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#SA323323

Traybakes *for a crowd*

COOKING ONCE. FEEDING MANY



Traybakes for a Crowd

100 Big-Batch Recipes for Parties, Potlucks & Busy Weeks

By

Robin Wickens

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Introduction

One tin. Many happy eaters.
Hosting a party, feeding a team, or stocking the freezer? These 100 traybakes deliver bold flavours with minimal faff. UK-friendly measures, supermarket ingredients, and clear make-ahead/freezer notes make planning easy. From Chicken Shawarma with Sumac Onions to Fish Pie Slab and Tiramisu Tray, this is buffet-proof cooking—reliable, generous and gloriously sliceable.
Includes: conversions & temperatures, allergens & swaps, store-cupboard list, timing guides, and drink pairings.

About the author
Robin Wickens is a UK recipe developer focused on crowd-pleasing, scalable cooking that works in real ovens with real budgets.

Disclaimer:

Always check ingredient labels for allergens. Follow local food safety guidance. The author and publisher are not responsible for adverse outcomes resulting from the application of the information herein.

Recipes reflect UK ingredients and guidance. Always check labels for allergens and “may contain” notices. Use separate boards for raw meat and ready-to-eat foods. Hold hot food at 63 °C or above and cold food at 5 °C or below for buffets. Cool hot food quickly and refrigerate within 2 hours . Reheat to piping hot (≥75 °C) once only. When in doubt, chill it.

How to use this book

When you're feeding a crowd, predictability and scale matter. Traybakes give you both: one tin, big flavours, minimal faff, easy transport, and straightforward portioning. This book focuses on recipes that fill a standard roasting tin or brownie tin, use supermarket-friendly ingredients, and scale neatly for 8–16 servings. Each recipe includes clear allergens, swaps, diet notes, make-ahead guidance, freezer suitability, and a quick wine/beer pairing so you can plan the whole do in one go.

Assumptions used throughout

Ovens: Fan-assisted temperatures in °C. Reduce by ~20 °C for conventional.

Tins: Unless stated, a 30 × 40 cm roasting tin or 23 × 33 cm tray lined with baking paper (overhang for lifting).

Servings: Most savoury bakes serve 10–12 as a main or 16–20 as part of a buffet. Most sweet bakes yield 24 small squares or 12–16 generous pieces.

Salt: Fine sea salt unless otherwise stated. Season “to taste” means taste it.

Oils & fats: Light olive oil or rapeseed for roasting; butter for baking.

Store Cupboard for Crowd-Friendly Traybakes

Tins & carbs: Chopped tomatoes, passata, tomato purée; chickpeas, cannellini beans; coconut milk; jarred roasted peppers; foil pouches of precooked grains.

Baking basics: Plain, self-raising, and strong white flour; caster, light brown and demerara sugar; bicarbonate of soda; baking powder; cocoa; vanilla; golden syrup; honey.

Oils & acids: Light olive/rapeseed oil, extra virgin olive oil, sesame oil; red/white wine vinegar, cider vinegar, balsamic, rice vinegar; lemons/limes.

Flavour bombs: Dijon/wholegrain mustard, harissa, gochujang, miso, curry

pastes, pesto, anchovies, capers, soy sauce/tamari, fish sauce, Marmite, miso.

Herbs & spices: Smoked and sweet paprika, cumin, coriander, turmeric, chilli flakes, oregano, thyme, rosemary, fennel seed, cinnamon, mixed spice, nutmeg, cardamom.

Nuts, seeds & extras: Almonds, walnuts, pistachios; sesame, pumpkin and sunflower seeds; tahini; dried fruit; oats.

Freezer heroes: Peas, spinach, mixed veg, prawns, herb cubes, part-baked breads.

Equipment You'll Actually Use

Heavy 30 × 40 cm roasting tin (or two), 23 × 33 cm tray , 20 × 30 cm brownie tin.

Baking parchment, foil, cooling racks, wire probe thermometer.

Large mixing bowls, jug, digital scales, microplane grater, long palette knife.

Potato ricer/masher, bench scraper, sharp chef's knife, shears.

Lidded gastronorm or clip-lock boxes for transport.

Optional but handy: immersion blender, speed peeler, pastry brush.

Core Techniques (Crowd-Proofed)

Sheet-pan searing: Preheat the empty tin for 10 minutes to jump-start browning.

Layering flavours: Marinade or dry-rub proteins; roast aromatics first; finish with a bright dressing or fresh herbs for lift.

Slab assembly: Build in the tin for lasagnes, rice bakes and dessert bars; compact with a spatula for neat slices.

Buffet timing: Aim for foods that hold well 30–60 minutes. Keep a loose foil tent to retain moisture; add finishing sauces/herbs just before serving.

Scaling up/down: Increase ingredients by ratio; keep tin depth similar so cook times remain reliable.

Conversions & Temperatures (Quick Reference)

Fan oven: 140 °C (low/slow), 160–170 °C (gentle roast/bake), 180–190 °C (standard), 200–220 °C (high roast).

Spoon measures: 1 tsp = 5 ml; 1 tbsp = 15 ml.

Tray sizes: 20 × 30 cm ≈ 8 × 12 in; 23 × 33 cm ≈ 9 × 13 in; 30 × 40 cm ≈ 12 × 16 in.

Rice ratios (oven): 1 cup rice : 1¾ cups liquid (tightly covered).

Meat internal temps (rested): Chicken 75 °C; Pork 70 °C; Beef/Lamb (medium) 60–63 °C; Salmon 50–53 °C.

Allergens & Swaps (House Style)

We list major UK allergens where relevant. Common swaps we'll use:

Gluten: Use certified GF flour blends, GF oats, tamari, GF baking powder.

Dairy: Swap butter for dairy-free block, milk for oat/soya, yoghurt for coconut.

Eggs: For cakes/brownies: 1 egg ≈ 60 g apple purée + ½ tsp bicarb, or commercial replacer.

Nuts: Use seeds (pumpkin/sunflower) or omit; check decorations.

Fish/Shellfish: Omit or swap for mushrooms/beans; use seaweed flakes for umami.

Diet tags used: V (vegetarian), Ve (vegan), GF (gluten-free if swaps noted), DF (dairy-free if swaps noted).

Chapter 1 – Wake-Up Slabs & Brunch Trays

Full English Breakfast Traybake with Herby Beans



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm + 20 × 30 cm
Allergens: Gluten (sausages may), Eggs.
Diet: Easily GF with GF sausages and bread omitted.

You'll need: 12 good sausages, 12 rashers streaky bacon, 12 eggs, 400 g mushrooms, 600 g cherry tomatoes, 800 g baby potatoes (halved), 2 peppers, 2 red onions, 2 × 400 g tins cannellini beans, 300 ml passata, 2 tbsp tomato purée, 2 tsp smoked paprika, 2 tsp Worcestershire (use GF if needed), 4 tbsp oil, parsley.

Method

1. Heat oven to 200 °C fan. Preheat the empty large tin. Toss potatoes, onions and peppers with 2 tbsp oil, salt and pepper; roast 15 minutes.
2. Add sausages, mushrooms and bacon; drizzle remaining oil. Roast 15 minutes.
3. Herby beans (small tin): Mix beans, passata, purée, paprika, Worcestershire, salt. Bake alongside for 20 minutes until bubbling.
4. Make 12 little wells among the veg/meat; crack eggs in. Return both tins for 6–8 minutes until whites set.
5. Scatter chopped parsley; serve with toast.

Make-ahead: Par-roast veg/sausages 20 minutes; chill up to 24 hours. Finish with eggs fresh.

Holds: 15–20 minutes, loosely covered.
Freezer: Veg/sausages base freezes 1 month (not eggs).
Swaps: Ve: swap meat for veggie sausages, add crispy smoked tofu.
Nutrition (per serving, approx): 2,350 kJ/560 kcal; 31 g fat; 36 g carb; 31 g protein.
Pairing: Malty English bitter or breakfast tea.
Origins & Facts: A traybake nod to the classic fry-up—same components, less hovering over multiple pans.

Maple-Mustard Bacon, Apple & Potato Brunch Slab



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: None common. Diet: DF, GF.

Method (condensed ingredients within steps)

1. Toss 1.2 kg baby potatoes (halved) with 2 tbsp oil , salt, pepper ; roast at 200 °C fan for 20 min .
2. Whisk 3 tbsp maple syrup + 2 tbsp Dijon + 1 tbsp cider vinegar .

3. Add 300 g thick-cut bacon lardons , 2 sliced red onions , 3 sliced apples , half the glaze; roast 15 min .
4. Finish with remaining glaze and small bunch parsley .

Make-ahead: Roast potatoes the day before; reheat with bacon and apples.
Freezer: Not ideal (apples soften).
Nutrition: ~1,800 kJ/430 kcal.
Pairing: Dry cider.
Origins: Northern European harvest tray—sweet, salty, sharp in one pan.

Smoked Salmon, Leek & Potato Frittata Tray



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm (deep)
Allergens: Eggs, Milk, Fish. Diet: GF.

Ingredients

2 tbsp butter, 2 leeks (sliced), 400 g cooked waxy potatoes (sliced)
300 g hot-smoked salmon (flaked)
16 eggs, 250 ml whole milk, zest 1 lemon, dill, salt, pepper

Method

1. Heat oven 180 °C fan . Butter the tin; line base.
2. Soften leeks in 1 tbsp butter; layer with potatoes and salmon.
3. Whisk eggs, milk, zest, dill, seasoning; pour in. Dot last tbsp butter.
4. Bake 22–26 min until just set; rest 5 min , slice.

Make-ahead: Bake, chill, and serve room temperature.
Freezer: Yes, up to 1 month; reheat gently.
Nutrition: ~1,720 kJ/410 kcal.
Pairing: Brut English sparkling.
Origins: Italian frittata technique, British smoked fish and leeks.

Harissa Mushroom & Halloumi Breakfast Hash (Ve-option)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Allergens: Milk (halloumi). Diet: V, GF; Ve if swapping halloumi for smoked tofu.

Method

1. Roast 1.2 kg baby potatoes , 500 g mushrooms , 2 peppers , 2 red onions at 200 °C fan with 3 tbsp oil , 2 tsp smoked paprika for 20 min .
2. Toss with 2 tbsp harissa , 1 tbsp honey , 2 tbsp lemon juice .

3. Add 500 g halloumi (cubes) ; roast 12–14 min to golden.
4. Finish with mint & coriander ; lemon wedges.

Freezer: Base veg yes; add cheese fresh.
Nutrition: ~1,630 kJ/390 kcal.
Pairing: Mint tea or pale ale.
Origins: North-African spice profile meets British sheet-pan ease.

Sticky Sausage, Mustard & Onion Tear-Apart Rolls



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 10 min |
Allergens: Gluten, Milk, Sesame (optional).
Diet: Can be DF/GF with swaps.

Ingredients

12 good sausages; 2 red onions (wedges); 2 tbsp oil

500 g strong white flour, 7 g fast yeast, 10 g salt, 300 ml warm milk (or oat), 40 g butter (or DF block)

Glaze: 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard, 1 tbsp honey, 1 tbsp melted butter

Method

1. Roast sausages and onions at 200 °C fan for 18–20 min .
2. Dough: Mix flour, yeast, salt; add milk and butter; knead 5–7 min. Prove 30 min.
3. Roll into 12 balls; tuck a chunk of sausage/onion in each; arrange in lined 23 × 33 cm tin. Prove 20–30 min.
4. Brush glaze; bake 190 °C fan 20–22 min .
5. Brush with a little extra honey to shine; sprinkle sesame (optional).

Make-ahead: Par-bake 10 min, cool; finish 10–12 min before serving.

Freezer: Baked and cooled, 1 month.

Nutrition: ~1,980 kJ/470 kcal.

Pairing: English pale ale.

Origins: Part sausage roll, part pull-apart bread—built for sharing.

Cinnamon-Vanilla French Toast Slab with Berry Syrup



Serves: 16 | Time: 45 minutes | Allergens: Gluten, Milk, Eggs. Diet: V.

Method

1. Whisk 8 eggs , 800 ml milk , 150 ml double cream , 120 g sugar , 2 tsp vanilla , 2 tsp cinnamon , pinch salt.
2. Butter a 23 × 33 cm tin; layer 1 large brioche or 16 slices thick bread .

3. Pour custard; rest 10 min ; dot 50 g butter .
4. Bake 180 °C fan 28–32 min until puffed and set.
5. Simmer 300 g mixed berries + 75 g sugar + 1 tbsp lemon for 5–6 min ; spoon over. Dust icing sugar.

Freezer: Assembled (unbaked) 1 month; thaw, bake.
Nutrition: ~1,670 kJ/400 kcal.
Pairing: Filter coffee or off-dry Riesling.
Origins: Brunch casserole approach—hotel-pan efficiency at home.

Chorizo, Potato & Egg Pepper Tray



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Allergens: Eggs. Diet: GF; DF if using cooking chorizo without dairy.

Method

1. Roast 1 kg potatoes (chunks) and 3 peppers (strips) with 2 tbsp oil , paprika , salt at 200 °C fan for 18 min .
2. Add 300 g sliced cooking chorizo ; roast 8 min .

3. Make 12 wells ; crack eggs; bake 6–8 min .
4. Finish with spring onions and parsley ; lemon wedges.

Freezer: Base yes; add eggs fresh.
Nutrition: ~1,800 kJ/430 kcal.
Pairing: Garnacha or lager.
Origins: Iberian flavours, British brunch practicality.

Sheet-Pan Kedgeree with Lemon Yoghurt



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Allergens: Fish, Milk (yoghurt), Eggs (optional). Diet: GF.

Method

1. In a deep 30 × 40 cm tin, combine 800 g basmati , 1.4 L hot stock , 1 tsp turmeric , 2 tsp curry powder , 2 onions (sliced) , 150 g peas , 50 g butter , salt. Cover tightly with foil. Bake 180 °C fan 25 min .

2. Fold through 400 g flaked smoked haddock (cooked/boned) and handful coriander ; rest 10 min covered.
3. Top with 6–8 halved soft-boiled eggs (optional).
4. Mix 250 g yoghurt + lemon zest + pinch salt ; dollop and serve with lemon wedges.

Freezer: Yes, without eggs and yoghurt.
Nutrition: ~1,630 kJ/390 kcal.
Pairing: Dry Riesling or IPA.
Origins: Anglo-Indian breakfast classic adapted to the oven.

Marinade Maths—Fast Flavour at Scale

Use 3% salt by weight for quick brines (30 g per litre water). For yoghurt or buttermilk trays, use 1 tsp salt + 1 tsp acid per 250 ml . For quick glazes, the 3:2:1 rule (3 parts sweet, 2 parts salty/savoury, 1 part acid) keeps balance when multiplying.

Chapter 2 – Chicken & Turkey Crowd-Pleasers

Sheet-Pan Chicken Shawarma with Sumac Onions & Tahini Drizzle



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes (plus marinating) | Allergens: Sesame (tahini). Diet: DF, GF.

Ingredients

2.5 kg boneless chicken thighs

Marinade: 120 ml olive oil, juice 2 lemons, 6 cloves garlic (grated), 2 tbsp ground cumin, 2 tbsp coriander, 2 tsp smoked paprika, 1 tsp turmeric, ½ tsp cinnamon, 2 tsp salt, pepper

4 red onions (thinly sliced), 2 tsp sumac, 1 tsp sugar, 1 tbsp lemon

Drizzle: 150 g tahini, 120 ml water, 1 garlic clove, lemon juice, salt

To serve: Flatbreads, pickles, herbs

Method

1. Marinate chicken at least 30 min (better overnight).
2. Roast on a preheated 30 × 40 cm tin at 220 °C fan 20–25 min until edges char and centres hit 75 °C .
3. Toss onions with sumac, sugar, lemon; stand 10 min.
4. Whisk drizzle to a pourable sauce.
5. Pile chicken into the tray, top with onions, herbs and tahini. Serve with warmed flatbreads.

Make-ahead: Marinate 24 h; roast before guests arrive and hold at 90–100 °C.

Freezer: Marinated raw chicken freezes 2 months.

Nutrition: ~2,060 kJ/490 kcal.

Pairing: Lebanese-style rosé or pilsner.

Origins & Facts: Street-food favourite reimagined for the oven—charred edges via high heat and a touch of cinnamon for depth.

Peri-Peri Chicken & Pepper Rice Tray



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Allergens: None common. Diet: GF, DF.

Method

1. Whisk 100 ml peri-peri sauce , 2 tbsp oil , 1 tsp smoked paprika . Toss with 2 kg bone-in chicken portions ; salt.
2. In deep tin, add 700 g long-grain rice , 1.25 L hot chicken stock , 2 peppers (strips) , 1 onion (sliced) , 250 g peas , zest 1 lemon ; salt. Nestle chicken on top.

3. Cover tightly with foil; bake 190 °C fan 35 min . Uncover 10–12 min to crisp.
4. Rest 10 min; fluff and finish with parsley and lemon wedges .

Freezer: Yes, cooled portions.
Nutrition: ~2,050 kJ/490 kcal.
Pairing: Vinho Verde or lager.
Origins: Portuguese-African flavour profile adapted to British tray-rice method.

Creamy Pesto Chicken, Cherry Tomato & Gnocchi Bake



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 35 minutes | Allergens: Milk, Gluten (gnocchi unless GF). Diet: Easily GF with GF gnocchi.

Method

1. Toss 1.5 kg shelf-stable gnocchi , 700 g cherry tomatoes , 1 red onion (slices) with 2 tbsp oil , salt in a lined tray.

2. Nestle 1.2 kg chicken mini fillets ; spoon over 200 g basil pesto loosened with 200 ml single cream .
3. Bake 200 °C fan 22–25 min until chicken hits 75 °C and gnocchi is golden.
4. Scatter rocket and grated Parmesan to serve.

Freezer: Not ideal (cream splits).
Nutrition: ~2,220 kJ/530 kcal.
Pairing: Pinot Grigio.
Origins: Italian market flavours with weeknight British convenience.

Sticky Tamarind-Honey Chicken with Roasted Pineapple



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Allergens: None common. Diet: DF, GF.

