

A Year Of AUD'S TASTY TREATS



JANUARY

Tartiflette

At a glance

Perfect for beginners
Prep time 25 minutes
Cooking time 40 minutes
Serves 4

You'll need

Pan to boil Potatoes and an ovenproof dish

Ingredients

1kg Maris Piper, Red skinned Desiree or Baking Potatoes

2tbsp Olive Oil

300g Streaky Bacon chopped

1 Large Onion diced

4 Cloves of Garlic

130ml White Wine

200ml Double Cream

1 Whole Reblochon Cheese sliced

1 Tbsp Fresh Thyme Leaves (or 1 tsp of dried)

Freshly ground Pepper

Butter for greasing



Tartiflette

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190 degrees / Gas 5
2. Peel the potatoes cover with salted cold water, bring to the boil and cook for 5-10 minutes until just tender. Leave to cool
3. Next heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the diced onion and bacon until golden brown add the garlic and cook for 2 more minutes, pour the white wine into the pan and let it bubble and reduce the liquid by half and remove from the heat.
4. Slice the cooled potatoes and place half into the buttered ovenproof dish, add some milled pepper (salt isn't needed as the bacon and cheese together are salty enough).
5. Sprinkle over the bacon and onion mixture and thyme leaves and top with the remaining potatoes.
6. Pour over the cream and arrange the slice reblochon cheese on top.
7. This can be prepared ahead and be kept in the fridge for a couple of days.
8. When ready to eat bake for about 25-30 minutes until the cheese is golden brown and bubbling.



Aud's tip

I have played around with a couple of recipes here but this is my own ultimate version of Tartiflette, I like lots of garlic but if you prefer you could reduce the amount a bit.

You can serve this with crusty baguette but if you want to put a slightly healthier slant on it then steamed broccoli or any green veg is also good!



FEBRUARY

Squidgy Pear Chocolate Pudding

At a glance

Easy recipe

Preparation time 20 minutes

Cooking time 35 minutes

Ingredients

200g/7oz butter, plus extra for greasing

300g/11 oz golden caster sugar

4 large eggs

75g/2.5 oz plain flour

50g/2 oz cocoa powder

410g can pear halves in juice, drained

100g/4 oz plain dark chocolate

(70% cocoa solids)

25g/1 oz flaked almonds (optional)

cream or ice cream, to serve

IF FREEZING

Wrap the cooled, unbaked pudding lightly in foil and freeze for up to one month. Unwrap the pudding and bake from frozen for 50 mins.



Method

Heat oven to 190C fan/gas 5.

Lightly grease a roughly 20x 30cm shallow ovenproof dish. Put the butter in a large saucepan and place over a low heat until just, melted.

Remove the butter from the heat and stir in the sugar until well combined.

Whisk the eggs together in a large bowl.

Gradually add the eggs to the butter and sugar, beating well with a wooden spoon in between each addition.

Sift the flour and cocoa powder on top of the egg mixture, then beat hard with a wooden spoon until thoroughly combined.

Pour into the prepared tin or dish and nestle the pears into the chocolate batter.

Put the chocolate on a board and cut into chunky pieces roughly 1.5cm with a large knife.

Scatter the chocolate pieces over the batter and sprinkle with almonds, if you like.

Your pudding can be frozen at this stage.

Bake in the centre of the oven for 30 mins or until the mixture is crusty on the surface and lightly cooked inside.

Do not allow to overcook as the cake will become spongy rather than gooey in the centre.

Serve warm with cream or ice cream,



Aud's tip

This pudding is suitable for freezing and take it from me, it's just as delicious.

“

This recipe is from the BBC Good Food website.

I have made it several times and the dark chocolate makes it a perfect Valentine's dessert.

