

Cookbook by Communicare

From our families to yours



What's Cooking!



Something Savoury



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Koubepia - Stuffed Vine Leaves



One of my favourite dishes from my 1970's authentic Greek recipe book. Koubepia can be eaten hot or cold served with a salad or as an accompaniment to meat dishes. Perfect for parties. As an alternative, Swiss chard leaves may be used instead of vine leaves and are just as delicious!

450g | 1lb fresh vine leaves or two packets of preserved vine leaves
450g | 1lb minced pork (or beef)
1/2 cup | 75g | 3oz long-grain white rice, rinsed

1/2 cup finely chopped parsley
1 small onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup | 100ml | 3 1/2 fl oz corn oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped
400g | 14oz tin of chopped tomatoes
1 tablespoon tomato purée
Juice of 1 lemon

1 level teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 level teaspoon ground black pepper
1 cup | 200ml | 7fl oz hot water
Salt

Place the leaves into a large bowl and pour over enough boiling water to cover them. Leave for a minute or two to soften and then drain in a colander.

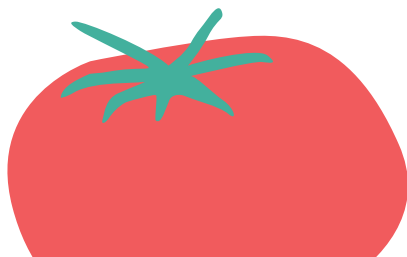
Next, place the mince, rice, parsley and the small chopped onion into a large basin and leave until required.

In a large flame-proof casserole dish or a large saucepan, heat the oil and fry the medium chopped onion until golden brown. Stir in the chopped tomatoes with the tomato purée and cook gently for 5 minutes. Next tip the tomato mixture straight into the mince and rice.

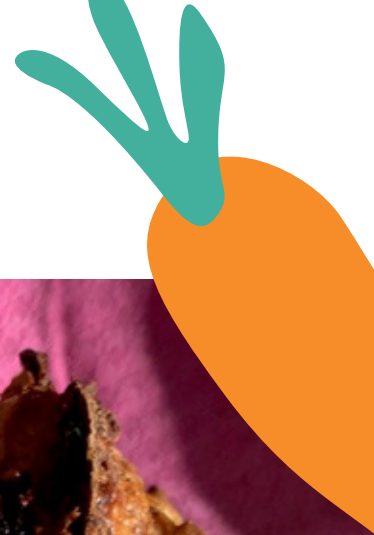
Add the lemon juice, cinnamon, pepper and some salt and combine all the ingredients together.

To make the koubepia, place a leaf face down onto a plate. Carefully spoon a tablespoon of the mixture near the stem of the leaf. Fold the sides of the leaf over and roll up tightly to make a cylinder shape. Continue to do this until all the mixture and the leaves have been used.

Then pack them into the casserole dish. Pour over the hot water and place a plate over the koubepia. Bring to simmering point, cover with a lid and cook gently for 30-35 minutes or until tender. Switch off the heat and leave to stand for 5 minutes before serving.



Sourdough Starter



Your sourdough starter is a living organism therefore it has to have a name. Mine is Doris Dough. Getting your starter going takes a bit of commitment but they are hardy little organisms once it gets going. There is lots of different versions and techniques out there for starters I am giving you my simple one. My first starter I killed with because I 'over-nurtured' it. Pantry Mama is your go to for Sourdough Baking <https://www.pantrymama.com/>. Have fun- it does become slightly addictive if you stick it out.

1 cup of high protein plain flour- I start mine and feed mine home brand wholemeal plain flour.

½ cup of tepid/lukewarm boiled tap water

Day 1- Mix the flour and the water together in an airtight jar or plastic container. I like a where the opening of the vessel is the same dimensions as the rest of the container and the opening is easy to get flour in and stir with a spoon. Ensure that the batter is well mixed and scarp down the sides. The batter should resemble thick pancake batter. Put an elastic band around the outside of the vessel to mark the level of the batter or mark with a Texta. Leave on bench or in a warm place not in direct heat.

