

THE CHEAPSKATES

JOURNAL

Bright ideas to save you money



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THE CHEAPSKATES JOURNAL - BRIGHT IDEAS TO SAVE YOU MONEY

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The Cheapskates Club -

Showing you how to live life debt free, cashed up and laughing!

If you want to win the Battle of the Bills and are serious about saving money, and living life debt free, cashed up and laughing then this is the place to be.

The Cheapskates Journal

Brought to you by: The Cheapskates Club

Mar 2017

From Cath's Desk

Hello Cheapskaters,

It is MOO Month. I love March, just because it's MOO month. I love the challenge of making as much as we can ourselves. The whole family gets in on the game, creating and designing and building the things we need and the things we want.

Of course we do a lot of MOOing in the kitchen. That goes without saying. We also MOO in the laundry, bathroom and garden. We MOO gifts, cards and wrapping paper. We MOO gift bags. MOOing has become such an ingrained part of our lives we don't even realise we're doing it.

Every time we MOO something we're saving money, time and energy. Yes, it takes time and costs money to MOO, but no more than it does to buy whatever we need or want.

During MOO month I try to find something new that I can MOO.

But every March I find something else we can MOO. Last year it was almond butter, a new chapstick with SPF and Cocoa Mint Soap. I wonder what it will be this year? I hope you all join in the fun of MOO month, it's so exciting to see just how many things we are not buying!

HAPPY CHEAPSKATING,
Cath

Feature Article: Things I Buy Once a Year

During the Aldi tours and workshops last week I mentioned a few of the things I only buy once a

year and it seemed to strike a chord with some Cheapskaters because I had lots of questions at each workshop about once a year shopping.

I have bought cleaning ingredients and toiletries once a year (meat once a quarter, most groceries once a month and top up with fresh fruit and veg and dairy fortnightly) for so long, I think Hannah was still in the pram. Now it's just habit and I love it.

Here's what I buy once a year:

Item	Qty	Size	Store	Brand	Dilute
Dishwashing liquid	6	450ml	Aldi		50:50 with water
Dishwasher powder	6	1kg	Coles/Aldi		Use 2 tsp per load
White Vinegar	4	2L	Aldi		Depends on what it is used for
Borax	3	500g	Coles		
Laundry soap	3	4pck	Coles		
Washing Soda		5kg	Aurora Cleaning Supplies		
Bicarb Soda		5kg	Aurora Cleaning Supplies		
All purpose bleach	4	1L	Aldi		No
Eucalyptus Oil	3	100ml	Aldi		No
Shampoo	3		Aldi		50:50 with water
Conditioner	3		Aldi		50:50 with water
Shampoo (kids)	6		Aldi		50:50 with water
Conditioner (kids)	6		Aldi		50:50 with water
Roll-on Deodorant	15	100ml	Aldi		No
Toothpaste	10		Aldi		No
Toothbrushes	5	4pk			
Toilet paper	15	12pck	Aldi		
Herbs & spices (onion, garlic, cumin, oregano, chilli powder, nutmeg, cinnamon, mixed spice etc.)		Depends on herb/spice, some I use more often than others	Hindustan Imports		

Why do I buy these things once a year? Well grocery shopping isn't my favourite thing to do; I like to get in, and get home (another reason I've been shopping monthly for 23 years). And because it saves me from worrying about running out between monthly shops and because it's another couple of aisles I can skip on shopping day.

Once a year, in the week between Christmas and New Year's Eve, I do my yearly shopping for things like dishwashing detergent, shampoo, borax and so on. It takes about an hour to shop and about half an hour to put it away at home. Then those things are off my list until the end of the year. Phew! The question was asked about

prices. Shopping once a year locks in prices - if they go up on any of those items during the year I've saved some money. Because most of the things I buy come from Aldi the price is always cheaper than brand names from Coles or Woolworths even on half-price sale, and it rarely changes.

Another question was where do I keep it all?

We have a big home, but there's not a lot of storage (go figure!) so like most households we need to juggle for optimum storage efficiency.

