

Cosy cooking: Healthy and hearty recipes to warm your winter



Cozy cooking: Healthy and hearty recipes to warm your winter

When the weather cools, there's nothing better than a warm, nourishing meal shared with family. Preparing healthy comfort meals at home can sometimes feel a little difficult to fit into busy days, especially when you're keeping an eye on the time and budget. Yet cooking at home more often supports better health and wellbeing, brings families together and is usually more affordable than eating out.

To support busy families, Cancer Council SA has created a collection of wholesome, comforting recipes designed to be both satisfying and practical. A simple meal planner and shopping list are also included to make home cooking that little bit easier. Each recipe can be adapted to suit your family's tastes or the ingredients you already have on hand.

All recipes average cheaper than \$6 per serve and can be on the table in about an hour or less. To make your comfort meals at home more nutritious, try the following tips:

- Boost fibre by adding tinned legumes to casseroles or dried legumes to soups.
- Serve dishes with a simple side of beans, carrot or broccoli (fresh or frozen). Add some almonds, chilli, olive oil or garlic for flavour.
- Reduce saturated fat by swapping cream for light cream, evaporated milk or Greek yoghurt.
- Get creative by swapping half mashed potato for white beans or cauliflower for a lighter twist.
- Choose oven-baking, air-frying or slow cooking instead of deep frying.



Healthy and hearty recipes weekly family dinner plan

Monday



Pumpkin and chickpea soup with crispy croutons

A comforting and nourishing soup with a crunchy twist. Perfect for meat-free Monday.

Tuesday



Beef stroganoff

A rich and creamy classic made lighter for everyday meals, this comforting favourite is perfect for bringing everyone to the table.

Wednesday



Red lentil dahl

A comforting, plant based “dahl-ight” the whole family can enjoy, ready in 30 minutes.

Thursday



Lamb and lentil shepherd's pie

A hearty twist on a family classic, combining tender lamb and nourishing lentils under a golden, comforting topping.

Friday



Healthier-for-you butter chicken

Skip the takeaway with this healthy “fakeaway” dish, a flavour packed favourite for Friday night.

Recipe shopping list

Fruits and vegetables

- 1 kg butternut pumpkin
- 5 brown onions
- 14 garlic cloves[^]
- 300g cup mushrooms
- 4 tsp grated ginger[^]
- 700g potatoes
- fresh oregano^{*}
- fresh coriander^{*}
- vegetables or salad to serve on the side (beans, carrot, etc.)—check your fridge first

Dairy, fridge and freezer

- 500g plain Greek yoghurt
- 300g (2 cups) frozen peas, carrots and corn mix

Meat

- 400g lean beef rump steak
- 150g lean lamb mince
- 750g chicken thighs

Shelf-stable ingredients

- 400g tin chickpeas
- 400g tin lentils
- 1375mL (5.5 cups) reduced-salt vegetable liquid stock
- 250mL reduced-salt beef stock
- 200g fusilli pasta
- 1 beef stock cube
- 180g reduced-salt tomato paste
- 135g red lentils
- 1 kg canned diced tomatoes
- 125mL light coconut milk
- 4 tsp garam masala
- cinnamon stick
- *optional*: roti bread or rice to serve with the dahl and butter chicken
- *optional*: bread to serve with the pumpkin soup

Pantry staples you may have at home

- olive oil
- cumin (2 tsp)
- dried oregano (1 tsp)
- Worcestershire sauce (3.5 tbsp)
- Dijon mustard (2 tsp)
- sweet paprika (0.5 tsp)
- ground turmeric (1 tsp)
- reduced-fat margarine (2 tsp)
- curry powder (2 tsp)
- cayenne pepper (0.25 tsp)
- sugar (3 tsp)

[^] substitute with garlic or ginger

^{*} Substitute with dried or another fresh herb like parsley



How to create a balanced dinner



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Refer to the Australian Dietary Guidelines for information on how to eat a well balanced diet.

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Simple tips for healthy meals

A balanced diet can give you and your family more energy to take on the day. Choosing nutritious meals and snacks throughout the day also helps contribute to good gut health and can reduce the risk of certain cancers.

BREAKFAST	• choose wholemeal or wholegrain breads and cereals • top cereals with fruit • top grainy toast with nutritious spreads (e.g. eggs, tomato, avocado, peanut butter or baked beans)			
LUNCH	• choose wholemeal or wholegrain bread or crackers • include salad or vegetables			
DINNER	• include plenty of vegetables • choose lean meats or meat alternatives, trim visible fat, remove chicken skin • choose high fibre grain foods			
SNACKS	• choose a variety from the five food groups (e.g. fruit, vegetables, grainy crackers, low fat cheese and yoghurt, nuts and seeds)			
LIMIT OR AVOID	• foods high in fat, sugar or salt • sugary drinks • alcohol			

For these recipes and more head to cancersa.org.au/cancer-prevention/recipes

Pumpkin and chickpea soup with crispy croutons

A comforting autumnal soup with a crunchy twist.



