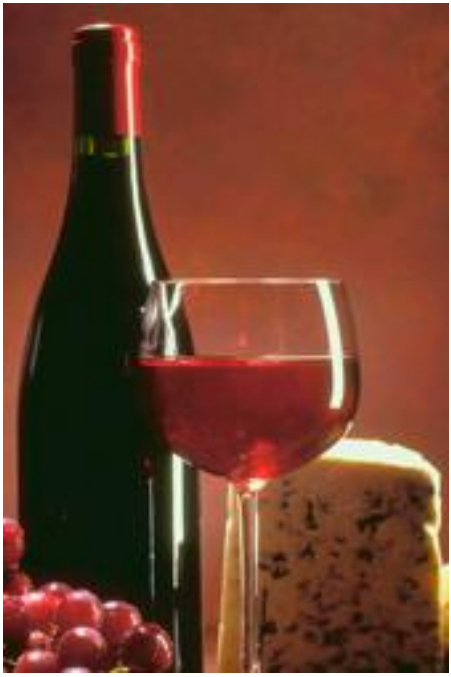
THE THREE TOWERS

MONTHLY RECIPIES

2011 to 2027





Editor's note:

This booklet is a compilation of all the recipes printed in The Three Towers from May 2011. Most recipes are "***Jane's Seasonal Recipes***" which were provided by our Advertising Manager, Jane Clark. Those that are not from Jane have the name of the individual contributor.

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SOUP

Asparagus Soup

June 2017

Serves 4-6

Asparagus has a mild delicate flavour, and is one of the first fresh spring vegetables after all the root veg of the winter. I was given several bundles of asparagus, which has a very short season, so I made a batch of soup for the freezer, and a couple of asparagus quiches.

1 large onion
25g butter
500g asparagus
2 medium potatoes
2 pints chicken stock
2 tbsp double cream

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add finely chopped onion and cook gently over a low heat until softened but not brown. Cut off the woody ends of the asparagus and chop the long thin spears into chunks. Add to the pan and cook gently. Peel and dice the potatoes and add to asparagus. Pour in hot chicken stock (for vegetarians use vegetable stock) and simmer for 20 mins. Whizz with a stick blender until smooth. To serve stir in double cream.

Curried Leek and Potato Soup

March 2022

Serves 4

A good wholesome winter soup.

3 leeks
1kg potatoes
2 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
2 teaspoons garam masala
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 litre veg stock
400ml coconut milk or cream

Thinly slice leeks, fry in oil over medium heat for about 5mins until slightly softened but not brown. Stir in spices and cook for 2 mins. Add peeled chopped potatoes and stock, bring to boil, turn down heat and simmer for 30 mins until potatoes are cooked. Stir in coconut milk and cook for 3 mins. Puree with a stick blender until smooth. Serve garnished with a dollop of crème fraiche.

Dolcelatte and Leek Soup with Parmesan Crisps

April 2017
Serves 4

This soup is Mary Berry's tasty variation on the traditional leek and potato. The parmesan crisps take it to a whole new level.

600ml milk
2 bay leaves
2 sprigs fresh thyme
¼ tsp fresh nutmeg
45g butter
1 large peeled potato (approx 300g cut into 1 in cubes)
2 leeks finely sliced
400ml veg stock
85g dolcelatte cheese (cut into small cubes)
50g parmesan, coarsely grated

Heat the milk, bay leaves, and nutmeg just to the boil. Set aside to infuse for 20 mins.
Make the parmesan crisps: heat the grill to highest setting. Line a baking sheet with parchment and make 8 circles of parmesan, shape in a round cutter. Grill for 4 mins until the cheese is melted and golden. Place on wire rack to cool.
Melt 25g butter, add potato cubes and cook for 5 mins over a very low heat, until starting to soften but do not allow to brown. Add rest of butter, increase heat, add leeks and cook for 4 mins, stirring often until almost tender. Pour in the stock and strained infused milk. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10 mins until veg is cooked. Puree the soup, reheat and stir in the dolcelatte.
Serve with a drizzle of cream and Parmesan crisps.

Granny's Mushroom Soup

May 2020

Serves 4

Katy McWilliams

1 oz butter
1 small onion, chopped finely
8 oz mushrooms, chopped finely
1 level tbsp flour
1 pt chicken stock
¼ pt milk
Salt and Pepper to taste

Melt the butter and add the onion until soft.
Add the mushrooms and sauté for 5 mins or until cooked through.
Stir in the flour and cook for 2 mins.
Cool slightly then add the stock and milk gradually.
Stir and bring to the boil. Season to taste.
Cover and simmer gently for 20 mins.

Serve with chopped parsley and crusty bread.

Green Soup

February 2018

Serves 2

After all the indulgences of the festive season, this makes a nutritious and healthy change.

1 tbsp olive oil
1 chopped onion
1 chopped courgette
500ml veg stock
1 chopped avocado
85g spinach
juice of ½ lemon

Sauté the onion until soft, add courgette and stock. Simmer for 10 mins. Add avocado, spinach and lemon juice. Cook for a few mins to wilt the spinach. Blend until smooth. Season to taste. Add more stock if you prefer a thinner soup.

Leek, Potato and Boursin Soup

February 2012
Serves 2-4

After the excesses of Christmas, a good warming bowl of soup goes down a treat. We have about 100 leeks still in the garden so this is a recipe that is very useful. Bob gets bored with plain leek and potato soup, so the addition of Boursin cheese (or any other similar garlic flavoured cheese works as well) elevates it from a simple soup to a special one.

2 tbsp olive oil
3 large leeks
3 large potatoes
2 pints vegetable stock
1 pack Boursin (or Roule) cheese

Heat the oil over a moderate heat, add thinly sliced leeks and cook gently until softened but not brown. Cut peeled potatoes into small pieces and add to leeks. Pour in hot stock and simmer until potatoes are soft (approx 15 mins). Allow to cool slightly then liquidise until smooth. Return to heat, add cheese and simmer until it has all melted. Season to taste.
Serve with fresh warm crusty bread.

Lentil and Chorizo Soup

May 2013

Serves 4

It has been a long cold winter and we have had plenty of soup to keep us warm. This has been my favourite soup recipe this season – using up the last of our carrots and onions from the garden.

50g chopped chorizo
1 large chopped onion
3 finely chopped large carrots
125g red lentils
2¼ pints veg stock
1 tbsp pumpkin seeds

Heat a large saucepan and gently fry chorizo for 5 mins until it gives up some of the oil. Remove chorizo – set aside in a bowl. Gently cook onions and carrots for 10 mins in the chorizo oil. Add rinsed lentils and stock. Bring to boil and simmer until lentils are soft – about 20 mins. Liquidise until smooth. Reheat, stirring in the chorizo. Check seasoning.
Serve in warmed soup bowls, sprinkle pumpkin seeds on the top.

Spicy Carrot and Coconut Soup

February 2015
Serves 4

It has been a bumper year for carrots in our garden – the largest we have ever had, mainly due to the load of soil we bought from British Sugar! So, this quick and easy variation on carrot soup is worth a try, if you like something a bit different.

1 tbsp oil
700g carrots, peeled and chopped
1 onion, peeled and chopped
2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp cumin seeds
1ltr veg stock
400ml can of light coconut milk
2 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
1 tbsp desiccated coconut, toasted

Heat the oil in a pan, add veg and cumin seeds. Cook over moderate heat for 5 mins, stirring. Pour in stock, bring to boil, cover and simmer for 20 mins. Liquidise and add coconut milk. Heat through. Serve in warm bowls, with swirl of coconut milk and a sprinkling of coriander and toasted coconut.

Spicy Lemony Lentil Green Soup

March 2020
Serves 4

This is my adaptation of a Waitrose recipe – a tasty winter warmer. The original recipe used cavolo nero but I put sprout tops in, though any leafy greens could be used.

250g red lentils
1 onion
1 tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp chilli flakes
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 large potato
1 lemon
½ tsp salt
200g Brussel sprouts
2 tbsp olive oil
chopped coriander to serve

Put lentils and chopped onion in large pan with turmeric, ground cumin and half chilli flakes. Add 900ml cold water, bring to boil and simmer very gently for 15 mins. Stir in small cubes of potato, 2 strips of pared lemon rind and salt. Add another 500ml water and simmer gently for 20 mins. Stir in the greens and cook for 5 mins until wilted. Whizz with a soup blender to the consistency required – I prefer it slightly chunky. Season with pepper and the juice of ½ lemon. Heat the oil in a small pan, stir in the rest of the chilli flakes, cumin seeds and 2 strips of lemon zest. Sizzle gently for 2 mins until seeds are toasted and the oil a reddish colour. Drizzle over the soup and add chopped coriander and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Spicy Pumpkin and Butter Bean Soup

November 2024

Don’t waste the inside of your pumpkin – make this delicious warming soup!

1oz butter
1 chopped onion
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1lb pumpkin or butternut squash
14oz can butter beans
1 pint veg stock
¼ pint double cream
Chopped coriander to garnish

Fry onion gently in butter until soft. Stir in chilli flakes, drained butter beans and pumpkin. Cook for 5 mins. Pour in stock, bring to boil then simmer for 30 mins. Process with a blender until smooth. Stir in cream and heat through. Garnish with coriander



SAVOURY

Beetroot Tarte Tatin

December 2020 & January 2021
Serves 2-4

This is a BBC Food recipe that I have adapted. I have reduced the amount of caramel as I felt it was a little too sweet. It is a very tasty unusual dish – so if you love beetroot give it a try! You could use pre-cooked beetroots to save on time, otherwise you have to prepare well in advance.

4 medium sized beetroot
35g butter
35g caster sugar
200g puff pastry
1 egg
FRYING PAN WITH METAL HANDLE

Wrap washed raw beetroots in foil, place on a baking tray and cook 200°C for approx 1½ hours. Set aside to cool in foil. Peel the beets and cut into quarters. Cover the base of 8in frying pan with butter – spread out and press down with fingers. Sprinkle sugar over butter. Heat over a medium heat until butter melts and sugar turns light golden. Arrange the beets in circles to cover the base of the pan. Set aside to cool. Roll out the pastry to 8in circle to fit over the top of the pan. Brush the pastry with beaten egg. Ensure that the frying pan is safe to use in the oven – silicon handles can cope up to 240°C. Bake in oven 200°C for approx 40 mins until pastry is golden and oozing caramel slightly at the edges. Invert carefully onto a serving plate. Serve with a green salad and balsamic dressing.

Cheese and Marmite Monkey Bread

December 2025 & January 2026

This is a very special bread recipe that Bob and I absolutely love! I made it for the Harvest Supper and it proved very popular. It is good for a special occasion – Christmas brunch perhaps, as it can be made the day before, kept in the fridge overnight, then cooked in the morning and served still warm. The aroma is wonderful! The recipe came from a Waitrose weekly newspaper in June 2020.

75g butter
200ml milk
500g strong white bread flour
7g sachet instant yeast
1 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
oil for greasing

COATING:
125g butter
50g Marmite
125g Cheddar

Heat cubed butter with milk until just melted. Set aside to cool. Put the flour in a large bowl, add yeast to one side and salt to the other (if you put the salt directly on the yeast it may kill the yeast and dough will not rise). Beat eggs into lukewarm milk. Gradually add to flour stirring to form a sticky dough. Knead on a lightly oiled surface for 10-15 mins until smooth and elastic (you can use a stand mixer with a dough hook attachment). Place the dough into an oiled bowl, cover with cling film and leave in a warm place for 1-2 hours until doubled in size. Grease a large Bundt or Savarin tin (round with a hole in the middle).

For the coating - melt the butter and Marmite over a low heat. Divide the dough into 25-30 small balls – they don't need to be equal in size. Roll each ball in Marmite butter, then the grated cheese. Randomly

scatter the balls into the Bundt tin, trying not to squash them down. They will touch and stick together as the dough proves. Tip any remaining butter and cheese over the top. Cover and leave to rise for one hour (or refrigerate until needed – it will rise in the fridge). Heat oven to 200°C, bake for 30 mins until well risen and golden. Leave to cool 5 mins then invert onto a serving plate and tap sharply to remove the bread in one piece. (I recommend a non-stick tin as mine always gets stuck!)

Bread and Cheese Bake

August 2018
Serves 2

This is a savoury variation of a bread and butter pudding. Quick and easy to make, so ideal for a quick lunch or supper.

4 slices multigrain bread, buttered
5oz mature cheddar, grated
4 spring onions finely chopped
¼ tsp mixed herbs
2 eggs
½ pint milk
Cayenne or paprika to sprinkle

Cut each slice of bread in half and arrange overlapping in a small shallow square baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese, onions and herbs. Mix eggs and milk together with a fork, and pour carefully over bread. Leave to stand for 20 mins. Heat oven to 190^0C and bake for 20 mins until golden brown and set. Serve with a simple leaf salad and tomatoes.

Cheesey Sprout Breakfast Muffins

February 2025

Makes 12

A glut of sprouts, made me look for different ideas to use them up! These muffins are tasty, and with lots of healthy ingredients, very good for you. Perhaps children who won't eat sprouts might eat them in this form! Other greens could be substituted.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 red onion
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
115g Brussels sprouts
250g sr flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
2 eggs
250g natural yogurt
100g grated strong cheddar cheese
1 grated carrot
4 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
2 tablespoons pine nuts

Heat the oil in a fry pan, cook finely chopped onion over a medium heat, until softened. Stir in spices and finely shredded sprouts, cook for 3 mins. Leave to cool. Mix flour and bicarb in a large bowl. Beat eggs and yogurt, stir into flour, with cooled sprout mixture. Fold in cheese, carrots and seeds. Divide mixture into 12 paper muffin cases. Bake in oven at 200c for 20 mins until risen and golden.

Best eaten warm, but will keep for 2 days and can be reheated.

Courgette and Cheese Muffins
October 2018
Makes 12

Despite the hot dry weather our courgettes have been very abundant. These savoury muffins are very tasty and quick to make.

2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp bicarb
1 tsp chilli powder
250g wholemeal flour
1 tbsp fresh snipped chives
300g grated courgettes
120g grated mature cheddar
2 eggs
150g natural yogurt
100ml milk
6 tbsp olive oil
10g sunflower seeds

Brush 12 paper muffin cases with a little melted butter, to make the muffins easier to remove. Mix flour, baking powder, bicarb, chilli powder and chives. Stir in 100g cheese, and courgettes. Whisk eggs, milk, yogurt and oil until combined. Stir into dry mix, until just blended. Do not over stir. Divide mixture into muffin cases and sprinkle with rest of cheese and sunflower seeds. Bake 180^0C for 30 mins until golden. Cool in the tin for 5 mins then stand on a wire rack to cool.

Can be eaten warm or cold. Can be kept for 3 days in a tin but warm through in a low oven.

Crackle Cheese Biscuits

February 2023
Makes 30

A Mary Berry recipe. Delicious little nibbles to serve with drinks. The Rice Krispies give them a delicious crunch. Very moreish!

100g soft butter
100g plain flour
100g mature cheddar cheese
¼ teaspoon salt
25g Rice Krispies

Whizz all the ingredients, except the Rice Krispies, in a food processor, until the mixture comes together. Add Rice Krispies, mix well with hands to combine. Shape into 30 small balls. Place on baking sheets lined with non-stick baking paper, bake at 180°C for 16-18 mins until lightly golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cook. Store in an airtight tine for up to a week – if they last that long!

Crumpets with Cream Cheese and Herbs

June 2026

Serves 4

A tasty quick and simple supper dish from the Dairy Diary.

225g spinach
250g cream cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 spring onions, finely sliced
8 crumpets

Put spinach into a large pan, cover. Wilt over medium heat for 3 mins. Drain in a colander, then roughly chop. Soften cream cheese, stir in herbs and spring onions. Season. Toast crumpets. Spread with herby cream cheese and spoon spinach on top. Serve warm

Devilled Mushrooms on Toast

December 2026
Serves 2

A quick and easy light lunch or supper dish which can be adapted – add veg of your choice, onions or courgettes perhaps. We still have yellow peppers in the greenhouse, not huge, but plenty of them this year despite the weather.

2 sweet red or yellow peppers
400g small mushrooms
2 tablespoons oil
2 tablespoons tomato puree
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Thinly slice the peppers and fry in oil until soft. Add thinly sliced mushrooms and cook over a medium heat, until soft, stirring occasionally. Add tomato puree and Worcestershire sauce, stirring until well coated. Serve on toast or muffins.

Frittata

October 2019

Serves 4

August and September saw an abundance of veg in our garden, so this is a good recipe to use them up; and makes a quick supper dish. It is a recipe to experiment with – all sorts of veg can be used and although this is a vegetarian recipe, there is an option to add cooked meat – ham, pepperami or sausage.

1 large onion
2 tbsp oil
8oz courgettes
8oz mange tout
8oz French beans
8oz small new potatoes, cooked, sliced or chopped
8oz cherry tomatoes, halved
6 eggs
4oz grated cheese
freshly ground black pepper

Fry sliced onion in oil, in a large frying pan, over a medium heat until softened. Blanch courgette, mange tout and beans for 2 mins. Drain and add to frying pan with potatoes. Cook for a few mins, then spread evenly over the base of the pan. Beat the eggs with a fork, then pour gently into the pan. Cook over a medium heat until the egg is just set. Scatter the tomatoes over the egg, then sprinkle over black pepper and grated cheese. Place under a hot grill until the cheese is melting and just starting to brown. Slide onto a serving plate and cut into quarters.

Gnocchi with Cabbage and Roasted Red Peppers

July 2023
Serves 4

My adaptation of a Waitrose recipe! I used spring cabbage from our veg plot, but you could use spinach (stir straight into the tomato sauce) or kale. A nutritious supper dish that contains 3 of your 5-a-day!

