



# better together

Guidebook



# Welcome!

This guidebook is designed to support you to confidently deliver cooking and food literacy programs using your own **strengths** and **resources**.

Our aim is to help **reduce the barriers** of cost and time involved in planning and delivering programs. With the help of community agencies we have designed a **simple and flexible** framework that can be changed to suit the needs of your community.

We encourage you to start a program, or continue an existing one—to create the space for food conversations.

*The programs have the potential to*



develop food and  
cooking knowledge  
and skills



generate  
ideas



support social  
connection



build confidence  
to cook at home

better  
together



A hand holding a black frying pan with a wooden handle, surrounded by fresh vegetables and fruits on a pink background. The pan is the central focus, with its handle held by a hand at the bottom. Various fresh ingredients are scattered around the pan: yellow tomatoes, black raspberries, green leafy vegetables, purple basil, and mushrooms. The text is centered on the black surface of the pan.

When we work  
**together**  
we encourage  
**empowerment  
+ ownership**  
within the community.





# Guiding principles



## Accessible

*Anyone in Tasmania can access, participate and deliver "Better Together"*



## Tasmanian

*The content, design, and delivery are shaped by Tasmanian voices and reflect the local eating environment.*



## Food Justice

*Helping communities create their own solutions for sustainable and fair access to food.*



## Joyful

*Food is flavourful, activities are fun and cooking and learning together is encouraged.*



# How to use this guidebook



## 1

### Be flexible

Follow from start to finish or choose sections that are most useful for your audience

## 2

### Get creative

Use as a base and build on or use for new ideas

## 3

### Make it your own

Remain open to change mid-program to suit the needs of your own community

#### CASE STUDY

##### From participant to volunteer



*I joined the More Than a Free Lunch cooking program at Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre after receiving a flyer in my letterbox. What enticed me to join was that the program involved sitting down to eat what we cooked and getting to take home ingredients to recreate the meal at home. I already know how to cook, so I knew I could use my skills."*

**Annie Johnson**

Warrane Mornington  
Neighbourhood Centre

##### Why did you choose to become a volunteer facilitator?

*It was a natural progression. I enjoy cooking, I enjoy eating, I know the community because I have lived in Warrane for over 30 years. I also like to teach cooking, make it fun and have a chat (something I am very good at!).*

##### What was the highlight of becoming a volunteer?

*Helping people, socialising and cooking. I can use my skills and experience with cooking, hospitality and from being a mother to help people. This gives me something to do and now I help with food relief and community breakfast, amongst other things at the Neighbourhood Centre.*

##### Would you recommend volunteering with a cooking program to others?

*Yes, I would – they will find it satisfying. It is a proud moment to have a dish at the end, that you have created, that you can eat together.*





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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who have contributed to the creation of this guidebook.

- Tasmanian State Government for their support and funding to build this project as part of the state's Food Relief to Food Resilience Strategy
- Tasmanian Public Health Services' Dietitians
- Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania
- Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre
- Dunalley Tasman Neighbourhood House
- Okines Community House
- Midway Point Neighbourhood House
- Mary Hutchinson Women's Prison
- Bethlehem House and volunteers
- Connected Women's group, Red Cross
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania
- Dorset Neighbourhood House
- Luke Burgess, Chef
- Holly Webber Design
- Jenna Perry, Dietitian
- Individuals who contributed stories

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders past and present and recognise their continuing spiritual connection to the Land.*



A close-up photograph of a person's hands cracking a brown egg into a dark blue bowl. The egg is split open, and the yolk and white are falling into the bowl. The person has a gold ring on their left ring finger. The background is blurred, showing a kitchen setting. The image is framed by a yellow border with rounded corners.

**Let's get started!**

*What are your existing  
resources or strengths?*



To get started planning your cooking and food literacy program, you can work with resources you already have.

