



Monkey Puzzle Day Nurseries

Autumn/Winter Menu 2025

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Welcome to your Autumn/Winter 2025 recipes

These recipes have been developed especially for your nursery settings—designed to be nutritious, seasonal, and practical to prepare in busy kitchens. They reflect a balance of the key food groups needed for children in early years, while introducing a wide variety of ingredients, textures, and flavours to help expand little palates.

Each recipe has been created with simplicity and consistency in mind, using familiar ingredients and clear methods to support your kitchen teams.

Kitchen staple foods

You'll notice a number of ingredients appear regularly across the recipes, including:

- Wholegrains like wholewheat pasta, couscous, and brown rice
- A variety of tinned beans and lentils
- Colourful, seasonal vegetables
- Full-fat dairy options, e.g. yoghurt, cheese
- And most importantly... fresh herb pots like basil, mint, parsley, and coriander. These are helpful to have available when small quantities are needed (rather than buying packets of fresh herbs and wasting them).

Using fresh herbs helps build flavour naturally, without the need for added salt (which we avoid completely in children's food). Where possible, we encourage involving children in the process—tearing and adding their herb leaves to their plates can be a simple, sensory way to interact and engage them with their food. For convenience and ease, **frozen chopped herbs** can absolutely be used too—they're still full of flavour and nutrients and make prep quicker on busy days (but frozen herbs must be heated through and not served frozen).

Common equipment used

To help make preparation more efficient across all settings, the following pieces of equipment are commonly used throughout the recipe pack:

- Stick blender
- Crinkle cutter – to cut hard fruit and salad vegetables, e.g. melon, cucumber, peppers
- Steamer: Stainless steel steamer pots or plug in multi-tier electric steamer.
- Food processor – grater and chopper attachment
- Small wooden bamboo skewers

Dietary modifications:

Swap in dairy-free cheese fortified with vitamin B12 and calcium for children on a dairy-free diet.

Swap in dairy free/plant based (& no added sugar) milk fortified with vitamin D, B2, B12, and calcium for children on a dairy-free diet. **Do not** use organic plant-based milk (as not fortified) or rice milk (not suitable for children under 5's).

Please do check each recipe in advance to ensure you have everything you need to get cooking.

Managing food waste & portion sizes

Remember: These portion sizes are starting points, not strict requirements. Every child's appetite varies daily - if you're consistently seeing food waste, reduce the initial serving size and let children ask for more when they want it.

For context: while a standard portion of fruit or vegetables for a toddler is 40g, you shouldn't serve this full amount directly onto a child's plate - large portions can feel overwhelming for little ones.

Instead, start small and offer more if children show interest. This approach:

- Reduces food waste
- Prevents children feeling overwhelmed
- Gives them control over how much they eat
- Allows for natural appetite variation

The goal is exposure and choice, not forcing children to eat specific amounts. Some days they'll eat more, some days less - and that's completely normal.

Baby weaning stages:

For babies 6-12 months, see the Baby Modification Guide for texture adaptations.

Let's get started!

Breakfast Recipes

Low sugar breakfast cereals, choose from:

- Weetabix,
- Shredded Wheat,
- Ready Brek,
- and plain porridge oats.

Weetabix and **Ready Brek** are particularly good as they're fortified with vitamins and minerals, low in sugar, and have textures that work well for young children.

Always check labels as formulations can change, and choose varieties without added honey, chocolate, or fruit pieces for the lowest sugar content. Look for cereals that are less than 5.0g of total sugars per 100g.

Breakfast bagels with choice of toppings

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 5 wholemeal bagels
- 2 ripe avocados
- 2 bananas
- 200g cream cheese
- 1 lemon (for juice to stop avocado browning)
- Optional: cherry tomatoes, cucumber slices

Method

Prepare the bagels:

1. Slice 5 bagels in half to make 10 portions
2. Toast lightly until just golden

Prepare toppings:

1. **Avocado:** Mash avocados with a fork, add squeeze of lemon juice and pinch of salt
2. **Banana:** Slice bananas into rounds just before serving
3. **Cream cheese:** Remove from fridge 10 minutes before serving to soften

Assembly:

1. Let children choose their topping or offer a selection
2. Spread chosen topping generously on each bagel half
3. For banana: place slices on top of cream cheese if desired. Or mashed banana, or banana fingers.
4. Add cherry tomato or cucumber slices for extra nutrition if available

Serving suggestions:

- Set up as a "bagel bar" where children can see the options
- Each child gets 1 bagel half (staff can offer seconds if needed)
- Serve with a cup of milk or water

Staff tips:

- Prepare mashed avocado just before serving to prevent browning
- Keep extra lemon juice handy to refresh avocado if needed
- Toast bagels in batches to keep them warm

Toasted crumpet with cream cheese & pear

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

10 crumpets

200g full-fat cream cheese

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp ground cinnamon

2-3 fresh pears, cored and diced (Sept-Nov) OR 2 x 400g tinned pears in juice, drained and diced (Dec-March)

Method

Toast crumpets according to packet instructions until golden and crispy

Prepare topping - mix cream cheese, vanilla extract, and half the cinnamon in a bowl until smooth

Prepare pears:

- **Fresh (Sept-Nov):** Wash, core, and dice into small pieces
- **Tinned (Dec-March):** Drain thoroughly and dice, discarding juice

Assemble - spread 20g cream cheese mixture on each warm crumpet

Cut into quarters - slice each crumpet into 4 pieces for easier handling by small children

Serve with pears - serve pears alongside crumpet

Finish - sprinkle remaining cinnamon over the top

Serve immediately while crumpets are still warm

Seasonal note

September-November: Use fresh ripe British pears (Conference, Comice)

December-February: Use tinned pears in juice (drain well to avoid excess sweetness)

Carrot cake & date overnight oats

Portion yield – Serves 10 children

Setting time: Overnight (minimum 8 hours). **Ensure to make the night before**

Ingredients

150g porridge oats

850ml milk

150g plain yoghurt

100g carrots or 1 medium, finely grated

200g dates, chopped small (remove stones)

2tbsp milled ground flaxseed

1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1/2tsp ground mixed spice

Method

Prepare dates - chop into small pieces appropriate for children's age, ensuring no stones remain

Grate carrots - use fine grater for smooth texture that blends well with oats

Combine dry ingredients - mix oats, milled flaxseed and mixed spice in large bowl

Add wet ingredients - pour in milk and vanilla extract, stir thoroughly

Fold in extras - gently mix in grated carrot and chopped dates

Place in container - spoon mixture into one large container

Refrigerate overnight - cover and chill for minimum 8 hours

Serve - stir gently before serving, add a splash of milk if too thick. Serve approx. 100g oat mixture per child.

Serving Suggestions:

- Serve chilled or at room temperature.
- Optional: sprinkle extra mixed spice on top
- Can be warmed gently if preferred.

Porridge with apple & raisins

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 150g porridge oats
- 1 litre milk
- 100g raisins
- 3 eating apples, peeled (core removed & discarded) and grated
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp milled ground flaxseed

Method

1. Put porridge oats and milk in a large saucepan
2. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring regularly
3. Add the raisins and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently
4. Add vanilla and cinnamon if using
5. Cook for another 1-2 minutes until porridge reaches desired consistency. Add more milk if porridge is too thick. Or keep cooking if too thin.
6. Meanwhile, grate the apple either by hand or using the grater attachment on a food processor. Stir half of the grated apple into the porridge and cook for a couple of minutes.
7. Serve the porridge in bowls with additional grated apple on the side, if child desires.

Porridge with mixed berry compote

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 150g porridge oats
- 1 litre milk
- 450g frozen mixed berries (or single berry variety, e.g. blueberry)
- 1 tsp ground mixed spice
- 2 tbsp milled ground flaxseed

Method

1. Put porridge oats, mixed spice, flaxseed and milk in a large saucepan
2. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring regularly until porridge reaches desired consistency.
3. Add the frozen berries and ground cinnamon to another medium saucepan **with 2 tbsp of water**, cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. The berries will release their juices and naturally sweeten the porridge
5. Serve porridge in bowls with a spoonful of berry sauce on top.

Chef's Tips

- Frozen berries are perfect for September to February - they're picked at peak ripeness and often more flavourful than fresh out-of-season berries
- No need to defrost the berries first – add straight to a saucepan as per the method.
- The natural fruit sugars provide lovely sweetness without any added sugar
- The ground cinnamon adds warmth and natural sweetness
- 40g of berry sauce is a guide for suggested portion size.

Wholegrain toast with Ricotta & Banana

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 10 small slices of wholemeal bread or approx. 25g per child
- 250g ricotta cheese
- 3 ripe bananas

Method

1. Toast bread lightly
2. Spread ricotta evenly on each slice of bread
3. Cut each slice in half or into fingers for easier handling
4. Cut bananas in half, then slice each half lengthwise into 2-3 strips
5. Serve ricotta toast with banana strips on the side

Chef's Tips

- Choose bananas that are ripe but still firm
- Each child gets one slice of toast (cut into fingers) plus banana strips on the side
- Banana strips are safer and easier for toddlers to handle than rounds

Wholemeal toast with cream cheese & fruit

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 250g wholemeal bread (10 x 25g servings) or 10 slices of bread
- 200g cream cheese, softened (10 x 20g servings)
- 4 ripe bananas
- 2 eating apples, peeled

Method

1. Toast bread lightly
2. Spread cream cheese evenly on each slice of toast and cut into fingers
3. Prepare bananas: either mash in a bowl until smooth OR cut into finger-sized strips
4. Grate peeled apples and set aside in a separate bowl. Cut some of the apple into thin slices for older more confident to eat as larger pieces.
5. Serve toast pieces with small bowls of prepared banana and grated apple/wedges on the side

To Serve

- Each child gets 1 slice of toast, cut into fingers with cream cheese if they wish.
- Small portions of banana (mashed for spreading or finger strips for eating separately)
- Small portions of grated apple for sprinkling on top or eating separately
- Children choose how much fruit to add (or none at all!)

Chef's Tips

- Soften cream cheese at room temperature for easier spreading
- Mash bananas just before serving to prevent browning
- Grate apples at the last minute to keep them fresh
- Let children decide how to eat their fruit - control encourages trying new things

Flexible and fun: Children love having choices about how to eat their food - some will create fruit-topped toast, others will eat components separately!

Pear & Sultana Porridge

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 150g porridge oats
- 1 litre milk
- 100g sultanas
- 3 ripe pears, cut into small wedges (skin removed) or tinned pears in juice, drained
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp milled ground flaxseed

Method

1. Put porridge oats and milk in a large saucepan
2. Bring to a gentle simmer, stirring regularly
3. Add the sultanas and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently
4. Add cinnamon
5. Cook for another 1-2 minutes until porridge reaches desired consistency. Add more milk if porridge is too thick
6. Meanwhile, remove the pear skin and cut pears into small wedges (or drain and slice tinned pears). Fresh pear should be squishable, if not, use tinned pear instead.
7. Serve the porridge in bowls with pear wedges on the side

Chef's Tips

- Pear wedges should be sliced thinly and manageable for little hands
- Removing pear skin reduces the choking risk for toddlers
- Serve the pear slices just before eating to keep them fresh and prevent browning
- Choose ripe pears for easier cutting and better texture (or use tinned pears in juice when fresh not available)
- If serving porridge to babies, grate the pear and stir through.

Naturally sweet: The sultanas provide lovely sweetness while fresh pear slices add extra fruit and a different texture - perfect winter comfort food for little ones!

Coconut & Apricot Overnight Oats with Fruit **Ensure to make the night before**

Serves 10 children

Overnight Oats

Ingredients:

- 150g porridge oats
- 850ml milk
- 150g plain yoghurt
- 3 tbsp desiccated coconut
- 100g dried apricots, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp ground milled flaxseed

Method:

1. Chop dried apricots into small pieces
2. Mix oats, desiccated coconut, and chopped apricots in a large bowl
3. Add milk, yoghurt, and flaxseed
4. Stir well to combine all ingredients
5. Cover and refrigerate overnight (minimum 6 hours)
6. In the morning, stir and divide between 10 bowls
7. Serve with whatever fruit is available from the 'fruit selection' list

Fresh Fruit

Ingredients:

- 2 x 300g tins mandarin segments in juice, drained

Method:

1. Drain tinned mandarins thoroughly and remove pips.
2. Serve in small bowls alongside the overnight oats

Chef's Tips

- Prepare the night before for quick breakfast service
- Chopped apricots soften overnight and add natural sweetness
- Each child gets overnight oats plus 40g fruit on the side.
- **Stir before serving as oats may separate**

Overnight Oats with Cranberry & Mandarins **Ensure to make the night before**

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 150g rolled oats
- 800ml milk
- 200g plain yogurt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 2 tbsp milled ground flaxseed
- 80g dried cranberries, diced
- 2 x 400g tins mandarin segments in juice, drained

Method:

1. In a large bowl, mix together oats, milk, yogurt, vanilla extract, and cinnamon
2. Stir in chia seeds and dried cranberries
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight (or at least 4 hours)
4. In the morning, stir well and check consistency - add a little more milk if too thick
5. Drain mandarin segments and set aside

Serving:

- Divide overnight oats into individual bowls
- Top each portion with mandarin segments or serve on the side.
- Each child gets approximately 120g serving of oats with 40g of fruit on top, as a suggested serving size

Chef's tips:

- The cranberries provide natural sweetness and chewy texture
- **Stir before serving as oats may separate**

Variation: Try fresh berries instead of mandarins when in season!

Banana & Cinnamon Toast with Milk

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 10 slices wholemeal bread
- 3-4 medium ripe bananas (approximately 300g)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 litre whole milk or dairy-free alternative (oat, almond, or soy milk)

Method:

Option 1: For Younger Children (Mashed Banana)

1. **Toast the bread** - toast slices until golden brown and crispy
2. **Prepare banana mixture** - peel bananas and mash with a fork until smooth, then mix in the cinnamon
3. **Spread on toast** - spread the mashed banana and cinnamon mixture evenly over each slice.
4. **Cut into fingers**
5. **Serve immediately** - place on plates with a 100ml glass of cold milk alongside each portion

Option 2: For Older Children (Interactive Version)

1. **Toast the bread** - toast slices until golden brown and crispy
2. **Prepare bananas** - peel and slice bananas into rounds, approximately 5mm thick
3. **Set up stations** - provide small shakers filled with cinnamon
4. **Let children build** - have children place banana slices on their toast and lightly crush with a fork
5. **Add cinnamon** - under supervision, children can shake cinnamon over their toast to taste
6. **Serve immediately** - place on plates with a 100ml glass of cold milk alongside each portion

For ease, staff may prefer to serve all children using option 1.

Benefits: The interactive approach helps children explore textures and flavours while developing fine motor skills and taste preferences. They can control how much cinnamon they add, making breakfast more engaging and educational!

Snack Recipes

Green Garden Dip (400g total):

- 200g frozen broad beans
- 150g cream cheese
- 30g extra virgin olive oil
- 20g fresh herbs (parsley, mint, or basil) OR 2 tsp frozen herbs
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Pinch of garlic powder (optional)

Method:

1. **Cook beans:** Steam or boil frozen broad beans for 8-10 minutes until tender. Drain well and cool slightly
2. **Blend:** Place cooked beans, cream cheese, olive oil, herbs, cumin, paprika, lemon juice, and garlic powder (if using) in a food processor
3. **Process:** Blend until smooth and creamy, scraping down sides as needed
4. **Adjust:** Taste and add more lemon juice or herbs if needed
5. **Serve:** Transfer to serving bowl - the herbs and beans create a lovely green color

Chef's Tips:

- Make sure beans are well-drained to prevent watery dip
- Can be made ahead and refrigerated - flavours improve after an hour
- Perfect for dunking vegetables, crackers, or pitta bread
- The natural green color is appealing to children

Fresh Fruit Selection (or tinned, where fresh not available)

Serves: 10 children

Portion Guide:

- 40g fresh fruit per child (is 1 portion as a guide) OR
- 40g tinned fruit per child (drained weight is 1 portion as a guide)

Seasonal Fresh Options (Sept-Feb):

September-October:

- Apples - wash, core, slice into wedges (remove skin for under 2s)
- Pears - wash, core, slice (check ripeness for easy eating)
- Late summer berries - blackberries, raspberries (check for freshness)

November-February:

- Citrus fruits - oranges, satsumas, mandarins (remove all pith and pips)
- Apples - Gala, Braeburn, Cox
- Pears - Conference, Comice
- Kiwi fruit - peel and slice into rounds
- Bananas - peel and slice just before serving

Budget-Friendly Tinned Alternatives:

- Peaches in juice - drain and serve segments
- Pears in juice - drain and halve if large
- Mandarin segments in juice - drain thoroughly & remove pips
- Pineapple in juice - drain and cut to appropriate size

Preparation Guidelines:

Fresh Fruit:

1. Wash thoroughly - all fresh fruit under cold running water
2. Remove hazards - stones, pips, skin, hard cores
3. Age-appropriate cutting - no choking hazards, manageable pieces
4. Serve immediately - prevent browning, maintain freshness. Use lemon juice where necessary to slow browning.

Tinned Fruit:

1. Drain thoroughly - remove excess juice to reduce sugar content
2. Check piece sizes - cut larger pieces if needed for safety
3. Rinse if desired - further reduce sugar content from juice

Safety Notes:

- Always check fruit pieces are appropriate size for age group
- Grapes – quarter lengthways for safety
- Check for any remaining stones, stalks, or hard pieces
- Supervise eating especially with harder fruits

For children following a vegetarian diet:

Pairing vitamin C-rich fruits like oranges or kiwi with vegetarian meals helps children absorb more iron from plant-based foods like beans and lentils. Therefore, actively encourage these fruits to children following a vegetarian diet to support their nutritional needs.

