

My BBQ Book  
*The Healthy Way*

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Without a doubt, the summer months are idyllic times for Maltese families. There are numerous opportunities for outdoor entertainments, among which is included the BBQ. The Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate has published these recipes, prepared by health professionals within the Directorate, so that everyone enjoying a BBQ can do so by eating appetising, tasty and healthy food.

*Enjoy your meal!*

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# Enjoy Your Barbecue

Summer provides the ideal opportunity to enjoy barbecues. When organising a barbecue, care should be taken to avoid unpleasant experiences resulting from incorrect transportation, preparation and handling of food. As with any type of cooking, it is important to follow safe food handling guidelines to prevent harmful bacteria from spreading and causing food-borne illnesses.

- Keep a clear space around the barbecue and a safe distance away from any flammable material.
- Set the barbecue in a corner but not against a wall, as heat can burn nearby surfaces.
- Keep a watchful eye on children and never leave a hot barbecue unsupervised.

## Make Grilling as Safe & Healthy as Possible

Research has shown that overcooking, burning and cooking meats and other animal food at high temperatures over an open flame, creates chemicals that are harmful to health. Furthermore, when fat or juices from the meat drips onto an open flame, they create flare-ups and smoke. This smoke will be full of chemicals which are inhaled whilst cooking. These chemicals will adhere to the surface of meat and be deposited on anything within reach. Taking a few precautions whilst barbecuing will minimise the health risks without sacrificing the taste.

**Marinades** reduce the formation of these harmful chemicals. Those marinades made with vinegar, lemon, red wine or beer act as an 'invisible shield' and have a protective effect against these harmful chemicals. Herbs and spices such as basil, mint, thyme, oregano, rosemary, sage, garlic and onion are packed with antioxidants and thus have a protective effect whilst making the food tastier.

Marinating meat for a long period of time may lower the amount of antioxidants so there is not a lot of flavour advantage to an overnight marinade. Never reuse marinade used on raw meat and poultry as it becomes full of germs.



# Practical Tips to Make Grilling Safe & Healthy

## Choose Wisely

- Choose coal that does not contain any chemicals.
- Choose lean cuts of meat, chicken or fish, instead of high-fat varieties such as ribs. Lean meat, white meats and fish create less dripping and less smoke.
- Choose unprocessed meats such as chicken, beef or fresh seasonal fish over processed meats such as sausages and burgers.

## Limit Time

- Precooking, especially poultry (thighs, drum sticks, whole breast) is recommended to ensure that the chicken is cooked well and also to reduce the time of the meat being grilled.
- Choose smaller cuts of meat, like kebabs, as they take less time to cook.

## Grilling Techniques

- Do not brush the marinade on the meat during cooking to avoid flaring from drippings.
- Rub or shake off any excess marinade to prevent flare-ups.
- Flip meat often, once every minute is best to avoid charring.
- Keep food at least 5cm away from heat source.
- Avoid charring or overcooking meats.
- Cut away charred parts of meats before eating.
- Go *slow* and *low*. In order to reduce harmful chemicals caused by charring, use a lower flame.



## Check Meat

Meat and poultry may brown quickly when grilled and may appear cooked. This may not be the case. It is recommended to use a meat thermometer to ensure grilled meats have reached the recommended internal temperatures in order to kill harmful germs.

## Recommended Internal Temperatures

### Grilling

- 63°C** (145°F) - whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb and veal (stand-time of 3 minutes at this temperature)
- 63°C** (145°F) - fish
- 71°C** (160°F) - homemade burgers and other ground beef
- 74°C** (165°F) - all poultry and pre-cooked meats

### After grilling

- 60°C** (140°F) or warmer - until it is served

## A Marinade Timing Guide

**Fish and Seafood:** 15 to 30 minutes for small pieces; 30 minutes for thicker pieces.

**Chicken:** Breast, 30 minutes to 2 hours; thighs/drumsticks 1 to 6 hours.

**Meats:** Lean meats, 30 minutes to 4 hours.

**Vegetables:** Root vegetables like carrots and onions, 30 minutes to 2 hours. Softer vegetables like tomatoes, coloured bell peppers, broccoli, 30 minutes.



