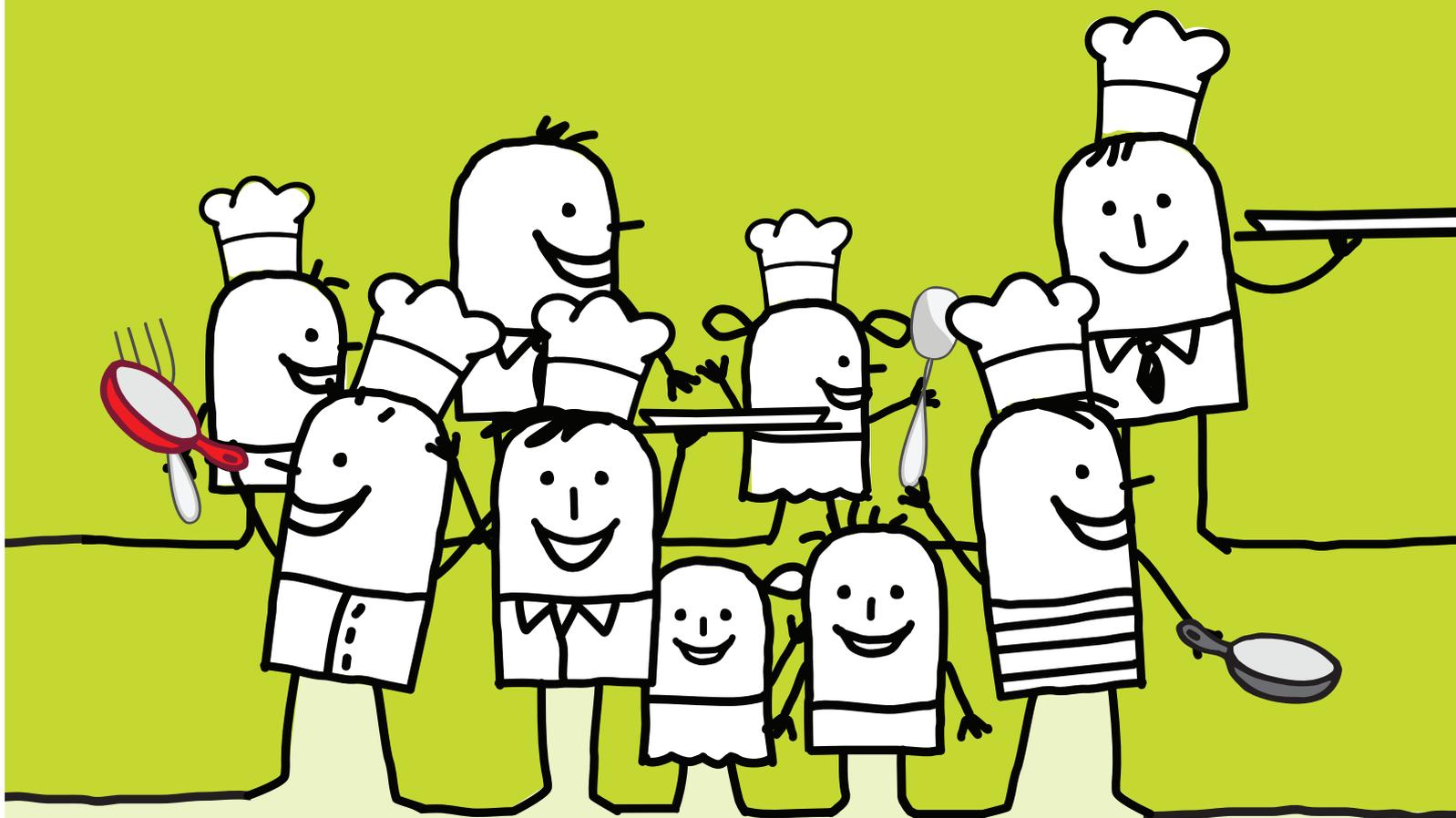


Batch Cooking



Have you ever gone to your local takeaway because you were in a rush and hadn't prepared dinner?

Do you love food?

Do you enjoy meeting new people?

Do you have one evening a month free?

If you have answered yes to any or all of the above questions I would like to introduce you to Batch Cooking Club.

