

The background of the image is a collage of food-related photos. On the left, a plate of cooked chicken with zucchini slices and a fork is visible. At the top center, there is a bowl filled with fresh green cilantro leaves. On the right side, a portion of a meal featuring chicken and zucchini is shown. At the bottom right, a blue-rimmed baking tray contains a meal of chicken pieces and zucchini slices. The entire scene is set against a rustic wooden plank background.

Simple Meal Plans

Bonus Meal Plan

autumn freezer meals

MEAL PLAN BONUS

Autumn Freezer Meals

- [1] Zucchini Burgers 15m* +
- [2] Cheesy Chicken 30m*
- [3] Mushroom Soup with Brown Butter Walnuts & Crispy Sage 30m*
- [4] Cabbage 'Lasagna' (Low Carb) 60m*
- [5] Simple Fish Stew 30m*
- [6] SWEET TREAT: Chocolate Walnut 'Cake' 6h*

★ Approximate time required. m = minutes. h = hours.

VARIATIONS

Pantry-Friendly: [1] Zucchini = frozen broccoli. Yoghurt = [cashew sauce](#). Frozen spinach. [2] Zucchini = frozen veg or sweet potato. Skip herbs. [3] mushrooms = onions. Skip sage. [4] Sour cream = almond meal or flaked almonds. Salad = frozen greens. [5] Fennel = extra onion or carrots. [6] Cream = coconut cream or [nut milk](#).

Vegetarian: [2] Chicken = mushrooms, chickpeas or tempeh. [4] Beef = [cooked lentils](#). [5] Fish = lentils or chickpeas.

More Substantial (Low Carb): [1] Avocado. Mayo. [2] Roast almonds or walnuts. [3] Extra walnuts + butter. [4] Larger serves! [5] Roast almonds. More mayo.

Carb Lovers / More Substantial: [1] [Burger buns](#). [2] Cooked pasta, rice or buttered chickpeas. [3] Crusty bread. [4] Cooked pasta. [5] Steamed potatoes.

Carnivore: [1] Beef burgers. [3] Bacon. [5] Chicken or sausages.

Paleo (Grain, Legume & Dairy-Free): [1] Yoghurt = [cashew sauce](#). [2] Cheese = [almond hummus](#) or smashed avocado. [3] Butter = olive oil. [4] Sour cream + parmesan = almond meal or flaked almonds. [6] Cream = coconut cream or [nut milk](#).

Keto / Ultra Low Carb: [3] [Spinach soup](#). [4] Halve the tomato. [5] Skip the onion and don't use carrot.

SHOPPING LIST

spring freezer meals

VEGGIES

2 medium zucchini [1]
2 bags baby spinach or salad leaves [1&4]
4 medium zucchini (800g / 28oz) [2]
1 bunch coriander (cilantro) or parsley [2]
900g (2lb) mushrooms [3]
1 small bunch sage [3]
1/2 large cabbage (500g / 1lb) [4]+
2 onions [5]
1 large bulb fennel OR 2 carrots [5]

PROTEIN

1 egg [1]
4 chicken thigh fillets (450g / 1lb) [2]
450g (1lb) minced (ground) beef [4]+
450g (1lb) fish fillets [5]

DAIRY

8T greek yoghurt [1]
150g (5oz) grated cheese [2]
8T salted butter [3]
300g (1 1/4cups) sour cream [4]+
2 handfuls grated parmesan (100g / 3.5oz) [4]+
200g (7oz) whipping cream [6]*

PANTRY

extra virgin olive oil
salt & pepper
75g (3oz) almond meal [1]
1/2 cup tomato passata or puree [2]
1 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional) [2]
2C chicken or veg stock [3]
2 handfuls walnuts [3]
700g (3C) tomato passata (puree) [4]+
1 jar (1.5C) tomato pasta sauce or puree [5]
large pinch saffron threads (optional) [5]
mayonnaise [5]
300g (10oz) walnuts [6]*
300g (10oz) milk chocolate [6]*

OTHER

[add your other items here]

NOTES + SUBSTITUTES

[number] refers to the recipe using that ingredient. Recipes serve 2.

