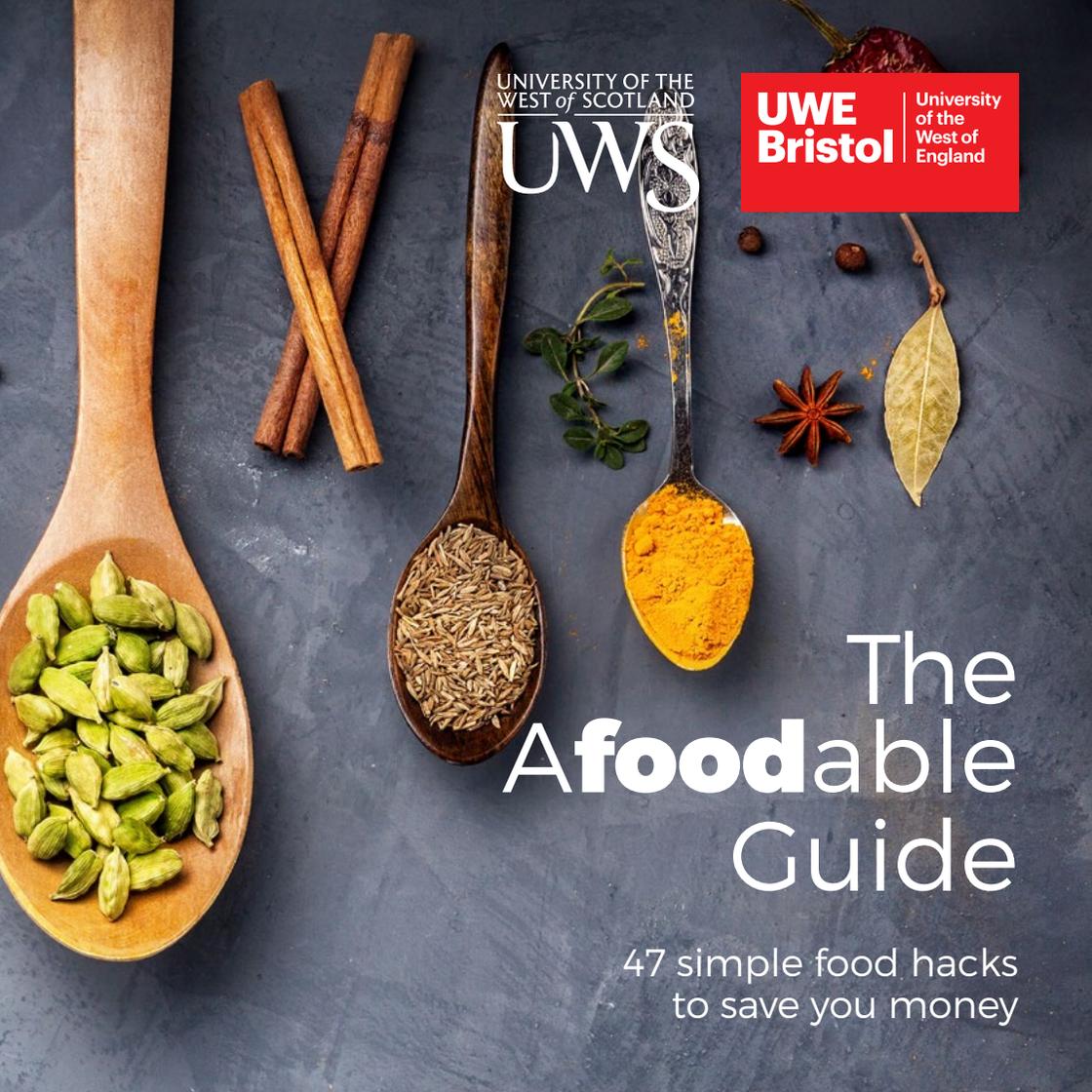


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The **Afoodable** Guide

47 simple food hacks
to save you money

Welcome...

You have got your hands on our new book, designed to give you a bunch of helpful advice to help you save money and get the most out of your food budget. As you flick through this book you'll find lots of recipes for various levels of confidence in the kitchen, as well as advice for saving money on food shopping, food storage info, ideas for using leftovers and much, much more.

We hope you enjoy it!

Chicken Fajitas

This dish is a quick and easy meal that can be adapted. Try beef instead of chicken, or load up with vegetables to make a veggie alternative.

Serves 2

1 red pepper & 1 green pepper, sliced
1 medium red onion, sliced
2 chicken breasts, sliced
1 tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp ground cumin
1 lime
1tbsp olive oil
2 large tortillas
50g cheddar
Soured cream, salsa and/or
guacamole to serve, it's up to you.



Put the peppers, onion, chicken, paprika and cumin into a bowl and squeeze in the juice of half a lime. Drizzle over 1 tbsp of olive oil and season with salt and pepper. If you have time, let this sit for a while to marinate.

Put a frying pan on a medium to high heat and add your peppers, onion and chicken. Cook for about 6-8 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through. Squeeze over the remaining lime juice.

Warm the tortillas in the microwave and build your fajita however you would like.

Top Tip: Experiment with the spices to get a seasoning that you love. Try adding some chilli powder.

Roasting a Chicken

A roast chicken is a great meal in itself but you can also get so much in the way of leftovers, making it handy thing to know how to make.

