

Home made popcorn

Serves 5, takes 10 minutes

- * *Popcorn kernels - 1/3 cup*
- * *Coconut or vegetable oil - a spoonful*
- * *Truffle oil (or olive oil) - a couple of glugs*

In a medium sized saucepan, heat the oil over a medium high heat. There should be enough oil just to cover the bottom of the pan. Place one corn kernel into the pan and wait for it to pop. When it does, remove the pan from the heat and pour in the rest of the corn. Put the lid on and give the pan a good shake to evenly distribute the kernels. After thirty seconds, return the pan to the heat (lid still on) and leave the corn for a few minutes to pop. You'll know when nearly all of the corn has popped because the popping sounds will spread out to every few seconds. Remove the pan from the heat and season the popcorn with salt and truffle oil.

Perfect roast chicken

Serves 5, takes 10 minutes preparation, plus 1h 20minutes oven time

- * *Free range chicken - 1 large*
- * *Lemon - half*
- * *Garlic - 10 cloves, skin on*
- * *Dried oregano - 1 tsp*
- * *Rosemary - a couple of sprigs*
- * *Olive oil*
- * *Leek - 1, sliced*
- * *Shallots - a handful*

Preheat the oven to 220 degrees C.

Making two incisions with a sharp knife, cut out the little white gland which runs through the chicken tail. If you leave it in, it can cause a slightly bitter taste in the flesh. Squeeze the lemon into the cavity of the chicken and season with salt and pepper. Stuff the squeezed lemon skin in, along with the garlic and the herbs. Rub olive oil all over the bird and season again with salt and pepper.

Arrange the sliced leeks in the bottom of a medium roasting tray and balance the chicken, breast side down, on top. Scatter the shallots around the bird and place in the oven for one hour and 20 minutes. After the first 20 minutes, reduce the temperature to 180 degrees C. For the final 20 minutes, carefully flip the chicken over so that the breast is facing upwards.

Rest the chicken for about 15 minutes before carving and serving, making sure to give everyone a shallot, some leeks and a couple of garlic clove.

Make sure to keep the bones to make up some delicious chicken stock. Just boil up the carcass in plenty of water for an hour. Add left over parsley stalks, onion skins, carrot, or celery sticks for extra flavour.

Green tahini sauce

- * *Tahini - 100g*
- * *Water - 100ml*
- * *Lemon - juice of 1/4*
- * *Salt - 1/8 tsp*
- * *Parsley - a large bunch, leaves only (preserve the stalks to add to your stock)*

In a measuring jug, whisk together the tahini and water with a fork until you have a smooth paste, the texture of smooth honey. Add extra water if necessary. Add the lemon juice and salt and whisk again.

Next, use a hand blender to blend in the parsley. Taste for seasoning and add more salt or lemon if desired.

Roasted winter vegetables

Serves 5, takes 10 minutes preparation plus 1 hour oven time

- * *Fennel - 1 large bulb*
- * *Sweet potato - 1 large*
- * *Beetroot - 1 large*
- * *Parsnip - 2 large*
- * *Butternut - 1/2, seeds removed*
- * *Rosemary - a few springs, leaves chopped*
- * *Dried oregano - 1 tbsp*
- * *Olive oil - a couple of glugs*

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees C.

Scrub all the vegetables clean with a brush and roughly chop them. In a very large roasting tin, toss them with the olive oil, herbs and plenty of salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for an hour, or until golden and tender.

If you are making these on their own, by all means cook them at a higher temperature (and reduce the cooking time). Anything up to 220 degrees C is fine. I put 180 degrees here so you can cook them along with the bird - if they need it, turn up the temperature once you've taken the chicken out to crisp things up.

Gingery Rhubarb Eton Mess

For five, with some leftover (perhaps), takes 20 minutes, plus oven and cooling time

- * *Egg whites - 3*
- * *Caster sugar - 160g*
- * *Rhubarb - 4 stems*
- * *Ginger - 3 heaped tbsp, finely chopped*
- * *Honey - 2 tbsp*
- * *Ginger syrup (optional) - 2 tbsp*
- * *Natural or Greek yoghurt - about 400g*

Start by making the meringues. Preheat the oven to 150°.

Whisk the egg whites with an electric whisk in a large, clean bowl. Start on a low speed for a couple of minutes, then increase the speed until stiff peaks form in the whites. Be careful not to over whisk, or the air pockets will begin to collapse. Gradually whisk in the sugar.

Spoon onto a baking sheet lined with greased baking paper, making six meringues. Don't worry too much about how they look, you'll be crumbling them up anyway when you serve. Place in the oven, reduce heat straight away to 140 degrees and cook for 40 minutes. Leave to cool in the oven for a couple of hours or overnight.

To make the rhubarb compote: slice the rhubarb into 2cm pieces and place in a saucepan with the ginger, honey, syrup (optional) and 1 tbsp water. Cover and simmer over a medium heat until tender, about 10 minutes. Add more honey if you it's too tart for you.

Serve in clear glasses for pink prettiness. Put a few spoonfuls of compote in each glass, followed by a layer of yoghurt. Top with crumbled meringue.