

# EASY SLOW COOKING RECIPE BOOK




North Tyneside Council

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# SLOW COOKING IS AN EASY, TIME SAVING, NUTRITIOUS AND COST-EFFECTIVE WAY TO COOK

**There are lots of recipes, both sweet and savoury, that can be made using a slow cooker.**

It's a particularly good way of cooking cheaper cuts of meat as it helps to tenderise them. Slow cooking preserves nutrients that are sometimes lost when cooking via other methods and also uses less electricity than an oven!

When cooking, always remember to follow good food hygiene practices, check that ingredients are in date, they have been stored correctly and that any young people are supervised when in the kitchen helping out.

It's a good idea to prepare your ingredients in advance if possible. If you're using meat, check the recipe as sometimes it needs to be browned or fried before being added to the slow cooker.



# HEALTHY EATING

Everyone should ensure that their diet includes a range of food groups and consists of a little bit of everything and not too much of anything.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of each food group we should aim to have in our daily diet.

Slow cooking is an easy way to include a range of food groups in our meals and the Eatwell Guide shows how much of what we eat overall should come from each different food group to achieve a healthy, balanced diet.

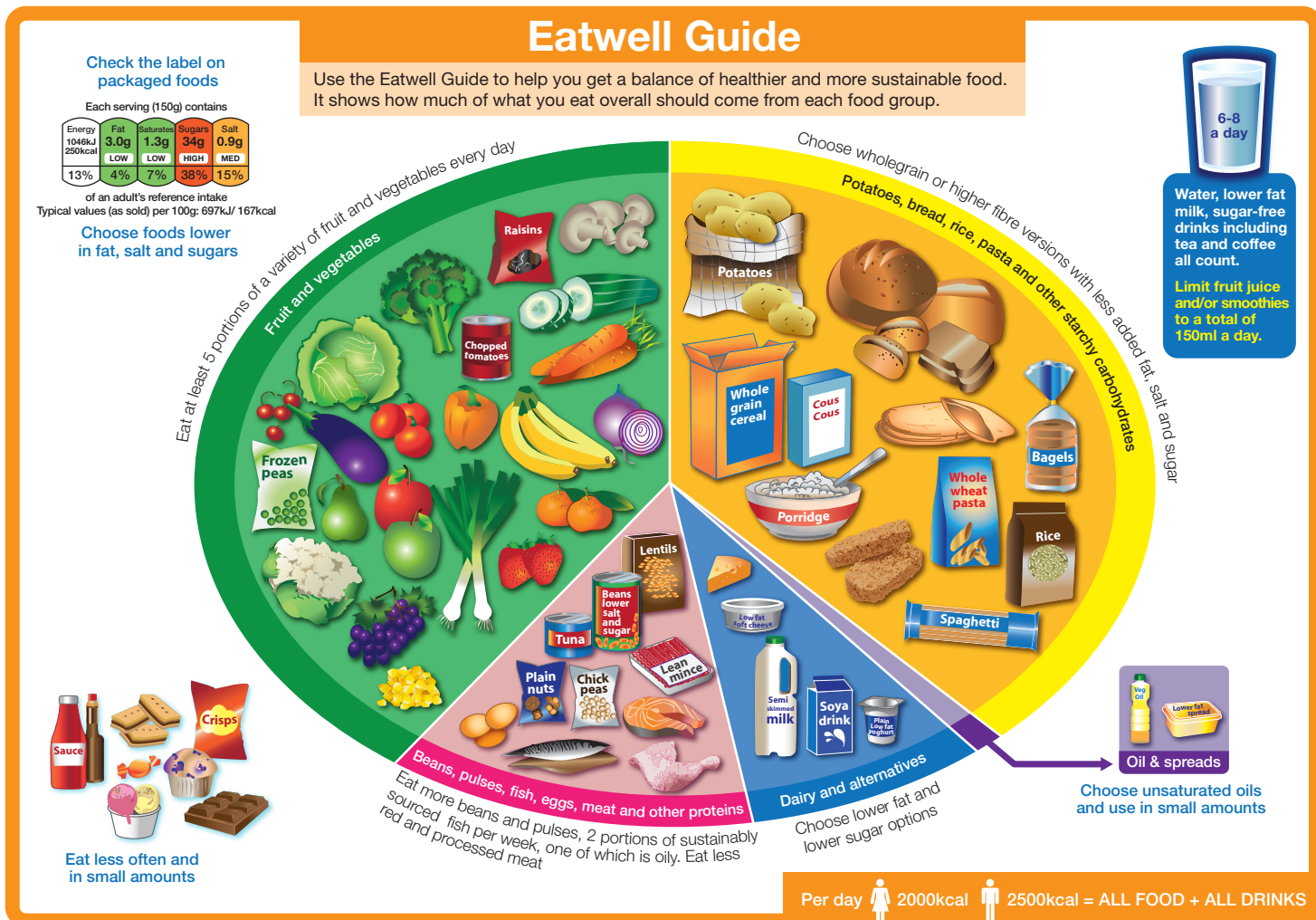
You don't need to achieve this balance with every meal but try to get the balance right over a day or a week.

