



Introduction

Simone and I have always had a profound love of food: preparing it, cooking it, but most of all, eating it. We can thank both our families for this inherited enjoyment of food. Both sets of parents are lovers of good food, and have always delighted in preparing it, which has fostered the interest we both take in the culinary arts. Simone's heritage is Spanish; my father grew up in a hotel, and my mother ran microwave cookery classes in Durban for many years. She is the author of a number of cookbooks.

Simone and I love nothing better than getting home from work, talking and sharing our stories of the day, before sitting down to a meal. Every night we turn off the TV, and have a relaxing dinner together at the dining room table. It is such a simple activity, but so pleasurable, that it has become our favourite part of the day.

For many years now, our family has met up for a Sunday lunch which we cook as a family, combining our skills, before breaking bread together.

This book is a selection of our combined favourite recipes, sharing with you the meals that we love to serve to our family and friends. It includes contributions by many of those friends and family members.

This book is a story of beautiful food which the two of us love. We hope that you will enjoy this book; and enjoy sharing these meals with your friends and family as much as we do with ours.

Richard and Simone

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Starters,
Appetizers
and Soups

Blinis with Smoked Salmon and other toppings

Warm or cold blinis served with a variety of toppings, together with a bottle of wine or champagne, is utter bliss! Give these a try, and experience the romantic moment! **Makes about 45 – 50**

Blinis:

110 g cake flour (200 ml)
70 g buckwheat flour (160 ml)
5 ml dried instant yeast
Pinch of salt
175 ml low-fat milk
5 ml honey
20 g butter or margarine (20 ml)
125 ml buttermilk
2 large eggs, separated
Knob of butter for cooking

Toppings:

Smoked salmon slivers
Lumpfish caviar
Creamy cheese such as cambozola or brie
Horseradish and slivers of rare roast beef
Tinned tuna, and sun-dried tomatoes
Beetroot relish, with a little extra cream cheese or mascarpone cheese
Caramelized onions and figs
Poached pears and honey

Crème Fraiche:

250 g crème fraîche
15 ml fresh dill, finely chopped
15 ml fresh parsley, finely chopped
Freshly-ground black pepper to taste

1. **Blinis:** Sift the flours together, add in the yeast and salt, and stir to combine.
2. Warm the milk, honey, and butter together in the microwave oven on 100% power for 1½ minutes, until blood temperature.
3. Add in the buttermilk and the egg yolks; whisk well together.
4. Add the liquid mixture to the flour, whisking all the time, to form a smooth batter.
5. Cover bowl with greased plastic wrap, and place in a warm spot for an hour. Try putting the bowl on a kitchen stool in front of the closed, heated oven door. This works really well.
6. Beat the egg whites to stiff peak stage; gently fold into the yeast mixture.
7. Use a non-stick frying pan, add butter; when melted and bubbling, rotate the pan to coat the bottom evenly with melted butter.
8. Drop teaspoonfuls of the mixture into the pan. Cook until little bubbles appear on the surface; turn over and cook the other side until golden brown.
9. Remove and set aside.
10. **Crème Fraiche:** Mix all crème fraîche ingredients together. Place in the refrigerator until required.
11. Place crème fraîche mixture into a disposable piping bag; Cut off the tip and pipe onto the cool blinis. Use the topping of your choice. Alternatively, serve blinis with a selection of toppings, allowing everybody to choose their own.

Tip:

If you wish to eat the blinis warm, it is best to serve the toppings separately; the crème fraîche will melt and run on the warm blini, if not eaten immediately.

Tip:

- These make enough to freeze half and reheat in a moderate oven for 10 – 15 minutes, when required.



Butternut Fritters with Rocket, Blue Cheese and Onion Marmalade

These are delicious little treats, super as a starter or a snack. They may be used as a fairly substantial main course, with the addition of extra salad. This is a great way to use up any leftover butternut. It's tempting to overindulge in this delicious combo of butternut, with the blue cheese and onion marmalade.

Makes 42 – 46 small fritters

Onion Marmalade:

2 large red onions, sliced
30 ml cooking oil
Salt and pepper
125 g brown sugar (155 ml)
125 ml red wine vinegar
45 ml balsamic vinegar

Butternut Fritters:

675 g butternut, peeled and chopped (750 ml)
2 large eggs
7 ml salt
3 – 5 ml chilli flakes
280 g cake flour (500 ml)
15 ml baking powder
Cooking oil for shallow-fat frying

To serve: 30 g rocket, 125 g blue cheese, crumbled

1. **Onion Marmalade:** Sauté onions in oil with the salt and pepper, for 5 minutes.
2. Add the sugar and vinegars; cook to a syrupy consistency, then set aside.
3. **Fritters:** Place the butternut into a steamer or into a colander over a saucepan, a quarter filled with boiling water; steam until tender.
4. Mash the butternut; cool slightly, then mix in the eggs, salt and chilli flakes.
5. Sift the flour and baking powder together; stir into the butternut.
6. Cook spoonfuls of the mixture in a frying pan with a little oil; cooking over a medium heat. Turn over when puffed up.
7. Drain well.
8. **Serve:** Layer the fritters with the rocket and crumbled blue cheese; drizzle the onion marmalade over the layers.

Variations:

- If you are not a blue cheese fan, substitute this for feta cheese or white Cheddar.
- Omit chilli flakes.
- If you prefer something sweet; omit onion marmalade; sprinkle fritters with cinnamon, and serve drizzled with maple syrup.



Caprese Heirloom Salad

In the shops at the moment there is the most fantastic selection of exotic tomatoes. The classic Caprese Salad may be spiced up by using fresh, simple ingredients, giving it a modern twist. Richard likes to use Buffalo mozzarella cheese, as this makes for a rustic look. This is a really delicious, simple starter that we love to make.

Serves 2

1 x yellow tomato, sliced
1 x green tomato, sliced
1 x red tomato, sliced
1 ball buffalo mozzarella cheese, torn into pieces
Two sprigs fresh basil
Drizzle of olive oil
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper

1. Choose pretty serving plates. Layer the exotic tomatoes, starting with a slice of yellow tomato.
2. Top this with a piece of mozzarella cheese.
3. Next, place a slice of green tomato, followed again by mozzarella, and lastly a slice of red tomato on top of the pile. Your stack should sit firmly in place.
4. Top with a sprig of fresh basil.
5. Drizzle over a little olive oil, and season according to taste.



Cherry-Red Roast-Tomato Starter

Perfect as a pre-drink snack, or to make for a book club. We love the flavour of roasted tomatoes, when combined with a little pesto and cream cheese, and mopped up with chunky bread; or gently piled onto some bruschetta or Melba toast. It certainly makes a very easy starter with great bursts of taste. We sometimes have this as our main meal, with the addition of some chunky crudités, and freshly baked bread.

Serves 4 – 6

1 punnet Rosa baby tomatoes
 25 ml olive oil
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
 5 ml Italian herbs, or garlic and herb mix
 1 small lettuce, washed and shredded
 1 x 250 g container cream cheese
 80 – 100 ml basil or red pepper pesto
 60 ml flaked almonds, toasted
 30 ml finely chopped parsley
 3 sprigs fresh basil

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Place tomatoes into a small roasting pan. Drizzle with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper and Italian or garlic herbs.
3. Roast for 20 – 25 minutes.
4. Arrange lettuce on a flat platter and place the unwrapped packet of cream cheese in the centre of the platter.
5. Place roasted tomatoes in their juices around the cream cheese.
6. Stir basil or red pepper pesto lightly and drizzle over the cheese.
7. Next, sprinkle with some toasted almonds.
8. Lastly, garnish the tomatoes with parsley, and a few fresh basil leaves.
9. Serve with sliced French bread or ciabatta bread, bruschetta, Melba toast, or biscuits.

Variation:

- Add 60 g sun-dried tomatoes to the fresh tomatoes after completing step 3. This gives a different texture and flavour to the recipe.



Middle-Eastern Salad Starter

This great starter is refreshing to the taste, with a little bite to it, which will satisfy any number of guests. The addition of dates provides an interesting texture to this salad; together with the almonds and spice it is 3very aromatic.

Serves 4

15 ml balsamic vinegar
 1 small red onion, thinly sliced
 100 g pitted dates, halved lengthwisw (Medjool dates are a good choice)
 30 g butter
 25 ml olive oil
 3 pita breads, cut into thin wedges
 75 g slivered almonds
 10 ml harrissa paste
 3 ml chilli flakes
 1 x 200 g packet spinach leaves
 25 ml lime juice
 Salt and freshly-ground black pepper

1. Combine vinegar, onion and dates for 30 minutes.
2. Heat butter and oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add pita bread wedges and slivered almonds; toss in the oil, and lightly fry, until the almonds are toasted, and the pita bread is crispy.
3. Add in the harrissa paste and chilli flakes; cook for a further minute.
4. Allow to cool.
5. Place the spinach leaves onto a flat platter; arrange the onion, dates, pita bread and almond mixture over the spinach leaves. Drizzle with lime juice, and season to taste.

Variations:

- In place of the pita breads, use 4 slices bread of your choice; remove crusts, and cut into cubes. Cook as in step 2.
- Serve on a mixture of rocket and watercress, in place of the spinach leaves.

Mini Pakora

When Richard was in India on holiday, he discovered these wonderful little titbits, which you can have as a starter or snack, or as part of a main meal. They are simple to prepare and may be made in advance. These are also great for vegetarians who eat eggs. Known as dhaltjies by our Cape Malay population, they are eaten as an appetizer during Iftars, or at weddings, birthdays, and at other celebrations.

Makes approximately 45 mini pakoras

1 red onion, finely chopped	1 large potato, peeled and grated
25 ml fresh ginger root, finely grated	1 red pepper, finely diced
25 ml sunflower oil	1 red or green chilli, seeds removed, and finely chopped
10 ml garam masala	10 ml sea salt flakes
10 ml curry powder	5 ml freshly-ground black pepper
10 ml black onion seeds	60 ml chickpea flour (ground dhal)
5 ml turmeric	45 ml finely chopped coriander
4 large egg whites	Cooking oil for shallow-fat frying
1 large sweet potato, peeled and grated (place in acidulated water; drain well before using)	

To serve: mint or mango chutney or mango pickle

1. Sauté the onion and ginger root in 25 ml sunflower oil until onions are translucent.
2. Add in the garam masala, curry powder, black onion seeds and turmeric; sauté for 2 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. Whisk the egg whites in a large, clean, dry bowl, until frothy.
4. Add all the ingredients (except the cooking oil and chutney) into the egg whites, and mix gently together.
5. Mixture will be fairly thick, with a good, dropping consistency.
6. If the mixture is too thin, add a little more chickpea flour. If it is too thick, add a little water.
7. Heat sufficient oil in a large frying pan on a medium heat to shallow-fat fry the pakoras.
8. Drop spoonfuls in the hot oil. Turn over after 30 seconds; cook a further 30 seconds; drain well. Continue until all the batter has been used up.
9. Keep warm or cool, then refrigerate or freeze.
10. Serve the little pakoras with mint or mango chutney, sweet chilli sauce, or mango pickle.

Tips:

- Although this recipe makes many pakoras, it is worth making a whole batch, then freezing what you do not use. Freeze in plastic freezer bags to save space in the freezer. You can always reheat these little treats quickly in the oven, when required.
- You can vary the vegetables, e.g. use grated courgette and mint, corn and chopped red pepper, or small florets of broccoli/cauliflower.
- Make larger pakoras for starters, or as part of a main vegetarian meal.





Pistachio and Cranberry Goat's Cheese Roll

At certain times you need to entertain. This appetizer or starter certainly has a festive and colourful air about it. It is very simple to prepare, and tastes as good as it looks. We hope you enjoy this as much as we do.

Serves 4 – 6

125 ml pistachio nuts, shelled
 10 ml ground coriander
 10 ml ground cumin
 3 ml dried thyme
 125 ml dried cranberries, roughly chopped
 250 g goat's cheese, in a log shape

To serve: Bruschetta, savoury biscuits, pita wedges or fresh French bread, sliced

1. In a small pan over medium-high heat, dry roast the pistachios; add in coriander and cumin after 3 minutes. Roast until fragrant; about 4 – 5 minutes in total, stirring fairly frequently. Allow to cool.
2. Combine the pistachios, coriander, cumin and thyme with the cranberries.
3. Place on a flat plate, and roll the goat's cheese log in the mixture until completely coated with the mixture.
4. Place on a serving dish; sprinkle the remaining pistachio and cranberry mixture around the log.
5. Store at room temperature for at least 15 minutes before serving.
6. The cheese will then soften nicely and become easier to spread.
7. Serve with a variety of bruschetta, savoury biscuits, pita wedges and/or fresh sliced bread.

Variation:

- Add 125 ml finely chopped glacé figs in step 2. Omit spices and thyme.



Quick Mexican Tomato-Tortilla Soup

Cooking for two can be more fun than cooking for any other number, especially when the two people are doing both the cooking and the eating. If cooking is an adventure; how much more fun to explore with somebody who is special in your life? This soup allows you to do just this. While one is chopping and preparing, the other can be making the tortilla wraps and setting the table; not forgetting to have a sip of wine in between!

Serves 4 – 6

15 ml sunflower oil
1 onion, chopped
3 ml dried chilli flakes
5 ml paprika
3 ml ground cumin
1 x 800 g tin chopped tomatoes
250 ml red lentils

1 x 400 g tin red beans, drained
1 litre chicken or vegetable stock
15 ml fresh basil, chopped
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
2 tortilla wraps, cut into thin strips
30 ml olive oil
Sea salt, to taste

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium-heat; lightly sauté the onion until translucent.
2. Add the chilli, paprika, cumin, tomatoes, lentils, beans and stock, bring to simmering point, then reduce the heat, and simmer for 20 minutes, until the lentils are soft.
3. Add chopped basil for the last 5 minutes of cooking time.
4. Blend soup with a plunge blender or in a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade. Process until smooth.
5. Season to taste.
6. Fold wraps into quarters; cut into fine strips with a pair of scissors. Toss strips in olive oil and sea salt and bake at 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4 for 15 minutes. Do this while the soup is cooking.
7. Serve soup with the crisped tortilla strips.

