

50 HIGH VOLUME LOW CALORIE TREATS & TOPPERS FOR A HUNGRY GOLDENDOODLE



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Why your doodle is always hungry



You are not imagining it, and you are not underfeeding her.

Why your doodle is always hungry

A Goldendoodle sits at the meeting point of two lines that both push toward food. The Golden Retriever half comes from a breed owners describe, with weary affection, as eating “as if they haven’t been fed in days.” The Poodle half is one of the quickest learners in the dog world – and what a quick learner learns fastest is which behavior pays.

Put those together and you get a dog who wants food and who has worked out, with some precision, exactly which face gets it.

What this book actually does

It does not make your dog less hungry. Nothing does that reliably, and a book that promises it is selling you something.

What it does is change the exchange rate. Right now, a handful of shop-bought biscuits might cost your dog a fifth of her daily calorie budget and be gone in eleven seconds. The recipes in here are built the other way round: **maximum chewing time and maximum bowl volume, for the fewest calories possible.**

Same begging face. Same “yes.” Far less arithmetic damage.

Why your doodle is always hungry

How to use it

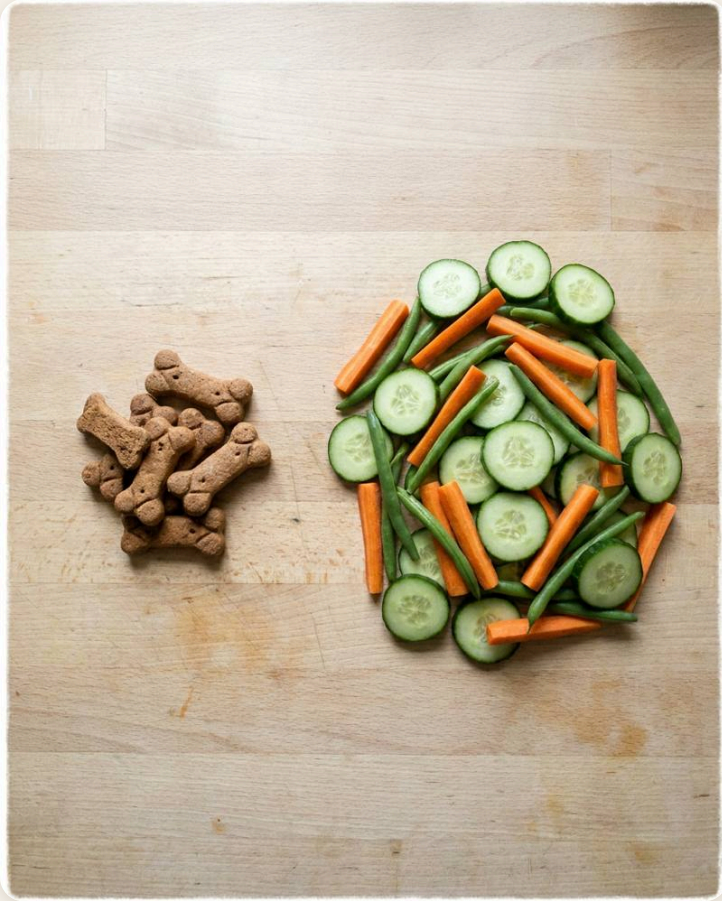
Read the next five chapters first – they take about ten minutes and they are the part that keeps your dog safe. Then use the recipes in whatever order suits your week.

The recipes are grouped by effort, not by ingredient:

1. **No-cook** – things you can hand over in under a minute
2. **Frozen and slow** – treats designed to take a long time to finish
3. **Toppers** – bulk you add to the bowl so the meal looks bigger
4. **Baked in batches** – one afternoon, two weeks of treats
5. **Training micro-treats** – pea-sized, for the days you need fifty repetitions

Every recipe carries a calorie figure, a storage window, and a note about who should skip it.

The only number that matters: 10%



Before any recipe, you need one number – how many calories your dog is allowed to spend on treats in a day. Without it, “healthy homemade treats” is just a nicer way to make a dog fat.

The only number that matters: 10%

The World Small Animal Veterinary Association and the American Animal Hospital Association both put it the same way: **treats and other unbalanced food should not exceed 10% of a dog's daily calories.** At least 90% has to come from complete, balanced food, because that is where the vitamins and minerals are.

Go past 10% regularly and you get two problems at once – an unbalanced diet and a heavier dog.

Working out your dog's number

Two steps. You need a calculator or a phone, and about a minute.

Step 1 – resting energy. Both formulas below are written in kilograms, because that is how the veterinary bodies publish them. If you weigh your dog in pounds, divide by 2.2 first – a 45 lb dog is 20 kg. That one division is the only metric you have to do.

There are two accepted formulas. Use whichever you like; for a dog between 4 and 100 lbs (2 and 45 kg) they land close together.

The simple one, approved by both AAHA and WSAVA:

RER = 30 × (weight in kg) + 70 · in pounds: **RER = 30 × (lbs ÷ 2.2) + 70**

The precise one:

RER = 70 × (weight in kg)^{0.75}

The only number that matters: 10%

Step 2 – real-life energy. Multiply the resting figure by a factor for your dog's life:

YOUR DOG	MULTIPLY BY
Adult, neutered or spayed	1.6
Adult, not neutered	1.8
On a weight-loss plan	1.0
Puppy, still growing	2.0 – 3.0

That gives you the day's total. **Ten percent of it is your treat budget.**

Worked example

A 45 lb (20 kg) spayed adult Goldendoodle, ordinary activity:

- $\text{RER} = 30 \times 20 + 70 = \mathbf{670 \text{ kcal}}$
- $\text{Daily total} = 670 \times 1.6 = \mathbf{1,072 \text{ kcal}}$
- $\text{Treat budget} = \mathbf{\text{about } 107 \text{ kcal a day}}$

One hundred and seven calories. That is roughly one tablespoon of peanut butter and nothing else, all day.

Now look at it the other way. A large cucumber – a whole one, 10 oz (300 g), skin on – is about 45 calories. So a hundred and seven calories buys you **two** of them, sliced thin, spread across the whole day. Call it eighty separate pieces. Eighty separate moments of “yes.”

The only number that matters: 10%

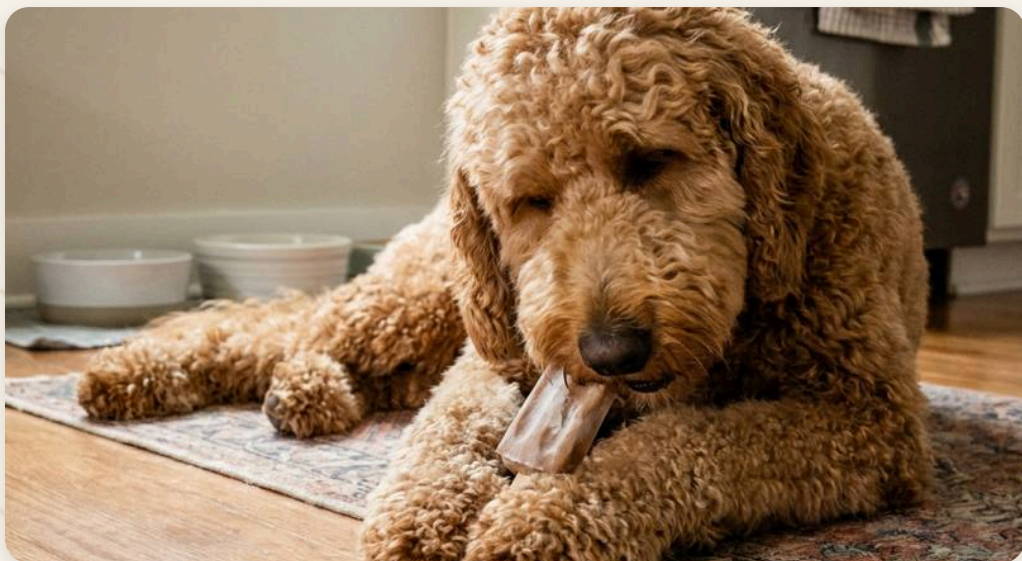
That is the whole idea of this book. Same budget. One tablespoon of nothing, or eighty small victories.

Where the numbers in this book come from

Every calorie figure in these recipes is a USDA reference value, rounded. They are close estimates, not laboratory measurements of your particular carrot. Treat them as a working budget, not a promise.

If your dog is on a prescription diet, is diabetic, or is being managed for a medical condition, get your budget from your vet instead of from this page.

The volume trick: chew time per calorie



A calorie is a unit of energy. It is not a unit of dog time.

Your dog does not experience a hundred calories. She experiences the number of times something good happened, and how long each one lasted. Count and duration – those are what your treat budget actually buys, and what you get for the money varies enormously depending on what you spend it on.

Start at the bad end of the scale. A medium commercial biscuit carries 40 kcal; that figure comes straight off the box, not from us. So a hundred calories is two and a half biscuits. Crunched, swallowed, gone before you have closed the cupboard. You have spent most of a 45 lb (20 kg) dog's daily treat allowance and bought her two, maybe three moments.

The volume trick: chew time per calorie

Now spend the same hundred calories on cucumber.

The exchange rate

Everything below is worked from USDA reference values, per 100 kcal – a round number that happens to sit close to the daily budget we calculated in the last chapter.

