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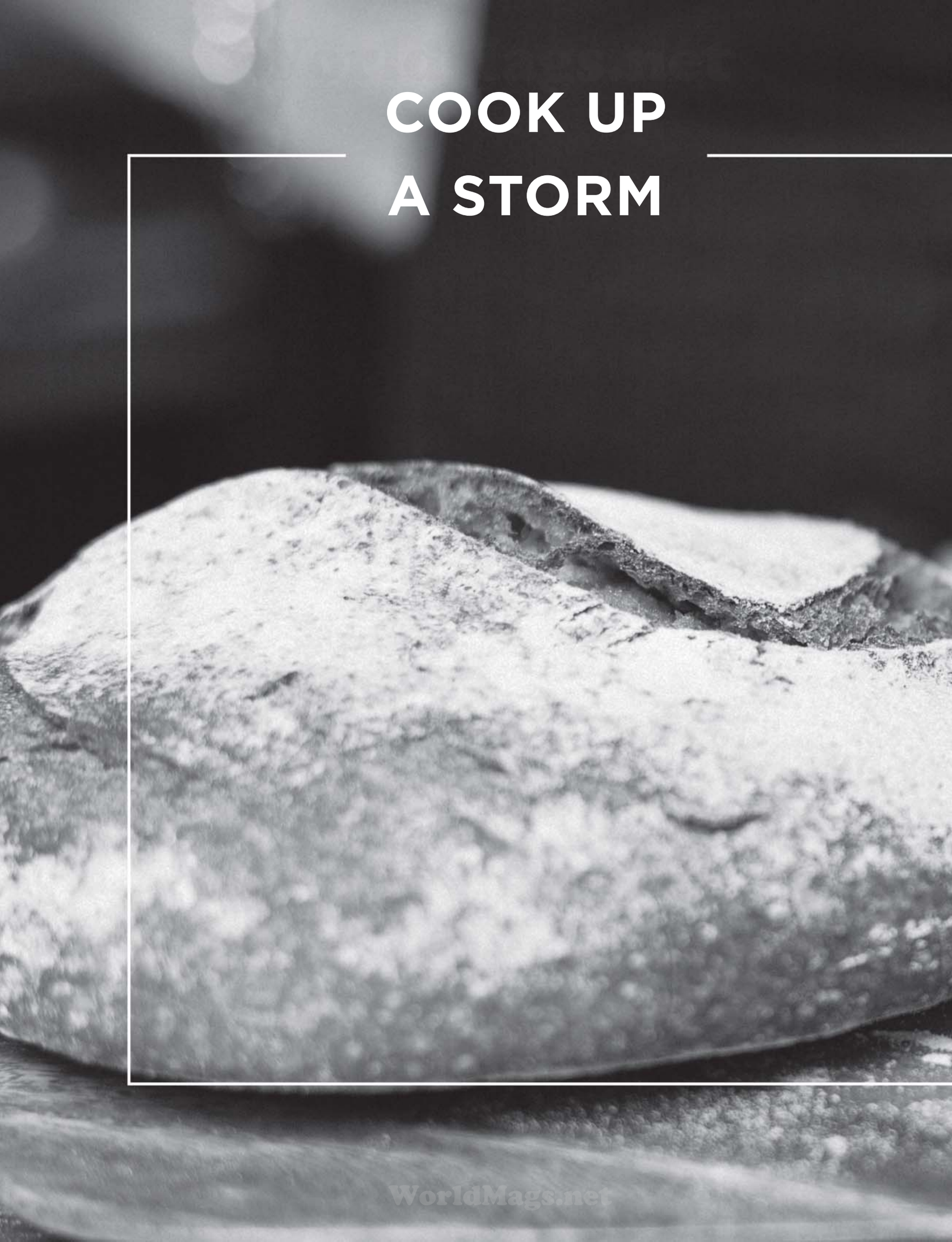
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IS JUST RIGHT."

-F. Scott Fitzgerald



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The first time I tasted brown sugar meringues was on holiday last summer...

We found a great little restaurant, tucked into the corner of the bay. When it was time for dessert, we all chose the meringues. After the first bite we knew it was something special. The double cream wrapped itself around the light, crisp shell; the sweet tang of the berries completed the decadent trio.

Today I'm making them at home, with the help of my KitchenAid Stand Mixer. Egg whites slide into the glass bowl and the balloon whisk spins to form glossy, white peaks. Fresh from the oven, the meringues are almost ready to serve. A few raspberries placed on top complete the memory of our picture perfect meal.

View all 8 colours in the NEW KitchenAid Platinum Collection at kitchenaid.com.au or kitchenaid.co.nz. Available at Myer, Matchbox, The Essential Ingredient and selected homeware stores.



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from the dish team

Baking has been experiencing something of a comeback in recent years – while many of us have fond memories of our mothers and grandmothers "filling the tins" with biscuits, slices and deliciously moist cakes, it would be fair to say home baking took a bit of a back seat for a while.

It's wonderful to see it make a return, with home bakers tackling everything from macarons to madeleines, biscuits and tarts to triple-layered cakes. Here at *Dish*, we believe good food shoud be a pleasure to prepare (and to eat!) and so we have assembled a collection of some of our favourite baking recipes from the magazine over the years, all created by Food Editor Claire Aldous.

Whether you're a beginner or an experienced baker, you'll find something to tempt you within the pages of *Baking Dish*. Along with the recipes we have also included useful information on essential equipment, techniques and terms, and Claire has invaluable advice on the pitfalls to avoid and tricks to master, in order to create perfect baking every time.

We hope you (and everyone who shares your baking efforts) enjoy this copy of *Baking Dish*.

Photograph by Manja Wachsmuth. Styling by Lisa Morton. Props are stylist's own.

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baking essentials

Set yourself up with the basic tools and equipment for baking, using our handy checklist.

Baking is one of life's pleasures, and having the right equipment on hand makes it even more enjoyable. If you invest in the necessary tools you will always have everything you need for any cake, tart or slice you could ever wish to make. Good quality items will last you for many years; in fact judicious scouring of second hand shops can often yield fantastic baking tins and utensils that have passed the test of time and are ready for a second home.

If you want to buy new, then advances in technology such as silicone bakeware have created products that are highly regarded for their reliability, long life and ability to withstand extreme temperatures. The main advantages of silicone cookware are its even cooking surface, simple cleaning and flexibility, and it is now commonly used in whisks, spatulas, cake and muffin pans.

Here is a list of suggested items (along with some for your wishlist!) to create a wide-ranging tool kit for the home baker.



Utensils and tools

Mixing bowls in assorted sizes

Glass or ceramic are preferable as acidic ingredients such as lemon juice can react with a metal bowl if left too long and develop a metallic taste. They are also suitable for placing over a pan of simmering water to melt chocolate and make sauces. Plastic bowls are not recommended as they are difficult to clean thoroughly.

1 x set measuring spoons

1 x set stacking measuring cups
¼, ⅓, ½ and 1 cup for dry ingredients.

1 x measuring jug
Look for a clear with graduated markings for liquids.

1 x cooling rack
Essential for cooling cakes, tarts and biscuits.

1 x wire whisk

1 x rolling pin: 40 cm wooden
Look for a rolling pin that is uniformly cylindrical, without handles and tapered ends. This enables equal pressure to be applied along the length of the rolling pin to roll the dough to a uniform thickness.

2 x wooden spoons

1 x rubber spatula, preferably heat resistant

1 x cake tester or skewer

2 x pastry brushes
One to be kept dry for baking purposes only. The second to glaze pastry or tarts and for brushing down sugar from the sides of the pot when making a sugar syrup.

1 x piping bag with assorted nozzles

1 x 20 cm palette knife

1 x wire mesh sieve and/or flour sifter

1 x citrus squeezer

Assorted biscuit cutters

Ceramic baking beans
Dried beans are a good alternative.



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Tins and dishes

Cake tins
20 cm, 24 cm and 26 cm spring-form cake tins with expandable sides. This ensures the cakes can be easily removed once the clip is released. Look for dull metal tins as they absorb heat and distribute it more evenly, while shiny tins reflect the heat and slow the cooking process.

Madeleine tin

Fluted, loose-based tart tins in assorted sizes
Look for metal tins, in order to get crisp, golden pastry.

Loaf tins in assorted sizes

1 x muffin tin

12 hole tin in metal or silicone

1 x flat metal baking tray
Heavy metal baking trays are ideal as they won't warp and buckle when heated. They have multiple uses, including baking biscuits and free-form pastry tarts, to hold ramekins and individual baking dishes in the oven and when browning dishes under the grill.

Ramekins
These small ceramic dishes can be used for making individual brulées, soufflés, baked puddings and pies.

Ceramic baking dishes
Great for larger puddings.

Non-stick baking sheets
A heat-resistant silicone sheet that is washable and reusable. They come in two weights, with the light duty baking sheet suited to biscuit baking and meringues. Can be used up to 260°C.



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Equipment and gadgets

Kitchen scales
Preferably electronic with metric and imperial readings in 1 gram increments. Baking is a science and requires correct measuring for good results.

Food processor
A great tool for the kitchen as it has multiple uses: making pastry; grinding nuts, seeds and spices; making mayonnaise, pesto and salsa; it also chops, purées, slices and grates.

Electric spice grinder
An inexpensive electric coffee grinder is also perfect for the job, just ensure you only use it for spices.

Ice-cream machine
Creamy ice-creams, sorbets and frozen yoghurts are all simple to make with a small, relatively inexpensive ice-cream machine.

Candy thermometer
For making sweets such as toffee and fudge, and jams and preserves.

Kitchen torch
The refillable gas flame lets you caramelize the tops of crème brulée and other sweet dishes.

Pasta machine
A hand rolling machine that clamps to the bench – great for rolling out bread dough for flat-breads.

Stand mixer
For making cakes and doughs. Most mixers will come with a dough hook, flat beater and wire whisk for making meringues.

Hand beater
For whipping cream, egg whites and creaming butter and sugar.

Wishlist:

Crêpe pan
A traditional French heavy steel pan, ideal for making sweet or savoury crêpes.

Double saucepan/bain-marie
Great for heating ingredients gently, melting chocolate and keeping food warm. (It is also possible to create one with a bowl sitting on top of a pot).

Pie funnel



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Store Cupboard Essentials

Butter

Chocolate

Dark chocolate with a proportion of cocoa solids of 60-72% for the best flavour.

White chocolate is a blend of cocoa butter, milk solids, sugar and vanilla; technically not chocolate, but a derivative as it does not contain cocoa solids.

Cocoa powder

Regular and Dutch cocoa. Dutch cocoa is a richer, darker cocoa with an alkali added, which neutralizes the cocoa's acidity – the process is known as 'dutching'.

Cornflour and other starch thickeners

Cornflour, arrowroot, and tapioca are popular starch thickeners. They have different strengths and weaknesses, so choose the one best suited to the recipe.

Starch thickeners give food a transparent, glistening sheen, which works well in a pie filling, but not in a gravy or sauce. If you want a high gloss finish, use tapioca or arrowroot.

Cornflour is the best choice for thickening dairy-based sauces, as arrowroot becomes slimy when mixed with milk products.

Arrowroot is the most neutral tasting of the starch thickeners and won't mask delicate flavors in a dish. Use arrowroot if thickening an acidic liquid.

Tapioca starch thickens quickly, and at a relatively low temperature. It's a good choice if you want to finish a sauce just before serving it.

Dried fruit

Apricots

Cranberries

Crystallized ginger

Dates

Prunes

Raisins

Eggs

We use #7 eggs in all *Dish* recipes unless otherwise stated. To test the freshness of an egg, place it in a bowl of water. A fresh egg will immediately sink to the bottom and lie flat on its side. A bad egg will float on the water and should be discarded.

Flours

Flour is usually made from grinding wheat, maize, rye, barley or rice. Wheat flour is the most popular and versatile flour with many variations:

White flour or **plain flour**, contains about 75 per cent of the wheat grain, with most of the bran and wheat germ taken out. White flour is usually artificially whitened but you can buy unbleached flour, which is an off-white colour.

Self-raising flour is plain flour mixed with a small amount of baking powder. When making cakes or bread, it is essential you use plain or self-raising flour as stated in the recipe for a successful result.

Wholemeal or **wholewheat** flour is made from the whole of the wheat grain. If the flour is steel-crushed the wheat-germ is separated from the white part of the grain and returned to the white flour at the end of the grinding process.



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Wholemeal flour produces heavier results than white flour so is often used in combination.

Strong flour is made from 'hard' wheat varieties which are high in gluten. This makes it ideal for bread-making where the dough needs to expand and rise well in order to produce a light loaf. Strong flour is not suitable for cake recipes.

Rice flour is made from ground white rice and is often used in shortbread and gluten-free baking.

Ground spices

Cinnamon

Ginger

Mixed spice

Nutmeg

Nuts

Almonds

Hazelnuts

Walnuts

Ensure the nuts are fresh – because of their high oil content they are best stored in the freezer to prevent them going rancid.

Raising agents

Baking powder

Made up of a mix of bicarbonate of soda, cream of tartar and a small quantity of starch.

The release of carbon dioxide is instantaneous upon contact with liquid and continues under heat.

Bicarbonate of soda

Bicarbonate of soda, or baking soda, is an alkali used to raise breads and cakes such as gingerbread, fruit cake and carrot cake. It needs an acid (as well as moisture) to activate, so is often combined with yoghurt, buttermilk or milk.

As with all raising agents, use the amount specified in the recipe. Adding extra bicarbonate of soda can result in a peaked or collapsed cake and a strong, unpleasant flavour.

Yeast

Available in two forms: **fresh** and **dried**.

Dried granular and **easy-blend yeast** are available from supermarkets. A convenient pantry staple that has a shelf life indicated on the packet. Before buying, check the expiration date to make sure it's fresh.

The dried yeast we use in *Dish* recipes is not intended to be started in warm liquid first. It should only ever be added to the dry ingredients as described and is packaged in single use sachets.

Other dried granular yeast needs to be 'proofed' in warm water before being added to the dough mix. If the yeast is active, it should froth up. If it doesn't, it means the yeast is stale and should not be used. It's important to note that when mixing yeast with water, the temperature shouldn't be too high or it will kill the yeast. Use warm water and if active, the yeast should rise within 10 minutes.

Fresh yeast is available at health food stores and gourmet food stores and sometimes the bakery section at supermarkets will sell fresh yeast to the public. It should be firm and moist, with a pale creamy colour. Avoid any yeast that is dark, or dry and crumbly. It is highly perishable, losing its potency within a couple of weeks after being packed and needs to be stored in the refrigerator. Fresh yeast also needs to be 'proofed' before using.

Salt

Fine iodized table salt

Flaky sea salt

Sugar

Caster sugar

Granulated sugar

Icing sugar

Soft brown sugar

Vanilla extract, paste or beans

For more detail on individual ingredients see the 'Glossary' on page 138.

Photography by Tony Brownjohn. Styling by Lisa Morton. All uncredited props are stylist's own. White tiles used throughout from Middle Earth Tiles – phone 09 360 2638. Page 8: Measuring cups from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663. Page 9: Star biscuit cutters from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663. Page 11: Kitchen Aid stand mixer from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663. Page 12: Green measuring cup(part of set) from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663.



Emily Taylor

One of Chelsea's Hottest Home Bakers says...

"Dark Cane sugar has a delicious liquorice characteristic from the Molasses syrup that coats the sugar crystals.

I use Dark Cane Sugar when a recipe calls for Muscovado style sugar because the molasses enhances the flavour of both sweet and savoury dishes".

For my recipes and tips on using Dark Cane visit:
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baking basics

Bake with confidence every time, with some tips from Food Editor Claire Aldous…

Home baking presented to friends, family or colleagues is always a special treat that elicits exclamations of delight from the recipients. When time and inclination permits, the sense of achievement and the glorious aromas filling the house can never be matched by something bought from the local bakery.

Even someone who rarely ventures into the kitchen can produce a simple lemon loaf if they follow a few basic rules. Remember that baking is a science – it's not just a matter of throwing together whatever takes your fancy – and the following advice will help get you on the right track from the beginning.



Basic rules when baking:

- Preheat the oven to the correct temperature and have the shelves in the right position. Most baking is cooked on the centre shelf. Recipes generally state if they need to be cooked in a higher or lower position.
- A tin of the correct size is vital. Tins are generally filled half to two thirds full with mixture. Too small a tin will mean some of the batter will overflow and the remaining mixture will collapse back into the tin, creating a dense texture. Too large a tin will mean the cake won't rise to the top and the sides will shield the batter from baking evenly.
- A dull metal cake tin is preferable to a bright, shiny tin. Dark tins absorb heat and distribute it more evenly, whereas shiny tins reflect the heat and slow the cooking process. If your cake recipe needs long, slow cooking (as with a dense fruit cake), it's a good idea to line the tin with a double thickness of baking paper to prevent the sides drying out and over-browning before the centre is cooked.
- Measure your ingredients accurately. The importance of this cannot be overstated, especially with baking. Always follow one set of measurements in a recipe, don't mix metric and imperial. Ideally, every kitchen should be equipped with a set of scales, measuring spoons and cups for dry ingredients and a measuring jug for liquids. Teaspoon, tablespoon and cup measures are level, not heaped, unless otherwise indicated.
- Ensure you have all the ingredients for the recipe and that they are at room temperature. If the eggs are in the fridge and time is short, put them in a bowl of warm tap water for a few minutes. If chocolate or butter has to be melted and cooled, do this before starting to mix the remaining ingredients. The same applies to roasting nuts, coconut and spices or seeds. These are always added cold to cake batters. Some ingredients can easily be changed to suit what is at hand – citrus can be orange, lemon, lime, mandarin or even a little grapefruit zest; nuts can be almonds, walnuts, pecans, macadamias, hazelnuts, cashews, pine nuts, pistachios and sometimes peanuts.
- Creaming butter and sugar until light and fluffy is a crucial step that many people get wrong when baking a cake. Don't rush it – it takes a good five minutes to transform these two ingredients into the required state. If they are only just combined the cake will be flat and not rise properly.
- Don't over-mix batter. This will develop the gluten and make the cake tough. When adding dry and liquid ingredients to the creamed mixture use a large metal spoon to fold in half the dry ingredients first, then fold in the wet and remaining dry ingredients, mixing only enough to bring the batter together.

A piece of cake

Many people ask the same questions about their cake baking failures, and while there are technical

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reasons for many mistakes, a few simple adjustments can make all the difference to the end result. Here are some common pitfalls.

The Volcanic Look: Having the oven temperature too high means the sides of the cake will set very quickly, while the still liquid centre has nowhere to go but up, resulting in a peaked volcano cake. Very few cakes are cooked above 180°C. The fan bake function can be quite fierce in some ovens, so try the bake function instead, to see if it makes a difference.

The Sunken Chest: There can be two reasons for this: the first is that the cake has not cooked through completely before being removed from the oven, resulting in a heavy, moist centre that will collapse on cooling. Test it with a skewer – if it comes out with wet crumbs attached, the cake isn't cooked. If the skewer comes out clean, it is cooked. But be aware this rule doesn't apply to some cakes and brownies intended to be very moist.

The second reason is that too much raising agent, such as baking powder or baking soda, was added. The cake will rise very fast then collapse in the centre because the batter hasn't had time to set.

The Fallen Fruit: Dried fruit sinking to the bottom of the cake can be due to batter too thin to support it, ie a light, airy sponge cake mixture. Tossing the dried fruit in a little flour before adding it to a fruit cake batter can be helpful. Fruit cakes need to be cooked at a lower temperature for a longer time due to the higher sugar concentration in dried fruit, which causes it to burn at high temperatures. If the cake is browning too quickly, cover loosely with a piece of crumpled foil.

Tunnels or Air Bubbles: This is caused by over-mixing the batter when the flour was added.

Cracks and Crumbles: If a cake is over-baked or the oven temperature is too high this will result in deep cracks along the surface and a dry, crumbly texture.

Pastry pointers

The oven must be preheated to the specified temperature before the pastry is placed in the oven.

Problem solvers:

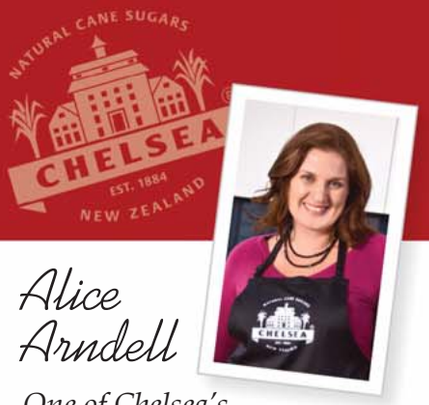
- Greasy or oily pastry – make pastry in a cool kitchen and work quickly to avoid the ingredients heating up which will make the pastry greasy. Cool hands by running them under the cold tap.
- The pastry shrinks when cooked – all pastry, except for choux, needs to be well chilled before it goes into the oven to bake. If not, the butter in the pastry will melt before the flour has had the chance to cook the pastry into its desired shape.
- The pastry is tough – too much water may have been added. Add only enough to just bring the dough together. Overworking the pastry may also cause it to be tough, so handle pastry gently.

Mastering the perfect meringue

Problem solvers:

- Egg whites don't form stiff peaks when beaten – the egg whites may have some egg yolk in them or the bowl and whisk may not be free from grease. You will need to begin again with a clean bowl and new egg whites.
- Meringue mixture collapses – the egg whites may have been overbeaten before the sugar was added. The sugar may have been added before the egg whites had been beaten enough or the mixture was overbeaten after the sugar was added.
- Beads of sugar syrup on the meringue – the first reason for this is if the sugar has not completely dissolved when beaten into the egg whites. The residual sugar crystals absorb water and make little beads of syrup on the surface of the meringue. Using caster sugar helps avoid this as the small particles dissolve more easily. The second cause is the oven temperature. If the temperature is too high, the protein in the egg white coagulates or sets too quickly. If this happens the water found naturally in the egg white is forced out faster than it can evaporate. This water then dissolves the sugar in the meringue to make syrup beads.
- Meringue doesn't crisp up – humidity and a rainy day will all affect the outcome of your meringue. Meringues are mostly air and if that air contains a lot of water it will have a dramatic effect on the end result.

Golden Syrup?



Alice Arndell

One of Chelsea's Hottest Home Bakers says...

"You just can't beat Chelsea's Golden Syrup for baking, making caramels, sauces, and our kiwi favourite 'Hokey Pokey'. Use the thicker richer syrup from the tin, for baking and use the thinner easy pour version for drizzling over fruit, ice-cream and pancakes, or in marinades.

I find a measuring cup with a light spray of non-stick baking spray, allows you to measure larger quantities accurately".