Variations:

- Serve soup with a blob of basil pesto.
- Use smoked paprika in place of normal paprika.
- For a meatier flavour, add in 125 g finely chopped bacon, in step 1.

Tip:

- Divide the soup into 2 portions. Freeze the remainder for use another day.



Roasted Zucchini and Roasted Tomato Soup

This is one of Richard and Simone's all-time favourites; a tasty, healthy starter, or a main meal, when adding some fabulous bread to the menu. It is super simple to make. Here you have a delicious soup, which is exceptionally low in fat.

Serves 4

1.5 kg zucchini (courgettes), chopped roughly
250 g cherry tomatoes
4 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 cloves garlic, crushed
45 ml olive oil
15 ml Parmesan cheese, grated

250 ml fat-free milk
5 ml each sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed
125 ml – 250 ml boiling water, as desired

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/ Gas mark 4.
2. Place chopped zucchini into an oven-roasting tray.
3. Add in cherry tomatoes, rosemary, and 2 x garlic cloves. Drizzle with olive oil.
4. Toss well together, and spread in an even layer.
5. Roast for approximately 45 – 60 minutes until golden brown, and vegetables have softened.
6. Place mixture into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade.
7. Add in Parmesan cheese, milk, seasoning, and remaining garlic cloves.
8. Blend together until smooth.
9. Add sufficient boiling water to achieve the consistency you require. Extra water will make the soup go further.
10. Season to taste, and serve hot or cold.
11. To make a hearty meal; serve with crusty bread.

Variations:

- Add 5 ml lemon rind, and juice of half a lemon to the soup.
- Add 30 ml low-fat or fat-free cottage cheese, in step 9.

Tip:

- Make up this recipe and divide into two portions. Eat one, and freeze one. Soups freeze really well in plastic bags. Line a square container with a plastic freezer bag, pour in the soup; label and freeze. Remove from the container once frozen.

Three-Topping Bruschetta

*Entertaining is easy if you can offer three different toppings to go onto ready-prepared bruschetta. All three toppings may be made ahead of time. They may be served either as snacks with drinks, or as an appetizer before the main course. With vegetarians in mind, we have included a veggie topping which is super delicious. **Makes approximately 20 canapés of each topping.***

Bruschetta

2 – 3 French loaves, cut into slices, or sour dough bread, cut into slices and then strips
Olive oil for brushing cut bread slices
Grill or bake in a very hot oven (220°C/200°C fan/Gas mark 7) for 8 – 10 minutes, until golden and crispy.

Topping One: Rocket, Parma Ham, and Pecan-Nut Ricotta

250 g ricotta cheese
125 g cream cheese
½ red chilli, finely chopped
50 g pecan nuts, finely chopped
Freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
250 ml rocket
10 – 12 slices Parma or prosciutto ham, cut in half

Topping Two: Feta with Grilled Red Peppers, Basil and Balsamic Glaze

200 g feta cheese, crumbled
100 g cream cheese
50 g Parmesan cheese, grated
1 large egg, beaten
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
30 ml chopped, fresh basil leaves
2 large red peppers, cut into halves, grilled, and skin removed
45 – 60 ml balsamic glaze
Fresh basil leaves

Topping Three: Rare Fillet of Beef on Blue Cheese with Caramelized Pears

150 g beef fillet, in one piece
Olive oil
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
100 g cream cheese
30 g Blaauwkrantz cheese or similar blue-veined cheese
2 pears, peeled and poached for 20 minutes with 1 cinnamon stick, and 1 red chilli
125 ml granulated sugar and water, to cover



1. Rocket, Parma Ham and Pecan-Nut Ricotta

1. Place ricotta, cream cheese, chilli and pecan nuts into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade. Process until smooth.
2. Add seasoning to taste.
3. Place approximately 10 – 15 ml ricotta mixture on each toasted bruschetta; top with a little rocket, and wrap around each one about half a piece of Parma or prosciutto ham.

2. Feta with Grilled Red Peppers, Basil and Balsamic Glaze

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Mix feta, cream cheese and Parmesan cheese together; add in the egg and seasoning.
3. Gently mix in the chopped basil leaves.
4. Grease a 24 x mini-muffin pan or two 12 x mini-muffin pans.
5. Fill each pan almost to the top. Smooth the tops, so mixture is even.
6. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes, until golden brown.
7. Cool; remove carefully from muffin pans, and set aside. Refrigerate until required.
8. Grill red pepper halves; remove charred skin, and cut into strips.
9. Place one baked feta round onto each bruschetta. Top with a slice of charred red pepper. Drizzle with some balsamic glaze, and top with a basil leaf.

3. Rare Fillet of Beef on Blue Cheese, with Caramelized Pears

1. Roll beef fillet in olive oil and in seasoning.
2. Heat a frying pan over medium heat; sear fillet for two minutes on each side, including the ends; about 10 minutes in total. (When pressed with the finger, the meat must feel spongy; it must not be firm to the touch).
3. Set aside to cool, and place in the refrigerator until required. Slice into wafer-thin slices when ready to assemble.
4. Thinly slice the cooled, poached pears.
5. Combine cream cheese and Blaauwkrantz cheese. Spread over the bruschetta base.
6. Top with a wafer-thin slice of beef, and finish with a slice or two of poached pears.

Variation:

- Add some poached peach slices, or fresh fig slices to the rocket, Parma Ham, and Pecan-Nut Ricotta.



Fish Dishes



Crispy-Crunchy Fish Bites

When there are just two of you, you look for something quick and easy to prepare, something which is nutritious as well as tasty. Look no further: this fish dish ticks all the boxes. This recipe is gluten-free, which is great when serving to gluten-intolerant guests.

Serves 2

2 large fillets firm, white fish, such as hake or dorado
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
 1 large egg
 100 ml freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 75 g ground almonds (very finely ground) (125 ml)
 25 ml finely grated lemon rind
 65g almond or rice flour (125 ml)
 Oil for frying
 250 g watercress

1. Cut each fillet into 4 – 6 equal-sized pieces. Season to taste, and set aside.
2. Whisk egg until light and foamy. Add Parmesan cheese and ground almonds; combine. Season with sea salt and black pepper. Add lemon rind.
3. Place fish into the 65 g almond or rice flour; toss to coat well.
4. Dip fish into the batter and coat thickly.
5. Place oil into a deep-fat fryer, or suitable pan over a moderate heat. Heat the oil.
6. Add a few pieces of fish at a time, so as not to reduce the temperature of the oil too rapidly.
7. Fry for approximately 3 minutes per side or 6 minutes in total.
8. Drain on paper towels; season to taste, if necessary. Repeat with remaining fish.
9. Keep cooked fish warm until all the fish has been prepared.
10. Serve fish with watercress and an avacodo and mango salad or salsa.

Tips:

- Buy almond or rice flour at a health-food shop, or in the health-food section of a large supermarket store.
- Grind your own almond flour, by placing blanched almonds in an electric coffee grinder or spice grinder.

Crusty-Potato Salmon Slices

The full monty of fish and chips, with a difference! Simply add a salad, and this meal is super nutritious, super fast, and super delicious.

Serves 2

4 unpeeled, grated potatoes, squeezed dry (about 250 ml),
microwave on 100% power for 4 – 5 minutes, drain well
15 ml freshly snipped chives
15 ml freshly chopped parsley
15 ml cornflour or potato or rice flour
5 ml potato seasoning spice
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper
40 ml sunflower oil
2 x 250 g boneless, skinless salmon fillets, patted dry with paper towel
Lemon or lime wedges

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas mark 6.
2. In a medium bowl, combine cooked potatoes with the chives, parsley, cornflour or potato/rice flour, potato seasoning, spice, salt, pepper, and oil.
3. Place salmon fillets onto a greased baking sheet or an ungreased "silpat" baking mat, and firmly press the shredded potato mixture on each piece.
4. Bake for 12 – 15 minutes until golden brown. Fish should flake easily, and potatoes should have made a good crust.
5. Serve with a crispy, green salad.
6. Garnish with lemon or lime wedges.

Variation:

- Use sweet potatoes instead of ordinary potatoes.

Tips:

- For a 2.5 cm-thick piece of fish, allow 10 minutes' cooking time.
- If you like a crispier finish to topping; grill for 2 – 3 minutes.



Tip:

- This recipe makes more jam than you need, so there will be some chilli-tomato-lime jam left over. Place into a sterilized bottle and refrigerate. Great with cheese and biscuits or as a dip with meatballs, crispy chicken strips, and battered or steamed vegetables.



Fresh Fish with Chilli-Tomato-Lime Jam

Lip-smackingly good! This is food with real flavour. The cumin in the batter gives the fish a lift. Together with the slightly sweet chilli jam, it's a great treat to eat.

Serves 2

Chilli-Tomato-Lime Jam

30 ml sunflower oil

2 medium onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced

2 red chillies, seeded and chopped

500 g tomatoes, peeled and chopped or 1 x 800 g tin tomatoes, chopped

Juice and rind of 2 limes

Sea salt, to taste

50 ml brown sugar

Fish

500 g fresh white fish fillets, such as hake, dorado, sea bass or kingklip; cut into 5 x 5 cm chunks

2 large eggs

140 g self-raising flour (250 ml)

30 g self-raising flour (60 ml)

125 – 190 ml soda water, or water with gas

Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

5 ml cumin seeds

Oil for deep-fat frying

1. **Chilli-Tomato-Lime Jam:** Place oil into a medium-sized saucepan, and sauté onions until translucent. Add in garlic and chillies; cook for a further minute.
2. Stir in tomatoes, juice and rind of the limes, salt and sugar. Cook over a moderate heat, stirring from time to time. Simmer gently for about 30 minutes, until mixture has reduced, and is thick and jam-like in texture. Set aside.
3. **Batter:** Using a medium-sized mixing bowl, beat the eggs. Add in the 140 g self-raising flour, water, salt and cumin seeds. Whisk well to obtain a smooth batter.
4. **Fish:** Place the fish into a plastic bag together with the 30 g self-raising flour. Seal the packet.
5. Toss well to coat the fish.
6. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a moderate heat. Test the temperature of the oil with a teaspoon of batter. The batter should fizz around the edges at once. The oil is then ready to use.
7. Place the coated fish cubes into the batter; coat well.
8. Drop coated fish cubes into the hot oil, and cook for about 4 – 5 minutes. Drain well on paper towels.
9. Serve immediately with chilli-tomato-lime jam, and thick sweet potato and butternut chips; or place fish into a wrap with the jam.



Glazed Salmon with Figs

Every now and again we like to have a special dinner, just the two of us, while we enjoy our private time together. This dish fits the bill! It is very trendy to combine savoury and sweet flavours. This dish is the perfect marriage. A little sea-salty with the fish, and sweet with the figs; throw in the crunch of the nuts, and some fresh-tasting coriander and lime, and it is more than sublime!

Serves 2

2 x 250 g portions fresh salmon fillets
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
 30 g unsalted butter
 15 ml fresh ginger root, peeled and finely chopped
 1 red chilli; remove seeds and slice thinly
 150 ml fig preserve cut into quarters
 60 ml macadamia nuts or almonds, chopped
 60 ml fresh coriander, chopped
 1 lemon or lime, cut into wedges

1. Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas mark 6.
2. Pat salmon fillets dry with paper towels. Season with salt and black pepper, and place onto a greased, aluminium-foil-lined baking sheet, which has a small edge to catch the juices.
3. Melt butter over medium-heat in a small saucepan. Add ginger and chilli, and cook for 1 minute.
4. Add fig preserve to butter and ginger. Mix well. Cook over a moderate heat for 2 – 3 minutes, until well combined. Remove from heat.
5. Top each fillet with fig mixture.
6. Sprinkle the macadamia nuts or almonds over the figs.
7. Bake in oven for 10 – 12 minutes, until the fish flakes easily.
8. Serve with coriander leaves, and lemon or lime wedges.
9. Accompanied by some salad greens and steamed baby potatoes, this makes a memorable meal.

Figs are packed with fibre. They are very low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. They provide us with phytonutrients, antioxidants and vitamins. Figs are widely found in Mediterranean diets, which we know to be good for our health.

Paprika and Cream Calamari

This is the most delicious way Richard has ever had calamari. Serve it with rice or (Richard's favourite) on garlic bread.

Serves 2

30 ml olive oil
250 g calamari tubes and tentacles, cleaned and cut into neat portions
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
250 ml low-fat cream
1 clove garlic, chopped
7 ml paprika
Juice of half a lemon
45 ml finely chopped chives

1. Heat oil in a large frying pan over a moderate heat.
2. Add calamari tubes and tentacles, and season with salt and pepper.
3. Toss the calamari as it cooks, and drain off any liquid that begins to accumulate. You may have to do this twice or three times. If there is any liquid present, the calamari will go rubbery.
4. Add in the cream, garlic, paprika, and lemon juice. Bring to the boil; turn immediately to simmer and cook a further 1 – 2 minutes.
5. Check seasoning; serve with rice or garlic bread. Garnish with chopped chives.



Prawns-To-Be-Wild, with Penne

This recipe is from our special friend, Anne Marie Chelin. We wish you good company with which to share this simple, yet memorable meal.

