



Mary Berry COOKS

My favourite recipes for family and friends

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ABOUT THE BOOK

In this brand-new official tie-in to Mary's much-anticipated BBC2 series, the nation's best-loved home cook invites you into her kitchen to share the secrets of her favourite dishes to make for family and friends.

Mary Berry Cooks features all the recipes from the show, along with Mary's menus for each episode – from a warming Kitchen Supper or a Sunday Roast to a Summer Buffet or an Afternoon Tea.

This all-new collection of 100 mouth-watering, simple recipes offers the perfect meal for any occasion. It includes dinner party staples such as Slow-Roast Shoulder of Lamb or Cottage Pie with Dauphinoise Potato Topping, special summer lunches such as Fiery Red Rice Salad and Summer Pudding, and of course, her trademark cakes and bakes.

Accompanied by Mary's no-nonsense, no-fuss advice on preparing ahead, each fool-proof meal is made easy, so that you can cook with confidence.

Whether a family lunch or a simple one-pot supper for friends, Mary's carefully tested recipes and comprehensive advice make *Mary Berry Cooks* the perfect kitchen companion.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Berry is the nation's favourite baker and the much-loved judge on the BBC's *The Great British Bake Off*. She has been teaching the nation to cook for over four decades and has over 70 books to her name, including *Mary Berry At Home* and *Mary Berry's Baking Bible*.

In 2009 Mary was awarded the highly coveted Guild of Food Writers Lifetime Achievement Award and in 2012 she was made a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.



INTRODUCTION

I cannot tell you how thrilled I am to be able to pass on my knowledge, through *Mary Berry Cooks*, not just on baking but on how to entertain family and friends through my love of good food.

No matter what I am cooking, I want it to be as simple and as fuss-free as possible. Everything must be absolutely delicious, of course, but whether you are entertaining a handful of close friends, cooking a family meal, or creating a buffet party for a summer's day, the last thing you need is stress in the kitchen. This is why my dishes always contain elements that can be made in advance, or frozen to avoid any last-minute hassle.

As a working mother many years ago, it was essential that I had home-cooked dishes for my children when I finished work, and even now that they are older, I have kept the habit of making as much as I can in advance. In fact, over the past few years I have found myself busier than ever, so to come home and have a supper ready to defrost from the freezer is still a godsend!

It has been years since I presented my very own programme, but I was delighted to have the opportunity in *Mary Berry Cooks* to show how to entertain in a simple, stress-free way. This book includes all the recipes from the series, along with my wealth of experience on how to cook for special occasions without being a slave to the stove – my mantra is ‘prepare ahead at all times’ and this book will give you all the tools you need. There are plenty of tips on what you can and can’t freeze ahead of time, as well as advice on how to present your dishes for maximum impact.

I love parties – who doesn’t? – and several times a year we open the gardens for the National Garden Scheme charity, and host church plant sales in the garden. For these, I always provide tea, coffee, cakes and sandwiches, and have got calculating how much to serve each time down to a fine art!

As you can imagine, I have had many family celebrations over the years, too, as my children have grown up, married, and had children of their own – so of course there have been numerous birthday parties, Christmas celebrations, and many other excuses for a jolly good time. I could never bring myself to buy ready-made party foods (although there is nothing

wrong with cheating by using ready-made pastry and buying in some spare crisps and nibbles), so over the years, I have developed recipes that are easy to make, but guaranteed to please, and will allow you to cater for almost any occasion.

In this collection, I have included some of my tried and trusted favourites, such as my Roast Fillet of Beef with Roasted Garlic and Mustard Cream ([here](#)), and Salmon Tranches with Herb Sauce, Quail's Eggs and Asparagus ([here](#)) – both impressive contributions to a summer buffet, but effortless to prepare ahead.

For drinks parties, I like to serve light, delicious canapés and have developed some lovely new ideas for this book which are quick and easy for you to make and serve. My moreish Croque Monsieur Toasts ([here](#)), Smoked Salmon Skewers ([here](#)) and Cocktail Palmiers ([here](#)) are all deceptively easy to make, but are certain to delight your party guests.

And for those winter nights when you just want to invite a few friends round for an intimate supper, there are plenty of recipes for hearty casseroles, bakes, and a fabulous Spiced Garden Vegetable Casserole ([here](#)) for vegetarians, all of which can easily be scaled up for bigger gatherings.

Of course, what dinner party would be complete without the pudding? Dessert can often feel like an afterthought, or another added stress to an already busy kitchen, but even simple puddings can provide a spectacular finish to a meal. Try my favourite, Warm Chocolate Fondant Tart ([here](#)), which can be made and frozen well in advance. Or as the days get longer, a spectacular Summer Pudding Loaf ([here](#)), which uses the best that the British hedgerows have to offer.

Afternoon tea is once again on the rise, with more and more people discovering the joys of baking. So I couldn't go without including my classic recipes for Teatime Scones ([here](#)) and Orange Butterfly Cakes ([here](#)), but have also included some wonderful ideas for simple 'cut-and-come-again' loaves to share over a cup of tea with a few friends, tray bakes that are perfect for a cake sale, and beautiful layer cakes for that special occasion.

A chapter on my Kitchen Wisdom gives you the tips and tricks that I have developed over the years. While it is not intended to be comprehensive, I

hope that some of my suggestions on stocking your larder, meal planning, and catering for crowds, will be useful for you too.

Throughout the book, I have included the menus from the television show, so you can see my favourite meals to cook for each occasion, before embarking on your own. But all the recipes are suitable for entertaining, so I do hope that you will have fun experimenting with courses and combinations to find your own favourites among this collection, and that you enjoy the recipes as much as we have enjoyed creating them!

Nary Berry

*Mary's
Kitchen
Wisdom*

IN MY LARDER

As you can imagine, I have a well-stocked larder full of ingredients to call on, which makes all the difference when you have to rustle up a last-minute dinner or want to make a whole new meal out of last night's leftovers. Here are some of the ingredients from the recipes in this book that I like to use and often have to hand, which would be a useful addition to your store cupboard too.



GRAINS, PASTA AND PULSES

CHICKPEAS

A nourishing, filling pulse that is full of protein and can be used to bulk out soups and stews or in couscous salads. Chickpeas are available dried or canned but I tend to opt for the latter for reasons of convenience as the dried variety needs lengthy soaking.

COUSCOUS

Couscous is a grain made from semolina. It is very convenient to have in the store cupboard as it needs no cooking; you simply soak it in boiling water (or you can steam it over boiling water) for 10 minutes to make it plump up and soften. Couscous has a mild flavour that is delicious as it is, but to boost it you can soak it in stock, or add lemon juice and other seasonings to the soaking liquid.

Traditionally served in Arabic countries to accompany tagines, couscous soaks up the juices from stews beautifully so makes a good starchy substitute for rice or potatoes.

Alternatively, it makes a great base for salads – add roasted vegetables, chopped mint and coriander, nuts, dried fruits, or pomegranate seeds to give lots of colour and texture.

Giant couscous is now available and is cooked and used in the same way.

LENTILS

Lentils are an inexpensive store cupboard ingredient and are a good source of protein. You can buy dried red, yellow, green and brown lentils, and they will keep for up to one year stored in an airtight container. Canned lentils are also available.

Red and yellow lentils

These lentils cook quickly and soon turn soft and pulpy. They are ideal for thickening stews and soups, and are the basis of many variations of Indian dhal.

Puy lentils

These grey-brown French lentils, which keep their round, firm shape when cooked, are considered to be the finest. They have a distinctive earthy flavour and are delicious served as an accompaniment to sausages and grilled meats or in salads.

How to cook lentils

Lentils do not need soaking. Rinse them, then cook them in water or in stock as described in the recipe, boiling them for the first 5 minutes, then simmering them until cooked and tender, which can take anything from 10 minutes to an hour depending on the type and the age of the lentils. Salt will toughen lentils so season them at the end of cooking.



PASTA

Pasta is an ingredient I often turn to when I'm in need of a quick, easy supper so I make sure I always have a variety of shapes in my cupboard, as well as spaghetti and lasagne sheets.

RICE

Rice is such a versatile ingredient: it can form the basis of a meal in itself – as a risotto or a salad, for example, while long-grain, basmati and other types, such as wild rice, can bulk out a meal as an accompaniment. As well as long-grain rice, here are the types I always have to hand.

Arborio rice

This is the classic risotto rice from Piedmont in Northern Italy. The grains are short and quite plump; translucent at the edge with a hard core, which is what gives them their distinctive creamy exterior with the 'al dente' or slightly chalky middle.

Carnaroli is another premium risotto rice; it has slightly longer grains than arborio.

Basmati rice

This is a long-grain Indian rice. When cooked its grains are light and fluffy and as is to be expected, their delicate, aromatic flavour complements Asian dishes particularly well.

Camargue red rice

Cultivated in the Camargue region of France this reddish-brown rice takes between 20 and 30 minutes to cook and has a delicious nutty flavour and a slightly chewy texture. Serve it alongside grilled meats or use it to make rice salads.

How to cook rice

One of the easiest and most reliable methods of cooking rice is to cook it in double its volume of water. Measure out 85ml (3fl oz) rice per person in a measuring jug. Tip the rice into a saucepan then measure double the amount

– 150ml (¼ pint) per person – of cold water, and pour on top of the rice with ½ tsp salt.

Bring the water to the boil, stir once, then cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid and reduce the heat to its lowest setting. Cook for 10 minutes before opening the lid. By this time the rice should be cooked and will have absorbed all the water, leaving the grains fluffy and tender. If not, return the lid and cook for a few more minutes until all the water is absorbed.



CANNED AND PRESERVED FOODS

ANCHOVIES

Related to the herring family, these tiny oily fish are filleted, salted in brine and canned or packed into jars. Their piquant flavour makes an excellent seasoning. Look for jars or cans of anchovies in olive oil or salt. If packed in salt they should be rinsed and patted dry before use. Cans and jars of anchovies will store well in the kitchen cupboard, but once opened should be decanted into a small airtight container, covered with olive oil and consumed within two days.

CAPERS

These are the flowering buds of the Mediterranean caper bush and are used to flavour sauces with their salty, sour taste. The buds are picked and preserved in salt or olive oil, or pickled in vinegar. Larger, sweeter caper berries are also available.

COCONUT MILK AND CREAM

Coconut milk is the liquid that is produced when coconut is grated (not to be confused with coconut juice or water, which is the liquid inside the coconut). It is sold in cans and generally separates – a thick, creamy layer forms above a runny liquid – so it should be stirred well before use. It is delicious in curries and soups. Once opened the milk needs to be kept in the

fridge and used within a day or two, or decant it and freeze it for up to six months.

Coconut cream is a hard block of compressed coconut flesh that is very rich and creamy and has to be chopped or grated before being added to curries, sauces and sometimes cakes. It can be kept in the store cupboard or fridge for several months.

DRIED PORCINI MUSHROOMS

Porcini (also known as ceps), with their deep earthy flavour, are thought to be the finest of mushrooms but they are also one of the most expensive and are available fresh for only a few months of the year. Happily, dried porcini are readily available and are a brilliant store cupboard essential. They are simple to prepare – you simply soak them in warm water until soft – then they can be snipped into pieces and added to risottos, chicken, game and beef casseroles and sauces to give a strong mushroom flavour. Don't throw out the soaking water, it will have a lot of flavour too so add it to the dish you are cooking.

Dried wild mushrooms are also available and can be used in the same way but don't have the depth of flavour of porcini.



OLIVES

Olives are widely grown in Spain, Italy, France and Greece. They are considered an essential ingredient in these countries' cuisines so are a useful ingredient to add a touch of sunshine to your cooking or simply as a delicious nibble with drinks.

Inedible raw, olives are brined before eating. Green olives are the unripe fruit, turning to brownish pink and then black as they ripen. Natural black olives are picked fresh, but the shiny black olives you can buy are often green olives that have been cured and treated to give the jet black colour.

Olives can often be marinated in olive oil with garlic, herbs, chillies or citrus rind. Often they are stuffed with pimento, rolled anchovies or whole blanched almonds.

Kalamata olives are purple, almond shaped olives grown in southern Greece. They have a distinctive fruity flavour and are usually sold brined. Manzanilla olives are small, succulent green Spanish olives.

TOMATOES

Canned tomatoes

An essential store cupboard ingredient used in bolognese sauces, stews and casseroles as they have a richer, more concentrated flavour than fresh tomatoes. Two types are available: whole, peeled plum as well as chopped. They are largely interchangeable but some people feel the whole tomatoes have a better flavour.

Passata

Made by cooking, then sieving tomatoes, passata is a thick but juicy pulp that is ideal as a base for pasta sauces, soups and stews. Available either smooth or chunky or with herbs and garlic added.

Sun-dried/sun-blushed tomatoes

Sun-dried tomatoes have had most of their moisture removed so they will keep for longer than fresh in the store cupboard. They have an intense,

sweet flavour, a slightly chewy texture and have so many uses in cooking: add them to soups, stews and pasta sauces, or give savoury bakes a strong tomatoey flavour without adding too much extra moisture.

Sun-blushed or ‘sun-ripened’ tomatoes are plumper and sweeter than sun-dried tomatoes as they are only partly dried and are kept in olive oil to preserve them. They work well in salads and sandwiches.

Tomato purée

A thick paste made by cooking tomatoes for several hours, then straining them to remove the seeds. Keep a tube of purée in the fridge to add depth of flavour to bolognese sauces, pasta sauces, casseroles and risottos.



GARLIC

In my view, no kitchen supply is complete without garlic.

Crushing garlic is the strongest way to use it: peel then cut in half and place on a chopping board with a little sea salt. Lay a large knife over the garlic and press down with the heel of your hand to crush, then scrape the blade back and forth over the garlic until finely crushed. A garlic crusher makes this job much simpler.

Garlic may also be chopped or sliced for a milder flavour – it is often used this way when stir-frying dishes. When frying garlic, never allow it to brown as this will mean it’s burnt and bitter.

Whole cloves of garlic or indeed whole bulbs of garlic can be roasted or added to a dish to give a mild sweet flavour. When roasted squeeze the garlic paste from a bulb to give a deliciously mild sweet purée.

Store garlic in a cool, dry, airy place and it will last several weeks.

HARISSA PASTE

Made from ground chilli peppers (often smoked or dried) and garlic, this pungent red paste originated in North Africa where it is widely used in recipes. Recipes vary so it may contain coriander, caraway or cumin, and usually olive oil. It may also contain tomatoes, or even crushed rose petals.

Try adding harissa to salad dressings for a fiery rich flavour; spread it thinly over pizza doughs; stir it into tagines, soups and stews and marinades for lamb or chicken dishes; smother it over barbecue meats and fish before cooking; or stir it into crème fraîche or Greek yoghurt to make an instant dip.

Once opened, pour a thin layer of olive oil over the paste and store it in the fridge.

HONEY

This is really handy for both sweet and savoury dishes, though I actually find I use it more often in the latter – in tagines, curries and marinades, for example. Clear rather than cloudy honey is the more versatile for cooking – choose a neutral-flavoured variety, rather than a heavily scented one such as lavender, or the floral flavour will overpower your dish.

HORSERADISH

It can be hard to source fresh horseradish unless you grow your own, but jars of grated horseradish and creamed horseradish with oil, cream and vinegar added are useful to keep in the cupboard. Horseradish is a member of the mustard family so it is quite strong and hot – delicious with roast beef and smoked fish.

MUSTARD

The seeds of the mustard plant are cracked or bruised and mixed with salt, water or lemon juice to make this flavoursome condiment. Mustards vary in strength, so it is useful to stock the three basics: mellow, rich Dijon mustard, which is excellent in dressings or to smear on bread to make sandwiches; coarse grain mustards, delicious in marinades and dressings; and hot, pungent English Mustard which is perfect to serve with roast beef,

hams and gammon, either on the plate or in sandwiches. Sweeter American mustard is also popular to serve with burgers or hot dogs.



SESAME OIL

Derived from sesame seeds, the oil is used to flavour Asian dishes, particularly Chinese food. It has quite a strong flavour so just a few drops added at the end of the cooking will give a delicious nuttiness to the dish, or you can stir-fry in it directly for a very intense flavour.

SOY SAUCE

Made from fermented soy beans, water and barley or wheat, soy sauce is used in Asian cooking as a seasoning. Light soy sauce is thin and salty, while dark soy sauce is richer and slightly thicker. Low-salt options are also available. Use it as you would salt and pepper in any savoury dish to give a little more depth of flavour than usual – it can also be used as a condiment in the same way as vinegar.

VINEGAR

Vinegars are a really useful store cupboard ingredient – vital for vinaigrettes and dressings but also handy for marinades, sweet-and-sour sauces, pickles and chutneys and as a condiment. I like to keep at least five or six different types in my cupboard as they are each so unique.

Those listed here are the ones I would have as a minimum, however there is also a wide range of herb and spice vinegars, such as chilli, tarragon or raspberry vinegars available and I love experimenting with these.

Balsamic Vinegar

The most authentic type of balsamic vinegar is made from grape must (juice) that is simmered until very concentrated and then left to ferment for a minimum of 12 years in wooden barrels. The fermentation imparts unique flavours, and during the process the vinegar becomes thick, dark and syrupy.

This high-quality vinegar comes from Modena, in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy. Look for the word ‘tradizionale’ for the best quality. It will be expensive but you need only use it in very small quantities and so will last you a long time. Alternatively, a cheaper option is ‘aceto balsamico di

Modena'. This has not been aged for so long, but is made using the same principle.

Be wary of other products masquerading as 'balsamic vinegar'. These are most likely cheap imitations that have caramel added to colour them.

Balsamic glaze

This rich and sticky balsamic vinegar reduction has a sweet and slightly sour flavour, and is delicious drizzled over salads or used to make a quick sauce.

Using balsamic vinegar

Use the best-quality 'tradizionale' balsamic where you will really appreciate its unique flavour. For an amazingly simple dessert, try it drizzled over sliced strawberries or good-quality vanilla ice cream. Drop a little into a small bowl of extra virgin olive oil and serve it with chunks of crusty bread for dipping.

Use less expensive 'aceto balsamico di Modena' in cooking. Add a drizzle to the pan juices of steaks, pork chops, duck or chicken breasts, or stir it into pasta dishes, risottos and marinades.

For salads, add just a few drops of balsamic to any oil and vinegar dressing to give it a rich flavour.

Malt vinegar

Made from fermenting barley and traditionally used to sprinkle over fish and chips or used in preserves.

Red and white wine vinegar

Made by fermenting red or white wines, their tangy and rich flavours are ideal to use in salad dressings. I use white wine vinegar for almost everything.

Rice wine vinegar

A mild-flavoured vinegar mainly used in Chinese cookery. It pairs well with such flavours such as soy and sesame oil and is often used to make

simple marinades.

Sherry and cider vinegar

Milder than wine vinegars, and with sweeter flavours, these are particularly good for dressings due to their unique flavours.



BASIL

The soft, shiny green leaves of this Mediterranean herb are the essential ingredient in pesto and are widely used in many Italian dishes. Basil is a very delicate herb and retains more flavour if torn rather than chopped with a knife. Similarly, always add basil at the end of cooking as prolonged heat will destroy its flavour.

Keep growing pots of basil fresh by keeping them on a sunny windowsill and always water from the base of the pot. Pick off wilted leaves, and the plant should grow for several weeks.

Basil should not be kept in the fridge as the leaves will turn black.

CORIANDER

Coriander is a tender, green leafy herb with a distinctive citrus flavour. It is widely used in Asian and Mexican dishes. Heat diminishes the flavour of coriander so add it to hot dishes at the last moment or use it raw. Add chopped or whole leaves to curries, salsas, guacamole and salads.

Store packets of coriander in the door of the fridge for 2-3 days only – it will wilt very quickly and does not freeze or dry well.



DILL

A wonderful herb to have in stock if you are cooking with fish as the flavours marry beautifully.

FENNEL

The feathery leaves – or fronds – of the fennel bulb have a pronounced aniseed flavour. It belongs to the same family as dill, and like that herb, too, fennel is a perfect partner to fish. Try barbecuing or cooking fish on top of the herb for a gentle fragrance.

Fennel seeds are sweet and liquorice-flavoured. They are commonly sprinkled on top of bread rolls for a unique flavour or added to Italian salamis.

LEMONGRASS

A woody stalk, composed of tightly packed leaves, this is one of the most distinctive flavourings in many dishes from Southeast Asia, particularly Thailand and Vietnam.

Crush the bulbous base of the stalk with the end of a rolling pin to release its aromatic juices or slice, then add to curries and soups.

The flavour is excellent in savoury dishes, paired with fish, prawns and chicken, but lemongrass can also be used to impart flavour to sweet syrups for fruit cocktails and to flavour lemonade, custards and cocktails. Lemongrass should be removed before serving.

Store it wrapped in damp kitchen paper in the fridge for up to two weeks.

Dried lemongrass is also available but is less fragrant – it should be soaked in water before use.

MINT

There are many varieties of this refreshing herb available, each with its own subtle flavour and appearance.

Spearmint has pointed, serrated-edged leaves and is the most commonly used in cooking as it has an excellent flavour. Peppermint has longer, darker

leaves and a stronger flavour, which is best used in confectionery. Apple mint leaves are rounder and furrer, and it has a sweeter, fruitier flavour so is often used in refreshing summer drinks.

Pluck the leaves from the stem then chop or shred them finely.

Keep packs of mint in the door of the fridge for up to three days.

PARSLEY

This is one of the most versatile herbs, and the one I use the most as the flavour complements so many different meats and vegetables and types of cuisine.

There are two types available: curly and flat-leaf. Curly has the milder flavour. Flat-leaf is darker and has a more robust flavour that stands up to cooking, while curly is often used for garnishing.

The two are interchangeable, however, so I often don't specify a type in my recipes – just use whichever you prefer.

I add parsley to dressings, sauces, pasta dishes and stuffings, and also as a garnish.

OREGANO & MARJORAM

Oregano grows wild in southern Europe and the Mediterranean. Marjoram is from the same herb family and is sometimes used interchangeably. Often used in Italian and Greek dishes, they have a great affinity to lamb, tomatoes, vegetables and eggs.

Fresh oregano or marjoram will last for one week in the fridge, but because of its high oil content will also dry well if left in a warm room for a few days.

ROSEMARY

This is a fragrant, versatile herb that is best used fresh. Take leaves off the stem and chop finely, or use branches of rosemary to add flavour to your roasts.

SAGE

A very easy herb to grow all year round, the soft velvety leaves have a slightly musky scent. Sage can withstand prolonged cooking without loss of flavour and it also dries well. The flavour goes well with pork and chicken, and it is often used in sausages, roasts and stuffings.

Whole leaves can be fried in butter or oil until crisp and then scattered over pasta, tortellini or gnocchi. Keep packs of sage leaves in the door of the fridge for 2–3 days and discard when the leaves turn black. To dry your own, simply hang it in a cool place until dried – it takes about two weeks.

TARRAGON

Fresh French tarragon is a long, slender green herb with an intense, almost aniseed flavour with hints of vanilla. Often used in French cooking, it is a perfect match for chicken and can also be used to flavour oils and vinegars.

Russian tarragon has very fine, thin leaves. It is often sold as a tarragon plant, but tastes like grass!

Store fresh tarragon wrapped in damp kitchen paper in the fridge for a maximum of 3–4 days.

THYME

This shrubby herb has tiny greyish-green leaves full of an intense aromatic oil that gives a real depth of flavour to meaty casseroles, stews and roasted vegetables. Like sage, it stands up well to long cooking times, imparting its flavour slowly and gently.

Sprigs of thyme can be added whole to dishes, or the leaves can be pulled off and chopped and rubbed over meat and chicken before grilling or barbecuing.

There are many varieties of thyme with which to experiment; try the citrus notes of lemon thyme for a change.



CARDAMOM

There are two types of cardamom – green and black. Both are small pods that contain clusters of small black seeds. Green cardamom is the more commonly available – you’re unlikely to be able to find black cardamom in the supermarket – and it is the one I use. You can use both the whole pods or crack them open and use the seeds, but note that whole pods are not supposed to be eaten. To get most of the flavour out of the pods, bruise them with a rolling pin before adding to the pan. Seeds are often sold separately by Indian grocers, but you can also take the seeds out of the pods yourself.

Ground cardamom is also available but doesn’t have the same aromas and fragrance as the whole spice.

CHILLI

I know that not everyone likes a lot of heat in their food, but if you use chillies judiciously, they can add a gentle warmth to your dishes that really is essential in certain cuisines.

The pith and seeds are the most potent parts of a chilli, so remove them for a milder heat. Cut the chillies in half, lengthways, remove the seeds and pith then slice or dice as required.

If you burn your mouth with chilli, drinking water will do no good because the spicy part – capsaicin – is not soluble in water. Drink milk or yoghurt, or eat ice cream or even peanut butter.

Below is a guide to the chillies I use most frequently.

Cayenne

Made from ground chillies, this is a hot and fiery spice that is used to add spicy heat. Drying a chilli increases its potency, so cayenne should be used sparingly as it really is strong and you can always add more but you can’t take it away! A pinch of cayenne adds a hint of spice when dusted over cheese biscuits, prawn cocktails or egg mayonnaise.

Dried chilli flakes

Useful to keep in the spice cupboard to use when you don’t have fresh. They are good to add to salsas or sprinkled into pastries and scones to give

an extra hint of flavour, though again, use with caution as they are surprisingly hot!

Jalepeño chilli peppers

These are the most popular and widely available chillies that you will find in the supermarket. Either red or green, they are bullet-shaped with a soft, smooth skin and range from medium to pretty hot. If you like a really hot chilli use tiny bird's eye chillies, which have a fruity, pungent heat.

How to prepare fresh chillies

It is best to use rubber gloves when preparing chillies, as the juice is very strong and easily absorbed by the skin, causing a burning sensation.

Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after preparing chillies, and never touch your eyes or other sensitive areas when handling chillies, as the capsaicin can really burn.

CORIANDER

Very different to the flavour of the fresh herb, the seeds of the coriander plant have a delicious warm, nutty, lemony or orangey citrus flavour when crushed.

Coriander is available to buy as whole seeds or ground, but as with most spices the whole seed is the more potent and for a stronger flavour, it's better to toast then grind the whole spice yourself. Toasting coriander seeds in a dry frying pan will bring out their nuttiness.

Coriander seeds are widely used in curries, often partnered with cumin seeds.

CUMIN

Cumin seeds are tiny, oval, brown-ridged seeds with a very distinctive, sweetish aroma widely used to season curries, and in Indian, Middle Eastern and Mexican cuisines. You can dry fry them to intensify their flavour but it's not essential. Also available ground.

FIVE-SPICE POWDER

A Chinese blend of five flavours – salty, sour, bitter, pungent and sweet, hence its name. It is a mixture of ground star anise, fennel, cloves, cinnamon and Sichuan pepper. I use it in stir-fries or add it to barbecue sauces and marinades.

GINGER

A small knobbly root (a rhizome), ginger has an unusual flavour – it adds freshness yet also spicy warmth, so is widely used in curries, stir-fries, chutneys, salsas and sauces.

Peel ginger with a potato peeler and finely shred, chop or grate the fibrous flesh before use. Store fresh ginger in the salad drawer of the fridge where it will last a couple of weeks, or freeze it and grate it straight from the freezer.

Don't be tempted to use fresh ginger in cakes and biscuits as the flavour becomes bitter. Dried, powdered ginger is more suitable for use in baking.

NUTMEG

Nutmeg has a warm, sweet, nutty flavour, and is used in a variety of cooking contexts. Although ground nutmeg is available, it is best to buy whole nutmeg kernels and grate them as needed; as with all spices the flavour is much stronger.

Nutmeg is a lovely complement to dairy products and is delicious sprinkled over a creamy rice pudding or a pumpkin pie, while a grating added to béchamel sauce or bread sauce really improves the flavour. Yet there are other classic flavour pairings – it is wonderful sprinkled over wilted buttered spinach, roasted pumpkin, or fresh pasta with hot butter. It is also widely used in cakes and desserts, and in mulled wine.



PAPRIKA

Like cayenne pepper, paprika is made by grinding dried red peppers or chillies. It is a very popular spice in Hungary, Spain (where it is known as *pimentón*) and Portugal, and is used to give goulash and chorizo sausages their characteristic flavours. Although generally milder than cayenne, paprika's strength does vary; some are sweet, some hot and some medium, so always check the label.

Smoked paprika is made from peppers that have been smoked first and the flavour is reminiscent of smoky bacon. Again check the label for sweet or hot varieties.

SESAME SEEDS

The tiny, cream seeds of the sesame plant have a subtle, nutty flavour and are delicious sprinkled over salads, added to bread mixes or sprinkled over stir-fries and Chinese dishes. Tahini is a sesame-seed paste, used to flavour houmous and the Middle Eastern sweet known as halva.

Sesame seeds can be dry-fried in a frying pan to give a more distinctive nutty flavour. Fry gently and carefully as they burn easily.



BAKING POWDER

Baking powder is used to give lightness to baked recipes such as scones, cakes, pastries and sometimes batter, as well as to make certain mixtures rise. It is a combination of acidic cream of tartar and mild alkaline bicarbonate of soda. Always check the use-by date as baking powder will lose its potency when past its best, and store it in an airtight container as moisture will also reduce its efficiency.

How to make your own baking powder

If you find you have run out of baking powder you can make your own.

To make the equivalent of one teaspoon of baking powder, mix half a teaspoon of cream of tartar with a quarter of a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda (sometimes called baking soda).

CRYSTALLISED ROSE PETALS

These have a delicate, perfumed flavour and are delicious sprinkled over icing on cupcakes or added to biscuits, such as in my Rose Petal Biscuits [here](#). Crystallised violets are also available and can be used in the same way.

FLOUR

Although there are a range of flours available, for the cakes and other teatime bakes in this book there are really only two types of flour you will need: plain and self-raising.

For cakes or bakes that need a rise, plain flour needs to be used in conjunction with a raising agent. Self-raising flour is simply flour that has the baking powder already incorporated, although as you will see, sometimes it is also used with a raising agent to give it a little extra lift.

To turn plain flour into self-raising flour, add 2–3 teaspoons of baking powder to every 200g (7oz) of plain flour.



FREEZE-DRIED STRAWBERRY AND RASPBERRY PIECES

These tiny pieces of freeze-dried fruits have a very concentrated flavour so a little goes a long way. Scatter them into muesli and yoghurt for breakfast; stir into cake mixtures or grind to a powder and use in butter icings, meringues and cake mixtures.

GOLDEN SYRUP

I find this a useful item to have in the cupboard as it's an essential ingredient in my flapjack recipes, which are such a quick and easy bake to whip up, while children love it poured over waffles or pancakes for pudding.

MAPLE SYRUP

Made from the sap of red maple or black maple trees and mainly harvested in Canada, this a sweet syrup, which has a unique flavour. It is traditionally served poured over American pancakes – often with bacon too – but is delicious drizzled over ice cream or added to cakes and icings, milkshakes and marinades. It can be used instead of golden syrup in some recipes but its thinner consistency may affect the end result.

SUGAR

Given how frequently I bake, I keep a wide range of sugar varieties in my cupboard as different sugars serve different purposes. Below is a list of the ones I think are absolutely essential if you're going to be baking regularly and the ones that are in my cupboard without fail, but I've made a note of those that are really for keen bakers and not necessarily ones that I use every day.

As a general rule, I prefer to use unrefined sugars. Keep unrefined sugars in a container with a lid. It doesn't have to be airtight as the sugar will keep moist if it can absorb moisture from the air. If your sugar has become hard, put a slice of bread in the container overnight, or warm the sugar in the microwave for just a second or two before use – take care to do this in very short bursts or it will burn.

Caster sugar

I stock two different types of caster sugar: refined white, which is the best for meringues; and unrefined caster sugar, which I prefer to use for sponge cakes (though this is a personal choice and refined caster sugar serves exactly the same purpose).

Demerara sugar

This is a rich, golden-brown sugar with large crunchy crystals and a creamy toffee flavour. It is made from pressed sugar cane, which is then steamed until the juice produces a thick cane syrup. This is then dehydrated to form large brown crystals. It gives a delicious crunch when sprinkled on top of cakes and crumbles, and is the perfect sugar to use in coffee as it lends the coffee a gentle caramel flavour.

Icing sugar

I use white icing sugar for most cakes, but also like unrefined icing sugar, which has a pale golden colour and a slight caramel flavour. It is ideal if you're making a caramel-flavoured buttercream.

Fondant icing sugar

This is essentially icing sugar mixed with dried glucose syrup. It is used to make a stiff fondant icing which can be rolled out to cover cakes, or to make a thick, glossy pouring icing that will set on top of cupcakes or fondant fancies. This is one for keen bakers as it takes a bit more skill to master how to use it.

Muscovado sugar

Made from unrefined sugar cane, muscovado sugar is moist and has a distinctive caramel flavour. There are three types, which vary according to the amount of molasses (the residual liquid produced during the sugar-making process) they contain. Light muscovado sugar is delicious in cakes and biscuits, and gives a good colour as well as flavour. Dark muscovado sugar has an even stronger, more treacley flavour and is perfect for making dark rich fruit cakes and gingerbreads. Molasses sugar is even richer and stickier with a deep flavour that is ideal to make barbecue sauces.

Make sure you are buying unrefined sugar rather than simply 'brown sugars', which are often refined white sugars coated in molasses to colour them.

