



Christmas Braai Menu

24th

Paella on the Braai

INGREDIENTS

- 8 chicken pieces (thighs and/or drumsticks)
- 2 kg shellfish (in the shell – like black mussels and prawns. If you're using just meat without shells, 1 kg is sufficient)
- 500 g fresh fish fillets (cut into blocks)
- 250 g spicy cured sausages (sliced or chopped – like chorizo or pepperoni)
- 2 tots olive oil
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 2 peppers (chopped – green, red or yellow)
- 2 cups rice (uncooked)
- 2 garlic cloves (crushed or chopped)
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 4 tomatoes (chopped)
- 3 cups fish, chicken or vegetable stock (3 cups is 750 ml which is also the size of a wine bottle)
- 1/2 cup black olives (pitted)
- 250 g peas (they come in frozen packets of this size)
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 tot parsley (chopped)
- salt and pepper
- Lemon wedges

***Please note that as with most dishes cooked on a braai, paella ingredients are not exact. Take these ingredients as a guide.**

INSTRUCTIONS

- In a large pan on the fire, fry the onions and peppers in the oil for 3 minutes. Your coals should be just hot enough to actually fry the onion. As the steel of the pan is much thinner than a cast iron pot, it will be a bit more sensitive to heat.
- Add the rice and mix well. All the rice should be thinly coated with oil. If this is not the case, add a bit more oil. Fry the rice for a few minutes until it turns pale golden in colour. Now add the garlic, paprika, turmeric, chilli powder and chopped tomatoes and stir fry for another 2 minutes.
- Add the stock and cover the pan with a lid or with tinfoil. The rice should now cook until soft, which will take about 35 minutes in total.
- Slightly reduce the heat under the pan by scraping away some coals. You are allowed to lift the lid now and again to stir the rice, and to monitor that it is not burning. Should everything seem a bit quiet, scrape a few extra coals back under the pan.
- After 20 of those 35 minutes, add the seafood, spicy sausage, olives and peas to the pan. Stir it in and cover the pan again. The seafood will cook in these last 15 minutes. Check your liquid level and add the wine if the pan becomes dry. If the wine is in and the pan still dry, start adding small amounts of water. On the side, and timing it to be ready with the rest of the dish, braai the chicken pieces in a grid over coals. This will take about 20–25 minutes.
- When the rice is soft, add salt and pepper to taste.
- Arrange the chicken pieces on top, garnish with parsley and lemon wedges, and serve immediately.

Cava Santa Monica Brut NV

Great value Champagne-look-a-like.
Good enough to fool your friends and family. Dry and crispy.



25th Christmas Day

Starters

Peri Peri Prawns

INGREDIENTS

- 2 – 6 bird's-eye red chillies (adjust number of chillies according to taste – two chillies give a mild heat while six will be hot and not for the faint-hearted)
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and roughly chopped
- 15ml (1 tbsp) fresh oregano, stems removed and roughly chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- juice of 1 lemon
- 30ml (2 tbsp) paprika
- 3ml red chilli powder
- 60ml (¼ cup) red wine vinegar
- 10ml (2 tsp) salt
- 5ml (1 tsp) black pepper
- 125ml (½ cup) olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

- Soak 20 or so bamboo skewers in cold water over night.
- De vein the prawns and wash under cold water, pat dry.
- Skewer the prawns so they are nice and straight
- Combine all the ingredients for the marinade in a blender and whizz until smooth. Cover the prawns in half the Peri Peri sauce for 2-3 hours and chill the rest
- Cook the prawns on the Braai for about 4 minutes on each side basting with butter
- Serve with the remaining sauce, iceberg lettuce and Tzaziki

Side of Salmon

INGREDIENTS

- 200 ml soy sauce
- 1 lime
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 fresh chilli
- 15 g fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 side of salmon

INSTRUCTIONS

- Finely chop the chilli and ginger and crush the garlic
- Put them in a small saucepan along with the sugar, soy sauce and lime juice and bring to boil.
- Let it bubble gently for ten minutes until it thickens slightly and leave to cool
- Brush the salmon all over with the sauce.
- Cook on the Braai for 5 to 10 minutes turning only once to prevent it from falling apart.
- Serve immediately

Doran Vineyards Arya White Blend 2018

Paaderburg, South Africa
Beautifully lush blend with a bit of lees ageing and skin contact. w white pear, green apple, orange, peach and honey.

