

Eating well recipe book

Simple, cost-effective ideas
for the whole family



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This resource is provided for information only and individual advice on diet and health should always be sought from appropriate health professionals.

Photo resources

For more information about photo resources for pregnant women, new mums, infants and young children, see the website www.firststepsnutrition.org

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First Steps Nutrition Trust

E: Vicky@firststepsnutrition.org

Registered charity number: 1146408

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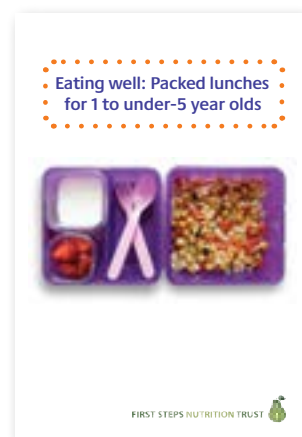
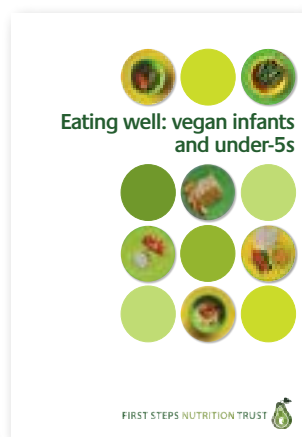
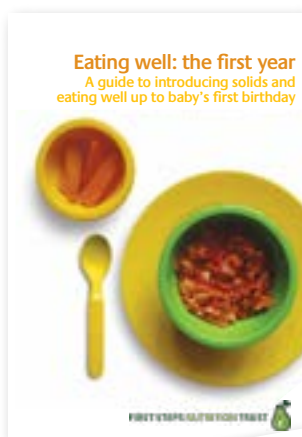
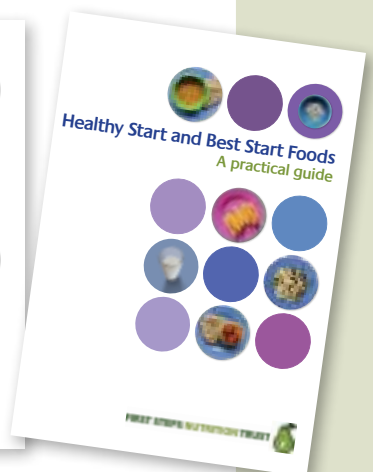
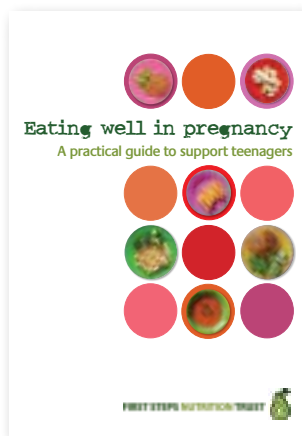
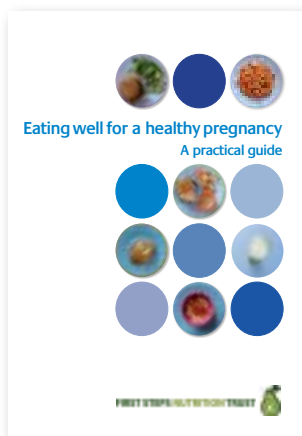
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About First Steps Nutrition Trust

First Steps Nutrition Trust is a charity that provides evidence-based practical resources to explain what eating well looks like. We aim to support families from pre-conception to when their children are 5 years of age, and we work within Government public health policy guidelines. We are wholly independent and take no commercial funding, and our work is open access so that anyone can use it to promote good public health, or to help them to eat better themselves. To find out more about the work we do, see www.firststepsnutrition.org.

Some of our publications are shown below.



FIRST STEPS NUTRITION TRUST



About the recipes in this guide

Planning to cook family meals from scratch can help families eat well and keep food costs down. All the recipes in this guide are designed for busy families. The recipes are cost-effective, healthy and delicious. And you don't need lots of equipment or lots of cooking experience to make them.

Each recipe in this guide has photos of portion sizes for adults and for children of different ages, including infants (those under 12 months of age), and a guide price for each recipe. We have made all the recipes in this guide to check they work and taste good.

Need to brush up on your cooking skills?

Contact your local council to find out if there is a community cooking class you could go to. This might be at a local college or community centre, for example. Many charities run cooking classes in local areas, and you can find information about these in your local library or searching on the internet.

Portion sizes

Families come in all different sizes. Each recipe in this guide makes enough for four adult portions, but you can make half the amount, or twice the amount, depending on the size of your family. For example:

- If there is one adult and two children under 5 in your family, each recipe will make enough for two meals. Or you can halve the recipe to make just one meal for you all.
- If there are two adults and two teenagers, each recipe will make enough for one meal for you all.
- If there are four adults, two teenagers and three primary school aged children in a family, the recipe can be doubled to feed everyone at one meal.

The photos with each recipe indicate what an appropriate portion size looks like for children of different ages, so you can judge how to make sure everyone gets what they need. These portion sizes are just estimates

and children will have different sized appetites depending on how active they are, and how much they are growing. Boys need to eat a bit more than girls as they are generally heavier and have more muscle mass, and teenage boys will frequently need to eat bigger portions than adult men as they are growing rapidly. Pregnant women don't need to eat more than usual, except in the last three months of their pregnancy. Breastfeeding women may need to eat a bit more energy (calories) if they are exclusively breastfeeding and feeling more hungry. A detailed summary of how energy needs vary by age and sex, and during pregnancy, can be found on page 90.

We have used different sized and coloured plates to indicate what appropriate portions look like for different family members. See the next page for scale photos of the plates used. We have simplified the different portion sizes to give four different examples per recipe.

Plates used in the photos

Next to each recipe are photos of four plates:



Yellow plate
25cm
Average portion for an
adult, or teenager
aged 12-18 years



Green plate
25cm
Average
portion for a
5-11 year old



Blue plate
20cm
Average
portion for a
1-4 year old

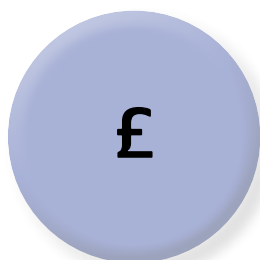


Red bowl
13cm
Average
portion for a
**7-12 month
old**

Price guide

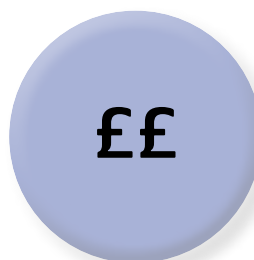
We estimated the price of foods using data from mysupermarket.co.uk (prices checked in 2023) and supermarket receipts. We used value range and supermarket brand products where possible – always choosing the best value items (but not including special offers and ‘buy one get one free’ offers).

At the top of each recipe page there is a circle with either one, two or three £ symbols, to show how much it costs to make the recipe:



Cost to make
4 adult portions =
Less than £2.50

= less than 63p per portion



Cost to make
4 adult portions =
£2.50 to £4

= 63p to £1 per portion



Cost to make
4 adult portions =
£4-£6

= £1 to £1.50 per portion

Equipment

The recipes in this guide do not require a lot of equipment. Many of them are one-pot meals that simply require a knife and chopping board, a spoon and a medium saucepan, and a hob. It is worth investing in these simple pieces of cookery equipment as you will save lots of money if you can cook your own food rather than relying on ready-prepared foods.

