

BBC

May 2020  
DHS15

# goodfood

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Middle East

## COMFORT FOOD

*when you  
need it  
most*

4 WAYS  
WITH  
FRENCH  
TOAST

WE  
ALL  
LOVE  
PIES

Sweet,  
savory,  
or one of  
both?

**Roasts  
reinvented**

Updated classics using  
beef, chicken and nuts

Baking on a budget

- \* Red velvet cookies
- \* Sticky toffee banana bread
- \* Thrifty birthday cake



Oven-to-table pasta showstopper

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Bateel's signature Ramadan collection

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Bateel







## Welcome to May!

Is it just me, or has anyone else become obsessed with meal planning since the country went into lockdown?

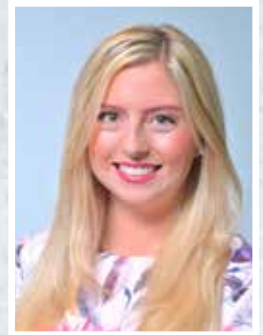
Having much more time on my hands to cook those not so 'quick and easy' recipes lately has been wonderful, but there's no denying that staying at home 24-hours a day can be tough. I find refuge in the kitchen, and delight in watching my family enjoy the meals I prepare for them – there's something comforting about cooking a hearty meal and having your loved one ask for seconds, isn't there?

Inside the comfort issue of *BBC Good Food Middle East*, you'll find pages of heartwarming recipes sure to lift your spirits during these difficult times.

What says comfort more than a warming pie? Gather the ingredients to make your preferred filling and spend an afternoon in the kitchen creating a homemade pie to be proud of. Sweet, savoury, or one of each, our stunning bakes on page 22 are surefire crowd-pleasers.

Don't miss our ultimate comfort food recipes on page 12 onwards. Start with a serving of bolognese stuffed pasta bake topped with melted mozzarella and parmesan, and finish up with warm fig sponge pudding – the menu is sure to go down a treat with your family.

Stay safe and take care,



*Sophie*  
Editor





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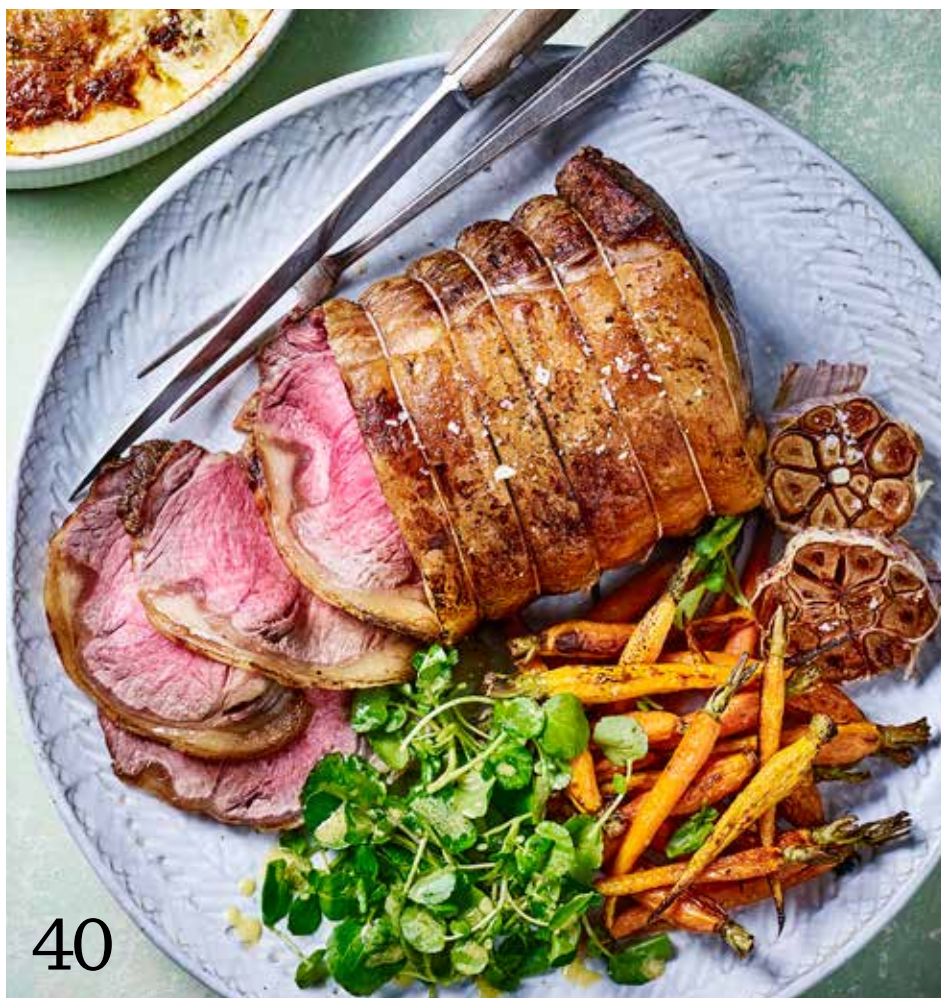
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**V** Suitable for vegetarians.

**❄** You can freeze it.

**❄** Not suitable for freezing.

**Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make.

**A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry.

**More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks.

**Low fat** 12g or less per portion.

**Low cal** 500 calories or less per main.

**Superhealthy** Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

**Good for you** Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

**Heart healthy** Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids.

**1 of 5-a-day** The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving.

**Vit C** **Iron** **Omega-3** **Calcium** **Folate** **Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients.

**GLUTEN FREE** Indicates a recipe is free from gluten.

**Some recipes contain pork. They are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for this symbol:**

**P** Contains pork.



# NEWS

## ribbles

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, in the UAE and across the Middle East

### Classic Fine Foods grocery delivery service launches



Industry ingredient supplier, Classic Fine Foods, has launched its home delivery deli service to cater to UAE residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Though traditionally Classic Fine Foods supplies ingredients to some of the UAE's top hotel and restaurants, the recent outbreak has led to the brand evolving to ensure everyone has access to high quality produce in a short turnaround time.

That means that UAE home cooks can get their hands on chef quality ingredients at reasonable prices, delivered straight to their door.

Classic Deli, the new home delivery arm of the brand, is now offering meat, seafood, dairy products, groceries, bread and pastry and fruit and vegetables for next-day delivery via its website, [classicedeli.market/ae](http://classicedeli.market/ae).



KEEP  
RESTAURANTS  
COOKIN'

### Support local restaurants with #YallahLetsOrder

Global food service company, Unilever Food Solutions has launched a nationwide campaign across the GCC to promote and support local restaurants during COVID-19.

Covering the UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the new campaign - namely 'Yallah Let's Order,' invites consumers to share visuals of their meals delivered from their favourite restaurant using the hashtag #YallahLetsOrder on their social channels every Thursday. In doing so, the idea is that the poster's fellow colleagues, friends and family will be encouraged to order local in support of the nation's eateries.

Inspired by #TheGreatAmericanTakeout - which has garnered over 20,000 active participants in a week since launching, this GCC-focused campaign hopes to bring business to restaurants and food operators at a time they need it most.

"#YALLAHLETSORDER is a small part that we can all play to help bring in traffic to restaurants and food operators," said Unilever Food Solution's Marketing Director (MEPS, SA and ANZ) Melinda Taylor. "We are confident that community and togetherness will be the enduring message of this crisis!"

# THE BEST BITES



NOW AVAILABLE

## Marks & Spencer's new hamper collection



Celebrate loved ones with Marks & Spencer's range of premium baskets filled with a selection of home comforts to delight family and friends. Available through the brand's M&S Food app, customers will be able to select from a range of hampers made up of delicious treats, which will be delivered direct to one's door.

With hampers filled with handpicked gourmet treats from around the world – think expertly crafted Swiss chocolates and a luxury Belgian collection, to the ultimate Italian feast and ingredients to cook up mouth-watering Indian dishes – the Marks & Spencer hamper ranges are sure to impress.

The hampers can be found on the Marks & Spencer Food app, available to download on Android and Apple app stores. Customers can get next-day delivery on orders placed before 12am. The home delivery service is free with an Dhs150 minimum spend.

## Careem introduces 'Shops' on Careem NOW for daily essentials

Careem has launched a grocery delivery service in Dubai through the Careem NOW app as a way to help customers during this time. The on-demand service supports customers with the delivery of groceries and other essentials within a quick response time, and continues to reinforce the Careem promise, to offer customers a continued comprehensive array of services, all displayed and catalogued on the app.

To avail the service, customers only need to download the Careem NOW app, choose their preferred merchant, select from a catalogue of available items and add them to their basket. Upon check out, customers can choose their location and payment method, and a Careem Captain will deliver the order within the hour.

In addition to being the only app to offer Lulu Hypermarket in Dubai, Careem Shops include 7-Eleven, 800-Pharmacy, Al Manara Pharmacy, NESCAFÉ DOLCE GUSTO, The Pet Corner, The Coffee Souq, Julius Meinl Coffee, Al Dar Roastery, Rootz Organics, Al Douri Signature, Al Douri Mart, Supermarché, Narinport, Four Seasons Pharmacy, and La Despensa Spanish Food Store, to name a few.

## COOK WITH JUMEIRAH AT HOME



Jumeirah Group has launched a new content series in which Chief Culinary Officer and former Global Head of the Michelin Restaurant and Hotel Guides Michael Ellis shares his favourite, personal recipes to recreate at home.

'Dinner with Michael' will feature weekly dishes – complete with ingredients list and easy-to-follow instructions – to inspire people to get adventurous and learn from a culinary great. Check out Jumeirah Group and its hotels' social pages every Thursday to discover the new

recipes and get some top tips from Michael Ellis on how to create elevated, restaurant-quality dishes at home.

From simple seafood dishes to sizzling steaks, the diverse range of recipes will delight the palates of the whole family. Don't forget to tag your dishes with #StayHomeWithJumeirah #CookItWithJumeirah





TRIED AND TESTED

# LIVEFRESHR

We review Livefreshr, a recipe kit delivery service in Dubai and Abu Dhabi

**D**uring these challenging times, families around the world are housebound due to the COVID-19 pandemic and now find themselves, like us, in the position of having to cook two or three meals a day for their families.

While having more time on our hands to cook homemade meals more often is a treat, it can be challenging to menu plan day after day – not to mention gathering all necessary ingredients to create chosen dishes with supermarket visits now only allowed in the UAE every three days, and supermarket delivery slots taking up to two-weeks to secure.





Portobello mushroom vegetarian fajitas, kung pao chicken, and brown butter fish with sprout mashed potato.

Then it's over to Livefreshr's team to do the grocery shopping for you.

### Ingredient delivery

The ingredient box is delivered on your preferred date, and what's great is that each of the recipes come portioned to the exact number of people you need it for, eliminating any waste. Ingredients, sourced from trusted supplier Kibsons, are also carefully wrapped and packaged to extend life.

Each individual recipe is bagged separately and contains all you need, with the exception of olive oil, salt & pepper, so the only decision left to make is which dish you'd like to cook and eat first.

Each bag comes with an ingredient check-list and a link to the online recipe to follow for cooking instructions. It's all very easy and straight forward, resulting in quality meals without any hassle.

### How to order

If you'd like to try the service, head to [livefreshr.com](https://www.livefreshr.com). The recipe kit service caters to one to six people, for either three, four, five or six meals per week. Pricing depends on how many recipes and portions you choose, but as an outline, you can expect to pay Dhs178 for four meals for one person per week, Dhs306 for four meals for two people per week, or Dhs468 for four meals for four people per week.

Livefreshr is also launching a referral program. Each person a user refers will be worth a 10% discount off their weekly order for as long as they are a customer.

In light of this, we decided to give Livefreshr a try, a fresh food delivery service in Dubai that supplies its users with cooking instructions, and pre-portioned, ready-to-cook ingredients to create delicious meals. Here's how it works:

### Choose your meals

The experience begins at [livefreshr.com](https://www.livefreshr.com), where you can select the recipes you'd like to try

for the week to come. Recipes on the site are updated every week so you'll not get bored, and are created by Livefreshr's in-house chefs – ensuring a balanced diet full of nutritional value.

Whether you prefer a meat, fish, or vegetarian style menu, the site is structured to suit all tastes and diet requirements, with recipe options including the likes of baked salmon with spicy-maple roasted squash and green beans,



# Tried & tasted

Dining out seems like a distant memory right now, so we've started working on our post-COVID-19 restaurant bucket list (daydreaming is allowed, right?) - here are our top three picks this month



Reviewed by Sophie Voelzing

Editor of BBC Good Food Middle East, lover of all things food and a keen seeker of new dining experiences.

## Where?

MARINA SOCIAL BY JASON ATHERTON, INTERCONTINENTAL DUBAI MARINA

Dining experience: Friday Social Brunch

What's it like? If you're looking for a laidback brunch with high quality food served straight to the table, Social Brunch is a winner.

The restaurant, by English celebrity chef and restaurateur Jason Atherton, serves contemporary British-Mediterranean cuisine in a buzzing yet sophisticated atmosphere - bringing a slice of London's best to Dubai.

Come Fridays, Social Brunch takes over the restaurant, giving guests the option to sit in or out to enjoy three and a half hours of unlimited food and beverage. The restaurant's picturesque outdoor terrace, which offers front row views over Dubai Marina's waterway and features a gin garden, is an excellent spot to spend a Friday afternoon. But, not to worry if the weather's a touch too hot, floor-to-ceiling windows span the restaurant's exterior, bringing the outdoors in.

## What are the food highlights?

The kitchen, led by chef Will Stanyer, prepares a selection of impressive sharing-style bites to start the brunch experience. Goat's cheese churros paired with a truffle honey dipping sauce are first to be devoured - they're the type of dish that you'll want to re-order, time and time again. There's also a Scotch quails' egg and English



breakfast 'tea & toast' to sample, each of which go down a treat.