Seared Tuna

INGREDIENTS

- 4 sustainably sourced tuna steaks of about 200 g each (very fresh or 'sashimi grade')
- 1 swig vegetable oil
- salt and black pepper about
- ½ cup sesame seeds (bonus points for a mixture of black and white if you can find it)
- ½ cup good-quality soy sauce
- 2cm ginger (grated or crushed)
- 1 spring onion (finely sliced)
- Pinch of sugar
- Splash white wine vinegar



INSTRUCTIONS

- Lie the tuna steaks in a dish, then brush them lightly with oil, and season with salt and pepper on both sides. Leave them in a cool place but out of the fridge for 10 minutes so they reach room temperature. Don't leave them too long before cooking, as fish can go off quickly.
- Put the sesame seeds in another dish or on a plate and then dip the steaks on all sides into the sesame seeds to coat them evenly.
- Carefully (so that the sesame seeds don't fall off) put the tuna steaks in a clean hinged grid, then braai them over very hot coals for about 1 minute each on both sides. If you're wondering whether your coals are hot enough, then they aren't! Take the steaks off the fire and put them on a wooden board to cool for 5–10 minutes before you slice them.
- While the tuna is resting, mix the soy sauce, ginger, spring onion, sugar and vinegar together in a bowl or jug, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
- Use a very sharp knife and cut the tuna steaks into slices. If you don't have a very sharp knife, buy a new knife, use a knife sharpener, or both. The fish should still be raw in the middle.
- Drizzle the sauce over the fish, or serve the sauce in small dipping bowls

Rustenberg Roussane 2020

Stellenbosch, South Africa
Perfumed nose reminiscent of lilies and stone fruits with flavours of ripe pineapple and steely finish. Delicious!

25th Christmas Day

Mains

Pork Belly on the Braai

INGREDIENTS

- 1 piece pork belly around 1.5kg, skin scored
- 1 cup of sea salt mixed with 1 cup of zested citrus peel, pepper, spices and fresh, finely chopped herbs of your choice (I use orange, lime, crushed fennel seeds, pepper, marjoram and thyme)

INSTRUCTIONS

- The secret to a great tasting Slow Roasted Crispy Pork Belly start with your preparation before cooking. Salting, spicing and leaving the pork belly for a day or two will make a remarkable difference to your end product, by doing this you will get a fuller concentrated flavour, buttery meat and crisp as you like skin.
- Rub the salt, herbs and citrus peel all over the skin and meat. Cover and let it rest for 24 – 48 hours, thereafter do not wash off the rub.
- Make a great fire
- The pork belly can either be cooked at an angle or at good height above the fire.
- Keep on eye open your fire, moving the coals around to ensure that the pork belly does not cook too fast or burn.
- The whole process takes about 3 to 4 hours- Turn the pork belly often and make sure it cooks evenly.
- In the last three minutes, drop your grid close to the coals – this will colour the skin and make it puff a little. Take care not to burn the skin at this point.
- Rest the meat for at least fifteen minutes before serving

Dirty Cote du Boeuf

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5kg piece Cote Du Boeuf, room temp
- Sea salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Generously season the steak all over
- Cook on the kettle BBQ until cooked to your liking
- Take the meat off to rest for five to ten minutes and open the vents to allow oxygen to flow in, getting the coals really hot
- Place the meat directly on the coals turning and moving until you've got a nice crust all over and serve.

Kaapzicht Pinotage 2018
Stellenbosh, South Africa
One of the most complex and tasty wines ever made from this fickle grape. Tremendous concentration and savoury fruit

Turkey in the Weber

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large Turkey brined for 24 hours in 800g of table salt and 10 litres of water
- 100g butter, softened
- 1 heaped tsp hot smoked paprika
- 1 heaped tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 1 heaped tsp brown sugar
- 1/2 tsp fennel seeds, crushed
- 1/2 tsp coriander seeds, crushed
- 1 tsp dried sage (or other dried herb of your choice)
- 44cl can of beer (your choice)

Catherine Marshall 'Jono's Wave' Chenin 2017
Elgin, South Africa
Fleshy stone fruits backed up by green apple acidity and granite undertones

INSTRUCTIONS

- Get the kettle BBQ up to 180c
- Rinse the turkey for an hour in fresh water, replenishing every fifteen minutes.
- Mix the spices etc in the butter to make a paste
- Pat the bird dry and rub the spice paste all over (reserving some for basting), working it under the skin.
- Move the coals around so they are spread evenly in the kettle so the heat is distributed well.
- Drink around 2/3 of the can then place in onto top of the rack and carefully stand the turkey over it so it stand up. Baste every 30 minutes.
- Pull over the lid and cook for 2-3 hours—until a thermometer reads at least 75c when placed in the thickest part of the bird.
- Gently take the turkey out of the Weber and rest on the can for fifteen to twenty minutes then *very carefully* pull it off the can—watch out for the hot beer! - and carve.

Butterflied Leg of Lamb

INGREDIENTS

- 1.8KG Butterflied leg of lamb
- 2 tbsps sea salt
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 2 tsp mixed fresh herbs, finely chopped
- Ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Marinade the lamb over night in the fridge, take out a few hours before cooking
- Cook on the Braai 20cm above the flame for 15 minutes on each side
- Rest for 20 minutes then slice and serve

Paul Cluver Pinot Noir 2017
Elgin, South Africa
Super sophisticated luminous pinot noir with toasty bramble and savoury notes.