A 1.5kg chicken can feed 4 people while a larger bird will feed more.

Take the chicken from the fridge about an hour before you wish to cook it and remove the packaging and string. It's important to know how much your chicken weighs so make a note of this from the packaging.

Preheat your oven to 180°C.

Put your chicken into a roasting tray, season with salt and pepper and rub a little vegetable oil over the skin. Cover the chicken loosely with foil.

Roast for 20 minutes per 450g, plus an extra 10-20 minutes. For those last 10-20 minutes, remove the foil so the skin crisps.

Remove from the oven and let it rest, still in the roasting tray, for about 10 minutes before carving.

Experiment: If you are more confident in the kitchen, experiment with your roast chicken.

- Mix crushed garlic, herbs and butter into a paste and rub this on to your chicken before roasting.
- Prick a lemon all over with a knife and put it inside the chicken's cavity with any herbs you like. Make sure and push this deep into the cavity so the air can still circulate.
- If you fancy a spicier version, experiment with different herbs and spices and look at recipes online.



Downshift Challenge

If you are living on a budget, it's really important that you get the most out of the money you spend on food. The Downshift Challenge, championed by moneysavingexpert.com, can save you a considerable amount on your food bill.

The idea is simple. Supermarkets separate their products into different categories, using language like 'luxury' or 'basic' to help you make a choice. Try dropping one brand level on everything and see if you can tell the difference. If not, stick with the cheaper one.

Typical Supermarket Brands

Premium Brands

e.g. Tesco Finest Chocolate Treats,
Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Salmon En Croute

Manufacturer's Brand

e.g. McVitie's Jaffa Cakes, Kellogg's Cornflakes

Supermarket Own-Brand

e.g. Sainsbury Cornflakes, Morrisons Coffee

No-Frills Brands

e.g. Tesco Value Washing Up Liquid, Asda Smart Price Orange Juice

Top Tips for Downshifting Success:

The most expensive isn't always the best:

The packaging and language used is designed to make you think you are choosing between 'luxury' or 'basic' so be sure to taste with your mouth rather than your eyes.

Always watch out for promotions:

If a higher branded product is on offer, making it cheaper than downshifting, by all means buy the higher brand. Try comparing the different prices of products based on the cost per gram.

Downshift supermarkets:

The downshifting logic also applies to supermarkets. If you don't already, shop in places like Aldi and Lidl and see what you can save.

Downshift cleaning products and cosmetics:

Don't stop with food! Try downshifting washing powder, shower gels, bleaches and other cleaning products.

Don't stop downshifting:

Keep dropping brand levels and trying out cheaper products. The whole idea behind downshifting is about trying new things. If you find a product you don't like, it's perfectly fine to go back to what you used to have.

You'll find a lot of helpful information on Downshifting, as well as a handy calculator that can show you what you could save, at

www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/downshift-challenge

Pitta Pizza

You can turn almost anything in to a Pizza! Leftover sandwich meats, mushrooms that will soon be thrown out or a wrinkled looking red pepper will all do nicely!

Serves as many as you want it to

1 pitta bread per person (you could also use readymade pizza bases)

About 25g of grated cheese per person

Any leftovers you want to use as toppings (ham, mushrooms, sliced peppers, pepperoni, sweetcorn etc.)

1 tbsp of tomato pizza sauce (you can buy jars of this, make your own or use a spread of tomato puree)



Spread tomato pizza sauce on your pitta or pizza base. Add a layer of your cheese and your chosen toppings. Top with a final sprinkling of cheese.

Place in the oven at 180°C for about 10-15 minutes, until the cheese has melted and the pitta is crispy. If using readymade pizza bases, follow the instructions on their packaging.

Veggie Option: Forget the meat and load up on veg to make this vegetarian friendly.

Steak and Ale Pie

This recipe takes a bit of work but produces a hearty pie that everyone will love.

Serves 4-6

900g stewing steak, diced

25g flour

100g butter

2 onions, roughly chopped

2 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped

2 carrots, chopped

150g button mushrooms (optional)

400ml ale

500ml beef stock (use stock cubes)

A beaten egg

A sheet of ready rolled puff pastry

Put the flour into a bowl and season well with salt and pepper before adding the cubes of beef and coating them in the flour.

Melt half of the butter in a pan on a high heat and add the meat, searing all over until golden brown. You are only searing the meat at this stage, not cooking through.

Lower the heat to low/medium and add the onions, garlic, carrots, mushrooms (if using) ale and stock and bring to a simmer. Cover with a lid and gently simmer for 1 hour.

Add the remaining butter to your mixture before transferring it to an oven proof pie dish.

Use a pastry brush or your fingers to rub some beaten egg around the edge of the pie dish and lay the pastry over the dish. Press down at the edges and trim off any excess pastry before brushing the pastry with the remaining egg.

Bake at 200°C for 20-30 minutes.

Carrots

Carrots are easy to grow. Plant seeds in cool weather and wait for 60 to 75 days before pulling them out of the ground.



Grow Your Own

Vegetarian lentil casserole

Easy recipe for mid-week veggie supper, which is also perfect for packed lunches.