3 red peppers
2 onions
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pack of gnocchi
190g jar chilli pesto
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar
1 small spring cabbage

Slice peppers and onions. Scatter in a large roasting tin, sprinkle with oil and roast for 30mins at 200°C. Fry the gnocchi in 1 tablespoon oil over a medium heat until lightly browned, about 10mins. In a saucepan heat the pesto, tomatoes, vinegar and sugar. Add finely shredded cabbage to a pan of boiling water and cook for 5 mins. Drain well and add to tomato sauce. Stir in the roasted veg and gnocchi. Serve in bowls with crusty bread.

Ham and Spinach Tart

February 2013
Serves 4

This is a very tasty tart - a cross between a quiche and a pizza. The beauty is that it is incredibly quick and simple to make. I always keep a block of ready-made puff pastry in the freezer, so the tart can be produced in no time for unexpected guests. During the festive season it was a good way to use up leftover gammon.

½ block ready-made puff pastry (approx 200g)
200g baby spinach leaves
2 eggs
25g grated parmesan
75g grated mature cheddar
125g cooked ham

Roll the pastry into a rectangle approx 12 x 8-inch. Score a border 1 inch from the edge and prick with a fork inside the border. Bake for 15 mins at 200°C. Gently flatten the centre down so that it will take the filling. While the pastry is baking, put the spinach in a colander and pour over a kettle full of boiling water. Drain well. When cool, squeeze out water and chop the spinach. Mix spinach with beaten eggs, most of cheese, and seasoning. Spread over the base of the pastry inside the border, scatter over chopped ham and finish with remaining cheese. Bake for 15 mins until lightly brown and just set. Serve warm with a tomato salad.

This recipe is very adaptable – cooked chicken could be substituted; or for a vegetarian option omit the meat and add extra vegetables - sun dried tomatoes, sweet peppers, mushrooms etc.

Lamb Crumble

June 2024

Serves 4

I have used this recipe for many years from a Milk Marketing Board Cook Book (in the 1970's!) It is a good way of using up meat from the Sunday roast and stretching it into another meal.

12 oz cold roast lamb or beef
1 small onion
4 ½ oz plain flour
1 tablespoon tomato puree
½ pint stock
2 oz butter
2 oz mature cheddar
½ teaspoon mixed herbs

Mince the meat and onions together. Mix in ½ oz flour, puree and stock. Turn into a pie dish. Rub the butter into remaining 4 oz flour until resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in grated cheese and herbs. Spoon over the meat and bake 180°C for 45 mins to 1 hour until crumble is crisp and golden. Serve with green veg and gravy.

Leek and Pancetta Gnocchi Bake

December 2021 – January 2022
Serves 2-3

I have only recently discovered gnocchi – a very versatile ingredient, perfect to rustle up a quick supper dish. Gnocchi are Italian potato dumplings and can be found in bags in the chill cabinet in most supermarkets.

500g bag of gnocchi
25g butter
1 large leek, finely sliced
50g pancetta, cubetti or bacon bits
1 tbsp cornflour
½ pint milk
100g cheddar

Melt butter in pan, add leeks, cook for 10 mins over moderate heat, until just starting to soften. Do not allow them to brown. Meanwhile boil the gnocchi for 2 mins in a pan of water. Drain well, tip into ovenproof dish. Add bacon to leeks, cook for 5 mins until bacon is slightly browned. Stir in cornflour, cook for 1 min. Gradually stir in milk until sauce thickens. Pour sauce over gnocchi, sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake at 190°C for 30 mins until golden and bubbling.

Leek and Cheddar Rolls

March 2021
Makes 8

Leeks are a staple veg in our garden, so this is a very popular recipe, as we always have plenty of leeks to use up before the spring planting starts. They freeze very well so a useful standby for a quick lunch with a few tomatoes.

1 large leek
115g mature cheddar
140g fresh breadcrumbs
1 large egg
40ml milk
250g puff pastry
egg to glaze

In a large bowl mix finely chopped leek, grated cheddar and breadcrumbs with beaten egg and milk, until it just holds its shape when pressed together. Roll pastry into a 40x30cm rectangle. Divide the filling in half and place each half along the 2 long edges pressing the mixture tightly into a sausage shape. Cut the pastry down the middle, brush the edges with beaten egg, then fold the pastry over each cheese roll and press firmly into place along the seam. Cut each roll into 4 even sized pieces and place on a tray lined with baking paper. Make diagonal slashes with a sharp knife, then brush all over with egg. Bake 25-30 mins at 210°C until pastry is golden and puffed up. Cool on a wire rack. Can be eaten warm or cold.

Mincemeat Monkey Bread

February 2026

250ml warm milk
7g sachet fast action yeast
50g granulated sugar
2 eggs
50g melted butter
1 teaspoon salt
500g plain flour

COATING: 115g melted butter
200g granulated sugar
2 tablespoons cinnamon

FILLING: 350g mincemeat
55g softened butter
55g light brown soft sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

GLAZE: (OPTIONAL)
100g icing sugar
2 tablespoons single cream
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Whisk the warm milk, yeast and sugar. Cover, set aside for 5 mins to activate the yeast. Using a stand mixer with a dough hook, add eggs, melted butter, salt and 125g flour. Beat on a low speed for 30 secs. Scrape the sides of the bowl with a silicone spatula. Add remaining flour. Beat until dough comes away from sides – about 2 mins. Continue mixing dough for 7 mins. Place dough in a lightly oiled bowl and turn it to coat all over in oil. Cover and leave to rise in a warm place for 1-2 hours until doubled in size. Generously oil 2.4 litre bundt tin.
Mix mincemeat, softened butter, brown sugar and vanilla until well combined.

For the coating melt butter in small bowl, mix cinnamon and granulated sugar in a separate bowl.

Once the dough has risen knock it back in the middle to release air then roll into approx 50 small balls about the size of a walnut. Dip each ball in melted butter then roll in cinnamon sugar. Layer the balls in the bundt tin. When a layer is complete, spread with 2 tablespoons of mincemeat mixture. Repeat, building several layers, spreading remaining mixture over final layer. Cover with cling film, leave to rise for 30 mins. At this stage it can be put in fridge overnight and cooked the next day as required.

Bake 180°C for 40 mins until golden and cooked through. Cool on a wire rack for 5 mins. Loosen carefully with narrow silicone spatula and turn out onto serving plate. To make the glaze: whisk the sugar, cream and vanilla, Drizzle over bread, serve warm, tear and share style!

Muffuletta

July 2018
Serves 4

This is a stuffed sandwich loaf – perfect for picnics. The meats and cheeses can be varied according to taste.

1 small round white crusty loaf
1 ball mozzarella, sliced
8 slices Italian salami
6 slices Emmental
8 slices cooked ham

Olive Salad
100g green olives stuffed with pimento, sliced
1 shallot, finely chopped
½ celery stick, finely diced 1tbsp capers, rinsed and drained
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp red wine vinegar

Mix olive salad ingredients and leave to stand for ½ hour. Split the loaf in half horizontally, and hollow out some of the bread from top and bottom (save and freeze to use for bread crumbs). Spread ½ olive mixture in bottom and add alternate layers of meat and cheese, finishing with rest of the olive salad. Put the top half of the bread on and press down. Wrap tightly in foil and weigh down for 1 hour (can be kept in fridge overnight). Cut into quarters to serve.

Parsnip & Parmesan Scones

November 2022

Makes 15

This is a recipe from a Waitrose newspaper. At the time of going to print, I haven't actually made them, so I do hope they are ok! We have parsnips in the garden and intend to dig up the first ones in a few days, so I look forward to trying out this recipe. Let me know what you think of them.

320g sr flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp dried sage
75g butter
1 large parsnip
30g parmesan
½ tsp wholegrain mustard
150ml milk
1 egg

Mix flour, baking powder and sage in a large bowl. Rub in butter to make fine breadcrumbs. Stir in coarsely grated parsnips and 25g finely grated parmesan. Mix mustard with milk, stir into flour with a round bladed knife, combining well. Tip dough onto a floured board, bring together and roll out to 2.5cm thick. Use a 5cm cutter to cut 15 scones. Put on a baking sheet, brush with beaten egg and scatter over remaining parmesan. Bake at 220°C for 12-15 mins until risen and golden. Serve warm, spread with butter.

Pumpkin & Chorizo Frittata

April 2021
Serves 4

This is a nutritious, quick & easy supper dish which can be adapted to suit – omit chorizo for vegetarians. Butternut squash can be used instead of pumpkin.

2 tablespoons oil
1 onion, sliced
1 red pepper, sliced
pumpkin approx. 450g peeled & chopped into 1 cm dice
150g chorizo, sliced
6 eggs
3 tablespoon milk
110g feta
12 sage leaves

Fry onion in large pan for 5 mins. Stir in red pepper and pumpkin, cooking a further 5 mins. Tip into baking dish and put in oven 180^0C. Add chorizo to hot pan and cook for 2 mins over medium heat. Add to veg in dish and sprinkle over sage leaves. Whisk eggs and milk, season and pour over veg and chorizo. Crumble feta over top, bake for 30 mins until golden. Leave for 10 mins until cutting into squares.

Serve with green salad.

Rhubarb and Ginger Scones

May 2021
Makes 12-14

The rhubarb season is here. Rhubarb planted in our garden has finally come to fruition! Over the years we have tried to grow it numerous times with no success. But last year two small clumps we were given took root; so this is the first recipe I have tried with it. Rhubarb crumble was always very popular at the Regional house, with a plentiful supply in the garden there.

750g sr flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
185g caster sugar
185g butter
200g young pink rhubarb
1 piece stem ginger in syrup from a jar
300ml milk

Mix flour, baking powder and sugar in large bowl. Add butter cut into small cubes. Rub in, until resembles fine breadcrumbs. (Do not use Kenwood or Kitchen Aid mixer – as I discovered flour went everywhere! You could half the quantities!) Cut rhubarb and ginger into small cubes. Add to mixture. Stir in most of milk (you can add ginger syrup from the jar to give a more gingery flavour) to make a soft, slightly sticky dough but don't over mix. Turn onto floured surface. Roll out to 3cm thick. Stamp out circles with 8cm cutter. Knead trimmings and reroll, stamping out more scones, making 12-14. Place on baking tray lined with paper, brush tops with milk and bake 180^{0}C for approx 20 mins until risen and golden.

Shallot Tarts

August 2015

Makes 4

2014 was a good year for onions – we grew some very large specimens and have only just finished eating them all. We also grew a lot of shallots and are still eating those. These tarts are very tasty and a good way to use up shallots.

2 tbsp olive oil
1 medium onion peeled and finely chopped
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
3 tbsp soft brown sugar
20-24 shallots peeled
500g pack frozen puff pastry
50g grated cheese

Gently fry chopped onion in oil for 4 mins until softened. Stir in balsamic vinegar and sugar. Cook for 2 mins until slightly gooey. Set aside to cool. Roll out pastry and cut into 4 x 5-inch rounds approx ¼cm thick, using a plain cutter. Lightly score a circle 1 inch in from the edge of each. Spread the inner circle of each round with chopped onion mixture. Top each one with 5-6 shallots (depending on size) then sprinkle with cheese. Bake for 20 mins at 200^0C until pastry is golden brown. Serve with green salad and tomato.

Spinach Pancakes

March 2019

With Shrove Tuesday coming up, this savoury filling is a good variation on traditional sweet pancakes.

8 ready-made pancakes
200g baby spinach leaves, very finely chopped
25g butter
50g salted peanuts
½ tsp paprika
50g stilton cheese
4 tsp plain flour
150ml single cream

Heat butter in a small pan, add peanuts and paprika, fry gently for 1 min. Add spinach and most of crumbled stilton. Stir in flour and cream. Bring to boil and cook gently for 3 mins, stirring. Divide filling between warmed pancakes and sprinkled with remaining crumbled stilton.

Turkey Toasts

February 2024
Serves 4

Although this is a good way of using up some of your Christmas turkey, it would work just as well with chicken left over from your Sunday roast.

25g butter
25g plain flour
½ pint chicken stock
3 tablespoons cream
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon mustard of your choice (optional)
200g cooked turkey
Snipped chives
4 slices crusty bread
115g grated cheese

Melt butter in pan, stir in flour, add stock; bring to boil, stirring continuously. Add cream, mayo, mustard, chives and cubed turkey. Stir well, keep warm. Lightly toast bread on both sides, spread with turkey mixture, sprinkle with cheese. Grill lightly until cheese just melts. Garnish with chives and serve with cranberry sauce.



MAIN

Beef and Beetroot Casserole

October 2012

Serves 4

Beetroot has been one of our more successful crops this year, so this is a good way of using it that makes a change from pickled beetroot, beetroot salad or chutney. It is a very hearty, wholesome casserole that can be served with jacket potatoes and a green vegetable.

1kg stewing beef
2 tbsp olive oil
20g butter
16 whole shallots, peeled
1 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp plain flour
8 small beetroots, peeled and halved
290ml red wine
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
290ml beef stock
2 tbsp crème fraiche
1 tbsp dry mustard
3 tbsp creamed horseradish

Heat oil and butter, brown beef over a high heat. Remove beef from pan. Reduce heat, add shallots and cook for 5-10 mins until golden. Stir in sugar and cook until the shallots are caramelised. Add flour and cook for 1 min. Add red wine and vinegar. Blend in stock. Return beef to pan and add beetroot. Cover and cook in oven at 160^0C for 2 hours until beef is tender. Mix crème fraiche, mustard and horseradish. Stir into casserole before serving.

Cauliflower Crisp

June 2013

Serves 2-4, depending on size of cauliflower

For the past few weeks, we have had a glut of cauliflowers and every evening meal has included cauliflower in some form! Cauliflower and gorgonzola soup was good and cauliflower cheese is always popular. This vegetarian dish was tasty, even for us carnivores!

1 cauliflower, broken into florets
2 tomatoes, cut into quarters
1½oz butter
8oz sliced mushrooms
1oz plain flour
½ pint milk
6oz grated Cheddar cheese
2 tbsp fresh breadcrumbs
Salt and pepper

Steam cauliflower until just tender – approx 10 mins. Drain and place in shallow dish with tomatoes. Melt butter and gently fry mushrooms for 5 mins. Add flour and milk, bring to boil stirring continuously. Stir in most of cheese and seasoning. Pour over cauliflower. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and rest of cheese. Bake in oven for 20 mins, 200^0C. Serve with jacket potatoes.

Chicken Jalfrezi

November 2019

Serves 4

Bob planted about a dozen red pepper seeds from a packet labelled sweet peppers, but showing a picture of red chillies. They turned out to be all chilli peppers, except for one sweet pepper plant! So now I have to use up about a hundred very hot red chillies. It was suggested I could give out a red chilli with each mag!

3 tbsp oil
1 ½ tsp cumin seeds
2 ins piece of fresh ginger, chopped
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tsp ground turmeric
2 tbsp mild curry paste
4 chicken breasts, cubed
1 red chilli finely chopped (seeds and all!)
1 green pepper, chopped
1 red pepper, chopped
8oz cherry tomatoes, halved
6floz coconut milk
1 tbsp garam masala

Heat oil, stir fry cumin seeds for 1 min. Add onions, ginger and turmeric. Stir fry 1 min, add 2 tbsp water and mild curry paste, stir well. Add chicken pieces, stirring and coating well. Add chilli, and peppers, stir fry for 10 mins, gradually adding coconut milk. Stir in garam masala. Cook gently for 10 mins until chicken is cooked through. Serve with rice and poppadums.

Chicken Jollof Traybake

August 2019

Serves 4

This is a quick and easy recipe that I adapted from a Lidl magazine, based on a spicy West African recipe. With tomatoes and peppers from our greenhouse and courgettes in the garden, this is ideal for a last-min supper dish.

8 chicken thighs
1 tbsp oil
1 onion
1 red pepper
1 red chilli
1 tsp paprika
400ml tin chopped tomatoes
600ml chicken stock
1 courgette
200g mixed colour cherry tomatoes
300g basmati rice

Arrange chicken in a large roasting tray, bake at 200^0C for 15 mins. Fry sliced onion and pepper in oil for 5 mins. Stir in chopped chilli and paprika, fry for 2 mins. Add chopped tomatoes and stock. Pour the pepper sauce around the thighs, add rice and stir well. Add sliced courgettes, and cherry tomatoes, ensuring chicken is uncovered. Roast for 40 mins until chicken is golden and the rice is cooked.

Chicken, Chorizo, Butterbean and Spinach Casserole

March 2016

Serves 4

This is a hearty dish which, although only having made it twice, is already a firm favourite in our home.

2 tbsp olive oil
500g boneless chicken thighs
1 onion, finely chopped
90g smoked bacon lardons
1 tsp smoked paprika
100g chorizo, chopped
100ml red wine
400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato puree
250g tin butterbeans, drained
100g baby spinach leaves

Heat 1 tbsp oil in ovenproof casserole dish. Fry chicken until lightly browned. Remove from pan. Add rest of oil, fry onion and bacon for 3 mins, add chorizo and paprika and fry a further 2 mins. Add wine, butter beans, tomatoes and puree. Return chicken to pan. Add ½ pint water, cover and cook in oven at 160^0C for 2 hours. Remove from oven and add spinach, giving casserole a good stir until spinach has wilted.
Serve with jacket potato, rice or crusty bread.

Courgette Pasta

November 2023

Serves 2

An abundance of courgettes resulted in this very quick and easy recipe, that I adapted from a Waitrose newspaper – ready in the time it takes to cook the spaghetti!

