

PLANNINGWITHKIDS.COM CHRISTMAS MENU PLANNING GUIDE



INCLUDES MENU PLANS, RECIPES AND PREPARATION PLANS

Planning With Kids Christmas Menu Planning

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Greek Inspired Christmas Menu Plan

Starters:

[Greek lemon and feta meatballs](#)

[Tzatziki](#)

[Halloumi](#)

Main:

[Roast Chicken](#)

[Slow cooked roast lamb](#)

[Briami \(Greek roasted vegetables\)](#)

[Roast potatoaes](#)

[Watermelon and feta salad](#)

[Greek rice salad](#)

Dessert:

[Chocolate mousse](#)

[Lemon yogurt cake](#)

[Raspberry and Malteser Ice cream cake](#)

Greek Meatballs



Ingredients:

- 500 grams lamb mince
- 1 egg
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ cup flat leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons lemon rind
- 100 grams Greek feta cheese
- 125 grams tzatziki

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
2. In a large bowl add the lamb mince.
3. Beat the egg lightly and add to bowl.
4. Crush garlic cloves and add to the meat mixture.
5. Add the dried oregano and bread crumbs to the mix.
6. Finely chop the flat parsley and add it.
7. Grate the lemon so you have 2 teaspoons to add.
8. Crumble 100 grams of Greek feta into the bowl.
9. Add salt and pepper to your taste, then using your hands mix until well combined.
10. Using about a tablespoon worth of mixture, roll it into a firm ball.
11. Place the meatballs onto a tray lined with baking paper.
12. Bake for about 30 minutes or until the meatballs are firm and have turned a golden colour. [OBJ]
13. Serve with tzatziki and if you are serving as finger food, you may like to add a tooth pick to each one, to make them easier to eat. Makes about 40.

Tzatziki Dip



Ingredients:

- 175gm tub natural yoghurt
- 1 medium Lebanese cucumber, peeled
- 1 garlic clove
- 1t lemon juice

Method:

1. Cut the peeled cucumber in half lengthways and allow your child to scrape out the pips with a spoon. Depending upon their age, allow them to grate the peeled cucumber as well.
2. Crush garlic (a garlic crusher or mortar and pestle are lots of fun!)
3. Combine yoghurt, cucumber, garlic and lemon juice.
4. Serve with your favourite vegetables, crackers or pita bread.

Easy Roast Chicken With Stuffing



Ingredients:

Stuffing

- 1½ cups breadcrumbs
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoons parsley
- 1 egg

Roast

- 1 whole large chicken
- 8 large potatoes
- 500 grams butternut pumpkin
- 1 small piece of broccoli
- 4 large carrots
- 250 grams frozen peas
- 50 grams butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Gravy

- 250 mls chicken stock
- 1 – 2 tablespoons corn flour (depending how thick you like it)
- 3 – 4 tablespoons water

Method:

Stuffing

1. Lightly beat egg in a medium sized bowl.
2. Finely chop onion and add it to the egg with the breadcrumbs and parsley. Combine well. [OBJ]

Roast Chicken and Veg

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius.
2. I truly detest handling raw meat and a whole chicken is the worst for me. Remove any fatty, wobbly bits from the cavity of chicken.
3. Stuff chicken with your homemade seasoning. Don't fill it up too much as the breadcrumbs will expand during cooking. [OBJ]
4. Then it is time to tie the chicken up! Place chicken on a chopping board, breast side up. Loop string around the tail end. Bring string around the ends of the drumsticks. Follow the creases in the drumsticks and body and pull the string towards the wing end of the chicken.
5. Turn the chicken over and take string over the wings and tie in a knot.

6. Rub chicken liberally with butter and season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. Place chicken on a rack over a baking dish. [OBJ]
8. Half fill the baking dish with water, but don't let the water touch the chicken. The water helps prevent the chicken from drying out.
9. Bake for 15 minutes and then reduce temperature to 180 degrees Celsius.
10. As a guide, they say a 1.5kg whole stuffed chicken takes about 30 minutes per 500g of weight to cook in an oven preheated to 180°C. Our chicken was close to 2kg and it took a little bit over 2 hours.
11. Cooking the veggies this way will take about 1.5 hours, so you need to make a start once you have the chicken in the oven. Cut potatoes into even size pieces. [OBJ]
12. Do the same with the pumpkin and then place them into a steamer and cook for about 15 minutes. They need to have cooked, but not be too soft.
13. Once they have cooked enough in the steamer, place them onto trays lined with baking paper. Allow them to cool for about 10 – 15 minutes. I find letting them “dry off” a bit first before splashing with oil and cooking them, means they turn out a little more crunchy. [OBJ]
14. Brush potato and pumpkin with olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. [OBJ]
15. Pop them in the oven and they will take about an hour to cook. Turn after 30 minutes, so they are evenly cooked.
16. Shuck corn, slice carrots and cut up broccoli.
17. I steam corn for about 20 minutes and the other veggies for about 10 minutes, so place them on to cook at 20 and 10 minutes before the chicken will be ready, respectively. [OBJ]
18. To test if the chicken is ready, insert a skewer into the thickest part of the thigh. If the juices run clear with no sign of pink, then it is ready to eat.

