



WEAN EAT GROW

By
Tessa
Kelly

A supportive guide to baby weaning full of honest advice to help you get started and a collection of our favourite baby friendly recipes

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“IF NO ONE HAS TOLD YOU TODAY -
YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB!”



INTRODUCTION

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Firstly I want to say a huge thank you for purchasing my first ebook which I am so excited to finally be able to share with you...

HI LOVELIES!

If you are reading this book for the first time, I'm guessing you and your baby are just about to start or are already underway on your weaning journey. It's a really exciting landmark for your little one but it can also be slightly daunting and perhaps a bit scary for you. My husband, Adam, and I have learnt so much in the last six months as we have taken Clara from first tastes to eating wholesome family meals together and we wanted to share everything we have learnt along the way, ably guided by some fantastic experts who have really helped us through the weaning process. Firstly Lucy Upton [@childrensdietitian](#) who is a Paediatric Dietitian with a huge wealth of knowledge. She has been an incredible support throughout & all the 100s of questions I asked her we hope to cover here to help you, with lots of her nutritional nuggets scattered throughout the book. Kate, founder of 'Mini First Aid' has also contributed some very helpful advice when it comes to the safety of weaning your baby which you can find in the coming chapters.

Having had so many questions and shared experiences from mums and dads on Instagram, we soon realised that it is quite normal to feel anxious about introducing your baby to solid food for the first time. We all seem to be asking the same questions. When is the right time to start? Traditional spoon-fed or Baby-led weaning? How much and how often does my baby need to eat? How do I know if my baby has an allergy? Does my baby eat too much or too little? Is my baby choking or gagging? How much milk does my baby need now? I mean it's a potential minefield if you are doing this for the first time.

So I thought it might be a good idea to bring everything together into a book that I wished we might have had when we started weaning. It's also a good opportunity for me to bring my hospitality degree to full use, as well as national cooking competitions and my Intermediate Cooking Skills course at Leith's School.

This is much more than just a recipe book cooking up delicious dishes for you all to enjoy, I hope to provide you with a realistic and practical guide for what lies ahead over the next 6-12 months for you and your baby at the dinner table.

Please remember it will take time and patience to develop confidence in the early stages of weaning but I hope this book makes you feel like I am with you every step of the way!

Tessa x



Disclaimer and other help available

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OUR WEANING ETHOS



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Eating better changed the way I felt, boosted my energy, improved my sleep.
I really believe it is never too early to start with healthy eating habits...

If you've been following me on Instagram for a while, you'll know health & wellbeing is a huge passion of mine following a severe case of glandular fever that knocked me off my feet in 2016. I also witnessed my dad go through a major emergency heart operation soon after my recovery and I then realised how important looking after yourself is. Eating better changed the way I felt, boosted my energy, improved my sleep. I really believe it is never too early to start with healthy eating habits.

Before I began our weaning journey with Clara, I knew it wasn't going to be just about making the transition from milk to solids. Adam and I wanted to make mealtimes social, fun and something to look forward to as a family. To create a setting where we interact through food, put our devices down and talk, laugh and enjoy mealtimes as our grandparents would have.

Coming from a family lineage of passionate cooking enthusiasts, we are so looking forward to involving Clara at the earliest opportunity in the cooking itself, educating her about ingredients, and obviously how fun it can be to create amazing, varied, wholesome and tasty dishes.

Our ethos is to create healthy eating habits for the whole family. Cooking meals that we can all enjoy together is so important. A busy and sometimes exhausting stage of early parenthood, you do not want to be cooking up a handful of separate meals for you and your household every mealtime. So we made sure our later recipes are packed full of goodness and are satisfying for everyone in the family. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing you are filling your baby's little body with an array of goodness and watching them enjoy their first foods as they **Wean, Eat and Grow.**



"WE HOPE TO HELP YOU SEE COOKING AS A HOBBY NOT A CHORE"

OUR FAMILY MANTRAS

Throughout our weaning journey and to this day we have 3 family mantras that we swear by. Hopefully they might help you along the way and you may even come up with some of your own. Remind yourself of them often, particularly when you're having one of those tough days!

Comparison is the thief of joy

Your child's journey with food will be completely different to that of another. Don't worry if you haven't started offering solids yet, if your baby isn't showing any readiness signs, or if your baby has shown no interest at all in food! Once you do start, there will be bumps in the road. Possible allergies, sudden dislike for their once favourite vegetable and some tantrums! All of this is normal and will happen at different stages of the process, there is no exact timeline for us to follow. So with that in mind, walk your own path, take cues from your child and trust your instincts.

Patience is a virtue

You've just spent 45 minutes preparing a delicious, perfectly nutritionally balanced meal.. well chances are that sometimes it's going to end up on the floor or everywhere other than in their mouth! This can be very frustrating but a little patience, deep breaths and some enthusiasm can work wonders. If it didn't go to plan today, leave it behind, tomorrow is always a new day.

One thing we won't do is panic!

I've lost count the number of times Adam said this to me, it quickly became a family motto. Hopefully we can equip you with all the tools and guidance you need in the chapters that follow which mean that you can recognize when your baby is struggling with food in their mouth so that you know exactly how to deal with any problems they may have and react accordingly. Calmly. Because if you are showing signs of panic, then I can guarantee your baby will recognize this instantly and reciprocate.



WEANING YOUR BABY

3

Your baby is ready to start their weaning journey but the biggest question is, are you?...

GETTING OFF TO THE RIGHT START

Before you get going, the very first step is to make sure your baby is ready. Often as your little one gets close to starting solids others may start to comment on them 'seeming ready for food', or you may notice their peers of a similar age have got going. It's so important to watch your baby here, to make sure they are ready to go from a developmental point of view.

It's also helpful to be aware that breast or formula milk will provide all the nutrition (energy & nutrients) your baby needs until they are 6 months. The Department of Health & NHS recommend starting solids from around 6 months of age, and not before 17 weeks.

Signs your baby is ready:

- Able to hold their head up straight and steady by themselves
- Able to maintain a stable seated position
- They can coordinate picking up objects and move them towards their mouth
- They can swallow food, not just spit it out (They are losing their tongue thrust reflex)

These signs are often confused as signs your baby is ready, but should not be a guide to a green light to start weaning:

- Chewing fists
- Having more milk or more frequent milk feeds
- Waking up overnight, more often than previously
- Showing an interest in your food - it's lovely when babies start doing this and it's likely to stand them in good stead when they do get going. Remember, your baby may or may not show an interest initially. If they don't, it doesn't necessarily mean they aren't ready to go if all the other signs are there.



CREATING YOUR MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT

Weaning is just as much about learning for your child as it is about nutrition. Your baby is going to have to grasp lots of new skills and experiences - which will take some time. Of course we want to provide them with as many nutrients as possible for their growth and wellbeing, but as we sit them at the table for the first time, it is much like sensory play. We are offering them an array of textures, colours, smells and shapes which will stimulate their minds, help them learn skills for eating (e.g. biting, chewing, munching), start to develop their grip and hand eye coordination. Not to mention the social aspect of eating with others at the table.

To be as successful as possible it is vital that we create a really good, calm, consistent meal time environment. This will allow your baby to get the most out of each serving of food.

Timing

A consistent routine can help your baby get the most out of meal times. Of course routines change as your baby grows, but try not to disrupt them too much. Try to plan meals not too close to nap time. If your baby is tired and irritable, it may lead to cutting short feeding time to whisk them off to bed. Equally important is that you have a period after eating where your baby can digest what they've eaten in an upright position and move around rather than lying them straight down to sleep. This will encourage a bowel movement allowing for a better nap if they sleep after a meal. Whenever it is that you choose to feed solids, leave plenty of time, don't rush them and enjoy the experience of food together.

Messy eating

Playing with food is normal. However tempting it may be for some of us, constant wiping and face scraping to prevent mess could end up being detrimental for your baby and their weaning journey. The sensation of mouth or face scraping with a spoon can be very unpleasant for them. This, along with too much wiping of the face and hands could lead to a negative association with certain foods, eating or tolerating 'mess'. We want them to be able to explore what is offered to them fully as part of the learning process, allowing for better hand eye coordination and to understand that food comes in all forms of textures, shapes and sizes.

Food throwing

If your baby throws food or drops it on the floor your first reaction may be to discourage them. Clara did this when she was full or sometimes when she was having a break before digging in again. The best advice we were given was to simply ignore them! Be patient, if they don't get a reaction then they likely won't continue doing it.

LUCY'S TOP TIP

Messy weaning is sensory weaning and absolutely integral to learning about food. Let your baby wear their food and feel as comfortable with it in between their toes as much as in their mouth! I'd suggest avoiding wearing their best outfits for meals, and investing in a splash mat and a long sleeved bib if you know you'll be a little ruffled with the mess!

LUCY'S TOP TIP

Food throwing is a normal phase (or multiple phases!) of your baby's journey with solids. It often occurs with food between 6-9 months of age as babies learn object permanence (e.g. if I move something it still exists). It can be a way of your baby learning about how food feels, sounds, moves or changes! For some babies it may also be a sign they have finished, and it might be time to end the meal.

Dinner Party Eating

The principle of dinner party eating may seem a little silly when thinking about feeding your child but can be extremely helpful in encouraging them to enjoy mealtimes as they move into the toddler stage. To create a social eating environment with eye contact, conversation, fun and even music will make eating together something to look forward to.

Eating with others takes the limelight off your child and allows them to watch you eat, take your lead and follow your example. If you are relaxed and having fun, it will help take the pressure off your baby and ensure they enjoy eating too. Screens of any kind can be a distraction so keep them away from the table, this is just as important for adults as it is for kids and can really help make mealtimes a time for greater connection with each other.



REFUSING FOOD

It may take 10 attempts or more for your baby to get used to new foods, flavours and textures. There will be days when they eat more, some when they eat less, and then days when they reject everything.

Don't worry – this is perfectly normal.

Be patient and keep offering a variety of foods, even the ones they don't seem to like, and let them get used to it in their own time. Other factors, such as teething, illness, being too hot or cold, if they are already full from milk feeds, tiredness or just too much going on around them, can also have a huge effect on appetite.

