

Christmas cookery



With all the fruity flavour of Christmas Pudding but none of the heaviness, this delicious alternative is the perfect dessert to complete a festive feast, says TV chef Chris Coubrough.

If you didn't make your Christmas pudding on Stir-up Sunday, this recipe will come to your rescue, as you can make it on Christmas Eve and cook it on the big day. Essentially what you do is put all the ingredients that go into Christmas Pudding on a light, thin pastry base, and then serve it with brandy butter, brandy custard or clotted cream. I find that when you have eaten your way through smoked salmon, turkey and half the chocolate in your stocking, Christmas Pudding can be a bridge too far. This has all the spiced, zingy flavour of that traditional dessert, but none of the heaviness that can leave you only good for a snooze on the sofa!

Chris owns Flying Kiwi Inns, including The Crown Hotel at Wells; The Crown Inn at East Rudham; The King's Head at Letheringsett; The Ship Hotel at Brancaster, and – opening in 2011 – the White Hart at Hingham. Visit www.flyingkiwiinns.co.uk

CHRISTMAS TART

Short pastry case:
5oz butter
10oz plain flour
Pinch of Salt
Cold water

Bowl one:
6oz mixed dried fruit
6oz figs, chopped
6oz apricots, chopped
3oz glazed cherries, halved
1 tbsp cinnamon
Rind and juice 1 orange
2 tbsp Grand Marnier

Bowl two:
2 eggs, beaten
6oz Demerara sugar
6oz maple syrup
2oz butter, melted



Chris Coubrough: A recipe with the flavours of good old Christmas Pud, but none of the heaviness.

30g grated marzipan
20g almonds or pecan nuts, chopped

1. To make the pastry case, place the cubed butter, flour and salt into a bowl and rub through fingers until you get a breadcrumb consistency. Add a little water at a time to bring to a pastry dough. Roll out and line a 12" flan ring.
2. Mix "bowl one" ingredients together and put to one side. Mix "bowl two" ingredients together. Then add the contents of the first mixing bowl to the second and stir well.
3. Place the mixture into the uncooked pastry case and bake at 180C for 1 hour.

WINE CHOICE

John Atkinson recommends pairing this pudding with MR Malaga, available from Adnams at £12.99.

"A glass of dessert wine will often outlast the pudding with which it is paired, so it has to stand alone as a drink too. MR is surprisingly delicate given its sun-blasted Andalusian origins, and its intense citrus flavours will merge perfectly with Chris' tart."