

Notes and guidance: Skill levels in food preparation

This list will help you to differentiate between the level of skill required for different dishes.

Remember to take into account the presentation of the dish and to look out for the use of ready-made ingredients, particularly when looking for complex dishes.

This list has been updated to include a greater range of vegetarian/vegan dishes, more nutritious choices and an increased range of dishes from different countries and cultures. The majority of dishes can be adapted for vegetarians/vegans.

Examples of dishes

Savoury dishes

Basic skills (standard components/ready-made ingredients used)	Medium demand	Complex skills (no standard components used)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolognaise • Cheese scones • Cheese and potato pie • Chicken chow mein • Dhal • Falafel • Fajitas (standard component wraps) • French dressing • Jollof rice (basic) • Macaroni cheese • Omelette • Pasta bake (tomato sauce) • Pasta salad • Pesto sauce • Savoury rice • Savoury muffins • Scone base pizza • Stir fry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aubergine bhaji • Bobotie • Bean chilli • Beef/vegetable burgers • Bread rolls • Bulgur vegetable chili • Calzone pizza • Cauliflower cheese • Cheese and onion slice • Cheese and vegetable whirls • Cornbread • Cous cous stuffed peppers • Falafels • Fish goujons • Focaccia • Gnocchi • Halloumi and vegetable curry • Jambalaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aubergine and potato dhansk • Caesar salad (portioning chicken) • Cheese soufflé • Chicken and mushroom pie • Chicken palak with chapatis/dhal/rice • Chilli cornbread pie • Cottage/Shepherd's pie (piped potato) • Curries (Meat/alternative proteins/vegetable preparation/blending spices/sauces) • Deboned/stuffed (jerk/seasoned) chicken and jollof rice • Enchilada (wrap and fillings) • Fish bean pudding (Moin Moin) • Fish cakes • Fish pie (filleted fish) • Flavoured breads • Gougere (with filling and topping)

Basic skills (standard components/ready-made ingredients used)	Medium demand	Complex skills (no standard components used)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabbouleh • Tomato soup • Vegetable soup • Yorkshire pudding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerk chicken and savoury rice • Koftas • Lentil bake • Meatballs • Meat/bean cobbler • Quiche (eg butternut squash) • Pasta carbonara risotto • Pizza (bread base) • Polenta and lentils cakes with roasted vegetables • Pumpkin pie • Puy lentil and rice pilaf • Risotto • Roasted vegetable soup • Roasted vegetable cous cous • Root vegetable and nut crumble • Samosa (dough) • Savoury muffins: courgette/beetroot/parsnip/sweet potato etc • Seitan kebabs • Seitan tacos • Shepherd's pie • Spanish tortilla • Spicy bean casserole • Spinach and ricotta pancakes • Stroganoff • Stew and dumpling • Stuffed pancakes with sauce • Stuffed pizza Medfouna • Sushi • Tabbouleh roasted vegetables/fish • Thai green curry • Vegetable ragout with polenta topping • Vegetable stir fry • Vegetable pakoras 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gnocchi with tomato sauce • Grilled vegetable terrine • Gyozos with wrappers and fillings • Lasagne (fresh pasta etc) • Mediterranean roasted vegetable tart • Moussaka • Pierogi dumplings • Ravioli • Savoury choux bun • Savoury plait (rough puff pastry) • Savoury roulade • Steamed Asian dumplings with sauce • Tagine and flat breads • Traditional Cornish pasties • Vegetable, meat, fish ramen • Vegetable rissoles with Hollandaise • Vegetable strudel • Vegetable Tarte Tatin • Wontons

Sweet products

Basic skills used	Medium demand	Complex skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple crumble • Carrot cakes • Flapjack • Fruit scones • Fruit salad • Fruity gingerbread • Muffins • Rock cakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple pie • Banana cake • Bread and butter pudding • Brownies • Carrot cake and frosting • Cherry clafoutis • Crème caramel • Decorated chilled cheesecake • Fruit and vegetable muffins (blueberry and carrot) • Lemon drizzle cake • Lemon pancakes • Panna cotta • Polenta cake • Swiss roll with filling • Victoria sandwich cake with a finish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple frangipane tart • Baked alaska (fruit ice-cream) • Bakewell tart • Baked fruit cheesecake • Brandy snap baskets and filling • Brioche rolls • Chelsea buns • Chocolate roulade • Decorated gelatin cheesecake • Fruit tarts with crème patisserie • Lemon curd and strawberry soufflé • Lemon tart • Pavlova (aqua faba) with a fruit coulis • Profiteroles with filling and topping • Fruit roulade • Queen of puddings • Strudel • Sweet potato pudding with custard • Swiss roll with lemon curd/jam

Differentiating food preparation skills

The following tables indicate the level of demand and skills associated with some practical dishes. The level of finish and skill would also need to be considered in the assessment. No ready-made ingredients should be used in the making of complex skilled dishes. Most dishes can be adapted for vegetarians/vegans.

