

Goblin Tools for Food and Cooking

Turning food tasks into clearer, smaller steps

Sometimes the hardest part of eating is not the food itself. It is deciding what to make, translating a recipe, beginning the first step and remembering what comes next. Goblin Tools is a collection of small digital tools designed for occasions when something feels too big or complicated. Two parts can be particularly useful around food: Chef and Magic ToDo.

Chef suggests a dish from the ingredients and details you enter. Magic ToDo takes a task and breaks it into smaller actions. Chef can also send its result directly to Magic ToDo. Used thoughtfully, this can reduce the blank-page feeling between “I need to eat” and taking the first workable action.

The tool should carry some of the thinking, not decide what is safe for your body.

This guide shows how to add the information that makes suggestions more useful, how to turn a meal into manageable steps, and how to check every result for allergens, food safety, sensory suitability and realism. Goblin Tools is not a dietitian, clinician or guaranteed recipe source.

What the two tools do

Tool	Its role	Useful food example
Chef	Suggests a dish using ingredients and details supplied by the user.	“I have microwave rice, tuna and sweetcorn. One bowl, no frying.”
Magic ToDo	Breaks a broad task into smaller actions. The spiciness setting influences how much detail it creates.	Turns “make lunch” into visible, checkable steps.

Why this may help

A broad instruction such as “cook dinner” relies on initiation, planning, sequencing, working memory, time awareness and switching attention. A generated list moves some of that information outside the mind. The person can focus on the current step instead of trying to hold the entire task at once. This may be helpful for ADHD, autism, fatigue, brain fog, low mood, anxiety or anyone who becomes stuck when a task is vague.

Before you begin

Write down three non-negotiables: **what you must avoid**, **what equipment you can use** and **how much effort you can manage**. Include diagnosed allergies and intolerances clearly, but never assume the output has checked them correctly. If cross-contamination matters, check packaging and preparation yourself.

A strong Chef prompt

Include	Example wording
Ingredients	“I have eggs, bread and grated cheese.”
Equipment	“I can use a microwave and toaster only.”
Capacity	“No chopping; maximum five actions; under ten minutes.”
Sensory needs	“Keep foods separate; smooth or predictable texture; mild smell.”
Dietary limits	“Do not include my listed allergens. I will still check every ingredient.”
Portion and skill	“One person; beginner; use UK measurements.”

Copy-and-adapt prompt

“Please suggest one simple meal for one person using [ingredients]. I can use [equipment]. I need no more than [number] steps and [time] minutes. Avoid [ingredients]. My sensory needs are [details]. Keep foods [separate/mixed] and use UK measurements. Include food-safety checks, but I will verify them independently.”

If the suggestion is wrong

You do not need to force it to work. Remove an ingredient, reduce the number of steps, state “use only the ingredients listed”, or ask for three simpler alternatives. If nothing feels safe, stop and use a familiar option. The purpose is to reduce pressure, not create a new standard you must meet.

From Chef to Magic ToDo

Once Chef has suggested something suitable, use “Send result to the Magic ToDo”. Check the list before beginning. Delete irrelevant tasks, add missing safety steps and move actions into the order that matches your kitchen. A computer-generated sequence can sound confident while still being impractical.

Example task breakdown

Broad task	Smaller visible actions
Make microwave rice with a familiar topping	1 Check the packet and allergens. 2 Put the rice packet beside the microwave. 3 Choose the topping. 4 Heat exactly as the packet directs. 5 Let it stand if instructed. 6 Open carefully because steam can burn. 7 Add or serve the topping separately. 8 Sit down and eat. 9 Store or discard leftovers safely.

Using the spiciness setting

Magic ToDo says a higher spiciness level signals that the task feels harder or more stressful, so it attempts to break it into more steps. More detail is not always better. If a long list increases overwhelm, lower the setting or keep only the next three actions. If “prepare food” is still too vague, raise it and break that item down again.

Make the list fit your brain

For working memory: keep the screen visible and tick each action. **For time blindness:** use the estimator as a rough guide, then rely on packet timings and a kitchen timer for cooking. **For sensory overload:** insert steps such as open a window, use ear protection or leave the room safely while the microwave runs. **For demand avoidance:** write choices rather than commands, such as “choose whether to heat the soup now or in ten minutes”.

Three useful ways to use it

Situation	What to enter	What to keep
I have ingredients but no idea	Ingredients, equipment, time and sensory limits in Chef.	One suggestion that feels realistic.
I know the meal but cannot start	The meal name in Magic ToDo.	Only the next physical action.
The recipe is too vague	Paste or summarise it and ask for exact numbered actions.	Original temperatures, timings and safety instructions.

The safety check before cooking

Pause before treating any generated recipe as reliable. Check the following against the food label, a trusted recipe or professional advice.

Check	Question to ask yourself
Allergens	Does every ingredient, topping, stock, sauce and substitute fit my needs? What about cross-contamination?
Cooking	Are the temperature, time and method appropriate for the actual product and appliance?
Storage	Has the food been stored correctly and is it within its use-by date?
Reheating	Does the packaging allow reheating, and will the food be steaming hot throughout where required?
Suitability	Does this fit my medical, sensory, swallowing and nutritional needs?

AI can invent combinations, overlook a restriction, misunderstand quantities or omit a crucial safety step. Never use it to decide whether an allergen is safe, whether food has spoiled, or whether a medical diet can be altered.

My low-capacity template

Foods I have: _____

Foods I must avoid: _____

Equipment I can manage: _____

Maximum time: _____ Maximum number of steps: _____

Texture, smell or presentation needs: _____

Do I need foods kept separate? _____

The familiar backup food I will use if the suggestion fails: _____

A message from Maggie

When your mind is already full, being expected to invent a meal and organise every step can feel like one demand too many. A tool that helps with the thinking can be valuable, but you remain the expert on what feels safe, what your body tolerates and what you can manage that day.

You do not have to follow every suggestion or complete every generated step. Keep what helps, change what does not, and return to a familiar food whenever you need to. Technology should make eating more accessible; it should never become another voice telling you that you have failed.

Sources and further information

Goblin Tools. Official collection of tools for tasks that feel too big or complicated.

goblin.tools

The Chef. Official guidance says Chef suggests a dish from the ingredients and details supplied, including equipment and ability.

goblin.tools/Chef

Magic ToDo. Official guidance explains task breakdown and the spiciness setting.

goblin.tools/ToDo

Food Standards Agency. UK food safety, hygiene and allergy information.

food.gov.uk

Books to explore

How to Keep House While Drowning by KC Davis - a shame-reducing approach to care tasks and workable systems.

Smart but Scattered Adults by Richard Guare, Peg Dawson and Colin Guare - practical support for executive skills.

The Autistic Adult's Guide to Nourishing Yourself by Kendra Little - practical discussion of barriers to feeding yourself.

Clinical note

This resource is educational and is not an endorsement or clinical validation of generated recipes. People with allergies, ARFID, eating disorders, swallowing difficulties, diabetes, kidney disease, gastrointestinal conditions, pregnancy-related requirements or prescribed diets may need individual advice from a registered dietitian or relevant clinician.

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