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At home with Heston

By Heston Blumenthal

Feedback?

In an exclusive preview of his latest book, the chef argues that great cooking boils down to having fun



Welcome to a strand of my cooking that you may not be familiar with. I'm probably best known for the dishes I serve at the [Fat Duck](#), such as hot and iced tea, nitro-poached vodka and lime sour, and jelly of quail with crayfish cream, all of which are extremely labour-intensive. I love the technical challenge of such dishes and the thrill of taking an idea and turning it into something that is wonderful to eat, but I'm not into complexity for its own sake. I'm a self-taught chef, and I know just how perplexing cooking can be. So I've always been keen to demystify the process. For some time I've wanted to write a book that has both exciting recipes and all the background information that explains how they actually work. A book that makes people feel at ease in the kitchen. *Heston Blumenthal at Home* is the result.

I was bitten by the food bug at 16, when my parents took me to a three-star French restaurant, and I learnt to cook from books, preparing versions of the French classics over and over again. What drove me nuts was that even with a

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basic thing like chicken stock, there'd be variations from one recipe to the next. Why did one chef make it by roasting chicken wings, then simmering them in water with flavourings for four hours, while another covered raw carcasses and giblets with water, added flavourings and then simmered for only an hour and a half? With a vanilla ice-cream base, why did different recipes choose to use whipping cream, double cream, crème fraîche or powdered milk? Once you know the answers to such questions, you're no longer simply a slave to a recipe, you can play around with it, or take its principles and apply them to a different dish – in short, you can begin to let rip.

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The habit of questioning everything that I picked up while teaching myself to cook became the normal way of doing things at the Fat Duck. Constantly challenging the orthodoxy has led to many surprising discoveries – like the fact that searing meat doesn't hold in its juices, or that cooking asparagus in water loses a lot of the flavour, or that unrefined sugar caramelises quicker than refined, so you can brown it on the top of a crème brûlée without overcooking the custard beneath. This know-how underpins my book and the recipes selected from it here.

Some of the techniques I've developed depend on modern technology. Often people find this daunting, or think that using probes and digital scales and water-baths somehow takes the romance out of cooking. But these are just tools to make the cooking easier and more accurate, or to create flavours and textures that would otherwise be difficult. If you want to cook these dishes the way I do, precise measuring and careful probing will help you achieve that goal.

However, in the end, cooking is about intuition and emotion, about going into the kitchen and trying things out, having fun. Much of the pleasure of eating comes from the flavours, textures and aromas you coax out of the ingredients, but a lot comes from the memories and associations and nostalgia that food evokes.

Great meals come from somehow tapping into these feelings and capturing them in the food you put on the table. The key to cooking is thinking about what excites you and working with that. These recipes are the ones that excite me. I hope that they inspire you to go into the kitchen and create something extraordinary.

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Pumpkin soup

This is a silky, luxurious soup. Roasting half the pumpkin and sweating the other half in butter gives a more interesting range of pumpkin flavours. You need to search out a nicely ripe pumpkin, though, if you want it to really sing.

Almost any soup will benefit from elements that add flavour and texture contrasts. Here I've used hidden pumpkin seeds (for crunch and to extend the range of pumpkin flavours even further), roasted red pepper diamonds, toasted hazelnuts, red pepper oil and brown butter, which brings a delicious nuttiness.

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Serves 6

For the soup

850g Pumpkin flesh

Olive oil

250g Unsalted butter

3 Onions, peeled and finely sliced

400g Whole milk

4 Sprigs of rosemary

Pinch of cayenne pepper

40g Sesame oil (or to taste)

40g Balsamic vinegar (or to taste)

Salt

To finish and serve

20g Hazelnuts, toasted until golden brown

½ Sprig of rosemary

20g Coarse dry breadcrumbs

1 tbs Melted brown butter. (To make brown butter, melt unsalted butter over a gentle heat, whisking continuously, until the solids turn golden brown. Take off the heat, strain through a coffee filter and store in fridge.)

1 Red pepper, de-seeded, roasted and peeled, then cut into diamonds

Pumpkin seeds

Red pepper oil (optional)

Pre-heat the oven to 180C.

To start the soup, thinly slice half of the pumpkin on a mandolin and cut the other half into large cubes. Roast the large cubes of pumpkin drizzled with a little olive oil in the pre-heated oven for approximately 45 minutes or until soft and caramelised. Melt 200g of the butter in a saucepan and sweat the onions and pumpkin slices for approximately 10 minutes.

In the meantime, in a second pan, heat the milk until almost simmering. Turn off the heat, add the rosemary, then allow to infuse for 20 minutes. Strain the liquid and discard the rosemary.

When the onions are translucent, add the rosemary milk, 600g cold tap water and the roasted pumpkin, bring to the boil and reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes until the sliced pumpkin is soft. Remove from the heat, liquidise and pass through a fine sieve.

Season with cayenne, sesame oil, balsamic vinegar and salt.

When ready to serve, combine the toasted hazelnuts with the rosemary and blitz to a coarse powder. Combine with the breadcrumbs.

Brush the inside rim of the soup bowls with the brown butter and coat with the hazelnut and rosemary mixture.

Place some red pepper diamonds and pumpkin seeds in the bottom of each bowl.

Warm the soup, add the remaining 50g of butter and aerate with a hand blender. Ladle into the nut-encrusted bowls and garnish with drops of red pepper oil.

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Marmite consommé

Marmite – you either love it or hate it. I happen to love it for its big wallop of umami. Here it’s the key ingredient for a very full-flavoured vegetarian soup.