Basic	Medium demand	Complex
Apple pie: Using ready-made pastry)	Apple pie: Using a shortcrust pastry with a lattice topping	French apple tart: Make a sweet pastry
Basic meringues: Eggs as a raising agent, spooned onto baking trays	Shaped meringues: Eggs as a raising agent/piped	Pavlova: Eggs as a raising agent – piped and shaped meringue of a pre-determined shape and size
Vegan meringues made with aqua faba, spooned and simply shaped	Vegan meringues made with aqua faba, piped and filled and presented with simple decoration or fruit coulis	Vegan pavlova made with aqua faba, piped filled and decorated with high level of finish and decoration
Basic lemon cheesecake: Biscuit base, chilled lemon filling	Chilled lemon flan: Biscuit base, filling and decoration	Tarte au citron: Using a pastry case, baking blind and lemon filling
Bean burgers/falafel: shaping, vegetable preparation	Bean burger with homemade bread bun: bread making, forming and shaping	Bean burger with homemade bread bun: bread making, forming and shaping and own made mayonnaise
Breaded fish: Using pre-filleted fish	Breaded fish goujons: Removing skin from fish	Fish pie: Fillet a fish, sauce making, mashed potato topping
Bread rolls: Using a packet mix/shaping	Bread rolls: Handmade dough/shaping/finish	Bread plait: Flavoured, using a handmade dough/shaping eg flavoured bread plait
Bruschetta with ready-made ciabatta and simple topping of choice eg tomato	Homemade bruschetta with tomatoes and other toppings of choice	Homemade bruschetta with range of different toppings and homemade balsamic glaze or dressing.
Burrito: Use ready-made wraps, simple chilli filling	Enchilada: Ready-made wrap, chilli filling and cheese sauce topping	Enchilada: Make own wraps, chilli and sauce topping
Carrot or beetroot muffins	Carrot or beetroot tray bake or cake with healthier topping and some decoration	Layered carrot or beetroot cake with reduced fat/sugar quark topping and handmade decorations
Cheese and onion rolls: Packet pastry	Cheese and onion rolls: Rough puff pastry	Cheese and onion plait: Rough puff/flaky pastry with accurate finish

Basic	Medium demand	Complex
Cheese and tomato pizza	Calzone with roasted vegetables	Homemade pizza, tomato sauce, vegetable toppings, homemade ricotta cheese, salad and dressing of choice
Chicken curry: Ready chopped chicken pieces in a curry sauce	Chicken curry: Skinning chicken portions and chopping into even pieces, homemade sauce	Chicken curry: Jointing a chicken and preparing the pieces appropriately into even sizes, sauce making and vegetable preparation
Chicken pie: Using ready cooked chicken, packet sauce and shortcrust pastry	Chicken pie: Using all in one sauce and shortcrust pastry	Chicken pie: Using roux sauce and homemade rough puff pastry
Cottage pie: Mashed potato, prepared filling.	Cottage pie: Use fresh potato, prepare all fillings	Cottage pie: Prepare fresh potato, filling, piping, gratin topping
Fish cakes: Using canned fish to make fishcakes	Fish cakes: Made with fish that the skin needs removing and homemade breadcrumbs	Fish cakes: Made using a whole fish that has been filleted and using homemade breadcrumbs, accurately shaped
Fish curry: Pre-filleted fish	Fish curry: Pre-filleted fish and rice and own flat bread	Fish curry: Fillet own fish, flavoured rice and stuffed naan
Gyozas or dumplings with ready-made wrappers, filling and dipping sauce of choice	Gyozas or dumplings with homemade vegetarian filling and dipping sauce of choice	Gyozas or dumplings with homemade wrappers, vegetarian filling eg seitan and dipping sauce of choice
Hummus with ready-made pitta breads	Homemade flavoured hummus with homemade pitta breads or flatbreads	Middle Eastern meze platter of choice eg homemade hummus, tzatziki, falafels, baba ghanoush, dolmade's, marinated kebabs and homemade pitas and flatbreads
Jollof rice made with ready-made tomato sauce/stock and plantain	Jollof rice/Caribbean rice and peas with pre-jointed chicken/meat, eg curried goat meat, oxtail, etc	Deboned/stuffed chicken served with jollof rice (Brunoise/julienne vegetables)
Mediterranean tart with cheese and tomatoes made with ready-made filo pastry	Mediterranean tart with homemade tomato sauce, roasted vegetables	Mediterranean tart with homemade pastry, homemade sauce, roasted vegetables and mozzarella cheese
Pasta in tomato sauce: Ready-made pasta	Tagliatelle: Making pasta/cream sauce	Ravioli: Making pasta, shaping and filling and tomato sauce
Pasta and tomato sauce	Homemade pasta and sauce of choice	Vegetarian lasagne with flavoured pastas using beetroot and spinach. Homemade ravioli or tortellini with homemade sauce and ricotta or mozzarella cheese.

