

SDN Beranga

mealtimes

cooking for and sharing meals with your child on the autism spectrum



Agatha Nicol



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Front cover drawing, *Celebration of food*, by the children at SDN Beranga

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Kia orana and G'day

My name is Agatha Tobia Nicol and I am the cook at SDN Beranga Children's Education and Care Centre. I am responsible for providing meals for up to 27 children a day, ranging from two to six years old, all of whom have autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

I have over 20 year's experience in the food and catering business and have also worked in hospitals dealing with people from all walks of life, including children with different types of food requirements including diabetes, low fat and allergies, just to name a few.

I am also a mother of four and some of my children, as well as myself, have allergies and food intolerances. I have lived with a child with ASD who is now an adult and with support is leading a healthy life. Throughout my whole life I have learnt to live with and care for people who have all kinds of both mental and physical challenges.

I am currently doing a course in Dietetics and Nutrition and will complete this in 2016.

My involvement with SDN Beranga began in 2013, shortly after it opened. I am passionate about what I do as it looks at a holistic approach to children and their relationship with food. At

SDN Beranga we not only look at the NSW Food Authority's guidelines for early childhood eating practices, we also look at the child and the family's goals for their child. We explore what kind of relationship the child and the family have with food and how their cultural and religious backgrounds affect their food choices.

This is not your typical recipe book. These are not Michelin Star type recipes.

A lot of the recipes will have common ingredients but are just presented in different ways. By keeping a familiarity with certain foods this encourages children to explore and try new things.

When I began cooking for SDN Beranga, there were a number of children with allergies and food intolerances that I had to take into consideration. I also had to make sure that I had main recipes that would cater for all of the children that were allergen-free from gluten, dairy, nut, soy and



eggs and stay within budget as you would in any household.

Searching on the internet proved frustrating as I could not find any recipes to fit this brief so I took everyday recipes and modified them to be allergen-free. We wanted to share what we have learnt and continue to learn, hence the reason this book was produced.

Like all things, these recipes have evolved and will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the children I'm catering for.

Mealtimes are not just made up of the foods that children eat. There are a wide range of other factors including the routine and structure of

the environment, a child's skills in feeding and swallowing, their ability to sit, use utensils and explore a range of tastes, colours and textures, as well as their ability to understand and communicate their needs and wants.

SDN Beranga is staffed by a team of educators, occupational therapists, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers and administrators. This transdisciplinary team provides a coordinated approach to mealtimes that supports the child to expand their food repertoire and helps the family share their mealtimes.

It is this expertise and knowledge that forms the basis of this book.

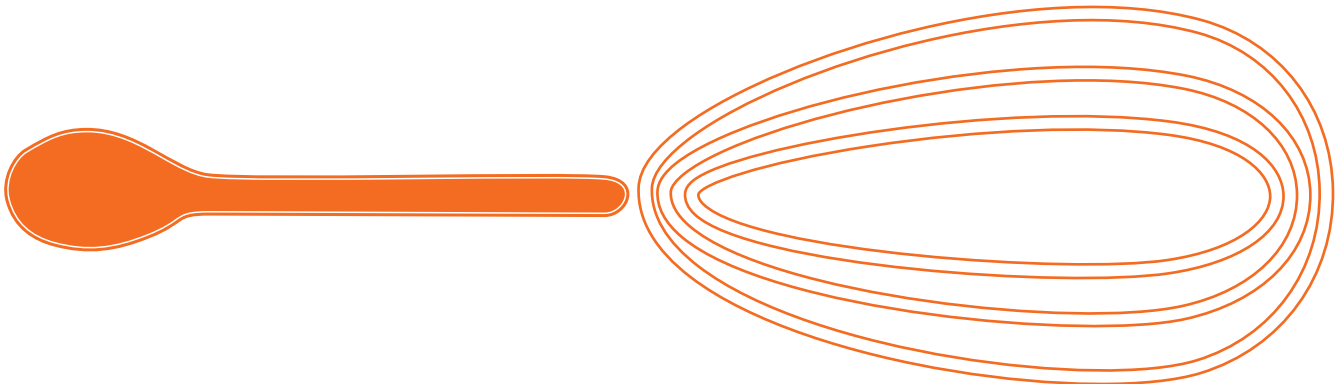
Introduction

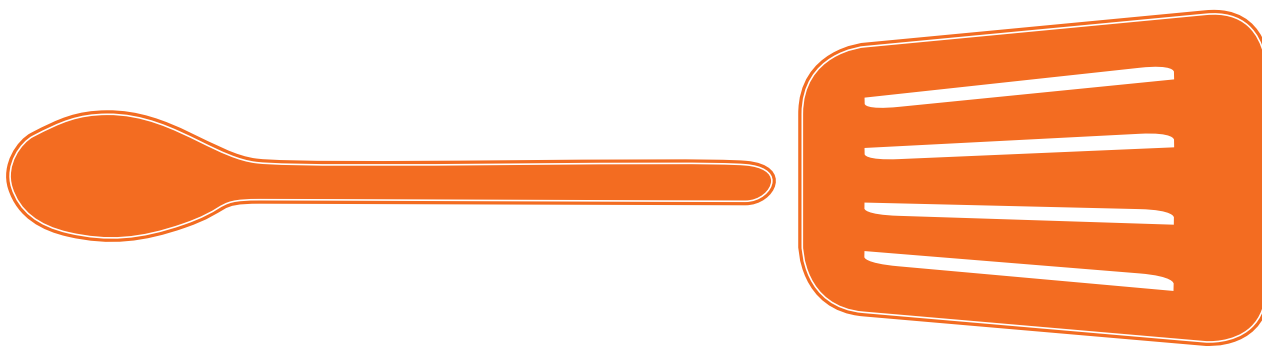
A crust eaten in peace is better than a banquet partaken in anxiety.

Aesop

I devised these recipes with the following in mind:

- 1** These recipes come from an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) perspective. Quantities of the ingredients are a guideline with only the exception of the baking items. You may wish to increase or decrease or omit altogether some items like herbs and spices that may not suit your child's palate. Adapt the recipe to suit your child and your family. If you have any favourite herbs or spices or flavourings that you prefer, use those instead.
- 2** In this increasingly hectic world, let's face it, a lot of us are time poor so most of these are quick and easy to prepare.
- 3** Cooking allergen-free food could become expensive and confusing with all the different products out there but these recipes are designed to be affordable. It's back to basics cooking really, without a lot of processed foods, but by all means if you want to swap the olive oil to organic coconut oil then go for it.





- 4 Understanding the environment of a child when and where they eat is also another factor. What they might eat at home, they may not eat anywhere else. They may also choose to eat from one specific plate or bowl or use a specific spoon or other utensils. All of these factors play an important role in setting the right environment for your child as they eat.
- 5 In the context of SDN Beranga, we also look at what the children are doing. So, for example, if the children are reading the book *The Hungry Caterpillar*, we will provide food from the book as props for the children to use. It's about making that connection with what they are learning to what they can experience with their food.
- 6 Most important is your child's relationship with food. Take into consideration smell, taste, colour, texture and temperature. If your child has a favourite food that they insist on eating all the time, one of the things I've found that works over time is changing some aspect of the dish slightly. They may resist to start with, but with perseverance your child will start to explore other foods. We have many lovely stories of children who have come to the centre eating only one type of food and by the time they leave, they are eating other kinds of foods.

The costings for the recipes are estimations due to several factors including seasonal costs of ingredients — especially fruit and vegetables, availability and substitutions depending on what your child may or may not like on any given day. Prices have been taken from the Coles Online website.

The nutritional analysis has not taken into consideration the weights of the finished dishes. Once again the main ingredients have been noted but not necessarily any substitutions. The formula used has been taken from the FSANZS (Food Safety Australia New Zealand Standards) database, however not all the ingredients used in these recipes have been listed on the database so these have been manually added on.

The information provided in this book is not meant to replace the advice of your practitioner. Please seek medical advice before embarking on any changes to your child's care and wellbeing.

