



THE sodexo
GUIDE TO
CHRISTMAS

**From Our Kitchen to Yours:
A Sodexo Christmas Recipe Guide**

From the
Sodexo Ireland Culinary team

Dear Friends,

Welcome to a Sodexo Guide to Christmas! This recipe book is our gift to you, a celebration of the festive season filled with cherished recipes crafted with love by the Sodexo Ireland Culinary Team. As chefs, we believe that food is at the heart of every memorable gathering, and we are honoured to share with you our favourite dishes to make your Christmas even more special.

Creating this recipe book was a true collaborative effort - each of us brought our own inspirations, family traditions, and culinary expertise to the table. We hope you feel the joy and passion behind each recipe as you prepare these dishes for your loved ones. From warming starters to indulgent desserts, every dish is designed to bring people together, share laughter, and create lasting memories.

Our commitment goes beyond just delicious food. At Sodexo, we are dedicated to using high-quality, seasonal ingredients that not only enhance flavour but also support sustainable practices. Every recipe reflects our promise to prioritise the freshest produce, locally sourced where possible, to ensure that your festive celebrations are not only delicious but also mindful of our environment.

We hope this collection inspires you to embrace the spirit of the season, creating magical moments around your own table. From our kitchen to yours, we wish you a joyful, nourishing, and heartwarming Christmas.

The Sodexo Ireland Culinary team

MEET THE TEAM



NIALL HILL

Sodexo Ireland Head of Food

Niall has over 30 years' experience working as a chef at the highest levels both nationally and internationally, across a variety of sectors. As head of food at the award-winning food company The Butler's Pantry for 16 years, Niall won numerous awards including the Great Taste Awards, Small Business Award and Blas na hEireann. In addition to having a huge passion for quality local and Irish ingredients, Niall has an MSc in Applied Culinary Nutrition and a BA in Botanical Cuisine and has completed a postgraduate in Sustainability Leadership in Business.

Niall combines knowledge and passion with a highly strategic and practical approach to drive the highest food quality and delivery on an ethos of local, seasonal, nutritious, and sustainable food. Niall joined Sodexo as Head of Food for the Island of Ireland in February of this year and will be actively involved in the development & implementation of food offers & marketing initiatives, while driving a culture of excellence in food service delivery across the Island of Ireland.



GLEN STEWART

Mobilisation Catering SME / Regional Development Chef

Glen has nearly 30 years' experience as a chef. Working through the years in Switzerland and Austria as well as in a number of seafood restaurants, hotels and gastro pubs between England and Ireland, he joined Sodexo nearly 13 years ago.

Glen has won several awards in competition and still maintains a passion for French cookery, as well as making novelty and formal celebration cakes in his spare time.



DAVID SAYCE

Regional Development Chef

Chef David Sayce is a seasoned professional with over 25 years of experience in the culinary industry. His career has spanned a wide range of roles, with a significant focus on 5-star hotels and fine dining restaurants.

One of the greatest privileges of his career has been the opportunity to combine his passion for food with travel. His work has taken him across the globe, including stints in Austria, South Africa, Australia, and Hong Kong, where he expanded his culinary repertoire and embraced new cultural influences.

For nearly two years, Chef Sayce has been part of the Sodexo team, initially serving as a hospitality chef for private corporate events, including luncheons and dinners. Over the past eight months, he has taken on the role of Regional Development Chef, a position that has brought new and exciting challenges. He enjoys finding innovative solutions while supporting his district, striving to help and contribute wherever possible.



CATHY ADAMSON

Craft Development Chef

Cathy has been working with Sodexo for 30 years in various sectors of the business and has spent many years being an active member within the UK&I Culinary teams. Cathy has also spent time working with world class chefs & competing at National level to obtain several awards and accolades.

Cathy is committed to developing the culinary talents within our teams and is actively involved with the Northern Ireland Schools Programmes such as 'Future Chef' to encourage young people into the business. Cathy has a real passion for food and loves working with a product or dishes to obtain the best possible flavours, whilst maximising quality.



STEPHEN BOYLE

Craft Development Chef

Stephen has been in catering for over 30 years. After catering college, he started his career in various London hotels including the Hilton and Savoy where he developed into a seasoned chef. After a few years he moved to New York and worked in restaurants including seafood restaurants, steak houses and gastro pubs. He returned to Ireland in 2007 and picked straight up where he left off and became Executive chef at a Marriott Resort Hotel and later change to corporate catering, he joined Sodexo over 3 years ago.



GORDON CARBERRY

Regional Development Chef

Gordon Carberry, currently a Craft Development Chef with Sodexo, brings a wealth of experience and passion to his role. Since joining Sodexo as Head Chef in 2022, Gordon has made a significant impact through his dedication to culinary excellence. He is actively involved in the competitive cooking scene, participating in prestigious events such as CATEX, the Culinary Olympics, IFEX in Belfast, and HRC in London.

