



Stress-free
Christmas
food



Ruby Roundabout



It was 7 years ago that I was somewhat forced into organising Christmas in advance. When you have 3 babies on the move eager and ready to attack the new tree that seems to have suddenly grown in the middle of the living room, you're forced into immediate action! Older sister was not impressed with any changes the trio were making to the tree - as is true of most siblings with autism. Things could easily become chaotic without a bit of forethought on my part.

There was no way I would have time on Christmas Day to start preparing the festive feast from scratch. Advance preparation was definitely required.

countdown to Christmas



The aim of this book is to give you options, lots of options, so that you don't have to panic!

All you really need to do is decide on which recipes you want to work with. A lot of them can be prepared in advance. But I've included a lot of recipes that help you get through the leftovers in the week following Christmas as you catch up with family and friends heading towards the new year celebrations.

We have tried to put some traditional favourites in and also some outdoor meals, as well as ideas for Christmas gifts for friends, families or school teachers.

Hopefully this will all help to make it a stress free Christmas for you and your family.





make a plan

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Work out and make a list of who you have invited and on what day they are coming.

Think about where you will be eating (inside or out), chairs, table coverings, serviettes, pots, pans, china and cutlery (you may be going disposable to ease the clearing up situation!).

If you don't have enough equipment, borrow from friends or family or neighbours, who may not be celebrating Christmas in the same style or are going away.

Now begin to plan what you are going to eat.

We have included a meal planner to give you some suggestions using the recipes provided, or you may have ideas of your own.

Most of our recipes, apart from the actual Christmas lunch, can either be prepared in advance, or are easy and stress-free to make.

*Make sure you have enough essentials.
E.g. cling wrap, foil, paper towel*

When planning, remember your drinks situation, nibbles etc so that you have all of those already in your store cupboard. Try to get cracking as soon as you can, to take advantage of any pre-Christmas special offers. Make sure you have plenty of pickles, chutneys, jams etc as these can be useful for last minute dishes. Also, stock your freezer with ready made pastry – homemade is wonderful, but time constraints can make the task a complete pain. Filo, puff, shortcrust and butter pastry will all be timesavers.

One of the great things about Christmas entertaining is that there is a multitude of things you can make and freeze in advance, so all that is needed is to get it out of the freezer in time, and garnish, heat, finish off etc.

Remember to stock up on other essentials such as foil, clingwrap, food covers, cocktail sticks – anything useful that you can use for another time as well.



simple homemade gifts

Some of our suggestions can be made up to 4 weeks in advance, but others such as the chocolate truffles, need to be made in the week leading up to when you want to give them to teachers etc. just before the school holidays begin.

Nearly all of the suggested items can be made in an afternoon, or a couple of afternoons, so try to set aside a bit of quiet time to get ahead with them.


*Not all homemade gifts need to be edible.
Here's a few ideas to get you started.*

And if you're feeling particularly crafty and energetic, try creating your own wine charms. My girls made these sets one afternoon from charms we found on the sale table at the local craft store. They are a low cost Christmas gift the kids can make without any real assistance.

Homemade soap, bath bombs or bath salts also make wonderful gifts that come from the heart and are truly cost effective. We've included instructions for 12 homemade Christmas gifts in our Christmas Craft e-Book.



Christmas PREPARATION PLAN



Make Christmas Cake	up to 3 months ahead, but see our easy recipe
Make Christmas Pudding	up to 8 weeks ahead but not necessary
Prepare Potato Dishes & Freeze	up to 1 month ahead
Prepare any Root Vegetable Dishes & Freeze	up to 1 month ahead
Make Cranberry Sauce & Freeze	up to 1 month ahead
Make Stuffing & Freeze	up to 1 month ahead
Make Bread Sauce & Freeze	up to 1 month ahead
Finish your Christmas Cake with Marzipan	up to 1 week ahead
Ice Your Cake	up to 1 week ahead
Make your Pie Filling (Steak Pie) & Freeze	1 - 4 weeks ahead
Make your Lamb Shanks & Freeze	1 - 4 weeks ahead
Make your Christmas Gifts (refrigerate in airtight containers, except truffles)	2 - 3 weeks ahead

A large, golden-brown roasted turkey is the centerpiece on a light blue platter. Surrounding it are various side dishes: Brussels sprouts, sliced carrots, and what appears to be cranberry sauce. The background is a dark, speckled countertop.

Traditional Christmas lunch



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Lemon Thyme Butter Turkey

You obviously will have to work out the size of your turkey to cope with the amount of guests you are having, but always overestimate so you can make good use of the leftovers and obviously save some precious time if you are having more guests after Christmas. Please don't overcook your turkey - some recipes ask for far more hours than is necessary to cook the bird. This is a really simple way of cooking the turkey and getting maximum flavour. We also cook the stuffing separately in balls, to avoid any fights!

Lemon Thyme Butter Turkey

Serves: 8-10 generously

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 3 hours (or until juices run clear)

Ingredients

1 x 6kg/13lb turkey

450g/1 lb butter, room temperature

1 lemon (juiced and peel finely grated)

1 onion, halved

1 orange, halved

1 bunch of thyme, leaves removed and chopped

Lemon Thyme Butter Turkey

Method

1. Heat the oven to 170 C/320 F.
2. Wash out the cavity of the turkey to ensure all entrails have been removed. Pat the turkey dry with kitchen towel.
3. Mix together the butter, lemon juice and grated peel and thyme leaves. Using your hands, very gently separate as much of the skin on the turkey breast away from the flesh, being careful not to tear the skin. Stuff the butter mix between the skin and the flesh smoothing it along the length of the breast as far as you can go.
4. There will be some butter mix remaining, so use this to rub all over the skin, including the legs. Season with salt and pepper. Cover the turkey with tin foil for the first hour of cooking. Put the peeled onion and orange halves into the cavity.
5. Place in the oven. Remove the tin foil after one hour, and continue to cook, testing the meat after two hours by placing a knife tip or skewer into the meat just above the leg.
6. The turkey should take 3 hours to cook, but as ovens vary, it is best to test after 2 hours, 2 hrs and again at 3 hours, until the juices run clear.

Accompaniments

We all have our favourite vegetables, so choose whichever ones you want. Here we have just given a few ideas, slightly different to the traditional plain vegetables.

Brussel Sprouts

Top, tail and wash your sprouts, removing any yellowish leaves. Boil for 15 minutes or until slightly tender. Drain.

Finely chop a small red onion and saut \square in butter in a frying pan. Place the sprouts in the pan and stir on a low heat. Add some chopped walnuts or brazil nuts and continue stirring until everything is mixed together. Keep warm.

Glazed Caraway Carrots

Wash and peel carrots and slice into batons. Braise in water and a large knob of butter with a dash of orange juice on the top of the oven. When soft enough, add the caraway seeds for just a few minutes. Drain and reserve some of the liquid. Toss in a little more butter and keep warm.

Petit Pois a la Francaise

Finely slice either green onions or some shallots. Place a little butter in the bottom of the pan and soften the onions. Put in the peas and the required amount of water and bring to the boil. Drain the peas and keep warm.

Roast Potatoes

Peel, wash and cut potatoes into required size. Boil until slightly soft on the outside, drain and toss in either seasoned flour or semolina. Roast in the oven using goose fat for really delightful crispy roast potatoes.

Stuffing Balls

Rather than go to the trouble of making more breadcrumbs, use a store bought packet of lemon and thyme or sage and onion stuffing. Mix with sausage meat, chopped celery and finely diced onion and mould into balls, using water to slacken the mix. 20 minutes before your turkey has finished cooking, place the stuffing balls around the bird to crisp up.

