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My recipe book



Categories of recipes

1- Starters

2- Sea food

3- Meat

4- Miscellaneous

5- Desserts

6- Baking

7- Drinks and cocktails

8- Recipes for kids

9- Basic recipes

10- Tips and tricks

11- World recipes

Starters

Small cakes

Cashew-nut and Parmesan biscuits :

Savoury biscuits with ground cashew nuts and grated Parmesan.

Chester : Shortbread cookies with grated Comté cheese.

-- Back to start of book --

Sea food

Fish

Baked salmon fillet : Baked salmon fillet with lemon and herbs, served with potatoes.

Baked sea bass fillet with lemon and tarragon : Sea bass fillet baked with lemon and tarragon.

-- Back to start of book --

Meat

Poultry

African style chicken : Smoked chicken with beans and tomato-coconut sauce.

Chicken "cantina" : Spicy chicken with onions and tomatoes.

-- Back to start of book --

Miscellaneous

Meat

Artichokes with beef : Sautéed artichokes, cooked beef and potatoes.

Chicken and mushroom brik rolls : Brik (or filo) rolls with onions, mushrooms and diced.

-- Back to start of book --

Desserts

Tarts

Alsatian apple tart : Sweet pastry case, apple slices and vanilla egg custard.

Apple and almond cream tart : Shortbread base, almond cream and apple slices.

-- Back to start of book --

Baking

Cakes

Kugelhof for Nanou : Traditionnal Alsatian cake.

Panettone : Italian brioche-style sweet loaf with dried and candied fruit.

-- Back to start of book --

Drinks and cocktails

Fruits

Mulled apple juice : Apple juice infused with spices, vanilla, tonka and cardamom.

Miscellaneous

Blackcurrant liqueur : To make your own Kir.

-- Back to start of book --

Recipes for kids

Cakes

Four quarters : The world simplest cake.

Four quarters (adding fruit) : A better version of four quarters (quatre-quarts).

-- Back to start of book --

Basic recipes

Cakes

Almond macaroon cake : Moist almond-meringue cake.

Biscuit de Savoie sponge cake : Light, fat-free cake with eggs.

-- Back to start of book --

Tips and tricks

Tarts

How to keep a tart pastry case crisp : A thin layer of white chocolate in the bottom of a tart.

How to...

How to cook caramelized puff pastry well :

Baking caramelized puff pastry to just the right thickness to use as "feuilletage".

-- Back to start of book --

World recipes

Tarts

Key Lime Pie for Jeremy : Lime tart with shortcrust case and whipped cream (Chantilly).

Cakes

Brownies : Traditional American chocolate cake with pecan nuts.

-- Back to start of book --

Cashew-nut and Parmesan biscuits



Overview:

For an ideal aperitif snack, why not try these delicious savoury biscuits made with cashew nuts and Parmesan?

For 30 pieces, you will need:

- 1 80 g cashew nuts
- 2 125 g flour
- 3 125 g butter
- 4 1 egg
- 5 80 g Parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano)
- 6 ½ teaspoon salt
- 7 20 g beaten egg (optional)
- 8 30 g Parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano) (optional)

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
25 min.	1 hour	30 min.	1 hour 55 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	2 394 Kcal or 10 023 Kj	518 Kcal or 2 169 Kj
Proteins	81 gr	18 gr
Carbohydrates	119 gr	26 gr
Fats	177 gr	38 gr

Step by step recipe

Put 80 g cashew nuts into a blender goblet.



Blend to a fairly fine powder.



Tip this into a mixer bowl and add 125 g flour, 125 g butter, 1 egg, the grated 80 g Parmesan (Parmigiano Reggiano) and ½ teaspoon salt.



Knead together until the dough is evenly mixed.



Transfer the dough onto a sheet of baking paper and shape into a flattened square or rectangle.



Lay a second sheet of baking paper on top and roll out with a rolling pin. Try to keep the rectangular shape as far as possible to minimise offcuts (stage 8).

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.



Preheat the oven to 360°F (180°C)

If necessary, finish rolling out the dough (still with the paper on), then remove the top paper.



Cut out small biscuits with a cutter in your preferred shape. Here they are simple rectangles.



Transfer the biscuits as you cut them onto the baking sheet you lined with paper in stage 7.



If possible, glaze the tops, using a brush.



Also, if you can, scatter a little extra grated Parmesan over the biscuits.



Bake for 30 minutes.



Leave to cool on a wire rack.



Remarks

If you can, toast the cashew nuts before blending them in stage 1; your biscuits will taste much better.

My personal notes

Chester



Overview:

Chester biscuits are shortbread biscuits made with Cheshire cheese, and are known as "Cheshire cheese cookies". Here's a version with Comté cheese.

For 50 pieces, you will need:

- 1 250 g flour
- 2 250 g butter
- 3 4 g salt
- 4 5 g paprika
- 5 250 g Comté cheese

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
35 min.	1 hour	20 min.	1 hour 55 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	3 763 Kcal or 15 755 Kj	496 Kcal or 2 077 Kj
Proteins	100 gr	13 gr
Carbohydrates	192 gr	25 gr
Fats	288 gr	38 gr

Step by step recipe

Pour 250 g flour, 250 g butter, 4 g salt and 5 g paprika into the bowl of a mixer.



Grate over 250 g Comté cheese



Knead with a hook at minimum speed...



... until you obtain a smooth paste.



Pour the dough onto your work surface and shape into a ball.

Cut the ball into 2 equal parts.



Roll each ball into a cylinder up to 3 cm (1.2 inches) in diameter.



Place each cylinder on a piece of cling film and roll it up.

Place the wrapped cylinders in the fridge for at least 1 hour.



After this time, preheat your oven to 180°C (360°F), then remove the film from the hardened pasta cylinders.



Cut into slices no thicker than 1 cm (0.4 inches).



Place the slices as you go on a sheet of baking paper on a baking sheet.

