



ACTIVITY PACK

(for communities)



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What is Cook and Share?

Cook and Share is all about bringing people together through food. It encourages schools, families, nurseries and communities across the UK to cook, eat, and enjoy food in ways that create connection, build skills and celebrate the joy of cooking.

Taking part can also support you in working towards your Food for Life actions. This activity pack offers you resources to help pupils learn practical cooking skills, understand healthy eating and connect food to culture and community.

Cook and Share is a chance to give pupils hands-on experience, spark conversations about food, and create joyful moments together. With flexible, accessible resources, it's a practical and inspiring way to weave cooking into your curriculum

How to get involved

These resources are designed to be flexible, so you can use them in whatever way works best for you. Each theme includes a mix of activities, recipes and ideas that can be:

- Used to create a lesson or learning session
- Picked apart to try individual recipes or short activities
- Adapted to suit your own setting, whether that's a classroom, a cooking club or at home.

There's no right way to use them! The aim is to give you practical tools, inspiration, and confidence. We encourage you to explore, experiment, and make them your own, so you and your learners get the very best out of them.

Theme One:

Cooking is Joyful

Cooking isn't just about making food, it's about making memories. When we cook, we laugh, share stories and spend time together.

Cooking helps us celebrate birthdays, holidays and moments that make us smile.

Cooking is a great way to connect with friends and family. You can learn new recipes from each other, taste different flavours, and be proud of what you create. Everything that you cook is something special, because you made it.



Cooking is Joyful

Pumpkin Power

A pumpkin isn't just for carving, it's for cooking too. After Halloween, nearly 20 million pumpkins go to waste, but pumpkins are tasty, healthy and full of goodness. This makes them a perfect way to teach pupils about food waste and how we can make the most of what we have.

Why not turn your pumpkin into something delicious? Give our Soup Chooser a whirl and experiment with some flavours, or use our Seeds and Spices cheat sheet to give the seeds a tasty twist.

If you've still got loads of pumpkin left over, don't worry! Use your roasting, blending and mixing skills to make some fun pumpkin play dough.



Cooking is Joyful

Firework Feasts

Bonfire Night is a night to wrap up warm, spend time with loved ones and share tasty food together. Cooking makes the night even more special.

Why not try our super-easy Garlic Pinwheels? They are perfect with a meal, or you can pop them into a lunchbox for a yummy snack on-the-go. And if you fancy something sweet, our Sticky Ginger Buns recipe will warm you right up.

Share these recipes to try at home, or hold a Bonfire Night themed event and sell these delicious treats to spread the love.



Cooking is Joyful

Happy Plates

Cooking and eating good food can make us feel really happy. Some foods even help our brains make 'happy chemicals'. You can find out more about this in our Food and Mood resource. Why not hold a learning session about how food affects your mood? Watch our 'Ask an Expert' film to see how food affects even the most professional chefs.

But happiness isn't just about the food itself. When we cook together, we get to laugh, share stories and enjoy time with the people we care about. This resource from the Jamie Oliver Kitchen Garden Project shows you how to put a meal together, balance your plate and make flavours and textures taste amazing.



Theme Two:

Cooking is for Everyone

It doesn't matter how old you are, or how much you already know, everyone can cook! You don't need to be an expert to get started. Cooking is all about trying things out, learning step by step, and having fun along the way. Cooking is for every skill level, every ability, and every person. You can chop, stir, mix, taste or share. There is always a way to join in.

Learning to cook is exciting because you discover new flavours, new skills, and new confidence. The kitchen is a place where everyone belongs!



Cooking is for Everyone

Air Fryer Fun

Did you know that an air fryer can do so much more than cook frozen food? It's a great way to start your cooking journey because it's easy to use, takes up little space and is cheaper to run than an oven.

With an air fryer anyone can cook. Try our tasty Wedges recipe, or make some yummy Falafel. You can even bake fresh bread. Our Air Fryer Focaccia shows you how

Share the recipes with your community to encourage others to make the most of their air fryer at home, or even better, host a group cooking session!



