

Potato-topped Chilli Beef

Oven: 190°C

2 tbsp olive oil
675g diced braising steak
2 onions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp tomato puree
400g can of kidney beans
400g can of chopped tomatoes
300ml beef stock
2 tbsp Tabasco
900g potatoes, peeled and cut in half
25g butter
Salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a saucepan and brown the meat. Transfer to a plate, then fry the onions and garlic gently for 5 minutes.

Return the meat to the pan and add tomato puree, drained and rinsed beans, tomatoes, stock and Tabasco. Season and simmer for 30 minutes until tender.

Meanwhile, boil the potatoes for 15 minutes. Drain, cool and coarsely grate. Spoon the chilli mixture into a 1.4L ovenproof dish.

Scatter the potatoes on top, dot with the butter and bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until golden.

Serves 6.

Parsnip & Potato Topped Venison Pie

Oven: 200°C, 400°F, Gas 6.

45ml olive oil
1 onion - chopped
1 garlic clove - chopped
3 rashers streaky bacon - chopped
675g venison mince
115g mushrooms - chopped
2tbsp flour
475ml beef stock
150ml port
2 bay leaves
1 tsp thyme
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp redcurrant jelly

675g potatoes - peeled and chopped
450g parsnips - peeled and chopped
1 egg yolk
50g butter
Nutmeg
Parsley

Heat oil - fry onions, garlic & bacon. Add venison and fry until browned. Mix in flour. Add stock, port, herbs, mustard and jelly. Boil for 30-40 minutes. Meanwhile, boil parsnips and potatoes together until soft, approximately 20 minutes. Drain and mash with the egg yolk, butter, a little nutmeg and chopped parsley. Season. Place the venison into an ovenproof dish. Spread the potato/parsnip mash on top. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes.

Blackcurrant Curd

Preparation Time: 10 mins

Cooking Time: 25 mins

Makes about one big jam jar full

450g blackcurrants
450g cooking apples, peeled and chopped
225g unsalted butter (for each 450g fruit purée)
4 large eggs (for each 450g fruit purée)
450g caster sugar (for each 450g fruit purée)

First make the blackcurrant purée. Put the blackcurrants and apples in a pan with a drop or two of water and cook slowly until softened. Don't worry too much about de-stalking as they are now passed through a nylon sieve. Measure the purée and assemble the unsalted butter, eggs and caster sugar, following the guidelines above. Put the purée into a double saucepan or a bowl over a pan of simmering water. Add the butter and sugar and dissolve. Beat the eggs lightly, strain into the mixture and stir until it thickens. Do not allow it to boil as it could curdle. When thick, pot and store. Eat within 3 months and keep in the fridge once opened.

This unusual alternative to the much loved lemon curd is unbelievably delicious as a filling for a sponge cake, or spread on to warm, freshly made scones.

Butternut Squash with Pancetta and Egg

Preparation Time: 5 mins
Cooking Time: 30-35 mins
Serves: 4

4 slices butternut squash, 1" thick, with any seeds removed
a little vegetable oil
200g pancetta, diced
100g mushrooms, sliced
4 spring onions, sliced
4 large eggs

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas Mark 6. Place each piece of squash on a baking sheet and rub a little oil on top. Season. Bake for 20 minutes or until tender. Meanwhile, fry the pancetta and sauté for 3-4 minutes or until it is crisp. Add the mushrooms and onion and sauté for a further 2 minutes. Heap the above mixture on top of the butternut squash and make a hollow in the centre of the mixture. Carefully crack an egg into the hollow and bake for 8-10 minutes or until the egg is baked to your liking. Serve hot with tomato salad.

Piquant Pork Casserole

Preparation Time: 5 mins
Cooking Time: 1½ - 2 hours
Serves: 4

450g lean pork cubes
1 leek, sliced
2 sticks celery, sliced
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
300ml orange juice
2 tbsp paprika
2 tbsp English mustard

Place pork cubes into an ovenproof casserole dish. Add leek, celery, garlic, tomato purée, Worcestershire sauce, orange juice, paprika and English mustard. Mix well, cover and cook in a preheated oven 140°C for 1½ - 2 hours until tender. Check every now and then that it is not becoming too dry. Add a little water if necessary. Serve with mashed swede, potato and carrots.

Spanish-ish Pasta Bake

Preparation Time: 10mins
Cooking Time: 30 mins
Serves: 4

300g dried penne pasta
2 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves crushed garlic
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and chopped
1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 tsp dried thyme
150ml water
100g Serrano ham, roughly chopped
150g Talton Smoky sausage, roughly chopped
freshly ground black pepper
100g cheddar cheese, grated

Cook the pasta following the instructions on the packet. Drain well and keep covered. Heat the oil in a pan and lightly sauté the garlic, onion and red pepper for 10 minutes or until soft. Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato purée, thyme and water and allow to simmer for 10-12 minutes. Add the ham and sausage, season with pepper and heat through. Place the cooked pasta in a serving dish; pour the tomato sauce over the top and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Place under a preheated grill and cook until the cheese is golden and bubbling. Serve with a fresh green salad and crusty bread.

Harvest Pumpkin Bread

1 cup caster sugar
¼ cup margarine
¼ cup apple sauce
2 eggs
1 cup solid packed pumpkin
2 cups plain flour
½ tsp salt
2 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
1 tsp ground cinnamon
½ cup raisins
1 tsp grated orange rind
juice of half an orange
½ cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Lightly grease a 9" x 5" x 3" loaf tin. Beat sugar, margarine and apple sauce until creamy and light (about 5 minutes). Add eggs one at a time and continue to beat. Add pumpkin and mix until smooth. Combine flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon. Stir into pumpkin mixture and mix until smooth. Add raisins, orange rind, orange juice and nuts (optional). Stir well and pour into loaf tin. Bake at 350°F for 60-65 minutes.
Cut into 12 slices.

This recipe and the one below are both American Halloween recipes and are therefore given using the original US 'cup' measurements. 1 cup = 8oz

Sweetcorn Fritters

Preparation Time: 5 mins
Cooking Time: 20 mins
Serves: 2

2oz plain flour
2 tbsp milk
good pinch of paprika and/or cayenne
1 large egg yolk
¼ teaspoon salt
grain from 2 cooked corn
1 large egg white, stiffly whipped

Boil the corn for 5-10 minutes and allow to cool. Stand the cobs on a board and slice the grains from the cob by pushing down with a sharp knife. This is actually surprisingly easy and is a good alternative to corn on the cob for those with dodgy teeth. Mix the ingredients in the order given, then drop tablespoons of the thick batter into hot butter in a heavy pan and fry until golden brown both sides.

Corn fritters are popular in the southern states of the USA where they like their soul food hot, spicy and fired. They would typically be eaten with fried chicken. They are also good for Saturday breakfast or brunch with bacon and grilled tomatoes. Talton Mill sweetcorn is picked daily and is as sweet and delicious as it sounds!

Pumpkin-Banana Shake

1 cup plain yoghurt
1 banana, sliced
2 drops vanilla
1 cup cooked chilled pumpkin.

To cook the pumpkin, place peeled pumpkin on a baking tray brushed with a little vegetable oil in a hot oven until tender.

In a blender, process the yoghurt, cooked chilled pumpkin, banana and vanilla. Blend until smooth and serve immediately.

Makes 3 delicious servings.