

Baked Eggs with Tomatoes, Chorizo and Manchego Cheese

A Spanish twist on the classic oeufs en cocotte. Experiment with other flavour additions – a little chopped cooked ham or Parma ham, diced cooked mushrooms, a few herbs, some sliced artichoke heart can all go into the base before you crack in the egg. For a really extravagant addition add a drop or two of white truffle oil over the cream.

Serves 4

butter, for greasing

1 ripe vine tomato, peeled, seeded and finely chopped

1 small raw chorizo sausage, skinned and finely chopped

4 large eggs

4 tbsp cream

25g (1oz) manchego or Cheddar cheese, finely grated

salt and freshly ground black pepper

thick slabs of toasted sourdough bread sliced into chunky fingers, to serve

1 Preheat the oven to 190C (375F), Gas mark 5. Butter 4 ramekins and scatter the tomatoes and chorizo in the bottom. Crack an egg into each ramekin and season with salt, then add a tablespoon of cream to each one and scatter the manchego or Cheddar on top.

2 Arrange the ramekins in a roasting tin and pour in enough boiling water to come about halfway up each ramekin. Place in the oven and bake for 15 minutes until the eggs are set and the cheese is bubbling.

3 Set a ramekin on each plate and add the chunky bread fingers to serve.

Butterflied Lamb with Spiced Mint and Yoghurt Rub

To bone the leg of lamb yourself, find the place where the long bone running down the length of the leg appears to run quite close to the surface. Split open the meat along that bone and carefully peel it back from either side. At the fatter end of the leg there is a small group of smaller bones. Continue to cut the meat away from these bones until you have completely opened up the leg and can lift them out.

Serves 4-6

3kg (7lb) leg of lamb, boned and well trimmed, roughly 5cm (2in) thick

25g (1oz) chopped fresh mint

juice of 2 lemons

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 tbsp ground coriander

1 tbsp mild chilli powder

2 tsp ground cumin

2 tsp coarse ground black pepper

4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

6 tbsp Greek strained yoghurt

salt and freshly ground black pepper

lightly dressed green salad, to serve

1 Place the lamb in a shallow non-metallic dish. Mix together the mint in a bowl with the lemon juice, garlic, ground coriander, chilli powder, ground cumin, olive oil, yoghurt and a teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper. Rub all over the meat, then cover with clingfilm and chill overnight or leave to stand at room temperature for 2-3 hours if time is short.

2 Preheat the oven to 230C (475F), Gas mark 9 or light a barbecue. If the lamb has been chilled overnight, bring it back to room temperature. If cooking in the oven, place the lamb, cut side up on a rack in a large roasting tin and season with salt. Roast in for 15 minutes, then turn over and roast for another 10 minutes for rare. Barbecue over medium-hot coals for about 50 minutes for medium rare lamb, turning occasionally.

3 Remove the lamb from the oven or barbecue and leave to rest in a warm place for 10 minutes. If you don't like your lamb too pink you can cover it with foil at this point and it will continue to cook. Carve into slices and arrange on plates with some salad.

Catalan Crème Pots

This is just one of the many great puddings that has firm Spanish roots. It is actually quite a light pudding that has all of the flavour of caramel without any of the sticky sweetness. It's actually very simple to make and benefits from being made well in advance

Serves 6-8

6 egg yolks
150g (5oz) caster sugar
25g (1oz) cornflour
1.2 litres (2 pints) milk
1 cinnamon stick
finely grated rind of 1 lemon
finely grated rind of 1 orange
3 tbsp demerara sugar

1 Place the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl with the sugar and using a hand-held whisk beat for 5 minutes until thickened. Tip in the corn flour and mix well to combined.

2 Place the milk in a pan with the cinnamon stick, lemon and orange rind. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 5 minutes.

3 Strain the milk, discarding the cinnamon stick, lemon and orange rind and then gradually whisk into egg and sugar mixture. Place in a clean pan and slowly return to the boil. Reduce the heat and cook gently until the mixture coats the back of a wooden spoon. Remove from the heat.

4 Leave to cool, then pour into 4 individual dishes or ramekins and chill for at least four hours or overnight is best to allow the custard pots to firm up.

5 When ready to serve, sprinkle the tops evenly with the demerara sugar and caramelize with blow torch or under a preheated hot grill. Arrange on plates to serve.