25th Christmas Day

Sides

Butternut Squash and Feta Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into 2.5cm chunks
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 tsp finely chopped red chilli, 3 cups baby spinach
- 100g feta cheese, crumbled
- 50g hazelnuts, toasted and roughly chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat the oven to 180c
- Drizzle the squash with 2 tblsp of the olive oil, season and roast in the oven until soft, around 30-40 minutes.
- Mix the remaining oil, lime juice, garlic and chilli and whisk to a dressing
- Turn the squash onto a platter, mix through the spinach, scatter over the feta, nuts and dressing

Braai broodjie

INGREDIENTS

- Sliced bread
- Cheese of your choice
- Fillings of your choice (traditionally it's chopped tomato, sliced onion and chutney)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Make your sandwich and butter the *outside* of the bread
- Braai in a closed grid over very mild coals until the cheese has melted and the outside is golden

Braai Baby Potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg baby new potatoes
- 250g smoked streaky bacon, chopped
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- Coarse salt pepper to taste
- 3 sprigs dill, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

- Par-boil the potatoes in salted boiling water, drain and put back in the pan, heat for 3 minutes to steam
- In a little of the olive oil fry the bacon until almost crispy.
- Add the spices and cook for a minute.
- Halve the potatoes and add to the pan with the bacon and spices and toss to coat well, add the remaining olive oil if the mix is a little dry.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Remove from the heat and add the dill, toss to combine
- Take two large pieces of foil, tip the potato mix in centre of the foil and fold to create parcel.
- Place the sealed parcel on the braai and cook for up to 30 mins until the potatoes are cooked through and slightly crispy.

Malva Puddings

INGREDIENTS

For the pudding

- 70g plain flour
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 100g caster sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 40g apricot jam
- 1 tbsp butter, melted
- 1/4 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 125ml whole milk

For the sauce

- 50ml double cream
- 40g caster sugar
- 30g butter

For the Crème Anglaise

- 200ml whole milk
- 2 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 2 large egg yolk
- 2 tsp sugar



INSTRUCTIONS

- Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas Mark 6.
- In a bowl, combine the flour, baking powder and baking soda. Set aside. In a stand mixer beat the sugar, egg and salt until you have a thick and pourable batter, similar to the consistency of a melted milkshake. Beat in the jam until incorporated, then mix in the melted butter and the vinegar.
- Add 1/3 milk, then 1/2 the flour mixture. Mix to combine. Add another 1/3 milk and the rest of the flour. Mix to combine, then add the remaining milk and mix until smooth.
- Divide equally between four greased pudding moulds.
- Bake until deeply caramelised, brown and well risen, around 25–30 minutes.
- While the puddings are in the oven, make the sauce. Gently heat the cream, sugar, butter and water, whisking until the butter is melted and the sugar has dissolved. Keep warm while the puddings are baking, but do not allow to boil or to catch on the bottom.
- Once the puddings are fully baked, remove from the oven and immediately make a cut in the top with the tip of a knife to create a space for the sauce. Pour the sauce into this cut, filling until each pudding can't take any more. Repeat with the remaining puddings, save the excess
- Make the crème anglaise. Heat the milk and the vanilla bean paste gently to scalding. Just before it bubbles, take the milk off the heat and remove any skin that may have formed. Whisk the egg yolk and sugar in a bowl, then pour over the hot milk, stirring continuously.
- Pour this mixture back into the pan, then heat over a low heat stirring continuously until it thickens slightly. To test if the crème anglaise is thickened, remove the pan from the heat and draw the back of a spoon through the custard. It should coat the back of the spoon evenly and when you draw a finger through the custard, the trail should remain.
- Serve as you wish

Italian Vegetarian Christmas Feast



Antipasti

As with the Paella these recipes are just a guide line so feel free to exchange ingredients for those most suited to your palate and be sure to get in some really good cheese to add to the platter

Focaccia

INGREDIENTS

- 375g strong white bread flour
- 375g “tipo 00” flour (sometimes sold as pasta flour)
- 1 tbsp fine sea salt
- 8g active dry yeast
- 130ml extra-virgin olive oil(100ml for the dough; 30ml for the topping, mixed with 30ml water and 1 tsp salt flakes)
- 2 tbsp coarse semolina or cornmeal (optional)
- Toppings of your choice (sun dried tomatoes, rosemary, olives)

Prosecco Ca Bolani Spumante NV
Veneto, Italy
Fizzier than a frizzante with ripe apple and citrus fruit. Jolly nice. Our top-selling Prosecco, once you've tried it you'll know why!

