

flavours of an

Aussie summer

keep it fresh
party &
entertaining

dairy-free
Splice Tart
perfect for a
summer party

Time to gather
and feast with our
**Christmas &
Australia Day**
holiday recipes!



**MITSUBISHI
ELECTRIC**

Merry Christmas and happy holidays from us...

Blue skies, golden sands and picnics under towering gums. Little wonder that summer in our great southern land is what we're famous for the world over. But more than simply places to explore, summer gives us so many opportunities to gather our friends and families close, and celebrate in our uniquely Australian way.

Great food, fabulous drinks and that charming blend of bright and earthy colours.

When you're planning your summer, it's important to keep the menu on point, which is easy to do when there's such a bounty of fresh flavours on offer. Yamba prawns, Tasmanian ocean trout, Cowra lamb, WA beef, Queensland fruit, mangoes from the NT, Victorian poultry, and free-range pork from the hills of SA.

With so much to choose from, you may need to plan two events. Or more.

The most important gift in this selection of recipes, however, is that they understand how we really live – busy, even hectic, but never wanting to compromise on quality. So to help you with this, many of the steps can be done the day before, or even days ahead. This leaves you more time to join in the fun, and to be that essential ingredient to transform a get-together into a real party.

Have a delicious summer!

From all of us at Mitsubishi Electric Australia.

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Contents

COCKTAILS

FIZZ THE SEASON	
STRAWBERRY AND VERMOUTH BUBBLY OLD FASHIONED.....	4
MISTLETOE KISS	
ROSEMARY AND POMEGRANATE MOJITO	7
ALCOHOL-FREE	
REDCURRANT AND LYCHEE NO-JITO.....	8
LONG HOT SUMMER	
COCONUT RUM, LIMECELLO AND PROSECCO SPRITZ	11

ENTREE

OYSTERS WITH SEAWEED GRANITA AND SESAME SPRINKLE	12
BEETROOT AND GIN CURED OCEAN TROUT WITH CARAWAY CRACKERS	15
PRAWN AND AVOCADO THAI SALAD.....	16
CRISPY WHITING FILLETS IN CRAFT BEER BATTER WITH CRUSHED POTATO CHIPS AND PARSLEY AIOLI.....	19
BARBECUED STUFFED CALAMARI WITH HERB AND RICE FILLING	20

MAIN

CAULIFLOWER SALAD WITH CHICKPEAS AND PUMPERNICKEL CRUMBS.....	23
CHICKEN AND MACARONI SALAD WITH GREEN GODDESS DRESSING.....	24
SICILIAN CARROT SALAD WITH PISTACHIOS AND GOLDEN RAISINS.....	27
BEEF WELLINGTON FOR THE CHRISTMAS TABLE	28
LAMB CUTLETS WITH GARDEN GREENS PESTO	31
PORK, CRACKLING AND SAUERKRAUT HAWAIIAN BUNS	32
VEGETARIAN TUNISIAN OKRA AND CARROT TAGINE	35
JUST LIKE A CHRISTMAS TURKEY, ONLY SMALLER.....	36
CRISPY ROAST DUCK WITH GLAZED CARROTS IN CHRISTMAS TREE DRESSING.....	39

DESSERT

FIGGY PEACH PAVLOVA BITES.....	41
CHRISTMAS LAMINGTONS	42
DAIRY-FREE SPLICE TART	45
SHORTBREAD CHRISTMAS TREES	46
CHEAT'S CHRISTMAS WREATH CAKE	49

FIZZ THE SEASON

STRAWBERRY AND VERMOUTH BUBBLY OLD FASHIONED

Preparation time: 5 minutes // Cooking time: nil
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 12 strawberries, hulled
- zest of 1 orange
- 1 Tbsp caster sugar
- 120ml white vermouth
- 400ml dry sparkling wine
- orange curls, sugar cubes and strawberries, to garnish
- 8 drops orange bitters

1 Combine the strawberries, zest and sugar in a cocktail shaker and muddle thoroughly. Pour in the vermouth, add one scoop of ice, then shake for 1 minute.

2 Strain into champagne saucers with ice, then top with sparkling wine. Garnish with orange curls, sugar cubes and strawberries. Add 2 drops of bitters onto each sugar cube.

For a virgin take, replace vermouth with an alcohol-free version and sparkling wine with tonic water.





