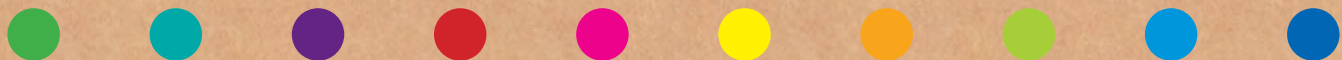


Wendy Blume



SAMPLE vegie smugglers



More Recipes that sneak the good stuff in





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Finding kitchen joy

When people tell me that they 'hate cooking' what they usually mean is that they hate thinking about food, hate writing lists, hate shopping, hate preparation and hate kitchen mess.

So to combat that, here are some tips that can help transform your kitchen difficulties into creative and enjoyable experiences. If you...

Hate planning...

Put your weekly meal plans together. Create your shopping list. Rotate them and save yourself the dreaded thinking and planning time.

Hate shopping...

Put your groceries on a list. There's nothing more frustrating than going to the supermarket and not knowing what you need. If you have a delivery of other stuff once a month, you can use that as a bit of a guide. In-store, leave the kids elsewhere (although supervised, of course!).

Hate food preparation...

Learn knife skills. Use kitchen gloves if you hate getting your hands dirty. Wear an apron. Truly, it can make a difference. Get out all the ingredients you need at the start of a recipe. After you use each one, pop it away and clear bench space.

Hate kitchen mess...

Invest in a range of dishwasher-proof measuring cups, spoons and mixing bowls. Always have a sink full of clean washing up water so you can wash as you go and avoid a scene of utter disaster at the end.

Have time off...

No one enjoys cooking every day. On your motivated days, cook double or triple quantities and stock the freezer. Then on days you can't face cooking, you don't have to. Too easy!

Don't be afraid of putting the kids to work - you're not being mean, you're teaching them life skills!



Some new vegies...

This book introduces a new range of Asian vegetables that extends your smuggling repertoire.

Most supermarkets have all vegetables available year-round. However, buying in season ensures tastier, cheaper produce. These symbols are a guide for the best time.

Summer ☀️ Autumn 🍂 Winter ❄️ Spring 🌸

Bean sprouts ☀️ ☀️ 🍂 ❄️

Eaten for the past 5000 years, bean sprouts are easily grown year-round. Their high water content means they are also light on health benefits, but they're fat free, low in kilojoules and add a great crunch to dishes. Use them within a day or two of buying as they're no good once mushy. Try rice paper rolls, page 38.



Water chestnuts ☀️ ☀️ 🍂 ❄️

A staple of Chinese cuisine, these vegies aren't actually nuts, but are grown floating in water. When buying them fresh they have a thick brown chestnut-coloured skin. Generally in Australia you'll be eating the canned ones, already peeled. They are high in potassium and retain their crunch when lightly cooked. Try Sarah's sang choy bao, page 70.

Asian greens 🌸

I'm lumping all of the leafy green vegies in together since they are often labelled interchangeably as bok choy, choy sum or tatsoi depending on your grocer. They are all high in vitamins A and C and can be used in stir-fries, soups and steamed dishes. Also try gai lan, although it is often too bitter for the kids to really love. Try red-cooked chicken, page 95.



Bamboo shoots 🌸

These are a bit of a wonder food, high in many vitamins including B6, zinc and fibre. Traditional Chinese medicine uses them to fight internal infections. They're only available fresh in the spring, which makes the canned ones a good option. Try stir-fried pork with rice noodles, page 44.



Snow peas & sugar snap peas 🌸 ☀️

Sweeter than their common pea cousins, but with many of the same nutritional assets, snow and sugar snap peas have edible pods, which bring a burst of colour and texture to many Asian dishes. Choose firm, bright green ones and keep in the fridge for 2-3 days. Try beef pho, page 43.



Beef & peanut rice paper rolls

Kids with nut allergies can skip the peanuts (use olive oil) and still have a delicious meal with the rest of the ingredients.

