

A Good Food Week



by Ryan the Anonymous Chef



Foreword

I hope you like to cook. If not, you may find it in you if you are willing to take on the challenge. What challenge you ask. Wait and see.

The purpose of this short book is to show you that it isn't that hard to be a great home chef. It serves as a mission for me to make our eating habits more healthy, organic and better tasting. Thanks to this book you may lose a few pounds or even leave a few years longer life. This is what makes me happy.

This book is written to inspire you to take a challenge. I challenge you to cook only great tasting and healthy food for a whole week. I will give you dinner and dessert recipes for each day of the week. The only thing you have to do is to cook them.

I want to show you that you don't have to eat only roots and seeds to be healthy. On the contrary, healthy food must be nutrient-rich and give you energy to do more.

To take the maximum out of it buy as many ingredients as possible from farmers or local markets. Be sure to use as fresh and preservative free ingredients as possible!

All the recipes in here are simple enough for even a beginner to execute perfectly. Do yourself a big favor and grab the opportunity.

Monday - *the challenge begins*

Start the week off right, with a light, succulent meal that will have your taste buds in a 5 star dining facility, as you relax in the comfort of your home.

So grab your chef hat, head to the kitchen, and get ready to have some fun while you make your own ginger prawn soba noodles.

Ginger prawn soba noodles



Ingredients

- ✿ 180g dried soba noodles
- ✿ 150g snow peas
- ✿ 1 bunch asparagus, cut diagonally into 3cm pieces
- ✿ 1 1/2 tablespoons soy sauce
- ✿ 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
- ✿ 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- ✿ 1/2 teaspoon caster sugar
- ✿ 500g peeled green prawns
- ✿ 4cm-piece fresh ginger, peeled, cut into matchsticks
- ✿ 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ✿ 2 teaspoons peanut oil
- ✿ 3 spring onions (shallots), thinly sliced diagonally

Method

Step 1 Cook the noodles following packet directions. This will take about 6 minutes, after your water is boiling. Add the snow peas and asparagus during the last few minutes of cooking. You're looking for them to be hot, but still firm. There should be a little snap when you bite into them. This is known as "al dente" in the world of cooks and chefs. Rinse with cold water, and then drain. Stop the cooking process by removing the heat already absorbed. Transfer to a bowl.

Step 2 While the noodles cook, combine the soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil and sugar in a bowl, mix gently with a wire whisk.

Step 3 Combine the prawns, ginger, garlic and half the soy sauce mixture in a bowl. Heat half the peanut oil in a non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook the prawn mixture, in 2 batches, stirring, for 3 minutes or until golden and cooked through.

Step 4 Add the prawn mixture, spring onion and remaining soy sauce mixture to the noodle mixture. Heat in the frying pan until the noodles have heated back up, then toss to combine.

Now enjoy your creation, you've earned it! The recipe isn't really difficult, but your guests will believe you worked the day away. And since you did, it's time you rewarded yourself with the sweet magnificence of our chocolate baubles...

Chocolate baubles



Ingredients

- ✿ 1/2 x 350g pkt frozen chocolate butter cake (Sara Lee brand), thawed, icing removed, cut into cubes
- ✿ 100g butter
- ✿ 250ml (1 cup) sweetened condensed milk
- ✿ 100g (1/2 cup, firmly packed) brown sugar
- ✿ 16 white marshmallows
- ✿ 65g (3/4 cup) desiccated coconut
- ✿ 80g chocolate sprinkles

Method

Step 1 Place the chocolate cake in the bowl of a food processor and process until fine crumbs form. This should take no more than a few minutes. Remember not to over do it, you'll end up with a paste instead of crumbs.

Step 2 Combine the butter, condensed milk and brown sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, for 10 minutes or until the butter melts and the mixture thickens and comes away from the side of the pan. Remove from heat. Set aside for 30 minutes to cool slightly.

Step 3 Add the cake crumbs to the butter mixture and stir until well combined. Use your hands to roll 1 tablespoonful of the cake-crumbs mixture around each marshmallow to enclose and form a ball.

Step 4 Combine the coconut and chocolate sprinkles on a large plate. Roll each chocolate ball in the coconut mixture to evenly coat. Place on a tray lined with non-stick baking paper. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for 1 hour or until firm.

Who says Mondays are no fun? Anyone who just ate with us will beg to differ!

Tuesday

Something green and healthy topped off with the most tender and juicy meats on the open market...