MISTLETOE KISS ROSEMARY AND POMEGRANATE MOJITO

Preparation time: 5 minutes // Cooking time: nil // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

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- | | |
|---|---|
| • 2 sprigs rosemary leaves | • 240ml white rum |
| • ½ cup pomegranate seeds | • 1 cup tonic water |
| • finely grated zest and juice of 3 limes (125ml) | • 2 cups soda water |
| • 2 Tbsp raw sugar | • rosemary sprigs and pomegranate seeds, to garnish |
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1 Combine the rosemary leaves, pomegranate seeds, zest and sugar in a cocktail shaker and muddle thoroughly. Mix in the juice and rum, add one scoop of ice, then shake well for 1 minute.

2 Strain into tumblers, top gently with ice, then pour the tonic and soda waters over. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and pomegranate seeds.

It's easy to reduce the calories in this cocktail, simply omit the sugar and use diet tonic water.

ALCOHOL-FREE REDCURRANT AND LYCHEE NO-JITO

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: nil // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 4 brown sugar cubes
- ¼ bunch mint leaves
- 6cm piece ginger, grated
- 3 limes
- 12 lychees, halved
- 1L old-fashioned lemonade
- 8 drops bitters
- 1 punnet redcurrants, picked

1 Combine the sugar cubes, mint and ginger in the bottom of a cocktail shaker and pound with a muddling stick. Chop one lime, add to the shaker with 4 lychees and muddle again. Stir in the lemonade and bitters.

2 Slice the remaining limes and add to glasses with the redcurrants, remaining lychees and ice. Pour in the lemonade mixture through a fine strainer.

Redcurrants are only available for a limited time at Christmas, if you can't get them use raspberries instead.





LONG HOT SUMMER COCONUT RUM, LIMECELLO AND PROSECCO SPRITZ

Preparation time: 5 minutes // Cooking time: nil // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 120ml coconut rum
- 90ml limecello
- 16 mint leaves
- 120ml simple syrup
- 90ml lime juice
- ¼ cup coconut cream
- 500ml Prosecco
- toasted coconut flakes and lime wedge, to garnish

1 Combine the coconut rum, limecello, mint, simple syrup, lime juice and coconut cream in a blender with 1 cup ice and purée until smooth. Pour into tall glasses then top with Prosecco. Garnish with toasted coconut flakes and lime wedges.

Most people are unlikely to use a whole bottle of limecello, if that sounds like you, replace with lime cordial.

OYSTERS WITH SEAWEED GRANITA AND SESAME SPRINKLE

Preparation time: 15 minutes // Cooking time: nil // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 24 Sydney Rock oysters
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, peeled and seeded
- 4cm piece ginger, finely grated
- ½ cup seaweed salad
- ¼ cup caster sugar
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 1 cup tonic water
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground white pepper
- 1 Tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 2 nori sheets, crumbled
- 1 Tbsp shiitake mushroom powder
- 2 tsp wasabi powder
- 1 tsp dashi powder

1 Shuck the oysters and reserve the juice.

2 Put the cucumbers, ginger, seaweed, sugar and lemon juice in a blender and purée until smooth. Strain through a fine sieve, then mix in the tonic water and oyster juice. Season with salt and white pepper, then pour into a shallow tray and freeze for 4 hours.

3 Combine the sesame seeds, nori, shiitakes, wasabi and dashi in a spice grinder and pulse to mix finely.

4 Scrape the granita with a fork to make crystals and spoon over the oysters. Scatter with sesame mix.

For a sugar-free version replace sugar with one tablespoon stevia powder dissolved in one tablespoon apple juice.



BEETROOT AND GIN CURED OCEAN TROUT WITH CARAWAY CRACKERS

Preparation time: 5 minutes + two days refrigeration // Cooking time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★★★★

- 1 side ocean trout, skinned and pin-boned
- 4 beetroot, coarsely grated
- 1 cup pink rock salt
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 bunches dill, finely chopped
- finely grated zest of 4 lemons
- 8 juniper berries, finely chopped
- ½ cup gin
- 2 large pita bread
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 2 limes
- 2 tsp caraway seeds, cracked
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- horseradish, cucumber salad and pickles, to serve

1 Preheat oven to 150°C. Arrange the ocean trout on a plastic tray. Mix the beetroot, salt, sugar, dill, zest and juniper, then press onto all sides. Drizzle with the gin, then cover with cling film and refrigerate for two days.

