

Head Chef Ger Dunne's 2019 Christmas Recipes

Season's Greetings to everyone from Head Chef Ger here at Butler House and Garden, I'm sharing with you some of my own personal Christmas recipes this year for you to try at home! These are the recipes that I will be cooking myself at home this Christmas for all my family who come to my house every year for the celebration.

We start off with a prawn and crab cocktail in lettuce canapé style and nibble these while opening presents. Then the main event is the goose this year, a change from turkey with some exciting side dishes, a delicious cranberry sauce, amazing stuffing, and to finish my own personal favorite the sherry trifle. Please give some of these recipes a try, enjoy, and Merry Christmas everyone.



Prawn & Crab Cocktail Lettuce Cups

PREP: 30 MINS

NO COOK

EASY

SERVES 8

I Serve these on a sharing platter and let everyone build their own little prawn cocktail bites for a perfect Christmas dinner party starter or canapé with a glass of champagne

Ingredients

For the Marie rose sauce

- 4 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 3 tbsp. tomato ketchup
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- juice and zest 1 lemon
- pinch of cayenne

For the tomato salsa

- 4 tomatoes, deseeded and finely diced
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 1½ tbsp. Tabasco

To serve

- 3 Little Gem lettuces, leaves separated
- 300g cooked and peeled prawns (I use a mixture of king prawns and north Atlantic prawns)
- 200g white crabmeat
- ½ bunch chives, snipped
- lemon wedges, to serve (optional)

Method

1. Mix all the ingredients for the Marie Rose sauce and set aside in the fridge. Do the same with the tomato salsa ingredients. These can be chilled for up to 24 hrs.
 2. Arrange the lettuce leaves, prawns, crab and chives in separate bowls. Put everything on the table with a pile of lemon wedges.
 3. At the table, add some prawns and crab to the lettuce leaves, spoon over some tomato salsa and Marie Rose sauce, and scatter over a few chives. Squeeze over a little lemon juice, if you like.
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Spiced Roast Christmas Goose with a Rich Port Gravy

“If you fancy a change from turkey on Christmas day, try roast goose – rich and golden with crispy skin, it’s a real treat!”

SERVES 8

COOKS IN 3 HOURS 45 MINUTES

Ingredients

- 1 x 4 kg whole goose, (ask your butcher for the giblets, too) must preorder.
- olive oil
- 1 clementine
- ½ a bunch of fresh rosemary, (15g)
- 2 onions
- 3 carrots
- 3 sticks of celery
- 1 handful of fresh bay leaves
- 1 measure of port
- 2 heaped tablespoons plain flour
- 1-liter organic chicken stock
- 1 pomegranate

SPICE MIX

- 90 g star anise
- 90 g fennel seeds
- 75 g coriander seeds
- 30 g Sichuan pepper
- 15 g cloves
- 60 g cinnamon sticks
- 1 large pinch of saffron
- 90 g soft brown sugar
- 60 g sea salt
- 30 g whole black peppercorns

Method

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4.
- To make the spice mix, blitz all the ingredients in a food processor to a fine powder. Pour through a coarse sieve into an airtight jar, then discard any woody bits left behind in the sieve.



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- With a fork or the tip of a sharp knife, prick the fatty lump under the goose's wing to help the fat melt out.
- Rub the goose all over with a little olive oil and 2 heaped tablespoons of the spice mix, making sure you get into all the nooks and crannies. Keep the remaining spice mix for another day – it's incredible on all roasted or grilled meats.
- Prick the clementine all over with a sharp knife, then place into the goose's cavity with a few rosemary sprigs.
- Peel and quarter the onions, then chop the carrots and celery into large chunks. Place into a large roasting tray with the remaining rosemary, the bay and goose giblets. Toss well, add 150ml of cold water, and then place the tray on the bottom shelf of the oven.
- Pop the goose directly on the bars above, so the juices from the goose drip into the tray, leaving you with crisp, beautifully succulent meat. Cook for around 3 hours, or until cooked through, golden and crisp. To check, insert a skewer into the thickest part of the thigh – if the juices run clear, it's done.
- When the goose has been roasting for 2 hours, remove the veg tray from the oven and replace it with another tray. Skim away the fat from the veg tray (reserve it in a jar with a few extra bay leaves to make amazing roast potatoes, place the tray on the hob over a high heat.
- Add the port and cook for around 3 minutes, or until reduced. Stir in the flour for a minute, then pour in the stock. Reduce to a simmer for around 10 minutes, or until thickened to a nice gravy consistency. Sieve into a medium pan, then set aside.
- When the time is up on the goose, remove it from the oven, cover with a double layer of tin foil and a tea towel and leave to rest for 20 to 25 minutes.
- Remove the tray from the oven, skim away and reserve the fat, then pour any juices into the gravy. Warm up the gravy on a medium heat.
- Once rested, place the goose on a board and remove the skin – pop this into the oven for another 10 minutes to crisp it up nicely (keep an eye on it!).
- Carve away the legs, then shred the meat with two forks, discarding the bones. Carefully slice away the breasts, then slice up and place on a platter with the remaining shredded meat.
- Halve the pomegranate, then holding it in the palm of your hand cut-side down over the platter, bash the back with a wooden spoon so the seeds come tumbling out. Snap the crispy skin over the top, then serve with your hot gravy and all the trimmings.

