



# ROUBA SHAHIN

MY JOURNEY WITH FOOD

Recipes in Times of Social Isolation

# Recipes in Times of Social Isolation

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Are you looking for the simplest recipes out there that will allow you to feed your whole family during this chaotic period but still not hold you captive in your kitchen for hours on end?

Or maybe you want to add new recipes to your cooking routine now there's more than enough time to spend inside?

Or you're simply trapped inside your house with not much to do and you want to learn more about cooking/ improve your cooking skills?



This e-book is written especially for you!

Every recipe is family-friendly, simple to follow and requires only ingredients that one can already find in your pantry/ freezer. I divided the recipes into several sections, each highlighting a staple ingredient such as rice, pasta, grains, legumes, etc.

Together these ingredients will help you create healthy and nutritious meals for yourself and your family!

Nutritional Benefits: there's more to staples than meets the eye

All the staples I used are essential in preparing nutrient-rich meals that will boost your immune system during this period.

Some photos used are from the original recipes and they may not reflect the adapted recipe or cooking step.

Below is how each ingredient works its magic:





## Rice

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Rice serves as a great source of B vitamins, calcium, magnesium, and fibre. These vitamins and minerals support the body's metabolism, boost immune system health, and improve the health of your digestive system.

Moreover, white rice is a primary carbohydrate source that gives you plenty of energy without creating spikes in your blood sugar levels.

Apart from being easy to prepare, rice is a versatile ingredient for any family meal and can be served with beef, pork, chicken, nuts and vegetables as main dishes or side dishes.





# Arabian Spicy Nut Rice

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This is a homemade recipe made traditionally with a delicious combination of nuts and rice.

Here, for a more cost effective meal, we will remove the nuts. You can cook this dish in less than 25 minutes and it will cost you approximately \$10.

I love that this dish is enjoyed by most children and there is no need to cook up a separate dish for them. It also makes a great lunch the next day.

## Ingredients

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- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 onions finely diced
- 400 grams lamb mince
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 1 ½ tablespoon Allspice
- 1 tablespoon of vegeta or salt
- 2 ½ cups boiling water

## Serves

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Serves 6-8 people



### Step 1

Add olive oil to a non-stick pot and saute the onion until translucent.

Add mince and continue cooking, breaking up the meat till it's fine. Once meat is brown and cooked but still moist, add rice and mix in the spice and vegeta. Stir well.

Add boiling water. Bring rice to the boil then lower the heat to a simmer and cover the pot with a lid.



### Step 2

After 7 minutes give the rice a stir.

Again, after 7 minutes give the rice another stir (*making sure you stir the rice from bottom to the top*).

Cook for a further 7 minutes or until cooked



### Step 3

Serve the rice on a platter. If you have fresh parsley on hand, chop and add a handful of it. Toss through.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

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\*Do not add salt to the rice or meat as vegeta is quite salty. If you don't wish to use vegeta, substitute with salt.

\*Let's remove the nuts for a budget friendly meal

\*Parsley is a garnish and not a necessary

\*Beef, chicken or turnkey mince can be a substitute to lamb

\*Some photos used are from the original Arabian Spicy Nut Rice recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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## Simple White Rice



This easy weeknight vermicelli rice requires no advanced prep ahead. A staple in Middle Eastern cuisine, rice pilaf is made with vermicelli. No Stress, you can easily leave the vermicelli out.

We love eating it alongside meat stews and vegetable dishes but my all-time favourite way to eat this - served with yogurt-

### Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup of vermicelli pasta broken (optional)
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 3 cups hot water
- Salt to season

### Serves

Serves 4-6 people

#### Step 1

Wash rice under cold water until it's colour turns clear. Set aside.



#### Step 2

Heat oil in a medium-size pot over medium heat. Add the vermicelli pasta and stir for approximately 2-3 minutes until golden in colour. Add the rice and stir until well coated with oil. ( see notes if you are not using the vermicelli pasta)



#### Step 3

Pour in the hot water and season with salt. Reduce the heat to low, cover with a lid and cook for approximately 20 minutes stirring once or twice.

Turn the heat off and let the rice rest for 5 minutes.

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*You can use ghee or butter instead of olive oil. Traditionally vermicelli rice is made with ghee

\*If vermicelli pasta is not a pantry staple, omit, begin by frying the rice

\*vermicelli egg pasta is different to the Asian rice vermicelli

\*Broken vermicelli pasta is available in most supermarkets

\*Some photos used are from the original Vermicelli Rice Pilaf found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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## Chickpea Aromatic Rice Pilaf



Your tinned chickpeas never tasted better with this fluffy rice mix. It's simple, budget-friendly homemade food that will become a classic in your kitchen.

