

The Idle Man Presents: Men Make Dinner Day Recipe Book

By The Idle Man

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Intro

Men, it's time for you to get into the kitchen and cook up a storm for Men Make Dinner Day. A whole day dedicated to men finally putting on the apron and making the dinner for their significant other or family. Creator Sandy Sharkey has pushed men off of the sofa and into the kitchen to their partners cries of joy - head over to www.menmakedinnerday.com to check out all of the info.

There are a few rules that go along with this, some that you may not like, but I'm afraid you're going to have to deal with it. As your partner sits back, cracks open that bottle of wine they've been saving and watches the telly, you can be creating something amazing in the kitchen.

[The Idle Man](#) have teamed up with various restaurants, bloggers and chefs to create this amazing collection of recipes ranging from super simplistic to haute cuisine. Whether you're in the mood for mac and cheese or steak, you'll be sure to find something in this guide to tickle your taste buds.

We've tried to keep it as simple as possible, but I'm sure you'll go running to the internet if something particularly challenging arises. Fear not, I'm sure your dinner with your other half or friends will go off without a hitch, and who knows, you may be making dinner more often than you think (if it all goes well that is).

**TOP TEN REASONS TO
PARTICIPATE IN
'NATIONAL MEN MAKE DINNER DAY'**

1. Participating in 'National Men Make Dinner Day' gives you optimum points with your other half. Use those points wisely!
2. Since other husbands in your neighbourhood are also cooking dinner, ironically this could be the ultimate male bonding experience.
3. Some desserts, such as crème brûlée, require the use of a propane torch. How much fun is that?!
4. Since YOU choose the recipe, it can be a turnip-free night.
5. Discovering that '250 ml' is the same as '8 ounces' AND '1 cup' is half the fun.
6. Whatever recipe you choose, you can name it after yourself. Example: tonight's dinner is called 'Doug's Surprise'.
7. Whoever is cooking always gets the most attention from the dog.
8. The blender, the electric mixer and the food processor are loud enough to drown out anyone in the house who is learning a musical instrument.
9. Several recipes include beer as a legitimate ingredient.
10. While cooking, you can still wear your tool belt, simply replace the hammer with a whisk.

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The Rules

Rule #1: Men Make Dinner Day is celebrated on the first Thursday of each November.

Rule #2: Man agrees to participate in national Men Make Dinner Day. Bonus points if he does so without seeking promise of night out with boys in return.

Rule #3: Man, completely unaided, chooses a 'published' recipe from any source, or Internet. Getting the recipe from 'her' cookbooks is allowed, but man gets bonus points if the recipe isn't already somewhere in the house.

Rule #4: Main meal must include minimum of four ingredients and require at least one cooking utensil other than a fork

Rule #5: Man goes shopping for *all* necessary ingredients. Bonus points if he takes inventory of cupboards and fridge first, before shopping trip (so you don't end up with two 64 ounce jars of pickled pimentos).

Rule #6: Man organises all necessary ingredients in order of importance on kitchen counter. At this point, he may need to make a phone call or shout out the word 'honey!' followed by a question. This is not allowed.

Rule #7: Man may, if desired, turn on radio or his favourite CD. Man agrees not to be within 30 feet of TV remote during cooking process. At this point, spouse and any other family members should not be anywhere near kitchen. (unless smoke detector goes off!)

Rule #8: Following recipe carefully, man starts to cook dinner! Apron is optional, (bonus points if recipe includes one of the following: capers, saffron, or the word 'scallopini').

Rule #9: Man must use the 'clean as he goes along' rule! Following each completed use of utensils, cookware, half-used jars of anything, spice bottles etc., everything is rinsed, cleaned and put away.

Rule #10: Man sets table, candles are lit, beverages are poured, no ketchup bottles, sour cream containers, or big boxes of salt on table.

Rule #11: Spouse and/or family members are served! This is an opportune time for a photo. Man is 'allowed' to gloat no more than three times during the meal. Family is encouraged to congratulate man on job well done. Family dog is not allowed to be secretly fed man's cooking.

Rule #12: After meal, table is cleared by man, dishwasher is loaded. Man returns to table for stimulating after-dinner conversation. At this point, man is told how much his meal was appreciated. He, in turn, describes the joys and challenges of the experience. He is given a hug, and his TV remote is returned to him.

Starters

Toasted Bruschetta (V)

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

An Italian classic, packed full of flavour and dead easy to make. The better the tomatoes the better the bruschetta!

Best Served With

Try pairing this Mediterranean starter with the light and fragrant Domaine des Huards Envol from the Loire Valley in France.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 fresh, crusty baguette
- 4 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped and drained
- Half a small red onion, finely chopped
- 1-2 cloves of crushed garlic
- 6 leaves of fresh basil, finely chopped
- 15ml balsamic vinegar
- 40ml extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

In a large bowl, mix all of the ingredients together (except the baguette!), not forgetting to add salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate for about an hour so the flavours marry together.

Slice the baguette loaf diagonally, into thick slices and lightly toast the slices until they are light brown on both sides. Remove the mixture from the fridge to bring it to room temp and serve on the warm slices of bread.

Moules Marinieres

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

The French do it best when it comes to romance, which is why we've chosen a French classic to begin the evening. Mussels are best bought fresh from your local market and are really easy to cook.

Best Served With

We suggest starting the night off with an award winning glass of Blanc de Blanc Champagne from Tendil & Lombardi.

INGREDIENTS

- 1kg mussels
- 25g unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 25ml dry white wine
- 1 tbsp roughly chopped fresh parsley

METHOD

Wash the mussels in cold water. Scrape away any barnacles and discard any that are open.

Take a large lidded pan that is big enough to hold all the mussels. Add the mussels, butter, onion, white wine and half the parsley and set over a high heat. Turn the mussels over every now and then as they start to open. Keep the lid on the pan in between turning them. When they are all open, remove from the heat and leave for 30 seconds or so to let all the grit settle to the bottom of the pan.

Scoop out the mussels with a big spoon and divide onto 2 deep plates. Pour all the juices from the pan over the mussels, holding back the last tablespoon or so, which will be full of grit. Sprinkle the rest of the parsley over the mussels and serve.

Spicy Beef & Papaya Salad

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

Add a bit of spice to the evening with a sensational thai salad. This dish will get the taste buds tingling and will showcase your flare in the kitchen.

Best Served With

Pair sugar with spice and send her senses wild with a lusciously sweet glass of Ice Wine from Canada's most sought after producer, Ziraldo.

INGREDIENTS

- 300g sirloin beef steaks, fat removed
- Vegetable oil, for greasing
- 100g bag baby spinach leaves
- 2 ripe but firm papayas, peeled, deseeded and sliced
- 1 small pack coriander, leaves picked
- 1 small pack mint, leaves picked
- ½ large cucumber, sliced
- 4 spring onions, thinly sliced
- 1 red chilli, thinly sliced
- 3 tbsp crispy onions
- For the dressing:
- 2 tbsp tamarind purée
- 1 tsp grated garlic
- Juice 2 limes
- 3 tbsp soft brown sugar
- 1½ tbsp fish sauce
- Large pinch chilli flakes

METHOD

Season the steak well. Heat a lightly oiled frying pan. Sear the steaks for 2 mins each side, then remove and leave to rest for 5 mins. When rested, thinly slice.