Herbs and spices from Hindustan come in plastic bags, not the best for long term storage or even efficient storage. I have a lot of recycled 500g pasta jars that I decant into. They're all labelled. These then go into the freezer. Why the freezer? It is cool and dark, and so helps to keep the herbs and spices fresh for the year. There are smaller containers in the spice cupboard that are handy to where I cook. When they are empty they get washed, dried and refilled. Now the common thought is that herbs and spices don't last longer than about six months. I say phooey to that! Of course they do. They may lose some potency over time (I'm using ginger I've had for almost three years and it is still strong). If that's the case all you need to do is add a little more to get the flavour you need. Don't go tossing those herbs and spices just because some supermarket or specialist store tells you to - they just want you to spend more of your hard earned money!

The dishwashing liquid and one spare empty bottle (for diluting) are stored under the kitchen sink, along with the dishwasher powder. It's where it is used, easy to get to and put away neatly.

The bottles of white vinegar, eucalyptus oil, borax, bicarb soda, washing soda and laundry soap are stored under the laundry trough because that's where they are used (the laundry, not under the trough). I make Miracle Spray in the laundry and grate soap for washing powder in the laundry so it makes sense to keep the ingredients in the laundry too.

The shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes and deodorant are kept in the relevant bathroom cupboards. Wayne and I have electric toothbrushes, the kids use normal toothbrushes. I allow for a new toothbrush every two months or when it starts to go fuzzy, so we can have a lot of toothbrushes in the bathroom at the beginning of the year. By the way, I don't throw out the "used" toothbrushes, I move them to the laundry and use them to scrub grout or around taps, to clean spots on the carpet, to clean the wheels on the cars and to scrub plant pots etc. before they are tossed.

And lastly the TP. Thank goodness for watertight garden sheds is all I can say, or we'd have TP stashed all over the house. I just stack it up on a pallet Wayne put down for me (to make sure it stays off any damp concrete) and the air can circulate around the stack to keep damp and condensation at bay.

Before we had the garden shed the TP was kept on top of the laundry cupboard, on a shelf in our wardrobe and on the bottom of the linen cupboard. Like I said, it was all over the place.

How do I pay for this once-a-year shopping?

The same way I pay for other shopping - from my grocery budget. Each month I put aside money to cover the big shop in December. Totalling the receipts from the last shop and dividing by 12 gives me the amount I need to put aside each month. Easy.

What if there is an amazing sale on borax or toothpaste during the year?

If I find an amazing sale, and it must be at least 10% less than I paid, then, if there is money in the once-a-year budget, I'll use it to stock up. I haven't often found this to be the case very often; the last time was on toothbrushes for 85c each (I used the slush fund to buy two years' worth) and adjusted the budget accordingly.

Doing a once-a-year shop may sound like hard work, but it's not. It is quick and easy, it saves

me money, time and energy for the rest of the year, why wouldn't I do it?

A Thoughtful Moment: Proving Faith

There was pin-drop silence in the lecture theatre.

Student: What about darkness, Professor? Is there such a thing as darkness?

Professor: Yes. What is night if there isn't darkness?

Student: You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light. But if you have no light constantly, you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? In reality darkness isn't. If it is, well you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn't you?

Professor: So what is the point you are making, young man?

Student: Sir, my point is your philosophical premise is flawed.

Professor: Flawed? Can you explain how?

Student: Sir, you are working on the premise of duality, you argue there is life and then there is death, a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science can't even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing.

Death is not the opposite of life: just the absence of it. Now tell me, Professor, do you

teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?

Professor: If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, yes, of course, I do.

Student: Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes sir?

The Professor shook his head with a smile, beginning to realise where the argument was going.

Student: since no one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an on-going endeavour. Are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you not a scientist but a preacher?

The class was in an uproar.

Student: Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen the Professor's brain?

The class broke into laughter.

Student: Is there anyone here who has ever heard the Professor's brain, felt it, touched or smelt it? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established Rules Empirical, Stable, Demonstrable Protocol, Science says that you have no brain, sir. With all due respect, sir, how do we then trust your lectures, sir?

The room was silent. The Professor stared at the student, his face unfathomable.

Professor: I guess you'll have to take them on faith, son.

Student: That is it sir.....exactly! The link between man and God is FAITH. That is all that keeps things alive and moving.

PS. The student was Einstein.