Serves 4

2 tbsp sunflower or vegetable oil

1 onion, chopped

2 garlic clove, crushed

700g potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

4 carrot, thickly sliced

2 parsnip, thickly sliced

2 tbsp curry paste or powder

1 litre/1¾ pints vegetable stock

100g red lentils

a small bunch of fresh coriander, roughly chopped

low-fat yogurt and bread, to serve

Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion and garlic over a medium heat for 4 minutes until softened, stirring occasionally. Tip in the potatoes, carrots and parsnips, turn up the heat and cook for 7 minutes, stirring, until the vegetables are golden.

Stir in the curry paste or powder, pour in the stock and then bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, add the lentils, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the lentils and vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened.

Stir in most of the coriander, season and heat for a minute or so. Top with yogurt and the rest of the coriander. You can also serve it with bread.

Minnesota Rice Hot Dish

This is a great dish that can easily be portioned up for the freezer and reheated in the microwave.

Serves 4-5

1 tbsp vegetable oil

500g beef mince

1 onion, chopped

4 sticks celery, chopped

200g white rice

750ml boiling water

2 cans condensed soup (chicken or mushroom)

3 tbsp soy sauce



Brown the mince in the oil with the onions and celery.

Add the mince mixture to an oven proof dish with the rice, water, soup and soy sauce and mix well.

Bake at 170°C for an hour, stirring well after 30mins.

Top Tip: Freeze any leftovers in individual portion sizes. When you want to use them, defrost thoroughly and microwave for at least 3 minutes. If the mixture seems a little dry, mix in a tablespoon of water before microwaving.



LOVE FOOD hate waste

Love Food Hate Waste are a great organisation that can help people to reduce household food waste and to save money. The average household could save £460 a year, simply by throwing away less food. Who wouldn't want a slice of that action?!

Visit lovefoodhatewaste.com for amazing tips on cutting your food bill, keeping your food fresher for longer, understanding food labels and planning your meals to name a few. They also have great recipes and tips on portion planning.

The Love Food Hate Waste App is also available on iPhone and Android and allows you to easily keep track of food planning, shopping, cooking meals and making the most of leftovers.

Chicken, Broccoli and Pesto Pasta

This dish is simple to make. You could leave out the chicken if you would prefer a veggie alternative.

Serves 4

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 chicken breasts, diced
1 large onion, sliced
300g broccoli, cut into florets
500g spaghetti or linguine
120g pesto



Heat the oil in a large pan on a medium heat and add the chicken and onion until the chicken is cooked and onion is softened.

In a separate pan with boiling water add the pasta and broccoli and cook as per the pasta packet instructions.

Drain the pasta and broccoli, and add to the chicken and onions. Stir in the pesto.

If you want be a little more fancy, grate some parmesan over the dish when you serve.

Easy Vegetarian Minestrone Soup

Minestrone is a hearty soup that can be eaten as a main meal. This recipe excludes any meat so is vegetarian friendly, simple to make and is easily doubled if you are feeding a crowd.

Serves 4

- 1 litre hot vegetable stock
(made with stock cubes)
- 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 100g spaghetti, broken into shorter lengths
(or other small pasta shape)
- 350g frozen mixed veg



Add the stock and tomatoes to a saucepan and bring to the boil before adding the pasta and cooking for as long as the packet instructions state.

About 4 minutes before the pasta is ready, add the frozen vegetables and bring back to the boil.

Serve in bowls with a chunk of crusty bread for dipping.

Brr...it's cold in here!

Keep your fridge temperature between 0°C and 5°C or food won't last as long as it could.

- Don't keep bread in the fridge. It will go stale much quicker.
- Most fruit and veg (except bananas and pineapples) is best stored in a fridge.
- Fruit and veg packaging has been designed to help it stay fresh, so don't take the packaging off until you are ready to eat the food.
- Once opened, food like cheese and ham keep better if they are well wrapped. Use cling film, foil or air tight containers.



Ice, Ice Baby!

Your freezer temperature should be at -18°C

- Wrap food before freezing to keep it at its best. Use freezer bags or plastic containers and minimise the air around the food to avoid 'freezer burn'.
- Freeze food in individual portions so it can defrost more quickly. This could include bread, meat (e.g. chicken breasts and slices of bacon) and leftover meals.
- Keep your freezer door closed to avoid fluctuations in temperature that can cause freezer burn.
- When you want to make use of it, defrost overnight in the fridge, use within 24 hours and cook until piping hot.



Homemade Potato Scones

This is a great way to use leftover mashed potato to make a new dish. Potato Scones (also known as potato farls or potato bread in other parts of the UK) are delicious served warm, or as part of a Scottish breakfast.

Ingredients

450g cold mashed potatoes

½ tsp salt

50g butter

100g self-raising flour



Add the salt, butter and flour to the mashed potatoes and mix well to form a stiff dough.

Tip onto a floured surface and roll out to a thickness of about 1/2 cm or the thickness of a pound coin. Cut into triangles (or whatever shape you fancy).

Heat a frying pan and a little oil or butter before griddling your potato scones for about 4 minutes on each side.

Serve hot.

Macaroni Cheese in a Mug

You read that right...a meal in a mug! Less washing up and a handy portion for one.

Serves 1

4tbsp dried macaroni
175ml cold water, plus extra 2 tbsp
2 tbsp soft cream cheese
¼ tsp English mustard
2 tbsp grated cheddar cheese
Salt and Pepper



Put the macaroni into a large microwaveable mug (about 500ml) with 75ml of the water and cover with cling film. Pierce once with a knife.