”



MARCH



Easy Delicious Chocolate Cake

Ingredients

- 6oz / 170g Self Raising Flour
- 5oz / 140g Castor Sugar
- Pinch of Salt
- 3 heaped teaspoons of cocoa powder
- 3oz / 85g Soft Margarine
- ¼ pint Milk
- 2 Medium Eggs
- 1 generous tablespoon of Syrup
- 1 level teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda
- 1 level teaspoon Baking Powder

Icing to fill and decorate:

- 6oz / 170g Icing Sugar
- 4oz / 115g Softened Butter
- 2oz / 57g Melted Dark Chocolate (80%+ cocoa content)

At a glance

- Easy all in one recipe
- Preparation time 15 Minutes
- Baking time 1 Hour
- Serves 8 to 10

You'll need

- An electric mixer makes this quick and easy
- 8" tin / 20cm tin





Easy Delicious Chocolate Cake

Grease and double line the tin with greaseproof paper

Preheat oven to 150°C

Place the ingredients in a mixing bowl and whisk slowly for a few seconds to combine the ingredients then mix for 3 minutes on full speed, scraping down the sides of the bowl once or twice in that time to ensure all ingredients are fully incorporated.

Place cake batter into the tin and bake for 45 minutes, to see if the cake is ready gently press the centre of the cake with your fingers and it should spring back, it may need up to 1 hour.

Allow to cool fully and remove from the tin. Split the cake horizontally and put half of the icing in the centre of the cake and the remainder on top, finish with chocolate curls or sprinkles

To Make the Icing:

Beat together the Icing sugar and butter until creamy and then beat in the melted chocolate until smooth, again an electric mixer makes this quicker!

This cake is beautifully light and airy so when you are decorating it make sure your icing is at room temperature so it doesn't pull all the cake crumb up.

It freezes brilliantly if you double wrap it and then decorate once defrosted.

It is also a really great base for a gateaux so handy to have in the freezer for an emergency dessert, instead of using the icing detailed here you could fill with fruit and cream and maybe a little liquor ! then decorate accordingly to make a decadent dessert.



**Aud's
Tips**

Easter Simnel Cake

APRIL

Ingredients

For the cake

100g Sultanas
100g Currants
100g Raisins
1 Teabag
1 tbsp Brandy
2 tbsp Golden Syrup
75g Self Raising Flour
75g Plain Flour
100g Butter, softened
100g Castor Sugar
2 Whole Eggs plus 1 Yolk
Rind of 1 Lemon
Rind of 1 Orange

Almond Paste

350g Ground Almonds
175g Icing Sugar plus a little extra for rolling
175g Caster Sugar
½ tsp Almond Extract
1 tsp Lemon juice
1 tsp Brandy
2 Eggs plus 1 Yolk

*(You can skip this stage if
using bought Almond
Paste)*

At a glance

Moderate skill

If have a bit of patience, time and skill this cake is well worth it.

These following stages can easily be split into stages over a few days:

Preparation time 1- 1½ hours

Baking time up to 2½ hours depending on your oven

Decoration time ½ hour

Serves 8 to 10

You'll need

An electric mixer makes this easier

Large bowls

7 to 8" tin (approx 18-20cm)

If making almond paste a pan

Rolling pin

Chocolate nest decoration

300g Cooking Chocolate (i use a mixture of milk and dark but whatever is your preference)

4 Shredded Wheat cereal biscuits

1 Tbsp Olive Oil

1-2 bags of Mini Chocolate eggs to fill the nest

Method

The Cake

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, Gas 4, 160°C fan oven. Line a 7 to 8" round cake tin with greaseproof paper, use 2 layers of paper all around the tin and in the bottom of the tin, I also wrap brown paper right around the edge of the tin along with a piece underneath the tin in the oven. This helps to protect the cake during the long baking process.
2. Make the cake by mixing all the dried fruits together in a bowl.
3. Put the teabag in another bowl and add 125ml boiling water and infuse for 10 minutes until nice and strong. Pour the liquid over the fruit, then stir in the golden syrup and rind of both the orange and lemon and the brandy.
4. Beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer until the mixture is light in colour and then beat in the eggs and yolk bit at a time then gently stir in both flours until smooth.
5. Finally stir in the dried fruits and their liquid.
6. Spoon half the cake mixture into the lined tin
7. Take the almond paste and cut off one third and roll a circle to exactly the same size as your tin (you will need a little icing sugar on a clean work surface to do this) lift and place on top of the cake mixture, pressing down gently to remove any trapped air. Spoon the rest of your cake mixture on top of the almond paste circle.
8. Cover the top of the tin with foil or brown paper and bake for 45 minutes, remove the foil/paper from the top and continue to bake for another 50 minutes until golden brown and a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean, if it needs a longer in the middle but is brown enough on top, then cover again to stop it from over browning. (The cooking time can vary according to your oven). Leave in the tin until completely cold.
9. Once the cake is completely cold the remaining almond paste can be rolled out to cover the top and sides of the cake. You are now ready to make the nest for the top....

