



**gamh**

Glasgow Association  
for Mental Health

# FOOD FOR RECOVERY

Eat Well, Feel Well



*“Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food.”*

–Hippocrates



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## **Love Behind Food**

*Tasting the spices,  
it takes me back to my childhood.  
Reminding me of the memories  
and the culture behind the food.  
My mom in the kitchen,  
while I stood beside her.  
Magic in motion:  
A skilled food whisperer.  
I want to be a part of it  
and learn to cook  
So she takes me by the hand,  
and let's me into her world.  
The aroma welcomes me  
the love and culture behind food  
means so much more to me.  
And everytime I eat,  
I remember her.  
And all she's taught me  
about food, about life, about love.  
I hope I get to share it,  
with my own daughter.*

*By Fida Islaih*

# Introduction

Food for Recovery has been an integral part of the GAMH group programme for 10 years featuring annual celebrations and festivals to promote and highlight related achievements. Our Community Garden within Bellahouston Park and Allotment plot within Tollcross park are a focus for the growing and cultivating of produce and the tranquil setting of the community garden has been a popular venue for several of our celebratory events.

We recognise the positive impact of a nutritional diet on mental and physical wellbeing and we promote this through our Food for Recovery Workshops where we talk about the importance of eating well and cooking meals from scratch as much as possible. We talk about the impact of certain foods on our mood and wellbeing—which we will look at later in this journal. People are always excited to talk about the food they enjoyed most when growing up (and the food they disliked) and we encourage people to connect with these food memories by cooking these meals for themselves, friends and families.

At our launch Food for Recovery Festival in 2010 we presented a book of positive food memories - Recipes of Hope - which was created by people we support. The book contained not only recipes, but heart warming stories connecting these recipes to people's family histories. A recurring theme within the stories revealed that meals created when family circumstances were financially challenging were the meals remembered most fondly! These stories and recipes provide the foundations of our Food for Recovery workshops, and we will continue to look at these themes of food and family history/ connection throughout this journal; we hope this will inspire you to think about your own food memories and share them with your friends and families—and with us!



# Extracts from Recipes of Hope

## **Joan describes the happy memories evoked when she makes Cloutie Dumpling:**

My mother would make Cloutie Dumpling on special occasions such as Birthdays and she would hide sixpences inside for us to find. We would all be excited to find the sixpences hidden inside. She would make it in the morning and I would watch her – although I never saw her putting the sixpences in. When I make Cloutie Dumpling for special occasions it makes me think of happy memories of my childhood with my mother.

## **Irene shares memories of her mum's cooking :**

My mum used to make meatballs and macaroni for a treat. It was very cheap to make and very filling. There weren't many carry out food places at that time and we couldn't really afford them. All eight of us (six children and two adults!) really enjoyed it and we all had a chance to help mum chop the onions and make the meatballs. The last time I had this meal was in Canada a few years ago and my brother made it for me and his family. We all really enjoyed it and the meal brought back happy memories of my mum's cooking.



# Food Memories

Think about the food you enjoyed eating with your family and friends while growing up or the food you cook for your family. Write about some of your favourite food memories and write down the recipes if you can remember

**What are your best food memories?**



**Were there any foods you didn't enjoy?**



## **Barriers to eating well**

When we talk about food and cooking in our workshops we ask people to tell us about some of the barriers that prevent them from cooking from scratch and eating well. Can you list some of the barriers you can think of which you feel makes it difficult for you to eat well? After you have done this look on the next page and compare your list with that of some of the participants' from our workshops.

### **Your barriers to eating well.**



## Group Participants' Responses



# Food for Your Recovery

Most of us lack the motivation at times to cook regular meals for ourselves and our families. We all need some inspiration to get us thinking about easy and tasty recipes that will work for us in our lives. Some people live with their families and find it difficult to please everyone with one recipe while others live alone and find it difficult to motivate themselves to cook for one. We buy processed convenience food particularly when we don't have much time to prepare meals or when we can't find the energy or motivation to cook. These meals are usually very high in fat, salt and sugar and if eaten regularly can impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. However, not all processed foods come in to this category.