INSTRUCTIONS

- Put the flours in a large mixing bowl with the salt and yeast. Whisk well to combine, then make a hole in the middle and add 100ml olive oil, plus 300ml water. Stir together and add more water (I used about 100ml more) until you have a very soft, but not too sticky, dough.
- Knead until soft and elastic; in a food mixer (preferable) on a medium-slow speed for about 7 minutes, or by hand on a lightly oiled work surface for 10-12 minutes. Put the dough on a lightly oiled rimless baking sheet and leave to rise in a draught-free place for 60-90 minutes until roughly doubled in size.
- Knock back the dough, and lightly dust the baking tray with the semolina, if using. Gently press the dough out with your fingers to fit the baking tray. Brush with olive oil and leave to rise again for about another hour, or until doubled in size again. When this time has nearly elapsed, heat the oven to 220C and put a pizza stone or baking tray in there to heat up. If you have a water spray, ready it.
- Whisk together the remaining 30ml olive oil with 30ml water until emulsified. Transfer the dough to you pizza stone or baking tray and poke dimples into the surface of the focaccia with your fingertips. Pour the oil-and-water mixture on top and scatter with the salt flakes, then place in the oven and squirt a little water into the base of the oven. Bake for about 25 minutes, or until golden on top – keep an eye on it. The focaccia is best eaten warm.

Deep Fried Olives

INGREDIENTS

- 200g feta
- 1tbsp white vermouth
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1/2 garlic clove, crush
- 2 oregano sprigs, leaves picked
- 1/2 tsp dried chilli flakes
- 1tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 300g pitted olives
- 1 cup plain flour
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups panko
- Sunflower oil, to deep-fry

FOR THE MAYO

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tsp white vermouth
- 1 tsp lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

- Put the flour, eggs and panko in three separate bowls, season the flour
- Place the rest of the ingredients in a food processor and pulse until a paste has formed.
- Stuff each olive with the feat mix and then dredge in the flour, egg then panko
- Mix the mayo ingredients together in a bowl while you heat the oil in a deep pan up to 180c
- Fry the olives in batches for 1-2 minutes until golden brown
- Serve warm

Grilled, Marinated Vegetables

INGREDIENTS

(Can be a mixture of any veg you fancy so the below list is just a suggestion)

- 1 medium aubergine
- 2 medium courgette
- 3 peppers (red/yellow/orange)
- 1 bulb fennel
- 1 red onion
- 8-10 tbsp good extra virgin olive oil
- 1-2 tbsp white balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tsp dried chilli flakes
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning

Pecorino Caparone 2019

Abruzzo, Italy
100% Pecorino. Floral, delicate aromas, lemon & apple fruit, light but deceptively intense, really clean, fresh and pleasing.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Slice all the vegetable long ways, the red onion into rounds.
- If you have gas oven place the peppers directly on the hob flame until they are black all over.
- Remove from the heat, place in a bowl and cover with clingfilm.
- Dry fry the rest of the veg on a high heat in a griddle pan and arrange in a single layer to cool slightly.
- Once the peppers have cooled peel off the skins
- Place all the veg in a large serving dish
- Mix all the marinade ingredients together, pour over the veg and leave to marinade for at least an hour, preferably over night
- If keeping in the fridge bring up to room temperature before serving

Italian Vegetarian Christmas Feast

Primo

Ligurian Swiss Chard Pansotti, Walnut Pesto, Truffle O

INGREDIENTS

PASTA

- 4 eggs
- 400g 00 flour

PESTO

- 1/2 slice white bread, crusts removed
- 50ml milk
- 50g walnuts, toasted
- 10g Grana Padano
- 1/g garlic clove
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- Lemon juice, to taste
- Salt

PASTA FILLING

- 100g swiss chard
- 200g spinach
- Small bunch parley, leaves picked and chopped
- Small bunch chervil, leaves picked and chopped
- 100g ricotta
- 20g Grana Padano
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- Nutmeg, finely grated
- Salt & pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Begin by making the pasta dough. Place the flour in a bowl and crack the eggs into the centre. Whisk with a fork, gradually incorporating the flour into the egg
- Once the mixture has become a dough, tip out onto a floured surface and knead for 10 minutes until you have a smooth, elastic dough. Cover with clingfilm and leave to rest for 1 hour
- Blanch the chard for 3 minutes in salted boiling water. Plunge into iced water to chill and retain its bright green colour, then drain and squeeze out as much water as possible. Roughly chop and place in a bowl
- Wilt the spinach in a hot dry pan, then squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Roughly chop and add to the bowl with the chard
- Stir in the ricotta. Add the chopped herbs (reserving a little parsley for garnish), Parmesan and lemon zest and mix thoroughly
- Season the mixture with salt, pepper, lemon juice and freshly grated nutmeg. Taste and adjust accordingly
- Next, make the walnut sauce. Soak the bread in milk until soft, then add to a blender with the rest of the ingredients. Blend to a fairly smooth sauce – it's fine to keep the texture coarse if you prefer
- Taste and season. The sauce may be quite thick but don't worry, as it gets loosened with pasta water later

Rosso Piceno Caccialepre 2016

Marche, Italy

Really silky, dark cherry and chocolate filled delight.

