



★ Spring/Summer Edition ★

The Monkey Puzzle Cookbook



Nutritionist-approved recipes
for happy, healthy children

A vibrant photograph of a child's meal. In the upper left, a pink, flower-shaped bowl is filled with creamy oatmeal, topped with several fresh strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries. Below the bowl, on a wooden cutting board, are more ingredients: a large blackberry, a strawberry, a blueberry, and a raspberry. A red and white checkered cloth is partially visible on the left side of the cutting board. The background is a soft-focus mix of teal and pink.

Welcome to your Cookbook

Spring/Summer

These recipes have been developed especially for our nursery children—designed to be nutritious, seasonal, and practical to prepare in busy kitchens. They reflect a balance of the key food groups needed for children in early years, while introducing a wide variety of ingredients, textures, and flavours to help expand little palates.

Each recipe has been designed for simplicity and consistency, using familiar ingredients and straightforward methods to support whoever is preparing the meals. Unless otherwise stated, all recipes are suitable for children aged 12 months and over.

Benefits of bananas

Bananas are a brilliant breakfast fruit – naturally sweet, easy to prepare and loved by young children. They also contribute towards the DfE Early Years Nutrition Guidance recommendation of a portion of fruit or vegetables at breakfast each day.



Crumpet with mashed banana & glass of milk

INGREDIENTS

10 crumpets • 3-4 ripe bananas, mashed • 1 litre whole milk to serve

Allergens: Contains cereals containing gluten (wheat) (crumpets). Contains milk.



METHOD

Toast the crumpets until lightly golden. Mash the bananas with a fork until smooth. Spread the mashed banana over each toasted crumpet. Cut each crumpet into strips to serve as finger food, or cut into quarters for older children. Serve with a glass of whole milk (approximately 100ml per child).

Chef's Tips

- Use ripe bananas - they're sweeter and easier to mash. Toast the crumpets just before serving so they stay warm.
- Check the salt content of the crumpets using the nutritional information on the packet. It must be less than 1.5g of salt per 100g.

Chicken & aubergine curry with chapatis & rice

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp vegetable oil • 2 white onions • 1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed • 1/2 tsp garam masala • 1/4 tsp ground cumin • 1/4 tsp ground coriander • 1/2 tsp turmeric • 350g boneless, skinless chicken breast, diced into 2cm pieces • 50g red lentils • 200g aubergine, cut into 1cm dice • 100g fresh or frozen spinach • 400g tin chopped tomatoes • 400ml coconut milk • 200ml water or low salt veg. stock • 3 tbsp fresh or frozen coriander, chopped (optional) • 200g basmati rice • 150g chapatis or wraps • 200g cauliflower florets

Allergens: Contains cereals containing gluten (wheat) (in the chapatis or wraps) and celery (stock) if using.



METHOD

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and fry the chopped onions for 8 to 10 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and spices, then cook for 1 minute. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, coconut milk, and 200ml water or stock. Add the lentils, chicken, aubergine, and spinach. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer with the lid on for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the lid for the final 15 minutes to thicken the sauce. Meanwhile, cook the rice and steam or boil the cauliflower until very soft. Stir the coriander into the curry, if using, and warm for 2 minutes. Serve with rice, chapatis, and cauliflower.

Vegetarian Recipe: Aubergine & red lentil curry with chapatis & rice

Omit the chicken and add an extra 100g red lentils for a protein-rich vegetarian curry.





Chef's Tip

Use pitta bread, flatbreads or wraps if chapatis are unavailable. Ensure salt content is 1.5g or less per 100g. Check the nutritional label on the pack.

Lemon & pea penne pasta

INGREDIENTS

400g dried penne pasta • 200g frozen peas • 1 lemon (zest and juice) • 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil • 200g green beans, trimmed • Parmesan or cheddar cheese, grated

Allergens: Contains cereals containing gluten (wheat) (in pasta) and milk (Parmesan/cheddar).



METHOD

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Drain, reserving a mugful of the pasta cooking water. While the pasta cooks, cook the frozen peas according to packet instructions (usually 2-3 minutes in boiling water). Drain and set aside. Steam or boil the green beans for 7-9 minutes OR until tender and easily squashable. Drain and set aside. In a large bowl, combine the lemon zest from 1 lemon, the juice of 1 lemon and the olive oil. Add the drained hot pasta and cooked peas to the bowl. Toss everything together, adding a splash of the reserved pasta water to help create a light sauce that coats the pasta. Add a little grated Parmesan and toss again. Serve immediately, with green beans on the side.





Chef's Tip

When asparagus is in season (March-June), you can replace the green beans with asparagus spears.

Interactive & Fun

Children love having control over their food choices, and this encourages them to try new combinations while building independence!



Build your own fruit & yoghurt bar

INGREDIENTS

600g plain whole milk yoghurt (or unsweetened dairy-free alternative such as oat or soya yoghurt) • Choose 3–4 fruits from the following, depending on season and availability: 200g strawberries, hulled and quartered; 200g blueberries, left whole for children over 12 months, halved for younger children; 2 ripe bananas, peeled and sliced into fingers; 2 ripe peaches or nectarines, stoned and cut into small pieces; 200g tinned fruit in juice (such as peaches, mandarins, or apricots), drained and chopped into small pieces; 2 kiwi fruits, peeled and cut into fingers • Toppings: desiccated coconut, milled flaxseed (optional)

Allergens: Milk (yoghurt).



METHOD

Spoon the yoghurt into individual bowls for each child. Prepare and cut the fruit safely according to the age and stage of the child and arrange in small separate bowls or on a platter so children can see the options. Allow children to choose their own fruit toppings and add to their yoghurt. Offer toppings (if using).

Chef's Tip

Set the fruit and toppings out in small bowls at the table so children can see and choose what goes into their yoghurt — this is a brilliant way to encourage food curiosity and positive mealtime experiences.



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