Create MOO Mixes in 5 Easy Steps

Commercial baking mixes are pretty mainstream these days. Cake mixes, muffin mixes, biscuit mixes, pastry mixes, pancake mixes, even cheesecake mixes are common and vary in price from the budget 65 cent generic cake mix to the very expensive gourmet mixes that cost up to \$11 a box.

What was once a novelty for our grandmothers is common place today.

There are some people who think cooking from scratch means adding eggs and water to a boxed mix. They can't imagine making pancakes unless the mix comes in a bottle or muffins without a box.

Mixes are convenient, I'll grant you that, but they contain dubious ingredients (what is a caking agent and do you really want to be feeding it to your family?) and they are often quite flavourless.

There is a better way, a much better way, to have the convenience of mixes without the expense or the health hazards.

You can have your cake and bake it yourself, too, by preparing your own baking mixes.

This is so simple, you'll wonder why you weren't doing it already.

To Create Your Own Mixes

1. Locate your favourite recipes for quick breads, coffee cakes, scones, cornbread, brownies, muffins, pancakes, and/or waffles. Just choose two or three to start. Pretty soon you'll have an arsenal of baking goodness at your ready. (I even do this for instant oatmeal packets.) I've included my favourite chocolate

cake recipe below, it makes great cakes and wonderful cake mixes.

2. Gather the ingredients for the recipes in question along with measuring cups and spoons and ziplock bags or air-tight containers and labels or a permanent marker. I find ziplock bags are the most convenient, cost effective and space saving. As a bonus they can be washed and re-used over and over and I use a permanent marker for labelling. I buy my ziplock bags from Aldi.

3. Label your ziplock bags with the name of the recipe, the baking directions, and any wet ingredients that will need to be added later.

4. Create an assembly line to fill the bags with the ingredients needed for each recipe. I typically make six batches of each mix at a time. It doesn't take much longer than doing one, and I have all the ingredients ready to go anyway.

5. Store these items in the freezer for longest storage. Even though all dry goods go into my freezer for at least a week, I always freeze mixes as soon as they are made too. Freezing not only kills any weevils that may be in the dry ingredients, but prolongs the shelf life of flours which can go rancid over time. If you're not going to use those mixes within six months or so, I suggest they stay in the freezer.

And there you have it - your very own method to make your own, unique baking mixes.

Here are some of the things I prepare as make-ahead mixes:

Cakes (chocolate cake/coffee cake/gingerbread/orange cake/pound cake)

Basic muffin mix

Pancakes/pikelets/crepes

Biscuits

Bread (white/wholemeal/corn)

Quick Chocolate Cake

Dry Ingredients:

3 cups SR flour

2 cups sugar

1/4 cup cocoa

Wet Ingredients:

2 cups cold water

2 tsp vanilla extract

2 tbsp white vinegar

3/4 cup vegetable oil

You can double, triple, quadruple the quantities (I measure out 7 lots at a time). Put the dry ingredients into ziplock bags and seal. Label the bag and with a permanent marker, add a list of the wet ingredients and the instructions to the front of the bag.

To make a cake add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients. Stir until just combined.

One quantity will make 2 dozen cupcakes or two 20cm square cakes. Bake at 180 degrees Celsius for 25 - 30 minutes for 20cm cake (or until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean). Bake for 12 - 15 minutes for cupcakes or until a skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Feed Your Family for \$80 a Week

I was challenged while I was in Perth in February, to feed a family of 4 for a week for just \$80.

That had to include breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for 4 people for the week, a total of 84 meals and 28 snacks.

I had a family who very kindly volunteered to be the \$80 a Week guinea pigs, with mum Juliana coming shopping with me and the kids happily helping to prepare one of the meals.

This isn't anything new for me, or a lot of other Cheapskaters who are living well on the \$300 a Month Food Challenge, but for Juliana it was less than half what she would normally spend for the week and it was her first time in an Aldi store!

I was so excited, I just love Aldi newbies. They have so much to gain and so much money to save it makes me jump for joy.

Juliana met me at the lovely Aldi supermarket at Mirrabooka Square and, with meal plan done and shopping list in hand, she put her \$1 in the trolley and off we went.

I love Aldi. I've loved Aldi since before they opened here in Melbourne. I'm sure I've mentioned before just how green with envy I was when the Bankstown store opened in Sydney - Sydney of all places, when I lived in Melbourne!

