

# Keep It Bag

Recipes & Guidelines



PROJECT 90 BY 2030

[www.90by2030.org.za](http://www.90by2030.org.za)



## How does it work?

The Keep It Bag traps heat inside the bag so that your food continues to cook in the pot after you take the pot off the stove. The Keep It Bag has great energy saving potential – up to 75% of your cooking energy. Now you can conveniently slow cook your food with minimal energy, while you get on with other things.

## How do I use it?

Bring your food to the boil on the stove, in a pot with a tight fitting lid. Once boiling, place the pot inside the bag and cover. Boiling time and duration in the bag will depend on what you are cooking.

## What can I cook in it?

A Keep It Bag is perfect for foods with a high water content such as soups, stews, rice and pasta as well as foods that need a longer cooking time like beans, grains and brown rice. A few particularly long-cooking foods, such as garbanzo beans, may need re-boiling part-way through the cooking process.

Raise your bread and leave your yoghurt or tempeh in the Keep It Bag to incubate. Just place a container of hot water in the bag to keep the temperature up.

Potatoes and root vegetables can be cooked in a Keep It Bag in their skins to retain their flavour. Bring them to a boil in a pot full of water and place quickly in the Keep It Bag for about twice as long as you would normally cook them. They may be left in the bag all day without overcooking and can be more easily peeled after cooking.

## Food Safety Guidelines:

Leftover foods should be refrigerated immediately and not left in a Keep It Bag.



## Cooking Times (approximate)

Food	Simmering time	Keep It Bag time
Quinoa	5 minutes	1½ hours
Millet	5 minutes	1 hour
Polenta	1 minute	1½ hours
White Maize Meal	1 minute	1½ hours
Pasta	5 minutes	15 minutes
White Rice	5 minutes	1 – 2 hours
Brown Rice	10 – 15 minutes	2 hours
Potatoes (whole)	5 – 10 minutes	1 – 4 hours
Soups and Stocks	10 – 15 minutes	2 – 3 hours
Split Peas	10 minutes	2 hours
Green Lentils	10 minutes	3 – 4 hours
Dried Beans, soaked	10 – 15 minutes	3 – 4 hours
Vegetable Stew	15 minutes	1 hour
Fish	5 minutes	1 hour
Chicken Stew/Roast	6 minutes	2 – 3 hours
Lamb Stew/Roast	10 minutes	2 – 4 hours
Beef Stew/Roast	10 – 15 minutes	3 – 6 hours

## General Cooking Guidelines

- Any cooking pot can be used, as long as it can fit comfortably into the bag.
- Use a small pot for a small amount of food (not a large pot for a small amount of food). The Keep It Bag will not work as well if there are air spaces inside the pot.
- Very small pots may need extra padding in the bag – it must be snug to retain the heat.
- Use a towel or newspaper to line the inside of the bag. This prevents the fabric on the inside from burning and from general wear and tear over time.
- Try not to open your Keep It Bag during the cooking process. Heat will escape so you'll need to reheat the food before putting it back in the Keep It Bag.

When cooking anything like meat for a roast or a whole chicken, the liquid around it can boil before the meat has reached the same temperature. Make sure the liquid covers the meat and it has come to a boil. The meat must be covered with liquid! The cooking time ranges from 3-6 hours, or all day. For "roasting" you can place your meat in an oven bag or Bain Marie and follow these guidelines:

1. Season and brown your meat.
2. Place chicken or other joint of meat in oven bag with selected spices.
3. Close and submerge in a pot of water. The bag should be left with the opening protruding out from under the lid. (Bain Marie should be covered with its lid.)
4. Boil for 10 minutes with lid on.
5. Transfer to Keep It Bag.
6. Leave for 2 – 6 hours.

## Care Instructions:

Line the inside of your Keep It Bag with a towel to prevent wear and tear and burning. Wash your bag in cold water in the washing machine or by hand and allow to air dry.

# Recipes

## Key

T: tablespoon

t: teaspoon

c: cup



## Boiled Eggs

- To boil one egg, pour boiling water over it to cover it.
- Put the pot in the Keep It Bag for 5 minutes or longer if you prefer a hard-boiled egg.
- To boil two eggs you will need twice as much boiling water, and for three eggs, three times as much to get the same results.

