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# INTRODUCTION

We're all too familiar with the daily struggle of putting meals on the table that tick all the boxes: yummy, affordable, nutritious, low-waste food that will be enjoyed by everyone and not end up in the bin. We know the food choices we make can play an important role in alleviating environmental problems, reducing food waste, avoiding excess packaging, managing budgets and building healthy bodies, but we also know it's not an easy feat.

As enthusiastic self-taught cooks and experienced teachers at the popular Cornersmith Cooking School, we have been discussing, experimenting with and refining our kitchen skills over 16 years of friendship and professional collaboration. When each of us had small children, we committed to preservative-free this, wholemeal that, and everything – including the Vegemite – was made from scratch. We turned ourselves inside out being the most wholesome and eco-conscious (if not the most boring) citizens on the planet.

Now we both have bigger kids who are bringing home Slurpees, the cooking school has expanded and life has got busier, more complicated and more expensive. We can't 'homestead' from city kitchens when we come home at 6 pm. At the same time, the stakes of the climate emergency are higher, and we know that now, more than ever, community and individual change matters. We haven't given up on the home-made everything, but we've learned how to cut corners, focus our priorities and develop 'hacks' for both sanity and sustainability.

While we both still love a day spent bottling tomatoes, we're now much more into perfecting quick tips and tricks that will keep kitchen scraps out of the bin and recipes that are versatile enough to stretch over a few dinners.

When our last cookbook, *Use It All*, came out in 2020 we were surprised and delighted by its success. The feedback made us realise that people in households of all kinds want to change their habits in the kitchen. We had discussions with readers and our cooking school students about the obstacles to reducing food waste, and for many it's simply that the wisdom of 'what to do with the thing' has been lost. So we looked to the cooks from less wasteful times for lessons in resourcefulness and thrift – rustic meals,

wartime rations – to really learn for ourselves and show readers how to make the very most out of every ingredient.

This book is a look into our own fridges and pantries, fruit bowls, freezers and gardens, to see the ways we manage the food that comes into our kitchens. It's not about lifestyle or Instagram perfection. It's about real people cooking good, simple, affordable food while also making better environmental choices.

We want to encourage you to be a more confident and instinctive cook, to take creative liberties with what you have and what you like. This book is to be used as a guide, as though we're there with you in your kitchen, reminding you to look at what you already have rather than head to the shops. The layout is an A–Z ingredient manual, designed to help you use up anything you're sick of looking at or that's going to go bad next week. We'll show you how half a jar of tomato paste can be turned into dinner, just how many things you can do with a tired broccoli head, how delicious cauliflower leaves and leek tops actually are, and how never to throw away cooked pasta or rice again. You'll find advice on what ingredient goes with what, ways to store food properly for longer life, quick ideas for what to do with awkwardly small amounts of something, waste hacks, ingredient swaps, preserving tips and, of course, the answers to that endless question, 'What's for dinner?'

Our recipes are simple but delicious. We use minimal ingredients and basic cooking techniques to feed ourselves, our families and friends with ease. This book will save you time and money while bringing resourcefulness back into your kitchen.

Remember, you don't need to be perfectly sustainable – even small changes will make a difference. We hope these pages help.

## Alex & Jaimee





**Anchovies** p 2 **Apples** p 5 **Apricots** p 10  
**Asparagus** p 14 **Avocado** p 17

## Cheat’s caesar salad dressing

MAKES ½ CUP (125 ML)

The beauty of this dressing is that it really does use up bits and bobs from the fridge. If you have most of the ingredients for the dressing, all you need is a cos lettuce and salad is served. Of course this dressing is also great with other salads, and even on grilled (broiled) chicken, boiled potatoes or poached eggs.

Finely chop 3 anchovies and 1 garlic clove, then smash together with the flat of your knife. Transfer to a bowl and mix with 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tsp worcestershire sauce and 1 tsp mustard. In another bowl, mix ½ cup (120 g) mayonnaise and ¼ cup (25 g) grated parmesan, then add the anchovy mixture and whisk to combine. If too thick, loosen with 1–2 tbsp water. Keep in the fridge for up to 1 week.

### TO MAKE A QUICK CAESAR SALAD

Grab a cos lettuce, tear it up, throw it in a bowl, top with 3 chopped hard-boiled eggs and 1 handful of Croutons (p 51), and drizzle with the dressing.