As soon as a store opened close to me, Chirnside Park, even though it was a bit of a trip, I was there. I had my shopping list and crossed everything off for the grand total of \$80 (and a few cents - it was under \$81) for the month.

You can imagine how exciting was to be able to show Juliana just how great the products are and just how cheap they are. Explaining the two tiers or levels of grocery items was thrilling. Telling her about the gluten free and organic ranges made me smile. Pointing out just how much Australian produce is in an Aldi store made me so proud (100% of the meat, 91% of fruit and veg and 93% of dairy is Australian - way to go Aldi).

But watching her eyes as we put the trolley load through the register was the most thrilling part of the day. Yes, the total on the docket was \$114, and the challenge was to feed a family of 4 for \$80. We completed the challenge.

The difference was the grocery items that will serve more than 1 week. Things like the rice and the breakfast cereals, the potatoes, onions and carrots that will all carry over to the next week and the week after (and the cost of those items would come off those grocery budgets - does that make sense?).

Here's the meal plan created for Juliana's family (and everything was bought at Aldi).

Breakfasts:

Monday - Friday: Wheat biscuits, rolled oats, milk, honey

Saturday: Ricies, milk, honey

Sunday: Mum's Hotcakes and Pancake Syrup

Lunches:

Sandwiches: Cheese & ham, Cheese & Chicken, Cheese & salami, Cheese & beef

Dinners:

Sunday: Roast chicken, baked veggies, gravy

Monday: Paprika Sausages, mash, peas/corn/carrots, broccoli

Tuesday: Mum's Spaghetti, salad, garlic bread

Wednesday: Chicken parma, wedges, salad

Thursday: MOO Pizza

Friday: Cream Cheese Patties, salad

Saturday: Haystacks

Munchies:

8 apples,

8 bananas,

8 oranges,

8 mandarins

And here are the recipes:

Paprika Sausages with Mushrooms

Ingredients:

1 tbsp oil

1 onion, finely sliced

2 - 3 tsp paprika

125g button mushrooms, sliced

425g can diced peeled tomatoes

salt & pepper to taste

500g sausages

Sour cream

Method:

Heat oil in a large pan and cook onions for 1 minute or until soft. Stir in paprika. Add mushrooms, tomatoes with juice and season to taste. Cook uncovered over a gentle heat for 10 minutes, stir occasionally. While sauce is cooking, cook sausages under grill until cooked through and browned. Remove sausages from heat and cut into chunks. Mix through sauce and heat. Top each serving with a spoonful of sour cream and sprinkle with paprika. Serve with cooked rice to stretch further, great heated up the next day.

Mum's Spaghetti

Ingredients:

500g mince
1 tin tomatoes
1 tin tomato soup
1 large onion, diced
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tsp mixed herbs
500g spaghetti

Method:

In a non-stick pan brown mince, drain and rinse to remove fat. Sauté onion and garlic in pan. Add mince, stir to combine. Add tomatoes and tomato soup. Stir in mixed herbs. Bring sauce to a boil, turn down to a simmer and let cook, stirring occasionally, while you cook the pasta. Cook spaghetti according to directions on packet. Drain, top with sauce and enjoy.

MOO Pizza

Make the bases and top with your favourite pizza toppings. You'll be eating the most delicious gourmet pizza for a fraction of the price of home delivery and it'll be faster too!

Penny Pinching Pizza Base

Ingredients:

2 cups plain flour – 30c
2 tbsp olive oil – 30c
1 cup warm water
1 tbsp dry yeast – 5c

1 tsp sugar – 1c

Method:

Dissolve the sugar in ¼ cup of the warm water and then add the yeast. Put aside to ferment – about 5 minutes.

Process the flour and oil for a few seconds until it becomes crumbly. Add the yeast mixture and process. Slowly pour in the remaining ¾ cup water. Process until a dough ball forms. Continue processing for 30 seconds.

Turn the dough out onto a floured board, cover with a damp tea towel and let it sit for 10 minutes.

At this point you can freeze the dough in a ball to use later on or cover with a damp tea towel and let it sit for 10 minutes before pressing into a Swiss roll tin, using the palm of your hand. Try not to roll it with a rolling pin (or Marmite jar) as it toughens the dough.