Fussy eating and food refusal is common with a lot of babies so I wanted to share a few do's and don'ts that really helped us.



...eat at the same time as them (babies love to copy, use that to your advantage!)



... positive reinforcement in the form of noises such as 'mmm' etc. Smiling and exaggerated facial expressions help too.



... try different variations of the same food. Clara rejected boiled mash potato but loved roasted crushed potatoes and potato rolled into balls. Offering foods in different ways like this also helps offering variety with textures, and lets your baby begin to learn that the same food can look and feel different too!



...keep a food diary for them. When we know they like a particular food we can offer it to them too often, meaning their diet might not be as varied as we would like it to be, or even as varied as we think it is. Looking back can help check you are providing enough variation.



...rush! Be sure to take breaks. Music and fun interaction will help create an association that the dinner table is a good place to be.



...over fill the plate - one big pile of food could overwhelm them! Using separated or divided plates can be helpful for some babies too, and can mean the whole meal isn't rejected.



...offer fruit or sweeter foods for a second course/desert each mealtime. We have already talked about getting your child used to bitter tasting vegetables before offering them fruit. It can also be a good idea that when you do offer fruit it goes onto the plate with everything else. Always leaving the sweet stuff last could lead to your child rejecting the savoury main meal and demand their desert prematurely!

"THERE IS NO COMPETITION...
IT'S JUST YOU & YOUR OWN JOURNEY."

IS FOOD BEFORE ONE REALLY JUST FOR FUN?

This phrase gets banded around a lot when it comes to weaning, and whilst the weaning process definitely can be fun and relaxed, it is still an important stage of your child's development. Foundations laid down from your baby's early weeks and months with food, really can shape their experiences with eating, mealtimes, accepted foods and both short & longer term health. Here's Lucy's interpretation of 'FUN':

F

Fundamental skill development and experiences -

Your baby is going to pick up a wide range of skills during the weaning process. These are not limited to skills needed for eating such as biting, chewing, swallowing food (oro-motor skills), but also covers their gross motor skills such as self feeding and fine motor skills such as picking up/handling food and sensory processing.

U

Understanding food and mealtimes -

Every new food offered to your baby is something new to learn about, explore and get to grips with. Your baby is going to learn to understand the wide range of sensory experiences associated with food and eating. These include communication skills at mealtimes, understanding their own appetite and body signals (I'm hungry vs. I'm full). Weaning is a process of learning and understanding that takes time and practice

N

Nutrition - Whilst initially your baby's milk feeds are still contributing to their nutritional needs, as weaning progresses it will be more and more important that they get a variety of vitamins and nutrients from food. Stores of certain nutrients like iron and zinc are also getting low by around 6 months of age, and foods rich in these nutrients are important to include.

Not delaying allergen introduction - It is now widely recognised that proactive introduction of common food allergens into a babies diet during weaning can help support food allergy prevention. These early months of weaning are an ideal time for introducing and establishing these foods as part of your baby's diet.



BUILDING A BALANCED PLATE

Building towards balanced meals for Clara was very much a process; your baby doesn't need to be having a roast dinner within a few weeks of starting weaning.

Early weeks of weaning - Your baby's milk will still be providing the majority of the energy and nutrients needed. These first few weeks are all about introducing basic tastes and flavours. Start with a vegetable led approach for the first 1-2 weeks, including those bitter, sour or umami tastes (green vegetables are great for this!), then gradually introduce foods from the other food groups e.g. iron rich foods, starchy foods, different

vegetables, fruits and allergenic foods. Avoid offering fruit in too many combinations, as babies are very used to (and usually prefer) sweet foods. Try to offer plenty of variety and combinations. There are no rules for foods that do and don't go together'.

As you progress, build your balance - Once your little one has started to get to grips with different foods and food groups it can be helpful to plan their meals to get the right balance of nutrition for growth and development.

Considering variety with both foods, textures and flavours when planning meals can be helpful too.

Dietary variety (or 'diversity' as Lucy likes to call it) is an easy way to make sure your little one is not only getting plenty of different nutrients but also learning about food and practising lots of different skills whilst sitting in a high chair and eating. Offering a variety of foods, especially vegetables, fruits grains, beans, pulses and lentils will also help feed your baby's different gut bacteria (gut garden) - we know more and more that gut health is important for overall health. Weaning is a perfect opportunity to start feeding all those healthy bacteria in your baby's gut, and establish healthy habits for health.

IRON

+

VITAMIN C

+

ENERGY

Source of iron - e.g. red meat, poultry (darker meat is higher in iron), eggs, lentils, beans, pulses, tofu, fortified cereals and dark leafy greens.

Source of Vitamin C - Vitamin C helps the body to absorb iron. Great sources of Vitamin C are fruits and vegetables, so aim to offer vegetables and/or fruit at each main meal. They are not only a good source of Vitamin C, but are packed with fibre, other key Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Don't forget to keep prioritising vegetables for those more challenging tastes! Dishes such as pasta sauces, stews, omelettes and curries are great opportunities to pack with a rainbow of vegetables!

Energy rich food - these can include starchy foods such as sweet potato, pasta, rice or bread, cereals, grains and/or higher fat foods such as avocado, ground nuts or nut butters, spreads and full fat dairy



QUANTITIES

It is recommended that you allow your child to eat to their appetite, so let your baby guide and lead you on how much food they need – never force them to eat. In the same way you follow your baby's cues when offering them breast or bottle feeds, be responsive to your baby when giving them solid foods and learn to recognise when they're hungry and when they've had enough. Weight and growth is a good indicator if you are worried about them over or under eating. There are growth charts in your child's 'Red Book' that the NHS in the UK provides you with at the birth - so if concerned, speak to a qualified health professional such as your GP or Health Visitor who can support with measurements and plotting your baby's growth.

Possible signs your baby is full...

- **Turning their head away.** Turning away and fussing as you bring the spoon to their mouth.
- **Locking lips.** Pressing their lips together as you guide the spoon to their mouth.
- **Squirming.** Fidgeting in their high chair and pushing up to try to get out.
- **Throwing things.** Tossing the spoon or food onto the floor when you try to encourage them to eat more.
- **Pushing your hand away.** Moving your hand as you try to keep feeding them.



LUCY'S TOP TIP

It's easy as a parent to get preoccupied with your baby 'having enough'. In reality, the majority of babies and children are excellent at self regulation e.g. eating/feeding to the demands of their body - these can change a lot! Tune in with your baby, follow their lead and try to focus on the variety offered, not volume.



The NHS in the UK recommends the following guide for meal progression;

FROM AROUND
6 MONTHS

From around 6 months – Your baby can start with one meal a day at a time that suits you both, we found lunch time worked best.

7-9
MONTHS

Your baby can now start to transition towards offering 3 meals a day. You'll probably start with two, then three meals a day at a pace right for your baby. The aim is for a routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner by around 9 months of age.

9-12
MONTHS

Your baby should now be established on three meals a day in addition to their milk feeds. Remember to follow the balanced plate guide above and try as much as possible to eat these meals as a family together - start as you mean to go on!

12
MONTHS

You can now start to introduce a healthy snack in between the established meal times. Your little one may progress towards a routine of three meals and two snacks per day. Often these snacks replace smaller mid morning or afternoon milk feeds.



LUCY'S TOP TIP

Vegetable led weaning is a good starting point before moving to other food groups. By 7-9 months it's important to move your baby on with textures, especially if you're following a spoon fed approach to weaning. Babies have a window of opportunity between 6-10 months of age where they are very receptive to learning about and developing the skills needed to manage the variety of textures food will challenge them with and adding finger foods along with a puree is ideal for learning about food but also practising their grips. It can be easy to stick with purees you know your baby is accepting well, especially when more textured or lumpy foods seem to be associated with gagging or spitting foods back out. This is normal, and part of the process of learning about textures! Make small changes to the texture of your baby's food if needed by adding less milk/water to the puree. Familiar foods are much easier to do this with.

WATER & MILK

Water is vital to keep your baby hydrated and is hugely beneficial when it comes to helping with digestion of solids and avoiding constipation. As we start to reduce the amount of breast milk or formula we offer as they get older it is particularly important that we ensure they are getting enough water throughout the day, not just at meal times but a cup when out and about is a good idea too.

Your baby can have tap water from 6 months of age, but if given pre 6 months for any reason it is advised to use cooled boiled tap water.

Fruit juices and fizzy drinks contain sugar and shouldn't be offered to young children. Don't be tempted by products advertised as 'baby' juices.

At mealtimes offer an open cup or free flow cup (no valve) rather than a bottle, this will help them learn to sip and protect their teeth. Expect plenty of

mess as your baby learns to drink too - this is a new skill, nothing like bottle drinking

Do not offer your baby cow's milk as a drink until they are 12 months old or more. You can use it as a cooking ingredient in food from 6 months of age.

Children over 1 year of age and toddlers typically do not need any more than between 300-400mls (10-13oz) of full fat cow's milk per day as part of a balanced and varied diet. Some can often have less, if eating other calcium rich foods such as yoghurt and cheese. Consistently higher intakes of cow's milk in toddlers can impact on their appetite for food, but also important factors like iron status. This is because cow's milk may not only be replacing intake of iron rich foods, but also larger intakes of calcium can interfere with the body's ability to absorb iron too.



The information below as provided by our health visitor. It suggests approximate amounts of expressed breast milk / infant formula milk needed from 6 months.

AGE	FEEDING GUIDELINES (Expressed Breast Milk /Infant Formula)	SUGGESTED INTAKE PER DAY
About 6 months (28 weeks)	4 feeds per day 210-240ml per feed	About 840-960ml per day
7-9 months	Milk could be offered at breakfast (150ml), lunch (150ml), tea (150ml) and before bed (150ml).	About 600ml per day
10-12 months	Milk could be offered at breakfast (100ml), tea (100ml) and before bed (200ml).	About 400ml per day
1-2 years	Full fat cows milk could be offered at snack times twice a day(100ml x 2), and as a drink before bed (200ml).	About 350-400ml per day of full fat cows mile or another suitable animal milk or milk alternative. Seek advice if using plant-based milk alternatives as these are lower in energy than full-fat animal milk.