For my recipes and tips on using Golden Syrup visit:
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cakes & loaves



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Orange, Almond and Semolina Cake with Lemon, Rosemary and Fennel Seed Syrup

This is a moist, slightly crumbly cake with a lovely sweet, herb-infused topping. As with most syrup cakes, it will happily keep for 4-5 days with the last slice being as good as the first. The syrup can be made well ahead, simply reheat before spooning over the cold cake.

100 grams butter at room temperature
½ cup demerara sugar
2 #6 eggs
125 grams ground almonds
⅓ cup fine semolina
½ teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt
finely grated zest and juice 1 orange

Syrup
½ cup caster sugar
2 tablespoons well flavoured honey (I used wild thyme)
6 tablespoons water
juice of 2 lemons
¼ teaspoon fennel seeds
1 teaspoon very finely chopped rosemary
1 small, thin skinned lemon, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 160˚C.

Grease and fully line a 20 cm square, fixed-base cake tin with baking paper.

Beat the butter and sugar in an electric mixer for 5 minutes. *The sugar will still be grainy.* Beat in the eggs, one at a time. Combine the almonds, semolina, baking powder, salt and the orange zest in a bowl, rubbing the mixture between your fingertips to infuse with the orange zest. Gently beat into the egg mixture with the orange juice.

Tip into the tin and smooth the top. Bake for 30 minutes until golden and firm and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin.

Syrup: Put all the ingredients, except the lemon slices, in a saucepan and stir to dissolve the sugar. Simmer over a medium low heat until the surface is covered with small bubbles and the syrup is thick. Add the slices of lemon and gently turn to coat in the syrup. Simmer for 3 minutes then remove from the heat, cover and leave for 5 minutes. *This finishes cooking the lemons.*

Gradually spoon the hot syrup over the cold cake until it is all absorbed then top with the slices of lemon. Serve with a bowl of thick, plain yoghurt. The cake will keep for 4-5 days in an airtight container. Serves 8

Baby Chocolate and Coconut Cakes

This version of the classic lamington uses a dense chocolate cake instead of the usual sponge. Freezing the cake and keeping the icing warm makes assembly a simple and stress-free process. Also try to keep your fingers free of icing to ensure the coconut on the cakes looks fresh.

⅓ cup canola oil
⅔ cup water
75 grams butter
⅓ cup Dutch cocoa, sifted
150 grams good dark chocolate, chopped
250 grams caster sugar
⅓ cup milk
1 egg
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1¼ cups self-raising flour

Icing
½ cup milk
3 tablespoons butter
4 cups icing sugar, sifted
½ cup cocoa, sifted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Topping
2½ cups long thread coconut, lightly toasted

To serve
mascarpone
red fruit jam

Grease a 20 cm square cake tin and fully line the base and sides with baking paper.

Cake: Preheat the oven to 150°C. Put the oil, water, butter and cocoa in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring until smooth. Remove from the heat and whisk in the chocolate and sugar until melted. Set aside for 15 minutes.

Whisk in the milk, egg and vanilla extract, then the flour, making sure there are no lumps. Pour into the cake tin and bake for 45 minutes or until firm and an inserted skewer comes out clean. If the cake has risen in the centre, place a piece of baking paper over the top then a chopping board to weigh it down and give a flat surface. Cool. *The cake is best made one day before cutting.*

Cake: Cut the cake into 3 cm squares. Put the pieces of cake, spaced slightly apart, on a tray lined with baking paper and place in the freezer for at least one hour.

Icing: Put the milk and butter in a saucepan and heat until the butter has melted. Put the icing sugar and cocoa in a heat-proof bowl and whisk in the hot milk and vanilla extract until smooth. Place over a saucepan of simmering water. *This keeps the icing at a soft consistency for dipping.* Put the toasted coconut into a bowl.

To assemble: Take 3 pieces of cake out of the freezer at a time. Gently press all sides of the cake with the flat side of a knife to give a smooth surface. Push one piece at a time onto a thin wooden skewer. Dip it into the chocolate, turning to coat on all sides. *Don't dip the base, as the cake won't sit flat if there is coconut on it.* Let the excess chocolate drip back into the bowl. Then, holding the cake over the bowl of coconut, use your fingers to drop the coconut onto all sides to coat. Press the top of the cake into the coconut. *If you roll the cakes in the coconut, it will lie flat and not have the lovely spiky effect.* Gently push off the skewer onto a tray lined with baking paper then lift the cakes to sit upright. Sprinkle the tops with a little more coconut. Set aside until set. Store for 3-4 days in an airtight container.

To serve: Just before serving place a small spoonful of mascarpone on each cake then a dollop of jam. Makes 36 x 3 cm cakes

Photography by Manja Wachsmuth. Styling by Lisa Morton. Pink milk glass cake stand, biscuit tin and pink tea towels from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663. All uncredited props are stylist's own.

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Orange, Almond and Semolina Cake with Lemon, Rosemary and Fennel Seed Syrup
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Baby Chocolate and Coconut Cakes
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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No-Cook Chocolate Truffle Cake



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No-Cook Chocolate Truffle Cake

This recipe will make more than you need, but I couldn't imagine anything nicer to find in the fridge the next day. Make 2-3 days ahead for easy entertaining.

200 grams plain, sweet biscuits (I used Anzac biscuits)
¼ cup melted butter

Filling
375 grams dark chocolate, 72% cocoa
2 cups cream
3 tablespoons rum or other liqueur*
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

To serve
icing sugar for sifting
mascarpone
fresh raspberries

Grease a 20 cm x 5 cm deep, square cake tin and line fully with baking paper, letting it come 1 cm above the rim of the tin. *This makes it easier to remove for serving.* Roughly break up the biscuits and place in a food processor. Process until finely ground. Remove 4 tablespoons of crumbs and set aside. Add the butter and pulse to combine. Press firmly into the base of the tin to make an even layer. Refrigerate while making the filling.

Filling: Finely chop the chocolate and place in a heat-proof bowl.

Heat ¾ cup of the cream to boiling point in a small saucepan and pour over the chocolate. Stir until melted and smooth. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool.

Beat the remaining cream, rum and vanilla to soft peaks. Using a large metal spoon, gently fold into the chocolate until there are no white streaks of cream left.

Pour the mixture over the crumbs and tap the tin gently on the bench to remove any air pockets. Sprinkle the top with the reserved crumbs. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to 3 days.

To serve: Using the baking paper, lift the cake from the tin and place on a chopping board. Using a long, sharp knife dipped in hot water, cut into 5 cm squares. *Wipe the knife clean and re-warm between each cut.* Use a pallet knife to transfer to serving plates. Serve chilled with a spoonful of mascarpone and a small stack of raspberries. The cake will cut into 16 x 5 cm squares.

**Other flavours that go with chocolate are brandy, whisky, mint, coffee, orange and most nut liqueurs.*

Baked Yoghurt and Lime Cake with Rhubarb and Rosewater

This very light dessert goes beautifully with poached fruits, such as quinces, plums, figs and apricots.

5 eggs, separated
⅓ cup caster sugar
3 tablespoons honey
⅔ cup plain flour, sifted
250 grams sour cream
250 grams thick plain yoghurt
finely grated zest and juice 1 large lime
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Rhubarb
6-8 stalks rhubarb, washed
⅓ cup brown sugar
finely grated zest and juice 1 orange
1-2 teaspoons rosewater

Preheat the oven to 160˚C.

Rhubarb: Cut the rhubarb into 6 cm pieces. Place in a single layer in a baking dish and sprinkle over the brown sugar and orange zest. Pour over the orange juice. Cover tightly with aluminium foil and bake for 20-30 minutes or until just tender but not totally collapsed. Cool and refrigerate until needed. Sprinkle over the rosewater just before serving.

Cake: Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Grease and fully line a 20 cm spring-form cake tin with baking paper.

Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and honey until thick and creamy. Add the flour, sour cream, yoghurt, lime zest and juice and the olive oil. Mix on a low speed until well combined.

Whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form, but not dry, and using a large metal spoon, fold into the yoghurt mixture.

Pour into the tin and bake for about 50 minutes or until the cake is puffed up like a soufflé and the top is a good golden colour. *Cover loosely with a piece of foil if the top is getting too brown.*

Leave to cool in the tin. *The cake will subside as it cools.*

To serve: Peel off the baking paper and transfer the cake to a serving plate. Dust with icing sugar just before serving as the top is damp and the icing sugar will dissolve quite fast. Cut into portions and serve with softly whipped cream and the rhubarb. Serves 6-8

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Baked Yoghurt and Lime Cake with
Rhubarb and Rosewater
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Banana, Cranberry
and Lime Layer Cake
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]

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Banana, Cranberry and Lime Layer Cake

150 grams butter at room temperature
½ cup caster sugar
½ cup brown sugar
3 eggs, separated
2¼ cups plain flour
pinch of salt
¾ teaspoon each baking powder and baking soda
¼ cup pistachios, chopped
½ cup dried cranberries, finely chopped
1 cup mashed, very ripe bananas
finely grated zest 1 lime
½ cup sour cream

Banana cream
1 large ripe banana, diced 1 cm pieces
3 tablespoons caster sugar
small knob of butter
100 grams butter at room temperature
125 grams cream cheese at room temperature
1 cup icing sugar, sifted
finely grated zest 1 lime
1 tablespoon lime juice

To assemble
2-3 firm but ripe bananas
1 tablespoon lime juice
2 tablespoons pistachios, finely chopped
2 tablespoons dried cranberries, finely chopped

24 cm square cake tin, greased and base and sides lined with baking paper

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Cake: Beat the butter and both sugars until light and pale then beat in the egg yolks. Sift the dry ingredients together then toss through the pistachios and cranberries.

Whisk the bananas, lime zest and sour cream together and gently mix into the batter alternating with the dry ingredients. *The mixture will be thick.*

Beat the egg whites to stiff peaks and, using a large metal spoon, fold a large spoonful into the mixture to loosen it a little. Fold through the remaining egg whites in two lots. Spoon into the tin and smooth the top. Bake for 30 minutes or until the cake is firm and golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool the cake in the tin.

Banana cream: Put the bananas, sugar and knob of butter in a sauté pan and cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until it forms a well caramelized and thick paste. Cool.

Beat the butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy then beat in the icing sugar and lime zest and juice. Scrape in the cooled banana paste and beat until well combined.

To assemble: Cut the cake in half horizontally (see tip below). Carefully slide a flat baking sheet between the layers and lift the top one off. Place the bottom half on a serving plate and spread with a third of the banana cream. Slice the bananas and brush both sides with a little lime juice and place them close together to cover the cake. Turn the second piece of cake cut side up and spread with a third of the banana cream. Place on top of the bananas, cream side down. Spread the remaining filling over the top. Toss the pistachios and cranberries together and scatter over the cream. Serves 8-10

To split a cake in half evenly, first mark the centre line with a sharp knife all the way around. Then, using a long serrated knife carefully work around and into the cake, turning it to ensure an even cut.

Coffee and Walnut Cake with Rum and Walnut Cream

I prefer dark rum in this recipe but brandy can be substituted. The optional step of brushing the cakes with extra rum improves the flavour and texture, but the cake is just as delicious without it.

Cake
150 grams walnuts
3 tablespoons instant espresso coffee
2 tablespoons boiling water
2 tablespoons dark rum
225 grams butter at room temperature
225 grams caster sugar
4 eggs
225 grams self-raising flour
½ teaspoon baking powder

Rum and walnut cream
⅓ cup milk
2 tablespoons dark rum
100 grams butter at room temperature
1 cup icing sugar
2 egg yolks

Coffee glaze
5 teaspoons boiling water
1 tablespoon instant espresso coffee
1 cup icing sugar, sifted

To assemble
extra rum for brushing the cakes, optional

2 x 23 cm x 4-5 cm deep cake tins, greased and bases lined with baking paper

Cakes: Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Roast the walnuts then grind them finely in a food processor. Divide the ground walnuts in half, reserving one half for the rum and walnut cream. Dissolve the coffee in the boiling water then stir in the rum and set aside to cool. Beat the butter and caster sugar together until very light and fluffy.

Add the eggs one at a time, adding a teaspoonful of flour with each egg. Combine the remaining flour, baking powder and walnuts and, using a large metal spoon, fold into the egg mixture with the cooled coffee. Divide the batter evenly between the tins and smooth the top. Bake for 20 minutes until the cake springs back when pressed lightly and is pulling away from the sides of the tin. Cool for 20 minutes then remove from the tins.

Rum cream: Bring the milk and rum to the boil then stir in the reserved ground walnuts. Cool.

Beat the butter and icing sugar until light and fluffy then beat in the egg yolks. Add the cooled walnut mixture and beat again for two minutes until the mixture is thick and smooth. Tip into a bowl, cover and refrigerate for several hours until firm. *The cream will be quite soft when first made but will firm up when chilled.*

Glaze: Dissolve the coffee in the boiling water then beat in the icing sugar to make a smooth, pourable glaze.

To assemble: Slice each cake in half horizontally (see tip below). Place one half, cut side up on a serving plate and brush with a tablespoon of rum and spread with a third of the walnut cream. Repeat this with another two layers of cake, rum and walnut cream. Place the final layer of cake, cut side down, on top, but don't brush with rum. Pour the coffee glaze into the centre of the cake and gently spread it over the top, letting some of it run down the sides of the cake. Serves 10-12

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Coffee and Walnut Cake with
Rum and Walnut Cream



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Chocolate and Roasted Hazelnut Cake

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Chocolate and Roasted Hazelnut Cake

200 grams hazelnuts, roasted and skins rubbed off
200 grams butter, chopped
200 grams dark 70% cocoa chocolate, chopped
5 eggs, separated
200 grams caster sugar
finely grated zest 1 orange

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Grease and fully line a 24 cm loose-bottom cake tin with baking paper.

Chop the nuts finely but leave them with a little texture.

Melt the butter and chocolate in a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water. Set aside to cool.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Put the egg whites in another bowl and whisk to soft peaks. Using a large metal spoon fold the cooled chocolate, hazelnuts and orange zest into the egg yolks then fold in the egg whites.

Pour into the tin and bake for 30 minutes or until a crust forms and a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out with moist crumbs attached, but not uncooked mixture.

Cool completely before removing the cake from the tin. Dust with icing sugar to serve. Serves 8-10

To roast nuts - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Lime, Riesling and Passionfruit Curd Cakes

1 x 370 gram jar passionfruit curd, such as Barker's
¾ cup thick plain yoghurt
¾ cup sour cream
icing sugar for dusting
mint leaves to garnish

Cakes
½ cup caster sugar
2 eggs
¾ cup vegetable oil
½ cup Riesling or other sweet wine
⅓ cup plain yoghurt
finely grated zest of 2 limes
1½ cups plain flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Grease and line the bases of 12 x 100 ml capacity cake tins with baking paper and place on a baking tray. *I used a canola oil spray for this.*

Cakes: Beat the sugar and eggs until pale and creamy. Add the oil, wine, yoghurt and lime zest and beat to just combine. Sift over the flour and baking powder and gently mix through until the mixture is smooth. Divide between the tins and put a teaspoon of passionfruit curd on the top of each cake. *Don't press it into the batter as it will sink into the centre while baking.*

Bake for 15 minutes until lightly golden and just starting to pull away from the sides of the tins. *Don't overcook or the cakes will be dry.* Cool for 15 minutes then remove from the tins and place on a wire rack to cool completely.

To serve: Arrange the cakes on a tray and dust with icing sugar. Mix the yoghurt and sour cream in a bowl and place a spoonful on top of each cake. Top with a spoonful of the remaining passionfruit curd and garnish with a tiny mint leaf if desired. Makes 12 cakes

Ginger Roulade with Tamarind-Glazed Mango and Mascarpone

Roulade
3 eggs
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup flour
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 tablespoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
pinch of ground cloves
1 tablespoon melted butter

Glazed mango
2 tablespoons tamarind concentrate
½ cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons lime juice
2 mangoes, peeled
200 grams mascarpone
100 grams thick plain yoghurt
2 tablespoons thinly sliced crystallized ginger

37 cm x 25 cm Swiss roll tin, lightly greased and lined with baking paper

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Beat the eggs and sugar in an electric mixer for at least 5 minutes or until the mixture is very thick and creamy and has tripled in volume.

Sift all the dry ingredients over the top of the mixture and drizzle the butter around the edges. Using a large metal spoon, gently fold together, ensuring there are no pockets of flour left in the batter.

Pour into the tin and smooth to an even layer.

Bake for about 8 minutes or until golden and the cake springs back when lightly pressed with your finger. *Don't over-bake the cake or it will be difficult to roll up.*

Leave for 1 minute then place a 40 cm long piece of baking paper that has been sprayed with a flavourless cooking spray over the top. Then place a flat baking tray over the paper. Holding the tin and the baking tray, invert the roulade and remove the tin. Carefully peel off the lining paper and leave to cool.

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Mango: Put the tamarind concentrate, brown sugar and lime juice in a small saucepan over a medium heat and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Cool.

Peel the mangoes and slice the cheeks off each side of the stone. Cut lengthways into 1 cm thick slices. Place on a lined baking tray and brush with a little of the tamarind syrup. Roast for 10 minutes then turn over and brush with more syrup. Cook for another 8-10 minutes or until the mango looks slightly translucent and golden. Cool. Reserve the remaining syrup.

To assemble: Whisk the mascarpone and yoghurt together in a bowl with most of the sliced ginger. Spread two thirds of the cream evenly over the roulade and using the baking paper as a guide, roll the roulade up from the shortest side. Place on a serving plate.

Dollop the remaining mascarpone cream along the top of the roulade and arrange slices of the mango and ginger over it. Place the remaining mango and tamarind syrup in separate bowls and serve with slices of the roulade. Serves 8

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Lime, Riesling and Passionfruit Curd Cakes
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Ginger Roulade with Tamarind-Glazed Mango and Mascarpone
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Rhubarb and Almond Cake

Rhubarb
6-8 slim stalks of rhubarb
finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
¼ cup packed brown sugar

Cake
180 grams butter
1 cup caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 orange
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1½ cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Topping
60 grams butter
½ cup caster sugar
4 tablespoons cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1½ cups (140 grams) sliced almonds, toasted
28 cm loose-bottom tart tin, lightly greased

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Rhubarb: Wash the rhubarb and slice into 10 cm lengths. Place in a baking dish with the orange zest, juice and brown sugar. Cover and bake until just starting to soften but still holding its shape. Cool.

Base: Beat the butter, sugar and orange zest together until light and creamy. Add the eggs and vanilla extract and beat well.

Combine the flour, baking powder and cinnamon and use a large metal spoon to fold into the batter.

Spoon the mixture into the tin and smooth the top. Cook for 20-25 minutes until firm to the touch and golden.

Topping: Place the butter and sugar in a saucepan and cook for 3-4 minutes until lightly coloured. Slowly add the cream and vanilla, stirring until smooth and cook for another 2 minutes. Stir in the almonds. Take the cake out of the oven and carefully spoon over the warm topping, spreading to an even layer. Arrange the rhubarb over the top and return the cake to the oven to cook for another 8-10 minutes.

To serve: Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature with softly whipped cream. Serves 8

Chocolate and Guinness Bundt Cake with Chocolate Ganache

¾ cup Guinness stout (do not include the foam when measuring)
1 teaspoon instant espresso coffee
¼ cup water
⅓ cup raisins, finely chopped
200 grams butter, chopped
150 grams dark chocolate, chopped (I used 68% cocoa)
2 cups plain flour
¾ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon sea salt
¾ cup brown sugar
1 cup caster sugar
2 eggs
¾ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Ganache
¾ cup cream
2 tablespoons butter
225 grams dark chocolate, finely chopped

8 cup capacity ring tin, well greased

Preheat the oven to 160°C.

Put the Guinness, coffee, water, raisins and butter in a saucepan over a medium-low heat and stir to dissolve the butter. *Don't let the mixture boil.* Remove from the heat and stir in the chocolate until melted. Cool.

Sift the flour and baking soda together then combine with the salt and both sugars.

Whisk the eggs, sour cream and vanilla together in a large bowl then whisk in the cooled Guinness mixture. Add the dry ingredients in 3 lots, whisking until well combined and ensuring there are no pockets of flour in the batter.

Pour into the tin and bake for 45-50 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. *Turn the cake occasionally for even cooking if necessary.*

Cool the cake for 15 minutes. Place a cooling rack over the tin and invert the cake onto it.

Ganache: Put the cream and butter in a saucepan and heat until just below boiling point. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate, stirring until melted and smooth. Leave for a few minutes until it starts to thicken. Place the cake, still on the rack, over a baking tray then slowly pour the ganache evenly over the cake, letting the excess drip down onto the tray. When the icing has set, carefully transfer the cake to a serving plate. Serves 8-10

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Rhubarb and Almond Cake

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Chocolate and Guinness Bundt Cake with Chocolate Ganache
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Lemon, Yoghurt and Poppy Seed Cake with Blueberry Sauce

Cake

¼ cup milk

3 tablespoons poppy seeds

¾ cup thick plain yoghurt

⅓ cup vegetable oil

1 cup caster sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

finely grated zest 3 lemons

¼ cup lemon juice

2 eggs

1⅔ cups self-raising flour

pinch of sea salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

Blueberry sauce

500 grams frozen blueberries, thawed with their juices

3-4 tablespoons icing sugar

lime juice

2 teaspoons cornflour

To serve

icing sugar

yoghurt or softy whipped cream

Grease a 24 cm spring-form cake tin and fully line with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Put the milk and poppy seeds in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Set aside to cool. *This softens the seeds and brings out their flavour.*

Whisk the yoghurt, oil, sugar, vanilla, lemon zest and juice, the eggs and the cooled milk and poppy seeds in a large bowl. Sift the flour, salt and baking soda together and whisk into the yoghurt mixture until smooth. Pour the batter into the tin and bake for 30-35 minutes until golden and firm to the touch. Allow to cool before removing from the tin.

Blueberry sauce: Place 300 grams of the blueberries and all the juice in a food processor with 3 tablespoons of icing sugar. Blend until smooth, taste and add more icing sugar if needed. Tip into a small saucepan. Mix the cornflour with 1 tablespoon of water until smooth. Stir into the juice and bring to the boil. Cook for 3 minutes. Stir in the whole blueberries and transfer to a bowl. Cool then stir in a good squeeze of lime juice.

To serve: Place the cake on a serving plate and dust with icing sugar. Serve with yoghurt and the blueberry sauce. Serves 8

Coconut and Raspberry Bundt Cakes

These little cakes are topped with freeze-dried raspberries from New Zealand company 'Fresh As'. (See below for details.) Use fresh raspberries when in season.

