

FOOD SECURITY IN BAW BAW & LATROBE

*Helping our communities access nutritious foods during the
Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.*

In Australia people are currently worried about food access and availability. This has resulted in an increase in panic buying and less food on the supermarket shelves.

Australia is not in danger of running out of food.

If we all take some simple steps there will be plenty of food available for everyone.



Alternatives to shopping at the supermarket

Major supermarkets are not the only option when food shopping.
You can shop for food locally with small businesses.

Great local places to buy food from include:

- Farmers markets
- Green grocers/ fruit and vegetable shops/ produce markets
- Smaller grocery shops
- Butchers
- Bakeries
- Local food hubs
- Farm gates sales
- Online vegetable box subscriptions



Grow your own

In Australia we grow a lot of fruits and vegetables which are available to buy from a range of shops. But if you are concerned about the ongoing availability of fresh food over the coming months, why not grab a shovel and start growing your own?

Even if you don't have big garden (or any garden at all) you can still grow herbs, tomatoes, beans, salads and other leafy greens such as spinach in pots.

Learn more about growing your own food from the links below:

[Growing from seed - any garden size!](#)

[Growing vegetables without a garden](#)

[Growing vegetables Australia](#)



Community gardens

Community gardens are a great place for growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables. Community gardens are a fun way to get involved in food production, especially if you are unsure about where to start. Please see the list below of the community gardens in Baw Baw and Latrobe that you could join.

**Please note some gardens may be not be operating as normal during this time, so please contact your local garden to get more information.*

Baw Baw

[Growing Together Baw Baw](#)

Jindivick Community Garden, JindiGarden@telstra.com
Drouin Primary School Community Garden, 5625 1666
Trafalgar Community Garden, 0419 113 994
Yarragon Community Garden, 5637 0222



Latrobe Valley

Yinnar Community Garden, yinnarcg@gmail.com
The VRI (Traralgon), info@thevri.com.au
Churchill Community Garden,
churchillcommunitygarden@gmail.com
Moe Community Garden, moemnh@bigpond.com



Emergency Food Relief

Victorians in mandatory self-isolation running short on food and unable to have any dropped-off by friends are now eligible for a "[food and personal care package](#)", with a two-weeks supply of essential food items. People wishing to request a pack should call Victoria's dedicated Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

Please view the links below to learn more about the Emergency Food Relief services available in Baw Baw and Latrobe.

[Emergency Relief Network of Latrobe City – Brochure](#)

[Baw Baw Emergency Food Relief – Brochure](#)

Other useful links include:

[Foodbank Victoria](#)

What to do with excess food?

If you suddenly find yourself with excess food, don't let it go to waste! There are many options available that will ensure you have plenty of food that can be safely stored and used as needed.

Preserving

Preserving excess food is a simple way to extend the storage life of fresh foods such as fruits, vegetables, and even meat.

There are many ways to preserve food including::

- Drying and dehydrating
- Freezing
- Fermentation
- Pickling
- Olive Oil

To learn about the different ways you can preserve food please click the links below:

[Food preservation ideas](#)

[What is fermenting?](#)

[Pickling 101](#)

Bulk Cook-ups

A great option if you have the freezer space is to plan a bulk cook-up. Cooking in bulk allows you to use up any fresh food that you have too much of; creating delicious meals for another time. Bulk cook-ups are great for those days where you don't have time to prepare a decent meal. It saves time (when you're busy - you can just grab some out of the freezer!) and reduces food waste. More great tips and a few simple recipes available in the links below:

[How to freeze foods successfully](#)

[Things to avoid when freezing food](#)

[What foods can I freeze?](#)

[Delicious bulk cooking meal recipes](#)



What to do with excess food?

Donate to a local charity

If you have excess food in the pantry after a particularly big shop, please consider donating it to a local charity struggling to support vulnerable people in our community (see Page 3 for local emergency food relief details). Many local charities are experiencing reduced food donations as Australians stock up on food. This puts pressure on food relief organisations supporting our most vulnerable community members. Do you really need 20 cans of baked beans, 10kg of rice, or a year's supply of pasta? If not, donate to your local emergency food relief provider.

What if I can't find the foods I usually cook with?

You may have trouble finding the foods you usually buy, but there are plenty of alternatives available. Get a little creative and swap your standard ingredients with some delicious alternatives. Below are a few handy tips on foods you can use in place of other ingredients that might be unavailable.

Substitution

White flour: swap with almond flour, coconut flour, spelt flour, rye flour, or quinoa flour.

Eggs: swap with mashed banana, egg replacer (commercial), yoghurt, buttermilk, or 1 tablespoon of chia with 3 tablespoons of water (leave for 5 minutes until it thickens).

Pasta (wheat based): swap with rice pasta or noodles, quinoa pasta or try vegetable noodles, such as zucchini noodles.

Baked beans: you can make your own with almost any kind of beans including; cannellini beans, kidney beans, butter beans or black beans to name just a few.

Canned vegetables: there is no shortage of fresh food available, so ditch the cans and enjoy a variety of fresh produce.

Fresh garlic: swap with minced garlic, garlic powder, garlic flakes or granulated garlic.



Food Handling and Safety

Although the spread of Coronavirus through food is very unlikely, you should always practice good hygiene when handling and preparing food.

Food Safety Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) has provided the following advice when handling and preparing food:

- Wash your hands between handling raw and cooked foods
- Thoroughly cook all meat products
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- Avoid close contact with people showing symptoms of respiratory illness, such as coughing and sneezing
- Avoid preparing food for others if you have symptoms of respiratory illness.

Other useful links:

[Food Safety Standards Australia and New Zealand](#)

[Latest COVID-19 updates](#)

[World Health Organisation](#)



References

1. Food Safety Standards Australia and New Zealand. Novel Coronavirus and Food Safety. 2019. [updated 2020 Mar; cited 2020 Mar 23]. Available from: <https://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/safety/Pages/NOVEL-CORONAVIRUS-AND-FOOD-SAFETY.aspx?state=vic>