Serves 4 as a light meal, or starter

Marinade:

1 clove garlic, chopped
60 ml chopped flat-leafed parsley
30 ml extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper

20 medium sized prawns, shelled

200 g penne pasta (500 ml)
15 ml extra-virgin olive oil
5 ml butter
1 small onion, finely chopped
250 ml frozen peas, thawed
250 ml dry white wine (optional)

1. Place garlic, parsley and 30 ml olive oil in a large bowl.
2. Add the prawns; sprinkle with salt and pepper, and toss to coat well. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.
3. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil; add salt, to taste.
4. Add the pasta, and cook according to the directions on the bag (usually 10 – 12 minutes).
5. Heat the olive oil and butter in a heavy-based frying pan; sauté the onion over medium-heat, until translucent. Add the prawns, with the marinade and peas; stir for 30 seconds.
6. Turn up the heat; cook until prawns turn pink, and moisture is reduced by about half. Check the seasoning.
7. Add cooked pasta to the pan.
8. Stir gently; serve immediately in either heated bowls, or on large-rimmed plates.



Smoked Salmon, Spinach and Tomato Pasta

Pasta is such a simple thing to cook and to turn into an easy meal. This recipe is no exception, however, the addition of smoked salmon and sun-dried tomatoes makes this recipe a quick, gourmet meal. Great for easy entertaining, served with a crunchy salad, fresh bread, and a glass of wine.

Serves 6

2 red onions, finely chopped
30 ml olive oil
30 g butter (30 ml)
45 ml cake flour
350 ml low-fat milk
5 ml garlic and herb seasoning
Salt and pepper to taste

200 g baby spinach
1 bag marinated sun-dried tomatoes, roughly chopped
1 x 300 g packet of smoked salmon offcuts
250 ml low-fat cream or plain yoghurt
200 ml mozzarella cheese, grated
1 bag fusilli pasta shapes

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. In a large saucepan, over a moderate heat, sauté the onion and oil together for about 3 minutes, until translucent.
3. Add butter and, when melted, stir in the flour. Cook for 2 minutes. Add milk, and make a white sauce. The sauce should not be too thick. Add herbs, salt and pepper, to taste.
4. Add spinach; cook for few minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes, lastly the salmon. Cook for about 3 minutes.
5. Cook the pasta in plenty of salted, boiling water, until the al dente stage is reached.
6. Combine the pasta and salmon mixture, then stir in the cream or yoghurt; combine gently.
7. If too thick, add a little more cream/yoghurt or milk, or a little of the pasta cooking liquid.
8. Pour into a greased baking dish 12 x 20 cm; sprinkle with grated mozzarella. Bake for 30 minutes, or until cheese is golden brown.
9. Serve with a cucumber salad.

Variation:

- Use 1 or 2 x 200 g tins red salmon, in place of smoked salmon.

Tip:

- Use sun-dried tomato oil to sauté onion, in place of 30 ml olive oil.

Zanzibar Oven-Roasted Prawns

We have a holiday home in Zanzibar where, when we visit, we have to live off the local produce. Fish and seafood are to be found in abundance; yams (sweet potatoes), bananas, and mangoes are also plentiful. While there, we have to keep our meals as simple as possible. This delicious, easy, quick way of cooking prawns has become a family favourite.

Serves 2

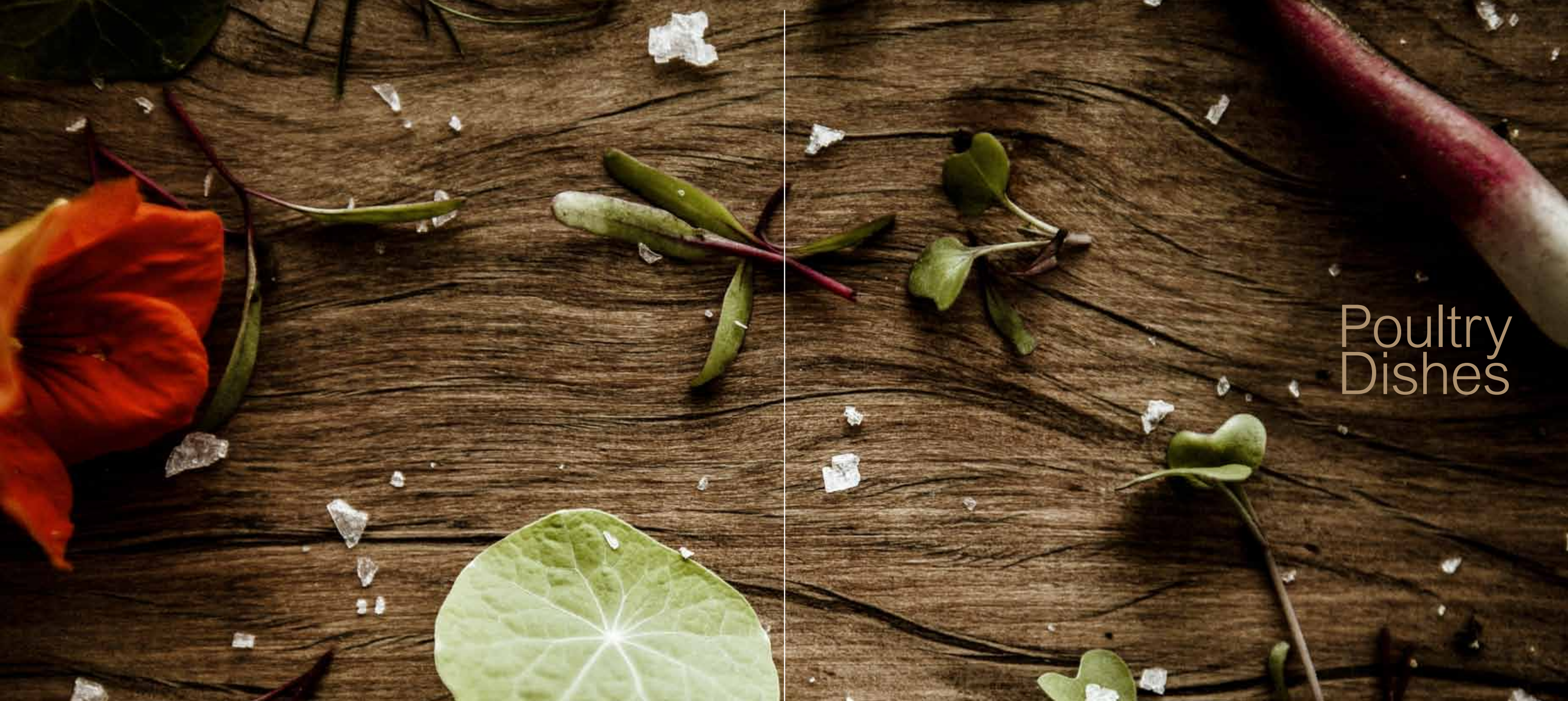
500 – 600 g tiger prawns (or large prawns), in the shell
 ½ a bottle of medium or hot piri-piri sauce of your choice
 Juice and rind of two lemons
 4 garlic cloves, peeled and cut into slivers
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
 1 lemon, cut into wedges for serving

1. Place the cleaned prawns into a glass dish. Pour over the selected piri-piri sauce, juice and rind of two lemons, and garlic cloves. Toss the prawns gently in the marinade mixture. Marinate for an hour, or longer if preferred.
2. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas mark 5.
3. Place prawns and marinade into a roasting dish. Cook for about 10 – 12 minutes until they turn pink. Stir from time to time while cooking.
4. Sprinkle over sea salt and black pepper.
5. Serve immediately with rice, or thickly-cut sweet-potato chips and a side dish of good quality mayonnaise with a little chopped chilli, lemon juice and fresh coriander. Makes a great dip for the delicious prawns.
6. Serve lemon wedges and a finger bowl alongside.

Tips:

- The prawns may also be cooked in the roasting dish; in a kettle braai; or over the coals. Do stir from time to time to disperse the marinade. Watch for the cooking point, when prawns will turn pink.
- If cooking in the kettle braai, use a disposable foil container: this makes cleaning up a breeze!





Poultry Dishes



Butter Chicken

When we entertain, we are always on the lookout for easy recipes which will appeal to most of our guests. This Butter Chicken recipe ticks all the boxes. It is simple to prepare ahead. This dish has had a great revival, thanks to our first South African Master Chef, Deena.

Serves 4 – 6

15 ml garam masala	15 ml cornflour per 1 kg chicken
5 ml paprika	60 ml cooking oil
3 ml salt	1 onion, chopped
3 ml chilli powder	1 cinnamon stick
5 ml turmeric	3 cardamom pods, split open
10 ml ground coriander	5 ml mustard seeds
10 ml ground cumin	375 ml tomato purée
2 cloves garlic, chopped	125 ml low-fat cream
15 ml chopped, fresh ginger root	15 ml fresh coriander, chopped
15 ml lemon juice	Salt and freshly-ground black pepper
250 ml Greek yoghurt	60 ml flaked almonds, toasted
8 chicken thighs, skin removed	

To serve: Basmati rice and a selection of sambals and chutneys.

1. Mix the spices, garlic, ginger, lemon juice, and yoghurt. Toss the chicken in the cornflour, and add to the yoghurt mixture. Set aside to marinate for an hour.
2. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Sauté the onion with the cinnamon, cardamom, and mustard seeds, until transparent. Add the chicken and the sauce. Cook for 15 minutes.
3. Add tomato purée, and cook for a further 15 minutes until the chicken is tender, and the sauce has reduced.
4. Stir in the cream and coriander. Season to taste.
5. Sprinkle over toasted almonds, and serve with rice and sambals.

Tips:

- Toast almonds in a small microwaveable glass bowl for 2 – 3 minutes on 100% power, stirring each minute.
- The addition of cornflour assists in tenderizing the chicken.

Coconut-Curry Chicken

We love the flavour of this chicken dish. it is great for us, as we can make it ahead of time, eat half of it, and freeze the rest for another day. Freshly grated coconut may be added to the sauce for extra body.

Serves 4

4 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless, cut into strips
 60 ml cake flour
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
 50 ml cooking oil
 1 onion, chopped
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 1 red chilli, seeds removed, and finely chopped
 3 cm piece of fresh ginger root, grated
 25 ml medium curry powder
 60 ml tomato purée
 300 ml water or chicken stock
 5 ml brown sugar
 1 x 410 g tin coconut cream or milk
 45 ml sultanas
 1 red pepper, cut into strips
 60 ml fresh coriander, chopped

1. Place chicken strips (goujons) into a plastic bag, together with flour, salt and pepper. Toss together, until chicken is well coated.
2. Heat the oil in a medium-sized saucepan. Brown the chicken strips quickly, in batches, removing them from the pan once evenly coloured.
3. Add the onions, garlic and chillies to the pan.
4. Sauté the onions until translucent. Add ginger and curry powder. Stir, and cook for about a minute.
5. Add tomato purée, water or stock, sugar, and coconut cream or milk. Stir in sultanas.
6. Place into a suitable casserole dish.
7. Cover with a lid, and bake at 160°C/140°C fan/Gas mark 3 for 30 minutes.
8. Add red pepper strips. Continue to cook for a further 20 – 25 minutes.
9. Top with coriander, and serve with basmati rice, mango chutney and sambals.

Variation:

- Add 125 ml freshly grated coconut to the recipe, in step 5.





Duck Breast Salad with Seared Pineapple and Pomegranate

*One of Simone's most favourite meals is duck, cooked any way. This recipe is especially good, using duck breasts; combining them with the fruitiness of pineapple and pomegranate, while providing crunch with the cashew nuts. The nuts and fruit beautifully offset the rich flavour of the duck. **Serves 2***

2 x good quality duck breasts

Salt

75 g cashew nuts

20 ml soy sauce

15 ml honey

½ small fresh pineapple,
peeled and cut into quarters lengthwise

20 ml olive oil,

50 g castor sugar

75 ml pineapple juice

2 ml ground coriander

2 ml cayenne pepper

1 star anise

15 ml honey

½ pomegranate, seeds removed, retain juice

Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

1 bag watercress, or rocket

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Prepare duck breasts: trim away any sinew and excess fat from around the breast; leave the skin intact; score with a sharp knife across the grain. Season with salt.
3. Heat a large, non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Place the duck breasts, skin-side down, in the dry pan. Remove any fat from the pan while cooking.
4. When the skin is golden-brown (about 3 minutes), turn breasts over, and seal for a further 1 – 2 minutes.
5. Transfer the duck breasts to the preheated oven. Cook a further 4 – 5 minutes.
6. Remove from the oven; place the duck breasts on a cooling rack to cool down. While still warm, cut into slices across the breasts.
7. Mix cashew nuts with soy sauce and 15 ml honey. Place onto a baking tray and roast for 10 minutes; set aside. When cool, break nuts into smaller pieces.
8. Remove core from the pineapple wedges. Slice into 1.5 cm slices.
9. Place a frying pan over a medium-high heat; add olive oil, and sear pineapple pieces until lightly golden. Set aside.
10. Place the sugar into a dry-frying pan over a medium heat. The sugar will melt, and turn a light caramel colour. Remove from the heat, and add pineapple juice, coriander, cayenne pepper, star anise, 15 ml honey, and any juice from the pomegranates. Mix well, and set aside to cool for 25 – 30 minutes, for flavours to infuse. Then strain the sauce.
11. Combine the duck slices, seared pineapple, strained caramel sauce, and the pomegranate seeds. Mix gently to blend the flavours.
12. Arrange watercress or rocket onto plates. Place the duck mixture attractively on top. Sprinkle with chopped cashew nuts, and drizzle over some of the caramel sauce.

Israeli Chicken and Apricots

With Richard's Israeli heritage, it is only natural that he should love all foodie things coming from the Middle-East. Spices, apricots, nuts, herbs, and chicken, together with yoghurt, are all well-loved ingredients. When combining them in this wonderful recipe, you can create a sensory trip which is very easy to prepare and which provides excellent dinner-party fare!