VANILLA

Vanilla pods are the long, black, dried seed pods of a climbing orchid from Madagascar. They add a delicate flavour to many desserts. Try infusing whole vanilla pods in warm milk to make a deliciously scented custard or ice cream. For a more pronounced flavour, cut the pods in half lengthways and, using the tip of a knife, scrape out the black seed paste and add this to dessert mixtures. When you have used the pods, dry them and place in a jar of caster sugar where they will gently scent the sugar to use in cakes and biscuits.

Vanilla essence

An inexpensive synthetic product that is best avoided.

Vanilla extract

The extract is 'vanillin', which is what gives vanilla its wonderful flavour. As it is taken from the natural source it is far more expensive than essence but a little goes a long way – just a little will scent a cake mixture or custard.



THE FREEZER

I believe the freezer is one of the home cook's best friends, and it would certainly have been difficult for me to cope with feeding a family or entertaining if I could not have prepared a number of recipes in advance, freezing them until needed. I also hate waste, so I try to freeze anything left over instead of leaving it in the fridge hoping it will be used up quickly.

The trick to using your freezer wisely is to keep a note of everything you have in there. I keep mine as a list stuck on the inside of my kitchen cupboard. Look at your list before you make a meal and cross items off when they have been eaten.

WHAT YOU CAN FREEZE

Main courses

I find it invaluable to freeze meals for supper or dinner parties, and will often double up a recipe to make one dish for supper and one for another time. Most cooked dishes are best frozen for no longer than 3 months so they retain their original flavour.

Vegetables

They do taste better fresh, but vegetables can be a useful thing to have in the freezer. Most vegetables need to be blanched before freezing as this helps to retain their colour, texture, flavour and the vitamins within them. Plunge them into boiling water and cook for 1–3 minutes, then immediately drain and plunge into ice-cold water. Certain watery vegetables, such as cucumber, endives, lettuce, radishes and artichokes, cannot be frozen. Tomatoes can be frozen but are only suitable to add to casseroles as they become very watery.

Fruit

Most freeze well and make an excellent stand-by dessert. Apples, rhubarb, plums, peaches, cherries and gooseberries are best stewed with a little sugar. Soft fruits such as strawberries or peaches are best turned into purées

as the whole frozen fruit will turn mushy when you defrost them. Smaller fruits like raspberries, blackberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants can be frozen whole.

Ginger

If you have some left over, freeze the whole root and grate from frozen. If peeled, wrap in clingfilm before freezing; if it still has its skin freeze it as it is.

Chilli

Chop whole chillies then freeze – you can add the chopped chilli directly from the freezer to your dish; it will defrost very quickly.

Cakes and puddings

Anything with delicate icing or decoration (such as piped cupcakes) should be open-frozen so that it is not damaged when wrapped or packaged. To open freeze, spread the items out on a tray and place in the freezer. When they are completely frozen, they can be packed in containers or bags without damaging the shape.

Biscuit and pastry dough

Biscuit dough can be frozen in a log shape, ready to be defrosted in the fridge then sliced and baked. Pastry cases can be frozen unbaked or baked blind ready to fill. Uncooked pastry freezes perfectly for up to 3 months.

Milk, cream and butter

It is useful to keep milk in the freezer; in emergencies it can be defrosted in a sink of cold water. The milk and fat will separate, but will homogenise again when shaken. Single cream and yoghurt do not freeze, but double and clotted cream do freeze as they have a higher fat content. Freeze cream for up to 3 months only. Butter and hard cheese (ideally grated so it is ready to use) are also useful to keep in the freezer – again for only 3 months. Buttercream icing does freeze well, but use after 3 months or the flavour will deteriorate.

Eggs

Whole eggs do not freeze well, so do not add them to a fish pie if you are freezing it. Egg whites can be frozen in small containers (make sure you label how many you have frozen) and are ideal for meringues. Egg yolks can also be frozen in small containers to enrich sauces or omelettes at a later date.

Wine

Don't let a drop of wine go to waste! Freeze it in ice cube trays ready to add to sauces. When frozen decant into small bags to store.

Jars of sauces

If you have half a jar of pasta sauce, roasted red peppers or pesto left over decant into containers and freeze. Passata and chopped tomatoes also freeze well if you have some spare.

WHAT YOU CAN'T FREEZE

Sugar paste and royal icing

This will become sticky when defrosted.

Salad ingredients

Ingredients like cucumber and lettuce contain too much water to freeze well.

Fresh basil, coriander and dill

It is better to make herbs into pesto or herb butters and freeze that instead.

Potatoes

If you are making a cottage pie or fish pie with mashed potato, add less milk and more butter to the potato or it will become watery when defrosted.

KNOW-HOW

- Cool foods after cooking or blanching before freezing.

- Exclude as much air as possible from packaged foods to prevent them drying out, and use the correct-sized container if possible.
- Keep washed cartons from ready-made foods. I wash out and keep ice cream and soup cartons that have tight-fitting lids as these are so useful for freezing portions of food.
- Wrap foods in foil first, then in waxed paper or a freezer bag.
- Always date and label the packages, and add cooking/reheating instructions too.
- Organise the shelves. Try to keep the same sorts of foods together in sections of your freezer. Keep vegetables in one drawer, desserts and cakes in another and so on. And keep a good rotation of stock, using up the oldest foods first. Keep all the small ingredients that will easily get lost in one area of the fridge (e.g. chillies, sausages, fresh herbs, cubes of stock or wine).

DEFROSTING

- If possible always defrost foods in the fridge for best results, or use the defrost setting on the microwave.
- You can defrost casseroles or soups on the hob, but stir thoroughly during defrosting to ensure they're heated through evenly.
- Meat, fish and poultry must reach boiling point for 10 minutes in the centre (3–4 minutes in the microwave) to ensure they are cooked thoroughly.
- Vegetables can be cooked from frozen.
- Some meals can be cooked from frozen: increase the cooking time in the recipe by half again and ensure the centre of the food has reached boiling point for at least 10 minutes before serving.
- If defrosting in the microwave, ensure food is of even thickness or it will cook unevenly.

MENU PLANNING

Whether you are planning a small dinner party, a Sunday lunch, a barbecue or a grand celebration, it is essential to plan not just the menu, but the time running up to the event too. While it might sound like a bore, a little forward planning and preparation can really help you to relax and enjoy the party on the day. This is why I have given you ‘prepare ahead’ instructions for as many recipes as possible in this book – they should help your events run smoothly with little or no last-minute worries.

CHOOSING YOUR DISHES

I usually start to plan my menus around the main course, thinking about how many people I will be serving and which ingredients are at their best at that time of year. In the winter, I might choose a casserole or a roast, while in summer, I am more likely to cook fish or chicken or serve cold cuts. To give people lots of choice, I try to serve at least two seasonal vegetables along with potatoes, rice or pasta.

I then choose the starter and pudding. It is important to have a mix of colours, textures and flavours in a menu, so if you have a pastry tartlet to start, you are unlikely to want a pastry dessert too, and if you have fish as a main course, avoid serving shellfish to start. Similarly, make sure you don’t have too much cream in each course as this will start to feel very heavy (as well as not being good for your health!), and have a mixture of hot and cold dishes, some of which you can prepare in advance.

If feeding a crowd, I like to serve two desserts – one rich and chocolatey; one fruity. This needn’t be very time consuming, as one or both can be prepared in advance.

PRESENTATION

It is always lovely – for you and for your guests – to make your room look a little bit special when entertaining. But making your table look inviting doesn’t need to be hard work.

I like to arrange seasonal flowers in low containers on the table. Sometimes just a few blossoms in egg cups or pretty teacups placed down the centre of the table can look beautiful.

It is a good idea to arrange items for a buffet table in the order that they will be collected, so plates first, followed by the food – starter, mains, salads and desserts – followed by napkins and cutlery.

If you don't have enough glasses, you can usually hire extras on a return basis from supermarkets or wine merchants – or why not make little labels to tie around the stems, so that everybody keeps hold of their one glass for the evening?

HOW MUCH TO COOK

Over the years, I have been fortunate enough to have given many large parties at home and in the garden, and I have learned that the more people you have, the less they seem to eat!

Most people cook far more than they need to, and I always feel that it is a shame to be so wasteful. So below is a rough quantities calculator that I use to work out recipes for my events.

Of course, quantities will vary slightly depending on your guests (I always find teenagers have a huge appetite!), the time of day and the type of party you are hosting.

SAVOURY DISHES, PER PERSON:

Joint with bone: 175–225g (6–8oz)

Joint without bone: 100–175g (4–6oz)

Meat for casseroles: 175g (6oz)

Pasta, uncooked: 75–100g (3–4oz)

Rice, uncooked: 40–50g (1½–2oz)

Salmon: 100–125g (4–4½oz)

Soup: 600ml (1 pint) will serve 3 people

Fillet steak: 150g (5oz)

Other steaks: 175–200g (6–7 oz)

SWEET DISHES, PER PERSON:

Cakes: a 20cm (8in) sponge will feed 6

Meringues: 1 egg white and 50g (2oz) caster sugar will make about 5 small meringues

Soft fruits: 75–100g (3–4oz)

Cream to accompany desserts: 600ml (1 pint) per 12 portions

NIBBLES, PER PERSON:

Crisps: 25g (1oz)

Salted nuts: 15g (½oz)

SANDWICHES AND BREAD:

1 loaf, medium cut, makes 10 rounds of sandwiches

100g (4oz) butter is enough for 1 large sandwich loaf or 12 bread rolls

1 long baguette cuts into 20 slices

DRINKS:

Champagne: 1 bottle (75cl) will serve 6 full glasses (8 if pouring smaller measures)

Wine: 1 bottle (75cl) will serve 6 glasses

Soft drinks and mixers: 1 bottle (1 litre) will serve 6 glasses

Milk for coffee: allow 900ml (1½ pints) per 20 cups

Milk for tea: allow 600ml (1 pint) per 20 cups

*Quick Bites
and
Canapés*

QUICK BITES *and* CANAPÉS

Whenever we have something to celebrate I throw a drinks party with lots of savoury bites to eat. Whether it is a Christmas or New Year's gathering, a birthday or anniversary, or just a simple celebration of a family achievement or event, there is nothing nicer than getting lots of friends and family around for a couple of hours to raise a glass or two.

If having a drinks party sounds like a lot of work, believe me when I tell you that it has been my mission over the years to find quick and easy canapés that can be made ahead and have no last-minute preparation, yet will always look stylish and appealing when served.

Don't be shy about relying on certain ready-made products to help save you time. There's absolutely no shame in this, particularly as you can buy some really excellent-quality, tasty versions of certain ingredients. A packet of ready-rolled puff pastry can be turned into savoury Cocktail Palmiers ([here](#)) or Tiny Pesto Tartlets ([here](#)) in minutes, and a pack of ready-to-bake dough balls are the perfect bite-sized base for a rich goat's cheese topping ([here](#)).

A fresh chunk of tuna can be cut into cubes, marinated ahead of time then fried in seconds to be served on little cocktail sticks ([here](#)), while rare roast beef is rolled up around cream cheese and tarragon for deceptively smart treats ([here](#)). The simplest idea is a tiny stack of three delicate sandwiches on a cocktail stick ([here](#)). They can be made ahead, are easy to hold when you have a drink in one hand and are sophisticated enough to serve to adults, while the simple flavours will appeal to children too.



Recipe List

Beef, Tarragon and Horseradish Roulades

Cocktail Palmiers

Croque Monsieur Toasts

Goat's Cheese and Tomato Canapés

Asian Tuna Skewers

Marinated Prawns with Chilli Dip

Smoked Salmon Skewers with Dill Mustard Sauce

Sandwich Skewers

Tiny Pesto Tartlets

Blue Cheese and Fig Filo Tartlets

Quail's Egg Croustades with Spinach and Hollandaise Sauce

BEEF, TARRAGON AND *Horseradish* ROULADES

These luxurious little roulades are impressive yet so easy to make. Beef fillet is expensive, but it has the wow factor for a special occasion – the melting texture and flavour are unrivalled. Best of all, the rolls can be completed a couple of hours before serving.

MAKES ABOUT 40 ROLLS

PREPARE AHEAD

Slice the beef then reassemble tightly to make it look like one piece again, then cover tightly in clingfilm. This will stop the beef oxidising and going brown. You can then assemble the rolls an hour or two ahead.

500g (1lb 2oz) piece of beef fillet, cut from the centre of the fillet

1 tablespoon sunflower oil

200g/7oz full-fat cream cheese

3 tablespoons creamed horseradish

a small bunch of tarragon

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Let the beef come to room temperature 30 minutes before cooking. Pat dry and season with salt and black pepper.

2 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Heat the oil in a heavy-based frying pan and when hot, fry the beef, until all the sides are browned. Place the beef in a roasting tin and roast for 20 minutes for rare beef, a little less if it is a slim joint. Cover with foil and leave to cool. Chill in the fridge until firmed up and easy to slice.

3 When the beef is cold, use a sharp knife to cut it into slices, as thinly as you can.

4 Mix the cream cheese with the horseradish, then place in a small plastic piping bag and snip off the end to give a hole about 1cm across. Pipe the mixture over one end of each slice of beef. Alternatively, simply spread each slice of beef with a little of the mixture. Add a couple of tarragon

leaves to each one then roll up tightly and cut the rolls in half. Stand them cut-side down on a serving tray and cover with clingfilm until ready to serve – ideally within a couple of hours; any longer and the beef may start to lose its lovely colour.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

To make just a few beef rolls, buy cooked, rare, sliced beef from the supermarket. Or if making a very large quantity why not buy ready-sliced pastrami and use in the same way?

Don't cook the fillet of beef until well done as it will not be as tender to eat and will not be such an appealing colour.



Beef, Tarragon and *Horseradish* Roulades

COCKTAIL *Palmiers*

Ready-rolled puff pastry is one of the cook's greatest friends. There are such good versions to buy now that there's really no need to worry about making your own pastry, particularly for something like a canapé. These buttery, savoury little French pastries take full advantage of the time-saving benefits of ready-rolled pastry, and they are ideal for big parties as they can be prepared in large quantities.

MAKES 48 PALMIERS

FREEZE

Prepare and slice the uncooked pastries then freeze on baking trays until firm, then you can pack them in a freezer container and take out a few when needed. Just bake in a preheated oven for about 12 minutes or until brown and crisp.

1 × 320g pack ready-rolled puff pastry
1 tablespoon yeast extract
1 tablespoon olive tapenade

1 You will need 2–3 baking trays. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Unroll the pastry and cut it into eight strips, each about 5cm (2in) wide. Spread four strips thinly with the yeast extract, and the other four with the tapenade.

3 Roll up each piece of pastry tightly from one long side until it reaches the centre, then roll up the other side to meet it. Place the pastry rolls on a tray in the freezer for 10 minutes to get firm.

4 Using a sharp knife cut each pastry roll very thinly into 6 slices about the thickness of a pound coin, so that you have 48 slices in total. Place the slices on 2–3 baking trays.

5 Bake for 10–12 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Allow to cool in the trays for 5 minutes, then place the pastries on a wire rack to cool. These are best served warm.

6 If you prefer, you can cook these and chill in the fridge or freezer, then reheat for 5 minutes before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Don't use all-butter puff pastry as it can be a little soft to handle.

CROQUE *Monsieur* TOASTS

You may need to make double quantities of these little bites depending on how many guests you have, as in my experience they're a very popular nibble and will have everyone coming back for more and more.

MAKES 72 TINY FINGER SHAPES

PREPARE AHEAD

The bread can be baked until crisp up to 1 day in advance, then topped with ham and cheese an hour or two before grilling rather than baking.

6 slices of thinly sliced white bread (from a small, ready-sliced loaf)
about 50g (2oz) melted butter
6 slices of smoked ham
150g (5oz) Gruyère cheese, finely grated
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

1 Preheat the Oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Brush the slices of bread with the melted butter on both sides. Place on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for about 15 minutes, turning over halfway through the cooking time. The bread should be just crisp and lightly golden.

3 Remove the bread from the oven, but do not turn the oven off. Put a slice of ham on top of each piece of bread and top evenly with the grated cheese. Return the bread to the oven and bake for about 10 minutes until the cheese has melted, then leave to cool for 5 minutes.

4 Trim off the crusts and cut each slice of bread in half then slice each half into 6 thin strips, so you get 12 fingers out of each slice. Arrange the fingers on a large plate, sprinkle with parsley and serve warm.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Use Cheddar in this recipe if you prefer. If you wish, top each finger with a strip of red pepper or tiny piece of sun-blushed tomato.

GOAT'S CHEESE AND *Tomato* CANAPÉS

A pack of ready-to-bake dough balls from your supermarket makes a very speedy base for these moreish nibbles.

MAKES 24 CANAPÉS

PREPARE AHEAD

These can be prepared 2–3 hours in advance, up to the point where they're ready to go into the oven, then baked at the last minute.

12 dough balls
a little softened butter
1 × 150g pack soft goat's cheese
1 tablespoon red pesto
¼ teaspoon chopped thyme leaves
12 cherry tomatoes, halved
25g (1oz) Parmesan cheese, finely grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Line a baking sheet with baking paper.
- 2 Slice the dough balls in half and then cut a thin slice off the rounded side so both halves sit flat. Butter one side and arrange, buttered side down, on the baking sheet.
- 3 Mix the goat's cheese, pesto and thyme together in a small bowl. Spread this on to the unbuttered sides of the dough making sure that it is spread up to the edges, then place one tomato half on top.
- 4 Season then sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 10 minutes until crisp and lightly golden. Serve warm.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If preferred, omit the tomatoes and use 100g (4oz) of sliced roasted red peppers from a jar instead.





Goat's Cheese and *Tomato* Canapés



*"Don't be shy about relying on certain
ready-made products to help save you time"*

ASIAN *Tuna* SKEWERS

This is a particularly good choice if you're serving a selection of nibbles at your party. The flavours will contrast well with the likes of little pastry bites, for example, and the elegant squares of sesame-coated tuna look very smart and sophisticated yet are so simple to prepare. Balsamic glaze is now available from good supermarkets; it is a reduced balsamic vinegar blend and is great for decorating plates too.

MAKES ABOUT 30 SKEWERS

PREPARE AHEAD

You can marinate the tuna for up to an hour before cooking.

4 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons balsamic glaze
2 tablespoons sesame oil
2 tablespoons light muscovado sugar
400g (14oz) piece of fresh tuna or 2 × 200g (7oz) steaks
75g (3oz) sesame seeds, toasted
sunflower oil, for frying

1 Measure the soy, balsamic glaze, sesame oil and sugar into a bowl. Mix together then pour one half into a small bowl or ramekin and set aside to use as a dipping sauce.

2 Cut the tuna into 4cm (1½in) cubes, then place in the marinade in the bowl. Marinate for up to an hour if you have the time.

3 Pour sunflower oil into a large frying pan so it is 2cm (¾in) deep. Heat over a high heat until a little piece of tuna sizzles when added to the pan. Add the cubes of tuna and cook for 1–2 minutes only, until seared and just cooked. Do not overcook or it will become dry. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon.

4 Place the sesame seeds on a large plate then add the tuna and toss to coat. Serve the tuna on cocktail sticks with the dip.



Asian Tuna Skewers

MARINATED *Prawns* WITH *Chilli Dip*

These mildly spiced prawns, handily served on little cocktail skewers, only need to be marinated very briefly then cooked at the last minute as they are best eaten hot. Provided all your cold canapés are ready, these can be the last ones you prepare, perhaps while any other hot ones are in the oven finishing cooking. Then you can leave your kitchen and spend time with your guests.

MAKES 24 PRAWNS

PREPARE AHEAD

You can marinate the prawns for up to an hour before cooking.

2 garlic cloves, crushed
½ mild red chilli, very finely chopped
grated zest and juice of 2 limes
2 tablespoons olive oil
24 raw, peeled king prawns (see [Mary's Wise Words](#))
15g (½ oz) butter

FOR THE DIP

150ml (¼ pint) soured cream
2–3 tablespoons sweet chilli sauce

1 Place the garlic in a bowl with the chilli, lime zest and juice and 1 tablespoon of the oil. Add the prawns to the marinade 15 minutes before ready to cook, or for up to an hour if you have the time.

2 Meanwhile make the dip. Mix the soured cream and chilli sauce together and serve in a little bowl alongside the prawns.

3 Heat the remaining oil and the butter in a frying pan until hot and foaming. Fry half the prawns for 2–3 minutes over a high heat, turning once or twice until pink. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the remaining prawns to the pan and cook in the same way. Return the other prawns to the pan and add any marinade that is still in the bowl. Heat for 30 seconds then serve the prawns on small bamboo skewers or cocktail sticks.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

To de-vein prawns cut down the back and remove the black intestines with the point of a knife. Look for decorative bamboo skewers, which I buy in large supermarkets or over the internet. Also look out for frozen king prawns – allow to defrost for about 1 hour before marinating.



Marinated Prawns with Chilli Dip

SMOKED *Salmon* SKEWERS *with* DILL MUSTARD SAUCE

Canapés don't have to involve intricate and elaborate cooking. In fact the trick with them is their presentation: they simply have to look interesting and appealing. Smoked salmon is, with good reason, a staple of the canapé tray, yet coming up with original ways to serve it can flummox some cooks. Here's something new for you; it's easy to prepare in advance, too.

MAKES ABOUT 24 SKEWERS

PREPARE AHEAD

You can prepare both the salmon and the sauce up to 12 hours ahead. Cover tightly with clingfilm and keep refrigerated.

1 × 200g pack smoked salmon slices
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon caster sugar
4 tablespoons light mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped dill

1 You will need 24 short bamboo sticks – about 15cm (6in) long. Cut the smoked salmon into strips – about three from each slice of salmon – then thread the strips on to the bamboo sticks so that they look pretty. Arrange on a serving platter.

2 Whisk the mustard, vinegar, oil and sugar together in a small bowl until combined, then whisk in the mayonnaise and dill. Season and spoon into a small serving bowl and place on the platter with the salmon.



Smoked Salmon Skewers with Dill Mustard Sauce

SANDWICH *Skewers*

Nothing could be simpler than making sandwiches, but when they are cut into tiny little squares and placed on a skewer they become such clever canapés and are ideal for all kinds of occasions, from drinks parties to children's parties. See [photograph here](#).

MAKES 9 SKEWERS

PREPARE AHEAD

Make these up to a day ahead. Cover with a slightly dampened sheet of kitchen paper and wrap in clingfilm until ready to serve.

a little softened butter
2 slices of thin-cut brown bread
4 slices of thin-cut white bread
1 slice of smoked salmon
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 slice of ham
6 slices of peeled cucumber

1 Lightly butter each slice of bread, then make a smoked salmon sandwich with the brown bread.

2 Mix the Dijon mustard with 1 tablespoon of the mayonnaise and spread over one slice of white bread. Top with the ham then another slice of white bread.

3 Spread the remaining tablespoon of mayonnaise on another slice of white bread. Top with the cucumber then the last piece of white bread.

4 Cut the crusts off all the sandwiches then cut each sandwich into 9 squares. Thread one ham, one salmon and one cucumber sandwich on to each skewer.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Don't be tempted to make sandwiches with messy fillings or anything too strongly flavoured as the combination needs to be very simple. You can buy clear plastic prism skewers for these canapés over the internet, or use skewers or long cocktail sticks.

TINY *Pesto* TARTLETS

Anything pastry-based, such as these little tartlets, is perfect for parties. Not only does everyone love biting into crisp layers of buttery, flaky pastry, but also these are small enough to help soak up some of that pre-dinner tipple without filling your guests ahead of the main event.

MAKES ABOUT 30 TARTLETS

PREPARE AHEAD

These can be baked the day before and just warmed through at 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7 for 5 minutes to re-crisp them.

1 × 320g pack ready-rolled puff pastry
6 tablespoons basil or sun-dried tomato pesto
2 roasted red peppers, finely chopped
100g (4oz) feta cheese, crumbled
basil leaves, to serve

1 You will need 1–2 baking trays. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Unroll the sheet of pastry and cut it vertically into strips 4cm (1½in) wide, then cut horizontally to make 4cm (1½in) squares. Place on the baking trays, with a little space in between them.

3 Place ¼ teaspoon of pesto in the centre of each tartlet. Top with a little heap of chopped pepper and a piece of cheese; pile as much filling into the centre of each square as possible, but don't top the whole surface as the edges of each tart should rise up around the filling.

4 Bake for 12–14 minutes until golden brown and risen. Serve warm, topped with basil leaves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Try topping the tartlets with caramelised onions (see [here](#)) and crumbled blue cheese and walnuts, or halved cherry tomatoes and tiny pieces of diced chorizo.

BLUE *Cheese* AND *Fig* FILO TARTLETS

These sophisticated little bites are deceptively simple to make – and most of the preparation can be done in advance.

MAKES 24 TARTLETS

PREPARE AHEAD

Bake the filo cases up to 1 day ahead. Make the filling and chill in the fridge for up to 8 hours, then fill the cases on the day.

4 sheets of filo pastry measuring 25cm (10in) square
a little melted butter
3 ripe figs, chopped into small pieces
100g (4oz) creamy blue cheese, such as Dolcelatte or Roquefort
1 teaspoon lemon juice
3 sage leaves, chopped
ground mild paprika, to dust
freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Grease a 24-hole mini muffin tray, or two 12-hole mini muffin trays, with melted butter.

2 Lay two filo sheets flat on a board and brush them with melted butter, then place one on top of the other. Cut into 25 equal squares about 5 × 5cm (2 × 2in). Repeat with the other two sheets. Put two squares on top of each other to make a star shape, and press into the prepared muffin tins. Repeat with the remaining sheets of pastry to make 24 mini tartlets (you will have one spare).

3 Divide the figs between the filo cases. Put the cheese, lemon juice and sage into a bowl. Mash down with a fork, season with pepper, then spoon blobs of cheese mixture on top of the figs. Sprinkle lightly with paprika and pepper.

4 Bake in the oven for 5–10 minutes until golden and crisp, and the cheese has just melted.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Ripe figs are delicious, but if they have tough skins, scoop the flesh away from the skin and chop. If figs are not in season use a pear, peeled and diced, then tossed in lemon juice.



Blue Cheese and Fig Filo Tartlets

Quail's Egg CROUSTADES WITH SPINACH AND Hollandaise SAUCE

Having a packet of ready-made croustade cases in your store cupboard means that you've always got the basis of a quick and easy-to-make canapé on hand. You could substitute quail's eggs for smoked salmon or little pieces of crispy bacon, if preferred.

MAKES 24 CROUSTADES

PREPARE AHEAD

Prepare and chop the spinach up to 1 day in advance. Cook the quail's eggs up to 1 day in advance, remove from the cold water and keep on a plate until needed.

100g (4oz) baby spinach leaves
24 quail's eggs
1 pack of mini croustade cases
about 6 tablespoons good hollandaise sauce
salt and freshly ground black pepper
a pinch of paprika, to serve

1 Place the spinach in a colander in the sink. Pour a kettle of boiling water over the spinach until wilted. Press out as much water as possible and pat dry with kitchen paper. Finely chop the spinach, adding a little salt and pepper. Set aside until required.

2 Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Have ready a bowl of cold water. Swirl the pan of boiling water with the handle end of a wooden spoon to create a sort of whirlpool, then break a quail's egg into a ramekin and slide it into the swirling water. Repeat this for 3–4 eggs at a time. Cook for about 1–2 minutes only – they should be just set but the yolks should still be runny. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon then place in the bowl of cold water to stop them cooking any further. Repeat until all the eggs are cooked.

3 No more than 30 minutes before you want to serve the croustades, preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Once hot, divide the spinach between the croustade cases. Drain and pat the quail's eggs dry, trim off any loose

egg white, then place one on top of each croustade case and pour over a little hollandaise sauce.

4 Cook in the oven for about 5 minutes or until just hot. Serve warm, sprinkled with paprika.



Quail's Egg Croustades with Spinach and *Hollandaise* Sauce

*Sharing Plates
and
Starters*

SHARING PLATES *and* STARTERS

Starters aren't something we necessarily enjoy on a daily basis but they're something I like to prepare for dinner parties or for special occasions. When deciding what sort of first course I want to serve, I tend to consider several factors. For me a starter should tempt the palate but not fill your guests up too much; it should always be a contrast to your main course rather than having ingredients that are too similar; and it should reflect the time of year and the produce that is in season.

Smoked salmon is always a popular choice as it's light and flavoursome and works throughout the year. In the spring I might serve Smoked Salmon with Potted Shrimps ([here](#)) while my Beetroot and Horseradish Gravadlax ([here](#)) is an ideal celebratory dish to serve for special occasions and parties, especially at Christmas. Gravadlax doesn't take long to prepare – you just have to allow a day or so for the curing – but looks stunning.

In winter I like to serve a warming soup such as my Creamy Celeriac Soup ([here](#)) or Thai-Spiced Tomato Soup ([here](#)) followed by a roast or casserole. These soups are also wonderful to serve for lunch with a warmed bread roll.

There is a fashion nowadays for putting a large platter of items in the centre of the table for everyone to tuck into. Of course it is easy to go and buy some cured meats, antipasti vegetables and dips, but I think it is nice to do some of the platter yourself, if time permits. If you prepare everything in advance it doesn't take long to assemble the platter (see [here](#)).

Your guests will very much appreciate the work that you have put into making their meal memorable, and I do hope you will enjoy making these dishes too.



Recipe List

[Scallops with Lemon and Dill Sauce and Watercress](#)

[Smoked Salmon with Potted Shrimps](#)

[Asparagus Mousse](#)

[Crab Cocktail](#)

[Garlic Mussels with a Hint of Lemon](#)

[Salmon and Asparagus Terrine](#)

[Beetroot and Horseradish Gravadlax](#)

[Tomato and Onion Galettes](#)

[Avocado, Tomato and Mint Salad](#)

[Garlic Mushroom Bruschetta](#)

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[Thai-Spiced Tomato Soup](#)

[Sharing Platter](#)

SCALLOPS WITH *Lemon* AND DILL SAUCE AND *Watercress*

You want to cook scallops so that they're still meltingly tender in the mouth – you should barely need to chew. It's very easy to overcook them, however, so you need to work quickly. Follow my tip below for how to avoid a rubbery texture. If you have hungry guests, or smaller scallops, allow two scallops per person.

SERVES 6

2 large oranges
100g (4oz) watercress
6 large, fat scallops without the roe
65g (2½oz) butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped dill
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Using a sharp knife cut the top and bottom off of each orange, then stand the oranges upright on a board and cut off all the peel and pith. Hold the oranges over a bowl to catch the drips and cut between each segment to release them. Arrange the orange segments on six serving plates with the watercress and set aside.

2 Slice each scallop into three discs and season well.

3 Heat 15g (½oz) of the butter and the olive oil in a frying pan over a high heat. When hot add the scallops and cook for just 1 minute, turn them over and cook for a further 30 seconds. You may need to cook them in batches. Remove with a slotted spoon and place on the plate with the watercress.

4 Add the remaining butter to the pan and allow to melt gently. Add the lemon juice and dill and a little seasoning then drizzle over the scallops and serve immediately.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

To cook scallops, I add them one by one to the pan in a clockwise direction like the numbers on a clock, then when I need to turn them over, I start at the beginning and work around the pan so that the scallops are all cooked for the same length of time.



Scallops with *Lemon* and Dill Sauce and *Watercress*

SMOKED SALMON *with* POTTED SHRIMPS

One for the warmer weather – a lovely, light, salad-y starter that can be rustled up in next to no time, leaving you more time to spend with your guests or on preparing the main course.

SERVES 6

6 thin slices of light rye bread
a little softened butter
300g (10oz) smoked salmon slices
100g (4oz) rocket leaves
3 × 50g pots of potted shrimps
pinch of grated nutmeg
2–3 teaspoons lemon juice
a little salad dressing
6 lemon wedges

- 1 Butter the bread and divide between six side plates, placing one slice in the centre of each plate.
- 2 Arrange two slices of smoked salmon on top of each slice of bread, making sure you get lots of height in the centre.
- 3 Arrange a little pile of rocket leaves on the side of each plate next to the salmon.
- 4 Scoop the potted shrimps into a small pan and warm until the butter has melted. Add a pinch of grated nutmeg and lemon juice to taste. Drizzle a little salad dressing over the rocket leaves. Spoon the potted shrimps over the salmon and serve with lemon wedges.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

I like to use a fairly dense light-coloured rye bread, either cut from a loaf or bought pre-sliced in a packet. Don't use the dark pumpernickel as its strong

flavour could overpower the salmon. I prefer to buy whole nutmeg kernels and grate a little whenever needed.

ASPARAGUS Mousse

This delicately flavoured mousse is an impressive dinner party starter. It uses leaf gelatine, which I've written about in more detail [here](#).

The mousse is delicious served with green salad, melba toast, crackers or a little smoked salmon.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Make and chill in the fridge for 2–3 days.

450g (1lb) asparagus spears
300ml (½ pint) whipping cream
½ garlic clove, crushed
50g (2oz) baby spinach leaves
1 egg, separated
1 tablespoon lemon juice
3 leaves of platinum grade leaf gelatine (see [here](#))
salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 thin slices of lemon, halved

1 You will need six 150ml (¼ pint) ramekin dishes or moulds. Bring a shallow pan of water to the boil, add the asparagus and cook for 3 minutes only. Drain and immerse in cold water to stop it cooking further. Drain and pat dry. Cut about 4cm (1½in) off the tips of 12 spears and set the pretty tips aside for a garnish.

