



Mellors

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

TO EAT WELL

TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

## FAMILY RECIPE & ACTIVITY PACK

SUMMER 2021

Food plays a central part in our lives. We have to eat it to survive and it's important that we get the right amounts to stay healthy. We all know that eating the wrong types of foods can affect our health now and in the future. But do we think enough about how the food we eat is affecting the environment?

There are extremes, globally, from an obesity epidemic and excessive food waste to malnourished communities when crops are used to produce biofuels to feed cars instead of people. The global food system is unbalanced.

We have all changed many of our daily practices at home and at work to help reduce our negative impact on the environment – reducing our use of paper at work, switching from plastic to reusable bags for life when shopping and using more energy efficient lightbulbs in the home. But, what can we change in our diets to help the environment as well as our health?

This is a really important topic and something we are hearing more and more about in the news so we want to help families to understand a little bit more about the impact our food choices have on the environment. This pack provides some top tips and recipes to help you eat well and help the environment at the same time.

Happy cooking!

*The Mellors family*

# How does the food we eat affect the environment?

From growing crops to processing, transporting, selling, storing and throwing away food – everything we eat has an impact on the environment and the climate. Here are just a few examples:

- In the UK, agriculture is responsible for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, 83% of ammonia air pollution and 16% of water pollution.
- 14.5% of global climate changing gases are due to meat and dairy production (more than all forms of transport).
- Over 10 million tonnes of food is wasted in the UK annually.
- Deforestation occurs to produce crops to feed animals and us.
- 95% of our fruit comes from abroad and half of our vegetables are imported. These emissions from the planes, trucks and ships used to transport items contributes to over 30% of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions.

## How Mellors are MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- We use local butchers, dairy and fruit & veg suppliers across the business, reducing food miles.
- We use 100% compostable packaging for all our 'grab & go' items.
- We only source water in bottles made from at least 50% recycled plastic.
- We recycle our used cooking oil into biofuel, over 16,120 litres per year. The equivalent of removing 275 cars from the road.
- Meat Free Mondays on the menu to reduce our meat usage and encourage all pupils to eat a greater variety of foods.

WWW.MELLORSCATERING.CO.UK

## What can you do as a family?

**REDUCE RED MEAT CONSUMPTION AND EAT MORE PLANT-BASED FOODS** such as vegetables, fruit, beans, seeds, nuts and grains. These are often cheaper too – saving money!

**BUY LOCALLY SOURCED, SEASONAL PRODUCE OR GROW YOUR OWN TO REDUCE YOUR FOOD MILES.** For example – avoid buying berries in winter, they will be more expensive, not as tasty and will have travelled a long way to your plate.

**BUY FOOD WITH AS LITTLE PACKAGING AS POSSIBLE.** Try reusable net bags when buying and storing fruit and vegetables. It helps them stay fresh for longer too.

**CHECK LABELS** and buy food that has been produced with high animal welfare standards or from sustainable sources. Look out for free range, Red Tractor, RSPCA assured meat and MSC fish.



**PLAN YOUR FAMILY MEALS AND MAKE A SHOPPING LIST.** Planning and making a shopping list means you are less likely to buy too much food that inevitably goes to waste.

**CHECK USE BY AND BEST BEFORE DATES.** A use by date on food is about safety. This is the most important date to remember. You can eat food until and on the use by date but not after. After the use by date don't eat, cook or freeze your food. The food could be unsafe to eat or drink, even if it has been stored correctly and looks and smells fine. The best before date, sometimes shown as BBE (Best Before End), is about quality and not safety. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. Its flavour and texture may not be as good.

**GET CREATIVE WITH LEFTOVERS.** Using leftovers can create some of the tastiest meals. Just be aware of food safety guidance when storing and reheating.

**LOOK OUT FOR REDUCED ITEMS IN SUPERMARKETS** because they have reached their best before date. If you don't plan to use them on the day of purchase, pop them in the freezer for another time.

# Recipe INFORMATION & TIPS!


Here's a few keys bits of information about our recipes and some tips to help make it as easy and enjoyable as possible to get cooking, with your children.

- Each recipe serves four people, so you may want to adjust the quantities to suit the size of your family and your appetites.
- Each recipe has been costed using average prices from 3 different supermarkets, to give you an indication of meal cost.
- We have included suggestions **in orange text** at each stage of the recipe for how you could get the kids involved. The age of your children and your confidence in having them in the kitchen with you may determine what stage you want to get them involved with each recipe.

## FOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR USING UP LEFTOVERS

Using up leftovers is a great way to reduce food waste and the amount you spend on food. But there are some food safety rules you should stick to, to ensure you do this safely.

- Eat any leftovers within 2 days of them being cooked.



- Cool it quickly (within 90 minutes) whilst keeping it covered, before putting it in the fridge or freezer. To help speed up cooling you can transfer the food to a cool dish, run things like rice and pasta under cold water or place things in a cool part of the kitchen. Ensure your fridge and freezer are working at the recommended temperatures.

- Label leftovers with the date they were made to help keep track of when they need to be used by.

- Reheat thoroughly.

## The benefits of *children* learning to cook

We want to encourage you to get your children involved as much as possible in preparing these meals. There are many benefits to getting children involved in the kitchen, here are just a few:

- It provides an indoor activity for children to engage with and learn from.
- Reading recipes, measuring quantities of ingredients and following instructions all help to develop literacy and numeracy skills. It also helps to develop scientific understanding, learning about how materials change when they are mixed together and heated or cooled.
- Children can develop a new life skill and, you never know, you may inspire your children to become chefs in the future!
- Research shows that if children have been involved in preparing food, they are more likely to eat it so this could be particularly helpful if you have a fussy eater on your hands.
- Being engaged in an activity like cooking or baking has shown to be a great way to bring down barriers and encourage children to open up and talk about how they might be feeling.

Expect there to be mess, but a tasty meal with a side of satisfaction at the end will make it all worthwhile. Remember, there's no reason why the help should stop there. Everyone needs to learn to wash up too!

# Roast dinner

## leftovers

Quite often families will make more than enough food as part of their Sunday dinner and there are always some leftovers, whether it is meat, veg or gravy.

Providing these are cooled, stored and reheated safely, they can nearly always be used to make delicious and nutritious meals and help reduce food waste.



# SUNDAY ROAST RISOTTO



Use up leftover roast chicken and vegetables from your Sunday dinner to make a delicious risotto the following day.

QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
1	Onion
2 cloves	Garlic
1 tbsp	Oil
300g	Risotto rice
1 litre	Stock made using 1 reduced-salt stock cube
150g	Leftover roast chicken
200g	Leftover cooked vegetables (e.g. carrots and broccoli)
80g	Frozen peas
1 tsp	Dried tarragon
40g	Parmesan cheese, grated

**TIP:**  
Use fresh herbs like tarragon or parsley and a lemon wedge to garnish and add flavour. Take a look at our activity at the back of this pack for information on growing your own herbs.



## Method

1. Peel and dice the onion and peel and finely chop the garlic.  
*Children can help to peel the onion, older children can help chop the onion and garlic. Younger children may be able to chop with help from an adult.*
3. In a large pan, heat the oil. Add the onion and cook for 2-3 minutes until soft. Add the garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes.  
*Children can help with stirring, being careful not to touch the hot pan.*
4. Turn up the heat a little and stir in the risotto rice, making sure each grain is coated in the oil. Cook the rice for 1-2 minutes, or until the grains become translucent at the outer edges.
5. Pour in a ladleful of stock and stir into the rice. Reduce the heat slightly to medium. Once the stock is absorbed, add another ladleful and repeat, waiting for the stock to absorb before adding more. Stir continuously
6. Once three quarters of the stock has been incorporated, taste the rice. It should be soft but retaining a slight bite. Continue to add the remaining stock if it's not quite cooked.
7. Meanwhile, chop or shred the leftover chicken. Prepare the leftover vegetables, chopping or breaking them up if you prefer them in small chunks.  
*Children of any age can do this. Support younger children if using a knife.*
8. Add in the leftover chicken, vegetables, peas and tarragon and stir well. Turn down to a low heat, cook for another 3-4 minutes until the chicken and vegetables have been heated through.
9. Meanwhile, grate the parmesan.  
*Support children to safely use the grater.*
10. Once everything is cooked and heated through, mix in the grated parmesan and serve.

