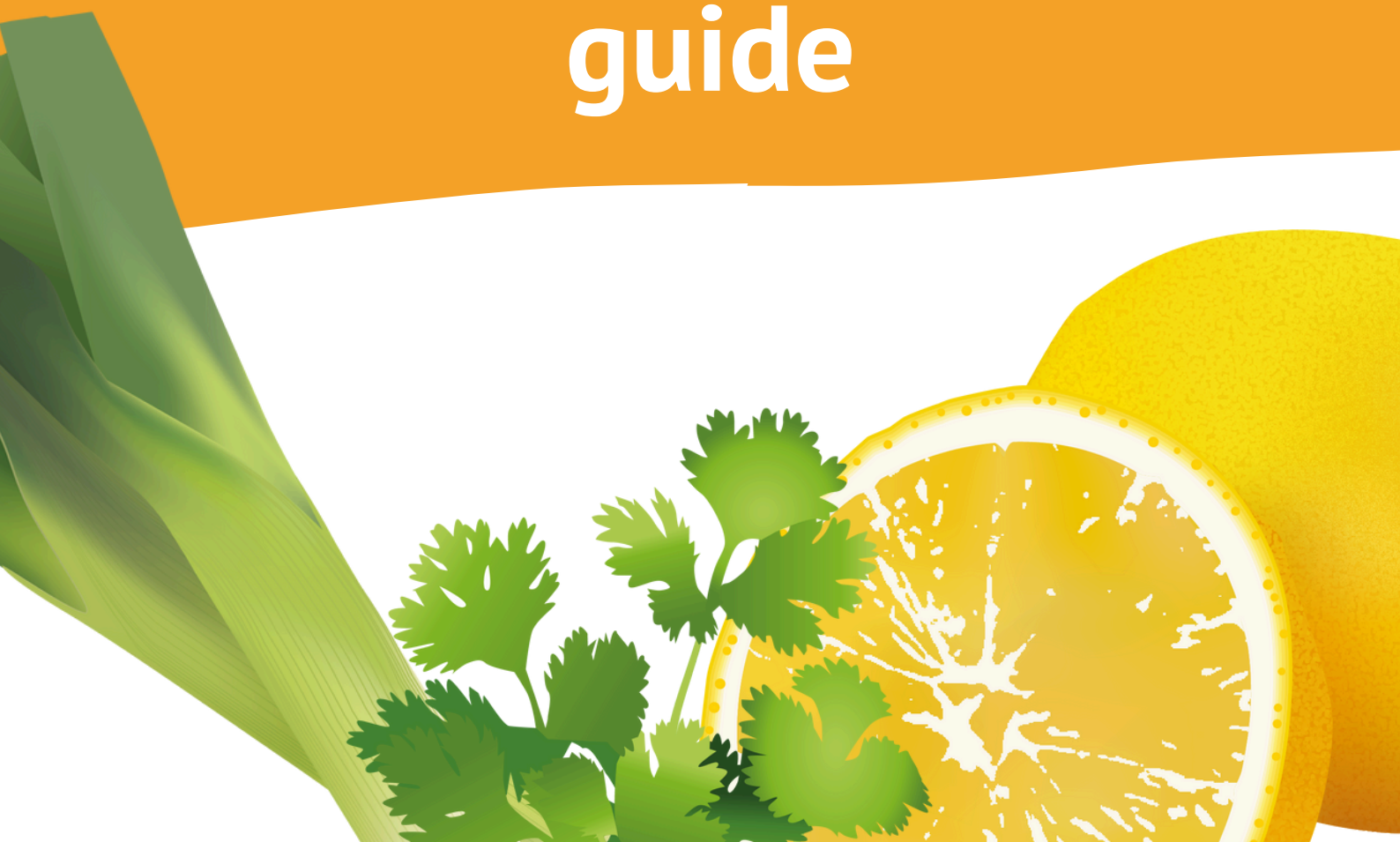




# HEALTHY ZONES

Cooking session  
guide



# HEALTHY ZONES



## Top tips

- 1** Spend time at the beginning of the session to establish a safe environment - no one has to try, no one has to like
- 2** Choose recipes that children will be excited about - get children to help you identify recipes to try
- 3** Have options for each task - for example herbs could be cut with scissors or simply torn
- 4** Choose a variety of fruit and veg with different colours and textures
- 5** Decide what the outcome is when planning - do you want them to learn a new skill or try a new food?
- 6** Get children to use all of their senses to explore food
- 7** Let children play with food when possible
- 8** Choose a mixture of foods you know children will like and add some that will challenge them