The Eatwell Guide divides the foods and drinks we consume into 5 main groups:

- fruit and vegetables
- potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
- dairy and alternatives
- oils and spreads

The guidance from the Eatwell Guide applies to most of us, whether we're a healthy weight or overweight, whether we eat meat or are vegetarian, and no matter what our ethnic origin.

Anyone with special dietary requirements or medical needs might want to check with a registered dietitian or nutritionist on how to adapt the Eatwell Guide to meet their individual needs.



# TOP TIPS:

## Batch cooking:

Batch cooking is a great way to stock your freezer with healthy, portion-controlled meals.

It's a cheaper way of buying and storing food and a good alternative to buying pre-prepared ready meals which are often expensive, high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.

Batch cooking means you can be more organised, for example you can take meals out of the freezer each morning to defrost and heat accordingly.

Family life is busy and it's too easy to reach for convenient food options if meals are not planned and prepared, but batch cooking can be a fun and an engaging part of your routine - get the kids involved in helping chop vegetables!

If you want to batch cook, allow time to buy, prepare and cook your meals and make sure you have enough freezer space and containers for storage! Try buying fresh produce from local suppliers or markets to get low-cost fruit and vegetables.

Batch cooking can also help you stay in control if you are watching your weight or keeping to a healthy balanced diet.

## Freezing portions:

It's best to avoid using single-use plastics and invest in some airtight containers which will withstand repeated freezing.

To ensure food stays safe, cool cooked dishes quickly before freezing. Freezing hot dishes will increase the temperature of the freezer and may cause other foods to start defrosting.

When defrosting, don't defrost at room temperature, always defrost in the fridge and check everything is fully defrosted. Partially defrosted food may not cook evenly when you re-heat it and bacteria could survive.

## Seven tips for eating well:

1. Base your meals on starchy foods such as wholemeal bread, brown rice/pasta, couscous or potatoes
2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables; at least five portions per day
3. Eat more fish – two portions per week including one oily fish
4. Cut down on saturated fat and sugar
5. Eat less salt – choose reduced/low salt where possible
6. Keep hydrated – six to eight glasses of water per day
7. Don't skip breakfast!



## LENTIL SOUP

Serves: 6

Cooking time: 3-4 hours

### Ingredients:

- 325g red lentils
- 1500ml water (boiled)
- 3 carrots (grated)
- ½ teaspoon tomato puree
- 2 onions (diced)
- 1 leek (chopped)
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Rinse the lentils and place them in a pan with all of the vegetables and fry gently for a few minutes
- Transfer all of the contents into the slow cooker
- Add the stock cube and boiling water
- Add tomato puree and black pepper
- Cook on medium for 3-4 hours
- Either blend smooth, or serve as it is for a chunkier texture
- Serve with some crusty bread

## ROASTED RED PEPPER AND CHERRY TOMATO SOUP

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 4-6 hours

### Ingredients:

- 2 red peppers (halved and deseeded)
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 10-15 cherry tomatoes
- 1 red onion (diced)
- 2 cloves garlic (crushed)
- 2-3 sundried tomatoes/or paste
- 500ml vegetable stock
- Salt and black pepper
- Optional: natural yoghurt (to serve)

### Method:

- Place the peppers and cherry tomatoes in the oven and roast until soft (not charred)
- In a pan, add the oil and fry the onions and garlic for a few minutes
- Transfer the onions, garlic, peppers and tomatoes to the slow cooker
- Add in the vegetable stock and sundried tomatoes
- Season with salt and pepper
- Cook on low for 4-6 hours or until the vegetables are soft
- Blend to your preferred consistency
- Serve with some natural yogurt and your choice of bread