Mix the dressing ingredients together with 1 tbsp water until the sugar is dissolved. Arrange the spinach, beef, papaya, herbs, cucumber, spring onions and chilli on a platter. Pour the dressing over half the salad and sprinkle with the crispy onions. Serve the remaining dressing on the side or save for making another salad.

Mexican pâté (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

Once you've got all the ingredients soaked – we tend just to put everything in water before we go to bed so that it's ready in the morning – this is a quick way to enjoy some raw food. It will keep for about three days once made. It's very versatile and you can enjoy it as a dip or with raw crackers or even in a sandwich or tacos if you're not worried about keeping the whole thing raw. You can buy a jar of miso at health-food stores and it adds such depth to this pâté – and indeed, to many other dishes. It's a great ingredient to discover and one of our fridge staples!

INGREDIENTS

- 75g almonds, soaked
- 150g 1 cup sunflower seeds, soaked
- 75g walnuts, soaked
- 1/2 small red onion, roughly chopped
- 1 tomato, roughly chopped
- A handful of fresh coriander leaves
- A handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 75g 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 tsp brown rice miso
- 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and roughly chopped
- A pinch of ground cumin
- 1/2 garlic clove • a handful of sun-dried tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 1/2 chipotle chilli, soaked

METHOD

Blend everything together in food processor, adding a little water if necessary to achieve a well-mixed pâté that still has a little texture.

Tortilla Soup (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

The origins of this popular Mexican soup are a bit of a mystery and there are countless variations. People argue ferociously over which version is correct (and best!), but no matter which one you pick you'll enjoy a pungent, deeply comforting mix of heady flavours. It's usually topped with tortillas that are sliced and then toasted, and this adds an unusual toasted-corn element, but you can substitute the tortillas for tortilla chips if you want to save time. In place of soured cream, we've used avocado – a vegan's best friend – for its easy, creamy goodness.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for coating
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 red (bell) peppers, deseeded and diced
- 1 courgette diced
- 2 sweetcorn (corn) cobs, kernels shaved off
- 1/2 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
- 1 chipotle chilli
- 1 spring onion chopped
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp mild smoked paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 400g tinned chopped tomatoes
- 500ml Vegetable Stock, homemade or shop-bought
- 4 corn tortillas, cut into strips, or 1/2 bag tortilla chips
- 400g tinned mixed beans, drained and rinsed

To Serve

- A few fresh coriander leaves
- 1 avocado, peeled, stoned and sliced
- 2 limes, halved

In a large pan, sauté the onion in the olive oil until translucent. Add the garlic, peppers, courgette, sweetcorn kernels, red chilli, chipotle and spring onion. Season with the cumin, paprika, salt and white pepper and stir well. Cook over a low heat for about 10 minutes, then add the chopped tomatoes and the vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat slightly, partially cover and simmer for a further 25–30 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the sliced corn tortillas, if using. Preheat the oven to 180` C/350 F/gas mark 4. Coat the tortilla strips with a little olive oil and arrange them in a single layer on a baking tray. Toast in the oven for about 5 minutes, or until nice and crisp. Set aside.

Add the beans to the soup and cook for another 10 minutes until heated through. Check the seasoning and adjust to taste. Divide the soup into bowls and serve topped with coriander, avocado, toasted tortilla strips or chips and a squeeze of lime juice.



Buffalo Mozzarella with Pomegranates, Chilli, Mint and Parsley (V)

Recipe Provided by Bukowski Grill

This is the perfect starter for those of you who aren't prepared to cook a whole lot. With a few ingredients you can make something very simple, but is packed full of flavour that is surely not to disappoint.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Buffalo mozzarella torn into 8
- 100g pomegranate seeds
- Small bunch of flat leaf parsley roughly chopped
- Small bunch of mint roughly chopped
- 1 red chilli deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 tbs Extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and cracked black pepper

METHOD

Arrange the mozzarella on a serving plate.

In a small bowl, mix the pomegranates with the parsley, mint, chilli and olive oil.

Drizzle all over the mozzarella, season and serve.

Mains

Salmon & Asparagus

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

All you need is one roasting dish for this fool-proof recipe. It's healthy and delicious with very little skill required!

Best Served With

Pair with a crisp and dry, Premier Cru Chablis from Charly Nicolle for a refreshing, citrus burst.

INGREDIENTS

- 400g new potatoes, halved if large
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 8 asparagus spears, trimmed and halved
- 2 handfuls cherry tomatoes
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 salmon fillets, about 140g each
- Handful basil leaves

METHOD

Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7. Tip the potatoes and 1 tbsp of olive oil into an ovenproof dish, then roast the potatoes for 20 mins until starting to brown. Toss the asparagus in with the potatoes, then return to the oven for 15 mins.

Throw in the cherry tomatoes and vinegar and nestle the salmon amongst the vegetables. Drizzle with the remaining oil and return to the oven for a final 10-15 mins until the salmon is cooked. Scatter over the basil leaves and serve everything scooped straight from the dish.

Steak and Sticky Red Wine Sauce

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

Why not have some fun while you cook with this boozy, full-flavoured steak.

Best Served With

Try pairing a traditional, rich Bordeaux from St Julien's rising star, Chateau Les Ormes. Remember to save a glass for cooking!

INGREDIENTS

- 8 shallots, peeled and quartered
- 2 sirloin steaks, about 175g/6oz each
- Crushed black peppercorns
- 25g butter
- 4 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 175ml red wine (and any extra for glugging)
- 150ml beef stock

METHOD

Season the steaks generously with salt and crushed peppercorns. Heat half the butter in a pan until sizzling, then cook the steaks for 2 ½ minutes on each side for medium-rare or until done to your liking.

Remove the steaks and keep warm. While they rest, add the remaining butter to the pan, throw in the shallots, then sizzle in the sticky pan until starting to brown. Add the balsamic vinegar and bubble for a few mins. Add the wine and boil down until sticky, then add the beef stock and simmer until everything comes together. Spoon the shallots over the steaks and serve with green beans and chips.

Lady and the Tramp Spaghetti & Meatballs

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

Treat the lady to a taste of Italy with easy-peasy meatballs in a rich and boozy tomato sauce!

Best Served With

Italian cuisine needs Italian wine so we've chosen a smooth Valpolicella Ripasso from organic producer, Corte Sant' Alda.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground sirloin
- 1/4 cup minced fresh onion
- 2 tablespoons dry breadcrumbs
- Salt & pepper to season
- 1 large egg white, lightly beaten
- 400g chopped tomatoes
- A big squeeze of tomato puree
- 150ml red wine
- 1tbs oil
- 225g dried pasta
- 5 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 5 tablespoons chopped fresh basil

METHOD

Combine the mincemeat, onions, breadcrumbs and 2 tablespoons of pasta sauce in a medium bowl. Season the mixture with salt and pepper. Shape the meat mixture into 25 (1-inch) meatballs and cook in a large, non-stick pan that's been drizzled in oil, over medium heat, for approx. 6 minutes, browning on all sides. Stir in remaining pasta sauce. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes or until the meatballs are done, stirring occasionally.