This vegan dish is deliciously gratifying and gluten-free.



**Step 1**  
Wash rice under cold water. Set aside

Add olive oil to a non-stick pot and sauté the onion until translucent.

Add rice. Mix in the spices, chickpeas and season with salt.

### Ingredients

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 onions finely diced
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 1 ½ tablespoon Allspice
- 1-2 cans chickpeas (400 grams) drained and rinsed
- Salt to season
- 2 ½ cups boiling water
- handful of fresh parsley or 2 table-spoon dried parsley

### Step 2

Add boiling water. Bring rice to the boil, then lower the heat to a simmer and cover the pot.

After 7 minutes give the rice a stir.

Again, after 7 minutes give the rice another stir (*making sure you stir the rice from bottom to the top*).

Cook for a further 7 minutes or until cooked.

### Step 3

Once rice is cooked, add parsley. Gently stir through.



### Serves

Serves 4-6 people

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Some photos used are from the original chickpea and eggplant rice found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

\*If parsley is not available, omit, it's just a garnish here.

\*If you have eggplant on hand, cut into slices, fry and add to the rice dish

\*How much do you love chickpeas? LOVE - 2 cans      LIKE - 1 can

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# One Pot Spinach Paella Style Rice



What was originally a spinach and lamb rice pilaf is now a fabulously tasty and full of good healthy ingredients paella style rice dish. A complete meal made in one pot for a quick weeknight meal.

Don't let the long list of ingredients put you off. If you look closely, they are mostly pantry essentials you already have on hand.

## Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves chopped
- 1 red chili finely diced
- 1 can diced tomatoes (400 grams) or 3-4 ripened fresh tomatoes
- 100 grams frozen spinach
- 1 teaspoon cumin ground
- 1 teaspoon coriander ground
- ½ teaspoon oregano dried
- 1 tablespoon vegeta or salt to season
- ground black pepper
- 2 cups basmati rice

## Serves

Serves 4-6 people

### Step 1

Place rice in a sieve and wash until water runs clear. Set aside.

Heat olive oil over medium heat in a pot. Add chopped onions and saute until translucent. Stir in garlic and chili and continue to cook for about 30 seconds.



### Step 2

Stir in the spices and tomato. Then add remaining ingredients. Season with salt and pepper. Mix well.

Add the water, put a lid on and cook on low heat for approximately 20 minutes or until rice is cooked.



## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Here we have removed the lamb cutlets

\*You can easily add 300 grams of lamb or beef mince to this recipe. Add the mince to the sautéed onion, garlic and chili. Brown before adding the spices and tomato.

\*Some photos used are from the original spinach and lamb pilaf recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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# Pasta

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Pasta is an excellent source of carbohydrates that can be paired with various other foods, such as fibre-rich vegetables and beans, tomato sauce and protein-packed cheeses and low-fat meats.

Whole-grain pasta is healthier than white pasta as it is higher in fibre and proteins and has more nutrients such as zinc, potassium, and magnesium.

When prepared at home, pasta is actually a cheap and filling meal that the whole family can enjoy. Also, there's nothing easier or quicker than to whip up some pasta for lunch and dinner.





# Pasta Salad

Looking for an easy and fresh lunch or you want to throw some magic into that leftover pasta you have in the fridge? This pasta salad is the easiest meal you'll cook

The right combination of easy store-bought and simple ingredients with my delicious homemade dressing makes this entire combination just delicious.

A delicious and easy to make classic pasta salad. Tossed with a quick homemade garlic zesty dressing it's a summer essential.

## Ingredients

- 300 grams of pasta (penne)
- 200 grams cherry tomatoes cut in ½'s OR 200 grams sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 x 400 gram can artichoke hearts cut in ¼'s
- 120 grams black olives (pitted)
- ½ red onion
- 1 cup fresh parsley
- 200 grams feta cut into cubes

## Dressing

- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- ½ cup of olive oil
- 1 garlic clove crushed (large)
- 1 teaspoon oregano dried
- 1 teaspoon sumac (optional)
- salt to season

## Serves

6-8 people



### Step 1

Cook pasta according to package directions, in salted water. Shake excess water and toss with a little oil to prevent pasta from sticking. Set aside.



### Step 2

Chop and prepare salad ingredients



### Step 3

To make the dressing, Add all dressing ingredients into a jar. Season with salt. Shake to combine.

Toss all ingredients together except for the feta. Add the dressing, taste and adjust. Gently

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*The most important step in making this salad is perfecting the cooking of the pasta. You want it to be cooked al-dente.

If you have fresh spinach or rocket on hand, add to the salad.

\*This salad will keep very well in the fridge for up to 3 days. You may need to add some more dressing.

