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Nourish Your Brain with Tastes from Home

A Mind-Healthy Cooking Toolkit for People Living with Dementia

Authors

Eleanor Ellis - Elisa Porretta - Radiah Rahman
Safa Idriss-Rabati - Vivien Nereen Saguros

We are a team of aspiring registered dietitians, studying at Toronto Metropolitan University and completing the Master of Health Science in Nutrition Communication. As part of our studies, we were instructed to design a public health initiative for the people impacted by dementia in Canada.

Acknowledgements

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Additionally, we thank our project partners:

- · Toronto Metropolitan University
- · Alzheimer Society of Canada

The Alzheimer Society of Canada is proud to collaborate with Toronto Metropolitan University's Master of Nutrition program as part of its 2025 capstone project. Initiated through outreach from the School of Nutrition, this partnership brings together graduate students and the Society to support the nutritional well-being of people living with dementia and their care partners. From January to July 2025, students worked closely with members of the Alzheimer Society of Canada's Advisory Group—comprised of persons living with dementia and care partners, through many conversations—gathering feedback on a monthly basis to guide the development of a dementia-friendly Toolkit.

The final resource is a simplified, easy-to-follow Toolkit designed specifically with the needs of this community in mind, offering accessible recipes that support independence, dignity and enjoyment in the kitchen. This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to creating practical, evidence-informed tools that promote quality of life through nutrition.



Introducing...

Nourish Your Brain with Tastes from Home

A Mind-Healthy Cooking Toolkit for People Living with Dementia. This dementia-friendly cooking toolkit was created to help people living with dementia, caregivers, families and care partners bring joy back to the kitchen while supporting the nutritional and emotional needs of individuals living with dementia. Packed with practical tips, culturally inspired meal ideas, and easy kitchen modifications, this toolkit helps turn everyday cooking into a meaningful, brain-supportive experience. Rooted in inclusivity, accessibility and evidence-based nutrition, it's your go-to guide for creating safe, satisfying meals that feel like home. One delicious memory at a time.

"Food is more than just fuel...
it's connection, comfort and culture".



How to Use This Toolkit



Support for Cultural Recipes and Brain Health

Each page is curated with recipe ideas and MIND diet-friendly adaptations to support cognitive health.



Create a Dementia-Friendly Kitchen

Explore safety and accessibility tips for a safer, more comfortable cooking space.



Print or Download

Print full pages or single sections and stick your favourite sheets on your fridge or cupboard for daily reference.



Personalize Your Plate

Customize recipes to meet your needs by swapping ingredients, skipping what you don't like, and adding or removing spices as desired!

Identifying the Need





In partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Canada, we distributed an online survey and conducted a focus group with people living with dementia, caregivers and health professionals, which revealed:

- Many people expressed difficulties finding culturally appropriate meal options in care settings
- · A desire for recipes and cooking that reflect diverse traditions
- The importance of modifying meals for texture or accessibility without losing cultural roots

A Toolkit Rooted in Culture

Our toolkit responds to these findings. By promoting meals that celebrate cultural heritage while meeting the dietary needs of people living with dementia, we can make food a

joyful, nourishing and inclusive part of care. It is apparent that many individuals from racialized groups feel excluded by mainstream dementia resources. We are here to design a resource that includes simpler recipes, visual tools, and adapted versions of cultural meals that accommodate dementia-friendly textures and cognitive needs.



Why Cultural Inclusion Matters in Dementia Care

Food is deeply personal and provides us with a sense of identity and connection to family memories. For individuals living with dementia, mealtimes can raise challenges due to cognitive changes. However, research evidence shows that integrating familiar cultural foods and flavours can bring memories and foster emotional well-being. Researchers found that serving traditional foods increased enjoyment, appetite and communication in people with dementia, bringing "moments of joy and delight" to mealtime.



Cultural foods support memory recall

Sensory cues like smell and taste can powerfully stimulate memory. A familiar dish can help someone remember family gatherings, early life or cultural celebrations. This connection has been shown to improve emotional well-being in the dementia community.



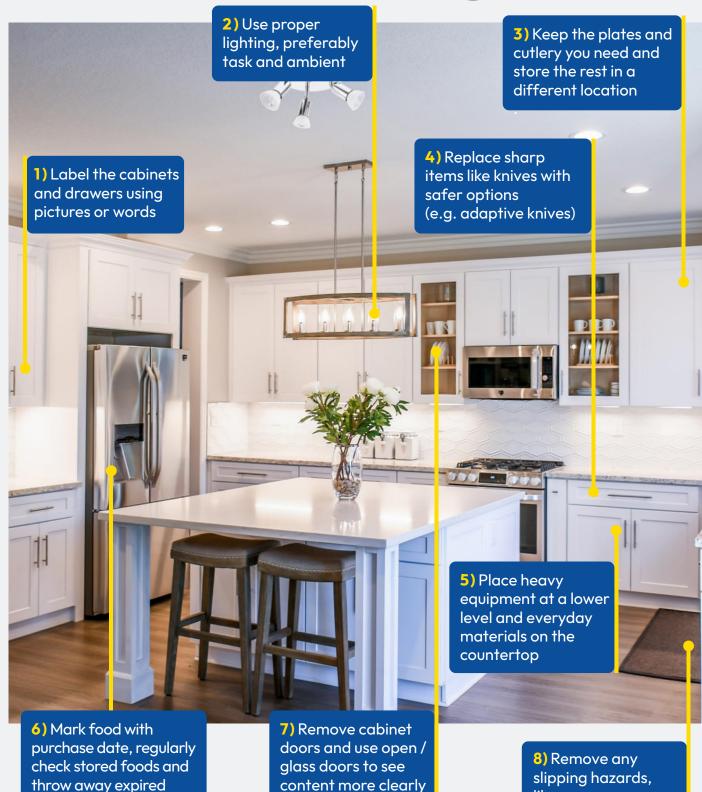
Inclusion and mealtime support boosts nutritional intake