Fresh Salad Vegetable Selection

Serves: 10 children

Portion Guide:

- 40g fresh salad vegetables per child (is 1 portion as a guide) OR

Seasonal Fresh Options (Sept-Feb):

September-October:

- Cucumber - wash, peel if desired, cut into thick sticks (safe from 6+ months)
- Tomatoes - wash, remove seeds if preferred, dice finely or quarter cherry tomatoes
- Lettuce - wash thoroughly, shred finely to prevent choking
- Peppers - wash, remove seeds, cut into thin strips

November-February:

- Cucumber - available year-round, cut into age-appropriate sticks
- Tomatoes - cherry tomatoes (quartered), regular tomatoes (diced)
- Cabbage - finely shredded raw (white or red)
- Carrots - grated or cut into thin sticks (raw only for 18+ months)
- Radishes - thinly sliced (mild varieties only)

Preparation Guidelines: Fresh Salad Vegetables:

1. Wash thoroughly - all salad vegetables under cold running water
2. Remove hazards - seeds, tough skins, hard cores
3. Age-appropriate cutting - finely shred lettuce, quarter cherry tomatoes
4. Serve immediately - maintain crispness and freshness

Safety Notes:

- Raw vegetables for 18+ months only - carrots, radishes need mature chewing
- Always quarter cherry tomatoes lengthwise to prevent choking
- Finely shred lettuce - prevents choking on large leaves
- Cucumber safe from 6+ months when cut into appropriate sticks

For children following a vegetarian diet: Pairing vitamin C-rich salad vegetables like tomatoes and peppers with vegetarian meals helps children absorb more iron from plant-based foods like beans and lentils. Therefore, **actively encourage** these vegetables to children following a vegetarian diet to support their nutritional needs.

Traffic light fruit kebabs

Serves: 10 children

Prep time: 15 minutes

Age suitability: 12 months+

Equipment Needed:

- 10 wooden cocktail sticks or short wooden skewers
- Sharp knife for adult preparation
- Chopping board

Ingredients:

Total fruit needed: Approx 400g (40g per child as suggested portion size).

Each child will receive a portion of every fruit type

- 3 large ripe bananas
- 3 satsumas/clementines, peeled and segmented
- 1 large ripe pear, cored and peeled.
- 100g seedless red grapes, washed
- 1 large ripe kiwi fruit, peeled (approximately 100g)

Method:

Preparation (Adult Only):

1. Prepare bananas: Peel and slice into 1.5cm thick rounds
2. Prepare satsumas: Peel carefully, separate into individual segments, remove any visible pips or white pith
3. Prepare pear: Peel, core and cut into 1.5cm cubes
4. Prepare grapes: Wash thoroughly and cut each grape lengthways into quarters to prevent choking
5. Prepare kiwi: Peel and slice into 1cm thick rounds, then cut each round in half

Assembly:

Thread fruit onto skewers ensuring each child gets every fruit type:

- Banana rounds
- Quartered grape pieces
- Satsuma segments
- Pear cubes
- Kiwi half-moons
- Divide all prepared fruit evenly between 10 kebabs

9. Final safety check: Ensure no pieces are too large and all grapes are properly quartered

Safety Guidelines:

Choking Prevention:

- Grapes MUST be quartered lengthways - never serve whole or halved
- All pieces should be no larger than 1.5cm in any dimension
- Remove all pips, stones, and tough skins
- Check satsuma segments for pips before threading

Supervision Requirements:

- Adult supervision required at all times during eating
- Children should be seated while eating kebabs
- Remove skewers immediately after serving if children are very young
- Alternative serving: Remove fruit from skewers and serve pieces in bowls for children under 18 months

Age Modifications:

- 12-18 months: Remove from skewer and serve pieces separately
- 18+ months: Can handle skewers with close supervision

For 12-24 Months (Early Toddlers):

- Small cubes: 1-1.5cm cubes (as in the kebab recipe)
- Quartered slices: Cut pear into quarters lengthways, remove core, then slice each quarter
- Still soft: Choose ripe pears that yield slightly to pressure

For 2+ Years:

- Thin slices: Can handle slightly larger pieces or thin wedges.

Storage and Food Safety:

- Keep refrigerated until serving

Early Years Setting Notes:

- Check individual children's allergy information before serving
- Consider removing kiwi if any children have not tried it before
- Perfect for autumn/winter when these fruits are in season and affordable

Variations:

- Summer version: Add strawberry quarters and melon cubes
- Spring version: Add apple pieces and orange segments

Educational Opportunities:

- Colour recognition - naming fruit colours
- Counting practice - counting pieces on a skewer
- Texture exploration - different fruit textures
- Cultural learning - discussing where different fruits come from

Recipe title - Vegetable Sticks with Butter Bean Dip

Portion yield - Serves: 10 children

Ingredients:

For the butter bean dip (400g total):

- 2 x 400g tins butter beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp fresh herbs (coriander or parsley)
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika
- Pinch of black pepper
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

For the vegetable dippers: (as a guide, 40g is 1 portion of veg, per child)

- 1 small cucumber, cut into batons
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips. Seeds, pith and stalk removed.
- 2 small little gem lettuce (or cos), leaves separated
- 6-8 radishes, quartered

Method:

Make the butter bean dip:

1. **Rinse beans** thoroughly and drain well
2. **Blend ingredients** - place beans, olive oil, lemon juice, herbs, paprika, and black pepper in food processor
3. **Process until smooth** - blend for 2-3 minutes until creamy consistency
4. **Add water gradually** if needed for dipping consistency
5. **Taste and adjust** - add more lemon juice or herbs as needed
6. **Rest** - chill for 15 minutes to let flavours develop

Prepare Vegetables:

1. **Wash all vegetables** thoroughly under cold water
2. **Cut vegetables** into child-appropriate sticks and strips
3. **Prepare lettuce** - separate leaves and wash, pat dry
4. **Check radishes** - ensure pieces are appropriate size for children

Serving:

- **Individual portions** - 40g butter bean dip per child

- **Variety of dippers** - arrange vegetable selection around dip
- **Include lettuce cups** - children can use as edible bowls for dip

Seasonal Notes:

- **Year-round availability** - all vegetables available Sept-Feb

Serving Suggestions:

- **Rainbow arrangement** - different coloured vegetables for visual appeal
- **Interactive eating** - let children choose their preferred dippers
- **Lettuce boats** - show children how to use lettuce as edible scoops

Storage:

- **Dip keeps** covered in fridge for 2-3 days
- **Vegetables** best prepared fresh but can be cut morning of serving
- **Store separately** until serving time

Sweet potato dip

Serves: 10 children

Ingredients:

- 600g sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 3 tbsp cream cheese or natural yoghurt
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped (or 1 tsp dried mixed herbs)
- Pinch of black pepper

Method:

1. **Roast sweet potatoes** - toss diced sweet potato with olive oil, roast at 200°C for 20-25 minutes until tender
2. **Cool slightly** - let sweet potatoes cool for 5-10 minutes
3. **Mash** - use fork or potato masher to mash sweet potatoes until smooth (leave some texture if preferred). To save time, add to a food processor and blend with the other ingredients.
4. **Add creaminess** - mix in cream cheese or yoghurt.
5. **Season** - add cumin, paprika, cinnamon, and black pepper
6. **Brighten** - stir in lemon juice and fresh herbs
7. **Taste and adjust** - add more spices or lemon juice as needed
8. **Serve** - at room temperature with oatcakes for dipping

Serving Suggestions:

- **Portion:** 40g dip per child
- **Serve with:** Plain oatcakes, vegetable sticks, or pitta triangles

Breadsticks with Red Pepper Dip

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 150g Breadsticks (15g per child as a suggested serving size)

Red Pepper Dip to serve

Ingredients:

- 2-3 medium red peppers, washed
- 3 tbsp cream cheese
- 1-2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove (optional), peeled
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oven to 220°C/200°C fan
2. Cut peppers into chunks, removing and discarding seeds and stalks
3. Roast pepper chunks on a baking tray for 20-25 minutes until softened and slightly charred. Leave to cool.
4. Whizz the roasted pepper chunks with cream cheese, black pepper, lemon juice and garlic (if using) in a food processor, just until smooth
5. Serve 1 tbsp dip per child in a bowl for dunking, alongside the breadsticks. Offer more if desired.

Rice Cakes with Tuna Dip

Serves 10 children

Tuna Dip

Ingredients:

- 2 x 145g tins tuna in spring water, drained
- 200g cottage cheese
- Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon
- Black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp fresh chives, finely chopped (optional)

Method:

1. Drain tuna thoroughly and flake into small pieces
2. Mix the tuna and cottage cheese until smooth
3. Add in the lemon zest and juice and black pepper
4. Add chopped chives if using
5. For a smoother texture, pulse briefly in food processor 3-4 times (optional)
6. Mix gently until well combined

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 10 plain rice cakes (1 per child, 25g serving)
- The tuna dip (above)

Method:

1. Break rice cakes in half for easier handling by small hands
2. Divide the dip between 10 small bowls, giving each child their own portion
3. Serve immediately

Chef's Tips

- Cottage cheese makes the perfect base - thick enough for dipping but creamy enough to spread
- Brief pulsing in food processor makes texture smoother for little ones while keeping some texture
- Make sure tuna is well-drained to prevent watery dip
- Can be made 2-3 hours ahead and kept covered in the fridge

Perfect combination: The mild, creamy dip pairs beautifully with crunchy rice cakes - a satisfying, protein-packed snack!

Vegetarian Option: Egg & Cottage Cheese Dip

Replace the tuna with 4-5 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and chopped. Mix with the cottage cheese, lemon juice, and black pepper in the same way. The eggs provide similar protein content and the creamy texture works perfectly with cottage cheese. You could also add a pinch of paprika for extra flavour if desired.

Apple & Cream Cheese Pinwheels [*Requires 30 minutes chill time*](#)

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 5 large soft flour tortillas or wraps (as a guide 25g is a portion)
- 2 eating apples, peeled, cored and grated
- 200g cream cheese, softened
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1tbsp milled ground flaxseed

Method

1. Peel apples, remove cores and seeds, then grate
2. Squeeze grated apple with clean hands to remove excess juice
3. Mix grated apple with mixed spice
4. Lay tortilla wraps flat on a clean surface
5. Spread softened cream cheese evenly over each tortilla, leaving a 2cm border around edges
6. Sprinkle the spiced apple mixture over the cream cheese
7. Roll up each tortilla very tightly
8. Wrap each roll in cling film and chill for 30 minutes to firm up
9. Remove cling film and cut each roll into 8 slices using a sharp serrated knife
10. Arrange pinwheels on serving plates

Chef's Tips

- Squeeze grated apple well to prevent watery filling
- Chilling helps the wraps hold their shape when slicing
- Mixed spice adds lovely warmth - perfect for autumn/winter
- Each child gets 4 pinwheel slices (from half a wrap)

Quick and easy: No baking required - just roll, chill, slice and serve! Creamy cheese filling with spiced apple creates the perfect sweet and tangy pinwheel that children love!

Thick Tomato Salsa with Oatcakes

Serves 10 children

Thick Tomato Salsa

Ingredients:

- 400g ripe tomatoes, diced small and drained
- 1 small red onion, peeled and very finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp fresh parsley, chopped (or 1/2 tsp dried)
- Black pepper to taste
- 1-2 tbsp plain tomato puree (to thicken)

Method:

1. Roughly chop tomatoes and place in a sieve for 10 minutes to drain excess juice
2. Put drained tomatoes, onion, and garlic in a food processor
3. Pulse briefly 4-5 times until chopped but still chunky (don't over-process)
4. Transfer to a bowl and stir in olive oil, lemon juice, and parsley
5. Add tomato puree to thicken the mixture
6. Season with black pepper
7. Let stand for 15 minutes to allow flavours to develop
8. Serve at room temperature

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 20 plain oatcakes (2 per child)
- The thick tomato salsa (above)

Method:

1. Arrange oatcakes on serving platters
2. Serve salsa in small bowls with spoons for easy scooping
3. Children can spread salsa onto oatcakes themselves

Chef's Tips

- Draining the tomatoes is key to preventing a watery salsa

- Tomato puree acts as a natural thickener
- Brief pulsing in a food processor saves time while keeping texture chunky
- Can be made 2-3 hours ahead - flavours improve with time
- Each child gets 2 oatcakes plus the salsa portion

Rice Cakes with Butter Bean Dip

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

For the butter bean dip (400g total):

- 2 x 400g tins butter beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp fresh or frozen mixed herbs (coriander or parsley)
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika
- Pinch of black pepper
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

For serving:

- 10 plain rice cakes (1 per child, as a guide)

Method

Make the butter bean dip:

1. **Rinse beans** thoroughly and drain well
2. **Blend ingredients** - place beans, olive oil, lemon juice, herbs, paprika, and black pepper in food processor
3. **Process until smooth** - blend for 2-3 minutes until creamy consistency
4. **Add water gradually** if needed for spreading consistency
5. **Taste and adjust** - add more lemon juice or herbs as needed
6. **Rest** - chill for 15 minutes to let flavours develop

Prepare rice cakes:

1. **Break rice cakes** in half for easier handling by small hands
2. **Arrange** on serving platters

Serving:

- **Individual portions** - 40g butter bean dip per child is a serving size guide. Serve less to start with, so as not to overwhelm them.
- **Rice cake pieces** - 2 halves per child for dipping and spreading

Chef's Tips

- Make dip slightly thicker for spreading on rice cakes rather than just dipping
- Rice cakes provide a neutral, crunchy base that children love

- Can spread dip on rice cakes or serve in small bowls for dipping

Perfect combination: Mild, creamy bean dip with crunchy rice cakes - familiar textures that children can manage independently!

Baked Sweet Potato Wedges with Cheese

Serves 8 children

Ingredients:

- 400g sweet potatoes, scrubbed, peeled and cut into thick wedges (approx. 2 large potatoes)
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Black pepper to taste
- 150g mild cheddar cheese, grated

Method:

1. Preheat oven - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. Prepare wedges – peel and cut sweet potatoes into thick wedges, pat dry with kitchen paper
3. Season - toss wedges with dried rosemary, olive oil and black pepper until well coated
4. Roast - spread on baking trays in single layer, bake for 25-30 minutes until tender inside and crispy outside
5. Serve - arrange hot wedges on plates with grated cheese served separately in small bowls

Supervision note: Check wedges are cool enough for little hands before serving.

Vegetable sticks with sour cream

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 1 cucumber, cut into batons
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips (seeds, pith and stalk removed)
- 1 small little gem lettuce (or cos), leaves separated
- 300ml sour cream

Method

1. Wash all vegetables thoroughly under cold water
2. Cut the cucumber into finger-sized batons
3. Remove seeds, pith and stalks from peppers, then cut into strips
4. Separate lettuce leaves carefully, keeping them whole
5. Arrange vegetable sticks on serving platters
6. Serve sour cream in small bowls for dipping

Chef's Tips

- Keep vegetables in cold water until serving to maintain crispness
- Cut all vegetables into child-friendly sizes for easy handling
- Each child gets approximately 40g of mixed vegetables (portion size is a guide - adjust to keep food waste down)
- Sour cream can be portioned into individual small pots if preferred
- Prepare vegetables up to 2 hours ahead and cover with damp kitchen paper

Fresh and crunchy: These colourful vegetable sticks provide different textures and flavours with creamy sour cream for dipping - perfect for encouraging children to try different vegetables!

Coriander Hummus with Rice Cakes (serves 10 children)

Coriander Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tin chickpeas in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
- 1/2 clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Method:

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy
3. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency. But don't allow it to get too wet or runny!
4. Taste and adjust seasoning
5. Serve in small bowls

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 10 plain rice cakes (1 per child) – as a serving size guide

Method:

1. Break rice cakes in half for easier handling by small hands
2. Arrange on serving platters
3. Serve with bowls of coriander hummus for dipping

Chef's Tips

- Tahini adds authentic flavour and extra creaminess to the hummus
- Each child gets hummus portion plus 1 rice cake

Fresh and flavourful: The coriander adds a lovely fresh taste to classic hummus, while rice cakes provide the perfect crunchy vehicle for dipping!

Plain Hummus with Corn Cakes (serves 10 children)

Plain Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ a clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Method:

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy
3. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency
4. Taste and adjust seasoning
5. Serve in small bowls

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 10 plain corn cakes (1 per child), as a serving size guide.

Method:

1. Break corn cakes in half for easier handling by small hands
2. Arrange on serving platters
3. Serve with bowls of plain hummus for dipping

Plain Hummus with red pepper sticks

Serves 10 children

Plain Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ a clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Method:

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy
3. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency
4. Taste and adjust seasoning
5. Serve in small bowls

To Serve

Ingredients:

- Red pepper.

Method:

1. Break corn cakes in half for easier handling by small hands
2. Arrange on serving platters
3. Serve with bowls of plain hummus for dipping

Oatcakes with Avocado & Lime Dip (serves 10 children)

Ingredients

For the Oatcakes:

- 20 plain oatcakes (2 per child)

For the Avocado & Lime Dip:

- 400g ripe avocados (40g per child), skin and stone discarded
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tsp fresh coriander, very finely chopped or frozen coriander
- 1 medium ripe tomato, deseeded and finely diced
- Pinch of ground black pepper

Method

Prepare Oatcakes:

1. Break oatcakes in half for easier handling by small hands
2. Arrange on serving platters

Make Avocado & Lime Dip:

1. Discard stone & skin, mash avocados until smooth but with some texture
2. Add lime juice immediately to prevent browning
3. Fold in fresh coriander - distribute evenly throughout
4. Add diced tomato for authentic texture and colour
5. Season with pinch of black pepper
6. Cover tightly until serving

Time-Saving Option - Food Processor Method:

1. Put peeled avocados, lime juice, coriander, and black pepper in food processor
2. Pulse 3-4 times until roughly chopped but still chunky
3. Transfer to bowl and fold in diced tomato by hand
4. Cover tightly until serving

Serving

- Individual portions - 2 oatcakes (4 halves) with 40g avocado dip per child
- Arrange oatcake pieces around small portion of dip for spreading or dipping

Chef's Tips

- Choose ripe but firm avocados for best texture
- Food processor method saves time but don't over-process - keep some texture

- Add diced tomato by hand to maintain pieces and colour contrast
- Oatcakes provide a sturdy, nutritious base for the creamy dip
- Can be made 1-2 hours ahead if covered tightly and chilled in the fridge.