2 medium sized grated courgettes
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons capers
Toasted pine nuts
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons crème fraiche
2 tablespoons pesto (green red or chilli)
100g rocket
Fresh basil leaves
Spaghetti
Parmesan

Fry the grated courgettes in olive oil for 2 mins. Add drained, rinsed capers, cook for 1 min. Add crème fraiche and pesto. Stir in pine nuts, lemon juice and zest. Warm through gently. Toss in rocket and basil. Stir in cooked spaghetti, sprinkle with grated parmesan.

Curried Beef Stew with Parsnip Dumplings

April 2023

Serves 4

A Tesco recipe for parsnip dumplings sounded very different – and it is very tasty!

1 tablespoon oil
400g diced beef
1 onion, sliced
2 carrots, cut into chunks
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon coriander
100g sr flour
600ml beef stock
300g parsnips, roughly chopped
300g potatoes, chopped
1 teaspoon rosemary
5g fresh parsley, chopped
100g mature cheddar, grated

Brown the beef in oil. Add onions and carrots cook over medium heat for 5 mins. Stir in spices, 1 tablespoon flour and cook for 1 min. Add beef stock. Bring to boil, cook in oven 170^{0}C for 1½ hrs. Meanwhile put parsnips and potatoes in cold water, boil for 10-12 mins until tender. Drain well, steam dry for a few mins then mash well with herbs, flour, and 75g grated cheese. Leave to cool while stew cooks. Shape potato mix into small dumplings and place on top of stew. Sprinkle over rest of cheese. Bake in oven 200^{0}C for approx. 30 mins until dumplings are golden and cooked through. Serve with green veg.

Fruity Edam Curry

June 2011

Serves 2

This is a quick and easy recipe I use a lot at home. To make it even easier and quicker you could use a ready-made curry sauce! It can also be made with gouda or even cheddar, but a lower fat cheese works best.

1 onion chopped
½oz butter or 2 tbsp of oil
1 tbsp of mild curry powder (or stronger if you prefer)
1 tbsp cornflour
½ pint vegetable stock
2 tbsp chutney
1oz sultanas
1 courgette
1 eating apple
200g edam cheese

Fry the onion gently in the oil for 5-10 mins until softened but not brown. Add the curry powder and cornflour, cook for 2 mins. Gradually add the stock, heat gently until thickened. Add the sultanas and chutney. Simmer gently for 10 mins. Add chopped courgette and chopped apple (skin can stay on) cook for 5 mins. When almost ready to serve, remove from heat and stir in cubed edam at the last min. Serve with boiled white rice.

Lamb Kebabs

July 2024

Serves 2 as a main or 4 as a snack

Tom McWilliams

This is one of Madhur Jaffrey's wonderfully simple recipes that is perfect for the summer. Cook on the BBQ or under a grill.

250 g boned shoulder or leg of lamb
4 tbsp full-fat natural yoghurt
1½ tbsp lemon juice
2.5 cm cube of grated fresh ginger
1½ tbsp vegetable oil
1 crushed clove of garlic
1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground coriander
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¾ tsp salt

Cut the meat into 2 cm cubes and place in a bowl or a freezer bag.
Mix the yoghurt, lemon juice and salt with the spices.
Add the yoghurt mixture to the meat, cover and refrigerate for anywhere between 6 and 24 hours.
At least 30 mins before cooking, remove the meat from the fridge and thread onto skewers and lightly brush with vegetable oil.
If using a grill, place the kebabs on a baking tray to keep your oven clean.
Bring the BBQ or grill up to temperature and cook the kebabs until lightly browned on one side then turn to brown the other side.

Note: I prefer to use a freezer bag for marinades as it ensures better coating of the meat and is easy to pop just about anywhere in the fridge.

Leek and Cheese Stuffed Squash

December 2022

Serves 4

We grew a variety of squash called “Honey Bear” this year, and had loads of them! They have a creamy orange flesh but don’t grow very big, so this recipe is perfect for them. It is a Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall recipe.

4 small squash about 450g each
35g butter
2 large leeks, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon English mustard powder
4 tablespoons crème fraiche
125g gruyere, or other strong flavoured cheese
Fresh or dried thyme
Black pepper

Fry leeks in butter over a medium heat; when they sizzle turn the heat right down, cover the pan, sweat gently for 10 mins until very soft. Stir in mustard, crème fraiche and cheese. Season with black pepper and thyme. Cut a small slice off the base of each squash, so it will stand up in a baking tin. Carefully slice a lid off the top of each squash. With a sharp knife cut out the centre of the squash and scoop out the seeds. Fill the cavity with the leek mixture, then put the lid back on. Place in a large baking tin, with space around for hot air to circulate. Bake at 190°C for about 60 mins, depending on the size of the squash, until the flesh feels tender inside.

Leek and Sausage Risotto

June 2014

Serves 2

We are down to our last 10 leeks and this tasty dish has featured on our menu most weeks in the past couple of months.

2 leeks
½ oz butter
4 sausages
1 tbsp chopped fresh sage
4oz arborio rice
1 pint hot vegetable stock
1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
2oz grated parmesan cheese

Grill the sausages until cooked. Meanwhile, melt butter gently in a large pan, add leeks and soften for 10 mins over a low heat. Add chopped sage and rice, stirring until rice becomes slightly translucent. Add stock, one ladleful at a time stirring frequently until it is absorbed, adding gradually, until all the stock is absorbed and the rice is cooked – this will take about 25 mins. Stir in the mustard, sliced sausages, most of the parmesan and season with ground black pepper. Sprinkle over remaining parmesan and fresh sage.

Leeks Wrapped in Ham with Cauliflower Cheese

May 2014

Serves 2

This is a quick supper dish that is almost a meal on its own. Our leeks have been abundant this year, so this is a variation we always enjoy. This is also the time of year when we get lots of cauliflowers all at once – 16 this spring! We have eaten cauliflower in some form every day for the past 2 weeks; cauliflower cheese being the most popular but also cauliflower and stilton soup, and cauliflower curry!

4 leeks
4 large slices of cooked ham
1 small cauliflower
1oz butter
1 tbsp plain flour
½ pint milk
4oz mature cheddar cheese
Coarsely ground black pepper
Paprika

Clean the trimmed leeks thoroughly under running water, to remove any grit. Cook them whole, for approx 3 mins in the microwave until lightly cooked (or steam them). Leave to cool. Blanch the cauliflower florets for approx 3 mins until just cooked. Make a cheese sauce: melt butter, stir in plain flour, over a medium heat, add milk gradually until smooth and bubbling. Add half the grated cheese and season well. Wrap the leeks in ham slices, place in a large shallow dish with cauliflower. Pour over the cheese sauce, sprinkle with the rest of the grated cheese and paprika. Bake at 200^0C for approx 30 mins.
Good with crusty bread and a green salad.

Moroccan Lamb and Chard Panfry

October 2023

Serves 2

We grew rainbow chard last year, but it wasn't very successful. However, this year it is doing well, so here is my variation on BBC Good Food's recipe.

1 bunch of chard
1 tablespoon olive oil
300g diced lean lamb
1 onion
1 teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
pinch chilli flakes
200ml lamb or chicken stock
2 small courgettes
handful raisins
handful toasted pine nuts

Strip the leaves from the chard. Shred the leaves and set aside. Cut the stalks into batons. Fry the lamb in oil over a high heat for 5 mins until browned. Add onions, chard stalks and spices and cook a further 5 mins until stalks are soft. Pour in stock. Add sliced courgettes and raisins. Simmer for 5 mins. Wilt the chard leaves in the stock, Scatter with pine nuts. Serve with rice.

One-Pot Chicken Dinner

March 2013

Serves 4

This is an incredibly simple dish, filling and substantial, using butternut squash which is cheap, very nutritious and abundant at this time of year. It should be adequate as a meal in itself but could be served with a green vegetable.

8 chicken drumsticks
200g shallots, peeled
750g small potatoes, cut into wedges
400g butternut squash, peeled, deseeded, cut into wedges
1 tbsp olive oil
30g pecan halves
Fresh thyme leaves
100g St Agur cheese (or any blue cheese)

Put chicken, potatoes and squash in a large baking dish. Drizzle with oil and toss to coat. Season with ground black pepper. Roast at 200^0C for about 1 hour, turning halfway through. Stir in nuts and thyme leaves and cook for a further 10 –15 mins until chicken is cooked through and skin crispy. Crumble over cheese, and return to oven for a few mins until just melted.
Serve garnished with thyme sprigs.

Pork and Cauliflower Meatballs

June 2022

Serves 2

We grow spring cauliflowers every year, but they always all come at once, So, we have a lot of cauliflower cheese and cauli soup! I came across this recipe and it is a good way of getting your family to eat cauli without them knowing it!

200g pork mince
200g cauliflower (whizzed in the food processor or grated)
25g fresh basil chopped
1 red chilli chopped (optional)
Zest of 1 lemon
1 beaten egg
1 tbsp tomato puree
Seasoning
2 tbsp olive oil
6 spring onions sliced
400g tin chopped tomatoes
160g baby spinach
Spaghetti (for 2 portions)

Mix mince, cauli, basil, chilli, lemon zest, tomato puree and season. Bind with egg. Shape into 8 meatballs and chill for 2 hours to firm up. Fry spring onions in olive oil over medium heat until just soft, add tomatoes, simmer for 15 mins. In a frying pan brown meatballs in oil, then add to simmering sauce until cooked through. Cook spaghetti in boiling water, and add spinach for 1 min. Drain and serve with meatballs.

Pork and Parsnip Cobbler

April 2018

Serves 4

With a few parsnips still in the garden, this recipe is ideal for a tasty dinner.

1 tbsp olive oil
600g diced pork
1 chopped onion
2 parsnips, cut into small chunks
2 tsp dried sage
1 tbsp tomato puree
2 tbsp plain flour
1ltr stock

Topping
250g plain flour
1½ tsp baking powder
75g cold butter, grated
100g cheddar, grated
1 tsp mustard powder
1 tsp dried sage
200ml milk

Fry onion in oil, add pork and cook until brown. Add parsnips, sage, and tomato puree. Cook for 2 mins. Add plain flour and give a good stir. Pour in stock, and simmer gently for 1½ hours with lid on – or in oven at 160^0C for 1½ hrs.
To make topping: mix flour, baking powder, sage and mustard powder. Stir in butter and most of cheese. Mix in milk to make a sticky dough. With a tablespoon shape into 8 balls and place on top of casserole. Sprinkle over rest of cheese and bake uncovered for 30 mins at 200^0C.
Serve with green veg.

Pork and Pumpkin Casserole

December 2024/January 2025

Serves 4

Don't waste the inside of your pumpkin – make this delicious casserole! The pumpkin can be replaced with butternut squash. This recipe comes from the Dairy Diary.

2 tbsp olive oil
4 boneless pork shoulder steaks
1 chopped onion
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp turmeric
1 tbsp cornflour
400g pumpkin chunks
600ml chicken stock

Fry pork in olive oil over medium heat for about 8 mins until brown. Transfer to casserole dish. Fry onion in pan juices for 5 mins, stir in spices and flour. Add pumpkin, stock and seasoning. Bring to the boil, then pour over pork. Cover with lid and cook in oven at 180°C for 1 hour until pork is tender. Serve with mashed potato and green veg.

Pork Fillet Roasted on Rhubarb

April 2023

Serves 4

Who would have thought of rhubarb with pork? Jamie Oliver! This is absolutely delicious – make sure to use young, sweet, pink rhubarb, early in the season.

I bought my pork fillet from Mill Farm Butchers, winner of the East of England Best Butcher award!
1 handful fresh sage leaves
5 tablespoons olive oil
1 pork fillets
10 slices prosciutto or Parma ham
12 sticks of baby rhubarb
salt & pepper

Crush half the sage with pestle and mortar, add olive oil and rub over pork. Leave to marinate for 1 hour. Season pork, then drape 5 slices of ham over each fillet. Cut rhubarb into finger-sized pieces, place in roasting dish and place pork on top. Sprinkle over rest of sage leaves and drizzle over rest of marinade. Wet a piece of greaseproof paper, scrunch it up, and place over pork, tucking it in. Cook at 200°C in a preheated oven for 20 mins, remove paper and cook a further 20 mins. Remove from oven and leave to rest for 5 mins. Serve the meat sliced with the rhubarb, juices and roast potatoes.

Pork, Pear and Parsnip Traybake

November 2026
Serves 2

Conference pears are at their best now and I have scrumped a few from my neighbours' tree! My adaptation of a Dairy Diary recipe. This is a quick dish that minimises washing up too.

2 pork shoulder steaks
2 tablespoons oil
300g small new potatoes
2 parsnips
2 pears
Sprigs of thyme
6 sage leaves
½ pint cider
2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Stilton or Lancashire cheese
2 tablespoons crème fraiche

Place a large roasting tin on the hob to heat. Rub pork with oil and seasoning. Sear the pork on both sides and remove from tin. Toss potatoes, parsnip wedges and cored pear quarters in tin, coating with oil. Cover with foil and roast at 180°C for 30 mins. Mix in thyme, sage and ¼ pint cider. Spread steaks with mustard and sprinkle over crumbled cheese. Place in tin with veg and roast, uncovered for 35 mins until pork is cooked through. Stir in rest of cider and crème fraiche.

Serves 2

Pumpkin and Chorizo Rigatoni

April 2014

Serves 2

This is a quick and easy supper dish – full of flavour. We had this several times after Christmas, to use up the last pumpkin.

300g pumpkin or butternut squash cut into small chunks
100g chorizo cut into chunks
Olive oil
Black pepper
1 tbsp dried rosemary
200g Rigatoni
Parmesan

Put the squash in a baking dish, sprinkle with rosemary, toss in olive oil and black pepper. Bake at 220^0C for 15 mins, add chorizo and bake for further 5 mins. Meanwhile cook rigatoni for 10-15 mins according to taste. Drain, then stir in pumpkin, chorizo and juices. Add a little more virgin olive oil if necessary. Sprinkle with finely grated parmesan and serve.

Good with crusty bread and a sweet chilli sauce, or a green salad.

Pumpkin Risotto

December 2013

Serves 4

Pumpkins have grown well this year and we have about a dozen of varying sizes. There are many varieties of pumpkin soup – chilli and butterbean, tomato and red kidney bean, and I have recently made pumpkin and red pepper, as all the red peppers in the greenhouse have come at once! If you have a bread-making machine, try making pumpkin bread too! This is one of my favourite pumpkin recipes.

2½ pints chicken or veg stock
2 tbsp olive oil
1oz butter
1 small onion finely chopped
4 slices chopped smoked bacon (can be omitted for vegetarians)
1 tbsp chopped fresh sage
1lb chopped pumpkin (or butternut squash)
8oz risotto rice
2oz grated parmesan cheese

Heat oil and half butter in a large pan, add onion and bacon (if using) and cook over a medium heat for 5 mins until soft but not brown. Add pumpkin and sage and cook for 1 min. Add rice and stir well until all the grains are coated in butter. Add a ladleful of hot stock, stir until it has all been absorbed before adding another. Continue adding stock for about 20 mins until the rice is creamy and tender but still with a bit of bite. Stir in the rest of the butter, parmesan and seasoning. Spoon into warm deep plates and serve scattered with shredded sage leaves.

Sausage Casserole

August/September 2026

Serves 2

1 onion
1 tablespoon oil
1 red pepper
4 sausages
1 tin chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon tomato puree
¼ pint stock
2 courgettes
4 oz French beans

Gently fry sliced onion in oil for 5 mins, add sliced red pepper, frying a further 5 mins. Add the sausages and cook until lightly browned, add tinned tomatoes, tomato puree, stock, sliced courgettes and chopped beans. Simmer until beans are tender, approximately 20 mins. Serve with jacket potatoes, rice or crusty bread.

Sausage Jambalaya

March 2012

Serves 4

This is a one pot supper dish that I make regularly at home and at the Regional House. It can be prepared and left to simmer for 40 mins while you do something else, then the vegetables are added shortly before serving. It is important to use brown rice. The dish can be served on its own or, for very hungry people, with lots of crusty bread and a green salad.

8 Lincolnshire sausages
1 chopped onion
1 tbsp oil
1 tsp chilli powder
2 tsp ground turmeric
8oz brown rice
¾ pint stock
1 can chopped tomatoes
1 sliced courgette
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
4oz button mushrooms, quartered

Halve sausages and fry in oil over a medium heat for 10 mins until lightly browned. Add onion, chilli powder, turmeric and rice. Fry for 5 mins, until rice is opaque. Add stock and tomatoes, bring to boil and simmer for 40 mins, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, adding more liquid if necessary. Add the pepper, courgette, and mushrooms. Cook for a further 10 mins.

(*For vegetarians just omit sausages. Other veg can be used (mange tout, green beans) or omitted as required.)*

Sausage and Leek Potato Bake

March 2024

Serves 4

750g potatoes
25g butter
450g sausages
4 large leeks
40g plain flour
450ml milk
110g mature cheddar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
25g fresh breadcrumbs

Peel and thinly slice potatoes. Cook in boiling water 5 mins until just tender (do not overcook). Drain. While potatoes are cooking, melt butter in large fry pan, add sliced sausage, cook for 5 mins. Add sliced leeks, cook for 5 mins. Stir in flour, cook for 1 min. Gradually add milk and 75g grated cheese, then stir in mustard. Bring to boil stirring continuously. Tip into greased ovenproof dish, arrange potato slices on top, sprinkle with breadcrumbs and rest of grated cheese. Bake at 200°C for 30mins until browned. Serve hot with sprouts or cabbage.

Slow Cooked Chicken Pasta

May 2024

Serves 4

This is my variation on a recipe from bbcgoodfood.com. It is made in a slow cooker so is handy if you have to go out. I make it on Sunday before I go to Church, then finish it when I get back, so it is ready an hour later.