Gravy

1. Remove the chicken from the roasting pan and cover with foil to keep warm. Or if you have a helper in the kitchen, get them to start carving the chicken.
2. Make a paste from the corn flour and water.
3. Place roasting pan on top of your stove. Heat the pan on high and add chicken stock. Once boiling, add the corn flour paste, reduce heat and stir continuously until gravy thickens.
4. Pour into gravy jug. [OBJ]
5. Serve up chicken, veggies, gravy and of course stuffing for those who like it.

Slow Cooker Roast Lamb



Ingredients:

- Olive oil
- Leg of lamb (ours was 2kgs)
- 2 x onions, sliced thinly
- 810 grams can of tomato soup
- 4 -5 carrots, peeled, top and tailed and cut to the same size
- Chosen vegetables for sides – we just had potatoes, carrots and peas

Method:

1. Using the slow cooker, this recipe took about 8 hours to cook.
2. Make sure that the leg will fit into your slow cooker. Ours was a little too big, so the ingenious Mr I went and grabbed his hacksaw and took the end off, so it would fit in!
3. Heat a couple of tablespoons of oil in a heavy based fry pan.
4. Brown / sear the leg of lamb in the oil for about 10-15 minutes.
5. Add your onions here if you are having any and let them sauté around the meat for a couple of minutes.
6. Transfer the leg of lamb and onions to the slow cooker. Add tomato soup to the meat making sure that it has a complete covering of the soup. Put the lid on and cook on high for 4 hours.
7. Turn the leg over, mix the soup and onions, pouring the liquid over the top of the lamb and cook for another hour.
8. Add carrots, cook for a further 2 – 3 hours.
9. I cook our chopped up potatoes in the oven with just a little bit of oil. They take an hour to cook.
10. I steam any other vegetables which take about 10 – 20 minutes depending on what they are.
11. I peeled back some meat to check if it's ready. It should come away easily. The meat just starting to fall off the shank is a good indicator the lamb should be tender.
12. Once cooked, remove from the slow cooker and let rest.
13. Carve lamb, add carrots and vegetables.
14. The kids preferred the tomato gravy on the side of the plate, I loved it poured directly over my lamb!

Briami – Greek Roasted Vegetables



Ingredients:

- 6 large tomatoes
- 3 medium salad onions
- 3 medium zucchini
- 2 sticks celery
- 3 cloves garlic
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill
- 100ml olive oil
- Traditional Briami would also have about 3 potatoes in the mix, but as we were doing standard roast potatoes as well, I didn't add potatoes to my Briami. I also doubled the recipe to make two dishes for our large crowd.

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees if you are going to be cooking the veggies on the day. I preferred to have all the veggies chopped up and then start the layering.
2. Slice the tomatoes
3. Chop the onions into thin wedges
4. Cut celery into pieces approx 2 – 3 cms in length
5. Halve the zucchinis and cut them into pieces approx 2 – 3 cms in length
6. Finely chop the parsley and dill
7. Peel the garlic
8. Lightly brush a baking dish with olive oil. I actually used lasagne dishes as I knew I would need my roasting dishes for the meat.
9. Place a layer of tomatoes on the bottom of the dish. Then top with celery, zucchini and onion.
10. Add the remaining tomatoes to the top of the dish.
11. I made the dish to this point and then covered with tin foil and placed it in the fridge over night on Christmas eve. This meant I had much less work to do Christmas morning. Just before cooking, crush garlic over the top of the dish and then top with chopped herbs. Season with salt and pepper, then drizzle the remaining oil evenly over the vegetables.
12. Place in the oven and cook for about 50 minutes. Give the veggies a good stir so the herbs and oil are well and truly mixed.
13. Cook for at about another 50 minutes until veggies are delicious and soft.
14. I placed the veggies in large bowls on the table and allowed family to serve themselves. They tasted delish!

Roast Potatoes



Ingredients:

- 2 kg large potatoes
- 4 tbsp olive oil

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius.
2. You can get a little fancy and make them star shaped by following the next step, or you can just cut the potatoes to a consistent size and cook them like that.
3. Slice the potato into 2 or 3 pieces, depending on the width of your potato. I sliced into 3 pieces as the potatoes that I was using were very thick.
4. You need to have the potatoes as wide as the size of your cutter if possible, but they still do work out well even if they are not the complete full star shape. Press the cutter into the potato slice to make the star. Keep the left over potatoes.
5. Place all cut stars into the bowl of oil and coat lightly. Too much oil makes them less crispy.
6. Place on a lined baking tray and bake in the oven for approx 40 minutes, turning once during cooking.
7. Place the remaining chunks of potato into the oil and coat. Spread them onto a lined tray also. As they are a smaller shape, these potato chips will take less time to cook. Add them to the oven about 10 minutes after the potato stars.
8. They are always very hot when first out of the oven, so allow a little time for cooling before serving up to little kids.