Be careful not to pack them too tightly, as they will spread out a little when cooked.



Bake for 15-20 minutes at 180°C (360°F).



Let cool on a wire rack.

Enjoy cold or warm, for example as an aperitif cookie.



Remarks

Comté cheese can be replaced, totally or partially, by another hard cheese such as Beaufort, Cantal or Salers. Paprika is there to add a little pep to the cookies, but you can replace it with another spice of your choice, or a little Espelette pepper.

My personal notes

Baked salmon fillet



Overview:

This is a quick recipe for salmon fillet, surrounded by sliced potatoes and baked with lemon juice, olive oil and herbs.

For 4 people, you will need:

- 1 300 g salmon fillet
- 2 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 ½ lemon
- 4 400 g cooked potatoes
- 5 30 g spring onion (scallion)
- 6 Herbs of your choice

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
15 min.	20 min.	35 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 428 Kcal or 5 979 Kj	167 Kcal or 699 Kj
Proteins	69 gr	8 gr
Carbohydrates	85 gr	10 gr
Fats	90 gr	11 gr

Step by step recipe

Preheat the oven to 360°F (180°C).

Prepare the salmon fillet: remove the skin and any remaining bones.

Pour 4 tablespoons olive oil into an oven-proof dish. Turn the salmon in the oil twice to coat it with oil.



Squeeze the juice of ½ lemon over the fish.

Salt and pepper lightly.



Slice 400 g cooked potatoes and arrange around the salmon.

Scatter the chopped 30 g spring onion (scallion) and Herbs of your choice evenly over the top.

If necessary, trickle a little more olive oil over the potatoes.



Bake for about 20 minutes.

Serve immediately.



Remarks

Do be careful not to overcook the salmon, otherwise it will dry out. To help, see this advice about the internal temperature of the fillet.

My personal notes

Baked sea bass fillet with lemon and tarragon



Overview:

This really simple recipe allows the natural nobility of sea bass to shine through: fillets baked until just done, complemented with lemon and tarragon.

For 4 people, you will need:

- 1 4 seas bass fillet
- 2 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 20 g butter
- 5 Tarragon
- 6 Salt
- 7 Pepper

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
15 min.	20 min.	35 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	563 Kcal or 2 357 Kj	117 Kcal or 490 Kj
Proteins	76 gr	16 gr
Carbohydrates	1 gr	< 1 gr
Fats	77 gr	16 gr

Step by step recipe

Ask your fishmonger to prepare the 4 seas bass fillet.

Rinse and dry the fillets, then remove any remaining bones.

salt and pepper the flesh side.



In a bowl, mix 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 3 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper with a fork.



Preheat the oven to 360°F (180°C).

Lay the sea bass fillets in a buttered oven-proof dish.

Brush the fillets generously with the oil and lemon mixture.



Put a few tarragon leaves on each fillet...



...then turn them over.

Brush the skin with the oil and lemon mixture.



Bake for about 20 minutes.

If you are unsure about judging when the fish is cooked (which is not obvious), stick an electronic thermometer into the thickest part of a fillet and cook just until the temperature reaches 140°F (60°C). It should then be done to perfection.



Take the dish out of the oven and, if you prefer, remove the skin at this point.



Serve immediately with your choice of accompaniment. Here it is a cauliflower tabouleh.



Remarks

Of course, this recipe works with other, cheaper kinds of fish, such as whiting. You can use lime juice instead of lemon for an amazing flavour that goes really well.

My personal notes

African style chicken



Overview:

This is a sort of smoked chicken, cooked in a tomato-coconut sauce, and served with kidney beans and plain rice. It's quite a simple recipe, with ready-made ingredients, but which needs a long cooking time on low heat (one hour).

For 6 people, you will need:

- 1 1 smoked chicken
- 2 1 onion
- 3 4 tablespoons palm oil
- 4 150 ml unsweetened coconut milk
- 5 500 g tinned red kidney beans
- 6 125 g button or field mushrooms (optional)
- 7 125 g small pieces of bacon
- 8 250 ml tomato coulis
- 9 Fine (or table) salt
- 10 Pepper
- 11 1 tablespoon palm oil
- 12 2 tablespoons palm oil

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
30 min.	1 hour 40 min.	2 hours 4 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	6 427 Kcal or 26 909 Kj	210 Kcal or 879 Kj
Proteins	495 gr	16 gr
Carbohydrates	323 gr	11 gr
Fats	351 gr	11 gr

Step by step recipe

Skin 1 smoked chicken, keeping only flesh (discard skin and bones), then cut out into small pieces.



In large pan, heat 4 tablespoons palm oil (or olive oil), then add chopped 1 onion, salt and pepper.

Cook for a few minutes without browning too much.



Add chicken pieces.



Stir well, and cook a few minutes while stirring so it doesn't catch on the bottom.



Pour in half of 250 ml tomato coulis.



Stir well.



Pour in 150 ml unsweetened coconut milk, stir well.



Cover and leave to cook on low heat for at least an hour.



Meanwhile heat 1 tablespoon palm oil in a frying pan, then add 125 g small pieces of bacon and cook for a few minutes until they are lightly fried.

Set aside.



In another pan, heat 2 tablespoons palm oil, then add drained and rinsed 500 g tinned red kidney beans.

Cook one or two minutes while stirring so that that they do not burn on bottom.



Add remaining tomato coulis, then fried bacon, and 125 g button or field mushrooms if desired.



Stir well and leave to cook covered on low heat until chicken has its full cooking time.

Meanwhile cook rice.



To serve, put rice onto a plate, add beans on top, then chicken.



Remarks

You can easily replace palm oil with olive oil, for a tastier dish tomato coulis by tomato sauce for pizzas. It's a meal which can easily be re-heated or frozen. So do not hesitate to make a good deal of it, even if it's for the first time.

My personal notes

Chicken "cantina"



Overview:

Chicken cantina is a simple recipe for spicy chicken with onions and tomatoes, served with rice, red beans or both.

