



Dining in Aged Care

*Creating an appetising
environment*





Dining in Aged Care

Creating an appetising environment

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Illustrations by Ethan Haylock



match studio





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Maggie Beer

"Food is the fuel of life, of great conversation and memorable meals. Its substance is far more than just the nutrients acquired in the act of eating. It's the knowledge of loving preparation, the anticipation of sharing a beautifully cooked and presented meal and the delicious pleasure of engaging all our senses as we eat. Food is nutrition not just for the body, but also for the soul. It's what fires our appetite for life, no matter what age."

The Maggie Beer Foundation was established in 2014, to transform the food experience of older people, bringing life-altering change to the wellbeing of the elderly through wholesome food that's full of flavour.

"It should be everyone's right to have good food and I believe that no one group of people need it more. My hope is that every meal can give comfort and pleasure, always something to look forward to."



Introduction

Food is essential for our survival, giving our bodies the fuel we need to keep our bodies functioning, and we love it. Much of our daily life revolves around food. Choosing what we'd like to eat, where we'd like to eat, and who we'd like to share our mealtimes with are all important factors in making mealtimes satisfying and enjoyable.

Unfortunately, as we age this enthusiasm for food can fade, but this doesn't have to be.

We feel passionately that the last years of one's life should be spent in a comfortable and enjoyable environment, with food playing a central role in giving pleasure the resident deserves as well as supporting good nutrition and a sense of community.

Guided by the mission of Maggie Beer, to bring fresh seasonal produce to people living in aged care homes, and supported by her foundation, we present you with 'essence'; a resource filled with ideas and opportunities that can help you and other aged care homes reinvigorate people's flavour for food and enhance the dining experience in your home.



How this resource can help you

Our goal is to help you begin a journey to discover what, why and how you can improve the quality of the dining experience for your residents.

An appetising dining experience involves more than just the taste of the food. We believe that by tantalising all of our senses and involving your residents and staff as much as possible in designing the dining experience you can encourage a sense of pride built upon a shared love for food.

Australia is a diverse, multicultural country filled with people who come from different places, cultures, identities and experiences.

Recognising this and the place of food in uniting us, essence invites you to explore how your dining experience can evolve into the future, highlighting simple and cost effective opportunities to improve your dining spaces, how you communicate with food and tips for how you can stimulate the senses.



Inside essence...

Your Dining Environment



The Table

The foundation of the dining experience. Find some tips for how you can improve how you set your tables.



Walls

Is your dining space inviting? Get some advice for things you can do to freshen up your space.



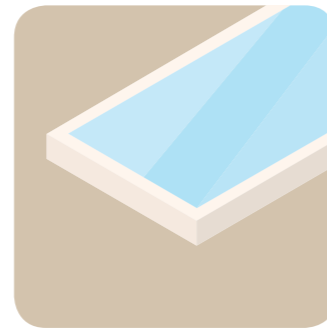
Artificial Light

Placing artificial lighting effectively and knowing what will compliment your spaces can make engagement in your dining spaces much easier.



From the Kitchen

While the meals you create are central, there are other things that you can do to stimulate engagement and improve people's appetites.



Natural Light

Illuminating spaces with natural light brings with it many health benefits for both you and your residents.



Colour & Appetite

Introducing colour in a common area like a dining room can refresh people's interest and can even stimulate appetite and influence mood.

The Senses



Engaging Sound

What does your dining space sound like? Find out how you can address good and bad sounds to create an ideal atmosphere.



Enhancing Flavours

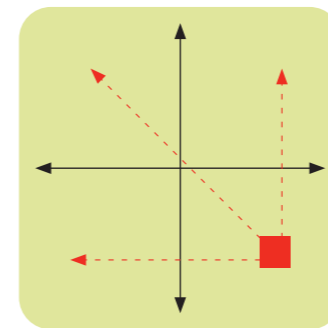
As we age, our sense of taste changes and so do our preferences, which is why flavour is so important to the pleasure of food.



Enticing Aromas

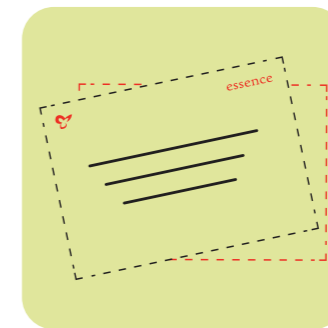
The aromas of food from the kitchen compliment the flavour. Here are some tips for stimulating your sense of smell.

Helpful Resources



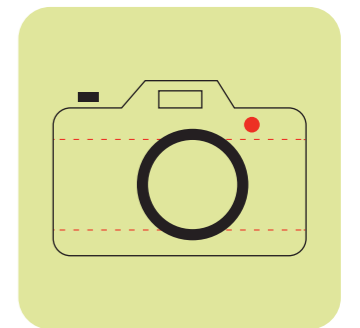
Brainstorming

Check out this useful brainstorming tool, to help you and your home determine how and where you can start making a difference today.



Conversation Cards

Create your own deck of food themed conversation cards to encourage your residents and staff to get to know each other.



Food Photography

Our easy to follow guide will walk you through how you can take good food photos without the need for expensive equipment.



The Table

The table itself is just as critical to the dining experience as the food is. The act of setting the table can be a simple task, but one that is often powerfully rooted in culture and tradition. A few small changes can go a long way to create a comfortable and accessible space for people to enjoy food and the company of others.

It is also important to be aware that dining is an activity that is ever evolving. As cultures meld and evolve together, the way in which we eat will change and how you reflect this on your tables and in your dining spaces will also change as time progresses.

Add a Centre Piece

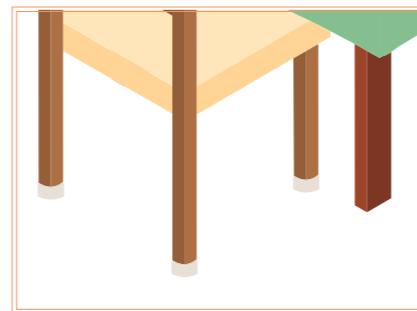
Including something in the centre of the table such as small fresh (edible) flowers, or silk flowers, or the days menu can liven up the dining experience and can stimulate appetite and conversation.

Reduce Annoying Sounds

Applying felt pads or rubber stoppers to the bottom of chair legs can reduce the sliding sound when they are moved, minimising harsh or annoying sounds. They can also protect your floors from scratching.

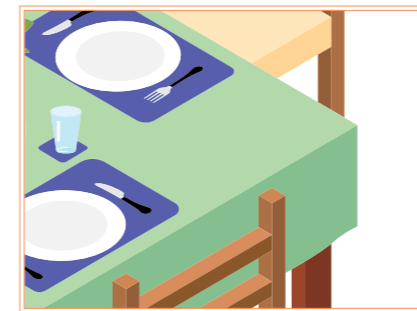
In your dining room...

- Are you and your residents comfortable in your space?
- Could something be rearranged to make moving around your space easier?
- How do you currently set your tables? How might your residents have set their family tables?
- Could introducing a new colour uplift people's mood?