\*Use any dry pasta you have on hand

\* If feta is not something you have in your fridge, the recipe is just as delicious without it

\*Fresh parsley can be substituted with 1-2 teaspoons dried parsley

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# Spaghetti Pesto with Sun-dried Tomatoes

The perfect dinner because everybody loves a super-quick meal. Let's add some sun-dried tomatoes and make it a dish the whole family will love.

Spaghetti pesto with sun-dried tomatoes is extremely quick to throw together and will cost you approximately \$10 to make



## Step 1

Bring a pot of water to the boil and add 2 tablespoons of salt.

Cook the spaghetti according to the packet instructions. Drain.

## Ingredients

- ½ cup olive oil
- 4 tablespoon pesto
- 2 teaspoons chili past
- 3 garlic cloves crushed
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup of vegetable stock or water
- salt to season
- 500 gram of dried spaghetti
- 5 spring onions
- 150 grams sun-dried tomatoes roughly cut

## Serves

4 -6 people

## Step 2

Using a wok, over medium heat, add oil and Sauté the pesto, chili, and garlic for approximately 1 minute. Lower the heat, add balsamic vinegar and stock/water. Simmer for a few minutes.



## Step 3

Once the pesto sauce is ready, add the cooked spaghetti and toss it through. Season with salt and pepper.

Add sun-dried tomatoes and spring onion and toss through

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Vegetable stock can be replaced with chicken stock or simply use water

\*Thin spaghetti pasta (no.3) works the best but don't stress if you don't have it. Use the spaghetti you have in your pantry.

\*If sun-dried tomatoes are not available, omit from recipe

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# Spaghetti with Beef Tomato Sauce

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You can never go wrong with a classic spaghetti recipe. Any leftover sauce can be used to bake some potatoes the next day.

This easy homemade beef sauce takes just a few minutes to prep. Simmer on the stove for a deep rich flavour and everyone will love it.

## Ingredients

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- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion roughly chopped
- 3 garlic cloves crushed
- 1 long red chili finely chopped
- 500 grams beef mince
- 2 x 500 ml passata sauce
- 4-5 basil leaves
- cracked black pepper
- salt to season
- 500 gram of dried spaghetti

## Serves

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4-6 people



### Step 1

Over medium heat, saute chopped onion, garlic and chili with olive oil until they soften, about 7 minutes. Add beef mince and continue to fry breaking up the mince until browned. Add passata sauce and basil leaves, reduce heat and simmer stirring occasionally for 30-40 minutes or until the sauce thickens and water is absorbed. Season with salt and pepper.



### Step 2

While the sauce is simmering, bring a pot of water to the boil and add 2 tablespoons of salt. Cook the spaghetti according to the packet instructions. Drain.



### Step 3

Once the beef sauce is ready, add the pasta and toss through. Season with salt and pepper.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

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\*If fresh basil is not on hand, substitute with dried basil, parsley or oregano. Don't stress if none are available, I've enjoyed it without herbs

\*If red chili is not on hand, use dried chili or omit from recipe

\*Double the sauce recipe. Freeze the other half

\*Some photos used are from the original Spaghetti with beef tomato sauce recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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# Grains

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Grains (especially whole grains) represent an important source of nutrients including fibre, B vitamins and minerals such as iron, magnesium, and selenium. They not only help improve colon health and support healthy digestion but also keep you energised.

Grains such as wheat can help you cook meat-free meals that are wholesome and delicious and will feed the entire family. Other types of grains such as oats are a cheap staple ingredient for breakfast and also for healthy homemade desserts.

## Legumes

- **Lentils:** they're full of B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, and potassium. Lentils are also a great source of plant-based protein and fibre. An extremely underrated staple, lentils cook faster than beans and they go well in soups, salads, and stews.
- **Beans:** they are rich in protein, fibre, and antioxidants, which keep your body healthy and protect it from disease. They are also an excellent source of protein for vegetarians and vegans.
- Beans are a must-have in your pantry as they're inexpensive, simple to prepare, and nutritious. Not to mention that if you cook them differently, they can feed a family for several days.
- **Chickpeas:** they are full of proteins and fibre which makes them a great replacement for meat in vegetarian and vegan diets. They are also known to help improve gut health and lower blood sugar levels. A tin of chickpeas can go a long way and can be transformed into a lot of delicious dishes that the entire family will love.





# Hummus Bruschetta



Hummus bruschettas using my homemade hummus are delicious, real and made with simple, healthy ingredients.

It's all about getting creative with Hummus! Here we turn it into more than just a dip.