Gravy

When you have finished cooking the bird, drain off the top layer of fat from the juices. Place the baking tray on the top of the oven, and bring up to almost boiling, scraping the juices or sticky bits from the bottom. Add enough freshly made store bought chicken stock (or make your own beforehand if you have time), and the onion from the inside cavity of the turkey. Continue to stir everything around until thoroughly blended. If you want thicker gravy, add some more stock cubes. Squeeze the juice out of the onion and discard. Pour gravy into a container and keep warm.

This is a really stress free way of getting Christmas lunch on the table, but do try other ideas of your own!



*Maple & Orange
Glazed Ham*

No Christmas is really complete without a delicious glazed ham. It does take a while, but it isn't really that complicated. Leftovers are also really useful around the Christmas period for quick salads or sandwiches or some delicious 'bubble and squeak' on Boxing Day!

Maple & Orange Glazed Ham

Serves: 10 - 12

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 3 - 3.5 hours



Maple & Orange
Glazed Ham

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Ingredients

5.5kg/12 lb ham

2 onions, quartered

20 cloves (approx)

handful of black peppercorns

2 bay leaves

6 tbsp maple syrup

3 tbsp Demerara sugar

3 oranges, thinly sliced

Method

1. Take a large pan (big enough for the ham to fit) and fill with water to cover the ham. Add peppercorns, bay leaves, onion, half of the cloves. Bring to the boil.
2. Skim off any impurities floating on the surface. Turn down the heat and leave to simmer for 2 □ hours.
3. Remove from the pan and leave to cool enough to handle. Remove the skin and most of the fat from around the ham.
4. Heat oven to 170 C/330 F. While the oven is heating, score the ham in 'diamond' shapes and pour over the maple syrup and smooth into the surface of the ham. Pat the sugar over as much of the ham as you can. Arrange the sliced oranges over the ham, pinning into place with the remaining cloves. This may look quite messy, but its really about getting the flavour of the orange into the ham. You can remove the oranges when you are slicing up the ham.
5. Place in a baking dish and bake for 30-40 minutes, basting frequently with the glaze as it melts off and mixes with the ham juices.
6. Rest the ham before carving. If you want, you can make a lovely glaze/jus for the ham by mixing some chicken stock with the remaining glaze in your baking dish, over the heat on top of the oven.
7. Stir to remove the sticky bits, and drain before using on the ham.

This recipe is a little twist on bread sauce, using onions to give a deeper flavour. Unfortunately, as tasty as it is, it cannot be jarred as a gift.

A Twist on Bread Sauce



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Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

85g/3 oz butter

2 onions, sliced

2 fresh bay leaves

600ml/20 fl oz milk

7 or 8 cloves

140g/5 oz white bread, crusts removed

142 ml/5 fl oz double cream

Method:

1. Heat butter until foaming and add onions and bay leaves. Gently fry until soft and translucent, do not allow to colour.
2. Add milk and cloves and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
3. Remove cloves and bay leaves and blitz the sauce in a processor along with the bread.
4. Tip the cream into the pan and pour the sauce back in. Gently heat and then leave to cool.
5. Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. To reheat, warm through gently on a low heat. If required, you can tear off a few more piece of bread and add to the mixture.

cook
ahead



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*Irish Style Braised
Lamb Shanks with
Vegetables*

Irish style merely means adding pearl barley as in Irish Stew, very popular as a dead easy and impressive festive dish. This truly is a warming and delicious dish, with a couple of twists in our tips! CAN BE SLOW COOKED as well. Cook a couple more shanks if you can and use these in our Greek Lamb Wraps for a quick dinner on another day.

Irish Style Braised Lamb Shanks with Vegetables

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 2.5 hours - 3 hours

Ingredients

4 medium sized lamb shanks

1 tbsp vegetable oil

4 tbsp of pearl barley

400ml of lamb stock (you can use beef stock)

Handful of fresh thyme leaves

200 grams of carrots roughly chopped

2 large leeks, cut into equal pieces

3 potatoes, quartered

2 medium onions, quartered

3 celery sticks, cut into about 8 cm each piece

Seasoning to taste

1 tin of flageolet beans or cannellini beans, rinsed



Irish Style Braised Lamb Shanks with Vegetables

Method

1. Preheat oven to 170 degrees. Heat the oil in a large frying pan, and brown off the shanks.
2. Transfer the shanks to a large casserole or ovenproof dish with a lid. Add the stock, barley, and thyme. Cover with foil and place the lid on. Cook in the oven for approx 2 hours.
3. Remove from the oven and add all the vegetables, plus some more water or stock if required. Season to taste, recover, and put back in the oven for another hour.
4. Take the casserole out of the oven and check that the lamb is soft and falling off the bone. If not, return to the oven for another 15-30 mins.
5. Take the lamb out of the casserole dish and place on a warm plate and cover tightly with foil. On the top of the oven, reheat the vegetables over a low to medium heat and check that they are cooked to your liking. Add more water or stock according to how you like the gravy.
6. Serve on warm plates, a couple of spoonfuls of the sauce on the bottom. Place the shanks on top, and then some more of the sauce and vegetables.
7. If required, serve with some baby potatoes or mashed potatoes sprinkled with a little mint.

TIPS

If you want to slow cook this, still brown off the shanks and put into a slow cooker with all the vegetables and stock. Cook on high for 4 hours, and then test. Replenish stock if necessary or even use water. Stir a little and continue to cook for another hour. Repeat this process until the lamb and vegetables are all tender. Add some chopped mint at the end before serving. A dash of mint sauce into the gravy will really bring out the flavour of the whole dish - bit of a cheat but delicious!

Roasted parsnips are also delicious served with this casserole, if you have the time.

This is an easy and quick version of a traditional English dish using ready-made puff pastry from the supermarket to give a lovely fluffy lid. Great served on Christmas Eve or another night when you have friends round for a casual dinner.

Steak, Ale & Mushroom Puff Pastry Pie

Serves: 6 - 8

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 2 - 2.5 hours

Ingredients

- 1.5kg/3.3lbs casserole steak (beef), fat removed and diced
- 500g/1lb pack of ready-made puff pastry
- 2 large white onions, peeled and sliced, or 10 shallots peeled, left whole
- 225g/8 oz button mushrooms
- 1 litre/2.2 pints of strong dark ale or Guinness
- 5 beef stock cubes
- 3 sprigs of thyme
- Pepper to taste
- 1tbs olive oil
- 1tbs plain flour
- 1 egg, beaten

Method

1. Place the oil in a large heatproof casserole pot and gently heat on top of the oven. In a plastic bag, mix the flour in with the beef and pepper, and shake to coat the meat.
2. Pour the meat into the casserole dish and turn up the heat to brown the beef all over and seal in the juices.
3. Pour in a little ale and continue to stir. Pour in the mushroom and onions and mix with the beef, allowing the mixture to bubble. Place the sprigs of thyme into the mix and add the rest of the ale. When it begins to bubble again, crumble in the stock cubes, mix thoroughly and turn down to simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Heat oven to 170C/325F. With a lid on the casserole dish, place in the oven and cook for 1 hr and 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, stir and test a piece of meat. If it is still slightly tough, replace in the oven for a further 30 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven and pour into a rectangular baking dish that will take all of the meat and most of the gravy. Set aside.
6. Roll your pastry out on a floured surface to approx 30mm/one-eighth of an inch thick.
7. Place over the top of the meat, and crimp the edges so that they are stuck to the rim of the dish. With any remaining pastry, make a few pastry leaves to decorate the top.
8. Brush with beaten egg, place the decoration on the top and brush again.
9. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes.
10. Serve with creamy mashed potato and vegetables of your choice.



