HEARTY & GROUNDING

Bacon-Wrapped Dates with Goat’s Cheese

PREP	COOK	SERVES
15 min	20 min	4 (16 pieces)

Sweet dates stuffed with creamy goat's cheese, wrapped in crisp bacon and finished with honey.

Ingredients

- 16 Medjool dates, pitted
- 100 g soft goat's cheese
- 8 rashers of streaky bacon, halved
- 1 tbsp honey
- Black pepper
- A handful of rocket, to serve

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Make a slit along each date and press in a little goat's cheese.
3. Wrap each date in half a rasher of bacon and secure with a cocktail stick.
4. Place on the tray and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, turning once, until the bacon is crisp and browned.
5. Brush with the honey and grind over some black pepper.
6. Serve warm on a bed of rocket.

HEARTY & GROUNDING

Slow-Braised Beef Ragu with Pappardelle

PREP	COOK	SERVES
25 min	3 h	6

Beef shin melting into a rich tomato and red wine sauce, tossed through wide ribbons of pasta.

Ingredients

For the ragu

- 1 kg beef shin or chuck, cut into large chunks
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 200 ml red wine
- 2 x 400 g tins chopped tomatoes
- 500 ml beef stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- Salt and black pepper

To serve

- 500 g pappardelle
- Grated parmesan
- Chopped fresh parsley

Method

1. Heat the oven to 160°C. Season the beef generously with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large ovenproof pot and brown the beef in batches until deep golden on all sides. Set aside.

2. In the same pot, cook the onion, carrots and celery over medium heat for 10 minutes until soft. Add the garlic and tomato purée and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Pour in the wine, scrape up everything stuck to the bottom and let it bubble until reduced by half.
4. Return the beef to the pot with the tomatoes, stock, bay leaves and rosemary. Bring to a simmer, cover and cook in the oven for 2½ to 3 hours, until the beef falls apart.
5. Lift out the herbs. Shred the beef with two forks right in the sauce, then simmer uncovered on the hob for 10 minutes until thick and glossy. Taste and adjust the seasoning.
6. Cook the pappardelle in well-salted water until al dente. Save a cup of the cooking water, drain the pasta and toss it through the ragu, loosening with a splash of the water.
7. Serve with parmesan and parsley.

Cook's tip

The ragu is even better the next day and freezes well for up to three months. Make a double batch.

HEARTY & GROUNDING

Brussels Sprouts with Crispy Pancetta and Parmesan

PREP	COOK	SERVES
10 min	30 min	4

Roasted Brussels sprouts with crisp pancetta, garlic and shaved parmesan. Even sprout sceptics ask for seconds.

Ingredients

- 600 g Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 100 g diced pancetta or bacon lardons
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- Salt and black pepper
- 30 g parmesan, shaved

Method

1. Heat the oven to 220°C. Toss the sprouts with the oil, salt and pepper and spread them cut side down on a large tray.
2. Roast for 15 minutes.
3. Scatter the pancetta over the sprouts and roast for 10 to 12 minutes more, until the pancetta is crisp and the sprouts are browned.
4. Add the garlic for the last 3 minutes so it does not burn.
5. Toss with the balsamic vinegar and top with the parmesan shavings. Serve hot.

> **Cook's tip**
>
> Placing the sprouts cut side down gives them a deep golden, caramelised face.

HEARTY & GROUNDING

Sticky Toffee Pudding

PREP	COOK	SERVES
20 min	45 min	8

Vegetarian

A soft, date-sweetened sponge drowned in hot toffee sauce. The best answer to a cold evening.

Ingredients

For the pudding

- 200 g pitted dates, chopped
- 250 ml boiling water
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 75 g soft butter
- 150 g dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 200 g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the toffee sauce

- 100 g butter
- 150 g dark brown sugar
- 200 ml double cream
- 1 tbsp black treacle
- A pinch of salt

Method

1. Heat the oven to 180°C and grease a 20 cm square baking dish.
2. Put the dates in a bowl, pour over the boiling water, add the bicarbonate of soda and leave for 10 minutes.
3. Beat the butter and sugar until pale, then beat in the eggs one at a time.

4. Fold in the flour and vanilla, then stir in the dates with all their liquid to a loose batter.
5. Pour into the dish and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until risen and a skewer comes out clean.
6. For the sauce, melt the butter and sugar in a pan, add the cream, treacle and salt, and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes until glossy.
7. Pour half the sauce over the hot pudding, cut into squares and serve with the rest of the sauce.

Cook's tip

Prick the warm pudding with a skewer before you pour over the sauce, so the sauce soaks right in.

HEARTY & GROUNDING

Mulled Wine

PREP	COOK	SERVES
10 min	30 min	6 small glasses

Contains alcohol

Red wine gently heated with orange, cinnamon, cloves, star anise and a little sugar. Contains alcohol.

Ingredients

- 1 bottle (750 ml) fruity red wine
- 1 orange, sliced, plus a strip of peel
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 cloves
- 2 star anise
- 3 tbsp sugar or honey, to taste
- 50 ml brandy (optional)

Method

1. Put the wine, orange, orange peel, cinnamon, cloves, star anise and sugar in a large pan.
2. Heat gently over low heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Do not let it boil.
3. Keep it below a simmer for 20 to 30 minutes so the spices can infuse.
4. Add the brandy, if using, and taste, adding more sugar if needed.
5. Strain into heatproof glasses and serve warm.

Cook's tip

Choose an inexpensive, fruity red wine, not a heavy or oaky one. Contains alcohol: for adults only.