I originally developed this consommé as part of a Fat Duck recipe that took the elements of a classic meaty dish – pot-au-feu – and gave them a vegetarian twist.

But on its own it makes a terrific soup that you can take in all sorts of directions, simply by adding different garnishes at the end – blanched baby vegetables, wilted spinach, poached eggs, raw enoki mushrooms or indeed any sort of mushrooms, cooked pasta or noodles all work really well.

It’s also a great addition to your vegetarian stock armoury, as it does not contain gelatine.

You will need a pressure cooker for this recipe.



Serves 4

For the consommé

750g Brown butter (see pumpkin soup recipe above)

1kg Peeled and finely sliced onion (approx. 5 large onions)

1kg Cleaned and finely sliced leek, white part only (approx. 20 leeks)

500g Peeled and finely sliced carrot (approx. 6-7 large carrots)

750g Red wine

3 Large egg whites

To finish and serve

10g Sherry vinegar (or to taste)

½ tsp Marmite (or to taste)

Salt and black pepper

To start the consommé, melt the brown butter in a pressure cooker over a medium heat and sweat the onion, leek and carrot until soft (approximately 15 minutes).

In the meantime, bring the wine to the boil in a saucepan and flame off the alcohol. Boil to reduce by one-third to 500g.

Add 250g cold tap water and the reduced wine to the vegetables. Place the lid on the pressure cooker and bring up to full pressure over a high heat. Reduce the heat to low and cook for one hour. Take the pressure cooker off the heat and allow to cool completely before removing the lid.

Strain the broth through a fine sieve into a bowl and place in the fridge overnight to allow the fat to separate from the broth. Remove the fat and reserve (this can be used to cook vegetables, melt over steaks or finish sauces).

Pour the broth into a clean pan, and filter using egg filtration. For this method, lightly whisk some egg whites until they are loose and have formed a few bubbles. Add the egg whites to the pan. Heat the stock gradually. After about 30-40 minutes of very gentle simmering, an egg “raft” will form and rise to the surface, attracting to it the fat and impurities. Lift the raft out. Ladle the consommé from the pan into a fine sieve lined with a coffee filter paper or dampened muslin, set above a clean pan or storage container.

When ready to serve, warm the consommé, add the sherry vinegar and Marmite, and season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Garnish with your choice from the suggestions above.

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Scotch eggs

It’s said that the department store Fortnum & Mason invented the “Scottish Egg” in the mid-19th century as a ready-to-eat luxury food. While most modern mass-produced versions are dense and stodgy, the Scotch egg can be a wonderfully refined food with lots of textural contrasts – a crunchy fried-breadcrumb exterior giving way to juicy meat and that final surprise of the egg with its still-runny centre. I like it served with a blob of mustard mayonnaise.

Scotch eggs are great picnic food, but to ensure runny yolks you can’t really make them much in advance. To be at their best, they should be served as soon as possible after leaving the oven. You can use any sausage meat here, but for me what works best is the kind used in a banger – something that has a bit of filler, which gives a smooth texture, rather than pure meat, which gives a coarser, drier texture. It’s a good idea to keep the sausage meat very cold, as it will be easier to wrap around the eggs.

Makes 8

10 Medium eggs



- 450g Sausage meat
- 1 tsp Chopped thyme leaves
- 45g French's mustard
- ½ tsp Cayenne pepper
- 2 tbs Chopped chives
- Salt and black pepper
- Plain flour
- 50g Whole milk

125g Panko or coarse breadcrumbs, blitzed to a powder

Groundnut oil, for deep-frying

Place eight of the eggs in a large pan with enough water to cover the eggs by 2cm. Place the pan over a high heat. Bring the water to the boil; as soon as it starts to simmer, allow the eggs to cook for two minutes exactly.

Remove the eggs to a bowl and place under cold running water for two minutes. Let them cool for 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the sausage meat in a food processor with two tablespoons of cold tap water and pulse six times. Turn into a bowl. Add the thyme, mustard, cayenne pepper, chopped chives and season with a little salt and freshly ground pepper. With clean hands, mix the spices into the meat and then divide into eight balls, approximately 55g per portion.

Once the eggs are cool enough to handle, carefully peel off the shells. Flatten each portion of sausage meat between two sheets of clingfilm into a circle, then remove the clingfilm. Place an egg in the centre of each sausage-meat circle. Wrap the sausage meat around the egg, pressing the edges in order to seal it but being careful not to press too hard. Place in the fridge for 20 minutes. Pre-heat the oven to 190C.

In the meantime, put enough flour to coat the eggs into a bowl and season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Beat the remaining eggs in a second bowl and stir in the milk. Put the Panko into a third bowl. Roll each egg in the flour, gently tapping off any excess, then dip it in the beaten egg. Finally, roll it in the breadcrumbs, making sure that all sides are coated.

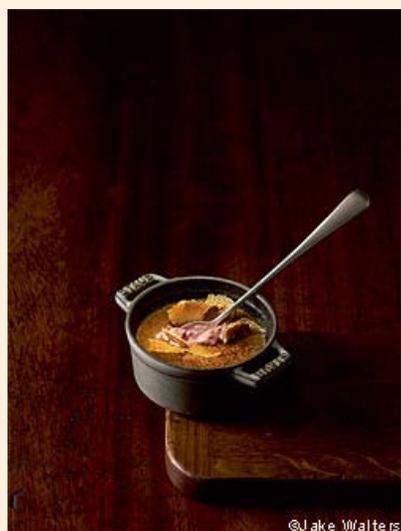
Heat a deep fat fryer to 190C or place a deep saucepan no more than half filled with oil over a medium-high heat until it reaches this temperature.