*Steak, Ale &
Mushroom Puff
Pastry Pie*

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buffet ideas



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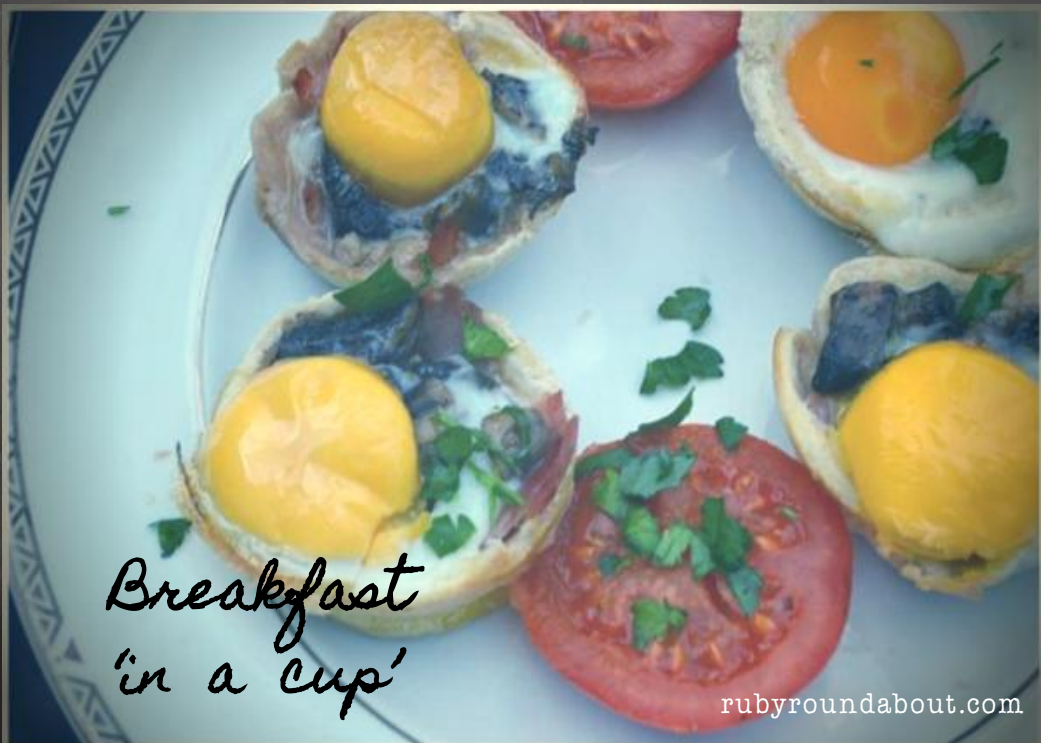
Impressive breakfast/brunch dish, using healthy ingredients. A bit of a twist on Eggs Benedict without the fattening muffin, and using rye bread. Eggs are a good addition to your diet as long as they are used in moderation. A great brunch dish for guests at Christmas – easy to prepare and very little washing up.

Breakfast 'in a cup'

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes



Ingredients

8 medium free range eggs

2 slices of lean ham

8 slices of rye bread or

6 button mushrooms chopped

sour dough bread, rolled

1 tbsp olive oil

thinly with the centre removed

Method

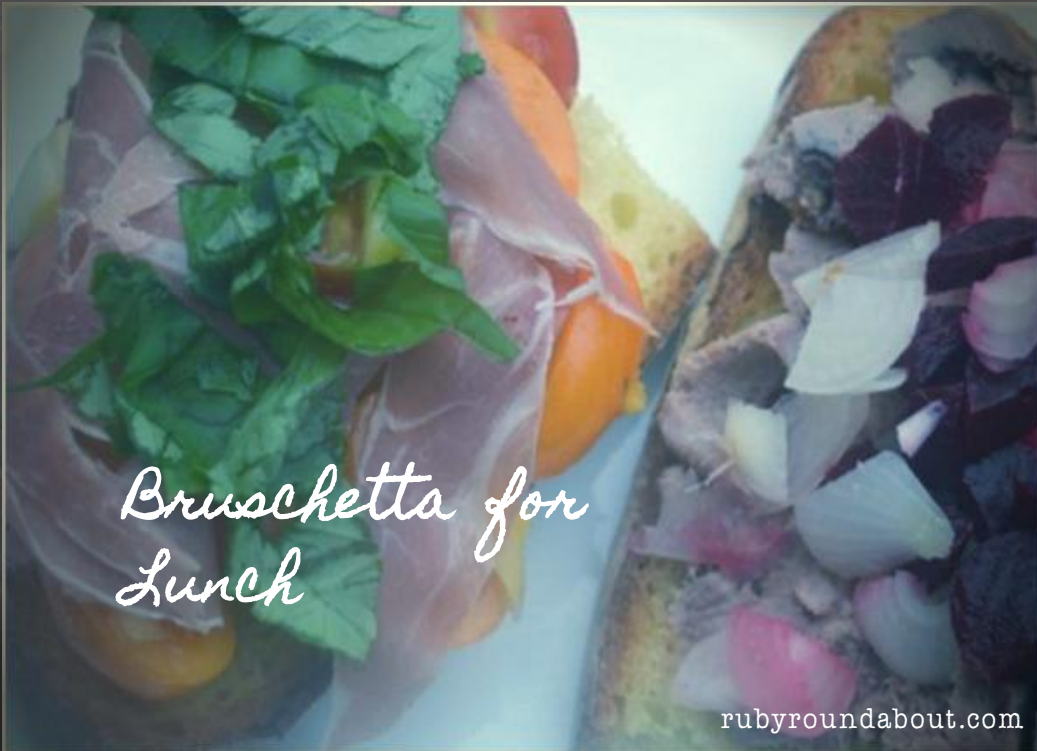
1. Heat the oven to 170C.
2. Flatten the bread with a rolling pin so that it is a little more thinned than a normal slice. Using a the edge of a large wine glass or coffee mug, cut out a circle from the middle of the bread. If you have a circular cutter, about 10/12cm, use this instead.
3. Lightly fry the chopped mushrooms in a small amount of oil (the natural moisture in the mushrooms should be enough to prevent sticking.)
4. Lightly oil a muffin tin, and place the bread circles into each compartment (this recipe is designed for 4 people but you can just double up on the ingredients according to amount of guests). Put into the centre of the oven to bake.
5. In a saucepan, add the spinach with a little water and cook until just soft, but not soaking wet. Remove from the cooker and squeeze the spinach as dry as possible. Place a portion of the spinach into each bread container, along with a few pieces of lean diced ham and a small amount of the chopped mushrooms.
6. Crack one egg, centrally, into each bread container so that it sits on the top.
7. Place back into the oven and bake for 5 minutes and then check that the egg is firm, but not undercooked. If the egg is still 'watery' on the top and opaque, replace and cook for a further minute. You do not want the egg hard.
8. Serve with herbed grilled tomatoes – enjoy!

This is a great way to use up any items you may have in the fridge, particularly salad items and leftover bread, such as baguettes or ciabatta loaves. There are many combinations of toppings, so have fun experimenting! Use for a drinks party or any occasion where you don't want to do a full blown Christmas lunch or supper.

Bruschetta for Lunch

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 10 minutes



Ingredients

8 slices leftover baguettes, ciabatta or similar
2 tbsp olive oil
2 or 3 cloves of garlic, skin off

For the tomato topping

8 baby cherry tomatoes, or 3-4 average size tomatoes
1 red or white onion, finely chopped
8 basil leaves, shredded

Drizzle of French or Italian dressing, or simple Virgin Olive Oil
4 slices of ham
Salt and Pepper to taste

For the Rustic Topping

Leftover pate or meatloaf
5 or 6 pickled onions, chopped
2 or 3 baby beetroots in vinegar, chopped
Salt and Pepper to taste

Method

1. Lightly toast the slices of bread, better under the grill than in a toaster to prevent burning around the edges.
2. Drizzle with olive oil and rub the garlic on to each slice of bread.
3. Mix the tomatoes and onions with a little vinaigrette or olive oil, salt and pepper and place on top of 4 slices of the bread. Thickly spread or slice the pate on to the remaining four slices.
4. Top with the onions and a little salt and pepper and the ham if desired.

