

Under the Choko Tree Cookbook Vol 1 - Recipes



By Nev Sweeney

Copyright

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author. The only exception is by a reviewer, who may quote short excerpts in a published review as long as reference to the author is given along with the title and the following website address: www.underthechokotree.com

Although the author has made every effort to ensure that the information in this book was correct at the time of publication, the author does not assume and hereby disclaims any liability to any party for any loss, damage, or disruption caused by errors or omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause.

© 2021 Nevin Sweeney – All rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 0.0 | Introduction | 4 |
| 1.0 | Our Recipes My world famous potato patties; Lindas' veg curry; impossible quiche; rice cooker rice and beans; mega-tasty veg wrap; A trio of sauces (plus one); winter garden soup; slow cooker bean bonanza. | 5 |
| 2.0 | Mexican Inspired Recipes Bean burritos from scratch; Anglo quesadillas; a Mexican feast | 16 |
| 3.0 | Asian Inspired recipes Asian style soup noodles; Chinese style omelette; veggie fried rice; stir fry; Vego Singapore noodles; not pad Thai; Greens and rice stir fry; | 21 |
| 4.0 | Indian Inspired Recipes Indian style veg curry; Seedy veg curry; Rice cooker biryani | 31 |
| 5.0 | Italian and Greek Inspired Recipes Pizza from scratch; homemade calzone; spinach and ricotta; horta; An easy way into wild greens; quick n' easy tomato pasta | 34 |
| 6.0 | Resources Books on thrifty/sustainable cooking and eating | 42 |

0.0 Introduction

While Under the Choko Tree is about living sustainably and not fine dining, it is inevitable that discussions turn to food, one of our basic needs. In various areas of our website you will find information and suggestions on how to produce, preserve and cook food using sustainable techniques, and now individual recipes as well.

Most of the recipes in this eBook we return time after time, cooking them on a regular basis. We return to them because they are easy to cook, make the best use of the stuff we produce ourselves (notably veggies and eggs) but most importantly they taste good! Quite often they can also be customised so that a number of different tastes can be massaged out of a single recipe with just minor changes. Also we make a larger amount so that we can eat for two nights with the one batch of food.

We like variety in our dishes so it can be difficult to make a whole dish out of stuff we grow at the Choko Tree, but it is a hugely rewarding feeling when we do. Generally we try to have at least one home grown ingredient in every dish we cook and these recipes support that approach. They also lend themselves to energy efficient cooking such as use of a wok or stored heat cooker and at the very least are one-pot dishes.

We are not vegetarians, but try and eat a vegetarian main meal 5 – 6 nights per week. This helps us maximise the use of the food we produce, while reducing our environmental impact, so you will find a preponderance of vegetarian recipes here. One good way to reduce your environmental impact without too much sacrifice is to commit to one night a week eating vegetarian. Who knows? You may grow to enjoy it like we did!

It might not be three star Michelin eating but we like it. If you have recipes you use for good honest home grown meals, send them along to me if you want to share, and I'll put them up on the website so others can benefit.

I will say at this point that we cook dishes inspired by other cuisines, and this is reflected in the recipes in this eBook, but they are not necessarily what I would call 'authentic' and have been Anglicised to a greater or lesser degree to reflect our tastes.

As the French say: "bon appetit!"

1.0 Our Recipes

1.1 My World Famous Potato Patties



I love these and make them every couple of weeks or so. Unfortunately I am a member of the “pinch of this and dash of that” school of cookery so please forgive me if the amounts are a bit vague in places. Mind you I have found that this recipe is quite forgiving and can put up with quite a bit of variation and still turn out a good feed.

The basis of the patties is good, old fashioned mashed potato made from either home grown or organic potatoes, we use “Dutch Cream” variety. When we make mash we make a big load, enough for a meal for both of us with about 2- cups 4 left over for making patties. I usually make the patties within a couple of days and if you leave the mashed potato in the fridge for at least 24 hours, it gets a stiffer texture and the patties stay together better.

I place the mashed potato in a 3 litre glass bowl and then add –

- 1 onion, diced
- About 6 cups of diced veggies (this may include, depending on time of year – peas, carrot, cauliflower, broccoli, beans, zucchini, sweet corn kernels, choko, Jerusalem artichoke, celery, kale, cabbage, silver beet, spinach and broad beans) To save time you could grate one or two of the hard vegetables but too much grated stuff seems to ruin the texture and make it slimy and soggy. I dice them to less than 6mm cubes.
- 1 cup grated cheese (we use tasty or mozzarella)
- 2 - 3 eggs
- 2 dessertspoons of spice mix – The mix can vary the flavour quite a bit, we get Thai spice from a local supplier but have also used biryani spice to give it an Indian flavour,

Mexican spices to give it Mexican flavour or straight curry powder to give it a Chinese flavour.

To make the patties I mix the potato, onion, veggies and cheese together and throw in the spice mix, mixing everything together with a fork until the spice mix has been well distributed. I throw in 2-3 eggs, depending on how much mixture there is, to bind the mix. One bowl of mix usually makes 6 – 7 patties with 2 patties by themselves being a decent meal for one person.

I form the mix into balls with my hand and then crumb them (dip in flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs) then flatten them out on a tray. I let them recover for 15 – 20 minutes then fry in olive oil over a fairly low heat (I put the fry pan on our wok ring over its lowest setting). I let the oil heat up for a bit and when it is fragrant I put the patties in. I cook them for 15 minutes on the first side and 10 minutes on the second. You will probably need to check them regularly to make sure you have the heat right or you can easily burn them.

Once they are cooked we eat them with some mayonnaise and sweet chilli sauce. We also put them on a burger bun with tomato, lettuce and beetroot. Either way It's a meal fit for a king!

Update

I have been making these for a while and basically any veg we have floating around gets thrown in, but just this past week I made a batch and I had some cooked red kidney beans in the fridge, so I thought I would throw some in, probably somewhere between one and one and a half cups. Wow! The beans really added something to the flavour and texture of the veggie patties that we really like, so I can see them being a regular addition. It is well worth a go, just add in a cup or two of your favourite cooked beans, fold them through the mash with a fork and then carry on as normal. You won't be sorry!

1.2 Linda's Veg Curry



This is not an authentic Indian, Thai or Malay style curry, it is more an anglicised version which uses a commercial curry powder for flavouring, but it is easy and quick to prepare. It uses lots of veggies and is very versatile. We like it.

The amount we make is really enough for 4 people but we refrigerate half to reheat (and therefore reduce cooking) within the next day or two or freeze it for consumption at a later time. I have also used it as a filling for curry pies.

Ingredients

- 1 medium sized onion
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 50gms of butter
- 100g plain flour
- 2 vegetarian stock cubes + 1 litre of water, or
1 litre of stock
- 1 teaspoon of sugar
- 3 heaped teaspoons of curry powder
- 3-4 cups of hard veggies which may be – potato, sweet potato, carrot, pumpkin, choko, Jerusalem artichoke etc.
- 2 cups of firm veggies which may be – Fresh (not frozen!) peas, beans, capsicum or celery
- 2 cups of leafy veg including silver beet, spinach, kale, broccoli, cauliflower



The stock cubes and curry powder we use!

Instructions

- Cut the onion up into 8 wedges
- Place a 350mm (or so) frypan onto medium heat,
- Throw in the butter and melt, then toss in the onion and garlic and cook until the onion softens.
- Add in the flour, stock cubes (if used), the curry powder and sugar
- Stir to cook for a minute or two then add in the water or stock.
- Put the lid on and allow to come to the boil and thicken while stirring regularly, add a bit more water if it appears too thick.
- Add in the hard veggies and cook for 10 minutes, stirring regularly.

Add in the firm veggies and cook for a further 10 minutes, stirring regularly. If the hard veggies are fully cooked, add in the leafy veg and cook for 2-3 minutes. Turn off the heat, place the lid on the pan and allow things to cook in stored heat for 5 minutes. Add salt to taste and serve (we usually have fresh bread with it)

Variations.

Thai style (sort of)

Cut back on the water and add in 375ml of coconut milk,
Add in 2 heaped dessertspoons of Thai spice at the end of the cooking time then the heat is turned off, stir around.

Pasta

Add in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup short pasta (we like curly pasta but macaroni etc. would do) when adding in the firm veggies. The pasta will consume some liquid so be ready to add some more water if required.

The pasta works well with either the standard curry or the Thai variation.

1.3 Impossible Quiche



When I am thinking about what to have for the evening meal I will have a look at what we are growing and see what I can come up with. Sometimes it is a case of “we have eggs, and we have silver beet, hmmm, quiche!” Most of the other stuff for the quiche we have hanging around so it is no biggie to toss one together and then have it with salad or veggies. One good thing about the following recipe is that the leaf component doesn’t have to be silver beet, it can just be a leaf veg of some description or a mixture. I made one (the one in the photo actually) a few weeks ago that had silver beet, spinach, kale, sorrel and rocket in it. There was probably other stuff I could have thrown in if I’d thought of it!

If you haven’t come across the whole “impossible” bit before, it is just that you throw everything together and then bung it in the oven to cook, rather than making pastry, blind baking it, adding the filling then re-baking. It makes a quick, easy and tasty feed.

I make them vegetarian but you can throw in a bit of bacon or sausage to meatify it if required. Other veggie stuff can be added alter the flavour as well and I regularly toss in some corn niblets and/or diced capsicum, how much you add is up to you.

Recipe

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 brown onion, chopped
4 eggs,
1 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup self-raising flour
1 cup grated cheese (We use mozzarella but I suspect anything would do)
1 cup of shredded mixed leaves(silver beet, spinach, kale etc.)
1 pinch of salt

Method

Caramelize the onion in a saucepan with the olive oil (I didn't realise how this one step improves the flavour of the dish so much!) and allow it to cool.