Set your mug in a microwaveable bowl (to catch any water that might boil over) and microwave on high for 2 minutes.

Stir well, pour any of the water from the bowl back into the mug and add a further 50ml of water and microwave for a further 2 minutes.

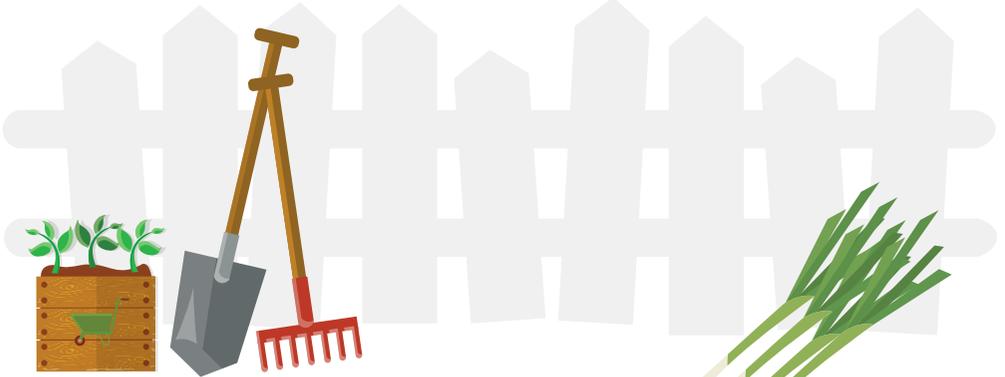
Repeat the above process 2 more times before stirring in the last 2 tbsp. of water, the cream cheese, mustard and grated cheese and microwaving on high for 2 minutes.

Stir well and season to taste with salt and pepper, leaving to stand for 1 minute before eating.

Top Tip: Microwaves vary so you may need to play around with recipes like this. These timings are based on a 1000W microwave.

Spring Onions

Like Leeks, you can also grow spring onions easily. Place the spring onion with roots in a glass or jar with water and it will start to grow.



Grow Your Own

Chocolate Cupcakes with Buttercream

These chocolate cupcakes are simple to make and a great treat.

Makes 12 cupcakes:

15g unsalted butter, softened
150g caster sugar
3 medium eggs
175g self-raising flour
25g cocoa powder

For the buttercream:

150g unsalted butter, room temperature
300g icing sugar
2 tbsp milk



Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a 12-hole muffin tin with cupcake cases.

Beat the butter, sugar, eggs, flour and cocoa in a large bowl using a whisk. Divide the mixture equally between the cupcake cases.

Bake for 15-20 minutes, until firm, and cool.

To make the buttercream, beat the butter, icing sugar and milk in a large bowl. Spread the buttercream over the cooled cakes and decorate however you would like.

Chilli Con Carne

Chilli is a great dish to make as it is so versatile and can be easily frozen for another time. Serve with rice, in a tortilla wrap or with a few tortilla crisps.

Serves 4-6

1 tbsp vegetable oil	500g lean mince beef
1 large onion, diced	1 beef stock cube
1 red pepper, sliced	1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped	1 tsp sugar
1 tsp hot chilli powder	1 x 400g tin of kidney beans
1 tsp paprika	Soured cream, to serve
1 tsp ground cumin	

Add the oil and onion to a pan and cook on a medium heat until the onion has softened. Add the garlic, pepper, chilli powder, paprika and cumin and stir well, cooking for a further 5 minutes. Add the mince and cook until browned.

Crumble in the stock cube and add 300ml of hot water, the tin of tomatoes and the sugar. Stir well and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes with a lid on, stirring occasionally.

Drain the can of kidney beans, rinse them with water and add to the sauce. Continue to simmer for a further 10 minutes, this time without a lid.

Turn off the heat and taste your chilli. Add as much salt and pepper as you would like but leave it to sit for 10 minutes before serving.

Eat the Seasons

One way to stick to, or get the most out of a tight food budget is to avoid paying higher costs for foods that have been grown in other countries and transported considerable distances to our supermarkets. By eating what is seasonal and what has been grown locally, you can save both energy and money.

To keep on top of the seasons visit www.eattheseasons.co.uk You can select any month of the year to see which fruit, vegetables, meat or seafood is in season. You can also find out what the season looks like for your favourite foods.



Easy Peasy Stir Fry

A stir fry is incredibly simple to make. You can buy packs of fresh stir fry vegetables in most supermarkets, with everything chopped and ready to go. You can also buy ready to go noodles and sauces, making this an excellent starter dish if you are new to cooking.

If you are feeling more adventurous you can always pick your own vegetables or pimp up what you have bought in the supermarket by adding pak choi, beansprouts or other veg. There are also lots of recipes online if you fancy making your own sauce.

Serves 2

2 tbsp vegetable oil

2 chicken breasts, sliced (or beef, or prawns)

1 pack of your chosen stir fry veg, roughly 300g

1 pack ready to stir fry noodles, roughly 300g

1 pack of your chosen stir fry sauce, roughly 180g



Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok on a high heat and add the chicken. Stir continuously to avoid it sticking to the pan until cooked through.