With a background rooted in the high standards of Michelin-starred kitchens, Gordon's expertise spans fine dining, comfort food, and everything in between. His deep understanding of both refined techniques and hearty, approachable dishes allows him to craft memorable culinary experiences. As a proud member of the Panel of Chefs Ireland, Gordon continually seeks to elevate his craft, blending creativity with the rich traditions of Irish cuisine.



JOHN CORE

Culinary Nutrition Lead

John Core serves as the Culinary Nutrition Lead for Sodexo, bringing over 25 years of professional culinary experience to the role. He holds a Master of Science degree in Applied Culinary Nutrition and utilizes his extensive academic and practical expertise to create dishes that are both delicious and nutritionally balanced for Sodexo's clientele. John delivers promotional pop-up restaurant concepts, culinary based nutrition seminars and one to one clinics for Sodexo client catering program. Recently, in recognition of his contributions to the field of culinary nutrition, John was honoured with the Paula Mee Applied Culinary Nutrition Award.

TWAS' THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS...

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE TO MAKE LIFE EASIER

Christmas Day is all about spending quality time with loved ones, indulging in delicious food, and celebrating together. However, the festive feast can often feel like a marathon in the kitchen, especially when juggling multiple dishes. The good news? With a little planning and preparation, you can breeze through your Christmas cooking with ease. In our recipes we call out steps that can be taken ahead of time and below are more practical tips to help you get ahead, so that on the big day, you can focus on what really matters—enjoying yourself!

1. GET AHEAD WITH VEGETABLE PREP

Vegetables are a major part of any festive feast, but chopping them all on Christmas Day can be time-consuming. To save valuable time:

- **Chop in advance:** Carrots, onions, celery, garlic, and other hardy vegetables can be peeled, chopped, and stored in airtight containers in the fridge for up to three days. This will save you from last-minute chopping chaos.
 - **Blanch:** For veggies like carrots or parsnips, blanch them briefly in boiling water, then plunge into ice water to stop the cooking process. Once cooled, dry thoroughly and store in the fridge. On Christmas Day, simply roast or sauté directly from chilled.
 - **Herbs and Garnishes:** Fresh herbs like rosemary and thyme can be rinsed, dried, and stored in a damp kitchen towel in the fridge. This keeps them fresh and ready for use in soups, stuffing, and sauces.
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2. MASTER THE ART OF MAKE-AHEAD SOUPS AND SAUCES

Soups and sauces are wonderful to have on hand for Christmas dinner, but they can take up valuable time if made on the day. The key is to prepare these well in advance:

- **Root Vegetable Soup:** Soups like root vegetable soup are perfect for making ahead. Simply cook the soup, blend until smooth, and allow it to cool completely before freezing. On Christmas Day, just reheat gently and serve with warm Christmas focaccia bread.
- **Rich Gravy:** A flavourful gravy is essential for Christmas dinner. You can prepare a batch using beef stock, red wine, and aromatics like garlic, onions, and rosemary. Reduce the sauce down to a thick consistency, then freeze in portions. Reheat and finish with a knob of butter for a glossy, rich finish.
- **Tomato-Based Sauces:** If your Christmas menu includes pasta or vegetarian dishes, a tomato sauce made with onions, garlic, tomato paste, and herbs can be made in advance and stored in jars. This versatile sauce can be used for lasagna, pasta bakes, or even as a base for a veggie dish.

3. EFFORTLESS DESSERTS: PREPARE IN ADVANCE

Desserts often get left to the last minute, but they are perfect candidates for prepping ahead of time.

- **Sherry Trifle:** This classic dessert is even better when made a day or two in advance. Assemble the sponge, fruit, and jelly layers first, allowing the jelly to set fully in the fridge. Prepare the custard and pour it over once the jelly has set. On Christmas Day, simply whip the cream, top with fresh berries, chocolate flakes, and any festive decorations.
- **Fruit Compote:** If you're serving a Christmas cake or pudding, a spiced fruit compote made with red wine, cinnamon, and seasonal fruits like plums or figs can be made a week in advance. Store in jars and serve chilled or warmed up.

4. STUFFING AND VEGETARIAN DISHES: MAKE THEM VERSATILE

Stuffing is a Christmas staple, but it can also double as a vegetarian main if prepared thoughtfully.

- **Make-ahead stuffing:** Prepare your stuffing mixture using breadcrumbs, sautéed onions, celery, herbs, and nuts. Shape into balls or press into a baking dish. This can be made up to two days in advance and stored in the fridge, ready to be baked on Christmas Day.
- **Vegetarian Alternatives:** Christmas isn't just about the turkey. Plan some hearty vegetarian dishes like our Mushroom & Chestnut Wellington. Preparing vegetarian soups or hearty salads with roasted root vegetables ensures there's something for everyone at the table.

