

Low Energy Cooking Recipes

Smart nutritious recipes that make the most of your budget

3 recipe sections

Low cook

LOW - 15 mins hob time or less

No cook

NO - recipes that require no cooking at all

Slow cook

SLOW - cooked in a low energy slow cooker



Tested by Community Kitchen class participants

Store Cupboard Heroes

These items are used throughout these recipes so grab them when you can.

Soya sauce Lemon juice (lemons or bottled juice)

Oil – vegetable, sunflower or olive Peanut butter

Vinegar Golden syrup or honey Mayonnaise

Seeds – any type Chilli powder

Coriander powder Cumin powder

Mixed herbs Stock cubes Salt Pepper

Garlic – 1 clove of garlic can be replaced in any of these recipes by 1 teaspoon of garlic paste or ½ teaspoon of garlic powder



Top tips

- Include a palm sized portion of protein in meals to feel fuller longer. No cook sources of protein include tinned fish, or pulses, beans, seeds and nuts.
- Eggs are a great source of quick cook protein.
- Use frozen fruit and vegetables in any of these recipes. Good value and healthy as nutrients are sealed in during the freezing process.
- Love your lid – Switch off your hob and keep the pan lid on for a few minutes. Food will continue to cook in the steam.
- Double up any of the recipes to save time and energy by batch cooking for the week.
- Keep empty jars with lids that fit. These are useful for making dressings and storing ingredients.

Tomato Sauce

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 2 400g tins tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs
- Salt
- Black pepper

Equipment: knife, large pan with a lid, wooden spoon

Method

1. Peel and finely chop the garlic.
2. Put the oil in a large pan on a medium heat.
3. Add the garlic and herbs and fry for around 2 minutes, or until lightly golden. Stir with a wooden spoon to prevent burning.
4. Add the tomatoes, squashing and breaking them up slightly with the spoon.
5. Add a splash of water to the empty tomato tins, give them a swirl and pour into the pan.
6. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down to medium-low and simmer for around 15 minutes until sauce gets thicker. Turn off the heat and let it continue 'cooking' in its own heat for another 15 minutes with the lid on.
7. Taste and season with a pinch of salt and pepper.

Low cook



Nutrition tip: Tomatoes are even more nutritious when cooked! This is because when they are heated, they release an antioxidant called lycopene (this gives them their red colour). Lycopene has positive effects on blood pressure, cholesterol levels and risk of certain cancers.

Chef's tip: Double the quantities and use it in different ways, either reheating in the microwave or quickly on the stove.

Ideas for 3 versions:

1. Arrabbiata Sauce to go with spaghetti. Add 1 teaspoon of dried chillies or chilli powder and fresh or dried parsley or oregano.
2. Marinara Sauce to go with pasta shapes. Add 1 tin of mackerel (or tuna or sardines) to the cooked sauce.
3. Vegetable Sauce. Add any fresh or tinned veg, bean or pulse – sweetcorn goes well. Serve with rice.

Anytime Bowl

Serves 2

Also known as a 'Buddha Bowl' this recipe combines rice and any veg with a tasty dressing and a crunchy topping.

Ingredients

- 200g cooked rice
- 400g of mixed vegetables – these can be tinned, frozen and defrosted or fresh. Whatever you have in your cupboard. Use heated up, cold or raw.

Spiced chickpeas:

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 400g cooked chickpeas
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon golden syrup or honey
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoon coriander
- 2 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chilli powder

For the dressing:

- 2 tablespoons peanut butter or brown sauce
- 3 tablespoons warm water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped

Equipment: mug / small bowl or jam jar with lid, whisk or fork, large pan, wooden spoon



Method

- 1. Spiced chickpeas:** In a mug or jar, mix together the lemon juice, golden syrup and soy sauce. Put it aside.
- 2.** Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add the chickpeas and fry, stirring with a wooden spoon until they start to turn gold and pop around a bit. This will take 3 to 5 minutes.
- 3.** Pour the lemon juice mixture over the chickpeas, stir in and fry together for 30 seconds to let the mixture evaporate a bit. Turn off the heat.
- 4. Dressing:** Mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl until it is smooth and creamy. You could also mix them in a clean jam jar, pop the lid on and shake well.
- 5.** Divide your chickpeas, rice and vegetables into two bowls and spoon your dressing over the top.