## CARROT AND CORIANDER SOUP

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking time:** 3-4 hours

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 2 onions (diced)
- 2 leeks (chopped)
- 6 large carrots (chopped)
- 500ml vegetable stock
- 140ml semi-skimmed milk
- 3 teaspoons dried coriander
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat
- Add the onion and fry gently until soft, add the leek and place a lid on the pan
- Reduce the heat and cook for 2-3 minutes or until the leek is soft
- Transfer the onions and leeks to the slow cooker
- Add the carrots, coriander and vegetable stock to the slow cooker
- Cook on medium for 3-4 hours or until all of the vegetables are soft
- Add in the milk and blend until smooth
- Season with black pepper
- Serve with crusty bread

## SWEET POTATO, LENTIL AND CURRY SOUP

**Serves:** 4-6

**Cooking time:** 3-4 hours

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 large brown onion (diced)
- 1kg sweet potato - fresh or frozen (cubed)
- 200g red lentils
- 1-2 teaspoons curry powder
- 1 vegetable stock cube dissolved in 1 litre of boiling water
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat and add the onion, cook for a few minutes until soft
- Add the curry powder, stirring until aromatic
- Add the sweet potato and lentils to the curry mixture and stir to combine
- Transfer the curry mixture into the slow cooker and pour in the stock
- Cook on a medium heat for 3-4 hours until the vegetables are soft
- Blend until smooth (add more stock if your soup is too thick)
- Season with pepper
- Serve with warm crusty bread



## SLOW COOKED BREAD

**Cooking time:** 2–2.5 hours

### Ingredients:

- 500g strong wholemeal flour or strong white flour (or a mix), plus extra for dusting
- 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
- 1g fine sea salt

### Method:

- Mix the flour, yeast and salt in a large bowl and make a well in the middle
- Measure 350ml warm water and pour most of it into the well and mix together with your fingers or a wooden spoon until combined into a slightly wet, workable dough (add a splash of water if needed)
- Tip the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead for at least 10 minutes until smooth and elastic
- Shape the dough into a large tight ball and place on a square of greaseproof paper
- Lift the greaseproof paper (with the dough on it) into the slow cooker
- Cover with the lid and cook on high for 2 hours
- Lift the bread out carefully using the greaseproof paper, the bottom should be crusty and the top should be springy (not soft)
- If you feel it's not ready, return to the slow cooker for 5 minutes and test again (it could take up to 2 hours 30 minutes)
- It's worth noting that the bread won't get a significant crust or golden colour from the slow cooker, once cooked, you can leave it to cool, or put it in the oven at 220C fan or gas mark 9 for 5 to 10 minutes to get some colour!



## TOMATO SAUCE FOR PASTA

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking time:** 4 hours

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1 onion (diced)
- 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- 2 tins of 400g chopped tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 red pepper (chopped)
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
- Splash of fresh orange juice
- Black pepper
- Optional: chilli flakes

### Method:

- In a pan, gently heat the oil and fry the onions, garlic, red pepper and balsamic vinegar
- Transfer the mixture to the slow cooker
- Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato puree, orange juice, black pepper and chilli flakes (if using)
- Cook on low for 4 hours or until all the vegetables are soft
- Blend to a smooth consistency or leave chunky depending on your preference
- Serve with cooked brown or white pasta





## SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE

**Serves: 6**

**Cooking time: 6–8 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 300g lean minced beef
- 2 onions (diced)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 2 celery sticks (chopped)
- 2 garlic cloves (crushed)
- 3 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 tablespoon dried mixed herbs
- 2 x tins of 400g chopped tomatoes
- Cooked spaghetti (to serve)
- Optional: 200g mushrooms (chopped)
- Optional: tin of green/brown lentils
- Optional: grated cheese

### Method:

- Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the mince with the crushed garlic until brown; remove any excess fat and add the mince to the slow cooker
- Add the onions, carrots, celery, chopped tomatoes, tomato puree and herbs (plus mushrooms and lentils if using)
- Mix well and season with black pepper
- Cover with the lid and cook on low for 6–8 hours, then uncover, turn to high and cook for another hour until the sauce is thick
- Serve with cooked spaghetti and sprinkle with grated cheese (optional)