Add the stir fry veg pack and cook for around 5 minutes, stirring continuously. Add the noodles and stir fry for a further 2 minutes, stirring well to mix the noodles through the veg.

Finally, add the sauce and stir fry for about 1 minute (until hot) before serving.

Simple Salsa

If you are a fan of Mexican style food, like fajitas or quesadillas, you might find it simpler to make your own salsa than buying it.

Makes 1 small bowl

1 pack of cherry tomatoes, roughly 330g

Salt and pepper

1 red chilli

Handful of fresh coriander

1 lime

2 tbsp olive oil

1 red onion (optional)



Chop the cherry tomatoes and transfer to a bowl, adding a good pinch of salt and some fresh black pepper.

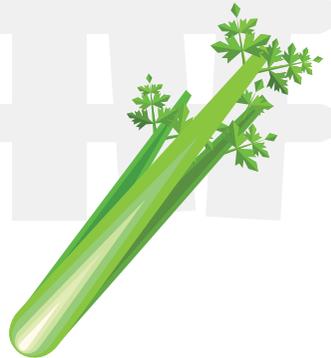
Finely chop half of a red chilli (deseed if you don't want your salsa too spicy) and add to the tomatoes.

If you want to, finely dice the red onion and add as much as you like. Red onion can be overpowering so leave this out if you prefer.

Chop the coriander and add to the tomatoes and chilli. Squeeze in the juice of one lime and a small drizzle of olive oil and mix well.

Celery

Celery can be re grown from the base of the vegetable. You usually do not use the celery base when you cook, so remember not to throw it away. Place it in a saucer of water. Change the water every day and you will start to see regrowth within a week.



Grow Your Own

Chicken and Rice Soup

This is great way to use up leftover roast chicken. It freezes well so there is no need to eat immediately. Double up if you have a lot of chicken leftover.

Serves 2-3

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion or leek, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 stick celery, chopped
(leave out if you don't like or have celery)
- 1 ½ pint of chicken stock from stock cube
- 200-250g chicken
- 185g white rice
- Splash of soya sauce to season



In a large saucepan, heat the oil on a medium heat and add the onion, carrot and celery. Cook until the onion and celery has softened.

Add the stock and bring to a simmer before adding the chicken and rice.

Simmer gently until the rice has cooked (about 15 minutes).

Season to taste with the soya sauce.

Quick Leftover Miso Soup

This soup is great because you make it with just about any combination of vegetables or meat that you have. It's a great way to use up food that is about to be past its prime! You can also use frozen veg such as spinach, mushrooms and peas.

Serves 2 (depending on how much vegetables and meat you add)

2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil

½ tsp miso paste

1 tablespoon fish sauce

½ medium onion, diced

Spring onion, sliced

1 clove garlic, crushed

Chillies to taste

500 ml stock (any kind, made from a stock cube)

Whatever leftover vegetables you have, chopped (celery, carrots, mushrooms etc.)

Whatever meat you have, sliced (leftover chicken, beef or pork)

Heat your oil in a wok or frying pan on a medium heat and add the garlic, chillies, onions & your chosen vegetables, cooking until the onions are translucent.

Add the stock and any meat that you are using. Bring to the boil and add the miso paste and fish sauce.

Give the soup a good stir, ensuring the miso paste has melted into the stock and cook until the vegetables are just tender. Remove from heat and serve. Garnish with chopped spring onions.



Food labels explained

Use by dates are about safety. The food can be eaten up to the end of this date but not after. You will see use by dates on food that goes off quickly, such as meat or dairy. For the use by date to be accurate, you should follow storage instructions.

Best Before dates are about quality. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. The best before date will only be accurate if the food is stored according to the instructions on the label.

Display Until/Sell by dates are for the shops so you can ignore these.



Tomato Pizza Sauce

This recipe makes enough for about 4 pizzas, so freeze the excess! Pour the sauce into an ice cube tray to freeze, and then add the cubes to a freezer bag. You then only lift out what you need.

Ingredients

175g tomato purée
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and black pepper to taste
1/2 tablespoon dried oregano
1/2 tablespoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary
150-200ml water



Mix together the tomato purée, olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper to taste, oregano, basil and rosemary. Mix well and gradually add the water, stopping when you've reached your desired consistency.

Let stand for several hours to let the flavours blend. No cooking necessary, just spread on pizza base.

Pizza Dough

It's not difficult to make pizza dough but it is time consuming as you need to leave the dough to rise. Once you make the dough it can be wrapped in cling film and kept in the fridge or freezer until you need it.

Enough for about 6 medium pizzas

1kg white bread flour

1 tsp salt

650ml lukewarm water

2 x 7g sachets of dried yeast

1 tbsp golden caster sugar

4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Sieve the flour and salt into a big bowl and make a well in the middle.

Mix the water, yeast, sugar and oil in a jug and leave for a couple of minutes before pouring onto your flour mixture, into the well.

Use a fork to mix the liquid with the flour until it starts to come together, then use your flour dusted hands to knead the dough until it is smooth and springy.





Dust a clean bowl with some flour and add your ball of dough, covering with a damp tea towel and leaving in a warm room for around an hour, until doubled in size.

Tip the dough onto a floured surface and knead well, pushing out the air. Portion up and store any dough you won't be using in the fridge or freezer.