Lower-GI dukkah lamb steaks



*Can't decide on light or hearty?
Try both with this salad, topped with a juicy slab of red meat!*

Ingredients

- ✿ 3 teaspoons olive oil
- ✿ 1 small red onion, diced
- ✿ 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ✿ 1/2 x 250g packet pearl couscous
- ✿ 1 cup boiling water
- ✿ 200g red cabbage, shredded
- ✿ 4 (450g) lamb leg steaks
- ✿ 1 tablespoon pistachio dukkah
(see note)
- ✿ 1/2 x 250g punnet grape tomatoes,
halved
- ✿ 30g baby spinach
- ✿ 75g reduced-fat feta cheese,
crumbled
- ✿ 1/3 cup low-fat Greek-style yoghurt
- ✿ 2 tablespoons fresh mint leaves,
chopped

Method

Step 1 Heat 2 teaspoons of oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes or until softened. Add couscous. Cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute or until coated. Add boiling water. Simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, for 6 minutes or until couscous is just tender. Stir through cabbage. Cover. Set aside.

Step 2 Press dukkah onto steaks. Heat remaining oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook steaks for 2 to 3 minutes each side for medium or until cooked to your liking. Transfer to a plate. Cover with foil. Set aside for 5 minutes.

Step 3 Stir tomato, spinach and feta into couscous mixture. Combine yoghurt and mint in a bowl. Serve steaks with couscous mixture and yoghurt mixture.

It's a salad, and a main course in one! And while it looks like the creation of a world famous chef, the secret (you made it at home) will remain safe, as long as you keep it that way. Besides, would anyone believe you even if you told them?

And now, it's time to relax, but not without something sweet, yet healthy first! Rather than making something complicated, that takes hours of prep time, we're just going to go with something quick, and easy... that tastes extravagant!

Lemon-curd frozen yoghurt



Ingredients: yoghurt, lemon curd. (Yes, that's it!)

Method: Place yoghurt in a large bowl. Stir lemon curd through in a rippled effect. Place mixture in a plastic container or mold and freeze overnight. Place in the fridge for 20-30 minutes before you want to serve it to allow it to soften.

As you can see by now, great food can be enjoyed without spendings great deal of time, or money. With a little bit of practice, you'll develop skills you thought only came with a culinary degree. And you're doing it without the textbooks, or the commute!

Wednesday

Ok, so It's the middle of the week. If you can't decide what to eat, there's only one thing that you can never get tired of, and is so versatile, it could be eaten every day, without making the same meal twice. That's right, I'm talking about, CHICKEN!

Herb-stuffed chicken and potato bake



Ingredients

- ✂ 4 large (about 720g) chicken thigh cutlets, skin on, excess fat trimmed
- ✂ 1/3 cup chopped fresh continental parsley
- ✂ 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ✂ 1 lemon, rind finely grated, cut into wedges
- ✂ 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- ✂ 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ✂ 2 teaspoons olive oil
- ✂ Olive oil spray
- ✂ 200g green round beans, steamed, to serve

Potato bake

- ✂ 310g sweet potato (kumara), peeled, cut into 2cm pieces
- ✂ 500g Red Delight potatoes, cut into 2cm pieces
- ✂ 3 shallots, trimmed, finely chopped
- ✂ 65g (1/4 cup) sour cream
- ✂ 250ml (1 cup) milk
- ✂ 40g (1/2 cup) coarsely grated cheddar

Now, this one has a few more ingredients, and may take a little longer, but it's well worth it. And don't be intimidated by the size of the job, just take it one step at a time, and you'll realize that there's nothing you can't handle... remember, YOU are the master of your own kitchen.

Method

Step 1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a roasting pan with non-stick baking paper.

Step 2 To make the potato bake, place the sweet potato and potato in a steamer over a saucepan of simmering water and cook, covered, for 4-5 minutes or until almost tender. Transfer to a baking dish. Top with shallot. Combine sour cream and milk in a jug. Pour over the potato mixture. Top with cheddar. Bake for 50-55 minutes or until golden.

Step 3 Meanwhile, run your fingers under the skin of each cutlet to create a large pocket. Combine parsley, garlic, lemon rind, dill, paprika and oil in a bowl. Spoon one-quarter of parsley mixture under the skin of each cutlet. Place in prepared pan. Spray with oil. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until golden and cooked through.

Step 4 Serve chicken with potato bake, beans and lemon wedges.

Now after that Wednesday night dinner, you're going to be stuffed... But,
loosen your belt a notch, because you've gotta try this!
It's ice cream, you can't say no!