Cooking is for Everyone

Level-up

Getting started with cooking doesn't have to be tricky, and you don't need loads of fancy equipment either. Our Cooking Equipment: Top Tips resource shows you the basics to help you begin.

Some skills like chopping, grating, and peeling can feel a bit daunting, especially with little hands around. Get together with your learners to watch our Cooking Skills videos and level-up your knowledge.

Feeling like you want to put your skills to the test? Try our Easy-Peasy-Tray Roast Recipe (and yes, you can make this in the air fryer too!).



Cooking is for Everyone

Simple Snacks

Cooking isn't just about making whole meals, you can start by making quick and easy snacks.

Did you know that you can turn vegetable peelings into Crisps? This is a great opportunity to talk about food waste, and the impact that this has on the planet.

You can also test out your chopping skills by slicing up cucumber, carrots and peppers. Pair these with some delicious Homemade Houmous, and you've got yourself a colourful snacking plate.

Cooking is for everyone, and if time and resources are limited then simple snacks are a great way to introduce cooking activities.



Theme Three:

Cooking is Minimally Processed

Try saying 'minimally' three times really quickly. It's tricky isn't it! Luckily, cooking minimally processed isn't as hard as it sounds. When we cook from scratch, we use real, whole foods like fruit, vegetables, grains, meat and beans. These foods help our bodies grow strong and stay healthy. Cooking this way means we use less 'ultra-processed' food. This is the kind of food that often has lots of ingredients that you wouldn't find in your kitchen cupboard! Instead, we get meals that are more filling, more nutritious, and more tasty too.



Cooking is Minimally Processed

Hearty Meals

Cooking from scratch can help us eat less ultra-processed foods.

Cooking hearty meals from scratch can be nutritious, delicious, and even meat-free! Try out our [Lentil Ragu recipe](#). You could use this recipe to teach learners about the environmental impact of pulses versus meat. For more inspiration, check out our [BeanMeals](#) resources.

If you're fancying something quick, try our [Noodles in a Mug](#) recipe for a minimally processed alternative to packet noodles that you would find at the supermarket.