For 4 people, you will need:

- 1 700 g chicken breast
- 2 1 onion
- 3 4 tablespoons oil
- 4 2 tablespoons chilli spices
- 5 800 g peeled and chopped tomatoes
- 6 1 bayleaf
- 7 1 garlic clove
- 8 Salt
- 9 Pepper

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
10 min.	30 min.	40 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 766 Kcal or 7 394 Kj	102 Kcal or 427 Kj
Proteins	150 gr	9 gr
Carbohydrates	46 gr	3 gr
Fats	109 gr	6 gr

Step by step recipe

Cut 700 g chicken breast into medium-sized pieces.

Set aside.



Prepare and chop 1 onion.

Set aside.



In a large frying pan over high heat, pour in 4 tablespoons oil and when hot add the chicken and 2 tablespoons chilli spices.



Brown, stirring occasionally, then add the onion, season with salt and pepper, and mix well.

Cook together for 1 or 2 minutes.



Add 800 g peeled and chopped tomatoes, 1 bayleaf and 1 garlic clove, salt and pepper again, and stir.

Lower the heat and cook gently, reducing slightly, for 15 to 20 minutes.



Check the seasoning, then remove and discard the garlic and bay leaf.

Serve with rice, kidney beans or vegetables of your choice.



Remarks

You can replace the bay leaf with a bouquet garni, for a more delicate taste. Feel free to adapt the quantity of spices to your taste.

My personal notes

Artichokes with beef



Overview:

This dish combines artichokes, sautéed with shallot in olive oil, with cooked beef and potatoes (simply heated through).

For 6 people, you will need:

- 1 200 g cooked potatoes
- 2 150 g cooked meat
- 3 1 shallot
- 4 700 g purple globe artichokes
- 5 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 Parsley

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
35 min.	15 min.	50 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 245 Kcal or 5 213 Kj	111 Kcal or 465 Kj
Proteins	44 gr	4 gr
Carbohydrates	98 gr	9 gr
Fats	75 gr	7 gr

Step by step recipe

Cut 200 g cooked potatoes and 150 g cooked meat into chunks.

Chop 1 shallot.



Prepare 700 g purple globe artichokes and cut into 4 lengthways.



Pour 3 tablespoons olive oil into a large frying pan on medium heat. When hot, add the artichokes, salt and pepper and mix well.

Turn down the heat, cover and leave to cook until the artichokes are lightly browned, stirring from time to time.



When the artichokes are cooked (tender), leave off the lid and add the shallots (add another 2 tablespoons of olive oil if necessary).

Salt lightly and cook for 1 minute without colouring, while stirring.



Then add the meat...



...and potatoes. Cook for a few minutes longer, just enough to reheat the meat and potatoes. Check the seasoning and scatter some chopped parsley over the top.



Serve on hot plates, with a trickle of olive oil poured over, if you wish.



Remarks

If you don't have purple artichokes, you can use chunks of normal artichoke hearts.

My personal notes

Chicken and mushroom brik rolls



Overview:

Roll of brik (or filo) pastry filled with chopped mushrooms, diced chicken and sautéed onions.

For 8 s, you will need:

- 1 400 g mushrooms
- 2 1 shallot
- 3 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 Parsley
- 5 ½ lemon
- 6 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 7 2 onions
- 8 300 g chicken
- 9 8 sheets of brick pastry
- 10 100 ml oil
- 11 Salt
- 12 Pepper

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
35 min.	20 min.	55 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	2 631 Kcal or 11 015 Kj	201 Kcal or 842 Kj
Proteins	84 gr	6 gr
Carbohydrates	97 gr	7 gr
Fats	212 gr	16 gr

Step by step recipe

Prepare 400 g mushrooms then slice them.



Chop 1 shallot and 2 onions, but keep them separate.



Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. When hot, add the shallot, salt and pepper.

Cook for 1 minute without colouring.



Add the mushrooms and cook until soft.

If they give off a lot of liquid, either drain this off or wait until it has boiled off. The cooked mushrooms should be fairly dry.



Tip into a large bowl. Add the juice of ½ lemon and some chopped parsley. Mix well and set aside.



Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in the same frying pan, still on medium heat. When hot, add the chopped onions, salt and pepper. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes without colouring.



Dice 300 g chicken fairly small.



Mix the chicken with the mushrooms and onions.

Make the rolls by placing a tablespoonful of filling near the edge of a brik sheet.



Then fold it up into a neat rectangular parcel.



Heat 1/2 cm (1/4 inch) oil in the frying pan and fry the brik rolls...



...on both sides.



Serve immediately.



Remarks

Use spring onions if possible, rather than normal onions (shown in the photos).

My personal notes

Alsatian apple tart



Overview:

This tart from France's Alsace region has a sweet pastry (or sweetcrust) case, filled with raw apple slices and a light vanilla egg-custard mixture, then baked.

For 1 Alsatian apple tart, you will need:

- 1 250 g sweet pastry
- 2 300 g paris flan filling
- 3 500 g apple

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
30 min.	25 min.	55 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	2 145 Kcal or 8 981 Kj	204 Kcal or 854 Kj
Proteins	304 gr	29 gr
Carbohydrates	2 242 gr	213 gr
Fats	1 031 gr	98 gr

Step by step recipe

Roll out 250 g sweet pastry.

Line a tart ring 8 inches (22 cm) in diameter.

Refrigerate until needed.



Prepare 300 g paris flan filling, leave to rest in the fridge.

Preheat the oven to 390°F (200°C).



Peel 2 onionss, cut into quarters, then again into eighths (more or less slices).



Take the pastry case out of the fridge and trim off any surplus pastry to neaten around the edge.

Impottant: check that there are no holes in the pastry, or the filling will run out onto the baking sheet during cooking.



Arrange the apple slices in the case...



...and pour the filling around them.

Put in the oven immediately.



If you have any left over pastry, apple and filling, use these up by making mini tarts.



