

# My Green Kitchen

My Green Kitchen by [Neena Truscott](#) and [Belinda Macdonald](#)



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[My-Green-Kitchen by Neena-Truscott-Belinda-Macdonald](#) – NZ\$39

My lovely friends have just released a wonderful book that is full of inspirational recipes integrating the healing power of foods in easy-to-make family recipes. These recipes have a focus on restoring gut health, utilising leftovers and seasonal abundance and foraging for superfoods.

Also included are herbal recipes for stimulating vibrant health and innovative ideas for meals which feature ancient grains, and how to indulge in sweet treats without the 'nasties'. The book features an article on 'ancestral eating' from Ben Warren of BePure, one of NZ's leading nutrition and holistic health experts.

Written by the winners of the first My Kitchen Rules NZ, Neena Truscott and Belinda Macdonald I love their work. This book reflects their love and commitment to good, healthy foods and take you on a journey in your own kitchen.

Two Thumbs Up, well worth getting.

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# Pea and Red Bell Pepper Salad

The core recipe is very yummy and can be added to with what's in season. I serve this super fresh salad with cold cuts of roasted chicken, lamb or fried salmon fillets.



Its also you can crumble some feta cheese right before serving.

## Ingredients

600g ( $\frac{3}{4}$  lb.) snow peas

400g ( $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.) mushrooms, sliced

2 small sweet red bell pepper, cut in half, de-seeded and sliced into strips

1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Walnut orange dressing

1 small clove of garlic, pressed

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup orange juice

2 tsp raw or runny honey

3 tbsp cider vinegar or white wine vinegar

2 tbsp walnut oil (or olive oil)

Pinch of salt and a few grinds of black pepper

#### Method

Top and string peas and then blanch peas in boiling water for 1 to 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes. Drain and put into cold water to shock (stop the cooking) and dry thoroughly.

Combine dressing ingredients in a jar with a tight fitting lid and shake until well combined (or whisk together in a bowl)

Toss vegetables with dressing and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.

Serve immediately.

#### Optional additions

1 cup sliced cheery tomatoes

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sweet corn kernels

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## [Easy Damson Plum Jam](#)

Damson plums are small and the flesh is quite sharp and sour, but in my view makes the absolute best plum jam in the world. I match the jam with nice cheeses on a platter with some slightly spicy cured meats. I am in heaven.



Makes about 8 250ml jars.

### Ingredients

1 1½kg (3.3lb) whole, washed damson plums

3 cups water

5 cups sugar

### Method

Combine the plums and the water and over a medium hot heat bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 15 minutes, stirring constantly.

Allow to cool enough to handle – or completely, if you like and fish out the pits. It's a bit messy but well worth it.

I put them in a colander over a large pot and pass the liquid and as much of the flesh that you can through and then start picking out the stones. Return the pulp to the rest of the jam to the pot once the pits are out. Bring them back to the boil and add the sugar to the plums, stirring to dissolve.

Reduce the heat to a light, rolling simmer and cook to jam stage, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, put the clean jars into a pre-heated oven at 140 C

(300F).

Return the plums to the jam kettle, and bring them back to the boil. Add the sugar to the plums, stirring to dissolve.

### Jam Stage Test

Sheet or spoon test – Dip a cool metal spoon into the boiling jelly mixture. Raise the spoon out of the steam, about 12 inches above the pan. Turn the spoon so the liquid runs off the side. The jelly is done when the syrup forms two drops that flow together and sheet or hang off the edge of the spoon.

Once the jam has reached setting point remove from the heat and stir and skim 5 minutes.

Pour into hot sterilized jars and seal with lids sterilized according to the manufacturers directions. (Generally, boiled for 5 minutes.)

Let cool, label and store when the jars have sealed.

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## [Asparagus Frittata](#)

## Ingredients



4-6 asparagus spears

3 free range eggs

3 tbsp grated parmesan

Olive or coconut oil

freshly ground black pepper and fine sea salt.

## Method

Clean the asparagus, cutting the lowest end of the stalks. Bring to a boil a little salted water (just enough to cover them) and let the asparagus cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Drain well and cut into 1 and 1/2 cm (slightly bigger than 1/2in) long pieces.