ALLERGENS

It's important that before you start offering your baby food, you are aware of what is classed as an allergen. A great place to start here in the UK is the NHS website, which has a whole lot of useful and up to date information. You can then start introducing them safely and monitor how your little one reacts, if at all. It can be a worrying part of the weaning journey, if you have any concerns or just want some advice or reassurance contact your GP or suitably qualified Health Professional.

Some foods that are classed as allergens may surprise you, they certainly surprised me!

- **Cow's milk**
- **Egg**
- **Soya**
- **Fish**
- **Tree nuts**
- **Peanuts**
- **Shellfish**
- **Sesame**
- **Gluten (wheat)**

If you think your child has had an adverse reaction to any foods eaten, seek medical advice immediately. If it is subsequently suspected they have an allergy it will be managed with support from suitably trained allergy professionals such as a doctor or dietitian.

Lucy says - Babies can show immediate or delayed symptoms to a food allergen. Immediate symptoms are within 2 hours of consuming that food, delayed may be 2 - 72 hours later. Signs of a reaction can include one more of the following;



Immediate (minutes - 2 hours)

- **Digestive/gut symptoms:**
diarrhoea or vomiting (often alongside skin symptoms)
- **Skin symptoms:**
flushing/redness, itching, hives, rash, immediate eczema flare, swollen face, lips
- **Breathing symptoms:**
sore, red and itchy eyes, runny or blocked nose, swollen and/or itchy throat and/or tongue, wheezing and/or shortness of breath, new onset persistent cough
- **Circulation symptoms:**
floppy, pale, limp or not responsive



Delayed (2 - 72 hours)

- **Digestive/gut symptoms:** diarrhoea, constipation, blood or mucus in poo, weight loss, reflux or vomiting, colicky abdominal pain, wind
- **Skin symptoms:** itchy skin, non specific rashes (may come and go), persisting or significant eczema (not improving with treatment, and/or needing regular steroids)
- **Behaviour:** baby may be reluctant or refuse feeds, appear in pain and in significant discomfort for long periods of time

INTRODUCING YOUR BABY TO ALLERGENS

Now that we know exactly what they are, how and when do we go about introducing them?

Introducing food allergens can be a scary time, however in the last few years, research has helped us understand that getting your baby to try these foods as early as possible can prevent food allergies. Current advice is to start introducing allergenic foods from weaning age onwards (sometimes earlier in higher risk babies) and aim to have tried them all by around 12 months. Be reassured that your baby is much more likely not to have a food allergy, and severe reactions in babies are very uncommon.

We created a white board in the kitchen and when we offered Clara a food listed above we noted down the time and date. We knew exactly what she had tried and when, so we could trace back any reaction to a specific food. We also monitored her a little more carefully after introducing one. A great tip is to introduce them in the morning where possible, this allows you to spot a reaction much easier throughout the day, rather than in the evening, when if symptoms develop in their sleep you would potentially be unaware until the next morning. It is also recommended that when an allergen is introduced your child is otherwise fit and well.

If you think they're under the weather, wait until they're fighting fit again before trying a new allergen. If your baby has eczema, seek support to manage their skin and get this well controlled.

When it comes to allergenic foods, start with a small serving - we used ½ a teaspoon, but you could start as small as ¼ teaspoon for food such as peanuts. Try slowly increasing the amounts mixed with other vegetables and foods that your baby has had before. Then, after you have seen no adverse reactions to the allergen after 2-3 days you can increase the amount you offer. Where possible, avoid offering a dish that incorporates multiple food allergens, unless your baby has had and tolerated these before, otherwise you will not be able to trace a reaction back to a specific food. We left a week between each. Choosing a specific day of the week to start to introduce a new allergen may help with tracking.

LUCY'S TOP TIP

Some babies are considered at higher risk of developing a food allergy. These babies are those with an existing food allergy e.g. cow's milk protein allergy and/or babies who have moderate to severe eczema. This is usually the type of eczema that has started early in a baby's life and may need regular steroid use. If your baby falls into this category you may wish to seek support with allergen introduction from a suitably qualified health professional.

Contact Reactions

As if there wasn't enough to try and understand, it is also common for babies to develop redness or a rash around their face or on their hands when eating certain foods. This isn't a food allergy, it is an irritant reaction caused by contact with specific types of foods on your baby's delicate skin - which can often be covered in food! These types of rashes or redness are harmless, will be localised to where the food has had contact with your baby's skin, and will subside on its own. Common culprits include:

- **Tomatoes and acidic fruits/vegetables**
- **Histamine rich foods like aubergine**
- **Foods which use citrus juice like lemon juice for flavour or preservation e.g. hummus**



Notable foods and drinks to be aware of:

There are some foods that, whilst not allergens, we should either avoid completely or limit. We have listed the most common foods known to be harmful to young children accompanied with appropriate advice. If you are unsure about ANY food type and its suitability for a baby or child it is always best to check before doing so.

- **Salt** - Under a year should not have more than 1g of salt a day
- **Added Sugar** - sugar found naturally in fruits should probably be their only sugar source
- **Honey** when they are under 12 months because it can contain a toxic bacteria
- **Eggs** - Ensure lion stamped and well cooked
- **Whole nuts** - until they are over 5 years old as they are a possible choking hazard (well ground nuts and nut butters are fine)



- **High mercury fish** - Swordfish, marlin, shark contain high levels
- **Unpasteurized or mouldy cheese** (possible food poisoning risk)
- **Rice based drinks** - rice drinks contain a more concentrated source of inorganic arsenic which can be harmful to babies. These drinks should be avoided whilst they are younger than 5 years old. If your baby needs to avoid dairy, other fortified plant based alternatives are available
- **Unsweetened calcium-fortified, plant-based drinks** - such as soya, oat and coconut and pea drinks. Avoid before your baby is 12 months as a drink but can be used as an ingredient in food. If your baby follows a milk free diet, take advice from a health professional about the most appropriate alternative for your baby



BABY WEANING FIRST AID

Before we started weaning I decided that I would like to know a bit more about general first aid for children. I came across **Mini First Aid** and immediately signed up to one of their courses. Kate, my teacher, has subsequently become a good friend and my go to person for advice, particularly for first aid during weaning. So here she provides us with some invaluable information to help provide you with knowledge and confidence as you get started with weaning.

“One of the biggest worries I think we all have when you first start to wean your baby is choking. Being anxious about it can actually have a negative impact on your baby and may hinder their enjoyment of trying new food. We must remember gagging is very normal to see when you start weaning and your baby learns to cope with different foods. Babies have a very sensitive and reactive gag reflex that sits much further forward in the mouth than us adults. So whilst it’s nerve wracking, expect gagging to be part of you baby’s learning process with food.”



It’s easy to get confused between your baby gagging and choking and so the following information from Mini First Aid will help you know the difference...

GAGGING

Red in the face
Making noise
gagging/coughing
Give them a chance
to work it out!

CHOKING

Pale face/ bluish lips
Silent
Give emergency first aid
without delay

REMEMBER

If they are loud and **RED**
let them go ahead
If they are silent and **BLUE**
they need help from you

TOP TIPS TO AVOID CHOKING

1

For safe weaning, foods need to be “squishable” between thumb and forefinger

(so no raw apple or carrot for example and with no pips or stalks)

2

Safe weaning foods are roughly “baby fist” or “chip” sized

3

Avoid round or cubed foods e.g. cubes of cheese, whole grapes, whole nuts, whole cherry tomatoes

4

Follow Mini First Aid’s “Sit, Chop, Chew” message: sit on bottoms to eat (this applies to mum and dad

too!); chop food into safe, manageable pieces as detailed above; chew – babies and children learn from others so make sure you demonstrate chewing, not shovelling!


For more information on how to access courses on First Aid for Babies there is further information here. Mini First Aid spends a lot of time talking about choking and gagging and there’s a reason for that – over 60% of parents we surveyed said choking is their number one first aid fear. By learning the difference between choking and gagging, and what to do in a choking incident, they hope to remove that fear, so that every parent and child can enjoy an exciting weaning journey exploring lots of yummy foods together!

LUCY’S TOP TIP

It’s so important that parents feel confident in knowing the difference between gagging and choking. Gagging is very normal to see during weaning as babies learn how to cope with different foods, and food reaches different places in their mouth or tongue.

Babies also have a very sensitive and reactive gag reflex, that sits much further forward in the mouth than us adults! So whilst it’s nerve wracking, expect gagging to be part of your baby’s learning process with food.



A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a pink shirt, smiling warmly. She is holding a baby who is laughing joyfully. The baby is holding a large, dark purple eggplant. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets.

LET'S GET STARTED

4

As you know from when you first had your baby, there is equipment that you buy that you simply have never used, and then there are a few things that you just can't live without. I thought you might like to know what my essential kit is.

THE BARE NECESSITIES

High chair

Here are my top tips for choosing the right one.

- Adjustable foot stool so feet always touch and are not hanging (you need your feet to eat!)
- Back support to help encourage sitting up straight
- Straps so they can't move around too much or get out
- Make sure they are comfortable to increase the time they will tolerate sitting upright, not slouched this helps digestion and also to prevent choking
- Use rolled up towels or blankets if your little one is slipping side to side in their chair

Bibs

We encourage messy eating so bibs that cover their whole upper body and catch the food will help with clear up and protect clothes, but make sure they are comfortable.

Food Blender

Ideal for making purees right through to being able to blitz into a mash consistency. If you would prefer a cheaper option hand blenders work really well (a little more mess but you can get them for £20 or less).

Plates and bowls

You may wish to choose those that stick at the base at the beginning with your own preference between silicone, wooden etc. Clara really liked the divider plates as she liked having the food spaced out instead of piled onto the plate.

Open cups or straw cups

No valve.

Ice cube trays

Ideal for freezing after batch cooking (whiskey ice cube trays are a great size!).

Storage Containers

There are lots on the market with airtight lids which stops seepage when storing in the fridge or freezer.

High Chair Toy

Before we started weaning, to get Clara used to sitting in the chair we used a toy that stuck to the tray, books also worked. We didn't use it when she was eating but when she finished she would be really content sitting a little longer with the toy or book, or singing sounds & listening to music. I really believe these are all contributing factors to why she likes being in her high chair now.

Soft spoons

In the early days these are easier on your baby's gums.

