

# THE HUNGRY HIPSTER

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Recipes Collection

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# Foreword

Monika, the author of this book and Mission Money ([missionmoney.co.uk](http://missionmoney.co.uk)) blog is a streetwise foodie focused on physical and mental agility and an expert on-budget cook. She is not a hipster, she just happens to spend a lot of time where large groups of hipsters reside.

Recipes contained in this collection reflect her attitude: a little bit fancy, not-too-much-nonsense, clean. If this is the sort of food you like, this book is for you.

Enjoy this collection – it has been written to make your mealtime more pleasant.

## Hipster breakfast for one

This chapter contains five rather quick, rather indulgent and mainly inexpensive breakfasts. All five are suitable as brunch dishes if you fancy sleeping in.

If you have been spending too much time (and money) in the hip cafes sprouting all over the western and far-eastern world, you know those delicious and simple dishes already.

# Breakfast 1: Avo and eggs on toast

This popular breakfast dish is by far one of my favourites. It makes for an excellent hangover killer, brunch dish or just a healthy(ish), filling breakfast option before a busy day.

*Prep time:*  
*10 mins*

*Cooking time:*  
*3 -10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Sort of easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

## Ingredients per single serving

½ avocado  
3 cherry tomatoes  
juice of ¼ lemon  
2 slices of toasting or sourdough bread  
2 eggs  
chili flakes  
salt & pepper  
Oil or butter, if frying the eggs and chorizo

Optional: a small handful of chorizo, sliced

## Instructions

1. Toast the bread
2. Chop the cherry tomatoes, mash the avocado and mix in a bowl with addition of lemon juice, chili flakes and salt and pepper to taste to create a chunky guacamole-like mixture
3. If using chorizo, cut it into thin slices and fry until the edges become crispy
4. Set your eggs to cook – either fry (tasty) or poach (healthy) them, depending on your tastes
5. While the eggs are cooking, spread the avocado & tomato mix on cooked toast. If using chorizo, add that on top of the avocado mix when cooked
6. Crown each slice of toast with an egg

**Tip:** you can microwave chorizo slices for 20-25 seconds on full power to get similar effect as frying it. It will be slightly chewier if microwaved, but still good.

## Breakfast 2: Cheap but hip omelette

Good omelette is hard to come by in a café environment - they seem either overcooked or overcomplicated. Just make your own and be done with it. This is a perfect, fast mid-week or weekend breakfast.

*Prep time:*  
*3 mins*

*Cooking time:*  
*3-10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

2 eggs  
1 tbsp. butter  
small handful of cherry tomatoes  
3 sprigs of basil  
salt & pepper

Optional: a small handful of cheddar

### Instructions

1. Get the pan onto a medium-high heat and add the butter
2. Cut the tomatoes in a half, take the basil leaves off the stem
3. Drop the tomatoes into the pan. They will need tossing around for about 1 minute, but in that time crack the eggs into a bowl, add a pinch of salt and pepper and beat well with a fork. You only need two hands for this, I promise
4. When your tomatoes are turning golden around the edges, turn the heat down to medium and pour the beaten eggs over them. Move the pan around to spread the egg mix evenly
5. The eggs will cook quickly – as soon as majority of the mixture has solidified, sprinkle the cheese over it if using any, and flip one half of the omelette over the other. You might need to ease it off the pan around the edges first
6. When the omelette starts turning golden brown on the bottom, plate up.  
Serve with basil sprinkled all over it.

**Tip:** you can easily replace tomatoes by other filling such as mushrooms, ham, peppers, spinach or other fast cooking greens to your taste. If you are using something chunky such as broccoli, pre-cook your broccoli before folding it into the omelette

## Breakfast 3: Best scrambled eggs ever 🌿

Let's face it; nothing beats good, quick scrambled eggs on toast. This fuss free recipe with simple addition of smoked salmon can easily turn into a delicious, inexpensive brunch.

*Prep time:*  
*10 seconds*

*Cooking time:*  
*3 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

2 eggs  
1 tbsp. butter  
2 tbsp. milk  
pinch of turmeric  
salt & pepper  
2 slices of toasting bread

Optional: spring onions, chives or smoked salmon

### Instructions

1. Get the bread toasting
2. Get the pan onto medium heat with half of the butter in it
3. Crack the eggs into a bowl, add the milk, salt, pepper and turmeric to taste and beat the mixture well
4. Pour the egg mixture into the pan and mix vigorously – you want it to be fluffy and soft. As soon as only few bits of egg remain liquid, turn the heat off. Let the residual heat from the pan finish cooking the eggs while you butter up the toast
5. Place your cooked eggs over the toast and serve

**Tip 1:** turmeric does absolutely nothing taste-wise in this recipe, but it is really healthy so use it if you have it.

**Tip 2:** this makes for a great brunch if you add smoked salmon strips

## Breakfast 4: Incredible vegan pancakes 🌿🌿

Fine, I will say it. These are better than non-vegan pancakes. The banana adds moisture without compromising the lightness. Served with peanut butter and berries these are just divine. The perfect weekend breakfast.

