

# Taste

## Just child's play



### Eating in

Judith Sweet

**S**CHOOL holidays without much sun can make for problems when it comes to keeping everyone happy and busy when confined indoors.

This is a good time to encourage children to don an apron and lend a hand in the kitchen.

The recipes today are easy and will appeal to children. Both use cooked rice.

When I cook rice as part of a meal I often add extra, as I find it great to have on hand because it can be used in many ways: it makes a great base for salads or as binding in meatloaf or burgers, in baked custards or, because it reheats well in a microwave oven, as a quick accompaniment to a meal.

It can be made more interesting by adding chopped fresh herbs or flavoured with a little cinnamon and brown sugar to serve with stewed rhubarb, apples or pears.

The beef casserole is almost a complete meal in a dish.

It has a base of cooked rice and is topped with a tomato-flavoured savoury mince that is combined with lots of vegetables.

A salad or green vegetables is all that's needed to finish the meal.

A can of condensed tomato soup is what I have used as both a flavouring and liquid in the mince topping. If this is not to your liking, you could use a similar quantity of tomato sugo or diced tomatoes. I have added rolled oats to the mixture, which works as a thickener and at the same time adds nourishment and fibre to the casserole.

Choose whatever vegetables you wish, depending on the likes of the family. I've chosen red capsicum, celery and carrot.

The rice pancakes are delicious and I've kept the sugar content to a minimum. If you have an electric frypan, use it for cooking these, especially if you have young helpers. The temperature is easy to control and four or five can be cooked successfully at once.

Stewed or poached fruit is a tasty accompaniment to these or a squeeze of lemon juice and sprinkling of sugar. Maple syrup, honey or jams are also favourites.

Brown rice contains much more fibre than white rice and is a healthy option. I quite like to combine the two; however, they will need to be cooked separately in the first instance, as brown rice requires a much longer cooking time than the white.

As bacteria can develop very quickly in cooked rice, it is essential it be kept refrigerated.

### Simple beef and rice casserole

**500g good quality minced beef**

**1 large onion, small dice**

**1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)**

**1 tsp curry powder (optional)**

**2 cups diced vegetables, such as carrot, celery and capsicum**

**1 tbsp savoury plum sauce**

**3½ cups cooked white or brown rice**

**1½ cups grated tasty cheese**

**½ cup rolled oats**

**2 tbsp finely chopped parsley**

**1 x 440g can condensed tomato soup or 440mls tomato sugo**

**1 tbsp oil**

**freshly ground pepper, to taste**

Grease a deep ovenproof dish. In a large frypan, heat the oil and add the diced onion.



### Rice pancakes

**1 cup cooked rice (white or brown)**

**½ cup self-raising flour**

**¾ cup milk**

**1 egg, separated**

**2 tbsp sugar**

**1 tbsp butter**

**pinch salt**

**few drops vanilla essence**

In a medium size saucepan combine the rice with a quarter cup of the milk and the butter.

Heat gently until warm and soft and the butter has melted. Remove from the heat.

Stir and cook the onion until it is translucent. Add the garlic and curry powder, if using.

Add the mince to the onion (you may need to turn up the heat a little) and stir while cooking until the meat has browned.

Reduce the heat, add the vegetables and cook for two to three minutes.

Stir in the soup, rolled oats and pepper and bring to a simmer. Taste for seasoning and adjust as necessary.

Remove from the heat.

Season the rice with salt and pepper and add the chopped parsley.

Put half the rice in the base of the casserole, then top with half the meat mixture, then another layer of rice. Add half a cup of the

Add the remaining milk, the egg yolk that has been beaten with a fork or small whisk, sugar, salt and flour. Mix together.

Stiffly beat the egg white and fold it through the mixture. It helps to make the mixture light.

Cook as for pikelets, that is: heat a flat, smooth bottomed pan over a moderate heat.

When hot, grease it by brushing a little butter or oil on the pan.

Drop the mixture into the pan, using a tablespoon of the mixture for each pancake.

Cook for 2-3 minutes, until bubbles show on the surface, then carefully turn. Cook for 2-3 minutes on the other side.

Serve while warm with your choice of topping.

cheese to the final layer of meat.

Cover loosely with foil and cook in a preheated oven 170C-180C for 20-25 minutes.

Remove from the oven and sprinkle the remaining cheese on the top. Cook, uncovered, until the cheese melts.

This can be totally constructed in advance — that is, earlier in the day — and kept refrigerated until you wish to serve it.

If it is going from the refrigerator to the oven, you will need to allow at least an extra 10 minutes for it to heat through. The heating time could be made faster by giving the casserole a few minutes in the microwave oven on a medium heat.



## Tasty Bits

### Oi! Stirring at Barilla

BARILLA Bay, just past the airport roundabout from Hobart, is having an open day next weekend with shore-based oyster farm tours, wine and product tastings.

The restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner over the weekend and you might like to try chef Graham Bumford's toyonoka strawberries from Mike Jenkinson, with chicken wrapped in filo pastry, a basil mayonnaise and balsamic reduction — or oysters with a strawberry salsa: toyonoka strawberries, spring onions and a French strawberry liqueur or an oyster shooter with the salsa.

### . . . Bar the shouting

VERNON Stuber considers himself "an Australian who grew up in Europe". Raised within sniffing distance of the Toblerone factory at Berne, Switzerland, he discovered his Australianness on a visit in 1985, confirmed it by 13 follow-up visits before migrating to Sydney in 2000, where he runs Australian Chocolate and is taking on the multinationals in the chocolate-bar market.

Into a market dominated by the products of Mars, Nestle and Cadbury comes Red Ripper, a cherry-and-chocolate concoction that meets Cherry Ripe head-on, and Verve, a nut and chocolate bar. Soon to come is Crikey It's Nuts — which just shows how Aussie Stuber has become.

The difference between Australian Chocolate bars and their rivals is that Stuber makes his with couverture chocolate which is 53 per cent cocoa solids in the dark chocolate and 35 per cent in the milk chocolate and they contain no vegetable fats, other than cocoa butter, at all.

### Shortly for seniors

OLDER people can find cooking a problem, be they men who have never had to do it or women who find little pleasure in cooking for just themselves instead of a family. Legacy Hobart and Eat Well Tasmania have obtained funds from the Department of Veterans Affairs to run classes called Cooking for One or Two at eight different centres around the state over the next 12 months.

Bookings are being taken for a course beginning on Monday, July 5 at Glenorchy RSL. The six two-hour sessions cost participants \$30, very good value considering you get to eat the main course and dessert with the rest of the class at the end of each session. Classes are limited to 10 or 12 people and include basic nutrition and food hygiene. Book with Jeltji Gillian, phone 6234 6581.

### Bickies of lightness

ARNOTT'S has three new flavours in its Snack Right range of biscuits — with only 1.3 grams of fat per biscuit. New to the range are Orange & Poppysed, Choc Chip & Apricot and Strawberry & Raspberry. They're tasty, with real fruit and seeds, and cost about \$2.30 a 165g packet.

ELAINE REEVES