

# FRUGAL

**RECIPES FOR HARD TIMES**

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.



# FRUGAL: AN ODE TO PENNY PINCHING

To be frugal is to make do, make it up, and make it together. And frugal cooking is a remembrance that food is precious, and asks to please be respected and shared. It is to iterate and reiterate that a lentil can be as delicious as a lobster - you just gotta know its vibe.

So. This collection of recipes is our little gift to the commons of cooking from students, teachers, staff, chefs and food justice practitioners operating in our greater RMIT community. It goes out with a strong, loving instruction: just give cooking a red hot go! If you know how to make something delicious to share for cheap, you've unlocked a level of daily pleasure that cannot be matched by Michelin stars or home deliveries.

My friends. My fronds even. Times might be tight, but cooking, eating and being together can help us stay nice and loose.

Peace, love and sea salt,  
Dr Helen Addison-Smith

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# BREAKFAST & SAVOURY SNACKS

# DR HELEN'S ANYTHING GRANOLA

## INGREDIENTS

8 cups rolled oats

4 cups mixed nuts and seeds

1/2 cup oil

1 cup honey Vanilla, cinnamon,  
or any sweet spices (optional)

2 cups dried fruit



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## METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Mix together oats and nuts/seeds in a large bowl.
3. Put oil and honey in a saucepan together. **HOT TIP:** measure the oil first, then the honey to prevent sticking.
4. Heat until just hot enough to mix through oats easily.
5. Pour the oil/honey mixture onto oats and nuts, mix with spices.
6. Spread granola on a large baking tray.
7. Bake until golden brown, stirring every few minutes.

# KRIS'S MAGIC BREAD

## INGREDIENTS

3 cups sifted self-raising flour

1 tsp salt

350 ml water

1 fbsp vinegar

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## METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. Mix water and vinegar in a large bowl.
3. Add flour, then salt. Fold gently to form wet dough.
4. Transfer to a lined loaf tin.
5. Bake 45 minutes, adding 5–10 minutes if needed.
6. Tap base to check if it sounds hollow.  
Let cool slightly before serving.

From the legends at The Staple Store who are releasing their best frugal recipes for free!  
<https://www.instagram.com/thestaplestore?igsh=ZGEzb3pjaW9pejlp>

# MRINALINI'S SAVOURY OAT PANCAKES

## INGREDIENTS

1 egg

1 cup oats (blitzed into flour if preferred)

Salt and pepper to taste

Water or milk to make batter

Optional: chopped herbs, spinach, grated  
carrot, leftover chicken or ham



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## METHOD

1. Mix oats, egg, salt, pepper, and water/milk to form thick batter.
2. Stir in optional vegetables or proteins.
3. Heat oil in a pan, cook small pancakes until golden on both sides.
4. Serve hot with a fried egg, hummus, or butter.

# LOVELY OLIVER'S SARDINE SPREAD

## INGREDIENTS

Sardines

Garlic

Flat-leaf parsley

Pinch of salt and pepper

Little mayonnaise

Bread

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## METHOD

1. Use Eva sardines straight from the can and mix them with finely chopped garlic, flat-leaf parsley, a pinch of salt, some pepper, and a little mayonnaise. Be careful not to drown the sardines in mayo-just enough to bind the mixture. Spread onto toasted bread. Yes!!!



## FOODIE FRIENDS' CHICKPEA LETTUCE WRAPS WITH PEANUT SAUCE



### INGREDIENTS

4 fbsps peanut butter	1/2 fbsp oil
1 tsp sriracha (adjust)	1/2 tsp salt
2 fbsps lime juice	1/4 tsp pepper
1/2 tsp garlic powder	1/2 tsp cayenne powder
1 fbsp soy sauce	1/4 tsp garlic powder
5 fbsps warm water	8 large romaine leaves
400 grams chickpeas, drained	2 slices mango
1/2 fbsp sriracha	1/4 diced onion
1 fbsp lime juice	Sprinkle of oregano

### METHOD

1. Microwave chickpeas with sriracha, lime juice, oil, salt, pepper, garlic powder, cayenne in single layer. Heat in 5-min intervals, stirring until crisp.
2. Mix peanut butter, sriracha, lime juice, garlic powder, soy sauce, and warm water to make smooth sauce.
3. Dice mango and onion. Fill each romaine leaf with chickpeas, mango, onion.
4. Drizzle with peanut sauce, sprinkle oregano if desired, serve.

# BIG MEALS



# MRINALINI'S CABBAGE & PEANUT STIR-FRY NOODLES

## INGREDIENTS

Any noodles	Vinegar or lime juice
Cabbage (half) - or any vegetables that need using up	Any protein (optional)
Garlic	Peanut butter
Ginger	Hot water (to loosen the peanut butter)
Chilli (optional)	Chopped peanuts
Soy sauce	Sesame seeds

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## METHOD

1. Boil any noodles. Meanwhile, shred half a cabbage (or whatever veg needs saving).
2. Fry garlic, ginger and chilli if you've got it.
3. Toss in the cabbage with a splash of soy sauce - or chuck in any small meat leftovers too. Add a dash of vinegar or squeeze of lime.
4. Tip in the noodles and stir through a big spoon of peanut butter with a bit of hot water to loosen. Garnish with chopped peanuts or sesame seeds if you're flush. Budget Pad Thai vibes!



