

Overhauling your pantry

To begin your stocktake, we want you to pull everything out of your pantry and sort it into three piles: Regulars; Bonus Meals; and Compost.



- **Regulars:** These are the items you use and buy all the time.
- **Bonus meals:** These are goods you bought once-upon-a-time but don't really know what to do with. They have more than likely been sitting on the shelf forever and you could probably make a whole extra meal out of them – if only you could find a way to use them up!
- **Compost:** These are foods which are past their use-by dates and should only be designated to compost or disposed of.

First of all, throw away anything that falls into your 'compost' group - it's definitely time they left the premises for good.

Then write all the items that you use and buy all the time in the 'regular' column of your pantry stocktake sheet.

Next write down all the mystery items in the 'bonus meals' column of your pantry stocktake sheet. It doesn't matter how small and insignificant the item might be, or if you can't possibly imagine a way to make it into a meal – it is our job to show you how! Just write the item on the list and then place the actual item into a sturdy box or container. From now on, this box of mysterious ingredients will be referred to as your **Bonus Meal Box**. In Part 6 we will show you just how to convert this pile of stuff into marvelous meals. Your creativity with this box is what the Challenge is all about and could be the difference between a boring week of meals and a gourmet feast!

shopping list

Days	Ingredients Needed	Cost
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		
	Week Total	
Non-Food Items		

The checklist

Are you ready to do the Challenge?

Have you:

- Chosen five reasons to do the challenge?
- Read the rules?
- Chosen your team-mates?
- Set your targets?
- Identified and planned for minor hurdles?
- Overhauled your pantry?
- Delved into your freezer?
- Explored your fridge?
- Looked for groceries in your garden?
- Chosen a style of menu planning?
- Read through the recipes?
- Gone searching for bonus meals?
- Worked out what meals you can make?
- Written them on your menu plan?
- Made sure you have included plenty of fruit & vegies?
- Made sure you have plenty of snacks?
- Written a shopping list?

When you can tick all of the above, you are ready, so GO FOR IT!

Crumpets

Nothing beats homemade crumpets! This recipe uses the most basic ingredients and will give you six yummy crumpets in around 15 minutes. You can use egg rings to make small crumpets, or for larger ones ask someone handy to cut a fruit tin into rings for you. Once you try these, you'll never want to eat crumpets out of a packet again!

1 cup plain flour
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
½ tsp sugar
½ tsp yeast
¾ cup warm water

Put your flour, baking powder, salt and sugar into a large bowl and mix all the ingredients together using an egg whisk. Add the warm water and stir the yeast into it with a fork. Pour your water and yeast mixture into your bowl of dry ingredients. Beat all together with an egg whisk until you have a smooth batter.

Lightly grease a large frying pan (preferably with a lid) and put over a low heat. Lightly grease the egg rings as well (the more egg rings you have, the faster you will be able to cook your crumpets). Put your egg rings in the pan and three-quarter fill each one with the batter. Be careful not to overfill as the mixture will rise and overflow. Cook your crumpets in the egg rings for approximately 10 minutes. Once the top of the crumpet is covered with holes, place the lid on the frying pan and cook for another 3 minutes. Enjoy warm with a blob of melted butter and your favourite topping.

CONTRIBUTED BY: PAULA NOWICKI

Grandma's marvellous muffins

There's no rule saying you HAVE to have cereal for breakfast. How about a delicious, warm muffin instead? Make a batch at the start of the week, then simply defrost one each morning. Jackie's kids love this recipe that Grandma makes just for them. Makes 12 regular or six large muffins:

1 ¾ cups self raising flour
2-3 tbsp sugar
1tsp baking powder
100g butter
¾ cup milk
1 egg
1tsp vanilla essence

Set your oven to 200C to warm up. Put all the dry ingredients into a large bowl. Melt the butter in a microwave-proof bowl and stir in the milk. Add the butter, milk, egg and vanilla to the dry ingredients and stir just enough until it's all mixed in. Put equal amounts of mixture into each muffin tin and bake in the centre of the oven for 15 minutes.

What we love about this recipe is that you can adapt it to use up pretty much anything – add half a cup of your chosen fruit, or a teaspoon of your favourite spice or essence. Dad likes apple and cinnamon, Mum likes banana choc chip, Ali likes mixed berries and Liam loves his with a blob of jam in the middle!

