

Cherry Festival

Quick Chocolate, orange and cherry mousse

Ingredients

100g/3½oz cherries, stones removed, roughly chopped

50g/2oz soft brown sugar

1 orange, juice and zest

100g/3½oz chocolate, broken into pieces

200ml/7fl oz double cream

2 whole cherries, stones removed, to garnish

Method

Cook the cherries, sugar, orange zest and juice in a saucepan over a medium heat for five minutes, or until the sugar has dissolved and the sauce is syrupy.

Pour the cherries and sauce into two ramekins and chill.

Melt the chocolate in a bowl placed over a pan of simmering water (the bottom of the bowl should not touch the water).

Whip the cream in a separate bowl until it forms soft peaks when the whisk is removed. Fold in the melted chocolate.

Spoon the chocolate and cream mixture onto the cherries.

Top each ramekin with a whole destoned cherry and serve either straightaway or chill and serve later.

Cherry Festival

Cherry shortbread with toasted flaked almonds

Ingredients

100g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting

200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

50g corn flour

50g ground almonds

250g pack cold butter, cut into cubes

50g glace cherries, finely chopped

½ tsp almond extract

8 tbsp cherry jam, sieved

Toasted flaked almonds to finish

Method

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Sift the icing sugar, flour and corn flour together into a bowl. Stir in the ground almonds and butter, then rub in the butter until smooth. Stir in the chopped glace cherries and almond extract, and bring together to form a dough.

Roll out on a lightly floured surface, and then stamp out biscuits using a round cutter. Keep re-rolling the trimmings until all the dough is used. Carefully transfer the biscuits to baking trays lined with parchment and bake for just 8-10 mins until just pale golden.

Using an upturned bottle top or similar, press gently into the centre of each biscuit to make a round indent. Spoon in a little jam and return to the oven for 2 mins. Remove and cool on a wire rack, before dusting with icing sugar and sprinkling the toasted almond flakes to serve.

Cherry Festival

Pan fried duck breast with a rich cherry sauce and duck and rosemary roasted potatoes

Ingredients

For the duck

4 duck breasts

Pinch of sea salt and cracked black pepper

For the sauce

1 tbsp vegetable oil

1 red onion, chopped

1 garlic clove, chopped

400ml/14fl oz red wine

300ml/10½fl oz chicken stock

4 sprigs fresh rosemary

30g/1oz dark brown sugar

50g/1¾oz cherry jam

2 cooked beetroots, chopped into small cubes

For the potatoes

4 medium potatoes, chopped into small cubes

salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tbsp chopped fresh rosemary

Method

For the duck, preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.

Fry the duck breasts, skin-side down, in a frying pan for 6-8 minutes.

Drain off any fat and reserve for later. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then turn the duck breasts over and roast in the oven for 6-8 minutes (for medium) or until cooked to your liking. Remove the duck breasts from the oven, cover with foil and set aside in a warm place to rest.

Meanwhile for the sauce, heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion and garlic for 4-5 minutes, or until softened. Add the wine, chicken stock, rosemary and sugar, bring the mixture to the boil and cook until the volume of the liquid has reduced by half. Drain the mixture through a sieve into a clean saucepan, then whisk in the jam. Fold in the beetroots, and keep warm.

For the potatoes, cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling, salted water for 5-10 minutes, or until just tender. Drain.

Heat the reserved duck fat in a frying pan, and then add the potatoes. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper and add the rosemary. Cook the potatoes for 5-10 minutes, or until crisp and golden-brown.

To serve, slice the duck breasts and place onto serving plates. Add some potatoes alongside and spoon over the sauce.