Tips for keeping food shopping costs down

- **Cook from scratch.** Making meals from scratch is cheaper and healthier than buying ready-made meals, which also often have a lot of unnecessary sugar, salt and preservatives added. Remember that food manufacturers and retailers are making a profit on even the cheapest ready meals.
- **Buy own-brand goods.** The quality is generally the same as popular brands. The only real difference is the price.
- **Buy saver versions of some food items.** Saver canned vegetables – like canned tomatoes or beans, saver frozen vegetables, dried pasta and rice, saver cheese or yoghurt – are often good choices. Avoid saver versions of meat products like sausages or burgers, as these are likely to be low in meat content and high in fat and salt.
- **Keep food fresh.** Store fresh vegetables in the fridge if possible. They will last longer and you will throw less away.
- **Cut down the amount of meat bought.** Use less meat in dishes by adding more vegetables, as well as peas and beans (such as chickpeas, lentils or red kidney beans) to add extra protein.
- **Get the best deals on fruit and veg.** Find out if there is a food co-op or a fruit and veg scheme in your area. These types of projects often sell quality fruit and vegetables at a lower price to help people in their communities access affordable fresh food.
- **Stick to the list!** Shopping costs can get out of control quickly if you don't have a plan or shopping list. If you plan your meals across the week, you won't buy food that gets wasted.
- **Compare prices and know how much you can spend.** There are lots of websites where you can compare the cost of food at different supermarkets.
- **Beware of offers.** Only buy offers such as 'buy one get one free' if you are certain you will eat both or are able to share the extra one with a friend.
- **Choose your fruit and vegetables carefully.** Don't buy fruit and vegetables that are overly ripe unless you are sure that you will use them quickly.
- **Buy frozen fruits and vegetables if you have a freezer or will use them on the day you buy them.** It's often cheaper to buy frozen fruits and vegetables. They contain the same nutrients as fresh ones, need no preparation and, if you can store them, they are often the cheapest way of adding vegetables to dishes.
- **Avoid pre-cut, pre-peeled, packaged vegetables and fruits.** They are more expensive than buying loose fruits and vegetables and lose nutrients when they are cut up and exposed to the air.

General advice

Eating sustainable food

Sustainable food choices and low-cost food choices have a lot in common, as often the cheaper option is also more sustainable. Eating more sustainable food is an important aspect of providing better food for all. The food we eat not only has an impact on our health, but also on the health of the planet. For example, buying loose fruits and vegetables instead of pre-packaged is more sustainable as there is less packaging, and it is also generally the cheaper option.

So, as well as having a positive effect on your family's health by buying fruits and vegetables, you can also have a positive impact on the health of the planet by making smart, low-cost, sustainable choices. Four simple ways of eating a more sustainable diet are to:

- Eat seasonal foods where possible (see *Buying fruit and vegetables in season* on page 91).
- Reduce food and packaging waste.
- Try to cook from scratch where possible.
- Reduce the amount of meat and meat products consumed.

For more information on sustainable diets, see www.sustainweb.org.

Good hygiene and food safety

- Always wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food or helping children to eat, and after changing nappies, toileting children, blowing your nose or sneezing into a tissue, or playing with pets.
- Children's hands should always be washed with soap and water before meals and snacks, and after going to the toilet.
- Never leave children under 5 alone while they are eating in case they choke. If children are in a high chair, always strap them in.

The most important things to remember when preparing, cooking or storing foods are:

- All fruit and vegetables to be eaten uncooked need to be washed thoroughly.
- Follow instructions on food to store it safely and always eat foods before the 'best before' date.
- Always keep cooked meat and raw meat apart and make sure they are well covered and cannot cross-contaminate each other.
- Cook foods such as pork, burgers, sausages, kebabs and poultry such as chicken and turkey thoroughly before eating.
- If previously cooked foods are re-heated, make sure they are heated to piping hot in the middle.

For more information on food safety, see www.food.gov.uk

Recipes

General tips for using the recipes in this guide to feed the family

- **Salt and other flavourings**

If you're using the same recipe to feed all the family, including children under 5 years and infants, make sure that salt or any other seasonings such as soy sauce, stock powder, chilli sauce, jerk seasoning or other flavouring powders and sauces are added to the dish **after** a portion has been taken out for the younger family members, as babies and small children have immature kidneys that can't cope with added salt.

- **Bouillon powder**

We use bouillon powder in recipes to add both salt and vegetable stock flavour. You can also use low-salt stock cubes. Bouillon powder can be bought in tubs and a tub will last a long time as it is used sparingly. You can also get vegetarian and vegan versions of bouillon if you are serving people who avoid animal products. One teaspoon of bouillon powder contains the same amount of salt as half a teaspoon of salt. You can use half a teaspoon of salt in place of 1 teaspoon of bouillon powder, or use none at all if you are happy with a lower salt taste. **If you are serving infants or young children do not add bouillon powder or salt until you have taken out a portion for them.**

- **Herbs**

We suggest using dried mixed herbs in some of the savoury recipes, as they add flavour and colour to a range of dishes. They are cheap to buy and they store well, so you don't need to buy them very often. If you have fresh herbs growing in a window box or in the garden, use those instead. 1 tablespoon of freshly chopped herbs is equivalent to 1 teaspoon of dried herbs.

- **Garlic**

Some of the recipes suggest using garlic paste or a crushed clove of fresh garlic. You can buy crushed garlic in tubes or tubs and this will have a long shelf-life and might be easier to manage than fresh garlic which needs to be bought regularly. Fresh garlic needs to be peeled and then chopped finely, or pushed through a garlic crusher if you have one, or smashed with the back of a wooden spoon.

- **Fish**

If using fresh or frozen fish, make sure all the bones have been removed before serving, especially if you're serving young children or older relatives or friends. Where possible, use fish from sustainable sources. See www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide/search for more information.

Soups

Soups

A warm bowl of soup with bread can be a tasty, hearty meal for everyone in the family. Soup is a great way of getting lots of vegetables into one meal and for using up vegetables that may be reaching the end of their life, but you can also make soups easily from store cupboard ingredients. Soups can be made smooth or chunky and, depending on the other ingredients, can have milk or water added as liquid.

Some example soup recipes are shown on the following pages. These show the amount of soup and bread that provide enough energy (calories) for a main meal for different age groups.

We give some more ideas for soups below. You could also find a book of soup recipes in your local library, or search the internet for cheap and easy soup recipes. Or look at the combinations of ingredients that are used in supermarket soups and then recreate your own at home.

Basic recipe for making a vegetable soup

1. Heat a small amount of oil in a saucepan and add some chopped onion. Fry for 1 minute.
2. Add the chopped vegetables, potatoes, beans or other ingredients that are being used and fry for another 2 minutes.
3. Add vegetable stock or water and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Either serve as it is, or mash, sieve or liquidise the soup.

To make the texture of a soup smooth:

- use a potato masher once all the cooked ingredients are soft, or
- pass the soup through a sieve, or
- use a hand-held blender or food processor if you have one.

You can add milk to some soups to make them 'cream of'. And you can flavour soups with lots of different herbs or spices.

Ideas for soups

Black-eyed bean and vegetable
Butternut squash and carrot
Callaloo with coconut
Carrot and coriander
Carrot and orange
Chickpea and spinach
Cream of celeriac
Cream of celery
French onion soup
Green pea, lettuce and mint
Lentil and tomato with cumin
Mushroom and butter bean with parsley
Pumpkin
Spinach and potato
Split pea and leek
Sweet potato chowder
Tomato and summer vegetables

Chicken and sweetcorn soup

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and diced
- 1 level teaspoon bouillon powder
- 1 medium potato, washed and diced (skin can be left on)
- 200g cooked chicken, diced
- 200g frozen sweetcorn
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs or 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 500ml water
- 500ml semi-skimmed milk

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the diced onion with the bouillon powder for a few minutes, stirring all the time, until the onion softens.
2. Add all the other ingredients except the milk, bring to the boil, and simmer for about 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Add the milk and re-heat.

