

GoodFood

The Family Meal Planner

Thrifty recipes and 7-day meal plans to help you save money and time

batch meals

instant dinners

weekday suppers

leftover ideas

budget family dinners

freezer and storecupboard meals

weekend feasts



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GoodFood

The Family Meal Planner

Thrifty recipes and 7-day meal plans
to help you save money and time


Edited by Helen Barker-Benfield

BBC
BOOKS



Notes on the recipes

- Eggs are large in the UK and Australia and extra large in the US unless stated otherwise.
- Milk is semi-skimmed unless stated otherwise.
- Wash fresh produce before preparation.
- Recipes contain nutritional analyses for 'sugar', which means the total sugar content including all natural sugars in the ingredients, unless stated otherwise.

 Marks recipes that can be frozen.

Good Food are concerned about sustainable sourcing and animal welfare so, where possible, we use organic ingredients, humanely reared meats, free-range chickens and eggs and unrefined sugar.

Oven temperatures

Gas	°C	Fan °C	°F	Oven temp.
¼	110	90	225	Very cool
½	120	100	250	Very cool
1	140	120	275	Cool or slow
2	150	130	300	Cool or slow
3	160	140	325	Warm
4	180	160	350	Moderate
5	190	170	375	Moderately hot
6	200	180	400	Fairly hot
7	220	200	425	Hot
8	230	210	450	Very hot
9	240	220	475	Very hot

Approximate weight conversions

- All the recipes in this book list both metric and imperial measurements. Conversions are approximate. Follow one set of measurements only; do not mix the two.
- Cup measurements used by cooks in Australia and the US have not been listed here because they vary from ingredient to ingredient. Kitchen scales should be used to measure dry/solid ingredients.

Spoon measures

Spoon measurements are level unless otherwise specified.

- 1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5ml
- 1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 15ml
- 1 Australian tablespoon = 20ml

(cooks in Australia should measure 4 teaspoons where 1 tablespoon is specified in a recipe)

Approximate liquid conversions

metric	imperial	AUS	US
50ml	2fl oz	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
125ml	4fl oz	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
175ml	6fl oz	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
225ml	8fl oz	1 cup	1 cup
300ml	10fl oz/ $\frac{1}{2}$ pint	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
450ml	16fl oz	2 cups	2 cups/1 pint
600ml	20fl oz/1 pint	1 pint	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups
1 litre	35fl oz/1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints	1 quart

How to use this book

My grandmother had a large family to feed so, by necessity, she had to be a canny shopper. And, when her children grew up and took their children to visit, she could always make a roast stretch for a few more mouths. Even now, there seems to be an endless supply of rock cakes for anyone who drops by.

Once again, our priority is to save time, money and waste, but most of us have lost (or not been taught) the right culinary skills. Being a frugal cook doesn't mean you can't feed your family well or serve up good food for friends; it means planning meals properly, making a shopping list and learning to make meals stretch further or to make the most of leftovers.

For two decades, *Good Food* magazine has created recipes to show that home cooking is simple; that family meals on busy weeknights or more relaxed dinners for friends can be equally effortless; that you can cook delicious, balanced meals that are economical too.

Good Food: The Family Meal Planner is a collection of over 200 of *Good Food's* most thrifty recipes. It's divided into five recipe chapters, each of which focuses on a different method of thrifty cooking.

Firstly, there are 'batch meals' that make two meals in one go. All these recipes feature freezing and reheating instructions so that you can make double the quantity, then freeze half to defrost and reheat later in the week for an 'instant dinner'. This way you'll save time as well as money – and avoid expensive, less healthy ready meals.

Next, there is a whole chapter devoted to the meals that many of us struggle with the most – finding something interesting and speedy to cook in the week. Along with each 'weekday supper' there's also a 'leftover idea' that uses either the remaining raw ingredients or the cooked surplus from the weekday supper as the base for a second meal.

In the third chapter, there are 'budget family dinners' that focus on simple recipes that use inexpensive ingredients but don't compromise on flavour. Consider this when you go shopping and don't get swayed

by impulse buys, but have one eye firmly fixed on the bargains so that you know a good deal when you see one.

Some convenience foods make life easier – noodles in the cupboard will ensure you can whip up a meal in minutes, canned pulses are a cheap and healthy way to bulk out soups. [Chapter 4](#) is full of ideas that make use of essential freezer and storecupboard ingredients, which last longer so can be bought in advance and kept on stand-by, ready to create a meal at a moment's notice. They are also often cheaper to buy than fresh.

