

# Cooking Sheets

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# Batter - Toad in The Hole & Pancakes

## INGREDIENTS

- 115g/4oz plain flour large pinch of salt
- freshly ground black pepper 4 large eggs
- 300ml/½ pint milk
- 2 tbsp/30g fresh thyme leaves
- 8 good quality pork, beef or vegetarian sausages 2 tbsp/30g of sunflower oil
- knob of butter, to serve

## METHOD

- To make the batter, sift the flour into a large bowl. Add the salt and pepper.
- Make a well in the centre of the flour and crack in the eggs. Using a wooden spoon, gradually beat the eggs into the flour then slowly beat in the milk until the batter is the consistency of double cream.
- Strain and push any remaining lumps through a sieve. Stir in the thyme (optional.) Cover and leave to stand for 30 minutes, or ideally 3-4 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
- Heat a large non-stick pan and cook the sausages over a medium heat until golden- brown all over. (If you do not have a non-stick pan add a little oil.) Turn off the heat and set aside.
- Place the oil into an ovenproof dish and heat in the oven for five minutes or until the dripping is hot and hazy.
- Add the sausages to the hot dish and pour in the batter. Immediately return the dish to the oven and cook for 35-40 minutes until well-risen and golden-brown.
- Serve seasoned with black pepper and a large knob of butter.

## PANCAKES

- Prepare batter as above but leave out the thyme. Heat oil in a large solid frying pan. Measure half a mug full of batter and pour into the hot oil. Cook one side for 30 seconds, turn the pancake and cook the other side until the pancake is golden and ready. Gently slide out onto a warm plate.
- Serve with sugar and lemon, maple syrup, strawberry jam and cream or melted cheese, creamed mushrooms etc.

# Homemade Steak Beefburgers

## AMOUNTS

An average bought beefburger is 4oz. A large one in a restaurant is 8oz. 6oz is a good size to serve. Once you know which size and how many, you buy your mince steak or minced beef, look for a 10% fat content or lower. The more fat content the lower quality mince. But too low fat content will make the burger dry and a bit flavourless. The better quality the beef, the nicer the beef burger.

## INGREDIENTS

- Minced steak (see above)
- Sunflower oil if you are going to fry them.
- Copious amounts of ground black pepper. (at least 1/4 teaspoon for each burger)
- Salt - (small pinch for each burger)
- Whole grain mustard (optional - 1/4 teaspoon for each burger)  
*NB: Some people like to add an egg to help bind the mixture together but this is not necessary - you can if you want. Finely chopped parsley is also nice added to the mix and adds another flavour. You can also make the mix go further by adding some breadcrumbs. Just put a few slices of bread in a whizzer until they are fine and mix them in the meat.*
- Burger buns

## FOR THE SALAD

Fresh green salad leaves, slices of tomatoes, slices of gherkins, slices of onion and/or Mayonnaise, ketchup, onion chutney or mustard if you like and/or grated or sliced Cheese.

## WASH YOUR HANDS

Put your minced steak in a large mixing bowl, sprinkle the pepper, salt (parsley if using) and wholegrain mustard over the mince. Then with your hands, mash together for at least 1 minute until it becomes 'pasty'. Using a food processor will make the mix too bouncy and tough. Don't overmix it.

Divide your burger mix into the appropriate portions. For the first time weigh each one, until you get to know approximately how big an 8oz and 6oz burger is.

Flatten into disc shapes, the flatter the disc of meat, the quicker it cooks. Remember they shrink quite a lot when they cook.

You can either grill them under a very hot grill for 10 mins each side, or fry in sunflower oil over a medium heat until they are brown throughout. You can eat burgers made from minced steak when they are pink inside but it's best to err on the safe side and check they are cooked through. Use a knife to gently check they are done. Once cooked arrange on a burger bun with your choice of salad and garnishes.

Serve by itself if you don't want bread (in that case have more salad) or with potato wedges.

# Homemade Veggie burgers

## INGREDIENTS

- 4 wholemeal burger buns
  - 1 x 400 g tin of chickpeas
  - 1 x 340 g tin of sweetcorn
  - Small bunch of fresh coriander or parsley
  - Half teaspoon ground cumin
  - Half teaspoon paprika
  - Half teaspoon ground coriander
  - 1 lemon
  - 3 heaped tablespoons plain flour
  - Sunflower oil
- 
- Drain the chickpeas and sweetcorn, tip them into a food processor, add half the leaves and all the stalks of the coriander or parsley to the processor.
  - Add the spices, flour and a pinch of sea salt, finely grate in the lemon zest, then whizz until combined - don't make it too smooth, it needs to retain some texture.
  - Divide the mixture into 4, and make burgers about 2cm thick. Put in the fridge for 30 minutes make firm.
  - Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat, add the burgers and cook for 10 minutes, or until golden and cooked through, turning halfway.
  - Place the burgers on a bun, add salad if you like it and ketchup or mayonnaise.

# Cup Cakes & Cakes

## INGREDIENTS

- 125g softened butter 125g caster sugar 2 eggs lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 125g self raising flour 2 tbsp milk

## METHOD

- Preheat oven 200c. Line muffn tins with cupcake papers.
- Beat together butter & sugar until lovely & creamy. Add beaten egg & beat again until well mixed.
- Beat in the vanilla. Add half of the sifted flour & fold to combine then add the milk & mix finally add the rest of the flour folding again to combine.
- Spoon into your prepared paper cases & bake for about 12/15mins, depending on your sizes. Keep checking but do not check for first 9 mins to allow the heat to raise the cakes.
- This mix will fill 12 cup cake, 6 muffns or medium cake tin

## FROSTING

- 85g softened butter
- 170g sifted icing sugar and vanilla extract 1 tablespoon milk
- Colouring to suit
- Cream butter, add icing sugar in bits, when stiff start to add the vanilla extract and then the milk until it is soft enough to pipe but still stiff enough to retain its shape. Once mixed add your colouring if you want. Take care to only add a drop at a time until it looks right. Do not over beat as the sugar will separate from the fat and the mix will go watery.
- If you want to cover a cake you will need more frosting so bulk up the mix proportionately.