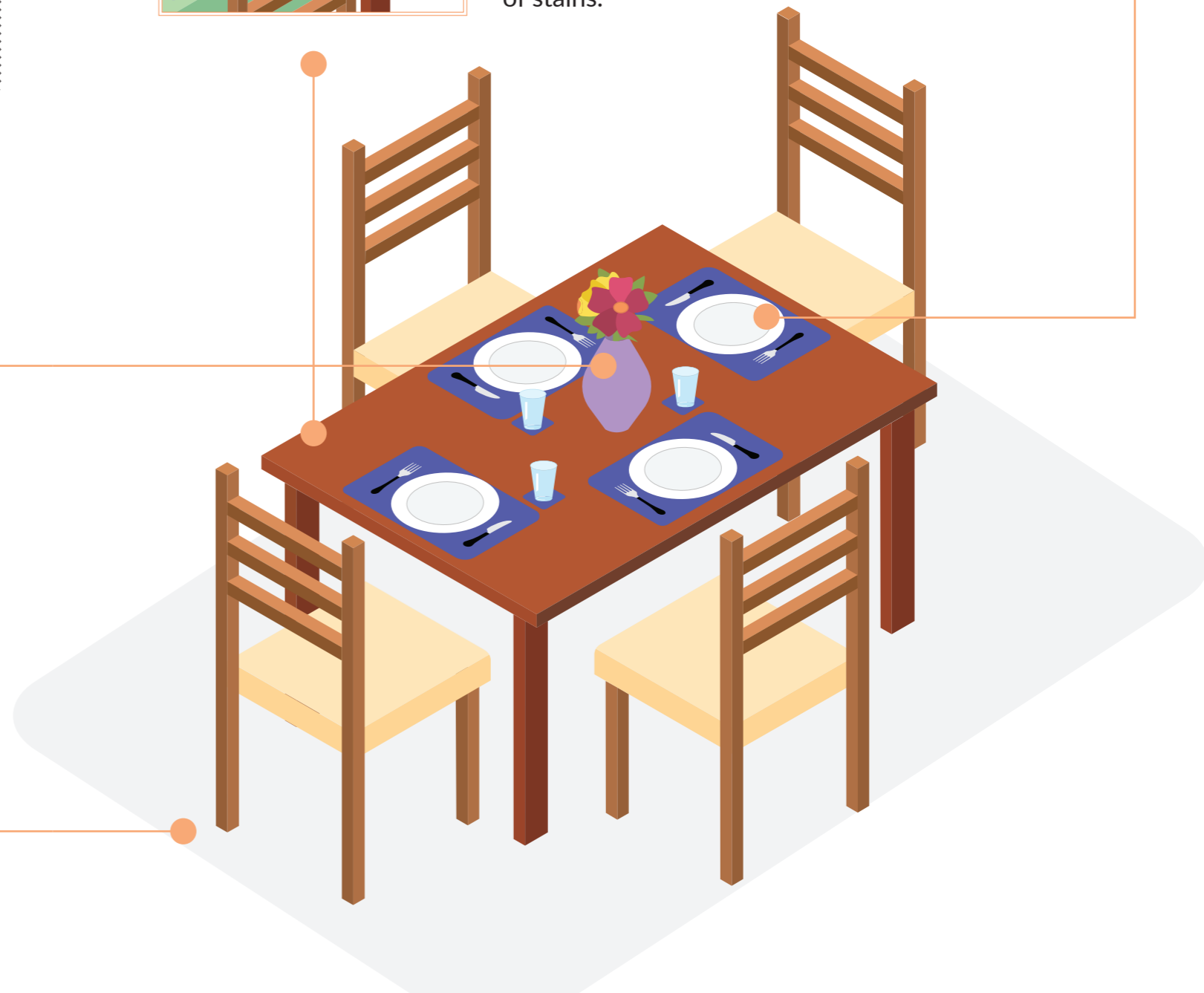
Update your Placemats, Trays & Coasters

Placemats, coasters and other setting material can be used to inject some character into your tables. Choose colours or designs that complement the other materials or the table itself to make it easier for residents to know where their food is.



Try a Tablecloth

A contrasting-coloured tablecloth can assist residents with sight difficulties to locate their plate and food with less difficulty. Dark colours, as long as the room is bright, can also reduce the visibility of stains.





Walls

Where you eat has a huge impact on one's attitude and enjoyment of food. Sitting in a space that is dark or plain can not only make it hard to see, it also suppresses people's personalities. Decorating your walls and considering what other items inhabit a space can go a long way to make you and your residents feel welcomed and comfortable.

Our tips for this space consider how to get residents to engage more with their food and each other, inspired by experiences like family mealtimes or dining out.

Make sure your floors and walls contrast

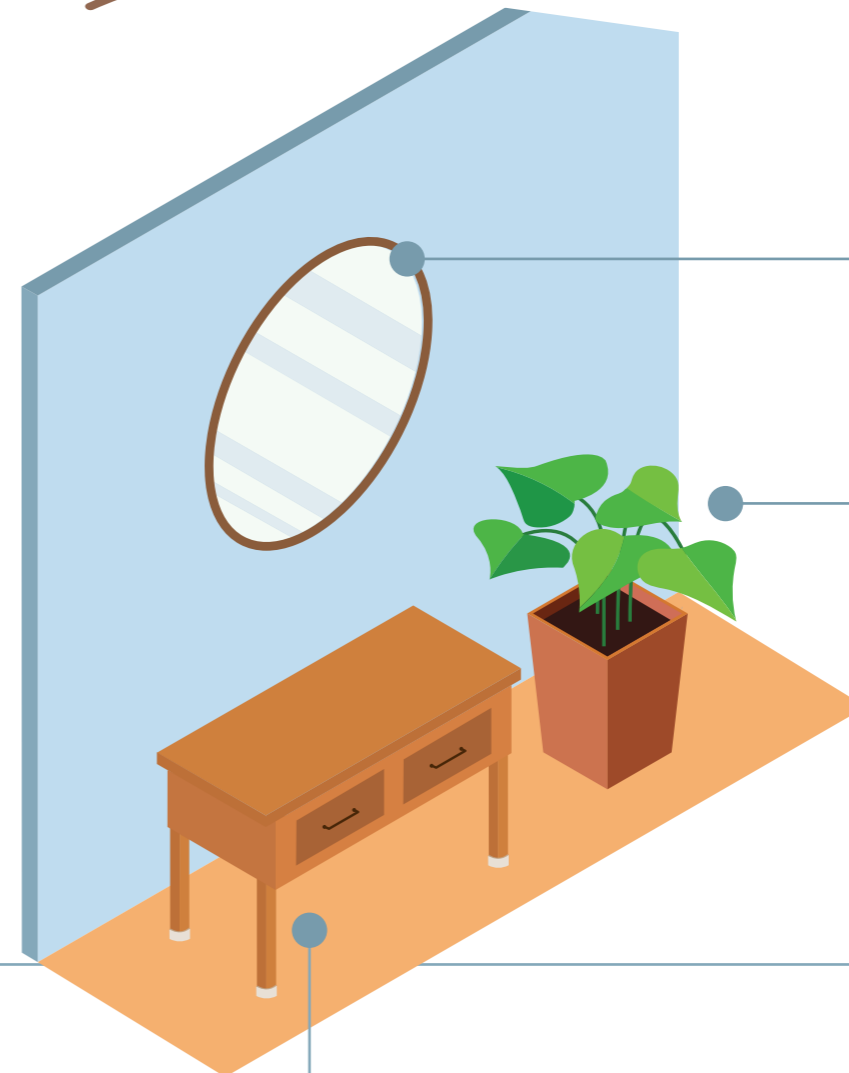
Make sure the colouring and styling of your walls and floors are clearly different from one another to make sure everyone can see clearly as they move within and between rooms.

Add framed photos or artwork

Artwork or framed photos can make a space look interesting and inviting. Why not display photos or artwork made by your residents and staff. These pieces could also be changed or swapped from other areas every so often to reinvigorate a space and mark that time has passed.