2 Cut the pita into wedges. Mix the oil, juice and seeds in a bowl and season with salt and pepper. Brush onto the pita then arrange on a lined tray and bake for 15 minutes, until crisp.

3 Slice the ocean trout very finely, then serve with the crackers, horseradish, cucumber salad and pickles.

Gluten-free pita breads are available at your local supermarket and work just as well.

PRAWN AND AVOCADO THAI SALAD

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 2 minutes
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 150g glass noodles
- 800g cooked Tiger prawns, peeled and halved
- 2 avocados, diced
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, seeded and cut into julienne
- 4 eschalots, finely sliced
- 1 cup bean sprouts, trimmed
- 1 cup Chinese cabbage, finely shredded
- ½ cup cashews
- 1 cup mixed Asian herbs
- 2 Tbsp fish sauce
- 2 Tbsp palm sugar
- 1 Tbsp rice vinegar
- 3 Tbsp lime juice
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 birdseye chillies, finely chopped
- 1 stick lemongrass, very finely chopped

1 Place the noodles in a bowl and cover with boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain well, then mix gently with the prawns, avocado, cucumbers, eschalots, sprouts, cabbage, cashews and herbs.

2 Mix the fish sauce, palm sugar, vinegar, lime juice, garlic, chillies and lemongrass. Sprinkle over the salad and serve.

If nut allergies are a problem, replace cashews with a mix of sunflower seeds and pepitas.





CRISPY WHITING FILLETS IN CRAFT BEER BATTER WITH CRUSHED POTATO CHIPS AND PARSLEY AIOLI

Preparation time: 12 minutes // Cooking time: 12 minutes // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 12 whiting fillets
- 1¼ cups plain flour
- 375ml pale ale
- 1 tsp celery salt
- vegetable oil for deep frying
- 20 small potatoes
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp tarragon vinegar
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 1 cup light olive oil
- lemon wedges, to serve

1 Toss the whiting in ½ cup flour, then shake off the excess. Lightly whisk the remaining flour with the beer and celery salt, dip the fish, then fry in hot (190°C) vegetable oil until golden and crisp. Drain on kitchen paper.

2 Meanwhile, steam the potatoes until tender, crush lightly, then fry in the vegetable oil until crunchy. Drain well then season with salt and pepper.

3 Combine the yolks, mustard, vinegar, garlic and parsley in a blender and purée until smooth. Add the oil in a steady stream while the motor is running. Season with salt and pepper, then serve with the fish and chips. Serve with lemon wedges.

Not everyone wants the oil of deep-fried food. As an alternative, grill the fish basting regularly with craft beer.

BARBECUED STUFFED CALAMARI WITH HERB AND RICE FILLING

Preparation time: 30 minutes // Cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 12 small calamari
- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1½ cups chicken stock
- 1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 1 bunch tarragon, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp chipotle chillies in adobo sauce, chopped
- ¼ cup smoked almonds, finely chopped
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- cooking oil spray
- 1 leek, finely sliced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 4 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 1L tomato passata
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tsp red wine vinegar

1 Separate the hoods and tentacles, rinse the hoods and pat dry. Rinse the rice well, then combine with the chicken stock in a medium saucepan over a moderate heat. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to low and cook for 15 minutes. Fit the lid and set aside for 15 minutes.

2 Mix the rice with the herbs, chipotles and almonds, then season with salt and pepper. Spoon into the calamari hoods, then seal with bamboo skewers. Sprinkle with cooking oil spray, then cook over a hot barbecue grill for 8 minutes with the tentacles, until lightly blackened.

3 Sauté the leek, garlic and anchovies in the olive oil in a skillet over a moderate heat for 5 minutes, until softened. Add the passata, sugar and vinegar, then season with salt and pepper. Arrange the calamari in the sauce and simmer for 20 minutes, until thickened.

Go (almost) carb-free by replacing rice with crushed cannellini beans.





CAULIFLOWER SALAD WITH CHICKPEAS AND PUMPERNICKEL CRUMBS

Preparation time: 20 minutes // Cooking time: nil // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

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|--|---|
| • 1 head cauliflower | • ¼ cup Greek yoghurt |
| • 8 slices pumpernickel bread | • 2 Tbsp tahini |
| • 2 x 400g chickpeas, drained and rinsed | • 2 tsp sherry vinegar |
| • 1 cup roasted capsicums, diced | • 2 Tbsp hazelnut oil |
| • ½ cup sunflower seeds, finely chopped | • sea salt flakes and freshly-ground white pepper |
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1 Remove the outer leaves of the cauliflower, then put in a food processor and pulse until it is a fine crumb. Place in a cloth and enclose, then squeeze to remove excess moisture.