100g sliced chorizo
4 chicken thighs
2 tablespoons red chilli pesto
6 sun dried tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried basil
750ml hot chicken stock
300g dried penne pasta
150g spinach
150ml double cream
grated parmesan

Heat the chorizo in a pan over a medium heat. Add chicken and brown for 5 mins. Put chorizo, chicken, chopped sundried tomatoes, basil and 150ml chicken stock into slow cooker. Mix well. Cook on high for 2 ½ hours. Add the pasta and remaining stock, cook for 1 hour, stirring well after 30 mins. Try to keep the pasta submerged so that it cooks properly. Stir in the spinach, which will wilt; then stir in the cream. Serve sprinkled with parmesan.

Slow Cooked Pork Chops

December 2011

I am very partial to pork in any of its many forms – whether it be sausage, pork pie, belly pork, or spare ribs! I found this recipe in a booklet on the Mill Farm Shop stand at the Church "Celebrating our Community" event back in the summer. It is quick to prepare and can be just left in the oven to cook while you do something else! It is the most delicious pork recipe I have ever tasted - I think it is the chorizo that gives it the wow factor!

4 pork chops
2 tsp olive oil
50g chorizo sausage, thinly sliced
½ pint stock
1 can butter beans
1 can baked beans
3 tbsp tomato puree

Heat oil in an oven-proof casserole dish. Brown chops on both sides. Add chorizo and allow oil to coat chops. Add stock, beans and puree. Mix well. Cover and cook in oven at 180^0C for 1¾ hours until meat is tender. Serve with green veg, jacket potato and/or crusty bread for dipping in the juices!

Heavenly!

Savoury Lamb Crumble

June 2024

Serves 4

I have used this recipe for many years from a Milk Marketing Board Cook Book (in the 1970's!) It is a good way of using up meat from the Sunday roast and stretching it into another meal.

12 oz cold roast lamb or beef
1 small onion
4 ½ oz plain flour
1 tablespoon tomato puree
½ pint stock
2 oz butter
2 oz mature cheddar
½ teaspoon mixed herbs

Mince the meat and onions together. Mix in ½ oz flour, puree and stock. Turn into a pie dish. Rub the butter into remaining 4 oz flour until resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in grated cheese and herbs. Spoon over the meat and bake 180°C for 45 mins to 1 hour until crumble is crisp and golden. Serve with green veg and gravy.



DESSERT

Apple Bread Pudding

June 2012

Bread pudding is a very traditional recipe, a good way of using up stale bread. My Mum used to make it when I was a child – there was always a big dish of it to be eaten hot with custard or cold as cake. It is sold in every bakery and tea shop in the Lake District. It is a good hearty slice of energy for the back pack when walking and is often seen on the refreshments stalls at marathon or cycling races. My variation has sliced apple in the middle and on top.

10oz bread (8 slices)
3oz soft marge
3oz soft dark brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp cinnamon
6oz mixed dried fruit
2 large cooking apples
2oz granulated sugar
8 sugar cubes

Break bread in a basin and cover with water. Leave to soak for several hours. Cream marge and sugar, beat in egg. In a sieve, squeeze out water from bread. Return to bowl and beat with wooden spoon, until broken down. Add bread to creamed mixture with cinnamon and fruit. Mix well. Spread half into a greased 2-pint dish. Place half of sliced apples over the bread mixture and sprinkle with half of granulated sugar. Spread with remaining bread, cover with rest of sliced apple, sprinkle over rest of granulated sugar, then crushed sugar cubes. Bake approx 1 hour, 190^0C until brown and shrinking from sides of dish.

Blackberry & Lime Self-Saucing Pudding

November 2021
Serves 4

This is a Tesco recipe. This works with frozen blackberries too. A delicious pudding, fine on its own but for an added bit of luxury you could serve with clotted cream, crème fraiche or ice cream!

75 g butter
300g blackberries
175g caster sugar
2 limes, zest and juice
150ml milk
2 eggs, separated
1 tsp vanilla
100g plain flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
icing sugar to dust

Put 150g blackberries, 50g sugar and 50ml water in saucepan, bring to boil, simmer for 5 minutes. Pour into ovenproof dish.
Leave to cool. Beat butter and 125g sugar until light and creamy, add lime juice and zest, beat for 1 minute. In a separate bowl mix milk, egg yolks and vanilla. Sift flour and baking powder in another bowl. Fold 1/3 milk mix into butter mix, along with 1/3 flour. Repeat until incorporated. Whisk egg whites for 1 minute to soft peaks. Gently fold into mixture until no white streaks remain. Stir in remaining blackberries. Put into baking dish on top of blackberry syrup. Place dish into roasting tin, and pour in enough boiling water to come half way up the side of the dish. Bake 30 mins 180^0C until golden, with a slight wobble in the centre. Dust with icing sugar.

Blackberry Pudding

November 2012
Serves 4

Blackberrying is a wonderful pastime in the autumn; this pudding makes a change from blackberry crumble. Blackberries for this recipe can be used straight from the freezer

500g blackberries
1 tbsp caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
150g butter
150g caster sugar
150g plain flour
150ml milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
3 eggs

Heat blackberries gently in a pan with 1 tbsp of sugar until just soft. Add vanilla. Place in a buttered baking dish. Cream butter and 150g caster sugar until soft and pale. Add flour, milk, vanilla and 3 egg yolks. Mix well. Whisk 3 egg whites until stiff. Fold gently into mixture, and spoon over blackberries. Bake at 160^0C for approx 1 hour until brown and slightly puffed. Serve with cream, crème fraiche or vanilla ice cream.

Blackberry Yogurt Sponge Pudding

October 2022
Serves 4

This is a quick and easy Dairy Diary recipe, which I have been using for many years! Blackberries have been abundant this autumn, though frozen ones work just as well.

150ml natural yogurt
175g caster sugar
120g melted butter
2 eggs
175g plain flour
1 ½ tsp baking powder
150g blackberries

Mix yogurt, sugar, melted butter and eggs. Fold in flour and baking powder. Gently stir in blackberries. Pour into 18cm greased round cake tin. Bake 180°C for 50 mins, until risen and just firm. Dust with icing sugar and serve with custard.

Chocolate Sponge Pudding with Chocolate Sauce

April 2012

Serves 4

This was always a very popular pudding when Dawn and Karen were young; now it proves popular at the Regional House too! It is a very simple basic chocolate sponge but the very rich sweet sauce makes it very special. Surprisingly, it has only a small amount of chocolate in it!

Sponge
4oz butter or marge
4oz caster sugar
2 eggs
3oz sr flour
1oz cocoa powder
1 tsp baking powder

Sauce
1oz plain chocolate (Bournville is best)
1/2oz butter
1 small tin evaporated milk (170 g)
2oz soft brown sugar
2 tbsp golden syrup

Mix all ingredients for sponge by hand or in an electric mixer until smooth and is a soft dropping consistency. Bake in a dish at 180^0C for 35 mins until cooked through. Melt all the ingredients for the sauce in a pan over a low heat. Bring to the boil stirring all the time. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 mins until thickened and glossy. Allow to cool slightly. Pour into a warm jug, and serve with hot pudding.

Gooseberry and Elderflower Tart

August 2017

With lots of gooseberries in the freezer, and with the home-made elderflower cordial (see "Elderflower Cordial" under "Side Dishes & Others"), this recipe is perfect. Very tangy and refreshing!

50g butter, melted
200g ginger nut biscuits
1 egg white
4 tbsp gooseberry preserve
100ml elderflower cordial*
200ml crème fraiche
125g icing sugar
3 eggs
300g gooseberries
3 tbsp caster sugar
juice ½ lemon
1 tbsp cornflour

Crush the biscuits, stir in butter and egg white. Press into 20cm loose-bottomed tin or flan dish. Bake for 10 mins 180^0C. Lightly press the base down with back of a spoon. Set aside. Mix gooseberry preserve with 1 tbsp cordial and spread over base. Whisk crème fraiche, icing sugar and eggs until smooth. Stir in remaining cordial, and carefully pour over preserve. Bake for approx 50 mins at 150^0C until just set, with a slight wobble in the centre. Leave to cool, then chill until firm for about 1 hour. Gently cook gooseberries, caster sugar, lemon juice and 3 tbsp water, until soft but still retain some shape. Mix cornflour with 2 tbsp water, add to gooseberries and bubble for 1 min. Cool and chill. When ready to serve spoon the gooseberries onto the tart.

Gooseberry and White Chocolate Fool

May 2011

I found this recipe when searching for ideas to use up gooseberries from the freezer, before Bob pinched them all to make wine (they do actually make an excellent wine though!) With the gooseberry season coming up, the ripe pink ones are best, so leave them on the bush longer – don't use hard green ones.

12oz gooseberries
3 tbsp sugar
2 tbsp water
1 large tub natural yogurt
150g white chocolate

Poach the gooseberries, sugar and water gently. Remove four whole gooseberries for decoration before they turn to pulp. Leave to cool. Melt white chocolate gently until smooth – in a bowl over a pan of simmering water or for 1½ mins in microwave, stirring halfway, taking care not to let it burn. Put half the cooled gooseberries in the base of four individual dishes and stir the rest into the yogurt. Gradually stir the yogurt mixture into the chocolate and mix well. Spoon onto the gooseberries in the dishes then leave to set for about 1 hour in fridge. Decorate with reserved gooseberries.

I did try this recipe with raspberries, but it didn't work so well – too sweet!

Individual Blackberry Puds

August/September 2024

Serves 4

August/September is blackberry season and this is our most favourite pud. I have been making these for years as we have blackberries in our garden and always have some in the freezer. Simple to make and a posh pud for a special dinner!

150g blackberries
100g caster sugar
1 tablespoon crème de cassis
100g sr flour
50g olive oil spread
150ml milk

Sprinkle the blackberries with 1 tablespoon caster sugar and cassis in a small bowl. Set aside.

Rub the spread into the flour until it looks like fine bread crumbs. Stir in the sugar. Pour in the milk and stir. The mixture will be a lumpy batter.

Divide the blackberries and juice between 4 x 200ml ramekins. Ladle the batter evenly between the 4 ramekins.

Bake on a tray at 180◦C for 35 mins until well risen and golden (the mixture may bubble over slightly). Leave to cool for 5 mins.

Dust with icing sugar and serve with a big spoonful of clotted cream on top.

Individual Pecan Pies

December 2012

Julia Thompson

Sweet shortcrust pastry
3 large eggs
4oz soft dark brown sugar
7oz golden syrup
1½oz melted butter
1 tbsp rum
6oz roughly chopped pecans
24 pecan nut halves for decoration

Line 8 x 4-inch individual tart tins or Yorkshire pudding tins with pastry. Distribute chopped pecans evenly into pastry cases.
Break eggs into large mixing bowl and whisk until foamy.
Stir in brown sugar, syrup, melted butter and rum and beat well.
Spoon equally over the chopped nuts in the prepared cases and place 3 pecan halves on top of each to decorate.
Bake at 190^0C for 25-30 mins.
Even better when served warm with pouring cream or crème fraiche

Brilliant for a special festive meal to wow your guests!

Marmalade Pancakes

March 2025

Makes 10 pancakes

March 4th is Shrove Tuesday, pancake day. This is a tasty alternative to the usual lemon and sugar pancakes.

50g sr flour
1 tablespoon caster sugar
1 egg
3 tablespoons milk
1 orange, zest and juice
3 tablespoons dried cranberries
2 teaspoons sunflower oil
½ teaspoon cornflour
2 tablespoons Seville orange marmalade
crème fraiche or yogurt

Stir sugar into sifted flour. Gradually mix in egg yolk and milk to make a smooth batter.
In a separate bowl whisk egg white until stiff, then fold into batter with orange zest and cranberries. Heat a large frying pan to medium heat, then brush with oil.
Working in batches, spoon tablespoons of batter into pan, fry for 2 mins until underside is brown. Flip and cook for another 2 mins. Transfer to plate and keep warm.
In a small pan blend cornflour and a little orange juice to make a smooth paste. Stir in rest of juice and marmalade. Heat gently until melted, bring to boil stirring and cook until slightly thickened. Serve pancakes with marmalade sauce and crème fraiche or Greek yogurt.

Nadiya Hussain's Carrot Cake Pakoras

May 2020

Serves 4

During the lockdown we have had loads of carrots in the garden – a bit past their best - but this recipe is a way of using them up in a very original and tasty way!

100g cream cheese
100g butter
4 tbsp icing sugar
2 tbsp maple syrup
1½ltr veg oil
300g grated carrots
50g chopped walnuts
5g sultanas
12g sr flour
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp mixed spice
2 eggs

Make the dip:
Beat butter and cream cheese until smooth. Stir in icing sugar and maple syrup. Put in a serving bowl, swirl over a little maple syrup and a pinch of mixed spice and chill.
Mix flour, baking powder, sugar and mixed spice. Stir in carrots, walnuts and sultanas. Add the eggs and mix well to a thick batter.
Heat oil in a large pan, Test oil is hot enough by adding a tiny drop of mixture. If it sizzles and rises to the top the oil is hot enough -170^{0}C.
Gently drop teaspoons of the mixture into the oil, swirling with a slotted spoon, until golden brown – about 4 mins. Make in batches, removing with a slotted spoon. Drain on kitchen paper.
Serve warm, dusted with icing sugar and dip.

Orange and Apricot Pasta

March 2018

Serves 4

Pasta for pudding? Why not! This is a delicious fruity pud, very quick and easy to make, and nutritious too.

12oz tagliatelle
2 x 1 oz tins of apricot halves in fruit juice
Juice and rind of 1 orange
2 tbsp sugar
2oz butter
2 tbsp flaked almonds

Cook pasta in boiling water until *al dente*. While pasta is cooking, heat chopped apricots with juice from one tin only, along with orange rind, orange juice and sugar until dissolved. Cook for 5 mins. Drain pasta, toss in melted butter. Spoon sauce over pasta and sprinkle with almonds.

Philippa's Little Sticky Toffee Puddings with Toffee Sauce

May 2012

Philippa Longstaff

This is a tried and tested Delia recipe with a few adjustments.

75g butter
150g caster sugar
2 eggs
175g sr flour
175g dates
175ml boiling water
½ tsp vanilla essence
2 tsp coffee essence
¾ tsp bicarb

Sauce
350g soft brown sugar
220g butter
2 tbsp double cream

Pour boiling water over chopped dates. Add vanilla, coffee and bicarb. Set aside. Cream butter and caster sugar until pale. Add beaten eggs and mix well. Fold in flour, and stir in date mixture. (The mixture will be very sloppy!) Divide between 8x3in ramekins, or 8 x 175ml metal pudding basins. Place on baking tray and bake at 180^0C for 25 mins. Leave to cool for 5 mins before turning out on to a shallow Swiss roll-type tin. Make sauce by melting all the ingredients in a saucepan and heating gently until sugar has dissolved. Pre-heat grill to its highest setting. Pour the sauce evenly over puddings. Place tin under the grill so that the tops of puds are 5 inches from heat. Heat for about 8 mins until the tops become brown and slightly crunchy and sauce is hot and bubbling.
Serve with chilled pouring cream.

Quick and Easy Cheesecake

July 2014

Serves 4-6

I have been making this recipe for many years. It originally came from Bob's aunt when we were first married - she heard it on the Jimmy Young Radio show ("What's the recipe today, Jim?") My recent variations are to use low fat biscuits, low fat cream cheese and Elmlea, so that we can have bigger slices! We are hoping to enjoy our first crop of strawberries very soon – we planted the strawberry plants three years ago and only had a handful last year. I often top the cheesecake with cooked blackcurrants (thickened with cornflour like a pie filling) which contrast well with the sweetness of the cheesecake filling.

50g butter
200g low-fat digestive biscuits
300g Philadelphia light cream cheese
2 tbsp icing sugar
½ pint Elmlea light double cream
1 tbsp milk
Strawberries

Melt butter and add to finely crushed digestive biscuits. Press into a flan dish and chill for 1 hour. Beat the cream cheese with icing sugar and spread over cooled biscuit base. Whip the Elmlea and milk (milk stops it from turning to cheese if over-whipped) to soft peaks. Spread over the cream cheese and chill. Decorate with whole or sliced strawberries, raspberries or any other seasonal fruit.

Raspberry Tiramisu

August/September 2021
Serves 6

100ml strong coffee
3 tablespoons brandy
150g raspberries
2 egg yolks
50g caster sugar
250g mascarpone
100ml double cream
1 pack sponge fingers
4 tablespoons redcurrant jelly
2 teaspoons cocoa powder
grated plain choc to decorate

Mix coffee and 2 tablespoons brandy in a shallow bowl. Whisk egg yolks and sugar for 2 mins until pale and thickened. Whisk in 1 tablespoon brandy and mascarpone until smooth. In a separate bowl whisk cream into soft peaks and fold into mascarpone mixture. Dip sponge fingers in coffee for 3 seconds. Lay ½ fingers in base of 22cm square dish, cutting to fit. Spread 2 tablespoons jelly over fingers. Dot with ½ raspberries, squashing into any gaps. Spread ½ mascarpone mix over top. Sift over 1 teaspoon cocoa. Repeat layers of sponge fingers, jelly, raspberries, rest of mascarpone and sift over cocoa. Cover and chill for 3 hours or overnight. Before serving, sprinkle with grated choc and raspberries to decorate.