Double-strawberry sauce with ice-cream



Ingredients

- ✿ 250g strawberries, hulled, plus 125g extra, hulled, quartered
- ✿ 1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
- ✿ 1 cup (120g) dried strawberries
- ✿ Vanilla ice cream, to serve

Method

Step 1 Place the fresh strawberries, sugar and 1 cup (250ml) water in a large saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir with a wooden spoon for 3 minutes, or until sugar has dissolved. Increase heat to high, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, without stirring, for 10 minutes or until the strawberries are soft.

Step 2 Using a stick blender, blend the mixture until smooth. Add the dried strawberries and cook, stirring, over low heat for 5 minutes, or until softened slightly.

Remove from heat, set aside in the pan for 10 minutes to cool, then stir in the extra strawberries. Serve warm or cold as a topping for vanilla ice cream.

... and there you have it, half way there, and you've survived like a champ. When was the last time you ate this good? Or felt this good?

Thursday

Today we're going to cross a cultural ocean, and try something inspired by Asian cooks but with an American twist...

Black rice salad with pork and cashews



Ingredients

- ✧ 175g (1 cup) Sunrice Black Rice
- ✧ 4 (about 125g each) pork loin steaks, excess fat trimmed
- ✧ 150g sugar snap peas (see note), blanched
- ✧ 150g snow peas, thinly sliced, blanched
- ✧ 100g baby spinach leaves
- ✧ 25g roasted cashews
- ✧ 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- ✧ 2 tablespoons orange juice
- ✧ 1 tablespoon lime juice
- ✧ 2 teaspoons white balsamic vinegar
- ✧ 2 teaspoons honey
- ✧ 1 teaspoon finely grated fresh ginger

Method

Step 1 Cook the rice in a large saucepan of boiling water for 30-35 minutes or until just tender. Drain. Be sure to remove from heat, as rice will overcook quickly, and stick together.

Step 2 Meanwhile, heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat. Spray with oil. Cook the pork for 4-5 minutes each side or until golden and just cooked through. Transfer to a clean chopping board. Cover loosely with foil and set aside for 2-3 minutes to rest.

Step 3 Thinly slice the pork. Place the rice, sugar snap peas, snow peas, spinach cashews and chives in a large bowl. Whisk the orange juice, lime juice, vinegar, honey and ginger in a small bowl. Add dressing and pork to the salad and gently toss to combine.

Now you will have people convinced you've traveled to the ends of the earth, in search of ways to spice up your life. And you certainly have come a long way in the kitchen this week.

Now, let's take another trip, down home this time, to see what we can do with some good ol' southern Georgia peaches...

Free-form peach pie



Ingredients

- ✿ 2 tablespoons apricot jam
- ✿ 1 sheet (25 x 25cm) frozen ready-rolled shortcrust pastry, just thawed
- ✿ 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- ✿ 1 x 415g can peach slices, drained
- ✿ Icing sugar, to dust
- ✿ Bought vanilla custard, to serve (optional)

Method

Step 1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Heat the jam in a small saucepan over low heat for 3 minutes or until melted.

Step 2 Place the pastry on the lined tray. Spread the jam over the pastry, leaving a 2cm-wide border around the edge. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of sugar.

Step 3 Spoon the peach into the centre of the pastry. Fold in the edges of the pastry to partially enclose the filling, leaving the centre open. Sprinkle with the remaining sugar.

Step 4 Bake in oven for 25 minutes or until golden. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool. Dust with icing sugar and serve immediately with custard, if desired.

Although this desert can be served cold, or reheated at another time, once you've tried it, you'll agree there's no bearing the taste of a fresh baked peach desert. I believe you've outdone yourself already this week, and still have a few days to go!

Friday

*It's Friday. Do we even have to talk about what's
for dinner? That's right. Fish.
But you've never had it quite like this!*

Harissa fish with fattoush



Ingredients

- ✂ 4 tablespoons (100g) harissa*
- ✂ 1/3 cup (80ml) lemon juice, plus wedges to serve
- ✂ 4 x 180g skinless blue-eye fillets
- ✂ 1 telegraph cucumber, peeled, deseeded, cut into chunks
- ✂ 3 tomatoes, deseeded, cut into chunks
- ✂ 2 cups watercress sprigs
- ✂ 1 small red onion, sliced
- ✂ 1 cup (160g) kalamata olives
- ✂ 100ml olive oil
- ✂ 2 teaspoons sumac*
- ✂ 1 pita bread round, grilled until crisp

Method

Step 1 Combine harissa and 2 tablespoons lemon juice in ceramic dish. Add fish, turn to coat, then set aside while you make the fattoush.