Add the milk into a bowl and whisk in each of the eggs in turn

Whisk in the self-raising flour and continue whisking until the mixture is smooth and lump free.

Whisk in the salt and add in the cheese.

You can wilt the leaves first in a frypan if you like it that way but I don't bother, I just arrange the chopped leaves in the bottom of a 200mm pie pan then pour over the whisked mixture and bake in an oven at 180°C for 45 min or until browned on top.

We sometimes use the solar oven to bake quiches and we have a thin walled black enamelled steel pie plate which we use for this purpose. The black steel absorbs and transmits the solar heat much better than the ceramic pie plate we would normally use in the gas oven. Also, it pays to preheat the oven (solar or otherwise) as it helps to release the quiche from the pan. I apply some release agent (butter) by wiping it onto the bottom of the pie plate just to be sure anyway.

1.4 Rice Cooker Rice and Beans

I like this one because it includes rice for carbs, dried beans for protein and veg for vitamins & minerals (home grown of course!) and spices of your choice for flavour, it is a cheap and nutritious feed.

This will serve 2 big eaters, 3 normal (or 2 dinners + 1 lunch the next day) or 4 with a bit of something else thrown in.

| | |
|--|--|
| Long grain rice | 2 cups |
| Butter or marg. | 2 tablespoons |
| Small onion chopped | 1 |
| Diced tomatoes | 1 x 400g can or jar if you do your own |
| Red kidney beans | 1 x 400g can or soak and cook from scratch |
| Water or stock | 2 cups |
| Spice/flavour mix* | 1 -2 teaspoons depending on taste |
| Diced veggies (carrot, beans, corn etc.) | 1 cup |

*Note on flavour mix – this could be any one of a number mixes depending on your likes and dislikes, we have tried a commercial Biryani Spice mix and also commercial curry powder, but Mexican spice mix of some description, gram marsala or Moroccan spices would also work well.

Method

1. Rinse the rice in cold water until it runs clear, to remove starch (if that is your thing, I rarely bother).
2. Add the butter to the rice cooker and set to cook, you may need to hold the inner pot down to keep the cooker from switching to "warm".
3. When the butter is melted add and cook the onion until it is soft.
4. Add in the tomatoes and fry for a couple of minutes
5. Stir in the rice, water, beans, veg and spices, place on the lid and let it cook until it switches to warm. Leave for 5 min on warm to vent off remaining steam.
6. Serve!



Rice and Beans Leftovers!

1.5 Mega-Tasty Veg Wrap

OK, I stole this idea from Le Wrap, but we have adapted it for home production and now make it at home quite regularly and find it to be super tasty. Obviously it is even better if you can add in some home grown veg as well.

Ingredients

The ingredients are a bit variable depending on what you have available, but I would recommend keeping the cabbage if you can for flavour and crunch. Amounts will vary with your appetite and the size of your tortillas. This is what we usually use -

- 2 homemade or commercial tortillas
- Finely sliced mushroom, onion, capsicum (roughly 1/3 cup per tortilla)
- Finely sliced cabbage (roughly 1/2 cup per tortilla)
- Julienned Carrot (1/3 cup per tortilla)
- Sliced tomato (2 – 3 slices per tortilla)
- Lettuce leaves (1 -2 per tortilla)
- Mayo (or other sauce/flavouring of your choice)
- Grated cheese (to taste)



Method

1. Lay out the tortilla and place in the centre a lettuce leaf or two, a couple of tomato slices and grated cheese to taste.
2. Add a tablespoon of oil to a wok and heat.

3. Stir fry onion, for a minute, add capsicum, carrot and cabbage and stir fry for a further two to three minutes.
4. Add the mushroom and stir fry for another two minutes.
5. Remove from the heat and place on the tomato/lettuce layer on the tortilla.
6. Drizzle over mayo or other sauces/flavouring as required.
- 7 Tuck in both sides of the tortilla a bit and tightly roll into a cylinder.
8. Place into a hot squish cooker (sandwich press for the uninitiated) and squish cook until the tortilla has browned a bit and become crispy.
9. Devour with gusto.

1.6 A Trio of Sauces (plus one)

As with a lot of people, we have a selection of recipes which we cook regularly and this works for us, but you have to be careful or it can become repetitive and menu fatigue sets in! One way of switching things up is to alternate sauces to change flavours of the basic meals, to keep things fresh. It is even better if the sauces are easy to make, are made from pantry staples and the odd fresh ingredient, and quick to prepare. The following four sauces, which we make and use on a regular basis, fit these criteria well. They can be combined with a number of meals (including ones in our recipe section) so that things are always fresh and you don't ever have to worry about menu fatigue.

Sate Sauce

2 hugely over heaped dessertspoons of peanut butter
270ml light coconut cream
2 teaspoons soy sauce
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of chopped chillies (I use de-tuned stuff from a jar, because we don't use much chilli but always have a jar of this stuff around. You could always make you own.)

Directions

Place the peanut butter, coconut cream and soy sauce into a saucepan and heat with stirring to disperse the peanut butter.
Once the peanut butter and coconut cream are homogenous, add in the soy sauce and chilli and stir well. Heat to simmering temperature and serve.

Works well with a stir fry, veggie patties or beans and rice.

Curry Sauce

1 small onion (diced)
1 Teaspoon garlic (crushed)
1 tablespoon butter
2 heaped tablespoons plain flour
3 level teaspoons curry powder
1 cup of water
1 chicken stock cube (or two teaspoons homemade stock powder)

Directions

Melt butter in a saucepan, add onion, garlic and chicken stock cube, sauté for couple of minutes. Add flour, curry powder and stir to combine, add 1 cup water, extra if a thinner consistency is required. Stir until the mix boils and thickens. Serve.

Works well over veggies or beans and rice

Mushroom Sauce

1 tablespoon butter
200g mushrooms, diced (can be fresh, dried the rehydrated or canned)
Cup of water
Teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons of corn flour

Directions

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add mushrooms and sauté for 5 minutes or until reduced down to approximately half the volume. Add salt.

Pour in the water and bring to the boil, predisperse the cornflour in a very small amount of water and add to the sauce while stirring until the sauce boils and thickens.

The water and cornflour can be varied depending on the desired thickness of the sauce,

Then serve

Works well over veggies.

Cheese Sauce

1 tablespoon butter
3 heaped tablespoons plain flour
1 cup of water
1 cup grated cheese (we find a mild cheese like cheddar works well)

Directions

Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the flour, mix and cook for 1 minute.

Add the milk and mix until homogenous, a whisk works very well for this.

Add the cheese and melt, the finished thickness of the sauce can be adjusted by adding more milk.

Works well over veggies.

We use all of these sauces regularly to add colour and flavour to our meals, and you can too!

1.7 Winter Garden Soup

This soup is a winter staple in our house. I make a big pot of it on the woodburner every week or two, enough for the two of us for two or three meals. It is tasty, economical, nutritious and energy efficient to prepare (depending on how you cook it!). It is also very versatile and can be changed up in a number of ways.



The basic soup

I usually make it in our 3.5 or 4.0 litre pot, first putting in a tablespoon or so of butter and then frying of a medium to large diced onion, with or without a bit of garlic, until it becomes translucent.

I then add in the fluid, about 1.5 litres of stock which is composed of water flavoured with our vego 'chicken' stock powder, and bring it to the boil while adding in the other veg.

The 'other veg' can be any combination of potato, carrot, choko, Jerusalem artichoke, beans, peas, broccoli, carrot, sweet potato, celery, corn kernels or cauliflower, all depending on the time of year we are cooking it, what we have in the garden and what other stuff we have on hand. I just dice the veg up into 1 cm – 2cm cubes, obviously peas and corn kernels go in as they are! We will also add some pearl barley from the pantry on occasion to add variety.

We do not put much in the way of extra flavourings in as we like the flavour just as it is with the stock and the veg, maybe just a bay leaf or two and perhaps some mixed herbs.

Once everything is in the pot it is just a case of simmering it for 30min – 45min or until the veg is tender. Then go for it!

Additives

To change things up when eating the soup for the second or third time around, we can throw in various additives –

Cornflour – if the soup was served 'au naturale' originally, thickening it up gives a different texture and experience when eating it the second time around.

Red Kidney Beans – we keep serves of cooked red kidney bean in the freezer ready to go and they will add extra protein and flavour, but you could just as easily throw in a tin of red kidney beans, chickpeas, black beans or whatever takes your fancy.

Pasta – adding in some pasta on the second cook will not only add new texture and flavour, but thicken the soup as well without the need to add cornflour.

Tomato paste or tomato pasta sauce – either opened specifically or if perhaps not the whole jar was used for a previous meal, tomato leftovers can be added on the second cook (or the first!) to supercharge the flavours.

Cooking

While, for the most part, we use the wood burning heater to cook up our winter soup, it would be just as easy to use a rocket stove if you've got one. This recipe also lends itself very well to cooking in the stored heat style of cooker, thus saving energy as well.

1.8 Slow Cooker Bean Bonanza



I originally stole this recipe from Tasty.Com and modified it a bit to suit our tastes and requirements. We have a 3.5 litre slow cooker and the recipe below fits it perfectly. I make up a batch of this and then freeze it in 450g – 500g portions, Linda doesn't like it but I love it, and it is perfect for a Sunday night tea when you don't feel like mucking around. I like it because it uses a variety of legumes (black beans, red beans, chick peas and red lentils). I also use our home produced/preserved diced tomatoes and our own onions and garlic. The result is wonderfully..... tasty, especially when served with a few schlogs of Greek yoghurt mixed through just prior to consumption and a topping of grated cheese.