Cleaning Cloths

Using disposable wipes is bad for the environment and expensive, so use a cloth that can be washed a re-used.



"THE SECRET INGREDIENT,
IS ALWAYS LOVE."



WEANING LIFE HACKS

The reason most parents give for failing to cook from scratch wholesome, nutritious meals for their children is time. Whilst we can't create time for you, we can offer some simple life hacks that hopefully help you be a little more efficient, so that there's no excuses for not cooking up a storm for your family.

PLAN AHEAD

A food planner to stick up on your fridge will help you plan for the week ahead, ensure you only buy what you need from the supermarket and create an offering for your child that is varied. It's easy to end up offering lots of the same things over and over without even realising!

STOCK UP

Buying multi packs of long life products, such as frozen vegetables, tinned beans and chickpeas (in water with no salt), frozen fruit and grains etc. will inevitably be cheaper and also mean you always have what you need.

BATCH COOK

If there's one single thing that could save you time every day it's this. It will also save money and help reduce your food waste too. Many of the recipes in this book will leave you with lots of portions to freeze for future use.

BUYING FISH

Fish can be expensive, especially fresh fish, which may put you off giving it to your child. I have found a whole new love and appreciation for fresh fish counters at my local supermarket. Primarily because it's the only way to get small portions of fresh fish for Clara's dishes, meaning no fish nor money goes to waste. Just tell them how much you need and they will chop it to size! I've found they're really knowledgeable and have introduced me to new varieties of fish. I am also paranoid about missing a bone, the fishmongers always seem willing to have a check for them too! We buy sustainable caught/ wild caught where possible and I have seen many supermarkets offering these in frozen fillet packs too. Don't forget initially they have such small amounts it's ideal to save some of yours of them too.

BUYING IN SEASON

Buying in season is not only cheaper but can also reduce the length of time from farm to plate, or that food is held in storage. This not only helps preserve the nutritional quality of foods, but also means they tend to taste better. Eating in season is another way of planning variety into your baby's diet. Shop at local greengrocers or markets that are more likely to stock in season produce, or check the label on your fruit and vegetables from the supermarket to see where they are sourced from.

STORE CUPBOARD ESSENTIALS

Below is a list of long life food products that you will always find in my kitchen. A lot of which will be used in the recipes ahead!

Cupboard

Herbs (various)
Low salt stock cubes (various)
Spices (various)
Black pepper
Pasta (orzo, fusilli, spaghetti)
Grains (couscous, quinoa, brown rice)
Millet
Cooked lentils
Dried egg noodles
Low salt bread / wholemeal / sourdough
Chopped tomatoes
Coconut milk
Tinned Beans (various varieties, no salt)
Chickpeas
Plain and self raising flour
Tahini
Free range eggs
Nut butters
Flax and chia seeds

Fridge

Pre-chopped or fresh garlic
Pre-chopped or fresh ginger
Tomato puree (no salt, just pure tomatoes)
Mild cheddar cheese
Full fat milk
Kefir Greek style yoghurt
Non dairy milks (fortified)
Tofu
Avocados
Green vegetables
Mushrooms
Various berries
Tomatoes
Red peppers

Freezer

Frozen mixed summer berries
Frozen peas & sweetcorn
Frozen mixed green veg
Frozen spinach
Bread - What we call 'emergency bread'



LUCY'S TOP TIP

Frozen fruit and vegetables are a saviour when it comes to weaning. They can often be misinterpreted to contain fewer vitamins and minerals, but this is simply not the case. Their convenience, nutritional value and cost makes them a 'no brainer' when it comes to weaning and family meal planning!

A woman with long, wavy blonde hair is smiling warmly at a baby. The baby is sitting on her lap, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants with red heart patterns. The baby is holding a piece of food, possibly a small sandwich or cracker, in their hands. The woman is also holding a piece of the same food. The background is a simple indoor setting with a white door.

TIME FOR RECIPES!

5

So, it's time for the recipes... please note the age ranges given are simply a rough guide. Every baby will be different.

THE RECIPES

You will find most of the recipes are plant based however Clara has no allergies so she eats everything. I have marked recipes that are gluten, dairy, nut & egg free and those that contain one of the other allergens listed previously - whilst including how some dishes can be adapted to the food choices you have made for your child. We eat sustainable fish so have included some of my favourite dishes & some of Dad's specials which include meat but at the end of the day it's down to YOU & only you as the parent how you wish to feed your baby.

It seems that these days people will follow one of two weaning methods, Traditional spoon-fed or Baby-Led Weaning (BLW). You will notice that we offered the choice of puree and finger food to Clara from day one.

We felt like this was a balanced approach to allowing our child to show us how she preferred to eat.

The advantage of this being that the puree allowed her to get accustomed to a wider range of flavours, as well as starting to use a spoon herself, and the finger food allowed her to learn to chew, alongside some hand eye coordination training.

The Early Recipe section is a selection of child friendly recipes that we offered to Clara from 8 months onwards, after having moved on from the puree dishes served with finger food, but every child is different. So with that in mind remember, your child may be ready younger or older, you will have to use your own judgement and take your child's lead.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

When it comes to having to throw a meal quickly together we can forget how quick & easy it is to include some veggies in there, my go to is usually sliced avocado, or quickly pour over some boiling water to steamed spinach, peas & sweetcorn – this really does take a matter of minutes & you can drain under cold running water straight after they are cooked. When your baby is older cucumber and pepper sticks became a favourite too. Also don't forget to add an extra handful in for yourself, as a great excuse for some extra nutrients for you to mama!



6+
MONTHS

FIRST TASTES

VEG LED PUREES



THE DAY HAS COME!

It's time to offer your baby something other than milk and start them on what will be a lifelong journey and love affair with food. Your little one may have taken interest in your food, which is a good sign but if not don't worry, some babies just need to be offered something before they realise it's for them too! It is normal to be nervous and excited, but whatever you feel inside, try to look calm in front of your baby to make them feel at ease, they are so quick to pick up anxious feelings from us!

The method we used in the early days was the veg led principle. We offered Clara a different bitter tasting vegetable, one at a time to start, and then combi purees mixing vegetables with other food groups after around week 4. Don't be tempted to offer a little fruit for fun. Once you get that sweet tooth going it might be a struggle to get them interested in bitter vegetables.

We also offered her a small amount of finger food with each bowl of puree to see if that appealed to her more, just make sure any finger food is well cooked and soft. A good test is that if you hold it with two fingers in a pincer grip it should break or mush easily. Offering finger food not only gives them the option to see what they prefer, it will also help with their hand eye coordination and start to better develop their grip.

We used a steamer to help retain as many nutrients as possible and a small food blender to puree the vegetables and in some cases added a little breast milk in the beginning to help form a smooth texture, you can also use formula or cow's milk. Traditional purees may also use a little water. Whatever you use, just add small amounts at a time, because once you've added it, you can't take it out and you don't want soup!

To best track which vegetables you have already offered, or if you want to plan for the days ahead, you can make a simple chart like we did below. This also shows you the vegetables we offered Clara in the first 2 weeks of weaning.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2
DAY 1 - BROCCOLI	DAY 8 - CAULIFLOWER
DAY 2 - POTATO	DAY 9 - BRUSSELS SPROUTS
DAY 3 - COURGETTE	DAY 10 - PARSNIP
DAY 4 - PEAS	DAY 11 - SWEDE
DAY 5 - AUBERGINE	DAY 12 - PEA
DAY 6 - ASPARAGUS	DAY 13 - CABBAGE
DAY 7 - AVOCADO	DAY 14 - CARROT



SIMPLE PUREES



VEGAN



GLUTEN FREE



EGG FREE



NUT FREE



FREEZABLE

It is important to remember that whilst your baby gets going with weaning that breast milk/formula is their main nutrient source and in the early stages of weaning we are just introducing tastes and textures and

getting them comfortable with sitting at the table. Here are 4 examples of some simple purees that we offered Clara using some of the vegetables in the table provided.

Method for all 4 simple purees:
Peel the vegetables, if necessary, then boil or steam them so that a butter knife passes easily through them. Next, add them to the blender and blitz with either breast milk, formula or water. Don't be afraid to add the herbs!

COURGETTE & OREGANO PUREE

Ingredients:

1 courgette 150-200g
60ml of water / breast milk / formula
½ teaspoon of oregano



AGE 6 MONTHS +



12 ICE CUBE SIZE PORTIONS FOR FREEZING



PEA & MINT PUREE

Ingredients:

200g garden peas
60ml water / breast milk / formula
1 teaspoon mint



AGE 6 MONTHS +



12 ICE CUBE SIZE PORTIONS FOR FREEZING



POTATO PUREE

Ingredients:

1 large/200g potato
(we used Maris Piper)
60ml water / breast milk / formula



AGE 6
MONTHS +



12 ICE CUBE SIZE
PORTIONS FOR
FREEZING



BROCCOLI & PARSLEY PUREE

Ingredients:

Broccoli florets (around 350g)
60ml of water / breast milk / formula
½ teaspoon of dried parsley



AGE 6
MONTHS +



12 ICE CUBE SIZE
PORTIONS FOR
FREEZING



TESSA'S TOP TIP

Remember, when adding your water or milk to the puree, add a little at a time, blitz and check the consistency. Once you add too much you can't go back!



7+
MONTHS

COMBI PUREES



MIXING THINGS UP!

After 4 weeks of simple purees we started mixing it up. You may begin to notice if your baby prefers one over the other. We would recommend still offering both at this stage at every mealtime as you may find they change their mind one day and it's all a good experience for them.

This idea is to slowly increase the texture over time and puree the food less and less, moving towards a chunky mash **by adding in less liquid**. Using a fork rather than a blender can create more of a mashed texture. That being said, don't rush! Listen to your instincts, use the signs your child gives you and follow their lead. The most important thing is that your baby is being introduced to a range of foods.





AGE 7
MONTHS +



SERVES
1 BABY



EGG FREE



NUT FREE



BREAKFAST OATMEAL WITH PEAR & CINNAMON

Oatmeal provides us with a smooth texture that a more traditional porridge oat might not, making it perfect for little ones. Offer with some pear finger food and see how they get on!

