

Being Creative with Recipes

What you decide to cook in school needs forward planning. Start by cross-referencing recipe ideas against the Cooking and Nutrition curriculum to find opportunities to build cooking skills and knowledge across the primary years. Choose recipes that will be popular with children from all backgrounds. Food for Life can help with this as our recipes are linked to cooking skills progression, have flexibility with ingredients and encourage discussion around healthy and sustainable diets.

There are a few 'rules' when encouraging creativity and flexibility with recipes as you want the outcomes to be successful and inspiring for children.

Some recipes are tried and tested and work because of food science principles. For example, shortcrust pastry is based on a 2:1 ratio of flour to fat that is rubbed in and bound together with a 5ml water for every 25g flour. The result is a crumbly, short pastry that can be used for tarts and pies. It's an example of a foundation recipe. If you switch the proportions around too much, you won't achieve a successful result. Other examples of foundation recipes are plain scones, white sauce and pancake batter.



The creativity and flexibility with foundation recipes can come in the fillings and flavourings you add. For example, a basic scone can be flavoured with spices like cinnamon or cardamom and sweetened with fruit like raisins, diced apple or blueberries. Or they can be made savoury with the addition of herbs, spices, mustard powder and cheese. All sorts of creative ideas can be achieved this way.



Recipes like soups, salads and pasta sauces are much more flexible and can be adapted quite widely. If a recipe suggests a particular herb, vegetable or fruit, think seasonally and look for a substitute that's at its best and economical. Also, to reduce costs, consider swapping fresh fruit and veg for tinned and frozen, especially when out of season.



Savoury Recipes

Here are 3 FFL savoury baked recipes that you might find helpful for your project work – especially if you are planning to cook items for packed lunches or a buffet. The fillings / flavourings for these recipes can be adapted to suit the time of year, what's available and any dietary requirements you have in the group.

- Leek and Mushroom Croustades - suitable for the youngest children to make as the tart cases are made from rolled-out sliced bread which is easy to handle. Filling ingredients can be mixed and matched to suit the occasion.
- Butternut and Feta Rolls - using filo pastry which is low in fat and a healthier option than puff pastry. It can be shaped and folded to encase a wide variety of fillings.
- Herby Cheese Scones - more suited to preparing with older primary-aged children as scones need gentle handling. Try different herbs, diced veg and cheeses.



Use the 'pick and mix' charts with children to help them create their own versions of the recipes.