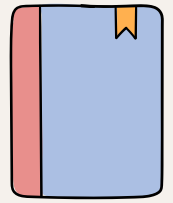


Caregiver's cookbook: a bereavement first aid pack



Introduction

This bereavement pack is a thoughtful collection of resources designed for organisations supporting caregivers and community groups with lived caregiving experience. The resources can help inspire the creation of personalised food rituals, which are inspired by fond memories of people close to them. This can offer comfort during times of grief and loss.

The caregiver's cookbook includes a workshop that can build confidence in the kitchen but also encourage creativity. It invites caregivers to engage in meaningful conversations about remembrance and loss, offering a space for reflection and shared experiences.

For individuals who prefer not to engage in group activities, the **Nourished by Memories: bereavement first aid pack for food rituals** is available.

A message from Isabelle Endreo at Rainbow Kitchen Magic

"I love eating and cooking. I grew up in France where food is so important, but England has been my home for most of my adult life. For me, food is a way to travel without having to move far. Food allows you to communicate and share with others, even if you're speaking a different language. It is a source of joy and discovery evocative of times gone by, places and people.

"Many meals I cook today are linked to the people I met and who inspired me. Watching my family and neighbours preparing food, or people I came across around a meal. At home in France, we discuss at breakfast what we will eat for lunch, at lunch we will talk about dinner or the next meals to come, especially when we gather for the holidays.

"When I was growing up, my mother often prepared our favourite croquets-monsieur; a baked cheese and ham sandwich. Sometimes, guests came for dinner and my parents cooked special occasion food, often a fish dish, in a buttery tomato sauce. A tasty apple tarte for pudding, the apples peeled and cut by my dad, pastry and baking by my mum. Sometimes the meals didn't go according to plan, experiments were a total failure, but we ate them as it is a sin to throw away food, unless rotten!

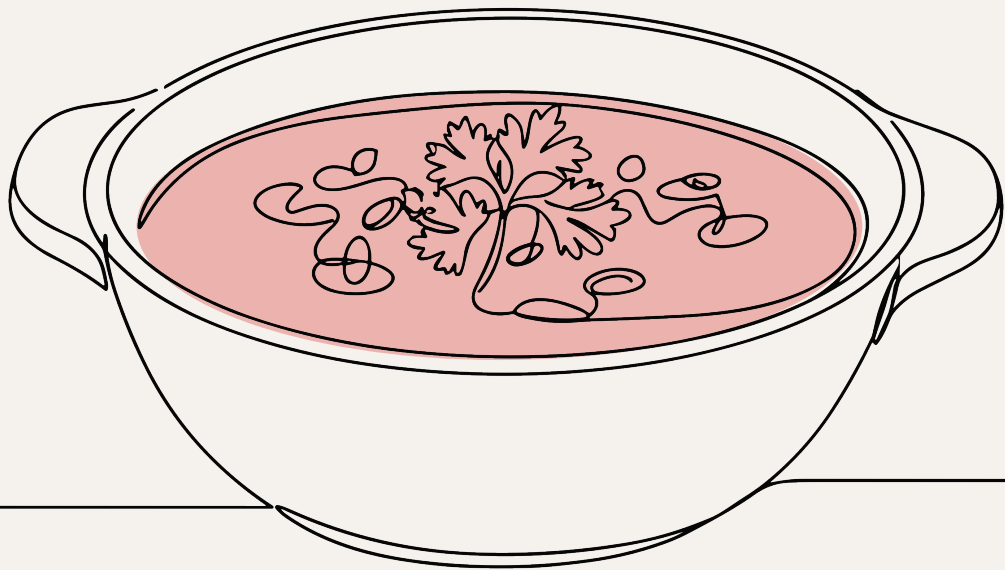
"Once a week my mum's mum cooked her special, a carrot soup with crème fraîche and refried potatoes, served with salad, and cheese. My grandad Pepe was half Italian, his specialities were fresh pasta, raviolis, pizza and polenta gnocchi. My dad's mum was a wonderful cook and I remember it felt like a party when she made her fried choux pastries. As she grew older, she lost her sense of smell and taste, it was devastating for her, but her food was still delicious. She would anxiously rely on our reaction to check she could still do it.