## Ingredients

- 1 Baguette sliced 3cm in thickness
- Handful roughly chopped parsley

### Hummus

- 1 x 400 grams chickpea can
- 2 cloves of garlic crushed
- 4 tablespoons Tahini (hulled)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 ice cubes
- 2-3 tablespoons water
- salt to season



### Step 1

To make the hummus Drain water from the chickpeas can and rinse.

Place all ingredients in a food processor and blend for two minutes. Open the cover and scrape down the sides and continue to blend until the hummus is smooth (about 3-5 minutes). The longer you run the blender, the smoother it will be .



### Step 2

Charr baguette on both sides on a hot griddle or under the grill.



### Step 3

Spread hummus over charred bread. Garnish with parsley.

Drizzle with olive oil.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*If fresh parsley is not on hand, omit and enjoy as is.

\*If tahini is not a pantry staple for you, omit but make sure you reduce your ice to 1-2 to avoid a runny textured hummus. You can always add water 1 tablespoon at a time if the hummus is too thick.

\*Left over hummus will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days

\*Some photos used are from the original Hummus Bruschetta recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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# Lentil & Spinach Soup



Dried lentils and frozen spinach - come together in a nourishing soup packed with proteins that will keep your family healthy and full.

It's cheap, hearty, delicious, high in fiber and super filling.

The combination of brown lentils, fresh spinach in a zesty broth is perfect. The addition of lemon lightens the whole dish so don't forget to squeeze some before serving.

## Step 1

Place washed lentils in a pot with the water and bring to the boil. Add ½ tablespoon of ground cumin, Cover with a lid, lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes stirring occasionally.



## Step 2

While lentils are cooking, prepare the onion. Heat olive oil in a pan, add onion and fry on low to medium heat until translucent.

## Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups brown lentils
- 8 cups water
- ½ tablespoon cumin
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large onions coarsely chopped
- 300 grams spinach frozen
- Salt to season
- Ground black pepper
- lemon



## Step 3

After 20 minutes, add cooked onion and spinach to the lentils. Season with salt and pepper and simmer for a further 10 minutes.

Squeeze with lemon juice and drizzle with olive oil before serving

## Serves

Serves 4 people

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Frozen spinach here substituted for fresh spinach

\*Lentils are often overlooked. They are a great source of soluble fiber which helps to slow digestion, keeping you feeling fuller for longer.

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# Mini Hummus Dinner Rolls



If your family loves hummus as much as mine does, you're in for a treat. It's all about changing it up in the kitchen! so put your hummus to good use. You can replace the pickled turnips with gherkins.

Hummus dinner roll recipe is delicious, real and made with simple healthy ingredients.

Just 3 simple steps and you are left with a delectable delight.



## Step 1

To make the hummus Drain water from the chickpeas can and rinse

Place all ingredients in a food processor and blend for two minutes. Open the cover and scrape down the sides and continue to blend until the hummus is smooth (about 2-3 minutes). The longer you run the blender, the smoother it will be .

## Ingredients

- 12 dinner rolls
- gherkin slices
- dukkah to garnish
- olive oil to drizzle

## Hummus

- 1 x 400 gram can chickpeas
- 3-4 tablespoon Tahini (hulled)
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 ice cubes
- 3-4 tablespoons water
- 1 clove garlic crushed
- salt to season

## Serves

Makes 12 dinner rolls



## Step 2

Slice rolls only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through across the top length ways and heat in the oven.



## Step 3

To assemble the dinner rolls, spread about 1 tablespoon of hummus on each roll, Add the gherkin. Garnish with dukkah and drizzle of olive oil.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Pickled turnips are replaced with gherkin (a more accessible ingredient)

\*This recipe is delicious with any choice of salad ingredient

\*If tahini is not a pantry staple for you, omit but make sure you reduce your ice to 1-2 to avoid a runny textured hummus. You can always add water 1 tablespoon at a time if the hummus is too thick.

\*Some photos used are from the original Hummus Dinner Roll recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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# String Bean Stew

String bean stew with meat also known as Loubyeh is a one-pot dish. It's incredibly simple to make, requires mainly staple ingredients and a deliciously comforting meal.

This dish is a combination of meat, string beans and tomato served over the famous Middle Eastern Vermicelli Rice Pilaf. I serve it on mash potato sometimes to change it up for the family.

This stew is absolutely delicious with great flavours and wonderful spices.

## Ingredients

- 500 grams lamb or beef diced
- 500 grams string beans trimmed, cut & rinsed
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions chopped
- 3 teaspoons allspice
- passata
- 2 cups water
- salt to season
- 1 cups chopped coriander

## Serves

Serves 6-8 people



### Step 1

In a pot, sauté the chopped onion and garlic over medium heat. Stir in meat and allspice and continue to sauté evenly until meat is brown. Add water and passata sauce and bring to the boil. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes.



