

# Cooking the way our grandparents did

Simple meals that stretch further and bring people together

Food is more than what is on the plate. It is about health, connection, culture and community.

These recipes are inspired by traditional ways of cooking – simple, filling meals designed to stretch further and bring people together.

These recipes come from a time when food was not wastes and meals were prepared simple, filling, and made to stretch further.

## Why these recipes matter...

Before food was convenient, it was:

- Stretched
- Shared
- Made to last

These recipes were built for:

- Tight budgets
- Large families
- Making the most of what was available

And they still work today.



## Meat and dumpling casserole

*A little meat, a lot of comfort*

### Ingredients

Casserole base:

- 500g beef mince or diced beef
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 2–3 carrots (sliced)
- 2 potatoes (chopped)
- 1 cup frozen peas (optional)
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2–3 cups water or stock (homemade if possible)
- 1 tbsp tomato sauce or paste (optional)
- Salt and pepper

### Dumplings

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp butter or margarine
- ½ cup milk (approx.)

### Optional extras

- ½ – 1 cup of lentils
- Extra vegetables: zucchini, pumpkin, celery
- Herbs (dried or fresh)

### Why it works

- Uses cheaper cuts of meat
- Bulked with veg and dumplings
- Very filling

Make it go further:

More dumplings = less meat needed

## Slow cooker / one-pot meals

*Set and forget, feed everyone*

### Ingredients

#### Protein (choose one)

- 500g–1kg meat (beef, chicken, sausages)
- or 1–2 cups lentils/beans (for low-cost option)

#### Vegetables (add plenty)

- 1 onion
- 2–3 carrots
- 2–3 potatoes
- Other veg (pumpkin, zucchini, broccoli stems, peas)

#### Flavour base

- 1–2 tbsp tomato paste or sauce
- Garlic (optional)
- Herbs (dried or fresh)

#### Liquid

- 2–3 cups water or stock

#### To stretch it further (optional)

- ½–1 cup lentils
- 1 cup beans
- Pasta, rice, or dumplings added later

### EXAMPLE COMBINATIONS

- Beef and Vegetable Stew | Beef + carrot + potato + onion + stock
- Curried Sausages | Sausages + onion + carrot + curry powder + water
- Chicken and Vegetable Stew | Chicken + mixed veg + herbs + stock
- Lentil and Vegetable (low-cost option) | Lentils + veg + tomato + stock

### Why it works

- Uses cheaper cuts of meat
- Bulked with vegetables
- Minimal effort
- Can become multiple meals

**TOP TIP**

Use less meat and more vegetables or mix cheaper cuts with sausages

## Rice pudding

*Warm, filling, and made from basics*

### Ingredients

- Rice
- Milk
- Sugar

### Why it works

- Very low cost
- Filling dessert or breakfast
- Uses pantry staples

## Bubble and squeak

*Leftovers made into a whole new meal*

### Ingredients

- Leftover potato
- Cabbage or vegetables

### Why it works

- No waste
- Quick and filling
- Great with eggs

## Vegetable soup

*The ultimate stretch meal*

### Ingredients

- Use whatever vegetables you have

### Why it works

- Uses whatever you have
- Feeds many
- Freezes well

## Bread and butter pudding

*Turning leftovers into something special*

### Ingredients

- 4–6 slices stale bread
- Butter or margarine
- 2 cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 2–3 tbsp sugar
- ½ cup sultanas or raisins (optional)
- 1 tsp vanilla (optional)
- Pinch of cinnamon or nutmeg (optional)

Optional extras: Apple slices, jam spread on bread, leftover fruit, a sprinkle of sugar on top

### How to cook:

#### Prepare the bread

- Lightly butter each slice
- Cut into halves or triangles

#### Layer in dish

- Place bread in an oven dish
- Sprinkle with sultanas (and any extras like apple or jam)

#### Make the custard

- Whisk together:
  - Milk
  - Eggs
  - Sugar
  - Vanilla (if using)

#### Pour over

- Pour mixture over the bread
- Press bread down gently so it soaks
- Let sit for 5–10 minutes if you can

Bake at 180°C for 30–40 minutes. Until golden on top and set in the middle

Serve warm, straight from the oven.

### Why it works

- Uses stale bread
- Simple ingredients
- Feels like a treat

## Custard

*Simple comfort from basics*

### Ingredients

- Milk
- Eggs
- Sugar

### Serve with:

- Fruit (fresh, preserved, or stewed)
- Cake (heat it up if it is a little stale as a dessert)
- Pudding

## Trifle

*Layered, flexible, and made from what is on hand*

### Why it works

Trifle is the ultimate “use what you have” dessert:

- Uses leftover cake or sponge
- Works with fresh, frozen, or tinned fruit
- Can be made as simple or as layered as you like
- Feeds a crowd

### What goes into it

#### Base layers:

- Leftover cake, sponge, or biscuits

#### Fruit layer:

- Fresh fruit
- Frozen fruit
- Tinned fruit

#### Creamy layer:

- Custard (homemade or packet)

#### Optional:

- Jelly
- Cream

### How to make it

1. Layer cake or bread at the bottom
2. Add fruit
3. Pour over custard
4. Repeat layers
5. Top with cream (if available)

Chill before serving

## Scones

Sweet or Savoury – One mix, many options

One batch can feed many and stretch across days – you can even freeze them to reheat and use later.

### Ingredients

- 3 cups self-raising flour
- 1 pinch salt
- 60g butter (or margarine)
- 1 cup milk (approx.)

### Method

1. Rub butter into flour
2. Add milk to form soft dough
3. Gently bring together (don't overwork)
4. Cut into rounds
5. Bake at 200°C for 12–15 mins

### For Savoury Scones:

 add to base mix:

Grated cheese, carrot or zucchini, herbs, leftover vegetable. Great for lunchboxes, snacks, and light meals.

**For fruit scones:** add to the base mix: ½ cup of sultanas or raisins and an optional 1-2 tablespoons of sugar. These can be served with butter, jam, or just as is.



### These options show us how to:

- Use cheaper ingredients
- Stretch small amounts of meat
- Turn leftovers into new meals
- Cook once, eat multiple times

Cooking like this takes time and energy and that is not always possible.

Even using one or two of these ideas can make a difference.

Our grandparents didn't call it "food resilience" they just called it cooking.

### These skills:

- Save money
- Reduce waste
- Feed families well

Sometimes the best solutions aren't new. They are the ones shared across kitchens, generations, and communities.

## TOP TIP

Freeze in portions and reheat in the oven (avoid microwave)