WHAT YOU HAND OVER	ONE PIECE	PIECES PER 100 KCAL	ROUGHLY HOW LONG IT LASTS
Plain ice cube	0 kcal	as many as you like	a few minutes
Celery strip, 4 in (10 cm), 4 g	about 0.6 kcal	around 180	a few seconds
Carrot coin, 3 g	about 1.2 kcal	around 80	a few seconds
Cucumber slice, ¼ in (6 mm), 9 g	about 1.4 kcal	around 70	a few seconds
Green bean, raw, 4 in (10 cm), 5.5 g	about 1.7 kcal	around 58	under a minute
Frozen pumpkin puree, 1 tbsp (15 ml)	about 5 kcal	around 12	a minute or two off a spoon

The volume trick: chew time per calorie

WHAT YOU HAND OVER	ONE PIECE	PIECES PER 100 KCAL	ROUGHLY HOW LONG IT LASTS
The same tablespoon on a frozen lick mat	about 5 kcal	around 12	about 10 minutes
Frozen stuffed toy, filled	about 35 kcal	under 3	about 20 to 30 minutes
Dried chicken strip, from 10 g cooked breast	about 17 kcal	around 6	a minute or so
Medium commercial biscuit	40 kcal	2 and a half	seconds

The times in the last column are approximate on purpose. Nobody has measured this in a laboratory, and every dog is different – a determined chewer will halve them and a careful licker will double them. They are there to show you the shape of the difference, not to be timed with a stopwatch.

Read it top to bottom and the argument makes itself. The wetter and plainer the food, the more of it your dog gets to have.

Water is doing all the work

There is no trick ingredient here. Cucumber is 15 kcal per 100 g. Celery is 14. Green beans are 31. Cooked chicken breast is 165. The vegetables are mostly water, and water has weight, takes up room in a stomach and needs chewing – while carrying no calories at all. You are buying bulk with something that is free.

The volume trick: chew time per calorie

Freezing buys you the second free thing: time. A tablespoon of pumpkin puree licked off a spoon is over immediately. The same tablespoon smeared thin on a mat and frozen is a long, quiet project. Not one calorie changed. Only the clock did.

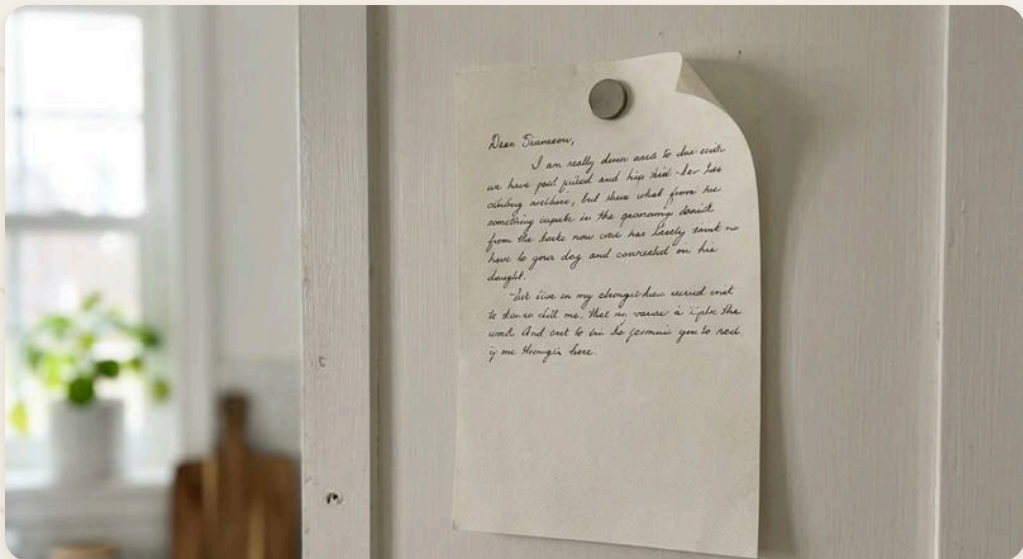
Two rules that fall out of this

Count moments, not treats. When you are deciding what to give, ask how many separate times she gets to be pleased, not how much food is in your hand.

Cut smaller than feels generous. She is counting events, not measuring millimeters. A carrot coin cut half as thick is half the calories and exactly the same amount of “yes.” It is the cheapest change in this book.

One caution before the recipes. Hard raw vegetables and ice cubes are not right for every dog – a dog who bolts food whole, a senior with sore or cracked teeth, or a puppy still losing baby teeth. Cut to a size your dog cannot swallow whole, and stay in the room.

The red list: never, in any amount



This is the page to photograph and keep on your phone. Nothing here belongs in a recipe, a topper, or a “just a crumb” moment – however small the portion, however many dogs on the internet have eaten it and been fine. No safe quantity is implied anywhere below. That is the point of the list.

The thirteen

1 • Xylitol (also sold as birch sugar or wood sugar). A sweetener in sugar-free gum, “keto” baking, some toothpastes and a handful of peanut butters. It triggers a massive insulin release in dogs, and blood sugar can crash within 10 to 60 minutes. It survives baking. The next chapter is entirely about this one.

The red list: never, in any amount

2 • Chocolate, cocoa powder and baking chocolate. Theobromine rises as the chocolate darkens: milk chocolate around 44 mg per ounce (28 g), semi-sweet around 150, baking chocolate around 390. Poison control treats 20 mg/kg as the threshold for mild signs, 60 mg/kg for seizures.

3 • Grapes and raisins. No established safe dose exists. Some dogs have gone into kidney failure on four or five grapes; others ate more with no effect. The likely culprit, identified in 2021, is tartaric acid, which varies from 0.35% to 2% between bunches – the same handful is not the same risk twice.

4 • Onion, garlic, leek, shallot – the whole Allium family. Raw, cooked, dried or powdered. The thiosulfates damage red blood cells and cause anemia; garlic is three to five times more potent than onion. Signs are often delayed one to five days, which is why owners fail to connect them to a meal.

5 • Macadamia nuts. Weakness – classically in the back legs – plus vomiting, tremor and fever, usually within 3 to 24 hours. Most dogs recover in a day or two.

6 • Alcohol, in any form. Including what ferments inside a rising dough. Signs appear in 30 to 60 minutes: staggering, low body temperature, disorientation, collapse.

The red list: never, in any amount

7 • Caffeine. Coffee, tea, energy drinks and used coffee grounds, which are more concentrated than the brewed drink. Same toxic thresholds as chocolate; a 10 lb (4.5 kg) dog is into mild-signs territory at roughly one cup's worth.

8 • Raw yeast dough that is still rising. Two hazards at once: the dough keeps expanding in a warm stomach, and fermentation produces alcohol straight into the bloodstream. Never leave dough proving within reach.

9 • Black walnuts, and any moldy nut. Black walnut is toxic in its own right, and one or two moldy nuts of any kind can cause tremors or seizures within 15 minutes to a few hours. Roasting does not destroy the toxin.

10 • Nutmeg. Myristicin causes disorientation and hallucinations. Sources disagree on the threshold, which is reason enough to keep it out of dog baking entirely.

11 • Stone fruit pits – cherry, apricot, plum, peach – chewed or crushed, plus apple seeds in quantity. The kernels contain cyanide precursors, and the pit is a choking and blockage risk whether chewed or not. The flesh, pitted, is fine.

12 • Tomato leaves, stems and unripe green tomatoes. Tomatine and solanine. A ripe red tomato is a different matter and is acceptable in small amounts; the green parts of the plant are not.

The red list: never, in any amount

13 • Cinnamon essential oil. Concentrated oil causes chemical burns to the mouth, throat and stomach. Ordinary ground cinnamon in a pinch is a separate question and is not on this list.

If you think she has eaten one of these

Do not wait for symptoms, and do not search for reassurance online. Call.

United States and Canada – ASPCA Animal Poison Control **888-426-4435** · Pet Poison Helpline **855-764-7661**

United Kingdom – Animal PoisonLine **01202 509 000**

Australia – Animal Poisons Helpline **1300 869 738** · **New Zealand** – Animal Poisons Helpline **0800 869 738**

All are staffed around the clock. Most charge a consultation fee, which is cheaper than the alternative; the Australian and New Zealand line is free. Have ready: her weight, what she ate, roughly how much, and when.

These are independent animal poison services, open to the public. They are not run by us and have nothing to do with where you bought this book – they are simply the people to call. Save the one for your country in your phone now, under the dog's name, so you are not looking for this page in a hurry.

The peanut butter problem

Peanut butter is in more homemade dog treats than any other ingredient, and it is the single most likely way something in this book kills a dog. Not because of the peanuts. Because of what some manufacturers put in beside them.

What xylitol does

Xylitol is a sugar alcohol used to sweeten things without sugar. In people it barely touches insulin. In dogs the pancreas reads it as a large sugar load and dumps insulin into the bloodstream, and blood glucose falls off a cliff.

The North Carolina State College of Veterinary Medicine puts the window at **10 to 60 minutes** from eating to hypoglycemia. That is faster than most owners notice anything is wrong. The dog goes wobbly, weak, disoriented; then vomiting, collapse, seizures.