Bake for about 35 minutes, then leave to cool in a wire rack. Serve warm or cold.



Remarks

For a richer version, reduce the quantity of milk and increase the cream.

My personal notes

Apple and almond cream tart



Overview:

For this apple tart recipe, we're going to use shortcrust pastry and almond cream, combined with slightly tart apple slices, for a very gourmet result.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 300 g sweetcrust pastry (pâte sablée)
- 2 200 g almond cream
- 3 1 kg apple
- 4 30 g apricot glaze (optional)

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
35 min.	40 min.	1 hour 15 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	19 129 Kcal or 80 089 Kj	1 275 Kcal or 5 338 Kj
Proteins	410 gr	27 gr
Carbohydrates	2 292 gr	153 gr
Fats	1 874 gr	125 gr

Step by step recipe

Place a 24 cm (9.5-inch) tart circle on a sheet of baking paper on a baking sheet.

Spread with 300 g sweetcrust pastry (pâte sablée) then fill the circle.



Spread 200 g almond cream evenly over the base.



Preheat oven to 180°C (360°F).

Peel 1 kg apple, cut in 2, remove core, and slice each apple half.



Spread the apple slices tightly over the bottom of the tart, so that there are plenty of apples.



Bake at 180°C (360°F), low in the oven, for 30 to 40 minutes.



If possible, brush the tart with apricots as soon as you remove it from the oven.

Let cool before serving.



Remarks

As always with cooking apples, choose a slightly tart variety if possible, such as Reine des Reinettes, RubINETTE or ReINETTE du Canada.

My personal notes

Kugelhof for Nanou



Overview:

This recipe is emblematic of Alsatian baking, but a more personal version (and a bit richer).

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 500 g flour
- 2 20 g yeast
- 3 4 eggs
- 4 310 g butter
- 5 100 g whole almonds
- 6 150 g raisins
- 7 100 ml milk
- 8 9 g fine (or table) salt
- 9 100 g caster sugar

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
35 min.	2 hours	40 min.	3 hours 15 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	6 017 Kcal or 25 192 Kj	404 Kcal or 1 691 Kj
Proteins	109 gr	7 gr
Carbohydrates	611 gr	41 gr
Fats	348 gr	23 gr

Step by step recipe

In the bowl of the mixer pour: 100 ml milk, 100 g caster sugar and 9 g fine (or table) salt.



Add 500 g flour, then 20 g yeast.



Start to knead 1 minute, then add 4 eggs.



Continue kneading until you get an elastic dough (with the mixer on speed 2 for about 10 minutes). Note: For the best way to knead, see: A few tips for effective kneading at home.



Meanwhile, cut 310 g butter into small pieces.



Quickly add small pieces of butter, and knead until it is completely mixed (no, really, I do not have shares in Kenwood...).



Then add the 150 g raisins, knead 1 more minute to mix thoroughly.



Melt 10 g butter, and butter the mould generously with a brush. Be sure to work thoroughly into the hollows at the bottom.



Place an almond in each hollow of the mould, putting the point towards the outside of the mould, it's prettier.



Spread dough evenly in mould.



Cover with a plastic sheet and leave in a warm place to rise, until the dough doubles in volume (between two and three hours).

Then bake in the oven at 210°C or 410°F for approximately 40 minutes.



Check cooking.

Do not turn out too hot, wait approximately 15 minutes before turning out onto a rack, and then dust with icing sugar.



Remarks

The quantity of raisins is approximate, do not hesitate to decrease or increase according to your taste. Kugelhof dries out and goes stale quickly after being cut, so remember to store it in an airtight tin if possible.

My personal notes

Panettone



Overview:

Panettone is a brioche-style Italian loaf, made with dried fruit (raisins and candied peel) and flavoured with left-over citrus fruit. The recipe is a bit complicated but, above all, it takes time, a great deal of time...

For 1 Panettone, you will need:

- 1 20 g honey
- 2 1 vanilla pod
- 3 ½ orange
- 4 ½ lemon
- 6 80 g leaven
- 7 80 g caster sugar
- 8 80 g water
- 9 80 g egg yolk
- 10 80 g butter
- 11 240 g flour
- 13 60 g flour
- 14 5 g fine (or table) salt
- 15 60 g caster sugar
- 16 80 g egg yolk
- 17 90 g butter
- 19 120 g raisins
- 20 120 g candied fruit

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
1 hour 35 min.	22 hours 45 min.	1 hour	1 day 1 hour 20 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	4 636 Kcal or 19 410 Kj	328 Kcal or 1 373 Kj
Proteins	73 gr	5 gr
Carbohydrates	690 gr	49 gr

Fats	215 gr	15 gr
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Step by step recipe

Prepare the aromatic mixture

The day before making the loaf, mix 20 g honey, 1 vanilla pod (scrape the inside) and the zest of ½ orange and ½ lemon in a ramekin.

Cover with plastic film and leave overnight.



First dough mixing

Put into a food-mixer bowl 80 g leaven, 80 g caster sugar, 80 g water, 80 g egg yolk, 80 g butter and 240 g flour.



Knead for about 25 minutes, then test the gluten with the window-pane test or check that the temperature of the dough does not rise above 79°F (26°C). Note: For the best way to knead, see: A few tips for effective kneading at home.



Gather the dough into a ball, wrap in plastic film and leave to rise for about 12 hours, until tripled in volume.



Knock back the dough by lifting it and thumping it back down onto the worktop.

Gather into a ball again, wrap in plastic film and refrigerate for 30 minutes.



Second dough mixing

Add 60 g flour and the aromatic mixture to the dough you have already prepared, then start kneading on slow speed.



Knead until fully absorbed (about 10 minutes).

Add 5 g fine (or table) salt and continue kneading until this is mixed in.



Add 60 g caster sugar a little at a time and knead until completely mixed in.



Add 80 g egg yolk and mix in.



Add 90 g butter and mix in.