Tips: Goose fat is absolute gold, and it's the best thing to roast your potatoes in.



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Cranberry & marmalade sauce

5 MINSCOOK: 10 MINS

SERVES 8

A homemade cranberry sauce with little flecks of peel from the marmalade for lovely bursts of citrus - easy to make in just 15 minutes great with the roast goose.

Ingredients

- 300g pack fresh or frozen cranberries
- juice 1 orange
- 50g light muscovado sugar
- 100g orange shred marmalade

Method

- Tip the cranberries into a medium pan over a low heat with the orange juice, sugar and marmalade, and stir until the sugar and marmalade melt and the mixture starts to bubble. Cook for 3-5 mins, depending on whether the cranberries are fresh or frozen, as the frozen ones will soften more quickly. They need to be tender but still hold their shape, so try to squash one to see if it is soft enough. The sauce will thicken as it cools, but this has a looser texture than shop bought. Will keep for 1 week in the fridge.
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Sizzled sprouts with pistachios & pomegranate

PREP: 10 MINS**COOK: 20 MINS**

EASY

SERVES 8

Add a deliciously different side dish to your Christmas spread with these pan-fried sprouts and juicy pomegranate seeds, drizzled with pomegranate molasses

Ingredients

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 500g Brussels sprouts, halved
- 50g pistachios, roughly chopped
- 100g pomegranate seeds
- pomegranate molasses, to drizzle (optional)

Method

- Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Put the sprouts in the pan, cut side down, and leave them to fry for 10-15 mins, tossing occasionally. If they're just lightly brown, carry on cooking for a further 5 mins until blistered.
 - Scatter over the pistachios and stir-fry until toasted. Remove from the heat and stir through the pomegranate seeds. Season with salt and tip into a serving dish. Drizzle with a little pomegranate molasses, if you like.
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Cheesy Celeriac, Leek & Rosemary Gratin

PREP: 25 MINS **COOK: 1 HR, 35 MINS**

EASY

SERVES 8

Combine celeriac and leek with mature cheddar for an indulgent Christmas side dish. A spoonful of mustard or horseradish stirred through the cream wouldn't go amiss

Ingredients

- 25g butter
- 2 leeks, outer layer removed, washed of any grit and sliced into rings
- small handful rosemary leaves, roughly chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 300ml double cream
- 300ml milk
- 1 celeriac (about 500g), peeled, quartered and thinly sliced
- 100g cheddar or gruyere, coarsely grated

Method

- Heat the butter in a saucepan. Add the leeks, rosemary and bay leaf, then cover and cook very gently over a medium-low heat for 15-20 mins until the leeks are soft. Pour over the milk and almost all the cream, then season and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and leave to cool a little, then scoop out the bay leaf.
- Pour a little of the leek mixture into an ovenproof gratin dish. Arrange a layer of celeriac in the dish, then season. Spoon over some more of the leek mixture and scatter with a little cheese. Repeat the process, alternating between layers of the leek mixture, cheese and celeriac slices, then finish with a drizzle of cream and the last of the cheese. *Can be prepared up to a day ahead and kept in the fridge.*
- Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Bake the gratin for 1 hr-1 hr. 15 mins until the top is golden and the celeriac is tender when poked with a knife. If the gratin is browning a little too much, cover the dish in foil. *Can be chilled, then reheated in a microwave or oven on a low heat with a drizzle more cream.*



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Golden Goose Fat Potatoes & Parsnips

PREP: 15 MINS **COOK: 2 HRS, 10 MINS**

EASY

SERVES 6

Roast your potatoes and parsnips in goose fat this Christmas for the ultimate side dish that everyone will love. Serve with our no-stress gravy

Ingredients

- 1½ kg Maris Piper potatoes, cut into large chunks
- 600g parsnips peeled and cut into large chunks
- 100g goose fat
- handful rosemary sprigs (optional)