# ZARA'S ROAST VEGGIE MEDLEY PASTA

## INGREDIENTS

### Base Recipe

2-3 cups chopped vegetables  
(zucchini, capsicum, eggplant,  
mushrooms)  
1 tin diced tomatoes  
1 onion, roughly chopped  
Garlic, to taste  
2 fbsps olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
Pasta of choice

### Optional Additions

Before roasting: diced bacon,  
salami, olives, capers  
After roasting: leafy greens,  
drained beans

### Sprinkly Bits

Cheese (parmesan or mozzarella)  
Fresh parsley  
Fresh chilli



## METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine base ingredients and before-roasting additions in a baking tray. Roast 1 hour.
2. Cook pasta until it is al dente.
3. Mix roasted vegetables and pasta together, adding after-roasting additions and reserved pasta water to loosen sauce.
4. Top with sprinkly bits and serve.

# JULIA'S PASTA WITH OLIVE OIL & GARLIC (AGLIO E OLIO)

## INGREDIENTS

500 grams dried spaghetti	1 tbsp dried red chillies flakes
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil	1/4 cup chopped parsley
5-10 garlic cloves, sliced	Grated cheese or lemon (optional)

## METHOD

1. Cook 500g of dried spaghetti (or any other dried pasta) in a large pot of salted boiling water (follow instructions on the packet for how long to boil but stop cooking at 1 minute before suggested time).
2. While you're waiting for the pasta to cook, heat oil over low to medium-high heat, add garlic and cook until golden - stay close and be careful not to burn it.
3. When pasta is ready, scoop out 1 cup of pasta cooking water, and drain pasta.
4. Add pasta to the fried garlic still in the frying pan and also add 3/4 cup pasta cooking water. Toss everything together for 1-2 minutes, until sauce thickens and sticks to pasta.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste. You can add grated cheese on top if you want, or even a squeeze of lemon.
6. Serve with green salad leaves and fresh tomatoes if desired.



# FOODIE FRIENDS' COLOUR AND CRUNCH BOWLS

For the bowls – all measurements are approximate and you can easily swap or leave something out!

## INGREDIENTS

150 grams carrots  
 150 grams kale  
 500 grams brown rice, cooked  
 400 grams sweet potato, chopped and roasted  
 150 grams red cabbage  
 200 grams frozen shelled edamame, cooked  
 200 grams canned chickpeas  
 2–3 spring onions  
 200 grams cucumber  
 Impossible Tuna (pg 27)  
 Pickled onions (pg 29)

Spicy Tahini Dressing  
 2 cloves garlic, crushed  
 1/4 cup tahini  
 1 fbsp sriracha  
 1 fbsp honey  
 3 fbsps lemon juice  
 2 fbsps soy sauce  
 2 fbsps water  
 Salt and pepper