Malnutrition is a growing concern in older adults with dementia. Engaging individuals living with dementia throughout the cooking process can enhance communication, promote sensory stimulation, and build confidence in the kitchen. Shifting the focus to engagement can foster companionship, connection, and a greater sense of familiarity with cultural dishes.

Making a Dementia-Friendly Kitchen



like rugs



items

Kitchen Set-up for Safety & Success

- 1. Use labels on cabinet doors and drawers to identify what is inside. For example, you can use **pictures** like for the garbage and **simple words** like "Cutlery Drawer" and "Pots and Pans Cabinet". Use bright paper, large font and lamination for labels.
- 2. Installing the proper lighting is extremely important and can improve safety. **Task and ambient lighting** systems are typically recommended.
- **3.** Reduce the number of options of plates, pots, cups, glasses, and cutlery stored in the cabinets and only keep the items used daily. Store the rest in a different location.
 - **A.** Consider changing glass or ceramic items to non-breakable options to avoid accidents.
- **4.** Remove any hazards and unsafe equipment/materials from easy reach. For example, knives and sharp objects should be hidden and replaced with **adaptive knives**.
- **5.** Place heavy items at an appropriate height level and everyday materials on the countertop. For example, it may be useful to put a tray on the counter containing basic essentials like tea, coffee, sugar, and a jar of cooking utensils.
- **6.** Mark and label food with purchase dates, regularly check your food supply before shopping and throw away expired items.
 - **A.** Store food in clear containers so you can easily see what's inside.
 - **B.** Work with already established routines, such as having weekly groceries delivered, to help move new food in and old food out.
- 7. Remove cabinet doors and use open/glass doors to see what's inside more clearly.
- 8. Remove any rugs and mats near the kitchen sink or stove area, as they are tripping hazards.
- 9. Some other things to keep in mind:
 - **A.** Cleaning liquids can be mistaken for drinks; either remove them from the kitchen area or store them somewhere higher up.
 - **B.** Be mindful when using an electric kettle; it can be too hot to touch, too heavy, or mistaken for a stovetop kettle.
 - **C.** Use appliances that have an auto shut-off feature.
 - **D.** The hot water tap temperature may be too high, resulting in scalding. Reduce the hot water temperature if needed.
 - **E.** Prevent unsafe stove usage by applying stove knob covers or remove knobs to prevent turning.
 - F. Discard toxic plants and fake food decorations that could be mistaken for real food.

Adaptive Tools and Equipment Checklist

People living with dementia have a higher risk of injury in their homes. Here are some suggestions for tools and equipment that may allow for a safer cooking environment.

Valve: -

can shut the gas off a cooker when the timer runs out.



can be placed on countertops, cooks meals using less oil, and is equipped with dial or digital controls.



can help alert you if smoke or gas is detected.



Water overflow alarm:

can help prevent leaks and flooding.

Fridge alarms: -

can alert you if a door is left open and prevent food spoilage.



Combination microwave oven: -

easy to use; can grill, roast and bake; and automatically shuts off when the timer runs out.



Small stepladder or stool with non-slip feet: can help you reach for items up high.



Common Hazards and How to Avoid Them

Hazards

Suggestions



Install safety latches on storage cabinets and drawers containing dangerous/breakable items.



Pad any sharp corners on furniture like tables and countertops.



Put caution signs near the oven, toaster, iron or other appliances that heat up.



Check foods in the refrigerator often. Mark expiry dates on foods to practice food safety.

The MIND Diet and Brain Health

What is the MIND diet?

The MIND diet
(Mediterranean-DASH
Diet Intervention for
Neurodegenerative Delay)
emphasizes eating nutritious,
brain-healthy foods. Rich in
antioxidants and beneficial fats,
the MIND diet has been shown to
help improve cognitive function.



MIND Diet Foods



VEGETABLES:

2+ servings daily (including 1 daily serving of leafy green vegetables)



BERRIES:

2-5 servings weekly



WHOLE GRAINS:

3+ servings daily (emphasis on minimally processed grains)



NUTS & SEEDS:

5+ servings weekly



LEGUMES & BEANS:

3-4 servings weekly



SEAFOODS: 1+ servings weekly (focus on fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines)



POULTRY: 2+ servings weekly (without skin)



LIMIT: Red/processed meats, saturated fats, full-fat cheese, refined grains and added sugars



Basic Cooking Skills and Safe Cooking Temperatures



Basic Cooking Skills

Steaming Vegetables

Add water to a pot, place a steamer basket with veggies in the pot, and cover with a lid. Bring to a boil. If you don't have a steamer basket, simply place veggies in a bowl with a small amount of water, cover with plastic wrap and microwave!