5. PLAN YOUR BREAD & BAKED GOODS IN ADVANCE

Nothing beats the aroma of freshly baked bread on Christmas morning. However, baking can be a time drain if left until the last minute.

- **Seeded Brown Bread:** Make this hearty bread a day or two in advance. It keeps well and actually tastes better the next day. Simply slice and serve with lashings of Irish butter for breakfast or alongside a bowl of soup.
- **Christmas Focaccia:** Prepare the focaccia dough the day before and let it rest in the fridge overnight. On the day, simply shape, decorate, and bake. The festive toppings like rosemary, olives, and cherry tomatoes will wow your guests.

6. ORGANISE YOUR INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

Having everything you need at hand can be a game-changer:

- **Stock Up on Staples:** Ensure you have plenty of pantry essentials like flour, sugar, spices, stock cubes, and dried herbs.
- **Make a List:** A detailed shopping list and timetable will save you from any last-minute panics. Include when to defrost the turkey, when to bake the bread, and which dishes can be made ahead.
- **Delegate Tasks:** Don't be afraid to ask for help. Family members can easily whip up desserts, chop vegetables, or set the table.



STARTERS

ROOT VEGETABLE SOUP WITH CHRISTMAS FOCACCIA BREAD



By Gordon Carberry

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 1 hour

Note: The focaccia dough can be prepared in advance and refrigerated overnight for a more intense flavour.

INGREDIENTS

Root Vegetable Soup

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 parsnips, peeled and diced
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 small celeriac, peeled and diced
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 200ml coconut milk (or cream, if preferred)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

Christmas Focaccia Bread

- 500g strong bread flour
- 10g sea salt
- 7g dried yeast
- 350ml warm water
- 50ml olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tbsp dried mixed herbs
- Fresh rosemary sprigs, for decorating
- Cherry tomatoes, halved
- Black olives, pitted
- Coarse sea salt, for sprinkling

METHOD

1. Prepare the Christmas Focaccia

- In a large bowl, mix the flour and sea salt.
- In a jug, mix the warm water, yeast, honey, and olive oil. Leave for 5 minutes until it starts to froth.
- Pour the yeast mixture into the flour and mix to form a soft dough.
- Knead on a floured surface for about 10 minutes until smooth and elastic.
- Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover, and leave to rise for 1-2 hours, or until doubled in size.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C (fan).
- Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Turn the dough onto the tray, stretching it gently to fit.
- Drizzle with olive oil and press your fingers into the dough to create dimples.
- Decorate with rosemary sprigs, cherry tomatoes, and olives to create a festive pattern. Sprinkle with coarse sea salt.
- Bake for 20-25 minutes, until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack before slicing.

2. Prepare the Root Vegetable Soup

- Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
- Add the onion and garlic, sautéing until softened, about 5 minutes.
- Stir in the carrots, parsnips, potatoes, and celeriac. Cook for another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Add the ground cumin, coriander, and nutmeg, cooking for 1 minute until fragrant.
- Pour in the vegetable stock, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cover and cook for 25-30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.
- Remove from heat and blend the soup until smooth using an immersion blender.
- Stir in the coconut milk and season with salt and pepper to taste. Reheat gently if needed.

To Serve

- Ladle the hot root vegetable soup into bowls.
- Garnish with a sprinkle of fresh parsley.
- Serve with slices of warm Christmas focaccia bread on the side.

SMOKED SALMON AND CRAB WITH SHAVED FENNEL, PICKLED CUCUMBER, AND HOMEMADE SEEDED BROWN BREAD



By David Sayce

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 1 hour

Note: The bread and cucumber pickle can be made a day in advance.

INGREDIENTS

Smoked Salmon & Crab

- 500g smoked salmon
- 250g fresh picked crab meat
- 50g cream cheese
- 50ml crème fraîche
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 bulb of fennel
- Handful of fresh dill, chopped
- 1 small bag of fresh rocket leaves
- 20ml extra virgin olive oil

Cucumber Pickle

- 1 cucumber
- 1 small shallot
- 10g sea salt
- 90g caster sugar
- 90ml white wine vinegar
- Pinch of mustard seeds, ground turmeric, and ground ginger

Seeded Brown Bread

- 250g wholemeal flour
- 60g plain flour
- 90g porridge oats
- 40g sunflower seeds
- 40g pumpkin seeds
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tsp bread soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 60ml black treacle
- 250-300ml buttermilk

METHOD

1. Prepare the Cucumber Pickle

- Top and tail the cucumber, then slice it in half lengthways. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds.
- Thinly slice the cucumber using a mandolin or sharp knife. Place the slices in a bowl, sprinkle with salt, and rub in gently. Leave for 10 minutes.
- In a small saucepan, combine the vinegar, sugar, shallot, and spices. Bring to a boil.
- Squeeze excess moisture from the cucumber and add it to the saucepan. Bring to a simmer for 3 minutes, then remove from heat.
- Once cooled, transfer the pickle to a sealed jar. It will keep in the fridge for up to 3-4 weeks.