Top with your favourite pizza toppings (we love tomato sauce, oregano and grated cheese and tomato sauce, slice mushrooms, pineapple pieces, sliced onion and olives topped with grated cheese). Bake in a hot oven for 15 – 20 minutes until the base is browned and the topping is bubbling nicely.

Suggested toppings:

Tomato sauce, oregano and grated cheese – 25c, 1c, 90c

Tomato sauce, sliced mushrooms, sliced capsicum, pineapple pieces, sliced onions, slice olives and grated cheese

Tomato sauce, shredded chicken, pineapple and cheese

Tomato sauce, shredded ham and beaten egg

Cream Cheese Patties

I love these patties in summer with salad just as much as I do in winter with steamed green vegetables.

Ingredients:

250g cream cheese

1 cup rice

1 large onion, grated

1 large carrot, grated

1 egg

1/2 tsp mixed herbs

Olive oil for frying

Shake'n'bake

1/2 cup milk

Method:

Cook the rice in boiling salted water for 12 minutes. Dice cream cheese into 2cm cubes (this makes it easier to melt). Drain rice. Add remaining ingredients, except shake'n'bake, milk and olive oil, to the hot rice, stirring to melt the cream cheese. Take 1/4 cup of mixture, shape into a patty. Dip in milk then in shake'n'bake to coat. Let the patties rest in the fridge for 30 minutes before frying in hot oil until golden brown on both sides. Can be served hot or cold.

Cheats Haystacks

Ingredients:

1 tin baked beans

1 tin kidney beans, rinsed

1 tin diced tomatoes

1 pkt corn chips

1/2 cup grated cheese

Method:

Mix baked beans, kidney beans and diced tomatoes and warm through. Layer corn chips on plates and top with bean mixture. Sprinkle with grated cheese and serve.

A Simple Soap for Beginners

I've posted this recipe before, and it is really simple, simple enough for a beginner, without being a melt-n-pour glycerine "soap", but I still get questions about making soap and how to start MOOing soap.

This recipe makes what is called a re-batched soap, meaning a soap made from another soap made using the cold or hot process, with added ingredients.

The base for this recipe is Lux flakes (for my overseas readers Lux is a brand of pure soap flakes; if you can't get Lux flakes in your country use your local brand of PURE soap flakes - if they're not in the laundry aisle, don't use them, they won't be pure flakes or suitable for this recipe).

Why is this soap recipe so easy? Simply because it doesn't use caustic soda (lye) so there is no precise measuring or safety gear needed.

Ingredients:

4 cups Lux flakes (see my note above)

1 cup milk

1/2 cup powdered milk

Pure essential oil for fragrance or soap safe fragrance oil (optional)

Step 1. Spray your soap moulds with cooking spray, this stops the soap from sticking.

Step 2. Add the Lux flakes to an old stockpot or large saucepan.

Step 3. Add 1/2 cup milk and stir over a low heat. Continue stirring and adding milk until all the soap flakes have dissolved. Don't be tempted to add more milk, it really isn't necessary. Just keep stirring over a low heat.

Scrape down the sides of the pot often and stir the scrapings into the mixture.

If you stop stirring the soap may burn (it will be OK to use, just not pretty and may have dark flecks through it - if this happens use it for cleaning), so if you get tired take the pot off the heat for a moment. This process takes about 15 minutes cooking time all up.

Step 4. Keep stirring until the soap reaches the consistency of mashed potato, quite thick and lumpy. This is when you add the milk powder and stir. The milk powder will make the mixture creamy and smooth. It should be a pourable consistency.

Step 5. If you are using essential oils, add them now. Depending on how strong you want the scent to be, use between two and four teaspoons of pure essential oil. Stir well to mix the essential oil through the mixture.

I don't add essential oil, I like the scent of the Lux flakes and essential oils fade over time (and quite quickly too, within about three months) and can end up smelling sour.

Step 6. Pour into your moulds, smooth the tops and leave for 24 hours to set. I like to leave the top of the moulds as smooth as I can, but don't worry if they're a little lumpy looking - you can fix it once the soap has hardened. Using a 1/4 cup measuring cup makes pouring into the moulds easier.

