

# What and how to cook in winter



Linking Ideas for Nourishment  
Knowledge & Support



# LINKS Eyemouth

LINKS Eyemouth is a project for families in the Eyemouth area in the Borders. The focus is round healthy, lower budget eating, saving energy, reducing household costs and staying well, physically and mentally.

The project addresses issues around waste or surplus food, uses local produce and low-carbon transport for local shopping and delivery via an e-cargo bike.

This winter LINKS has been delivering community cooking sessions and the families have included their favourite recipes in this booklet.

We all have our part to play in the climate crisis and the LINKS project and its families have shared some of their climate action tips and advice for cooking and eating well in winter. We hope you find it useful!



## **Different ways of cooking**

### **Air fryer**

Air fryers are small convection ovens and can be used as an alternative to a standard oven or a deep fat fryer. The internal cooking chamber radiates heat near the food and then a fan moves the hot air around the food.

An air fryer is ideal for cooking crispier, healthy meals with less energy. You can cook a variety of things in an air fryer like meats, vegetables and even scones! Air fryers are about 50% more energy efficient than ovens and use less time to cook.

### **Slow cooker**

Slow cookers are designed to cook food slowly, at a low temperature and keep it hot.

Although slow cookers take longer to cook food, they are often rated at as little as 200 watts, making them one of the most energy-efficient appliances in your kitchen – a tenth of some electric ovens.

An average-sized slow cooker uses just 1.3 kWh per meal, which comes in at around 45p on the current average energy tariff.

## Food leftovers

Reheat in microwave or fry up for a quick and tasty lunch.

Make leftover meat or veg into a 'salad pot' for lunch – ideal to take away too.

Add pasta, rice or quinoa, and a drizzle of dressing.

Stale bread – whizz into breadcrumbs if you have a machine, then freeze. Use as crispy topping on pasta, roast veg or anything else.

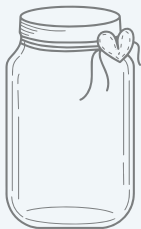
Add herbs and grated cheese.

Freezer night or fridge night – using up odd bits and pieces – add a big pot of pasta or potatoes.

Don't need expensive containers – wash and reuse margarine tubs, ice cream tubs, yoghurt pots etc.

Label clearly with date and contents.

If storing opened container in fridge – write on date opened.



## Low cost cooking

Throw in a handful of porridge oats to add extra roughage and texture.

Use soda bread to make (savoury) scones – add grated cheese or dried herbs.

Packs of frozen white fish – great for fish pie or soup, or add breadcrumbs and fry.

Make 'pesto' with any herb pack, greens such as spinach, dash of oil or lemon juice.

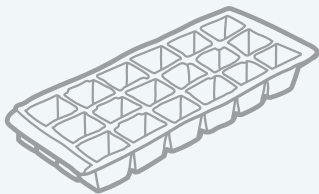
If you are using the oven, consider cooking two things at once, or making double and freeze one.

Batch cook – and freeze some for later.

Freeze extra chopped veg or herbs in ice cube trays – to add to soups, pasta etc.

Freeze stewed apples in ice cube trays – and melt one on your porridge.

If your milk is going to go off before you can use it all, pour some in an ice cube tray and then use when needed.



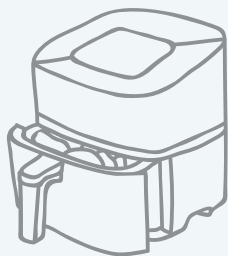
## Planning your meals ahead

Planning a menu is by far the cheapest way to do your shopping.

You are much more likely to buy what you need, and avoid the temptation of foods that are not essential.

Meal planning can help you feel more calm and organised:

- It reduces repetition of the same meals over and over again.
- It helps save money and reduce wastage.
- It helps you to eat healthier by planning variety and balance into your diet.
- Your child(ren) can get involved in helping, making them more likely to try new foods.
- Planning your meals and snacks allows you to reduce waste by re-using specific ingredients throughout the week.



## Tips for winter food shopping

Shopping for food is a key aspect of the cookery process and involves both planning and budgeting skills. It is important to plan ahead, consider the quantities and costs of foods as well as the nutritional balance of meals.