Finally, there is a more indulgent chapter of 'weekend feasts' that includes plenty of three-course suggestions to try when you have a little more time to spend in the kitchen. These recipes are all great for entertaining. There are also some simple baking recipes and instructions for homemade stocks, which, if you have time to prepare them, are great thrifty cooking techniques.

Each chapter can be dipped into whenever you need inspiration as all the ideas work as stand alone recipes, but, if you use the meal planners in [chapter 6](#), you can also sort out your shopping lists in advance and enjoy a thrifty recipe every night of the week.

Every recipe has been tested in the *Good Food* Test Kitchen, so that it will work first time for you and, where possible, we use full pots or packs of shop-bought items so you won't be left with half a pack or jar after making a recipe.

We hope this cookbook will inspire and help you to make the most of your money and time, and reduce your waste, but, most of all, we hope that we've chosen a collection of recipes that you'll enjoy cooking, and that you and your family and friends will love eating.

Helen Barker-Benfield
Good Food magazine



Batch meals and instant dinners

With a well-stocked freezer, you should never be stuck for something to eat. The dishes in this chapter require a little longer in the kitchen than many of the recipes in this book, so we suggest you prepare them at the weekend when you've got more time. Once you've made your batch meals and frozen half, however, what you're left with are ready meals at their best – healthy, cheap and homemade, so you'll know exactly what's in each preservative-free bite.

Batch cooking is clever cooking. There is great satisfaction in knowing that, after an hour or so in the kitchen, you can create enough food for at least two meals. You can save a significant amount of money by cooking in bulk too. Shops often offer better deals on larger packs, making them more economical. The problem is knowing how to use it all before it goes off – batch cooking is one answer.

Every recipe in this chapter serves at least four, but can be easily doubled or halved to accommodate the size of your family. To batch-cook these meals, double the quantities of all the ingredients then follow the green instructions for the ‘instant dinner’. Enjoy half the dish straight away and keep the leftovers in the freezer to defrost and reheat later in the week or month when you’re short on time – whenever you need an instant dinner. Most of the instant dinners in this chapter can be reheated or cooked straight from frozen, but if you plan a little in advance, you can cut the cooking time, and save energy, by taking the dish from the freezer the night before and allowing it to defrost in the fridge. Then all you need to do is follow the quick reheating instructions and prepare some rice or veg to serve.

Freezing know-how

- Cooked meat and fish won’t last as well as raw foods in the freezer, so try not to keep them longer than a month.
- Wrap food carefully or put it in sealed freezer-proof containers.
- Make sure you use a freezer-proof and ovenproof dish if you want to reheat cooked food from frozen.
- Remember to write the name of the dish on the container and date it – it’s easy to forget how long something has been lurking behind the fish fingers if it’s not labelled!
- An efficient freezer is a full one, as the air doesn’t need to circulate as much, keeping running costs lower. If you’ve got lots of free space,

you can fill freezer bags with stock (see [chapter 5](#) for some homemade stock recipes) and stuff them into the holes, or stock up on essentials such as frozen peas and bread.

■ Cool cooked food as quickly as possible to avoid bacteria breeding. Don't put cooked food into the fridge if it's still warm.

Cooking from frozen

Some dishes, and many in this chapter, can be cooked straight from frozen. As a quick guide, foods that can be cooked from frozen include soups, stews, braises, casseroles and dishes like bolognese sauce, bakes, gratins and potato-topped pies, as well as thin fish fillets, small fish, sausages and burgers, and seafood too, if added at the end of a hot dish. Raw poultry and large joints of meat should never be cooked from frozen.

hilli con carne
piced parsnip shepherd's pies
eggie shepherd's pie with sweet potato mash
an-fried chicken in mushroom sauce
ive-a-day tagine
picy root and lentil casserole
piced lamb with chickpeas
egetarian lasagne
oast vegetable cassoulet
sian pork and aubergine hotpot
lulti mince
paghetti bolognese
östi bolognese bake
utternut squash casserole
ot beef stew with beans and peppers
hicken casserole with red wine, ham and peppers
ighland beef with pickled walnuts and pastry puffs
ight chicken curry
oulash in a dash
leatloaf
heesy leek and potato pie
ish pie
alian-style beef
/arming fish stew
linty pea and potato soup
omato soup
hunky cheddar and celeriac soup
moked haddock chowder