Verdicchio Villaia 2017

Marche, Italy

Very rich and deep in flavour but with plenty of tension and bright acidity at the

- When the pasta dough has rested, quarter it and roll through the pasta machine, moving down the settings until you have pasta sheets around 1–1.5mm thick
- Working with a quarter of the dough at a time, lay out on a surface dusted with semolina flour. Place teaspoonfuls of filling along the dough, then carefully lay a second sheet of pasta over the top
- Carefully press down around the filling to seal the pansotti and remove any air bubbles. Use a fluted pasta wheel (or knife if you don't have one) to cut the pansotti into triangular shape
- Place the pansotti on a tray dusted with semolina flour whilst you work in batches to make the rest
- Cook the pasta in heavily salted boiling water for 3–5 minutes, depending on how al dente you like your pasta
- Gently heat the walnut sauce in a large pan, loosening the sauce with a few spoonfuls of pasta water. Drain the pasta and add to the pan. Toss to coat the pansotti evenly in the sauce
- Serve the pansotti warm with a drizzle of truffle oil and a sprinkle of chopped parsley

Secondi

Filo pastry, artichoke, porcini mushrooms, Squacquerone

INGREDIENTS

- 16 sheets ready made filo pastry
- 1 small onion, finely diced
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- 200g mushrooms, diced
- 50g dried porcini mushrooms, soaked in boiling water for 20 minutes.
- 50ml vegetable stock
- Small jar of marinated artichokes, drained and diced
- 250g Squacquerone
- 30ml milk
- 1 tbsp chives, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp melted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

- Pre heat the oven to 180c
- Gently fry the onion and garlic until softened
- Drain the porcini mushrooms, reserving the stock and finely chop
- Add both mushrooms to the pan and fry for 2-3 minutes.
- Add the stock and a table spoon of the mushroom liquid and cook until almost all the liquid has disappeared.
- Add 80g of the cheese and the milk, stir in the artichokes and chives
- Place 4 sheets of pastry on top of each other, twisting each sheet slightly to form a star
- Pile the filling in the centre of each, top with a table spoon of the cheese and gather up the outsides and scrunch them together
- Brush each with melted butter
- Place on a baking tray covered with baking paper and cook for 20-25 minutes, until golden brown

*****Squacquerone** is a sophisticatedly salty cheese, with sweet milky notes. Made in the regions of Ravenna, Forli-Cesena, Rimini, Bologna, and Ferrara. So soft and fresh it's almost like thick yoghurt.

Italian Vegetarian Christmas Feast

Contorini

Verdura Ripassata in Padella

INGREDIENTS

- 800g mixed greens
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1/2 tsp chilli flakes (more to taste)
- 1/2 lemon, juice only
- Glug extra virgin olive oil
- Salt & pepper

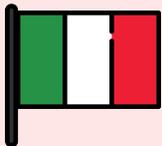
INSTRUCTIONS

- If any of the greens have stalks cut them out and thinly slice them, put them to one side
- Bring a pan of well salted water to the boil and add the leaves and cook for 5-10 minutes (depending on what you're cooking) until they are past al dente
- Once cooled squeeze out any excess water
- Heat the olive oil and cook the garlic until it's about to turn brown
- Add the chopped stalks and fry for a couple of minutes before adding in the leaves.
- Once cooked through remove from the heat and squeeze over the lemon juice, check seasoning and serve

Caponata

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Aubergine
- Sea salt
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion chopped
- 1 red pepper, cored and chopped
- 2 small celery stalks thinly sliced
- Black pepper
- 1 tin plum tomatoes
- 2 tbsp capers
- 1/4 cup pitted green olives roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 tsp to 1/2 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh mint



Feudo Maccari Nero D'Avola 2018

Sicily, Italy
Warm, succulent ripe figs, black cherry and plum with smoky leather.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat the oven to 400 degrees F. Season the aubergine cubes with salt (if you have the time, set it aside in a colander to sweat out its bitterness for about 20 or 30 minutes, while you prepare the remaining ingredients. Pat dry with paper towel).
- Place the seasoned eggplant cubes on a sheet pan, add a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil (about 3 tablespoons or so) and toss to coat. Roast the eggplant in the heated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until browned.
- Heat 2 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil in a large frying pan. Add the onions, bell pepper, and celery. Season with a pinch of kosher salt and black pepper. Cook for about 5 to 7 minutes, tossing regularly until softened.
- Add the tomatoes, capers, olives, raisins, honey, bay leaf and crushed pepper flakes. Pour in the vinegar and white wine. Stir to combine. Simmer on medium-low heat for 10 minutes.
- Stir in the roasted aubergine and cook for another 2 to 3 minutes in the sauce. Finish with fresh parsley and mint.

FORMAGGIO ET FRUTTA

Traditionally the Italians have a fruit and cheese course before the dessert and serve it with seasonal fruit. There are over 400 different Italian cheeses and each region has its own varieties and production methods. You could choose to focus on just one region and have multiple

Tallegio - A semi soft, smear rind cheese produced in the caves of Tallegio. Strong smelling but mild in flavour.

Gorgonzola - The world's oldest blue vein cheese, it has a crumbly, soft texture and a mild, nutty aroma. Gets sharper in flavour with maturity

Scamorzi Affumicate - A firmer soft cheese than mozzarella it is smoked by being held over a flaming straw for 10-15 minutes. It has a subtle, smoky flavour with a sweet caramel note.