Short Cook Time (3-5 mins):

Spinach, peas and asparagus

Medium Cook Time (7-10 mins):

Broccoli, cauliflower and green beans

Long Cook Time (10-15 mins):

Potatoes, beets, carrots and other root vegetables

Cut the vegetables into uniform pieces to ensure they cook evenly.

Boiling Vegetables

Place vegetables in a pot, cover with water and bring to a boil.

Short Cook Time (3-5 mins):

Spinach, kale and other leafy greens

Medium Cook Time (8-10 mins):

Broccoli, cauliflower and brussel sprouts

Long Cook Time (10-15 mins):

Potatoes, carrots and parsnips

Longest Cook Time (45 mins to 1 hour):

Beets



Roasting Vegetables

Set oven to 425°F. Lay veggies in a single layer on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil (preferably canola). Place in oven and cook for the recommended time as stated below.

Short Cook Time (10-20 mins):

Soft or thin vegetables like green beans, asparagus, zucchini and bell pepper

Medium Cook Time (15-25 mins):

Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and brussels sprouts

Long Cook Time (30-45 mins):

Root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, parsnips and beets

Cut the vegetables into uniform pieces to ensure they cook evenly.



Baking Meats, Eggs and Seafood

- The best practice for baking meats, eggs and seafood is to utilize internal temperature checks for doneness (see our next section!)
- In general, baking is the best for people living with dementia, as many ovens have built-in reminder features if the oven is on, and you can set timers directly on the oven rather than using another tool.
- If you would like to sear a protein, you can always sear it over high heat with a heat safe oil (like canola) briefly on each side (1-3 mins) to achieve the desired sear and texture, and then put in the oven to finish cooking.
- Always sear it over high heat with a heat-safe oil (like canola) briefly on each side (1-3 mins) to achieve the desired sear and texture, and then put in the oven to finish cooking.

Grains: Rice

- For every cup of rice you are cooking, use 2 cups of water (1:2 ratio!)
- 1. Bring a pot of rice and water to a boil.
- 2. Reduce the stove heat to low and cover with a lid.
- 3. Simmer for 20 minutes for the perfect rice!



Grains: Quinoa

 For every cup of quinoa you are cooking, use 2 cups of water (1:2 ratio!)

1. Bring a pot of quinoa and water to a boil.

2. Reduce the stove heat to low and cover with a lid.

3. Simmer for 20 minutes for the perfect quinoa!



Grains: Pasta

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil (don't forget to salt it!)

2. Add in your desired amount of pasta. All the pasta should be covered by water.

3. Boil for 10-12 minutes.

4. Check if the pasta is done by placing one piece of pasta in a heat safe bowl, running it under cold water and then tasting it! Whether you like al dente (slightly firm) or well done (very soft) pasta this method won't fail you!



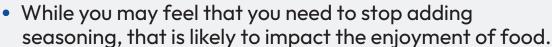
Grains: Quick Oats

- For every 1/2 cup of oats you are cooking, use 1 cup of water (1:2 ratio!)
- 1. Make sure you are using 'quick oats' when using this cooking method for oatmeal!
- 2. Place water and oats in a microwave-safe bowl.
- 3. Microwave for 1 minute.
- 4. Let sit for 30 seconds to cool slightly.
- 5. Add your favourite oatmeal toppings!



Using Herbs and Spices with Care

Taste changes are very common for people living with dementia.



- Herbs and spices are still useful to have on hand not only to keep food flavourful, but also to include flavours from a person's culture.
- Simply adding less seasonings means that the food is still flavourful but not overpowering for a person.
- Herbs may be more palatable due to their lack of spice and light flavour.
 - Herbs include parsley, cilantro, dill, thyme, etc.
- Spices may create throat or stomach discomfort, so use sparingly.
 - Spices include cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, paprika, cumin, etc.
- As a general guide, herbs are usually the leaves of a plant, while spices are the seeds of a plant ground up.
- If spices and herbs are intolerable, adding different textures to a meal can provide interest and variety.
- In general, it is good practice to start by adding very little seasoning to a meal (1/4 teaspoon at a time) and gradually adding more as needed.