Whisk the eggs with a little salt and black pepper (I like lots), add the parmesan and then the cut asparagus.

Pour a couple of tablespoons of oil in a medium-small frying pan and make it hot before adding the egg and asparagus mixture. Lower the temperature and cook until the eggs start to solidify. Flip over and quickly brown also the other side. Serve warm or cold with a seasonal side salad.

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# Runny Egg with Asparagus Solders

I love this when asparagus is in season and I have some yummy free range eggs in the pantry. For me asparagus and eggs are a match made in heaven.



## Ingredients

1 jumbo free-range egg per person

75g fresh asparagus, stalks trimmed or snapped

Some melted butter

Fine sea salt and fresh ground black pepper to season

## Optional

2 thin slices Parma ham (or any other cured ham of your choice) per serve

## Method

Trim the asparagus spears or snap them to remove the woody end. To snap, work with one asparagus spear at a time. Hold an asparagus spear on either end and start to bend it by pulling both ends towards you, each spear will snap off in its own place above the spot where the asparagus turns woody.

Boil the egg(s) to your liking, I like mine very runny. Drain and dry the egg(s) and place each in a egg cup on a serving plate.

Poach-steam the asparagus for a couple of minutes to soften them so they are just cooked and are still a little firm.

Drain and toss in some melted butter and season to taste.

Lay the ham in a single layer on a board and place the asparagus onto the ham. Roll up loosely and place next to the egg cup. You can also slice the ham into strips and roll around each asparagus spear.

Serve and use the asparagus spears to dip in the runny egg as if they are bread soldiers.

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## [Real Food Real Fun eBook](#)

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## [Cooking With Garlic](#)

In a follow-up post to [Garlic](#), I want to chat a little about cooking garlic.



Garlic is an allium in the same family as onions, chives, shallots and leeks. It's cultivated for the distinct flavour of its bulb. Garlic is high in vitamins B6 and C, and contains several minerals including magnesium, potassium and calcium. Garlic also contains essential oils, glucose and fructose.

### Selecting Garlic

When selecting garlic, choose plump, firm bulbs with tight cloves. Bulbs that appear drier, where the skin easily falls

off, are likely old. If you slice open your garlic clove and notice that there is a green stem inside, this indicates that your garlic is sprouting and past its prime. It is still okay to use the clove, but some find this green stem to be bitter and pungent. Simply remove the green stem prior to cooking.

### Using Garlic In Your Cooking

One raw garlic clove, finely minced or pressed releases more flavor than a dozen cooked whole cloves. When garlic cloves are cooked or baked whole, the flavor mellows into a sweet, almost nutty flavor that hardly resembles any form of pungency. This nutty flavor makes a surprisingly nice addition to desserts, such as brownies or even ice cream. I also bake whole heads of garlic when I am making pumpkin soups.

You can increase the health benefits you receive from garlic by letting it sit after you've chopped it or crushed it. If you give your chopped/crushed garlic time to sit before changing its temperature (through cooking) it will give the alliinase enzymes in garlic an opportunity to become active and this offers great health benefits, let it rest for about 8 minutes.

### Garlic and Heat



When sautéing garlic, be very careful not to burn it. The flavour turns intensely bitter, and you'll have to start over. Never put garlic into very hot oil. Oil heated over a medium heat will let the garlic release its wonderful taste

infusing the oil.

The smaller you cut it, the stronger the flavour. Chopping finely and/or pressing a clove exposes more surfaces to the air, causing a chemical reaction to produce that strong aroma and potent flavour. This is even more so when you have fresh garlic at the beginning of the harvest season.

If you have a good garlic press, you don't even need to peel garlic cloves before pressing, which can be a wonderful time-saver. Just place the unpeeled clove in the tool cavity, press and discard the skins left in the cavity.

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## Using Herbs

Outlined below are some suggestions of what herbs to use with what meats or vegetables. Herbs are a great option when you are living a seasonal fresh to bring full flavour to your dishes. If you are not big on the use of herbs in your cooking start with some of the suggested matched below and play around with tastes.



