

Cooking with Leftovers

Why avoid food waste?

We all generate food waste – at home, in school, at work and on the un...everywhere. early all this food is thrown in the bin, and while some is composted most ends up in the landfill!

About 1/3 of all the food we buy gets thrown out! On average, wasted food costs each Irish household €700 a year. For some Irish households this can be over €1000! The food we throw away is a waste of valuable resources as it is expensive to buy and expensive to dispose of. Food has a high carbon footprint as energy is used to grow, harvest, transport, process, package, prepare and sell it. The main types of avoidable food waste are:

- Bread
- Apples
- Potatoes
- Salads
- Meat and fish
- Yoghurts and milk
- Spreads and dips

Lovely leftover recipes

Scrumptious Starters

Cheddar Cheese & Bacon Scones

Vegetable Soup with Ginger

Magnificent Mains

Braised Chicken Thighs in Chunky Vegetable & Tomato Sauce

Leek & Bacon Pie with Potato Topping

Spicy Salmon Fishcakes

Decadent Desserts

White Chocolate Bread & Butter Pudding

Mini Apple & Mixed Berry Crumbles

Scrumptious Starters

Cheddar Cheese & Bacon Scones

I adore these scones as a bread option for a dinner party but also as lunchbox fillers. You can have as much fun and variation as you like by playing around with the ingredients to change the flavour.

Ingredients

Savoury Scone Mixture:

1lb/450g plain flour
1 rounded teaspoon baking powder
Pinch Salt
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper or paprika
3oz/75g grated cheddar cheese
3oz/75g butter
1 large egg
Approximately 7floz/200ml buttermilk

Flavouring:

5oz/150g cooked bacon-cut into chunks
2 teaspoons of freshly chopped thyme

Glaze:

1 egg
3 tablespoons milk
Pumpkin Seeds

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas Mark 4.

Prepare and Grease a flat baking tray

In a large bowl place your sieved flour, baking powder and cayenne pepper.

Add the salt and diced butter. Gently rub the butter into the flour.

Add the grated cheese, cooked bacon and chopped thyme.

In a separate bowl lightly whisk the egg together and add to the dry ingredients.

Mix in the buttermilk to achieve a soft sticky dough.

Roll out on a floured work surface and cut into equal sized shapes using either a sharp knife or a scone cutter.

Brush lightly with beaten egg and milk and sprinkle with the pumpkins seeds or a little extra cheese if you wish.

Bake in the oven for 25 minutes.

Serve warm with butter.

Top Tip

- You may need to use extra buttermilk to achieve the right consistency.
- If you don't have leftover bacon use some bacon lardons-cooked gently.

Vegetable Soup With Ginger

Just a mild spiced flavour in this soup. It's a very warming nourishing soup.

Ingredients

1oz/25g butter
½ medium sized onion
1 inch fresh root ginger-peeled
2 sticks of celery
1 medium leek
3 cloves of garlic
1 sweet potato

10oz/300g butternut
squash/turnip/broccoli/pumpkin
2 medium carrots
2 large sprigs of thyme
Seasoning
2 pints/1200ml chicken/vegetable stock
2floz/50ml double cream
Pinch ground cinnamon

Method

Peel and chop the potato, carrots & butternut squash and add them to the chopped celery, leeks, onions, ginger and garlic in a large bowl. Heat a large saucepan with the butter and toss in all of the vegetables together with the thyme sprigs. Allow them to cook very gently (and without colour) for 8-10 minutes or until the smaller of the vegetables are glazed off. Next add in approximately 2/3 of the chicken or vegetable stock and bring the mixture to a slow boil and then reduce the heat and simmer for an additional 15-20 minutes or until all of the vegetables have softened down completely. Using a hand blender, blitz the soup until it is nice and smooth. Mix in the cream and ground cinnamon at this stage and return to the heat and bring back to a very gentle boil. If you would like a thinner soup, now would be the best time to add some additional stock to thin it down. Correct the seasoning at this stage also. Transfer it to your serving bowls or cups and garnish the soup with a little crème fraiche or pouring cream infused with some additional ground cinnamon. Serve as required or alternatively allow the soup to cool down and then transfer it into suitable containers and freeze until required.

Top Waste Prevention Tip

· Vary the types of vegetables as much as you can in this recipe using whatever you have to hand.

Magnificent Mains

Braised Chicken Thighs in Chunky Vegetable and Tomato Sauce

A perfect Healthy option for all the family to enjoy!

