

# Play With Your Food

a creative family project by:  
**the hidden gardens**

ACTIVITIES AND RECIPES ABOUT FOOD AUTUMN 2016



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# Sensory play (Play with your food!)



## Rice Painting

### Ingredients

Dying Rice

Materials:

White Rice

Food colouring gel

Vinegar

### Method

Place rice into a big bowl add two teaspoons of vinegar with desired amount of colouring - mix thoroughly and then tip out into a tray to dry. Rice should be prepared a couple days in advance to allow it to dry and for the colour to set. Once done it will keep in your cupboard forever, so you can make a bunch and then put some away for when needed.

### Making Art with Rice

As with the beans it is fun for kids to stick their hands into bowls of rice. Place a couple of different colours (at least) into some bowls and let them do their thing. Then have paper and PVA glue on the ready. (heavier paper works better- or even recycled boxes turned into your own canvas). Let them spread the glue and sprinkle (or dump) the rice. Top tip is to do this activity on a tray with a lip or even a baking tray - this will save you clean up time!



## Herby Playdough

### Ingredients

1 cup salt

2 cups flour

1.5 cups boiling water

2 tbsp oil

a few drops of fresh lemon juice (this works in the same way as cream of tartar)

fresh herbs eg rosemary, thyme, sage, oregano, mint (anything that smells nice and is not irritant!)

### Method

Mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl with a metal spoon. As soon as it is cool enough to touch, start kneading until it becomes soft, stretchy and pliable.

Mix in the herbs. We used rosemary and lemon thyme from the garden.

Store in a zip-loc bag (air squeezed out first) in the cupboard. It should last up to a year at room temperature!





## Vegetable Printing

### Ingredients

Vegetables! Carrots, Peppers, Celery, Mushrooms, Corn on Cob, Potatoes etc...  
(whatever you have in fridge!)

Paints

Big sheets of paper

## Bean Shakers

### Ingredients

Plastic bottles from your recycle bin washed and dried

Selection of dried beans

Stickers, ribbons, coloured tape, pipe cleaners to decorate the bottle.

It's really fun if you place a selection of beans in separate bowls to let the kids play with (immensely satisfying for myself have to say!) and place into their bottle testing out the shake factor as they go.

2. Next tape the lid onto the bottle so there are not escaped beans later on.

3. Finally let your wee one decorate the bottle as they see fit.

4. Make music!

# Pasta Wreaths

## Ingredients

Pasta shapes  
Food colouring  
Paper plates  
Ribbon  
PVA  
Glitter glue  
Stars, pom poms or other decorations

## Method Pasta Colouring:

1. Put dried pasta shapes into a plastic box. Add gel food colour and a healthy dash of vinegar. Put lid on box and shake!
2. Keep adding colour/vinegar until desired colour
3. Pour onto tray lined with parchment to allow to dry.



## Method Wreath Making:

1. Take a paper plate and cut out the centre to make a wreath shape.
2. Put a selection of decors in wee bowls along with coloured pasta
3. Tie ribbon around (for hanging) before craft begins.
4. Allow your child to layer up materials as s/he wishes
5. Will probably take a few days to dry.

# Salt Dough Decorations

## Ingredients

2 cups Plain flour  
1 cup Salt  
½ cup water  
Spoon of oil

## Method

Mix the flour and salt in a bowl. Add the oil and gradually add water till flour is starting to form a dough. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead till smooth. Roll out the dough (½ - 1cm thick) and cut out shapes. Use a straw to make a hole for the string to go through.

To dry the cut out shapes you can either:

1. Cook low heat in oven for 2-3 hours till hard, turning regularly. Check don't burn.
2. Cook in a microwave for about 5 minutes (depending on your microwave). Do it 1 minute at a time (or less if you have a new microwave). Turn each time.
3. Leave to dry for 2-3 days (depending on the heat in the room), turning regularly.

When they are fully dry paint them with poster paint and give them a coat of glue to seal them.

# Recipes (Tasting your food!)

## Pasta

### Green Pesto

#### Ingredients

1 tbsp Olive oil  
1 clove Garlic  
Handful of Basil, rocket or spinach (or a mix)  
1 tbsp Parmesan  
Handful of Nuts (pine nuts, cashews, walnuts)  
Salt and pepper to taste

### Red Pesto

#### Ingredients

2 Red peppers (roasted with the skin taken off)  
1 tbsp Olive oil  
1 clove Garlic  
1 tbsp Parmesan  
Handful of Nuts (pine nuts, cashews, walnuts)  
Salt and pepper to taste

#### Method

Put all the ingredients in a food processor and blend till smooth. Taste and adjust ingredients to suit.



# Pizza



## Hidden Veg Pizza Balls

### Basic Pizza Base

#### Ingredients:

- 300 g. strong bread flour
- 1 tsp of instant yeast
- 1 tsp of salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil plus extra for drizzling

#### Method:

Put the flour into the large bowl, then stir in the yeast and salt.