**Processed food:** Food that has been cooked, tinned, frozen, packaged or changed in nutritional composition with fortifying, preserving or preparing in different ways. When we cook, bake or prepare food, we are processing food.

**Minimally processed foods:** Often simply pre-prepared for convenience—foods that are processed at their best to lock in nutritional quality and freshness. This includes tinned tomatoes, frozen fruit and vegetables, bagged salads, cut veg and tinned tuna can all be a valuable part of a nutritional diet and handy to have available for cooking or preparing meals.

**Heavily processed foods:** The most heavily processed foods often are pre-made meals including frozen pizza and microwaveable meals, cakes, biscuits, and soft drinks. Try to avoid eating these foods too often. Foods with ingredients (e.g. sweeteners, spices, oils, colours and preservatives) added for flavour and texture including cooking sauce, salad dressing, yogurt, cake mixes and cured meats—are more heavily processed.

Some processed food can help you eat a more nutritional diet. Milk and juices are sometimes fortified with calcium and vitamin D and breakfast cereals may have added iron and fibre. Tinned fruit (in juice or water) is a good option when fresh fruit is not available. Some minimally processed food such as pre-cut vegetables and bagged salads are convenient for preparing quick nutritional meals.



# Bulk is Best: A How To Guide

Many people find that cooking in bulk saves time and money and reduces food waste. People also find that they use less convenient food (including carry outs). Having these meals available in you freezer also helps on days when you are not feeling motivated to cook or prepare meals. Below are some tips that people have found helpful when beginning to prepare food this way.

- Pick a meal or two of your family favourites (soups are also a popular choice for cooking in bulk)
- Make sure you have storage containers
- Write down your ingredients for 2 or three days portions
- If you aren't sure check online or ask someone for a recipe
- Set aside a day when you will have the time to cook.
- Shop for required ingredients
- Lay out what you need to cook
- Play some music to help you on your way
- Get ready to cook!
- When cooled store extra portions in your freezer and defrost the night before or morning you want to use.

You may want to label and date your meals before freezing and check recommended storage times for your freezer model (usually 2-3 months)



# Hearty Bolognese Sauce

6 generous servings | Aidan Ferguson

## Ingredients

2 Tsp Oil (olive or rapeseed)	1kg Steak mince
Large jar of passata	6 Garlic cloves (thinly sliced)
2 Onions	400g Dried pasta
Tomato and garlic puree	5 Carrots
Vegetable stock cube	5 Celery sticks
Dried herbs and spices	1 Tbsp Sugar
• Parsley, basil, sage, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves	1 Tsp Balsamic vinegar
• Chilli flakes, ginger, paprika	Fresh parsley & parmesan

## Method

- 1) Salt the mince and add to a scalding pan and fry until browned, then empty into a casserole dish.
- 2) Dice the onion and, in the same pan used for the beef, fry covered on a low-medium heat until soft and golden, stirring occasionally (add some salt to the onions).
- 3) Chop the carrots and celery then add them to the onion and cook until softened. Preheat oven to 180 °C.
- 4) Add the garlic then stir in puree. Cover until it starts to darken then empty into the casserole dish and add the tomato base.
- 5) Crumble stock cube and mix it into sauce. Now add dried herbs, dried spices, sugar, vinegar, a glug of red wine, and a good twist of black pepper. Mix thoroughly.
- 6) Cover the dish and put on the hob at medium until the sauce starts bubbling, then put it in the oven. Check it every 15 minutes and reduce the heat if the sauce is bubbling up!
- 7) Boil pasta in salted water and near the end add a ladle of pasta water to sauce.
- 8) Add pasta to sauce and mix in parsley and parmesan, Finally, season to taste and serve!