Small plates to share ensue, featuring one of Marina Social's signature dishes, the burrata stuffed tomato, drizzled with aged balsamic - it's easy to suss why this is one of the restaurant's most ordered dishes. Served alongside, we also enjoy eggs royale topped with brown butter hollandaise, and a juicy wagyu cheese burger slider.

The menu switches up for mains, and each guest is given the choice of one dish. We chose to order the Black Angus flank steak with truffle fries and Portobello mushroom, and the mouthwatering grilled king tiger prawns with garlic butter and fries. With each of the dishes sounding equally as tempting, we decided to share between us and I'm glad we did as each dish impressed. Other options on the menu included ragu of Welsh lamb with tagliatelle, 'KFC' Jospier-grilled chicken thighs, fillet of salmon with potato puree and slow-roast tomato,

and lastly wild mushroom & truffle sourdough pizza with buffalo mozzarella and taleggio.

We struggled to find space after such a generous meal, but couldn't resist a small taste of dessert. On offer from the sweet cart is traditional soft-serve ice cream (great for the kids), Marina Social's very own take on a mars bar with salted caramel ice cream, and apple crumble & white chocolate cheesecake. **The bottom line:** Social Brunch takes place every Friday from 1pm to 4.30pm, followed by happy hour, and is a wonderful spot for enjoying an afternoon with a small group of family or friends. Brunch packages start at Dhs290 with soft beverages, and three other premium packages are available. **\*Please note that Social Brunch is currently paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

**Want to go?** For more information or to make a reservation, call 04 446 6664, e-mail [reservations@marinasocialdubai.com](mailto:reservations@marinasocialdubai.com) or visit [marinasocialdubai.com](http://marinasocialdubai.com).



**Where?****LPM RESTAURANT & BAR, DIFC****Dining experience:** Dinner

**What's it like?** Ultimately known as one of Dubai's best restaurants, LPM Restaurant & Bar (previously La Petite Maison) has earned its reputation for a reason.

Sophisticated, classy and gimmick-free, this French-Mediterranean restaurant has been around for a while, which in Dubai, says a lot.

The décor and ambiance at LPM, much like its food, offers perfected simplicity. Expect starched white table cloths, beige furnishings and eye-catching abstract artwork on the walls.

We visited on a Friday evening and it was clear to see that LPM, which houses a dining room, bar and terrace, was the place to be in DIFC. Alive with atmosphere, the bar was a buzz with friends catching up over drinks, while the dining room barely had a seat spare come 8.30pm – so be sure to make a reservation before your visit.

**What are the food highlights?**

At the table, a fresh, whole lemon and tomato, alongside olive oil await to be enjoyed at your leisure, and not long after being seated, varied freshly baked bread is served tableside from a basket – dining simplicities at their best.

The menu at LPM boasts a generous selection of classic French dishes that showcase seasonal fish, seafood, and meat.

To start, dishes not to be missed include the moorishly rich escargots de Bourgogne – be ready to mop up



lashings of mouthwatering garlic butter with bread after you've polished off the snails, a portion of the well-balanced yellowtail with avocado and citrus dressing is also a highlight, along with the grilled aubergine topped with baked mozzarella, prawns and pistou – this dish in particular took me by surprise with its deep, warming flavours.

At this point, it's good to note that dishes ordered are served as and when they're ready, and the serving style here very much encourages sharing, as would we.

For main, we shared the cooked-to-perfection, tender grilled lamb cutlets with smoked aubergine, and the grilled tiger prawns, with creamy baked potato gratin and steamed broccolini on the side – each dish packed full of quality and attention to detail.

To conclude, the unassuming framage frais cheesecake with mixed berry compote stuns with its light, velvety texture and creamy taste. No frills, just a classic dessert done absolutely right. The warm thin crust apple tart served with vanilla ice cream is also a delight.

**The bottom line:** LPM Restaurant & Bar is all about excellence. It's a gorgeous restaurant offering high food

and service standards, in a classy yet fun and upbeat atmosphere. The perfect spot for a date night with your other half, or a venue to celebrate a special occasion with loved ones.

Staff are very well trained and attentive, ensuring the comfort of all guests at all times.

It's safe to say you're guaranteed a memorable experience at LPM, a Dubai gem that never goes out of style.

**Want to go?** For more information, call 04 439 0505 or visit [lpmrestaurants.com/dubai](http://lpmrestaurants.com/dubai)

**NOW ON DELIVEROO**

LPM is now available on Deliveroo. After a successful launch in March serving the Downtown Dubai area, LPM has now collaborated with the InterContinental Dubai Marina to be able to service guests residing in Marina and the surrounding areas.





Reviewed by Glesni Holland  
Online Editor, BBC Good Food  
Middle East

### Where?

### HUTONG, DIFC

#### Dining experience: Dinner

**What's it like?** Perched on the edge of Dubai's bustling financial centre, newly opened Hutong brings a taste of sophisticated, Northern Chinese flair to the city. Upon arrival, it's clear that no expense has been spared in the fit-out of the new restaurant - which hails from the brand's original Hong Kong-based outlet following its opening in 2003, before expanding to London, New York and Miami in recent years. Spanning the ground and first floors of the Gate 6 building in DIFC, guests are first greeted by glamorous hostesses before being led down a folia-lined pathway, complete with elaborate water feature and twinkling lights overhead. To the right is an al-fresco terrace (ideal for after work drinks, with Hutong's happy hour running from 5pm until 8pm), and to the left is the indoor, split-level restaurant. There's depth in the detail where decor is concerned at Hutong; if you can see it, that is. Blacked out windows and dimly lit interiors encase bespoke design elements that merge Chinese and Arabic influences. Expect red plush velvet cushions atop mahogany furniture, exposed brickwork with carved geometric detail, eye-catching monochrome floor tiles and Hutong's signature wishing tree in the centre.

#### What are the food highlights?

Hutong promises to bring "contemporary and occasionally fiery" Northern Chinese cuisine to the floor. But don't expect any form of "spiceometer" on the menu. Instead, just go with the understanding that dishes are likely to be on the high-end of the spice scale, so be sure to check with your waiter before ordering. To begin, don't miss the vegetable spring rolls. Though perhaps a predictable addition to any Cantonese menu, these incredibly light and crispy pockets of deliciousness shun any spring rolls I've tried in the past into a distant memory. Instead of traditional rice paper rolls, which I find can often be on the greasy



side, Hutong's version of the much-loved appetiser features paper thin glass noodles, which have been delicately deep fried and packed with a meaty mushroom and cabbage filling. The wild mushroom and truffle bao's come highly recommended. Each bun mirrors the appearance of an oversized mushroom, lightly toasted on top and served alongside crispy kale. Punchy truffle flavours and pillowy bao buns make this dish a delicious sharing appetizer. The spicy beef xiao long bao is also not one to miss. Though not served in the more traditional steamed bread bun, this dish features melt-in-the-mouth braised beef with a spicy kick, encased in a steamed starchy shell. Diners are advised to first pierce the bun and enjoy the liquid centre, which is a flavoursome soup that surrounds the beef, before biting into the remainder of the bun.

For mains, expect signature Cantonese favourites such as Peking duck and crispy ribs. We opt for the wok-tossed tenderloin beef, which comes in a fiery Laoganma sauce. The beef is cooked well - seared on the outside and tender on the inside - and is complemented by the egg truffle fried rice beautifully. My dining partner chooses a vegetarian dish - the golden

tofu with capsicum. Expecting this to be encased in a crispy, golden outer shell, we are slightly deflated to see learn that the tofu hasn't been fried. What arrives instead are pillowy pieces of soft tofu, drenched in a radiant red chilli sauce. Nevertheless, the sauce has an intense depth of flavour that is not for the faint hearted, so fans of spice will be sure to love this!

**How was the service?** We face some teething problems (miscommunication over our drinks and a delay in taking our food order) that I put down to a new restaurant finding its feet. But aside from that, each member of staff that we encounter is extremely hospitable and keen to tell us about the restaurant's concept and love of good food.

**The bottom line:** A welcome addition to Dubai's Chinese dining scene, and a great spot for Thursday night drinks once the outbreak is over. Though the restaurant is temporarily closed, Hutong is said to be using the time to create new and exciting culinary ideas. We can't wait to see them for ourselves in the future!

**Want to go?** Follow @hutongdubai on Instagram for updates on the restaurant's reopening. Call 04 220 0868 for bookings.





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# Comfort food

*It's time to get cosy!*

Our cookery team reveal their favourite hearty one-pots to share at home. Turn on the oven and gather your loved ones around the table for some quality time.

*recipes* BBC GOOD FOOD TEAM *photographs* MAJA SMEND



# Stuffed pasta bake bolognese

While talking about our favourite pasta dishes, we came up with the idea of combining a couple of favourites – bolognese and stuffed pasta shells – to make the ultimate pasta bake. Nestle the shells deeper down into the sauce for a softer, more lasagne-like dish, if you like, but we enjoy the added crunch of the pasta edges crisped up on top.

BBC Good Food cookery team

## gf tip

### MAKE IT VEGGIE

● Swap mince for diced mixed mushrooms and a can of cooked green lentils, and simmer for an hour before assembling. Use vegetarian cheeses, too.

**SERVES 6** **PREP 30 mins**

**COOK 2 hrs** **EASY**

250g large pasta shells or conchiglioni  
200g mascarpone  
2 x 125g balls mozzarella, drained and finely chopped  
large bunch basil, roughly chopped, plus a few whole leaves to serve  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
parmesan, to serve

#### For the bolognese

1 tbsp olive oil  
1 onion, finely diced  
1 celery stick, finely diced  
1 carrot, finely diced  
400g beef mince  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 tbsp tomato purée  
3 bay leaves  
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes  
pinch of sugar  
1-2 tsp balsamic vinegar

**1** To make the bolognese, heat the oil in a wide ovenproof pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion, celery and carrot with some seasoning for 20 mins until soft and lightly golden. Tip in the beef mince, turn up the heat and fry, stirring regularly, for another 10 mins until the mince browns. Add the garlic, fry for a minute, then pour in the wine and bubble for a few mins more, scraping the pan to release any bits. Stir through the purée,

bay leaves and tomatoes, with a canful of water. Simmer for 1½ hrs, covered for the first hour, then remove the lid and bubble until the tomatoes have broken down. Season with salt, pepper, the sugar and balsamic vinegar.

**2** Tip the pasta shells into a large heatproof bowl with a pinch of salt, and pour over a kettle of boiled water. Cover and leave to soften for 15-20 mins – they need to retain some firmness so you can fill them.

**3** Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 4 and drain the pasta. Use a fork to mash the mascarpone with the mozzarella, chopped basil, garlic and some black pepper in a bowl.

**4** The bolognese should be a little wetter than you'd like as the pasta shells will absorb some of the liquid as it bakes. Remove from the heat, giving it a final stir. Using a teaspoon, fill the pasta shells with some of the mascarpone mixture, pressing the mix in with your index finger. Nestle the shells into the sauce, filled-side up. Bake for 20-30 mins until the top is golden and bubbling, and the pasta is tender. Grate over some parmesan and finish with a few basil leaves.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • 2 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 630 kcals • fat 37g • saturates 21g • carbs 34g • sugars 10g • fibre 4g • protein 30g • salt 0.7g



# Slow-cooked pork & sage hotpot



*Growing up in the north-west, hotpot and meat pies were a weekly staple in our house; steak and kidney pudding, Lancashire hotpot, and creamy chicken and leek pie were some of my favourite dishes. When I moved to London, I wanted to combine all my favourites into one pie and came up with a silky, slow-cooked pork filling flavoured with cider and sage beneath a crispy, crunchy layer of potatoes, like the sort that tops a traditional hotpot. I make this frequently for friends in the winter when you need something that sticks to your ribs and puts a smile on your face.*

**Anna Glover, acting food editor**

**SERVES 6 PREP 40 mins**  
**COOK 3 hrs MORE EFFORT** ✨ 📦

4 tbsp olive oil, plus a little extra  
1kg diced pork shoulder  
20g butter, cubed, plus a little extra  
4 leeks, trimmed and thickly sliced  
4 garlic cloves, crushed  
3 tbsp plain flour  
400ml chicken stock  
2 bay leaves  
½ small bunch parsley, finely chopped  
small bunch sage, leaves picked,  
5 left whole, the rest chopped  
200ml single cream  
400g Maris Piper or King Edward potatoes  
400g sweet potatoes

**1** Heat half of the oil in a deep ovenproof frying pan, or flameproof casserole dish, and fry the pork pieces over a medium high heat in batches until seared all over, then transfer to a plate. Add another 1 tbsp oil to the pan, if you need to, while you're cooking the batches. Once all the pork is seared, transfer to a plate and set aside.

**2** Add another 1 tbsp oil to the pan with a little butter and fry half the leeks with a pinch of salt for 10 mins until tender. Add the garlic, fry for a minute, then stir in the flour.

**3** Pour in the cider, a little at a time, stirring to pick up any bits stuck to the bottom of the pan and to combine everything. Add the stock, bay leaves and seared pork, then simmer, half-covered with a lid

for 1-1½ hrs until the meat is just tender (it will later cook to the point of falling apart in the oven). *Can be prepared a day ahead.*

**4** Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Simmer uncovered for a few minutes to reduce the sauce, if you need to – it shouldn't be too liquid or the potatoes will sink into the sauce. Stir in the parsley, chopped sage, remaining leeks, and the cream, then season well.

**5** Peel both types of potatoes and cut into slices 2mm thick, by hand or using a mandoline. Alternate layers of potato and sweet potato in circles over the pie, or randomly, if you prefer. Dot the cubed butter over the top and bake for 1-1½ hrs until the potato is tender. Nestle in the whole sage leaves, brushed in a little oil, for the last 10 mins. Leave to rest for 10 mins before serving.