2. Bake the Seeded Brown Bread

- Preheat the oven to 170°C (fan).
- In a large bowl, mix the wholemeal flour, plain flour, oats, bread soda, salt, and half of the seeds.
- In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, treacle, and buttermilk.
- Pour the wet mixture into the dry ingredients and mix gently until just combined. The batter should be pourable, not too thick.
- Pour the batter into a greased loaf tin and sprinkle the remaining seeds on top.
- Bake for 40-50 minutes. The bread is done when it sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.
- Cool on a wire rack before slicing. Serve with butter.

3. Prepare the Smoked Salmon & Crab

- Pick through the crab meat to remove any shell fragments.
- Thinly slice the fennel using a mandolin and place the slices in iced water to keep them crisp.
- In a mixing bowl, combine the crab, cream cheese, crème fraîche, half of the lemon zest and juice, chopped dill, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Mix gently.
- Line 6 small cups or ramekins with cling film and lightly brush with olive oil. Line each cup with smoked salmon, letting the edges overhang.
- Fill each cup with the crab mixture, fold the overhanging salmon over the top, and cover with the cling film.
- Press down gently, place a small weight (such as a plate) on top, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

To Serve

- Drain the fennel and toss with the remaining lemon zest and juice, a drizzle of olive oil, and a pinch of salt.
- Carefully turn out the salmon and crab parcels onto plates.
- Serve each parcel with a drizzle of crème fraîche, a spoonful of pickled cucumber, a slice of seeded brown bread, and a handful of fresh rocket leaves.
- Garnish with the lemon-dressed fennel for a fresh, vibrant finish.



MAIN COURSE



BUTTERMILK-BRINED TURKEY CROWN WITH SAGE BUTTER



By Niall Hill

SERVES 8 (PLUS LEFTOVERS)

Preparation time: 15 minutes
(plus brining time)

Cooking time: 3½ - 4 hours

Note: For best results, brine the turkey crown overnight.

INGREDIENTS

Brine

- 3 litres of water
- 275g kosher salt
- 100g brown sugar
- 1 tbsp black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp whole allspice
- 5 bay leaves
- 1 litre buttermilk
- 1 turkey crown (legs removed)

Sage Butter

- 100g butter, softened
- 1 bunch fresh sage, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- Sea salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Preparation

- In a large pot, combine the water, salt, sugar, peppercorns, allspice, and bay leaves. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer for 5 minutes.
- Remove from heat and let the brine cool completely.
- In a large bowl or container, pour in the cooled brine and stir in the buttermilk.
- Submerge the turkey crown in the brine mixture, cover, and refrigerate for at least 3 hours, preferably overnight.
- While the turkey is brining, prepare the sage butter. In a bowl, mix the softened butter with the chopped sage, crushed garlic, salt, and pepper until well combined.
- Preheat the oven to 220°C (Gas Mark 8).
- Remove the turkey crown from the brine and pat it dry with paper towels.
- Carefully slide your fingers between the skin and the meat of the turkey to create a pocket. Spread the sage butter evenly under the skin, pressing it down to distribute. Season the turkey generously with salt and black pepper on both sides.

2. Cooking

- Drizzle the turkey with olive oil and season it well.
- Place the turkey crown in a roasting pan and roast at 220°C for 40 minutes to sear.
- Lower the oven temperature to 170°C (Gas Mark 3) and continue cooking for an additional 2 hours or until the internal temperature reaches 75°C.

3. Finishing Touches

- Once the turkey is cooked, remove it from the oven and loosely cover with foil.
- Let it rest for at least 10 minutes before carving.



TURKEY GRAVY (EASY)



By *Stephen Boyle*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 5 minutes
Cooking time: 8 - 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 750ml boiling water
- 150ml white wine (optional)
- 2 tbsp cranberry sauce
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 3-4 chicken stock cubes
- Turkey stock (optional, if available)

METHOD

1. Prepare the Gravy Base

- After roasting your turkey, place the baking tray with the turkey juices on medium heat. Add the flour and whisk continuously to form a smooth paste.

2. Prepare Turkey Stock (Optional)

- If your turkey has been deboned, prepare a light stock by roasting the bones with some vegetables, then simmering in a pot of water for 1.5 - 2 hours. Alternatively, dissolve chicken stock cubes in boiling water.