“Every year at Christmas, my father tries to reproduce her baked seafood dish, it is delicious, but he is always disappointed. It is not hers, but we remember her every time he prepares this dish. My grandparents are long gone, but my parents are still busy in the kitchen.

“I love remembering people through the dishes they made. I still cook some of the recipes, but the taste is often different, even if I try to get as near as I can. It doesn’t taste exactly like theirs. They had a particular touch, style and flavours. This brings back memories of so many special moments, daily meals around the table, sharing food, talking, remembering, arguing, enjoying. There are memories of the people I love and loved.

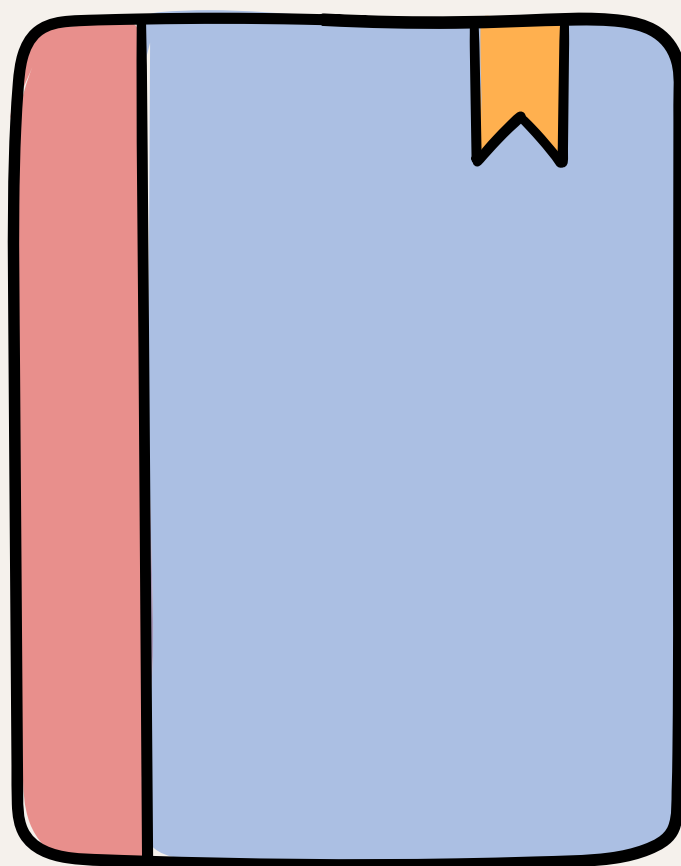
“Everyone will take what they need from this toolkit - to build or rebuild confidence in the kitchen, regain control and do something that can be a source of joy.”



This bereavement first aid pack has been co-designed by St Michael’s Hospice and Rainbow Kitchen Magic.



Caregiver's Cookbook workshop guide



This bereavement first aid pack has been co-designed by St Michael's Hospice and Rainbow Kitchen Magic.



What you need to know as a facilitator

Workshop overview

This workshop is for people in caregiving relationships, past or present. It explores the power of food, discovering how flavours can help us to remember cherished memories of people we are close to.

Participants will use their senses to create a personalised memory cookbook, reconnecting with those moments which mean a lot to them. Through the creation of recipes, the workshop offers a space to explore grief, loss, and conversations surrounding those topics.

What are we looking to achieve from this workshop?

- Begin creating a personal memory cookbook featuring recipes and food rituals inspired by memories.
- Gain confidence in using food as a way to connect, reflect and remember.

Time

Approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes (including a 10 minute break). Recommended group size is six people.

Before the workshop, ask people to let the facilitator know of any allergies or dietary restrictions. Alternative ingredients and equipment will be provided as needed, and all allergens will be clearly labeled.

What you'll need

- Ingredients representing five flavour profiles: sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami.
- Food-safe equipment to handle ingredients.
- Flipchart and markers.
- Memory prompt cards (one per flavour station).
- Flavour profile booklets (one per person).
- Notebooks and pens (one per person).
- (Optional) herbs, spices, and sauces posters (one per person).
- (Optional) experiment and layering flavours posters (one per person).