Roll out your pizza base to the thickness of a pound coin and set on a bit of tin foil that has been oiled and floured and add your chosen toppings.

Set your oven to a setting that heats from the bottom rather than a fan option. You want it to be really hot, so try setting at about 240°C. Cook your pizza until the dough crisps and the topping is cooked, roughly 5 minutes.

Top Tip: Make sure you preheat your oven before popping the pizza in and keep a close eye as it really won't take long.

Another Top Tip: Combine this with the tomato pizza sauce recipe.

Leeks

You can regrow leeks with little effort. Place your leeks with roots in a glass or jar with water and you will start to see your leeks flourish.



Grow Your Own

GLAM-bled eggs

This easy to make breakfast or brunch will impress without breaking the bank.

Serves 2

3 eggs

1 tbsp butter

1 splash of milk
(about 2 tbsp if you are being precise)

Black pepper

½ pack of smoked salmon trimmings (roughly 60g)

2 slices bread

(or bagel, English muffin, crumpet etc.)

Handful of spinach or rocket



Crack the eggs into a mug and beat well with the pepper and milk.

Add the butter to a pan on a low heat and allow it to melt before adding the egg mixture and stirring continuously for about 5 minutes until they are set, but still have a little wobble. Add the salmon trimmings and cook for a further minute to warm through.

Toast your bread/bagel/muffin/crumpet and top with a few spinach or rocket leaves before adding the eggs.

Top Tip: Smoked salmon can be expensive, but if you are only going to be adding to scrambled eggs, trimmings are great.

Very Healthy Smoked Salmon and Cream Cheese

You can use this smoked salmon mixture to top a baked potato, make a sandwich, put on a toasted bagel or on crackers.

Serves 3-4

- ½ tub (about 125g) of quark
(if you can't find this, use low fat cream cheese)
- ½ pack of smoked salmon trimmings (roughly 60g)
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- Black pepper
- Pinch of sugar
- 1 tbsp of chopped herbs



Mix all ingredients together and season to taste with the amount of lemon juice, pepper and sugar you would like. If you do have a food processor, you can blitz this into a pate.

Top Tip: If you do use fresh herbs but don't want the rest to go to waste, chop them up and freeze in a sandwich bag.

Another top tip: Use the rest of your smoked salmon trimmings to make GLAM-bled eggs.

5 Basic Cooking Items

You don't need a fancy kitchen with all the latest gadgets to be able to prepare a meal. It is possible to manage with these 5 basic items:

- Medium sized frying pan or wok
- Chopping board
- Wooden spoon
- Medium saucepan and lid
- Chopping knife

If you are more of a keen cook, or have the budget available to buy a little more, go for the following:

- Microwave
- Good oven gloves
- Sieve
- Plastic food containers or food bags
- Scissors
- Bottle Opener (obviously!)



Chicken Quesadilla

Everything goes in a Quesadilla making this a great recipe for using up the leftovers from a roast chicken and anything else you have sitting in the fridge.

Serves 4

8 flour tortillas

250g grated cheddar

300g cooked chicken

½ red onion, thinly sliced

2 tbsp olive oil

60g jalapeno chillies, roughly chopped (optional)

4 tbsp sour cream

Serve with guacamole and/or salsa. It's up to you!



Place four of the tortillas onto a chopping board and cover each with the grated cheese.

Divide the chicken, red onion and jalapeno chillies (if using) over the cheese-covered tortillas.

Spread the sour cream on one side of the remaining four tortillas and place sour cream-side down onto the filled tortillas.

Heat a frying pan and add the oil. Carefully place a quesadilla into the frying pan and cook over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes, until crisp and golden and the cheese filling is melting.

Carefully turn the quesadilla over and cook on the other side for a further two minutes, or until crisp and golden.

Veggie Option: Use leftover roasted vegetables instead of chicken.

Tuna Pasta Bake

A filling staple for any home!

Serves 4

5 handfuls of dried pasta shapes

1 large handful of frozen veg
(e.g. peas, sweetcorn, carrots)

1 tin of tuna drained

1 tin of condensed mushroom soup

½ the soup can of milk

1 tbsp American or French mustard

Handful of grated cheese and/or breadcrumbs



Fill a pan with water and bring to the boil. Add your pasta and vegetables and cook for about 8 minutes, or until the pasta is almost cooked.

Drain the pasta and vegetables and add to an oven proof dish with all other ingredients. Mix well.

Bake at 180°C for 30 mins.

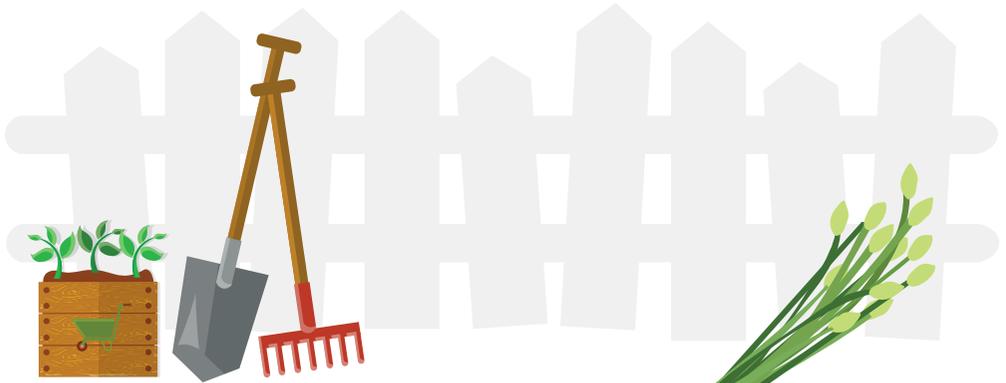
If you want to, add the cheese and/or breadcrumbs for the last 5 minutes.

