

Recipes for a warmer winter

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Delicious ways
to keep you warm
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Winter Stew



Fish pie



Ratatouille pasta



Baked apple
and raisins

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Introduction

Nutritious food helps us stay warm and well in cold weather. In winter we are all more vulnerable to poor health and illness. It's a shocking fact that one older person dies every eight minutes in England and Wales.

When we are cold our blood thickens and our blood pressure rises, as we get older this puts us at greater risk of having a heart attack or a stroke. The cold weather also increases the likelihood of chest infections and can cause problems for people with breathing difficulties such as asthma.

The good news is that we can take simple steps to reduce these risks. Inside this booklet you'll find lots of helpful tips and there are more inside the free *Winter Wrapped Up* information guide – available from Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65**.

For example, did you know that in winter you should try to ensure at least one of your daily meals is hot?

Why not start giving yourself the extra care you deserve by trying out some of the warming and delicious winter recipes in this booklet? Follow the simple steps we recommend and you can protect your health and keep warm in winter.

Happy cooking!

Mushroom soup



Soup is always a favourite on a cold winter's day, either for a lunch with a crusty roll, or as a starter for dinner.

This soup is creamy and warming and the mushrooms contain fibre and many vitamins and minerals to support the body, including B vitamins and potassium.

Serves 2

Preparation time

15 minutes

Cooking time

20 minutes

Ingredients

25g/1oz butter

1 onion,
finely chopped

1 green pepper,
finely chopped

1 leek,
finely chopped

1-2 garlic cloves,
peeled crushed

300g/10½oz
mushrooms,
ideally button or
chestnut, sliced

2 tbsp plain flour

450ml/16fl oz
vegetable stock

450ml/16fl oz milk

1 tbsp finely
chopped parsley

Method

Melt the butter in a pan over a low heat, and gently sweat the onion, green pepper, leek and garlic until they start to soften.

Increase the heat and add the mushrooms to the pan, stir until well combined. Continue to fry until the mushrooms are cooked. Stir in the flour, and cook for one minute. Remove the pan from the heat and add the stock a little at a time, stirring well between each addition.

Once all the stock is added, return the pan to the heat, bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer for a few minutes. Pour in the milk and bring to a simmer. Stir in the chopped parsley and add freshly ground black pepper to taste.

Cold weather reminder

Food is fuel

Hot meals and drinks help keep you warm. Include a good range of foods in your diet and aim for five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, so that you're getting plenty of nutrients and vitamins. Remember that frozen vegetables are as good as fresh.

Winter stew



Enjoy a complete nutritious meal all cooked in one pot with this warming stew. The meat provides protein to help the body grow and repair; the potatoes provide carbohydrates to give energy and fibre, and vitamins and minerals from the vegetables help protect from winter germs. Invite family or friends to share it with you or chill or freeze any extra for another day.

A slow cooker is very handy for stews, and you can prepare the ingredients in the morning and leave it to cook all day. This can also be cooked in the oven.

Serves 4

Preparation time

15 minutes

Cooking time

5–7 hours
(or 2–3 hours
in the oven)

Ingredients

340g/12oz cubed meat,
such as stewing beef,
lamb, or chicken

1 onion, chopped

2 potatoes,
cut into chunks

2 carrots, sliced

1 parsnip or swede,
chopped

2 stock cubes:
beef, lamb or chicken

2 tbsps of gravy
granules or cornflour
to thicken

500ml/20fl oz water,
add more if required
during cooking

Dried mixed herbs, chilli
powder and/or pepper
to taste as required

Method

Place the meat and vegetables in the slow cooker, or an ovenproof casserole dish with lid.

Add the stock cubes to the boiling water and stir until dissolved. Add gravy granules or cornflour to thicken slightly.

Pour the mixture into the pot and then add more boiling water so that all the meat and vegetables are covered.

Season as required, for an even warmer taste add ground black pepper or a little chilli powder.

Turn on the slow cooker and leave for 5–7 hours, or put the covered casserole dish in the oven for 2–3 hours at gas mark 6/200°C/400°F.

Stir occasionally and add more water and thickening granules or cornflour as required checking that the meat is tender and the vegetables are cooked through before serving.

Cold weather reminder

Keep warm and well – 64°F (18°C) is the ideal temperature for your bedroom

Consider having the heating on in your bedroom at night. It is important to ensure that your bedroom temperature does not fall below 65°F (18°C).