Step by step workshop guide

1. Welcome, icebreaker and disclaimer (10 minutes)

- **Welcome:** introduce the purpose of the workshop and the idea of a memory cookbook as a way to record meaningful food memories.
- **Disclaimer:** reiterate the importance of sharing allergies or dietary restrictions.
- **Icebreaker:** share a short food related memory and invite participants to share their own stories, if they feel comfortable to.

2. Introduction to flavour profiles (10 minutes)

- **Flavour exploration:** introduce the five flavour profiles - sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami. Discuss how they can evoke emotions and memories. Use the flipchart for group insights.
- **Materials distribution:** hand out flavour profile booklets, notebooks and optional materials.
- **Customising the cookbook:** encourage participants to start with their notebook as an initial step, using it to capture ideas and thoughts during the workshop. Later, they can expand their memory cookbook into a format that connects with them - whether it's a digital version, a video, an audio recording, or a scrapbook. Highlight that this process can be tailored to suit them.

3. Flavour stations and sensory exploration (15 minutes)

- **Station setup:** create five stations representing each flavor profile.
 - a. Sour (smell) e.g. lemons, vinegar, tamarind.
 - b. Umami (taste) e.g. soy sauce, mushrooms, miso.
 - c. Bitter (touch) e.g. bitter greens, coffee.
 - d. Sweet (sight) e.g. honey, fruits, sugary ingredients.
 - e. Salty (sound) e.g. olives, seaweed, salted nuts.
- **Activity:** rotate through stations, using all senses to engage with flavours. Participants reflect on memories associated with each flavour, jotting down notes in provided notebooks.

4. Break (10 minutes)

Take a short break to relax and share informally.

5. Creating recipes and rituals (15 minutes)

- **Resource review:** refer participants to Flavour Profiles Booklet and provide a brief demonstration on how to use the 'helpful example' in the booklet.
- **Recipe creation:** guide participants as they begin outlining one or more recipes inspired by personal memories. You can offer support, answer questions and provide feedback throughout the process.
- **Group sharing (optional):** if participants are comfortable, invite them to share their recipe ideas. Discuss as a group how these recipes can be comforting when experiencing grief or

remembering someone special.

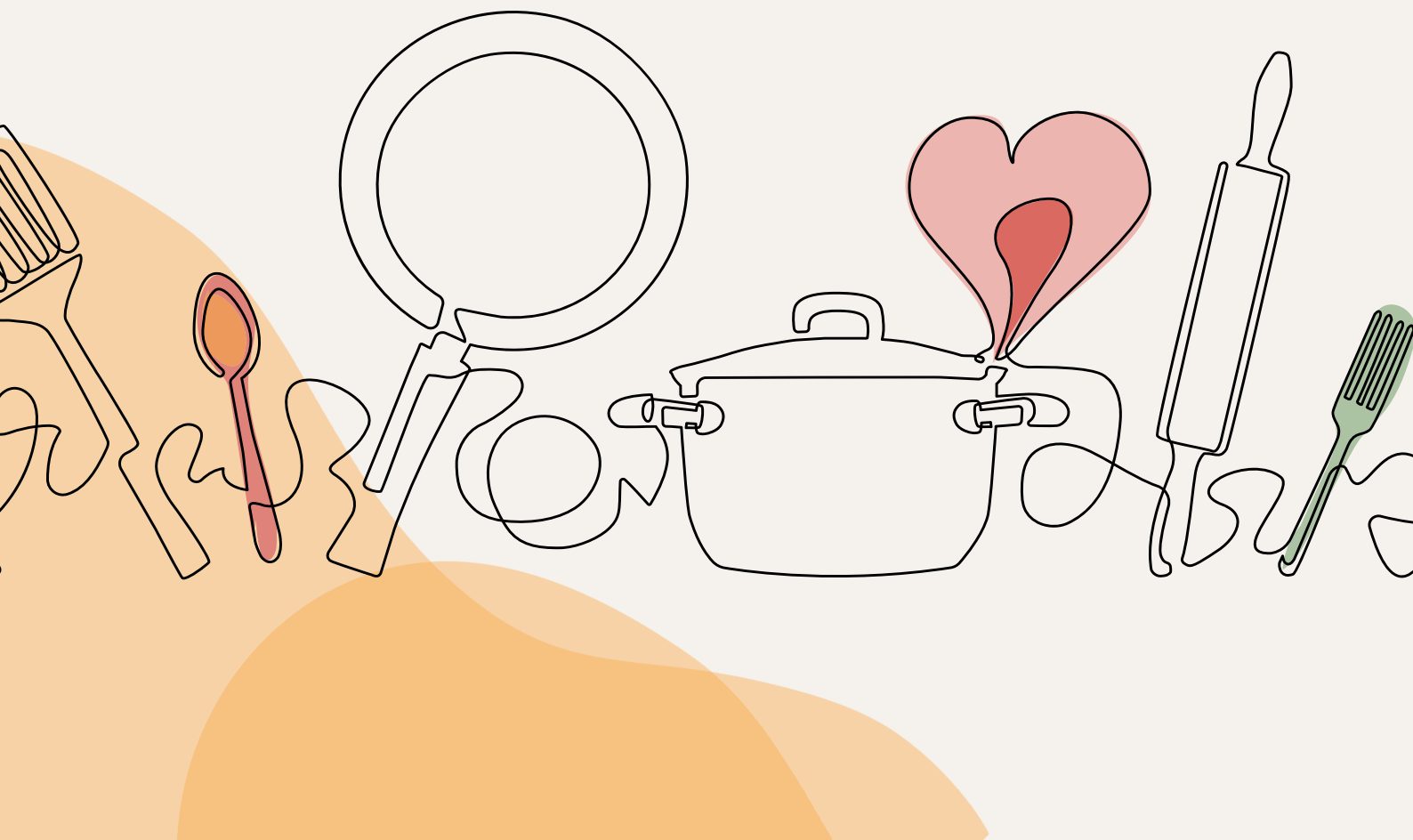
- **Connection and reflection:** encourage participants to consider who they might want to share their recipes with. It could be someone they are caring for, family, friends, or could be a private keepsake for personal reflection.