Ingredients:

30g oatmeal
100ml cow's milk/non dairy alternative
1 pinch of cinnamon
1 soft ripe pear

Method:

Pour the **oatmeal** into a small pan and add the **milk**, initially cook on a medium heat until the mixture starts to bubble and then reduce to a low heat to simmer.

Grate 1 tablespoon of the **pear** into the porridge and stir well. Simmer for 5 minutes adding more **milk** if necessary to achieve the desired consistency.

Add a sprinkle of **cinnamon** to the porridge and allow to cool. Meanwhile, cut a finger from the **soft ripe pear** and remove any skin to serve beside the oatmeal.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Oats are a great fibre rich cereal to offer babies. They are also really versatile, and oatmeal can easily have added grated vegetables, fruits, ground nuts or seeds added for variety.



AGE 7 MONTHS +



16 ICE CUBE SIZE PORTIONS FOR FREEZING



DAIRY FREE



EGG FREE



GLUTEN FREE



NUT FREE



VEGAN



FREEZABLE



ROOT VEGETABLE PUREE

I apologise in advance for any beetroot coloured stains that might come your way, but beetroot is another great flavour for a little one to taste for the first time with a blast of nutrients for good measure. The colour will make for some good sensory play too!

Ingredients:

- 1 small cooked beetroot (check no salt or sugar added)
- 1 parsnip
- 1 medium potato
- ½ teaspoon chopped or dried garlic
- 1 teaspoon rosemary
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 pinch of dried cumin

Method:

Peel the **potatoes** and **parsnip** and cut into 1-2cm cubes, plus 2 **parsnip** fingers for finger food. Steam or boil for 10-12 minutes or until cooked. Drain and leave the **parsnip** fingers to one side.

Put the cooked **potato** and **parsnip** cubes into a blender and gently pulse. Add the cooked **beetroot**, **garlic**, **rosemary**, **thyme** and **cumin** to the blender and blitz to a puree.

Add water or breast milk/formula to achieve a smoother consistency if required. Once cool serve the puree alongside the parsnip fingers.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

It may be an idea to avoid wearing your favourite dress at the table when little ones are eating this particular dish!

7M+

AGE 7 MONTHS +



16 ICE CUBE SIZE PORTIONS FOR FREEZING



EGG FREE



DAIRY FREE



GLUTEN FREE



NUT FREE



FREEZABLE



COD, POTATO & PEA PUREE

A classic early dish that is well balanced nutritionally! We have cooked this for Clara many times since we started weaning and gradually increased texture from puree to mash to solid food over time.

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon parsley
- 100g cod fillet
- 100g garden peas
- 100g potato
- ½ lemon
- ½ teaspoon garlic

Method:

Preheat your oven to 200°C. Peel your **potatoes** and rinse under cold water.

Lay your **cod fillet** on a baking tray lined with parchment paper and drizzle over a little oil (we use avocado oil). Squeeze over the juice from ½ a **lemon**, rub the **garlic** evenly over the fillet and put in the oven for 20 minutes (or until cooked).

Cut the **potato** into quarters and add to a pan with water so that they are fully submerged. Boil for 15 minutes. With 5 minutes to go of the potatoes cooking time, add the **peas**. Drain the **potatoes** and **peas**, leaving to one side a tablespoon of peas and 2 fingers of potato if you would like to offer some finger food.

Add to the blender. Remove the **cooked fish** from the oven and break up with a fork before adding to the blender with the vegetables. Add the **parsley**, and blitz, stopping to scrape down the ingredients from the side to evenly puree. If you desire a smoother puree, add a little water, breast milk or formula and blitz a little more as required.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

White fish like cod is a great source of protein and iodine. Iodine is important for normal cognitive development and thyroid function.

7M+

AGE 7 MONTHS +

16 ICE CUBE SIZE
PORTIONS FOR
FREEZING

DAIRY FREE



GLUTEN FREE



NUT FREE



VEGAN



FREEZABLE



MUSHROOM & LENTIL DHAL

This dish offers an array of herbs and spices for your little one to experience, along with a top up of Vitamin D from the mushrooms and protein from the lentils. This dish can be cooked for older kids too, just serve with some cooked rice or some sliced wholemeal pitta bread.

Ingredients:

250g cooked lentils
1 medium onion
100g chestnut mushrooms
200ml coconut milk
1 tablespoon tomato puree
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
2 teaspoon chopped ginger
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon dried coriander
½ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon garam masala
100g fresh spinach

Method:

Finely chop the **onions**. Heat a pan with a little oil on a medium heat. Add the onions to the pan and cook for 3-4 minutes or until they start to soften. Finely dice the **mushrooms** and trim the stalks from the fresh spinach. Add the **mushrooms** to the pan with the **onion** and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the **garlic, ginger, paprika, coriander, cumin, tomato puree** and **garam masala** to the pan and mix together well so that all of the ingredients are covered in spices.

Next, add the **cooked lentils** and **coconut milk** and simmer on a low heat for 10-12 minutes, remembering to stir every now and then so nothing sticks to the bottom of the pan. The dhal should start to go creamy. If it starts to dry out, add a little hot water from a kettle.

With 3-4 minute left of cooking time in the pan, stir in the **spinach** so it wilts into the dhal. Sprinkle over a little **coriander** to finish.

Allow to cool and serve either straight from the pan or puree slightly in a blender depending on what you feel your child can manage best.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Don't be afraid to offer herbs and spices in your recipes for baby - it's perfectly safe (just hold the hot chilli). This recipe is a fabulous example of offering a variety of flavours for baby to get to grips with. Baby food doesn't have to be bland, quite the opposite!

8+
MONTHS

EARLY RECIPES





After monitoring how Clara managed certain finger foods, purees and mushy textures in the first 4-8 weeks we moved her on to more adult style dishes, progressing on from purees. Only you will know when your child is ready for each of the dishes in this section and you can mash or cut the food accordingly to meet their needs as you deem necessary.

TOAST!

An old school classic that doesn't have to be boring or repetitive, we use a sourdough with a low salt content in our household but you can use anything you like, pitta bread is another winner with Clara. Try to toast the bread a nice tan colour and don't over toast to the point where it starts to go black.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Toast is a perfect way to introduce bread to babies, as the texture is usually easier to manage than fresh bread. Try to choose a bread with <math><0.3\text{g}</math> of salt per slice, and offer a mix between white or wholemeal options as a way of including variety alongside Tess's top toppings below.



AVOCADO

NUT BUTTER

FULL FAT
CREAM CHEESE
(OR VEGAN ALTERNATIVE)

HUMMUS

TAHINI

OREGANO CHEESE
& TOMATO

BANANA

JAM (LOW SUGAR)
OR CHIA JAM



8M+

AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES 1 ADULT
& 1 BABY
SMOOTHIE



DAIRY FREE



EGG FREE

VERY BERRY SMOOTHIE

I love a smoothie & I mix them up from kale and avocado to summer berries. Clara's eyes usually take great interest when she sees mine so they can make a great occasional snack as a small smoothie bowl or by adding a few spoonfuls as a topping on some porridge for younger babies, as you can squeeze plenty of vitamins & nutrient rich foods into it.

Ingredients:

100g full fat greek yoghurt
(or dairy free alternative)
1 small handful of frozen
summer berries
1 small banana
1 teaspoon of almond butter
100ml oat milk
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Method:

This couldn't be easier to make. Using half of the **milk**, pour into your blender. Add the **yoghurt, berries, banana** and **almond butter**. Blitz for 30 seconds and check the consistency.

Keep adding **milk** to get to your desired consistency, if serving in a bowl with a spoon for your baby you may want to keep it a little thicker. If you desire a more runny consistency add more milk as required. Simple!

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Super smoothie bowls are a great way to pack in fibre for young children, and can be a great help if your little one is constipated. You always have the option to add in extra fruits, vegetables or seeds. Avoid offering smoothies as a drink under 1 year of age.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES
1 ADULT &
1 LITTLE ONE



EGG FREE

PARENT & BABY OVERNIGHT OATS

If you know that you'll be pushed for time in the morning or simply won't have the energy to cook up a storm first thing, then these overnight oats are perfect to prep the night before and grab out of the fridge in the morning. Alternatively you can warm them up on the hob for a couple of minutes if you wish! Soaking the oats this way not only increases the flavour, it also makes it easier for our body to digest the oats more efficiently.

Ingredients:

- 100g porridge oats
- 350ml milk (dairy or non dairy depending on your dietary preference/ requirements)
- 2 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 grated apple
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp almond butter

Method:

In a jar or container suitable for the fridge, add the **chia seeds, cinnamon, and oats** before pouring in the **milk** and mixing together. Then add the almond butter.

Remove the stalk from the **apple** and finely grate into the mix stopping before you reach the core and being careful not to add any seeds. Mix together well, pop a lid on the container and refrigerate overnight. Done!



LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Chia seeds are a good source of protein, calcium, omega 3 and fibre. For babies with quickly adapting guts, start with small amounts initially. Chia seeds can also be a great egg replacer for babies with egg allergy - mixed 1 tablespoons of chia seeds with 3 tablespoons of water and leave to stand for 5 minutes before using in place of an egg.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES 1 CHILD



NUT FREE



SWEET EGGY BREAD

This is a sweet variation of the classic egggy bread, particularly good at breakfast! You could create this recipe using a variety of fruits.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium egg
- ½ banana
- 4 raspberries
- 1 pinch of cinnamon
- 1 slice of sourdough bread
- 1 small knob of butter

Method:

Whisk the **egg** in a shallow bowl. Add the peeled **banana** and **raspberries** and mash well into the egg mixture with a fork.

Add the **bread** to the bowl and leave to absorb the mixture for 2 minutes on each side.

Heat a small knob of **butter** in a frying pan on a low heat. Add the egggy bread to the pan and fry on a low heat for 2-3 minutes on each side or until the mixture is no longer wet.

Remove from the pan and sprinkle on a pinch of **cinnamon**. Remove the crusts and slice into 'soldiers' 2 cm wide to create 3-4 fingers.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

For best results ensure the fruit is well mashed into the mixture, this will prevent it separating from the bread when cooking. The natural sugars in the fruit will burn if you have the heat too high, so be sure to use a low heat on the pan.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES 1 CHILD



GLUTEN FREE*



NUT FREE



SUNDAY BRUNCH SCRAMBLED EGGS

Eggs are our favourite for breakfast and brunch, but since Clara joined the party we wanted to get a little more goodness and flavour into them. This dish does just that!