Barbecued Cajun Chicken Legs  
Stir-Fry Vegetables  
Jacket Potatoes, Bell Peppers & Mozzarella





# Barbecued Cajun Chicken Legs

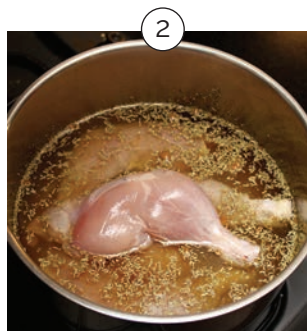
## Ingredients

- 3 chicken legs of 100g each (skinless)
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- Fresh juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp cajun spice
- 1 tbsp curry
- 1 tbsp rosemary
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ¼ of a tsp freshly ground black pepper

## For the marinade

In a glass container, combine the garlic, cajun spice, lemon juice, olive oil, and black pepper.

*serves 3*



## Method (partially precook at home before finishing on the barbecue)

1. Fill a medium sized pot with water.
2. Add the rosemary, curry and chicken legs to the water and leave to boil until almost cooked.
3. Remove chicken legs from water and leave to cool.
4. Place the chicken legs in the marinade.
5. Leave to marinate for one to six hours, turning occasionally.
6. Shake off any excess marinade, to prevent drippings.
7. Place the chicken legs on the barbecue grid, turning every minute until done.



## Stir-Fry Vegetables

### Method (precook at home)

1. Heat a non-stick pan over moderate heat.
2. When hot, add the olive oil and heat for about one minute.
3. Add the onions, carrots and water, stir-fry for 2 minutes.
4. Add the remaining vegetables, garlic, sesame seeds and Chinese five spices and stir-fry until vegetables are tender-crisp.
5. Reheat on the barbecue grid wrapped in baking sheet in an aluminium container.

### Ingredients

- 8 mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 green, 1 red, 1 yellow bell peppers, cut in squares
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 courgette, sliced
- 2 small onions, cut in strips
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp Chinese five spices
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp water

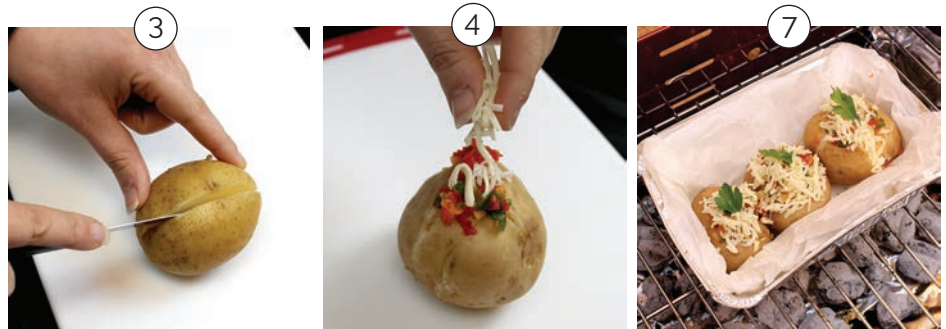
*serves 3*

# Jacket Potatoes, Bell Peppers & Mozzarella

## Ingredients

- 3 medium sized potatoes, one per person
- ¼ green, ¼ red, ¼ yellow bell peppers, finely chopped
- 100g shredded mozzarella
- 2 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

*serves 3*



## Method (precook at home)

1. Wash the potatoes thoroughly and boil.
2. Drain water immediately and leave the potatoes to cool.
3. Cut a cross on top of each potato and squeeze the sides to open.
4. Top with mozzarella, bell peppers and garlic.
5. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and garnish with oregano and freshly ground black pepper.
6. Wrap the potatoes in a baking sheet and place in an aluminium container.
7. Place container on the barbecue grid until mozzarella melts.