2 Place the cream in a small pan with the garlic and heat gently until hand hot. Add the spinach and allow to wilt. Place the cream mixture and the asparagus in a food processor and blend until almost smooth. Return the mixture to the pan and heat for 1 minute. Beat the egg yolk and add to the mixture along with the lemon juice. Mix to combine and season to taste.

3 Soak the gelatine in 150ml (¼ pint) cold water for 10 minutes. When softened, remove from the water, shake off excess water, add to the warm asparagus mixture and stir until dissolved. Pour the mixture into a shallow

container and chill in the fridge for about 1½ hours until on the point of setting.

4 Whisk the egg white until it forms stiff peaks, then fold into the asparagus mixture. Divide the mixture between the six ramekins and leave to set in the fridge for at least 4 hours.

5 To turn out the mousses, dip the ramekins into boiling water for a second or two, then invert the moulds on to side plates and shake gently to release the mousse. Decorate each with 2 asparagus spears and a slice of lemon.

CRAB *Cocktail*

Swapping the customary prawns for crab lends this starter a little more elegance and sophistication, as to me the crab meat looks more delicate perched on top of the avocado. I know that there might be some prawn cocktail stalwarts among you who won't want to break from tradition, though, and you can easily substitute peeled prawns for crab (see [Mary's Wise Words](#)).

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

These can be prepared and kept in the fridge for about 2 hours before serving.

3 Little Gem lettuces, cored and finely shredded
8 plum tomatoes, halved, deseeded and cut into fine strips
3 spring onions, finely chopped
2 small avocados, diced
juice of 1 lime
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 tablespoons crème fraîche
a little finely chopped red chilli
1 teaspoon tomato ketchup
200g (7oz) fresh white crab meat
salt and freshly ground black pepper
a little coriander or flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

1 Divide the lettuce between six cocktail glasses or tumblers.

2 Set aside a few strips of tomato for garnish then mix the rest with the spring onions. Add the avocado, lime juice and a little seasoning. Stir well then pile on to the lettuce.

3 Mix the mayonnaise with the crème fraîche, chilli and ketchup. Season to taste then spoon over the avocado. Top with the crab meat and garnish with the remaining tomato strips and a coriander or parsley leaf.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Use 200g (7oz) peeled prawns instead of the crab, if preferred.

The dressing just needs a hint of chilli; if you don't have fresh chilli, use a little chopped chilli from a jar or a few dried chilli flakes.



Crab Cocktail

GARLIC *Mussels* WITH A HINT OF *Lemon*

This is such a delicious, quick and easy recipe to make for a midweek supper or to share with friends. I like to add a little chilli for a touch of spiciness, but leave it out if you prefer. Simply serve with lots of crusty bread to mop up all the juices.

SERVES 6

2kg (4lb) fresh live mussels
a large knob of butter
1 large onion, chopped
¼ red chilli, deseeded and diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
150ml (¼ pint) dry white wine
150ml (¼ pint) pouring double cream
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons chopped parsley
salt and freshly ground black pepper
crusty bread, to serve

1 Tip the mussels into a large bowl of cold water. Check through them and throw away any that are open or do not close when tapped, as this means they are not fresh. Pull away the hairy beards, and scrape off any large barnacles but don't worry too much about cleaning them all off.

2 Melt the butter in a very large, deep saucepan or preserving pan. Add the onion and chilli, cover with a lid and cook over a low heat for about 5 minutes until just soft. Add the garlic and fry for 1 minute.

3 Add the mussels and toss over a high heat. Add the wine, cover with a lid and boil for about 5 minutes until all of the mussels have opened (discard any that haven't). Remove the lid and boil for a few minutes to reduce the liquid a little, then add the cream and lemon juice and season. Simmer for 3 minutes until slightly thickened. Add the parsley and serve piping hot in bowls with plenty of crusty bread.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is a good idea to give each guest a little bowl of warm water with a slice of lemon in, to use as a rinsing bowl for their fingers. Place a couple of large empty bowls on the table for the shells, too.



Garlic Mussels with a Hint of Lemon



MARY'S MENU FOR
A DINNER PARTY

APPETISERS

Blue Cheese and Fig Filo Tartlets
Goat's Cheese and Tomato Canapés

STARTER

Salmon and Asparagus Terrine

MAIN COURSE

Guinea Fowl with Wild Mushroom Sauce
Vegetable Platter

DESSERT

Warm Chocolate Fondant Tart

SALMON AND *Asparagus* TERRINE

A terrine is a striking and impressive dish to place on the table at the start of a meal. This one, made with salmon and asparagus, is surprisingly light and you also have the possibility of varying the thickness of the slices according to how much or how little food will follow it.

Serve the slices of terrine with melba toast, oatcakes or a little green salad.

SERVES 8

PREPARE AHEAD

This will keep for up to 2 days in the fridge.

150g (5oz) salmon fillet
about 7 large asparagus spears
350g (12oz) smoked salmon slices
200g (7oz) full-fat cream cheese
75g (3oz) softened butter
1 tablespoon chopped chives
2 tablespoons lemon juice
salt and freshly ground black pepper
cress, to serve (optional)

1 Grease a 450g (1lb) loaf tin then line with a double layer of clingfilm. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Place the salmon fillet on a square of foil. Season the salmon and fold the foil over the top to make a parcel. Cook in the oven for 12–15 minutes until the flesh has turned an opaque pink. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

3 Trim the woody ends of the asparagus to exactly the length of the tin. Bring a frying pan of water to the boil and cook the asparagus spears for 3–4 minutes until they feel just tender when pierced with a knife, then drain and plunge into ice-cold water to cool. Drain and pat dry.

4 Trim a smoked salmon slice to fit the base of the tin then cut slices to fit all four sides, leaving a little to overhang, and reserve one slice for the top.

5 Place the remaining smoked salmon in a food processor with the cold cooked salmon fillet, cream cheese, soft butter, chives and lemon juice. Blend until smooth and season to taste.

6 Spread half the smoked salmon mixture into the lined tin and top with the asparagus spears, laying them head to tail so that they fit tightly into the tin. Top with the remaining salmon mixture and lay the last piece of smoked salmon on top.

7 Cover the terrine with clingfilm and leave to chill for at least 6 hours in the fridge, then remove the clingfilm, turn out and cut into slices (see [Mary's Wise Words](#)). Scatter with cress, if using, and serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you freeze the terrine for 30 minutes it will be easier to slice.

You could also make this in individual 150ml (¼ Pint) ramekins and turn them out, to create separate, portion-sized terrines for each person.



Salmon and *Asparagus* Terrine

BEETROOT AND *Horseradish* GRAVADLAX

Curing salmon in beetroot and horseradish offers a twist on the classic Scandinavian recipe. It makes for a beautiful first course, not only because the beetroot stains the fish a stunning dark purple; it also imbues the salmon with a delicate, subtle, earthy flavour.

Gravadlax makes a lovely celebratory starter at any time of the year, but I particularly like to serve it at Christmas. It's especially handy then, as it's something you can prepare a couple of days ahead or even freeze so that you have it on hand to serve as a starter or with drinks when you need to.

Note that you will need to start preparing this dish at least 24–36 hours ahead.

SERVES 8

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made up to 2 days in advance.

FREEZE

This freezes well, either as a whole fillet or in portions or slices. Make sure you wrap it tightly in a double layer of clingfilm and freeze for no more than 1 month.

1kg (2 lb 2 oz) salmon fillet, skin on

FOR THE CURE

2 tablespoons fresh grated horseradish (from a jar, if preferred)

200g (7oz) raw beetroot, peeled and grated

75g (3oz) demerara sugar

75g (3oz) coarse sea salt

grated zest of 1 orange

freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE BEETROOT SALAD

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon caster sugar

1 tablespoon chopped chives
500g (11b 2oz) cooked peeled beetroot, finely diced

FOR THE HORSERADISH SAUCE

3 tablespoons fresh grated horseradish (from a jar, if preferred)
200g (7oz) crème fraîche

TO SERVE

a few trimmed chive stems, to garnish
brown bread and butter

1 Lay the salmon fillet skin-side down then remove any fine bones with tweezers (run your fingers over the salmon to feel them). This process is known as pinning, and the fishmonger may already have done it for you.

2 Line a large roasting tin with foil. Put the salmon skin-side down on to the foil.

3 Mix all of the curing ingredients together and spread over the salmon flesh. Press down firmly to cover the surface. Cover the tin with foil and seal the edges. Place another roasting tin on top of the salmon then weigh it down with scale weights or cans of pulses.

4 Put into the fridge for 24–36 hours. When ready, remove the foil, scrape off the topping and carefully drain off all the sticky liquid. Wrap the salmon in a fresh piece of foil and store in the fridge until ready to serve.

5 To make the salad, measure the mustard, vinegar, oil and sugar into a bowl. Whisk together until smooth and season to taste. Add the chopped chives and beetroot and toss together.

6 To make the sauce, mix the horseradish and crème fraîche together in a bowl and season.

7 To serve, cut three thin slices of gravadlax per person, and arrange on eight individual plates. Serve with a pile of beetroot salad and a spoonful of sauce. Arrange the trimmed chive stems on top of the salmon and serve with brown bread and butter.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Buy the best salmon you can. If you can't buy fresh horseradish, look for jars of grated horseradish.



Beetroot and *Horseradish* Gravادلax

TOMATO AND *Onion* GALETTES

A *galette* is a French creation – essentially a round, flat or free-form pastry, which is filled or topped with sweet or savoury ingredients. They are the cook and pastry-lover's great friend as the more rustic approach means they don't have to look as neat and tidy as one might expect a quiche to be, for example, and are very easy to throw together. I often serve these as a light lunch, perhaps after a bowl of soup or just with a green salad.

MAKES 6 GALETTES

PREPARE AHEAD

These can be made and kept in the fridge for 2–3 hours before baking.

15g (½oz) butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 onions, finely sliced
2 tablespoons light muscovado sugar
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, plus extra, for drizzling
1 × 320g pack ready-rolled puff pastry
200g (7 oz) cherry tomatoes, each cut into 4 (you will need 18 slices altogether)
a little grated Parmesan cheese
salt and freshly ground black pepper
rocket leaves, to serve

1 Heat the butter and oil in a pan and very gently fry the onions for about 5–8 minutes until transparent and tender. Add the sugar and balsamic vinegar and continue to cook until brown and sticky. Season with salt and black pepper to taste.

2 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Lightly grease a baking sheet. Lightly roll out the pastry and cut into 6 circles, about 15cm (6in) in diameter, using a saucer as a template. Transfer the circles to the baking sheet.

3 Divide the sticky onions between the circles. Arrange all the tomatoes on top of the tartlets. Sprinkle with the Parmesan and bake for 15 minutes until

golden brown and risen. Serve with a few rocket leaves drizzled with balsamic vinegar.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Top the tartlets with slices of goat's cheese instead of the tomatoes, if preferred.



Tomato and *Onion* Galettes





*"A starter should tempt the palate, but also reflect
the time of year and the produce in season"*

AVOCADO, TOMATO AND *Mint* SALAD

If you are looking for a starter to rustle up in minutes, this is your solution. I make this as my standby starter or sometimes as a light lunch for myself.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

You can chop the tomatoes and toss them in the dressing up to 1 day in advance and chill in the fridge.

3 firm but ripe avocados, halved and stoned
6 ripe tomatoes, halved, deseeded and diced

FOR THE FRENCH DRESSING

1 tablespoon white wine or cider vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon mint sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
salt and freshly ground black pepper
mint leaves, to garnish

1 Start by making the dressing. Whisk the vinegar, oil, mustard and mint sauce together. Season with salt, pepper and a little sugar to taste.

2 Slice the avocado halves, then arrange each half in a fan shape on a side plate. Scatter the tomato over the avocado then drizzle over the dressing. Serve garnished with fresh mint leaves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Give avocados a gentle squeeze in the Palm of your hand – they should ‘give’ slightly but not be too hard or too soft. I often choose the ripe and ready-to-eat ones to be sure they have the best flavour. Remember that avocado will turn brown if exposed to the air, so coat with the dressing as quickly as Possible.



GARLIC *Mushroom* BRUSCHETTA

Bruschetta is a good option if you're feeding a large group as they can simply be heated just before you're ready to sit down and placed on platters in the centre of the table for everybody to help themselves. This recipe can easily be doubled or simply scaled up if you've got a bigger group.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The toasts can be made up to a day in advance and kept in a tin. The mushroom mixture can also be kept for a day in the fridge. Warm the toasts in the oven (200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6) for 3–4 minutes. Reheat the mushrooms in a pan then place on the toasts, sprinkle with the Parmesan and heat for a further 2–3 minutes in the oven.

1 ciabatta loaf
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
25g (1oz) butter
450g (1lb) small chestnut mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon medium sherry or Madeira
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
2 tablespoons crème fraîche or double cream
a little grated Parmesan cheese
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Cut the loaf into 18 thin slices and lay them on a baking tray. Mix the oil and garlic together in a bowl, then brush over the bread with a pastry brush. Bake for 10 minutes until golden and crisp, turning the bread halfway through the cooking time and brushing the other side of the toasts with more oil. Remove from the oven but do not turn the oven off.

2 Heat the remaining garlicky oil with the butter in a frying pan and add the mushrooms. Cook for about 5 minutes until the mushrooms are tender, then add the sherry and boil for 1 minute. Add the parsley, plenty of seasoning and the crème fraîche. Pile the mushrooms on top of the toasts, sprinkle with a little Parmesan and return to the oven for 2–3 minutes. Serve hot.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

The sherry gives the mushrooms a lovely rich flavour, but you can use lemon juice instead.

CREAMY *Celeriac* SOUP

This recipe is really just a simple leek and potato soup that's been given a lift with the addition of some celeriac. It has a wonderfully creamy texture and the celeriac deepens the flavour, making it more complex. It makes a lovely, warming start to a winter meal.

SERVES 4–6

PREPARE AHEAD

This soup can be made and kept in the fridge for 1 day.

FREEZE

Freeze for up to 1 month.

25g (1oz) butter

1 leek, white part only, thinly sliced

1 medium celeriac, about 350g (12oz), peeled and cut into 3cm (1in) cubes

1 medium potato, roughly chopped

600ml (1 pint) vegetable or chicken stock

150ml (¼ pint) crème fraîche

salt and freshly ground black pepper

a little chopped parsley or chives, to serve

1 Melt the butter in a large pan and fry the leeks on a low heat for 3–4 minutes until softened but not browned. Add the celeriac and potato, then pour in the stock. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes until all the vegetables are completely tender.

2 Purée in a blender or food processor until smooth, then return to the pan, add the crème fraîche and heat through. Check the seasoning and add more if necessary. Serve hot with a sprinkling of parsley or chives.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If the soup is a little thick, thin it down with some extra stock.

Thai-Spiced TOMATO SOUP

This is an unusual spicy and fragrant soup, which is lovely to serve on a cold winter's day.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made and kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.

FREEZE

Freeze for up to 1 month.

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger root
1 tablespoon red Thai curry paste
1 × 400g can chopped tomatoes
1 × 400g can coconut milk
1 lemongrass stick, bashed with a rolling pin
1 tablespoon tomato purée
1 tablespoon light muscovado sugar
2 tablespoons Thai basil leaves, chopped, plus extra leaves to decorate

1 Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium–high heat. Add the onion, carrots and red pepper and fry for 3 minutes. Add the ginger and Thai curry paste and fry for 30 seconds.

2 Add all the remaining ingredients except the Thai basil. Bring up to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer for 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Remove the lemongrass stalk, add the Thai basil then place the soup in a blender or food processor and purée until smooth.

3 Return the soup to the pan, add about 200ml (7fl oz) of water to thin the soup down, and reheat to serve. Decorate each bowl of soup with fresh Thai basil leaves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Thai basil, sometimes known as holy basil, is now available in supermarkets. Its large leaves are very fragrant with a distinctive citrusy and clove-like flavour that is delicious in Asian dishes.



Thai-Spiced Tomato Soup

Sharing PLATTER

A platter of savoury nibbles set in the middle of the table at the start of a meal is a great way to get the conversation rolling. And because nowadays it's so easy to buy ready-made versions, your guests will really appreciate the fact that you have gone to the trouble to make your own.

I have given you separate recipes for Rosemary Roasted Almonds, Seeded Bread Sticks, Roasted Vegetables, Lemon Houmous and a simple Cherry Tomato and Mozzarella Salad – but of course, you can pick and choose from this assortment as needed, depending on your number of guests.

For meat eaters, you could also add some cold meats. I like Spanish Paleta Ibérica de Bellota in particular, which comes from free-range acorn-fed pigs and has a really lovely, nutty, sweet flavour.

This quantity of nibbles serves eight, and you will probably need two large serving platters on which to display it all.

PREPARE AHEAD

The roasted almonds can be made up to 1 week ahead and kept in a screw top jar. The bread sticks will keep in a cake tin for 2–3 days (warm them for 5 minutes in a hot oven if liked). The roasted vegetables and houmous can be made and chilled up to 2 days ahead. The tomato salad can be made up to 1 day in advance.

FREEZE

The vegetables will freeze for 1 month.

ROSEMARY ROASTED ALMONDS

SERVES 8 AS PART OF A SHARING PLATTER

200g (7oz) blanched almonds
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary leaves
½ teaspoon smoked paprika

1 Heat a wide-based pan over a very high heat and dry-fry the almonds for a minute until toasted. Watch them carefully as they can burn easily. Add the

oil, salt and rosemary, reduce the heat and fry until crisp.

2 Remove from the heat and sprinkle in the paprika, toss together and serve.

3 Alternatively you can roast the almonds in an oven preheated to oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Place the almonds in a small ovenproof dish and drizzle with the oil. Sprinkle with the salt and paprika and roast in the oven for 15 minutes until golden brown. Sprinkle with the rosemary and serve warm or cold.

SEEDED BREAD STICKS

If you don't have grain bread flour, use the same quantity of white bread flour and add two tablespoons of mixed seeds, such as sesame, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.

MAKES ABOUT 25 BREAD STICKS

250g (9oz) white seed and grain bread flour

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar

1 teaspoon easy-blend yeast

2 tablespoons olive oil

sesame or poppy seeds, semolina or polenta, for rolling the bread sticks

sea salt, to finish

1 Lightly oil two baking trays. Measure the flour, salt and sugar into a mixing bowl and stir in the yeast. Mix the oil with 150ml ($\frac{1}{4}$ pint) lukewarm water and add to the flour. Mix well until it forms a soft dough, then turn out on to the work surface and knead for 10 minutes (or for 4–5 minutes in a mixer with a dough hook).

2 Sprinkle the worktop with the sesame or poppy seeds, semolina or polenta and roll out the dough as thinly as possible into a rectangle – the seeds will stick to the outside of the dough. Cut the dough into 1cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) wide strips. Then roll each one between your hands to a pencil shape, trying to make sure there are seeds all the way around each stick. Place on the baking tray, spaced a little apart. Cover with clingfilm and leave in a warm place to prove for about 15–20 minutes, until risen a little. Sprinkle with a little sea salt. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

3 Bake the bread sticks for 10 minutes until golden brown and crisp. They will be soft inside at this stage; if you prefer drier grissini-style sticks, bake for a further 3 minutes. Allow to cool completely, then store in a tin for up to 3 days.

LEMON HOUMOUS

If you like the traditional sesame seed flavour of houmous, add three tablespoons of tahini paste to the mixture or, if you prefer, add four tablespoons of chopped fresh coriander leaves for an aromatic flavour.

SERVES 8 AS PART OF A SHARING PLATTER

2 × 400g cans chickpeas, drained
1 garlic clove, crushed
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
grated zest and juice of 2 lemons
3 tablespoons Greek yoghurt
a good pinch of ground cumin
plenty of salt and ground black pepper

1 Place all the ingredients in a food processor with 2 tablespoons of hot water and blend until smooth. Season to taste and pop in the fridge to chill. Serve chilled.

CHERRY TOMATO AND MOZZARELLA SALAD

SERVES 8 AS PART OF A SHARING PLATTER

250g (9oz) small ripe tomatoes on the vine, halved

250g (9oz) mini mozzarella balls

about 8 basil leaves, finely chopped

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place all the ingredients in a bowl, season well and chill until ready to serve.

ROASTED VEGETABLES

SERVES 8 AS PART OF A SHARING PLATTER, OR 4–6 AS A SIDE DISH

1 small aubergine, cut into 5mm (¼in) slices
1 courgette, cut into 5mm (¼in) slices
3 red peppers, deseeded and cut into 5mm (¼in) strips
2 red onions, thickly sliced
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 tablespoons olive oil
200g (7oz) chargrilled artichoke hearts in oil, drained
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Place all the vegetables except the artichokes in a roasting tin with the garlic and drizzle with oil. Season well.

2 Roast the vegetables for 20 minutes, then add the drained artichoke hearts, toss everything together and return to the oven for a further 5–10 minutes until hot and slightly charred. Allow to cool.

3 When cool, toss the vegetables with balsamic vinegar and serve.



Sharing Platter

Family Favourites

FAMILY FAVOURITES

This chapter is made up of the recipes that I think of as ‘family favourites’. By this, I mean not only that these meals are popular in my household, but also that they meet certain additional criteria.

A ‘family favourite’ could be a recipe that will feed and nourish hungry adults and children on a busy weeknight when I have less time to cook. So I have included recipes here that are quick to prepare, yet still tasty and filling, featuring store-cupboard staples such as pasta. Other family favourites are dishes such as risottos, quiches, curries and stews – meals that everybody is familiar with yet that never fail to delight.

Many of my recipes are versions of classic dishes that have been given a little twist – a simple cottage pie has been given a luxurious dauphinois topping ([here](#)) and burgers are made from pork and red pepper rather than the more traditional beef ([here](#)). And there are dishes that, while they are still meals I would serve up on a weeknight, are that little bit more special and for me they could also double up as casual supper party offerings.



Recipe List

[Cottage Pie with Dauphinois Potato Topping](#)

[Rib-Eye Steak with Stilton Butter](#)

[Lamb Dhansak](#)

[Triple Tomato Risotto](#)

[15-Minute Pasta](#)

[Pork and Red Pepper Burgers](#)

[Peppered Tarragon Chicken](#)

[Spinach, Gruyère and Ham Quiche](#)

[Hobie's Tuna Pasta Bake](#)

[Butternut Squash and Spinach Lasagne](#)

[Pastitsio](#)

[Chargrilled Citrus Chicken Breasts](#)

[Spiced Garden Vegetable Casserole](#)

RICH BEEF AND *Mushroom* STEW

This is a Rich and comforting stew, smart enough to serve for a dinner party. I serve it with Mustard Mash (see [here](#)) and a green vegetable. Shin of beef has an excellent flavour but needs slow cooking – for an alternative, look for braising steak.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be cooked the day before, chilled in the fridge and reheated.

FREEZE

Cool completely then freeze for up to 3 months. Defrost in the fridge overnight and reheat thoroughly.

50g (2oz) plain flour

2kg (4lb) shin of beef, cut into 2.5cm (1in) chunks and trimmed of any excess fat

6 tablespoons vegetable oil

6 small shallots, peeled and kept whole

6 celery sticks, roughly sliced

8 carrots, roughly chopped

25g (1oz) dried porcini mushrooms

600ml (1 pint) red wine or stout

300ml (½ pint) beef stock

6 sprigs of thyme

450g (1lb) button mushrooms

2 tablespoons redcurrant jelly

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place the flour in a bowl or in a plastic bag with plenty of salt and black pepper and toss the meat in it until well coated.

2 Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole and add the beef. Fry until browned on all sides. You may need to do this in batches as you don't want to overcrowd the pan; it is important to just brown the beef and not stew it. Remove the meat from the pan using a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the shallots, celery and carrots to the pan and fry for 5 minutes until softened a little.

3 Meanwhile, soak the dried mushrooms in 300ml (½ pint) boiling water until softened, then chop into smaller pieces, reserving the soaking liquid.

4 Return the meat to the pan and add the red wine or stout. Bring to the boil and bubble for 4–5 minutes, until reduced by about a third, then add the stock, the soaked mushrooms and their soaking liquid and the thyme. Bring back to the boil then cover and simmer on a low heat for about 2½ hours or until tender. If preferred, you can place the dish in a preheated oven at 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 3 to cook for the same amount of time.

5 Add the button mushrooms to the casserole with the redcurrant jelly and continue to cook for a further 30 minutes or until the meat is meltingly tender.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you want to thicken the sauce further, mix 1 tablespoon of plain flour with 2–3 tablespoons of cold water to make a thin paste, and add gradually to the boiling sauce until thickened to your liking. To help get the skins off the shallots, soak in boiling water before peeling.



Rich Beef and *Mushroom* Stew



Mustard MASH

A dash of wholegrain mustard never fails to liven up a dish of good old mashed potato. I like to serve this with my Rich Beef and Mushroom Stew (see [here](#)), but you could equally serve this alongside a Sunday roast.

SERVES 4–6

1.5kg (3lb) floury potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

50g (2oz) butter

100ml (4fl oz) milk

2 tablespoons wholegrain mustard

1 Put the potatoes into a pan of cold salted water. Bring up to the boil and boil gently for about 20 minutes, or until the potatoes feel really tender.

2 Drain the potato chunks well, then return to the pan. Add the butter and milk, and mash using a potato masher until no lumps remain. Season with salt and pepper, if needed. Add the wholegrain mustard to the potato, and stir to combine.

3 To serve, spoon into a warmed serving dish and serve immediately.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Cutting the potatoes into evenly shaped chunks means that they will cook in the same amount of time. This makes it much easier to know when they are ready to take off the heat.

COTTAGE PIE WITH *Dauphinois* POTATO TOPPING

A luxurious layer of cream and potato make this ‘dauphinois’ version so much smarter than the usual cottage pie, yet it’s just as easy to prepare. And it tastes great the next day too.

SERVES 6–8

PREPARE AHEAD

The minced beef mixture can be cooked 1–2 days in advance.

FREEZE

The cooked mince mixture can be frozen for up to 3 months.

1 tablespoon sunflower oil
900g (2lb) minced beef
2 onions, chopped
4 celery sticks, diced
50g (2oz) plain flour
250ml (9fl oz) red wine
300ml (½ pint) beef stock
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons light muscovado sugar
1 tablespoon chopped thyme
250g (9oz) small chestnut mushrooms, sliced
dash of gravy browning (optional)
1.5kg (3lb) King Edward potatoes, peeled and cut into 4mm slices
150ml (¼ pint) pouring double cream
100g (4oz) strong Cheddar cheese, grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 You will need a 2-litre (3½-pint) shallow ovenproof dish. Heat the oil in a large frying pan until hot. Fry the beef over a high heat until golden brown, stirring, then remove from the pan and set aside. Add the onion and celery to the pan and fry until beginning to soften. Return the beef to the pan.

2 Whisk the flour and wine together in a bowl to make a smooth paste. Whisk in the stock then add to the pan with the Worcestershire sauce, sugar

and thyme. Bring to the boil, stirring until thickened, then add the mushrooms and gravy browning, if using, and season. Cover with a lid and simmer for 45 minutes, until the mince is tender, then check the seasoning.

3 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Cook the potato slices in boiling salted water for about 4–5 minutes – they need to be just soft. Drain carefully in a colander and leave to cool a little. Don't worry if the potatoes break up a little, as this will help them absorb the cream; if they are too hard they will be waxy and the cream will run off.

4 Tip the cooked meat into the ovenproof dish. Arrange a layer of the blanched potato on top of the mince, then pour over half the cream. Arrange the remaining potato on top, seasoning between the layers, then pour over the remaining cream and sprinkle over the cheese. Bake in the oven for about 30 minutes or until golden and bubbling.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Make sure you cook the dish fairly quickly once the potato topping is added or the potatoes may discolour and the cream will sink into the meat.



Cottage Pie with *Dauphinois* Potato Topping

RIB-EYE STEAK WITH *Stilton* BUTTER

A thick, juicy steak is a real treat and so easy to cook for a dinner party, and here's how to cook them without having to disappear to the kitchen at the last minute or fill the room with smoke!

SERVES 6

100g (4oz) softened butter
2 banana shallots, finely diced
75g (3oz) Stilton
1 tablespoon finely chopped chives
a little olive oil
6 × 4cm- (1½in-) thick rib-eye steaks, each about 200g (7oz)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Melt 25g (1oz) of the butter in a small pan and cook the shallots over a low heat until softened. Remove from the heat, tip into a bowl and allow to cool for 10 minutes.

2 Mash the Stilton with a fork and beat in the remaining butter and the chives. Add the shallot mixture and season with salt and pepper. Mix well.

3 Place the Stilton butter on a sheet of clingfilm and form into a sausage shape. Roll up, twisting the ends to secure. Chill for at least 30 minutes before using.

4 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. To cook the steaks, heat a large non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Brush each steak with a little oil and season with salt and pepper. Fry each steak for 2 minutes on each side or until golden and sealed. You will need to cook the steaks two or three at a time. Transfer to a baking sheet while you cook the remainder.

5 Bake the steaks for 6 minutes or until piping hot for rare. Add an extra 2 minutes for medium, and 4 minutes for medium to well done. Rest the steaks for 2 minutes. Slice the butter and place a slice on top of each steak just before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you are using fillet steak, this is totally lean, so use slightly less per person – around 150g (5oz) should be sufficient.

To cook the steak to perfection, make sure it sizzles as soon as it hits the hot pan and time the cooking for just 2 minutes on each side. The method above works well for any type of steak of the same thickness, but if using a thicker fillet steak, bake for 8 minutes for rare. Add 2 minutes for medium, and 4 minutes for medium to well done. Rest the steaks for 2 minutes before serving.



Rib-Eye Steak with *Stilton* Butter

LAMB *Dhansak*

Dhansak is a popular Indian curry made from meat and lentils, flavoured with spices including cumin and ginger. It is mild, sweet and Rich with just enough heat to satisfy most tastes. And best of all it benefits from being made a day in advance as it tastes even better the next day. I like to serve this with Raita and Fresh Tomato Relish (see [here](#)), as well as hard-boiled eggs, poppadoms, Rice and, of course, mango chutney.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Make 1–2 days ahead, keep in the fridge, then reheat thoroughly.

FREEZE

Transfer to a freezer-proof container and freeze for 1 month. Don't freeze for longer as the flavours will intensify and the dish may become too spicy.

3 tablespoons sunflower oil
1kg (2lb 2oz) diced lamb (shoulder or leg, or a mixture)
2 onions, diced
25g (1oz) fresh ginger root, peeled but left whole
4 garlic cloves, peeled but left whole
1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
10 green cardamom pods
1½ tablespoons ground cumin
1½ tablespoons ground coriander
½ tablespoon ground turmeric
1 × 400g can chopped tomatoes
200ml (7fl oz) beef stock
75g (3oz) dried red lentils
3 tablespoons clear honey
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 2.

2 Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large frying pan. Add half the lamb and fry until browned. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon and set aside, then brown the other half of the lamb and set aside.

3 Add the remaining oil to the pan. Add the onions and fry for 4–5 minutes until beginning to soften.

4 Meanwhile, place the ginger, garlic and chilli into a small food processor and whizz until finely chopped.

5 Bash the cardamom pods with the end of a rolling pin to split the husks, then remove the seeds and grind them to a fine powder in a pestle and mortar. Add to the pan along with the remaining spices and the garlic and ginger mixture.

6 Add the remaining ingredients to the pan and add the lamb. Bring to the boil, then cover and place in the oven to simmer for 1–2 hours until tender. Check the seasoning and serve.

RAITA

PREPARE AHEAD

Keeps for 2 days in the fridge.

1 small cucumber, peeled
350g (12oz) Greek yoghurt
5 tablespoons chopped mint

1 Cut the cucumber in half lengthways, scoop out the seeds and cut the flesh into small cubes. Place in a bowl with the yoghurt and mint and chill for up to 2 days before serving.

FRESH TOMATO RELISH

PREPARE AHEAD

Keeps for 2 days in the fridge.

1 red onion, finely chopped
6 ripe tomatoes, skinned, deseeded and chopped
2 tablespoons chopped coriander leaves,
juice of ½ lemon
½ red chilli, chopped (optional)

1 Mix all the ingredients together and chill for up to 2 days before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is difficult to tell how hot a chilli is going to be. The large chillies in supermarkets are usually mild and in this curry will give enough heat for most tastes, but use more or less as desired. Don't waste any leftover chillies, they freeze well and can be chopped even when frozen.

If you don't have a pestle and mortar to crush the cardamom seeds, add 1½ teaspoons ground cardamom instead.



Lamb *Dhansak*

TRIPLE *Tomato* RISOTTO

I think a Risotto is such a great option for an easy midweek supper. It does need to be watched and stirred but that's it – half an hour later you'll have a wonderfully comforting pan of tasty veg and creamy Rice.

SERVES 4–6

1 tablespoon olive oil
25g (1oz) butter
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
4 tablespoons tomato purée
500g (1lb 2oz) arborio rice
300ml (½ pint) dry white wine
1.8 litres (3¼ pints) hot vegetable or chicken stock
200g (7oz) sun-blush tomatoes, chopped
250g (9oz) roasted peppers from a jar, drained and chopped
300g (10oz) cherry tomatoes
125g (5oz) petit pois
4 tablespoons crème fraîche
75g (3oz) Parmesan cheese, grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper
a few fresh basil leaves, to garnish

1 Heat the oil and butter in a large frying pan and when hot, fry the onion for about 5 minutes until softened and tender. Add the garlic and fry for 30 seconds.