Fry the Scotch eggs two at a time for two minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oil with a slotted spoon and place on a drying rack over a baking tray. When all the eggs have been fried, place the tray in the oven for an additional 10 minutes. Serve immediately while the yolks are still runny.

Brûléed chicken liver parfait

The idea of a chicken liver brûlée might seem unusual, but it makes a beautiful starter that surprises people (in a good way) and has nice textural contrast – the rich, silky-smooth, delicate custard topped with a brittle, caramelised, glass-like crust. Don't baulk at the large amount of alcohol required: it is reduced down to a very concentrated syrup and is key to the flavour of the dish. The Madeira, in particular, contributes a lot to the dish's character – the richer and nuttier it is, the better the end result – so it's vital to buy a top-quality product.

Ingredients that are to be mixed together will combine better, without splitting, if they are at the same temperature. This is why we put the main ingredients for the parfait – the chicken livers, eggs and butter – in separate sandwich bags in warm water.



Serves 8

For the alcohol reduction

100g Peeled and finely sliced shallot
(approx. 2 banana shallots)

1 Clove of garlic, peeled and sliced

15g Sprigs of thyme, tied together with
string

150g Dry Madeira

150g Ruby port

150g White port

75g Brandy

For the parfait

400g Chicken livers (stringy veins removed)

20g Salt

4 Large eggs

400g Unsalted butter, cubed and at room temperature

125g Whipping cream

Demerara sugar, for the top

Put all the ingredients for the alcohol reduction into a medium saucepan and place over a high heat. Bring to the boil and reduce to a thick syrup. Remove and discard the bundle of thyme, and put the reduction to one side until it is required.

To start the parfait, fill a medium saucepan with cold water and heat to approximately 50C.

Combine the livers and salt in a sealable sandwich bag. Crack the eggs into another sandwich bag, with the butter in a third.

Remove the saucepan from the heat and place the bags in the water, being careful to keep the tops of the bags out of the water. Allow the bags to warm for 10 minutes so that all the ingredients are the same temperature before you start mixing them.

Pre-heat the oven to 110C.

After 10 minutes, remove the bags from the water and put the livers and eggs into a tall container and add the alcohol reduction. Blitz smooth with a hand blender. Slowly add the melted butter to the liver mixture while blitzing as if making mayonnaise.

When all the butter has been fully incorporated, pass the mixture through a fine sieve lined with a double layer of muslin. Squeeze out as much of the mixture as possible, then stir in the whipping cream.

Pour the mixture into eight 8cm diameter ramekins so that they are two-thirds full. Place the ramekins in a deep roasting tray, and pour just-boiled water into the tray until it reaches two-thirds of the way up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the tray with foil and place it on the middle shelf of the pre-heated oven.

After 15 minutes start checking the parfaits by carefully removing the foil and inserting a digital probe into the centre of a parfait. Once the temperature reaches 62C, remove the roasting tray and take the ramekins out of the water. Leave them to cool for 20 minutes at room temperature before chilling in the fridge, for at least six hours or overnight.

About 30 minutes before serving, remove the parfaits from the fridge.

Just before serving, sprinkle with a thin layer of demerara sugar and brûlée with a blow-torch to form a glassy top. Serve with char-grilled bread.

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Peach and Parma ham salad

This salad gets its edge from the combination of peaches, cloves and Gruyère, which have an amazing affinity due to compounds they have in common.

The peaches must be perfectly ripe, while the ham adds flavour and texture.

Serves 4-6

For the vinaigrette

Mustard vinaigrette (40g white wine vinegar, 120g groundnut or wholegrain mustard, 120g groundnut or rapeseed oil)

½ tsp Ground cloves

For the peach salad

25g Balsamic vinegar

180g Parma ham slices

2 Ripe peaches

200g Rocket leaves

Sea salt and black pepper

80g Gruyère cheese, shaved with a vegetable peeler

For the vinaigrette, put the vinegar and mustard in a bowl and whisk together. Slowly add in the oil while still whisking. Season with salt. Add the ground cloves.

For the peach salad, pour the balsamic vinegar into a small saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium heat.

Let the liquid reduce to a syrup consistency (approximately 10 minutes), and remove from the heat. Allow to cool.

While the vinegar is reducing, place the slices of ham in the freezer for about 10 minutes. This will make them easier to cut. Chop the slices roughly.

Halve the peaches, remove the stones and slice the flesh into thin wedges.

When ready to serve, toss the rocket leaves in the vinaigrette and season with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Add the peach slices, the Parma ham and Gruyère shavings and, using a spoon or squeeze bottle, drizzle the reduced balsamic over the top of the salad.

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Tea smoked salmon

Salmon responds well to smoking because of its oiliness. Fat holds on to flavour, so the fish can really take on a smoked aspect, and the fat also keeps the salmon from drying out too much.

You can of course buy smoked salmon in any supermarket, but smoking your own gives a much more individual, distinct flavour – and a real sense of achievement. The recipe uses jasmine tea to flavour the smoke but other teas can be used – Earl Grey, lapsang souchong, Darjeeling – each of which will bring a different character to the fish.

Serves 6-8

330g Salt

165g White granulated sugar

5g Chopped dill

30g Jasmine tea leaves



500g Salmon, skinned, pin bones removed

To make the cure, mix the salt, sugar and dill together thoroughly.

Moisten 15g of the jasmine tea leaves with a little water and allow to stand for five minutes, then spread them all over the salmon.

