

# Easy Cooking



# Easy cooking



## Contents

• Introduction	Page 3
• Eatwell Guide	Page 4
• Getting started	Page 5
• General points	Page 6
• No cook recipes and Fruit Salad	Page 7
• Smoothies	Page 8
• Prepare now, cook later	Page 9
• Vegetable crumble	Page 9
• Cooking on the premises	Page 10
• Vegetable soup	Page 11
• Bread rolls	Page 12
• Brussels sprout tarts	Page 14
• Clearing up	Page 19
• Follow up resources and Acknowledgements	Page 20

# Easy cooking



## Introduction

This booklet is based on ideas presented at a variety of seminars run by LEAF Education (formerly FACE) and/or its partners. As can be seen from the photos, we often carried out the activities with adults (teachers and farmers) but with a view to taking them back to our various locations to use with children.

Children love the hands-on approach that cookery involves. For farmers and teachers, the important thing to remember is that cooking does not have to be complicated. This booklet includes healthy no-cook projects which teach children important food assembly skills. We also look at activities using more equipment if you have access to hobs, pans etc. The key is to be prepared—make sure everything is in place before you begin and you will be thrilled to see the fun and achievements of the children.

Always remember to check in advance whether children have any food allergies or intolerances.



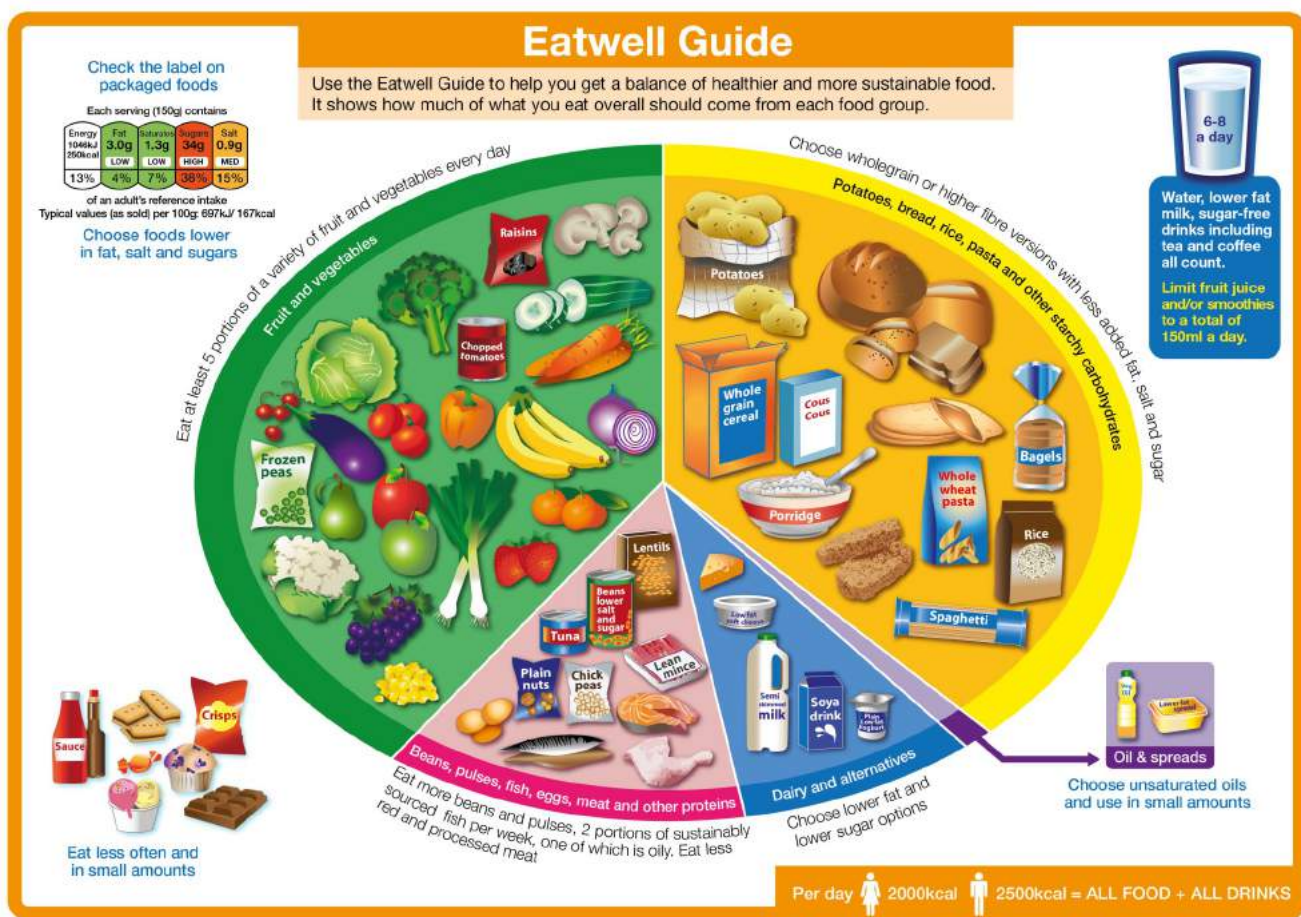


# Easy cooking

## Eatwell Guide

You may wish to incorporate the Eatwell Guide into your work on healthy eating. The Eatwell Guide is a tool used to define government recommendations on eating healthily and achieving a balanced diet.

The guide is available in other formats at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide>



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland

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# Easy cooking



## Getting started

Safety is paramount. Make sure you know if any children have any food allergies (farmers need to liaise with teachers beforehand).

Hand washing facilities MUST be available—soap and running water will be needed at various stages.

Aprons are useful to protect clothing but you must allow time for these to be tied in place! Disposable aprons are available but not very sustainable. Wipe clean aprons might be best.

Make sure the children follow these basic rules:

- Tie back long hair
- Roll up sleeves
- Wash hands with soap
- Remove aprons before visiting the toilet and wash hands again before returning to the cooking area
- Cover any cuts or sores with a blue plaster

