

Simple solutions for using up vegetables

Asparagus

Either raw or cooked asparagus can be:

- Enjoyed on its own
- As a side or starter for a meal – drizzle with a little olive oil & parmesan
- Added to salads for extra crunch and flavour
- Used as dipping sticks with dips
- Added to quiches or frittatas
- Used in stir fries.

Avocados

- Can simply be cut up and added to salads
- Used in rolls or sandwiches instead of butter
- Sliced and eaten on toast or wholegrain crackers, possibly with cheese and tomato
- Mashed with chopped tomato, lime juice and garlic to make guacamole
- Pureed into an avocado dip
- Can be used as a healthier base for desserts such as chocolate mousse
- Added to a smoothie
- Smashed with feta and a drizzle of lemon juice on toast.

Broccoli

- Use the stalks. Slice them up to serve in a stir fry, dice them and add to a soup, or blend into a liquid and add to a 'wet' dish like soup or stew.

Beans, Peas and Snowpeas

Raw:

- Raw beans or peas can be added into the mixture of frittata
- Snowpeas can be a crunchy addition to salads or enjoyed on their own as a snack
- Beans are also a great nutritional alternative to serve with dip along with carrots and celery.
- You could also cut up your beans, and freeze them with peas and snowpeas to be used in dishes like below:



Frozen:

Frozen beans and peas are easily added to many hot dishes at the same time as the other vegies, as they are small in size and will cook quickly. Try them in:

- A beef and vegetable stir-fry
- Pumpkin or vegetable soup
- Chicken casserole or a curry.

Capsicum

Raw:

Like many vegetables, slices of capsicum are a great addition to stir fries and salads, and will always add a dash of colour. They can also be added to curries, pasta sauces, in frittatas, or eaten raw with dip.

Cooked:

When you have one or more capsicums that need to be finished, try cooking them for lunch or dinner using the ideas below, or grilling slices of them to be used over the next few days:

- **Stuffed** – the shape and structure of the capsicum makes it ideal for stuffing and means you can save on cleaning dishes too! Slice off the tops and scoop out the insides of the capsicums. Then fill them with breadcrumbs, a mince-meat mix (leftover Bolognese sauce works well), or flavoured cous cous, with herbs, spices and anything else you have on hand! Bake the filled capsicums upturned on a tray lined with foil until skins have softened and started to darken.
- **Roasted or grilled / barbequed** – when grilled or barbequed capsicums release a delicious sweet flavour, which can add a beautiful aroma to a roast or barbeque. By slicing them, drizzling them with oil and cooking them this way, capsicums can be preserved for longer in the fridge and added to salads or sandwiches over the coming days.

Carrots

Raw:

- Carrots are delicious raw by themselves
- Added to salads
- Chopped into sticks to be served as a healthy alternative to have with dip.
- Sliced carrot can also be added to stews or casseroles, as well as soups and stir fries.

Have you tried sweet carrot dishes?

- Roasted or barbequed carrots, with a drizzle of honey and a sprinkle of herbs and spices, or sesame seeds, become a great side dish to a roast or barbeque meal.
- Grated carrot is a delicious and healthy addition to sweet muffins and cakes – it will add colour, texture, and fibre to your sweet treats.

Cauliflower

- Try your hand at serving cauliflower 'rice' instead of regular rice with meals such as curries or stir-fries.

Cucumber

Raw:

- Raw cucumber is a delicious snack on its own
- Cut into sticks served with dip.
- It can also be sliced and added to salads or used in sandwiches or wraps.
- Or sliced and added to drinking water for a cool summer drink.

Try mixing cucumber with...

- Yoghurt and garlic to make Tzatziki! This dip is great served with cut up vegies as an appetizer, or served alongside Indian curries to help cool the dish down.
- Cream cheese and salmon for a healthy and colourful appetizer! Slice the cucumber to use as a base, and top with these two tasty treats for a refreshing snack or starter.
- Other vegetables to make a juice! Cucumber's sweetness means it can be substituted for a fruit in many juices, making the juice lower in sugar, but still delicious! Try it with carrots, ginger and beetroot; or mint, apple and celery.

Legumes

Using those leftover legumes:

- **Soup** – lentils, chickpeas or beans are a delicious addition to soups, and provide a good source of protein too, which will help to keep you fuller for longer! Either tinned or canned legumes can be added to soups, just watch that they're not overcooked and become too mushy.
- **Bolognese sauce** – lentils are a great way to beef up a Bolognese sauce, with a much smaller price tag. Use half beef mince and half legumes to make your sauce go further for half the price. This can then be used for not only Bolognese, but burritos, tacos, pizza topping, Shepherd's Pie, baked potato topping, stuffed capsicums... the list goes on!
- **Lentil or legume based salads** – chickpeas and beans are great additions to fresh vegetable salads, and lentils can go well with a roast vegetable salad. Just rinse thoroughly and add to the fresh salad! They can take the place of meat again, and save you the time and energy spent on cooking.
- **Dip** – chickpeas become hummus, or beans can be mixed with fish or eaten by themselves – the perfect protein-packed snack to have on hand for afternoon nibbles, served with cut up vegies or multigrain crackers.



- **Curry** – a lentil dahl is a delicious Indian staple, and a perfect way to use up leftover lentils. Alternatively, as with a Bolognese sauce, they can be the perfect addition to your favourite curry to bulk it up without the added cost of buying fresh meat.

Lettuce

Lettuce is great in:

- Salads – either whole leaves or sliced up, lettuce can be mixed with any other vegetables, with a drizzle of balsamic for a dressing and added tuna or feta to make a complete meal.
- Chopped up in burritos, wraps or tacos will have had a cool crunch to your meal.
- Using the lettuce leaf as a wrap or cup, fill it with a chicken or beef and veggie mixture.