Put a layer of the cure on the bottom of a container and rest the salmon on top. Completely hide the salmon with the remaining cure. Cover the container with clingfilm and put into the fridge for 16 hours.

Remove the salmon from the cure and rinse thoroughly. Leave to rest in the fridge for two to three hours until the fish is dry but a little sticky.

Place a small container of ice under a rack in a smoking tin. Place the fish on the rack.

Place the remaining jasmine tea leaves in the corner of the tin and set them alight. Seal the tin and leave for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and light the leaves again, then re-seal. Repeat this process one more time.

Slice the fish thinly with a very sharp knife and serve with brown bread or blinis, pickled cucumber and soured cream butter.

If not serving immediately, wrap tightly in clingfilm and keep in the fridge for up to a week.

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Braised chicken with sherry and cream

Normally white wine would be used in a cream sauce for chicken, but here I have used sherry. It adds deep aromatic notes to what is basically a very simple dish. If you have time, you could brine the chicken thighs in an 8 per cent brine (80g salt per 1kg water) for four to six hours first – this will make the texture and flavour even better.

Serves 6

For the chicken

6 Chicken thighs, skin on

Salt and black pepper



Plain flour

150g Unsalted butter

2 Onions, peeled and sliced

1 Leek, white part only, cleaned and sliced

3 Cloves of garlic, peeled and bashed with

the flat part of a knife or by hand

300g Palo Cortado or Amontillado sherry

500g Chicken stock

250g Double cream

10 Baby onions, peeled (see tip, below) and halved

Pinch of sugar

8 Sprigs of thyme, leaves picked

150g Button mushrooms, quartered

To finish and serve

100g Pancetta lardons

10g Parmesan cheese, finely grated

10g Gruyère cheese, finely grated

5g Dijon mustard

1 tsp White truffle oil

Chives, tarragon and parsley

How to peel small onions and shallots

Small onions and shallots are fiddly to peel, but you can make it easier by blanching them in boiling water first. Bring a pan of water to the boil, add the whole onions and blanch them for one to two minutes, covered with a lid. Remove with a slotted spoon and cool immediately in iced water. When cool, they should easily come out of their skins.

Season the chicken thighs with salt and freshly ground pepper, and dust with a little flour. Melt 30g of the butter in a casserole dish and sear the chicken until golden brown. Remove the chicken from the pan and set aside.

Add the onions, leek and garlic to the pan, and cook until translucent (approximately 15 minutes).

Pre-heat the oven to 100C.

Pour the sherry into the onion pan and bring up to the boil. Set alight. When the flames have died away, reduce the heat, add the chicken stock and cream, and simmer for 20 minutes.

Return the chicken to the pan and bring to a simmer. Cover the casserole dish and place in the pre-heated oven for 45 minutes or until the chicken is completely cooked. Allow the chicken to cool in the liquid.

Once cool, remove the chicken from the pan. Strain the sauce through a fine sieve and discard the vegetables. Place the sauce back in the casserole over a high heat and boil to reduce by half, skimming off any impurities that rise to the surface.

In the meantime, in a frying pan, melt half of the remaining butter until foaming. Sprinkle the baby onions with salt, freshly ground pepper, a pinch of sugar and the thyme leaves, and brown on the flat side, then remove.

Add the remaining butter to the pan and caramelize the mushrooms to a golden colour, seasoning during the process (approximately 15-20 minutes).

Add the onions and the mushrooms to the casserole with the reduced sauce, and simmer for two minutes.

Wipe the frying pan and, over a medium-high heat, render the fat out of the lardons until they are soft (approximately 10 minutes). Remove the lardons and drain on kitchen paper.

To serve, add the Parmesan, Gruyère, mustard and truffle oil to the casserole. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Add the chicken thighs, stir, and place over a medium heat for 10 minutes to warm them through. Garnish with the lardons and freshly chopped herbs.

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Slow-roasted rib of beef with bone-marrow sauce

This recipe is a prime example of low-temperature roasting, and you will have to start cooking at least five hours before you want to eat. It's a great showcase for dry-aged meat, if you can get hold of some, but it will suit any good-quality rib of beef. I cook the meat to 55C, which will make it medium-rare.

The bone marrow gives the sauce a rich, unctuous character, but if you can't obtain bone marrow, you can make the sauce without it.

Serves 6

For the beef

Groundnut oil

1 Well-aged three-bone rib of beef (on the bone)



Salt

For the bone-marrow sauce

2kg Beef stock

100g Unsalted butter

250g Peeled and finely sliced shallot (approx. 5 banana shallots)

150g White wine

100g Dijon mustard

10g Sherry vinegar

15g Lemon juice

100g Bone marrow, rinsed and diced (ask the butcher)

20g Flat-leaf parsley leaves

20g Chives

10g Tarragon leaves

Salt and black pepper

Pre-heat the oven to 60C.

Place a large frying pan over a high heat until it is smoking hot. Coat the bottom of the pan with a thin layer of oil and when it begins to smoke, season the beef with salt and brown on all sides.

Put the browned meat in a roasting pan and place in the oven until the internal temperature of the meat reaches 55C (this should take four to six hours). When the core temperature reaches 55C, remove the beef from the oven and leave to rest at room temperature for one hour.

To start the bone-marrow sauce, pour the beef stock into a large saucepan and place over a high heat. Bring to the boil and allow the liquid to reduce by three-quarters until 500g remains (approximately 25 minutes).

In the meantime, melt the butter in a medium saucepan and cook the shallots for approximately seven to 10 minutes until they are light brown in colour. Add the wine and allow to reduce by three-quarters.

