



Cooking with the Sassy Chef

Cooking tips for healthy tuckshop meals

The recipes demonstrated in these webisodes by Alison Taafe, *The Sassy Chef*, are designed to be tasty, quick and easy to prepare, appealing to students and, as Alison says herself, are 'full of healthy goodness'.

Alison gives useful cooking and food preparation tips along the way and provides suggestions for alternative ingredients. The recipes provided here have been modified to reflect proportions needed for tuckshops but please feel free to experiment with ingredients and quantities as you see fit.

Basic Food Preparation

Vietnamese Chicken Salad

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12 - 15

Ingredients

Chicken Salad

- 1/2 large wombok/chinese cabbage, very finely shredded
- 2 medium limes, juice only
- 250g bean sprouts
- 4 medium red chillies, finely chopped
- 6 cooked skinless chicken breasts, very finely sliced
- Three large handfuls coriander, washed, roots removed, roughly chopped (optional)
- Three large handfuls Vietnamese mint, coarsely shredded (or normal mint if only option)

Dressing (This is a highly flavoured dressing and only minimal amounts are used per serve)

- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 100ml Asian fish sauce (Nam Pla)
- 25ml rice wine vinegar (or plain white vinegar)
- 4 tbsp castor sugar dissolved in 2 tbsp warm water

Method

1. Make the dressing by combining all the ingredients in a bowl and mixing well.
2. Mix all the ingredients of the salad together and moisten with the dressing and lime juice to taste.
3. Pile the salad into a clear plastic bowl or individual noodle boxes. Garnish with the coriander and mint leaves.
4. Keep in refrigerator until service time.

The Sassy Chef's 'Fancy' Coleslaw!

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12

Ingredients

2 small white cabbages or Savoy (curly cabbages), finely shredded
4 large leaves silverbeet, collard greens, Swiss chard or kale, stalks removed, finely shredded (optional)
4 carrots, grated
2 large granny smith apples, cored, quartered, finely sliced
2 handfuls sultanas
2 tbsp sunflower kernels
2 tbsp pepita (pumpkin) kernels
Enough reduced fat mayonnaise to bind
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste (optional)

Method

Combine all ingredients with enough mayonnaise to moisten. If mayonnaise is too thick, add a little warm water and adjust seasoning to taste.

This tasty coleslaw can be served separately in small salad containers or with tuna, ham or chicken.

Tuna and Coleslaw wrap

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12

Ingredients

12 flatbread wraps
Fancy coleslaw (recipe included above)
2 x 450g canned tuna in natural spring water, drained

Method

Pile a generous helping of coleslaw in the centre of flatbread wraps. Top with a small amount of canned tuna. Wrap into neat rolls. Wraps can be served wrapped in greaseproof paper or plastic wrap.

Store in the refrigerator until service time.



Pasta and grains

Chicken and Orange Couscous

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12-15

Ingredients

750g couscous

Approximately 1.3 litres boiling water

3 oranges, zest removed, peeled, cut into small pieces

3 small cooked chicken breasts, skin removed, cut into small pieces (or commercial diced, cooked chicken)

3 handfuls each of pepita (pumpkin) kernels (optional), chopped dates or sultanas

3 handfuls finely chopped herbs (parsley or coriander leaves, or whatever is available)

3 tbsp red onion, cut into very small dice

3 oranges – juice only

2 tbsp olive oil

Method

1. Place couscous in a large, bowl and pour over the boiling water until it just covers the couscous. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and allow it to steam for about 10 minutes.
2. Don't stir yet; just let it stand.
3. Remove plastic wrap and gently break up couscous using a fork. Allow to cool.
4. Fold through chicken, orange pieces, orange juice and zest (optional), parsley, coriander, onion and oil.
5. Add a small amount of seasoning to taste. Make sure there are no lumps of couscous by using a fork to stir it gently.
6. Serve in small plastic containers.



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Tuna and Pasta Salad

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12 - 15

Ingredients

8 cups cooked pasta

400g tuna (canned in spring water, drained and flaked) or you can substitute 800g cooked chicken (diced)

2 handfuls sultanas

8 green shallots, finely sliced

1 red capsicum, cut into small dice

1 large carrot, peeled, grated

4 tbsp olive oil

Generous splash balsamic vinegar

2 tbsp chopped chives, dill, coriander or parsley (or whatever herbs are available - perhaps there are some fresh herbs in the school garden). Dried herbs could also be used. One teaspoon dried herbs is equivalent to one tablespoon fresh herbs.

Method

1. Add all ingredients to a large mixing bowl and toss lightly with a metal spoon. Try not to smash up the pasta too much.
2. Serve in noodle boxes or clear plastic containers.



Stir fries

San Choi Bao

Tuckshop serves: approximately 8 (2 parcels per serve)

Ingredients

- 1 - 2 tbsp oil (or use oil spray)
- 4 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 2 red chillies, finely chopped (optional)
- 400g lean pork mince or chicken mince
- 500ml water
- 2 large carrots, peeled, grated
- 8 green shallots, thinly sliced
- 4 tsp palm or raw sugar
- 2 limes, juice only (can use bottled lime juice)
- 1 iceberg lettuce, separated into big leaves or use Savoy (curly cabbage) or wombok (Chinese cabbage)

Method

1. In a wok add oil, garlic and chilli and heat gently.
2. Add pork or chicken and cook for 3 minutes, breaking up the mince all the time with a wooden spoon (this may need to be done in two batches).
3. Add water and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes or until water has absorbed.
4. Stir through carrot, shallots, lime juice and sugar.

