



Saving Your Sanity
One Meal at a Time

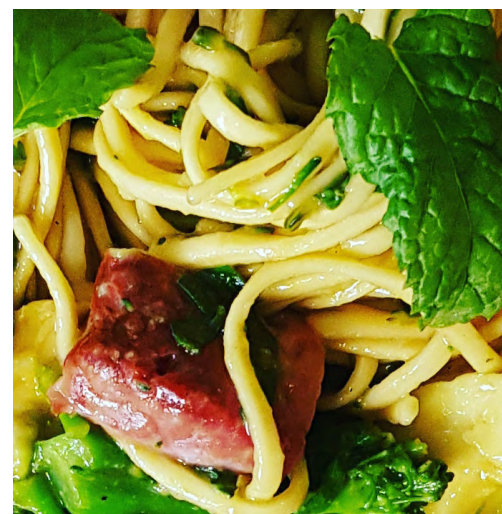
WHAT'S FOR TEA?

Autumn Edition



*10 seasonal veg-packed,
speedy, weekday winners
for busy families*

By Jacqueline McBeth



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first e-book from me- hopefully not the last! If you're a busy parent desperately trying to come up with daily teatime inspiration that ticks all the nutritional boxes for your family, then look no further. Here are *ten easy recipes* that both kids and parents should love- I mean, who wants to cook and clean up the kitchen twice a night? And while eating with children is not always possible (nor desirable- let's be honest) it is so very important on a number of levels- not least the nutritional one. It will save you money, have a positive impact on family relationships and usually leads to children making better food choices in the long term.

If I'm brutally honest, I rarely plan my week when it comes to food, or much else for that matter, but whenever I do cook- I'm *always* thinking of leftover potential, as honestly, I'm not all that into cooking every single night (it's Tuesday night and my kids are still eating the soup I made on Saturday).

I've tried hard to include recipes that don't list twenty hard to find ingredients- in fact, most of this you'll have in your cupboard. The recipes have evolved with my family- and are our firm favourites. I've taken inspiration from Thomasina Miers, Claire Thomson, David Frenkiel, Nigel Slater and Georgina Hayden and made the recipes my own- and you should too. Experiment with what your family like and what's available, put your own stamp on them.

In terms of speed and simplicity, many of the dishes are one pot wonders, saving on the dreaded washing up. Only one dish takes longer than 40 minutes and most are between 15 and

30. Many of them will do another day (or at least a working lunch- because when are we ever not going to be working from home?)

From a nutritional perspective, each dish delivers at least two of your five a day while a few contain up to four. On this note, if you think certain members of your family will be put off by the discovery of a lentil here or a green leaf there, there are few things you can do:

- Reduce the quantity of the offending item until hardly perceptible and each time you cook the dish, increase it little by little
- Chop as finely as you can, it really works. Nobody likes a huge chunk of carrot
- Make sure the leafy veg is soft- kale is horrible when chewy
- Let the children see, touch and taste the offending item before cooking- often it's just a phobia of hidden or unknown ingredients
- Use bread as a weapon- vegetables are almost always easier to bear when encased in a warm fluffy pitta or scooped up in a flatbread. Serve soup with giant cheesy toasted croutons.

Finally, having taught healthy cookery to children for a number of years, (and having had a fussy daughter for 10) never underestimate the power of wonderful cooking smells on empty tummies- it really does work.

Happy Cooking!

Jacquie

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WARMING BEAN AND CAVOLO SOUP

Serves 4-6

Time: 30 minutes

When the mornings get colder and I'm allowed to make soup again, this is the first one I go for. Lockdown has probably meant calmer weekends for most of us, so there's often more time for cooking up a little of what you love. A pan of soup on a Saturday is an easy, nutritious lunch and quite possibly dinner on a Monday when Sunday leftovers just won't stretch.

This isn't even really a recipe, more of an idea, a soup base that you can change, depending on what you have in the fridge with just a few caveats.