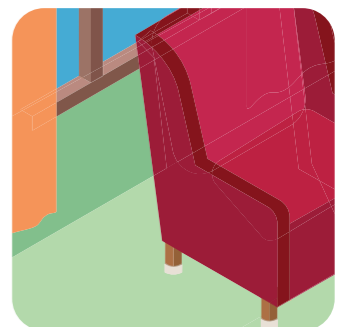
Small changes that make a big difference



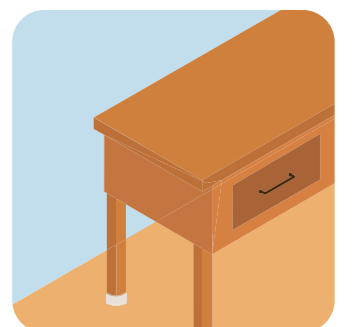
Bring in nature! Add some low maintenance potted plants to make your space feel alive.



Mirrors reflect light and can be used to brighten a room without a lot of light sources.



Avoid dark, heavy furniture



Bring in texture through different finishes, materials and surfaces

What could you do?

- When was the last time you painted your walls? Could a new coat of paint make your room feel fresh?
- Could you update furniture or decor you already have?



Natural Light

Sitting in the sun or by a window carries with it a lot of health benefits. Daylight has been proven to improve our mood and motivation, helping us feel warm and comfortable inside and out, as well as encouraging healthy sleep. We even use it to measure when we should eat, spacing our meals out over the course of a day.

Directing natural light within your dining spaces will not only brighten them without using electricity, it will also have positive effects on morale, concentration and sociability within the space.



Reflect light with mirrors

Mirrors, along with other metallic surfaces, can be useful for dispersing light from unwanted areas into poorly lit spaces.



Bright and light-coloured walls

Bright colours reflect and bounce light, illuminating rooms that are long and away from a natural light source.



Invest in skylights

While not for all spaces, building in skylights and solar tubing can be cost effective and more sustainable ways to illuminate spaces with few windows or poor visibility.



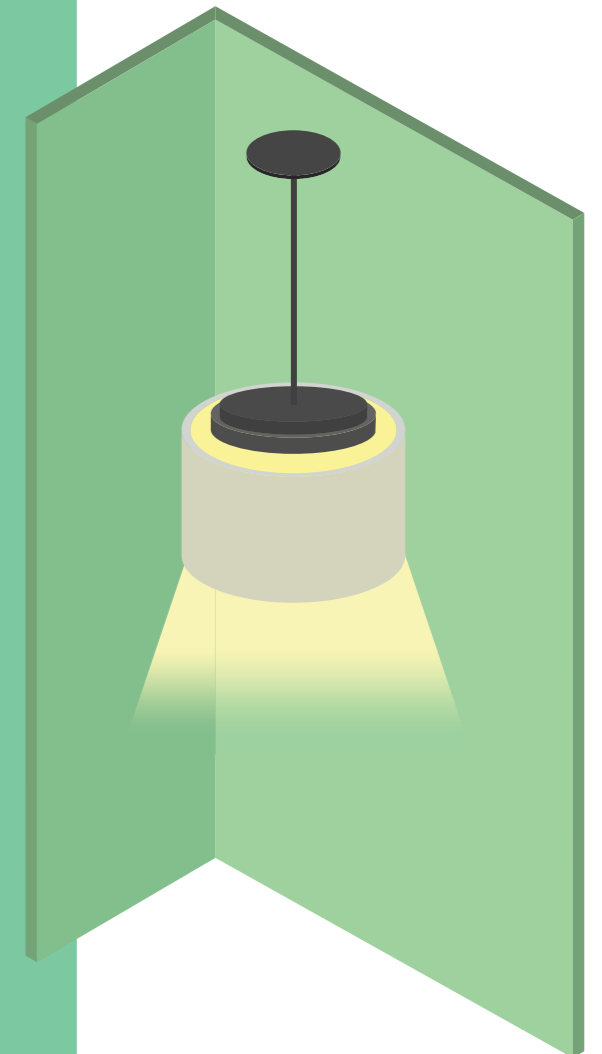
Artificial Light

While daylight is certainly preferred there are of course many instances where artificial light is valued. Spaces where natural light is harder to manipulate or at night, other lighting can be brought in to illuminate your spaces.

As we grow older, our eyesight can deteriorate, which often includes our ability to perceive certain colours and to see things clearly. Reds can look like pinks and blues can become harder to see.

Placing Artificial Light

When lighting a space, it is important to consider the shape and size of the room. Be mindful of dark corners as lighting that is distributed unevenly can make it difficult for residents with reduced eyesight to see clearly. Are there surfaces or objects in the space that create unwanted reflections or glare?



Colour Temperature

Cool lights, those with a white or blue hue, are akin to natural light which is great for day spaces and dining rooms. Warm lights, those with an orange hue, are best for bedrooms or for spaces that encourage rest and sleep.



Adding Lights

Does your room have dark corners? Brighten it up by adding wall or floor lights that balance the lighting in a space. Add a pendant or lamp with a shade to direct light and create a feature.



Highlight the Ceiling

Direct light towards the ceiling with ceiling and wall mounted fittings. Be sure to have these fittings recessed or surface mounted to avoid becoming a hotspot for contamination.



From the Kitchen

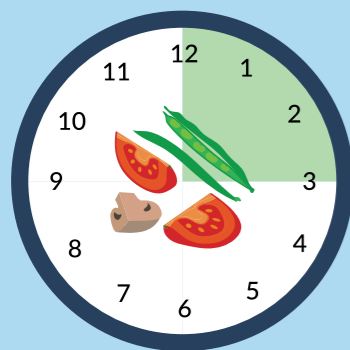
The kitchen is of course essential to how people enjoy their meals. The aroma, the sounds and of course the taste all contribute greatly to creating a tantalising dining experience for your residents.

We believe that it is important for all residents to feel at home, a feeling that food is so integral to achieving. While the meals you create are central, there are other things that you can do to stimulate engagement and improve people's appetites.

Take care with plating & portioning

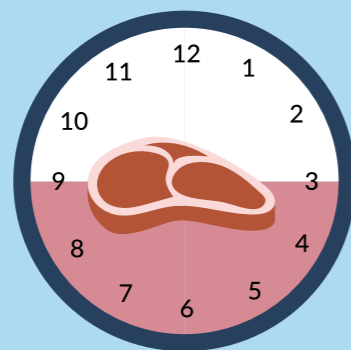
As they say 'we eat with our eyes'. Taking care in how you plate your food can help persuade those who aren't as hungry to eat. One approach to presenting your food we suggest is known as the clock portion model.

Imagine your plate is a clock, where each half or quarter highlights different food groups on the plate, presenting your meals neatly and clearly. For some meals like meatballs or soups which don't quite fit this model, you should plate them how you feel will be most appetising for your residents.



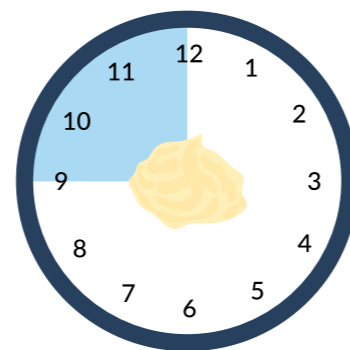
Vegetables

Between 12-3 O'clock



Main Protein

Between 3-9 O'clock



Starch

Between 9-12 O'clock

Get input from your residents

- Do your residents and staff enjoy the food you serve? What feedback do they share with you?
- Does your menu give residents a picture of what a meal will be like?
- Is your method for ordering and preparing food as clear and efficient as it could be?

Find a print out for your kitchen staff to refer to at the back of this booklet.



Improving your menu

What does your menu say about your food? Sharing more information with your residents about the meals you offer can make choosing meals much easier. From our research we found that residents are interested in photos of their food, the ingredients and its nutritional value. Make sure you give the dish a familiar name, even when more nutritious ingredients might have been added that they might be unfamiliar with.