# Apples

Is there anything more annoying than half an apple? There is not. After many years of raising children, we’ve both become experts in using up apples that have one tiny bite taken from them. If you’re in the half-eaten fruit years, we see you; if not, we encourage you to think about apples as more than a snack. They’re salad, dessert, condiment and everything in between.

**Go with** Beetroot, pumpkin (squash), brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, celery, radishes, daikon, turnips, fennel, kohlrabi, silverbeet (Swiss chard), butter, cheeses, pork, bacon, ham, nuts, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds and tahini, berries, rhubarb, quince, pears, persimmons, dried fruit, brandy, maple syrup, honey, cloves, allspice, cinnamon, coriander seeds, horseradish, ginger, rosemary, thyme, sage

**Storage** Apples will keep in a fruit bowl on the kitchen counter for about 5 days. For longer storage, refrigerate them for 2–3 weeks. Once an apple has been cut, it will last longer if covered in water with a squeeze of lemon juice mixed in.

**Substitutes** Hard pears can be used instead of apples as their texture is similar, but you might want to amp up the seasoning, as the flavour is much milder. Poached quince, rhubarb and pear can replace apples in cooked dishes or baking.

## Some ideas for the apples in the fruit bowl

- \* When roasting pumpkin (squash), sweet potato, fennel or onions, throw in some unpeeled apple chopped to a similar size to the vegetables.
- \* Sauté apple and cabbage in butter for the perfect complement to a sausage or baked potato. See Sautéed Cabbage (p 67), adding 1 thinly sliced apple to the shredded cabbage.
- \* Make a toastie with good cheese, thinly sliced apple and a little chutney or mustard.
- \* Quick-pickle (p 473) thinly sliced apple for salads and cheese boards. »



## Pretend Nutella with half a brown avo

MAKES ABOUT ¼ CUP (60 ML)

You can absolutely spread this on toast and give it to the kids for breakfast. Just don't try to trick anyone over five years old.

Mash ½ brown avo very well with a fork, then mix in 1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder, 2–3 tsp brown sugar and a little dash of vanilla. Keep mixing until everything is combined. Spread on toast and top with slices of banana.

## Rice, greens and half-an-avo fritters

MAKES 6, SERVES 2–3

We make use of half a brown (or green) avo by using it as an egg replacement here and there. These fritters usually have two eggs, but you can replace one with half an avo that needs using.

In a small bowl, mash ½ avocado, then add 2 eggs and whisk until creamy and smooth. In another bowl combine 1 cup (185 g) cooked rice, 1 cup thinly sliced greens (kale, spinach, cabbage or fennel), ½ cup chopped herbs, 1 chopped small chilli, 1 finely chopped garlic clove and ½ tsp salt. Add the avocado mix to the rice mix and combine. Heat ¼ cup (60 ml) oil in a frying pan and drop in dollops of the mixture (2–3 tbsp) to make 4–6 fritters. Fry on each side for 2–3 minutes and serve immediately. Yummy with some sour cream and chilli jam.



**Bacon** p 22 **Bananas** p 24 **Barley** p 28 **Beans, broad** p 31  
**Beans, dried or tinned** p 34 **Beans, green** p 38  
**Beetroot** p 42 **Berries** p 47 **Bread** p 50 **Broccoli** p 55  
**Brussels sprouts** p 59 **Buckwheat** p 62

# Beans, dried or tinned

You should probably have at least two tins of beans or a bag of dried beans in the cupboard at all times. The best thing about beans is that they can help you turn whatever is in the pantry or fridge into a meal. One egg? A little stock? Half a jar of passata (puréed tomatoes)? A bit of celery? Add some beans and suddenly something’s happening. It’s this approach to cooking that makes for a sustainable kitchen. Don’t run to the shops every time you can’t think of what to cook. Instead, open up the pantry and deal with that quarter-full bag of beans.

**Go with** Stocks, robust oils, hard cheeses, yoghurt, tahini, beef, lamb, bacon, eggplant (aubergine), tomatoes, capsicum (pepper), zucchini (courgettes), potatoes, carrots, corn, silverbeet (Swiss chard), spinach, onions, garlic, celery, chilli, parsley, mint, coriander (cilantro), mustard seeds, coriander seeds, cumin, paprika, bay leaves, oregano, rosemary, sage

**Storage** Store dried beans in an airtight container in the pantry for years. Store unused cooked or opened tinned beans in an airtight container in the fridge for 3–4 days.