Serves 4

500 g boneless and skinless chicken breasts,
sliced in halves, lengthwise

Marinade:

3 ml chilli flakes
2 cloves garlic, crushed
30 ml olive oil
15 ml honey
15 ml lemon juice
5 ml ground coriander
5 ml ground cumin
5 ml paprika
3 ml ground cinnamon

Couscous:

1 bunch spring onions, chopped
15 ml olive oil
200 ml couscous (250 ml)
500 ml chicken stock, heated
75 g dried apricots (125 ml), chopped
75 ml pine nuts or slivered almonds, toasted (125 ml)
60 ml fresh parsley, chopped
30 ml fresh mint, chopped
Grated rind and juice of 1 lemon
100 g Roma cherry tomatoes, cut in halves
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

To serve: Plain, unsweetened, thick yoghurt

1. Mix marinade ingredients together, and place in a plastic zip-loc bag. Add chicken, and mix together well. Place in the refrigerator while preparing the rest of the ingredients.
2. Sauté the spring onions in a little olive oil in a saucepan for two to three minutes.
3. Add the couscous and apricots. Stir well, then stir in the hot chicken stock. Simmer for 10 minutes, until just cooked.
4. Heat a large heavy-based frying pan, and cook the chicken pieces in the marinade for 6 – 7 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through.
5. Remove the couscous from the heat. Mix in the nuts, parsley, mint, rind and juice of the lemon, and cherry tomatoes. Season to taste.
6. Place some couscous on each plate; top with chicken pieces; finish off with a large spoonful of yoghurt. Garnish with a sprig of mint, and a small piece of dried apricot.

Variation:

- For a vegetarian option; omit the chicken and use tofu. Use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock.





Oven-Baked Crunchy Chicken Strips

Sometimes it is good to have a recipe that looks after itself once the preparation is complete. This is just such a dish! Once the crumbs have been set to chill, the remainder of the meal may be prepared and kept aside. Cooking the chicken in the oven takes very little trouble. It is easy to clean up after this meal.

Serves 2

40 ml sesame seeds
 125 ml dry breadcrumbs
 60 ml cornflakes, crushed
 2 ml salt
 10 ml fresh or 3 ml dried thyme
 2 ml ground coriander
 5 ml paprika
 15 ml soy sauce
 40 ml light mayonnaise
 1 clove garlic, crushed
 10 ml honey
 2 skinless chicken breasts, cut into thick strips
 25 ml sunflower oil
 1 lemon or lime, cut into wedges

1. Mix sesame seeds, breadcrumbs, crushed cornflakes, salt, thyme, coriander and the paprika, in a large soup plate.
2. Mix soy sauce, mayonnaise, garlic and honey in another soup plate.
3. Coat chicken strips lightly in mayonnaise mixture; roll in crumbs to coat evenly.
4. To set the crumbs, refrigerate for 45 – 60 minutes or place in the freezer for 20 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
6. Line a baking pan with aluminium foil. Grease with oil.
7. Place crumbed chicken on the prepared pan; roll gently in the oil to cover lightly.
8. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and still succulent.
9. Serve with lemon or lime wedges, new potatoes and steamed green beans.

Variation:

- Add the juice and rind of one small lemon or lime, in step 2.

Tips:

- Serve chicken strips with a spicy dip, as part of an appetizer, or snack meal.
- Serve chicken strips in wraps with shredded lettuce, avocado slices, and a little sour cream or natural yoghurt.



Spicy Lime Chicken-and-Noodle Salad

This chicken salad is crunchy and smooth, with exotic flavours. It has a preparation style which is not taxing at all. We love eating this on our patio, overlooking the sea, and enjoying the relaxed lifestyle that this recipe reflects.

Serves 6 – 8

45 ml fish sauce
 Freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 2 large red chillies, finely chopped
 (remove seeds for a milder flavour)
 10 ml brown sugar
 Juice and rind of one lime
 8 chicken breasts, skinless and boneless, cut into 2.5 cm cubes
 60 ml sunflower oil

Salad:
 50 ml lime juice
 50 ml castor sugar
 200 g Chinese rice noodles
 1 cucumber, halved and thinly sliced
 4 radishes, sliced
 Small handful fresh mint leaves, chopped
 4 spring onions, sliced finely
 30 ml cashew nuts, chopped
 Seeds of 1 pomegranate

1. Whisk together in a bowl the fish sauce, pepper, garlic, chillies, sugar, and rind and juice of the lime.
2. In a separate bowl, pour half of the marinade over the chicken. Mix gently, coating chicken with the marinade. Cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 30 minutes, or overnight. Reserve the remainder of the marinade.
3. Meanwhile, make a dressing by adding the lime juice and sugar to the reserved marinade, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
4. Place the noodles in a large heat-proof dish; cover with boiling water, and leave for 2 – 3 minutes, until noodles have softened.
5. Drain, and rinse the noodles under cold water, to arrest the cooking process. Drain well.
6. In a large bowl mix noodles, cucumber, radishes, mint, spring onions, and cashews. Toss with the dressing.
7. Remove the chicken cubes from the marinade, shaking off any excess.
8. Fry the chicken cubes in heated oil in a large frying pan over medium heat for 3 – 4 minutes on each side. Drain, and set aside.
9. **To serve:** Place noodle salad onto a flat platter. Top with warm chicken cubes, and lastly those jewel-like pomegranate seeds. Garnish with a few extra mint leaves.

Tip:

- Place the chicken, in step 2, into a zip-lock bag; pour in the marinade as directed; close bag. Massage chicken a little to disperse the marinade evenly. In the bag, the chicken takes up less room in the refrigerator!



Meat
Dishes



Beef 'n Beer with Peppers

Hearty, healthy, and warming! Perfect for sharing with people you love; or you can eat some of the meat, and freeze the remainder for another meal.

Serves 6 – 8

Beef:

60 ml sunflower oil
2 kg stewing beef, such as chuck, topside, thick flank, or neck of beef, cut into 5 cm x 5 cm cubes
2 onions, peeled, and roughly chopped
3 carrots, peeled, and roughly chopped
2 sticks celery, sliced
1 bay leaf
2 red peppers, deseeded, and cut into strips
1 orange or yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into strips
750 ml stout or Guinness (1 x bottle/can)

Polenta:

500 g polenta
500 ml water
30 g butter (60 ml)
100 ml low-fat cream
45 g freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
Dash of ground nutmeg

Red Cabbage:

30 ml olive oil
1 red cabbage, shredded
60 ml sultanas
60 ml balsamic vinegar
15 ml brown sugar
1 ml ground cinnamon

Freshly chopped parsley for garnishing

1. **Beef:** Heat the oil in a large-sized saucepan; brown the cubes of beef in batches, just sufficient to cover the bottom of the pan. Remove from the pan and set aside; continue until all the meat is browned.
2. Sauté the onions until translucent. Add in the carrots and celery, and cook a further 6 – 8 minutes.
3. Add the bay leaf and peppers, and the stout or Guinness.
4. Return the meat to the pan.
5. Turn the heat down to simmer and cook gently for 2½ – 3 hours.
6. Alternatively, place in a casserole dish with a lid, and cook at 160°C/140°C fan/Gas mark 3 for 2½ – 3 hours. Remove the lid; cook a further 20 – 30 minutes.
7. Another option is to cook in the slow cooker for 5½ – 6 hours, but remove the meat, and add the liquid to a saucepan. Either boil to reduce, or thicken with a paste of cornflour and water. Return the meat to the sauce.
8. **Red Cabbage:** Heat 30 ml olive oil in a large frying pan. Toss in the cabbage, and stir-fry quickly for 5 minutes.
9. Stir in the sultanas, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar and cinnamon. Season to taste.
10. **Polenta:** Cook the polenta according to directions on the bag.
11. When cooked, add in butter, cream, Parmesan cheese, and seasoning.
12. Add a dash of nutmeg to the polenta.
13. **To Serve:** Place a little polenta, cabbage and beef on the plate. Top with peppers. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley.



Creamy Lamb Korma

The secret to this curry is long, slow cooking, to develop excellent flavours, and to enjoy lamb pieces which are melt-in-your-mouth tender. This type of cooking is ideally suited to cheaper, tougher cuts of meat, such as the shoulder, neck, shank and breast of lamb; or mutton leg, neck, shoulder, and shank. **Serves 4**

1 kg boneless lamb, cut into 2.5 cm cubes	30 g butter (30 ml)
2 onions, finely chopped	15 ml sunflower oil
1 x 5 cm piece fresh ginger root, peeled and grated	1 onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, crushed	1 cinnamon stick
30 ml coriander seeds	30 ml tomato paste
10 ml ground cumin	500 ml natural, plain yoghurt
10 ml cardamom seeds	75 g sultanas (125 ml)
5 ml salt	3 ml garam masala
5 – 7 ml chilli flakes	100 g slivered almonds, toasted
50 ml slivered almonds	

To serve:

Jasmine or basmati rice, mango or brinjal pickle, and mint or mango chutney, fresh coriander and 200 ml natural, plain yoghurt.

1. Place onion, ginger, garlic, coriander seeds, cumin, cardamom, salt, chilli flakes and 50 ml almonds into a food processor or small mini chopper. Process until a paste is formed.
2. Place the lamb cubes into a large bowl or zip-loc bag. Add the paste, and mix well together. Set aside to marinate for at least one hour, or overnight.
3. Heat butter and oil in a heavy-based saucepan, over a moderate heat.
4. Add meat; brown in batches; remove from the pan, before browning the next batch.
5. Add the onion, and sauté until translucent.
6. Add in the cinnamon stick, tomato paste and yoghurt. Stir well to amalgamate. Return the meat to the pan, together with the sultanas.
7. Cover, and turn the heat very low. Cook for approximately 2½ – 3 hours. Add another 100 – 200 ml hot water, if the sauce is too thick. Stir from time to time. Check on the liquid, ensuring that the meat does not catch and burn. Add more hot water, if necessary.
8. Stir in garam masala.
9. Serve with rice, topped with a good dollop of natural yoghurt, coriander, and toasted, slivered almonds.

Tips:

- A slow cooker is ideal to cook this recipe in. Add the ingredients into the slow cooker after step 6 is complete. Cook for approximately 5 ½ hrs.
- If using mutton, the cooking time will be slightly longer.



Fresh Citrus Beef and Pesto Salad

Fresh flavours make a great taste. This recipe is economical: it stretches to feed the hungry! This is a colourful dish, with the combination of peppers and beans. The addition of the citrus with the basil transports it to the sublime.

Serves 4 – 6

1 red pepper, halved; discard seeds
1 yellow pepper, halved; discard seeds
100 g fresh green beans, topped and tailed, cut into 2 cm lengths
200 g beef fillet steak, cut 2.5 – 3 cm thick
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper
200 g uncooked pasta – spirals, penne, or macaroni
6 spring onions, finely chopped
100 g mushrooms, wiped, and cut into quarters

Citrus Basil Pesto:

250 ml fresh basil leaves, finely chopped	50 ml olive oil
2 cloves garlic	15 ml fresh orange juice
25 ml pumpkin or sunflower seeds	15 ml fresh lemon juice
15 ml orange and lemon zest	

1. Microwave pepper halves for 5 minutes. This will speed up the grilling process.
2. Grill peppers under a hot grill, skin side-up, until skin turns black, and blisters. Cool under a damp tea towel or in a plastic bag; then remove charred skin. Dice the peppers.
3. Microwave green beans with 25 ml water for 2 – 3 minutes on 100% power. Drain, and set aside.
4. **Steak:** Spray a non-stick frying pan with non-stick cooking spray. Place on hob over moderate to high heat. When hot, place steak in pan; cook for 3 minutes each side.
5. Remove, and set aside for 5 minutes, before cutting into thin strips.
6. Season steak to taste.
7. **Pesto:** Place chopped basil, garlic, pumpkin seeds, and citrus zest in a food processor or mini chopper. Process for a minute or two; add the oil, lemon, and orange juice. Process again, until you reach the desired consistency.
8. Season to taste.
9. **Pasta:** Cook pasta in a large pan of rapidly boiling salted water, until al dente.
10. Drain, and toss with the pesto in a large bowl.
11. Add in beans, spring onions, and mushrooms.
12. Add chopped peppers and steak strips to the penne; toss to distribute evenly.
13. Chill, or serve at room temperature. Garnish with extra, fresh basil leaves.



Italian Fillet

Something nice and meaty is a welcome treat. Fillet is always popular; it is easy to slice and serve; there is no wastage. The idea of cooking fillet in salad dressing may sound strange, but it gives the beef a superb flavour. Do try this recipe: it is easy, and looks fabulous.

Serves 8

1 – 1.5 kg beef fillet, trimmed
 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 15 ml mustard powder
 Freshly-ground black pepper
 1 bottle Italian salad dressing
 15 ml cornflour
 15 ml prepared mustard
 15 ml medium-cream sherry
 250 ml low-fat cream or thick natural yoghurt
 45 ml finely chopped parsley
 Small bunch watercress

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan/Gas mark 7.
2. Place fillet on a board, and flap the thin tail part under the main part of the fillet, to form an even-sized and uniform, thick piece of meat. Tie up the fillet with string at 3 cm intervals.
3. Rub fillet with crushed garlic, mustard powder and black pepper. Allow to stand at room temperature for 30 minutes to an hour.
4. Place into roasting pan.
5. Pour salad dressing over fillet.
6. Roast for exactly 20 minutes for rare beef fillet; or until done to your taste.
7. Remove meat from pan. Cover with aluminium foil, and then a thick tea-towel. Allow to stand for 10 minutes for rare and 20 minutes for medium-done meat. This step is prior to carving.
8. Mix cornflour to a paste with a little water; add to meat juices in the pan, and cook over a medium heat to thicken.
9. Stir in mustard, sherry and cream or yoghurt. Mix thoroughly. Allow to simmer, and the sauce to amalgamate.
10. Immediately before serving, slice fillet, pour sauce over, and garnish with chopped parsley and watercress.

Tips:

- This fillet is excellent hot or cold. Slice in paper-thin slices. Try to catch all the compliments!
- Remember well-done meat is always 80% tougher than rare or medium-done meat.