Red Pepper Dip with Pitta Bread (serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 3 red peppers
- 3 tbsp cream cheese
- 1 small garlic clove (optional)
- 1-2 tsp lemon juice
- Black pepper to taste
- 5 wholemeal pitta breads (half a pitta bread per child as a guide)

Method:

1. Heat oven to 220°C/200°C fan
2. Cut peppers into chunks, removing seeds and stalks
3. Roast pepper chunks on a baking tray for 20-25 minutes until softened and slightly charred
4. While peppers are roasting, warm pitta breads in the oven for the last 2-3 minutes
5. Cut each pitta bread in half and slice into strips for dipping
6. Whizz the roasted pepper chunks with cream cheese, lemon juice, and garlic (if using) in a food processor
7. Add a pinch of black pepper if desired
8. Serve warm dip in a bowl with pitta strips arranged around it for dunking

Serving: Each child gets half a pitta bread (cut into strips) with the red pepper dip for sharing

Cheese & herb scones with salad veg selection

(Makes 10 scones)

Serve 1 scone per child

Ingredients:

- 225g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 60g butter, cold and cubed
- 50g mature cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 tbsp fresh chives, chopped (or 1 tbsp dried mixed herbs)
- 1 egg
- 60ml milk
- Black pepper
- Extra milk for brushing

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 6 or 400F.
2. Rub butter into flour and baking powder until mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Use a food processor to save time. Pulse briefly until ingredients are just combined.
3. Stir in the grated cheese.
4. Beat the eggs with 60ml milk. Add the chives (or dried mixed herbs) to the egg mixture, then add to dry ingredients.
5. Mix gently to form a soft dough (add a little more milk if needed)
6. **Either:** Roll out on a floured surface to 2cm thickness and cut into rounds using a 5cm cutter, **or** press dough/roll dough into a rectangle of 2cm thickness and cut into 10 squares (roughly 5cm x 5cm each), and place on a greased, lined baking sheet.
7. Brush tops with milk
8. Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown
9. Cool on wire rack. Cut in half before serving.

Serving: 1 scone per child as a snack

Chef's tip:

- Don't overwork the dough - gentle mixing keeps scones light and fluffy!
- The rectangle method is faster and easier for larger batches with no waste!

Cheddar Cheese & Pear Snack

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 150g mild cheddar cheese
- 4-5 ripe but firm pears, peeled
- Lemon juice (to prevent browning of pear)

Method:

Prepare the cheese:

1. Cut cheddar into small cubes (approximately 1cm x 1cm) - easy for small fingers to pick up
2. **For younger children, not confident with larger pieces:** Grate the cheese instead to avoid choking risk

Prepare the pears:

1. Wash, peel, and core the pears
2. Cut pears into thin slices (about 3mm thick). Avoid large chunks.
3. **For younger children, not confident with larger pieces, grate the pear.**
4. Lightly squeeze over a little lemon juice to prevent browning

Serving:

- Arrange cheese cubes and pear slices on individual plates
- Each child gets approximately 15g cheese and approx half a pear
- Supervise children while eating

Safety tips for staff:

- Cut pears into thin slices
- Ensure pears are ripe enough to be easily bitten through. Or use tinned pear in juice (not syrup), if fresh pears are not in season.

Green garden dip with Oatcakes and red pepper

Serves 10 children

For the Green Dip (400g total):

- 200g frozen broad beans
- 150g cream cheese
- 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 20g fresh herbs (parsley or mint) OR 2 tsp frozen herbs
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Pinch of garlic powder or 1 small garlic clove, peeled (optional)

For Serving:

- 200g red peppers, cut into batons (20g per child)
- 100g oatcakes (10g per child or approximately 10 oatcakes)

Method:

1. **Cook broad beans** - boil frozen broad beans in water for 6-8 minutes until tender, drain and cool
2. **Blend base** - place cooked broad beans, cream cheese, and olive oil in a food processor
3. **Add flavourings** - add fresh herbs, cumin, paprika, lemon juice, and garlic powder (if using)
4. **Process until smooth** - blend for 2-3 minutes until creamy consistency is achieved (skins will create a slight texture)
5. **Taste and adjust** - add more lemon juice, herbs, or spices as needed
6. **Rest** - chill for 15 minutes to allow flavours to develop
7. **Prepare vegetables** - wash and cut red peppers into batons suitable for dipping
8. **Portion** - serve 40g of dip per child with pepper batons and oatcakes

The oatcake

s provide a lovely nutty, wholesome alternative to rice cakes and their slightly rough texture makes them perfect for scooping up the creamy dip!

Roasted Vegetable kebabs (or Rainbow veggie sticks!)

Requires wooden bamboo skewers or pick sticks

Serves 10 toddlers (40g cooked veg per child)

Ingredients:

- 1 medium courgette, cut into rounds (1cm)
- 1 yellow pepper, cut into large chunks (2cm pieces)
- 20 cherry tomatoes, halved (4 halves per child)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried herbs (oregano or mixed herbs)
- Black pepper, to taste
- 20 wooden skewers

Method:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. **Prepare vegetables** - cut all vegetables into toddler-safe sizes as specified above
3. **Season** - toss vegetables separately with olive oil and herbs
4. **Roast** - spread on large baking trays, roast for 20-25 minutes until tender and lightly golden
5. **Cool slightly** - allow vegetables to cool for 5 minutes for easier handling
6. **Assemble skewers** - thread a variety of tomato pieces, courgette and pepper onto wooden skewers.
7. **Serve** - arrange on platters while still warm

Safety note: Supervise toddlers with skewers and remove vegetables from sticks for very young children.

Oatcakes with Cream Cheese

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 20 oatcakes (2 per child)
- 200g cream cheese (20g per child)

Method:

1. **Prepare some oatcakes** - spread cream cheese on half the oatcakes (10 pieces) and arrange on serving platters
2. **Set up interactive station** - place remaining 10 plain oatcakes on plates alongside small bowls of cream cheese
3. **Provide spreading tools** - give children small child friendly knives or spoons for spreading
4. **Serve** - let children spread their own cream cheese on the plain oatcakes.

Perfect interactive snack: Children get to practice spreading skills and control how much cream cheese they want, while some pre-made ones are ready for those who prefer them already prepared.

Supervision note: Adult guidance needed with spreading tools for younger children.

Carrot & Cucumber Sticks

Serves 10

Ingredients:

- 2 large carrots, peeled
- 1 cucumber, peeled

Method:

1. **Prepare cucumber** - cut cucumber into thick sticks approximately 6cm long and 1cm thick. Remove seeds from center if cucumber is very watery
2. **Prepare carrots** - cut carrots into sticks the same size as cucumber (6cm long, 1cm thick)
3. **Leave carrots raw** - for toddlers 18+ months, raw carrots are safe when cut into appropriate thick sticks
4. **Check sizes** - ensure all sticks are thick enough that toddlers cannot fit the entire piece in their mouth at once

Age-Appropriate Guidelines:

- **18+ months:** Raw carrots + raw cucumber ok (thick sticks only)
- **12-18 months:** Steam carrots until soft. Raw cucumber ok (thick sticks)
- **6-12 months:** Steam carrots until soft
- **Cucumber safe from 6+ months** - babies can gnaw on thick spears safely. Remove peel

Safety Guidelines:

- **Thick sticks only** - at least 1cm wide to prevent choking
- **Always supervise** - babies and toddlers should be seated and supervised while eating
- **Raw carrots only for 18+ months** - younger children need steamed carrots
- **Carrots should be soft enough to squish between your fingers.**

Lunch Recipes

Recipe title – Mild Chickpea & Cauliflower Curry with Brown Rice

Serves: 10 children

Ingredients:

For the curry:

- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 300g cauliflower, cut into small florets
- 100g frozen spinach
- 1 large onion, finely diced (100g)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 400ml coconut milk
- 400ml vegetable stock - low salt or salt free stock.
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated (or 1/2 tsp ground ginger) or use frozen ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- Black pepper, to taste

For the rice:

- 400g brown rice

Method:

Prepare the rice:

1. Rinse rice thoroughly until water runs clear
2. Cook rice – Add water to pan, bring water to boil, add rice, reduce heat and simmer covered for 25-30 minutes. Drain.
3. Rest - leave covered for 5 minutes, then fluff with fork

Make the curry:

1. Heat oil in large pan over medium heat
2. Cook onion for 5 minutes until soft and translucent
3. Add spices - cumin, coriander, turmeric, ginger, and garlic, cook for 1 minute until fragrant
4. Add tomato puree - cook for 30 seconds
5. Add cauliflower - stir to coat with spices, cook for 3-4 minutes

6. Add liquids - pour in coconut milk and stock, bring to gentle simmer
7. Add chickpeas - stir in drained chickpeas, simmer for 10 minutes
8. Keep an eye on the sauce, if it looks dry, add more water.
9. Add spinach - stir in frozen spinach, cook until wilted and heated through (2-3 minutes)
10. Season and check - taste for flavour balance, ensure cauliflower is tender. Cook curry for longer, if cauliflower needs further softening.
11. Briefly pulse the curry with a stick blender to break up any larger pieces of cauliflower and lightly combine the ingredients.

Serving:

- Serve 80g cooked brown rice per child
- Top with curry, ensuring each portion contains chickpeas, cauliflower, and spinach

Seasonal Notes:

- Cauliflower peak season - September through to February.

Nutrition Tip:

This curry introduces children to warming spices in a mild, approachable way. Chickpeas provide plant-based protein and fibre, while the combination of cauliflower and spinach contains different textures and vitamins and minerals. The gentle spices help develop children's palates for diverse flavours.

Mediterranean Vegetable Lentil Stew with Pitta Bread

(serves 10 children)

Lentil Stew

Ingredients:

- 200g red lentils
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large onions, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large carrots, diced
- 2 sticks celery, diced
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and diced (about 400g). Seeds removed and discarded.
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1.2 litres vegetable stock (low sodium)
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

Method:

1. Rinse red lentils until water runs clear, then drain
2. Heat olive oil in a large, heavy-based pot over medium heat
3. Use a food processor to dice the carrots, onions, celery and garlic if easier.
4. Add onions, carrots, and celery to the pan and cook for 8-9 minutes until softened
5. Add the garlic - cook for 1 minute
6. Add butternut squash and cook for another 5 minutes
7. Stir in tomato puree, cumin, coriander, oregano, thyme, and black pepper - cook for 1 minute
8. Add chopped tomatoes, red lentils, vegetable stock, and bay leaves

9. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes until lentils are tender. Stir occasionally and add more stock if looking dry. Ensure squash is tender and can be squished easily between fingers.
10. Remove bay leaves, stir in fresh parsley
11. Season with more black pepper if needed

Pitta Bread

Ingredients:

- 5 wholemeal pitta breads (half a pitta or 25g is one serving)

Method:

1. Warm pitta breads in the oven at 180°C for 2-3 minutes
2. Cut into strips for easy dipping, or serve whole

To Serve

Serve the warm lentil stew in bowls with warm pitta bread on the side for dipping and scooping.

Nutrition tip:

We have chosen wholemeal pitta bread because it's **high in fibre** and children love the flavour. Fibre contributes to normal digestive function.

Cottage Pie with Potato & Cauliflower Topping & green beans

(serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

Meat filling:

- 450g lean minced beef
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 2 carrots, finely diced
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 150g mushrooms, diced
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 500ml beef stock (low sodium)
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- Black pepper to taste

Topping:

- 1kg potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 250g cauliflower florets (additional vegetable in topping)
- 50g unsalted butter
- 50ml milk
- 80g mature cheddar cheese, grated
- Black pepper to taste

200g Green beans, to serve on the side

Method:

Prepare the topping:

1. Boil potatoes and cauliflower together until tender (15-20 minutes)
2. Drain well and mash together with butter and milk until smooth
3. Season with black pepper, set aside

Make the filling:

1. Heat oil in a large pan, cook onions, celery and carrots for 10 minutes until soft
2. Add minced beef and cook until lightly browned, breaking up with a spoon

3. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute
4. Add tomato puree, balsamic vinegar, stock, mushrooms and herbs
5. Simmer for 45 minutes until thickened, season with black pepper. Add more water if it looks too dry.

Assemble:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Spoon meat mixture into a large baking dish
3. Top with potato and cauliflower mash, spreading evenly
4. Sprinkle grated cheese over the top
5. Bake for 30 minutes until golden and bubbling

Vegetable side dish: Serve with green beans, trimmed and steamed/boiled until tender. Drain and serve separately.

Vegetarian alternative:

Replace minced beef with 500g cooked green lentils and use vegetable stock instead of beef stock.

Lentil & Vegetable Pie with Potato & Cauliflower Topping & Green Beans

(Serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

Lentil Filling:

- 2 x 400g tinned green lentils in water (yields 40g protein per child)
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 2 carrots, finely diced
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced
- 150g mushrooms, diced
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 500ml vegetable stock (low sodium)
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- Black pepper to taste

Topping:

- 1kg potatoes, peeled and cubed (yields 80g cooked per child)
- 250g cauliflower florets (additional vegetable in topping)
- 50g butter

- 50ml milk
- 80g mature cheddar cheese, grated
- Black pepper to taste

Side Vegetable:

- 200g green beans, to serve on the side

Method:

Prepare the topping:

1. Boil potatoes and cauliflower together until tender (15-20 minutes)
2. Drain well and mash together with butter and milk until smooth
3. Season with black pepper, set aside

Make the lentil filling:

1. Heat oil in a large pan, cook onions, carrots and celery for 10 minutes until soft
2. Add cooked lentils and warm through for 3-4 minutes
3. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute
4. Add tomato puree, balsamic vinegar, vegetable stock, mushrooms and herbs
5. Simmer for 20 minutes until thickened, season with black pepper. Add more stock if it looks too dry.

Assemble:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Spoon lentil mixture into a large baking dish
3. Top with potato and cauliflower mash, spreading evenly
4. Sprinkle grated cheese over the top
5. Bake for 30 minutes until golden and bubbling

Vegetable side dish: Serve with green beans, trimmed and steamed/boiled until tender. Drain and serve separately.

Chef's Tips:

- Use tinned green lentils or pre-cooked lentils or cook 250g dried green lentils in advance
- Lentil mixture should be thick but not dry - add extra stock if needed

Coconut turmeric tofu noodles

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 500g egg noodles
- 400g firm set tofu, cubed into 1cm pieces (40g per child)
- 400ml coconut milk
- 1 red pepper, diced into small 5mm pieces
- 1 yellow pepper, diced into small 5mm pieces
- 150g courgette, diced into small 5mm pieces
- 1 carrot, finely grated
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, very finely grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1 tbsp fresh coriander, finely chopped (optional)

Method:

1. Cook egg noodles according to packet instructions, drain and keep warm
2. **Tofu:** Pan-fry tofu cubes in 1 tbsp oil until golden (5-6 minutes), set aside
3. **Coconut vegetables:** Heat remaining oil, sauté ginger and garlic and turmeric for 30 seconds.
4. Add diced peppers and carrots, cook for 6-8 minutes until soft
5. Add coconut milk, simmer gently for 5 minutes
6. Add courgette and cook 3-4 minutes until all vegetables are very soft
7. Add lime juice and mix gently

Serving:

- Serve 50g cooked noodles per child in bowls
- Top with coconut vegetable mixture
- Add 40g tofu pieces on top
- Sprinkle with finely chopped coriander if using. Or use frozen and cook through for a couple of minutes.

Moroccan style hake with couscous and broccoli

Serves 10 children

Moroccan Spice Mix

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

Method:

1. Mix all spices together in a small bowl
2. Store in an airtight container (makes extra for future use)

Hake

Ingredients:

- 1kg fresh hake fillets (skinless and boneless), cut into smaller portions, e.g. 100g portion.
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp of the spice mix (above)
- Juice of 1 lemon

Method:

1. Heat oven to 180°C/160°C fan
2. Mix olive oil with 1 tbsp spice mix and lemon juice
3. Brush the fish with the spiced oil mixture, all over
4. Wrap the fish up in a foil parcel, and place on a baking tray.
5. Bake for 15-20 minutes until fish flakes easily. Watch out for steam, when opening the foil parcel at the end of cooking.

Moroccan Couscous

Ingredients:

- 400g couscous
- 500ml boiling water
- 2 tbsp olive oil

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, diced small
- 1 courgette, diced small
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp of the spice mix (above)
- 2 tbsp dried apricots. Finely diced
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh or frozen coriander
- Approx 200g fresh broccoli to serve. Cut into small florets

Method:

1. Put couscous in a large bowl, pour over boiling water, cover and leave for 10 minutes
2. Heat olive oil in a large pan, add onion and cook for 5 minutes until soft
3. Add spice mix, carrots and courgette, cook for 5 minutes
4. Add tomatoes and apricots
5. Simmer for 10-15 minutes until vegetables are tender
6. Fluff couscous with a fork and stir alongside the vegetable mixture
7. Steam or boil the broccoli until tender. Serve alongside the meal as a finger food.
8. Sprinkle the meal with fresh coriander if using. If using frozen coriander, heat through for a couple of minutes.

To Serve

Place couscous on plates and top with the vegetables and the spiced hake and broccoli. The mild spices give lovely flavour without being too hot for little ones!

Vegetarian version:

Moroccan Style Chickpeas with Couscous and broccoli

To make the hake recipe vegetarian, simply replace the hake with 2 x 400g tins of drained and rinsed chickpeas - pat them dry, toss with the same spiced oil mixture (olive oil, spice mix, lemon juice plus 1 tbsp tomato puree), spread on a baking tray and roast at 180°C for 20-25 minutes until slightly crispy

Age-appropriate serving: For younger toddlers (12-18 months), mash chickpeas more thoroughly. For older toddlers (2+ years), lightly crushed chickpeas as above are perfect.

Then serve the chickpeas on top of the couscous.

Nutrition tip -

"Eat the Rainbow!" This colourful meal shows how variety makes eating fun and interesting. The orange carrots, red tomatoes, green courgette and herbs all add different vitamins, minerals, flavours, textures and natural colours to make the plate look appealing and exciting for children.

Salmon & Noodle Bowl

Serves 10 children

Base

Ingredients:

- 300g wholewheat noodles
- 600g salmon fillets, skinless and boneless

Vegetables

Ingredients:

- 1 yellow peppers, cut into thin strips and steamed until soft
- 200g broccoli florets, steamed until soft
- 200g green beans, topped and tailed

Sesame Dressing

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, finely grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Black pepper to taste

Method

1. Cook wholewheat noodles according to package instructions, drain and cool slightly
2. Steam yellow pepper strips and broccoli florets until soft and safe for toddlers (8-10 minutes)
3. Cook green beans in boiling water for 3-4 minutes, then drain
4. Bake salmon at 180°C for 12-15 minutes until cooked through, then flake into child-sized pieces
5. Mix all dressing ingredients together
6. Serve noodles in bowls topped with flaked salmon, steamed peppers, broccoli, and green beans.

7. Drizzle with sesame dressing

Chef's Tips

- Ensure all vegetables are well-cooked and soft for toddlers
- Flake salmon into small, manageable pieces with no bones
- Each child gets a balanced portion of noodles, salmon, and vegetables

Nutrition tips:

Oily Fish Requirement: This salmon dish helps meet DfE guidance that oily fish must appear on nursery menus at least once every 3 weeks. Salmon provides essential omega-3 fatty acids, making this an important nutritional requirement, not just a menu option.