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## METHOD

1. Assemble bowls: rice, vegetables, top with Impossible Tuna, pickled onions, and dressing.

# FOODIE FRIENDS' IMPOSSIBLE TUNA

## INGREDIENTS

400 grams watermelon

2 fbsps vinegar

5 fbsps soy sauce

1/4 tsp garlic paste

1 tsp sesame oil

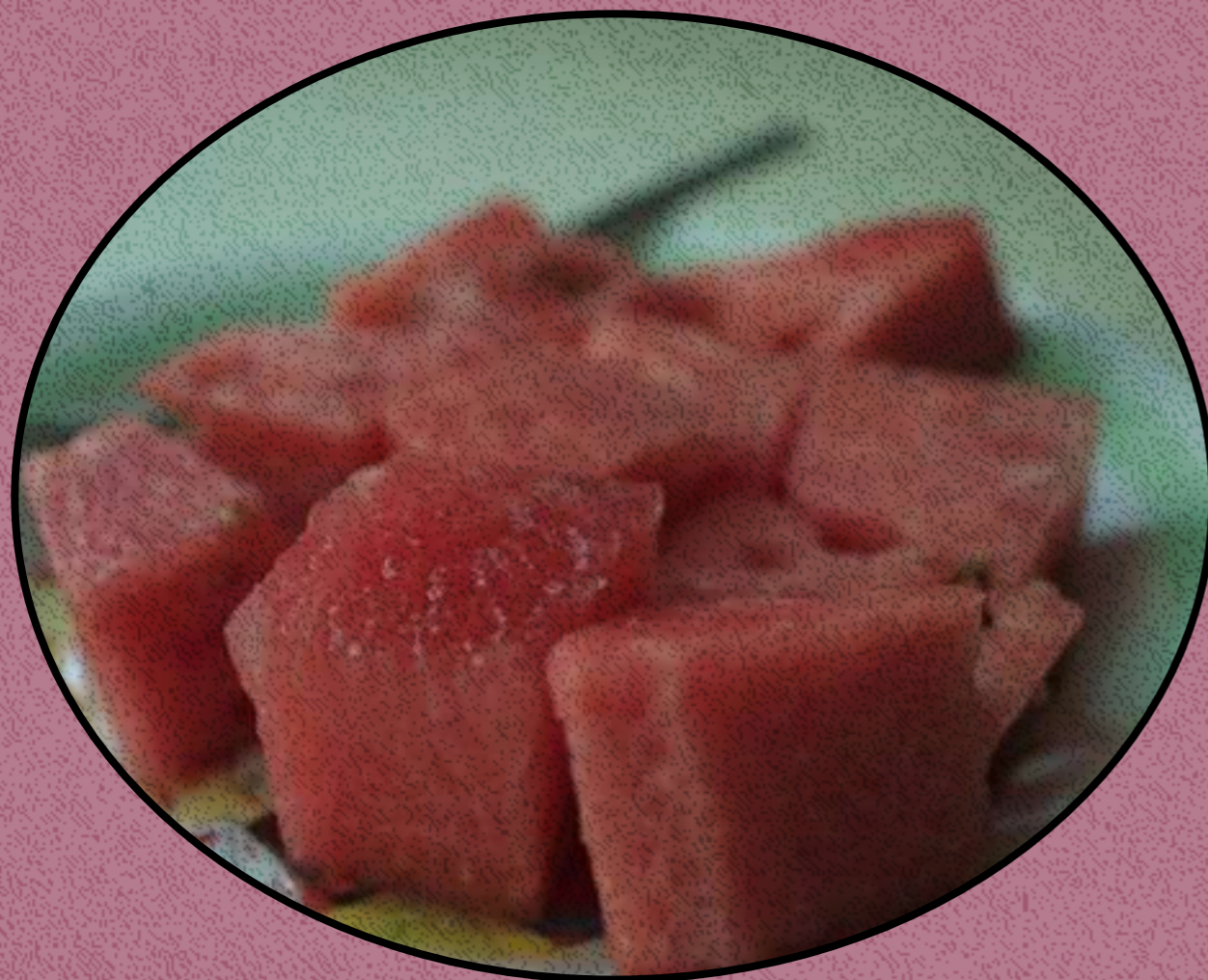
1/4 tsp ginger paste

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## METHOD

1. Peel and cut watermelon into cubes.
2. Mix soy sauce, sesame oil, and vinegar in a bowl; add watermelon and toss gently.
3. Cover and refrigerate for 30–60 minutes to marinate. Cook with either the microwave or the air fryer option
4. Microwave option (soft and juicy): Microwave uncovered for 6–8 minutes, stir, then another 4–6 minutes until firm and deepened in colour. Drain excess liquid.
5. Air fryer option (chewier): Preheat to 180°C. Arrange cubes in one layer and air fry 10–12 minutes, shaking halfway.
6. Toss with reserved marinade and serve warm or at room temperature.

Adapted from: Fit Green Mind <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMI6AQTC1yR/>



# FOODIE FRIENDS' PICKLED ONIONS

## INGREDIENTS

1 onion	1/2 tsp each peppercorns,
1 1/2 cups water	cumin seeds, mustard seeds,
1 1/2 cups vinegar	ginger
5 fbsps sugar	1 fbsp salt
4 dried chillies	3 bay leaves

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## METHOD

1. Slice the onion thinly and place it into a clean heat-proof jar.
2. In a pot, combine water, vinegar, sugar, dry chilis, peppercorns, cumin seeds, mustard seeds, ginger, salt, and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 1–2 minutes to dissolve the sugar and salt and release the spices.
3. Pour the hot brine over the onions, making sure they're fully submerged. Let it cool, then seal and refrigerate. They'll start tasting great in an hour and get even better by the next day.



# FOODIE FRIENDS' SUPER STUFFED SPUD

## INGREDIENTS

4 good-sized potatoes	1.5 tsps salt
50 g spring onion stalk, finely chopped	1.5 tsps pepper
1 tomato, diced finely	Sliver of butter for each potato
75 g sour cream	5 fbsps corn (about 1 fbsp per potato)
80 g cheddar and mozzarella mix	1 can baked beans in tomato sauce
2 fbsps vegetable oil	A drizzle of sriracha sauce

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## METHOD

1. Pierce potatoes with a fork, coat them with vegetable oil, and sprinkle with salt.
2. Microwave for 7 minutes, stir or turn, then microwave another 5 minutes until soft.
3. Cut each potato vertically and scoop the inside slightly. Mash with a bit of butter.
4. Add cheese and microwave for 1 minute to melt.
5. Heat baked beans in a bowl for 1 minute.
6. Spoon baked beans over each potato, then top with sour cream, corn, tomato, and spring onion.
7. Drizzle with sriracha and serve hot.



# FOODIE FRIEND'S NACHO SALAD

## INGREDIENTS

### Salad

100 g spinach  
 200 g lettuce  
 170 g kidney beans  
 160 g sweet corn  
 ½ onion, diced  
 10 g capers (optional)  
 30 g nachos, lightly crushed  
 1 tomato, diced  
 250 g chickpeas  
 1 capsicum, diced

### Dressing

4 fbsps yogurt  
 1/2 cup mayonnaise  
 1/2 fbsp paprika  
 1/2 tsp honey  
 1/4 fbsp chili powder and cumin  
 (optional)  
 1/2 fbsp lemon juice  
 2 fbsps olive oil  
 1 tsp salt  
 1 tsp pepper

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## METHOD

1. Wash and chop the vegetables. Drain and rinse the corn and beans.
2. In a large salad bowl, combine the vegetables and nachos.
3. Add paprika, cumin, olive oil, and salt, then mix in with the chickpeas. Microwave for 3-5 minutes (more for crunchy).
4. Pour the salad dressing over the top and mix well.