2 Add the tomato purée and rice to the onion and stir until the rice is coated with oil. Add the wine and stir until absorbed. Add a ladleful of hot stock and stir until the stock is absorbed, then continue to add the stock in this way, a ladleful at a time, until the risotto rice is nearly tender, making sure each ladle of stock is fully absorbed before you add the next.

3 Add the sun-blush tomatoes, peppers, cherry tomatoes and petit pois and stir for about 4 minutes until the peas are soft and the rice is tender but still has a bit of bite.

4 Add the crème fraîche and Parmesan and season to taste. Garnish with the basil leaves before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Make sure the stock is always simmering and stir it in a ladleful at a time to give a creamy mixture. This dish is best made and served immediately, and is not suitable for freezing.



MARY'S MENU FOR
A KITCHEN SUPPER

STARTER

Sharing Platter

MAIN COURSE

Lamb Dhansak
or
*Butternut Squash and
Spinach Lasagne*

DESSERT

Elderflower Posset

15-MINUTE *Pasta*

This is my standby pasta supper – great for everyday family meals or for casual supper parties too. If you don't have Parma ham, then Black Forest ham or Serrano ham work just as well.

SERVES 6

350g (12oz) penne pasta
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 × 80g packs Parma ham, snipped into small pieces
250g (9oz) small chestnut mushrooms, halved or quartered
200g (7oz) full-fat crème fraîche
100g (4oz) Parmesan cheese, grated
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
salt and freshly ground black pepper
green salad and crusty bread, to serve (optional)

1 Cook the pasta in boiling salted water according to the packet instructions, drain and set aside.

2 Heat the oil in a frying pan. Add half the Parma ham and fry until crisp, then remove and set aside.

3 Add the mushrooms to the pan and fry for 2 minutes. Add the crème fraîche and bring up to the boil. Add the pasta, Parmesan, remaining ham and parsley and toss together over the heat. Season well. Serve topped with the crispy Parma ham, and with a green salad and crusty bread, if you like.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you have left over double cream, you can use this instead of crème fraîche. For special Occasions add a pack of asparagus tips to the pasta 4 minutes before the end of cooking time, then drain with the pasta.



15-Minute *Pasta*

PORK AND Red *Pepper* BURGERS

Serving a good homemade burger at a barbecue or for a kitchen supper makes such a change from bringing out ready-made versions. I think these pork burgers are a lovely alternative to a traditional beef burger, with lots of interesting flavours. Serve them with a crusty roll or some sweet potato chips.

MAKES 8 BURGERS

PREPARE AHEAD

The burgers can be prepared and kept in the fridge for 2 days before cooking.

FREEZE

The burgers can be made and frozen uncooked for 1 month. Layer them between sheets of baking paper in a freezer-proof container so they will separate easily. Defrost thoroughly before cooking.

1 tablespoon sunflower oil
½ onion, finely diced
3 rashers of smoked streaky bacon, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
75g (3oz) crustless bread
2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
450g (1lb) minced pork
2 roasted red peppers (from a jar), drained
½ teaspoon salt
freshly ground black pepper

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion and bacon over a low heat until the onion has completely softened but not browned. Add the garlic and fry for 1 minute.

2 Place the bread and parsley in a food processor, whizz to make crumbs, then add the onion and bacon mixture, pork, red peppers, salt and plenty of black pepper. Whizz until well mixed. Shape the mixture into 8 burgers and chill for 30 minutes if you have the time.

3 Preheat a grill or barbecue and when hot, grill the burgers for about 6–8 minutes on each side until golden and cooked through. Or cook in a little

hot oil in a frying pan, and once browned reduce the heat and cook right through.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is important to cook burgers right the way through, so I often brown them first then finish them off in a hot oven (200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6) for a further 5 minutes so that they cook without burning on the outside.



Pork and *Red Pepper* Burgers





*"A good homemade burger at a barbecue
or for a kitchen supper makes such a change
from ready-made versions"*

PEPPERED *Tarragon* CHICKEN

I've had people tell me they are reluctant to cook chicken breasts because they worry they're going to be dry. But wrapping the chicken breasts in Parma ham will keep their juices locked into the meat. Couple that with a deliciously creamy stuffing and there's no chance of any dryness.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The dish can be prepared and kept in the fridge for 24 hours before roasting.

6 skinless, boneless chicken breasts

1 × 150g pack black-pepper full-fat cream cheese (see [Mary's Wise Words](#))

1 egg yolk

3 tablespoons chopped tarragon, plus extra leaves, to decorate

12 slices of Parma ham

a knob of butter

a little clear honey

200g (7 oz) full-fat crème fraîche

juice of ½ lemon

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Put the chicken breasts on to a board. Using a sharp knife make a pocket in the side of the chicken breast, cutting through to the middle.

3 Mix the cream cheese with the egg yolk and 2 tablespoons of the tarragon and season well. Divide between the chicken breast pockets, pushing the mixture into each one. Wrap each breast in two slices of Parma ham so the chicken is completely covered.

4 Grease a small roasting tin with butter then arrange the chicken breasts inside. Drizzle over a little honey then roast for about 30–35 minutes or until the chicken is golden brown and no longer pink in the centre. Remove the chicken breasts from the tin and leave to rest for 5 minutes while you make the sauce.

5 Add the crème fraîche and lemon to the roasting tin. Put the tin on to the hob and bring to the boil, scraping the tin with a wooden spoon to release all of the chicken juices. Add the remaining chopped tarragon and season. Serve the chicken sprinkled with a few tarragon leaves, and with the sauce alongside for everyone to help themselves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Look for firm, flavoured cream cheese rather than the very smooth type sold in plastic tubs. Smooth cream cheese may soften too much and run out of the chicken pockets before the meat is cooked.

To check that the chicken is cooked through, cut one breast in half – serve this one to yourself.



Peppered *Tarragon* Chicken

SPINACH, *Gruyère* AND HAM QUICHE

Sometimes the simplest additions or tweaks to a basic recipe can really change the flavour of a dish. Here, using a strong-flavoured tangy cheese, such as Gruyère, really lifts this quiche and, in my opinion, makes it one of the tastiest ever.

SERVES 8

PREPARE AHEAD

This will keep for up to 3 days in the fridge once cooked.

FREEZE

Wrap the cooked quiche in clingfilm and foil and freeze for up to 1 month. Defrost overnight.

FOR THE PASTRY

175g (6oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
100g (4oz) butter, cubed
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon water

FOR THE FILLING

a knob of butter
1 onion, chopped
200g (7oz) baby spinach
4 eggs, beaten
300ml (½ pint) double cream
100g (4oz) ham, diced
100g (4oz) Gruyère or Emmental cheese, grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 You will need a deep, 23cm (9in) loose-bottomed fluted flan tin, a baking tray and baking beans. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 To make the pastry, measure the flour and butter into a food processor. Whizz until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs (or place in a mixing bowl and rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips). Add the egg and water to the dry mixture and mix until it forms a soft but not sticky dough.

3 Dust a work surface lightly with flour and roll out the pastry to a circle large enough to line the base and sides of the tin. Press on to the base and sides and trim the top edge. Prick the base all over with a fork. Line the pastry case with baking paper and baking beans. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes until just coloured, remove the beans and foil and bake for a further 5 minutes to dry out.

4 Reduce the oven temperature to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4. Place a heavy baking sheet in the oven to preheat.

5 To make the filling, melt the butter in a frying pan and gently fry the onion for about 5 minutes or until softened.

6 Place the spinach in a colander in the sink, then pour a kettle of boiling water over the spinach until it wilts. Squeeze out as much water as possible and pat the spinach with kitchen towel.

7 Beat the eggs and cream together and season with salt and black pepper.

8 Place the onion in the pastry case then top with the ham and spinach. Pour over the cream and egg mixture and sprinkle with the cheese.

9 Place the tin on the preheated baking tray and bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes until golden brown and just set in the centre.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

For vegetarians simply omit the ham and make sure you use a strong-flavoured melting vegetarian cheese. Check the label – many cheeses are now made without animal rennet but there are many that still use it.



Spinach, *Gruyère* and Ham Quiche

HOBIE'S *Tuna* PASTA BAKE

Hobie, aged 6, and Louis, aged 8, are our grandsons. They love to cook this with me for our supper. Not only is it very simple to make but is also very tasty – both adults and children love it – and a great last-minute meal as you will probably have all the ingredients in your fridge or store cupboard already.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be prepared up to a day ahead then baked in the oven for about 20 minutes or until thoroughly hot all the way through.

FREEZE

This can be frozen for up to 1 month, but leave out the hard-boiled eggs as they will become rubbery when frozen. Don't sprinkle over the cheese topping – add the cheese after defrosting, just before you bake the dish.

250g (9oz) pasta shapes

50g (2oz) butter

50g (2oz) plain flour

600ml (1 pint) milk

100g (4oz) Cheddar cheese, grated

6 eggs

1 × 185g can tuna in oil, drained

1 × 195g can sweetcorn, drained

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the pasta and cook for 10–11 minutes or according to the packet instructions, until tender. Drain well.

3 Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small pan, whisk in the flour and cook for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the milk, stirring until smooth and thickened. Season with salt and black pepper and add most of the cheese.

4 Cook the eggs in boiling water for 8 minutes, then plunge them into cold water to cool. Remove the egg shells and cut the eggs into quarters.

5 Mix the pasta with the cheese sauce, then add the eggs, flaked tuna and sweetcorn and turn into a baking dish. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and bake for 20 minutes until browned. Alternatively, if serving at once, the hot dish can be browned under the grill instead of being placed in the oven.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you wish, you can use frozen sweetcorn instead of tinned, or replace them with peas, if preferred.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND *Spinach* LASAGNE

This is a great combination of colourful vegetables that makes a rich and satisfying vegetable supper. For vegetarians use a well-flavoured vegetarian cheese. Lasagne sheets vary in size, so aim to have two layers of pasta to fit the dish without overlapping.

SERVES 6

1 small butternut squash, peeled, seeds removed and cut into 3–4cm chunks
2 onions, thickly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
250g (9oz) button chestnut mushrooms, sliced thickly
250g (9oz) spinach, washed
about 6 large dried lasagne sheets
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

400ml (¾ pint) tomato passata
3 tablespoons red pesto

FOR THE CHEESE SAUCE

75g (3oz) butter
75g (3oz) plain flour
600ml (1 pint) hot milk
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
200g (7oz) Gruyère cheese, grated

PREPARE AHEAD

You can make the components of this – the vegetables and sauces – one day ahead, or make the whole dish one day ahead and chill in the fridge either uncooked or cooked. If cooked, reheat the dish covered in foil so that the top doesn't burn.

FREEZE

This is best frozen when cooked. Defrost in the fridge overnight before reheating for 30–40 minutes at 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Add at least 15–20 minutes to this time if reheating from frozen.

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. You will need a shallow 2-litre (3½-pint) shallow baking dish.

2 Place the squash and onions in a roasting tin, mix with the oil, season then roast for about 30 minutes until tender. (When you pierce the squash with a knife it should go through easily, but you don't want the squash to be mushy.) Add the mushrooms for the last 10 minutes.

3 Put the spinach in a colander in the sink, and pour over a kettle of boiling water until the spinach has wilted. Allow to drain, then press out as much of the water as you can.

4 For the tomato sauce, mix the tomato passata with the pesto.

5 Immerse the lasagne sheets in boiling water for 5 minutes until softened.

6 For the cheese sauce, melt the butter in a small pan then beat in the flour. Gradually whisk in the hot milk, stirring all the time, until the sauce thickens. Add the mustard and about three quarters of the cheese and continue to stir gently until the cheese has melted. Season well.

7 To assemble the lasagne, put a third of the roasted vegetables into the bottom of your ovenproof dish followed by a layer of spinach then a third of the tomato sauce and a third of the cheese sauce. Lay lasagne sheets on top of this. Top with half of the remaining vegetables, tomato sauce and cheese sauce. Add the last lasagne sheets and top with the remaining vegetables, tomato sauce and cheese sauce. Sprinkle the reserved cheese over the top.

8 Bake for 30–40 minutes or until the lasagne is golden and bubbling on top.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Many cheeses are now made with non-animal rennet, so always check the label to check that it is suitable for vegetarians.



Butternut Squash and *Spinach* Lasagne



PASTITSIO

This is a traditional Greek pasta bake using minced lamb, and is a great family supper dish. You could use penne pasta if you haven't any macaroni to hand.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made 1–2 days in advance and chilled in the fridge. Bake in the oven for 30–40 minutes until piping hot in the centre.

FREEZE

Prepare up to step 5, and then freeze for up to 1 month. Defrost thoroughly then cook for 45 minutes in the oven at 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

200g (7oz) macaroni
500g (1lb 2oz) lean minced lamb
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 onions, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
25g (1oz) plain flour
150ml (¼ pint) red wine
1 × 400g can chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon chopped marjoram
1 tablespoon tomato purée
1 tablespoon light muscovado sugar
2 bay leaves
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SAUCE

25g (1oz) butter
25g (1oz) plain flour
300ml (½ pint) hot milk
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
150g (5oz) mature Cheddar cheese, grated

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. You will need a deep 2–2.25 litre (3½–4 pint) ovenproof dish.

2 Cook the macaroni in boiling salted water according to the packet instructions until al dente. Drain and refresh in cold water.

3 Heat a large non-stick frying pan or flameproof casserole. Dry-fry the lamb until browned then transfer to a plate. Heat the oil in the pan. Add the onions and garlic and fry for 5 minutes until soft, then return the lamb to the pan and sprinkle over the flour. Stir to coat the lamb in the flour. Blend in the remaining ingredients and season well. Cover with a lid, bring up to the boil and gently simmer on the hob for 30 minutes, until the lamb is tender. Remove the bay leaves.

4 While the mince is cooking, make the cheese sauce. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the flour. Using a whisk, blend in the hot milk, whisking until smooth and thickened. Add the mustard and simmer for 30 seconds. Remove from the heat and add half the cheese. Season well.

5 Spoon half of the mince mixture into the ovenproof dish. Put half of the pasta on top and spread to cover the surface. Top with the remaining mince and pasta and then finish with the cheese sauce. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top.

6 Bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes until bubbling and golden brown on top.

CHARGRILLED *Citrus* CHICKEN BREASTS

A quick and tasty way to serve chicken for a light summer lunch alongside plenty of salad. Try serving it with the Fiery Red Rice and Carrot Salad ([here](#)).

SERVES 4

PREPARE AHEAD

Marinate for no more than 1 day in the fridge. Or cook completely and serve cold.

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into thick strips
grated zest and juice of 1 lime
grated zest and juice of 1 small orange
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons clear honey
2 tablespoons olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place the chicken strips in a non-metallic bowl and pour over the citrus zest and juices and honey, and season. Leave in the fridge to marinate for about 1 hour.

2 Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan. Lift the chicken out of the marinade, shaking off most of the grated zest and juice but reserving them, then fry the chicken for about 2–3 minutes, in batches if necessary, turning over halfway through, until browned and cooked through. Remove the chicken with a slotted spoon and transfer to a plate.

3 Add the reserved marinade to the pan and bring to the boil. Return the chicken to the pan, coat with the marinade and cook for just 1 minute until piping hot. Serve immediately.

SPICED *Garden* VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

This casserole packs a punch in terms of flavour, and with every forkful you can feel it doing you good! It is packed with vegetables and pulses and is also low in fat but feels very filling. It may sound strange but it is delicious served cold too.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

You can cook this up to 2 days in advance. Not suitable for freezing.

6 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 onions, roughly chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
2 teaspoons ground turmeric
2 × 400g cans plum tomatoes
2 large butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into 2cm chunks
2 cauliflowers, broken into small florets
4 red peppers, deseeded and cut into 1cm pieces
2 × 400g cans chickpeas, drained
600ml (1 pint) vegetable stock
2 tablespoons harissa paste
2 tablespoons coriander leaves, roughly chopped
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3.

2 Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole, and fry the onions for about 5–8 minutes over a low heat until soft and transparent. Add the garlic and turmeric and fry for 30 seconds.

3 Add the tomatoes, squash, cauliflower and peppers. Stir well then add the chickpeas and stock. Bring to the boil, then cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 1 hour, until all the vegetables are really tender.

4 Remove a couple of tablespoonfuls of the juices, blend with the harissa and stir back through the casserole. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Add the coriander and serve hot.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Harissa is a hot pepper and spice paste used in North African dishes. Recipes vary, but it usually contains chillies, garlic, cumin, coriander and lemon. It can vary in strength, so use with caution. It gives a rich intensity to all kinds of casseroles and stews, is delicious stirred into houmous and can be rubbed on to chicken before roasting too.



Spiced Garden Vegetable Casserole

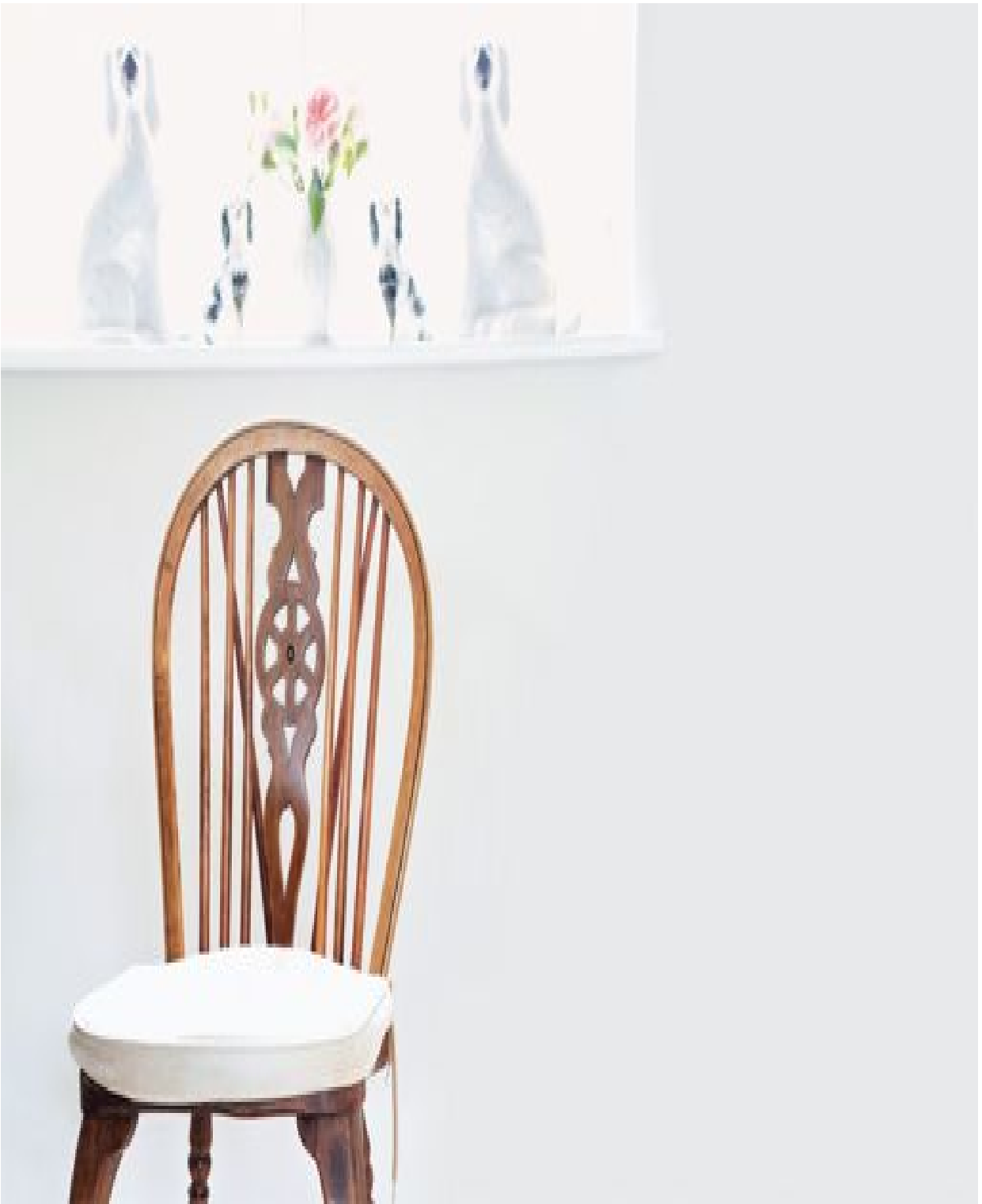
Spectacular Suppers

SPECTACULAR SUPPERS

Of course, each person's notion of what makes a 'spectacular' supper will be different. Perhaps it's the atmosphere during the evening, a superb bottle of wine, a luxurious ingredient in the dish, or simply a plate of food shared with loved ones – for me, these would all make a supper truly spectacular.

This chapter is centred on food that I serve when I entertain. In choosing the recipes, I thought about dishes that are special because they make a memorable meal for my guests – this is either because they're something a little unusual, or because in putting them on the table I know they leave an impression, both visually and, most importantly, with their flavour. There are recipes that might feature ingredients that are a little bit more costly than I would normally use – whole sea bass is not something I buy every day, but for a special occasion I think it's lovely to splash out – and recipes that take more time to prepare, such as an absolutely stunning Salmon en Croûte with Pesto-Roasted Vegetables ([here](#)).

Entertaining doesn't need to be complicated, however. As in all the chapters in this book, I've included as many dishes that can be partly or fully prepared in advance, leaving you to enjoy the maximum amount of time with your guests.



Recipe List

[Venison and Chestnut Pie](#)

[Asian Belly of Pork with Stir-fried Vegetables](#)

[Guinea Fowl with wild Mushroom Sauce](#)

[Salmon En Croûte with Pesto-Roasted Vegetables](#)

[Salmon Tranches with Herb Sauce, Quail's Eggs and Asparagus](#)

[Baked Salted Sea Bass](#)

[Spring Chicken with Lemon and Fennel](#)

[Duck Breasts with Mango Cream Sauce](#)

[Pistachio Basil Pesto with Fettuccine](#)

[Cobb Salad with Ranch-style Dressing](#)



VENISON AND *Chestnut* PIE

This is a hearty dish to serve on a cold autumn evening or for Sunday lunch with loads of buttery mashed potato and green vegetables. The filling is simply a rich venison stew so you could also serve it without the pastry if you prefer.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The venison filling can be cooked, cooled and chilled for up to 2 days in the fridge before completing the pie.

FREEZE

Make the filling and allow to cool completely before transferring to a large lidded freezer-proof container and freezing for up to 1 month. Defrost completely before adding the pastry topping and cooking as from step 5.

5 tablespoons sunflower oil
2 onions, roughly chopped
6 rashers of streaky bacon, snipped into strips
750g (1¾lb) stewing venison, cut into cubes
50g (2oz) plain flour
4 tablespoons Madeira or medium sherry
450ml (¾ pint) red wine
450ml (¾ pint) beef stock
2 tablespoons wholegrain mustard
300g (11oz) chestnut mushrooms, quartered
1 × 200g (7oz) pack whole peeled, cooked chestnuts
3 bay leaves
4 sprigs of thyme
500g (1lb 2oz) puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 You will need a deep 2.25-litre (4-pint) pie dish. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large shallow pan or frying pan that has a lid and cook the onions for 5 minutes, until soft and transparent. Add the bacon and cook for a further 5 minutes.

2 Remove the onions and bacon from the pan using a slotted spoon and set aside. Add the remaining oil and when hot add the venison and fry until browned. You will need to do this in batches so that the meat browns rather than stews in its juices. Set aside each batch of meat on a plate.

3 When all the meat is cooked, return it to the pan. Add the flour and stir well. Add the Madeira or sherry and stir vigorously to blend it with the meat juices and give a smooth thick mixture, then stir in the red wine, beef stock and mustard.

4 Bring to the boil, check the seasoning, reduce the heat and return the onion mixture to the pan along with the mushrooms, chestnuts, bay leaves and thyme. Simmer, covered, for 1 hour, stirring occasionally until the meat is tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed. Remove the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Remove from the heat and allow to cool completely.

5 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Spoon the filling mixture into the pie dish. Roll out the pastry to a rectangle a little larger than the top of the dish. Cut a 1cm- (½in-) strip off the edge of the pastry and place it around the rim of the pie dish. Dampen this with water, then lay the pastry lid on top. Press the edges well to seal then trim the edge with a sharp knife. Using the blade of the knife, make little cuts all around the cut edge of the pastry to help it rise evenly, then crimp the edges. Make a hole in the centre of the pie for the steam to escape. If you wish roll out the remaining pastry trimmings and cut a few diamond-shaped leaves. Score the veins with a knife then arrange the leaves on top of the pie.

6 Brush the pie all over with the beaten egg (try not to let it drip down the sides of the pastry as this will prevent it rising). Bake the pie for about 35–45 minutes, until golden, risen and the filling is piping hot.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Venison is available in good supermarkets and butchers in the autumn and winter. Look for stewing venison – shoulder meat is ideal.



ASIAN BELLY OF PORK WITH *Stir-fried* VEGETABLES

This delicious roast has an oriental flavour that is perfect to serve with stir-fried vegetables, and is great for a smart supper as it can be prepared well in advance.

When preparing the pork, make sure the belly of pork skin is scored as finely as possible so that it crisps up well and is easy to break into pieces. The crackling is everybody's favourite part of roast pork, and this will be no exception, so make sure you distribute it evenly between your guests when serving.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Cook the pork for the first 3 hours, but do not increase the oven temperature at the end. Cool the pork completely then cut into very thick slices and chill. To reheat, cook at 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7 for 20–30 minutes, wrapped in foil. The vegetables should be cooked at the last minute but can be sliced ahead of time and kept in plastic bags in the fridge ready to be cooked.

1 × 1.5kg (3lb) piece of boned belly of pork, scored finely
2 teaspoons salt
4 tablespoons soy sauce
3 tablespoons clear honey
a 2cm (¾ in) knob of fresh root ginger, grated
100ml (3½fl oz) orange juice
200ml (7fl oz) water
1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder
1 tablespoon cornflour
200ml (7fl oz) chicken stock

FOR THE STIR-FRY

2½ tablespoons sesame oil
½ onion, sliced
200g (7 oz) pak choi, sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
250g (9oz) chestnut mushrooms, quartered
150g (5oz) mangetout, sliced in four on the diagonal

175g (6oz) baby corn, sliced on the diagonal

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 2.
- 2 Rub salt into the scored skin of the pork belly. Mix together the soy, honey, ginger, orange juice, water and five-spice together and pour into a small roasting tin. Sit the pork on top.
- 3 Cook in the oven for 3 hours until completely tender then remove from the oven and set aside while you prepare the sauce.
- 4 To make the sauce, pour the juices from the pan into a jug. Skim off the fat then pour into a small pan. Mix the cornflour with a little cold water to make a smooth paste, then add to the pan along with the stock. Stir over a high heat until thickened slightly. Set aside then reheat just before serving.
- 5 Increase the oven temperature to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Line the roasting tin with foil, put the pork on top and fold up the sides of the foil to cover the sides, but not the top of the meat. Roast in the oven for 20–30 minutes until the skin is crisp and brown.
- 6 To make the stir-fry, heat the oil in a frying pan or wok over a high heat. Add the onion and fry for 3 minutes then add the remaining vegetables and stir-fry until the vegetables are just cooked. Serve with the pork and reheated sauce.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Buy good-quality pork, which has a nice thick, dry skin, as this will give the best, crispiest crackling.

Get your butcher to score the rind for you, making sure he scores it very finely, and buy the pork off the bone so it is easier to carve. This will also give better crackling, as the scores allow the fat to crisp up nicely.



Asian Belly of Pork with *Stir-Fried* Vegetables

GUINEA FOWL WITH WILD *Mushroom* SAUCE

Guinea fowl is similar in flavour to chicken but a little richer. Young birds can be smaller so you may need to buy three to serve six, for larger appetites.

If you haven't time to make fresh stock with the bones use chicken stock instead.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Cook the guinea fowl and sauce then cool, cover and chill overnight. To heat, place in the preheated oven for 45 minutes until hot through.

FREEZE

Cook the guinea fowl and sauce, but do not stir in the crème fraîche. Cool then freeze for up to 2 months. Defrost overnight in the fridge then reheat thoroughly as above, adding the crème fraîche at the end.

2 oven-ready guinea fowl, about 1.2kg (2lb 8oz) each
7g (¼ oz) dried porcini mushrooms
2 tablespoons olive oil
50g (2oz) butter
200g (7oz) smoked bacon lardons
4 banana shallots, chopped
50g (2oz) plain flour
300ml (½ pint) amontillado sherry or dry white wine
200ml (7fl oz) guinea fowl or chicken stock
1 tablespoon chopped thyme
200g (7oz) small chestnut mushrooms, sliced
2–3 tablespoons crème fraîche
a small bunch of parsley, finely chopped

1 To joint the birds: bend the legs and thighs away from the birds, then cut between the joint to separate them. Cut between the thigh and leg joints to make two pieces. Bend back the wings and cut them off, setting them aside for the stock. Cut either side of the breastbone and remove the breasts. Cut out the two oysters (the small, lean pieces of meat) from the base of the

carcass. Pull the skin off all the pieces of meat. To make stock, place the carcasses, skin and the wings in a pan with 900ml (1½ pints) water and bring to the boil, then simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat.

2 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4. Place the dried porcini mushrooms in a small bowl with 150ml boiling water and set aside to plump up for 20 minutes. Strain the mushrooms through a sieve, reserving the liquid. Chop the mushrooms.

3 Heat the oil and half of the butter in a large, ovenproof frying pan or flameproof casserole. Season the guinea fowl and fry the pieces over a high heat until golden on all sides. You may need to do this in two batches. Remove the meat with a slotted spoon and cover.

4 Add the lardons and shallots to the frying pan along with the remaining butter, and fry for 5 minutes until the onions are tender and lightly golden.

5 Measure the flour into a bowl. Whisk in the sherry or wine, whisking until you have a smooth consistency. Add the reserved mushroom liquid and the chicken stock.

6 Pour the liquid into the frying pan and stir until thickened and smooth. Add the thyme, porcini mushrooms, chestnut mushrooms and all of the guinea fowl pieces except the breasts. Season and bring to the boil.

7 Remove the guinea fowl from the heat and cover. Transfer into the oven and cook for 20–25 minutes, until nearly tender. Add the breasts and continue to cook in the oven for a further 10–15 minutes.

8 Stir in the crème fraîche and sprinkle with parsley. Just before serving, cut the breasts in half so that everyone gets a bit of breast and dark meat.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You could snip the knuckle off the drumstick with kitchen shears, so that they look a little smarter. It is also a good idea to cut off the gristly sinew at the knuckle end of the drumsticks when cooked.

If preferred, roast the birds whole then joint and remove the skin. The meat will not have the browned appearance, so add it to the sauce and reheat together as a casserole.



Guinea Fowl with Wild *Mushroom* Sauce

SALMON EN CROÛTE WITH *Pesto-Roasted* VEGETABLES

A dinner party and summer buffet classic, this wonderful dish has stood the test of time because it never fails to look impressive and is so easy to prepare ahead and to serve. Different recipes have cropped up in my books over the years but I make no apology for that as I don't think you can ever have too many. With its sun-dried tomato pesto, basil and roasted peppers and courgettes, this version brings a taste of the Mediterranean to one of the most British of dishes. Just add new potatoes and a side salad. I prefer to serve it hot, but it can be served at room temperature too.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

Make the 'parcel' but do not bake, and keep in the fridge for up to 1 day. Cook as in step 6, on a preheated tray.

FREEZE

Wrap the uncooked 'parcel' in foil, then put in a plastic bag and seal. Freeze for up to 1 month. Thaw for about 12 hours in the fridge before baking as in step 6.

3 red peppers, halved and deseeded
2 red onions, cut into eight wedges
3 courgettes, cut lengthways into 1cm slices
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 × 320g packs ready-rolled puff pastry
1 × 1kg (2lb 2oz) side of salmon, skin removed, cut from the centre
3 tablespoons sun-dried tomato pesto
1 egg, beaten

FOR THE SAUCE

600ml (1 pint) pouring double cream
juice of 1 lemon
4 tablespoons sun-dried tomato pesto
4 tablespoons chopped basil

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Place the red peppers, onion and courgette in a large roasting tin with the olive oil and roast for 20–25 minutes, until the vegetables are charred and tender. Allow to cool, then peel and discard the skin from the red peppers and cut them into bite-sized pieces.

3 Place a large baking tray in the oven to heat.

4 Unroll one pack of pastry and roll it out to make it a little longer – about 2cm larger all around – than the piece of fish (check that it will fit on the baking tray – you may have to place it diagonally). Place the pastry on top of a sheet of baking paper so that you can easily slide the completed parcel on to the baking tray. Place the salmon in the centre of the pastry and spread with the pesto, top with the courgettes and onions and lay the red peppers on top. Brush the pastry around the fish with some of the beaten egg.

5 Roll out the other pack of pastry to a rectangle slightly larger than the first one so that it drapes over the fish and filling. Carefully lift it on to the salmon and vegetables, trim off any excess and press the edges down well to seal. Re-roll the pastry trimmings thinly and cut out pastry decorations if you like. Brush the pastry with more beaten egg.

6 Carefully slide the parcel on to the preheated baking tray (still on the parchment) and bake for 35–40 minutes, until golden brown, both on top and underneath. Allow to rest for 10 minutes while you make the sauce.