Here are some tips to help make the shopping process easier:

- Be prepared with a list of meals you plan to make for the week ahead.
- Plan a list before leaving the house and stick to it. It can be helpful to write your shopping list in the order of the aisles in your local supermarket, this will make it easier to follow and save you time when shopping.
- Keeping a pad and pen in the kitchen and add to list when store cupboard essentials are used up, this can save time when writing your list and prevent you from forgetting those key ingredients.
- When shopping, check use by dates of foods to ensure they will still be safe to eat when you plan to use them. Fresh foods which can be frozen at home are also useful but remember to follow food storage and defrosting guidelines.
- Have a quick rummage through the fridge, freezer and store cupboard once a week; it'll end those evening runs to the local late night shop for essentials.

## Tips for winter food shopping

- Stock up on bulk buys if possible, staples/versatile ingredients – pasta, tinned tomatoes.
- Never go to the shop hungry, if you shop whilst being hungry you will be more likely to pick up items that aren't on your list and may look good but won't meet all your nutritional needs.
- Get shopping delivered (if you can access online) if tricky to go yourself – get family to contribute to the menu plan (and shopping/cooking).
- If you find supermarkets overwhelming, try to shop at quiet times – sometimes supermarkets have a dedicated 'quiet hour'.
- Combine walk in countryside with trip to local farm shop – fresh and local produce.
- If you have freezer space, consider buying a 'family pack' from the local butcher.
- Buy dry ingredients in bulk, eg rice, lentils, porridge – if you have somewhere to store them. Take your own containers to a local refill store if you have one.
- Get together with a group of friends and buy multipacks from a wholesaler to share out among you.



## **Smaller or reduced appetite**

Winter can be a time when all our patterns change – getting out less, eating different foods, drinking less water and fruit juices, and so on. This can contribute to all sorts of other health problems or feeling uncomfortable.

As we get older our appetite can also reduce so you want to get a good amount of energy and protein. It can help to:

- Include high calorie foods such as full fat milk, butter or nuts.
- Have several small meals or snacks throughout the day, avoiding too much salt or sugar –something tasty like spiced roasted chickpeas.
- Try drinks like smoothies as they can have good food content too (add peanut butter, yoghurt, oats or nuts if making your own).

Foods high in natural fats also work well like:

- Nuts & olives
- Cheese
- Avocado
- Peanut butter & chocolate spread
- Soups with beans or lentils
- Milky drinks like milkshakes or hot chocolate

In winter we tend to stay at home more and not get out to get as much exercise as we would usually do, we may have a smaller appetite so feel like smaller portions.

# RED PEPPER, TOMATO & COURGETTE SOUP

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)



1 tablespoon of  
olive oil



2 medium onions



3 cloves of garlic



2 red peppers



2 courgettes



1 vegetable stock cube &  
500ml boiling water



Tin of chopped  
tomatoes

# RED PEPPER, TOMATO & COURGETTE SOUP

## METHOD



Peel and chop the onions and garlic



Wash and chop the red pepper and courgettes



Dissolve the stock cube in boiling water



Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the onions, and cook for 5 minutes stirring occasionally

# RED PEPPER, TOMATO & COURGETTE SOUP

## METHOD



Add the garlic, peppers and courgettes, cook for a further 5 minutes



Add the tomatoes and stock to the saucepan. Stir well, then leave to simmer over a gentle heat, for about 15 minutes



Blend the soup or serve chunky if preferred

# POTATO, LEEK & SWEETCORN SOUP

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)



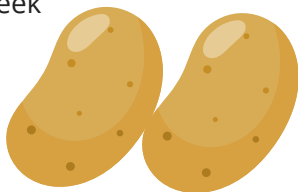
1 tablespoon of  
vegetable oil



2 small or 1 large  
leek



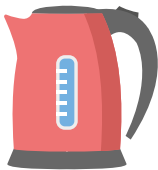
2 handfuls of frozen  
sweetcorn or 1 small  
tin



2 large  
potatoes



1 vegetable stock cube &  
750ml boiling water



Black pepper to  
season (optional)

# POTATO, LEEK & SWEETCORN SOUP

## METHOD



Wash and chop or slice the leeks



Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat



Add the leeks, stirring well



Peel and chop the potatoes into small pieces and add to the pan with the sweetcorn