Tailor the activities according to the age and aptitude of the group. It sounds obvious, but very small children and very sharp knives do not mix! However, slightly older children can be taught basic knife skills in order to, for example, chop vegetables.

# Easy cooking

## General points

You need

- A suitable space in which to work
- Tables which can be cleaned easily or plastic tablecloths
- Sets of equipment (depending on the level of activity)
- Access to ingredients

Quantities: these will vary according to group size.

Take the opportunity to make the links from farm to fork. If time allows, incorporate a farm tour to see the carrots/potatoes/wheat growing or the cows which produce the milk etc. In each activity in this booklet, there is no indication when you should introduce these ideas—you will find the most opportune times to do this.



# Easy cooking

## No cook recipes

The following healthy recipes need no cooking but still provide new skills, a sense of achievement and delicious end results!

### Fruit salad

Provide a variety of seasonal fruits and see if the children can identify them. According to the age of the children, talk about where the fruits come from/seasonality/health benefits etc.

It might be best to peel some fruit in advance e.g. apples and pears but children will be able to peel bananas, satsumas etc.

Demonstrate basic knife skills and use the bridge method to cut and the claw method to slice.

See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zo0lx\\_tFhH0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zo0lx_tFhH0)

Children will then be able to slice strawberries, bananas, grapes etc.

Combine all the fruits and add orange juice.



# Easy cooking

## Smoothies

**Smoothies are a popular way of introducing fruit to children who are reluctant to eat it in other forms.**

### **Strawberry smoothie**

- 6 – 10 strawberries
- 1 small individual pot of natural yoghurt
- 1 banana
- 1 tsp runny honey

Small groups of children can combine the ingredients and place in a blender/liquidiser. Adults supervision is needed for the blending.

Search the internet for a wide variety of recipes for smoothies.





# Easy cooking



## Prepare now, cook later

If you do not have the equipment, or the time, to cook dishes, children might be able to prepare and assemble them to take home.

## Vegetable crumble

Materials you will need for the group:

Peeled mixed vegetables (e.g. potatoes, onions, carrots etc.)

Seasoning

Pureed tomatoes

Flour

Butter

Set of small knives

Chopping boards

Mixing bowls

Individual foil containers

Pre-printed cooking instructions: Remove foil lid and bake in the oven at 190C/  
Gas 5 for about 1/2 hour, until golden.