We cook (and occasionally grow) our own legumes so the black and red kidney beans and the chickpeas are soaked overnight, then boiled up the next day and left in the stored heat cooker for a few hours, drained and then frozen in 250gm portions. As it works out, 250g of cooked legume is about as much as you get in a 420g can (the rest being expensive water), so if you don't want to process your own, one can of each will do. For the tomato paste, I generally buy in a glass jar of the stuff and freeze it in an ice cube tray, then empty the tray into a container and store the frozen tomato paste cubes in the freezer until needed. Two of the cubes of tomato paste are roughly equivalent to one quarter of a cup.

Recipe

1 tablespoon oil
1 onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
250g black beans
250g kidney beans
250g chickpeas
250g corn kernels (1 x 420g can, drained) or you can cut the kernels from fresh corn
420g diced tomato (1 x can) or 1 x 400gm jar of your own if you are so minded
¼ cup tomato paste (55 g)
2 tablespoons cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon ground coriander
4 cups vegetable stock (I use 2 Massel chicken stock cubes in 1 litre of water, they have no animal content)
¾ cup lentils (125 g)

Method

1. Fry up the onion and garlic in the oil and add to the slow cooker
2. Add the beans, chickpeas, corn, tomato and tomato paste
3. Sprinkle the spices on top
4. Add the stock and lentils, stir to distribute everything
5. Cook on high for 4 hours or on low for 6.
6. If you are that way inclined (and I am) you can toss in a couple of teaspoons of cornflour suspended in a small amount of water and stir around to thicken it up a bit.

As mentioned above, stir some Greek yoghurt through any portions you are going to eat (and freeze the stuff not yoghurted) top with grated cheese of your choice. You will not find a tastier quick, easy and high protein vego meal, even if the resulting flatulence is almost life threatening!

2.0 Mexican Inspired Recipes

2.1 Burritos from Scratch

There are a couple of problems with the supplies which you need to buy to make it though, they are industrially produced and so contain some questionable ingredients that I am sure were not in the original stuff, and it can be quite expensive. Thus our quest to make the good gear from scratch, or at least as scratch as I can make it at the moment, the dairy stuff is a bit problematic as we have no cow or goat so we generally have to buy it in. Anyway, here goes –

The Tortilla

The recipe I used was wonderfully simple, using only four ingredients – flour (actually 5 ingredients because I used 2 types of flour), salt, water and olive oil in the proportions below –

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Wholemeal flour | 1 cup |
| Bakers flour | 1 cup |
| Salt | $\frac{3}{4}$ TSP |
| Olive oil | 3 Tbsp |
| Water (warmed) | $\frac{2}{3}$ cup |

To make:

Mix the flours, oil and salt in a bowl and then slowly add the water while mixing it in with your fingers. Keep adding the water and mixing until it comes together into a dough, turn out and knead for a couple of minutes. Put back into the bowl and let the dough rest for 20 minutes. Cut the dough into 4 equal sized wedges and then form into balls. Using an elliptical rolling pin (which works best for us!), roll out each ball into a thin disc, about 250mm in diameter. Place into a lightly oiled pan on medium heat and let it cook until bubbles form, for me this was a couple of minutes, then turn over and cook on the other side. Consume immediately or store in an airtight container in the fridge. Freeze if you want to keep them longer.

The end product tasted good and were flexible enough to wrap around the filling so I didn't make a mess of my shirt (again). All up they only took half an hour to prepare including waiting time and a couple of minutes to cook each one. They are a worthwhile addition to your culinary repertoire.

The Spice Mix

This took a little bit of work. We used to buy the packet stuff but had some concerns with it as noted above. We downloaded a few recipes off the net but it took some fooling around to get to a formula we liked the flavour of and was not so hot it took our heads off.

The formula we worked out is as follows;

- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 2 tablespoons + 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons onion powder

- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons cornflour

This is a good start and you can go from here. We buy the spices whole or grow our own and grind them just before use, which keeps the flavour fresh. As far as the onion and garlic powder goes, you can buy the powder, buy dried granules and grind in the spice grinder before use or grow your own, dry and then grind. The oregano is also easy to grow, dry and grind. We have not tried anything with DIY paprika so it is bought in as well.

Add 3-4 dessertspoons to the filling mix below, cook up for a minute or two then add $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup of water which will thicken things up nicely as it reheats.

The Filling

We like to do a veggie filling based on red kidney beans and I shamefully admit that I used to use the tins. It was nice and easy and I have had problems previously with the dried beans made from scratch. However, after some research it turns out that old beans (older than 12 months) can prove difficult to rehydrate and tend to come out like bullets, which kind of explains my previous efforts.

So I bought some fresh ones and soaked a cup of them overnight, changed the water, then boiled them up for 10 minutes and put them in my stored heat cooker for a few hours. What came out the other end were some really nice and well-cooked beans. Now we make a batch of beans weighing a kilo or a kilo and a half, split them up and freeze them for later use.

My usual recipe calls for a tin of beans which is 410 grams, but that includes the water the beans were cooked in. each tin only having about 300grams of actual beans, so I decided to use 300 grams of our own rehydrated and cooked beans instead.

To make the filling I tossed a diced onion I into the fry pan with a bit of oil, closely followed by some freshly picked garden veggies diced into about 5mm cubes (carrot, zucchini, capsicum – you get the idea) and some corn niblets. I really don't measure, just toss the stuff in until it looks enough. This was then followed by the cooked beans. If it gets too dry and starts to catch, toss in a bit of water.

After frying up on low heat for about 15 minutes I tossed in the spice mix and a cup of water then reheated to boil and thicken the spice mix. Your burrito filling is now ready to serve!

Other Stuff

To eat we put some filling mix onto the tortilla, add some sliced tomato and lettuce (home grown where possible), some shredded cheese, sour cream or yoghurt and sweet chilli sauce. I will make this for tea every couple of weeks and we both enjoy it a lot.

It sounds like a lot of effort but it is not really. You can precook the beans and pre-make the spice mix and then all you do on the day is make the tortillas and cook up the filling. Give it a go and I'm sure you won't be disappointed!

2.2 Anglo Quesadillas

It is interesting to see how different cuisines achieve getting a variety of experiences from a similar set of ingredients, and I have been fooling around with the tortillas from Mexican cuisine to see what I could come up with. This recipe for Anglo-quesadillas was the result of some that fooling around. We found them to be very tasty.

To start off with I made one recipe of tortilla dough (see 2.1 above), this made four quesadillas, which was more than enough for the two of us, one and a half quesadillas per person being about right, unless you are really hungry. The only difference is that rather than cutting the dough into 4 quarters, cut the dough into 8 equal wedges and then form into balls. Roll out each ball of tortilla dough to a round, about 150mm – 200mm and cook as for 2.1.



With your tortillas ready to go, prepare the other ingredients. You can use other stuff for toppings such as corn, sliced mushrooms or diced cabbage, but this is what we used, and it worked out pretty well for us -
1 medium onion thinly sliced,
1 medium red and green capsicum Cut the centre out of the capsicums, remove any seeds and membranes left and slice thinly.
½ jar, diced tomatoes
1 knob butter
1 – 2 teaspoons Mexican spice mix
Grated cheese (we used

mozzarella, but whatever works for you!)

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add in the onion and capsicum and cook for 2 – 3 minutes, add in about half a 375ml jar of diced tomatoes and cook for a couple more minutes and then spoon on one or two (depending on taste) teaspoons of Mexican spice mix, add salt and pepper to taste, mix well and remove from the heat.

Set up four of the small tortillas as bases, cover each base with grated cheese, top with the cooked veggies, then the remaining tortillas to make quesadillas.

Cook the quesadillas in a hot pan, two minutes on each side, ensuring the cheese is melted. Cut into quarters and serve with sour cream and (for extra naughtiness) sweet chilli sauce, and enjoy!

Homemade/grown ingredients are best where you can manage it and in our case that was –

- the onions and the green capsicum were home grown
- the bottled tomatoes were home grown and bottled at home
- The organic wholemeal flour was ground by us.
- The Mexican spice mix was made by us from bought in and home grown ingredients (see 2.1 above).

We found them to be well worth the work to throw together, and if you roped the family in to help out it could be even more fun! (for the cook at least).

2.3 A Mexican Feast

I have been casting around for some different flavours and ways of presenting food based on stuff we already have on hand at home. I guess that is one of the side effects of lockdown. I tend to cook the same dozen to eighteen meals in rotation and it is quite possible to get menu fatigue, so I wanted to change things up a bit. I thought this was worth a go, we have done it a few times and it seems to go over fairly well. The feast can be broken up into a number of sections: soft tacos, taco filling (I threw this together the first time and it worked, I have no idea what else to call it!), Mexican rice, cheese and salad, other bits and pieces.

Soft Tacos

These are made using the same recipe as the tortillas I make for our burritos. (see 2.1 above) Except I cut the dough into 8 equal wedges which I form into balls. Using an elliptical rolling pin I roll out each ball into a thin disc about 150mm to 200mm in diameter.

Taco Filling

This is a bit hap-hazard because I just throw it together, but generally is composed of onion, capsicum and mushrooms. I finely slice an onion, or a half onion if there is one left over, but dicing works too, I slice two sides of a capsicum into strips and I then finely slice two to three mushrooms. It is then just a case of adding a bit of oil and frying them up until they are cooked, 5 to 10 minutes generally then adding some Mexican spice powder. You could use commercial stuff or make your own, the recipe for which is in 2.1 above. Vary the chili powder and black pepper amounts to suit your preferred heat level.