Barbecued Chicken Breast  
Vegetable Kebabs  
Rice with Mixed Vegetables & Mushrooms



# Barbecued Chicken Breast



## Ingredients

- 300g chicken breast
- 1 orange, freshly squeezed
- Pinch cayenne pepper/dried chilli
- 2 tsp sweet paprika
- 2 tsp English/Dijon mustard
- 1½ tsp honey
- 1 tsp olive oil
- ¼ of a tsp freshly ground black pepper

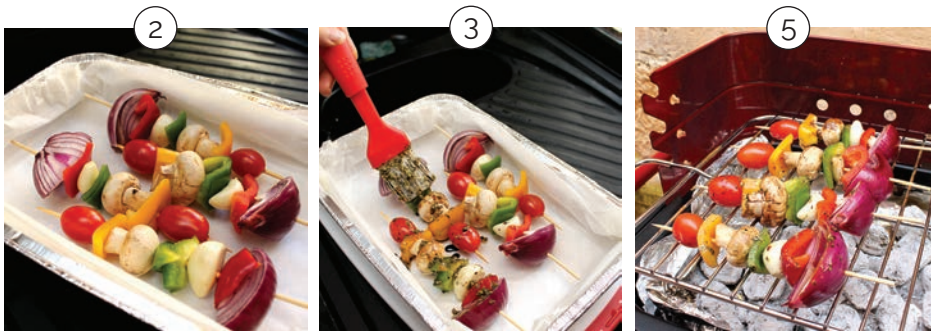
## For the marinade

In a glass container, mix the orange juice, cayenne pepper, sweet paprika, mustard, honey, olive oil and black pepper.

## Method

1. If the chicken breast is too thick, slice horizontally to make it into a thinner piece.
2. Place the chicken in marinade.
3. Cover and leave in the refrigerator to marinate for 30 minutes to 2 hours, turning every fifteen minutes.
4. Remove chicken breast from the marinade.
5. Shake off any excess marinade, to prevent drippings.
6. Grill on the barbecue grid, turning every minute.
7. Do not brush remaining marinade onto the chicken during cooking.
8. When done, keep the chicken warm until served.

serves 3



### Method

1. Soak 9 wooden kebab sticks in water for 1 hour, to avoid them getting burnt during cooking.
2. Thread mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, bell peppers, onions and garlic onto the kebab stick.
3. Mix the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, oregano and freshly ground black pepper and brush onto the vegetable kebabs.
4. Shake off any excess marinade, to prevent any dripping.
5. Place on the barbecue grid and cook until tender.

## Vegetable Kebabs

### Ingredients

- 9 button mushrooms
- 9 cherry tomatoes
- 9 cloves garlic
- 1 red, 1 green, 1 yellow bell peppers, cut into squares
- 1 red onion, cut into chunks
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper

*serves 3*

# Rice with Mixed Vegetables & Mushrooms



## Ingredients

- 150g wholegrain rice
- 100g mushrooms
- 2 handful frozen mixed vegetables
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric
- ¼ of a tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp curry
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

## Method (precook at home)

1. Cook the rice (1 part rice to 2 parts water) together with the rest of the ingredients in a pot till the water is absorbed.
2. Stir from time to time.
3. Add a little boiling water in case the rice is still not done and cook for a few more minutes.
4. Place the cooked rice in a baking sheet and in an aluminium container and keep warm on the barbecue grid, otherwise do not reheat but serve cold.\*

serves 3

\*It is not recommended to reheat rice as it could give you food poisoning.

Tasty Steak in Balsamic Vinegar Marinade  
Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables  
Potato Salad