280 grams butter at room temperature

280 grams caster sugar

5 eggs

200 grams plain flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 cup desiccated coconut

½ teaspoon sea salt

½ cup milk

finely grated of zest 1 lemon or lime

2½ cups frozen free-flow raspberries

Raspberry glaze

200 grams frozen raspberries

200 grams raspberry jam

½ cup water

Garnish

freeze-dried or fresh raspberries

8 x 200 ml capacity cake tins, well brushed with melted butter

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding a teaspoonful of flour with each egg. Sift the remaining flour, baking powder and baking soda together and stir in the coconut and salt. Using a large metal spoon, fold the dry ingredients into the butter mixture along with the milk and lemon zest. *The batter will be thick.*

Fill the cake tins half full, spreading the batter evenly with a spoon. Top this with 5 raspberries then spoon over the remaining batter, spreading it evenly then place another 4 raspberries on top. Put the tins on a baking tray and bake for 30 minutes, turning the tray for even browning if necessary. The cakes should feel firm to the touch and be pulling away from the sides of the tin. Leave for 15 minutes then remove from the tins and cool.

Glaze: Put the frozen raspberries, jam and water in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to combine. Simmer for 15 minutes, stirring often, until the mixture is thick and reduced. Tip into a fine sieve set over a bowl and, using the back of a spoon, press the mixture through until only the seeds remain in the sieve. Cool and refrigerate until ready to use.

To assemble: Spoon the glaze over the cakes, letting some of it run down the sides then top with a few freeze-dried raspberries. Dust with icing sugar and serve with softly whipped cream or thick plain yoghurt if desired. *The unglazed cakes can be made and kept in an airtight container for 3 days.* Makes 8

Fresh As Freeze-Dried Raspberries are available from gourmet food stores or email info@fresh-as.com for stockists.

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Lemon, Yoghurt and Poppy Seed
Cake with Blueberry Sauce
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Coconut and Raspberry Bundt Cakes
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Baked Lemon Cake with Glazed Lemons and Strawberries

400 grams ricotta cheese
110 gram log soft goat's cheese
150 grams caster sugar
150 grams ground almonds, lightly toasted
fine zest of 2 large lemons
6 eggs, separated

Glazed lemon slices
8 thin skinned, seedless lemons
500 grams caster sugar
500 ml water
1 punnet of strawberries, hulled and halved
1 cup thick yoghurt
1 cup cream, softly whipped

Lightly grease and line the base and sides of a 24 cm spring form cake tin.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Blend the ricotta, goat's cheese, sugar, almonds, lemon zest and the egg yolks in a food processor. Tip into a large bowl.

Beat the egg whites in another bowl until stiff. Use a large metal spoon to fold the egg whites in three lots into the ricotta mixture.

Pour the mixture into the tin, smooth the top and place in the oven.

Bake 30-35 minutes or until golden and just cooked in the middle. *The cake will rise quite high then deflate as it cools.* Allow to cool in the tin.

Lemon slices: Slice the lemons very thinly – *this is easily done using a mandolin* – and remove any pips. Place in a bowl and cover with boiling water. Stand for 3 hours.

Combine the sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for 5 minutes. Drain the lemons and add to the syrup. Place a circle of baking paper over the lemons and cover with a small plate. *This keeps the lemons submerged in the syrup.* Simmer very gently for 50-60 minutes until the lemon rind is translucent and the liquid has reduced to a syrup. Cool then store, covered, in the refrigerator.

To serve: Remove the paper from the cake and place it on a serving plate. Put the strawberries in a bowl and mix through as many glazed lemon slices and as much syrup as desired. Pile some of the fruit on top of the cake and serve the rest in a bowl. Dust the cake with icing sugar just before serving. Combine the yoghurt and cream and serve alongside the cake.

The cake will keep covered, in the refrigerator for 3-4 days. Top with the fruit when ready to serve. Serves 8

Mandolins are available from specialty cookware stores.

Orange and Ginger Cake with Ginger Syrup, Lychees and Pineapple

200 grams butter, melted and cooled
5 eggs
½ cup packed brown sugar
½ cup caster sugar
1½ cups plain flour
pinch of salt
½ cup finely chopped crystallized ginger
finely grated zest of 1 large orange
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Ginger syrup
1 cup water
¾ cup caster sugar
3 tablespoons grated fresh ginger

Garnish
½ a pineapple, peeled and eyes removed
1 x 400 gram tin lychees, well drained
mint leaves

To serve
icing sugar
crème fraîche

Grease a 24 cm spring-form cake tin and line the base with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Beat the eggs and sugars in an electric mixer until very thick and pale. Put the flour, salt and ginger in a bowl and toss to coat the ginger in flour. Using a large metal spoon, gently but thoroughly fold the two mixtures together, making sure there are no pockets of flour trapped in the batter.

Fold in the butter, zest and vanilla until well combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 30 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. *Cover the top loosely with foil if it is getting too brown.* Cool the cake in the tin.

Syrup: Place all the ingredients in a small saucepan, stirring over a low heat to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for about 8 minutes or until reduced by half.

To assemble: Remove the sides from the tin and invert the cake onto a large plate. Peel off the baking paper and using a thin skewer, poke holes all over the cake. Carefully spoon half the hot syrup over the cake. When the syrup has been absorbed, place another plate over the cake and turn the cake presentation side up. Pour the remaining syrup over the top.

To garnish: Remove the tough core from the pineapple and using a mandolin or a sharp knife, slice very thinly and place on kitchen towels to soak up the excess juice. Arrange the lychees on top of the cake then stack the sliced pineapple around and between the lychees. Dust with icing sugar and serve with a bowl of crème fraîche. Serves 10-12

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Orange and Ginger Cake with
Ginger Syrup, Lychees and Pineapple

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Baked Cinnamon Cheesecake

Spain produces many versions of this type of cake made with fresh cheese. It is best served the day it is baked when it is very light, although it is still delicious the next day, but has a firmer texture once refrigerated.

Filling
250 grams cream cheese at room temperature
⅓ cup cream
100 grams caster sugar
1 tablespoon plain flour
200 grams quark
2 tablespoons well flavoured, runny honey
5 eggs at room temperature
finely grated zest of 2 lemons

Topping
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon caster sugar

To serve
fresh berries or berry compote

Grease a 20 cm loose-based cake tin and line fully with baking paper.

Wrap the base of the tin in foil to prevent any leakage. Put the cake tin on a baking tray.

Preheat the oven to 170˚C – not fan bake.

Filling: Beat the cream cheese until smooth then add the cream, caster sugar, flour, quark and honey. Beat on low speed to combine. *Avoid over-beating as it adds too much air and causes the cheesecake to split when cooking.*

Beat in the eggs, one at a time, then stir in the lemon zest. Pour into the tin.

Bake for 15 minutes then reduce the temperature to 120˚C and bake for a further 15 minutes. Very carefully remove the cake from the oven and sprinkle over the combined cinnamon and sugar. *If sprinkled on too early it will sink into the cake and disappear.* Cook for a further 45 minutes or until just firm but with the very centre still a little wobbly. Leave to cool completely.

To serve: Remove from the tin and gently pull off the baking paper. Place on a serving plate and cut into wedges. Serve plain or with fresh berries or a berry compote. Serves 8

Olive Oil and Quince Paste Madeira Cake

finely grated zest of 1 lemon and 1 orange
150 grams caster sugar
1½ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
pinch of salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
150 ml light olive oil
3 eggs
juice of 1 orange
150 grams firm quince paste, diced

To serve
icing sugar
slices of fresh orange
mascarpone or ricotta

Grease and line a 4 cup-capacity loaf tin with baking paper.

Preheat the oven to 175˚C.

Put the lemon and orange zests and the caster sugar in a large bowl and rub together with your fingertips. *This infuses the sugar with the citrus oils.*

Stir in the flour, cinnamon, salt and baking powder.

Whisk the olive oil, eggs and orange juice together and beat into the dry ingredients to make a smooth batter.

Spoon a third of the batter into the loaf tin and scatter over a third of the quince paste. Repeat with another third of the batter and quince paste and top with the remaining cake mixture.

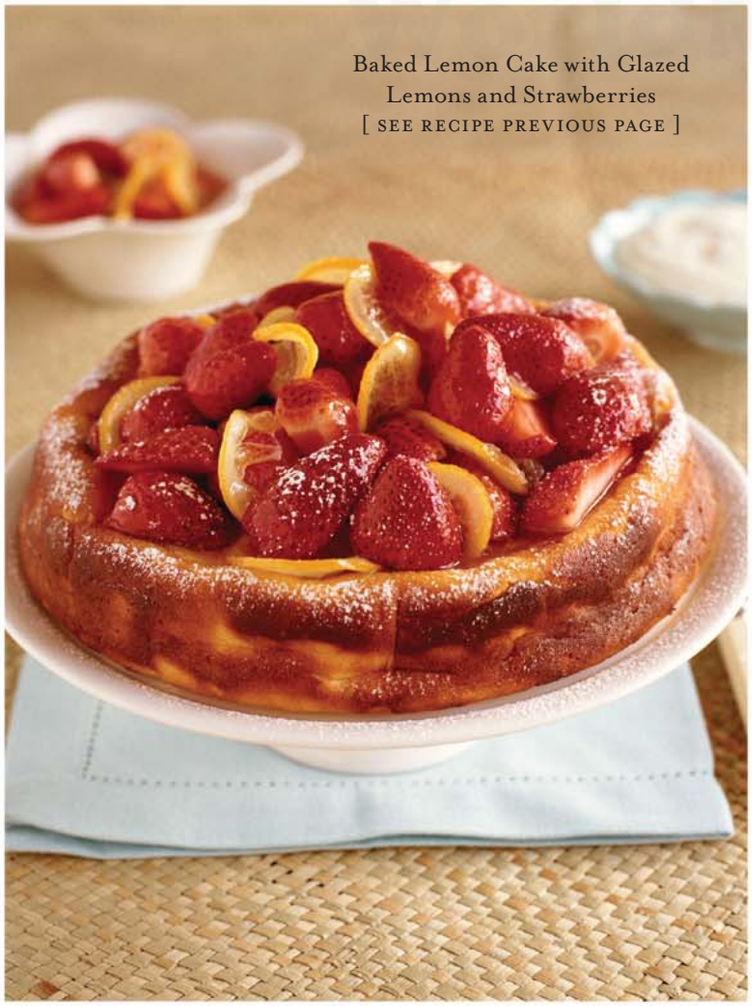
Bake for 10 minutes then dot the remaining quince paste over the top. *Layering the quince paste should give you pockets of it throughout the cake.*

Bake for a further 30 minutes or until well risen and a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin.

To serve: Dust the top with icing sugar and cut into slices. Serve with slices of fresh orange and a dollop of mascarpone or ricotta.

The cake will keep for a week in an airtight container. Makes 1 cake

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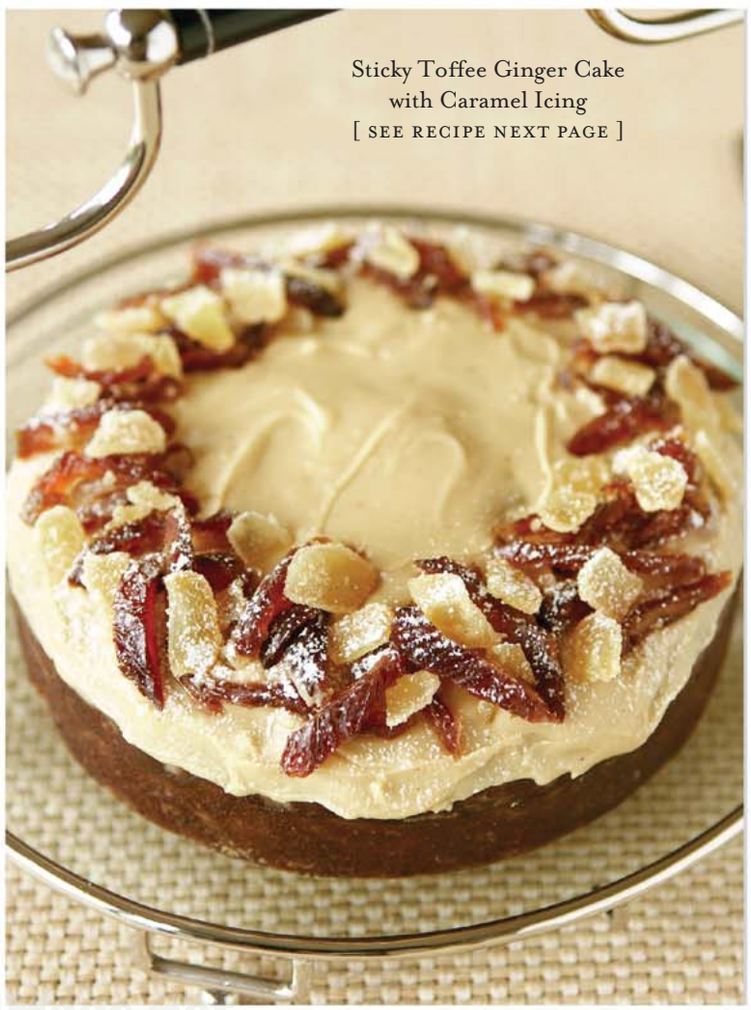
Baked Lemon Cake with Glazed Lemons and Strawberries
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Baked Cinnamon Cheesecake



Olive Oil and Quince Paste Madeira Cake



Sticky Toffee Ginger Cake with Caramel Icing
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Sticky Toffee Ginger Cake with Caramel Icing

This cake is a great dessert to make ahead. It will keep beautifully for 4 days in an airtight container.

200 grams pitted dates, finely chopped
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup hot strong black coffee
2 eggs, lightly beaten
3 tablespoons finely sliced crystallized ginger
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
110 grams butter
⅓ cup brown sugar
⅓ cup golden syrup
200 grams plain flour
pinch of salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons ground ginger
½ teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves

Caramel icing
50 grams butter
½ cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup milk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups icing sugar, sifted

To finish
5 dates, pitted and sliced
5 pieces crystallized ginger, sliced
crème fraîche or mascarpone to serve

Grease a 20 cm spring-form cake tin and line with baking paper.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Combine the dates, soda and coffee in a bowl and leave for 20 minutes. Pulse the date mixture in a food processor to form a paste. Tip into a bowl and stir in the eggs, crystallized ginger and vanilla.

Cream the butter, sugar and golden syrup until pale. Sift the flour, salt, baking powder and spices together then, using a large metal spoon, fold the flour in alternatively with the date mixture.

Pour into the tin and bake for about 40 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin.

Icing: Melt the butter and brown sugar in a saucepan, bring to the boil and cook for one minute. Remove from the heat and whisk in the milk and vanilla. Stir in the icing sugar to make a smooth icing. Allow to cool but not set, stirring occasionally until it is a thick pouring consistency. *The icing needs to be set enough to spread over the cake otherwise it will slide off the top and down the sides.* Decorate with the dates and ginger and serve with a dollop of crème fraîche or mascarpone. Serves 8

Brandied Fruit, Chocolate and Spice Christmas Cake

This delicious cake comes from Christchurch interior designer (and avid cook!), Marilyn Carter-Smith. It combines the best from a traditional Christmas cake with its brandy-soaked dried fruits, the richness of a dense, dark chocolate cake, as well as walnuts and spices. If time allows, soak the fruit for at least 1 week and up to 3 weeks.

Fruit mixture
500 grams dried fruit cake mix
75 grams glacé cherries
250 grams pitted prunes, roughly chopped
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup grated apple, skin on
2 tablespoons golden syrup
1 cup brandy

Cake
175 grams butter
¾ cup raw sugar
2 eggs
1¾ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon each ground nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and mixed spice
¼ teaspoon ground chilli, optional
250 grams dark chocolate, finely chopped, I used 72% cocoa
finely grated zest 1 orange
3 tablespoons orange juice
½ teaspoon baking soda

Fruit: Combine all the ingredients in a large bowl, cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Stir daily.

To assemble and cook: Preheat the oven to 150˚C and set the rack one level below the centre of the oven. Grease and fully line an 8 cm deep x 20 cm square cake tin with 3 layers of baking paper.

Beat the butter and sugar until pale and creamy. *The sugar will not be dissolved.* Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding a tablespoonful of the flour with each egg. *This stops the mixture from curdling.* Combine the remaining flour, baking powder, spices and chocolate in a bowl. Stir the orange zest, juice and baking soda together in another bowl. Using a large metal spoon, fold both mixtures into the butter along with the soaked fruit.

Spoon into the tin and smooth the top. Cover with a piece of baking paper, pressing it onto the mixture. Wrap a thick piece of brown paper around the outside of the tin, securing with kitchen string.

Bake for about 2 hours or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. *Make sure it's not just melted chocolate on the skewer.* Cool in the tin.

To serve: The cake can be left unadorned or can be iced with a traditional icing or chocolate ganache. It's also delicious served with fresh berries and mascarpone. Makes 1 cake

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Brandied Fruit, Chocolate
and Spice Christmas Cake



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Blackberry and Lemon Loaf

This is a lovely loaf to add to your baking repertoire. Raspberries, boysenberries or blueberries can also be used when in season and frozen berries work well too.

185 grams butter
1 cup caster sugar
finely grated zest of 1 orange and 1 large lemon
¼ cup lemon juice, make up with orange juice if needed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 eggs
1½ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt
½ cup ground almonds
about 42 fresh or frozen blackberries
1 tablespoon caster sugar

To serve
icing sugar for dusting
softly whipped cream

Grease and fully line a 23 cm x 12 cm loaf tin with baking paper. Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Put the butter, sugar, citrus zest and lemon juice in a saucepan and heat gently, stirring to dissolve the sugar. *Do not boil the mixture.* Cool.

Whisk in the vanilla extract and eggs. *The mixture will be thick but runny.*

Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl, pour on the butter mixture and whisk until smooth.

Pour half the mixture into the tin and dot with half the blackberries, gently pushing them into the batter. *If using frozen berries do not thaw first as thawed fruit will bleed into the batter.* Carefully pour over the remaining batter and place the remaining blackberries on the top. *Don't push them into the batter.* Sprinkle the berries with sugar.

Bake for 55-60 minutes or until the cake is firm to the touch and is pulling away from the sides. *Cover the top lightly with foil if it is browning too fast.* Cool in the tin.

To serve: Remove the cake from the tin and transfer to a serving plate. Dust with icing sugar and serve with a bowl of softly whipped cream. Serves 8

Fig and Ginger Loaf with Ricotta and Fresh Mango

25 ml milk
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 eggs
1 egg yolk
100 ml vegetable oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons golden syrup
⅓ cup sliced preserved ginger in syrup
200 grams plain flour
¼ teaspoon salt
1½ teaspoons ground ginger
½ teaspoon cinnamon
150 grams caster sugar
¾ cup diced dried figs

To serve
200 grams ricotta
1 fresh mango, peeled and sliced
syrup from jar of preserved ginger

Preheat the oven to 125˚C. Grease and line a 3 cup-capacity loaf tin with baking paper.

Warm the milk and add the baking soda, stirring to dissolve. Whisk in the 2 eggs and the egg yolk then stir in the oil, vanilla extract, golden syrup and the preserved ginger.

Combine the flour, salt, ginger, cinnamon and the sugar in a bowl. Add the figs and toss with the flour to coat each piece. Tip in the liquids and use a large metal spoon to fold together. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for about 1½ hours or until firm to the touch. Set aside to cool.

To serve: Slice the loaf and top with ricotta and sliced mangoes. Drizzle with a little ginger syrup. Makes 1 loaf

The loaf is also delicious when the slices are placed on a medium hot, ridged grill for about 1 minute each side, or they can be lightly toasted.

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Fig and Ginger Loaf with
Ricotta and Fresh Mango





Blackberry and Lemon Loaf
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Claire's Grandmother's Fruit Salad Loaf

This loaf brings back fond memories for Dish Food Editor Claire Aldous: "School holidays were always special when spent with my Nanna and Poppa. Being a farmer's wife meant Nana always had the tins filled with delicious cakes and slices for the morning and afternoon 'smokos'. This fruit salad loaf was what Nana called "a great keeper", staying moist right to the last slice."

150 grams butter, softened
175 grams sugar
175 grams plain flour
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon mixed spice
3 eggs
zest and juice of one orange
8 plump dried apricots, thinly sliced
¼ cup well drained crushed pineapple
⅓ cup mashed ripe banana
¾ cup icing sugar
zest and juice of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Grease and line the base and sides of a 1.75 litre-capacity loaf tin with baking paper.

Cream the butter and sugar together until pale and creamy. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder and the mixed spice.

Beat the eggs into the butter one at a time until well mixed. Add the dry ingredients, orange juice and zest, apricots, pineapple and banana and fold through using a large metal spoon. Tip into the tin and smooth the top.

Bake 40-50 minutes or until firm to the touch and the sides are pulling away from the baking paper. Cool a little before removing the tin.

Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and add enough lemon juice to make a smooth, pourable icing. Drizzle this over the cake, allowing some of it to run down the sides. Sprinkle over the lemon zest while the icing is still wet.

The loaf will keep in an airtight container for 4 days. Makes 1 loaf

Zucchini, Fig and Almond Loaf

3-4 medium zucchini to give 2¼ cups grated zucchini
2¼ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon each whole cumin seed and aniseed, toasted
finely grated zest of 1 large lemon
1 cup thinly sliced dried figs
70 grams slivered almonds, toasted
3 eggs
¾ cup vegetable oil
To serve
soft ripe cheese, such as Brie

Preheat the oven to 150˚C.

Grease and line a 2 litre loaf pan with baking paper.

Grate the zucchini and place in a clean tea towel. Roll up tightly and squeeze out all the excess water.

Put the flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda, sugar, spices, lemon zest, figs, almonds and the zucchini in a large bowl and toss so the figs and zucchini are well coated in flour and not clumped together.

Whisk the eggs and oil together and stir into the zucchini mixture to make a very thick batter. Make sure there are no pockets of flour in the batter.

Spoon into the tin and use a fork to press it into an even layer. Bake for about 70 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the loaf comes out clean. Cool in the tin.

To serve: Slice the loaf thickly and spread with soft cheese.
Makes 1 loaf

To toast spices - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Wrap the loaf in plastic wrap and store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Use two teaspoons of cumin seeds if you have difficulty locating whole aniseed. This will give a different flavour to the loaf but will still be delicious. Aniseed is not the same as star anise.

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Claire's Grandmother's Fruit Salad Loaf
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Zucchini, Fig and Almond Loaf
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Pumpkin Loaf with Butterscotch Icing and Candied Pumpkin Seeds

1 cup light muscovado sugar or brown sugar
⅓ cup vegetable oil
2 eggs
150 grams grated raw pumpkin
finely grated zest 1 orange
1½ cups plain flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons mixed spice

Candied pumpkin seeds
1 egg white
¼ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon each ground ginger and cinnamon
70 grams raw pumpkin seeds

Butterscotch icing
60 grams butter
125 grams brown sugar
50 ml cream
375 grams icing sugar, sifted

3 x 1⅓ cup-capacity small loaf tins or 1 x 4 cup-capacity loaf tin

Preheat the oven to 150˚C.