Method

1. Blend 3 tbsp tamarind concentrate , 3 tbsp honey , 2 tbsp soy or tamari , 1 tbsp grated ginger , 2 cloves garlic , 1 tbsp oil .
2. Toss with 2 kg chicken thighs and 1 pineapple (chunks) ; season.

3. Roast 200 °C fan 30–35 min to glaze, turning once.
4. Finish with lime and coriander ; chilli optional.

Freezer: Marinated raw chicken freezes 2 months; add pineapple fresh.
Nutrition: ~1,930 kJ/460 kcal.
Pairing: Hazy pale ale.
Origins: Sweet-sour Southeast Asian tang, simplified for sheet-pan cooking.

Lemon-Garlic Chicken with New Potatoes & Green Beans



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm (deep)
Allergens: None common. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

2 kg bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
1.2 kg baby new potatoes, halved
500 g fine green beans, trimmed
Marinade: 4 tbsp olive oil; zest and juice of 2 lemons; 5 cloves garlic, grated; 2 tsp dried oregano; 1 tsp dried thyme; 2 tsp sea salt; black pepper

Finish: small bunch parsley, chopped; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven to 200 °C fan . Toss potatoes with half the marinade; spread in a preheated tin and roast 15 minutes .
2. Toss chicken with remaining marinade; season. Nestle chicken among potatoes skin-side up; roast 25–28 minutes until the chicken reads 75 °C and the potatoes are nearly tender.
3. Add green beans to the tray, toss in the juices; roast 8–10 minutes more until bright and just tender.
4. Rest 5 minutes ; scatter parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

Make-ahead: Marinate chicken up to 24 hours . Par-roast potatoes 15 minutes earlier in the day; finish with chicken and beans when needed.
Holds: 20 minutes, loosely tented with foil.
Freezer: Marinated raw chicken, 2 months; thaw fully before roasting.
Swaps: Use asparagus (in spring) instead of beans; add 100 g pitted olives for a Mediterranean twist.

Nutrition (approx per serving): 2,020 kJ/480 kcal; 27 g fat; 20 g carb; 37 g protein.

Pairing: Unoaked Chardonnay or Pilsner.

Origins & Facts: Classic Mediterranean flavours scaled to one pan; high heat keeps the skin crisp while lemon brightens the whole tray.

Buffalo-Style Chicken Tray with Blue Cheese Crumb & Celery Slaw



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk, Gluten (crumb). Diet: Can be GF with GF crumbs; DF if skipping dairy elements.

Ingredients

2 kg boneless chicken thighs

Sauce: 120 g hot sauce (Frank's-style), 80 g butter (or DF block), 1 tbsp honey, ½ tsp garlic granules

Blue cheese crumb: 120 g fresh breadcrumbs (or GF), 80 g blue cheese (crumbled), 1 tbsp oil, black pepper

Celery slaw: 6 celery sticks (finely sliced), 1 small red onion (thinly sliced), 2 tbsp mayo, 2 tbsp yoghurt (or DF alt), 1 tbsp cider vinegar, pinch sugar, salt

To serve: chopped chives

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Pat chicken dry, season lightly.
2. Melt butter with hot sauce, honey and garlic; toss chicken in half the sauce. Spread on the tray; roast 20 minutes .
3. Mix crumb ingredients. Brush chicken with remaining sauce; scatter crumb over the top. Roast 8–10 minutes more until bubbling and chicken hits 75 °C .
4. Toss slaw ingredients; season to taste.
5. Rest chicken 5 minutes ; shower with chives and serve with slaw.

Make-ahead: Mix sauce and crumb a day ahead; slaw keeps 6 hours chilled.

Freezer: Cooked chicken (without slaw) freezes 1 month.

Swaps: Use cauliflower florets (Ve) roasted 20–25 minutes; finish with vegan “blue” dressing.

Nutrition: ~2,060 kJ/490 kcal.

Pairing: IPA or dry Riesling.

Origins & Facts: Stateside bar favourite reworked as a party pan—crumb gives the blue-cheese hit without needing a separate dip.

Chicken Tikka Traybake with Onions, Peppers & Mint Yoghurt



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes (plus marinating) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (yoghurt). Diet: GF; DF with coconut yoghurt.

Ingredients

2.2 kg boneless chicken thighs, chunked

Marinade: 300 g plain yoghurt; 2 tbsp lemon juice; 6 cloves garlic; 2 tbsp grated ginger; 2 tbsp garam masala; 2 tsp ground cumin; 2 tsp paprika; 1 tsp turmeric; 2 tsp salt

2 red onions (wedges), 3 peppers (chunks), 3 tbsp oil

Mint yoghurt: 250 g yoghurt, small bunch mint, pinch salt, squeeze lemon

To finish: fresh coriander; lime wedges

Method

1. Marinate chicken at least 2 hours (overnight best).
2. Heat oven to 220 °C fan ; preheat the empty tray. Toss onions and peppers with oil and a pinch of salt; roast 10 minutes .
3. Add chicken with its marinade, spreading in an even layer. Roast 18–22 minutes , turning once, until edges char and the thickest pieces hit 75 °C .
4. Whisk mint yoghurt.
5. Scatter coriander; serve from the tray with mint yoghurt and limes.

Make-ahead: Marinate 24 hours; veg can be chopped 1 day ahead.

Freezer: Raw marinated chicken 2 months.

Swaps: Use paneer (V) or extra-firm tofu (Ve) with 2 tbsp oil in the marinade.

Nutrition: ~1,950 kJ/465 kcal.

Pairing: Off-dry Gewürztraminer or lager.

Origins & Facts: Curry-house classic adapted to the tray—charred edges thanks to a hot tray and yoghurt marinade.

Honey-Soy-Garlic Chicken with Sesame Broccoli & Spring Onions



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Soy, Sesame. Diet: DF; GF if using tamari.

Ingredients

2 kg chicken thighs (boneless)
Sauce: 100 ml soy/tamari, 60 ml honey, 2 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 4 cloves garlic (grated), 1 tbsp grated ginger

700 g broccoli florets; 6 spring onions (chunks)
2 tsp toasted sesame seeds; lime wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Whisk sauce. Toss chicken with half the sauce; arrange in tray; roast 15 minutes .
2. Toss broccoli and spring onions with remaining sauce; add to the tray. Roast 12–15 minutes more until chicken is 75 °C and broccoli is caramelised at the tips.
3. Rest 5 minutes ; sprinkle sesame seeds; serve with lime wedges.

Make-ahead: Sauce keeps 1 week in the fridge.
Freezer: Raw chicken tossed in sauce (without veg) freezes 2 months.
Swaps: Add 300 g sliced mushrooms for extra umami; swap broccoli for tenderstem (reduce time by 3–4 minutes).
Nutrition: ~1,800 kJ/430 kcal.
Pairing: Crisp lager or Sauvignon Blanc.
Origins & Facts: Teriyaki-adjacent glaze built from store-cupboard staples; finishing the veg in the same tray means maximum flavour pickup.

Turkey Meatball & Tomato Orzo Tray



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Gluten (orzo, breadcrumbs), Eggs (in meatballs), Milk (optional Parmesan). Diet: Can be GF with GF orzo/crumbs; DF if skipping cheese.

Ingredients

Meatballs: 1.2 kg turkey mince; 1 small onion (grated); 2 cloves garlic (grated); 80 g fresh breadcrumbs; 1 egg; 30 g Parmesan (optional); 1 tsp dried oregano; 1 tsp salt; pepper

Tray base: 2 tbsp olive oil; 1 onion (diced); 2 cloves garlic (sliced); 2 × 400 g tins chopped tomatoes; 600 ml hot chicken stock; 400 g orzo; 1 tsp sugar; 1 tsp smoked paprika; salt, pepper

Finish: handful basil; extra Parmesan to serve

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Mix meatball ingredients; roll 36 small balls.
2. Sauté onion and garlic in oil in the tray (on the hob if oven-safe, or in a pan then pour into tray). Stir in tomatoes, stock, orzo, sugar, paprika, seasoning.
3. Nestle meatballs into the saucy orzo. Cover tightly with foil; bake 25 minutes .
4. Uncover; stir gently, adding a splash of hot water if thick. Bake 8–10 minutes more until orzo is tender and meatballs are 74–75 °C .
5. Rest 5 minutes ; scatter basil and Parmesan.

Make-ahead: Form meatballs up to 24 hours ahead.

Freezer: Cooked portions freeze 1 month; reheat with a splash of stock.

Swaps: Use beef or pork mince; or swap orzo for small pasta shapes (adjust liquid/time).

Nutrition: ~1,780 kJ/425 kcal.

Pairing: Chianti or amber ale.

Origins & Facts: Weeknight pasta bake engineered for crowds—tiny meatballs cook evenly while enriching the orzo.

Paprika Roast Chicken with Chorizo, Olives & Peppers



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: None common (check chorizo label for sulphites). Diet: DF, GF.

Ingredients

2 kg bone-in chicken legs (separated into thighs/drumsticks)
250 g cooking chorizo, thick slices

1 kg waxy potatoes, chunks; 2 red peppers, strips; 1 red onion, wedges

2 tsp smoked paprika; 1 tsp sweet paprika; 3 tbsp olive oil; 2 cloves garlic, grated; 1 tsp salt; pepper

120 g pitted green olives; small bunch parsley; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss potatoes, peppers and onion with oil, paprikas, garlic, salt and pepper; spread and roast 15 minutes .
2. Add chicken pieces and chorizo; roast 28–32 minutes until chicken is 75 °C and the edges are lightly charred.
3. Fold through olives; rest 5 minutes . Scatter parsley; serve with lemon wedges.

Make-ahead: Prep everything in the tin (minus salt) up to 6 hours ; salt and roast when ready.

Freezer: Not ideal once cooked (potato texture softens), but raw seasoned chicken freezes 2 months.

Swaps: Use sweet potatoes for half the potato weight; add 1 tbsp sherry vinegar at the end for brightness.

Nutrition: ~2,120 kJ/505 kcal.
Pairing: Garnacha or Spanish lager.
Origins & Facts: Iberian sheet-pan energy—paprika and chorizo render into the veg for a built-in sauce.

From Butcher to Buffet

Bone-in thighs and legs are the traybake workhorses: they render flavourful fat, tolerate timing drift, and slice neatly for platters. For crisp skin, preheat the tin and avoid overcrowding; aim for at least 1–2 cm of visible tray around pieces so hot air can circulate.

Chapter 3 – Beef, Pork & Sausage Suppers

Honey-Mustard Sausage, Cabbage & Apple Roast



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Mustard; Gluten (sausages may). Diet: GF if using GF sausages.

Ingredients

1.8 kg good pork sausages (or 24 chipolatas)
800 g baby potatoes, halved
1 large red onion, wedges; 2 eating apples, thick slices
½ hispi or small white cabbage, thick wedges
2 tbsp oil
Glaze: 2 tbsp runny honey, 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard, 1 tbsp cider vinegar, pinch chilli flakes, salt, pepper
To finish: parsley, lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss potatoes and onion with oil and a little salt; roast 15 min .
2. Add sausages, cabbage wedges and apples; roast 15 min .
3. Whisk glaze; brush over everything. Roast 12–15 min more until sausages are 75 °C and edges caramelised.
4. Rest 5 min ; finish with parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Par-roast veg 15 min ; chill up to 24 h .
Freezer: Cooked portions up to 1 month .

Swaps: Use chicken sausages; or swap cabbage for fennel wedges.

Nutrition: ~2,050 kJ/490 kcal.

Pairing: Dry cider or Kölsch.

Origins & Facts: Central/Northern European flavour cues—sweet, sharp, and savoury—scaled to a single family tin.

Smoky Paprika Meatball & Pepper Orzo Tray



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Gluten (orzo, crumbs), Eggs (in meatballs), Milk (optional cheese). Diet: Can be GF with GF orzo/crumbs.

Ingredients

Meatballs: 1 kg beef mince, 1 egg, 80 g fresh breadcrumbs, 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1 tsp oregano, 1 tsp salt, pepper

Base: 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 onion (diced), 3 peppers (strips), 2 garlic cloves (sliced), 500 g orzo, 2 × 400 g chopped tomatoes, 700 ml hot beef stock, 1 tsp sugar, 1 tsp paprika, salt, pepper

Finish: 80 g grated hard cheese (optional), basil

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Mix meatballs; roll 36 small balls.
2. In the tin (or a pan), sauté onion, peppers and garlic in oil 5–6 min . Stir in orzo, tomatoes, stock, sugar, paprika, seasoning.
3. Nestle meatballs; cover tightly with foil and bake 25 min .
4. Uncover, stir gently; bake 8–10 min more until orzo is tender and meatballs are 74–75 °C .
5. Rest 5 min ; top with cheese and basil.

Make-ahead: Meatballs raw, 24 h chilled.

Freezer: Cooked portions 1 month .

Swaps: Half beef/half pork for richness; add olives for a Spanish note.

Nutrition: ~1,850 kJ/440 kcal.

Pairing: Garnacha or amber ale.

Origins & Facts: Spanish-Italian crossover—paprika warmth with orzo's crowd-friendly texture.

Korean-Style Bulgogi Beef with Sesame Broccoli



Serves: 10–12 | Time: 45 minutes (plus marinating) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Soy, Sesame, Gluten (soy sauce). Diet: DF; GF if using tamari.

Ingredients

1.5 kg beef bavette or sirloin, thinly sliced across the grain

Marinade: 120 ml soy/tamari, 2 tbsp brown sugar, 2 tbsp grated pear or apple, 2 tbsp mirin (or 1 tbsp sugar + 1 tbsp water), 1 tbsp sesame oil, 4 cloves garlic (grated), 1 tbsp grated ginger, black pepper

700 g broccoli florets, 4 spring onions (chunks), 1 tbsp oil

2 tsp toasted sesame seeds; lime wedges; chilli flakes (optional)

Method

1. Marinate beef 30 min–8 h .
2. Heat oven 220 °C fan . Toss broccoli and spring onions with oil and a pinch of salt on the preheated tray; roast 8 min .
3. Spread beef in a single layer over veg; drizzle remaining marinade. Roast 6–8 min until browned at the edges but still juicy.
4. Rest 3–4 min ; sprinkle sesame seeds, add lime and chilli.

Make-ahead: Marinate up to 8 h .

Freezer: Raw beef in marinade 1 month .

Swaps: Use pork shoulder slices; add mushrooms for bulk.

Nutrition: ~1,720 kJ/410 kcal.

Pairing: Light lager or off-dry Riesling.

Origins & Facts: Sheet-pan take on bulgogi—high heat mimics the sizzle; pear tenderises and sweetens.

Sticky Hoisin Pork Belly Bites with Pak Choi



Serves: 12 as a main, 16 as a nibble | Time: 1 hr 10 min | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Soy, Gluten (hoisin). Diet: DF.

Ingredients

1.8 kg skinless pork belly, 3 cm cubes
Sauce: 120 g hoisin, 2 tbsp soy, 2 tbsp honey, 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 2 cloves garlic, pinch five-spice
4 pak choi, quartered lengthways; 1 tbsp sesame oil

To finish: spring onions, sesame seeds, lime

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Toss pork with half the sauce; spread in a single layer. Roast 35 min , turning once.
2. Add remaining sauce; roast 10–12 min more until sticky and edges caramelise.
3. Toss pak choi with sesame oil and a little salt; add to tray for the last 6–8 min until just tender.
4. Finish with spring onions, sesame, lime.

Make-ahead: Roast pork to step 1, cool; glaze and reheat before serving.
Freezer: Cooked pork bites 1 month .
Swaps: Use boneless ribs; or swap pak choi for tenderstem broccoli.
Nutrition: ~2,220 kJ/530 kcal.
Pairing: Pale ale or juicy Shiraz.
Origins & Facts: Cantonese-leaning flavours—five-spice and hoisin—balanced by a crisp green finish.

Porchetta-Spiced Pork with Potatoes & Fennel



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 10 min | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: None common. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

2 kg pork shoulder, cut into thick steaks (or 2 kg boneless pork loin, fat scored)
Rub: 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp fennel seeds (crushed), 1 tbsp rosemary (chopped), 3 cloves garlic (grated), zest 1 lemon, 2 tsp salt, pepper

1 kg waxy potatoes (chunks), 2 fennel bulbs (wedges), 1 red onion (wedges)
Splash white wine or cider; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss potatoes, fennel and onion with half the rub; roast 20 min .
2. Rub pork with remaining mixture; nestle on veg. Roast 30–35 min (loin may take 40–45 min) until pork is 70 °C .
3. Splash with wine/cider; roast 5 min more. Rest 10 min ; serve with lemon.

Make-ahead: Rub pork 24 h ahead; veg can be prepped 1 day ahead.
Freezer: Raw rubbed pork 2 months .
Swaps: Add 100 g pancetta lardons; or use chicken thighs for a lighter version.
Nutrition: ~2,060 kJ/490 kcal.
Pairing: Verdicchio or dry cider.
Origins & Facts: Porchetta flavours—fennel, garlic, rosemary—translated to a quick roast format for weeknight practicality.

Cottage Pie Slab with Cheddar Mash Top



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 15 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk. Diet: GF if stock is GF.

Ingredients

Base: 2 tbsp oil, 1.2 kg beef mince, 2 onions (diced), 2 carrots (diced), 2 celery sticks (diced), 2 tbsp tomato purée, 2 tsp Worcestershire (GF if needed), 400 ml beef stock, 1 tsp thyme, 1 tsp marmite (optional), salt, pepper, 150 g peas

Mash: 1.6 kg floury potatoes, 80 g butter, 120 ml milk, 120 g mature cheddar, salt, pepper

Method

1. Boil potatoes until tender; steam dry. Mash with butter, milk, half the cheese; season.
2. Brown mince in oil; add veg and cook 8 min . Stir in purée, Worcestershire, stock, thyme, marmite; simmer 12–15 min until thick. Fold in peas.
3. Tip into lined tin; spoon mash on top, rough up with a fork; scatter remaining cheese.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 25–30 min until bubbling and golden.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ahead; add 5–8 min to bake time from chilled.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked or baked).
Swaps: Use lamb for shepherd’s pie; swap cheddar for Red Leicester.
Nutrition: ~2,300 kJ/550 kcal.
Pairing: Best bitter or Côtes du Rhône.