For babies

If serving this soup to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- chop the meat finely, and
- allow the soup to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Chicken and sweetcorn soup

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Easy minestrone soup

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide
(at 2023 prices)
= less than 63p
per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan
if bouillon is
vegan



Dairy-free



Egg-free
if the pasta is
egg-free



INGREDIENTS

50g small pasta pieces or pasta for soup

500g carton of passata or 1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes

350g frozen mixed vegetables

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon bouillon powder

1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs or
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

800ml water

METHOD

1. Add all the ingredients to a large pan.
2. Bring to the boil stirring occasionally so the pasta doesn't stick to the bottom.
3. Turn the heat down and simmer for about 15 to 20 minutes until the pasta is cooked.
4. Stir well before serving.

Freezing soup

- Soup is ideal for freezing. Once it has cooled down to room temperature, pop it into a plastic box or freezer bag, make sure it is securely fastened and keep it in the freezer until you need it. Having a home-made meal you have put in the freezer is the same as having a frozen ready meal – but without the high cost or added salt, fat and sugar!

For babies

If serving this soup to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- make sure the vegetables and pasta are finely chopped, and
- allow the soup to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Easy minestrone soup

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Leek, potato and pea soup

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
2-3 large leeks, washed and sliced (about 250g prepared weight)
2 large potatoes, washed and diced, skin on (about 400g prepared weight)
400ml water
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs or 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, finely chopped
600ml semi-skimmed milk
200g frozen peas

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the leeks and potatoes, and cook for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the water, bouillon powder and herbs and simmer until the vegetables are soft.
3. Add the milk and peas and heat through until the peas are cooked.
4. Sieve, mash or blend the soup (or leave it as it is).

For babies

If serving this soup to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion, and
- allow the soup to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Leek, potato and pea soup

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Lentil and carrot soup

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan if bouillon is vegan



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon bouillon powder
- 3-4 large carrots, peeled and diced (about 350g prepared weight)
- 165g dried red lentils
- 1 litre water (1,000ml)

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the garlic, bouillon powder and carrots, and fry gently, stirring regularly, for 5 minutes.
2. Add the lentils and water and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Simmer for about 20 minutes until the lentils are soft.
4. Either serve the soup as it is, with chunks, or mash, sieve or blend to make a smooth soup or if serving it to a baby.

For babies

If serving this soup to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- allow the soup to cool before serving.

Tips

- Instead of carrots you could also make this soup with sweet potato, parsnip, butternut squash or a combination of root vegetables.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Lentil and carrot soup

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Jacket potatoes

Jacket potatoes

Jacket potatoes with fillings make a quick, tasty and nutritious meal.

Cooking jacket potatoes

There are different ways of cooking jacket potatoes. You can cook them in a microwave oven, a regular oven or a combination of the two.

- To cook in a microwave oven, prick the potatoes with a fork and microwave each one for 6 to 8 minutes or until tender. If you cook four large potatoes at one time, the cooking time will be four times as long (so about half an hour). Microwave ovens use less heat and energy than conventional ovens.
- To cook in an oven, prick the potatoes with a fork and place in a hot oven for 40 minutes or until tender. Cooking in the oven is the most expensive method of cooking.
- If you want to crisp the potato skin without using the energy it takes to cook in the oven, cook for 5 minutes in the microwave and finish off in a hot oven for 10 minutes.

The recipes on pages 22-29 are designed for 4 large jacket potatoes or for a combination of large and small jacket potatoes, depending on who the meal is for. You can either cut large potatoes in half or quarters or bake smaller potatoes as needed.

We based our recipes on potato weights of:

- Adults and teenagers – 250g
- Children 5-11 years – 180g
- Children 1-4 years – 100g
- Infants 7-12 months – 60g

Encourage everyone to eat the potato and its skin, as the skin is high in fibre and other nutrients. Chop the skin well before serving it to a baby.

There is no need to add butter or fat spread to the potato if you are using a moist or soft filling.

Some example fillings are given on the following pages and there are more ideas opposite. Many of the pasta sauces or pie fillings in this book would make useful jacket potato fillings too (see pages 62 and 32).

Ideas for fillings for jacket potatoes

Baked beans
Baked beans with a few drops of chilli sauce
Chilli con carne
Cottage cheese with chopped pineapple
Grated cheese and chopped fresh tomato
Canned mixed bean salad
Houmous and green leaves
Low-fat soft cheese with apple chunks
Mashed tuna with kidney beans and salsa
Mozzarella, chopped tomato and basil
Plain yoghurt mixed with coriander, chopped cucumber and spring onion
Roasted peppers
Scrambled egg with chopped tomatoes and red pepper
Tomato salsa with olives and feta cheese
Tuna and sweetcorn mayonnaise

Jacket potato with beef stir-fry

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at 2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per portion

Gluten-free
if soy sauce is
gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

4 large jacket potatoes (or equivalent), cooked (see page 21 for how to cook them)

For the filling:

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil

1 large onion, peeled and sliced

200g lean beef, cut into strips

1 large carrot, peeled and sliced into thin sticks

1 large courgette, washed, topped and tailed and sliced into thin sticks

1 red pepper, cored and seeds removed and cut into slices

3 tablespoons soy sauce

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the sliced onion and beef strips and fry, stirring all the time, until the meat is browned.
2. Add the carrot, courgette and red pepper and stir-fry over a high heat until the vegetables are softening and the meat is cooked.
3. Add the soy sauce and mix well (but if serving to babies and children under 5, don't add any soy sauce to their portion). Serve the stir-fry over the cooked jacket potatoes.

For babies

If serving this to a baby:

- chop the meat finely
- mash the potato and filling together, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Jacket potato with beef stir-fry

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old



Jacket potato with scrambled egg and spinach

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Dairy-free if vegetable fat spread is dairy-free



INGREDIENTS

4 large jacket potatoes (or equivalent), cooked (see page 21 for how to cook them)

For the filling:

25g vegetable fat spread

250g frozen spinach

5 large eggs, beaten

METHOD

1. Melt the fat spread in a pan, add the frozen spinach and cook until defrosted and softened.
2. Add the beaten eggs and cook, stirring constantly, until the eggs and spinach are mixed and the egg is cooked.
3. Serve immediately on the cooked jacket potatoes.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- mash the potato and filling together, and
- allow to cool before serving.

Tips

- It is always a good idea to serve some extra vegetables with dishes. Carrots provide a good colour contrast.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Jacket potato with scrambled egg and spinach

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Jacket potato with tuna, sweetcorn and soft cheese

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at 2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per portion

Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

4 large jacket potatoes (or equivalent), cooked (see page 21 for how to cook them)

For the filling:

200g frozen sweetcorn

1 can tuna fish in brine (drained weight 130g)

200g low-fat soft cheese

3 or 4 spring onions, diced

METHOD

1. Place the sweetcorn in boiling water, bring to the boil, and then drain and rinse.
2. Mix all the filling ingredients together in a bowl and serve immediately over hot cooked jacket potatoes.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- mash the potato and filling together, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Jacket potato with tuna, sweetcorn and soft cheese

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Jacket potato with vegetable chilli

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan if bouillon is vegan



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

4 large jacket potatoes (or equivalent), cooked (see page 21 for how to cook them)

For the filling:

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil

1 small onion, peeled and diced

1 teaspoon bouillon powder

1 red pepper, de-seeded and diced

2 large tomatoes, diced

1 large can (400g) red kidney beans (use the beans and the water they are in)

1 teaspoon chilli powder

1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the diced onions and bouillon powder and fry, stirring all the time, until the onions soften.
2. Add all the other filling ingredients and simmer gently, stirring regularly, for about 10 minutes until all the vegetables are soft.
3. Serve over cooked jacket potatoes.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- mash the filling well and then mix the potato and filling together, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Jacket potato with vegetable chilli

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Potato-
topped
pies

Potato-topped pies

Savoury pies are a family favourite in homes across the UK. Using mashed potato instead of pastry is much healthier and quicker. For even more nutritional benefits and to save time and money, keep the skins on the potato.