Day 2- Discard ½ to ¾ of the batter. **DO NOT TIP DOWN THE SINK.** Re-feed the remaining batter with ½ cup of flour and about ¼ cup of water (or you can do similar quantities to Day 1)

Repeat Day 2 until you get a nice bubbly smelly starter. This may up to 30.days. The higher protein content of the flour the quicker your starter will grow. Don't be tempted to feed twice a day this is how I messed up my first starter. Try to consistently feed at same time every day. You will know when you starter is ready when it consistently bubbly every day, it is doubling in size (or close to doubling) and it smells sour (during the growing period it will have some interesting odours).

One you have a good healthy starter you can feed it once week and store it in the fridge (putting it to sleep). If keeping in fridge take out a few hours before use, feed it and let it sit (waking up). Feed it weekly if you are not using it regularly.

Banging Chicken Pie



This is a family fav on busy nights. It is super simple to put together and YUMMY.

2 large knobs of butter
1 large leek, washed and chopped into 2cm pieces
200g mushrooms, roughly chopped

4 x 250g chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces
250ml chicken stock
1 tbsp cornflour
100ml double cream

2 large handfuls of baby spinach leaves
About 6 sheets of filo pastry
Drizzle of olive oil
Salad or veg, to serve

Preheat your oven to 190°C (fan 170°C, gas mark 5). Heat the butter in a large frying pan over a medium to high heat. Add the leek and mushrooms and fry for 2–3 minutes until they just start to soften.

Crank up the heat to high, add the chicken pieces and fry for a further 2 minutes – the chicken won't be cooked through at this point – then pour in the chicken stock and let it come to a simmer.

Meanwhile, mix the cornflour with 2 tablespoons of water until smooth, then pour into the pan, along with the cream. Bring back to the boil, stirring gently, and cook until the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat and stir in the spinach, then tip the whole lot into a pie dish about 28cm x 15cm. Set aside to cool a little.

Take a sheet of filo and roughly crumple it in your hands – there is no right or wrong to this method! Place the crumpled filo on top of the chicken filling in the pie dish and repeat with the remaining filo sheets.

Drizzle the pastry with olive oil, then bake the pie for about 20 minutes, by which time the filo will have crisped up and turned golden brown in places.

Serve up your pie with fresh salad or some vegetables.

Braised Brisket with Prunes and Bacon



We came across this recipe leafing through the Sunday paper. There's usually a recipe in there somewhere each weekend. Our family loves delicious meat, rib eye, slow cooked tomahawk steaks, slow cooked lamb shanks. We were new to the world of brisket, and the slow cooked recipe sounded amazing...so...we gave it a go. And it didn't disappoint. It's now a winter family favourite, with mash or pappardelle pasta and a glass of red wine. The recipe serves eight, which is perfect for our family — we freeze one half and its even more delicious reheated in a saucepan...

2 tsp vegetable oil
2x 1.5kg beef brisket
Salt and pepper, to season
4 onions, peeled and sliced
4 cloves garlic, peeled and bruised
400g cand crushed tomatoes

1 litre beef stock
500mL red wine
1 cinnamon stick
5 sprigs thyme
2 bay leaves
1/2 tsp allspice
Peel of 1/2 an orange

3 carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks
200g thick cut bacon, sliced into batons
1 cup prunes
2 Tbsp finely shredded curly parsley

Heat your oven to 160C fan-forced (180C conventional). Heat a heavy casserole over medium heat and add the oil. Season the beef with salt and pepper and brown each piece well on all sides, then set aside. Add the onion and garlic to the casserole and fry for about 5 minutes until lightly browned.

Return the beef to the casserole and add tomato, stock, wine, cinnamon, thyme, bay leaves, allspice and orange peel. Season well and bring to a simmer. Cover and transfer to the oven for 3 1/2 hours. Remove from the oven and stand for 30 minutes.

Remove the beef from the pot and put in the fridge for at least 30 minutes more.

Return the sauce to a simmer and add the carrots. Fry the bacon in a separate pan for about 5 minutes, then add to the sauce with the prunes. Simmer for 20-30 minutes until the carrots are softened. Adjust seasoning.

Slice the brisket into 1cm slices. Return to the sauce to warm through for about 10 minutes, add the finely shredded parsley, then serve.

