

One for the Road

Going on a great summer road trip?
We have cooking tips and recipes to help along the way.





One for the Road - Thoughts from our Brand Ambassador Fast Ed.

We were sitting around a beat-up old table on the hilly outer edges of Tumbarumba earlier this year when the news that a Covid lockdown was going into effect brought all of our phones to life.

After a few days of uncertainty, judgement came from the Health Department that news and information creators (a category into which we certainly fit), were exempt provided a strict range of protocols were observed. And so we continued to travel, although the borders of NSW had been closed hard and fast for us.

But with the pandemic came a not-insignificant auxiliary problem – the cafes, bistros and restaurants all closed. We could travel, sure, but where to eat?

And right there, as we sat on the verandah of the rented house in the dimming light, tired and a little irritable, we had to pick ourselves up, head to the boot of the car, rummage through boxes of ingredients (like a pantry for the road) and come up with something sufficiently tasty, easy and nutritious to keep the crew going.

When all is said and done, my principal takeaway was really quite straightforward, but please don't think I'm being trite, because I'm really not. The food matters, sure, but far more important is the quality of that brief window of time you have as a family perched around that table together. Irrespective of age, interests or mood, for you and for your kids, those are the slivers of time that will be the signposts of history with which you mark out your life in years to come.

So, cook whatever works, and I'm only too happy to help with recipes, but make sure you do that other vital thing. Enjoy it. A meal spent together is the very definition of bliss. And that was the most important lesson I've learnt on the road this year.

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INTENSELY POTATO PIE

The key here is that not all potatoes are the same, which means choosing the right kind can make or break your recipe. So, we'll get to know some varieties, and put them to work creating a rich, hearty and kind of over the top spud-licious meal. My version was unforgettably delicious out of a camp oven.

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Serves: 10

4 medium starchy potatoes
100g ghee, melted
Sea-salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
4 medium waxy potatoes
1 leek, diced
½ head fennel, finely diced
8 cloves garlic, minced
2 Tbsp unsalted butter
2 Tbsp plain flour
1 cup chicken stock
1 bunch dill, chopped
2 cups crinkle cut potato crisps
Extra dill to serve

1 Preheat oven to 180°C fan-forced (200°C conventional), or a camp oven to moderate. Peel and coarsely grate the starchy potatoes, then squeeze to remove excess moisture. Mix with the ghee in a large bowl and season with salt and pepper. Press into the sides of a 22cm fluted tart tin*. Line with baking paper, then foil, then baking weights and bake for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, peel, dice and steam the waxy potatoes, until tender, then set aside. Sauté the leek, fennel and garlic in butter in a large frying pan for 5 minutes, until softened, then add the flour and cook briefly. Mix in the stock and simmer until thickened. Fold in the potatoes and dill.

3 Remove the baking weights and lining of the potato crust, then spoon in the filling and bake for 20 minutes, with a good pile of coals on top of the lid if cooking in a camp oven. Allow to cool slightly, turn out, then top with crumbled potato crisps.

Camp cooking tip #1

Check where the prevailing wind is coming from before you light your fire. It might seem obvious, but trust me, it really isn't for most people. You need to ensure that the smoke isn't going to fill your tent or caravan (a recipe for a bad night's sleep), and ensure there's no dry brush or grass immediately downwind as that could be a fire risk.

Camp cooking tip #2

Invest in a non-stick barbecue liner. These are usually about \$10 and you'll find them at any hardware store or barbecue specialist. They have three main benefits. When you find yourself at a public barbecue that no one has cleaned in eons, simply drape it over the top and dinner is on its way. If you're cooking fish and lamb chops (for example) and you don't want to mix the flavours, then cook one on the plate, then cover with a liner and cook the second. Lastly, if you're barbecuing for just yourself and someone special, avoid all the needless cleaning by using this culinary prophylactic.



COUNTRY STYLE CHICKEN SOUP WITH HERBED EGG DROP

Chicken soup for the soul and stomach. Bound to be a family pleaser at the end of a long day's camping.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 1½ hours

Serves: 4

1 small chicken (about 1.2kg)
1 Tbsp black peppercorns
6 juniper berries
8 bay leaves
1 head garlic, halved
2 cinnamon sticks
1 parsnip, peeled and chopped
2 carrots, peeled and cut into rounds
2 sticks celery, sliced
4 large potatoes, peeled and diced
1 bunch chives, very finely sliced
sea-salt flakes and freshly-ground white pepper
6 free-range eggs
1 bunch dill, very finely chopped
grilled sourdough toasts, to serve

1 Place the chicken, peppercorns, juniper berries, bay leaves, garlic, cinnamon and parsnip in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Set over a medium heat and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for 1 hour.