What is a Batch Cooking Club?

A Batch Cooking Club consists of people who come together to batch cook a meal. When the meal is cooked it is divided up between the participants to bring home, freeze and enjoy at a later date. It really is that simple.

What are the benefits?

Wouldn't it be great to have a few spare delicious meals in the freezer to have when needed? Not only will it deter you from making poor food choices but you will also be eating healthy meals at a fraction of the cost.

What do I have to do?

Each participant is expected to help prepare and cook the meal. This may involve tasks like chopping vegetables, cooking meats or washing the dishes. There is something for everyone so anyone can attend.

How much does it cost?

Costs vary depending on how many people are in the group and the meals they choose to cook but we anticipate that each person will leave with 4-5 portions of food at a cost of no more than £5.

Where's my nearest Club?

For a list of local clubs visit www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk or to start your own request a Batch Cooking Club Toolkit from your local Council.

Starting a Batch Cooking Club - A step by step guide

1. Advertise

Advertise for members in your local area. You could do this through social media, local community groups or advertise in local businesses. Recommended group size 6-10 people.

2. Find the Venue

Find a premises that is local, value for money and can accommodate everyone in your group easily e.g. community venues, church halls etc. If there is only a small group the sessions could alternate between participants houses.

3. Meet and Greet

Organise an initial meeting with your group. Get to know the group through icebreakers (please see Appendix 1). Discuss what the expectations are from each member, when and where you will meet, allergies, overall budget per session and who will purchase the shopping. When considering the budget the group can decide how many portions of the meal each person would like to take home e.g. if 5 participants want to take home 2 portions each then 10 portions of the meal will need to be made. It is also helpful if the host brings a few healthy low cost recipes to this initial meeting so the group can decide what they want to cook at their next session.

4. Lets get Cooking

Come together as a group and prepare and cook the pre-selected meal. At the start of the session give everyone a task that they feel confident in completing e.g. peeling potatoes, chopping an onion or cutting meat. It is particularly important in these initial sessions to encourage everyone to participate in both cooking and conversation. While the meal is cooking the group can discuss what they would like to prepare at the next Batch Cooking Club meeting and who will purchase the ingredients.

Please be very careful when cooking the meal. All necessary precautions should be taken to prevent injury.

Basic Food Hygiene Information

Preparing

- Before preparation begins ensure all participants wash hands in accordance with hand washing guidance (please see Appendix 2).
- Raw meat can cause food poisoning. It is important to ensure that all equipment, worktops and utensils are washed thoroughly after being used to prepare raw meat.
- Ensure all soiled vegetables are washed thoroughly before adding to the dish.

Cooking

- **Food should be cooked to a minimum of 75°C.**
- Visually check the food to ensure it is cooked throughout (please see Appendix 3).

Cooling

- When cooked the batch should be decanted into smaller storage containers as soon as possible to allow quicker cooling. All food must be cooled quickly and placed in the fridge/freezer within 2 hours. Do not put hot food into the fridge/freezer as this will increase the temperature of the fridge/freezer and potentially cause food poisoning. If you decide to refrigerate the meal ensure it is eaten within 72 hours.
- If freezing the meal ensure it is used within 3 months (to prepare follow Defrosting & Reheating steps).

Defrosting

- To defrost, leave the sealed container in the fridge the day before and use within 24 hours. Make sure the meal is fully defrosted before reheating

Reheating

- When reheating, make sure the core temperature is above 75°C or is piping hot throughout.

Do not refreeze when defrosted.

Please Note: if you suffer from an allergy it is your responsibility to ensure the food is safe for you to eat.

“Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council accept no responsibility should an injury or illness occur as a result of attending a Batch Cooking session. It is each participants responsibility to ensure safety in respect of preparation and consumption of food.”