Safe Internal Temperatures for Meat, Eggs and Seafood

Beef, Veal and Lamb	Temperature
Ground meat (e.g. burgers, meatballs, sausages)	71°C (160°F)
Pieces and whole cuts	Medium-rare 63°C (145°F) Medium 71°C (160°F) Well done 77°C (170°F)

Poultry and Game Birds	Temperature
Ground poultry (e.g. burgers, meatballs, sausages)	74°C (165°F)
Frozen raw breaded chicken products (e.g. nuggets, fingers, strips, burgers)	74°C (165°F)
Pieces (e.g. wings, breasts, legs, thighs)	74°C (165°F)
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	74°C (165°F)
Whole bird	74°C (165°F)

Eggs	Temperature
Egg dishes	74°C (165°F)

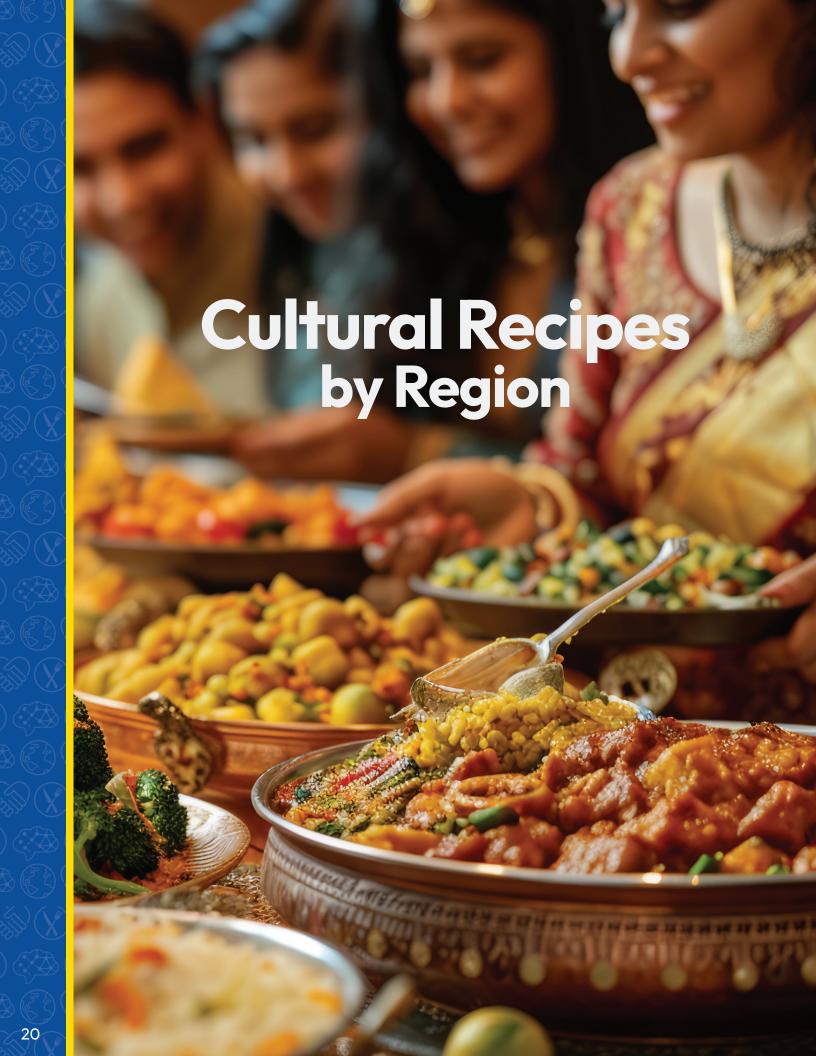
Safe Internal Temperatures for Meat, Eggs and Seafood

Seafood	Temperature
Fish	70°C (158°F)
Shellfish (e.g. shrimp, lobster, crab, scallops)	74°C (165°F)

Leftovers	Temperature
All leftovers	74°C (165°F)

Hot Dogs	Temperature
Hot dogs	74°C (165°F)

Game Meats	Temperature
Ground meat, meat mixtures, ground venison, sausage	74°C (165°F)
Deer, elk, moose, caribou/reindeer, antelope, pronghorn, large game (e.g. bear, bison, muskox, walrus)	74°C (165°F)
Small game (e.g. rabbit, muskrat, beaver)	74°C (165°F)



North America

The culinary traditions of North America reflect a rich tapestry of cultures, histories, and regional influences, with Indigenous foodways forming a foundational thread. Food plays a central role in family life, celebration, and identity throughout this continent. From the use of corn, beans and squash, known as the "Three Sisters", to traditional methods like pit cooking and smoking, Indigenous communities have long shaped the continent's food landscape. In Mexico, dishes like tamales and pozole trace back to Indigenous roots of often enjoying food in communal settings.

Canada and the U.S. offer diverse regional cuisines, from Southern soul food to New England seafood boils to Quebec's poutine, demonstrating how immigration and geography shape food culture.

Tacos

Common Foods and Spices

Chili

Powder



Garlic

Juniper

Berries



Mac & Cheese with Cornbread





Recipe adapted from: Eating Bird Food

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Baking dish (9x13 inch)
- Pot
- · Large saucepan
- Whisk

- Measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Grater for cheese (or use pre-shredded cheese)
- · Wooden spoon or spatula

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups unsweetened almond milk
- · 2 cups vegetable broth

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- · 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup cornbread or corn muffin crumbs
- Cooking spray

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 375°F and spray a 9×13 inch baking dish with **cooking spray**.
- Cook elbow macaroni according to package instructions until al dente (you want the pasta a little undercooked).
- 3. While pasta is cooking, add **butter** to a large saucepan and heat over low heat. Once butter is melted, whisk in **all-purpose flour** until combined.
- 4. Add **almond milk**, **vegetable broth**, **salt** and **pepper** and bring mixture to a boil, whisking constantly, raising heat to medium-high, until mixture is smooth and thick.
- 5. Remove from heat and slowly add 2 cups of **shredded cheddar cheese**, mixing until fully melted and smooth.
- 6. Add cooked pasta to cheese mixture and stir to combine until pasta is fully coated.
- 7. Add pasta to prepared baking dish and top with remaining 1 cup **cheddar cheese** and **parmesan cheese**. Sprinkle **cornbread** or **corn muffin crumbs** over the mac and cheese and bake for **20-25 minutes** until it's bubbly and the top begins to brown.
- 8. Broil for the last 2 minutes to brown the top even more, watching closely to not burn the cheese.
- Remove from oven and let cool slightly before serving.