**HOT TIP:** You can prepare each component in advance, refrigerate, and assemble when ready to eat.



# PARISA'S PERSIAN EGGPLANT TACHIN

## INGREDIENTS

1 and 1/2 cups basmati rice	1/4 cup vegetable oil
15 small eggplants	1 tsp salt
1 and 1/2 cups plain yogurt	1/2 tsp black pepper
2 eggs	1/4 cup barberries (sautéed with a little oil and sugar)
1/2 tsp ground saffron (bloomed in 2 tbsps hot water)	
100 g butter (melted)	

## METHOD

1. Wash rice and parboil 6–7 minutes; drain.
2. Slice eggplants, salt for 20 minutes, pat dry, and microwave or fry until soft.
3. Mix yogurt, eggs, saffron, butter, salt, and pepper. Stir in 2 cups parboiled rice.
4. Grease a microwave-safe dish. Spread saffron-rice mix on bottom, layer eggplants, top with plain rice.
5. Drizzle a little butter on top. Microwave 20–25 minutes at 70% power. Optional: brown top with grill or broiler.
6. Cool 5 minutes, invert, and garnish with barberries.



# CRISPY TOFU & MUSHROOM SISIG

## INGREDIENTS

700 g firm tofu (2 blocks)	800 g mushrooms (2 cans champignons), drained
8 fbsps neutral oil	2 green peppers, sliced
2 fbsps butter	2 bird's eye chilies, sliced (optional)
8 fbsps cornstarch	6 fbsps mayonnaise
4 cloves garlic, minced	6 fbsps vegetarian mushroom oyster sauce
2 medium onions, chopped	2 fbsps Knorr liquid seasoning (or soy sauce)
2 small red capsicums, diced	4 fbsps water
2 small green capsicums, diced	



## METHOD

1. Pat tofu dry and cut into cubes. Toss with salt, pepper, and cornstarch.
2. Fry tofu in oil until golden and crisp. Drain on paper towel.
3. In a pan or microwave-safe bowl, melt butter; add garlic and onions, cook until soft.
4. Add capsicums, green peppers, and chili; cook for 3–4 minutes.
5. Add mushrooms and sauce mixture. Stir until everything is coated.
6. Toss tofu back in. Mix well and serve hot with garlic rice (recipe follows)

# FILIPINO FRIED GARLIC RICE (SINANGAG)

## INGREDIENTS

4 fbsps neutral oil

1 tsp salt (or to taste)

6 cloves garlic, minced

4 cups cooked rice

(2 cups uncooked rice)



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## METHOD

1. Heat oil in a pan or wok over medium heat. Add salt.
2. Add garlic and cook until golden and fragrant.
3. Add rice, break up clumps, and toss until coated with garlic oil.
4. Stir-fry for 4–5 minutes until hot and lightly toasted.
5. Adjust salt to taste and serve.

# HELIOTOPE'S SEA URCHIN BISQUE: A REGENERATIVE SOUP



As we start to observe the effects of the warming of the planet (that scientists have been warning of for over 100 years) perhaps the most dramatic outcome to date in south eastern Australia has been the devastation of the massive Giant Kelp *Macrocystis pyrifera* forests that have surrounded the coastline of what is now known as Victoria and Tasmania for millennia (the fossil record suggests at least 32 million years). In Tasmania, they have reduced by 95% since the 1970s, when the first sea urchins were observed among them.

Sea urchins are native to Australian waters but until the 70s only found in warmer waters to the north. Their natural predators, snapper and crayfish / rock lobster are not found in sufficient quantities to quell their expansion. As voracious herbivores, they destroy the forests by chewing through the kelp at the base, then grazing on smaller seaweeds until no vegetation is left; creating 'urchin barrens,' areas destitute of life, and therefore radically reducing fish populations, and ecosystem collapse.

Conversely, whilst Giant Kelp provides an incredibly productive ecosystem, able to grow up to 50cm per day in the right conditions, it does not do so well in warmer waters that are less nutrient rich, so the warming currents reduce the ability for the kelp to return. The Giant Kelp forests provided habitat, food resources, and protected against storms and coastal erosion. The kelp forests were home to many of the local sea creatures, including coveted seafood such as crayfish and abalone; mystical, almost unworldly\* beings such as the weedy sea dragon *Phyllopteryx taeniolatus*, the golden weed fish *Cristiceps aurantiacus*, the inquisitive blue devil fish *Paraplesiops meleagris*.

They are also home to the maireener | elenchus | rainbow kelp shell *Phasianotrochus irisodontes*; the sea snail from which palawa / Tasmanian Aboriginal women made exquisite shell necklaces for thousands of years.