7 To make the sauce, gently heat the cream, and stir in the lemon juice and pesto. Remove from the heat then stir in the basil just before serving.

8 Serve the salmon en croute, cut into slices, with the sauce in a jug alongside.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Try to buy a wide piece of fish rather than a long thin fillet, as it will fit in the oven better. It is also essential to heat the baking tray in the oven first, as this instantly starts to cook the pastry, preventing a soggy bottom!

Use basil pesto if you prefer.







MARY'S MENU FOR
A WINTER BUFFET

MAIN COURSE

*Salmon en Croûte with
Pesto-Roasted Vegetables*
Rich Beef and Mushroom Stew
Spiced Garden Vegetable Casserole

SIDE DISHES

Foolproof Green Salad
Mustard Mash

DESSERT

Laffa Panacotta with Sliced Oranges
*Meringue Franche with
Summer Fruits and Cream*

SALMON *Tranches* WITH HERB SAUCE, *Quail's Eggs* AND ASPARAGUS

I love to serve these salmon fillets on a large platter. They look so pretty, and the flavour of the herb sauce really complements the fish. This would be the perfect meal to serve for a special occasion with the Broad Bean and Little Gem Salad [here](#).

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

The salmon, the asparagus, the eggs and the sauce can all be prepared up to 2 days in advance and then assembled no more than 2 hours before serving. Keep chilled until served.

butter, for greasing

10 × 125g (5oz) single fillets of salmon, cut from the whole fillet, skin on

20 fine asparagus tips

12 quail's eggs

salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SAUCE

1 tablespoon snipped dill

1 tablespoon snipped chives

1 tablespoon torn mint leaves

1 tablespoon small sprigs of parsley

100g (4oz) full-fat crème fraîche

100g (4oz) full-fat Greek yoghurt

150ml (¼ pint) light mayonnaise

1 teaspoon caster sugar

juice of ½ lemon

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Butter a large roasting tin and arrange the salmon fillets with a little space between each one, then sprinkle with black pepper.

3 Cover tightly with foil and bake for 15 minutes or until the fish turns an opaque pink colour. Remove the foil and allow to cool, then chill. When cold, remove the salmon skin.

4 Bring a frying pan of water to the boil, add the asparagus and boil for just 3 minutes or until tender when pierced with the tip of a knife. Plunge into ice-cold water to stop it cooking any further, then drain well.

5 Bring a small pan of water to the boil and cook the quail's eggs for just 2 minutes. Plunge into ice-cold water to stop them cooking any further, then drain well and peel off the shells.

6 Make the sauce. Place all the sauce ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend to a smooth sauce. Taste and season if necessary.

7 Arrange the salmon on a serving platter. Spoon a little herb sauce on top of each piece of fish, then top with half a quail's egg and 2 asparagus spears. Serve the remaining sauce in a sauce boat and arrange the remaining quail's eggs on the serving platter.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Try to get salmon fillet slices that are all the same thickness. If they are very thin at the end, fold the sides underneath to prevent over-cooking.



Salmon Tranches with Herb Sauce, Quail's Eggs and Asparagus

BAKED *Salted* SEA BASS

Sea bass is now so popular that it is an inexpensive fish to serve for a dinner party. By cooking it in a crust of salt you seal in all the moisture and sweetness of the fish, and guests will be amazed to see you crack open the salt crust to reveal the succulent fish.

SERVES 4

4 small whole sea bass, scaled and gutted
2 lemons, thinly sliced
a bunch of thyme
1kg (2lb 2oz) sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.
- 2 Season the fish with pepper and fill the cavities with lemon slices and thyme sprigs.
- 3 Put the salt into a bowl, add 6 tablespoons of water and stir until sludgy. Spread a thin layer (about 1cm thick) on to the base of a roasting tin. Arrange the sea bass on top. Spread the remaining salt mixture over the top and pat on to the fish to make a crust.
- 4 Bake in the oven for 35–40 minutes. To test if the fish is cooked, make a hole in the crust and using a small knife, peel away the skin; the flesh should be opaque.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You must use rock salt for this dish as fine salt will be too powdery and won't form a crust.



Baked Salted Sea Bass

Spring CHICKEN WITH LEMON AND FENNEL

This is a very fresh-tasting, light and easy dish for a spring or summer supper party, that takes just 30 minutes to cook. Although you might think the slightly aniseed flavour of fennel would be overpowering, cooking the fennel until soft, as I do here, mellows the flavour and gives the dish a lovely sweetness too. It is great served with mashed or new potatoes, carrots and asparagus.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made up to a day in advance, but it is best to add the cream when the casserole has been reheated.

1 fennel bulb, trimmed, cored and thinly sliced
400ml (12fl oz) chicken stock
2 tablespoons olive oil
a knob of butter
6 small skinless, boneless chicken breasts
2 garlic cloves, crushed
25g (1oz) plain flour
200ml (7fl oz) white wine
juice of 1 small lemon
1 tablespoon chopped thyme leaves
200ml (7fl oz) full-fat crème fraîche
salt and freshly ground black pepper
a small handful of parsley, to garnish (optional)

1 Place the fennel in a pan with half the stock, bring to the boil, then cover with a lid and simmer for 10 minutes until tender.

2 Heat the oil and butter in a large frying pan and when hot, fry the chicken for 3–4 minutes on each side until golden brown. You may need to do this in batches. Remove from the pan and set aside.

3 Add the garlic to the frying pan and fry for 30 seconds, then add the remaining stock. Bring to the boil.

4 Mix the flour with the white wine to make a paste. Add the paste to the boiling stock and whisk briskly to thicken. Return the chicken to the pan with the lemon juice, fennel and its liquid and the thyme leaves. Bring up to the boil and cover with a lid. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for about 15 minutes or until the chicken is tender. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

5 Stir the crème fraîche into the pan and serve sprinkled with plenty of parsley, if you wish.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

I am always amazed at how I learn something new every day. I like my fennel to be really soft, so when testing this recipe we boiled it in wine first, and to our surprise the wine made the fennel very tough and stringy – so always cook it in stock or water!

DUCK BREASTS WITH *Mango* CREAM SAUCE

You might not think of serving duck in a rich sauce, but by removing the skin the meat itself is less rich. This sauce is so quick to make and complements the duck beautifully. Its intriguing flavour will have everyone guessing what it is made from. Just serve the duck with mashed potatoes and a green vegetable, and be prepared to share the recipe with your guests!

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The onions and duck can be prepared and chilled for a few hours before assembling and cooking the dish.

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
6 small duck breasts, skin removed (see [Mary's Wise Words](#))
3 tablespoons mango chutney
3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
300ml (½ pint) pouring double cream
1 teaspoon paprika
salt and freshly ground black pepper
a little chopped parsley, to garnish

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large frying pan and fry the onion over a low heat until soft and transparent.

3 Spoon the onion into a shallow baking dish (something that will hold all the duck breasts comfortably with a little space between them).

4 Add the remaining oil to the frying pan and when hot, add the duck breasts and fry for 2 minutes on each side until golden brown. Place the duck on top of the onion and season well.

5 Mix together the mango chutney, Worcestershire sauce and cream, then season and pour over the duck.

6 Place in the oven and cook for 10 minutes. Stir well, then sprinkle with paprika and cook for a further 15 minutes, until the duck is tender but still slightly pink in the centre. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with the chopped parsley.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

To remove the duck skin, pull the skin away from the meat – most of it comes away easily but if necessary slide a knife between the skin and meat to loosen the sinews.

Pistachio BASIL PESTO WITH *Fettuccine*

This pasta dish is rich, creamy and a bit more unusual than the usual basil pesto. I have a great trick for keeping your homemade pesto bright green: just blanch the basil as below, it makes the pesto looks stunning when brought to the table.

SERVES 4

PREPARE AHEAD

The pesto can be made 1–2 days in advance and kept in the fridge.

1 × 80g pack basil leaves
½ teaspoon caster sugar
100g (4oz) shelled pistachio nuts
100g (4oz) Parmesan cheese, grated, plus extra to serve
2 garlic cloves, sliced in half
150ml (¼ pint) olive oil
350g (12oz) fettuccine pasta
100ml (4fl oz) pouring double cream
salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1 Blanch 50g (2oz) of the basil leaves in boiling water for 1 minute. Drain in a sieve, then run cold water over the leaves and drain well.
- 2 Put the blanched basil, sugar, nuts, Parmesan and garlic into a food processor. Whizz until roughly chopped. Pour in the oil and 50ml (2 fl oz) of cold water. Whizz until smooth then season to taste. Chop the remaining 30g (1oz) of basil.
- 3 Cook the pasta in boiling salted water according to the packet instructions, reserving 100ml (4fl oz) of the cooking water before draining.
- 4 Put the puréed basil mixture into the saucepan along with the cream and bring up to the boil. Add the pasta, chopped basil and reserved pasta water, toss together and season. Serve at once with extra grated Parmesan.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Use penne pasta if preferred. If you wish, add 100g (4oz) peeled prawns along with the cream.

If time is short, you can always use a carton of fresh pesto, which is available in the best supermarkets.



Pistachio Basil Pesto with Fettuccine



*"Just blanch the basil, and your pesto will
keep its stunning bright green colour"*



COBB SALAD WITH *Ranch-style* DRESSING

This American salad of tomatoes, avocado, eggs, chicken, bacon and blue cheese is arranged in rows with shredded lettuce and drizzled with a rich, creamy Ranch-style dressing. It was created by a Mr Cobb for his restaurant in Los Angeles in 1926 and has become an American classic. Traditionally the dressing is made with garlic powder but I prefer to use fresh garlic instead.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

You can lay out all the ingredients except the avocado on the platter and chill until ready to serve.

3 eggs
6 rashers smoked streaky bacon
1 iceberg lettuce, shredded
2 cooked skinless chicken breasts, cut into cubes
6 tomatoes, deseeded and chopped
175g (6oz) creamy blue cheese, cubed
2 avocados, cubed

FOR THE DRESSING

100ml (4fl oz) mayonnaise
100ml (4fl oz) buttermilk
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 teaspoon chopped thyme
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Cook the eggs in boiling water for 8 minutes. Drain, immerse in cold water and allow to cool, then remove the shells.

2 Heat a non-stick frying pan, then dry-fry the bacon until crispy. Break into pieces.

3 Arrange the lettuce on a platter with the eggs, chicken, bacon, tomatoes, cheese and avocado arranged in rows on top.

4 To make the dressing, place all the ingredients in a food processor or blender and whizz until the herbs are very finely chopped. Season well and drizzle over the salad just before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you want to prepare the avocado in advance, toss it in lemon juice to prevent discolouration. You could use chives and dill instead of thyme, and add olives to the salad too, if you like.



Cobb Salad with *Ranch-style* Dressing

A Classic Roast

A CLASSIC ROAST

This chapter is all about the classic definition of a ‘roast’ – a joint of meat that is roasted in the oven and most often served up as Sunday lunch. But in an age when many of us are trying to reduce the quantity of meat we consume, I wanted to include a different style of Sunday lunch too, and I thought a luxurious fish pie would fit the bill ([here](#)). Like a roast, it’s easily prepared ahead of time, then popped in the oven for you to forget about, so you can enjoy time with your guests.

Roasts needn’t be simply about the meat. I’ve included different ways of preparing each type of joint so that you can pack in lots of additional flavour. A lamb rack is served with a delicious herb and mustardy breadcrumb crust ([here](#)); gammon is covered in a sticky but not too sweet maple-syrup glaze and is served with a spicy homemade chutney ([here](#)); while chicken gets a traybake treatment and is paired with lots of wonderful Mediterranean flavours, such as olives and preserved lemons ([here](#)).

And of course, roast lunch wouldn’t be complete without Roast Potatoes ([here](#)), Yorkshire Puddings ([here](#)) and a generous selection of vegetables to dive into ([here](#)). I’ve my top tips for achieving that crisp golden crust and soft, fluffy interior to your potatoes as well as perfectly-risen Yorkshire puds.

Finally, my Sunday lunch has to end with a homemade pudding, and I’d urge you turn to the Cold Desserts and Hot Puddings chapters ([here](#) and [here](#)) to choose a sweet finish to yours.



Recipe List

[Crusted Rack of Lamb with Classic Gravy](#)

[Slow-roast Shoulder of Lamb with Rosemary and Paprika Rub and Fresh Mint Sauce](#)

[The Ultimate Roast Potatoes](#)

[Vegetable Platter](#)

[Yorkshire Pudding](#)

[Honey-roasted Pork Fillet](#)

[Roast Fillet of Beef with Roasted Garlic and Mustard Cream](#)

[Maple-glazed Gammon with Apricot and Ginger Chutney](#)

[Three Fish Pie with Leeks and White Wine](#)

[Mediterranean All-in-One Chicken](#)

Crusted RACK OF LAMB WITH *Classic* GRAVY

Cutting through the lamb before putting on the crust makes the rack very easy to carve and keeps the crust in place.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The lamb can be coated in the crumb mixture one day in advance and kept chilled in the fridge.

2 racks of lamb (6–8 cutlets per rack), French trimmed (see [Mary's Wise Words](#))
50g (2oz) white bread, crusts removed
3 tablespoons chopped chives
3 tablespoons chopped parsley
a little Dijon mustard
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE GRAVY

40g (1½oz) plain flour
450ml (¾ pint) hot chicken or lamb stock
a few drops of Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon redcurrant jelly
gravy browning (optional)

- 1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.
- 2 Remove the skin from the lamb and trim away any surplus fat. Make cuts about 2cm deep between each bone.
- 3 Heat a large frying pan until hot. Brown the lamb on both sides until golden, then leave to cool while making the crust.
- 4 Put the bread into a food processor and whizz until you have fine crumbs. Add the chopped herbs and whizz again. Season.
- 5 Spread the fat side of the lamb with a little Dijon mustard then pat on the crumb mixture. Arrange in a small roasting tin, crust-side up, and roast in the oven for 30 minutes, which will keep the lamb pink in the middle.

Transfer to a hot plate, cover with foil and rest for 10 minutes in a warm place.

6 Meanwhile, make the gravy. Add the flour to the roasting tin and whisk into the fat. Put the tin on the hob over a medium heat and whisk in the hot stock, Worcestershire sauce, redcurrant jelly and gravy browning, if liked. Stir until thickened then strain into a warm gravy boat or jug. Carve the lamb and serve with the gravy.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

A 'French-trimmed' rack means that all the rib bones have been scraped of meat and fat, leaving them exposed and very clean, with just the lamb fillet on the bone – this makes the rack easy to slice into cutlets.

I like rack of lamb served pink, sweet and succulent. If you prefer it well done, add 15 minutes to the cooking time.



Crusted Rack of Lamb with Classic Gravy

Slow-roast SHOULDER OF LAMB WITH *Rosemary AND Paprika* RUB AND *Fresh Mint* SAUCE

Shoulder of lamb is quite fatty, but that's what makes the meat sweet and succulent, and when cooked for a long time at a low temperature, it becomes so tender it just falls off the bone. The rosemary and paprika rub gives the meat a lovely herbal, fragrant flavour.

SERVES 6–8

PREPARE AHEAD

The mint sauce can be made up to 1 day ahead.

2.2kg (5lb) whole shoulder of lamb, with bone
2 tablespoons finely chopped rosemary
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon mild paprika
2 onions, sliced
1.2 litres (2 pints) beef or chicken stock
2 tablespoons plain flour
a pinch of sugar
gravy browning (optional)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE FRESH MINT SAUCE

a small bunch of mint, leaves only, finely chopped
2 tablespoons clear honey or golden syrup
2 tablespoons white wine or cider vinegar

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Put the lamb on a board. Mix the rosemary, oil and paprika together and season well. Rub over the lamb on both sides.

3 Put the onions and stock into a small roasting tin, put a rack on top then place the lamb on it. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes until browned then reduce the temperature to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3. Cover with foil and

continue to roast for 3–4 hours, basting from time to time until completely tender and the meat is falling off the bone.

4 Meanwhile, prepare the mint sauce. Mix the finely chopped mint with the honey and the vinegar.

5 Remove the foil and place the lamb on a plate to rest while you make the gravy. Pour the pan juices and softened onion into a jug. Skim off the fat into a bowl. Heat 2 tablespoons of the fat in a saucepan. Add the flour and stir until smooth. Pour the stock and onions through a sieve into the saucepan, pressing the onions with the back of a spoon to get as much of their liquid into the gravy as possible. Add about 300ml (½ pint) of boiling water to the gravy and whisk until thickened and smooth. Add a pinch of sugar, seasoning to taste and a little gravy browning, if too pale. Carve the lamb and serve with the gravy and mint sauce.



THE ULTIMATE *Roast* POTATOES

Golden, crisp roast potatoes will always win you lots of compliments so here are my top tips for making them as perfect as possible.

PREPARE AHEAD

You can peel the potatoes and leave covered in cold water for a couple of hours before cooking. You can also roast the potatoes until pale golden and then cool them and reheat in a very hot oven the next day.

FREEZE

Roast the potatoes in hot fat for just 10 minutes, then cool completely and freeze in plastic bags. Roast from frozen in very hot oil for about 1 hour.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT POTATO

Always use main crop, floury potatoes such as King Edwards, Desiree or Maris Piper, and check on the label that it says ‘good for roasting’. Avoid waxy potatoes such as Charlotte or Anya.

PAR-BOIL

Place the potatoes in cold water with plenty of salt, then bring up to the boil and once boiling, cook for 5 minutes or until the potatoes are beginning to soften around the edges. Drain the potatoes, then cover the pan with a lid and let the potatoes steam for a few minutes to dry.

A CRISP COATING

It is really important to get the fat smoking hot before adding the potatoes, then turn them in the oil to coat and roast at a high temperature. I like to make sure the edges of the potato are fluffy (toss them in the saucepan with the lid on to roughen them up slightly). For extra crunch sprinkle the potatoes with a little semolina before roasting.

WHICH OIL OR FAT TO USE

Personally I like the combination of vegetable oil, which has a high flame point so can get to very high temperatures without burning, and goose fat, which gives a really good flavour. You can use just vegetable oil if you

prefer, or vegetable oil with a little butter, or even all goose fat, but the most important tip is to get the fat piping hot in the oven before adding the potatoes, so that the starch will start to caramelise as soon as it hits the hot fat.

HOW MANY TO SERVE

Depending on appetites, allow 2–6 chunks of potato per person, but don't overcrowd the tin when roasting them. Depending on the size of potato, I usually cut them into quarters.

OVEN TEMPERATURE

Roast potatoes need to be cooked at a high temperature (220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7) and turned once or twice until golden all over. If you cook the potatoes at a lower temperature they are more likely to absorb the oil and become soggy. If you need to hurry up the browning, just turn the oven up to its highest setting.

Roast POTATOES

SERVES 6

1–1.5kg (2.2–3lb) main crop potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

3 tablespoons goose fat

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Put the potatoes into a pan of cold salted water. Bring up to the boil and boil for about 5 minutes, until starting to soften around the edges. Drain really well then put back into the saucepan and shake to roughen up the edges.

3 Put a roasting tin or tray in the oven to heat. Once hot, add the fats and heat for 5 minutes in the oven. Carefully add the potatoes and turn in the fat until coated.

4 Roast for about 40–45 minutes, turning over halfway through the cooking time, until golden brown and crisp.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

I find it very helpful to prepare and freeze partially roasted potatoes (see [here](#)), particularly at Christmas time.

Vegetable PLATTER

I love to serve a lot of interesting vegetables at a dinner party, but don't want to be cooking them at the last minute. So I always get a platter cooked and ready to reheat at the last minute, just as they do in restaurants.

SERVES 10

750g (1¾lb) peeled sweet potatoes, cut into 2cm (1in) cubes
350g (12oz) baby carrots, scrubbed and cut in half lengthways with green tops
50g (2oz) butter, melted, plus extra for greasing the dish
450g (1lb) red cabbage, finely shredded
4 tablespoons light muscovado sugar
4 tablespoons white wine vinegar
350g (12oz) frozen petit pois

1 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add the sweet potato cubes, bring back to the boil and cook for 2 minutes. Add the carrots to the pan with the potato and cook both vegetables together for a further 6 minutes or until just tender when pierced with a knife. Drain then refresh with cold water to stop the cooking process. Return to the pan and toss with half the melted butter so that it coats the hot vegetables.

2 Heat the remaining melted butter in a large saucepan, add the cabbage, sugar and vinegar. Stir over a low heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes until tender. Season to taste then leave to cool.

3 Cook the petit pois in a pan of boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain, cover with cold water and drain again.

4 Butter a large, flat ovenproof dish. Arrange the vegetables in four rows (sweet potatoes and carrots at the ends) and season with salt and pepper. Cover with a piece of buttered foil and chill until ready to reheat.

5 To reheat, preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Cook, covered in foil, for 25 minutes, checking them after 20 minutes, until all the vegetables are steaming hot.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Whatever vegetables you wish to cook, make sure they still have a little bite before you cool then reheat them. You could also use sugarsnap peas or mangetout, baby carrots, mixed broad beans and peas, and tiny boiled new potatoes.

Don't over-heat the vegetables, otherwise they will lose their colour, and don't keep them hot in the oven once reheated for the same reason.



Vegetable Platter



MARY'S MENU FOR
A SUNDAY ROAST

MAIN COURSE

*Slow-roast Shoulder of Lamb
with Rosemary and Paprika Rub*

SIDE DISHES

Fennel and Potato Gratin

Roast Potatoes

Yorkshire Puddings

DESSERT

Plum and Marzipan Tarte Tatin

Yorkshire PUDDING

Who doesn't love a big pillowy Yorkshire pud? Yet why is it that many cooks are scared of making their own? If you follow this recipe I can guarantee you success; I have been using it at my Sunday lunches for years.

MAKES 12 PUDDINGS

PREPARE AHEAD

The puddings can be made ahead and reheated in a hot oven for about 8 minutes. The batter can be made up to 2 hours ahead and left to stand in the fridge.

FREEZE

The cooked puddings can be frozen and cooked from frozen in a preheated oven for about 10 minutes.

100g (4oz) plain flour

¼ teaspoon salt

3 eggs, beaten

225ml (8fl oz) milk

sunflower oil

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Grease a 12-hole deep muffin or bun tin, or two 4-hole Yorkshire pudding tins, or one 23 × 33cm (9 × 13in) roasting tin.

2 Measure the flour and salt into a bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the eggs and a little milk. Whisk until smooth, gradually adding the remaining milk. This can be done with a wooden spoon, but it is easier with a hand-held electric whisk. Pour the mixture into a jug.

3 Measure a dessertspoon of oil into each hole of the 12-hole tray, a tablespoon into each hole of the 4-hole tin, or 3 tablespoons into the roasting tin. Transfer to the preheated oven for 5 minutes, until the oil is piping hot.

4 Carefully remove the heated tin from the oven and pour the batter equally between the holes or into the tin. Quickly return it to the oven and cook for

20–25 minutes (35 minutes for the roasting tin) or until golden brown and well risen. Serve immediately.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is very important to get the oil piping hot, as soon as the batter is poured in it will set and start to cook, giving you crisp, well-risen puds.

Honey-roasted PORK FILLET

In this quick midweek supper or Sunday roast, the accompanying apples and parsnips are roasted in the tin with the pork. This makes it an effortless one-pot meal.

SERVES 6

2 onions
2 parsnips
900g (2lb) new potatoes
2 crisp eating apples
6 sage leaves, chopped
2 pork fillets, each about 450g (1lb)
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons wholegrain mustard
3 tablespoons clear honey
2 garlic cloves, crushed
300ml (½ pint) beef or chicken stock
6 tablespoons double cream or crème fraîche

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Peel the onions and cut each one into eight wedges, keeping the root end on to hold each wedge intact. Peel the parsnips and cut each one into eight wedges too.

3 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the potatoes and onions for 5 minutes, adding the parsnips for the last minute, then drain. Place the vegetables in a large roasting tin. Cut the apples into 8 wedges each, remove the core and add to the tin along with the sage leaves. Place the pork fillets in the centre of the tin.

4 Mix the oil, mustard, honey and garlic and pour over the meat and all the vegetables.

5 Roast in the oven for about 25–30 minutes until everything is golden brown and tender. Remove from the oven and place the roasting tin on the hob. Lift out the pork and vegetables and set aside to rest, covered with foil.

Add the stock to the tin and bring to the boil, then stir in the cream and check the seasoning. Serve the pork sliced, with the roasted vegetables and cream sauce.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Make sure the pieces of apple, parsnip and onion are all of similar thickness so that they cook evenly. Don't overcook the pork or it will be dry. This is one recipe that is not suitable for preparing ahead or freezing.

ROAST FILLET OF BEEF WITH *Roasted* GARLIC AND *Mustard* CREAM

A tender cut of beef is a little bit of luxury, so ideally you want to complement that by serving it with something equally special that isn't going to overpower or detract from the flavour of the meat itself. In my family, this simple cream sauce does the trick. If you're splashing out for a gathering of friends, this is a great main course to choose as it can be cooked ahead and is effortless to serve.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

The sauce can be prepared up to 2 days in advance. You can brown the meat ahead of time and then roast it on the day – just add 5 minutes to the cooking time. To serve the beef cold, carve an hour or two before serving, then reassemble as a whole joint and wrap tightly in clingfilm. Only unwrap just before serving as the beef will lose its lovely pink colour if it is left exposed to the air for too long.

1kg (2lb 2oz) middle cut of thick fillet of beef (see [Mary's Wise Words](#))

about 2 tablespoons olive oil

2 whole garlic bulbs

150ml (¼ pint) mayonnaise

150ml (¼ pint) full-fat crème fraîche

½ teaspoon caster sugar

2 tablespoons wholegrain mustard

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Rub the fillet of beef with oil and salt and pepper.

2 Heat a large frying pan until very hot, then fry the fillet on all sides until sealed and browned. Transfer the fillet to the centre of a roasting tin, arrange the whole garlic bulbs around it and drizzle with a little oil.

3 Roast in the oven for 23 minutes for medium rare (or for only 20 minutes if it is a long, thin piece).

4 When the beef has cooked, remove from the oven, cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rest for 15 minutes. If serving the beef cold, leave to cool then wrap in foil and place in the fridge to cool completely.

5 While the beef is resting, make the sauce. Cut the garlic bulbs in half and squeeze the garlic from each single clove into a bowl. Add the mayonnaise, crème fraîche and sugar and purée in a blender or food processor until smooth, then stir in the mustard. Chill until ready to serve alongside the beef.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is important to ask for a piece of fillet cut from the middle, as you want the beef to be of even thickness throughout its length so that it cooks evenly.



Roast Fillet of Beef with *Roasted* Garlic and *Mustard* Cream

Maple-glazed GAMMON WITH APRICOT AND GINGER CHUTNEY

So many people cook a gammon at Christmas time, but I think it also makes a lovely summer Sunday lunch served hot or cold, especially when paired with this spicy apricot chutney.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

The gammon can be cooked and glazed and will keep in the fridge for 2–3 days. The chutney will keep in the fridge for 3–5 days.

1 × 1.8–2kg (4–4lb 4oz) gammon joint, boned
2 bay leaves
1 onion, peeled
6 peppercorns
3 tablespoons maple syrup
1 teaspoon English mustard powder
3 tablespoons light muscovado sugar

FOR THE CHUTNEY

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 onions, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
400g (14oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots, diced
2 crisp eating apples, peeled and diced
100g (4oz) light muscovado sugar
200ml (7fl oz) cider vinegar
5 tablespoons grated fresh root ginger
2 red chillies, finely chopped
zest and juice of 2 oranges
8 tablespoons maple syrup

1 You will need a 2.25 litre (4 pint) ovenproof dish. Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3. Place the gammon in a deep ovenproof saucepan that just fits it. Add the bay leaves, onion and peppercorns. Add enough water to cover the gammon then bring to the boil. Transfer to the oven and

cook for about 2 hours or until tender and remove from the oven. Increase the oven setting to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 When the ham is cooked remove it from the pan, and using a sharp knife cut off the skin, leaving a thin layer of fat underneath. Score the fat into diamonds then place a little foil over each end of the gammon so that only the fat is showing – this will prevent the meat drying out. Place the gammon in a small roasting tin.

3 Mix together the maple syrup, mustard powder and sugar, then pour over the fat. Bake for about 20–25 minutes until golden, basting halfway through the cooking time.

4 While the gammon is cooking you can make the chutney. Heat the oil in a medium pan and fry the onion over a low heat until really tender and transparent but not browned. Add all the remaining ingredients, bring to the boil, then simmer for about 10 minutes or until the apricots have softened and everything is soft and pulpy. Serve hot or cold. If serving cold, spoon the chutney into sterilised jars, label and seal the tops.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

I prefer to use unsmoked gammon as it is less salty, but do use a smoked joint if you prefer. Add as little or as much chilli as you like.



Maple-glazed Gammon with Apricot and Ginger Chutney



*"Sunday lunch wouldn't be complete without
roast potatoes and a generous selection of
vegetables to dive into"*



Three Fish PIE WITH Leeks AND WHITE WINE

The leeks and wine make this fish pie taste a little more sophisticated than traditional versions so you could confidently serve it at a casual supper party. If cooking for children you can replace the white wine quantity with more milk.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The pie can be assembled and chilled in the fridge for up to 12 hours before cooking.

FREEZE

Make the pie but omit the eggs as they become tough and rubbery when frozen. You can freeze the cooked pie for up to 1 month. Reheat in the oven at 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6 for about 45 minutes.

FOR THE TOPPING

1kg (2lb 2oz) potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks
a knob of butter
a little milk
50g (2oz) Gruyère cheese, grated
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE FILLING

75g (3oz) butter
2 leeks, sliced
75g (3oz) plain flour
150ml (¼ pint) white wine
600ml (1 pint) milk
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
750g (1¾lb) mixture of salmon, smoked haddock and fresh haddock fillet, skinned and cut into cubes
6 eggs, hard-boiled, peeled and quartered

1 You will need a 2.25 litre (4 pint) ovenproof dish. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Put the potatoes into a saucepan of cold salted water. Bring up to the boil and simmer until completely tender, about 20 minutes. Drain well then mash with the butter and milk. Add pepper and check the seasoning.

3 To make the fish filling, melt the butter in a saucepan, add the leeks and stir over the heat, cover with a lid and simmer gently for 10 minutes until soft.

4 Measure the flour into a small bowl. Add the wine and whisk together until smooth. Add the milk to the leeks, bring to the boil then add the wine mixture. Stir briskly until thickened. Season and add the parsley and fish. Stir over the heat for 2 minutes then spoon into the dish. Scatter over the eggs. Allow to cool until firm.

5 Spoon the mashed potatoes over the fish mixture and mark with a fork. Sprinkle with the cheese. Bake for 35–40 minutes until lightly golden on top and bubbling around the edges.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You can of course use just haddock, cod or salmon, or add a few prawns and some mussels too, if you prefer. You could also make the sauce with cider instead of wine. I sometimes add some spinach or peas to the mixture too.



Three Fish Pie with Leeks and White Wine

Mediterranean ALL-IN-ONE CHICKEN

This is a great way to feed the family as the chicken and veg are all cooked in one very large tray in the oven. It takes only minutes to put everything together then it sits in the oven for under an hour with no fussy finishing off to do and only one pan to wash up. The recipe allows one chicken thigh and one drumstick per person, but use less if you are not such big eaters.

I love stuffed olives, but use plain green or black ones if you prefer. The preserved lemons really give a lovely citrus tang to the dish and are well worth using but if you can't find them use one sliced lemon instead.

SERVES 6

1kg (2lb 2oz) main crop potatoes, peeled and cut into 5cm (2in) chunks
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, cut into wedges
2 garlic cloves, crushed
6 rashers of smoked streaky bacon, snipped into 1cm (½ in) pieces
6 chicken thighs
6 chicken drumsticks
5 preserved lemons, cut into quarters
1½ teaspoons paprika
3 courgettes, thickly sliced
1 × 200g can anchovy-stuffed green olives, drained
salt and freshly ground black pepper

- 1** Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.
- 2** Place the potatoes in a large roasting tin with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Toss well to coat them. Add the onion, garlic, bacon and chicken pieces and toss together.
- 3** Add the lemons to the roasting tin. Season everything well and sprinkle with the paprika. Roast for 40 minutes.
- 4** In a bowl toss the courgettes in the remaining tablespoon of oil and season with salt and pepper, then poke them in among the chicken and scatter the

olives over the top. Return to the oven for a further 20 minutes, until the chicken and vegetables are golden brown and tender.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Don't overcrowd the roasting tin, you need everything to be in a single layer or it will not cook evenly – divide between 2 tins if necessary.

Preserved lemons can usually be bought in jars in the speciality section of the supermarket. Traditionally from Morocco, the lemons are preserved in salt water and are beautifully soft and citrusy. Use them to flavour tagines and chicken or pork dishes. They will keep in the jar in the fridge for 1 month, or you can freeze them in a freezer-proof container for up to 3 months.



Mediterranean All-in-One Chicken

*Vegetables,
Salads
and Sides*

VEGETABLES, SALADS AND SIDES

I fear that vegetables are often the poor relation of the dinner party. So often we concentrate on the main course and pud and the vegetables are an afterthought. But I love salads, both as part of a main course and to serve on their own as a light lunch. The Broad Bean and Little Gem Salad ([here](#)) is delicious and is a bit like a Caesar salad, perfect for lunchtime in the sun.

I wanted to include more substantial salads based on rice and couscous, too, so my Fiery Red Rice and Carrot Salad ([here](#)) is made with nutty, sweet Camargue rice, which is something that I now keep in my store cupboard as it makes such a colourful addition to a buffet table.