*Prep time:*  
*5 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Sort of easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving (4 chunky pancakes)

100 grams' flour  
1 very ripe banana  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp baking powder  
1/2 cup almond milk  
1 tsp apple cider vinegar (or other  
lemon juice)  
few drops of vanilla extract

Suggested serving with peanut butter  
and blueberries or coconut yoghurt and  
honey

### Instructions

1. Mash the banana really well in a bowl big enough to fit all the ingredients and give you room to stir well
2. Add wet ingredients except the coconut oil to the banana mash and mix
3. When thoroughly combined, sift in the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly
4. Heat the pan to medium and add  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the coconut oil
5. When the pan is hot enough, spoon approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your pancake batter into the pan and cook until each side is golden brown

**Tip:** the batter will be thicker than usual pancake batter

## Breakfast 5: Indulgent sweet quark crepes

This is a Polish recipe and if you ever visit a Polish café (they're all full of bearded hipsters these days too), this dish will be a staple. It sounds very indulgent, but with use of quark instead of heavy cream, it's the good news, not the heart attack.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Sort of easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

**Ingredients per  
single serving  
(3-4 filled crepes)**

**Instructions**

Batter:

100 grams' flour

3/4 cup milk

1 egg

few drops of vanilla extract

butter or oil to fry on

Filling:

1 pack of quark (200-250 grams)

2 tsp powdered sugar

1. Whip the batter ingredients together until you get a smooth, rather runny mixture (you can use a blender if do not fancy whisking by hand). Sifting rather than pouring the flour in helps if mixing by hand
2. Heat the frying pan until medium warm
3. Pour approx. ¼ of the batter into the frying pan, swirling the pan to get it evenly distributed
4. Fry until each side is golden. You should avoid letting the crepes brown too much as this will make them less pliable when folding or rolling
5. When all your crepes are cooked, place the quark into a bowl and whisk with 1tsp of powdered sugar (use more if you find it not sweet enough). You can also just mix it in with a fork instead of whisking, but be sure to mix it well
6. Spread the filling onto the pancakes and either roll or fold them. Sprinkle the other teaspoon of sugar over the top of them for extra sweetness and decoration

**Tip 1:** spread the filling across whole pancake and fold the crepes in half and half again to end up with evenly filled 'triangles' or roll it into a cigar shape

**Tip 2:** if you do not enjoy quark, use other crepe fillings such as Nutella, lemon juice and sugar, yogurt or fruit

# Dining al desco - quick weekday lunch for the overworked

Bringing your own lunch into work or school does not have to mean sweaty sandwiches and sad, limp lettuce. All ten recipes in this section have been tried and tested as work lunches in a trendy, creative agency environment and in a suited and booted corporate world.

All can be eaten warm or cold, do not produce offending smells that might cause office attitude outbreak, are quick to prepare and fit into the 'cheap' meals category without looking or feeling cheap.

## Work Lunch 1: Tabouli 🌿 🌿

Why is this Mediterranean dish good for lunch?

It has all the carbs you'd want but will not send you into a food coma. The original recipes use bulgur or other cracked wheat, but we have no time for cooking that. Grab some couscous instead.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*None*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

Small bunch of flat leaf parsley  
Small bunch of fresh mint  
1 small, firm tomato  
1 scallion onion  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
1 tsp lemon juice  
salt & pepper  
60g dry couscous  
150ml boiling water

### Instructions

1. Boil the water and pour it over your couscous. You will need to fluff it up with a fork after a couple of minutes. The couscous will be ready once all water is absorbed
2. Chop up the herbs, tomato and onion very finely
3. Mix in with the couscous
4. Drizzle over with the olive oil, lemon juice, sprinkle the salt and pepper and mix thoroughly again

Optional: serve with some yogurt  
if you find the herbs too strong,  
or add some pre-cooked chicken  
or hardboiled eggs to make it  
more filling

**Tip:** you can substitute the scallion for more widely available spring onion – chop two spring onions up, white and green part.

## Work lunch 2: Red pesto beef with leaves

It looks far eastern, it kind of tastes far eastern, but all ingredients to make it are available in any regular food shop across the western world. Home cooked fusion food at its best.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*15 – 20 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Sort of easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

125g lean beef (5% fat recommended)  
1 small leek  
1 carrot  
1 celery stalk  
2 tbsp. red pesto  
2 tbsp. tomato concentrate  
1 head of small gem lettuce or other crispy leaves of your choice  
salt, pepper & chilli flakes  
1 tbsp. cooking oil of choice

### Instructions

1. Chop the carrot and celery up into fine cube
2. Slice the white part of the leek finely
3. Place a skillet, wok or a pot with a lid over medium heat and add the cooking oil
4. When the oil is hot, add carrot and celery and sauté under a lid for 5-7 minutes (until soft) stirring as needed
5. Add the leek and sauté for another 1-2 minutes
6. Add the beef into the mix and raise the heat to medium-high. Brown off the beef with vegetables until thoroughly cooked
7. Reduce the heat back to medium and stir in the red pesto and tomato concentrate. Cook for another 2 minutes. If the mixture appears too dry, add a splash of water

Eat with clean, washed lettuce leaves on the side. To maximise flavour you can wrap the beef mix into the leaf and eat it in a single bite.