1. Demonstrate the bridge and claw methods for safe chopping of vegetables.  
[http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018\\_Safe\\_Peeling\\_Chopping.pdf](http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018_Safe_Peeling_Chopping.pdf)
2. Distribute a variety of peeled vegetables and supervise chopping
3. Chopped vegetables should be shared between foil containers and seasoned
4. Ask children to pour small quantities of pureed tomato onto their vegetables
5. Demonstrate how to rub butter into flour to make crumble topping
6. Children prepare own crumble topping and then press into place on top of the vegetables
7. Place foil lids in place and attach cooking instructions for use later. (Explain these to the children so that they can appear knowledgeable when they get home!)

# Easy cooking

## Cooking on the premises

Not every farm or school has cooking facilities but if you decide to offer slightly more advanced sessions you will benefit from hobs and ovens. You can use “baby belling” cookers and electric pans for demonstration purposes but if you are going to offer cookery session on a regular basis you should consider investing in a good quality domestic cooker. This should have gas, electric or induction top, grill oven and main oven, preferably fan assisted. This will give flexibility and the ability to cater for 30 children.



# Easy cooking

## Vegetable Soup

Karen Watson of Barleylands inspired us with this recipe—it is quite simple but the trick is to be as organised as Karen is!

Materials you will need for the group:

Peeled mixed vegetables (e.g. potatoes, onions, carrots etc.)

Set of small knives

Chopping boards

Saucepans

Jugs

You will also need access to a hob to heat the soup, a liquidiser or blender and bowls, spoons etc. to eat it!

1. Demonstrate the bridge and claw methods for safe chopping of vegetables.  
[http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018\\_Safe\\_Peeling\\_Chopping.pdf](http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018_Safe_Peeling_Chopping.pdf)
2. Distribute a variety of peeled vegetables and supervise chopping
3. Chopped vegetables should be shared between saucepans
4. Add water/stock
5. The cooking on the hob (and subsequent blending) need not involve the children directly. While the soup is cooking, why not move on to making bread rolls?



# Easy cooking

## Bread rolls

Materials you will need for the group:

500g strong bread flour

1.5 teaspoons dried yeast

300ml water

1.25 teaspoons salt

Mixing bowls

Depending on the age of the group members, the leader can do the mixing of the flour, yeast and water and then distribute balls of dough; or you can get the children doing the mixing too. It isn't complex and really just involves combining all the ingredients. Don't add all the water at one go—with experience you will learn the right texture of the mix.

Show the group how to flour the table.

Give each child a ball of dough and show them how to knead it. (New words—helpful to extend vocabulary and tie in to literacy at school!)

Rolls can then be made into a variety of shapes—small cottage loaves, plaits etc.

Bake in the oven at 230°C / 450°F





# Easy cooking

## Enjoy your food!

Eating what you have all cooked is important. Lots of skills will be incorporated: table manners, eating as a group etc. But the most important aspect is to enjoy what you have cooked. Remember that for some children this might be their first experience of cooking!



# Easy cooking



## Brussels sprout tart

Whatever you think at the start, this tart is absolutely delicious!

If you don't have cooking facilities, the group can prepare the tart and take it home in a plastic box with cooking instructions included.



We carried out this session with Idris Caldora of the Academy of Culinary Arts Chefs Adopt a School who does a lot of work with children. He made it all seem quite easy but the trick is in the preparation. You need to have everything ready for your group beforehand.

Materials you will need for the group:

Chopping mats	Brussels sprouts
Plastic boxes	Caramelised onions
Rolling pins	Thyme
Foil cases	Ready made pastry
Pastry cutters	Cheese (two sorts ideally—1 grated)
Plastic spoons and knives	Cream/sauce
Aprons	Baking trays (if to be cooked on the premises)
Flour for rolling	Labels and pencils
Chefs' hats are a bonus!	

Idris made everything look very professional by setting out individual places with all the equipment needed.