Redcurrant and Mango Cobbler

July 2011
Serves 4

The redcurrant bushes in our garden are looking very healthy, so soon we will be inundated with redcurrants. I use them a lot in summer puddings, topping for cheesecakes, compotes, or simply lightly stewed with a little sugar and stirred into Greek yogurt - very light and refreshing after a big Sunday lunch. Our favourite though is redcurrant and mango cobbler – a delicious mix of smooth sweet mango with tart redcurrants, divine! If redcurrants aren't available, or difficult to come by, raspberries can be substituted instead.

2 ripe mangoes
12oz redcurrants
1oz plain flour
4oz caster sugar

Cobbler Topping
4oz sr flour
1oz caster sugar
2oz butter
6 tbsp single cream

Peel and slice the mangoes. Place in a pie dish with redcurrants, sprinkle over plain flour, caster sugar and mix lightly. To make the cobbler topping - rub butter into flour and sugar. Add cream to make a light dough. Roll out, and cut into ½ inch thick rounds with a biscuit cutter. Overlap the rounds to cover around the edge of the dish – leaving the fruit in the middle uncovered. Bake for 30-40 mins until the scones are lightly brown. Sprinkle with caster sugar. Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or crème fraiche.

Rhubarb and Almond Tart

June 2016

The long rhubarb season is upon us, and this tart is a variation on a Bakewell which is very popular at the Regional House.

3 tbsp jam
4oz marge
4oz sugar
2 eggs
4oz ground almonds
1oz plain flour
1 orange
12oz young pink rhubarb
Redcurrant jelly to glaze

Make pastry and line a 9-inch flan dish. Prick base and smear with jam. Beat marge and sugar until pale and creamy, gradually add eggs. Stir in ground almonds, flour, grated orange zest and juice of half the orange. Mix well. Pour into pastry case. Cut rhubarb into 1-inch pieces and arrange in circles, like spokes of a wheel. Push slightly into the almond mixture, but do not submerge. Bake at 180^0C for approx. 50 mins until firm and golden. Melt jelly and brush over tart to glaze. Serve warm or chilled with crème fraiche.

Rhubarb Bread and Butter Pud

May 2026
SERVES 4

Another delicious rhubarb pud made with young pink rhubarb.

75g caster sugar
200g rhubarb, cut into 3cm pieces
325ml milk
50ml cream
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 tablespoons custard powder
1 egg
37g butter
5 slices thick sliced white bread, cut into triangles

Icing sugar to serve

Heat 150ml water and 25g sugar in a pan over a low heat. When the syrup starts to bubble add rhubarb and simmer for 3 mins. Remove from heat and leave to soak. Gently heat milk, cream and vanilla. Whisk egg, 50g sugar and custard powder, then add milk mixture, whisking constantly. Grease baking dish, then butter bread. Layer bread and rhubarb (reserving syrup) then pour over custard mixture, covering the bread. Leave to soak for 30 mins. Bake 160^0C for 30 mins until puffed up. Sprinkle over 1 tablespoon sugar, bake 190^0C for a further 10 mins until golden and crisp on top. Serve sprinkled with icing sugar, rhubarb syrup and more cream!

Rhubarb and Strawberry Crumble

June 2018

Serves 4-6

Rhubarb and strawberries are both in season and this makes a stunning combination for a crumble.

1½lb rhubarb
8oz strawberries
5oz sugar
3 tbsp plain flour
4oz plain flour
2oz brown sugar
2 tsp granulated sugar
½ tsp cinnamon
2oz butter
2oz walnuts, toasted and chopped

Slice the rhubarb into ½ inch chunks. Cut strawberries in half. Sprinkle with flour and sugar and toss to cover. Leave to stand in dish until slightly moistened. Mix flour, sugars and cinnamon. Rub in butter to form breadcrumb like texture. Stir in walnuts. Level the top of the rhubarb mixture. Cover with crumble topping. Bake 190^{0}C for 40 mins until golden and juices bubble around the edges. Serve with custard, cream or ice cream.

Rhubarb Clafoutis

April 2026

Serves 4

Young pink rhubarb is now in season. We have forced a small patch of it (covering it in a dark tub, so encouraging light-coloured pink shoots which are really sweet). This is a quick simple delicious pud!

1lb rhubarb, cut into 1-inch lengths
2½oz butter
6oz demerara sugar
4oz plain flour
2 eggs
6oz can evaporated milk
¾ teaspoon ground ginger
Porridge oats

Put rhubarb and 1oz butter in 2½ pint ovenproof dish, sprinkle over 3oz sugar. Bake 200^{0}C for 10 mins. To make the batter: melt 1½oz butter. Whisk in flour, eggs, evaporated milk, ginger and 3oz sugar. Pour over the rhubarb. Sprinkle with a handful of oats. Reduce oven to 180^{0}C and bake for 20 mins until lightly set. Serve with cream, crème fraiche or custard.

Rhubarb Steamed Pudding

June 2020

Serves 8

Jo and Gene Plews

4oz butter
4oz light brown sugar
2 eggs
2oz sr flour
2oz wholemeal sr flour
½ tsp baking powder
2oz fresh breadcrumbs
6oz rhubarb
Grated orange zest

Cream butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Beat in eggs. Mix dry ingredients and fold in with breadcrumbs. Gently mix in chopped rhubarb and orange zest. Turn into a greased 1½ pint pudding basin. Cover with a double thickness of greased baking paper or foil. Fold under rim to secure. Place in top part of steamer and steam for 1 hour. Turn onto a warmed serving plate. Serve hot.

St Fillans' Pudding

February 2017

4 generous servings

If, like the Vicarage, you still have lots of cooking apples this is a very delicious pud; a Scottish recipe from one of Paul Hollywood's cook books.

650g cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced
30g caster sugar
¼ tsp cinnamon
3 tbsp water
handful of raspberries
225g plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cream of tartar
110g caster sugar
80g butter
2 eggs
40-60ml milk
1 tbsp demerara sugar

Put apples, cinnamon, 30g sugar and water into saucepan, cover and cook gently, stirring occasionally, until apples are just soft. Stir in raspberries. Tip into a buttered 1ltr ovenproof dish. Rub butter into flour, sugar, baking powder and cream of tartar until it is like fine breadcrumbs. Stir in eggs and enough milk to make a thick batter. Spread the mixture carefully on top of fruit. Sprinkle with demerara sugar and bake for approx 40 mins 180^0C until risen and golden brown.
Serve with custard or cream.

St George's Day Pudding

April 2019

Serves 6

Not quite sure what the connection with St George's day is but this is yet another very tasty variation on bread and butter pudding from the Dairy Diary.

10 slices white bread
chocolate hazelnut spread
75g dried cranberries
1 pint milk
3 tbsp caster sugar
4 eggs

Spread the bread with chocolate spread, make into sandwiches and cut into triangles. Arrange neatly in base of 2-pint ovenproof dish. Scatter with cranberries. Gently heat milk and sugar, until sugar dissolves. Pour milk onto beaten eggs in a steady stream, whisking well. Pour over bread and leave to stand for 30 mins. Bake at 180^0C for 40 mins until golden and lightly set. Serve warm, with cream if liked (gilding the lily springs to mind!)

Sticky Pear and Toffee Puddings

November 2016

Serves 4

Pears make delicious puds and this one is very tasty and quick to make in the microwave.

100g butter, softened
120g soft brown sugar
2 pears, peeled, cored and chopped
1 egg
60g sr flour
2 tsp icing sugar to dust
1 tsp ground cinnamon to dust

Mix 40g butter and 60g brown sugar. Divide in base of 4 x 200-250ml ramekin dishes. Top with chopped pears. Whisk remaining butter and brown sugar until pale and fluffy. Add egg and stir. Add flour and mix to a smooth batter. Spoon into the ramekins. Cook two at a time in microwave (660W or 700W) for about 2½ mins until risen and cooked through. Leave to stand for 1 min. Dust with icing sugar and cinnamon.
Serve with clotted cream, crème fraiche or ice cream.

Sticky Toffee Pear and Ginger Upside Down Pudding

November 2014

Topping
50g butter
100g light brown sugar
4 firm fresh pears, peeled, cored and quartered
4 pieces of stem ginger, finely chopped

Sponge
50g butter
125g brown sugar
90g black treacle
125ml soured milk (or add a few drops of lemon juice to fresh milk)
1 egg
125g plain flour
½ tsp bicarb
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp ground nutmeg

Topping: melt butter and brown sugar in microwave for 1 min. Stir well until thick and smooth. Spread in base of 20cm cake tin or deep dish. Arrange pears and scatter with chopped ginger.
Sponge: melt butter, sugar and black treacle in microwave for 1 min until melted and smooth. Stir in milk. Add flour, bicarb and spices. Beat in egg and mix well. Pour over pears and bake at 180^0C for about 50 mins, until skewer inserted comes out clean. Run a knife around the edge of the dish to loosen. Leave to cool for about 10mins. Invert the pudding onto a plate and serve warm with creme fraiche, ice cream or pouring cream.

Strawberry and Clotted Cream Ice Cream

August & September 2023

Who doesn't like strawberry ice cream? This is quick and easy to make and tastes heavenly!

600g strawberries
2 tablespoons golden caster sugar
276g clotted cream
397g tin condensed milk
300ml whipping cream

Put chopped strawberries and sugar in a pan and simmer gently for 15 mins. Leave to cool for 10 mins, then whizz in a blender until smooth. In a large bowl beat the clotted cream until smooth. Gradually whisk in condensed milk until smooth and well mixed. Add the whipping cream and whisk until soft peaks form. Fold in the strawberry puree. Freeze in a container for at least 6 hours.

Strawberry Chocolate Tart

June 2015

Serves 6

The best of British strawberries are now in season. This is one of my favourite strawberry recipes - quick and easy to assemble; especially if you buy a ready-made pastry case! An even simpler variation could be to spread the base of the pastry case with Nutella for an instant dessert!

1 blind - baked 9-in pastry case
180g Bournville plain chocolate
180g low fat crème fraiche
Strawberries to decorate

Gently melt the chocolate on a low setting in the microwave or in a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water. Stir well then mix in crème fraiche, stirring until smooth. Spoon into pastry case. Chill in fridge until ready to serve. Decorate with fresh strawberries.

Any other soft fruit can be substituted – raspberries are particularly good.

Strawberry Clafouti

August 2020

Serves 3 to 4

We have been inundated with strawberries this year; but last year the yield was so poor we almost dug them up! So, I have been trying out numerous strawberry recipes, and this was our favourite. I have made clafouti (a French recipe) many times with various fruit, though never with strawberries before.

250g strawberries
2 eggs
4 tbsp s caster sugar
3 ½ tbsp plain flour
125ml natural yogurt
75ml milk
1 tsp vanilla extract

Grease a 6-inch diameter ceramic dish (at least 2-inch deep). Beat eggs and sugar, stir in flour, add milk, yogurt and vanilla. Blend well. Pour into dish. Place halved strawberries on top. Bake 45 mins 180^0C until set. Cool to room temperature. Sprinkle with icing sugar.

White Currant Tart

August 2011

Serves 6-8

A couple of years ago we bought a small white currant bush and this is the first year it has produced enough to make anything with. This is the best recipe I could find and makes a delicious cheesecake. I used a mixture of red and white currants to give it colour but you could use raspberries or strawberries just the same. The recipe also suggested you could use ginger biscuits or orange biscuits; in which case you might use the rind of an orange instead**.**

500g fromage frais
450g plain yogurt
3 tbsp icing sugar
Grated zest of a small lemon
450g white currants
75g butter
300g lemon biscuits
Icing sugar for dusting

Mix the fromage frais and yogurt. Line a colander or sieve with muslin or a new J-cloth. Pour the mixture into the sieve, place the whole thing on a shallow dish and put it in the fridge. Leave overnight. Melt the butter. Crush the biscuits, then mix them with the melted butter. Tip them into the tart tin and press down firmly. Chill for 20 mins. To make the filling, discard the liquid, tip the strained cream cheese mixture out of the muslin into a bowl. Stir in the sugar and zest. Smooth the filling into the chilled tart crust. Pull the currants from their stalks and pile them on top of the tart filling. Dust generously with icing sugar and leave for a few mins before slicing.



SIDE DISHES & OTHERS

Beetroot and Broad Bean Salad

August 2013

Serves 6

With the warm weather here at last, and our first crop of beetroot due any day, it is time for salad! This is a very refreshing alternative to plain beetroot in vinegar.

500g cooked beetroot
300g baby broad beans
6 spring onions
15g fresh tarragon
1 tbsp red wine vinegar
4 tbsp olive oil
¼ tsp caster sugar

Cook the broad beans for approx. 3 mins until just tender. Drain and refresh under cold water. Remove the skin from the biggest ones (any that are larger than a thumbnail). Mix vinegar, oil and sugar for the dressing. Cut the beetroot into wedges. Pour over the dressing, stir in broad beans, onion and tarragon. Put in serving dish.
Good with cold meats or pork pie.

Brussels Gratin

February 2014

Serves 4

As in most years, we have plenty of sprouts in the garden this winter, and with a huge joint of cooked ham to eat over Christmas, this proved a very popular dish.

500g Brussel sprouts
4 slices of pancetta, smoked streaky bacon, or chopped cooked ham
150ml double cream
50g gruyere cheese
1 tsp Dijon mustard
50g breadcrumbs
2 tbsp grated parmesan

Cook the sprouts until just tender. Drain really well. Fry the bacon until golden, stir in cream, grated gruyere and mustard. Add sprouts and stir well. Put in a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle over the breadcrumbs and parmesan. Bake at 200^0C approx 20 mins until golden and bubbling.

Can be served as a supper dish on its own, but good with sausages and jacket potatoes. For vegetarians, omit the bacon.

Courgette, Potato & Feta Bake

July 2021
Serves 2-3

Thanks to Sue Cork for this very tasty veg accompaniment to a meat dish, or as a vegetarian dish on its own.

1 large courgette
4/5 large potatoes
200g feta cheese
Olive oil
Dried mint

Pour about 2 tablespoons of oil in a large shallow dish. Peel and thinly slice the potatoes, slice the courgette about ¼ inch thick. Put a layer of potatoes in the dish, then half the courgettes, crumble half of the feta over the top and sprinkle liberally with dried mint. Repeat the layers again and finish with another layer of potatoes. Pour over more olive oil and bake at 200^0C for approx 1½ hours until the potatoes are cooked through.

Crispy Pumpkin Bake

December 2019

Serves 4

We have loads of pumpkins this year – not huge, just big enough for one meal, so this is a perfect veg accompaniment to a meat dish – perhaps even your Christmas dinner! Chilli can be left out if preferred.

1kg pumpkin
5 tbsp olive oil
12 shallots
1 red chilli
1 tbsp rosemary
2 tbsp parsley
1 orange zest
120g fresh breadcrumbs

Put shallots in ovenproof dish, toss in 1 tbsp oil. Bake in oven for 15 mins at 200^0C. Chop pumpkin into 2-inch chunks. Add to onions and mix well, cook for further 15 mins. Heat rest of oil in frying pan, add chopped chilli, rosemary, parsley and orange zest, stirring constantly. Add breadcrumbs and seasoning, mixing well. Cook for 1 min. Reduce oven to 180^0C. Tip breadcrumbs over pumpkin and onions. Bake for 30 mins until golden and pumpkin has softened.

Elderflower Cordial

July 2016

This is so simple and cheap to make, but as the flowers are only available for a very short season, it is imperative to be ready to make it quickly. I made it for the very first time last year and should have made it many years ago! It is so much nicer than the stuff you buy in the shops.

Citric acid can be bought from the chemist and Campden tablets are used in beer and winemaking to kill off any yeast, so very important to use if you wish to keep the cordial for any length of time.

25 elderflower heads
2 whole sliced lemons
1½kg caster sugar
1½ltr water
50g citric acid
2 Campden tablets

Pick flower heads that are just open with no brown bits. Dissolve sugar in water and cool slightly. Put flowers and lemons in a container, pour over sugar syrup. Add citric acid and Campden tablets. Stir, cover, and leave in a cool place for 24 hours. Strain through a muslin cloth. Pour into sterilised bottles. Keeps for about 8 weeks. Dilute to taste. Once opened store in the fridge.

Parsnip, Potato & Gruyere Bake

October 2024

This is a wonderful accompaniment to a Sunday roast. It is our most favourite parsnip dish, though this year has been a poor season for parsnips – not many of the seeds geminated, despite several interval sowings!

1 lb Potatoes
8 oz Parsnips
4 oz Gruyere
7 fl oz Crème fraiche
5 fl oz Double Cream

Thinly slice potatoes and parsnips. Layer in an oven proof dish. Scatter over grated Gruyere. Mix crème fraiche and double cream. Season with black pepper and pour over the potatoes. Bake 180°C for 1 ½ - 2 hours until golden and the potatoes are tender.

Rhubarb Ketchup

May 2022

With rhubarb now coming into season this recipe from a Waitrose magazine is a wonderful tangy sauce to have with burgers. The magazine shows a lovely pink sauce but don't worry if it looks a caramel brown colour!

1 tablespoon sunflower oil
1 onion chopped
1 clove of garlic, roughly chopped
800g rhubarb, cut into small chunks
1 bay leaf
4 cloves
150g caster sugar
150g red wine vinegar

Fry onion in oil over a low heat with a pinch of salt, cook for 5 mins until it starts to soften. Add garlic, cook for 1 min. Add rest of ingredients. Bring to a simmer and cook for 30 mins, stirring occasionally until rhubarb is totally soft. Remove the cloves and bay leaf. Whizz in a blender until smooth, season and mix well, Strain through a fine sieve, then transfer to sterilised jars or bottles. Store in fridge, use within 4 weeks.

Saag Aloo (Spicy Potato and Spinach Dish)

November 2020

This recipe is adapted from a Lidl magazine and is perfect as we have a plentiful supply of spinach at the moment.