Burmese Chicken Curry & Coconut Rice



Chicken Curry:

1kg chicken pieces (skin removed and cut into smaller pieces)
2 small onions (diced)
3cm ginger root
2 cloves garlic
1 stalk lemon grass (cut into 5cm lengths)
3-4 tablespoons vegetable oil

2-3 tablespoons fish sauce

1 tablespoon Paprika

½ teaspoon Tumeric

1 teaspoon Balachan (preserved shrimp paste)

Curry Powder to taste (preferably Burmese curry powder)

2 medium potatoes cut into large cubes

Coconut Rice:

2 cups rice

3 cups water

1 small onion peeled and cut into quarters

¼ cup coconut milk powder mix

A pinch of Tumeric

1-2 Bay leaves

1 Cinnamon stick

Splash of vegetable oil (a generous teaspoon)

A pinch of salt

Chicken Curry:

Heat oil in large heavy based pot. Add onions and heat until soft. Grind ginger & garlic in mortar & pestle and add to pot along with lemon grass, turmeric, paprika, fish sauce, curry powder and Balachan (stir to dissolve).

Add a splash of water if mixture is sticking to the base of the pot.

Add chicken, one cup of water and bring to the simmer. Add potatoes. Cover and cook until chicken is tender.

(Check for seasoning, fish sauce and Balachan can be salty)

Coconut Rice:

A great variation on steamed rice – simply put all the ingredients in a rice cooker and hit the switch.

Nasi Lemak Sambal Ikan Bilis (Dried Anchovies Sambal)



Nasi Lemak, widely known as the national dish of Malaysia, is fragrant coconut milk rice served with sambal ikan bilis (which is a spicy relish made with dried anchovies), boiled eggs, toasted peanuts and sliced cucumber. A favourite in the Jeyamohan household, Rajeswary Suppiah has perfected the art of the sambal ikan bilis.

1 cup water
Tamarind pulp size of a small ping pong ball
1/2 red onion

1 cup dried anchovies
1 clove garlic
4 shallots
10 dried chillies

1 teaspoon belacan or shrimp prawn paste
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon sugar

For the tamarind juice, soak the tamarind pulp in water for 15 minutes and then squeeze the tamarind to extract the flavour, drain the pulp and retain the juice.

Rinse the dried anchovies and drain the water. Fry the anchovies until they turn light brown and put aside. Grind the prawn paste together with shallots, garlic, and deseeded dried chillies with a food processor. Slice the red onion.

Heat some oil in a pan and fry the spice paste until fragrant. Add in the onion and the anchovies, tamarind juice, salt, and sugar and mix through well. Simmer on a low heat until the sambal thickens. Set aside to cool

Serve with steamed rice or nasi lemak rice (made like making steamed rice but with 5.6 oz of coconut milk added to water for 2 cups of rice and pandan (screwpine) leaves thrown in during the cooking process to add flavour); sliced cucumber; sliced hard boiled eggs and peanuts.

Filipino Chicken Adobo



Thought I'd put through a family favourite dish which is a popular food choice in the Philippines.

Chicken and Marinade:
750g / 1.5 lb chicken thigh fillets , boneless and skinless (5 - 6 pieces) (Note 1)
3 garlic cloves , minced

1/3 cup (85ml) soy sauce, ordinary all purpose or light (not dark soy sauce, Note 2)
1/3 cup + 2 tbsp white vinegar
4 bay leaves (fresh) or 3 dried

For cooking:
2 tbsp oil , separated (vegetable, canola or peanut)
3 garlic cloves , minced
1 small brown onion , diced
1 1/2 cups (375 ml) water

2 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp whole black pepper (sub 2 tsp coarse cracked pepper)

Serving:
2 green onions/scallions , sliced (garnish)

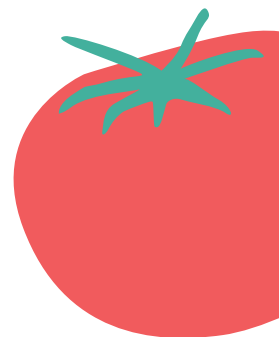
Combine Chicken and Marinade ingredients in a bowl. Marinate for at least 20 minutes, or up to overnight.

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a skillet over high heat. Remove chicken from marinade (reserve marinade) and place in the pan. Sear both sides until browned – about 1 minute on each side. Do not cook the chicken all the way through. Remove chicken skillet and set aside.

Heat the remaining oil in skillet. Add garlic and onion, cook 1 1/2 minutes. Add the reserved marinade, water, sugar and black pepper. Bring it to a simmer then turn heat down to medium high. Simmer 5 minutes.