## Yoghurt

- Heat a litre of full cream milk on the stove and when it is 'baby bottle warm' put a cup of full cream yoghurt (about 250mL) from the store in it. Don't stir it.
- Then put the mixture in the Keep It Bag and let it sit overnight.
- Your yoghurt will be ready in the morning.
- You can save and store a cup of the yoghurt, which you can use as the starter culture for your next batch of yoghurt.
- You can add jam or other fruit to the yoghurt to flavour it.
- The yoghurt will thicken in the refrigerator.



# Soups

## Tomato Soup with Croutons

Serves 6, Prep time 20 minutes plus soaking, Keep It Bag time 2 hours

4T olive oil  
 1L chicken or vegetable stock  
 1 onion, chopped  
 salt and pepper  
 3 garlic cloves, crushed  
 225g stale bread, crusts removed, diced or corn chips  
 800g fresh flavoursome tomatoes, blanched  
 a few basil leaves, chopped  
 skinned and chopped (or use canned)

1. Heat half the oil in a large pot, add the onion and garlic and fry gently for 5 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Gradually stir in the stock.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste and bring to the boil for 5 minutes.
5. Transfer to the Keep It Bag for 2 hours.
6. To make the croutons, heat the remaining oil in a pan, add the bread cubes and fry, turning, until crisp and golden. Skip this step if you're using corn chips.
7. Add freshly chopped basil and croutons or corn chips before serving.

## Gazpacho (cold, summer soup)

Serves 6, Prep time 20 minutes plus refrigeration time

This is a great soup to prepare for a picnic. Refrigerate and transfer to your Keep It Bag. Because of its insulating properties, the Keep It Bag can also be used for keeping food and beverages cold for 3 - 4 hours.

2kg ripe tomatoes  
 2T olive oil  
 1 medium red onion, finely diced  
 1T vegetable oil  
 1 large carrot, finely diced  
 2 garlic cloves, crushed  
 1 green bell pepper, finely diced  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 2 sticks celery, finely diced  
 juice of ½ lemon  
 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced  
 pita bread, to serve  
 ½ bunch flat leaf parsley, chopped

1. Peel and coarsely chop the tomatoes.
2. Reserve a little of the diced vegetables to serve on the side of the soup.
3. Place the tomatoes and remaining diced vegetables, parsley, both oils, garlic, salt and pepper into a blender, 1 cup at a time, and blend until smooth.
4. Pour into a glass bowl and refrigerate until chilled.
5. Stir in the lemon juice.
6. Keep chilled in your Keep It Bag for 3 – 4 hours before serving with the diced vegetables and pita bread.

## South African Butternut Soup

Serves 4 -5, Prep time 20 minutes, Keep It Bag time 2 – 3 hours

1 medium sized butternut, peeled, deseeded and chopped into pieces (smaller pieces cook faster)  
 1 garlic clove, minced  
 1t ginger, grated  
 2 onions, peeled and finely chopped  
 4c vegetable stock  
 2T olive oil

1. Slow cook onions in olive oil until transparent (clear), for about 10 – 12 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and ginger and gently stir through the onions.
3. Add the butternut and coat with the onion mixture. Cook with the lid on for 2 minutes.
4. Add the vegetable stock, salt and pepper to taste. The liquid should cover the butternut. Bring to the boil with the lid on.
5. Transfer to your lined Keep It Bag, close and leave for 2 – 4 hours.

This soup is best enjoyed with a smooth texture - use a stick blender or try a potato masher during loadshedding. For added flavour and nourishment, add a fresh chilli salsa of chopped tomato, onion, chilli, and fresh coriander. For a more child-friendly option, add Greek yoghurt and a sprinkle of nutmeg.