You can cook crabs from live yourself, but here we have just used ready prepared hand picked crab, with mainly white meat but a little brown meat as well for flavour. Crab is exceptionally good and healthy to eat. If you can get some pretty decorative shells from the fishmonger or supermarket, it makes the dish look beautifully presented. If not, they are readily available in hardware stores or online.

Dressed Baby Crab & Mango Salad

Serves: 2

Preparation Time: 15 minutes



*Dressed Baby
Crab and Mango
Salad*

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Ingredients

6-8 oz of hand prepared crab meat

(depending on whether you have this as a starter or a lunch)

Juice of two limes, plus a couple of slices for garnishing the crab

A little chopped parsley

1 tbsp of low fat mayonnaise

Freshly milled black pepper

2 mangoes

Mangoes are filled with goodness. One mango can provide you with more than 3x your daily recommended intake of Vitamin A & C.

Method

1. Place your crabmeat into a bowl and mix in the mayonnaise, lime juice and black pepper. Cut the remaining lime, or some of it, into thin triangles.
2. Using your chopping board, slice the mangos down to the stones, and twist into halves. Remove the skin and slice into pieces lengthwise. This can be quite difficult but persevere! Set the mango slices aside.
3. On your board, finely chop the parsley and mix into the crab meat.
4. Fill the shells with the crabmeat mixture, not too full, and decorate with small triangles of lime.
5. Serve on a platter with the mango slices around the edges to decorate. If you cannot get the shells, make a ring from the mangoes on each plate and serve the crab on top.

Spicy and delicious, this kedgeree is very easy to make and great for a big family. Kedgeree originated in India so it is a bit of a spicy dish that you can eat at any time of day.

Kedgeree

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 25 - 30 minutes

Cook Time: 30 - 60 minutes



Ingredients

475g/1lb 1oz undyed smoked haddock fillet, cut in half
200g/7oz basmati rice, rinsed in cold water and drained
4 free-range eggs
40g/1½ oz butter
2 bay leaves

100g/3½ frozen peas (optional)
1 tbsp sunflower oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 heaped tbsp medium curry powder
3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
3 tbsp double cream
Freshly ground black pepper
½ lemon, juiced

Method

1. Place the haddock in a large frying pan, skin-side up. Pour over 500ml/17fl oz water, add the bay leaves and bring the water to a simmer. Cook the fish for 8-10 minutes until it is just done and flakes easily. Drain in a colander over a bowl, reserving the cooking liquor, and discard the bay leaves.
2. Pour the cooking liquor into a medium saucepan and stir in the rice. Cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer the rice very gently for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave the rice covered for 3-5 minutes more. By this time it should have absorbed all the fish liquor.
3. While the rice is cooking, bring some water to the boil in a medium pan. Add the eggs and cook for eight minutes. Drain them in a sieve under cold running water and when cool enough to handle, peel them carefully and set aside. Cook the peas, if using, in a small pan of boiling water and drain.
4. Melt the butter with the oil in a large pan and cook the onion over a low heat for five minutes until softened, stirring occasionally. Add the curry powder and cook for another 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Place the cooked rice into the pan and stir in the onions. Add the peas, cream, parsley and some ground black pepper.
5. Flake the fish into chunky pieces and add to the pan. Stir the lemon juice and cook for 1-2 minutes. Cut the eggs into quarters and place them on the rice. Cover the pan with a lid and heat through for 2-3 minutes or until the eggs are warm, then serve.
6. If not serving immediately, tip the kedgeree into a warm dish and dot with a few cubes of butter. Cover with foil and keep warm in a low oven for up to 20 minutes before serving.

In this recipe we have used both lean beef and chicken mince, in order to keep the dish as low fat as possible, and it works! You can use chicken or pork totally if you wish, it makes no difference to the quantities and can be just as tasty. You may prefer to add extra herbs to just spice it up a little. Surprisingly low in calories and fat, it can be served warm or cold and is great for picnics. Serve with a homemade coleslaw (use a light dressing or low fat mayonnaise) or a potato salad with a little olive oil dressing, lemon juice and chopped spring onions or scallions. If there is any left over mixture, this can be turned into meatballs. Alternatively, make extra mixture anyway, make into meatballs and freeze, ready for use another time.

Picnic Style Terrine with Pistachios

Serves: approx 8 slices

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

*Picnic Style
Terrine with
Pistachios*

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Ingredients

300g of lean minced beef

200g of minced chicken or
lean pork

1 medium onion finely chopped

50g of packet stuffing mix or

50g of brown breadcrumbs

Large Handful of chopped

fresh parsley

1 tsp dried oregano

4tbsp of fresh grated parmesan

1 egg, beaten

8-10 slices of prosciutto ham

(you can use streaky bacon but
it increases the fat content)

Handful of pistachios, shelled
and chopped

A little oil for greasing

Method

1. Tip the chicken, beef and stuffing (or breadcrumbs) into a large bowl. Add the chopped onions, garlic, parsley and oregano and pistachios. Put in the beaten egg and mix thoroughly.
2. Lightly oil a 500g loaf tin and line it with the prosciutto, slightly overlapping and leaving some at the top to fold over. If you have any left, chop finely and place into the mixture. Spoon the mixture into the loaf tin and press down firmly. Fold over the prosciutto to enclose the meat loaf.
3. Put the loaf tin into a deep baking tray and fill to half way up the side of the loaf tin with hot water.
4. Bake for 1 hour until the sides of the loaf are coming away from the tin. Cool for 10 min and then drain off any excess liquid from the loaf. Turn out on to a chopping board and slice, or leave cold until ready for slicing.
5. Serve with a potato salad, coleslaw or jacket sweet potato and peas! It is an amazingly healthy dish.

This vegetarian dish is full of flavour, utilising herbs and spices to boost the couscous to another level. With the addition of some roasted vegetables, it is quite filling. Anything left over can be used in a salad for lunch the next day. This dish really is full of flavour and delicious as part of a cold buffet with meats and fish. Your family will enjoy it!

Roasted Vegetables with Herb Couscous

Serves: 6 as part of a buffet

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

10 oz / 300 g packet of couscous

1¾ cups / 360 ml of water

1 tbsp / 14 ml of olive oil

1 oz / 25 g of fresh herbs

(i.e – mint, coriander, thyme)

finely chopped

1 tsp / 2.3 g of paprika or

Ras-El-Hanout ground

Moroccan spice blend (optional)

2lb / 450 g butternut

squash, deseeded and cut into
wedges (skin on)

10 baby (cherry) tomatoes,

halved

4 oz / 113 g of young baby

asparagus

Juice of one orange

“Dash” / 0.1 g of ground

black pepper

Method

1. Set the oven to 180 C / 350 F. Prepare the squash as directed, tossing the pieces in tbsp / 14 ml of olive oil. Season with the ground black pepper. Roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes until soft.
2. After 20 minutes, put the asparagus and baby tomato halves into the baking dish with the squash and toss in the juices.
3. In the meantime, boil the water. Put the couscous into a large bowl and cover with the boiling water. Add the paprika or Ras-El-Hanout, stir and cover with cling wrap (plastic wrap). Leave to soak. When the couscous has soaked up the water and is moist and soft, add most of the chopped herbs and mix thoroughly.
4. To make the dressing, mix the juice of the oranges with the remaining oil.
5. Remove the roasted vegetables from the oven. Take the skin off the squash. Place the couscous on a serving plate, and add the vegetables on top.
6. Cover with the dressing and left over chopped herbs.



Roasted Vegetables
with Herb Couscous

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Lovely different style of coleslaw using red cabbage and beetroot. If you can get hold of pomegranate seeds, or whole pomegranates to use the seeds, it is even more delicious. Serve with cold meats, salads or even in sandwiches.