**Tip 1:** if you are missing the carbs, chop the lettuce up and serve leaves and beef over some rice.

**Tip 2:** this dish also makes for a great dinner. Double the quantities the night before and have it for lunch the following day.

## Work lunch 3: Tuna pasta salad

This one is an oldie, but a goodie. Adding a couple of broccoli florets or a handful of sugar snap peas will lift this dish to make it a little more filling, a little healthier and just a tad more presentable when you reach for it at work.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

40g wholegrain dry pasta (penne suggested)  
1 small tin of tuna in spring water  
1 heaped tbsp. of natural yogurt  
70g frozen sweetcorn  
4-5 small broccoli florets or a handful of sugar snap peas  
salt & pepper

### Instructions

1. Boil the pasta according to instructions. If you are using fresh green vegetables, use a bigger pot and steam them over the pasta while it is cooking
2. Drain the tuna and move it into a mixing bowl big enough for all your ingredients or even your lunch box
3. Defrost the sweetcorn, and if using, garden peas by running them under cold water in a sieve. Drain them well and add to the mixing bowl with tuna
4. When the pasta and vegetables are cooked, drain well and add to the mixing bowl with other ingredients. Allow them to cool for few minutes
5. Add the yogurt and seasoning to taste and mix until combined well

**Tip 1:** if you do not have or do not like fresh greens, add in a handful of frozen garden peas or anything green with some texture of your choice

**Tip 2:** do not overheat this dish, it tastes better at room temperature

## Work lunch 4: Avo, prawns and chorizo bowl

In recent years I have developed something of an obsession for avocados. Although they are ever so calorific, they are also delicious and packed with goodness. Allow them to ripen until just about to get mushy and enjoy in this simple, delicious and super quick meal.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*5 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

1 small avocado  
1 handful of chorizo slices  
5-6 medium peeled and cooked prawns  
1 firm tomato  
½ English cucumber  
1 tsp olive oil  
1 tsp lemon juice  
salt & pepper

### Instructions

1. Place a pan over a medium heat and fry chorizo slices. They contain plenty of fat, you do not need to use any oil for frying, but do not let them get too crispy
2. Slice up the avocado
3. Dice the tomato and cucumber and place in a bowl with avocado
4. Take the cooked chorizo off the heat and add to the avocado bowl
5. Add the olive oil into the pan off heat while the pan is still hot, followed by the lemon juice and prawns. Stir them around quickly to pick up the chorizo flavour from the pan, then add into the avocado bowl
6. Add seasonings to taste and stir well

**Tip:** if you like your meals spicy, add some chilli flakes and slightly more lemon juice over this simple dish.

## Work lunch 5: The dreaded quinoa bowl 🌿🌿

Quinoa has been trending as the healthy grain for few years now. It can be great, but it can also be entirely disgusting. I am a big fan of somewhat masking its natural, slightly bitter flavour and enjoying the nutritional benefits without enduring the full force of not-my-favourite flavour.

*Prep time:*  
*7 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*20 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

4-5 broccoli florets  
1/4 cup quinoa  
1 shallot  
1 medium carrot  
handful coriander  
2 spring onions  
5 peanuts

dressing:

1/2 lime, zest and juice  
1 tsp sesame oil  
1 garlic clove  
small piece of ginger

### Instructions

1. Cook quinoa according to instructions. Be sure to rinse it well before cooking to minimise bitter taste
2. Grate the carrot, chop the shallot, coriander, spring onions, spring onions and peanuts
3. Steam the broccoli lightly, it should retain some crunch
4. When the quinoa is cooked, mix in the chopped vegetables and place broccoli over the top
5. Prepare the dressing by mincing the garlic and ginger, mixing them with the liquid ingredients and zest
6. Pour the dressing over your quinoa bowl

**Tip 1:** if you like your vegetables crunch, leave the broccoli uncooked – just wash it well. It is perfectly edible raw.

**Tip 2:** cooking the night before? Save the dressing in a small container and pour over the dish when ready to eat.

## Work Lunch 6: Brown rice bowl

Another fusion-ish dish, this particular recipe has its origins somewhere in between health and fashion, where wholegrain is good, looking like it's not from around here is better and your stomach not grumbling an hour after eating it is the best.

*Prep time:*  
20 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
25 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Sort of easy

*Cost:*  
Medium

### Ingredients per single serving

60g brown rice  
1 chicken breast  
1 small courgette  
1 small avocado  
Juice of ¼ lemon  
1 garlic clove  
4-5 cherry tomatoes  
1 sweet pepper  
5-6 crushed peanuts  
salt & pepper  
cayenne pepper or chilli flakes  
1 tbsp. olive oil

### Instructions

1. Cook the rice according to instructions
2. Pre-heat a grill or a griddle pan
3. Mince the garlic and place in a re-sealable bag big enough for the chopped vegetables alongside the spices, olive oil and lemon juice
4. Slice the courgette and pepper into chunky slices and add to the bag, shake well and remove
5. Throw the chicken breast into the bag it should pick up whatever spices are left in the bag
6. Grill the pepper and courgette until light charring/griddle marks appear on both sides (3-4 minutes)
7. Grill the diced chicken breast in the same way until cooked
8. Chop and roughly mash the avocado, crush the peanuts
9. Assemble the bowl: place the cooked rice on the bottom, chicken and vegetables over it and crown with avocado and cherry tomatoes. You can cut the tomatoes into halves if preferred that way

## Work lunch 7: Beans and cheese salad 🌿

This super-simple, Mediterranean inspired dish looks nice and is full of nutritional goodness. For a salad, it is very filling but will not cause you to fall asleep in an afternoon meeting.