Pecorino Romano - Dry-salted by hand and aged for 8-12 months, this cheese has a bold and deliciously pungent flavour.



Banfi Classico Riserva 2016

Tuscany, Italy
Delicious, elegant & complex, soft plum, blackberries, liquorice, vanilla and leather

Italian Vegetarian Christmas Feast

DOLCE

Tiramisu

INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs, separated
- 100g caster sugar
- 2 tbsp Marsala
- 250g Mascarpone
- 150ml double cream
- 150ml espresso
- 75ml Tia Maria
- 36 Savoiardi biscuits
- 2-3 tbsp cocoa powder

INSTRUCTIONS

- Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar until pale and thick. Stir the marsala and mascarpone together then fold into the egg and sugar mixture. Whip the cream to soft peaks in one bowl and whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks in another. Gently fold the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture, then fold in the egg whites incorporating as much air as possible.
- Line a deep, loose-bottomed 20cm square cake tin with a thick strip of baking paper leaving the ends overhanging (Pour the coffee and Tia Maria into a large bowl. Dip the biscuits into the mixture and put a layer into the bottom of the tin (you might have to trim the ends). Cover with 1/3 of the cream and a dusting of cocoa.
- Repeat twice more but don't add the last dusting of cocoa until you are ready to serve. Chill in the fridge for at least 4 hours or preferably overnight. Remove the whole tiramisù from the tin, dust with more cocoa and cut into slices.

Struffoli

INGREDIENTS

- 600g of plain flour
- 4 eggs
- 2 tbsp of caster sugar
- 50g of butter
- 1/2 lemon, zested
- 1 pinch of salt

TO DECORATE

- 500g of honey
- 125ml of Limoncello
- Sprinkles
- Candied peel



INSTRUCTIONS

- Pour the flour on a clean work surface and mix in the sugar, salt, lemon zest, eggs and the softened butter. Form a ball of dough and leave to rest for at least 1 hour
- Take the dough and quickly knead it on a lightly floured surface. Cut into small pieces and roll each piece between your hands, flouring them again to make marble-sized balls
- Preheat the oil to 190°C. When the oil has come up to temperature, fry the balls a batch at a time. Drain them when they are golden but not overly crunchy. Let them dry on paper towel
- Pour the honey into a roasting pan with a glass of limoncello and heat very gently, stirring constantly until it becomes runny. Remove from the heat
- Dip the struffoli in the honey mixture and arrange on a serving plate (dampen your hands slightly to prevent the honey from sticking and breaking the struffoli). Add the confetti, the candied peel



COFFEE

The Italians were the first Europeans to embrace coffee in the 1600s and were the inventors of the first coffee machines.

A perfect cup of Italian coffee must satisfy what the Italians call the Quattro M del Caffè' (the four M's of coffee). These are:

M for Miscela (blend) – the coffee blend used has an essential role.

M for Macinadosatore (doser grinder) – this the machine which grinds the coffee beans and measures out the right weight of coffee grounds to make the perfect espresso. Ideally, this is 7 gr of coffee grounds. But that's not all! It is also necessary to take in consideration how fine the coffee needs to be ground. For example, if the air is very humid, it is recommended to grind the coffee more coarsely and vice-versa. As such, the grinder needs to be adjusted daily or even several times a day to the weather conditions.

M for Macchina per Espresso (espresso machine) – a complex machine that has undergone various developments and improvements over the last hundred years or so in order to serve you a perfect cup of Italian espresso every single time.

M for Mano (hand) – the expert hand of the barista controls and fine tunes all the mechanical elements in order to produce the perfect cup of coffee. A good barista needs to know how to use and maintain as best as possible the different machines. He or she also needs to know the taste of his or her clientele so as to procure the right coffee blends and roasts.

Clare's Laid Back Christmas Feast

With a starter you just stick on a plate and most dishes that can be made ahead this should make Christmas day fairly relaxing...(the wine helps)

Gobillard Vintage Rose NV
Champagne, France
A delicate river trout colour, fruity, expressive and full of flavour.

**Perello Olives
Truffle Crisps**

***Order from Grog in plenty of time for Christmas - re order if you accidentally eat them

Starter

Smoked Seafood Platter

Order a nice selection from your local Fishmonger and serve with cornichons, aioli, lemon, wedges and buttered brown bread. My choices would be:

Langoustines /Lobster
Hot smoked salmon
Smoked Halibut

Smoked mackerel pate
Smoked eel
Smoked trout

Pouilly Fume 'La Moyniere' 2018
Burgundy, France
Fresh green apple, lime and wet stone along with a hint of gooseberry and a smoky flintiness. Intense.

The recipe below is a Delia Smith one and therefore pretty much perfect....

