Budget Meal Ideas

Simple, filling recipes for less

1. Rice Ideas

Cilantro rice —

Toss fresh cilantro and lime juice into cooked rice. Drizzle with oil.

Egg fried rice —

Leftover rice with egg and soy sauce. That's it, but it hits every time.

Rice & beans —

A classic combo: cheap, filling, and surprisingly nutritious.

Buttered rice —

Rice, butter and salt. Simple comfort food.

Garlic rice —

Fry garlic in oil or butter, then mix through rice. Feels fancier than it costs.

Tomato rice —

Cook rice with tinned tomatoes or stir them in after. Add salt and spices if you've got them.

Tuna rice —

Mix a tin of tuna into hot rice with a bit of mayo or oil.

Egg & soy rice bowl —

Rice topped with a fried egg and a splash of soy sauce.

Rice with beans & cheese —

Add a bit of cheese to make it more satisfying.

Sweet rice —

Rice with milk or water, sugar, and maybe cinnamon.

Coconut rice —

Cook rice in coconut milk and water. Add sugar for sweetness or salt to make it savoury.

Lemon rice —

Heat oil with turmeric and lemon juice, then drizzle over warm rice.

Red lentil curry with rice

Chickpeas and rice

2.Pasta Ideas

Like rice, pasta lasts a long time and can be changed up in countless ways. Add seasonal vegetables or meat for variety.

If you have no veg or meat, try:

- Caramelised onion pasta – Caramelise onions in a little oil and add pasta, topped with chili flakes.
- Garlic pasta – Cook oil and garlic over medium heat. Finish with salt and pepper.
- Butter pasta – Add butter to freshly cooked pasta with chilli flakes or cracked pepper.
- Fettuccine Alfredo
- Ricotta pasta – If you have ricotta in the fridge, add it with a little pasta water to make it creamy.

Other cheap pasta recipes

- Canned tuna pasta
- Sausage pasta
- Mac and cheese
- Mushroom pasta

3. Sandwich Ideas

Peanut butter & jam —

Classic for a reason. Cheap, filling, zero effort.

Baked beans on toast —

Simple and filling.

Jam sandwich —

Keep it simple with fruit jam or marmalade.

Egg mayo

Mash boiled eggs with mayo and a pinch of salt and pepper.

Cheese & butter —

Good bread and a decent slice of cheese goes a long way.

Grilled cheese —

Toast it in a pan with butter for a crispy, melty upgrade.

Tuna mayo —

Mix tinned tuna with mayo; it stretches across multiple sandwiches.

Ham & mustard —

Simple, salty, and a little sharp.

Banana sandwich —

Banana with peanut butter if you have it.

Leftover sandwich —

Turn leftover chicken, potatoes, or even pasta into a filling.

Cream cheese spread —

Add salt, pepper, or herbs if you've got them.

Sugar sandwich —

Bread, butter, and a sprinkle of sugar.

4. Soup Ideas

A hearty vegetable soup can be made with everyday ingredients such as potatoes, carrots, and leeks. Make a big batch and freeze portions for later.

1. **Potato soup —** Potatoes, onion, and stock. Blend it or leave it chunky. Dirt cheap and super filling.
2. **Lentil soup —** Red lentils cook quickly and don't need soaking. Add stock and spices if you have them.
3. **Tomato soup —** Tinned tomatoes with stock and a little sugar or salt to balance it.
4. **Cheap chicken noodle —** Use stock cubes, a small amount of chicken or leftovers, and cheap noodles.
5. **Clear vegetable soup —** Any random vegetables and stock make dinner. Try carrot, celery, onion, and garlic.
6. **Split pea soup —** Cheap dried peas, a long simmer, and a hearty result.
7. **Carrot soup —** Blend cooked carrots, onion, and stock until smooth. Slightly sweet and very cheap.
8. **Bean soup —** Tinned or dried beans with stock and your choice of seasoning.
9. **Instant noodle upgrade —** Add an egg or leftovers to cheap noodles.
10. **Rice soup, congee-style —** Cook rice in lots of water until soft and porridge-like. Add stock and top with herbs.