Ruby Slaw

Serves: 6-8

Preparation Time: 5 minutes



Ruby Slaw

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Ingredients

- 1 red cabbage – approx 450g/1lb in weight, finely shredded
- 2 large fresh beetroot, grated
- 3 red apples, finely diced
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 5 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon of ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon of caraway seeds
- Handful of pomegranate seeds (optional)

This simple salad is jam packed with vitamins and amazing colour. It can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.

Method

1. Make the dressing by mixing the vinegar, sugar, mustard, caraway and pepper together thoroughly in a large bowl.
2. Toss in all the remaining ingredients and combine together. Add a little more seasoning if required.

This lovely and rich dish will use up your leftover turkey after Christmas. Turkey is one of the healthiest meals, but you can substitute chicken if it's easier or more convenient.

Turkey Marengo

Serves: 4-5

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes



*Turkey
Marengo*

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Ingredients

450g/1lb turkey meat, diced

1 tbsp vegetable oil

2 white onions, sliced into rings and halved

2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped into dice

1 red and 1 green pepper, deseeded and sliced into strips

225g/8oz can chopped tomatoes

1 cup of chicken stock

1 tbsp curry paste

1 tbsp mild chilli powder

1 tsp sugar to lightly sweeten

TIP: Use up any leftover chicken or turkey (particularly after Thanksgiving or Christmas) This dish will only take 15-20 minutes using your leftovers.

Method

1. In a very large pan, sauté the pieces of turkey in the oil until lightly browned. Push to one side and add onion, peppers and apples to soften. When softened, push the turkey back and mix with the other ingredients.
2. Add curry paste, chilli powder and sugar to sweeten. Add chicken stock and can of tomatoes. Mix well.
3. Bring to the boil and then turn down to a simmer. Cook for 30 minutes on low heat.
4. Add any seasoning you require to adjust the taste.
5. Serve with rice, mashed potatoes or flatbreads. Whatever you want!

This makes a really fantastic centrepiece for a Christmas or New Year gathering and tastes beautiful using the poaching method. Use as part of a wonderful spread. Don't be daunted. This really is easier than you may think!

Whole Poached & Dressed Salmon

Serves: 10

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes



Whole Poached & Dressed Salmon

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Ingredients

1 whole salmon, gutted – approx 2.75kg/6lb

1 onion, chopped

3 bay leaves

4 tbsp white wine vinegar

2 lemons, quartered

Salt and pepper to season

Salmon is packed full of Omega 3s. 2 Serves a week provides recommended intake of Omega 3 which has been shown to be beneficial to your heart.

Method

1. Lay the salmon gently in a large roasting tin, or a fish kettle if you have one. Cover entirely with water and add the onion, bay leaves, lemon and salt and pepper.
2. Cover with a lid or tin foil, bring to the boil on the top of the oven, (place across the top of two rings). Bring up to the boil.
3. Once boiled, turn the heat off and leave to cool.
4. Once cool, remove the salmon, trying not to break it. Carefully scrape off the skin. Place on a large platter. Decorate with half slices of lemon and cucumber.
5. If you are feeling brave, using an icing pump and a small nozzle, pipe small rosettes of mayonnaise along the back of the fish.



Zingy Thai Chicken Salad

This is an amazing salad, packed full of protein and vitamins , and enhanced by the Thai spices and herbs. Using skinless and boneless chicken breasts and fresh salad ingredients, the dish is low in fat and extremely healthy. The method of poaching used to cook the chicken is also a healthier option than grilling, frying or baking with the skin on.

Zingy Thai Chicken Salad

Serves: 4

Preparation & Cook Time: 50 minutes

Ingredients

- 3 boneless and skinless chicken breasts.
(about 350 g/7-8 oz each)
- 1 Chinese leaf cabbage
- 1 and half cups carrots, julienned
- 1 oz coriander, chopped
- Half a cup of salad (green) onions/scallions, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ a cup of unsalted peanuts, finely chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 small red chillies, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp of low salt soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 tbsp peanut oil (if not available, use sesame oil)
- 1 stalk of lemon grass, chopped and lightly crushed
- 2 cms/1 inch of ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- Thinly sliced flesh from one mango or papaya
- Leaves of 1 Little Gem or Iceberg Lettuce to garnish the plate



Zingy Thai Chicken Salad

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The various textures of the salad create an amazing crunch, while the dressing gives the zing from the fresh limes, low fat soy, garlic and chillies. This works for lunch or dinner, and is a super centrepiece for a Christmas buffet or lunch party.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 160C/320F. Peel and slice the lemongrass stick into pieces and lightly crush. Do the same with the ginger and place both in the bottom of a deep sided baking dish. Place the chicken breasts on the top of the spices, and fill with water up to approx 4cm covering over the chicken. Place in the oven and cook for 30 mins.
2. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. In the meantime, prepare all your salad vegetables using your chopping board, and the dressing separately. The best way to shred the cabbage is by rolling up each leaf and finely slicing downwards. Peel the carrots and slice them julienne style, either by hand or with a julienne cutter if you have one. Dice the salad onions and chop the chilli finely, followed by the coriander. Chop the peanuts and place in a separate bowl. Once all your salad vegetables are prepared, put into a large bowl and set aside. Take the mango or papaya, and slice as thinly as you can, removing the skin. Leave to one side.
3. For the salad dressing, combine the peanut or sesame oil, the chillis, the soy and the chopped garlic together. Slice your limes and squeeze all of the juice into the mixture, along with the brown sugar. Adjust and season to taste. You can add more of any of the ingredients depending how spicy or sweet you want it.
4. Pour the dressing over the salad and mix well. When the chicken has cooled enough, add to the bowl and mix thoroughly.
5. Prepare your serving platter by surrounding the outside edge with lettuce leaves. Pour the chicken salad into the centre of the platter, add the mango/papaya to the top, followed by the chopped peanuts.
6. PLEASE NOTE - 3 chicken breasts are between 4 people.



other ways with
potatoes



Ruby Roundabout

Yummy potato dish – serve this for a wholesome brunch with side salad and a good crusty sourdough bread. If you cannot get pancetta in your store, you can substitute pancetta with bacon or chorizo both equally as delicious. A smaller portion of this can be served as an accompaniment to roast chicken or other meats.

Pancetta & Potato Bake

Serves: 5 – 6 as a side dish

Preparation Time: 1 hour



*Pancetta &
Potato Bake*

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Ingredients

5 large baking potatoes, peeled and very thinly sliced (if you have a mandolin or a processor with a slicing blade it makes life easier). If not, you can slice by hand but try to get the slices as thin as possible.

225g/8 oz of pancetta, cubed.

3 or 4 large onions, peeled and finely sliced (exactly the same process as the potatoes)

3 cloves of garlic, skin removed and crushed or finely diced

2 handfuls fresh chopped parsley

450g/16 oz of fresh double cream

6 oz gruyere cheese or very strong cheddar

Method

1. Pour the cream into a saucepan and add in your diced garlic. Put on a very low temperature to heat through gently. Try not to let it boil, otherwise the cream may separate. The flavour of the garlic will infuse into the cream and give a lovely subtle taste.
2. Start to layer up your ingredients – potatoes, pancetta, then onion and parsley.
3. When the cream is warmed through, pour over each layer as you go along, then top each layer with a little of the cheese.
4. Continue layering, and pour any final amount of cream over the whole dish, and scatter the remaining cheese.
5. Place in the oven at 320 degrees F/160 degrees C on the middle or bottom shelf. Cook in the oven for about 45 min (this does depend on the thickness of your potato slices), but up to an hour if necessary. If the top of the dish has started to colour too much, cover with foil.
6. The dish should be bubbling and golden brown. Pierce in the centre with a sharp knife to determine whether the potatoes are cooked through.

These are wonderful as you can cook a batch of potatoes in advance and freeze them for use when you need them. Serve with any of the buffet dishes or with cold meats and salad.

