

# Project Food Newsletter

Now more than ever, most of us are trying to reduce our food and fuel bills. Whilst there is sadly no magic wand, there are a few changes we can all make to help reduce costs.

With very best wishes,  
Hannah and the Project Food team



**PROJECT FOOD**

A helping hand to healthy eating

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## Focus on... Reducing food costs

### Batch cooking

Whether you're making a pasta sauce, soup or curry, batch cooking is a great way to reduce both costs of ingredients and the amount of energy needed to cook them. It means you can freeze portions for another occasion and then reheat cheaply on the hob or in the microwave. When making a big batch of something you also tend to use smaller amounts of things, e.g. you may use a whole tin of tomatoes rather than half a one. You then prevent the half a tin going mouldy in the fridge and wasting money...see below!

### Reducing food waste

Reducing the amount of food we throw away is one of the biggest ways to save money. Try to keep your fridge organised and find out how to keep different fruit and veg to best preserve their life. And learn to love your leftovers! Soups and omelettes are great leftover recipes.

### Food swaps

Replacing expensive meat with pulses is a great way to reduce the cost of some dishes. For example, by swapping 400g of beef mince in a bolognese recipe with 200g mince and 200g lentils you'll save yourself about £1.50. It's also better for you too. Pulses such as chickpeas, lentils and beans are cheap, low in fat, high in protein and work really well to bulk out curries and stews.

### Eat the seasons

Looking out for seasonal fruit and veg is a great way to not only reduce costs but also to ensure that you are eating the most tasty produce available. For example, a leek purchased now will cost less than one you buy in July and taste more delicious too. You'll find a recipe for leek and potato soup on the next page.

Good veg to look out for over the winter are apples, beetroot, brussel sprouts, cabbage, chard, cauliflower, leeks, parsnips, peas, spring greens, swede and turnips.



## Use your cooker wisely

There are several things to consider here. If you use the oven a lot, traditionally quite an expensive way to cook, have you thought of cooking those meals in a different way? For example, a baked potato could first be cooked in the microwave and then crisped up in the oven, meaning the oven is on for a much shorter time. Microwaves are generally very cheap to run.

Do you have an unloved slow cooker lurking at the back of your cupboard? This could be the time to bring it out again! A slow cooker can be an economical way to cook casseroles and dishes that spend a lot of time in the oven.

Or, when using your oven, try not to cook just one dish. So if you're cooking a lasagne, bake some muffins at the same time.



## Create a freezer and cupboard food stash

Frozen or tinned foods can be a great way of enjoying a variety of different foods the whole year round. These foods are usually quite cheap too and, as they have a long shelf life, are a great choice if you're watching the pennies.

Frozen peas are not only a great source of vitamins, but are also high in protein, while frozen soft fruits make a great addition to porridge or a topping for yoghurt. And tinned sardines are full of protein and good oily fats, and are delicious on toast too!



If you have an excess of fresh fruit available (there seem to be cooking apples everywhere at the moment), you can stew into a compote and freeze in batches.

## Leek and Potato Soup

Makes about 5 portions

### Ingredients

2 medium leeks  
1 tablespoon olive/vegetable oil or butter  
1 onion, chopped  
225g/8oz potatoes, peeled and cubed  
Black pepper  
1.2 litres/2 pints low salt vegetable stock

### Optional

Bay leaf and/or some sprigs of thyme  
Milk

### Method

1. Trim your leeks and remove the tough outer layer. Now slice them into rounds and wash really well.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat and add the onions and leeks. Season with black pepper. Mix together really well and then cover and reduce the heat to low. Cook gently for about 15 minutes until really soft.
3. Then add potatoes, stir and cook for another minutes. Add the stock, and bay leaf (and thyme too) if using, and bring to the boil. Season well and simmer for about 15–20 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.
4. Remove the bay leaf and whizz with a hand blender or in a blender until smooth, adding a little milk if you like or a creamier soup.