# Sauces

## Tomato Sauce with a Twist

Makes about 8 cups, Prep time 15 minutes, Keep It Bag time 1-2 hours

1T olive oil  
juice of ½ lemon  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
2T chopped flat leaf parsley  
2 brown onions, diced  
2T chopped coriander  
4 x 400g cans crushed tomatoes  
salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
1T freshly ground cumin seeds

1. Heat the olive oil and fry the garlic and onions until soft.
2. Add the tomatoes, cumin and lemon juice and simmer, lid on for 5 minutes.
3. Quickly stir through the parsley and coriander, season, replace lid, leave on stove for 2 minutes and transfer to Keep It Bag for 1½ - 2 hours.
4. Remove pot from the Keep It Bag, once the mixture is cooled, store in refrigerator for up to 7 days or freeze.

This sauce is great with seafood, especially sardines and mussels. It makes an excellent base for pasta marinara sauce.

## Creamy Vegetable Sauce

Serves 4, Prep time 15 minutes, Keep It Bag time ½ – 1 hour

250mL coconut oil or olive oil  
1T ground turmeric  
4 garlic cloves, crushed  
1T freshly ground coriander seeds  
4 onions, diced  
1T finely chopped red chilli  
1c desiccated coconut  
1½ L hot water  
1T fresh lime zest  
2 x 200mL coconut cream  
2 cinnamon sticks  
2T rice flour  
2T black mustard seeds  
1 bunch coriander, chopped

1. Heat oil, fry the garlic, onions, coconut, lime zest, cinnamon and mustard seeds until the onions are soft.
2. Add turmeric, ground coriander, chilli and gently fry for a few minutes until fragrant.
3. Add water and coconut cream, bring to the boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes, lid on.
5. Stir in rice flour to thicken.
6. Transfer to Keep It Bag for ½ hour to 1 hour for flavours to develop.
7. Stir in fresh coriander before serving.



# Vegetables

## White Bean Chakalaka with Creamy Polenta (Yellow Maize Meal)

Serves 4 – 5, Prep time 20 minutes, plus soaking, Keep It Bag time 5 hours

1 can Chakalaka Mix  
1t salt  
2 onions  
1 clove garlic  
3 sweet peppers (Red, Yellow and Green)  
1t curry powder (your favourite)  
2c haricot beans, soaked overnight and pre-cooked in a Keep It Bag  
1 finger-sized freshly grated ginger (optional)

For the Creamy Polenta/Mielie Meal:

2c polenta or mielie meal  
4c water  
½t salt  
4T butter or olive oil

### Tips and Suggestions:

Toasted coconut is a delicious sprinkle on top of this meal.  
Sprinkle with one or a combination of freshly chopped herbs like coriander, mint or parsley.  
For a richer colour and flavour, add a can of tomato paste to the gravy mix.

- Bean Preparation:**  
Soak the beans, for no less than 8 hours - 2 cups of beans would need 10 cups of water, for the soaking process (2 cups of dry beans will yield about 5 cups of cooked). Drain off soaking water and give the beans a good rinse. Place in the pot and cover with water with a little extra on top, place on a medium to high heat and bring to the boil. Line your Keep It Bag with a towel, and place your pot in there for 3 – 4 hours.
- Chakalaka Gravy:**  
Peel and chop the onions. Gently sweat on a low heat for about 12 minutes until soft, stirring from time to time. While the onions are cooking, slice the peppers in half and remove the seeds, cut into small cubes and stir through the softened onions. Cook for 2 minutes then add garlic, ginger and spice. Stir through and add a can of Chakalaka as well as the cooked beans. Season with salt and bring to a gentle boil. Line your Keep It Bag with a towel and allow to rest for ½ an hour while you prepare the Polenta.
- Creamy Polenta/Mielie Meal:**  
Bring 4 cups of water to the boil. Add the salt and butter. Bring down to a low heat, add the polenta and stir continuously for 2 minutes. Remove Chakalaka pot from the Keep It Bag and pour hot contents over the polenta/mielie meal mixture. Return the new mixture to the Keep It Bag for 1½ hours before serving.

