

SIMPLE LASAGNE

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 celery stalk, diced
2 garlic cloves, finely sliced
250g beef mince
250g pork mince
1 tbsp tomato purée
400g tin chopped tomatoes
200ml beef stock
200ml red wine
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
9-12 lasagne sheets (depending on the size of your baking dish)
50g Parmesan, grated
150g pack mozzarella, shredded
For the white sauce
50g butter
50g plain flour
550ml semi-skimmed milk

Method

In a large pan, heat the olive oil over a low heat. Fry the onion, carrot, celery and garlic for 5 mins, or until softened. Add the mince and fry on a medium heat until golden. Turn up the heat, pour in the wine and bubble until reduced. Stir in the tomato purée, chopped tomatoes and stock. Add in the Worcestershire sauce and simmer for 15 mins, or until the liquid has reduced. Season.

Meanwhile, make the white sauce. Melt the butter in a small saucepan over a low heat and add the flour. Whisk until combined and cook on low for 1-2 mins. Remove from the heat and gradually whisk in the milk until you have a loose sauce. Season. Return to a gentle heat and whisk constantly until the sauce thickens.

Preheat the oven to gas 6, 200°C, fan 180°C. Layer up the lasagne in a baking dish, starting with a third each of the ragu, then the pasta, then the white sauce. Repeat twice. Top with the Parmesan and mozzarella then bake in the oven for 40-45 mins, until piping hot and crisp and bubbling on top. Serve immediately.

SCHNITZELS

Ingredients

450g pork fillet
1 tbsp plain flour
100g natural breadcrumbs
1 free-range egg, beaten
2 tbsp vegetable oil, for shallow frying
1 lemon, cut into wedges to serve
For the slaw
175g white cabbage, shredded
80g sweet and smoky shredded beetroot, from a 180g pack
8 small radishes, thinly sliced into matchsticks
2 tbsp light mayonnaise

- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh dill

Method

To make the slaw, mix the cabbage, beetroot and radishes in a bowl. Stir in the mayonnaise and mustard, season. Cover and chill in the fridge.

Cut the pork into 12 equal pieces and put them between 2 sheets of clingfilm. Place on a chopping board and bash with a rolling pin to about 1cm thick. Put the flour on a plate and season; put the breadcrumbs on a separate plate. Coat the pork with the flour, then dip in the egg, then in the breadcrumbs to coat.

Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and fry the pork in batches for 3-4 mins each side until golden and cooked through. Transfer to a plate lined with kitchen paper. Scatter the dill over the slaw, then serve with the pork and lemon wedges to squeeze over.

VEGGIE RICE BOWL

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 120g pack Tenderstem broccoli tips, halved lengthways
- 1 red pepper, seeded and cut into chunks
- 160g pack marinated tofu pieces
- 2 x 250g pouches microwave rice
- 200g frozen peas
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 3 spring onions, chopped
- 1 red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 2.5cm piece fresh ginger, grated
- 3 tbsp tamari
- 2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 1 tbsp rice wine vinegar

Method

Heat the oil in a wok. Add the broccoli and pepper and stir-fry, over a high heat, for 3 mins. Add the tofu and cook for 1-2 mins, until crisp.

Tip in the rice and stir-fry for 4 mins, breaking up the grains as they warm. Stir through the peas and cook for a further 2-3 mins.

Meanwhile, make the sauce. Mix the chilli, garlic, ginger, tamari, sweet chilli sauce and vinegar in a bowl. Pour it over the rice mixture and toss until coated and warmed through. To serve, spoon into bowls and scatter over the sesame seeds and spring onions.

CAJUN-SPICED FISH TACOS

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp cajun spice
- 1 tsp cayenne pepper
- 4 white fish fillets (such as haddock, cod or river cobbler)
- vegetable oil
- 8 flour tortillas
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 2 little gem lettuces, shredded

4 spring onions, shredded
1 x 300ml jar salsa
For the dressing
soured cream
1 lemon, juiced
small bunch chives, snipped
1 garlic clove, finely chopped

Method

On a large plate, mix the cajun spice and cayenne pepper with a little seasoning and use to coat the fish all over.

