



# Kale and tatties: Cooking and feasting on the plot in Scotland

## Why cook outdoors?

Increasing numbers of community gardens across Scotland are including outdoor cooking and sharing meals in their garden activity. Aside from being an excellent way to bring people together socially cooking in your setting can also :

- Attract and retain volunteers
- Bring different groups together to share recipes and ideas
- Introduce healthy eating and basic cooking skills in an informal environment
- Define what to grow on site.
- Introduce themes of food sustainability.
- Ensure that all of the crops from the garden are used , and show the growers how to prepare them at the same time.
- Celebrate success with soup or pizza at garden open days or on special occasions.
- Maintain social momentum in quieter garden months.



## What to cook?

Once you have decided that you want to do some outdoor cooking, you need to think about what to cook. This will be influenced by who you are cooking with and why.

- Remember the need for religious or cultural sensitivity around menu planning and scheduling.
- Don't be scared to ask for advice from participants or other more established projects. They often have ideas and tips to share
- Some cultures consider it inappropriate to serve or eat food with their left hand
- Check with participants for possible food allergies, where in doubt asking is safer than assuming, for example some people are allergic to celery which is commonly found in stock cubes.
- Eating vegetables can be a cultural challenge to lots of folk. Try simply sauteeing potatoes and serve with a very small garden salad for those who are not too convinced about vegetables.
- Where introducing cooking skills or healthy living ideas it's important to keep things simple and replicable in the home environment. For example use, one pot recipes with cup based measures and a few key ingredients.

## What's in your garden?

Be creative and work with what you have in the garden. For example, thyme is a great alternative to basil for things like pizza toppings and pasta sauces, and can be grown in Scotland all year round.

Link what you're cooking and eating to your garden activity, eg. if you are sowing carrots buy

some carrots and make carrot soup.

## How much time do you have?

Outdoor cooking can take a while to set up and organise. Cooking time will depend on equipment being used and the weather conditions - wind can disperse heat from gas stoves and fires. Until you have some experience it's best not attempted in a hurry!

## What equipment do you need?

The table opposite sets out some of the options that you might consider for your main means of cooking. Other essential equipment includes:

- First Aid kit
- Fire gloves - an invaluable investment when using any of the equipment mentioned opposite
- Access to drinking water. A tap is not necessary if you have portable water containers but you need somewhere to regularly wash hands, ingredients and equipment.



- Salt, sugar, pepper and stock cubes are essential.
- A pump action hand soap
- A stable table or clear, clean, flat surface for food preparation is ideal. Ensuring this is at waist height will help avoid bad backs.
- Pans, sharp knives, wooden spoons, cups, plates, spoons etc. Consider biodegradable plates or cups to reduce washing up and keep things clean and simple.
- If you stick to simple vegetable based recipes with





A comparison of different cooking equipment options	
<b>Kellie Kettle</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	Any setting interested in introducing a simple element of food or drink. Good to bring small group together. Great for hot drinks, fresh herb teas, or instant soup.
<b>Pro's?</b>	Simple, inexpensive. No fuel needed just dry sticks. A good way to test people's appetite for this kind of activity. Kids love collecting twigs for the stove. Very quick activity – can take just 3 mins for the kettle to boil.
<b>Con's?</b>	Limited in what you can cook as it is only hot water. Care needed when removing the kettle from the fire.
<b>Open fire</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	A setting where group activity has an all day element-fire can be a good focus. Good for one pot recipes, eg soup, risotto, garden pot noodles, baked apples or potatoes, marshmallows on sticks.
<b>Pro's?</b>	Cheap, great to support all day activity and versatile if you have a tripod or trivet.
<b>Con's?</b>	Need dry –untreated wood source. can take a while to cook. Not recommended for a small setting or ones prone to vandalism as fire pit may attract 'visitors'.
<b>H&amp;S?</b>	Adequate space for the fire and around the fire pit is essential. It's worth notifying the fire station in dense urban areas that you plan to have an open fire, just in case anyone reports it – saves an unnecessary call out! Ensure the fire is properly extinguished.
<b>Camping stove and gas bottle</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	The best option where you want to use cooking to informally teach people to cook as the most replicable method. Great to 'test out' interest before committing to more permanent structure. One pot recipes- garden soup, risotto, garden pot noodles, minestrone.
<b>Pro's?</b>	Portable, good in a small setting or one to prone to vandalism. Very small stoves now available . Quick and fuel efficient. Relatively inexpensive.
<b>H&amp;S?</b>	Gas needed to be stored securely as per COSHH guidelines. NB Stoves that don't fix on top of the gas canister are more stable and easier to use.
<b>Rocket stove</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	Another good option for teaching cooking skills. One pot recipes- garden soup, risotto, garden pot noodles, minestrone.
<b>Pro's?</b>	Relatively portable but ideally require storage unless your site very secure. DIY option quite straightforward. Fast and fuel efficient.
<b>Con's?</b>	Small amounts of dry wood required.
<b>Frontier stove</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	See Rocket stove.
<b>Con's?</b>	Expensive so secure storage required.
<b>Pizza oven</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	Great in an established garden with dedicated social space .They are best sited in a sheltered spot or undercover. Try pizza, baked potatoes and apples. Bread and biscuits possible but these take a lot of practice!
<b>Pro's?</b>	A definite crowd pleaser for open days and community events. You can either build a 'cob' or brick pizza oven- construction itself is a great group activity over time.
<b>Con's?</b>	Dry wood source required. Not for sites prone to vandalism. Does require some material cost for either cob or brick. Takes a long time to heat up.
<b>Solar oven</b>	
<b>Ideal for?</b>	Any sheltered, sunny setting. Great for educational purposes in a school garden for instance. Try soup.
<b>Pro's?</b>	Educational and DIY element makes it almost cost free and very low impact
<b>Con's?</b>	Need sustained sunshine!