Lip-Smacking Best Spare Ribs

Are you a spare-rib lover? If so, this is the ultimate recipe for best-ever spare ribs. The secret lies in cooking the ribs beforehand; then basting with the basting sauce right at the end of the cooking time. Most recipes marinate the ribs in the sauce; the ribs then become burnt and dry. Once you have mastered this technique and tasted the end result, you will never use another spare-ribs recipe!

Serves 6 (allow 500 g per person)

3 kg pork ribs, cut into portions of two or three ribs
 Water, sufficient to reach three-quarters up the side of the pan
 2 lemons, thickly sliced
 2 carrots, cut into chunks
 2 onions, unpeeled, cut into wedges

Basting Sauce:

300 ml tomato purée or pulp
 30 ml Worcestershire sauce
 30 ml soy sauce
 25 ml prepared mustard, (Dijon or grainy mustard are good)
 100 ml brown sugar
 100 ml honey

1. Preheat oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas mark 3.
2. **Cook Ribs:** Place portions of ribs into an oven-pan with the water, lemons, carrots and onions.
3. Cover with aluminium foil, shiny side facing the food; bake for 45 minutes to an hour.
4. Cool slightly, before removing the foil. Cool ribs completely in the liquid.
5. **Make the basting sauce;** place all ingredients into a saucepan, and cook together over a moderate heat until bubbling, and sugar has dissolved. Set aside.
6. Drain off the liquid from the ribs, and discard the lemons, carrots and onions.
7. Set aside the ribs for grilling over the coals; under the grill element; or in a kettle braai.
8. Braai or grill for 10 – 15 minutes; do not use the basting sauce. Turn over ribs from time to time to ensure even browning and heating. Use meat tongs to turn over the meat.
9. Liberally brush the ribs with the basting sauce, and continue to braai for a further 1 – 2 minutes. The ribs will go sticky and crispy. Take care not to burn the basting sauce.
10. Serve immediately.
11. Have available plenty of wet towels, and a finger bowl for each person; sit back and enjoy!

Never turn meat with a fork. This pierces the meat, and causes the meat juices to leach out. Meat will be drier and less succulent. Always use tongs to turn meat over.



Moroccan Pork with Sweet Potato and Hummus

A healthy meal in 20 minutes, capturing great Mediterranean / Moroccan flavours. This recipe makes use of many ready-prepared convenience foods, for ease of preparation.

Serves 2

½ x 500 g bag ready-prepared, cubed sweet potato
 20 ml olive oil
 30 ml sweet chilli sauce
 2 pork steaks, cut 2.5 cm thick
 10 ml olive oil
 25 – 30 ml harissa spice, or Moroccan spice rub
 10 ml olive oil
 1 x red pepper, sliced thinly
 ½ x 250 g container hummus

Garnish: 25 ml fresh coriander or 15 ml fresh thyme

1. Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan/Gas mark 5.
2. Place sweet potato in a casserole dish with 25 ml water. Cover, and microwave on 100% power for 4 – 6 minutes, or until potatoes are just tender.
3. Place into baking dish. Toss in 20 ml olive oil and sweet chilli sauce. Roast in the oven for 10 – 15 minutes.
4. Rub pork steaks with 10 ml olive oil and the harissa or Moroccan spice rub.
5. Heat 10 ml olive oil in a pan. Cook pork steaks on both sides, until golden brown (8 – 10 minutes). Be careful not to overcook, or they will be dry.
6. Add red pepper strips to pan with pork steaks during the last 4 minutes cooking time.
7. Serve pork steaks with red peppers, topped with a dollop of hummus, garnished with coriander or thyme, and a spoonful of sweet potato.
8. Serve with a green salad, if desired.

Variation:

- Use beef or lamb steaks, instead of pork.

Tip:

- Make your own hummus.



Olive Garden Chorizo Pasta

In lower Wimbledon, London, there is a fabulous little restaurant serving this divine pasta dish. Using our own imagination, we have created a similar version for you to make in the comfort of your own home.

Serves 4

1 onion, chopped
 2 – 3 cloves garlic, crushed
 25 ml olive oil
 250 g chorizo, skin removed, halved lengthwise and cut into thin slices
 1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
 1 x 410 g tin chopped tomatoes
 30 ml tomato paste
 5 ml paprika
 15 ml fresh herbs such as parsley, basil, rosemary and/or thyme, chopped
 45 ml honey
 150 – 200 ml liquid from pasta
 250 ml low-fat cream or crème fraîche
 250 g fusilli or radiatori pasta shapes

To serve: 45 g fresh Parmesan cheese, grated

1. Sauté onion and garlic in olive oil in a medium-sized saucepan, until translucent.
2. Add in chorizo and fry for a few minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Add the red pepper and cherry tomatoes; sauté for a further 3 minutes.
4. Add in the chopped tomatoes, tomato paste, paprika, herbs and honey.
5. Turn heat to low; simmer gently for about 10 minutes. Stir from time to time.
6. Meanwhile, cook pasta in boiling, salted water until al dente – (about 8 – 10 minutes). Drain.
7. Remove approximately 150 – 200 ml liquid from pasta; add to the simmering sauce.
8. Stir in the cream or crème fraîche.
9. Gently mix the pasta with the sauce. The sauce should coat the pasta generously.
10. Serve with freshly grated Parmesan cheese, garlic bread and a crisp, green salad.

Variations:

- Add ½ red chilli, chopped, in step 2, if you wish to add a bit more bite to the recipe.
- Add 100 g sliced portobellini mushrooms in step 3.



Pulled Pork

This dish can cook while you sleep, if you use the oven or a slow-cooker. The meal is a great way of feeding a crowd. It can be the centrepiece on the table, surrounded by a variety of sauces, breads, rolls, wraps, vegetables and fruit, which everyone can mix and match, and help themselves to. We find this an effortless way of entertaining!

6 – 8 servings

2 kg shoulder of pork, deboned
45 ml rub of your choice
or
40 ml garlic and herb seasoning

To serve:

6 – 8 white soft Portuguese rolls
BBQ sauce
Chilli sauce
Tomato chutney
Tomato sauce
Apple purée
Baby rocket leaves
Swiss cheese slices or grated Cheddar cheese
Tomato slices
Caramelized onions
Chilli-Tomato-Lime Jam (see page 37)
Gherkin, sliced
Pineapple wedges, thinly sliced

1. Prepare meat by rubbing liberally with rub of your choice; or with garlic and herb seasoning.
2. Leave at room temperature for at least two to three hours.
3. Preheat oven to 150°C/130°C fan/ Gas mark 2.
4. Place pork onto a roasting trivet over 200 ml water. Cover with aluminium foil.
5. Oven-roast for 4 hours. Remove aluminium foil, and roast a further hour.
6. Alternatively, cook for 6 hours, or overnight in a slow-cooker.
7. This recipe may also be cooked for 5 hours in a kettle BBQ, such as the Weber or Big Green Egg.
8. Allow to stand for at least 15 – 20 minutes.
9. Use two forks to pull the meat fibres apart.
10. Serve in rolls with any of the above condiments and additions.
11. Alternatively, serve pork piled high on a crisp green salad, drizzled with a lemon and herb dressing.

A collection of various mushrooms is arranged on a blue textured surface. The mushrooms include several white mushrooms with long, thin stems and some with small, round caps. There are also several brown mushrooms with more rounded, textured caps. The mushrooms are scattered across the frame, with some clustered together and others isolated. The blue background has a fine, woven texture.

Vegetarian Fare, Vegetables and Salads



Artichoke Lasagne

Richard's mum, Margaret, loves artichokes, and with her in mind; this recipe was devised. This has since become a family favourite, which Simone and I prepare for a lazy lunch with my family.

Serves 4 – 6

Roasted tomato purée:

1 kg red tomatoes, cut into wedges
3 large red onions, peeled and sliced
45 ml olive oil
15 ml sugar
Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
15 ml fresh or 5 ml dried basil
300 ml tomato purée

Topping:

100 g Cheddar cheese, grated (250 ml)
60 g mozzarella cheese, grated (125 ml)
50 g fresh Parmesan cheese, grated

Cheese Sauce:

120 g butter or margarine (120 ml)
120 g cake flour (180 ml)
1 litre milk
Salt and white pepper, to taste
100 g mature Cheddar cheese, grated (250 ml)
15 ml prepared mustard

Precooked lasagne sheets

2 – 3 x 410 g tins artichoke hearts, drained, cut into halves or quarters

1. **Roasted tomato purée:** Place tomatoes, red onions, olive oil, sugar, salt, pepper and basil, into a roasting pan. Roast at 200°C/180°C fan/Gas mark 5 for 25 – 30 minutes; add the tomato purée.
2. Place into a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade; or use a plunge blender, and process or purée together, until mixture is still slightly coarse. Check seasoning.
3. **Make cheese sauce:** Melt butter in a large saucepan. Stir in the flour, and cook for a further 2 minutes. Pour in the milk; whisk well. Keep stirring until sauce thickens. Season to taste. Add in cheese and mustard, and whisk well to combine.
4. **Assemble:** Place a thin layer of cheese sauce on the bottom of a lasagne dish; arrange lasagne sheets on top of sauce, followed by a layer of tomato sauce. Scatter half of the artichoke hearts evenly over the tomato sauce. Follow this with a layer of cheese sauce.
5. Repeat layers, ending with cheese sauce.
6. Top with a mixture of the Cheddar, mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses.
7. Bake at 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4 for 35 – 40 minutes, until golden brown.

Tips:

- Trim sharp edges of fresh artichoke leaves with a pair of kitchen scissors.
- It is important to drain the tinned artichokes very well, as they retain a lot of liquid; this will water down the sauce. Fresh artichokes are best trimmed and soaked in lemon juice and water for at least an hour, to remove grit and dirt particles. Cook fresh artichokes in boiling water half-way up the inside of the pan, adding 30 ml olive oil and 10 ml salt to the water. Cook for 40 – 45 minutes. Drain; use in the recipe above, or serve on their own with a delicious sauce.



Baked Risotto

I love risotto, but for some reason my patient attempts at stirring away over a stove have never produced the desired results. Then I read about “Baked Risotto”; this changed my life forever. A simple recipe, it can form the base either for an incredible crowd-pleasing, wow-factor, party-dinner meal; or for a humble bowl of the best comfort food.

We like to make “Prawn and Pea Risotto” for friends, serving it with a simple, green side salad, and some crispy, rustic ciabatta for extra crunch, and to mop up some of the oozy juices. This recipe comes from our friends, Rich and Simone – yes, really, the other Rich and Simone! Serves 4

375 ml Arborio rice
 1.2 litres vegetable or chicken stock
 250 ml finely grated Parmesan or pecorino cheese
 45 g butter (45 ml)
 Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Place the rice and stock into a greased baking or casserole dish; stir to combine.
3. Cover with a lid, or cover tightly with aluminium foil.
4. Bake for 35 – 40 minutes, or until most of the stock is absorbed. The risotto should not to be too dry.
5. Stir in the Parmesan cheese, butter, and the seasoning; serve immediately.

Variations:

- 250 g wild or large brown mushrooms; sauté separately, and add in step 5.
- Cooked and diced chicken, lemon juice and rind, 15 ml fresh or 5 ml dried thyme; add in step 5.
- 300 g cooked butternut, and 15 ml fresh sage; add in step 5.
- 400 g prawns and 200 ml frozen peas; sauté prawns and peas together and add in step 5.
- Use half stock and half white wine for the liquid amount.

Tip:

- Start off with the basic baked risotto recipe. You can then add whichever ingredients you like. I generally fry the “extra” ingredients separately, and add them once the basic risotto is cooked.



Easy Spanish Tortilla

This is a very special recipe to me. The first time I went for dinner to my in-laws' home, Maggie and John, Maggie cooked this meal. That night I asked them for their daughter's hand in marriage. Naturally, every time I see or eat a tortilla, it brings back wonderful memories. Maggie likes to put on some classical guitar music (Albeniz), make you close your eyes, eat, drink, and pretend that you are at a Tapas bar on Las Ramblas, in Barcelona. Maggie's mother, who hails from Barcelona, showed her, on one of her visits to South Africa, how to make this easier, baked version. The proper method is to cook this tortilla (omelette) on top of the stove in a large, heavy-based frying pan. When it is partly cooked, you slide it onto a large plate, turn it over, and return to the frying pan, to cook on the other side. Far too complicated; this takes years to master. Comer con mucho gusto (eat and enjoy).

Serves 6 – 8

12 – 14 large eggs
8 potatoes, parboiled and
chopped into thick slices
3 onions, cut into rings
80 ml olive oil
Sea salt, to taste
Freshly-ground black pepper, to taste

Garnish: 45 ml finely chopped parsley or
rocket leaves

Serve: Accompany Tortilla with sun-dried
tomatoes and large, plump, black olives

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Use a large, round, flat dish/ flan ring/ earthenware dish. This is to make the cooked tortilla resemble the same shape as if it had been cooked in a large frying-pan on the stove.
3. Spray the dish with Spray and Cook; rub with a small amount of olive oil.
4. Sauté the onions until almost translucent; then add the parboiled potatoes. (It is best to do this in batches).
5. When completed; spoon into the prepared dish.
6. Beat 12 eggs and add seasoning; pour this over the onions and potatoes, until they are covered with the eggs – you may need to add more eggs.
7. Place dish on a baking tray; bake for approximately 30 – 45 minutes, until the eggs have set, and are cooked through.
8. Remove from oven and leave to cool.
9. Cut into wedges and leave in the dish. When this has cooled to room temperature; sprinkle with chopped parsley or rocket.
10. Serve with sun-dried tomatoes, olives and a glass of wine.

Variations:

- Add chorizo, ham, or bacon for a different flavour.
- Use sliced red or green peppers, added in step 4.