**Substitutes** No, not all beans taste the same – of course they don’t. But let’s get real, you can swap nearly any kind of bean with another and still be able to make the recipe of your choosing.

## How to decide on tinned vs dried

Tinned is easy, but dried is cheaper and more sustainable. There, that’s the difference. Try to get into the habit of going to the bulk shop (if there’s one near you) and buying dried beans. But of course the truth is that we end up buying tins when we’re in a hurry, or we forgot, or had other things to do. Here’s a very rough conversion and some advice for soaking and cooking to help make it easier:

- \* As a general rule of thumb, dried beans double in volume once soaked and cooked.
- \* About ½ cup (around 100 g/3½ oz) dried beans, once soaked and cooked, will give you about the same amount as the drained contents of a 400 g (14 oz) tin.
- \* A 400 g (14 oz) tin of beans gives about 240 g (8½ oz) drained beans.
- \* Cooking times and soaking requirements for dried beans are different. Red kidney beans definitely need to be soaked before cooking at a boil. They are toxic otherwise.
- \* Dried beans take 40 minutes to 1 ½ hours to cook, depending on their size and whether they’ve been soaked first.

## Some ideas for a tin of beans or last half-cup of dried beans

- \* Turn salad into a meal. Combine a tin of beans with cooked rice, couscous or barley, and add lots of fresh herbs and capers or something pickled. Use the pickle brine and a splash of olive oil to make the dressing.
- \* Add a tin of beans or a handful of cooked beans to your next tray of roasted vegetables. Coat the beans with a little oil, season well and tip them into the roasting tray for the last 5–10 minutes of cooking.
- \* Try the ‘No Food Processor? No Worries’ Mashed Hummus or the crispy Oven-roasted Chickpeas (both on p 109) with white beans or kidney beans instead of chickpeas.
- \* Follow the Simple Chickpea Stew recipe (p 110), using white beans or red kidney beans instead of the chickpeas.
- \* For nachos or burritos, drain tinned black beans or red kidney beans and fry in a hot oiled frying pan with diced onion, chopped garlic, some spice mix 4 (p 420) and plenty of salt.
- \* **Beans and greens** Sauté some chopped bacon, then throw in roughly chopped spinach and sauté until wilted. Add a tin of black-eyed peas or white beans, then cook until everything is hot but still brightly coloured. Add salt, squeeze some lemon juice on top and lunch is served.
- \* **Pasta e fagioli** Cook any short type of pasta, strain and return to the pot. Add drained tinned beans and Comfort Pasta Sauce (p 3) or your favourite tomato-based pasta sauce and lots of parmesan.

## Left-over rye bread salt

This recipe comes from *Beyond the North Wind* by Darra Goldstein. It's a beautiful example of how resourcefulness is not consolation but innovation. This salt gives a second life to stale bread by turning it into a seasoning. Use it as a finishing salt to give a smoky, salty flavour to meats and vegetables. For the best results you need left-over rye bread or some other really flavoursome bread, such as buckwheat or barley.

Preheat the oven to 240–260°C (475–500°F). Tear stale rye bread into small pieces to make up ⅓ cup (about 20 g) and cover with water. Soak for 30 minutes. Drain the bread but don't squeeze out the excess water. Mix the wet bread with ½ cup (150 g) salt; it will make a mash. Lightly oil a roasting tin, add the mash in a slightly flattened round lump, and bake for 30 minutes.

Carefully remove from the oven and allow the hardened bread and salt to cool. Break it up into smaller pieces then blitz in a spice or coffee grinder or pound to a coarse powder with a mortar and pestle. Keep in an airtight container in the pantry for up to 1 year.

## Tasty meatballs – using left-over crappy sandwich bread

SERVES 4

This is for the last bits of sandwich bread in the bag that no one wants to eat.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Soak 1 cup (about 45 g) torn-up sandwich bread in a little milk or stock, or even a grated onion. Let it sit for 5 minutes or so. In a medium bowl combine 500 g (1 lb 2 oz) minced (ground) meat of your choice, 3–4 finely chopped garlic cloves, ¼ cup (25 g) grated parmesan (optional), ¾ tsp salt and either a big handful of chopped fresh herbs or 1 tsp dried herbs. If you want to add grated carrot or zucchini (courgette), go wild. Throw in the torn soaked bread and combine gently. Roll tablespoonfuls of the mixture into meatballs and fry them gently in an ovenproof frying pan with a little oil for 4 minutes or until brown all over.