# Tasty Steak in Balsamic Vinegar Marinade

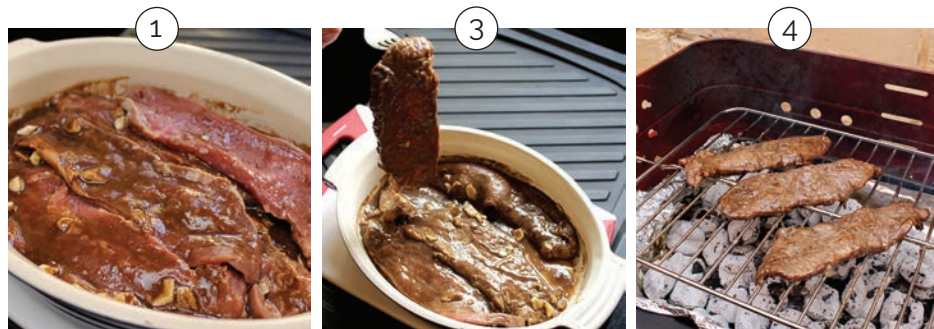
## Ingredients

- 3 portions of lean barbecue steak (90g per person)
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 60ml balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- Freshly ground black pepper

## For the marinade

In a glass container combine all the last five ingredients and mix well.

serves 3



## Method

1. Place the steak in the marinade.
2. Cover the glass container and put in the refrigerator to marinate for two hours.
3. Rub or shake off any excess marinade to prevent flaring from drippings.
4. Place on the barbecue grid and flip every minute until it just bounces to the touch.
5. Do not brush marinade on the steak during cooking.
6. Discard any remaining marinade.



## Roasted Mediterranean Vegetables

### Method (precook at home)

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C.
2. Spread the bell peppers, onion, marrow, aubergine and cherry tomatoes on a baking sheet in an ovenproof dish.
3. Arrange the vegetables in rows to make a colourful design.
4. Tuck the garlic among the vegetables then brush them with the olive oil.
5. Place some sprigs of rosemary among the vegetables and grind over some fresh black pepper.
6. Garnish with lemon wedges and olives.
7. Roast for 20-25 minutes or until vegetables are cooked through. Turn the vegetables halfway through the cooking time.
8. Reheat on the barbecue grid wrapped in a baking sheet in a small aluminium container.

### Ingredients

- 3 bell peppers, cut into large squares
- 1 onion, cut into thick wedges
- 1 large marrow, cut into large cubes
- 1 large aubergine, cut into large cubes
- 6 cherry tomatoes
- 8 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Fresh rosemary sprigs
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Lemon wedges and black olives to garnish

*serves 3*

# Potato Salad



## Ingredients

- 250g potatoes, cut into large pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 1 green onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 20g chopped fresh parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper
- White vinegar (to taste)

## Method (precook at home)

1. In a large pot, boil the potatoes with skin.
2. When ready, drain and rinse with cold water.
3. In a large bowl, mix the bell pepper, onion and garlic.
4. Add the potatoes and use a wooden spoon to gently combine.
5. Add white vinegar to taste.
6. Season with ground black pepper and garnish with chopped parsley.
7. Keep warm on the barbecue grid or serve cold.

*serves 3*

Lemon Chicken & Vegetable Kebabs  
Stuffed Bell Peppers  
Spicy Potato Wedges



# Lemon Chicken & Vegetable Kebabs

## Ingredients

- 300g chicken breast
- 3 coloured bell peppers, cut into squares
- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 6 button mushrooms, halved
- 1 marrow, cubed or sliced
- 1 small aubergine, cubed or sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 3 tbsp honey
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- ¼ of a tsp freshly ground black pepper



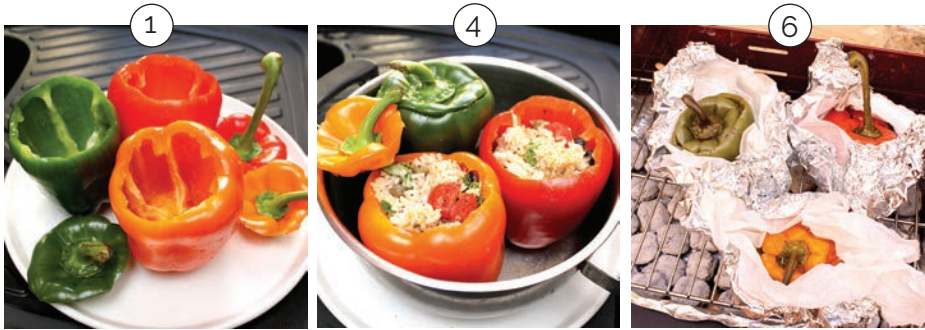
## Method

1. Soak 6 wooden kebab sticks in water for 1 hour, to avoid them getting burnt during cooking.
2. Cut the chicken breast into 2.5 cm cubes and place in the marinade mixing well to coat.
3. Cover and leave in the refrigerator to marinate for 30 minutes to 2 hours.
4. Thread the marinated chicken and vegetables onto the skewers/kebab sticks.
5. Place the kebabs on the barbecue grill, turning every minute and grill for 12 to 15 minutes or until done.