Mexican Rice

- Oil (we use Aussie extra virgin olive oil) 2 tablespoons
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 carrot, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed or two teaspoons of minced garlic
- ½ to 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 cup white rice
- 2.5 cups of stock, we use our own vege chicken stock powder or Massel chicken stock cubes
- 2 dessert spoons tomato paste
- ½ cup peas (fresh or frozen)

To make:

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan (ours is 250mm) with a heavy base. Place over medium heat and cook the onion, carrot and fresh peas if you are using them, for 5 minutes or until softened.
2. Add in the garlic and cumin and fry until fragrant for a minute or two.
3. Add the rice and cook, stirring for a couple of minutes. Add the stock and tomato paste and stir well to combine. I generally add the stock powder or cube to hot water and combine before adding.
4. Bring to the boil, cover and reduce to low. Cook for 12 minutes or until rice is tender (not slightly crunchy like my first attempt!).

5. Remove from the heat and stand for 5 minutes. If you are using frozen peas, add them now and stir through once the rice is removed from the heat. Stir well and serve.

Other bits and pieces

Salad – we generally just use tomato and lettuce but you could include whatever you want in the way of salad.

Cheese – grated cheese goes well

Sour cream or Greek Yoghurt – We find either works well with this dish or even both if you are a glutton for punishment.

Sauce whatever takes your fancy, we use sweet chilli, but you could use tomato, mild, medium or hot chilli or barbecue.

To serve and eat

I usually make the soft taco tortillas and set them aside, prepare the taco filling, put the Mexican rice on and while it is cooking fry up the pre-prepared taco filling ingredients. It is then takes only a matter of seconds to make up the salad and cheese on a platter and set out the condiments and other bits and pieces. I then set out the rice and taco filling in the pans onto trivets on the table. We then just throw whatever bits we feel like onto a soft taco, wrap and eat!

Linda and I make three soft tacos each, and the amounts for the filling are just right for that, but there is plenty of the rice left over.



3.0 Asian Inspired Recipes

3.1 Asian Style Soup Noodle

I like this recipe because for me, it ticks all the boxes –

- Tasty,
- Inexpensive to prepare,
- Very versatile and home grown veggies can easily be integrated,
- Quick to make with low energy consumption.
- Can be prepared as vegetarian if desired

Ingredients

Chicken stock – may be home prepared or you can use commercial liquid stock or stock cubes.
Noodles – these may also be home prepared but if so will need precooking. If using commercial noodles you can use 2 minute style noodles, cheapest when bought in a 10 pack without flavour sachets. Fresh hokkien noodles or dried thin egg noodles also work well.

Vegetables – I use whatever we have growing, usually choosing from a mixture of: broccoli, bok choy, celery, cauliflower, carrot, cabbage, onion, peas, corn (niblets cut from the cob), kale, sliver beet.

A serve of stir fried leafy greens, recipe is [here](#)

Special bits – to add extra flavour and variety could be deep fried tofu, boiled egg, commercial or homemade won tons. Meaty bits like barbecue pork or steamed chicken will also add extra flavour.

Method

1. Slice all veggies thinly, for my last effort I used bok choy, onion, cauliflower, broccoli, celery and corn niblets.
2. Measure out the stock or water for stock, I use 200mm Chinese style bowls and they work very well, requiring roughly 3 cups of stock or water per bowl.
3. Heat the stock. I use Massel chicken stock cubes which are easy if you want soup noodles on the spur of the moment, one cube per two cups of water.
4. Place one dry noodle cake or handful of cooked noodles in the bottom of the bowl.
5. When the stock is simmering toss in the veggies and any special bits including meat and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.
6. Pour the stock mixture over the top, allow to sit for 5 minutes to reheat (and rehydrate if required) your noodles.
7. Add half a serve of stir fried greens onto the top of your dish and you are ready to go.

This is a great lunch or evening meal on cold winter days. This winter we have been having them once a week or so and find them to be easy, tasty and filling, warming us up after a day working outside in the cold.



3.2 Chinese Style Omelette



We have chooks. Needless to say there are time of the year when we are awash in eggs, and a great way to use them is with a Chinese Style omelette. I do call it Chinese style because I am no chef, but I do sort things out so they work for me.

We generally do the vegetarian style, but there is no reason why you couldn't throw in some meat if you have a mind to. Where possible we only use the stuff we are growing, but it can be nice to throw some other bits in as well.

Recipe

5 eggs per person (I like my omelettes eggy!)

1 cups sliced veggies per person (usually includes include onions or shallots, the a mix of what is available including carrot, celery, peas, beans, corn niblets, bok choy etc.)

1 cup per person - Stuff to hold things together*

*When making Chinese style omelettes I find it is great to have something long and stringy to hold them together and traditionally we have used either cabbage or bean sprouts. Lately, however we have been using other leafy greens like kale and/or silver beet, sliced lengthways or even wild greens such as dandelion or sow thistle. These perform the same function as the cabbage or bean sprouts but make it easier to make omelettes when the garden is not producing cabbage and I forgot to put the sprouts on the week before!

Method

1. Throw in the eggs and then whip them up a bit so that they are somewhat homogenous.
2. Throw in everything else and stir it round until mixed.
3. Heat up the wok, we use a mild steel traditional style wok and use the gas wok ring, cook top on our wood burning heater or rocket stove as appropriate.
4. Add a couple of tablespoons of oil to the wok and get it nice and hot.
5. Pour half of the mixture into the wok (obviously if you want more, but smaller omelettes, don't pour in as much).
6. Let that sizzle for a while, using a charn (the tool you use with a wok that looks like a shovel, this is easiest if you have two) lift the edge to keep an eye on the bottom that it isn't burning.
7. Insert one charn under each edge and flip the omelette over without throwing stuff everywhere. (It comes with a bit of practice).
8. Push down on the top to force out any uncooked egg into contact with the hot wok surface. You may need to do this a few times and may need to flip once or twice more.
9. When cooked, plate up, cover in sauce and serve!

Sauce

I really like the sauce so for us I would double up on this amount for us, but you might want to start out with a bit less!

- 1 cup water
- 1 stock cube
- 2 dessertspoons of soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 heaped teaspoon of cornflour dispersed in a bit of water

Place stock cube, soy sauce and sugar in the water, heat and dissolve, pre-disperse corn flour in the bit of water, add to sauce, boil to thicken and serve.

3.3 Veggie Fried Rice



This is one of our family favourites, easy and quick to cook after a bit of preparation and it can use up all sorts of home produced veggies. It can be a meal in itself or a great accompaniment to other meat or vegetarian dishes. We use a traditional mild steel wok to make our fried rice, heated by our wood fired heater in winter, a rocket stove when it is not winter, or the gas stove when I am feeling lazy.

Recipe

- 1 ½ cups of long grain rice and water for cooking
- 5 eggs
- 25mm ginger root (peeled)
- 1 decent sized onion (diced)
- 2 tablespoons of oil (x2)
- 1 -2 cups of diced home produced veggies (eg peas or beans cut 6mm long, corn kernels, carrot, zucchini, broccoli, cauliflower, celery, bok choy, etc.)
- Spring onion or onion tops if you grow them (cut into 6mm sections)
- 20ml soy sauce (roughly).

Method

1. Cooking the rice

It is a good idea to do this at least a couple of hours before you want to eat your fried rice. Cook it and then put it in the fridge to cool and dry for a couple of hours and when you come fry it, it won't clag together (technical term used by chefs).

Put 2 litres of water into a pot with a close fitting lid. Add salt if desired (I usually don't bother) and bring water to the boil. With the water boiling add the rice and then give it a good stir to prevent it sticking to the bottom of the pot. Put the lid onto the pot and return it to the boil. Once it re-boils turn off the heat and let the pot sit unmolested for 12 minutes. Once the rice is cooked, drain it out into a colander and then rinse with running water until it runs clear. Let it drain in the colander for 10 to 15 minutes then upend it onto an appropriate size plate and store it in the fridge for at least 2 hours to dry.

2. Cooking the egg

Do this just before you are going to make the fried rice.

I generally use 5 eggs for just Linda and I but if you were making fried rice for a larger number of people (ie with more rice etc) I usually go with one egg per person and one for the wok!

Pour your eggs into a cup or bowl and stir around with a fork until the mixture is more-or-less homogenous. Preheat the wok and add in 2 tablespoons of oil. When the oil is getting hot add in the eggs and let them cook to firm up a bit, but keep an eye on the bottom to make sure the eggs do not burn. Using your wok tool (churn) break up the egg mix and cut it into smaller lumps, keep it moving around the hot wok until most bits are browned but not burned. Remove from the wok and place in a bowl to one side.

3. Cooking the rest

1. Heat the wok and put in two tablespoons of oil, stir fry the onion and ginger for 3 minutes or until the onion is transparent.
2. Throw in the diced veggies and stir fry for a further 5 minutes or until any hard vegetables (eg carrot) are cooked but still crisp.
3. Add the cooked egg and stir fry for a couple of minutes to heat through.
4. Add the rice and stir fry until the rice is hot, add the soy sauce. (add more soy sauce to your taste)
5. Serve hot.

3.4 Stir Fry

This recipe came about as a result of peasant thinking. Supermarket thinking is "what do I want for dinner", peasant thinking is "what do I have to make dinner". I wanted to make something easy, that tasted good and used what we had. The dish breaks down into three main components – noodles, veggies (hopefully at least some home grown) and protein.

Noodles

While I am fan of fresh Hokkien style noodles and usually get hold of some when planning a stir fry we had none, but we did have some plain "instant" noodles. They come quite cheaply in a 10-pack

and I have been using them in the soup noodles that I make so we had a stock. (Yes, homemade noodles are still on the to-do list!)

Home grown veggies



Obviously this will depend on the time of year and what you are growing. In this case we had zucchini, bok choy, carrot, beans and onions. We also had some leftover cauliflower left over from a visit to the markets a week or two ago.