Transfer to the oven and bake for 10 minutes. You could add 500 ml (17 fl oz) tomato passata (puréed tomatoes) before baking if you want a saucy dish. Serve on mashed potato or tomatoey pasta, or with flat breads.

# Broccoli

The following recipes are for the times you had good intentions and bought two or three heads of broccoli but then the week got away. While these simple recipes work with lovely fresh broccoli, they're equally good with the slightly yellowing, seven-day-old variety. Feel no shame about your ageing brassicas. Learn how to store broccoli well and follow recipes that use up the whole head.

**Goes with** Broccoli is mild, green and grassy. Pair it with any other green vegetable, nuts, seeds, meats and tofu, and intensify its mellow flavours with sharper ingredients like lemons, blue cheese, cheddar cheese, parmesan, mustard, chilli, olives, capers, soy sauce, miso, garlic, ginger or spices. Dress cooked broccoli while it's warm, so it can absorb all the deliciousness.

**Storage** To avoid broccoli wilting quickly, wrap the unwashed head in a clean damp cloth, beeswax wrap or reusable plastic bag, leaving the stem free so it can breathe. Wash well before using.

**Substitutes** For obvious aesthetic and textural reasons, cauliflower is the best substitute for broccoli. Brussels sprouts roast like broccoli, green beans steam and stir-fry in a similar way, and kale will give you the nutritional powerhouse you're looking for with broccoli.

## Some ideas for rescuing broccoli

- \* Pour Miso Dressing (p 277) over warm blanched, steamed or charred broccoli florets.
- \* Broccoli doesn't always preserve well, as it can get soft and sulfurous, but the Italian method of cooking in vinegar and preserving in oil is pretty delicious. Follow the recipe for Italian-style Preserved Green Beans (p 40), using a head of broccoli instead of beans.
- \* Char chopped broccoli in a very hot oiled frying pan and chuck in a handful of olives, some capers, chilli flakes, salt and a squeeze of lemon juice.
- \* For a yummy green side, make the Japanese-style Sesame Greens (p 40) using broccoli.

# Cabbage

Cabbage wins the endurance (and value-for-money) vegetable marathon every time. The fact that it's under-appreciated breaks our brassica-loving, money-saving, versatile-cooking hearts. When raw, it's crisp and a touch peppery; when cooked, it's mild and sweet. Every part of a cabbage is edible, so buy it whole, use it all and, when in doubt, make sauerkraut.

## Goes with

Carrots, onions, fennel, potatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin (squash), brussels sprouts, kohlrabi, turnips, radishes, buckwheat, barley, apples, pears, grapefruit, pomegranate, figs, garlic, ginger, chilli, sage, coriander (cilantro), juniper berries, mustard seeds, fennel seeds, black pepper, cloves, tarragon, parsley, dill, horseradish, mustard, pork, bacon, chicken, anchovies, hazelnuts, walnuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, eggs, mayonnaise, cream, blue cheese, butter

## Storage

Basically this thing lasts forever. Buy a whole cabbage. If you're intimidated by its size, stick to red cabbage, which tends to be smaller. Store a whole cabbage as is, in the vegetable crisper in the fridge, for up to 1 month. As you cut into the cabbage, just rewrap the unused portion in either a clean damp cloth or a large beeswax wrap. If you have a small amount, slice it up and keep in an airtight container with 1 tbsp water for 5–7 days, remembering to change the water every 2–3 days.

## Substitutes

If need be, replace cabbage with kale, brussels sprouts, celery or kohlrabi.