Beef stew with dumplings

Ingredients: 2.5kg braising steak, brisket or beef shin
10 medium onions
10 medium carrots
5 celery sticks
250g mushrooms
750ml tomato passata
3 reduced salt beef stock cubes and 1.5 litres of boiling water,
or 1.5 litres of fresh stock
1 tsp rapeseed oil or frylite

For dumplings: 450g self-raising flour
½ tsp mustard powder
1 bunch chives or scallions
1 handful parsley
400ml skimmed milk or buttermilk
8tbsp rapeseed oil

Optional: 3 tsp mustard powder
4 bay leaves
1 sprig rosemary and thyme
1 handful parsley
½ tsp pepper
Any vegetables you like

Equipment: 1 large pot
1 frying pan
1 sharp knife
1 chopping board
1 peeler
1 tablespoon
1 teaspoon
1 set of scales
1 measuring jug
1 bowl

Cost:	£2.45 per serving (based on supermarket prices)
Serves:	20
Preparation time:	35-40 minutes
Cooking time:	2-3 hours

Method: First peel and chop your vegetables, and cut them into ½ inch pieces. Then brown off your meat in a frying pan by simply adding 1 teaspoon of oil and heating up, then add your meat in batches and sear. You can brown off your onions; carrots and celery after you've seared your meat this is not essential however it can add more flavour. Place your meat and vegetables along with the rest of your ingredients and optional flavours into a large pot cover with the stock and simmer.

In a bowl add the flour and all the dry ingredients for your dumplings and mix well, then add your milk and oil and mix with a fork until the dough comes together. If the dough is too sticky add more flour, if it's too dry add more milk. Separate the dough and roll into dumplings. Place these on top of the stew during the last 30 minutes of cooking.

When everything is cooked check for seasoning and then serve with a side of fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

When freezing, make sure that the dish has completely cooled down and try to keep the dumplings on top of the stew.

Italian Lasagne

Ingredients: 2kg of 5% fat or less minced beef
8 medium onions
2 large carrots
100g mushrooms
8 garlic cloves
2tbsp dried mixed herbs
2.2ltr tomato passata
35-40 lasagne sheets, no cook or regular
500g mozzarella
100g grated parmesan or other cheese
(if using a strong cheese reduce the quantity)

Equipment: 1 frying pan
2-3 lasagne dishes or deep baking trays
1 sharp knife
1 chopping board
1 tablespoon
1 teaspoon
1 bowl

Cost:	£1.75 per serving (based on supermarket prices)
Serves:	20
Preparation time:	25-30 minutes
Cooking time:	35-40 minutes in oven at 200°C

Method: Preheat your oven to 200°C. Peel and chop your vegetables into small cubes. Brown off your minced meat in a frying pan. Do this in batches; drain off the fat after each batch. Brown off your onions in batches adding the mixed herbs and crushed garlic. Add this and the passata to the browned meat.

Grate your cheese and cut your mozzarella into cubes. If using dried lasagne sheets soak these in warm water for 5 minutes before using. Then start layering your lasagne in a lasagne dish or deep baking tray, first a few tablespoons of the meat mixture, then a layer of pasta sheets and continue this process. This recipe makes 2-3 lasagnes depending on the dish/tray you are using. The final layer should be meat mixture with the mozzarella and parmesan on top. Then bake your lasagnes in the oven for 35-40 minutes, check with a knife to see if everything is cooked and serve with a side of fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

Chicken and Vegetable Curry

Ingredients: 15 chicken thighs (on the bone or off, remove skin)
200g curry paste
1 butternut squash
5 peppers
1 1/2 cup red lentils
800ml reduced fat coconut milk
2 cups frozen peas
2 reduced salt chicken stock cubes and 1 litre of hot water,
or 1 litre of fresh stock

Equipment: 1 large pot
1 sharp knife
1 peeler
1 chopping board
1 measuring cup

Cost:	£1.55 per serving (based on supermarket prices)
Serves:	20
Preparation time:	20 minutes
Cooking time:	1 hour

Method: First peel and chop your vegetables into 1 inch pieces. You could brown off the chicken thighs in a frying pan this will add more flavour but is not necessary. You can use many types of curry pastes for this recipe, tikka masala, madras, thai green curry etc, so use whatever you like best. Put all the ingredients into your pot; add the stock cubes with hot water or the fresh stock until you've covered all of the ingredients. Give everything a good mix and leave to cook on a simmer. When cooked check for seasoning and serve with a side of fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

Cottage Pie

Ingredients: 2.5kg lamb mince, or 5% fat or less minced beef
4 medium onions
6 large carrots
6 celery sticks
5 garlic cloves
5 tbsp flour
4 tbsp tomato paste
2 Reduced salt beef stock cubes and 1 litre of hot water,
or 1 litre of fresh stock