The dough should be very smooth by now, but add a little water if necessary (45 ml or 1.5 fl oz maximum).



Add the fruit
Finish by adding the rehydrated 120 g raisins and 120 g candied fruit (mixed citrus peel is best)...



...and mix well.



Tip the dough out onto the worktop, gather into a ball and leave to rest, covered with a plastic sheet, for 15 minutes.



Prepare the mould: this is a high-sided round mould 20 cm in diameter (approx. 8 inches). Line it with cooking parchment and stand on another sheet of paper, laid on a baking sheet.



Press down on the dough to flatten it and expel the gas that has formed, then reshape into a ball and put into the mould.

Leave to rest for 8 hours.



Cooking and resting

Preheat the oven to 340°F (170°C).

Score the top of the dough in a cross pattern...



...and slip small knobs of butter into the cross cuts.



Bake for about 1 hour, ideally until the centre of the panettone reaches 201°F (94°C). Check this with an electronic thermometer.



When the panettone is cooked, turn it out while it is still hot and push 2 long skewers through the base...



...and hang it upside down from them like this.

Leave to rest in this position for at least 2 hours.



Your panettone is ready and now you can enjoy a well-deserved treat!



Remarks

As with any emblematic dish, you will find one or more recipes described as "the real Italian recipe", each claiming to be authentic. I would take my hat off to anyone who could sort the "right" one out from among them. That said, the Italian lady from whom I learned this recipe assured me that, whatever else might be in it, there is no yeast in a panettone, just leaven - always.

My personal notes

Mulled apple juice



Overview:

This very simple recipe will give you a warming drink with an amazing flavour of apples and spices. Just the thing to serve to your guests as a "trou normand" (traditionally a small glass of calvados served between courses), or to round off a meal with the dessert.

For 600 ml, you will need:

- 1 600 ml apple juice
- 2 60 g caster sugar
- 3 3 tonka beans
- 4 1 vanilla pod
- 5 10 greens cardamoms beans

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
3 min.	1 hour	15 min.	1 hour 20 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	512 Kcal or 2 144 Kj	76 Kcal or 318 Kj
Proteins	1 gr	< 1 gr
Carbohydrates	126 gr	19 gr
Fats	0 gr	0 gr

Step by step recipe

Put 600 ml apple juice into a saucepan and add 60 g caster sugar, 3 tonka beans* (coarsely chopped), 1 vanilla pod (split lengthways) and 10 greens cardamoms beans.

*American cooks should be aware that tonka beans are currently banned in the USA by the FDA.



Put on medium heat and bring to the boil.

Take off the heat, cover (very important) and leave to infuse for a good hour or longer.



Strain the juice and tip any remaining spices into the fine sieve you are using.

The mulled apple juice is ready and can be put into sealed bottles and kept in the fridge for several days.



Before serving, bring up to a simmer on medium heat...



...and serve piping hot in small coffee cups.



Remarks

If you'd like a more syrupy drink, add a little more sugar. To bring out even more cardamom flavour, chop or crush the seeds as well. You can also give the tonka*, cardamom and vanilla a quick blast in a blender before adding this ground spice mixture to the apples. *American cooks should be aware that tonka beans are currently banned in the USA by the FDA.

My personal notes

Blackcurrant liqueur



Overview:

The fruit liqueurs (or "creams" in French) are a mix of neutral alcohol in which fruits are macerated, and sugar syrup. They are the basis of the very famous "Kir", mixture of dry white wine and blackcurrant liqueur. This recipe is for blackcurrant, but it can be made with other soft fruits like raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, etc.

For 1 litre, you will need:

- 1 700 g blackcurrant
- 2 600 ml neutral-flavoured eau-de-vie
- 3 2 blackcurrants leaf (optional)
- 4 500 g caster sugar
- 5 300 ml water

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
45 min.	10 min.	55 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	3 860 Kcal or 16 161 Kj	184 Kcal or 770 Kj
Proteins	7 gr	< 1 gr
Carbohydrates	598 gr	28 gr
Fats	0 gr	0 gr

Step by step recipe

Put 2 blackcurrants leaf in a 1 litre jar.



Quickly wash 700 g blackcurrant under the tap, drain and dry them.
Fill up the jar.



Fill the jar with 600 ml neutral-flavoured eau-de-vie. The fruit must be completely covered with the alcohol.



Seal the jar and leave in a cool and dark place for about 3 months.



After 3 months, the alcohol will have taken on a pretty red/purple color.



This means that all the flavour of the fruits has been transferred to the alcohol.



Empty the contents of the bottle into a strainer placed over a high-sided container (to avoid splashes - they stain!) and collect the blackcurrant juice.



Pour the juice into a pan.

You can now discard the fruit, they have lost all their taste.



Prepare the sugar syrup:

In another pan put 500 g caster sugar and 300 ml water.



Heat to about 110°C or 230°F, you can use a thermometer to check.

It takes about 10 minutes to reach this temperature.



Leave the syrup to cool for about 10 minutes, until the temperature drops below 100°C or 212°F.



Carefully mix the two liquids together:

Add the blackcurrant juice to the syrup.



Then pour this mix into the other pan.



Repeat this until the two liquids are thoroughly mixed.

It's important to do it like this because if you introduce a spoon or other utensil to stir with, the syrup might start to crystallize.



The blackcurrant liqueur is now ready, and can be bottled.



To make "Kir", the famous aperitif, pour one measure of blackcurrant liqueur into a glass and about six measures cool dry white wine (typically white Bourgogne like "Bourgogne aligoté" or equivalent).

You can also make a "Communard" by replacing the white wine with a light red one. A votre santé !

Remarks

Its essential to use good quality fruit for this recipe, with bad or ordinary fruit you will have poor liqueur, and with well-flavoured fruit a great one. Best results are obtained with wild fruits, especially raspberries. A couple of leaves can be left in with blackcurrants, but not with other fruit. If you are making strawberry liqueur, cut large fruit into 2 or 4. If you have a lot of blackcurrants in season, make blackcurrant coulis.

