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Homecoming 2009 - Burns Supper



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The traditional Burns supper menu consists of cock-a-leekie soup, haggis neeps and tatties finished off with some cloutie dumpling, however after many years of being invited to serve a good supper, I've found myself using it as an opportunity to celebrate Scottish ingredients with still a nod to tradition. I served this menu at a Burns Supper in New York a number of years ago and it was appreciated by guests from both sides of the Atlantic.

Happy Cooking! Nick Nair



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Millie

Hot smoked salmon with avocado salsa





Hot smoked salmon with avocado salsa

Serves 4

Ingredients

250g hot smoked salmon,
flaked into large pieces

For the Salsa:

1 large ripe Haas avocado

2 ripe plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded
and chopped into 1 cm (1/2 inch) dice

1/4 red onion, finely chopped

1 red chilli, seeded and finely chopped

1 tablespoon Japanese pickled ginger,
finely chopped (optional)

3 tablespoons fresh coriander, chopped

2 teaspoons Thai fish sauce
juice and zest of a lime

Maldon salt & freshly ground black pepper
squeeze of lemon juice

For the lobster oil:

175g lobster or langoustine shells
350ml sunflower oil

1 tiny piece broken star anise
3 white peppercorns

5cm piece carrot, peeled and diced
2 shallots, diced

5cm piece celery diced
2 cloves of garlic

15g mixed herbs (such as parsley,
thyme & tarragon)

1/2 tsp tomato puree
50ml dry white wine

This simple elegant starter was a bit of a signature dish in passed years. As with all simple dishes it relies on the finest quality ingredients to make it really sing. I use farmed organic Orkney salmon, ripe hass avocados and a generous amount of fresh coriander. The salsa benefits from being made in advance to allow its flavours to mellow, and the lobster oil may seem extravagant but it does add a wonderful flavour to many fish and shellfish dishes.

Method

Crush the shells and drain away any liquid. Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a pan, add the shells, star anise and white peppercorns and fry over a medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring every now and then. Add all the remaining ingredients, except the oil, and cook until the wine has evaporated. Add the rest of the oil and leave to simmer for 45 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to stand for 24 hours. Strain through a muslin lined sieve, transfer to a bottle and seal. This will keep in the fridge for about a month.

To make the salsa, halve the avocado and remove the stone. Halve again and remove the skin before chopping it into 1 cm (1/2 inch) chunks. Place in a mixing bowl and add the chilli, onion, coriander, pickled ginger if using, tomato, Thai fish sauce, a pinch of Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper and the lime zest and juice. Mix well and leave at room temperature for about 10 minutes for the flavours to develop.

To serve, set a 7.5cm biscuit cutter or food ring in the centre of a plate. Flake the salmon, and using about 75g per ring, press into the base of each ring, banking it up the sides of the ring so that it will hold. Spoon the salsa on top of the salmon and press down lightly. Remove the ring carefully and garnish with a small handful of slightly dressed salad leaves piled on top. Drizzle round the lobster oil.



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Wickham

Haggis, Bashit Neeps an' Chappit Tatties





Haggis, Bashit Neeps an' Chappit Tatties

Serves 8

Ingredients

450g (1lb) Maris Piper potatoes, peeled and cut into even-sized pieces
3 tablespoons warm milk
40g (1½ oz) unsalted butter
Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper
500g haggis, cooked
400g turnip (or Swede, depending on your Nationality), cooked, seasoned and mashed with a knob of butter
For the gravy
½ pint beef stock
splash of red wine
knob of butter
salt and freshly ground black pepper

These are the classic accompaniments to haggis. Chappit Tatties are just Mash (see below) and the bashit neep are roughly mashed turnip (neep) or swede as they say in England, seasoned highly with salt and freshly ground black pepper and enriched with a knob of butter. The haggis should be cooked as per the producer's instructions, which will depend upon the size and recipe of the haggis. This mash recipe will feed 8 as a starter, so there may be some left over.

Method

Place the potatoes into a pan of salted cold water and bring to boil. As soon as the water comes to the boil, reduce to a simmer (it's important not to cook the potatoes too quickly), and cook for approximately 20 minutes. Check the tenderness the point of a sharp knife should feel little resistance when pushed into the potato. Drain in a colander and return to the pan to dry out over low heat for a few minutes. Mash them with a potato masher or pass them through a mouli or ricer into a bowl. Using a wooden spoon beat in the warm milk, then the butter vigorously, making the mash light and fluffy. (If you are going to re-heat them, don't add the butter yet). To make the gravy, reduce the beef stock and red wine to thicken. Stir in the butter and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Simmer for a further few minutes to thicken further.