Wholewheat benefits: Choosing wholewheat noodles over white provides extra fiber and nutrients. The nutty flavor of wholewheat noodles also introduces children to more complex, wholesome tastes.

Vegetarian option:

Tofu & Noodle Bowl

Serves 10 children

Base ingredients:

- 300g wholewheat noodles
- 500g plain firm tofu, drained and pressed

Vegetable ingredients:

- 1 yellow peppers, cut into strips and steamed until soft
- 200g broccoli florets, steamed until soft
- 200g green beans, topped, tailed and steamed until soft

Sesame dressing ingredients:

- 3 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar (or white wine vinegar)
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, finely grated
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Black pepper to taste

Method

1. Cook wholewheat noodles according to package instructions, drain and cool slightly
2. Steam yellow pepper strips and broccoli florets until soft and safe for toddlers (8-10 minutes)
3. Steam green beans for 5-6 minutes until tender, then cut into 1cm pieces
4. Cut tofu into small child-friendly cubes (1cm). Pan-fry in a little oil for 5-6 minutes until golden on all sides
5. Mix all dressing ingredients together
6. Serve noodles in bowls with tofu cubes and steamed peppers, broccoli, and green beans on the side. Don't serve components on top of each other, keep separate.
7. Drizzle with a little sesame dressing over the noodles.

Chef's Tips

- Ensure all vegetables are well-cooked and soft for toddlers
- Press tofu well before cooking to remove excess water
- Pan-frying gives tofu a firmer texture that's easier for children to handle

- Steam green beans until very soft, then cut into 2-3cm pieces (or 1cm pieces for children under 2 years) - well-cooked green beans are much safer than fibrous vegetables as they break apart easily when soft
- Each child gets a balanced portion of noodles, tofu, and vegetables

Chicken & Leek Potato-topped pie with greens

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 1kg potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- Splash of milk for mashed potato
- 500g skinless chicken breast, diced into small pieces (approx. 1cm dice)
- 2 leeks, cleaned and sliced (approx. 350g)
- 450ml chicken stock (salt-free)
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 heaped tbsp plain yoghurt
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

Method:

Prepare the Potato Topping:

1. **Cook potatoes:** Place peeled potato chunks in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes until completely tender when pierced with a knife.
2. **Drain and mash:** Drain potatoes thoroughly and leave for 2-3 minutes to steam dry. Mash with a potato masher or ricer until completely smooth, creamy and lump-free. Season with black pepper. Add a splash of milk to loosen. Set aside.

Prepare the Filling:

3. **Preheat oven** to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas Mark 6
4. **Cook leeks:** Heat olive oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over medium heat. Add sliced leeks to the pan and cook for 5 minutes until softened and lightly golden.
5. **Add chicken:** Add diced chicken and dried thyme and cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring regularly, until just sealed and lightly golden.
6. **Make sauce:** Sprinkle flour over the chicken and leeks, stir well and cook for 1-2 minutes. Gradually add chicken stock, stirring constantly to prevent lumps. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 8-10 minutes until thickened and sauce coats the back of a spoon.
7. **Season and finish:** Add black pepper. Remove from heat and cool for 5 minutes before stirring through the natural yoghurt.

Assemble and Bake:

8. **Assemble pie:** Transfer the chicken and leek filling to a large ovenproof baking dish (approx. 25cm x 25cm). Spread the mashed potato evenly over the top, using a fork to create ridges for extra browning.
9. **Bake:** Place in preheated oven for 25-30 minutes until the potato topping is golden brown and has reached the correct temperature.
10. **Rest and serve:** Allow to cool for 5 minutes before serving. Serve with seasonal greens, recipe below.

Vegetarian Alternative:

Cannellini bean & leek potato topped pie with greens

To make this vegetarian, replace the chicken with 2 x 400g tins of drained cannellini beans and use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock - the creamy beans work beautifully with the leeks and create the same hearty, satisfying filling.

Seasonal Greens

Ingredients:

- 200g seasonal greens (see options below)

Seasonal Options:

- **September-October:** Fresh spinach or early cabbage
- **November-December:** Brussels sprouts (halved) or winter cabbage
- **January-February:** Kale or savoy cabbage

Method:

1. Steam or lightly boil chosen greens until tender
2. Brussels sprouts: halve and steam for 8-10 minutes
3. Cabbage/kale: shred and steam for 5-7 minutes
4. Spinach: wilt in pan for 2-3 minutes
5. Serve alongside the pie

Chef's Tips

- Ready-rolled pastry makes this quick and easy for busy kitchens
- Choose greens based on what's in season for best flavour and value
- Pie can be assembled in advance and baked when needed
- Each child gets a portion of pie plus seasonal vegetables

Perfect winter comfort food: Hearty chicken and leek filling with flaky pastry, served with nutritious seasonal greens!

Leek & bean risotto with peas

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 400g risotto rice (Arborio)
- 3 large leeks, cleaned and sliced (about 300g)
- 200g frozen peas (served separately)
- 2 x 400g tin haricot beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 1.5 litres vegetable stock (low salt or salt free)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (or frozen parsley, if fresh unavailable)

Method

1. Heat vegetable stock in a saucepan and keep warm
2. Heat olive oil in a large, heavy-based pan
3. Add onion and cook for 3 minutes until soft
4. Add leeks and garlic, cook for 5 minutes until tender
5. Add risotto rice and stir for 1 minute until coated
6. Add warm stock one ladle at a time, stirring frequently
7. Continue adding stock and stirring for 20-25 minutes until rice is soft
8. In the last 5 minutes, add the haricot beans to warm though
9. Stir in black pepper to taste.
10. Meanwhile, cook frozen peas in boiling water for 3-4 minutes, then drain
11. Remove the risotto from the heat and stir in fresh parsley. Or use frozen parsley and heat for a couple of minutes.
12. Serve immediately

Chef's Tips

- Use a food processor to cut the onion and leek to save time
- Keep stock warm throughout cooking for best results
- Stir regularly but don't need to stir constantly

- Haricot beans add protein and creamy texture - the same beans used in baked beans!

Nutrition Tip: This delicious risotto combines starchy carbohydrates from the rice, with protein-rich haricot beans and mixed vegetables, creating a complete, balanced meal in one dish. The slow cooking method makes the rice naturally creamy. Using a variety of vegetables adds different colours, textures and flavours to help children explore new tastes in a familiar, comforting format.

Creamy salmon pasta with peas

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 340g dried pasta (penne or fusilli)
- 400g salmon fillets, skinless and boneless
- 400g frozen peas
- 300ml crème fraîche
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, chopped (or frozen)
- Black pepper to taste

Method

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions, drain and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a large pan, add onion and cook for 5 minutes until soft
3. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute
4. Cut salmon into small, child-friendly pieces and add to pan
5. Cook salmon for 3-4 minutes until just cooked through
6. Pour in crème fraîche and lemon juice, stir gently and warm through for 1-2 minutes (don't boil)
7. Add cooked pasta and dill, toss gently to combine
8. Cook the frozen peas as per packet instructions. Drain and serve separately.
9. Season with black pepper and serve immediately

Chef's Tips

- Remove any bones from salmon carefully before cutting
- Cut salmon into small, manageable pieces for children
- Crème fraîche adds lovely richness - just warm through, don't boil or it may curdle

Vegetarian Alternative: Creamy bean pasta with peas

To make this suitable for vegetarians, replace the salmon with:

- Tinned cannellini beans in water, drained and rinsed

Method change:

- Skip steps 4-5 (cooking salmon)
- Instead, add the drained cannellini beans in step 6
- Warm through for 2-3 minutes before adding crème fraîche.

Nutrition tip:

This creamy pasta dish combines protein-rich salmon with starchy carbohydrates and vegetables, creating a complete, balanced meal in one bowl. Salmon provides omega-3 fatty acids, while the peas add extra vegetables and fibre. The pasta provides energy-giving carbohydrates, and the creamy sauce helps make the fish appealing to children who might otherwise be hesitant about trying fish

Greek style chicken bites with roasted potatoes, green beans & yoghurt dip

Serves 10 children

For the Greek style chicken bites:

- 500g chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces (2-3cm chunks)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ tbsp lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1½ tsp dried oregano
- Black pepper to taste

For the Greek roasted potatoes:

- 1kg potatoes, cut into wedges
- 75ml olive oil
- Juice of 1½ lemons
- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 200ml hot chicken stock

For serving:

Greek yoghurt dip

- 250ml Greek yogurt mixed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp dried mint (tzatziki-style sauce)

Green beans

- 400g green beans, trimmed
- Lemon juice
- Extra virgin olive oil

Method:

1. **Marinate chicken first** - cut chicken into bite-sized pieces and marinate in olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, oregano and black pepper for at least 30 minutes (or up to 2 hours for better flavor)
2. **Start potatoes** - preheat oven to 200°C. Toss potato wedges with olive oil, lemon juice, oregano and garlic in a roasting tray. Pour hot stock around (not over) potatoes. Roast for 35-40 minutes or until golden and crispy

3. **Cook chicken** - after potatoes have been cooking for 15 minutes, spread marinated chicken pieces on lined baking trays and cook for 20-25 minutes until cooked through and no pink remains
4. **Prepare beans** - blanch green beans in boiling water for 3-4 minutes until tender but still bright green. Drain and toss with a little olive oil and lemon juice
5. **Prepare dip** - mix Greek yogurt with olive oil and dried mint
6. **Serve hot** - arrange on platters with bowls of yoghurt dip for dunking

Chef's Tips

- Use lined baking trays for chicken to prevent sticking and easier cleanup
- Both potato wedges and chicken should finish cooking at the same time. Don't overcook chicken, to prevent it drying out.
- Keep beans bright green by not overcooking

Vegetarian option to replace Greek chicken bites:

Use recipe for 'Sweet potato & chickpea patties'

Nutrition tip:

Chicken breast provides high-quality lean protein to support children's growth and development. This interactive meal encourages children to explore different flavours by dipping their chicken bites and roasted potatoes in the creamy yoghurt sauce, making healthy eating fun while they control their own portions. The separate components create a balanced plate with protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables all in one satisfying Mediterranean-inspired meal.

One-Pot Sweet Turkey Rice

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 600g turkey breast, diced into small pieces
- 400g basmati rice
- 800ml low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 large onion, finely diced (use a food processor)
- 2 carrots, diced small (use a food processor to dice to save time)
- 50g unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 100g sultanas
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped or use frozen.
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the green beans:

- 200g frozen green beans (or fresh green beans when in season in July to September)
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Squeeze of lemon juice

Method:

1. **Cook turkey** - heat olive oil, cook diced turkey until golden and cooked through (5-6 minutes), remove and set aside
2. **Cook aromatics** - in same pan, melt butter, cook onion and carrot until golden (8 minutes), add cinnamon and allspice for 1 minute
3. **Add rice** - stir in rice, coat with spiced butter for 2 minutes
4. **Add stock** - pour in stock, bring to boil then simmer covered for 25 minutes
5. **Finish rice** - stir in cooked turkey and sultanas and cook 3 minutes more
6. **Cook green beans** - meanwhile, steam or boil green beans for 4-5 minutes until tender, toss with olive oil and lemon juice
7. Leave rice to sit for 5 minutes before serving.
8. **Serve** - garnish rice with fresh parsley, serve with green beans on the side

Perfect separation: Children can choose whether to mix the green beans in or eat them separately!

Nutrition Tip:

Turkey provides high-quality protein to support children's growth and development. This balanced meal includes protein from turkey, starchy carbohydrates from rice, and vegetables that provide vitamins and minerals. The mild warming spices like cinnamon help broaden children's palates, and introducing different spices from a young age encourages more adventurous eating habits. The sultanas add natural sweetness that children enjoy, creating a well-rounded meal that combines all the main food groups in one appealing dish.

Vegetarian option:

One-Pot Sweet Bean Rice

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins butter beans, drained and rinsed
- 400g basmati rice
- 7500ml low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 large onion, finely diced (use a food processor)
- 2 carrots, diced small (use a food processor to dice to save time)
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 200g tinned diced tomatoes
- 50g unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 100g sultanas
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped or use frozen
- Black pepper to taste

For the green beans:

- 200g frozen green beans
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Squeeze of lemon juice

Method:

1. **Warm beans** - heat olive oil, gently warm butter beans for 3-4 minutes, remove and set aside

2. **Cook aromatics** - in same pan, melt butter, cook onion, carrot, and red pepper until golden (8 minutes), add cinnamon and allspice for 1 minute
3. **Add rice** - stir in rice, coat with spiced butter for 2 minutes
4. **Add stock** - pour in stock and diced tomatoes, bring to boil then simmer covered for 20 minutes
5. **Finish rice** - stir in warmed butter beans and sultanas and cook 3 minutes more
6. **Cook green beans** - meanwhile, steam or boil green beans for 4-5 minutes until tender, toss with olive oil and lemon juice
7. **Serve** - garnish rice with fresh parsley, serve with green beans on the side
8. Leave rice to sit for 5 minutes before serving.

Amends: This vegetarian dish also has red peppers and tomatoes included to provide vitamin C to boost iron absorption from the butter beans while keeping authentic Turkish flavours!

Sweet Potato and red lentil curry with rice and pitta bread

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 200g red lentils
- 200g sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 150g frozen spinach
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 white onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 400ml coconut milk
- 500ml vegetable stock (made with low-sodium/salt free stock cubes)
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 3 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped. Or frozen coriander.
- Black pepper to taste

To serve:

- 200g basmati rice
- 150g wholemeal pitta bread

Method:

1. **Cook base** - heat oil in large pan, sauté onions for 5 minutes until softened
2. **Add spices** - add garlic, garam masala, cumin, ground coriander, and turmeric, cook for 1 minute
3. **Add liquids** - stir in chopped tomatoes, coconut milk, and 200ml vegetable stock
4. **Add lentils and sweet potatoes** - add red lentils and diced sweet potatoes, bring to boil
5. **Simmer** - reduce heat and simmer for 15-20 minutes until lentils and sweet potatoes are tender. Keep adding more stock if needed (if it looks dry). Red lentils will absorb a lot of liquid.
6. **Finish** - add frozen spinach for final 3-4 minutes until wilted, season with black pepper. If using frozen coriander, heat through for a couple of minutes.

7. **Cook rice** - meanwhile, cook rice according to packet instructions
8. **Serve** - garnish curry with fresh coriander, serve with rice and warm pitta bread

Cod Fishcakes with sweetcorn, spinach and bread

Need extra time to chill and fishcakes to firm up in fridge

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 450g cod fillets
- 800g potatoes, peeled and cut into small chunks
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped or frozen
- 1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped or frozen (or 1 tsp dried)
- Black pepper to taste
- 3 slices wholemeal bread, blitzed into breadcrumbs using a food processor
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 100g plain flour
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil

Braised Spinach:

- 200g fresh spinach, washed and any large stalks removed and discarded
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Black pepper to taste

Sweetcorn:

200g sweetcorn - Use fresh sweetcorn in September. Then from October to February, use tinned sweetcorn in water or frozen sweetcorn. Serve warm. Cook as per on pack cooking instructions.

Method for fishcakes:

1. **Cook potatoes** - boil potatoes until tender, drain and mash until smooth
2. **Poach cod** - gently poach cod for 12-15 minutes until cooked through, drain and flake. See note below.
3. **Mix filling** - combine mashed potato, flaked cod, lemon zest and juice, herbs, and black pepper
4. **Chill mixture** - refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up

5. **Shape fishcakes** - form into 10 round patties, so 1 patty per child
6. **Coat fishcakes** - dip each in flour, then beaten egg, then breadcrumbs
7. **Cook fishcakes** - shallow fry in oil for 3-4 minutes each side until golden, then bake at 180°C for 15 minutes
8. **Braised spinach** - heat olive oil and butter, add spinach and cook until wilted, season with lemon juice, nutmeg, and black pepper

***How to poach cod for fishcakes:**

1. Cover with liquid - place cod in shallow pan, cover with cold water
2. Gentle simmer - bring slowly to barely bubbling, poach 8-12 minutes until fish flakes easily
3. Drain and flake - lift out with slotted spoon, cool slightly, then flake into pieces

Key: Keep it gentle - don't boil hard or the fish will be tough.

Bread to serve:

- 150g fresh wholemeal bread, cut into thick fingers
- Butter or plant-based spread (preferably containing vitamin A)

Method: Cut bread into thick finger-sized pieces. For younger children, lightly toast the bread fingers to make them firmer and reduce choking risk. Serve with butter or plant-based spread on the side for children to spread themselves.

Vegetarian option:

Sweet Potato & Chickpea patty with sweetcorn, braised spinach and sweetcorn

Patties need extra time to chill in fridge before cooking

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 300g sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 300g potatoes, peeled
- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas in water, drained and rinsed
- Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (or 1 tbsp dried)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp paprika (mild and sweet)
- Black pepper to taste
- 3 slices wholemeal bread, blitzed into breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs, beaten

- 100g plain flour
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil

Method:

1. **Roast sweet potatoes** - roast diced sweet potatoes at 200°C for 25 minutes until tender
2. **Cook potatoes** - boil potatoes until tender, drain and mash until smooth
3. **Mash chickpeas** - roughly mash chickpeas with a fork, leaving some texture
4. **Mix filling** - combine mashed potato, roasted sweet potato, mashed chickpeas, lemon zest and juice, herbs, cumin, paprika, and black pepper
5. **Chill mixture** - refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm up
6. **Shape cakes** - form into 10 round patties
7. **Coat cakes** - dip each in flour, then beaten egg, then breadcrumbs
8. **Cook** - shallow fry in oil for 3-4 minutes each side until golden, then bake at 180°C for 15 minutes

Beef Lasagne

Serves 10 children

For the Beef Ragu:

- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 medium onions, peeled, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled, diced small
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped/crushed
- Small bunch fresh basil. Leaves picked and set aside. Stalks, finely chopped
- 500g fresh beef mince
- 2 x 400g tins plum tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 1½ tsp mixed dried herbs
- Black pepper to taste

For the Cheese Sauce:

- 40g unsalted butter
- 40g plain flour
- 450ml whole milk
- 100g mild cheddar cheese, grated

Assembly:

- 400g dried lasagne sheets
- 50g mild cheddar cheese, grated (for topping)

Method:

1. **Make ragu** - heat oil, fry onions, carrots, and chopped basil stalks for 5 minutes until softened. Add garlic for 2 minutes, then beef and black pepper. Cook until beef loses pink colour
2. **Simmer** - add tinned tomatoes and dried herbs. Fill each of empty cans with water and add to the pan. Simmer uncovered for 1 hour until thickened and reduced, stirring occasionally. Stir in torn basil leaves until wilted
3. **Make cheese sauce** - melt butter, whisk in flour for 1 minute. Gradually add milk, whisking until smooth. Simmer until thickened, stir in cheese
4. **Assemble** - Preheat oven to 180°C. Layer the baking dish with: a layer of ragu sauce, a layer of cheese sauce, and lasagne sheets. Repeat 3-4 times. Scatter

remaining grated cheese on top. Poke in a few basil leaves over the top and black pepper.