Other great suggestions for a tasty breakfast alternative:

Slack scones – Snazzy Snacks - Page 187
 Ali's microwave scrambled eggs – Kid friendly food – Page 159
 Breakfast muffins – Bonus meals– Page 211
 Couscous – Bonus meals - Page 212

Rice

Rice and risottos of all types are great during Challenge weeks. They are filling and flavoursome and many can be made from leftovers or from very few ingredients.

Mushroom risotto

This super fast meal requires just a few ingredients to make. Grab those mushrooms out of your fridge and turn them into something fantastic! If you have Parmesan cheese it's great for some extra bite but ordinary grated cheese will do.

1 tbsp butter

1 diced onion

4-6 large mushrooms, sliced

2 cups rice, pre-cooked in vegetable stock

Parmesan cheese, grated

Heat your tablespoon of butter in a frying pan over medium heat.

Once the butter is sizzling, sauté your onion and mushrooms for a few minutes until soft. Remove the pan from the heat and add your vegies to the cooked rice. Return to the heat until piping hot and sprinkle with the Parmesan. So easy!

Super serving suggestion: If you happen to have some spinach in your freezer or in your garden, cook separately and stir through at the end for some extra greens.

CONTRIBUTED BY: KIRBY CHESNEY

Beans and rice

This meat-free meal is rather like chilli con carne, without the chilli or the carne! Kids love it too; just don't tell them it's good for them!

1-2 tbsp olive oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

Cumin seeds, or any other spices you have to hand

1 ½ cups uncooked rice

1 400g tin diced tomatoes

1 large tin kidney beans, rinsed and drained

1 heaped tsp stock powder dissolved in one cup water

Extra water

Grated cheese

Sour cream (optional)

Heat oil in a large pan and gently cook garlic and spices for a couple of minutes. Add the rice to the pan, mixing in well enough to coat it in the garlic and spices and cook for a further minute. Stir in your tomatoes, kidney beans and stock. Cover and cook on low heat until your rice is cooked and a little creamy. Check the pan regularly and stir in half a cup of water each time – this keeps the rice from drying out and sticking to the pan (you may need to do this 4-5 times). Once your rice is cooked through, serve with sour cream, grated cheese and salad or vegetables.

NB: The sour cream was added later just because we had some in the fridge, but you don't really need it, it's still yummy without it!

CONTRIBUTED BY: KATH CORBEN

How to stretch your mince to a second meal

Whether you have a little or a lot of mince leftover, there are some great additional meal ideas that will make good use of your mince. If you have enough mince on hand, it's a good idea to **double the recipe and refrigerate or freeze in portions for later use.**

Mince meal options include:

Spaghetti bolognese: Stir through a little tomato sauce just before serving for a sweeter taste and sprinkle with grated cheddar or Parmesan.

Lasagne: Layer with lasagne sheets and béchamel sauce, then sprinkle the top with grated cheese.

Pies and pasties: Simply cook up a few extra vegetables – mushroom, peas, or diced potato – and use with mince as a pie filling, or wrap with mince in filo pastry.

Cottage pie: Mix a large handful of peas with your mince and place in the bottom of a pie dish. Microwave/steam four potatoes and mash with milk and butter, then place on top of the mince. Cook your pie at 180C for 30-40 minutes.

Nachos: Mix a little curry paste, and/or sweet chilli sauce through your mince along with some kidney beans and serve over the top of corn chips with cheese, avocado, tomato, salsa and sour cream.

Tortillas and tacos: Use plain mince or nachos mince (see above) and serve on tortilla bread or in taco shells with chopped tomato, cheese, lettuce, avocado, corn kernels, sour cream and salsa.

Toasted sandwiches: Simply add a little tomato or barbecue sauce and cheddar for a super easy meal, or serve on toast.

Tropical tuna

Close your eyes and pretend you're on a tropical island! Any leftover tropical tuna is great recycled as a pizza topping or spread over an omelette!

1 small tin pineapple pieces

1 green capsicum

1 400g tin tomato soup (or you can use crushed tomatoes)

4 cups cooked, drained pasta (elbows or spirals are best)

1 large tin tuna in brine, drained

Open your tin of pineapple and drain it over a medium sized saucepan so that it catches all the juice. Place the pan with the juice in it onto a medium high heat.

Slice the pepper and add to the pan. Pour in your tomato soup and heat through. Stir gently until the mixture is almost boiling, then add the pineapple pieces.

Put your cooked pasta in the base of an ovenproof dish and spread the tuna over the top. Pour your tomato and pineapple mixture over the top of the tuna.

Cover and bake at 180C for about 30 minutes.

