

# **Christmas recipes**

Christmas seems to come round faster with each passing year, the build up, the Christmas shopping, wrapping presents and an entire myriad of things to do.

I have included some tasty recipes for budding chefs to try out during the festive season. All recipes are for 4 people unless otherwise stated.

## **Bread Sauce**

375ml full fat milk

1 onion (peeled and chopped roughly)

2 cloves or a pinch of powdered clove

25g Fresh soft white breadcrumbs

Salt and Pepper

25ml Double cream

1 Bay Leaf

1 Blade of Mace

6 peppercorns

10g butter

## **Method**

1. Pour the milk into a saucepan and add the onion, cloves, mace, bay leaf, peppercorns and bring to the boil, allow to infuse over a low heat.
2. Strain the milk through a fine sieve into another pan
3. Add the double cream and butter, bring back to the boil
4. Whisk in the breadcrumbs and simmer gently, season with pepper and salt to taste.

**Chefs Tip:** When seasoning the finished sauce remember that bread and butter both contain high levels of salt. Bread sauce can be made up a couple of days in advance and kept in the fridge and be warmed up in a microwave in a suitable container. Adding chopped thyme or parsley to the sauce adds flavour and colour.

## **Chestnut stuffing**

### **Ingredients**

200g chestnuts (peeled)

600g Sausage meat (we use wicks Manor Farms old traditional sausage meat)

50g shallots (peeled and finely chopped)

50g onion (peeled and finely chopped)

100g butter

100g of brown or white breadcrumbs

Bunch of parsley (Chopped)

A few sprigs of thyme, rosemary and sage (Chopped)

2 cloves of garlic (peeled and crushed)

4 dried apricots (Chopped)

Salt and pepper

Dash of Worcester sauce

100g chestnut puree

2 egg yolks

### **Method**

1. Heat the butter in a frying pan and add onion, shallot and garlic.
2. Sweat without colour over a low heat until tender and translucent.
3. Add to a large mixing bowl and allow to cool.
4. Add all the other ingredients and combine well.
5. You should be left with a smooth paste.
6. Season to taste.
7. Either use the mix to stuff the turkeys cavity or push under the breast skin above the supremes.
8. The stuffing can be cooked separately in a well buttered cake tin simply pack the stuffing into the tin, cover with tin foil and bake with the turkey at 180 degrees for about an hour.

**Chefs Tip:** Add a handful of dried cranberries to the mix for a fruity stuffing. Replace chestnuts with any nut walnut, apricot and thyme is a nice mix as is basil, sundried tomato and pine nut for a Mediterranean twist.

## The Turkey

(Always plump for a free range bronze turkey)

(We use Little Mountains Farm Free range Turkeys and allow between 1 and 1.2kg of bone in turkey per person)

Turkey should be roasted in a moderate oven at 180 degrees centigrade and we allow 15-20 minutes per ½ kg. The only sure way to test a turkey is ready is with a digital temperature probe which can be purchased in most good kitchen equipment shops, stab the probe into the thickest parts of the turkey such as: by the wing joint below the crown, in between the leg and body and if you have stuffed the turkey probe into the centre of the stuffing. **All parts should read 77 degrees to 80 degrees in all cases.**

## Ingredients

5 kg Turkey (giblets removed and boiled up for stock)

6-7 rashers of bacon

Salt and pepper

½ glass of red wine

50g plain flour

Dried Thyme

Dried Rosemary

100ml Vegetable oil

1 large potato (cut in half long ways)

## Method

1. In a large roasting tray pour in half the oil.
2. Place the potatoes in the centre to form a platform for the turkey
3. Place the turkey on the potatoes and drizzle remaining oil over the bird
4. Sprinkle well with the dried herbs, salt and pepper.
5. Loosely cover with foil and place in the middle of the oven.
6. Roast at 180 degree centigrade for 1 hour, remove tray from oven remove foil and baste well.
7. Place the foil back on and replace in the oven for a further 1 hour then repeat 6.
8. For the last 1 and ½ hours remove the foil and baste every 30 minutes.
9. Probe the turkey to ensure the meat has reached above 77 degrees centigrade in all areas.

For the last ½ hours cooking mix a packet of saffron powder with a few tablespoons of white wine and brush over the bird. This is termed as gilding and will promote a lovely golden brown finish to the turkey.