Make a well, pour in 200 ml warm water and the olive oil and bring together with a wooden spoon until you have a soft, fairly wet dough.

Turn onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 5 minutes until smooth.

Cover with a tea towel and set aside. You can leave the dough to rise if you like, but it's not essential for a thin crust.



# Beetroot Dough

## Ingredients

3/4 cup cooked and chopped beets, lightly packed in a liquid measuring cup  
Enough almost warm water to make 1 cup when mixed with cooked beets, plus 1  
Tablespoon.  
1 package bread machine or active dry yeast  
1 teaspoon honey  
3 cups all-purpose flour (Use good quality all-purpose or bread flour)  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for the bowl

## Method

1. Scrub beets under warm water to clean. Stab a knife into it a few times for venting. Line a plate with paper towels, place the beet on the plate, and cover with a paper towel. Microwave the beet on high for several minutes until easily stabbed through with the knife. Cool completely. Alternatively after scrubbing beet place into a 200/180 degree oven on a baking tray and roast until a fork easily pierces into the centre.

2. Chop the beet into chunks. Place 3/4 of a cup of the chunks (lightly packed) into a liquid measuring cup. Top with enough water to make 1 cup. Puree the beet/water mixture in a blender until smooth. (A couple small chunks are ok, but you might end up picking them out as you roll the dough. You can also strain beet mixture through a fine mesh strainer if you have one.) Pour the mixture back into the liquid measuring cup and top with enough water to make 1 cup, then add 1 more Tablespoon.

Add all the ingredients into a stand mixer bowl. Mix with the dough hook until well kneaded.

3, Remove from the bowl and knead by hand for 2 minutes on an unfloured surface. (If you have a counter that stains find another place). Then pat into a ball.

4. Grease a large bowl with olive oil and add the dough, flipping once to coat. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm spot until doubled.

Roll the dough into wee balls and 'hide' the fillings inside. Fillings could include corn, mozzarella, cheddar, ham, olives, caramelised onions, tomato paste.... whatever you have in the cupboard!





# Fruit



## Fruit Tarts made with Trucks

### Ingredients

Selection of autumn fruits (Plums, Apples, Pears)

Sugar (caster or brown)

Cinnamon

Digestive Biscuits

Butter

### Method

1. Peel and chop up fruit (you can leave skin on soft fruits such as plum and pear). Place into pot with a few tsp of water and sugar to taste (start with a tsp, can adjust based around natural sweetness of fruit) and pinch of cinnamon. Let it stew under fruits are soft and has become syrupy, add more water as needed.
3. Have fun crushing biscuits with trucks, hammers, cars etc.
4. Oil cupcake tin with butter or other oil (coconut, vegetable etc)
5. Add melted butter to biscuit mix so it can be pushed down into base of cupcake tin.
6. Fill cupcake tin about 1/3-1/2 with biscuit mix, push down so is compacted.
7. Add spoonfuls of fruit, raisins, blue berries etc as wish!
8. Bake in 180 oven about ten minutes.



## Improvisational Soup

Soup is a great way to use up leftovers. Many recipes begin with 'sofritto' -a sauteed base of celery, onion and carrot, the word actually means 'lightly fried'. We begin by using a sofritto, then adding ingredients based around what we have/want to taste!

### Ingredients Sofritto:

- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 stalk celery

### Method

1. Chop onion, carrot, celery finely and saute on a low heat with a bit of olive oil until soft (garlic can be added in last stages, but not too early as it can brown too quickly).
2. Throw in ingredients (as listed below) and cook until ready. Add water as needed.
3. Puree with hand blender
4. Serve with croutons or pita.

### Add ins:

- Sweet Potato (boil or roast in advance)
- White Beans (canned)
- Coconut (tinned)
- Tomato (canned, or passata)
- Lentil (red, uncooked, rinse first)
- Coriander
- Parsley
- Ginger

### Some combinations:

- Sweet Potato/White Bean/Tomato/Parsley
- Lentil/Coconut/Coriander/Tomato
- Sweet Potato/Coconut/Ginger/Lentil
- White Bean/Tomato/Parsley
- etc!

# Snacks and sweet things



## Healthy Cereal Bars

### Ingredients

2 cups crispy rice cereal (or cereal of your choice)

1/2 cup peanut butter (can sub for almond/cashew)

1/2 cup sticky sweetener of choice- I've used brown rice syrup (best), honey and maple syrup (least sticky)

2 tablespoons coconut oil

Selection of dried fruit, coconut, chocolate chips etc to taste

### Method:

Line a baking tray with baking paper and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, add your crispy rice cereal and mixers and set aside.