For the mash: 3.5kg potatoes
500ml skimmed milk
50g cheddar for topping (optional)

Optional: Pepper to taste
1 sprig chopped rosemary, thyme and sage

Equipment: 2 large pots
2-3 oven dishes or deep baking trays
1 sharp knife
1 peeler
1 chopping board
1 measuring cup
1 teaspoon
1 tablespoon

Cost:	£1.60 per serving (based on supermarket prices),
Serves:	20
Preparation time:	35-40 minutes
Cooking time:	30-35 minutes in oven at 200°C

Method: Preheat your oven to 200°C.
Then peel, chop and boil the potatoes and cook in a large pot. When cooked check with a fork to ensure that they are tender, drain the water and place to the side.

Peel and chop your vegetables into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes. Heat up a pot and then brown off your mince. Whenever the mince has browned, crush the garlic and add to the mince along with herbs, seasoning and the flour and stir for a few minutes while cooking. Then add all your vegetables and the rest of your ingredients to the pot. Make sure the stock doesn't quite cover the ingredients and cook for 5 minutes on a high heat until slightly thickened.

For your mash, heat the milk and add the cooked potatoes and mash until soft. Check the mash for seasoning.

Now take your oven dishes or deep baking trays and distribute the mince mixture evenly between them. Add your mash on top and then the 50g cheddar (optional) over the mash. Bake in the oven at 200°C for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown and serve with a portion of fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

Tuna and Cauliflower Pasta Bake

Ingredients: 8 tins tuna, or 4 tuna steaks
2 small or 1 large cauliflower
750ml tomato passata
500ml low fat crème fraiche
2 cups frozen peas
1.5 kg dried brown pasta e.g. Rigatoni
300g low fat cheddar
2tbsp mixed dried herbs

Equipment: 1 large pot
2-3 oven dishes or deep baking trays
1 sharp knife
1 peeler
1 chopping board
1 measuring cup
1 teaspoon
1 tablespoon

Cost:	£1.45 per serving (based on supermarket prices)
Serves:	20 servings
Preparation time:	20 minutes
Cooking time:	20-30 minutes in oven at 200°C

Method: Preheat your oven to 200°C.
Take a large pot and boil the pasta in hot water. To prepare the cauliflower, simply cut off florets, cut larger florets in half and add this to the boiling pasta. Cook the pasta to the specifications outlined on the packaging and drain. Mix the pasta with all the other ingredients except the cheese. Pour the pasta mixture into your oven dishes or baking trays, then add the grated cheese on top and bake in the oven until golden brown. Serve with a portion of fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables.

Ice Breakers

Food Alphabet

A simple introductory game to play as everyone arrives.

Give each young person a sheet of paper with the alphabet written down one side.

They have to add the name of a food to each letter of the alphabet

i.e. a=apple, b=bread. There is one point for each answer.

Select a few letters for a triple point score. We suggest, Q, U, V, X, Y, Z.

The highest score wins an item of food of your choice!

What's Cooking?

Your group just inherited a restaurant from Chef Charlie, a long lost friend. The only problem: Charlie was very disorganised. The only recipes you have found are on strips of paper. You have to make sense of it all and quickly! The restaurant is opening tonight and you have to have the food ready.

- Divide participants into 2 groups.
- Each member of the group will be given a part of the recipe.
- Your job is to put it together as quick as possible. Your recipe must make sense.
- When the group is done, loudly shout "Bon Appetite" to signal the end of the game.

Materials Needed: Cut Recipes (separate the title, ingredients and instructions)

Time: Allow 10-12 minutes to complete the game. Once the group calls "Bon Appetite" have them read out the recipe in the order they think it should be in.

Love Letter with fruit & veg

Read this letter aloud, and ask guests write down on a piece of paper the fruits and vegetables they hear in the story. Award a prize to the person with the most correct answers.