Add chicken smooth side down. Simmer uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes (no need to stir), turning chicken at around 15 minutes, until the sauce reduces down to a thick jam-like syrup. If the sauce isn't thick enough, remove chicken onto a plate and let the sauce simmer by itself - it will thicken much quicker - then return chicken to the skillet to coat in the glaze.

Coat chicken in glaze then serve over rice.



Pumpkin, Sage and Hazelnut Ravioli



Ingredients:

500g pumpkin, peeled and diced
½ brown onion, diced
30g parmesan (plus extra to serve)

¼ tsp nutmeg
300g “00” pasta flour (or plain as an alternative)
3 eggs
Olive oil

150g butter
40g hazelnuts, blanched and skin off
12 sage leaves

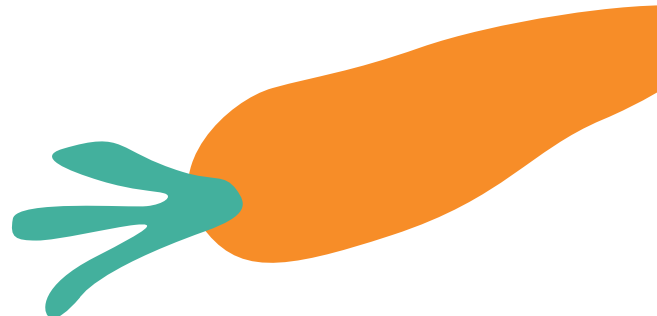
Preheat your oven to 200c. Toss your diced pumpkin and onion in some oil and scatter it across a baking dish. Roast for 35 minutes, or until pumpkin is tender.

Meanwhile, make the pasta. Add your flour and a pinch of salt to a bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the eggs and 1tsp oil into the well and slowly mix the eggs, bringing more and more flour in as your mix until all the flour is combined. Transfer the mix to a lightly floured surface and knead it until its smooth. If it's sticky, add a small amount of flour. If there's flour that won't mix in, add a small amount of water.

Once your dough is smooth, it's time to roll it out. Full disclosure - I use a pasta maker. If you don't have one, you can absolutely roll your dough, it'll just be a bit more work. Cut your pasta dough into four pieces and then roll them out into long, thin sheets about 3mm thick. Salt a pot of water and bring it to the boil.

When your pumpkin is ready, puree the pumpkin and onion with 30g parmesan and the nutmeg. Lay out two sheets of pasta and add dollops (about ¾ of a tablespoon) of puree in a row about 10cm apart to the centre of the sheet. Add another sheet on top, seal around each dollop of puree, and cut them into ravioli shapes. Repeat with the other two pasta sheets. In batches, cook the ravioli in the boiling water for about 5 minutes.

Add the butter and hazelnuts to a frypan on medium heat and cook until the butter turns golden brown. Take it off the heat and mix in the sage. Combine it with the ravioli and add parmesan to serve.



Cottage/Shepphards Pie



My Nan made a very good Sheppards Pie or Cottage Pie. I have updated it as an adult to make it vegan.

1 pound firm tofu, drained and crumbled
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced

2 cups mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas, and corn)
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1 cup vegetable broth
2 pounds potatoes, peeled and chopped
1/4 cup non-dairy milk
2 tablespoons vegan butter
Cayenne Pepper

Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add the crumbled tofu to the skillet and cook for 5-7 minutes until lightly browned. Add the mixed vegetables, tomato paste, soy sauce, and flour to the skillet and stir to combine. Gradually add the vegetable broth, stirring constantly until the mixture thickens.

In a separate pot, boil the potatoes until soft. Drain the water and mash the potatoes with the non-dairy milk and vegan butter until smooth.

Add salt and pepper to taste to both the tofu mixture and mashed potatoes.

In a large baking dish, spread the tofu mixture evenly on the bottom. Add the mashed potatoes on top and spread them evenly.

Bake the shepherd's pie for 25-30 minutes, or until the top is lightly browned.

Let the shepherd's pie cool for a few minutes before serving. Enjoy!

French Onion Chicken Pasta Bake



- 250g Penne pasta
- 200g thick sliced button mushrooms
- 6 fresh thyme sprigs
- 1 BBQ chicken – meat shredded
- 60g baby spinach
- 1 pkt French onion soup mix
- 1 ½ cups milk
- ½ cup thickened cream
- 1 ½ cups grated pizza cheese

Grease large baking dish.

Cook pasta, drain and reserve.