Stovetop or in the microwave, melt your nut butter with your sticky sweetener and coconut oil. Then pour the mixture into the crispy rice cereal and mix well. If you used brown rice syrup, this should be perfect. If you used honey or maple, you may need to add a dash more to make them stick together.

Pour mixture into the lined baking tray and press firmly into place. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to firm up.

### Notes

Rice crispy treats can be kept at room temperature- They can also be refrigerated or frozen too



## Sweet Potato Crackers

Ingredients (makes the equivalent of about one box of crackers):

1-1/2 cups plain flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1 medium sweet potato (1 cup of sweet potato puree)  
1 teaspoon sugar (optional, depends on how sweet your potato is)  
coarse salt

Cook sweet potato until softened. If boil in water skin and chop first or roast in 200 degree oven for about 45-50 minutes then peel. Let it cool then purée cooked potato using a hand blender (these are the best for making purees) until it's a smooth mixture.

Place butter into bottom of large bowl. Sift flour, baking powder, sugar and salt together into 2nd large bowl then using dough hook attachment on hand mixer - mix butter into the flour mixture until it becomes a coarse meal texture. (use your hands if don't have)

Add the sweet potato puree to the bowl and take your hand mixer using regular attachment and let it stir until it turns into one big clump. Roll it into a ball. Divide dough into 4 pieces. For easier rolling, wrap it in parchment and chill for 1/2 hour.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and and roll as thin as you can roll it. Cut using small cookie cutters. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

You can sprinkle with salt, sesame seeds and a little cayenne, if desired.

Bake in a preheated 180C oven for 10 minutes until bottoms are slightly browned. (this will depend on your oven, first time pay attention!) Turn over and bake until they're crispy. You want them to be crispy, not chewy. Just don't let them get too brown.

Cool on a wire rack before storing in a airtight container. There aren't any preservatives in these so you should probably snack them up within a week.





## Savoury twists

Makes about 10 twists (depending on pastry sheet size)

### Ingredients

- 1 sheet of frozen puff pastry (thawed at room temp)
- baby(or frozen) spinach/corn/tomato
- grated parmesan/cheddar
- 1 egg, beaten

### Directions

Place the pastry on a floured surface and carefully unfold (if yours is not a ready sheet, then you will need to roll it out with a rolling pin until it is about 1/8" inch thick.

Slice the pastry sheet in half and then slice each half into 5 equal sized strips (so you have 10 strips).

Add a few leaves of baby spinach and some grated Parmesan to one strip at a time \and fold over in half to seal in the spinach and parmesan and then holding each end, carefully twist and place on a baking tray, lined with parchment paper.

When you have completed this with all the strips, place the baking tray in the fridge for about 10 mins, just to firm up the pastry and then brush with the beaten egg.

Place in a preheated oven at 200c (gas mark 6) and bake until golden.

Enjoy!!

## Recipe: Chocolate Black Bean Cake Bites

### Ingredients

- 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed thoroughly (approx 1½ cups)
- ½ cup pure cane sugar (can substitute granulated sugar)
- ¼ cup turbinado sugar (can substitute brown sugar or piloncillo)
- ½ cup finely chopped nuts
- 3 tablespoon cocoa powder, I prefer Dutch process
- 4 tablespoon butter, at room temperature
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 2 large eggs
- powdered sugar, for dusting

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 300 F. Grease or spray an 8x8" baking pan.
2. Drain and rinse black beans thoroughly. This is best done in a colander.
3. Combine black beans, sugars, chopped nuts, cocoa powder, butter, baking powder and salt in a food processor.
4. Process until smooth, stopping once or twice to scrape down sides with a spatula if necessary.
5. Add in eggs and pulse/process to combine.
6. Pour mixture into prepared pan.
7. Bake for 35 - 40 minutes or until center is firm and the edges get slightly crisp.
8. Cool on a wire rack.
9. To serve, cut into bite sized squares and sprinkle with powdered sugar. Enjoy!
10. Store covered in fridge.

## Recipe: Chocolate Bean Frosting

*The following is just a guide – start with these amounts, blend, taste and adjust as you like. Makes enough to spread on one small cake or 9 muffins.*

### Ingredients:

- 60g (slightly heaped 1/3 cup) cooked and rinsed black beans or adzuki beans
- 1 ½ tbsp cocoa or cacao powder
- 1 very heaped tbsp smooth nut butter (cashew would be mildest but I used peanut butter with good results)
- 2 tbsp (+) runny acacia honey or maple syrup
- Pinch of fine salt
- ¼ tsp vanilla powder or paste (extract is too strong here – you taste the alcohol)
- Enough warm water to get a smooth frosting (I used about 1 teaspoon)
- Method: Pop everything into a blender and blend like mad. Keeps for four days, refrigerated in a covered container.

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a creative family project by:  
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Led by artists Kate E. Deeming & Alex Wilde

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