Quinoa Confetti Salad

Quinoa is a gluten-free grain. It originates in the Andean mountains of South America. It is high in protein, minerals and vitamins. It aids in digestive problems, and in reducing high blood pressure, and is a great source of vitamins and minerals. Quinoa is higher than wheat in lysine. Because it has a fairly bland taste, it marries well with a variety of different flavours, vegetables, and spices.

Serves 4 – 6

500 ml cooked quinoa, cooled
 100 ml fresh mint, finely chopped
 100 ml fresh parsley, finely chopped
 50 g mange tout, topped and tailed
 ¼ red pepper, finely chopped
 ¼ yellow pepper, finely chopped
 1 carrot, grated
 100 ml almonds, roughly chopped
 3 ml ground cumin
 Rind of one lemon
 Salt and freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
 1 x bag mixed salad greens

Dressing:

60 ml olive oil
 Juice of one lemon
 10 ml honey
 5 ml soy sauce

Garnish: Toasted sunflower and pumpkin seeds

1. **To cook quinoa:** Soak quinoa for 5 minutes in cold water, strain through a sieve.
2. Place quinoa in vegetable stock, and bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 minutes. Place the lid on the saucepan; allow to stand for 5 minutes, for all the liquid to be absorbed. Fluff up quinoa grains with a fork.
3. When quinoa has cooled, add mint, parsley, mange tout, red and yellow pepper, and carrot. Stir gently.
4. Add almonds, cumin, and lemon rind; season to taste.
5. Mix together the dressing ingredients.
6. Add dressing to quinoa mixture; toss together gently.
7. Arrange salad greens on a platter. Place quinoa mixture on top, and sprinkle with toasted sunflower and pumpkin seeds.

Tip: You can use a tri or multi-coloured quinoa for a great visual effect.

Did you know that the aubergine (brinjal) is a fruit, used as a vegetable? Aubergines are very low in calories and fats, but rich in soluble fibre. This is good news for weight watchers! Aubergines also have significant amounts of phenolic flavonoid phytochemicals called anthocyanins. Scientific studies have shown that these antioxidants have potential health effects against cancer, aging, inflammation, and neurological diseases.



Simone's Zanzibarian Aubergines

A quick and simple side dish, absolutely delicious and very easy to make. Aubergines (brinjals) are often called the 'poor man's meat', as they are as tasty and filling as a meat dish, while much more economical.

Serves 6 – 8

4 – 5 medium-sized aubergines (brinjals)
 280 g cake flour (500 ml)
 30 ml turmeric
 5 ml salt
 Freshly-ground black pepper, to taste
 2 large eggs, beaten
 100 – 150 ml olive oil for shallow-fat frying

1. Slice aubergines (brinjals) in rings; place in a colander, and sprinkle with salt. Set aside for 20 – 30 minutes. Rinse under cold water; pat dry.
2. Meanwhile, mix together the flour, turmeric, salt and black pepper.
3. Dip aubergine slices into the flour mixture, then into the egg mixture, and again into the flour mixture.
4. Heat oil in a large frying-pan, over a moderate heat; shallow-fry the coated aubergine slices until golden brown on both sides. Drain on paper towel.
5. Serve immediately with salad or salsa.
6. This recipe is also superb as a complement to a braai, or served alongside grilled fish or chicken, steak or chops.
7. A great side sauce for serving with the aubergines is one small cucumber, peeled and grated mixed with 250 ml thick plain yoghurt and 50 ml fresh chopped mint.

Tips:

- Sprinkling the aubergines (brinjals) with salt prior to cooking will release any bitterness there may be in the fruit.
- Dipping the aubergines into flour first dries the surface of the aubergine. Coating with the egg and again with the flour, prevents the batter from peeling off the slices when frying.



Tabbouleh

When we entertain, it is handy to serve something that improves in flavour when made in advance. Tabbouleh is just such a salad. It is tasty when accompanied by a fresh, green salad, and it is a winner at a braai, or on a buffet table. It is also a great vegetarian option. As this is a classic Middle Eastern salad, it is something my family has made for generations.

Serves 8 – 10

250 ml bulgar wheat
 375 ml boiling water
 15 ml sea salt (Maldon sea salt is my choice)
 60 ml extra-virgin olive oil
 Juice and rind of 2 lemons
 Juice of 1 lime
 1 bunch spring onions, finely sliced
 ½ small red onion, finely chopped
 1 bunch fresh mint leaves, chopped
 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
 1 English cucumber, unpeeled, cut in half, seeds removed, and diced
 4 celery stalks, finely sliced
 250 g cherry / Rosa tomatoes, cut in halves, or quartered
 30 ml red wine vinegar
 Salt and freshly-ground black pepper for seasoning

1. Place in a bowl the bulgar wheat, boiling water, salt, olive oil, and lemon and lime juice and rind. Allow mixture to stand covered for an hour or two, until all the liquid has been absorbed.
2. Add the remaining ingredients; adjust the seasoning, and mix gently.
3. Place in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
4. Garnish with extra chopped parsley. Check seasoning before serving.

Bulgar wheat is high in fibre and protein, and low in fat and calories. This food offers bulk and nutrients to fill you up, without adding kilos! One thing to bear in mind, is that bulgar wheat has fewer calories, less fat, and more than twice the fibre of brown rice.

Thai Squash and Sweet Potato Phyllo Tart

We love the fresh taste of Thai curries, coconut milk, and coriander, added to Simone's favourite sweet potato and squash; this delicious recipe will delight the senses.

Serves 4 – 6

15 ml sunflower oil
 30 ml red or green Thai curry paste
 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
 1 small red chilli, seeds removed, and sliced
 750 g hubbard squash, peeled, and cut in 2.5 cm cubes
 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled, and cut into 2.5 cm cubes
 1 x 400 g tin "lite" coconut milk
 250 ml chicken or vegetable stock
 60 ml chopped coriander (optional)
 5 ml dried oregano
 15 ml soy sauce
 4 to 5 sheets phyllo or samoosa pastry, lightly brushed with oil

Garnish: 20 ml pumpkin seeds; 20 ml sesame seeds

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Heat the oil in a large pan over a moderate heat; lightly fry Thai curry paste for 2 minutes.
3. Add onion and cook until translucent, then add the chilli, hubbard squash, and sweet potato. Cook for 3 – 4 minutes.
4. Add the coconut milk and stock; simmer for 15 minutes, until vegetables are just tender.
5. Stir in the chopped coriander, oregano, and soy sauce. Pour mixture into a greased 20 x 28 cm baking dish.
6. Lightly bunch up phyllo pastry sheets which have been brushed with oil; and place over the top of the vegetables, completely covering the surface.
7. Sprinkle over with pumpkin and sesame seeds.
8. Bake for approximately 15 – 20 minutes, until the phyllo pastry is light golden in colour.

Variation:

- Use butternut squash in place of hubbard squash.

Tip:

- Place cut sweet potatoes into acidulated water to prevent discolouration.





Vegetable Red-Thai Curry with Noodles

Vegetables form a very important part of our diet. This curry supplies us with great taste and variety. It is delicious on noodles, but is just as good served with rice or naan bread.

Serves 2

30 ml olive oil
 45 ml red Thai curry paste
 1 small onion, chopped
 1 clove garlic, crushed
 1 small piece ginger root, finely chopped
 125 g mange tout
 125 g fresh green beans, cut into 2 cm lengths
 2 carrots, cut into julienne strips
 1 courgette, cut into 2.5 cm chunks
 1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced
 1 x 200 g tin water chestnuts, drained and sliced
 1 x 400 g tin "lite" coconut milk
 60 ml vegetable stock
 10 ml fish sauce
 20 ml brown sugar
 200 g Chinese noodles

To garnish: Fresh coriander

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add Thai curry paste, and stir for 30 seconds; add in onion, garlic, and ginger root.
3. Cook for a further 2 – 3 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Add in mange tout, beans, carrot strips, courgette, red pepper and water chestnuts. Stir-fry for a further 2 minutes.
5. Add the coconut milk, vegetable stock, fish sauce and brown sugar.
6. Simmer for 8 – 10 minutes, until vegetables have softened, yet still retain some crunch.
7. Meanwhile, pour boiling water over Chinese noodles. Leave for 2 – 3 minutes. Drain, and rinse under cold water, to arrest the cooking process.
8. Place noodles into a bowl; pour vegetables and sauce over noodles.
9. Garnish with fresh coriander, and serve.

Peel root ginger easily: scrape the skin off with the edge of a teaspoon. It's amazing how the teaspoon gets into all the knobby bits of the root ginger, removing the skin with ease.



Desserts
and After
Dinner Treats



Coconut-Banoffee Pavlova

The great thing about this famous dessert is that the meringue can be made way ahead of time, and filled at the last minute. Meringues are always popular: this filling is a fantastic combination of flavours. The bananas and coconuts give a hint of Zanzibar; hence Simone and I love this twist – it reminds us of lovely, lazy, summer days. Our pavlova makes a grand entrance at all our parties!

Serves 12

Pavlova:

8 egg whites,
at room temperature
460 g castor sugar (560 ml)
10 ml vinegar
30 ml cornflour
10 ml vanilla essence

Filling:

300 ml whipping cream
3 bananas, cut on the diagonal, into slices
200 ml Salted Caramel Sauce (see page 117)
Fresh coconut shavings, or large, dried coconut flakes

1. Preheat oven to 140°C/120°C fan/Gas mark 1.
2. **Pavlova:** Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry, on high speed, in an electric food mixer.
3. Fold in castor sugar a little at a time; beating continuously on high speed, until thick, and soft peaks hold; this should take around 10 minutes.
4. Add in vinegar and cornflour; lastly the vanilla essence.
5. Use a large baking sheet, which has been lined with baking paper. Draw a 25 cm circle in the middle of the paper.
6. Spoon the meringue onto this circle, making the edges slightly higher than the centre. Make swirls in the meringue so that it looks stunning when cooked.
7. Bake at 140°C/120°C fan/Gas mark 1 for 1 hour; then turn down the temperature to 100°C/80°C fan/ Gas mark ¼; bake for a further 45 minutes.
8. Allow to cool in the oven.
9. **Filling:** Whip cream until soft peaks form; place in the centre of the pavlova.
10. Arrange banana slices decoratively on top of the cream.
11. Immediately prior to serving, heat salted caramel sauce for 1 minute on 100% power in the microwave oven, to soften the sauce. Do not heat the sauce too much, as it will melt the cream. Drizzle over bananas and cream; sprinkle over coconut flakes.
12. Serve immediately.

Tip:

- Place unpeeled bananas into a deep bowl. Pour boiling water over. Allow to stand for 60 seconds, until peels begin to go black. Pour off the water. Allow to cool before peeling. An enzyme is released between the skin and the banana, which prevents discolouring for a fairly long time.



Honey-Nougat Ice Cream

Honey-Nougat ice cream has the flavour of traditional almond-and-nut nougat in a smooth, intensely rich ice cream. This is any sweet-lover's dream dessert. Give it a try. We love it!

Serves 6

375 ml thick cream
 3 ml orange flower water/essence
 1 x vanilla pod
 2 large egg whites, room temperature
 80 ml honey
 250 ml granulated sugar
 60 ml water
 125 ml toasted almonds, coarsely chopped
 60 ml toasted pistachio nuts or pine nuts, coarsely chopped
 125 ml dark chocolate, finely chopped

1. Place cream, orange flower water/essence and the seeds of the vanilla pod in a medium bowl; beat the cream until it is thick, and holds soft peaks. Place the whipped cream in the refrigerator until required.
2. Place the egg whites into the bowl of an electric food mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat the egg whites until soft peaks form.
3. While the egg whites are beating, combine the honey, sugar, and water in a medium-sized saucepan. Bring mixture to the boil over medium heat; stir until the sugar dissolves. Boil for two minutes.
4. Remove the syrup from the heat, and, while the mixer is running, slowly pour the hot syrup in a steady stream into the egg whites.
5. Beat the mixture for about 5 – 7 minutes, until it has cooled to room temperature.
6. Fold in the cream, chopped, roasted nuts, and chopped chocolate.
7. Pour into an airtight plastic container with a lid, and place it in the freezer, to firm up overnight.

Variations:

- Add 125 ml dried cranberries and chopped, white chocolate instead of dark chocolate, in step 6.
- Add 100 ml raspberries to the mixture, in step 6.
- Add 125 ml glacé cherries, chopped, in step 6.
- Add 125 ml glacé figs, chopped, in step 6.
- Add 150 g nougat bars, chopped in step 6. (Sally Williams' nougat is excellent!)



Jam-Jar Cheesecake Puddings

This is not a "cheesecake" as such, but the flavours are reminiscent. It is a super-speedy take on a cheesecake pudding. This is another great recipe from the other Rich and Simone; they serve these puddings in ramekins; however, you could easily use a parfait glass or some cute old jam jars. This is one of those "throw together" puddings that does not need to be perfect, but tastes decadent. My kind of dessert to a "T".

Serves 4

1 packet Tennis or digestive biscuits
 30 g butter, melted (30 ml)
 250 g container plain cream cheese
 250 g container mascarpone cheese
 5 – 10 ml lemon essence
 30 ml castor sugar, or add sugar to taste

To Serve: 1 x punnet fresh raspberries or blueberry compote.

1. Crush Tennis or digestive biscuits in a food processor, using the double-knife stainless-steel blade. Pulse if you want larger pieces.
2. Mix in the melted butter.
3. Spoon the biscuit crumble into small jam jars or empty glass yoghurt pots, ramekins or small dishes, and pat down firmly with the back of a spoon.
4. Place biscuit bases in the freezer to firm up.
5. Place remaining ingredients, except raspberries or blueberry compote, into a bowl, and whisk together with an electric beater or plunge blender.
6. Spoon the mixture on top of the biscuit base, and place in the refrigerator to set for at least 2 hours.
7. Top each jam-jar cheesecake with raspberries or blueberry compote.