### **To present the turkey**

1. Remove the turkey from the tray and pour off any excess juices into a bowl, strain the remaining liquid in the roasting tray in to the same bowl.
2. Place the bird on a carving board or salver and keep warm, covering with a fresh sheet of tin foil will keep the meat moist and allow it to rest.
3. In the roasting tray sprinkle a little plain flour to soak up the grease and place back in the oven until golden brown.
4. Pour a glass of red wine in to the pan and bring to the boil on top of the stove, try to remove all the pan residue and roasting juices add the stock made from the giblets and the additional juices from the roasting tray and add to the wine mix
5. Transfer all the liquid to a saucepan, bring to the boil
6. Adjust the thickness of the gravy by adding a little corn flour slaked in cold water and crumble in a chicken stock cube.
7. Adjust the seasoning to taste.

### **Turkey stock**

#### **Ingredients**

- 1 onion (Peeled and chopped)
- 1 leek (Washed well and chopped)
- 1 stick of celery (Washed well and chopped)
- 1 carrot (Peeled and chopped)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig of thyme or a tsp of dried
- 6 peppercorns
- Turkey giblets and any turkey bones

#### **Method**

1. In a large saucepan place all the chopped vegetables and seasonings
2. Place the bones and giblets on top and cover with cold water.
3. Bring to the boil and skim any grease from the top of the water.
4. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 1 hour, strain through a fine sieve.
5. Use when making the gravy.

## **Cranberry and orange compote**

### **Ingredients**

- 100g fresh cranberries
- 50g caster sugar
- 4 oranges (zest and juice)
- 2 lemons (zest and juice)
- 1 measure of cointreau
- 1 vanilla pod (split lengthways and the seeds removed)
- 1 shallot (chopped fine)
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 1 measure of port

### **Method**

1. In a saucepan place the sugar, zest and juice of the oranges and lemons, the vanilla seeds, the shallot and the honey.
2. Bring to the boil and add the cranberries.
3. Reduce the heat and simmer until the cranberries are soft and a thick jam is reached add the port and the cointreau.
4. Return to the boil and allow to thicken again.
5. Remove from the heat and place in a suitable container, allow to cool and keep in the fridge until needed. Tastes great hot or cold

**Chef's tip:** This compote can be made well in advance and kept in the fridge it goes very well with cheese and as a festive alternative to chutney in sandwiches.

## **Last minute Christmas pudding**

(This recipe is ideal if you haven't already made your pudding.)

### **Ingredients**

2lb Mixed Dried fruit (sultanas, raisins, currants, dates)

¼ lb Blanched Almonds (roughly chopped)

¼ lb candied peel

¼ lb glace cherries (roughly chopped)

All of the above can be mixed and matched if you prefer a nutty pudding omit some of the cherries and add another variety of nut etc.

1 lemon (grated Zest and juice)

1 orange (grated zest and juice)

½ lb Plain Flour

Good pinch of sea salt

2 level tablespoon mixed spice

½ lb Fresh white breadcrumbs

½ lb unrefined castor sugar

1 lb vegetable suet

8 eggs

½ pint stout

1 double measure of brandy

1 measure of sherry

1 measure Madeira

¼ pint of milk

1 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tablespoon vanilla essence

1 carrot finely grated

1 cooking apple finely grated.

## Method

1. A couple of days before making the puddings wash all the dried fruit in plenty of warm water, drain well and place in a bowl until ready to make the puddings.
2. Add the nuts, cherries, peel with the washed fruit.
3. Add the zest and juices.
4. Whisk the eggs together.
5. Add all the other ingredients to the fruit and nut mix keeping back the milk.
6. Once all the ingredients are well mixed together adjust the consistency with the remaining milk.
7. Ideally you want a soft dropping consistency, meaning that a spoon full of the mixture falls easily from the mixing spoon when tapped against the side of the bowl.
8. Place the finished mix into pre greased pudding basins; this recipe makes 4- 5 inch puddings or one big pudding.
9. Cover the filled pudding basins with a layer or cling film then a layer of tin foil ensuring that the fitting is tight this keeps the steam from entering the basin during cooking.

Allow to stand overnight for the mix to settle.