Remove the shallot pan from the heat and add the Dijon mustard. Stir thoroughly before adding the reduced beef stock.

Add the sherry vinegar and lemon juice and whisk until all the ingredients are fully incorporated.

Gently heat the sauce and when hot, add the diced bone marrow and remove the pan from the heat. The bone marrow should soften but not melt.

Finely chop the herbs and stir them into the sauce. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and pour into a warm jug.

When the beef has rested, cut the meat from the rib bones in a single piece by running a very sharp knife along the bones. Then run the knife along the chine (the other bone) so that all the bones have been removed.

Carve the meat against the grain in 1cm slices. Serve with the sauce and roast potatoes.

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Crab lasagne

In Britain, we think of lasagne as layers of ground beef, béchamel sauce and pasta, but it's often made with other ingredients – such as artichokes or mushrooms and ham, or seafood, which I think works particularly well. Here I've used crab meat to bring a welcome touch of lightness and sweetness to the dish.

One of the other main flavour components is an intense tomato fondue sauce that needs to be cooked for four hours. If this seems like a lot of work for one dish, make double the quantity: what you don't use here can be stored in the fridge, and will make a great sauce for other pasta dishes. You can also simplify the recipe by using sieved tomatoes (passata) to make a straightforward sauce instead. (Put a litre of passata in a pan, add olive oil, chopped herbs and garlic, and cook gently until reduced by three-quarters.)

In recipes that call for chopped tomatoes, most advise you to discard the pulp and seeds, but these have more umami taste than any other part of the tomato, and it seems to me a shame to waste all that goodness. So, here's my approach. Peel the ripe tomatoes first (see tip below). Then cut the tomatoes in half vertically and scoop out the insides with a teaspoon, over a chopping board. Roughly chop the pulp and seeds and tip them into a sieve set over a bowl. Sprinkle over a little salt and leave for 20 minutes to extract the juice. After this you can discard what's left in the sieve, reserving the juice to use alongside the tomato flesh.

Serves 4-6

For the tomato fondue sauce

115g Extra virgin olive oil

1 Small onion, peeled and finely sliced

½ Star anise

2 tsp coriander seeds



1 Clove of garlic, peeled and crushed

1 Bouquet garni (thyme, celery leaf, parsley and bay leaf, tied together with a strip of leek or a piece of string)

1.5kg Tomatoes, peeled, de-seeded and chopped (reserving the juices)

Tabasco sauce

Worcestershire sauce

2 tsp Tomato ketchup

20g Sherry vinegar

For the crab filling

500g Fish stock

225g Skinless cod fillet

400g Cooked white crab meat, checked for bits of shell

For the sauce

Grapeseed or groundnut oil

130g Peeled and finely sliced shallot (approx. 2-3 banana shallots)

1 Clove of garlic, peeled and bashed with the flat part of a knife or by hand

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp fennel seeds

1 Bay leaf

200g Dry white wine

1kg Fish stock

100g Whipping cream

100g Whole milk

20g Cornflour

Salt and white pepper

Nutmeg

For the pasta

10g Salt

10 Dry lasagne sheets

To finish and serve

20 Basil leaves

20 Tarragon leaves

50g Parmesan cheese, finely grated

How to peel tomatoes

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. In the meantime, fill a bowl or basin with iced water. With a sharp knife, score a shallow cross on the bottom of each tomato. Lower the tomatoes into the boiling water and leave for 15-20 seconds or until the skins visibly split. Remove from the hot water and plunge into the iced water. Remove immediately and peel by hand.

For the tomato fondue sauce, pour 90g of the olive oil into a wide-bottomed saucepan and place it over a very low heat. Add the onion, star anise and coriander seeds and sweat for 10 minutes.

Add the garlic and bouquet garni and continue to sweat for another five minutes.

Add the chopped tomatoes, tomato juices, a few drops each of Tabasco and Worcestershire sauce, the ketchup and vinegar, and cook over a very low heat for three to four hours. When cooked the fondue should be dark red and almost jam-like.

Skim the separated oil off the top before liquidising the fondue into a smooth sauce in a blender. (Keep this oil, as it has a terrific flavour, and can be used in vinaigrettes or tossed into pasta.)

Pass the sauce through a fine sieve, then stir in the remaining 25g olive oil.

For the crab filling, heat the fish stock in a small saucepan over a low heat until the liquid reaches 50C. Add the cod and, at this temperature, gently cook for 10-15 minutes until the fish is cooked through.

Remove the fish from the liquid with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. When dry, flake the fish with a fork and mix with the crab meat.

To start the sauce, heat a thin layer of oil in a saucepan over a medium heat and sweat the shallots, garlic, fennel seeds and bay leaf for 10 minutes. Add the wine, increase the heat to high and allow the liquid to reduce in volume by two-thirds.

Add the fish stock and reduce by half. Strain through a fine sieve and discard

the shallots, garlic and aromatics. Return the liquid to the pan and add the whipping cream and milk. Place over a medium heat and when the liquid is warm, sieve in the cornflour and whisk over the heat until the sauce thickens (approximately five minutes). Season with salt, freshly ground white pepper and freshly grated nutmeg to taste.

For the pasta, bring 1kg cold tap water to the boil and add the salt.

When boiling, add the lasagne sheets one at a time. Cook for eight to nine minutes, stirring occasionally to stop the sheets sticking together. Using tongs, remove the pasta sheets from the water and set to one side on a tray.