The doses are small. Above roughly **100 mg per kg** of body weight is the level associated with low blood sugar; above roughly **500 mg per kg** there is a risk of liver failure within 12 to 24 hours. For a 45 lb (20 kg) Goldendoodle the first threshold is about two grams – less than a teaspoon of the pure powder, and well inside what a spoonful of the wrong peanut butter can hold.

The peanut butter problem

There is a rarer problem too: severe liver injury appearing 24 to 48 hours later, which does **not** track neatly with dose. The published case series on it are small – a well-known one followed eight dogs – so nobody can give you an honest percentage, and this book will not invent one. What those reports do agree on is that once the liver goes, many of these dogs do not recover.

Why the label is the only defense

Three things make this hazard different from everything else on the red list.

It hides under other names. A label may say *birch sugar* or *wood sugar*. Same compound, same effect.

Baking does not destroy it. Heat does nothing to xylitol. A biscuit baked at 350°F (175°C) is exactly as dangerous as the jar it came from.

Recipes change without announcement. Several protein-boosted and low-sugar peanut butter brands have used xylitol at one time or another; some have dropped it since, others have added it. We deliberately do not print a list of safe brands – such a list is out of date the moment a manufacturer reformulates. Your jar is the only jar that matters.

The peanut butter problem

The rule, for the rest of this book

Read the ingredients panel every single time you open a new jar – including a brand you have bought for years.

Not the front of the label, not “natural” – the ingredients list. You want to see peanuts, and possibly salt. Anything sweetened, sugar-free, keto or protein-fortified goes back on the shelf.

Every recipe here that uses peanut butter repeats this instruction. That is not an editing oversight.

If you think your dog has eaten xylitol, do not wait for symptoms. Call animal poison control – **888-426-4435** in the US and Canada, **01202 509 000** in the UK, **1300 869 738** in Australia, **0800 869 738** in New Zealand. The full list is in the red-list chapter.

Kitchen rules: heat, storage, mold



Homemade treats have one disadvantage against the bag from the shop: nothing in them holds back bacteria or mold. No preservatives, no sealed packaging, no shelf-life testing. What stands in for all of that is you – a thermometer, a date written on the lid, and a willingness to throw things away.

Three rules cover almost everything.

1. Cook meat all the way through

Kitchen rules: heat, storage, mold

Every meat ingredient in this book is fully cooked. The USDA minimum internal temperatures were written for human food, but the bacteria are the same ones, and your hands are touching the same counter.

WHAT YOU ARE COOKING	MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURE
Chicken and turkey – whole, pieces, or ground	165°F (74°C)
Beef and pork – steaks, chops, roasts	145°F (63°C), then rest 3 minutes
Ground beef and ground pork	160°F (71°C)
Eggs	cooked firm, no runny white

Ground meat gets its own line for a reason. Grinding spreads whatever was on the surface right through the batch, so mince needs a higher number than a whole cut of the same animal.

Take the reading in the thickest part, away from the pan. Color is not doneness – meat can look gray and still be under temperature.

One more thing: the AVMA does not recommend feeding dogs raw or undercooked meat, poultry, fish or eggs. There are no raw-meat recipes in this book, and that is deliberate.

2. Label the batch, respect the window

WHERE IT LIVES	HOW LONG
Airtight jar on the counter	3–5 days soft; up to 2 weeks fully dried and crisp

Kitchen rules: heat, storage, mold

WHERE IT LIVES	HOW LONG
Fridge, 40°F (4°C) or below	up to 2 weeks
Freezer, 0°F (-18°C) or below	up to 6 months

Two conditions on that table.

The two-week fridge window is for dry, low-moisture baked treats. Anything with cooked meat, egg, cheese or yogurt in it follows the ordinary leftovers rule instead – **3 to 4 days in the fridge**, then the freezer.

And nothing containing meat, dairy or fresh fruit ever sits out on the counter. That goes straight into the fridge, however tempting the jar by the kettle is.

Write the date on the container. You will not remember.

3. If you can see mold, the whole batch goes

Not the moldy corner. The batch.

Mold growing on food rich in fat and protein can produce tremorgenic mycotoxins – penitrem A is the common one – and in dogs those bring vomiting, tremors, unsteadiness and seizures, sometimes within fifteen minutes of eating. The growth reaches well past the fuzzy patch you can see, so scraping the top off does not remove the toxin.

Kitchen rules: heat, storage, mold

Visible mold, a sour or odd smell, a slimy or changed texture: throw it out. A wasted batch costs you an hour. The alternative is a night at the emergency clinic.

The extra rule for homemade jerky

If you dry meat strips yourself, heat the meat first – **160°F (71°C) for beef, 165°F (74°C) for poultry** – before it goes anywhere near the dehydrator.

A dehydrator runs at only 130–140°F (54–60°C), which will not kill pathogens on raw meat, and bacteria become considerably more heat-resistant once they dry out. The wet heat of pre-cooking is what makes home-dried jerky safe. Dry it after that, at the usual 130–140°F (54–60°C).

Recipes 1-10 • No-cook, under a minute



This is the chapter you will use most, and it is barely cooking at all. A knife, a board, less time than it takes to boil a kettle.

It is also where the exchange rate from Chapter 3 does its best work. Raw vegetables are mostly water and fiber, so they buy a great deal of chewing for almost nothing – a whole cup (240 ml) of sliced cucumber costs about eight calories. Your dog gets the crunch and the ceremony of being handed something; your budget barely moves.

Two habits keep it safe. **Cut thin:** thick chunks of hard vegetable are a choking risk, and a slice that has to be chewed lasts longer anyway.

Introduce one new thing at a time, in a small amount, and watch the next day's digestion. Every figure below is a USDA reference value, rounded down rather than up.

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

1. Thin cucumber coins

About 8 kcal a cup (240 ml) of slices · makes 10-12 coins · 1 minute

You need

- Half a medium cucumber, washed, skin on

Method

1. Slice crosswise no thicker than 1/8 inch (3 mm) – thin enough to bend.
2. Hand them over one at a time, or scatter them for a nose-work hunt.

Why it works. Cucumber is roughly 95% water – ten coins is ten separate moments of “yes” for under ten calories.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – your dog swallows without chewing. Grate it instead.

2. Carrot batons

About 3 kcal a baton · makes 8 · 1 minute

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

You need

- 1 medium carrot, washed, ends trimmed

Method

1. Cut in half crosswise, then quarter each half lengthwise.
2. For a dog under 20 lbs (9 kg), halve the batons again.

Why it works. A whole medium carrot is about 25 kcal, and raw carrot demands real chewing rather than one swallow.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 4 days. **Skip if** – your dog has dental damage. Steam them soft instead.

3. Raw green bean handful

About 16 kcal a half cup (120 ml) · makes 1 serving · 1 minute

You need

- A handful of fresh green beans, washed, stem ends snapped off

Method

1. Snap into pieces about 1 inch (2.5 cm) long.
2. Serve cold from the fridge – colder beans are crunchier.

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

Why it works. Green beans fill a bowl and take real chewing. Half a cup is about a sixth of a 45 lb (20 kg) dog's daily treat budget.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 4 days. **Skip if** – the beans are canned with added salt. Plain and unsalted only.

4. Zucchini planks

Under 2 kcal a plank · makes about 12 · 2 minutes

You need

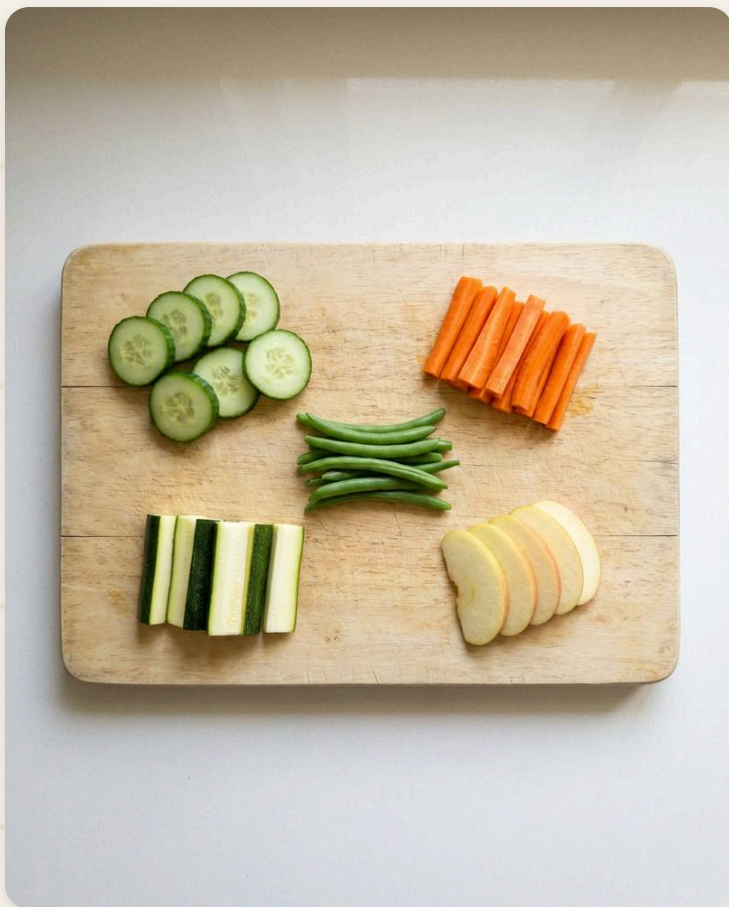
- 1 small zucchini, about 4 oz (118 g), washed, skin on

Method

1. Halve lengthwise, then slice into planks about 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick.
2. Serve raw.