Quick key for dietary labelling

Many residents have specific dietary requirements, that can change based on a variety of factors. To improve your system consider developing a colour code that can be used to label who and what requirements are needed.





Colour & Appetite

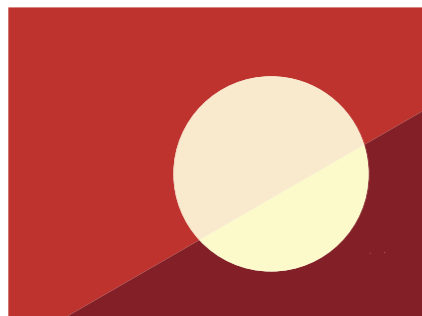
Colour in a space is very important. It can illuminate a space, create a warm and friendly environment and can create interest and excitement. Look at your dining room, how would a pop of colour make your space more inviting? Certain colours have also been linked to stimulating appetite and influencing people's mood.

Our colour tips

If you are looking to stimulate appetite avoid blue, grey, and other dark shades. Instead consider some of the colour combinations below when choosing paint colours, furniture, decor and other room accents.

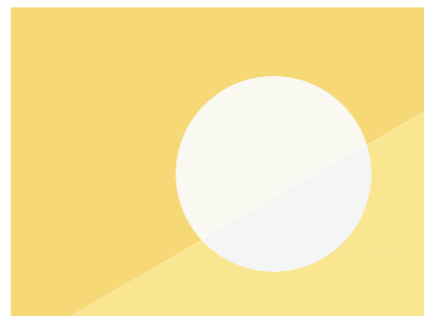


Deep Reds



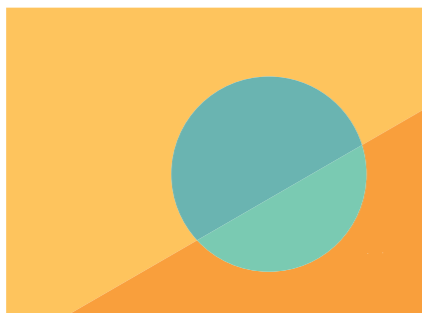
Light Creams

Soft Yellows



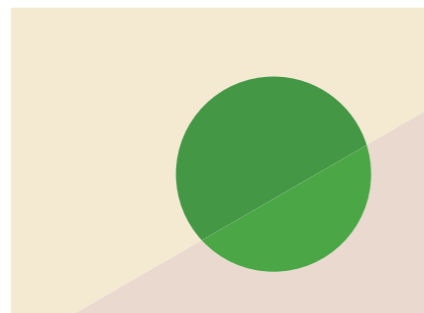
Off Whites

Smooth Oranges



Turquoise

Beige



Natural Greens



Engaging Sound

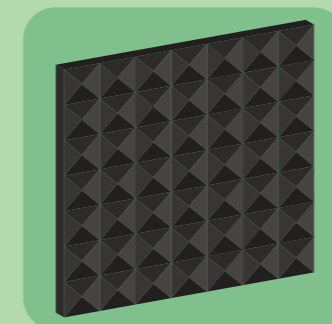
What does your dining room sound like? We don't always think about the impact that sound has on our mood and on how comfortable we feel.

For those with hearing impairment or noise sensitivity, and those with severe or onset dementia, loud or repetitive sounds can be quite disruptive and make concentrating on eating or hearing a conversation a challenge. Similarly, an absence of sounds and other stimuli can also make you feel bored.



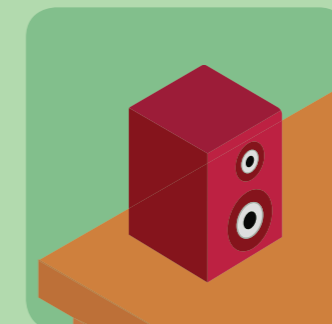
Avoid or dampen hard surfaces

Vinyl flooring and other hard surfaces can create loud screeching sounds, particularly in larger open spaces where there is a lot of movement. Choosing soft furnishings or applying felt and rubber stoppers to furniture can help reduce disruptive noise.



Absorbing bad sounds

If you have a particularly noisy space and don't necessarily want to change your furniture, you could try installing acoustic foam panels or tiles which can go anywhere on walls or ceilings.



Play familiar music

Playing familiar songs and music before and after mealtimes can have therapeutic benefits and can be a fun way to connect people with their past.



Connect with nature

We have an instinctive attraction to nature and the outdoors. Open up doors and windows to allow for gentle sounds like birds singing, wind rustling and plants scraping.



Enhancing Flavour

Our sense of taste is directly linked to our enjoyment of food and as we age our sensitivity to certain flavours and tastes tends to decline. The healthiness of our mouths, some medications, and our mental health can all have an impact our desire for food. In particular, our sense of sweetness and saltiness tend to dull, while sour and bitter tastes can often be tolerated at higher levels.

Knowing how your residents' taste can change, prepare food that accentuates flavour and aroma, to improve their health and pleasure of eating.



Why not start a food & wine club

A great way to get residents interested in food is to start a food & wine club. It can also be a great opportunity for residents to socialise with each other and with staff, sharing their favourite meals and experiences.



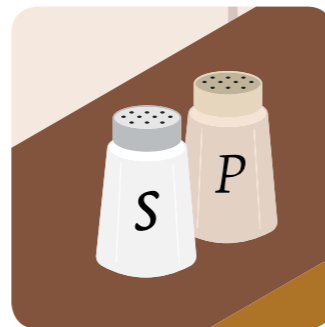
Consider umami

Accentuate your savory dishes with ingredients such as Miso, Mushrooms, Parmesan, Mustards, Bacon, Olives or Soy Sauce.



Balance flavour with Acidity

Verjuice, vinegars and lemon juice can be used to add acidity to your food to balance flavours in a dish.



Seasoning is key

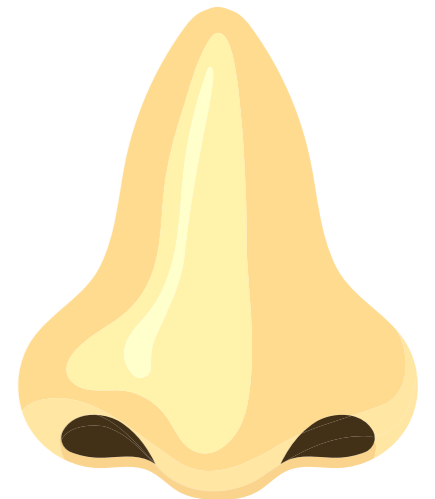
Finish cooked legumes and pastas off with a flourish of extra virgin olive oil, sea salt flakes and pepper.



Enticing Aromas

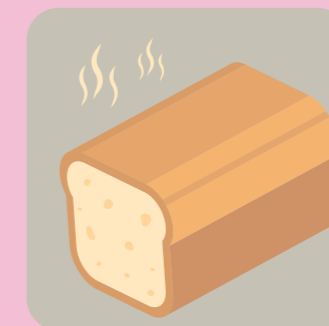
Complimented by the flavour of food, our sense of smell is even more important in enticing our appetite. Not only can pleasant smells make your mouth water, certain scents can also trigger memories, transporting us to a different time.

Clever cooking techniques and ingredients can be used to create big, bold aromas that encourage residents towards food, lift their mood and stimulate their appetite as they prepare for their next meal.



Use aromatic ingredients

Fresh seasonal ingredients give food the best and strongest aromas. If diet permits, you can use all sorts of herbs and spices to ramp up the aroma of your food.



Create pleasant smells

A good way to entice people to the dining room can be to bake things like breads, which can be served alongside your meals of the day.