Legend



gluten free



dairy free



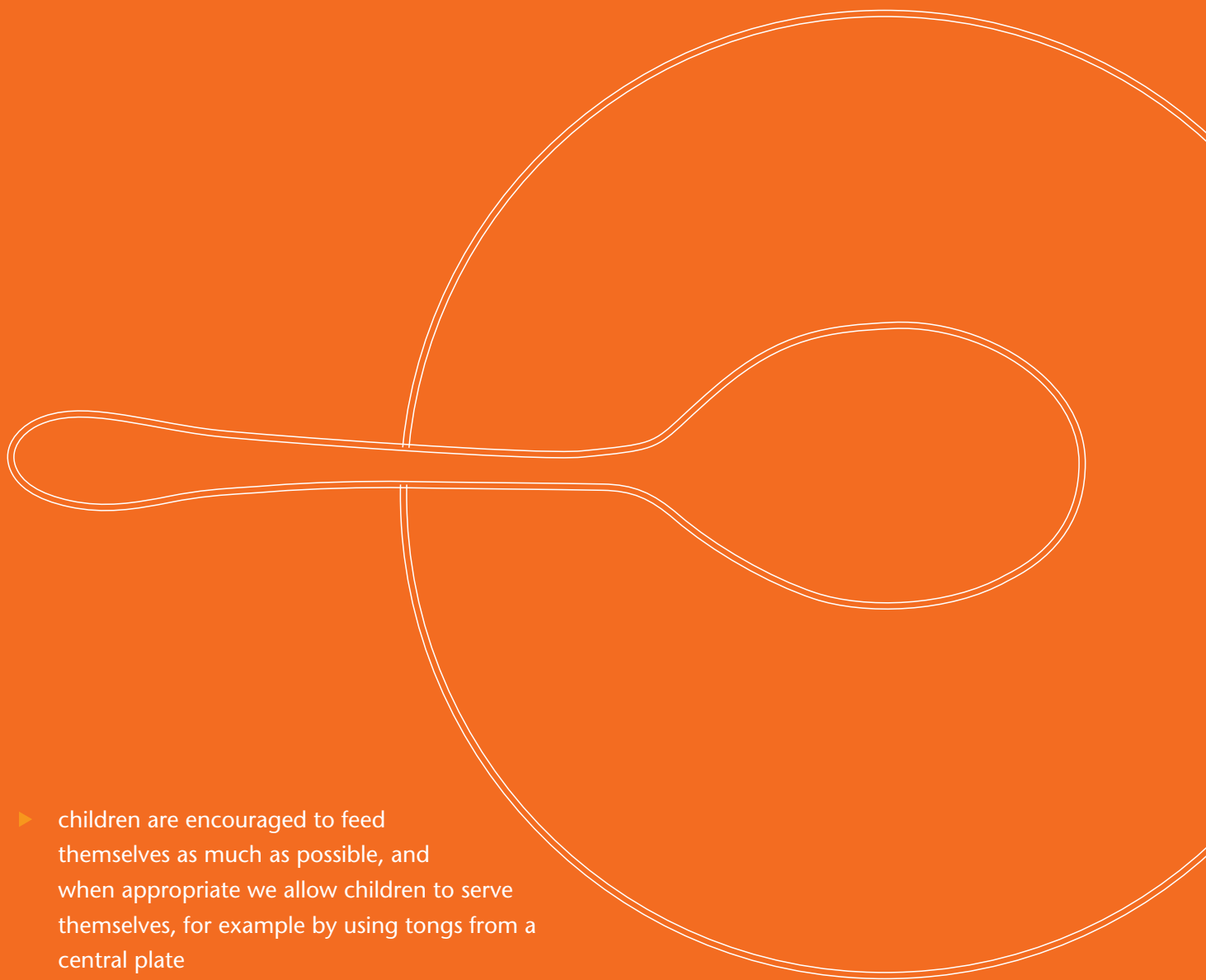
total recipe cost

SDN Beranga mealtime strategies

Mealtimes should offer children the chance to eat familiar and acceptable foods for nutrition, as well as expose them to foods they don't normally like or eat. Here are some strategies we use at SDN Beranga that you might like to try at home.

- ▶ serve meals and snacks at the same time every day, and use the same routine:
 - we give a verbal notice before each meal (eg 'Three more minutes then we'll have lunch')
 - we also use routine and visual cues to let children know that the meal will soon begin — wash hands, push chairs to table, set out placemats, sit at table
 - simple placemats are used at each mealtime to show children where to sit and how to stay within their own space
 - use the same plates and bowls (we use plain white crockery at SDN Beranga).
- ▶ make sure that the children have stable posture; that is, they are sitting in a supportive chair, and their feet are flat on the ground
- ▶ give small servings — second helpings can always be given!
- ▶ if your child has a limited diet, serve them one of their preferred foods at each meal plus one new food for them to try





- ▶ children are encouraged to feed themselves as much as possible, and when appropriate we allow children to serve themselves, for example by using tongs from a central plate
- ▶ use child-friendly spoons and forks if needed
- ▶ children and adults eat at the same time. This allows role modelling and exposure to new foods through seeing what adults are eating
- ▶ verbal praise is given for all attempts to explore new food, such as looking at the food, touching it, smelling, tasting, licking, and of course eating it!
- ▶ mealtimes last no longer than 30 minutes, and there is a clear routine for the end of each meal or snack — bowls are scraped into the bin, the table is cleared, and hands are washed.

Exploring sensory food play

Food and nutrition are such a big part of life, and for a lot of families and children with ASD meal times can be challenging to say the least.

Children with ASD experience sensory processing in a whole different way to most people. This can make eating, tasting and swallowing and enjoying foods a sometimes daunting and challenging experience.

Sensory food play is one of the many fun ways we can explore food and help make connections between learning and real life experiences. It helps children to learn in a fun, unstructured, no pressure environment where they can feel free to experiment.

- ▶ sensory food play uses all five senses to explore food through sight, taste, sound, smell and especially touch
- ▶ it develops self-esteem by allowing children opportunities for self-expression. They're pretty much in control and they can play how they like in a way that helps them understand and learn
- ▶ by using descriptive words, they can experiment and learn language

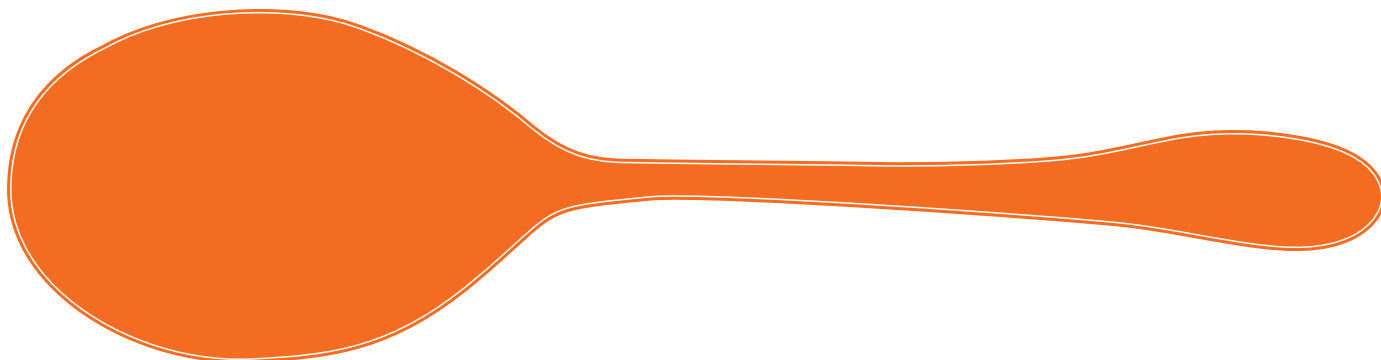
- ▶ they learn to develop social skills through sharing, taking turns, practising negotiation skills, organising, and problem solving and working out solutions
- ▶ it encourages children to use and explore their imagination and creative play.

Using everyday things like herbs and spices and other food products that you normally use to cook with and eat will help children to make an association between an experience that is fun and happy with something that they can eat to nourish their bodies.

By first using a fun, no stress food experience, it allows children to have an anchoring point that will help them associate a particular food to a happy memory. This will encourage them to take the steps necessary to go from playing with food to eventually placing it in their mouths, to biting, chewing and hopefully swallowing and keeping it down.

On the flip side, when a child has had a bad experience with a particular food, once again, using that food in a playful environment will help change their perception. By finding and using similar foods, over time and with perseverance, most children will overcome their fear of that particular food. However, for some children, that may not be the case, so finding something similar is always helpful.

The following sensory food play recipes are edible so if your child eats it, it should be ok, however we don't recommend they eat copious amounts of it.



Make a sensory bin

Sensory bins are awesome hands-on tools for children to learn about their world and their senses! Sensory play may calm a child, focus a child, and engage a child. Here's what a sensory bin can offer a young child as well as the parent!

practical life skills Sensory bins let a child explore, discover and create play using practical life skills (dumping, filling, scooping) and learn valuable play skills.

play skills (emotional development) Great for both social play and independent play, sensory bins allow children to play cooperatively or side by side.

language development Sensory bins increase language development by children experiencing with their hands all there is to see and do, which leads to great conversations and opportunities to model language.



For more
great information
Google or Pinterest
sensory bins

understanding the body's senses Many sensory play bins include a few of the senses! Touch, sight, sounds, taste and smell are our body's senses. Children can experience several at a time with a sensory bin.

How to make a sensory bin

choose a container A sturdy box or large plastic container is ideal.

choose a filler Use the following chart for ideas on how to fill your container with items that your child will tolerate. This might be trial and error to find the right filler. If unsure, begin with items from the first column, then add some of your child's favourite smaller toys to entice them to explore.

less likely to tolerate

Dry pasta/Uncooked rice

Shredded paper

Lentils/Coloured corn kernels

Herbs

Salt

Straws

Leaves/Feathers

Pom poms/Cotton Balls

Cereal

Fabric

Water

somewhat likely

Playdough

Clay

Dry sand

Play foam

Magic sand

Dry dirt

Ice cubes

more likely to tolerate

Jelly

Water beads

Goop

Slime

Shaving foam

Finger paint

Mud

Baby food

Cooked coloured pasta
(see recipe page 14)

add a scoop or shovel and container Scoops or cups from the kitchen as well as containers and funnels are great fun to add.

theme You can create a theme by adding matching colours or materials like trucks, animals and other bits and pieces. No theme is fine too!

Beranga playdough

This is a recipe for uncooked playdough.

ingredients

1 packet of rice flour
4.5 teaspoons of oil
1 packet of corn starch
1.5 cup of salt
3 tablespoons of cream of tartar
3 cups of hot water
Food colouring as desired

method

Mix all the dry ingredients together.

Add the vegetable oil then add the food colouring to the first cup of water and add into the bowl, mixing it in. Add the rest of the water, a little at a time to get the right consistency. You may not need all the water.

Store the playdough in a large plastic snap lock bag or airtight container.

This recipe can be cooked.
Just place all ingredients into a pot and add all the water, cook over a low heat for 3 to 5 minutes until the dough comes away from the sides of the pot. Turn out onto a lightly floured board or bench and knead until smooth.

Sensory food play story

the snails, crocodiles and frogs

Here's a fun game to play that will encourage your child to explore food and textures.
Make a diorama using the ideas below. Tell the story while your child finds the characters.

I went for a walk one day, down by the billabong and guess what I saw?

I saw two frog friends sitting on a lily pad.

