

Good Food Cooking Tips

Follow these top tips and feel confident cooking for people of all ages.

Safety

Be aware of the allergens in the ingredients you are using and provide information to the people involved in preparing and eating the food you prepare. Some 'sneaky' allergens might be present in ingredients, e.g. stock cubes / bouillon powder may contain celery, mustard and cereals containing gluten, Worcestershire sauce contains fish, dried tomatoes may contain sulphites. Check for food allergies and special requirements when people join the group.

Follow the '4Cs' of food hygiene – cleaning, chilling, cooking and avoiding cross contamination. Take a look at the Food for Life Get Togethers Food Safety Guide for more details.

Follow the '4Cs' of food hygiene

1. **Cleaning**
2. **Chilling**
3. **Cooking**
4. (avoiding) **Cross Contamination**



Some hazards to watch out for in cooking activities:

- **Wash all soil off the vegetables** before bringing into the preparation area to avoid cross contaminating work surfaces and equipment
- **Think about how to make the cooking area as safe as possible, for example:**
 - **secure trailing cables** from small electrical equipment like the portable induction hob, electric kettle and food blender
 - **keep the floor clear** by wiping up all spills and picking up vegetable peelings
 - **Supervise young children** and people with mobility difficulties around hot pans and always use oven-gloves when taking things out of the oven
 - Make sure you are asking people to prepare and cook things that are suited to **their level of skill and experience**, e.g. young children are best tasked with tearing herbs and chopping soft vegetables as they are easy to cut, while older children and able-bodied adults can get on with dicing hard vegetables
 - **Show everyone how to use knives safely** using the bridge and claw cutting techniques
 - Be aware that stick-blenders have a **very sharp, open blade** and should be used with supervision
 - **Check the serving temperature** of soup and pie fillings – it needs to be hot but not scalding, especially for serving to young children and older people



Good Food Tips

- **Find out what vegetables are grown locally** and are in season. Put an order in with local producers or an organic veg box scheme supplier.
- **Make use of home-grown produce** – a few vegetables can go a long way when made into soup, salads, dips and stir-fries. Herbs are easy to grow and are brilliant for adding seasonal flavour.
- **Soup can be made from vegetables that have been reduced for quick sale in the supermarket**, or from vegetables that have been in the fridge for a while, to reduce food waste and save money.
- **Gradually build up store cupboard ingredients** like dried herbs, spices, sauces and pastes to allow people to adjust seasoning for personal taste. Remember to check date-marks and use up older stock before opening new jars.
- Serving vegetable soup helps towards **5-a-day targets**.
- Adding pulse vegetables to soup, like peas, beans and lentils **increases fibre content**.
- Use **wholegrain products** to increase the fibre in what you cook, e.g. brown rice and wholemeal flour
- **Make savoury scones, muffins or bread rolls** rather than sweet cakes and biscuits.
- To extend the cooking activity into the home, link up with a local producer, greengrocer or foodbank to **offer recipe bags** that the community can obtain for free or buy at a discount and cook for their family.

Intergenerational opportunities

- **Link to story-telling.** For example, 'Stone Soup' is a European folk story in which hungry strangers convince the people of a town to each share a small amount of their food in order to make a meal that everyone enjoys. It's a moral tale regarding the value of sharing.
- **Link your cooking activity to themed events,** for example make curry and spicy snacks for a Bollywood film night.
- **Make and serve food for community events** when parents, grandparents, children and teachers come together. Examples might include harvest celebration, gardening days, bonfire night, school plays and parents' evenings.
- **Prepare ingredient bags** and recipe cards for attendees to take away and make at home.
- **Bring together people from different cultural backgrounds** to learn about and share recipes from around the globe.
- **Share cooking and serving tasks out across the group** – young children love using their hands to tear ingredients and can take on simple tasks such as stirring, spreading, washing vegetables etc. More experienced group members can pass on their cooking skills like peeling and chopping or using the heat source.



Send us your photos – we'd love to share photos of your Get Togethers that we can share on our social media channels, **so join in!**

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