Almond Paste

If using begin by making the Almond Paste

1. Begin by mixing together the icing and caster sugar in a large bowl, then stir in the whole eggs and the egg yolk. Place the bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and whisk for about 10 minutes until the mixture is thick and fluffy (this is easier with the help of an electric hand whisk!)
2. Remove the bowl from the heat and whisk in the almond extract, lemon juice and brandy and continue to whisk until the mixture cools a bit.
3. Stir in the ground almonds and knead with your hand to form a firm paste.
4. Cover with cling film and leave to one side.

This almond paste recipe is a Delia Smith recipe and I use it for my Christmas cake too, it is a bit fiddly, but well worth the effort, however the cake also works well with a couple of packets of bought almond paste or marzipan.

Chocolate Nest

1. Melt the chocolate of your preference in a bowl slowly over a pan of warm water, the water needs to be barely simmering as if the chocolate gets too hot it will go thick and lumpy.
2. Stir in the olive oil and then the crushed Shredded Wheat biscuits, use a spoon to arrange the chocolate mixture on top of your marzipan covered cake in the form of a nest.
3. Allow to set and then fill with your favourite chocolate eggs and a chick if you have one.
4. A ribbon around the sides finishes it off nicely but is not essential.

If you don't have any brown paper for around the outside of the cake tin then another double layer of greaseproof paper all around the outside, underneath and on top will also work fine. To fix the paper around the outside I just use staples or paper clips and then the paper can be used again.

Adding Olive Oil to the chocolate prevents it from setting too hard so that you can slice through it a little bit easier.



**Aud's
Tips**



Beetroot and Goats Cheese Salad

MAY

Seasonal dish

Beetroots are coming into season and they come in a lovely array of colours, so try to use as many of them as you can in this recipe for a really bright side dish.

We are getting to the time of the year where we are thinking about salads and even the heady days of summer and eating outside, this is a great easy side dish to accompany a large selection of dishes, anything from a spring Quiche to a summer BBQ.

I think the idea for this recipe originally came from a Slimming World magazine (the kind of thing i tend to pick up in the hairdressers or dentist!) but i have altered it a bit and i use it over and over again.

At a glance

Easy

Prep 15 Minutes

Cooking Time 20 Minutes, this can be done in advance

Serves 4

Serves 8 to 10

Ingredients

800g fresh Beetroots, as many different colours as you can get hold of

2 tbsp Olive Oil for roasting

100g Mixed salad leaves, try to include some Rocket in this as it goes well with the Beetroot

1 small Red Onion thinly sliced

400g can Chickpeas, drained and rinsed

160g soft goats' cheese or Feta if you prefer

Freshly ground black pepper and salt

Sesame seeds to finish

If you are short on time then you can drizzle with a nice bought vinaigrette, but if you have time try this dressing for a change...

Dressing

200g Natural Yoghurt

1 x Clove Garlic finely chopped

½ tsp each of ground Cumin, Turmeric and Cinnamon

Juice of 1 Lime

1 tsp runny Honey

Handful of fresh Coriander

Beetroot and Goats Cheese Salad

Method

Put all the dressing ingredients in a hand blender, give it a good blend and serve in a jug along side the salad.

Peel and cut the beetroots into even sized small cubes or wedge shapes, place in a roasting tray with the Olive Oil, Salt & Pepper and roast for 20 minutes at 200°C or until just cooked when you test with a sharp knife, do not overcook as they need to retain a bit of bite.

On a platter spread the leaves, holding a few sprigs of Rocket back to garnish.

