

A vibrant watercolor illustration featuring several cats of different colors (black, orange, grey, red, blue, green) and various food items like bowls of treats, a plate of cookies, and a small cake. The background is a soft pink wash. The title 'COOKING FOR CATS' is written in large, bold, orange letters in the center. Below the title is the subtitle 'The healthy, happy way to feed your cat' in a smaller, cursive font, followed by the author's name 'DEBORA ROBERTSON' in a simple, bold font.

# COOKING FOR CATS

*The healthy, happy way  
to feed your cat*

DEBORA ROBERTSON

# Top Tips

## GOOD THINGS



### Eggs

Cats should not eat raw eggs, but a small amount of cooked egg from time to time is a good source of protein and amino acids.

### Fish

Fish is not a natural food for cats. They are desert animals, remember? But a little fish from time to time is fine. Poached or steamed white fish or salmon is usually popular. You might sometimes want to feed them canned fish – sardines and mackerel are a good source of Omega 3 fatty acids and as they're so smelly, they can be a good way of concealing pills or other medication your cat requires. If you think your cat might be constipated or plagued by a hairball, a very small amount of fish oil from the can may help. All cats seem to adore tuna, but it should be fed very sparingly (see *The Tuna Conundrum*, page 66).



### Fruit

Cats tend not to be crazy about fruit as they lack flavour receptors for sweetness. Small amounts of fruit from time to time can help aid digestion though, particularly if they are constipated. Peeled and cored pieces of apple, small bites of banana, and blueberries – which most cats also love to chase across the floor – are good choices.



### Meat and game

About 90 per cent of your cat's diet should be made up of lean meat. Make sure you cut off any excess fat as it can cause pancreatitis, which is extremely painful and can be fatal. Poultry, rabbit and lamb are very good sources of protein; while some cats like beef too, it is the most allergenic meat (See *Dealing with Allergies and Intolerances*, page 103).



### Vegetables

Vegetables such as broccoli, sweet potatoes, peas, spinach, green beans and squash, lightly cooked and cut up into small pieces, are a good source of fibre, but ensure they don't make up more than 10 per cent of your cat's diet.



### Liver and other organ meats

These are very rich sources of protein, vitamins and minerals and most cats find them delicious. They also usually have the benefit of being relatively inexpensive.

## Top Tips

# BAD THINGS

### Chocolate

Chocolate contains theobromine and if cats ingest it, it can be fatal. In most cases, the darker the chocolate (i.e. the higher the cocoa content), the more toxic it is.



### Alcohol and caffeinated drinks

Of course, I realize you're not sitting down with your cat for a cocktail or a coffee, but they are curious creatures and may sometimes sip something you leave lying around on the table or floor, so be vigilant.



### Dog food

Though dog food is not toxic to cats, your cat needs a very different set of nutrients. Cat food should contain plenty of vitamin A, taurine, arachidonic acid and protein, while dog food has much lower levels of these nutrients as their need for vitamin A and protein is less. They are also able to produce taurine and arachidonic acid, but cats must obtain these acids from their food. Without a sufficient amount of taurine, cats can develop heart disease or vision and dental issues.



### Onions and garlic

If eaten by cats, onions, garlic, leeks, shallots and spring onions (scallions) - in fact all members of the allium family - can damage red blood cells and lead to anaemia.

### Dairy

While cats might enjoy milk, cream and cheese, they have trouble digesting lactose and it can cause upset stomachs and diarrhoea.

A small amount of unsweetened, plain live yogurt is an acceptable occasional treat though.



### Grapes and raisins

Ingesting even a small amount of grapes or raisins can cause kidney failure in cats. Some cats may show no symptoms before becoming very ill indeed, so be vigilant - it's best not to keep them in the fruit bowl, and pick up any that you may drop on the floor before 'chase the toxic fruit' becomes a potentially dangerous game.



# SALMON FISH CAKES



- 🐾 1 x 200-g/7-oz can of salmon with no added salt, drained, or 200g/7oz/1 cup cooked salmon, finely flaked
- 🐾 40g/1½oz/scant ½ cup cucumber, grated

- 🐾 50g/2oz/¼ cup cooked millet (cooked weight)
- 🐾 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
- 🐾 ¼ tsp Plaque Off (optional, see Resources, page 108)

Makes  
**2-3**  
fishcakes

This is a simple and quick recipe, which I can usually make from what I have in the store cupboard. If you think it's a faff to cook such a small serving of millet, you'd be right. Cook a decent amount and fluff the remaining grains (technically a seed, fact fans) into a salad for yourself, or freeze it in ice-cube trays for later.