Lightly grease and line the base of the loaf tins with baking paper.

Whisk the sugar, oil and eggs together in a large bowl and stir in the pumpkin and orange zest. Combine the dry ingredients and fold into the pumpkin mixture. Divide the mixture between the tins and bake for 30-35 minutes until firm and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tins. *A large loaf will take about 1 hour.*

Pumpkin seeds: Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Using a fork, lightly whisk the egg white, sugar and spices together in a bowl, add the pumpkin seeds and combine well. Spread out evenly on a lined baking tray and bake for 4 minutes. *The mixture will puff up.* Turn the seeds over with a palette knife and bake again for another 4 minutes. *They will form small sticky clumps and will crisp up when cold.* Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

Icing: Heat the butter and sugar in a saucepan until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and whisk in the cream and icing sugar until smooth. Spread the warm icing over the cake and sprinkle with the candied pumpkin seeds. *If the icing sets before you have iced the cakes, reheat to a spreadable consistency.* Dust the tops with icing sugar before serving. *The loaves can also be left un-iced and served simply dusted with icing sugar, or plain, with or without butter.*

Makes 3 small loaves.



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biscuits & slices



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Chocolate and Cherry Brownie

150 grams butter
150 grams dark chocolate (67% cocoa), chopped
3 eggs
¾ cup caster sugar
¼ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup plain flour
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional
350 grams cherries, halved and pitted

Preheat the oven to 175˚C.

Grease a 24 cm x 24 cm cake tin and fully line with baking paper.

Put the butter and chocolate in a small bowl and place over a saucepan of simmering water, ensuring the base of the bowl is not touching the water. Stir occasionally until the chocolate is melted and smooth. *Don't let the mixture get too hot.* Cool.

Whisk the eggs, sugar and vanilla in a large bowl until combined, but not light and fluffy, then whisk in the cooled chocolate mixture. Sift over the combined flour, salt, baking powder and cinnamon and using a large metal spoon, fold together. Stir in half the cherries and pour the batter into the tin. Scatter over the remaining cherries.

Bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out with damp crumbs attached. Cool in the tin. Cut into small pieces and dust with icing sugar to serve. Store in an airtight container for 3-4 days.

Raspberry Parisian Macarons

100 grams egg whites
pinch of cream of tartar
2 tablespoons caster sugar
1-2 teaspoons raspberry essence
red food colouring
140 grams ground almonds
220 grams icing sugar

Filling
85 grams butter, soft but not melted
175 grams icing sugar, sifted
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
red food colouring

Preheat the oven to 150°C.

Whisk the egg whites and cream of tartar to soft peaks in an electric mixer. Add the caster sugar, raspberry essence and a few tiny drops of red food colouring. *Dip a wooden skewer in the colouring and add cautiously. You don't want bright red macarons but the colour will fade during cooking so a deepish pink colour is best.* Continue to beat until stiff peaks but not dry.

Sift the ground almonds and icing sugar together, adding any almonds that haven't gone through the sieve into the bowl. Using a large metal spoon, fold into the egg whites until well combined. *Don't worry about losing volume, the mixture should not be too light and airy.* Spoon into a piping bag fitted with a 1½ cm wide plain piping nozzle. Pipe small rounds, about 3 cm apart, on lined baking trays.

Drop the trays a couple of times on the bench to get rid of any air bubbles and to flatten them slightly. Leave for 45-50 minutes until a good skin has formed on top of the macarons. *This is an integral part of the recipe. Without this step they will not have their distinctive smooth tops.*

Bake the trays, one at a time, for 12-14 minutes. Leave for 5 minutes before gently transferring to a cooling rack.

Butter cream: Beat the butter, icing sugar and vanilla extract together until light and creamy. Add a few drops of red food colouring to make a pale pink colour.

To assemble: Spoon the butter cream into a piping bag and pipe a small round on half the macarons. Top with another macaron and gently press together. The macarons will keep for 2-3 days in an airtight container in the refrigerator, but will soften on keeping.
Makes about 30 doubles

Photography by Manja Wachsmuth. Styling by Lisa Morton. Rachel Carley fluted plates from Tessuti – phone 09 376 4802. All uncredited props are stylist's own.

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Chocolate and Cherry Brownie
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Raspberry Parisian Macarons
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Hazelnut and Chocolate Ganache Cookies

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Hazelnut and Chocolate Ganache Cookies

250 grams hazelnuts

250 grams icing sugar plus extra for rolling out

4 tablespoons flour

30 grams good quality candied orange peel, finely chopped

finely grated zest of ½ an orange

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 egg plus 1 egg yolk

Ganache

200 ml cream

200 grams good dark chocolate, chopped

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Put the hazelnuts in a baking dish and roast in the oven for 8-10 minutes or until golden. Tip into a tea-towel and rub off the skins. Allow to cool.

Place the nuts in a food processor and pulse to coarsely grind. Add the icing sugar, flour, candied peel, orange zest and cinnamon and process again until finely chopped. Whisk the egg and the yolk together and tip onto the nut mixture. Pulse until the dough comes together. It will be quite soft and sticky. Scrape into a bowl, cover and refrigerate until firm.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Lightly sprinkle the bench and your hands with icing sugar. Break off small pieces of dough and roll into marble-sized balls. Use a fork to flatten a little, then dip the tops into the icing sugar to give a good coating. Place on lined baking trays.

Bake the cookies for about 10 minutes or until a light golden brown. Cool slightly then transfer to a cooling rack.

Ganache: Bring the cream to just below boiling point in a small saucepan. Add the chocolate and whisk until smooth. Tip into a bowl and cool to a spreadable consistency.

Spoon the ganache into a piping bag and pipe a layer onto the smooth side of half the biscuits. Sandwich with the remaining cookies and dust the tops with more icing sugar if desired. Unfilled cookies will keep for 3 days in an airtight container. Filled cookies will stay crisp for 1 day but will soften on keeping. Makes about 80 single cookies

Sicilian Date, Fig and Lemon Biscuits – Cuchidahti

Filling

175 grams pitted dates, roughly chopped

175 grams dried figs, roughly chopped

70 grams butter at room temperature

zest and juice of 1 large lemon

Pastry

150 grams butter at room temperature

½ cup caster sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1¾ cups plain flour

Icing

2 cups icing sugar, sifted

¼ cup milk

1 lemon

Put the dates, figs, butter, lemon zest and juice in a food processor and process to a smooth paste. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Dough: Beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until well combined. Fold in the flour to make a smooth dough.

Turn out onto a large piece of plastic wrap and form into a disc. Wrap and refrigerate until firm. *The dough will be very soft when first made.*

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Cut the dough into three even pieces. Working with one piece at a time and keeping the remaining pastry refrigerated, roll out on a well-floured surface to a rectangle 40 cm x 10 cm. Put a third of the filling, in teaspoonfuls, along the centre of the pastry, leaving a border each side. *Don't flatten the filling.* Brush the border lightly with water and fold one side of the dough over the filling, then roll the pastry towards you to form a log. *If it breaks, gently press the pastry together.* Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling.

Cut into 9 cm pieces and carefully lift onto a lined baking tray. Cut 4 slits along the top and gently bend each roll into a slight curve. Refrigerate until firm.

Bake for 20 minutes until a light golden brown. Transfer to a cooling rack.

Icing: Combine the icing sugar and milk in a bowl until smooth. You want a thick, but pouring consistency so adjust with more icing sugar or milk as needed. Using a teaspoon, drizzle the icing over the biscuits and using a fine grater, zest the lemon over the icing before it sets.

Dust with icing sugar to serve. Makes about 20

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Sicilian Date, Fig and
Lemon Biscuits – Cuchidahti
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Double Chocolate Chip
and Oatmeal Cookies
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]

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Double Chocolate Chip and Oatmeal Cookies

1½ cups plain flour
1 cup rolled oats
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon ground allspice
¾ cup each white and dark chocolate buttons
¾ cup melted butter
1 cup brown sugar
¼ cup caster sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 170°C.

Combine the flour, oats, salt, baking soda, allspice and the chocolate in a large bowl.

Combine the butter and sugar in another bowl then whisk in the vanilla extract and the eggs.

Pour into the dry ingredients and stir to combine well. *The dough is soft and can't be rolled out.*

Place tablespoons of the dough on lined baking trays about 5 cm apart, giving them plenty of room to spread and flatten with the back of a fork.

Bake in batches, for 8-10 minutes until golden.

Leave on the tray for 5 minutes then transfer to a cooling rack.
Makes about 24 cookies

Italian Spiced Orange Shortbread – Sbriciolona

'Sbriciolona' is Italian for 'crumble'. This is my version of the delicious, shortbread-style dessert. It's the perfect finale to a meal. Dip pieces in the yoghurt cream and serve with fresh berries and muscatels.

1½ cups whole, skin-on almonds, roasted and roughly chopped
2¼ cups plain flour
¾ cup rice flour
pinch of sea salt
¾ teaspoon baking powder
¾ cup castor sugar
⅓ cup brown sugar
200 grams butter, cubed
finely grated zest of ½ an orange
3 egg yolks
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

Topping
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 170°C.

Grease and line the base of a 30 cm spring form cake tin or loose-based tart tin.

Put both flours, salt, baking powder and both sugars in a food processor and pulse to blend. Add the butter and zest and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg yolks and vanilla and pulse until the mixture is damp but not forming large clumps. *Don't be tempted to add any extra liquid, keep pulsing and the mixture will come together.* Tip into a large bowl and stir in the almonds. Using your fingertips, press the mixture firmly into the tin, leaving the surface bumpy and uneven.

Combine the sugar and spices and sprinkle over the top. Bake for 45-50 minutes until a good golden colour and firm to the touch. *Cover the top loosely with a piece of tin foil if it is browning too fast.* Cool completely before removing from the tin.

To serve: Cut into irregular pieces and stack on a serving platter. Dust with icing sugar before serving. Sbriciolona will keep for 3-4 days in an airtight container.

To roast nuts – see Techniques page 136.

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Italian Spiced Orange
Shortbread – Sbriciolona

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Apricot, Almond and Chocolate Biscuits

110 grams butter
¼ cup packed brown sugar
⅓ cup golden syrup
50 grams dried apricots, thinly sliced
50 grams good quality dark chocolate, chopped
50 grams slivered almonds, toasted
⅔ cup self-raising flour
pinch salt
1 cup porridge oats
100 grams good quality dark chocolate, melted

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Put the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a saucepan and stir over a medium heat to dissolve the sugar. Cool to lukewarm.

Toss the apricots, chocolate, almonds, flour, salt and the oats in a bowl.

Pour on the butter mixture and stir to combine.

Place a spoonful in your hand and gently squeeze together. Form into a ball, place on a lined baking tray 3 cm apart and flatten lightly with a fork.

Bake for about 10 minutes until lightly golden. Leave on the tray for 5 minutes then transfer to a cooling rack.

Drizzle the chocolate over the cold biscuits and leave to set.

Store in an airtight container. Makes about 18

Almond Cookies – Polvorones

These melt-in-the-mouth biscuits are wrapped in tissue paper and given to all good children in Spain as a treat when the Three Wise Men bring their presents on the Twelfth Night.

70 grams ground almonds
200 grams butter at room temperature
200 grams icing sugar
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
250 grams plain flour
pinch of salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon cardamom
extra icing sugar to garnish

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Spread the ground almonds on a baking tray and toast in the oven until a pale gold colour. *Don't let them get too brown as they continue to darken on cooling.*

Cream the butter, icing sugar and lemon zest until light and fluffy.

Combine the dry ingredients and mix into the butter to form a dough. Tip onto the bench and bring together. Flatten into a disc, wrap well and refrigerate until firm.

Roll out on a lightly floured bench to 1 cm thick. Using a biscuit cutter or ruler, cut into diamonds or circles. Carefully lift onto lined baking trays and bake for 10-12 minutes or until lightly golden.

Leave on the tray for 10 minutes to firm up then transfer to a cooling rack. Dredge with the extra icing sugar before serving.

The polvorones will keep for several days stored in an airtight container. Makes about 30

Macadamia and Blue Cheese Biscuits

Serve these nutty, cheesy biscuits with an aperitif. The dough can be kept ready in the freezer to be sliced and baked when required.

150 grams macadamia nuts
¾ cup plain flour
pinch salt
pinch cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
50 grams cold butter cut into small dice
75 grams soft blue cheese, crumbled
25 grams freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Roast and roughly chop the macadamias.

Place the macadamia nuts, flour, salt, cayenne and rosemary into a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the butter and pulse until it resembles coarse crumbs. Add both cheeses and pulse until the dough just starts to come together. Tip onto a piece of baking paper and roll up into a cylinder about 4 cm thick. Refrigerate until firm.

Slice the chilled dough into 1 cm thick slices and place on a lined baking tray. Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden brown and the centre is firm. *Do not allow them to get too dark or the nuts will taste bitter.*

Transfer to a rack to cool. Store in an airtight container. Makes about 30

To roast nuts - see Techniques page 136.

Spiced Sesame and Honey Torrone

Torrone usually refers to a sweet made with egg whites, honey and nuts, but in Sicily it can refer to a variety of different sweetmeats containing honey.

1 cup raw sesame seeds
½ cup granulated sugar
1 cup light floral honey, such as Viper's Bugloss
½ teaspoon ground cardamom or cinnamon
1½ cups soft, white breadcrumbs, made from 2 day old bread
finely grated zest from 1 orange and 1 lemon
1 teaspoon orange flower water

Grease and line a 20 cm cake tin with baking paper.

Put the sesame seeds, sugar, honey and cardamom in a saucepan and bring to the boil over a low heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

Boil for 4 minutes then add the breadcrumbs and, stirring continuously, cook for 3 minutes until the mixture becomes thick and pulls away from the side of the saucepan. Stir in the zest and orange flower water.

Tip the mixture into the tin and spread to an even layer. Cool.

To serve: Peel off the baking paper and using a very sharp knife, cut into small pieces. Store in an airtight container between pieces of baking paper.

The torrone is very sticky – only use baking paper or plastic wrap when storing.

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Apricot, Almond and Chocolate Biscuits



Almond Cookies – Polvorones



Macadamia and Blue Cheese Biscuits



Spiced Sesame and Honey Torrone

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Warm Lemon Madeleines with
Lemon Posset and Lemon Curd
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Chocolate, Rum and Spice Cookies
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]



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Warm Lemon Madeleines with Lemon Posset and Lemon Curd

You can make this batter for these delightful little cakes up to 12 hours ahead. Keep it refrigerated until ready to use.

125 grams butter
finely grated zest of 1 large lemon
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs
125 grams caster sugar
125 grams plain flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
pinch salt

Lemon posset
450 ml cream
½ cup caster sugar
finely grated zest and juice of 2 lemons

To serve
½ cup lemon or lime curd, optional
icing sugar for dusting
1 x 12 hole madeleine tray
melted butter for brushing the tins

Posset: Combine the cream, sugar and lemon zest in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. *If you use a small pot the mixture is likely to boil over.* Simmer for 5 minutes then remove from the heat and pour in the lemon juice. Stir well then pour into small cups or glasses. Cover and chill for 2 hours to set.

Madeleines: Melt the butter then stir in the lemon zest and vanilla and set aside to cool.

Beat the eggs and caster sugar in an electric mixer until very thick and pale and tripled in volume.

Sift over the combined dry ingredients in three batches and, using a large metal spoon, gently but thoroughly fold together, ensuring there are no pockets of flour in the batter. Drizzle the butter around the edge of the mixture and fold through.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes and up to 12 hours.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Brush the madeleine tins well with melted butter and fill with a generous tablespoon of batter.

Bake for 8 minutes until golden, risen and firm to the touch. Transfer to a cooling rack. Rinse the tray, dry and re-butter if you need to make a second batch.

To serve: Stack the madeleines on a serving platter and dust generously with icing sugar. Put the lemon curd into small dishes or glasses and serve with the posset. Dip the madeleines into the curd or posset and eat. Makes 24 regular sized madeleines

Chocolate, Rum and Spice Cookies

130 grams good dark chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons rum
300 grams plain flour
¼ cup Dutch cocoa
¼-½ teaspoon chilli powder
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
120 grams butter at room temperature
¾ cup caster sugar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 egg
fine zest of ½ an orange

Put the chocolate and rum in a heat proof bowl and gently melt over a pot of simmering water. Set aside to cool.

Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla together until pale and creamy. Add the egg then mix in the cooled chocolate.

Combine the dry ingredients and fold into the egg mixture.

Tip the dough onto the bench and roll into 2 logs about 2 cm in diameter.

Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm but not solid. *If it is too hard the dough will crack and break when cut.*

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Slice the dough into 1½ cm thick rounds and place on a lined baking tray.

Bake for 7 minutes then carefully turn them over and cook for another 3-4 minutes.

Transfer to a cooling rack and when cold dust with icing sugar or drizzle with chocolate ganache. Store the cookies in an airtight container for up to a week. Makes about 30 cookies

Dutch cocoa – see Glossary page 138.

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tarts
sweet & savoury



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Little Lime Meringue Tarts

Meringues
1 egg white
2 tablespoons caster sugar
2 tablespoons icing sugar
1 teaspoon fine lime zest

Pastry
60 grams butter at room temperature
50 grams icing sugar
1 egg
125 grams flour

Filling
200 grams soft goat's cheese
¼ cup caster sugar
fine zest and juice 1 lime
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ cup cream

Meringues: Preheat the oven to 75˚C. Beat the egg white with a pinch of salt to soft peaks. Gradually add the caster sugar and beat until thick and glossy. Add the sifted icing sugar and the lime zest and beat for 1 minute. Pipe tiny meringues onto a lined baking tray and cook for approximately 1½ hours or until crisp. Cool and store in an airtight container.

Pastry: Put the butter and sugar in a food processor and blend for 2 minutes. Add the egg and process until smooth. Add the flour and a pinch of salt and pulse to just bring together. Tip onto the bench and form into a flat disc. *The pastry will be very soft.* Cover and refrigerate until firm.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Roll the pastry out gently on a floured bench. Cut out 8 x 10 cm circles.

Line lightly greased ½ cup capacity muffin tins then refrigerate again until firm. Bake the tarts blind (see below) for 12 minutes, remove the paper and beans and cook for another 2 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Reduce the oven temperature to 160˚C.

Filling: Beat the goat's cheese, sugar, lime zest and juice until smooth then whisk in the eggs and cream. Pour into the tart shells. Bake for 20 minutes or until the filling is just set. Set aside to cool.

To serve: Top each tart with meringues and lightly dust with icing sugar. *These tarts are best if not refrigerated. Make and eat them on the same day.* Makes 8 tarts

To 'bake blind' – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Nectarine and Polenta Tart

This recipe makes more pastry than is required for one tart. Freeze the rest and use to make small tarts.

Pastry
125 grams butter at room temperature
½ cup caster sugar
1 egg
1¼ cups plain flour
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon sea salt
¼ cup quick cook polenta

Filling
3-4 firm but ripe nectarines
3 tablespoons plain flour
pinch of salt
3 tablespoons caster sugar
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
3 tablespoons cold butter
3 sugar cubes, roughly crushed, optional

35 cm x 10 cm loose-based tart tin

Pastry: Beat the butter and sugar for 1 minute. Beat in the egg then mix in the flour, allspice, salt and polenta. Tip onto the bench and form into a flat rectangle. *The pastry will be soft.* Wrap in cling film and chill for 1 hour or until firm.

Roll out on a lightly floured bench to a 40 cm x 20 cm rectangle. Line the tin with the pastry and trim off any excess. Chill or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 160˚C.

Filling: Halve and stone the nectarines then cut each half into 5-6 wedges. Arrange the fruit cut side up in two rows, wedging the slices against one another so they are tightly packed. Combine the flour, salt, sugar, ginger and butter in a bowl. Using your finger tips, rub together to form coarse crumbs then sprinkle over the nectarines.

Put the sugar cubes in a plastic bag and pound gently to crush coarsely then set aside. Bake the tart for 25 minutes then sprinkle the crushed sugar cubes over the top if using. Bake for a further 5 minutes until the nectarines are tender and the pastry is golden. Cool for 20 minutes before removing from the tin.

Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 8

Photography by Manja Wachsmuth. Styling by Lisa Morton. Rachel Carley platter from Tessuti – phone 09 376 4802. Rachel Carley Tulip bowl from Sabato – phone 0800 SABATO. All uncredited props are stylist's own.

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Nectarine and Polenta Tart
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Pedro Ximénez Sherry and Raisin Tart

Pedro Ximénez is a rich Spanish sherry, also known as PX. It can be substituted here with a sweet Marsala wine.

Pastry
1⅔ cups plain flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
¾ cup icing sugar, sifted
110 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg yolk
2-3 tablespoons chilled water
26 cm tart tin with a removable base

Filling
¼ cup Pedro Ximénez sherry
1 cup large raisins
3 eggs plus 2 egg yolks
½ cup caster sugar
400 ml cream

To serve
1 cup cream
2 tablespoons Pedro Ximénez sherry

Pastry: Put the flour, salt, icing sugar and butter in a food processor and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and 2 tablespoons of the water and add, pulsing until the dough just starts to come together. Add the extra water only if necessary.

Tip onto a large piece of plastic wrap and bring the dough together to form a flat disc. Wrap and chill until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm. Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, then remove the baking beans and paper. Reduce the oven to 175˚C and bake for a further 5 minutes or until the pastry is lightly golden and dry. Cool.

Filling: Put the sherry and raisins in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Cool.

Whisk the eggs, egg yolks and the caster sugar in a bowl then stir in the cream. Add the raisins and sherry. Pour the filling into the tart case and gently distribute the raisins. Bake for 30-35 minutes until the top is golden and the filling is just set. Cool the tart in the tin.

To serve: Whisk the cream and sherry to soft peaks and place in a serving bowl. Remove the tart from the tin and lightly dust the edges with icing sugar. Serves 8-10

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Mango Tart with Sweet Red Chilli Syrup

5 sheets filo pastry
½ cup melted butter

Filling
¼ cup grated dark palm sugar
¼ cup cashew nuts, roasted
¼ cup desiccated coconut, toasted
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Sweet red chilli syrup
2 long red chillis
½ cup caster sugar
1¼ cups water
juice of 1 lime

To finish
1 cup thick plain yoghurt
½ cup mascarpone or sour cream
finely grated zest ½ an orange
1 mango, peeled
icing sugar

Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Lightly grease a 24 cm tart tin with a removable base.

Sweet red chilli syrup: Halve the chillis lengthwise and scrape out the seeds with a teaspoon. Slice finely, lengthways, into julienne (see below). Place with the other ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for 20 minutes or until syrupy. *Very small bubbles will be on the surface.* Cool and chill.