I saw four crocodile friends having a drink from the billabong.

I saw some snails hiding in the shade by the pretty orange flowers.

What can you see?

ingredients

Dirt Crushed Gluten-free *Weetbix*

Pond Soy yoghurt mixed with blue food colouring

Plants Lemon balm (big leaves), oregano (small leaves), mint, flowers are marigolds — all edible.

Animal lollies Available from the supermarket. May contain traces of gluten, but free from all other allergens.

Coloured rice

This is a really quick and easy way to make coloured rice without all the extra fuss. It will keep in an airtight container for up to two weeks.

ingredients

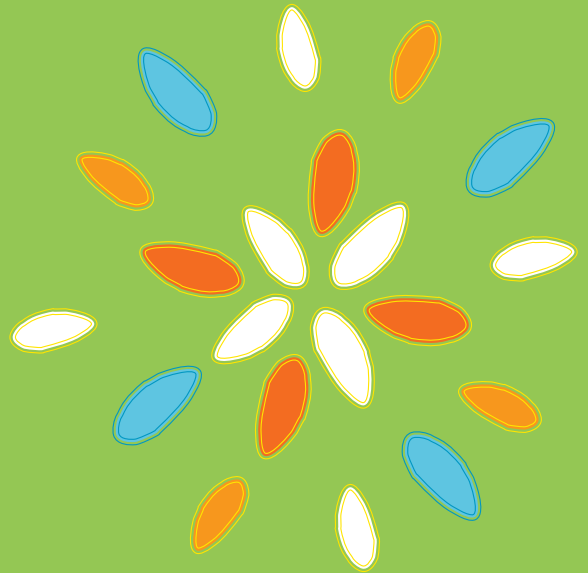
Cup of dry uncooked rice

1 teaspoon of food colouring

method

Place ingredients into a container or plastic bag and shake to mix thoroughly.

Place some cling wrap on a tray and place the coloured rice on the tray to dry.



Coloured gluten free pasta

ingredients

1 cup of uncooked gluten pasta

3 teaspoons of food colouring

method

Place ingredients into a bowl (preferably stainless steel) or a plastic bag and mix thoroughly.

Line a tray with cling wrap and place the coloured pasta on the tray to dry.



Coloured spaghetti

ingredients

250 grams of uncooked gluten free spaghetti

1 tablespoon of olive oil

Food colouring (about 1 teaspoon)

method

Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil.

Place oil into the pot once the water has boiled

Cook the spaghetti according to the directions on the packet.

Once the spaghetti has cooked, drain, and put the cooked spaghetti into a bowl of cold water to stop it cooking. Drain thoroughly.

Place the cooked pasta into a bowl or plastic bag and add drops of food colouring (about 1 teaspoon). Depending on how dark or light you would like the colour, add accordingly.

Store in an air tight container in the fridge for up to a week.

The page is decorated with yellow line art swirls. In the lower-left area, there are three small, horizontally-oriented ovals in yellow, blue, and red. In the lower-right area, there is a large white circle with a yellow border containing text.

Look out for commercial food colouring made from fruits, berries and vegetables. Many are gluten, dairy, egg, nut and soy free, with no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives.

breakfast and snacks

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banana muffins 19

fruit kebabs 20

vegetable nuggets 21

quick and easy pizza bread 22

veggie sticks with hommus dip 24





Banana pancakes

Delicious on their own, or top with extra banana or a topping your child prefers.

serves
4–6

30
mins

gf

df

\$4.15

ingredients

- 1 cup *Orgran* self raising flour
- 1/4 cup castor sugar
- 1 teaspoon *Orgran No Egg*
- 1/2 cup rice milk
- two mashed bananas
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or melted *Nuttelek*
- Olive oil spray, for greasing

method

- Put the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix with a whisk.
- Add the wet ingredients and mix until combined.
- Lightly grease frying pan with olive oil spray and preheat.
- Add tablespoons of the mixture to the hot pan.
- Cook until bubbles form on top of the pancakes or until golden brown, then flip over.
- Place cooked pancakes onto a heat proof dish to cool down.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 30 Serving size: 20 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	147kJ	734kJ
Protein	0.2g	1.1g
Fat, total	0.6g	3.1g
— saturated	0.1g	0.5g
Carbohydrate	6.9g	34.3g
— sugars	3.6g	17.8g
Sodium	22mg	109mg

Banana muffins

I've used these as little cupcakes and decorated them for a child's birthday party. Having something that is slightly different but still has a familiarity about it often engages the child to explore and want to try. Serve warm or at room temperature.

ingredients

Olive oil spray, for greasing	1 cup <i>Orgran</i> self-raising flour, sifted
2 bananas, mashed	1 tablespoon castor sugar
1 tablespoon olive oil or melted <i>Nuttex</i>	1 tablespoon <i>Orgran No Egg</i>
1 cup rice milk	

method

Preheat oven to 200°C. Spray muffin pans with oil to lightly grease.

Mash the bananas in a large bowl with a fork. Add the oil and milk and mix well.

In another bowl add flour, castor sugar and *Orgran No egg* and mix together with a whisk. Combine the banana mixture with the dry ingredients and mix well. This step can also be done in a food processor — just place all the ingredients together and blend till smooth.

Spoon mixture into the prepared muffin pans and bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 10 Serving size: 30 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	173kJ	578kJ
Protein	0.4g	1.3g
Fat, total	0.7g	2.2g
— saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate	8.0g	26.7g
— sugars	3.1g	10.2g
Sodium	29mg	98 mg

serves
4–6

20
mins

gf

df

\$4.30

Fruit kebabs

For another texture, place kebabs into the freezer for a few hours or overnight until frozen.

serves
2

15
mins

gf

df

\$2.75

easy

ingredients

Use whatever fruit is in season: watermelon, strawberries, banana, apples, pears, oranges, rock melon, honeydew melon.

Clean popsicle sticks.

method

Cut fruit into whatever shape your child prefers.

Thread fruit onto popsicle sticks. Three or four pieces should do.

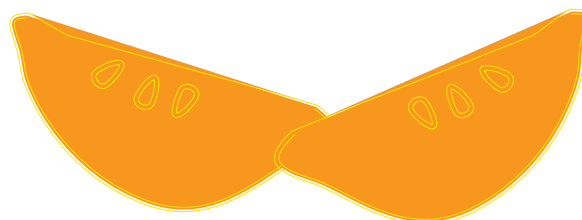
Place onto a platter to share.

Serve either on its own or with your child's favourite yoghurt.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 2 Serving size: 40g

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	77kJ	192kJ
Protein	0.3g	0.8g
Fat, total	0.1g	0.3g
— saturated	0.0g	0.0g
Carbohydrate	3.5g	8.7g
— sugars	3.0g	7.5g
Sodium	2mg	5mg



Vegetable nuggets

A lot of children associate nuggets with chicken so it's a fun way of engaging children with little morsels that contain veggies. The great thing about using a neutral coloured vegetable is that it can change a child's perception of a particular food. Over time you may like to show your child what it is exactly that they are eating.

ingredients

½ cup finely chopped cauliflower

¾ cup rice milk

1 ½ grated zucchini, peeled

2 cups *Orgran* self raising flour, sifted

⅓ cup olive oil

2 teaspoons *Orgran No Egg*

method

Pre-heat oven to 180°C.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and fold together until mixed thoroughly.

Place teaspoons of mixture onto a nonstick oven proof tray and spray with olive oil.

Bake for 15–20 minutes or until golden. Spray again lightly with olive oil while still warm.

Serve warm or cold with tomato sauce or any preferred dips. Makes 60 nuggets.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 60 Serving size: 10 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	114kJ	1140kJ
Protein	0.1g	1.1g
Fat, total	1.0g	9.8g
— saturated	0.2g	1.5g
Carbohydrate	4.5g	44.6g
— sugars	0.2g	1.8g
Sodium	33mg	330mg

serves
6

40
mins

gf

df

\$6.50

easy

Quick and easy pizza bread

serves
12

This recipe is great for children to get involved and take ownership of what they have made. Leave out the chicken for a vegetarian option.

20
mins

gf

\$12

easy

ingredients

100 grams chopped cooked chicken pieces

1 gluten free french stick, sliced

4 tablespoons tomato pasta sauce or
small can of chickpeas, pureed

440 grams can pineapple pieces, drained

1 large ripe tomato, diced

½ green capsicum, deseeded and diced

2 mushrooms sliced

150 grams mozzarella cheese, grated

Olive oil spray

serving suggestion

Another quick and easy way is to save the crust ends of loaves of bread. Pop them in the freezer and pull them out when you need them. Spread tomato paste on top and add the toppings. Bake as per recipe.

method

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Spread tomato pasta sauce on bread halves, or, if your child is dairy free, spread the pureed chickpea mixture on top and drizzle with olive oil.

Mix together all the topping ingredients in a bowl. Divide mixture across the top of the bread slices.

Top with mozzarella.

Place on an oiled baking tray, and bake in oven for 15 minutes or until heated through.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 12 Serving size: 50 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	276kJ	551kJ
Protein	3.5g	7.1g
Fat, total	2.2g	4.5g
— saturated	0.8g	1.6g
Carbohydrate	7.0g	14.1g
— sugars	2.2g	4.4g
Sodium	95mg	89mg



Veggie sticks with hommus dip

serves
6

20
mins

gf

df

\$3.50

easy

You could add beetroot, cooked spinach, corn or peas (all pureed of course), or add a few drops of food colouring to give the dip another dimension for your child to explore.

ingredients

Vegetables of your choice: carrots, baby carrots, purple and yellow carrots, celery, lightly blanched broccoli and cauliflower or choko. Whatever vegetables are in season.