To serve, use a serving spoon to shape a spoonful of the haggis, neeps and tatties on the plate and spoon around some of the gravy. Alternatively, take the presentation up a level and use a ring mould to create a tri-colour tower. Spoon in a layer of the mashed potatoes into a ring mould and press down firmly. Top with a layer of mashed turnip and again compress. Finally top with a layer of haggis, taking care to get an even top layer. Gently remove the ring mould and spoon around the gravy and serve.



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Homecoming 2009 - Burns Supper

Neil Blair

Roast Loin of venison, skirlie potatoes, braised red cabbage, game and blueberry sauce





Roast Loin of venison, skirlie potatoes, braised red cabbage, game and blueberry sauce

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 small roe saddle (1.5kg/3lb 5oz)
 1 tablespoon butter
 1 tablespoon sunflower oil, mixed
 Maldon salt & freshly ground black pepper

For the Braised Cabbage:

1 red cabbage, finely shredded
 50g (2oz) redcurrant jelly
 50ml (2fl oz) sherry vinegar
 Zest and juice of 1 orange

120ml (4fl oz) port
 ½ bottle red wine
 85g (3oz) raisins
 50g (2oz) butter

For the skirlie potatoes

50g (2oz) bacon fat, or beef or duck
 dripping
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 125g (4oz) medium or coarse oatmeal
 Maldon salt & freshly ground black pepper
 700g mash (see previous recipe)

ingredients continued on next page>

This is a bit of a star dish, but much of it can be cooked a day or so before, making the day itself more of an assembly. The sauce, potatoes and cabbage can all be made in advance, leaving the venison to be prepared on the day. It's not really worth making a smaller quantity of the red cabbage or the game gravy, however both freeze well and are delicious with most game animals or birds. Your butcher should prepare the saddle for you, giving you the two loins and the meaty trimmings. Get him to chop the rib bones into 2.5cm (1 in) pieces. This is a bit of a 'star' dish and requires some pre-planning. Consequently, your starter and pudding should be simple.

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4.

First make the game gravy. Roast the venison bones for approximately 30 minutes in the oven. Meanwhile, heat a medium-sized saucepan, add the sunflower oil and venison trimmings and caramelize for 20 minutes. Add the shallots, mushrooms, garlic, bay leaf, thyme, and crushed peppercorns. Gently fry for 5–10 minutes or until dark brown and caramelized.

Pour in the Port and red wine. Boil until a thick, syrupy glaze is achieved. Add the stock, redcurrant jelly, blueberries and roasted bones and simmer for 45 minutes skimming frequently.

Pass through a fine sieve into a small, clean pan, simmer again and reduce until required flavour is achieved. Thicken with 1 tsp arrowroot if required, then check the seasoning and set aside. See finishing sauce. (This makes more gravy than you need for this dish; keep the rest in the fridge or freeze it.) Next make the skirlie potatoes. Melt the dripping or fat in a frying pan and add the onion. Cook over a gentle heat for about 10 minutes until just beginning to turn golden. Stir in the oatmeal and "skirl" around the pan for a couple of minutes until the fat is absorbed and the oatmeal smelling "toastie".
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Roast Loin of venison, skirlie potatoes, braised red cabbage, game and blueberry sauce

Ingredients continued

For the sauce game gravy

- 600g venison rib bones
- 2-3tbsp sunflower oil
- 200g venison trimmings, roughly chopped
- 4 shallots, finely sliced
- 8 button mushrooms, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 6 white peppercorns, crushed
- 150ml Port
- 150ml red wine
- 100g blueberries (blueberries)
- 700ml brown chicken or game stock
- 1 tsp redcurrant jelly
- 1 tsp arrowroot, if required to finish Game Sauce
- 400ml game gravy
- Handful blueberries to serve
- 2tsp Cabernet Sauvignon vinegar warmed through

Remove from the heat. Place the mash in a large mixing bowl and mix through the skirlie mix. Form the mix into cakes and place on a baking sheet. Place in the oven for 15 minutes, until warmed through. Keep warm until ready to serve.