For the pasta, take a saucepan and fill it with water and bring it to the boil and add a sprinkle of salt. Add your spaghetti and cook for about 10-12 minutes until cooked al dente (which means still a touch hard).

Serve the meatballs over the spaghetti and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and fresh basil.

Depending on how romantic you're feeling, share your meatballs with your lucky lady by nosing them across the plate her way.

Glastonbrie

This pun is too good to miss, just like the festival that inspired it. Full of flavour and cheese and surely to be a hit, this recipe is made for those mac and cheese, and festival lovers of you out there.

Recipe and Photo Provided by Anna Mae's

INGREDIENTS

- 400g macaroni
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 70g Japanese panko breadcrumbs (any breadcrumbs will do)
- 60g shop-bought or home-made crispy onions
- 25g flour
- 25g butter
- 600ml milk
- 150g mild Cheddar, grated
- 150g Somerset brie, rind removed and cheese cubed
- A few sprigs of rosemary



METHOD

Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the pasta according to the pack instructions, until al dente. Tip into a colander and leave to drain completely.

Melt the butter in a frying pan over a low heat and toss in the panko breadcrumbs to coat. Lower the heat to medium and toast the breadcrumbs until golden. Set aside. Crush the crispy onions and mix them with the toasted breadcrumbs. Set aside.

In a heavy-bottomed pan, add the butter and flour until combined and slowly add the milk until fully incorporated, then reduce the heat to low. Add all the cheese and stir until melted. Stir in the drained pasta.

Transfer to 4 serving bowls, cover with breadcrumbs and beautify with sprigs of rosemary.



Beer-battered Tofu ‘Fish’ and Chips with Tartare Sauce and Mushy Peas (V)

Recipe Provided by Whole Food Heaven

We're suckers for anything battered once in awhile and this really hits the spot. The tofu is a wonderful substitute in this classic British dish and the nori really adds the taste of the sea. Served with chunky chips, piquant tartare sauce to liven it up and a healthy dose of mushy peas, this is a dish to treasure. Serve, of course, with cheap malt vinegar.

INGREDIENTS

- 180g plain (all-purpose) flour
- 1 tsp cornflour (cornstarch), plus extra to dust
- 1½ tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 325ml pale ale (make sure you get a vegan one)
- 350g block fresh firm tofu, drained and cut into 8–10 slices
- 1 sheet nori, cut into pieces to match the tofu slices
- Salt and pepper
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges to serve
- 1 batch Tartare Sauce to serve

For the chips

- 4–5 King Edward potatoes, peeled, cut into chunky chip shapes and left to dry out on a tea towel
- 750ml cups vegetable oil

For the mushy peas

- 200g cups fresh or frozen peas
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- A handful of fresh mint, finely chopped

To make the chips, heat the oil to about 160 • C. When a cube of bread browns in about 40 seconds, put half the chips in – you're going to cook them in two batches – and fry for about 10 minutes until the insides are soft. Keep the temperature constant. Remove with a slotted spoon and leave to drain on a baking sheet covered with kitchen paper (paper towels).

While the chips are draining, make the beer batter by combining the flour, cornflour, onion, garlic and chilli powders with the ale, mixing thoroughly. In a pan, heat the oil to 170 ◻ temperature by putting a couple of drops of batter in the oil and seeing if it crisps up.

Dust the tofu and nori slices with a little cornflour, then coat with the batter mixture and add to the hot oil in batches. They should take about 3–4 minutes to get really crisp. Flip them over midway so that they get nice and golden on both sides. Remove with a slotted spoon, place on some kitchen paper to soak up any excess oil and season to taste.

When you're ready to eat, heat the oil to 190 °C, put the chips back in and cook until they're golden and crispy. This should take about 6 minutes. Meanwhile, put the peas in boiling water with a little salt, bring to the boil, then cook for a couple of minutes until they're slightly overdone. Strain, put them back in the pan, then crush with a potato masher, adding a little water if necessary to make them soft. Add the apple cider vinegar and chopped mint. Season with salt and pepper and slowly heat while mixing for a couple of minutes.

Put everything together on a (big!) plate with a generous wedge of lemon and a dollop of Tartare Sauce and enjoy.



Korma (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

This sweet, creamy curry is just one of those things you sometimes crave, and although it's often made with yogurt or cream, our mix of cashew nuts and coconut milk give it the same level of comforting creaminess. Serve with chapattis and basmati rice for a real treat and to add that little something extra to the meal. We also love to eat our curries with a chutney or pickle, so try that, too. You could also add a dollop of Coconut Yoghurt.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp coconut oil (or cooking oil of your choice)
- 4 black peppercorns
- 1 dried red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp chilli powder
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 6 green cardamom pods
- 1 clove
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 1/2 tbsp coriander seeds, lightly toasted in a pan and then crushed
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander leaves, plus extra to garnish
- 1 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 1 garlic clove, puréed
- 1 1/2 large onions, puréed
- 1 cm fresh root ginger, peeled and blended with the onion
- 1 small cauliflower, cut into small florets
- 250g pumpkin, diced
- 100g green beans
- 200ml coconut milk
- 150g cashews, soaked for 2 hours
- 500ml cups water
- 40g sultanas (golden raisins) salt cooked basmati rice to serve
- 1 lime, cut into wedges, to serve

METHOD

Heat the coconut oil in a pan with the peppercorns, chilli and chilli powder, cinnamon, cardamom, clove, turmeric, coriander seeds and leaves, garam masala, garlic, onion and ginger and slowly cook on a low heat, mixing it around occasionally, while you prepare the vegetables. You want to cook it until there's no longer the smell of raw onion, which should take about 10 minutes.

Add the vegetables and continue to cook over a low heat.

Meanwhile, in a blender, combine the coconut milk and cashews and add to the vegetable mix, along with the water and the sultanas. Leave to simmer for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent it from catching. Season to taste, garnish with coriander leaves and serve with basmati rice and lime wedges for squeezing over.



Thai Green Curry (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

This has got a little more kick than the Korma. Properly made, it's another potent combination of sour, sweet, salt and heat, offset by the soothing creaminess of the coconut, that will assault your taste buds in the best-possible way. Green chiles lend colour and bite, but you can experiment with the remaining ingredients. Aubergines, cherry tomatoes and, wait for it, lychees, are our favourite combination! It's a great idea to stock up on things like galangal, fresh turmeric and kaffir lime leaves and keep them in the freezer so you don't have to make a special grocery trip when you want to pack flavour into your dishes.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 aubergine, cubed
- A pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp coconut oil (or cooking oil of your choice)
- 1 batch Thai Green Curry Paste
- 1 tbsp palm sugar
- 800 ml tinned coconut milk
- Tamari, to taste (make sure it's gluten free)
- 200g tinned lychees
- 100g mangetout, sliced at an angle
- 100g baby corn, cut in half
- 250g cherry tomatoes
- A handful of fresh coriander leaves, from the roots used in the paste (above), plus extra to garnish
- A handful of fresh Thai basil leaves, plus extra to garnish
- Cooked short-grained brown rice (or rice of your choice) to serve

Preheat the oven to 200 °C/gas mark 6. Put the aubergine cubes on a baking sheet, sprinkle over the salt and drizzle with olive oil. Roast for about 20 minutes.