## MACARONI CHEESE

**Serves: 4**

**Cooking time:  
1.5 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 350g dry pasta
- 600ml semi skimmed milk
- 50g reduced fat spread
- 50g reduced fat or lighter soft cheese
- 70g mature cheddar (grated)
- Black pepper
- Green/mixed salad to serve

### Method:

- Pour boiling water over the pasta and drain (you don't need to cook this in a pan)
- Put all of the ingredients into the slow cooker (keeping back 10g of grated cheese) and stir well
- Cover and cook on low for 1 hour
- Stir again then put the lid back on and cook for a further 30 minutes until the pasta is cooked and the sauce has reduced enough to coat the pasta
- Leave the lid off and reduce for the last 10 minutes if you need to, or add a splash more milk (this will depend on the size of your slow cooker)
- Sprinkle with 10g of grated cheese
- Serve with a green or mixed salad



## ONE-POT CHICKEN STEW

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking time:** 6-8 hours

### Ingredients:

- 2 chicken breasts (diced)
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 1 onion (diced)
- 4 medium potatoes (peeled and cut into chunks)
- 1 chicken stock cube
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 1 heaped dessert spoon cornflour
- Black pepper

### Method:

- In a pan cook the chicken pieces in oil over a medium heat until brown
- Add the onion and cook for a few more minutes
- Add in the herbs, stock cube and tomato puree and stir
- Transfer the chicken mixture into the slow cooker
- Add in the potatoes and carrots and give it a good mix
- Fill the slow cooker with boiling water until all of the ingredients are covered
- Mix the cornflour with a small amount of water and add this to the mixture to thicken
- Cook on low for 6-8 hours
- Season with black pepper and serve

## CHICKEN CURRY

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking time:** 6 hours

### Ingredients:

- 1 large onion (diced)
- 2 chicken breasts (diced)
- 3 tablespoons mild curry paste
- 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 vegetable stock cube
- 1 tablespoon ginger (finely chopped)
- 1 yellow pepper (deseeded and chopped)
- White or brown rice (boiled, to serve)
- Optional: 30g fresh coriander leaves (chopped)

### Method:

- Put the onion, curry paste, chopped tomatoes, stock cube, ginger and yellow pepper into the slow cooker with a third of a tin of water and stir well
- Add the chicken to the slow cooker and push it under all of the ingredients so that it's completely covered
- Put the lid on and chill in the fridge overnight (this allows the chicken to absorb the flavours)
- The next day, cook on low for 6 hours until the chicken and vegetables are tender
- Stir in the chopped coriander leaves (if using) just before serving
- Serve with brown or white rice

## CHICKEN CASSEROLE

**Serves: 4**

**Cooking time: 3-4 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 2 chicken legs
- 2 chicken thighs
- 1 onion (diced)
- 1 leek (chopped)
- 2 celery sticks (chopped)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 200g mushrooms
- 450ml chicken stock
- 1 garlic clove (crushed)
- 200g new potatoes
- Gravy, to thicken sauce
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Place all the ingredients, except the gravy, in the slow cooker
- Cover with the lid and cook on medium for 3-4 hours or on high for 2-3 hours
- Mix well and add in the gravy to thicken your sauce, cook for an additional 30 minutes uncovered

*Recipe provided by Barry's Eggs and Veg. The ingredients for this recipe should cost approximately £6.50. Barry's Eggs and Veg sells ingredients for this recipe as a pack which is available to order directly to your door.*

## SAUSAGE CASSEROLE

**Serves: 4**

**Cooking time: 8 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 2 red or brown onions (diced)
- 1 celery stick (chopped)
- 4 carrots (chopped)
- 8 low fat sausages (halved)
- 1 sweet potato (peeled and cubed)
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon tomato puree
- 1 beef stock cube / pot
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Fry the onion, celery and carrot in the oil over a low heat until they soften and then transfer to the slow cooker
- Using the same frying pan, brown the sausages, drain any excess fat and add to the slow cooker
- Add the sweet potato and chopped tomatoes
- Put the tomato puree in the frying pan and add 250ml boiling water, stir the mixture to pick up the flavours and pour into the slow cooker
- Add in the stock cube and pepper
- Cover with the lid and cook on low for 8 hours



## BEEF STEW

**Serves: 4**

**Cooking time: 5 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon oil
- 400-500g beef (diced)
- 1 onion (diced)
- 3 carrots (chopped)
- 2 celery sticks (chopped)
- 2 medium potatoes (peeled and cubed)
- Half a turnip
- 450ml beef stock
- Gravy, to thicken sauce
- Black pepper