Toast, Brown & Smoke Foods

Looking to add extra flavour? Toasting, browning and smoking ingredients are all great techniques to heighten the flavour and aroma for older palates.



Have you tried aromatherapy?

Outside of preparing food, essential oils and aromatherapy can also be used to stimulate appetite and improve wellbeing. Lavender helps improve sleep, promote better concentration, and reduce anxiety. Citrus is great for encouraging appetite and Peppermint can alleviate nausea, headaches and indigestion.



THE MAGGIE BEER FOUNDATION

The Maggie Beer Foundation was established in 2014, to transform the food experience of older people, bringing life-altering change to the wellbeing of the elderly through wholesome food that's full of flavour. And in that short time we've changed the lives of thousands of people through our education and training of chefs and cooks, the work done by Maggie and her team in advocating for the elders through the media and influential conferences and forums and the establishment of kitchen gardens.

We know that there will always be a lot to do. So the Maggie Beer Foundation will work hard to deliver our strategic priorities of:

- EDUCATION
- RESEARCH
- ADVOCACY
- PARTNERSHIPS



maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/make-a-donation

SO HOW CAN YOU HELP?

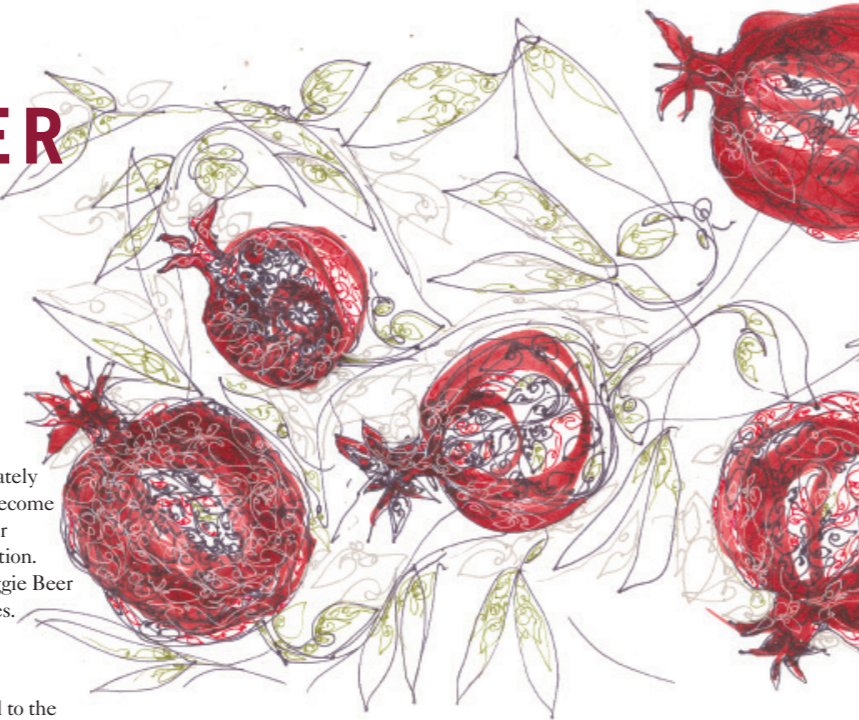
MAKE A DONATION

The easiest and most immediately useful thing you can do is to become a supporter of the Maggie Beer Foundation by making a donation. All donations support the Maggie Beer Foundation's strategic priorities.

LEAVE A BEQUEST

By leaving a legacy in your will to the Maggie Beer Foundation through a bequest, you make a powerful commitment that will assist in improving the food experiences of current and future generations of older Australians.

Maggie Beer Foundation Ltd
ABN 15 168 279 865



“Food is the fuel of life, of great conversation and memorable meals. Its substance is far more than just the nutrients acquired in the act of eating. It's the knowledge of loving preparation, the anticipation of sharing a beautifully cooked and presented meal and the delicious pleasure of engaging all our senses as we eat. Food is nutrition not just for the body, but also for the soul. It's what fires our appetite for life, no matter what age.”



BECOME A PARTNER

We create partnerships with governments, universities, companies and businesses which share our philosophies and commitment to 'creating an appetite for life' for older Australians. There are many mutually beneficial ways that your business can get involved with the Maggie Beer Foundation:

- Support a program or a project
- Become involved with one of our strategic priorities
- Implement the Partnering Program in an Aged Care home.

SUPPORT AN EVENT OR FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

Whether through attendance, sponsorship or gifts, your support is always appreciated.

BECOME A MEMBER

You can become a member, show your support, and stay connected with the Foundation's work by joining our supporters' register.

Contact info@maggiebeerfoundation.org.au to find out more or visit the website for a list of upcoming events.



BECOME AN ADVOCATE

The primary focus of the Maggie Beer Foundation is to radically change food practices in Aged Care - to improve the emotional and physical wellbeing of each and every person.

We need governments and the whole Aged Care industry to refocus policy. Your voice of support, your help in creating a Charter of Rights for those in Aged Care is essential.

We know this is no easy task for anyone involved in Aged Care - it's not simply a matter of a menu change. This requires examination of every aspect of Aged Care.

And you can help.

So share your own story and help create an appetite for change and an appetite for life.



SOCIAL

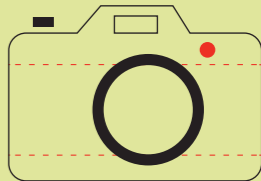
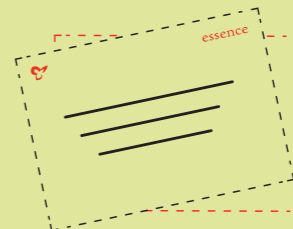
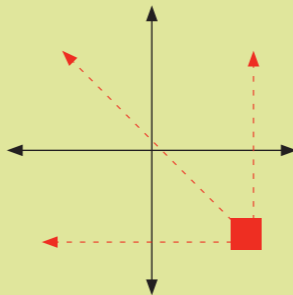
- Maggie Beer Foundation
- Maggie Beer Foundation

#maggiebeerfoundation



Helpful Resources

In this section we have included some tools and step-by-step guides to help you brainstorm new ideas and consider how you might implement them, access to food-themed conversation cards and advice for how to take appetising food photos.





Brainstorming

Before diving in to make changes in your space, it's important to consider which changes you think will be beneficial and how you might try to incorporate these ideas without creating new issues.

As each aged care home is different, start by considering what aspects of your space you might like to address and consider what resources and infrastructure you have available.

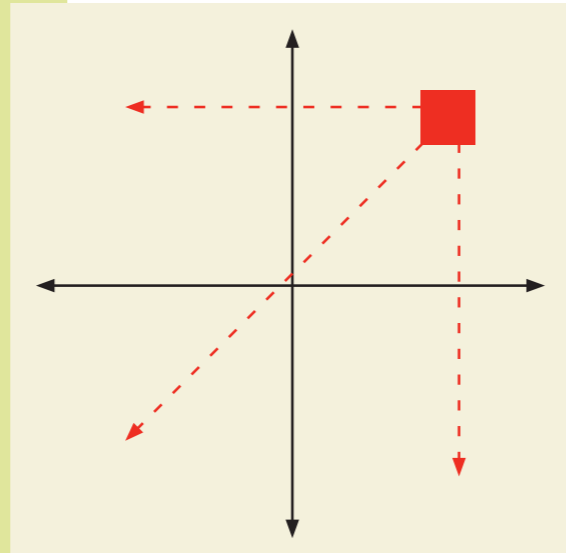
Plot your thoughts on a grid

1. For this activity, draw up two lines that cross in the middle on a sheet of paper. Label each point with a different theme or consideration for you to consider your ideas within. We have included some examples, but make sure you pick the ones that are relevant to you and your needs.
2. To generate ideas, ask the people in the session to individually write down at least four ideas. Keep one idea per post-it note and no more than four words.
3. Each person takes it in turns to read out and place their idea on the grid, then discuss ways in which you could approach your idea differently.