2 Place the pumpernickel in the food processor and pulse until crumbly. Mix with the cauliflower, chickpeas, capsicums and sunflower seeds. Mix well.

3 Mix the yoghurt, tahini, vinegar and oil in a bowl, then season with salt and pepper. Drizzle over the salad.

Pumpernickel is made from rye but this still contains gluten. For a gluten-free version, take thick slices of gluten-free bread and dry in the oven before crumbling.

CHICKEN AND MACARONI SALAD WITH GREEN GODDESS DRESSING

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 15 minutes // Makes: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

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|---|--|
| • 4 chicken thigh fillets | • 1 bunch watercress leaves |
| • sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper | • 4 cloves garlic |
| • 300g macaroni | • 2 anchovy fillets (opt.) |
| • 1 bunch parsley leaves | • finely-grated zest and juice of 2 lemons |
| • ½ cup slivered almonds, toasted | • 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil |
| • 4 green shallots, finely sliced | • ½ cup aioli |
| • 1 punnet baby tomatoes | • 1 tsp Tabasco |
| • 1 bunch chives | |
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1 Place the chicken thigh fillets in a medium saucepan of cold water with 1 tsp salt. Set over a moderate heat until barely simmering, then reduce the heat to low and cook gently until the chicken is just firm. Set aside to cool, then shred.

2 Cook the pasta according to packet instructions until al dente, then cook for 1 more minute. Strain, cool under cold running water, then drain thoroughly. Toss with the chicken, parsley, almonds, shallots and tomatoes.

3 Combine the remaining ingredients in a blender and purée until smooth. Season with salt and pepper, then drizzle over the salad.

For a lower fat version, replace chicken thighs with chicken breast and aioli with yoghurt.



SICILIAN CARROT SALAD WITH PISTACHIOS AND GOLDEN RAISINS

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: nil
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 1kg carrots
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds
- 1 red onion, finely sliced
- ¾ cup golden raisins, chopped
- ½ cup dried apricots, diced
- ½ cup slivered pistachios
- ½ bunch mint leaves, torn
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp pickle juice
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper

1 Peel then grate the carrots coarsely. Mix with the pomegranate seeds, onion, raisins, apricots, pistachios and mint, then toss well.

2 Combine the oil, pickle juice and mustard in a bowl, whisk well, then season with salt and pepper. Drizzle over the salad.

Pomegranate seeds can be hard to find, particularly throughout summer, but are easily replaced with dried cranberries or goji berries.

BEEF WELLINGTON FOR THE CHRISTMAS TABLE

Preparation time: 30 minutes // Cooking time: 1 hour // Serves: 6 // Difficulty: ★★★★★☆

- 1kg piece beef fillet, trimmed
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 500g button mushrooms
- 2 tsp fennel seeds, cracked
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 bunch thyme leaves
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp Bonox
- 1 Tbsp porcini mushroom powder
- 1 bunch English spinach leaves
- 4 crepes (store-bought is fine)
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 300g best-quality puff pastry, rolled to 3mm
- 2 Tbsp sesame seeds

1 Preheat oven to 200°C. Season the beef generously with salt and pepper, then drizzle with half the extra virgin olive oil. Sear in a large frying pan over a high heat until well-browned on all sides. Set aside to cool completely.

2 Meanwhile, toss the mushrooms, fennel seeds, garlic and thyme in the remaining oil, arrange in a roasting pan and bake for 30 minutes, until the mushrooms are browned. Sprinkle with Worcestershire sauce and bake for 5 more minutes. Put in a food processor and purée to a paste. Stir in the Bonox and porcini mushroom powder.

3 Blanch the spinach leaves until just wilted, then refresh in iced water. Spread the mushroom mix around the beef, then wrap in spinach leaves. Wrap in crepes. Brush lightly in egg.

4 Trim a 5cm piece from the end of the pastry, then wrap the beef log in the remaining piece, rolling several times to seal. Pinch the overlapping ends. Brush with egg, then allow to dry, then brush with egg again. Cut stars from the trimmed pastry, brush with egg, sprinkle with sesame seeds, arrange on top.