Fry onions until soft with fresh thyme.

Add chicken, soup mix, milk, spinach and half the cheese to the mushroom and thyme, bring to the boil.

Mix in the pasta and add to the baking dish.

Spread remaining cheese

Gnocchi Bake with Chicken and Bacon



- 150g bacon
- 1 cup cooked chicken
- 1 brown onion diced
- 200g button mushrooms sliced
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tspn olive oil
- 30g butter
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 500ml cream
- 50g parmesan cheese grated
- 500g gnocchi

Cook gnocchi as per directions and drain
Preheat oven to 108°C

In a large pan with a little oil, fry the onion and bacon for 2 minutes

Add mushrooms and butter and cook for 3 minutes

Add garlic and cream, stir to combine.
Simmer for 5 minutes

Remove from heat, add chicken and half the parmesan cheese, mix well. Put the gnocchi in the base of a baking dish and pour over cream mixture
Top with grated cheese and cook until golden

Creamy Tuna Mornay



- 60g butter
- 1 onion diced
- 1 carrot diced
- 2 celery sticks diced
- 1 red capsicum diced
- 1/3 cup plain flour
- 440g canned corn drained
- 425g canned tuna in springwater
- 375ml CARNATION Light & Creamy Evaporated Milk
- 1 cup tasty cheese grated
- 1 tbs wholegrain mustard
- 2 tbs fresh curly parsley chopped
- 1 pinch salt and pepper

Melt butter in large saucepan, add onion, carrot, celery and capsicum and cook gently until softened.

Add flour and cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and gradually stir in evaporated milk.

Return to heat and stir until thickened. Add tuna and spring water, corn, cheese, parsley and mustard. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook until heated through and cheese has melted.

Pesto Pasta Salad

Salad:

500g bow tie pasta cooked and rinsed under cold water, set aside to cool
1 270g jar of semi dried tomatoes drained and sliced into bite sized pieces
1 345g jar of sliced kalamata olives drained
250g mild salami sliced into strips
1.5 cups of Mozzarella

Optional:

Bunch of chives finely diced
Toasted pine nuts
Dressing:
1/3 cup olive oil
1-2 cups loosely packed basil leaves
1/4 cup Parmesan
2 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp of sugar
Pinch of salt and pepper

Salad:

Add all ingredients into salad bowl and mix to combine.

Dressing:

Mix all dressing ingredients in blender until smooth and creamy. If too thick add a dash of water, if too thin add extra cheese/basil.

Adjust to suit taste - more sugar, sweeter dressing etc. Add dressing to pasta salad and serve.

Chicken Curry and Yellow Rice

Chicken Curry:

800g Chicken
2 Ginger
3 big cloves of garlic
2 tsp turmeric
2 tsp coriander ground
2 tsp cumin
Chilli to liking
Coconut cream
2 onions
Vegetable oil
Salt

Coconut Rice:

2 cups of rice
2 tsp turmeric
Cardomon
Cloves

Chicken Curry:

Brown onions in vegetable oil then add spices, garlic and ginger.

Cook for 2 minutes then add chicken
Add coconut cream and water till the chicken is covered

Coconut Rice:

Cook rice in oil

Add spices

Add water and cover

Pea and Ham Soup

This recipe freezes and defrosts really well and is a staple in our house during the winter months. I generally double this recipe so I always have some on hand.

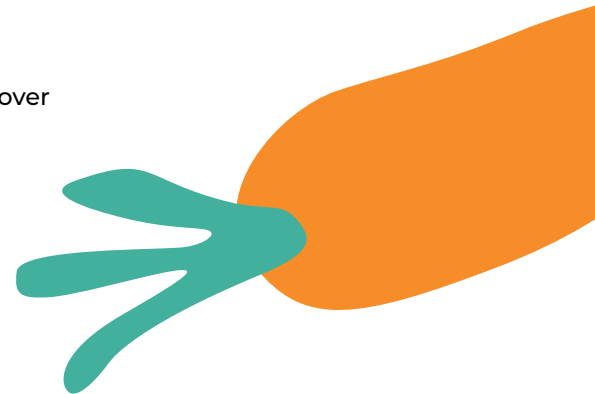
3 carrots
1 onion
1 ½ cups of split peas
300g ham hock
5 cups of water

Chop carrots and onions – I blitz mine later so just a usable size so they cook evenly
Place water, peas, carrot, onion and hock into the slow cooker.