Suggested labels

Easy – hard
Cheap – expensive
Short term – long term
Few stakeholders – many stakeholders
Iterative – revolutionary
Small impact – large impact
Negative social impact – positive social impact
Negative environmental impact – positive environmental impact

Negative economic impact – positive economic impact
High red-tape – low red-tape
Many policy constraints – few policy constraints
Politically sensitive – politically easy
Low anticipated constraints – high anticipated constraints
Few competitors – many competitors

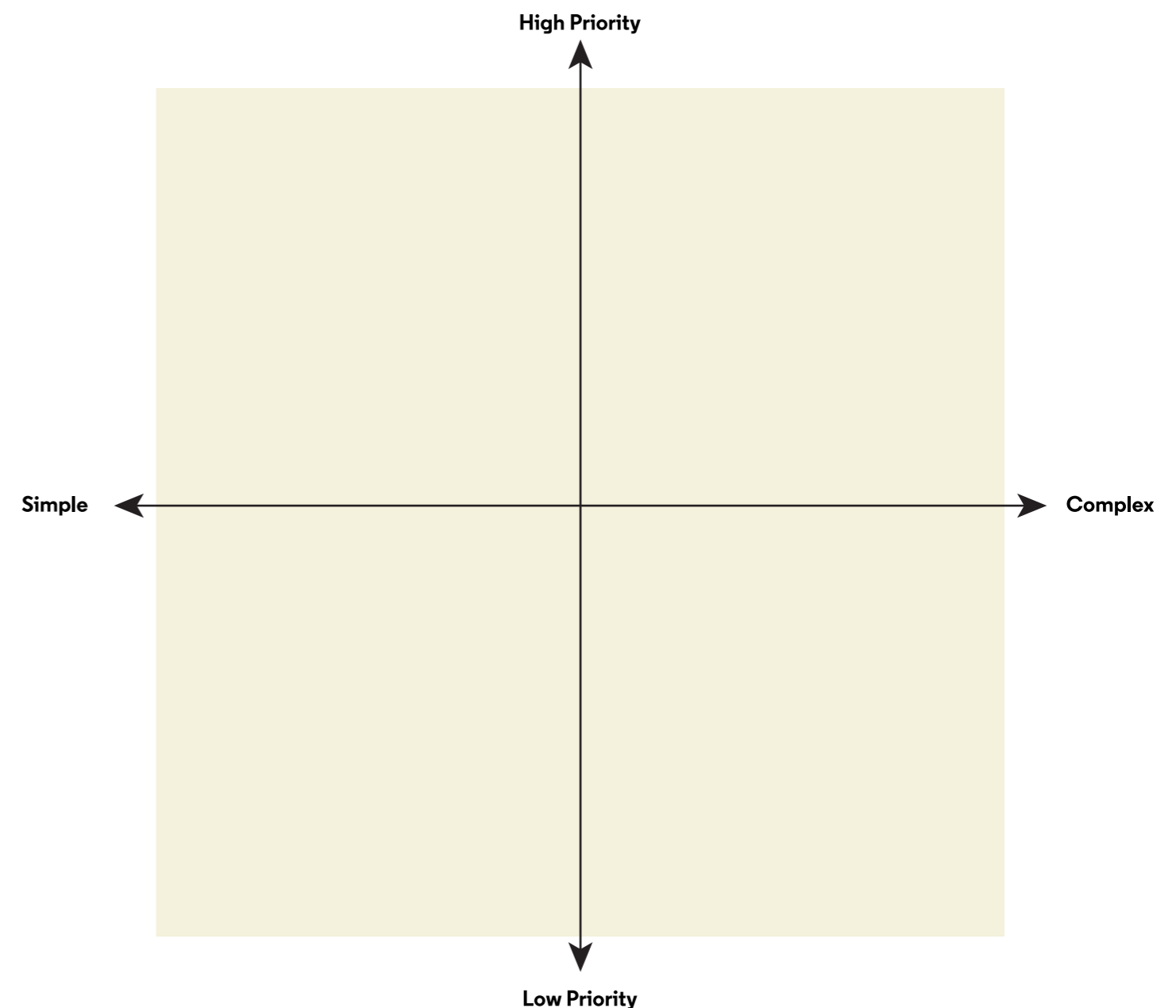


Brainstorming Grid

Print this grid out or draw up your own on any size sheet of paper you'd like. You could even use a table and make the grid using masking tape.

Title _____

Date / /

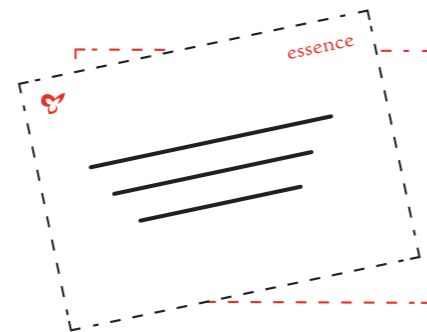




Conversation Cards

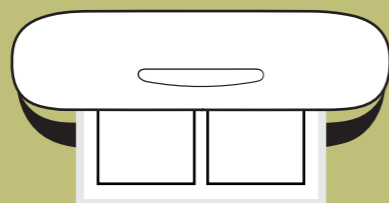
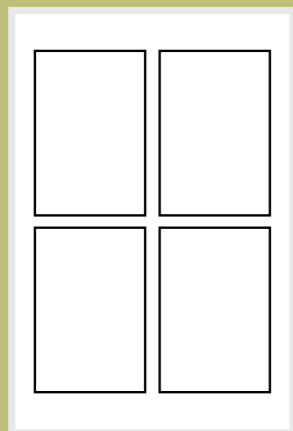
A good conversation over a cup of tea or coffee can be a great way to get to know people and to share with others our interests and experiences.

To encourage residents and staff to better get to know one another, we have developed a series of food themed conversation cards that you can make and share in your home.