Sprinkle over the leaves the onion and chickpeas, add the roasted beetroots, (which by the way can be warm if you are serving the salad immediately or they are equally tasty cold)

Crumble over the cheese, sprinkle with Sesame seeds and the remaining rocket.

A final twist of ground salt and pepper and serve with vinaigrette or the yoghurt dressing

Aud's Tips

Beetroots are coming into season and they come in a lovely array of colours, so try to use as many of them as you can in this recipe for a really bright side dish.

If you are short on time drizzle with a nice bought vinaigrette





Cavolo Nero with Caraway Seeds

JUNE

Seasonal dish

Cavolo Nero is a type of Kale with a slightly bitter tang and then a sweet after taste, it is in season right now and you will find it in the supermarkets and on market stalls. I bought some last week which is grown in Lancashire, so really local and full of nutrients.

If you find spring greens and cabbage a bit dull then this is a really good way to quickly make them more interesting

At a glance

Easy

Preparation 5 minutes

Cooking time 5 minutes

Serves 2



Ingredients

1tbsp Butter or Olive Oil to fry

1 Cavolo Nero

1 Clove Garlic

1 Shallot or ½ small onion

Sprinkle of Caraway seeds (if you don't like these you can use any seeds e.g. sesame)

Salt and Black Pepper to taste



Cavolo Nero with Caraway Seeds

Method

Break the cabbage into individual leaves and very coarsely chop

Briefly steam or *blanch the leaves quickly for no more than 1 minute, they should be just starting to wilt and retain their bright green colour. *Refresh see Aud's tip below

Finely dice the Shallot and crush the Garlic

Heat the butter or oil in a frying pan and gently fry the Shallot and Garlic until soft but with little colour, then throw in a generous sprinkle of Caraway seeds, continue to fry for 2 minutes to release the flavour from the seeds.

Now throw in the refreshed cabbage, season to taste and toss everything in the pan for 2 minutes until the Spring Cabbage is heated through, be careful not to overcook or you will spoil the nice fresh taste of the dish.

Serve immediately.

Aud's Tip



*A really handy tip to keeping almost all vegetables crisp when cooking is to blanch them in boiling water, this just means to scald them in boiling water quickly and then refresh in really cold water to halt the cooking process, you can then drain and keep the vegetables in the fridge until you want to reheat them.



Strawberry & Chocolate

Layered Dessert

JULY

2 in 1

This is actually 2 recipes in 1, the brownie recipe is simply the best brownie recipe I have come across and really easy to make for an afternoon tea, then combined with these delicious ingredients that make up the rest of this dessert it becomes a delicious finale to any meal.

Ingredients (brownies)

185g Butter	40g Cocoa Powder
185g Dark Chocolate	85g Plain Flour
3 Eggs	50g White Chocolate
275g Caster Sugar	chopped
	50g Milk Chocolate chopped

Ingredients

600g Strawberries, plus a few extra to decorate
2 tbsp Orange juice and 2 tbsp Cointreau mixed together (if you don't wish to add alcohol then 4 tbsp orange juice instead)
500g Mascarpone
100g Caster Sugar
3 Eggs Separated
8 Ready-made brownies if skipping the brownie recipe above
50g Good quality plain chocolate, grated or make into curls.

At a glance

Prep time: 2 hours (1 hour if using ready made brownies)

Baking time: 40 minutes (no baking if using ready made brownie)

Serves: 8

*Tbsp = tablespoon

**This recipe contains raw egg and should be avoided if you are pregnant

You'll Need:

Presentation bowl for trifle

Mixer with beater & whisk attachment would make it easier



Strawberry & Chocolate Dessert



Method for brownies

1. Grease and line 20cm tin. Preheat oven to 180°C or 350°F or gas 4.
2. Melt the butter and dark chocolate together in a bowl over a pan of gently simmering water. Leave to cool.
3. Whisk the eggs and sugar for 3-5 mins until pale and creamy and double original volume.
4. Fold cooled chocolate mixture into sugar and eggs, sieve in flour and cocoa and fold again and gently stir in chopped chocolate.
5. Pour into tin and bake for 35 mins
6. Leave in tin until completely cold

Constructing your dessert

Choose a nice deep trifle dish, clear glass is nice if possible as it shows the layers off nicely, but not essential. Individual glass dishes are also an option here.