Protein

Carrying on with my theme of using what was available, I searched through the freezer and found some minute steak which was still there from our last big freezer buy of pasture fed beef. It has been at least a year but we vacuum packed

the meat and it is lasting well. I have also made this dish with tofu, using a similar process to the meat and I suspect I could serve it with boiled eggs and the protein and it would still go over well.

Method

1. If you are using meat, cut it into thin strips across the grain, for the two of us I used about 300gms of minute steak, and place into a bowl. Add in 3 teaspoons of Chinese char siu sauce, a glug (technical term equal to a slosh and a half) of soy sauce and 2 teaspoons of cornflour. Mix it all around with a fork and leave to marinate for at least 15 minutes.
2. We have two 200mm Chinese bowls and they are excellent for serving, so get them out and place a cake of dry noodles in the bottom of each one. Put some water on to boil.
3. Heat up the wok and add a tablespoon or two of oil and place it on the heat. When the wok is starting to smoke add in the meat a couple of pieces at a time and cook until all surfaces are seared and the meat is just about cooked through, remove from the wok as they are done and replace with fresh pieces.
4. Put boiling water into the bowls sufficient to cover the noodle cake
5. Stir fry the onion (add garlic or ginger as well at this point if desired for three minutes until translucent.
6. Stir fry the other veggies, starting with the harder veg like carrot and ending with the softer more quick cooking veg like the bok choy. Add in a couple of teaspoons of char siu sauce and a similar amount of soy sauce. Distribute the sauces evenly while stir frying the veg. When the veg is almost cooked return the meat to the wok and reheat.
7. Pour the hot water off the noodles and separate them with a fork, add in a teaspoon of soy sauce if desired and use the fork to distribute the sauce.
8. Ladle the meat and veg mixture from the wok into the bowls on top of the rehydrated and heated noodles and you are good to go!

There is a bit of preparation required but the cooking itself goes fairly quickly. It is a quick, cheap and nutritious feed which tastes great and is worth including in your family's repertoire of favourite dishes.

3.5 Vego Singapore Noodles

I love Singapore noodles from our local Chinese restaurant! It is not vegetarian but makes a great Friday night feed in combination with other meals off their menu. I've even been to Singapore, but it was a flying business visit and I didn't get to try their noodles. One of the funniest things though, my elder daughter did some work there and it turns out no one in Singapore had heard of Singapore noodles, maybe she should have asked for Australian noodles!

Anyway, here is a wonderful recipe for vegetarian Singapore noodles which I found just recently, it has become a staple at our place already though!

Ingredients

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Soy sauce | 2 tablespoons |
| Mirin | 1 tablespoon |
| Brown sugar | 1 tablespoon (packed) |
| Rice vermicelli noodles | 150 grams |
| Oil (eg grapeseed or rice bran) | 2 tablespoons |
| Onion | 1 (sliced) |
| Carrot | 1 large or 2 small (julienned) |
| Cabbage | 1 cup (finely sliced) |
| Mushrooms | 1 cup (finely sliced) |
| Peas | ½ cup (finely sliced) |
| Capsicum (green) | ½ cup (finely sliced) |
| Coarse salt | ½ teaspoon |
| Minced fresh ginger | 2 teaspoons |
| Minced fresh garlic | 2 teaspoons |
| Curry powder | 3 teaspoons |

The Prep takes longer than the cook!

Method

1. In a small bowl, mix together the soy sauce, mirin and brown sugar, and set aside.
2. Prepare the veggies
3. Bring a large saucepan full of water to the boil, when boiling add the noodles and remove from the heat. After 3 minutes pour the noodles into a colander and allow them to drain, put to one side.
4. Add the oil to a large wok (mine is 390mm, but you could probably get away with 350mm) on high heat. Add the onions and cook for a minute or two. Add the rest of the veggies and stir fry for 3 to 5 minutes until the veg is lightly browned.
5. Add the garlic, ginger and curry powder and stir to combine, cook for a minute or two until fragrant, reduce heat to medium.
6. Add the rice noodles and stir to combine, the noodles should take on a golden curry colour.



7. Add the soy sauce/mirin/sugar mixture and stir fry for a minute or so, remove from the heat and serve.

3.6 Not Pad Thai

As mentioned in previous recipes, our tastes are a bit on the Anglo side (Just sayin') and I wanted a vegetarian pad Thai recipe I could live with. There are stacks of recipes on the 'net, so I trawled through them to find one which would work for us. I experimented a bit but found that one of the, what appeared to me to be key, components was a taste that neither of us cared for ie tamarind paste. So I did a bit more experimenting and added a couple of bits that we like and what I came up with is the recipe below, which needless to say is sans tamarind paste and so it is not authentic pad Thai, thus it is **Not Pad Thai** – enjoy!



Ingredients

- 200gm rice noodles (pad Thai style),
- 2 eggs
- 4 cloves garlic (minced)
- 3 tbsp. onion (diced)
- 3 to 4 heads of baby bok choy (if you grow these at home, sometimes the leaves can get somewhat bitter. If so cut them off and use the white stalks, they work very well)
- 1 small carrot, julienned
- 1 cup peas
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 2 to 3 cups bean sprouts (Home grown or bought in)
- 2 spring onion leaves (sliced)
- 3 to 4 tbsp. oil

Ingredients for the Not Pad Thai Sauce:

- 1/4 cup vegetable stock (or my vegetarian chicken stock powder, made up)
- 3 1/2 tbsp. soy sauce
- 1/2 to 1 tsp. chili sauce
- 3 tbsp. brown sugar

Method

1. Bring water to the boil in a saucepan and add the noodles, stir with a fork to separate, boil for 6 minutes and then drain and run under cold water.
2. Make up the Not Pad Thai sauce and stir well to dissolve the sugar and set aside.
3. Whisk the raw eggs with a fork and cook in a hot wok scrambling until the egg has formed slightly browned pieces – set aside.
4. add the oil to a hot wok, then add the onion and garlic, stir fry for 1 – 2 minutes until fragrant.
5. add in the bok choy, carrot, peas and mushrooms and stir fry for 2 – 3 minutes.
6. add in the egg and stir fry for another 2 minutes.

7. add in the drained noodles, followed by 1/3 of the sauce and stir fry.
8. keep adding the sauce and stir frying for 3 – 6 minutes until the noodles are soft but still chewy.
9. Turn off the heat, add bean sprouts and sliced spring onion leaves, toss and serve.

Serves 2 – 3 depending on how hungry you are!

3.7 Greens and Rice Stir Fry in the Chinese Style

I am always on the lookout for tasty vegetarian recipes in which I can use our home grown veg. I also look for recipes that enable us to make use of home grown and foraged greens. We also like to grow bean sprouts and use them in recipes as well.

Low and behold, this recipe allows us to make use of all three! It is constructed from several authentic Chinese dishes, but seeing as I have altered it somewhat to take into account what we have and use regularly here, and a bit more towards our taste, I was not comfortable in labelling it authentic. Rather, it is in the Chinese style.

My apologies to any Asian chefs out there, for butchering more of your recipes! For those playing at home, the original recipes came from an excellent book called 'Seductions of Rice' by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid. It talks about rice, and rice recipes from all over the world, but large sections are taken up with the dishes which accompany the rice.

The way I have structured the recipe is that (with the exception of the rice cooker) all of the action takes place in a single wok, quickly rinsed between dishes, with all of the energy, flavour, money and nutrient savings of the stir fry cooking method.

Ingredients

The rice

For the two of us I initially used one and a half rice cooker cups of rice, but two was better.

Chinese Veg and Greens

- ½ cup of stock or water
- 2 tablespoons of soy sauce
- ¼ teaspoon of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of peanut oil or similar
- 1 tablespoon of minced garlic
- 3 spring onions (cut into 25mm lengths) (or just use spring onion leaves if you are growing them)
- 12mm of ginger, grated
- 200gm to 250gm of Cut up veg (depending on what is available, I used broccoli and cauliflower cut into small florets and beans cut into 20mm lengths but sliced mushrooms and/or carrots would be good too!)
- 200gm to 250gms of greens, sliced (I used about half and half of silver beet leaves and mix of sow thistle, dandelion and mallow leaves)
- 2 teaspoons of cornflour suspended in 1 tablespoon of cold water.



Yummy sprouts

- 1 or 2 spring onion leaves cut up into 25mm lengths
- 1 tablespoon of peanut oil or similar
- 3 cups of mung bean sprouts (if you are growing these yourself, remove the green seed coats before starting the recipe as they have an unpleasant texture and can take time to remove)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar
- Sesame oil

Method

1. cut up the veg, prepare the greens and measure out the sauces and have them ready to go
2. rinse the rice and put it into the rice cooker (assuming you are using one, otherwise use the absorption method and prepare it beforehand) turn it on.
3. add the oil to a hot wok and stir fry the veg for 5 minutes, remove to a bowl
4. reheat the wok and add a bit more oil if required, add in the garlic, ginger and spring onions, stir fry for 30 seconds
5. throw in the greens and stir fry for 1 ½ to 2 minutes, return the veg to the wok
6. add in the stock and soy sauce and bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 3 minutes
7. add the cornflour and water and stir fry until it boils and thickens, remove to a serving plate and rinse the interior of the wok
8. Replace the wok on the burner, on high heat and add the oil.
9. Add the spring onions and bean sprouts and stir fry vigorously, using the chuan (stir fry tool) to spread and press them against the hot sides of the wok for a minute.
10. add the salt and stir fry for another minute
11. add the soy sauce and rice vinegar and stir fry for a further minute.
12. turn it out onto a serving dish and drizzle with sesame oil.

The rice cooker should by now be finished and on 'heat'. We serve by filling small Chinese bowls with rice, covering the top with veg and greens, than adding some of the beansprouts on top of that.

The above recipe makes enough for two. Enjoy!