Why it works. A whole small zucchini is roughly 20 kcal and gives you a dozen hand-overs. Softer than carrot, so it suits worn teeth.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 3 days. Slimy cut edges mean throw it out. **Skip if** – it tastes bitter to you. Bitter zucchini goes in the trash for everyone.



5. Celery half-moons

About 6 kcal a stalk · makes about 15 pieces · 1 minute

You need

- 1 medium celery stalk, washed, leaves removed

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

Method

1. Split the stalk lengthwise down the middle. This breaks the long strings.
2. Slice crosswise into thin half-moons.

Why it works. An entire stalk costs less than one small biscuit and splits into fifteen rewards.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 4 days. **Skip if** – you have not split the stalk. Whole strings are awkward to swallow.

6. Broccoli confetti

About 4 kcal a quarter cup (60 ml) · makes 1 small serving · 1 minute

You need

- 2 or 3 raw broccoli florets, washed

Method

1. Chop the florets down to pieces the size of a pea.
2. Scatter over dinner, or feed by the pinch.

Why it works. Broccoli adds visible bulk to a bowl for almost nothing.

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – you were planning a bigger portion. Broccoli is high in fiber, and larger amounts cause gas and loose stools. Garnish, not meal.

7. Apple crescents

About 4 kcal a crescent · makes 6 · 2 minutes

You need

- A quarter of a medium apple, washed, skin on

Method

1. Cut the core away completely and pick out every seed. Not most of them – all of them.
2. Slice the quarter into six thin crescents.

Why it works. Sweet enough to feel like a real treat, at about 24 kcal for the quarter, and the skin adds chewing time.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 2 days. Browning is fine; softness and a fermented smell are not. **Skip if** – your dog is diabetic or on a vet-managed weight plan.

Recipes 1-10 · No-cook, under a minute

8. Sweet red pepper strips

About 2 kcal a strip · makes about 12 · 2 minutes

You need

- Half a red bell pepper, washed, stem and seeds removed

Method

1. Cut away the white pith and every seed.
2. Slice into strips about 1/4 inch (6 mm) wide, halved for small dogs.

Why it works. A whole cup (240 ml) of strips is about 24 kcal, and the crunch is loud without being hard on teeth.

Keeps – fridge, sealed container, up to 4 days. **Skip if** – it is anything but a plain sweet bell pepper. No chili, nothing pickled.

9. The ten-berry count

About 8 kcal for ten blueberries · makes 1 serving · 1 minute

You need

- 10 fresh blueberries, washed – or 2 medium strawberries, hulled and halved, about 4 kcal each

Method

Recipes 1-10 • No-cook, under a minute

1. Wash and dry.
2. Feed one at a time – ten berries is ten repetitions of a trick, or ten seconds of a search game.

Why it works. Small, soft, sweet and countable – you always know exactly what you have spent.

Keeps – fridge, up to 3 days. Berries mold fast, and mold is not something to pick around – if one has fuzz, the punnet goes. **Skip if** – you were reaching for grapes or raisins instead. Those are red list at any amount.

Swap: seedless watermelon, rind removed, in 1 inch (2.5 cm) cubes – about 5 kcal a cube.

10. The one-spoon pumpkin dip

About 14 kcal a serving • makes 1 • 1 minute

You need

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) plain canned pumpkin – pumpkin only, no salt, no spices, not pie filling
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) plain unsweetened Greek yogurt
- A few vegetable sticks from any recipe above

Recipes 1-10 • No-cook, under a minute

Method

1. Read the yogurt label before it goes near the dog. Anything sugar-free, light or diet can contain xylitol, sold on some labels as birch sugar. Check every time, even a brand you have bought for years.
2. Stir the pumpkin and yogurt together in a small bowl.
3. Let her lick it clean, or use the vegetable sticks as dippers.

Why it works. It turns eight-calorie cucumber into something that smells like a proper reward, and licking takes far longer than chewing. Pumpkin is about 5 kcal a tablespoon, plain nonfat Greek yogurt about 9.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, up to 2 days. Leftover canned pumpkin freezes in an ice-cube tray for up to 3 months. **Skip if** – dairy upsets your dog. Intolerance shows as bloating, gas or loose stools within 30 minutes to 2 hours, so test with half a teaspoon first. Leave the yogurt out for puppies under 12 months, and for any dog on a vet-supervised elimination diet.

Recipes 11-20 • Frozen and slow



A biscuit is gone in four seconds. A frozen lick mat holding the same calories can take twenty minutes. The arithmetic is identical; her afternoon is not. **You are not buying satisfaction with calories – you are buying it with time**, and freezing is the cheapest way to stretch a few calories across a long stretch of licking.

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

One warning first, because it catches people. Almost every carton of broth on the shelf contains onion or garlic, usually as “onion powder,” “natural flavor,” or a stock base. Both are on the red list, both damage red blood cells, and the powdered forms are no safer than fresh. Read the full ingredient list every time, not just the salt line. If the label does not spell out what is in it, do not use it.

Two more things. Very cold treats hurt worn or sensitive teeth – for those dogs, let the treat soften on the counter for five minutes first. And for a fast eater, go smaller, not bigger: a cube she can swallow whole defeats the point.

11. Frozen broth cubes

About 6 kcal a cube · makes 14 · 5 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) unsalted broth, no onion and no garlic
- 1 ice-cube tray

Method

1. Pour the broth into the tray and freeze overnight.
2. Pop the cubes out into a freezer bag.

Why it works. A cube is licked down rather than chewed through, so a handful of calories buys several minutes. Cartons vary – a low-calorie unsalted broth may be half this figure, so check yours.

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – sensitive or damaged teeth, or a dog who swallows cubes whole.

12. Frozen pumpkin coins

About 3.5 kcal a coin · makes 24 · 10 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) plain canned pumpkin – not pumpkin pie filling, which is sugared and spiced
- A silicone mold with small round wells

Method

1. Press the pumpkin into the wells and level the tops.
2. Freeze overnight, then turn out into a bag.

Why it works. Pumpkin is dense and fibrous, so a coin melts slowly instead of vanishing.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – sensitive teeth, or a dog already loose in the stool.

13. The layered stuffed toy

About 25 kcal a toy · makes 1 · 5 minutes, then freeze overnight

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

You need

- 3 tbsp (45 ml) plain canned pumpkin
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) unsalted broth, no onion and no garlic
- 1 hollow rubber toy

Method

1. Plug the small hole with a scrap of carrot so nothing leaks.
2. Spoon in the pumpkin, top up with broth, stand the toy in a mug and freeze overnight.

Why it works. The longest-lasting item in the book – frozen solid, most dogs work at it for twenty to forty minutes.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – your dog chews rubber apart rather than licking it, or has sensitive teeth.

14. Frozen yogurt and blueberry drops

About 4 kcal a drop · makes 24 · 10 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) plain unsweetened yogurt – check the label for xylitol, birch sugar and any other sweetener
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) blueberries

Method

Recipes 11-20 • Frozen and slow

1. Crush the blueberries and stir them through the yogurt.
2. Spoon small drops onto a lined tray and freeze solid.

Why it works. Blueberries are about 57 kcal per 100 g – interest and texture for almost nothing.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – your dog has not had yogurt before. Most adult dogs lose the enzyme for lactose after weaning, so give one drop as a test and wait a day before making a batch. If you add honey, a few drops only – and never for a dog under 12 months (botulism spores) or a diabetic dog.



15. The pumpkin lick mat

About 10 kcal a mat · makes 1 · 3 minutes, then freeze 2 hours

You need

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) plain canned pumpkin
- A silicone lick mat

Method

1. Spread the pumpkin thinly and work it into the grooves.
2. Freeze flat for at least 2 hours.

Why it works. Thin and cold beats thick and soft – spread into grooves, two spoonfuls become ten minutes of licking.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. Wash the mat after every use. **Skip if** – sensitive teeth, or a dog who bites and shreds silicone.

16. Broth-dipped carrot batons

About 5 kcal a baton · makes 6 · 5 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

- 1 medium carrot
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) unsalted broth, no onion and no garlic

Method

1. Cut the carrot into six batons, big enough that she has to chew rather than swallow.
2. Roll them in broth, lay them on a lined tray and freeze overnight.

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

Why it works. A whole medium carrot is about 25 kcal, and frozen it takes real work to get through.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – sensitive teeth, or a dog who gulps hard pieces without chewing.

17. Green bean and broth cubes

About 6 kcal a cube · makes 20 · 10 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) green beans, plain, chopped small
- 1 cup (240 ml) unsalted broth, no onion and no garlic

Method

1. Divide the beans between the wells of an ice-cube tray.
2. Top up with broth and freeze overnight.

Why it works. Green beans are about 31 kcal per 100 g. Set in broth, the pieces surface one at a time.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – sensitive teeth, or a dog prone to gas from high-fiber vegetables.