1. To cook millet, place one part millet to two parts water in a pan, bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 25 minutes, stirring from time to time (or follow the instructions on the packet). Freeze it in ice-cube trays and then, once frozen, decant into a freezer bag to store, so you always have serving-size portions on hand.
2. In a bowl, mix everything together until well combined. Form into two or three patties, depending on the size of your cat. Serve one patty as a meal and store the rest, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days, or in the freezer for up to 4 months.

# SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH CHICKEN LIVERS

This is an easy and nutritious meal. I sometimes give it to Dixie when she is feeling a little under the weather and she wolfs - or lions - it right down.

- 🐾 1/4 tsp olive oil
- 🐾 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 🐾 40-50g/1 1/2-2oz chicken livers, cleaned and trimmed of sinews
- 🐾 Pinch of Plaque Off, optional (see Resources, page 108)

Makes  
**1-2**  
servings

1. Warm the oil in a small non-stick pan over a medium-low heat. Add the eggs and cook, stirring, until they form soft curds. Of course, you can do this in a microwave, if you prefer. Scoop them into a bowl to cool while you cook the livers.
2. Tip the livers into the same pan in which you cooked the eggs with a splash of water and cook over a medium-high heat until they are cooked through with no hint of pink in the centre. This shouldn't take more than 4-5 minutes. Stir into the eggs.
3. Once the livers are cool, spoon some into a bowl for your cat - how big a serving depends on the size of your cat and how hungry she is. Sprinkle on some Plaque Off if you are using it. Any leftovers can be kept, covered, in the refrigerator for a day.

# HOW TO MAKE A SCRATCHING POST



Cats love to scratch. They do it to stretch their bodies and clean and sharpen their claws. It's their yoga. If you wish to deter them from practising one of their favourite activities on your family heirloom sofa or precious carpets, make a scratching post. Or several scratching posts - in this case, more is better. For sisal rope, I like buying from Ropelocker (see Resources, page 108) - they sell untreated 6-mm/ 1/4-in sisal specifically designed for pet toys.

- ✿ Non-toxic paint - I like Nutshell Natural Paints (see Resources, page 108)
- ✿ Paintbrush
- ✿ A piece of MDF (medium density fibreboard) or heavy wood for the base, approx 70 x 70cm/28 x 28 in
- ✿ 10 x 10-cm/4 x 4-in piece of wood, at least 60cm/24in long - a fence post will do
- ✿ Post cap, for the top of the wood
- ✿ Pencil
- ✿ Drill
- ✿ 4 x 5-cm/2-in wood screws
- ✿ Screwdriver
- ✿ Sisal rope, about 30-50m/32-54 yards, depending how long your post is (see above)
- ✿ Staples and staple gun
- ✿ Pet-safe glue - I like Gorilla wood glue
- ✿ Some ribbon and bells or other small cat toys (optional)

1. Paint the base, the fence post and cap and leave to dry completely. Add a second coat to the base and cap if you think it is required (the post will be covered by the rope).
2. Centre the post on the base and draw around it with a soft pencil. Drill four guideholes about 1cm/ 1/2 in diagonally in from the corners of the square. Place the base on one end of the post and, from the underside of the base, screw the two together.

*Cont'd* ✿

# RABBIT STEW

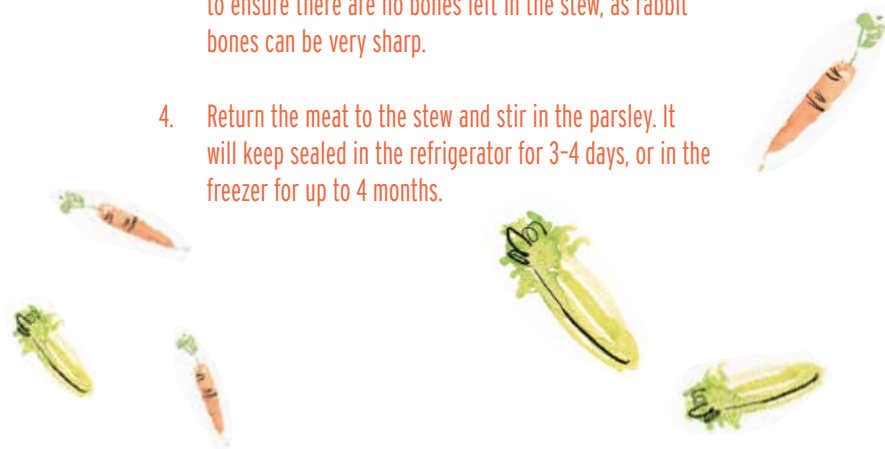
Rabbit is a very healthy, lean meat and is often available from good butchers and even some supermarkets now - it's relatively inexpensive, too. If you see it and you have room in your freezer, stock up and you'll have the building blocks for many happy kitty dinners.