If the mixture is starting to harden in the pot, put it back over a very low heat to melt again and stir until melted. Remember to scrape down the sides of the pot and your spoon to get it all melted.

This soap does set quite quickly on the outside, but the inside will be soft for quite a while. Don't be tempted to remove them from the moulds any earlier than 12 hours after pouring, and if you are, be careful not to squeeze the soap too hard or it will break.

Step 7. After 24 hours, remove from the moulds and place soap on a cake rack to cure. Trim the top of the soap so it is smooth. I use a very sharp carving knife for this, then I add the shavings to the washing powder tin.

Step 8. Cure for at least a week, preferably four weeks, before using. The longer the soap cures, the harder the cakes will be and the better they will be to use - they won't go gluggy as quickly if they have been left for a few weeks to cure and harden.

Notes:

I use silicone cake moulds as they are relatively cheap and available from \$2 shops and the different shapes make pretty soaps. I used individual heart cupcake moulds and three sea shell shaped moulds to make this batch; they all came from the op shop. You can use empty juice or milk cartons (not plastic bottles, you'd need to cut the soap out of those), or Pringles tubes or cake tins (line with plastic wrap so you can lift the soap out). You don't need to invest in a wooden soap mould, they are expensive and unless you are going to make soap regularly the other options are just as handy.

Normally you'd keep this pot just for soap making, and not use it for cooking food in once it's been used to make soap. That's because making soap from scratch involved caustic soda and it's just not worth risking being burnt or getting sick from any residue in the pot. As this is a repurposed soap, the lye/caustic soda has already reached saponification and cured.

Milk - you can use either cows or goats milk in this recipe.

Milk powder - full cream gives the best result. Skim can be used in a pinch but the soap won't be as smooth and creamy and won't have a rich feel to the lather.

This soap doesn't create a huge lather, but rather a nice, silky froth when you use it.

I don't add fragrance to my soaps, and this one especially doesn't really need a scent as the Lux flakes already smell lovely. If you do want to add scent, only use pure essential oils if you are going to be using this soap for hands, hair etc. Pure Eos don't last long, but fragrance oils (which are usually a synthetic scent in an oil base) will last. If you're going to use fragrance oils, make sure get one which is made just for soap making so it won't cause any irritations.

Dear Cath

Q. How do you pre-make your potato wedges so that you can freeze them for later use?

Janine

A. Hi Janine,

I par boil whole potatoes - about 10 minutes boiling, then drain and let them cool.

When they are cool I cut them into wedges, dredge them with paprika and freeze.

Then, when I'm ready to roast them, I turn the oven to 230 degrees, put in a couple of oven trays to heat for 10 minutes. While this is happening I drizzle a little olive oil over the frozen wedges and give them a toss to coat them. Take the oven trays from the oven, tip the wedges straight onto the hot trays and back into the oven. Turn down to 210 and cook for 20 minutes, turning at 10 minutes, or until they're fork tender and cooked through.

When potatoes are cheap it's a great way to have wedges without spending a fortune. These days they cost about the same per kg as the bought frozen wedges, so not much money saved but they are good.

Q. I remember reading in one of the posts about knowing your butcher and what to look for regarding blade steak - something about the line of fat/gristle running through the meat.

Many thanks, Dallas

A. Years ago my butcher told me to look for the steak (blade, chuck, barbecue) that has the finest line of marbling running through it as this will be the most tender. He was right, I've never had dry or tough steak when I've been picky and chosen the cuts with the finest marbling.

On the Menu - Fried Green Tomatoes

It's that time of year: the tomato bushes are loaded with tomatoes and you're making sauce and chutney as fast as you can with the ripe fruit. But what do you do with the green tomatoes?

I grew up believing that green tomatoes would give me at best a tummy ache, at worst make me sick.

And then I saw a movie - do you remember Fried Green Tomatoes - and my eyes were opened to this delicious treat. I'm sure the tummy ache was a rumour spread so those who shall remain nameless could enjoy all the green tomatoes, fried of course, themselves.

If you haven't tried fried green tomatoes, do. They're good, and easy to make. And a great way to use up those green tomatoes you have growing in the backyard.