### Step 2

Add washed beans. Season with salt and continue to simmer for approximately 15 minutes or until the sauce slightly thickens and beans are tender. Stir in the coriander.



### Step 3

This stew is best served over Vermicelli Rice Pilaf but change it up and serve it with mashed potatoes or with simple steamed rice.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Tomato passata is a thick sauce consistency used for pasta dishes

\*You can use crushed tinned tomatoes if passata sauce is not on hand, it will just mean a longer cooking time of approximately 5-10 minutes

\*If coriander is not available, substitute with fresh or dried parsley

\*If using dried herbs, always use less than suggested quantity

\*No stress if herbs are not accessible, it's delicious and hearty anyway.

\*If using fresh beans, trim off the stems. Cut in half and rinse in cold water.

\*You can use frozen string beans

\*No stress if herbs are not accessible, it's delicious and hearty anyway.

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# White Bean Stew

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This dish is a stew of white butter beans served over the famous Middle Eastern Vermicelli Rice Pilaf. You can make it with or without meat. I use canned beans in my recipe as it is easier and most of us will have on hand.

This is an easy, hearty and nutritional meal. White beans are considered super foods, as they are rich with minerals.

A comforting dish ideal during winter, to warm you up and keep those hungry children.

## Ingredients

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- 500 grams of chicken cut into cubes
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions chopped
- 3 teaspoons allspice
- 680 ml passata sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 x 400 gram cans butter beans
- salt to season
- 1 cups chopped coriander

## Serves

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Serves 6-8 people



### Step 1

In a pot, sauté the chopped onion and garlic over medium heat. Stir in meat and allspice and continue to sauté evenly until meat is brown. Add water and passata sauce and bring to the boil. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes.



### Step 2

Add washed beans. Season with salt and continue to simmer for approximately 15 minutes or until the sauce slightly thickens and beans are tender. Stir in the coriander.



### Step 3

Serve over steamed rice.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

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\*Tomato passata is a thick sauce consistency used for pasta dishes

\*You can use crushed tinned tomatoes if passata sauce is not on hand, it will just mean a longer cooking time of approximately 5-10 minutes

\*If coriander is not available, substitute with fresh or dried parsley. If substituting with dried herbs, always use less

\*No stress if herbs are not accessible, it's delicious and hearty anyway.

\*If chicken is not on hand or you simply want a meat free stew, add the beans to step one and simmer until sauce thickens and slightly reduced.

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## Wholegrain Cracked Wheat in Tomato Sauce - Burghul W Bandoura

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A simple yet delicious dish made from cracked wheat. Cracked wheat is a traditional ingredient in the Middle East and is often a staple in our pantries.

This is the perfect dish for vegetarians and vegans and anyone who may want a meat free meal.

It will keep for few days in the fridge. - perfect for anyone who loves quick meal packed with flavour.

Serve it with natural yogurt or simply on its own.



### Step 1

In a pot, heat olive oil over medium heat and fry onion until very soft, about 7-10 minutes. Add diced tomatoes. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. season with salt.



### Step 2

Add cracked wheat. stir, cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until cooked, stirring from time to time so the cracked wheat does not stick to the pot and caramelise.

### Ingredients

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- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions finely diced
- 2 x 400 gram tins diced tomatoes
- salt to season
- 1 cup fine cracked wheat



### Step 3

There are several ways to serve this but for now simply enjoy it as is.

### Serves

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4-6 people as a main

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

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- \*Skip the garnishing
- \*Olive oil can substituted with vegetable oil
- \*If fine cracked wheat is not available, use coarse cracked wheat
- \*Some photos used are from the original Wholegrain Cracked Wheat in Tomato Sauce recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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## Vegetables

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- Tomatoes: they are a great source of antioxidants such as lycopene, vitamin C and vitamin A which are essential for heart health. Tomatoes are also the main ingredient in sauces as they're easy to cook and pair well with various herbs and spices.
- String beans: they are a rich source of vitamins A, C, and K, and of folic acid and fibre which supports metabolism, strengthen your immunity and promote your body's ability to make new healthy cells. String beans are relatively easy to cook and will help you add more healthy greens to your kids' diet.
- Potatoes: they represent an extremely filling and healthy carbohydrate. They are also a good source of vitamins such as vitamin C and vitamin B6 and minerals like potassium, which makes them a great ally for the health of your digestive system and metabolism.
- You can incorporate potatoes in almost any meal you'll prepare for your family be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner. They're budget-friendly and extremely versatile - you can mash them, bake them, fry them and even add them in soup and stews.
- Spinach: it's rich in iron and magnesium which help your body produce the energy needed for your everyday activities. Spinach is also a great source not only of vitamin K which is essential for bone health but also of vitamin A and vitamin C which can boost your immune system.
- Did you know that frozen spinach is healthier than the fresh version as it keeps its nutrients for a longer period of time? It's also actually one of the most versatile vegetables you can keep in your freezer.
- Onion: it's rich in B vitamins which play an important role in metabolism and the health of your nervous system. Also, onions represent an important source of prebiotics which maintain the health of your digestive system and gut.
- I don't think there's a house out there without any onion at all. They add great flavour to almost any main dish or side dish you can think of. Cheap, versatile, easy to store and cook, what more can you ask for?
- Garlic: it's well-known for its anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory properties due to the presence of a sulphur-containing compound called Allicin which is found in fresh, crushed or chewed garlic. Together with onion, garlic is one of those ingredients that can instantly level up your food in terms of flavour.