Watermelon and Feta Salad



Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 limes
- 1 small salad onion
- 1½ kg watermelon
- 250 grams feta cheese
- Fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Fresh mint

Method:

1. Juice the limes – you will need enough juice to cover the cut up onion. So if your limes are small you may need more than 2.
2. Chop the onions and place in a bowl. Add the lime juice to the onions and let them sit. The lime juice will help soften the flavour and make them a lovely transparent colour. [OE]
3. Once you have removed any seeds and the rind of the watermelon, cut it into small wedges. Place the watermelon pieces into your salad bowl.
4. Cut the feta into small cubes and add to the watermelon.
5. Roughly chop the flat parsley. I used about a half a cup chopped in the salad, you may like to use less or more depending on your taste.
6. Roughly chop the mint. Again, I used about a half a cup chopped in the salad, you may like to use less or more depending on your taste.
7. Add the herbs to the salad, along with the onion and the juice it is sitting in.
8. Pour in olive oil and gently mix salad.
9. Perfect summer salad is now ready to eat!

Greek Rice Salad



Ingredients:

Salad

- 3 cups of cooked rice
- 125g feta cheese
- 1 small cucumber
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh mint, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

Dressing

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tbsp grated lemon rind
- ½ tbsp seeded mustard

Method:

1. Cook rice in your preferred way.
2. Allow it to cool slightly before transferring to a large mixing bowl.
3. Cut feta up into small cubes and add to the bowl.
4. De-seed cucumber then chop into small pieces and add to the bowl.
5. De-seed tomatoes and chop into small pieces and add to the bowl.
6. Roughly chop all the herbs and add to the bowl as well.
7. In a small bowl add all the dressing ingredients and whisk together.
8. Pour dressing onto rice and mix gently.
9. Arrange salad onto a plate or bowl and enjoy!

Olive Oil Chocolate Mousse



Ingredients:

- 90ml extra virgin olive oil (I used Cobram Estate Extra Virgin Olive Oil)
- 150g good quality dark chocolate (I used Lindt Dessert Chocolate, but I would use something not so dark next time, something less than 70%)
- 250ml thickened cream (I used Bulla Thickened Cream 35%)

Method:

1. Break chocolate into pieces into a heavy glass bowl. Make sure the bowl you use will fit over a saucepan.
2. Whip cream until it has light peaks and set aside.
3. Fill a saucepan with 5cm of water. Place bowl on top of saucepan and melt chocolate on a medium heat. As chocolate begins to melt, stir gently. I am sure there are plenty of instructions on how to do this bit and about the temperature you need the chocolate to be, but I just went on how nice and shiny the chocolate looked.
4. Once the chocolate is melted add the extra virgin olive oil and stir until blended.
5. Then add the cream and fold into the chocolate/oil mixture.
6. As I wanted to make individual chocolate mousse, I poured the entire chocolate mousse mixture into a jug, then poured the mixture into the small glasses.
7. Place in the fridge until ready to serve.
8. Add a dollop of cream to the top and serve. Next time I make them, I am going to add about 50mls of Cointreau liqueur after the cream and make it an adult only dessert!

Lemon Yoghurt Cake



Ingredients:

- 125 grams butter softened
- 1 cup caster sugar
- finely grated rind of a lemon
- 3 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1½ cups self raising flour
- ½ cup greek style yoghurt
- Optional: icing sugar for dusting

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius
2. I used a round lined 20cm spring form for this cake.
3. Place softened butter, sugar and lemon rind in a medium sized bowl and beat until light and creamy.
4. Add eggs one at a time, beating well in between adding the next egg.
5. Fold in lemon juice, then a half the flour, half yoghurt and combine well, then add the other halves combining well again with a wooden spoon.
6. Pour into pan. Bake for about 35 minutes. The skewer will come out clean when it is cooked.
7. Allow the cake to cool in the pan for 15 minutes before turning out on to a rack.
8. Dust with icing sugar.

Raspberry and Malteser Ice Cream Cake



Ingredients:

- 2 litres good quality ice cream
- 250 grams Maltesers
- 2 punnets raspberries

Method:

1. Scoop ice cream out of tub and into a large mixing bowl and let it soften for 5 – 10 minutes.
2. Remove about three quarters of the pack of Maltesers and place them into a plastic bag. Crush them with a rolling pin.
3. Add crushed Maltesers and 1 punnet of raspberries to the ice cream and mix gently through.
4. Once combined, pour into a 20cm spring form cake tin, lined with plastic wrap.
5. Use remaining Maltesers and raspberries to decorate the cake. Whilst making the cake, there was significant theft of Maltesers and raspberries (by someone who shall remain unnamed!) so the top of our cake was decorated more sparsely than I would have liked.
6. Cover cake with plastic wrap and place into the freezer to reset. This usually takes a number of hours, to form properly.
7. Remove from freezer 5 minutes before required and transfer to a serving plate.