We give four recipes for potato-topped pies on the following pages. Below is the recipe for making the mashed potato for them.

Mashed potato pie top

1. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil.
2. Peel the potatoes and cut into cubes.
Or just wash the whole potatoes and cut them into cubes.
3. Add the potato pieces to the boiling water and cook for about 10 to 15 minutes or until the potato is tender.
4. Drain the potatoes well.
5. Add about a tablespoon of milk for each person you are serving, and mash to make a chunky or smooth potato depending on how your family likes it.

Ideas for flavouring the mashed potato pie tops

You can make mashed potato pie tops more interesting by adding extra flavours to the mashed potato – for example, garlic, chopped herbs or dried mixed herbs, mustard, horse radish, chives or paprika.

Ideas for fillings

You can top all sorts of pies with mashed potato. Traditionally people use potato as a topping for shepherd's pie (made with lamb), shepherdess pie (made with vegetables), cottage pie (made with beef) or fish pie (made with any white or oily fish), but you can make up all sorts of filling combinations. Some recipes for potato-topped pies are given on the next pages.

Chicken and mushroom pie

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at
2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per
portion

Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1.4kg (1,400g) potatoes, washed and diced, or peeled and diced

100ml semi-skimmed milk

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 small onion, peeled and diced

250g mushrooms, diced

300g cooked chicken, cut into dice or chunks

20g cornflour

2 tablespoons water

200g low-fat soft cheese

METHOD

1. Boil the potatoes in water for about 15 minutes until tender. Drain well. Add the semi-skimmed milk and mash to a desired consistency.
2. In a large pan, heat the vegetable oil and fry the diced onion for several minutes to soften.
3. Add the diced mushrooms and chicken and cook for 5 minutes to soften the mushrooms.
4. Add the soft cheese and stir well.
5. Blend the cornflour with 2 tablespoons of water to make a smooth paste and add to the mixture, stirring. Bring to the boil and cook for a few minutes to thicken the mixture.
6. Place the chicken and mushroom filling into an ovenproof dish and top with the mashed potato. If the potato and filling are both still hot, just grill the top of the pie before serving. Otherwise heat the pie through in a hot oven (180°C /350°F/ Gas 4) for about 10 to 15 minutes.

For babies

- If serving this pie to a baby, chop the chicken finely, mash the pie well, and cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Chicken and mushroom pie

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old



Fish pie

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1.4kg (1,400g) potatoes washed and diced, or peeled and diced
100ml semi-skimmed milk
350g frozen white fish fillets
30g vegetable fat spread
200ml semi-skimmed milk
1 tablespoon cornflour
2 tablespoons water
150g frozen sweetcorn
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

METHOD

1. Boil the potatoes in water for about 15 minutes until soft. Drain and mix with the first quantity of semi-skimmed milk, mashing to a desired consistency.
2. Place the frozen fish fillets in a dish and either microwave gently for about 5 minutes to cook them, or place them between two heatproof plates over the pan of boiling water cooking the potatoes. (The heat from the steam will cook the fish.) Flake the fish, making sure that there are no bones remaining.
3. In a separate pan, heat the fat spread and add the remaining milk. Blend the cornflour with 2 tablespoons water and add this to the mixture. Bring to the boil and cook for a few minutes until it thickens. Turn off the heat and add the fish, sweetcorn and black pepper.
4. Place the fish mixture in a bowl and top with the mashed potato.
5. If the potato and filling are both still hot, you can just grill the top of the pie before serving. Otherwise heat the pie through in a hot oven (180°C / 350°F / Gas 4) for about 10 to 15 minutes.

For babies

- If serving this pie to a baby, make sure there are no bones in the fish, mash the pie well, and cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Fish pie

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Mediterranean pie

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1.4kg (1,400g) potatoes, washed and diced, or peeled and diced
100ml semi-skimmed milk
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
1 red pepper, washed, de-seeded and sliced
1 courgette, washed, topped and tailed and cut into cubes
1 large can (400g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed (drained weight 240g)
1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
40g sunflower seeds

METHOD

1. Boil the potatoes in water for about 15 minutes until soft. Drain and mix with the semi-skimmed milk, mashing to a desired consistency.
2. In a large pan, heat the vegetable oil and add the onion, garlic and bouillon powder. Fry gently, stirring, until the onion softens.
3. Add the red pepper, courgette, chickpeas, tomatoes and dried mixed herbs. Simmer until all the vegetables are soft.
4. Put the vegetable mixture in an ovenproof bowl and top with the mashed potato. Sprinkle the sunflower seeds on the top.
5. If the potato and filling are both still hot, you can just grill the top of the pie before serving. Otherwise heat the pie through in a hot oven (180°C / 350°F / Gas 4) for about 10 to 15 minutes.

For babies

- If serving this pie to a baby, don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion. Mash the pie well, and allow it to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Mediterranean pie

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Shepherdess pie

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1.4kg (1,400g) old potatoes, washed and diced, or peeled and diced

100ml semi-skimmed milk

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 small onion, peeled and diced

1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed

1 teaspoon bouillon powder

250g ready-to-eat vegetarian mince, or reconstituted dried vegetarian mince

1 carrot, peeled and diced

1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs

1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes

200ml water

40g grated Cheddar cheese

METHOD

1. Boil the potatoes in water for about 15 minutes until soft. Drain and mix with the semi-skimmed milk, mashing to a desired consistency.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, garlic and bouillon powder and fry for a few minutes until the onion softens.
3. Add all the other ingredients except for the cheese, and simmer the mixture for about 15 minutes until the vegetables are all soft.
4. Place the mixture in a heatproof dish, top with the mashed potato and sprinkle with the grated cheese.
5. If the potato and filling are both still hot, you can just grill the top of the pie before serving. Otherwise heat the pie through in a hot oven (180°C / 350°F / Gas 4) for about 10 to 15 minutes.

For babies

- If serving this pie to a baby, don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion. Mash the pie well, and allow it to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Shepherdess pie

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Stews and hotpots

Stews and hotpots

From Hungarian goulash to Mexican chilli – stews are popular across the globe. Stews are a great way of getting lots of vegetables into a one-pot meal and they can be prepared in advance.

Stewing basically means cooking ingredients in liquid, slowly and gently. The slow and gentle cooking method makes tougher cuts of meat a perfect choice for stews. Meat becomes tender and flavourful after stewing. Using less expensive cuts of meat – such as shoulder of lamb, beef skirt or brisket, chicken thighs or pork hock – is a great way to stay within your food-shopping budget, and a butcher will be able to advise you on good cuts for stewing.

You'll see, from the examples of recipes on the following pages, that recipes with meat in them are more expensive than the meat-free options. Plenty of stews use different kinds of beans rather than meat as the main source of protein. Bean-based stews can be a tasty, cost-effective alternative to meat-based stews and they're just as nutritious. The easiest way to buy most beans is canned, as cooking them from dried can be time-consuming and uses a lot of gas or electricity unless you have a pressure cooker to cook them more quickly. You can add dried lentils and split peas without soaking or cooking them first, as they will cook while the stew is cooking.