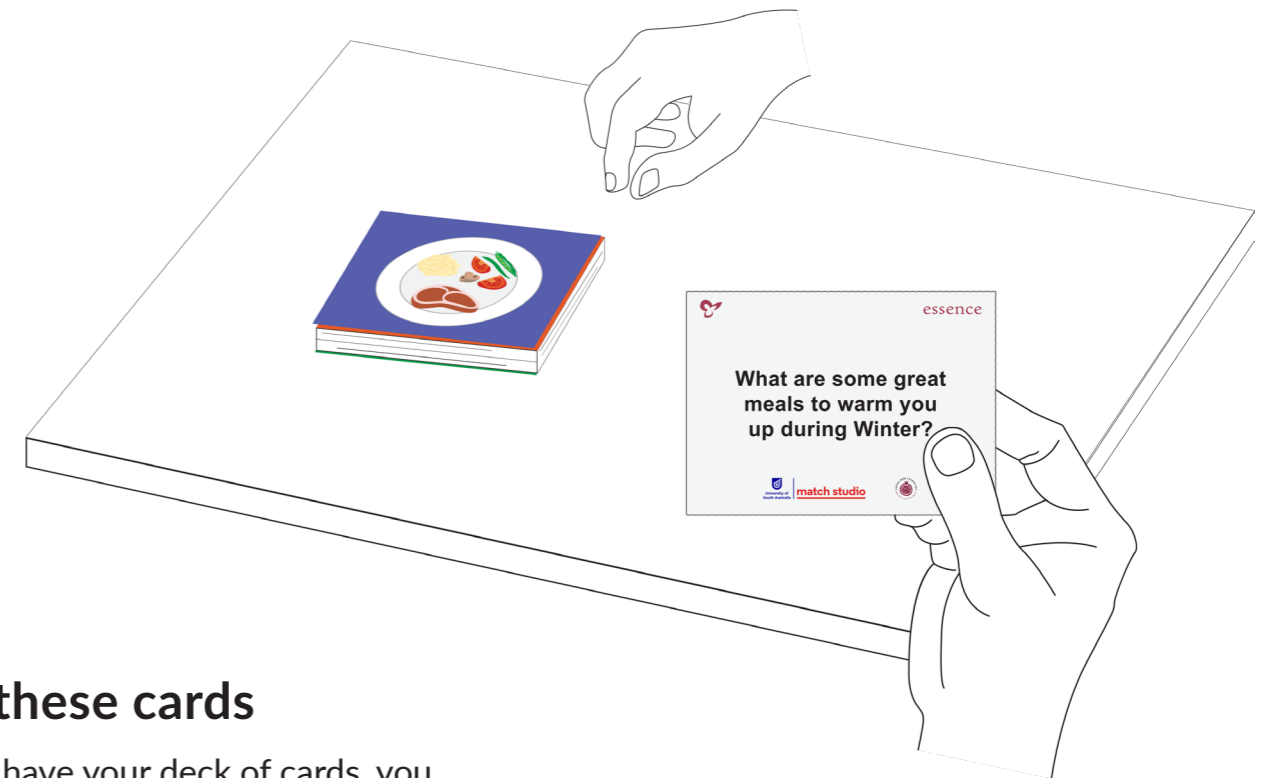
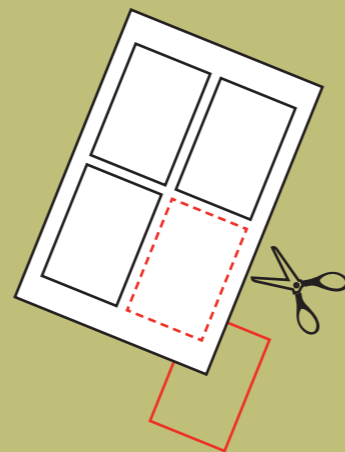
How to make your own conversation cards

1. Find our food conversation cards within this resource.



2. Laminate your cards to make them easier to keep clean.

3. Cut out each card to form your deck and use them when ready.



Using these cards

Once you have your deck of cards, you can use them any way you would like. We recommend placing a card or two on each of your tables during mealtimes to encourage some conversation or place the deck on a coffee table in a sitting area.





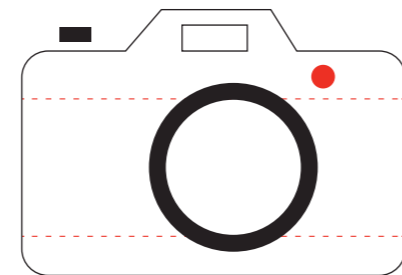
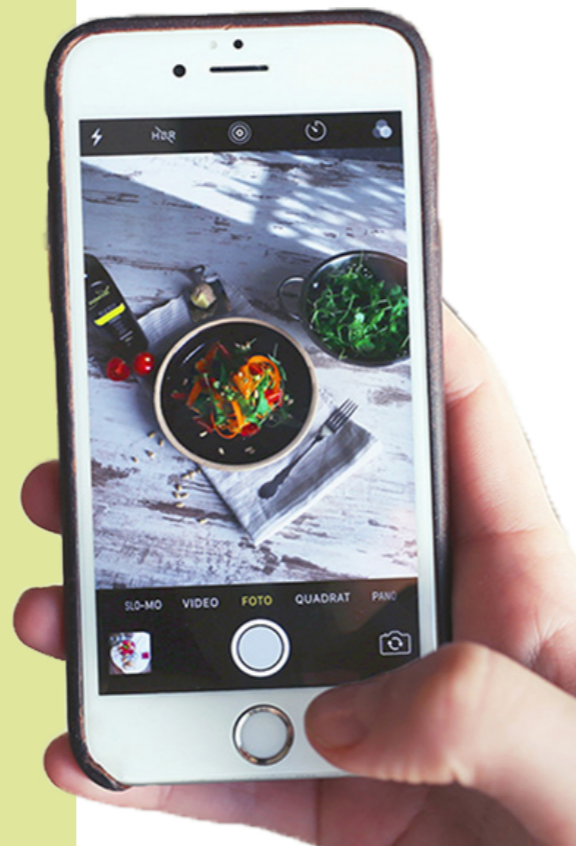
Food Photography

To make it easier to entice someone towards a meal they might not be familiar with, why not take photos of your meals and include them as part of your menu or with you when your residents are ordering.

You don't need to have a lot of experience or an expensive camera to be able to shoot clear and appetising photos of your food. Our easy to follow guide will walk you through how you can take good photos of your food.

Step-By-Step Guide

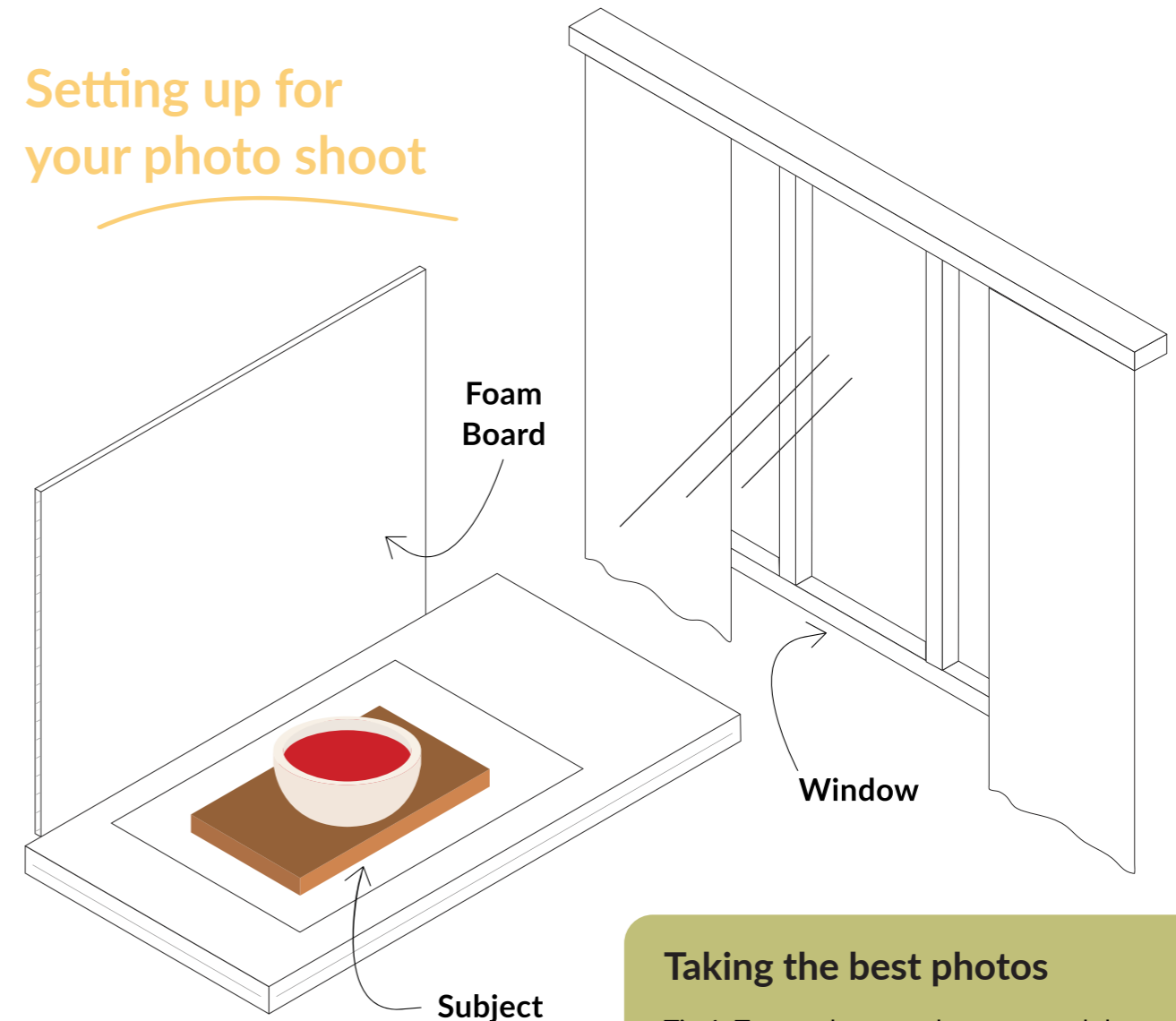
1. Before you set up your images, find a window or space with lots of natural light, to make sure your photos look their best.
2. Position your card or foam board adjacent to the window or opposite where the light is coming from. You might also need something to prop this up for you depending on where you are.
3. Place your wooden board or platter in front of your card or board. This will be the stage for your food so use something that you think will make your food appealing.
4. Place your plated meal on the wooden board or platter.
5. Open your camera app on your device and spend a few minutes adjusting your plate to make sure it is clear on your screen.
6. When you are ready take a few photos from different angles. Try taking your photos from eye level, from a 45-degree angle (halfway between eye level and directly on top) and from a bird's eye (directly above).
7. Look through your photos and choose the best one to use.