Filling: Put all the ingredients in a food processor and grind finely.

To assemble: Lay one sheet of pastry on the bench, keeping the others covered with a damp tea towel. Brush with butter and sprinkle one half of the sheet with a fifth of the filling. Fold the other half over the top and brush with butter. Place in the tin, gently pressing it into the sides.

Repeat with the remaining pastry, buttering and filling, placing each sheet in the tin in alternate directions. Fold the overhanging pastry down to the rim of the tin. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a good golden colour. Cool in the tin.

To serve: Whisk the yoghurt, mascarpone and orange zest together and spoon into the tart. Using a vegetable peeler, 'peel' the mango flesh into long strips, curl and arrange over the cream. Drizzle with the chilli and syrup and dust the edges of the tart with icing sugar. Serves 4-6

Julienne – see 'Techniques' page 136.

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Pedro Ximénez Sherry
and Raisin Tart



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Mango Tart with Sweet Red Chilli Syrup
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Honey Nut Tart
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Honey Nut Tart

Use a single type or a combination of nuts in this tart. Look for roasted unsalted nuts, otherwise roast the nuts separately before using (see 'Techniques' page 136).

Pastry
200 grams plain flour
pinch of salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons caster sugar
125 grams butter, diced and chilled
2-3 tablespoons cold water

Filling
½ cup each roughly chopped skin-on almonds, brazil and cashew nuts, roasted
½ cup caster sugar
½ cup honey
½ teaspoon sea salt
125 grams butter, diced
finely grated zest 1 orange
½ cup cream
1 egg
1 egg yolk

To serve
icing sugar
softly whipped cream
24 cm x 3.5-4 cm deep loose- based tart tin

Pastry: Place the flour, salt, cinnamon and sugar in a food processor with the butter and pulse to coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over the water and pulse again until the dough just starts to come together.

Tip onto the bench and gently bring the dough together with your hands. Form into a flat disc, wrap and chill until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Patch any holes in the pastry or the filling will leak out and bake onto the base of the tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, then remove the baking beans and paper and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool. Reduce the oven to 180˚C.

Filling: Melt the sugar, honey and salt in a saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Bring to the boil and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in the butter and orange zest. Cool for 20 minutes.

Whisk the cream, egg and egg yolk in a bowl then whisk in the honey mixture. Scatter the nuts over the base of the tart and gently pour over the filling, redistributing the nuts evenly. Bake for about 40 minutes until the pastry is golden brown and the centre is set but still has a little wobble. Cover loosely with a piece of aluminium foil if the top is getting too brown. Place on a cooling rack and cool completely before removing from the tin.

To serve: Dust with icing sugar and serve with softly whipped cream. A salad of fresh mango with mint is a lovely accompaniment. The tart will keep in an airtight container for 2 days. Serves 8

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Fruit Tartlettes

Pastry – pâte sablé
250 grams plain flour
½ teaspoon salt
180 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
60 grams icing sugar

Crème patissière
1½ cups milk
1 vanilla bean or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 egg yolks
90 grams caster sugar
35 grams cornflour
2 tablespoons brandy – optional
¼ cup cream, whipped to soft peaks

To finish
selection of fresh fruit, (I used blueberries, kiwifruit and tamarillos)
½ cup apricot jam
¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
mint sprigs for garnish
15 brioche tins or other small tart tins

Pastry: Put the flour, salt and butter in a food processor and blend to coarse crumbs. Stir the egg, vanilla extract and icing sugar together and pour over the flour. Pulse until the dough just starts to come together.

Tip onto the bench and gently form into a disc. Cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm. Roll out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tins. Place in the freezer for at least 15 minutes prior to baking.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake blind (see below) for 15 minutes then remove the baking paper and beans. Reduce the oven to 170˚C and bake until the pastry is golden and cooked through. *A lower temperature is required due to the high butter content in the pastry, which can burn easily.*

Crème patissière: Put the milk into a saucepan. Halve the vanilla bean and scrape the seeds out with the point of a knife. Add the seeds and pod to the milk and slowly bring to just below boiling point.

Whisk the egg yolks, caster sugar and cornflour together. Remove the vanilla bean and slowly whisk in the hot milk then pour the whole mixture back into the saucepan. Place over a medium heat and stirring constantly, bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 2 minutes, stirring constantly, to cook out the cornflour. Stir in the brandy.

Tip into a bowl and cover the surface with a piece of plastic wrap. Cool and refrigerate until ready to use. Whisk the custard to loosen and fold in the cream. Heat the jam and press through a sieve to remove any bits of skin. Stir in 1-2 teaspoons of boiling water to thin down if necessary.

To assemble: Fill the tart cases with crème patissière and top with sliced fruit. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush the fruit with the apricot glaze and scatter with the almonds and a sprig of mint. *Glazing the fruit gives a glossy shine and prevents the fruit from discolouring.* Makes 15

The tarts can be topped with fresh berries or stone fruit in summer, roasted apples or pears in autumn, poached dried fruits or any good quality purchased preserved fruits.

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Fruit Tartlettes

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Strawberry and Lemon Tart

This recipe is based loosely on a 'shaker lemon tart', in which whole lemons are sliced thinly, combined with lots of sugar and left to marinate overnight before being baked in pastry. (You can use 300 grams of good quality purchased sweet short pastry if you don't want to make your own.)

Pastry
250 grams plain flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ cup icing sugar
150 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg
2 tablespoons cornflour
2 eggs
1 egg yolk
½ cup melted butter, cooled
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

To finish
1 punnet strawberries
icing sugar for dusting

Filling
1 large juicy lemon
½ an orange
1¼ cups caster sugar

35 cm x 10 cm rectangular tart tin with a removable base

Pastry: Put the flour, salt, icing sugar and butter in a food processor and pulse to coarse crumbs. Add the egg and pulse again until the dough just starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and gently bring the dough together with your hands. Form into a disc, wrap and chill until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, then remove the baking beans and paper. Reduce the oven to 175˚C and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool.

Filling: Cut the lemon and orange into quarters and remove the pips. Chop the fruit roughly and place in a food processor with the sugar. Process until the fruit is finely chopped then tip into a bowl. Put the cornflour in a small bowl and stir in a ¼ cup of the fruit mixture until smooth. Tip back into the bowl and add the remaining ingredients, gently whisking to combine. *You don't want a lot of bubbles in the mixture.*

Pour into the tart case and bake for 25 minutes until the filling is just firm and the top is lightly browned. *You may not be able to get all the filling in the tart case.* Cool.

To serve: Halve or quarter the strawberries and pile on top of the tart. Dust with icing sugar to serve. Serves 6-8

To bake blind - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Strawberry Tart

Pastry
200 grams butter at room temperature
½ cup brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
1½ cups plain flour
½ cup whole wheat flour*
pinch of salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Filling
100 grams soft goat's cheese
2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
¼ cup icing sugar, sifted
2-3 tablespoons brandy or orange liqueur
500 grams mascarpone

To finish
approximately 45 medium-sized strawberries, hulled
⅓ cup apricot jam, warmed and sieved
1 tablespoon pistachios
small mint leaves

26 cm loose-based tart tin

Pastry: Beat the butter and both sugars for 2 minutes. Sift the flours, salt and cinnamon together, add and mix until just combined.

Roll the pastry out between 2 sheets of baking paper to a 30 cm circle. Slide onto a baking tray and refrigerate until just firm enough to handle. Line the tart tin, patching the pastry where necessary and smoothing the cracks to give an even surface. Refrigerate or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Bake the tart case blind (see below) for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 170°C. Remove the paper and beans and continue to bake the tart until the pastry is fully cooked, about 10 minutes. Cool.

Filling: Beat the goat's cheese, zest, icing sugar and brandy together. Using a large metal spoon, fold in the mascarpone. *Be careful not to over mix or the mascarpone will curdle.*

To finish: Spread the cream over the base of the tart and arrange the strawberries on top. Brush the berries with warm jam to give a glossy sheen and garnish with pistachios and mint. Serves 8

The tart case can be fully cooked 2 days ahead and stored in an airtight container. The filling can also be made and refrigerated for 2 days.

Whole wheat flour is available from whole food stores

To bake blind - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Baking beans - see 'Glossary' page 138.

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Strawberry Tart

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Strawberry and Lemon Tart
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Lemon Tart

Pastry – pâte sucré

240 grams plain flour

¼ teaspoon salt

30 grams icing sugar

180 grams butter, diced and chilled

1 egg yolk mixed with cold water to equal 60 ml

Filling

finely grated zest of 2 lemons

150 ml lemon juice

½ cup cream

200 grams caster sugar

6 eggs, lightly beaten

To finish

caster sugar

brulée torch or iron

Pastry: Place the flour, salt and icing sugar in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the butter and process until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the egg yolk and water and pulse to just bring the dough together. Tip onto the bench and gently bring together. Form into a disc, cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line a 30 cm loose-based tart tin. Lightly prick the base with a fork and place in the freezer for at least 15 minutes prior to baking.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake blind (see below) for 20 minutes then remove the paper and beans. Reduce the oven to 170˚C and bake for a further 5-8 minutes until golden. *A lower temperature is required due to the high butter content in the pastry, which burns easily.*

Reduce the oven to 150˚C.

Whisk the lemon juice, cream, caster sugar and eggs together. Strain into a jug and stir in the lemon zest. Pour into the tart shell and bake for 30 minutes or until the filling is just set but still has a slight wobble.

Leave to cool before removing from the tin.

Sprinkle the surface with a thin layer of caster sugar and caramelise with a brulée torch.

To serve: Dust with icing sugar and serve with softly whipped cream. Serves 10

To bake blind - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Baking beans - see 'Glossary' page 138.

Grilled Apricot and Honey Fool Tart

I have used coconut biscuits for the tart case, but you can use any plain, crisp biscuit. Use roasted almonds, walnuts, macadamia or pine nuts in place of the hazelnuts. The number of apricots required for the tart will depend on their size.

Tart shell

16 Krispie biscuits, roughly broken

¼ cup hazelnuts, roasted and shells rubbed off

2 tablespoons brown sugar

3 tablespoons melted butter

1 egg white, lightly whisked

Apricots

½ cup white wine

12 small, firm but ripe apricots, halved and stone removed

½ cup honey, warmed

2 tablespoons orange liqueur, optional

To assemble

½ cup sour cream

½ cup thick plain yoghurt

Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Lightly grease a 35 cm x 10 cm rectangular tart tin with a removable base.

Tart: Put the biscuits, hazelnuts and sugar in a food processor and process to fine crumbs. Add the butter and egg white and pulse until the crumbs are well coated and damp.

Tip into the tart tin and using your finger tips, press the crumbs firmly and evenly over the base and up the sides of the tin. Chill for 30 minutes or until firm.

Bake for 20 minutes until lightly golden then set aside to cool. *The biscuit case will puff up when cooking but will subside as it cools.*

Apricots: Preheat the grill to its highest setting. Put the wine in a shallow heat-proof baking dish large enough to hold the apricots in a single layer. Place the apricots, cut side up in the dish and drizzle with the honey then the liqueur if using. *Warming the honey makes it easier to drizzle.* Place under the grill and cook until the apricots are tender and tinged with colour but not collapsing. *Don't have the fruit too close to the grill or it will burn before softening.* Carefully transfer the fruit to a plate and cool.

To assemble: Place a third of the apricots in a food processor with half the pan juices and process until smooth. Whisk the sour cream and yoghurt together and using a fork, gently stir the apricot purée through to give a marbled effect. Tip into the tart shell and arrange the remaining apricots on top. Drizzle with any remaining baking juices.

Decorate with tiny, spray-free edible flowers if desired. Serves 8-10

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Lemon Tart
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Grilled Apricot and
Honey Fool Tart
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Raspberry, Almond and Sour Cream Tart with Sugared Almonds

1 x recipe sweet shortcrust pastry (see page 134) or 300 grams bought sweet shortcrust pastry

Filling

⅓ cup sour cream

¼ cup melted butter

2 eggs

1 egg yolk

70 grams ground almonds

½ cup caster sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1½ cups frozen raspberries

Sugared almonds

¼ cup caster sugar

1 egg white

½ cup sliced almonds

35 cm x 10 cm rectangular tart tin with removable base

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm. Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, then remove the baking beans and paper. Reduce the oven to 170˚C and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool.

Filling: Gently whisk all the ingredients except the raspberries in a bowl. Pour into the tart shell and dot the raspberries over the top but don't press them into the mixture. Bake for 25 minutes or until the filling is golden and just firm to the touch.

Sugared almonds: Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Combine the sugar and egg white in a bowl. *Don't whisk the egg white*. Gently stir in the almonds until well coated. Spread the mixture in a thin layer onto a lined baking tray and bake, turning every few minutes, until golden. *The mixture will puff up.* Leave to cool on the tray then break into small pieces and store in an airtight container.

To serve: Place the tart on a serving platter and scatter with some of the sugared almonds. Dust with icing sugar and serve the remaining sugared almonds separately. Makes 1 tart

Golden Syrup and Brown Butter Tart

2 cups flour

¼ teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons icing sugar

finely grated zest ½ orange

125 grams butter, diced and chilled

1 egg

2-3 tablespoons chilled water

Filling

130 grams butter

3 eggs

⅔ cup cream

½ teaspoon salt

400 ml golden syrup

3 cups fresh, soft white bread crumbs

finely grated zest and juice 1 lemon

a little milk and raw sugar for the pastry leaves

28 cm loose-based tart tin

Pastry: Put the flour, salt, icing sugar and the orange zest in a food processor and pulse to blend. Add the butter and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg and water and add to the mixture pulsing again until the pastry just starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and form into a disc. Wrap and chill until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm. Bake blind (see below) for 20 minutes. Remove the paper and beans and cook for a further 5 minutes. Cool. Cut leaves from the remaining pastry and place on a baking tray. Brush with milk and sprinkle with raw sugar. Bake until golden and crisp.

Reduce the oven temperature to 160˚C, not fan bake. *If your oven only has fan bake, reduce the heat to 150˚C.*

Fillling: Put the butter in a saucepan and cook over a medium heat for about 10 minutes until it stops bubbling, is foamy on the surface and a darkish golden colour. This means the water has evaporated and you are left with 'brown' butter. Strain into a bowl and leave for 10 minutes.

Whisk the eggs, cream and salt together.

Warm the golden syrup in a saucepan, *but don't let it boil,* and whisk in the brown butter. Stir in the egg mixture, crumbs, lemon zest and juice. Pour into the tart case and bake for 60 minutes until the filling is a dark golden colour and firm. Remove and cool to room temperature before removing from the tin.

To serve: Arrange the pastry leaves on top and dust with icing sugar. Serve with softly whipped cream. Serves 8-10

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Baking beans – see 'Glossary' page 138.

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Raspberry, Almond and Sour Cream Tart
with Sugared Almonds

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Golden Syrup and
Brown Butter Tart
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Pistachio and Black Doris Plum Tart
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Pistachio and Black Doris Plum Tart

The plums can be replaced with tinned apricot halves or use fresh fruit when in season.

- 1 x 750 gram tin Black Doris plums, drained
- 70 grams pistachios
- 40 grams ground almonds
- ⅓ cup self-raising flour
- ½ cup caster sugar
- 100 grams butter, melted
- finely grated zest 1 large lime and ½ an orange
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons apricot jam, warmed

To serve
- softly whipped cream

Preheat the oven to 180C. Grease an 11 x 35 cm or a 24 cm round tart tin with a removable base and line it with baking paper, enough to come up the sides of the tin.

Halve and stone the plums. Place cut side down on kitchen towels to remove excess moisture.

Put the pistachios and ground almonds in a food processor and process until finely chopped. Set aside one tablespoon of the nuts and tip the remaining nuts into a medium bowl. Add the flour, sugar, butter, lime and orange zests, eggs and vanilla extract. Beat with a wooden spoon to combine. Pour the mixture into the lined tart tin and spread out evenly.

Arrange the plums, cut side down, on top of the batter. *You will probably only use 12-14 halves depending on the size of the plums. Reserve the remaining plums.*

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the top is golden and the filling is puffed and firm to the touch. Remove from the oven and brush the top with warm apricot jam. Cool.

To serve: Remove the tart from the tin and place on a serving platter. Scatter with the reserved ground nuts and dust lightly with icing sugar. Serve at room temperature with softly whipped cream. Serves 6-8

The tart can be made 2 days ahead. Store it in a cool place in an airtight container but do not refrigerate.

Any excess plums can be crushed with a fork and gently folded through the cream.

Jam Crostata

- 1¾ cups flour
- ⅓ cup caster sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 100 grams butter, diced and chilled
- zest of 1 lemon
- 1 egg plus 1 egg yolk
- 1-2 tablespoons chilled water
- 475 grams raspberry jam or jam of your choice
- egg wash made from 1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tablespoon water
- 1 x 30 cm pizza tin or loose bottom tart tin

Put the flour, sugar and the salt in a food processor and pulse to blend.

Add the butter and lemon zest and process until it resembles coarse crumbs. Beat the egg, the yolk and 1 tablespoon of the water together and add to the dough. Pulse until it just starts to come together, only adding the extra water if necessary. Tip onto the bench and gently bring together by hand to form a disc. *The dough will feel quite sticky.* Wrap and refrigerate until chilled.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tin (see below).
You will have extra pastry left for making the lattice strips. Roll out the remaining pastry and cut narrow strips long enough to lie right across the tin. Spread the jam evenly over the pastry and brush the edges with egg wash. Place the strips over the jam and press onto the rim of pastry then brush with egg wash. If the pastry starts getting soft, put it back in the refrigerator to firm up.

Bake the crostata for 35-40 minutes or until golden and the pastry is thoroughly cooked. Set aside to cool.

To serve: Slide the tart off the tin onto a serving plate. Dust the pastry with icing sugar and serve with softly whipped cream if desired. Serves 8-10

The tart will stay crisp, in an airtight container for 2-3 days.

Lining a pastry tin – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Pizza tins are readily available from most supermarkets and are ideal for this type of tart. The holes in the base ensure the pastry is lovely and crisp.

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Jam Crostata

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Cherry and Lemon Tart

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Cherry and Lemon Tart

This silky smooth tart is basically the filling that you would pour into a pastry case and bake. It's the perfect do ahead dessert as it will happily keep for 2-3 days, covered, in the refrigerator.

- 3 eggs
- ⅓ cup plain flour
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 125 grams melted butter
- finely grated zest of 3 lemons
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 300 ml cream
- 20 firm cherries, halved and stoned
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- icing sugar
- 20 cm round springform cake tin

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Grease the cake tin and line the base with baking paper.

Wrap the base of the cake tin in foil to prevent any filling leaking out as it is a very liquid batter. Place a flat baking tray in the oven to heat.

Whisk the eggs in a large bowl then gradually whisk in the flour and salt to make a smooth batter. Whisk in the remaining ingredients as follows: sugar, butter, lemon juice, cream and then the lemon zest. *Don't over-beat, or too much air will be added to the batter.*

Pour half the mixture into the tin and scatter with half the cherries. Pour over the remaining batter and place the cake tin on the oven tray. Bake for 15 minutes then remove the tart from the oven and gently place the remaining cherries and pine nuts on top. Bake for a further 30-35 minutes until the filling is set but still a little wobbly and the top is golden. *Cover the tart loosely with foil if the top is getting too brown before it's cooked.* Leave the tart to cool completely in the tin then cover and refrigerate for several hours for the tart to firm up.

To serve: Run a knife gently between the tart and the side of the tin. Release the clip and remove the side. Dust with icing sugar and cut into wedges to serve. Serves 8-10

Christmas Mince Tarts

Pastry
- 240 grams flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 4 tablespoons icing sugar
- 200 grams butter, diced and chilled
- 1 egg yolk plus iced water to make 60 mls

Viennese biscuit topping
- 150 grams butter at room temperature
- 150 grams cream cheese at room temperature
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons icing sugar
- 1½ cups flour
- pinch of salt
- 24 hole x 6 cm tart tins, lightly greased
- 5 tablespoons sour cream
- 500 grams of homemade or good quality fruit mince

Pastry: Place the flour, salt and icing sugar in a food processor and pulse to blend. Add the butter and process to fine crumbs. Add the yolk and water and pulse until the pastry just starts to come together. Add a little more water if the mixture is too dry. Tip onto the bench and gently bring together to form a disc. Wrap and chill until ready to use.

Viennese topping: Cream the butter, cream cheese, vanilla extract and the icing sugar until light and fluffy. *It is important that the butter and cream cheese are very soft but not melted before beating, otherwise the mixture is too firm to pipe.* Add the flour and salt and gently bring together. Do not refrigerate before using.

To assemble and bake: Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured board to a 3 mm thickness. Use an 8 cm pastry cutter to cut out 24 rounds and line the tins. Refrigerate or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Just before using, mix the sour cream into the mincemeat. Fill each tart with 1 tablespoon of mincemeat.

Fill a piping bag fitted with a 1 cm star nozzle with the Viennese mixture.

Pipe a circle of biscuit topping on top of each tart, leaving a hole in the centre.

Place in the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until golden on top and the pastry base is cooked through. Remove from the oven and sit in the tins for 15 minutes before carefully lifting out and cooling on a wire rack.

Dust with icing sugar just before serving. The tarts will keep in an airtight container for 3 days. Makes 24 x 6 cm tarts

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Christmas Mince Tarts
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Roasted Red Onion and Blue Cheese Tart

1 recipe shortcrust pastry (see page 134) or 300 grams bought pastry

Onions

3 large red onions, peeled with root end trimmed but left intact

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

3 tablespoons olive oil

sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Filling

3 eggs

150 ml sour cream

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 tablespoon chopped thyme leaves

100 grams soft blue cheese

To serve

baby rocket or spinach

26 cm loose-based tart tin

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Cut the onions into quarters through the root end and place in a large baking dish with the vinegar and olive oil. Toss and season well. Roast for 30-40 minutes or until tender, turning occasionally. *Try to keep the quarters whole when turning.* Cool.

Pastry: Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tin. Bake blind* for 20 minutes then remove the beans and paper and bake for a further 5-8 minutes or until the pastry is lightly golden and dry.

Reduce the oven temperature to 170˚.

Filling: Whisk all the ingredients, except the blue cheese, in a bowl and season.

Arrange the onions in the pastry case and gently pour over the filling. Break the blue cheese into pieces and place around the onions. Bake for 25-30 minutes until the filling is golden and set. Cool for 30 minutes.