3. Combine Ingredients

- Add the chicken stock (or prepared turkey stock), boiling water, and whisk until smooth. If using, add white wine and cranberry sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes to reduce and cook off the alcohol.

4. Thicken and Strain

- Once the gravy has thickened to your liking, remove it from the heat. Strain out any solids, or use a hand blender to incorporate them for a smoother consistency.

5. Infuse with Thyme

- Add the sprig of thyme and let it infuse for a few minutes before serving.



RICH VEAL GRAVY



By *Stephen Boyle*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 3.5 litres beef stock
- 3 carrots, chopped (rough cut)
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 sticks celery, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 1 tube tomato paste
- 100g hoisin BBQ sauce (about half a 210g jar)
- 200ml red wine
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 knobs butter (for finishing)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Prepare the Base

- In a deep pan, heat a drizzle of oil over medium-high heat. Add the carrots, onions, celery, garlic, rosemary, and thyme. Sauté until the vegetables are deeply browned.

2. Caramelize the Vegetables

- Sprinkle the brown sugar over the sautéed vegetables and cook for another 2-3 minutes until lightly caramelised.

3. Incorporate the Tomato Paste

- Add the tomato paste and stir continuously for 3-4 minutes, being careful not to let it stick to the bottom of the pan.

4. Add Hoisin and Wine

- Stir in the hoisin BBQ sauce and cook for 2 minutes. Then pour in the red wine and simmer for 5 minutes to reduce slightly.

5. Add the Stock and Simmer

- Pour in the beef stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook until the mixture has reduced by a quarter, skimming off any fat and impurities from the surface.

5. Strain and Finish the Gravy

- Strain the gravy through a fine sieve into a clean pot. Continue to simmer and reduce until it reaches your desired thickness. Adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and fresh herbs if needed.

7. Enrich with Butter

- Once removed from the heat, whisk in the knobs of butter to create a rich glaze. Do not re-boil after adding the butter to maintain the smooth texture.

Tips

- For a thicker gravy, blend the cooked vegetables into the sauce, but note this may make the consistency less smooth.
- Adjust the thickness with a little cornflour and water slurry if needed.



APPLE-GLAZED CIDER-BRAISED SMOKED HAM



By Niall Hill

SERVES 8 (PLUS LEFTOVERS)

Preparation time: 15 minutes
(plus brining time)

Cooking time: 3½ - 4 hours

INGREDIENTS

- 4kg smoked ham (boned & rolled)
- 2 onions, cut into large chunks
- 2 carrots, cut into large chunks
- 2 sticks celery, cut into large chunks
- 1 bunch fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 black peppercorns
- 330ml craft cider (1 bottle)
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp French mustard
- 6 tbsp Highbank Orchard syrup or honey

METHOD

1. Preparation

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (Gas Mark 4).
- Wash and roughly chop the onions, carrots, and celery.
- In a large, deep roasting tray, combine the chopped vegetables, thyme, bay leaves, peppercorns, cider, and vegetable stock.
- Place the smoked ham on top of the vegetable mixture. Cover the ham with a sheet of parchment paper, then tightly seal the tray with aluminium foil.

2. Cooking

- Place the tray in the preheated oven and cook for 3½ - 4 hours, or until the ham is tender. Ensure the internal temperature reaches at least 75°C.
- Remove the ham from the oven and carefully peel away the foil and parchment paper.
- Transfer the ham to a clean roasting tray lined with fresh parchment paper.
- Increase the oven temperature to 250°C (Gas Mark 9).
- Gently peel off the outer layer of skin from the ham, leaving a thin layer of fat.
- Brush the ham all over with the French mustard, followed by a generous coating of apple syrup or honey.
- Return to the oven for 10-15 minutes, or until the glaze is caramelised and golden.

3. Finishing Touches

- Garnish with freshly picked thyme.
- Allow the ham to rest and cool slightly before carving into thick slices.



MUSHROOM & CHESTNUT WELLINGTON



By John Core

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Note: The filling can be prepared in advance and refrigerated until needed.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 50g butter
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 500g mixed mushrooms (chestnut, portobello, shiitake), finely chopped
- 200g cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh tarragon, finely chopped
- 100g fresh breadcrumbs
- 100g cream cheese (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 500g puff pastry (ready-rolled)
- 1 egg, beaten (for glazing)

METHOD

1. Prepare the Filling

- Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F).
- Heat the olive oil and butter in a large pan over medium heat.
- Add the chopped onion and garlic, cooking for 5-7 minutes until softened.
- Stir in the mushrooms and cook for 8-10 minutes, allowing most of the moisture to evaporate.
- Add the chopped chestnuts, thyme, and tarragon, cooking for a further 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
- Remove from heat, stir in the breadcrumbs and cream cheese (if using), and let the mixture cool completely.