4 hours on high or 8 hours on low – the meat will fall off the bone when done.

I remove the hock and bones then blitz the soup. Chop the meat and return to the pot.

Serve with crusty white bread



Cassata

1/2 cup mixed glacéd fruit
2 tablespoons dark rum
300ml thickened cream
1 tablespoon icing sugar
125g dark chocolate
2 teaspoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
2 litre carton Streets Blue Ribbon vanilla ice cream
2 teaspoons cocoa
Peppermint flavouring and green colouring
60g coconut biscuits
60g blanched slivered almonds
1 tablespoon dark rum
Extra whipped cream and glacéd cherries to decorate

Layer 1
Chop glacéd fruit into small pieces and combine with rum in a small bowl. Leave to stand. Whip cream and icing sugar until thick and fold in fruit and rum. Spread over base of large spring form pan which is lined on base and sides with aluminium foil. Freeze until set.

Layer 2
Melt chopped chocolate in top of double saucepan over hot water. Add butter and vanilla essence. Stir until butter melts. Remove from heat. Cool slightly. Soften approximately 1/3 of ice cream and fold chocolate mixture thoroughly into ice cream. Add sifted cocoa and mix well. Spread ice cream mixture over cream layer. Freeze again.

Layer 3
Soften 1/3 ice cream and add few drops of peppermint flavouring and green colouring. Spread over 2nd layer. Freeze again.

Layer 4
Crush biscuits coarsely. Place biscuit crumbs and almonds on oven tray. Bake in slow oven until crumbs are crisp and almonds lightly brown. When third layer is frozen, spread the remaining 1/3 of slightly softened ice cream. Cover with crumb mixture, pressing well into ice cream.

Cover with aluminium foil and return to freezer and freeze until set. Decorate with extra whipped cream beaten with rum and decorate with glacéd cherries or any other decoration that you like.

Nanna Glad's Damper

450g (3 cups) self-raising flour
Pinch of salt
80g butter, chilled, cubed
185ml (3/4 cup) water

Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Combine the flour and salt in a large bowl. Use your fingertips to rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add the water to the flour mixture and use a round-bladed knife in a cutting motion to mix until the mixture just comes together, adding 1-2 tablespoons extra water if the mixture is a little dry. Use your hands to bring the mixture together.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Softly knead into a round shape or let the kids make dinosaurs and place on tray. Dust the damper with a little extra flour and bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes or until the damper is cooked through and sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Transfer to a wire rack for 5 minutes to cool slightly (if you can wait) Break with hands (not a knife) and serve warm or at room temperature with a big mob of honey or golden syrup, jam and cream, vegemite or dipped into a kangaroo stew.

Croissant Bread and Butter Pudding

3 large stale croissants
20g butter
30g raisins or sultanas
Zest of 1/2 an orange
300ml cream
500ml milk
1 egg
3 egg yolks
50g sugar
1T vanilla essence

Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees.

Tear croissants into small pieces and place in a greased baking dish.

Cut butter into small cubes and dot over the croissants. Sprinkle the raisins or sultanas over the croissants. Mix the milk, zest and vanilla in a bowl.

In a separate bowl mix the eggs, yolks and sugar and then add to the milk mixture. Whisk thoroughly. Pour the liquid over the croissants and leave for at least ten minutes so the croissants soak up the liquid.

Bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown on top.

Serve with vanilla ice cream.

Baci di Dama (Lady's Kisses)



Originally from the region of Piedmont, these Italian hazelnut cookies are known in Italy as Baci di Dama and consist of two little hazelnut cookies sandwiched with chocolate.

7 oz (1¾ sticks/200 grams)
unsalted butter (softened)
1 cup (200 grams)
superfine (castor) sugar

1¾ cups (200 grams)
ground hazelnuts
1 ½ cups (200 grams) flour
¼ teaspoon fine salt

Chocolate filling
3 oz (85 grams) semisweet
(dark) chocolate (broken)

Preheat the oven to 320°F/160°C. Line two large baking sheet with non-stick parchment paper.

Beat the butter and sugar together until smooth.

With the mixer on low speed incorporate the ground hazelnuts and flour and salt. Be sure that the mixture is well combined by scraping the bowl with a spatula getting right to the bottom. Mix again if necessary.