1 tbsp peanut oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 lb lean beef mince
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp minced ginger
1/2 cup low sodium, no sugar added, fish sauce
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tsp sugar
2 tsp fish sauce
White (or black) pepper

To serve:
10 rice paper rounds
Crushed roasted peanuts
Bean sprouts
Spring onions, cut into sticks
Cucumber, cut into sticks
Dried rice vermicelli (prepared according to packet directions, rinsed under cold water, drained)
Mint and coriander leaves, to taste (I like lots)
Sweet chilli sauce
Lime juice

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan over medium-high heat. (Cooking over a higher heat cooks off the liquid, keeping the mixture quite dry.)

Cook the onion for a couple of minutes, then add the mince, ginger and garlic. Toss through until the mince is broken up and as dry as you go. Add the soy sauce, fish sauce and sugar and stir for a couple of minutes.

Add the soy sauce, sugar, fish sauce and pepper. Cook, stirring, until the mince is thoroughly cooked.

Prepare the rice papers according to packet directions. Start by adding a few tablespoons of the meat mixture to the paper then add whichever ingredients you like, roll up and enjoy!

MAKES 10

Morning prep plan

1. Cook the filling. Transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate.
2. That night, reheat filling and prepare rolls as directed.



Rate it
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OPTIONAL DIPPING SAUCE Combine 1 tbsp water, 1 tbsp soy sauce and 1 tbsp hoisin sauce.

Pumpkin, corn & lentil soup

Red lentils are the holy grail of vegie-smuggling recipes. It took about 18 months to find a recipe that the kids loved. Enjoy!

1kg butternut pumpkin,
cubed
Olive oil
1/2 tsp Morton's
salt
1/2 cup red lentils, picked
over, rinsed
1 litre good-quality
chicken stock
420g can creamed corn
Baguette
Grated cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 220°C.

Line a baking tray with baking paper and top with the pumpkin in a single layer. Drizzle with oil and as much salt as your family. Toss to combine and bake for 15–20 minutes until the pumpkin is soft but without too much oil.

Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large pan over medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook for 6–8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for another minute.

Add the pumpkin, stock and lentils to the pan, stir and cover. Bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes until the lentils are tender.

Stir through the corn and black pepper. Remove from the heat and use a stick blender to blend until creamy.

Slice the baguette, scatter with cheddar and grill under a preheated grill on medium until it is melted and golden. Cut some slices into cubes and keep some whole.

Serve the soup in cute bowls, with both cheesy cubes hidden throughout and a large slice on top.

SERVES 2 ADULTS & 2 KIDS

Storage

Keep the soup in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 48 hours. Cook the cheesy bread slices as you reheat the soup in the microwave.



Rate it



Comments

MELT THE CHEESE on the bread under the grill.
Keep the underneath untoasted so the soup soaks in.

SAMPLE

Chicken & tarragon one-pot

Kids love the orange in this dish, which gives it a sweet flavour. Adults might like to squeeze over a good splash of lemon juice and sprinkle with parmesan and parsley.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 500g chicken thigh fillets, trimmed, cut into 2-3 even pieces
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled, chopped
- 1 large zucchini, chopped (peeled first if you're cooking for kids)
- 1 cup rissoni
- 1 cup white rice
- 2 x 10cm peelings of orange zest (use a vegetable peeler to do this)
- 1 tbsp chopped tarragon
- 1 cup frozen peas

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the chicken and brown for 2-3 minutes on each side to get golden patches. Remove and set aside. Reheat the pan over medium heat and cook the onion and carrot for 2 minutes then add the zucchini. Cook for another couple of minutes until the vegies are softening then add the garlic for another minute. Add the stock, orange zest and tarragon to the pan. Season with black pepper. Bring to the boil then return to a simmer. Add the chicken, rice and peas. Cook for 15 minutes until the rice is tender and the chicken is cooked through (about 8 minutes).

Remove and discard the orange zest before serving. Cut the chicken into pieces to suit your kids.

SERVES 2 ADULTS & 2 KIDS.

Freezing & defrosting

Portion individual servings into containers. Cool quickly and freeze. Keeps frozen for 1-2 months. Reheat in the microwave, stirring regularly, until piping hot throughout.



FOR THE BABIES Blitz up this entire dish and freeze it in ice cube trays - you'll have gourmet baby food ready to defrost any time.