Greek Inspired Menu - What You Can Do Ahead and When

Not every single task that needs to be completed is listed below, but some of the main things you can do in advance to take some of the pressure of Christmas day.

Three weeks ahead

- Finalise menu plan for the day.
- Order meat required and set date for collection.
- Shop for non-perishable ingredients.
- If you are making your own condiments like mustard, onion jams etc, they can be made now.

Two weeks ahead

- Create name cards and menus for the table if you are going to be having them.
- Decide on table centrepieces and buy/make.
- Check that you have enough crockery and cutlery for the number of guests attending.

One week ahead

- Make meatballs and freeze.
- Decide on drinks to serve on the day and purchase.
- Make mayonnaise if you will be serving it.

Five days ahead

- Order bread / bread rolls for pick up on Christmas morning.
- Make Christmas biscuits / shortbread if you will be having them to serve with coffee.
- Make sure you have finished wrapping all your presents!
- Make [ice-cream cake](#).

Two days ahead

- Buy all remaining ingredients required for the menu plan.
- Stuffing can be made.
- Make [Christmas sweet treats](#) if you are having them.
- Make chocolate mousse.

One day ahead

- For roast veggies you can speed up the time to cook them on Christmas day with some night before preparation. Parboil them, allow them to cool, then cover and refrigerate.
- Stuff the chicken etc.
- Prepare other meats and seafood, eg wash and chop mud crab, score ham.
- Make dressings and dips.
- Toast any nuts that are required for dishes, cool then keep in air-tight container.
- Make lemon yogurt cake.

Greek Inspired Menu – Shopping List

50 grams butter	2 tablespoons fresh parsley	2 tablespoons olive oil
125 grams butter	1 medium lebanese cucumber	3 tablespoon olive oil
250 mls cream (35% fat)	1 large lemon	2 tablespoons olive oil
3 large eggs	1 large lemon	100 mls olive oil
1 large eggs	1 tablespoon lemon juice	4 tablespoons olive oil
1 large eggs	1 tablespoon lemon juice	90 mls olive oil
125 grams feta cheese	1 teaspoon lemon juice	4 tbsp olive oil
100 grams feta cheese	1/2 tablespoon lemon rind	1 cup plain flour
250 grams feta cheese	2 tsp lemon rind	1/2 tablespoon seeded mustard
175 grams greek style yoghurt	2 medium lime	1 1/2 cups self raising flour
1/2 cup greek style yoghurt	2 cups peas	810 grams tomato soup
500 grams halloumi cheese	8 large potatoes	3 cups cooked rice
125 grams tzatziki	8 large potatoes	250 grams Maltesers
200 grams frozen peas	2 kgs potatoes	150 grams dark chocolate (70%)
2000 mls ice cream premium quality	2 punnets raspberries	
1 cup water	3 large spanish onions	These ingredients are to make:
1 small broccoli	2 medium tomato	
500 grams butternut pumpkin	6 large tomato	Roast Chicken and Vegetables
4 large carrots	1.5 kilograms watermelon	Lemon Yoghurt Cake
5 large carrots	2 large white onion	Homemade Star Chips
2 sticks celery	1 large white onion	Slow Cooker Roast Lamb
1 small cucumber	3 medium zucchini	Raspberry and Malteser Ice Cream Cake
1 tablespoon fresh basil	1 teaspoon dried oregano	Greek Rice Salad
2 tablespoons fresh dill	500 grams lamb mince	Halloumi
3 tablespoons fresh flat leaf parsley	2 kilograms leg of lamb	Briami – Roasted Greek Vegetables
3 cloves fresh garlic	1 large whole chicken	Greek Meatballs
2 cloves fresh garlic	1 1/2 cups bread crumbs	Tzatziki
1 clove fresh garlic	1/2 cup bread crumbs	Watermelon and Feta Salad
1 tablespoon fresh mint	1 cup caster sugar	Chocolate Mousse
2 tablespoons fresh mint	250 mls chicken stock	
1 tablespoon fresh parsley	2 tablespoons corn flour	
1/2 cup fresh parsley	1 tablespoon dried parsley	
	2 large egg whites	
	2 tablespoons olive oil	

Easy Christmas Menu Plan

Starters:

[Chicken sandwiches](#)

[Sun Dried Tomato and Fetta Tarts](#)

Main:

[Roast Chicken](#)

[Slow Cooker Balsamic Beef](#)

[Roast Pumpkin Salad](#)

[Scalloped Potatoes](#)

[Simple Roasted Tomato Salad](#)

[Quinoa Salad](#)

Dessert:

[Rich chocolate cake](#)

[Mini Cheesecakes](#)

[Honeycomb Icecream Cake](#)

Chicken Sandwich Recipe



Ingredients:

- 2 chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups rocket lettuce leaves
- 1 cup whole egg mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- sea salt
- cracked pepper
- 2 loaves of bread

Method:

1. Dice chicken into small pieces.
2. Heat oil in a pan and cook chicken until golden brown. I like it to have a lot of brown as I prefer the flavour this way.
3. Place chicken in medium size mixing bowl
4. Shred rocket and add to mixing bowl.
5. Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, salt and pepper in a small bowl.
6. Add mayonnaise mix to the chicken and blend in.
7. Mixture can be used straight away or refrigerated over night.
8. Butter bread lightly and spoon mixture on to the bread. Place second piece of bread on top.
9. Press lightly on the sandwich and cut crusts off all sides.
10. Cut sandwiches in half and place on serving dish.
11. If you are not serving immediately, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Sun Dried Tomato and Feta Tarts



Ingredients:

- 1 bunch of spring onions
- 250 grams semi sun dried tomatoes
- 5 sheets short crust pastry
- 2 – 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- small chunk of fetta (less than 100 grams would be enough)
- 4 eggs
- 400 mls cream
- extra olive oil if needed

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius
2. Lay out pastry slices to defrost. (I lay out all 5 sheets as I have 4×12 mini muffins trays. If you have less than this, you may not want to defrost it all at once.)
3. Finely chop spring onions.
4. Roughly chop sun dried tomatoes into small pieces.
5. Use residual oil from sun dried tomatoes and heat on medium heat in a small pan.
6. Add more oil if not enough oil from the sun dried tomatoes. You need just enough to cover the base of the pan.
7. Add spring onions and cook for a couple of minutes stirring constantly.
8. Add garlic and sun dried tomatoes and cook for another couple of minutes.
9. Set aside until ready for use.
10. Gently beat 4 eggs, then add cream and beat further until well combined. Set aside.
11. I use a glass to make the circle pasty shapes. I cut shapes from all 5 sheets of pastry. This will make 45 small tarts.
12. I spray the trays with a cooking spray to make sure they don't stick.
13. Line all muffins tins with the pastry. Be sure to keep all edges pointing in an upward direction. If they are flat, the egg mixture tends to overflow easily.
14. Spoon a large teaspoon of mixture into each pastry case.
15. Pour egg mixture into each case slowly until the contents are well covered.
16. Crumble fetta on the top of each tart.
17. Bake for approx 15 – 20 minutes or until golden brown. Tip – if the tarts are under cooked they will be difficult to remove from tin.
18. Remove immediately to cool on a wire rack.
19. Serve with chutney. This recipe makes approx 45 mini tarts or 24 large Savoury Tarts.

Easy Roast Chicken With Stuffing



Depending on your family and how many you are having over for Christmas, you may not need to cook these extra veggies as the other side dishes will be enough.

Ingredients:

Stuffing

- 1½ cups breadcrumbs
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoons parsley
- 1 egg

Roast

- 1 whole large chicken
- 8 large potatoes
- 500 grams butternut pumpkin
- 1 small piece of broccoli
- 4 large carrots
- 250 grams frozen peas
- 50 grams butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Gravy

- 250 mls chicken stock
- 1 – 2 tablespoons corn flour (depending how thick you like it)
- 3 – 4 tablespoons water

Method:

Stuffing

1. Lightly beat egg in a medium sized bowl.
2. Finely chop onion and add it to the egg with the breadcrumbs and parsley. Combine well. 

Roast Chicken and Veg

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius.
2. I truly detest handling raw meat and a whole chicken is the worst for me. Remove any fatty, wobbly bits from the cavity of chicken.
3. Stuff chicken with your homemade seasoning. Don't fill it up too much as the breadcrumbs will expand during cooking. 

4. Then it is time to tie the chicken up! Place chicken on a chopping board, breast side up. Loop string around the tail end. Bring string around the ends of the drumsticks. Follow the creases in the drumsticks and body and pull the string towards the wing end of the chicken.
5. Turn the chicken over and take string over the wings and tie in a knot.
6. Rub chicken liberally with butter and season with salt and pepper to taste.
7. Place chicken on a rack over a baking dish. [OBJ]
8. Half fill the baking dish with water, but don't let the water touch the chicken. The water helps prevent the chicken from drying out.
9. Bake for 15 minutes and then reduce temperature to 180 degrees Celsius.
10. As a guide, they say a 1.5kg whole stuffed chicken takes about 30 minutes per 500g of weight to cook in an oven preheated to 180°C. Our chicken was close to 2kg and it took a little bit over 2 hours.
11. Cooking the veggies this way will take about 1.5 hours, so you need to make a start once you have the chicken in the oven. Cut potatoes into even size pieces. [OBJ]
12. Do the same with the pumpkin and then place them into a steamer and cook for about 15 minutes. They need to have cooked, but not be too soft.
13. Once they have cooked enough in the steamer, place them onto trays lined with baking paper. Allow them to cool for about 10 – 15 minutes. I find letting them “dry off” a bit first before splashing with oil and cooking them, means they turn out a little more crunchy. [OBJ]
14. Brush potato and pumpkin with olive oil and season with salt and pepper to taste. [OBJ]
15. Pop them in the oven and they will take about an hour to cook. Turn after 30 minutes, so they are evenly cooked.
16. Shuck corn, slice carrots and cut up broccoli.
17. I steam corn for about 20 minutes and the other veggies for about 10 minutes, so place them on to cook at 20 and 10 minutes before the chicken will be ready, respectively. [OBJ]
18. To test if the chicken is ready, insert a skewer into the thickest part of the thigh. If the juices run clear with no sign of pink, then it is ready to eat.