# Cookies

## INGREDIENTS

- 100g plain chocolate 25g butter
- ½ of a 397g tin of condensed milk 110g self raising flour
- 35g milk or white choc buttons

## METHOD

- Lightly butter a baking tray. Break up the chocolate and gently melt it along with the butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water or in a microwave, taking care not to burn the chocolate, stirring occasionally. Stir in the condensed milk, then remove from the heat and cool.
- Mix in the flour and the chocolate buttons and chill the mixture until firm enough to handle. Preheat the oven to 180C / fan 160C.
- Place large teaspoonfuls of the mixture spaced well apart on the prepared baking trays. Bake in the preheated oven for about 15 minutes. The cookies should still look soft and will glisten. Don't overcook them, as they soon become very hard. Carefully remove the cookies with a palette knife and cool on a wire rack.

# Cottage or Shepherd's Pie

This is a great way to feed a lot of people quite cheaply. Make a large amount, divide it into portions and freeze or fridge individual portions for later in the week. This is called batch cooking and can be one with lots of other recipes such as spaghetti bolognese, curry and pasta bakes.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1kg potatoes, such as Maris Piper, peeled
- 150g butter
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 can of tomatoes chopped
- tbs of tomato puree (optional)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- freshly ground black pepper
- 600g minced steak (cottage) or minced lamb (shepherds), or meat substitute.
- 350ml beef, chicken or veg stock
- 1 tsp cornflour (you can use gravy granules if you don't have cornflour but then don't use a stock cube).
- HP or ketchup sauce to taste.

## METHOD

- Pre-heat the oven to 180C. Cut your potatoes into evenly sized chunks, and put in a large pan of cold, salted water. Bring to the boil and simmer until tender. Meanwhile, heat the butter in a pan over a moderate heat, then add the vegetables. Soften, but do not brown.
- Add the thyme, and then the meat. Brown it all over, add the bay leaf and then add half the stock. Whisk the other half with the cornflour, and then stir into the meat mixture. Add a generous dash of HP sauce and allow to simmer on a low heat for 15 minutes. Drain the potatoes and mash with a generous slab of butter. Season to taste.
- Taste meat and add salt and pepper, adding more HP sauce if necessary. If it looks dry, pour in a little water.
- Put the meat into a large baking dish and top with the potato. For a nice crispy top, I like to add it in lumps, or you can run a fork over the top if you prefer. Top with small pieces of butter or grated cheese
- Put into the oven for about 40 minutes, until the potato is crisp and slightly brown, then serve.

# Eggs

An egg is extremely nutritious filled with protein, vitamins and minerals.

The shell of the egg is porous, allowing air to penetrate, the older it is the more air the egg will contain. If you are ever unsure of how fresh an egg is it can easily be discovered by placing it in a bowl of water. If it sinks to the bottom and sits horizontally it is probably fresh. If it lies on the bottom but is tilted towards the surface it will be approx a week old. If it floats it may be stale.

## TO BOIL AN EGG

(medium size - adjust your times if they are large or small)

- Put the egg/s in a small pan, cover them with cold water, turn on the heat. When boiling turn down to a rolling simmer so they don't crash about in the pan. Boil for: 3 minutes if you like your eggs really runny, 4 minutes if you want a set white and a creamy yolk. 5 minutes for a white & yolk that is set with just a bit of soft in the middle of the yolk. 6 minutes to slice for a salad.
- \*To time an egg if you have no clock or timer simply put a large jug of cold water in a microwave and set the microwave to the time you want to boil your egg for. (Remember it will be hot when you want to dispose of the water)
- To peel a hardboiled egg crack the shells all over and put in a bowl of cold water, peel them under the water.

## TO POACH AN EGG

- Place a frying pan or wide saucepan over a gentle heat and add enough boiling water from a kettle to fill it to 2.5cm deep. When you can see the merest trace of bubbles forming over the bottom of the pan carefully break the eggs into the water one at a time. Let them simmer for approx one minute.
- Then remove the pan from the heat and let the eggs sit for another 10 minutes.
- Lift them out carefully with a slotted spoon to drain off the water.

\* If you are impatient you can simply simmer them for approx 3 mins and this seems to work just as well - you will soon find out how you like to have your own poached eggs and adjust your cooking times accordingly.

## TO FRY AN EGG

- Place a pan over a medium heat and as soon as the oil looks hot (there will be a faint shimmer on the surface) carefully break the eggs into the

pan. Let them settle for half a minute and then baste them with the hot oil using a large spoon.

- After about a minute they will be cooked, but you can easily see how the yellow changes colour and can stop basting when they are cooked to your liking.
- If the fat is splattering and spitting it is too hot. Turn it down. The egg should simply 'simmer' in the fat.
- **NEVER LEAVE A FRYING PAN UNATTENDED AND KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE ON THE HEAT OF THE OIL AT ALL TIMES. IF IN DOUBT TURN IT DOWN OR REMOVE FROM**
- **THE HEAT.** Remove the eggs with a spatula. \* Eggs can also be cooked in butter but to do this use less heat so you don't burn the butter.

## SCRAMBLED EGGS

### TO MAKE IN THE MICROWAVE

- Crack your eggs in a jug/large mug with a knob of butter and pinch of pepper, (if you want to add salt do it after cooking)
- Put in microwave and give 20 second bursts of cooking time on maximum setting. Stirring in between until they are done to your liking.

### USING A PAN

- Crack the eggs in a small heavy based saucepan.
- Add a slosh of milk, knob of butter and pinch of pepper (if you want to add salt do it after cooking)
- Stir the eggs around breaking up the yolks.
- Put on a medium heat and stir constantly, scraping the bottom of the pan to remove the cooked egg and mix into the uncooked liquid.
- Carry on doing this until your eggs are cooked - approx 4 minutes - or until how you like them.

# Fruit Tarts

## INGREDIENTS FOR THE SHORT CRUST PASTRY

- 255g/9oz plain flour
- pinch of salt 140g/5oz cold butter 6 tsp cold water
- 

## INGREDIENTS FOR THE FILLING

- Jam of your choice

## METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 200C/400F
- Sieve the flour and salt into a bowl.
- Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- Add the cold water to the flour mixture. Using a knife, mix the water into the flour, using your hand to firm up the mixture. The pastry should be of an even colour and suitable consistency for rolling.
- Roll it out so that it is approximately half a cm thick and cut into round shapes. You can cut round a tin of beans if you don't have a suitable 'cutter'.
- If you don't have a rolling pin you can simply take a golf ball sized piece of pastry and flatten it out using your thumb and palm of your hand.
- Press into the individual sections of a muffin or tart tin.
- Fill the pastry with a large spoonful of jam.
- Bake for 20-30 minutes.
- When cooked, slide on to a serving plate, Add fresh fruit if you want to and dust with caster sugar.