Twice Baked Potatoes

Serves: this recipe is for 4 potatoes

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour 10 minutes



Ingredients

4 medium/large baking potatoes

50g/3 oz butter

50g/3 oz strong cheese, grated

Leftover ham or cooked bacon

The following potatoes will be great choices for baking: Desiree, Dutch Creams, Golden Delight, Kennebec, King Edward, 'New' Potatoes, Otway Red, Pontiac, Red Rascal, Royal Blue, Sebago

Method

1. Heat oven to 200C/375 F. Place the potatoes on a baking tray and bake in the oven for approximately 1 hour (test to ensure they are cooked through).
2. Remove and allow to cool. When safe to handle, cut down the middle of the potato (lengthwise) and scoop out all the cooked flesh. Place the flesh in a bowl with the butter and cheese and beat it together.
3. Mix through the cooked bacon or ham, and season to taste. Scoop the mixture back into the shells, and top with a little more grated cheese.
4. When ready to serve, place the potatoes back in the oven at 175 C/340 F and bake for about 10 minutes until the skin is crispy and the topping is all melted together.



Desserts & cakes



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What a brilliant way to use your left over Christmas Pudding – there always is some! And this makes it taste completely different!

Christmas Ice Cream Bombe

Serves: 6

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Refreeze after combining until ready to serve



*Christmas Ice
Cream Bombe*

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Ingredients

Leftover Christmas Pudding, blitzed in
the processor, or a jar of mincemeat
220g / 6 ozs really creamy vanilla ice-
cream

This is such a simple idea. Don't be afraid to add in some additional dried mixed fruit you have left over from Christmas celebrations. Or some chocolate coated sultanas.

Method

1. In a large bowl, mix together the blitzed Christmas Pudding, or the mincemeat, with the vanilla ice cream.
2. Scoop into an oval 'bomb shaped' glass or pyrex bowl, press down and smooth over the top.
3. Place back in the freezer until ready to use. When ready remove from the freezer and quickly dip the upturned bowl into warm water. Put a plate on the top, and turn over. Leave for 1 minute and the ice cream bombe should slip easily out of the bowl in one piece!
4. Decorate with holly or other Christmas delights.

This is probably the easiest profiterole recipe we have ever used. Make batches in advance and freeze for another time.

Profiteroles with Chocolate Orange Sauce & Sparkle

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes



*Profiteroles with
Chocolate Orange
Sauce & Sparkle*

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Ingredients

150ml/5 1/4 fl oz. water
65g/2 1/2oz plain flour, sieved
2 eggs, medium, lightly beaten
150ml/5 1/4 fl oz. whipped cream, whipped
4 tbsps butter

Chocolate Orange Sauce

55g/2oz plain chocolate, broken
Zest of 1 orange
1 tbsp butter

4 tbsps golden syrup

Small tub of edible glitter dust or stars, etc.

Method

1. Place water and butter in medium saucepan and bring to boil over moderate heat.
2. Remove from heat and immediately add flour. Return to heat and beat with wooden spoon for 2-3 minutes until mixture leaves sides of pan. Cool slightly. Gradually beat eggs into mixture until no traces remain.
3. Place teaspoonfuls of the choux mixture well apart on greased baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven 220°C/425° F/Gas mark 7 for 15 minutes then reduce to 190°C/375° F/gas mark 5 for 15-20 minutes. Slit sides of profiteroles and cool on wire tray. When cool, fill with cream.
4. To make sauce, place all ingredients in small bowl over pan of hot water. Leave to melt and beat until smooth and glossy. Arrange profiteroles on serving dish and serve with chocolate orange sauce.
5. Add loads of sparkle over the top with edible glitter to make it really Christmassy!

Delicious dessert using low fat ricotta cheese. You can use any low fat cream cheese or cottage cheese, low fat being the key to this recipe. The 'humble' pear is a much underused fruit in its fresh state, particularly with the skin on. An all round delicious fruit, eaten either straight in the hand, or in this dessert, which seems indulgent but actually isn't! The addition of a low fat ricotta or cream cheese adds a wonderful taste and looks great at a dinner party. The chopped walnuts are also an added texture and flavour, whilst still bringing another healthy addition to the dish. Even the kids will love these! A great easy to prepare Christmas dessert for warm weather, with that hint of festive spice in the cinnamon.

Honey & Ricotta Stuffed Baked Pears

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 2 large semi-ripe pears, halved lengthwise with stalk intact
- 200 grams/7 Oz of low fat ricotta cheese, or low fat cream cheese/cottage cheese
- Handful of walnuts, chopped
- 2 tablespoons of raw honey
- 2 'low fat' biscuits (any kind)
- Shake of cinnamon on each pear

Method

1. Heat the oven to 170C/325F/Gas mark 3.
2. Using a clean chopping board, cut the pears in half lengthwise, leaving the stalk and skin intact. Cut and scoop out the core and any seeds. Place on a parchment or foil lined shallow baking tray. Place in the oven and cook for 15 minutes.
3. Whilst the pears are cooking, finely chop the walnuts, place in a bowl and mix with the honey and ricotta.
4. After 15 mins, remove the pears from the oven, and put in the mixture, dividing evenly between the pear halves. Continue to bake for approx 5-10 minutes. Test that the pears are soft with a skewer. If not, return to the oven for a few more minutes.
5. Crush and sprinkle over the biscuits - if you really don't mind about 'low fat' use any kind of sweet biscuit that you want. Shake a little cinnamon on each pear.
6. Serve with a little yoghurt and a further dash of honey, if required.

We have all done it, started out with good intentions about making our own pudding this year and then realised we have run out of time! Don't despair, this is an instant Christmas pudding that can also be made up to one month in advance.

Last Minute Christmas Pudding

Serves: 6-8

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes



Ingredients

- 225g/8oz self raising flour
- 100g/4oz butter frozen, then coarsely grated
- 300g/10 oz mincemeat (shop bought)
- 225g/8 oz molasses sugar or rich brown sugar
- 4 tbsp black treacle
- 4 tbsp rum or whisky
- 140g.5 oz marmalade (preferable with fine shreds)
- 3 eggs, beaten

Method

1. Butter and line the base of a 1.5 litre/2 pint pudding bowl with greaseproof paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix the ingredients together with a wooden spoon, leaving the butter and flour until last. Make sure you add the ingredients one at a time to get a smooth mix.
3. Tip the pudding mix into the basin and cover with a circle of greaseproof paper.
4. Microwave on medium heat for 20-25 minutes. Test by using a skewer inserted into the middle - if it comes out clean, the pudding is cooked.
5. Store for up to one month. When ready to use, simply microwave for 10 minutes.
6. Serve with your homemade brandy butter or cream or custard.

No need to make weeks and weeks in advance, this lovely moist Christmas cake can be made a few weeks in advance or almost last minute (but don't put pressure on yourself by waiting too long!) Very fruity and moist, one of the best recipes we have ever found to take the toil out of Christmas preparation.

Quick & Easy Christmas Cake

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 3 - 4 hours

Finishing: 1 hour

Quick & Easy
Christmas
Cake



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Ingredients

900g/2 lbs mixed dried fruit
(cut any large pieces up.
sultana size)
300ml/10 fl.oz dry cider
225g/8 oz butter
225g/8 oz soft brown sugar
Zest and juice of one lemon
and one orange
2 tbs black treacle

170g/6 oz nuts (almonds,
hazels, pecans etc) chopped
4 large eggs, beaten
225g/8oz plain flour
1 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp grated nutmeg
6 tbs brandy
450g/1lb ready made
marzipan
450g/1lb royal icing

Method

1. Put all the fruit in a large pan with the cider, bring to the boil and cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove and leave to soak. The fruit should absorb all the liquid. Whatever liquid remains, drain off.
2. Cream butter and sugar together and add the orange and lemon zest and a little of the juice. Add the treacle and mix well. Add the beaten eggs and mix thoroughly.
3. Sieve the flour and spices together and fold into the wet mixture. Add the nuts and mix thoroughly. The cake mix should drop off the spoon reasonably easily.
4. Heat oven to 150C/275 F. Line a 20cm/8 inch cake tin with greaseproof paper. Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper.