Top Tip: Don't throw away the ends of your loaf of bread. Blitz these in a food processor or blender to make breadcrumbs and freeze for when you might want a crunchy topping on a recipe like this.

Another top tip: Don't have breadcrumbs? Pulverize a packet of crisps instead and sprinkle on with some cheese.

Chives

Place chives in your garden. You can cut back the chives to encourage new growth after the chives flower in early spring.



Grow Your Own

Vegetable Curry

This vegetarian curry is a great budget recipe that freezes well in batches. Double up to feed a big group and serve with rice and naan bread.

Serves 4 - 5

1 large potato, diced	1 onion, sliced
½ butternut squash, peeled and diced	2 tbsp vegetable oil
½ aubergine, diced	1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk
500g tomato passata	1 red pepper, sliced
3 tbsp tikka masala paste	1 courgette, diced

Mix the potato, squash and aubergine with 1 tbsp of the curry paste and 1 tbsp of the oil in a roasting tray and put in the oven at 180°C for 30 minutes.

In a large pan on a medium heat fry the onions in the remaining oil until softened. Stir in the rest of the curry paste and cook for 3 minutes.

Mix in the passata and coconut milk and a little water if the sauce seems overly thick for your liking. Simmer for 5 minutes.

When the vegetables in the oven are finished, add them to the sauce, along with the pepper and courgette. Simmer for 10-15 minutes until tender.

Top Tip: You can add whatever vegetables you like.

Another top tip: Experiment with different readymade curry pastes.

Easy Spaghetti Bolognese

This is a simple and delicious recipe for anyone on a budget. The sauce can be easily frozen.

Serves 4

2 tbsp vegetable oil

Salt and pepper

400g beef mince

1 onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

2 carrots, diced

2 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes

400ml beef stock

400g spaghetti

Heat 1tbsp of the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the mince, with a good pinch of salt and pepper. Cook until browned and then remove from the pan and set aside.

Add the remaining oil to the pan with the onions, cook for about 5 minutes, or until softened and then add the garlic and carrot and cook for a further 2 minutes.

Add the beef and any juices back into the pan with the tomatoes and stock. Mix well and simmer gently for 45 minutes.

Boil the spaghetti in salted water as per the packet instructions. When ready, drain and add to the Bolognese sauce. Mix well and serve.

Top Tip: Use Quorn mince for a veggie alternative.



Basic Food Staples

You don't need a supply of exotic herbs and spices, every shape of pasta or fancy oils. If you are new to cooking, or are stocking your kitchen on a budget, the list below shows 10 basics that will go far.

- Dried pasta
- Rice
- Stock cubes
- Salt and pepper
- Sunflower oil (olive oil as a treat!)
- Tinned tomatoes
- Frozen vegetables
- Dried mixed herbs
- Chilli powder/flakes
- Dried minced garlic





Lettuce

Lettuce is easy to grow. You can sow lettuce seeds in the ground or a large container and get your fresh salads in a few weeks. Sow a little seed every fortnight to ensure a long supply.



Grow Your Own

Banana Bread

This is a great way to use up bananas that might otherwise be past their best. You will need a loaf tin, roughly 20cm x 12cm, but could also bake in a muffin tin (just remember to reduce the baking time).

Makes 1 loaf

285g plain flour

½ tsp salt

1 tsp bicarbonate of soda

110g butter, plus extra for greasing

225g caster sugar

2 eggs

85ml milk

4 ripe bananas

2 tsp lemon juice



Preheat oven to 180°C. Mix the butter and sugar together using an electric whisk until light and fluffy.

Mash the bananas with the milk and lemon juice and add to the butter and sugar mix, along with the eggs. Beat well.

Add the flour, bicarbonate of soda and salt and mix well to combine. Pour into the greased loaf tin and bake for about 1 hour. Keep an eye on it.

Let it cool completely before slicing and serving. It's particularly good with a little butter!

Top Tip: Try adding chocolate chips for a little extra indulgence.

Better – than – bought – basic – biscuits

This amazing recipe has 4 different variations that you can try. Once baked and cooled, store your biscuits in an airtight container to keep them fresh.

Makes 12-15 biscuits:

For the basic dough:

110g self-raising flour
40g granulated sugar
50g margarine
2 tbsp golden syrup

Then choose one of the following:

- 2tsp ground ginger
- 50g of chocolate, chopped
- 30g oats and 1 tsp ginger
- 50g mixed chopped nuts and raisins

Add flour, sugar and margarine to a bowl and mix with a fork until crumbly.

Add the syrup and your chosen extras and mix well with a wooden spoon or spatula to form a stiff paste.

Form into 12-15 balls and place on a baking sheet lined with greaseproof paper (make sure to leave room for spreading). Use a fork to flatten your dough.