# Chicken Curry & Couscous

## Ingredients

8 Skin on, bone-in chicken thighs	2 Tbsp sunflower oil
250g Couscous	3 Garlic cloves, Sliced
2 Onions, finely sliced	500ml Chicken stock
2 Tsp turmeric	Large handful whole green olives
1 Tbsp garam masala	Zest and juice 1 lemon
Small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped	

## Method

- 1) Toss the chicken thighs in half the spices and a pinch of salt until completely coated
- 2) Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large sauté pan with a lid. Fry chicken, skin-side down, for 10 mins until golden brown, turn over, then cook for 2 mins before removing from the pan
- 3) Pour the rest of the oil into the pan, then fry the onions and garlic for 8 mins until golden. Stir in the rest of the spices, then cook for 1 min longer.
- 4) Pour over the chicken stock and scatter in the olives. Bring everything to the boil, turn down the heat, then sit the chicken, skin side up, in the stock
- 5) Cover the pan with a lid, then simmer gently for 35-40 mins until the chicken is tender. Put the kettle on, then lift the chicken onto a plate and keep warm
- 6) Take the pan off the heat. Stir the lemon juice and couscous into the saucy onions in the pan and top up with enough boiling water just to cover the couscous if you need to
- 7) Place the lid back on the pan, then leave to stand for 5 mins until the couscous is cooked through. Fluff through half the parsley and the lemon zest, then sit the chicken on top.
- 8) Scatter with the rest of the parsley and zest before serving.



# Meal Plan Example

Day	Meal
Mon	Chicken salad
Tues	Bolognese & garlic bread
Wed	Chicken curry
Thurs	Baked potato & tuna
Fri	Frozen fish, potatoes & veg
Sat	Chicken curry
Sun	Bolognese & salad

**Items**

Spaghetti  
Garlic bread  
Carrots  
Flour  
Garlic  
Tinned tomatoes  
Mince  
Chips  
Salad  
Potatoes  
Chicken  
Onions

## Extra things I need from shops

Newspaper

Chocolate

Bananas

Irn Bru

TV Guide

Pencils

Apples

Milk

Cat Food

## Meal Plan Example

Day	Meal
Mon	
Tues	
Wed	
Thurs	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	

Items

Extra things I need from shops

## Meal Plan Example

Day	Meal
Mon	
Tues	
Wed	
Thurs	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	

Items

Extra things I need from shops

# Food Quiz

There are so many different foods across the world, different flavours and fruits and vegetables that you may never have eaten. Below are some fruit and veg names and pictures. See if you can match them (Answers and descriptions on the next page).

Loquats



Pomelo



Rambutan



Ugli Fruit



Mangosteen



Alfalfa Sprouts



Pak Choi



# Answers

**Loquats** grow on trees, They can be smooth or fuzzy, yellow to yellow-orange, and round, oval, or pear-shaped. The flesh texture of a Loquat is smooth and firm, similar to an apricot, with a moderately thick skin reminiscent to a peach.



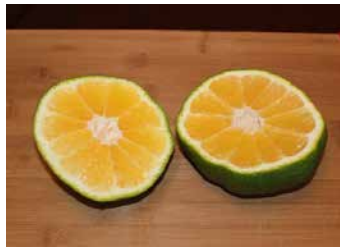
**Pomelo** fruit is the largest variety of citrus fruit in the world. It originated in South and Southeast Asia and is still very popular in Malaysian, Chinese, Cambodian, Thai, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Tahitian cuisine, among others



**Rambutan** are exotic fruits grown in tropical countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Australia. They grow on a medium-sized trees. The name rambutan means hairy, referring to the spikes on the skin of the fruit.



**Ugli Fruit** is wrapped in a rough, puffy, slightly loose-fitting greenish-yellow to orange fragrant skin. The fruit is similar to a grapefruit with one important distinction: It is sweet, unlike the grapefruit and does not have a tart after taste.



The **mangosteen** is a tropical fruit about the size of a tangerine, whose leathery maroon shell surrounds moist, fragrant, snow-white segments of ambrosial flesh



**Alfalfa** is a bean sprout, and looks a bit like cress. It's great for adding a crunch to salads and sandwiches. They're best eaten as soon as possible (the fresher, the crunchier, the better). As they're a living plant they keep growing once packed.



**Pak choi**, also known as bok choy, is a leafy green from the cabbage family. Pak choi is a traditional Asian ingredient, often served with Asian flavours such as soy sauce, miso, lemongrass or galangal.