Heat the coconut oil in a pan and add the curry paste. Sauté on a medium heat for 3–4 minutes, then add the palm sugar and let it caramelize. Add the coconut milk and bring it to the boil. Add the tamari to taste and simmer for 15 minutes. At this point you can put the mixture through a strainer, if you like, to remove any woody bits from the paste.

Return the mix to the pan if necessary, bring back to the boil, then add all the fruit and vegetables except the cherry tomatoes. Bring back to the boil and simmer for 2–3 minutes before adding the tomatoes and herbs.

Remove from the heat, garnish with extra coriander and Thai basil leaves and serve with brown rice.



Aged Rib Eye Steak with Roasted Pepper Salsa

Recipe Provided by Bukowski Grill

If you're looking for something classic with a twist then look no further. You can do no wrong with a good ole traditional steak, and this one packs a punch. With a South American flare this steak will not disappoint yourself and your other half.

INGREDIENTS

For the Salsa

- 1 large red onion cut into 4
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 2 large red peppers cut in half and deseeded
- 2 large yellow peppers cut in half and deseeded
- 2 tomatoes cut in half
- 2 large whole red chillis
- 1 tbsp sweet smoked paprika
- 4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped flat leaf parsley

For the Steak

- 4 rib eye steaks 340g 12oz each
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 200°C. In a large bowl mix together all of the salsa ingredients apart from the parsley. Transfer to a large shallow roasting tray and place in the oven for 30 minutes, until everything is soft and starting to blacked slightly.

Once cooked remove from the oven and leave to cool. Place the steaks on a large chopping board and rub with the olive oil, salt and pepper. Preheat a BBQ or griddle pan and cook the steaks on both sides for 5 minutes, in batches if necessary. Remove and leave in a warm place to rest for 5 minutes.

While you are waiting for the steaks to rest, place all of the roasted salsa ingredients including the parsley on a large chopping board and roughly chop with a knife. Serve the steaks and salsa on 4 warm plates.

Frying Pan Pizza

Recipe Provided by Pizza Pilgrims

This is something you may of never heard of before, but you'll kick yourself when you know how simple and delicious this recipe is. For those of you who are a little bit less adventurous in the meal department then this is for you, simple, delicious and sure to be a hit.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 x balls of Neapolitan Pizza Dough
- 1 tin of San Marzano (or any good-quality Italian) tomatoes
- A good pinch of sea salt
- Grated Parmesan
- A handful of basil leaves
- 150g fior di latte cheese (cow's milk mozzarella), torn into pieces no bigger than a 50 pence coin
- Extra virgin olive oil

METHOD

Take the dough balls and press them out flat to make four 10 inch pizza bases using the tips of your fingers. To make the tomato sauce, first crush the tomatoes by hand. This stops the seeds being whizzed up by the blender, which makes the sauce bitter. Add a pinch of salt, then blitz with a hand blender until you have a tomato sauce with a slightly rough texture.

Preheat the grill to its absolute highest setting. Lay a pizza base flat in a dry frying pan (preferably non-stick) that has been on a high heat and is screaming hot. Spread a thin layer of sauce with a ladle across the base, leaving a couple of centimetres round the edge for the crust. Add a pinch of Parmesan, basil leaves and a quarter of the mozzarella, in that order.

Drizzle with olive oil. Once the base of the pizza has browned (about 1–2 minutes), take the frying pan and place it on the highest shelf, under the grill. Once the crust has taken on some colour (again about 1–2 minutes), the pizza is ready to go. Eat it fast (contrary to popular belief, pizza is not better cold the morning after!).



Cheesus Loves You

Recipe and Photo Provided by Anna Mae's

Now as the name goes, I think that this recipe is for the cheese lovers out there. It's probably best you don't tell your date how much cheese is in it, so keep that one under your hat. Packed full of flavour and you guessed it, cheese, and you'll have an amazing meal.

INGREDIENTS

- 400g macaroni
- 25g of Butter
- 25g Plain Flour
- 600ml of Milk
- 230g mature Cheddar, grated
- 90g Monterey Jack Cheese, grated
- 30g Parmesan, grated
- ½ tsp English mustard
- 30g mozzarella, grated

METHOD

Preheat the grill to 220°C/200°C (fan)/gas 7.

Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and cook the pasta according to the pack instructions, until al dente. Tip into a colander and leave to drain completely.

In a heavy-bottomed pan, make the beginnings of the sauce by placing the butter and flour into a pan and mix until combined and slowly add the milk until fully combined, then reduce the heat to low. Add all the cheese except the mozzarella, then the mustard, and stir until melted. Stir in the drained pasta.

Transfer the mixture to an ovenproof dish, sprinkle over the mozzarella and place under the grill for 6–8 minutes, or until blistered and bubbling.

Quick and Easy Tuna Steak Dinner

Recipe Provided by Pro Trainer

For a healthier option this tuna steak dinner will be a winner with some of you. A world away from the copious amounts of cheese in some of the recipes (you'll see no judgement here), this dish makes for a nice change.

INGREDIENTS

- Tuna Steaks (one per person)
- Eggs (Approximately 2 per person)
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Green Beans
- Spring Onions
- Sesame Seeds
- Soya Sauce

METHOD

Boil eggs for 12 minutes (you'll want at most 4). Once cooked, let them cool by replacing boiled water with cold water. Then boil Broccoli & Green Beans for 8 – 10 minutes.

You'll want to wilt the spinach for around 5 minutes, which means so it's slightly limp through the cooking, and cook the tuna steaks in a little olive oil. Times will vary depending on how well you like it cooked, for steaks a little rarer in the middle a few minutes either side will be just fine.

Chop the spring onions as thick or as thin as you'd like. Make a bed with the broccoli & green beans, then place the remainder of the contents on. Finally, sprinkle with sesame seeds & a small amount of soy sauce and you're good to go.

Fried Chicken

Recipe and Photo Provided by Mother Clucker

This is an instant classic that no-one can refuse, perfect for getting stuck in and forgetting the cutlery, you'll be sure to have the napkins at the ready and a drop of water incase they get a touch too spicy for you.

INGREDIENTS

- Chicken breast (two packets from your local chicken emporium)
- 500ml Buttermilk
- 1 Bulb of Garlic
- 2 Lemons, Zested and juiced
- 2 Chillis
- Rosemary (hand full of stalks)
- Flat leaf parsley (handful)
- 1kg Plain flour
- 100g Paprika
- 50g Salt
- 50g Chilli powder/Cayenne powder
- Rapeseed oil (2l for shallow fry / or fill your fryer)

METHOD

Cut up or blend all of your veg for your marinade and slice your chicken breast into strips you should get 5 a breast minimum. Mix your chicken in with your marinade, cover and whack in the fridge. Ideally for an hour plus so it starts juicing up. Wash your hands and finely cut up the parsley.