Beans that can be added to stews

All of these beans make great additions to stews:

Aduki beans
Black beans
Black-eyed peas
Butter beans
Cannellini beans
Edamame beans (You can buy these frozen.)
Kidney beans
Lentils (red or green)
Low-salt and low-sugar baked beans
Pinto beans
Split peas

Four top tips for cooking stews

- Make sure ingredients are cut into similar-sized pieces to ensure even cooking.
- Stir occasionally to make sure the ingredients don't stick to the bottom.
- Cook over a medium or low heat to make the ingredients tender and the flavours blend.
- Keep the lid on when stewing so that liquid does not evaporate.

Sweet potato stew

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, peeled and diced
1 red pepper, de-seeded and diced
450g sweet potato, peeled and diced
75g frozen green beans
1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes
1 large can (400g) red kidney beans, drained and rinsed (drained weight 240g)
2 heaped tablespoons (85g) smooth peanut butter
1 teaspoon chilli powder
300ml water
1 teaspoon freshly chopped herbs such as coriander or parsley (optional)

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onions until they start to soften.
2. Add all the other ingredients except for the herbs, and bring to the boil, stirring well. If you are serving children under 5 with this recipe, you can add the chilli powder after cooking, after the children's portions have been put on one side.
3. Simmer for about 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft.
4. Sprinkle with the fresh herbs before serving.

For babies

- Mash well and cool before serving to babies.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – African sweet potato stew

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Baked bean and veggie sausage hotpot

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan if vegetarian sausages are vegan



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed
1 large potato, washed and cubed
3 carrots, peeled and diced
4 vegetarian sausages, each cut into 4 pieces
1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes
1 large can (400g) reduced-salt baked beans
200g frozen peas
350ml water

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the onion and garlic until the onion starts to soften.
2. Add all the other ingredients to the pan and stir well. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for about 15 minutes until the vegetables are cooked.

For babies

- If serving this meal to a baby, mash well and allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Baked bean and veggie sausage hotpot

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Creamy chicken and leek hotpot

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at
2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per
portion

Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 large leeks (about 200g), washed and sliced into 1cm slices
3 large carrots (about 300g), peeled and cubed
2-3 stalks celery (about 100g), washed and sliced
300g chicken breasts, cubed
400g potatoes, washed and cubed
100g frozen green beans, chopped
500ml water
200g low-fat soft cheese

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the leeks, carrots, celery and chicken and fry for 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add the potatoes, green beans and water, bring to the boil and simmer for about 20 minutes until the vegetables and chicken are cooked.
3. Turn off the heat, stir in the soft cheese until evenly distributed and serve immediately.

For babies

- If serving this meal to a baby, chop the meat and vegetables finely, and allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Creamy chicken and leek hotpot

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Goulash

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at 2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per portion

Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, peeled and diced
350g lean pork meat, diced
1 green pepper, de-seeded and sliced
1 large potato, washed and diced
2 large (400g) cans chopped tomatoes
1 large (400g) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (250g drained weight)
1 tablespoon paprika powder (this can be left out if a less spicy taste is preferred)
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs

METHOD

1. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan and fry the onion and pork until the meat is browned on all sides and the onion is starting to soften.
2. Add the green pepper and potato and fry for 1 or 2 minutes.
3. Add all the other ingredients, bring to the boil and then simmer for 15 to 20 minutes until all the ingredients are cooked.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder or paprika powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- chop the meat and vegetables finely, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Goulash

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Rice recipes

Rice recipes

Rice is the most commonly eaten staple food across the world. Its low cost and versatility make it a great base for a variety of healthy meals. Most of the recipes in this section can be cooked in one pot or saucepan, saving you time and washing-up! The only other equipment you'll need is a cutting board, knife, tin opener and spoon.

There are lots of different kinds of rice available in most supermarkets. All the recipes in this section have been made using supermarket value range long grain white rice, but other varieties of rice would work well too. Our recipes are based on 200g of dried rice. If you don't have scales, this is equivalent to 1 cup (240ml) or 12 tablespoons.

There are lots of rice-based ready meals available in supermarkets. Often they come in microwavable pouches and are very expensive for the portion size you get. Making your own rice-based meals is much cheaper and often a healthier and tastier option.

If you are keeping cooked rice, you need to take great care to store it correctly. Keep it in the fridge but for no more than 24 hours. And make sure it is heated through to piping hot.

The following pages contain a range of one-pot rice recipes.

You can swap white rice for brown rice in all these recipes, but it takes 10-15 minutes more to cook brown rice until tender. Keep the lid on so that there is plenty of steam to cook the rice.

Other grains

You can base main meals around other grains such as couscous, bulgar wheat, quinoa, barley, oatmeal, cornmeal, cassava, millet, buckwheat, rye or sorghum.

Many cuisines around the world use different grains as the main staple food, and can often be used alongside other sauces and toppings in this recipe guide. The grains can be made into porridges, or boiled as you might boil rice, or can be cooked as tortillas or breads.

All grains are a good source of energy because of their starch content, protein, B vitamins and minerals such as copper, manganese, magnesium and phosphorus. Wholegrain versions are high in fibre.

Egg-fried rice

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



INGREDIENTS

400ml water
200g white rice
6 large eggs
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
3-4 spring onions, chopped
1 red pepper, de-seeded and diced

METHOD

1. Bring the water to the boil, add the rice, bring to the boil again and stir once. Place a lid on the pan and simmer for about 5 to 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave the rice in the pan with the lid. It should absorb all the water and be tender.
2. Break the eggs into a bowl and beat them until the yolks and whites are mixed.
3. In a frying pan, heat the oil and fry the onion and red pepper until they soften.
4. Add the rice to the vegetables and heat through.
5. Pour the egg mixture over the rice and, stirring all the time, cook the mixture until the eggs are cooked.
6. Serve immediately.

For babies

- If serving this meal to a baby, allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Egg-fried rice

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Jerk chicken with rice and beans

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

1 large skinless chicken breast (about 200g), cut into strips

1 heaped tablespoon jerk seasoning

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 small onion, peeled and diced

1 green pepper, de-seeded and sliced

1 large can (410g) red kidney beans, drained and rinsed (drained weight 240g)

200g white rice

400ml water

METHOD

1. Coat the chicken strips in jerk seasoning and stir well. Leave in the fridge for an hour to marinate. (If serving this to a baby, leave some chicken unseasoned, cook it separately, and add it to some of the cooked rice mixture at the end.)
2. In a large saucepan, heat the oil and fry the onion and green pepper for 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add the chicken and cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Add the kidney beans, rice and water to the mixture and bring to the boil.
5. Simmer for about 20 minutes with the lid on the pan until the rice has absorbed the water and the chicken and vegetables are cooked.

For babies

- If serving this meal to a baby, chop the meat and vegetables finely, and allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Jerk chicken with rice and beans

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Turkey and vegetable pilaf

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
200g raw turkey breast, cut into strips
1 green pepper, de-seeded and diced
1 large tomato, diced
150g frozen sweetcorn
200g white rice
400ml water

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and add the garlic, herbs, bouillon powder and turkey strips.
Cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until the turkey is slightly browned.
2. Add the vegetables and rice and cook gently for 1 minute.
3. Pour over the water, bring to the boil stirring all the time and then simmer gently for about 15 minutes with a lid on until the rice and vegetables are cooked.

For babies

- If serving this meal to a baby, don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion.
- Chop the meat and vegetables finely, and allow to cool before serving.