Vegetarian [2] Chicken = mushrooms, chickpeas or tempeh. [4] Beef = [cooked lentils](#). [5] Fish = lentils or chickpeas.

Carb Lovers [1] Burger buns. [2] Cooked pasta, rice or buttered chickpeas. [3] Crusty bread. [4] Cooked pasta. [5] Steamed potatoes.

't' = teaspoon 'T' = tablespoon

Unless otherwise stated all cans are 400g / 14oz. Standard bag of salad = approx 150g (5oz).

+ [4] Serves 3-4. Leftovers keep really well.

* [6] Serves 6-10. Can be halved or quartered.



Zucchini *burgers*

ZUCCHINI BURGERS

Enough for 2
Takes 15 minutes

2 zucchiní, grated

75g (3oz) ground
almonds

1 egg

8 tablespoons
greek yoghurt

1 bag baby spinach leaves

1. Combine zucchini, almonds and egg in a large bowl. Season and using your hands form into 2 patties and place on a large plate.

2. Heat a pan on a medium heat. Add a little oil and carefully slide the burgers into the pan.

3. Cook for 3-4 minutes on each side, being super careful when you turn because the burgers do have a tendency to fall apart. Burgers are done when they're a deep golden brown colour on both sides.

4. Meanwhile, season yoghurt generously with salt and pepper to make the sauce.

5. Serve burgers on a bed of baby spinach with yoghurt sauce drizzled over.

I'm super excited about these burgers. At last a vegetarian burger that celebrates one of my favourite veggies. The yoghurt sauce is super simple and a great thing to have up your sleeve. It's amazing what a little salt and pepper can do to a good quality natural yoghurt.

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly – zucchini = defrosted frozen broccoli chopped and squeezed dry. Yoghurt = [cashew sauce](#). Defrosted frozen spinach pan fried in butter to serve.

nut-free – replace the almond meal with soft bread crumbs.

egg-free – the egg is really critical here, so don't be tempted to substitute egg replacers.

carnivore – serve with some crisp bacon on top or make beef burgers instead.

dairy-free – replace the yoghurt sauce with a tahini sauce by combining equal parts of tahini, water and lemon juice. You could also serve with a nut based pesto, mayo, cashew sauce or coconut yoghurt.

ZUCCHINI BURGERS

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

more substantial (carb lovers) – serve on burger buns.

more substantial (low carb) – add some mayo, avocado + almonds.

more veg – serve with salad veg like cherry tomatoes, grated carrot and beets.

PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook burgers as per the recipe but keep the yoghurt + baby spinach separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven (straight from frozen if you wish) 200C / 400F for 10 -20 minutes or until burgers are hot. Serve with yoghurt + spinach leaves.

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

zucchini – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few weeks. Not great frozen.

almonds – pantry.

egg, yoghurt – keeps for weeks in the fridge.

baby spinach – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



cheesy chicken

CHEESY CHICKEN

Enough for 2
Takes x30 minutes

4 medium zucchini
(800g / 28oz)

4 chicken thigh fillets
(450g / 1lb)

1/2 cup tomato
passata or puree

1 teaspoon smoked
paprika (optional)

150g (5oz) grated cheese

1 bunch coriander
(cilantro) or parsley

1. Turn your oven on to 250C (480F). Slice zucchini into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick and place in a baking tray.

2. Chop chicken thighs into 2 pieces and place on top of the zucchini. Mix tomato and paprika (if using) and pour sauce over the chicken. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pop in the oven for 15 minutes.

3. When the timer goes, scatter the cheese over the top of the chicken and return to the oven for another 5-10 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

4. Serve with coriander / parsley leaves sprinkled over.

The first time I made this I just piled everything into a baking dish. Popped it in the oven and set the timer so dinner cooked itself while the boys and I went for a walk to the dam.

So easy!

The only trick was I didn't take the timer with me so we had to guess when we needed to be home.

Luckily we made it! But next time I'll use the timer on my phone ☐

As always just use the recipe as a starting place. Make it your own with inspiration from the variations below.