Gravy

1. Remove the chicken from the roasting pan and cover with foil to keep warm. Or if you have a helper in the kitchen, get them to start carving the chicken.
2. Make a paste from the corn flour and water.
3. Place roasting pan on top of your stove. Heat the pan on high and add chicken stock. Once boiling, add the corn flour paste, reduce heat and stir continuously until gravy thickens.
4. Pour into gravy jug. [OBJ]
5. Serve up chicken, veggies, gravy and of course stuffing for those who like it.

Slow Cooker Balsamic Beef



Ingredients:

- 1 boneless piece of beef (I use at least 1.5kg)
- 4 cloves garlic
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 cup beef stock

Method:

1. Place beef in to the slow cooker
2. In a small bowl mix all ingredients.
3. Pour sauce onto beef, add halved garlic cloves and set slow cooker to cook for four hours on high or six to eight hours on low.
4. You will be able to tell if the meat is ready as it will easily break off with a fork.
5. Remove the beef from the slow cooker. Drain off some of the sauce, but not all of it. Place it straight into the dish you are going to serve it from. I used a lasagne dish.
6. Using forks pull apart the roast, then gently pour half a cup of the sauce over the meat. The sauce has beautiful flavours so keep it for something else!
7. Allow the family to serve themselves their meat and other accompaniments. We served it up with a roast pumpkin salad.

Roast Pumpkin Salad



Ingredients:

- 1.5 – 2kg butternut pumpkin, cubed 1.5cm x 1.5cm approx
- olive oil spray
- sea salt flakes
- 75 grams almonds
- baby spinach

Honey and Balsamic Dressing

- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Place pumpkin onto trays lined with baking paper.
3. Spray lightly with olive oil and crush salt flakes over the pumpkin.
4. Cook pumpkin for 45 minutes, until the pumpkin is starting to brown. You can cook the pumpkin well in advance and simply store it in an air tight container until you need it.
5. While the pumpkin is cooking crush the almonds with rolling pin or other method that you prefer! Wash and dry baby spinach.
6. To make the dressing in a small jar add honey, vinegar and olive oil.
7. If you have made the dressing in advance and have had it sitting in the fridge, before pouring on the salad, shake vigorously to mix, then take off lid and heat in the microwave for about 15 seconds. Put the lid back on and shake vigorously again and all ingredients should combine beautifully! (The dressing should only be added immediately prior to serving.)
8. Normally I would add this all in a salad bowl and toss, however the kids are not all super keen on the dressing, so I assemble it on the plate and pour the dressing on individually for those who like it.

Scalloped Potatoes



Ingredients:

- 15 large potatoes
- 600ml cream
- 1 packet French onion soup mix
- 150 grated tasty cheese

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 160 degrees Celsius.
2. Slice potatoes thinly long ways.
3. Mix in a pouring jug the cream and French onion soup mix.
4. Lightly grease a large lasagne dish and begin layering potato completely across the base of the dish.
5. Sprinkle a small amount of cheese across the potatoes.
6. Begin another layer going the opposite way.
7. Sprinkle lightly with cheese again and repeat this process until half of sliced potatoes have been used.
8. Pour half of the cream mixture evenly across the potatoes.
9. Begin layering again and continue until all potato has been used.
10. Pour remaining cream mixture onto the potatoes and finish with a small sprinkling of cheese.
11. Cover with aluminium foil and place in the oven for two hours. To check that the dish is ready – use a skewer to pierce the potatoes to make sure they are soft.

Simple Roasted Tomato Salad



Ingredients:

- 3 ripe roma tomatoes
- Olive oil spray
- A few handfuls of rocket
- 1 red onion
- 100 grams pine nuts
- ¼ cup mint leaves
- 1 – 2 tbsp red wine vinegar

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Slice Roma tomatoes into 8 wedges each. Place onto trays lined with baking paper.
2. Spray the tomatoes with a little olive oil and sprinkle with salt.
3. Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes – don't turn them otherwise they lose their shape.
4. While they are cooking, wash and dry the rocket. After I wash the rocket, I let it sit on a clean tea towel until the tomatoes are ready.
5. Toast the pine nuts lightly in a fry pan and set aside.
6. Measure out ¼ cup mint leaves. Thinly slice the onion.
7. Once tomatoes are cooked, allow them to cool for 10 minutes before putting salad together.
8. In a large bowl add the rocket, red onion and roasted tomato. Tear mint into pieces and add it to the bowl. Add half of the pine nuts. Toss lightly, then add remaining pine nuts to the top of the salad.
9. Drizzle red wine vinegar over the salad and enjoy.