## Pan-fried potatoes with sweet onions

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Pan-fried potatoes with sweet onion is a simple and cost-effective recipe.

Did you know that onion is the perfect accompaniment to golden fried potatoes?



### Step 1

Begin by peeling the potatoes and cutting them into even bite-sized pieces.

Heat olive oil in a frying pan and sauté the onions over medium heat.

### Ingredients

---

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion
- 2 potatoes (medium size)
- salt to season



### Step 2

Add diced potato stirring and mixing with the onion.

Cover and continue to cook until potatoes are cooked through and onions are golden in colour. (approximately 10-15 minutes) Season with salt.

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

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\*Some photos used are from the original Pan-fried potatoes with sweet onion recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au).

### Serves

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4 people

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## Herbs & Spices: the hidden heroes behind every recipe

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Herbs and spices are literally at the heart of Middle Eastern cuisine and the secret behind great flavour in every dish we make.

When it comes to herbs, there's one thing I've got to tell you: don't underestimate the power of dried herbs.

Considering that now we won't have access to fresh herbs so often, having the dried version at hand is essential. Also, dried herbs are stronger than fresh herbs so make sure to be mindful when substituting.

Here's a list with the most essential dried herbs you should keep in your pantry:

- Oregano - bitter, lemony flavour
- Thyme - strong, minty flavour
- Rosemary - pine flavour
- Sage - similar to rosemary but with lemony notes
- Parsley - multi-purpose with light and grassy flavour
- Basil - highly aromatic with a peppery taste
- Dill - grassy and slightly lemony flavour
- Bay leaves - strong, bitter taste

In terms of spices, what I use most in my recipes is the Arabian spice, known in the Middle East as Bharat. This 7-spice blend is used to season meat and it contains black pepper, paprika, cumin, coriander, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon.

Bharat can be found at Middle Eastern grocery stores and in various supermarkets. However, if you don't have it home, you can always substitute it with allspice.

Another essential spice, a star of the Middle Eastern food everywhere, is cumin. It has a strong earthy, nutty flavour and is used in both meat and vegetable dishes, as well as in stews and sauces.

The most important thing to do when using herbs and spices to season your food is to try to create balanced dishes. Use moderate amounts so you don't overwhelm the food.

Also, consider the flavour of the main ingredient as this dictates what and how much herbs and spices are used.





## Meat



Some excellent protein-rich foods include lean red meat, tofu, chicken, turkey, nuts, fish, pulses, eggs, yogurt, low fat milk and cheese.

Being a child or a teenager can be fun but it also comes with challenges to parents. Their active lifestyle and growing body means they have nutritional needs to be met. So there's nothing better than a balanced healthy meal that also includes a protein for building and repairing muscle.

Meat has long been a staple of family meals, especially for dinner. Beef, pork, lamb, poultry, fish, and seafood all provide complete protein.





## Chicken Schnitzel Rolls



A ridiculously easy recipe for the no-fuss lunch/dinner that you've always dreamed of. And what's better than a crunchy schnitzel roll for tomorrow's brunch?

So what makes a great sandwich/Roll?

### Ingredients

- 4 chicken breast-halved lengthwise to form 8 pieces
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups (or more) of breadcrumb
- salt and pepper to season
- 1 litre oil for deep frying
- gherkin
- mayonnaise
- chili sauce (optional)

### Serves

Makes 8 schnitzels



#### Step 1

Slice each chicken breast fillet in half length-ways to form 8 pieces. Season chicken breasts with salt and pepper

Beat eggs in a shallow baking dish. Place breadcrumb in another shallow baking dish, adding more if necessary.

Working with 1 chicken breast at a time, dip into the egg mixture, turning to coat evenly and carefully coat with breadcrumb.



#### Step 2

Heat oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add chicken schnitzels and cook for 6-8 minutes or until golden and cooked through.

Transfer to a wire rack or onto a plate lined with a paper towel.