If you have a lunch break, a microwave or BBQ, basic equipment and donated food, you can cook!  
**Keep it simple.**

### WHAT TO CONSIDER...



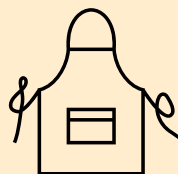
Funds



Equipment



Space



Facilitator



Food

Here are some program examples based on available resources:

#### Small scale program

No additional funding  
No equipment  
Small space / no kitchen  
Internal staff or volunteers  
Existing food ingredients (e.g. food relief donations)

#### Medium scale program

Some funding  
Kitchen space  
Additional staff hours or volunteers willing to give more time  
Existing food ingredients and small additional budget

#### Large scale program

Funding for program  
Full equipped kitchen – ability to purchase additional equipment or rent a space  
Ability to pay for an external program or a facilitator  
Existing food ingredients and large additional budget

### Starting with a grant and limited space



*When I stepped into my role at TUSA, students had already voiced what they wanted from a cooking program. With a \$50,000 grant spread over three years, I had the opportunity to bring their vision to life—despite not having a kitchen.*

*Without extraction fans, we can't cook indoors, so we adapted. We filled our space with essential tools including large paella pans—allowing us to cook outside.*

*Our ingredients come from Loaves and Fishes, local community members, Food Bank, and a local church that donates bread. Our menu is shaped by what's available—reducing food waste and keeping costs low.*

*This setup proves that you don't need a commercial kitchen. With a bit of creativity and community support, you can bring people together through cooking—no matter the space or limitations."*

**Kim White**, Food Security Program Coordinator, Tasmanian University Student Association (TUSA)



**CASE STUDY**

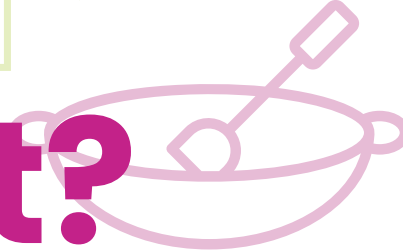
# who?

will facilitate the program?



# what?

equipment will you need and use?



# when?

will you deliver the program  
(include how often, day of the  
week, time of day, length of time)?

# where?

will you setup (e.g. open space on tables  
with electric fry pans, community or  
commercial kitchen)?



# how?

will you advertise and  
engage community?  
Is there an existing group?



# what?

number of participants can be involved?



**Tip:**

*We suggest one  
facilitator per 4-5  
participants to make  
sure there is enough  
support*





## What to cook?

Click here to visit the  
Eat Well Tasmania  
website for seasonal  
recipe ideas



### Cooking is my story



Cooking is a feeling of connection with someone. Whenever I cook, the feeling comes back to me. Right now, my mum is somewhere else in the world, but when I cook, this feeling of her comes to me.

Cooking for my family is a story that I'm sharing. Creating a story within my house. When I see someone cooking, I can recall the moment when I did it at home with my mother or with my child. It's a **story** that comes to my mind. A **story** of connection and love.

**Shishma Bhandari**, Connected Women's Cooking Group, Red Cross Tasmania



CASE STUDY

# How will you engage your community?



## Expressions of interest

Invite community members to complete a written expression of interest.

Check out the template in the toolkit!



## Advertisement

You could use flyers, Facebook, Instagram or newsletters to advertise your program.

OR you could plan around an existing group and time of people gathering.

Check out the poster and social media templates in the toolkit!



## Community consultation

Invite community members for a catered morning tea to ask what they might like to see in a cooking program.





## Have a go!

Run a one off 'have a go' session.

This can be a great way to explore what the community want and need, and who might be interested in participating.



Use a feedback form to get community voice



## Ask participants whether they have any dietary requirements

Keep a record of contact details and dietary requirements and choose a recipe that everyone can cook and enjoy.



Check out a booking form template in the toolkit!

### Starting a cooking program and community engagement

CASE STUDY



When seeking funding for 'More Than a Free Lunch' cooking program, we identified a need to source additional equipment for two participant stations alongside the existing commercial kitchen. Volunteer team members were allocated to the kitchen space and the two stations to lead activities.

Included in the funding applications were extra staff hours for project management and delivery. This is critical as we did not have the capacity to continue to support projects with a small staff team.