The rapid destruction of the Giant Kelp forests demonstrates how quickly a small imbalance can have enormous consequence. Australia's oceans are facing distress on all fronts, with bleaching of coral reefs to both the east and west coasts, and the devastating algal bloom currently occurring in South Australia with no remedy in sight. \*except that they are of our world, and very specifically so.

## HOW TO HELP

1. Eat more local sea urchin :)
2. Try not to eat predator species such as snapper and crayfish unless provenance is clear
3. Contribute to KelpTracker 2.0 – a partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the Victorian National Parks Association, the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) at the University of Tasmania and OzFish Unlimited that identifies remaining tracts of Giant Kelp ecosystem.  
<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/43e1ec88fd154b7ab21d67bc3f9e38f6>
4. Donate to the Nature Conservancy, who are supporting kelp restoration amongst other projects <https://www.natureaustralia.org.au/donate-to-our-mission/donate/>
5. Sign the petition asking government to do more to manage urchins, and/or donate to Great Southern Reef
6. Approach the world with a mindset of care.

## INGREDIENTS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 900 ml fish or shellfish stock <sup>1</sup>  | 4 shallots or one small onion, finely sliced <sup>3</sup>                            |
| 15 g kombu ( <i>Laminaria</i> species) or golden kelp <sup>2</sup>   | 20 g ginger <sup>3</sup>   |
| 20 g miscellaneous seaweed, perhaps <sup>2</sup> <i>Wakame</i> <i>Undaria pinnatifida</i> (invasive species growing in temperate Australian waters) or Sea lettuce <i>Ulva lactuca</i> (native to temperate Australian waters) | 10 g fresh turmeric or 1/2 tsp dried <sup>3</sup>                                    |
| 40 g butter (can be substituted with olive oil)  | 1 potato, finely sliced or diced (less cooking time for soups is ideal) <sup>3</sup> |
| 1 tbs olive oil  | 320 g pumpkin <sup>3</sup>   |
|  | Foraged leaves or root tops <sup>5</sup>   |
|  | 1 sea urchin <i>Centrostephanus rodgersii</i> <sup>4</sup>                           |

## METHOD

1. In a saucepan, bring the fish stock and seaweed to 60°C (if you don't have a thermometer, bring to just under a simmer). Hold the dashi stock at around 60° for an hour, checking on it every 10 minutes and removing or returning to the heat as required.
2. Whilst monitoring the stock temperature, gently sweat the shallots in the butter and olive oil (lid on). When they have softened but not browned, add the turmeric, ginger, pumpkin and a pinch of salt, and continue to sweat until the pumpkin softens. Then add the potatoes and strained dashi and simmer until the potatoes are soft.
3. Meanwhile, prepare the garnish. Preheat the oven to 150°C, wash the leaves and dry. Toss in a bowl with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Spread the leaves out on a baking sheet for 20–60 minutes until they dry out, noting this may occur at differing rates. Transfer to kitchen paper as they cook. Can be stored in an air-tight container.
4. To finish the soup, add the urchin roe, blend and return to the pan. Serve, garnishing with the crisped greens.

## TITO'S GOCHUJANG NASI BAKAR WITH ROASTED MUSHROOMS, SAYUR ASEH, & SALT BUSH SAMBAL MATAH



When I first moved to Melbourne from the city of Bandung, Indonesia, the first thing I missed was the mountains that used to surround me. The mountains where chillies and vegetables are grown to be made into nasi bakar - parcels of rice mixed with spices that have been cooked for hours, then grilled in banana leaves. The recipe takes hours of preparation: making bumbu base, cooking the rice with lemongrass and salam leaves, preparing the proteins, wrapping each parcel just so. It was magnificent but exhausting, the kind of cooking that makes sense when you have time, but not when you're a busy student (or lecturer).

I kept thinking about the essence of the dish though – that moment when you unwrap the charred banana leaf and aromatic steam rises – and wondering if I could capture that without the, well, work. The answer came from different places. First, ingredients from Korea (gochujang) and Japan (miso) that could provide that depth of flavour without the hours spent preparing shallots. Is it different to most nasi bakar? Yes. But I am not just remembering, I am also adapting. And gochujang and miso are not only delicious, they are also easy to find in Melbourne.

Sundanese food is always about textural and flavour contrasts and the use of fresh local ingredients. Nasi bakar is never just about just the nasi bakar, but also about the other things served with it. And one of the most Sundanese things is sayur asem (tamarind soup with chokoes). And that's when I realised that chokoes grow very well in Melbourne – hanging over back fences in Footscray and Coburg. And of course we need sambal. But since gochujang is already quite deep in flavour, we need something fresh and zingy. Hence, a take on Balinese sambal matah, adapted to Australian ingredients: red onions and saltbush.

What emerged was something honest. Easy to make, and an adaptation born from necessity and respect. The aromatic paste simplified to just ginger, garlic, and turmeric. The complex proteins are replaced with roasted mushrooms that deliver the same savory satisfaction. The sayur asem is still sour and bright and focused on providing flavours for the neutral chokoes. It's still nasi bakar-you still get that smoke, that ceremony of unwrapping, that hit of sambal heat-but it's now achievable for the reality of a busy life in Melbourne.