Simple Quinoa Salad



Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup quinoa
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cold water
- 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flat leaf parsley
- 1 small Lebanese cucumber
- Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Rinse quinoa thoroughly. I place it in a sieve and run it under cold water.
2. Use a medium saucepan and add the quinoa and water.
3. Cover and bring to the boil. Once boiling, reduce heat to low and allow to simmer for about 10 minutes.
4. While the quinoa is cooking, peel, deseed and dice the cucumber. Chop parsley.
5. Grate the skin of the lemon so you have 2 teaspoons of finely grated rind. Squeeze lemon so you have $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of lemon juice.
6. At the 10 minute mark, check quinoa. All water should be fully absorbed.
7. Once quinoa is ready, return quinoa to the sieve and rinse again and drain.
8. Place quinoa in a large bowl and add parsley and cucumber. Toss gently.
9. Use a jar or other container with a lid and add lemon juice, lemon rind, oil and season with salt and pepper.
10. Put lid on and shake well. Pour over quinoa and gently toss again and then serve.

Rich Moist Chocolate Cake Recipe



Ingredients:

- 250 grams butter
- 1tbsp dry coffee with 1 cup hot water
- ¼ cup cocoa mixed with ½ cup hot water
- 200 grams dark good quality cooking chocolate
- 2 cups caster sugar
- 1½ cups self raising flour
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsps vanilla essence
- Optional: Strawberries and cream to serve.

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 150 degrees Celsius.
2. In a large mug mix coffee and 1 cup of boiling water and set aside.
3. In another mug mix cocoa and ½ cup of boiling water and set aside.
4. Measure out all sugar and flour and have ready.
5. Chop butter into cubes and melt butter in the microwave for about a minute on high (could be more depending on your microwave).
6. Break up chocolate and melt in microwave for 1 min, stir and melt for 15 seconds bursts after that until the chocolate is melted.
7. Add butter and melted chocolate to a large bowl, add sugar.
8. Pour in coffee and cocoa and mix with a spoon until well combined.
9. Add flour and beat for about a minute.
10. Add both eggs and vanilla, then beat for another minute or so.
11. The mixture will be very runny! Pour into a well lined 25cm round springform.
12. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes.
13. Allow to stand for 10 minutes before moving to a cooling rack.
14. Serve with strawberries and whipped cream!

Mini Cheesecakes



Ingredients:

Base ingredients

- 1 packet butternut snaps

Filling ingredients

- 900 grams cream cheese
- 1½ cups caster sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 extra large eggs at room temperature

Swirl ingredients

- 170 grams fresh raspberries
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Method:

1. Cream cheese is easiest to work with when it is at room temperature, so make sure you have it out of the fridge a while before you start making them. The eggs also need to be at room temperature, so have them out too.
2. Preheat the oven to 160 Celsius. Place patty pans in muffin tins. I used double lined patty pan. Then place one whole butternut snap biscuit into each of the pans. They fitted perfectly into my tins.
3. In a jug add the raspberries, caster sugar, and lemon juice and puree using a stick blender or traditional blender.
4. To remove the seeds, pour the raspberry puree into a sieve and press through into a bowl. Set aside.
5. In a large bowl add the cream cheese, caster sugar, salt, vanilla, and eggs .
6. Beat with a hand mixer until completely smooth.
7. Place spoonfuls of the filling on top of the biscuits.
8. Add a couple of drops of the raspberry mix onto the filling.
9. Swirl the raspberry with a toothpick to blend. You will most likely have quite a bit of raspberry coulis left over. You can keep it for serving with the cheesecakes later if you wish.
10. Bake for about 20 – 25 minutes. My oven heats unevenly so I turned the trays around once during the cooking time.
11. Once cooked place them on a cooling rack and allow them to cool to room temperature before placing them in the fridge.
12. To fully set they need to be refrigerated for at least 4 hours before serving.
13. You could serve them still in the patty pans, but I took them out. Once set, the mini cheesecakes come easily out of the pans. Enjoy as they are or serve with the remainder raspberry coulis. Makes 24

Ice Cream Cake – Honeycomb Flavour



Ingredients:

- 2 litres good quality ice cream (Home brands etc tend not to refreeze as well, or you could be completely conscientious and make your own ice cream! I use Cadbury Full Cream Vanilla.)
- 2 x 250 grams Chocolate coated honeycomb. (I do use home brand for this and have found it to taste just as good in the cake.)
- Cling Wrap
- 20cm or 25cm Spring form cake tin

Method:

1. Remove ice cream from freezer and place into a large bowl. Cut up into chunks, to aid mixing. I like to rinse the container and keep it to store any leftover cake that there may be airtight back in the freezer.
2. Place honeycomb into a plastic bag and tie a knot in it. Using a rolling pin or like item, crush the honey comb into small chunks.
3. Line the spring form tin with cling wrap. Make sure that the entire inside of the tin is lined with cling wrap, to allow for the cake to be easily removed. I have made the cake in both a 20cm tin and 25cm tin and both work well.
4. Add two thirds of crushed honeycomb to ice cream and mix thoroughly.
5. Pour ice cream mixture into lined spring form tin and smooth out.
6. Decorate the top of the cake with remaining honeycomb.
7. Carefully cover all of the cake with cling wrap to ensure that ice doesn't form on top of the cake when it refreezes.
8. Place tin in the freezer for at least four hours. I generally make this one day or more in advance, which is another reason why I love this cake. It can be in the freezer a number of days before you need it and still taste great.
9. Remove from freezer when cake is required, undo spring form and peel back cling wrap. The 20cm will be a little harder to serve than the 25cm because of its thickness, so if you are wanting to cut the 20cm cake into nice slices, then remove it 10 minutes (weather dependent of course!) or so before you wish to cut it.
10. Enjoy your cake! For children's parties I generally serve in ice cream cones, but it can easily be cut into slices and served on plates/bowls.

Easy Menu - What You Can Do Ahead and When

Not every single task that needs to be completed is listed below, but some of the main things you can do in advance to take some of the pressure of Christmas day.

Three weeks ahead

- Finalise menu plan for the day.
- Order meat required and set date for collection.
- Shop for non-perishable ingredients.
- If you are making your own condiments like mustard, etc, they can be made now.

Two weeks ahead

- Create name cards and menus for the table if you are going to be having them.
- Decide on table centrepieces and buy/make.
- Check that you have enough crockery and cutlery for the number of guests attending.

One week ahead

- Make tarts and freeze.
- Decide on drinks to serve on the day and purchase.
- Make mayonnaise if you will be serving it.

Five days ahead

- Order bread / bread rolls for pick up on Christmas morning.
- Make Christmas biscuits / shortbread if you will be having them to serve with coffee.
- Make sure you have finished wrapping all your presents!
- Make ice-cream cake.

Two days ahead

- Buy all remaining ingredients required for the menu plan.
- Stuffing can be made.
- Make [Christmas sweet treats](#) if you are having them.
- Make chocolate cake – it is very moist so will keep well.

One day ahead

- Roast tomatoes and pumpkin and store in airtight containers in the fridge.
- Slice potatoes and cover them with water to stop them from turning brown. Keep in the fridge.
- Stuff the chicken etc.
- Prepare other meats and seafood, eg wash and chop mud crab, score ham.
- Make dressings and dips.
- Toast pine nuts, cool, then keep in air-tight container.
- Make mini cheesecakes.
- Make chicken filling for sandwiches.

Easy Menu – Shopping List

50 grams butter	8 large potatoes	1 tablespoon olive oil
250 grams butter	170 grams raspberries	1 tsp olive oil
600 mls cream	1 medium red onion	1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
400 mls cream	2 cups rocket lettuce	1 tablespoon olive oil
900 grams cream cheese	1 handful rocket lettuce	1-2 tbsp red wine vinegar
4 large eggs	10 sticks spring onions	1/8 tsp salt
1 large eggs	3 ripe roma tomato	5 grams salt flakes
2 large eggs	1 large white onion	2 tsp salt flakes
4 extra large eggs	75 grams almonds (whole)	1 1/2 cups self raising flour
75 grams feta cheese	3/4 cup quinoa	1 tbsp soy sauce
0.33 cup sour cream	1 boneless piece beef topside	2 tsps vanilla extract
150 grams tasty cheese (grated)	2 large chicken breasts	2 tsp vanilla extract
250 grams semi sun dried tomatoes	1 large whole chicken	1 tbsp worstershire sauce
200 grams frozen peas	1/2 cup balsamic vinegar	500 grams chocolate coated honeycomb
2 litres ice cream premium quality	2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar	200 grams dark chocolate (70%)
5 sheets short crust pastry	1 cup beef stock	
1 1/2 cups cold water	5 grams black cracked pepper	
250 grams baby spinach	1 1/2 cups bread crumbs	These ingredients are to make:
1 small broccoli	1 packet butternut snap biscuits	
500 grams butternut pumpkin	2 cups caster sugar	Scalloped Potatoes
2 kg butternut pumpkin	1 1/2 cups caster sugar	Roast Chicken and Vegetables
4 large carrots	2 tsps caster sugar	Chicken and Rocket Sandwiches
3 cloves fresh garlic	250 mls chicken stock	Honeycomb Ice Cream Cake
4 cloves fresh garlic	1/4 cup cocoa	Sun Dried Tomato and Fetta
1/3 cup flat leaf fresh parsley	2 tablespoons corn flour	Tarts
1 small lebanese cucumber	1 tablespoon dried parsley	Slow Cooker Balsamic Beef
1 medium lemon	1 packet french onion soup mix	Simple Roasted Tomato Salad
1 tsp lemon juice	1 tbsp honey	Simple Quinoa Salad
1/4 cup mint leaves	1/4 cup honey	Roast Pumpkin Salad With Balsamic Dressing
100 gms pine nuts	1 tsp instant coffee	Rich Moist Chocolate Cake
15 large potatoes	1 cup mayonnaise	Mini Cheesecakes
	2 tbsp oil olive spray	
	2 tablespoons olive oil	