1. Hull and roughly slice the strawberries, (holding back the ones to decorate) mix them with the orange juice & cointreau if using, in a large bowl, then leave to stand for about 30 minutes to macerate.
2. Beat the mascarpone with the sugar and egg yolks until smooth. Whisk the egg whites in a very clean bowl to form soft peaks, then gently stir a little into the mascarpone mix to lighten it. Gently fold in the rest.
3. Halve the brownies horizontally. Tuck half of them snugly into the base of a glass trifle bowl (you may need to cut them to fit). Add half the strawberries and juices, then half the mascarpone mixture. Top with another layer of brownies, then follow with the remaining strawberries and juices. Finally spread the remaining mascarpone on top.
4. Cover and chill for several hours or overnight preferably.
5. To serve, decorate the dessert with the reserved strawberries and the grated chocolate or chocolate curls.

Aud's Tip

When you are whisking the egg whites in step 2 all the equipment must be very clean with no traces of egg yolk or grease otherwise the egg white will not whip up sufficiently.

This is a great 'make ahead' dessert and can be made 24 hours in advance but just leave the decorative strawberries and chocolate on the top until you serve, so it looks like you have just whipped it up!!

If you choose to skip making the brownie and purchase those instead then it is super quick.

Reference to any sources:

Parts of this recipe have been taken from 'BBC Good Food' but i have changed and adapted it over the years to make this delicious summery dessert.



Plum Clafoutis

(pronounced "Kla-foo-tee")

AUGUST

A French classic!

If you want a quick and easy finish to a meal and you like a simple dessert then you need to try this French classic. It is a comforting mixture somewhere between a baked custard, a flan and a pancake!

I have used plums here, technically cherries are used in this recipe, but you can substitute these for blackberries, blueberries, sliced pears, raspberries... or a mixture of any sweet fruit that you think will sit nicely in the baked custard, there isn't a lot of sugar in the recipe so avoid a tart fruit.

Ingredients

- 40g Butter - melted
- 3 Whole Eggs
- 2 Egg Yolks
- 75g Caster Sugar
- 80g Plain Flour
- 50g Ground Almonds
- Pinch Salt
- 500ml Double Cream
- ½ tsp Almond Essence
- 4 or 5 Ripe Plums
- Butter for greasing dish

At a glance

- Serves 8
- Prep time 15 mins
- Cook time 30 mins
- Cooling time 30 mins

You will need

24cm ceramic or glass dish, not loose-bottomed



Plum Clafoutis



Method

- Preheat your oven 180°C / 350°F
- Cut the plums into strips (approx 8 slices each depending on the size)
- Melt the butter and leave to cool while you make the custard
- Using an electric whisk combine all the eggs and sugar, getting as much air in as you can to make a nice light batter, the mixture needs to double in volume.
- Add to the egg mixture the flour, salt, cream, cooled melted butter and ground almonds and essence and whisk well until smooth with no lumps
- Pour the batter into a well greased glass or ceramic flan dish and arrange the sliced fruit on top (see pic 1)
- Bake for 25-30 mins or until just set in the middle and golden brown on top, it shouldn't be runny in the middle but a slight wobble is ok.
- Allow to rest for at least 30 mins (see pic 2)
- Serve luke warm, delicious with vanilla ice cream! (see pic 3)

Aud's tip

If you are not serving immediately then store covered in the fridge and reheat in a pre-heated oven for about 10 minutes, it can be eaten cold but i always prefer it luke warm.

Clafoutis does not freeze





Lemon Drizzle Cake

SEPTEMBER

Macmillan Coffee Morning

I acquired this recipe a long time ago from a friend and it is the easiest and tastiest Lemon Drizzle I have made.

If you have never really baked cakes and want to have a go then this is a great cake to start with, and I am sure Macmillan is a fund raising cause close to most of us in some way.