Consider using ramekins or muffin trays to make individual portions. This enhances safety, manages time and is less overwhelming.



Three Sisters Chili

Recipe adapted from: A Spicy Perspective





EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- · Large 7-8 quart saucepot
- Cutting board
- Vegetable peeler
- Kitchen knife

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Fork, spoon

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup butter
- · 1 large sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- · 2 poblano peppers, seeded and chopped
- 5-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 whole butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and chopped into 1/2 inch cubes
- 3 (15-ounce) ounce cans red kidney beans,• 1 bay leaf drained and rinsed
- 3 cups vegetable broth

- •1(28-ounce) can crushed fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 (13.5-ounce) can chopped mild green chiles
- 10 ounces frozen corn
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- · 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- - 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

- 1. Set a large 7-8 quart saucepot over medium heat. Add the **butter**, **onions**, chopped poblano peppers, and minced garlic. Sauté for 5 minutes to soften.
- 2. Add in the cubed **butternut squash**, rinsed **kidney beans**, **fire roasted tomatoes**, vegetable broth, green chiles in juices, frozen corn, and all herbs and spices (cumin, oregano, bay leaf). Add salt and pepper.
- 3. Cover and simmer for **15-20 minutes**, stirring occasionally. Then uncover and simmer another **5 minutes** to thicken.
- 4. Once the squash is fork-tender, remove the **bay leaf**.
- 5. Taste to ensure spice level is appropriate.
- 6. Stir in the **cilantro** and serve.



Middle East & North Africa

The culinary traditions of the Middle East and North Africa, including Iran, Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco, are deeply tied to history, culture and community. Food is central to social life, with meals often shared in large gatherings that emphasize hospitality. In Lebanon, *mezze* features small shared dishes, fostering connection; in Iran, stews and rice dishes anchor family meals. Egypt's communal dishes like *koshari* reflect diverse influences, while Moroccan tagines and couscous are staples of family and festive occasions.





Common Foods and Spices





COUSCOUS (Couscous Bidaoui)

Recipe adapted from: Salima's Kitchen

serving



EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Large pot with lid
- Medium pot or kettle
- Cutting board
- Kitchen knife
- Vegetable peeler

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Ladle
- Fork

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- · 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 1/2 cups water

- · 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- · 1 zucchini, chopped
- · 1 sweet potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat couscous

- 1. In a large pot, heat **olive oil** over medium heat. Add chopped **onion** and sauté for about **5 minutes** until soft.
- 2. Add **garlic**, **turmeric**, **cumin**, **salt**, and **pepper**. Stir for **1 minute** until fragrant.
- 3. Add **carrots**, **zucchini**, **sweet potato** and **chickpeas**. Pour in vegetable broth (make sure most of the ingredients are covered).
- 4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and cover with a lid. Simmer for **25–30 minutes**, or until vegetables are tender.
- 5. Meanwhile, prepare couscous: bring 11/2 cups water to a boil, remove from heat, stir in couscous, cover, and let sit for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
- 6. Serve couscous on a plate, topped with the vegetable stew and broth.





Sfouf (Turmeric Semolina Cake)

9-12 small squares



Recipe adapted from: Taste of Beirut

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Mixing bowls (1 large, 1 medium)
- Baking dish (9x9 inch)
- · Kitchen knife
- Toothpick

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk or spoon for mixing

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups semolina
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- •1 cup low-fat milk
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup honey

- 1 tablespoon turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/4 cup chopped walnuts (for topping)
- Optional: 1 teaspoon aniseed

- 1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
- 2. In a large bowl, mix **semolina**, **whole wheat flour**, **turmeric**, **aniseed (if using)**, and **baking powder**.
- 3. In a separate bowl, whisk together **milk**, **olive oil** and **honey** until well combined.
- 4. Gradually add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients, mixing until a smooth batter forms.
- 5. Pour the batter into a greased 9x9 inch baking dish.
- 6. Sprinkle chopped **walnuts** evenly over the top.
- 7. Bake for **30-35 minutes**, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
- 8. Allow to cool before cutting into squares and serving.

Caribbean

Including Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Bermuda, these different islands all share similarities within their vibrant food. With influences from African, European, Asian and Indigenous cuisines, Caribbean food is nothing short of flavourful. Key ingredients in Caribbean cuisine are shaped by these cultural influences as well as the tropical climate of the region. Food is central to Caribbean culture, present in social gatherings, celebrations, religious ceremonies and festive traditions. Traditional recipes are often passed down throughout generations to create a sense of familial bonding through food.