You may be entitled to help to pay your energy bills, insulate your home and install central heating – for more information and to get your free *Winter Wrapped Up* information guide, which includes one free room thermometer, call Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65**.

Ratatouille pasta



This dish contains lots of vegetables including garlic to provide vitamins and minerals that support immunity, something we all need in the winter months. Basil contains Vitamins A and C as well as iron and calcium.

Serves 2

Preparation time

10 minutes

Cooking time

30 minutes

Ingredients

200g/7oz sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into wedges

200g/7oz parsnips, peeled and cut into large pieces

200g/7oz carrots, cut into large pieces

2 red onions, quartered

Olive oil

75ml/5 tbsps clear honey

Salt and pepper to season

150g/6oz dry pasta – choose whichever shape you prefer

3–4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

1 tin of chopped tomatoes

A small bunch of basil, torn

Method

Preheat the oven to gas mark 6/200°C/400°F. Place all the vegetables on an oven tray and drizzle with the olive oil and honey and season. Roast in the oven for about 20 minutes until all the vegetables are tender and browned.

While the vegetables are in the oven, cook the pasta according to packet instructions.

Remove vegetables from the oven and put them in a saucepan, along with the crushed garlic and chopped tomatoes.

Bring to the boil and simmer gently for a few minutes stirring in some basil leaves.

Pour over the pasta to serve and garnish with torn basil.

Cold weather reminder

Keep warm and well – keep your bedroom windows closed at night

It's a common misconception that sleeping with the window open is healthy. In fact, breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections. That's why it's important to always shut your bedroom windows at night during the winter months. Install a carbon monoxide alarm in each room that has a gas appliance. Adding several layers of covers to your bed at night will also trap in the warm air. Having a hot drink before bed and keeping one in a flask by your bedside are good ideas too.

Beef stroganoff



Traditionally stroganoff is made with beef, but this can be replaced with turkey or chicken if you want to keep costs down or prefer less fat in the meal. All are good sources of protein for growth and repair of the body.

Brown rice contains more fibre than white and takes a little longer to cook. You can substitute with noodles or pasta which are also good sources of carbohydrates to provide the body with energy.

Serves 2

Preparation time

15 minutes

Cooking time

20–30 minutes

Ingredients

1 cup of rice (a normal drinking mug filled to the top is usually a good amount of rice for two people)

1 onion, thinly sliced

3 cloves of garlic, crushed

300g/10oz rump steak or frying steak

A splash of olive oil

125g/4oz of frozen peas

125g/4oz chestnut mushrooms, sliced

4 tbsps sour cream

A bunch of fresh parsley, chopped

Method

Boil a saucepan of water. Rinse the rice in a sieve then add to the water. Leave to simmer for about 15 minutes or until the rice is cooked (if using brown rice add another 10 minutes to cooking time).

Chop the onion into small pieces and peel and crush the garlic.

Using a different chopping board and knife, trim any fat off the meat, then cut it in to thin strips (about 1cm across), and season with pepper.

Heat a large frying pan, add a splash of olive oil and fry the onions and garlic for 2–3 minutes over a medium heat.

Add the beef to the pan and simmer for 3–4 minutes until browned.

Add the mushrooms and keep stirring until they are browned and soft.

Add the peas and stir into the mixture with a wooden spoon. Keep the pan on a medium heat and let everything cook.

Take off the heat and stir in 3–4 spoonfuls of sour cream, and some finely chopped parsley.

Drain the rice in a sieve and pour boiling water over it to remove the starch. To serve, spoon the stroganoff on top of the rice.



Fish pie



Fish is always a good choice once or twice a week. White fish contains low fat protein and oily fish such as salmon is a good source of the omega 3 fats that doctors recommend for their heart protective properties.

This fish pie provides a balanced meal for those winter evenings, with potatoes for carbohydrate and vegetables giving vitamins and minerals. You can add chopped parsley instead of cheese to the sauce to lower the saturated fat content.

Cold weather reminder

Keep warm and well – 70°F (21°C) is the ideal temperature for your living room

It's best to try to keep the temperature throughout your home stable, as sudden changes in temperature can be dangerous. If it's not possible for you to do this, close the doors to rooms you aren't using and try to keep the temperature in your living room at 70°F (21°C) or more. It's harder to judge temperatures as we grow older, so keep a thermometer handy to detect any changes.