Using a spatula scrap the dough onto a sheet of plastic wrap, press into a flattened ball. Wrap well with plastic and refrigerate for 2 hours or even overnight.

Divide the disc into four equal portions. Roll each portion into a 9inch/22cm log. Cut the log into 25 even slices. Roll each into balls. Each ball will be approximately the size of a hazelnut in the shell.

Arrange on prepared baking trays, leaving a little room between each.

Bake in the preheated oven for 15 minutes, until pale golden.

Remove from the oven. Cool for 5 minutes before transferring to wire rack to cool.

To assemble, roughly divide chopped chocolate ⅔ and ⅓. Melt ⅔ of the chocolate in a bowl over a saucepan of barely simmering water (or microwave on low power stirring occasionally until melted).

Remove from heat and stir in the remaining ⅓ until melted. This will easily temper the chocolate so that it sets well.

When the biscuits are cool, use the chocolate to sandwich them together.

Simmel Cake



100 grams glace cherries
500 grams mixed dried fruit
175 grams soft unsalted butter
175 grams caster sugar

Zest of 1 unwaxed lemon
225 grams plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground ginger
25 grams ground almonds
3 large eggs
2 tablespoons milk
1 kilogram yellow marzipan to decorate

Icing sugar for rolling
1 tablespoon apricot jam (melted)
1 egg white (optional)

Take everything you need out of the fridge so it can get to room temperature. Preheat the oven to gas mark 3/170°C/150°C Fan/325°F. Butter and line the bottom and sides of a 20cm / 8 inch spring form cake tin with a double layer of brown baking paper. Chop the cherries very finely and add them to the rest of the fruit.

Cream the butter and sugar until very soft and light, and add the lemon zest. You could do this by hand, just with bowl and wooden spoon, but I own up to using my freestanding mixer here. But it's not crucial, not least because the intention with fruit cakes is not to whip air into them. Measure the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger and ground almonds into a bowl and stir to combine.

Add 1 of the eggs to the creamed butter and sugar with 2 tablespoons of the dry flour-and-spice ingredients, then beat in the remaining eggs in the same way. Beat in the rest of the dry ingredients, and then the milk. Finally fold in the fruit.

Dust a surface with a little icing sugar and then roll out about 400g / 14oz of the marzipan. Cut it into a 20cm / 8 inch circle which will fit in the middle of the cake later.

Spoon half of the fruit cake mixture into the cake tin, smoothing it down with a rubber spatula, and then lay the marzipan circle on top of it. Spoon the rest of the mixture into the tin on top of the marzipan circle and smooth the top again. Bake for half an hour and then turn the oven down to gas mark 2/150°C/130°C Fan/300°F for another 1½ hours or until the cake has risen and is firm on top. Let it cool completely on a rack before you spring it open.

Unspring the cooled fruit cake, and unwrap the lining from the cake. Roll out another 400g / 14oz circle of marzipan, paint the top of the cake with the melted apricot jam, and then stick it on.

Make 11 apostle balls out of the remaining marzipan, roughly 2.5cm / 1 inch in size. Beat the egg white — just till it's a bit frothy and loosened up a little, no more — and use that as glue to stick the apostles around the edge of the cake.

Now for the bit I love, but you can ignore altogether. Paint the whole of the cake with egg white, and then blow-torch the marzipan so that it scorches slightly, giving a beautifully burnished look.

Choux Pastry



Toppings - there are lots of things you can do with these. Simplest is to melt some dark chocolate and dip them. If you are using very dark chocolate, add some icing sugar for sweetness. Another is Craquelan which is just a sweet biscuit which you rest on top of the profiterole before you cook them. Filling – can use Crème Patissiere or chocolate mousse or anything.

Craquelan:

4 ounces (1/2 cup; 115g)
light brown sugar
4 ounces (1 stick; 115g)
unsalted butter, cut
into 1/2-inch cubes, and
softened to about 68°F
(20°C)
4 ounces (about 1 scant
cup; 115g) all-purpose
flour, sifted

Crème Patissiere:

2 egg yolks
30gm caster sugar
25gm cornflour
Vanilla bean or good
quality vanilla paste
– not vanilla essence

Pastry:

125g unsalted butter
250ml water
125g plain flour
4 eggs

Pastry:

Pre heat oven to 180C. Heat butter and water in saucepan until butter is melted and it reaches a low boil. Remove from heat, sift and stir in flour. It will start frothy and then go smooth and will come away from the pan in a nice shiny ball. Refrigerate 5 to 10 minutes. If the mixture is hot it will cook the eggs which you are about to mix in. But also don't make it too cold, just cool it enough not to cook the eggs Beat in eggs one at a time. It will be quite gluey. Pipe or spoon onto a lightly greased pan. Bake until light brown.