## STEP 1: RICE (NASI LIWET)

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup jasmine rice

1 and 1/4 cups water

(or, if you're Asian like me, use the finger method but reduce it a bit because you will be adding some coconut milk)

2 fbsps coconut milk.

This will create a subtle coconut sweetness, but you can add more if you like it richer (just reduce the amount of water).

Alternatively, you can use powdered coconut milk to add to the water.

A pinch of salt.

2 makrut lime leaves, spine removed, chopped finely.

(optional) NOTE: this is also often called kaffir lime leaves in shops.

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### METHOD

1. Rinse rice once to remove a bit of starch.
2. Combine rice, water, coconut milk, chopped makrut lime leaves, and salt in a pot.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce to lowest heat, cover tightly, and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Turn off heat, let stand for 10 minutes without lifting the lid.
5. Fluff rice with a fork. Rice cooker can be used as an alternative.

## STEP 2: AROMATIC PASTE

### INGREDIENTS

25 g ginger, peeled and roughly chopped

25 g garlic, peeled

10 g fresh turmeric

(or 1 tsp powder)

2 fbsps vegetable oil

1.5 fbsps gochujang

1.5 tsps white miso

NOTE: this is a simplified version designed for quick cooking. If you have time, make what Indonesians call 'bumbu merah' or 'red spice base'. To the spice base, add 50gms of red shallots and 250gms of red long chillies. Then, blend together and fry on low heat for 30-40 minutes, stirring regularly so the paste doesn't catch on the pan. Taste – you want to keep cooking until the raw taste is gone. You can use this red spice base for the sayur asem. You might have some extra – you can use this for stir frying, making simple curries, etc.

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### METHOD

1. Blend ginger, garlic, turmeric, and oil into a paste.
2. Heat a little oil in a pan over medium heat. Fry paste for 5–7 minutes, stirring constantly until fragrant and no longer raw-smelling.
3. Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Mix in gochujang and miso until blended.
4. Add the cooked rice while still warm and mix until each grain is coated with the paste.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning, remembering mushrooms will be added later.
6. Optional note: For a gluten-free or non-spicy version, use only miso, but be careful of saltiness.

## STEP 3: ROASTED MUSHROOMS

### INGREDIENTS

200 g button mushrooms, quartered  
 2 fbsps olive oil  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 Black pepper to taste

### METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 190°C.
2. Toss mushrooms with olive oil, salt, and black pepper.
3. Spread on a baking tray and roast for 30 minutes. Check taste and texture; continue roasting 5–10 minutes if needed until crispy but still meaty.
4. Mix roasted mushrooms into rice and taste.
5. Optional: For extra crispiness and to collect mushroom liquid, roast 15 minutes, drain liquid, and continue roasting.

## STEP 4: SAYUR ASEM WITH CHOKOES

### INGREDIENTS

1L water.  
 2 fbsps tamarind paste.  
 2 fbsps palm sugar or dark brown sugar  
 1 choko (about 300g).  
 Fresh galangal, if you can find it.  
 Cut into largish segment, crush it a bit with a pestle, then drop into the sayur asem.

Salt to taste.  
 If you've made bumbu merah: add bumbu merah into the water after boiling. And if you're not allergic to peanuts, add 100-200 grams of raw peanuts in as well – it will add another layer of texture and flavours.

### METHOD

1. Bring water to boil. Add tamarind paste and palm sugar, stirring to dissolve.
2. Meanwhile, halve choko crosswise (through the equator, perpendicular to the stem). Remove top and bottom. Peel with a knife-skin is tough, but cooking will soften it a bit. Don't worry about perfection. Cut into 2cm cubes.
3. Add choko to boiling liquid. Simmer 40 minutes until tender and translucent. Season with salt. For best results, make the night before and refrigerate-chokoes will pickle in the liquid overnight.
4. Note: Choko skin can make your hands feel weird/dry when peeling (it's got a weird latex-like sap). Some people like to oil their hands first or wear gloves. Or just wash your hands afterwards.

## STEP 5: SALTBUSH SAMBAL MATAH

### INGREDIENTS

1/2 red onion, sliced paper-thin.    3 fbsps coconut oil  
 1 tsp salt                                      Handful fresh saltbush leaves  
 2-3 bird's eye chillies,                      (optional)  
 thinly sliced

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### METHOD

1. Toss onion slices with salt. Let sit for 15 minutes.
2. Place salted onions chillies (and saltbush if using) in a heatproof bowl. Heat coconut oil until it shimmers. Pour hot oil over the mixture-it should sizzle.
3. Stir and serve immediately.

## STEP 6: SERVE

### METHOD

1. Mix mushrooms into rice and place a mound on each plate.
2. Ladle warm sayur asem alongside, in a bowl or over rice.
3. Top with sambal matah.

### Banana Leaf Version:

4. Place rice mixture in softened, cleaned banana leaf square. Roll into cylindrical parcel, secure ends with a toothpick.
5. Heat a pan on high, grill 2-3 minutes per side until leaf chars.
6. Serve by unwrapping at table. Leaf imparts aroma and adds a theatrical presentation.