Onions

Tips to avoid onion tears:

- Put onions in the fridge for one hour before chopping/peeling etc.
- Chop the onions under running water.
- Avoid cutting into the base plate (the root area) while chopping.

How to use up onions:

- Onions are a very versatile vegetable, forming the base of many meals, so you can use up your onions by simply making a savoury meal!
- Cooked diced onion is often the starting point for dishes such as soup, stir-fries, pasta sauces, added to savoury scones or muffins, or include in frittatas or quiches – cook diced onion with a drizzle of olive oil for 5 minutes, or until soft, to get these dishes started.
- Sliced fresh onion to use in salads or healthy burger buns, or salsa or dips.
- When your onions are growing a bit old, cut them up and make onion jam or chutney, a great addition to barbeque meats or sandwiches!
- You can also caramelize onions to use as a great flavour addition to any sandwich or barbeque dishes, and as a pizza topping or in a quick pasta dish.
- Use finely diced red onions in guacamole.

Potatoes

- Potatoes can be used in soups such as potato and leek or pumpkin, or it can be added to a vegetable soup.
- Cut up potatoes and roast a big batch. Stored in an airtight container in the fridge they can later be added to salads and other meals.
- Boil and then mash potatoes as a side to help absorb delicious jus from meals.



- Baked potatoes, with skin on and served with assorted toppings are an easy, quick solution to lunch or dinner.
- Boiled potatoes can also be cut up and made into potato salad, or added to stews or curries.
- You can even make your own healthy chips! Slice slicing potatoes thinly and place them on a tray lined with baking paper, drizzle with oil, sprinkle with herbs and spices and bake until crisp.

Pumpkin

Pumpkin can be used in both sweet and savoury dishes.

Sweet:

- Cooked, mashed pumpkin can be added to cakes and muffins to add delicious flavour and texture.
- Mashed pumpkin can also be used to make pumpkin scones.

Savoury:

- It is well known as a key soup ingredient in not just pumpkin soup, but many other flavours.
- Also delicious when roasted, boiled or mashed and served on the side of a dish
- Like potatoes, cut up and roast a big batch to be used in salads or in sandwiches.
- It can also be cut up and cooked in many hot dishes such as stews, curries, stir fries, frittatas, and even as a topping on a pizza, especially with spinach, feta and pine nuts
- Pumpkin chips – sliced pumpkin, drizzled with oil and sprinkled with herbs and spices, roasted on a lined baking tray – serve as a tasty, healthier snack instead of bought chips.

Spinach (fresh, bagged or frozen)

- It's a great idea to freeze any leftover or excess fresh spinach before it wilts, just make sure you blanch it first
- **To blanch fresh spinach:** put washed spinach in boiling water for 30 seconds to 1 minute, until it becomes bright green. Strain the spinach and immediately place in a bowl of cold water and ice until it is no longer warm. This leaves the spinach tender, and retains its nutrients. Squeeze off excess water, then pack in airtight containers and freeze immediately. It can last for 10-12 months in the freezer.

How to use your fresh or frozen spinach:

- Remember that a large amount of spinach will cook down to only a small amount, so don't be scared to add *a lot* to a meal!
- Fresh spinach is great in salads or sandwiches as an alternative to regular lettuce, and it contains higher concentrations of vitamins and minerals than many lettuce varieties!
- Stir a handful of fresh spinach through a just-cooked pasta or risotto dish until it wilts from the heat, or add it fresh after cooking for a pop of colour and texture.

- Stir fresh or frozen spinach into any cooked dish such as stir fries, stews, curries and quiches or frittatas to add colour and extra nutrients.
- Cook fresh or frozen spinach in a saucepan with a little olive oil and garlic for a delicious and nutrient-rich side to any breakfast, lunch or dinner!
- Add spinach to a green smoothie
- Cook spinach into spinach and ricotta filo pastries
- Make pesto with spinach instead of basil – just combine in a mixer with olive oil, garlic and pine nuts.

Tomatoes

- Fresh tomatoes can be sliced or quartered and eaten raw in salads or by themselves.
- They are a staple in many Italian and Mexican dishes – use them as a base for a pizza or pasta sauce, or freshly diced and served on burritos, tacos, tostadas and enchiladas.
- You could also cut up fresh tomatoes to make a salsa or tomato chutney
- Baby tomatoes can be a lovely appetizer served on toothpicks or skewers with bocconcini or mozzarella and basil with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar.
- If concerned about tomatoes going off too soon, canned tomatoes are also a great pantry staple that can be used in any of these dishes in place of fresh tomatoes.
- Dice tomatoes and use in guacamole
- Cut up to use in minestrone or tomato pasta sauce
- Use in Bolognese sauce.

Zucchini

Raw:

- Sliced, diced or peeled into ribbons and added to salads
- Sliced or peeled into ribbons and used as pasta – just mix with some other cooked vegetables and a drizzle of olive oil.

Cooked:

- Grate and bake in cakes or muffins – similar to grated carrot, grated zucchini can add bulk and nutrients to a sweet treat, with a slightly different flavour
- Grate and bake in bread, scones or homemade pizza dough
- Steamed, grilled or fried sliced zucchini can be served as a side or starter.
- Cut up and cook zucchini with other vegetables in any type of hot dish such as stews, soups, pasta sauces, casseroles, stir-fries, frittata and ratatouille.
- Grate zucchinis and create vegetable fritters with other sliced vegetables, some flour, breadcrumbs and egg, cooked in a non-stick pan or with minimal oil.
- Slice or dice and add to pea and zucchini soup
- Grate, or use in slices, to create zucchini slice.