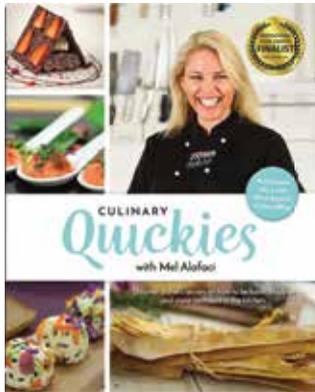


# KITCHEN

# Quickie



## *Culinary Quickies*

*Culinary Quickies* is a recipe book with a difference written by African Australian chef and entrepreneur, Mel Alafaci. Known as the Queen of Culinary Bling, this sassy, smiley, happy chef will have you creating culinary masterpieces out of everyday ingredients in no time. Chef Mel shares ALL of her culinary secrets and shortcuts offering practical advice to get you feeling confident and to find your mojo in the kitchen again.

To purchase visit: [www.chefmel.me](http://www.chefmel.me)



### ↑ MOROCCAN MINCE WITH PISTACHIO AND DATE GRAVEL

2 squirts of a canola or rice bran cooking spray into a large nonstick pan  
 800g lean beef mince (fluff this up with your hands so it's all nice and loose and fluffy and not in one big block)  
 1 large onion, finely diced  
 1 clove of garlic crushed (optional)  
 1 tablespoon ras el hanout (you can make your own using my recipe or just use 1 teaspoon cumin powder, ½ teaspoon cardamom powder and ½ coriander powder)  
 1 teaspoon turmeric (the most important ingredient other than good quality mince, this will add fabulous colour to your otherwise drab mince!)  
 ½ cup finely diced fennel or you could use grated carrot, zucchini or you choose!  
 1 vegetable or beef stock cube crumbled to a powder  
 1 cup chopped tomatoes or use one tin chopped tomato  
 2 tablespoons tomato paste or Passata  
 1 tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed  
 salt and pepper to season.  
 About 1 teaspoon of lemon zest

### PISTACHIO AND DATE GRAVEL - MIX TOGETHER

1-2 tablespoons pistachios bashed or chopped to a nice coarse gravel  
 2 tablespoons finely chopped dates  
 I added some dried rose petals but if you don't have that grate in some lemon zest (½ teaspoon) and 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley or coriander for colour.

The first thing you should do is heat and grease a large pan until just about smoking hot. The mince must sizzle when it hits the pan... Now add the mince that you have broken up in the packaging or a bowl so it is loose and fluffy already. Put the mince into the pan...it should sizzle nice and loud and sexy. Do not stir, I know you are worried about this burning and you are also worried about lumps, but let the mince brown and seal on the first side you put down first and let the pan heat up again and then you can stir ever so slightly just to get some more mince onto the base of the pan. My favourite mince 'fluffer' is one of those cheap plastic-coated whisks you get at the supermarket that only has about 4 loops. If you don't have one of those use a strong plastic spoon or egg flip to break down the mince. Once the mince is brown and fragrant and sexy all by itself, then and only then do you add the finely

chopped onion and garlic. There should be enough oil out of the mince that you have rendered off during your amazing sizzle cooking of the mince at a nice high heat. You can stir as much as you like now by the way, that mince is sealed off! Now add the spices, fennel, stock powder and seasoning and stir through. Amazing colour isn't it! Finally, add the chopped tomatoes and passata and the chickpeas and you're practically done. Turn down the heat and let that all cook through and then add the lemon zest and it's ready to serve. This way of cooking will not only save you time, but it will add valuable flavour and vibrant personality to your otherwise boring mince.

I love to get creative with my mince and change the spices thus changing the flavour. I served mine with a yoghurt swirl and the pistachio and date gravel with just a twist of fresh peppery rocket leaves.  
**Serves 4-6**

### ← SEARED CRISPY SKIN FISH WITH PANCETTA BARK AND RUSTIC PEA MASH

180g fish, skin on, per person  
 Salt and pepper to season  
 Half lemon or lime per serving  
 4-6 strips of Pancetta placed on a roasting tray and then baked until crispy in a hot oven of 200°C

A beautiful piece of fish or salmon needs little masking and if cooked perfectly, will simply shine! The trick is to cook the fish properly and get the skin sexy and crispy. You need to get your pan or BBQ SWEAR WORD HOT and greased with about 5 ml vegetable or rice bran oil in the pan just so that the fish doesn't stick. When the pan is hot, place the fish (not skin side) presentation side down, and use your tongs to make sure it doesn't stick...I just give the piece a little wiggle to make sure it hasn't stuck but will create a sexy crust of flavour and colour. When the first side is brown (simply look underneath and lift with your tongs) turn it over to do the skin side too. After about a minute or two you should be able to remove the skin using the tongs. Don't stress if it breaks or you have to strip-peel it off, it is all part of the rustic glamour of this dish! Place the skin aside and then turn the now skin-free side down to brown it off. When the fish is cooked (check by placing a fork or knife in the centre of the thickest part and if it flakes when you twist it is done!) Remove from the pan and now lower the heat and fry the skin nice and hot but not so hot that it burns in a flash...this will dry and crisp up the skin and the best way is to remove the skin so you don't overcook the fish!



### ← BUTTERBEAN PUREE

**2 tins of butterbeans, drained**  
**¼ cup cream or milk or simply use stock if you want to omit dairy**

**1 clove of garlic, crushed**  
**¼ teaspoon turmeric**  
**¼ veggie or chicken stock cube to taste**

Place all ingredients in a large saucepan and heat over a really low heat, stirring regularly for about 10 minutes until wonderfully hot. Once the beans are heated through, simply mash with the metal head of a stick blender OR place in a food processor once cooled slightly. Either process completely, or leave slightly chunky for a more rustic mash! Feel free to add some hot water to make this puree thinner if you don't want it as thick. You can make this as thick or as thin as you like. And if you have leftovers, you can repurpose this as a sexy dip (drizzle with olive oil, crushed pistachios and dukkah). Serve either serve chunky or as a puree.



### ← BROWNIE HOUSE

**250 g unsalted butter**  
**200g dark chocolate**  
**4 large eggs**  
**360g castor sugar**  
**65g plain fl our**  
**1tsp baking powder**  
**5g Ras el Hanout or vanilla paste**  
**80g cocoa powder**  
**100g chocolate chips/roasted nuts**

Melt butter and dark chocolate together. You will need to break the chocolate into pieces of course to help it melt easier. Once melted stir through until smooth and allow to cool slightly. Beat eggs and castor sugar together until pale and fluffy. Sift plain flour, baking powder, Ras el Hanout and cocoa powder together. Mix all of these together to make a smooth batter and also add chocolate chips or roasted nuts of your choice. Spoon into a greased baking sheet and then bake in a moderate oven of 180°C for 20-25 minutes until firm on the outside but still very gooey on the inside...do not be tempted to overcook these, they are best when extremely gooey.