My personal notes

Four quarters



Overview:

It's "the simplest cake in the world", called four quarters, because it's made with 1/4 eggs, 1/4 sugar, 1/4 flour and 1/4 butter.

For 1 Four quarters, you will need:

- 1 3 eggs
- 2 150 g caster sugar
- 3 150 g flour
- 4 150 g butter

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
50 min.	25 min.	1 hour 15 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	2 469 Kcal or 10 337 Kj	412 Kcal or 1 725 Kj
Proteins	33 gr	6 gr
Carbohydrates	261 gr	44 gr
Fats	143 gr	24 gr

Step by step recipe

Preheat oven to 180°C or 356°F now, so it will be at the right temperature when the cake is ready.

Weigh 3 eggs and note the weight.



Weigh the same amount of sugar, put in a bowl.



Weigh the same amount of flour, put in a bowl.



Weigh the same amount of butter, put in a bowl.

Put butter and sugar in a mixing bowl.



Mix well with a spatula.



Add flour, through a fine sieve if possible, to prevent lumps.



Mix well.



Add 3 eggs.



Mix well again.



Pour batter into a mould or tin, preferably non-stick.



Put in the oven for about 25 minutes.

Check cooking (ask an adult for help with this).



And that's it.



Remarks

It's already delicious just as it is, but you could add some fruit (apples, pears, apricots, ...) cut in pieces, and mixed into the batter before putting in the mould or tin. See how to do this.

My personal notes

Four quarters (adding fruit)



Overview:

To improve a "four quarters" cake.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 3 apples

Times:

Preparation
35 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	275 Kcal or 1 151 Kj	51 Kcal or 214 Kj
Proteins	2 gr	< 1 gr
Carbohydrates	63 gr	12 gr
Fats	2 gr	< 1 gr

Step by step recipe

Peel fruit (in this photo it's apples), cut in quarters and remove core.



Cut each quarter into small pieces.



And add it to the batter.



Mix well.

You can now pour batter into the mould or tin as for the usual four quarters.



My personal notes

Almond macaroon cake



Overview:

This is a cake version of an almond meringue, moister and denser in texture. This cake can be eaten on its own or made smaller, like finger biscuits. It can also be used as the base in a boozy dessert, such as a framboisier.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 40 g butter
- 2 120 g caster sugar
- 3 40 g ground almonds
- 4 20 g flour
- 5 100 g egg white
- 6 1 tablespoon caster sugar

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
25 min.	35 min.	60 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 188 Kcal or 4 974 Kj	355 Kcal or 1 486 Kj
Proteins	15 gr	4 gr
Carbohydrates	157 gr	47 gr
Fats	56 gr	17 gr

Step by step recipe

Melt 40 g butter on low heat, then leave to cool.



Sieve into a bowl: 120 g caster sugar, 40 g ground almonds and 20 g flour. Mix well.



Beat 100 g egg white to stiff peak stage and add 1 tablespoon caster sugar at the end.



Tip the mixture from stage 2 into the beaten egg whites.



Fold in gently with a soft spatula, tipping the bowl on its side.

Don't overdo this - you need to keep the mixture as light and airy as possible.



Take out a little of the mixture (about 3 tablespoonsful) and put this into the pan with the melted butter, which should be almost cold.

Mix well.



Pour this butter mixture into the bowl and fold in gently.

Mixing the butter in two stages like this helps to keep the mixture smooth and light without the butter causing it to "fall".



Preheat the oven to 360°F (180°C).

Put the mixture into a cake ring standing on a sheet of cooking parchment, or into a non-stick mould or tin.



Bake for 30 minutes.



Leave to cool in the tin. Be very careful when handling, as this macaroon cake is very fragile.



Remarks

You can vary the flavour of this cake by replacing some or all of the almonds with ground hazelnuts.

My personal notes

Biscuit de Savoie sponge cake



Overview:

Biscuit de Savoie is not a "biscuit" in the English sense, just a very light sponge cake. It is delicious plain, but it can also be filled with cream, fruit, etc.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 70 g flour
- 2 70 g potato starch
- 3 3 eggs
- 4 100 g caster sugar

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
30 min.	40 min.	1 hour 8 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 085 Kcal or 4 543 Kj	278 Kcal or 1 164 Kj
Proteins	25 gr	6 gr
Carbohydrates	209 gr	54 gr
Fats	16 gr	4 gr

Step by step recipe

Preheat the oven to 360°F (180°C).

Prepare the tin or mould by lining the base and sides with cooking parchment.

You can scatter a few flakes almonds in the bottom if you like, but this is not essential.



Mix 70 g flour and 70 g potato starch.



Put 3 eggs and 100 g caster sugar into a food mixer bowl.



Beat on high speed until the mixture is light like a mousse.



Sieve the flour and potato flour into the bowl.



Gently fold in the flour, just until it is incorporated into the frothy egg mixture.

This is the tricky part of the recipe. This needs to be done rapidly but gently to keep as much air as possible in the mixture. It is best to lean the bowl over on its side and use a soft spatula to lift and turn the mixture.



Pour the batter into the mould or tin.



Bake for a bout 20 minutes and check that the cake is cooked before taking it out of the oven.



Turn the cake out and leave on a wire rack to cool.



My personal notes

How to keep a tart pastry case crisp



Overview:

The problem with tarts, and fruit tarts in particular, is that the filling (fruit, cream or whatever) ends up soaking into the pastry and turns it soft. Here is a professional tip for avoiding this problem: spread a thin layer of white chocolate, which does not have a strong flavour, in the bottom of the tart. This seals the pastry and it will stay crisp. French pastry chefs have a verb for that, it's "chablonner".

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 50 g white chocolate

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
10 min.	20 min.	30 min.	1 hour

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	267 Kcal or 1 118 Kj	533 Kcal or 2 232 Kj
Proteins	3 gr	6 gr
Carbohydrates	31 gr	62 gr
Fats	15 gr	29 gr

Step by step recipe

Bake your pastry case blind, then leave to cool on a wire rack.