Couscous is also a great store cupboard ingredient as it takes only minutes to soak and turn into a tasty meal with lots of vegetables. Just make sure you season it well. I am always surprised at how much flavouring coucous soaks up, so the more seasoning you add, the tastier it will be.



Recipe List

[Broad Bean and Little Gem Salad](#)

[Mango, Mint and Prawn Salad](#)

[Foolproof Green Salad with Dill Dressing](#)

[Roasted Fennel, Onion and Potato with Parmesan Topping](#)

[Fiery Red Rice and Carrot Salad](#)

[Jewelled Couscous Salad](#)

[Goat's Cheese, Pomegranate and Onion Salad with Balsamic Dressing](#)

[Crunchy Broccoli Salad](#)

[Lime Coleslaw](#)

BROAD BEAN AND *Little Gem* SALAD

This is such a lovely, fresh-tasting salad, ideal for an al fresco meal. If you want to include meat in this dish, you could add six fried, crispy, crumbled bacon rashers.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

The dressing can be made up to 3 days in advance.

300g (10oz) frozen baby broad beans
6 Little Gem lettuces
100g (4oz) Parmesan cheese, or vegetarian hard cheese, cut into shavings with a potato peeler
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE CROUTONS

5 thick slices of white bread, crusts removed, cut into cubes
6 tablespoons olive oil

FOR THE MUSTARD DRESSING

3 tablespoons Dijon mustard
5 tablespoons white wine vinegar
8 tablespoons olive oil
5 tablespoons double or single cream
1 tablespoon caster sugar

1 First make the croutons. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Place the cubes of bread in a plastic bag, pour in the oil and season well. Pick up the bag to toss the cubes in the oil so that they are evenly coated. Spread the bread out in a single layer on a baking tray and cook in the oven until browned – about 5 minutes. Watch them all the time to prevent scorching, and shake them occasionally to make sure they brown evenly.

2 Cook the broad beans in boiling water for about 3–4 minutes until tender, then drain and refresh in cold water. Remove the beans from their skins and set aside.

3 Trim the very ends off of the lettuces but keep the root intact, then cut each lettuce into six wedges. Arrange on a serving platter, scatter over the beans, Parmesan and croutons and season with salt and pepper.

4 Measure all the dressing ingredients into a large bowl, whisk until smooth and season. Pour the dressing over the salad, then toss everything together.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If serving vegetarians look for Parmesan-style cheese made without animal rennet.

Do not salt the water when boiling the broad beans – salt will toughen them.



Broad Bean and *Little Gem* Salad

MANGO, MINT AND *Prawn* SALAD

This vibrant, brightly coloured salad is very refreshing and light, and will liven up a barbecue or summer buffet menu.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made up to 1 day in advance.

2 firm but ripe mangoes
3 carrots
300g (10oz) cooked, shelled prawns
2 tablespoons chopped mint
2 tablespoons chopped coriander
1 mild red chilli, deseeded and chopped
juice of 1 lime
1 tablespoon olive oil
freshly ground black pepper

1 Cut the mangoes in half lengthways, down either side of the large, flat central stone, and cut the mango flesh away from the stone. Score the flesh in a criss-cross pattern to make 3cm (1in) dice. Push the mango halves inside out and cut the flesh away from the skin. Place all the mango in a salad bowl.

2 Using a potato peeler, shave the carrots into long thin strips and add to the mango. Add the prawns, mint and coriander, chilli, lime juice and oil and toss together. Serve chilled, sprinkled with freshly ground black pepper.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You could also serve this salad with grilled chicken instead of prawns for lunch, if you prefer.



Mango, Mint and *Prawn* Salad

Foolproof GREEN SALAD WITH DILL DRESSING

I like to add some crunchy vegetables to my green salad to liven it up. And if you want to prepare this salad ahead so that the lettuce doesn't wilt, the trick is simple – just don't toss it with the dressing until ready to serve.

SERVES 10

8 spring onions, finely sliced
8 celery sticks, finely sliced
1 small fennel bulb, finely sliced
1 romaine lettuce
½ large cucumber, halved lengthways and thickly sliced
200g pack mixed salad leaves
100g pack rocket or watercress

FOR THE DILL DRESSING

9 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon caster sugar
a bunch of chopped dill
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 First, make the dill dressing. Whisk together the oil, white wine and balsamic vinegars, mustard, sugar and some salt and pepper in a bowl until evenly combined and thickened. Taste and season accordingly then add the dill.

2 Place the spring onions, celery and fennel in a large salad bowl. Add the dressing and mix well. Tear the romaine lettuce into manageable pieces. Place the cucumber and the romaine leaves in the bowl on top of the fennel. Season then top with the mixed leaves and rocket or watercress. Chill for up to 4 hours.

3 Just before serving toss everything together.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Don't toss the salad until ready to serve, as the dressing will soften the leaves. The dressing can be chilled in the fridge for up to a week in a screw top jar. Just give it a good shake before using and add the dill only just before serving. Use the highest quality olive oil for the best flavour.





*"Don't toss salad until ready to serve,
as the dressing will soften the leaves."*



ROASTED *Fennel*, ONION AND POTATO WITH *Parmesan* TOPPING

This simple side – a hearty combination of potatoes and vegetables – is all cooked in one dish so it's perfect for a dinner party or Sunday lunch. In fact, it is so tasty you could eat it as a supper on its own, served with a green vegetable or lightly dressed salad.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

You can assemble the dish up to 12 hours ahead and chill in the fridge.

3 large fennel bulbs
600g (1lb 6oz) large potatoes, peeled
3 onions, each cut into 6 wedges
50g (2oz) butter, plus extra for greasing
2 garlic cloves, crushed
50g (2oz) *Parmesan* cheese, grated

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Butter a shallow 2.5-litre (4-pint) ovenproof dish, about 23 × 30cm (9 × 12in).

2 Trim the tops from the fennel and cut each bulb in half through the root, then cut each in half lengthways into three wedges. Cut the potatoes into wedges the same size as the fennel wedges.

3 Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, then cook the fennel and onion for about 5 minutes. Add the potatoes and boil for a further 5 minutes, until all the vegetables are just tender. Drain well.

4 Put the butter and the garlic in the empty vegetable pan and set over a low heat until just melted. Add the vegetables to the butter, toss until coated, then tip into the prepared dish. Sprinkle with the *Parmesan*. Bake for 30–40 minutes, until piping hot.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is essential to pre-cook the potatoes and fennel, otherwise they absorb too much butter and you would have to use more, giving an over-rich result; the fennel would also be much tougher.



Roasted *Fennel*, Onion and Potato with *Parmesan* Topping

Fiery RED RICE AND Carrot SALAD

This is a great accompaniment to chargrilled meats, chicken or fish so it's perfect for a summer barbecue. Camargue rice from France is a short-grained rice with a brownish-red colour, nutty flavour and slightly chewy texture. It takes about 30 minutes to simmer but should still retain a little 'bite' when cooked.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

The dish can be made up to 2 days ahead and kept in the fridge.

450g (1lb) Camargue red rice
6 carrots, coarsely grated
8 spring onions, thinly sliced
a small bunch of coriander leaves
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE DRESSING

finely grated zest and juice of 4 limes
4 teaspoons clear honey
1–2 red chillies, finely chopped
4 tablespoons light olive oil
2 tablespoons cider vinegar

1 Measure the rice in a jug then place in a pan with double the volume of boiling water – about 600ml (1 pint) – then add a teaspoon of salt. Bring back to the boil, then cover and reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook for 20–30 minutes, until the grains are tender. Drain if necessary and leave to cool.

2 Tip the carrots, spring onions and half the coriander into a mixing bowl.

3 Mix together all the dressing ingredients.

4 Add the rice to the bowl of vegetables then toss with the salad dressing. Taste and season then serve scattered with the remaining coriander leaves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Add as much or as little red chilli as you like. One red chilli is enough for most tastes, but you can add a second if you like a bit of heat. Don't waste the other half of the chilli, it can be frozen in a little plastic bag and is easy to chop from frozen.

Carmargue red rice can be found in all large supermarkets.



Jewelled COUSCOUS SALAD

This versatile salad is delicious on its own, or you can serve it with grilled chicken or lamb or with flakes of smoked trout or mackerel. Vary it by adding flaked almonds instead of seeds, or dried cranberries instead of pomegranates. Fresh mint or coriander leaves are also very tasty – just use whatever you have.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The salad can be made, without the broccoli, up to 3 days ahead and kept in the fridge. Add the broccoli no more than 1 hour before serving, otherwise it will lose its colour when the dressing is added.

250g (9oz) couscous
2 lemons
150g (5oz) Tenderstem broccoli
100g (4oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots
seeds of 1 pomegranate
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
6 drops of Tabasco sauce
2 tablespoons light olive oil
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place the couscous in a bowl. Grate the zest of one of the lemons and add it to the couscous along with the juice of both lemons. Add 350ml (12fl oz) boiling water and plenty of seasoning. Leave to soak until all the water has been absorbed.

2 Cut the broccoli into 5cm (2in) lengths and cook in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain and plunge into cold water to stop it cooking. Drain well and add to the couscous.

3 Snip the apricots into very small pieces using kitchen scissors, then add to the couscous along with the pomegranate seeds and parsley. Add the Tabasco and olive oil and check the seasoning.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Tabasco sauce is made from hot chillies so use it sparingly. If you don't have any, use a little chopped red chilli or even a little sweet chilli sauce. A little harissa paste is also delicious stirred through.



Jewelled Couscous Salad

Goat's Cheese, POMEGRANATE AND ONION SALAD WITH *Balsamic Dressing*

A lovely light salad bursting with colour and contrasting textures and flavours. The sweetness of the caramelised onions is balanced by the juicy sweet-and-sourness of pomegranates and the tangy, salty flavour of the goat's cheese.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Cook the onion up to 2 days in advance and keep in the fridge.

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 onions, sliced
1 tablespoon light muscovado sugar
100g (4oz) lamb's lettuce
150g (5oz) firm goat's cheese, broken into pieces
100g (4oz) pomegranate seeds (roughly 1 pomegranate)
salt and freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE DRESSING

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
4 tablespoons olive oil
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon soy sauce

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan. Add the onions and fry for 2 minutes. Cover with a lid and simmer gently for 5 minutes until soft. Add the sugar and stir until caramelised. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

2 Mix all of the dressing ingredients together in a jug.

3 Arrange the lamb's lettuce on six small plates. Scatter over the goat's cheese, pomegranate seeds and onions. Season the salad portions then drizzle over the dressing.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Make sure you use a firm goat's cheese that will crumble easily, rather than a soft, creamy one.

To remove the seeds from a pomegranate, cut it in half. Place each half cut-side down on a worktop and bash the skin with a rolling pin to release the seeds, then turn the right way up and break the skin, and the seeds will fall out easily.

CRUNCHY *Broccoli* SALAD

My cousin Robin gave me this simple recipe, and I like to serve it as part of a buffet. The raw, crunchy broccoli makes a lovely textural contrast when served with a mixed plate of cold meat and salads.

SERVES 6

450g (1lb) broccoli (about 2 heads), stalks discarded and cut into tiny florets

8 spring onions, finely chopped

2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

3 tablespoons caster sugar

200ml (7fl oz) mayonnaise

1 Place the broccoli florets in a non-metallic bowl with the remaining ingredients. Refrigerate overnight and serve chilled.

Lime COLESLAW

Coleslaw is always a popular addition to a summer table. This recipe is a variation of the classic as I have added lime juice and coriander for a change. It is delicious served on top of my Pork and Red Pepper Burgers ([here](#)) or with the Maple-Glazed Gammon ([here](#)) or Spinach, Gruyère and Ham Quiche ([here](#)).

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This can be made up to 2 days in advance and kept in the fridge.

1 small white cabbage, about 450g (1lb), finely shredded
200g (7oz) carrots, coarsely grated
a bunch of spring onions, finely sliced
grated zest and juice of 1 lime
200ml (7fl oz) mayonnaise
4 tablespoons chopped coriander leaves

1 Mix the cabbage and carrots with the remaining ingredients and chill until ready to serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Turn this into traditional coleslaw by mixing the only cabbage and carrots with the mayonnaise, or why not add a little curry paste and some raisins for another tasty variation?



Cold Desserts

COLD DESSERTS

While hot desserts provide the warming, comforting and often heartier end to the type of meal we generally crave in the winter, cold desserts really come into their own in the warmer months and by early April we're generally looking for lighter finishes, perhaps to make use of the fruit that is coming into season.

In summer, when the garden is groaning with raspberries, loganberries, blackcurrants and redcurrants, I make summer puddings to freeze and enjoy later in the year. If you ever visit a pick-your-own farm and buy too much fruit, remember that it freezes beautifully too, so put it into freezer-proof bags or containers and keep it for summer puddings or red fruit salads. Or why not showcase them in my Summer Glory Trifle Cake ([here](#)) and Rosé Wine Jellies ([here](#))?

And there's no reason why we shouldn't indulge in a bit of richness in the summer too. Cheesecakes are great favourites, and who doesn't love a slice of millionaire's shortbread? So I have combined the flavours of the two to make a wickedly good Millionaire's Cheesecake ([here](#)).

Meringues are a perfect partner for fruit and cream, so try the Meringue Tranche ([here](#)). It is perfect for a buffet and at almost 60cm (24in) long it looks spectacular laid down the centre of the table. Everyone will wonder how it fitted in the oven.

Finally, cold desserts also have a great advantage in that most can be prepared in advance and often frozen, too.



Recipe List

[Jaffa Panna Cotta with Sliced Oranges](#)

[Millionaire's Cheesecake](#)

[Brandy Snap Raspberry Tians](#)

[Irish Cream Ice Cream Roll](#)

[Raspberry and Lime Cream Pots](#)

[Rosé Wine Jellies with Summer Fruits](#)

[Summer Pudding Loaf](#)

[Chilled Fresh Fruit Salad](#)

[Elderflower Posset](#)

[Elderflower Cordial](#)

[Bramley Apple Sorbet](#)

[Meringue Tranche with Summer Fruits and Cream](#)

[Summer Glory Trifle Cake](#)

[Mango and Passion Fruit Trifle](#)

JAFFA *Panna Cotta* WITH SLICED ORANGES

This velvety, creamy chocolate dessert is almost nicer than chocolate mousse, which I find is often too rich or can be a worry if it contains raw egg white. And in this version, the chocolate is also beautifully complemented by some fresh orange slices. Best of all it is simple to make and is ideal for dinner parties as it will happily sit in the fridge for two days. If you don't want to make as many as ten, you can halve the mixture and it will serve six.

SERVES 10

PREPARE AHEAD

You can make this up to 2 days in advance and store it in the fridge. Not suitable for freezing.

1 litre (1¾ pints) pouring double cream

200g (7oz) dark chocolate (50 per cent cocoa solids), finely chopped

7 oranges

100g (4oz) caster sugar

4 leaves of platinum grade gelatine, or 8 leaves of regular gelatine (see [here](#))

a little vegetable oil, for greasing

- 1 Very lightly oil ten individual 150ml (¼-pint) pudding basins or ramekins.
- 2 Heat the double cream in a small pan until it comes to the boil, then remove from the heat, stir in the chocolate and keep stirring until the chocolate has completely melted.
- 3 Grate the zest of four of the oranges and add to the chocolate cream. Squeeze the juice from two and add eight tablespoons of the juice to the chocolate mixture along with the sugar.
- 4 Place the gelatine in a little cold water and leave to soak for 10 minutes. When softened, remove the gelatine from the water, shake off excess water and place in the warm chocolate mixture. Stir until dissolved.
- 5 Strain the mixture through a sieve then divide equally between the oiled dishes. Place in the fridge and allow the panna cottas to set overnight or for

at least 6 hours.

6 Meanwhile, prepare the orange segments. Using a serrated knife, cut off all the peel and white pith from the remaining oranges (including the ones that you have zested). Working over a bowl to catch the juices, cut between the membranes to remove the segments, then place the segments in the juice and squeeze any extra juice from the remaining membranes into the bowl. Chill in the fridge.

7 To turn out the panna cottas, fill a bowl with boiling water then dip the moulds into the water for just a second – no longer or the mixture will melt too much. Invert the moulds on to a plate to serve, with a few orange segments alongside.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you don't have little pudding basins, use ramekins or dariole moulds, or just set the mixture in pretty little glasses. It would also set in a loaf tin and would slice easily too. You could also serve these with a dish of shortbread rounds, see [here](#).

If you wish, use orange liqueur, brandy, chocolate hazelnut liqueur or Irish cream liqueur in place of 2 tablespoons of the orange juice.



Jaffa Panna Cotta with Sliced Oranges

Millionaire's CHEESECAKE

Oh my goodness, this is such an indulgent dessert. You should serve small portions as it is rich, but I guarantee everyone will come back for second helpings! It is rather gooey though, so is best removed from the tin at the last minute to avoid accidents.

SERVES 10–12

PREPARE AHEAD

Make and chill in the fridge for up to 2 days. You can make the shortbread base up to 1 week ahead.
Not suitable for freezing.

FOR THE SHORTBREAD BASE

butter, for greasing
100g (4oz) plain flour
50g (2oz) semolina
100g (4oz) butter
50g (2oz) caster sugar

FOR THE CARAMEL

25g (1oz) butter
50g (2oz) light muscovado sugar
1 × 397g can caramel condensed milk

FOR THE CHEESECAKE

200ml (7fl oz) pouring double cream
2½ leaves of platinum grade leaf gelatine (see note [here](#))
300g (10oz) full-fat cream cheese

FOR THE CHOCOLATE TOPPING

100ml (4fl oz) pouring double cream
100g (4oz) dark chocolate (at least 50 per cent cocoa solids), finely grated

1 Lightly butter a 20cm (8in) round springform cake tin and line the base with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3.

2 To make the base, mix the flour and semolina together in a bowl, add the butter and rub in with your fingertips until the mixture resembles

breadcrumbs (this can also be done in a food processor). Stir in the sugar then bring everything together to make a smooth dough. Press into the base of the cake tin and smooth with the back of a spoon. Bake for 35 minutes until pale golden brown. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin.

3 While the base is cooking, make the caramel. Melt the butter in a medium pan, add the sugar and stir over a low heat until dissolved. Add the canned caramel and bring to the boil. As soon as it is boiling, set the timer for 4 minutes and boil, stirring constantly, until the caramel has darkened and thickened slightly. Make sure you stir vigorously, particularly around the edge of the pan where it may catch. You will feel the caramel thicken slightly, and when removed from the heat and the bubbles have subsided you should be able to draw a path through the caramel and see the base of the pan easily. Leave the caramel to cool while the shortbread base finishes cooking. After 5–10 minutes you should be able to roll a tiny piece of caramel into a small, soft ball. If not, cook for 1 minute more. Weigh 100g (4oz) of the mixture into a bowl and set aside. Spread the remaining caramel over the cooled shortbread base when it comes out of the oven, while still in the tin. Leave to set for 30 minutes.

4 To make the cheesecake mixture, place the reserved caramel back into the pan that you cooked it in, and add 100ml (4fl oz) double cream. Place over a very low heat and stir until the caramel has dissolved.

5 Place the gelatine in 4 tablespoons of cold water and leave for 10 minutes to soften. Remove from the water, shake off any excess, and stir into the hot cream and caramel until dissolved.

6 Beat the remaining cream and cream cheese together until smooth, then stir in the cream and caramel mixture. Pour this over the caramel in the cake tin and leave for 2 hours until set.

7 To make the topping, warm the cream in a small pan until hot but not boiling. Add the chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Allow to cool a little so that it will not melt the cheesecake. Pour over the cheesecake and leave to set in the fridge for at least 2 hours, ideally for 6 hours or until everything is set and firm. Serve cut into thin slices.

A NOTE ON GELATINE

Leaf gelatine is now more available than powdered, and gives a lovely smooth set. It is easy to use: just soften it in cold water for about 10 minutes, then drain, add to warm liquids (fruit juice, wine, liqueurs, warmed cream or milk) and watch it dissolve. However the strength of the setting power of gelatine varies depending on the brand you buy. Platinum grade gelatine uses 5 leaves of gelatine to set 600ml (1 pint). Some other gelatines use 12 leaves to set 600ml (1 pint).

If using cream cheese or double cream in a mixture you will not need as much gelatine, so follow the instructions on the back of the packet. In this recipe I have used half the amount of gelatine needed for 1 pint (i.e. 2½ leaves of platinum gelatine or 6 sheets of regular gelatine).



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is important to cook the caramel until it thickens slightly so that it sets firm enough to cut. I find it best to set the timer and boil the mixture rapidly for 4–5 minutes, stirring all the time so that it does not burn on the base of the pan. You may find that the caramel will melt slightly where it meets the cheesecake, but this just makes it more delicious!



Millionaire's Cheesecake

BRANDY SNAP *Raspberry* TIANS

Tubular brandy snaps filled with cream are the classic way of serving the crunchy biscuits. This impressive-looking variation is simply a fun twist – small, flat brandy snap biscuits sandwiched together with cream and raspberries just before serving.

MAKES 6 STACKS

PREPARE AHEAD

The biscuits can be made up to a week in advance, wrapped in foil and kept in a cake tin until ready to serve. Assemble no more than 30 minutes before serving or the biscuits will soften.

25g (1oz) butter
25g (1oz) demerara sugar
25g (1oz) golden syrup
25g (1oz) plain flour
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon lemon juice

FOR THE FILLING

150ml (¼ pint) pouring double cream, whipped
150g (5oz) raspberries
a few mint leaves, to decorate

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3. Line two baking sheets with baking paper.

2 Measure the butter, sugar and syrup into a small pan and heat gently until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved and no longer feels grainy in the bottom of the pan. Leave the mixture to cool slightly then sift in the flour and ginger. Add the lemon juice and stir well to mix thoroughly. Place one level teaspoonful of mixture on a baking sheet in a neat circle. I find a little round measuring spoon helps to do this easily. Repeat, placing about 6 spoonfuls, well spaced apart on each sheet (you will need to bake them in batches).

3 Bake for about 8 minutes or until the mixture has spread out and is a dark golden colour. Ideally the biscuits will have spread to a circle about 5cm

(2in) in diameter.

4 Remove from the oven. If the biscuits are too large or misshapen, use a biscuit or scone cutter to cut them into shape while still warm. Leave the brandy snaps to cool for a few minutes until firm enough to remove, and place on a wire rack or board to cool. Repeat with the remaining mixture.

5 To serve, spread a brandy snap with a little cream, top with raspberries and stack another biscuit on top. Add a little spoonful of cream and a raspberry on top. Decorate with mint leaves.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If the brandy snap mixture becomes too firm to spoon on to the baking sheet, roll it into tiny balls about the size of a 5p piece, or warm the mixture slightly.



Brandy Snap *Raspberry* Tians



*"I like to use seasonal flowers in low containers
to make the dining table look a little bit special"*



IRISH CREAM *Ice Cream* ROLL

This indulgent dessert, made by rolling up ice cream around a chocolate filling, is a real crowd pleaser, and is sure to bring gasps of admiration from guests – particularly when they discover that the ice cream is homemade!

The ice cream is actually incredibly easy to make, and the combination of ingredients in it is not only delicious, but also helps keep the ice cream soft enough to roll.

SERVES 8–10

FREEZE

This will keep in the freezer for up to 3 months.

FOR THE CHOCOLATE FILLING

300ml (½ pint) pouring double cream
200g (7oz) dark chocolate, 40–60 per cent cocoa solids

FOR THE ICE CREAM

300ml (½ pint) pouring double cream
500ml (15 fl oz) fresh vanilla custard, chilled
3 tablespoons Irish cream liqueur

TO DECORATE

icing sugar
chocolate curls

- 1 Line a 23 × 33cm (9 × 13in) Swiss roll tin with foil and baking paper.
- 2 For the filling, heat the cream in a small pan, until it just comes to the boil. Remove from the heat then add the chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Allow to cool, then place in the fridge. When it has started to thicken, begin making the ice cream. It should be ready by the time the ice cream has semi frozen.
- 3 To make the ice cream, whip the cream in a large bowl until it just holds its shape. Add the custard and liqueur and whisk again until smooth and

thickened to a soft peak consistency.

4 Spread the mixture evenly into the lined tin and place on a level surface in the freezer. Leave to freeze for 1½ hours or until just frozen but not too firm. This is important, as if the ice cream is too hard, it will be very difficult to roll.

5 Remove the ice cream from the freezer. Spread the chocolate filling evenly over the ice cream then, using the foil and paper to help you, roll up the ice cream into a tight roll from one short end, making sure you don't roll the paper inside. When you have reached the end of the roll, wrap the paper and foil tightly around the roll and quickly place the mixture back into the freezer to freeze for about 5–6 hours.

6 To serve, remove the ice cream from the freezer 30 minutes before serving and place in the fridge to soften slightly. Dust with icing sugar and sprinkle with chocolate curls. Serve cut into slices.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

It is a good idea to put the timer on to remind you to roll the ice cream before it sets too hard. If it is too hard to roll just remove it from the freezer and leave in the fridge for a little while until it has softened slightly. Don't leave it at room temperature as the edges will melt before the centre has softened.

To make easy chocolate curls, use a potato peeler to shave curls from a bar of chocolate – the chocolate should be at room temperature.

Foil-lined baking parchment is easy to buy in the shops - though it is essentially the two items stuck together! If you are unable to buy it, use baking parchment instead.



Irish Cream Ice Cream Roll

RASPBERRY AND *Lime* CREAM POTS

This is a very quick and easy dessert that can be rustled up in next to no time.

MAKES 6 POTS

350g (12oz) raspberries
150g (5oz) icing sugar
250g (9oz) full-fat Italian mascarpone cheese
200g (7oz) full-fat Greek yoghurt
juice of 1 large lime
25g (1oz) peeled pistachio nuts, roughly chopped

- 1 Set aside 18 raspberries for garnish, then put the remainder into a bowl. Add 25g (1oz) of icing sugar and stir gently to coat in the sugar. Divide the raspberry mixture between 6 small glass pots or glasses.
- 2 Measure the mascarpone, yoghurt, lime juice and remaining icing sugar into a bowl and stir until smooth. Spoon on top of the raspberries.
- 3 Put three raspberries on top of each pot and sprinkle with pistachio nuts.

ROSÉ WINE *Jellies WITH Summer Fruits*

This is so simple to make yet looks stunning when set in small dessert glasses. It is perfect to serve for summer parties when you want to get everything made well in advance. Do note that this is a little alcoholic, but you can boil off the alcohol if you prefer.

SERVES 4–6

PREPARE AHEAD

These will keep in the fridge for up to 3 days.

400ml (14fl oz) medium-dry, fruity rosé wine
50g (2oz) caster sugar
3 leaves of platinum grade gelatine (see [here](#))
175g (6oz) raspberries
2 ripe peaches, peeled
200g (7oz) strawberries

1 Pour 300ml (½ pint) of the wine into a small pan with the sugar and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved.

2 Place the remaining wine in a shallow dish and add the gelatine leaves. Leave to soak for 5 minutes until they have softened, then tip the gelatine and cold wine into the hot rosé wine. Stir until the gelatine has dissolved, warming the mixture very slightly if necessary.

3 Cut all the fruit into small dice and divide it between 6 small dessert glasses. Pour over the wine and leave to set for about 4 hours.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You can vary the fruit: blueberries and blackberries would work well, but avoid pineapple and kiwis as these contain an enzyme that prevents the gelatine setting.

If you prefer, bring the wine to the boil for 2–3 minutes to boil off the alcohol.

To peel peaches, cut a cross in the stem end, immerse the peaches in boiling water for 2–3 minutes, then plunge into cold water and peel off the skins.



Rosé Wine Jellies with Summer Fruits

SUMMER *Pudding* LOAF

This loaf-shaped version of a summer pudding is easier to make than the traditional shape made in a pudding basin, and is also neater to slice and serve. If preferred, divide the recipe between two 450g (1lb) loaf tins, making one to serve now and one to freeze for later.

Remember, you will need to make this the day before you want to serve it as it needs overnight soaking.

SERVES 12

PREPARE AHEAD

This should be made a day in advance, but will also keep for 2 days in the fridge.

FREEZE

The pudding freezes beautifully. Just freeze in the tin, then when firm you can remove the tin and wrap in another layer of clingfilm to protect it. It will keep for months in the freezer and is a great way to enjoy summer berries all year long. Freeze any leftover fruit in a freezer bag. Defrost the loaf overnight in the fridge to ensure it is thoroughly defrosted.

butter, for greasing

1.5kg (3lb) mixed summer berries (such as blueberries, red- and blackcurrants, raspberries, blackberries and loganberries)

400g (14oz) caster sugar

1 large unsliced white tin loaf or use a loaf of thick-sliced white bread, ideally 2–3 days old

1 Butter and line a 900g (2lb) loaf tin, or two 450g (1lb) tins, with a double layer of clingfilm.

2 Prepare the fruit by removing any leaves and stalks. Place blueberries, redcurrants and blackcurrants in a pan with the sugar and 75ml (3 fl oz) water and bring to the boil. Cook for 2–3 minutes until the berries have just softened and burst but don't overcook. You don't need to cook raspberries, blackberries or loganberries but if using only these types of berry, you will need to cook one type to get it to release its juice. If using in combination with the cooked fruit above, just add them to the pan at the end.

3 Using a sharp knife, cut the crusts off all sides of the loaf of bread, then cut the loaf lengthways into medium-thick slices so that you have long slices rather than square slices. Brush one side of the slices that are to line the tin generously with fruit juice from the berry mixture.

4 Place one slice of bread in the base of the tin, juice-brushed side down, trimming it to fit. Place a slice of bread either side of the inside of the tin and cut slices to fit both ends of the tin, putting the juice-brushed side against the tin.

5 Spoon a little of the berry juice into the base, making sure that all the bread is well soaked in juice, then add the fruit gradually, making sure the bread soaks up all the juices and becomes red. When the tin is full of fruit, top with bread to seal it, making sure there are no gaps. Spoon over a couple of tablespoonfuls of juice from the remaining berries, to make the whole top turn red. You should have about half the amount of berries left over, which are lovely served alongside each slice of the pudding.

6 Cover the top with clingfilm. Place a weight such as a can of baked beans on top of the loaf to press the mixture down; this will ensure that the mixture soaks into the bread and it becomes firm enough to cut. Place the loaf in the fridge overnight.

7 To turn out, peel back the clingfilm, then turn the loaf upside-down on to a plate and remove all the clingfilm.

8 Serve cut into slices with the remaining berries and juice.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Try to use a loaf of bread that is 2–3 days old. If too fresh, it is difficult to slice evenly and won't be firm enough to hold its shape. Make sure you press the fruit and juices down well into the tin to ensure that all the juices soak into the bread as you layer it up.

If you like, use a little Cassis (a blackcurrant liqueur) to boost the fruity flavour. Always taste the fruit and adjust the sweetness, you want it to be

sweet yet have a refreshing sharpness too.

You will have a little bread left over but don't let this go to waste; make it into breadcrumbs and freeze them to use for stuffings or to coat fish, fish cakes or chicken.



Summer Pudding Loaf

CHILLED FRESH *Fruit* SALAD

This is a refreshing fruit salad that can be made in advance and won't go brown. It is the ideal dessert after a rich main course. I like to serve it with chilled crème fraîche.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The bulk of the salad can be made the day before; just add the raspberries at the last minute.

1 ripe Canteloupe melon
2 ripe mangoes
1 orange
1 ripe papaya
4 passion fruit
225g (8oz) raspberries

1 Using a sharp knife, cut the melon in half, then scoop out the seeds and discard. Cut each half into four. Remove the rind by slipping the knife between the melon flesh and rind, then cut the melon into bite-sized pieces.

2 Peel the mango using a sharp knife or peeler. Slice the mango cheeks off either side of the large central flat stone then cut the mango into cubes. Cut off the mango around the stone too.

3 Using a serrated knife, cut off the top and bottom of the orange, then cut away all the peel and pith. Cut between the orange segments to remove each piece.

4 Peel the papaya with a knife or potato peeler then cut the fruit in half. Scoop out and discard the seeds and cut the fruit into pieces. Cut the passion fruit in half and scoop out the seeds.

5 Put all the prepared fruit, except the raspberries, in a bowl, cover with clingfilm and put in the fridge for 3–4 hours or overnight, mixing from time to time.

6 Just before serving, add the fresh raspberries.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Choose mangoes and papayas that just give when lightly squeezed so that you know they are ripe. Too firm and they will have no flavour; too soft and they are past their best.



MARY'S MENU FOR
A SUMMER BUFFET

SALADS

*Broad Bean and
Little Gem Salad*

Fiery Red Rice and Carrot Salad

MAINS

*Maple-Glazed Gammon with Fresh
Apricot & Ginger Chutney*

*Roast Fillet of Beef with Roasted
Garlic & Mustard Cream*

Salmon Tranches with Herb Sauce

DESSERT

Summer Pudding Loaf

Elderflower POSSET

This frozen dessert is so fragrant and so easy to make. The ingredients are just whipped together and put in the freezer, and it doesn't even need churning. Serve with summer berries for a light and refreshing end to a summer meal.