To assemble and cook, pre-heat the oven to 180C. Chop 16 each of the basil and tarragon leaves. Spoon a thin layer of the tomato fondue sauce into a baking dish (20×30cm), then lay some of the lasagne sheets on top in a single layer. Add another layer of tomato fondue sauce followed by a layer of the crab and cod mixture, a layer of sauce and a sprinkling of Parmesan and herbs.

Repeat these layers until the baking dish is full, finishing with a layer of pasta covered with sauce and Parmesan. Cook in the pre-heated oven for 25 minutes or until the edges are bubbling. Roughly chop the remaining herbs and sprinkle on top before serving.

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Triple cooked chips

I became obsessed with chips around 1992, before I had even opened the Fat Duck, and this was probably the first recipe that I could call my own. It has since cropped up in restaurants and pubs all over the place. Achieving the crisp, glass-like exterior depends on getting rid of moisture from the potato and creating little cracks in the surface where the oil will collect and harden, making it crunchy.

Serves 6

1kg Maris Piper potatoes, peeled and cut into chips (approx. 2×2 ×6cm)

Groundnut or grapeseed oil

Sea salt

Place the cut chips into a bowl under running water for five minutes to wash the starch off.

Place 2kg cold tap water in a large saucepan and add the potatoes. Place the pan over a medium heat and simmer until the chips are almost falling apart (approximately 20-30 minutes, depending on the potato).

Carefully remove the cooked chips and place them on a cooling rack to dry out. Then place in the freezer for at least one hour to remove more moisture.

Heat a deep-fat fryer or a deep pan no more than half-filled with oil (to a depth of around 10cm) to 130C.

Fry the chips in small batches until a light crust forms (approximately five minutes), remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper.

Put the potatoes on a cooling rack and place in the freezer for at least one hour. (At this stage, if you don't want to cook and serve immediately, the chips can be kept in the fridge for three days.)

Heat the oil in the deep-fat fryer or deep pan to 180C and fry the chips until golden (approximately seven minutes). Drain and sprinkle with sea salt.

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Crispy lemon sole with potted shrimps and cucumber

The "crispy" in the title doesn't refer to the fish, but to the thin slices of bread on which the fish is fried, and under which it is then briefly baked and served. The fish is protected from direct heat, and what is in essence fried bread adds texture to the dish.

The potted shrimps make a delicious and incredibly simple sauce. It's vital, however, that the shrimps are only heated until they're just warmed through and no further, otherwise they turn into little bullets. The addition of cucumber to the shrimps gives crunch.



Serves 4

2 Slices of white sandwich bread

Salt and black pepper

Finely grated zest and juice of ½ lemon

4 Lemon or Dover sole fillets, skinned

2 tbs Groundnut oil

250g Potted shrimps, shop bought

5g Dill

½ Cucumber, peeled, de-seeded and

sliced

Pea shoots

Pre-heat the oven to 110C.

Cut the crusts off the bread slices and place them between two sheets of clingfilm. Using a rolling pin, roll to a thickness of 2mm. Remove the clingfilm and season the bread with a little salt and a little of the lemon zest.

Place the fillets of fish on the rolled bread (two fillets on each slice) and trim the fish and bread to ensure that they are both the same size. You will have four pieces.

Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat, then place the fillets, bread-side down, in the pan and sauté them until golden brown (approximately three minutes). Remove from the pan and place the fillets, fish-side down, on a tray lined with baking parchment. Place in the oven for approximately five minutes.

Put the potted shrimps in a small saucepan and warm them gently over a low heat until the butter is completely melted. Finely chop the dill and add it to the shrimps with the cucumber, lemon juice and remaining zest, and season with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Place a spoonful of the potted shrimp mixture in the middle of each plate and put the lemon sole fillets on top, fish-side down. Drizzle some of the remaining shrimp butter around the plates and garnish with pea shoots.

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Liquid centre chocolate pudding

The traditional way to make a chocolate pudding with a runny centre is by baking a mixture of eggs, butter, sugar, chocolate and a little flour until the outside forms a crust but the inside remains gooey. This recipe takes a completely different approach, putting a frozen chocolate ganache inside the cake mixture. This ensures that the centre melts to the perfect runny consistency at exactly the point when the exterior is cooked through. If you want to skip making the ganache, you could use a scoop of good-quality chocolate ice-cream instead.



Serves six

For the water ganache

- 310g Whipping cream
- 325g Dark chocolate, chopped (minimum 60 per cent cocoa solids)
- 50g Unsalted butter

For the pudding mix

- 240g Dark chocolate, chopped (minimum 60 per cent cocoa solids)
- 225g Unsalted butter

- 100g Plain flour
- ½ tsp Salt
- 350g Eggs (approx. 7 large eggs)
- 150g Unrefined caster sugar

For the water ganache, place 110g cold tap water and the cream in a saucepan over a medium heat and bring to a simmer.

In the meantime, place the chocolate in a bowl over a pan of simmering water and allow it to melt completely.

Once the chocolate has melted, add the water and cream mixture to it in three additions and mix thoroughly with a spatula after each addition. Stir in the butter. Allow to stand until it reaches room temperature, then stir one more

time.

Pour the ganache into a deep-sided container until it reaches 3cm deep. Place the tray in the freezer for two hours or until fully set. Meanwhile, have ready six 5cm diameter ramekins.

Using a 2cm ring cutter, cut cylinders out of the ganache, and place one in the centre of each ramekin. Return to the freezer.

To make the pudding mix, place the chocolate and the butter in a bowl over a pan of simmering water and melt completely. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

In the meantime, sieve the flour and salt together into a bowl. When the chocolate is cool, add the flour and salt and mix thoroughly.