# Grilling

Pre-heat the grill to the highest setting at least 10 minutes before you want to start cooking.

## MEAT, FISH OR MEAT SUBSTITUTES

Eg: bacon, salmon, sausages, burger, gammon etc. Place the meat on the grill rack.

- Always make sure there is a tray put under the rack to catch the fat that drips out of the meat. If you don't your oven or grill will quickly become unuseable because it will start to smoke and smell terrible
- Try to position the meat 5-7cm from the heat. Turn the meat over half way through cooking to grill the other side.
- Timings will vary on how thick your meat is and how you like it cooked. Remember chicken and pork must always be well cooked right through the steak. Beef and lamb can be slightly pink if that's how you like to eat it.
- Allow 10-12 minutes per side for thick (1.5 cm or thicker) cuts of meat or chicken breasts. 5-7 minutes per side for thinner (1cm or thinner eg bacon) cuts. To check that it is cooked through simply cut a bit off or cut into the middle to see the colour of the meat. If it's still slightly pink then give it a few more minutes each side.
- Serve with: salad, vegetables, mashed potatoes, potato wedges, pasta, rice - anything you fancy. or veg (eg: large flat mushroom) or cheese on toast,

## GRILLING VEGETABLES

- Courgettes, mushrooms etc.
- Please see above but brush the vegetables with a bit of oil before grilling.

# Common Herbs

Store fresh herbs in the salad drawer of the fridge, where they should last five to six days.

## PARSLEY

Parsley can be used as a garnish and flavouring and as a vegetable. There are two main varieties: curly leaf and flatleaf. Both can be used for the same purposes although flatleaf parsley has a stronger flavour and tends to be favoured in Mediterranean cooking. Parsley is especially good used in soups and sauces. Chop or shred it and mix with butter to melt over fish or to glaze vegetables. There is just as much flavour in the stalk as in the leaf.

## CORIANDER

Coriander is one of the world's most commonly used herbs. It is green, leafy and strong-smelling with a fresh, citrus taste that makes it an invaluable garnish and flavour enhancer. Both the fresh leaves and stalks are edible, as well as the berries, which are dried and called coriander seeds. Coriander tends to be associated most with Asian and Central and South American cooking. For maximum flavour, it is best added to dishes just before serving.

## CHIVES

Chives have long, thin green blades that are hollow inside. They have a mild, onion flavour. Add to salads, omelettes, garnish soups or jacket potato toppings, or anywhere where you prefer a milder onion flavour.

## ROSEMARY

Rosemary is a strongly flavoured and versatile herb. Native to the Mediterranean, its green leaves resemble pine needles. The plant is an evergreen shrub, so the leaves are available fresh all year round. Use with chicken, pork, lamb or on roast potatoes.

## THYME

The intensely pungent flavour complements most meats. It can withstand long cooking times and it is a good complement to slow-cooked dishes such as stews, slow roast pork or chicken. It is one of the herbs used in bouquet garni, along with parsley and bay. Its flavour marries well with other robust herbs such as rosemary and sage. Chop it up in stuffings for poultry or lamb or use it chopped in a marinade for olives. Add sprigs to marinades for meat, fish or vegetables or tuck a few sprigs with half a lemon and an onion inside a chicken before roasting.

The strong flavour of sage means that a little goes a long way, especially if you're using dried leaves, so use sparingly. Sage goes well with pork, beef, duck and chicken recipes, and fatty meats in particular. In Italy it is commonly chopped, mixed with melted butter and served stirred into pasta or gnocchi. It's the traditional flavour of sage and onion stuffing.

## OREGANO

A pungent green herb which goes well with a variety of foods, from lamb to vegetables, stuffings and egg dishes. Oregano is closely related to marjoram. It is characteristic of many Greek dishes (particularly lamb) and in the UK is often sprinkled liberally on pizzas. Oregano grows easily in well protected areas in the UK. Oregano is one of the herbs in the mixture called herbes de Provence.

## BASIL

There are numerous species of basil; some have scents reminiscent of pineapple, lemon, cinnamon or cloves; others have beautiful purple leaves. In Mediterranean regions, basil and tomato is a classic combination. Pesto, made from basil leaves and pine nuts, with parmesan or pecorino cheese and olive oil (traditionally pounded together in a mortar and pestle - the latter lends pesto its name) is another classic dish.

## MINT

There are many different species of mint, but the one used most widely in Western cooking is spearmint, native to the Mediterranean and widely cultivated in the UK. It can be ground into mint sauce or jelly - the ultimate accompaniment to roast lamb. Mint is a great addition to light summer soups (it pairs especially well with pea, courgette, asparagus and other green vegetables.) Plus it's a great garnish for desserts and drinks - try it sprinkled over sugared strawberries or add it to fruit drinks, cocktails or Moroccan-style sweet tea.

## BAY LEAF

This aromatic leaf is an essential component of the classic bouquet garni: parsley, thyme and a bay leaf. The leaves impart their flavour to a variety of dishes and ingredients, making bay a versatile store cupboard ingredient. It's also one of the few herbs that doesn't lose its flavour when dried. Long cooking draws out the aroma of this herb and most braised, poached and stewed dishes benefit from the addition of a bay leaf, as do soups, stocks and risottos. Add a bay leaf when braising red or pickled cabbage, to poaching liquid for fish, or to infuse the milk for custard or rice pudding. It's the traditional flavour of many Italian dishes including spaghetti Bolognese.

# Eggs - Omelettes

## TO MAKE A 3 EGG PLAIN

### OMELETTE

(use a medium size frying pan)

- Before you start have everything ready: bowl, eggs, omelette pan, fork, large spoon, salt and pepper, butter or oil.
- Depending on how hungry you are 2 eggs make a small omelette snack for one person. 3 is a substantial meal.
- Break the eggs into a bowl and add the pepper and gently mix together breaking the yolks. Don't over beat the mixture. If you want an extra creamy omelette you can add a small dash of cream or milk.
- Heat a knob of butter, about a big dessert spoonful (or 2 spoonfuls of oil) in the pan on a medium heat until it is melted and quite hot (about 30 seconds).
- When the butter is foaming pour the eggs into the pan, tilting it to and fro to spread the eggs evenly over the base of the pan. Then leave it flat on the heat and count to five.
- After 5 seconds a bubbly frill will appear around the edge.
- Now tilt the pan and draw an edge of the omelette up into the middle of the pan to allow the remaining uncooked mixture to run to the bottom and cook. Do this until all the liquid has been tipped to an edge and the omelette is beginning to set. • Remember an omelette will go on cooking on the plate so it's quite important to leave a small amount of liquid egg to set on the pate.
- Once the mixture looks as though its almost all set slide it out onto a plate and fold it over as you tip it out.
- Add salt once it's on the plate if you must.