*Prep time:*  
*7 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*none*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

4-5 cherry tomatoes  
small tin of mixed beans (approx. 200g)  
2-3 artichoke hearts in oil  
a handful of black olives  
50g goats cheese

#### Dressing:

1 tsp apple cider vinegar or lemon juice  
1 tsp olive oil  
pinch of pepper

Optional: basil or mint leaves

### Instructions

1. Rinse the beans thoroughly and place in a dish you will use for mixing the salad
2. Drain the artichoke hearts and add to the beans
3. Add olives, if using tinned, drain them well first
4. Throw in cherry tomatoes, whole will keep better if you are preparing this lunch a day in advance
5. Mix everything together, crumble the cheese in
6. Combine the dressing ingredients and drizzle over the salad

**Tip 1:** if you are struggling to find mixed beans, butter, haricot, cannellini, red kidney beans or even chickpeas will do. Go with the type of beans you actually enjoy.

**Tip 2:** goats cheese can be expensive – substitute with feta or any other salty, crumbly white cheese variety

## Work Lunch 8: Pesto chicken sandwich

Fine, most people like a sandwich once in a while. This one is a little different to your usual limp looking misery found in the supermarket isles. Use focaccia or ciabatta roll and you have gotten yourself a gourmet sandwich without paying for one.

*Prep time:*  
5 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
12 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Sort of easy

*Cost:*  
Medium

### Ingredients per single serving

1 small chicken breast  
1 heaped tbsp. Greek yogurt  
1 small mozzarella ball  
1 tbsp. green pesto  
small handful of rocket leaves or other peppery greens  
salt and pepper  
1 tsp olive oil for cooking the chicken  
2 slices of bread or bread roll of your choice  
  
Optional: serve with baby plum tomatoes on the side

### Instructions

1. Season the chicken breast with salt and pepper and pan fry with the olive oil
2. While the chicken is cooking, cut or shred the mozzarella and wash your leaves
3. Combine the yogurt and pesto – use a small amount of the mix to spread over the inner part of the top slice of your sandwich
4. Once the chicken is cooked, allow it 2-3 minutes to cool down and shred it thoroughly
5. Combine the chicken and yogurt pesto mix and spoon onto the bottom slice of your bread
6. Place rocket leaves and mozzarella on top and close your sandwich

**Tip:** want to cut the cooking time? Use pre-cooked chicken available in just about every supermarket.

## Work lunch 9: Prawn salad sandwich

Have you ever had one of those supermarket prawn sandwiches? They always seem to faintly smell of old fish and have enough mayonnaise in them to get you on your way to a heart attack. Why even bother? Making your own will not only result in something that looks and smells better, but it will also taste better and won't have you craving more food 20 minutes later.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

A handful of small or medium sized prawns, cooked and peeled  
1/4 avocado  
1 tbsp. crème fraise  
1 medium hard-boiled egg  
salt & pepper  
1 stalk of celery  
2 slices of bread or bread roll of your choice

Optional: cayenne pepper

### Instructions

1. Chop the celery finely
2. Chop the egg finely
3. In a bowl mix the celery, egg, prawns, crème fraise and salt & pepper
4. Spread the mix onto your bread
5. Slice the avocado half and place on top of the mix in your sandwich

**Tip:** yes, you can use mayo instead of crème fraise. You can also use Greek yogurt.

## Work lunch 10: Easy yogurt & tomato soup 🌿

This is an uber-light, diet friendly meal and one of my favourites to offset a foodie weekend or an indulgence following major holidays. It might appear all too simple, but simple sometimes is exactly what is needed. Serve this meal at room temperature or piping hot.

*Prep time:*  
5 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
10 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Really easy

*Cost:*  
Low

### Ingredients per single serving

2 large tomatoes  
150g natural yogurt  
salt & pepper  
pinch of sugar  
mixed herbs or dried basil  
garlic bread or crusty roll

Optional: a splash of balsamic vinegar

### Instructions

1. Submerge the tomatoes in scalding water for approx. 30 seconds and remove the skins, blend until smooth
2. Place blended tomatoes into a pan, add a splash of water, the seasoning and sugar and simmer for 3-5 minutes on low heat
3. Add dried basil or other herbs of choice, the yogurt and simmer for another 1 minute
4. Serve with garlic bread, crusty roll or similar

**Tip:** like garlic? Throw a clove into the blender with the tomatoes for additional flavour.

# Would you rather cook or sleep tonight?

## Easy and fast dinners.

Let's face it. Cooking dinner mid-week is great when you have time for it. But when you don't, skip that takeaway and pick one of the seven quick and easy dishes below. It will be better for your body and for your pocket.