Melt 50 g white chocolate in a bain-marie.



You will notice how, unlike dark chocolate, white chocolate stays quite thick and pasty when melted.



Spread a thin layer of white chocolate over the base and up the sides of the tart case.

The pasty consistency of the chocolate makes this tricky, so I advise you to use a pastry brush, holding the bristles firmly to make them stiffer.



The aim is to produce something like this: the pastry case (shown in brown) with a thin chocolate "lining" (yellow) to protect the pastry from the moist filling (red).



Try to make an even layer over the whole of the pastry case.

Refrigerate for about 20 minutes.



Now your tart is ready for filling.



Remarks

Believe me, this tip will change your life! It works unbelievably well. Of course, you can only do this with tarts that are not going to be cooked after filling. Doing this to a tart case that is about to go in the oven is useless. It is easy to imagine this working (though I have yet to try it) with dark chocolate, though the chocolate flavour would be noticeable, which might work well for certain tarts.

My personal notes

How to cook caramelized puff pastry well



Overview:

When puff pastry is caramelized to use in patisseries like millefeuille, French chefs call it a "feuilletage" (which means "lamination" or "leafing"). This is baked on its own before being assembled with cream, fruit, etc. The baking needs to be carefully managed: the pastry should puff into layers, but not swell too much (just a few millimeters normally). To achieve this, we need to follow a special method that I have explained for you here.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 250 g puff or flaky pastry (pâte feuilletée)
- 2 30 g caster sugar

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
15 min.	25 min.	40 min.

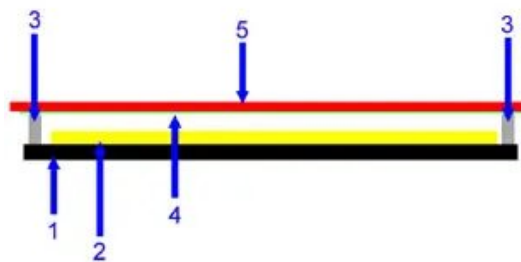
Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	1 185 Kcal or 4 961 Kj	423 Kcal or 1 771 Kj
Proteins	120 gr	43 gr
Carbohydrates	955 gr	341 gr
Fats	853 gr	304 gr

Step by step recipe

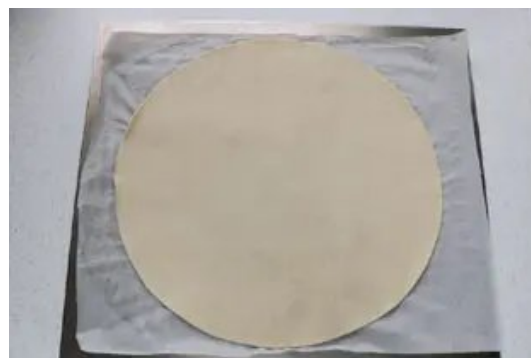
We need to end up with postry that is well-layered, but has not risen too much. To acheive this we will be cooking it on a baking sheet, with 2 shallow supports at the sides, covered with a protective sheet of cooking parchment (to stop it sticking), and a second baking sheet on top.

The diagram alongside explains this assembly: 1= bottom baking sheet, 2= puff pastry, 3= metal supports (about 1/2 inch or 1 cm deep), 4= protective cooking parchment, 5= top baking sheet.



Preheat the oven to 390°F (200°C).

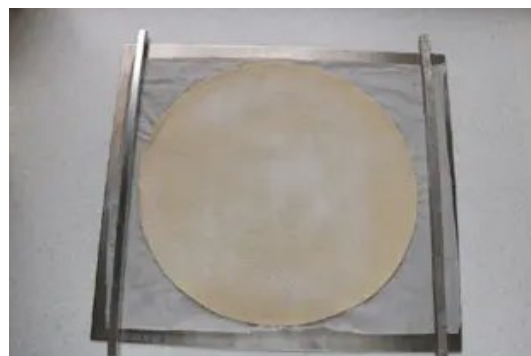
Roll out the pastry and lay it on a baking sheet. If it comes ready rolled with a sheet of paper, just leave this in place, as in the photo.



Dust the pastry all over with 30 g caster sugar in as even a layer as possible.

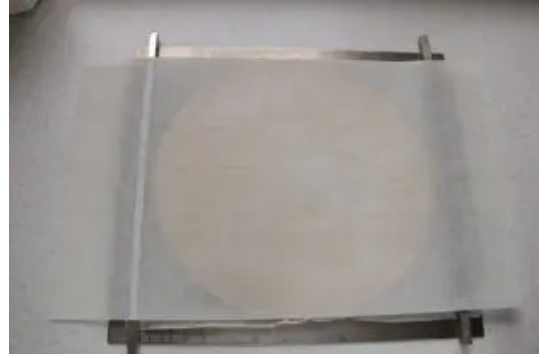


Place the two metal supports (they will be going in the oven) on either side, so that they are not touching the pastry. These are 2 old metal school rulers 1 cm (about 1/2 inch) thick.



Lay a sheet of cooking parchment on top.

Note: Pull the paper taut so that it is not sitting on the pastry - this will help the cooking and browning.



Place a second baking sheet on top.



Put this whole contraption in the oven and bake for about 25 minutes.



Watch for how the pastry is browning. The top baking sheet should be removed after about 20 minutes to allow the top of the feuilletage to brown nicely. Make use of this opportunity to turn the baking sheet round if necessary so that the pastry cooks evenly.

Take the pastry out of the oven when golden brown and leave to cool on a wire rack before using in a recipe.