5. **Bake** - cook for 35-45 minutes or until lasagne sheets are cooked until bubbling and knife slides through easily

Vegetarian option

Vegetable and red lentil Lasagne

Serves 10 children

For the Red Lentil Ragu:

- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 medium onions, peeled, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled, diced small
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped/crushed
- Small bunch fresh basil. Leaves picked and set aside. Stalks, finely chopped
- 200g dried red lentils
- 2 x 400g tins plum tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 500ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 1 ½ tsp mixed dried herbs
- Black pepper to taste

For the Cheese Sauce:

- 40g unsalted butter
- 40g plain flour
- 450ml whole milk
- 100g mild cheddar cheese, grated

Assembly:

- 400g pre-cooked dried lasagne sheets
- 50g mild cheddar cheese, grated (for topping)

Method:

1. **Make lentil ragu** - heat oil, fry onions, carrots, and chopped basil stalks for 5 minutes until softened. Add garlic for 2 minutes, then red lentils and black pepper. Stir for 1 minute
2. **Simmer** - add tomatoes, vegetable stock, and dried herbs. Simmer uncovered for 25-30 minutes until lentils are soft and mixture is thick. Stir in torn basil leaves until wilted

3. **Make cheese sauce** - melt butter, whisk in flour for 1 minute. Gradually add milk, whisking until smooth. Simmer until thickened, stir in cheese
4. **Assemble** - Preheat oven to 180°C. Layer the baking dish with: a layer of lentil ragu sauce, a layer of cheese sauce, and lasagne sheets. Repeat 3-4 times. Scatter remaining grated cheese on top. Poke in a few basil leaves over the top.
5. **Bake** - cook for 35-45 minutes until bubbling and knife slides through easily

Key Changes:

- Replaced 500g beef mince with 250g red lentils
- Added 500ml vegetable stock for lentils to cook in
- Reduced cooking time to 25-30 minutes (lentils cook faster than beef)

Children's Beef & Lentil Curry with Rice & Butternut Squash

Serves 10 children

Main Curry Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, finely diced (100g)
- 450g diced stewing beef, cut into small 1cm pieces
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 200g dried red split lentils
- 150g frozen spinach
- 150g frozen peas
- 400ml coconut milk (light)
- 750ml low-salt beef stock

Authentic Spices:

- 1.5 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp garam masala
- 1/4tsp ground ginger

Method:

1. Heat oil, cook onion until soft (5 minutes)
2. Add beef pieces and brown quickly (2-3 minutes) - just to seal, not cook through
3. Add spices, cook 1 minute
4. Add tomatoes, lentils, and 500ml stock
5. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer covered for approx. 2 hours until beef is very tender and falls apart easily.
6. Keep an eye on it. Add more stock/water if too dry.
7. Add the coconut milk, frozen spinach and peas 10 minutes before the stew is ready
8. Check beef is fork-tender and easy to break apart
9. Cool slightly before serving

Chef's Tips:

- Only brown beef briefly to seal - the long slow simmer will tenderise it
- Test beef pieces - they should break apart easily with a fork

Steamed Butternut Squash Fingers (serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 400g butternut squash, peeled (yields approximately 300g cooked - 30g per child)
- Pinch of black pepper (optional)

Method:

1. Prepare squash - peel butternut squash, remove seeds, and cut into finger-shaped batons approximately 1cm x 1cm x 6cm long
2. Steam - arrange squash fingers in a steamer basket over boiling water
3. Cook - steam for 12-15 minutes until tender when pierced with a fork but still holding their shape
4. Check doneness - should be soft enough for children to bite easily but not mushy
5. Serve - arrange on platters as finger food alongside the curry and rice

Alternative - Boiled:

- Gently boil in lightly boiling water for 8-10 minutes until just tender
- Drain carefully to avoid breaking

Vegetarian option

Children's Vegetable & lentil curry and butternut squash fingers (served separately)

Serves 10 children

Main Curry Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, finely diced (100g)
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 200g dried red split lentils
- 150g frozen spinach
- 150g frozen peas
- 400ml coconut milk (light)
- 500ml low-salt vegetable stock

Authentic Spices:

- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp mild paprika

Method:

1. Heat oil, cook onion until soft (5 minutes)
2. Add spices, cook 1 minute until fragrant
3. Add tomatoes, lentils, and 500ml of stock
4. Keep an eye on the curry, add more stock if looking dry.
5. Simmer 30 minutes until lentils nearly cooked
6. Add frozen spinach and peas, cook 10 minutes more
7. Add coconut milk, cook 5 minutes more. Add more stock if needed.
8. Cool slightly before serving

Chicken, mushroom and spinach potato topped pie with carrots

(serves 10 children)

Ingredients: For the filling:

- 450g chicken breast, diced into small 1cm pieces (45g per child)
- 600ml low-salt chicken stock
- 2 tbsp olive oil for frying
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely diced (100g)
- 150g crème fraîche
- 200g button mushrooms, sliced
- 200g fresh spinach, washed and chopped (or 100g frozen spinach)
- 60g plain flour
- 100g frozen peas
- Black pepper to taste

For the potato topping:

- 800g potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 25g unsalted butter
- 75ml milk
- Black pepper to taste

Side Vegetables:

- 400g carrots, cut into batons

Method: Make the potato topping:

1. Boil potatoes until tender (15-20 minutes)
2. Drain well and mash with butter and milk until smooth
3. Season with black pepper, set aside

Make the filling:

1. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan, cook onion until soft (5-7 minutes)
2. Add mushrooms and cook until softened (5 minutes)
3. Add chicken pieces and cook until just white on outside (3-4 minutes)
4. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute
5. Gradually add stock, stirring constantly to prevent lumps
6. Simmer for 15 minutes until chicken is cooked through and sauce thickened
7. Add spinach and peas, cook for 2-3 minutes until spinach wilted

8. Remove from heat, stir in crème fraîche, season with black pepper

Assemble and bake:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Spoon chicken mixture into a large baking dish
3. Top with mashed potato, spreading evenly and creating texture with a fork
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden and bubbling

Prepare carrots: Steam carrot batons until tender (8-10 minutes), serve alongside the pie

Chef's Tips:

- Don't overcook chicken initially - it finishes cooking in the sauce
- Let filling cool slightly before adding crème fraîche to prevent curdling
- Create ridges in potato topping with a fork for better browning

Vegetarian option

Mushroom, Spinach and Bean potato topped pie with carrots - Vegetarian (serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins cannellini beans, drained
- 600ml low-salt vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 150g crème fraîche
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 200g button mushrooms, sliced
- 200g fresh spinach, washed and chopped (or 100g frozen spinach)
- 60g plain flour
- 100g frozen peas

Mashed Potato Topping:

- 800g potatoes, peeled and diced
- 50g unsalted butter
- 100ml whole milk

Side Vegetables:

- 400g carrots, cut into batons and steamed until soft

Method:

1. Boil potatoes until tender (15-20 minutes), drain and mash with butter and milk until smooth
2. Add olive oil to a large pan, gently sauté onion for 5 minutes
3. Add the mushrooms and continue frying until soft (approx. further 3 minutes)
4. Add fresh spinach and cook until wilted (2-3 minutes) - or add frozen spinach and cook until heated through
5. Add flour and cook for 1 minute
6. **Gradually add vegetable stock, stirring constantly - you may not need all the stock**
7. Simmer until sauce thickens (10-12 minutes) - **add water if sauce becomes too thick**
8. Add cannellini beans and peas, cook for 2-3 minutes to heat through
9. Remove from heat and stir in crème fraîche

10. Transfer to large baking dish, cool slightly
11. Spread mashed potato evenly on top, fork the surface for texture
12. Bake at 200°C/180°C fan for 25 minutes or until golden on top
13. Serve pie with carrots on the side

Beef Bolognese with Potato Wedges and green beans and cauliflower

(serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 400g lean beef mince (40g per child)
- 1 medium onion, finely diced (100g)
- 2 celery sticks, finely diced (100g)
- 200g carrots, finely diced (200g total veg)
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tsp dried herbs (oregano/mixed herbs)
- 300ml low-salt beef stock
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 150g mild cheddar cheese, grated (15g per child)

Potato Wedges:

- 800g potatoes, cut into wedges (80g cooked per child as a guide for portion size)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp dried rosemary

Side Vegetables:

- 200g green beans, topped and tailed
- 200g cauliflower florets

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C for potato wedges
2. Toss potato wedges with olive oil and rosemary, bake for 30-35 minutes until golden
3. Heat oil in large pan, fry onion, celery and carrots until soft (8-10 minutes)
4. Add beef mince, cook until browned all over (8 minutes)
5. Add garlic and herbs, cook 1 minute
6. Add chopped tomatoes and stock
7. Simmer for 1 hour until sauce thickened and vegetables very soft.
8. Stir occasionally. Add more water if needed to prevent sauce being dry.
9. Steam green beans and cauliflower: 8-10 minutes for toddlers (finger food), 12-15 minutes for babies (very soft)

10. Cut green beans into 2-3cm pieces after steaming
11. Serve Bolognese with potato wedges, steamed vegetables, and sprinkle cheese on top (allow older children to add their own cheese)

Vegetarian Bolognese with Potato Wedges and green beans and cauliflower
(serves 10 children)

Same ingredients and method, using red lentils instead of beef mince

Chef's Tips:

- Reduce cooking time to 45 minutes, won't need as long as the beef Bolognese. Keep adding extra water if looks dry.
- **Toddlers (12+ months):** Steam vegetables 8-10 minutes, cut green beans into 2-3cm pieces
- **Babies (6-12 months):** Steam 12-15 minutes until very soft.

Perfect winter meal: Rich, warming Bolognese with crisp potato wedges and tender steamed vegetables!

Vegetable Chilli Con Carne

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 2 large onions, finely diced
- 2 red peppers, diced
- 2 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced into 1cm cubes
- 1 tsp mild paprika
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- Black pepper to taste
- 1 x 400g tin kidney beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 1 x 400g black beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 600ml low-salt vegetable stock
- 2 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 4 tbsp tomato puree
- 1-2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp frozen coriander (to finish)

Method:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat
2. Add onion and red pepper and cook for 5 minutes until softened
3. Add sweet potato, cook for 5 minutes
4. Add garlic, paprika, and cumin, cook for 1 minute until fragrant
5. Stir in tomato puree and cook for 1 minute
6. Add chopped tomatoes, kidney beans, black beans and vegetable stock
7. Season with black pepper and bring to the boil
8. Reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes until sweet potato is tender and sauce has thickened. If looking dry, add more water to loosen.
9. Stir in frozen coriander and cook for 1 minute.
10. Taste and adjust black pepper seasoning if needed

Serving Suggestions:

- Serve with brown rice

Chef's Tips:

- Use a food processor cutting attachment to cut the onion, red pepper and garlic to a small dice to save time.
- Ensure sweet potato is cut small (1cm) for even cooking and child safety
- Check sweet potato is fork-tender and squishable before serving

Hearty, warming vegetarian chilli perfect for cold days!

Tea Recipes

(First Course)

Recipe title - Toasted tortilla triangles with guacamole

Serves: 10 children

Ingredients:

For the Toasted Tortillas:

- 250g corn tortilla wraps (25g per child as a guide)
- 1 tbsp olive oil

For the guacamole:

- 400g ripe avocados (40g per child)
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh coriander, very finely chopped or frozen coriander
- 1 medium ripe tomato, deseeded and finely diced
- Pinch of ground black pepper

Method:

Make Toasted Tortilla Triangles:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Cut tortillas into triangles (6-8 pieces per tortilla)
3. Brush lightly with olive oil
4. Bake 6-8 minutes until crispy and lightly golden
5. Cool on wire rack until just warm

Make guacamole:

1. Discard stone & skin, mash avocados until smooth but with some texture
2. Add lemon juice immediately to prevent browning
3. Fold in fresh coriander - distribute evenly throughout
4. Add diced tomato for authentic texture and colour
5. Season with pinch of black pepper
6. Cover tightly until serving

Serving:

- Individual portions - 25g tortilla triangles with 40g guacamole per child
- Arrange triangles around small portion of guacamole for dipping.

Plain Hummus with Red Pepper Sticks (serves 10 children)

Plain Hummus Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tin chickpeas in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ a clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Red Pepper Sticks:

- 3-4 red peppers
- Water for steaming (if needed)

Method:

Make the hummus:

1. Put all hummus ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy
3. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency
4. Taste and adjust seasoning
5. Serve in small bowls

Prepare red pepper sticks:

1. Wash and deseed the red peppers
2. Cut into thick finger-sized sticks
3. **For younger children or those struggling with hard texture:** Steam pepper sticks for 3-4 minutes until slightly softened but still with some crunch
4. **For older children:** Serve raw pepper sticks

Serving: Arrange pepper sticks around bowls of hummus for dipping

Chef's tip: Test the pepper texture with the children first - some may prefer them raw while others need them lightly steamed.

Tea recipes

(Main Course)

Chicken Fajitas with tomato salsa & sour cream

Serves: 10 children

For the Chicken Fajitas:

Ingredients:

- 600g chicken breast (skinless and boneless), sliced into strips
- 2 red peppers, sliced
- 2 yellow peppers, sliced
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp sweet paprika
- Juice of 2 limes
- Pinch of black pepper

Method:

1. **Season chicken** - toss chicken strips with half the cumin, paprika, and lime juice
2. **Heat oil** in large pan over medium-high heat
3. **Cook chicken** - fry chicken strips for 6-8 minutes until cooked through and golden
4. **Remove chicken** - set aside and keep warm
5. **Cook vegetables** - add peppers and onions to same pan with remaining spices
6. **Cook until tender** - 6-8 minutes until vegetables are soft and slightly charred
7. **Combine** - return chicken to pan, add remaining lime juice, toss together

Vegetarian Alternative:

Black Bean Fajita Filling:

- 2 x 400g tins black beans, drained and rinsed
- Same peppers and onions as above
- Same spices and lime juice
- **Method:** Cook vegetables as above, add drained black beans in final 3-4 minutes to heat through

Fresh Tomato Salsa

Ingredients:

- 4 large ripe tomatoes, finely diced
- 1/2 red onion, very finely chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh coriander (optional)
- Juice of 1 lime
- Pinch of black pepper

Method:

1. **Prepare tomatoes** - finely dice
2. **Mix ingredients** - combine tomatoes, onion, coriander (if using), lime juice, and pepper
3. **Rest** - let flavours develop for 15 minutes before serving

To Serve (Serve components separately):

- Warm wholemeal wraps (25g per child)
- Chicken or bean fajita mixture
- Fresh tomato salsa
- Plain sour cream (small dollop per child)
- Let children build their own combinations

Serving Notes:

- Cut wraps into triangles for easier handling
- Provide spoons for children to scoop fillings
- All components at appropriate temperature for safe eating

Nutrition Tip:

This interactive meal introduces children to Mexican flavours while allowing them to control their own combinations. The mild spices help broaden their palate, while the separate components accommodate different taste preferences and eating abilities. This creates a perfectly balanced meal with protein from chicken or beans, vegetables from the colourful peppers and fresh salsa, and fibre from the wholemeal wraps.

Smoky Herby Baked Beans with Jacket Potato & vegetable sticks

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large onions, diced (about 200g)
- 2 large carrots, diced small (about 200g)
- 1 red pepper, diced (about 100g)
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 2 tsp sweet paprika - mild
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- Black pepper, to taste
- 400ml vegetable stock (low sodium)
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

Method:

1. Heat olive oil in a large, heavy-based pot over medium heat
2. Add the onions, carrots and red peppers - cook for 10 minutes until softened
3. Add garlic, cook for another 2 minutes. Keep stirring.
4. Stir in tomato puree, paprika, oregano, thyme, and black pepper - cook for 1 minute
5. Add chopped tomatoes, cannellini beans and vegetable stock
6. Bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to low
7. Cover and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally
8. Remove lid and simmer for another 15 minutes until sauce has thickened
9. Stir in fresh parsley
10. Taste and adjust seasoning with more black pepper if needed

Jacket Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 10 medium baking potatoes (about 200g each)

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oven to 220°C/200°C fan
2. Scrub potatoes clean and pat dry
3. Prick all over with a fork
4. Rub with olive oil and sprinkle with black pepper
5. Bake for 45-60 minutes until skin is crispy and flesh is fluffy
6. Cut open and fluff with a fork

To Serve

Serve the smoky baked beans alongside the jacket potatoes and vegetable sticks

Fresh Vegetable Sticks (serves 10 children)

Ingredients

- 1 cucumber, cut into batons
- 2 red peppers, cut into strips (seeds, pith and stalk removed)
- 2 small little gem lettuce (or cos), leaves separated
- 8 radishes, quartered

Method

1. Wash all vegetables thoroughly
2. Cut cucumbers into finger-sized batons (about 7cm long)
3. Remove seeds, pith and stalks from peppers, then cut into strips
4. Separate lettuce leaves carefully, keeping them whole
5. Trim radish tops and roots, then quarter each radish
6. Arrange on serving platters or individual plates
7. Serve immediately for maximum crispness

Chef's Tip: The sweet paprika gives a lovely smoky flavour to the baked beans without any heat, perfect for children's palates. The beans can be made ahead and reheated when needed.

Nutrition tip:

Beans – Nature's Superfood! Cannellini beans are a fantastic plant-based protein and an excellent source of fibre. Introducing children to different types of beans and pulses helps them discover that protein doesn't only come from meat – beans are tasty, versatile, and a wonderful foundation for many delicious meals!