**GOOD TO KNOW** fibre • vit c • 2 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 644 kcal • fat 35g • saturates 14g •  
carbs 39g • sugars 13g • fibre 80g • protein 35g •  
salt 0.6g

## gf tips

### HOTPOT PERFECTION

● *Make sure your potatoes are sliced so they're all of a similar size to create an even topping.*

● *You can make individual hotpots in smaller ovenproof pie dishes and freeze them, uncooked. Bake for the same time, making sure the filling is piping hot and bubbling.*







# Fig sponge pudding



*A sponge pudding is one of my favourite things to eat on a wintry day. I often make them to use up odd jars of jam or marmalade, for those times when you*

*realise everyone in your household has opened a different jar and there's no room to store anything else. Served warm with cold cream, ice cream or thick Greek yogurt, this is such a comforting dish. I've smartened it up a bit by adding figs and some snazzy garnishes but still kept the comfort factor cranked up to 10. The olive oil and thyme add complexity without making it savoury, but you do need a really punchy, peppery extra virgin olive oil for the flavour to come through. If you prefer it sweeter, drizzle with a little extra honey instead.*

**Miriam Nice, projects editor**

**SERVES 6-8 PREP 20 mins plus cooling COOK 1 hr EASY V**

**250g butter, softened, plus extra for the dish**  
**5 tbsp golden syrup**  
**4 tbsp honey**  
**8 fresh figs**  
**4 large eggs**  
**250g golden caster sugar**  
**250g self-raising flour**  
**1 tsp baking powder**  
**1 tsp vanilla extract**  
**For the topping**  
**4 tbsp full-fat Greek yogurt**  
**2-3 thyme sprigs (optional)**  
**extra virgin olive oil or honey, for drizzling (optional)**

**1** Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter a 20 x 22cm ovenproof dish, then pour in the golden syrup and honey. Trim the stalks from the figs, then cut a deep cross in the top, just so they open out a bit, but be careful not to cut all the way through. Sit the figs upright on top of the syrup and put them in the oven to bake for 15-20 mins until softened and starting to caramelize a little at the edges.

**2** While the figs are cooking, make the sponge mixture. Put the eggs, sugar, flour, baking powder, vanilla and butter in a bowl and use an electric whisk to beat until smooth.  
**3** Remove the dish from the oven, scoop the figs out with a slotted spoon and set aside. Once the syrup mixture has cooled in the dish, take spoonfuls of the sponge batter and gently place them on top of the syrup. It's best to do this all the way around the edge first, then end in the middle – this helps keep the syrup mixture separate. Smooth the batter out very gently to cover any gaps and seal the syrup mixture in.  
**4** Bake for 35-40 mins or until the sponge springs back when pressed. Allow to cool for around 5 mins or until just warm, then seconds before serving, dot the surface with eight small dollops of the yogurt. Top each mound with a baked fig, then scatter over some thyme leaves and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, if you like.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium · fibre  
**PER SERVING (8)** 733 kcals · fat 32g · saturates 19g  
· carbs 98g · sugars 75g · fibre 6g · protein 10g  
salt 1.3g



**tip**

## **FOR EXTRA CRUNCH**

● *The crisp top of the pudding provides a great contrast of textures with the sponge centre, but if you want even more crunch, try crumbling over a couple of sesame brittle bars.*





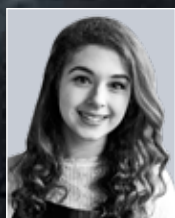








# Smoky spiced veggie rice



*Picture this: you're sitting at a restaurant in the French Quarter of New Orleans, taking in the sounds of soulful jazz and the aroma of spices as you dive into a freshly cooked jambalaya. The smoky heat gently warms and soothes you after a long day. This dish, inspired by my favourite city, is full of fiery flavours; comforting while still bursting with life and soul. My take on the classic is vegan, too, because many of the dishes I make at home are. There is added comfort in knowing you are making a difference in the world by eating less animal produce – and without compromising on flavour.*

**Liberty Mendez, cookery assistant**

## gf tip TURN UP THE HEAT

● *If you're a spice lover and want to fire up the heat, then add another 1 tsp chipotle paste and a fresh, finely sliced red chilli along with the other spices in step 2.*

**SERVES 6 PREP 15 mins  
COOK 1 hr EASY V**

25g cashews  
4 tbsp olive oil  
1 corn on the cob  
250g rainbow baby carrots, halved lengthways  
2 red onions, finely chopped  
2 celery sticks, finely chopped  
2 large red peppers, finely sliced  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
2 tbsp Cajun seasoning  
1½ tsp smoked paprika  
1 tsp chipotle paste  
2 tbsp tomato purée  
200g heirloom cherry tomatoes, halved  
400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed  
400g can cherry tomatoes  
300g long-grain rice, washed  
400ml vegetable or vegan stock  
1 tbsp red wine vinegar (vegan varieties are readily available)  
2 tbsp caster sugar  
2 spring onions, finely sliced

**1** Dry-fry the cashews in a large saucepan or casserole dish over a medium heat until golden brown. Remove from the heat, leave to cool, then roughly chop. Heat 1 tbsp oil in the same pan over a high heat, then

fry the corn on each side for 20 seconds to char. Remove from the pan, set aside, then tip in the carrots and fry for 5 mins. Remove from the pan and set aside.

**2** Heat the rest of the oil in the same pan over a medium heat and fry the onions and celery for 10 mins until soft and slightly coloured. Tip in the peppers and garlic, then fry for another 5 mins before adding the Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, chipotle paste and tomato purée. Fry for 1 min until the spices are fragrant, then add the cherry tomatoes and fry for another 2 mins.

**3** Stir in the kidney beans, canned tomatoes, rice, stock, vinegar and sugar, then stir until everything is combined. Bring to the boil, then cover with a lid and simmer with a lid on for 35-40 mins on a medium-low heat, stirring halfway through, until the rice is cooked and liquid absorbed.

**4** Slice the corn off the cob and mix it through the rice along with the carrots. Season and garnish with the spring onions and cashews.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • vit c • 3 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 447 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 2g • carbs 69g • sugars 20g • fibre 11g • protein 11g • salt 0.6g



# One-pot paneer curry pie



*When I was very young my dad developed an enthusiasm for curry, concocting the most wonderful, richly spiced dishes inspired by Madhur Jaffrey cookbooks and his childhood spent in Kenya and Singapore. Even now, when I visit my parents, I'm met with the fragrant aroma of garam masala, buttery fried onions and ginger, and greeted with a plate of golden samosas. This pie is, in turn, inspired by my dad. I've topped a creamy makhani-style filling with a crisp puff pastry lid. What could be more comforting than a curry in pie form? It's perfect for indulging in at the weekend with a cold beer.*

**Esther Clark, deputy food editor**

**SERVES 6 PREP 25 mins**  
**COOK 1 hr 30 mins plus cooling**  
**MORE EFFORT V** \*filling only

2 tbsp vegetable oil  
440g paneer, cut into 2cm cubes  
4 tbsp ghee or butter  
2 large onions, finely sliced  
2 large garlic cloves, crushed  
thumb-sized piece of ginger, finely grated  
½ tsp hot chilli powder  
2 tsp ground cumin  
2 tsp fenugreek seeds  
1½ tbsp garam masala  
2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes  
1 tbsp caster sugar  
300g potato, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes  
150g spinach  
150g frozen peas  
100ml double cream  
2 tbsp cashew nut butter  
plain flour, for dusting  
320g sheet all-butter puff pastry  
2 large eggs, 1 whole, 1 yolk only, lightly beaten together (freeze the leftover egg white for another recipe)  
2 tsp nigella seeds  
pilau rice or green veg, to serve

**gf tip**  
**PICK THE RIGHT DISH**

● *If you don't have a shallow, ovenproof casserole dish, make your filling in a large pan, then transfer the mixture to a 28-30cm pie dish before topping with pastry and baking in the oven.*

**1** Heat the oil over a medium heat in a shallow flameproof casserole dish roughly 30cm wide. Add the paneer and fry for 5 mins, turning with tongs until each side is golden. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate lined with kitchen paper.  
**2** Heat the ghee or butter in the same dish over a medium-low heat,

then add the onions and a big pinch of salt. Fry for 15 mins, or until softened and caramelised. Stir in the garlic and ginger, cook for 1 min, then tip in the spices and fry for a further 2 mins. Scrape the spiced onions into a food processor or blender along with the tomatoes and blitz until smooth. Pour back into the pan with 1½ cans of water, then stir through the sugar and potatoes. Bring to the boil, lower to a simmer, then cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 mins or until the potato is just tender.

**3** Add the spinach and peas, and cook for 5 mins. Stir in the cream and cashew butter, then return the paneer to the pan and season to taste. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool completely.

**4** Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 8. On a lightly floured surface, roll the pastry out to just bigger than your casserole dish. Cut a thin strip off each side and fix these around the edge of the casserole. Roll the pastry sheet over the top and press the edges with a fork to seal, and tuck in any overhang. Brush with the egg, sprinkle with the nigella seeds and bake for 30-35 mins or until deep golden brown. Leave to rest for 15 mins before serving with pilau rice or green veg.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • folate • fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 871 kcales • fat 60g • saturates 31g • carbs 47g • sugars 17g • fibre 7g • protein 31g • salt 0.7g







# We all love PIES

What's more comforting than creating a homemade pie to be proud of? Sweet, savoury, or one of each, these stunning bakes are surefire family-pleasers

*recipes* CASSIE BEST *photographs* TOM REGISTER



Steak & blue cheese pie, p33





Lamb keema shepherd's pie, p26



## Lamb keema shepherd's pie

*Shepherd's pie is one of our favourite national dishes, but being a lover of exotic spices, I couldn't help but give it a makeover. I've taken inspiration from lamb keema, or keema matar, which is a rich mince and pea curry. I've kept the spicing quite mild, making it suitable for the whole family, but you can increase the quantity of curry powder or fresh chilli if you like it spicy. The poppadum topping is optional, but it adds a crunchy texture.*

**SERVES 6** **PREP 20 mins**  
**COOK 1 hr 50 mins** **EASY** ✨

2 tbsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for drizzling  
2 onions, chopped  
500g lamb mince  
thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and grated  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp turmeric  
2 tbsp mild or medium curry powder

1 tbsp tomato purée  
1 lamb or beef stock cube  
pinch sugar  
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks  
4 large potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks ½ the size of the sweet potato chunks  
50g mature cheddar, grated  
250g frozen peas  
2 poppadums (optional)  
1 green chilli, thinly sliced (optional)

**1** Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onions until soft and starting to brown, about 8-10 mins. Push to one side of the pan and add the lamb. Leave it alone until the underside is browning, then break it down with the back of a spoon. Leave to brown for a few mins more, then stir in the ginger, garlic, spices and tomato purée. Stir for a few mins until the mixture is sticky and aromatic. Add 600ml water, the stock cube and sugar. Bring to a simmer, then lower the heat and cook for 45 mins, stirring occasionally to prevent it from sticking. The sauce should be thick, but if it reduces too

quickly, add a splash of water or cover with a lid.

**2** Put the sweet potatoes and potatoes in a pan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer for 15 mins until tender. Drain and leave to steam dry for 10 mins.

**3** Mash the potatoes with the cheese and some seasoning. Tip the mince into a baking dish about 20 x 35cm and 10cm deep. Stir in the peas. Cover with the mash, making dips and peaks with the back of your spoon, or pipe the mash on for a neater finish. Crush the poppadums in your hands and scatter over the mash, then drizzle over a little oil. *You can now chill for up to two days or freeze for two months.* If cooking straightaway, heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4.

**4** Bake for 45 mins until golden and bubbling around the edges. Leave to cool for 5 mins before serving, with the green chilli scattered over, if you like.

**GOOD TO KNOW** fibre • iron • 2 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 445 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 7g • carbs 41g • sugars 11g • fibre 8g • protein 24g • salt 0.8g

## Take shepherd's pie to the next level with aromatic spices, a kick of green chilli and crunchy poppadums

### Make the ultimate mash

- Sweet potatoes can retain more liquid than regular potatoes when boiled, which can result in soggy mash. To prevent this, make sure you leave them to steam dry in a colander for at least 10 mins until the edges look flaky.
- For super-smooth mash, use a potato ricer – this is like a giant garlic crusher for spuds! Alternatively, push them through

a fine sieve with the back of a large metal spoon. This is how *The Ivy* achieves super smooth fluffy mash on its signature shepherd's pie.

- We've used a piping bag with a star nozzle attachment to pipe the mash on the pie. This creates lots of peaks, which become crispy in the oven. You can simply spoon the mash on top if you like, then use a fork to rough it up a little.







## Rhubarb & custard slab pie

*This is an American-style fruit pie with a sturdy fruit filling, baked in a slab or sheet for easy portioning. I love the classic combination of rhubarb and custard, but you could also use lightly stewed dessert apples or pears, or seasonal berries.*

**SERVES 12** **PREP 35 mins plus**  
**1 hr chilling** **COOK 45 mins**  
**MORE EFFORT V**

### For the pastry

600g plain flour  
150g icing sugar  
300g cold butter, cut into small pieces

3 egg yolks, plus 1 egg, beaten

### For the filling

75g instant custard powder (we used Bird's)

200g caster sugar, plus 1 tbsp  
550ml whole milk

2 tsp vanilla bean paste, extract or 1 vanilla pod, seeds scraped out

700g forced rhubarb, ends trimmed and cut into 2cm pieces

1 tbsp cornflour

**1** Put the flour, icing sugar, butter and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt in a food processor, and blend until combined. Add the egg yolks and 2 tsp cold water, then blitz again until the dough starts to form clumps around the blade. Tip onto your work surface and knead briefly to bring the dough together. Remove about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the dough, shape both pieces into discs and wrap. Chill for at least 30 mins. Alternatively, mix the flour, sugar and salt in a bowl and work in the butter with your fingertips before adding the yolks and water.

**2** Mix the custard powder and 75g of the sugar with 100ml of the milk to make a smooth paste. Warm the rest of the milk in a saucepan. Pour the warm milk over the custard powder mix, stir and pour back into the pan with the vanilla. Heat until you have a really thick custard. Transfer to a bowl, cover to prevent a skin forming, and chill for at least 30 mins or until cold.