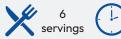


Common Foods and Spices





Jamaican Rice and Peas





Recipe adapted from: Meals By Mavis

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Fine mesh strainer
- Medium non-stick pot with lid
- Cutting board

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Kitchen knife

INGREDIENTS

- · 1 tablespoon canola oil
- · 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup liquid from the canned beans
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon ginger, minced
- •1 teaspoon ground allspice

- 2 stalks scallions, chopped
- 4 stalks thyme, stems removed
- · 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
- 2 cups brown rice
- 540 ml can red kidney beans
- 1/2 cup + 2 tablespoon coconut milk

- 1. Rinse the **rice** in the fine mesh strainer until the water runs clear.
- 2. In a pot over medium heat, add in **canola oil**, **onions**, and **garlic**. Stir and cook for **1 minute**.
- 3. Pour the following ingredients into the pot: **liquid from canned beans**, **water**, **ginger**, **allspice**, **scallions**, **thyme**, **salt and pepper**.
- 4. Cover the pot with a lid and bring to a boil.
- 5. Add the **rice**, **beans** and **coconut milk** to the pot. Stir to combine. Cover the pot with a lid and bring to a boil.
- 6. Reduce the heat to low and let the ingredients simmer for **35-40 minutes**, stirring halfway through.



Dosti Roti

1 hou

Recipe adapted from: A Spicy Perspective

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Tawa (or 10-inch cast iron skillet)
- · Plate lined with parchment paper
- Rolling pin
- Mixing bowl

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Pastry brush

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups flour (plus a little extra flour for sprinkling)
- · 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ·1 teaspoon salt

- 1 1/2 cups water
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons canola oil
- · 1 tablespoon brown sugar

- 1. In a large bowl, combine the **flour**, **baking powder**, **salt**, and **sugar**.
- 2. Gradually add water until a shaggy, sticky dough has formed.
- 3. Rub 1 tablespoon oil over the dough. Cover with a towel and allow to rest for 15-30 minutes.
- 4. Divide the dough into 4 equal pieces. Then divide each piece in 2. You should have 8 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball.
- 5. Use a rolling pin to make each ball into a 4-inch circle.
- 6. Using your fingers, rub a small amount of **butter** into the surface of one dough circle. Repeat for another dough circle.
- 7. Sprinkle flour on the first dough circle and place the second circle on top and press together. Repeat steps 6 and 7 until no more dough remains.
- 8. You will now have four separate double-layered dough pieces. Roll each piece of dough into a 10-inch circle.
- 9. Heat your tawa or skillet over medium heat and brush with oil.
- 10. When hot, place the roti in the pan and brush with **butter**. Let cook for **1-2 minutes** and flip. Brush cooked side of the roti with **butter**. Rotate the roti as it cooks to cook evenly.
- 11. Repeat flipping as needed to cook through.
- 12. When cooked, remove roti from pan onto a plate lined with parchment paper. Wrap in a clean, dry cloth for storage (but they are best enjoyed hot!)

South Asia

South Asian cuisine is a vibrant and diverse culinary tradition that spans countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Known for its bold flavours and rich aromas, it often features a dynamic mix of spices such as cumin, turmeric, coriander, cardamom and chili. Common cooking styles include slow-cooking stews, grilling in clay ovens (tandoors), deep-frying, and tempering spices in hot oil. Eating holds deep cultural and social significance in South Asia. Meals are often communal and celebratory: a time for families to gather, share stories and uphold traditions. Food is seen not just as sustenance but as a way to express love, hospitality and identity.



Common Foods and Spices





Indian Lentil Soup

Recipe adapted from: Food.com





EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Large pot
- Small pan
- Immersion or regular blender (or ladle for mashing)
- Wooden spoon
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Fine mesh strainer

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups lentils
- · 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 2-3 bay leaves
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- · 2 tablespoons olive oil

- 2 teaspoons mustard seeds
- · 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Black pepper and salt to taste
- Optional: 1/2 1 lemon, juiced
- · Optional: Spinach or kale
- · Optional: Whole grain pita bread or brown rice

- 1. Rinse the **lentils** thoroughly.
- 2. In a large pot, combine the **lentils**, **vegetable stock**, **turmeric**, **cumin**, **cardamom**, and bay leaves.
- 3. Simmer for about **30 minutes** or until the lentils are very soft.
- 4. Remove the **bay leaves**.
- 5. Blend the cooked **lentils** with an immersion or regular blender until they are smooth but have some texture. (Or mash with a ladle.)
- 6. In a small pan, heat **olive oil** over medium heat. Add **mustard seeds** and **garlic** and sauté for 1-2 minutes.
- 7. Add the oil mixture to the lentil soup.
- 8. **OPTIONAL:** Stir in a handful of **spinach** or **kale** and simmer for **5 more minutes**.
- 9. Season with **pepper** (and **salt** if desired), and add **lemon juice** (optional).
- 10. Serve hot. If you like, you can serve the soup with whole grain pita or brown rice.