2. Assemble the Wellington

- Roll out the puff pastry on a floured surface.
- Spoon the mushroom mixture into the centre of the pastry, shaping it into a log.
- Fold the pastry over the filling, sealing the edges with a little beaten egg. Ensure the seam is underneath.
- Transfer the Wellington to a lined baking tray, seam-side down.
- Brush the top with the remaining beaten egg to achieve a golden finish.

3. Bake and Serve

- Bake in the preheated oven for 35-45 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and crisp.
- Allow the Wellington to rest for 5 minutes before slicing.



WILD MUSHROOM SAUCE



By *Stephen Boyle*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium shallots, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 200g chestnut mushrooms, sliced
- 200g wild mushrooms, sliced
- 35g butter
- 300ml double cream
- 60ml white wine or Calvados
- 100ml turkey stock (or 1 chicken stock cube dissolved in 100ml water)
- 1 tsp fresh tarragon, chopped (optional)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. In a heavy-bottomed pot, melt the butter over medium heat.
2. Add the chopped shallots and garlic, sautéing for 2-3 minutes until soft and fragrant.
3. Add the chestnut and wild mushrooms to the pot. Cook for 3-4 minutes until the mushrooms are tender and release their juices.
4. Pour in the white wine or Calvados, allowing it to reduce for 2 minutes.
5. Add the turkey stock and simmer for 2-3 minutes.
6. Stir in the cream and cook gently for another 3-5 minutes until the sauce thickens.
7. Add the tarragon (if using) and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

Tip

For a thicker consistency, mix a small amount of cornflour with water and stir into the sauce. Simmer until desired thickness is reached.



SIMPLE HERB STUFFING



By *John Core*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 100g butter (preferably Kerrygold)
- 200g fresh breadcrumbs (preferably from a wholemeal loaf)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh sage, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).
2. In a large pan, melt the butter over medium heat.
3. Add the chopped onion and cook for 5-7 minutes until softened but not browned.
4. Stir in the grated carrots and cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.
5. Add the thyme, sage, and parsley, mixing well.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste, then remove from heat.
7. Stir in the breadcrumbs until thoroughly combined.
8. Transfer the mixture into a greased ovenproof dish and spread evenly.
9. Bake in the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and crisp.

To Serve

- Perfect alongside roast meats, or as a delicious side dish for your festive feast. Enjoy warm, straight from the oven!



HONEY-GLAZED CARROTS & PARSNIPS



By *Gordon Carberry*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Note: The filling can be prepared in advance and refrigerated until needed.

INGREDIENTS

- 750g medium carrots
- 750g medium parsnips
- 60ml honey
- 50ml olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of black pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 2 sage stalks
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish

METHOD

1. Preparation:

- Preheat the oven to 175°C (fan).
- Peel the carrots and parsnips (reserve peelings for soup, if desired). Cut the vegetables into chunks on an angle.

2. Cooking

- In a large bowl, whisk together the honey, olive oil, salt, pepper, crushed garlic, thyme, and sage.
- Add the carrots and parsnips to the bowl and toss until the vegetables are well coated.
- Spread the vegetables evenly on a roasting tray.
- Roast in the preheated oven for 35-40 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender and caramelised, turning them halfway through for even cooking.

3. Finishing Touches

- Once cooked, transfer the roasted vegetables to a serving dish.
- Garnish with chopped fresh parsley.
- Serve immediately and enjoy!



BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH BACON AND CHESTNUTS



By *Glen Stewart*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Note: You can prepare the sprouts in advance to reduce workload on the day.

INGREDIENTS

- 1.25kg Brussels sprouts, trimmed (buy 1.5kg if untrimmed)
- 200g bacon lardons or diced pancetta
- 200g vacuum-packed chestnuts, whole or chopped
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil (rapeseed or sunflower)
- 50g butter, plus extra for garnish
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

METHOD

1. Prepare the Brussels Sprouts

- If needed, trim the sprouts by slicing off the rough stalk ends and removing any outer leaves. Cut a shallow "X" into the base of each sprout.
- The chestnuts can be used whole or roughly chopped, depending on your preference.

2. Cook the Brussels Sprouts

- Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the trimmed Brussels sprouts and bring back to the boil. Cook for 5 minutes. This will help retain their green colour.
- Drain immediately and rinse under cold running water until completely cool (around 10 minutes). Drain again thoroughly.
- **Tip: You can do the above steps a day in advance to save time.**

3. Cook the Bacon and Chestnuts

- Heat a large frying pan over medium heat. Add the oil and the bacon lardons or pancetta. Sauté for about 10 minutes until crisp and golden.
- Remove the bacon from the pan, leaving the fat behind.
- Increase the heat to high, add the chestnuts to the same pan, and fry for 5 minutes until they start to brown. Remove the chestnuts and set aside.