## For the marinade

In a medium sized glass bowl, mix the olive oil, lemon juice, lemon zest, honey, cayenne and black pepper.

serves 3



# Stuffed Bell Peppers

## Method

### *For the stuffing*

- Cook the rice/bulgur wheat (1 part rice/bulgur to 2 parts water) until the rice/bulgur is tender.
- Leave to cool.
- Stir in the onion, garlic, capers, black olives, parsley, basil and 1 tbsp olive oil.
- Season with fresh black pepper.

### Stuffing the peppers

1. Cut the bell peppers around the stalk, remove the seeds.
2. Fill the bell peppers with some stuffing.
3. Cover bell peppers with the stalk.
4. In a pot wide enough to fit three bell peppers add the water, vinegar and 1 tbsp olive oil.
5. Cover with a lid and cook until peppers are tender.
6. Keep warm on the barbecue grid, otherwise do not reheat but serve cold.\*

*\*Avoid reheating rice as it could give you food poisoning.*

## Ingredients

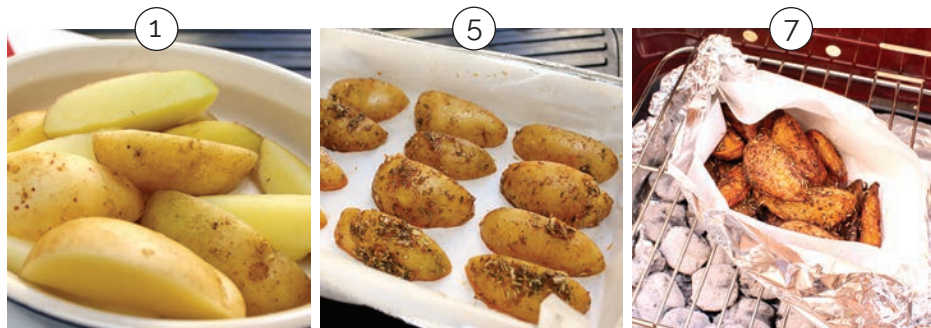
- 140g wholegrain rice/ bulgur wheat
- 1 red, 1 yellow and 1 orange bell peppers
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp capers & 2 tbsp chopped black olives, rinsed
- Handful fresh parsley and basil, chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 200ml water
- 4 tbsp vinegar
- Freshly ground black pepper

*serves 3*

# Spicy Potato Wedges

## Ingredients

- 1 medium sized potato per person
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp rosemary
- ½ tsp oregano
- ½ tsp thyme
- 1 tsp hot paprika
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper



## Method (precook at home)

1. Cut potatoes into wedges and leave with skin on.
2. In a small bowl, combine the last 7 ingredients.
3. Add the potato wedges to the mixture of ingredients and mix well.
4. Cover the base of an oven proof dish with a baking sheet.
5. Arrange the potato wedges in single layers.
6. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes turning them over after 20 minutes.
7. Reheat on the barbecue grid wrapped in baking sheet and aluminium foil.

serves 3

Barbecued Fish  
Caponata  
Oven Baked Sweet Potatoes





# Barbecued Fish

## Ingredients

- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh basil
- 2 tsp mint
- 1 tbsp cumin
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 2 tbsp olives & 2 tbsp capers, rinsed
- 2 tsp grated lemon rind
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 3 seasonal fish (115g each of fish meat)

serves 3



## Method

1. In a glass container combine the first 10 ingredients.
2. With this mixture, stuff, rub and coat the fish and garnish with lemon and tomatoes slices.
3. Wrap the fish, first in the baking paper then in aluminium foil (*al cartoccio*) and marinate in refrigerator for 30 minutes.
4. Place the fish on the barbecue grid (still wrapped), turning occasionally until the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.