no animal products (including milk, eggs), you need just one vegetable chopping board. Bucket or container for dirty dishes

- A comprehensive and up to date copy of risk assessment - see more below.

NB All equipment on site (unless stored in a sealed plastic container) should be thoroughly washed before use.

## But what about health and safety?

Good hygiene and risk awareness are essential components to safe outdoor cooking and risk free eating! Outdoor cooking is not a high risk activity if the necessary precautions and measures are

taken.

A few tips for safe cooking (to minimise risk)

We recommend that someone in a supervisory role has undergone REHIS food hygiene training and that there is also a certified first aider on site.

- A robust and meaningful risk assessment is essential to keeping everyone safe.
- Have your own copy to hand in advance of the activity, this will act as reminder for the equipment you need. Then either run through it with the group or better still write one for the day with your group. This is an excellent way to promote group responsibility as well as mitigating risk.

- Ask your group what they think the hazards may be and how to minimise them. For example hot equipment is a hazard – risk of burns and scalds can be minimised by having 'clear zone' around cooking equipment and one allocated person monitoring equipment, also the use of fire gloves to prevent burns when handling hot pans etc.
- A few agreed ground rules can help keep everyone straight such as keeping space around the cooking area, sticking to the allocated jobs, not smoking whilst cooking etc.
- Decide who is going to take on which jobs - harvesting, preparing, cooking, washing up etc.
- If you want to keep things simple, in terms of hygiene, just stick to vegetable based dishes with no dairy or meat produce.
- Wash vegetables well and away from the food preparation area to avoid a muddy kitchen. Don't assume people know how to cook hygienically or safely until you have shown them.
- Remember children need adult supervision at all times.

## Evaluation

There is no better evaluation than a clean plate but 'digestion time' presents an ideal opportunity to have relaxed discussions about food, ways of cooking, recipe suggestions and to plan the next session.

We'd love to hear how you are getting on so please let us know so that we can share your experience with others.



# What resources are available to help me get started?

## FCFCG

If you are interested in outdoor cooking on your site please contact the office to discuss your ideas. We can put you in touch with a project local to you using outdoor cooking in their setting.

This factsheet is based on FCFCG's 'Cooking and Feasting on the plot' where more recipes and useful links can be found.

Other relevant publication include 'Health and safety on community growing sites' and 'Chillies and Roses - a good practice guidelines on meeting the needs and engaging with multi ethnic communities'.

## The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland (REHIS)

Acts as the main awarding body for a number of food safety and food and health qualifications in Scotland.

Offer an online food hygiene course which costs around £20 and only takes a few hours.

## Community Food and Health Scotland (CFHS)

CFHS works with communities across Scotland to access healthy, affordable food. They offer a wide range of resources from support with cooking training, and hygiene certificates to small grant schemes and relevant

publications, for example evaluating community food projects and changes in diet.

[www.lowimpact.org](http://www.lowimpact.org)

Lots of information and recipes for clay ovens, pizza ovens and rocket stoves.

## Tried and tested easy recipes

*Soup* - Use a simple onion/garlic base with a good vegetable stock and garden vegetables and herbs to season.

*Minestrone* - As above but as throw in some small pasta

*Pot noodles* - This could not be easier or healthier! Cook thin rice nice noodles in boiling water with vegetable stock, soy sauce, sliced ginger and fresh garden veg such as spring onions, radish, carrot, sugar snap peas and coriander.



*Risotto* - Really easy to incorporate garden vegetables such as courgettes, peas, beans and a handful of fresh herbs.



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