6. Closing circle (10 minutes)

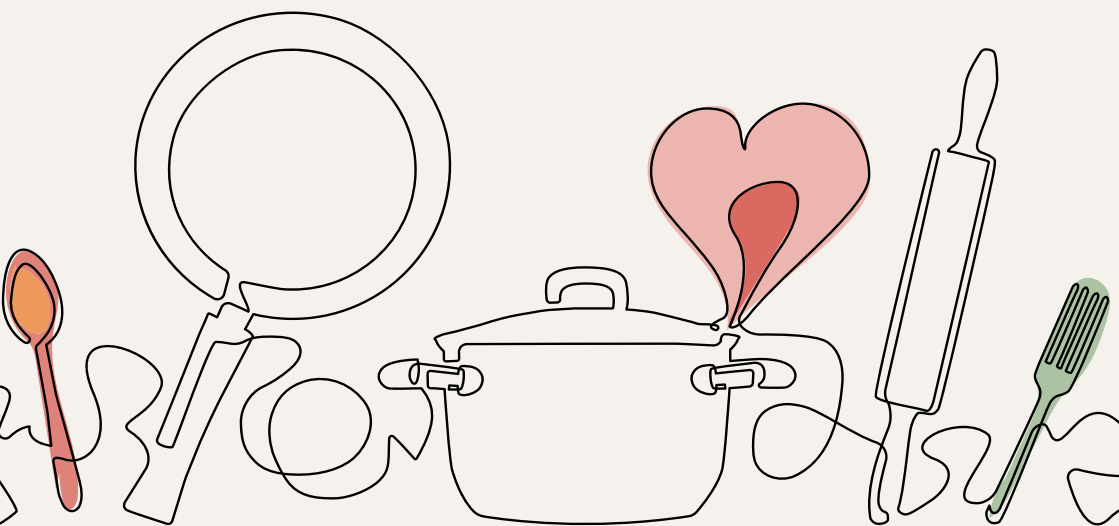
- **Reflection:** invite participants to share their experiences and thoughts on using food to connect with memories.
- **Thank you:** express gratitude for their participation and openness.
- **Takeaways:** distribute bereavement support materials and encourage participants to continue developing their memory cookbooks.