# JUST FOOD COLLECTIVE'S BOUGIE RAMEN 2.0

This dish was served at the Frugal Canteen as a luxurious, 1000-thread-count, silken gravy of sesame and soy to blanket fresh wheat noodles and a collection of vegetables lovingly fermented by the legends at Long Prawn, The Fermentary, and RMIT. Eggs (or tofu for vegans!) were soaked in strong, salty, spicy tea for an extra caffeine kick. A dish fit for the bourgeoisie but made with love for students.

**Eat the rich, eat your veggies, call your mum!**

We've always loved the quote "When the people shall have nothing more to eat, they will eat the rich". During class struggles, which this cost-of-living crisis certainly is, it invokes a call to action that goes against our most agreed upon rule, no cannibalism. But it certainly also invokes a deep querying into the distinction between the rich and the working class. How have we as humanity ended up in such a society that the rich eat whatever they want, and the working class eat the scraps?

Society says no cannibalism, but society also closes its eyes to the poverty of the people. Society doesn't care about your daily struggles; society only cares about themselves. At Just Food Collective, we don't believe you have to eat the rich to survive, but we do believe that we should all have access to delicious food and have a safe, joyful life. Since 2022, Just Food has been researching and designing solutions to student food insecurity, and the loneliness and mental ill-health that is created because of it. Student food insecurity in Australia sits around 50%, that's one in two students who can't afford to eat enough food each day, or maybe don't have time to eat, hopping from full-time study to work shifts late in the night.

When you bring students together to cook, serve and care for each other, in a safe environment, momentarily you practice what we believe to be a just food system. We've been practicing what good gardening, cooking and mindful eating looks like, and we've been practicing the joys of hospitality. Join us to eat our Bougie Ramen 2.0 (no bourgeoisie were harmed in the making) and celebrate this cheap and delicious recipe with us. It might be so good you could sing, so we wrote a song too.



# BOUGIE RAMEN 2.0

## INGREDIENTS

1 pack instant noodles

### Sauce

75 g silken tofu

1/4 tsp finely minced garlic 1/4

tsp finely minced ginger

1/2 tsp vinegar (rice wine or white)

1 tsp sesame oil

1 tsp soy sauce

1 tsp miso paste

1/2 tsp honey, maple syrup, or sugar

1 tsp toasted sesame seeds Chilli sauce or powder, to taste (e.g., shichimi togarashi, kosho, or any preferred chilli)

### Topping Ideas

Spring onion, coriander, boiled/poached/fried egg, seaweed, marinated firm tofu, grated carrots, finely sliced cabbage, kimchi, daikon pickles, sauerkraut, bean sprouts, blanched broccoli/asparagus/ Asian greens

## METHOD

1. Cook noodles according to packet instructions, reserving 3–4 tbsps of the cooking liquid before draining completely.
2. Press the silken tofu through a fine mesh strainer until smooth. Mix in all other sauce ingredients. Alternatively, blend all sauce ingredients in a smoothie blender and blitz.
3. In the noodle pot, toss the noodles with the sauce, adding reserved noodle cooking liquid as needed to achieve desired consistency.
4. Taste for seasoning and adjust with chilli, black pepper, or additional soy sauce as needed.
5. Serve noodles in bowls topped with your choice of toppings, e.g., a soft-boiled egg cut in half with blanched greens and kimchi.

## TIPS

1. Why not bulk prep for the week? A standard 300g pack of silken tofu will make 4 servings of this sauce so times all the ingredients by 4 and have yourself a quick sauce ready for some 2-minute noodles in the fridge (will keep 3 days refrigerated)
2. Make this dish your own! If you love garlic, add more- same with ginger. Feel free to come up with even more toppings than we've suggested- the world is your oyster... mmm, fanned oysters

# SWEET THINGS



# FOODIE FRIEND'S ON-THE-GO CEREAL BARS

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup peanut butter

1 tbsp coconut oil

1 and 1/2 cups rice puffs

1/3 cup pistachios

1/4 cup dark chocolate

1/2 tsp sea salt flakes

1/4 cup honey

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## METHOD

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, heat the peanut butter and honey; mix well.
2. Add rice puffs and combine thoroughly.
3. Pour into a greased or parchment-lined dish and press evenly.
4. Chill until solid.
5. Melt dark chocolate with coconut oil.
6. Dip or drizzle chocolate over bars. Sprinkle pistachios and sea salt.
7. Chill again until firm.



# TAHO (FILIPINO SILKEN TOFU DESSERT)

## INGREDIENTS

900 g silken tofu

2 tsp vanilla extract

2 and 1/2 cups brown sugar

2 cups tapioca pearls (sago)

2 cups water

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## METHOD

1. Cook tapioca pearls per package directions; set aside in a little syrup or water.
2. Make syrup: Combine brown sugar, water, and vanilla. Boil, then simmer 2–4 minutes.
3. Warm tofu in a steamer or microwave (2–5 minutes).
4. To serve: Scoop tofu into cups, add tapioca pearls, and pour over syrup.