## FILLINGS

### CHEESE

Add a handful of cheese before you turn the omelette out. If you can fold it over in the pan and leave for 15 seconds before tipping out gently onto a plate. If that isn't possible then simply add the cheese and fold it as you tip it out onto the plate and leave for a minute to melt the cheese.

### MUSHROOMS

Fry a handful of mushrooms in the pan before you add the egg mixture.

### HAM

Add a handful of ham to the mixture a minute or so before you turn it out of the pan.

## SPANISH OMELETTE

- Fry a handful of potatoes and onions with some black pepper in some oil or butter for about 5 minutes before adding the egg mixture.
- Turn the heat down to very low and add the egg mixture.
- Leave for approx 15 minutes uncovered.
- When the egg mixture is cooked more or less through, place a flat plate over the pan and turn it upside down, then gently ease the omelette back in to the pan and cook the other side for about 2 minutes to brown.
- Turn off the heat and let it sit in the pan for another 5 minutes and serve.

Almost any vegetable (chopped up to 1.5cm pieces) can be put in an omelette - you can make up your own favourite.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

By themselves, with a salad, baked potato or chips.

# Pasta

Pasta is made from wheat and water. It's a cheap meal and can be made to go with almost anything. If you are cooking spaghetti or linguine you can easily work out how much to cook by using a 10p piece. Enough dried long spaghetti (held in your hand) to cover a 10p piece is more than enough for one person.

## HOW TO COOK PASTA

A large saucepan of salted boiling water for the pasta to be able to move about in.

When the water is boiling add the pasta and give it a stir in the water to separate it. Pasta should be cooked until it is 'al dente' which means it will still have a slight bit of bite to it and not be soggy like tinned pasta. Shapes of pasta take longer than thin ones like spaghetti. The only real way to check that it is cooked is to taste it. Start after around 8 minutes and there should still be a slight bit of resistance. If it is being added to a sauce remember it can also cook for another minute in the sauce. Drain in a colander over the sink and then put the colander over the pan to catch the final drips.

## PASTA DRESSINGS

Pasta does not need to be drowned in a rich sauce. The basic ingredients to add are usually, garlic, Italian extra virgin olive oil, basil and tomatoes. These form the base of many sauces. You can then add cheese, fish, chicken or whatever you feel like or have in your cupboard. Mild chillis go well, tinned anchovies mashed in a bowl until they are a sauce, sardines, chopped chicken, parmesan, cream etc.

## BASIC TOMATO SAUCE

**SERVES 2** - A can of chopped or whole plum tomatoes, pulped in the pan with a fork, potato masher or food processor. Garlic, olive oil, salt, black pepper to taste. Reduce all the ingredients down until it becomes a thick sauce and toss some cooked pasta into the sauce. Cook for a minute and serve. You can also add some: chilli, cooked mushrooms or some cream cheese or a handful of parmesan or grated cheddar.

## BOLOGNESE SAUCE INGREDIENTS:

Cooked spaghetti,  
Olive oil,  
Handfull of mushrooms,  
1 onion diced,  
Mince steak - 12 oz ish  
2 small carrots  
1 stick celery  
2 cloves garlic  
Italian mixed herbs  
Bay leaf  
1/2 tube of tomato puree  
1 tin of plum tomatoes  
1 veg stock cube  
Salt and black pepper.  
Parmesan and/or grated cheddar.

## METHOD

- Fry the olive oil and minced steak until browned, then reduce the heat slightly and add your onions, mushrooms, carrots, celery and garlic. Next stir in your tin of plum tomatoes. Add a flat teaspoon of Italian herbs, bay leaf, tomato puree, stock cube. Give everything a stir with a wooden spoon, breaking up the plum tomatoes as you go and bring to a gentle simmer.
- Reduce the heat to low-medium and leave it for about an hour. Stir occasionally to make sure it doesn't burn. When ready check it for salt and pepper, if it needs more seasonings add them.
- Pour onto cooked spaghetti and add the parmesan or cheddar.

## CREAMY PASTA

Serves 2  
 Handful of chopped bacon (or lardons)  
 2 teaspoons olive oil  
 Handful of grated parmesan cheese  
 1 onion finely chopped  
 Black pepper  
 Mug of double cream.

### METHOD

Put a large pan of salted water on to boil add the pasta, allow it to cook on a rolling boil until done.  
 Cut the bacon into 1cm cubes. Then in a large pan cook the bacon cubes in the oil until they are cooked, add the onions and fry together until they are soft. Take the pan off the heat.  
 Add the: cream, parmesan and some pepper.  
 When the pasta is ready, drain the pasta, put in a bowl and pour the creamy sauce over the pasta.

## PASTA BAKE

This is a great way to feed a lot of people quite cheaply. Make a large amount, divide it into portions and freeze or fridge individual portions for later in the week. This is called batch cooking and can be one with lots of other recipes such as spaghetti bolognese, curry and shepherds or cottage pie.

Use: tins of drained tuna, or a handful of cooked ham, cooked chicken, fish or meat substitute - mushrooms make a great vegetarian substitute.

You can leave out or swap any of the ingredients - so long as you have a sauce to coat the pasta with.

### INGREDIENTS

1 onion  
 2 cloves of garlic olive oil  
 1 pinch of dried chilli flakes  
 1 tin of chopped tomatoes  
 Flat tsp of dried Italian herbs  
 Sea salt  
 Freshly ground black pepper  
 500g dried pasta - penne, bows/shells etc. (*You can use spaghetti if it's all you have in just break it up short*)  
 150g Cheddar cheese.

*If you don't like tomatoes you can add cream to make a creamy version or a white sauce  
 - or add both, there are no rules.*

### METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas 6.

Peel and finely chop the onion and garlic.