### Method (precook at home)

1. Cook the onions and garlic in 250 ml water.
2. When ready, add bell peppers, aubergine, tomatoes, olives, capers, oregano, olive oil and freshly ground black pepper.
3. Add boiled water if mixture starts to dry out.
4. Cook until the mixture is soft and tender.
5. Reheat on the barbecue grid wrapped in baking sheet and in an aluminium container.

### Ingredients

- 3 coloured bell peppers, cut into cubes
- 1 small aubergine, cubed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 tbsp black olives & 4 tbsp capers, rinsed
- 2 tbsp oregano
- 12 tomatoes, cubed
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

serves 3

# Oven Baked Sweet Potatoes

## Ingredients

- 250g sweet potatoes
- 1 tbsp dried thyme
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper



## Method (precook at home)

1. Preheat oven.
2. Wash sweet potatoes thoroughly and leave with skin on.
3. Cut into thin slices.
4. Arrange slices on a baking sheet in an oven proof dish or an aluminium tray.
5. Drizzle olive oil on the potato slices and garnish with thyme and fresh black pepper.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until done.
7. Reheat on the barbecue grid wrapped in baking sheet and aluminium foil.

*serves 3*

Barbecued Veal Chops  
Mixed Vegetables with Herbs  
Zesty Bulgur Wheat

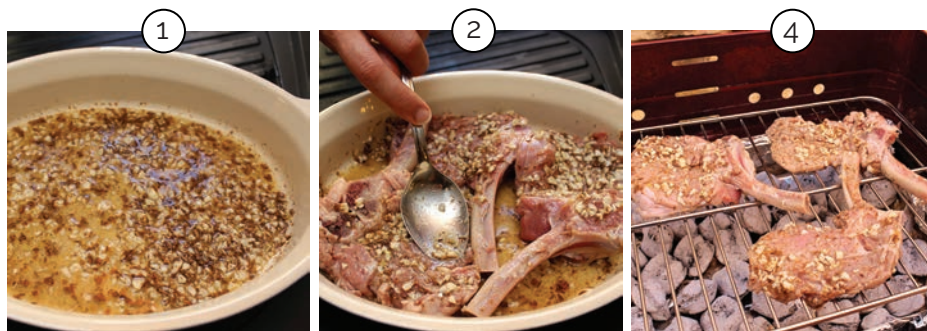


# Barbecued Veal Chops

## Ingredients

- 3 portions veal chops of 90g each
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large lemon, squeezed
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper

*serves 3*



## Method

1. In a glass container mix the olive oil, lemon juice, coriander, caraway seeds, garlic and black pepper.
2. Rub mixture over veal on both sides, rubbing into the meat.
3. Cover and marinate from 30 minutes to 4 hours in the refrigerator.
4. Place the marinated veal on the barbecue grid and flip every minute.
5. Grill 4-6 minutes total per side.



### Method (precook at home)

1. In a medium sized pot, boil 100ml of water.
2. Add all the vegetables, avoid overcooking.
3. Add the fennel and coriander.
4. When ready, remove any excess water.
5. Reheat on the barbecue grid, wrapped in baking sheet and in an aluminium container.

## Mixed Vegetables with Herbs

### Ingredients

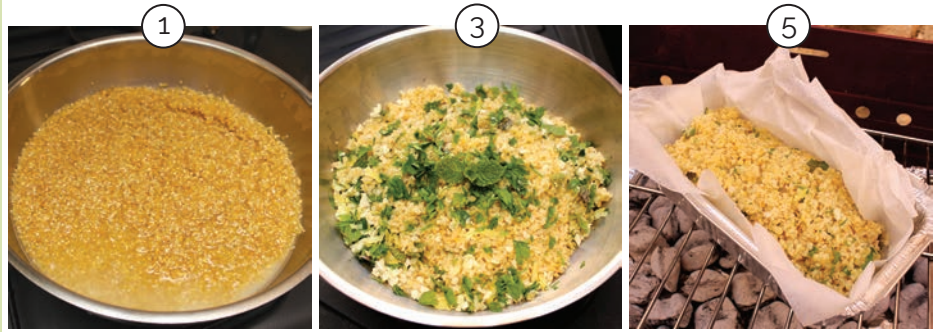
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 9 florets cauliflower
- 9 florets broccoli
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 1 tbsp coriander
- 100ml water