Tips

- You can use any other meat or fish in a pilaf, and a variety of vegetables. You could try using frozen peas or green beans, carrots, courgette, butternut squash or other small amounts of vegetables you have left over from other recipes.
- To make a vegetarian version, use Quorn, chickpeas or any other peas or beans instead of turkey.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Turkey and vegetable pilaf

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Vegetable biryani

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan if bouillon is vegan



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons medium curry powder
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
1 onion, peeled and diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1 large potato, washed and cubed (no need to peel)
100g frozen peas
1½ cauliflower, broken into small pieces
1 large can (400g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed (240g drained weight)
200g white rice
400ml water

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a large pan and add the curry powder, bouillon powder and onion and cook for a few minutes until the onion softens.
2. Add the carrot, potato, peas, cauliflower, chickpeas and rice and stir for 1 minute.
3. Pour over the water and simmer gently with the lid on the pan for about 20 minutes until the rice is tender and the vegetables are all cooked.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- chop the vegetables finely, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Vegetable biryani

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Pasta recipes

Pasta recipes

Pasta is a great way to get a variety of vegetables into family meals. The quick cooking time of pasta makes pasta-based meals convenient for busy families.

You will find lots of different kinds of pasta in the supermarket. Choose a variety that works with your food budget or that you know you and your family will enjoy. We use about 450g of pasta in recipes for four adults. Most pasta comes in packets of 500g or 1 kg (1,000g) so you should be able to estimate the amount easily.

There are lots of pasta sauces and ready-made pasta meals available in supermarkets, but many of them are expensive and contain unnecessary amounts of sugar, fat and salt. Making your own pasta sauce is a great way to save money and provide healthier meals for your family that taste a lot better than the bought versions.

Pasta is the general name given to spaghetti and the different shapes of pasta that are sold under a range of names such as penne, fusilli, farfalle and tagliatelle, and it also includes lasagna sheets.

Fresh pasta is usually a lot more expensive than dried pasta and has to be cooked and eaten quite quickly once you buy it. Dried pasta can be easily stored and is just as nutritious as fresh pasta.

Tips for cooking pasta

Add the pasta to a large pan of boiling water. The amount of time it takes to cook depends on the shape of the pasta, but it usually cooks in about 15 minutes. It is best if the pasta feels slightly firm when you bite into it.

- Don't add oil to the water.
- Don't add salt to the water.
- Cook with the lid on.
- Don't overcook. Pasta cooks fairly quickly, so keep an eye on the time!

Green mac and cheese

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£££

Price guide (at 2023 prices)
= £1 to £4 per portion

Vegetarian



Egg-free
if the macaroni
is egg-free



INGREDIENTS

500g macaroni
1 head (about 600g) broccoli, cut into florets
200g (1 tub) low-fat soft cheese
200ml semi-skimmed milk

METHOD

1. Cook the macaroni in boiling water for about 15 minutes until it is soft. After the first 10 minutes, place the broccoli in the same pan as the macaroni, or steam it over the boiling macaroni in a colander.
2. Drain the macaroni and broccoli and then stir in the low-fat soft cheese and milk.
3. Heat through if necessary before serving.

Other vegetables you can use

- Instead of broccoli you can use any other green vegetable in season such as finely chopped spring greens, chopped green beans, courgettes, green peppers, peas, cauliflower, spinach or any frozen green vegetable.

For babies

- Chop the vegetables and macaroni finely, and allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Green mac and cheese

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Pasta with green beans and peas

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan if bouillon is vegan



Dairy-free



Egg-free if the pasta is egg-free



INGREDIENTS

450g dried pasta or spaghetti
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 small onion, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
250g frozen green beans
250g frozen broad beans
300g frozen peas

METHOD

1. Cook the pasta or spaghetti in boiling water until cooked (see page 61) and then drain.
2. In a large pan, heat the oil and fry the onion and bouillon powder for a few minutes until the onion softens.
3. Add the remaining vegetables and heat through with a lid on until the vegetables are cooked.
4. Mix the pasta and vegetable mixture together and serve.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- chop the vegetables and pasta finely, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Pasta with green beans and peas

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Spaghetti Bolognese

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Dairy-free



Egg-free if the spaghetti is egg-free



INGREDIENTS

200g lean minced beef
1 small onion, peeled and diced
1 medium carrot, peeled and grated
1 teaspoon garlic purée or 1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes
75g porridge oats
200ml water
450g spaghetti

METHOD

1. Dry-fry the mince with the onion, carrot, garlic, bouillon powder and mixed herbs until the mince is browned.
2. Add the tomatoes, oats and water and simmer gently for 15 to 20 minutes with a lid on until the meat and vegetables are cooked.
3. While the Bolognese is cooking, boil the spaghetti in water until tender (see page 61), and then drain.
4. Serve the Bolognese sauce over the pasta.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion, and
- chop the meat sauce and spaghetti finely, and allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Spaghetti Bolognese

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Tuna pasta

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Dairy-free



Egg-free
if the pasta is
egg-free



INGREDIENTS

- 450g dried pasta (this can be pasta shapes or spaghetti)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and diced
- 1 green pepper, de-seeded and diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste or 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 teaspoon bouillon powder
- 1½ large cans (400g) chopped tomatoes (total 600g)
- 2 cans tuna (185g per can) in brine, drained (total 275g drained weight)

METHOD

1. Boil the dried pasta in a large pan of water until it is cooked (see page 61).
2. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and add the onion, pepper, garlic, herbs and bouillon powder and fry, stirring regularly, until the onions and peppers are soft.
3. Add the canned tomatoes and tuna and heat through.
4. Add the cooked pasta and stir thoroughly until the tuna pasta is heated through.

For babies

If serving this meal to a baby:

- don't add the bouillon powder until after you have taken out the baby's portion
- chop the macaroni finely, and
- allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Tuna pasta

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

No-cook meals

No-cook meals

If you're in a hurry, the weather is hot or you want to make a simple meal, sandwiches and salads are a great way of providing a nutritious meal for you and your family.

No-cook meals can also be slightly cheaper to produce than cooked meals as you don't need to use any gas or electricity to make them.

Are hot meals more nutritious than cold meals?

Sometimes people think you have to have a hot meal for it to be nutritious, but if your meal consists of all the same components from the different food groups (starchy foods, meat or alternatives, dairy foods, fruits and vegetables), cold meals and packed lunches can be just as nutritious.

Packed lunch tips

Making packed lunches for children who go to school or for partners or family members going to work is much cheaper than buying food in sandwich bars or supermarkets, and you will know what went into them!

Packed lunches should contain a starchy base such as bread, pitta bread, a wrap or a pasta, rice or couscous salad; a meat or alternative such as egg, canned fish, houmous, peanut butter or soft cheese; some vegetables; some fruit; and a drink of milk or a yoghurt.

Some of the dishes in this resource can be served cold as salads the next day if they are refrigerated overnight.

Good choices for sandwich fillings and salad ingredients

Bean spreads such as houmous	• Raw vegetables: carrots, peppers, beans
Eggs	• Roasted vegetables
Low-fat soft cheese or spreadable cheese	• Salad vegetables: leaves, tomatoes,
Nut spreads such as peanut butter	• cucumber
Nuts and seeds	• Sweetcorn
Peas, beans and lentils	• Tuna or other canned fish

Tip

- Raw vegetables such as carrots, peppers, celery and cucumber are quick and easy accompaniments to any no-cook meal.

Peanut butter and banana sandwiches, with carrot and cucumber

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices wholemeal bread
- 4 tablespoons (160g) peanut butter
- 2 large bananas, peeled and sliced
- 2 large carrots, peeled and cut into sticks
- 1/2 cucumber, washed and cut into sticks

METHOD

1. Spread the peanut butter onto four slices of the bread.
2. Add the sliced banana and top each sandwich with another slice of bread.
3. Serve the sandwiches with carrot and cucumber sticks.