Using a mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whisk the eggs and sugar for approximately eight to 10 minutes or until light and creamy.

Fold a third of the egg mixture into the chocolate, being as gentle as possible. Add the remaining egg mixture and fold until well combined.

Half fill each ramekin with the mix and tap the ramekin a few times on the work surface to ensure any big air bubbles disappear, then continue to fill to the top. Place the ramekins back in the freezer for 1 hour.

When ready to serve, pre-heat the oven to 180C.

Place the ramekins in the oven. Bake for 15-18 minutes until the pudding mix is fully set. Serve immediately.

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Peach and rosemary tarte tatin

With its deep, rich caramelised flavours, tarte tatin is now part of the classic French repertoire, but legend has it that it was created by accident at the end of the 19th century when one of the two sisters who ran the Hotel Tatin placed an apple tart in the oven upside down.

Whether or not the story is true (Larousse says that an upside-down tart made of apples or pears is an ancient speciality of the Sologne area of France), it highlights the role played by chance in culinary creativity – a mistake can, sometimes, produce something amazing.

Serves 6

- 400g Unrefined caster sugar
- 185g Unsalted butter, cubed
- 6 Large ripe peaches, peeled and cut into 3 wedges around the stone
- 500g All-butter puff pastry



125g Double cream

5 Sprigs of rosemary

200g Whipping cream

30g Icing sugar

Put 200g of the sugar into a straight-sided ovenproof frying pan (approximately 24cm in diameter) and place the pan over a medium heat. Allow the sugar to begin caramelising but do not stir until most of it has turned to liquid, then mix in the unmelted sugar with a spatula. Add 100g of the butter and mix until the sugar and the butter are well combined. Allow to cool slightly.

Arrange the peach wedges, cut-side up, around the pan, trying to pack them as tightly as possible. Allow to stand for five minutes.

Pre-heat the oven to 190C. In the meantime, roll the puff pastry into a circle between two sheets of baking paper to a thickness of 4mm and about 3cm larger than the diameter of the pan. Roll the edge of the pastry backwards to approximately 2cm in – this will give a nice, crispy edge. Place the puff pastry, rolled-edge-side up, on top of the peaches, making sure to tuck the pastry down the edges inside the pan.

Place the pan in the pre-heated oven for approximately 30 minutes or until the puff pastry is brown in colour.

While the tatin is in the oven, place the double cream in a small pan with the rosemary over a medium heat. Allow to come to a simmer, then remove from the heat and allow to infuse for 15 minutes. Remove the rosemary.

In the meantime, put the remaining 200g of sugar into a saucepan over a medium heat. Allow to caramelise as above, then add the remaining 85g butter. Mix until well combined. Add the infused cream in three stages, making sure the cream is fully combined after each addition.

Remove the tatin from the oven and let it sit for five minutes – this will allow the caramel to thicken up, making it easier to turn. Place a plate that is just larger than the diameter of the pan on top and turn the pan over, being careful of the hot caramel that may spill out. Remove the pan and allow the tatin to sit for five minutes.

Pour the whipping cream into a bowl, add the icing sugar and whisk until medium peaks form. Serve a portion of the tatin with a dollop of whipping

cream and a drizzle of some of the rosemary-infused caramel over the top.

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Roast chicken

A good roast chicken is one of the glories of the weekend. Whenever possible, on a Sunday evening I like to cook a dinner of roast chicken, roast potatoes, carrots, gravy and cauliflower cheese. (My youngest daughter loves cauliflower cheese so much she once had it on her birthday, with the candles stuck in it!)

However, the conventional method of roasting on a high heat risks drying out the meat. A better approach is to cook the chicken on a lower heat, using a digital probe to monitor it, then rest it, and finally put it back in the oven very briefly on a high heat, just to give the surface some colour and Maillard flavours. It's not essential, but I'd also recommend brining the chicken before roasting it, so that it stays juicy and moist. Cover the chicken in an 8 per cent brine overnight, then rinse and pat dry. (Brining needs only the most basic equipment – and some space in the fridge. An amount of salt is added to a large pan of water, usually somewhere between 6g and 15g per 100g water - in other words, 6-15 per cent - and then generally warmed so that the salt fully dissolves. If you are using solutions of 10 per cent or less, it may be enough to add the salt to cold water and whisk it in. Once the brine is cold, food is added to the pan and then refrigerated.)

Serves 4-6

1 chicken, weighing approx. 1.5-2kg

1 lemon

½ bunch of thyme

125g unsalted butter, at room temperature

Salt and black pepper

6-12 chicken wings or skin-on thighs

2 carrots, peeled and roughly chopped

2 cloves of garlic, peeled and bashed with the flat part of a knife or by hand

200g dry white wine

250g brown chicken stock

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

2 tbsp tarragon leaves

2 tbsp parsley leaves

Pre-heat the oven to 90C.

Remove the wishbone and any trussing from the chicken. Open out the legs a little so air can circulate. Cut off the wingtips and parson's nose (if it has one)

and reserve. Roll the lemon between your palm and the tabletop to soften it, then pierce it a few times with a fork. Put the lemon and thyme into the cavity of the bird. Rub butter into the skin. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper.

Place the chicken in a roasting tray with the chicken wings or skin-on thighs, wingtips and parson's nose. Add the carrots and garlic to the tray. Place in the oven and cook until the internal temperature of the thickest part of the breast reaches 60°C. (With an average-sized chicken this should take 3-4 hours.)