Dip & dunk pitta with beetroot & bean hummus, cheese & vegetable sticks

Serves 10 children

Wholemeal Pitta Bread

Ingredients:

- 5 wholemeal pitta breads (half a pitta bread is a suggested portion size)

Method:

1. Warm pitta breads in the oven at 180°C for 2-3 minutes
2. Cut each pitta into finger-sized strips
3. Arrange on serving platters

Beetroot & Bean Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tin cannellini beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 200g cooked vacuum-packed beetroot
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp plain thick yoghurt (unsweetened)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz until smooth and creamy
3. Serve in small bowls for dipping

Vegetable Sticks

Ingredients:

- 2 large cucumbers, cut into sticks
- 4 large carrots, cut into sticks

Method:

1. Cut vegetables into finger-sized sticks
2. Arrange on serving platters

Cheese

Ingredients:

- 100g Cheddar cheese

Method:

- Remove the cheese from the fridge and allow to come to room temperature for easier cutting (about 10-15 minutes).
- Using a clean sharp knife, cut the cheese into small cubes approximately 1cm x 1cm - this size is perfect for little hands to grip and safe for young children to chew.
- If serving to very young children (under 3), you may want to cut the cubes slightly smaller or into thin sticks to reduce choking risk.
- Arrange the cheese cubes on the serving plate alongside the vegetable sticks and pitta bread pieces.
- Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to 2 hours before serving to keep the cheese fresh.

Chef's Tips

- Hummus gets better after sitting for 30 minutes - flavours develop
- Keep vegetable sticks in cold water until serving to stay crisp
- Each child gets pitta strips, hummus portion, and mixed vegetable sticks

Perfect for little hands: Soft pitta strips and crisp vegetables are ideal for dipping and dunking - children love the interactive eating experience, and it's super quick for busy kitchen staff!

Nutrition Tip: This colourful meal combines different food groups - wholemeal pitta provides energy, beans offer plant-based protein, cheese contributes calcium for healthy bones and teeth and the variety of vegetables adds different textures, flavours and natural colours to make eating fun and interesting for children.

Italian pasta and bean stew

(Serve with bread on the side for dunking)

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 300g dried macaroni pasta
- 2 x 400g tins borlotti beans, drained and rinsed
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, diced small
- 2 sticks celery, diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 750ml vegetable stock (low salt or salt free stock)
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley (or frozen parsley)
- 5 slices bread, for dunking. Cut in half to provide approx. 25g per person.

Method

1. Cook the pasta in a separate large pan of boiling water according to packet instructions until just tender. Drain and set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a large pan, add onion, carrots, celery and cook for 8-10 minutes until soft. Stir frequently.
3. Add garlic, cook for another 1 minute.
4. Add chopped tomatoes, oregano, and black pepper.
5. Add half the beans and all the stock, bring to a simmer.
6. Cook for 10-12 minutes until vegetables are tender.
7. Lightly mash the remaining beans and add to the pot (this thickens the stew).
8. Add the cooked pasta and gently stir through. Simmer for 2-3 minutes to heat through and allow flavors to combine.
9. Check consistency - add a little more stock if too thick, or simmer uncovered if too thin.
10. Stir in fresh parsley. If using frozen parsley, warm through for a couple of minutes.
11. Serve in bowls with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

12. Give children a spoon to eat this meal.

Chef's Tips

- Cooking pasta separately prevents it from becoming mushy and gives better texture control
- The partially mashed beans create a lovely creamy texture without cream
- Can be made thicker or thinner by adjusting stock quantity at the end
- Borlotti beans are traditional in this Italian comfort dish

Nutrition tip:

This hearty Italian dish includes borlotti beans as a source of protein and fibre, while the mixed vegetables add variety, vitamins, minerals, colour and different textures. This traditional dish shows how simple, wholesome ingredients can create a satisfying and nutritious meal that children love - proving that good nutrition doesn't need to be complicated!

Falafel with wraps, salad & feta

Serves 10 children

Some children may find feta quite tangy - encourage them to try it with the cucumber or wrap to balance the flavour.

Falafel Balls

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil for frying onion
- 1 medium onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1.5 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Fry the onion in oil for 5-7 minutes or until lightly coloured.
3. Drain and pat chickpeas dry with kitchen paper
4. Put chickpeas, cooked onion, garlic, parsley, cumin, coriander, and black pepper in food processor
5. Pulse until mixture is roughly chopped but not smooth
6. Add flour and pulse briefly to combine
7. Shape mixture into 20 small balls using damp hands
8. Place on baking tray and brush with olive oil
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and firm

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 5 flour tortilla wholemeal wraps, cut into triangles (25g per serving, per child approx)
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips (about 200g total)
- 1 large cucumber, cut into sticks (about 200g total)

- 100g feta cheese, cubed

Method:

1. Warm wraps briefly and cut each into 6 triangles
2. Cut red pepper into child-friendly strips
3. Cut cucumber into finger-sized sticks
4. Cube feta cheese into small, child-friendly pieces
5. Arrange everything on platters for children to build their own portions

Chef's Tips

- Make falafel mixture slightly chunky for better texture
- Damp hands prevent mixture sticking when shaping
- Each child gets 2 falafel balls, wrap pieces (approx. 25g), 40g mixed vegetables (pepper and cucumber), and feta cheese cubes
- Children can eat components separately
- If mixture seems too wet/crumbly:

Too wet: Add extra 1 tbsp flour

Too dry/crumbly: Add 1-2 tbsp water or olive oil

Nutrition Tip: Children love building their own combinations with these mild, protein-rich falafel balls and fresh vegetables! The build-your-own approach encourages children to explore different food combinations and textures while developing independence and food confidence.

Beef & Tomato Meatballs with rice (serves 10 children)

Meatball Ingredients

- 500g lean beef mince
- 1 tbsp dried mixed herbs
- 10 cream crackers (blitzed in a food processor to small crumbs)
- 1 egg, beaten
- Black pepper to taste

Tomato Sauce Ingredients

- 2 red onions, finely chopped
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 400ml tomato passata
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped (or 1 tbsp dried)
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs, e.g. oregano
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Black pepper, to season

Method Make the Meatballs:

1. Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Blitz the cream crackers in a food processor for a few minutes. Or use a rolling pin to smash them up in a sealed plastic bag.
3. Mix beef mince, herbs, blitzed cream crackers, beaten eggs, and black pepper in a large bowl.
4. Using damp hands, roll mixture into 30 small meatballs (3 per child)
5. Place on a lightly oiled baking tray
6. Bake for 10-12 minutes until browned on all sides
7. Remove and set aside. Reduce oven temperature to 190°C/170°C fan

Make the Sauce:

1. Heat olive oil in a large oven-proof dish or casserole
2. Add chopped onions and cook for 5 minutes until soft
3. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute
4. Add chopped tomatoes, passata and herbs
5. Season with black pepper.

6. Simmer for 20 minutes or until the sauce begins to thicken

Cook Together:

1. Add the browned meatballs to the tomato sauce
2. Cover and cook in oven for 20-25 minutes until meatballs are cooked through and no pink remains
3. Remove lid for last 10 minutes if sauce needs thickening
4. If sauce appears too thin, simmer uncovered on the hob for a few extra minutes
5. Serve hot

Chef's Tips

- Browning the meatballs first adds extra flavour and helps them hold their shape
- Damp hands prevent meatball mixture sticking when rolling
- Make meatballs small and even for consistent cooking
- Each child gets 3 meatballs with sauce
- Serve with rice

Vegetarian Option: Puy Lentils in Tomato Sauce with rice

Serves 10

Replace the beef meatballs with:

- 2 x 400g tins puy lentils in water, drained and rinsed

Method changes:

1. Make the tomato sauce exactly as written
2. After the sauce has simmered for 5 minutes, add the drained puy lentils
3. Cover and cook in oven proof dish for 20-25 minutes
4. Stir halfway through cooking
5. Serve hot with rice on the side.

Spanish Chicken with Brown Rice (serves 10 children)

Spanish Chicken Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 red onions, diced
- 500g chicken breast, cut into small child-friendly pieces
- 2 sweet peppers, cut into strips
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp sweet paprika, mild
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 400ml chicken stock (low sodium)
- 1.5 tbsp plain flour (for coating chicken)
- 1.5 tbsp cornflour
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- Black pepper to taste

Brown Rice

- 400g brown rice
- 900ml water

Method Prepare Rice:

1. Cook brown rice according to package instructions with 900ml water (usually 25 minutes)
2. Drain and keep warm

Make Spanish Chicken:

1. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a heavy-based saucepan and cook diced onions for 5-7 minutes until soft. Remove onions and set aside.
2. Season chicken pieces with black pepper, then toss in plain flour, shaking off any excess.
3. Heat remaining 1 tbsp oil in the same pan and brown chicken pieces for 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove chicken and set aside.
4. Add peppers to the same pan and cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, then add paprika and cook for 30 seconds (being careful not to burn).
6. Return onions to the pan, add chopped tomatoes, chicken stock, and mixed herbs. Bring to a simmer.

7. Mix cornflour with 3 tbsp cold water to make a smooth paste, then stir into the sauce.
8. Return browned chicken to the sauce and cook for 15-20 minutes until chicken is tender and sauce has thickened.
9. Season with additional black pepper if needed.

Serving:

- Serve cooked chicken mixture alongside brown rice

Chef's Tips

- Cut chicken into small, manageable pieces for children
- Brown rice takes longer than white rice but provides more nutrients and fiber

Vegetarian option

Spanish Chickpeas with Brown Rice (serves 10 children)

Spanish Chickpeas Ingredients

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 red onions, diced
- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 sweet peppers, cut into strips
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp sweet paprika, mild
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 400ml vegetable stock (low sodium)
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- Black pepper to taste

Brown Rice

- 300g brown rice
- 900ml water

Method Prepare Rice:

1. Cook brown rice according to package instructions with 900ml water (usually 40-45 minutes)
2. Drain and keep warm

Make Spanish Chickpeas:

1. Heat oil in a heavy-based saucepan and cook diced onions for 5-7 minutes until soft.
2. Add chickpeas and peppers, cook for 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, then add paprika and cook for 30 seconds (being careful not to burn).
4. Add chopped tomatoes, vegetable stock, and mixed herbs. Bring to a simmer.
5. Cover and cook for 15-20 minutes until flavors have combined.
6. If sauce appears too thin, remove lid and simmer uncovered for 5-10 minutes to reduce naturally.
7. Season with black pepper to taste.

Serving:

- Serve cooked chickpea mixture alongside brown rice

Chef's Tips

- Brown rice takes longer than white rice but provides more nutrients and fiber
- Chickpeas provide plant-based protein and fiber

Rainbow Wraps with hummus [*This recipe is assembled with the children*](#)

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 10 small tortilla wraps or x 5 large wraps cut in half
- 400g plain hummus recipe
- 1 red pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 yellow pepper, cut into thin strips
- 2 carrots, grated
- 1 cucumber, cut into thin strips
- Fresh little gem lettuce leaves (optional)

Plain Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tin chickpeas in water, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ a clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Method:

1. Put all ingredients in a food processor
2. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy
3. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency
4. Taste and adjust seasoning

Rainbow wraps method:

1. Set up a "wrap station" with tortilla wraps and all fillings in separate bowls
2. Spread a layer of hummus on each wrap (if child requests it)
3. **Let children point and choose their rainbow vegetables** and staff place them on their wrap
4. **Staff then wrap each completed wrap tightly in foil** to prevent spillage
5. Cut foil-wrapped wraps in half if too big.

Serving: Children unwrap their foil parcels and enjoy! Staff supervise where needed.

Or children may prefer to eat the components separately.

Italian Bean & Cheese Pitta Pizzas with Green Salad

Serves 10 children

For the Pitta Pizzas:

- 5 wholemeal pitta breads (half a pitta bread or 25g is a suggested serving size guide)
- 400g tinned cannellini beans in water, drained and rinsed
- 200g passata
- 150g mozzarella cheese, grated
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1-2 tsp dried oregano

For the Green Chopped Salad:

- 2 little gem lettuces, finely chopped
- 1 cucumber, diced small
- 2 ripe avocados, diced
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Black pepper, to taste

Method:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. **Prepare pittas** - lightly brush pitta breads with extra virgin olive oil, place on baking trays
3. **Prepare beans** - lightly crush cannellini beans with a fork, leaving some texture
4. **Add toppings** - spread a 1-2 tbsp of passata over each pitta, scatter lightly crushed beans evenly, sprinkle with mozzarella and herbs and black pepper
5. **Bake** - cook for 8-10 minutes until cheese is melted and pitta edges are crispy
6. **Make salad** - mix chopped lettuce, cucumber, and avocado. Dress with olive oil and lemon juice and black pepper.
7. **Serve** - cut each pitta pizza into slices/fingers before serving with a portion of green salad

Nutrition tip

This is a great balanced meal for children as it includes all the main food groups - protein from beans, starchy carbohydrates from the wholemeal pitta, dairy from the cheese and vitamins and minerals from the fresh salad vegetables. Cannellini beans provide plant-based protein to support children's growth and are high in fiber which contributes to normal digestive function.

Rainbow bowl – Bulgur wheat with roasted vegetables and hummus

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 400g **bulgur wheat** (makes 800g cooked = 80g per child)
- 800ml vegetable stock (low salt or salt free)
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cubed (2cm pieces)
- 200g red peppers, cut into strips (stalk and seeds removed)
- 200g tinned sweetcorn in water, drained
- 200g vacuum-packed cooked beetroot, cut into slices
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Black pepper to taste

Plain Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ a clove garlic, peeled
- Black pepper to taste
- 2-3 tbsp water (if needed for consistency)

Method:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. **Start squash** - toss cubed squash with 2 tbsp olive oil, season, roast for 25 minutes
3. **Add peppers** - add pepper strips to tray with remaining oil and cumin, roast together for 15 minutes until tender
4. **Cook bulgur** - bring vegetable stock to boil, add bulgur wheat, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until tender. Drain
5. **Assemble bowls** - divide bulgur between bowls, and serve with roasted squash, pepper slices, sweetcorn, and beetroot. Try to keep ingredients separate if possible, rather than being mixed or too close together.
6. **Make hummus** - Put all ingredients in a food processor. Blitz for 2-3 minutes until smooth and creamy. Add water gradually if needed for dipping consistency. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve in 1 bowl and encourage children to help themselves where possible. Otherwise pre-plate the houmous.
7. **Serve** - provide hummus in small pots for dipping the vegetables.

Flaked Salmon with potato wedges, broccoli & lemon yoghurt sauce

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 600g salmon fillets, skin removed and boneless
- 1kg white maris piper potatoes, cut into wedges. Keep skin on.
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp dried dill
- Black pepper to taste

For lemon yoghurt Sauce:

- 600ml Greek yogurt (60g per person as a guide, is a suggested serving size. Start by offering less)
- Juice of 1 lemon

Broccoli: 500g broccoli. Leaves picked and discarded.

Method:

1. Preheat oven - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. Prepare wedges - toss potato wedges with 3 tbsp olive oil and pepper, spread on baking trays
3. Start roasting wedges - bake for 15-20 minutes
4. Prepare salmon - place salmon fillets on foil sheets, drizzle with remaining oil, sprinkle with dill and a little black pepper. Wrap tightly in foil parcels
5. Add salmon to oven - place foil parcels alongside wedges and cook both for a further 18 minutes until salmon flakes easily and wedges are crispy
6. Cook the broccoli - steam or boil until tender. Drain. Ideally serve in one bowl and allow children to serve themselves
7. Make sauce - mix yogurt and lemon juice in a bowl
8. Flake salmon - carefully open foil parcels and gently break cooked salmon into large flakes
9. Serve - arrange salmon flakes, broccoli, and crispy wedges on plates with yogurt sauce for dipping. Keep each component separate.

Nutrition tip

Salmon provides high-quality protein to support children's growth and development. The interactive yogurt dipping sauce encourages children to try new foods at their own pace, giving them control over how much sauce they use with their salmon and potato wedges. This hands-on approach helps build confidence with different

textures and flavors while making mealtime more engaging. The dill adds a gentle herb flavor that helps expand children's palates in a subtle way.

Vegetarian option:

Roasted Tofu with Potato Wedges, Broccoli & Lemon Yoghurt Sauce

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 500g firm tofu, drained and cut into cubes
- 1kg white maris piper potatoes, cut into wedges. Keep skin on.
- 5 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
- Pinch of sweet paprika
- Black pepper to taste

For Lemon Yoghurt Sauce:

- 600ml Greek yogurt (60g per person as a guide, is a suggested serving size. Start by offering less)
- Juice of 1 lemon

Broccoli: 500g broccoli. Leaves picked and discarded.

Method:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 200°C/180°C fan/gas mark 6
2. **Prepare wedges** - toss wedges with 3 tbsp olive oil and black pepper, spread on baking trays
3. **Roast wedges** - bake for 25-30 minutes until starting to crisp
4. **Season tofu** - pat tofu dry, toss cubes with remaining oil, garlic, paprika, and pepper
5. **Add tofu** - add seasoned tofu to oven for 15-20 minutes until golden and crispy
6. **Cook the broccoli** - steam or boil until tender. Drain. Ideally serve in one bowl and allow children to serve themselves
7. **Make sauce** - mix yogurt and lemon juice in a bowl
8. **Serve** - arrange crispy tofu cubes, broccoli, and crispy wedges on plates with yogurt sauce for dipping. Keep each component separate.

Perfect plant protein: Tofu gets lovely and golden with mild, kid-friendly flavours!

Beef & Vegetable Stew with Herb Cobblers *Serves 10 children*

For the stew:

- 500g diced beef (braising/stewing steak), cut into small chunks, approx. 1cm.
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 500ml beef stock (made with low-sodium stock cubes)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- Salt and pepper to taste

For herb cobblers:

- 300g self-raising flour
- 150g butter, cubed
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped (or frozen if fresh not available)
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 150ml milk
- Extra milk for glazing the cobblers

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180c.
2. **Cook vegetables** - heat oil, cook onion, carrots, celery, and thyme for 8-10 minutes until softened
3. **Add flour** - stir in flour, mix until vegetables are coated, cook for 1 minute
4. **Add tomatoes** - stir in tomatoes and tomato purée
5. **Add beef and stock** - add beef and stock, bring to boil
6. **Oven bake** - add bay leaf and place in oven for 2 hours or until beef is tender. Meanwhile make the cobblers.
7. **Make cobblers** - rub butter into flour, add herbs, then milk to form soft dough
8. **Shape cobblers** - drop spoonfuls of dough on top of stew, brush with extra milk
9. **Final bake** - return to oven for a further 30 minutes until cobblers are golden

Chef's tips:

Beef stew should have 2 hours total in the oven: 1 hour 30 minutes for the stew, then a further 30 minutes with the cobblers on top of the stew. The meat should fall apart easily. Taste the stew and tweak the seasoning.