Heat up your oil (175°C) and start to mix all of your dry ingredients in a bowl to make your flour mix and set aside. Pour the buttermilk into a bowl and grab a handful of chicken and place in the flour mix cover in the mix and shake well. Drop into the buttermilk and cover all over and then drop back into the flour mix and cover again.

Slowly drop each strip of chicken into the fryer, be careful not to deep fry your finger (it's easy). Cook for 3 and a half mins and remove from fryer and shake basket/turn chicken over in pan every now and again (75°C and above for cooked if you use probe). Use your tongs (or hands if you really are a man) to remove your chicken. Step back and admire the beautiful chicken you've created.

Grab a plate, chuck it on and sprinkle with parsley so it looks pretty. Your girlfriend will be impressed with your attention to detail. Dip in your favourite hot sauce.



Spicy Chicken Wings

Recipe and Photo Provided by Dirty Bones

For those of you who love a certain chain of fast food then this will resonate with you ten fold. Spicy wings will impress anyone and everyone, a simple yet effective you can't go wrong with.

INGREDIENTS

- 500g Chicken wings
- 40ml olive oil
- 200ml Lemon juice
- 130g golden caster sugar
- 20g cornflour
- 40ml water
- 2 red chillis - finely sliced on an angle
- 20g tajin
- 2 spring onions – finely sliced

METHOD

Put an oven proof tray in the oven and preheat to 220°C

Mix the cornflour and water to form a suspension and put the lemon juice and sugar in a pan and place on a high heat. Whisk until the sugar has completely dissolved.

Add the corn flour solution and continue to whisk until the mixture starts to thicken. Remove from the heat and pour into a large bowl sitting on ice. Continue to whisk until the mixture has cooled.

Put the wings in a bowl and coat with the oil. Roast the wings for approximately 10 minutes or until crispy all over and cooked through. Toss the wings in a bowl with the lemon glaze, seasoning with tajin and a little black pepper. And to finish it all off garnish with the chilli and spring onion.



Mexican Style Spicy Smokey Steak

Recipe Provided by World of Zing

For a twist on the classic, this spicy steak will right up your street. Combining both flavour and ingenuity this recipe will surely be a hit amongst the stake lovers among you.

INGREDIENTS

The Steak

- Go for a Sirloin or a Flat Iron for this recipe

For the Spice Rub

- 2 Chipotle Meco Chillis
- ½ Pasilla Chilli
- 1 tbsp of paprika
- 2 tbsp of brown sugar
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp of sea salt

Blitz to a coarse powder. This spice blend can be kept in a cool dry place in your kitchen for up to a year.

METHOD

Rub the Spice Rub with a teaspoon of olive oil into the meat then allow this to marinate for at least four hours in the fridge. Allow the steak to come up to room temperature before you start cooking it.

Grill or fry the steak, which ever suits you best (preferably rare to medium). Once cooked, slice the meat to whichever thickness and serve with chunky chips or new potatoes.

Zite Tagliate alla Calabrese (Classic Rustic Pasta Dish)

Recipe Provided by Rebecca Milford and Massimo Grippa

This recipe comes from Massimo Grippa, executive chef at Valentina Fine Food Italian Restaurants, and genius behind the Cappella Romana – a feast of tagliatelle, meatballs and mozzarella baked inside ham. In this slightly simpler recipe he tells you how to make a simple yet impressive Italian classic.

INGREDIENTS

- 200g of fresh pasta
- 50ml Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 large sticks Celery, finely chopped
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1 piece of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 chilli finely chopped
- 30g fresh rosemary
- 200g diced pancetta
- 600g Italian tomato sauce or passata
- Parmesan, basil and black pepper to garnish.

METHOD

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the chopped celery, garlic, onion, chilli, rosemary and pancetta. Fry for about 10/15 minutes, until nicely browned but not burnt.

Add the 600g of passata, and then add the fresh pasta. Cook together for ten minutes, or until the pasta is softened.

When is all ready to go grate a small chunk of parmesan on top, drizzle with a bit of oil and add torn basil and black pepper.

Sides

Asian Greens with Vegan 'Oyster' Sauce (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

We love to add a whack of greens to pretty much every meal we eat, and this is a great way to do it. Buy whatever's available – pak choy is increasingly easy to get hold of and available in most supermarkets, but gai lan is a big favourite of ours if you're able to get to an oriental grocery. Vegan 'oyster' sauce is just as tasty with local greens like chard, kale or cabbage and is also lovely with stir-fries.