Pickles, Dressings
& gifts



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One of our Christmas favourites, this is quickly made but the end result is delicious. Serve with cold meats or cheeses, or in sandwiches.

Beetroot & Onion Relish

Serves: 2 small or 1 large jar

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes



Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil

1 medium red onion, peeled and chopped

3 or 4 oregano leaves, finely chopped

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 tsp caster sugar

4 medium sized beetroots, grated

This makes a fantastic little gift but is equally delicious at home with your daily meals.

It keeps in refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Method

1. Cook the onions in olive oil for 2-3 minutes until soft but not coloured.
2. Add balsamic vinegar and beetroot and stir. Add sugar, season with salt and pepper to taste. Put the lid of the pan on for a minute or so.
3. Remove from the heat. Jar immediately, or leave in the refrigerator for up to one week.

Deliciously decadent, add a little of this on to your Christmas pudding, to lift your 'spirits'! It can be jarred and used as a Christmas gift. If you have some brandy butter left over from the Christmas festivities, try it on some crunchy toast or some grilled steak or roast meat for a sweet topping.

Brandy Butter

Serves: 6 - 8

Preparation Time: 5 minutes



Brandy
Butter

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Ingredients

125g/3 1/2 oz of unsalted butter, softened

125g/ 3 1/2 oz icing sugar

2 tbsp hot water

3 tbsp brandy

You can keep this in the refrigerator for a few days as a lovely little addition to the Christmas Pudding.

Method

1. Cream the butter and icing sugar together.
2. Loosen it a little by beating in the hot water.
3. Beat in the brandy until mixture is smooth.
4. Chill in the fridge until required or jar immediately as a gift.

This makes such a gorgeous and decadent gift that undoubtedly lets a special person in your life know just how much they mean to you. You'll be thrilled to know that it takes only a small amount of time with few ingredients and little advance preparation.

Chocolate Truffles

Serves: 12 – 16 truffles

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 5 – 10 minutes



Ingredients

170g/6oz chocolate

28g/1oz butter

100ml/3 1/2fl oz double cream

28g/1oz caster sugar

1 tablespoon icing sugar

1 tablespoon cocoa powder

These delicious treats will keep in an airtight container for up to one week.

Method

1. Break up the chocolate, chop very finely and put into mixing bowl with the butter.
2. Place the cream and sugar in a saucepan, bring just to the boil and remove from heat.
3. Pour the cream onto the chocolate and butter and beat until chocolate melts and mixture is smooth and shiny. Freeze for a few hours, until firm enough to shape.
4. Mix the cocoa and icing sugar together, dust hands with mixture and roll mixture into truffle shapes.
5. Chill until serving, or keep in an air tight container for up to a week.

This lovely, tangy seasonal dressing is perfect for salads and it works for Christmas as well as those gorgeous hot Summer days. That combination makes it perfect for a hot Aussie Christmas.

Christmas Dressing

Serves: 500 ml

Preparation Time: 5 minutes



Ingredients

- 4 tbsp cranberry sauce
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 1/2 red chilli, deseeded, sliced lengthways
- 6 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 350ml/12 fl.oz good quality olive oil
- 2 tsp runny honey
- A few peppercorns

Homemade dressings not only taste wonderful but also ensure that you know what's in them!

This dressing will last up to one month stored in the refrigerator.

Method

1. Whisk all the ingredients together in a bowl, except the fresh herbs.
2. Pour the mixture into a sterilised flip top bottle or jar.
3. Add the fresh rosemary to infuse.
4. Store in a cool dark place.

This really is very easy but extremely fresh and tasty cranberry sauce. Not only is it a gorgeous little gift for somebody special, but it is a delicious addition to your own Christmas table.

Extremely Easy Cranberry Sauce

Serves: 8 (1 medium sized jar)

Preparation Time: 2 minutes

Cook Time: 5 - 10 minutes



*Extremely Easy
Cranberry Sauce*

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Ingredients

100g/3 1/2 oz muscovado sugar

100ml fresh orange juice

250g/9 oz fresh or frozen cranberries
(if frozen, quantity must be net of glaze)

This delicious sauce will last up to one week stored in the refrigerator.

Alternatively, jar immediately and seal.

Method

1. Place orange juice and sugar in a pan and bring to the boil.
2. Stir in the cranberries and simmer until tender, but not mushy,. This takes about 5 minutes from frozen and 8 - 10 minutes from fresh.
3. The sauce will thicken as it cools.

These seasonal biscuits make a delicious Christmas snack, lovely to eat yourself at home but equally fabulous as a gift for a special friend.

Gingerbread Star Biscuits

Serves: 24 biscuits

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes



*Gingerbread
Star
Biscuits*

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Ingredients

- 125g/4 1/2 oz butter
- 100g/4 oz dark brown sugar
- 60g/2 oz golden syrup
- 325g/11 1/2 oz plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tbsp ground ginger

Try a variety of gingerbread shapes to hang on the Christmas tree.

Method

1. Heat oven to 170 C/330 F. Prepare a couple of baking trays with lining.
2. Melt butter, sugar and syrup in a pan, stirring to prevent burning or sticking until all ingredients are combined. Remove from heat.
3. Sieve flour, bicarbonate and ginger together in a bowl. Pour in the wet ingredients and mix thoroughly to form a stiff dough.
4. Chill for 10 min in the fridge. Flour your work surface and roll out the dough to about 5mm. Take your choice of Christmas cutters and cut out your biscuit shapes.
5. Place the biscuits in batches on the trays and pop into the oven. Bake for 9-10 minutes until light golden brown.
6. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on a wire rack before decorating with icing, glitter, silver balls - whatever you want!

Delicious antipasto dish that can be eaten on its own with bread, or as an accompaniment to salads, meats and cheeses as part of a buffet. A wonderful gift as well for Christmas.

Italian Roasted Capsicum Relish

Serves: 4 - 6

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 - 25 minutes



Ingredients

6 bell capsicums, mixed colours

3 cloves of garlic, skinned but left whole

1 sprig of fresh rosemary

2 springs of fresh thyme

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

(enough to cover the vegetables once jarred)

1/2 red chilli, deseeded and cut lengthwise

Store this antipasto in a sealed jar in the refrigerator.

It can remain refrigerated for up to 3 weeks.

Method

1. Heat oven to 170C/320 F.
2. Cut capsicums into chunks (right size to fit your jar if making as a gift), ensuring that seeds and core are removed.
3. Toss in a little of the olive oil with the garlic cloves.
4. Roast in the oven for 20-25 minutes until tender, but still with a slight bite.
5. Remove and cool.
6. Place the mix in a jar with the rosemary and thyme, pour in the olive oil to cover.

Picalilli works well at any time of the year but it is particularly delicious with any leftover ham after your Christmas celebrations.

Old English Picalilli

Serves: 3 - 4 medium size jars

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes



Old English
Piccalilli

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Ingredients

1 large cauliflower, broken
into very small florets
3 onions, diced into smallish
pieces (1 cm/ 1/2 inch)
3 carrots, peeled and sliced
into matchsticks
(1cm/ 1/2 inch)
2 courgettes, diced
(1cm/ 1/2 inch pieces)

200g/6 oz fine beans, sliced
(2cm/ 3/4 inch pieces)
75g/2 oz plain flour
1/2 tbsp of mild curry powder
1 tbsp mustard powder
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp mustard seeds
450g/1lb sugar
1 litre malt vinegar

This mixture can be left in the refrigerator for a week.

Alternatively, it will last for 6 months sealed correctly in an airtight jar.