Chef's tip: Add 2 teaspoons smoked paprika to the chickpeas for extra flavour. For additional protein add any cooked or tinned meat or fish, nuts or seeds or a boiled egg.

Nutrition tip: Chickpeas are a good source of plant-based protein and are high in fibre. This great combination slows down digestion which keeps us fuller for longer. They are also great for gut health.

Chocolate Popcorn Bars

Makes 8 bars

One of the Community Kitchen favourites – filling, flavoursome and fun to make!

Ingredients

- 1 packet of pre-made popcorn, about 80g (any type)
- 70g seeds (any type)
- 4 tablespoons golden syrup or honey
- 100g dark chocolate broken into pieces
- 2 tablespoons oil

For a NO COOK version use:

- 6 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons golden syrup
- ½ bag popcorn crushed (about 40g)
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons seeds (optional)

Equipment: large mixing bowl, small bowl, frying pan, wooden spoon, baking tray, knife

Chef's tip: You can swap popcorn with rice krispies or corn flakes, and you can add dried fruit to the mix.

Nutrition tip: Seeds are full of healthy fats that help to keep our heart healthy. Seeds are high in vitamin E and contain zinc and selenium, all needed for a strong immune system.

Low cook

No cook



LOW COOK version

- 1.** Place the popcorn in a large mixing bowl.
- 2.** Toast the seeds in a frying pan (no oil on a moderate heat) – keep turning with a spoon until starting to brown. Take them off the heat and put in a small bowl.
- 3.** In the same pan heat the golden syrup on a low heat, add the oil and mix well until they combine. With the heat still on put the seeds back into the pan and stir well with a spoon.
- 4.** Carefully pour the hot mixture onto the popcorn and mix with a spoon. Put the popcorn mix onto the tray, spread it and press firmly with the spoon to squash them down.
- 5.** Break the chocolate bar into small pieces into a microwavable bowl and microwave for 1 min to melt it – stir well. If you don't have a microwave sit a bowl on the top of a pan of gently boiling water. Add the chocolate to the bowl and stir gently until it melts.
- 6.** Drizzle the melted chocolate on top of the popcorn mixture in whatever pattern you want.
- 7.** Let it set in the fridge for one hour (or two hours at room temperature) then cut it into bars with a knife.

NO COOK version

- 1.** Mix the peanut butter, cocoa powder and syrup together. Add popcorn (and the seeds) and stir until well combined. Press the mixture into a baking tray. Leave to set until firm for a couple of hours. Cut into bars. Enjoy!

Carrot Cake Overnight Oats

No cook



Makes 2

Although this can be eaten straight away, if you leave it overnight the oats absorb the yoghurt and juice to create a soft and tasty dish.

Ingredients

- 1 fresh carrot
- 1 tin of fruit in juice (any kind) 300g
- 70g oats
- 200g plain yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons of dried fruit
- 1 tablespoon of honey (or golden syrup)
- 2 jars washed thoroughly with hot water or small bowls

Optional:

- 1 tablespoon chopped nuts
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon



Method

1. In the bowl grate or finely chop the carrot and then add the oats, yoghurt, dried fruit, cinnamon, nuts (if using) and mix together. Add the tin of fruit and its liquid.
2. Add the honey or golden syrup to the mixture and mix well.
3. Spoon the mixture into two small jars (or bowls). This can be eaten straight away or leave covered in the fridge overnight.

Chef's tip: Top with chopped nuts, crumbled biscuits or wafers.

Nutrition tip: Carrots for breakfast? Yes please! Carrots are packed full of vitamin A which helps your body fight infection. And, while they might not help you see in the dark, they promote eye health as you age.