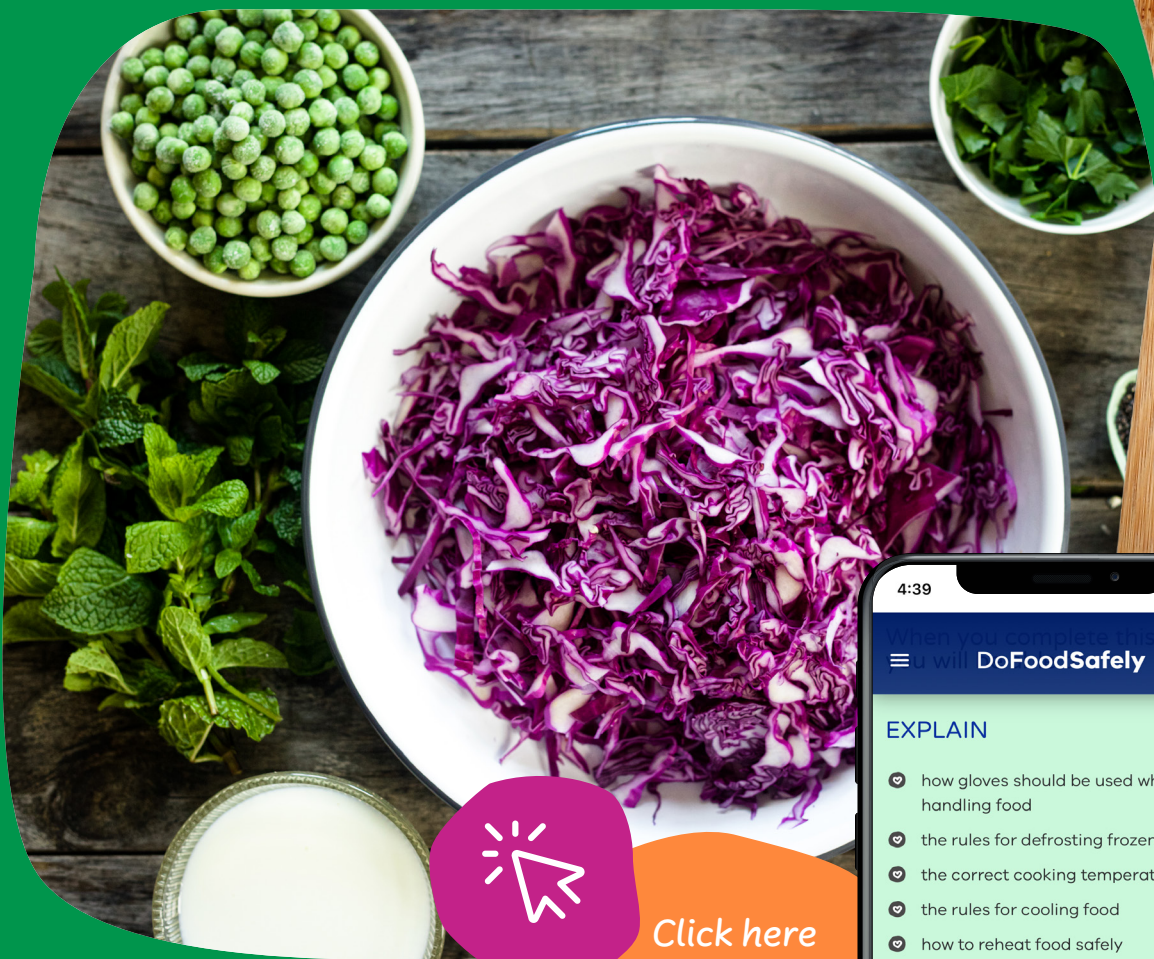
Additional food for the program was sourced every fortnight alongside our standard ordering. Seeking the best prices meant we saved funds and could eventually outsource program delivery to be run by an external qualified dietitian. This added great value to the program and freed staff to focus on other projects.

To find our initial participants we engaged food relief, community lunch participants and existing community people who expressed interest. Through word of mouth and general promotions, we saw a regular flow of new participants. We had between 15 and 25 participants at different times join us and ultimately found that the best number for managing the program was 12-15."

**Ben Cooper**, previous Manager, Warrane Mornington Neighbourhood Centre



# Have you completed food safety training?



As a facilitator, it is essential to complete basic food safety training.

The Tasmanian Government recommends the DoFoodSafely course – **it's FREE!**





# How to structure a session

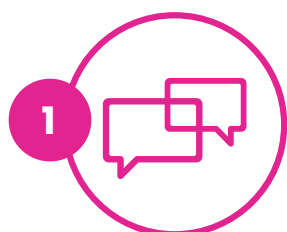
A session can be designed in many ways and there is no right or wrong.

We know, however, that it can feel overwhelming with where to start so it can help to structure your session around a specific topic. We have provided a selection of topic ideas for you to choose from to get started.