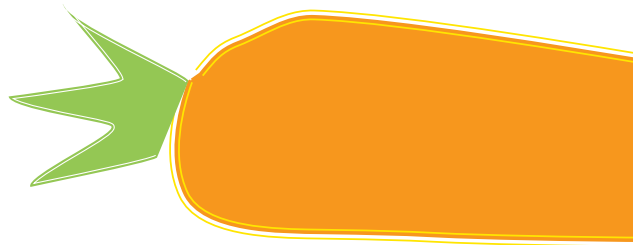
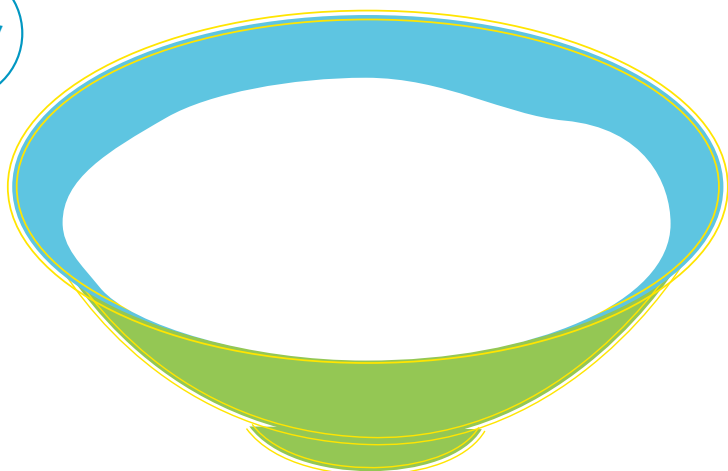
Small can of chickpeas, drained

Half a lemon

Pinch of cumin or whatever flavourings your child prefers

3 tablespoons olive oil

There are lots of different types of cutters on the market that can make fun shapes of your veggies. Just changing the shape of the vegetable gives a whole new dimension.



method

Peel and cut vegetables into sticks.

Blanching vegetables can be done in a couple of ways. Either place vegetables into a microwave proof bowl and microwave for 60 seconds. Or simply place vegetables in a bowl, pour boiling water on top, leave for a minute, and drain.

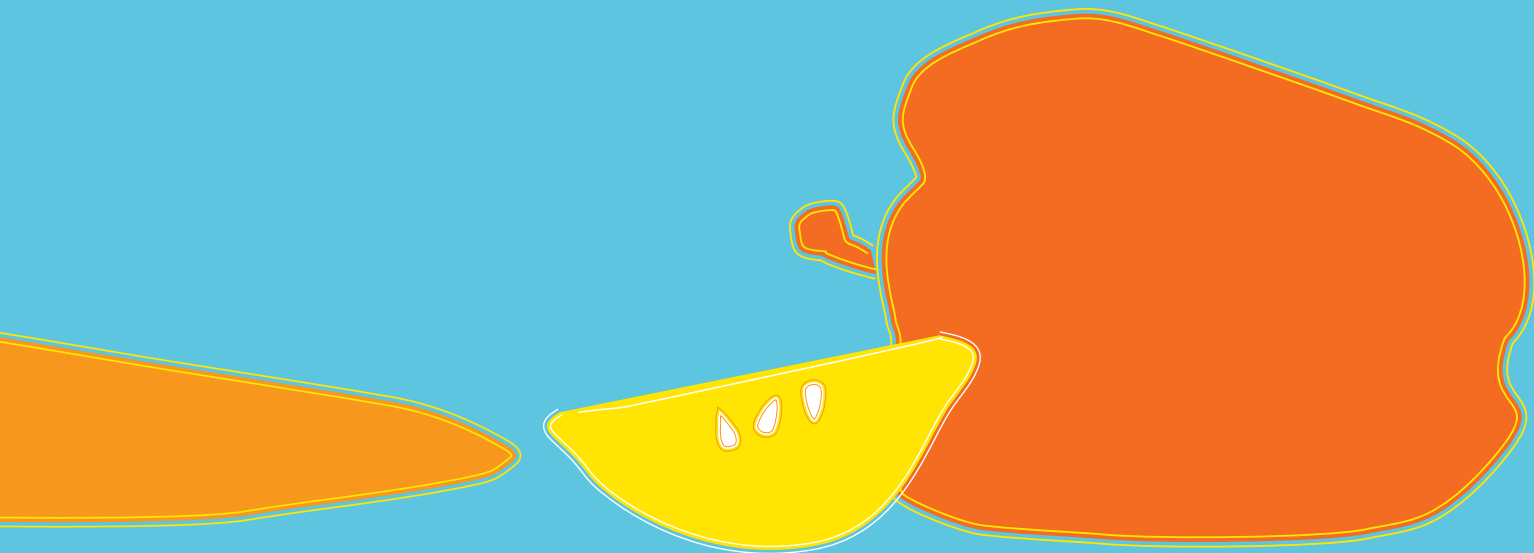
To make the hommus dip, drain the can of chickpeas and, using a food processor or a stick blender, blend the chickpeas with the juice of half a lemon and a pinch of cumin. Drizzle in the olive oil and blend well until smooth.

Serve vegetables on a platter with a bowl of the hommus dip in the middle.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 150 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	62kj	82kj
Protein	1.0g	1.3g
Fat, total	0.7g	0.9g
— saturated	0.1g	0.2g
Carbohydrate	0.7g	0.9g
— sugars	0.6g	0.9g
Sodium	51mg	69mg



**lunch
and
dinner**

beef lasagne 28

bolognaise meat sauce 30

chicken stir fry rice 32

chilli con carne 34

crispy chicken bites 36

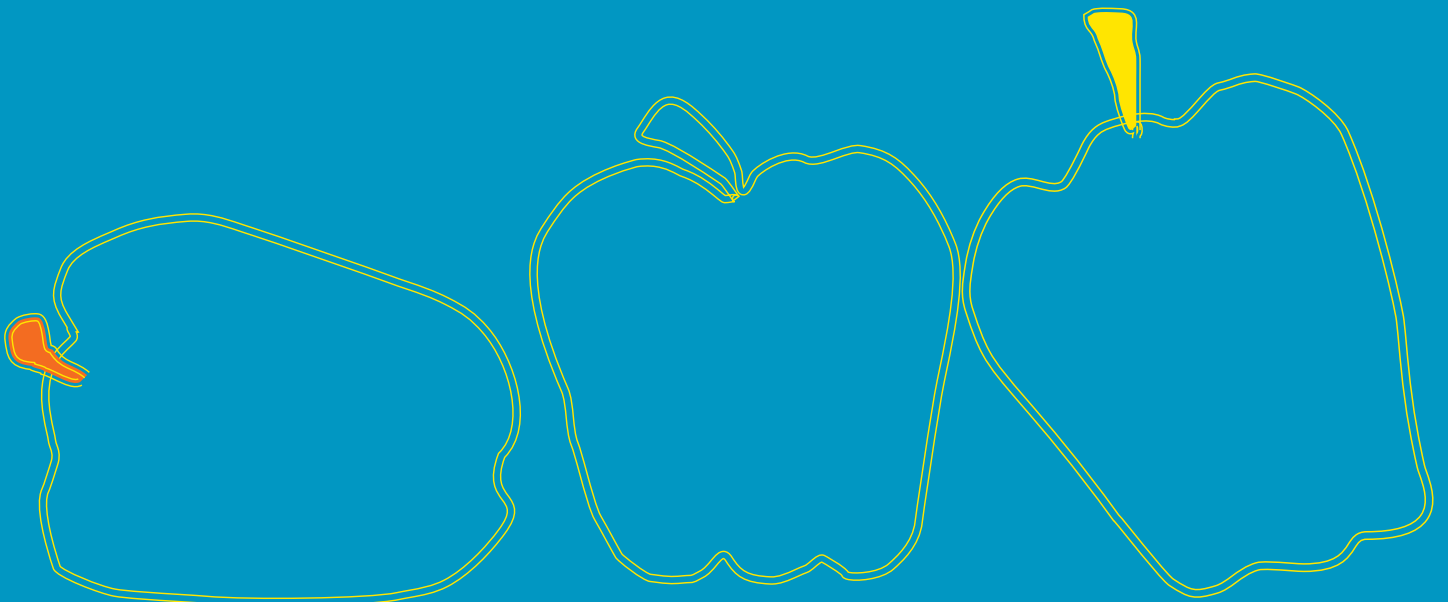
salads 38

potato wedges or chips 40

sweet potato wedges 41

roasted veggies 42

Thai inspired noodle salad 44



Beef lasagne

You can also make this recipe using other types of pasta. Just spread a layer of your preferred pasta (I've used macaroni and penne) instead of lasagne pasta sheets. You can use cooked pasta instead of lasagne sheets — this will reduce the cooking time to 30–40 minutes.

serves
6

100
mins

gf

df

\$20

ingredients

1.5 litres bolognaise meat sauce
(see recipe page 30)

225 grams gluten free lasagne sheets

500 grams gluten free bread crumbs
(you can make your own by blitzing
crumbled gluten free bread in a food
processor or blender)

½ cup olive oil

Allergen free béchamel sauce

60 grams *Nuttelex*

⅓ cup plain white gluten free flour

4½ cups rice milk
(the quantity of milk depends on how thick
you prefer your béchamel sauce)

pinch of ground nutmeg

pinch of white pepper

½ teaspoon garlic salt

method

To make the allergen free béchamel sauce:

Melt *Nuttelex* in a small pan over a medium heat until foaming. Add flour and whisk together until mixture thickens.

Add the rice milk a little at a time, continuously whisking to ensure no lumps, until it reaches a thick consistency. You may not need all the milk.

Add nutmeg, white pepper and garlic salt to taste. Set sauce aside and assemble the lasagne.

