



Cook Like a Local

A travel food playbook for self-catering, road trips, and Airbnb kitchens

Made from our conversation about holidays, snacks, and cooking simply with local ingredients.

How to Build an Epic Snack Bag

- **Start with a cool bag or rucksack** – add freezer packs or frozen water bottles (they'll keep things cool, then become drinks later).
 - **Fresh & crunchy:** carrot sticks, cucumber slices, pepper strips, grapes, pre-peeled oranges.
 - **Protein boost:** pots of Greek yogurt with fruit/seeds, hummus with veg sticks, boiled eggs, baked falafel.
 - **Slow energy:** bags of plain or lightly salted nuts/seeds, homemade granola bars, savoury muffins or veg scones (frozen/defrosted en route).
 - **Sweet but steady:** fresh fruit, a little dark chocolate, a drizzle of honey in yogurt pots if needed.
 - **Avoid:** service-station impulse buys (crisps, sweets, overly seasoned nuts) – they spike energy and moods, then crash.
 - **Pro tip:** pack everything in small tubs/bags so it's easy to hand out, especially if you're travelling with kids.
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The Local-Cooking Game Plan

- **Shop like a local:** Hit the nearest market/supermarket and buy what the region does best (e.g., tomatoes, feta, olives and olive oil in Greece; beans, duck/chicken, lardons, bread in France).
- **One-pan mindset:** Assume a basic kitchen. Favour tray-bakes, stews, grills, big salads, and no-cook dips.
- **Cook once, eat twice:** Make dinners large enough to feed the next day.
- **Season simply:** Salt, pepper, lemon, olive oil, garlic, herbs. If the base ingredients are great, you don't need much else.



- **Keep snacks real:** Nuts/seeds, fruit, yogurt pots, simple bakes. Save the service-station splurge.
- **Use what's there:** If there's a **barbecue**, plan at least one grill night with a big salad & bread.

Market-Day Checklist (Pack this in your notes app)

Core staples

- Extra-virgin olive oil, lemons, garlic, onions
- Fresh herbs (oregano, mint, thyme), dried oregano
- Seasonal veg for salads & grilling
- Good bread (baguette, sourdough, village loaf)

Regional highlights

- **Greece:** tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, red onion, Kalamata olives, feta, Greek yogurt, watermelon, local fish.
- **France:** jarred/canned white beans (haricots/flagelots/butter beans), chicken thighs/duck confit/sausages, lardons, herbes de Provence, tomatoes/purée.

Snack basket

- Mixed nuts & seeds (plain or lightly salted), fruit (grapes, apples, pre-peeled oranges in a bag), carrot/pepper/cucumber sticks, hummus, full-fat Greek yogurt, oats, honey/maple, dark chocolate.

Airbnb add-ons (nice-to-have)

- Foil, a cheap oven tray if none provided, matches/charcoal if there's a BBQ.

Quick Local Classics

1) Greek Salad (Horiatiki)

Serves 4 - 4 ripe tomatoes, chunky wedges

- 1 large cucumber, halved lengthways & sliced
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- A handful Kalamata olives
- 150–200 g feta (a block, not crumbled)
- 2–3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1–2 tsp red wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tsp dried oregano, sea salt & black pepper

Method

1. Toss tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, onion and olives with oil, vinegar/lemon, salt,

pepper.

2. Top with a slab of feta; sprinkle with oregano and a last drizzle of oil.

3. Serve with good bread.

2) Tzatziki (No-Cook Dip)

Makes ~2 cups - 400 g full-fat Greek yogurt

- ½ large cucumber, grated & **squeezed dry**

- 1–2 garlic cloves, finely grated

- 2 tbsp olive oil

- 1 tbsp lemon juice

- 1–2 tbsp chopped fresh mint (or dill)

- Salt & pepper

Method

Mix everything, salt to taste, chill 20+ minutes. Spoon alongside grilled meats/fish, veg sticks, or on toast.