### Method:

- Place the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and cook the beef until sealed
- Drain any excess fat and place in the slow cooker
- Add all the remaining ingredients, except the gravy
- Cover with the lid and cook on high for 5 hours, stirring every hour
- Mix well and add in the gravy to thicken your sauce, cook for an additional 30 minutes uncovered

*Recipe provided by Barry's Eggs and Veg. The ingredients for this recipe should cost approximately £8. Barry's Eggs and Veg sells ingredients for this recipe as a pack which is available to order directly to your door.*

# VEGETABLE AND CHICKPEA CURRY

**Serves:** 4

**Cooking time:** 6–8 hours

## Ingredients:

- 1 garlic clove (crushed)
- 2–3 teaspoons curry powder
- 50g red lentils (rinsed in cold water)
- 2 sweet potatoes (peeled and cubed)
- 2 onions (diced)
- Half a small cauliflower (chopped into florets)
- Half a small broccoli (chopped into florets)
- 2 carrots (chopped)
- 1 teaspoon oil
- 420ml vegetable stock
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin chickpeas (drained)
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- White or brown rice (boiled, to serve)

## Method:

- In a pan, fry the onion and garlic in the oil until soft, add the curry powder and cook until aromatic
- Transfer the mixture to the slow cooker and add the sweet potato, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, chickpeas, chopped tomatoes and tomato puree
- Pour the stock over the top and cook on low for 6–8 hours
- Serve with boiled brown or white rice



## CHEESE SCONES

**Makes: 12**

**Cooking time: 1.5 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 225g white or wholemeal self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 45g margarine
- 50ml skimmed milk
- 45g grated mature cheese, plus extra for topping
- 1 egg

### Method:

- Sieve the flour and baking powder into a bowl and rub in the margarine using your fingertips
- Stir in the grated cheese
- Whisk the egg and milk together and mix into the dry ingredients
- Mix to form a soft dough, use a splash more milk if necessary
- With a rolling pin or your hands, press the dough out onto a floured surface
- Using a small cookie cutter, press out 12 scones from the dough
- Brush the top of the scones with a little milk or beaten egg and sprinkle the extra cheese on top
- Place the scones in the slow cooker on some baking paper with a tea towel under the lid
- Cook on high for 1 hour 30 minutes

## FRUIT SCONES

**Makes: 12**

**Cooking time: 1.5 hours**

### Ingredients:

- 225g white or wholemeal self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 45g margarine
- 50ml skimmed milk
- 2 tablespoons dried fruit
- 1 egg

### Method:

- Sieve the flour and baking powder into a bowl and rub in the margarine using your fingertips
- Stir in the dried fruit
- Whisk the egg and milk together and mix into the dry ingredients
- Mix to form a soft dough, use a splash more milk if necessary
- With a rolling pin or your hands, press the dough out onto a floured surface
- Using a small cookie cutter, press out 12 scones from the dough
- Brush the top of the scones with a little milk or beaten egg
- Place the scones in the slow cooker on some baking paper with a tea towel under the lid
- Cook on high for 1 hour 30 minutes

## RICE PUDDING WITH BERRIES

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 3-4 hours

### Ingredients:

- 15g margarine
- 100g pudding rice
- 750ml semi skimmed milk
- 25g caster sugar (preferably golden)
- Frozen or fresh berries (to serve)
- Optional: ground nutmeg

### Method:

- Grease the inside of the slow cooker with margarine
- Put the pudding rice, milk and sugar into the slow cooker and stir well
- If using, stir in as much nutmeg as you'd like
- Cover with the lid and cook on medium for 3-4 hours, or until the rice is tender and creamy
- Serve with frozen (defrosted) or fresh berries

## FRUIT CRUMBLE

Serves: 4

Cooking time: 3-3.5 hours

### Ingredients:

- 150g self-raising flour
- 50g porridge oats
- 75g margarine
- 50g caster sugar
- 450g tinned fruit (in own juice, drained) or frozen berries
- Optional: 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

### Method:

- Place the flour and oats in a bowl and rub in the margarine until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs
- Stir the sugar into the crumb mixture
- Place your fruit of choice in the bottom of the slow cooker
- Sprinkle the crumb mixture over the top of the fruit
- If using, sprinkle the cinnamon on top of the crumble
- Place the lid on cooker and cook on low for 3-3.5 hours





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