

Easy Cooking



Easy cooking



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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. The activities in this booklet are now presented for parents and home educators.

Children love the hands-on approach that cookery involves and 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.

Make sure you bear health and safety in mind—lots of handwashing and be careful with sharp knives 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.

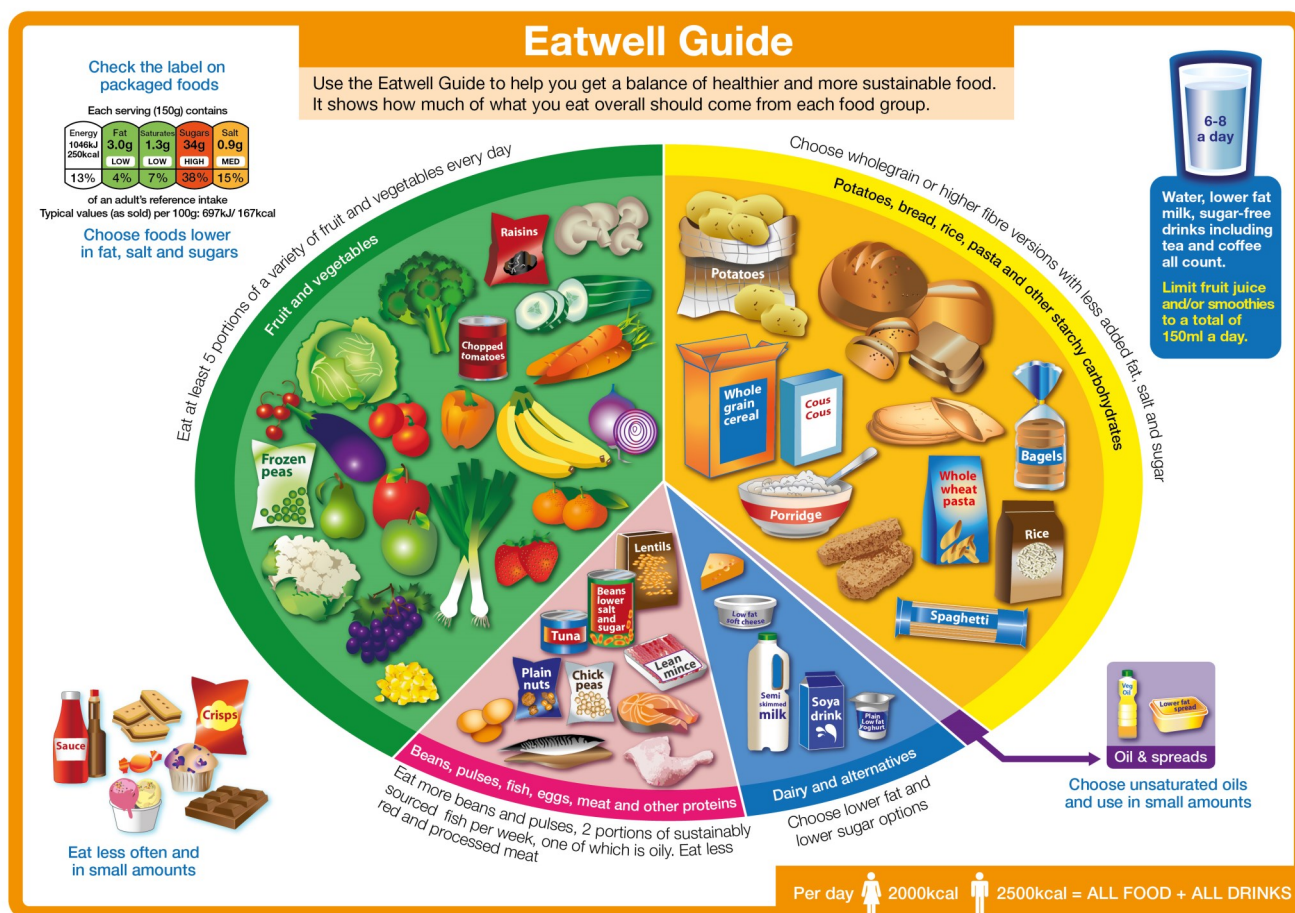
As parents you will know whether your children have any food allergies or intolerances.

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Eatwell Guide

You may like to look at the Eatwell Guide so that you can discuss healthy eating with your children. 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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Getting started

Safety is paramount. Remind yourself if any food allergies have to be considered.

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

Aprons are useful to protect clothing.

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

Tailor the activities according to the age and aptitude of the children. 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.

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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

Take the opportunity to make the links from farm to fork. If appropriate, set the children tasks to find out about how carrots/potatoes/wheat are grown or the production of milk. There are many videos available to help with this.

For example:

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



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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

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

Combine all the fruits and add orange juice.



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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

Help the children to combine the ingredients and place in a blender/liquidiser. Adult supervision is needed for the blending.

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



Prepare now, cook later

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

Vegetable crumble

Materials you will need:

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

Seasoning

Pureed tomatoes

Flour

Butter

Set of small knives

Chopping board

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
2. Provide children with 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.

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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:

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
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?



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Bread rolls

Materials you will need:

500g strong bread flour

1.5 teaspoons dried yeast

300ml water

1.25 teaspoons salt

Mixing bowls

Depending on the age of the children, you as a parent 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 children 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



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Brussels sprout tart

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

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 beforehand.

Materials you will need:

Chopping boards/mats
Plastic boxes
Rolling pins
Foil cases
Pastry cutters
Plastic spoons and knives
Aprons
Flour for rolling

Brussels sprouts
Caramelised onions
Thyme
Ready made pastry
Cheese (two sorts ideally—1 grated)
Cream/sauce
Baking trays
Labels and pencils

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 tarts:

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
1tesp	Thyme leaves
	Salt and pepper

Caramelised onion

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

Short crust pastry (or use ready made)

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. Either use ready made pastry or make your own (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.

4. Pre heat the oven to 190°C/gas mark 5.

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Brussels sprout tart continued

Provide each child 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).



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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 children 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. This will avoid arguments about which tart belongs to which child! (If you are not cooking straight away, 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.

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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.

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!



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Follow up resources

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

Countryside Classroom	http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk
LEAF Education	https://education.leafuk.org/
British Nutrition Foundation	https://www.nutrition.org.uk/foodinschools.html
Food a Fact of Life	http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/
Grow your own potatoes	http://growyourownpotatoes.org.uk/
Royal Academy of Culinary Arts	https://www.royalacademyofculinaryarts.org.uk/
School Food Matters	http://schoolfoodmatters.org/

Acknowledgements

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.