## Spinach and Ricotta Lasagne

Serves 6, Prep time 25 minutes, Keep It Bag time 3 - 4 hours

2 x 200g packs of spinach  
6 lasagne sheets  
1c ricotta cheese  
2T olive oil  
3c grated Parmesan  
3c Tomato Sauce with a Twist (page 7)  
salt and pepper  
1½ cups grated Mozzarella cheese

- In a bowl, mix together the spinach, ricotta, and ½ cup of the Parmesan. In a second bowl, mix together the Tomato Sauce with a Twist and a ½ cup water.
- Spread ¾ cup of the Tomato Sauce mixture in the bottom of a 3 – 4L pot. Top with 2 lasagne sheets (breaking to fit), ¾ cup of the remaining Tomato Sauce with a Twist, half the spinach mixture, and ½ cup of the mozzarella; repeat. Top with the remaining sheets and tomato mixture.
- Cover and heat the pot up on low to bubbling.
- Add the remaining Mozzarella. Sprinkle with Parmesan, cover to heat up the lid.
- Transfer the pot to the Keep It Bag, leave for about 4 hours.
- Serve with a salad.



# Meat Dishes

## Fragrant Chicken Stew

Serves 4 - 6, Prep time 20 minutes, Keep It Bag time 2 hours

6 trimmed chicken breasts weighing about 1,5kg  
pinch of salt  
75g plain flour  
¼t black pepper  
60g butter  
¼t ground cardamom seeds  
¼t ground cinnamon  
15 small onions, peeled  
3T lemon juice  
5T pine nuts  
parsley sprigs, to garnish  
1L chicken stock  
white rice, to serve

1. Rinse the chicken breasts and pat dry. Cut each breast into 3 pieces and dip them in the flour. Melt butter in a pot, and fry the chicken pieces over a moderate heat until brown on both sides. Remove from pot.
2. Fry the whole onions in the same pot until golden brown. Remove onions, then fry the pine nuts until golden brown. Remove pine nuts and drain on absorbent paper. Add the chicken stock, salt, pepper, cardomom and cinnamon to the pot, stirring continuously for 2 minutes.
3. Place the chicken and onions in the pot and bring to a boil with the lid on.
4. Transfer to the Keep It Bag, cover, and leave for 2 hours.
5. Before serving, stir in the lemon juice, cover and leave for 5 minutes. Garnish with the fried pine nuts and parsley sprigs before serving. Best served with Basmati rice.

## Honeyed Lamb with Dried Fruit and Almonds

Serves 4, Prep time 20 minutes plus 4 hour marinating time, Keep It Bag time 2 hours

3 white onions  
2T paprika  
juice of 2 oranges  
1t saffron threads  
125mL honey  
1T finely grated ginger  
1T ground cinnamon  
3 bay leaves  
8 prunes, pitted  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
75g roasted blanched almonds  
125mL olive oil  
sesame seeds, to garnish  
8 lamb forequarter (or neck) chops  
2 hard-boiled eggs, quartered

1. Chop one of the onions and cut the other two into rings.
2. Combine the chopped onion with the paprika, saffron, ginger, bay leaves, salt and pepper and olive oil.
3. Cut the chops in half and coat with this mixture. Leave for 4 hours or overnight if possible.
4. Brown chops in a pot on medium heat. Add water to cover and bring to the boil.
5. Add the other 2 onions, orange juice, honey and cinnamon. Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.
6. Transfer to a Keep It Bag and leave for 2 - 4 hours.
7. Garnish with prunes, almonds, sesame seeds and boiled eggs.

## Winelands Marinated Beef

Serves 6 - 8, Prep time 25 - 30 minutes, plus marinating, Keep It Bag time 4 -6 hours

300mL red wine vinegar  
salt and pepper  
1 garlic clove, chopped  
1 x 3,5kg joint topside or top rump, fat removed, tied in neat shape  
2 cloves  
75g butter  
pinch cinnamon  
1 large onion, chopped  
2 carrots, chopped  
2 sticks celery, chopped  
300mL dry white wine  
300mL sherry or port  
sprig each of rosemary and thyme

1. Mix together the vinegar, garlic, cloves, cinnamon, carrots, celery and herbs and season well.
2. Place the meat in a deep dish and pour over the marinade.
3. Cover and refrigerate for 12 hours, turning the meat frequently.
4. Drain the meat and vegetables and dry them on absorbent kitchen paper. Discard the liquid.
5. Heat the butter and gently cook the onion, celery and carrots for 5 minutes. Remove and set aside.
6. Add the meat to the pot and brown well on all sides.
7. Return the vegetables to the pot with the wine and sherry/port, and salt and pepper to taste. You may need a bit more water to barely cover the meat.
8. Cover the pot and let simmer until heated through (10 minutes on medium).
9. Transfer to your Keep It Bag and leave for 4 - 6 hours.
10. Serve with creamy polenta.