Serves: 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 35 minutes

Diet and allergies: Nut free. Vegetarian. Gluten free. Dairy free*.

Ingredients

- 1 kg peeled butternut pumpkin, cut into 2cm pieces
 - 1 brown onion
 - 3 garlic cloves
 - 2 tsp olive oil
 - 1 tsp ground cumin
 - 1 tsp dried oregano leaves
 - 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 - 1L (4 cups) reduced-salt vegetable liquid stock
 - ½ cup 99% fat-free plain Greek **yoghurt***
 - (optional)
- * Dairy-free if Greek yoghurt omitted or dairy-free yoghurt alternative used.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C.
2. Line 2 large baking trays with baking paper. Place the pumpkin, onion and garlic on one lined tray and drizzle with oil. Sprinkle with cumin and oregano. Toss to coat. Bake, turning halfway through, for 30 minutes or until tender.
3. Meanwhile, place half of the chickpeas on a paper towel and pat them dry. Remove any loose skins. Place chickpeas on the other lined tray. Spray with olive oil and season with pepper. Bake, stirring halfway through, for 25–30 minutes or until crispy.
4. Remove the vegetable tray from the oven. Use tongs to remove the skin from the onion. Cut the ends off the garlic cloves and squeeze the garlic out. **CAUTION:** Allow garlic to cool slightly before squeezing to avoid burns.
5. Put the pumpkin, onion, garlic and the remaining chickpeas into a large food processor or blender. Blitz until smooth.
6. Add the stock and blitz until combined.
7. Transfer the pumpkin mixture to a large saucepan or pot over medium heat. Stir occasionally until heated through.
8. Divide the soup among bowls. Dollop with the yoghurt and swirl it through the soup. Top with the chickpea croutons and sprinkle with freshly ground black pepper. Serve.



Variations

Use sweet potato instead of pumpkin.



Serving tip

Serve with a warm crusty bread on the side.



Cooking tip

For step 3, you could put all ingredients straight into the large saucepan and blend with a stick blender.



Money-saving tips

Swap liquid stock for 2 crumbled stock cubes and 1L (4 cups) water.



Storage tip

TO REFRIGERATE: Store soup in a reusable container for up to 3 days. Reheat in the microwave until heated through to serve.

TO FREEZE: Store soup, as above, for up to 6 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight and reheat as above to serve.



Nutrition tips

For more protein, add nutritional flakes to the soup.



Beef stroganoff

A lighter take on a family staple.



Serves: 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Diet and allergies: Nut free. Gluten free*.

Ingredients

- 200g **fusilli pasta***
- 1 beef stock cube
- 400g lean beef rump steak, sliced into thin strips
- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 300g cup mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp reduced-salt tomato paste
- 1 tbsp **Worcestershire*** sauce
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp sweet paprika
- ⅓ cup 99% fat-free plain Greek **yoghurt**

* If using gluten-free pasta and Worcestershire sauce.

Method

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Cook the fusilli, following packet instructions, until al dente. Drain.
2. Put the stock cube in a heatproof jug with 1½ cups (375ml) boiling water and stir until dissolved.
3. Meanwhile, lightly spray a large non-stick frying pan with olive oil and heat over high heat. Cook the beef, turning occasionally, for 3 minutes or until browned. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
4. Add a splash of the stock to deglaze the pan. Add the onion, garlic, mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until softened.
5. Add the tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, paprika, reserved beef and remaining stock. Stir to combine. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer for 3 minutes or until the sauce has slightly thickened. Lightly season with salt and pepper.



Variations

Use chicken breast instead of beef. Substitute the pasta for rice if preferred.

**Serving tip**

Sprinkle with fresh parsley to serve.

**Cooking tip**

The 5 minutes for cooling the meat mixture is essential before you add the yoghurt to ensure the sauce doesn't split.

**Money-saving tips**

Use lean beef strips instead of rump steak.