**3** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 and put a baking sheet on the middle shelf. Toss the rhubarb, cornflour and remaining 125g sugar together in a bowl. Roll out the larger of the two pieces of dough on a lightly floured surface, to a rectangle large

enough to line the base and sides of a 25 x 35cm shallow baking tin, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ cm thick. Lift the dough over your rolling pin and drape into the tin, leaving any excess hanging over the edges. Stir the set custard and spread over the pastry base. Top with the rhubarb, in neat lines or randomly, and scatter any sugary bits over the top.

**4** Roll out the smaller piece of pastry until large enough to cover the top of the pie. You can either cover the pie completely, leaving a few holes for the steam to escape, or create a decorative topping (see 'How to decorate your pie' below). When you're happy with your design, brush the top with beaten egg and scatter over the 1 tbsp caster sugar. Place the tin on the tray on the middle shelf and bake for 40-45 mins, until the pastry is deep golden brown and the filling is bubbling. This pie is best served at room temperature or just warm, so leave to cool for at least  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hrs before slicing.

### GOOD TO KNOW 1 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 606 kcals • fat 27g • saturates 15g  
• carbs 79g • sugars 34g • fibre 3g • protein 9g • salt 0.7g

### How to decorate your pie

*Use a pizza cutter to cut eight thin strips of pastry, working from one of the shorter edges. Roll out the remaining pastry so it's a little longer, then cut into thin strips. Lay the longer strips over the length of the pie, and the shorter strips diagonally going the other way. Trim the edges of the pie and use the off-cuts to cut out enough polka dots (we used the large end of a piping nozzle) to go all the way around the edge.*







This buttery rhubarb pie is perfect served with cold single or clotted cream



## Spiced chicken & apricot pastilla

*Filled with tender meat, spices, nuts and fruit, the aromatic pastilla is one of my favourite pies. If you're not a fan of mixing meat with fruit, you could leave the apricots out, but I love the sweet and savoury combo myself. I like to serve this as the centrepiece for a big help-yourself type dinner, with salads of warm roasted veg with feta, grains, dips and bread. It's traditionally dusted with a sprinkle of icing sugar.*

**SERVES 8** **PREP** 20 mins plus cooling **COOK** 1 hr 15 mins  
**EASY** \* before baking

2 tbsp rapeseed or vegetable oil  
2 onions, halved and sliced  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
2 tsp each ground cinnamon, cumin and coriander  
1 tsp turmeric  
½ tsp fennel seeds  
4 chicken legs  
500ml chicken stock  
1 tbsp clear honey  
50g ground almonds  
1 lemon, zested and ½ juiced  
85g dried apricots, quartered  
small bunch parsley, chopped  
270g pack filo pastry (7 sheets)  
75g butter, melted  
icing sugar and cinnamon, for dusting (optional)

Serve this as a centrepiece with a salad of roasted veg with feta and grains

**1** Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large casserole dish and cook the onion and garlic for 8 mins until soft. Add the spices and stir for about 30 seconds until aromatic, then add the chicken. Pour in the chicken stock and season. Cover with a lid and leave to simmer for 45 mins, or until the chicken is tender.

**2** Lift the chicken pieces onto a plate. Add the honey and almonds to the cooking liquid and simmer until thick and reduced by half, then turn off the heat. Meanwhile, finely shred the chicken with two forks, discarding the skin and bones. Return the chicken to the sauce and stir in the lemon zest, apricots and parsley, then leave to cool. *Can be chilled for up to two days.*

**3** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 with a baking sheet on the middle shelf. Unwrap the pastry, keeping any you're not working with under a damp tea towel so it doesn't dry out. Brush a 22-23cm springform or loose-bottomed round tin with a little oil. Push two pastry sheets into the tin to line the base, brushing them with melted butter and leaving a little extra up the sides. Repeat this with two more sheets across the other diameter of the tin so all sides are lined. Patch up any holes or thin patches with another sheet of buttered pastry.

**4** Spoon in the chicken mixture and pat down evenly. Sit another two sheets of pastry on top, brushing the melted butter between the layers again, and scrunching the edges of the pastry around the sides. Brush the top with a little more butter and bake on the heated baking sheet for 30 mins until crisp and golden brown. It's best eaten warm, so leave to cool for about 30 mins. Dust with a pinch of icing sugar and cinnamon to serve, if you like.

**PER SERVING** 384 kcal • fat 19g • saturates 7g • carbs 31g • sugars 9g • fibre 4g • protein 19g • salt 0.7g





Flaky filo makes this pie feel lighter than your usual chicken pie







This super short and flaky pastry has a hint of mustard to complement the beef



## Steak & blue cheese pie

*Here's a pie to cuddle up with on the sofa. Tender meat, a deeply savoury gravy, the flakiest pastry and molten blue cheese.*

**SERVES** 6-8 **PREP** 35 mins plus chilling **COOK** 3 hrs 30 mins  
**MORE EFFORT** ✨ 📏

### For the pastry

400g plain flour  
1 tbsp English mustard powder  
100g lard  
100g butter  
2 eggs, beaten (1 for the pastry and 1 for egg wash)

### For the filling

1kg braising steak such as brisket or skirt, cut into chunks, any sinew and fatty bits discarded  
50g plain flour  
1 tbsp English mustard powder  
3 tbsp rapeseed or vegetable oil  
250g bacon lardons  
2 carrots, cut into small chunks  
2 onions, chopped  
2 bay leaves  
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce  
1 tbsp tomato purée  
600ml beef stock  
6 thyme sprigs  
150g strong crumbly blue cheese, such as stilton  
1 piece marrowbone, about 10cm depending on the depth of your pie dish (optional)

**1** First, make the pastry. Put the flour, mustard powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt, the lard and butter in a food processor and pulse until combined. Add 1 egg and pulse again. Add 1 tbsp cold water, if needed, until it forms a short pastry. Knead quickly

into a ball, then wrap and chill in the fridge for at least 30 mins. *Can be made three days ahead or frozen for two months.*

**2** Season the steak generously and toss with the flour and mustard powder. Heat half the oil in a large pan. Brown the meat in a few batches, adding more oil as you need to and making sure you don't overcrowd the pan. Turn the meat only when the underside has a nice dark crust. Transfer the chunks to a plate as you go.

**3** Add the bacon to the pan and fry until beginning to crisp. Tip in the carrots, onions and bay leaves and cook for another few mins until the veg is soft. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce and tomato purée for 1 min, scraping the tasty bits from the bottom of the pan, then add the stock, thyme and browned beef. Season, cover the pan and simmer gently for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hrs, stirring now and again to prevent the sauce from sticking, until the beef is tender. Remove the lid for the last 30 mins to thicken the sauce. Alternatively, braise in the oven at 160C/140C fan/gas 3 for the same amount of time. Leave to cool. *Can be chilled for up to three days, or frozen for two months.*

**4** Transfer the beef to a pie dish and crumble the cheese over the top. Place the marrowbone in the centre, nestling it into the meat. Alternatively, use a pie funnel or piping nozzle. Roll out the pastry on a floured worktop until large enough to cover the pie and about  $\frac{1}{2}$ cm thick. Brush the remaining beaten egg over the edges of the pie dish, drape the pastry over, trim the

excess pastry and pinch around the edge to seal. Cut a hole for the marrowbone or pie funnel to poke through, and brush the top all over with beaten egg. Use the pastry trimmings to decorate the pie however you like. Chill for about 30 mins while you heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6.

**5** If you have any beaten egg left, give the pie a final brush for extra glossiness. Bake for 45-50 mins until the pastry is deep golden.

**PER SERVING** (8) 831 kcal • fat 50g • saturates 22g  
• carbs 49g • sugars 4g • fibre 4g • protein 44g • salt 2.2g

### Butter or lard?

*It may seem extravagant to buy both for this pastry, but it's worth it. The butter adds flavour and the lard keeps the pastry short and crumbly. Make sure you don't skip the chilling, as it makes the pastry much easier to handle.*

### Marrowbone

*I've used a piece of marrowbone as the pie funnel – you can get one from your butcher. Measure the depth of your pie dish, then ask them to cut it to the same length. A regular pie funnel, piping nozzle or egg cup will do the job, but the marrow adds a meaty flavour. If you're into double carbs, scoop the marrow from the bone once cooked and spread on some bread to dip in the gravy.*

Nuggets of molten blue cheese add savoury bombs of flavour to every bite of this saucy steak pie



## Aubergine, tomato & halloumi pie

*This is a great midweek pie for the family. It's something a little different using very familiar ingredients. Serve it with a handful of salad leaves – it really doesn't need anything else.*

**SERVES** 4-8 **PREP** 25 mins  
**COOK** 1 hr **EASY** **V** **\***

6 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil  
2 large aubergines, cut into thin rounds  
1 large red onion, halved and sliced  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
2 tsp ground coriander  
400g can chopped tomatoes  
1½ tbsp pomegranate molasses or good balsamic vinegar  
small bunch mint, leaves chopped  
270g block halloumi, cut into 8 slices  
500g block all-butter puff pastry  
50g pine nuts, toasted  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tbsp sesame seeds

**1** Heat 2 tbsp oil in your largest frying pan. Cook the aubergine slices for about 5 mins on each side until golden brown and soft – you'll need to add more oil between batches. Remove from the pan and set aside.

**2** Fry the onion in the remaining oil until soft, about 8 mins. Add the garlic and cook for another min or 2. Stir in the coriander, chopped tomatoes, molasses and some seasoning. Simmer for 15 mins until you have a thick, rich sauce. Stir in the mint leaves.

**3** Heat a drizzle more oil in a pan and fry the halloumi slices for 2 mins on each side until golden brown. Set aside with the aubergine. Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6.

**4** Roll out the pastry to a rectangle, 50 x 25cm and cut into two squares (don't worry about all the edges being neat at this stage). Place one on a baking sheet lined with parchment. Layer the tomato sauce, aubergine, halloumi and a scattering of pine nuts (in that order) onto the middle of the pastry, leaving a border around the edge, about 1.5cm. Keep layering until the ingredients have all been used up. Brush the edges with a little egg.

**5** Roll the second sheet a little larger, then lift over the pie and press down the edges to seal. Neaten the edges with a knife, then brush the whole pie with more egg. Score fine lines over the top with your knife to decorate, making sure you don't pierce the pastry. Cut a small cross in the centre of the pie and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake for 30-35 mins until golden brown.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • fibre • 2 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING (8)** 540 kcals • fat 39g • saturates 15g •  
carbs 28g • sugars 8g • fibre 7g • protein 16g • salt 1.6g

### Make it vegan

*Did you know that most varieties of ready-made puff pastry are vegan? Just don't go for the all-butter variety. If you swap the halloumi for extra roasted veg and the egg for oat or soya milk, you've got a delicious vegan pie.*

Add roasted peppers, courgettes, mushrooms or any other seasonal veg to this versatile vegetarian pie



Pine nuts add great texture to this pie, but you can swap for almonds or walnuts, if you prefer





comfort food

# vegan batch cooking

Transforming a ragu into different meals is an age-old trick to reinvent leftovers, and this one is simple, plant-based and nutritious

recipes SOPHIE GODWIN photographs ROB STREETER

## your base recipe

### Vegan ragu

HEALTHY

LOW CAL

4 OF 5-A-DAY

SERVES 6 PREP 20 mins COOK 1 hr EASY V\*

30g dried porcini mushrooms	100ml vegan red wine (optional)
3 tbsp olive oil	250g dried green lentils
1 onion, finely chopped	2 x 400g cans plum tomatoes
2 carrots, finely chopped	250g pack chestnut mushrooms, sliced
2 celery sticks, finely chopped	250g pack portobello mushrooms, sliced
4 garlic cloves, sliced	1 tsp soy sauce
few thyme sprigs	1 tsp Marmite
1 tsp tomato purée	

**1** Pour 800ml boiling water over the dried porcini and set aside for 10 mins. Meanwhile, pour 1½ tbsp oil into a large pan and gently cook the onion, carrot, celery and a pinch of salt, stirring for 10 mins, until soft. Remove the porcini and roughly chop. Set aside with the liquid.

**2** Add the garlic and thyme. Cook for 1 min, then stir in the purée and cook for 1 min. Pour in the wine. Cook until reduced, then add the lentils, mushroom stock and tomatoes. Bring to the boil, then reduce and simmer with a lid on.

**3** Meanwhile, heat a large frying pan. Add the 1½ tbsp oil, then tip in all of the mushrooms. Fry until the water has evaporated and the mushrooms are golden. Pour in the soy and stir, then add the mushrooms to the lentil pan.

**4** Stir in the Marmite. Cook over a medium heat for 30–45 mins, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are cooked. Remove the thyme and season.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • healthy • low fat • low cal • folate • fibre • iron • 4 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 268 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 1g • carbs 30g • sugars 10g • fibre 9g • protein 14g • salt 0.5g

## recipe 1

### Vegan lasagne

CALCIUM

FIBRE

4 OF 5-A-DAY

SERVES 2 PREP 5 mins COOK 40 mins EASY V

1 tbsp olive oil  
2 tbsp plain flour  
300ml soya milk  
nutmeg, for grating  
2 x portions vegan ragu (see left)  
4 lasagne sheets  
1 tbsp nutritional yeast (optional)  
green salad, to serve

**1** Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Heat the oil in a pan, whisk in

the flour and cook for 2 mins. Slowly whisk in the soya milk and cook until you have a creamy white sauce, about 5 mins. Season to taste, adding a grating of nutmeg.