# POTATO, LEEK & SWEETCORN SOUP

## METHOD



Crumble in the stock cube and add the water



Bring to the boil, stirring well



Turn down the heat and simmer gently for 30 minutes



For a smoother soup use a hand-blender or simply mash with a potato masher

# CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)



1 tablespoon of  
vegetable oil



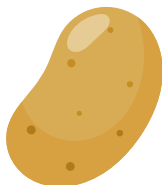
1 medium onion



1 large garlic clove  
(optional)



3-4 medium  
parsnips



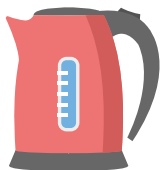
1 medium  
potato



1 teaspoon mild  
curry powder



1 vegetable stock cube &  
800ml freshly boiled water



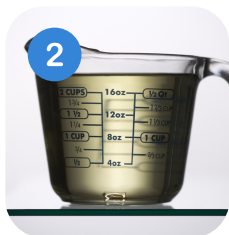


# CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP

## METHOD



Peel & chop onion, potato, parsnips & garlic



Boil kettle, pour water into measuring jug. Crumble stock cube into water & stir until dissolved



Heat the oil in a medium pan over a medium heat



Add the chopped onion to pan cooking for 2-3 minutes until soft

# CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP

## METHOD



Add in garlic, parsnips and potatoes then cook for another 5 minutes on a low heat



Stir in the curry powder and cook for 2 minutes on a medium heat



Add stock slowly stirring well, bring to the boil then turn down the heat, cover with a lid and simmer gently for 25 minutes or until parsnips are soft



Remove from the heat and blend with a hand blender for a smooth texture

# SLOW COOKER SPICED PARSNIP SOUP

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)



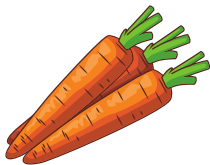
750g parsnips



1 medium onion



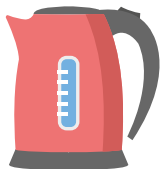
2 large garlic  
cloves



400g carrots



2 teaspoon curry  
powder



2 vegetable stock cubes & 1  
litre freshly boiled water

# SLOW COOKER SPICED PARSNIP SOUP

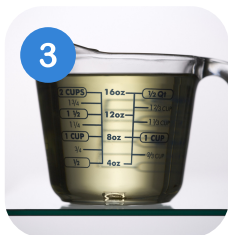
## METHOD



Peel & chop onion, carrots, parsnips & garlic



Tip the parsnips, carrots, onions, garlic and curry powder into a slow cooker, and mix well so all the vegetables are coated in the curry powder.



Pour in the vegetable stock, then mix again.



Cook on low for 8 hours. Once ready use a hand blender or mash with a potato masher

# BUTTERNUT SQUASH & APPLE SOUP

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)



1 tablespoon of  
vegetable oil



1 medium onion



2 apples



1 medium butternut  
squash



2 cm or ½ inch piece  
fresh ginger  
(optional)



1 vegetable stock cube &  
800ml freshly boiled water

# BUTTERNUT SQUASH & APPLE SOUP

## METHOD



To prepare butternut, cut in half across the middle



Cut each half lengthways, and scoop out the seeds using a spoon, peel and chop into smaller chunks



Boil kettle, pour water into measuring jug. Crumble stock cube into water & stir until dissolved



Peel and chop the onion and apples

# BUTTERNUT SQUASH & APPLE SOUP

## METHOD



5 Peel and grate/chop the ginger (if using)



6 Heat the oil in a medium cooking pan over a medium heat



7 Add the onion and ginger (if using) and cook for 2-3 minutes until it begins to soften



8 Add in the chopped apple and butternut squash chunks, cooking for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally

# BUTTERNUT SQUASH & APPLE SOUP

## METHOD



Cover with the vegetable stock



Bring to the boil, stirring well



Turn down the heat, cover with a lid and allow to simmer gently for 30 minutes until the vegetables have softened



Remove from the heat and blend with a hand blender or mash well with a potato masher



# FRUIT SCONES

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)



225g self raising  
flour



1 tbsp vegetable oil



1 tsp sugar



1 egg



130ml milk (9 tablespoons)



70g (handful) raisins  
or dried fruit of your  
choice

# FRUIT SCONES

## METHOD



Preheat oven to  
220°C/fan 200°C/ gas  
mark 7



Sift the flour into a large  
bowl



Beat the egg and oil  
together with the milk



Mix the wet and dry  
mixtures together with the  
dried fruit to form a soft  
dough