Origins & Facts: British classic engineered for slicing cleanly into buffet-friendly squares.

Mex Beef Nacho Bake with Black Beans



Serves: 12 as a main, 16 as a snack | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (cheese), Gluten (check chips). Diet: GF with GF tortilla chips.

Ingredients

1 tbsp oil; 800 g beef mince
1 onion (diced), 2 cloves garlic (minced)
1 tbsp chilli powder, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp smoked paprika

1 × 400 g tin black beans (rinsed), 1 × 400 g tin sweetcorn (drained)
500 ml passata, 1 tsp sugar, salt
300 g tortilla chips
250 g grated cheddar/Monterey Jack
To finish: jalapeños, spring onions, coriander; sour cream/salsa to serve

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Brown mince in oil; add onion, garlic, spices; cook 4–5 min . Stir in beans, corn, passata, sugar and salt; simmer 5 min to thicken.
2. Layer half the chips in the tray, top with half the beef mix and cheese; repeat.
3. Bake 10–12 min until cheese melts. Finish with jalapeños, spring onions, coriander.

Make-ahead: Beef mixture 3 days chilled.
Freezer: Beef mixture 2 months (not chips).
Swaps: Use turkey mince; add peppers.
Nutrition: ~1,950 kJ/465 kcal.
Pairing: Mexican lager or Zinfandel.

Origins & Facts: Party nachos built for scooping—layered to keep some chips crunchy.

Harissa Lamb Meatballs with Herbed Couscous



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Gluten (couscous), Eggs (meatballs, optional). Diet: DF; can be made GF with GF grain (millet/quinoa).

Ingredients

Meatballs: 1.2 kg lamb mince, 1 small onion (grated), 1 egg (optional), 2 tbsp harissa paste, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp coriander, 1 tsp salt, pepper

Tray: 2 tbsp olive oil, 2 red onions (wedges), 2 peppers (strips), 2 courgettes (half-moons), 1 × 400 g tin chickpeas (rinsed), 150 ml water/stock

Couscous: 500 g couscous, 600 ml boiling stock, 2 tbsp lemon juice, 2 tbsp olive oil, parsley & mint (large handful), salt

To finish: yoghurt tahini (optional): 200 g yoghurt, 1 tbsp tahini, lemon, salt

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Mix and roll 36 meatballs.
2. Toss onions, peppers, courgettes and chickpeas with oil and a little salt in the tray; roast 10 min .
3. Add meatballs and water; roast 18–22 min until meatballs are cooked through (74–75 °C) .
4. Meanwhile, soak couscous with hot stock 5 min ; fluff with lemon, oil, herbs and salt.
5. Serve meatballs and veg over couscous; add yoghurt tahini if using.

Make-ahead: Meatballs raw 24 h chilled.

Freezer: Cooked meatballs and veg 1 month ; prepare couscous fresh.

Swaps: Beef or turkey mince; swap couscous for bulgur or quinoa.

Nutrition: ~1,900 kJ/455 kcal.

Pairing: Moroccan rosé or IPA.

Origins & Facts: North African spice path—harissa heat balanced by cooling herb couscous.

Sage–Onion Stuffed Pork Steaks with Roasting Juices



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Gluten (breadcrumbs), Milk (butter). Diet: Can be DF/GF with swaps.

Ingredients

12 pork loin steaks (about 150 g each)

Stuffing: 200 g fresh breadcrumbs, 1 small onion (very finely chopped), 10 sage leaves (chopped), 40 g melted butter (or oil), 1 tsp mustard, salt, pepper, splash stock if dry

Tray veg: 600 g baby potatoes (halved), 2 apples (sliced), 1 red onion (wedges), 2 tbsp oil

150 ml apple juice or light stock; 1 tsp cider vinegar

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss tray veg with oil and a little salt; roast 15 min .
2. Mix stuffing. Cut a pocket in each steak; fill with stuffing, secure with cocktail sticks, season outside.
3. Place steaks on veg; pour in apple juice. Roast 18–22 min to 70 °C .
4. Splash vinegar into the tray; scrape juices to glaze. Rest 5 min ; remove sticks to serve.

Make-ahead: Assemble steaks 6 h ahead.

Freezer: Not ideal once stuffed (texture); raw stuffed steaks 1 month if well wrapped.

Swaps: Use chicken breasts; add streaky bacon wrap for extra protection.

Nutrition: ~1,780 kJ/425 kcal.

Pairing: Medium-dry cider or Pinot Blanc.

Origins & Facts: Sunday-roast flavours adapted for fast tray service.

Chipotle Pulled Pork & Sweet Potato Bake



Serves: 12 | Time: 2 hrs 15 min (mostly hands-off) | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm with foil
Allergens: None common. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

2.2 kg boneless pork shoulder, cut into 4 large chunks
Rub: 2 tsp chipotle paste or powder, 2 tsp smoked paprika, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp oregano, 2 tsp salt, 2 tbsp oil
2 onions (sliced), 3 cloves garlic (sliced)

400 g chopped tomatoes, 250 ml chicken stock, 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar, 1 tbsp brown sugar

1.2 kg sweet potatoes, 3 cm chunks; 1 tbsp oil, salt

To finish: coriander, lime; optional feta crumble

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan . Rub pork; place with onions and garlic in the deep tin. Pour over tomatoes, stock, vinegar and sugar. Cover tightly with foil; bake 1 hr 45 min .
2. Toss sweet potatoes with oil and salt on a separate tray; add to the oven for the last 40–45 min at 190 °C fan until tender and caramelised.
3. Shred pork in its juices; fold through roasted sweet potatoes. Adjust seasoning with salt, vinegar or a pinch of sugar.
4. Top with coriander, lime and optional feta.

Make-ahead: Pull pork; chill 3 days . Reheat with a splash of stock.

Freezer: Yes, 2 months .

Swaps: Use beef chuck; add black beans for extra bulk.

Nutrition: ~2,180 kJ/520 kcal.

Pairing: Pale ale or Tempranillo.

Origins & Facts: Slow-cooked flavours with tray-roasted sweets for smoky-sweet balance—built for easy self-serve tacos or bowls.

From Butcher to Buffet

For clean slices and juicy meat, rest trays 5–10 minutes before serving. When scaling beyond one tin, cook in separate trays rather than piling higher—depth changes time and texture. Keep a small jug of hot stock to revive anything that's dried in holding.

Chapter 4 – Fish & Seafood Sheet Pans

Buy from a trusted fishmonger; keep fish cold (≤5 °C) until cooking. Pat fillets dry and season just before they hit the hot tray to prevent weeping. For juicy results: white fish 50–54 °C , salmon 50–53 °C , prawns opaque and firm (2–4 minutes once hot) . Shell-on prawns and skin-on fillets hold better on buffets. Serve lemon, herb oils and a crunchy element (crumbs/nuts) for texture.

Lemon-Herb Salmon with Baby Potatoes & Green Beans



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm (deep)
Allergens: Fish, Milk (butter optional).
Diet: GF; DF if using oil only.

Ingredients

1.2 kg baby potatoes, halved
2 tbsp olive oil, salt, pepper
1 kg salmon fillet, skin-on, pin-boned (or 12 portions)
300 g fine green beans, trimmed

Dressing: zest 2 lemons, 60 ml lemon juice, 60 ml olive oil, 1 tbsp Dijon, 1 garlic clove grated, small bunch dill & parsley (chopped)
Optional finish: 40 g butter in dots; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss potatoes with oil, salt and pepper; roast 18–20 min .
2. Push potatoes aside; add beans and top with salmon, skin-side down. Season lightly.
3. Whisk dressing; spoon half over salmon. Dot butter if using. Roast 10–12 min (thickest centre ~ 50–53 °C).
4. Rest 3 min ; spoon remaining dressing over. Serve with lemon wedges.

Make-ahead: Par-roast potatoes earlier the same day; finish with fish.
Freezer: Not recommended once cooked; par-roasted potatoes freeze well.
Swaps: Use trout; swap beans for asparagus (reduce final roast by 2–3 min).
Nutrition: ~1,750 kJ/420 kcal.
Pairing: Unoaked Chardonnay or Pilsner.
Origins & Facts: Classic brasserie flavours scaled to a crowd—hot tray ensures crisped potato edges.

Prawn, Chorizo & Cherry Tomato Bake



Serves: 12 as a main or 16 as tapas | Time: 25 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Crustaceans. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

400 g cooking chorizo, thick coins
900 g raw king prawns (peeled, tails on)
600 g cherry tomatoes
1 red onion, thin wedges; 3 garlic cloves, sliced
2 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp smoked paprika; pinch chilli flakes; salt, pepper
Finish: lemon wedges, parsley

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Roast chorizo, onion, garlic and tomatoes with oil, paprika, chilli, salt and pepper for 10 min .
2. Add prawns; toss in the rendered oils. Roast 5–7 min until just opaque.
3. Squeeze lemon; scatter parsley.

Make-ahead: Prep ingredients; cook à la minute.
Freezer: Not ideal once cooked; raw prawns freeze well.
Swaps: Add 1 tin chickpeas for bulk; or swap prawns for squid rings (cook 4–5 min).
Nutrition: ~1,610 kJ/385 kcal.
Pairing: Albariño or crisp lager.
Origins & Facts: Iberian-leaning crowd-pleaser—chorizo oil seasons the whole tray.

Miso-Ginger Cod with Sesame Greens



Serves: 12 | Time: 30 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Fish, Soy, Sesame. Diet: DF; GF if using tamari and GF miso.

Ingredients

12 cod portions (~120 g each), skinless
Marinade: 80 g white miso, 40 ml soy/tamari, 40 ml mirin (or 1 tbsp sugar + 2 tbsp water), 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 1 tsp sesame oil

500 g tenderstem broccoli, 250 g sugar snap peas
1 tbsp neutral oil; 2 tsp toasted sesame seeds; spring onions to finish

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Whisk marinade. Toss greens with oil and a spoon of marinade; roast 8 min .
2. Pat cod dry; brush generously with marinade. Lay over greens; roast 8–10 min until flaky (50–54 °C).
3. Scatter sesame and spring onions.

Make-ahead: Marinate cod 15–30 min max (longer can over-cure).
Freezer: Not recommended once marinated.
Swaps: Use haddock or pollock; add mushrooms for umami.
Nutrition: ~1,420 kJ/340 kcal.
Pairing: Off-dry Riesling or Kölsch.
Origins & Facts: Nobu-inspired flavour profile made weeknight-easy; miso lacquer gives sheen and seasoning.

Cajun-Spiced Basa with Corn & Peppers



Serves: 12 | Time: 30 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Fish. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

12 basa or pollock fillets
3 peppers (strips), 1 red onion (wedges), 250 g sweetcorn kernels (drained)
Rub: 2 tbsp Cajun seasoning, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp garlic granules, 2 tbsp oil, 1 tsp salt
Finish: lime wedges, chopped coriander

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss peppers, onion and corn with half the rub; roast 10 min .
2. Brush fish with remaining rub; nestle on veg. Roast 8–10 min until opaque and just flaking.
3. Squeeze lime; scatter coriander.

Make-ahead: Mix rub; veg can be prepped 1 day ahead.
Freezer: Cooked fish not ideal; raw fillets freeze well.
Swaps: Add black beans for a Tex-Mex slant; swap Cajun for fajita seasoning.
Nutrition: ~1,380 kJ/330 kcal.
Pairing: Sauvignon Blanc or light lager.
Origins & Facts: Budget-friendly white fish with punchy spice—built for bowls or tacos.

Mediterranean Haddock with Olives & Tomatoes



Serves: 12 | Time: 30 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Fish. Diet: GF, DF.

Ingredients

12 haddock fillets, skin-on if possible
600 g cherry tomatoes; 1 small fennel bulb (thin wedges); 1 red onion (thin wedges)
80 g mixed pitted olives; 1 tbsp capers (rinsed)
2 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp dried oregano; zest 1 lemon; salt, pepper

Finish: parsley, lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss tomatoes, fennel, onion, olives and capers with oil, oregano, lemon zest, salt and pepper; roast 10 min .
2. Add fish; season lightly. Roast 8–10 min until flaky.
3. Finish with parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Veg base can be roasted 8 h ahead; reheat and add fish.
Freezer: Cooked fish not ideal; veg base freezes 1 month .
Swaps: Use cod or coley; add 1 tbsp white wine to veg for sauciness.
Nutrition: ~1,460 kJ/350 kcal.
Pairing: Vermentino or dry rosé.
Origins & Facts: Provençal pantry flavours; capers lift and balance olive richness.

Tandoori Salmon with Red Onion & Yoghurt Raita



Serves: 12 | Time: 35 minutes (plus marinating) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Fish, Milk (yoghurt). Diet: GF.

Ingredients

1.2–1.4 kg salmon fillet, skin-on
Marinade: 250 g yoghurt, 2 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 2 garlic cloves, 2 tsp garam masala, 1 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli (or mild paprika), 1 tsp salt
2 red onions, thin wedges; 1 tbsp oil

Raita: 250 g yoghurt, ½ cucumber (grated & squeezed), mint, pinch cumin, salt
Finish: coriander, lemon

Method

1. Marinate salmon 30–60 min .
2. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss onions with oil and a pinch of salt; roast 8 min .
3. Lay salmon on onions; spread extra marinade thinly on top. Roast 10–12 min to 50–53 °C at centre.
4. Rest 3 min . Serve with raita, coriander and lemon.

Make-ahead: Mix marinades and raita 1 day ahead.
Freezer: Not recommended once marinated/cooked.
Swaps: Use trout sides; add peppers to the tray.
Nutrition: ~1,780 kJ/425 kcal.
Pairing: Off-dry Gewürztraminer or lager.
Origins & Facts: British Indian restaurant flavours—oven heat gives light char without a tandoor.

Garlic Butter Prawns with Courgettes & Orzo



Serves: 12 | Time: 35 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Crustaceans, Milk (butter), Gluten (orzo). Diet: Can be DF/GF with swaps (oil + GF pasta/rice).

Ingredients

500 g orzo; 900 ml hot vegetable stock; 125 ml white wine (optional)

3 courgettes, half-moons; 1 shallot, finely diced

100 g butter (or 60 ml olive oil), 3 garlic cloves grated, zest 1 lemon
900 g raw king prawns, peeled
30 g Parmesan (optional), parsley; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . In the deep tin, mix orzo, hot stock, wine (if using), shallot and courgettes; cover tightly with foil and bake 18–20 min , stirring once.
2. Melt butter with garlic and lemon zest; toss prawns in half.
3. Uncover tray; stir orzo (add splash hot water if dry). Scatter prawns on top; drizzle remaining butter. Bake 5–7 min until prawns are opaque.
4. Rest 3 min ; finish with Parmesan (if using), parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Orzo base can be part-cooked 1–2 h ahead; reheat and add prawns.
Freezer: Not ideal (prawn texture).
Swaps: Use small pasta shapes; or swap orzo for quick-cook rice (adjust liquid).
Nutrition: ~1,720 kJ/410 kcal.
Pairing: Pinot Grigio or light pilsner.

Origins & Facts: Risotto vibes without stirring—oven-steamed orzo becomes glossy from prawn juices.

Fish Pie Slab with Crisp Cheddar Crust



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 5 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm

Allergens: Fish, Milk, Gluten (if using non-GF flour), Mustard (optional). Diet: Can be GF with GF flour/stock.

Ingredients

Filling: 60 g butter, 1 leek (thinly sliced), 60 g plain flour (or GF), 750 ml whole milk, 1 tsp Dijon (optional), 400 g smoked haddock (skinless chunks), 400 g white fish (cod/coley), 200 g prawns, 100 g peas, zest 1 lemon, dill/parsley, salt, pepper

Mash top: 1.6 kg floury potatoes, 80 g butter, 150 ml milk, salt

Crust: 120 g mature cheddar, grated; 30 g breadcrumbs (or GF)

Method

1. Boil potatoes; mash with butter and milk; season.
2. For filling, soften leek in butter 5 min . Stir in flour; cook 1 min . Gradually whisk in milk; simmer 3–4 min to a thick sauce. Add Dijon if using, lemon zest, herbs, salt and pepper. Fold in fish, prawns and peas.
3. Tip into lined tin; spoon mash over and rough the surface. Scatter cheddar and crumbs.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 25–30 min until bubbling and golden; rest 10 min to slice.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ahead; bake from chilled (+5–8 min).

Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked or baked).

Swaps: Top with cheesy puff pastry for a faster finish; add spinach.

Nutrition: ~2,230 kJ/535 kcal.

Pairing: Chardonnay (unoaked) or golden ale.

Origins & Facts: British comfort classic engineered to cut into clean slabs for buffets.

Holding & Serving Fish

Hold cooked fish trays loosely covered at 60–70 °C for up to 20 minutes —longer risks dryness. Refresh with a quick spoon of hot butter/oil and a squeeze of lemon right before serving. For buffets, pre-portion with a palette knife so guests can lift neat pieces without shredding the fillets.

Chapter 5 – Veggie Mains that Satisfy

Make Vegetables the Headliner

Build veggie trays around three pillars: protein (beans, lentils, tofu, paneer, eggs or grains), texture (something creamy, something crisp), and brightness (acid, herbs, citrus, pickles). For a crowd, roast veg a touch darker than you would for two—deep caramelisation reads as flavour even when food cools a little on a buffet.

Paneer Tikka Tray with Peppers & Onions (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes (plus marinating) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (paneer, yoghurt). Diet: V; GF.

Ingredients

1.2 kg paneer, 3 cm cubes
3 peppers, chunky pieces; 2 red onions, wedges

Marinade: 350 g plain yoghurt, juice 1 lemon, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 3 cloves garlic grated, 2 tsp garam masala, 1½ tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp turmeric, 1½ tsp Kashmiri chilli or mild paprika, 2 tsp salt, 2 tbsp oil

Finish: coriander, lime wedges

Method

1. Toss paneer and veg with marinade; chill 30–120 min .
2. Heat oven 220 °C fan . Preheat tray. Spread mixture in a single layer; roast 18–22 min , turning once, until edges char.
3. Rest 3 min ; scatter coriander and serve with lime.