Panzanella Salad

No cook



Serves 2

Panzanella originated in the central Italian countryside where farmers reduced food waste by soaking old bread to soften it and combining it with vegetables and dressing to make a tasty salad.

Ingredients

- 300g stale bread (a couple of days old – dry but not mouldy)
- 160g tinned fish (any type). Drain the fish – if it is in oil keep the oil to one side
- 1 onion
- 2 tomatoes (medium size)
- ½ cucumber
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs
- 1 tablespoon oil (only if the fish is in water or brine)
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

Equipment: 2x large bowls, mug, knife, tablespoon

Chef's tip: Fresh herbs like basil or parsley can be used instead of dry if you have them.

Method

1. Soak the stale bread in a bowl with ½ mug cold water.
2. Thinly slice the onion.
3. Chop the tomatoes into small chunks.
4. Slice the cucumber thinly.
5. Taking the bread out of the bowl with your hand squeeze well to remove all the water and crumble into another bowl.
6. Add the fish (if using), onion, tomatoes, cucumber and herbs.
7. Add 1 tablespoon of oil and one tablespoon of vinegar (you can use the oil you have set aside from the fish tin)
8. Season with salt and pepper.
9. Leave the panzanella for half an hour before serving (or overnight in the fridge if you want to eat it for a packed lunch the next day).

Nutrition tip: Tinned tuna is a great source of high-quality protein. Including a palm sized amount of protein in each meal helps to keep us fuller for longer.

Try this recipe with any tinned fish, tuna, mackerel, sardines or salmon. These tinned fish are high in omega 3 fats which are good for your brain and heart.

Potato Salad with Aioli

Serves 4 as side dish
Serves 2 as main dish

No cook

Nutrition tip: Potatoes are a good source of several vitamins and minerals, particularly potassium and vitamin C. Potassium is concentrated in the skin and may benefit heart health so if you cook potatoes leave the skins on.

Ingredients

- 500g tin of potatoes (drained) or cooked potatoes, chopped
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 5 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar
- 1 teaspoon mixed herbs (fresh or dried)
- Pepper

Equipment: Large bowl, spoon, sieve or colander

Method

1. Drain the tinned potatoes.
2. In a bowl mix the mayonnaise, garlic and the lemon juice or vinegar.
3. Add a pinch of pepper if you like.
4. Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and add herbs before serving.

Chef's tip: You can store any leftovers for up to 3 days in the fridge (4 hours max outside the fridge). Add ½ teaspoon of curry powder or paprika to the mix for a more spicy flavour.

Minestrone Soup

Serves 4

Slow cook

This hearty Italian soup made with pasta and beans is very nourishing, filling and flavoursome. It is great for batch cooking and can be frozen in portions.

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 tin of beans/pulses/lentils drained
- 1 tin of carrots drained or 1 fresh carrot
- 1 tin of potatoes drained or 1 large/2 small potatoes chopped into cubes
- 1 tin of peas or handful of frozen peas
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- 4 tablespoons oil
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon mixed herbs
- 1 stock cube
- 3 mugs of water

Optional:

- 4 handfuls dried pasta shapes

Chef's tip: Swap a tin of vegetables with whatever chopped fresh vegetables you have available (cauliflower, green beans, broccoli, kale etc). Use any fresh herbs as well. If you have any leftover pasta or rice use this instead – add this half an hour before the end of the cooking time.

Slow cooker sizes – an easy guide:

- **SMALL** Up to 3½ litres: Cooks for 1-2 people
- **MEDIUM** 3½-5 litres: 2-4 people
- **LARGE** 5-7 litres: 4 or more people

Our slow cook recipes are designed for a medium sized slow cooker.

Nutrition tip: Slow cooking can actually preserve nutrients that can be lost when food is heated at a higher temperature.

Method

1. Fry the onion in a pan with the oil over a low heat for about 5 minutes until the onion is soft. This gives your soup a richer flavour.
2. Add the onion and all the other ingredients (except the pasta) into the slow cooker and mix well.
*You can skip step 1 if you wish and add the onion raw at step 2.
3. Turn on the slow cooker to HIGH for 3 hours or LOW for 5 hours.
4. If you are using pasta add it half way through (large shapes) or for the last hour (small shapes).
5. Enjoy this in a bowl as it is or top with grated cheese or croutons.



