

## FOOD

If you are running out of ways to entertain little ones, get them busy in the kitchen

# School's out: go stir crazy

BY VICTORIA PREVER

**W**HEN YOU reach the 'I'm bored' stage of the school holidays, cooking is a great way to keep little hands busy.

Most children's cookery courses will be booked by now. So here are some tips and recipes from the professionals, to inspire you to get busy in the kitchen with your children or grandchildren:

## 1. PLAN AHEAD

Have all equipment out and ready before you start. "Know what recipe you want to make and make sure you have all ingredients to hand" advises Nicole Freeman of the Kids' Kitchen. "It sounds obvious, but kids have limited patience, so upfront planning makes the cooking experience more fun for everyone." Freeman also recommends weighing ingredients first for little ones. "That way cooking is quicker, less messy and you can ask them to find each ingredient in turn."

## 2. RULES

"Establish kitchen rules like washing hands and not touching stove knobs or knives" says chef and cookery teacher Lisa Roukin. "Then give frequent reminders about what's ok to touch and what can hurt them."

Even older children need safety reminders especially if they're working with appliances and knives or at the stove."

## 3. RELAX

Get outside your mess comfort

Children love getting creative in the kitchen



zone and let them be creative. "It's amazing what children can do when you let them", says cookery teacher and caterer, Fabienne Viner-Luzzato ([homecookingwithfabienne.co.uk](http://homecookingwithfabienne.co.uk)).

"The youngest ones just need more attention for tasks like separating eggs and measuring but the older ones can be more independent."

## 4. NOSHING IS GOOD

"Tell them how real chefs work — tasting as they go — and encourage them to do the same." says Freeman. "This can get even the fussiest eaters to try things." She also recommends encouraging

the children to share their goodies. "Eating what they've made at a family supper or taking baked goodies for a family tea is a great way of them showing off what they have made".

## 5. FUN WITH FOOD

Viner-Luzzato suggests investing in fun cooking gadgets like an instant ice cream maker or chocolate lolly making sets. "Creating lollies or ice cream is magical for children." Children will also love harvesting their own ingredients.

"When you pick your own, they'll taste food at its very best and maybe try something they've previously been wary about" says Roukin. "You can often pick a range of produce, including broad beans, peas, garlic, beetroot, berries and currants." Find a local farm at [pickyourown.info](http://pickyourown.info).

Here are some recipes to get you started and help the summer fly by.

## NICOLE FREEMAN'S Groovie smoothie

► Smoothies are a fab way of getting more fruit and veggies in, and the kids love using the food processor. This recipe always gets the kids going and is one of my most requested recipes. Kids think it tastes delicious despite the spinach. Serve in clear glasses — we use plastic champagne flutes — for maximum green impact.

Makes: 775-800ml (4 good servings)

### INGREDIENTS

50g fresh spinach leaves

1 banana  
1 apple cored and chopped  
160g green grapes  
170g yoghurt  
1 fresh pineapple skinned and chopped into pieces or 350ml of pineapple juice

### METHOD

● Put all the ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.

● If you don't like "bits" in your smoothie or you don't have a very powerful one (such as a Vitamix) strain through a sieve before serving

Nicole teaches at the Kids' Kitchen [www.thekidskitchen.net](http://www.thekidskitchen.net)

