

Seven Warming Autumn Evening Meals

A practical week of seasonal recipes inspired by Chinese dietary therapy

Warm

Simple

Seasonal

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How to use this guide

These seven evening meals have been selected from my larger autumn recipe collection. They offer a manageable week of cooked meals using seasonal vegetables, grains, pulses, fish and meat. Use the sequence as written or choose the recipes that suit your household.

Chinese dietary therapy considers the season, the preparation of food and the individual person. The descriptions in this guide reflect that traditional framework; they are not rigid rules or a substitute for individual medical or dietary advice. Adjust ingredients for allergies, intolerances, medication and any guidance you have received from a qualified clinician.

Your seven evenings

Monday	Vegetable casserole
Tuesday	Stuffed peppers with quinoa and beans
Wednesday	Ginger chicken with autumn vegetables
Thursday	Lentil stew with carrots and parsnips
Friday	Tofu and vegetable stir-fry
Saturday	Baked fish with roasted squash
Sunday	Roast chicken with root vegetables

Food safety: Follow packet instructions where relevant. Cook poultry and minced meat thoroughly. The UK Food Standards Agency advises that the centre of food should reach 70°C for 2 minutes, or 75°C for 30 seconds. Fish should be opaque and separate easily with a fork.

Vegetable casserole

Serves	4 to 6	Preparation	20 min	Cooking	50 min
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A gently spiced casserole of root vegetables, courgette and spinach. Serve on its own or with rice.

Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 2 parsnips, peeled and sliced
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 courgette, sliced
- 1 red or yellow pepper, sliced
- 1 red onion, sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 60 g spinach
- 250 ml vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp lower-salt soy sauce or tamari
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1/2 tsp Chinese five spice
- Black pepper; salt only if needed
- Toasted sesame seeds, optional

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan or 200°C conventional.
2. Place the sweet potato, parsnip, carrot, courgette, pepper, onion and garlic in a large casserole dish. Toss with the olive oil.
3. Mix the stock, soy sauce, sesame oil, ginger and five spice. Pour over the vegetables.
4. Cover and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, stirring once halfway through.
5. Remove the cover, fold in the spinach and bake for another 10 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.
6. Taste before adding salt and finish with sesame seeds if using.

Chinese dietary perspective: Longer cooking softens the vegetables and brings warmth to the meal. The ginger and five spice add aromatic heat without making the dish heavy.

Stuffed peppers with quinoa and beans

Serves	4	Preparation	20 min	Cooking	45 min
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Colourful peppers filled with quinoa, beans and vegetables. Add turkey mince or plant-based mince if you want a more substantial filling.

Ingredients

- 4 large peppers
- 185 g cooked quinoa
- 250 g turkey mince or plant-based mince, optional
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 250 g chopped tomatoes
- 80 g sweetcorn
- 100 g cooked black beans, drained
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper
- 80 g grated cheese or dairy-free alternative, optional

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan or 200°C conventional.
2. Slice the tops from the peppers and remove the seeds. Stand them in a baking dish.
3. Warm the oil in a frying pan. Cook the onion for 4 minutes, then add the garlic.
4. If using mince, add it now and cook thoroughly. Stir in the quinoa, tomatoes, sweetcorn, beans, cumin and paprika. Season lightly.
5. Fill the peppers, replace the tops and cover the dish with foil. Bake for 30 minutes.
6. Remove the foil, add the optional cheese and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes, until the peppers are tender and the filling is steaming hot.

Chinese dietary perspective: This meal combines cooked grains, beans and vegetables in one dish. Baking softens the peppers while keeping the filling satisfying and easy to portion.

Ginger chicken with autumn vegetables

Serves	4	Preparation	20 min	Cooking	15 min
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A quick midweek stir-fry with ginger, garlic and colourful vegetables. Serve with rice or noodles if wanted.

Ingredients

- 500 g skinless chicken breast or thigh, thinly sliced
- 2 carrots, cut into thin strips
- 1 courgette, cut into thin strips
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 1 onion, sliced
- 30 g fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp lower-salt soy sauce
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce or vegetarian stir-fry sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
- Spring onion and sesame seeds, optional

Method

1. Mix the chicken with 1 tbsp soy sauce and leave for 10 minutes while preparing the vegetables.
2. Mix the remaining soy sauce with the oyster or vegetarian sauce and sesame oil.
3. Heat a wok or large frying pan. Add the oil and cook the chicken until browned and cooked through. Transfer to a clean plate.
4. Add the ginger and garlic to the pan, followed by the carrot, courgette, pepper and onion. Stir-fry for 4 to 5 minutes.
5. Return the chicken, add the sauce and cook until everything is steaming hot and the chicken is thoroughly cooked.
6. Finish with spring onion or sesame seeds if using.

Chinese dietary perspective: Stir-frying uses brisk heat and a short cooking time. Ginger and garlic bring warmth and movement, while the vegetables retain some texture.

Lentil stew with carrots and parsnips

Serves	4	Preparation	15 min	Cooking	40 min
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A simple one-pot evening meal that can be prepared ahead and reheated once until steaming hot.