4. Finish the Dish

- Return the empty pan to the heat (no need to clean it). Add the Brussels sprouts along with about 100ml of water. Cover and cook on medium heat for 5 minutes.
- Remove the lid, increase the heat, and add the butter. Sauté until all the water evaporates and the butter starts to sizzle, about 2 minutes.
- Add the cooked bacon and chestnuts back into the pan. Toss everything together and cook for another minute.

To Serve

- Season generously with salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish and top with a small knob of butter for extra richness.



FLUFFY SEA SALT & SAGE ROAST POTATOES



By *David Sayce*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 10-15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- 2.5kg Maris Piper potatoes
- 4 tbsp goose fat
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 20g fresh sage
- 2-3 garlic bulbs

METHOD

1. Preparation:

- Peel the potatoes and cut them into even-sized pieces. Place them in a bowl of water; this can be done the day before if needed.
- Gently pick the sage leaves from the stalks, setting both aside.
- Lightly crush the garlic bulbs (leave the skins on).

2. Cooking

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan).
- Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the potatoes, reduce to a simmer, and cook for 15 minutes until just tender.
- Drain the potatoes well, then transfer them to a large mixing bowl. Toss gently to roughen the edges; this helps create a crispy texture.
- Drizzle with the goose fat and olive oil, tossing to coat evenly. Season with sea salt, then add the sage stalks and crushed garlic.
- Line a baking tray with greaseproof paper. Spread the potatoes out in a single layer and roast in the oven, turning every 10 minutes, until golden brown and crispy (about 40-50 minutes).

3. Finishing Touches

- Remove the garlic and sage stalks from the tray.
- Scatter the reserved fresh sage leaves over the potatoes and roast for an additional 5 minutes to crisp up the leaves and enhance the flavour.



CHRISTMAS WHIPPED MASHED POTATOES



By *David Sayce*

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 30-35 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5kg Maris Piper potatoes
- 100g unsalted butter
- 150ml pouring cream
- Salt and white pepper, to taste
- 2 pinches ground nutmeg
- 100g pancetta, diced
- 20g flat-leaf parsley, chopped

METHOD

1. Preparation:

- Peel the potatoes and place them in cold water to prevent browning.
- Dice the pancetta into small pieces.
- Wash and finely chop the parsley.

2. Cooking

- Place the potatoes in a large pot of lightly salted water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a gentle simmer and cook until tender, about 20-25 minutes.
- In a small saucepan, gently warm the butter and cream together.
- In a frying pan, heat a drizzle of olive oil and fry the pancetta until crispy. Remove and set aside.

3. Finishing Touches

- Once the potatoes are tender, drain them well. Pass the potatoes through a ricer back into the pot for a smooth texture.
- Stir in the warmed butter and cream mixture. Season with salt, white pepper, and nutmeg to taste.
- Spoon half of the mashed potatoes into a serving bowl. Mix the remaining mash with the crispy pancetta.
- Transfer to the serving bowl and garnish with chopped parsley.



DESSERTS



SHERRY TRIFLE



By Glen Stewart

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Note: Allow time for the jelly and custard to cool and set.

INGREDIENTS

Base Layer

- 100g boudoir sponge fingers or 300g jam Swiss roll (sliced 1cm thick)
- 100ml sweet sherry

Fruit

- 250g fresh raspberries
- 300g fresh strawberries

Jelly

- 2 x 135g packs of raspberry or strawberry jelly

Custard

- 35g custard powder
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar
- 600ml milk

Cream Topping

- 600ml double cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Decoration

- 50g chocolate flakes or grated dark chocolate
- Optional: sprinkles, candied angelica

METHOD

1. Prepare the Base and Fruit

- Arrange the sponge fingers or sliced Swiss roll in the bottom of a large glass trifle bowl.
- Remove the stems from the strawberries and slice them, reserving a few slices for decoration.
- Scatter the sliced strawberries and half of the raspberries over the sponge layer.
- Drizzle the sherry evenly over the sponge and fruit.

2. Make the Jelly Layer

- Tear the jelly into cubes and place them in a heatproof jug.
- Add 600ml boiling water and stir until the jelly is completely dissolved. Then, add 600ml cold water.
- Pour the prepared jelly over the sponge and fruit, ensuring they are fully covered.
- Refrigerate until the jelly is fully set before adding the custard layer.

3. Prepare the Custard

- In a bowl, mix the custard powder and sugar with a small amount of milk to create a smooth paste.
- Heat the remaining milk in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly.
- Gradually pour the hot milk into the custard paste, whisking continuously.
- Return the mixture to the saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring until it thickens and comes to a gentle boil.
- Once thickened, remove from heat and continue stirring for a minute to prevent a skin from forming.
- Allow the custard to cool to room temperature, stirring occasionally.
- Pour the cooled custard over the set jelly, spreading it evenly with the back of a spoon.