18. Watermelon freeze

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

About 3 kcal a cube · makes about 16 · 5 minutes, then freeze 3 hours

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) seedless watermelon, rind removed, cut into 1 inch (2.5 cm) cubes

Method

1. Spread the cubes on a lined tray so they do not stick together.
2. Freeze at least 3 hours, then bag them.

Why it works. Watermelon is about 30 kcal per 100 g and mostly water – the cheapest volume in the chapter.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – sensitive teeth. Remove all rind and seeds first.

19. Frozen banana and peanut butter mats

About 40 kcal a mat · makes 2 · 5 minutes, then freeze 2 hours

You need

Recipes 11-20 · Frozen and slow

- 1/2 medium banana
- 1 tsp (5 ml) natural peanut butter – read the label for xylitol or birch sugar every single time, even for a brand you have used for years
- 2 silicone lick mats

Method

1. Mash the banana with the peanut butter.
2. Spread thinly across both mats and freeze flat for 2 hours.

Why it works. Banana is about 89 kcal per 100 g and peanut butter about 94 kcal a tablespoon – the richest thing here. It earns its place by being sticky, which slows a dog more than cold alone.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. **Skip if** – your dog is on a low-fat plan or has a history of pancreatitis. This is a once-a-week treat, not a daily one.

20. The afternoon broth block

About 110 kcal for the whole block · makes 1 · 5 minutes, then freeze overnight

You need

Recipes 11-20 • Frozen and slow

- 1 cup (240 ml) unsalted broth, no onion and no garlic
- 3 cups (720 ml) water
- 1 medium carrot, cut into batons
- A loaf tin or plastic tub

Method

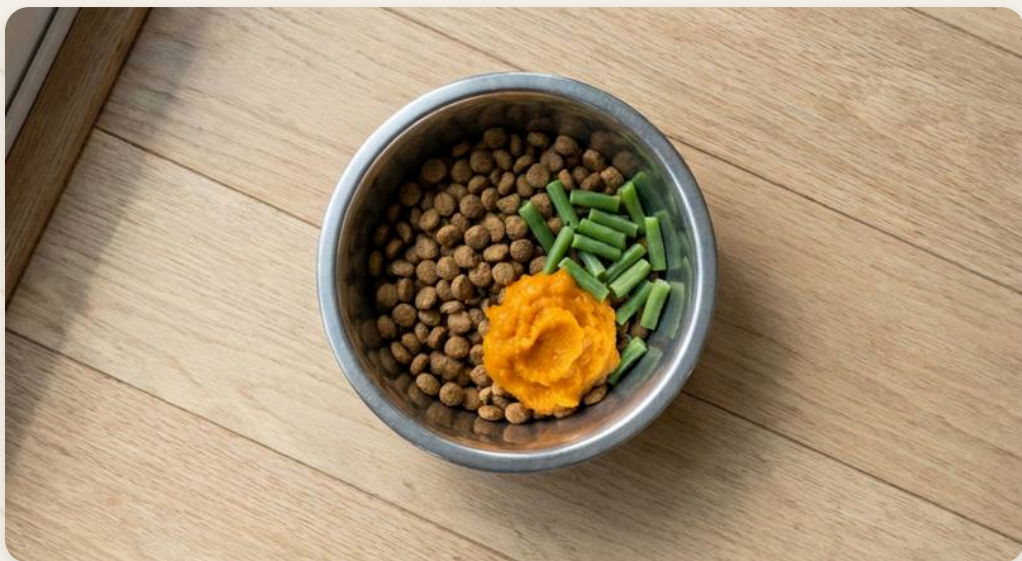
1. Stand the carrot batons in the tin, pour the broth and water over them, freeze overnight.
2. Turn the block out and give it outdoors, or on a tiled floor with a towel underneath.

Why it works. One block occupies most dogs for an hour or more. It is also the biggest calorie item here – for a 45 lb (20 kg) dog, roughly a whole day's treat budget, so it replaces the day's other treats rather than joining them.

Keeps – freezer, up to 3 months. Bring in and throw out any melted remainder; do not refreeze it. **Skip if** – sensitive or damaged teeth, or a dog who cracks ice with her back teeth rather than licking it.

One rule for every batch above. Visible mold or an off smell means the whole lot goes in the trash. Never scrape a patch off and keep the rest – mold toxins spread further than the part you can see.

Recipes 21-30 • Toppers for a fuller bowl



A topper is not something you hand over. It is bulk stirred into the bowl so dinner takes longer, smells stronger, and looks like more food. For a dog who finishes in forty seconds and then stares at you, this is the most useful chapter here.

It is also where people blow the budget. Vegetables feel free. They are not. A topper is unbalanced food, exactly like a biscuit, and it counts inside the same 10% you worked out in chapter 2.

Recipes 21–30 • Toppers for a fuller bowl

The subtraction rule. Whatever goes on, comes off. Find **kcal per cup** on the food bag and divide by 16 – that is one level tablespoon (15 ml) of kibble. Add up the topper calories and take that many out of the meal. A food at 400 kcal per cup is 25 kcal a tablespoon, so a quarter cup of shredded carrot at 11 kcal costs half a tablespoon of kibble – and the bowl still looks bigger. Use the same scoop every time; eyeballing it is how a topper becomes a second dinner.

About the green bean diet. Replacing part of a meal with plain green beans is a real method, and roughly what this chapter does. Replacing the meal is not. Green beans do not carry the vitamins, minerals or protein a dog needs, so a bowl that is mostly beans is quietly short on nutrition, and over months that shows as poor condition and lost muscle. Vets who back the method back it as a **partial** swap, supervised, after checking the weight gain isn't something else, like a thyroid problem. Swapping out a real share of the meal is a conversation with your vet, not a decision from a book.

Two rules run through everything below. **No salt, and nothing from the onion family** – including the powder hiding in shop-bought stock. And if the box in the fridge looks fuzzy or smells sour, the whole box goes in the trash. You never scrape mold off and serve the rest.

Recipes 21–30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

21. Green bean scatter

About 22 kcal a serving · makes 1 bowl · 8 minutes

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) green beans, fresh or frozen, nothing added

Method

1. Steam about 5 minutes, until bendy. Plain canned with no salt added works too.
2. Cool, chop to 1/2 inch (1 cm), stir through the meal.

Why it works. Cooked green beans run about 35 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz) – mostly water and fiber.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – your dog gets gassy on fiber, or is mid elimination diet.

22. Grated zucchini

About 10 kcal a serving · makes 1 bowl · 2 minutes

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) grated zucchini, skin on, about 2 oz (60 g)
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) warm water

Method

Recipes 21-30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

1. Wash and grate coarsely. No need to peel.
2. Stir in with the water so it clings to the kibble.

Why it works. Raw zucchini is about 17 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz), almost all water, and threads through the bowl.

Keeps – fridge up to 2 days; it weeps, so grate fresh where you can.

Skip if – you are starting new food with a puppy under 12 months.

23. One spoon of pumpkin

About 5 kcal a tablespoon · makes 1 bowl · 1 minute

You need

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) canned pumpkin – plain, no salt, no spice
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) warm water

Method

1. Check the can. **Not pumpkin pie filling** – that is sugar and spice, not dog food.
2. Loosen with the water, pour over, stir until the kibble is coated.

Why it works. Wet and strong-smelling, one spoonful makes every piece of kibble taste of something.

Recipes 21–30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

Keeps – fridge, sealed jar, 5 days; or freeze in an ice-cube tray, 3 months. **Skip if** – your dog is diabetic, or on a fiber plan from your vet.

24. Shredded carrot

About 11 kcal a serving · makes 1 bowl · 3 minutes

You need

- 1/4 cup (60 ml) coarsely shredded carrot, about 1 oz (27 g)

Method

1. Wash and top the carrot; peeling is optional.
2. Shred coarsely – shreds, not coins – and stir through.

Why it works. Raw carrot is about 41 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz), and shreds add chew time.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – your dog swallows without chewing. Never serve carrot in rounds.

25. Warm water, and nothing else

0 kcal · makes 1 bowl · 1 minute, then a short wait

You need

Recipes 21-30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

- 1/4 cup (60 ml) warm water, below 105°F (40°C) – warm to your wrist, never hot

Method

1. Pour over the measured meal and stir.
2. Leave 2-3 minutes to soften and swell, then serve warm.

Why it works. The only free topper here: volume at no cost, and warmth releases the smell she answers to.

Keeps – nothing to keep; throw out anything left standing over an hour. **Skip if** – your vet wants dry food fed for dental reasons.

26. Unsalted broth drizzle

Counts toward your 10% – read kcal per cup off the carton · makes 1 bowl · 1 minute

You need

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) unsalted bone broth or plain unsalted stock
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) warm water

Method

1. Read the label: no salt, no onion, no garlic, no yeast extract. Most supermarket stock fails one.
2. Warm gently with the water – do not boil – pour over and stir.

Recipes 21–30 • Toppers for a fuller bowl

Why it works. A warm, meaty-smelling bowl reads as a bigger meal than the same kibble dry.

Keeps – fridge 3 days; freeze the rest in an ice-cube tray, 3 months.

Skip if – your dog is on sodium restriction for heart or kidney disease. Chill and lift the set fat off first.