Ingredients:

- 1 small egg
- 1 teaspoon of butter (or dairy free alternative)
- A pinch of black pepper
- A pinch of smoked paprika
- ½ a red pepper
- ½ teaspoon of ground turmeric
- ¼ avocado

Method:

Chop the **red pepper** into small squares roughly ½ cm across. Whisk the **egg** in a bowl with the **turmeric**. Heat the butter in a small pan and just as it melts add the **peppers** and cook for 2-3 minutes on a medium heat. Next, reduce the heat to the lowest setting and add the whisked **egg** and **turmeric**, gently folding the mixture into the **peppers** until cooked through.

Once the mixture is cooked add a pinch of **black pepper** and a pinch of **paprika**. Remove from the pan to cool. Meanwhile, slice an **avocado** in half and whilst still in the skin, cut lengthways into fingers and remove with a spoon. Serve the eggs with toast and 2 avocado fingers on the side.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

It's best to sprinkle the cooked mixture in a little paprika at the end, doing so earlier in the cooking process will colour the egg mixture and it won't look too appetising for your little one!



AGE 8MONTHS +



12 MINI
FLAPJACKS



EGG FREE



CARROT CAKE FLAPJACKS

Served with some yoghurt for breakfast or lunch, these flapjacks are great at home and on the move for busy parents. That's if you haven't eaten them all yourself!

Ingredients:

150g porridge oats
1 carrot
1 apple
2 bananas
(1 mashed & 1 sliced for the topping)
80ml / ½ a mug of cow's milk (or dairy free alternative)
1 teaspoon of cinnamon
1 teaspoon of turmeric & pinch of black pepper (optional)
Drizzle of nut butter on top (optional)

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C/400°F/Gas mark 6) In a large mixing bowl add the **oats, grated carrot, grated apple & mashed banana** (you can use a fork) followed by the **milk, cinnamon, turmeric & black pepper**. Mix all ingredients until fully combined.

Pour the mix into a baking tray that is lined with non-stick baking paper. Flatten with the back of a spoon, so the mixture is evenly spread. Slice the second **banana** and put on top of the flapjack mixture, trying to place evenly to help you cut into squares later. Follow with a generous drizzle of **nut butter** on top.

Place the baking tray in the middle of the oven & bake for 25 minutes or until golden. Remove from the oven and let sit on the side for a few minutes. Lift the flapjacks out of the tray using the baking paper. Once cooled, cut into squares.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

I have used bananas to top my flapjacks but raspberries and other fruits work well too, so mix it up! It is best to add the berries at the end if you do so.

8M+

AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES 8-10
FINGERS OR
6 SHAPES (AS
PICTURED)
PLUS SOME OFF
CUTTINGS, DON'T
WASTE THEM!



NUT FREE



COURGETTE PANCAKES

Another family favourite that is great to refrigerate and serve in a packed lunch when on the move. Use as part of a lunch or dinner with something else alongside or serve on their own as a yummy snack at 12 months+. Get creative with some novelty cookie cutters to produce some fun shapes!

Ingredients:

120g self raising flour
180ml milk or dairy free alternative
4 finely grated baby courgettes or use ½ of a regular one (they just seem to contain more water)
2 free range egg
Oil for frying
Suggested seasoning: pinch of black pepper, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon of parsley (fresh or dried)

Method:

Beat the **egg** in a large mixing bowl. Grate the **courgette** into the same bowl and add the **flour** and **milk** (or milk alternative). Mix together well with a wooden spoon to disperse any lumps of flour and add your **herbs** to taste. Heat a pan on a medium heat with a little oil and pour in the mix. Depending on the size of your pan you may need to cook multiple batches, a guide for a good thickness is the size of a medium slice of bread.

Cook for 3-4 minutes or until the mixture has begun to set and is turning a golden colour. Then flip to the other side and cook for another 3-4 minutes. Make sure the mixture is cooked in the middle then remove from the pan on to a chopping board and cut into your desired shapes.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

For best results here we need to remember to get the ratio of vegetables to wet mixture correct. If you add too many vegetables v.s the wet mix then your fingers might crumble and break, especially if you want to use them as part of a packed lunch.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



12 MUFFINS



SPICED BROCCOLI & CHEESE MUFFINS

When we first made veggie muffins for Clara as a snack we always thought to ourselves how bland they were. After playing around with herbs and spices we found that our now not so secret ingredient of Garam Masala really sets these muffins apart from the rest.

Ingredients:

- 1 broccoli crown
- 1 cup self raising flour
- 1 cup of milk (cow's or oat)
- 4 free range eggs
- 1 handful of grated cheddar cheese (or dairy free alternative)
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 2 teaspoons garam masala

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Remove the large stalk from the **broccoli crown** and blitz in a food processor to form a crumble. Take a large mixing bowl and with your **broccoli**, add **flour, eggs, milk, grated cheese, black pepper** and **garam masala**. Mix all the ingredients together well.

Lightly grease a non stick muffin tray and spoon in the mixture so that each mould is $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Cook in the oven on the middle shelf for 30 minutes. Test your muffins are ready with a toothpick by poking them and if it comes out clean of mixture then they're ready!

TESSA'S TOP TIP

These muffins really are versatile and are something I love having a batch of. We have used broccoli but any vegetable that can be grated also works just as well.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



DAIRY FREE



GLUTEN FREE



VEGAN



Most hummus and dips that you find in the supermarket will include salt, and in a lot of cases, too much salt for a child. Making your own hummus and baba ganoush from scratch may seem like a lot of effort but you can make enough to last the week and for the whole family to enjoy! We serve both of these on top of toast soldiers or with some cucumber fingers to dip.

NO SALT HUMMUS

Ingredients:

250g chickpeas
2 tablespoons tahini
Juice from 1 lemon
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
1 teaspoon paprika
1 tablesspon extra-virgin olive oil

Method:

Drain the **chickpeas** and rinse in cold water. Add to a food processor the **tahini** and **lemon juice** and blitz for 30 seconds. Then add the **chickpeas**, **garlic**, **olive oil** and **paprika** and blitz to a smooth consistency. If your hummus is a little thicker than you would like then add 2 tbsp of water and mix for 30 seconds more. You can keep adding a little water like this until you reach your desired consistency. To serve, sprinkle a little paprika on top.

BABY-GANOUSH

Ingredients:

1 large aubergine
Juice from one lemon
½ cup fresh parsley
Pinch of black pepper
2 tablespoons tahini

Method:

Cut the **aubergine** into discs 1cm thick. Lay on a baking tray lined with parchment and drizzle over a little **oil** (we use avocado oil). Roast in a preheated oven for 30 minutes until softened. Whilst the **aubergine** roasts finely chop the **parsley**. Add the **cooked aubergine**, **chopped parsley**, **tahini**, **lemon juice** and a pinch of **pepper** into a food blender and blitz to a smooth texture.



LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Chickpeas are a fabulous plant based source of protein and iron.

These versatile legumes can be used as a replacement for meat in a variety of foods including curry, stew or burgers.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES
1 CHILD
3-4 THIN SLICES



NUT FREE



SAVOURY EGGY BREAD

Eggy Bread is a firm family favourite in our house and is so quick and easy for when you're short on time but want to make sure you get both protein and veggies into a dish in good quantities.

Our savoury recipe uses grated courgette but you can easily substitute this for any root vegetable you have in your fridge. Grating is better than slicing or dicing as it stops the mixture from separating from the bread as you cook it in the pan. Perfect served alongside some avocado fingers and extra steamed or boiled vegetables.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium egg
- 1 sprinkle of grated cheese
- 1 sprinkle of grated courgette
- 1 pinch of dried oregano
- 1 pinch of black pepper
- 1 slice of sourdough bread (low salt content)
- 1 small knob of butter

Method:

Whisk the egg in a shallow bowl. Next, sprinkle in the **cheese, courgette, oregano** and **black pepper**. Whisk all of the ingredients together, making sure that everything is evenly mixed with no major lumps.

Add the **bread** to the bowl and allow it to absorb the mixture for at least 2 minutes before turning it over to absorb for a further 2 minutes on the other side. Add a small knob of **butter** to a frying pan on a medium heat. Fry the **bread** for 2 minutes on each side and the mixture is cooked. It should look golden brown when done.

Once cooked, remove from the pan, remove the crusts and slice into 'soldiers' 2cm wide.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Eggs have to be a top weaning food for me! They are very versatile, a great protein source, rich in B12 and the yolk is a great source of iron.



AGE 8 MONTHS +

SERVES
1 CHILD

DAIRY FREE



NUT FREE



BABY RAMEN BOWL

This is hands down Clara's favourite dinner time dish. If you would like to make the dish vegan then use a vegetable stock. Similarly you can substitute the tofu for chicken, or any other meat or fish, just alter the cooking time to make sure everything is cooked adequately. We use cooked chicken from the night before when we use meat, which speeds up the cooking process and means less waste.

Ingredients:

30g tofu
30g egg noodles (use rice noodles to avoid egg)
1 tablespoon of chopped shiitake mushrooms
½ cup of peas
½ cup of chopped green cabbage
1 chicken stock cube
½ teaspoon garlic
½ teaspoon chopped ginger
A squeeze of lime
1 teaspoon coriander
1 teaspoon sesame oil

Method:

In a medium size frying pan heat the sesame oil on a medium to low heat. Add the **green cabbage** and **mushroom** to the pan and cook for 4-5 minutes to soften.

Meanwhile in a deep pan add the **noodles** and enough boiling water to cover them completely.

Then, crumble in the **chicken stock cube** and mix so that it has fully dissolved. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 10 minutes or until the noodles are soft.

Once the **cabbage** and **mushrooms** have begun to soften, add the **chopped ginger, chopped garlic, coriander, and tofu** to the frying pan. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the **peas** to the stock and **noodles** when the noodles have 3 minutes left to cook. Drain the **noodles** and **peas**, setting the stock water aside, and add them to the frying pan of your stir fry vegetables. Mix all the ingredients together in the pan giving everything a good coat of flavour and cook for a further 2 minutes. Finally squeeze over a little lime juice.

