

Turkey burgers

Serves four, generously, takes 25 minutes

Delicately flavoured with sage and cumin, these patties are super quick to whip up. For a party, you could fry up the burgers in advance, then reheat them in a hot oven, adding the cheese when you heat them up. As I said above, if you're after something lighter, serve them over a vegetable puree like roasted carrot or butternut. Or add a rasher of crispy grilled bacon to go the other way.

For the burgers:

- * Turkey mince - 700g
- * Ground cumin - 1 tsp
- * Sage - about 6 leaves, chopped
- * Courgette - 1, finely grated
- * Egg - 2
- * Salt - 1/2 tsp
- * Black pepper - a few cracks

** Cheese - for topping the burgers. I used Tallegio which works well as it's mild and melty. Brie would also be classic and delicious.*

To serve - brioche buns, watercress and ketchup/mayo/ mustard. Or better, cranberry sauce.

In a large bowl, mix together all the ingredients for the burgers with your hands.

Heat a couple of large saucepans over a medium high heat (if you use two large pans you can cook all the burgers at once). Using a paper towel, smear some olive oil across each pan.

Using your hands, create medium sized burger patties (about 8 cm across) and place them in the pans to cook. You'll get about 12 patties. Make sure the heat is high enough that they're sizzling.

Wait about 10 minutes before carefully flipping them. Lightly toast the brioche buns while you're waiting.

After flipping them, wait a few minutes and then lay a slice of cheese on top of each burger. Leave to cook for another five minutes, until the cheese is melted and the burgers look cooked through. Don't be tempted to cook them too long - nobody likes a dried out turkey patty.

Let people assemble their own burgers at the table. Provide napkins.

Roasted sweet potato, watercress, maple spiced almonds and pomegranate salad

Serves 4, takes 45 minutes (15 minutes active time)

A sweet and tangy festive salad which looks beautiful and is easy to put together. You can make the separate elements in advance and then assemble everything just before you eat.

- * Sweet potatoes - 4, cut into wedges
- * Olive oil - to drizzle
- * Paprika - a few pinches

For the dressing:

- * Dijon mustard - 2 tbsp
- * Maple syrup - 1 tbsp
- * Cider vinegar - 1 tbsp
- * Water - 1 tbsp
- * Olive oil - 4 tbsp
- * Allspice - 1/4 tsp

For the maple almonds:

- * Almonds - 1 cup
- * Maple syrup - 2 tbsp
- * Ground cinnamon - 1/2 tsp
- * Paprika - 1/2 tsp
- * Chili powder - a few pinches

- * Water cress - enough for four
- * Pomegranate - seeds of 1/2

Preheat the oven to 210 degrees C.

Lay the sweet potatoes out on a baking tray. Toss with olive oil and paprika and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 30 minutes, until golden.

Next, make the dressing by whisking all the ingredients together in a glass.

To prepare the almonds, mix all the ingredients together in a bowl. Then lay the almonds out on a roasting tray lined with baking paper. Once the sweet potatoes are cooked, reduce the oven temperature to 160 degrees C and bake for 10 minutes.

Remove from the oven, let cool slightly before removing from the baking parchment and breaking up any clumps.

To assemble the salad, place the watercress in a large bowl and toss the dressing through. Arrange the sweet potatoes on top, then scatter over the pomegranate seeds and almonds.

Maple pecan pies with an almond crust

Serves 4, generously, 15 minutes active time, plus oven time

Auntie Jeanne's pecan pie will always have a place in my heart. And my belly. This recipe keeps the basic components and flavours of her filling, but cutting out the refined sugar and considerably upping the density of pecans. The traditional pastry is replaced by an almond crust, more nutritious than your classic short crust, but still giving you a little buttery hit. If you wanted a dairy free version, you could replace the butter with coconut oil.

This yields four generous, deep, individual tarts. Double the quantities to make a large tart. You'll just need to increase the cooking time for the filling.

For the crust:

- * *Ground almonds - 1.5 cups*
- * *Butter - 50g, cold, cut into chunks*
- * *Maple syrup - 1 tbsp*
- * *Salt - a pinch*
- * *Egg - 1*

For the filling:

- * *Maple syrup - 3/4 cup*
- * *Egg - 1*
- * *Salt - a couple of pinches*
- * *Ground almonds - 1 tbsp*
- * *Butter - 2 tbsp, melted*
- * *Vanilla essence - 1/2 tsp*
- * *Ground ginger - 1/4 tsp*
- * *Ground cinnamon - 1/4 tsp*
- * *Ground cloves - 1/4 tsp*
- * *Ground nutmeg - 1/4 tsp*
- * *Rum - 1 tbsp*
- * *Pecans - 125g*

Four individual deep metal tart tins or one small deep metal tart tin

Start by making the crust. In a mixer, pulse the almonds and butter until just combined. Add the maple syrup, salt and egg and mix to combine.

Using your fingers, press the mixture into the metal tart tins and up the sides. Place the tarts in the fridge to chill for twenty minutes.

Preheat the oven to 190 degrees C.

To make the filling, whisk the egg and maple syrup in a mixing bowl. Add the remaining ingredients, apart from the pecans, and mix again. Finally add the pecans and toss to evenly coat.

Place the chilled tart cases in the oven and bake for about 12 minutes, until the crust starts to turn golden.

Remove them from the oven and reduce the heat to 160 degrees C.

Spoon the pecan mixture into the tarts. For a tidier looking tart, use your fingers to arrange the pecans on the top in a flat layer, the outside of the nuts facing upwards.

Bake for another 25 minutes, until the filling is just set.

Leave the tarts to cool for about 10 minutes before turning them out. Serve with something creamy and cold.