Method

1. Rinse all the prepared vegetables and drain. Sift flour into a large pan, add the spices and very gradually add the vinegar, stirring continuously to avoid lumps and blending to a small paste. Add remaining vinegar and pour in the sugar, stirring to make sure all the ingredients are thoroughly mixed.
2. Bring to the boil and continue to stir until the mixture thickens. Add the vegetables and bring back to the boil for 2-3 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat, and when ready to handle, put into jars and seal when completely cool.



blog
ideas



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These are delicious burgers as an alternative to dense red meat, with an Asian twist. They can be cooked in a fry pan or on the barbecue. Serve with hand cut potato wedges and homemade coleslaw.

Best Ever Turkey Burgers

Serves: 4

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 4 hours

Best Ever Turkey Burgers

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Ingredients

300g/1 1/2 lbs of minced turkey

1 large red onion, diced

Handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped

Handful of fresh sage, finely chopped

1 red chilli, seeds removed and finely diced

2 tablespoons of sweet chilli sauce

2 tbsp of dry breadcrumbs

Small amount (no more than 1 tbs) of olive oil for frying, plus a little extra for the wedges

Half cup flour for dusting/coating

4 ciabatta rolls or similar

4 large baking potatoes, cut into wedges

1 small white cabbage, shredded

2 large carrots, julienned or grated

1 red or white onion, thinly sliced

2 tbsp of mayonnaise or French dressing

– (your preference) with 2 tps of cranberry sauce, mixed together

Method

1. Mix all of the ingredients other than the oil and flour into a large bowl, making sure that the turkey mince is mixed well and broken down to incorporate all the other ingredients. It is best to do this with your hands. Shape into burgers and then roll in the flour, trying to coat all round including the sides. Refrigerate.
2. Put the oven on at 340 degrees F/170 degrees C.
3. Wash your potatoes, but do not peel them. Cut into smallish wedges, place in a bowl and toss in olive oil so that they are well coated all over. Add salt and pepper to taste, or even a little Cajun seasoning. Put on a baking tray, spreading them out evenly. Place into the centre of the oven. They should take about 20 minutes, turning half way through.
4. Heat a tablespoon of olive oil and swish round your pan. Place the burgers in and keep the pan down to a low heat, turning the burgers every few minutes. They should take about 10-15 minutes to cook through. Best to use your own judgement.
5. Alternatively place on the bbq and cook on each side for about 5-6 minutes.
6. While the burgers and wedges are cooking, make your coleslaw by putting all the ingredients into a bowl (white cabbage, onion and carrot) and mix well with your choice of dressing, either mayonnaise or French dressing.
7. Serve in your ciabatta roll, with guacamole or cranberry mayonnaise and a little crunchy lettuce.

This is so delicious and can be made at any time of the year, so don't be put off by the word 'barbecue'. Sweet and tender pork, slow cooked until it simply melts is a great way to feed quite a few people, and once you have prepared it, you can just walk away and leave it to infuse all the wonderful flavours. Serve in rolls or buns or warm on top of a salad, or in wraps, pita bread etc.

Pulled Pork in Spicy Barbecue Sauce

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 4 hours

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 2 onions, sliced | 140g/6 oz tomato ketchup |
| 3 bay leaves | 4 tbsp red wine vinegar |
| 1 tbsp of mustard powder | 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 tbsp of smoked paprika | 3 tbsp soft dark brown sugar |
| 2kg/ 4 1/2 lbs of pork
shoulder, boned | 1 tbsp ground black pepper |

Method

1. Heat oven to 160 C/300 F/ Gas Mark 3. Scatter the onions and bay leaves in the bottom of a large roasting tin.
2. Mix together the marinade ingredients – mustard, paprika and pepper and firmly rub over the piece of pork. Place the pork, skin side up on top of the onions and pour approx 200 ml of water into the bottom of the tin. Wrap with foil and cook straight away, or you can keep in the fridge for 2 or 3 days to marinate. Bake for 4 hours until the meat is falling apart.
3. Mix the ketchup, Worcestershire sauce and brown sugar together. Remove the pork from the baking tin and place in another tin and pour over the ketchup mix.
4. Now you have a choice – either replace in the oven for 10 minutes until bubbling, or place on the barbecue (skin side down first) and cook for 10 minutes on each side, being careful not to lose any meat when you turn the joint over.
5. Remove and place on a clean tray, and using forks, shred the meat – it will be so tender that not much effort will be needed!
6. Put into rolls or serve on top of salad with crusty bread. Add extra barbecue sauce or serve with coleslaw or ruby slaw.



A warm prawn cocktail? Just about! Just simply adapt the basic prawn cocktail recipe into something a little spicier and cooked on the barbecue.

Butterfly Chilli Barbecued Prawns with Sweet Chilli Mayo

(Prawn Cocktail with a Twist)

Serves: 8 - 10

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Marination: 2 hours

Cook Time: 5 minutes

*Butterfly Chilli
Barbecued Prawns
with Sweet Chilli
Mayo*

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Ingredients

20 large king prawns (about 700g),
cut through the back and tract removed

3 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 red chilli, finely chopped

3 tbsp olive oil

Handful of fresh parsley, chopped

2 lemons and limes, quartered

For the Sauce

8 tbsp mayonnaise

2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce

Juice of half a lemon or lime

Method:

1. Marinate the cut prawns in the garlic, chilli and olive oil. Set aside about one-third of the marinade to use as a dressing with the parsley. Cover in cling film and leave in the fridge for about 2 hours.
2. Mix the mayo, sweet chilli sauce and juice of lime or lemon together and put in a bowl.
3. On your ready heated barbecue or on a griddle plate on the stove, put the prawns on shell side down and cook for 2 minutes, throwing some of the marinade over as you are cooking. Turn over, and cook for 1-2 minutes on the flesh side, again throwing some of the marinade over. Make sure the shell side has turned pink, and the flesh is cooked.
4. Place on a bed of lettuce and pour over the sauce containing the parsley. Use the chilli mayonnaise as a dip.



Not so naughty mocktails



Ruby Roundabout

rubyroundabout.com

Refreshing mocktail, great for hot weather. Slightly sharp for those not liking tastes that are too sweet.

Muddled Mojito

Mocktail

Serves: 4

Ingredients

2 tbsp sugar

Large handful of mint

Juice of 6 limes

1.5 litres soda water

Method

1. Muddle the sugar with the mint leaves in a pestle and mortar, or use the end of a rolling pin.
2. Put a generous handful of crushed ice into 4 glasses.
3. Divide the lime juice between the 4 glasses.
4. Divide the mint mix between the 4 glasses and top with soda water.
5. Add a pretty straw for the guests to stir with.

Muddled
Mojito
Mocktail

rubyroundabout.com

Seasonal in taste and seasonal in colour, this lovely mocktail is great served over crushed ice.

Orange & Cranberry Spritz

Serves: 8

Ingredients

1 litre fresh orange juice

1 litre smooth cranberry juice

800 ml sparkling elderflower drink

Method

1. Mix together orange and cranberry juice in a large jug. Slowly pour over the sparkling elderflower (it will fizz up quite a lot).
2. Stir together well and serve in tall glasses over crushed ice.
3. Garnish with some fresh cranberries.

Orange &
Cranberry
Spritz

rubyroundabout.com

Peach Cooler



rubyroundabout.com

Another delicious festive mocktail, which uses sparkling grape juice instead of wine, as at least you think you are drinking something alcoholic.

Peach Cooler

Serves: 8

Preparation Time: 5 – 10 minutes

Ingredients

6 cups soda water

2 cups peach juice

2 cups sparkling white grape juice

Slices of fresh peach for garnishing

Method

1. Combine the soda water, peach juice and sparkling grape juice together in a tall jug.
2. Fill glasses with ice and pour over the mixture slowly as it will fizz a bit.
3. Garnish with the fresh peach slices.

Have a safe and Merry Christmas from Ruby Roundabout
Trinity Kya Irish K
Ella Cassidy