Delicious served with a simple salad of thinly sliced celery, grated carrot and freshly chopped parsley. Add a generous blob of mayonnaise, a couple of squeezes of lemon, and a sprinkle of black pepper. Toss all together to combine.

CONTRIBUTED BY: JUDITH LONG

Jackie's happy fruit crumble

Jackie's kids LOVE this recipe! She calls it happy fruit crumble because whenever she makes it she takes any sad looking fruit from the fruit bowl and turns them into this fantastic comforting pudding. It makes her feel happy that she's putting them to good use instead of throwing them away and it puts a smile on the whole family's faces when they tuck into it!

4-5 largish pieces of fruit, peeled and sliced (apples, pears, peaches, apricots, whatever you have! If using tinned fruit, drain well first)

½ cup dried fruit OR 1 cup fresh, tinned or frozen berries

Juice of half a lemon (not essential but good!)

Drizzle of golden or maple syrup (optional)

1 cup flour

150g butter or margarine (or 125g at a push)

½ cup rolled oats

½ cup coconut

2 tbsp brown sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

Put your oven on at 180C to warm up. Place your peeled, sliced fruit in a deep baking dish. Sprinkle your dried fruit or berries over the top. Squeeze lemon juice over your fruit if using and drizzle the syrup over the top. If you don't have lemon juice or syrup, sprinkle a little extra brown sugar over the top instead. Put your oats, flour, coconut, brown sugar and cinnamon into a large bowl. Add the butter and combine all together by running the ingredients through your fingers until well mixed and crumbly (you can of course use a food processor if you don't mind the extra dishes). Scatter your crumble mixture over the fruit and bake in the oven for 50 minutes. Delicious on its own or served with ice cream, cream, custard and even milk!

Mars Bar surprise slice

What's the surprise? There are no Mars Bars in this recipe! This clever recipe was dreamed up by Simple Savings member Nova Dunworth. She wanted to make a Mars Bar slice – the only problem was, she didn't have any Mars Bars. However, she wasn't about to let that stop her! This ingenious recipe tastes as good as the real thing and will use up your Rice Bubbles and condensed milk in the pantry. Perfect!

1 tin condensed milk

2 tbsp golden syrup (or maple syrup)

60g butter

3 tbsp cocoa

2 ½-3 ½ cups Rice Bubbles (any brand will do)

3 tbsp butter (for topping)

200g dark or milk chocolate, whatever you have

Melt your condensed milk, golden syrup and butter in a saucepan over a low heat. Simmer, stirring constantly for about 15 minutes until this yummy mixture caramelises. Using a low heat will ensure the sugar won't burn the bottom of your precious saucepan!

Add the cocoa to your caramel and mix well. Leave to cool for 10-15 minutes. Stir in your Rice Bubbles, trying not to break them too much. Things get pretty sticky at this point but the mixture will firm up on chilling. The amount you add depends on how chewy you like it – the more Rice Bubbles you have the firmer the slice will be.

Press into a greased and lined slice tray and chill. When cold, make your topping by melting the dark or milk chocolate with the 3 tablespoons of butter. Spread it on top of your Rice Bubble mixture and refrigerate until required.

CONTRIBUTED BY: NOVA DUNWORTH

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Artichokes

Not simply a big thistle, artichokes are high in vitamin A and C, as well as calcium and iron. However, marinated artichokes are one of those foods that people tend to buy and then allow to sit inside the fridge door for months because they have no idea what they're supposed to do with them. This is a real shame because they can be used to make some delicious meals!

Pizza

For a delicious lunch or light meal spread tomato paste, artichokes and any cooked meat or vegies you like on a pizza base. Sprinkle with grated cheese and pop it in the oven. If you don't have any pizza bases, just use toast and pop it under the grill. Simple, lazy and so yummy!

Dip

Blend marinated artichokes with Parmesan cheese, olive oil and parsley to make a fantastic dip. Drain your jar of marinated artichokes and chop them roughly. Pop them into a blender with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Parmesan or finely grated cheese and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil. Blend until smooth and add salt and pepper to taste. Perfect with pita bread chips, turkish bread or crackers.

Frittata

Artichokes are perfect in quiche or frittata. Simply chop finely and saute with your other favourite vegetables when making your usual recipe.

Salads

Artichokes are a refreshing addition to all kinds of salads. They are especially delicious in potato salad, caesar salad and green salad.

Self raising flour

To convert plain flour to self raising flour, add two teaspoons of baking powder to one cup of plain flour. You can also use 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar and half a teaspoon of bicarb soda to one cup plain flour.

