



TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

A Christmas Celebration at Moore's Of Coleraine

1. Breakfast Menu

Homemade Granola
Toasted Winter Sandwiches
Christmas Morning Cranberry Muffins
Toasted Bruchetta with Figs, Ballyblue Cheese and Grilled Pancetta
Bacon

2. Dinner

A Winter Fish Pie with a Lemon & Thyme Rosti Topping
Mulled Wine
Cranberry, Pear and Pecan Pie with Honeyed Mascarpone
A Filo Crusted Tart of Stilton, Celery and Crispy Bacon

3. Christmas Eve Supper Party

Sicilian Roasted Fished, Roasted Lemon with Olives, Capers and Rocket
A Festive Fruited Saffron Stew
Lemon Syllabub



Homemade Granola with Flambéed Berries & Warm Maple Syrup

(Makes 800g/1¾ lb granola)

Ingredients

450g/1lb rolled oats
2 tbsp sunflower oil
2 tbsp honey
1 tsp natural vanilla extract
75g/3oz flaked almonds
50g/2oz sesame seeds
50g/2oz flaxseeds
50g/2oz sunflower seeds
110g/4oz dried cranberries or raisins

(Granola Yoghurt)

125ml/4floz low fat natural yoghurt
2 dsp maple syrup

(Berries)

110g/4oz assorted fresh berries

(Optional)

2-3 dsp Irish Mist

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Place the rolled oats in a large roasting tin and toast in the oven for approximately 15 minutes, turning once or twice during cooking.

In a small saucepan combine the oil, honey and vanilla extract, and heat until warm. Add the almonds, sesame seeds, flaxseeds and sunflower seeds to the honey mixture and stir. Remove the pan from the heat, and pour the honey and seeds over the oats. Mix well.

Continue to bake the coated oats for another 15 minutes, until well browned and crisp, turn every 5 minutes so that they brown evenly. Break up the oat mixture into chunks with a wooden spoon and add the dried cranberries or raisins. Leave to cool completely. When cold, store in an airtight jar – granola will keep in a cool place for 2-3 months.

To serve, combine the yoghurt and maple syrup. Take two glasses and spoon 2-3dsp granola into the bottom of each one. Add a layer of yoghurt and then top with a spoonful of berries.

The berries can be flambéed in a little liqueur for a special Christmas morning breakfast.



A Toasted Winter Sandwich

A great toasted sandwich if you like your food on the go! This can be made with any kind of bread you like: wheaten, bagels or – my favourite – walnut bread.

(Serves 2)

Ingredients

4 slices bread or 2 bagels – halved
4 rindless rashers maple cured bacon
175g/60z cream cheese
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
Few drops of natural vanilla extract
1 dsp maple syrup or honey - warmed

Method

Pre-heat the grill to its hottest setting. Toast the slices of bread or bagel halves until lightly browned. Cook the bacon under the grill until crisp.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix the cream cheese, cinnamon and vanilla. Spread the toasted bread with the cream cheese mixture. Top two slices or bagel halves with the bacon. Flash under a hot grill for 30 seconds, then top with the other remaining toast or bagel halves. Press well together, cut in half and serve the sandwiches as they are, or with a little maple syrup or honey drizzled over the top.



Christmas Morning Cranberry Muffins

Muffins are a staple of American eating and are almost as popular here. This lovely recipe is inspired by some muffins I tried in New England.

(Serves 8-10)

Ingredients

226g/8oz plain flour – sieved
1tsp baking powder
½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
½ tsp ground cloves
110g/4oz cranberries
1 Bramley Apple – peeled, cored and chopped
50g/2oz caster sugar
2 eggs – beaten
110g/4oz butter
150ml/¼ pt sour cream

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Lightly grease a muffin pan or line with paper cases – the mixture will make 8-10 muffins.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and spices. Make a well in the centre of the dry mixture. Add the cranberries, apples and sugar. Pour in the eggs, butter and sour cream.

Lightly mix the wet ingredients, then quickly stir in the flour mixture. Do not over mix – it does not matter if there are some floury patches. Spoon the mixture into the prepared muffin pans.

Bake the muffins for 15-20 minutes, until well risen, browned and springy to the touch. When cooked, wrap in a tea towel and allow to cool.

Dust with icing sugar or cinnamon.