Olive oil- don't skimp. The luxury of the olive oil will carry through to the finished dish, heightening flavours and giving it a welcome richness. Leeks or onions for flavour- one onion/ two leeks. And carrots, finely chopped to deliver sweetness. I like a bit of garlic too. Celery if you have it. Maybe a herb or two like rosemary and thyme.

3 tbsp olive oil

2 leeks or 1 onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

2 carrots, finely chopped

Chopped rosemary/a few sprigs thyme (not essential)

A few ripe tomatoes or 1 tin tomatoes

A tin of cannellini beans, drained (or 150g broken spaghetti)

1.2 litres vegetable stock

A parmesan rind

A bunch of green, leafy veg

Salt and pepper

Get a large, heavy bottomed pan and warm the oil. Add the chopped veg and Make sure it is cooked gently for AT LEAST 10 minutes (usually more like 15) until the leeks or onions are soft, translucent and starting to caramelise. This forms the flavour basis of this and many other meals and the most important part of the dish.

Add a few chopped tomatoes or a tin (half a tin is enough but you know what will happen to the other half...) and cook for a further 5 if fresh, 15 mins if tinned.

**at this stage, you could whizz it up to make it more palatable for kids.*

Add the beans, (again, broken up bits of spaghetti might be more of a hit with the kids!) veg stock and parmesan rind. Simmer gently for 10. Shred a bunch of green leaves (chard, cavolo, kale, savoy cabbage) and throw in, cooking until tender. The chard and cabbage need a minute or so, the kale and cavolo, a few minutes more. You could throw in any leftover cooked meat you might have- chicken, ham or even roast squash. Season really well.

Serve with huge croutons of chunky, buttered toast sunk into the soup.

GOOD FOR:

- Using up veg including overripe tomatoes
- Using up parmesan rinds
- Using up leftover roast chicken
- Cooking once-eating twice





BEEF, MUSHROOM AND GREENS STIR-FRY WITH OYSTER SAUCE

2

Serves 4

Time: 15 minutes

I can barely write this recipe without salivating. During the first lockdown, I set up a Facebook recipe-sharing group called Curfew Kitchen-aiming to help, support and inspire those of us stuck at home, unable to shop our usual ingredients and juggling work/childcare and teaching duties with feeding your family not once but twice a day.

This recipe was shared by one of our lovely members, Joanne Cheung. I cooked it immediately and it was delicious and crucially, ready in minutes. I've added red pepper here for colour and crunch.

4 tbsp oyster sauce

2 tbsp dark soy sauce

2 tbsp oil

A thumb size piece of ginger, grated

200g rump steak, sliced thinly across the grain (tofu also good here)

150g mushrooms, wiped and sliced

300g shredded greens

1 pepper, sliced

Mixes the sauces together and set aside.

Fry the beef in the hot oil for a few minutes and set aside.

Wipe pan.

Add a little more oil and fry the ginger, mushrooms, pepper and greens for a few minutes on a high heat.

Return the beef and sauce to pan, stir until warm through and serve with rice or noodles.

GOOD FOR:

- Really quick dinner
- A flavour blast
- Making a little meat go further

CAULIFLOWER, QUINOA AND SPINACH CAKES

Serves 4

Time: 30 minutes

I've been making these delicious little numbers for so many years- they are a David Frenkiel (Green Kitchen Stories) original and very, very moreish. Great way of getting loads of nutrients and fibre into the family. They're originally made with wild garlic which is (not widely) available for a short time in Spring- but unless you have a field of it near you- just use spinach and garlic. Cauliflower is grown all year round in the UK- lucky for us!

They are super simple to make and don't take too long.

200g quinoa

200g cauliflower

50-100g baby spinach

4 eggs

200g feta

80g oats

2 cloves garlic, crushed

Oil for frying

Firstly cook the quinoa in about 500ml salted water until tender (they should sprout little tails when done). Drain and leave to cool. Rice the cauli either by pulsing in a food processor or grating it (this is what I do!) and put in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the eggs, shredded spinach, crumbled feta, oats and garlic. Now fold in the quinoa and make sure everything is thoroughly mixed. If you have time, refrigerate for half an hour, if not, don't worry- the mixture will just be a little harder to shape.