Ingredients

170g Castor Sugar
115g Margarine
170g Self Raising Flour
2 Medium Eggs
Grated Zest of 1 lemon - juice is used
later in topping
1 level teaspoon Baking Powder
4 tablespoons Milk

Drizzle topping

115g Granulated Sugar
Juice of 1 Lemon

As ever, an electric mixer makes it easier but it can be made by hand too, take care if you are using an electric mixer not to over mix!



Lemon Drizzle Cake

Method

- Preheat your oven 150°C (Fan Oven)
- Place all the ingredients for the cake together into the mixing bowl, if using an electric mixer use the whisk attachment, start slow until all the ingredients are combined and then full speed for 1-2 minutes maximum, scraping down the sides half way through.
- Place into a greaseproof lined 2lb loaf tin (a 2lb or 900g loaf tin measures approx 20cm long x 9cm wide x 6cm high), and heat sometimes and use these tin liners which are super easy.
- Bake at 150°C for 35-45 minutes, every oven is different so times will vary but a skewer should come out clean from the centre of the loaf.
- While the loaf is still slightly warm (but not straight out of the oven!) stir together the granulated sugar and the juice of the lemon and pour over the top of the loaf allowing it to go down the edges between the cake and the greaseproof so the you get the 'drizzle' effect down the sides too.
- Allow to cool thoroughly before removing from the tin.
- Make a cuppa and enjoy, see how long a loaf lasts !!?



Aud's tips

Once you have zested the lemon, if you put it in the microwave for 15 second bursts until it is slightly warm you will get more juice out of it than a cold lemon, and it makes squeezing easier too.

Double this recipe and freeze one, they freeze brilliantly :)

I once tried to make the drizzle topping with castor sugar as i had run out of granulated but i was disappointed as the 'drizzle' became more of a sweet syrup and you are really looking for a slightly crunchy finish on top.



Pumpkin Soup

At a glance

OCTOBER

Perfect for beginners
Preparation time 5 minutes
Cooking time 40 minutes
Serves 6-8

You'll need

A large heavy based cooking pot

Ingredients

2 tbsp Olive Oil

1oz Butter

1 Large Onion, roughly chopped

2 Large Cloves of Garlic peeled and roughly chopped

2 Carrots peeled & roughly chopped

2 Sticks of Celery roughly chopped

1 rounded teaspoon of each of the dried spices
smoked paprika, cumin & coriander

2 Bay Leaves

1 Large Pumpkin peeled and roughly chopped
(prepared weight approx 1kg)

1 Litre of vegetable or chicken stock, a little extra
may be needed

100ml Double Cream

Salt and Freshly ground Black Pepper

TO FINISH:

6-8oz Mature Lancashire cheese Grated



Pumpkin Soup

Method

- 1 Heat the oil and butter in a large saucepan then gently cook the onion, celery, garlic and carrots until soft but not coloured on low heat for about 10 minutes
- 2 Add the chopped pumpkin, salt and pepper and spices, continue to cook and stir occasionally for 8-10 minutes
- 3 Pour in the stock, add the bay leaves and season well and bring to a boil. Half cover the pan with a lid and reduce to a simmer, continue to cook for about 20 minutes until all the ingredients are really tender when tested with the point of a knife.
- 4 Remove from the heat and add the cream then puree with a hand blender until really smooth, if you want an extra velvety texture to your soup then you can pass it through a fine sieve. At this stage, the soup can now be stored in the fridge for 4-5 days or frozen for up to 4 months
- 5 Reboil the soup for a couple of minutes, you can adjust the consistency at this stage if it is a little too thick add more stock or a splash of milk, ladle into warmed bowls, and serve with crusty bread

Aud's tip

For an even more luxurious soup serve with a generous spoonful of grated mature Lancashire cheese in the centre of each bowl.

The pumpkin in this recipe can be replaced with any of the squash family of vegetables (also known as Cucurbits or Gourds) for example Butternut Squash.





Red Wine Braised Lamb Shanks

NOVEMBER

Warming Casserole

So, the weather has changed, and warming casseroles are a must. You will not be disappointed with this recipe; it takes time to cook slowly (the longer and slower, the better) but you will be rewarded for your efforts.....