## Some ideas for using up a bit of left-over cabbage

- \* A plain cabbage stir-fry is very satisfying. Follow the steps for the Stir-fried Celery (p 87). Flavour with plenty of ginger and throw in some toasted sesame seeds before serving.
- \* Add to your Kimchi Pancakes (p 225) and serve with Japanese mayonnaise, pickled ginger and all the sauces. »

Cabbage p 65 Capers p 69 Capsicum p 72 Carrots p 76  
Cauliflower p 80 Celery p 85 Cheese p 89 Cherries p 102  
Chicken p 105 Chickpeas p 108 Chillies p 112  
Coconut, dried p 115 Corn p 118 Crackers p 122 Cream p 124  
Cucumber p 126 Cumquats p 130



## CELERY LEAVES

In those weeks when you have celery in the house, don't buy herbs. Use your celery leaves in place of parsley, throwing them liberally into salads, on top of soups, in sandwiches and through grains, or stick them in your pickles and ferments or your gin and tonics.

### Celery leaf gremolata with green olives

If a celery bunch was extra bushy, make this gremolata, store it in the fridge in an airtight container and scatter it over all your meals. We particularly like it on scrambled eggs, vegetable soups that need a punch of flavour, and avocado on toast.

Very finely chop 1 large handful of celery leaves and put them in a bowl with the zest of 1 lemon, plenty of ground black pepper, a big pinch of salt and lots of finely chopped green olives. Feel free to add cumin seeds or chilli flakes if you like. Store in the fridge in an airtight container for about 4 days. Once it starts to wilt, stir it through a soup and no one will know.

### Celery leaf syrup for gin and tonics

MAKES 1 CUP (250 ML)

You'll never regret having a bottle of this in the fridge. Follow the Ginger Syrup recipe (p 176), replacing the ginger with 1 generous handful of celery leaves and ½ cup (70 g) chopped celery stalks that aren't good enough for eating. Add 1 tsp black peppercorns, the zest of 1 lemon and 1 tsp crushed juniper berries. Use 2 tbsp celery leaf syrup in your next G&T, then try not to drink 10 in one go.

### Celery leaf pesto

You'll find this recipe in our book *Use It All*, but it's too good to leave out here. Spread it on toast and top with a fried egg, or add it to a salad wrap, potato salad (p 362) or fish burger.

Put 1–2 cups (20–40 g) celery leaves, a handful of nuts (any kind), 2 garlic cloves, ½ cup (50 g) grated parmesan and a pinch of salt in a food processor, then blitz to a paste. With the motor running, add 100–150 ml (3½–5 fl oz) of a not too intense oil until well combined. Transfer to a clean jar or airtight container and store in the fridge for up to 10 days.

# Cheese

Bits of unused cheese are fairly regular guests in the fridge, no? And because cheese is such a luxury ingredient, with a large environmental footprint, wasting it can cause some niggling guilt. But even a scraping of cheese can be put to good use, because it can impart a saltiness and umami flavour to whatever you're cooking. Our tips are based on the bold assumption that you'll be happy to serve a little cheese on nearly every occasion. We know there's a world of amazing ones out there, but we've chosen the most commonly purchased and wasted cheeses to discuss here. Remember, cheese is a rather flexible ingredient. You can substitute most soft cheeses for other soft cheeses and likewise with hard cheese. What's more, you can often swap hard cheese and soft cheese. Ricotta instead of parmesan with pasta is fine, cheddar instead of brie can work too. Just be sensible about it.

## BLUE CHEESE

So. Much. Flavour. All at once metallic and floral with a hint of armpit, blue cheese can really divide a household. There's a range of piquancy in blue cheeses, but rarely are they considered mild. Usually blue cheese is bought in smaller amounts, with less chance of waste, but sometimes most of the blue cheese is left on the cheese platter after a dinner party and you might find yourself a bit stuck as to what to do with it.

**Goes with** Avocado, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, asparagus, spinach, pumpkin (squash), celery, apples, pears, apricots, blueberries, cumquats, figs, grapes, peaches, nuts, sage, parsley, ham

**Storage** Store blue cheese well wrapped in baking paper in the more humid part of your fridge, such as the vegetable crisper, so it doesn't dry out. It will last 3–4 weeks.

## CHERRY STEMS AND STONES

### Cherry stem tea

Cherry stems are full of flavour and are said to have detoxifying properties. Steep dried cherry stems in boiling water for a gentle anti-inflammatory tea. Be aware that some sources recommend that pregnant women avoid this tea.