Fried Green Tomatoes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup cornmeal

1/4 cup plain flour

1/2 tsp sugar

1 tsp salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

4 medium-size green tomatoes, cut into 1 cm slices

Vegetable oil*

Method:

Combine cornmeal, flour, sugar, salt, and pepper in a medium mixing bowl; stir well. Dredge tomato slices in cornmeal mixture.

Fry tomato slices, a few at a time, in 6mm (1/4 inch) hot oil in a large frying pan until browned, turning once. Drain on paper towels. Serve immediately.

Notes:

I use olive oil, we like the richer flavour.

We have Fried Green tomatoes as a side dish with sausages, rissoles, grilled chicken pieces etc.

Quote of Note



Cheapskates Tip Store

The Cheapest Fabric Softener Ever

I read this one online years ago, and it's saved me a fortune in fabric softener products. I simply use 2 tablespoons of Coles store brand vinegar in the final wash, and everything comes out soft, fresh, stain free, and NO, it doesn't smell of vinegar. A two litre bottle of store brand vinegar from Coles is \$1.10 and I calculated I get 300 fabulously soft washes out of it. Instead of using commercial fabric softeners that are filled with a ton of chemicals. I had psoriasis, and since I've gone to MOO washing powder and just 2 tablespoons vinegar, it's not been an issue. My hospital thinks I'm miraculously cured on all the pills they gave me. They made me worse. I changed to MOO, and stopped using commercial laundry detergents and fabric softener, and I'm healed.

Contributed by Lisa DeLace

MOO Disinfectant Spray

When you have someone sick in the home, especially with gastro, this spray is better than anything you can buy to kill germs and bacteria

and help stop it spreading through the whole family.

You will need:

hydrogen peroxide (3% solution)

Full strength white vinegar

2 spray nozzles

one spray bottle

Hydrogen peroxide comes in a brown bottle because it's extremely light sensitive, so leave it in the original bottle! Instead of transferring the liquid to another spray bottle, simply put a nozzle on the brown bottle from the chemist. You can buy it from your local chemist. The last bottle I bought cost under \$3 so it isn't expensive.

Fill an empty spray bottle with straight white vinegar.

Hold your hydrogen peroxide bottle in one hand and vinegar bottle in the other. Mist the surface you'd like to disinfect with the hydrogen peroxide and then follow up with a mist of the vinegar. Important: Don't combine the two liquids into one bottle – they will form a new chemical if they're combined that doesn't work as well. Use a clean, damp microfibre cloth to wipe over the surface.

This technique was developed to be sprayed directly onto food, but you can use it to disinfect anything in your house. I use it to clean the chopping boards after I've cut up raw chicken. If you do use the spray on fruit or vegetables, rinse the food with water after you've disinfected to remove any lingering flavours.

Keep Sponges Clean

A study of 30 different surfaces in 22 homes found that the kitchen sponge has the most

bacteria – harbouring more germs than your toilet seat! Eww!

If your sponge or kitchen cloth has seen better days, it's a good idea to replace it instead of tossing it in your dishwasher. Old or worn out sponges may break apart and possibly damage your dishwasher.

To help keep your sponge clean:

Keep in a dry place. Bacteria thrives in moist environments, so it's important to keep your sponge dry. Wring out your sponge after every use and store it in a dry place.

Run it through the dishwasher. Place your sponge on the top shelf with the rest of your dishes. Run the sponge through the dishwasher on the hottest cycle. Be sure to air dry the sponge thoroughly afterwards.

Microwave it. A study from the USDA's Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Centre found that the microwave is the best at killing bacteria, yeast and mould in kitchen sponges. If you don't have a dishwasher, microwave a soaking wet sponge on the highest setting for two minutes. Carefully remove the sponge and let it cool before use.

Replace it. Replace your sponge every two weeks. Tip: Try sponges made from natural and sustainable materials to reduce waste. I move sponges from the kitchen, to the laundry, to the bathroom and finally it is binned.

Garlic Bread Made Easy

If you find yourself cooking a meal and realise you don't have any garlic bread, then here's a cheap and quick way to make it!

1 – 2 slices of bread

1 – 2 tablespoons of olive oil

Crushed garlic and herbs (adjust amounts to your liking)

Simply spread the mixture on your bread and pop under the grill. Chop into small cubes for salad croutons!

