

From batch cooking to bulk shopping and one-pan-wonders... We're here to help with your meal planning, says Liezl Vermeulen

Be a better batch cook

These days it seems to be all about convenience meals and cook-box deliveries. We're all for an easier approach, but we're also firm fans of a home-cooked meal. The happy medium?

Batch cooking.

This refers to a base recipe cooked in bulk which can be transformed into many more diverse meals, aiding in easy meal planning. Make a large pot of curry sauce, meaty bolognaise or a vegetable ragu, for example, and transform it into several different dishes throughout the week. Portion the large batch and freeze for later use.

The incredible bulk

So, you got a little 'shopping happy' when the nationwide lockdown was announced?

That's exactly the way it should be! Buying pantry staples and vegetables with a longer shelf-life in bulk is way more budget-friendly. Big bags of hardy vegetables like potatoes, beetroot or butternut are great added to meaty dishes to up your veggie intake or to stretch a meal – the same goes for a can of beans.

One-pan wonders

It's clear that lockdown got us all cooking more often – the FL team couldn't be more thrilled! But we're not fans of more dishwashing, am I right? Hello, one-pan cooking.

The golden rule with this approach is to keep cooking times of individual ingredients in mind, and to layer according to how long they would take to cook. Meat and hardier vegetables need more time than tender veg like broccoli stems and spinach – add these towards the end of cooking time.

Don't get stuck on the pan part – it can be anything from a pot or roasting tray to a pressure cooker. Think of classic flavour combinations and keep timing in mind – as simple as that.