Craquelan:

Roll to about 2mm thick between sheets of baking paper Use a cutter to make discs about 5cm in diameter and place one of top of each profiterole before cooking.

Crème Patissiere:

Split vanilla bean, add to milk and heat milk. Don't boil In a separate bowl, ix yolks and sugar and sift in flour. Slowly add warmed milk and stir so no lumps. Put back on low and keep stirring until it thickens. You will think nothing is happening but it will come together suddenly Strain and put in piping bag. Cool.

Create a small hole in the bottom of each profiterole and pipe in Crème Patissiere. It should not be so runny that it comes out. If it is very running it either has not been cooked enough or has not been cooled enough (or both)

Mum's Almond Biscuits



8 egg whites
2 cups icing sugar

Beat egg whites well in a mixer.

Add icing sugar and continue to beat. Add in flour. Add in almonds and stir.

Roll dough into a log shape and place on baking tray.

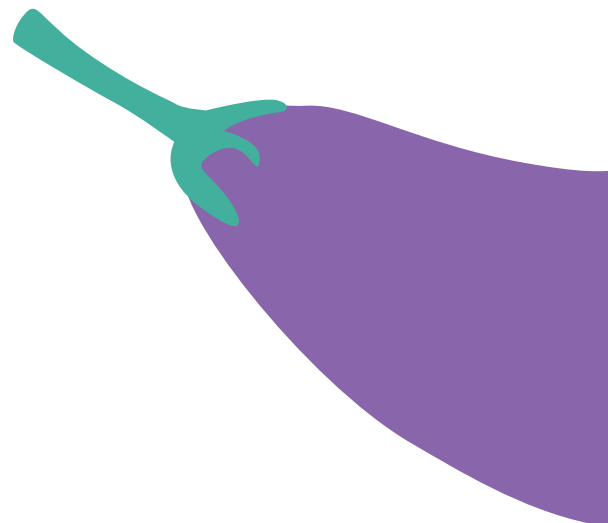
Preheat oven to 200°C and place dough log in for approximately 20 minutes.

2 cups plain flour
2 1/2 cup raw almonds

Cool the dough log and wrap in foil and refrigerate overnight.

The next day cut them into very thin slices and place back into the oven to dry.

This should make approximately 2 tins full of biscuits.



Coconut Koeksisters



Servings - 25 servings, Prep time - 30 minutes, Cooking time - 30 minutes, Total time - 1 hour

3 tablespoons water
2¼ teaspoons dry yeast
¼ cup sugar
2¼ cups all-purpose flour
¾ teaspoon salt
3 egg yolks
¼ cup milk

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Oil for deep-frying
Cinnamon cardamom sugar
¼ cup brown sugar

¼ cup white sugar
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
2 teaspoons cinnamon powder
150 g fine coconut

In a large bowl combine the yeast, and water in a warm place for about 5 minutes. In a microwave, warm the milk, butter and sugar until the butter is melted. This will take about one minute. Set aside.

Using a hand mixer, mix in the salt and 2 cups of flour with the yeast mixture until well combined. Add the egg yolks, then slowly add the warm butter mixture and vanilla until the dough is fully combined. If the dough is too sticky, add more flour. Cover with a damp cloth and keep in a warm place until double in size.

Knead the dough down and place it on a floured board, cut in about 25 – 30 pieces, roll in a ball, and arrange in a single layer. Let it rise for about 15 minutes.

While the dough is rising, combine the sugar, cardamom, ginger and cinnamon and set aside.

In a large, saucepan, pour vegetable oil until it is 5 centimetres high (too little oil will result in flatter balls), and place on medium heat until the oil is 350°C. When ready, gently place a few balls at a time into the saucepan.

Fry for a few minutes until the bottom side is golden brown. Turn the ball over and fry for a few more minutes until the other side is golden brown. Use a large spoon or something like that to take it out of the oil.

Place them in the cinnamon sugar and roll until it is coated with cinnamon sugar. Then, roll in desiccated coconut.