Recipe adapted from: Tea for Turmeric

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Large, non-stick pan with lid
- Baking tray
- Cutting board
- Vegetable peeler

- · Wooden spoon or spatula
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Kitchen knife
- Grater

INGREDIENTS

- · 1 medium egaplant, peeled and diced
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 inch ginger, grated
- 2 ripe tomatoes, chopped (or 1/2 cup canned, no-salt added)
- 1/2 teaspoon of preferred spices (turmeric, cumin powder, coriander, black pepper to faste)
- 1/2 cup waterk
- Optional: Fresh cilantro and lemon juice to finish
- · Whole wheat roti, brown rice, or soft bread, for serving

- 1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss diced eggplant with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Spread on a baking tray and roast for **25–30 minutes**, until soft and golden.
- 2. In a lpan, heat 1 tablespoons **olive oil** over medium heat.
- 3. Add **chopped onion** and sauté for **5 minutes**.
- 4. Add garlic and ginger. Cook for 1 more minute.
- 5. Add **spices** and **tomatoes**. Cook for **5 minutes**, until soft. Add a splash of water if needed.
- 6. Add **potatoes** with 1/2 cup water. Cover and simmer on low for 10-12 minutes.
- 7. Add the **roasted eggplant**. Cook uncovered for **5–10 minutes** until texture is soft. Add water if too thick.
- 8. Turn off the heat. Add chopped **cilantro** and a little **lemon juice**.
- 9. Serve with **whole wheat roti**. **brown rice**. or **soft bread**.

East Asia

East Asia includes flavours and traditions from countries such as China, Korea and Japan. This region is well-known for stir-fries, steaming, and fermentation or pickling. Commonalities between the ingredients, cooking methods and traditions originate from their history of trade, cultural exchanges, religious beliefs and similar geographical conditions. Certain dishes and foods often hold a symbolic meaning, which has led to consumption of those foods on certain occasions and celebrations.

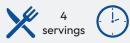


Common Foods and Spices





Asparagus Stir-Fry Recipe adapted from: The Woks of Life





EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Wok (or frying pan)
- Wooden spoon (for stir-frying)
- Cutting board

- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Kitchen knife

INGREDIENTS

- 1/3 cup water
- · 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine (can substitute dry white wine or another Chinese cooking wine)
- 2 teaspoons oyster sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white sugar

- 1/4 teaspoon sesame oil
- · 1 pinch white pepper (can substitute black pepper)
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 450 grams asparagus
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch, mixed into 1 tablespoon of water

- 1. Prep the **asparagus**. Trim the ends of the **asparagus** where the green colour fades.
- 2. Cut the **asparagus** into small 2-inch/5 cm pieces (roughly the size of your thumb).
- 3. In a liquid measuring cup, mix together water, Shaoxing wine, oyster sauce, salt, sugar, sesame oil, and white pepper.
- 4. In a wok over medium-high heat, add in the canola oil and prepped asparagus.
- 5. Stir-fry the **asparagus** for **1 minute** and add the **garlic** and **sauce mixture**. Cook for 1 minute.
- 6. Add in the **cornstarch and water** mixture and stir-fry until the sauce has thickened and coats the asparagus.
- 1. Prep the asparagus in advance! You could also steam it ahead of time for two minutes to skip the need to stir-fry it before adding the sauce.
- 2. Prep the sauce in advance!



Fish Tofu Soup ** servings C





Recipe adapted from: The Woks of Life

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Large wok (or pot)
- Wooden spoon (for stir-frying)
- · Large bowl
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Cutting board
- Kitchen knife
- Ladle

INGREDIENTS

Fish and Marinade:

- · 8 oz (225 g) tilapia, sliced
- 1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine (substitute dry white wine or another Chinese cooking wine if need be)
- · 1 teaspoon light soy sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white or black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon sesame oil

Soup:

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1-2 thin slices of ginger
- 1/2 pound firm tofu, sliced
- Optional: 6 dried chilies
- 1 cup soybean sprouts
- 4 cups chicken stock/broth
- 1 cup napa cabbage, sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 6 fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 1 1/2 cup water
- Salt to taste

- 1. Start by marinating the tilapia. Mix the **tilapia** and marinade ingredients (**Shaoxing wine**, **light soy sauce**, **salt**, **pepper**, **sesame oil**) together in a bowl and set aside-while you prep the other ingredients for about 15-20 minutes. You should have all the ingredients ready to go before you turn on the stove!
- 2. When you're ready to cook, heat 2 tablespoons **canola oil** in a large wok over medium heat. Add the **ginger** and **mushrooms**, and sauté for **2 minutes** until fragrant and slightly browned. Stir in the dried **chilies**, if using, and cook for another **30 seconds**. Add the bean sprouts and stir for another minute.
- 3. Add the chicken stock, water, napa cabbage, sliced tofu, and sesame oil. Bring to a boil and add **salt** to taste.
- 4. Once boiling, lay each piece of fish on the surface of the soup. (Do this one by one. You don't want the **fish** pieces to stick together in one clump). The heat should still between medium-high and high.
- 5. Carefully move the fish around the soup so each piece gets submerged in the hot liquid. Bring the soup to a boil, and it's done.

