

# Aussie Classics

Being an Aussie, and most importantly a Queenslander, make me super-proud. I feel fortunate to have a wide range of fresh produce available to me at any time – produce that is unrivalled in quality. When you have lived in different countries, you realise what it is to be an Aussie and how lucky we are in this sunburnt land. We have beautiful clean air and water that make our fruit and vegetables taste better than anywhere else I have ever been. The fact that we can eat fish and seafood straight out of our waterways and ocean and know that they are uncontaminated is a blessing.

When you look through all the chapters in this book, you'll see how much I love traditional dishes, whether they're from Australia, Italy or China, and how I like to experiment with them. Just by adding a few different ingredients, you can put a whole new twist on a good, basic recipe. Keep an eye on what you have in your fridge or kitchen cupboard that could help in the transformation. In this chapter, for

*My family loves a celebration.*

example, a can of tuna, shredded leftover chicken (from my Time-poor Roast Chicken) or chopped ham is all it takes to turn Beau's Special Salad into a main meal.

Also, as our family entertains a lot, I believe in making maximum use of my freezer and often double the ingredients and make two of a particular dish at one time. We're all time poor, and this is a super-efficient way of streamlining your cooking and keeping a lot of people happy and well fed in a very short amount of time.



BJ stole this  
recipe from Joe,  
his father-in-law,  
who is Hungarian.

## BIG JOHN'S BEET SALAD

This salad is super tasty and very easy to make. It looks wonderful on a lunch or dinner table when entertaining. The beetroot adds a vibrancy of colour and, as a bonus, it's super healthy. Try to make this salad a few hours before serving as the flavours will develop well. I like to serve it with any barbecued meat. It is also a great accompaniment to seafood.

5 large uncooked organic beetroot  
1 bunch basil  
½ bunch flat-leaf parsley  
¼ cup lemon juice  
2 tablespoons olive oil

Peel the beetroot and wash them well. Wearing rubber gloves to stop your hands turning pink, coarsely grate the beetroot. Place in a serving bowl.

Pick the basil leaves and chop both them and the parsley. Add to the bowl. Pour over the lemon juice and olive oil and toss to combine. Season well with salt and pepper.

**No cooking required**  
**Serves 6–8**

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A food processor with a grating disc is a quick and easy way to grate the beetroot, or use a mandoline with a julienne blade. However, I think it never tastes the same as when Big John grates it with love.

Big John is a Greek friend of mine whom I have known since I was 18. BJ is very passionate about this salad and recommends grating the beets in your underwear to save your clothes from being stained deep purple. I must say I have never tried this method as I don't want to scare the children.





## JAKE'S SPRING ROLLS

Jake is a Filipino friend of mine who can cook just about everything. Among my favourite things that he cooks are his spring rolls and I am lucky to be able to share his recipe here. There is always a container of homemade spring rolls in our freezer. The kids love these as an after-school snack. These days, you can spray them with oil and air-fry them, but you really cannot beat freshly fried spring rolls served with sweet chilli dipping sauce!

500g pork mince  
 1 onion, very finely diced  
 1 carrot, grated  
 1 egg  
 2½ tablespoons light soy sauce or tamari  
 1 teaspoon sesame oil  
 ¼ cup finely chopped green shallots  
 275g packet (20) spring roll pastry wrappers  
 1 tablespoon flour  
 50ml water  
 vegetable oil, for frying

### DIPPING SAUCE

¼ cup sweet chilli sauce  
 ¼ teaspoon sesame oil  
 ¼ teaspoon light soy sauce

Combine the mince, onion, carrot, egg, soy sauce, sesame oil and green shallots in a mixing bowl. Season with pepper and mix well. I like to use my hands to do this as it's the best way to make sure all the ingredients are evenly distributed.

Take the wrappers from the freezer about 20 minutes before you start rolling. Remove them from the packet and cut them in half diagonally to make into piles of triangular wrappers. Cover with a damp tea towel to stop them drying out. Make a slurry with the flour and water and set aside.

Place one triangular wrapper on the bench, pointy end facing you. Spoon a little filling onto the centre, the amount of which is best explained as the length and thickness of your 'pointy finger'. We like nice thin spring rolls. Fold the pointy

end closest to you over the filling first. Dip your fingers in the slurry and trace over the edges, then fold in the edges and roll up the spring roll. The slurry helps to bind the spring roll wrapper together.