# Rice and Starches

## Plain Macaroni, Spaghetti and Noodles

A pack of macaroni, spaghetti or noodles  
salt to taste  
3½c water

Bring water to a boil.  
Put the pasta or noodles in the pot and add a touch of salt.  
Transfer to the Keep It Bag and leave it there for 15 minutes. If you leave it any longer it will go soggy.

## Polenta (yellow maize) and Mielie Meal (white maize)

Serves 4, Prep time 10 minutes, Keep It Bag time 1½ hours

2c polenta or mielie meal  
4c water  
½t salt  
4T butter or olive oil

1. Bring 4 cups of water to the boil.
2. Add the salt and butter.
3. Bring down to a low heat and add the polenta/mielie meal and stir continuously for 2 minutes until thickened.
4. Replace lid and simmer on low heat for a minute or two.
5. Transfer to Keep It Bag. Leave for 1½ hours.



## Wheat Bread

Equipment:

A pot to contain the bread jars.  
A round cooling rack that comfortably fits in your pot (the kind used for baking). The jars will rest on the rack inside the pot. If you have a canning set you can use the canning rack to rest the jars on in your pot.

For the bread containers:

Use flour shaker containers or glass jars.  
You can also recycled cans from tinned food, but these tend to rust after a few uses.  
Make sure the bread jar height is almost as high as the pot they will be contained in.

1T yeast  
2T sugar  
2c very warm water  
1½t salt  
2T oil  
4c flour (1½c wheat)

Method:

1. Mix ingredients thoroughly until soft and smooth. Rise for 25 minutes until the dough doubles in size. Punch down. Makes two loaves.
2. Place the round cooling rack inside the big pot. The purpose of the rack is to create a barrier between the bread jars and the bottom of your pot to prevent direct contact with heat.
3. Grease the jars.
4. Divide the raised and punched down dough into balls that will fill about ¼ of each jar.

5. Cover the jars with greased foil and seal with rubber bands.
6. Place the jars in the pot and put about 2 cups of very warm water in the pot. Cover pot with the lid and leave to rise until dough doubles in size.
7. The bread should have risen to just past the halfway mark of your jars. Now add very warm water to the pot - to about the halfway mark of the jars.
8. Bring the water in the pot to a boil for 10 minutes with the lid on.
9. Transfer the pot to your lined Keep It Bag and nest it there for 2 – 4 hours.
10. The bread has no crust and is quite soft. You may need a sharp knife to ease it out of the containers.

## Plain Basmati Rice

400g basmati rice  
750mL water  
1t salt  
knob of butter (optional)

1. Wash the rice thoroughly and drain in a sieve.
2. Place it in the appropriately-sized pot for the amount of water.
3. Pour in the water, add salt and butter, cover and bring to the boil over high heat.
4. Remove from heat and place in the Keep It Bag for a ½ hour to an hour. You can leave it in the bag until needed.

# Desserts

## Fresh Figs with Honey and Wine

Serves 6, Prep Time 20 minutes, Keep It Bag time ½ hour

450mL dry white wine  
8 whole cloves  
75g clear honey  
450g fresh figs  
50g castor sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
1 small orange  
fresh mint or bay leaves to decorate

For the cream:  
300mL double cream  
1 vanilla pod  
1t castor sugar

1. Put the wine, honey and sugar in a heavy-based saucepan and heat gently until the sugar dissolves.
2. Stud the orange with the cloves and add to the syrup with the figs and cinnamon.
3. Cover and bring to a simmer, then transfer to a Keep It Bag for 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, put 150mL of the cream in a small saucepan with the vanilla pod.
5. Bring almost to the boil, then leave to cool and infuse for 30 minutes.
6. Remove the figs from the Keep It Bag and leave to cool.
7. Remove the vanilla pod from the cream and pour the vanilla infused cream into a bowl.
8. Add the remaining cream and sugar, whip lightly.
9. Transfer figs to a serving dish, garnish with fresh mint or bay leaves and serve with the cream.