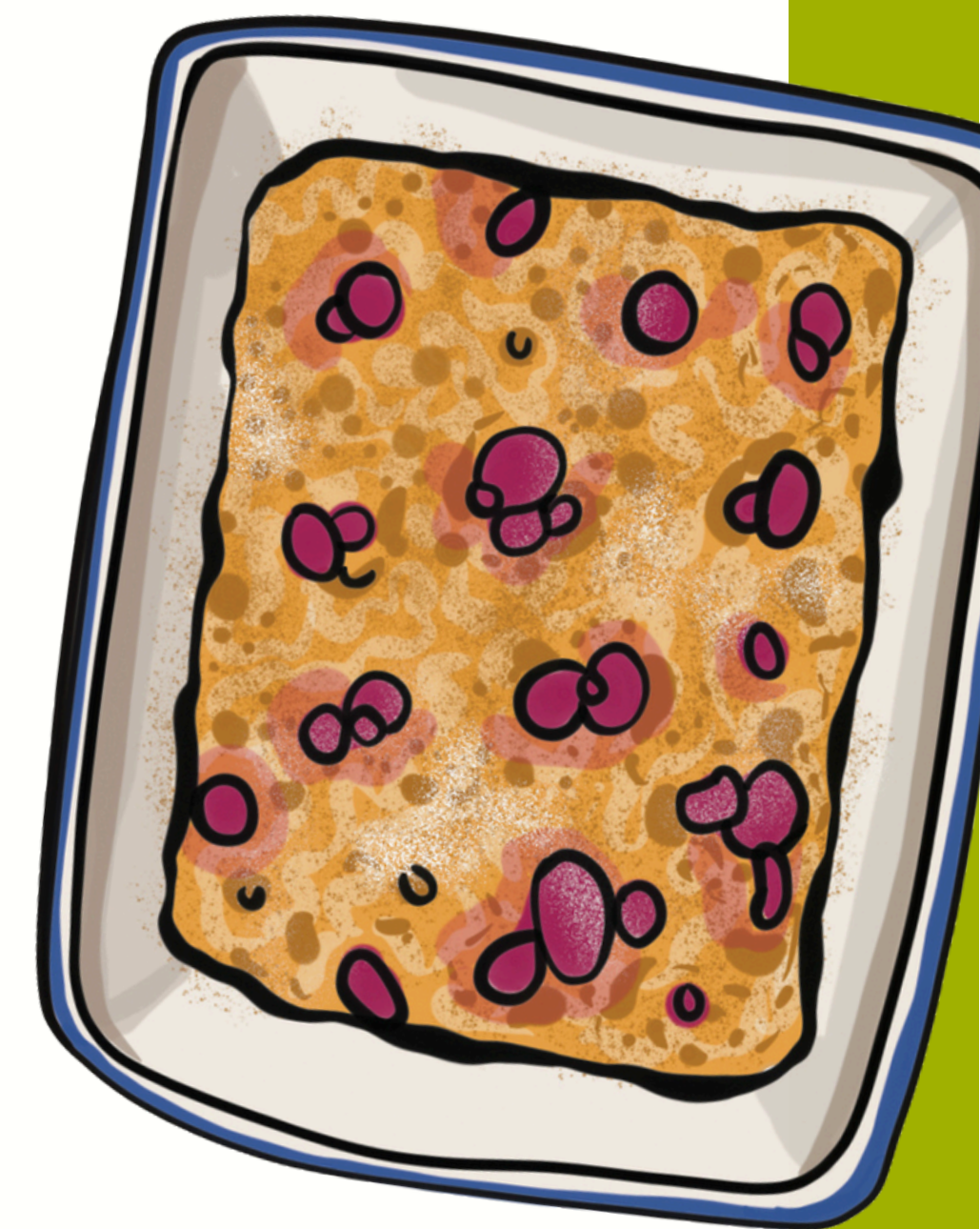
Cooking is Minimally Processed

Baked Goodies

Everyone loves a sweet-treat, but shop-bought ones can sometimes have lots of extra ingredients that aren't always the best for us.

The good news? You can make your own treats using more natural, minimally processed ingredients. That means more goodness, and sometimes even veggies! Try our Chocolate and Beetroot Muffins or our Chocolate Courgette Cake. These would also make perfect lunchbox additions to replace shop-bought biscuits, or chocolate bars.

If you fancy something fruity, our Slow Cooker Fruit Crumble is super tasty and easy to make.



Cooking is Minimally Processed

The Whole Truth

Shop-bought snacks like biscuits, crisps, and fizzy drinks are quick and tasty, but our food system often makes unhealthy choices the easiest to grab. We believe it should be the other way around. Minimally processed foods like fruit, veg, beans and nuts should be the easiest to find, just as nature intended.

Encourage learners to explore the ethical side of food by looking at issues around food choices and food production. To bring their learning to life, why not turn it into a letter-writing activity? Learners can write to their local MP to share why eating more minimally processed food matters.



Theme Four:

Cooking is Human

Cooking is something that humans have always done. It's one of the things that makes us different from animals. From the beginning, people have gathered around fires, shared food and told stories. Every culture in the world has special recipes and traditions. Cooking connects us across time and place. It's a way to share who we are, where we come from and what we celebrate.

When we cook, we are part of something bigger, a human tradition that brings people together.



Cooking is Human:

Food around the World

Every culture has special recipes and traditions. Cooking connects us across time and place, it's how we share who we are, where we come from, and what we celebrate.

Why not try cooking some traditional foods from celebrations around the world? During Diwali, you could make our tasty Bombay Chickpeas. For Lunar New Year, try our Spring Rolls recipe or cook up some crispy Latkes for Hanukkah. You could even host an event to celebrate these different cultures..

Cooking is human, and it's a delicious way to explore different cultures and celebrate together.



Cooking is Human:

Show and Tell

Ask your group to close their eyes and think about the best thing that they've ever eaten. This can be any type of food, or meal. Ask them to remember the smells, the taste, the textures and if they were with people when they ate it. Now, ask them to draw a picture, or write down what made the food so special. Go around and share memories.

Everyone's favourite memory will be different, and that's what makes it amazing! Food connects us all, and sharing those memories is a human tradition we all have in common.