2 Carefully remove the chicken and allow to cool slightly. Remove the meat, shredding into finely strips. Discard the bones. Strain the soup, then return the liquid to the saucepan.

3 Add the carrots, celery and potatoes to the soup and cook gently for 30 minutes, until the potatoes are tender, then mix in the chicken and chives. Season with salt and pepper.

4 Whisk the eggs and dill together, then season with salt. Ladle the soup into warmed bowls, then drizzle the egg mixture in. Serve immediately with grilled sourdough toasts.





CACIO E PEPE: BUCATINI PASTA WITH CHEESE AND PEPPER

This could be the simplest pasta ever, just a handful of ingredients. What I love about it is that it is really clever, using the starch from the pasta cooking water to create a thick and delicious sauce. This really is one recipe that everyone ought to know.

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4

400g bucatini

75g unsalted butter

sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely grated Pecorino

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely-grated Parmesan

$\frac{1}{2}$ bunch parsley, very finely chopped

1 Cook the pasta according to manufacturer's instructions in a large saucepan of rapidly boiling salted water until al dente, then drain well, reserving 1 cup of pasta cooking water.

2 Put the butter in a large frying pan and melt gently, then increase heat and add half a cup of pasta water. Boil rapidly for 1 minute. Season with salt and a very generous amount of black pepper.

3 Stir in the Pecorino, whisking until the sauce has a creamy texture, then add the pasta and toss to coat well. Add the Parmesan and parsley, then serve.

Camp cooking tip #3

Travel with a fire blanket. They cost around \$7 at hardware stores and can be the difference between life and death if you're making a traditional fire. Literally. Don't put it off. And while you're at it, get one for home as well.

Camp cooking tip #4

If you are making an old-fashioned fire remember that we cook over coals, not flames. No matter how much your stomach is rumbling you'll need to be patient. Not only is the flavour better, but you almost completely remove the possibility of being that guy at the campsite who just incinerated his entire meal.

SPICED LAMB LEG BARBECUE ROAST

A great roast is the ideal way to end the day. But if you want to do it even better, then get outdoors and pop it on the barbecue.

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 1¼ hours

Serves: 8

1 whole lamb leg, bone in (approx. 2kg)
2 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp dried thyme leaves
1 tsp ground coriander seeds
sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
12 fresh bay leaves
2 bunches kale
2 cups mixed baby tomatoes, quartered
2 x 180g packets haloumi, sliced
lemon wedges, to serve

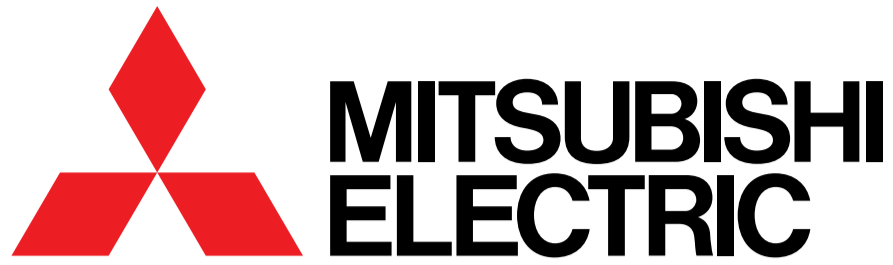
1 Use a small sharp knife to cut rings around the lamb leg, 3cm apart. Combine the spices in a mortar and pound well, then season with salt and pepper. Mix in half the olive oil and rub onto the lamb. Place the bay leaves into the incisions.

2 Grill over a low-moderate heat for 20 minutes, turning several times, until lightly browned, then transfer to a rack over a roasting pan and cook with the BBQ hood down for 1 hour.

3 Allow the lamb to rest. Meanwhile, toss the kale in the remaining olive oil and grill lightly, then grill the haloumi as well. Mix with the tomatoes and arrange on a platter, then put the lamb on top.

Camp cooking tip #5

Don't be afraid of cooking in the coals, as well as on a grill. If you wrap potatoes, pumpkin, parsnips or even cauliflower in a triple layer of foil with some garlic, olive oil and herbs, they will cook to perfection in about an hour, then do the grilling at the last minute.



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