To sweeten the chore, have a glass of wine to hand.

## Dinner 1: Pasta alla puttanesca

This traditional dish is usually served with spaghetti, but we do not always have spaghetti to hand. Tagliatelle, penne, fusilli or any other pasta which grips sauce well will do for this quick, easy dinner.

*Prep time:*  
*5 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*17 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

1 tsp olive oil  
2-3 anchovies  
1 clove garlic, chopped finely  
chilli flakes  
100g spaghetti or other pasta of choice  
¼ jar of passata or two large tomatoes, skin removed and blended  
5-6 pitted black olives, drained  
1 tsp capers  
salt & pepper  
fresh parsley for garnish

### Instructions

1. Boil the pasta in accordance with instructions on the pack. Remember to add a pinch of salt to water
2. In a deep frying pan or a non-stick pot add the oil and anchovies and cook on low heat for 3-4 minutes. Keep pressing the anchovies down until they become almost a paste
3. Add garlic and chilli flakes to anchovies
4. Add the tomatoes, capers and olives to anchovies and simmer for another 10 minutes stirring occasionally
5. When your pasta is cooked, reserve approx. 2 tbsp. of water it was cooked in
6. Drain the pasta and alongside the reserved water, add to your sauce
7. Stir thoroughly and serve with chopped parsley sprinkled over the dish

## Dinner 2: Pasta carbonara (the real one)

Carbonara, made well, is delicious; Forget the ready-made versions available in the supermarket, carbonara sauce made from scratch is much tastier and lighter. Sauce works well with spaghetti, tagliatelle or any other pasta varieties which grip sauce well. This dish is not light and will surely help you sleep.

*Prep time:*  
*5 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 - 12 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

100g spaghetti or other pasta of choice  
50g cubetti di pancetta or bacon lardons  
50g parmesan or pecorino cheese  
1 large egg  
1 garlic clove  
1 tbsp. unsalted butter  
salt & pepper

### Instructions

1. Boil the pasta in large saucepan according to packet instructions. Remember to add a pinch of salt to the water
2. Crush and finely chop the garlic clove
3. In a frying pan, fry up the pancetta or bacon lardon cubes with a little bit of butter until crispy. When they start browning, add the garlic (you can take the garlic out later if you like, I tend to leave it in)
4. While the pasta and pancetta are cooking, finely grate most of the cheese into a bowl reserving a little bit to sprinkle over the dish when ready, add the egg and salt and pepper to create the base for the sauce. Mix the cheese and egg thoroughly
5. When cooked, remove pasta and pancetta from heat. Drain the pasta reserving 2-3 tablespoons of water and return it to the pan it was cooked in
6. Pour the egg and cheese sauce over the pasta and stir vigorously – the egg mixture should thicken but not scramble. If it becomes too thick, add a little more water, but do not make it too watery
7. When mixed, add the fried up pancetta and mix well again
8. Serve with the cheese saved earlier sprinkled over the dish

## Dinner 3: Avocado bacon salad

Salad for dinner can be good and filling. Forget flimsy rabbit food, this one will not only leave you well fed, but it will also take the guilt away if you want some ice cream for dessert – it is just a salad after all.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*5 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

1 small avocado  
2 bacon rashers  
little gem lettuce or crunchy salad mix  
1 tsp of cooking oil

#### Dressing:

1 tsp of lemon juice  
1 tbsp. of olive oil  
½ tsp Dijon mustard  
salt & pepper

Optional: a handful of sunflower seeds or toasted walnuts

### Instructions

1. Heat a pan and fry the bacon until crispy
2. Cut the small avocado into slices
3. Shred the gem lettuce
4. While the bacon is frying, on a plate you will be using combine the leaves and avocado
5. Prepare the dressing by mixing all ingredients
6. When bacon is cooked, cut it into bite-size pieces and add to your plate
7. Sprinkle sunflower seeds or walnuts, if using over the plate
8. Finish off by pouring the dressing over your ready salad

**Tip 1:** want more carbs? Add some croutons

**Tip 2:** struggling to cut the crisped up bacon with knife without crumbling it? Pick it up and use kitchen scissors instead

## Dinner 4: Gnocchi and chicken in mustard sauce

You know that bottle of pale ale in this recipe? Get a good one. Pour 150 ml into the sauce, drink the rest.

*Prep time:*  
2 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
20 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Really easy

*Cost:*  
Medium

### Ingredients per single serving

120g ready gnocchi  
1 chicken breast  
1 bottle of pale ale  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
150 ml single cream  
salt & pepper  
1 tsp oil for frying the chicken

Optional: serve with some cooked broccoli

### Instructions

1. Place a frying pan on a heat and add oil
2. Season the chicken breast with some salt and pepper and pan fry
3. While the chicken breast is cooking, get a pan of water cooking for the gnocchi. Cook them according to instructions and drain
4. When the chicken is cooked through and browned to your preference, remove the breast from the frying pan and pour into the same pan approx. 150 ml of ale of your choice
5. Allow the ale to simmer for 2-3 minutes and add the mustard, cream and additional pinch of salt. Stir to combine the ingredients and allow to simmer for further 5 minutes
6. The sauce should thicken really quickly – once it does, take the heat off and tip your gnocchi into your frying pan – toss them in the sauce to cover thoroughly
7. Plate the gnocchi and chicken – pour some of the sauce gnocchi is covered in over the chicken

**Tip:** fancy pork instead? Pork chop will substitute the chicken nicely in this recipe, but do not use beefsteak, it doesn't work in this dish.