# HOMEMADE SOUP

COST  
£1.14

QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
1	Onion
1 stick	Celery
2	Carrots
1	Leeks
2 tbsp	Vegetable oil
1 level tbsp	Plain flour
1 litre	Stock using 1 stock cube
300g	Cooked chicken, skinned and shredded
300g	Left over vegetables
1 tbsp	Fresh parsley, chopped

## Method

1. Peel and chop the onion and chop the celery.  
*All children can help to peel the onion and older children can help chop the onion and celery. Younger children may be able to chop with help from an adult.*
2. Prepare any uncooked vegetables that you're using.
3. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onions and celery and cook for a few minutes until starting to soften.  
*Children can help with stirring, being careful not to touch the hot pan.*
4. Stir in the flour and cook for 2 minutes. Add the chicken stock and any other uncooked vegetables you might be using.  
*Children can help to measure the flour, pour into the liquid and add the vegetables to the pan.*
5. Bring to the boil, stirring continuously. Season with salt and pepper, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
6. Add the cooked chicken and any cooked vegetables and continue to simmer until heated through. Adjust the seasoning, stir in the parsley and serve.

NOTE: If you prefer a smooth soup you can blend with a hand blender or in a liquidiser. Leave the soup to cool slightly before doing this.

## VARIATIONS

### VEGETABLE SOUP

If you want a vegetarian or plant-based version, use a vegetable stock cube, swap the chicken for additional vegetables and add in some lentils or beans for a source of protein.

### SWEETCORN SOUP

Swap the vegetables and parsley for 2 nests of dried noodles, 1x 325g can of sweetcorn and 1-2 tsp of reduced salt soy sauce. Add the noodles to the stock 3-4 minutes before the end of cooking, then drain the sweetcorn and add to the soup to heat through for 1-2 minutes.

TIP:  
You can thicken with cornflour instead of plain flour or add additional vegetables.





# MORE RECIPES

# TOMATO SAUCE

This basic tomato sauce can be used to make a variety of delicious family meals. Serve with fresh MSC certified fish, new potatoes and crisp fresh salad.



QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
1	Onion
1	Carrot, peeled and finely diced
2	Garlic clove, peeled and finely grated or crushed
1 stick	Celery
2 tbsp	Oil, preferably olive oil but vegetable oil will work
400g	Canned chopped tomatoes
1/3 tsp	Dried oregano, basil or mixed herbs

## Method

1. Peel and dice the onion and carrot, peel and finely grate or crush the garlic and dice the celery.  
*All children can help to peel the onion and older children can help chop the onion and grate the garlic.  
Younger children may be able to chop with help from an adult.*
2. Heat the oil in a medium sized pan. Add the onion, garlic, carrots and celery and cook over a low heat for 5 minutes or until the vegetables are starting to soften, stirring regularly.
3. Add the tomatoes and herbs and cook for 25 minutes, stirring regularly.  
*Children can help to stir, being careful not to touch the hot pan.*
4. Stir in a splash of water to loosen the sauce, if needed, and season to taste.

## VARIATIONS

### TUNA PASTA

Add 2 tins of tuna with the chopped tomatoes at step 3 and then stir through some low-fat cream cheese, sweetcorn and cooked pasta before serving.

### VEGETABLE PASTA BAKE

Add any vegetables that need using up at step 2, we recommend peppers, courgettes, mushrooms or aubergines. Combine the sauce and vegetables with pasta, top with grated cheese and bake in the oven until the cheese has melted.

### BEAN CHILLI

Swap the oregano for 1 tsp of paprika and 1 tsp of chilli powder, add once the vegetables have started to soften and cook for a few minutes. Then add some mixed beans or kidney beans with the tomatoes. Serve with brown rice.



### TIP:

Make a larger batch and, once cooled, freeze and use within 3 months.



# CAJUN RICE BURRITO

This is a versatile recipe that can be adapted to use any meat or vegetables that need using up, helping to reduce food waste. You can even use frozen vegetables in this dish too.

COST  
£3.96

QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
1 small	Onion
2 sticks	Celery
1	Pepper
4	Spring onions
2 cloves	Garlic
1/2	Fresh chilli, deseeded and sliced
1 tbsp	Vegetable oil
250g	British lean mince beef
1	Reduced salt stock cube
120ml	Boiling water
250g	Packet of cooked rice
1 tsp	Cajun spice
4	Tortilla wraps
Bunch	Fresh coriander
OPTIONAL EXTRAS: Sour cream, guacamole, salsa, BBQ sauce, salad leaves, grated cheese.	