Facilitator guidance

- **Supportive presence:** create a welcoming environment where participants feel safe to explore and share their memories.
- **It's okay not to have all the answers:** acknowledge that this is a creative process. Remind participants that there's no right or wrong way to take part in this workshop.
- **Bereavement signposting:** be prepared to provide appropriate bereavement service information for participants who may need additional help.
- **Self-care:** encourage everyone (including yourself) to take care of themselves during and after the workshop.
- **Respect boundaries:** remind participants that there is no pressure to share.
- **Flexibility:** be adaptable and responsive to the needs of the group. Some participants may require more time or guidance, and that's okay.



Flavour profiles: reconnect with cooking



Co-designed by
St Michael's Hospice
(Hastings and Rother) and
Rainbow Kitchen Magic



Getting started

This booklet offers a simple guide to flavour profiles. You can use it to create a dish inspired by someone you cared for or rediscover your love for cooking.

How you can use this guide (with a helpful example):

- Who inspires you?
My mum loved pancakes. I will use the flavour profile guide to explore flavours based on what she enjoyed.
- Pick two - three flavours
I choose sweet and sour (mum loved this combination), with a personal twist to suit my taste.
- Choose ingredients
I gather the basics and my chosen flavours: vanilla extract (sweet), lemon juice (sour), and cinnamon(my twist).
- Taste and balance
I taste as I go. The cinnamon is too strong, so I balance it by adding more vanilla to soften the flavour.
- Enjoy
While I enjoy my pancakes, I think of the times spent with mum.
- Experiment
Next time, I'll try nutmeg instead of cinnamon to see how the flavour changes.

Helpful tips

- You can search online or use a cookbook for cooking times and tools.
- It's okay to make mistakes; it's a great way to learn.

Salty



Sharp, briny, and often associated with food preservation.

Common sources



Sea salt



Anchovies



Soy sauce



Cured meat



Olives



Feta cheese



Salted nuts



Capers



Seaweed

Enhance: to make it saltier, add a pinch of salt, soy sauce, or Parmesan cheese.

Balance: if it's too salty, add a little sugar or lemon juice to balance it.

Sour



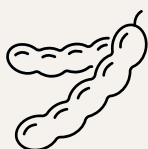
Tangy, tart, sharp, citrus and fermented flavours.

Common sources

Fruits



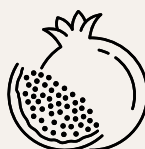
Lemon/lime



Tamarind



Green apple



Pomegranate

Vinegar



Balsamic
vinegar



Apple cider
vinegar



White wine
vinegar

Fermented foods



Kimchi



Sauerkraut



Pickles



Yoghurt

Enhance: to make sourness stronger, squeeze in more lemon juice or add vinegar.

Balance: if it's too sour, try adding a little sugar or honey to soften the taste.

Savoury (umami)



Deep, brothy and rich. Often found in fermented, aged, or slow cooked foods.

Common sources



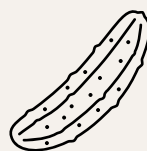
Mushrooms



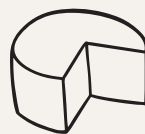
Tomatoes



Fish sauce



Pickled
vegetables



Parmesan



Marmite



Worcestershire
sauce

Enhance: to boost savoury flavours, try adding soy sauce, cheese, or mushrooms.

Balance: if it's too strong, add a little sweetness (like carrots) or lemon juice to lighten it.

Did you know?

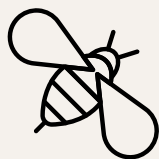
Umami foods can help make meals feel more filling, which is helpful when appetite is low.

Sweet



Pleasant, sugary, or honey-like. Use to complement other flavours such as bitterness, acidity or spiciness.

Common sources



Honey



Jam



BBQ sauce



Maple syrup



Agave

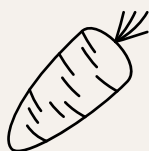


Sugar

Natural sweeteners



Fruits
(e.g. apple,
pear,
mango).



Veggies
(e.g. carrot,
squash,
parsnips).



Sweet
potatoes



Roasted
nuts



Fennel

Enhance: to make sweetness stronger, add a little sugar or honey.

Balance: if it's too sweet, add a tiny bit of salt or lemon to balance it out.

Bitterness



Sharp, earthy, astringent flavours.