Roast Forerib of Beef

INGREDIENTS

- 3-rib joint, wing end or sirloin of beef on the bone (approx 2.7kg/6lb)
- 1 level dessertspoon mustard powder
- 1 level dessertspoon plain flour
- 1 small onion, peeled and cut in half
- salt and freshly milled black pepper

SAUCE

- 2 rounded tbsp hot horseradish
- 1 heaped tbsp crème fraîche
- 2 level tsp wholegrain mustard

GRAVY

- 25g/1oz plain flour (about 1 heaped tbsp)
- approx 1 litre/1 and three quarter pints vegetable stock, or water from the potatoes



Rolf Binder Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

Barossa Valley, Australia
Absolutely stunning fine wine at a fantastic price. A beautifully complex nose of crushed blackcurrants, mint and eucalyptus. Even better on the palate.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Pre-heat the oven to 240C/475F/Gas 9.
- If you dust the fat surface of the beef with mustard and the flour - just rub them in gently - then season with salt and pepper, it becomes extra crusty during cooking. So do that first, then place the joint in the roasting tin and tuck the two pieces of onion in close to the meat. The onion will caramelize as the beef cooks and give a lovely flavour to the gravy.
- Place the meat just above the centre in the oven and cook for 20 minutes then turn the heat down to 190C/375F/Gas 5 and cook for 15 minutes to the pound 450g/16oz for rare, adding another 15 minutes for medium rare and another 30 minutes for well done. While the beef is cooking, lift it out of the oven from time to time, tilt the tin and baste the meat really well with its own juices - this ensures that the flavour that is concentrated in the fat keeps permeating the meat, and at the same time the fat keeps everything moist and succulent. While you're basting close the oven door in order not to lose heat.
- When the beef is cooked, remove it from the oven, transfer it to a board and allow it to stand in a warm place for up to an hour, loosely covered with foil, before carving - to let all the precious juices that have bubbled up to the surface seep back into the flesh. Also, as the meat relaxes it will be easier to carve. Meanwhile, make the gravy.
- After removing the meat from the roasting tin, tilt to see how much fat remains - you need about 2 tbsp for this amount of gravy (the rest can be spooned into a dish and used for Yorkshire pudding). Place the roasting tin over a medium heat and sprinkle the flour into the fatty juices. Then, using a wire whisk, blend in the flour using a circular movement.
- When you have a smooth paste, slowly add the hot vegetable water, whisking all the time, and scraping the base of the tin to incorporate all the residue from the roast. When the gravy is bubbling, taste to see if it needs a little more seasoning, then let it carry on bubbling and reduce slightly to concentrate the flavour.
- You can now pour the gravy into the jug and keep it warm if lunch is imminent or, if not, leave it in the roasting tin and re-heat gently just before serving.
- To make the horseradish sauce, simply mix all the ingredients together in the bowl you're going to serve it in.

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Sides

Root Vegetable Gratin

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion, sliced
 - 2 cups (1/4-inch-sliced) fennel, top and core removed if tough
 - 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 tablespoon)
 - 450g sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
 - 450g celery root, peeled and sliced
 - 450g waxy potatoes, peeled and sliced
- ****The root veg should all be cut to the same size (around the width of a £1 coin)
- 1 cup double cream
 - 2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
 - 2 cups grated gruyere cheese
 - 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves
 - Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - 2 1/2 cups coarse fresh breadcrumbs or panko
 - 2 to 3 tablespoons melted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat your oven to 350°F. Butter a 13×9-inch deep baking dish.
- Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large deep (ideally 12-inch) saute pan over medium heat and add the onions and fennel. Cooking, tossing occasionally, until lightly browned and tender, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for one minute more.
- Meanwhile, in the largest bowl you own, combine the onion mixture with remaining vegetables, cream, stock, cheese, thyme, 1 tablespoon kosher salt and 1 1/2 teaspoons black pepper. Pour mixture into prepared dish and spread until even. Mix breadcrumbs and butter until evenly coated and distribute evenly over top of dish.
- Bake 1 1/2 hours uncovered, or until vegetables are very tender when tested with a small knife and the top is browned and bubbly. Allow to set for 15 minutes at room temperature and serve hot.



Cote du Rhones Vinsobres Chaume Arnaud 2016

Rhone, France
Single village wine of immense quality. The wine that created Great Grog in 1999

Sprouts with grapes and chestnuts

INGREDIENTS

- 12 small shallots, peeled and left whole
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed with the flat of a knife
- 250g ready-cooked and peeled chestnuts
- 4 fresh bay leaves
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 130ml olive oil
- 80ml Shaoxing rice wine (or pale dry sherry)
- 60ml soy sauce
- 180g seedless red grapes
- 800g brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved lengthways
- Salt
- 2 green chillies, cut into thin rounds
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp caster sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/350F/gas 4. Put the first five ingredients in a large 34cm x 26cm, high-sided roasting tin, then add 100ml oil, 75ml rice wine and two tablespoons of soy sauce. Cover tightly with foil and roast for 35 minutes, until the shallots are soft but still hold their shape. Stir in the grapes, cover again with foil, cook for 10 minutes more, then remove from the oven, discard the foil and set aside the tin while you roast the sprouts.
- Turn up the oven to 240C (220C fan)/465F/gas 9. Toss the sprouts in two tablespoons of oil and a quarter-teaspoon of salt, then spread them out on two oven trays lined with baking paper. Roast for 16 minutes, switching the position of the trays halfway through, until browned, then tip the sprouts into the shallot tin, gently mix everything together and leave, uncovered, at room temperature for an hour, ideally, and at least 30 minutes, to give the flavours time to develop.
- Meanwhile, in a small bowl mix the chillies, rice vinegar, sugar and an eighth of a teaspoon of salt, and leave to pickle for at least 30 minutes.
- Once the sprouts have sat for a while, stir in the remaining teaspoon of rice wine and two tablespoons of soy sauce, and the parsley, and transfer to a large, shallow bowl. Top with the pickled chillies and their pickling liquid, and serve.