# Food & Mood

When we don't eat enough nutrient rich foods, our bodies may lack vital vitamins and minerals, often affecting our energy, mood and brain function. Many studies have shown that a diet high in refined sugars - white bread, cakes, and biscuits - can impair our brain function and even lower our mood.

Serotonin is a messenger chemical in the brain that improves mood and creates feelings of wellbeing and happiness. Serotonin requires the tryptophan protein from our diet. This protein is more effective when we eat carbohydrate-rich foods such as oats, pasta, rice, wholewheat bread, nuts, seeds, and cereals. Much of our serotonin is produced in our gut, so improve your gut health by eating probiotic yogurt and staying hydrated.

Proteins consist of amino acids, which make up the chemicals your brain needs to regulate your thoughts and feelings. It also helps keep you feeling fuller for longer. Some protein-rich foods are lean meat, fish, eggs, cheese, legumes (peas, beans and lentils), soya products, nuts and seeds.

Eating regularly will prevent a dip in our sugar levels which can lead to feeling tired irritable and depressed. A good tip is to eat a filling breakfast such as eggs, oats, cereals and wholewheat bread keep you fuller for longer. Bananas are a great snack rich in Vitamin B6 which can help boost our serotonin levels if eaten regularly.

To help monitor and understand the impact of different foods on your mood you could try keeping a food and mood diary for a few weeks - we have included a sample for you.



Avoid too much sugar in your diet as it can affect our blood sugar levels and cause lethargy, anxiety and irritability. If your body is low in vitamins and minerals such as vitamin B-12, zinc or Omega 3 this may also impact on your mood and wellbeing.

Many of us rely on caffeine when we are tired or have a busy day ahead. However, we are not always aware of the impact caffeine has on our body and mental wellbeing - too much can cause anxiety, feelings of jitteriness and extra nervous energy.









































If we eat too much of one type of food and not sufficient amounts of other types it can cause an imbalance in our mood. Avoid too much dairy, caffeine, alcohol, artificial additives and sugar.

Try to have a breakfast every day. Try oats, which slowly release energy. Eat some fruit every day. Try and drink plenty water.









































Make small changes but remember to be kind to yourself—we all need treats sometimes! Do your best and be positive with your achievements.



# Food & Mood Diary

	Eg.	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast	<div>No breakfast</div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Lunch	<div>Tuna sandwich</div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Dinner	<div>Lasagne &amp; vegetables</div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Snacks	<div>Apple, Yoghurt</div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
Notes	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

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Notes	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div>

# A Final Extract from Recipes of Hope

## **Margaret explains why she enjoys carrying on the family soup-making tradition:**

My mother made soup when money was limited. She made soup all through the winter for us coming home from school. After a bowl of steaming hot soup and a sandwich she would hope to satisfy our hunger for the rest of the night. My mother worked full-time and was able to throw a pot of soup together in ten minutes, a skill she had to acquire with constant hungry mouths to feed. Soup would also feed a number of visitors more cheaply!

As a Grandmother I make soup for my grandchildren, who would live on soup. My granddaughter likes to help and I hope she will make it for her children. My grandson is not a good eater but he loves soup which is packed with fresh vegetables. I don't think children eat sensibly today and would live on "fast foods", so I love to see the we'ans eating a good bowl of soup!

## **Ingredients**

3lb Carrots

2 Sticks of celery

Broth mix (steeped overnight)

1 Large leak

Parsley

4 Stock cubes (ham, chicken, or vegetable depending on taste)

## **Method**

- 1) Wash and chop vegetables (liquidise if preferred)
- 2) Place vegetables in a large pot with stock
- 3) Add broth mix
- 4) Simmer for 1 hour
- 5) Sprinkle with parsley and serve with crusty bread



# Call For Submissions

Have you cooked any meals inspired by this food journal?  
Do you have any favourite recipes or positive food memories?

We would love it if you shared them with us!

Email it to:

**groupteam@gamh.org.uk**

If you would like to, you could include a brief description of why you chose this and what it means to you personally.

We cannot wait to see your creations supporting you on your journey to wellbeing!



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