**Storage tip**

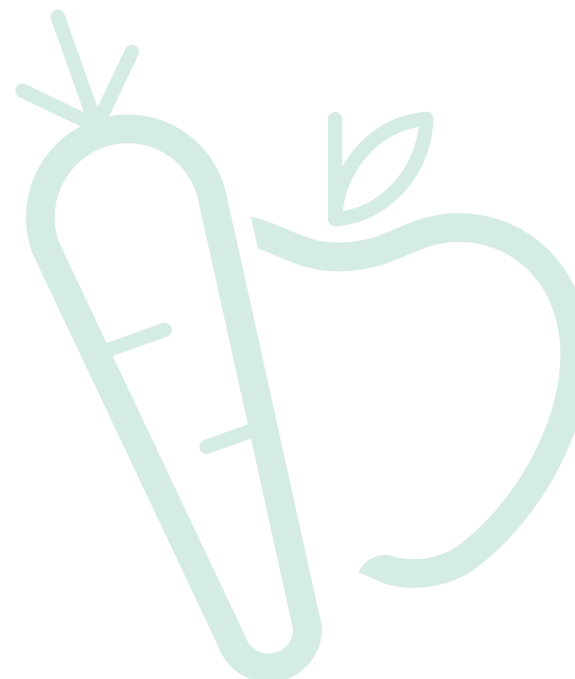
TO REFRIGERATE: Store stroganoff in a reusable container for up to 2 days. Reheat in the microwave until heated through to serve.

TO FREEZE: Store stroganoff, as above, for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight and reheat as above to serve.

**Nutrition tips**

Add capsicum and baby spinach to the stroganoff for added nutrients, or serve with steamed broccoli or sauteed broccolini on the side.

Swap fusilli pasta for wholemeal spirals or pulse pasta spirals for a fibre boost.



Red lentil dahl

A comforting, plant-based “*dahl-ight*” the whole family can enjoy.



Serves: 4

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

Diet and allergies: Nut free. Gluten free. Dairy free. Vegetarian.

Ingredients

- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp finely grated ginger
- 2 tsp garam masala
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- ¼ tsp dried chilli flakes (optional)
- 135g dried red lentils
- 1½ cups (375ml) reduced-salt vegetable stock
- 200g canned diced tomatoes
- ½ cup (125ml) light coconut milk

Method

1. Lightly spray a large saucepan with olive oil and heat over medium heat. Cook the onion, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until softened.
2. Add the garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, for 1 minute or until fragrant.
3. Add the garam masala, turmeric, chilli and ¼ cup (60ml) water to the pan and stir to combine.
4. Add the lentils, stock, tomatoes and coconut milk. Stir through and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes or until the lentils are tender.
5. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Serve.



Variations

Any yellow dal such as chana dal, toor dal or moong dal can be used in this recipe.

**Serving tip**

Serve with roti bread on the side. Top with fresh coriander, a squeeze of lemon juice and a drizzle of plain yoghurt.

**Cooking tip**

Dahl will continue to thicken after cooking. Stop the cooking just before what you think is the ideal consistency, and it will be just right by the time you serve.

**Money-saving tips**

Use 2 reduced-salt stock cubes with 3 cups of water instead of liquid stock.

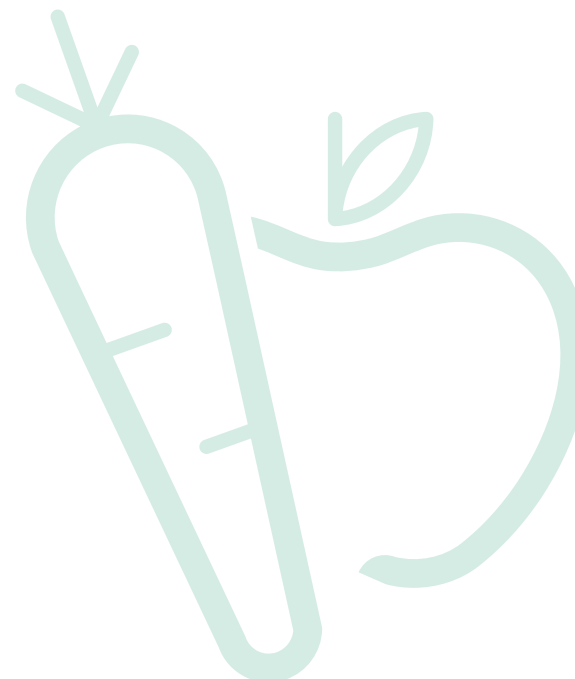
**Storage tip**

TO REFRIGERATE: Store dahl in a reusable container for up to 3 days. Add a splash of water to loosen the dahl and reheat in the microwave until heated through to serve.

TO FREEZE: Store dahl, as above, for up to 6 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight and reheat as above to serve.

**Nutrition tips**

Stir through 120g of baby spinach leaves at the end until wilted for added folate and iron.



Lamb and lentil shepherd's pie

A comforting winter dish to warm the soul.



Serves: 6

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 55 minutes

Diet and allergies: Dairy free*. Gluten free^. Nut free.

Ingredients

- 1 brown onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 150g lean lamb mince
- 2 cups frozen peas, carrots and corn mix, thawed
- 400g can brown lentils, drained and rinsed
- 400g can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup (250ml) reduced-salt beef stock
- ¼ cup fresh oregano leaves, roughly chopped
- 2½ tbsp **Worcestershire*** sauce
- 700g potatoes, cut into chunks
- 2 tsp reduced-fat **margarine***

* if using a dairy-free margarine

^ if using a gluten free Worcestershire sauce.