Toasted Bruchetta with Figs, Ballyblue Cheese and Grilled Pancetta Bacon

(Serves 3-4)

Ingredients

1 Ciabatta loaf
110g/4oz Ballyblue Cheese
4 fresh figs
2 tbsp olive oil
4 dsp balsamic or red wine vinegar
1 dsp pesto

(To Serve)

Fresh Herbs

Method

Cut the Ciabatta in half, sprinkle with olive oil and toast below a hot grill. Grill the Pancetta bacon. Cut the figs into quarters and toss them in red wine vinegar or balsamic. Cut the cheese into think slices.

(To make the sandwich)

Top the toasted bruchetta with a light spread of pesto. Top with figs, bacon and blue cheese. Sprinkle with olive oil and flash below a hot grill for 1-2 minutes just until the cheese shows signs of bubbling and melting. Top with herbs.

Serve hot.



A Winter Fish Pie with a Lemon & Thyme Rosti Topping

In this simple recipe the fish is poached gently, flavoured with cream, lemon and parsley.

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

225g/8oz pieces of white fish e.g. haddock, cod and whiting
225g/8oz lightly smoked undyed haddock

110g/4oz prawns
275ml/½ pt milk
25g/1oz butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 dsp cream
4 dsp crème fraiche
1 dsp parsley – finely chopped
110g/4oz garden peas – lightly cooked
Zest of 1 lemon
1 leek – sliced
1 tbsp capers

(Topping)

2 large potatoes – lightly boiled and grated
½ tsp mustard
4 dsp low fat yoghurt
2 dsp cream
1 lemon – rind only
½ tsp fresh thyme

Method

Cut the fish evenly into large cubes. Ensure the fish is free of any bones.

Gently heat the milk and butter in a large shallow pan and the seasoning and the fish. Poach gently until the fish softens (this will take about 5 minutes). Add the cream and the crème fraiche and lightly mix in with the fish until the sauce thickens. Scatter the parsley, peas, capers, leek and lemon zest over the fish but do not stir. Heat gently for 1-2 minutes – do not boil – then transfer to a serving dish.

Lightly boil the potatoes for 5-6 minutes then drain and grate coarsely.

Mix in a bowl along with the mustard, yoghurt, cream, lemon rind and thyme. Spoon over the fish in an oven proof dish and bake in the oven at 200°C/Gas Mark No 6 for 15-20 minutes approximately. Serve hot.



Mulled Wine

(Serves Approx 15-20)

Ingredients

1.7L (3pints) water
225g/8oz granulated sugar
2-3 cinnamon sticks
3 oranges
10-12 cloves
2 bottles red wine
1 apple and orange to serve

Method

Roughly cut up the oranges and place in a saucepan with all the other ingredients, except for the red wine. Heat gently until the sugar has dissolved, then bring to the boil, simmer for 30 minutes and strain. (The syrup can be made up to this stage and then stored in the fridge until required.)

To serve, return the syrup to the pan, bring to boiling point, add the wine and slice of apple and orange and serve.



Cranberry, Pear and Pecan Pie with Honeyed Mascarpone & Yoghurt

(Serves 6-8)

Ingredients

175g/6oz plain flour – sifted
25g/1oz caster sugar
75g/3oz ground almonds
110g/4oz butter – softened
1 egg – lightly beaten
75g/3oz soft brown sugar
25g/1oz butter – melted
5 tbsp maple syrup or honey
110g/4oz pecan nuts
Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

(Filling)

175g/6oz cranberries
4 pears – peeled, cored and diced
25g/1oz caster sugar
3 large eggs

(Honeyed Mascarpone)

200g/7oz mascarpone cheese
4 dsp low fat natural yoghurt
1 tbsp honey

Method

Place the flour in the food processor, then add the sugar, ground almonds, butter and egg. Blend until the mixture binds together – add a little water if necessary – then transfer to a floured surface. Roll out gently (this is a very short pastry) and use to line a loose-bottomed flan tin, 18-20cm/7-8inch in diameter. To transfer the pastry easily to the dish, slide the loose bottom under the pastry and then just drop it into the tin.

Wrap the lined flan tin in cling-film and chill for 15-20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Blind bake the pastry oven case for 12-15 minutes.

Turn the oven down to 170°C/Gas Mark 3. Place the cranberries, pears and caster sugar in a bowl and mix.

Beat the eggs with the brown sugar until light and creamy. Add the melted butter and maple syrup, and beat again. Add the sugar-coated berries and pears, most of the nuts (keep a few for the top), and the lemon zest and juice. Mix gently, then spoon into the pastry case. Arrange the reserved nuts on top. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until the pastry is cooled and the filling has set.

To make the honeyed mascarpone, mix the mascarpone with the yoghurt and honey. Allow the pie to cool slightly before serving with mascarpone and yoghurt.