Vegetarian option:

Vegetarian Stew with Herb Cobblers

Serves 10 children

For the stew:

- 2 x 400g tins mixed beans (kidney beans, cannellini, chickpeas), drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 500ml vegetable stock (made with low-sodium stock cubes)
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme (or 1 tsp dried)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- Black pepper to taste

For herb cobblers:

- 300g self-raising flour
- 150g unsalted butter, cubed
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped or use frozen herbs
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- 150ml milk
- Extra milk for glazing the cobblers

Method:

1. **Preheat the oven to 180°C**
2. **Cook vegetables** - heat oil, cook onion, carrots, celery, and thyme for 8-10 minutes until softened
3. **Add flour** - stir in flour, mix until vegetables are coated, cook for 1 minute
4. **Add tomatoes** - stir in tomatoes and tomato purée
5. **Add beans and stock** - add drained beans and stock, bring to boil
6. **Oven bake** - add bay leaf and place in oven for 45 minutes. Meanwhile make the cobblers

7. **Make cobblers** - rub butter into flour, add herbs, then milk to form soft dough
8. **Shape cobblers** - drop spoonfuls of dough on top of stew, brush with extra milk
9. **Final bake** - return to oven for a further 30 minutes until cobblers are golden

Chef's tips: Vegetarian stew needs less cooking time (45 minutes + 30 minutes with cobblers). The beans just need heating through.

Stuffed peppers with couscous (and a tomato sauce)

Serves 8 children

Ingredients:

- 4 large red peppers, halved lengthways and deseeded
- 320g couscous
- 480ml hot vegetable stock (low salt)
- 2 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 80g raisins
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh mint, chopped (or 1 tsp dried)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Black pepper to taste

Simple tomato sauce for stuffed peppers

Ingredients:

- 400g passata
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small onion, very finely diced
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Pinch of black pepper

Method for the tomato sauce:

1. **Cook onion** - heat olive oil in a saucepan, cook finely diced onion for 8-10 minutes until very soft and starting to break down
2. **Add garlic** - add crushed garlic, cook for 1 minute until fragrant
3. **Add passata** - stir in passata and oregano
4. **Simmer and thicken** - cook gently uncovered for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until sauce has thickened.
5. **Season** - taste and add pepper as needed
6. **Serve** - serve the sauce warm alongside the stuffed peppers

Make-ahead tip: This sauce can be made earlier in the day and gently reheated when needed.

Method for the stuffed peppers with couscous:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 190°C/170°C fan/gas mark 5
2. **Prepare couscous** - place couscous in bowl, pour over hot stock, cover and leave for 10 minutes until fluffy
3. **Make filling** - fluff couscous with fork, stir in chickpeas, raisins, herbs, and 2 tbsp olive oil, season
4. **Stuff peppers** - fill pepper halves with couscous mixture, reserve any extra couscous and serve on the side.
5. **Bake** - place stuffed peppers in baking dish, cover with foil, bake for 30-35 minutes until peppers are tender
6. **Serve** - Each child gets half a stuffed pepper. They can eat the couscous from the 'bowl' before eating the pepper!

Macaroni Cheese with Salmon & Tomato Salad

(serves 10 children)

Macaroni Cheese:

- 400g dried macaroni pasta
- 60g unsalted butter
- 60g plain flour
- 600ml whole milk
- 150g mild cheddar cheese, grated
- Pinch of black pepper

Salmon:

- 500g salmon fillets, boneless (40g cooked per child as a suggested serving size)
- 1-2 tbsp olive oil

Tomato Salad:

- 400g cherry tomatoes, quartered lengthwise
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Fresh basil leaves, chopped

Method:

1. Cook macaroni pasta according to package instructions until tender
2. Drain pasta and set aside
3. Prepare tomato salad: quarter cherry tomatoes lengthwise, drizzle with olive oil, add chopped basil
4. Cook salmon: heat olive oil in pan, cook salmon fillets for 4-5 minutes each side until cooked through. Flake into small, child-safe pieces. Or oven bake wrapped in foil for 18-20 minutes at 180c.
5. Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat
6. Add flour and stir to make a roux, cook for 1 minute
7. Gradually add milk, whisking constantly to prevent lumps
8. Simmer until sauce thickens (5-8 minutes)
9. Remove from heat and stir in most of the cheese (save some back for topping)
10. Add cooked pasta and mix until coated in cheese sauce
11. Transfer to serving dish, sprinkle with remaining cheese
12. Serve macaroni cheese with flaked salmon on the side and tomato salad on the side. Serve components separately.

Chef's Tips:

- Check salmon carefully for bones before serving to children
- Flake salmon into small, manageable pieces (no larger than 1cm)
- Quarter cherry tomatoes lengthwise to prevent choking
- Each child gets: creamy macaroni cheese + 40g salmon + fresh tomato salad

Classic comfort food: Creamy macaroni cheese with flaky salmon and fresh tomato salad!

Red lentil macaroni cheese with Tomato Salad

(serves 10 children)

Macaroni Cheese:

- 300g red lentil pasta (penne shape)
- 200g cannellini beans (1 x 400g tin, drained)
- 60g unsalted butter
- 60g plain flour
- 600ml milk
- 150g mild cheddar cheese, grated
- Pinch of black pepper

Tomato Salad:

- 400g cherry tomatoes, quartered lengthwise
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Fresh basil leaves, torn

Method:

1. Cook red lentil pasta according to package instructions until tender
2. Drain pasta and set aside
3. Prepare tomato salad: quarter cherry tomatoes lengthwise, drizzle with olive oil, add chopped basil if using
4. Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat
5. Add flour and stir to make a roux, cook for 1 minute
6. Gradually add milk, whisking constantly to prevent lumps
7. Simmer until sauce thickens (5-8 minutes)
8. Remove from heat and stir in most of the cheese (save some for topping)
9. Add cooked pasta and drained cannellini beans
10. Mix gently until pasta and beans are coated in cheese sauce
11. Transfer to serving dish, sprinkle with remaining cheese
12. Serve immediately with tomato salad on the side

Chef's Tips:

- Tomatoes provide vitamin C to help absorb iron from red lentil pasta and beans
- Quarter cherry tomatoes lengthwise to prevent choking

- Red lentil pasta provides extra protein and has a mild flavor
- Each child gets protein from both the red lentil pasta and cannellini beans

Tuna and tomato pasta bake with breadcrumb topping and sweetcorn

(serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 400g pasta (penne or rigatoni)
- 400g tuna in water, drained weight
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 150g mozzarella cheese, grated

Breadcrumb Topping:

- 100g fresh breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Side Vegetables:

- 400g sweetcorn (steamed)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C
2. Cook pasta until al dente, drain
3. Heat olive oil, sauté onion until soft (5 minutes), add garlic (1 minute)
4. Add tomatoes and oregano, simmer 15 minutes until reduced
5. Stir in tuna and fresh basil
6. Mix pasta with sauce, transfer to baking dish
7. Top with mozzarella, then breadcrumb mixture drizzled with olive oil
8. Bake 20-25 minutes until golden
9. Serve with steamed sweetcorn

Chef's Tips:

- Fresh basil gives authentic Italian flavor
- Golden breadcrumb topping provides lovely texture contrast

Authentic Italian comfort food: Classic tuna pasta in rich tomato sauce with golden, crunchy topping!

Vegetarian option:

Italian Bean Pasta Bake with breadcrumb topping and sweetcorn

(serves 10 children)

Ingredients:

- 400g pasta (penne or rigatoni)
- 2 x 400g tins borlotti beans in water, drained
- 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 1 red pepper, stalk and seeds removed. Finely diced.
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 150g mozzarella cheese, grated

Breadcrumb Topping:

- 100g fresh breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp olive oil

Side Vegetables:

- 400g sweetcorn (steamed)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C
2. Cook pasta until al dente, drain
3. Heat olive oil, sauté onion and pepper until soft (5 minutes), add garlic (1 minute)
4. Add tomatoes and oregano, simmer 15 minutes until reduced
5. Stir in drained borlotti beans and fresh basil, heat through for 3-4 minutes
6. Mix pasta with bean and tomato sauce, transfer to baking dish
7. Top with mozzarella, then breadcrumb mixture drizzled with olive oil
8. Bake 20-25 minutes until golden
9. Serve with steamed sweetcorn

Chef's Tips:

- Borlotti beans are classic in Italian pasta dishes
- Fresh basil gives authentic Italian flavor
- Use food processor to cut the veg to save time.

Spiced chicken with potatoes, yoghurt dip & broccoli

Serves 10 children

Spiced Breaded Chicken:

- 600g chicken breast, cut into fingers
- 100g plain flour
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 150g breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil for baking

Roasted Spiced Potatoes (Aloo):

- 800g potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes (around 1.5-2cm)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin

Simple Raita Dip:

- 600g Greek or thick plain yogurt
- 1 cucumber, finely diced/grated.
- 2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- Squeeze of lemon juice

Side Vegetables:

- 200g frozen broccoli

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C
2. **Prepare potatoes:** Toss cubed potatoes with oil, curry powder, turmeric and cumin
3. **Prepare chicken:** Mix breadcrumbs with curry powder, turmeric, and cumin
4. **Coat chicken:** Dip chicken fingers in flour, then egg, then spiced breadcrumbs
5. **Bake:** Place chicken and potatoes on separate baking trays.

6. Bake the potatoes for 35-40 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Bake the chicken for 20-25 minutes until chicken is cooked through and no pink remains.
8. **Make raita:** Squeeze out excess water from the cucumber. Mix yoghurt with the cucumber, mint, cumin, and lemon juice
9. **Steam vegetables:** Steam broccoli florets until tender (5-8 minutes)
10. **Serve:** Arrange chicken, spiced potatoes, and vegetables on plates with raita dip alongside

Chef's Tips:

- Cut potatoes into uniform 2cm cubes for even cooking
- Potatoes may need 5 minutes longer than chicken - start them first
- Check chicken is cooked through (internal temperature 75°C)
- "Aloo" (spiced potatoes) are a classic Indian side dish

Authentic Indian-inspired flavours with traditional spiced potatoes!

Roasted tofu with potatoes, yoghurt dip and broccoli

Serves 10 children

Spiced Breaded Tofu:

- 500g firm tofu, pressed and cut into fingers (50g per child)
- 100g plain flour
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 150g breadcrumbs
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil for baking

Roasted Spiced Potatoes (Aloo):

- 800g potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes (1.5-2cm approx)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp mild curry powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin

Simple Raita Dip:

- 600g Greek yogurt
- 1 cucumber, finely diced or grated
- 2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- Squeeze of lemon juice

Side Vegetables:

- 200g broccoli florets

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C
2. **Prepare tofu:** Mix breadcrumbs with curry powder, turmeric, and cumin
3. **Coat tofu:** Dip tofu fingers in flour, then egg, then spiced breadcrumbs
4. **Prepare potatoes:** Toss cubed potatoes with oil, curry powder, turmeric and cumin

5. **Bake:** Place tofu and potatoes on separate baking trays.
6. Start potatoes first, add tofu after 15-20 minutes .
7. So bake potatoes for 35-40 minutes or until golden.
8. Bake tofu for 15-20 minutes or until golden
9. **Make raita:** Squeeze excess water out of cucumber. Mix yogurt with diced cucumber, mint, cumin, and lemon juice
10. **Steam vegetables:** Steam broccoli florets until tender (5-8 minutes)
11. **Serve:** Arrange tofu, spiced potatoes, and broccoli on plates with raita dip alongside

Chef's Tips:

- Press tofu for 30 minutes before cutting to remove excess water
- Cut potatoes into uniform cubes for even cooking
- Potatoes will need 15 minutes longer than tofu - start them first

Pudding Recipes

(Or Second Course)

Mandarin & Yoghurt Fool

Portion yield - Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 600g thick plain yoghurt (unsweetened)
- 300g tinned mandarin segments in juice, drained (juice discarded)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- Pinch of ground cinnamon for garnish (optional)

Method:

1. Drain mandarins thoroughly.
2. Prepare mandarins - gently break larger segments into smaller, child-appropriate pieces. Remove any visible pips.
3. Layer method - in individual serving bowls:
 - Spoon half the yoghurt (30g per child) into the bottom
 - Add layer of mandarin segments (15-20g per child)
 - Top with remaining yoghurt (30g per child)
 - Finish with remaining mandarin segments (10-20g per child)
4. Optional enhancement - add vanilla extract to yoghurt before layering (stir through)
5. Chill - refrigerate for 15 minutes to allow flavours to meld (optional)
6. Garnish - dust lightly with cinnamon before serving if desired

Winter Orange Rice Pudding

Serves: 10 children

Ingredients: For the Rice Pudding:

- 150g pudding rice (or short-grain rice)
- 1000ml whole milk
- Zest of 2 large oranges
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- Pinch of ground ginger

For the Orange Topping:

- 3 large oranges, segmented with pips removed
- Extra orange zest for garnish (optional)

Method: Make the Rice Pudding:

1. **Preheat oven** to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas Mark 2
2. **Combine ingredients** - place rice, milk, orange zest, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ginger in large ovenproof dish
3. **Stir well** - ensure spices and zest are evenly distributed
4. **Bake** - cook for 75 minutes, stirring every 15-20 minutes to prevent skin forming
5. **Check consistency** - rice should be tender and mixture creamy (add drop more milk if needed)

Prepare Orange Segments:

1. **Peel oranges** - remove all white pith
2. **Segment carefully** - cut between membranes to release clean segments
3. **Remove all pips** - check each segment thoroughly
4. **Set aside** until serving

Serving:

- **Serve warm** - portion rice pudding into bowls
- **Top with orange segments** - 3-4 segments per portion
- **Optional garnish** - sprinkle of fresh orange zest

Banana & Coconut Yoghurt Pudding

Serves: 10 children

Ingredients:

- 6 large ripe bananas
- 600g plain yoghurt
- 2 tbsp desiccated coconut (unsweetened)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)

Method:

1. **Mash bananas** - use fork to mash bananas until smooth but with some texture
2. **Combine** - gently fold mashed banana into the yoghurt
3. **Add coconut** - stir in desiccated coconut for texture and extra coconut flavour
4. **Add vanilla** - mix in vanilla extract if using
5. **Portion** - divide into individual serving bowls
6. **Serve** immediately or chill for 15 minutes to let flavor develop

Serving Suggestions:

- **Individual portions** - approx. 80g per child
- **Serve chilled** for best texture
- **Optional garnish** - extra banana slices or a pinch of coconut

Texture Notes:

- **Desiccated coconut** adds gentle texture interest

Storage:

- **Best served fresh** - banana can brown
- **Stir before serving** as natural separation may occur

Blueberry Compote with Plain Yoghurt

Serves 10 children

Blueberry Compote

Ingredients:

- 500g frozen blueberries
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of ground ginger (optional)
- Zest of 1 lemon

Method:

1. Put frozen blueberries and water in a saucepan
2. Cook over medium heat for 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally
3. The berries will release their juices and start to break down
4. Add vanilla, cinnamon, ginger (if using), and lemon zest
5. Continue cooking for 2-3 minutes until you have a lovely chunky compote
6. Remove from heat and let cool slightly
7. Can be served warm or cold

To Serve

Ingredients:

- 600g plain natural yoghurt
- The blueberry compote (above)

Method:

1. Divide yoghurt between 10 bowls or cups
2. Spoon warm or cooled compote over the yoghurt
3. Serve immediately

Chef's Tip: Frozen blueberries are perfect for this time of year - they're picked at peak ripeness and frozen immediately, so they're often more flavorful than fresh ones out of season. They also break down beautifully when cooked, creating natural sweetness without any added sugar!

Fresh Banana with Cinnamon

Serves 10

Ingredients

- 5 medium ripe bananas
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Method

1. Peel bananas and cut each one in half crosswise
2. Cut each half lengthwise into 2-3 strips
3. Arrange banana strips on individual plates
4. Set up a 'sprinkle station' with small containers of cinnamon and tiny spoons or shakers
5. Children take their plates to the sprinkle station and sprinkle the cinnamon themselves onto their banana strips if they wish
6. Children control how much or how little to add, or can skip it entirely
7. Serve immediately

Chef's Tips

- Choose bananas that are ripe but still firm - they should be yellow with just a few brown spots
- Cut the bananas into strips just before serving to prevent browning
- Set up a 'sprinkle station' so children can choose whether to add cinnamon - making it their decision encourages trying new flavours
- Call it 'magic dust' or 'fairy dust' to make it more exciting for children
- Each child gets approximately half a banana (40g serving) and a very light dusting of cinnamon!

Why toddlers love it: The natural sweetness of banana pairs beautifully with warm, fragrant cinnamon. Children love having control over their own food choices at the sprinkle station, building independence while enjoying their fruit!

Pear with ginger

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 5 ripe pears, peeled and cut into child-friendly slices (Use tinned pears in juice, when fresh pears are not in season. Pear season is August to November in UK.)
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger (optional, incase individual children don't wish to have it)

Method

1. Peel pears and cut into thin slices, removing the core
2. Arrange pear slices in individual bowls
3. Set up a 'spice station' with small containers of ground ginger and tiny spoons
4. Children take their bowls to the spice station and sprinkle the ginger themselves onto their pear pieces *if* they wish
5. Children control how much or how little to add, or can skip it entirely
6. Serve immediately

Chef's Tips

- Choose pears that are ripe but still firm for easy cutting
- Cut pears into thin slices for safer eating - easier for toddlers to manage than chunks
- Set up a 'spice station' so children can choose whether to add ginger - making it their decision encourages trying new flavours
- Call it 'warming spice' to make it appealing for children
- Each child gets approximately half a pear (40g serving) and a **very** light dusting of ginger!

Why children love it: The sweet, juicy pear pairs beautifully with the gentle warmth of ginger. Children love having control over their own food choices at the spice station, building independence while enjoying their fruit!

Introducing gentle spices early encourages more adventurous eating and helps children become more accepting of diverse flavours as they grow.

Mixed Fruit Compote

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 250g frozen mixed berries
- 3 eating apples, peeled, cored and diced
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 3 tbsp water

Method

1. Put apples, frozen berries, mixed spice and water in a saucepan
2. Cook over medium heat for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally
3. Continue cooking until apples are soft and berries have broken down
4. Stir gently to combine all fruit
5. The natural fruit sugars will create a lovely sweet compote
6. Serve warm or cold

Chef's Tips

- Frozen berries are perfect for this recipe - they break down beautifully and release natural sweetness
- Fresh apples add texture and extra natural sweetness
- Mixed spice gives lovely warming flavours perfect for autumn/winter
- Each child gets approximately 40g of cooked fruit
- Mixed fruit compote can be served with plain yoghurt (note this contains milk, allergen) on the side.