## Dinner 5: Salmon with couscous and veg

Light, tasty and really quick. What else would you want for a mid-week dinner?

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Medium*

### Ingredients per single serving

1 salmon steak  
2 tbsp. Greek yogurt  
60g couscous  
1 spring onion  
2-3 cherry tomatoes  
1 small sweet pepper  
salt & pepper  
pinch of sweet paprika powder  
1 tbsp. lemon juice  
1 tbsp. olive oil

### Instructions

1. Boil some water to prepare couscous, you will need approx. 200 ml
2. Place a frying pan on medium heat with half of your olive oil
3. Season the salmon steak with sweet paprika, salt and half of your lemon juice and pan fry until cooked through
4. While the salmon is frying, place couscous in a bowl with some salt and pepper. Add remaining lemon juice and olive oil in with the 200ml hot water, stir and pour over the couscous
5. When most water is absorbed, fluff the couscous with a fork
6. Chop up the spring onion, tomatoes and sweet pepper finely and stir into the couscous and plate it up
7. Season your Greek yogurt with salt and pepper
8. When salmon is cooked, plate up alongside couscous and add crown the dish with yogurt sauce

**Tip:** not sure how to pan fry the salmon? Start frying it skin side down and carry on until the skin is crisping up on the edges. Then flip for a couple of minutes to finish off the top of your steak. Salmon will turn to paler shade of pink while cooked.

## Dinner 6: Jacket potato goodness 🌿

You can put just about any topping imaginable over the good old jacket potato. And although some will tell you microwaving a jacket potato is a culinary crime, be a criminal. Unless you are cooking 20 of these, no point spending an hour with your oven.

*Prep time:*  
*7 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*10 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients per single serving

1 baking potato  
1 smoked mackerel fillet  
1 spring onion  
1 tbsp. Greek yogurt or crème fraise  
salt & pepper  
  
Optional: 1 tsp horseradish sauce

### Instructions

1. Microwave cook your jacket potato (usually 7-10 minutes depending on size, poke few holes in it to allow some of the moisture to escape)
2. Skin and break the mackerel fillet up into small pieces with a fork
3. Finely chop the spring onion
4. In a bowl combine the mackerel, yogurt, spring onion, salt and pepper and if using, the horseradish sauce
5. When your potato is cooked, place it on your dinner plate, make one cut across the length and one across the width to open it up some and place your filling inside and over the top

## Dinner 7: Broccoli and Stilton soup 🌿

This delicious soup is warming, filling and a little bit stinky, but bear with it and smell the good Stilton.

*Prep time:*  
10 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
20 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Really easy

*Cost:*  
Low

### Ingredients per single serving

1 tsp butter  
1 shallot or small white onion  
1 stalk celery  
1 small potato  
4-5 broccoli florets (1/3 of a head)  
250ml vegetable stock  
40g Stilton  
pepper

Optional: toasting bread to serve with

### Instructions

1. Finely chop the shallot and celery stalk, peel and cut the potato into small cubes
2. In a small pan warm up the butter over medium heat and throw in the chopped shallot and celery stalk. Sautee until soft and the shallot starts to turn golden, this should take 3-4 minutes
3. Add in the stock, potato and broccoli. You will want all vegetables to covered by the stock, hence small pot with a lid is suggested for this recipe
4. Simmer your soup for 15 minutes, take off the heat and blend thoroughly with a hand blender
5. Return to low heat (keep the lid on the pot to avoid the soup splashing when it starts simmering) and allow to simmer for 2-3 minutes
6. Take the soup off the heat, crumble in the cheese and add pepper to taste – mix thoroughly

**Tip 1:** like this soup? Make more and freeze for up to 6 weeks

**Tip 2:** do not have fresh broccoli to hand? Frozen broccoli florets work just as well and are cheaper than fresh broccoli

# Granola bars are not good enough – random and delicious snacks

Snacks are there for two reasons: feeding you and giving you a reason to stop looking at the computer screen. Forget the shop bought, pre-packaged boring snacks and try something better.

## Random snacks 1: I want sugar

### Pear smoothie 🍃

1 ripe pear  
250ml unsweetened almond milk  
1 medium sized ripe banana

Core the pear, peel the banana and blend both with almond milk until smooth. Like your smoothies cold? Use a frozen banana or add a couple of ice cubes into the mix.

### Greek yogurt with honey and blueberries 🍃

150ml Greek yogurt  
1 tbsp. runny honey  
a handful of blueberries

Mix all the ingredients and enjoy.