Fry 2 tablespoons of oil, the onion, garlic and chilli in a heavy frying pan and fry for 5 to 10 minutes until softened. Turn up the heat and add the chopped tomatoes (and or cream). Add the Italian herbs. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes.

Cook the pasta.

Add your meat/fish/meat substitute to the sauce trying to leave a few chunks intact. Season with salt and black pepper. When the pasta is ready, drain and tip into the sauce, mix it all together and then put in large shallow baking dish (around the size of a sheet of paper.)

Grate the cheese and sprinkle over the pasta. Place in the oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until golden and bubbling. Leave to stand for 5 minutes, then serve with veg or salad or on its own.

# Basic Pizza Bread

## INGREDIENTS

- 700g of strong white bread flour
- 1 dessert spoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of easy blend dried yeast
- 1 teaspoon of sugar.
- 400ml of hand hot water
- Tablespoon of olive oil.

## METHOD

- Sift the flour, salt, yeast and sugar into a bowl
- Make a well in the centre and add the water.
- Mix to a dough starting with a wooden spoon and then using your hands. Add the olive oil and knead well.
- Transfer the dough to a flat, clean surface.
- Knead the dough until it becomes springy and elastic - approx 3 minutes of quite hard work!
- Return to the bowl and cover with a clean cloth or loose cling film. Leave in a warm room for approx an hour.
- Preheat the oven to 230C (quite high)
- Take the dough out of the bowl and throw it lightly on the clean flat surface to knock the air out of it.
- Knead again for another 2mins.
- Divide the dough into fist size balls and roll out flat on a floured surface - use your hands to flatten and pull roughly into shape.
- Spread basic shop bought Passata (tomato) sauce over the surface.
- Add toppings of your choice - classic is mozzarella cheese and tomatoes with fresh basil, but other options are: ham, mushrooms, chicken, peppers, pineapple, chilli etc
- Bake in hot oven for approx 25mins until ready.

Don't over pack them as the middle doesn't cook if you do and make sure your oven is hot before you put the pizza in to cook the dough as well as the toppings.

To make your own passata reduce plum tomatoes by boiling down a tin for approx 20 mins until thick, add black pepper and garlic if you wish.

# Potatoes

Potatoes are cheap, a wholefood, high in fibre and vitamin C. Once peeled, potatoes will start to go black unless they are covered in water. If you aren't going to use them immediately, place them in a bowl of cold water until you are ready. You can save your peelings in a bowl of water and make fried potato skins later. Simply drain and dry, coat in oil, salt and pepper and bake in a preheated oven (180C) for about half an hour. Dip in mayonnaise or ketchup or dip of your choice.

## BAKED POTATO

Simply wash the potatoes thoroughly (don't peel) and put in a low oven, around 150C to 180C and leave for an hour and a half or longer. Microwave them for 5 mins and then turn and microwave for another 5 mins and then cook in a preheated oven on 200C for an hour or Microwave as above but until they are cooked through - probably takes around 20/25 mins for a medium sized potato. (You can just keep microwaving and turning the potato for about 20 minutes - if you are in a hurry).

They can be eaten by themselves with butter, melted cheese, tuna and sweetcorn, baked beans, prawns and mayonnaise, bolognese sauce etc....

## ROAST POTATO

Put a large pan of salted water on a high heat to boil.

Peel potatoes and cut into 4cm chunks. Place the chunks of potato in the pan of boiling water and turn down to a simmer for 10 minutes.

Drain water thoroughly, put the lid on the pan and roughly shake the saucepan to fluff the edges of the potatoes. Then take off the lid to let them dry out - leave for about 10 mins. Pour in a good tablespoon of sunflower oil and stir until the potatoes are covered in oil.

Sprinkle black pepper over them and a little salt and place on a shallow baking tray. Put in a hot oven (180C) for approx 35 to 50 minutes or until they are browned nicely. They will brown and crisp better if you turn them once or twice during cooking. You can also just simply peel them, cut them up and put in oven on a baking tray for an hour.

## POTATO WEDGES

See above but cut potatoes into segments (like a Terry's chocolate orange) and don't be so rough with them when you shake them in the pan as they will break.

Add some crushed garlic or chilli powder to the oil if you like them spicy.

## MASHED POTATO

Put a large pan of salted water on a high heat to boil. Peel the potatoes and cut into 4cm chunks. Boil for approx 25 mins or until a knife slips out easily.

Drain thoroughly.

Add a slosh of milk, a knob of butter and black pepper, mash until its smooth and creamy adding more milk as you go along to get it to your desired consistency. Adding a dash of double cream will make it extra special. Add salt to taste when it's close to finished.

Cheesy mash is also delicious, simply add grated cheese.

# Rice

A wholefood staple. Wholegrain (Brown) will give you more fibre and nutrition in your diet. Long grain is used for curries etc. Basmati is nicest, but ordinary American long grain is fine. Short grains are for puddings and risottos.

## PLAIN BOILED RICE

Wash white rice first. Rinse in water at least 3 times before cooking - this removes a lot of the starch and prevents it from becoming 'sticky.' If you want sticky rice then don't wash it.

A full mugful of dried rice will serve 2 people.

Place the rice in a pan of boiling water (the water needs to have covered all the rice by at least a cm, save energy and don't boil more water than you need to) and turn heat down to a simmer for approx 20mins.

Check the rice after 15 mins and bite in half to see if the rice is opaque (cloudy) all the way through. If it isn't check again in 5 mins and then every minute after that. It is very easy to overcook rice.

Once it's cooked drain and leave in the pan with the lid on tightly. It will keep warm for at least 20 mins.

## FRIED RICE

First boil your rice (as above), then heat some sunflower, vegetable or groundnut oil in a wok or frying pan. Finely chop whatever vegetables you like and may have to hand - eg: onions, carrots, broccoli, tomatoes etc. Fry the vegetables for about

4-5 minutes, until soft, then add the rice and fry the mixture together for about 2 minutes. Add salt and pepper and maybe some soy sauce if you have any to hand.

## CURRY

Use any bits of left over chicken (or any fish/meat) - those stripped from a roast chicken are perfect or use diced fillets. You do not have to add meat.