# FRUIT SCONES

## METHOD



Turn onto a floured board or clean surface, knead lightly and shape into a round with your hands, patting it down to about 2cm thick



Cut the round of dough into 6 wedges



Place scones onto a lightly floured baking tray spread well apart



Bake on top shelf of oven for 10-15 minutes. Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes then serve

# AIR FRYER SCONES

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)



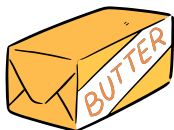
225g self raising  
flour



1 tbsp baking  
powder



50g caster sugar



50g unsalted  
butter



120ml milk



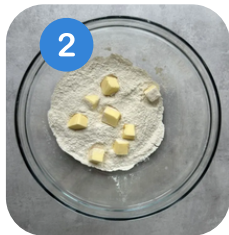
70g (handful) raisins  
or dried fruit of your  
choice (optional)

# AIR FRYER SCONES

## METHOD



In a large bowl, combine your flour, sugar, baking powder and a pinch of salt.



Add the butter and rub it into the flour using your fingers until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add dried fruit if using



Make a well in your mixture, pour in the milk and start combining to form a dough.



Turn out your dough onto a lightly floured surface.

# AIR FRYER SCONES

## METHOD



Roll it out to about 3 or 4 cm thick, and use a round cutter to cut out your scones.



Line the air fryer basket with some baking paper and add the scones, remembering to leave room for them to expand



Brush them with a little milk for a beautiful, golden finish and let them bake for about 8 to 10 minutes at 180°C until golden brown and well-risen



Allow to cool for 5-10 minutes then serve

# CHEESE SCONES

INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)



225g self raising  
flour



50g sunflower spread



75g mature cheddar  
cheese



1 egg



75ml milk (5 tablespoons)



$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp mustard  
powder (optional)

# CHEESE SCONES

## METHOD



Preheat oven to 220°C/  
fan 200°C/gas mark 7



Sift the flour (and mustard  
powder if using) into a large  
bowl



Add the sunflower spread  
and gently rub into the flour  
using your finger tips until  
the mixture resemble  
breadcrumbs



Grate the cheese, keeping a  
little back for the top of the  
scones, stir the rest into the  
flour mix



# CHEESE SCONES

## METHOD



Beat the milk and egg together. Stir into the dry mix to form a soft dough



On a lightly floured surface- Use your hands to shape the dough into a round, about 2cm deep



Cut into 6 triangles/wedges



Place scones onto a lightly floured baking tray and sprinkle the tops with spare grated cheese. Bake on top shelf of oven for 10-15 minutes

Our LINKS Eyemouth project has been delivering community cooking sessions where we have been making delicious, nutritious easy to make meals on a budget. Where possible we use local or surplus food.

The following recipes have been provided by NHS Borders Healthy Living Network and have been costed against an average ASDA shop in December 2023:

<b>Recipe</b>	<b>Asda Total</b>	<b>Per Serving</b>
Curried Parsnip Soup	£0.67	£0.17
Easy Fruit Trifle	£3.63	£0.91
Butternut Squash & Apple Soup	£2.40	£0.59
Oatie Christmas Mincemeat Slice	£1.29	£0.21
Turkey or Chicken Gravy	£1.05	£0.26
Spiced Apple Muffins	£1.14	£0.19
Hedgehog Potatoes	£0.80	£0.20



# Easy Fruit Trifle



## Ingredients - serves 4

- 4 small plain muffins or (½ a pack) trifle sponges
- 200ml low fat custard (ready made)
- 150g tub of low fat natural or Greek yoghurt
- 400g tinned fruit in juice (not syrup) of your choice e.g. peaches

## Method

1. Open and drain tinned fruit and cut into desired size, keeping aside a little fruit to decorate

### To assemble

2. Break muffins or trifle sponges into the bottom of one large glass or dessert dish or into 4 small glasses or dessert dishes
3. Add a layer of fruit on top of the muffins or sponges. You can also add a little fruit juice if you like.
4. Top with a layer of the custard
5. Finish by spooning over the yoghurt

### To decorate

6. Decorate with the fruit set aside

### Top Tips

- Replace tinned fruits in juice (not syrup) e.g. peaches, apricots or fruit cocktail with fresh or frozen (defrosted) fruits or berries