Make-ahead: Marinate up to 24 h (paneer firms nicely).

Freezer: Not ideal once marinated; paneer can be frozen plain.

Swaps: Halloumi (reduce salt), or firm tofu (Ve) with 2 tbsp extra oil in marinade.

Nutrition (approx/serving): 1,950 kJ/465 kcal.

Pairing: Off-dry Riesling or lager.

Origins & Facts: North-Indian tikka flavours; paneer's high melting point makes it perfect for high-heat trays.

Sweet Potato, Black Bean & Corn Enchilada Bake (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (tortillas unless GF).
Diet: Ve; GF with corn tortillas.

Ingredients

1.2 kg sweet potatoes, 2 cm cubes
1 tbsp oil, 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1 tsp ground cumin, salt
2 × 400 g tins black beans (rinsed), 1 × 340 g tin sweetcorn (drained)

700 ml passata, 2 tbsp tomato purée, 1 tbsp chilli powder, 1 tsp oregano, 1 tsp sugar, salt

12–14 small tortillas (corn for GF)

Topping: 1 avocado, diced; 150 g vegan cheese (optional); coriander; lime

Method

1. Roast sweet potatoes with oil, paprika, cumin and salt at 200 °C fan 20 min .
2. Simmer passata, purée, chilli powder, oregano, sugar and salt 8 min to a pourable enchilada sauce.
3. In the tin, layer a little sauce, then tortillas, sweet potatoes, beans and corn; repeat, finishing with sauce. Sprinkle vegan cheese if using.
4. Bake 18–22 min until bubbling. Rest 10 min ; top with avocado, coriander and lime.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+5 min).

Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked or baked).

Swaps: Add roasted peppers; use brown rice instead of tortillas (increase sauce).

Nutrition: ~1,720 kJ/410 kcal.

Pairing: Zinfandel or pale ale.

Origins & Facts: Tex-Mex technique; oven layering keeps tortillas soft yet sliceable.

Mushroom & Spinach Lasagne Slab (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 10 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta), Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

Filling: 2 tbsp oil; 1 kg mixed mushrooms (sliced); 2 shallots (diced); 3 cloves garlic; 400 g spinach; 150 ml white wine (optional); salt, pepper, thyme
Béchamel: 70 g butter; 70 g plain flour; 900 ml milk; 80 g Parmesan; nutmeg; salt

12–14 lasagne sheets (fresh or dried, no-boil preferred)
150 g mozzarella or extra cheddar for top

Method

1. Fry mushrooms hard in oil to deep golden; add shallots and garlic. Deglaze with wine; reduce. Wilt spinach; season with salt, pepper, thyme.
2. Make béchamel: butter + flour 1 min; whisk in milk; simmer 4–5 min to coat a spoon; add Parmesan and nutmeg; season.
3. Layer: béchamel, pasta, mushrooms; repeat, ending with béchamel. Top with cheese.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 30–35 min until bubbling and bronzed. Rest 10–15 min before slicing.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+8 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked or baked).
Swaps: Use GF sheets; add ricotta between layers.
Nutrition: ~2,220 kJ/530 kcal.
Pairing: Barbera or amber ale.

Origins & Facts: Classic Italian structure with British-favourite mushrooms for savoury depth.

Ratatouille & Pesto Giant Couscous Tray (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Nuts (pesto if traditional), Gluten (couscous; use GF grain). Diet: Ve if vegan pesto; easily GF with quinoa or rice.

Ingredients

1 aubergine, 2 courgettes, 2 peppers, 1 red onion—2–3 cm chunks

3 cloves garlic, sliced; 3 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp dried oregano; salt, pepper

500 g giant (Israeli) couscous; 1.1 L hot veg stock
120 g vegan pesto (or basil, nuts/seeds, oil, lemon blended)
Finish: cherry tomatoes, basil, lemon zest

Method

1. Roast veg with oil, oregano, salt and pepper at 210 °C fan 25 min to deeply caramelise.
2. Tip couscous and hot stock into the veg; cover tightly with foil; bake 15–18 min until tender.
3. Fold in pesto; adjust seasoning. Scatter halved cherry tomatoes, basil and lemon zest.

Make-ahead: Roast veg earlier; finish with couscous just before serving.
Freezer: Not ideal (couscous softens).
Swaps: Use pearl barley (not GF, increase time/stock); or quinoa for GF.
Nutrition: ~1,650 kJ/395 kcal.
Pairing: Provence rosé or Kölsch.
Origins & Facts: French Provençal veg meets Middle-Eastern-style grains—one tray, bright finish.

Broccoli, Cauliflower & Cheddar Crumble Bake (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm

Allergens: Milk, Gluten (crumb). Diet: V; can be GF with GF crumbs/flour.

Ingredients

700 g cauliflower florets; 700 g broccoli florets

Cheese sauce: 70 g butter; 70 g flour; 850 ml milk; 180 g mature cheddar; 1 tsp mustard; nutmeg; salt

Crumble: 120 g fresh breadcrumbs; 40 g grated cheddar; 40 g toasted almonds (optional); 2 tbsp oil; pepper

Method

1. Blanch florets 2–3 min ; drain well.
2. Make cheese sauce (as béchamel above); season boldly.
3. Combine veg and sauce in the tin. Mix crumble; scatter on top.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 22–26 min until bubbling and golden.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+5–7 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: Swap almonds for pumpkin seeds (nut-free); add leeks.
Nutrition: ~1,880 kJ/450 kcal.
Pairing: Pale ale or Chardonnay.
Origins & Facts: Mac-and-cheese energy without pasta—veg carries the sauce beautifully for a buffet.

Gochujang Roasted Aubergine with Sticky Rice (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm + covered rice tray
Allergens: Soy (if using soy sauce), Sesame. Diet: Ve; GF with tamari.

Ingredients

4 large aubergines, 2–3 cm chunks
Glaze: 3 tbsp gochujang, 2 tbsp soy/tamari, 2 tbsp maple syrup, 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp sesame oil, 2 cloves garlic grated, 1 tsp grated ginger
2 spring onions; sesame seeds

Sticky rice: 800 g sushi rice, rinsed; 1.2 L hot water; 1 tsp salt (in deep tray, foiled)

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss aubergine with half the glaze; roast 20 min .
2. Add remaining glaze; roast 10–12 min more until jammy and caramelised.
3. Bake rice in a separate covered tray at 190 °C fan 25–30 min until tender; rest 10 min .
4. Serve aubergine over rice; finish with spring onions and sesame.

Make-ahead: Glaze keeps 1 week .
Freezer: Aubergine not ideal; rice can be portion-frozen.
Swaps: Add tofu cubes with the second glaze bake.
Nutrition: ~1,760 kJ/420 kcal.
Pairing: Off-dry Riesling or lager.
Origins & Facts: Korean pantry hero gochujang gives sweet heat that clings to aubergine’s spongy flesh.

Greek Briam with Feta & Lemon (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (feta). Diet: V; GF.

Ingredients

3 potatoes, thin slices; 2 courgettes, thin rounds; 1 aubergine, thin half-moons; 1 red onion, thin wedges; 3 tomatoes, thick slices
4 cloves garlic sliced; 80 ml olive oil; 1 tsp dried oregano; ½ tsp cinnamon; salt, pepper

200 g feta; lemon zest; parsley

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss all veg with oil, garlic, oregano, cinnamon, salt and pepper; layer rustically in the tin.
2. Cover with foil; bake 35 min . Uncover; bake 15–20 min until tender and edges caramelise.
3. Crumble feta on hot tray; add lemon zest and parsley.

Make-ahead: Bake to tender, cool; reheat uncovered to crisp.
Freezer: Not ideal (courgette weeps).
Swaps: Use halloumi strips instead of feta (add in last 10 minutes).
Nutrition: ~1,670 kJ/400 kcal.
Pairing: Greek white (Assyrtiko) or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: Traditional Greek mixed-veg bake; cinnamon adds warmth without reading “sweet”.

Butter Bean, Lemon & Herb Bake with Crispy Crumbs (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (crumbs). Diet: Ve; GF with GF crumbs.

Ingredients

3 × 400 g tins butter beans (rinsed)
2 tbsp olive oil; 1 leek (finely sliced); 2 garlic cloves (grated)
250 ml veg stock; zest 2 lemons; 2 tbsp lemon juice
Big handful parsley & dill (chopped)

Crumb: 120 g fresh breadcrumbs, 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tsp fennel seeds (crushed), pinch chilli flakes, salt

Method

1. Sauté leek in oil to soft; stir in garlic 1 min . Add beans, stock, lemon zest/juice; simmer 3–4 min . Fold in herbs; tip into tin.
2. Mix crumb; scatter on top.
3. Bake 190 °C fan 15–18 min until golden and bubbling.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake before serving.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: Add artichoke hearts; swap dill for tarragon.
Nutrition: ~1,590 kJ/380 kcal.
Pairing: Sauvignon Blanc or wheat beer.
Origins & Facts: Greek-ish giant beans vibes, simplified—lemon and herbs keep it bright and buffet-friendly.

Wild Mushroom & Barley Oven Risotto (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Milk (butter/cheese). Diet: V; easily DF with olive oil, skip cheese.

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil + 20 g butter; 1 onion (finely diced)

500 g pearl barley (rinsed)

1 L hot veg stock + 250 ml hot water

700 g mixed mushrooms, sliced; 2 cloves garlic; 100 ml white wine (optional)

60 g Parmesan (or vegetarian hard cheese); parsley; lemon zest

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Sauté onion in oil/butter 5 min ; stir in barley 1 min . Add wine (if using), then hot stock/water and a pinch of salt. Cover tightly with foil; bake 35 min .
2. Meanwhile roast mushrooms with a little oil and salt on a separate tray 18–20 min until deeply golden.
3. Fold mushrooms and garlic into barley; bake uncovered 8–10 min to thicken. Finish with Parmesan, parsley and lemon zest.

Make-ahead: Holds well; loosen with hot stock to serve.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months ; reheat with stock.
Swaps: Use spelt (not GF) or brown rice (increase time).
Nutrition: ~1,800 kJ/430 kcal.
Pairing: Pinot Noir or brown ale.
Origins & Facts: Oven “risotto” technique for hands-off crowd cooking; roasted mushrooms add umami without sogginess.

Chickpea Shawarma Tray with Tahini & Pickles (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Sesame. Diet: Ve; GF.

Ingredients

3 × 400 g tins chickpeas (drained, patted dry)
2 red onions (wedges), 2 peppers (strips), 1 large courgette (half-moons)

Spice oil: 4 tbsp olive oil, 2 tsp ground cumin, 2 tsp coriander, 1 tsp paprika, 1 tsp turmeric, ½ tsp cinnamon, 1½ tsp salt

Tahini lemon: 120 g tahini, 120 ml water, juice 1 lemon, 1 small garlic clove grated, salt

Finish: chopped parsley, pickled chillies or gherkins; lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss chickpeas and veg with spice oil; roast 25–28 min until crisp at edges.
2. Whisk tahini sauce until pourable (add water as needed).
3. Drizzle sauce over hot tray; top with pickles, parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Spice oil and tahini can be made 3 days ahead.

Freezer: Not ideal (chickpeas lose crispness).

Swaps: Add cauliflower florets; serve with flatbreads.

Nutrition: ~1,630 kJ/390 kcal.

Pairing: Dry rosé or pilsner.

Origins & Facts: Levantine flavours, vegan protein; oven heat “fries” chickpeas without deep-frying.

Pumpkin, Sage & Ricotta Pasta Bake (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta), Milk (ricotta/Parmesan). Diet: V.

Ingredients

1 kg peeled pumpkin/squash, 2 cm cubes; 2 tbsp oil; salt, pepper
500 g short pasta (rigatoni/penne)
Sauce: 30 g butter; 30 g flour; 700 ml milk; ½ tsp nutmeg; 60 g Parmesan; salt

250 g ricotta; 8–10 sage leaves (torn); 80 g mozzarella or extra cheddar

Method

1. Roast pumpkin with oil, salt and pepper at 200 °C fan 20 min .
2. Cook pasta 2 minutes shy of al dente; drain.
3. Make white sauce; stir in Parmesan and nutmeg; season.
4. Combine pasta, pumpkin, ricotta and sage with most of the sauce; tip into tin; top with remaining sauce and mozzarella.
5. Bake 190 °C fan 18–22 min until golden at edges.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: Use GF pasta; add toasted walnuts on top.
Nutrition: ~2,050 kJ/490 kcal.
Pairing: Viognier or golden ale.
Origins & Facts: Northern Italian flavours—sweet squash, sage and ricotta—made crowd-friendly.

Halloumi, Courgette & Cherry Tomato Bake (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (halloumi). Diet: V; GF.

Ingredients

800 g halloumi, 2 cm cubes
3 courgettes, thick half-moons; 500 g cherry tomatoes; 1 red onion, wedges

Marinade: 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tsp dried oregano, zest 1 lemon, 1 tsp chilli flakes, 1 tsp honey, 1 tsp apple cider vinegar, 1 tsp salt

Finish: basil, lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss veg with half the marinade; roast 15 min .
2. Add halloumi; drizzle remaining marinade; roast 10–12 min until halloumi golden at edges and tomatoes burst.
3. Finish with basil and lemon.

Make-ahead: Prep components; roast à la minute for best texture.

Freezer: Not suitable.

Swaps: Use paneer (less salty); add olives for briny punch.

Nutrition: ~1,800 kJ/430 kcal.

Pairing: Dry rosé or pilsner.

Origins & Facts: Greek-Cypriot flavours with a British sheet-pan pace—salty cheese balanced by sweet tomatoes and citrus.

Crisp, Chewy, Tender—Texture in the Tin

Great vegan trays juggle three textures : something roasted to a deep edge (veg/protein), a soft base (rice, orzo, couscous, beans), and a fresh finish (herbs, pickles, citrus). Bake covered to steam grains, then uncover to dry and caramelise . Add dressings after baking to keep flavours bright.

Chapter 6 – Vegan One-Tins & Rice Bakes

Jerk Cauliflower, Pineapple & Rice (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm (foil)
Allergens: None common. Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

800 g basmati rice (rinsed well)

1.4 L hot vegetable stock; 400 ml coconut milk

1 large cauliflower, florets (bite-size)

1 pineapple, 2 cm chunks (or 500 g drained chunks)

1 red onion, thin wedges; 1 red pepper, strips

Jerk mix: 3 tbsp oil, 1½ tbsp jerk seasoning, 1 tsp allspice, 2 tsp brown sugar, 1 tsp dried thyme, 1 tsp salt

Finish: spring onions, lime wedges, fresh coriander

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . In the deep tin, mix rice, hot stock and coconut milk; season lightly.
2. Toss cauliflower, pineapple, onion and pepper with the jerk mix; pile evenly over rice.
3. Cover tightly with foil; bake 30 minutes . Uncover, gently stir top layer through; bake 10–12 minutes more until rice is tender.
4. Rest 10 minutes ; fluff. Top with spring onions, coriander and lime.

Make-ahead: Roast veg (step 2 mix) earlier in the day; bake with rice before serving.

Freezer: Portions freeze 2 months ; reheat with a splash of water.

Swaps: Use mango instead of pineapple; add black beans for protein.

Nutrition: ~1,820 kJ/435 kcal.

Pairing: Pale ale or off-dry Riesling.

Origins & Facts: Caribbean-inspired sweet heat; coconut milk gently enriches oven-steamed rice.

Tomato, Olive & Roasted Pepper Orzo (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Gluten (orzo). Diet: Ve.

Ingredients

600 g orzo; 1.2 L hot vegetable stock
2 × 400 g tins chopped tomatoes; 2 tbsp tomato purée
2 peppers (strips); 1 red onion (thin wedges)
120 g pitted olives; 2 tbsp capers (rinsed)
2 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp dried oregano; 1 tsp smoked paprika; salt, pepper

Finish: basil, lemon zest

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Toss peppers and onion with oil, oregano, paprika; roast 10 min .
2. Stir in orzo, hot stock, tomatoes, purée, olives, capers, salt and pepper. Cover tightly with foil; bake 15–18 min , stirring once.
3. Uncover and bake 3–5 min to thicken. Rest 5 min ; finish with basil and lemon zest.

Make-ahead: Keeps 2 days chilled; loosen with hot stock to serve.
Freezer: Up to 1 month ; reheat with stock.
Swaps: Use small pasta shells; add roasted aubergine.
Nutrition: ~1,700 kJ/405 kcal.
Pairing: Chianti or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: Pantry Mediterranean—salty-briny elements keep orzo from tasting flat on a buffet.

Coconut-Lime Chickpea Tray Bake (Ve, GF)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: None common. Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

3 × 400 g tins chickpeas (rinsed, well dried)
1 kg mixed veg (choose: cauliflower florets, sweet potato chunks, courgette half-moons)
1 red onion, wedges
Sauce: 400 ml coconut milk, zest 2 limes, juice 1 lime, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp mild curry powder, 1 tsp salt
Finish: coriander, extra lime wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Spread chickpeas, veg and onion in the tray; season lightly.
2. Whisk sauce; pour over and toss. Bake 25–28 min until veg is tender and edges lightly coloured.
3. Rest 5 min ; scatter coriander, serve with lime.

Make-ahead: Sauce holds 1 week refrigerated.
Freezer: Cooked tray 1 month ; reheat covered with a splash of water.
Swaps: Add spinach in last 5 minutes; serve with rice.
Nutrition: ~1,640 kJ/392 kcal.
Pairing: Sauvignon Blanc or wheat beer.
Origins & Facts: Creamy but dairy-free; lime zest added after baking keeps flavours bright.

Sticky Teriyaki Tofu with Broccoli (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 40 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Soy, Sesame. Diet: Ve; GF if using tamari.