To serve: Remove the tart from the tin, place on a serving platter and garnish with rocket. Serves 6

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Leek and Goat's Cheese Tart with Walnut Pastry

Pastry

1¼ cups plain flour

pinch of salt

70 grams walnuts, roasted

120 grams butter, diced and chilled

1 egg yolk

3 tablespoons chilled water

Filling

2 tablespoons olive oil

small knob of butter

3 large leeks

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tablespoons chopped thyme

1 teaspoon sea salt

½ cup sour cream

½ cup cream

2 eggs

2 egg yolks

¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

sea salt and freshly ground pepper

100 gram log goat's cheese, cut into rounds

To serve

baby rocket leaves and a few extra walnuts

Lightly grease a 24 cm x 3 cm tart tin with a removable base.

Pastry: Put the flour, salt and walnuts in a food processor and process until the walnuts are finely ground. Add the butter and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and water and add to the flour. Using the pulse button, process until the dough just starts to come together.

Tip onto the bench and form into a flat disc. Cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Refrigerate or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, remove the baking beans and paper and bake for a further 5-7 minutes or until the pastry is golden. Cool.

Reduce the oven temperature to 180˚C.

Filling: Heat the olive oil and butter in a large sauté pan and add the leeks, garlic, thyme and a good pinch of salt. Cover and cook over a medium low heat for 15 minutes, turning occasionally. Uncover and cook until all the liquid has evaporated and the leeks are tender. Stir in the sour cream then set aside to cool.

Whisk the cream, eggs and egg yolks and nutmeg in a bowl and season. Add the leeks and combine. Pour into the tart case and top with the goat's cheese. Bake for 25–30 minutes until the filling is set and firm to the touch. Rest for 30 minutes before removing from the tin.

To serve: Place the tart on a serving platter and scatter with a small handful of baby rocket leaves and a few extra walnuts if desired. Serve warm or at room temperature. Serves 8

To roast nuts/To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

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Roasted Red Onion and Blue Cheese Tart
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]



Leek and Goat's Cheese Tart
with Walnut Pastry
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Smoked Salmon and Caper Tart

Pastry
225 grams flour
170 grams butter, diced and chilled
pinch of salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons thyme leaves
1 egg yolk
3 tablespoons iced water

Filling
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 spring onions, thinly sliced
1 leek, thinly sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 handfuls of baby spinach
3 eggs
1 cup crème fraîche
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
2 tablespoons capers, drained
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
200 grams hot smoked salmon
8 cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

To finish
small handful rocket leaves
¼ cup black olives
shaved Parmesan

Pastry: Place the flour, butter, salt, pepper and thyme leaves in a food processor and process until the mixture forms fine crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and water and add to the flour. Process until the dough just starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and form into a disc. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured bench and line a 24 cm loose-based tart tin. Refrigerate until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, remove the baking beans and paper and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool.

Filling: Heat the oil in a sauté pan and cook the spring onions, leek and garlic until soft. Fold in the spinach and turn to wilt. Cool.

Whisk the eggs, crème fraîche, lemon zest, flat-leaf parsley and the capers together. Add the cooled leek mixture and season. Pour into the tart. Break the salmon into pieces and scatter over the top. Dot with the tomatoes and sprinkle with Parmesan. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until just set.

To serve: When the tart has cooled transfer it to a serving plate. Scatter over the rocket, olives and shaved Parmesan and drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil. Serves 6

To bake blind - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Potato, Pancetta and Artichoke Tarts

300 grams good quality puff pastry
2 Spring onions, finely chopped
½ cup crème fraîche
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
I clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 medium waxy potatoes, scrubbed
1 x 400 gram jar articchoke hearts,drained
8 cherry tomatoes, halved
100 grams pancetta or shaved streaky bacon,ripped into pieces
sea salt and freshly ground pepper

To finish
canola oil
fresh basil leaves

Pastry: Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and cut into 4 squares. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate until ready to use.

Combine the spring onions, crème fraîche, mustard, garlic and olive oil in a bowl and season.

Cook the potatoes in boiling, salted water until just tender. Cool, peel and cut into small chunks.

Cut the artichoke hearts into quarters.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Spread half the crème fraîche mixture over the pastry, taking it right to the edges. Top with the potatoes, artichoke hearts and cherry tomatoes. Drape the pancetta or bacon around the vegetables. Spoon the remaining crème fraiche over, drizzle with a little olive oil, a pinch of sea salt and a grinding of pepper.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the pastry is crisp and golden.

Basil: Heat a little oil in a saucepan and drop in a few basil leaves at a time. Fry until crisp, remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen towels.

To serve: Slide the tarts onto a board or plate and scatter over the basil.

Serve immediately. Serves 4

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Smoked Salmon and Caper Tart

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Potato, Pancetta and Artichoke Tarts
[SEE RECIPE PREVIOUS PAGE]

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Tomato Tart
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]



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Tomato Tart

Pastry

225 grams plain flour

170 grams butter, diced and chilled

pinch of salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary

1 egg yolk

3 tablespoons iced water

Tomatoes

8 medium-sized vine tomatoes

1 teaspoon sea salt

1 tablespoon olive oil

knob of butter

1 red onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

250 grams button mushrooms, diced

2 handfuls of baby spinach

¼ cup fresh white breadcrumbs

6 eggs

300 ml crème fraîche

sea salt and freshly ground pepper

¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan

Pastry: Place the flour, butter, salt, pepper and rosemary in a food processor and process until the mixture forms fine crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and water and add to the flour. Process until the dough just starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and form into a disc. Cover in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll out on a lightly floured bench and line a 24 cm x 3 cm or 4 cm deep flan ring or loose-based tart tin. Refrigerate until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes, remove the baking beans and paper and bake for a further 5 minutes. Cool.

Tomatoes: Lower the tomatoes into a saucepan of boiling water for 10 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and place in a bowl of iced water. Peel off the skin and cut off the tops to make lids. Use a teaspoon or melon baller to scrape out the seeds, taking care not to split the tomato shell. Sprinkle the insides with a pinch of salt and invert onto paper towels to drain for one hour.

Heat the oil and butter in a sauté pan and cook the onion and garlic until tender. Add the mushrooms and cook until soft and any moisture has evaporated. Stir in the spinach to wilt, then the breadcrumbs and season generously.

Carefully pat the tomatoes dry, inside and out, with paper towels and spoon in the stuffing.

Beat the eggs and crème fraîche together and season well. Arrange the tomatoes in the tart and top with the lids. Brush the lids with a little olive oil and season. Pour the cream mixture around the tomatoes and scatter over the Parmesan.

Bake the tart for 15 minutes then reduce the temperature to 180˚C and cook until the custard is just set.

Serve warm or at room temperature with a salad. Serves 4-6

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Asparagus and Spinach Tarts

A savoury take on a Danish pastry, this is delicious for brunch or lunch served with a crisp salad. It's important to use thin asparagus spears for these tarts, as thicker ones may take too long to cook.

2 sheets pre-rolled puff pastry

Filling

100 grams spinach, tough stems removed and well washed

100 grams cream cheese at room temperature

1 clove garlic, crushed

finely grated zest ½ a lemon

½ teaspoon ground fennel seeds

sea salt and freshly ground pepper

To assemble

12-16 slim spears of asparagus

8 thin slices salami, 7 or 8 cm diameter

olive oil

1 egg, lightly beaten (egg wash)

sesame or mustard seeds

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Filling: Put the spinach in a bowl, cover with boiling water and turn to wilt. Drain and refresh in cold water. Place in a clean tea towel and squeeze out all the moisture. Chop finely. Beat the cream cheese until smooth then mix through the spinach, garlic, lemon zest and ground fennel. Season.

To cook: Cut each sheet of pastry into two 12 cm x 12 cm squares.

Spread the spinach cream in a 6 cm wide strip, diagonally from corner to opposite corner over the pastry. Toss the asparagus in a little olive oil and season. Loosely wrap in the salami and place on top of the spinach cream.

Brush the pastry border with egg wash and fold in the two corners, leaving the ends and tips of the asparagus uncovered. Brush the pastry with the egg wash and sprinkle with sesame or mustard seeds. Bake 25 minutes or until the pastry is fully cooked and a deep golden colour. Serves 4

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Asparagus and Spinach Tarts



Leek, Thyme and Goat's Cheese Tart

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Leek, Thyme and Goat's Cheese Tart

Pastry
200 grams plain flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme
100 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg mixed with 1 tablespoon water

Filling
2 tablespoons butter
1 large leek, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme
½ cup crème fraîche
3 eggs, lightly beaten
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
150 grams soft goat's cheese

24 cm loose-based tart tin, 3-3.5 cm deep

Pastry: Put the flour, salt and thyme in a food processor and pulse to blend. Add the butter and pulse again until it resembles coarse crumbs. Add the egg and water and pulse until the dough starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and form into a flat disc. Wrap and chill for at least 1 hour. Roll out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Chill or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake the tart blind (see below) for 20 minutes then reduce the oven temperature to 170˚C. Remove the baking beans and paper and cook the tart for a further 6-8 minutes or until the base of the pastry case is cooked and lightly golden.

Filling: Melt the butter in a large sauté pan and add the leek, onion, garlic and thyme with a good pinch of salt. Cover and cook until tender but not coloured, stirring occasionally. Cool.

Whisk the crème fraîche and eggs together in a bowl and season well. Stir in the cooled leek mixture and pour into the tart case, smoothing it out evenly. Crumble over the goat's cheese and bake for 25 minutes or until the filling is set. Cool for at least 15 minutes before removing from the tin. Serve warm or at room temperature with a green salad. Serves 8

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Crab, Lemon and Crème Fraîche Tart

300 grams bought shortcrust pastry (or see page 134 to make your own)

Filling
2 eggs
1 clove garlic, crushed
200 grams crème fraîche
¾ cup freshly grated Parmesan
finely grated zest of 1 lemon
grating of fresh nutmeg
2 spring onions, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
300 grams crab meat
sea salt and freshly ground pepper

To serve
long chives for garnish

24 cm loose-based tart tin

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin. Refrigerate until firm.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Bake the tart case blind (see below) for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 180˚C. Remove the baking beans and paper and bake for a further 5-7 minutes until golden. Cool.

Filling: Put the eggs, garlic and crème fraîche in a bowl and gently whisk to combine. *You don't want the mixture too aerated.* Fold in ½ the Parmesan, the lemon zest, nutmeg, spring onions, chives and the crab meat and season well. Pour into the cooled tart case and scatter over the remaining Parmesan. Bake for about 30 minutes until the filling is set. Cool for 30 minutes before removing from the tin. Place on a serving platter and top with the chives. Serves 6-8

To bake blind – see 'Techniques' page 136

Packets of raw, frozen crab meat are available from good fish shops. Thaw in the fridge and place the crab meat on paper towels to remove excess moisture before adding to the filling. Check the meat for any small pieces of shell.

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Crab, Lemon and Crème Fraîche Tart
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Swiss Chard, Bacon and Parsnip Tarts
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Swiss Chard, Bacon and Parsnip Tarts

Even the most reluctant parsnip eater will enjoy this delicious tart. The nutty flavour of the parsnip goes beautifully with the bacon, herbs and lemon zest in the filling.

Filling
- 400 grams parsnip
- 300 grams Swiss chard, spinach or silver beet
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 150 grams streaky bacon, diced
- 4 spring onions, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped rosemary or thyme
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 egg
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- finely grated zest 1 lemon
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

To assemble
- 3 sheets pre-rolled puff pastry
- 1 egg yolk mixed with 1 teaspoon cold water (egg wash)
- Parmesan for grating
- sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 180˚C

Filling: Peel and quarter the parsnips, cutting out the tough centre core. Cut into 3 cm pieces and cook in boiling salted water for 2-3 minutes until just tender. Drain well and set aside.

Slice the stalks of the chard finely and roughly chop the leaves.Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan and sauté the bacon, spring onions, garlic, rosemary and the chard stalks for 3 minutes. Add the parsnips, season well and cook for another 3 minutes. Add the chopped leaves and cook, turning often, until tender and wilted. Scrape the mixture into a large bowl and cool.

Whisk the sour cream, egg, garlic, parsley, lemon zest and nutmeg together, season and combine with the cooled vegetable mixture.

To assemble: Cut two 14 cm x 23 cm wide rectangles from two pieces of the pastry. Cut the remaining pastry into long 2 cm wide strips. Place the two pieces of pastry on a lined baking tray and brush a 2 cm wide border of egg wash around each piece. Lay the pastry strips on top, trimming them to fit along the ends. Brush the strips with egg wash and repeat with another layer of pastry to give a double thickness border around each tart. *This prevents the filling spilling over the sides of the tarts.*

Spoon the filling into the two tarts, making sure each has the same amount of parsnip and greens. *The mixture will be piled up quite high but will shrink during cooking.* Grate Parmesan generously over the tarts and give a good grind of black pepper.

Bake for 20 minutes or until the pastry is puffed and golden and the filling is set, turning the trays for even browning if necessary.

To serve: Cut each tart in half, transfer to plates and serve with roasted vine tomatoes if desired. Serves 4

To prepare the vine tomatoes pictured, place them in a small roasting dish, drizzle with a little olive oil and season. Roast for 5 minutes or until the skins just start to split.

As a substitute for the parsnips, use a 400 gram tin of artichoke hearts. Drain well and chop roughly. Add to the sauté pan with the Swiss chard.

Asparagus Tart with Gruyere Cheese Pastry

- 30-34 slim spears of asparagus
- olive oil
- sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Pastry
- 200 grams plain flour
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 100 grams butter, diced and chilled
- 50 grams grated Gruyere cheese
- 1 egg
- 1-2 tablespoons cold water

Topping
- ¼ cup mascarpone
- 1 tablespoon cream
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

To cook
- Parmesan
- olive oil

1 x 30 cm pizza tin or loose- bottom tart tin

Pastry: Put the flour, salt, butter and cheese in a food processor and pulse to form coarse crumbs. Combine the egg and 1 tablespoon of water and pulse again until the dough just starts to come together. *Only add the extra water if necessary.*

Tip onto the bench, bring the dough together gently with your hands and form into a flat disc. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill until firm.

Roll the pastry out thinly on a lightly floured bench and line the tart tin, trimming off any excess pastry. Cover and chill or freeze until firm.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Topping: Combine the ingredients in a bowl, season and spread evenly over the pastry.

Snap the tough ends off the asparagus and discard. Toss the asparagus with a little olive oil, salt and pepper. Arrange the spears with the tips facing out like the spokes of a wheel, trimming the asparagus to fit. Grate over a little Parmesan and bake for about 15 minutes until the pastry is golden and crisp.

To serve: Transfer the tart to a flat plate or board and garnish with extra Parmesan, olive oil and a grind of pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 1 tart

Pizza tins are readily available from most supermarkets and are ideal for this type of tart. The holes in the base ensure the pastry is lovely and crisp.

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Asparagus Tart with
Gruyere Cheese Pastry

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Roasted Tomato, Caramelised Onion and Feta Tarts

[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]



Grape and Goat's Cheese Tarts
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]

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Roasted Tomato, Caramelised Onion and Feta Tarts

The onion jam used in these tarts is a staple item in my fridge. I also use it on burgers, with barbecued meats and as a condiment with cold cuts and cheese. Roast the tomatoes at the same time as the tarts to save turning the oven on twice.

3 sheets pre-rolled butter puff pastry
12 small vine tomatoes
olive oil

Onion jam
5 large red onions, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
knob of butter
1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary or thyme
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons brown sugar
½ cup balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon sea salt

To assemble
3 eggs
½ cup cream
200 grams feta cheese
4 tablespoons basil pesto

sea salt and freshly ground pepper
12 hole muffin tin, lightly greased

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Stamp out 4 x 10 cm circles from each sheet of pastry and line the muffin tins. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. *The pastry needs to be well chilled before cooking.*

Onion jam: Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan, cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover and cook for a further 20-30 minutes over a low heat or until thick and glossy. *The volume of onions will have reduced by more than half.* Cool.

To assemble: Whisk the eggs and cream in a large bowl and season generously. Stir in the onions then divide evenly between the tart cases. Cut the feta into 12 slices. Break each slice into 2-3 pieces and place over the onions.

Bake for 20 minutes or until the pastry is crisp and the feta is golden.

Place the tomatoes on a lined baking tray and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast for 5-8 minutes or until the skins have just started to split. Cool.

To serve: Top each tart with a spoonful of pesto and a roasted tomato. The tarts are best served warm or at room temperature. Makes 12

Grape and Goat's Cheese Tarts

These delicious and easy to assemble tarts make a great lunch dish with a salad or they can be served as a dessert.

200 grams good quality purchased puff pastry
1 egg yolk mixed with 1 teaspoon water
100 grams soft goat's cheese
400 grams seedless red grapes, halved
1 teaspoon fennel seed, toasted and coarsely ground
demerara sugar
icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Cut the pastry into 4 even pieces. Roll out thinly on a lightly floured bench. Egg wash the edges and fold them over to create a small rim, pinching the pastry as you fold it. Brush the rims with egg wash.

Crumble the goat's cheese and scatter over the base of the tarts. Pile on the grapes and scatter with ground fennel seed and a generous sprinkling of sugar.

Bake for about 25 minutes or until puffed and deeply golden. Serve warm, dusted with a little icing sugar. Serves 4

To toast spices – see 'Techniques' page 136.

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Spanish Chocolate with Spiced Doughnuts
Chocolate con Rosquillas

'Rosquillas' seems to be a broad name used for many sweet cakes and biscuits in Spain, although the direct translation is 'doughnut'. Each pastry shop has its own specialties – all very different. For the chocolate in this recipe, look for one flavoured with orange and/or spices.

Chocolate
500 ml milk
2 tablespoons cornflour
200 grams good quality dark chocolate, chopped
2 egg yolks
½ cup condensed milk

Cinnamon doughnuts
1¾ cups self raising flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cinnamon
⅓ cup sugar
2 tablespoons melted butter, cooled
¼ cup milk
2 eggs

To cook
canola oil

To finish
2 cups granulated sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Chocolate: Put the cornflour in a small bowl and stir in 3 tablespoons of the milk to make a smooth paste. Stir this into the remaining milk and tip into a saucepan. Heat to just below boiling point then whisk in the chocolate until smooth. Stir the egg yolks and condensed milk together and whisk into the chocolate mixture. Slowly bring to the boil and simmer for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Doughnuts: Combine the flour, salt, cinnamon and sugar in a bowl. Whisk the melted butter, eggs and milk together and stir into the dry ingredients to make a thick batter.

Combine the sugar and cinnamon in a shallow dish.

Put 4 cm of canola oil in a medium sized, heavy-based saucepan and heat to 180˚C on a sugar thermometer. *A piece of bread dropped into the oil should be golden within 30 seconds if the oil is at the right temperature.*

Carefully drop teaspoonfuls of batter into the pan and cook for 1 minute each side. *Don't overcrowd the pan as the oil temperature will drop rapidly and the doughnuts will be heavy.*

Remove with a slotted spoon and roll in the combined sugar and cinnamon. Keep warm in a low oven until all the doughnuts have been cooked.

To serve: The chocolate can be served chilled or warm. Pour into small pots or ramekins and refrigerate if serving chilled. If serving warm, gently reheat, stirring constantly and pour into small pots to serve.

Makes about 30 doughnuts and 8 x 90 ml pots of chocolate. Serves 8

Chocolate and Raisin Rugelach

This pastry is of Jewish origin and is traditionally eaten at Hanukkah. The cream cheese is the key to the light, flaky pastry. The raisins can be replaced with finely chopped dried apricots or figs.

Pastry
300 grams flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
200 grams butter, diced and chilled
225 grams cream cheese, diced

Filling
40 grams butter
200 grams dark chocolate, roughly chopped
½ cup condensed milk
1 cup raisins, finely chopped

To cook
1 egg, lightly beaten
raw sugar for sprinkling

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Pastry:: Put the flour, salt, butter and cream cheese in a food processor and pulse until the dough just starts to come together. Tip onto the bench and bring the dough together. Form into a cylinder, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm.

Filling: Put the butter then the chocolate into a heat-proof bowl. Place over a saucepan of barely simmering water to melt, stirring only occasionally. Remove from the heat and stir in the condensed milk to just combine and make a smooth paste. *Don't over mix the chocolate or it will go grainy.* Set aside to cool but don't refrigerate.

To assemble: Divide the dough into 3 equal pieces. Roll the pastry out, one piece at a time, on a lightly floured bench to form a 30 cm circle. Keep the remaining pieces in the fridge. *The pastry is difficult to work with if it gets soft.*

Using a palette knife, spread a third of the cooled chocolate mixture over the pastry and sprinkle with a third of the raisins. Cut into 8 triangles. Starting at the widest edge, lightly roll each piece to resemble a croissant. Place on lined baking trays with the pointed end underneath. Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling. Cover and refrigerate until very firm. *The rugelach can be assembled 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate until ready to cook.*

To cook: Brush each rugelach with egg and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a good golden brown and well cooked. Transfer to a cooling rack. Dust with icing sugar to serve. Rugelach will keep in an airtight container for 3 days. Makes 24

Photography by Manja Wachsmuth. Styling by Lisa Morton. Green milk glass bowls from The Home Store – phone 0800 843 4663. All uncredited props are stylist's own.

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Spanish Chocolate with
Spiced Doughnuts
'Chocolate con Rosquillas'
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Chocolate and Raisin Rugelach
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Date, Rum and
Ricotta Strudels



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Date, Rum and Ricotta Strudels

You can substitute the rum with another spirit or liqueur if desired; whisky, brandy, coffee and hazelnut all go well with dates. The date paste can be made several days in advance. Store covered in the fridge, adding the almonds to the paste when assembling the pastries.

Date paste
200 grams pitted dried dates, roughly chopped
2 tablespoons caster sugar
finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
¼ cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
2 tablespoons dark rum
70 grams sliced almonds, roasted and roughly chopped

Rum syrup
½ cup water
½ cup caster sugar
2 tablespoons rum

To assemble
12 sheets filo pastry
½ cup melted butter
150 grams firm ricotta
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
icing sugar for dusting
mascarpone for serving

Put all the paste ingredients, except the rum and almonds, in a medium saucepan and cook over a low heat, stirring often, until it forms a thick paste. *The dates should be very soft and all the liquid evaporated.* Stir in the rum and almonds and cool.

Syrup: Put the water and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil for 1 minute then add the rum. Tip into a bowl and cool.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

To assemble: Lay one sheet of filo on the bench with the long end towards you. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with sesame seeds. *Keep the remaining pastry covered with a damp tea towel to prevent it drying out.* Brush another sheet of pastry with butter and lay it on top. Sprinkle with more sesame seeds. Repeat to make 4 layers. Cut the pastry into 3 strips.

Place a spoonful of date paste in the bottom left hand corner of each strip and top with a spoonful of ricotta. Brush the border with butter and fold up to make a triangle. Place on a lined baking tray, seam side down, brush with butter and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling.