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly – zucchini = frozen broccoli or frozen cauliflower or sweet potato. Skip coriander / cilantro.

no smoked paprika – it's lovely without. Or you can replace with ground cumin or coriander.

hot! – add a little dried chilli powder or fresh chopped chilli to the tomato. If you have some chipotle chilli in adobo sauce, definitely use them! Or serve with your fave hot sauce.

keto / ultra low carb – skip the tomato. replace 1/2 the zucchini with baby spinach leaves added at the end. Reduce the cheese. Serve with mayo or aioli.

vegetarian – replace chicken with cooked mushrooms, chickpeas, black beans or lentils. Tempeh or tofu is another option.

CHEESY CHICKEN

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

dairy-free – skip the cheese and serve roast chicken and veg with a tasty sauce like mayo or smashed avocado & lime. Or [cashew sour cream](#) or [almond hummus](#).

more substantial (carb lovers) – roast sweet potato or other root veg separately. Or serve with corn chips, warm tortillas, pasta, buttered chickpeas, rice or pita.

more substantial (low carb) – serve with sour cream or avocado smashed with lime and salt. Or [these zucchini tortillas](#). Or roast nuts.

different vegetables – bell peppers (capsicum), eggplant, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, cauliflower, broccoli or finely sliced onion are all great! If you want to use root veg, cook them separately or add them to the pan and roast for 15-20 minutes to give them a head start before adding the zucchini. Leafy greens (cooked separately) or salad leaves can give a nice boost. I usually add a big scoop of home made sauerkraut for a little probiotic crunch.

different protein – sausages, chicken breast fillets, ham, cooked chickpeas, cooked black beans, lentils, tofu or tempeh.

PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook as per recipe but keep the herbs separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for a week or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven or in a frying pan with a little oil – will look messy but still delicious!

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

zucchini – will keep for 2 weeks or longer in a plastic bag in the fridge. To keep it even longer, cook sliced zucchini in a little butter until just soft then store in an airtight container in the fridge.

chicken thigh fillets – freeze them.

tomato passata or puree / smoked paprika – keep them in the pantry.

cheese – most hard and melting cheeses will keep for weeks wrapped in waxed paper or baking paper and stored in an airtight container (or sealed ziplock bag) in the fridge. If you need to store for longer cheese can be frozen.

coriander – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.



mushroom soup *with brown butter*
walnuts & crispy sage

MUSHROOM SOUP WITH BROWN BUTTER WALNUTS & CRISPY SAGE

Enough for 2
Takes 30 minutes

*900g (2lb) mushrooms,
sliced*

*6-8 tablespoons
salted butter*

*2 cups chicken o
r veg stock*

*1 small bunch sage,
leaves picked*

2 handfuls walnuts

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of your butter with a little drizzle of oil in a medium saucepan on a medium high heat. The oil prevents the butter from burning. When the butter has melted, add the mushrooms and cook, stirring for 5 minutes or until mushies are starting to brown.

2. Add stock. Cover and bring to a simmer. Simmer, covered for 10 minutes, or until mushrooms are tender.

3. While the mushrooms are cooking, melt the remaining 4-6 tablespoons butter in a small frying pan on a medium high heat. When the butter starts to foam add the sage and walnuts and cook, stirring frequently for a few minutes until the walnuts are toasted and the butter goes a deep golden brown colour. Remove from the heat.

4. When the mushrooms are tender. Remove pot from the heat and puree soup using a stick blender. It's up to you how smooth you make it. Taste soup and season with salt as needed.

5. Divide soup between two bowls and top with walnuts, sage and the beautifully nutty brown butter.

I've always loved browned butter and sage with pumpkin soup, but only recently had the idea to try it with mushroom soup instead. Low carb and just as delicious. Love it!

And the walnuts add all the crunch to take this from being just another mushroom soup, to something really special. When I did my recent photo shoot, this was the dish I was most excited to choose for lunch (and there were a lot of good options!).

If you have some exotic mushrooms, by all means go for it. But this soup is fabulous with humble button mushies from the supermarket.