Fry onions, garlic and any other thinly sliced vegetables you like or happen to have, e.g: tomatoes, peppers, carrots, broccoli, mushrooms, peas etc. Once soft add a spoonful of medium curry powder. Add some creamed coconut and mix thoroughly. Simmer for a few minutes then add the cooked chicken. Let the mixture warm through

for another 2 minutes and serve on a bed of plain boiled rice. You can also add cashew nuts or fruit such as pineapples or dried sultanas after you add the creamed coconut. If you don't like coconut add a tin of chopped tomatoes - or both. Curry is a dish to be made on the hoof out of what you have and how you like it.

## RICE PUDDING

50g butter

50g sugar (golden if poss) 100g pudding rice

1/2 whole nutmeg grated

1 litre of full cream milk or since cream

1 tsp of vanilla (optional)

Place all ingredients in a gratin dish and bake for 2 hrs at 140C It's important not to hurry this dish and keep it on a low oven. Stir the mixture thoroughly after an hour but not again until cooked.

## STOVE TOP RICE PUDDING

Mix all the ingredient in a heavy bottomed saucepan and cook on a very low heat, with barely a bubble rising, for about an hour. Check it and stir occasionally.

## INDIAN SPICED RICE PUDDING

Use only white sugar (to keep the whiteness of the dish) half and half coconut milk and milk and half and half coconut cream and butter.

Add 5 crushed cardamom pods and a handful of unsalted pistachios (and or sultanas if you like them) and cook very slowly on the hob until all thick and creamy.

If you want to make it extra special add a desert spoonful of rose water.

# Roast Chicken

- Place the chicken in the roasting tin and smear 2 oz (50 g) of softened butter all over the chicken with your hands. Season the chicken all over with salt and freshly milled black pepper. If you have them put a lemon cut in wedges and an onion inside the chicken.... unless you are going to stuff it!

If you want to stuff the chicken, Make the stuffing as directed on the pack - begin at the neck end where you will find a flap of loose skin: gently loosen this away from the breast and pack about two-thirds of the stuffing inside. Make a neat round shape on the outside then tuck the neck flap under the bird's back. Take the remaining stuffing and place it in the body cavity.

- Roast in the centre of a pre-heated oven, gas mark 5, 375F (190C), for 20 minutes per lb (450 g) plus 10-20 minutes extra this will be 1 hour and 50 minutes to 2 hours for a 5 lb (2.25 kg) bird. Baste three times during the cooking time. For the final 15 minutes of cooking, increase the heat to gas mark 7, 425F (220C) to give the skin that final golden crispiness. When it is cooked, remove it from the oven and cover it with foil. Leave to rest whilst you are preparing everything else.

**Remember:** You can also cook a chicken by preparing as above and placing it in 1cm of water in a roasting tin. Have the oven preheated to around 200C, put the chicken in the oven and immediately turn the heat down to 125C. Baste occasionally. The chicken can be left cooking in the oven for up to 5 hours without harming. You can also surround the chicken with potatoes and sturdy root vegetables like carrots or parsnips, which means you have an instant dinner ready when you are. Turn the heat up to about 180C half an hour before you want it to be ready.

## HOME MADE GRAVY

To make stock for a home made gravy. Remove the wings from the chicken then place the cooked chicken on a plate, and cover in foil or a clean cloth. Set the tray with all the juices etc to one side.

Put the chicken wings and an onion and stock cube in a small saucepan. Add a mug of water to the tray that the chicken was cooked in and stir well until everything has loosened and come away from the tray. Pour into the saucepan with the wings. Simmer the liquid for as long as possible but at least 10 minutes. Strain the liquid into another saucepan. Then add either gravy granules or gravy powder as directed on the packets.

Serve with roast and/or mashed potatoes and vegetables of your choice. See appropriate cooking sheets.

... but gravy granules are really good so don't feel like you need to!

# Soups

When making soups its good to not be too precise, then each one turns out differently and you can learn what works and doesn't. When making a soup try to stick to one or two vegetable flavours which you can enhance with spices or herbs, unless making a simple mixed vegetable soup. Be careful which and how much stock cube you use. They are very salty. 1/2 a stock cube will flavour enough soup for two. A plain vegetable one is best, use chicken if you only have them in.

- Try not to over cook veg as it starts to smell strongly. 10 mins frying and 10-15 mins simmering should be enough for most vegetable soups.
- Celery or handful of parsley adds a really good flavour to all soups.
- You will need a large heavy bottomed saucepan with a lid and a food processor. If you don't have one you can get quite a successful broth type soup from just mashing the soup ingredients with a potato masher or forcing them through a sieve when cooked.
- The basic method is to fry onions, herbs and spices with your chosen ingredients for about 10 minutes, add water (just cover them), boil for another 10 minutes then liquidise or make a thicker soup, mash with a potato masher and add liquid until it's the right consistency.

## LEEK & POTATO

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 handful of chopped onion
- 2 handfulls of potato chopped (2cm pieces)
- 2 handfulls of chopped (2cm pieces) leeks (white or pale green bits) 1 chopped stick of celery (optional)
- garlic cloves to taste
- half a vegetable stock cube - (unless your making more in which case double all the ingredients)
- half a chilli pepper (optional) lots of black pepper
- large knob of butter or big glug of oil

### METHOD

Fill a kettle and set to boil

Fry the onion, potato, garlic, chilli and leek for ten minutes in the butter or oil until it starts to just brown on some edges.

Add boiling water to just cover the veg. Add stock cube and the black pepper

Place lid on pan and leave to simmer for another ten minutes.

When the veg is soft but not stewed remove from heat. If using a whizzer add a dash of cold water and stir before putting in the food processor.

Whizz for 15 seconds, avoid over whizzing potato soups as they can become gluey. If no food processor is available pour into a sieve over another pan and stir through with a metal spoon until it is all passed through the sieve. Add water if you want it thinner. • A dash of cream will add body to the soup (and calories)

## CARROT & CORIANDER SOUP

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 handful of chopped onion
- 4 handfulls of carrot chopped (2cm pieces)
- 1 chopped stick of celery (optional)
- Garlic cloves to taste
- 1 spoonful of coriander seeds
- Half a vegetable stock cube - (unless your making more in which case double all the ingredients)
- 1 Teaspoon of paprika
- Half a red chilli pepper (optional or to taste) lots of black pepper
- Large knob of butter or big slosh of oil half a mug coconut milk (optional) 1/4 tsp of grated nutmeg
- Fill a kettle and set to boil

### METHOD

Fry the onion, carrot, coriander seeds, nutmeg, celery, garlic and chilli for ten minutes in the butter or oil until it starts to just brown on some edges.