**2** Spoon a third of the ragu into an ovenproof dish, then top with 2 lasagne sheets followed by a third of the white sauce and a third of the ragu. Top with the remaining lasagne sheets and ragu, then spread over the rest of the white sauce. Sprinkle over the nutritional yeast, if using. Bake for 35 mins until cooked through. Serve with salad.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • healthy • calcium • folate • fibre • iron • 4 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 530 kcals • fat 16g • saturates 3g • carbs 60g • sugars 11g • fibre 13g • protein 26g • salt 0.5g



Shoot director RACHEL BAYLY | Food stylist SOPHIE GODWIN





## recipe 2

### Vegan Bolognese



**SERVES 2 COOK 10 mins EASY V**

180g spaghetti  
2 x portions vegan ragu  
(see recipe, left)  
handful fresh basil leaves

Cook the spaghetti in a large pan of salted water for 1 min less than pack instructions. Reheat the ragu. Drain the pasta, reserving a ladleful of water, then toss the spaghetti in the sauce, using a little liquid to loosen the ragu slightly. Serve topped with fresh basil and some black pepper.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • healthy • low fat • folate • fibre • 4 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 599 kcals • fat 8g • saturates 1g • carbs 97g • sugars 12g • fibre 13g • protein 25g • salt 0.3g

## recipe 3

### Vegan moussaka



**SERVES 2 PREP 5 mins  
COOK 45 mins EASY V**

350g potatoes, peeled and chopped  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1/2 tsp dried oregano  
1 aubergine, thinly sliced lengthways  
50ml soya milk  
2 x portions vegan ragu  
(see recipe, left)

- 1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Boil the potatoes in a pan of salted water for 8-10 mins.
- 2 Meanwhile, mix the oil with the oregano. Brush it over the aubergine and sprinkle with sea salt. Heat a griddle pan over a medium heat and cook for 3 mins on each side.
- 3 Drain and mash the potatoes with the soya milk, then season to taste.
- 4 Spoon the ragu into an ovenproof dish and layer in 1/2 the aubergine, followed by the mash. Brush over the remaining oregano oil, then top with the remaining aubergine. Bake for 25 mins until golden.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • healthy • folate • fibre • iron • 5 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 533 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 3g • carbs 60g • sugars 15g • fibre 16g • protein 19g • salt 0.3g



For more vegan recipes, visit [bbcgoodfoodme.com/healthy-vegan](http://bbcgoodfoodme.com/healthy-vegan)



4 ways

# french toast

Update a breakfast favourite with new sweet or savoury topping ideas. Try serving a selection as part of a weekend brunch spread

recipes ESTHER CLARK photograph MELISSA REYNOLDS-JAMES

## gf tip

Use a thick, hand-sliced loaf for these recipes. If using pre-sliced bread, soak it for half the time stated in the method.

## Mozzarella-stuffed French toast

SERVES 2 PREP 10 mins  
COOK 10 mins EASY V

Divide **150g grated hard mozzarella** between **2 slices of thick white bread** (crusts removed), leaving a 1cm border. Sandwich both with another slice of bread, then press the edges with a fork to seal. Beat **1 large egg** with **150ml milk** in a dish, add the sandwiches and leave to soak for 1 min, turning once. Fry in **2 tbsp salted butter** over a medium heat for 5 mins, then flip and cook for 5 mins more. Serve with **chilli sauce**.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium  
**PER SERVING** 595 kcals • fat 34g •  
saturates 21g • carbs 42g • sugars 6g •  
fibre 2g • protein 28g • salt 2.1g

## Rhubarb & custard French toast

SERVES 2 PREP 10 mins COOK 20 mins EASY V

Cut **200g rhubarb** into 3cm pieces and simmer with **1 split vanilla pod**, **3 tbsp caster sugar** and the **zest and juice of 1/2 small orange** for 8-10 mins, or until the rhubarb is soft but holds its shape. Set aside. Beat **1 large egg** with **300ml milk** in a shallow dish, add **4 thick slices of white bread** and leave to soak for 1 min, turning once. Fry in **2 tbsp butter** over a medium heat for 4 mins, then flip and cook for 4 mins more. Top with the rhubarb and **100ml warm custard**.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • 1 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 639 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 13g • carbs 85g • sugars 47g • fibre 4g •  
protein 19g • salt 1.5g



## Mushroom, bacon & tomato French toast

**SERVES 2** **PREP** 10 mins  
**COOK** 20 mins **EASY** 

Heat the grill to high. Grill **4 rashers streaky bacon** for 5-6 mins, then set aside. Put **100g halved cherry tomatoes** on a baking tray and grill for 5 mins. Mix with **2 tbsp tomato chutney** and set aside. Fry **100g halved portobellini** or **chestnut mushrooms** in **½ tsp olive oil** for 5 mins. Beat **1 large egg** with **300ml milk** in a shallow dish, add **4 thick slices of white bread** and leave to soak for 1 min, turning once. Fry in **2 tbsp butter** over a medium heat for 4 mins, then flip and cook for 4 mins more. Top with the tomato mix, bacon and mushrooms.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • folate • 1 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 657 kcals • fat 36g • saturates 17g •  
carbs 52g • sugars 16g • fibre 4g • protein 28g •  
salt 3.3g

## Spiced banana honey French toast

**SERVES 2** **PREP** 10 mins  
**COOK** 10 mins **EASY** **V**

Thickly slice **2 small bananas**. Put **3 tbsp honey**, **½ tsp cinnamon** and **¼ tsp ground cardamom** in a pan. Bring to a simmer and swirl until golden. Add the bananas and toss. Beat **1 large egg** with **300ml milk** in a dish, add **4 thick slices of white bread** and soak for 1 min, turning once. Fry in **2 tbsp butter** over a medium heat for 4 mins, flip and cook for 4 mins more. Top with the bananas and **50ml whipped cream**, if you like.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • folate • 1 of 5-a-day  
**PER SERVING** 609 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 12g •  
carbs 83g • sugars 45g • fibre 4g • protein 18g •  
salt 1.4g





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# WEEKEND

Mouthwatering dishes to dig into with your family and friends over the weekend.



**Baking on a budget, p48**



**TOMMY'S TWIST**

**Bread & butter pudding, p60**



**3 TRIPS TO TAKE**

**Easy recipes for first-time cooks, p62**



**ROAST REINVENTED, p40**







# ROASTS REINVENTED

We've updated classic roasts with new takes on beef, chicken and even nut roast in our impressive spring collection

*recipes* BBC GOOD FOOD TEAM *photographs* TOBY SCOTT



“  
This roast  
will win over  
meat-eaters as  
well as veggies  
”

## Feta-stuffed cannellini nut roast

*Nut roast has had a few image problems since the vegetarian boom of the 1970s, but this revamp should change opinions. Packed with pistachios, Middle-Eastern spices, sundried tomatoes and a creamy mascarpone and feta filling, this roast will win over meat-eaters as well as veggies. Serve it with purple sprouting broccoli tossed in harissa, which, when roasted, helps to create the most deliciously moreish crisp edges.* **Esther Clark**

**SERVES 6 PREP 30 mins**

**COOK 1 hr 10 mins MORE EFFORT V**

3 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for the tin  
and for drizzling

1 celery stick, finely chopped

2 leeks, halved and sliced

400g can cannellini beans, drained  
and rinsed

100g pistachios, finely chopped

50g sundried tomatoes, drained  
and roughly chopped

80g parmesan or vegetarian  
alternative, grated

100g cooked quinoa

3 tbsp za'atar

50g fresh breadcrumbs

2 large eggs, beaten

50g plain flour

½ small bunch of parsley,  
finely chopped

1 tbsp toasted mixed seeds

**For the stuffing**

100g feta, crumbled

2 tbsp mascarpone

1 tbsp finely chopped chives

1 tbsp finely chopped dill, plus  
a few fronds to serve

1 lemon, zested

**For the broccoli**

300g purple sprouting broccoli

½ tbsp coriander seeds, crushed

1 tbsp rose harissa

**1** Oil the base and sides of a roughly 18cm loaf tin and line with baking parchment. Heat 1½ tbsp oil in a frying pan, tip in the celery and leek, and fry for 10 mins, or until both are softened and translucent.

**2** Roughly mash the cannellini beans in a large bowl. Stir through the fried celery and leek, pistachios, sundried tomatoes, cheese, quinoa, za'atar, breadcrumbs, beaten eggs, flour and parsley. Season well.

**3** For the stuffing, crumble the feta into a bowl and roughly mash with a fork, then stir in the mascarpone, herbs and lemon zest. Season.

**4** Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Sprinkle the mixed seeds over the bottom of your lined loaf tin. Pat half the bean and nut mixture into the tin and use a spoon to press out a channel along the middle, roughly 2cm wide. Spoon the feta mixture into the channel, then pat down the remaining bean and nut mixture over the top and around the sides. Cover in foil and bake for 50 mins or up to 1 hr until firm to the touch.

**5** Toss the broccoli in a baking tray with the coriander seeds, harissa and remaining 1½ tbsp oil. Season and roast on the lower shelf of the oven for the last 20 mins of the cooking time, or until crisp at the edges.

**6** Serve the nut roast on a platter alongside the broccoli. Drizzle with olive oil and top with the dill fronds.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron •  
2 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 518 kcals • fat 31g • saturates 11g •  
carbs 30g • sugars 8g • fibre 11g • protein 24g •  
salt 1.4g

### gf tips

#### FOR CONVENIENCE

- If you can't get hold of harissa, then toss the broccoli with a mix of 1 tsp sweet smoked paprika and 1 tsp hot smoked paprika.
- You can make the nut roast up to 48 hrs ahead and store in the fridge until ready to roast.



# Roast beef sirloin & béarnaise dauphinoise

*An intensely flavoursome, peppered sirloin joint is roasted with seasonal baby carrots. Serve alongside potatoes dauphinoise, enriched with tarragon, shallots and gruyère for a roast that will wow your guests without oodles of fiddly side dishes – and that means less washing-up as well.* **Esther Clark**

**SERVES 10** **PREP** 45 mins plus resting and infusing **COOK** 1 hr 35 mins **MORE EFFORT**

2kg boneless beef sirloin, tied  
2 tbsp olive oil  
½ tbsp black peppercorns  
½ tbsp sea salt  
1 large garlic bulb  
450g baby carrots, halved  
200g watercress

#### For the dressing

5 tbsp olive oil  
2 tbsp cider vinegar  
1 tbsp Dijon mustard  
½ tsp caster sugar

#### For the dauphinoise

40g unsalted butter, plus extra for the dish  
3 banana shallots, finely chopped  
70ml white wine vinegar  
500ml double cream  
500ml whole milk  
3 large garlic cloves, bashed  
small bunch of tarragon, leaves finely chopped, stalks reserved  
1 large egg yolk (freeze the white for another recipe)  
1.5kg King Edward potatoes, thinly sliced  
70g gruyère cheese, grated

**1** Leave the beef at room temperature for 1 hr before cooking. For the dauphinoise, heat the butter in a saucepan over a medium heat. Once foaming, add the shallots and a pinch of salt and fry for 10 mins or until softened. Add the vinegar and reduce it by half, then pour in the cream and milk. Tip in the garlic and tarragon stalks and bring to a simmer. Take off the heat and set aside to infuse for 30 mins.

**2** Tip the mixture into a bowl, scoop out the garlic and tarragon stalks, and discard. Whisk through most of the chopped tarragon, the egg yolk and some seasoning. Mix the potato slices through the infused cream until they are fully coated, then arrange in overlapping layers in a buttered 30cm round dish. Pour over any remaining liquid, scatter with the gruyère and set aside.

**3** Heat the oven to 220C/200C fan/gas 7. Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick pan over a high heat. Add the beef and fry for 5-7 mins, on all sides, until the fat is golden brown. Remove and put in a roasting tin. Bash the peppercorns and salt together in a pestle and mortar,

and rub this over the fatty parts of the meat. Cut the garlic bulb in half through the cloves, then add to the tin. Turn the oven down to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the beef in the oven to cook for 55 mins-1 hr 5 mins (for medium-rare). Put the dauphinoise on the lower shelf to cook for the same amount of time, then add the carrots to the roasting tin for the last 25 mins. A cooking thermometer should read 55C when the beef is cooked. Cover with foil and leave to rest for 25 mins.

**4** Make the dressing by whisking all the ingredients together with some seasoning, then toss with the watercress. Serve the beef thinly sliced with the dauphinoise, carrots, the roasted garlic and the lightly dressed watercress leaves.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • iron • 1 of 5-a-day • gluten free

**PER SERVING** 859 kcals • fat 61g • saturates 31g • carbs 26g • sugars 7g • fibre 5g • protein 49g • salt 1.4g



Before becoming deputy food editor, Esther trained at Leiths School of Food & Wine and worked as a chef in Italy. She loves to cook comforting dishes at home in London for hungry friends.  
@esthermclark

## gf tips

### PERFECT TIMING

- Assemble the dauphinoise up to 24 hrs before baking and bring to room temperature for half an hour before cooking.
- Get yourself a decent digital probe meat thermometer. This way you'll be able to get an accurately cooked joint of meat.







# Italian-style roast cabbage wedges with tomato lentils

*Roasting cabbage produces crisp, caramelised leaves on the outside and a soft, sweet centre, ideal for a veggie or vegan centrepiece. Pairing it with black olives, sundried tomatoes, lemon, garlic and basil gives it the feel of Italian comfort food, with all the associated aromas and textures.*

**Liberty Mendez**

**SERVES 6** **PREP** 30 mins

**COOK** 1 hr 15 mins

**MORE EFFORT** **V**

100ml extra virgin olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, crushed  
2 small winter green cabbages, outer leaves removed, each cut into 6 wedges

**For the new potatoes**

750g baby new potatoes  
1 tbsp olive oil  
2 lemons, zested

**For the lentils**

1 tbsp olive oil  
2 onions, finely chopped  
2 celery stalks, finely chopped  
250g red lentils  
400g can chopped tomatoes  
2 vegetable stock cubes  
3 tbsp sundried tomato purée  
1 tbsp red wine vinegar  
small bunch of basil, finely chopped, plus a few whole leaves to serve

**For the black olive pangrattato**

2 tbsp olive oil  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
½-1 tsp chilli flakes  
3 thick slices stale crusty bread or sourdough, crusts removed then blitzed into breadcrumbs (about 120g)

1 lemon, zested  
100g Kalamata olives, pitted and roughly chopped

**1** Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Bring a large pan of water to the boil and blanch the potatoes for 10-12 mins until tender, then drain and leave to cool. For the cabbage, mix together the oil and garlic, rub all over the wedges, season, then spread out on a large baking tray. Roast on the top shelf for 15 mins.