Put all the ingredients into a bowl and then pour over 60ml of stock water, a little more or a little less depending on your serving bowl.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Tofu, made from soya bean curd, is another great plant based source of protein and iron. Choosing a 'calcium set' tofu means it's also a great additional calcium rich food to include in your baby's diet.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



4-6 CHILD PORTIONS



NUT FREE



FREEZABLE



ZESTY FISH FINGERS WITH MUSHY PEAS

Fish fingers with a little zesty twist! We started making our own fish fingers so we knew exactly what was going into them. This recipe makes plenty so you can keep them in the freezer and reheat in the oven for when you need them next.

Ingredients:

- 500g cod (any flaky white fish will work)
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 medium eggs
- 5 tablespoons of breadcrumbs
- 2 teaspoons of lemon zest from an unwaxed lemon
- 1 teaspoon of dried parsley
- ½ cup of peas

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a baking tray with a sheet of baking paper. In a shallow bowl, whisk your **eggs** and set to one side. In a second bowl, combine the **flour, breadcrumbs, lemon zest** and **parsley**.

Slice the **fish** into small fingers and place in the bowl with the **egg**, coating well. Take each finger individually and roll in the **breadcrumb mix** until completely coated. Place all fingers on the baking tray. Bake for 20-25 minutes depending on size, until the breadcrumbs are golden.

Whilst the fish fingers are cooking, gently cook the **peas** in a saucepan with a touch of water until soft. Alternatively, you can steam them

for a couple of minutes. Place them in a food processor and lightly blitz until mushy. Remove the **fish** from the oven and plate up. Add the mushy peas on top or on the side. Enjoy the fish fingers with your baby or freeze the remaining portions.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

If you don't have breadcrumbs but have lots of bread that is about to go to waste, simply blitz a couple of slices in a blender.



AGE 8 MONTHS +



SERVES 1 CHILD



DAIRY FREE



NUT FREE



COD ORZO PASTA

Orzo pasta is the perfect first pasta for a weaning baby. Quick to cook, small in size and easy to manage in the mouth for your little one. So few ingredients but so much flavour in this dish!

Ingredients:

- 50g cod
- 30g orzo pasta
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 small handful of frozen garden peas
- 1 small handful of baby spinach.
- ½ lemon
- 1 teaspoon parsley
- 1 vegetable stock cube (low salt)
- pinch of black pepper
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon garlic

Method:

Preheat your oven to 180°C and prepare a pan of boiling water.

Drizzle a little olive oil over your **cod** in a baking tray and season with a pinch of **pepper** and half of the **garlic**, cook for 15 minutes or until the fish is cooked through.

Meanwhile add the **orzo pasta** to a pan of boiling water. Add the **stock cube** and stir to dissolve fully. Simmer for 10 minutes. With 3 minutes remaining add the **garden peas**.

Remove the stalks from the **spinach** leaves and roughly chop.

Once the **pasta** is cooked, drain the excess water leaving the pasta behind in the same hot pan. Add a drop of olive oil, **spinach, paprika, parsley**



TESSA'S TOP TIP

If you don't eat fish yourself, then remember the fresh fish counter in your local supermarket will provide you with small portions of fish, so neither the food or your money goes to waste.

and a squeeze of juice from half a **lemon** to taste. Stir well together (the spinach should wilt from the residual heat in the pan, but if it doesn't then put back onto a low heat until it's wilted sufficiently).

When the **cod** is cooked remove from the oven and use a fork to break the fish apart into small flakes, checking for bones as you do so. Add the cod to the pan of pasta and stir to mix evenly. Leave to cool and then serve!

12+
MONTHS

FAMILY RECIPES



EATING TOGETHER

All of our first tastes and early recipes have been leading towards this point. Whereby we can cook one dish for the whole family for everyone to enjoy together and not have to worry about cooking separate dishes for adults, older children and toddlers. They are simple, nutritious and packed with different herbs and spices, which we have been introducing to our children since week one. For smaller families or those that don't have the chance to always sit down and eat together, each recipe can be frozen in small portions as required so that you can enjoy them at a later date. Alternatively, for busy mums and dads, you can batch cook a recipe to freeze for use at a later date.

We found that some really simple changes and adaptations to our usual meals meant that Clara could enjoy them with us...

- Changing to low or no salt stock cubes - these still add flavour, but without the salt content which is so important to limit for babies (They need less than 1g per day <1 year of age)
- Avoiding adding salt to meals for seasoning - this included moving away from any added salt to cooking water for pasta etc.
- No added sugar - We also avoided any honey or free sugars e.g. syrups, fruit juices in meals
- Avoiding pre seasoned/marinated fish or meats in food - we only cook with fresh unseasoned fish and add flavour ourselves (most marinades will contain salt and smoked or cured products can also have a high salt content)



12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES 2 ADULTS
+ 6 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS
OR 10-12
CHILDRENS
PORTIONS



DAIRY FREE



NUT FREE



VEGAN



FREEZABLE



VEGGIE BOLOGNESE

Bolognese has been a staple family meal for us all for generations, this recipe cuts out meat but definitely not flavour, so it's a great dish to persuade the meat eaters in your house to try! We always have portions of this in the freezer. If you decide to do the same, batch cook the bolognese and freeze in child or family size portions. Then when the time comes, defrost and reheat it in a pan on a low heat whilst you cook your pasta. Make sure the bolognese is piping hot before allowing it to cool, ready to be served.

Ingredients:

1 medium white onion
250g pre-cooked puy lentils
125g chestnut mushrooms
1 tablespoon tomato puree
400g chopped tomatoes
150g spinach
2 garlic cloves (or a teaspoon of pre-chopped 'lazy' garlic)
1 teaspoon dried basil (or a generous sprig of fresh basil)
Low salt vegetable stock cube
Pasta of your choice

Method:

Dice the **onion** and chop the **mushrooms** into similar size pieces. Peel and finely chop the **garlic**. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan on a medium heat. Add the **onion** and cook for 2-3 minutes or until it begins to turn golden and soften a little. Then add the **mushrooms** and chopped **garlic** and cook for a further minute. Add the **tomato puree, lentils** and **basil** to the pan and mix well. Cook together for 2 minutes.

Add 150ml of boiled water to a cup or bowl with the vegetable stock and stir well to dissolve. Pour the **vegetable stock** to the pan and add the **spinach** and simmer on a low heat for a further minute or until the spinach has wilted. Add the **chopped tomatoes** and mix well cooking for another 2 minutes.

Serve over the pasta of your choice and allow to cool before serving. If using spaghetti you may need to cut it up according to your child's needs.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

Serve over the pasta of your choice. Clara loved macaroni pasta mixed into the bolognese between 9-12 months and spaghetti as she got a little older. Perfect to get your Lady and Tramp photograph for the photo album!

12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES 2 ADULTS
+ 6 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS
OR 10-12 CHILDRENS
PORTIONS



DAIRY FREE



NUT FREE



EGG FREE



FREEZABLE



POTATO & BUTTERNUT SQUASH FISH PIE

Fish is the one protein source that everyone eats in our family so this dish really brings everyone together. The whole dish can be cooked earlier in the day and popped in the fridge for later. Then simply reheat in the oven at 180°C for 30 mins when it's dinner time!

Ingredients:

- 2 salmon fillets
- 2 cod fillets
- 2 leeks
- 1 cup garden peas
- 2 medium size potatoes
- 350g butternut squash (peeled & diced into cubes)
- 100g fresh spinach
- 2 garlic cloves (1 teaspoon of pre-chopped garlic)
- 1 sprig of parsley (1 teaspoon dried parsley)
- 400ml coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon corn flour
- 1 lemon

Method:

Chop the **leeks** into discs around a centimetre thick. Peel and thinly slice the **garlic cloves**. Peel the **potato** and dice into squares around 1-2 cm across, if you have used pre-chopped **butternut squash**, cut the **potato** the same size. Add the **potato** and **butternut squash** to a pan and boil in water for 15-20 minutes or until cooked. (alternatively you can use a steamer)

Meanwhile, heat a large pan with a little oil on a medium heat. Add the **leek** to the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes until they soften and start to change colour. Add the chopped **garlic** to the pan and squeeze in the juice from half a **lemon** and cook for 2 minutes. Chop your **salmon** and **cod fillets** into baby bite size cubes and add to the pan cooking for 2-3 minutes. As the fish cooks add the **parsley** and 2 pinches of **black pepper**. Next add the **coconut milk**, bring to the boil then reduce to a low heat to simmer.

Sprinkle in the **corn flour** a little at a time to thicken to your desired consistency. Add the **spinach** and **garden peas** and simmer for 10-12 minutes stirring occasionally.

Remove the **squash** and **sweet potato** from the water and drain, then mash together and season with **black pepper** and **parsley** to taste. Pour the fish mixture into a shallow ovenproof dish and top with the squash and potato to make a lid.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

Orange vegetables like squash in this dish are rich in beta-carotene, the plant based source Vitamin A. Vitamin A has an important role in vision, skin health and the immune system

12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES 4 ADULT WRAPS + 10-12 CHILDREN'S MINI WRAPS OR 20 CHILDRENS MINI WRAPS



NUT FREE*



EGG FREE*



FREEZABLE



BEAN QUESADILLAS

This is our mild take on a usually spicy Mexican dish that is appropriate for the whole family. Just because there's no chillies doesn't mean they aren't full of flavour! We usually serve Clara a side of avocado, sweetcorn or red pepper to accompany the wraps.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium white onion
- 1 red pepper
- 4 large vine tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon of chopped garlic
- 1 teaspoon of dried coriander
- 1 teaspoon of smoked paprika
- 200g chopped tomatoes
- 400g cannellini beans
- Grated cheddar cheese (alternatively use coconut 'cheese')
- 8 soft tortilla wraps

Method:

Dice the **onion, tomatoes and red pepper** into small evenly sized pieces. In a large frying pan add a little oil over a medium heat and add the **onions and red pepper** cooking for 3-4 minutes. Next, add the **tomatoes, garlic, coriander and paprika** and cook for a further 3-4 minutes.