Good sandwich fillings

- You can make sandwiches with a whole variety of nutritious fillings such as egg, houmous, canned fish such as tuna or sardines, or soft cheese. Add salad vegetables for colour and crunch. Always serve sandwiches with extra vegetables and salad.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Peanut butter and banana sandwiches, with carrot and cucumber

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Pitta bread with houmous and cucumber, with carrot salad

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan



Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

4 wholemeal pitta bread
300g houmous
120g cucumber, washed and sliced
3 large carrots (about 300g), peeled and grated
60g raisins
1½ tablespoons vegetable oil

METHOD

1. Toast the pitta bread, and then cut off one end of each pitta to let out the steam and make a pocket.
2. Fill with houmous and cucumber.
3. Mix the grated carrot, raisins and oil to make a salad.

For babies

- Serve the houmous, carrot salad and pitta bread separately.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Pitta bread with houmous and cucumber, with carrot salad

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Savoury couscous salad with tuna

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

300g couscous
200g frozen sweetcorn, defrosted
550ml boiling water
1 can tuna in brine (drained weight 138g)
100g cherry tomatoes ($\frac{1}{2}$ punnet), washed and chopped
1 large can (410g) chickpeas, drained and rinsed (240g drained weight)
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon chopped herbs (parsley, mint or coriander all work well)

METHOD

1. Put the couscous and sweetcorn in a large bowl. Pour the boiling water over it, stir and leave to absorb all the water. Fluff with a fork when cool.
2. Drain the tuna and flake the fish.
3. Add the flaked tuna and all the other ingredients to the couscous, stirring well.

For babies

- If serving to a baby, chop the tomatoes into small pieces.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Savoury couscous salad with tuna

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Mexican bean and cheese wrap, with red pepper and celery

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

2 large cans (400g) mixed bean salad, drained and rinsed (520g drained weight)

4 large tortillas or wraps

160g hard cheese (e.g. Cheddar), grated

1 large red pepper, washed, de-seeded and sliced

4 sticks of celery, washed and sliced into sticks

METHOD

1. Mash the mixed beans with a fork.
2. Divide the beans onto the four tortillas and top with the grated cheese.
3. Roll up and slice as needed.
4. Serve with the red pepper and celery sticks.

For babies

- Mash the beans before serving them to a baby.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Mexican bean and cheese wrap, with red pepper and celery

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Puddings

Puddings

Everyone enjoys a good pudding! Puddings can be a good way of getting milk and fruit into your family's diet.

Custard and rice pudding made with milk, or plain yoghurt, can be served with all sorts of fruit to make a tasty pudding. Some types of fruits can now be bought frozen – for example, mixed berries, mango chunks, or fruit salad. Frozen fruit is often better value than fresh fruit (especially out of season).

Fruits are often cheaper when they are in season. See page 91 for tips on buying seasonally.

Ideas for fruits that can be served with custard, rice pudding or yoghurt

Baked apples	Satsuma segments
Stewed apples	Pineapple
Stewed rhubarb	Frozen berries
Baked pears	Frozen mango
Baked bananas	Canned peaches in juice
Fresh nectarines	Canned mandarin oranges in juice
Fresh peaches	

Puddings for children

Many people serve flavoured and fruit yoghurts and fromage frais to babies and children as desserts. These are often expensive and have a lot of added sugar. If a yoghurt says on the label that it has more than 12.5g of sugar per 100g, that is a lot of sugar. Fromage frais with more than more than 10g of sugar per 100g is high in sugar.

You can make your own fruit yoghurts and fruit fromage frais using plain yoghurt or fromage frais and the fruit of your choice. Children will often like yoghurts with more fruit in them, and they can be a good way of using up some leftover stewed fruit or fruit purée. They can be a lot cheaper as well.

Apple crumble

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Vegan
if vegetable fat spread is vegan



Dairy-free
if vegetable fat spread is dairy-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

65g white flour
50g vegetable fat spread
65g porridge oats
40g sugar
5 eating apples (prepared weight about 350g)
1 teaspoon mixed spice or cinnamon powder

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Put the flour in a bowl and add the fat spread to it. Rub the fat spread into the flour with your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the porridge oats and sugar and mix together.
3. Peel and slice the apples. Put the apples into a heatproof baking dish, add the spice or cinnamon and mix together.
4. Place the crumble mix over the apple and put the crumble in the oven for 30 to 35 minutes until the fruit is soft and the crumble browned.

For babies

- You can make crumble without adding any sugar.
- Allow to cool before serving.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Apple crumble

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old

Banana custard

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

30g custard powder

500ml semi-skimmed milk

30g sugar

4 large bananas (about 500g)

METHOD

1. Blend 1 or 2 tablespoons of the milk with the custard powder to make a paste.
2. Put the remaining milk in a saucepan to heat. Before it comes to the boil, add the custard mixture slowly, stirring all the time so that it blends in and doesn't go lumpy, and then add the sugar.
3. Stir the custard well as it comes to the boil and then simmer for a few minutes until it thickens.
4. Peel the bananas and cut them into chunks. Place in a bowl and add the custard.

Tips

- You can add any fruit to custard – fresh, stewed or canned in fruit juice.
- If you want to liquidise the fruit and custard together it makes a 'fruit fool'.
- You can also set the custard and fruit in layers in a glass to make it look special.
- You can make custard without sugar for babies as the mashed up banana will sweeten it.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Banana custard

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old



Poached pear with Greek yoghurt and honey

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

££

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = 63p to £1 per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

4 large pears
4 tablespoons (80g) honey
360g Greek yoghurt

METHOD

1. Peel the pears, remove the core and cut into quarters.
2. Place the pears in a saucepan of gently simmering water and poach for about 15 minutes.
3. Remove the poached pears and place in a serving bowl. Drizzle with honey and serve with Greek yoghurt.

For babies

- Serve this pudding without the honey. Honey should not be given to under-1s.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Poached pear with Greek yoghurt and honey

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old



7-12 month old



Rice pudding with raisins

This recipe makes 4 adult-sized portions.

£

Price guide (at 2023 prices) = less than 63p per portion

Vegetarian



Gluten-free



Egg-free



INGREDIENTS

85g pudding rice

850ml semi-skimmed milk

35g sugar

85g raisins

METHOD

1. Place the rice, milk and sugar in a saucepan and heat gently, stirring all the time, until the mixture just comes to the boil.
2. Turn the heat down and, stirring regularly, allow to simmer gently for about 20 minutes while the rice absorbs the milk.
3. Stir in the raisins and heat through.

Other milky puddings

- You can make milky puddings with other cereals, such as semolina, sago or tapioca. You can also add other sorts of dried fruit such as chopped apricots, dates or figs, or you can add fresh fruit.
- For people who don't drink cows' milk, you can make milk puddings from unsweetened calcium-fortified soya milk, but you will need to use about one and a half times the volume of cows' milk and the puddings will take longer to cook.
- If you have the oven on for another dish, you can make the rice pudding in the oven by placing the same ingredients in a greased heatproof dish and baking for about an hour and a half on a bottom shelf.

For babies

- Leave out the sugar when making desserts for babies.