### Hot cocoa 🍃

1 tsp unsweetened cocoa powder  
1 tsp white sugar  
150 ml semi-skimmed cow's milk or almond milk  
50 ml hot water

Place sugar and cocoa in a cup, pour over the hot water and stir until all cocoa and sugar lumps are dissolved. Top up with milk and microwave for 1 minute on high.

Wondering why this is even considered a snack? Hot beverages tend to quench hunger temporarily and this particular drink containing cocoa is richer in antioxidants than an average rich tea. Presence of approx. 3% of protein in cow's milk composition helps to trick your stomach into not growling.

## Apple with peanut butter

1 apple of your choice

1 tbsp. peanut butter

Peel the apple, core and cut into wedges. Dip in the peanut butter.

## Random snacks 2: I want salt

### Broccoli with yogurt and garlic 🌿

4-5 broccoli florets  
2 tbsp. natural yogurt  
1 garlic clove  
salt & white pepper

Steam or cook the broccoli. Crush the garlic clove and mix with the yogurt, salt and pepper. Pour over the broccoli and serve warm.

### Crispbread with savoury cottage cheese 🌿

2-3 pieces of crispbread such as Ryvita, Finn Crisp or similar  
100g cottage cheese  
few sprigs of chives  
salt

Finely chop the chives and mix with the cottage cheese alongside the salt. Serve cold with crispbread. Most shops sell already flavoured cottage cheese, if you don't feel like chopping chives.

### Salty popcorn 🌿 🌿

Handful of corn kernels of your choice  
Olive oil spray  
Salt

Microwave the popcorn in a bowl with a cover. Bowls are better than paper bags as they stop the corn from burning as fast as it would in a bag. Spray your popcorn lightly with olive oil – in this recipe it acts as an adhesive for salt only. Sprinkle salt and enjoy.

## Cheap bruschetta 🌿 🌿

2 slices of crusty bread  
1 large, ripe tomato  
1 garlic clove  
salt & pepper  
1 tsp olive oil

Toast the bread. While it's toasting, crush the garlic clove, chop the tomato very finely (you can discard the seeds if you do not like them), and mix both with salt, pepper and oil. Place your tomato mix over the bread and serve still warm.

## Random snacks 3: I don't know what I want

Carrot sticks and hummus 🌿 🌿

1 -2 carrots  
1 small pack of humus (100g)

Peel the carrots and chop into rough 'stick' shapes. Dip into the humus, enjoy cold. Short of time? You can buy the carrots already cut, but time is money, so expect them to be double the price of regular carrots. Plenty of time? Make your own hummus.

Spicy feta and sweet pepper dip 🌿

100g feta  
60g roast peppers  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
a handful of breadsticks

Blend feta, roast peppers (drained if you are using canned/jarred variety) and olive oil into a smooth paste. Serve as a dipping sauce with breadsticks or other crusty bread of your choice.

If you just want a bar of chocolate, who are we to judge.

# Cook more and freeze some for later

“Freezer cooking” is not just a domain of busy housewives. If you are strapped for time during the week and readily available food choices do not cut it, consider meal prepping and freezing food portions.

Not every meal freezes well, but the small selection of recipes in this section has been tried over and over again to give you a selection of foods that do not lose taste, texture or visual appeal when defrosted and re-heated.

Why cook in bulk and freeze ready meals? This is a perfect solution for those who are picky eaters, those who are busy and those who mind their health as much as their budget.

# Freezer meal 1: Vegan shepherd's pie 🌿 🌿

This delicious pie takes a while in the oven, but is delicious, filling and healthy.

*Prep time:*  
25 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
90 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Really easy

*Cost:*  
Low

## Ingredients for 6 portions

Pie topping:  
600g starchy potatoes such as  
Maris Piper  
400g butter beans tin  
30g dairy free margarine  
1 tbsp. dried thyme  
salt & pepper

Pie filling:  
1 onion  
2 carrots  
2 sticks of celery  
4 garlic cloves  
400g kidney beans tin  
200g chestnut mushrooms  
10 sun-dried tomatoes  
2 tbsp. tomato puree  
2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar  
150g of red lentils (dry)  
200g frozen peas  
250g vegan vegetable stock  
1 tbsp. dried thyme  
salt & pepper  
1 tbsp. olive oil