- ✦ 1 tsp olive oil
- ✦ 1 or 2 rabbits, jointed (a prepared rabbit should weigh 600-800g/1lb 5oz-1lb 12oz)
- ✦ 750ml/26fl oz/3¼ cups vegetable or chicken stock (if using a store-bought one, make sure it has no added salt) or simply use water
- ✦ 200g/7oz/1½ cups green beans, topped and tailed and cut into 1-cm/½-in pieces
- ✦ 1 carrot, cut into 1-cm/½-in dice
- ✦ 1 celery stalk, cut into 1-cm/½-in dice
- ✦ 1 sweet potato, cut into 1-cm/½-in dice
- ✦ 4 tsbp finely chopped fresh parsley

Makes  
1  
large pot



1. Warm the olive oil in a large casserole dish over a medium-high heat. Add the rabbit pieces and sauté until just browned. Add the stock or water - you need enough to cover the rabbit, so top up the stock with water if you don't have enough. Bring to a simmer, then cover and simmer very gently for about 1¼ hours or until the meat is really tender. Check for tenderness, as some rabbits are tougher than others.
2. Add the chopped vegetables and cook for a further 15 minutes.
3. Cool, and when the meat is comfortable to handle, remove and shred it, pulling every scrap from the bones. Be careful to ensure there are no bones left in the stew, as rabbit bones can be very sharp.
4. Return the meat to the stew and stir in the parsley. It will keep sealed in the refrigerator for 3-4 days, or in the freezer for up to 4 months.



# LAMB AND DILL HOTPOT



- 🐾 1kg/2lb 4oz diced, boneless leg of lamb or lamb shoulder
- 🐾 100g/3½oz peeled and deseeded butternut squash, or 100g/3½oz/¾ cup sweet potato, and cut into 1-cm/½-in dice

- 🐾 1 carrot, cut into 1-cm/½-in dice
- 🐾 1 celery stalk, cut into 1-cm/½-in dice
- 🐾 1 tbsp chopped fresh dill

Makes  
**1**  
large pot



My cat Dixie loves this dish. I add dill here for its alleged mild calming properties, though I can't really say it deters her from running up the curtains that much.

1. Put the lamb into a saucepan and pour over enough water to cover. Bring to the boil and skim off any scum that rises to the top. Lower the heat to a bare simmer, cover and poach for about 1 hour until the lamb is very tender.
2. Add the vegetables, bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes until the vegetables are very soft. Stir in the dill. Cool completely and skim fat off the top. You can purée some or all of this hotpot if it makes it more appealing to your cat.
3. This will keep sealed in the refrigerator for 3-4 days, or in the freezer for up to 4 months.



# CHICKEN AND SPINACH OATMEAL COOKIES



🐾 200g/7oz/1½ cups cooked chicken,  
very finely chopped

🐾 100g/3½oz/1 cup rolled oats (oatmeal)

🐾 50g/1¾oz/¼ cup cooked spinach,  
excess water squeezed out

🐾 1 egg, lightly beaten

Makes  
**30**  
approx.

Who doesn't love a cookie? These are a tasty treat, perfect for using up any leftover roast chicken you might have.

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/400°F/Gas 6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients until everything is very well combined. Drop teaspoons of the mixture onto the parchment paper, leaving some space between each one, as they will spread out a little. Press with the back of a spoon to flatten them out a bit.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for about 20 minutes until cooked through. Leave on the baking sheet to cool before serving to your cat. These will keep in the refrigerator for a couple of days or in the freezer for 4 months.

# MINI HAMBURGERS



🐾 500g/1lb 2oz minced (ground) beef,  
5% fat

🐾 100g/3½oz/½ cup cooked spinach,  
excess water squeezed out

🐾 1 tsp chopped fresh thyme leaves

Makes  
**30**  
approx.



These are always popular. You can switch the beef for other kinds of minced (ground) meat, and the spinach for squash or sweet potato if you like.

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/400°F/Gas 6. Line a roasting pan with parchment paper.
2. In a bowl, mix together all the ingredients with your hands until everything is very well combined. Break off walnut-sized pieces and roll them into balls, then flatten into patty shapes and place in the prepared pan.
3. Bake in the preheated oven for 18-22 minutes, until entirely cooked through. These will keep sealed in the refrigerator for a couple of days, or freeze for up to 4 months.