Ingredients

1.2 kg extra-firm tofu, pressed and 3 cm cubes
700 g broccoli florets; 1 red onion, thin wedges
Sauce: 120 ml soy/tamari, 80 ml mirin (or 2 tbsp sugar + 60 ml water), 1½ tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp grated ginger, 2 cloves garlic, 1 tbsp cornflour mixed with 2 tbsp water

2 tsp sesame oil; sesame seeds; spring onions

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss tofu with 1 tsp oil and a pinch of salt; roast 12 min .
2. Whisk sauce; toss broccoli and onion with half the sauce. Add to tray; roast 10 min .
3. Pour remaining sauce over; bake 5–6 min until glossy and sticky. Finish with sesame oil, seeds and spring onions.

Make-ahead: Press and cube tofu; sauce keeps 1 week .
Freezer: Not ideal (tofu texture), though pre-frozen tofu gives chewier bite.
Swaps: Add peppers or mushrooms; serve over rice.
Nutrition: ~1,580 kJ/378 kcal.
Pairing: Kölsch or off-dry Riesling.
Origins & Facts: Restaurant-style lacquer without frying—cornflour gives that shiny cling.

Lentil Moussaka Slab (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 10 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (if using flour in topping). Diet: Ve; GF with GF flour.

Ingredients

Base: 2 tbsp olive oil; 1 onion (diced); 2 cloves garlic (minced); 1 tsp cinnamon; 1 tsp oregano; 2 tbsp tomato purée; 2 × 400 g tins lentils (rinsed); 1 × 400 g tin chopped tomatoes; 200 ml veg stock; salt, pepper

Veg layers: 2 aubergines (1 cm slices), 700 g potatoes (thin slices), 2 tbsp oil, salt
Topping: 600 ml unsweetened oat milk, 50 g olive oil or vegan block, 50 g flour, 2 tbsp nutritional yeast, ¼ tsp nutmeg, salt, pepper

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Roast aubergine and potato slices brushed with oil and lightly salted 20 min , turning once.
2. For base, sauté onion and garlic in oil; add spices and purée 1 min . Stir in lentils, tomatoes, stock; simmer 10 min until thick.
3. Make topping: whisk fat and flour in a pan 1 min ; gradually whisk in oat milk; simmer 3–4 min to thick; add nooch, nutmeg, salt, pepper.
4. Layer potatoes, half lentils, aubergine, remaining lentils; top with creamy sauce.
5. Bake 190 °C fan 25–30 min until bronzed. Rest 10–15 min to slice.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked or baked).

Swaps: Add courgette layer; spice with a pinch of allspice.

Nutrition: ~1,880 kJ/450 kcal.

Pairing: Grenache or amber ale.

Origins & Facts: Greek moussaka reworked with lentils and oat béchamel—stacks beautifully for buffets.

Harissa Veg & Pearl Couscous with Lemon (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Gluten (couscous). Diet: Ve.

Ingredients

2 peppers (strips); 1 red onion (wedges); 1 aubergine (chunks); 2 courgettes (half-moons)
2 tbsp olive oil; 1½ tbsp harissa paste; 1 tsp ground cumin; 1 tsp salt
500 g pearl (giant) couscous; 1 L hot veg stock

Finish: lemon zest & juice, parsley & mint (big handful), 80 g toasted almonds or pumpkin seeds

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss veg with oil, harissa, cumin and salt; roast 20 min until charry.
2. Stir in couscous and hot stock; cover tightly with foil; bake 12–15 min until tender.
3. Rest 5 min ; fold through lemon, herbs and nuts/seeds.

Make-ahead: Holds well warm; refresh with lemon and a splash of hot stock.
Freezer: Not ideal (couscous softens).
Swaps: Use quinoa for GF; add olives for briny pop.
Nutrition: ~1,640 kJ/392 kcal.
Pairing: Rosé or pale ale.
Origins & Facts: North-African flavours; roasting first builds complexity before steaming the grain.

Peanut-Sesame Sweet Potato Tray (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Peanuts, Sesame, Soy. Diet: Ve; GF with tamari.

Ingredients

1.2 kg sweet potatoes, 2 cm chunks; 1 red pepper, strips; 1 red onion, wedges
Sauce: 80 g smooth peanut butter, 60 ml soy/tamari, 1 tbsp maple syrup, 1 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tsp grated ginger, 1 small garlic clove, 60–90 ml warm water (to loosen)

Finish: coriander, toasted sesame seeds, lime wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Toss sweet potatoes, pepper and onion with 2 tbsp oil and a little salt; roast 20–22 min .
2. Whisk sauce to a pourable consistency. Toss through the hot tray; roast 8–10 min more until edges caramelise.
3. Finish with sesame, coriander and lime.

Make-ahead: Sauce 1 week chilled.
Freezer: Cooked tray 1 month ; revive with hot water and fresh lime.
Swaps: Swap peanut butter for tahini (nut-free); add broccoli florets in step 2.
Nutrition: ~1,860 kJ/445 kcal.
Pairing: Hazy pale ale or off-dry Riesling.
Origins & Facts: Satay-ish flavours without skewers; water thins the sauce so it bakes, not burns.

Faux Pho – Quick Vietnamese Noodle Bake (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 35 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Soy (optional), Gluten (if using wheat noodles). Diet: Ve; GF with rice noodles and tamari.

Ingredients

400 g flat rice noodles (medium)

1.5 L boiling veg stock; 2 star anise; 4 cloves; 1 cinnamon stick; 2 cm ginger (sliced); 2 tbsp soy/tamari (optional); 1 tbsp brown sugar; 1 tbsp lime juice

300 g mushrooms (sliced), 1 carrot (matchsticks), 1 red pepper (strips), 150 g beansprouts

Finish: basil, coriander, mint, lime wedges, sliced chilli

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Put noodles, spices, ginger, soy, sugar and lime in the deep tin. Pour over boiling stock; add mushrooms, carrot and pepper.
2. Cover tightly with foil; bake 12–14 min until noodles are tender. Stir in beansprouts; rest 5 min .
3. Fish out whole spices if you like; pile with herbs, lime and chilli.

Make-ahead: Keep broth base ready; cook noodles to order.

Freezer: Not suitable.

Swaps: Add tofu cubes; swap veg seasonally.

Nutrition: ~1,420 kJ/340 kcal.

Pairing: Lager or jasmine tea.

Origins & Facts: Brothy tray trick—steam-baking hydrates noodles while spices perfume the stock.

Thai Green Veg & Rice Bake (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: Deep 30 × 40 cm (foil)
Allergens: Soy (in paste), Sulphites (check stock). Diet: Ve; GF if paste is GF.

Ingredients

750 g jasmine rice (rinsed)
1 × 400 ml coconut milk + 1.2 L hot veg stock
2–3 tbsp vegan Thai green curry paste
1 aubergine (chunks), 1 courgette (half-moons), 200 g green beans (halved), 1 red pepper (strips)
1 tbsp oil; 1 tsp salt

Finish: Thai basil/coriander, lime wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . In the tin, whisk coconut milk, stock and curry paste; stir in rice and salt.
2. Toss veg with oil and a pinch of salt; spread over rice. Cover tightly with foil; bake 35 minutes .
3. Uncover, gently stir veg through; bake 8–10 min more until rice is tender. Rest 10 min ; finish with herbs and lime.

Make-ahead: Assemble to step 1; hold 6 h chilled; bake fresh.
Freezer: Portions 2 months .
Swaps: Add tofu cubes or chickpeas; swap green paste for red.
Nutrition: ~1,780 kJ/425 kcal.
Pairing: Crisp lager or Grüner Veltliner.
Origins & Facts: One-pan curry and rice—foil traps steam so grains cook evenly under the veg.

Smoky Bean & Potato Spanish-Style Tray (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: None common. Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

900 g waxy potatoes, 2 cm chunks
1 red onion (wedges), 1 pepper (strips), 3 garlic cloves (sliced)
2 tbsp olive oil; 2 tsp smoked paprika; ½ tsp ground cumin; 1 tsp salt
2 × 400 g tins butter or cannellini beans (rinsed)

120 g pitted green olives; 2 tbsp sherry vinegar
Finish: parsley, lemon wedges

Method

1. Heat oven 210 °C fan . Toss potatoes, onion, pepper and garlic with oil, paprika, cumin and salt; roast 25 min .
2. Add beans and olives; roast 8–10 min more.
3. Splash with sherry vinegar; rest 5 min . Finish with parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Par-roast potatoes 1 day ahead; combine and finish when needed.
Freezer: Cooked tray 1 month .
Swaps: Add artichokes; use sweet potatoes for half the mix.
Nutrition: ~1,630 kJ/390 kcal.
Pairing: Garnacha rosé or lager.
Origins & Facts: Tapas pantry in a pan—paprika smoke, briny olives, tangy vinegar.

Cauliflower Shawarma with Pomegranate (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm

Allergens: Sesame (if tahini served). Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

2 large cauliflowers, florets

Spice oil: 4 tbsp olive oil, 2 tsp ground cumin, 2 tsp coriander, 1 tsp paprika, ½ tsp turmeric, ½ tsp cinnamon, 1½ tsp salt

1 red onion, thin wedges

Finish: pomegranate seeds (1 large fruit), chopped parsley, lemon

Optional drizzle: 120 g tahini, 120 ml water, lemon juice, salt

Method

1. Heat oven 220 °C fan . Toss cauliflower and onion with spice oil; roast 22–26 min until well charred at edges.
2. Drizzle tahini sauce if using; top with pomegranate, parsley and lemon.

Make-ahead: Spice oil 3 days ; roast just before service.
Freezer: Not ideal.
Swaps: Add chickpeas for extra bulk; serve with flatbreads.
Nutrition: ~1,340 kJ/320 kcal (without tahini).
Pairing: Dry rosé or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: Levantine street-food profile—sweet spice + tart pomegranate wakes up buffets.

Bombay Potato & Spinach Bake (Ve)



Serves: 12 | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Mustard (if using seeds). Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

1.2 kg baby potatoes, halved
Tempering: 3 tbsp oil, 1 tsp mustard seeds (optional), 1½ tsp cumin seeds, 1 onion (sliced), 2 cloves garlic (sliced), 1 tsp garam masala, ½ tsp turmeric, ½ tsp chilli flakes
250 g tomatoes (chopped); 200 ml veg stock; 200 g frozen peas
250 g spinach (roughly chopped)

Finish: coriander, lemon

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . In a large pan (or the tray over a hob), warm oil; pop mustard and cumin seeds 30 sec . Add onion and garlic; soften 4 min . Stir in spices.
2. Tip into the tray with potatoes, tomatoes, stock and peas; season. Cover tightly with foil; bake 30 min .
3. Uncover, toss; bake 10–12 min until potatoes are tender and edges crisp. Fold in spinach to wilt.
4. Finish with coriander and lemon.

Make-ahead: Cook to tender; reheat and fold spinach in to serve.
Freezer: Cooked base 1 month ; add spinach fresh.
Swaps: Add cauliflower florets; or swap peas for chickpeas.
Nutrition: ~1,590 kJ/380 kcal.
Pairing: IPA or dry Riesling.
Origins & Facts: UK curry-house favourite side, scaled as a hearty vegan main with buffet-friendly textures.

Starch Smart—Pasta & Potato for a Crowd

For clean slices, keep trays shallow and starches just shy of fully cooked before baking—they'll finish in the sauce. A thicker sauce means neater portions later:

aim for coat-the-spoon (béchamel) or lightly soupy (tomato/stock) before the bake, knowing starch will absorb some moisture. Always rest 10–15 minutes before cutting.

Chapter 7 – Pies, Pastas & Bake-to-Share Classics

Three-Cheese Mac & Greens Slab (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta/flour), Milk, Mustard (if using). Diet: V.

Ingredients

700 g macaroni (or short pasta)
Greens: 300 g shredded cavolo nero or kale (stems off), 200 g spinach

Cheese sauce: 80 g butter; 80 g flour; 1.2 L milk; 1 tsp Dijon (optional); 200 g mature cheddar; 120 g Gruyère or Emmental; 80 g Parmesan (or veg hard cheese); nutmeg; salt, pepper

Topping: 80 g fresh breadcrumbs; 2 tbsp olive oil

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Boil pasta 2 minutes under packet time. Blanch kale 1 minute in the pasta water; drain with pasta. Fold in spinach to wilt.
2. Sauce: melt butter, whisk flour 1 min ; gradually whisk in milk; simmer 4–5 min to thick. Off heat add cheeses and Dijon; season with nutmeg, salt and pepper.
3. Combine pasta/greens with sauce; tip into tin. Mix crumbs with oil; scatter.
4. Bake 20–22 min until bubbling and golden.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6 min).

Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked/baked).

Swaps: Use GF pasta/flour; add leeks; swap spinach for peas.

Nutrition: ~2,280 kJ/545 kcal.

Pairing: Chardonnay or amber ale.

Origins & Facts: Classic mac, but greens add bite and hold on a buffet.

Chicken, Leek & Sweetcorn Puff-Top Pie



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pastry/flour), Milk.
Diet: — (DF with swaps and DF pastry).

Ingredients

2 tbsp butter + 1 tbsp oil; 3 leeks (thinly sliced); 2 cloves garlic
1 kg cooked chicken (shredded, thigh/roast leftovers ideal)
40 g flour; 800 ml chicken stock + 100 ml milk; 1 tsp thyme; 1 tsp mustard (optional); 1 × 325 g tin sweetcorn (drained)
2 tbsp parsley; salt, pepper

1 sheet all-butter puff pastry (320–375 g); 1 egg (wash)

Method

1. Heat oven 200 °C fan . Soften leeks in butter/oil 6 min ; add garlic 30 sec . Stir in flour 1 min . Whisk in stock/milk; simmer 3–4 min to creamy. Add thyme, mustard, sweetcorn and chicken; season, fold in parsley.
2. Tip into tin. Lay pastry on top, crimping edges; slash to vent, egg-wash.
3. Bake 25–30 min until deeply golden and piping hot.

Make-ahead: Filling 2 days ; assemble and bake fresh.
Freezer: Whole unbaked pie 2 months .
Swaps: Shortcrust top; add bacon lardons; make DF with oil and DF pastry.
Nutrition: ~2,060 kJ/490 kcal.
Pairing: Viognier or golden ale.
Origins & Facts: British high-street classic scaled up; puff top speeds service.

Beef Lasagne for the 9 × 13



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 15 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta/flour), Milk. Diet: —; GF with GF sheets/flour.

Ingredients

Ragù: 2 tbsp olive oil; 1.2 kg beef mince; 1 onion (diced), 2 carrots (diced), 2 celery (diced); 3 cloves garlic; 2 tbsp tomato purée; 2 × 400 g chopped tomatoes; 250 ml beef stock; 1 tsp oregano; 1 bay; salt, pepper
Béchamel: 70 g butter; 70 g flour; 1 L milk; pinch nutmeg; 60 g Parmesan

12–14 lasagne sheets; 150 g mozzarella (or extra cheddar)

Method

1. Brown mince; add veg 8 min . Stir in purée 1 min ; add tomatoes, stock, oregano, bay; simmer 20–25 min until thick.
2. Make béchamel; season; add Parmesan.
3. Layer: ragù, sheets, béchamel—repeat 3–4 layers; finish with béchamel and mozzarella.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 30–35 min until bubbling. Rest 15 min before slicing.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+8 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: Half pork/half beef; add red wine in ragù.
Nutrition: ~2,330 kJ/555 kcal.
Pairing: Sangiovese or amber ale.
Origins & Facts: Family lasagne engineered for clean, generous squares.

Spinach & Ricotta Cannelloni Tray (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta), Milk, Egg (some pasta). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Filling: 700 g ricotta; 400 g thawed spinach (squeezed dry); 80 g Parmesan; zest 1 lemon; nutmeg; salt, pepper
Sauce: 700 ml passata; 1 onion (very finely diced); 2 tbsp olive oil; 2 cloves garlic; 1 tsp sugar; ½ tsp oregano; salt
18–20 dried cannelloni tubes; 120 g mozzarella (top)

Method

1. Simmer onion in oil 6 min ; add garlic 30 sec ; add passata, sugar, oregano; simmer 8 min ; season.
2. Mix filling; pipe/spoon into tubes.
3. Spread some sauce in tin; nestle filled tubes; cover with remaining sauce and mozzarella.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 30–35 min until tender and bubbling.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6–8 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: GF tubes if available; add basil; replace ricotta with cottage cheese (drained).
Nutrition: ~1,920 kJ/460 kcal.
Pairing: Chianti or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: The tubes steam in sauce—ideal for buffets; lemon keeps the filling lively.

Tuna Sweetcorn Pasta Bake with Crispy Crumbs



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta/crumbs), Milk, Fish. Diet: —; GF with swaps.

Ingredients

700 g fusilli/penne (2 min under)
Sauce: 60 g butter; 60 g flour; 900 ml milk; 120 g cheddar; 1 tsp Dijon (optional); lemon zest; salt, pepper
3 × 145 g tins tuna (drained and flaked); 1 × 325 g tin sweetcorn (drained); 150 g peas (frozen)

Topping: 100 g fresh breadcrumbs; 30 g Parmesan; 2 tbsp olive oil

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Make cheese sauce; season boldly with lemon zest, salt and pepper.
2. Combine pasta, tuna, corn and peas with sauce; tip into tin.
3. Mix crumbs, Parmesan and oil; scatter.
4. Bake 18–22 min until golden and bubbling.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: Use GF pasta/crumbs; add spring onions; swap tuna for salmon.
Nutrition: ~1,980 kJ/475 kcal.
Pairing: Pinot Grigio or golden ale.
Origins & Facts: School-dinner nostalgia, upgraded for neat slices.

Ham, Leek & Potato Dauphinoise Slab



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr 5 min | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk. Diet: GF.

Ingredients

1.8 kg floury potatoes, 3 mm slices
2 tbsp butter; 3 leeks (thinly sliced)
400 ml double cream; 300 ml whole milk; 1 tsp Dijon (optional); salt, pepper, nutmeg
250–300 g cooked ham, finely shredded
80 g Gruyère or cheddar (top)

Method

1. Heat oven 180 °C fan . Soften leeks in butter 6 min .
2. Warm cream and milk with mustard/nutmeg; season well.
3. Layer half potatoes, half leeks, half ham; repeat. Pour over cream mixture (should just kiss the top layer). Press down.
4. Cover with foil 25 min ; uncover, top with cheese; bake 20–25 min until tender and bronzed. Rest 10–15 min .