Ingredients

8 chicken thighs/breasts
4-6 mushrooms-sliced
2 cloves of garlic
1 medium onion-chopped
1 ½ mixed peppers-cut into chunks

2 carrots-cut into chunks
1 tin chopped tomatoes
5floz/150ml chicken stock
1 glass of white wine
Thyme sprigs
Seasoning.

Method

Preheat the oven to 170C/325F/Gas Mark 3
Heat a large pan with a little oil and cook the chicken thighs, skin side down, until they are golden brown.

Transfer to side dish for a moment.

Meanwhile return the pan to the heat and add in the onions, carrot, mushrooms & mixed peppers together with the chopped garlic to the pan and fry for a couple of minutes or until the vegetables have begun to soften.

At this stage add in the white wine and allow this to reduce for a moment or so.

Season the mixture now with salt and black pepper.

Pour in the chopped tomatoes & chicken stock at this stage and allow the liquid to come to the boil.

Return the chicken thighs to the pan together with some thyme sprigs, secure with a tight fitting lid and cook gently for approximately 1 ¼ hours until the chicken is tender.

Serve with some chunky bread and a large green salad

Top Waste Prevention Tip

· Make stick with leftovers and then freeze as ice cubes for use when cooking – this works with left over wine too!

Bacon & Leek Pie with Potato Topping

This is a quirky variation to the traditional creamed potato topping. Without the potato topping this dish is delicious mixed through some hot pasta or served with boiled rice or creamed potatoes.

Ingredients

2lb/900g leftover cooked bacon-diced into bit size chunks
2 medium sized leeks-sliced thinly
8 mushrooms-sliced
3 cloves garlic-crushed
1oz/25g butter
1oz/25g plain flour
1/2 glass white wine
14floz/400ml milk
2floz/50ml cream

Topping:

4-6 large potatoes-scrubbed well (peeled if you wish)

1oz/25g fresh white breadcrumbs

1oz/25g grated cheddar cheese

Method

Cut the potatoes into thick slices.

Put the potatoes into a large pot of salted water and bring to the boil.

Cook for 8-10 minutes until the potatoes are tender but not fully cooked through

Strain into a colander and allow to cool.

Meanwhile heat a large shallow saucepan with the butter (and a little bit of oil to stop the butter from burning).

Add in the leeks, garlic and mushrooms at this stage together with a little seasoning.

After a further 5 minutes sprinkle in the flour and use this to dry up any liquids in the pot (and thicken the sauce), Pour in the white wine and the milk & cream at this stage and allow the mixture to come to a gentle boil whilst stirring all the time. Season lightly at this stage also and add in the bacon and continue to cook for 4-5 minutes
Simmer for 20-25 minutes and then transfer to a large casserole dish.

Neatly arrange the sliced potatoes on the top, Sprinkle with some salt, pepper, cheese and breadcrumbs and bake in a preheated oven (190C/375F/Gas Mark 5) for approximately 20 minutes.

Top Waste Prevention Tip

· One third of the potatoes we buy get thrown out! Recipes like this are a great way to use leftover potatoes.

Spicy Salmon Fishcakes

(Serves 6)

Serve as a starter or main course depending on size. If you wish to really impress you could mould the mixture into a series of small croquettes and serve them as a canapé as your guests arrive for dinner.

Ingredients

Spicy Salmon Cakes:

3 large salmon darnes

½ glass white wine

1lb/450g leftover mashed potatoes

1 bunch spring onions-finely chopped

1-2 dessertspoons mango chutney

½ green chilli-finely diced

Grated zest ½ lemon

1 egg yolk

Freshly chopped parsley

Seasoning

Coating:

2oz/50g seasoned flour (plain flour with a little salt and pepper)

1 egg mixed with 2floz/50ml milk approx

4oz/110g fresh white breadcrumbs

1 dessertspoon of sesame seeds

Method

Preheat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas Mark 5.

Place the salmon onto a baking tray and pour on the white wine.

Season lightly with salt and pepper and poach in the oven for 15 minutes.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool down.

Meanwhile in a large bowl combine the potatoes, spring onions, mango chutney, diced green chilli, parsley & lemon zest and mix well.

Roughly crush up the cooked salmon and carefully mix it into the mixture without breaking the fish up into too many pieces. Mould the mixture into the desired shapes (Approximately 6-8).

Use a little flour to assist you and to prevent the fish cakes from sticking to the work surface.

Transfer to the fridge for about 30 minutes to allow the fish cakes to firm up a little.