Variations:

- Use chocolate digestive biscuits or a full-flavoured chocolate biscuit instead of the Tennis or digestive biscuits.
- Use scraped vanilla bean pod or 15 ml good quality coffee powder, instead of lemon essence.
- Add in 4 small bars of chopped Sally Williams Nougat. Use an extra 2 chopped nougat bars with the raspberries for the topping.
- **Blueberry Compote:** 500 ml fresh blueberries, 125 ml water, juice and rind of 1 lemon and 250 ml castor sugar. Simmer together until thick and shiny. Use as a topping for cakes, cheesecake and pies or layered with Greek yoghurt as a simple dessert.

Tip: Use $\frac{3}{4}$ of a packet of biscuits for a thinner base.

Macadamia Apple Crumble

Our very good friends Beth and Dmitri always bring the most wonderful gifts, whether they come for dinner or for lunch. For my birthday one year, they brought an enormous bag of macadamia nuts. We combined macadamia nuts with some apples and made the most delicious apple crumble.

Serves 4 – 6

200 g butter (200 ml) (divided)
 4 large Granny Smith apples, peeled and sliced
 500 ml unsalted, plain macadamia nuts
 30 ml granulated sugar
 40 ml golden brown sugar

To serve: 250 g mascarpone cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Choose a suitable dish in which to bake the crumble in. Place 50 g butter (50 ml) into the dish; melt in the microwave oven on 100% power, for 2 minutes.
3. Place apple slices into the butter; bake in the oven for 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, place macadamia nuts and 30 ml granulated sugar into a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade.
5. Pulse the nuts until they resemble fine crumbs, add in 150 g cubed butter, and pulse again to mix.
6. Remove the apples from the oven; sprinkle the macadamia nut mixture over, and top with golden brown sugar.
7. Return to the oven; bake for a further 20 – 25 minutes.
8. If necessary, place under a grill for a minute or two, until top becomes golden brown.
9. Serve warm, with big dollops of mascarpone cheese.



Mango-Citrus Granite

Deliciously refreshing to eat, on a hot, steamy day. The mango gives this recipe a wonderful, creamy taste; zingy on the tongue, with the addition of the lime and lemon. This frozen dessert is great for sharing or just for eating on your own!

Serves 8

100 ml water
180 ml granulated sugar
2 large stringless mangos,
(approximately 500 ml purée)
Juice and rind of 1 lime
Juice and rind of 1 lemon
Sprigs of mint

1. Place water and sugar into a heavy-based saucepan over a moderate heat, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool.
2. Peel mangos; remove the flesh, and place into a food processor or liquidizer. Process to a smooth purée.
3. Add in the lime, and lemon rind and juice; process again.
4. Add the cooled sugar-syrup to the fruit purée; process, to combine.
5. Place into a shallow, plastic container, and freeze. Once the mixture starts to form ice crystals around the edges, give it a stir, and continue to freeze. Do this a few more times, until the granite has frozen completely. Alternatively freeze; then place the mixture back into the food processor or liquidizer; blend for a minute or two to break up the ice crystals.
6. Place scoops into small shot glasses; top with mint sprig; serve with a small spoon.



Open Plum-and-Apple Tart, with Gingery Syrup

This is a moreish, easy-to-make dessert or tea-time treat. The fruit fills the need for something a little bit healthy, while the pastry and maple syrup makes it indulgent. The flavours in this recipe marry well; plums and apples, ginger and almonds, make excellent combinations.

Makes 1 tart using 250 g pastry (serves 2)

1 x 250 g sheet frozen, butter puff pastry, thawed
 2 apples, such as Granny Smith, golden delicious or Pink Lady, peeled, cored, and sliced
 2 plums, washed, and sliced into wedges
 25 ml dark brown sugar
 3 ml ground ginger
 1 small piece fresh ginger root, peeled and finely grated
 50 ml maple syrup
 30 ml slivered almonds
 30 ml dark brown sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Place the thawed pastry onto a greased baking sheet. With a sharp knife, score about 2 cm from the outside edge, making sure not to cut all the way through.
3. This will make an edge for the tart, and hold in the filling.
4. Mix the apple and plum slices with brown sugar, ginger, ginger root, and maple syrup.
5. Arrange the fruit evenly over the inside of the pastry, taking care to keep the scored edges free. Use all the fruit by piling it up in the centre – take care not to spill onto the edges of the pastry.
6. Reserve any liquid from the fruit for drizzling over at the end of the cooking time.
7. Mix together the almonds and 30 ml brown sugar; sprinkle over the fruit.
8. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes, until the pastry edges have puffed up.
9. Pour the leftover syrupy liquid over the tart.
10. Dust with icing sugar; serve with thick Greek yoghurt, mascarpone cheese, cream or ice-cream.

Pots of Chocolate

There is something extremely satisfying about consuming chocolate! This recipe is a chocoholic's dream. You will keep going back for more. No cookbook is complete without a chocolate recipe to drool over – here is ours.

Serves 6

200 g dark chocolate, broken into pieces
 50 g butter (50 ml)
 100 ml full-cream milk
 125 ml double cream
 100 g icing sugar, sieved
 2 large egg yolks
 Rind of 1 orange
 200 g Amaretto biscuits, or similar
 125 ml brandy

1. Place chocolate, butter, milk, and cream, in a suitable microwave container; cook in the microwave on 100% power for 4 – 6 minutes, stirring each minute, until chocolate has totally melted, and mixture is fully amalgamated.
2. Set aside to cool slightly.
3. Beat in icing sugar, egg yolks, and orange rind.
4. Break up the biscuits into small pieces, or crush with a rolling pin, or process in a food processor.
5. Divide half of the biscuit pieces among 6 glasses or dessert dishes. Sprinkle with some brandy; then pour the chocolate mixture over, to cover. Repeat this step.
6. Place pots in the refrigerator, and allow to set overnight.

Variations:

- In step 4, place crushed biscuits and brandy into the chocolate mixture; mix gently together, and place in refrigerator to set.
- Scoop out small spoonfuls; place either in shot glasses, or serve on decorative spoons. Made this way, this recipe will be sufficient for up to 20 people.



Salted Caramel Sauce

One of the latest food fashions is to mix sweet and sour/savoury. This sauce is excellent, as it has so many uses. Store in the refrigerator: use liberally.

Makes 2 x jam jars

400 g sugar (500 ml)
180 g butter (180 ml)
250 ml cream
5 – 7 ml sea salt flakes (Maldon sea salt is good)

1. Place the sugar in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over moderate heat, to melt the sugar crystals.
2. Remove from the heat; add in the butter little by little. Whisk the butter, taking great care, as the mixture will be very hot.
3. Return to the heat, and add in the cream. Continue to whisk, and to cook, until the sauce is good and creamy, and well blended; about 1 – 2 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat; add in 5 ml salt, or to taste. Allow to cool slightly. If you wish for a saltier flavour, add the other 2 ml salt. It is better to allow mixture to cool before adding the remaining salt; as this will ensure a crunchier texture of the sauce.
5. Pour into two clean jars, and refrigerate.

Uses:

- Serve over ice cream, Pavlova, roulade or meringues.
- Great as a filling in a sponge cake, with some whipped cream; or in a pastry base, or over shortbread; cover with a chocolate ganache for a superb dessert. Drizzle over meringues or pavlovas, for the extra 'wow' factor.
- Try this sauce as a layer in the bottom of an apple pie – simply delicious!
- A twist on the normal sticky-toffee pudding sauce, serve up this salted version, and await the compliments.
- Try this recipe as a sauce for Christmas pudding – it's an absolute winner!
- Add a spoon or two of sauce to some hot chocolate, for deluxe comfort food.
- A pot of salted caramel sauce makes a great gift. Tie with a pretty ribbon; on an attractive label (you can get some great printable labels off the Internet) give some ideas for using it.



Saucy Date and Butterscotch Pudding-in-a-Cup

On a chilly evening, with a nip in the air; when you don't have much time to make dessert, but you want something sweet at the end of the day, this recipe is quick and easy. There will be minimal washing up to do!

Serves 2

Batter:

45 g cake flour (90 ml)
 5 ml baking powder
 5 ml ground cinnamon
 40 g brown sugar (60 ml)
 30 g butter (30 ml), melted, and slightly cooled
 90 ml milk
 3 ml vanilla essence
 1 ripe banana, mashed
 6 pitted dates, chopped (optional)

Sauce:

15 ml butter
 120 ml boiling water
 60 ml brown sugar
 30 ml golden syrup or honey

To serve:

Ice cream, custard or whipped cream

1. Use two large, microwave-proof coffee or tea cups (no gold or silver rim). Grease cups very well.
2. Sift the flour, baking powder, and cinnamon. Add the sugar and mix well.
3. In a glass jug or bowl, melt the butter for 1 minute in the microwave oven, on 100% power. Then add milk, vanilla essence, banana and dates.
4. Add this to the dry flour mixture. Stir gently to combine. Divide mixture between the two cups.
5. **For the sauce:** In a jug or bowl, place all the sauce ingredients; mix well.
6. Pour equally over the batter in the two cups. Cover with plastic wrap.
7. Cook on 100% power for 60 seconds, then microwave on 60% power for 30 seconds – 1 minute until the batter is fluffy and cooked. There should still be a slightly wet patch in the centre of the cup. Carefully remove plastic wrap.
8. Serve with ice-cream, custard, or lightly whipped cream.

Simone's Famous Date Balls

Instead of using biscuits as you would normally do for a date ball, Simone makes a healthy version with a low GI breakfast muesli. It is a wonderful, sweet snack after dinner; or it may be eaten as a healthy snack on the run.

Makes 36 small balls

500 ml breakfast muesli or low GI breakfast cereal
10 x pitted dates, cut in halves
100 g walnuts

1. Place all ingredients into the bowl of a food processor fitted with the double-knife stainless-steel blade.
2. Process on high speed, until the mixture becomes a paste.
3. Roll into large, marble-sized balls.
4. Place in the refrigerator to firm up.
5. Serve as an after-dinner snack, or with steaming cups of cappuccino coffee.



Baking and
some Sweet
and Savoury
Treats

Beer Bread

This is one of the easiest recipes to make. The whole house smells of freshly-baked bread. Beer bread looks superb, and is a great hit at any dinner party. If you need to whip up a quick meal, this is the recipe for you! The bread rises in no time, and is the quickest bread in the world to make. It is fun, because it uses beer; and it tastes fantastic with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, or with some farm-fresh butter.

Makes 1 loaf or 8 – 10 rolls

500 g self-raising flour
5 ml coarse salt
340 ml can of beer

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/ Gas mark 4.
2. Mix together the flour, salt, and beer.
3. For rolls, shape the batter into fist-sized chunks; dust in flour for a rustic look; place onto a greased baking sheet, and bake for 10 minutes.
4. Alternatively, grease a loaf tin; place the bread mixture into the prepared pan.
5. Sprinkle extra Maldon sea salt, or sesame, or sunflower seeds over the surface.
6. Bake for 55 minutes to an hour.
7. Allow the loaf to stand for at least 30 minutes before slicing.

Variations:

- Add 30 ml fresh rosemary, chopped, and 180 ml feta cheese, crumbled.
- 5 ml dried basil, 5 ml dried oregano, 2 cloves garlic, crushed, and 125 ml Parmesan cheese.
- 30 ml fresh dill, or chopped parsley and 250 ml grated Cheddar cheese.
- Experiment with different beers/ stout/ Guinness, for a change of flavour.



Chocolate Ganache

Silky smooth, decadent in taste; the ultimate topping for sheer indulgence.

600 ml cream
200 g dark chocolate

1. Place cream in a wide-mouth pan, bring to boiling point. Do not boil: the cream should be 'spitting'. Whisk well whilst the cream is coming to the boil.
2. Remove from the heat; stir in dark chocolate, broken into pieces,
3. Allow to stand for about 4 minutes, then mix to blend well. A small wire whisk works very well for this task.
4. Allow to cool quite a while before using (too hot and it will run, and not cover the cake very well; too cold, and it will not spread to a smooth, glossy shine, which holds its shape).
5. Pour evenly over surface of cake or cup cakes. A spatula helps to spread the ganache evenly over the top.
6. Extra chocolate ganache may be frozen for another recipe.

Tips:

- Should you find the ganache very runny, either you did not cook the cream for long enough for it to 'spit'; or the proportion of chocolate was incorrect. The mixture needs to cool down sufficiently to thicken.
- Note that the ganache will be lighter in colour when just made. As it cools or is poured over the cake, it will become darker as it sets.



Chocaholic Chocolate Cake

*This recipe is dark, moist, sublime, delicious, with a crunch. It offers everything you have ever wanted in a chocolate cake. It rises a little on the top during cooking; after turning it out, invert the cake, in order to frost a level surface. **Serves 8 – 10***

250 ml boiling water	300 g castor sugar (365 ml)
50 g cocoa powder (125 ml)	300 g cake flour (540 ml)
125 ml sunflower oil	5 ml bicarbonate of soda
100 g dark chocolate	5 ml baking powder
125 g butter (125 ml)	Pinch salt
3 large eggs	125 ml buttermilk

To decorate: Ice with Chocolate Ganache; 8 – 10 Romany Cream Biscuits

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Grease and line base of 1 x 26 cm/ 2 x 20 cm spring-form cake pan/s with baking paper. Grease the paper a second time.
3. Place boiling water, cocoa powder and sunflower oil into a jug; stir to mix well; set aside to cool.
4. Melt chocolate and butter together on 100% power in the microwave oven, for 2 – 3 minutes. Set aside to cool.
5. Beat eggs and castor sugar together in an electric food mixer, until light and fluffy.
6. Sift the cake flour, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder, and salt.
7. Blend the cooled cocoa-powder mixture with the melted chocolate mixture. Add in the buttermilk.
8. Add the sifted flour mixture alternately with the liquid mixture, into the egg mixture. Take care to mix gently together; do not overbeat.
9. Pour mixture into prepared pan/s.
10. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes for two pans, or 40 – 45 minutes for one pan, until firm in the centre, and a cake tester comes out clean. Cool in the pans for 10 – 15 minutes, before turning out.
11. Allow to cool completely on a cake-cooling rack.
12. Place one layer onto a plate, top with chocolate ganache. Roughly break up or blitz in a food chopper 4 – 5 Romany Cream biscuits; scatter over the ganache. Place another layer on top. If using one layer, cut the layer in half, and proceed as for the two-layer cake.
13. Frost top layer with more chocolate ganache icing, so that it drizzles slightly down the sides of the cake; scatter the remaining broken Romany Cream biscuits evenly over the top.