## Brussels sprout tart

The quantities given below are for 4-6 depending on the size of the mould so multiply up according to the number of your attendees:

275g	Brussels sprouts, trimmed and sliced
2	Eggs beaten
150ml	Full fat milk or double cream
120g	Stilton cheese, cubed or crumbled
Pinch	Ground nutmeg
2tbsp	finely grated parmesan
1tsp	Thyme leaves
	Salt and pepper

### Caramelised onion

1	Small red onion
25ml	Olive oil
15g	Unsalted butter
1tsp	Soft brown sugar

### Short crust pastry

225g	Plain flour
1	Whole egg
Pinch	Salt
150g	Unsalted butter

Method: **Steps 1-3 need to be carried out in advance of the session.**

1. Firstly make the short crust pastry, sieve the flour and salt into a bowl, cube the butter and rub into the flour until a sandy texture. Beat the egg gently and add to the flour and butter, knead into smooth dough, handle as little and lightly as possible Place into the fridge for at least 2 hours to rest.

2. Peel and thinly slice the onion, gently heat the olive oil in a non stick pan and gently fry without colour until the onions are cooked and translucent, add the butter and sugar and mix until the butter and sugar has dissolved. Place to one side to cool down.

3. Steam the sprouts for 5 minutes until just tender.

# Easy cooking

## Brussels sprout tart continued

Provide each person with a circle of pastry and demonstrate how to roll out (turning 1/4 at a time) and then use a cutter before placing the pastry case in the foil case.



Add some caramelised onion and strip a couple of sprigs of thyme and add the leaves.



Chop a few sprouts using the bridge and claw methods.

( See [http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018\\_Safe\\_Peeling\\_Chopping.pdf](http://media.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/sites/5/2015/09/LGCT018_Safe_Peeling_Chopping.pdf)).





# Easy cooking

## Brussels sprout tart continued

First add some crumbled cheese and then some grated cheese.



Make a sauce by beating together the eggs, milk and seasoning.  
Pour over the sauce.

Ask the group to write their name on two sticky labels (or one if not cooking the tarts now.) Place a name label beneath the dish on the baking tray and stick the other to the lid of a plastic box. (If you are not cooking on the premises, this is the time to place the uncooked tarts in the plastic box with pre-printed instructions).



Cook the tarts at 180°C/gas mark 5 for 35-40 minutes.

# Easy cooking

## Pride in your work



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## Clearing up

This is the part we don't enjoy so much but it is important to help children develop good habits of keeping the working space tidy and clearing up properly at the end.

Visiting children often enjoy making the place tidy again so make sure you utilise their enthusiasm!

We witnessed a fantastic approach to clearing up at the end of a session. Idris Caldora uses disposable table covers which are sticky taped to the tables. At the end of the session, all equipment etc. is removed and then the tape is undone so that the table covering can be folded inwards and rolled up to capture any debris!



# Easy cooking



## Follow up resources

There are many organisations which offer resources for following up in school. Here are a few:

Countryside Classroom	<a href="http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk">http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk</a>
LEAF Education	<a href="https://education.leafuk.org/">https://education.leafuk.org/</a>
British Nutrition Foundation	<a href="https://www.nutrition.org.uk/">https://www.nutrition.org.uk/</a>
This is Dairy Farming	<a href="http://www.thisisdairyfarming.com/">http://www.thisisdairyfarming.com/</a>
Food a Fact of Life	<a href="http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/">http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/</a>
Food Teachers Centre	<a href="http://foodteacherscentre.co.uk/">http://foodteacherscentre.co.uk/</a>
Grainchain	<a href="https://www.grainchain.com/">https://www.grainchain.com/</a>
Grow your own potatoes	<a href="http://growyourownpotatoes.org.uk/">http://growyourownpotatoes.org.uk/</a>
Royal Academy of Culinary Arts	<a href="https://www.royalacademyofculinaryarts.org.uk/">https://www.royalacademyofculinaryarts.org.uk/</a>
School Food Matters	<a href="http://schoolfoodmatters.org/">http://schoolfoodmatters.org/</a>

## Acknowledgements

A growing number of farmers and organisations are offering cookery workshops to schools as they understand this is an excellent way to demonstrate the story of food from farm to plate. You might like to extend this topic by using the Why Farming Matters e-booklet (also available in hard copy) which contains links to videos of farmers who grow our food.

<http://www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk/using-the-videos>

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this publication.