# JUST FOOD COLLECTIVE'S CHOCOLATE SESAME BLISS BALLS

## INGREDIENTS

60 g date paste

1/2 cup oats

1/2 cup almond meal

1/2 cup tahini

4 fbsp maple syrup or honey

60 g cocoa powder

Pinch of sea salt

3 fbsp sesame seeds (for coating)

1 cup water

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## METHOD

1. Blend oats into powder in a food processor.
2. Mix date paste, almond meal, tahini, maple syrup, cocoa, and salt in a bowl.
3. Adjust with water or oats for consistency.
4. Roll into about 15 balls.
5. Roll balls in sesame seeds to coat.
6. Refrigerate in an airtight container up to 1 week (or freeze).



# FOODIE FRIENDS' HIGH PROTEIN COOKIE DOUGH BALLS

## INGREDIENTS

400 g canned chickpeas, drained	5 fbsp honey or rice malt syrup (optional)
120 g peanut butter (unsalted)	4 tsp vanilla extract
40 g oat flour	120 g dark chocolate chips
2 fbsp almond meal	1/2 tsp salt



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## METHOD

1. Blend chickpeas, peanut butter, flours, honey or rice malt syrup, and vanilla in a food processor for 30 seconds.
2. Scrape sides, process again until smooth.
3. Add almond milk to loosen if needed.
4. Fold in chocolate chips.
5. Roll into balls or serve as edible cookie dough.

## FOODIE FRIENDS' MICROWAVE MAGIC CARROT CAKE

### INGREDIENTS

85 g butter (6 tbsp), melted	240 ml whole milk
170 g all-purpose flour	3/4 cup finely grated carrot (about 1.5 medium carrot)
170 g dark brown sugar	1 and 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 and 1/2 tsp baking powder	Poppy seeds (optional)
1 and 1/2 tsp cinnamon	

### METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a microwave-safe Pyrex dish (about 30 seconds).
2. Add flour, brown sugar, baking powder, and cinnamon directly into the dish. Mix well.
3. Stir in milk, grated carrot, and vanilla until the batter is smooth and even.
4. Microwave on high for 6 minutes. Continue in 30-second intervals until the top is set and springs back when pressed (total 6–8 minutes).
5. Let cool in the dish for 15 minutes before frosting.
6. Optional: for frosting, beat cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Add powdered sugar and vanilla, and mix until smooth.
7. Spread frosting over cooled cake, slice, and serve.



## OPEN TABLE'S NO WASTE BLISS BALLS

A new favourite in our No Waste Workshops, bliss balls have quickly become a hit. They're simple to make, endlessly adaptable, and a clever way to use up pantry bits that might otherwise go to waste.

### INGREDIENTS Makes ~20 bite-sized balls

1 cup rolled oats or leftover  
cooked rice/quinoa

1/2 cup nut butter, tahini, seed  
spread or coconut oil

1/2 cup sweetener: honey,  
maple syrup

Pinch of salt

1/2-1 cup add-ins

crushed cereal, shredded  
coconut, dried fruit, cacao nibs,  
crushed nuts, or even a broken-  
up muesli bar

Optional: cinnamon, cocoa  
powder, vanilla essence,  
citrus zest




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### METHOD

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Mix well - your hands work best!
2. Add a splash of water or milk (dairy or non-dairy) if mixture is too dry; more oats or crushed cereal if too wet.
3. Roll into small balls.
4. Coat in coconut, sesame seeds or cocoa if you like.
5. Chill in the fridge for 30 mins (or eat straight away - we won't judge).
6. Tip: This is a very forgiving recipe. Use what you have, and taste as you go.

# DR HELEN'S FANCY CHOCOLATE MICROWAVE CAKE

## INGREDIENTS

1 and 1/2 cups flour	1 cup oil
1 cup sugar	1 cup cold coffee, milk or even just water
3 heaped tbspc Cocoa	3 tbspc Golden Syrup
1 tsp Baking Soda	1 tbspc whipped cream: flavoured to taste with icing sugar, vanilla, matcha, or whatever else that floats your boat!
1 tsp Baking Powder	
2 Eggs	



## METHOD

1. Grease x3 microwave safe containers with spray oil
2. Sift all dry ingredients together
3. Add wet ingredients to dry and whisk just until a smooth batter forms
4. Pour equal amounts into your three containers. You don't want the batter to be more than a few centimetres deep, or it won't cook.
5. Microwave each layer for 2 – 2.5 minutes, loosely covered with a lid, until the top feels firm and springs back to the touch
6. Allow to cool completely before unmoulding, and cool even more before icing.

Adapted from: <https://justamumnz.com/2014/05/21/grandmas-microwave-chocolate-cake/>

FRUGAL CANTEEN

FRUGAL CANTEEN

AT RMIT UNIVERSITY  
CORNER OF CAROLAN STREET  
AND VICTORIA STREET, CARLTON

# HOT FLAVOURED WATER

@JING PRAWIN

frugal canteen 4/10



WHERE FREE FOOD BECOMES ABSURD

4/10  
FRUGAL  
CANTEEN

CORNER OF CAROLAN  
AND VICTORIA STREET



FRUGAL CANTEEN

AT RMIT UNIVERSITY  
CORNER OF CAROLAN STREET  
AND VICTORIA STREET

frugal canteen 4/10

# ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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