Spread cherry stems on a baking tray and dry for a few days in a sunny, airy place in the kitchen or pop into a 120–140°C (235–275°F) oven for 20 minutes or until completely dry. Store in a jar or airtight container. To make tea, add 2–3 tbsp cherry stems to a small pot of boiling water and simmer for 5 minutes, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 5 minutes. Strain and add a little honey or sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice.

### Cherry stone vinegar

Place the stones in a clean jar and cover with red wine vinegar or apple cider vinegar. Seal and leave to sit on the bench for 1–2 weeks. Taste for cherry flavour and strain when the vinegar is nicely infused with it. Store in the fridge and use as a dressing for tomato or beetroot salads. It will keep for ages.

See [apricots](#), [peaches](#) and [plums](#) for ideas with other stone fruit.



## Chicken

You know it's going to be a good day when you wake up and there's left-over chicken in the fridge. Lunches can be made in a jiffy, and dinner has basically cooked itself. The following ideas come from ten years' worth of text messages between us, each one showing off yet another meal that can be made from a handful of shredded chicken.

### Storage

Shred left-over cooked chicken and store in a sealed container in the fridge for 3–4 days. Treat it like gold – do not let a single bit go to waste.

### Some ideas for enjoying precious left-over chicken

- \* Fried rice is often on our menu the day after a roast chicken. Add it with the rice in the Green Eggy Fried Rice (p 57).
- \* Add shredded chicken to Congee (p 394). Heat a little oil in a frying pan, flash-fry the chicken with a pinch of salt, and pile it onto a warm bowl of congee.
- \* Mix shredded chicken with something creamy, like mayonnaise or a soft cheese, lots of chopped herbs and something salty like chopped capers, pickles or olives. Season with salt (if needed) and pepper, then spread on bread for lunch.
- \* **Tasty two-minute soup** Heat 1 cup (250 ml) broth or stock, then throw in a handful of shredded chicken and the kernels from 1 corn cob. It's two-minute soup without all the bullshit.

### Some ideas for shredded chicken in salads

- \* The Cold Noodle and Wombok Salad With Pickles (p 487) can be made with left-over shredded chicken. Heat the chicken through in a hot wok before adding to the noodles.
- \* Left-over chicken in the fridge and stale bread on the counter mean caesar salad is on the menu. Crunchy lettuce, shredded chicken, Croutons (p 51) and soft-boiled eggs with Cheat's Caesar Salad Dressing (p 4) make for a simple dinner with no waste.
- \* Toss left-over shredded chicken through a grain salad for some added protein. Try the Big Grain Salad (p 379) or the Best Barley Side (p 29).

- \* Add ½ cup (about 75 g) to the Best Barley Side (p 29).
- \* Make the creamy version of the Anything-goes Potato Salad (p 362) with ½ cup (about 75 g) sauerkraut mixed through. Nothing acts as a foil to rich ingredients the way fermented cabbage does.
- \* Serve sauerkraut with the Parsnip Rosti (p 323) or Green Things Fritters (p 439).
- \* A fried egg on toast with lots of kraut on top is an excellent way to start the day. If you make your own bacon and egg rolls, add sauerkraut to help balance the richness.
- \* **Kraut two-minute cup-a-soup:** Melt a little butter in a small saucepan and sauté some finely chopped dill, a bit of sliced or shredded left-over chicken or ¼ cup (55 g) left-over mashed potato, and 2–3 tbsp sauerkraut. Cover with 1 cup (250 ml) stock and when it's hot, the soup is ready.
- \* **Reuben sandwich** Fresh bread, pastrami, Russian Dressing (p 418), Swiss cheese and sauerkraut. Best sandwich in the business.
- \* **Quick kraut salad** Combine 1 cup (about 150 g) sauerkraut, 1 grated carrot, ¼ thinly sliced onion and whatever herbs you have around. Dress with 2 tbsp neutral oil, a big squeeze of lemon juice, and salt and pepper.

## Sautéed sauerkraut

SERVES 2–3 AS A SIDE

Many people think sauerkraut is to be eaten raw and only raw, but sauerkraut in cooked food adds depth of flavour, and sautéed sauerkraut makes a soul-fortifying side to baked potatoes, sausages, chops, lentil stews (p 246), dumplings and other comfort foods.