## Handy Tip

It is recommended to allow **at least 2 hours for a session**

## GUIDE TO A SESSION STRUCTURE



### Pick a topic and discuss (30 mins)

This is a time for participants to relax and get to know every one.



### Get cooking! (1-2 hours)

Time to get hands-on and cook!



### Eat together (30 mins)

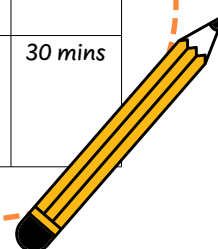
Set table, dine, share the meal and clean up.

Check out the 'Topic ideas for sessions' resource as well as blank templates to help you plan in the toolkit



Here's a sample 2-hour session plan using 'What's in Season?' as the topic for discussion:

	Description	Time
<p><b>Topic:</b> <b>What's in Season?</b></p>	<p>Warm up: Going around the group, ask participants 'What's your favourite meal of the week?'</p> <p>Discussion: Lead a discussion about eating with the seasons and what the benefits are.</p> <p>Activity: 'Guess the season' - present the recipes to the group and ask them to guess which ingredients are in season.</p>	30 mins
<p><b>Cooking</b></p>	<p>One pan mediterranean bake</p> <p>Apple crumble</p>	60 mins
<p><b>Eat together</b></p>	<p>Dine outside under cover at the picnic tables. While dining, talk about other seasonal ingredients that could be included in the recipes cooked.</p>	30 mins





# What are you going to cook?

When choosing a recipe, consider the following:



## Time

Choose dishes that can be prepared and cooked within your time frame

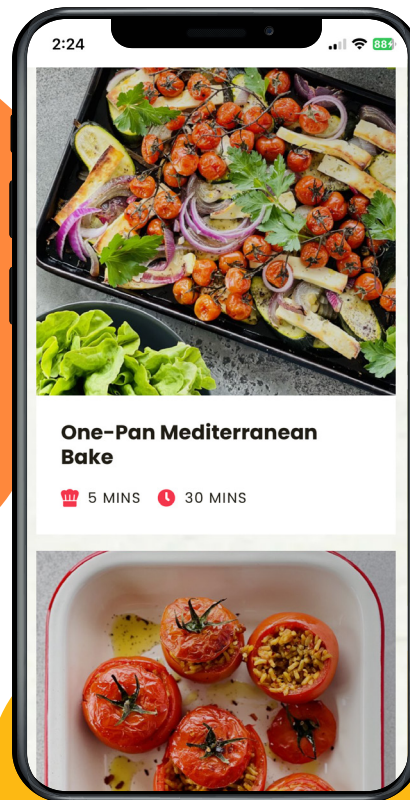


## Cost

\$10-\$15 per serve

## Visuals

Pictures can be helpful to show the finished dish



*Click here to visit the Eat Well Tasmania website for seasonal recipe ideas*



## Dietary requirements

Ask your participants about dietary requirements when they first book, so you can choose a recipe they can eat.

## Variety

Include at least 3 different vegetables

- swap to what's in season
- include a source of protein (meat, chicken, fish, seafood, milk, cheese, yoghurt, tofu, legumes, nuts, seeds)
- include flavour from herbs and spices

**WHAT'S  
IN SEASON?**





## CASE STUDY

### Sharing my recipe

**Cholpon Tabyldieva Bond,**  
Okines Community House



**Why did you join the cooking group at Okines Community House in 2024?**



I joined Okines cooking group because that was a great opportunity for me to share some of my traditional dishes and learn about different cuisines. Also, I met new people who like to cook and share the best recipes! I am always open to learning and curious about foods and ingredients from other countries. As I am from Kyrgyzstan (Central Asia) we have a very mixed history and heritage, so our cuisine is very different as well. Our cuisine includes Mongolian, Dungan, Kalmaki, Tatar, Kazah, Chinese, Korean and our traditional Kyrgyz taste.

**What inspired you to share and cook a recipe as part of a community cooking group?**

In our culture, food is the main thing to bring tribes and clans together. By sharing food, we are showing love and connection to each other. We believe that every visitor brings good energy and friendship, and eating together means your home is full of happiness - sometimes we cook for 300 people in one day with each other's help. Through cooking and sharing my food with the cooking group, I could share my love too.