3) French(-ish) One-Pan Cassoulet Tray-Bake

Easy, hearty, and great next day

Serves 4–6

- 6 bone-in chicken thighs **or** 6–8 good sausages (or 2 confit duck legs if you find them)

- 1 jar/can (660–750 g) white beans **with liquid** (*taste the liquid; if briny, rinse and add 250 ml water/stock*)

- 1 onion, sliced

- 3 garlic cloves, sliced

- 100 g lardons or 2 tbsp olive oil

- 1 tbsp tomato purée (or 200 g chopped tomatoes)

- 1 tsp dried thyme or herbes de Provence, 2 bay leaves

- 150–250 ml water/stock

- Optional: handful breadcrumbs + drizzle of oil for a crunchy top

Method

1. Heat oven to **180°C** (160°C fan).

2. In a sturdy tray or casserole, cook lardons (or warm oil), then add onion & garlic; soften 5–8 min.

3. Stir in tomato purée, herbs, beans (with liquid or rinsed + stock), bay. Nestle in chicken/sausages; season.

4. Add a splash of water/stock so it's saucy but not soupy. Cover with foil (if you have it).

5. Bake **45–60 min** (sausages) or **60–75 min** (chicken). Uncover for last 15 min; add



breadcrumbs if using.

6. Rest 10 min. Serve with a green salad and bread.

Tip: Make extra; it's even better tomorrow.

Fast No-Faff Add-Ons

Tapenade (Olive Spread)

Blend/pound **200 g pitted black olives, 1 tbsp capers, 1 anchovy** (optional), **1 small garlic clove, juice ½ lemon,** and **3–4 tbsp olive oil** to a coarse paste. Spread on toast, swirl through beans, or spoon over grilled fish.

Hummus Snack Box

Pot of hummus + sticks of carrot, cucumber, peppers. Add cherry tomatoes, olives, or baked falafel for variety.

Baked Falafel (Pan or Oven)

Mash **2 cans chickpeas (rinsed)** with **½ onion finely chopped, 2 garlic cloves, 2 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp ground coriander, salt, pepper, 2–3 tbsp flour or breadcrumbs.** Form balls; bake **200°C, 18–22 min,** turning once, or shallow-fry to crisp.

“Cook Once, Eat Twice” Holiday Menu (2 Days)

Day 1 – Grill Night (or Pan Sear)

- Grilled chicken, fish, or local sausages
- Greek salad + tzatziki
- Bread & olive oil

Day 2 – Tray-Bake Remix

- French(-ish) cassoulet tray-bake using leftover grilled meats + white beans
- Side of simply dressed greens/tomatoes
- Fruit (watermelon) for dessert

Smart Snack & Breakfast Prep (Road Trip or Flight)

- **Yogurt pots:** Greek yogurt + chopped fruit + seeds; sweeten lightly if needed.
- **Granola bars (no-bake):** 2 cups oats, ½ cup peanut butter/almond butter, ⅓ cup honey/maple, pinch salt, ½ cup mixed nuts/seeds, optional ¼ cup chopped dark



chocolate. Warm nut butter + honey, mix, press into a lined tin, chill, cut.

- **Savoury veg scones/muffins (freeze ahead):**
 - 250 g self-raising flour, 2 tsp baking powder, 200 g Greek yogurt, 1 egg, 120 g grated veg (courgette & carrot, squeezed), 60–80 g grated cheese, pinch salt/pepper.
 - Mix, spoon into muffin tin or scone shapes, bake **200°C for 15–20 min**. Cool, freeze, then defrost en route.
 - **Fruit, peeled & ready:** Pre-peeled oranges in a bag, grapes, apples.
 - **Hydration hack:** Freeze water bottles to double as ice packs; drink as they thaw.
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Airbnb Kitchen Survival Tips

- **Assess & adapt:** One decent pan? Do a tray-bake or a big salad + grilled protein.
 - **Beans check:** Taste the can/jar liquid; if it's tasty, use it. If not, **rinse and add water/stock**.
 - **Knife reality:** If road-tripping domestically, bring your knife; if flying, embrace the blunt one and keep recipes simple.
 - **Barbecue bonus:** Plan a grill night early—leftovers feed tomorrow's lunch/dinner.
 - **Minimal washing-up:** Foil-lined trays, salads in the mixing bowl you'll serve from.
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Kid-Friendly Tweaks

- Keep dips mild; serve chili/oily toppings on the side.
 - Let kids help: tearing herbs, washing tomatoes, arranging salad.
 - Build-your-own plates: grilled protein + pittas/flatbreads + tzatziki + salad = instant buy-in.
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Optional (If Kitchen Has a Blender): Taramosalata

Smoked cod's roe + stale bread (soaked & squeezed) + garlic + lemon + olive oil, blended to a pink, creamy dip. Gorgeous—but skip unless you've got the kit and can find the roe.

Final Thought

If you shop and season like a local and keep the methods simple, holiday food stays **fresh, affordable, and delicious**—with minimal faff and maximum time at the beach or by the pool.