Serves 2

Preparation time

5 minutes

Cooking time

60 minutes

Ingredients

A packet of prepared fish for fish pie or a selection of mixed chopped fish such as smoked haddock, cod and salmon (330g or 12oz approx.)
¾ pint/450ml of milk
450g/1lb potatoes
1 leek, chopped
75g/3oz butter
1 tbsp plain flour
Black pepper
1 tbsp chopped chives
50g/2oz grated cheddar cheese

Method

Put the fish in a shallow saucepan and add the milk. (If the fish has skin on, put it in skin side up to prevent it from sticking). Put the lid on and bring to the boil, then simmer for five minutes. Turn off the heat and leave to cool.

Meanwhile peel and chop the potatoes, and boil for 20–25 minutes. Once cooked, drain the potatoes, and mash with a little extra milk or butter. Steam or boil the leeks for seven minutes until soft.

Once the fish is cool enough to handle, pour the milk it was cooked in into a bowl or measuring jug, and flake the fish into an ovenproof shallow dish, discarding any skin or bones. Add the leeks.

Melt the butter in a saucepan, and add the flour. Cook over a low heat for a couple of minutes, stirring all the time, then add the milk that the fish was cooked in, a little at a time until it thickens. Season with chives and pepper. Whisk to ensure there are no lumps and then keep stirring, adding a little extra milk if needed, to make a thick, smooth sauce. Take off the heat and stir in half the grated cheese.

Pour the sauce over the fish and leeks. Cover evenly with the mashed potato and use a fork to make patterns on the surface. For extra flavour, add the other half of the grated cheese to the top.

Bake in a moderate oven on gas mark 4/180°C/350°F for 20 minutes, or until the top is golden and the fish mixture underneath is bubbling. Serve with peas, runner beans or broccoli.

Baked apple with raisins



This favourite recipe provides a warm dessert which is cooked in the oven alongside other dishes so it can be timed to be ready just after dinner, saving on fuel.

Apples contain vitamin C to help protect against colds and flu and there is soluble fibre in the skin to support digestion.

Serves 1

Preparation time

10 minutes

Cooking time

50 minutes

Ingredients

1 cored cooking apple

10g/½oz butter

25g/1oz raisins

1 tsp brown sugar

Method

Preheat the oven to gas mark 6/200°C/400°F.

Core the apple and score it with a sharp knife around the middle and place in a little water in an ovenproof dish.

Mix the butter, raisins and brown sugar together.

Stuff the mixture into the apple.

Place in the middle of the oven and cook for about 50 minutes or until soft.

Serve with custard or cream.



Cold weather reminder

Get help with your heating costs

Rising fuel prices means that finding the funds to heat your home properly can be a worry. Advice is available on making your home warmer and more energy efficient – and you may be entitled to grants and benefits to help you pay your energy bills. Find out whether you are eligible for help and claim your free *Save energy, pay less* information guide by calling Age UK Advice on **0800 169 65 65**.

Microwave mini lemon sponge puddings



Something sweet after dinner is always a comfort on a cold winter evening, and it is healthier if you can make it yourself from fresh ingredients. Lemons contain vitamin C and an egg is full of goodness.

This dish is quick and cheap. These sponge puddings keep well, so any left over puddings can be put in the fridge or freezer for another day.

Serves 4

Preparation time

10 minutes

Cooking time

70–80 seconds
depending on
microwave

Ingredients

50g/2oz
softened butter

50g/2oz
caster sugar

1 lemon,
zest and juice

1 large egg

50g/2oz
self-raising flour

3 tbsps of
lemon curd
(or other jam
as preferred)

Method

Grease individual ramekin dishes or small tea cups. (Make sure they are suitable for use in the microwave).

Beat the softened butter, sugar and the grated zest of the lemon with one teaspoonful of lemon juice until light and fluffy, then beat the egg lightly and add slowly to the mixture.

Add sifted flour slowly and beat until absorbed.

Spoon the mixture into the dishes – do not fill above half way as the mixture rises very quickly and is very hot. Cover with a loose lid or cling film and microwave for 70 seconds.

Once the 70 seconds is over, let the pudding stand for 10–20 seconds before testing if it's spongy (the heat transfers with time so it might not seem cooked straight away). To test, carefully press with a finger to see if spongy. If it isn't, try another 10 seconds but do not microwave for too long or the sponge will harden.

In a separate dish, mix a teaspoonful of lemon juice with the lemon curd or jam and heat for a few seconds in the microwave.

Turn the sponges out onto plates and spoon the lemon curd or jam over the top.

Serve on its own, with hot custard or a little cream.

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