Prepare your three separate bowls for to coat the fish cakes, with seasoned flour in one, egg wash in the other and the breadcrumbs and sesame seeds in another.

Remove the fish cakes from the fridge and pass through the bowl of seasoned flour, then into the egg wash and finally shake off the excess and coat fully in the breadcrumb mixture

Pan Fry until golden on both sides and then transfer to the preheated oven for approximately 10 minutes to ensure that the salmon fishcakes are sufficiently heated through.

Serve with green salad and sweet chilli jam.

Top Waste Prevention Tip

· For herbs and salads leaves grow your own. They take up little space, taste great and will save you money.

Decadent Desserts

White Chocolate Bread & Butter Pudding (Serves 6)

This is a simple twist on a classic dish. This is a wonderful treat to take out of the oven after the traditional Sunday roast and because it is so simple to make that just adds to the appeal. Feel free to leave out the white chocolate but it does just add an extra richness to the dessert.

Ingredients

1 loaf of sliced bread-buttered and crusts removed (approx 12-16 slices)
7oz/200g caster sugar
5 large eggs
18floz/500ml milk
3 ½ floz/100ml pouring cream
3oz/75g sultanas
4oz/110g white chocolate
2oz/50g flaked almonds-optional
¼ teaspoon of ground cinnamon

Method

Butter all the slices of bread and cut off the crusts.

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas Mark 4.

Put the milk and cream into a large saucepan and heat gently (almost to the boil).

Layer the bread up in a 9 or 10inch oven proof dish and scatter the soaked and drained sultanas in between each layer of bread. You should end up with three (or four) layers of bread altogether with the sultanas scattered in between each. The top layer should be just bread (DO NOT PUT SULTANAS ON THE TOP). 2oz/50g of sugar should be scattered in between each layer also.

Break the 5 eggs into a large mixing bowl and add the remaining 5oz/150g sugar and beat together until combined. Add in the white chocolate at this stage (chocolate drops or a bar-chopped finely).

Add the cinnamon to the eggs and sugar and pour the boiled milk & cream over the egg and chocolate mixture and whisk well until combined.

Slowly pour all of this mixture over the bread and butter and allow it to stand for about 10 minutes to allow the milk to infuse into the bread.

Scatter the flaked almonds on the top of the soaked pudding at this stage.

Put into the oven and bake for 40 minutes until the pudding is well risen and almost set to the touch.

Serve with butterscotch sauce and cream.

Additional Tips:

- If you wish you can leave out the white chocolate or even substitute it for dark.
- Sultanas should be rinsed in hot water before use and if you wish (or if time allows) you can soak them for approximately 30 minutes in either orange juice or whiskey for a more developed flavour.
- You can have the pudding assembled and soaked in advance and leave it in the fridge until you are ready to cook it.

Top Waste Prevention Tip

· 1/3 of all bread bought gets thrown out.
Try this yummy bread and butter pudding recipe or make bread crumbs from stale bread. The bread crumbs can be frozen and used later.

Mini Apple & Mixed Berry Crumbles

A crumble is a very traditional dessert but one which is always very popular. This dessert can be frozen very successfully and retained until required at a later stage.

Ingredients

Sweet Pastry: (you will have some left over for the next time)

9oz/250g plain flour

3oz/75g caster sugar

4oz/110g butter

Cold water

Compote:

3 large cooking apples-peeled and diced

6oz/175g mixed berries

2oz/50g caster sugar

1 tablespoon water

Pinch ground cinnamon

Crumble Topping:

8oz/225g plain flour

4oz/110g butter

4oz/110g brown sugar

Pinch cinnamon

Method

Place the sifted flour in a large bowl with the caster sugar.

Rub in the butter with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add the water to the dry ingredients and bind it together.

Wrap in cling film and allow to rest.

Bring all ingredients except the berries to the boil for 3-4 minutes. Add the berries. Allow to cool down.

Rub all ingredients together.

Line a buttered tartlet mould with sweet pastry, ½ fill with apple compote.

Scatter with some of the crumble topping.

Bake in a hot oven for 15-18 minutes

(190C/375F/Gas Mark 5).

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

I am using the mini muffin baking sheets for these crumbles but you could choose to use a larger tray and just adjust the timing upwards.

Sometimes it is nice to put some fresh or frozen berries in with the apple.

Waste Prevention Tip

- Try to use seasonal fruit!
- Check out www.bestinseason.ie Bord Bia's website which explains the benefits of eating fresh fruit and vegetables grown within the natural Irish season

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