Once all the vegetables have begun to soften, add the **beans and chopped tomatoes** mixing well and cooking together for 5 minutes allowing the sauce to thicken a little. Remove from the heat and spoon some of the mix onto one half of a **tortilla wrap**, grate a little **cheese** on top and fold over the over half of the wrap to form a half moon shape.

Heat a little oil in a frying pan and add the filled tortilla cooking for just 2 minutes on each side so that the tortilla begins to brown and the cheese starts to melt. Remove from the pan and cut the tortillas with a knife in the shape of a pizza slice to the desired width, depending on who it's for. Repeat this process with the remaining mix and tortillas.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

When pan frying the tortilla try not to brown them too much as the tortilla will go hard and make them difficult for children to eat. Using a low heat to warm and soften the wraps a little is what we are looking to do.

*Dietary information given for quesadilla filling only, remember to check the ingredients in the wraps you chose to use for the ingredients and allergens they may contain.

12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES 2 ADULTS
+ 4-6 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS
OR 8 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS



NUT FREE



FREEZABLE



DAD'S TURKEY CURRY

Curries are a great way to get loads of veggies into a dish that is full of flavour, especially those veggies that your little one might not be too keen on and normally avoid on the plate. Adam uses turkey thigh in his curry as it has a higher fat content than a breast which means it retains moisture during cooking to give you a nice tender texture. If you are looking for a vegan friendly option then lentils are the perfect choice for a curry and use a vegetable stock. Serve with rice.

Ingredients:

500g turkey thigh mince
1 medium courgette
1 sweet potato
1 medium onion
200g coconut milk
1 chicken stock cube
200ml boiling water
2 tablespoons mild curry powder (low or no salt)
1 teaspoon chopped ginger
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
1 teaspoon garam masala
2 teaspoons dried coriander

Method:

Finely dice the **onion**, cut the **courgette** into 1-2 cm cubes. Peel the **sweet potato** and dice into 1-2cm cubes.

Heat a large frying pan on a medium heat with a little oil and add the **turkey mince**, cook for 3-4 minutes. Add the **onion, courgette** and **sweet potato** and cook for a further 8-10 minutes or until the **courgette** and **sweet potato** have started to soften and the **turkey** is golden brown.

Meanwhile, add 200ml boiling water to a cup with the stock cube and stir well. Next, add the **garam masala, coriander, curry powder, ginger** and **garlic** to the pan and stir so that all the ingredients are coated in spice. Pour in the stock and stir before adding the **coconut milk**. Bring the curry to the boil and then simmer on a low heat for 10 minutes allowing the sauce to thicken. Check your vegetables are a suitable tenderness for children before serving.

LUCY'S NUTRITIONAL NUGGET

The dark meat or leg/thigh meat from turkey or chicken is also higher in iron than the breast meat. The darker meat from poultry is an easier texture for babies and young children to get to grips with.

12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES 2 ADULTS
+ 4-6 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS OR
8-10 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS



DAIRY FREE



GLUTEN FREE



NUT FREE



VEGAN



FREEZABLE



SWEET POTATO & CHICKPEA TAGINE

Another great dish to allow your little one to enjoy and experience a whole combination of different flavours. We serve it alongside some quinoa cooked in stock and a sprinkle of coriander.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 red pepper
- 1 medium white onion
- 400g chickpeas in water, rinsed & drained
- 2 handfuls of spinach
- 10 dried apricots chopped into chickpea size
- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons tomato puree
- 800g chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground smoked sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon coriander
- 200g quinoa

Method:

Peel the **sweet potato** and dice into cubes 1-2cm across. Chop the **onion** and **red pepper**. Chop the **apricots** to roughly the size of a **chickpea**. Add a little oil to a pan on a medium heat and add the **sweet potato** cooking for 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Next add the **onion** and **red pepper** and cook for a further 2-3 minutes. Add the **garlic, cumin, paprika, cinnamon, coriander** and **spinach** to the pan and stir to cover the vegetables in the spices and allow the **spinach** to wilt.

Pour in the **chickpeas, chopped tomatoes, apricots** and **tomato puree** and stir together. Cover the pan with a lid and simmer on a low heat for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, thoroughly rinse your **quinoa** in a fine sieve under running water then place in a saucepan with double the amount of water to boil for 20 minutes.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

Boiling your grains in low salt stock water really does make a huge difference to the flavour especially with quinoa and couscous!

Keep stirring the tagine and if the mix starts to dry up, add a little water.

Check that the sweet potatoes are sufficiently soft before serving alongside the quinoa.



12M+

AGE 12 MONTHS +



SERVES
4 ADULTS +
4-6 CHILDREN'S
PORTIONS



NUT FREE

CAULIFLOWER MACARONI CHEESE

Whilst Macaroni pasta is perfect for little ones it's also a great choice for the whole family. We like to cook this on weekends when our parents visit, served in a sharing dish and let everyone dig in. We top ours with tofu for a protein source to try and create a more nutritionally balanced dish, but it also works great served alongside salmon fillets.

Ingredients:

1 medium whole cauliflower
250g dried macaroni pasta
800ml soya milk
100g grated cheddar cheese (Violife vegan coconut cheese works too)
150g spinach
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon english mustard
1 tablespoon butter (or vegan alternative)
1 tablespoon dried chives
2 tablespoons plain flour
100g tofu
Juice from one lemon
1 tablespoon nutritional yeast

Method:

Preheat your oven to 200°C.

Trim the **cauliflower** into florets and add to a pan of boiling water, simmering on a medium heat for around 10 minutes or until tender, drain and set aside. In a second pan, boil the **pasta** in water according to the packet instructions or until soft and then drain. Rinse with water to remove any starch and stop the pasta sticking together before setting aside.

In a pan (large enough to eventually hold all the ingredients) on a medium heat, add the **garlic** and **butter** until melted and then stir in the flour with a wooden spoon, cook for 2-3 minutes until it forms a paste. Next, pour in the milk a little at a time, gently whisking continuously. Once all of the **milk** has been added, simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes to thicken. Add the **cheese, nutmeg, chives, mustard, lemon juice** and a pinch of **black pepper** and stir together whilst the cheese melts.

TESSA'S TOP TIP

This recipe uses soya milk as there's quite a lot of milk required for the cheese sauce and we want to be mindful of our child's total dairy intake on any given day. If your child isn't being offered cow's milk as a drink at all, and they do have dairy in their diet, then you could use it in place of the soya milk.

Turn off the heat and add the **cauliflower, pasta** and **spinach** and mix well. The **spinach** should wilt from the residual heat. Transfer all the ingredients to a baking dish.

Finally, dice the **tofu** less than 1cm across and sprinkle on top with the nutritional yeast and a final pinch of **chives**. Cook in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until the crust has started to turn golden and crispy.

FINAL THOUGHTS



6

Writing this ebook has given me the opportunity to reflect on my own weaning journey with Clara.

WEAN, EAT, GROW

It has been really tough at times, with good days and bad. But, the overriding emotion is one of happiness and satisfaction watching Clara start a healthy relationship with food.

Whether you are just about to start your own journey or are already going and are looking for help, I hope the chapters and recipes in this book equip you with the tools necessary to successfully wean your baby on to solids and more than that, introduce them to the wonderful diverse and varied world of food.

Weaning your child can also help ignite your own relationship with good food, both in terms of consumption of the right kinds of ingredients and the enjoyment we can get from preparing it and watching the people we love most enjoying it. Food really can bring a family together and in a world with so many distractions and excuses not to sit and communicate face to face, let the dinner table be a place to enjoy each other's company and have fun.

And remember, as you go above and beyond to feed and care for your family, don't forget to look after yourself!

Don't forget to take a snap of your yummy meals from our recipes and tag me @mrstessakelly, I can't wait to see them all come to life.

Good Luck!

Tessa x



“MUM - SHE WHO SACRIFICED HER BODY, SLEEP, SOCIAL LIFE, SPENDING MONEY, EATING HOT MEALS, PEEING ALONE, PATIENCE, MEMORY, ENERGY & SANITY FOR LOVE.”

TANYA MASSE

FURTHER EXPERT HELP



Throughout this book we have had the amazing help of our expert contributors, Lucy - The Children's Dietician and the people at Mini First Aid.

Below you can find more information on both and the extremely helpful and informative services they offer.

MINI FIRST AID



If you'd like to learn about baby first aid in detail, or just want to gain some extra confidence, you can book on to our 2 hour baby and child first aid classes, covering choking, CPR and much more. And for regular first aid updates and advice, you can subscribe to our newsletter, or follow us on our social media pages!



@minifirstaid



minifirstaid



www.minifirstaid.co.uk



info@minifirstaid.co.uk

NHS WEBSITE

The NHS start 4 life website is an excellent place to find all the latest information and recommendations from UK national healthcare professionals and of course your GP will be happy to answer any questions you may have specific to your own child's needs.



www.nhs.uk/start4life/weaning/

LUCY UPTON - THE CHILDREN'S DIETITIAN



Lucy (pictured below) is an experienced Paediatric Dietitian and Nutritionist, who is passionate about helping children and their families achieve happiness and health with food and nutrition, no matter what challenges may stand in the way. Her knowledge of front-line children's dietetics and nutrition helps to bring honest and pragmatic advice when supporting families and those interested in child nutrition. Her breadth of experience working in both the NHS and private sector, as well as being an advisor in early years public health and a practitioner for a feeding clinic, means that she has a unique offering for children and families.

Lucy runs a private clinic two days a week, and is happy to support families 1:1 with weaning, food allergies, vegetarian or vegan diets for children, feeding difficulties, food refusal/fussy eating or more complex nutritional concerns for babies and children.

She also runs regular weaning webinars, including for those with food allergies.

Lucy is also experienced with supporting business and individuals with brand projects, PR or consultancy services in the field of infant or child nutrition. She is an experienced media spokesperson and provides regular communications or commentary for written and online news outlets, alongside experience with podcasts, radio and national television.



@childrensdietitian



www.thechildrensdietitian.co.uk



lucy@thechildrensdietitian.co.uk





mrstessakelly.com



[@mrstessakelly](https://www.instagram.com/mrstessakelly)

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