Bolognaise sauce

Serve with either normal or gluten free pasta or spaghetti of your choice.

serves
4-6

30
mins

gf

df

\$7

ingredients

250g lean minced beef	½ teaspoon cumin
½ tablespoon olive oil	1 clove of garlic
1 stalk of celery	½ teaspoon Italian herbs
1 medium carrot	1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 medium zucchini	1 x 800g can tomatoes
1 red capsicum	1 teaspoon raw sugar
1 small brown onion	250ml (1 cup) cold water
½ teaspoon ground coriander	
½ teaspoon sweet paprika	

method

Peel and finely dice onion. Dice carrot, zucchini, celery and capsicum.

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, zucchini, celery and capsicum to pan. Add garlic, ground coriander, sweet paprika and cumin. Stir and cook for 6 or 8 minutes, until vegetables soften.

Add beef, stir and use wooden spoon to break meat into small pieces.

Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until mince browns slightly.

Add canned tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, Italian herbs and cold water. Stir and bring to the boil.

Turn heat down, allow to simmer for 30 minutes or until sauce has thickened. If the sauce is too thick and requires a thinner consistency, just add more water.

Serve in a bowl with cooked pasta.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	320kj	426kj
Protein	2.3g	3.1g
Fat, total	6.5g	8.6g
— saturated	2.6g	3.4g
Carbohydrate	1.9g	2.6g
— sugars	1.9g	2.5g
Sodium	2mg	17mg

You can generally buy Italian herbs already made up in one container or use basil, rosemary and oregano.

Chicken stir fry rice

This recipe can be easily adapted to add beef or lamb or even minced meat. Just change the chicken stock to beef stock. For a vegetarian version, leave out the meat.

serves
6

15
mins

gf

df

\$24

ingredients

750 grams chicken strips	1 teaspoon ground coriander
½ tablespoon olive oil	250 grams english spinach
1 clove crushed garlic	100 grams mung bean sprouts
1 teaspoon grated ginger	2 tablespoon light gluten free soy sauce
1 spring onion	1 teaspoon chicken salt or chicken powder stock
½ finely diced capsicum (any colour)	3 cups cooked rice, preferably long grain
1 small finely diced zucchini	
1 medium finely diced carrot	

method

Crush garlic. Grate ginger. Slice the spring onion.

Finely dice the capsicum, carrots and zucchini and set aside in a bowl.

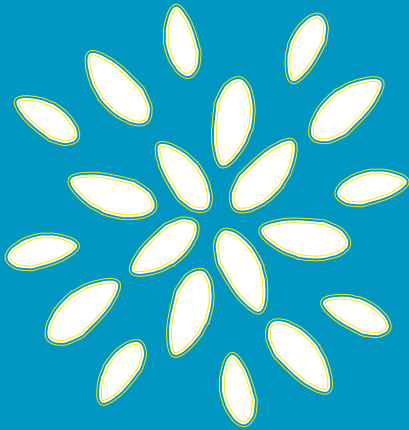
Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add chicken and brown. Then remove the chicken from the pan and set aside in a separate bowl. For large quantities this will need to be done in batches.

Add a splash of olive oil to the pan and cook the garlic, ginger and coriander for about 30 seconds. Add all the spices and the vegetables (except for the spring onions) and cook for a further minute.

Add the soy sauce, chicken salt and rice and cook for a further two minutes.

Add the cooked chicken and spring onions and warm through.

Serve in bowls.



nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 150 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	744kJ	496kJ
Protein	25.2g	16.8g
Fat, total	2.3g	1.5g
— saturated	0.5g	0.4g
Carbohydrate	12.3g	8.2g
— sugars	1.6g	1.1g
Sodium	414mg	276mg

Chilli con carne and rice

serves
6

Provide toppings for children to add — mashed avocado, tomato, shredded lettuce, grated cheese or sour cream. You can add chilli powder to the meat recipe.

40
mins

gf

df

\$15

ingredients

250 grams lean minced beef

1½ cups of cooked rice

½ tablespoon olive oil

1 small brown onion

1 stalk celery

1 teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon sweet paprika

½ teaspoon ground cumin

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 clove garlic

1 medium carrot

1 medium zucchini

1 red capsicum

1 x 125g tin red kidney beans

1 x 125g tin chickpeas

1 x 800 gram tin tomatoes

1 teaspoon raw sugar

250ml (1 cup) cold water

Gluten free flour tortillas



method

Cook rice according to packet instructions.

Peel and finely dice onion. Dice celery, carrot, zucchini and capsicum. Peel and crush garlic.

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, celery, carrot, zucchini and capsicum to pan. Add ground coriander, sweet paprika and cumin. Stir and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, until vegetables soften.

Add beef, stir and use wooden spoon to break meat into small pieces. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until mince browns slightly.

Drain and rinse chickpeas and kidney beans. Add to pan along with tinned tomatoes, tomato paste, raw sugar and cold water.

Stir and bring to the boil.

Turn heat down, allow to simmer for 30 minutes or until sauce has thickened.

Serve with plain cooked rice and flour tortilla.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	169kJ	225kJ
Protein	3.7g	4.9g
Fat, total	1.1g	1.5g
— saturated	0.4g	0.5g
Carbohydrate	3.0g	4.0g
— sugars	1.9g	2.5g
Sodium	48mg	64mg

Crispy chicken bites

A lot of children associate this recipe with 'chicken nuggets' from a popular family restaurant. It's all about perception when it comes to trying to entice children to try new foods. This recipe can easily be changed to include your preferred herbs and spices.

serves
7

20
mins

gf

df

\$6.50

easy

ingredients

350 grams diced chicken pieces

½ teaspoon sweet paprika

1 teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon garlic powder

½ teaspoon chicken salt

½ teaspoon dried thyme

½ teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon dried sage

½ cup gluten free flour

½ cup gluten free bread crumbs or
Sanitarium gluten free *Weetbix*

2 tablespoons olive oil

method

Wash chicken pieces and drain in a colander.

Mix all dry ingredients together in a large bowl and stir with a whisk to combine.

Coat the chicken pieces with the dry mixture.

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat.

Batch fry the chicken to brown then transfer onto an oven tray.

Place, uncovered, into a preheated oven, at 180 degrees and bake for 10–15 minutes.

salads

If you’re wondering why I’ve included salads (some children are notoriously fickle with salads), I’m the eternal optimist. By arranging them separately on a plate and changing the cut from sticks to round shapes etc, it allows the children to explore the possibilities.

Sometimes by adding a social story of what each vegetable does to your body in a superhero sort of way, it makes it more interesting and appealing to the children.

garden salad

Shredded iceberg lettuce (middle vein removed), sliced tomato, sliced cucumber and carrot rounds.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	67kj	89kj
Protein	1.0g	1.4g
Fat, total	0.1g	0.1g
— saturated	0.0g	0.0g
Carbohydrate	1.9g	2.5g
— sugars	1.7g	2.2g
Sodium	14mg	18mg

serving suggestion

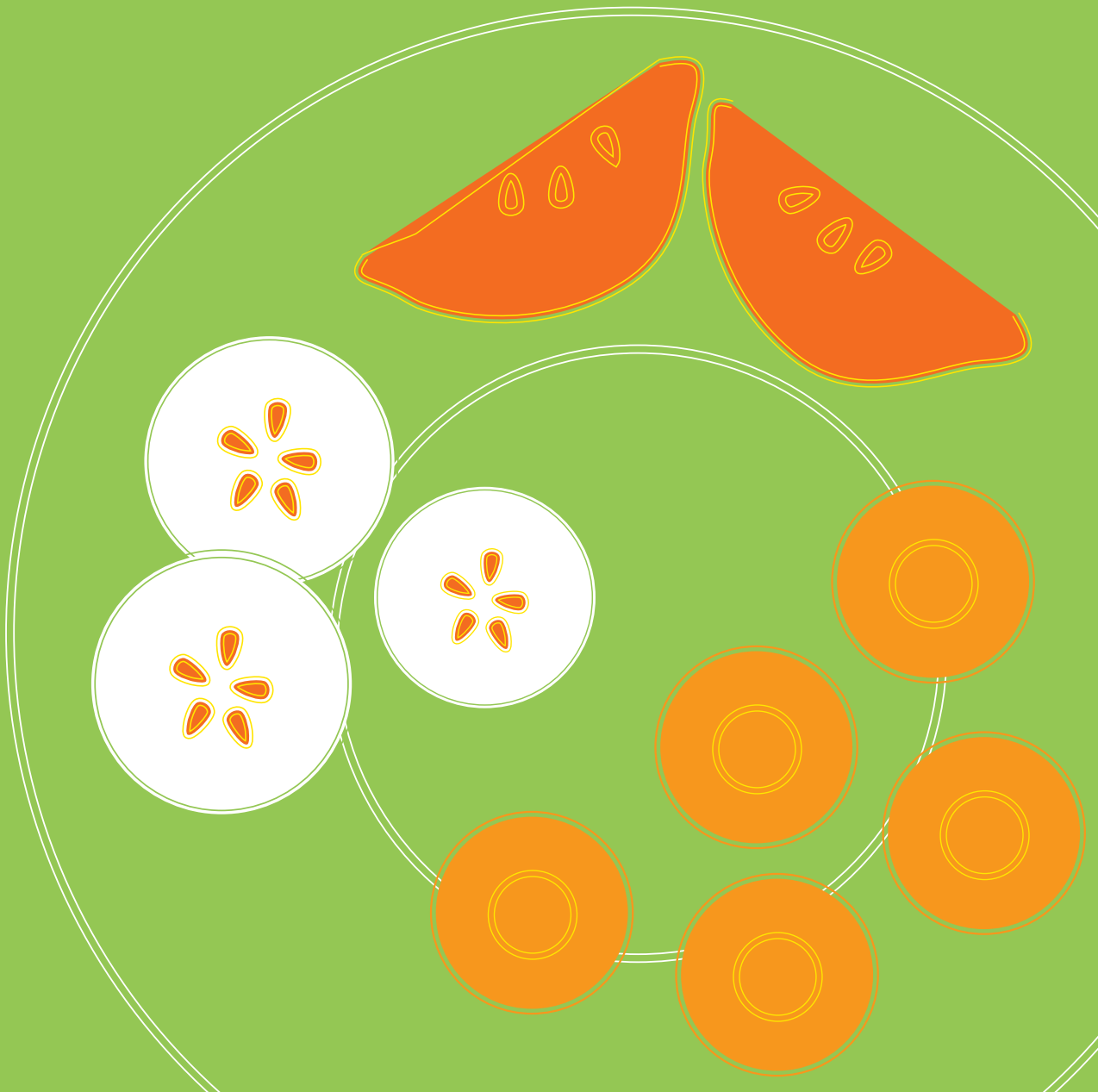
Arrange the salad items separately on the plate.

variety salad

Shredded iceberg lettuce (middle vein removed), sliced tomato wedges, cucumber slices (halved, then sliced), carrot sticks, alfalfa sprouts.

seasonal salad

Sprouts, shredded cabbage, grated carrots, raw peas, snow peas, etc.