INGREDIENTS

- Your choice of greens – pak choy, gai lan or morning glory are all good

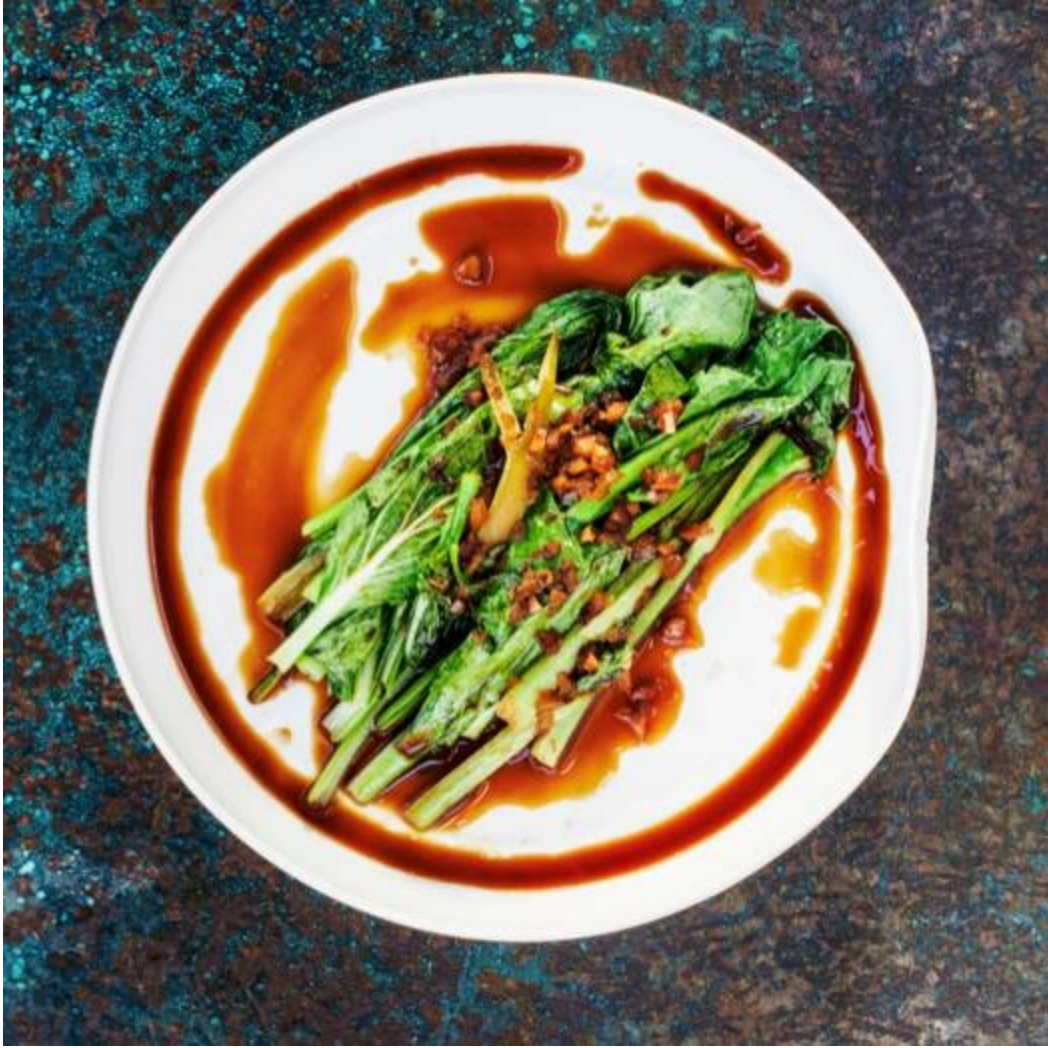
For the oyster sauce

- 1 tbsp coconut oil (or cooking oil of your choice)
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 4 tbsp Shaoxing wine
- 1–2 tbsp tamari, to taste (make sure it's gluten free)
- A dash of toasted sesame oil

METHOD

Heat the coconut oil in a pan and sauté the onion and garlic over a medium heat for a few minutes until they become translucent. Add the sugar and continue to heat until it begins to caramelize, about 4 minutes, then add the wine and flambé (if you can and want to show off a bit – otherwise not the end of the world to just cook it). Taste and add the tamari and a dash of sesame oil to season.

Steam the greens. How long will depend on which greens you're using, but it normally takes about 5 minutes. Drain, transfer to a bowl or plate, pour the sauce over the top and serve.



Mashed Potatoes

Recipe Provided By Mandy Courcey

You can't go wrong with a bowl of mashed potatoes, the ultimate in comfort food. However, this recipe is a little different because you have the added flavour of mustard or even horseradish if you prefer it. Adding a little something new to a classic recipe and statement side dish to many meals, it's sure to win over your date.

INGREDIENTS

- Potatoes (3-4 large ones)
- Butter
- Milk
- Mustard (or horseradish if preferable)

EQUIPMENT

- Potato masher

METHOD

Cut the potatoes into medium sized chunks and add them to a saucepan. Fill the saucepan up with cold water until all of the potatoes are covered and place it on the hob. Turn the hob on until the water is brought to a boil and then lower it to keep it at a simmer.

You'll know when the potatoes are done when you can easily poke through them with a knife. Once cooked drain all of the water and place into a large bowl. Mash the potatoes until they are lump free and smooth, then add the butter and milk to make them more creamy.

Add a teaspoon or two of mustard or horseradish to taste into the mash and mix in well. It's important not to over mash the potatoes as they can become sticky and glue-like in texture.

Serve with beef on the plate or add them to a clean bowl and serve them on the table by themselves.

Cajun Baked Sweet Potato Fries

Recipe and Photo Provided by Minimalist Baker

Probably a national favourite, sweet potato fries have overtaken the normal frie as being the go-to side dish for many. How can you improve on greatness you say? Well, you can with cajun baked sweet potato fries, I'm sure your mouths are drooling at the very thought of them. Your other half will be sure to love every morsel of this side dish and even ask for seconds.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, scrubbed clean (organic when possible)
- 2 Tbsp olive, canola or melted coconut oil
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 1½ tsp garlic powder
- 1½ tsp smoked paprika
- 1½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried (or 2 tsp fresh) thyme
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper*

OPTIONAL: 1 Tbsp sugar of choice (coconut + cane are best)

METHOD

Preheat oven to 220T . Leave the skin on and cut sweet potatoes into thin, even match sticks with a very sharp knife then transfer to two baking sheets and drizzle with olive oil. Then sprinkle with seasonings, sugar and toss.

Transfer fries to 1 large or 2 baking sheets and arrange in a single layer to ensure they crisp up. Bake for 15 minutes and flip/stir to cook on the other side. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes more, or until brown and crispy. You'll know they're done when the edges are dark brown and crispy.

Remove from oven and either serve as is, or drizzle with a bit of maple syrup or honey to offset spiciness. Serve plain or with your favourite dip, such as [whiskey bbq ketchup](#).



Caesar Side Salad

Recipe Provided By Luke McCarthy

A simple side salad is a great dish to serve to your guests. Simplicity at its best, this caesar salad is simple in method yet full of flavour, a perfect accompaniment to any meat and pasta dishes, or a lighter option for you health enthusiasts.

INGREDIENTS

- Cos or Romaine Lettuce
- Block of Parmesan Cheese
- Bacon (3-4 rashers for 2 people)
- Caesar Dressing
- Olive Oil
- Croutons

METHOD

Tear off some lettuce leaves and thrown them into a large bowl, whichever lettuce you choose, you'll want to have big pieces so you get a good crunch when you bite into it.

Take a frying pan and place a drizzle of oil and bring to the heat. Cut your bacon up in strips or bite size pieces and fry until cooked and crisp. Whilst the bacon is cooking, take your block of parmesan cheese and shave pieces off with a peeler into the bowl of lettuce leaves. You'll a handful per person eating.

Once the bacon is cooked let it cool thoroughly as you don't want to have a warm salad. once cooled add into the bowl of lettuce and cheese. Take your croutons (pre-packaged is fine) and throw them into the mix and drizzle over the caesar dressing until lightly covered.

Mix all of this together until everything is fully covered by the dressing and serve in a large, clean bowl for the table. Lightly drizzle over some olive oil to taste once served.

Desserts

Chocolate Sorbet

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

You can't go wrong with a chocolate pud. If you'd like something light to finish off the meal try a chocolate sorbet. Try serving in one bowl with 2 spoons to turn the romance up!

Best Served With

We've paired this with the chocolatey flavours of Andeluna Cellar's Malbec.

INGREDIENTS

- 200g caster sugar
- 50g cocoa
- 50g dark chocolate, finely chopped
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

METHOD

Tip the sugar into a bowl, sift in the cocoa and stir. Bring 600ml water to the boil in a medium saucepan. Whisk in the sugar and cocoa and return to a gentle simmer for 5 minutes, whisking occasionally. Remove from the heat and stir in the chocolate and vanilla until the chocolate has melted.

When the mixture has cooled, put in the fridge for several hours or ideally overnight until well chilled. Make the sorbet in an ice-cream machine or pour into a rigid plastic container, preferably bowl shaped, and freeze until frozen 3cm from the edges. Whisk to break down the ice crystals, then freeze again for until completely frozen.

Before serving, transfer to the fridge for 30 mins to make scooping easier.

Chocolate Torte

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

Chocolate is the way to any woman's heart and this torte is so rich and indulgent it's sure to impress.

Best Served With

We've made this dessert even more delectable by pairing it with one of the most sought after sweet Maury's of the world, Mas Amiel Vintage.