Bolognese Sauce

Serves 4

Slow cook



Ingredients

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2-3 tablespoons oil
- 1 tin of carrots (or 2 fresh carrots)
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 400g tins tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons of mixed herbs (fresh or dried)
- 1 stock cube
- Black pepper, sugar, and salt – a pinch of each
- 1 mug of water (2 mugs if you are using dried lentils)

Meat option:

- 500g mincemeat (pork or beef or turkey)

Vegetarian option:

- 400g of dried lentils (or 2 tins of lentils, drained)

Nutrition tip: Garlic is great. A few small cloves pack a big hit of health benefits. Eating garlic regularly is linked with positive effects on blood pressure, cholesterol levels, immune system, and even risk of certain cancers. If you like the flavour add more.

Method

1. If you can pre-cook the chopped onion, garlic and meat (if using) for 5-8 minutes on a low heat in a frying pan with 2 tablespoons of oil, that will give the sauce more flavour. Then add all the remaining ingredients to the slow cooker.
2. If you are just using the slow cooker put everything in at the same time.
3. Mix well and turn the slow cooker on for 5 hours on LOW or 3 hours HIGH.

Chefs tip: Ideas for 3 versions

1. Save half of this sauce and add a teaspoon of chilli and a tin of any type of beans (drained) for a quick chilli con/non carne. Great with rice or on top of mashed potato.
2. Try adding a tablespoon of soy sauce, brown sauce, gravy granules or marmite for extra depth of flavour (and extra vitamin B12 in marmite!)
3. Try half meat half lentils. Use 200g meat + 200g lentils. In our classes even the biggest meat lovers tell us how much they like the lentil version of Bolognese – so try the half and half version if you aren't yet convinced!

Tagine

Serves 4

Slow cook

Ingredients

- 2 tins of potatoes, drained and chopped
- 1 tin of carrots drained (or two fresh carrots diced)
- 1 tin of chickpeas, drained
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 handful of dried fruit
- 1 stock cube
- 1 mug of water
- Pinch of salt and pepper

Nutrition tip: 30g of dried fruit, like apricots, count as one of your 5 a day. Dried apricots are a good plant-based source of iron, important in making red blood cells which carry oxygen around the body.

Method

1. Add all the ingredients into the slow cooker and stir.
2. Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 hours if you are using tinned veg or 4 hours for fresh veg.

Chef's tip: Sprinkle over fresh parsley or coriander if you have some and serve with flatbreads or couscous.

Use fresh vegetables instead of tinned. Cut the vegetables into pieces so they will cook evenly (roots 2cm, softer veg 3cm). Add 1 teaspoon of powdered or fresh ginger for extra heat.

If you like your Tagine on the sweeter side add 1 tablespoon honey or syrup, and 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon if you have it.



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Tel. **01273 293 117** Visit: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/LDSF

Impact Initiatives Food Access Support (18+)

Help with shopping, referrals to food support and emergency parcels.

Tel. **01273 322 950** Text: **07593 817 654** Email: food.access@impact-initiatives.org.uk

Money Advice Plus

A charity offering free debt and benefits advice, money support services and can help with getting a food bank referral.

Tel. **08081 963 699** Email: info@moneyadviceplus.org.uk Visit: www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk

Moneyworks

Moneyworks is a council-funded project which provides wide range of financial advice and works by referring clients into the right service across the city's advice partnership.

Tel. **08009 887 037**

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CAB provide independent, impartial, free and confidential advice to help people overcome the problems they face. Contact for help with managing debt, fuel debt, claiming benefits, food bank referrals and more.

Tel. **08082 787 815** Visit: www.cabrightonhove.org

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Free Home Safety Visits: www.esfrs.org/your-safety/safer-homes

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Produced thanks to the support of the Third Sector Investment fund.

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