## Instructions

1. Get out two large cooking pots and a deep pie/ casserole dish
2. Start cooking with the filling, which takes longer. Chop the onion, carrot, celery, garlic, mushrooms and sun-dried tomatoes finely (do not mix them yet)
3. Place a large pan on heat with olive oil
4. Add chopped onion, mushrooms, carrot and celery and allow to fry until the onion is starting to turn golden
5. Add in the stock, garlic, sun-dried tomatoes, tomato puree, vinegar and the dried red lentils as well as thyme
6. Cover and simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. In the meantime, drain and rinse the kidney beans, defrost the peas by running them under some cold water in a sieve. Set both aside and start working on the pie topping
7. Peel the potatoes and cut up into small chunks
8. Boil some water in a kettle, place your second large pan on heat and boil the potatoes until soft and easy to mash. Add a pinch of salt to the water. They should not take longer than 12-15 minutes to cook
9. While the potatoes are cooking, drain the butter beans and rinse well and turn your oven on to preheat to 180 Celsius degrees
10. Once potatoes appear soft (poke them with a fork to check), toss in the butter beans and simmer for approx. 1 minute together, then drain and mash into a fine mash with the margarine, thyme and salt and pepper to taste
11. Check on your pie filling – the red lentils should have by now absorbed most of the moisture giving you a thick stew. Add kidney beans, frozen peas and salt and pepper to taste and bring to simmer – it only needs to simmer for 1-2 minutes
12. Move your pie filling into the pie (or casserole) dish and evenly distribute the potatoes. I tend to do this large spoonful at the time, using the fork to distribute the potatoes mix evenly. You should have enough to cover the whole dish with approximately 1.5 cm thick layer

13. Place your dish in the oven for 45 minutes. In the last 10 minutes, raise the temperature to 200 Celsius degrees to brown the top of the pie lightly but be careful not to burn it.
14. Allow the pie to cool, distribute into freezer safe containers and freeze.

**Tip:** want additional texture? Serve this pie with some long stem broccoli on the size which can be frozen directly with the dish.

## Freezer meal 2: Hungry boyfriend's honey mustard pork chops

I have a case of lovely yet very hungry boyfriend going on. He likes meat, he likes big portions and most of all, he likes good flavours. He likes this classic dish a lot too so the chance is, you might like it just as much.

*Prep time:*  
*10 minutes*

*Cooking time:*  
*50 mins*

*Difficulty:*  
*Really easy*

*Cost:*  
*Low*

### Ingredients for 6 portions

6 good size pork chops  
3 tbsp. honey, runny type preferred  
4 tbsp. Dijon mustard  
1 tbsp. olive oil  
200 ml beer of your choice  
1 large carrot  
1 white onion  
1 tbsp. butter  
salt & pepper  
500g baby potatoes

Optional: rosemary or thyme can be used to add flavour to your baked potatoes

### Instructions

1. Get the baby potatoes boiling in a large pot of water with a pinch of salt – you will boil them until they're just about cooked through (approx. 15 minutes)
2. While the potatoes are boiling, cut the carrot and onion into fine slices, season the chops with salt and pepper and pre-heat the oven for 200 Celsius degrees
3. In a frying pan brown the carrot and onion in the butter
4. When browned, remove the vegetables into a baking dish you will use to bake the chops and in the same frying pan, lightly brown each pork chop. Place the browned chops over the vegetables in your baking dish
5. If you haven't yet, get your potatoes off the heat or they'll overcook. Drain them and place in a separate baking dish, sprinkle with 1 tbsp. olive oil and some salt and pepper to then bake lightly in the oven
6. Return to your frying pan – pour the beer, honey and mustard into the pan and simmer for a couple of minutes – you want to lift any brown bits of the meat and vegetables and keep that flavour in the sauce
7. Pour the sauce over your pork chops and place both the baking dish with meat and the one with potatoes in the oven
8. Bake both for 30 minutes
9. Allow to cool and place in freezer safe containers, one portion consisting of pork chop, little bit of the carrot and onion and few potatoes per container

## Freezer meal 3: Old school veg soup 🌿 🌿

I grew up eating piping hot, super healthy soups. Mainly the type where there are so many vegetables in it, to broth feels overcrowded. Recipe below is one of my favourite single pot dishes to eat freshly cooked or to freeze and pull out when I am in need of something warming.

*Prep time:*  
15 minutes

*Cooking time:*  
45 mins

*Difficulty:*  
Really easy

*Cost:*  
Low

### Ingredients for 4 portions

2 carrots  
2 parsnips  
3 celery stalks  
1 onion  
1 clove of garlic  
a handful of yellow split peas  
a handful of frozen sweet corn  
kernels  
2 large potatoes  
1.5 l vegetable stock  
1 tbsp. thyme  
salt & pepper  
1 tbsp. olive oil

Optional: to make this richer, add  
a dash of double cream to your  
portion

### Instructions

1. Clean and peel all vegetables as needed.
2. Chop all vegetables except the potatoes and onion into fine cubes
3. Slice the onion finely and cut the potatoes into larger, bite size chunks
4. In a large stock pot, brown the onion and garlic lightly in olive oil
5. Pour in the stock and bring to boil
6. Add all other vegetables, grains and pulses alongside the herbs and spices
7. Bring back to boil, reduce the heat and simmer for at least 30 minutes stirring occasionally
8. When cooled, freeze in freezer safe, portion size containers

## About the author

Monika Kinga Seredynska (1986) is a Polish-born British author and creative. She currently lives in London with her French partner and two cats, where she runs a number of personal finance, lifestyle and environment focused initiatives such Mission Money blog and YouTube channel Monika Saves.

Her written work to date has been focused on non-fiction essays and fiction short stories. Video materials from her Polish-language YouTube channel (no longer active) on life and socio-political situation in modern Europe have been featured in a popular Polish creative show "Wolny Ekran" (Free Screen) which airs on TVP1, Polish national television channel.