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly – mushrooms = onions. Cook until onions are very soft before adding stock – about 10 minutes. Skip the sage.

more substantial (carb lovers) – Serve with crusty bread and butter or toss in some cooked pasta, quinoa or chickpeas after the soup has been pureed.

more substantial (low carb) – double the walnuts and / or use more butter.

more veg – soften an onion before browning the mushrooms. Add diced carrot and celery with the stock and simmer a little longer until the veg are tender.

extreme mushroom – add a small handful of dried porcini mushrooms with the stock. Or a few teaspoons porcini mushroom powder.

different mushrooms – fab also with large flat mushrooms (field), shiitake, portabello or a mixture of mushies.

MUSHROOM SOUP WITH BROWN BUTTER WALNUTS & CRISPY SAGE

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

dairy-free – use extra virgin olive oil to crisp the sage and toast the walnuts.

nut-free – replace walnuts with cooked chickpeas or sourdough bread crumbs.

no sage – the brown butter walnuts will work without. OR try thyme leaves or rosemary instead.

carnivore – add some cooked bacon after pureeing.

no stock – use a can of tomatoes + 1/2 cup of water as well – if soup too thick add extra water.

extra creamy – if you love extra creamy soups – add a drizzle of cream when pureeing the soup.

keto / ultra low carb – [try this spinach soup](#).

PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook soup as per the recipe but keep the walnuts, sage and brown butter separately so they remain crisp. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring soup back to a simmer and melt butter in a small frying pan.

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

mushrooms – keep in the fridge in a brown paper bag. Once cooked will keep for weeks. And can be frozen raw or cooked.

butter – will keep in the fridge for weeks.

chicken or veg stock / walnuts – keep them in the pantry.

sage – best to use for another meal. Can be frozen but will wilt when defrosted.

cabbage 'lasagna'
(low carb)



CABBAGE 'LASAGNA' (LOW CARB)

Enough for 3-4
Takes 60 minutes

1/2 large cabbage
(500g / 1lb)

450g (1lb) minced
(ground) beef

700g (3cups) tomato
passata (puree NOT
concentrated tomato paste)

300g (1 1/4cups)
sour cream

2 handfuls grated
parmesan (100g / 3.5oz)

baby spinach or
salad leaves, to serve

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Slice cabbage finely. Place cabbage in an oven proof lasagna dish (approx 22cmx28cm / 8inx11in but it doesn't need to be exact). Drizzle generously with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.

2. Roast cabbage until really soft – about 20 minutes, stirring about half way.

3. Meanwhile, brown meat in a hot pan with a little oil. Then add the tomato puree and simmer for 10 minutes or so. Taste and season with salt if needed.

4. When the cabbage is soft and cooked down, layer with the meat sauce.

5. Mix sour cream and Parmesan then spread carefully over the top. Depending on the size of your dish it may not completely cover so I leave some space around the edges (see photo below).

6. Bake 200C (400F) for about 15-20 minutes or until hot and bubbly and browned on top. Serve with salad on the side.

I think cabbage is one of the most underrated vegetables.

I love it raw in crunchy shaved salads, I love it fermented into sauerkraut or kimchi and I just adore it cooked until soft and then used as a pasta substitute such as in this Low Carb 'Lasagna'.

You'll be surprised just how well this dish compares with your traditional carb-laden lasagne. It's super comforting, can be made in advance and reheats beautifully. Win win win!

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly – sour cream = about 150g (5oz) almond meal or flaked almonds. Mix with parmesan to make a cheesy crust. Serve with frozen spinach sauteed in butter.

vegetarian – replace beef with cooked lentils or beans.

dairy-free / paleo – replace the sour cream and parmesan with a few handfuls almond meal, or flaked almonds or soft bread crumbs. (or a combo of almond meal and flaked almonds) Scatter over the top to give a lovely crust. You'll need about 200g (14oz) nuts. Or skip the cheese topping and just serve tomatoey beef on a bed of the cabbage with [brazil nut parmesan](#) or [almond hummus](#).

vegan – combine the vegetarian and dairy-free options.

more veg – feel free to layer in other cooked veg like roast zucchini, eggplant (aubergine), capsicum (bell peppers) or mushrooms.