#### Step 3

Toasting the bread/rolls is optional. Halve each schnitzel.

Fill or top bread/roll with chicken schnitzel and gherkin. Drizzle with the sauce of your choice.

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Schnitzels freeze well. Make ahead of time and freeze. Thaw schnitzels before frying.

\*Add cheddar cheese to your roll if you have it on hand and place in a press down toaster or in the oven for a few minutes

\*Don't throw out the used oil. As soon as the oil cools enough to handle, pour it through a fine mesh strainer into a clean, dry glass jar/container. You will find dirty bits at the bottom of the pot. Stop pouring before you pour this stuff through and discard it separately. Store to use again.

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# Spicy Lamb Puff Pastries - Laham-B-Ajeen

The perfect family-friendly snack to have around. You can make these in batches and freeze them so they can be enjoyed later.

Ready puff pastry is an easier alternative to the homemade dough and still does this dish justice.

## Ingredients

- 2 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion diced finely
- 250 grams lamb mince
- 1 tablespoon allspice
- 1 tablespoon pomegranate molasses (optional)
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- ½ tablespoon tahini (hulled)
- Handful roughly chopped fresh parsley
- salt to season
- 2 sheets ready rolled puff pastry

## Serves

\*Makes 18 pieces

### Step 1

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan forced

To prepare the filling, heat the olive oil in a large non stick frying pan and sauté the onion until it softens.



### Step 2

Add mince and sauté breaking up the meat until it's fine. Fry until the juices have evaporated but meat is still moist. Add the spice, molasses, vinegar, tahini and parsley. Season with salt. Remove from heat.



### Step 3

Cut 1 sheet of puff pastry into 9 equal squares. Place approximately 1 tablespoon of the meat mixture in the center of each pastry square.

Bring two diagonal corners together and gently overlap them to create the shape shown in photo, leaving some of the stuffing exposed on either side.

Repeat the process with the rest of the puff pastry.



### Step 4

Place on a tray lined with baking paper. Bake for about 20-25 minutes or until pastry is golden. Garnish with mint leaves

Serve it with yogurt.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*If pomegranate is unavailable, omit from recipe, you can add 1 fresh tomato diced

\*Herbs are a garnish so don't stress if they are not in your pantry.

\*Substitute fresh parsley with 1 teaspoon of dried parsley

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ROUBA SHAHIN

MY JOURNEY WITH FOOD



## Desserts

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Treat Yourself: healthy home-made sweets to eat when the sugar craving strikes

All this time spent inside might make you crave sweets a lot more often than before. Also, if you have kids, the struggle to satisfy their sweet tooth while self-isolating is real.

As a mother of two, I know that struggle and I want to share with you my favourite quick dessert recipes that are not only healthy and budget-friendly but also very quick to make.

From buttery rolled oats biscuits to moist chocolate cake and fluffy banana bread to the classic pancakes we all love, this e-book has it all.





# Simple Banana bread



Serve it with tea or coffee, this tasty and healthy recipe is the best way to satisfy your sweet tooth. You can recreate this using frozen bananas and a handful of pantry essentials.

Not only is it so quick to make, freezes well and you will only need 6 ingredients. Slice it up, Cling wrap it and freeze it. Makes a great snack.



## Step 2

Preheat oven to 160 degrees fan forced. Grease and flour a 23cm rectangular cake tin

To make the cake batter; sift flour and baking powder in a bowl. Add remaining ingredients and mix to a smooth batter.



Pour mixture into a the prepared greased cake tin.

## Ingredients

- 2 ½ cups self raising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 3 eggs (beaten)
- 2 ½ cups mashed ripe banana (3-4 medium bananas)
- 1 cup canola/vegetable oil



## Step 3

Bake for approximately 50 minutes or until cooked through.

Alternatively pour into mini muffin tins and cook for approximately 20-25 minutes

Let stand in the pan for 10 minutes and turn onto wire rack to cool.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

- \*You could add ½ cup of choc chips or ½ a cup of roughly chopped walnuts
- \*White sugar can be used if caster sugar is not on hand
- \*Some photos used are from the original banana bread recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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## Chocolate Orange Cake



You can't but love the moist, lovely orange and chocolate taste of this cake.

And we can all agree, chocolate makes everything better and this cake recipe requires only simple ingredients and one bowl.

A super easy, chocolate orange cake to make. Just combine all ingredients, mix and bake.



### Step 1

Preheat oven to 170°. Grease a 23cm round cake tin generously with butter.

Add all the ingredients into a large bowl. Mix well for at least 2 minutes until well combined. Pour into the prepared cake tin and smooth the top.

### Step 2

Bake in preheated oven for approximately 35-40 minutes or until cooked through and your cake tester comes out clean.

