

THE JACK IN THE GREEN

3 Simple Dishes from 3 South West Chef's of the Year.



In August The Jack in the Green once again became home to the 'South West Chef of the Year'.

This is an annual competition run by Taste of the West. Our in house Charcuterie expert Matthew Downing was delighted to become the third 'Jack' chef in the last four years to win the title. To do so, he first had to impress the likes of Michael Caines, Peter Gorton and the Tanner Brothers and beat off competition from every other chef who entered from across the South West!

Both myself and Scott have won the competition in previous years and for this recipe card we wanted to show you three simple, comforting and easy to follow recipes that you can cook at home.

Matthew Mason
November 2010

Mushrooms

by Matthew Mason

Mushrooms are one of winter's most versatile ingredients. I love to use them in soups, pastas, risottos or simply pan fried on toast as we've done here and served with a soft poached duck egg and toasted sourdough for a great start to the day. They are a superb accompaniment for game at this time of year too.

Mushrooms come in all shapes and sizes with over 3,000 varieties in England alone. However, only a hundred or so are edible and at least twenty are seriously harmful or potentially fatal. If you do fancy foraging some for yourself, then make sure you go with someone (ideally a local expert) who knows what they are doing. Once you have found a good spot, very often they will return the next year - this is the reason foragers are very secretive about the whereabouts of their treasure!

This year we have seen more foragers than ever before on our kitchen doorstep with bumper crops of Ceps and the most incredible Chanterelles. These are just a couple of the most prolific types of mushroom available. A personal favourite of mine is the appropriately named 'Trompette de Mort' or 'Trumpet of Death' (jet black and shaped like a trumpet) and the 'Pied de Mouton' or 'Sheep's Foot', so called because if you turn it over it looks like a sheep's foot. There's also the infamous Morel mushroom which you often find as a dried mushroom. This can add an incredible smoky flavour to dishes and is a great store cupboard item to have.

Most supermarkets will sell a selection of farmed mushrooms like field, chestnut, shitake or oyster. But at this time of year, and if you can get them, or know of a secret spot, then there is nothing quite like a good wild mushroom. Be sure to clean thoroughly before use as they are sharing the forest floor with many other creatures. Whilst I wouldn't encourage you to necessarily wash them, if you do, be sure to dry them as thoroughly as you can before frying. Water really is a mushrooms enemy and the best mushrooms are dry and clean.

Mushrooms on toast are brilliant for breakfast, lunch or even dinner with one of the many game birds available at this time of year (simply roasted and served with the breast carved on top).

TIPS

WHEN IT COMES TO COOKING THE MUSHROOMS, USE A LARGE PAN SO ANY MOISTURE CAN EVAPORATE AND SO THEY CAN FRY, RATHER THAN BOIL, IN THEIR OWN JUICES.

USE A GOOD QUALITY OLIVE OIL AND AN INTERESTING MIX OF MUSHROOMS (APPROX 200G PER PERSON), SOME GARLIC OIL, A LITTLE CHOPPED PARSLEY AND FINISH WITH A SQUEEZE OF LEMON.



Chicken, Ham and Leek Pie

by Matthew Downing
Serves 8

I enjoy cooking this pie when my family come for a visit; it's a great winter warmer!

INGREDIENTS

For the Filling:

6 free range chicken breasts. Skin removed and diced in 1 inch squares. Fry in a pan with a little oil until golden all over.

10 baby leeks or 3 tender medium sized leeks (wash well) cut into 3cm pieces, blanch until tender, leave to cool in iced water.

1 ham hock boiled in water with a bay leaf, small carrot, stick celery and half a leek until the meat is falling off the bone. (Or you could use diced, cooked ham. You can ask your butcher for some off cuts).

For the Pie Sauce:

1 pint of milk
2oz unsalted butter
2oz plain flour

For the Pastry:

400g plain flour (plus extra for dusting)
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
50g fridge cold butter diced
175g fridge cold lard diced
150ml water
2 teaspoons salt



Method:

- 1). Sift the flour into a large bowl and stir in the pepper.
- 2). Rub the butter and 50 g of the lard until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- 3). Make a well in the centre, put the water and salt in a saucepan, bring to a simmer then remove from the heat.
- 4). Whisk in the remaining 125g lard. Pour the mixture into the bowl with the flour. Stir well first with a wooden spoon then your fingers to make a smooth pliable dough.
- 5). Cover and leave for 15-20minutes to allow it to cool and become workable,
- 6). Working quickly, reserve a third of the pastry to make the lid. Roll out the remaining pastry on a heavily floured work surface, until 5mm thick and use this to line a well greased cake tin (17.5cm in diameter). Leave a 3cm overhang around the edge. Press the pastry well into the base and sides of the tin.
- 7). For the sauce, melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the flour (always stirring) and this will become a roux. Slowly add the milk until you have a thick white sauce. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 8). Add the chicken, ham and leeks to sauce and pour the mixture into the pastry base.
- 9). Roll out the remaining pastry into a 24cm round. Brush the edges of the pie with water. Place the lid on top and trim off the excess pastry. Pinch the edges. Brush the pastry lid with water and place a 1 cm hole in the centre of the pie lid.
- 10). Bake in a pre heated oven over 180°C /350F/Gas4 for 35 - 40minutes until the pastry is golden brown.



Butternut Squash Muffins

by Scott Paton



The mysterious squash comes in all sorts of different shapes and sizes and is actually a fruit, not a vegetable. Squash can be made into incredible soups and spicy Thai butternut is a firm favourite at work, as is a classic squash soup with brown butter and sage.

Butternut squash muffins are the perfect winter treat and in many ways very similar to carrot cake. They're so simple to make that I would urge everyone to give them a go. It's also a great way to get the kids eating squash!

For about a dozen muffins you will need:

400g peeled, de-seeded and roughly chopped butternut squash
350g light brown sugar
4 large free range eggs
A pinch of salt
300g sifted plain flour
2 teaspoons of baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
175ml extra virgin olive oil

Method:

- 1). Blend the squash in a food processor until finely chopped, add the sugar and crack in the eggs.
- 2). Add a pinch of salt, the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and olive oil and whizz together until very smooth, scraping down the sides as necessary.
- 3). Fill some paper cases with the cake mixture and bake in a pre-heated oven (180°C) for 20 minutes. If when prodded with a knife or skewer it comes out clean then they are done. If it is still a little sticky, pop back in the oven for a further five minutes or so.
- 4). When cooked, remove from the oven and cool on a wire rack.
- 5). For the frosted topping, place the zest of an orange and a lemon and the juice from half a lemon into a bowl. Add 150ml soured cream, 2 tablespoons of sifted icing sugar, a few vanilla seeds and mix well.
- 6). Once your cakes have cooled down, spoon the topping onto the cakes and finish with a little more grated zest. If you are lucky enough to have lavender in the garden, sprinkle a little liberally on top.