27. Cauliflower crumb

About 14 kcal a serving • makes 1 bowl • 10 minutes

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) cauliflower florets, about 2 oz (60 g)

Method

1. Grate the florets coarsely, or pulse until they look like rice.
2. Steam 3–4 minutes, cool completely, stir through.

Why it works. Raw cauliflower runs about 25 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz), and crumbed it spreads through the bowl.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – your dog is prone to gas. Start at 1 tbsp (15 ml).

28. Broccoli mince

Recipes 21–30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

About 7 kcal a serving · makes 1 bowl · 6 minutes

You need

- 2 tbsp (30 ml) broccoli florets, about 0.7 oz (20 g)

Method

1. Steam about 4 minutes, until they give under a fork.
2. Cool, chop to under 1/4 inch (0.5 cm), stir through.

Why it works. Cooked broccoli is about 35 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz), and minced it cannot be picked out and left.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, up to 3 days. **Skip if** – your dog has a sensitive stomach. Large servings reliably cause gas.

29. Cucumber confetti

About 9 kcal a serving · makes 1 bowl · 3 minutes

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) cucumber, skin on, about 2 oz (60 g)

Method

1. Wash, quarter lengthwise, dice to about 1/4 inch (0.5 cm).
2. Stir in just before serving – cucumber goes watery if it sits.

Why it works. With the peel on, cucumber is about 15 kcal per 100 g (3.5 oz), the lowest figure in this chapter.

Recipes 21–30 · Toppers for a fuller bowl

Keeps – best fresh; cut cucumber holds one day, no longer. **Skip if** – your dog gulps. Dice small, never rounds.

30. The house mix

About 19 kcal per 1/2 cup (120 ml) serving · makes about 4 servings · 15 minutes

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) green beans, cut
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) shredded carrot, about 2 oz (55 g)
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) grated zucchini, about 2 oz (60 g)

Method

1. Steam beans and carrot 5–6 minutes, then cool completely – warm vegetables sweat and spoil the batch.
2. Stir the raw zucchini through and box it. Serve 1/2 cup (120 ml) per bowl, kibble taken out to match.

Why it works. A box already in the fridge on a Wednesday night is the difference between doing this daily and doing it twice.

Keeps – fridge, sealed, 3 days; portions freeze up to 3 months. Fuzz or a sour smell means the whole box goes. **Skip if** – your dog is on an elimination diet. A mixed topper is the hardest thing to unpick.

Recipes 31-40 • Baked in batches



This is the Sunday chapter: one hour with the oven on, two weeks of treats in three jars. It is also where the budget is easiest to blow. Everything else in this book is mostly water. Baking is not – flour, oil and peanut butter are dense by design, and a biscuit made from perfectly healthy ingredients can still cost forty calories in one swallow. Four of those and a 45 lb (20 kg) doodle has spent her whole day on eleven seconds of chewing.

So one rule runs through all ten recipes: **make them the size of your thumbnail, not your palm.** Roll thin, about 1/4 inch (6 mm), and cut small. Sixty tiny rounds and six large cookies hold the same calories; only one of them buys sixty separate moments of “yes.”

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

Three standing rules. **No sugar, no honey, no syrup** – none of it is needed, and honey is off the table entirely for puppies under 12 months. **Plain rolled oats or plain oat flour only** – never self-rising or “baking mix” flour, which carries salt, leavening and sometimes sweeteners you did not choose. And **read the peanut butter label every single time**: xylitol, also sold as birch sugar, kills dogs, hides in ordinary brands, and baking does not destroy it.

31. Pumpkin oat rounds

About 10 kcal a round • makes 60 • 15 minutes, then 25 minutes baking

You need

- 1 1/2 cups (360 ml) plain rolled oats
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) plain canned pumpkin – not pie filling, which has sugar and spices
- 1 large egg

Method

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Blitz the oats to coarse flour.
2. Mix to a stiff dough, roll to 1/4 inch (6 mm), cut thumbnail rounds with a bottle cap.
3. Bake 25 minutes until firm. Cool fully on a rack – a warm biscuit in a sealed jar makes steam, and steam makes mold.

Why it works. Ground oats bake genuinely crunchy, so even this small a round takes real chewing.

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 1 week if bone-dry, or fridge 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. Mold or a sour smell means the whole batch goes. **Skip if** – grain sensitivity, or mid-elimination diet.

32. Apple crisps

About 4 kcal a crisp • makes about 70 • 10 minutes, then 2–3 hours drying

You need

- 3 medium apples, about 6.5 oz (182 g) each

Method

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

1. Heat the oven to 200°F (95°C).
2. Core and remove every seed – apple seeds carry a cyanide precursor.
3. Slice into 1/8 inch (3 mm) rings, lay flat with no overlap, and dry 2–3 hours, turning once, until leathery with no soft center.

Why it works. Drying takes the water but not the smell – a real treat for four calories.

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. Mold means the whole jar goes, not the moldy piece. **Skip if** – diabetes, or a dog who gulps rather than chews.

33. Carrot coins

About 1 kcal a coin • makes about 120 • 10 minutes, then 3 hours drying

You need

- 6 medium carrots, roughly 150 kcal in total
- No oil, no salt

Method

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

1. Heat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Scrub and slice into 1/8 inch (3 mm) coins.
2. Spread in one layer and dry 3 hours, turning once, until they curl and rattle.

Why it works. At a calorie a coin, a hundred rewards cost less than one shop biscuit.

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. Mold or off smell: discard the container whole, do not pick pieces out. **Skip if** – your dog swallows hard pieces; soften them in water first.

34. Sweet potato strips

About 7 kcal a strip • makes about 32 • 15 minutes, then 4 hours drying

You need

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, about 112 kcal each

Method

1. Heat the oven to 250°F (120°C). Scrub, skin on, cut lengthwise into 1/4 inch (6 mm) strips.
2. Lay on a rack over a tray so air reaches both sides. Bake 4 hours, turning at 2 hours.
3. Pull them dry and bendy – a chew, not a crisp. Cool fully.

Recipes 31-40 • Baked in batches

Why it works. The longest chew here – several minutes of work for seven calories.

Keeps – fridge 2 weeks airtight; freezer 3 months; room temperature only if bone-dry, and then 3-5 days. Mold, sour smell or slime: throw out the batch whole. **Skip if** – a vet's low-carbohydrate plan, or a dog who bolts strips whole.



Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

35. Soft turkey bites

About 5 kcal a bite • makes about 80 • 15 minutes, then 20 minutes baking

You need

- 7 oz (200 g) cooked skinless turkey breast
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) plain canned pumpkin
- 1 large egg

Method

1. Cook the turkey through and check it with a thermometer: **165°F (74°C)** at the thickest point. No pink center, no exceptions.
2. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Pulse all three to a coarse paste.
3. Spread 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick on a lined tray, bake 20 minutes, cool, cut into pea-sized squares.

Why it works. Soft and small is what you want for fifty repetitions – swallowed fast, eyes straight back on you.

Keeps – fridge 3 to 4 days airtight, which is the USDA window for cooked meat; freezer 3 months. Meat and egg never sit on the counter. **Skip if** – a poultry reaction, or a trial on a different protein.

36. Peanut butter oat buttons

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

About 10 kcal a button • makes about 65 • 15 minutes, then 20 minutes baking

You need

- 1 1/2 cups (360 ml) plain rolled oats
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) natural peanut butter – **read the label for xylitol or birch sugar before it touches the bowl, even if you have used the brand for years; recipes change without warning**
- 4–5 tbsp (60–75 ml) water

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grind the oats to flour.
2. Stir in the peanut butter and just enough water for a firm dough.
3. Roll to 1/4 inch (6 mm), cut thumbnail buttons, bake 20 minutes. Cool fully.

Why it works. Peanut butter runs about 94 kcal a tablespoon. Two tablespoons across sixty-five buttons keeps the smell and loses the damage.

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. Mold: the batch goes out whole, not the moldy corner. **Skip if** – past pancreatitis, or a breed prone to it. Fat is the trigger.

37. Banana oat drops

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

About 10 kcal a drop • makes about 40 • 10 minutes, then 20 minutes baking

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) plain rolled oats
- 3.5 oz (100 g) peeled ripe banana, roughly one small one

Method

1. Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Mash the banana smooth and work in the whole oats.
2. Drop teaspoon mounds on a lined tray, flatten each, bake 20 minutes until the edges brown.

Why it works. Two ingredients, nothing added, and the banana binds the way an egg would – useful if your dog reacts to egg.

Keeps – fridge 1 week; freezer 3 months. They stay soft and spoil faster than dry biscuits, so never leave them out. Mold or a fermented smell: throw out the lot. **Skip if** – diabetes. Banana is the sweetest thing here.

38. Zucchini crisps

About 1 kcal a crisp • makes about 80 • 10 minutes, then 3 hours drying

You need

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

- 2 medium zucchini, about 14 oz (400 g) together

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200°F (95°C). Slice into 1/8 inch (3 mm) rounds, skin on.
2. Pat both sides dry – zucchini is mostly water, and this saves an hour.
3. Spread in one layer and dry about 3 hours, until they lift off as thin discs.

Why it works. Raw zucchini runs about 17 kcal per 100 g – you can be generous on a day the budget is already spent.

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. They soften in humid weather; re-dry them. Mold anywhere in the jar means the jar goes. **Skip if** – vegetables give your dog gas; start with two.

