Bread

Croutons

Commercial bread tends to stay miraculously fresh for days on end, eventually going straight from soft and fresh to soft and mouldy.

Home-made bread, free from the multitude of additives and preservative that go into commercially baked bread, tends to go stale from day 2 onwards, rather than mouldy.

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C.
2. Cut stale bread into squares or triangles.
3. Grate a little leftover cheese – strong Cheddar is excellent.
4. Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper, place the bread on the paper and scatter over the cheese.
5. Bake for 6-7 minutes or until the cheese is melted.
6. Float on top of soup.

Breadcrumbs

Run a piece of stale bread, or several stale slices, through a processor with the steel-blade attached, to create your own breadcrumbs. Bag up and freeze.

Poor man’s Pesto

Pesto is made from fresh basil, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese and extra-virgin olive oil – luxury ingredients unless you live on a Tuscan hill-side. For a more frugal, but very delicious version, try this:

1. Mix homemade breadcrumbs with a generous amount of chopped fresh herbs, such as parsley or basil, and finely chopped garlic.
2. Gently heat 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil in a frying pan.
3. Add the crumbs and garlic and brown while stirring – don’t burn!
4. Add the chopped herbs and season well.
5. Scatter over freshly cooked pasta and drizzle with a little extra olive oil.
Potatoes

Potatoes are one of the most versatile left-over ingredients. Cook more than you need when boiling, roasting or mashing.

Turn left-over potatoes into patties – mix with left-over greens or fish, an egg yolk if you have it, and turn in a little flour before pan frying.

Plain potato cakes made from left-over mash and bound with a few tablespoons of plain flour are delicious served with crispy bacon and the left-over cranberry sauce from Christmas!

Pasta

Left-over pasta is so versatile. Mix it with any crunchy raw vegetables that lurk in the fridge, including celery, peppers, cucumber or radishes. Add few cubes of Parmesan cheese, olives, cold chicken or salmon – most of it will turn into a very decent pasta salad that would travel well in a Tupperware box.

Pasta bake

Any cold, cooked pasta shape can be turned into a pasta bake.

Cold pasta
Left-over cooked vegetables such as peppers/tomatoes/leeks/green beans
A few pieces of smoked bacon
3 large, organic eggs
300ml full-fat milk
Freshly chopped parsley (if you have it, otherwise no need to buy)
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
50g grated, stale cheese

1. Lightly oil or butter an oven-proof dish.
2. Place the pasta in the dish, together with any cold cooked vegetables.
3. If you have some bacon, pan-fry it until crisp.
4. Pre-heat the oven to 190°C.
5. Lightly mix the milk and eggs, season. Add parsley if you have it.
6. Scatter the bacon over the pasta then pour over the milk and egg.
7. Scatter with grated cheese and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the egg has set and the surface is golden.
8. Serve with a green salad or a tomato salad.

Vegetables
One of the easiest ways to use up cold, cooked vegetables is to turn them into a Frittata – an Italian-style omelette. As long as there are eggs in the fridge, you won’t need to add any fresh ingredients. Having said that, a crisp green salad would go well with this.

Frittata

- 3 tablespoons sunflower or light olive oil
- ½ onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and chopped
- A variety of left-over vegetables
- 6 eggs
- 2-3 tablespoons cold water
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and soften the onion. Add the garlic and chopped left-over vegetables.
2. Lightly beat the eggs with a fork. Add water and seasoning.
3. Pour the egg over the vegetables and cook on a medium-heat for 8-10 minutes, or until the lower half is set.
4. Turn the grill on and place the pan under the grill – REMEMBER TO USE AN OVEN GLOVE BEFORE TOUCHING THE PAN AGAIN
5. When the surface is golden, remove and serve with a salad.

Stock

When thinking about leftover vegetables, spare a thought for those raw vegetables that lurk in your fridge or vegetable box. They may look as if they are past their best, but even when a little wilted they can be used for stock.

The vegetables needed for stock are celery, leek, carrot and onion. The first three are often the very vegetables to lose their crispness. However, even when a little sad, they can be used to make stock. Woody herbs such as rosemary and thyme often stay fresh for a very long time, so if you have a few sprigs in you fridge, you are in business.

- 2 carrots, peeled and halved
- 2-3 sticks celery, cleaned and cut into 3-4 pieces
- 1 large leek, cleaned and cut into 3-4 pieces
- 1 onion, peeled and halved
- 8-10 whole peppercorns
- Fresh herbs – thyme, rosemary and parsley

1. Fill a large stock-pot with 2-3 litres water.
2. Add the vegetables, peppercorns and herbs.
3. Simmer, very gently, for 1-2 hours, skimming when needed.
4. Strain.
5. Season with salt and use for soup or risotto.
Left-over vegetable curry

If you have a fair amount of cooked vegetables such as parsnips, turnips, carrots, and fennel try this:

- 2 tablespoons mild olive oil or sunflower oil
- 1 onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon hot curry powder
- Pinch of caster sugar
- All your leftover cooked vegetables
- 250-300ml vegetable stock
- 1 tin coconut milk

1. Heat the oil in a wide frying pan and gently fry the onion until soft. Add the garlic, spices and sugar and continue to cook for 2-3 minutes.
2. Stir in your leftover vegetables, add stock and coconut milk.
3. Simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Serve with rice.

Mayonnaise

Nothing transforms cold vegetables or meat like a good mayo. Making some – in the knowledge that there is crusty bread, cold chicken, a few gherkins, some cold roast potatoes – is simple, every-day bliss!

- 1 organic egg yolk – at room temperature
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dry English mustard powder
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Splash of lemon juice
- Sea salt and a little pepper
- 250ml sunflower oil
- 2-3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1. Place the yolk, vinegar, salt and mustard in a large mixing bowl.
2. Add a few drops of sunflower oil and set to work with a large balloon whisk.
3. Slowly add oil drop by drop until the mixture is thick, and then start adding more quickly, while beating vigorously. Continue until all the sunflower oil is incorporated and you have a thick, glossy, mayonnaise.
4. Add the lemon juice and whisk in the extra-virgin olive oil.
5. Season to taste.
Making the Most of Food is the launch event of Cambridge Sustainable Food Alliance (CaSFA).

www.transitioncambridge.org/casfa

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