You will find out what you like and this will open the door to even greater tasting foods.

I use both fresh and dried.

[You can download this post as a pdf by clicking here](#)

**Herbs with meat.**

Beef –

Basil, Bay leaf, Caraway, Chervil, Lovage seed, Cumin, Garlic Fenugreek, Ginger, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Savory, Tarragon, Thyme and Peppermint.

Lamb –

Basil, Bay leaf, Cinnamon, Coriander, Cumin, Chervil, Dill, Garlic, Ginger, Lemon Balm, Lovage seed, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Saffron, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme and Savory.

Ham –

Lovage, Marjoram, Mint, Mustard, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary and Savory.

Pork –

Anise, Caraway, Cardamom, Coriander, Chervil, Dill, Garlic, Ginger, Oregano, Rosemary, Saffron, Sage, Tarragon, Fennel, Lovage seed, Marjoram, Savory and Thyme.

Veal –

Basil, Bay leaf, Chervil, Chives, Ginger, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Savory and Thyme.

Venison –

Bay, Lovage seed, Rosemary, Sage, Savory and Sweet Marjoram.

Rabbit –

Basil, Bay, Marjoram, Lovage seed, Rosemary and Sage.

Liver –

Basil, Dill, Marjoram, Sage, Savory and Thyme.

Turkey –

Basil, Garlic, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Saffron, Sage, Savory, Tarragon, Thyme, Parsley and Sweet Marjoram.

Chicken –

Thyme, Anise, Basil, Bay leaf, Borage, Chervil, Chives, Cinnamon, Cumin, Dill, Fenugreek, Fennel, Garlic, Ginger, Lovage, Lemon Balm, Marjoram, Mint Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary,

Saffron, Sage, Savory and Tarragon.

Duck –

Bay, Rosemary, Sage, Sweet Marjoram and Tarragon.

Goose – Fennel, Sage and Sweet Marjoram.

Fish – Anise, Basil, Borage, Caraway, Chevil, Chives, Dill, Fennel, Garlic, Ginger, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Saffron, Sage, Savory, Tarragon and Thyme.

Baked or Grilled Fish –

Basil, Bay, Caraway, Chervil, Chives, Dill, Fennel, Lemon Balm, Lemon Thyme, Lovage, Marjoram, Mints, Parsley, Savory, Tarragon and Thyme.

Salmon –

Dill seed and Rosemary.

Fish Soups – Bay, Lovage, Sage, Savory, Tarragon and Thyme.

Oily Fish – Fennel and Dill.

Seafood – Basil, Bay, Chervil, Chives, Dill, Fennel Seed, Marjoram, Rosemary, Tarragon and Thyme.

### **Herbs with vegetables**

Artichokes –

Bay, Savory and Tarragon.

Asparagus –

Chives, Lemon Balm, Sage, Savory, Tarragon, Thyme, Chervil, Dill and Tarragon.

Avocado –

Dill, Marjoram and Tarragon.

Beans Dried –

Savory, Cumin, Garlic, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, and Thyme.

Beans, Green –

Savory, Basil, Caraway, Cloves, Dill, Marjoram, Mint, Sage and Thyme.

Broccoli –

Basil, Dill, Garlic, Lemon Balm, Marjoram, Oregano, Tarragon and Thyme.

Brussel Sprouts –

Dill, Sage and Savory.

Cabbage –

Basil, Caraway, Cayenne, Cumin, Dill, Fennel, Marjoram, Sage, Savory, Borage, Dill seed, Mint, Oregano and Savory.

Carrots –

Anise, Basil, Chervil, Chives, Cinnamon, Clove, Cumin, Dill, Sage, Ginger, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley, Savory, Tarragon, Thyme and Chervil.

Cauliflower –

Basil, Caraway, Chives, Cumin, Dill, Garlic, Marjoram, Parsley, Rosemary, Savory, Tarragon and Fennel.

Corn –

Chevil, Chives, Lemon Balm, Saffron, Sage and, Thyme.