INGREDIENTS

- 200g unsalted butter
- 200g bar dark chocolate, 70% cocoa, chopped
- 4 large eggs
- 200g golden caster sugar
- 50g plain flour
- 50g ground almonds
- Cocoa powder, for dusting

METHOD

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Butter and line with greaseproof paper the base and sides of a 23cm cake tin. Put the butter and chocolate into a pan and gently melt together until smooth. Whisk the eggs and sugar together for 5 mins until it becomes the thickness of custard.

Pour the chocolate and butter mix into the whisked egg and sugar, then fold it in very carefully using a wooden spoon. Mix the flour, almonds and ¼ tsp salt together, then fold into the mix until even. Spoon into the tin and bake for 35-40 mins until evenly set with a slight crust all over the top. Leave the cake to cool until warm, then dust with cocoa.

Homemade Scones

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

Put your baking skills to the test with this British classic. These buttery scones deserve a healthy dose of clotted cream and jam.

Best Served With

10 year old Tawny Port from Senhora do Convento.

INGREDIENTS

- 85g diced butter
- 350g self-raising flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 200ml milk at room temperature, plus a splash extra
- Crushed sugar cubes, to decorate

METHOD

Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Whisk the diced butter into flour. Tip into a bowl and stir in salt with bicarbonate of soda and sugar. Roughly stir in milk – don't over-mix.

Tip out onto a lightly floured surface and turn over a couple of times to very gently bring together with your hands. Gently pat to about 1in thick, then stamp out rounds with a floured cutter. Pat together trimmings to stamp out more. Brush the tops with a splash more milk, then scatter with crushed sugar cubes. Bake on a baking sheet for 10-12 mins until risen and golden.

When your scones have cooled, cut them in half across the middle and smother with strawberry jam and clotted cream.

Poached Pears with Vanilla Cashew Cream (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

These spice-infused poached pears make a light yet intensely flavourful dessert. The recipe also works well with plums, figs, nectarines and cherries. If you want to make some up in advance, you can store the pears in the liquor in a sealed container in the fridge for a couple of days. This will really heighten the flavours, too, but it's not necessary if you want to enjoy them straight away.



INGREDIENTS

- 750ml water
- 80g sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise
- 10–12 saffron strands
- 1 stick lemongrass, bruised a little to release the flavour
- ½ glass white wine (or red for a pink pear)
- 2 dessert pears, such as Conference pears, peeled
- Ground cinnamon to dust
- 1 batch sweet Raw Cashew Cream to serve - try adding 1 pinch of saffron strands with the vanilla

METHOD

Put the water and sugar in a pan along with the cinnamon, star anise, saffron, lemongrass and white wine and bring to the boil, stirring occasionally to help dissolve the sugar.

Meanwhile, peel the pears, then, using a knife or an apple corer, remove as much as you can of the core, keeping the pear intact and leaving its stalk untouched.

Reduce the heat, add the pears, cover and simmer gently for 45 minutes. Turn off the heat, but leave the pears to sit in the poaching liquor for another 30–40 minutes to really take on the flavours.

Carefully remove the pears from the poaching liquor. Set aside to cool, then transfer to the fridge. Keep some of the poaching liquor to serve. When they're nicely chilled, put each pear on a bed of Raw Cashew Cream. Lightly dust each one with cinnamon and serve with a little poaching liquor drizzled over the top.

Churros with Dark Chocolate Dipping Sauce (V)

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

For when you need a treat, these long, piped Spanish-style doughnuts really fit the bill. rolled in sugar and cinnamon and served with a dark chocolate sauce for dunking, this is the indulgent, delicious counterbalance to all the healthy stuff! In Spain they're even eaten for breakfast dipped in hot chocolate or coffee if you ever feel like an early morning sugar overload!

INGREDIENTS

For the sugar dip

- 150g brown sugar
- A pinch of salt
- 1 heaped tbsp ground cinnamon

For the churros

- 250ml water
- A pinch of salt
- 2 ½ tbsp sugar
- 60ml vegetable oil, plus an extra 400ml for frying
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 110g plain (all-purpose) flour

For the sauce

- 100g dark chocolate (make sure it's vegan and has a high cacao content)

METHOD

First, make the dip. Mix together the sugar, salt and cinnamon in a bowl. Set aside.

Next, make the churros dough. In a pan, bring the water to the boil before adding the salt and sugar. Once they've dissolved, turn off the heat and add the oil and vanilla extract. Add the flour and mix thoroughly until all the ingredients are well combined. Transfer to a piping bag and set aside.

To make the sauce. Use a bain marie (or put a glass bowl over a pot of simmering water). Add the chocolate and heat until melted.

Heat the 400ml oil in a pan until it reaches about 190 °C, when a cube of bread browns in 60 seconds. Pipe in some long strands of the churros dough (you should be able to do about 4 at a

time) and move them around so that they cook evenly. Remove when crispy and golden using a slotted spoon and roll in the sugar dip. Monitor the heat as you cook the remaining batches, keeping the cooked churros warm until you have used up all the dough.

Then all you'll have to do is serve the churros hot with the chocolate dipping sauce.



Rhubarb Crumble

Recipe Provided by Rainy Day Mum

This recipe is a classic no matter what. Memories of you childhood may be flooding back at this very moment as the taste of rhubarb crumble will bring everything back to you.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 stalks of rhubarb
- 2 - 4 tbsp of caster sugar (to your taste)
- 110g all purpose flour
- 85g caster sugar
- 85g margarine
- 50g porridge oats

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 180°C and cut the rhubarb into inch long sections. Place in a oven proof dish and sprinkle with 2 - 4 tablespoons of caster sugar (to your taste).

Into a bowl add flour, sugar, margarine and porridge oats, using a knife chop up the margarine. Using your hands crumble between your fingertips (this is coldest part of your hand, else you'll melt the butter) until it forms a breadcrumb consistency.

Pour on top of the rhubarb and place in the oven for between 20 and 30 minutes and serve in a bowl with some vanilla ice cream or a dollop of pouring cream.

Chocolate and Smokey Chili Mousse with Sour Cherries and Rum

Recipe Provided by Bukowski Grill

INGREDIENTS

For the Mousse

- 150g 70% dark chocolate broken
- Pinch of salt
- 4 large free range eggs separated
- 55g caster sugar
- 150ml double cream
- 1tsp chipotle powder
- 1tsp orange zest

For the Sour Cherries

- 100g sour cherries
- 100ml dark rum
- 55g roasted hazelnuts
- 1 tsp orange zest

METHOD

In a large heatproof bowl, melt the chocolate over a pan of simmering water, until melted, stirring every now and then; this should take around 5 minutes. Do not let the bowl touch the water, as this will overheat the chocolate. Once the chocolate has melted, remove from the heat and set aside to cool slightly for a couple of minutes.

Once the chocolate has cooled, beat in the salt, egg yolks and sugar. Whisk double cream until it has thickened slightly. Whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks have formed.

Add the chipotle powder and orange zest, then fold in the cream, followed by the egg whilst. Divide between 4 glasses and place in the fridge to set for 2 hours. While you are waiting for the mousse to set. Soak the sour cherries in the rum and roughly chop the hazelnuts. Just before serving remove the mousse from the fridge and top with the cherries, hazelnuts and orange zest.