## Method

1. Peel and chop the onion and chop the celery.  
All children can help to peel the onion and older children can help chop the onion and celery. Younger children may be able to chop with help from an adult.
2. Deseed and dice the pepper. Top and tail, then slice the spring onions and peel and crush the garlic.  
Older children can help chop the vegetables. Younger children may be able to chop with help from an adult.
3. Deseed and slice the chilli.
4. Heat a large pan with the oil. Add mince beef and cook until the mince is browned.  
Children can help to stir, being careful not to touch the hot pan.
5. Add the onions, pepper, celery, spring onion, garlic and chilli.  
Cook until vegetables are beginning to soften.
6. Meanwhile, dissolve the stock cube in the boiling water.
7. Add rice, spice and stock. Cook all the ingredients for 2 minutes to heat the rice.  
Children can help add these ingredients and combine them.
8. Stir through the chopped coriander and season to taste.
9. Lay the tortilla wraps on a flat surface. Divide the mixture between the wraps. Add any optional extras like salsa, sour cream or BBQ sauce, fold over the ends and roll to seal.

## TIP:

Look out for reduced products in the supermarket that have short use by dates. These are great for this dish and make it even cheaper.





Snacks

&

Baking

# VEGAN CHOCOLATE BROWNIE

Baking with plant-based ingredients can be challenging, as many cakes and biscuits use eggs to help bind ingredients together and give cakes structure. Chocolate brownies are firm favourites in Mellors dining rooms, so we have adapted our recipe to make it suitable for those following a plant-based or vegan diet.

COST  
£2.00

QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
250g	Plain flour
150g	Caster or granulated sugar
65g	Cocoa powder
1 tsp	Baking powder
250ml	Water
250ml	Vegetable oil
1 tsp	Vanilla extract

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/Gas mark 4. Grease and line a baking tin.
2. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt. Pour in water, vegetable oil and vanilla extract and mix, until well blended.  
*Children of all ages can help weigh out ingredients and mix them together.*
3. Pour the mixture into the tin. Bake for 15 to 25 minutes, until the top is no longer shiny. Leave to cool for at least 10 minutes before cutting into squares.



# HOUMOUS

Houmous is a Middle Eastern staple. It's a healthy, tasty and versatile dish that can be used as a snack with vegetable sticks, as a dressing for salads or added to sandwiches and dishes like falafel wraps.



QUANTITY	INGREDIENT
1/2	Lemon
1x 400g can	Chickpeas
2 cloves	Garlic, peeled
3 tbsp	Hot water
2 tbsp	Olive oil
1/2 tsp	Ground cumin
1/2 tsp	Salt

## Method

1. Squeeze the lemon juice out of the lemon, removing any seeds.  
Children can do this independently.
2. Drain and rinse the chickpeas.  
Once the can is open, children can drain and rinse the chickpeas in a colander.
3. Put all the ingredients in a food processor. Process until smooth. Add in extra water if it's too thick. Taste and add extra lemon juice or salt if needed.
4. Serve with vegetable sticks and or pitta bread for healthy snacks.

## VARIATIONS

- You can add a multitude of flavours to your houmous.
- Experiment with anything that needs using up or your favourite spices.
- Some favourites in our secondary schools are roasted red peppers, cooked beetroot or lemon and coriander.

## TIP:

Add a tablespoon of plain yoghurt to give a creamier texture.



# ACTIVITIES

Mellors

## HOW KIND TO THE ENVIRONMENT IS THE FOOD YOU EAT?

1. Pick **5** foods from the kitchen cupboards, fridge and freezer.
2. For each food, explore the following:
  - a. Was the food grown, did it come from an animal or was it made in a factory?
  - b. Which country did it come from? How far away from England is that? How might it have got from its place of origin to the supermarket shelves?
  - c. Does it have any packaging, is it recycled or recyclable? Could it be in different packaging or not have any packaging at all to be kinder to the environment?

### CHALLENGE

As a family, decide on one thing that you can change about the food you buy and eat to help the environment.

Let us know your thoughts on Twitter @MellorsCatering  
#EatWelltoHelptheEnvironment

## GROW YOUR OWN

Growing your own fruit, vegetables and herbs is a great way to reduce your impact on the environment. You don't need to have an allotment or lots of outdoor space either.

Start with some herbs which you can grow from seeds in small pots (inside or outside). You can buy seeds very cheaply and April/May is the perfect time to sow the seeds.

Lettuce and rocket are also easy to grow and can be put in the ground or in pots or grow bags.

There's lots of advice on the internet about how to start growing your own produce.

Try [WWW.GARDENERSWORLD.COM](http://WWW.GARDENERSWORLD.COM) and [WWW.RHS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.RHS.ORG.UK).