Ingredients

- 200 g green or brown lentils, rinsed
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 parsnips, diced
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 20 g fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 1 x 400 g tin chopped tomatoes
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper
- Parsley or coriander to serve, optional

Method

1. Warm the olive oil in a large saucepan. Cook the onion for 5 minutes until softened.
2. Add the garlic, ginger, cumin and coriander. Stir for 1 minute.
3. Add the carrots and parsnips and stir to coat them in the spices.
4. Add the lentils, stock and tomatoes. Bring to a gentle boil.
5. Lower the heat, cover loosely and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, until the lentils and vegetables are tender. Add a little water if needed.
6. Season to taste and finish with herbs if using.

Chinese dietary perspective: Lentils and root vegetables make a grounding, gently cooked meal. The warming aromatics give depth without relying on heavy sauces.

Tofu and vegetable stir-fry

Serves	4	Preparation	20 min	Cooking	15 min
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A vegetarian stir-fry with tofu, kale and seasonal vegetables. Serve with brown rice or quinoa.

Ingredients

- 400 g firm tofu, drained and pressed
- 2 carrots, cut into thin strips
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 130 g kale, tough stems removed
- 1 courgette, cut into thin strips
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 20 g fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil
- 3 tbsp lower-salt soy sauce or tamari
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- Black pepper

Method

1. Cut the tofu into cubes. Mix the soy sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil and honey or maple syrup.
2. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a wok or large frying pan. Brown the tofu on all sides, then transfer it to a plate.
3. Add the remaining oil, followed by the garlic and ginger. Cook briefly until fragrant.
4. Add the carrot, pepper and courgette. Stir-fry for 4 minutes.
5. Add the kale and cook for another 2 minutes.
6. Return the tofu, pour in the sauce and toss until everything is coated and steaming hot.

Chinese dietary perspective: The tofu provides substance while the quick cooking keeps the vegetables lively. Ginger and garlic balance the fresher character of the stir-fry.

Baked fish with roasted squash

Serves	4	Preparation	15 min	Cooking	30 min
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Fish and cinnamon-roasted butternut squash make a straightforward Saturday meal with contrasting textures.

Ingredients

- 4 fish fillets, such as salmon, cod or haddock
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 20 g fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus 2 tbsp for the squash
- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tbsp soy sauce or tamari, optional
- Salt and black pepper
- Lemon and parsley to serve, optional

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan or 200°C conventional.
2. Toss the squash with 2 tbsp olive oil, cinnamon and a little seasoning. Roast for 15 minutes.
3. Mix the garlic, ginger, remaining olive oil and optional soy sauce. Brush over the fish.
4. Add the fish to the oven and cook it alongside the squash for 12 to 15 minutes, depending on thickness.
5. Check that the fish is opaque and separates easily with a fork. Continue roasting the squash until tender and lightly caramelised.
6. Serve with lemon or parsley if using.

Chinese dietary perspective: Autumn is traditionally associated with dryness, so this meal combines roasted squash with fish that remains moist when gently baked.

Roast chicken with root vegetables

Serves	4 to 6	Preparation	20 min	Cooking	1 hr 20 min
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A Sunday roast with lemon, sage, carrots and parsnips. Cooking time will vary with the size of the chicken.

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken, approximately 1.5 to 2 kg
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges
- A handful of fresh sage leaves
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 4 carrots, cut into chunks
- 4 parsnips, cut into chunks
- 2 red onions, cut into wedges
- 4 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- Salt and black pepper
- 250 ml water or chicken stock

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C fan or 200°C conventional.
2. Put the vegetables and garlic in a roasting tin. Toss with 1 tbsp olive oil and a little seasoning.
3. Rub the chicken with the remaining oil and season it. Put the lemon and sage inside the cavity, then place the chicken on top of the vegetables.
4. Pour the water or stock into the tin. Roast according to the chicken's weight and packet instructions, basting once or twice.
5. Check the thickest part away from the bone. It should reach at least 75°C for 30 seconds; without a thermometer, ensure there is no pink meat, the juices run clear and the centre is steaming hot.
6. Rest the chicken for 15 minutes before carving. Serve with the roasted vegetables.

Chinese dietary perspective: Roasting brings warmth and sweetness to root vegetables. The complete meal is substantial, so portions can be adjusted according to appetite.

A flexible seasonal guide

This is a starting point, not a fixed prescription. You can exchange vegetables, proteins and grains according to availability, preference and tolerance. If a dish feels too heavy, reduce the portion or add more vegetables. If it is not substantial enough, add rice, barley, bread or another food that suits you.

Persistent digestive symptoms, unexplained weight loss, blood in the stool, repeated vomiting, severe abdominal pain or a significant unexplained change in bowel habit should be medically assessed.

Further support

For individual Chinese dietary guidance or acupuncture support in Lewes, visit esaiashobbs.com/chinese-dietary-therapy-lewes or book at bookesaias.com/booking.

Food safety guidance: UK Food Standards Agency, [Cooking your food, gov.uk](https://www.food.gov.uk).