Potato chips

Carisma white potatoes are a low GI potato and are excellent for slow release energy, but you can use any potato you prefer. Potatoes can be peeled if desired.

serves
6

45
mins

gf

df

\$10

easy

ingredients

1.5 kgs *Carisma* potatoes

1 teaspoon chicken salt or chicken stock powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon garlic powder

method

Preheat oven to 180 degrees fan forced.

Wash and pat dry potatoes. Cut into medium wedges or long strips.

Place potatoes into an oven tray and toss through with olive oil, chicken salt and garlic powder. Mix well.

Roast for 35–45 minutes until evenly browned.

Serve in a platter or bowl with a side bowl of tomato sauce or *Orgran Gravy*.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	275kJ	367kJ
Protein	1.8g	2.4g
Fat, total	1.8g	2.5g
— saturated	0.3g	0.4g
Carbohydrate	9.7g	12.9g
— sugars	0.4g	0.6g
Sodium	51mg	68mg

Sweet potato wedges

You can peel the sweet potatoes before roasting if you wish. You can add any other spices or herbs to the sweet potatoes, however be mindful that some children with ASD may find the toppings ‘too busy’ visually.

ingredients

- 4.5 kgs medium-sized sweet potatoes
- 2 teaspoons cumin powder
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder

method

Preheat oven to 180 degrees fan forced.

Wash and pat dry sweet potatoes and cut into medium wedges or long strips.

Place sweet potatoes on an oven tray and toss through with olive oil, cumin powder and garlic powder. Mix well.

Roast for 35–45 minutes until evenly browned.

Serve on a platter with a bowl of creamy hommus dip. (See page 24)

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	1000kJ	1340kJ
Protein	1.9g	2.5g
Fat, total	22.3g	29.7g
— saturated	3.2g	4.3g
Carbohydrate	7.9g	10.6g
— sugars	2.5g	3.4g
Sodium	1380mg	1840mg

serves

6

45

mins

gf

df

\$6.50

easy

Roasted veggies

serves
6

40
mins

gf

df

\$24

easy

You can also add meat to this dish. I use chicken pieces, tossed in chicken stock powder and olive oil (just like chicken nuggets), or small gluten free lamb sausages. The children sift through the meal and usually end up trying or eating the veggies in their attempt to find the meat.

ingredients

1 cup potato	pinch sweet paprika
½ cup sweet potato	pinch ground coriander
½ cup carrot	pinch ground cumin
½ cup pumpkin	pinch garlic powder
½ cup zucchini	pinch chicken salt
6 cloves of garlic	¼ teaspoon dried thyme
Half a small onion	¼ teaspoon dried oregano
1 punnet cherry tomatoes	¼ teaspoon dried sage
1 tablespoon olive oil	1 tablespoon gluten free flour

method

Pre heat oven to 180 degree fan forced.

Wash and cut potato, sweet potato, carrot, pumpkin and zucchini into bite size pieces.

Break up the garlic cloves, don't peel them.

Top and peel onion but don't cut off the bottom, cut into wedges.

Place all the vegetables and tomatoes into a roasting dish and pour over the olive oil.

In a separate bowl, mix dried ingredients then sprinkle over vegetables. Mix thoroughly.

Bake on an oven tray until vegetables are golden brown and cooked through.

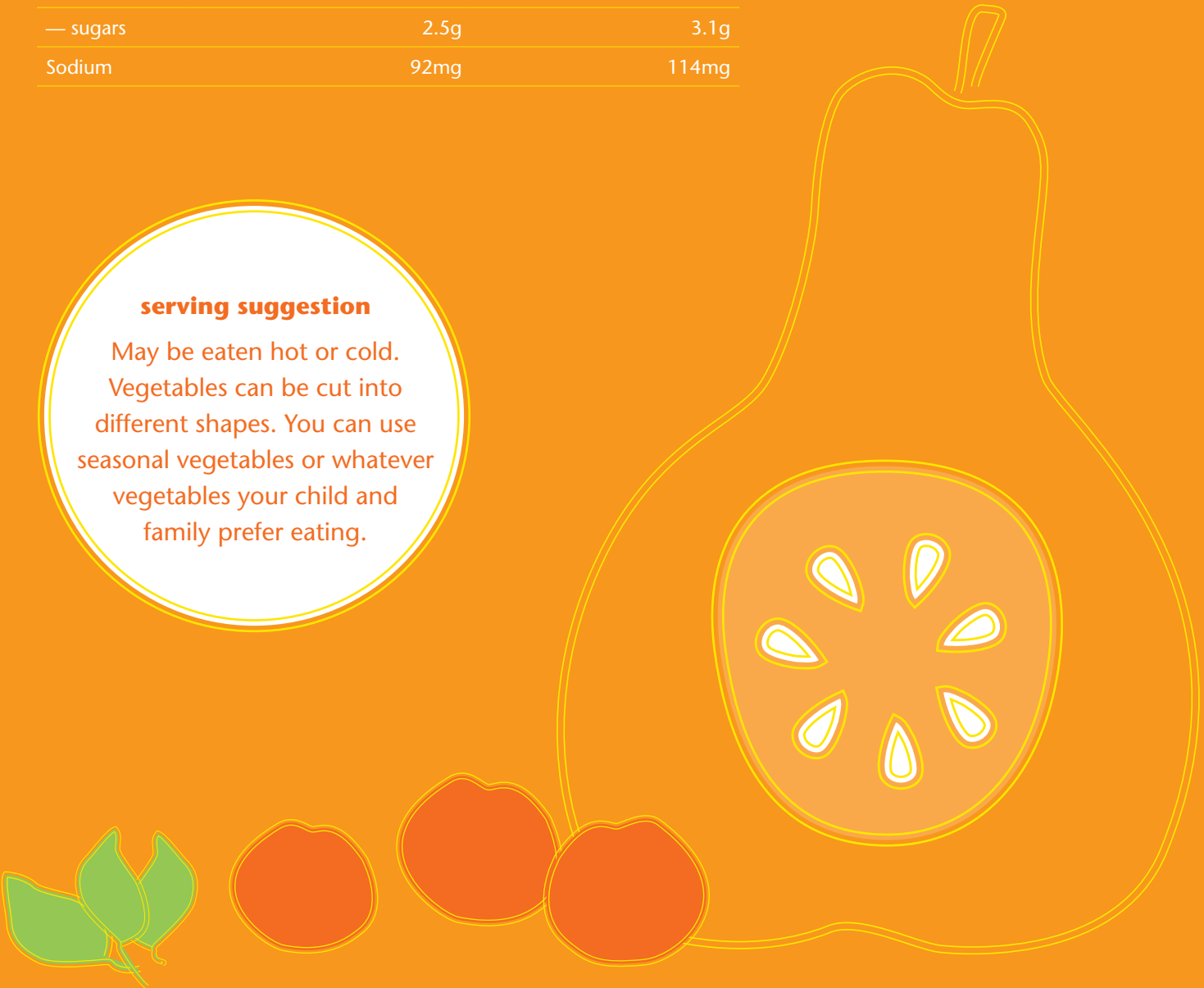
nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 80 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	237kj	297kj
Protein	1.2g	1.4g
Fat, total	2.2g	2.8g
— saturated	0.3g	0.4g
Carbohydrate	6.7g	8.4g
— sugars	2.5g	3.1g
Sodium	92mg	114mg

serving suggestion

May be eaten hot or cold.
Vegetables can be cut into
different shapes. You can use
seasonal vegetables or whatever
vegetables your child and
family prefer eating.



Thai inspired noodle salad

serves
6

20
mins

gf

df

\$24

A colourful, nutritious 'no cook' recipe. This recipe can be changed to include beef strips or even eaten as a vegetarian dish.

ingredients

300 grams shredded cooked chicken

1 x 300 gram packet vermicelli rice noodles

1 clove crushed garlic

1 teaspoon small grated fresh ginger

1 finely sliced kaffir lime leaves

½ stalk lemon grass

½ bunch fresh coriander

½ tablespoon rice bran oil

2 tablespoon gluten free soy sauce

1 spring onion

½ iceberg lettuce

½ capsicum (any colour)

1 medium carrot

250 grams mung bean sprouts

½ finely sliced red spanish onion

1 teaspoon raw brown sugar

method

Break up the rice noodles and place into a large heat proof bowl. Cover with boiling water and leave until tender.

To prepare the marinade:

Crush the garlic and grate the ginger.