4.0 Indian Inspired Recipes

4.1 Indian Style Vege Curry

One of the enduring disappointments in my life has been my inability to cook up some Indian food that tastes even remotely like anything you can get in a restaurant. We both like spiciness with not too much heat and with the rich vegetarian tradition in Indian cooking I thought I would be able to find something that even a culturally impoverished anglo like myself could put together. It seemed that it was not to be.....until now!

After much searching and, dare I say it, experimentation I have found a recipe that is not too much hassle, I can use with our homegrown produce and always turns out really well. I cook it in our 345mm wok, it is deep enough so that the sauce doesn't dry out and burn, but you still need to keep an eye out and top up with extra water if required.

Ingredients

Sauce

- 1 large or two medium onions quartered
- 3 medium-sized tomatoes quartered (I use one 375ml jar of the diced tomatoes we preserved last summer)
- ½ teaspoon of chilli paste (reduce if you want less heat, add more if you want it hotter)
- 5 cloves garlic
- 1" piece of ginger, peeled
- 3 tbsps vegetable/ canola/ sunflower cooking oil

Spice mix

- 2 tsps ground coriander
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 10 curry leaves

Vegetables

- 500 gms chunky, mixed vegetables - for example potato, sweet potato, choko, carrot, Jerusalem artichoke, cauliflower, broccoli, beans, corn, peas with the bigger stuff cut into 1cm or so cubes.
- Salt to taste

End bit

200gm Greek style yogurt whisked till smooth (we don't use much yoghurt or I would be making my own, but the Jalna stuff is the right consistency and the pack size is perfect to ensure there is no waste.)

Method

- Cut the vegetables up and put to one side. To make things easier I steam the hard veggies in the microwave for a few minutes.
- Place the onion, tomatoes, chilli paste, ginger and garlic into a blender and blend into a smooth paste. You don't need to add any water to the mix at this point, there is more than enough liquid contributed by the tomatoes.
- Measure out the spice mix into a small bowl. (we keep whole spices and grind them as needed to ensure freshness; also there is no substitute for home grown fresh curry leaves!)
- Heat the cooking oil in the wok on medium heat. When hot, add the mixture from the blender. Add all the powdered spices and the curry leaves.
- Stir and fry/ sauté till the oil begins to separate from the sauce. Add some water to the blender and swish it around to wash down any sauce still remaining on the sides. If the sauce is getting a bit too thick, add some diluted sauce mix out of the blender to keep the water level up. At this point you need to be monitoring the sauce mix and stirring fairly continuously to prevent it burning.
- Add the soft vegetables and cook for 10 minutes, then add the steamed hard vegetables and cook for a further 10 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Cook till the vegetables are tender but not pulpy/ overcooked. Remove from heat and stir in the yogurt till fully blended.

I serve with steamed Basmati rice or homemade tortillas that have been made a bit more thickly (ie not rolled out as thin) and rebadged as roti.

This makes enough for two people with robust appetites plus lunch for one the next day or would feed four if you had another dish.

4.2 Seedy Veg Curry

After making our **Indian Style Veggie Curry** (see above) for a while, I still enjoyed it but Linda went off it. It takes a bit of work so I was not going to make it just for me. I thought I would try a different approach and handed some of our curry type cookbooks to Linda and asked her to pick one she would like. She picked this one.

My initial thoughts were not positive, but I made it and.....wow! It was really good! I usually make it to the following recipe and also make a load of rice cooker biryani (see below) at the same time. For the two of us it makes enough for two meals each so I save the leftovers and it gives me a night off from cooking, and a good feed as well.

In the book it was listed just as a mixed vegetable curry but due to the fact that it has most of the spices added in seed form, at our place it is known as the Seedy Curry.

Ingredients

600gms or so of veg cut up in roughly 1cm - 2cm cubes, depending on what you have in the garden and/or fridge. We use a mix of potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrot, cauliflower, zucchini, beans (cut to 2cm or so), peas, broccoli etc.

Vegetable oil 2 tablespoons

Cumin seeds 2 teaspoons

Mustard seeds 1 teaspoon

Onion seeds 1 teaspoon

Turmeric 2 teaspoons

Crushed garlic 3 cloves
Curry leaves 10 – 12
Salt ½ teaspoon
Sugar 1 teaspoon
Greek yoghurt 300 mls (premixed with 2 tsp of cornflour)

Method

1. Steam the veg for 20 minutes or until just tender.
2. Measure out the seeds, garlic and curry leaves into a small bowl.
3. When the veg is ready, add the oil to a frying pan, (ours is 32cm but you could get by with one a bit smaller) and heat to medium.
4. Add the contents of the bowl to the frying pan and cook until the garlic is golden brown.
5. Reduce the heat and fold in the vegetables, sugar and salt, ensuring th veg are coated with the curry spice mix.
6. Add the yoghurt to the pan and fold to coat the veg, reheat and serve immediately.



Note that the seeds, garlic and curry leaves making up this curry can be grown at home, depending on your climate, and the yoghurt can also be made at home, adding an extra dimension of satisfaction when you serve it up to your family.

4.3 Rice Cooker Biryani

This is the ultimate easy dish to put together, can contain any amount of home grown veggies and works really well by itself or (even better) as an accompaniment to another Indian curry such as our Indian Style Veggie Curry or Seedy Veg Curry above. It is also very energy efficient, the rice cooker using only as much power as is needed to cook it then turning itself to 'heat'.



The Finished Product

I do cheat sometimes and use a commercial biryani spice mix which is blended and sold by a local spice company and which we get packaging free into our own containers. There is no reason you could not make your own from scratch if you want to though.

We do make our own detuned spice mix, too on occasion, based on the recipe in Hemphills' Spice and Herb Bible.

Ingredients

Two cups basmati rice

3 cups water

Two cups diced or small veg eg peas, corn niblets, broccoli or cauliflower florets and/or diced carrot, choko, zucchini, or beans cut into 5mm lengths.

Diced onion

Knob butter

Handful sultanas

Handful unsalted/raw cashews

2 dessertspoonsful biryani spice mix

Method

- Place the butter in the rice cooker and turn it onto 'cook' with the lid in place. Once the butter is melted add the diced onion and cook until translucent.
- Add the other vegetables and fry for a few minutes, turn off rice cooker. Add the basmati rice and water, stir. Add in the biryani spice mix and stir to distribute. Turn rice cooker on to 'cook'.
- Once the rice cooker has turned off, fluff up the biryani and serve.

It really is as simple as that and the result is wonderful! Linda loves it and I cook it every week or two.

5.0 Italian and Greek Inspired Recipes

5.1 DIY Pizza

Who doesn't love pizza? I certainly do and so does my family, and you can make fresh homemade pizza reasonably easily. You can even make it with some home produced components included as well and it doesn't get much better than that!

There are a number of components to what I regard as good pizza, and one of those components is pizza sauce, can't have a good pizza without good pizza sauce, and the best pizza sauce is homemade! This is how I make ours -

Pizza sauce

I take a 2.5 litre saucepan and fill it with cut tomatoes, I just cut them in half and toss them in until they hit the rim of the saucepan. I add in maybe a quarter of a cup of water to start things off and prevent catching, then turn on the heat. I turn the heat onto low until the tomatoes start to cook down and once there is some liquid in the bottom of the pan I turn up the heat and cook them for a few hours. I stir them every so often to make sure they are not catching on the bottom.

I cook them until the liquid level is down to 50% or less volume in the saucepan, but I keep an eye on them more frequently towards the end and drop the heat back to low so I don't get black burnt bits in our sauce. Once the tomatoes are evaporated down I process them to remove skins and seeds. This can be done a number of ways but for a relatively small amount like this, the best way is probably to get hold of a 'Mouli' food mill, they are not expensive and will do the job a lot quicker and easier than a kitchen sieve and a spoon.

With the tomatoes now missing their seeds and skins, I return them to the saucepan and reheat them. I fry up a couple of large diced onions and 4 diced cloves of garlic and toss them in once they are cooked translucent. I add a teaspoon of salt (you might want more or less) and herbs like dried oregano and basil. An alternative is to use an Italian herb season mix, in which case a couple of teaspoons generally works well.

With the sauce completed but still hot, I pack it into 250ml jars (which have been previously sterilised along with their lids) and affix said lids and process for 1 hr at 100°C by boiling in a larger saucepan. Once processing is complete, I remove them from the boiling water and sit them on a tea towel to cool. Ensure that the pop-top in the lid pops down to show a vacuum has been formed or you will need to re-process, perhaps with a new lid! Or use the jar immediately.

Pizza Base

For years, when we had homemade pizza, I took the easy way out and bought some wholemeal Lebanese bread. That worked, and worked well but I found that we really wanted some real pizza crust to munch on so I started making the recipe below. The amounts are perfect for two 28cm pizzas and as luck would have it, each 250ml jar of pizza sauce is ideal for those two 28cm pizzas!

Just as an aside, when we were using Lebanese bread as a base, we would have a pizza each, but with the from-scratch pizza base using the same toppings, one pizza will do the both of us. We still make two, but put one in the fridge for later.