Get a large thick bottomed frying pan on a medium heat and add a glug of oil. Wet your hands and form the mixture into small burger shapes- fry in batches, about 3 minutes on either side until golden.

Eat immediately with a little sweet chili sauce or a green salad. My daughter prefers these inside a pitta- with ketchup obviously.

GOOD FOR:

- Fibre and protein
- Eating all year round
- A kid friendly way to eat cauliflower



CREAMY FISH PIE WITH LEEKS AND MELTING CHEESE

Serves 4

Time: 45 minutes

Packed with creamy leeks, smoked haddock and melting cheese, there are never any leftovers in our house. I've used parboiled sliced potatoes here, but you could use mash or even puff pastry. The taters do need a little cooking first- if not they'll take AGES to cook in the oven while your fish will take minutes.

It's an easy dish and the same base could be used for a chicken or ham pie. If vegetarian, you could use chunks of roasted celeriac or squash instead.

The leeks and carrots are cooked in butter until soft and sweet, a spoonful of flour thickens the sauce nicely as does a glug of cream.

5 or 6 potatoes, sliced (about 2 cm thick)
peeling optional

30g butter

2 leeks, trimmed of the tougher, outer leaves, sliced thinly and washed.

2 carrots, scrubbed, halved lengthways and halved again, then sliced thinly.

150g cavolo nero or kale, washed, stalks removed and shredded.

1 heaped dessert spoon plain flour

200ml milk

75g grated cheddar (half for mixture, half for top)

300-400g fish- smoked haddock, cod, hake or even prawn etc. cut into large chunks.

Salt and pepper.

Heat the oven to 180C

Get your potatoes on a simmer in a large pan of salted water- keep an eye on them, you don't want them to fall apart. Drain when done.

Get an ovenproof casserole on a medium heat and melt the butter. Cook the leeks and carrot gently until soft (12 mins) and add the cavolo or kale. Cook a few minutes until soft and stir in the flour cook 1 minute, stirring.

Pour in 200ml milk, cook for a few minutes until thickened. Remove from heat, stir through the cheese and fish. Season.

Layer the potatoes on top, dot with butter and cheese, bake for 10 mins at 180, then 5 to 10 under a hot grill until golden.

I don't think this dish needs any addition, but petit pois would be really nice on the side.

GOOD FOR:

- Hiding vegetables
- Using up fish from the freezer!
- Delivering midweek luxury





LEEK, CAVOLO NERO AND BACON TART

Serves 4

Time: 40 minutes

I reckon this is the most fun you can have with winter veg. A delicious, creamy, sweetish filling with crispy, salty bacon on top of buttery, flaky pastry- think Pret bacon and tomato breakfast pastries- what's not to like?.

A lovely veggie option would be a few circles of goat's cheese atop, bubbling and scorched, or a smattering of toasted pine nuts.

A good knob of butter

2 leeks, sliced thinly and washed

A bay leaf

150g kale, stalks removed and shredded

100ml cream

Salt and pepper

8 rashers streaky bacon
(preferred but any will do)

500g shop bought puff pastry

A beaten egg

Melt the butter in a frying pan and add the leeks, cooking gently for at least 12 minutes until soft and sweet.

Meanwhile, fry off 8 rashers of streaky bacon- until really crisp.

Add the shredded Cavolo Nero, allow to soften properly (lid on for speed).

Season well, add 100ml cream and cook 5 minutes.

Roll out 500g pack puff pastry (about 25×35) to fit on a lined rectangular baking sheet). Score a few cm inside the edge of the outline to create a lip. Spread the mixture inside and brush the edges with a beaten egg, lay the bacon on top and cook for 20 to 25 mins at 200c until golden brown.

Eat warm at top speed.