Add boiling water to just cover the veg.

Add stock cube, paprika and the black pepper

Place lid on pan and leave to simmer for another ten minutes.

When the veg is soft but not stewed remove from heat. If using a food processor add a dash of cold water and stir before putting in the food processor.

Whizz for 15 seconds,

If no food processor is available push through a sieve with a metal spoon until its all passed through the sieve. Add water if you want it thinner.

Add the coconut milk and return to the heat. Gently bring back to a simmer and then serve.

Spicy pumpkin soup can be made by substituting the carrot for pumpkin.

# Common Spices

## GARLIC

Garlic is a member of the same family as onions and leeks. There are many varieties and they differ in size, pungency and colour. Garlic is a main flavour of many cooking traditions. The cloves are separated, peeled and then used whole, or chopped or crushed. The more finely the garlic is crushed, the stronger it will taste in the dish, but slow oven-baking tends to mellow the flavour. Use in practically every cooked dish and many cold. Dressings, stews, soups, roasting meats and vegetables, in marinades, in oils. Chop it finely if you are going to fry with it as the sugar in the juice when crushed may stick to the pan and burn. Crush it into stews, mayonnaises etc.

## CHILLI

Chilli peppers are a small, fiery variety of capsicum. They can be green, yellow, orange, red or black. In general, the smaller the chilli, the more potent, but it's worth bearing in mind that individual chillies of the same variety and even from the same plant can contain different levels of heat. The seeds and flesh of the chilli can both be eaten, but cooking chillies does not reduce the intensity of capsaicin; only removing the seeds and veins will lessen their heat. To prepare fresh chillies, slit them lengthwise, remove the seeds and membranes with the tip of the knife and cut off the stem. It's very important to avoid contact with the eyes or any sensitive skin during or after preparing chillies - even washing your hands afterwards may not be enough to remove all the capsaicin. Crumbled dried chillies work well when fried in olive oil with garlic and mixed with spaghetti for a simple Italian-style supper.

## TUMERIC

A bright yellow spice that comes from the rhizome of a plant in the ginger family. It is sometimes available fresh, but is usually sold dried and ground, in powder form. Turmeric has anti-oxidant properties which is why it has long been an Indian home remedy for many illnesses. Turmeric is often a component of curry powder and it is used on its own in many Asian dishes, including fish curries, dhals, pilafs as well as in many North African meat and vegetable dishes. Turmeric also gives chutneys and pickles (such as piccalilli) their distinctive yellow tinge. It has a slight peppery aroma and a musky taste.

## NUTMEG

Both nutmeg and mace come from the same plant. Nutmeg is the 'nut', while mace is the surrounding lacy 'aril'. Nutmeg has a warm, spicy aroma and flavour and can be used in sweet and savoury

cooking. It is a component of the classic béchamel sauce and is used to flavour a host of cakes, puddings and custards.

## CARDAMON

Cardamom seeds are contained in small pods about the size of a cranberry. Cardamom has a wonderful aroma and an enticing warm, spicy-sweet flavour. The whole pods can be added to dishes, or the seeds can be extracted and either added whole or ground. Cardamom is widely used in Indian cooking and in Scandinavian baking. It can be bought in the pod, as seeds or ground but the ground seeds soon lose their flavour so it's preferable to buy the pods and grind the seeds yourself using a pestle and mortar. If you're using cardamom to flavour dishes such as stews and curries, lightly crush the whole pod and add it to the mixture: the shell can be removed after cooking or eaten in the dish. Cardamom also has an affinity with chocolate. A little cardamom goes a long way, though, so use it sparingly. Add to equal parts basmati rice and sugar and twice as much coconut milk for a fantastic Indian rice pudding.

## CINNAMON

Ground cinnamon (the bark of the cinnamon tree) is gorgeous cooked with apples or in baked goods such as buns, cakes, sweet pastries and puddings. Historically it has been used to flavour chocolate dishes and drinks. Cinnamon is added to poaching syrup for fruits such as pears, plums and bananas and to mulled wine or punch.

Cinnamon bark is also used to flavour meat, poultry and vegetable stews and can be added to spicy marinades.

## STAR ANISE

Star Anise has a strong, distinct 'anise seed' flavour. It's used in savoury dishes and should be used in small quantities. Whole and ground star anise are used differently in cooking. The whole pods are added to braised dishes, soups, and stews and removed at the end of cooking. Ground star anise powder is used similarly to other ground spices to add flavour to a dish. Whole star anise is good to add to fatty meat braised dishes such as pork. Ground star anise is a common spice in Indian cooking and drinks such as chai, and can be added to pumpkin pie and gingerbread.

# Cheese on Toast

How to make perfect cheese on toast

Toast both sides and liberally butter one side. Lay thin slices of (or a handful of grated) cheese over the buttered side of the toast ensuring no bread is left showing, to prevent scorching. Place the toast slices under a hot grill.

It's ready when the cheese is bubbling and slightly browning, be patient.

You can add: spring or cooking onions, chopped tomatoes, or ham (put the cheese on top) Now add some black pepper and salt.

You can add anchovies, mushrooms, onions - anything you like with cheese. Have it with a salad, chips, dip in mayonnaise or ketchup. However you like it!

## CREAMED MUSHROOMS ON TOAST

Heat butter or olive oil in a large frying pan and fry the mushrooms. Cook for 2 mins, then add the garlic and cream. Cook for 3-5 mins more to reduce/thicken the sauce and until the mushrooms are soft and lightly coated in the cream. Stir through a little parsley if you have it.

Toast and butter the bread, then spoon the mushroom mixture on the toast. Top with cheese or bacon if you want to.

## SARDINES ON TOAST

Toast the bread, lightly butter or drizzle olive oil over it. Mash the sardines in a bowl and spread over the toast. Add salt and pepper, and maybe a little more oil or cheese?

Put under a hot grill until they are sizzling and toasting on the edges.

# Vegetables

Vegetables are a fantastic source of vitamins and minerals. Eating lots of different vegetables means you'll get a good range of vitamins and minerals in your body. To have a healthy diet, we should be eating at least 5 portions a day. Buying locally and in season should also work out a bit cheaper and if you shop at your local market or grocers you will save money.