Bake for 15–20 minutes until golden and crisp, turning the tray halfway through for even browning. Transfer to a cooling rack.

To serve: Dust with icing sugar and serve warm or at room temperature with mascarpone and rum syrup. Makes 9 strudels

Strawberry and Vanilla Brioche

Not only do these brioche taste fabulous, there is the added bonus that the dough can be made the day before and proved overnight in the refrigerator. Have the filling and tins prepared and the assembly can be done in minutes. If, however, you wish to make and bake the brioche on the same day, leave the dough in a warm place for 2 hours or until doubled in bulk, then proceed with the recipe.

Dough
2½ cups plain flour
¼ cup caster sugar
1½ teaspoons instant dried yeast
½ teaspoon sea salt
60 grams butter, very soft but not melted
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup warm milk

Filling
100 grams butter, soft but not melted
1 tablespoon strawberry jam
½ cup caster sugar
finely grated zest 1 large lemon
400 grams strawberries, about 1½ punnets

To assemble
soft butter and caster sugar

Dough: Place 1½ cups of the flour, the sugar, yeast, salt and butter in the bowl of an electric mixer. Whisk the egg, vanilla and warm milk together and pour onto the flour. Beat, then add enough of the remaining flour to make a soft but not sticky dough that comes away from the side of the bowl. Continue kneading for 2 minutes. *If you don't have an electric mixer, mix the dough in a large bowl. It just takes a little more effort doing it by hand.*

Place the dough in a large well buttered bowl, turning to coat on all sides. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator overnight. Remove from the fridge 30 minutes before rolling.

Filling: Combine all the ingredients, except the strawberries, to make a soft paste. Cover and set aside until ready to use but do not refrigerate. Generously butter the base and sides of a 30 cm x 4-5 cm deep fixed-base cake tin and sprinkle with caster sugar, shaking out the excess.

The next day: Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Hull the strawberries for the filling and cut into small pieces.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured bench into a rectangle approximately 45 cm x 25 cm. Spread evenly with the filling and scatter the strawberries over the top.

Starting from the long side, roll up to form a log. With a sharp knife, trim the ends and cut into 9 rounds. Place 8 around the tin and one in the centre, cut side up. Brush the tops with a little soft butter and sprinkle with caster sugar. Bake for 25-30 minutes until a good golden colour, lightly covering with a piece of aluminium foil if they start to over-brown.

Remove from the oven and leave for 1 minute then invert the tin onto a large plate. Place a piece of baking paper then another plate over the brioche and invert again so they are now crusty side up. Spoon any juices and strawberries that remain in the tin or are on the plate, over the brioche. Cool for at least 30 minutes then dust with icing sugar before serving. The brioche are best eaten on the day they are made but can be warmed for a few minutes in a 180˚C oven to refresh the flavours if made a day ahead. Makes 9

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Strawberry and Vanilla Brioche
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Hazelnut, Chocolate and Date Baklava
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Hazelnut, Chocolate and Date Baklava

The baklava are best served on the day of making. If you do make them ahead, reheat in a 180˚C oven for 3-4 minutes to re-crisp them, but cool before serving.

6-8 sheets filo pastry
½ cup melted butter

Filling
70 grams hazelnuts, roasted and chopped
⅓ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon each ground cinnamon and ginger
¼ teaspoon each ground cloves and cardamom
50 grams dark chocolate (68% cocoa), chopped
¼ cup finely chopped dates

To serve
icing sugar for dusting
rose Turkish delight, optional

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Filling: Put all the filling ingredients into a food processor and pulse until finely chopped but not turning into a paste. Any large pieces of filling will rip the pastry when rolled.

To assemble: Lay one sheet of filo on the bench with the short end towards you. Keep the remaining pastry covered with a damp tea towel to prevent it drying out.

Brush half the sheet with butter and sprinkle with three tablespoons of filling. Fold the top, un-buttered half, over the filling. Brush with butter. Cut into 3 x 7 cm wide strips and roll up firmly into small cigars. Brush with butter and place on a lined baking tray. Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling, wiping the bench clean before laying out the next sheet of filo.

Bake for 8-10 minutes until golden, turning the tray halfway through for even browning. Transfer to a cooling rack.

To serve: Dust with icing sugar and arrange on a platter with the Turkish delight. Makes about 18 baklava

To roast nuts - see 'Techniques' page 136.

Lemon Curd, Berry and Pistachio Brioches

These delicious brioches are much easier to make than you might think, as the dough can be made a day in advance. Use fresh berries or stone fruit when in season.

Brioche
3 cups plain flour
1½ teaspoons instant dried yeast
¼ cup caster sugar
½ teaspoon sea salt
80 grams butter, soft but not melted
½ cup warm milk
1 egg
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Filling
125 grams cream cheese, softened
½ cup sour cream
1 tablespoon icing sugar
finely grated zest 1 lemon
1 teaspoon lemon juice
⅓ cup lemon curd
300 grams frozen mixed berries

To finish
1 egg yolk beaten with 1 teaspoon of water (egg wash)
caster sugar
2-3 passionfruit or passionfruit in syrup
2 tablespoons chopped pistachio nuts
icing sugar

Brioche: Put 1½ cups of the flour, the yeast, sugar, salt and butter in the bowl of an electric mixer. Whisk the milk, egg and vanilla together and with the mixer going, pour onto the flour. Beat well then start adding enough of the remaining flour to make a soft and slightly sticky dough that comes away from the side of the bowl. Continue kneading for 3 minutes.

Form the dough into a ball and place in a large, well buttered bowl, turning it to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate to rise slowly overnight. *If you intend using the brioche dough on the same day that you make it, cover it and leave in a draught-free place until doubled in size.*

The next day: Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Roll the dough into a log and cut into 8 equal pieces about 80 grams each.

Roll each piece into a 14 cm circle and place on a lined baking tray. Brush the edges with water and fold in the edge to make a 1 cm wide border, pressing it to seal. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and leave for 30 minutes.

Filling: Beat the cream cheese until light then beat in the sour cream, icing sugar, lemon zest and juice. Stir in the lemon curd.

Divide the filling between the brioches and top with the berries. Brush the edge of the brioches with egg wash and sprinkle both the berries and the brioches generously with sugar. Bake for 16-18 minutes until golden and puffed. Transfer to a cooling rack.

To serve: Spoon the passionfruit over the warm or just cooled brioches, scatter with the pistachios and dust with icing sugar. Makes 8

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Lemon Curd, Berry and
Pistachio Brioches

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Spiced Chocolate, Almond and Cranberry Rolls

⅓ cup cream
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
150 grams good dark chocolate, roughly chopped
¼ cup slivered almonds, roasted
¼ cup dried cranberries, finely chopped
8 sheets filo pastry
½ cup melted butter for brushing
icing sugar for dusting

Heat the cream and allspice in a saucepan to just below boiling point. Remove from the heat, add the chocolate and whisk until melted and smooth. Chop the almonds finely and stir into the chocolate with the cranberries. Tip into a bowl and cool until the mixture is thick enough to pipe. Transfer to a piping bag with a 2 cm wide nozzle.

Place one sheet of filo pastry on the bench, keeping the rest covered with a damp tea towel. Brush with the melted butter then top with another sheet of filo. Pipe a thick line of chocolate filling along the short edge. Brush the pastry with butter then roll up to form a cigar, tucking in the sides as you roll. Place on a lined baking tray and repeat with the remaining filo, butter and chocolate.

Brush the rolled logs with butter and bake for 15 minutes until golden and crisp. Cool. Using a very sharp knife, cut each roll on an angle into 6 pieces. Transfer to a serving platter and dust with icing sugar. Makes 24 pieces

Fig and Almond Fruit Bread

2 cups whole, skin-on almonds
250 grams dried figs, thinly sliced
100 grams dried apricots, finely chopped
½ cup dried cranberries
finely grated zest of 1 orange
1½ teaspoons mixed spice
good grinding of black pepper
1 cup plain flour
pinch of salt
½ cup honey
3 tablespoons brandy

To serve
ripe Brie, Camembert or a blue cheese

Preheat the oven to 180˚C. Grease a 6 cup-capacity loaf tin and line fully with baking paper.

Spread the almonds out in a shallow tray and roast in the oven until golden. *Watch carefully as they can become too dark very quickly.* Cool and chop roughly.

Put the almonds, figs, apricots, cranberries, orange zest, mixed spice, black pepper, flour and salt in a large bowl and toss well to coat all the fruit in flour.

Combine the honey and brandy and heat until just warm. Tip onto the fruit mixture and mix well.

Spoon half the mixture into the tin and, using the back of a spoon, press into the tin. Repeat with the remaining mixture and smooth the top. Bake for 30 minutes until golden and firm to the touch. Cool. The loaf will keep in an airtight container for 2 weeks.

To serve: Slice and serve with soft, ripe cheese. Makes 1 loaf

Boxty – Irish Potato Flatbread

Said to have originated during the Irish famine, boxty is made with both raw and cooked potatoes. Serve with soups or a casserole, or as a brunch dish with mushrooms and sautéed kidneys.

500 grams floury potatoes, eg Agria, peeled and diced 2 cm
500 grams floury potatoes, peeled
100 grams butter, melted
2 teaspoons salt

Cook the diced potatoes in boiling salted water until tender. Drain well, put back into the saucepan and place over a low heat to dry off any excess moisture. Mash and leave to cool.

Grate the remaining potatoes into a muslin-lined sieve set over a bowl. Squeeze out the liquid and leave to stand for a few minutes. *The potato starch will settle on the bottom of the bowl.* Combine the cooked and raw potatoes in a large bowl with the butter, salt, pepper and herbs. Carefully pour off the potato water and discard. Scrape the starch over the potato mixture and stir to combine. Work in enough flour to make a soft dough. Tip onto a floured bench and knead for a few minutes until smooth. Cover and leave for 15 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Divide the dough into 8 pieces and roll out on a lightly floured bench until ½ cm thick. Heat a sauté pan with a knob of butter and cook the flatbreads until golden on both sides. Transfer to a baking tray and bake for 25-30 minutes. Serve hot with butter.

Caramelised Orange and Pernod Pastries

These sugared pastries are based on the traditional 'Torta de Aciete' of Spain, which are made with olive oil.

2 cups flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
1½ teaspoons finely grated orange zest
2 teaspoons caster sugar
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup milk
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons Pernod or other anise flavoured liqueur

To finish
olive oil
granulated sugar
1-2 tablespoons whole aniseed

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Sift the flour and baking powder together then rub the orange zest in with your fingertips. Stir in the caster sugar, salt, milk, olive oil and the Pernod to make a smooth dough. Cover and leave for 30 minutes.

Divide the dough into 16 pieces and roll out thinly on a lightly floured bench. Place on lined baking trays. Brush with oil then sprinkle generously with sugar and the aniseed. Prick the dough well with a fork. Bake in batches until the edges are turning a dark golden colour and the pastries are crisp.

Place on a rack to cool then store in an airtight container for 4-5 days. Makes 16

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Spiced Chocolate, Almond and Cranberry Rolls



Fig and Almond Fruit Bread



Boxty – Irish Potato Flatbread



Caramelised Orange and Pernod Pastries

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Apple Doughnuts
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Almond and Coffee Profiteroles
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Apple Doughnuts

1¾ cups self-raising flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅓ cup sugar
2 tablespoons melted butter, cooled
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup milk
finely grated zest 1 lemon
2 eggs
1 tablespoon rum, optional
1 apple, peeled and grated

To cook
canola oil

To finish
1 cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Combine the flour, salt, cinnamon and sugar in a bowl. Whisk the melted butter, vanilla extract, milk, lemon zest, eggs and rum together and stir into the dry ingredients to make a thick batter.
Stir in the grated apple.

Combine the caster sugar and cinnamon in a shallow dish.

Put 4 cm of canola oil in a medium sized, heavy-based saucepan and heat to 170°C on a sugar thermometer. *If you don't have a thermometer, drop a piece of bread into the oil. It should turn golden within 30 seconds.*

Carefully place small spoonfuls of batter into the pan and cook for 1-2 minutes each side. *Don't overcrowd the pan as the oil temperature will drop rapidly and the doughnuts will be heavy.*

Remove with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towels and roll in the sugar and cinnamon mix. Serve immediately. Makes about 20

Almond and Coffee Profiteroles

Choux pastry
1 cup plain flour
pinch of sea salt
120 grams butter, diced
1 cup water
4 eggs

Topping
1 egg, lightly beaten
3 tablespoons sliced almonds

Coffee crème pâtissière
5 egg yolks
¾ cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup plain flour
5 tablespoons cornflour
2½ cups milk
1-2 tablespoons instant espresso coffee granules
1-2 tablespoon coffee liqueur, optional

To assemble
½ cup cream, softly whipped
icing sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 220˚C

Sift the flour onto a sheet of baking paper and add the salt.

Put the butter and water in a large saucepan over a medium heat and bring to a rolling boil, making sure all the butter has melted before the water comes to the boil.

Remove from the heat, tip in all the flour and beat vigorously with a wooden spoon until the dough comes away from the sides of the saucepan and forms a thick, smooth ball. Transfer the dough into the bowl of an electric mixer and allow to cool for 10 minutes. With the motor running, add the eggs one at a time to make a thick, smooth, glossy paste. *The first egg takes a little while to beat in.*

Pipe or spoon 16 mounds of choux pastry onto a lined baking tray, spacing them at least 4 cm apart. Brush with beaten egg and scatter with the almonds.

Bake for 10 minutes then reduce the temperature to 180˚C and bake for a further 25 minutes or until the pastry is golden and very crisp. Remove from the oven and cut a slit in the side of each choux to release any steam and return to the oven for 5 minutes to dry out.

Cool the pastries on a wire rack.

Crème pâtissière: Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and vanilla in a large heat-proof bowl. Sift the flour and cornflour together and gradually whisk into the egg yolks to make a smooth paste. Put the milk and espresso coffee in a saucepan and bring to just below boiling point. Slowly pour into the egg mixture, whisking constantly to prevent it curdling.

Tip the custard back into the saucepan and place over a medium heat. Stirring constantly, slowly bring to the boil and then cook for a further minute until the custard becomes very thick and there is no taste of raw flour left. Remove from the heat and stir in the liqueur if using. Tip into a bowl and cover the surface with plastic wrap to prevent a skin forming. Cool then refrigerate until ready to use.

To assemble: If the custard has been refrigerated it will be very thick. Beat well to remove any lumps that may have formed then fold in the cream. Spoon the custard into a piping bag with a wide nozzle. Halve each profiterole and fill the bottom half with custard, ensuring they are well filled. Replace the top and dust generously with icing sugar. Makes 16

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Spiced Brown Sugar
and Walnut Sticky Buns
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Spiced Brown Sugar and Walnut Sticky Buns

Dough

3¼- 3½ cups plain flour
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons instant dried yeast*
1 cup lukewarm milk
1 egg
2 egg yolks
150 grams butter, very soft but not melted

Filling

¾ cup walnuts or hazelnuts, roasted and finely chopped
¾ cup chopped dates or sultanas
150 grams butter, soft but not melted
1 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
finely grated zest 1 large lemon

Generously butter a 12 hole ½ cup-capacity muffin tin

Dough: Put 3¼ cups of the flour and all the remaining dry ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer. Whisk the milk, egg and egg yolks together and pour onto the flour. Beat for 2 minutes to form a sticky dough, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Gradually beat in the butter, mixing until well combined and the dough is shiny and smooth and comes away cleanly from the sides of the bowl. *At this point you may need to use the extra flour, adding it a teaspoon at a time if the dough is very soft.*

Place the dough in a large well buttered bowl, turning it to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight but remove from the fridge at least an hour before rolling.

Filling: Combine all the ingredients to make a soft paste and set aside.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured bench into a rectangle about 40 cm x 20 cm. Have the dough with the long side facing you.

Spread the filling evenly over the top then roll up from the long side to form a log. Using a sharp knife, cut into 12 rounds and place each one into a muffin tin, cut side up. Bake for 12-15 minutes until well risen and golden.

Let the buns sit for a few minutes before removing from the tins. Scoop out any nuts left in the tins and place on top of the buns. Best served the day of making. Makes 12

**The dried yeast we have used in this recipe is not designed to be started in warm liquid first. It should only ever be added to the dry ingredients as described. It is conveniently packaged in single use sachets and is readily available on the baking shelves of the supermarket.*

To roast nuts – see 'Techniques' page 136.

Caramelised Red Onion, Black Olive and Herb Bread

Onions

2 tablespoons olive oil
knob of butter
3 large red onions, sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tablespoons brown sugar
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
sea salt and freshly ground pepper
¼ cup chopped black olives

Dough

2 cups plain flour
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon instant dried yeast
1 teaspoon ground fennel
1 tablespoon finely chopped rosemary
¾-1 cup lukewarm water
2 tablespoons olive oil

To assemble

olive oil
sea salt
cumin seeds

Onions: Heat the olive oil and butter in a sauté pan. Add the onions and garlic with a good pinch of salt, cover and cook until soft, stirring occasionally. Stir in the brown sugar and balsamic vinegar. Cook gently, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until the onions are thick and sticky with no liquid left in the pan. *This can take 25-30 minutes to caramelize properly.* Stir in the olives and cool.

Dough: Combine the flour, salt, yeast, fennel and rosemary in a bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the ¾ cup of water and the olive oil and mix to a soft dough, adding the extra water if needed. Tip onto a lightly floured bench and knead lightly for 2 minutes. Place in an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place to double in bulk.

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

To assemble: Roll out the dough on a lightly floured bench to a 30 cm x 30 cm square then transfer to a lined flat baking tray.

Spread the onions evenly over the dough, leaving a 1 cm border around the edge.

Brush the border with cold water then fold the dough over twice to make a 10 cm x 30 cm rectangle. Brush generously with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt and cumin seeds.

Bake for 25 minutes until golden and the bread sounds hollow when tapped. Lightly brush again with olive oil when it comes out of the oven. Serve warm or at room temperature. It is best eaten on the day of making. Makes 1 loaf

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Caramelised Red Onion,
Black Olive and Herb Bread



Herb and Parmesan Bread Sticks
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Grape and Blue Cheese
Schiacciata with Honey
[SEE RECIPE NEXT PAGE]

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Herb and Parmesan Bread Sticks

1 recipe of dough (see 'Basic Recipes' page 134)

Filling

1 tablespoon each finely chopped rosemary and thyme

2 teaspoons dried sage

1 tablespoon capers, finely chopped

finely grated zest 1 lemon

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

good grinding of black pepper

To finish

⅓ cup olive oil

2 cloves garlic, crushed

sea salt

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat the oven to 200˚C.

Filling: Combine the ingredients in a bowl and set aside.

Roll out the dough on a lightly floured bench to form a rectangle approximately 50 cm x 30 cm.

Combine the olive oil and garlic and lightly brush the dough with some of the oil. Sprinkle the filling, widthwise, over half the dough and fold the other half over the top. Lightly roll the dough to press the two halves together. Brush the top with more of the garlic oil and cut down its length into two pieces.

Cut into 1 cm wide strips, they should be about 25 cm long, and twist each piece from both ends. Place the twists 2 cms apart on a lined baking tray, brush with garlic oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake for 8 minutes then turn the sticks over and bake for a further 5-6 minutes or until they are golden. *Rearrange the bread sticks on the tray for even browning if necessary.*

Remove from the oven and push the bread sticks together. This makes it easy to quickly brush them all with the remaining garlic oil and sprinkle them with Parmesan. The bread sticks are best served warm. If making ahead, reheat for 3-4 minutes in a hot oven.
Makes about 12-16 bread sticks

Grape and Blue Cheese Schiacciata with Honey

This easy flat bread with its moreish sweet/savoury flavours can be served with drinks, as a snack, or with salad as a light lunch.

Dough

2½ cups plain flour

½ teaspoon sea salt

1 teaspoon instant dried yeast

1 cup warm water

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 tablespoons honey

To assemble

2 tablespoons olive oil

400 grams seedless red grapes

150 grams blue cheese, crumbled into small pieces

1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme

3 tablespoons honey

30 cm ovenproof sauté pan or cake tin, brushed lightly with olive oil

Dough: Place the dry ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer. With the mixer going, gradually add the water, olive oil and lastly the honey and beat on low speed for 5 minutes. *The dough should be smooth and elastic.* If the dough is very loose, add a little extra flour. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place for 1-2 hours until doubled in size.

Preheat the oven to 180˚C.

To assemble: Divide the dough in half. Roll one piece out on a lightly floured bench to fit the base of the tin.

Lightly brush the dough with olive oil and scatter with half the grapes, blue cheese and thyme and drizzle with half the honey.

Roll out the second piece of dough and place on top, pinching the edges together. Brush with olive oil and scatter over the remaining grapes, gently pushing them down into the dough, then top with the remaining blue cheese, thyme and honey.

Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden and puffed.

To serve: Cut into wedges and serve warm, drizzled with extra honey if desired. Serves 8

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Raspberry, Lime and Mascarpone Muffins

Ingredients

2 cups self raising flour
½ cup caster sugar
1 large pinch of salt
150g salted butter
Zest of 1 lime, finely grated
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup milk
1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries
250g Tatua Mascarpone

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease and flour a medium sized 12 mould muffin tin.
2. In a bowl, sift flour, sugar and salt together then rub in the butter.
3. Add the lime zest, eggs and milk then stir until just combined.
4. Spoon a small amount of mix into each muffin mould to 1/3 full. Top each with 5 raspberries.
5. Place a dessert spoon sized dollop of Tatua Mascarpone in the centre of the raspberries and muffin mixture.
6. Distribute the remaining muffin mix evenly between the muffin moulds. Top with the remaining raspberries.
7. Bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until nicely browned and cooked through.



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basic recipes

Butterscotch icing

60 grams butter
125 grams brown sugar
50 ml cream
375 grams icing sugar, sifted

Heat the butter and sugar in a saucepan until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and whisk in the cream and icing sugar until smooth.

Chocolate ganache

¾ cup cream
2 tablespoons butter
225 grams dark chocolate, finely chopped

Put the cream and butter in a saucepan and heat until just below boiling point. Remove from the heat and add the chocolate, stirring until melted and smooth. Leave for a few minutes until it starts to thicken.

Custard

300ml hot milk
1 egg
3 egg yolks
2 tablespoons caster sugar

Heat the milk in a saucepan to just below boiling point. Whisk whole egg, egg yolks and caster sugar in a bowl. Whisk in a small amount of the hot milk to warm the mixture then whisk in the remaining milk. Tip the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over a gentle heat, stirring constantly for 10 minutes. The custard will thicken a little, but still have a pourable consistency (to check if it is cooked, run your finger down the back of the spoon and a clean line should appear and remain visible for a few seconds).