Real Ale Float

Recipe Provided by Clapton Craft

INGREDIENTS

- Premium Vanilla Ice Cream
- Brandy
- Chocolate Stout, such as Brooklyn Chocolate Stout, Rogue Oatmeal Stout, Evil Twin Yin or Kernal Export Stout.
- Premium Chocolate

METHOD

Pour the beer into tall glasses and scoop the ice cream on top of it. Splash a touch of brandy over the top and shave some chocolate over the ice cream. Simply delicious.

Cocktails/Drinks

N'Ice Wine Gin Martini

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

INGREDIENTS

- 50ml Ziraldo Vidal Icewine 50ml of Becketts Gin
- 50ml Lime Juice

METHOD

Shake with crushed ice, serve in Martini glass.

Minty Fresh Sparkling Cocktail

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams

INGREDIENTS

- 85g golden caster sugar
- 4 tbsp fresh lemon juice 1 bottle of chilled, Dubreuil Crémant de Loire Brut NV
- 20g/1oz pack fresh mint

METHOD

Put the sugar and lemon juice in a small pan and heat gently to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for 2 minutes to make a syrup. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

To serve, pour 50ml of lemon syrup into 6 champagne flutes or tall glasses, top up each glass with the chilled sparkling wine, then stir quickly to mix before serving with mint sprigs tucked in the top.

Bellini

Recipe Provided by Simone Williams
Image Provided by The Fishes, Oxford

INGREDIENTS

- 25ml peach purée or peach nectar 125ml
- Zucchetto's Prosecco Superiore Extra Dry

METHOD

Put the peach purée in a Champagne flute up to about 1/3 full and slowly top up with Prosecco.



Homemade Lemonade with Chia Seeds

Recipe and Photo Provided by Whole Food Heaven

This super-refreshing drink reminds us of happy, sunny days on the beach in Mexico, where the wonder seed chia, much-beloved by the Mayans, is liberally added to most things. As well as being jam-packed with good nutrition, chia seeds also absorb 10 times their weight in water, so they form a kind of bulky gel when added to liquids that really helps hydration on long, sticky days. Many long-distance cyclists add them to their water bottles to take advantage of this; also the gel helps make you feel full. as a source of omega-3 oils, we find them much more user-friendly than flaxseed as they're far easier to digest and don't need to be ground. This is an all-round winner for summer barbecues or picnics.

INGREDIENTS

- 5 unwaxed lemons, peeled and roughly chopped (reserving the zest of 1)
- 150ml agave
- 1 litre cold water
- 8 sprigs fresh mint to garnish, plus extra to garnish
- Ice
- 2 tbsp chia seeds

METHOD

Put the lemons, lemon zest, agave and water in a blender and combine on high speed for about a minute. Add the mint and blend for a further 10 seconds.

Put a few ice cubes in each glass, top with the lemonade and stir in 1–2 tsp of the chia seeds. Leave for a few minutes to allow the chia to soak a little, then garnish each glass with a sprig of mint and serve.



Etiquette

For those of you who lack a certain charm in the kitchen, we have provided some rules courtesy of Tamiko Zablieth at Minding Manners. Whether you're entertaining for royalty or just your friends, these rules will do you no harm when you're layering on the charm when serving dinner.

- Decide on your menu well ahead of time and make a shopping list.
- Unless you are a confident chef, do not try to be overly ambitious with your menu. Simplicity well executed will win over your guests.
- It's all in the preparation so get everything organised and relaxed for when your guest(s) arrive and make sure that white wines are chilled, red wines are uncorked (decanted if necessary) and that you have plenty of ice and garnishes for the drinks you are serving.
- Make sure the table is laid and includes a centrepiece, for instance candles and a small arrangement of flowers (this will earn major bonus points) – choose white and one other colour for utmost elegance and avoid choosing blooms which are heavily scented.
- Include glasses for water on the table – this can be poured before your guests sit down but wines must only be poured once they are seated - no one likes a warm white wine.
- Write out oven temperatures and cooking times for all components to ensure that everything is cooked at the same time – it seems obvious but is actually quite often overlooked.
- Have all plates for the evening out of cupboards to ensure a smooth transition between courses and no banging and crashing from the kitchen!!
- Many desserts can be prepared ahead of time – sometimes a day early – this will again relieve any pressure.
- Good presentation will be noticed. Warm plates for hot dishes and do not overload with food if you are plating up away from the table.
- Prepare several topics of conversation in advance. If it is a special moment, perhaps a tete-a-tete, avoid usual topics (e.g. your partner's mother who wants the two of you again for Christmas. Or the brother who has forgotten he owes you £1,000).
- If your steak burns or your pasta ends up on the floor...laugh and move on to Plan B. You do have a Plan B, right?
- Be a relaxed and convivial host and enjoy the evening – your enjoyment will radiate to your guests.

Glossary

AL DENTE: Boiling pasta to the point where it's soft, but still firm to the touch.

BEAT: A repeated over hand motion used to combine ingredients. May be done with a spoon or an electric mixer. A screwdriver, no matter how clean, should not be used to combine recipe ingredients.

BOIL: To heat liquid until bubbles rise and break on surface. Looks similar to something you may see in your bath-tub.

BROWN: To fry something until it turns brown - not black.

CAN OPENER: The metal part with the mickey mouse ears on top of what looks like a tiny circular saw, on the other end of the more familiar bottle opener.

CHOP: To cut food into pieces. A knife is most often used, rather than a karate movement.

DICE: Cut into cubes smaller than ½ inch. Use of measuring tape is acceptable for beginners.

DRAIN: To let liquid run through the holes in a strainer. If no strainer available, resist urge to use a fishing net.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER: Extremely important, should be positioned no further than 3 feet from the "chef" at all times.

GRATE: To cut into small pieces using a standard kitchen utensil called a 'grater'. Success is greater if your grater is greater.

LONG-HANDLED FORK: Good to use when something's burning and you don't want to get too close.

SHRED: To slice into sliver-like pieces with a knife, or a shredding instrument.

SPATULA: A utensil with a wide flat end used for lifting and flipping over foods in a frying pan. Men are usually quick to find this in a typical kitchen, as it resembles a smaller version of a barbeque tool.

STRAIN: To stretch neck around corner of kitchen to see what wife is doing while you're making dinner.

Thank You's

We'd like to thank everybody that was involved and happily gave recipes to our e-Book, Men Make Dinner Day.

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- Clapton Craft
- Bukowski Grill
- Mother Clucker
- Dirty Bones
- World of Zing
- Rebecca Milford and Massimo Grippa
- Minimalist Baker

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About The Idle Man

The Idle Man are a British-based menswear retailer catering for the average guy who wants to upgrade his style. From Levi's to Converse and Edwin to The North Face, their collection of brands aim to cover all styles from the more contemporary street to the classic tailoring.

As well as delivering an impressive roster of external brands, The Idle Man also has its own range of wardrobe staples, perfect for any modern man's wardrobe. It's not all about retail either, as their editorial section, The Idle Manual, offers exclusive and original content on fashion, music, fitness, food and travel – delivering an in depth look at all lifestyle topics men are interested in.

Visit their full site at theidleman.com