At a Glance

Serves 4

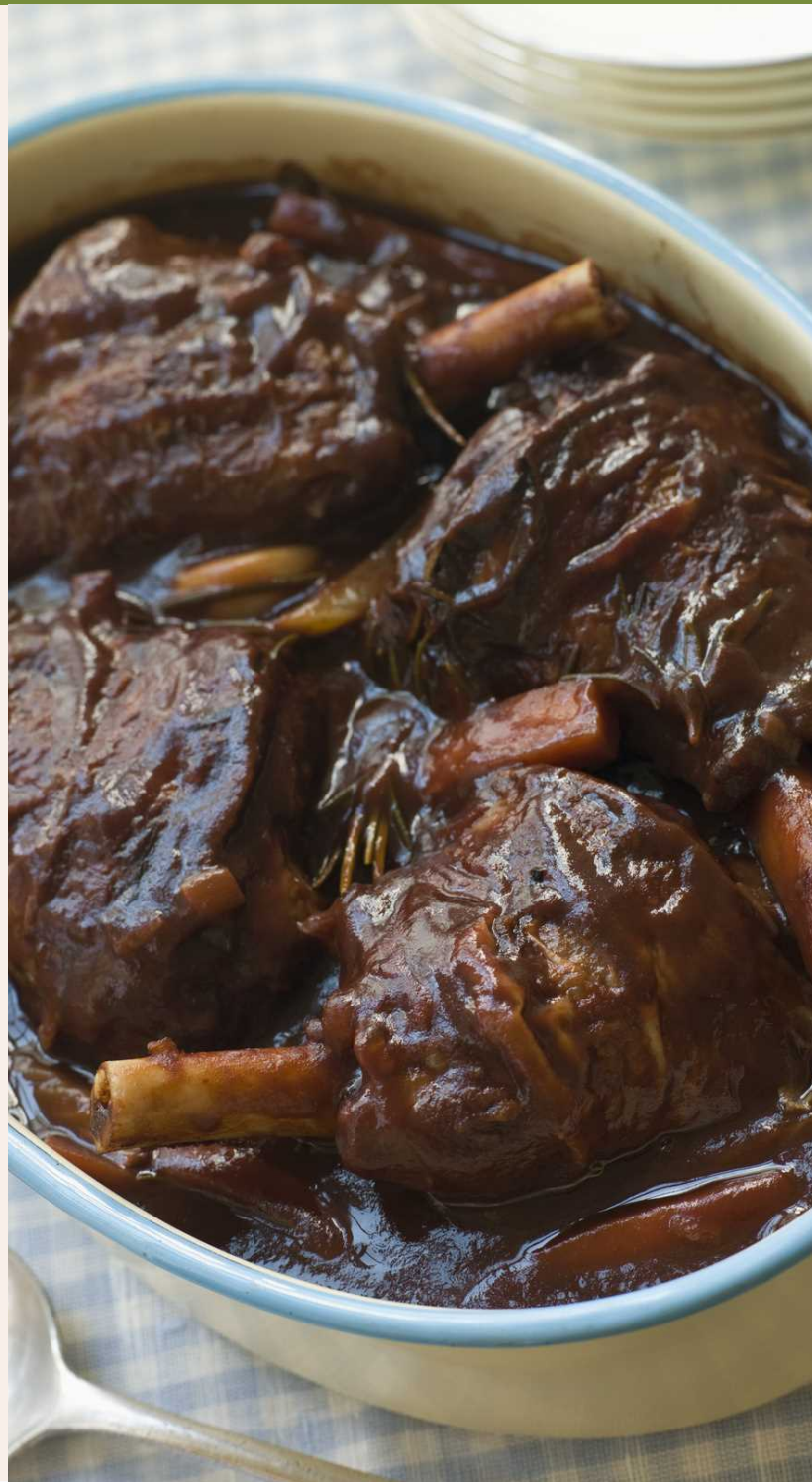
Easy

Preparation time 45 mins

Cooking time 2-3 hours

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp Oil
- 4 Lamb shanks
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 1 carrot, peeled and sliced
- 2 sticks celery, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 250ml full bodied red wine
- 250ml beef or lamb stock
- 6 fl oz tomato passata
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large sprig of thyme]
- chopped parsley to serve