Clare's Laid Back Christmas Feast

Pudding

Black Forest Gateaux

INGREDIENTS

CAKE

- 6 medium eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250g golden caster sugar
- 50g cocoa powder
- 100g plain flour
- 150g unsalted butter, melted and cooled, plus extra for greasing
- 150g dark chocolate
- 3 tbsp raspberry preserve
- 40 pitted black cherries, fresh or tinned

FOR THE SYRUP

- 175g golden caster sugar

- 2 tbsp kirsch

FOR THE KIRSCH CREAM

- 750ml whipping cream

- 75g golden caster sugar

- 2 tsp vanilla extract

- 3 tbsp kirsch

Cameleon Malbec Dulce 2018

Uruguay

Layers of plum fruits, chocolate, coffee, caramel, spice and mar-

INSTRUCTIONS

- First, make the sponges. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4. Grease 3 x 22cm-diameter sandwich cake tins and line the bases with baking paper.
- In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, vanilla and sugar together using an electric hand whisk until thick and the whisk leaves a trail – it will take about 10 minutes. Sift the cocoa powder and flour together, then fold in. Stir in the melted butter.
- Divide the cake mixture between the tins and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until springy to the touch. Cool in the tins for 5 minutes, then turn out on to a rack to cool completely.
- Shave the block of chocolate using a potato peeler or by scraping the blade of a kitchen knife across the surface. Chill the shavings.
- To make the syrup, put 200ml water and the sugar in a pan; bring to the boil for 5 minutes. Leave to cool; stir in the kirsch. To make the kirsch cream, whip the cream and sugar to firm peaks, then fold in the vanilla and kirsch.
- To assemble the cake, level the tops of the sponges using a sharp knife, if necessary. Place a little kirsch cream on a serving plate and secure one of the sponges on top. Brush the sponge with some of the syrup; spread over the raspberry preserve.
- Sandwich together with a second sponge and brush again with the syrup. Spread over a layer of the kirsch cream, about 1cm (½in) deep. Cover with the cherries, reserving 8.
- Spread a little more cream over the cherries, then top with the final sponge, upside down, to give an even, flat top. Brush with syrup (you may have a little syrup left).

- Spoon a quarter of the remaining cream into a piping bag fitted with a large star nozzle; set aside. Using a palette knife, cover the top and sides of the cake with the rest of the cream.
- Stick the chocolate shavings over the sides of the cake with your palm. Pipe around the edge of the cake and 8 swirls in the middle; place the reserved cherries on the swirls.

Notes on cheese...

The factor that has the most influence on the flavour of a cheese is not (as is commonly thought) the milk of the animal it came from or where it was made (although both obviously have an impact) is the rind of the cheese. It is a hugely complex microbial biome that cheese makers have learned to manipulate over centuries that influence the flavour and aging potential of a cheese and is a very good place to start when thinking about your cheeseboard.

There are four types of cheese rinds

- Non Edible - generally made from wax, bark or paper. The material is chosen to best suit the type of cheese it encases. Protecting it while it ages. Examples are Dutch Goudas
- Bloomy Rind - A soft, fluffy, white coating commonly tasting of mushrooms. Another term is 'surface-ripened' as the cheese is inoculated on the outside creating a mould that 'blooms' and then is repeatedly patted down to create the rind. Examples: Camembert, Brie de Meaux
- Wash rind - Often a sticky texture and a reddish orange colour creating what it is often referred to as 'stinky cheese' and can vary wildly in the final product. The cheese is regularly washed in either a briny solution or some kind of alcohol which allows certain bacteria to grow on the outside creating the flavours. Examples: Tallegio (wash rind) Gruyere (Hard washed rind)
- Natural rind - this is simply formed by the salt being drawn out of the cheese to create a natural crust to protect itself. The can be covered with wax or cloth or even have oil and spices rubbed into them. Examples: Stilton, Comte
- There is also cheese with no rind. Examples: Mozzarella, Soft Chevres

Rioja Vega Anniversario 135 Reserva 2011

Rioja, Spain

Very ripe fruit, chocolate liqueur, jam, apple sauce, coconut, toast aromas, cedar wood. Unbelievably concentrated but with amazing freshness