

Winter Pumpkin soup

We love the smooth velvety texture of this soup, and for an everyday recipe the soup alone is delicious. However, if serving for an occasion making the soda bread and spiced lentil cake too is well worth the effort.

Serves 8:

Ingredients

500g pumpkin – peeled, seeded and diced in to 1 inch cubes
1 large shallot - peeled and sliced
200g unsalted butter - diced
5g table salt
10g parmesan - grated
600ml chicken or vegetable stock
Crème fraiche – to serve

Method of work

1. Over a medium heat in a large heavy bottomed pan soften the shallot and the diced pumpkin with the butter
2. Once softened add the salt and stock, bring to a simmer
3. Place a lid on the pan and gently simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until the pumpkin is cooked through
4. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly
5. Add the grated parmesan and mix well
6. Blend the soup until smooth in a liquidiser
7. Check for seasoning and add a little more salt if you like,
8. Serve with crème fraiche and a twist of black pepper

Try roasting your pumpkins seeds, they make a great crunchy addition to soups, salads, casseroles and curries. Alternatively put them raw on your bird table.

Soda Bread

Ingredients

250g bread flour

5g salt

7g bicarbonate of soda

50g sunflower seeds

55g feta cheese – cut into cubes

250ml buttermilk

5g fresh mint - chopped

Method of work

1. Place the flour, salt and bicarbonate of soda into the bowl and rub together.
2. Add the seeds and cheese and stir in, then add the buttermilk and mint and fold together gently until all the dry flour is incorporated.
3. Once it is all together, take out of the bowl and roll it around in some flour to make it easier to handle
4. Place on to a grease proof tray and put 2 cuts on top 2cm deep to make a cross and place into the oven as soon as it is finished – (this will not require any proving).

Bake at 240°C for about 17 minutes.

Spiced lentil cake

Spiced lentils

Ingredients

100g cooked puy lentils
50g red onion finely chopped
60ml soy sauce
60ml balsamic vinegar
40ml tomato sauce (ketchup)
20ml sweet chilli sauce
15g chopped pickled ginger
Pinch ground cumin

Method of work

1. Cook the onions without colour and when translucent add the cumin and cook out for 5 minutes without burning
2. Add the soy sauce and balsamic and reduce by half.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in the cooked lentils and the rest of the ingredients, check the seasoning and allow to cool

To make the cake

Ingredients

340 spiced lentils (the above recipe makes this)
100 diced onion
160 flat mushrooms diced small
2g coriander seeds (about 15 seeds)
350g pumpkin seeds
20g sesame seeds
40g pinenuts
30g chopped tarragon
80 panko breadcrumbs

A little oil for frying

Method of work

1. Roast the nuts and seeds in oil until golden brown
2. Add the onion and mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Add the spice lentil mix, panko and tarragon mix well and
4. Season and allow to rest for 1 hr to allow the panko to take on the flavour and tighten the mix.
5. When ready give a good mix again and then weigh into 50g balls and shape.
6. Coat with a little flour, egg and breadcrumbs and then store till required

To finish the cakes for the soup, either deep fry on 180°C for 3 minutes until golden or pan fry until golden on both side in a little oil on a moderate heat and place in the oven for 2 minutes at 180°C to ensure the core temperature is hot.