To serve immediately, top leaves with pork or chicken mixture, roll up into parcels and eat. If serving later, place leaves on plates or in clam shell container and place mince mixture beside leaves.

Chicken Stir Fry Noodles

Tuckshop serves: approximately 4 (multiply recipe for additional serves)

Ingredients

- 500g Hokkien noodles (fresh or dried)
- 250g skinless chicken breast or thighs, cut into 4cm x 1 cm strips
- 1 - 2 tbsp canola oil (or use oil spray)
- 1 medium onion, finely sliced
- 1 red capsicum, finely sliced
- 2 sticks celery, finely sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 20g ginger, grated
- 1 bunch bok choy/asian greens, (or other green leafy vegetable) shredded
- 6 shallots, finely sliced
- 2 handfuls beansprouts
- 40ml hoisin sauce
- 20ml reduced salt soy sauce

30ml sweet chilli sauce

Method

1. Prepare noodles according to directions.
2. Heat up half the oil in a clean wok and when it is hot add the chicken and stir fry until the chicken is completely cooked. Then remove the chicken from the wok.
3. Clean out the wok with some kitchen paper and then add the remaining oil and allow to heat.
4. Add the onions, capsicum, celery and cook quickly for a few minutes. Then add the garlic and ginger and cook for about 30 seconds.
5. Add the bok choy, shallots and beansprouts and cook for a minute. Return the chicken to the wok and heat through thoroughly.
6. Add all the sauces and bring to the boil. Add the noodles. Add a little water if not loose enough.
7. Serve in noodle boxes.

This recipe is very quick to cook. If you have a large wok, this recipe can be doubled or trebled to make more servings at once. Otherwise, you can have extra vegetables prepared and repeat the stir fry procedure to feed more hungry students in next to no time!



Slow cooking

Beef Ragout with Fettuccine

Tuckshop serves: approximately 12 - 15

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil

1.2kg lean beef (chuck/blade or topside), trimmed, cut into small cubes

4 large onions, finely chopped

4 carrots, cut into 1cm dice

6 sticks celery, cut into 1cm dice

4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 tbsp sweet paprika

2 tbsp Italian dried herbs

Pinch salt

1L beef stock (or use water)

4 bay leaves (fresh if available, dry is suitable too)

800g crushed tomatoes (look for no added salt varieties where available)

Large handful parsley leaves, chopped

Method

1. If your slow cooker has a browning setting, add half the oil and allow to heat. Cook the beef in batches for 5 to 6 minutes or until browned. Transfer to a bowl. (Note: if slow cooker does not have a browning setting, brown in a fry pan).
2. Heat remaining oil in slow cooker and add onion, carrot, celery and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes, while stirring, or until onion has softened. Add paprika and dried herbs. Put the beef back into the slow cooker and add stock, bay leaves and crushed tomatoes.
3. Place the lid on the slow cooker and set for 4 to 5 hours or until beef is tender. Alternatively this can be done in the oven. Remember to fry off meat and vegetables first if using this method. The meat will take about 2 hours at 180°C covered in the oven to cook.
4. Stir occasionally to stop sticking. If it becomes too dry and the meat is not tender, add more hot stock and continue cooking.

Serve ragout with pasta such as fettuccine, in a clear, heat proof container. A great warming dish on a cold winter's day.



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Massaman Beef Curry with Steamed Rice

Tuckshop serves: approximately 16

Ingredients

1.5kg rump steak or lean topside (remove fat, cut into 2 cm cubes)
2 tbsp canola oil
200g Massaman paste (available in tins in the supermarket)
4 cans coconut flavoured light evaporated milk (or reduced fat coconut milk)
6 kaffir lime leaves (these can be bought dried in jars, frozen or fresh. If you buy fresh leaves, those that are not used immediately can be stored in the freezer)
4 large potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 cm cubes
4 limes (juice only)
Asian fish sauce (Nam Pla)
White sugar to taste

Method

1. Heat up a large pan, add oil and fry the beef in batches until sealed (i.e. no blood). Alternatively you could use the browning setting on your slow cooker.
2. Add the Massaman paste. Lower the heat and cook for 1 minute.
3. Add coconut flavoured light evaporated milk (or reduced fat coconut milk) and lime leaves. Bring to the boil.
4. Transfer into a large, ovenproof dish with a lid or cover with foil.
5. Place into the oven (180°C) and cook until beef is just tender, approximately 1 ½ hours (stirring occasionally). Add the potato and re-cover. Cook until the potato is soft (approximately 30 minutes extra).
6. If using a slow cooker, cook for about 4 to 5 hours.
7. Finish the curry by adding the lime juice, fish sauce and sugar to taste. Balance these ingredients to taste (i.e. sourness, sweetness, saltiness).
8. If curry is too liquid, add a little corn flour to thicken.

9. Serve curry on top of steamed rice in a noodle box or clear plastic container.