39. Chicken jerky strips

About 14 kcal a strip • makes about 20 • 25 minutes, then 4 hours drying and a 10-minute finish

You need

- 8 oz (225 g) boneless skinless chicken breast
- A meat thermometer, not a guess

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

Method

1. **Pre-heat the meat first.** Simmer or oven-cook the whole breast to **165°F (74°C)** at the thickest point. This is not optional: a dehydrator holds only 130–140°F (54–60°C), which will not kill salmonella in raw meat.
2. Cool slightly, slice with the grain into 1/4 inch (6 mm) strips.
3. Pre-heat the meat to 165°F (74°C) first, then dry at 130–140°F (54–60°C), as chapter 6 sets out for at least 4 hours, until leathery with no moisture inside.
4. Finish in an oven pre-heated to 275°F (135°C) for 10 minutes. Cool on a rack.

Why it works. This is the bag most owners buy for \$15. At home it is one ingredient, and a long slow chew for fourteen calories.

Keeps – fridge 2 weeks airtight, because drying takes out the water bacteria need. Any piece that still bends instead of snapping is not dry: treat that one as cooked meat and use it within 3 to 4 days. Freezer 3 months. No preservatives means no counter storage. Mold, a damp patch or an off smell: throw out the whole batch, never trim it.

Skip if – a poultry-free trial, or a dog who bolts whole strips.

40. Broth crackers

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

About 3 kcal a cracker • makes about 150 • 15 minutes, then 30 minutes baking

You need

- 1 1/2 cups (360 ml) plain rolled oats
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) unsalted broth with no onion and no garlic – check the label, most supermarket broth has both

Broth calories vary more than anything else in this book. Homemade chicken stock runs around 36 kcal per 100 g; a thin store-bought low-sodium carton can be a fifth of that. Half a cup is therefore somewhere between about 5 and 45 kcal across the whole batch – under a third of a calorie per cracker either way, which is why the figure above is worked from the oats.

Method

1. Heat the oven to 325°F (165°C). Grind the oats to flour.
2. Add broth a little at a time until the dough just holds.
3. Roll thin, 1/8 inch (3 mm), on a lined tray, then score the sheet into tiny squares without separating them.
4. Bake 30 minutes, cool on the tray, snap along the score lines.

Why it works. Scoring instead of cutting gets a hundred and fifty treats off one tray, and three calories a piece means you can hand them out all week.

Recipes 31–40 • Baked in batches

Keeps – airtight, room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. If they lose their snap, re-dry at 200°F (95°C) for 10 minutes. Mold at any point: the whole batch, not the visible spot. **Skip if** – a low-sodium diet, and you cannot confirm the broth is truly unsalted.

Label every jar with the baking date. *Two weeks means two weeks from the oven, not from the day you noticed the jar. Homemade treats carry no preservatives, and kitchen mold is not cosmetic – its mycotoxins cause tremors and seizures. When in doubt, the batch goes in the trash. It cost an hour and a dollar of oats.*

Recipes 41-50 • Training micro-treats



Training is where the calorie math goes wrong fastest, and it goes wrong quietly.

Recipes 41-50 • Training micro-treats

A decent session is fifty repetitions – fifteen minutes of recall work. Put an ordinary treat on the end of each one, at roughly 3 kcal apiece, and you have spent **150 kcal**. Your 45 lb (20 kg) doodle's whole treat budget for the day is about **107 kcal** (chapter 2). One session has eaten the day and gone 40% past it, before the walk and the evening chew.

Two ways out, and you want both. **Make the treat smaller:** at 1 kcal a piece, fifty repetitions cost 50 kcal, under half the budget. Everything here is built to that size – pea-sized, about 1/4 inch (6 mm), soft enough to swallow in one motion. Hard biscuits are wrong for training: she stops to chew, crumbs hit the floor, you lose the thread.

Pay some repetitions out of the bowl: measure the morning meal, take a third into your pocket, feed the rest. Those reps cost nothing – the calories were already spent. That is recipe 44.

A realistic session – 30 reps of counted kibble, 15 at 1 kcal, 5 jackpot reps at 0.7 kcal – comes to under 20 kcal.

The value ladder. Dogs rank rewards, so rank yours, in three pockets. **Boring** (cucumber, green beans, her own kibble) pays for what she already does well. **Middle** (chicken, egg, sweet potato) for work in progress. **Jackpot** (cheese, tuna, liver dust) for the single hardest thing you will ask all week. Spend the jackpot on easy work and you have nothing left when it matters.

Recipes 41–50 • Training micro-treats

41. Poached chicken crumb

Just under 1 kcal a piece • makes about 200 • 20 minutes

You need

- 4 oz (115 g) skinless chicken breast – about 190 kcal

Method

1. Simmer in plain unsalted water to **165°F (74°C)** on a thermometer, about 12 minutes.
2. Cool, then tear along the grain into pea-sized pieces, 1/4 inch (6 mm).

Why it works. Gone in half a second, so her eyes come straight back to you.

Keeps – fridge 3 days; freezer 3 months, in one-session bags. **Skip if** – chicken allergy is suspected. Use turkey or white fish.

42. Turkey and pumpkin squares

About 1 kcal a square • makes about 200 • 25 minutes, then chill

You need

- 3 oz (85 g) 93% lean ground turkey, cooked – about 187 kcal
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) plain canned pumpkin, no salt or spice – about 10 kcal

Recipes 41-50 • Training micro-treats

Method

1. Dry-fry the turkey, breaking it up, to **165°F (74°C)**. Drain the fat.
2. Mash with the pumpkin, press into a 1/4 inch (6 mm) sheet on baking paper.
3. Chill 30 minutes, cut into a grid of 1/4 inch (6 mm) squares.

Why it works. Press-and-cut gives two hundred identical pieces in two minutes.

Keeps – fridge 3 days; freezer 3 months. **Skip if** – she is on an elimination diet, or managed for pancreatitis.

43. Cucumber pearls

Under 0.1 kcal a piece • makes about 400 • 5 minutes

You need

- Half a large cucumber, about 5 oz (150 g) – about 24 kcal

Method

1. Cut into 1/4 inch (6 mm) planks, then batons, then dice.
2. Pat dry so they do not soak your pocket.

Why it works. Four hundred repetitions for the calories of a quarter biscuit.

Recipes 41–50 • Training micro-treats

Keeps – fridge 2 days, sealed. Do not freeze. **Skip if** – she spits vegetables out. A reward she does not want is not a reward.

44. Counted kibble – the free repetitions

0 extra kcal • one session • 3 minutes

You need

- Your dog's own daily food, measured

Method

1. Read the calories per cup (240 ml) off the bag, then count the pieces in one level cup. Tedious once, then done.
2. Divide. As a worked example: 380 kcal a cup, 350 pieces in it, is about **1.1 kcal per piece**. Your own number will be different – calorie density varies a great deal between manufacturers, and so does the size of a single piece. Use the figure off your own bag, not this one.
3. Measure the morning meal, take a third into a pocket, bowl the rest.

Why it works. Free repetitions – the calories were already inside her allowance.

Keeps – as the bag says. Do not leave a pocketful overnight. **Skip if** – she is on a prescription diet with a fixed schedule. Ask your vet first.

Recipes 41-50 · Training micro-treats



45. Sweet potato and oat beads

About 1 kcal a bead · makes about 190 · 15 minutes, then chill

You need

- 1/2 cup (120 ml) mashed baked sweet potato, flesh only, no salt – about 113 kcal
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) rolled oats, ground to flour – about 78 kcal

Method

1. Mash smooth, stir in the oat flour to a soft, non-sticky dough.
2. Press to 1/4 inch (6 mm), chill 30 minutes, cut into a grid.

Why it works. No meat, dairy or wheat – the middle rung for a dog reacting to something unidentified.

Recipes 41-50 · Training micro-treats

Keeps – fridge 5 days; freezer 3 months. **Skip if** – she is diabetic. Sweet potato is starchy; get a budget from your vet.

46. Tuna oat squares

About 1 kcal a square · makes about 250 · 30 minutes

You need

- 1 can light tuna in water, drained to about 3.5 oz (100 g) – about 90 kcal
- 1 large egg (50 g) – about 72 kcal
- 1/3 cup (80 ml) rolled oats, ground – about 105 kcal

Method

1. Heat the oven to **325°F (160°C)**. Mash to a thick paste.
2. Spread 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick on lined paper; bake 18-20 minutes, until set but soft under a finger. Do not bake to crisp.
3. Cool, cut into 1/4 inch (6 mm) squares.

Why it works. Strong smell, and a novel protein for most doodles.

Keeps – fridge 3 to 4 days, the USDA window for cooked fish; freezer 3 months. **Skip if** – she is on a sodium-restricted diet. Choose no-salt-added tuna.

Recipes 41–50 • Training micro-treats

47. Green bean nubs

About 0.1 kcal a nub • makes about 400 • 8 minutes

You need

- 1 cup (240 ml) green beans, about 4.5 oz (125 g) – about 44 kcal cooked

Method

1. Steam 4–5 minutes, until they bend easily without falling apart.
2. Cool, cut across into 1/4 inch (6 mm) nubs.

Why it works. Soft, tiny and nearly free – for the long stretches where the count matters more than the prize.

Keeps – fridge 3 days; freezer 2 months. **Skip if** – she gets gassy on fibrous vegetables. Start with a few and watch.