Image courtesy – <http://famebiography.net/figs/>

Choose figs that are plump and firm,  
and use quickly as they don't store well.

## Blueberry and Pear Crumble

Serves 4, Prep time 15 minutes, Keep It Bag time 20 minutes

5 pears  
2T arrowroot  
1T mixed spice  
½c almond meal  
4T lemon juice  
10 dates  
1T honey  
1T water  
300g blueberries  
½c walnuts, chopped

1. Peel pears, remove core and pips and slice.
2. Heat a medium-sized pot to low-medium heat, add pear slices, mixed spice, lemon juice and honey.
3. Add arrowroot and stir until pears are coated. Add blueberries and stir through. Cover, then transfer to a Keep It Bag for 20 minutes.
4. In the meantime place the almond meal in a food processor, turn onto medium high and add dates and water. Blend until well combined.
5. Place the crumble into a bowl and add the walnuts.
6. Top the blueberry and pear crumble with the almond mixture.

## Coconut and Lime Custard

Serves 4, Prep Time 15 minutes, Keep It Bag time 2 – 3 hours

1c coconut milk  
2T lime juice  
½c water  
1t vanilla essence or paste  
1T honey  
4 eggs  
1 lime, peel finely grated  
¼c shredded coconut, toasted

1. Place coconut milk, water, honey, grated lime and lime juice in a saucepan and simmer over medium heat for 1 minute.
2. In a bowl, beat eggs, add slowly to hot coconut mixture, whisking quickly until combined and a smooth texture has formed. Stir in vanilla essence or paste.
3. Place mixture into 4 individual serving size glass jars and screw the lids on.
4. Pour a little water into a pot that will hold the jars, and boil until the pot and lid are heated.
5. Carefully place the glass jars in the pot –the jars should fit snugly in the pot.
6. Pour boiling water into the pot to come halfway up the sides of the jars.
7. Put the lid on the pot and transfer the pot quickly to the Keep It Bag.
8. Let it stand for 2 – 3 hours or until set.
9. Cool to room temperature then place the jars in the fridge to cool for 6 hours or overnight.
10. Serve with toasted coconut sprinkled on top.

## About the Keep It Bag Initiative

Keep It Bag is an initiative of Project 90 by 2030 - a change-focused environmental organisation that aims to inspire and mobilise a low-carbon generation.

We envision a world that sustains humanity, where people are valued and earth systems are preserved.

In bringing about change, one of our focus areas is building partnerships with communities – to co-create vibrant and sustainable communities. Project 90 by 2030 has been working with communities across South Africa over the past five years. Our community engagement work involves capacity building on alternative, low-tech and affordable clean energy solutions.

To find out how you can get involved, visit our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Keepitbag>

## Good for you and good for the planet

Keep It Bag is an environmentally friendly, heat retention bag for cooking. Slow cook your food with minimal fuel. It is made in Cape Town with locally-sourced materials and filled with fibre from recycled plastic material as insulation. By using recycled insulation we are reducing waste to landfill. When you use a Keep It Bag, you can achieve savings of up to 75% of the cooking energy for every meal cooked.

By purchasing a Keep It Bag, you have taken steps to reduce your personal carbon footprint.

## Helping communities save energy while saving the planet

The Keep It Bag initiative offers a low-cost, low-tech, clean energy solution to improve energy efficiency. It is used as part of a mix of customised solutions to address energy poverty in the marginalised communities that Project 90 by 2030 works with.

Proceeds from the purchase of Keep It Bags will go towards Project 90 by 2030's community engagement work; supporting the communities that we work with to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on fossil fueled-energy.