1 sliced onion
2 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon turmeric
500g baby new potatoes
200g spinach

Fry onion in oil over medium heat for 5 mins. Add spices and halved potatoes, turning to coat the potatoes in the spices. Add 100ml water. Cover and cook over a gentle heat for 10 mins. Remove lid, increase heat until potatoes begin to crisp. Add spinach, splash of water, & cook for 2-3 mins until wilted.

Spicy Lime Courgette Salad

October 2016

Our courgette plants have been very productive this year. This is a tasty accompaniment for cold meats.

1 lime – grated zest and juice
1 tbsp caster sugar
2 tbsp chopped coriander
1 tsp olive oil
1 red chilli – finely chopped
4 grated courgettes

Mix lime zest, juice, sugar, coriander, olive oil and chilli. Toss dressing through courgettes and leave for 10 mins for flavours to develop. Will keep for 48 hours in airtight box in fridge.

Wild Garlic Pesto

May 2020

Frances Plummer

(Riverford recipe)

This is delicious thrown through pasta, swirled through soups and stews or served as a condiment to baked potatoes or a perfectly roast chicken. Try using it as a salad dressing or popping a few dabs into your favourite sandwich. Will keep for at least a week in the fridge. Feel free to replace the hazelnuts with any nut of your choosing, likewise any salty hard cheese can work too. Makes 1 large jar.

100g wild garlic
50g Parmesan grated
50g hazelnuts, skinned and toasted
olive oil
lemon juice, to taste
salt and pepper

Prep time: 10 min
Thoroughly wash your wild garlic and place in a food processor, blitz until fairly well broken up.
Next add your Parmesan and process further, this will help to break down the garlic leaves.
Finally add your hazelnuts. When the nuts are added you will want to have your olive oil to hand; turn the machine back on, and add olive oil to your desired consistency.
Add salt, pepper and lemon juice to taste.



PRESERVES

Autumn Fruit Chutney

October 2011

I am not fond of chutney (I don't like a strong vinegar flavour), but I often make it when I have a glut of fruit or veg as Bob loves it. However, this recipe is one of my favourites, as it is quite sweet and fruity. The recipe originally came from my Dairy Diary and I first made it last year when I was given a bag of plums and pears. Chutney isn't difficult to make, just very time consuming, chopping all the fruit and veg, and having the patience to cook it for long enough. Chutney must be fairly thick – not runny!

500g Bramley apples - peeled, cored and chopped
6 large conference pears – peeled, cored and chopped
8 large plums – stoned and quartered
600g blackberries
50g fresh ginger – finely chopped
Red and green chilli 1cm piece of each - deseeded and finely chopped
600g onions – peeled and roughly chopped
750g granulated sugar
450ml distilled white vinegar

Put all the ingredients in a large stainless-steel preserving pan. Heat gently, stirring often, until it comes to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 3-4 hours, stirring occasionally to prevent it sticking to the bottom of the pan, until thick and reduced. Spoon into clean jars, warmed in the oven on a low temperature. Store in a cool dark place for a minimum of 1 month to allow the flavour to develop, before using.
Serve with bread, cheese and cherry tomatoes.

Cherry Tomato Chutney

October 2021

We had a glut of tomatoes so I made a batch of this – very tasty!

370g cherry tomatoes, halved
85g sweet red peppers
175g finely chopped onions
1 small chilli, finely chopped or ½ teaspoon dried chilli flakes
40g sultanas
150ml distilled vinegar
110g light brown sugar

Put all the ingredients, except tomatoes, into preserving pan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 mins, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes and simmer for 15 mins until chutney has thickened. Put in 2 small warmed jars and seal with screw top lids.

Chilli Plum Chutney

October 2015

Plums are in abundance at the moment and this is a good recipe to use up a surplus. This is my favourite chutney – sweet and tangy with a hint of chilli.

1.35kg plums, halved and stoned
500ml white wine vinegar
175g dried apricots, chopped
600g granulated sugar
1 whole lemon, finely chopped
4 red chillies finely chopped (including seeds)
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp ground ginger
10 black peppercorns

Cook the plums and vinegar in a preserving pan until soft and pulped – about 20 mins. Add all the spices, lemon and chillies. Simmer gently for 20 mins. Add sugar and stir until fully dissolved. Cook over a medium heat - stir occasionally to prevent sticking, for approx 1 hour until the chutney has thickened, and most of the liquid has evaporated. Pour into hot sterilised jars. (Like most chutneys, the flavour improves with keeping)

Christmas Jam

August/September 2025

I made this last Christmas, and when I defrosted my freezer recently found some cranberries, so I made this jam again with strawberries from our garden.

12oz cranberries (fresh or if frozen defrosted)
16oz strawberries (fresh or if frozen defrosted)
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon mixed spice
1lb 12oz granulated sugar
125ml fresh orange juice
zest of 1 orange
1 lemon
small knob butter

Peel and section lemon, removing skin and pith. Put cranberries, strawberries, lemon pieces and spices in blender. Coarsely chop – **DO NOT PUREE**. Put in heavy bottom pan, stir in orange juice and zest. Add the butter (to reduce foaming). Bring mixture to rolling boil over a high heat, stir constantly. Add sugar and heat gently until melted. Simmer on medium heat until thickened. Remove from heat and test for set – cool a small amount on a saucer and leave to cool. Run finger over it, and if it wrinkles it is set. Ladle into hot jars and add lids while hot to form a seal.

Good as a sweet jam but can also be eaten with cold meats.

Green Tomato Marmalade

October 2017

If you have a lot of green tomatoes this is an ideal use for them. I made it last year and the result was delicious! It can be used as a chutney, as it is very tangy.

5 lemons
400ml water
900g green tomatoes
1.5kg granulated sugar

Squeeze the lemons. Place the flesh, membranes and pips in a square of muslin. Remove the pith from the inside of the peel with a sharp knife, and cut the peel into fine strips. Put the peel in a pan, add water and simmer, covered for 20 mins. Chop the tomatoes into small pieces and put into a preserving pan, with lemon juice, made up to 1.7ltr with water. Add the softened lemon peel and the muslin square tied up with string. Bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cook for 40 mins until soft. Remove muslin bag and squeeze any liquid back into pan. Add sugar, heat gently stirring until dissolved. Turn up heat and boil rapidly until setting point is reached, stirring occasionally. Test for set by placing a small spoonful on a chilled saucer and leave to cool. Push gently with your finger and if it wrinkles the preserve is setting. Remove from heat, ladle into hot jars and put lid on immediately.

Red Pepper and Chilli Jam

October 2025

This season has been our best ever for red peppers, so I made this "jam". Good with cheese!

1kg red peppers
6 red bird's eye chillies
350g cider vinegar
700g granulated sugar
black pepper

Cut peppers in half, remove stalks, seeds and white pith.

Puree ¾ of peppers in food processor, depending on your processor you may need to chop the peppers, and add the vinegar.

Very finely slice the rest of the peppers.

Chop the chillies (remove seeds if you don't want it too fiery!) In a large pan combine puree, vinegar, chillies and sugar.

Simmer, stirring until sugar dissolves. Stir in ground black pepper and bring to boil. Boil for 10 mins. Take off heat and stir in sliced peppers.

Allow to cool for 20 mins. Fill four 300g jars, seal with lids immediately.

Ready to eat once it is cool. Keeps up to 6 months but eat within a week once opened.

Rhubarb and Ginger Jam

August 2012

Makes approx 5 pounds of jam

Rhubarb is very much in season now. I have made rhubarb fool, rhubarb crumble, rhubarb cake and rhubarb chutney. This recipe comes from a British Sugar book which I got in 1977 that started my foray into preserves. I always consult it when I have a glut of produce, to see what I can make. This recipe I used for the first time this year and it is absolutely delicious on a slice of fresh home-made bread.

2lb 8oz rhubarb
2lb 8oz sugar
5 tbsp lemon juice
4oz stem ginger
1 tsp ground ginger

Cut rhubarb into small pieces, place in a large bowl in alternate layers with sugar. Add lemon juice and leave overnight. Place in preserving pan and bring to boil, then boil rapidly for 15 mins. Add stem ginger and ground ginger. Boil rapidly for approx 10 mins until setting point is reached - test by cooling a tsp of jam on a cold saucer in fridge for 5 mins. Push the jam and if it wrinkles, setting point has been reached. Give the jam a good stir, then pot in small jars and seal with screw tops immediately, while still hot.

Spiced Pickled Pears

November 2015

Pears are in season and this is a very popular preserve at the Regional House. Delicious served with cold meats and cheese.

500ml distilled vinegar
500g granulated sugar
1 tsp cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
1 lemon, rind and juice
1.3kg firm pears, peeled, quartered and cored

Put all the ingredients, except the pears in a preserving pan. Heat gently until the sugar has dissolved. Boil for 5 mins. Add the pears and poach gently until just tender – approx. 20 mins depending on ripeness. Remove with slotted spoon, and put in hot sterilised jars (warmed in the oven about 120^0C while the pears are cooking). Boil the vinegar to reduce by a third. Pour over the pears. Cover the top of the pears with waxed paper to keep them submerged, and seal with vinegar proof lids. Store in a cool dark place for 1 month before eating.



CAKES & BISCUITS

Bakewell Cake

October 2013

With lots of raspberries in the freezer and plenty of home-made raspberry jam, this recipe came in very useful. I will also try it with fresh blackberries and blackberry jelly instead of raspberries.

150g soft butter
150g caster sugar
150g sr flour
150g ground almonds
2 large eggs
1 tsp vanilla
6 tbsp raspberry jam
150g raspberries
50g flaked almonds

Mix butter, sugar, flour, eggs and vanilla together. Place half mixture in 8 to 9-inch greased and lined cake tin. Level the top. Dot the jam, and scatter raspberries over. Drop tbsp of remaining mixture over the top, do not cover - leave gaps so the jam and raspberries poke through. Sprinkle with almonds and bake at 180^0C for 45-50 mins. Can be served warm with custard or cream; or cold as cake.

Banana and Chocolate Chip Cake

June 2021
Serves 10

From the BBC Good Food website

125g butter
150g caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 egg (beaten)
3 bananas (mashed)
100g chocolate chips (white or milk are best)
190g self-raising flour
60ml milk
Sprinkle of demerara sugar (if liked)

Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin. Melt butter, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over a medium heat.
Remove from heat and add the mashed bananas, mix well.
Add egg, mix well.
Stir in the flour and the milk. Once combined, add the chocolate chips.
Pour into the prepared tin, sprinkle with a teaspoon of demerara sugar to give crunch topping, if liked.
Bake at 170^0C (150^0C fan, gas mark 3) for 45 minutes until a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool and enjoy.

Banana Cake with Peanut Butter Frosting

December 2017

I have been making banana cake for many years, from my Kenwood Chefette recipe book that we received as a wedding present in 1973! The hand whisk is still going strong, though the stand, bowl and liquidiser are long gone! I found this peanut butter frosting recipe earlier this year, and it certainly makes a simple cake into something much more special. Salted peanuts can be sprinkled on top to decorate, but they do tend to go soft within 24 hours.

4oz soft butter
2 very ripe bananas
2 eggs
10oz soft brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla essence
10oz sr flour
¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda

Frosting:
25g soft butter
125g icing sugar
60g cream cheese
50g crunchy peanut butter

In a liquidiser or processor, whizz the butter, bananas, eggs sugar and vanilla until smooth. Stir in the flour and bicarb, mixing well. Pour into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Bake at 180^0C for approx. 1 hour until golden and a skewer inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 10 mins, and then turn out onto a cooling rack. Make the frosting by beating the butter and icing sugar until pale, light and fluffy. Beat in cream cheese and peanut butter. When the cake is completely cold, spread the frosting on the loaf with a palette knife. Immediately before serving, sprinkle over salted peanuts to decorate if you wish.

Beetroot and Chocolate Cake

October 2026

We have a lot of beetroot this year, and I have been meaning to try this cake for a few years. It is quick and easy to make and is very moist.

225g cooked beetroot
30g cocoa powder
180g plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
225g caster sugar
100g plain chocolate
200ml sunflower oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs

Mix flour, cocoa and baking powder in a large bowl. Stir in sugar and chopped chocolate. In a separate bowl, finely grate the beetroot. Beat in the eggs, vanilla and oil, mixing well. Stir into dry ingredients, folding gently but do not overwork. Pour into a greased lined 2 lb loaf tin. Bake at 180^{0}C for 1¼ hours until firm to touch and skewer comes out clean. Cool in tin for 10 mins then turn onto a wire rack to cool. Sprinkle with icing sugar and serve with creme fraiche, cream or ice-cream.

Blackberry Crumble Bars

May 2017

If you still have blackberries in the freezer these are an alternative to blackberry and apple crumble! These tasty little bars are ideal with coffee or in a lunch box.

350g blackberries
1 orange, zest and juice
225g plain flour
125g semolina
125g golden caster sugar
225g butter
2 tsp cornflour
50g walnuts, finely chopped
2 tbsp demerara sugar

Mix flour, semolina and 100g caster sugar. Rub in butter, until just starting to stick together. Stir in orange zest. Press half the mixture into a lined 20cm square cake tin, making an even layer with the back of a spoon. Mix remaining 25g caster sugar, cornflour and orange juice. Add blackberries and toss to combine. Spread blackberries over pastry base. Stir nuts into remaining crumble. Spread over the berries, sprinkle with demerara sugar and bake 180^0C for 45 mins. Leave to cool in the tin, cut into bars.

Blueberry and Lime Drizzle Ring

March 2017

This is another Mary Berry recipe, a variation on the classic lemon drizzle cake.

225g butter
225g caster sugar
275g sr flour
1 tsp baking powder
4 large eggs
2 tbsp milk
Finely grated rind of 3 limes
100g blueberries

For the glaze
6 tbsp lime juice (3 limes)
175g granulated sugar

Grease and line with strips 3-pint ring mould. Cream butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Beat in eggs, milk and lime rind. Stir in flour and baking powder. Spoon half mixture into ring mould. Scatter over the blueberries and top with remaining mixture, smoothing evenly to cover fruit. Bake at 180^0C for approx. 35-40 mins until well risen. While the cake is baking make the glaze, mix lime juice and granulated sugar. Leave the cake to cool in the tin for a few mins, then loosen the sides carefully with a palette knife. Turn it out onto a wire cooling rack, set over a baking tray. Peel off paper strips. While the cake is still warm, prick all over with a fine skewer. Stir the glaze, then spoon slowly over warm cake. Leave to cool completely.

Carrot and Raisin Cupcakes

April 2013

Makes 12

Frances Plummer

Frances baked these for a recent village event and they are quite delicious. A good way of persuading children to eat their veg!

225g carrots
130g raisins
2 large eggs
130g caster sugar
120ml corn oil
½ tsp vanilla extract
Grated zest of 1 orange
120g plain flour
1 tsp bicarb
Pinch salt
1 tsp cinnamon

Preheat oven to 160^0C and line muffin tins with cake cases. Finely grate carrots and combine with raisins. In a large bowl beat eggs and sugar for several mins and then add oil, vanilla and orange zest and beat well. Sift flour, bicarb, salt and cinnamon then gradually add these to the egg and sugar mixture, beating well. Pour mixture into the bowl containing the carrots and raisins and blend well. Spoon mixture into the cupcake cases to about 2/3 full. Bake for about 25 mins – the cupcakes will be quite dark brown in colour and feel spongy to the touch. Remove from oven and leave in tins for about 10 mins before putting them on wire rack.

Choccy Dodgers

April 2022

Makes 28 cookies

250g plain flour
75g cocoa
230g butter
200g caster sugar
2 egg yolks
1 teaspoon vanilla
50g granulated sugar for dusting

For the ganache:
180g dark chocolate (Bournville is best)
120ml double cream
1 tablespoon crème de cassis (optional)

Beat softened butter with caster sugar until light and creamy. Add egg yolks one at a time, beating well. Mix in vanilla and add dry ingredients to make a soft dough. Using a tablespoon roll the mixture into smooth balls (about 25g each). Put granulated sugar in a bowl and roll the balls in sugar. Place on greased baking sheets, spacing apart to allow for spreading. With your thumb, make a small well-like indent in the middle of each, being careful not to push through to the bottom. Bake at 180c for 10-12 minutes, until crackled. The indents will have puffed up a bit, so carefully push them down again as soon as you take them out of the oven. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. To make the ganache: chop the choc into small pieces and put in a bowl. Heat the cream in a small pan, and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Pour it over the choc, and stir until smooth, add cassis. Leave to stand for 10 mins to thicken slightly. Spoon the ganache into the thumb prints. Leave until ganache has set. Best eaten same day, but can be stored in airtight tin at room temperature for 3 days.

Chocolate and Carrot Brownies

March 2015

Still on a carrot theme, these brownies are very rich, so do cut them into very small pieces!

150g Bournville dark chocolate
120ml sunflower oil
175g sugar
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
50g cocoa
125g sr flour
4 tbsp milk
150g grated carrots
50g white chocolate

Melt dark chocolate. Leave to cool. Whisk oil, sugar, egg and vanilla. Stir in cocoa, flour, milk, grated carrot and cooled dark chocolate. Mix well. Spoon into a greased 24cm square tin and bake 180^0C for 25 mins. Leave to cool in tin. Drizzle melted white chocolate over the top of the cake.
Leave until quite cold – preferably overnight so that the cake firms up. Cut into small squares. If cut too soon, the cake will be very crumbly.

Chocolate and Hazelnut Scones

March 2026

This recipe comes from the National Trust Book of Scones which I received as a Christmas gift. I am working my way through the recipes; and with Easter coming up chocolate scones seem a good one to try! This particular recipe comes from Acorn Bank in Cumbria.