Remove the middle vein from the kaffir lime leaf and finely slice.

Remove tough outer stalks from the lemon grass and chop middle part finely.

Finely slice the stalks of the fresh coriander. Set aside the leaves to use as garnish.

Place all of these ingredients into a bowl and add the rice bran oil and the gluten free soy sauce. Mix well and allow to stand.

Slice the spring onion and lettuce. Finely dice the capsicum. Coarsely grate the carrots. Set aside the vegetables into a bowl.

Rinse and drain the mung bean sprouts.

Peel and finely slice the red spanish onions.

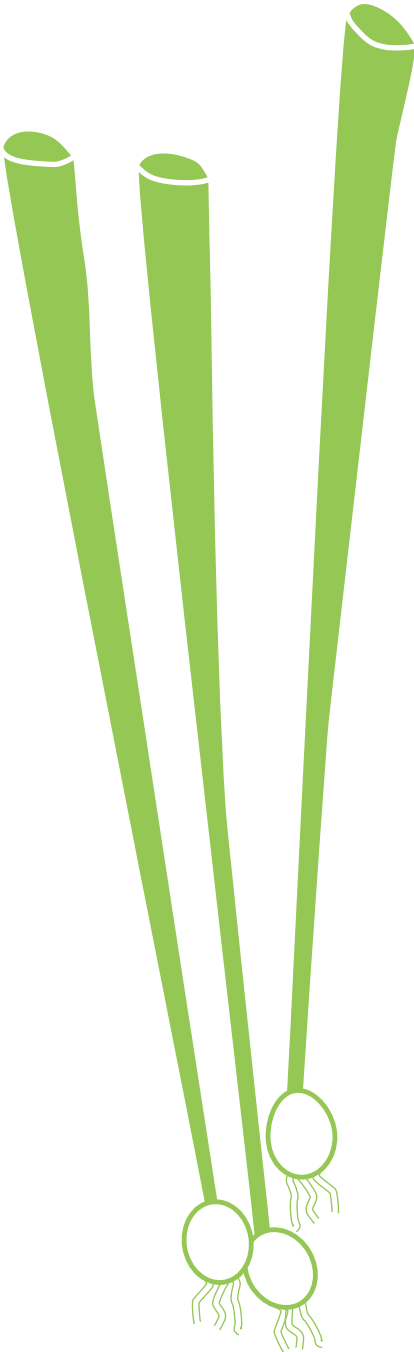
Drain the water from the noodles and add to a large mixing bowl with the marinade. Mix well.

Add all the other ingredients, including the brown sugar, and mix to combine. Cut up the remaining fresh coriander leaves and add to the mixture.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 150 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	400kJ	267kJ
Protein	10.6g	7.0g
Fat, total	1.1g	0.7g
— saturated	0.3g	0.2g
Carbohydrate	9.6g	6.4g
— sugars	2.0g	1.4g
Sodium	223mg	149mg



desserts

apple crumble 48

custard and stewed fruit 50

gluten free shortbread 52

rainbow yoghurt 54

bread and butter pudding 55

Apple crumble

For a slightly chewy texture, use dried apple rings instead of fresh or canned apples. Cut them up before using in the recipe. Serve with custard or ice cream or soy yoghurt.

serves

6

45

mins

gf

df

\$12

ingredients

6 medium apples or an 800 gram can of apples

½ teaspoon cinnamon

2 tablespoons *Nuttelex*

1 tablespoon brown sugar

½ cup water

1 lemon

For the crumble topping

12 Sanitarium gluten free Weetbix

1 cup gluten free flour

250 grams *Nuttelex*

½ cup brown sugar

method

Peel and slice the apples and place in a shallow pan or frying pan.

On a medium heat, add the water, sugar, cinnamon and *nuttelex* and cook the apple to preferred consistency.

Place all the ingredients for the crumble into a large bowl and mix thoroughly, making sure that all the Weetbix are crushed without any large chunky bits.

Place apple mixture into an oven proof dish and sprinkle the crumble on top and bake at 180 degrees for 15–20 minutes. Check to ensure the crumble doesn't burn.



The apple and crumble can be made separately and stored.

To cook the crumble separately, place into an oven proof dish and bake at 180 degrees for 15–20 minutes, leave to cool down, then place into an airtight container and place in the fridge. This will keep for up to a week.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 75 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	1010kj	1350kj
Protein	5.6g	7.5g
Fat, total	5.3g	7.1g
— saturated	1.2g	1.6g
Carbohydrate	40.4g	53.9g
— sugars	5.3g	7.1g
Sodium	127mg	169mg



Custard and stewed fruit

serves
6

20
mins

gf

df

\$16

You can use whatever fruit is in season. You can also serve with fresh fruit cut into shapes. Make the custard your child's favourite colour. We also use the custard recipe for finger painting so let your imagination go wild.

ingredients

3 cups rice milk

½ teaspoon cinnamon

3 tablespoons cornflour

1 teaspoon *Nuttelex*

½ teaspoon yellow food colouring

½ cup water

6 medium apples (or any preferred fruit, peaches and plums work well)

1 teaspoon brown sugar

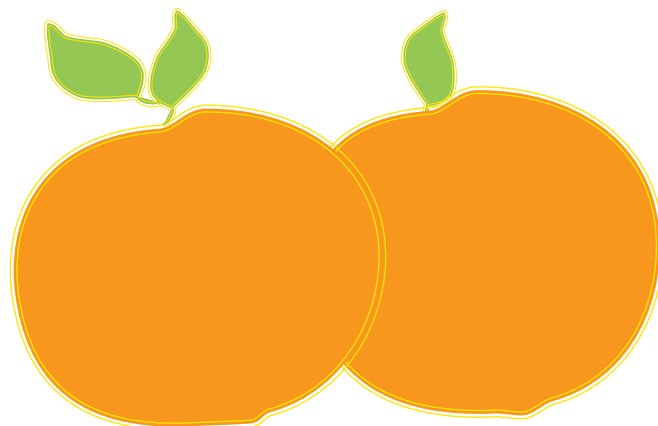
method

Pour the rice milk into a pot, add the cornflour and food colouring and mix together.

Stir constantly over a medium heat until the mixture is thickened. This should take 5–8 minutes. Add more milk for a thinner consistency or more cornflour for a thicker consistency. Rice milk is sweet enough on its own, but add a sweetener if your child prefers it.

Peel and slice the apples and place in a shallow pan or frying pan. Add the cinnamon, *nuttelex*, water and brown sugar and cook to your preferred consistency.

Serve the fruit and custard either separately on their own, or spoon custard over the fruit.



Vanilla shortbread

This is a gluten free shortbread recipe, kindly donated by Nadia Frangie.

serves

6

50

mins

gf

df

\$6

ingredients

1 cup gluten free flour	150 grams (room temperature)
1 teaspoon cornflour	unsalted butter or <i>Nuttelex</i>
1 teaspoon baking powder	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
25 grams icing sugar	Gluten free jam

method

Preheat oven to 150 degrees Celsius.

Place all the dry ingredients into a bowl and stir through with a whisk.

Add the butter and/or *Nuttelex* and vanilla extract and fold through the dry ingredients until well mixed.

Knead dough together in the bowl. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth.

Roll into a cylinder shape about 3cm wide.

Cut into 1cm thick discs and indent each surface with your thumb. Dollop a quarter teaspoon of jam into the centre of each disc.

Line a baking tray with grease proof baking paper and place shortbread discs evenly spaced on the paper. Bake for 30–40 minutes till lightly golden.

Once baked, leave on the oven tray for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Store in an airtight container.

Rainbow yoghurt

This can be done with ice cream as well. Use a tub of vanilla ice cream, let it melt slightly, stir in the colours you like and refreeze. You can also freeze the yoghurt once it's coloured.

serves
1

5
mins

gf

df

easy

ingredients

75 to 100 grams soy yoghurt (or plain yoghurt if your child is not gluten free)

Food colouring, red, blue and yellow, 1 ml per drop

method

Place a portion of yoghurt into a bowl.

Add a few drops of food colouring.

Using a fork or a spoon, swirl the colours through.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 1 Serving size: 150 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	596kj	397kj
Protein	7.4g	5.0g
Fat, total	1.5g	1.0g
— saturated	0.9g	0.6g
Carbohydrate	22.7g	15.2g
— sugars	22.1g	14.8g
Sodium	235mg	157mg

Bread & butter pudding

A great way to use up stale bread. You could microwave this if you like, or place under a grill until golden brown. The sultanas can be left out.

ingredients

Slices of gluten free bread, two per person

2 grams *Nuttelex*

125 grams sultanas

custard recipe

6 cups rice milk

3 tablespoons cornflour

5 mls yellow food colouring

1 tablespoon honey (optional)

serves

6

20

mins

gf

df

method

Heat oven to 180 degrees.

Butter the bread with the *Nuttelex*, cut the bread in half and place on a greased 20cm oven-proof dish.

Make the custard by pouring the rice milk into a saucepan and adding the cornflour and food colouring. Gently bring to a simmer, stirring constantly, for 10 to 15 minutes until the custard is cooked.

Sprinkle sultanas over the bread mixture and pour custard over the top. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden brown on top. Drizzle honey on top before baking if desired.

nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 6 Serving size: 150 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	414kJ	276kJ
Protein	1.1g	0.7g
Fat, total	1.5g	1.0g
— saturated	0.3g	0.2g
Carbohydrate	19g	12.7g
— sugars	8.6g	5.7g
Sodium	59mg	39mg

smoothies

serves
1

5
mins

gf

df

\$1.70

easy

Easy to make and easy to drink, fruit smoothies are a great way to provide nutrition.