CABBAGE 'LASAGNA' (LOW CARB)

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

more substantial (carb lovers) – add in a few layers of lasagna sheets and expect to cook for longer. Or serve with garlic bread.

more substantial (low carb) – serve larger slices.

keto / ultra low carb – halve the tomato.

short on time – increase oven temp to 250C (480F). Cabbage will take 10-15 minutes. And will only take 5 mins to brown at the end. Or if you don't mind getting another pot dirty, boil cabbage in about 2cm (1in) salted water with the lid on for 4-5 minutes or until cabbage is soft. Drain well then use as per the recipe from step 4. Another alternative is that you could skip the sour cream sauce and baking. Just serve cooked cabbage with meat sauce and grated parmesan.

PREPARE AHEAD?

Absolutely! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the salad / spinach separately. If you like you can prepare up until the end of step 5 and save the final baking and browning until you're ready to serve. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, defrost first (if frozen) then warm in the oven 200C / 400F for 15-20 minutes. If reheating lasagna that has already been browned, cover with foil to avoid burning.

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

cabbage – will keep in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks, even months. Can be frozen but will have a wilted texture once defrosted.

minced (ground) beef – freeze it.

tomato passata – keep it in the pantry.

sour cream – use for another meal.

parmesan – keeps for longer in a chunk so only grate when you're cooking. I wrap in waxed paper or baking paper and then keep in an airtight container or a sealed ziplock bag. I prefer this over just wrapping in cling wrap because the air in the container allows the cheese to breathe and not sweat but the container / plastic bag prevents from drying out in the dry fridge air. Either way will keep for months.

baby spinach or salad leaves – are highly perishable. My first path would be to use them for another meal (salad for breakfast!) but if that isn't possible you can pop them in the freezer. They will wilt down but can then be used anywhere you'd use wilted greens. At least this way they won't go slimy.

simple fish
stew



SIMPLE FISH STEW

Enough for 2-3
Takes 30 minutes

2 onions, peeled & chopped

1 large bulb fennel
OR 2 carrots

1 jar commercial tomato pasta

sauce or tomato puree
(about 1 1/2 cups)

large pinch saffron
threads (optional)

450g (1lb) fish
fillets chopped

mayonnaise, to serve

1. Heat a generous glug of oil in a large pot. Add onions, fennel and carrots and cook on a medium heat, covered and stirring occasionally for 10-15 minutes or until all the vegetables are soft but not browned.

2. Add the tomato puree, 1 1/2 cups water and saffron (if using). Bring to a simmer.

3. Add fish and gently simmer for 2-3 minutes or until fish is cooked through.

4. Taste & season. Top with reserved fennel fronds (if you have them) and serve with mayo on top.

I like to serve this stew in deep bowls with a fresh green salad on the side. But feel free to serve with crusty bread if you don't mind the carbs.

I love this best with the fennel but if you can't find any, carrots or celery are an excellent substitute.

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly – fennel = extra onion or carrots.

short on time? – skip the onions and finely slice fennel so it cooks quicker.

vegetarian / vegan – replace the fish with firm tofu, mushrooms, lentils or chickpeas. It will just need to simmer until hot.

keeping the Irish happy – add steamed, sliced potatoes in with the fish.

mixed seafood – feel free to add in some prawns (shrimp), clams or mussels. Adjust the cooking time accordingly.

more substantial (carb lovers) – serve with baguette, steamed potatoes, rice or quinoa. Or toss cooked pasta in the stew.

SIMPLE FISH STEW

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

more substantial (low carb) – add some macadamias or other nuts and more mayo.

more veg – add snowpeas or green beans.

carnivore – replace fish with chicken or sausages.

keto / ultra low carb – replace onion with celery. And Replace fennel / carrot with zucchini. Replace 1/2 the tomato with water or stock. You could also just skip the onion and carrot.

PREPARE AHEAD?

Yes! Just cook stew as per the recipe but keep the mayo separately. You might like to undercook the fish so it doesn't overcook when you reheat but no need to stress. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring stew back to a gentle simmer and serve with mayo.

