

# HEALTHY BITES

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## Fast not flash

The last thing many of us feel like doing after a busy day at work is cooking up a gourmet feast. The good news is, cooking healthy and tasty homemade meals doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming.

Here are some of our "real life" tested tips to make mid-week meals that are ready in a flash:

### 1. Frozen vegies are your friend

They're pre-cut, affordable and just as nutritious as fresh. Some of our favourite ways to use them are:

- ▲ Peas + carrots + corn in fried rice
- ▲ Frozen spinach will stay incognito in a lot of pasta sauces or can shine in an omelette
- ▲ Frozen edamame is a hit in Asian salads
- ▲ Stir-fry mixes make noodles a breeze
- ▲ Frozen broccoli and cauliflower are a great side to your steak

### 2. Eggs anyway

Have you got eggs in the fridge? You've got a meal! A cheese and spinach omelet, curried egg sandwich or sweet potato frittata are all great options.

### 3. Ready rice

Use ready-cooked sachets of brown rice from the supermarket. They're more expensive than cooking your own, and have a lot more packaging, but are very convenient when you need an easy meal.

### 4. Big batch bol

Make a big batch of Bolognese sauce and freeze into meal-size portions. Ziplock bags are handy for storing sauce as they stack nicely in the freezer (and can be re-used). When you need a quick meal defrost the sauce in the microwave, cook some pasta (or microwave some potatoes, or make some toast) and slap it all together. You could even go for an old Italy meets Mexico vibe and turn the bol into burritos. Genius!

### 5. Kooky couscous

Couscous is a super quick and easy grain to prepare – add boiling water, cover, leave for a few minutes and voila, ready to go! Bonus points if you can find the wholemeal variety.

### 6. Home-cooked microwave meals

Curry, soup, pasta sauce, tagines, casseroles and stews all do very well in the freezer. Cook up big batches for maximum efficiency and to save on dishes! Spoon meal-sized portions into freezer-safe containers or zip-lock bags and freeze for a rainy day.

### 7. Kids in the kitchen

Don't be afraid to ask the kids to help with the prep. It will probably take more time initially but they'll be learning valuable life skills and eventually they'll be actually helping!

# PANTRY PASTA

**Prep:** 10 min

**Cook:** 15 min

**Serves:** 2

## Ingredients

- ▲ 1 tsp oil
- ▲ 1 onion, chopped
- ▲ 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- ▲ 1 carrot, grated
- ▲ ¼ zucchini, grated
- ▲ 2 tsp dried mixed herbs
- ▲ to taste pepper
- ▲ 1 x 400g can no-added-salt diced tomatoes
- ▲ 1 x 400g can no-added-salt brown lentils
- ▲ 1 tbs Parmesan cheese
- ▲ 120 g spaghetti or other pasta



## Method

1. Cook pasta according to packet directions and drain.
2. Heat oil in a saucepan, add onion and garlic and cook until soft.
3. Add carrot and zucchini, stirring until well mixed. Lower heat, cover and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add tomatoes, lentils, herbs and pepper to vegetables, turn up the heat and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Remove from heat and serve over pasta. Sprinkle with cheese.

**VARIATION:** Use up whatever fresh or frozen veggies you have in this sauce. Pumpkin, eggplant, and green beans all work well.



Do you end up throwing away wilted herbs at the end of each week? Give your herbs a second chance with this handy tip! Roughly break or chop herbs into an ice cube tray, top up with oil and place in the freezer. Once cubes are frozen, pop them out and store in a container in the freezer.