In a frying pan over medium heat, melt 2 tbsp butter or oil and sauté 1 large diced onion until translucent. Add 3 chopped garlic cloves and, if you'd like, 3 chopped bacon rashers or some chopped speck. Stir until the bacon or speck is crisp. Now add 2 cups (about 300 g) strained sauerkraut and 1 tsp mustard or ½ tsp mustard powder. Stir, then cook for about 10 minutes. Add ¼ cup (60 ml) cream and cook for another few minutes.

## Some ideas for using sauerkraut brine

Don't throw the juice away. Sauerkraut brine has all the flavour of the kraut itself, and if it comes from an unpasteurised jar then it's also full of live cultures.

- \* Knock back a shot to benefit from its microbial goodness.
- \* Use it as the base of a salad dressing. Add some olive oil and salt, and that's it.
- \* Add a splash to soup. The brine's acidity and depth of flavour will give the soup a lift.
- \* It's a good replacement for lemon juice if you've run out of lemons. Splash a little on barbecued greens such as asparagus or zucchini (courgettes) or grilled (broiled) fish.
- \* Use it instead of pickling liquid in the Anything-goes Potato Salad (p 362).
- \* Add a splash to a bloody mary or a vegetable juice.



# Spinach

From fresh leaves to sea monster in the blink of an eye, spinach is often wasted if it isn't used rather quickly. Buy it with intention and prepare for two days of loving spinach. Luckily for you, it's one of the most versatile vegetables: we can't think of a single cuisine that doesn't have a plethora of ways to use spinach. Even on its deathbed, spinach can still be sautéed and make it to the table.

**Goes with** Onions, garlic, ginger, tomatoes, zucchini (courgettes), mushrooms, potatoes, sweet potato, asparagus, silverbeet (Swiss chard), figs, pomegranate, basil, coriander (cilantro), chicken, ham, dried beans, chickpeas, tofu, poppy seeds, mustard, butter, cream, yoghurt, coconut milk, soft cheeses, parmesan, barley, miso, nutmeg, pepper

**Storage** Do not wash spinach before storing it. For a bunch of spinach, if there's a rubber band or string holding it together, untie it, wrap the bunch in a clean tea towel (dish towel), then place in a reusable plastic bag or cloth bag and store in the fridge for a few days. To freeze spinach, blanch in boiling water for 30 seconds, then submerge in iced water for 1 minute or until the heat is completely out of the spinach. Squeeze dry and pop into an airtight container in little fistfuls. Frozen spinach can be kept for 3 months. We generally avoid buying baby spinach that comes in a plastic bag because of the packaging, but you can store unopened bags in the fridge until the use-by date. Once opened they will only last about 1 day, so get cooking.

**Substitutes** The other green things are good substitutes: silverbeet (Swiss chard), kale, cavolo nero and, in a salad, rocket (arugula).

## Some ideas for spinach that needs using

- \* Try the Silverbeet Quesadillas (p 411) with spinach.
- \* Make creamed spinach, following the Creamed Silverbeet recipe on p 411. Wilted spinach *really* reduces, of course, so the resulting dish will be perfect for 1–2 people.
- \* **Spinach salad** Toss torn spinach leaves with ½ thinly sliced red onion, ½ cup (45 g) thinly sliced button mushrooms and a handful of toasted pine nuts. Season with salt and pepper, then dress with olive oil and red wine vinegar or Classic Mustard Vinaigrette (p 283).
- \* **Green dip** Blitz a few spinach leaves with some green olives and plain yoghurt for a lively dip. Season to taste with salt, pepper and some chilli flakes.

## Margi's green sauce

MAKES ABOUT 200 ML (7 OZ)

This great sauce from our friend Margi appeared in *Use It All*, but it's too good to leave out here. Add it to scrambled eggs for green eggs.

Steam ½ bunch (about 175 g/6 oz) spinach, stems and all, until wilted. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Transfer to a food processor with ½ chopped garlic clove, 1½ tbsp olive oil, ½ tsp flour and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Blitz until smooth, then add a little dash of milk or cream. If it doesn't look smooth enough, add a little more oil and blitz again.

## Green things fritters

MAKES 5–6

Long live the fritter. Could there be a more forgiving and useful trick up your sleeve? When in doubt, make fritters. When the fridge needs a clear out, make fritters. When the vegie patch is looking like it could do with a tidy-up, make fritters. Here's a green fritter recipe for all of the above. Use Spinach, silverbeet (Swiss chard), zucchini (courgettes), kale, celery leaves, peas, herbs, or a mix of what you have.