GOOD FOR:

- Getting kids to eat kale
- Making the house smell incredible
- Making people love you



SUPERFAST SLURPY NUTRITIOUS NOODLES WITH CHILI AND LIME

6

Serves 4

Time: 15 minutes

One of my all time favourite meals- quick, stunningly tasty and pretty good for you- it's a bit of a miracle. You can also freestyle with other veg- I like fried courgettes in the Summer.

4 nests of medium egg noodles

1 small head of broccoli, cut into very small florets

4 spring onions, sliced finely

200g baby spinach (shredded)

1 avocado

Juice of 1 lime

2 tbsp soy

2 tbsp sesame oil

150g leftover roast meat or tofu
(I love the saltiness of ham in this)

2 tbsp chili oil (optional, half of my children would not approve)

Fresh coriander to garnish
(not essential- but gorgeous)

Simmer the noodles in a large pan until tender, add the broccoli florets and cook a further minute or so (you want them just without that raw edge).

Drain the pan leaving a little of the cooking water- stir in the spinach and cover, allowing to wilt. Scoop out the avocado with a teaspoon and stir into the pan. Add the lime, soy, sesame oil and chili if using.

Taste and add more if you need it. Add the meat if using and herbs.

Eat immediately.

GOOD FOR:

- Very quick dinner
- Using up coriander/avocado
- When you need a flavour sensation



PENNE WITH TOMATO AND KALE

Serves 4-6

Time: 30 minutes

This is an old family favourite and packs in so many nutrients in the shape of 4 different veg plus protein and fibre from the lentils, it really is a super one pot supper.

It's an easy base of onion and carrot (sometimes I add half a fennel) but the pasta is cooked in the pan with stock- so much less washing up. I like it with a splash of cream at the end, it's a gamechanger, but not essential.

If you have a big enough pan, make double- it will keep for another day.

3 tbsp olive oil

1 onion

1 carrot

2 cloves garlic

A sprig of rosemary, leaves picked and chopped

A bay leaf

1 tin tomatoes

100g dried lentils (I use red ones as they are fast to cook and difficult to detect)

1.6l vegetable stock

Salt and pepper

250g penne or similar pasta

150g kale, destalked and shredded

A glug of cream

Warm the oil in a large, heavy bottomed pan. Add the onion, carrot, bay leaf and rosemary, cooking gently on a medium heat- then in with the garlic. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes until soft and translucent- this is the flavour base of the dish, don't move to the next step unless the veg is cooked.

Add a tin of tomatoes and stir in the lentils, salt and pepper. Add the stock. Cook for 5 to 10 until lentils are mostly cooked but still have some bite. Add the pasta- stir well and simmer until the pasta is just about done. This does have a tendency to stick so keep stirring and keep to a gentle simmer or you may have to add more stock/boiling water.

Stir through the kale and cook gently for a few minutes, take off the heat and add the cream.

Serves with lots of parmesan.

GOOD FOR:

- 5 portions of your 5 a day
- Hardly any washing up
- Good veg:pasta ratio

WINTER PILAU WITH WARM SPICES AND BROCCOLI

Serves 4-6

Time: 30 minutes

Another one pot dish that literally cooks by itself- it's also seasonally versatile, a great recipe to have up your sleeve the whole year round.

Pilau's start with frying the 3 warm spices to flavour the oil: Cumin, cinnamon, cloves. Then in with the rice and stock. At this point you could add broccoli, chard, cabbage, kale, cavolo nero- all roughly chopped, put a lid on it and walk away. If your family like chickpeas, throw in a tin, lentils and beans also work here. Typically, my kids like to add a sausage or two!

2 tbsp oil
 4 cloves
 1 cinnamon stick
 2 bay leaves
 1 heaped tsp cumin seeds
 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tsp ground coriander
 ½ tsp ground cumin
 300g basmati (rinsed 3 times)
 500ml vegetable stock
 Salt and pepper
 Broccoli, chard, cavolo nero, kale, all of these work here.

Get your oil warming in the pan and add the cloves, cinnamon, bay and cumin seeds- let it sizzle for 30 seconds.