What you'll need

- a device with a camera, like an iPhone or iPad
- a large window with natural light
- white card or foam board
- large wooden platter, board or clean surface

Setting up for your photo shoot



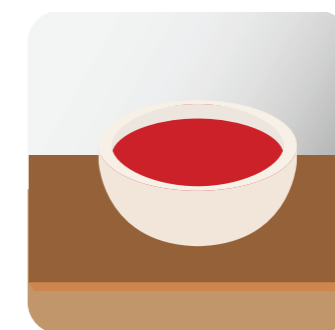
Taking the best photos

- Tip 1: Try to take your photos around the same time of day, to keep your images consistent
- Tip 2: Make sure your shadow isn't in the way

Some angles you can try when taking your photos



Eye Level angle



45° angle



Bird's Eye angle



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Share Your Experience

Have you trialled something in your home that made a positive difference? Or perhaps something that didn't quite go to plan? Share your experiences with us and other aged care homes, and together we can build a community that reignites the pleasure of enjoying food and dining in aged care.

Some more helpful resources

- maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/recipes
- maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/news
- maggiebeerfoundation.org.au/events

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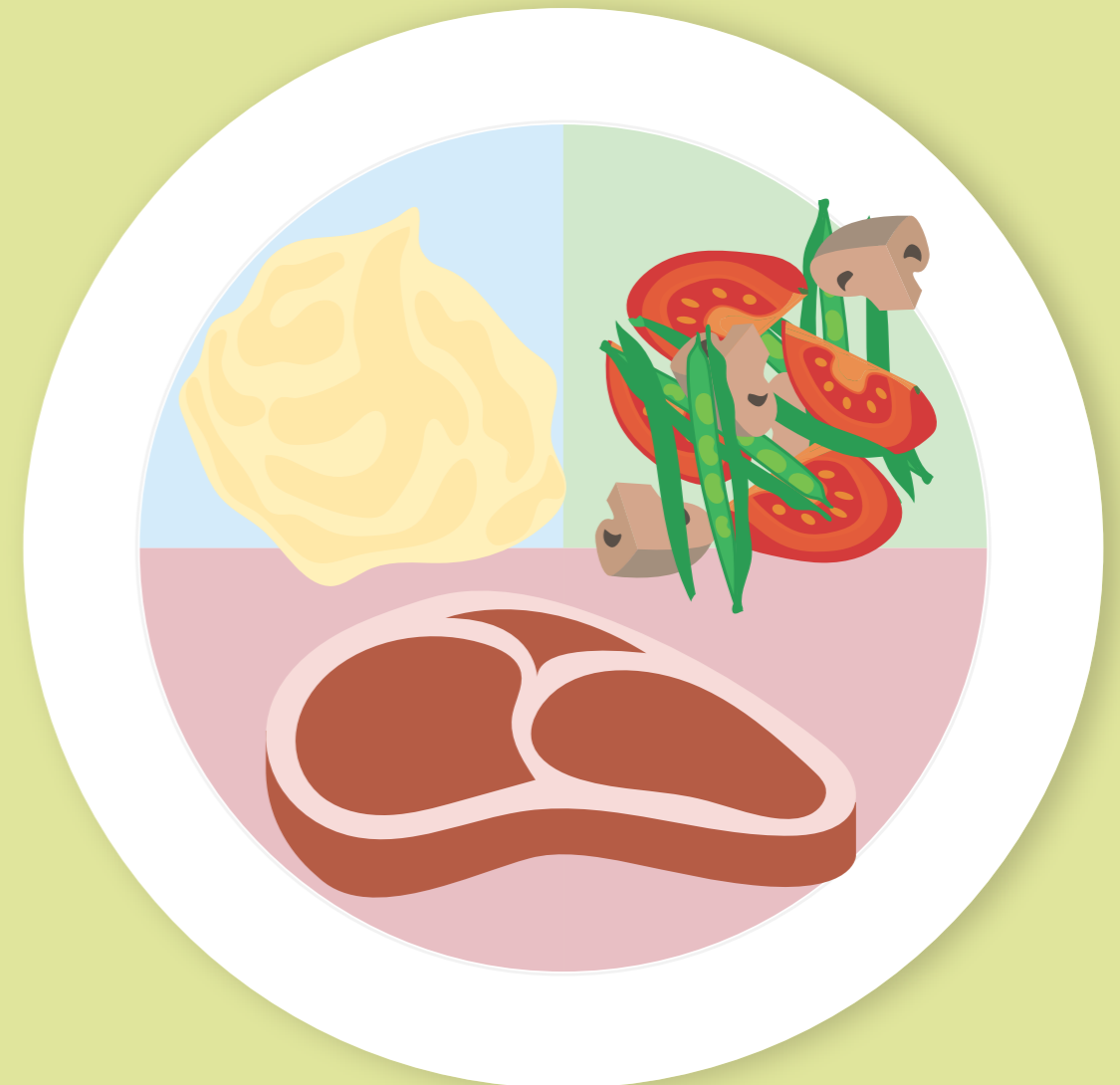


@maggie_beer_foundation

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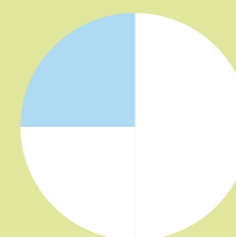
Plate your meals

with the clock portion model



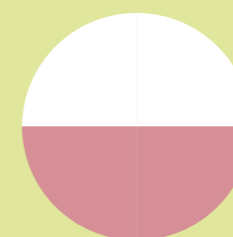
Starch/Grains

9-12 O'clock



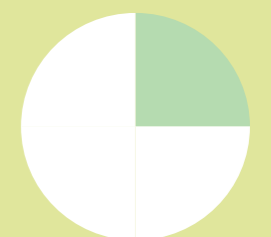
Protein

3-9 O'clock



Vegetables

12-3 O'clock



Imagine your plate is a clock, where each half or quarter highlights different food groups on the plate



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Make some notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



This image shows a full page of a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.



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match studio