## To Cook

1. Bring a large pan to the boil and add the pudding/puddings the level of the water should be just below the top of the basin and simmer on the stove for 3-4 hours. Do not allow to boil dry add boiling water from the kettle during the cooking. It is almost impossible to overcook a Christmas pudding and the longer the cooking process the darker the pud becomes.
2. Once cooked remove from the water allow to cool and remove the cling film and foil lid, replace with fresh cling film and foil and store either in a cool pantry or in the fridge.
3. To re heat boil for a further 2-3 hours in a large saucepan with water as for the cooking or simply remove all foil and cling film and zap in the microwave.
4. When hot all the way through serve onto a serving dish and warm a couple of measures of either brandy or whiskey in a small pan, drizzle the pudding with the warmed alcohol and flame with a lighter. **Be very careful with lighting the pudding and carry the lit pudding away from your body allowing the flames to blow back as you walk. Alternatively carry the warmed alcohol in the pan and drizzle over the pudding at table then light the vapours.**
5. Serve with brandy butter and/or custard

## **Proper English Custard**

(This recipe relies on the freshest of eggs we use Sunnymeade eggs)

### **Ingredients**

3 egg yolks

25g Castor Sugar

1 Vanilla Pod (seeds scraped out)

200 ml Full Fat Milk

50ml Double cream

### **Method**

1. Whisk the egg yolks and sugar together in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy and a pale yellow almost white colour.
2. Bring the milk to the boil in a saucepan with the vanilla seeds and pod, allow to infuse.
3. Strain the milk over the egg and sugar mix and whisk until fully blended and return to the saucepan.
4. Stirring constantly slowly heat the custard until it starts to thicken. This mixture cannot boil or the eggs will scramble once the custard coats the back of the spoon, strain the custard again and serve immediately or allow to cool and serve cold.
5. Consume within 3 days and store in the fridge.
6. Once cooked the custard can be flavoured with a cheeky dram or two.

## **Rum or Brandy Butter**

### **Ingredients**

200g Unsalted Butter (soft)

150g icing sugar

Brandy/Rum

### **Method**

1. Place the soft butter in a mixing bowl and whisk until light and glossy add the icing sugar and continue to whisk until a fluffy mix is achieved.
2. Slowly pour in your preferred tippie a little at a time to taste whisking after each addition.
3. Serve immediately or store in the fridge in a suitable container, allow to come up to room temperature before serving.

## **Turkey mussaman Curry**

### **Ingredients**

400g cooked turkey meat (diced)

175 ml coconut milk

1 tsp ground cardamom

2 lemons (grated zest and juice)

2 limes (grated zest and juice)

12g castor sugar

500ml good turkey stock

1 leek (washed well and cut into rings)

100g baby spinach leaves

2 shallots (finely chopped)

1 white onion (finely chopped)

4 cloves of garlic (peeled and crushed)

50ml vegetable oil or ghee

1 bunch coriander (chopped)

1 bunch basil (chopped)

1 red chilli (seeds removed and discarded flesh chopped)

1 red pepper (deseeded and sliced into batons)

For the spices

½ tsp cayenne pepper

1 tsp ground coriander

½ tsp ground cumin

½ tsp ground cinnamon

½ tsp fenu greek

## **Method**

1. In a large pan heat the oil over a moderate flame.
2. Add the leek, red pepper, chilli onion and shallot and cook until tender and translucent.
3. Add the garlic and continue to cook for a few minutes.
4. Add the spices and cook for a few minutes.
5. Add the turkey and stir so the spices cover the meat.
6. Add the stock and all the other ingredients except the spinach.
7. Bring to the boil.
8. Transfer to a casserole dish with a lid and cook for an hour in a pre heated oven at 180 degrees centigrade.
9. Once cooked remove the casserole from the oven add the spinach and return to the oven for 5-10 minutes. Adjust the seasoning and serve.

Serve with egg noodles drizzled with sesame oil or boiled or steamed rice.

Omit the chilli if you are looking for a milder curry.

## **Candy Chestnuts**

An excellent accompaniment to the turkey

### **Ingredients**

100g peeled chestnuts

50ml maple syrup

50ml honey

50g butter

### **Method**

1. Place the chestnuts in a baking dish.
2. In a saucepan bring the honey, maple and butter to the boil.
3. Pour over the chestnuts and cover with foil.
4. Bake at 180 degrees centigrade for 1 hour.
5. Remove foil and return to the oven allow the maple and honey mix to form syrup and stir frequently until a caramelised glaze is achieved.
6. Serve with the turkey.