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

onions, tomato pasta sauce or tomato puree, saffron – pantry it up!

fennel – will keep for a few weeks in a plastic bag in the fridge.

fish fillets – best if used on the day you buy them. Can be frozen. Or cook the dish anyway and gently reheat, once cooked the fish will keep well for 4-5 days in the fridge.



chocolate *walnut*
'cake'

CHOCOLATE WALNUT 'CAKE'

Enough for 6-10
Takes 6 hours

300g (10oz) walnuts

200g (7oz) whipping cream

300g (10oz) milk chocolate,
chopped into chunks

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Place walnuts on a baking tray and roast for 8-10 minutes or until deeply golden brown and tasting toasted.
2. Line a loaf tin with baking paper so the base and sides are covered. Bring cream to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Remove from the heat and stir in the chocolate chunks. Stand for about 5 minutes to allow chocolate to melt.
3. Gently stir your chocolate cream mixture until smooth and glossy. If there are a few chunks of unmelted chocolate don't stress too much.
4. Pour half the chocolate mixture into your prepared tin. Top with 3/4s of the walnuts saving the last 1/4 for decorating the top. Layer over the remaining chocolate mixture. Finish with the remaining walnuts.
5. Place in the freezer for 6 hours or until the 'cake' has set enough that you can slice it.

This cake actually began life as a tart I made for a dinner party a few months ago. Everyone loved it so much I made a mental note to figure out a way to enjoy it again for my birthday. And here we have it!

With the milk chocolate it's definitely a big treat for me. But well worth the blood sugar high!

I've also made it with dark chocolate and while I did enjoy it, I prefer the sweet sweet caramelly goodness of this milk chocolate version.

Because of the low cocoa solids content of the milk chocolate, you'll need to freeze this to get it to set. And it is going to take the 6-hours - sorry you'll have to wait that long!

The good news is, it stays soft enough that it can be eaten straight from the freezer. Enjoy!

And like all the best Birthday cakes, it comes with a warning... It's very rich so start with small slices.

VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

pantry-friendly: – cream = coconut cream or [nut milk](#).

short on time – replace milk chocolate with dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids) – will only take an hour to set in the freezer.

different nuts – I adore this with walnuts but cashews or pecans will also work – macadamias are nice too. OR use a mixture of nuts.

CHOCOLATE WALNUT 'CAKE'

MORE VARIATIONS & SUBSTITUTIONS

low carb / low-sugar – use dark chocolate.

dairy-free / paleo – use coconut cream or almond milk and use dark chocolate.

little tarts – use the chocolate walnut mixture to fill these [baked tartlet shells](#).

more substantial – serve with double cream, whipped cream or ice cream.

nut-free – replace walnuts with chopped plain sweet biscuits such as digestives or graham crackers. And you'll be able to change the name to what the Irish call a 'Chocolate Biscuit Cake'.

not quite so sweet – use a mix of 50:50 milk and dark chocolate.

PREPARE AHEAD?

A must! Leftovers will keep in the freezer for months but the walnuts will get softer over time. To serve, slice straight from the freezer and allow to stand for a few minutes (if you can wait that long!).

WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY

walnuts / milk chocolate – keep them in the pantry.

cream

INGREDIENT STORAGE BEST PRACTICES

VEGGIES

zucchini (courgettes) – in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag.

baby spinach / salad leaves – store sealed bag in the fridge. If buying loose leaves, wash and spin dry in a salad spinner then wrap loosely in paper towel and place inside plastic bag. Push out most of the air and seal. Store in the fridge.

green herbs – in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag.

mushrooms – in a brown paper bag in the fridge to avoid sweating.

cabbage – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks if not months.

fennel – in the fridge wrapped in a plastic bag.

carrots – will keep wrapped in a plastic bag in the fridge for weeks if not months.

PROTEIN

eggs – I keep mine in the pantry because we eat a lot of eggs. Will last much longer in the fridge.

chicken thigh fillets – in the fridge in the packaging they were purchased in.

minced (ground) beef – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

fish fillets – in the fridge. Get your fishmonger to pack them with a small bag of ice to keep as cold as possible.