Bake at 190°C for 7 – 9 minutes. You'll get a softer biscuit if you bake for less time and a crunchier biscuit if you bake for longer.

Top Tip: These biscuits would be a great homemade gift. Wrap a batch in cellophane and tie with a nice ribbon.



Bamboozled by Bargains?

Supermarkets are great at marketing, often making something seem like a better bargain than it actually is. Watch out for the tricks they employ, causing even the savviest shopper to despair:

Confusing Unit Prices

Comparing unit prices is the best way to see what the better deal is, but when items aren't labelled with a consistent price per kilogram or litre, it can be difficult.

Dodgy Offers

Sometimes the price of an item mysteriously rises just as a 'bargain' offer begins. One supermarket increased the price of pizza from £1.50 to £2 just as a '2 for £3' offer appeared, then dropped the price again when the offer ended.

Pricier Multipacks

You might expect a multipack to be better value, but sometimes that's not the case. Be sure to check.

Shrinkage

Customers don't like paying more, but they might not notice getting slightly less for their money. So, a tub of cream cheese can shrink from 200g to 180g without any decrease in price.

'Was' pricing that really wasn't

One supermarket sold hand wash for £1.80 for just one week, then labelled it as 'Was £1.80, now 90p' for nearly three months.

Get lots of helpful advice at

www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/cheap-supermarket-shopping

Chilli Chicken Pasta

This meal is easy to reheat so use any leftover portions for packed lunches.

Serves 4

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 x 400g packs of chicken breast fillets
1 large onion, chopped
2 peppers, sliced
400g tin of chopped tomatoes
1 tsp chilli flakes
1tsp garlic salt
4 handfuls of whole wheat pasta
Parmesan cheese to serve



Bring a large pan of salted water to boil and add your pasta. Boil this as per the packet instructions.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan on a medium heat, add the chicken and cook through before lowering the heat and adding the onions and peppers. Cook until softened.

Add the tinned tomatoes, chilli flakes and garlic salt to your chicken, onion and peppers and bring to a simmer on a medium heat.

Drain the pasta, reserving a cup of the pasta water.

Add the pasta to the tomato sauce, mixing to coat well. If the sauce is thicker than you would like, simply add a small amount of the pasta water until you are happy with it. Serve with a sprinkling of grated parmesan cheese.

Lemonade Scones

Scones...made with lemonade?! We don't joke! These scones are incredibly easy to make and taste amazing. Impress friends and family by whipping these up and serving with jam and cream.

Makes about 9-12 scones, depending on how big you make them

750g self-raising flour

375ml lemonade

300ml double cream

½ tsp salt



Mix all ingredients together with a mixer using a dough hook, or use a fork if you don't have a mixer.

The dough will be sticky so press it out with your hands on a floured surface until it's about 2cm thick.

Use a cutter or the rim of a glass to cut out before putting on a greased baking tray. Put flour on the cutter to prevent the dough sticking. Bake at 200°C for between 10 and 15 minutes.

Herbs and Spices on a Budget

Seeing a recipe that looks great but has a huge list of ingredients can be off putting, especially if those ingredients are herbs and spices that can be costly. These tips will help you save money and get the most out of herbs and spices.

- **Only buy what you need:** Don't feel compelled to buy everything. Stick to a recipe.
- **Shop around:** Try budget retailers like Aldi and Lidl, buy supermarket own brand or look in Asian or Chinese supermarkets.
- **Look around the shelves:** Check the world food aisles in supermarkets, not just the herbs and spices section. You can often find the same item, packaged slightly differently for a much cheaper price.
- **Dried herbs:** Don't be afraid to buy dried herbs instead of fresh. They last longer.
- **Store wisely:** Follow the storage instructions on any packaging.
- **Freeze fresh herbs:** If you do buy fresh, chop up the excess and freeze in a freezer bag.
- **Freeze fresh ginger:** Put fresh ginger into the freezer. When you need it for a recipe, simply grate directly from frozen into your recipe.
- **Grow your own:** If you are feeling adventurous, have a go at growing a range of herbs. You can find lots of growing tips at www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/growing-your-own-herbs

You don't need to spend money on pricey cookbooks to get good budget recipes or ideas for using your leftovers. The internet, television, free magazines from supermarkets and social media all offer a wealth of inspiration, making it incredibly easy to venture into the kitchen.

The following websites have a huge number of recipes to choose from, often organised into categories including budget, using leftovers, quick and easy or vegetarian:

www.bbc.co.uk/food/

www.bbcgoodfood.com/

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes

www.studentcooking.tv/recipes

Supermarkets often have websites with recipes and ideas that you can take advantage of:

<https://realfood.tesco.com/recipes.html>

<https://recipes.sainsburys.co.uk/recipes>

www.asdagoodliving.co.uk/food/recipes



If you are drawn to the cooking style of a particular TV chef, check them out online or through social media for ideas and recipes:

www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/

www.hairybikers.com/recipes

www.nigella.com/

www.maryberry.co.uk/

www.nigel Slater.com/Recipes

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram also have lots of inspiration. You'll often find very short and easy to follow video recipes, food hacks that will help you get the best from your ingredients and ideas for using leftovers. Look for the following, all of which are available through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram:

- **Tasty**
- **Goodful**
- **Food Network**
- **The Body Coach**
- **BBC Good Food**





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