Common sources

Vegetables



Kale



Spinach



Broccoli

Herbs



Sage



Thyme



Rosemary

Beverages



Coffee



Grapefruit



Beer

Nuts and seeds



Almonds



Coca/cacao

Enhance: to make bitterness stand out, add coffee, dark chocolate, or leafy greens.

Balance: if it's too bitter, balance it with some sweetness (like honey) or creaminess (like butter).

Spicy



Spicy isn't a flavour, it's a sensation. However, it can add heat and complexity to meals.

Common sources

Chilli peppers and chilli powder



Types of chilli:
jalapeno,
habanero,
serrano
and cayenne.

Hot sauces



Types of hot
sauce:
siracha,
tabasco
and harissa.

Spices



Black pepper



Paprika

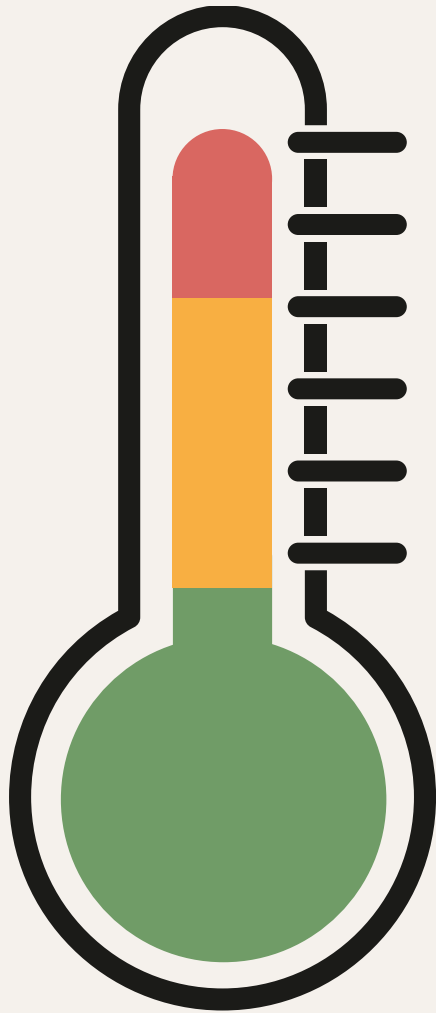


Ginger

Enhance: to make it spicier, add a pinch of chili powder or a bit of hot sauce.

Balance: if it's too hot, you can cool it down with a bit of cream or sugar.

Experimenting with flavours scale



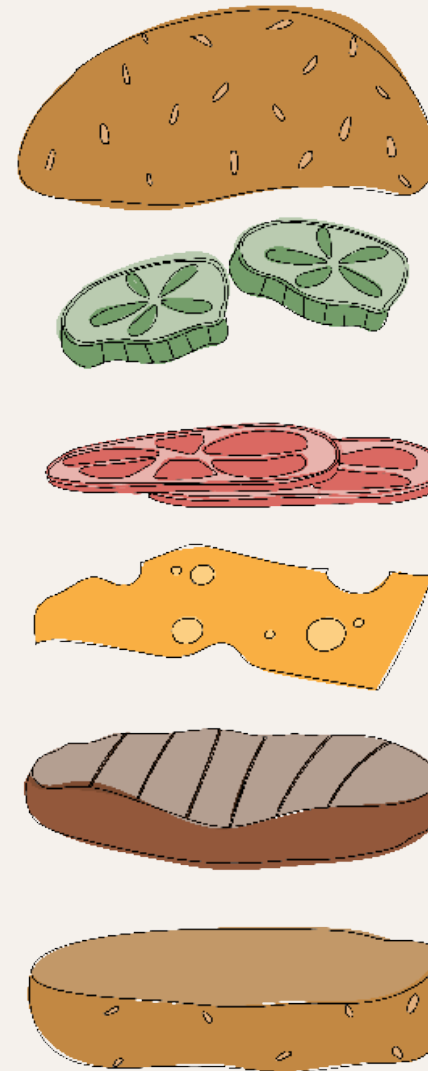
Bold: strong flavours that can dominate the dish (e.g. chilli powder, curry powder, mustard seeds).

Balanced: blends well with most dishes (e.g. oregano, thyme, rosemary, parsley).