Red Wine Braised Lamb Shanks

Method

1. Heat oven to 160°C fan. Put a large casserole dish that will snugly hold the lamb shanks in a single layer over high heat with half the oil. Add the lamb shanks and brown well on all sides. Remove from the pan and set aside.
2. Reduce the heat, add the remaining oil and add the sliced onion, carrot and celery. Cook for about 5 minutes until they are mostly tender and beginning to turn golden at the edges. Add the garlic and continue to cook for a further minutes.
3. Pour the red wine into the pan, bring to a boil and simmer for 3 mins. Add the stock and passata and bring back to the boil. Season, add the sugar, bay leaves, thyme and lamb shanks, mixing to coat thoroughly in the braising liquid.
4. Cover with a tight-fitting lidded braise on the middle shelf of the oven for about 2 hours or until the meat is tender, turning the meat in the liquid every 30 minutes. Remove from the oven, check the seasoning of the sauce, scatter with parsley and serve with lots of mashed potato.

Aud's tips

This can be made the day before and reheated which intensifies the flavours even more.

This is another BBC good food recipe from long ago that never fails to please!





Mum's Christmas Cake

DECEMBER

Pound All Round

This is my mum's delicious Christmas cake recipe (just to say....she loves baking and is brilliant at it!) She always made a large 10" square cake at Christmas, with lots of mouths to feed at the farm. She calls it her 'pound all round' recipe, but I have halved the ingredients here to make an 8" round cake and have updated the weights into grams!

Ingredients

225g Currants

225g Sultanas

225g Raisins

225g in total of Cherries & Mixed Peel together (chop the cherries into smaller bits)

½ pint Brandy (optional)

225g Butter

225g Brown Sugar

225g Plain Flour

4 Eggs

½ tsp Mixed Spice

½ tsp Ground Cinnamon

½ tsp Salt

Rind & juice of 1 small lemon

At a Glance

Makes an 8" round cake

Easy

Preparation of tin and cake 1hr

Baking 3-4 hours at 150°C (depending on your oven)



Christmas Cake



I like to soak my fruit in brandy for a few days, prior to baking.



All tucked up in my trusty (well used) brown paper layer.



Wrap up and feed with brandy every week until its time to decorate.

Method

- Heat your oven to 150°C fan and Line an 8" tin with a double layer of greaseproof paper
- Prepare brown paper to wrap around the sides on the outside of the tin using staples to secure them in place and flat pieces for underneath and on top to protect the cake in the oven.
- For the best results, soak the fruit in half the brandy for a few days prior to baking the cake, stirring each day.
- Using the beater on your mixer cream together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy, add the spices and salt and rind & juice of the lemon.
- Gradually add the eggs one at a time and then add the flour and mix until the flour has all disappeared, be careful not to over mix once the flour has gone in to the mixture.
- Add the soaked fruit by hand, place into lined tin and wrap the brown paper around the outside to protect the cake during it's long slow bake.
- Place in the middle of the oven sitting the cake on brown paper, only put the top piece of paper on when you are happy with the colour
- Ovens differ, so a skewer **MUST** be clean when inserted into the middle of the cake. Avoid putting anything else in the oven while you bake your cake.
- Allow to thoroughly cool before removing from the tin.
- Wrap the cake really well in cling film and tinfoil and if you like a boozy cake feed it with brandy regularly until you decorate it.

Aud's tip

I have to say we love a well soaked cake and mine gets fed with the remaining brandy after cooking, adding slowly over the weeks leading up to Christmas, this is of course optional!



A Year Of AUD'S TASTY TREATS



I hope you have enjoyed my month-by-month recipes for 2023.

I'll be back next year with some new tasty treats.

In the meantime, have a lovely Christmas break.

Audrey

For more gift ideas and recipes visit ...

VALLEYLIVING.CO.UK