# Cooking session guide



## Preparation

- Choose your recipe - check allergies/dietary requirements
- Format recipes to suit children's needs - add symbols or photos of tasks, make writing bigger or split recipe into different task cards
- Write a shopping list and buy spare ingredients if possible
- Write an equipment checklist
- Create a powerpoint to guide the session and further break down trickier tasks

## Setting up the space

- Set up specific stations with all equipment that is needed
- Give each child their own recipe card if possible
- Preheat ovens, line baking trays or drain ingredients to speed up the session

## During the session

- Have examples of ingredients in their raw form
- Read the recipe aloud or get one of the children to do so
- Float between groups to offer assistance when needed
- Allow time at the end of the session for feedback on the recipe - get children to really explain what they liked/disliked

# Adapting tasks



## Time constraints

- Tasks like chopping an onion can be time-consuming - think about whether this can be done with small food processor or pre-diced instead
- Pre-cook ingredients like grains or tofu
- Start with any components that need to cook in the oven and make non-cook components last

## Ability level

- Have options for each task - for example herbs could be cut with scissors or simply torn
- Cooking food in oven might take a bit more time but is easier to manage especially for bigger groups

**Easiest:** no cook recipes **Medium:** oven recipes **Hard:** hob recipes

## Setting up stations

If there is enough equipment for each group think about guiding children through the recipe at different stations - for example having one weighing and measuring station, one to mix ingredients, one to mash, one to dice etc to ensure children always have something to do

# Managing groups



Have activities that are hands on to help children who struggle with attention to self regulate - for example a pestle and mortar to make guacamole or pesto as the pounding motion can be soothing

Prepare a back up activity like writing a recipe review or get children to wash up throughout the session to make sure they are occupied

Set up a sensory station where children can explore the ingredients through touch and smell if they have completed all their tasks

# Trying new foods



**Be positive - even if you don't like one of the ingredients. You are a role model and children might be tempted to mimic your behaviour if you openly say you dislike a food**

**Try starting a conversation like this:**

**"What about [insert name of food here], have you tried this before?" If they say they don't like it, ask them what they don't like about it and what other food available they are willing to try?**

**Offer a variety of different veggies and ask them which one they like the most and encourage them to try new foods without pressure. Never force a child to keep trying a food as this can create negative associations and might stop them from trying this food in future.**

**If they don't like the food, ask them what it is they didn't like. Was it the taste or how it felt in their mouth? If they do like a food, avoid over praising the child or saying things like "I knew you would like it". Thank them for trying the food and ask them what they liked about it.**

# Exploring with all senses



Encourage children to engage with the ingredients with all of their senses. Two important rules to establish: no one has to try, no one has to like. For more ideas check out:

<https://www.tasteeducation.com/>



Ask children to describe the ingredient. What colour is it? What shape is it? Is it big or small?



Choose different ingredients that might make a sound like snapping a carrot or chop different ingredients and listen to the sounds.



Pass around fragrant ingredients such as herbs and spices. Encourage children to describe what they can smell.



Hide different veggies in a bag and get children to stick their hand in and explore it through touch.



Choose ingredients with different flavour profiles - something sweet, something sour, something salty and ask children to describe the taste.

# Knife safety



If you are using knives (a task which children are often excited about) make sure to go through basic knife safety first.