DAIRY

yoghurt – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

cheese – in the fridge. I prefer to wrap in baking paper or waxed paper and then store inside a sealed plastic bag or other container.

butter – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

sour cream – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

parmesan – in the fridge wrap in baking paper and store in a sealed plastic bag or airtight container.

cream – in the fridge in the packaging it was purchased in.

PANTRY

All pantry items best stored at room temperature in a dark place.

* Also see the WASTE AVOIDANCE STRATEGY with each recipe for tips on preserving ingredients for longer periods if required.

PREP AHEAD POSSIBILITIES

Here are suggestions for things you can possibly prepare ahead. They're just suggestions though so please don't feel like you need to devote your weekend to getting these steps done! It's totally up to you.

1 Zucchini Burgers

BURGERS (15 minutes)

Yes! Just cook burgers as per the recipe but keep the yoghurt + baby spinach separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven (straight from frozen if you wish) 200C / 400F for 10 -20 minutes or until burgers are hot. Serve with yoghurt + spinach leaves.

2 Cheesy Chicken

CHICKEN (30 minutes)

Roast chicken and veg as per recipe but keep the herbs separately. Leftovers will keep in the fridge for a week or can be frozen. To serve, warm in the oven or in a frying pan with a little oil – will look messy but still delicious!

3 Mushroom Soup

SOUP (30 minutes)

Cook soup as per the recipe but keep the walnuts, sage and brown butter separately so they remain crisp. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring soup back to a simmer and melt butter in a small frying pan and serve on the soup with the walnuts and sage.

4 Cabbage Lasagna

LASAGNA (60 minutes)

Absolutely! Just cook as per the recipe but keep the salad / spinach separately. If you like you can prepare up until the end of step 5 and save the final baking and browning until you're ready to serve. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, defrost first (if frozen) then warm in the oven 200C / 400F for 15-20 minutes. If reheating lasagna that has already been browned, cover with foil to avoid burning.

5 Simple Fish Stew

STEW (30 minutes)

Yes! Just cook stew as per the recipe but keep the mayo separately. You might like to undercook the fish so it doesn't overcook when you reheat but no need to stress. Will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks or can be frozen. To serve, bring stew back to a gentle simmer and serve with mayo.

6 Chocolate Walnut Cake

'CAKE' (30 minutes)

Prepare as per recipe. Will keep in the freezer for months but the walnuts will get softer over time. To serve, slice straight from the freezer and allow to stand for a few minutes (if you can wait that long!).

ZUCCHINI BURGERS

Enough for 2
Takes 15 minutes

2 zucchiní, grated
75g (3oz) ground almonds
1 egg
8 tablespoons greek yoghurt
1 bag baby spinach leaves

1. Combine zucchini, almonds and egg in a large bowl. Season and using your hands form into 2 patties and place on a large plate.
2. Heat a pan on a medium heat. Add a little oil and carefully slide the burgers into the pan.
3. Cook for 3-4 minutes on each side, being super careful when you turn because the burgers do have a tendency to fall apart. Burgers are done when they're a deep golden brown colour on both sides.
4. Meanwhile, season yoghurt generously with salt and pepper to make the sauce.
5. Serve burgers on a bed of baby spinach with yoghurt sauce drizzled over.

CHEESY CHICKEN

Enough for 2
Takes 30 minutes

4 medium zucchiní (800g / 28oz)
4 chicken thigh fillets (450g / 1lb)
1/2 cup tomato passata or puree
1 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional)
150g (5oz) grated cheese
1 bunch coriander (cilantro) or parsley

1. Turn your oven on to 250C (480F). Slice zucchini into rounds about 1cm (1/2in) thick and place in a baking tray.
2. Chop chicken thighs into 2 pieces and place on top of the zucchini. Mix tomato and paprika (if using) and pour sauce over the chicken. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt and pop in the oven for 15 minutes.
3. When the timer goes, scatter the cheese over the top of the chicken and return to the oven for another 5-10 minutes or until the cheese is melted.
4. Serve with coriander / parsley leaves sprinkled over.