4. Finish with Cream and Decorations

- Whip the double cream with the vanilla extract until soft peaks form.
- Spoon the whipped cream over the custard layer, creating soft peaks with the back of your spoon.
- Sprinkle with chocolate flakes or grated dark chocolate.
- Decorate with the reserved strawberries, raspberries, and any optional sprinkles or candied angelica for a festive touch.



CHRISTMAS PUDDING WITH BRANDY BUTTER



By Cathy Adamson

SERVES 6

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 4½ hours

Note: The pudding can be made in advance and stored in the fridge or a cool, dry place.

INGREDIENTS

Christmas Pudding

- 120g butter, diced
- 120g soft brown sugar
- 120g plain flour
- 1 level tsp baking powder
- 50g egg, beaten
- 60g breadcrumbs
- 120g sultanas
- 120g raisins
- 120g cherries, halved
- 120ml Irish stout
- 80ml brandy, plus extra for finishing
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp mixed sweet spice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Brandy Butter

- 100g unsalted butter, softened
- 225g icing sugar
- 3 tbsp brandy or cognac

METHOD

1. Prepare the Fruit Mixture

- Soak the sultanas, raisins, cherries, diced apple, lemon zest, orange zest, and their juices in the stout and brandy for 24-48 hours before making the pudding.

2. Make the Pudding

- Grease and line a 2lb pudding basin with parchment paper.
- In a mixer with a paddle attachment, cream the butter and soft brown sugar until light and fluffy.
- Gradually add the beaten egg, then sift in the flour, baking powder, mixed spice, and cinnamon. Mix until combined.
- Add the soaked fruit along with any remaining soaking liquid, then fold in the breadcrumbs gently until fully incorporated.
- Spoon the mixture into the prepared pudding basin, leaving a little room for expansion.
- Cover the top with a round of parchment paper cut to size.
- Wrap the entire basin securely with cling film.

3. Steam the Pudding

- Place the basin in a steamer and steam for 4½ hours.
- Remove from the steamer and let it cool slightly before turning it out onto a serving dish.
- Warm a little extra brandy, pour it over the warm pudding, and carefully set alight.

4. Make the Brandy Butter

- Place the softened butter into a mixing bowl.
- Gradually mix in the icing sugar, beating until smooth.
- Add the brandy to taste and mix until well combined.
- Spoon the brandy butter into a serving dish, cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.



SWEET MINCE PIES



By Cathy Adamson

MAKES 20 MINCE PIES

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Note: The sweet mince can be made in advance and stored for up to a week in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

Sweet Mince

- 175g sultanas
- 175g raisins
- 50g currants
- 50g mixed peel
- 50g dried cranberries
- 225g dark brown sugar
- 65g butter
- 2 Bramley apples, peeled and chopped
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- 50g ground almonds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1½ tsp mixed spice
- 150ml brandy

Sablé Pastry

- 375g plain flour
- 75g icing sugar
- 180g cold butter, diced
- 1½ beaten eggs
- Pinch of salt

METHOD

1. Prepare the Sweet Mince

- In a medium pot, melt the butter over medium heat.
- Add the brown sugar, chopped Bramley apples, orange zest and juice, cinnamon, and mixed spice.
- Stir in the sultanas, raisins, currants, mixed peel, cranberries, and ground almonds.
- Simmer for 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is soft and pulpy.
- Remove from the heat and stir in the brandy. Set aside to cool completely.

2. Make the Sablé Pastry

- In a food processor, combine the flour, icing sugar, and salt.
- Add the diced cold butter and pulse until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- Gradually add the beaten egg and blend just until the dough begins to come together.
- Remove the dough from the food processor, shape into a ball, wrap in cling film, and refrigerate for 20 minutes.
- Preheat the oven to 170°C (fan).

3. Assemble and Bake the Mince Pies

- Lightly grease two mince pie baking trays.
- Divide the chilled pastry in half and lightly flour your work surface.
- Roll out half of the pastry to 4mm thickness and cut into discs using a pastry cutter.
- Line each hole of the baking trays with the pastry discs, pressing gently to fit.
- Brush the edges of each pastry case with a little water.
- Spoon the cooled sweet mince mixture into the pastry cases.
- Roll out the remaining dough to 4mm thickness and cut out lids for the pies.
- Place a lid on each pie, pressing the edges gently to seal.
- Prick the tops with a fork and bake in the preheated oven for 15–20 minutes, or until golden brown.
- Once baked, remove from the oven and dust generously with icing sugar using a fine mesh sieve.

To Serve

- Enjoy warm or cold, either on their own or with a dollop of freshly whipped cream.