Chilli con carne ❄️

This classic spicy dish is easy to make and ideal to have in the freezer for emergencies.

erves 4 ■ prep 25 mins ■ cook 35 mins, plus standing

large onion, chopped
red pepper, deseeded and chopped
tbsp sunflower oil
garlic cloves, chopped
heaped tsp hot chilli powder (or 1 level tbsp if you have mild)
tsp paprika
tsp ground cumin
00g/1lb 2oz minced beef
beef stock cube
00ml/½ pint hot water
00g can chopped tomatoes
tsp dried marjoram
tsp sugar ([see tip](#))
tbsp tomato purée
10g can red kidney beans

1 Put a deep frying pan on the hob over a medium heat. Add the oil and leave for 1–2 mins until hot. Add the onions and cook, stirring fairly frequently, for about 5 mins, or until the onions are soft and slightly translucent. Tip in the red pepper, garlic, chilli, paprika and cumin. Give it a good stir, then leave it to cook for another 5 mins, stirring occasionally.

2 Turn up the heat, add the meat to the pan and break it up with a spoon or spatula. Keep stirring and prodding for at least 5 mins until all the mince is in uniform mince-sized lumps and there are no more pink bits. Make sure you keep the heat hot enough for the meat to fry and

become brown rather than just stew. If you are doubling the recipe, you will need to fry the meat in batches.

3 Crumble the stock cube into the hot water. Pour this into the pan with the mince mixture. Add the chopped tomatoes. Tip in the marjoram and the sugar, if using, and season with salt and pepper. Squirt in the tomato purée and stir the sauce well.

4 Bring the whole thing to the boil, give it a good stir, cover and turn down the heat until it is gently bubbling then leave for 20 mins. Stir occasionally to make sure the sauce doesn't catch on the bottom of the pan or isn't drying out. If it is, add a couple of tablespoons of water and make sure that the heat really is low enough. After simmering gently, the mince mixture should look thick, moist and juicy.

5 Drain and rinse the beans in a sieve and stir them into the chilli pot. Bring to the boil again, and gently bubble without the lid for another 10 mins, adding a little more water if it looks too dry. Taste a bit of the chilli and season to taste. Replace the lid, turn off the heat and leave your chilli to stand for 10 mins before serving with soured cream and boiled rice.

Per serving: 387 kcalories, protein 36g, carbohydrate 25g, fat 17g, saturated fat 6g, fibre 6g, added sugar 1g, salt 2.32g

Instant dinner

Make double, cool half and freeze in a freezer-proof container. To cook the chilli from frozen, gently reheat it on the hob, until it has completely defrosted and has bubbled away for at least 20 mins.

TIP Add a little sugar when using canned tomatoes to balance the acidity, or make your chilli a little special by omitting the sugar and using plain chocolate – a Mexican idea that will give the chilli a smooth, rounded flavour. Stir in a small piece (about the size of your thumbnail) when you add the beans.

Spiced parsnip shepherd's pies ❄️

These individual pies are ideal for storing in the freezer for those nights when you need a solo supper.

Serves 6 ■ prep 30 mins ■ cook 1 hour

For the meat sauce

2 tbsp sunflower oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 small knob root ginger, peeled and grated
2 tbsp medium curry powder
500g/1lb 2oz minced lamb
400g can chopped tomatoes
200g/4oz frozen peas

For the topping

500g/1lb 5oz parsnips, peeled and chopped into large chunks
1 large potato, peeled and chopped into large chunks
1 green chilli, deseeded and chopped
1 large bunch fresh coriander leaves, chopped
1 tsp ground turmeric
Juice 1 lemon
100g/2oz butter

1 For the sauce, heat the oil in a pan and add the onion. Cook until soft, add the garlic, ginger and curry powder, then cook until the spices release their aroma. Turn up the heat, add the mince and fry until browned, then add the tomatoes and simmer for 20 mins until thickened. A few mins before the end, add the peas.

2 Meanwhile, tip the parsnips and potatoes for the topping into a pan of cold water, bring to the boil, then cook for 10 mins. Drain, season and mash with the rest of the topping ingredients.

3 Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. To assemble the pies, place some meat sauce in six individual pie dishes (or one large dish) and top with mash. Ruffle up the tops with a fork, then bake for 20 mins until golden and bubbling.