Anyway, the recipe is -

1.5 cups bakers' flour (organic)
1.5 cups whole wheat flour (organic and freshly ground)
2 teaspoons yeast
1 teaspoon salt
¼ cup olive oil
1 cup warm water

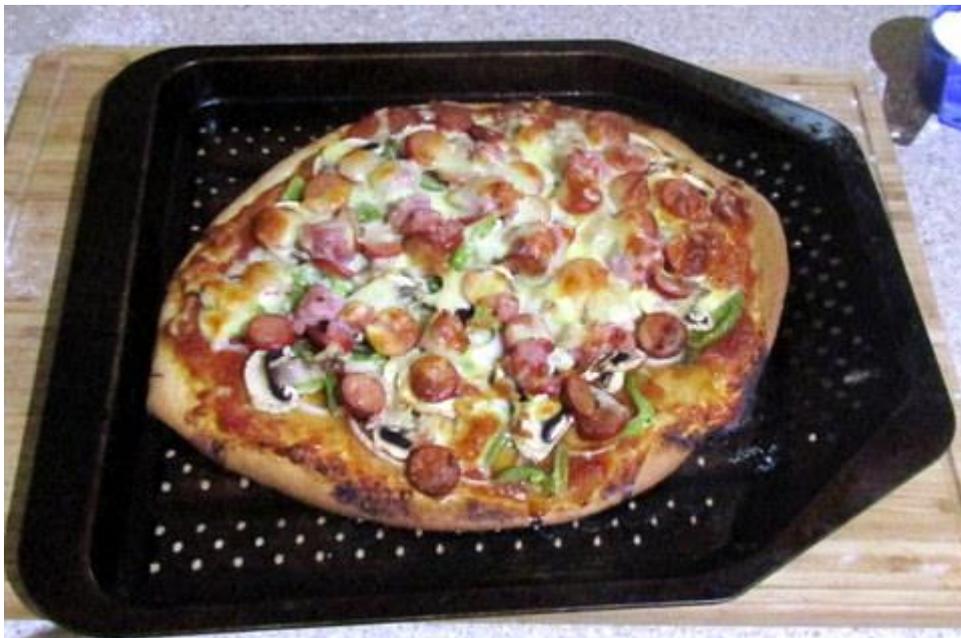
(Note: leaving the olive oil out gives a thinner, crispier crust)

Add flours, salt, yeast into a mixing bowl, measure out water and oil.
Make well in the centre and add liquids, mix until combined, I generally just use my fingers.
Knead for 10 minutes.
Replace in bowl and cover with tea towel, leave for 30 minutes to rise.
Cut in half, form each half into a ball and roll out into two rounds about 5mm-6mm thick.
Top and bake at 220°C for 15 minutes, but check regularly after 10 minutes

Generally when cooking pizza (and there is nothing quite like the smell of cooking pizza is there?) I usually don't time it, I just keep an eye on them.

Toppings

Obviously the toppings are up to you, you will need the pizza sauce and mozzarella cheese as a minimum (and you can make your own mozzarella too), then throw on whatever you want. We originally went with a supreme style pizza with onion and capsicum (home grown when we can), mushrooms, cabanossi and Italian sausage. More recently we tend to go with a vegetarian version with onion, mushroom, red and green capsicum, and pineapple which works fine, too.



Making your own pizza is a fun thing to do with the family, you can use fresh and organic ingredients, some of which you can even produce yourself, so give it a go and once you have you won't settle for substandard pizza ever again!

5.2 Homemade Calzone

We were watching a cooking show about calzone, and my immediate thought was – I could do that! Whether it would turn out any good and whether we would enjoy it or not, of course, would be another matter!

I already make our own pizzas and on the show they used pizza dough (although further research suggested that bread dough is also used) and for a filling our often used ricotta and silver beet would work very well. The process we use for making our own pizza dough is available under 5.1 above and the recipe for the ricotta and silver beet filling (using home-made ricotta and home grown silver beet, eggs and onions of course!) is available below (See 5.3).

So, you have a batch of pizza dough and a batch of ricotta and silver beet filling ready to go, now what?

If you have made the same amount of pizza dough as in my recipe, this will effectively make four good sized calzone, each one making a meal for one person, or two enormous ones for sharing, or for big eaters! Likewise the amount of silver beet and ricotta in my recipe should neatly fill the calzone. Ok, with maybe a bit left over.

To make the calzone (four of them) cut the pizza dough into quarters, take one quarter and roll it into a ball between your hands, then pat it out into a circle. With a rolling pin, roll it out until it is 200mm in diameter or a bit more, and circular. Place a good sized scoop of the filling onto one half of the dough, leaving a clear space of 1.5 – 2 cm around the bottom edge. Get a bit of water on your fingers and run it around the bottom edge of the dough.

To form the calzone, pick up the far end of the dough and stretch it up and over the filling, pressing the top edge down onto the clear space at the edge of the filling to form a seal. Then twist the edge back on itself to form a decorative edging. This should give you a semi-circular calzone. To finish it, cut three small slits in the top to let steam out during cooking and give it an egg wash to make the top nice and shiny after cooking.



Place them on a baking tray and bake the finished calzones in the oven at 220°C for around 15 minutes, but keep an eye on them, they may take a bit shorter or longer depending on your oven. When they are golden brown, remove from the oven and serve.

And yes, my fears were groundless, they were delicious!

5.3 Spinach and Ricotta

Just recently we have been making our own ricotta cheese from powdered skim milk and have been integrating it into recipes we already like, as well as trying new ones. One base recipe we have been using is combining the ricotta with silver beet to make a standard mix which we can then turn into any one of a number of meals.

Recipe

Silver beety bit

Silver beet 200gms
2 small onions
1 clove of garlic
1 knob butter
Pinch of salt to taste

1. In a fry pan, melt the knob of butter (or margarine).
2. Chop the onion and add to the fry pan.
3. Mince the garlic and add to the fry pan, fry until the onion is transparent.
4. Remove the stems and mid rib from the silver beet and cut into 25mm (approximately) strips.
5. Add the silver beet strips to the fry pan and cook down with the lid on, until it is reduced in volume and has wilted down.

Ricotta bit

340gms (1 batch) homemade ricotta
2 eggs
100gms coarsely grated cheddar or mozzarella cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

In a large bowl, add all of the ingredients and stir around until they are combined. To make the ricotta and silver beet standard mix, allow the silver beety bit to cool down a bit and then add it to the ricotta bit and stir until combined.

OK, so it looks good, smells good and tastes good, but what can you do with it?



Recipe 1 – Pie

Grab a 25cm pie plate and grease it, and place pastry in the bottom (you could use homemade shortcrust or the equivalent, but we had some old, frozen puff pastry and used that). Fill with the ricotta and silver beet filling then top with puff pastry. Bake at 200°C for 30 to 35 minutes or until golden.

Recipe 2 – Cannelloni

Get hold of some cannelloni shells or make your own pasta, fill them with the ricotta and silverbeet mixture, place in a baking dish and then pour the sauce. To make the sauce put two jars of tomato puree into saucepan and heat it up to boiling add a clove or two of garlic and a heaped dessert spoon of Italian seasoning. Then pour the sauce over the cannelloni, cover with grated cheese and bake for 30 to 35 minutes at 180°C.

5.4 Horta (Well, anglo-horta!)



One of the things which I have been interested in for a while is how to get more green leafy vegetables (usually referred to as 'greens') into our diet, and I admit the problem has mostly been me! Greens are –

- Easy to grow and tolerate shading well,
- Prolific in their production of edible bits, and
- High in nutrition

So what's not to love? Well, they can also taste like crap! Or I should say they taste like crap to me. I am not a fan of 'bitter' or 'peppery' and many greens are bitter/peppery or acquire bitterness/pepperiness as they age.

So I needed to find recipes which could include greens, but would not taste like crap.

During some late night research on the TV, Anthony Bourdain came to my rescue during a tour through the Greek Islands. He told me about Horta. Strictly speaking horta is a stack of wild greens boiled up and eaten simply with a drizzle of olive oil and a squeeze of lemon. The aforementioned greens could be just about anything – dandelion, amaranth, chicory, purslane, dock, fathen, plantain, in fact just about any edible weed with green leaves can go into it. It makes a dish that is filling, nutritious, almost free and can be made at a time of year when there is little else growing. As my friend and teaching partner Danielle calls it – hungry gap food.

So, was this answer to a maiden's prayer? Possibly, but not mine. My tastes run a bit Anglo for this olive oil and lemon juice approach, but on the TV show they did it a different way, with onions and tomatoes. This was more my style! I wanted to test it out with silver beet (if I found that unpalatable I may as well stop right there) so this is what I put together –

Horta (Anglo style)

1 medium onion
3 medium tomatoes
1 garlic clove (crushed)
3 large silver beet leaves.
A good pinch of salt and a bit of pepper
1 glug of olive oil

Method

Dice onion and tomatoes, cut up the silver beet into 25mm strips, leaving out most of the central rib. In a frying pan place the olive oil and heat,
Toss in the onion and garlic, fry a for a few minutes to caramelise
Toss in the tomato and cook down for 5 or 10 minutes
Toss in the silver beet and cover, cook down for 10 minutes then cook uncovered for another 5 minutes.
Add salt and pepper and serve.

Y'know what? It tasted pretty good!

It has become a staple in our house and while I still use silver beet as the base I have started throwing in other leaves such as sweet potato, fathen, mallow, choko, amaranth, purslane, mizuna etc. I am yet to give the dandelion leaves ago but in future I will. I have decided that I will pass on the choko leaves, they are a bit rough and I don't like the texture (think tomato and onion flavoured sandpaper). The experimenting continues!

If you want to make green leafy vegetables a bigger part of your diet but are not sure how, give Anglo-horta a go, it is a great way to test the waters. If you want to do more with wild greens, read on -

5.5 An Easy Way into Wild Greens

There are a whole stack of reasons why you might want to start harvesting, cooking and eating wild greens (AKA potherbs or "weeds"). Free food, locally grown, seasonal and highly nutritious.....oh, and did I mention free? These are all great reasons to look into wild greens, but there are some rules to follow when harvesting them, which I outline [here](#).

One reason you might not be so enthusiastic is that they can have varying levels of bitterness. If you like bitterness in your food that's cool but if you are like us and don't, here is a way to include them in your diet without activating your gag reflex. In fact they become downright tasty!