5 Arrange on a lined oven tray and bake for 30 minutes, until the pastry is deeply-golden and crisp. Cool on a wire rack.

If keeping track of the calories in Christmas dinner, low-fat puff pastry is readily available.





LAMB CUTLETS WITH GARDEN GREENS PESTO

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 12 lamb cutlets, French trimmed
- 2 tsp celery salt
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp za-atar
- 2 tsp dried mint powder
- 2 cup mixed leafy greens (spinach, watercress and kale)
- 1 bunch basil leaves
- 2 cloves garlic
- ¼ cup toasted hazelnuts chopped
- ½ cup finely grated Pecorino
- ¼ cup hazelnut oil
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper

1 Season the lamb cutlets with celery salt and sprinkle with 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil. Cook on a hot griddle for 3 minutes each side. Scatter with za-atar and dried mint.

2 Blanch the leafy greens until just tender, then refresh in iced water and squeeze well. Combine in a food processor with the basil, garlic and remaining extra virgin olive oil. Stir in the hazelnuts, Pecorino and hazelnuts, then season with salt and pepper.

Ask your butcher to trim the fat cap from the outside of the cutlets for an equally tasty but healthier dinner.

PORK, CRACKLING AND SAUERKRAUT HAWAIIAN BUNS

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 3½ hours // Makes: 12 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 1.6kg pork shoulder
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1L pineapple juice
- 7g (1 sachet) instant dried yeast
- 2 Tbsp caster sugar
- 450g bakers' flour
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 60g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- baby salad leaves, sauerkraut and mustard, to serve

1 Preheat oven to 210°C. Pat the pork dry with kitchen paper, then refrigerate uncovered for 4 hours, until the skin is completely dry. Overnight is even better. Season generously with salt and pepper and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

2 Place the pork on a rack over a roasting pan and bake for 45 minutes. Reduce the heat to 150°C and bake for a further 2½ hours. Set aside to rest.

3 Meanwhile, boil the pineapple juice until reduced to ¾ cup. Allow to cool. Put the yeast, sugar, flour, salt and juice in a mixer and beat with the dough hook on low speed until just combined. Add the eggs, yolks and butter, then beat until a smooth dough forms.

4 Cover the dough and allow to rise for 1 hour, then divide into 12 pieces and rolls into balls. Put in a lightly oiled lamington pan, cover, and allow to rise for 45 minutes. Bake at 190°C for 25-30 minutes, until deep golden. Cool on a wire rack.

5 Shred the pork and chop the crackling. Assemble in halved buns with the baby salad leaves, sauerkraut and mustard.

For the vegetarians at the table, replace pork with some grilled halloumi.





VEGETARIAN TUNISIAN OKRA AND CARROT TAGINE

Preparation time: 20 minutes // Cooking time: 45minutes // Serves: 4-6 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 2 leeks, sliced
- 2 sticks celery, finely sliced
- 12 cloves garlic, sliced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 8 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup dried barberries
- 1 Tbsp ras el hanout spice mix
- 1 Tbsp ground turmeric
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1L vegetable stock
- 2 cups okra, sliced
- 10cm piece ginger, cut into very fine batons
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- herbed yoghurt, pomegranate seeds and sliced shallots, to serve

1 Fry the leeks, celery and garlic in half the olive oil in a large saucepan over a moderate heat. Once softened, add the carrots, barberries and spices, cook briefly, then pour in the stock. Simmer for 30 minutes.

2 Pour the remaining oil in a pan over a high heat and fry the okra and ginger, until lightly blacked. Add to the saucepan and season with salt and pepper. Serve with herbed yoghurt, pomegranate seeds and sliced shallots.

While a quarter of a cup of extra virgin olive oil is seriously tasty, you only need one tablespoon if you're trying to cut down on calories.

JUST LIKE A CHRISTMAS TURKEY, ONLY SMALLER

Preparation time: 20 minutes // Cooking time: 2 hours
Serves: 6 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 1 large chicken
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 brown onions, very finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 bunch thyme, very finely chopped
- ½ cup dried cranberries, chopped
- ½ cup pistachios, chopped
- 1 bunch chives, finely sliced
- 3 cups breadcrumbs
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- 4 bunches garden greens
- 2 Tbsp raspberry vinaigrette

1 Preheat oven to 210°C. Pat the chicken dry inside and out with kitchen paper. Season generously with salt and pepper, then drizzle with 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil.