SUGGESTED PORTION SIZES – Rice pudding with raisins

Adult, or teenager aged 12-18



5-11 year old



1-4 year old

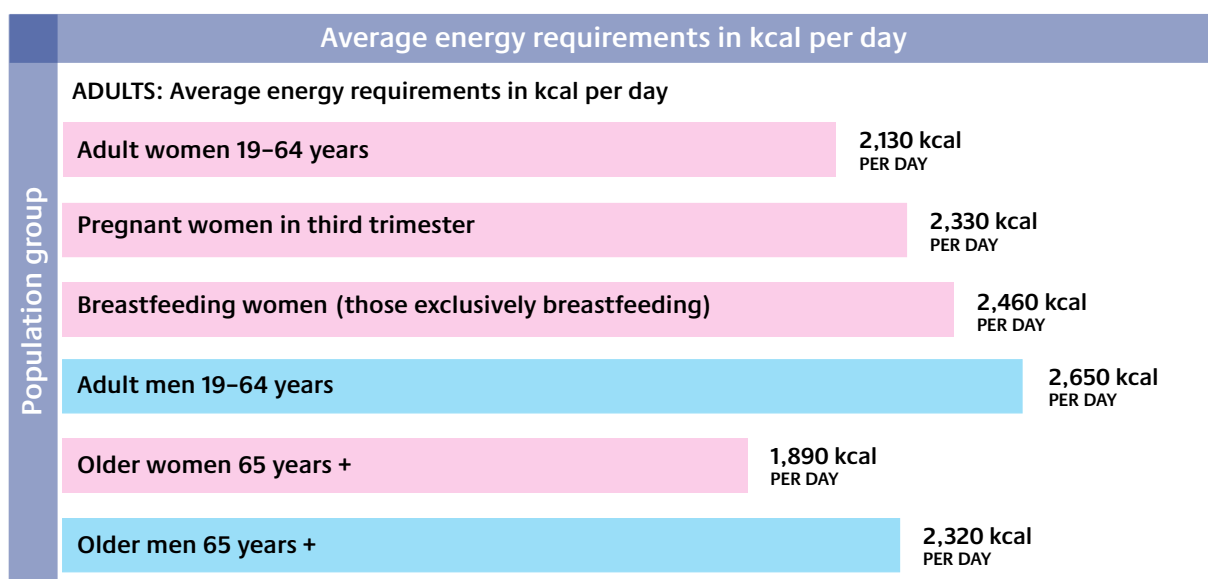
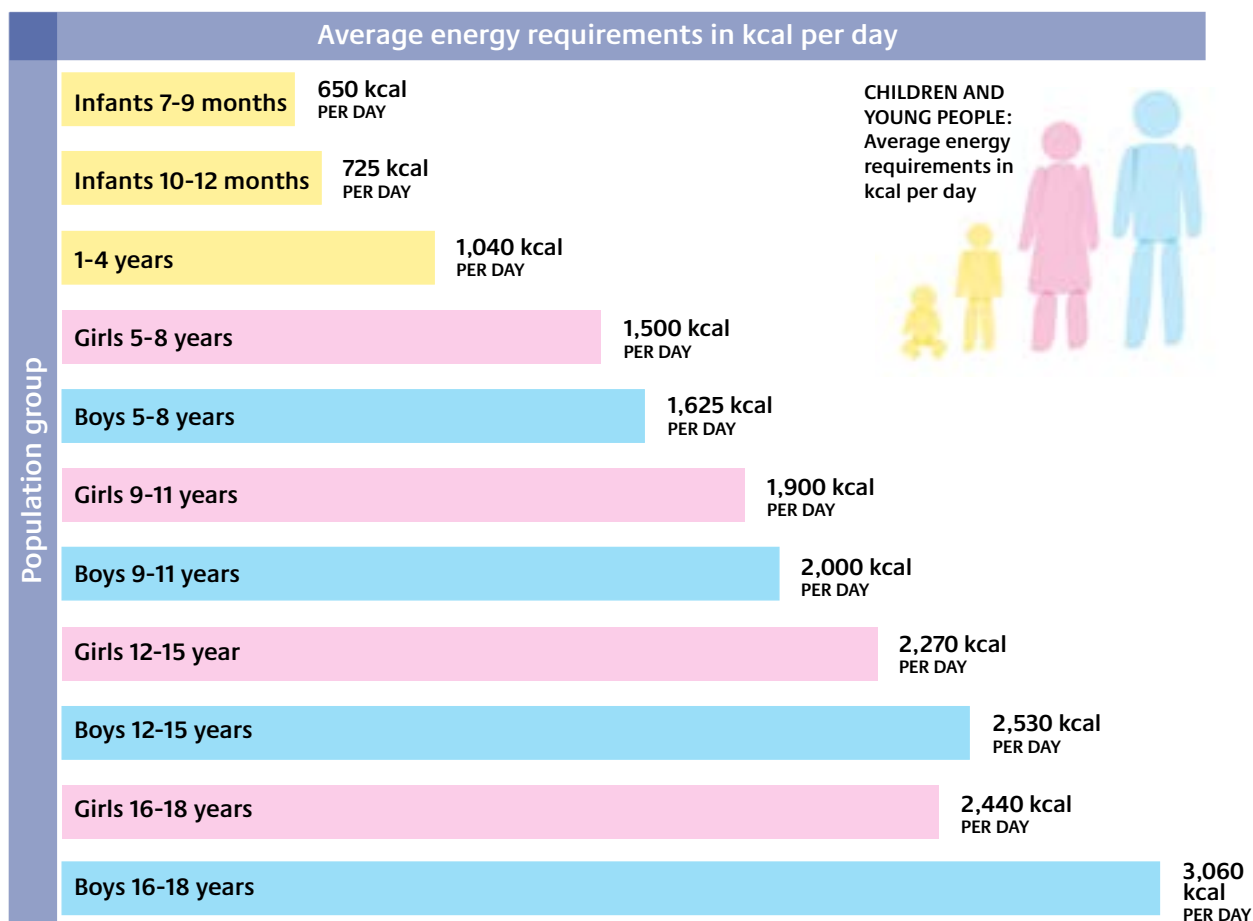


7-12 month old



Energy requirements by age and sex

There are general estimates of how much energy (calories) people need by age and sex, and we use these to estimate portion sizes. You can see from the charts below how energy needs vary, but it is important to remember that individuals will have different appetites depending on how active they are and how tall and heavy they are.



Buying fruit and vegetables in season

Below are examples of fruit and vegetables you can buy. You can buy the things on this list at any time of the year, but the chart shows when they are in season in the UK.

When to buy them?	Vegetables			Fruit	
SPRING March to May	asparagus beetroot broad beans leeks lettuce peas	radishes rocket samphire spring cabbage spring greens	spring onions watercress	rhubarb	
SUMMER June to August	aubergines beetroot broad beans broccoli carrots chilli peppers courgettes cucumber	fennel French beans garlic globe artichokes peas peppers radishes	runner beans shallots squash sugar snap peas sweetcorn tomatoes	blackcurrants blueberries cherries figs gooseberries loganberries nectarines	peaches raspberries redcurrants strawberries
AUTUMN September to November	broccoli Brussels sprouts cabbage cauliflower celeriac	chicory Jerusalem artichoke kale mushrooms parsnips	pumpkin spinach squash swede sweetcorn turnip	apples pears damsons greengages grapes	plums
WINTER December to February	Brussels sprouts cabbage celeriac	parsnips purple sprouting broccoli	kale leeks spinach swede	rhubarb	
ALL YEAR ROUND	potatoes cassava cocoyam dasheen sweet potatoes taro yam	Frozen vegetables: broad beans broccoli green beans mixed vegetables peas soya beans spinach sweetcorn Sprouted seeds such as: alfalfa beansprouts mung beans sunflower	Imported vegetables such as: Chinese leaves gourds avocado mooli okra pak choi yard long beans ... and a whole range of vegetables used in Asian and African cookery.	Frozen fruit such as: frozen mixed berries Imported fruit such as: banana clementines cranberries grapefruit kiwi fruit lemons limes mango melon	oranges papaya passion fruit pineapple pomegranates Sharon fruit



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