The highlight of sharing my recipe, called 'Funchoza', was hearing from some group members that they had never tried such a tasty dish with minimal ingredients.

**Would you recommend others share their own recipes?**

Yes, to learn more different recipes!



## Ask your community!

What do they want to cook, or do they have a recipe to share? This can be done at the first session or as part of an expression of interest.



### Ingredients

Think about what is in season, in the community garden or whether there is anything donated in food relief.



### Equipment

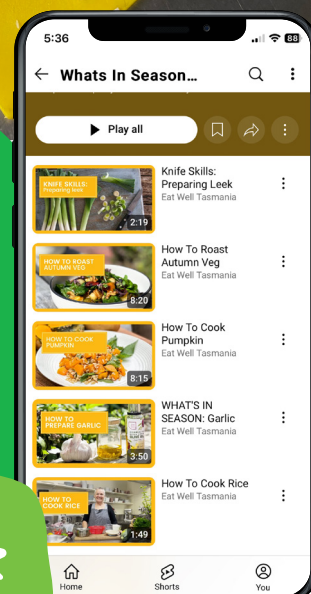
What would be needed?



### Cooking techniques

Chopping, grating, mixing, blending, roast/steam/boil/fry - to have enough tasks for each participant and show different techniques

[Click here to access the video library of cooking techniques from Eat Well Tasmania.](#)







## Tips for facilitating the session

### Setting up:

- \* **Arrive at least 30 minutes before start** to check ingredients and set up stations
- \* **Organise stations** based upon number of participants and tasks in the recipe
- \* Pre-heat oven if needed
- \* **Recipes** – different literacy levels, consider pictures or writing the recipe up in large writing on butcher's paper or a whiteboard
- \* **Support** – what tasks can other staff or volunteers help with?



### **Using your own strengths**

*Remember, you have strengths and life experience which adds value to the program. Use it and be your own facilitator!*

## Before and during cooking:

- \* Talk through the recipes with participants and explain tasks.
- \* Go through basic food safety.
- \* Ask participants to choose tasks. They could work together or individually. It is up to them what they do and how much they participate. Observing is a form of participation.
- \* Offer support or guidance through questioning. If participants ask questions on how to do something, ask them what they think or might like to try, then offer your idea.
- \* If tasks are completed early, keep participants busy with extra tasks such as washing up or setting the dining area.
- \* Moving away from the recipe is okay! This is an important part of learning to cook with creativity and new ideas.
- \* If there are participants who are more confident with cooking, encourage them to teach and show other members of the group.



### Sharing recipes

*At the end of cooking, ask participants if they have a recipe to share for next time or if they would like to show the group how to cook something. You never know if there is an experienced cook in the group!*



## Eating together:

- \* Set the table – can you bring in a foldable table or simply gather around one of the cooking benches?
- \* Why not take the meal outside if the weather is nice! There might be a local picnic bench or community garden where you could eat.
- \* Share the meal and encourage participants to talk about how they might make the dishes differently at home.





# Gathering feedback

Feedback can help you find out what has been going well and what you could do differently in the program to meet your community's needs.



## Participant survey form



Access the survey in the toolkit

You can use the short survey provided in the toolkit to collect feedback about the program. Use the survey after each session or at the end of a series of sessions. It can help find out what the community want to learn or cook.

## Keep track of your hard work



Access the data table in the toolkit

The program data sheet in the toolkit can be used to keep note of the hard work you are doing. The information can be used for reporting back to funders.

## Community engagement through food

CASE STUDY



As part of a Healthy Tasmania grant, we were able to refurbish a commercial kitchen at the Multicultural Council of Tasmania hall. We then started a cooking group with the Red Cross Connected Women's group. This was much easier than trying to engage new people, as the group already knew each other and regularly used the hall on Mondays.

Each time group members would bring more people, and this has made it very successful. In our sessions, the women take turns cooking one of their favourite family dishes with the help of a \$100 voucher. We hope to use this meeting time for more opportunities in the future, such as bringing in professionals to come and do talks. Communicating things over a meal is so much easier than having a meeting!"

**Joana Cubillos**, Community Development Lead - Capacity and Events, Multicultural Council of Tasmania Inc.



**For more information, contact**

the Project Officer at [eo@eatwelltas.org.au](mailto:eo@eatwelltas.org.au)

**eatwelltas.org.au**



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