The recipe is a simple one, based on a Kylie Kwong Recipe I got out of John Newton's book "The Oldest Foods on Earth", my version goes as follows –

A good slug of oil, eg peanut oil etc.
½ tsp of coarse salt*
3 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 onion, diced
100 – 150gms of edible leafy greens**
2 tbsp Kekap Manis (Indonesian sweet soy sauce)
3 tbsp chicken stock
1tsp sesame oil

1. Heat the oil in a wok,
2. Toss in the salt, garlic and onion. Stir fry for a couple of minutes.
3. Cut the leaves up into quarters, toss into the wok and stir fry for 3 minutes,
4. Add the kekap manis, stir fry for a minute,
5. Add the stock and stir fry for one minute,
6. Remove from the heat, add the sesame oil and serve immediately

* The salt added plus the salt in the soy sauce and the stock masks the bitter flavour of the wild greens.

** Here is the sneaky bit! You can start out with all silver beet or spinach leaves if you like, just to see what it tastes like, then add in wild greens as you go! Recently I made this recipe with equal parts silver beet, mallow, milk thistle and dandelion leaves, but the combinations are endless.

By starting out with the milder cultivated leaves and then adding more and more wild greens as you go along you will be surprised how much of this free resource you can introduce into your diet.



5.6 Quick n' Easy Tomato Pasta



This is a very quick and easy to prepare but filling and tasty to eat meal, ideal for when you have been out all day, or working all day in the garden, and want something quick that is not takeaway.

Ingredients

2-3 teaspoons of oil
1 onion (diced)
3 cloves of garlic (minced)
1 jar of tomato sauce
1 Jar of diced tomatoes

1 Jar of water
½ stock cube (optional)
A couple of big handfuls of pasta, we like large spirals
120gms Sour cream
Cheese for topping

Method

Heat up a frying pan, add the oil, onion and garlic, fry until transparent
Add in the tomato sauce and diced tomato, wash out the sauce jar with the equivalent of 1 jar of water, and bring to the boil.
Toss in the stock cube if required
When boiling, add in the pasta and stir to distribute,
Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until pasta reaches desired texture, monitor during this time to make sure the mix doesn't get too dry, and more water if required.
Remove from the heat, add in the sour cream, top with grated cheese and serve.

Alternatively, if one person doesn't want the sour cream, stir in the sour cream after serving.

This recipe is quick, easy, tasty and filling. If you grow your onion and garlic and grow and/or process your own tomatoes as we do, it can be mostly home produced as well!

6.0 Resources

I have a weakness for cookbooks written to help you save money. They sometimes have great ideas in them to help you make use of scarce resources (food, fuel, time) which helps you save money but can also help you cook and eat more sustainably. Here is my collection, I hope that you find at least some of them interesting.

The Thrifty Cookbook (476 ways to eat well with leftovers) – Kate Colquhoun – Bloomsbury Publishing (UK) 2009 ISBN 978 1 4088 0081 2 – Contains some good basic data about how not to waste food as well as simple stuff like stock, making your own bread and jams plus Pizza! A smattering of international recipes from the Middle East, India and South East Asia. Probably not much new if you are an accomplished cook but a great resource if you are new to the game.

The Credit Crunch Cookbook – Katy Denny (Exec. Editor) – Octopus Books (UK) 2009 ISBN 978 0 600 61977 2 – Covers waste not, want not, basic budget meals for light, main and sweet, gourmet touches on the cheap and low cost eat-in recipes for Italian, Mexican, Indian, Thai and Chinese. Some of the recipes in these cheapo books can be a bit rough (unless you like lots of offal) but they are really good in this one. Good tips on cost cutting too.

The \$21 Challenge – Fiona Lippey & Jackie Gower – Simple Savings International P/L (AUS) 2009 ISBN 978 0 9806533 0 4 – They have developed a process whereby you use the stuff you have in your cupboards and can only spend \$21 per week of new stuff, the idea being that it helps you focus on the important stuff while saving heaps of money. Lots of good cheap recipes as well as a section on using up excess/leftovers effectively. They have a website about the process - <http://www.simplesavings.com.au/>

Table Tucker – Penina Petersen – Hachette Australia (AUS) 2009 ISBN 978 0 7336 2444 5 – This is another “system” but is very environmentally friendly in its approach. The principles are cooking with seasonal ingredients, grow your own veggies, bulk buying, shift old habits and eat less meat, reduce waste, water and energy consumption and embrace earth happy ideas. LOTS of good info on menu planning and lots of good recipes. They also had a website but it no longer seems to be active.

Champagne Life on a Beer Budget – Maree Wrack – Champagne Life Beer Budget (AUS) 2011 ISBN 978 0 9807070 0 7 – Nary a recipe to be seen on this one. It is more about savvy shopping, ideas to help you save in your approach to food buying and cooking, decluttering and getting control of your outgo. The website referenced in the book no longer works.

The Pauper’s Cookbook – Jocasta Innes – Penguin Books (UK) 1971 ISBN 9780711235618 (was re-issued recently). The book has over 250 recipes covering the standard stuff, leftovers, quick dishes based on pantry stuff, money saving extras and living off the land, special occasion dishes and dieting on the cheap. There are also sections on menu planning and kitchen equipment. Recipes are a bit out of date (liver kebabs??????).

The New Pauper’s Cookbook – Jocasta Innes & Kate Harris – Random House (UK) 1992 ISBN 0 09 175434 8 – Similar to the above with additions of sections on Pasta Faster and Veggies for vegetarians. There is still plenty of offal but there are more international recipes and no sign of liver kebabs.

Good Food on a Budget – Georgina Horley – Penguin Books (UK) 1969 ISBN 978 0233961644 – This little paperback has over 500 pages of recipes and information. Lots of information about equipment and setting up a kitchen, basic operations about baking and other kitchen processes, buying

vegetables and cutting up meat, all the basic stuff is there. The majority of the rest of the book is recipes set out by month, which would need to be turned around by 6 months for southern hemisphere to hit the season's right. Some recipes are a bit out of date but at least there is nothing about liver kebabs.

Penny Pincher's Cookbook – Sophie Leavitt – Lancer Books (US) 1973 ISBN 7254 0172 9 – There are a series of “hints” at the back and front of the book, the rest being divided up into recipes for cereal and bread, eggs, soups, meat, fish, vegetables, salads and desserts. There is also a small section on herbs and spices. There are no “international” recipes, just American home cooking with the odd weirdo thrown in like peanut soup.... It is a small paperback.

The Money Saver's Cookbook – Geri Tully – Tower Publications (US) 1970 ISBN N/A – This is another small paperback, not much background just a series of recipes based around meat, poultry, fish, casseroles, leftovers, sausage canned meat and fish, vegetables, rice variations and desserts. There are a couple of pages at the back on suggested kitchen equipment.

The Complete Hassle Free, Money-Saving Kitchen Handbook – Diana Walton & Hilda Kassell – Signet (US) 1974 ISBN 978-0451058607 – This is also a book of techniques rather than recipes. There are sections on spending less at the supermarket, food preparation, using herbs and spices, getting over difficulties like running out of an ingredient and what to substitute, how to use the freezer and other stuff on food storage. There is also a section appliances, partying on the cheap, cleaning up and growing plants from pits and seeds. No a lot of info in each section but interesting nevertheless.

The Thrifty Gourmet – Ann Marshall – Angus & Robertson (AUS) 1974 ISBN 0 207 12453 1 – This is a small book (77 pages) and a little bit dated but it has some good ideas as well. It is divided into ideas on how to economise, then recipes and ideas for breakfast, soup, hogget and lamb, beef and veal, liver and kidneys (!!!!) working with a tough chook, fish, sausages and sundries. There is also a small section on entertaining on a budget and desserts.

Beating the Cost of Cooking – Mary Berry – Independent Television Books (UK) 1975 ISBN 0 900 72737 3 – From (a much younger looking) Mary Berry of “The Great British Bake-off” fame. She starts put talking about setting up your kitchen and what equipment is required, then talks about making the most of food covering how to shop then making meat, fish et. Go further. She then gets into the recipes around starters, meat and fish, pasta cheese and eggs, rice and vegetables. She also has sections on one-pot meat cooking, cooking with left overs, puddings, cakes and biscuits. Mostly good recipes with a few weirdo's thrown in like cream of lettuce soup.

The Next-to-Nothing Cookbook – Helen Harrison – Bay Books (AUS) 1982 ISBN 0 85835 564 7 – This one is mostly recipes, lots of sections with a few recipes in each section. Sections include soup, meat, stews and casseroles, spicy dishes, fish, cheese and eggs, beans and cereals, vegetables and salads, dressings, sauces and herbs, sweets, cakes and biscuits. There is also a section on party treats and lollies and one on household management which talks about left-overs, being thrifty and rescuing cooking disasters.

Better Meals for Less – George Cornforth – Review and Herald Publishing Association (US) 1975 ISBN 978 0 3855 2909 9 – The book starts with a chapter on food and nutrition in general then goes on to provide recipes for meat “analogues”, bread, soup, legumes, nuts and eggs, vegetables, salads, fruit and simple desserts. It has some “interesting” recipes such as nut meat a la king but the recipes are healthy as well as vegetarian.

And last, but by no means least –

The Green Kitchen – Richard Ehrlich – Kyle Cathie Ltd (UK) 2009 ISBN 978 1 85626 804 2 – This one is a really good book for cooking more sustainably with techniques and recipes for cutting energy use, saving money and reducing waste. The techniques (with accompanying recipes) covered include lidded cooking, microwave cooking, pressure cookers, no-cook cooking and cooking for multiple meals. There are also sections on equipping a green kitchen, greener cleaning and reducing waste. Lots of great information, this is a great little book.