Filo Crusted Tart of Stilton, Celery and Crispy Bacon

(Serves 8-10)

Ingredients

4 sheets filo pastry
1 egg white or butter
1 dsp olive oil or butter
225g/8oz stilton cheese
115g/4oz bacon – grilled
2 stalks celery – sliced
2-3 sun-dried tomatoes – sliced

(Topping)

115g/4oz yoghurt
4 dsp cream
3 egg yolks
Salt and pepper
½ tsp paprika pepper

Method

Layer the sheets of filo pastry and brush with melted butter or egg white and olive oil. Layer 3-4 sheets into a tin either round or rectangular.

(Prepare the filling)

Crumble the stilton cheese. Slice the celery, chop the grilled bacon and slice sun-dried tomatoes. Place all ingredients in the filo case.

(Prepare the topping)

Mix together the yoghurt, egg yolks, cream and paprika pepper. Season. Pour over the tart and bake at 200°C/Gas Mark 6/400°F for 20-25 minutes. Serve with a green salad.



Sicilian Roasted Fish with Roasted Lemon Olives, Capers and Rocket

A really quick starter using the best of seasonal fish. Add a few prawns if you like. The secret of this dish lies in its simplicity along with fresh snappy flavours which are ideal for a starter.

(Serves 2)

Ingredients

2 fillets white fish – hake, haddock or turbot
100g/4oz large shelled prawns
2 lemons
1 dsp capers
50g/2oz olives
1 dsp balsamic vinegar
1 bunch rocket
4 dsp olive oil
Freshly milled black pepper

Method

This dish can either be roasted in the oven or cooked in a shallow fry pan.

Prepare the fish fillets, skin, then place in a roasting dish. Pour over olive oil, juice from 1 lemon roasted and blacken in the oven. For flavour, add a little balsamic vinegar. Scatter over the olives and capers and roast in the oven at 200°C/400°F. Gas Mark 6 for 10-12 minutes. If liked, add a few prawns. Cooking time will vary slightly with the thickness of the fish fillets.

Remove and serve on a plate. Garnish with rocket leaves and pour over the roasted juices from the pan. Cut the remaining lemon into slices and use to garnish.



A Festive Fruited Saffron Stew served with Celebration Rice, Clementine's, Saffron and Pistachio.

An ideal dish when you want to prepare in advance. A combination of fruit and either lamb or pork can be used for this dish. The fruit can be fresh or dried. The hint of cinnamon brings out the best in the flavours.

(Serves 6-8)

Ingredients

1 dsp saffron threads
2 dsp water

1 dsp olive oil
900g/2lb pork or lamb pieces

225g/8oz baby onions
1 tsp garlic – finely chopped
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp cinnamon
110-225g/4-8oz apricots, depending on taste
400g/14oz tin chopped tomatoes
2 litres/2pt stock (vegetable or chicken)
50g/2oz whole almonds
50g/2oz pistachio nuts
25g/1oz dates
25g/1oz dried cranberries

Method

Place the saffron threads in a bowl with water and leave to infuse for 10 minutes until the water is yellow.

Heat the oil in a pan and add the meat. Cook over a high heat for 6-7 minutes until the meat has browned. You may need to cook the meat in batches – if you overload the pan the meat will stew instead of browning.

Add the baby onions, garlic and paprika and cook for 2-3 minutes.

Add the cinnamon, saffron threads and liquid, apricots, tomatoes, cranberries, dates and stock. Turn the heat down and leave to simmer for 1-1¼ hours with the lid on. If you do not want to keep this dish on the hob, it can be cooked in the oven at 190°C/Gas Mark 5.

Add the nuts to the casserole dish approximately 15 minutes before serving.

Serve with basmati rice or toasted bread.



Lemon Syllabub With Roasted Pecan Nuts

The flavour of Irish Mist combines beautifully with tangy lemon in this delicate light pudding.

(Serves 2)

Ingredients

1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
Grated zest of 1½ lemons
50g/2oz caster sugar
2 tbsp Irish Mist
275ml/½ pt double cream – whipped
1 egg white – whisked until stiff
25g/1oz pecan nuts

Method

Mix the lemon juice, two thirds of the lemon zest, the sugar and Irish Mist in a bowl until the sugar has dissolved. Fold in the cream and then the egg white. Transfer the mixture into tall glasses and chill in the fridge for 1 hour.

Toast the pecan nuts in a dry frying pan until golden, then chop them roughly.

Sprinkle the nuts and remaining lemon zest over the glasses and syllabub and serve.