Eggplant –

Basil, Cinnamon, Dill, Garlic, Marjoram, Mint, Oregano, Parsley, Sage, Savory and Thyme.

Lentils –

Garlic, Mint , Parsley, Savory and Sorrel.

Mushrooms –

Coriander, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Tarragon, Thyme, Basil, Dill, Lemon Balm, Parsley, Rosemary and Savory.

Onions –

Basil, Marjoram, Oregano, Sage, Tarragon and Thyme.

Parsnips –

Basil, Dill, Marjoram, Parsley, Savory and Thyme.

Peas –

Caraway, Chevil, Chives, Rosemary, Savory, Tarragon, Thyme, Basil, Chervil, Marjoram, Mint, Parsley and Sage.

Potatoes –

Parsley, Basil, Caraway, Chives, Coriander, Dill, Fennel, Lovage, Sage, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Tarragon and Thyme.

Spinach –

Anise, Basil, Caraway, Chevil, Chives, Cinnamon, Dill, Rosemary, Thyme, Borage, Marjoram, Mint, Sage, Sorrel and Tarragon.

Squash –

Basil, Caraway, Cardamom, Cinnamon, Cloves, Ginger, Marjoram, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Savory and Dill.

Tomatoes –

Basil, Bay leaf, Chives, Chervil, Coriander, Dill, Garlic, Lovage, Sage, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Savory, Tarragon and Thyme.

Turnips –

Dill seed, Marjoram and Savory.

Zucchini –

Basil, Dill, Marjoram, Rosemary and Tarragon.

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## Garlic

I have been asked many times why garlic is so good for us. In this blog I offer up reasons as well as some tips to get the best from garlic.



*Allium sativum*, commonly known as garlic, is a species in the onion genus, *Allium*. Its close relatives include the onion, shallot, leek, chive. Garlic has a history of human use of over 7,000 years and is native to central Asia.

Garlic is a wonderful seasoning to add aroma, taste, and added nutrition to your dishes. I recommend using raw chopped or pressed garlic in many of your dishes to take advantage of the benefits derived from garlic.

You can increase the health benefits you receive from garlic by letting it sit after you've chopped it or crushed it. If you give your chopped/crushed garlic time to sit before changing its temperature (through cooking) it will give the alliinase enzymes in garlic an opportunity to become active and this offers great health benefits.

What this means is that the Allicin that is present in garlic has time to form properly. I let garlic rest for 8-10 minutes before I start to cook with it. This resting vastly improves the health benefits of garlic.

For more on the health benefits of garlic follow this link to an article from Dr Mercola

<http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2013/09/23/>



[garlic-health-benefits.aspx](http://garlic-health-benefits.aspx)

## Growing Garlic



Garlic is a very easy plant to grow. It takes up very little room and if you prepare the soil you are planting into all it should need is to keep the soil moist.

In general, the best times for planting are mid-autumn or early spring. Garlic needs a lot of full sun, but it might tolerate partial shade provided it's not for very long during the day or growing season. The soil must be well dug over and crumbly. Sandy loam is best.

Break up each bulb into cloves (little segments), it is these segments which you plant not the whole bulb.

Bury each clove (segment) finger depth, at least 5 cm (2 inches) below the ground (twice as deep as the length of the clove). Space the cloves you are planting 20cm (8 inches) apart.

Garlic is happy growing in pots and containers, in a pot the size of a kitchen bucket you can plant about 6 cloves of garlic. All that is required is good drainage, a position in full sun and good potting mix.

## Harvesting and Storage

Loosen the area around each bulb with a shovel. Pull the bulbs out of the ground. Be careful with the digging process, since garlic tends to bruise easily.

Wash them and leave to dry in a well-ventilated space or in the sun for a few days if rain is guaranteed not to fall. Garlic can get sunburned, so don't leave them outside for too long.

Store garlic in a cool, dry place in your home. Dried bulbs can be kept in a garlic keeper (usually made from pottery), and individual cloves can be pulled off as needed.

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## Is Eating Seasonal and Local Expensive Part One Getting Started

As a seasonal fresh chef I get told all the time that "we can't eat local and seasonal fresh, it costs too much".