**2** While the cabbage is cooking, put the new potatoes onto a large baking tray and gently crush with the back of a spoon or a masher, so they split open slightly. Drizzle over the oil and some seasoning, then stir in the lemon zest. Once the cabbage has had 15 mins, put the potatoes on the top shelf of the oven and move the cabbage to the bottom. Cook for 45 mins, turning everything halfway through.

**3** For the lentils, heat the oil in a medium saucepan and fry the onions and celery until soft and translucent, about 10-15 mins. Tip in the lentils, tomatoes, 450ml water, stock cubes, tomato purée and vinegar, bring to the boil and simmer uncovered for 30-35 mins,

stirring occasionally until the lentils are soft and cooked through. If the mixture gets a little dry, add a splash of water to stop it sticking. Stir in the basil and an extra 50ml boiling water to loosen the mixture. Season well.

**4** While the lentils are cooking, make the pangrattato. Heat the oil in a large frying pan, fry the garlic and chilli for 30 seconds, then add the breadcrumbs. Toast until golden and crunchy, then tip in the lemon zest and olives and fry for a further 3 mins. Set aside to cool.

**5** To serve, spoon lentils onto each plate, put a cabbage wedge on top and sprinkle over the pangrattato. Garnish with the extra basil and serve the potatoes on the side.

**GOOD TO KNOW** vegan • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 3 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 610 kcal • fat 29g • saturates 4g • carbs 62g • sugars 14g • fibre 13g • protein 19g • salt 1.6g



Liberty was a pastry chef at the House of Commons before joining the Good Food cookery team. As well as baking, she has a keen interest in plant-based cookery and always strives for sustainability in the kitchen.  
@bakingtheliberty





**gf tip****HOW TO USE PANGRATTATO**

● Using pangrattato (Italian for breadcrumbs), is a brilliant way to spice up and add some texture and interest to your dish. Change it up by adding different kinds of blitzed nuts (cashews work well), or experiment with dried herbs and spices like smoked paprika.







# Spring one-pot roast chicken

*Radishes and whole spring onions add a lovely twist to this Sunday roast and together with a sauce made using mascarpone, tarragon and lemon, it bursts with spring flavours. Because everything is cooked together, the veg gets coated in the sauce and the meat stays succulent, too.* **Anna Glover**

**SERVES 4** **PREP 20 mins**  
**COOK 1 hr 20 mins** **EASY**

1.5kg whole chicken  
250g mascarpone  
½ small lemon, zested and juiced  
small bunch of tarragon,  
finely chopped  
3 tbsp olive oil  
800g new potatoes, halved if large  
1 garlic bulb, halved  
200g radishes, halved if large  
½ bunch of spring onions, trimmed  
150ml chicken stock  
200g frozen peas, defrosted  
100g spring greens, chopped

**1** Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Remove any string from the chicken and sit in a large roasting tin or a baking dish, with plenty of space around it.

**2** Mash 2 tbsp of the mascarpone with the lemon zest, 1 tbsp of the tarragon and some seasoning. Slip your hand beneath the chicken skin to pull it away from the meat, then spread the mixture beneath the skin in a thin layer. Spoon another 3 tbsp

mascarpone into the cavity of the chicken, to melt in with the roasting juices and enrich the sauce later on. Rub 2 tbsp olive oil into the skin, season well with sea salt, then loosely tie the legs together with butcher's string. Roast for 20 mins.

**3** Arrange the potatoes and garlic around the chicken, drizzle over another 1 tbsp oil and cook for another 30 mins.

**4** Toss the radishes and whole spring onions into the dish, in and around the potatoes and coating everything in the fat, then roast for another 25 mins. The potatoes and radishes will be golden and tender, and the chicken should be cooked through. Remove the chicken from the tin, cover loosely with foil and leave to rest.

**5** Pour off or spoon away the excess oil from the tin. Stir the remaining mascarpone (about 150g) with the stock in a jug until lump-free, then pour into the tin and bubble on the hob for few minutes, stirring to coat the potatoes and veg. Squeeze over some lemon juice and season.

**6** Stir in the peas, spring greens and most of the remaining tarragon, and bubble for a few more minutes until bright green. Sit the chicken back in the middle of the tin to serve and scatter over the reserved tarragon.

**GOOD TO KNOW** calcium • folate • fibre • vit c • iron • 2 of 5-a-day

**PER SERVING** 950 kcals • fat 59g • saturates 26g • carbs 40g • sugars 10g • fibre 10g • protein 59g • salt 0.7g

## TWIST IT

### ● Go green

Swap radishes for chopped leeks, long-stem broccoli, sugar snaps or mangetout.

### ● Know your herbs

Tarragon, with its sweet aniseed flavour, complements the flavour of chicken and cuts through the creaminess of the sauce. If you're not a fan of aniseed (it tastes more like fennel than liquorice), basil, chives or even wild garlic would work equally well.



Anna is a food stylist and recipe writer who loves creating new flavours with well-known ingredients. When she's not in the kitchen, she loves pottering in the garden or pursuing her quest to find the best pizza in the world.

[@anna\\_glover1](https://twitter.com/anna_glover1)



**gf tip****NEXT LEVEL CHICKEN**

● *Salting the chicken liberally a day ahead of cooking ensures really crisp skin, but it's not essential if you're cooking straightaway. You can also prepare the mascarpone mixture and stuff it under the skin the day before to marinate the meat, keeping it covered in the fridge.*



# Baking on a budget





Get drizzling, dripping and swirling with these fun, thrifty bakes. Whip up an easy, showstopping birthday cake or try new twists on old favourites like red velvet cookies or sticky toffee banana bread – with just a few clever tricks you can make them look extra special

*recipes* ANNA GLOVER *photograph* MIKE ENGLISH





# Rhubarb & custard blondies

*Blondies are brownies made with white chocolate instead of dark, and flavoured with vanilla instead of cocoa. Custard powder in the cake mix makes them extra fudgy and, if you don't have rhubarb, you can use any jam or compote – swirl through ready-made raspberry jam, or a homemade pear and apple compote for a crumble-inspired blondie.*

**SERVES 12** **PREP 15 mins** plus cooling  
**COOK 55 mins** **EASY** **V** ❄️

225g salted butter (or unsalted with a pinch of salt), plus extra for the tin  
200g light brown soft sugar  
100g caster sugar  
150g plain flour  
50g custard powder  
½ tsp baking powder  
3 medium eggs  
250g white chocolate chips or white chocolate finely chopped  
2 tsp vanilla extract

**For the rhubarb & custard swirl**  
200g rhubarb (frozen, or canned and drained is fine)  
75g caster sugar  
pink or red food colouring (optional)  
4 tbsp ready-made custard (from a carton is fine, or made up from powder)

**1** For the rhubarb & custard swirl, put the rhubarb and sugar in a wide pan with 2 tbsp water (or omit the water if using canned rhubarb). Cook over a medium heat, stirring frequently for about 10 mins, until the rhubarb breaks down and turns jammy. Add a few drops of food colouring if you want a pink rhubarb swirl, but the flavour will still be great if you're using green-tinged rhubarb. Leave to cool.

**2** Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Put the butter and both sugars into a pan and put over a low heat. Melt together until smooth and shiny, then remove from the heat, and leave to cool for 10 mins while you sieve the flour, custard powder and baking powder in a bowl. Butter a 20 x 30cm baking tin and line with baking parchment.

**3** Beat the eggs into the cooled sugar and butter mixture, then fold in the dry ingredients until you have a smooth batter. Stir in 150g of the chocolate chips and the vanilla. Pour into the brownie tin, then use a teaspoon to swirl rhubarb compote on top of the batter. Add dollops of the custard, then swirl a skewer or cocktail stick through the compote to create a marbled pattern.

**4** Bake for 35-40 mins until set and the edges are coming away from the sides of the tin, then leave in the tin to cool. Melt the remaining 100g chocolate in short blasts in the microwave or in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Use a spoon to drizzle the chocolate over the blondie in a zig-zag pattern. Cut into squares to serve. *Will keep for three days in an airtight container, or freeze the squares individually.*

**PER SERVING** 464 kcal • fat 24g • saturates 14g • carbs 57g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.6g

## **gf tip** USING RHUBARB

● *Frozen or canned rhubarb is available all year round, but while in season, rhubarb can be picked up cheaply in bunches. It freezes well, too – just chop and put in a container in the freezer until you're ready to make a compote (without the colouring). You can spoon it over porridge, yogurt or make a crumble. It keeps for up to four days covered in the fridge.*





Great for the  
cake tin  
**COST**  
**PER SERVING**  
43p





# Chocolate & raspberry birthday layer cake

*Like a Victoria sponge, but better. Frozen raspberries are much cheaper and last a lot longer than fresh, and when swirled into cream between chocolatey layers, who could resist a slice?*

**SERVES 12** **PREP** 20 mins plus cooling **COOK** 40 mins  
**EASY** **V** \* sponges only

225ml sunflower oil, plus extra for the tins  
250g caster sugar  
3 large eggs  
225ml milk  
250g self-raising flour  
4 tbsp cocoa  
1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda  
**For the raspberry layer**  
150g raspberry jam  
100g frozen raspberries, defrosted  
300ml double cream  
2 tbsp icing sugar

**1** Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Oil and line two round 20cm springform cake tins with baking parchment. Whisk the oil, sugar, eggs and milk in a bowl until smooth. Sieve the flour, cocoa and bicarb into another large bowl, then gradually mix in the wet ingredients.

**2** Divide the mixture between the tins and bake for 35-40 mins until the cakes are risen and spring back when pressed. Leave to cool in the tins for 10 mins, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

**3** For the raspberry layer, stir the jam and the defrosted raspberries together. Once the cakes are cool, whip the cream with the sugar to soft peaks, then gently fold half the raspberry mixture through the cream to create a ripple effect.

**4** Spoon most of the reserved raspberry mixture over one of the cakes, then dollop on half of the cream. Smooth over with a palette knife, then place the other sponge on top. Swirl over the remaining cream and swirl the last of the raspberry mixture through it. *Will keep in the fridge for two days.*

**PER SERVING** 549 kcals • fat 36g • saturates 12g • carbs 49g • sugars 33g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.6g

## gf tip SIMPLE SWAPS

● *Making chocolate cakes and buttercream icing can be expensive when baking, but using vegetable oil instead of butter and cocoa instead of melted chocolate keeps costs down here. It means the cake also keeps well (it won't go stale if it's wrapped and left for a few days, or you can freeze the sponges to decorate later) and it creates a texture that ensures the layers will stack and slice beautifully for guests. Adding lashings of whipped cream looks lavish, but it's usually more cost-effective than making buttercream.*







Quick and thrifty  
birthday showstopper  
**COST**  
**PER SERVING**  
33p



# Red velvet cookies

*We've turned the popular cake into chewy cookies, complete with cream cheese icing. Baking them is much cheaper than buying a box of chocolates for Valentine's Day, and something homemade is always appreciated. Box them up to give as a gift, or make a batch of dough to keep in the fridge so impromptu guests can enjoy freshly baked cookies.*

**MAKES** 16-18 **PREP** 20 mins  
plus chilling **COOK** 15 mins  
**EASY** \* dough only

175g soft salted butter  
200g light brown soft sugar  
100g caster sugar  
1 large egg  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
½-1 tbsp red food colouring gel,  
depending on strength  
225g plain flour  
25g cocoa powder  
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda  
150g white chocolate chips  
or chunks  
**For the drizzle**  
2 tbsp soft cheese  
6 tbsp icing sugar

**1** Beat the butter and sugars together with an electric whisk until pale and fluffy. Beat in the egg, vanilla and food colouring until you have a bright red batter. Sieve over the flour, cocoa and bicarb. Fold everything together to make a stiff evenly-coloured dough, then fold in the chocolate chips.

**2** Put the dough on a sheet of baking parchment, fold the parchment over the dough and mould into a sausage shape about 6cm wide. Chill until ready to bake. *Will keep for a week in the fridge or one month in the freezer.*

**3** Heat the oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Cut the cookie dough into 1cm thick slices using a sharp knife and arrange on two large baking sheets lined with baking parchment well-spaced apart so they have room to spread in the oven. Bake in batches, keeping the unbaked cookies on the sheet in the fridge while the rest are baking.

**4** Bake in the middle of the oven for 13-15 mins until the cookies are crisp at the edges, but still soft in the centre. Leave to cool on the baking sheet for a few minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Beat the soft cheese in a small bowl to a loose consistency, then stir in the icing sugar. Use a piping bag or spoon to drizzle the icing over the cookies. *Un-iced cookies keep for five days in an airtight container, or two days iced.*

**PER BISCUIT** 268 kcals • fat 12g • saturates 7g •  
carbs 36g • sugars 26g • fibre 1g • protein 3g •  
salt 0.3g

## **gf tips** BEST BUYS

- *Chocolate chips can be cheaper than bars, but check for special offers.*
- *You only need a small amount of soft cheese for these cookies, but if you don't have any, a simple icing of milk or water mixed with sugar would work.*
- *Gel food colourings are best when baking, as they keep their colour when baked and less is needed to achieve a good result.*
- *Vanilla extract is cheaper than bean pastes or pods, but use whatever you have to hand.*
- *This dough keeps for a long time, so bake as many as you need and chill or freeze the rest so there's no waste.*







An easy  
Valentine's gift  
**COST**  
**PER SERVING**  
31p





Comforting,  
citrusy pud  
**COST**  
**PER SERVING**  
35p



# Lemon drizzle sponge pudding

*We've turned a classic lemon drizzle cake into a self-saucing pud for a money-saving, retro dessert that is comfort food at its best. Sweetened lemon juice poured over just before baking thickens and puddles in the bottom of the dish to create the sauce. Serve straightaway, with cream or custard if you fancy. It's the perfect way to round off Sunday lunch.*

**SERVES 10** **PREP 15 mins**

**COOK 50 mins** **EASY** **V**

250g soft butter, plus extra for the dish

380g caster sugar

4 eggs

250g self-raising flour

1 tsp baking powder

3 lemons, zested and juiced

2½ tbsp cornflour

custard or cream, to serve

**For the drizzle**

50g icing sugar

1 lemon, juiced and zested

**1** Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter a 30 x 20cm deep baking dish.

**2** Put the butter and 250g caster sugar in a bowl and beat for 5 mins until pale and fluffy. Whisk in the eggs, then sieve over the flour and baking powder and fold in until you have a batter. Stir in the lemon zest, reserving a little for decoration.