SERVES 6

300ml (½ pint) pouring double cream

300ml (½ pint) undiluted elderflower cordial (ready-made or see [here](#) for how to make your own)

summer berries such as strawberries, redcurrants or raspberries, to serve

a dusting of icing sugar, to decorate

- 1 Place the cream in a mixing bowl and whip until it forms soft peaks, then gradually pour on the elderflower cordial, whisking until combined.
- 2 Freeze in pretty little dessert glasses or Martini glasses for at least 3 hours or overnight.
- 3 To serve, place in the fridge for 15–20 minutes to soften slightly, then put a few small strawberries, redcurrants or raspberries on each, decorate with a dusting of icing sugar and serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

The posset can also be frozen in a freezer-proof container and scooped into glasses if you prefer. It could also be made with other fruit cordials, but don't be tempted to use fruit juice – it is the sugar in the cordial that makes the posset freeze smoothly.



Elderflower Posset

ELDERFLOWER *Cordial*

Elderflower cordial is fun to make if you have easy access to elderflower trees and the flowers that arrive in the early summer.

PREPARE AHEAD

The cordial will keep for 2–3 months in the fridge

1.5kg (3lb) granulated sugar
1.5 litres (2½ pints) water
2 lemons
about 25 elderflower heads
50g (2oz) citric acid
2 Campden tablets

1 Measure the sugar and water into a large pan. Bring to the boil, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool.

2 Slice the lemons thinly by hand or in a food processor. Put into a large plastic box or a bucket. Add the elderflower heads to the lemons along with the citric acid and Campden tablets. Pour over the cooled sugar syrup. Cover and leave overnight or for up to a couple of days.

3 Sieve and strain through muslin into sterilised bottles and store in the fridge. To serve, dilute to taste with still or fizzy water.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Look for elderflower heads from about the end of May; they can be frozen if you want to save them. Freeze about 25 heads in a bag and add to the hot sugar syrup straight from the freezer – this will stop them turning brown once defrosted. Cool the syrup before you add the remaining ingredients.

Campden tablets are used in home wine- and beer-making to kill bacteria and also to inhibit the growth of wild yeasts. Citric acid is a natural preservative and also gives a slightly sour flavour to the cordial. Look for both in pharmacists.

BRAMLEY *Apple* SORBET

This is such an easy and cleansing dessert to serve in the autumn and winter after a heavy main course. At Christmas time I also sometimes serve it with some gently warmed leftover mincemeat.

SERVES 12

1kg (2lb 2oz) Bramley apples (about 5–6), peeled, cored and roughly chopped
100g (4oz) caster sugar
4 tablespoons golden syrup
4 tablespoons lemon juice

1 Place the apples and sugar in a pan with 50ml (2fl oz) cold water. Cover with a lid and cook over a low heat for about 10 minutes, until the apples have collapsed almost to a purée. Mash them well with a fork. Remove from the heat and stir in the golden syrup and lemon juice.

2 Place the mixture in a shallow freezer-proof container and freeze for 2 hours until it has formed ice crystals around the edges. Stir well to break up the ice then return to the freezer and freeze until firm, stirring occasionally. If possible, churn in an ice-cream machine for a smoother consistency.

3 Remove from the freezer and place in the fridge 30 minutes before serving. Serve scooped or shaved into small glasses.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Serve this dessert with little shortbread biscuits or the Mini Brandy Snap Biscuits [here](#).

MERINGUE *Tranche* WITH SUMMER FRUITS AND CREAM

This pavlova-style dessert looks spectacular arranged down the length of the table, and topped with your favourite seasonal fruits. To serve, cut a board measuring 100 × 20cm (40 × 8in) and cover with foil, or use 5 large tiles, as shown [here](#).

SERVES 8–10

PREPARE AHEAD

Meringues can be wrapped in foil and kept for 1 month. If kept for a long time they become a little brittle, so when you come to use them, top with the cream and fruit about 5 hours before serving, which will help soften the meringue and make it easier to serve.

4 large egg whites
225g (8oz) caster sugar

FOR THE TOPPING

300ml (½ pint) pouring double cream
200g (7oz) Greek yoghurt
450g (1lb) fresh blueberries
450g (1lb) fresh raspberries
icing sugar, to dust

1 Line a large baking sheet with baking paper. You will also need a plastic piping bag. Mark two rectangles 12 × 40cm (5 × 16in) in pencil on the paper, and turn the paper over. Preheat the oven to 120°C/100°C fan/Gas ½.

2 Place the egg whites in a spotlessly clean bowl and whisk with an electric hand whisk until they form stiff peaks. Continue whisking as you add the sugar one teaspoonful at a time until all the sugar is incorporated. The meringue will then become shiny and will hold stiff peaks when the whisk is lifted.

3 Place the mixture in a large plastic piping bag and snip 1cm (½in) off the end. Pipe the meringue to cover the rectangle shapes on the paper, then pipe

little blobs along the long sides on top to make a rim. Or, if preferred, simply spread the meringue into the rectangular shapes using a spoon.

4 Bake for 1½–2 hours or until the meringues can be lifted off the paper easily without sticking. Turn off the oven, keep the door ajar and leave the meringues inside until they are cold.

5 Arrange the meringues on the board or tiles. Just before serving, whip the cream until it just holds its shape then fold in the yoghurt. Spread on to the meringues and top with the blueberries and raspberries in rows across the meringue. Dust with icing sugar.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

When making the meringue, it is essential to add the sugar gradually – one spoonful at a time – while whisking as this will suspend the sugar in the egg whites and prevent the meringue from collapsing or weeping.



SUMMER GLORY *Trifle* CAKE

This pretty dessert has all the flavours of a trifle – light sponge with jam, sherry flavoured cream and summer fruits – but is made into an easy-to-slice summer gâteau. Use your favourite fruits, and omit the sherry if serving to children.

SERVES 10–12

PREPARE AHEAD

Make the sponge 1–2 days in advance and keep loosely wrapped in clingfilm until needed. Once assembled, the dessert will keep in the fridge for 1 day.

FOR THE SPONGE

4 eggs
100g (4oz) caster sugar
100g (4oz) self-raising flour

FOR THE FILLING

5 tablespoons warmed, sieved raspberry or apricot jam
300g (10oz) raspberries
1 × 240g can apricots or peach slices in juice, drained and dried on kitchen paper
450ml (¾ pint) double cream
1 tablespoon medium sherry (optional)
1–2 tablespoons icing sugar
a few sprigs of mint, to decorate

1 Line a 23 × 33cm (9 × 13in) Swiss roll tin with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until the mixture is light and fluffy, and has doubled in size, and the whisk leaves a trail when lifted out. Sift the flour on to the mixture, then using a large spoon, carefully fold it in until evenly mixed, taking care not to knock the air out of the mixture. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and give it a gentle shake so that it finds its own level and goes evenly into the corners.

3 Bake for about 10 minutes or until the sponge is pale golden brown and is beginning to shrink from the edges. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes then turn out on to a cooling rack, peel off the baking paper and invert the cake so that it is the right way up again. Leave to cool completely.

4 Cut the edges off the cake then cut it lengthways into two equal pieces. Turn the cake upside down and spread both pieces with half the warm jam.

5 Place one piece of cake jam-side up on a serving plate. Arrange a row of raspberries down each long side of the cake and place a row in the centre. Reserve the remaining raspberries.

6 Slice the apricots, if using. Arrange most of the apricots or peaches between the rows of raspberries.

7 Whip the cream until it forms soft peaks. Stir in the sherry, if using, and icing sugar to taste. Spread a little cream on the bare side of the other length of cake and set aside. Spread the remaining cream on top of the fruit then place the other piece of cake on top, jam-side down.

8 Arrange the remaining raspberries and apricot or peach slices on top of the cake then brush with the remaining warmed jam and decorate with mint sprigs. If you like, you can chill the cake for up to 2 hours before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Do not use fresh peaches unless serving within an hour or two as they will discolour.

You can of course use strawberries instead of raspberries, or why not make a chocolate sponge and fill with canned red cherries and cream? Just replace 25g (1oz) of the flour with cocoa powder.

If you accidentally over-whip the cream, fold a little milk into it to loosen it.



Summer Glory *Trifle* Cake

MANGO AND *Passion Fruit* TRIFLE

As trifles can be made with just about any fruit you fancy, they can be served throughout the year. Many people think of them as a Christmassy dessert – the splendour of the dreamy cream, custard layers and sherry-soaked sponge bring a festive touch to the table. However, trifle is equally at home on a summer buffet table, where the fruit can take more of the centre-stage. This version offers a modern tropical twist on an old favourite.

I have soaked the trifle sponges in orange juice and rum, but you can omit the rum if serving to children.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The trifle can be made up to 1 day ahead and kept in the fridge.

1 pack of trifle sponges
4 tablespoons apricot jam
juice of 2 oranges
3 tablespoons rum (optional)
2 ripe mangoes, diced
grated zest and juice of 1 lime
300g (11 oz) Greek yoghurt
2 tablespoons icing sugar
300ml (½ pint) double cream
3 passion fruits

1 You will need a 1.5-litre (3-pint) glass trifle dish or bowl. Cut the trifle sponges in half and spread the cut sides with the jam. Sandwich together and arrange in the base of the trifle dish. Pour the orange juice and rum, if using, over the sponges and leave to soak in.

2 Arrange half the diced mango on top of the sponges.

3 Stir the lime zest and juice into the yoghurt with 1 tablespoon of the icing sugar and spread on top of the mango.

4 Whip the double cream until it just holds its shape. Cut the passion fruits in half, scoop the seeds from 1½ fruits into the cream and stir in along with the remaining tablespoon of icing sugar. Spoon the cream on top of the yoghurt layer. Decorate with the remaining passion fruit and mango.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Add a few blueberries or strawberries to the mango layer if you like. Why not top with some toasted coconut flakes too?

Hot Puddings

HOT PUDDINGS

Classic, comforting British puddings, such as rice pudding ([here](#)), Queen of Puddings ([here](#)) and Sussex pond pudding ([here](#)) are often overlooked these days, which is sad as they are enthusiastically appreciated when they are served.

I believe in keeping our traditional dishes alive but I also believe in adapting recipes in order to suit your tastes or to improve the original if you can. So I have played with the old-fashioned Sussex pond pudding recipe, packing lots of chopped apple inside the suet crust and around the whole lemon so that the pudding doesn't collapse so much when cut and all those sweet buttery juices are set off against the sharpness of the apple and lemon. It is well worth making for a Sunday lunch as everyone will gasp with appreciation when the lovely golden suet crust is turned out of the pudding basin. It's wonderful served with a big jug of custard too.

My favourite dessert in this chapter is the Warm Chocolate Fondant Tart ([here](#)), which has a thin, very buttery pastry and slightly gooey chocolate centre; it cuts well and is perfect to serve for a dinner party. Or for a fruity end to a meal try my hot Plum and Marzipan Tarte Tatin ([here](#)) – its blushing red colour and sharp-sweet flavour is fabulous, and it is very simple to make as it uses ready-made puff pastry and marzipan.

In times when everyone is rushed and so often watching what they eat, a fabulous homemade pudding is a rare and special treat, so why not treat your friends and family soon?



Recipe List

[Sussex Pond Pudding with Apples](#)

[Apple Crumble with Walnuts and Sunflower Seeds](#)

[Classic Rice Pudding](#)

[Queen of Puddings](#)

[Saucy Brownie Pud](#)

[Warm Chocolate Fondant Tart](#)

[Rhubarb and Orange Cobbler](#)

[Plum and Marzipan Tarte Tatin](#)

Sussex POND PUDDING WITH APPLES

For anybody who isn't familiar with this traditional English delight, Sussex pond pudding is a classic basin pud, in which a soft layer of suet pastry encases a whole lemon and wonderful buttery juices. I love the traditional version but find that the whole thing always collapses when served so I thought it would be a good idea to pack the pudding with apples to bolster it – the result is even more delicious.

SERVES 6–8

PREPARE AHEAD

This pudding is best freshly made although any leftovers can be warmed up. Not suitable for freezing.

FOR THE SUET CRUST

225g (8oz) self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting

100g (4oz) shredded suet

75ml (3fl oz) milk

FOR THE FILLING

4 Cox's apples, peeled, cored and diced

150g (5oz) butter, cut into cubes, plus extra for greasing

200g (7oz) light muscovado sugar

1 large lemon

cream or custard, to serve

1 You will need a 1.5-litre (2½-pint) pudding basin. First make the suet crust. Measure the flour and suet into a bowl. Measure the milk into a jug, then add 75ml (3fl oz) cold water, to make 150ml (¼ pint) in total. Mix into the dry ingredients to make a soft dough.

2 Lightly dust the work surface with flour then roll out the dough to a 30cm (12in) circle. Cut a quarter out of the circle and set it aside to be used as the lid. Thickly butter the pudding basin, then line it with the pastry, pressing the join together.

3 Put the apples into a bowl with the butter and sugar, then place a little in the pudding basin on top of the suet pastry.

4 Prick the lemon all over with a cocktail stick then place in among the apples so that it sits upright. Pack as much of the remaining apples and butter mixture as you can around the lemon, piling it up to make a dome and packing it tightly down into the bowl.

5 Roll out the reserved suet pastry to make a circle to fit on top of the pudding and pinch the edges to seal.

6 Cut a square of foil and make a pleat in the centre. Place the foil over the pudding basin, tie with string then loop the string over the basin and under the string a couple of times to make a handle. Tie securely.

7 Place the lid of a jam jar in a large saucepan to stop the basin touching the bottom of the pan, add the pudding basin then pour boiling water around it so that it comes three quarters of the way up the sides. Cover the saucepan with a tight-fitting lid, and simmer for 3½ hours. Check the pan occasionally and top up with more boiling water as necessary.

8 To serve, remove the foil and invert the basin on to a plate. Remove the basin and serve the pudding with cream or custard. Expect the pudding to rapidly collapse – that is part of its charm!



MARY'S WISE WORDS

I like to use parchment-lined foil as it is very thick and keeps the pudding well sealed when steaming.

Don't be tempted to use Bramley apples as they are too sharp and also they collapse when cooked.

If making this for vegetarians, use vegetable suet.





Sussex Pond Pudding with Apples

APPLE CRUMBLE WITH WALNUTS AND *Sunflower* SEEDS

This is such a clever recipe: the apple and crumble are cooked separately, so not only does the crumble stay crisp, but also you can make it in advance and assemble the dessert whenever needed. The crumble topping is almost a granola and very tasty to nibble on, too.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

The crumble topping will keep well for a week in an airtight container and the apple will keep for 3–4 days in the fridge. Reheat the apple in a pan and top with the cold crumble mix – it does not reheat well.

FREEZE

Freeze the apple for up to 4 months (in individual portions if liked). Freeze the topping mixture in a freezer bag so you can sprinkle out as much as needed.

1.5kg (3lb) cooking apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced
juice of ½ lemon
100g (4oz) light muscovado sugar

FOR THE TOPPING

50g (2oz) plain flour
50g (2oz) porridge oats
150g (5oz) light muscovado sugar
150g (5oz) walnuts, roughly chopped
50g (2oz) sunflower seeds
100g (4oz) softened butter

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Place the apples in a small flameproof casserole with the lemon juice, sugar and 6 tablespoons of water. Bring to the boil on the hob, then place in the oven and cook for about 20 minutes until the apple is tender but has not fallen to a pulp.

3 Weigh the topping ingredients into a mixing bowl and rub in the butter until it is evenly distributed and the mixture has formed small clumps. Spread the mixture evenly over a baking tray and bake for about 20 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Stir to break up the crumble and sprinkle over the hot apple.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You can cook the apples on the hob, but I find they break down into a pulp very quickly and that they keep their shape better if cooked in the oven. Use dessert apples if liked, but reduce the sugar to just a tablespoonful or so as they are much sweeter than cooking apples.



Apple Crumble with Walnuts and *Sunflower* Seeds

CLASSIC *Rice* PUDDING

Not to be forgotten, rice pudding is one of the easiest, most inexpensive and, I think, most delicious puddings you can serve.

SERVES 4

PREPARE AHEAD

Once baked, this will keep for two days in the fridge and can be warmed up in a pan or in the microwave before serving. It is also delicious served cold.

100g (4oz) short-grain pudding rice
50g (2oz) caster sugar
600ml (1 pint) milk
300ml (½ pint) single cream
freshly grated nutmeg
25g (1oz) butter

1 You will need a shallow 1-litre (2-pint) baking dish. Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 2.

2 Weigh the rice into the dish, then add the sugar and pour over the milk and cream. Stir well. Grate a generous sprinkling of nutmeg on top of the mixture and dot with butter.

3 Bake for 30 minutes, stir, then bake for a further 1½ hours or until the rice has absorbed most of the milk and cream and a lovely rich skin has formed on top.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You must use pudding rice for this dessert as it has short starchy grains that will soak up all the milk. Omit the cream and use all milk if you want a less rich version. Serve it with a dollop of jam too, if you like.



Classic *Rice* Pudding



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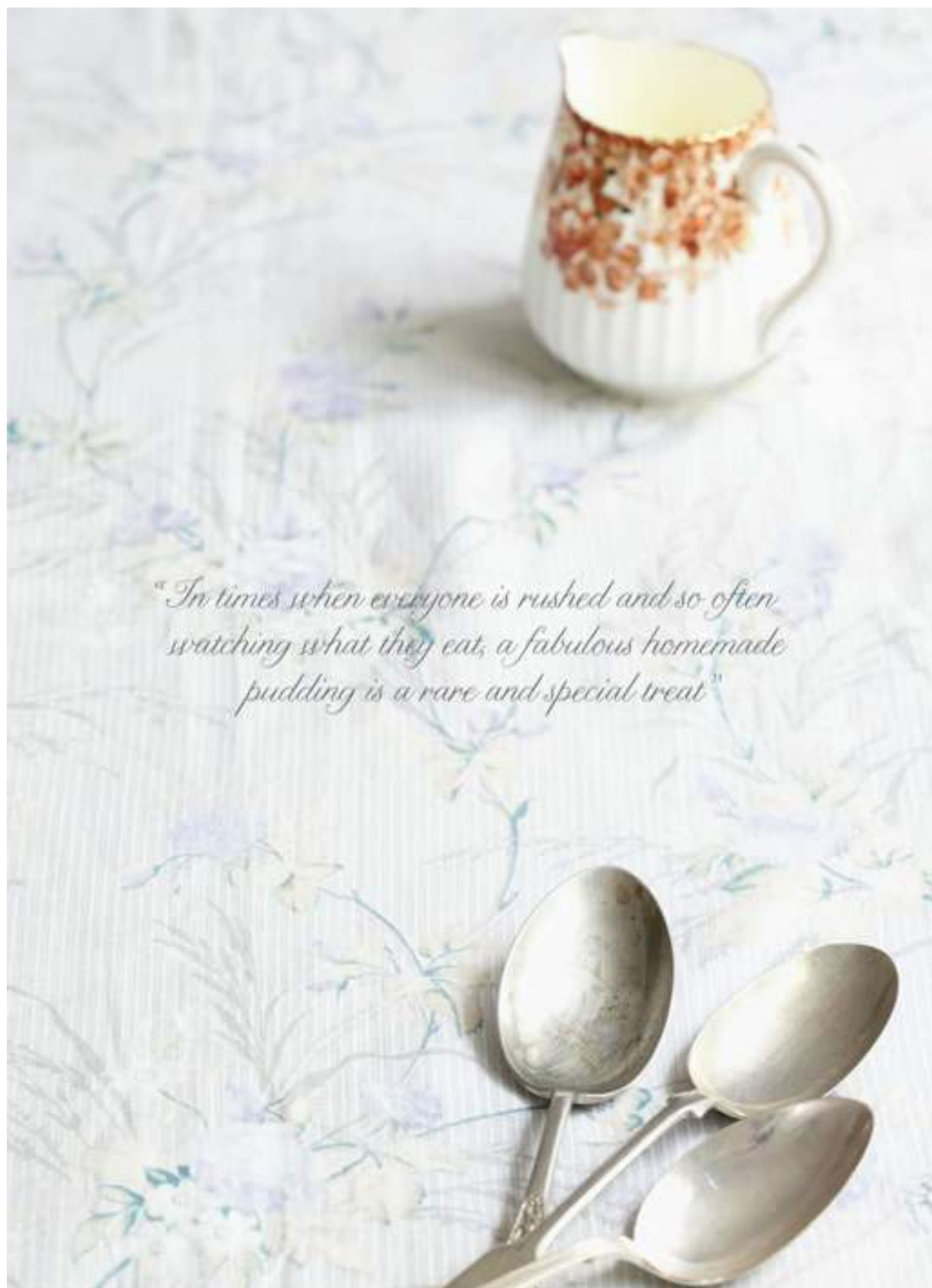
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*Tré J. Cointreau,
Président*

*A Paris ...
Le 2 octobre 2012*





*"In times when everyone is rushed and so often
watching what they eat, a fabulous homemade
pudding is a rare and special treat"*

QUEEN OF *Puddings*

This old fashioned pudding is so comforting, everybody loves it and it is such an economical and easy pudding to make. If you don't have full fat milk, add a little cream to semi-skimmed.

SERVES 4

PREPARE AHEAD

The base, custard and meringue can be made 6 hours in advance, up to the end of step 5.

FOR THE BASE

600ml (1 pint) full-fat milk
25g (1oz) butter, plus extra for greasing the dish
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
50g (2oz) caster sugar
3 egg yolks
75g (3oz) fresh white breadcrumbs
6 tablespoons blackcurrant or strawberry jam

FOR THE MERINGUE

3 egg whites
175g (6oz) caster sugar

1 Grease a 1.5-litre (2½-pint) shallow ovenproof dish (one that will fit inside a roasting tin) with butter. You will also need a plastic piping bag if you want to pipe the meringue, otherwise just spoon it on. Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan/Gas 3.

2 For the base, gently warm the milk in a small pan until hand hot. Add the butter, lemon zest and sugar. Stir until dissolved. In a bowl, lightly whisk the egg yolks and then slowly add the warm milk while whisking. Keep whisking until incorporated.

3 Sprinkle the breadcrumbs over the base of the buttered dish and pour over the custard. Leave to stand for about 15 minutes, so the breadcrumbs absorb the liquid.

4 Place the dish in a roasting tin and fill the tin halfway with hot water. Bake the custard in the oven for 25–30 minutes until set. Remove from the oven and cool while you make the meringue topping. Reduce the oven temperature to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 2.

5 To make the meringue, whisk the egg whites using an electric hand whisk on full speed until they form stiff peaks. Add the sugar a teaspoon at a time, still whisking on maximum speed until the mixture is stiff and shiny. If you want a swirly, piped top to the pudding, transfer the meringue mixture to a piping bag and snip the end to make a hole about 1cm (½ in) across.

6 Gently spread the jam on top of the custard then pipe the meringue on top of the jam or spread it on with a spoon and make little peaks so that it looks pretty. Return the pudding to the oven (not in the roasting tin) for about 25–30 minutes until the meringue is crisp and pale golden all over. Serve at once.

SAUCY *Brownie* PUD

Spoon through the sponge to discover the gooey rich sauce underneath! This addictive pud is perfect with a good dollop of ice cream and it's made even better by the fact that it is so quick and easy to cook. It is best served straight from the oven but don't worry, you can get everything ready beforehand and assemble it just before baking.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

Although this can be cooked an hour or two beforehand, it is best not to cook it the day before as sometimes the sauce will be absorbed into the sponge. If you want to cook it and then reheat it, you will need to do so in a microwave – the oven will dry it out.

You can also prepare the sauce and pudding up to a few hours in advance, but do not pour the sauce over the pudding until ready to bake.

150g (5oz) self-raising flour
25g (1oz) cocoa powder
125g (5oz) light muscovado sugar
1 egg
150ml (¼ pint) milk
75g (3oz) butter, melted and cooled
vanilla ice cream or clotted cream, to serve

FOR THE SAUCE

75g (3oz) light muscovado sugar
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
250ml (8fl oz) boiling water

1 Butter a shallow 1-litre (2-pint) baking dish. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Measure the flour into a mixing bowl with the cocoa powder and sugar. Add the egg. Mix the milk and butter together then beat into the flour mixture until smooth. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish.

3 To make the sauce, mix all the ingredients together then pour evenly over the cake mixture. Don't pour it all in one place, and try not to disturb the

sponge mixture too much.

4 Bake for 30–40 minutes, until the pudding has risen and feels just firm to the touch. The sauce will have sunk into the pudding and be runny underneath. Serve hot with ice cream or clotted cream.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you prefer, make 6 individual puddings in ramekins instead. You will only need to bake them for 15–25 minutes.

Why not use hot coffee in the sauce instead of water to make a mocha pud? Or try adding raspberries to the pudding mixture.

WARM CHOCOLATE *Fondant* TART

This tart looks like something you might have bought from a French patisserie, but it is so easy to make. I like it served gently warmed (see [here](#)) with a dusting of icing sugar, but you could make it really glamorous by topping it with chocolate curls, a drizzle of melted chocolate or a little whipped cream and fresh summer berries.

SERVES 6–8

FOR THE PASTRY

100g (4oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
50g (2oz) icing sugar
50g (2oz) butter, diced, plus extra for greasing
1 large egg yolk
about 1 tablespoon cold water

FOR THE FILLING

100g (4oz) butter
150g (5oz) dark chocolate, no more than 60 per cent cocoa solids, finely chopped
150g (5oz) golden caster sugar
75g (3oz) plain flour
6 medium eggs

TO SERVE

a dusting of icing sugar
a few small strawberries, to decorate (optional)
pouring cream (optional)

PREPARE AHEAD

This tart can be made 1–2 days in advance. Bring it to room temperature and warm it slightly in a low oven (120°C/100°C fan/Gas ½) for 10 minutes. You can also make and bake the pastry case blind up to a week in advance (store it in a cake tin), then add the filling and bake half an hour before serving.

FREEZE

The tart can be baked and frozen for up to 1 month. Defrost completely then warm through in a low oven (120°C/100°C fan/Gas ½) for 10 minutes.

1 Butter a 23cm (9in) fluted flan tin. To make the pastry, measure the flour and icing sugar into a large bowl and rub in the butter with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs (this can also be done in a food processor). Add the egg yolk and water and mix until it comes together to form a firm dough. Wrap in clingfilm and leave to rest in the fridge for about 30 minutes.

2 Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Dust the work surface with flour then roll out the pastry as thinly as you can to a circle about 5cm larger than your flan tin. Line the tin with the pastry. Don't worry if the pastry breaks a little, it is easy to patch up. Chill for 15 minutes.

3 Prick the base of the pastry with a fork, line the pastry case with baking paper or foil and fill with baking beans. Bake the pastry blind for 10 minutes, until just lightly golden, then remove the paper and beans and return the tart to the oven to cook for a further 5–7 minutes until pale golden and the base is cooked.

4 To make the filling, melt the butter in a medium pan over a low heat, then add the chocolate and stir until melted and smooth. Remove from the heat and stir in the sugar and flour. Whisk in the eggs one at a time.

5 Place the flan tin on a baking tray. Pour the mixture into the pastry case, filling it right to the top, and place in the oven. (If you have any mixture left over, cook it in a ramekin for 5 minutes and enjoy as a cook's treat!) Bake the tart for 10–12 minutes until just set around the edges but still slightly wobbly in the centre.

6 Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly, until warm not piping hot. Dust with icing sugar. If liked cut a shape out of baking paper and place on top of the tart before dusting with icing sugar, then remove the paper to make a stencilled effect. Or serve the tart warm with strawberries and cream.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you don't have time to rest the pastry in the fridge for 30 minutes you can roll it out, line the tin and freeze it for 10 minutes before baking blind.

Use a good-quality bar of chocolate with a high percentage of cocoa solids (40–60 per cent) for a rich flavour.

You can also make this as 8 individual tartlets baked in bun tins. Cook for about 4 minutes, making sure the mixture still has a wobble in the centre.



Warm Chocolate *Fondant* Tart

RHUBARB AND *Orange* COBBLER

Cobblers can be sweet or savoury but as a dessert, they are essentially a stewed-fruit filling topped with a crust made from a scone-like dough. The topping in this recipe is rolled out fairly thinly making it less robust than a traditional cobbler might be, and there is a generous amount of rhubarb.

SERVES 6

PREPARE AHEAD

This is best made and served as soon as it is baked, but any leftovers can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.

800g (1lb 12oz) early rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 5cm (2in) lengths
150g (5oz) caster sugar
grated zest and juice of 2 oranges
cream or custard, to serve

FOR THE SCONE COBBLER

150g (5oz) self-raising flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
75g (3oz) caster sugar
50g (2oz) softened butter
75ml (2½fl oz) milk
about 2 tablespoons demerara sugar

1 You will need a 1.5-litre (3-pint) baking dish and a 5cm (2in) pastry cutter. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Arrange the rhubarb in the baking dish, add the caster sugar, half the orange zest and all the orange juice.

3 Measure the flour, baking powder and caster sugar into a mixing bowl. Add the butter and rub it into the flour until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the milk and remaining orange zest and mix to a soft dough. Turn the dough on to a lightly floured work surface and pat out until about 1cm (½in) thick. Cut into circles using the cutter. Arrange the scones on top of the rhubarb in a circle around the edge of the dish then sprinkle with the demerara sugar.

4 Bake for 30–40 minutes until the rhubarb is tender when tested with the point of a knife and the cobbler is golden brown. Serve hot with cream or custard.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Make this cobbler with any seasonal fruits; try apples and blackberries, plums or summer berries.

PLUM AND *Marzipan* TARTE TATIN

This is a cheat's variation of the classic French tart and makes an impressive pudding to serve with lots of cream, ice cream or crème fraîche.

SERVES 8

75g (3oz) light muscovado sugar

about 7–9 large firm plums, roughly 500g (1lb 2oz) in total, halved, stones removed

100g (4oz) marzipan

1 × 320g pack ready-rolled all-butter puff pastry

1 You will need a 23cm (9in) round, fixed-base cake tin, at least 5cm (2in) deep. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7.

2 Sprinkle the sugar over the base of the tin in an even layer. Arrange the plums on top of the sugar, cut-side down.

3 Roll out the marzipan to a round slightly smaller than the tin and place on top of the plums.

4 Roll out the pastry just a little bit bigger so that it is the width of the cake tin. Place the cake tin on top of the pastry. Using the tin as a guide, cut around the tin to make a circle, then lay the pastry over the plums and tuck the edges of the pastry down around the fruit. Make a small cross in the top of the pastry to let the steam escape during baking.

5 Bake for 25–30 minutes until the pastry is crisp and golden and the plums are tender. Loosen the edges of the tarte then turn out on to a plate and serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you have small plums, you might need to use a few more to cover the tarte.

If your plums are very ripe you will get lots more juice, so tip the juices into a pan and boil rapidly, before pouring over the turned out tarte.

Don't be tempted to use a loose-bottomed cake tin or a springform tin or you will lose all the juices. It is a good idea to bake the tarte on a baking tray in case the juices bubble over the top of the tin.



Plum and *Marzipan* Tarte Tatin

*Afternoon
Tea*

AFTERNOON TEA

Sitting down to a homemade tea is a real treat, and such a lovely way to entertain friends. I enjoy getting out my mother's teacups and teapot and serving a proper tea with carefully cut sandwiches and a selection of cakes and scones. It may seem simple, but I do hope my tips are helpful when you come to prepare sandwiches for your own large gatherings ([here](#)).

I am never without a tin of shortbread to offer visitors, but I wanted to give you a new twist on the classic version so have added cranberries and white chocolate chips to the dough ([here](#)). The resulting biscuits are irresistible – I often have to hide the tin from myself.

Many people like to bake cakes for charity sales and school fetes, so there are some delicious tray bakes that will fly off the cake stall. Try the Chocolate and Ginger Flapjacks ([here](#)) or the Sultana and Cranberry Tray Bake ([here](#)). My Rich Chocolate Tray Bake ([here](#)) is a real winner too – a lovely moist sponge with a milk chocolate ganache icing.

I am always so delighted to receive the letters telling me that I have inspired you to bake, particularly from young children (many of whom seem to know more about baking than their parents now!) so I couldn't do a book without including some of my classic bakes, such as scones ([here](#)) and butterfly cakes ([here](#)). There are two variations on a sponge cake too, one with marzipan grated through it ([here](#)) and the other layered with lots of lemon mascarpone icing ([here](#)). These have become some of my new favourites – I hope you will like them too.



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[Orange Butterfly Cakes](#)

[Whole Lemon Cake with Lemon Cheesecake Icing](#)

[Marzipan and Apricot Sponge](#)

[Apple and Cinnamon Loaf Cake](#)

[Banana Cake with Cinnamon Cream Cheese Frosting](#)

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[Raspberry Swirl Meringues](#)

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[Chocolate and Ginger Flapjacks](#)

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Teatime SANDWICHES

No afternoon tea would be complete without a selection of little sandwiches, and over the years I have discovered how to make large platters of sandwiches that can be prepared ahead without compromising on freshness or flavour. Here are my top tips for making the perfect, dainty sandwiches, along with my favourite fillings (see [here](#)).

MAKES 24 SANDWICHES (TO SERVE 6)

12 slices of bread from
a thin-cut white or brown loaf
butter
fillings of your choice (see [here](#))

- 1 Butter all the slices of bread on one side, top half the slices with the filling(s) of your choice and sandwich together. Leave the crusts on.
- 2 Arrange the sandwiches in piles of four on a large tray (check first that it will fit in your fridge). Cover with a layer of damp kitchen paper, then cover tightly with clingfilm and place the tray in the fridge.
- 3 Two hours before serving, slice off the crusts and cut the sandwiches into fingers or if you prefer, quarters – either triangles or squares. Cover with cling film and keep at room temperature until ready to serve. They will taste as fresh as the moment you made them.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Tomatoes and cucumber will make sandwiches go soggy so should only be used in sandwiches made on the day. It is best to remove their seeds too. Cut cucumber in half and scoop out the seeds with a teaspoon. Cut tomatoes in half and scoop out the seeds with your fingers.