## Ingredients

- 220 grams self-raising flour
- 30 grams of cocoa
- 2 teaspoon baking powder
- 200 grams of soft butter
- 150 grams caster sugar
- 2 tablespoon golden syrup
- 4 eggs beaten
- 100 grams of milk chocolate, grated
- Grated rind 2 oranges
- juice of 2 orange pulp-free (approximately 180-200 ml)



### Step 3

Rest for 5 minutes and then transfer onto a wire rack to completely cool.

Dust lightly with icing sugar and decorate with fresh orange segments.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Long-life orange juice can be used instead of fresh juice.

\*No fresh oranges on hand, no need for the orange zest.

\*Lemon zest can be a substitute for orange zest.

\*No golden syrup on hand, use honey instead

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## Rolled Oat Biscuits



Crunchy and buttery treats you can whip up with only a few ingredients that you already have in your pantry.

Wholesome Oats add loads of goodness to these crunchy and buttery biscuits.

This is an easy to follow homemade biscuit recipe. Oat biscuits are super delicious and your family will love them too.



### Step 1

Preheat oven to 160°. Lightly grease and line a 3cm deep, 16 x 25.5 cm baking pan with baking paper.

Put butter in a bowl with the sugar and beat until soft and creamy. Add in the egg and vanilla essence. By hand, gently fold in the oats and flour. Work into the creamed mixture to make a dough. Divide mixture into walnut-sized balls with damp hands. Toss each one in the extra oats



### Step 2

Place 3-4 cm apart on the lined baking pan. Flatten each biscuit.

## Ingredients

- 175 grams of butter softened
- 175 grams caster sugar
- 1 egg beaten
- vanilla essence (3-4 drops)
- 50 grams rolled oats
- 225 grams self-raising flour
- Extra rolled oats to coat

## Serves

Makes 18-22 biscuits



### Step 3

Bake in the oven for approximately 15 minutes or until biscuits are golden. Allow to completely cool.

## Tips in the time of Social Distancing

- \* Keep your butter soft, soft, soft
- \* Biscuits will crumble if they are handled warmly. Wait for them to cool

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## Simple Homemade Pancakes



Who wants pancakes for breakfast with simple ingredients found in your pantry?

When you're in a rush to feed a mad crowd of teenagers and children, this easy recipe with simple ingredients will keep them happy and full.

Simple homemade pancakes are fluffy and super soft with the added bonus of filling up those hungry kids.

### Ingredients

- 3 cups of self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- pinch of salt
- 2 eggs (lightly beaten)
- 1 cup of milk
- 70 grams unsalted butter melted
- extra melted butter for cooking

### Serves

Makes 8-10 pancakes



#### Step 1

Sift the flour, baking powder and sugar into a bowl. Add a pinch of salt. Mix well. Set aside



#### Step 2

Whisk the eggs, milk and melted butter in a bowl and pour over the dry ingredients, whisking to form a batter. Rest for 10-15 minutes



#### Step 3

Heat a frying pan and brush lightly with extra melted butter. Pour approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the batter into the pan. Cook over low heat until golden in colour, turn the pancake over and continue to cook for 20 seconds or until cooked.

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Long life milk is a substitute for fresh milk

\*For toppings, you can use frozen raspberries, blueberries or whatever frozen fruits you have in your freezer or simply spread butter and honey on top of them. Vegemite is a staple we all have and of course sugar and a squeeze of lemon

\* Keep some pancake dry ingredients mixed in a jar and just add wet ingredients on the day.

\*If salted butter is all you have in your fridge, use it and omit the addition of salt

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## Sahlab Dessert Drinks



This is what we all need right now! The best milk-based comfort drink that the whole family can enjoy in the evening.

It's a smooth milk-like pudding that can be instantly prepared from cornflower and sugar.

Garnish it with cinnamon powder and enjoy it with a cookie or two.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 2 tablespoons sugar or honey
- 1 teaspoon orange blossom water or vanilla pod
- Cinnamon ground

### Serves

Makes 1-2 drinks

### Step 1

Combine milk, cornflower, sugar, and orange blossom or vanilla pod. Whisk over medium heat until milk slightly thickens (approximately 3 minutes)



### Step 2

Serve hot. Garnish with cinnamon powder

### Tips in the time of Social Distancing

\*Long life milk can be used if fresh is unavailable

\* Orange blossom and vanilla pods are suggestions - You can flavour your drink with whatever you have in your pantry or omit.

\*Some photos used are from the original sahlab dessert drink recipe found at [www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)

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Stay safe and have fun cooking!

Much love

روبا

*Rouba xx*



[www.roubashahin.com.au](http://www.roubashahin.com.au)