Remove the chicken from the roasting tray and place it on a rack set over a plate so that it can rest for 30-45 minutes. Turn the oven temperature up to 230-240C. Put the roasting tray containing the wings or thighs, carrots and garlic on the hob over a medium-high heat and brown the meat and vegetables. Add the white wine and scrape and stir to deglaze the pan. Add the chicken stock and any juices from under the chicken, and cook until reduced to a sauce. Strain into a small saucepan.

After the chicken has rested, put it back in the roasting tray and return it to the oven for 5-10 minutes so that it browns, taking care that it doesn't burn. (To help browning you could melt some butter in a pan, add some wine and a few sprigs of thyme, bring it to the boil, then take it off the heat and use it to baste the chicken.)

Before serving, add the mustard to the sauce, warm through, then chop and add the herbs.

Serve with roast potatoes, glazed carrots and Brussels sprouts.

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Chilli con carne

The chilli cook-offs that take place across America each year are like a cross between charity fundraiser, barbecue and raucous street party, but the competitors take them very seriously. Each cook has their own secret ingredient or technique for elevating chilli to another level, from triple-rinsing diced pork to dusting cumin round the rim of the bowl.

In this chilli there are secret ingredients and techniques of my own. The kidney beans are brined overnight, which helps them to cook evenly and prevents the skins from splitting. The tomatoes are pressure-cooked, then reduced to an umami-rich concentrate, after which the vine is added and left to infuse because it has lots of raw tomato aroma. You can skip both these procedures and replace the beans and tomatoes with tinned varieties, but the tomato concentrate is an excellent way to enrich stews or any dish that requires tomato paste, so I'd just make a large batch and freeze some. The spiced butter (see below) that finishes the chilli really gives it a lift (put some in the chilli and more on the table), and with this too you can make plenty and freeze some for use in other dishes.

In chilli cook-offs, competitors are cooking against the clock, but chilli is best made slowly, and the flavours develop if it's left to stand for a day or two.

You will need a pressure cooker for this recipe.

Serves 4

For the kidney beans

10% brine (50g salt dissolved in 500g tap water)

150g dried kidney beans

500g cherry tomatoes on the vine

For the chilli

Olive oil

450g minced beef

1 large onion, peeled and diced

2 star anise

1 large carrot, peeled and diced

3 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped

1 green chilli, de-seeded and diced

30g tomato purée

375g red wine

50g spiced butter (p.261)

3 medium tomatoes, diced

500g beef stock (p.40)

To finish and serve

2 red peppers, de-seeded, roasted and peeled (see tip, below), then chopped

Salt and black pepper

Finely grated zest and juice of 3 limes

Spiced butter (optional, see method below)

Grated cheese

Soured cream

Cornbread muffins (optional)

Put the brine in a container, stirring until dissolved. Add the beans, cover and refrigerate for 12 hours. Place the tomatoes and 50g water in a pressure cooker, reserving the vines. Put on the lid and place over a high heat. When it reaches full pressure, cook for 20 minutes.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool before taking off the lid. Place the pan over a high heat, stirring frequently until the liquid has reduced by half

(approximately 10 minutes).

Leave the tomatoes to cool, then tip into a container, adding the vines to infuse a fresh tomato flavour. To cook the beans, strain them and place in the pressure cooker. Remove the vines from the tomatoes and add the tomatoes to the beans. If necessary, add some water so that the beans are covered in liquid.

Put the lid on and place the pressure cooker over a high heat. When it reaches full pressure, reduce the heat and cook for 20 minutes. Leave to cool completely before opening. Add this mixture to the chilli when completed.

To start the chilli, coat the bottom of a large saucepan with olive oil and place over a high heat until smoking hot. Add the mince, in batches if necessary so that it browns rather than stews, and cook until evenly coloured. Remove and drain the meat.

Add a little water to the same pan to deglaze it, and tip the water and bits in with the drained meat so none of the flavour is lost.

Turn the heat down to medium and add another thin layer of olive oil. Add the onion and star anise and cook over a medium-high heat for approximately 7-10 minutes until the onion begins to colour, then add the carrot, garlic and green chilli. Cook for another 10 minutes or until the carrot is soft.

Add the tomato purée, stir and cook for another 5 minutes until everything turns a brick-red colour. Pour in the red wine and allow to reduce by two-thirds. Remove the star anise and discard.

Stir in the spiced butter (for mild-medium heat), the browned mince, diced tomatoes and stock, and simmer over a low heat for 2-3 hours, stirring occasionally. To finish, fold the beans and chopped peppers into the chilli, and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper, lime zest and juice, and stir in more spiced butter to increase the heat. Serve with grated cheese, soured cream and cornbread muffins.

How to roast and peel red peppers

Cut the top and bottom off the peppers and remove the centre, seeds and white part. Cut the peppers in half and lay the pieces skin-side up on a baking tray. Brush the skins with groundnut or grapeseed oil. Place the tray under the grill until the skin has blistered and blackened. Put the peppers in a bowl and cover with clingfilm. When they are cool enough to handle, the skin will peel off easily.

Spiced butter

2 tbsp olive oil

1½ tsp ground cumin

1 tsp chilli powder

1½ tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp tomato ketchup

½ tsp Worcestershire sauce

½ tsp Marmite

125g unsalted butter, at room temperature

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and lightly fry the cumin and chilli powder for a couple of seconds.

Pour into a bowl and add the smoked paprika, tomato ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, Marmite and butter. Mix together thoroughly.

Roll into a log and wrap in parchment paper or decant into a bowl. Keep in the fridge until required (for up to a week), or freeze for a month.

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Marmite! You got to love it. Try a small dollop with porridge (oats or rice), and you have yourself a very tasty and healthy breakfast!