Shortening

If your recipe calls for shortening (often used in pastries) but you don't have any then you can use other types of solidified oils instead such as butter, cophera, lard or margarine.

Sour cream

If you have run out of sour cream, there's no need to give up and go to the shops. Sour cream is simply cream that has had a culture added. Alternatives are UHT cream, fresh cream, cream cheese, plain yoghurt, even cottage cheese at a pinch.

Spices

One of the wonderful things about spices, apart from their fantastic flavour, is that you can mix and match them where necessary. The alternatives included in this table should work with most recipes if you don't have the right spice on hand.

Sugar

You can substitute sugar with honey, corn syrup or molasses. For bread making, use one cup of honey plus a pinch of baking soda.

Spice substitutions

Allspice:	Substitute a little clove, nutmeg, cinnamon and pepper, to replace allspice, or simply mix half a teaspoon of cinnamon with half a teaspoon of ground cloves to make one teaspoon of allspice.
Aniseed:	Substitute with fennel seed or a few drops of aniseed essence.
Cardamom:	Substitute with ginger.
Chilli powder:	Substitute with a dash of chilli sauce plus a little oregano and cumin if you have it. You can also use red cayenne pepper, chilli flakes or hot paprika.
Cinnamon:	Substitute with a quarter of the required amount of nutmeg or allspice.
Cloves:	Substitute with allspice, cinnamon or nutmeg.
Cumin:	Substitute with chilli powder.
Ginger:	Substitute with allspice, cinnamon, ginger or nutmeg.
Mace:	Substitute with one nutmeg.
Nutmeg:	Substitute with cinnamon or ginger.
Saffron:	You can replace saffron with a dash of turmeric to add colour. So much cheaper than saffron too!

Substituting ingredients fast

Remember this table is here. It is in case, eek, you're in the middle of cooking something wonderful, in a huge hurry and discover too late that you don't have everything you need. Don't panic, we made a super quick reference table to get you out of a tight spot in a hurry.

Ingredient	Amount	Substitution
Allspice	1 tsp	Mix ¼ tsp each clove, nutmeg, cinnamon & pepper or ½ tsp cinnamon with ½ tsp ground cloves
Aniseed	¼ tsp	¼ tsp fennel seed, or A few drops of aniseed essence
Baking powder	1 tsp	Mix ⅔ tsp cream of tartar and ⅓ tsp bicarb soda
Basil	1 tbsp	1 tbsp oregano or thyme
Breadcrumbs	1 cup	1 cup ground cornflakes, or 1 cup rolled oats, or 1 cup crushed breakfast cereals, or 1 cup crushed savoury biscuits, or 1 cup potato chips, or 1 cup coconut
Brown sugar (light)	1 cup	1 cup white sugar with 1 tbsp honey, maple syrup or golden syrup
Brown sugar (dark)	1 cup	1 cup white sugar with 2 tbsp honey, maple or golden syrup
Butter	1 cup	1 cup either margarine or vegetable oil, or 1 cup shortening (Copha, Kremelta)

Substituting ingredients

Ingredient	Amount	Substitution
Buttermilk	1 cup	Add 2 tsp lemon juice or vinegar to 1 cup milk and let stand for 5 minutes, or 1 cup either sour cream or yoghurt
Cardamom	1 tsp	1 tsp ginger
Chervill	1 tbsp	1 tbsp tarragon or parsley
Chilli powder	¼ tsp	1/8 tsp each oregano & cumin, dash of chilli sauce
Chives	1 tbsp	1 tbsp spring onion, onion or even leek
Chocolate	120g	¼ cup cocoa, ⅓ cup sugar and 3 tbsp shortening
Cinnamon	1 tsp	¼ tsp nutmeg or allspice
Cloves	1 tsp	1 tsp allspice, cinnamon or nutmeg
Cocoa	1 tbsp	2 tbsp drinking chocolate (remove 1 tbsp sugar from recipe)
Cornflour	1 tbsp	1½ tbsp flour or arrowroot powder
Cream	1 cup	¾ cup milk and ¼ cup butter, or 1 cup evaporated milk, or a blend of equal parts milk and cottage cheese
Cream of tartar	½ tsp	1½ tsp lemon juice or vinegar, or ½ tsp tartaric acid
Cumin	1 tsp	1 tsp chilli powder
Dark chocolate	30g	¼ cup cocoa (or carob powder) and 1 tbsp butter