Add the onion and then the garlic as you go, cooking until soft- about 10 minutes. Add the cumin and coriander, cook another minute.

Pour the well-rinsed rice into the pan, stir to coat well, then in with the boiling stock. Season and stir through your chosen veg. Simmer for 10 minutes with the lid on, then take lid off for 5.

Delicious with warmed pitta and a dollop of yoghurt.

GOOD FOR:

- Washing-up
- Fast food
- Introducing kids to spices
- Versatility- change veg with the seasons



SHEPHERDESS PIE

Serves 4-6

Time: 40 minutes

A delicious, nutritious weeknight treat, with loads of fibre, topped with a crunchy cheesy mash. Veg-fearing kids love this dish- try it out and see.

3 tbsp olive oil
1 onion
2 carrots
2 cloves garlic
1 tin tomatoes
1 tsp dried herbs (if you have it)
Salt and pepper
200g red lentils
500ml vegetable stock
750g potatoes (mix of white and sweet)
Cheese and butter for the mash

Warm the olive oil in a good-sized pan. Chop the onions and finely dice the carrot and mince the garlic. Add to the pot with salt and pepper. Cook on a low to medium heat for 10 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Put the kettle on and make your stock by pouring boiling water over the stock cube. Refill kettle for potatoes.

Add the tomatoes, herbs and lentils, stir for a minute or 2 until everything is coated then pour in the boiling stock. Simmer gently (around 10 mins) until the lentils are soft.

Meanwhile, cut the potatoes into chunks (we don't peel our white potatoes as we like the texture and added fibre- but do peel the sweet ones). Simmer in a pan of boiling water until tender. Drain and mash with a good knob of butter or olive oil) Check the seasoning of the lentil mixture, you could add some Worcestershire Sauce here if you have it. Pour it into a shallow pie dish and top with the mash. Scatter over grated cheese and slide under a hot grill for 5 minutes until golden and crunchy.

Serve with HP sauce and maybe a side of peas!

GOOD FOR:

- 4 portions of veg in one sitting
- Fibre
- Introducing lentils to kids





SWEET, SILKY LEEK AND KALE PASTA WITH A CRUNCHY TOPPING

10

Serves 4-6

Time: 20 minutes

Often, when I'm feeling a little overwhelmed and I know I've got a busy week ahead of me, I cook up a few things that can be added to pasta to make a meal in minutes. This was one of those dishes, and probably the most liked by both my Instagram followers and my children this year. When I get a moment over the weekend- usually a Saturday morning, I'll cook up a few bits of veg for the week ahead.

A **good knob** of butter/2 tbsp oil

2 or 3 good-sized leeks, halved lengthways and sliced finely

250-300g bag

kale, stalks removed, finely chopped

50g grated cheddar, half for pasta, half to scatter on the top

1 or slice bread, rubbed together to make breadcrumbs (doesn't matter if you end up with massive chunks)

A drizzle of olive oil

Get your pasta on.

Melt the butter in a good-sized oven proof pan with a lid (it's going under the grill later) throw in the leeks and cook for 15 minutes. Add the kale and a splash of water, cover and cook for a few minutes- kids hate chewy kale.

Season and add cooked pasta, a splash of the cooking water and lots of grated cheddar. A dash of cream if you have it. More cheese on top. Half a slice of bread and rub the 2 halves together over the top. Drizzle with oil and get it under the grill until bubbling and golden.

Perfect midweek meal. Possibly leftovers.

GOOD FOR:

- Fast food
- Getting kids to eat kale
- Leftovers



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jacquie is a working mum who has been teaching children and their families how to cook healthy food for 5 years: in schools, children's centres and all kinds of settings. Her ambition is always getting kids to love kale. She's launched local healthy eating campaigns and runs a busy Instagram account and Facebook page, aiming to inspire busy parents with quick, healthy and cheap dinner ideas.

She is gearing up to launch a Recipe Box Delivery Service in Spring, serving her local area, packed with fresh, seasonal veg and the ideas to make super simple suppers.

[Click here to find out more.](#)

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