Pour oil in a frying pan to a depth of about 2cm and heat over a medium heat. Shallow-fry the spring rolls in batches until golden, turning them often. This will take about 2–3 minutes as the filling must be cooked through. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Combine all the dipping sauce ingredients and serve with spring rolls.

**Cooking 12 minutes**  
**Makes 35–40**

I also like to make spring rolls into a salad by chopping them into bite-sized pieces and serving them on a bed of rocket or iceberg lettuce leaves with the sweet chilli dipping sauce as a dressing.

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.  
Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

## SALMON POKE BOWL

We love a poke bowl. Billy will often make one after uni as a healthy snack, especially after a fresh catch and it's perfect to upsize to feed the family for dinner, or for friends when entertaining. The ingredients are for one serving.

100g sashimi-grade salmon, tuna or kingfish  
1-1½ cups cooked brown or sushi rice  
¼ cup diced Lebanese cucumber  
¼ cup baby spinach leaves  
½ avocado, peeled, cut into cubes  
1 large red radish, sliced into very thin rounds  
1 green shallot, thinly sliced  
1 roasted nori sheet, sliced into strips  
1 tsp each white and black sesame seeds, toasted  
dried chilli flakes  
sprinkle of fried garlic, optional

### MARINADE

1 tablespoon light soy sauce  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
1 tablespoon rice vinegar  
2cm-piece ginger, peeled and finely grated

Dice the salmon into small cubes, about 0.5cm each.  
Prepare all the remaining ingredients.

Fifteen minutes before serving, combine all the marinade ingredients in a chilled glass bowl. Add the salmon to the marinade and stir to make sure every piece is well coated. Cover and place in the fridge for 15 minutes. As there is no acid in the marinade to 'cook' the fish, it can be left longer.

To serve, spoon the rice into a shallow, wide serving bowl. Add the cucumber, spinach, avocado, radish and marinated salmon in piles over the rice. Sprinkle the top with green shallot, nori, sesame seeds and fried garlic if using.

**Cooking 10 minutes**  
**Serves 1**

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If you're making more than one poke bowl, upscale the ingredients and prepare all the individual elements. Put them into separate serving bowls and take to the table so everyone can make their own bowl.



# MY MUST-HAVE PANTRY STAPLES

## In the Cupboard

Agave syrup, for cocktails  
Balsamic vinegar  
Basmati rice  
Chilli flakes  
Dried black peppercorns  
Flour tortillas  
Hoisin sauce  
Honey  
Iodised salt  
Olive oil  
Oyster sauce  
Pasta, dried, a variety  
Peanut oil  
Plain flour  
Rice wine vinegar  
Rock salt  
Self-raising flour  
Sesame oil  
Shaoxing cooking wine  
Spring-roll pastry wrappers  
Sriracha (hot chilli) sauce  
Sweet chilli sauce  
Tabasco sauce  
Tomatoes, canned  
Tuna, canned (Sirena brand)  
White dumpling wrappers  
(gow gee)  
Worcestershire sauce

## In the Fridge

Chicken, organic or free-range  
Cream  
Eggs, organic or free-range  
Fresh chillies  
Fresh coriander  
Fresh parsley  
Fresh thyme  
Mayonnaise, whole-egg  
Milk, full-cream  
Parmesan cheese  
Salted butter  
Unsalted butter  
White wine and champagne

## On the Kitchen Bench

Garlic  
Ginger  
Lemons  
Limes  
Onions  
Oranges  
Tomatoes

## Kitchen Appliances

Cold-press juice extractor  
Food processor  
Handheld electric beaters  
Rice cooker  
Stand mixer  
Stick blender

## Cookware

Cake tins  
Cast-iron dishes  
Cheese grater  
Colander  
Cookie cutters  
Frying pan, heavy-based  
Mandoline slicer  
Metal skewers  
Microplane grater  
Mortar and pestle  
Salad spinner  
Saucepans, large and small  
Sieve and V-shaped sieve  
Storage jars/containers  
Wok

## In the Drawer

Baking paper  
Chopsticks  
Food-preparation gloves  
Glass straws  
Kitchen scissors  
Knives, good quality  
Ladle  
Paper towels  
Pastry brush  
Peeler  
Rubber gloves  
Slotted spoon  
Spatula  
Tea towels  
Tongs  
Whisk  
Wooden spoons