My Dearest Leslie,

I am certainly in a (**PICKLE**). I have (**BEAN**) longing so for a (**DATE**) with you, that my heart (**BEETS**) fast every time I see you. You are beautiful with your (**PEACH**) like complexion and your (**RADISH**) hair. You see, I'm (**PLUM**) daft about you, but I can't tell whether you (**CARR-OT**) all for me. You are the (**APPLE**) of my eye, and my love for you is as strong as an (**ONION**). Love like mine can make a (**MAN-GO**) crazy. Please don't (**SQUASH**) my fondest hopes; for should you consider me a (**LEMON**), or (**TURN-IP**) your nose at me, I could not bear it. However, we (**CANT-ALOUPE**), so (**LETT-UCE**) be married in December.

Love, Jim

P.S. I am sure I can get a (**RAIS-IN**) salary, so our financial future looks bright.

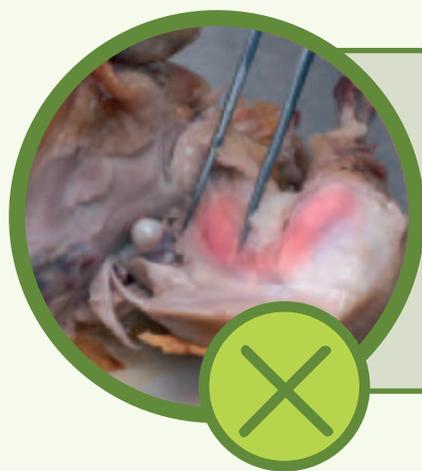
Advice on Cooking

Cooking is a critical step to ensure that any bacteria that may be present in food are completely killed and the food is safe to eat. It is essential that cooking is carried out properly.

Safe Cooking Tips

- Preheat equipment such as ovens and grills before cooking. If you use equipment before it has preheated, food will take longer to cook. This means that recommended cooking times in recipes or manufacturer's instructions might not be long enough.
- Do not let raw food touch or drip onto cooked food e.g. when adding food to the grill/barbecue. Raw food can carry food poisoning bacteria, which could spread onto cooked food and stop it being safe.

Checking That Foods Are Properly Cooked



Check that poultry is cooked properly in the thickest part of the leg. The meat should not be pink or red and the juices should not have any pink or red in them.



The largest piece of meat in stews, curries etc. should be piping hot all the way through with no pink or red in the centre.





Check that sausages and burgers are thoroughly cooked and piping hot all the way through. This is because they may have bacteria spread throughout. Whole cuts of pork should also be thoroughly cooked.



Check that combination dishes are piping hot (steaming) in the centre. If you are cooking a large dish or batch, check in several places. (Remember large dishes or batches require a longer cooking time).

Check that liquid dishes bubble rapidly when you stir them. This is to make sure the food is hot enough to cook it thoroughly and kill food poisoning bacteria. Stir liquid dishes frequently. This is to help make sure the food is the same temperature all the way through, with no cold spots.



Check that all the outside surfaces of whole cuts of meat and whole joints (beef or lamb) are full cooked. This will kill food poisoning bacteria which are only on the outside of meat. Pork and rolled joints should not be served rare



Cut into the centre of fish, or near the bone if there is one, to check that the colour and texture has changed. Whole pieces of fish (e.g. tuna steaks) can be served 'rare' as long as they have been fully seared on the outside.



TO check a pork joint or rolled meat joint, insert a skewer into the centre until juices run out. The juices should not have any pink or red in them.



Turn meat and poultry during cooking as this helps it cook more evenly.

Effective Handwashing Technique



Step 1

Wet your hands thoroughly under warm running water and squirt liquid soap onto your palm.

Step 2

Rub your hands together palm to palm to make a lather.



Step 3

Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other and along the fingers.

Step 4

Put your palms together with fingers interlocked and rub in between each of the fingers thoroughly.

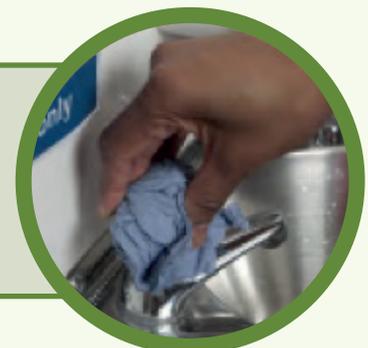


Step 5

Rub round your thumbs on each hand and then rub the fingers of each hand against your palms.

Step 6

Rinse off the soap with clean water and dry your hands thoroughly on a disposable towel. Turn off the tap with the towel and throw the towel away.



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