**3** Spoon the sponge batter into the dish and smooth over the top.

**4** Mix the lemon juice with the cornflour in a heatproof bowl to make a smooth paste. Mix the remaining 130g caster sugar

with 300ml boiling water in a jug, pour over the cornflour mix and whisk until smooth. Pour this over the sponge. Bake for 45-50 mins until golden and set, and the sponge springs back when touched.

**5** While the pudding is baking, make the lemon drizzle. Mix the icing sugar with enough lemon juice (about half of it) to create a loose consistency. Drizzle over the sponge while it's still warm and decorate with the reserved lemon zest. Serve straightaway with cream or custard.

**PER SERVING** 492 kcal • fat 23g • saturates 14g • carbs 66g • sugars 43g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.9g

**gf tip**

## QUICK LEMON CURD

● Lemons are a cheap and easy ingredient to have on standby for a last-minute pudding. Combined with a bit of sugar and cornflour from the storecupboard, it creates a cheat's lemon curd that transforms a simple sponge into a crowd-pleasing dessert.





# Sticky toffee banana bread

Use up any overripe bananas to make this loaf cake that's been given an indulgent makeover with toffee sauce and nut brittle.

Adding dates to the sponge batter also lends a jammy sweetness reminiscent of sticky toffee pudding, so you can serve it warm with extra toffee sauce and ice cream for an easy dessert as well as cutting it into slices for breakfast.

**SERVES 10** **PREP 25 mins** plus cooling **COOK 1 hr 15 mins**  
**EASY** **V** \* banana bread only

125g soft butter, plus extra for the tin  
75g caster sugar  
50g dark brown soft sugar  
3 medium eggs  
2 large ripe bananas, mashed  
50g natural yogurt  
200g plain flour  
2 tsp baking powder  
50g pitted dates, chopped (about 10)  
50g pecans or walnuts, chopped (or mixed chopped nuts)  
**For the toffee sauce**  
100g light brown soft sugar  
25g butter, cut into cubes  
100ml double cream  
**For the banana & nut brittle**  
150g caster sugar  
50g pecans or walnuts (or mixed nuts)  
50g banana chips  
½ tsp sea salt flakes

**1** Heat the oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Butter and line a 900g loaf tin with a strip of baking parchment.

**2** Beat the butter and both sugars in a bowl for 5 mins with an electric whisk until really fluffy. Whisk the eggs, banana and yogurt in a separate bowl until mostly smooth, then whisk this into the butter and sugar mixture. Fold in the flour and baking powder until just combined, then fold in the dates and nuts. Spoon into the tin, smooth over the top and bake for 1 hr-1 hr 15 mins until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 mins, then lift out using the strip of parchment.

You can serve it warm now, or leave to cool completely on a wire rack.

*Will keep for four days in an airtight container.*

**3** Meanwhile, make the toffee sauce. Put the sugar in a heavy-based frying pan and melt over a medium-low heat until light golden brown and liquid – don't stir, just tilt the pan to melt the sugar. Carefully whisk in the butter until smooth, then pour in the cream slowly and bring to a bubble. Mix until the sauce is smooth and shiny. Pour into a heatproof bowl, cover and leave to cool to room temperature.

**4** For the brittle, put the sugar in a frying pan with 2 tbsp water over a medium heat, stir briefly, then simmer for 10 mins until the caramel turns amber. Don't stir after the initial mix, just tilt the pan to get an even deep golden colour.

**5** Meanwhile, line a baking tray with baking parchment. Carefully stir the nuts, banana chips and salt into the caramel, until well coated, then pour onto the tray. Tip the tray (or use a spoon) to make sure the nuts are in a single layer – or they will be harder to separate later. Leave to cool completely before breaking the brittle into shards.

**6** Stir the toffee sauce to loosen if it's become stiff, or warm for a few seconds in the microwave (add a splash more cream if you need to), then drizzle over the cake so it drips down the sides. Top with the shards of brittle. *Will keep for two days in an airtight container.*

**PER SERVING** 464 kcal • fat 24g • saturates 14g • carbs 57g • sugars 44g • fibre 1g • protein 5g • salt 0.6g

## **gf tips** MAKE A LITTLE GO A LONG WAY

- Mixed nuts are the cheapest nuts to buy, but use whatever you have – just check the use-by date as they go rancid quite quickly. Hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds or peanuts all work well in this cake.
- A simple toffee sauce and brittle add extra flavour and texture to the cake using everyday, storecupboard ingredients.
- Banana bread keeps well in the freezer. Any extra sauce and brittle keeps for four days stored in separate airtight containers.





Use up  
leftover bananas  
and nuts for this cake  
**COST**  
**PER SERVING**  
56p







**TOMMY'S TWIST**

# BREAD & BUTTER PUDDING

BBC chef **Tommy Banks** turns a classic comfort food pudding into a modern sharing dessert

photograph SAM STOWELL

## Bread & butter pudding toast

*Bread and butter pudding is a lovely dessert but it can be on the heavy side, especially if you've just eaten a big dinner. I've simplified a recipe that I serve at my restaurant, The Black Swan in Oldstead, and added the caramel crunch you get on a crème brûlée to come up with a twist that's indulgent but much lighter and quicker to make. It's also fun to serve with unsweetened whipped crème fraîche for dipping the toast soldiers into.*

**SERVES 4** **PREP 25 mins**  
**COOK 20 mins** **EASY V**

400g brioche loaf  
3 eggs  
120g whole milk

75g Irish cream liqueur  
100g unsalted butter  
100g golden caster sugar  
250g crème fraîche

**1** Use a bread knife to remove the crusts and square up the brioche loaf. Cut the loaf into 3cm slices, then cut each slice into three rectangular fingers. Whisk together the eggs, milk and Irish cream liqueur in a shallow dish. Put the brioche fingers in the egg mixture and leave for about 5 seconds on each side until they are soaked but still holding their shape.

**2** Put a large frying pan on a medium heat, add the butter and heat until sizzling. Add the brioche fingers to the pan and slowly cook on a medium-high heat, turning so all sides are an even, golden brown. Remove the toast from the pan and

toss in the sugar, then transfer them to a baking tray or rack. Use a blowtorch to caramelize the sugar on all sides or, if you don't have a blowtorch, grill on each side for 1 min, or until the sugar has melted. Leave the brioche to cool and the sugar crust to harden.

**3** Tip the crème fraîche into a bowl and whisk until it thickens and forms soft peaks – initially it will loosen but continue to whisk. Serve a big pile of the toast in the middle of the table with the crème fraîche for dipping into or spreading over.

**PER SERVING** 943 kcals • fat 63g • saturates 38g • carbs 75g • sugars 42g • fibre 1g • protein 15g • salt 1.1g



Tommy Banks is chef-owner at The Black Swan in Oldstead ([blackswanoldstead.co.uk](http://blackswanoldstead.co.uk)) and Roots in York ([rootsyork.co.uk](http://rootsyork.co.uk)). He is also a judge on *Family Cooking Showdown*, returning to BBC Two this autumn. His book, *Roots* (£25, Seven Dials), is out now. For more recipes from Tommy, see [bbcgoodfood.com](http://bbcgoodfood.com). [@tommybanks8](https://twitter.com/tommybanks8)









# Isolation inspiration: *Maldives*

What will travel look like when we're able to vacation again? We're thinking somewhere secluded, away from the crowds – say, in the middle of the Indian ocean. Use your time in lockdown to start planning for when the world's in a healthier place. Whether it be for an island-hopping adventure or a long-stay at an isolated resort, we have three tempting picks to choose from in the Maldives.

By **Sophie Voelzing**



## **WHERE?** Naladhu Private Island Maldives

**WHAT'S IT LIKE?** Unwind in blissful seclusion at Naladhu, an ultra-exclusive private island resort boasting just 20 villas, or houses as they're known here.

All about privacy and personalisation, Naladhu's key messaging centers around making each and every guest feel at home, and from the moment your speedboat transfer from Male Airport arrives at this island, that's exactly how you're made to feel, at home.

No check-in desk faffing happens at Naladhu, as each guest is escorted directly from the boat by foot – not a car in sight – to their house, where the hassle-free admin takes place alongside welcoming refreshments of freshly baked cookies, juice and cooled towels. From here and for the entirety of a stay, all guests receive a 24-hour dedicated butler, with a dedicated employee to ensure familiarisation.

All houses feature private pools, and come with the option of being ocean-facing or on a private beachfront, or if you want the best of both worlds, you can opt for the two-bedroom residence that offers a slice of each. The décor in each of the houses is homely and elegant – making you feel like you've just arrived at a timeless beach house of dreams – the place you never want to leave, and where memories to last a lifetime are made.

Inside your very own secluded sanctuary, you'll find everything you need – if you didn't want to leave your house for duration of the stay, you'd be able to do so more than comfortably. The spa even comes to your home if you'd like to enjoy a treatment in-villa.

Pools within the houses are large enough for length swimming, but if a dip in the ocean sounds better, each house comes with its own private beach hut and set of beach loungers reserved just for you a few minutes' walk from home.

What's great about Naladhu is that it's part of a lagoon of three

*Best for couples and privacy*



sister resorts – Naladhu being the smallest and most exclusive. The other two resorts, which are accessible by shuttle boats whenever you need them, are Anantara Veli and Anantara Dhigu.

Guests at Naladhu are able to explore all three islands and their F&B offerings, while guests of Veli and Dighu are only able to visit Naladhu upon request or for a special dining experience.

When it comes to dining at Naladhu, experiences are intimate and tailored to all tastes and dietary requirements.

"It's all about personalisation and ensuring that a guest's requirements are always met. Guests are able to request specific ingredients that they'd like to enjoy, and if they are staying for a long time we can even get the special produce for them during their stay upon request," said Cluster Executive Chef Christof Egli.

Unlike most resorts, breakfast served in-house is included in the price and is available at any time you'd like it.

For when you may want to venture out, intimacy can still be maintained at a picnic set up by the Naladhu team on a nearby deserted island, or dinner by candlelight on a sandbank or coconut grove.

On-island, because most

dining is done within the residence, privately or on the sister islands, Naladhu features just one restaurant and lounge, known as The Living Room. It's a relaxing, welcoming space where guests can wander in for a bite at any time of day and enjoy a varied menu for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Over on Veli and Dighu, expect to find modern Japanese cuisine at Origami, signature Thai at Baan Huraa, international menus and Maldivian highlights at Fushi Café, grilled meat & seafood delights at Sea.Fire.Salt., and authentic Italian dining at Terrazzo. There are also a couple of bars that are situated perfectly for sundowners, or after-dinner drinks.

Whatever your culinary preferences may be, there's certainly something for everyone at Naladhu.

Serving all guests with ultimate privacy and exclusivity, this island offers the epitome of barefoot luxury.

### **VISIT:**

To book your stay, e-mail [stay@naladhu.com](mailto:stay@naladhu.com) or visit [anantara.com/en/naladhu-maldives](http://anantara.com/en/naladhu-maldives) for more information.





*Best for honeymooners*



**WHERE?** Anantara Veli  
Maldives Resort

**WHAT'S IT LIKE?** Fringed by a crystal clear turquoise lagoon, Anantara Veli located in the South Male Atoll is a postcard-perfect, adults-only resort just a 30-minute speedboat ride from Male International Airport. Closely neighboured by Anantara Dighu (a family-friendly island), and Naladhu (the lagoon's most exclusive resort), Anantara Veli makes up the third sister property located within the lagoon. While each of the islands are accessible via pontoon boats that ferry guests from A to B on demand, some guests choose to book their stay across all of the islands. Three holidays in one? Sign us up!

Home to 67 luxury over-water and ocean bungalows, there isn't a bad villa option at Veli. All villas boast warming, tropical interiors, privacy and direct access to the ocean, while some feature private

swimming pools. The rooms here don't disappoint, and make it very easy to enjoy a getaway with heaps of peace and relaxation.

Be prepared to spend a lot of time in the water at Veli, as dips into the ocean below your villa are pretty hard to deny. There are also plenty of unique experiences to be had here. Head out on a dolphin-spotting excursion, fishing trip or go snorkeling with wild dolphins, manta rays, whale sharks, turtles, eagle rays and more – the experience is breathtaking, so don't forget your GoPro.

Be sure to pick up your snorkeling kit from the Dive Center – you never know what you'll see at the beaches surrounding the resort – there's always something to look at swimming along in the waters.

Now you've worked up an appetite, it's time for food. On-island at Veli and Dighu, you'll find Fushi Café, which serves a full breakfast buffet, complete

“  
**One of the main ingredients in Maldivian cuisine, the coconut is used in a variety of forms, from grated and shaved, to liquid form such as coconut milk, and as oil in dishes that are deep-fried.**  
”

with live cooking stations, plus Aqua and Dhoni poolside restaurants and bars for lunch and snacks throughout the day – not forgetting sundowners and after-dinner drinks.

One of Dighu's stand-out restaurants is Sea.Fire.Salt, a grilled restaurant that specialises in meat and seafood. Above, you'll find a taste of Italy at Terrazzo.

As a Thai brand, Anantara prides itself on offering the best Thai food available in the atoll, and that it does. Head to Bann Huraa for a dining experience that immerses you in Thai hospitality and charm. Also on the Asian-style list is Origami, the Japanese restaurant on Veli that serves Teppanyaki, sushi and sashimi.

