

Mediterranean chutney

Makes about 6 x 370ml (1lb) jars

Takes about 3 hours but worth it!

- 1.35kg tomatoes skinned & chopped
- 4 red and 2 green peppers deseeded and chopped small
- 2 small aubergines chopped small
- 1.5kg onions, finely chopped
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 525g granulated sugar
- 450ml white wine vinegar
- 1 ½ tsp each salt, coriander seeds, crushed, paprika (smoked works well)
- 3 tsp cayenne pepper
- Sterilised jars with screw top lids

1. Put the tomatoes, peppers, aubergine, onions and garlic into a large lidded pan. Bring to a gentle simmer, cover and cook for about an hour till tender, stirring now and again.
2. Ideally transfer into a preserving pan and add the sugar, vinegar, salt and spices and stir over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved
3. Turn up the heat and bring to a bubble then cook for about 40-50 minutes until the watery liquid has evaporated and the chutney looks much thicker. When you stir through the chutney it should leave a trail in the pan. Try my chilled saucer test – put a spoonful on a frozen saucer and run your finger through it. If it leaves a clear path then the chutney is ready.
4. Make sure you stir the chutney quite a lot near the end of cooking time as it will catch on the bottom of the pan as it thickens
5. Spoon out or carefully pour into your jars up to the brim and pop the lids on straight away

This is a chutney that does need to mature to taste its best. Ideally at least 3 months.

Perfect with cold meats and pork pie for the Christmas table!

Marrow & ginger jam

Makes about 6x370ml (1lb) jars

Takes about an hour plus chopping and resting overnight

- 1.3kg marrow flesh, seeds and any fibrous strands removed
- 1.6kg granulated sugar
- 30g root ginger, cut into chunks and crushed
- 2 large lemons and 1 orange
- 5 or 6 balls of stem ginger, diced (optional)
- Sterilised jam jars
- Muslin to make a small bag

1. Dice the marrow into evenly sized, small (up to 1cm) cubes. Put in a large basin with half the sugar. Stir well, cover and leave overnight. It will produce quite a lot of syrup so don't worry!
2. Pour all the marrow and syrup into a large saucepan.
3. Peel the lemons and orange thinly. Place the ginger and peel in the muslin and make it into a secure bag.
4. Add the bag to the pan with the juice of the fruits.
5. Stir on a low heat until the sugar is dissolved then increase the heat to a simmer for 30 minutes.
6. Lower the heat and add the rest of the sugar and stir until it's completely dissolved.
- Boil gently for approx 15-20 minutes until the marrow has become transparent and setting point is reached.
7. Take out the bag and squeeze really well to release any juices.
8. Add the diced stem ginger if using and stir in well.
8. Leave to cool slightly and pour carefully into warm jars and cover with screw top lids.
9. Cool then store in a cool dark place. Once opened it will keep in the fridge for several weeks.

We use this mainly as a topping for vanilla ice cream but it's delicious on the top of a baked apple .

You could also try serving this with a sponge pudding or even a Yorkshire pud left over from the Sunday roast!

Parsnip cake

Takes about an hour. Cuts into 15 pieces

300g parsnips grated or add in some carrot or squash or even apple)

4 clementines or 2 oranges, zest and juice

140g sultanas

Pinch of salt

2 good tspn mixed spice

1 tspn bicarb of soda

4 large eggs, beaten

Scattering of granulated sugar or some crushed white sugar cubes.

Preheat oven to 180C/fan160/gas 4. Grease and line a 30x20cm traybake tin

1. Put the sultanas in a small bowl, add the clementine juice and zest from 2 fruits. Microwave for 2 minutes on **high** setting
2. In a large bowl mix together the flour, sugar, spices, bicarb and salt
3. Melt the butter then when cooled add the beaten eggs and sultanas and any juices from the bowl
4. Tip into the dry ingredients and mix together with a wooden spoon. Add in the grated parsnip and give another good stir.
5. Pour into your baking tin then pop in the oven for a good 35-40 minutes. Test with a skewer. Leave to cool in the tin then turn out on to a wire rack ready for icing
6. Sift the icing sugar into a small bowl then stir in the zest from the last 2 clementines. Then add the juice of 1 of the fruits and stir well. Add more juice a bit at a time to make a fairly runny icing.
7. Drizzle or spread the icing depending on the finish you prefer – either way let it run down the sides a bit!

300g SR flour

300g soft light brown sugar

1 tspn ginger or nutmeg

200g butter, melted

200g icing sugar