Method

- Tip the potatoes into a large pan of cold salted water and bring to the boil. Turn the heat down slightly and keep the water bubbling gently for 3 mins, then add the parsnips and continue to simmer for 3 mins more. Drain everything and leave until cool enough to handle, then separate the parsnips and the potatoes.
 - Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6 with a large roasting tin containing the goose fat inside. When the goose fat is hot, remove the tin from the oven. Carefully tip in the potatoes and turn them so they're completely coated in fat. Place the tin back in the oven and leave undisturbed for 1 hr. Remove the tin from the oven, add the parsnips and gently turn everything together.
 - Increase oven temperature to 220C/200C fan/gas 8. Roast everything for 20 mins, then turn the parsnips and potatoes again with the rosemary, if using, and roast for about another 15 mins until everything is golden and crisp. Sprinkle with sea salt and scoop into a warm serving dish.
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Chestnut, Bacon & Cranberry Stuffing

PREP: 30 MINS - 40 MINS **COOK: 40 MINS** **PLUS 1 HOUR TO SOAK THE CRANBERRIES**

EASY

MAKES 24 STUFFING BALLS

This festive stuffing brings together all the trimmings in one gorgeous mass, great with the goose.

Ingredients

- 100g dried cranberries
- 50ml ruby port
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 rashers unsmoked back bacon, cut into strips
- 50g butter
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 450g sausage meat
- 140g fresh white or brown breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
- ½ tsp chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 140g peeled, cooked chestnuts, roughly chopped
- 1 medium egg lightly beaten

Method

- Soak the cranberries in the port for an hour. Fry the onion and bacon gently in the butter, until the onion is tender, and the bacon is cooked. Add the garlic and fry for another minute or so.
 - Cool slightly, then mix with all the remaining ingredients, including the cranberries and port, adding enough egg to bind – I find it easiest to use my hands. Fry a knob of stuffing in a little butter, taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.
 - To Cook: This stuffing can be baked in a dish or rolled into balls that will be crisp on the outside and moist inside. To bake, press the stuffing into a greased ovenproof dish in a layer that is around 4cm thick. Bake at 190C/gas 5/fan 170C for about 40 minutes, until browned and, in the case of sausage meat stuffing, cooked right through. Alternatively, roll into balls that are about 4cm in diameter. Roast the stuffing balls in hot fat (they can be tucked around the turkey or done in a roasting tin of their own) for 30-40 minutes, until crisp and nicely browned on the outside.
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Classic Boozy Christmas Trifle

PREP: 45 MINS**COOK: 15 MINS** PLUS COOLING AND SETTING

SERVES 10

Christmas celebrations are not complete without a trifle and this recipe is guaranteed to be the crown jewels of the table

Ingredients

- 750g frozen summer fruit (raspberries, blackberries, red and blackcurrants)
- 250g caster sugar
- 9 sheets leaf gelatin
- 75g custard powder
- 1.2l milk
- 1½-2 madeira cakes
- 4 tbsp sherry or cassis
- 300-450ml double cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 2 crushed amaretti biscuits, to serve
- Whole fresh strawberries for garnish

Method

- Put 750g frozen summer fruit in a pan with 200g caster sugar and 1-liter water and bring to a gentle simmer.
- Cook for 2 mins, then scoop out 6 tbsp. fruit and 150ml juice. Now carry on cooking the fruit in the pan for 5 mins.
- Meanwhile, soak 9 sheets leaf gelatin in cold water to soften it. If you have a hand blender, blitz the cooked fruit or mash with a potato masher, then strain through a sieve into a large bowl and push through the pulp so just the skins and seeds are left.
- Squeeze excess water from the gelatin, add to the hot fruit syrup and stir to dissolve. Cool, then chill until on the point of almost setting.
- Make the custard according to pack instructions with 75g custard powder, 1.2l milk and 50g caster sugar to create a thick custard. Cover the surface with baking paper while it cools a little.
- Pile 1½ - 2 cubed madeira cakes into a trifle bowl, spoon over the reserved juice and berries, then 4 tbsp. sherry or cassis.
- Pour over a thick layer of custard, pushing it against the side of the dish to seal in the cake below. Leave to cool and set with a skin - this makes a barrier for the jelly.
- When the custard is cold and set, and the jelly is on the point of setting, spoon the jelly over the custard and chill until ready to complete.



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- Whip 300 - 450ml double cream with 1 tsp vanilla extract and 2 tbsp icing sugar until just holding its shape, then spoon round the bowl over the set jelly. Scatter with 2 crushed amaretti biscuits, strawberries and chill until ready to serve.
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