**Bear Claw**



**Bridge Hold**

## Safety measures

- Put a wet paper towel under the cutting board to stop it from moving about
- Tell children how to walk with a knife - holding it down by their side
- Or establish the rule that all knives should stay on the table at all times

*Remember: graters, zesters, and peelers are sharp too*



# Station planner



## Station 1 - Task:

**Equipment**

**Ingredients**

## Station 2 - Task:

**Equipment**

**Ingredients**

## Station 3 - Task:

**Equipment**

**Ingredients**

# Equipment checklist



Equipment	Yes	No	Quantity/Details
Chopping boards			
Cutlery			
Sharp knives			
Rubber spatulas/mixing spoons			
Measuring spoons/cups			
Frying pan			
Boiling pan (with lid)			
Kettle			
Weighing scales			
Plates, bowls			
Garlic squeezer			
Vegetable peeler			
Mixing bowl – large			
Mixing bowl – medium			
Mixing bowl - small			
Graters			
Scissors			
Measuring jug			
Rolling pin			
Tin opener			
Sieve/colander			

# Rice Paper Veggie Rolls

Summer rolls are traditionally from Vietnam and make for a delicious refreshing snack in summer. You can customise this recipe with any vegetables or protein you prefer.

Makes: 12 • Preparation time: 20 mins

## Ingredients

- 12 rice paper sheets
- 65g rice noodles (pre-soaked)
- 1/4 lettuce
- 1 pepper
- 1/2 cucumber
- 1/4 red cabbage
- 1 coriander
- 1 mint
- 1 block of smoked tofu
- Sesame oil

## Method

1. Prepare a flat tray with water and boil a kettle with water.
2. Cut the tofu into sticks and fry with some neutral cooking oil until crispy.
3. Pour the boiling water over the noodles in a bowl and let them cook, then drain and rinse with cold water.
4. Chop up all of the veggies into small chunks.
5. Prepare a plate drizzled with sesame oil (just enough to coat)
6. Dip a rice paper in the tray, ensuring both sides are soaked, then remove and place on the preparation area or chopping board.
7. Add veggies, herbs, tofu and rice noodles in the order desired.
8. Carefully start rolling the top of the rice paper down, over the filling. After 2 rolls, fold in both sides to keep filling from falling out. Continue rolling down as tight as possible until the end is reached.
9. Serve with preferred dip.

## Sweet Chilli Dip

- 30 ml rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced or grated
- 1 inch knob of ginger, minced or grated
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste
- Juice of 1 lime

## Creamy sesame dip

- 40g tahini
- 2 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoon water
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 clove garlic, minced or grated
- 1 inch knob of ginger, minced or grated
- Juice of 1 lime

# Rainbow pitta pizzas

The wholemeal pitta is rich in fibre, and fibre consumption is strongly linked to a healthy digestive system. This recipe encourages diversity and is a great option for getting children involved with picking their own toppings.

Makes: 1 small pizza • Preparation time: 15 minutes

## Ingredients

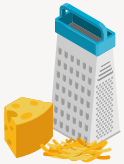


1 wholemeal pitta

2 tbsp passata



2 tbsp grated cheese



Mushrooms



Sweetcorn



Peppers



Tomatoes



Red Onion



Olives



Courgette



Herbs



## Method



1. Turn on the oven/grill



2. Spread 1 tbsp passata on the pitta, use the spoon to make sure it's all covered.



3. Chop up the vegetables into small chunks.

4. Add the vegetables on to the pizza.



5. Then, sprinkle grated cheese on top.



6. Bake in the oven for 5 minutes (until the cheese starts to bubble and turn golden).



## Equipment

- Sharp knife
- Chopping board
- Grater (if using a block of cheese)
- Tablespoon & teaspoon
- Oven trays
- Oven

[www.schoolfoodmatters.org](http://www.schoolfoodmatters.org) • [enquiries@schoolfoodmatters.org](mailto:enquiries@schoolfoodmatters.org)

For project news and updates, sign up for our regular newsletters.



# HEALTHY ZONES

**We put children and young people's health centre stage and support schools to make the healthy choice, the easy choice.**



Any questions?

Get in touch with us...

[enquiries@schoolfoodmatters.org](mailto:enquiries@schoolfoodmatters.org)