MUSHROOM SOUP WITH BROWN BUTTER WALNUTS & CRISPY SAGE

Enough for 2
Takes 30 minutes

*900g (2lb) mushrooms, sliced
6-8 tablespoons salted butter
2 cups chicken or veg stock
1 small bunch sage, leaves picked
2 handfuls walnuts*

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of your butter with a little drizzle of oil in a medium saucepan on a medium high heat. The oil prevents the butter from burning. When the butter has melted, add the mushrooms and cook, stirring for 5 minutes or until mushies are starting to brown.

2. Add stock. Cover and bring to a simmer. Simmer, covered for 10 minutes, or until mushrooms are tender.

3. While the mushrooms are cooking, melt the remaining 4-6 tablespoons butter in a small frying pan on a medium high heat. When the butter starts to foam add the sage and walnuts and cook, stirring frequently for a few minutes until the walnuts are toasted and the butter goes a deep golden brown colour. Remove from the heat.

4. When the mushrooms are tender. Remove pot from the heat and puree soup using a stick blender. It's up to you how smooth you make it. Taste soup and season with salt as needed.

5. Divide soup between two bowls and top with walnuts, sage and the beautifully nutty brown butter.

CABBAGE 'LASAGNA' (LOW CARB)

Enough for 2
Takes 60 minutes

*1/2 large cabbage (500g / 1lb)
450g (1lb) minced (ground) beef
700g (3cups) tomato passata (puree NOT
concentrated tomato paste)
300g (1 1/4cups) sour cream
2 handfuls grated parmesan (100g / 3.5oz)
baby spinach or salad leaves, to serve*

1. Preheat your oven to 200C (400F). Slice cabbage finely. Place cabbage in an oven proof lasagna dish (approx 22cmx28cm / 8inx11in but it doesn't need to be exact). Drizzle generously with olive oil and sprinkle with salt.

2. Roast cabbage until really soft – about 20 minutes, stirring about half way.

3. Meanwhile, brown meat in a hot pan with a little oil. Then add the tomato puree and simmer for 10 minutes or so. Taste and season with salt if needed.

4. When the cabbage is soft and cooked down, layer with the meat sauce.

5. Mix sour cream and Parmesan then spread carefully over the top. Depending on the size of your dish it may not completely cover so I leave some space around the edges (see photo below).

6. Bake 200C (400F) for about 15-20 minutes or until hot and bubbly and browned on top. Serve with salad on the side.

SIMPLE FISH STEW

Enough for 2-3
Takes 30 minutes

2 onions, peeled & chopped
1 large bulb fennel OR 2 carrots
1 jar commercial tomato pasta sauce
or tomato puree (about 1 1/2 cups)
large pinch saffron threads (optional)
450g (1lb) fish fillets chopped
mayonnaise, to serve

1. Heat a generous glug of oil in a large pot. Add onions, fennel and carrots and cook on a medium heat, covered and stirring occasionally for 10-15 minutes or until all the vegetables are soft but not browned.
2. Add the tomato puree, 1 1/2 cups water and saffron (if using). Bring to a simmer.
3. Add fish and gently simmer for 2-3 minutes or until fish is cooked through.
4. Taste & season. Top with reserved fennel fronds (if you have them) and serve with mayo on top.

CHOCOLATE WALNUT 'CAKE'

Enough for 6-10
Takes 6 hours

300g (10oz) walnuts
200g (7oz) whipping cream
300g (10oz) milk chocolate, chopped into chunks

1. Preheat your oven to 180C (350F). Place walnuts on a baking tray and roast for 8-10 minutes or until deeply golden brown and tasting toasted.
2. Line a loaf tin with baking paper so the base and sides are covered. Bring cream to a simmer in a medium saucepan. Remove from the heat and stir in the chocolate chunks. Stand for about 5 minutes to allow chocolate to melt.
3. Gently stir your chocolate cream mixture until smooth and glossy. If there are a few chunks of unmelted chocolate don't stress too much.

4. Pour half the chocolate mixture into your prepared tin. Top with 3/4s of the walnuts saving the last 1/4 for decorating the top. Layer over the remaining chocolate mixture. Finish with the remaining walnuts.
5. Place in the freezer for 6 hours or until the 'cake' has set enough that you can slice it.

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