Step 2 Place cucumber, tomato, watercress, onion and olives in a bowl. Mix 1/3 cup (80ml) oil, sumac and remaining 2 tablespoons lemon juice in a small bowl. Season and set aside while you cook the fish.

Step 3 Heat remaining oil in a large non-stick frypan over medium heat. Cook fish for 3-4 minutes each side or until golden and cooked through.

Step 4 Break pita bread into pieces and toss with salad and dressing. Serve the fish on the salad, with lemon wedges.

Ok. That one was out of the advanced class textbook...If you managed it, and are still here, you deserve a big pat on the back.

And you also deserve a tasty treat. But after cooking this last meal, who wants to do any more work in the kitchen?

That's why tonight were going with an old fashioned favorite. So simple and delicious, it's become s classic that will last through the ages. Check out this Fridays version of the banana split...

Banana split



Ingredients

- ✂ 1 banana, peeled, cut lengthways
- ✂ 2 scoops vanilla ice-cream
- ✂ 3 pecans, chopped

Homemade chocolate sauce

(Makes 2/3 cup)

- ✂ 100g dark chocolate, broken into squares
- ✂ 1/4 cup thickened cream
- ✂ 1 tablespoon Kahlua, optional

Method

Step 1 To make chocolate sauce: Place chocolate and cream in a microwavesafe jug. Microwave, uncovered, on HIGH (100%) power for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute with a metal spoon or until smooth. Stir in Kahlua, if desired.

Step 2 Place banana slices on a plate. Top with scoops of ice-cream.

Step 3 Drizzle with chocolate sauce. Sprinkle with nuts. Serve.

Simple. Delicious. To say any more would defeat the purpose.

Saturday

It's finally here! The weekend. Time to kick off the work boots, relax, grab a cold drink, and think about the good things life has to offer. Sometimes the weekend seems almost too good to be true, like this next meal on our menu...

Snapper with Asian green salad



Ingredients

- ✂ 1 long red chilli (see note), deseeded, thinly sliced
- ✂ 2 limes, rind finely grated, juiced
- ✂ 3 teaspoons brown sugar
- ✂ 3 teaspoons sesame oil
- ✂ 4 (175g each) snapper fillets, skin removed
- ✂ 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
- ✂ 100g baby Asian salad greens
- ✂ 1 red onion, halved, thinly sliced
- ✂ 250g grape tomatoes, quartered
- ✂ lime wedges, to serve

Method

Step 1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Cut four 40cm lengths each of foil and baking paper. Place baking paper on top of foil.

Step 2 Combine chilli, lime rind, 1/4 cup lime juice, sugar and oil in a bowl. Season with salt.

Step 3 Place 1 fish fillet on each piece of baking paper. Top with garlic. Spoon 2 teaspoons of lime dressing over each. Join foil and baking paper together, folding edges over at top to enclose fish. Seal to form parcels. Place on a baking tray. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until fish is cooked through.

Step 4 Meanwhile, place salad greens, onion and tomatoes in a bowl. Whisk remaining lime dressing and spoon over salad. Toss to combine. Arrange salad on plates.

Step 5 Remove fish from parcels and place 1 fillet on each salad. Serve with lime wedges.

It's amazing what we can accomplish in our own home, with a little knowledge, minimal cooking equipment, and a simple instruction manual.

Wouldn't it be great if everything on life were this easy, and yielded such an enjoyable result? While we can't promise everything in one day, we can shoot for at least 2 great things. Now, Of course that meal was one of them, so why not have the second one shortly after?

One of the wisest men I've ever known said these words to me long ago: "Everybody likes cake." And they hold true to this day.

Now I'm not exactly sure what he had in mind when he said it, but I believe it was along the lines of this.

Almond cake with apricot and vanilla bean syrup



Ingredients

- ✿ 250g butter, softened
- ✿ 2/3 cup caster sugar
- ✿ 4 eggs
- ✿ 2 cups almond meal
(ground almonds)
- ✿ 1/4 cup rice flour
- ✿ Double cream, to serve
- ✿ Apricot and vanilla bean syrup
- ✿ 1 vanilla bean, split
- ✿ 1/2 cup caster sugar
- ✿ 4 apricots, halved, stones removed,
cut into thick wedges

Method

Step 1 Preheat oven to 160°C/140°C fan-forced. Grease a 6cm-deep, 22cm round cake pan. Line base and sides with baking paper.