*serves 3*

# Zesty Bulgur Wheat

- Ingredients**
- 150g medium size bulgur wheat
  - Zest of ½ lemon
  - 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
  - 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
  - 2 sprigs mint, finely chopped
  - 2 sprigs parsley, finely chopped
  - Freshly ground black pepper

*serves 3*



**Method (precook at home)**

1. Cook the bulgur wheat (1 part bulgur to 2 parts water) until the bulgur wheat is tender.
2. Remove from the heat and cool slightly.
3. Stir in the lemon zest, garlic, mint, parsley and extra virgin olive oil.
4. Season with freshly ground black pepper.
5. Keep warm on the barbecue grid or serve cold.

Homemade Beef Burgers  
Lentil Patties



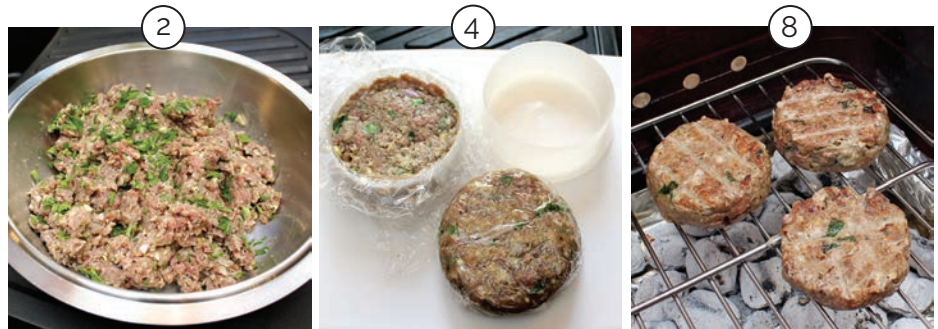


# Homemade Beef Burgers

## Ingredients

- 250g lean good-quality minced beef
- 3 wholemeal burger buns
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp bread crumbs
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- Handful parsley
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

serves 3



## Method (prepare at home a day before)

1. Tip the beef into a bowl.
2. Add the onion, garlic, bread crumbs, egg, coriander, parsley, olive oil and pepper. Mix well.
3. Prepare a round container (for shape) and cover the base with stretch and seal.
4. Fill the container with third of the mixture.
5. Press mixture to form a burger.
6. Repeat twice more, so as to prepare three burgers.
7. Remove burgers from the container and wrap with stretch and seal and freeze.
8. Remove the stretch and seal and place the frozen burgers on the barbecue grid.
9. Grill for about 4-6 minutes or until done, turning every minute.



# Lentil Patties

## Method

1. In a pot, combine the rice, garlic, onion, lentils, carrots, mustard, curry/cumin and water.
2. Leave to simmer until rice and lentils are tender and all the water has been absorbed.
3. Put the mixture in a bowl and leave to cool.
4. Add 3 beaten eggs and parsley and mix.
5. Cover base of an ovenproof dish with a baking sheet and spray some olive oil.
6. Form the mixture into shapes or patties.
7. Bake the patties in a preheated oven for about five minutes for each side or until lightly golden.
8. Keep warm on the barbecue grid, wrapped in baking sheet and aluminium foil.
9. Serve with a fresh salad.

## Ingredients

(makes 6 patties)

- 100g wholegrain rice
- 100g lentils
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Chopped parsley
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 2 tsp parsley
- 2 tsp English/Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp curry/cumin
- Olive oil spray
- 500 ml water

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**Health Promotion & Disease  
Prevention Directorate**

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