FILLINGS YOU CAN PREPARE 1 DAY AHEAD

Rare roast beef with horseradish sauce

Salami, mustard and rocket

Little Gem lettuce, chicken with curried mayonnaise

Egg mayonnaise with mustard and cress

Smoked salmon and cream cheese

Houmous with chopped olives

Ham with wholegrain mustard

Cream cheese with mango chutney and watercress

Grated Cheddar with mayonnaise and finely chopped spring onion

Mature Cheddar and pickle

Goat's cheese, rocket and olive tapenade

Sliced Dolcelatte and grapes

Crispy bacon and egg mayonnaise



FILLINGS THAT NEED TO BE MADE ON THE DAY

Prawns with Marie Rose sauce

Cucumber and black pepper

Tuna, mayonnaise and lemon

Fresh salmon and cucumber

Avocado and bacon

Crab, avocado and lime mayonnaise

Pastrami with cream cheese, horseradish sauce and rocket

Tomato, pesto and feta





ORANGE *Butterfly* CAKES

These little fairy cakes are filled with orange curd and topped with a butter icing. My granddaughter Abby made lots of these for our church sale and enjoyed weighing each one before baking to make sure they were all exactly the same size – 35g (1½oz) went into each paper case so they were all perfect and even.

MAKES 12 CAKES

PREPARE AHEAD

The cakes will keep in a cake tin for up to 3–4 days.

FREEZE

The cakes can be frozen for up to 1 month.

100g (4oz) baking spread
100g (4oz) caster sugar
2 eggs
100g (4oz) self-raising flour
1 level teaspoon baking powder
grated zest of 1 orange
3 tablespoons orange curd

FOR THE ICING

50g (2oz) softened butter
100g (4oz) icing sugar, sifted, plus extra to finish

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4. Line a bun tin with 12 fairy cake cases (see [Mary's Wise Words](#)).

2 Measure all the cake ingredients except the orange curd into a large bowl and beat well for 2–3 minutes until the mixture is well blended and smooth. Fill each paper case with 35g (1½oz) of mixture.

3 Bake in the oven for 15–20 minutes until the cakes are well risen and golden brown. Lift the paper cases out of the tin and cool the cakes on a wire rack.

4 When cool, cut a disc from the top of each cake, leaving a little rim around the edge, and cut this disc in half. Spoon half a teaspoon of orange curd over each cake.

5 To make the icing, beat the butter and icing sugar together until well blended. Pipe or spoon a swirl of the icing on top of the orange curd and place the half slices of cake on top to resemble butterfly wings. Dust the cakes with icing sugar to finish.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Fairy cakes are not as deep as cupcakes or muffins so use shallower cake trays (widely known as bun tins) and make sure you buy the right paper cases to fill the tin.

You can of course also make these with lemon zest and lemon curd if preferred.



Orange Butterfly Cakes

WHOLE *Lemon* CAKE WITH LEMON *Cheesecake* ICING

There are three whole lemons used in this cake, icing and decoration, so the flavour is intense and utterly delicious.

SERVES 12

PREPARE AHEAD

The baked cake will keep for up to 4 days in a tin.

FREEZE

Freeze the unfilled baked sponges for up to 3 months.

2 small thin-skinned lemons, or 1 large one
275g (10oz) softened butter, plus extra for dusting
275g (10oz) caster sugar
275g (10oz) self-raising flour
2 level teaspoons baking powder
4 eggs

FOR THE FILLING AND ICING

50g (2oz) softened butter
175g (6oz) icing sugar
250g (9oz) full-fat mascarpone
175g (6oz) fondant icing sugar

TO DECORATE

1 thin-skinned lemon
50g (2oz) caster sugar

1 Grease two 20cm (8in) round sandwich tins and line the bases with baking paper.

2 First make the lemon decoration. Peel long strips of lemon rind then cut into fine strips (keep the lemon to juice it for the icing). Place the peel in a saucepan with half the caster sugar, cover with boiling water and boil for 1 minute. Drain and pat dry, then place on baking paper. Scatter over the remaining sugar and dry out in a low oven set at 110°C/90°C fan/Gas ¼ for

about 1 hour, until crispy. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice, then set aside for the icing. Increase the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

3 To make the cake, place the 2 whole lemons in a small saucepan, cover with water, bring to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes or until very soft and tender. Drain and cut the lemons in half and remove any pips.

4 Place the boiled lemons in a food processor and process to a smoothish pulp but still with chunky bits. Transfer to a small bowl. Add all the remaining cake ingredients to the food processor and blend until smooth. Lift out the blade and stir in just over half the processed lemon pulp.

5 Divide the mixture evenly between the two prepared tins and bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown and just shrinking from the edges of the tins.

6 Leave to cool for 5 minutes then turn the cakes out, peel off the paper and leave to finish cooling on a wire rack.

7 To make the lemon filling, place the butter and icing sugar in a bowl and mix till smooth and creamy (you could also do this in a food processor). Add the mascarpone, mix again, then add the reserved lemon pulp and mix until just combined.

8 Cut both cakes in half horizontally so you have 4 layers. Spread the lemon cream evenly between 3 of the layers, stacking them on top of each other. Place the remaining layer on top.

9 Mix the fondant icing sugar with 1–2 tablespoons of the reserved lemon juice to make a thick pouring consistency. Pour the icing over the top of the cake, allowing it to drizzle down. Sprinkle the candied lemon rind on top.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Look for thin-skinned lemons that give easily when squeezed so that the pith is not too thick.

Fondant icing sugar has glucose syrup added to it so it makes a lovely thick glossy icing that sets well.



Whole *Lemon* Cake with Lemon *Cheesecake* Icing



*"It's so delicious that I often have to
hide the tin from myself"*

MARZIPAN AND *Apricot* SPONGE

I am constantly looking to come up with new sponge cake ideas, and with this recipe it was the marzipan that was the initial nugget of the idea. I love the almondy flavour of marzipan, so it seemed natural to me to try to weave it into a cake somehow. I also knew that marzipan would keep the sponge lovely and moist. The snipped apricots add another element, in terms of both texture and flavour. I think the resulting cake is a real winner.

SERVES 8

PREPARE AHEAD

The unfilled cake will keep well in a cake tin for up to 4 days. Once filled with cream it should be kept chilled in the fridge and taken out of the fridge a couple of hours before serving.

FREEZE

The unfilled sponge can be frozen for up to 3 months.

100g (4oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots
100g (4oz) marzipan
225g (8oz) self-raising flour
225g (8oz) softened butter, plus extra for greasing
225g (8oz) caster sugar
4 eggs
2 level teaspoons baking powder

FOR THE FILLING

4 tablespoons good-quality apricot jam or compote
150ml (¼ pint) double cream, whipped
icing sugar, to dust

1 Grease two 20cm (8in) sandwich tins and line their bases with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Cut the apricots into tiny pieces – it is easiest to do this with kitchen scissors. Grate the marzipan on the coarse side of a grater and add 2 tablespoons of the measured flour. Toss together to help stop the marzipan from clumping together.

3 Mix the butter, sugar, eggs, remaining flour and baking powder in a large bowl and beat until thoroughly combined. Add the apricots and marzipan/flour mixture and fold into the cake mixture gently. Divide the cake mixture evenly between the prepared tins and level the surfaces.

4 Bake in the oven for 25–30 minutes or until well risen and the tops of the cakes spring back when lightly pressed with a finger. Leave to cool in the tins for a few minutes, then turn out, peel off the paper and finish cooling on a wire rack.

5 When completely cold, spread the cakes with the jam and whipped cream and sandwich. Sprinkle with icing sugar to serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Look for the plump dried apricots, often called ‘ready-to-eat’, as they will be nice and succulent in the cake – you want to avoid chewy pieces.



Marzipan and *Apricot* Sponge

APPLE AND *Cinnamon* LOAF CAKE

This is a lovely moist loaf (shown left [here](#)), which I love to serve sliced and buttered. It's very quick and simple to make.

MAKES TWO 450G (1LB) LOAVES

PREPARE AHEAD

This cake will keep for 3–4 days in a cake tin.

FREEZE

This will freeze for up to 3 months either as a whole cake or in slices layered between strips of baking paper.

200g (7oz) self-raising flour

75g (3oz) butter

100g (4oz) light muscovado sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

3 dessert apples, about 350g (12oz) before peeling, peeled and cored

3 eggs, beaten

2 tablespoons warmed, sieved apricot jam, to finish

1 Grease two 450g (1lb) deep loaf tins and line their bases with a strip of baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Place the flour and butter in a bowl and rub the butter in with your fingers until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs (this can also be done in a food processor). Stir in the sugar and cinnamon.

3 Dice 2½ apples and stir into the cake mixture along with the eggs. Beat until combined. Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared tins. Thinly slice the remaining apple half and arrange in a row along the middle of each cake top. Bake for about 40–45 minutes until golden, risen, firm to the touch in the centre and just shrinking from the sides of the tins.

4 Brush the top of the cakes with the apricot jam. Allow to cool in the tins for 10 minutes then turn out and leave to cool on a wire rack.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

450g (1lb) loaf tins can vary in size. Ours measures $15 \times 10 \times 7.5\text{cm}$ ($6 \times 4 \times 3\text{ in}$).

If you wish to make a larger cake, in a 900g (2lb) loaf tin, double the mixture and bake for about 1 hour.



Apple and Cinnamon Loaf Cake

BANANA CAKE WITH *Cinnamon* CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Although baking cakes is wonderful, no one wants to eat too much cake so I prefer to make two small loaves and freeze one for another time. This is a great way to use up any over-ripe bananas, and is a very popular, moist cake. Leave it plain or ice it with this cream cheese frosting ([shown right here](#)).

MAKES TWO 450G (1LB) LOAF CAKES

PREPARE AHEAD

This cake keeps well in a cake tin for up to 1 week.

FREEZE

Freeze the iced cakes without the banana chips for up to 2 months wrapped in greaseproof paper.

225g (8oz) self-raising flour

100g (4oz) butter, cubed

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

225g (8oz) light muscovado sugar

grated zest of 1 lemon

225g (8oz) peeled bananas (about 2 small bananas), mashed with a fork

2 eggs, beaten

FOR THE CREAM CHEESE ICING

100g (4oz) softened butter

150g (5oz) full-fat cream cheese

150g (5oz) icing sugar, sifted

a pinch of ground cinnamon

a few banana chips, to decorate

1 Grease two 450g (1lb) loaf tins and line their bases with a strip of baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Weigh the flour into a mixing bowl and add the butter. Rub the butter into the flour with your fingers until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs (you

could also do this in a food processor). Stir in the cinnamon, sugar and lemon zest.

3 Add the mashed bananas to the flour mixture, along with the beaten egg. Mix well until combined then divide between the prepared loaf tins and level the surface.

4 Bake for about 30–35 minutes until the loaves are risen, golden brown and just beginning to shrink from the sides of the tins. Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then turn out, remove the paper, and finish cooling on a wire rack.

5 To make the icing, beat the butter until smooth then gradually beat in the cream cheese until well combined. Add the sifted icing sugar and a pinch of cinnamon to taste. Beat well until smooth. Top the cakes with the cream cheese icing. Decorate with banana chips.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you have over-ripe bananas in the fruit bowl, freeze them in their skins. They will go black, but defrost and peel them and use them for banana bread, or this cake!

SULTANA AND *Cranberry* TRAY BAKE

I love a plain fruit cake so I created this simple tray bake version, which is even easier to make than the classic cake. You can of course vary the fruits according to your taste: use a mixture of raisins, currants, mixed peel or cherries instead.

MAKES 21 SQUARES

PREPARE AHEAD

This cake keeps well in a cake tin for 3–4 days.

FREEZE

Freeze in freezer bags for up to 3 months.

225g (8oz) baking spread
225g (8oz) caster sugar
275g (10oz) self-raising flour
2 level teaspoons baking powder
4 eggs
100g (4oz) sultanas
100g (4oz) dried cranberries
¼ tsp mixed spice
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons milk
3 tablespoons demerara sugar

1 Grease a 23 × 33cm (9 × 12in) tray bake tin and line the base with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Measure all the ingredients except the demerara sugar into a large bowl and beat well with a wooden spoon until well blended. Turn the mixture into the prepared tin and level the top. Sprinkle with the demerara sugar.

3 Bake for 35–40 minutes or until the cake has shrunk from the sides of the tin and springs back when pressed in the centre with your fingertips. Leave to cool in the tin, then cut into 21 squares and peel off the paper.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Use very soft butter instead of baking spread if you prefer.

Tray bake tins of this size are available from online and mail order baking retailers.

RASPBERRY *Swirl* MERINGUES

Not only do these look pretty, they taste divine too. Enjoy them on their own or sandwich them with whipped cream.

MAKES 9 DOUBLE MERINGUES

PREPARE AHEAD

These will keep well, unfilled, in a cake tin for up to 2 weeks. Not suitable for freezing.

12g (½oz) freeze-dried raspberries

3 egg whites

175g (6oz) caster sugar

TO SERVE

150ml (¼ pint) double cream, whipped

- 1 Line two baking trays with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 120°C/100°C fan/Gas ½.
- 2 Place the freeze-dried raspberries in a very small bowl and crush with the end of a wooden rolling pin to a fine powder. Set aside.
- 3 Put the egg whites in a large bowl and whisk with an electric whisk on full speed until they are stiff and look like a cloud. Add the sugar a tablespoonful at a time, whisking well after each addition until all the sugar has been incorporated. The meringue will be stiff and glossy. Using a spoon gently fold in most of the powdered raspberries, but don't over-mix as the mixture should look marbled.
- 4 Spoon tablespoonfuls of the mixture on to the lined trays, swirling it into nice round shapes. There should be enough to make about 18 medium-sized meringues. Sprinkle with a little of the remaining raspberry powder.
- 5 Bake for 1½ hours or until the meringues lift easily off the paper without sticking. Turn off the oven, keep the door ajar and leave the meringues in the oven until cold.

6 Sandwich with whipped cream no more than a couple of hours before serving or the meringues will become too soft.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Freeze-dried raspberries, strawberries and mango pieces are available in the cake decorating section of some large supermarkets, or you can order them online. Make sure any unused fruits are kept sealed in their packets.

To make chocolate-swirled meringues, swirl a tablespoon of cocoa powder through the mixture instead of the raspberry powder.



Raspberry Swirl Meringues

Rich CHOCOLATE TRAY BAKE WITH *Feathered* ICING

A chocolate sponge topped with a milk chocolate icing feathered with white chocolate, this is a great cake for a birthday party for the young as they love the sweetness of milk chocolate. And of course you can decorate it however you like – try topping it with sweets, chopped chocolate bars, marshmallows or lots and lots of candles!

If you are making this recipe for a more sophisticated occasion, use dark chocolate with about 40 per cent cocoa solids.

MAKES 21 SLICES

PREPARE AHEAD

This cake will keep for up to 1 week in a cake tin. If you want to serve the cake the day it is made, make sure you make the icing the day before or at least in the morning so it has time to set. Keep the icing in the fridge.

FREEZE

The cake can be iced and frozen in slices for up to 3 months, though the appearance won't be quite as shiny once it has thawed.

50g (2oz) cocoa powder
6 tablespoons boiling water
100g (4oz) baking spread or softened butter
275g (10oz) caster sugar
3 eggs, beaten
125ml (4fl oz) milk
175g (6oz) self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3–4 tablespoons warmed, sieved apricot jam

FOR THE ICING

100ml (4fl oz) double cream
200g (7oz) milk chocolate for baking, finely chopped or grated
50g (2oz) white chocolate, chopped

1 Grease a 30 × 20cm (12 × 8in) tray bake or roasting tin and line the base with baking paper. You will also need a small plastic piping bag. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Measure the cocoa into a bowl, add the boiling water and mix until smooth. Add the baking spread or butter and beat into the cocoa until smooth, then add the sugar, eggs, milk, flour and baking powder and mix until combined – this can be done in a mixer or by hand.

3 Pour into the prepared tin, spread evenly and bake in the oven for 30–35 minutes until well risen, just firm to the touch and shrinking away from the sides of the tin. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes then turn out on to a wire rack and peel off the paper. Brush the top of the cake with the warmed jam and leave to cool completely.

4 To make the icing, warm the cream in a small pan until hot, then add the milk chocolate and stir until completely melted and smooth. Leave to cool a little so that it is a thick pouring consistency (this shouldn't take long but depends on the room temperature). Pour the icing over the cake, spreading it out with a palette knife to cover the cake completely.

5 To decorate, melt the white chocolate in a small bowl set over a pan of gently simmering water, then place in a small piping bag, snip the end off the bag and pipe in lines down the length of the cake about 1cm (½in) apart. Drag a cocktail stick through the white chocolate in opposite directions across the cake to give a feathered effect.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Milk chocolate can be tricky – look for a good quality milk chocolate from the baking section of the supermarket, rather than a confectionery bar.

Ganache is so often made with dark chocolate and many children find this too bitter. This milk chocolate version is utterly delicious and will pour over the cooled cake or can be cooled until it is a little thicker to spread, like a fudge topping; it will set firm enough to roll into balls to make truffles too.



Rich Chocolate Tray Bake with Feathered Icing

CHOCOLATE AND *Ginger* FLAPJACKS

Flapjacks are the easiest, quickest tray bake to make and are always so popular. The addition of melted chocolate and ginger makes these a little bit different, giving them a slight kick of spice.

MAKES 24 SQUARES OR SLICES

PREPARE AHEAD

These flapjacks will keep for up to 2 weeks in a cake tin.

FREEZE

Place slices in a freezer bag and freeze for up to 2 months.

175g (6oz) butter
50g (2oz) dark chocolate, 40–60 per cent cocoa solids
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
225g (8oz) demerara sugar
75g (3oz) golden syrup
275g (10oz) porridge oats
100g (4oz) stem ginger, drained and finely chopped

1 Line a 30 × 23cm (12 × 9in) tray bake or roasting tin with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas 3.

2 Measure the butter, chocolate, cocoa powder, sugar and syrup into a medium pan and warm over a gentle heat until everything is melted and smooth.

3 Stir the oats and ginger into the melted mixture and mix well. Turn the mixture into the prepared tin and press flat with a palette knife or the back of a spoon.

4 Bake in the preheated oven for about 35–40 minutes until the mixture is bubbling and a little darker at the edges – it will still feel soft in the centre. Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely in the tin. When cold, turn out, remove the paper and cut into squares or slices.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Stem ginger is sometimes called crystallized ginger – for this recipe you should use the type that comes in round balls, stored in syrup.

If you are not keen on ginger, just leave it out, or use dried apricots instead.

If you want to make plain flapjacks omit the chocolate, cocoa and ginger, but increase the butter to 225g (8oz). Take care not to over-bake flapjacks or they become hard and difficult to cut.

Rose Petal BISCUITS

These beautiful buttery biscuits have the flavour and aroma of Turkish Delight from the use of crystallised rose petals and rose extract. They make a lovely gift or are just delicious to nibble with a cup of tea.

MAKES 20 BISCUITS

PREPARE AHEAD

These biscuits will keep in a cake tin for up to 1 week.

FREEZE

Either freeze the dough in a ball or as uncooked biscuits ready to pop in the oven (freeze on a tray until firm, then pack in a freezer container between baking paper) or freeze them baked. Freeze for 2 months only; any longer and the rose flavour will deteriorate.

275g (10oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting

200g (7oz) softened butter

100g (4oz) icing sugar

2 egg yolks, beaten

½ teaspoon rose extract

2 tablespoons sugared rose-petal pieces, chopped

icing sugar, to dust

1 You will need a 6cm (2½in) biscuit cutter (I like to use flower- or heart-shaped cutters). Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4.

2 Place the flour and butter in a bowl and rub together with your fingers until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the icing sugar then add the egg yolks, rose extract and rose petal pieces. Start squeezing the mixture together until it all binds to a dough. If the mixture is a little soft, chill until it is firm enough to roll.

3 Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work surface and using a 6cm (2½in) round or shaped cutter, cut out the biscuits.

4 Place the biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 12–15 minutes until just turning golden brown at the edges. Allow the biscuits to

cool for 5 minutes then remove from the tray and allow to cool completely. Dust with icing sugar to serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

You will find crystallised rose petals in many delicatessens and cake-decorating stores, or you can order them online.

Try using crystallised violets instead of roses. Or use lemon or orange zest instead of the roses.

These biscuits keep their shape really well so you can use a variety of different biscuit cutters.



Rose Petal Biscuits

DOUBLE *Choc Chip* COOKIES

Everyone loves a chocolate chip cookie, but while some like them crisp, others prefer a soft and chewy cookie. So here is a brilliantly versatile recipe that can be made either way. The trick with a soft, cake-like cookie is to use self-raising flour, as this makes the biscuits lighter in texture. If you like a harder cookie, substitute plain flour for self-raising.

MAKES ABOUT 16 COOKIES

PREPARE AHEAD

The mixture can be made and shaped into a log then chilled in the fridge for up to a week. Slice and bake as in step 4. The baked cookies will keep for two weeks in a cake tin.

FREEZE

The uncooked dough will keep for 1 month in the freezer – defrost in the fridge and cut off slices to bake as above. Or freeze the cooked cookies for up to 3 months.

75g (3oz) softened butter
75g (3oz) golden caster sugar
75g (3oz) light muscovado sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg
150g (5oz) self-raising flour
25g (1oz) cocoa powder
100g (4oz) plain, milk or white chocolate chips

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas 4. Line two baking trays with baking paper.

2 Place the butter and sugars in a mixing bowl and beat with a wooden spoon or electric mixer until soft and creamy. Gradually beat in the vanilla and egg until well combined.

3 Stir in the flour, cocoa powder and chocolate chips and mix to a soft dough. Roll the mixture into 16 golf-ball sized balls; the mixture will be a bit sticky, so chill for about 15 minutes before rolling if you have time. Flatten each biscuit with the palm of your hand to about 5mm (¼in) thick. They will spread to about 8cm (3in) wide so make sure there is plenty of

space between them on the prepared trays to allow for this amount of spread.

4 Bake the cookies for 12–15 minutes, until golden brown. Baking them for 12–13 minutes will give softer cookies, 15 minutes will dry them out a little more to make them crisper. Leave to cool on the baking tray for 10 minutes before lifting on to a wire rack to cool.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Instead of chocolate chips, add dried cranberries, raisins or chopped dried apricots if you prefer. For vanilla cookies, omit the cocoa powder and use the same quantity of flour instead.

TEATIME *Scones*

I have lost count of how many scones I have made over the years. I love large scones with clotted cream and jam, but for a teatime with a selection of cakes and sandwiches I prefer smaller scones, which are daintier to eat.

MAKES 16 SCONES

PREPARE AHEAD

Ideally you should eat the scones fresh, however, you could make them the day before and heat them gently in a hot oven (220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7) just for a few minutes to refresh them.

FREEZE

Cool then freeze. Defrost at room temperature then refresh in a hot oven (220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7) for 5 minutes.

250g (9oz) self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
1 rounded teaspoon baking powder
40g (1½oz) softened butter, plus extra for greasing
25g (1oz) caster sugar
1 egg
about 100ml (4fl oz) milk

TO SERVE

strawberry jam
clotted or whipped cream

1 You will need a 4cm (1½in) fluted cutter. Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas 7. Grease two baking trays.

2 Measure the flour and baking powder into a large bowl. Add the butter and rub it in with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar.

3 Beat the egg and place in a measuring jug. Pour in enough milk to make the liquid up to 100ml (4fl oz), then put about 1 tablespoon aside for glazing the scones later.

4 Gradually add the egg and milk mixture to the dry ingredients, stirring it in until you have a soft, slightly sticky dough.

5 Turn the mixture out on to a lightly floured surface and pat out until it is about 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) thick. Stamp out the scones using the 4cm ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in) cutter. Make sure you don't twist the cutter or the scones will not rise evenly.

6 Gently gather the trimmings together and pat out again to make more scones. Arrange the scones on the greased baking trays and brush the tops with the reserved milk.

7 Bake for 8 minutes until well risen and golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

8 To serve, cut each scone in half horizontally and top with strawberry jam and clotted or whipped cream.

VARIATIONS

CHEESE, TOMATO AND THYME SCONES

Omit the sugar from the mixture, and instead add 100g (4oz) finely grated Gruyère (reserving a little to sprinkle on top) and 75g (3oz) sun-blush tomatoes, snipped into little pieces. Add a good shake of salt and pepper and 1 teaspoon thyme leaves. Mix and cut as seen [here](#), sprinkling the tops with a little cheese before baking.

CINNAMON AND SULTANA SCONES

Add 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon and 75g (3oz) sultanas to the mixture.

LEMON OR ORANGE SCONES

Add the zest of 1 lemon or orange to the mixture, and serve the scones with lemon or orange curd.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

The scone dough should be slightly sticky to give the best results. Don't over-handle the dough or it will be tough, and don't be tempted to roll it out

too thinly or you won't get good deep scones.

For larger 5cm (2in) scones, bake for 10–12 minutes.



BLACKBERRY *Friands*

Friands are deliciously moist, light and buttery cakes. They are not over-sweet, so are ideal for afternoon tea. Made from ground almonds and butter, they use egg whites to lighten the mixture so there is no need for a raising agent. They are traditionally cooked in oval or barquette tins, but I just bake them in a non-stick muffin tray without any paper cases (see [Mary's Wise Words](#)).

MAKES 20 FRIANDS

PREPARE AHEAD

The baked cakes will keep in the fridge for 2 days.

FREEZE

Freeze for up to 3 months. Defrost at room temperature – they will only take a couple of hours to defrost.

200g (7oz) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

225g (8oz) icing sugar

75g (3oz) plain flour

150g (5oz) ground almonds

½ teaspoon almond extract

6 egg whites

150g (6oz) fresh blackberries

25g (1oz) flaked almonds

icing sugar, to dust

1 Grease one or two non-stick or silicone muffin tray(s). Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6.

2 Melt the butter in a small pan then remove from the heat and leave to cool a little.

3 Sift the icing sugar and flour into a bowl and stir in the ground almonds and extract.

4 Whisk the egg whites in a clean, grease-free bowl until they are foamy – they do not need to have soft peaks. Add the egg whites and melted butter

to the dry ingredients and using a large metal spoon fold the mixture together until just combined.

5 Divide the mixture between the muffin tin(s). The mixture should come to about three quarters of the way up each hole. Add two or three blackberries to each one and sprinkle with a few flaked almonds. Bake for 15–20 minutes until firm in the centre. Leave to cool for 5 minutes then turn out on to a wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar before serving.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Don't worry if you only have one muffin tin, bake the first batch, then cook the remainder later. Or use a mini muffin tin or a bun tin as well. They will take a little less time to cook, about 10–12 minutes.

Cultivated blackberries can be very large, so cut them in half if necessary. You could also use raspberries too.



Blackberry *Friands*

CRANBERRY AND WHITE CHOCOLATE *Shortbread*

I always have a tin of shortbread ready to offer friends (and always keep a stock in the freezer too). For me, the addition of cranberries and white chocolate chips has made this shortbread even more irresistible. Use dark chocolate chips if you prefer.

MAKES 8 WEDGES

PREPARE AHEAD

This will keep in a cake tin for up to 1 week.

FREEZE

This will keep for 2 months in the freezer. Defrost at room temperature.

100g (4oz) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
50g (2oz) semolina
100g (4oz) softened butter, plus extra for greasing
50g (2oz) caster sugar, plus extra to finish
50g (2oz) dried cranberries
50g (2oz) white chocolate chips

- 1 Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C fan/Gas 2. Lightly butter a baking tray.
- 2 Mix the flour and semolina together in a bowl, add the butter and rub in with your fingertips until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar, cranberries and chocolate chips. Squeeze the mixture together to make a smooth dough.
- 3 Roll out the dough on a lightly floured work surface into a 20cm (8in) round. Lift on to the baking tray. Crimp the edges to decorate. Prick all over with a fork and score into 8 wedges with a sharp knife. Chill for about 30 minutes until firm.
- 4 Bake for 40 minutes or until pale golden. Mark the wedges again and sprinkle the shortbread with caster sugar.

5 Allow the shortbread to cool on the baking tray for 5 minutes, then lift off carefully and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Cut into wedges to serve.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Semolina gives the shortbread a lovely crunch but you can use cornflour or rice flour instead. You will find dried cranberries in all the supermarkets.



Cranberry and White Chocolate *Shortbread*

Strawberry JAM

What better accompaniment to a batch of freshly baked scones (see [here](#)) than a pot of homemade strawberry jam?

MAKES 4–6 JARS

1kg (2lb 2oz) fresh strawberries, washed, hulled and dried

juice of 1 lemon

1kg (2lb 2oz) jam sugar

1 If the strawberries are large, cut them into halves. Put the strawberries and lemon juice into a large pan, and heat gently for 2–3 minutes until the fruit has just softened. Add the sugar to the pan and stir over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved and the liquid is clear, then boil steadily for about 6 minutes or until setting point.

2 To test if the jam is ready, spoon a little on to a cold plate and leave for a minute, then push the jam with your finger. If the jam crinkles and separates, without flooding back, setting point has been reached.

3 Set the jam aside and leave to cool. Spoon into sterilized jars, label and seal with wax paper and a lid.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Strawberries are naturally low in pectin. which gives jam its set when combined with sugar. Jam sugar has extra pectin added to ensure a good set.

SUMMER FRUIT *Smoothie*

Smoothies are not as sweet as milkshakes and are a little healthier too, so a perfect treat for a summer's day.

SERVES 4

225g (8oz) fresh blackberries

225g (8oz) fresh raspberries

225g (8oz) fresh blueberries

1 just ripe medium banana, broken into pieces

150ml (¼ pint) plain yoghurt

150ml (¼ pint) milk

1 good tablespoon icing sugar

1 Place all the ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth. Alternatively, use a hand held mixer.

2 Pour the smoothie into 4 tall, cool glasses and enjoy.



MARY'S WISE WORDS

If you prefer your smoothies a little sweeter, just add a little more icing sugar.



MARY'S MENU FOR
AFTERNOON TEA

Teatime Scones

*Whole Lemon Cake with
Lemon Cheesecake Icing*

*Chocolate Tray Bake with
Feathered Icing*

*Apple and Cinnamon
Loaf Cake*

Teatime Sandwiches

Orange Butterfly Cakes

CONVERSION TABLES

MEASUREMENTS

METRIC	IMPERIAL
5mm	¼in
1cm	½in
2.5cm	1in
5cm	2in
7.5cm	3in
10cm	4in
12.5cm	5in
15cm	6in
18cm	7in
20cm	8in
23cm	9in
25cm	10in
30cm	12in

OVEN TEMPERATURES

°C	FAN °C	°F	GAS MARK
140°C	120°C Fan	275°F	Gas 1
150°C	130°C Fan	300°F	Gas 2
160°C	140°C Fan	325°F	Gas 3
180°C	160°C Fan	350°F	Gas 4
190°C	170°C Fan	375°F	Gas 5
200°C	180°C Fan	400°F	Gas 6
220°C	200°C Fan	425°F	Gas 7
230°C	210°C Fan	450°F	Gas 8
240°C	220°C Fan	475°F	Gas 9

VOLUME

METRIC	IMPERIAL
25ml	1fl oz
50ml	2fl oz
85ml	3fl oz
100ml	3½fl oz
150ml	5fl oz (¼ pint)
200ml	7fl oz
300ml	10fl oz (½ pint)
450ml	15fl oz (¾ pint)
600ml	1 pint
700ml	1¼ pints
900ml	1½ pints
1 litre	1¾ pints
1.2 litres	2 pints
1.25 litres	2¼ pints
1.5 litres	2½ pints
1.6 litres	2¾ pints
1.75 litres	3 pints
1.8 litres	3¼ pints
2 litres	3½ pints
2.1 litres	3¾ pints
2.25 litres	4 pints
2.75 litres	5 pints
3.4 litres	6 pints
3.9 litres	7 pints
5 litres	8 pints (1 gallon)

WEIGHTS

METRIC	IMPERIAL
15g	½oz
25g	1oz
40g	1½oz
50g	2oz
75g	3oz
100g	4oz
150g	5oz
175g	6oz
200g	7oz
225g	8oz
250g	9oz
275g	10oz
350g	12oz
375g	13oz
400g	14oz
425g	15oz
450g	1lb
550g	1¼lb
675g	1½lb
750g	1¾lb
900g	2lb
1.5kg	3lb
1.75kg	4lb
2.25kg	5lb



MARY'S WISE WORDS

Conversions are approximate and have been rounded up or down.

When following a recipe, you should use either the metric or the imperial set of measurements only – never mix the two.

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For this book we were also joined by home economist Mitzie Wilson, she is immensely talented and has a wealth of experience to share. She and Lucinda have been cooking up all the recipes each week – we have had some very fun lunches together and indulged in many delicious meals from this book, so you can be assured that everything has been thoroughly tried and tested! And of course, my husband Paul, my children, their other halves and my grandchildren have all helped out with tastings and suggestions too.

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As you can see, we have had some wonderful parties while making this book – I hope you do while using it too!

Nary Berry

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