

Drop in with Dirk

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COMMUNITY NETWORK



Dirk Lakeman

Created by a tenant, for tenants, this space is for everyone whether you're a seasoned gardener, a confident home cook, or just starting out.

Each month, I'll be sharing practical tips, helpful advice, and easy-to-follow recipes to help you get the most out of your home, your garden, and your budget.

Got a question about cooking or gardening? I'm here to help!

Time is tight for most of us, so I love showcasing quick meals and snacks that take just 10 to 15 minutes to prep. Even a slow cooker or air fryer can be ready to go in minutes just set it and let it do the work, and you'll have a healthy plate ready in no time.

This blog is like a cosy kitchen table, a spot to chat, share ideas and grow together, one post at a time.

So grab a cuppa, and feel free to drop in anytime.



HEALTHY EATING



Team Tasting Experience

Some members of the Community Development Team were lucky enough to sample Dirk's delicious food and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Alongside the tasty dishes, they also learned more about preparing healthy, nutritious meals that are both quick to make and budget-friendly — a truly inspiring and appetising session! Dirk will be hosting cooking demonstrations in some of our sheltered schemes across Northern Ireland, so be sure to check in on our socials to find out when there's one in your area.



Coleslaw

Cut a white cabbage into quarters for ease of slicing, keep the core in to ensure that the cabbage does not fall apart.

Use a mandolin with V or angled shaped blades and slice cabbage on the thinnest blade, or use a sharp knife.

Blanch cabbage in a steamer. Cover and steam for 5-7 minutes, or until the cabbage is tender.

Once cabbage has cooled down, blend with mayonnaise (Helmans is best) to your taste, little french mustard and a touch of tomato ketchup, pinch of salt & ground white pepper.

You can add (blanched) fine julienne of carrots.

For the next day you can add tomato purée and a touch of balsamic vinegar and honey.

The day after that add some Korma paste.



HEALTHY EATING

Skewered Chicken with Satay Sauce

I recommend using chicken and chicken thighs from Sainsburys or Pheasant Hill Farm, the price from Sainsburys is more affordable and has good flavour.

I bone the chicken thighs myself and use the skins and bones to make chicken broth. I simmer them for about 20 minutes with salt, pepper and bay Leaves.

For chicken satay I marinate the chicken in soy sauce, and Saute - Grill - BBQ them to 74 Degrees Centigrade BUT Chicken Thighs can be cooked to a higher temperature as they do NOT become dry, they stay juicy. Chicken Breast on the other hand if you cook them to a higher temperature they tend to become dry and do not stay juicy.

Satay Sauce

Use a few Spoons of SMOOTH peanut butter in a sauce pan and add some chicken stock (cube) approximately 1 ½ times the volume of the peanut butter, bring to the boil whilst stirring gently until a smooth consistency, season with soy sauce and chilli paste or tabasco chilli.



Tomato Concasse

Sauté half or a whole onion red* or white with 2 cloves of garlic finely chopped in olive oil or cooking oil. Olive oil is best for flavour. Keep stirring to prevent caramelisation.

When transparent add 3 spoons of vinegar, cider vinegar is best for flavour, add a 400 gram tin of chopped tomatoes and simmer until you have a sauce-like consistency, add salt, ground pepper, mixed herbs of chopped flat parsley and honey or sugar to get a sharp but soft flavour.

*Red onions, known for their vibrant purple-red skin and flesh, are often favored for their milder, sweeter flavor when raw, making them great for salads, salsas, and garnishes. White onions, with their papery white skin and crisp, firm flesh, are typically more pungent raw but still suitable for raw preparations like salsa.



HEALTHY
EATING

