

Smoked Salmon & Spinach Potato Gratin

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

250ml cream

200ml milk

2 small cloves garlic, crushed

1 kg potatoes, peeled & thinly sliced

200g smoked salmon

200g baby leaf spinach

Salt & Pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 200C.

Warm the cream, milk and crushed garlic in a pan over a gentle heat; watch carefully that it doesn't boil over.

Place the spinach in a colander in the sink; pour boiling water over to wilt the leaves slightly making it easier to work with. Leave to drain.

Place a layer of the thinly sliced potatoes on the base of a large casserole or baking dish.

Place thinly cut strips of the salmon over the potato and cover with half of the drained spinach leaves. Season with black pepper and very little salt as the salmon provides enough flavour.

Repeat once more with the potato, salmon, spinach and seasoning ending with a third and final layer of potato.

Pour the garlic infused cream mixture over the potato slowly leaving it to work its way through the layers evenly.

Place in a bain marie (a larger deep sided tray filled with boiling water) and cook for 45 minutes until bubbling and golden, rotating if necessary to brown evenly on top. Serve with a green salad.

Emergency desserts:

1. Fold mashed strawberries through Sweetened whipped cream then spoon into cups and place in the fridge for a few hours for a quick & easy mousse.
2. Ripple melted chocolate (not hot) through cold whipped cream to create chocolate mousse. Spoon into cups and chill, serve with crushed digestive biscuits on top.
3. Split a medjool date & fill with peanut butter, tastes just like snickers

Burnt Basque Cheesecake

A cake from Basque region of northern Spain. The beauty of this cake is that you have to burn it. Everything is mixed in one bowl and poured into the tin to cook. The flavour is incredible, like creme brûlée mixed with baked vanilla cheesecake. Serve with cold softly whipped cream or fresh strawberries etc.

Serves 8-10

500g cold cream cheese

500ml cream

200g caster sugar

4 large eggs

1-2 tsp vanilla extract

30g plain flour

Preheat the oven to 230C.

Line a 22cm 9" tin with removable base with a piece of greaseproof paper. Blend all of the ingredients till smooth then pour the mix into the tin. Tap the tin on the countertop to remove any bubbles. Bake for 30-40 mins till almost black on top. Leave to cool completely

then cover and place in the fridge in the fridge overnight. When ready to serve remove from the tin and serve with softly whipped cream.

Any seasonal fruit is amazing with this cake. I poached gooseberries for a few minutes till they burst in a few tbsp of elderflower syrup or you can stew chopped rhubarb in a few tbsp of marmalade.

Chester cake:

The traditional Cork Chester cake, this is my mother's recipe. Can be called donkeys gudge or gur cake because little gurriers skipping school could buy a big chunk of it and it would keep them going all day. Traditionally made with day olds bread that the bakery had but can also be made with old cake crumbs (not as nice but depends on what you've grown up eating). Pure comfort food & nice autumn spices.

340 g (12oz) good quality white bread

1 pot cold tea (chai, earl grey or normal)

1 tsp baking powder

90 g (3oz) plain flour

225 g (8oz) brown sugar

54 g (2oz) butter

2 tblsp mixed spice

225 g (8oz) sultanas

2 eggs

0.25 pint milk

2 tblsp marmalade

1 lb readymade shortcrust pastry

For the icing ...

200 g icing sugar

Juice of a lemon

Method

Cover the stale bread with the cold tea. Leave to soak for an hour.

Preheat the oven to 180C.

Squeeze the bread dry by pressing the mixture in a sieve over the sink.

Sift the flour with the baking powder, add the sugar. Rub in the butter and add the spices.

Add sultanas to the bread and mix well. Turn into the flour mixture and combine well.

Beat the eggs with the milk, add the marmalade and mix well with the bread.

Roll one half of the pastry to fit into the buttered baking tin (a rectangular 20.5x 32cm)

Prick the pastry base with a fork.

Spread the bread mixture over the pastry. Cover with the remaining pastry and pinch the edges together to seal. Prick the top with a fork.

Bake for 1 hour and 45mins until golden.

Leave to cool.

For the icing

Mix the lemon juice with the sugar until thick. Add more icing sugar or hot water depending on how thick the icing is. Spread generously over the cake and slice once set.