Europe

The culinary traditions of Europe vary greatly by region, but many share a strong emphasis on fresh and seasonal ingredients, bread, cheese and communal dining. In Southern Europe (e.g. Italy, Greece and Spain), the Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil, vegetables, legumes and fish, is a cornerstone of eating. Northern and Central Europe often feature whole grains, root vegetables, and fermented foods. Eastern European diets emphasize hearty soups, pickled vegetables, and grains like buckwheat. Across the continent, meals bring people together, with food preparation rooted in heritage and tradition.



Common Foods and Spices





Simple Cabbage Rolls Recipe adapted from: Spend With Pennies



EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- · Large skillet (or frying pan)
- Large pot
- Medium pot

- Baking dish (9x13 inch)
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Aluminum foil
- Bowl (for making sauce)

INGREDIENTS

- · 1 head green cabbage, separated into leaves
- 1 cup white rice, uncooked
- 1 pound ground turkey
- 1/2 pound lean ground beef
- · 2 small yellow onions, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced

- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 (400 mL) can diced tomatoes with juices
- · legg
- 1 1/3 cup canned tomato sauce, divided
- 1 (298 mL) can condensed tomato soup
- 2 cups water (for cooking rice)

- 1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
- 2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add cabbage leaves and cook for **2 minutes**. Set aside.
- 3. Bring two cups of water to a boil. Add one cup of rice to the water and reduce the heat to low. Cook for 15 minutes (rice should be slightly undercooked). Set aside.
- 4. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add in the turkey, beef, onions, garlic, parsley, dill, salt and pepper. Cook until no pink remains in the meat.
- 5. Add in **cooked rice, diced tomatoes**, 1/3 cup of tomato sauce, and egg. Stir to combine.
- 6. In a small bowl, combine 1 cup of tomato sauce and the can of tomato soup.
- 7. In a 9x13 baking dish, spread an even layer of the tomato soup and sauce mixture.
- 8. Lay a **cooked cabbage leaf** flat and add in 1/4 cup meat mixture to the cabbage. Fold in each end and roll up the leaf like a burrito. Place fold side down into the baking dish. Repeat until no meat or cabbage remains.
- 9. Cover the baking dish with foil.
- 10. Bake for 1 hour and 25 minutes.



German Apple Pancake

3-4 servings



Recipe adapted from: The Kitchn

EQUIPMENT NEEDS

- Cast iron skillet (or any oven-safe skillet)
- · Large mixing bowl

- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Knife and cutting board
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Whisk
- Oven

INGREDIENTS

- · 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup 2% milk
- 1 large Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, or Pink Lady apple, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- Powdered sugar or maple syrup, for serving

- 1. Prep batter: In a large bowl, whisk together **eggs** and **milk**. Leave at room temperature for **30 minutes**.
- 2. Preheat oven: Set to 425°F.
- 3. Cook the apples: In an oven-safe skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add apple slices, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg. Cook for about 5 minutes, until soft and slightly caramelized. Remove from heat.
- 4. Finish the batter: To the egg mixture, add remaining 1 tablespoon **sugar**, 1 teaspoon **vanilla**, and 1/4 teaspoon **salt**. Stir in 1/2 cup **flour** and whisk until smooth.
- Combine and bake: Spread apples evenly in the skillet. Pour batter on top. Bake for 12–15 minutes, until puffed and set in the centre.
- 6. Serve: Dust with **powdered sugar** or drizzle with **maple syrup**.





POTS and PANS



UTENSILS



CUTLERY



KNIVES



MUGS



GLASSWARE



PLATES



BOWLS



TEATOWELS/ WASH CLOTHES



FRIDGE



STOVE/OVEN



FREEZER



DISHWASHER



MICROWAVE



CUTLERY

UTENSILS

POTS and **PANS**

Heavy

GLASSWARE

Breakable

MUGS

Breakable

KNIVES

Sharp

TEATOWELS/

WASH CLOTHES **BOWLS**

Breakable

PLATES

Breakable

FREEZER

STOVE/OVEN

Hot

FRIDGE

AIR FRYER

MICROWAVE

DISH **WASHER**



KETTLE



BLENDER



COFFEE MACHINE



SPICES / SEASONING



PET FOOD



GARBAGE BIN



SINK



PLEASE WASH HANDS



CLEANING PRODUCTS



DO NOT TOUCH







CAUTION: HOT



MEDICATION



COFFEE
MACHINE
Hot

BLENDER

KETTLE

Hot

GARBAGE BIN

PET FOOD

SPICES / **SEASONING**

CLEANING PRODUCTS **PLEASE** WASH **HANDS**

SINK

DO NOTUSE

PLEASE USE

DO NOT TOUCH

MEDICATION

CAUTION: HOT

CAUTION: FREEZING

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Thank You!

We appreciate everyone who reviewed this resource and hope you find it useful in the future. We wanted to contribute something useful to this community, whether you are a person living with dementia, a caregiver or a family member. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Jhnelle McLaren-Beato and Natasha Jacobs, who helped us every step of the way in the creation of this toolkit. Another huge thank you to everyone who participated in our focus groups and provided us with the information we needed to create something useful for people living with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

"Food is more than just fuel...
it's connection, comfort and culture".