2 Sauté the onions, garlic and thyme in the remaining extra virgin olive oil until softened, then transfer to a bowl and mix with the cranberries, pistachios, chives, breadcrumbs and sherry. Season with salt and pepper, then spoon into the chicken cavity and seal with a skewer.

3 Arrange the chicken on a wire rack over a roasting pan and bake for 20 minutes. Reduce the heat to 180°C and bake for a further 1 hour and 10 minutes.

4 Blanch the greens until just tender, then dress with raspberry vinaigrette and serve with the chicken.

Replace breadcrumbs with gluten-free breadcrumbs or a mix of sunflower seeds and almonds





CRISPY ROAST DUCK WITH GLAZED CARROTS IN CHRISTMAS TREE DRESSING

Preparation time: 40 minutes // Cooking time: 1½ hours // Serves: 6 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 1 duck (approx. 1.6 kg)
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 3 bunches baby carrots, halved
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- sea salt flakes and freshly-ground black pepper
- 1 cup tarragon vinegar
- ½ cup pine needles
- ¼ cup honey mustard dressing
- 1 bunch parsley leaves
- ¼ cup roasted hazelnuts, chopped

1 Preheat oven to 210°C. Tie the duck by the neck and hang over a saucepan of boiling water. Ladle water over the duck for 5 minutes, then set aside to dry for 2 hours.

2 Arrange the duck on a rack set over a roasting pan and bake the duck for 30 minutes with a little water in the pan. Prick the duck all over with a pin, then bake for another 10 minutes.

3 Mix the soy sauce, lime juice and honey and brush onto the duck. Continue baking for 30 minutes, basting regularly.

4 Meanwhile, toss the carrots in the extra virgin olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Arrange in a roasting pan and bake for 40 minutes.

5 Pour the vinegar into a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add the pine needles and allow to cool. Strain, then boil the vinegar to reduce to 2 Tbsp. Sprinkle the vinegar and dressing over the carrots and bake for 5 more minutes. Dress with parsley and hazelnuts.

Make your own pine vinegar by infusing new season pine buds (from a Christmas tree) into apple cider vinegar.



FIGGY PEACH PAVLOVA BITES

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 4 hours 5 minutes // Makes: 24 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 4 egg whites
- 1 cup caster sugar
- ½ tsp cream of tartar
- 2 tsp vanilla paste
- 300ml thickened cream
- 75g icing sugar
- fig and peach slices, to garnish

1 Preheat oven to 110°C. Combine the egg whites, sugar and cream of tartar in the bowl of an electric mixer and set over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Heat gently, stirring constantly, until the sugar dissolves.

2 Beat on high speed for 10 minutes, until completely thickened, then stir in half the vanilla. Pipe as 5cm rosettes on a lined oven tray, then bake for 4 hours, until completely crisp.

3 Whisk the cream, icing sugar and remaining vanilla to stiff peak, place on top of the meringues, then garnish with fruits.

Egg-free pavlova can be made by replacing egg whites with the water from chickpeas. Yep, you heard me right.

CHRISTMAS LAMINGTONS

Preparation time: 15 minutes // Cooking time: 25 minutes // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 300g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 225g caster sugar
- finely grated zest of 2 limes
- 3 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 4 tsp vanilla paste
- 350g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- red and green food colouring
- 400g white chocolate
- 75g Copha
- 150g dried cherries, chopped
- 75g desiccated coconut
- 75g rice bubbles
- 500g icing sugar mixture
- 75g unsalted butter
- 4 cups shredded coconut

1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine 250g butter with the caster sugar and lime zest in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat with the paddle attachment on medium speed for 5 minutes, until very light.

2 Whisk the eggs, yolks and 2 tsp vanilla, then add to the mixer and beat until combined. Fold in the flour, baking powder and buttermilk and stir to combine. Divide in two, then tint one half red and the other green. Spoon into two lined 20cm x 30cm slice pans and bake for 25 minutes, until just firm. Cool on a wire rack.

3 Melt the white chocolate and Copha gently, then mix in the cherries, coconut and rice bubbles, then spread over the red cake. Top with the green cake then refrigerate until firm.