Pour into a jug if serving warm, otherwise tip into a bowl and cover the surface with plastic wrap. Cool then refrigerate. Makes 1½ cups

Coffee crème patissiere

5 egg yolks
¾ cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup plain flour
5 tablespoons cornflour
2½ cups milk
1-2 tablespoons instant espresso coffee granules
1-2 tablespoons coffee liqueur, optional

Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and vanilla in a large heat-proof bowl. Sift the flour and cornflour together and gradually whisk into the egg yolks to make a smooth paste. Put the milk and espresso coffee in a saucepan and bring to just below boiling point. Slowly pour into the egg mixture, whisking constantly to prevent it curdling.

Tip the custard back into the saucepan and place over a medium heat. Stirring constantly, slowly bring to the boil and then cook for a further minute until the custard becomes very thick and there is no taste of raw flour left. Remove from the heat and stir in the liqueur if using. Tip into a bowl and cover the surface with plastic wrap to prevent a skin forming. Cool then refrigerate until ready to use.

Raspberry coulis

500 grams frozen raspberries, thawed with their juices
2-3 tablespoons icing sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Blend the raspberries in a food processor until smooth. Add the icing sugar and lemon juice and process again. Tip into a sieve set over a bowl and push the berries through with the back of a spoon until only the seeds are left in the sieve. Discard the seeds and pour the coulis into a serving jug.

Raspberry glaze

200 grams frozen raspberries
200 grams raspberry jam
½ cup water

Put the frozen raspberries, jam and water in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to combine. Simmer for 15 minutes, stirring often, until the mixture is thick and reduced. Tip into a fine sieve set over a bowl and, using the back of a spoon, press the mixture through until only the seeds remain in the sieve. Cool and refrigerate until ready to use.

SWEET SAUCES

Butterscotch sauce

60 grams butter
½ cup packed brown sugar
½ cup cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon sea salt

Melt the butter in a small saucepan and stir in the brown sugar and cream. Bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar and simmer for 3 minutes. Stir in the vanilla and salt.

Caramel sauce

1 cup caster sugar
¼ cup water
1 cup cream
2 tablespoons rum
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
40 grams butter
¼ teaspoon sea salt

Put the sugar and water in a medium saucepan over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil and cook until the mixture turns a deep golden colour. Remove from the heat and gradually stir in the cream, taking care as the mixture will bubble and splatter furiously.

Return to the heat and simmer for 1 minute. Stir in the rum, vanilla, butter and salt. Cool then refrigerate for at least 2 hours until thick. *The caramel can be made several days ahead and kept refrigerated.*

Chocolate Fudge Sauce

200 ml cream
4 tablespoons brown sugar
150 grams dark chocolate, chopped
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
40 grams butter

Put the cream and brown sugar in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and whisk in the chocolate to make a smooth sauce. Stir in the vanilla extract and the butter. Tip into a bowl or jug and serve warm. The fudge sauce will keep, covered and refrigerated, for 2 weeks. When re-heating, never let the sauce boil as it can seize and become grainy. Makes 2 cups

Crème Anglaise

200 ml milk
200 ml cream
1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste
or 1 vanilla bean
6 eggs
4 tablespoons caster sugar

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Put the milk, cream and vanilla paste in a small heavy-based saucepan and heat gently until just scalding. Remove from the heat and set aside. Place the eggs and sugar in a bowl that will fit snugly over a saucepan of gently simmering water. Using an electric hand mixer, beat until the mixture becomes thick and pale and the whisk leaves a trail when dragged through.

Stir continuously with a wooden spoon while slowly pouring in the hot cream mixture. Place the bowl over the pan of simmering water and cook over a gentle heat until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of the spoon.

Remove from the heat, cool and refrigerate until needed. Reheat gently and serve warm. It will keep, refrigerated, for 3-4 days.

Warm toffee sauce

1 cup caster sugar
½ cup water
¾ cup cream
1-2 tablespoons brandy, optional
2 tablespoons butter

Put the sugar and water in a saucepan over a medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Increase the heat and boil for 10-12 minutes or until it turns a light golden colour. Carefully pour in the cream, brandy and butter and simmer for 1 minute. *If making ahead, reheat to serve.*

PASTRIES & DOUGH

Choux pastry

1 cup plain flour
pinch of sea salt
120 grams butter, diced
1 cup water
4 eggs
1 egg, lightly beaten (for eggwash)

Preheat the oven to 220°C Sift the flour onto a sheet of baking paper and add the salt. Put the butter and water in a large saucepan over a medium heat and bring to a rolling boil, making sure all the butter has melted before the water comes to the boil.

Remove the pan from the heat, add the flour and stir quickly to incorporate. It will form a thick dough. Return the pan to the heat and stir until the mixture forms a ball and pulls away from the side of the pan. *This should take 1-2 minutes. This 'dries' the dough slightly and allows it to puff when baked.*

Add the eggs one at a time and beat vigorously until well incorporated and smooth.

Place the pastry into a piping bag and pipe onto lined trays. Gently flatten the point with a moist brush, then coat with eggwash before baking. Bake for 10 minutes then reduce the temperature to 180°C and bake for a further 25 minutes or until golden.

Shortcrust Pastry

180 grams plain flour
pinch of salt
90 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg yolk
2-3 tablespoons cold water

Put the flour, salt and butter in a food processor and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and 2 tablespoons of water and add to the flour. Pulse to process until the dough just starts to come together, only adding the extra water if necessary (over-mixing and too much water will make the pastry tough). Tip onto a large piece of plastic wrap and bring the dough together to form a flat disc. Wrap and chill until firm.

Sweet Shortcrust Pastry

1⅔ cups plain flour
½ teaspoon sea salt
¾ cup icing sugar, sifted
110 grams butter, diced and chilled
1 egg yolk
2-3 tablespoons chilled water

Put the flour, salt, icing sugar and butter in a food processor and pulse to coarse crumbs. Combine the egg yolk and 2 tablespoons of the water and add, pulsing again until the dough just starts to come together. Add the extra water only if necessary. Tip onto a large piece of plastic wrap and bring the dough together to form a flat disc. Wrap and chill until firm.

Classic Dough for Pizza or Bread Sticks

2 cups plain flour or '00' flour
1½ teaspoons finely chopped rosemary
½ teaspoon sugar
1½ teaspoons instant dried yeast
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 cup lukewarm water
1 tablespoon olive oil

Place the dry ingredients in the bowl of an electric mixer. Mix the water and oil together. With the mixer going, gradually add the oil and water to make a soft but not sticky dough. Add a little more water if the dough is too firm. Knead on a low speed for 5 minutes. Remove, form the dough into a smooth ball and place it in a lightly oiled bowl, turning to coat it all over. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside in a warm place untildoubled in size, about 1½ hours.

'00' flour – see 'Glossary' page 138.

TIPS FOR PERFECT PASTRY:

If making pastry by hand: Wash hands under a cold running tap to keep them cool and only use your fingertips when rubbing the fat into the flour.

Keep all ingredients and utensils as cold as possible. Don't let the fat get too warm as it will make the pastry oily and it will be tough once baked. If necessary, place the bowl with the pastry in the fridge to cool down before continuing.

Handle the pastry as little as possible. (Most pastries can be made successfully in a food processor as long as care is taken not to over-mix.)

Other tips: When adding the liquid, exact amounts can never be specified because the amount of liquid that flour absorbs varies. Add two thirds of the liquid and immediately start to bring the dough together. If it's too dry, add more liquid little by little until the dough resembles coarse breadcrumbs. If too wet, the dough will be sticky and difficult to roll out, resulting in a tough pastry.

If too dry it will crack when rolled out and be dry to eat. It is crucial to rest the pastry in the fridge for at least 30 minutes to relax the gluten. This makes the pastry more elastic and easier to roll out. Form the pastry into the shape you want to roll it out in, wrap tightly in plastic wrap to prevent it drying out and chill.

When working with pastry that has a high fat content, such as pâte sucrée, place the pastry between 2 large sheets of baking paper then roll into the desired shape. This means you don't have to use extra flour, which can toughen the pastry and also makes it easier to turn for even rolling. If rolling directly on the bench, lightly flour both the rolling pin and the work surface and roll the pastry from the centre and in the same direction turning the pastry regularly to ensure it doesn't stick to the bench, only adding a little extra flour if necessary. The dough needs to be firm but pliable for rolling.

If too cold the dough will crack, if the dough becomes soft during rolling, carefully slide it onto a flat baking tray and chill briefly.

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techniques

Bake blind: line a prepared pastry case with baking paper and fill with pie weights or dried beans. The beans support the pastry as it cooks. Bake in a preheated 190°C-200°C oven for up 10-12 minutes before removing the paper and weights. The shell should now have taken form. If the pastry is not going to be cooked further with a filling, reduce the temperature to 175°C until it is completely cooked and golden. Otherwise return to the oven for the time specified in the recipe.

Brown butter: makes approximately ⅔ cup. Melt 250 grams of butter in a small saucepan over a medium heat until it begins to boil and a white foam has risen to the surface. Skim off the foam and discard. Continue cooking until the solids on the bottom of the pan have turned a good brown colour and the clear butter is golden and smells nutty. Pour through a fine strainer into a clean jar and cool. Refrigerate until ready to use. If a smaller quantity is needed, 6 tablespoons (90 grams) will yield 4 tablespoons of brown butter.

Clarify butter: melt 250 grams of butter in a small saucepan over a low heat until it begins to boil and a white foam has risen to the surface. Skim off the foam with a spoon and discard. Tilt the pan and spoon the clear yellow butterfat into a clean jar, taking care not to disturb the white milk solids in the bottom of the pan. Discard the solids. The clarified butter will keep in the refrigerator for 2 months. Makes about ¾ cup.

Cream butter and sugar: Have the butter at room temperature and beat until the texture is smooth and fluffy with no grains of sugar left in the mixture.

Filling tins: Once the raising agent has been added to the wet ingredients it starts working immediately. You need to get the mixture into the oven as soon as possible once these are added. Don't fill the tin more than two-thirds full and spread the batter evenly.

Glazing: key to creating a glossy, golden surface on baked pastry. Pastry is usually glazed with egg wash, simply a mixture of beaten eggs – but milk, or milk and sugar can also be used.

Julienne: this term refers to food that is sliced into thin matchsticks. This is most easily done using a mandolin but can also be done by hand. First cut into 3mm (⅛-inch) thick slices. Stack the slices and cut into 3mm (⅛-inch) thick strips. Cut into desired length.

Lining a pastry tin: If the pastry has softened during rolling it will need to be chilled briefly again before attempting to line the tin.

To transfer the pastry from the bench to the tin, simply drape it over your rolling pin so it hangs down evenly on each side. Centre the rolling pin over the tin then carefully unroll the dough. Or fold your circle of pastry into quarters and place with the point in the centre of the tin, then carefully unfold the pastry into its circle.

- Fluted tins: when lining fluted tins it is important to press the pastry firmly into the ridges around the tin and the base to remove any pockets of air.
- Deep tins: cut a small triangle out of one side of the pastry after rolling, so you don't get lots of folds when you place it in the tin.

After lining the tin, cover and chill or freeze the unbaked shell to relax the dough and minimize shrinkage. They can be baked from frozen but will require a few minutes longer in the oven.

Melting chocolate: place the chopped chocolate in a stainless steel or glass bowl over a pot of simmering water. Do not allow the bottom of the bowl to touch the surface of the water, otherwise the chocolate will burn and seize.

Pit cherries: cut around the circumference and twist the two halves in opposite directions. Pull out the pit.

Poach: to cook food, completely covered in barely simmering liquid (the surface of the liquid should not break). Foods which can be poached include apples and pears, beef, chicken, dried fruits, duck, eggs, figs, fish, quinces, stone fruits and vegetables such as leeks, carrots and globe artichokes. This liquid can be water, stock, wine, sugar syrup, rendered duck or goose fat or olive oil. Poaching meat or poultry will give moist, succulent results and is especially ideal if the meat is to be served cold. It is particularly important to have a well-flavoured poaching liquid as this method of cooking does not allow any caramelisation to occur. Poaching can take place either in the oven at a very low temperature, as in confit of duck, or on direct heat. A simmer mat is a useful tool to ensure the gentlest heat is maintained.

The poaching liquid can then be used as a base for a flavoursome soup. Stocks can be used over and over again, in fact they get better with use as the flavours are enriched further. Care must be taken though to prevent bacterial growth.

- Always use the stock for the same type of meat e.g. chicken.
- After each use, bring the stock to the boil, skim it and strain it through a fine sieve.
- Store it in a clean container with a well-sealed lid.
- Cool completely before refrigerating or freezing.

Reduce: to boil a liquid – often stock, wine or a sauce – rapidly until the volume is reduced by evaporation, thereby thickening the consistency and intensifying the flavor.

Roast nuts: spread the nuts out in a single layer on a shallow baking pan and place in a preheated 180°C oven. Shake the pan every few minutes until the nuts are golden. Watch carefully as the nuts can become too brown very quickly. Remove and tip into another dish to cool.

Sterilise bottles and jars: put jars or bottles and their lids through a hot cycle of the dishwasher. Alternatively, wash in hot soapy water and rinse well. Place them on an oven tray in a cold oven. Turn the heat to 120°C and leave for 30 minutes.

Toast and grind spices: place the spice in a small dry pan over a medium heat and toss until fragrant and just starting to darken in colour. Be very careful not to burn as this will make them bitter. Toast one spice at a time rather than combining, as each spice will take a different time to toast. Tip out onto a plate and cool. Grind in a mortar and pestle or a small coffee grinder reserved for the purpose.

Whip egg whites: Have the egg whites at room temperature and ensure the bowl and beater are clean and dry. There are three stages that the eggs will go through: the first is foam, then soft peaks, and finally firm peaks. The peaks are indicated by pulling the whisk out of the whites: at the soft peak stage the whites will not hold their points and will droop over. Stiff peaks will hold their form.

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glossary

'00' flour: a finely ground Italian high grade durum wheat flour, commonly used in pizza and pasta making. Available from specialty food stores.

Baking beans: ceramic or metal 'beads', which can be re-used. Available from cookware stores. Dried beans can also be used as an alternative.

Brioche: yeasted bread enriched with eggs and butter. It is most commonly available from specialist French–style bakeries.

Buttermilk: originally the by-product of butter making. Nowadays it is made commercially. It is generally available in the dairy section of the supermarket.

Creme de cassis: a liqueur made from blackcurrants, substitute with blackcurrant concentrate.

Crème fraîche: a matured, thickened cream that is slightly soured. It can be added to hot sauces or soups without the risk of curdling, but is also delicious served with puddings.

Demerara sugar: unrefined golden, raw sugar. Available from supermarkets and food stores.

Dutch cocoa: this richer, darker cocoa has an alkali added, which neutralises the cocoa's acidity. The process is known as 'dutching' – the cocoa is not from Holland.

Filo pastry (also spelt phyllo): a type of paper thin pastry from the Eastern Mediterranean. It is used for sweet and savoury dishes and is readily available fresh from the supermarket. It is important to keep it covered while in use as it dries out quickly when exposed to the air.

Labne: a thick, strained yoghurt. It can be formed into small balls and rolled in herbs, spices or nuts or drizzled with honey and served with fruit as a dessert.

Leaf gelatine: sets a much clearer gel than its powdered equivalent. It comes in varying grades but is rarely labelled with the grade, having been repackaged by the retailer from a bulk box. Silver grade will give a firmer set than gold, so it is best to check the grade upon purchase.

Marsala: a fortified wine from Sicily. The sweet version is used in cooking, such as in the classic dessert, Zabaglione. Dry Marsala can be drunk as an aperitif or added to savoury dishes.

Mascarpone: a fresh cheese from Italy made from double cream. Mascarpone is readily available in supermarkets.

Muscovado sugar: an unrefined dark brown sugar with a distinct molasses flavour. It is slightly stickier and coarser than regular brown sugar due to the sugarcane juice left in during its production, but brown sugar can be used as an alternative.

Palm sugar (also known as Gur, Jaggery, Gula Melaka): is derived from several different palm trees including the palmrya and coconut palms. The sap of the palm is boiled down and the result can be either similar to a thick honey, a soft paste or a hard cake which is then grated or shaved. These cakes come in different shapes and sizes and the colour can vary from pale to dark. The flavour is quite caramelly and can be substituted with equal parts of brown sugar and maple syrup. Available from Asian supermarkets.

Palette knife: a knife with a long, blunt, round-ended flexible blade.

Polenta: Made from grinding corn into flour or meal, it is a rich yellow colour. Used in both savoury and sweet dishes. Use the quick cook, finely ground instant polenta when adding to cakes and biscuits.

Pomegranate molasses: a thick syrup produced by cooking down pomegranate juice. It is a slightly astringent, sweet-sour condiment used widely throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

Preserved ginger: jars of ginger preserved in syrup are available from Asian food stores.

Preserved lemons: lemons are preserved in salt and lemon juice, sometimes with spices such as cinnamon, and bay leaf. They are ready to use after 4 weeks. Only the rind is used, the flesh is scraped away and discarded.

Quark: (also 'quarg') a soft, white fresh cheese that is readily available in tubs in the chiller section of supermarkets. Use sour cream or ricotta as alternatives.

Quince paste: Quince and many other fruits can be cooked for a long time with sugar until they form a thick paste, which sets firm on cooling. It can then be sliced and served with cheese. Look for quince paste that is a deep dark red, it will have the best flavour.

Ricotta: Meaning 'recooked' in Italian, ricotta is a fresh, creamy low fat cheese available in the chiller section of supermarkets.

Rosewater: an intense, concentrated distillation of rose petals used as a flavouring in cakes, pastries and desserts. Available in specialty stores.

Tamarind concentrate: made by soaking dried tamarind pods in water then passing through a sieve to obtain a pulp. You can make it yourself easily from block tamarind or buy the concentrate ready-made in a jar. The flavour is sour-sweet and is used in Asian and Middle Eastern dishes in the same way lemon juice is used in Western cooking. Both pods and concentrate are readily available from Asian grocery stores and good supermarkets.

Vanilla beans: the cured pods from the vanilla orchid. These can be used whole or split, with the seeds scraped into the mixture.

Vanilla bean paste: made by infusing vanilla beans in a thick syrup made of sugar, water and a natural thickener with the vanilla seeds scraped into the paste.

Vanilla extract: not to be confused with vanilla essence, which is a commercially manufactured product. Vanilla extract is made from vanilla beans macerated in an alcohol-based solution.

Verjuice: in the 14th and 15th centuries French cooks used this juice made from unripe grapes. It has the tartness of lemon and the acidity of vinegar but without their harshness. It marries well with nut oils. Use it to de-glaze pans, make vinaigrettes, or poach fruit in a syrup made from equal parts verjuice and sugar. Use white wine as an alternative in sweet applications.

Yeast: There are several varieties of dried granular yeasts on the market.

Instant dried yeast – the yeast we use in *Dish* recipes. It is not intended to be started in warm liquid first. It should only ever be added to the dry ingredients as described. It is conveniently packaged in single use sachets and is readily available on the baking shelves of the supermarket.

Dried granular – follow the packet instructions for 'proofing' as for fresh yeast below.

Fresh yeast – this should be firm and moist, with a pale creamy colour. Avoid any that is dark or dry and crumbly. This yeast needs to be 'proofed' before being added to the dough mixture. Yeast is dissolved in warm water and left for 5 -10 minutes to froth up. If it doesn't, it means the yeast is stale and the baking won't rise. Available from health food stores, gourmet food stores and sometimes the bakery sections in some supermarkets will sell to the public.

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useful conversions

Notes for cooks

To ensure successful results in cooking, we recommend you invest in accurate measuring tools – measuring cups and spoons and a measuring jug are essential and electronic scales are particularly useful as they weigh accurately in both imperial and metric.

Always follow one set of measures in a recipe. Do not mix them up.

Dish uses:
Large eggs (No.7)

Level spoons and cup measurements

Liquids are always measured in a jug and dry ingredients in measuring cups.

NB: One tablespoon is 15ml (the Australian tablespoon is 20ml)

Useful ingredient equivalents

Breadcrumbs
1 cup fresh = 50 grams
1 cup dried = 115 grams

Butter
1 (American) stick = 115 grams
1 cup = 225 grams
2 tablespoons = 30 grams

Cheese
1 cup grated tasty = 115 grams
1 cup Parmesan = 150 grams

Egg Whites
Large (No. 7) egg white = 30 grams

Flour
1 level measuring cup = 150 grams

Gelatine
3 teaspoons granulated/3 leaves (gold grade)
will set 500 mls/2cups liquid to a light jelly
1 rounded tablespoon granulated/4-5 leaves (gold grade)
will set 500 mls/2 cups liquid to a firm jelly
Leaf gelatine comes in varying grades. It is wise to check the setting properties of the leaf gelatine you buy before use.

Honey, Golden Syrup
1 cup = 350 grams

Onions
1 x 115 gram onion = 1 cup chopped

Rice
1 cup uncooked rice = 200 grams
1 cup cooked = 165 grams

Sugar
1 cup caster and granulated = 225 grams
1 cup brown sugar = 200 grams
1 cup icing sugar = 125 grams

Spinach
650 grams spinach leaves = ¾ cup puree

Yeast
2 tablespoons fresh (compressed) = 1 tablespoon dried (granulated)

Oven temperatures

225°Fahrenheit = 110°Celsius = cool oven
300°Fahrenheit = 150°Celsius = very low oven
350°Fahrenheit = 180°Celsius = moderate oven
400°Fahrenheit = 200°Celsius = hot oven
450°Fahrenheit = 230°Celsius = very hot oven

Volume

1 level teaspoon = 5mls
1 level tablespoon = 15mls
1 oz/fl oz = 28.35 grams/mls
1 pound = 450 grams
1 cup liquid = 250 mls
1 pint = 600 mls
1 litre = 1000 mls
1 quart = 4 cups

Weight

10 grams = ¼ oz
15 grams = ½ oz
25 grams = 1 oz (actual 28.35grams)
450 grams = 1 pound
1 kilogram = 2 ¼ pounds

Length

1cm = ½ inch
2.5cm = 1 inch
12cm = 4½ inches
20cm = 8 inches
24cm = 9½ inches
30cm = 12 inches

Food name equivalents:

We all use cookbooks and magazines from around the world. These are some of the more common ingredients which have differing names:

baking paper	parchment paper/silicone paper
beetroot	beets
cannellini beans	white kidney bean
capsicum	bell pepper/sweet pepper
celeriac	celery root
coriander	cilantro
cream	heavy cream
eggplant	aubergine
fillet (as in meat)	tenderloin
golden syrup	dark corn syrup
hapuka	groper
icing sugar	confectioners sugar
plain flour	standard/ pure flour
prawn	jumbo shrimp
rocket	rocquette / arugula
scallopini	pattypan squash
spring onions	green onions
zucchini	courgettes

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