## BUYING VEGETABLES

Look for crisp vegetables with brightly coloured leaves. Avoid vegetables with brown patches, wilted or slimy leaves, bruised or pulpy flesh. But don't be put off by odd-shaped vegetables. The price of in-season fruit and vegetables is lower. This means when they grow naturally in the UK- eg: strawberries in UK summer.

## ORGANIC VEGETABLES

Organic agriculture does not use artificial fertilisers and pesticides; farmers use methods such as crop rotation and natural fertilisers. However, organic food is generally more expensive than non-organic produce. The organic produce sold in Britain is often imported, adding to the environmental impact of 'food miles'. Some pesticides are thought to be linked to serious illnesses such as cancer.

## STORING VEGETABLES

Most salad vegetables will keep for a week in the salad drawer of the fridge, but tomatoes shouldn't be kept in the fridge or their sweetness will go.

Squashes and root vegetables like potatoes will keep for a week or two in a vegetable rack in a cold, dark place and can keep for many weeks if stored properly. Remove plastic packaging and store vegetables loose or they will sweat and rot. Store cut vegetables in the fridge. Freezing doesn't preserve food forever, but frozen vegetables will keep for up to six months. Buying carrots and potatoes with soil still on helps them to keep longer.

## PREPARING VEGETABLES

Vegetables are very versatile; most can be eaten raw and can be cooked by virtually every method. All vegetables should be washed thoroughly before use, to remove dirt and pesticides. Peeling vegetables is an easy way to remove surface dirt or germs, but don't peel too thickly because many nutrients are stored just below the skin. Buy a vegetable 'mandolin' and learn how to use it properly. It will save you hours of time. Some organic vegetables can be treated to a good scrubbing and don't need peeling.

## COOKING VEGETABLES

Keep cooking time to a minimum. Steaming and stir-frying are both quick cooking methods that help vegetables to maintain their texture. Baking vegetables creates a better flavour as the sugars start to caramelise. How long you cook vegetables for, is really down to how you like them - about twice as long to steam. Check to see if vegetables are done by piercing them with a knife or tasting them. Drain them and serve at once. If you want to serve them later, plunge them into cold water to stop them from cooking further then cook again very briefly in boiling water when you're ready to serve.

## BOILING

Cut your vegetable into 3cm squares or cubes. Add to boiling water and simmer for a few minutes. The less boiling the more nutrients remain. As a guide, most leafy vegetables, cabbages, peas etc. will need about 5 minutes boiling. Roots, tubers and squashes will take 10-20 minutes, depending on their size.

## STEAMING

Cut your vegetable into 3cm squares or cubes. Place a steaming rack in the saucepan and add enough water to come up to the bottom of the rack. Add the vegetables. Place a lid on the saucepan and steam until the vegetables are tender.

Approximately 10 minutes.

## STIR FRYING

Slice the vegetables thinly. Into matchstick size pieces. Heat oil in a wok or large saucepan and add the vegetables. Stir for approximately 3-5 minutes. Add any sauce you like.

## ROASTING

Heat the oven to approx 180C. Cut your vegetable into 3cm squares or cubes. A mix of onions, tomatoes, garlic, courgette and peppers is nice. Coat the veg in olive or sunflower oil, sprinkle with black pepper and salt and bake for approx half an hour.

# White Sauce

- (Bechamel) 500 ml milk
- 50g cornflour (or plain flour) 50g butter
- 1 slice of onion \*(optional) 1 bay leaf \*(optional) few parsley stalks \*(optional)
- Grated nutmeg \*(optional)
- *\*If you don't use the optional flavourings half or quarter of a vegetable stock cube would help give some flavour*
- Salt and black pepper

## METHOD

- Mix the flour with a small amount of the milk in a jug or mug until it is a thin cream. Set to one side.
- Bring the rest of the milk to the boil, add the butter, parsley, nutmeg, a slice of onion & bayleaf in the pan and bring it to a low simmer. This will take approximately 5 mins.
- Remove the bayleaf, parsley and onion.
- Using a wooden spoon, start to stir the milk quite vigorously and slowly add the flour mixture, until you have a smooth paste in the pan.
- Once the sauce starts to become thicker, turn the heat down to a low setting and then let the sauce slowly simmer for approximately 2 mins.
- To store simply cover in cling film (to prevent a skin forming).
- To reheat put the jug of sauce in a pan of barely simmering water until warm again.

## OTHER VARIATIONS

Once you can make a basic white sauce the opportunities for different meals are endless. Add a handful of grated cheese and a bit of chilli for a cheese sauce to pour over cauliflower, vegetables, pasta.

Fry some mushrooms and onions first and add them to the sauce scraping the flavourings from the bottom of the pan carefully into the mix. This can be used over a chicken breast or steak.

Green pepper corns for pork or steak.

# Chicken Fajitas

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 chicken breast, finely sliced
- 1/2 red onion, finely sliced
- 1/2 red pepper, sliced
- 1/2 red chilli, finely sliced (optional)

## FOR THE FRESH SALSA

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and finely chopped
- 1/4 red onion
- Very finely chopped
- 1 small garlic clove (crushed)
- Small splash of white wine vinegar
- 1tsp of lime juice
- Small bunch of coriander, roughly chopped.

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl, stir and refrigerate until ready to serve.

## FOR THE MARINADE

Mix together in a large bowl

- Smoked paprika
- 1 dessert spoonful of ground coriander
- 1 pinch of ground cumin
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 lime, juiced
- 2 drops Tabasco

## TO SERVE

- 8 tortillas
- Fresh mixed salad leaves of your choice

## METHOD

- Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and wrap 4 medium tortillas in foil.
- Make the marinade and put to one side.
- Slice the: chicken breasts into strips about half the size of your finger. Finely slice the red onion, red pepper and chilli (if using), into the marinade. Leave to absorb the flavours.
- Make the salsa and put in the fridge.
- Heat a griddle pan until smoking hot and add the chicken and marinade to the pan.
- Keep everything moving over a high heat for about 5 mins using tongs until you get a nice charred effect. If your griddle pan is small you may need to do this in two batches.
- To check the chicken is cooked, find the thickest part and tear in half - if any part is still raw cook until done.
- Put the tortillas in the oven to heat up and serve with the cooked chicken, a mixed salad and a fresh tomato salsa, (home made preferably) or mayonnaise.