Contributed by Chloe Johnson

MOO Designer Gym Clothes

Use an old black t shirt and bike pants. Lay them flat on the table. Have a small dish of bleach and draw, with your index finger, flowers and ferns on the top and butterflies and birds on the thigh part of the pants. (Or any pattern you like). After each small application, wait to see the fabric fade and get a picture of what is needed. I wear this 'set' when I am gardening or doing outside work. It is a good talking point for connecting to the neighbours

Contributed by Lynn Dingley

MOO Mayonnaise

I find store bought mayonnaise too much salt, sugar and vinegar so I MOO it.

Just take a tin of sweetened condensed milk, (full fat or low fat and MOO condensed milk works too), add equal part of white vinegar, use the tin as a measure. Stir together. Additional optional extras such as salt and pepper, a teaspoon mustard powder or mixed herbs.

This mayonnaise keeps nearly indefinitely in the fridge. The mayo will thicken, but stirring again will thin it down.

Contributed by Norma Thornton

MOO Lactose Free Yoghurt for a Quarter of the Price

My daughter has recently been required to go lactose free due to a food intolerance. It is great that you can purchase lactose free dairy now but the yoghurt and cheese is expensive.

To make lactose free yoghurt, I have been using the lactose free UHT milk mixed with 1/4 of the lactose free yoghurt (small tub) in a yoghurt maker the same way I would use it for normal yoghurt. If you do not wish to buy the yoghurt to start with, you could use an antibiotic powder as a starter for the yoghurt.

The four pack of yoghurt can retail for close to \$6 for four small tubs. You can make one litre for about \$1.50-2.00.

I have flavoured with blueberries but my daughter is happy just to have it as is.

Contributed by Kathryn Clarke

MOO Coffee Scrub

Don't throw your used coffee grindings away, put them on a saucer to dry out then take them to your bathroom. Splash your face with warm water, press your wet fingers into the grindings and wash your face using the grindings to gently scrub your face. It smells delicious and your skin will feel so smooth and clean afterwards; you'll love it!

Contributed by Susan Schinzig

MOO Oxygen Bleach/ Oxyclean

Ingredients:

1 cup Water

½ cup Peroxide

½ cup baking soda

Instructions:

1. Combine in container.
2. Let sit 20 minutes before using.

Use in your wash or for soaking stained items or for general cleaning! This is really good for stained grout among many other uses.

Contributed by Heather Schlusemeyer

Simple MOO to Lose Ink Stains

I use whole milk to remove ink stains. Works a treat. For a large spill, I place a pie dish under the stained spot. Pour the milk into the pie dish and rub fingers up and down stain to wet the fibres. Leave to soak. Return in 15 - 30 minutes and check if more milk and soaking time needed; if it does repeat first step. If not, wash as per usual. This has worked every time for me and I am terrible at spilling ink on me or writing all over myself.

Contributed by Pat

Unclog Your Showerhead

Lime scale and mineral build-up can clog water passages over time and decrease water pressure. This easy, nontoxic approach allows you to unclog your showerhead without scrubbing or removing it.

What You'll Need:

plastic bag

Bicarb soda

white vinegar

rubber band

Step 1. Find a strong plastic bag that is large enough to fit around your showerhead. A grocery bag works well!

Step 2. Mix 1/3-cup bicarb soda with one cup of white vinegar in the bag. The bicarb soda will react with the vinegar causing it to bubble, so I

suggest doing this over a sink or the bath in case it overflows.

Step 3. Put the bag over your dirty showerhead and secure with a rubber band. Make sure the head is completely covered in the bicarb solution. The acid in the vinegar reacts with sodium bicarbonate to form carbonic acid, a strong cleaning agent.

Step 4. Leave the bag on the showerhead overnight.

Step 5. in the morning, run the water through the showerhead for a minute, and then rinse the outside of the showerhead and arm until no trace of the bicarb solution remains.

Bonus: You can also grab a pin or needle and gently poke it through the showerhead holes to clear them.

Shiny, Silky Clean Hair

I use cider vinegar as a hair rinse which leaves my hair shiny and silky clean. Use about a 1/4 cup of cider vinegar instead of conditioner. Pour it over your wet hair, let it sit for a couple of minutes, then rinse for the softest, shiniest, silkiest hair ever. You'll find your hair won't need washing as often too.

Contributed by Peggy

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