Heat a little oil in a frying pan, add in the fish and cook over a medium heat until golden. Reduce the heat and continue frying until the fish is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Cook in batches if you don't have enough room in the pan.

Meanwhile, prepare the dressing by combining all the ingredients with a little seasoning.

Soften the tortillas by heating in the microwave for 5-10 seconds. Pile high with the avocado, lettuce and spring onion, add a spoonful of salsa, top with large flakes of fish and drizzle over the dressing.

FLUFFY BANANA PANCAKES

Ingredients

100g dried fruit and nut mix
1 large free-range egg
1 mug of wholemeal self-raising flour
1 mug of semi-skimmed milk
½ tsp ground cinnamon
3 ripe bananas
olive oil
6 tbsp Greek-style yogurt
clear honey (optional)

Method

Whizz the dried fruit and nuts in a food processor to a chunky crumb.

Crack the egg into a large mixing bowl, add the flour, milk and cinnamon, and whisk together until you have a smooth batter.

Peel and halve the bananas lengthways. Place a large frying pan on a medium heat with 1 tsp oil.

Add 2 banana halves to the pan, cut side down, and fry for 3 mins, or until lightly caramelised.

Pour a ladleful of batter over each banana, cook for 2 mins, or until tiny bubbles appear on the surface and the base is golden, then confidently flip them over and cook for 1 min more. Repeat as required with the remaining bananas and batter – I like to work in batches, so the pancakes are always hot.

Serve straight away, topped with a dollop of yogurt, the fruit and nut crumb, and a drizzle of honey, if you like.

CLASSIC BEEF STROGANOFF

Ingredients

2 tbsp vegetable oil
500g beef rump steaks, fat trimmed, cut into 1cm strips
250g mixed mushrooms (wild, chanterelle, Forestiere or chestnut all work well)
knob of butter

1 onion, sliced
1 tsp plain flour
250ml hot beef stock
150ml pot soured cream
300g easy-cook long-grain rice, cooked following pack instructions, to serve
handful chopped parsley, to serve
pinch of paprika, to serve

Method

Put a large frying pan over a high heat. When the pan is really hot (a drop of water should instantly sizzle in the pan), put in a little of the oil. Add half the beef, taking care not to overcrowd the pan. Fry for 1-2 mins until golden, then season well and use tongs to quickly turn the strips over. Cook for 1-2 mins more, then remove and set aside.

Fry the remaining beef in a little more oil as before, then remove and set aside. Cook the mushrooms in the remaining oil for 2 mins until golden and soft, then remove and set aside.

Turn the heat down to medium and put the butter in the pan followed by the onion. Cook for 3-5 mins until soft. Stir in the flour, ensuring that the onion is evenly coated, then pour over the hot beef stock and any juices from the resting beef and mushrooms. Bring to the boil and leave to simmer for 5 mins or until slightly thickened.

Stir most of the soured cream through the sauce until smooth, then return the beef and mushrooms to the pan. Finish cooking for 1-2 mins for rare steak, 3-4 mins for medium or up to 5 mins for well done, ensuring everything is heated through.

Serve with the cooked rice and dollop over the reserved soured cream. Scatter over the chopped parsley and paprika to finish.

FLAPJACKS

Ingredients

90g salted butter
90g golden syrup
90g light muscovado sugar
150g oats
50g sunflower seeds
25g sesame seeds
75g dried apricot pieces, finely chopped
75g sultanas

Method

Preheat the oven to gas 4, 180°C, fan 160°C.

Line a 20cm square baking tin with non-stick baking paper.

Put the butter, golden syrup and sugar into a medium pan over a medium-low heat. Heat gently, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and stir in all the remaining ingredients.

Press the mixture into the tin. Cook for 20 mins until golden brown. Mark the flapjack into 16 squares while still hot. Cool slightly, then turn the flapjack out onto a chopping board. Cut into squares and leave to cool.