Per serving: 424 kcalories, protein 22g, carbohydrate 27g, fat 26g, saturated fat 11g, fibre 8g, sugar 10g, salt 0.53g

Instant dinner

Make double and freeze half the pies unbaked but assembled. Cook as above, but increase the cooking time by 20 mins, until the pies are piping hot throughout and bubbling.

TIP Clever shopping means thinking about the seasonality of the vegetables. Root vegetables are plentiful and cheaper in the winter, but peppers can cost a fortune then, so choose the dishes you want to cook when prices are lowest.



Spiced parsnip shepherd's pies

Veggie shepherd's pie with sweet potato mash ❄️

The secret to this pie's filling is to use carrots that are big and old (in age rather than past their best!), so they don't lose their texture when cooked.

erves 4 ■ prep 25 mins ■ cook 20 mins

2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 large carrots (500g/1lb 2oz in total), cut into sugar-cube size pieces
2 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
200ml/8fl oz red wine
100g can chopped tomatoes
2 vegetable stock cubes
100g can green lentils
250g/2lb 2oz sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
50g/1oz butter
50g/3oz mature vegetarian cheddar, grated

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan, then fry the onion until golden. Add the carrots and all but a sprinkling of the thyme. Pour in the wine, 150ml of water and the tomatoes, then sprinkle in the stock cubes and simmer for 10 mins. Tip in the can of lentils, including their juice, then cover and simmer for another 10 mins until the carrots still have a bit of bite and the lentils are pulpy.

2 Meanwhile, boil the sweet potatoes for 15 mins until tender, drain well, then mash with the butter and season to taste. Pile the lentil mixture into a pie dish, spoon the mash on top, then sprinkle over the cheese and remaining thyme.

3 Heat oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5. Cook for 20 mins if cooking straight away, or for 40 mins from chilled, until golden and hot all the

way through.

Per serving: 531 kcalories, protein 16g, carbohydrate 79g, fat 17g, saturated fat 8g, fibre 12g, sugar 31g, salt 3.95g

 **Instant dinner**

Make double and freeze half uncooked but assembled, then defrost and bake as above. If cooking from frozen, heat oven to 160C/fan 140C/gas 3 for 20 mins, then turn up the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5 for the rest of the cooking time.



Veggie shepherd's pie with sweet potato mash

Pan-fried chicken in mushroom sauce ❄️

This is such an aromatic and attractive dish that you should serve it straight from the casserole with the lid on for maximum impact.

erves 6 ■ prep 30 mins ■ cook 1-1¼ hours

tbsp sunflower oil

large chicken legs, skin on, halved at the joint to make 6 thighs and 6 drumsticks

00ml/1¼ pints chicken stock (or water)

0g/2oz butter

onion, finely chopped

00g/14oz mixed wild mushrooms or chestnut mushrooms

00ml/½ pint dry white wine

00ml/½ pint double cream

1 Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Fry the thighs for 8–10 mins, skin-side only, until golden brown, then transfer to a flameproof casserole dish. Fry the drumsticks for about 5 mins each side and add them to the thighs.

2 Pour the stock over the chicken. There should be enough stock just to cover the chicken, if not add a little water. Bring the stock to the boil and cover, leaving the lid slightly off. Cook at just below simmering point for 30–35 mins until the chicken is cooked.

3 While the chicken is simmering, drain the oil from the pan. Heat the butter in the pan and add the onion. Sweat for 5 mins until soft but not coloured. Turn up the heat, add the mushrooms, then fry for 3 mins until they soften and start to smell wonderful. Pour over the white wine, raise the heat to maximum and boil rapidly for 6–8 mins until reduced by two-thirds.

4 Strain the stock into a pan with the onion, mushrooms and white wine, bring back to the boil and reduce again by two-thirds until it is thick and syrupy. Pour in the double cream, bring to the boil, season if you want, then pour the sauce over the chicken. Heat the chicken through in the sauce for 2–3 mins then turn off the heat and leave for a few mins before serving.

Per serving: 600 kcalories, protein 50g, carbohydrate 3g, fat 40g, saturated fat 22g, fibre 1g, added sugar none, salt 0.8g

Instant dinner

Make double, cool half and freeze after step 3 until ready to use. Defrost thoroughly and then follow the recipe from step 4. Simmer the chicken in the sauce for 20 mins until it is piping hot throughout and the sauce is bubbling.



Pan-fried chicken in mushroom sauce