Mild: use sparingly, delicate and subtle flavours (e.g. bay leaves, white pepper, saffron).

A quick reference to help build confidence when experimenting with flavour profiles in cooking.

Layering flavours guide



4. Finish with freshness: near the end, add fresh herbs, a squeeze of citrus, or a dash of sauce to give a burst of brightness and freshness.

3. Build throughout the cooking process: as your meal cooks, taste it and adjust seasoning. Add herbs, spices, or acids (like lemon juice or vinegar) at different points to enhance the flavours.

2. Season early: add salt and basic seasonings early on to help them penetrate the food as it cooks. For example, season meat or vegetables before you cook them.

1. Start with a base: begin by cooking aromatic ingredients like onions, garlic, and spices in oil or butter. This creates a flavourful foundation for your meal.

Date of preparation: July 2025

Herbs and spices

These herbs and spices are versatile, and easy to use in many basic dishes. Perfect for beginners or to build confidence in the kitchen.

Herb/spice	Flavour	Pairs well with
Basil	Sweet, slightly peppery.	Tomatoes, pasta, chicken and salads.
Rosemary	Woody	Chicken, potatoes, and roasted vegetables.
Thyme	Earthy, lemony.	Chicken, potatoes, soups and roasted vegetables.
Oregano	Warm, slightly bitter.	Tomato based sauces, pasta, pizza and grilled meats.
Parsley	Fresh, grassy.	Fish, chicken, soups and salads.
Mint	Sweet, cool.	Lamb, peas, yoghurt, fruits and tea.
Cumin	Warm, earthy, nutty.	Chilli, tacos, rice and meats (beef, chicken).
Paprika	Sweet, smoky.	Meats, potatoes, rice and eggs.
Cinnamon	Sweet, warm.	Baked goods, oatmeal, fruits and chilli.
Garlic	Strong, savoury.	Almost everything; meats, vegetables, pasta, soups and sauces.



Sauces

Here is a table of ingredients for each sauce. Just mix and match them to create the flavours you want to achieve.

Sauce	Ingredients
Tomato sauce	Canned tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, onion, oregano, basil, salt and pepper.
Béchamel (white sauce)	Butter, flour, milk, salt, pepper and nutmeg (optional).
Pesto	Fresh basil, garlic, pine nuts, parmesan cheese, olive oil, salt and pepper.
Vinaigrette	Olive oil, vinegar (red wine, balsamic, or apple cider), dijon mustard, salt and pepper.
Gravy	Pan drippings, butter, flour, broth (chicken, beef, or vegetable), salt and pepper.
Alfredo sauce	Butter, heavy cream, garlic, parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.
Barbecue sauce	Ketchup, vinegar, brown sugar, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, salt and pepper.
Soy sauce stir-fry sauce	Soy sauce, garlic, ginger, honey (or sugar), sesame oil and cornstarch (optional).
Honey mustard sauce	Mustard, honey, vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper.
Cheese sauce	Butter, flour, milk, cheddar cheese (or any cheese), salt and pepper.





Sensory cards for creating a food tradition

**Prompt cards linking to the five senses.
To help you to connect flavours to memories.**

These cards can help you create a food tradition by thinking about a special date, like a birthday or anniversary.

Simply, pick a date and use the cards to explore different senses. This can help you recreate the experience at home.



Sight

Think back to that special day. How did the food look?
You might recreate the meal's presentation or add visual touches to your table.



Smell

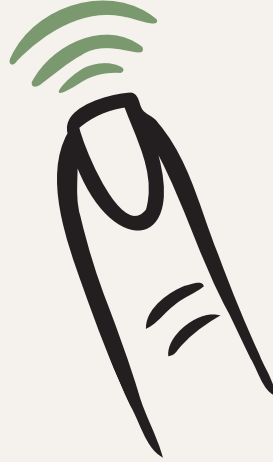
Recall the scents that filled the air.

Could you bring those smells into your cooking or use a fragrance to remind you of that time?



Taste

What flavours made the meal special?
You could add those flavours to your food or include them in something you order.



Touch

Is there an object that connects you to the moment?
Holding it while you cook or eat might help you feel close to the person.



Sound

What sounds or music were part of that day?

Playing them can help set the tone and reconnect with the memory.