4 Cut the cake into squares. Put the icing sugar, butter and remaining vanilla in a bowl, add ½ cup boiling water, and whisk until smooth. Dip the cake squares in the icing, then roll in coconut.

Gluten-free lamingtons are easy. Simply replace self raising flour with a gluten-free version and follow the same instructions.





DAIRY-FREE SPLICE TART

Preparation time: 25 minutes // Cooking time: 40 minutes // Serves: 10 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 225g plain flour
- 45g icing sugar
- 85g coconut flour
- pinch fine salt
- 150g solid coconut oil
- 9 egg yolks
- finely-grated zest and juice of 4 lemons (1 cup juice)
- 200ml extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp vanilla paste
- 350g caster sugar
- 4 eggs
- 30g cornflour
- 400ml coconut cream
- 1½ Tbsp powdered gelatine
- 1 tsp coconut essence

1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine the flour, icing sugar, coconut flour and salt in a food processor and pulse to combine. Add the coconut oil and process on low speed until crumbly.

2 Whisk 5 yolks, zest of 1 lemon, 1 tsp vanilla and 75ml extra virgin olive oil in a bowl. Add to the processor with the motor running, until a dough forms. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for 2 hours.

3 Roll out the dough to a 40cm disc and line into a 24cm deep tart ring. Line with damp baking paper, fill with baking weights, then bake for 30 minutes, until golden. Cool on a wire rack.

4 Combine the juice, remaining zest, remaining yolks, eggs, remaining vanilla, 250g caster sugar and cornflour in a bowl and whisk until smooth. Set over a saucepan of barely simmering water and cook, whisking constantly, until it thickens.

5 Remove from the heat and whisk in the remaining oil. Pass through a fine sieve, then pour into the pastry shell and smooth. Refrigerate until firm.

6 Warm the coconut cream and remaining caster sugar in a small saucepan over a moderate heat until dissolved. Mix the gelatine with ¼ cup and set aside for 5 minutes, then whisk into the coconut mixture to dissolve. Stir in the coconut essence, then pour over the tart and refrigerate until set.

While most gelatine is made from animal product, plant-based gelatine can be found at health food stores.

SHORTBREAD CHRISTMAS TREES

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 20 minutes
Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

- 250g unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ cup icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups plain flour
- ½ cup cornflour
- 125g dark chocolate melts, finely chopped
- 125g white chocolate melts, finely chopped
- cachous and sanding sugar, to decorate

1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Combine the butter, icing sugar and vanilla in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat with the paddle attachment on medium speed for 5 minutes, until very light. Sift the flour and cornflour in, then beat gently to form a dough. Wrap in cling film and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2 Roll the dough to ½ cm thick, then cut out Christmas tree shapes and arrange on lined trays. Freeze, then bake for 15-18 minutes, until golden. Cool on a wire rack.

3 Melt the chocolates, then spread white or dark chocolate onto biscuits and brush to make leaf effects. Decorate with cachous and sanding sugar.

If you need a dairy-free option, use margarine in place of butter and dairy-free white chocolate from your supermarket.





CHEAT'S CHRISTMAS WREATH CAKE

Preparation time: 10 minutes // Cooking time: 5 minutes // Serves: 4 // Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆

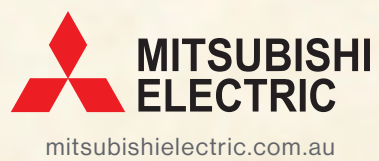
- 400g mixed dried fruit, chopped
- 1 cup brandy
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 650g madeira cake, torn into pieces
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 400g white chocolate, chopped
- 100g unsalted butter
- 50ml thickened cream
- fondant holly decorations, to garnish

1 Combine the dried fruit, brandy and vanilla in a medium saucepan and cook over a moderate heat for 10 minutes, until the brandy is absorbed.

2 Mix with the cake and spice. Combine 300g chocolate and the cream in a medium saucepan and gently melt over a low heat. Beat into the madeira mix, then spoon into a ring mould lined with cling film. Press down firmly then refrigerate until firm.

3 Heat the remaining chocolate and cream in a bowl over a saucepan of barely-simmering water, whisk well. Unmould the pudding wreath onto a platter, then spoon over the white chocolate sauce. Garnish with fondant holly decorations.

To keep booze off the menu, replace brandy with apple juice and a generous splash of rum-flavoured essence.



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