Turn the oven heat up to 230°C/450°F/Gas mark 8. To make the red cabbage, remove the coarse outer leaves. Quarter it and cut out and discard the root. Finely slice the cabbage using a sharp knife. Heat a large pan and add 50g (2 oz) of butter. When it sizzles, add the cabbage and stir in to coat. Add the redcurrant jelly and allow it to melt. Add the vinegar, orange, port, the red wine and some seasoning.

Bring it to the boil, reduce to a simmer and cover with a lid and cook for 1 1/2 hours, then remove the lid, add the raisins increase the heat and reduce the liquid to a syrup. When it's ready check and adjust seasoning.

For the meat, when you are nearly ready to serve, heat a frying pan until it's hot. Season the roe loins with salt and pepper (you may have to cut them in half to fit the pan). Add the sunflower oil and butter to the pan. Then add the loins and lightly fry each side for three to four minutes respectively until well browned. Remove the pan to a warm place to relax the meat for at least 10 minutes (but no more than 30). Warm through four large spoonfuls of the cabbage in a small saucepans and warm through the sauce. Pour any juices from the relaxing meat into the cabbage, then reheat the meat in the oven for 90 seconds. Have the potatoes ready. Finish the game gravy by taking 400ml of the prepared game sauce, add the vinegar and blueberries and warm through for 2 minutes.

Place a potato cake on four warmed serving plates and top with a generous spoon of the red cabbage. Carve the meat into approximately 24 slices and lay six slices on each pile of cabbage. Check and adjust the seasoning before spooning it over and around the meat.



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Neil Blair

Hot whisky and marmalade pudding with Drambuie custard





Hot whisky and marmalade pudding with Drambuie custard

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

150g fine brown breadcrumbs
25g self-raising wholemeal flour
120g light brown soft sugar
120g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing the bowl
175g well-flavoured, course-cut marmalade
30ml whisky
3 large eggs
1 rounded tsp bicarbonate of soda
For the custard
150ml full fat milk
150 double cream
1 vanilla pod, split, seeds scraped out and reserved
3 egg yolks
30g caster sugar
30ml Drambuie

Lighter than a traditional cloutie dumpling, this steamed pud is a lighter but no less Scottish end to a hearty meal. It has to be my favourite winter pudding and the light whisky kick and smooth Drambuie custard definitely warm the cockles.

Method

Butter a 3 pint pudding basin really well and choose a saucepan large enough to hold the pudding basin comfortably. We use 3 pint plastic basin that have a matching lid, perfect for this recipe.

Place the breadcrumbs, flour and sugar in a large mixing bowl. Melt the butter and marmalade together in a saucepan over a gentle heat, but do not boil. Pour the melted ingredients into the dry ingredients and mix together thoroughly. Lightly whisk the eggs until frothy and beat gently into the mixture until well blended. Last of all, dissolve the bicarbonate of soda in 1 tbsp of cold water. Beat this into the pudding mixture, which will increase in volume as it absorbs the bicarbonate of soda – leave to stand for 5 minutes for the bicarb to work. Cover it with a double sheet of buttered foil or a lid if your basin has one, making sure there is a pleat in it for expansion.

Place the pudding basin in a saucepan of boiling water. The water should reach halfway up the side of the basin. Simmer the pudding steadily for 2 hours. The water will need topping up throughout the cooking period. Meanwhile make the custard. Place the milk, cream and vanilla pod and seeds into a thick-bottomed pan and place on a high heat until boiling. In a stainless steel bowl, beat the egg yolks and sugar together with a balloon whisk until the mixture becomes thick, fluffy and pale.

Add the hot mix to the eggs. When stirring sure that you cover the whole pan by stirring in a figure of eight rather than round and round.

The mixture should begin to thicken within about 2 minutes. You're looking for a temperature of 82°C, and a thermo probe will prove invaluable. If you don't have a probe, watch for little puffs of steam escaping from the side of the pan. When the mix has thickened enough to coat the back of the spatula, take off the heat and strain immediately through a fine sieve to remove any small lumps which may have formed. Serve immediately, or pour into a clean bowl, cover with cling film (touching the surface to avoid a skin forming) and chill in an ice bath.

Uncover the pudding and turn it out onto a warm serving dish. Serve hot with the warm custard.



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