Finely chop 1 bunch (about 350 g/12 oz) spinach. You can include the stems, but make sure to chop them small (you'll need about 3 firmly packed cups in all). Put the spinach (or other greens) in a bowl with 1 cup picked fresh herbs of your choice, ½ cup grated or crumbled cheese (haloumi and strained feta cheese work well), ¼ cup (35 g) plain (all-purpose) flour and 3 eggs beaten with ½ tsp salt. Mix all the ingredients very well. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a frying pan over medium–high heat and pour in ½ cupfuls of the green mix, cooking 2–3 fritters at a time for 3 minutes on each side.

Serve the fritters warm, but they're also great the next day for a packed lunch.



# PRESERVING GUIDE

You'll notice a lot of preserving recipes in all the Cornersmith cookbooks. It's true, we're obsessed with preservation, not just because we love the flavour of preserved foods and condiments, but for its important role in a low-waste kitchen. We use preservation techniques every day. This doesn't mean we're bottling boxes of fruit and vegetables all the time – in fact, lots of cooks are preserving without even realising it. Covering pesto with oil is a short-term preservation method to stop your green sauce deteriorating from exposure to oxygen. Drying herbs in the sun is preservation, as you're removing the moisture that mould needs to grow.

If you know what you're doing, you can preserve a cucumber in vinegar or an apricot in sugar syrup for many years. The earlier Cornersmith books will give you more in-depth knowledge about the craft and science of longer-term preserving. In this book, we want to give you some simple traditional preserving techniques as a way to combat food waste. We've chosen easy recipes that we both make in our home kitchens: adaptable jams for what's in the fruit bowl, pickles for the oversized daikon you accidentally bought, syrups for fruit scraps and so on.

Preserving doesn't always mean sterilisation, fancy jars and hours spent hunched over pots of boiling water. Sterilising jars and heat-processing are really important if you're looking to store your preserves out of the fridge for long periods of time. This is a good skill to have if you're making four or more jars of something and you don't want to fill up the fridge, or if you don't think you'll be able to eat them over the next few months. A lot of the recipes you'll find here only fill one clean (rather than sterilised) jar or container to be stored in the fridge. This might be, for example, a quick pickle, a kraut, or an infused vinegar. We'll let you know which recipes you need to be more careful with, and which ones you can bung in an old (clean) takeaway container.

## Sterilising jars and bottles

It sounds like a big mystery, but sterilising your jars and bottles is pretty easy.

### CHECKING YOUR JARS AND BOTTLES

When you're starting out, just use what you have in the kitchen cupboard. Second-hand jars are fine to reuse, as long as there are no cracks or chips in the glass that could harbour microorganisms or cause the jar to break when heated. Second-hand metal (but not plastic) lids are okay too, if they're in good condition. Make sure there's no rust, and that the white acid-proof coating inside the lids is intact. Also check that the lids aren't misshapen or dented, as both of these can interfere with the seal.

### HOW TO STERILISE YOUR JARS AND BOTTLES

Wash them in hot soapy water and rinse well, then place upright in an ovenproof dish in a cold oven. Heat the oven to 110°C (225°F). Once it has reached temperature, leave the jars in the oven for 10–15 minutes or until completely dry, then remove them carefully. Pour a hot mixture straight into hot jars; when packing cold pickles or preserves, wait for the jars to cool down first.

To sterilise the lids, place them in a large saucepan of boiling water and leave for 5 minutes, then drain and dry with clean paper towel, or sit them on a wire rack to air dry. Make sure they are completely dry before using.

## Filling your jars

This information is if you're looking for long storage times. For quick pickling or one jar of jam, just store it in the fridge and eat it! Remember that hot jams or chutneys need hot jars, and cool pickles need cool jars, otherwise the heat shock could break the glass.

### FILLING JAM JARS

Carefully pour the hot jam into your hot sterilised jars, leaving a 5 mm (¼ in) gap at the top of the jar. Wipe the rims of the jars with paper towel or a clean damp cloth and seal immediately. Store unopened jars of jam and marmalade in a cool, dark place; once opened, they should be kept in the fridge and used within 2–3 months. If you want to make a bigger batch and keep it for longer, heat-process (p 503) your jars before storing them.