Make-ahead: Bake, chill and reheat covered 20 min at 170 °C .
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (baked).
Swaps: Bacon lardons; swap cream for half crème fraîche for tang.
Nutrition: ~2,300 kJ/550 kcal.
Pairing: Riesling (off-dry) or cider.
Origins & Facts: Dauphinoise technique with British ham-and-leek comfort.

Moroccan Lamb & Apricot Filo Pie



Serves: 12 | Time: 1 hr | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (filo), Milk (butter if used). Diet: —; DF if brushing with oil.

Ingredients

1 tbsp oil; 1 kg lamb mince; 1 onion (diced)
Spices: 2 tsp ground cumin; 1 tsp cinnamon; 1 tsp coriander; ½ tsp allspice; 1 tsp paprika
2 cloves garlic; 2 tbsp tomato purée; 250 ml stock; 120 g dried apricots (diced); 40 g toasted almonds (optional); salt, pepper
8–10 sheets filo; 60 g butter melted or 60 ml olive oil; sesame seeds

Method

1. Brown lamb; add onion 6 min . Stir in spices and garlic 1 min ; add purée, stock, apricots; simmer 10 min to thick; season; fold in almonds. Cool 5 minutes.
2. Heat oven 190 °C fan . Brush tin with butter/oil. Layer 5 sheets filo, overlapping with overhang; brushing between sheets.
3. Add lamb mixture; fold overhang on top. Crumple remaining sheets as a ruffled top; brush and sprinkle sesame.
4. Bake 25–30 min until crisp and golden.

Make-ahead: Filling 3 days ; assemble and bake fresh.
Freezer: Whole unbaked pie 2 months .
Swaps: Beef mince; add spinach; swap apricots for raisins.
Nutrition: ~2,120 kJ/505 kcal.
Pairing: Grenache or malty ale.
Origins & Facts: Pastilla-adjacent flavours, simplified with ruffled filo for crunch.

Fish Finger Pie (Retro Party Favourite)



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Fish, Gluten (fingers/crumbs), Milk. Diet: —; can be GF with GF fingers/crumbs and GF flour.

Ingredients

Base: 24–28 fish fingers (shop-bought), baked 200 °C fan 10 min to firm
Sauce: 50 g butter; 50 g flour; 800 ml milk; 1 tsp Dijon (optional); 100 g cheddar; salt, pepper
300 g peas (frozen); 2 spring onions (sliced)

Mash: 1.6 kg potatoes; 80 g butter; 120 ml milk; salt
Topping: 50 g breadcrumbs (optional), 20 g Parmesan

Method

1. Line tin with the pre-baked fish fingers in one tight layer.
2. Make cheese sauce; fold in peas and spring onions; season. Pour over fingers.
3. Spoon on mash; roughen; top with crumbs/Parmesan.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 25–30 min until bubbling and golden.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+6–8 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: Use fish chunks; add sweetcorn.
Nutrition: ~2,100 kJ/500 kcal.
Pairing: Pilsner or lemonade for the nostalgia.
Origins & Facts: British tea-time classic turned shareable showpiece.

Roasted Veg & Pesto Pasta Bake (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (pasta), Milk (pesto/cheese), Nuts (traditional pesto).
Diet: V; nut-free with seed pesto.

Ingredients

700 g penne/rigatoni (2 min under)
1 aubergine, 2 courgettes, 2 peppers—chunks; 1 red onion wedges; 2 tbsp oil
350 g passata; 120 g pesto (basil or rocket-almond); 100 ml pasta cooking water
150 g mozzarella/cheddar; basil

Method

1. Roast veg with oil and salt at 210 °C fan 20 min to caramelise.
2. Mix pasta with passata, pesto, pasta water and roasted veg; season. Tip into tin; scatter cheese.
3. Bake 15–18 min until bubbling. Finish with basil.

Make-ahead: Assemble 6 h ; bake fresh.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: GF pasta; sun-dried tomatoes; seed-based pesto.
Nutrition: ~1,900 kJ/455 kcal.
Pairing: Pinot Grigio or Kölsch.
Origins & Facts: Roast first for depth; pesto added off-heat to keep its aroma.

Chicken Alfredo Baked Orzo



Serves: 12 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Gluten (orzo). Diet: —; GF with GF pasta/rice and DF swaps.

Ingredients

500 g orzo; 1 L hot chicken stock
1 tbsp oil; 1 small onion (finely diced); 2 cloves garlic
1.2 kg cooked chicken (shredded)

300 ml single cream; 80 g Parmesan; zest ½ lemon; pepper
200 g peas; parsley

Method

1. Heat oven 190 °C fan . In a pan, soften onion/garlic in oil; tip into tin with orzo and hot stock; cover with foil 15–18 min , stirring once.
2. Stir through chicken, cream, Parmesan, lemon zest and peas; season with pepper.
3. Bake uncovered 6–8 min to thicken. Rest 5 min ; scatter parsley.

Make-ahead: Orzo base can be pre-steamed; finish to serve.
Freezer: Not ideal (cream splits) though edible.
Swaps: Add broccoli; use cooked turkey.
Nutrition: ~2,060 kJ/490 kcal.
Pairing: Chardonnay or pale ale.
Origins & Facts: Alfredo flavours without a saucepan queue; the orzo releases starch for a silky bake.

Pulled Brisket Cottage Pie



Serves: 12 | Time: 2 hr 30 min (mostly hands-off) | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk (mash). Diet: GF if stock is GF.

Ingredients

1.6–1.8 kg beef brisket; salt, pepper
Base aromatics: 1 tbsp oil; 2 onions (diced); 2 carrots (diced); 2 celery (diced); 2 tbsp tomato purée; 400 ml beef stock; 200 ml stout or red wine (optional); 1 bay; 1 tsp thyme
Mash: 1.6 kg potatoes; 80 g butter; 150 ml milk; salt, pepper

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan . Season brisket; place over sautéed aromatics in a deep roasting tin; add purée, stock, stout/wine, bay and thyme. Cover tightly; braise 2 hr until shred-tender.
2. Lift beef; reduce juices on the hob if thin; shred beef back into its gravy; check seasoning.
3. Boil potatoes; mash with butter/milk.
4. Spoon beef into the pie tin; top with mash; roughen. Bake 190 °C fan 20–25 min until golden.

Make-ahead: Entire base 3 days ; chill and top/bake later.
Freezer: Yes, 3 months (base or whole pie).
Swaps: Use lamb shoulder; add peas to the base.
Nutrition: ~2,340 kJ/560 kcal.
Pairing: Best bitter or Côtes du Rhône.
Origins & Facts: Sunday brisket meets cottage pie—a crowd-pleasing, slice-clean hybrid.

Broccoli–Cauli Cheese Slab with Mustard Crust (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Gluten (flour/crumbs), Mustard. Diet: V; GF with swaps.

Ingredients

700 g cauliflower florets; 700 g broccoli florets

Sauce: 70 g butter; 70 g flour; 900 ml milk; 1 tsp English mustard; 200 g mature cheddar; 40 g Parmesan; nutmeg; salt, pepper
Crust: 100 g panko or fresh breadcrumbs; 1 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp mustard; 20 g grated cheddar; pepper

Method

1. Blanch florets 2–3 min ; drain well.
2. Make cheese sauce; season boldly with mustard and nutmeg. Fold veg through sauce; tip into tin.
3. Mix crust; scatter evenly.
4. Bake 190 °C fan 22–26 min until golden and bubbling. Rest 10 min to slice.

Make-ahead: Assemble 24 h ; bake from chilled (+5–7 min).
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (unbaked).
Swaps: GF crumbs/flour; add leeks.
Nutrition: ~1,980 kJ/475 kcal.
Pairing: Pale ale or Chardonnay.
Origins & Facts: A slab-friendly twist on the British classic—crisp top, saucy middle, tidy portions.

Hold Warm, Serve Happy

Sides should wait for you , not the other way round. Choose dishes that hold texture at 60–70 °C for 20–40 minutes (foil-tented), or that taste great at room temperature.

Add fresh bits last minute — herbs, citrus, dressings, nuts—so trays wake up on the buffet.

Chapter 8 – Sides, Salads & Tear-and-Share Breads

Garlic & Herb Focaccia Slab (V)



Serves: 16–20 | Time: 2 hrs with proving (hands-on 20 min) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Gluten; Milk (if using butter).
Diet: V; DF with oil.

Ingredients

Dough: 750 g strong white flour; 10 g fast yeast; 12 g fine salt; 520–540 ml lukewarm water; 40 ml olive oil

Pan & top: 60 ml olive oil; 3 cloves garlic grated; 2 tsp chopped rosemary; flaky salt

Method

1. Mix flour, yeast and salt. Add water and oil; knead 5–7 min to a soft, sticky dough.
2. First prove 45–60 min until doubled.
3. Oil the tin with 2 tbsp oil. Scrape in dough; stretch to fit, rest 10 min , then dimple with oiled fingers.
4. Stir remaining oil with garlic and rosemary; spoon over. Prove 20–30 min until puffy.
5. Bake 220 °C fan 18–22 min until golden. Sprinkle flaky salt; cool 10 minutes before cutting.

Make-ahead: Par-bake 14–15 min ; cool, wrap, and finish 6–8 min to serve.

Freezer: Yes, 1 month (par-baked or baked).

Swaps: Add olives or sliced cherry tomatoes before baking.

Nutrition: ~850 kJ/203 kcal per piece (of 20).

Pairing: Italian pilsner or Verdicchio.

Origins & Facts: Ligurian bakery classic, engineered as a party slab with generous olive oil for a soft crumb and crisp base.

Roasted New Potatoes with Salsa Verde (Ve)



Serves: 12–16 | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Mustard (if using). Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

1.8 kg baby new potatoes, halved; 3 tbsp olive oil; salt, pepper

Salsa verde: 1 small bunch parsley, ½ bunch mint, 1 tbsp capers (rinsed), 4 anchovy fillets (optional, omit for Ve), 1 tsp Dijon (optional), 2 tsp red wine vinegar, 70 ml extra virgin olive oil, lemon zest, pepper

Method

1. Roast potatoes with oil, salt and pepper at 200 °C fan 30–35 min , shaking once.
2. Blitz or chop salsa verde ingredients to a spoonable sauce; taste for salt and acidity.
3. Toss hot potatoes with half the salsa; drizzle the rest just before serving.

Make-ahead: Roast earlier; rewarm 10 min at 180 °C , dress at the end.
Freezer: Not recommended.
Swaps: Add peas or green beans in the last 5 minutes for a “salad niçoise” vibe.
Nutrition: ~900 kJ/215 kcal (of 14 servings).
Pairing: Sauvignon Blanc or pale ale.
Origins & Facts: Italian green sauce brightens roasted spuds so they shine warm or room temp.

Sheet-Pan Caesar Brussels (V)



Serves: 12 | Time: 30 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (Parmesan), Eggs (mayo), Fish (anchovy, optional), Mustard (dressing).
Diet: V (if no anchovy).

Ingredients

1.5 kg Brussels sprouts, halved; 2 tbsp olive oil; salt, pepper

Dressing: 120 g mayo; 1 tsp Dijon; 1 tsp Worcestershire (or vegetarian alternative); 1 small garlic clove grated; juice ½ lemon; 30 g finely grated Parmesan; 2 anchovy fillets (optional); black pepper

Finish: extra Parmesan; croutons (optional)

Method

1. Roast sprouts at 210 °C fan 18–20 min until charry and tender.
2. Whisk dressing. Toss hot sprouts with dressing on the tray.
3. Finish with Parmesan (and croutons if using).

Make-ahead: Roast sprouts; reheat and dress just before serving.

Freezer: Not suitable.

Swaps: Use shredded hispi cabbage for a milder profile.

Nutrition: ~920 kJ/220 kcal.

Pairing: Kölsch or Chardonnay.

Origins & Facts: Warm “Caesar salad” energy—char brings sweetness; dressing clings for buffet resilience.

Honey-Chilli Carrots with Hazelnuts (V)



Serves: 12–16 | Time: 35 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Nuts (hazelnuts). Diet: V; Ve if using maple instead of honey; GF.

Ingredients

1.5 kg carrots, batons or thick coins
2 tbsp olive oil; salt, pepper
Glaze: 2 tbsp honey (or maple), 1 tbsp cider vinegar, ½–1 tsp chilli flakes, zest 1 orange
60 g toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped; parsley

Method

1. Roast carrots in oil, salt and pepper at 210 °C fan 18–22 min until caramelised.
2. Toss with glaze; return 3–4 min .
3. Scatter hazelnuts and parsley.

Make-ahead: Roast and hold; glaze just before serving.
Freezer: Not ideal.
Swaps: Use pistachios or pumpkin seeds (nut-free); add cumin seeds in the glaze.
Nutrition: ~670 kJ/160 kcal (of 14 servings).
Pairing: Riesling (off-dry) or wheat beer.
Origins & Facts: Sweet-heat glaze plus crunch provides the “texture contrast” every buffet needs.

Giant Greek Salad Tray with Oregano Vinaigrette (Ve)



Serves: 16–20 | Time: 20 minutes | Tin/Tray: 30 × 40 cm serving tray
Allergens: Milk (if adding feta). Diet: Ve without feta; GF.

Ingredients

1.2 kg tomatoes (mix of cherry and wedges), 2 cucumbers (chunked), 1 red onion (thin slivers), 2 peppers (chunks), 120 g olives
Optional: 300 g feta, large cubes
Vinaigrette: 80 ml extra virgin olive oil, 30 ml red wine vinegar, 1 tsp dried oregano, 1 tsp Dijon, ½ tsp sugar, salt, pepper

Method

1. Toss veg and olives. Whisk vinaigrette; pour over and gently combine.
2. Add feta (if using) on top; crack black pepper.

Make-ahead: Prep veg and dressing separately 6 h ; combine just before service.
Freezer: No.
Swaps: Add cooked small pasta for a picnic salad; or use vegan feta.
Nutrition: ~600 kJ/144 kcal (without feta, of 18 servings).
Pairing: Assyrtiko or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: Built to sit happily at room temperature; oregano and vinegar keep flavours lively.

Caprese Panzanella Tray (V)



Serves: 16 | Time: 30 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Gluten (bread), Milk (mozzarella). Diet: V.

Ingredients

400 g day-old ciabatta/bread, 3 cm chunks
700 g cherry tomatoes, halved; 2 large tomatoes, wedges
250 g mozzarella pearls (or torn balls)
1 small red onion, thinly sliced; big handful basil

Dressing: 90 ml extra virgin olive oil, 30 ml red wine vinegar, 1 tsp Dijon, 1 tsp honey, salt, pepper

Method

1. Toss bread with 1 tbsp olive oil and a pinch of salt; toast on the tray at 200 °C fan 8–10 min to crisp edges.
2. Whisk dressing. While bread is warm, toss with tomatoes, onion and half the dressing; rest 10 min to soak.
3. Fold in mozzarella and basil; add remaining dressing to taste.

Make-ahead: Toast bread cubes 24 h ; assemble near service.
Freezer: No.
Swaps: Use vegan mozzarella; add roasted peppers.
Nutrition: ~840 kJ/200 kcal.
Pairing: Lambrusco or light lager.
Origins & Facts: Two Italian salads merged for crowd appeal—crunchy bread plus creamy cheese.

Smoky Corn & Black Bean Salad (Ve)



Serves: 16 | Time: 20 minutes (+ optional corn roasting) | Tin: 30 × 40 cm for roasting (optional)
Allergens: None common. Diet: Ve, GF.

Ingredients

3 × 340 g tins sweetcorn (drained) or kernels from 6 cobs
2 × 400 g tins black beans (rinsed)
1 red pepper (diced), 1 small red onion (finely diced), 1 jalapeño (minced, optional)
Dressing: 60 ml lime juice, 80 ml olive oil, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp ground cumin, ½ tsp sugar, salt, pepper

Finish: coriander; lime wedges

Method

1. Optional: Roast corn on a hot tray 10 min at 220 °C fan for char.
2. Whisk dressing; toss with corn, beans, pepper and onion.
3. Finish with coriander and extra lime.

Make-ahead: Keeps 2 days chilled; brighten with fresh lime before serving.
Freezer: No.
Swaps: Add avocado at service; sub kidney beans.
Nutrition: ~780 kJ/186 kcal.
Pairing: Mexican lager or Albariño.
Origins & Facts: Tex-Mex style; smoked paprika simulates grill notes for indoor prep.

Buttered Greens with Lemon & Almonds (V)



Serves: 16 | Time: 20 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Milk (butter), Nuts (almonds).
Diet: V; Ve with oil; GF.

Ingredients

800 g tenderstem broccoli; 400 g green beans; 200 g peas
40 g butter (or 2 tbsp olive oil); zest 1 lemon; salt, pepper
60 g toasted flaked almonds

Method

1. Blanch broccoli and beans 2–3 min , peas 1 min ; drain and steam-dry.
2. Toss on a hot tray with butter, lemon zest, salt and pepper; heat 5–6 min at 200 °C fan to glaze.
3. Scatter almonds.

Make-ahead: Blanch and chill up to 24 h ; glaze to serve.
Freezer: Blanched greens 1 month ; refresh in boiling water briefly.
Swaps: Pumpkin seeds (nut-free); add mint leaves.
Nutrition: ~520 kJ/125 kcal.
Pairing: Grüner Veltliner or pilsner.
Origins & Facts: A buffet-proof green medley—blanch ahead, finish hot and glossy.

Pull-Apart Cheese & Spring Onion Slab Bread (V)



Serves: 20 | Time: 1 hr 20 min (includes proof) | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Milk, Eggs (if glazing). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Dough: 600 g strong white flour; 7 g fast yeast; 10 g salt; 350 ml warm milk (or oat milk); 40 g melted butter (or oil)
Filling: 200 g mature cheddar (grated); 4 spring onions (finely sliced); 30 g butter, softened; 1 tsp mustard (optional)

Finish: 1 egg beaten (glaze, optional); sesame or nigella seeds

Method

1. Mix and knead dough 5–7 min to smooth. Prove 45 min .
2. Roll to a large rectangle (~45 × 30 cm). Spread soft butter and mustard; scatter cheese and onions.
3. Cut into 6 strips; stack them, then cut into squares and pack upright into the lined tin (like “dominoes”).
4. Prove 20–25 min . Egg-wash; sprinkle seeds. Bake 190 °C fan 22–26 min until deep golden.