500g sr flour
100g caster sugar
125g butter
75g chocolate chips or small chunks from a choc bar
50g hazelnuts, chopped
225ml milk

Glaze: (optional)
50g icing sugar
½ tablespoon cocoa
15g hazelnuts

Rub butter into flour and sugar, until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Stir in choc and hazelnuts. Add milk and mix to a soft dough. Turn onto floured surface and roll out to about 3cm thick. Using a 7cm round cutter, stamp out rounds and place on baking tray. Bake 190^0 C for approx 20 mins. Cool on a wire rack. Toast 15g chopped hazelnuts for 5 mins and leave to cool. To make icing: sift cocoa and icing sugar. Add a little cold water, a few drops at a time, and stir until icing is a dropping consistency. When the scones are cool, drizzle or pipe the icing and sprinkle with toasted hazelnuts.

Makes about 10 large scones

Chocolate Biscuit Gateau

April 2020

Serves 8-10

With Easter almost upon us, time for a chocolate recipe! Beware, this cake uses raw eggs. It is the most delicious thing ever, but extremely rich – you only need a very small slice!

8oz plain chocolate (Bournville is best)
8oz butter
2 eggs
1oz caster sugar
8oz digestive biscuits
whipped cream, glace cherries and nuts to decorate

Melt butter and chocolate. Allow to cool. Beat eggs and sugar. Pour into chocolate mixture, beating continuously. Fold in chopped digestives. Turn into loose bottomed shallow 8-inch tin, base lined with greaseproof paper. Level the top of the mixture. Chill in fridge overnight. Turn on to serving dish. Pipe whipped cream on top, decorate with glace cherries and nuts of your choice.

Chocolate Crackle Tops

April 2016

Makes about 40 biscuits

If you haven't had your ration of chocolate over Easter, try these tasty little biscuits. They are quick and easy to make – however, you do have to prepare the mixture several hours before hand, or leave overnight. They are fudgy biscuits with the texture of a brownie. Once baked, the biscuit top cracks and the icing sugar contrasts with the chocolate inside. The children will enjoy making these – rolling the biscuits is very messy!

200g plain chocolate
90g butter
150g caster sugar
3 eggs
1 tbsp vanilla essence
175g plain flour
25g cocoa powder
½ tsp baking powder
Icing sugar for coating

Melt chocolate and butter gently in microwave, stirring frequently until just melted. Stir in sugar and mix 2-3 mins until dissolved. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well. Stir in vanilla. Mix in flour, cocoa and baking powder until just blended. Cover with cling film and put in fridge 2-3 hours or overnight, until mixture is cold and holds it shape. Using a tsp, scoop mixture out and roll into small balls – about size of a walnut. Drop balls one at time into icing sugar and roll until heavily coated. Remove ball with a slotted spoon and tap against side of bowl to remove excess sugar. Place well-spaced apart on greased baking sheets and bake for 10-12 mins at 170^0C. Do not overbake or the biscuits will be dry. Leave on tray for 3 mins until just set. Using a palette knife transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

Chocolate Mayo Brownies

November 2013

This is a favourite with my family – a good Bonfire night treat!

140g plain chocolate (I find Bournville is best)
3 eggs
225g caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla
40g plain flour
2 g cocoa powder
1 tsp baking powder
110g Hellman's real mayonnaise
55g pecan nuts (or walnuts)

Gently melt the chocolate in microwave. Whisk eggs, sugar and vanilla until slightly thickened. Whisk in chocolate. Fold in flour, cocoa and baking powder. Stir in mayo and chopped nuts. Pour into well-greased 8 x 11-inch tray bake tin. Bake at 160^0C for approx 30-35 mins. The cake will be soft and crusty on top. Leave to cool in tin, cut into squares when cold.

Using mayo instead of butter makes them 55% lower in saturated fat. So these brownies are good for you! Very moreish!

Chocolate Star Bread

March 2023

My Granddaughter had a mania for Nutella, so she loved this! I have adapted this from a WI magazine. Although it is called “bread” it is a misnomer – really rather like a tear and share Danish pastry. It is incredibly easy to make and can be rustled up very quickly – ideal for a weekend late breakfast or brunch.

320g pack of Jus Rol pastry sheet
200g choc spread – Nutella is good
Milk to glaze
Icing sugar to dust

Unroll pastry and use 18cm wide bowl to cut 2 circles. Re-roll the trimmings to make a third circle. Warm the spread in a bowl over warm water to make it easier to spread. Cover a baking sheet with baking parchment. Place one circle on parchment. Spread half the choc spread over pastry, leaving 1cm gap at edge. Place second sheet on top and spread with rest of choc spread. Place the third pastry circle on top.

Place a small cup, approximately 7cm in diameter, in the centre of the pastry as a marker. Cut the pastry in quarters radiating from the cup. Cut into eighths then sixteenths. Remove the cup. Carefully lift two of the sixteenths next to each other at a time, and twist over, one clockwise, and one anticlockwise. Repeat with all other pairs. Carefully fold over the outer edges of each piece so that they are sealed. Glaze with milk. Bake 180°C for 15-20 mins. Dust with icing sugar. Eat warm and enjoy!

Chocolate Yule Log

December 2016

Cake:
4 eggs
4oz caster sugar
3oz sr flour
1oz cocoa powder

Filling:
¼ pint milk
2 egg yolks
6oz Bournville choc
4oz butter
2oz icing sugar

Grease and line 12 x 9-inch Swiss roll tin. Whisk 4 eggs and caster sugar until thick, pale and creamy. Gently fold in sifted flour and cocoa cutting through the mixture in a figure of 8 movement, lifting it from the base of the bowl and shaking the cocoa and flour back into the egg mixture. Pour the mixture into the tin. DO NOT smooth the surface, just tip the tin so that the mixture flows into the corners. Bake at 200^0C for 12-15 mins until the cake springs back when pressed lightly. While still hot, turn out onto greaseproof paper dredged in caster sugar. Carefully peel off the paper, trim off any crisp edges and cut a line, 1 inch in from one of the short edges but don't slice all the way through. Fold the indented end over and roll up keeping the paper inside. Leave to cool. Heat the milk until just warm. Blend egg yolks in a heatproof basin and beat in milk. Put the basin over a pan of gently simmering water and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture coats the back of the spoon. Add chocolate and stir until melted. Cover the basin with cling film and leave to cool, stirring occasionally. DO NOT refrigerate. Cream butter and icing sugar, then gradually stir in cooled chocolate custard. Unroll the cake and spread with 1/3 chocolate mix. Re-roll carefully so as not to cause cracks, but don't worry too much as they can be covered. Transfer to serving dish. Spread the remaining chocolate mix onto the cake, covering the ends too. Make lines with a fork – as for the bark of a tree. Chill for approx. 1 hour until set. Decorate as you wish.

Courgette, Lemon and Pistachio Cake

November 2017

Courgettes have been abundant this year, and cake recipes are common too but this is a delicious variation. It is very important to squeeze out the liquid to prevent the cake being too soggy.

325g grated courgettes
120g butter
180g caster sugar
Juice and zest of 2 lemons
50g pistachio nuts
½ tsp vanilla extract
3 eggs
280g sr flour
½ tsp baking powder
60g icing sugar

Place the grated courgettes in a tea towel and wring out as much moisture as you can over the sink. This may take a few mins. Melt the butter with sugar, stir in courgettes, lemon zest, chopped pistachios and vanilla. Beat in eggs. Add flour and baking powder, stir in gently – do not overmix. Tip into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Bake at 180^0C approximately 1 hour until skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Mix lemon juice and icing sugar. Using a fork, gently prick the top of the cake and pour over the lemon drizzle, so that some soaks in and the rest forms a light glaze on top. Cool in the tin.

Crunchy Ginger Biscuits

April 2015

Makes approx 30

These biscuits are very quick and easy to make. They keep well for a long time in an airtight tin – if you don't eat them all, as they are very moreish!

3oz butter
3oz soft brown sugar
3oz clear honey
2oz black treacle
8oz sr flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp ground cinnamon
2oz crystallised stem ginger

Melt butter, sugar, honey and treacle in a large bowl in microwave for approx 1 min. Stir well until mixed and smooth. Stir in flour, bicarb, ginger and cinnamon. Add chopped ginger and mix well. Leave to cool and firm up for approx 10 mins. Roll a tsp of the mixture into a smooth ball. Place on a greased baking tray, spaced well apart. Bake for 12-15 mins 180^0C. Leave to cool on tray for 5 mins before transferring to wire rack to cool.

Ecclefechan Tarts

December 2015

Makes 12

I first tasted these delicious little tarts when I saw them in Sainsbury's a couple of months ago. This recipe came from Paul Hollywood's latest book British Baking, which I couldn't resist buying when I saw the recipe for Ecclefechan tarts. At the time of writing I haven't actually tried out this recipe but I am sure it will be fine! They are the Scottish variation of mince pies.

Pastry	Filling
200g plain flour	150g dark soft brown sugar
2 tbsp icing sugar	2 eggs
100g butter	100g butter
1 egg	1 tbsp sherry vinegar
1 tsp lemon juice	200g mixed dried fruit
2-3 tsp cold water	2 g chopped walnuts
	25g chopped pecans

Make the pastry: rub fat into flour and icing sugar. Add egg, lemon juice and water. Knead gently into a smooth ball. Wrap in cling film and chill for 30 mins. Roll out and using 10 cm cutter, cut into 12 circles and place in muffin tins.
For filling: beat sugar and eggs, then add melted butter, vinegar and dried fruit. Mix well. Divide between pastry cases. Mix walnuts and pecans, sprinkle over tarts. Bake 20 mins 200^0C, until pastry is golden and filling has slight wobble. Place the tray on a wire rack to cool. It is easiest to remove the tarts when they are still slightly warm.

Eggnog Cookies

July 2022
Makes 12

125g soft butter
125g caster sugar
2 tbsp milk
2 tsp vanilla extract
150g sr flour
25g custard powder
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
3 tbsp bronze crunch pieces (Waitrose Cooks' ingredients)

Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment. Beat butter, sugar and milk until pale and creamy. Add flour, custard powder and spices, beat until combined. Divide dough into 12 pieces, shape into balls. Roll in bronze crunch. Place on baking trays, spaced well apart to allow for spreading, press down lightly with palm of hand to flatten slightly. Bake 150^0C for 30 mins until edges are just firming, but centres still soft. Cool for 5 mins on tray, then transfer to a wire rack to cool and crisp up.

Elderflower Cordial Sandwich Cake

August 2016

If you made elderflower cordial (see page 59) this summer this is a delicious cake using some of it. I have modified it slightly from Lynn Hill's Clandestine Cake Club Cook Book.

200g white chocolate
4 large eggs, separated
2 tbsp elderflower cordial
150g butter
3 tbsp elderflower cordial
200ml double cream
230g caster sugar
130g sr flour
150g icing sugar

Make the chocolate ganache first. Heat the cream in small saucepan until just bubbling around the edge. Pour over the chocolate and mix until melted. Cover with cling film and leave to cool for 4-6 hours in the fridge until a firm spreading consistency. Beat egg yolks and 190g caster sugar using an electric mixer until pale, light, fluffy and doubled in volume (approx 10 mins). Mix in 2 tbsp elderflower cordial. In a clean bowl, whisk egg whites until soft peaks form and add remaining 40g caster sugar until well combined. Fold half the egg whites into egg yolk mix, then fold in half flour. Repeat with remaining egg whites and flour. Divide the mixture between 2 greased and lined 20cm round tins. Bake 190^0C for approx. 25 mins. Leave to cool in tins for 5 mins before turning onto wire rack to cool. Beat butter and icing sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in 3 tbsp elderflower cordial. Use buttercream to sandwich the cakes together and spread chocolate ganache over the top of cake. Decorate cake as you like with raspberries, strawberries or chocolate buttons.

Ginger Cake

May 2018

A quick and easy to make cake which stores well in a tin, or can be frozen as a standby.

12oz sr flour
1 tsp bicarb
3 tsp ground ginger
7oz caster sugar
4oz soft marge
2 eggs
2 tbsp golden syrup
8 fl oz boiling milk

Mix all the ingredients together by hand or electric mixer, until smooth. Pour into a greased and lined 7-inch round deep tin. Bake at 140^0C for 60-80 mins until cake is shrinking slightly from the sides and a skewer comes out clean. Turn onto a wire rack to cool. This cake can be eaten straight away but can be left for a few days to allow the flavour to develop. It can be jazzed up with icing, butter cream or decorated as you wish.

Gooseberry and Pistachio Cake

October 2020

I made this the first time with fresh gooseberries, and the second time with thawed ones from the freezer. Both worked well. I have adapted the recipe from a Waitrose card. I didn't have enough ground almonds, so I topped it up with plain flour. The second time I used 200g of ground almonds (omitting the flour) but it sank in the middle, though was perfectly fine. Flour helps to produce a firmer cake but if you need a gluten-free cake just use ground almonds.

5 eggs, separated
220g golden caster sugar
100g natural yogurt
60ml olive oil
140g ground almonds
60g plain flour
¼ tsp baking powder
½ tsp bicarb
100g pistachios, chopped
125g gooseberries (small pink ones)

Whisk egg whites to form soft peaks. Gradually whisk in 110g sugar, until stiff and shiny. In separate bowl, whisk egg yolks and 110g sugar until thick and pale. With a large metal spoon, gently fold yogurt and oil into yolk mixture. Add almonds, bicarb, baking powder, 75g nuts and gooseberries. Carefully fold in egg white and spoon mixture into 23cm greased and lined spring form tin. Smooth the top. Bake for about 1 hour at 180^0C, covering the top halfway through with foil. When cooked should be well risen and coming away from the side. Cool in tin. Serve dusted with caster sugar and 25g chopped pistachios.

Honey and Almond Cake

April 2024

150g butter
150g honey
50g icing sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
225g ground almonds

ICING
150g icing sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
50g whole almonds with skin on

Melt butter, set aside to cool. Whisk 100g honey, 50g icing sugar, eggs and vanilla until light and pale. Add butter and ground almonds, mixing well. Pour into a greased and lined 23cm round cake tin. Bake 170°C for 30mins until a skewer inserted in middle comes out clean. Allow to stand for 5 mins. Slice the almonds, each into about 3 pieces and toast on a baking tray in the oven for about 10mins. Heat the remaining 50g honey. Turn the cake out, while still warm, remove the paper and flip over onto serving plate. While the cake is still hot pour over the honey and leave to cool. Mix icing sugar and lemon juice to make a spreadable icing. Spread over the top of the cake (use a palette knife dipped in hot water if necessary), scatter toasted almonds over the top. Leave to set for 1 hour.

Honey, Spice and Orange Cake

June 2023

This is a delicious cake! Set honey can be used, but for the drizzle melt it in the microwave for 10 seconds or so. Make sure you support local bee keepers!

115g butter
115g runny honey + extra to drizzle
80g golden caster sugar
Grated zest and juice of 1 orange
2 eggs
225g sr flour
1 teaspoon bicarb
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon mixed spice
½ teaspoon ground ginger
50g chopped mixed peel

Cream butter, honey, sugar and orange zest until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in eggs. Mix flour, bicarb and spices. Fold into mixture with peel and orange juice. Spoon into greased and lined 20cm deep round cake tin. Bake for 50 mins until risen and golden; and an inserted skewer comes out clean. While the cake is still warm, prick holes all over the top and drizzle honey evenly over the surface. Leave in tin for 20 mins then transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Lemon Feather Cake

November 2025

I absolutely love lemon curd, so this is a popular recipe for me. The advantage for some is that it is gluten free.

3 eggs, separated
5 oz caster sugar
grated rind and juice of ½ lemon
2½ oz cornflour or potato flour

FILLING
½ pint double cream
8 oz lemon curd

Whisk egg yolks, sugar, lemon rind and juice until very pale, thick and creamy – when it leaves a trail for 8 seconds when the whisk is lifted.

Fold in the flour using a large metal spoon. Whisk the egg whites until stiff but not dry. Fold into lemon mixture.

Pour into 7-inch-deep cake tin lined with baking paper. Bake for 40 mins 170°C until puffed and lightly golden, and firm to the touch. Leave to cool in tin for 5 minutes.

Turn onto a wire rack and cool. Whip cream – but not too stiff. Fold in the curd.

Split the cake with a serrated knife, sandwich together with the cream. Dust with icing sugar.

Mincemeat Biscotti

February 2019

If you have mincemeat left over from Christmas, try these crisp tasty biscuits – a variation on the traditional Italian almond variety.

75g butter
150g caster sugar
1 egg
250g luxury mincemeat
1 tbsp brandy
280g plain flour
1½ tsp baking powder
50g toasted walnuts

Cream butter and sugar, until light and fluffy. Stir in beaten egg, then mincemeat and brandy. Add flour, baking powder and chopped walnuts, stir well. On a floured board, shape into 2 x 12-inch long logs – similar to a flat baguette. Bake on greased baking trays 160^0C for 25 mins. Allow to cool, then cut each log into 18 diagonal thin slices. Bake for a further 12 mins. Cool on wire rack.

Will keep in an airtight tin for about a week. If they go a bit soft, crisp them up in a medium oven for 5 mins.

Mincemeat Crumble Squares

December 2018

265g plain flour
125g soft brown sugar
100g ground almonds
225g cold butter
700g quality mincemeat
75g pecan halves
icing sugar to dust

Rub butter into flour, sugar and almonds until coarse crumbs. Put 2/3 mixture in 8-inch square tin - base and sides lined with baking parchment. Press lightly to flatten slightly. Put mincemeat on top, then scatter with remaining crumb mixture but do not pat down. Sprinkle pecans over the top. Bake approx. 45 mins at 180^0C until golden. Leave to cool for 10mins before carefully removing from tin. Cut into squares and serve cold, dusted with icing sugar as cake with a cup of coffee, or serve warm as desert with cream, ice cream or crème fraiche.