Method

1. Lightly spray a large, deep-frying pan with olive oil and heat over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until starting to soften. Add the garlic and mince and cook, breaking up the lumps with a spoon, for 3–4 minutes, until browned. Add the peas, carrots and corn, lentils, tomatoes, stock, oregano and Worcestershire sauce. Stir to combine. Simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes or until the sauce has thickened and flavours develop.
2. Meanwhile, put the potatoes in a large saucepan of water and bring to the boil. Boil for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain and return to the pan to rest for 3–5 minutes. Add the margarine and lightly season with salt. Mash until smooth.
3. Transfer the mince mixture into a 1.5L deep round baking dish. Spoon the mash evenly on top and bake for 25 minutes or until the top is golden and the sauce is bubbling around the edges. Leave it to stand for 5 minutes, then serve.



Variations

Use lean beef mince instead of lamb, if preferred.

Add one or two bay leaves before simmering to help flavours develop.

Sprinkle finely grated parmesan cheese over the potato before baking.



Serving tip

Serve with a fresh garden salad.



Cooking tip

The sauce won't thicken any further in the oven, as no steam escapes during baking. So, make sure to cook it until you reach your desired consistency before pouring it into the dish.

Allow the mince mixture to cool in the baking dish for around 30 minutes before spooning the mash evenly on top. This can help prevent the potato seeping into the mixture and maintain the two layers.



Money-saving tips

Use jarred minced garlic, beef stock cubes or dried oregano as some budget saving ingredient swaps.



Nutrition tips

Add extra veggies to the mince mixture such as capsicum, zucchini and mushrooms for added nutrients and flavour.



Storage tip

TO REFRIGERATE: Store pie in a reusable container for up to 2 days. Reheat in the microwave until heated through to serve.

TO FREEZE: Store pie, as above, for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight and reheat as above to serve.

Healthier-for-you butter chicken

A healthier version of this flavour-packed family favourite.



Serves: 4

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Diet and allergies: Nut free. Gluten free. Dairy free*

Ingredients

- 2 tsp curry powder
 - 2 tsp garam masala
 - 1 tsp ground cumin
 - ½ tsp turmeric
 - ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
 - 1 cinnamon stick
 - 1 brown onion, finely chopped
 - 3 garlic cloves, finely grated
 - 2 tsp finely grated ginger
 - 750g chicken thighs, fat-trimmed, cut into 4cm pieces
 - 400g can diced tomatoes
 - 140g reduced-salt tomato paste
 - 3 tsp sugar
 - 1 cup 99% fat-free plain **yoghurt***
 - ¼ cup finely chopped coriander leaves, plus extra leaves to serve
- * dairy free if using a dairy-free yoghurt or omitting

Method

1. Lightly spray a large saucepan with oil and place over medium heat. Add the curry powder, garam masala, cumin, turmeric, cayenne pepper and cinnamon. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until fragrant.
2. Add the onion, garlic, ginger and ⅓ cup (80ml) water and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until the onion has softened.
3. Add the chicken and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until browned but not cooked through.
4. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar and ⅔ cup (160ml) water. Bring to a simmer and stir occasionally for 30 minutes or until sauce has thickened.
5. Remove from the heat and set aside to slightly cool.
6. Stir through the yoghurt and coriander. Divide among bowls and sprinkle with extra coriander.



Variations

Use chicken breast instead of chicken thighs.



Serving tip

Serve with steamed basmati rice or naan bread.



Cooking tip

Allow the butter chicken to cool down before stirring through the yoghurt to ensure the sauce doesn't split.



Money-saving tips

Use jarred minced garlic and ginger.



Storage tip

TO REFRIGERATE: Store butter chicken in a reusable container for up to 2 days. Reheat in the microwave until heated through to serve.

TO FREEZE: Store butter chicken, as above, for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight and reheat as above to serve.



Nutrition tips

Serve with steamed greens on the side.





About Cancer Council SA

As South Australia's leading cancer charity, we have been working across every aspect of every cancer for more than 90 years. Our purpose is to reduce the rate and impact of cancer for all South Australians through cancer prevention, research and support.

This collection of dinner recipes can help you and your family incorporate more nutritious ingredients in your diet. While no single recipe or food can protect against cancer, we know that a healthy, balanced diet can help lower your overall cancer risk. Home cooking means you can build meals around a variety of vegetables, legumes, wholegrains and antioxidants which are all bursting with flavour.

We hope you enjoy our quick and easy recipes. For even more healthy food and snack options, visit our website: cancersa.org.au

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