Make-ahead: Shape and chill overnight ; proof longer before baking.
Freezer: Baked bread 1 month ; reheat wrapped.
Swaps: Add jalapeños; use mozzarella for extra pull.
Nutrition: ~780 kJ/187 kcal.
Pairing: Pale ale or sparkling water with lemon.
Origins & Facts: Monkey-bread method redesigned as neat slices for buffets.

Sticky Sesame Roasted Cauliflower (Ve)



Serves: 12–16 | Time: 35 minutes | Tin: 30 × 40 cm
Allergens: Soy, Sesame. Diet: Ve; GF with tamari.

Ingredients

2 large cauliflowers, large florets
Sauce: 60 ml soy/tamari, 60 ml maple syrup, 2 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp ketchup (gloss), 1 tsp grated ginger, 1 small garlic clove, 1 tsp cornflour mixed with 1 tbsp water

2 tsp sesame oil; toasted sesame seeds; spring onions; lemon or lime wedges

Method

1. Toss florets with 2 tbsp oil and a little salt; roast 200 °C fan 18–20 min until starting to colour.
2. Simmer sauce in a small pan to thicken 1–2 min ; pour over cauliflower and toss.
3. Return to oven 6–8 min until sticky. Finish with sesame oil, seeds and spring onions; serve with citrus wedges.

Make-ahead: Roast florets ahead; glaze just before service.
Freezer: Not ideal.
Swaps: Add tofu cubes with the glaze; or use broccoli.
Nutrition: ~650 kJ/155 kcal.
Pairing: Lager or jasmine tea.
Origins & Facts: Takeaway-style sheen without frying—cornflour gives a lacquer that clings on a buffet.

Slice Size & Portion Planning

For neat squares, line tins with a parchment sling , bake until just set at the centre, then cool completely (or chill) before cutting with a long sharp knife, wiping between cuts. Most trays here yield 24 small squares or 12–16 generous slices .

Chapter 9 – Sweet Classics: Brownies, Blondies & Bars

Ultimate Dark Chocolate Brownie Slab



Serves/Yield: 24 squares | Time: 45 minutes + cooling | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Eggs, Gluten. Diet: V.

Ingredients

250 g unsalted butter
300 g dark chocolate (70%), chopped

4 large eggs
300 g caster sugar + 100 g light brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
180 g plain flour; 35 g cocoa powder; ½ tsp fine salt
Optional: 150 g chopped dark chocolate or toasted nuts

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan . Line tin with parchment sling.
2. Melt butter and chocolate gently; cool 5 minutes.
3. Whisk eggs, sugars and vanilla until thick and glossy (1–2 minutes).
4. Pour in chocolate mixture; whisk to combine. Fold in flour, cocoa and salt (plus mix-ins if using) just until no flour streaks remain.
5. Bake 22–26 minutes until the top is shiny and a skewer has moist crumbs (not wet batter). Cool completely; chill for ultra-neat slices.

Make-ahead: Keeps 4–5 days airtight.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months , well wrapped.
Swaps: GF with 1:1 GF flour; dairy-free with plant block + DF chocolate.

Nutrition (per square): ~850 kJ/203 kcal.
Pairing: Espresso or stout.
Origins & Facts: Crinkly top comes from whisking sugars into eggs before folding in chocolate—don’t overbake.

Salted Caramel Pretzel Blondies



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Milk, Eggs. Diet: V.

Ingredients

220 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
280 g light brown sugar; 2 large eggs; 2 tsp vanilla
280 g plain flour; ½ tsp baking powder; ½ tsp fine salt
120 g white chocolate chips (optional)
120 g mini pretzels, roughly crushed
200 g thick salted caramel sauce (shop-bought or homemade), plus flaky salt

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan ; line tin.
2. Whisk butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Fold in flour, baking powder and salt; then stir in chocolate and half the pretzels.
3. Spread batter in tin; dollop caramel and swirl lightly. Scatter remaining pretzels; add a pinch of flaky salt.
4. Bake 22–25 minutes until set at edges with a soft centre. Cool fully before cutting.

Make-ahead: 3–4 days airtight.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: GF pretzels and flour; swap white choc for dark or omit.
Nutrition: ~820 kJ/196 kcal.
Pairing: Milk stout or English breakfast tea.
Origins & Facts: Sweet-salty-crunchy balance is designed for buffets—pretzels stay crisp on top.

Lemon Drizzle Tray with Crunchy Sugar Top



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cake: 300 g unsalted butter (soft), 300 g caster sugar, 5 large eggs, zest 3 lemons, 320 g self-raising flour, ½ tsp fine salt, 60 ml milk
Drizzle: 120 g caster sugar, juice of 3 lemons

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan ; line tin.
2. Beat butter and sugar pale. Beat in eggs one by one with a spoon of flour. Fold in remaining flour, salt and milk; add zest.
3. Bake 28–34 minutes until springy.
4. Mix sugar and lemon juice to a grainy syrup. Poke the hot cake all over and spoon on drizzle to form a crisp top. Cool completely.

Make-ahead: 3 days airtight.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (undrizzled); thaw and drizzle.
Swaps: DF with plant block and plant milk; GF with SR GF blend.
Nutrition: ~760 kJ/182 kcal.
Pairing: Earl Grey or Prosecco.
Origins & Facts: British classic—the granular sugar is key to that crunchy glaze.

Raspberry & White Chocolate Blondies



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 45 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

220 g unsalted butter, melted and cooled
280 g light brown sugar; 2 large eggs; 2 tsp vanilla
260 g plain flour; ½ tsp baking powder; ½ tsp salt
180 g white chocolate, chopped
200 g raspberries (fresh or frozen)

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan ; line tin.
2. Whisk butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Fold in flour, baking powder and salt.
3. Stir through chocolate; spread batter; dot with raspberries (don’t overmix).
4. Bake 22–26 minutes until set with a gooey centre. Cool fully.

Make-ahead: 3–4 days chilled.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: Swap raspberries for cherries or blueberries; GF with 1:1 blend.
Nutrition: ~820 kJ/196 kcal.
Pairing: Moscato d’Asti or coffee.
Origins & Facts: The moisture from berries keeps the centre fudgy—bake just to set.

Banoffee Crumb Bars



Yield: 24 bars | Time: 1 hr (mostly cooling) | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

Base: 320 g digestive biscuits (fine crumbs), 120 g unsalted butter (melted)
Filling: 500 g thick dulce de leche/caramel, 3 medium firm bananas (sliced)

Top: 250 ml double cream, 1 tbsp icing sugar, 1 tsp vanilla; cocoa for dusting (optional)

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan . Mix crumbs with butter; press firmly into lined tin. Bake 10 minutes ; cool 10 minutes.
2. Spread caramel evenly; chill 20 minutes to firm. Layer banana slices tightly.
3. Whip cream with icing sugar and vanilla to soft peaks; spread on top. Dust with cocoa. Chill 1 hour before slicing.

Make-ahead: Assemble up to serving day (best within 24 h for bananas).
Freezer: Base + caramel layer only (1 month); add bananas/cream fresh.
Swaps: Use shortbread for base; DF cream alternatives work.
Nutrition: ~860 kJ/205 kcal.
Pairing: Latte or brown ale.
Origins & Facts: All the banoffee pie joy in hand-held bars—keep bananas firm for tidy cuts.

Bakewell Almond Jam Squares



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 1 hr | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk, Nuts (almonds). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Pastry base: 250 g plain flour, 60 g icing sugar, 150 g cold butter, 1 egg yolk, 1–2 tbsp cold water, pinch salt
Filling: 200 g raspberry jam; 175 g butter (soft); 175 g caster sugar; 3 eggs; 175 g ground almonds; 40 g plain flour; ½ tsp almond extract

Top: 30 g flaked almonds; optional thin icing (80 g icing sugar + 1–2 tsp water)

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan . Rub flour, sugar and butter to crumbs; add yolk and water to a dough. Press into lined tin; dock; bake 12 minutes .
2. Spread jam thinly. Beat butter and sugar; add eggs, then almonds, flour and extract. Spread over jam; scatter flaked almonds.
3. Bake 25–30 minutes until golden and set. Cool fully; ice with thin lines if you like.

Make-ahead: 4–5 days airtight.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: Apricot jam; GF with sweet shortcrust alternatives.
Nutrition: ~900 kJ/215 kcal.
Pairing: English breakfast tea or Amaretto coffee.
Origins & Facts: Derbyshire classic adapted as a sturdy slice—jam barrier keeps the base crisp.

Sticky Toffee Pudding Tray with Hot Sauce



Yield: 20–24 squares | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cake: 250 g dates (chopped), 300 ml just-boiled water, 1 tsp bicarb; 120 g butter (soft); 180 g light brown sugar; 3 eggs; 220 g self-raising flour; 1 tsp vanilla; pinch salt
Sauce: 180 g light brown sugar; 120 g butter; 250 ml double cream; 1 tsp vanilla; pinch salt

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan ; line tin. Soak dates in hot water with bicarb 10 min ; blitz to a coarse purée.
2. Beat butter and sugar; add eggs. Fold in flour, salt, vanilla and date purée.
3. Bake 28–32 minutes until just set.
4. Simmer sauce ingredients 3–4 minutes to glossy. Pour half over warm cake; serve rest hot for ladling.

Make-ahead: Cake keeps 3 days; warm with extra sauce.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months (cake and sauce separately).
Swaps: DF with plant cream/butter; GF with SR GF blend.
Nutrition: ~1,050 kJ/251 kcal (with a light sauce portion).
Pairing: Porter or strong English tea.
Origins & Facts: Pub classic engineered for squares—soak dates for tender crumb.

Rocky Road for a Crowd (No-Bake)



Yield: 24–32 bars | Time: 15 minutes + chilling | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Gluten (biscuits), Soy (chocolate may). Diet: V.

Ingredients

300 g dark chocolate + 150 g milk chocolate
150 g unsalted butter; 120 g golden syrup
250 g digestive biscuits, chunky pieces
120 g mini marshmallows
120 g mixed add-ins (e.g., glacé cherries, raisins, honeycomb pieces)
Finish: icing sugar to dust (optional)

Method

1. Line tin. Gently melt chocolates, butter and syrup; cool slightly.
2. Fold in biscuits, marshmallows and add-ins.
3. Press into tin; level. Chill 2–3 hours until firm; cut.

Make-ahead: 1 week chilled.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: GF biscuits and DF marshmallows/chocolate as needed.
Nutrition: ~820 kJ/196 kcal (of 30).
Pairing: Coffee or milk stout.
Origins & Facts: British no-bake legend—perfect for make-ahead party platters.

Carrot Cake Slab with Tangy Icing



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 55 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk, Nuts (optional). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cake: 260 g plain flour; 1 tsp bicarb; 1½ tsp baking powder; 2 tsp cinnamon; ¼ tsp nutmeg; ½ tsp salt
Wet: 3 large eggs; 200 g caster sugar; 150 g light brown sugar; 220 ml neutral oil; 1 tsp vanilla; 320 g finely grated carrots; 80 g sultanas; 80 g chopped walnuts (optional)

Icing: 200 g full-fat cream cheese; 60 g soft butter; 250–300 g icing sugar; 1–2 tsp lemon juice

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan ; line tin.
2. Whisk dry ingredients. In another bowl, whisk eggs, sugars, oil and vanilla; fold in dry mix, then carrots, sultanas and nuts.
3. Bake 28–34 minutes until springy. Cool completely.
4. Beat icing ingredients until smooth; spread and swirl. Chill to set before slicing.

Make-ahead: Iced cake keeps 3 days chilled.
Freezer: Cake (un-iced) 2 months .
Swaps: DF icing with plant cream-cheese/butter; nut-free by omitting walnuts.
Nutrition: ~820 kJ/196 kcal.
Pairing: Chai tea or brown ale.
Origins & Facts: Oil-based sponge gives long-lasting moisture—ideal for buffets.

Gingerbread Tray with Lemon Icing



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 50 minutes | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Eggs, Milk (if using butter). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cake: 200 g unsalted butter (or 180 ml oil), 200 g dark muscovado sugar, 200 g golden syrup, 150 g black treacle; 300 ml milk; 2 large eggs; 320 g plain flour; 1½ tsp bicarb; 2 tsp ground ginger; 1 tsp cinnamon; pinch cloves; ½ tsp salt

Icing: 180 g icing sugar; 2–3 tbsp lemon juice

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan ; line tin. Gently melt butter, sugars, syrup and treacle; cool slightly.
2. Whisk in milk and eggs. Sift flour, bicarb, spices and salt; fold in to a pourable batter.
3. Bake 28–32 minutes until set and springy. Cool fully.
4. Mix icing to a thick drizzle; pour over and let it set before slicing.

Make-ahead: Improves after a day as spices bloom.

Freezer: Yes, 2 months (un-iced).

Swaps: DF with oil + plant milk; GF with 1:1 blend.

Nutrition: ~780 kJ/186 kcal.

Pairing: Hot lemon tea or porter.

Origins & Facts: Classic British traybake—treacle depth lifted by sharp lemon icing.

Pack, Chill, Slice—Party Trays without the Oven

Chilled trays shine when the oven's rammed. For clean cuts, line with a parchment sling , chill until fully set , then run a hot knife (wiped between cuts). For transport, keep at ≤5 °C ; many slices hold 1–2 hours at room temp for serving, but return leftovers to the fridge promptly. Add fresh toppings (zest, fruit, whipped cream) at the venue so they look perky.

Chapter 10 – Festive, No-Bake & Fridge Trays

Tiramisu Slab (Keep-Cool)



Yield: 24 squares | Time: 30 min + 6–8 h chill | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Eggs, Gluten (sponge fingers), Alcohol (marsala/rum optional).
Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cream: 500 g mascarpone; 300 ml double cream; 120 g icing sugar; 1 tsp vanilla; 2 tbsp marsala or dark rum (optional)
Dip: 350 ml strong espresso (cooled); 2 tbsp caster sugar; 1 tbsp marsala/rum (optional)
400–450 g savoiardi (ladyfingers)
Finish: 25 g cocoa powder; dark chocolate shavings

Method

1. Whisk mascarpone, cream, icing sugar and vanilla to soft peaks; fold in marsala/rum if using.
2. Mix espresso, sugar and optional alcohol in a shallow dish. Dip biscuits 1–2 sec per side (don't soak).
3. Layer half the biscuits in the lined tin, half the cream, remaining biscuits, remaining cream.
4. Cover and chill 6–8 h (overnight best). Dust with cocoa and shave chocolate before slicing.

Make-ahead: 48 h (improves day 2).
Freezer: Not ideal (cream grainy).

Swaps: Alcohol-free; GF sponge fingers; half mascarpone for thick Greek yoghurt (lighter).

Nutrition: ~760 kJ/182 kcal per square.

Pairing: Espresso, Vin Santo or coffee liqueur.

Origins & Facts: Venetian classic scaled wide—the quick dip keeps biscuits intact yet spoon-soft after chilling.

Biscoff Cheesecake Bars (No-Bake)



Yield: 24 bars | Time: 20 min + 4 h chill | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (biscuits), Milk, Soy (spread/cookies). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Base: 450 g Lotus Biscoff biscuits (fine crumbs); 150 g unsalted butter (melted)
Filling: 700 g full-fat cream cheese; 350 ml double cream; 120 g icing sugar; 1 tsp vanilla; 200 g Biscoff spread (melted to pourable)
Top: 120 g Biscoff spread (melted); extra crumbs

Method

1. Mix crumbs with butter; press firmly into lined tin. Chill 10 min .
2. Beat cream cheese, icing sugar and vanilla until smooth. Whip cream to soft peaks; fold into cheese. Ripple in melted spread (don't fully mix for marbling).
3. Spread over base; level. Drizzle top with melted spread; feather with a skewer.
4. Chill 4–6 h until set; scatter crumbs; slice.

Make-ahead: 3 days chilled.
Freezer: Yes, 1 month (without decorative drizzle if you like).
Swaps: Use speculoos-style GF biscuits; or switch to Oreos for a cocoa version.
Nutrition: ~820 kJ/196 kcal.
Pairing: Latte or milk stout.
Origins & Facts: The high fat-to-liquid ratio sets without gelatine—clean cuts after a proper chill.

Millionaire’s Shortbread (Classic)



Yield: 24 squares | Time: ~1 hr plus cooling | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten, Milk, Soy (chocolate may). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Shortbread: 320 g plain flour; 90 g caster sugar; 250 g cold butter; pinch salt
Caramel: 400 g sweetened condensed milk; 150 g unsalted butter; 120 g light brown sugar; 2 tbsp golden syrup; pinch salt
Topping: 350 g dark or milk chocolate; 1 tbsp neutral oil (shine)

Method

1. Heat oven 160 °C fan . Rub flour, sugar and butter to crumbs; press into lined tin; dock. Bake 22–26 min lightly golden; cool.
2. For caramel, simmer all ingredients 6–8 min , stirring constantly, until thick, glossy and temperature ~112–116 °C (soft-ball) or distinctly “lava-like”. Pour over base; cool to room temp then chill 30–40 min to set.
3. Melt chocolate with oil; pour over caramel; level. Score light cutting guides after 5–8 min , then chill to set fully before slicing.

Make-ahead: 1 week airtight.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: Salted caramel (½ tsp flaky salt on warm chocolate); GF shortbread base.
Nutrition: ~900 kJ/215 kcal.
Pairing: Black tea or porter.
Origins & Facts: Scoring before full set prevents “caramel squeeze” and cracking tops.