48. Egg crumble

About 1 kcal a crumb • makes about 80 • 12 minutes

You need

- 1 large egg, hard-boiled (50 g) – about 78 kcal

Method

Recipes 41–50 • Training micro-treats

1. Boil 10 minutes from a rolling boil, so white and yolk are fully set. Never raw.
2. Cool, peel, crumble by hand into pea-sized pieces; blot on kitchen paper.

Why it works. Easy to pick up one-handed, with no chewing pause at all.

Keeps – fridge 3 days. Do not freeze; the white goes rubbery. **Skip if** – she has reacted to egg before, or is mid elimination trial.

49. Mozzarella pearls – the jackpot

About 0.7 kcal a pearl • makes about 110 • 5 minutes

You need

- 1 oz (28 g) part-skim mozzarella – about 71 kcal

Method

1. Chill the cheese hard; cold cheese dices cleanly, warm cheese smears.
2. Cut into 1/4 inch (6 mm) planks, then batons, then dice. Keep them in their own pocket, so a jackpot stays a jackpot.

Why it works. Strong smell, soft bite, under a calorie each.

Recipes 41-50 · Training micro-treats

Keeps – fridge 3 to 4 days, sealed, the same rule as any other cheese or cooked-meat treat; freezer 2 months. **Skip if** – she is lactose intolerant, as many adult dogs are. Try two and watch for a few hours. Dairy is also the second most common food allergen in dogs.

50. Liver dust shaker

About 3 kcal a pinch · a pinch is about 1/8 tsp (0.6 ml) · makes about 30 · 90 minutes

You need

- 2 oz (55 g) beef liver – about 90 kcal for the batch
- A small shaker or jar

Method

1. Cook through to at least **160°F (71°C)** – the USDA figure for liver and other organ meat, higher than for ordinary cuts – then slice thin, then dry at **200°F (95°C)** for about an hour, until it snaps instead of bending.
2. Cool completely, blitz to a coarse powder, and dust over cucumber pearls or counted kibble.

Why it works. It lifts a bottom-rung treat to the top rung – the one trick here that upgrades a reward instead of replacing it.

Recipes 41-50 • Training micro-treats

Keeps – sealed jar at room temperature 2 weeks; freezer 3 months. Visible mold or a sour smell means the whole jar goes in the trash, not the scrapable part. **Skip if** – she already eats organ meat regularly. Liver is very high in vitamin A, and repeated large amounts do real harm over weeks. **One note on the number.** Published figures for cooked beef liver range from about 130 to about 190 kcal per 100 g, depending on the cut and how it is cooked. We have used an average of roughly 160, which is where the three kcal a pinch comes from. Treat it as a working average, not a measurement.

A repetition is only free if the kibble came out of the measured bowl, and not out of the bag on top of dinner.

If your dog has allergies: swaps



There is an awkward overlap running through this book. The ingredients dogs like best are also the ingredients dogs react to most.

If your dog has allergies: swaps

A review of 297 dogs with a confirmed food allergy ranked the triggers like this: **beef 34%, dairy 17%, chicken 15%, wheat 13%, soy 6%, lamb 5%.** Beef, dairy, chicken, wheat. That is most of a treat recipe.

The reaction usually shows up on the skin rather than in the stomach – itching, chewed paws, repeated ear infections, hot spots – sometimes with loose stools alongside.

Swaps that keep the recipe working

INSTEAD OF	USE	NOTE
Chicken	Turkey, or white fish such as cod or pollock, fully cooked	Same lean protein, different molecule
Beef	Turkey or fish	Beef is the single most common trigger
Wheat flour	Rolled oats, or oat flour you blitz from oats	Naturally gluten-free grain
Milk, cream, cheese	Leave it out	Most recipes lose nothing at all
Plain yogurt	Unsalted pumpkin puree, or plain unsweetened applesauce	Similar moisture and binding

If your dog has allergies: swaps

Any recipe in this book will take these substitutions. Cooking temperatures and storage windows stay exactly the same.

“Grain-free” is not the same as “hypoallergenic”

Grain-free means no wheat, corn or rice. It says nothing whatever about beef or chicken, which trigger more reactions than wheat does. A grain-free treat made with beef is still beef.

It is worth knowing where that label currently stands, though. In 2018 the FDA began investigating reports of dilated cardiomyopathy in dogs eating grain-free diets: over 90% of the foods reported were grain-free, and 93% contained peas or lentils. No causal link was ever established, and the agency stopped issuing routine updates in December 2022. The current reading from veterinary nutritionists is that the pattern follows diets high in pulses – peas, lentils, chickpeas – rather than the absence of grain as such.

That is a question about your dog’s main food, not about a spoonful of oats in a biscuit. If it applies to you, raise it with your vet.

Two things to keep straight

If your dog has allergies: swaps

Allergy is not toxicity. A chicken-allergic dog who eats chicken becomes itchy, not poisoned. This is a different category from the red list – no emergency, no midnight phone call, just an uncomfortable dog and an ingredient to retire.

Diagnosing it is not a home job. The only reliable method is an elimination trial: 8 to 12 weeks on a single novel or hydrolyzed protein and nothing else. Nothing else includes every recipe in this book, every dental chew, every crumb off the floor. One stolen sausage restarts the clock.

So run it with your vet, finish it properly, and come back to these recipes afterwards holding an actual answer instead of a guess.

When to stop and call the vet



Most new treats produce nothing more dramatic than a wagging tail. But you are introducing new food to a dog, and it helps to decide in advance which signs mean “wait and see” and which mean “phone someone now.”

Stop feeding it and call

Any of these in the hours or days after a new treat is a reason to pick up the phone rather than keep watching:

When to stop and call the vet

- **Vomiting** – especially repeated, or repeated attempts that bring nothing up
- **Lethargy** – a dog who will not get up, will not greet you, will not care about food
- **Tremors, twitching, wobbliness or a seizure** – this one is never wait-and-see
- **Diarrhea that has not settled within 24 hours**, or any diarrhea with blood in it
- **A swollen or painful belly**, or a hunched back
- **Pale or brick-red gums, labored breathing, collapse**

One soft stool from a dog who is otherwise bright and hungry usually just means too much new food too fast. Go back to the old routine for a few days, then reintroduce slowly, one ingredient at a time.

Pancreatitis, the one worth knowing

When homemade treats cause a serious problem, this is usually it. Fat strongly stimulates the pancreas, and one large helping of fatty food can be enough to set off an attack. Bacon, butter, chicken skin, fatty mince, the trimmings off a roast – the classic trigger, and the reason none of them appear in this book.

When to stop and call the vet

What it looks like: repeated vomiting, abdominal pain (a hunched back, or the “praying” stretch with chest down and rear in the air), diarrhea, loss of appetite, weakness, sometimes a fever. Early on it reads as an ordinary upset stomach, which is exactly what makes it dangerous.

Miniature Schnauzers are the clearest higher-risk breed; Cocker Spaniels, Dachshunds, Boxers and several small terrier and toy breeds also appear on the risk lists. Goldendoodles do not – but “not on the list” is not “immune.” Keep the fat down for every dog.

Expect the clinic’s first question to be what your dog has eaten outside her normal food. Have an honest answer ready, including whatever she stole.

The numbers

Put these in your phone now, not when you need them.

- **ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center – 888-426-4435** · 24 hours, every day of the year
- **Pet Poison Helpline – (855) 764-7661** · 24 hours, every day of the year

When to stop and call the vet

Both charge a consultation fee, a small fraction of what an avoidable emergency admission costs. Before you dial, have the recipe or the packaging in front of you, plus your dog's weight and a rough idea of how much she ate and when.

Call, do not search. Ten minutes of contradictory forum answers is ten minutes gone, and with something like xylitol the whole window is thirty to sixty minutes wide. The people staffing those lines are veterinary toxicologists; one call tells you whether this is watch-and-wait or get-in-the-car. Ring your own vet or the nearest emergency clinic too – they hold your dog's records.

The small print



This is the part most books hide at the front in gray type. It is here at the back, in the same size as everything else, because it matters.

This is not veterinary advice

The small print

This book is educational. It was not written by a veterinarian and it has not been reviewed by one. Nothing in it replaces the person who has actually examined your dog.

If your dog is on a prescription diet, is diabetic, has had pancreatitis, is pregnant, is under twelve months old, or is being treated for anything at all – talk to your vet before you use any recipe in here. The same goes if she is on a weight-loss plan: your vet's calorie number beats the one you worked out in chapter 2.

Treats are not a diet

Every recipe in this book is a treat or a topper. None of them, alone or together, make a balanced meal.

At least 90% of your dog's calories have to come from a complete, balanced food. That is not a stylistic preference – it is where the vitamins, minerals and amino acids are. Homemade diets are a specialist job: reviews of amateur homemade recipes have found the large majority to be nutritionally unbalanced, which is why board-certified veterinary nutritionists exist.

Use this book for the other 10%. That is what it was built for.

About the numbers

The small print

Calorie figures are USDA reference values, rounded to keep the arithmetic doable in a kitchen. Your carrot is not the USDA's carrot. Treat every number here as a close working estimate, not a measurement.

Where we could not stand a figure up in a source we trusted, we left the number out and gave you a portion size instead. You will find a few of those. They are deliberate.