# Oatie Christmas Mincemeat Slice



## Ingredients - makes 6

- 75g plain flour
- 55g sunflower spread
- 60g porridge oats
- 50g caster sugar
- 100g mincemeat
- 1 apple

## Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 190°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 5
2. Add the flour, porridge oats, sugar and spread into a mixing bowl
3. Gently “rub” the spread into the dry ingredients using your fingertips to make a crumble
4. Press half the mixture into a small loaf tin or baking tin (or a rectangular foil container)
5. Peel and grate the apple, discarding the core
6. Mix the mincemeat and apple together and spread it over the first layer of crumble
7. Cover the apple and mincemeat with the remaining crumble and press down firmly
8. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown
9. Allow to cool then cut into 6 slices

## Top Tips

- Use wholemeal flour instead of white
- Cool hands under cold water and dry – ready to “rub in”
- Serve as a dessert with low fat natural/Greek yoghurt



# Turkey or Chicken Gravy



## Ingredients - serves 4

Turkey or chicken cooking juices  If serving to babies 6-12 months (from roasting tin) - leave out the stock cube and use

2 tbsp cornflour and a little cold **boiled water only** water  
1 vegetable stock cube + 500ml freshly boiled water

## Method

1. In a cup or small bowl - mix 2 tbsp cornflour with cold water to make a thin paste
2. Pour 500ml freshly boiled water from the kettle into a heatproof jug, add the  stock cube and stir until fully dissolved
3. Pour the turkey or chicken juices into a pan with the vegetable stock, place on the hob over a high heat and bring to boil
4. Reduce the heat a little then stir or whisk in the cornflour paste until gravy thickens
5. Turn the heat down low and simmer gently for 5 minutes
6. Serve over your carved turkey or chicken and vegetables

### Top Tips

- Instead of using a vegetable stock cube, if you have boiled any vegetables, drain off the water and use 500ml of this
- For families with babies 6-12 months, use plain water (or the vegetable cooking water only); the crumbled stock cube can be stirred in once baby's portion is taken out
- If gravy is too thick, add a little more water



# Spiced Apple Muffins



## Ingredients - makes 6

- 1 large apple
- 30g caster sugar
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp sunflower oil
- 3 tbsp semi-skimmed milk
- 100g self raising flour
- ¼ tsp mixed spice or cinnamon

## Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 190°C/Fan 170°C/Gas 5
2. Place muffin cases into a muffin tin
3. Break the egg into a medium mixing bowl
4. Add the oil, sugar and semi-skimmed milk, stirring well until blended
5. Sift the flour and mixed spice/cinnamon into another bowl
6. Peel and grate or chop the apples into small pieces and add to flour then stir
7. Add the dry and wet ingredients together, stir until combined – do not overbeat
8. Spoon the mixture into 6 muffin cases (in a muffin tin)
9. Bake for 20-25 minutes until golden and springy to touch

### Top Tips

- For a plain muffin leave out fruit and spice/cinnamon
- Use medium muffin or bun cases
- Try using different fruits e.g. one ripe banana or pear



# Hedgehog Potatoes



## Ingredients - serves 4

- 8 small/medium potatoes
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- Pepper to taste (optional)

## Method

1. Pre-heat oven 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 5
2. Wash the potatoes
3. Place each potato on a chopping board, then make thin slices across the top carefully - making sure you do not cut right through the potato
4. Place the potatoes on baking tray brushed with oil then drizzle oil over the potatoes sparingly
5. Place in pre-heated oven and cook for 30 minutes
6. Remove tray from oven and baste the potatoes with the hot oil carefully, then turn tray and add pepper (if using)
7. Return to the oven to roast for another 30-40 minutes or until potatoes are cooked through and golden

### Top Tips

- Add some mixed herbs or spice up with Cajun/smoked paprika
- If you have any leftovers refrigerate and reheat in a hot oven for 10-15 minutes the next day





**Linking Ideas for Nourishment  
Knowledge & Support**

For more information or to get in touch about our LINKS project contact Ruth [ruth.n@otbds.org](mailto:ruth.n@otbds.org) or Charlene [charlene.linkseymouth@gmail.com](mailto:charlene.linkseymouth@gmail.com)



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