Build Your Own Fruit & Yoghurt Bar

Serves 10 children

Base

Ingredients:

- 500g plain Greek yoghurt

Fruit Selection (Autumn/Winter)

Ingredients:

- 2 eating apples, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices
- 2 ripe pears, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices (or tinned pears in juice, drained and sliced)
- 200g seedless grapes, quartered lengthwise
- 2 satsumas/clementines, peeled and segmented

Toppings Station

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp milled flaxseed
- 1 tsp mixed spice

Method

1. Set up individual bowls containing each fruit option
2. Place yoghurt in a serving bowl with serving spoons
3. Set up small containers with flaxseed and mixed spice, each with tiny spoons or in shakers
4. Give each child a bowl
5. Each child takes their turn to visit the yoghurt bar and add their chosen fruits to their bowl, and add what they wish to try.
6. At the toppings station, children can sprinkle flaxseed and/or mixed spice if they wish
7. Encourage children to try different combinations

Chef's Tips

- Cut all fruit into child-safe slices and fingers - thin apple and pear slices, grapes quartered lengthwise
- Use seasonal fruit for best flavour and value
- Let children make their own choices - some may want just yoghurt, others will try everything

- Call the flaxseed "super seeds" and mixed spice "magic dust" to make them more appealing

Interactive and fun: Children love having control over their food choices, and this encourages them to try new combinations while building independence!

Apple & Carrot Flapjacks

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 150g porridge oats
- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1 small eating apple, peeled, cored and grated
- 1 small carrot, peeled and grated
- 50g raisins
- 500ml milk (dairy, oat, or soya)
- 50g unsalted butter, melted
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Method

1. Heat oven to 180°C/160°C fan
2. Line a 25cm x 25cm baking tray with baking paper
3. Mash banana until smooth
4. Use food processor with grating attachment to grate apple and carrot together
5. Mix oats, grated apple and carrot, raisins, cinnamon, and mixed spice in a large bowl
6. Add mashed banana, milk, melted butter, and vanilla
7. Mix everything together until well combined
8. Press mixture firmly into the lined baking tray
9. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown on top
10. Cool completely in the tray before cutting into 10 pieces

Chef's Tips

- Press mixture down firmly to help flapjacks hold together
- Use food processor grating attachment to save time on apple and carrot prep
- Natural sugars from fruit provide all the sweetness needed
- Store in refrigerator in airtight container for up to 3 days.

Naturally sweet: The combination of banana, apple, and raisins provides natural sweetness while grated carrot adds moisture and extra vegetables.

Pear & blueberry pancake sheet

Serves 10

Ingredients:

- 150g self raising flour (can use wholemeal or white)
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 125ml whole milk
- 1 tbsp plain yoghurt (unsweetened)
- 1 medium ripe pear, peeled, cored and thinly sliced or use tinned, if fresh not available.
- 75g fresh or frozen blueberries
- Extra butter for greasing

Method:

1. **Preheat oven** - heat to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 7. Line a baking tray (approximately 25cm x 25cm) with greaseproof paper.
2. **Make batter** - whisk flour and baking powder salt in a large bowl. In another bowl, beat eggs, then whisk in milk and yoghurt
3. **Combine** - pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and whisk until just combined (don't overmix - a few lumps are fine)
4. **Pour and arrange** - pour batter into prepared tray, spreading evenly. Arrange pear slices over the surface, then scatter blueberries on top
5. **Bake** - place in oven for 15-20 minutes until golden brown and a skewer inserted in centre comes out clean
6. **Cool slightly** - allow to rest for 5 minutes before cutting into 10 squares
7. **Serve** - cut into portions and serve warm

Baked apples

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 6 large eating apples, peeled and cored
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract (optional)

Method

1. Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan
2. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper
3. Peel and core apples, then cut each into 6-8 wedges
4. Place apple wedges in a large bowl
5. Drizzle with olive oil and melted butter, then add mixed spice and vanilla
6. Toss gently to coat all wedges evenly
7. Arrange in single layer on baking trays - don't overcrowd
8. Roast for 15-20 minutes, turning wedges halfway through cooking
9. Cook until tender and lightly golden
10. Serve warm or at room temperature

Chef's Tips

- Cut wedges evenly for consistent cooking
- Baking paper prevents sticking and makes cleanup easier - or grease trays well if skipping
- Don't overcook - they should be tender but not mushy
- Each child gets approximately 4-5 wedges (or approx. 40g), as a portion guide.

Naturally sweet: Roasting brings out the apples' natural sweetness while warm spices add cozy autumn flavours.

Winter Fruit Crumble with Yoghurt

Serves 10 children

Fruit Filling

Ingredients:

- 500g frozen mixed berries
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Crumble Topping

Ingredients:

- 200g plain flour
- 100g unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 100g porridge oats
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice

Method

1. Heat oven to 190°C/170°C fan
2. Mix cornflour with water in a small bowl to make a smooth paste
3. Put frozen berries and cinnamon in a large saucepan with a lid
4. Cook over medium heat for 10-15 minutes until berries break down
5. Stir in cornflour paste and cook for another 2-3 minutes until thickened
6. Remove from heat and let cool slightly
7. Meanwhile, make crumble: rub cold butter into flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Use a food processor to save time.
8. Stir in oats and mixed spice
9. Transfer the berry compote to a large baking dish
10. Sprinkle crumble topping evenly over the compote
11. Bake for 25 minutes until golden brown and bubbling
12. Serve warm with plain yoghurt

To Serve

- 300g plain Greek yoghurt
- Serve crumble warm with a dollop of cool yoghurt

Chef's Tips

- Cook berries into a compote first for concentrated flavour and to prevent watery crumble
- Baking time is shorter as fruit is already cooked
- Each child gets a portion of crumble plus yoghurt

Winter comfort: Mixed frozen berries create a deliciously warming pudding with natural sweetness - perfect with cooling yoghurt!

Stewed Apple with sultanas & yoghurt

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 500g eating apples, peeled, cored and chopped
- 50g sultanas
- 600g plain yoghurt (60g per child), to serve
- 2-3 tbsp water

Method:

1. **Prepare apples:** Peel, core and chop apples into small, even pieces
2. **Cook apples:** Place in a heavy-based pan with 2-3 tbsp water over medium-low heat
3. **Simmer:** Cook gently for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until apples break down into a soft purée
4. **Add sultanas:** Stir in sultanas and cook for a further 5 minutes until plumped
5. **Cool to serving temperature:** Allow to cool until warm but safe for children
6. **Serve:** Spoon into bowls and top each portion with a dollop of yoghurt

Whipped ricotta with tinned peaches

Serves 10 children

Ingredients

- 500g ricotta cheese
- 2 x 400g tins peaches in juice, drained and sliced
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Method

1. Drain peaches thoroughly and pat dry with kitchen paper
2. Reserve most peaches for serving separately on the side, keeping about 150g for mixing through the ricotta
3. Put the ricotta, 150g drained peaches, and vanilla in a food processor
4. Pulse 8-10 times until ricotta becomes light and fluffy with small peach pieces throughout
5. Don't over-process - you want it whipped with a few lumps, not smooth
6. Slice remaining peaches into child-friendly pieces to serve alongside
7. Spoon whipped peach ricotta into individual bowls
8. Top with remaining peach slices, on the side. Or place the extra peaches in a sharing bowl for children to help as and if they want more peaches

Chef's Tips

- Pulse rather than blend continuously for best texture with peach pieces
- Ricotta mix should be light and airy with small peach chunks, not completely smooth
- Drain peaches very well and pat dry to prevent making a watery ricotta
- Each child gets approximately 50g ricotta plus peaches on the side if they wish
- Serve chilled for best taste

Orange & Cranberry Scones with fresh orange (makes 10 scones)

Serves 10 children, 1 scone each.

Ingredients:

- 225g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 60g unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 50g dried cranberries (or raisins, if cranberries are unavailable) - these provide natural sweetness
- Zest of 1 large orange
- 1 egg
- 60ml milk (approximately)
- Extra milk for brushing
- For serving: Approx 3 oranges, peeled and segmented

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 6 or 400F.
2. Rub butter into flour and baking powder until mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Use a food processor to save time. Pulse briefly until just combined.
3. Transfer flour mixture to a bowl.
4. In a separate bowl, beat the egg and add 60ml milk. Add cranberries and orange zest to egg mixture and stir.
5. Add egg mixture to the dry ingredients.
6. Mix gently to form a soft dough (add more milk if needed)
7. Either: Roll out on floured surface to 2cm thickness and cut into rounds using a 5cm round cutter, or press dough/roll dough into a rectangle, to 2cm thickness and cut into 10 squares (roughly 5cm x 5cm each). Place on a greased, lined baking sheet.
8. Brush tops of scones with extra milk that's leftover.
9. Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown.
10. Cool on wire rack. Cut in half once cool.

Serving: 1 scone per child, cut in half with fresh orange segments on the side

Chef's tip:

- Use the zested orange for the fresh orange segments. Remove pith and seeds. Cut into segments and serve.
- Use a food processor at the start to combine the flour, butter and baking powder.

Fruit Chia Pudding (serves 10 children) *Make at least 4 hours before serving or leave overnight*

Ingredients:

Ingredients:

- 60g chia seeds
- 50g porridge oats (rolled oats)
- 350ml milk
- 400g plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 100g mixed dried fruit, chopped (raisins, apricots, dates and/or dried cranberries)
- Fresh fruit for topping (from fruit selection list)

Method:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together milk and yogurt until smooth
2. Add vanilla extract and cinnamon
3. Gradually whisk in chia seeds, making sure no clumps form
4. Stir in porridge oats and dried fruit
5. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight, stirring once after 30 minutes to prevent clumping
6. Before serving, stir well and check consistency - add a little more milk if too thick

Serving:

- Divide into individual bowls or cups
- Top with extra fresh fruit (or tinned fruit in juice, drained) or serve on the side for children who'd rather it be kept separate. Ideally let them help themselves.

Chef's tips:

- The dried fruit provides all the sweetness needed
- Dates work particularly well as they break down slightly and add natural sweetness
- The oats add extra texture and make the pudding more filling
- Soaking overnight allows the oats to soften perfectly

The oats will absorb some liquid and add a lovely chewy texture alongside the gel-like chia seeds, making it more substantial and familiar for children who know porridge!

Apple and berry crumble with yoghurt

Serves 10 children

Fruit Filling Ingredients:

- 300g apples, peeled, cored and roughly chopped
- 200g frozen mixed berries
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 2 tbsp water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Crumble Topping Ingredients:

- 200g plain flour
- 100g unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 100g porridge oats
- 1/2 tsp mixed spice

To Serve

- 500g plain Greek yoghurt (50g per child is the suggested serving size, but start by offering less)

Method

1. Heat oven to 190°C/170°C fan
2. Mix cornflour with water in a small bowl to make a smooth paste
3. Put diced apples, berries and cinnamon in a large non-stick saucepan with 2 tbsp water, cook on a medium heat for 20-25 minutes until apple has softened and berries have broken down. Stir often to prevent sticking to pan.
4. Stir in cornflour paste and cook for 2-3 minutes until thickened
5. Remove from heat and let cool slightly
6. Meanwhile, make crumble: rub cold butter into flour until it resembles breadcrumbs
7. Stir in oats and mixed spice
8. Transfer the fruit compote to a large baking dish
9. Sprinkle crumble topping evenly over the compote
10. Bake for 25 minutes until golden brown and bubbling
11. Serve warm with plain yoghurt.

Fruit Scones with fresh fruit selection

Makes 10 scones, 1 scone per child

Ingredients:

- 225g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 60g unsalted butter, cold and cubed
- 50g dried fruit (e.g. raisins, sultanas, apricots). Ensure to remove stalks
- 1 egg
- 60ml milk (approximately)
- Extra milk for brushing
- For serving: plant based spread fortified with vitamin A.

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan/gas mark 6 or 400F.
2. Rub butter into flour and baking powder until mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Use a food processor to save time. Pulse briefly until just combined.
3. Transfer flour mixture to a bowl.
4. In a separate bowl, beat the egg and add 60ml milk. Add dried fruit to egg mixture and stir.
5. Add egg mixture to the dry ingredients.
6. Mix gently to form a soft dough (add more milk if needed)
7. Either: Roll out on floured surface to 2cm thickness and cut into rounds using a 5cm round cutter, or press dough/roll dough into a rectangle, to 2cm thickness and cut into 10 squares (roughly 5cm x 5cm each). Place on a greased, lined baking sheet.
8. Brush tops of scones with extra milk that's leftover.
9. Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown.
10. Cool on wire rack. Cut in half once cool.

Serving: 1 scone per child, cut in half

Chef's tip:

- Use a food processor at the start to combine the flour, butter and baking powder.

Stewed Pear with plain yoghurt

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 500g ripe eating pears, peeled, cored and chopped or tinned if fresh not available.
- 100g sultanas
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 600g plain yoghurt (60g per child approx)
- 2-3 tbsp water
- Splash of lemon juice

Method:

1. Peel, core and chop pears into small pieces
2. Place pears in a pan with 2-3 tbsp water. Add lemon juice and cinnamon.
3. Cook gently for 15-20 minutes until pears are soft and tender
4. Add sultanas and cook for a further 5 minutes until plumped
5. Mash lightly with a fork, leaving some texture
6. Cool to safe serving temperature
7. Serve warm with a dollop of yoghurt.

Chef's Tips:

- Choose ripe pears for quicker cooking and natural sweetness
- If using tinned pears, stew for less time. But make sure it's still soft and tender.
- Mash sultanas slightly for younger children to prevent choking
- Check temperature before serving - should be warm, not hot
- Each child gets 40g cooked pear + 60g yoghurt

Soup Recipes

Serve 10 children each

Serve each soup recipe with bread and salad veg selection on the side.

1. Autumn Squash & Apple Soup

Ingredients:

- 600g butternut squash, peeled and diced (fresh Sept-Nov, frozen Dec-Feb). Seeds removed.
- 2 medium eating apples, peeled and chopped
- 2 tins of 400g butter beans in water, drained
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 750ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 1 tsp mild curry powder (optional)
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil in large pot, sauté onion and red pepper until soft (8 mins)
2. Add squash and cook for 5 minutes
3. Add curry powder and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add apples and stock.
5. Simmer 20 minutes until squash is tender. If soup is too thin, cook for longer.
6. Add butter beans, cook 5 minutes
7. Blend until smooth (leave some texture for older children)
8. Season to taste

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

2. Minestrone soup

2. Minestrone soup Ingredients:

- 400g borlotti beans (2 x 400g cans, drained)
- 200g carrots, diced
- 200g frozen peas (good vitamin C source!)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 celery sticks, diced
- 400g chopped tomatoes (canned - excellent vitamin C!)
- 200g small pasta shapes
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 700ml vegetable stock
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil, sauté onion and celery until soft (5 mins)
2. Add carrots, cook 5 minutes
3. Add tomatoes, stock, and oregano
4. Simmer 15 minutes
5. Add pasta, cook 10-12 minutes until tender
6. Add beans and peas, cook 5 minutes
7. Lightly mash some of the beans with a fork to thicken the soup naturally
8. Simmer uncovered for the last 5 minutes to reduce if needed
9. Season to taste

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

Chef's Tips:

- Mashing some beans naturally thickens without adding flour
- Final uncovered simmer reduces any excess liquid for perfect consistency

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

3. Roasted Root Vegetable Soup

Serves 10 children

Ingredients:

- 200g carrots, peeled and cut into small chunks
- 200g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into small chunks
- 2 medium onions, peeled and cut into wedges
- 200g dried red lentils
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 800ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C
2. Toss the sweet potato, onion and carrots with 2 tbsp oil and roast in baking trays for 30 minutes or until golden and lightly caramelised.
3. Heat the remaining oil in large pot
4. Add roasted vegetables, cumin and lentils.
5. Fry for a couple of minutes.
6. Add the stock
7. Simmer for 20 minutes until lentils and carrots are soft.
8. Check carrots are soft. If not, continue to simmer for 5-10 minutes longer and check again.
9. Blend until smooth using a stick blender.
10. Season to taste with pepper.

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

4. Winter Leek & Potato Soup

Ingredients:

- 3 leeks, sliced (fresh Sept-April). Only use white and light green parts.
- 1 onion, finely diced (peeled)
- 400g potatoes, diced
- 200g broccoli cut into small florets (fresh Sept-Nov, frozen Dec-Feb - high vitamin C!)
- Cannellini beans, tinned in water (2 x 400g cans, drained)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 150ml thick Greek plain yoghurt (or dairy free yoghurt if dairy free recipe is required).
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil in large sauce pan
2. Add onion and fry for 5 minutes.
3. Add leeks, cook gently 10 minutes until soft
4. Add potatoes and stock
5. Simmer 15 minutes
6. Add broccoli, cook 5 minutes or until tender
7. Add beans, cook 5 minutes
8. Blend until smooth using a stick blender
9. Remove from heat, stir in yoghurt, season to taste

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

5. Lentil & Kale Soup

Serves 10

Ingredients:

- 2 tins green lentils in water (2 x 400g), drained
- 200g kale, chopped (fresh Sept-Feb, frozen alternative) (remove large/thick stems and cut into smaller pieces)
- 1 red pepper, diced (excellent vitamin C!)
- 1 large onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1 carrot, diced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 400g chopped tomatoes (canned - more vitamin C!)
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil, sauté onion, carrot and red pepper until soft (8 mins)
2. Add garlic and coriander and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add lentils, stock, and tomatoes
4. Simmer for 25 minutes
5. Add kale, cook 5 minutes until wilted
6. Lightly blend (keep some texture), using a stick blender.
7. Season to taste

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)

6. Broccoli & Cauliflower Cheese Soup

Ingredients:

- 400g broccoli florets (fresh Sept-Nov, frozen Dec-Feb - high vitamin C!)
- 400g cauliflower florets (fresh Sept-Nov, frozen Dec-Feb - good vitamin C!)
- 400g chickpeas (2 x 400g cans, drained)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 800ml vegetable stock (low salt)
- 150g mild cheddar cheese, grated
- 200ml milk
- 3 tbsp plain flour
- Black pepper to taste

Method:

1. Heat oil, sauté onion until soft (5 mins)
2. Add flour, cook 1 minute
3. Gradually add stock, stirring constantly
4. Add broccoli and cauliflower
5. Simmer 15 minutes until tender
6. Add chickpeas, cook 5 minutes
7. Blend until smooth
8. Stir in cheese and milk, but add milk gradually. Don't use the full amount of milk if not necessary.
9. Season to taste.

Serve with: 250g bread (25g per child)