Moccachino Slices

May 2019

Another quick and easy traybake, that goes perfectly with a cup of tea or coffee.

100g butter
225g soft brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tbsp instant coffee, mixed with 3 tbsp boiling water
2 tsp baking powder
125g plain flour

Topping
150ml sour cream, yogurt or crème fraiche
280g white choc
cocoa powder to dust

Melt butter in microwave, stir in sugar. Cool slightly, stir in coffee and eggs. Add baking powder and flour, mix well. Pour into greased and lined 12 x 9-inch tin. Bake 180^0C for 20 mins. Cool in tin. Melt white chocolate and stir in sour cream. Leave to cool for 15 mins. Spread over top of cake. Dust lightly with cocoa and leave to set. Cut into squares.

Norfolk Scone

November 2011

On the Parish Pilgrimage to Walsingham last month, I enjoyed a very large slice of Norfolk shortcake in the café at the shrine. It reminded me of a teatime recipe that I have used many times in the past. The Norfolk shortcake was rather like a tray bake slice – soft rather than crisp, packed with currants and nutmeg. This recipe is similar, in that it uses nutmeg and currants, but is more like a giant scone sandwich!

1lb sr flour
6oz butter
2 eggs
3oz soft brown sugar
6 fl oz milk
4oz currants
½ tsp nutmeg
2 tbsp Demerara sugar

Rub 4oz butter into flour. Mix to a soft dough with eggs and milk. Knead lightly. Divide dough in half and roll each piece into an 8-inch round. Place one on a lightly greased baking tray. Spread remaining butter on dough. Mix brown sugar, currants and nutmeg. Spread evenly over buttered dough. Lay the second round on top and press down firmly. Cut into 8 wedges, through the top layer of dough only. Brush top with milk and sprinkle with Demerara sugar. Bake at 200^0C for 35 mins.
Serve warm with butter.

Nutella Cookies

May 2015

If you still haven't had your quota of chocolate for Easter, try these – delicious; and very simple to make.

1 egg
250g Nutella
250g sr flour
125g caster sugar
50g chopped hazel nuts

Blend all the ingredients, except the nuts, in a food processor until smooth. Add the nuts. If the mixture is too crumbly add 1-2 tbsp water. Form into 1-inch balls. Place on a baking tray, spaced apart, and press each one down lightly with a fork. Bake for approx 10 mins at 180^0C. Leave to cool for 5 mins, before transferring to a wire rack to cool. Store in an air-tight tin. (These cookies will be soft set)

Peanut Butter Biscuits

June 2020

4oz block margarine
4oz peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
4oz caster sugar
4oz light brown sugar
1 egg
8oz plain flour
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp baking powder

Cream marge, peanut butter and sugars until smooth. Beat in egg. Mix dry ingredients and stir in. Mix well to a stiff dough. Roll into walnut sized balls, and place on greased baking trays, spaced well apart. Flatten lightly with a fork. Bake 190^0C for approx 15 mins until golden. Cool on tray for 5 mins, to allow them to crisp up, then transfer to a cooling rack. When cold store in an airtight tin.

Peanut Butter Flapjack

March 2014

6oz crunchy peanut butter
4oz soft margarine
8oz Demerara sugar
6 tbsp golden syrup
10oz rolled oats
2oz salted peanuts
2 tsp lemon juice

Melt the peanut butter, marge, syrup and sugar together (in saucepan or microwave). Stir in oats, peanuts and lemon juice. Press into greased 11 x 7-inch shallow tin. Bake at 160^0C for approx 35 mins until golden. Mark into squares and cool in tin. Cut into squares when cold. Store in an airtight tin. Keeps well for up to 2 weeks (assuming you don't eat them!)

Very moreish! Good for packed lunches.

Plum and Almond Cake

November 2018

A delicious cake using up a glut of plums at the Regional House.

175g butter
300g halved plums
150g caster sugar
3 eggs
125g sr flour
100g ground almonds
2 tbsp toasted flaked almonds
2 tbsp plum jam

Line the base of a 20cm baking tin with parchment. Chop 200g plums into small dice. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Fold in flour and ground almonds, until just combined. Spoon some of the mixture into the tin to just cover the base. Fold the diced plums into the remaining mixture and spoon into cake tin. Cut the rest of the plums into wedges and arrange on top of mixture. Bake for 50-60 mins at 170^0C, until skewer inserted comes out clean. Cool in tin for 10mins then turn onto wire rack to cool completely. When ready to serve, warm the jam with 1 tbsp water, brush over cake to glaze and sprinkle with flaked almonds.

Poppy Seed and Honey Cake with Strawberry Icing

July 2020

100g caster sugar
175g butter
85g honey
3 eggs
140g sr flour
25g cornflour
2 tbsp poppy seeds
100g icing sugar
2 tbsp strawberry puree

Butter a large ring tin (approx 8-inch) dust with a spoonful of flour and caster sugar. Tap out excess. Cream butter, honey and sugar until pale and fluffy. Beat in eggs. Add dry ingredients and fold in. Spoon into tin and level the surface. Bake 160^0C for approx 35 mins until risen and firm. Cool in tin for 10 mins then ease sides with a palette knife and turn onto wire rack to cool. Make the puree by crushing a handful of strawberries and pushing through a sieve to remove pips. Mix icing sugar and puree to make a stiff icing – use more icing sugar if necessary. Put a plate under the cooling rack to catch the drips. Drizzle the icing over the cooled cake, and decorate with fresh strawberries. Can be served with cream, crème fraiche or even ice cream!

Pumpkin Loaf Cake with Maple Icing

December 2023/January 2024

We had about 12 huge pumpkins this year and at the time of writing have still got 6 left! For some time, we have been living on a diet of all things pumpkin -soup, risotto, roasted, curry, pie, blondies and now I have adapted this recipe from BBC Food.

220ml milk
1 tablespoon distilled or cider vinegar
125mlsunflower oil
1 tablespoon maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
200g pumpkin puree (tinned or fresh)
350g sr flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
165g caster sugar
1½ teaspoon mixed spice

ICING
150g icing sugar
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon milk

Grease and line 2lb loaf tin. Stir vinegar with milk in a bowl and leave to stand about 10 mins until slightly curdled. Whisk in oil, maple syrup, vanilla and pumpkin puree. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder, caster sugar and spice. Stir in milk mixture and beat well until smooth. Pour into loaf tin and bake 180°C for 55 mins until lightly browned and cooked through. Leave to cool for 15 mins in tin before turning onto wire rack to cool. Mix icing sugar, maple syrup and milk until smooth. Pour the icing over the cool cake and leave to set at room temperature for about 2 hours. Cut the cake into slices to serve.

Pumpkin, Pecan and White Chocolate Blondies

February 2020

We are still eating pumpkins! These little squares are delicious – adapted from a Lidl recipe.

275g pumpkin (or butternut squash)
175g soft butter
1 tsp vanilla extract
200g light brown sugar
1 egg
225g plain flour
125g white choc
100g pecans

Chop pumpkin into chunks and cook in microwave until soft (approx 15 mins). Mash and leave to cool. Beat butter, vanilla and sugar until pale smooth and creamy. Add egg, beating well. Stir in pumpkin, flour, chopped chocolate and pecans. Spoon mixture into greased and lined 8 x 12-inch baking tin. Bake 180^0C for 40mins. Cool in tin for 10 mins. Cool on a wire rack. Cut into squares. Can be served cold as cake, or warm with cream or ice cream.

Pumpkin, Poppy Seed and Lemon Loaf

December 2013

8oz diced pumpkin
3 tbsp milk
1 egg
6oz sr flour
½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1½ tsp mixed spice
½ tsp nutmeg
2oz butter
5oz caster sugar
2 tbsp poppy seeds
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

Cook pumpkin in microwave until tender. Drain and puree until smooth. Mix flour, baking powder, bicarb, spice, nutmeg and sugar. Rub in the butter until like fine bread crumbs. Stir in poppy seeds, egg, milk and pumpkin puree. Spoon into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Bake at 180^0C for about 50 mins until risen and golden. Cool on a wire rack. Remove paper and serve cut into thin slices.

This cake keeps very well.

Raspberry and Almond Cake

July 2019

With the soft summer fruit season fast approaching, what better than a raspberry cake?

6oz sr flour
6oz caster sugar
6oz soft marge
6oz ground almonds
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp baking powder
4 eggs
10oz raspberries (fresh or frozen)

Mix all ingredients, except raspberries, to a smooth batter - a soft dropping consistency (can be done in a food processor). Pour half the mix into an 8in deep round lined or loose bottomed tin. Sprinkle half the raspberries over the mix, and cover with the rest of the batter. Lightly press the remaining raspberries into the top of the cake and bake for approx 80 mins at 165^0C until firm, and skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins. Turn onto wire rack to cool. Dust with icing sugar and cinnamon mix. Can be served warm or cold with raspberry sauce, cream or crème fraiche.

Raspberry Cream Cheese Streusel Cake

July 2026

The raspberry season is almost upon us, so here is a nice cake recipe from the Dairy Diary. You could substitute blueberries or other soft fruit.

150g caster sugar
200g butter
2 eggs
25g ground almonds
200g sr flour
200g raspberries
50g cream cheese
50g demerara sugar

Beat caster sugar and 150g softened butter. Beat in the eggs, fold in ground almonds and 150g flour. Gently fold in raspberries. Spoon half mixture into a greased and lined 2lb loaf tin. Add teaspoonfuls of cream cheese, cover with remaining mixture, smooth the top. Rub remaining 50g of butter with remaining 50g flour, stir in demerara sugar. Sprinkle on cake. Bake 180oC for approx 1 hour until golden, and a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool in tin.

Rhubarb and Custard Muffins

June 2019

Makes 12

Have you got lots of rhubarb in the garden and are fed up with rhubarb crumble? Try these for a change!

300g rhubarb
50g caster sugar
140g soft light brown sugar
75ml sunflower oil
1 egg
Zest of 1 orange
284ml carton soured cream
300g sr flour
8 tbsp thick Devon custard (from a carton) chilled

Cut rhubarb into 1in lengths, toss in caster sugar, put in roasting tin, cover in foil and roast 200^{0}C for 15 mins until tender. Cool and drain. Beat oil, brown sugar, egg, zest and sour cream until combined. Mix in flour, and fold in rhubarb. Divide ¾ mixture into 12 muffin cases, make a dip in the centre, fill each with a small blob of custard. Cover with the rest of the muffin mix. Bake at 180^{0}C for 25 mins until risen and golden. Sprinkle with caster sugar. Best eaten same day.

Rhubarb and Ginger Cake

July 2025

I made my own rhubarb compote – stewing rhubarb with a little sugar. The original recipe used ground ginger but I prefer the texture and flavour of stem ginger.

385g Bonne Maman rhubarb compote
250g plain flour
1½ teaspoons bicarb
2 tablespoons chopped stem ginger
200g golden caster sugar
75g soft brown sugar
2 eggs
150ml veg oil

Icing

100g butter
200g icing sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Reserve 2 tablespoons of compote for icing. Whisk sugar, eggs, oil and the remaining compote. Stir in flour and bicarb, beat in stem ginger, mixing well. Spoon into greased and lined 10in square tin. Bake 160^0C for 45-50 mins. Cool in tin for 10 mins then turn onto wire rack to cool. Beat butter, sugar and vanilla with reserved compote, until smooth. Chill until thickened. Spread over top of cake.

Serve cut in squares.

Simple Sachertorte

April 2025

With Easter this month a chocolate recipe is a must. This is a quick and easy cake; very rich so only small slices recommended!

8oz plain choc (I always use Bournville)
4oz soft butter
3oz sr flour
4oz caster sugar
½ teaspoon baking powder
2oz ground almonds
4 eggs
4oz choc nut spread (eg Nutella)
4 tablespoons apricot jam
4 tablespoons single cream
½ oz butter

Gently melt half the choc in a bowl in microwave for 30 secs. Stir until smooth, leave to cool slightly. Beat butter, sugar, flour, baking powder, almonds and eggs until smooth. Stir in melted choc. Spoon mixture into 8in greased and baselined round cake tin. Bake 170°C for approx. 50 mins until skewer inserted comes out clean. Cool in tin for10 mins. Turn onto wire rack, cover with tea towel and leave to cool. Slice cake horizontally and sandwich together with Nutella. Melt jam then brush over top and sides of cake. Gently heat the rest of the choc with butter and cream, stirring until smooth. Cool for 10 mins until thick enough to spread over cake. Leave to set.

Traditionally the cake is piped in chocolate with the word Sachertorte but you could decorate it with mini choc eggs!

Sour cherry and White Chocolate Garibaldi

February 2022

I found this recipe in a craft magazine as a suggestion for home-made edible Christmas gifts, and couldn't resist giving them a try. Very moreish!

125g butter
275g sr flour
75g caster sugar
4 tablespoons milk
175g dried sour cherries (or dried cranberries)
1 egg
200g white choc

Rub butter into flour until it looks like breadcrumbs. Stir in sugar and milk, bringing together to form a dough. Briefly knead until dough is smooth. Wrap in cling film and chill for 15 mins to firm up. Roll out dough to make 2 rectangles, approx. 24x30cm each. Sprinkle cherries over one rectangle, then lay the other rectangle on top. Re-roll to press the cherries down. Trim edges to neaten, then cut lengthways into thirds; then cut each strip into 8 pieces. You should have 24 equal rectangles. Transfer to paper lined baking sheets, brush with beaten egg, and sprinkle with a little caster sugar. Bake 15 mins at 1800C until lightly golden. Leave to cool on baking sheets. When biscuits are cold, melt white choc and half dip each biscuit lengthways in the choc. Return biscuits to baking sheets to set.

Spiced Buttermilk Cakes

May 2020

Frances Plummer

(original Guardian recipe)

A good use for milk which had gone sour!

300g white flour
2 tsp baking powder
2 tsp mixed spice
Pinch salt
125g butter
90g white sugar
150g mix of dried apricots, cranberries and currants
1 egg
125ml buttermilk or half yoghurt/half milk (I used milk which had gone sour).

Heat the oven to 180^0C and line 2 baking sheets with baking parchment.
Sieve the flour, baking powder, salt and spices into a large bowl.
Cut the butter into small chunks and rub into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs.
Stir in the sugar and dried fruit.
Beat the egg with the buttermilk/milk and then add to the dry ingredients.
Mix quickly till it comes together and then put tbsp of mixture onto the baking sheets, leaving some room for them to spread.
Bake for 15-20 mins until golden brown. Cool on a rack.

Strawberry Pancake Gateau

July 2017

Serves 6-8

8oz wholemeal flour
2 tbsp caster sugar
1 tsp nutmeg
2 tsp baking powder
2 eggs
2 tbsp veg oil
8oz strawberries
4 tbsp clear honey
1 small orange
12oz cream cheese
2 tbsp milk
3 tbsp caster sugar
½ pint milk

Mix flour, sugar, nutmeg and baking powder. Stir in eggs, oil and ¼ pint milk, beat until smooth. Add remaining milk. Heat 6-inch frying pan over moderate heat, lightly wipe pan with oil on kitchen paper. Turn heat to low, pour 1/3 of batter into pan. Cook for 2-3 mins until bubbles appear on surface, turn pancake, press down lightly at edge and cook 1 min. Place on cooling rack and make 2 more. Spread each pancake with 1 tbsp honey while still warm. Cut 4 slices from centre of orange and set aside to decorate. Beat together cream cheese, milk, caster sugar, and grated rind from ends of orange. Halve the strawberries – save 3 for top decoration. Place one pancake on serving dish. Save 2 tbsp of cheese mixture for top decoration. Spread ¼ mixture on pancake, top with ½ the strawberries. Spread cheese on both sides of 2nd pancake, place on top of 1st pancake. Spread remaining cheese on 3rd pancake, and place cheese side down on top of 2nd. Spread remaining honey on top. Place ½ reserved cheese on top in centre. Cut orange slices from rind to centre, overlap to form cones and put a little cheese in the centre of the cone. Arrange around cheese on top of pancake. Place the remaining strawberry halves between the orange slices.

Tahini Cookies

February 2021

Makes approximately 20 biscuits

115g butter
50g brown sugar
100g caster sugar
80g tahini
2 tablespoons honey
210g plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
20g sesame seeds
2 tablespoons brown sugar

Beat butter and sugars until smooth and creamy. Add honey and tahini, mix well. Stir in flour and baking powder until blended and forms a soft dough. Roll 1 tablespoon dough into balls. Mix sesame seeds and 2 tablespoons brown sugar on a saucer. Roll the balls in the seed mixture. Place on baking tray and flatten slightly. Bake at 180^0C for 12-14 mins until light brown. DO NOT OVERCOOK. Leave on the tray to cool completely.

Westmorland Pepper Cake

May 2016

An unusual cake recipe from my Dairy Diary – that even Bob eats despite not liking dried fruit! The pepper and cloves give it a warming spicy flavour.

75g butter
75g raisins
75g currants
110g caster sugar
225g sr flour
½ tsp ground ginger
½ tsp ground cloves
½ tsp finely ground black pepper
4 tbsp milk
1 egg

Put butter fruit and sugar in a saucepan with ¼ pint water, melt gently, stirring. Bring to boil and simmer gently for 10 mins. Leave to cool. Stir in flour, spices and pepper. Beat in milk and egg. Pour into greased and lined 7-inch round cake tin at 180^0C for 45 mins, until firm and golden. Cool on a wire rack.
Can be served with Lancashire cheese.