Beranga energy

ingredients

1 small banana, peeled

1 kiwifruit, peeled

1 teaspoon of honey

250 mls of rice milk

Place all the ingredients into a blender and mix thoroughly.

The quantity of milk depends on your child's ability to swallow and the consistency they prefer. Make the smoothie thicker or thinner by adding more or less milk.

Brekkie smoothie on the run

ingredients

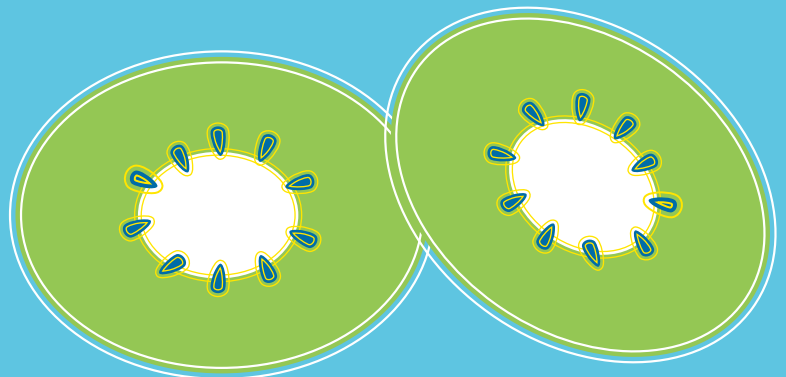
1 small banana, peeled

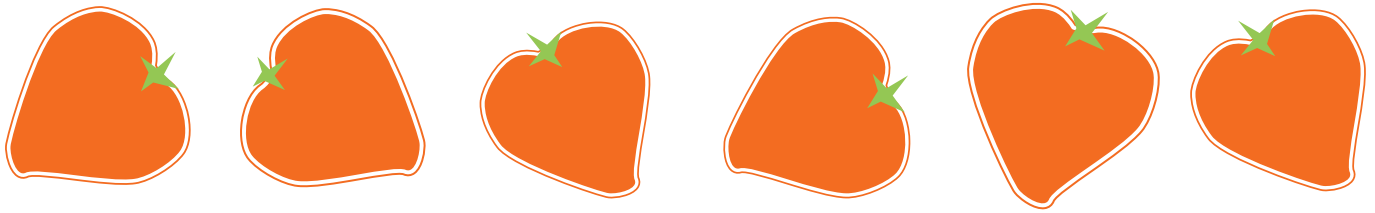
2 *Sanitarium* gluten free *Weetbix*

1 small apple, cored but not peeled, cut into small pieces. Alternatively, you can use tinned apples.

500 mls of rice milk or alternative milk

Place all the ingredients into a blender and mix thoroughly.





YumYum smoothie

ingredients

- 1 bottle of apple puree
- 1 bottle of plain yoghurt (or soy yoghurt)
- 1 cup of plain vanilla ice cream (if your child is allergic to dairy, leave it out)
- 1 or 2 cups of rice milk (or cow's milk if your child has no known allergies)
- 1 teaspoon of honey (optional)

Place all the ingredients into a blender and mix thoroughly.

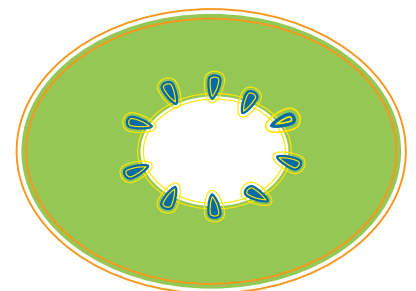
nutrition information

Servings per recipe: 1 Serving size: 300 grams

	average quantity per serving	average quantity per 100g
Energy	1110kj	370kj
Protein	8.5g	2.8g
Fat, total	5.2g	1.7g
— saturated	2.4g	0.8g
Carbohydrate	44.5g	14.8g
— sugars	34g	11.3g
Sodium	203mg	68mg



If your child does not have any allergies you can use cow's milk or almond milk or even fruit juice.



Summary

This book is part of a longer research project which involved data collection over a six month period, with an initial trial period of three months to refine data collection systems.

For the purpose of this research project, the team collected daily data on:

Food eaten

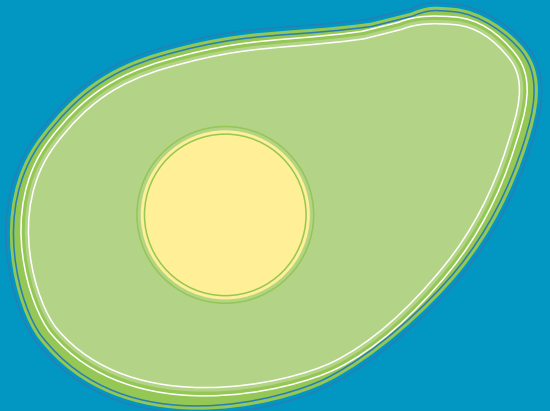
- ▶ timing (time food being served)
- ▶ weights of food served and portions served
- ▶ weights of food spilled or uneaten.

Environment

- ▶ children's attendance patterns
- ▶ staff rostered on each day
- ▶ set up of mealtime (child eating in group or on own)

Special requests for food

- ▶ food requests from the staff
- ▶ food requests from families as discussed in Individual Education Plans
- ▶ dietitian or medical practitioners' recommendations.



Food brought in from home

- ▶ emergency lunches for children in case they don't eat the centre food
- ▶ children's favourite foods
- ▶ school readiness — lunch boxes brought from home with lunches in them, or empty for cook to supply a lunch pack from the centre menu.

A significant amount of data was collected. Some of the general findings from the project found that:

- ▶ consistency of people and the environment is important:
 - changes in staffing or other faces impacted on the consumption of food and the children's interest in exploring new foods
 - changes in the way the mealtime environment was set up, including the number of tables, size of group and noise in the space also affected the consumption of food and children's interest in exploring new foods.
- ▶ consistent use of the same ingredients, presented in different ways, resulted in the children exploring more foods
- ▶ use of the same foods in sensory play as well as at mealtimes resulted in higher exploration of foods.

The data was collected in a long day care centre specifically for children with ASD. Statistical reliability of the data was not possible as this is an unpredictable environment, there was no control group in place, and the service experienced significant staffing changes.

Suggested alternative products for allergy cooking

It's important to check the ingredients listed, the manufacturers warnings on the packages, and more importantly the added flavour enhancers which are usually listed just as numbers, eg E627. Sometimes these are animal derived but in this instance it's a vegetable based enhancer. However, err on the side of caution and, if in doubt, leave it out!

Orgran

orgran.com.au

The products listed are gluten, wheat, nut, egg, soy, dairy and yeast free and are vegan.

- ▶ Gluten/Wheat Free Plain Flour
- ▶ Gluten/Wheat Free Self-Rising Flour
- ▶ Baking Flour (for bread making)
- ▶ Outback Animal Biscuits (come in either 175g box or 1 x 10 individual packets)
- ▶ No Egg (comes in a powder form, 1 teaspoon = 1 egg)
- ▶ Gravy
- ▶ Custard
- ▶ Animal Shaped Pasta

For a full range of their products and stockists go to their website. Some major supermarkets carry some of their products and online ordering is limited. Most health shops stock a wider range but prices vary.

Freedom Foods

www.freedomfoods.com.au

- ▶ *Vege Spread* (alternative to Vegemite)
- ▶ **An alternative for Soy Sauce:** Mix one teaspoon of *Vege Spread* to half a cup of boiling water and mix (adjust the consistency/volume by adjusting the vege spread to water ratio)
- ▶ Gluten Free Cornflakes
- ▶ Gluten Free Rice Flakes

For a full range of their products and stockists go to their website. Some major supermarkets carry some of their products and online ordering is limited. Most health shops stock a wider range but prices vary.

Other alternative foods:

- ▶ Basmati or any other type of rice
- ▶ *Nuttlex Spread* Margarine (allergen free)
- ▶ *Real Foods* Corn Thins
- ▶ *White Wings* Gluten Free Plain Flour
- ▶ *White Wings* Gluten Free Self-Rising Flour
- ▶ *Australia's Own* Organic Rice Milk or any Rice Milk
- ▶ *Australia's Own* Soy Milk or a Soy Milk
- ▶ Tinned fruits such as peaches, pears etc
- ▶ *Aldi's* 'Has No' gluten free products
- ▶ *GlutenFree Kitchen* — Australian owned
- ▶ *AussieHealth*

There are other allergy free food products out there, so jump online and check them out!

What is SDN Beranga

SDN Beranga Early Education and Care Centre is a purpose-built centre for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The service also includes a number of satellite centres operated by a range of providers who are supported by SDN Beranga staff. SDN Beranga has been funded by the NSW Government to be a demonstration service for best practice in early childhood education and care for young children with ASD. SDN Beranga staff includes early childhood teachers and educators, a family resource worker, psychologist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist and a centre cook. The centre caters for 27 children aged 2–6 who have ASD per day.





Who is SDN

SDN Children's Services has been delivering quality early childhood education, care and family support since 1905. We are proud of our long history of working with children and their families, working with communities, and supporting the development of practitioners and children's services. With around 700 staff across 36 sites in Sydney, regional NSW and the ACT, we have grown into one of Australia's most respected children's services organisations. We operate 25 long day care centres and preschools and deliver 24 government-funded child and family programs in NSW and ACT.

What we believe: our philosophy

We believe that every person and every living thing has inherent worth, and is owed respect and care.

We believe that we live in an inter-dependent world, where we all belong and are enriched by each other's contributions.

We have always believed, since our beginnings in 1905, that the world can be a better and more equitable place, and that we can help to make it so.

We believe that potentials and possibilities are realised when everyone offers and experiences care, connection and challenge.



Thanks to the children and staff at SDN Beranga for their help in making this book possible!

www.sdn.org.au

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