Step 2 Using an electric mixer, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating after each addition. Stir in almond meal and flour. Spread mixture into prepared pan. Bake for 1 hour 15 minutes or until a skewer inserted in centre comes out clean. Stand in pan for 10 minutes. Turn out onto a wire rack to cool for 10 minutes.

Step 3 Meanwhile, to make syrup: Using a sharp knife, scrape seeds from bean. Place seeds, bean, sugar and 1/2 cup cold water in a saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until sugar dissolves (don't boil). Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low. Simmer for 7 minutes or until slightly thickened. Add apricots. Simmer for 2 to 3 minutes or until apricots are just tender. Remove from heat. Remove and discard bean.

Step 4 Place cake on a plate. Spoon over apricot mixture. Serve with cream.

Sunday

The 7th day. A day of rest. A day to relax, and enjoy. Although that may not always be possible, one thing we can always enjoy is dinner. And Sunday is the perfect day to have a somewhat exotic meal. Tuna steak may not be hard to find, as a matter of fact most major supermarkets have them. It is a fish, but it has that heavy, meaty taste and texture to it, yet it won't weigh you down the way pork or beef will. And the roster tomato salad adds just the right tang on the side.

Seared tuna, green bean & roasted tomato salad



Ingredients

- ✂ 1 x 250g punnet cherry tomatoes, halved
- ✂ 1 red onion, halved, cut into thin wedges
- ✂ Olive oil spray
- ✂ 400g chat (small coliban) potatoes, halved
- ✂ 250g green beans, topped
- ✂ 4 (about 150g each) tuna steaks
- ✂ 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ✂ 1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard
- ✂ 2 teaspoons olive oil
- ✂ Pinch of caster sugar
- ✂ 100g baby rocket leaves

Method

Step 1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Place tomato and onion on the tray and spray with olive oil spray. Season with pepper. Roast for 10 minutes or until just tender.

Step 2 Meanwhile, place the potato in a steamer basket over a saucepan of simmering water. Cook, covered, for 10 minutes. Add the beans and cook, covered, for a further 2 minutes or until the beans are bright green and tender crisp and the potato is tender. Refresh under cold running water. Drain.

Step 3 Preheat a barbecue grill or chargrill on high. Spray both sides of the tuna with olive oil spray. Cook on grill for 1-2 minutes each side for medium or until cooked to your liking. Transfer to a plate. Set aside for 2-3 minutes to rest.

Step 4 Whisk together lemon juice, mustard, oil and sugar in a jug. Season with pepper. Place tomato mixture, potato mixture and rocket in a bowl and gently toss until just combined. Divide among serving plates. Drizzle over the dressing and top with tuna. Serve immediately.

Now Sunday is the day many of us yet not to leave home. We try not to work too hard, and some of us never bother to get out of our pajamas. And if we're still in pajamas, we can have breakfast food any time of day, right?

Since I'm making the rules, the answer is yes, and so it's going to be pancakes for dessert. Only were going to go for the gold, and do a lot better than simple maple syrup tonight. Try out this recipe, passed on to us from chefs in the tropics...

Citrus ricotta pancakes



Ingredients

- ✿ 1 1/2 cups milk
- ✿ 1 egg
- ✿ 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ✿ 2 cups self-raising flour
- ✿ 1/4 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- ✿ 1/3 cup caster sugar
- ✿ 25g butter, melted
- ✿ 2/3 cup smooth ricotta cheese
- ✿ 2 teaspoons finely grated orange rind
- ✿ 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon rind

Method

Step 1 Whisk milk, egg and vanilla together in a jug. Sift flour and bicarbonate of soda into a bowl. Stir in sugar. Make a well in centre. Add milk mixture. Whisk until just combined. Stir in ricotta, orange rind and lemon rind.

Step 2 Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Brush pan with butter. Using 1/4 cup mixture per pancake, cook 2 pancakes for 3 to 4 minutes or until bubbles appear on surface. Turn and cook for 3 minutes or until cooked through. Transfer to a plate. Cover loosely with foil to keep warm. Repeat with remaining mixture, brushing pan with butter between batches. Serve.

Congratulations! 7 days of great food, and all of it healthy. I hope you've enjoyed yourself this week, and I hope you learned that eating right has to be neither difficult, boring, nor does it have to be without flavor and zest! Anyone can cook impressive food. We may not all be executive chef material, but we don't have to live out of the microwave either. So take some time, and a little effort, and dinner can be a very enjoyable experience.

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