I have to say, this is not true and it can be made a reality with a little understanding on how to buy in season. Seasonal

food is better for you and the planet , plenty of nutrients and flavour !

Eating locally supports the economy you live in or are close to. It also supports local and smaller farms who are farming sustainably

Eating seasonally also reduces food costs because when we buy what is abundant and in season, the supply is higher and this means the cost of the food is lower. This enables you to buy better quality items while stretching your food dollars. Often they will have specials and you can buy up on, blanch vegetables and freeze for later use.

When I say local I don't mean at the supermarket, I mean from your local farmers markets or green grocer. The benefit of buying from these two is that either they have grown the produce themselves or they have sourced from local suppliers and can tell you where it has come from.

When produce is in season locally, the relative abundance of the crop usually makes it less expensive. It's the basic law of supply and demand, and when crops are in season you'll be rewarded financially by purchasing what's growing now.

**Ok, How Do I Start?**

**Planning Your Weeks Meals**

The first thing I suggest is to start a meal plan for the coming week. I do these late in the week in the evening so I can take advantage of the farmers markets and green grocers.

You can download a A4 weekly meal planning chart here....

[www.jimmyboswell.com/GFS\\_Meal\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.jimmyboswell.com/GFS_Meal_Planning.pdf)

When you are starting chat with family and find out what they want over the next week and make a list of the meal suggestions.

Spend time each week looking for recipes. The internet is great for this. Remember to bookmark sites you like to you can get back to them quickly.

Decide what to prepare. I find it helpful to think in terms of categories, for example:

Soup or Salad

Ethnic styled meals like Italian meatballs, curries etc

Pasta

Casserole

Quick & Easy.

Ethnic – you could divide it into cooking styles

grilling & BBQ's

crock-pot

stir-fry

roast

If I pick one from each category, there's sufficient variety that my family won't complain, and by putting the Quick & Easy meals (tacos, hamburgers, spaghetti) on harried days, dinner will get done on time.

Save one day a week for a new dish from a cookbook or a food blog if you like to try new things. If it's from a blog, make sure you print out the recipe and keep it with your menu plan or in a notebook just for that purpose.

To help with herbs and seasonings have a look at my blog on herb and spice blends that makes cooking a lot easier.

<http://www.tasteofhome.co.nz/everyday-dried-herb-blends/>

## **Start a Meal Calendar.**

Now that you're getting inspired in what to eat, start a calendar of what you'd like to cook over the next few days or few weeks and mix and match meal requests from family and friends.

This is also a great way of getting kids in the kitchen helping meals that they love. They can start with washing vegetables, mixing things together, cracking eggs and loads more. This gives them pride in what has been cook and what they are eating.



## **Choose a shopping day and make a shopping list.**

This makes it easier to plan where you need to go and this can save a lot of time and money.

## **Check what's on sale.**

This works in with meal planning and your shopping. When you are making the shopping list check your pantry and add to the list anything that needs to be re-stocked.

## **Plan for leftovers.**

This is a very good way to eat fresh and save money through buying when things are on special. I regularly cook one or two big healthy casseroles or ragus at the beginning of the week and eat off them all week long for lunch.

Some people can only eat leftovers for a single night. There are many ways that we can have the leftovers in different

ways. I will delve into this in another post.

### **Be strategic about freezing.**

The freezer is your friend. Actually, it's the friend of future you. Make a double batch of that sauce you love, some stocks half or all for later. Make a double batch of soup, stew, chicken cacciatore – throw it in the freezer. Let a month go by, and those leftovers will look fresh and tasty!

### **Don't overstuff the refrigerator.**

It's easy to get overwhelmed when your fridge is over-full. Also, things get hidden in the back. Don't let things go bad. Keep your fridge airy and light, with a sensible, realistic amount of food in it.

### **Keep a well-stocked pantry.**

Meals are easier and quicker to prepare if you keep your pantry well-stocked. Don't run out of olive oil at inconvenient moments. Have spices and herbs ready to season and flavour dishes you are cooking.