For guests wanting to enjoy local flavours, there is a Maldivian-themed 'Spice Spoons' cooking class available upon request, where participants can sample and discover a range of local ingredients.





As a tropical nation made up of 26 atolls, comprising 1,200 tiny islands in the Indian Ocean, the Maldives is plentiful with fish and seafood options.

“We have a daily delivery of fresh reef fish – mainly white snapper, grouper and my favourite, the red snapper. Our yellow fin tuna is excellent as well,” explained Cluster Executive Chef Christof Egli, who maintains high culinary standards at Veli.

“On Dighu, we also have a chef’s garden that’s very unique as it is not easy to grow fresh produce in the Maldives. We grow coconuts, bananas, lemon grass, basil and some more herbs, which use in Baan Hurrah and Terrazzo restaurants for guests to enjoy,” he added.

After all that eating, relax a little more at the Anantara Spa or discover blissful Ayurvedic treatments at Balance Wellness by Anantara – with the sound of calming waves surrounding you, you’re sure to leave this vacation floating on air.

#### **VISIT:**

To book your stay, e-mail [velimaldives@anantara.com](mailto:velimaldives@anantara.com), or visit [anantara.com/en/velimaldives](http://anantara.com/en/velimaldives) for more information.



#### **KNOW YOUR COCONUTS**

### *Meet the Coconut Guru at Anantara Veli, Xavier*

#### **Tell us about your role as the island’s Coconut Guru – what does your job entail?**

My role involves going around the island every day with my coconut trolley and offering fresh and tender coconuts to our guests. The guests who spend a lot of time on the beach during sunny days, particularly enjoy the coconuts as a refreshment.

#### **What types of coconuts can be found in the Maldives?**

Cocos Nucifera Palms are most common in Maldives. They are unbranched, monoecious trees with smooth, columnar, light grey-brown trunks, usually 9-18m height and sometimes taller (up to 30m).

#### **Why are coconuts so good for consumption?**

Coconuts are rich in fiber, and may offer a number of benefits, including improved heart health, weight loss, and digestion. Overall, unsweetened coconut meat makes for a great addition to a balanced diet.

Fresh coconut is completely natural. It’s good to have it in the morning and also

during sunny days to keep your body cool and refreshed. Most coconuts are a bit sweet and some of them are bit salty.

#### **Which coconut is the rarest in Maldives?**

In Maldives most of the islands have green coloured coconuts and only in some areas there are yellow coloured coconuts. Yellow coconut water is less sweet to drink.

You’ll find coconut trees on most islands in Maldives, as coconuts are self-planting and travel to the islands in the ocean before being washed ashore.

#### **What traditional Maldivian dishes can be made using coconuts?**

Coconuts, called ‘kurumba’ in Dhivehi, are grown on every island in the Maldives and are such a vital part of the culture and cuisine that the coconut palm has been declared the country’s national tree. One of the main ingredients in Maldivian cuisine, the coconut is used in a variety of forms, from grated and shaved to a liquid form such as coconut milk, and as oil in dishes that are deep-fried.





Best for families and active travellers

**WHERE?** Niyama Private Islands Maldives

**WHAT'S IT LIKE?** After a 40-minute seaplane journey from Male International Airport, your stylish arrival to Niyama Private Islands, complete with cooled lemongrass towels, an iced beverage and a warm welcome from Niyama's friendly team, couldn't be more dreamlike.

Promptly and smoothly transported from seaplane to villa on a buggy, it's immediately obvious that luxury is a key ingredient at this resort – so is attention to detail, with all guests' names carved into wooden plaques on each of the villas, plus personalised name tags on every bicycle.

There are 134 villas at Niyama, each one as luxurious as the next. The 'basic room' category definitely doesn't apply here. Nestled amidst jungle-like settings of the beachfront, the villas are all about privacy, acting as perfect little hideaways for visitors. It's the type of place you could easily spend your day without seeing another guest, with each villa equipped with everything you need – from your own private beach and swimming pool, to snacks and refreshments, including complimentary homemade ice cream in the freezer and a popcorn machine with salted kernels for popping when you fancy a bite.

Niyama also has over water villas with their own terrace-top plunge pools.

If you are travelling as a family or in a larger group, there are bigger villas available. The ultimate option, however, is the 'Crescent' – a playground of five ultra-chic villas, all with private

pools, for up to 14 adults and eight children. To top it off, the accommodation comes with a private chef, two butlers and a host of complimentary activities including a dhoni sunset cruise and movies on the beach under the stars.

When it comes to F&B at Niyama, resort Executive Chef, Christophe Wehrung, commented: "We strive to give our guests an authentic, high-quality experience, and sourcing locally helps us to do that. From local Maldivian waters, we're able to source fish species such as red grouper, Jack fish, yellow fin tuna, and marlin, which are all available on our menus at Niyama."

Whether it be freshly caught fish or seafood, dinner under the sea, succulent grills, Asian cuisine in a treehouse, Teppanyaki, or private dinners on the beach, dining options are plentiful here and there's something for everyone.

What really stands out at Niyama is how every restaurant feels like a standalone outlet – not one of the eateries feels like a standard hotel restaurant.

Set in the treetops, literally, is Nest. This Asian avant-garde restaurant offers the most magical of settings, and the food is equally as impressive. On the menu, you'll find specialities from China, Thailand and Indonesia, plus, there's also a Teppanyaki table located on the lower level.

Next on the gourmet journey is

fine dining, seafood-led restaurant Edge. Accessible only by boat, Edge is set half a kilometer out in the ocean away from the resort, on its own small terrace. Sundowners here are not to be missed, before delighting in an al fresco degustation menu under the night's sky. Expect to enjoy premium dishes featuring Japanese wagyu beef, lobster and salmon gravlax.

Just when you think things have reached a pinnacle, you discover underwater restaurant Subsix just below Edge. It's like being inside an aquarium, only you're not – the fish swim in open waters around you, while you dine safely confined within the breathtaking restaurant. Without even mentioning the food, just a visit to this outlet is alone an experience not to be missed. Serving Champagne breakfasts, subaquatic lunches and wine pairing dinners, Subsix is where to celebrate a special occasion (anyone thinking of proposing?) – there's even nighttime glow parties that take place down there.

Next, there's Tribal, a signature restaurant at Niyama serving African and South American cuisine. Like all restaurants on the island, Tribal too is a fully-immersive experience. We're talking blazing fire torches and jungle-like settings all around the open-air venue, plus an Afro-Latin menu that reflects tribal culinary traditions. A trip to Tribal will certainly allow you to try something new, from warm ostrich boboti – a South African dish consisting of spiced minced meat baked with an egg-based topping, and luwombo guinea fowl – luwombo is a method of cooking from Uganda, where chicken beef, ground nuts, or dry fish is







tyed up in a banana leaf and steamed over green bananas. If you're ready to be adventurous, other ingredients on the menu include impala, veal tongue, antelope and more. Tribal also offers an exciting cooking class, where you can experience cooking these ingredients firsthand.

For breakfast, lunch or dinner, you can take a stroll to Blu or Epicure, where you'll find a great range of cuisines served at live cooking stations. There's also The Deli, for grab-and-go style nibbles throughout the day.

When you're ready to explore, Niyama is packed full of activities to keep you busy. The Maldives has a reputation for lacking in activities, but that's not true.

The resort consists of two islands, joined by a bridge. 'Chill' island is where the Drift Spa resides, and 'Play' island houses the water sports shack, and the island's best surfing spot. Niyama is one of the Maldives' most sought-after surfing destinations, with some of the world's best surfers visiting annually to take part in competitions.

Head out on a dolphin excursion, fishing trip, or go snorkeling with whale sharks. On-island, there's also plenty of water activities including kayaks, jet skis, jet packs and diving equipment to enjoy.

To relax, catch a breath at early morning yoga, then head to the spa in the afternoon, where you'll find a superb selection of treatments, including massages, holistic treatments and whole spa packages with hair and nail services.

Whatever you decide to fill your time at Niyama with, one thing is for certain – barefooted bliss awaits.

### **VISIT:**

To book your stay, e-mail [reservations@niyama.com](mailto:reservations@niyama.com), or visit [niyama.com](http://niyama.com) for more information.

## **TRY AT HOME**

# *A Taste of Maldives*



## **MALDIVIAN TUNA CURRY**

160g yellow fin tuna  
5g onions  
3g garlic  
3g ginger  
5g fish curry powder  
1g curry leaves  
1g cumin powder  
100ml coconut milk  
50ml fish stock  
1 lime  
Salt, to taste  
Pepper, to taste  
Corn oil

- 1** Heat the corn oil in a pan.
- 2** Sauté the diced garlic, onion and ginger with the curry powder, cumin and tuna.
- 3** Add some of the fish stock and coconut milk and simmer gently with the curry leaves.
- 4** Cook it well and add the rest of the coconut milk and fish stock, then allow to boil for a few minutes.
- 5** Add the seasoning and lime juice to taste
- 6** Serve with steamed rice.



# COMPETITIONS

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to gourmet goodies, up for grabs.



## WIN!

**A TABLE OF 5 FOR PAELLA SATURDAYS AT BEBEMOS! WORTH DHS500**

Steering clear from Spanish clichés of bullfighting, flamenco and castanets, Le Méridien Dubai Hotel and Conference Centre is bringing Spain's most

famous culinary tradition of Tapas to Dubai with BebeBemos.

Taking references from Spain's culinary vibrancy and relaxed way of life, BebeBemos marries robust flavours of the region with its extraordinary artistic heritage. The dining philosophy is a nod to the Barcelonian way of life and will stay true to the las Tapas culture of socializing, sharing food amid friendly banter and sangrias.

Paella Saturdays take place every Saturday from 1pm to 4pm with live Spanish guitarist for entertainment.



## WIN!

**A BRUNCH AT FARM-TO-TABLE BRUNCH FOR 4 PEOPLE ON SOFT BEVERAGE PACKAGE! WORTH DHS1,300**

Gather your family and friends to discover exquisite tastes and flavours at a unique brunch feast in Mazina, Address Dubai Marina.

The newly launched Farm-To-Table Brunch features an extensive buffet of locally grown and seasonally inspired dishes. Embark on an unforgettable culinary journey and discover eight live cooking stations with a high-quality meat selection, pasta station, sushi counter and hearty salad corner. Don't forget to leave some space to choose from a dedicated dessert station, including seasonal tarts, old fashioned pies and freshly baked pancakes or waffles. The little ones can enjoy their own kids buffet including homemade and healthy wraps/sandwiches, baked fish, sweet potato fries, fruit skewers & much more. Afterwards they can head to the play area to make some new friends. Gluten free and vegan options are also available for those with dietary requirements. Every Friday from 12:30pm to 3:30pm. For more information or reservations, please call 048883444 or email [dine@emaar.com](mailto:dine@emaar.com)



## WIN!

**DINNER FOR 2 AT SMOKED MEAT KITCHEN! WORTH DHS650**

SMK Meat Platter is a selection of SMK's best-selling smoked meat that includes smoked briskets, ribs, sausages and wings good 2-3 pax. SMK sides

platter has all the SMK famous side dishes like SMK seasoned chips, SMK slaw, SMK texan chili and SMK Mac & cheese.



## WIN!

**A MEAL FOR 4 AT MOHALLA RESTAURANT, DUBAI DESIGN DISTRICT! WORTH DHS500**

Mohalla, which translates to "my neighborhood" or "my community" is an ode to the 'Community Neighborhoods' of India which transports guests through the hustle and bustle streets of Indian cities and picturesque towns.

Highlights of the new menu includes the Bhejitable Chop (Beetroot Cutlet); a classic Bengali street food made with Beetroot

cutlet and ghugni (dry white peas curry) served with raw papaya salad, Sour Mango Wings; deep fried juicy chicken wings tossed in tangy, sweet, spicy raw mango relish. Curry lovers can also enjoy the signature Delhi 6 Butter Chicken; World famous Punjabi tandoori chicken cooked in tomato and butter gravy. Cucumber Curry; Homestyle cucumber curry cooked with fresh coconut and Mangalore masala is a perfect veg option. The homegrown restaurant located in the urban and chic location, Dubai Design District combines colourful and contemporary style to its already lush interiors while keeping the electric and vibrant Indian culture and rhythmic music that soothes the soul. The service is casual and enjoyed either on your table or on one of the lively street food counters.



## WIN!

**A TASTE OF HAKKASAN FOR 2! WORTH DHS596**

Taste of Hakkasan offers a special set menu of the award-winning restaurant's most popular signature dishes, all served with style and class. The culinary journey begins with

hot and sour soup with chicken, followed by Peking duck pancakes, selected dim sum and delicious mains like stir fry black pepper rib eye beef and crispy silver cod with XO sauce. Finally, the decadent meal ends with a superb chef's selection of exquisite desserts. Hakkasan offers guests a world-class culinary experience, using the finest ingredients and expert traditional techniques to create timeless yet innovative signature dishes.



To be in with a chance of winning these prizes, visit our competitions page on [www.bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://www.bbcgoodfoodme.com), or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to directly to the website.

\*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



# Cream of Europe

Rise to the top  
with French Cream

In pastry and other branches of the culinary arts, there is no denying that cream is an essential ingredient. As a cooking element, it adds an incredible depth of flavor.

European dairy cream, especially French cream, enhances the flavor of all preparations.

It has an unparalleled melt in the mouth, and its softness on the palate is uniquely smoothing and comforting.

No matter the level of the cooking skills, anyone can incorporate French cream to a range of dishes, from savoury to sweet.



## Dark Chocolate mousse & black sesame praline with iced yoghurt & caramel

By Chef Liz Stevenson

*Pastry Chef Liz Stevenson arrived in Dubai in 2008 and worked for numerous prestigious venues in the city such as Jumeirah, Rüya and Qbara. She developed a dynamic plate composed of a creamy dark chocolate mousse coated in crushed black sesame praline, with white chocolate and yoghurt sorbet, and a salted nut caramel.*



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