Mocha Icebox Cake (Freezer-Friendly)



Yield: 20–24 slices | Time: 25 min + chill/freeze | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (biscuits), Milk. Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cream: 600 ml double cream; 250 g mascarpone; 120 g icing sugar; 2 tbsp cocoa; 2 tsp instant espresso powder; 1 tsp vanilla; pinch salt
Layers: 600–700 g chocolate digestives or bourbon biscuits
Finish: cocoa + grated chocolate

Method

1. Whisk all cream ingredients to medium-firm peaks.
2. Spread a thin layer in lined tin. Add a snug biscuit layer. Repeat cream + biscuits to 5–6 layers, finishing with cream.
3. Chill 8 h or freeze 3–4 h to sliceable set. Dust with cocoa and chocolate.

Make-ahead: 48 h chilled; 1 month frozen (wrap well).
Freezer: Excellent—slice from semifrozen for super-neat bars.
Swaps: GF biscuits; add a splash of coffee liqueur to cream for adults.
Nutrition: ~760 kJ/182 kcal.
Pairing: Espresso, cold brew, or stout float.
Origins & Facts: Old-school “icebox” stack—biscuits soften into cake under mocha cream.

Citrus Posset Slice (Fridge)



Yield: 24 slim bars | Time: 15 min + 4 h chill | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Milk, Gluten (biscuit base). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Base: 300 g shortbread biscuits (fine crumbs); 120 g butter (melted); pinch salt
Posset: 900 ml double cream; 220 g caster sugar; zest of 3 lemons; 120 ml fresh lemon juice (or mixed citrus: lemon/lime)
Finish: fine zest, thin lemon wheels or candied peel

Method

1. Mix crumbs with butter and salt; press into lined tin; chill 10 min .
2. In a pan, heat cream, sugar and zest to a bare boil ; simmer 3 min , stirring.
3. Remove from heat; whisk in lemon juice. Cool 10 min ; pour over base.
4. Chill 4 h until set. Decorate and slice.

Make-ahead: 48 h chilled.
Freezer: Not ideal (may weep).
Swaps: Lime-only for key-lime vibes; GF biscuits.
Nutrition: ~740 kJ/177 kcal.
Pairing: Prosecco or Earl Grey.
Origins & Facts: Classic British posset sets via acid—no gelatine—into a silky, sharply refreshing slab.

Pistachio-Rose Semolina Tray (Bake, Soak, Chill)



Yield: 24 diamonds | Time: 55 min + soak | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Nuts (pistachio), Milk (yoghurt/butter). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Cake: 300 g fine semolina; 80 g plain flour; 150 g caster sugar; 1 tsp baking powder; pinch salt; 300 g Greek yoghurt; 120 g melted butter; 1 tsp vanilla; 2 tbsp rosewater (to taste)

Syrup: 250 ml water; 220 g sugar; strip lemon peel; 1 tbsp lemon juice; 1 tsp rosewater (to finish)
Top: 60–80 g pistachios (roughly chopped)

Method

1. Heat oven 170 °C fan . Mix dry ingredients; stir in yoghurt, butter, vanilla and rosewater to a thick batter. Spread in lined tin; score diamonds.
2. Bake 28–32 min until golden.
3. Simmer syrup 5 min (add rosewater off heat). While cake is hot, re-score cuts and ladle over syrup slowly until absorbed.
4. Scatter pistachios; cool fully, then chill 1 h to slice cleanly.

Make-ahead: 3–4 days (improves as syrup settles).
Freezer: Yes, 1 month .
Swaps: Orange blossom instead of rose; almond flakes (if nut-swapping, check allergens).
Nutrition: ~800 kJ/191 kcal.
Pairing: Mint tea or sparkling rosé.
Origins & Facts: Basbousa-style semolina cake—fragrant and travel-proof for parties.

Black Forest Tray Trifle (Assembly)



Serves/Yield: 16–20 scoops or 24 bars (if set firm) | Time: 30 min + 4 h chill | Tin: Deep 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (sponge), Milk, Eggs, Sulphites (cherries). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Sponge layer: 1 shop sponge tray (or brownies, 800 g), cut to fit
Soak: 250 ml cherry juice + 2–4 tbsp kirsch (optional)

Cherry layer: 700 g jar morello cherries, drained (reserve 200 ml juice); 2 tbsp sugar; 1 tbsp cornflour mixed with 2 tbsp juice—heat to a loose compote, cool

Custard: 700 ml thick vanilla custard (shop or homemade)

Cream: 500 ml double cream + 2 tbsp icing sugar + 1 tsp vanilla

Finish: dark chocolate curls; extra cherries

Method

1. Lay sponge in the lined tin; drizzle with cherry juice/kirsch.
2. Spread cooled cherry compote; top with custard.
3. Whisk cream to soft peaks; spread on top.
4. Chill 4 h (or overnight) to set enough for neat scoops/slices. Finish with curls and cherries.

Make-ahead: 24 h.

Freezer: Not suitable.

Swaps: Chocolate Swiss roll slices; dairy-free custard/cream alternatives.

Nutrition: ~780 kJ/186 kcal (scoop).

Pairing: Kirsch, stout, or strong coffee.

Origins & Facts: Crowd trifle with Black Forest flavours—cherry-custard-cream strata in a liftable slab.

Chocolate Orange Fridge Slice (No-Bake)



Yield: 24–28 bars | Time: 15 min + 2 h chill | Tin: 23 × 33 cm
Allergens: Gluten (biscuits), Milk, Soy (choc). Diet: V.

Ingredients

Base mix: 300 g dark chocolate; 150 g butter; 120 g golden syrup; zest 2 oranges; 1 tsp orange extract (optional)
Dry: 300 g digestives (chunks); 120 g mixed add-ins (e.g., candied peel, raisins, chopped nuts)

Top: 200 g dark chocolate; finely grated orange zest

Method

1. Melt base mix gently; cool slightly; fold in biscuits and add-ins.
2. Press into lined tin; level firmly.
3. Melt topping; pour over; tap to smooth. Zest orange over the just-set surface.
4. Chill 2–3 h ; cut bars with a hot knife.

Make-ahead: 1 week chilled.
Freezer: Yes, 2 months .
Swaps: GF biscuits; milk chocolate for sweeter finish.
Nutrition: ~740 kJ/177 kcal.
Pairing: Orange pekoe tea or porter.
Origins & Facts: Terry’s-adjacent flavour in party-proof format—no bake, big payoff.

Quick Reference

Allergens & Swaps: Check labels on chocolate, biscuits and spreads; many contain soy lecithin , milk powders and may-contain nut notices. GF alternates exist for most biscuit bases.

Serving Temps: Chill-set trays slice best at 4–7 °C ; remove 10–15 min before serving for flavour.

Freezable? Many no-bake bars freeze well; avoid freezing dairy custards and high-water fruit gels (they weep). For icebox cakes, slice from semi-frozen for the sharpest edges.

Feeding a crowd should feel generous, sociable, and—crucially—repeatable. Traybakes make that possible: one tin, one temperature, one timer, many happy eaters. This collection was built for home cooks who host big: birthdays in the garden, village halls with stubborn ovens, Sunday roasts that sprawl into evening. Every recipe here aims to be supermarket-friendly, time-sane, and buffet-proof, with clear guidance on allergens, swaps, diet notes, make-ahead tactics and freezer suitability. May these pages be splattered with oil and chocolate and the odd splash of gravy—proof you fed people well.

Robin

Dedication

To everyone who brings an extra chair and never arrives empty-handed.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the friends who ate “test batch five” with enthusiasm; to the local allotment crew for surplus courgettes; to patient fishmongers and butchers who answered awkward scaling questions; and to all UK cooks who keep a tray in the oven and a kettle on.

How to Use This Book - Reference

Tin default: 30 × 40 cm roasting tin or 23 × 33 cm tray unless noted. Line with parchment sling.

Temperatures: Fan-assisted °C; reduce by ~20 °C for conventional.

Servings: Sweets cut into 24 squares; savouries feed 10–12 as a main or 16–20 for buffets.

Allergen/Diet blocks: Listed per recipe. Use the Allergens & Swaps Index (back matter) for quick cross-checks.

Make-ahead keys: “Par-roast”, “assemble, chill”, “reheat covered”, “finish fresh”.

Freezer icons: Freezable / Part-freezable / Not ideal (see guide below).

Safety: Cool hot food quickly; chill within 2 hours; reheat once to ≥75 °C.

Pairings: Simple wine/beer suggestions to reduce decision fatigue.

A Cook's Promise (House Rules)

1. Season boldly; 2) Don't overcrowd the tin; 3) Add something fresh at the end; 4) Rest before slicing; 5) Make it yours—swap, tweak and adapt.

The Crowd Host's Stopwatch (Master Timeline)

T–3 days: Freeze/defrost bases; shop long-life items; make sauces and dressings.

T–2 days: Roast veg components; braise meats; bake un-iced cakes; assemble fridge trays.

T–1 day: Assemble bakes to the “ready to oven” stage; chill salads undressed; label allergens.

T–4 hours: Preheat ovens; set up buffet table; chill drinks; slice garnishes; warm plates.

T–90 mins: Bake mains; hold at 60–70 °C tented. Dress salads last-minute.

T–0: Finish with herbs/zest/crunch; open wines; invite first helpings.

T+30 mins: Refresh hot trays with a spoon of stock/butter; rotate platters.

Store Cupboard & Fresh Staples (UK-Oriented)

Grains & Tins: passata, chopped tomatoes, tomato purée; chickpeas, cannellini, butter beans; coconut milk; tuna; roasted peppers; olives; capers.

Baking: plain, self-raising and strong flours; caster, light brown, icing sugars; baking powder; bicarb; cocoa; golden syrup; vanilla.

Flavour: Dijon/wholegrain mustard; Worcestershire (GF if needed); soy/tamari; fish sauce; harissa; gochujang; curry pastes; pesto; Marmite; miso.

Spices/Herbs: smoked & sweet paprika; cumin, coriander, turmeric; chilli flakes; oregano; thyme; rosemary; fennel seed; cinnamon; cardamom; nutmeg; mixed spice.

Oils/Acids: light olive/rapeseed; extra virgin olive; sesame; red/white wine, cider and balsamic vinegars; lemons/limes.

Nuts/Seeds: almonds, walnuts, pistachios; pumpkin/sunflower; tahini.

Fresh: onions, garlic, carrots, celery; potatoes; peppers; mushrooms; salad leaves; herbs.

Freezer: peas, spinach, mixed veg, prawns, herb cubes, part-baked breads, pastry.

Equipment You'll Actually Use

Heavy 30 × 40 cm roasting tin (or two), 23 × 33 cm tray, 20 × 30 cm brownie tin; parchment, foil; instant-read thermometer; large bowls; digital scales; jug; microplane; palette knife; ricer/masher; cooling racks; clip-lock tubs for transport. Optional: immersion blender, pastry brush.

Techniques That Scale

Preheat the empty tin 10 minutes for better sear.

Steam then crisp: Cover rice/pasta bakes first, uncover to colour.

Layering: Roast aromatics, add protein, finish with a dressing/herb shower.

Resting: 5–15 minutes yields neat slices and juicier trays.

Depth control: Keep layers 3–5 cm deep for reliable times. Use two tins rather than one very deep one.

Conversions & Temperatures (Quick Reference)

1 tsp = 5 ml; 1 tbsp = 15 ml; 1 cup (UK recipe context for rice ratio) ≈ 240 ml.
Trays: 20 × 30 cm ≈ 8 × 12 in; 23 × 33 cm ≈ 9 × 13 in; 30 × 40 cm ≈ 12 × 16 in.
Fan oven guide: 160–170 °C gentle, 180–190 °C standard, 200–220 °C high roast.
Meats (rested): Chicken 75 °C; Pork 70 °C; Beef/Lamb medium 60–63 °C; Salmon/White fish 50–54 °C.
Rice (oven): 1 part rice : 1¾ parts hot liquid, tightly covered.

Nutrition at a Glance

Per-recipe nutrition is approximate and intended for planning. For lighter buffets, balance 1 creamy/starchy + 1 protein + 2 veg-heavy trays per 10–12 guests. Offer a vegan + GF option by default.

UK Allergen Guidance & “May Contain” Reality

Top concerns: Gluten, Milk, Eggs, Nuts, Peanuts, Sesame, Soy, Fish, Crustaceans, Mustard, Sulphites, Celery, Lupin, Molluscs.

Best practice:

Keep ingredient lists with trays; mark “may contain” if shown on packaging.

Separate serving utensils; dedicate a corner of the buffet to GF/Ve.

For sesame/peanut, avoid shared toasters/crumbs and seed sprinkles near those trays.

For coeliacs: use certified GF oats/flour; check baking powder; avoid cross-contact with shared tongs/boards.

Substitutions for UK Cooks (Fast Table)

Gluten: GF flour blends (raise with 1¼ tsp GF baking powder per 150 g flour), GF pasta/orzo alternatives (maize, rice), tamari.

Dairy: Baking—use block plant butter; savoury—oat/soya creams; yoghurt—coconut/soya; cheese notes—nutritional yeast + miso for umami.

Eggs (cakes/brownies): 1 egg ≈ 60 g apple purée + ½ tsp bicarb or commercial replacer.

Nuts: Swap pumpkin/sunflower seeds; tahini ↔ peanut butter (check allergens).

Fish/Shellfish: Mushrooms/white beans + seaweed flakes for umami; smoked paprika for depth.

Dietary Constraints (What We Mean)

V: vegetarian; Ve: vegan; GF/DF: gluten/dairy free (with noted swaps).

Low heat/spice options always offered; look for “Swaps” in each recipe.

Low-lactose: use aged hard cheeses (lower lactose) sparingly; plant creams in sauces.

Low-FODMAP pointers: use green parts of spring onions, lactose-free dairy, and swap garlic for infused oil.

The Host’s Troubleshooter

Soggy roasted veg: Tin overcrowded → split into two trays; preheat tray; increase heat last 5–8 min.

Rice underdone: Not enough liquid or lost steam → add 100–200 ml hot stock, cover 10 min.

Pale top: Move to higher shelf; switch to grill for 2–3 min (watch closely).

Dry meat: Slice, return to tray, ladle over hot stock/butter; tent 5–10 min.

Cheesecake won’t set: Chill longer; if rushed, freeze 30–40 min before slicing.

Brownies crumbly: Overbaked; next time pull with moist crumbs on the skewer.

Buffet Logistics (Layout, Flow, Labelling)

Traffic: Protein left, veg middle, starch right; cutlery at the end to reduce clogs.

Height: Cake stands/overturned tins under cloth add levels and visibility.

Labelling: Name + diet tags + key allergens.

Heat management: Rotate hot trays; keep one tin “in reserve” warming at 90–100 °C.

Travel: Strap tins with foil; carry herbs/dressings separately; “wake” trays at the table.

Menu Builders (Sample Sets for 12)

Classic Roast Mix: Lemon-Garlic Chicken; Briam with Feta; Roasted New Potatoes with Salsa Verde; Tiramisu Slab.

Vegan Feast: Chickpea Shawarma; Gochujang Aubergine + Sticky Rice; Harissa Couscous; Pistachio-Rose Semolina.

Hearty Winter: Cottage Pie Slab or Pulled Brisket Cottage Pie; Broccoli–Cauli Cheese Slab; Honey-Chilli Carrots; Gingerbread Tray.

Sunshine Spread: Tandoori Salmon; Ratatouille & Pesto Couscous; Caprese Panzanella; Biscoff Cheesecake Bars.

Seasonality Snapshot (UK)

Spring: asparagus, Jersey Royals, leeks, spring greens.

Summer: tomatoes, courgettes, peppers, berries.

Autumn: squash, mushrooms, apples, pears, brassicas.

Winter: roots, cauliflower, kale, citrus.

Use peak produce as the “hero”; build trays around it.

Wine & Beer Pairing (Quick Map)

Creamy/cheesy: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Kölsch.

Tomato/spice: Garnacha, Barbera, IPA.

Smoky/sweet-spicy: Off-dry Riesling, pale ales.

Fish/citrus: Vermentino, Pilsner.

Chocolate/caramel: Porters/stouts; Ruby Port for desserts.

Origins & Facts (Extended Notes)

Kedgeree: Anglo-Indian dish adapted from khichdi, made British with smoked haddock.

Shawarma: Levantine spit-roast; oven mimicry via high heat and sugar-spice char.

Briam: Greek layered veg bake—olive oil and oregano define flavour, cinnamon adds warmth.

Basbousa: Syrup-soaked semolina cake popular from Egypt to the Levant; rose/orange blossom variations abound.

Millionaire’s Shortbread: Scottish roots via shortbread; 1980s UK café boom cemented its place.

Quick Shopping Checklists

Savoury Party for 12 (sample):
Chicken thighs 2.5 kg; onions x6; peppers x6; potatoes 2 kg; rice/orzo 800 g; tins tomatoes ×4; chickpeas ×3; yoghurt 500 g; lemons ×6; herbs; spices (paprika, cumin, oregano); flatbreads; salad leaves; beer/wine.

Sweet Table (24 serves):
Butter 1 kg; plain flour 1 kg; sugar (caster + brown) 1 kg; eggs ×12; chocolate 1 kg; cocoa 200 g; cream 2 L; mascarpone 500 g; biscuits 1 kg; lemons ×6.

Host's FAQ

Can I double a tray? Yes—use two tins, not one deeper tin.

Fan vs conventional? Subtract ~20 °C for conventional; expect +5–10 minutes.

Holding hot food? 60–70 °C tented ≤40 minutes; refresh with stock/butter.

Transport? Line with parchment sling; foil tight; finishers (herbs, sauces) in small tubs.

After the Party: Leftovers, Safely

Cool quickly; box shallow; label what & when . Most cooked trays: 3 days in the fridge; reheat once to ≥75 °C. Rice: reheat thoroughly and avoid multiple cool–reheat cycles.

Epilogue:

One Tin, Many Tables

A full tray landing on a crowded table signals plenty. You cooked once; everyone eats well. Keep these tins moving—church halls, bake sales, back gardens, tiny flats with loud friends. The measure of a good dish is not its complexity, but the number of people it brings back for seconds.

Written in UK English. Recipes tested with supermarket ingredients and a domestic fan oven. Layout optimised for printing to A4 or reading on tablet. All measurements metric.

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