Delicate Rose and Rosemary Shortbread

Love is in the air when you make these biscuits. Their delicate flavour is fantastic as a tea-time or after-dinner treat. They store really well; and make the perfect gift for Valentine's Day!

Makes approximately 50 – 60 biscuits

170 ml spray-free rose petals, torn into small pieces
 250 g butter, softened (250 ml)
 100 g icing sugar (200 ml)
 10 ml rose water
 280 g cake flour (500 ml)
 65 g cornflour (130 ml), or rice flour
 20 ml finely chopped, fresh rosemary

1. Carefully rinse and dry the rose petals.
2. In the bowl of an electric food mixer cream the butter, icing sugar and rose water, until very light and fluffy.
3. Sift in flour and cornflour or rice flour; add rose petals and rosemary. Stir until just combined.
4. Turn out onto lightly floured surface; knead gently, until the mixture just comes together.
5. Using a floured rolling pin, roll out dough to roughly 1 cm thick.
6. Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut desired shapes. Transfer to baking-paper-lined baking trays. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, if possible.
7. Preheat oven to 160°C/140°C fan/Gas mark 3.
8. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes, until light golden. Be aware that the baking time will depend on the size and shape of your shortbread.
9. Check regularly; once biscuits start to colour, remove from the oven.
10. Cool on baking trays. Dust with extra icing sugar to serve.
11. Store in an airtight container.

Variation:

- Use 30 ml lavender flowers, instead of the rosemary.



Fresh Fig Tart

Perfect for summer days, lovely soft figs in a heavenly sponge batter, drizzled with honey. Serve with Earl Grey tea, or lots of iced home-made lemonade. Freeze the summer bounty of figs, then recreate the feelings of summer in the dead of winter. Served with a good cappuccino coffee, it will be just the ticket.

Serves 6 – 8

125 g softened butter (125 ml)
 150 g castor sugar (185 ml)
 110 g cake flour (200 ml)
 2 ml salt
 10 ml baking powder
 3 large eggs, beaten
 100 g blanched almonds, ground (250 ml)
 50 g blanched almonds, chopped (125 ml)
 8 – 10 fresh figs, washed and cut in halves, lengthwise
 30 ml honey or 80 ml fig jam or fig preserve, chopped with juice

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Grease a 23 – 26 cm loose-bottomed pan. Place baking paper on the base; grease again.
3. In the bowl of an electric food mixer, cream the butter and castor sugar together, until light and fluffy.
4. Sift together the cake flour, salt, and baking powder.
5. Add dry ingredients alternately with the beaten eggs, mixing together gently on low speed.
6. Add the ground and chopped almonds; mix together.
7. Place mixture into prepared pan, levelling off the surface.
8. Press figs, cut side uppermost into the cake batter. Arrange in an attractive pattern, covering the surface of the cake.
9. Bake for 50 – 60 minutes, until a skewer comes out cleanly.
10. Immediately drizzle honey or warmed fig jam or preserve over the surface of the tart. Allow to stand in the pan for at least 10 minutes.
11. Turn out and cool.
12. Serve with crème fraîche, whipped cream, mascarpone cheese, or ice-cream.

Tip:

- Use preserved green figs if no fresh figs are available and preserved fig liquid to glaze.



Lemon Curd

The tartness of lemons, combined with the sweetness of sugar, makes this an ever-popular filling for meringues, tarts, pies, cakes, and cookies. Cooked in the microwave oven, it is as easy as 1-2-3. Makes a great gift too!!

Makes approximately 400 ml

Juice and rind of 2 large, yellow lemons, to make 125 ml
 250 g castor sugar (310 ml)
 125 g butter or Stork Bake margarine (125 ml)
 3 large eggs

1. Blend lemon juice, rind and castor sugar together in a large bowl.
2. Cook on 100% power in the microwave oven for 1 – 2 minutes, until sugar dissolves.
3. Add in the butter; stir until melted.
4. Beat the eggs together well. Add some of the hot, lemon mixture to the eggs, beating continuously, then return this egg mixture to the remaining lemon mixture; whisk well.
5. Cook on 70% power for 2 – 3 minutes; whisk every 30 seconds, until thickened.
6. Pour into sterilized, hot, dry jars, and seal. Label, and store in a cool, dry place.

Variations:

- **Orange Curd** – replace lemon rind and juice with orange rind and juice.
- **Granadilla Curd** – Use 125 ml granadilla pulp instead of lemon rind and juice.

Tips:

- Use in filling sandwich cakes or biscuits.
- Use whipped cream flavoured with 100 ml lemon, orange or granadilla curd, as dessert toppings, or with meringues.
- Spread on bread, in tartlets, on scones, or crumpets.
- Excellent to sell at fêtes and for gifts.



**Tip:**

- A metal baking pan gives a better result for this recipe. Instead of a Bundt pan you can use 24 cm round loose-bottomed cake pan, grease well and place baking paper on base, grease again. The cake will take 30 – 35 minutes to bake without a funnel in the middle.

Lemony Limoncello Cake

Here is the recipe for an incredible cake, which is topped with lemon curd and candied lemon peel, or fresh strawberries, or raspberries. The zingy lemon taste keeps coming; both in the cake and the topping. Makes a great addition to the tea table, or it can be served as a dessert: the hole in the middle can be filled with berries. Make your own lemon curd; it tastes so much better, and for this cake, is far nicer than store-bought.

Serves 8

Sponge cake:

2 large eggs
210 g castor sugar (250 ml)
250 ml plain, unsweetened yoghurt
80 ml sunflower oil
Zest and juice of two lemons to make 50 ml juice
125 ml Limoncello, or similar lemon liqueur
280 g cake flour (500 ml)
7 ml baking power
3 ml bicarbonate of soda

Syrup:

150 ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
50 ml Limoncello liqueur, or similar lemon liqueur
150 g castor sugar

Candied Lemon Peel:

375 ml water
Finely sliced peel of two lemons
375 ml sugar

To decorate:

50 g lemon curd
Candied lemon peel, or fresh strawberries, or raspberries

1. **For sponge cake:** Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Grease in a small metal 24 cm bundt or ring pan; line the base with baking paper, and grease again.
3. In the large bowl of an electric mixer, whisk the eggs and castor sugar together until thick and creamy.
4. Whisk the yogurt, oil, zest, 50 ml lemon juice and Limoncello together.
5. Sift flour, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda together.
6. Alternate the yogurt mixture with the flour mixing on a slow speed to amalgamate. Be careful not to over-mix, as the gluten in the flour will be stretched, and the cake will not rise properly. Pour mixture into prepared pan.
7. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes, until golden, and a skewer inserted into centre of cake comes out clean.
8. **Syrup:** Combine syrup ingredients; pour over the warm cake.
9. **Candied peel:** Bring water to the boil in a small saucepan.
10. Add lemon peel, and continue to boil for 5 minutes, until tender.
11. Stir in sugar; mix gently to combine, and boil until the peel becomes transparent. Drain well.
12. **To serve:** Remove cake from cake pan and, when cool, spread with lemon curd, and top with candied peel, or sliced strawberries, or raspberries.



Lime, Gin, and Tonic Cupcakes

This recipe epitomizes Simone and me, in that it is unique, quirky, and filled with variety! These cupcakes will be the talking point at your next party!

Makes 12 muffin-sized cupcakes, or 16 fairy cupcakes

175 g butter (175 ml), softened
 175 g castor sugar (200 ml)
 2 large eggs
 200 g self-raising flour (350 ml)
 3 ml salt
 2 ml baking powder
 45 ml tonic water
 15 ml gin
 Rind of 1 lime

Syrup:
 100 g castor sugar (125 ml)
 125 ml tonic water
 Rind of 1 lime
 50 ml gin

Decoration:
 1 – 2 limes, cut into mini wedges
 12 white or toasted coconut marshmallows, cut into small cubes
 12 small skewers

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan/Gas mark 4.
2. Line a muffin pan with paper cupcake liners.
3. Cream the butter and 175 g castor sugar together, in an electric food mixer, until light and fluffy.
4. Add in the eggs, one at a time.
5. Sift self-raising flour, salt and baking powder together.
6. Add the sifted flour, 45 ml tonic water and 15 ml gin into the batter; mix until combined; be careful not to over-mix.
7. Stir in the rind of the lime.
8. Fill each cupcake liner approximately 2/3rd full.
9. Bake for 25 – 30 minutes.
10. Meanwhile, in a saucepan over a moderate heat, heat the 100 g castor sugar, tonic water and lime rind, until sugar has dissolved; remove from the heat, and add the 50 ml gin.
11. When the cupcakes come out of the oven, pierce each cupcake a few times with a wooden skewer; pour approximately 25 ml of the sugared-gin solution over each hot cupcake.
12. Allow to cool slightly; remove from baking pan; place on a cooling rack.
13. When cool, top with mascarpone frosting, lime wedges, and chopped, white or coconut marshmallows, threaded onto skewers.

Mascarpone Frosting

We love this topping with the Lime, Gin and Tonic Cupcakes. Indulgent, but such fun!
Makes sufficient to ice 12 large cupcakes

250 g mascarpone cheese
125 g icing sugar, sifted (260 ml)
30 ml gin
Rind of one lime

1. Beat mascarpone cheese and icing sugar together, add in gin and lime rind.
2. Pile frosting onto cupcakes, and decorate accordingly.



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Oven Temperatures

Temperature Range	Celsius	Fahrenheit mark	Gas	Usage
Very low	100°C	200°F	1/4	Drying out rusks, meringues
	110°C	225°F	1/4	Meringues
	120°C	250°F	1/2	
Low	140°C	275°F	1	Large fruit cakes
	150°C	300°F	2	Baked custards etc, slow casseroles
Moderate	160°C	325°F	3	Fruit cakes, casseroles, roasting large joints
	180°C	350°F	4	Biscuits and cakes, pasta, meat, fish and vegetable dishes
	190°C	375°F	5	Breadmaking, buns, muffins, some cakes, biscuits, muffins etc.
	200°C	400°F	6	
Hot / high	220°C	425°F	7	Small cakes, pork crackling
	230°C	450°F	8	Scones, pastries
Very hot/ very high	240°C	475°F	9	Pastries
	260°C	500°F	10	Puff pastries

Approximate Metric Equivalents

Millilitre		USA Cup		Tablespoon		Teaspoon		Fluid oz
250 ml	=	1 cup	=	16 tablespoons	=	48 teaspoons	=	8 oz
190 ml	=	3/4 cup	=	12 tablespoons	=	36 teaspoons	=	6 oz
170 ml	=	2/3 cup	=	10 tablespoons	=	30 teaspoons	=	5 oz
125 ml	=	1/2 cup	=	8 tablespoons	=	24 teaspoons	=	4 oz
85 ml	=	1/3 cup	=	5 tablespoons	=	15 teaspoons	=	3 oz
60 ml	=	1/4 cup	=	4 tablespoons	=	12 teaspoons	=	2 oz
45 ml	=	3/16 cup	=	3 tablespoons	=	9 teaspoons	=	1.5 oz
30 ml	=	1/8 cup	=	2 tablespoons	=	6 teaspoons	=	1 oz
15 ml	=	1/16 cup	=	1 tablespoon	=	3 teaspoons	=	0.5 oz
10 ml	=	–		–		2 teaspoons		–
5 ml	=	–		–		1 teaspoon		–
2 ml	=	–		–		1/2 teaspoon		–
1 ml	=	–		–		1/4 teaspoon		–

Weights and Measures

GRAM WEIGHT PER 250 ml					
CHEESE		MEAT	SEEDS		
Cheddar cheese, grated	100 g	Ham, chopped	125 g	Poppy	150 g
Cream cheese & cottage cheese	250 g			Sesame	150 g
Mozzarella, grated	125 g	MISCELLANEOUS		Sunflower	150 g
		All Bran/ Cornflakes	50 g		
DRIED FRUIT		Biscuit crumbs	120 g	SUGAR	
Apricots	150 g	Butter	250 g	Castor sugar	210 g
Cherries, cut	150 g	Cake crumbs	125 g	Icing sugar	130 g
Cherries, whole	160 g	Chocolate chips	200 g	White sugar	200 g
Dates	150 g	Coconut	80 g	Yellow/brown sugar	200 g
Fruit cake mix	150 g	Custard Powder	120 g		
Prunes, stoned	150 g	Digestive Bran	30 g	VEGETABLES	
Raisins, sultanas, currants	150 g	Jam, apricot	330 g	Carrots, grated	125 g
		Jam, marmalade	330 g	Mushrooms	70 g
FLOUR		Margarine	250 g	Potatoes, grated, raw	125 g
Brown bread flour	140 g	Oats	80 g	Pumpkin, cooked, mashed	225 g
Cake flour	140 g			Spinach	200 g
Cornflour	120 g	NUTS			
Crushed wheat	200 g	Almonds, shelled, flaked	150 g		
Wholewheat flour	150 g	Peanuts, shelled	150 g		
Self-raising flour	140 g	Pecans/walnuts	100 g		
Semolina	160 g	Sprinkle nuts	150 g		
Wheatgerm	80 g				
White bread flour	140 g				

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