Remarks

It is important to caramelize the pastry: for flavour, of course, but mostly because the caramel forms a sealing layer which protects the pastry from the moist filling (usually cream) and keeps it crisp longer. If you prefer not to caramelize the pastry, you can glaze it with egg to make it look more attractive. Making a successful feuilletage is not easy, especially at first. It is worth remembering that the great French chef Joël Robuchon, when asked: "When was the first time you felt like a real cook?", replied: "The day I made my first successful strawberry millefeuille". So, be brave and have a go!

My personal notes

Key Lime Pie for Jeremy



Overview:

Key Lime Pie is a famous speciality from the Keys region of southern Florida. This delicious tart is usually made with Key limes - a special variety. But in this simplified version, normal limes will work perfectly well.

For 1 , you will need:

- 1 200 g sweetcrust pastry (pâte sablée)
- 2 4 limes
- 3 4 egg yolks
- 4 400 g sweetened condensed milk
- 5 250 ml Chantilly cream

Times:

Preparation	Resting	Cooking	Start to finish
1 hour 35 min.	2 hours	15 min.	3 hours 50 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	15 078 Kcal or 63 129 Kj	1 101 Kcal or 4 610 Kj
Proteins	247 gr	18 gr
Carbohydrates	1 333 gr	97 gr
Fats	973 gr	71 gr

Step by step recipe

Roll out 200 g sweetcrust pastry (pâte sablée) and bake blind.

Leave to cool on a wire rack.



Squeeze 4 limes, which should give you about 125 ml of juice.

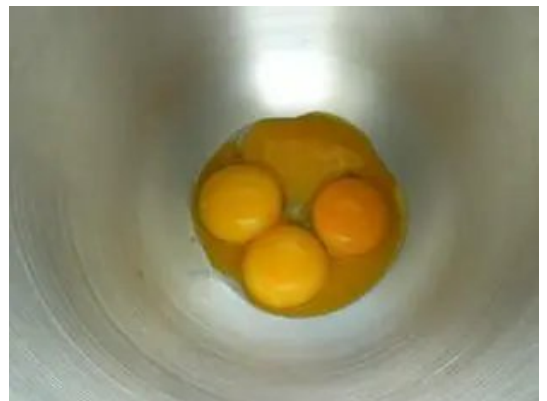


Add the zest of one lime to the juice.

Preheat the oven to 180°C (360°F).



Put 4 egg yolks into a food-processor bowl.



Beat on maximum speed for about 5 minutes until the yolks plump up a little in volume.



Reduce the beater speed slightly and slowly pour in 400 g sweetened condensed milk.



Reduce the beater speed further and slowly pour in the lime juice and zest.



Continue beating for a few more minutes until the mixture is fairly light.



Pour this filling into the tart case.



Cook for 10-15 minutes, just until the filling sets (check this by shaking the dish gently from side to side).



Leave to cool, then cover with stretch plastic film and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.



Just before serving, cover the top with rosettes of Chantilly (whipped cream).



Your Key lime pie is ready.



You can replace if you prefer, like Jeremy, Chantilly cream by a meringue French or Italian, so in that case brown the top like in a pear and lime meringue pie.



Remarks

This recipe is very well known in the USA and is typical of the South. There are many different variations: with meringue topping instead of cream, crushed biscuits and butter instead of pastry, etc. You can find mediocre versions all over Florida. These are usually over-sweet, artificially flavoured and green coloured. Now, a good Key lime pie is not green!

My personal notes

Brownies



Overview:

Brownies are traditional North-American tray-baked cakes: always moist in texture, usually with chocolate and pecan nuts. Brownies should still be soft in the middle, so need to be slightly undercooked.

For 1 kg 400 g, you will need:

- 1 200 g pecan nuts
- 2 300 g dark chocolate
- 3 300 g butter
- 4 200 g egg (How to...)
- 5 240 g brown sugar
- 6 200 g flour

Times:

Preparation	Cooking	Start to finish
20 min.	15 min.	35 min.

Nutritional information

	Whole recipe	Per 100 g
Energy value (in k-calories)	7 181 Kcal or 30 065 Kj	499 Kcal or 2 089 Kj
Proteins	71 gr	5 gr
Carbohydrates	606 gr	42 gr
Fats	497 gr	35 gr

Step by step recipe

Preheat the oven to 180°C (360°F).

Toast 200 g pecan nuts: spread them out on a baking sheet and put in the oven for 5 minutes.

Set aside, and leave the oven on.



Put 300 g dark chocolate et 300 g butter into a bowl.



Melt over a bain-marieor in the microwave on low power.

Set aside.



Put 200 g egg and 240 g brown sugar into a bowl and mix well.



Add the egg and sugar mixture to the chocolate.

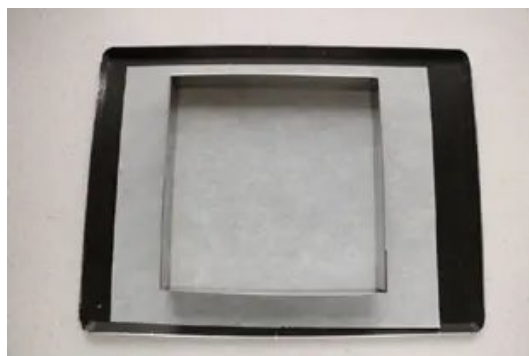
Beat together by hand until thoroughly mixed.



Add 200 g flour, then the toasted pecan nuts.



Sit an 8-inch (20 cm) square tin, mould or ring on a sheet of cooking parchment, laid on a baking sheet.



Pour in the mixture.



Bake for 20-30 minutes, checking the cooking frequently. Brownies should stay soft, so it is important not to overcook.



Turn out when cold and cut in portions, if you wish.



You can serve brownies with real custard (crème anglaise) a little whipped cream, a scoop of vanilla ice cream or something more adventurous, like fresh mint ice-cream.



Remarks

If you don't have pecan nuts, walnuts will work just fine. For an extra-delicious brownie, you can caramelize the pecan nuts (Jeremy's idea). For a brownie with a more 'cereal' texture, add 50g rolled oats to the mixture. If possible, toast these like the nuts.

My personal notes