Basic	Medium demand	Complex
Pasta salad using dried pasta, cooked chicken, appropriate vegetables and mayonnaise	Pasta salad using dried pasta, chicken cooked from raw, homemade dressing	Pasta salad using homemade pasta, chicken cooked from raw, precision cut vegetables and a homemade emulsion eg mayonnaise
Parsley sauce: Starch based sauce using a packet mix	Cheese sauce: Starch based sauce using the roux method	Infused velouté sauce: Starch based sauce using the roux
Plum and blackberry pie: Using ready-made shortcrust pastry	Plum and blackberry pie: Make shortcrust pastry and stewed plums	Plum and blackberry jalousie: Made using own flaky pastry, stewed plums and homemade custard
Pizza: Use of a packet mix bread to make a dough	Bread rolls: Creating a yeast dough using the chosen yeast appropriately to make evenly sized bread rolls	Chelsea bun: Making a sweet yeast dough filling, shaping and glazing
Samosa, empanadas or spring rolls with ready-made filo pastry	Samosas, empanadas or spring rolls with filo pastry and vegetarian filling.	Samosas, empanadas or spring rolls with homemade filo pastry with fish, chicken or paneer filling and served with homemade mango or hoisin sauce
Soup with ready-made stock	Homemade spiced butternut squash or parsnip soup	Minestrone soup with homemade pasta shapes, stock and served with homemade bread
Spaghetti bolognese: Ready-made pasta, jar of tomato sauce, chopping vegetables	Tagliatelle: Making pasta with a prepared pasta sauce	Lasagne: Making own pasta, vegetable sauce and roux sauce
Spanish omelette: Use of protein to set mixtures	Quiche Lorraine: Use of protein to set mixtures/shortcrust pastry	Mini quiche with a variety of fillings: Use of protein to set mixtures/shortcrust pastry
Stir fry: Using prepared chicken/vegetable preparation	Chicken and pasta bake: All-in-one sauce, chopping chicken/ vegetable preparation	Chicken and pasta bake: Chicken jointed, roux sauce, shortcrust pastry/pasta made
Sushi rolls	Sushi rolls with vegetable or fish filling.	Assortment of vegetable, fish or meat sushi served with a bento box platter and homemade vegetable accompaniments
Swiss roll – whisked sponge with satisfactory results	Swiss roll: Rolled well, limited cracking	Swiss roll: Rolled well, limited cracking, own made jam or lemon curd
Swiss roll with ready-made jam filling	Homemade Swiss roll with reduced fat yogurt and fresh fruit filling	Mango and passion fruit roulade with homemade yogurt and fruit coulis

Basic	Medium demand	Complex
Vegetable burgers or falafels with ready-made bread rolls and dips	Homemade veggie burgers with homemade bread rolls and salad	Homemade veggie burgers with homemade seitan, bread rolls, sweet potato wedges, salad accompaniments and homemade dips and vegan mayonnaise made with aquafaba.
Vegetable soup: roughly chopping vegetables	Vegetable stir fry: Batons and sliced vegetables with a simple sauce	Vegetable stir fry: Julienne and batons prepared with precision and homemade sauce
Vegetable ramen served with ready-made noodles	Vegetable, meat, fish or egg ramen served with homemade noodles	Vegetable, meat, fish or egg ramen served with homemade noodles with jointed chicken, filleted fish, or homemade seitan or tofu
Vegetable, fish or chicken biriyani or curry served with boiled rice and a ready-made sauce	Vegetable, fish or chicken biryani or curry with marinade, homemade sauce and served with rice or naan	Vegetable, fish or chicken biryani or curry with jointed chicken, filleted fish or homemade paneer. Served with a naan, flavoured bread or roti of choice.
Yorkshire pudding: Making a simple batter	Making choux pastry	Gougere with filling and topping: Making choux pastry