Rate it
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Comments



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THIS is also delicious with crab. Replace the salmon with 140g packaged crab meat - available in most large supermarkets.

SAMPLE

Salmon smash

Using salmon might seem extravagant but in small quantities it's affordable. Besides, it's fun to indulge in the odd luxury.

- 4 potatoes
- 1 cup peeled and very finely diced pumpkin
- 6 spring onions, sliced
- 150g smoked salmon
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1 bunch of fresh herbs (try any combination of sage, dill and parsley)
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- Lemon wedges and green salad, to serve

Preheat oven to 220°C.

Cook each potato in the microwave in a microwave-proof dish on high for 4 minutes (or boil whole in a large saucepan for 10 minutes) until just cooked. Set aside to cool slightly.

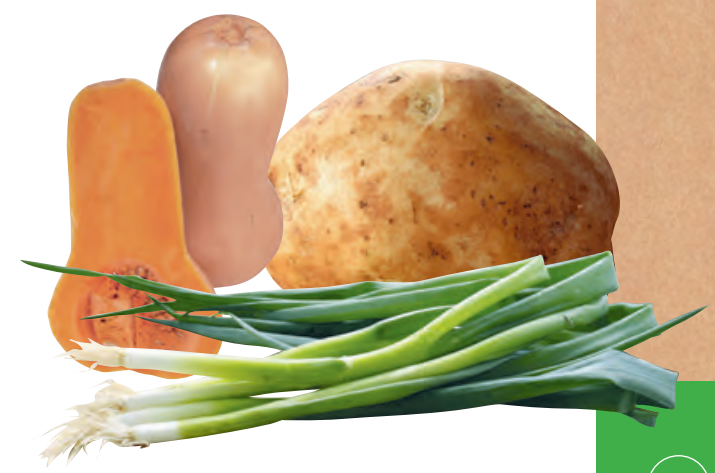
In a large mixing bowl combine the pumpkin, spring onions, salmon, lemon zest and juice, herbs and salt and black pepper to taste.

Remove the skin from the potatoes (they should pull away easily) and use a fork to squish them flat then add to the mixing bowl. Mix gently so that the flavours meld but large chunks of potato remain.

Put 3 tbsp of the olive oil in a medium baking dish and place in the oven for 5 minutes to heat.

Carefully remove the dish (beware, oil gives nasty burns) and place on a firm surface. Gently spoon the potato mixture into the oil, spreading out evenly. Drizzle the rest of the oil over the top and bake for 20 minutes until golden. Serve with lemon wedges and salad.

SERVES 2 ADULTS & 2 KIDS





This mixture also makes a fantastic loaf. Cook in a greased, lined 14 x 20cm loaf tin at 180°C for 50 minutes.

Sweet little carrot & ginger cakes

These cakes are so cute and SO DELICIOUS! The only problem is that I end up eating so many that the 'healthy' tag becomes a total sham!

- Canola oil cooking spray
 - 1¾ cups self-raising flour
 - ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 - 1 tsp ground ginger
 - ½ cup brown sugar
 - ½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts
 - ½ cup All-Bran (or similar)
 - 3 carrots, peeled, grated
 - ¾ cup milk (soy drink is fine)
 - ¼ cup grapeseed oil
 - 2 eggs
 - ¾ cup crushed tinned pineapple, drained
- Icing
- 250g low-fat cream cheese
 - ¾ cup icing sugar

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a 12-hole muffin tin with cooking spray.

Sift the flour, cinnamon and ginger into a large mixing bowl. Add the salt and sugar. Stir through the walnuts, and carrots.

In another bowl mix together the milk, oil, eggs and pineapple. Pour this into the dry ingredients. Mix until just combined then divide evenly between the muffin tin holes. Bake for 25–30 minutes then bake for 25–30 minutes until a skewer comes out clean and the tops are slightly springy to the touch.

Place the cakes on a wire rack to cool. Beat the cream cheese and icing sugar together in a small bowl (use hand-held electric beaters to make this easier). Use a knife to spread the icing over the cooled cakes.

MAKES 12



Rate it
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