

Season's eatings

Delicious in December

'Tis the season to be jolly and indulge in some fabulous food and drink. The seasonal larder may be limited, but now is the time to enjoy juicy clementines, spicy mulled wine, and of course, those Christmas Day roasties and sprouts. If you're inviting guests this year, make life easy for yourself by planning your menus in advance and get your fridge and freezer stocked with easy essentials too. Then all you need to do on the big day is pour a glass of something fizzy and enjoy the festivities.

TURN TO
PAGE 28 FOR
RACHEL DEMUTH'S
MIX-AND-MATCH
MAKE-AHEAD
CHRISTMAS DAY
MENU

www.vegetarianliving.co.uk | 19





The ultimate roasted vegetables

With a foolproof technique for roasting vegetables, this recipe will not only serve for Christmas but will take you through the year, as you replace these winter roots with fennel or turnips, and the rosemary with oregano, as the year rolls round to the warmer months.

Serves 6 | Prep 10 mins
Cook 1 hr 10 mins

4 tbsp olive oil
 900g floury potatoes, such as Maris Piper, peeled and quartered
 4 carrots, peeled and quartered
 sea salt
 4 parsnips, peeled and quartered
 4 banana shallots, peeled and quartered
 1 bulb of garlic, separated into cloves but left unpeeled
 2 sprigs of rosemary, torn into leaves

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Put the oil in a large roasting tin and place it in the oven.

2 Put the potatoes and carrots in a pan of salted water, bring to the boil, then boil for 5 minutes. Add the parsnips and cook a further 3 minutes. Drain well, then return to the pan. Put the lid on the pan and give it a good shake to roughen the edges of the vegetables.

3 Remove the hot roasting tin from the oven. Carefully add the part-cooked vegetables, along with the shallots and garlic cloves, turning each piece over in the hot oil. Sprinkle with the rosemary and season with sea salt. Return to the oven to roast for about 1 hour, turning once, until the vegetables are golden and tender.

■ PER SERVING 282 cals, fat 9g, sat fat 1g, carbs 40g, sugars 11g, protein 4g, salt 0.08g, fibre 8g



Recipe adapted from MasterChef Kitchen Bible (DK, £30).



SEASONAL STAR

ORANGES

When summer berries are a distant memory and even the English apple season has passed by, the mandarin family brings joy to the fruit bowl. For many of us, it's also traditional to receive a beautiful orange fruit in your Christmas stocking.

Mandarin is the collective name for all easy-peeling types of small citrus fruit, including satsumas, tangerines and clementines. Clementines – thought to be a hybrid of tangerines and oranges – are thin-skinned and deliciously sweet with firm, juicy segments. Tangerines tend to be available later in the season, while satsumas are the easiest to peel with a delicate sweetness and juicy, soft segments.

While you can just peel and eat, if you've got a bowl of

clementines to use up, they are surprisingly versatile. For a deliciously light Moroccan-inspired breakfast, arrange segments on a plate with slices of grapefruit and orange then top with toasted coconut and pistachio nuts, pomegranate seeds and a drizzle of honey or yogurt. For a festive brunch or dessert, try a clementine syrup with cinnamon drizzled on American-style pancakes or waffles – add ice cream if you're feeling really decadent. They also make a lovely addition to a Christmas pudding alongside nuts and dried fruit.

The sweetness of clementine also pairs well with salty ingredients – so add segments to a green leafy salad with watercress and pumpkin seeds, and top with feta or grilled halloumi.

TURN TO
 PAGE 43 TO
 MAKE FESTIVE
 FIZZ WITH CHILLED
 PROSECCO
 AND FRESH
 CLEMENTINES

Your December larder

FRUIT AND NUTS Almonds, apples, Brazil nuts, chestnuts, clementines, cranberries, hazelnuts, passion fruit, pears, pineapple, pomegranate, satsumas, tangerines, walnuts

VEGETABLES Beetroot, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chicory, horseradish, Jerusalem artichoke, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, parsnips, potatoes (maincrop), salsify, shallots, swede, truffles (black and white), turnips, wild mushrooms

Season's eatings



Chocolate mulled wine

This is the most decadent hot chocolate you will ever have and the most indulgent mulled wine at the same time!

Use a really fruity chocolate from the Dominican Republic, where the cocoa has a natural red fruit undertone to it that works really well with the richness of the red wine, port and spices.

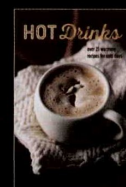
Serves 6 | Prep/cook 10 mins + infusing

750ml red wine
 2 cinnamon sticks
 6 cloves
 2 star anise
 1 large sprig of fresh rosemary
 2 bay leaves
 4 cardamom pods
 ½ vanilla pod
 1 orange, sliced
 200g soft light brown
 250g fruity dark chocolate, chopped
 2 tbsp ruby port (optional)

1 Pour the red wine into a saucepan or pot set over a low heat. Add the cinnamon sticks, cloves, star anise, rosemary and bay leaves. Lightly bruise the cardamom pods and add them, along with the vanilla pod, to the pan with the orange slices. Add the sugar and slowly heat the wine, taking care not to let it boil.

2 Remove the pan from the heat and set aside for 30 minutes to allow the spices to fully infuse with the wine.

3 Add the chopped chocolate to the pan and reheat to just below boiling point, stirring constantly to smoothly melt the chocolate. Add the port (if using), mix again and strain into heatproof glasses to serve.



Recipe by Will Torrent, adapted from *Hot Drinks* (Ryland Peters and Small, £7.99). Photograph by Jonathan Gregson.



Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Brussels sprouts

Roast sprouts, celeriac and prunes

Sweet, sticky prunes partner Brussels sprouts beautifully, and a little balsamic vinegar and garlic further enhance the flavours of the winter veg in this dish.

Serves 4 | Prep 10 mins | Cook 50 mins

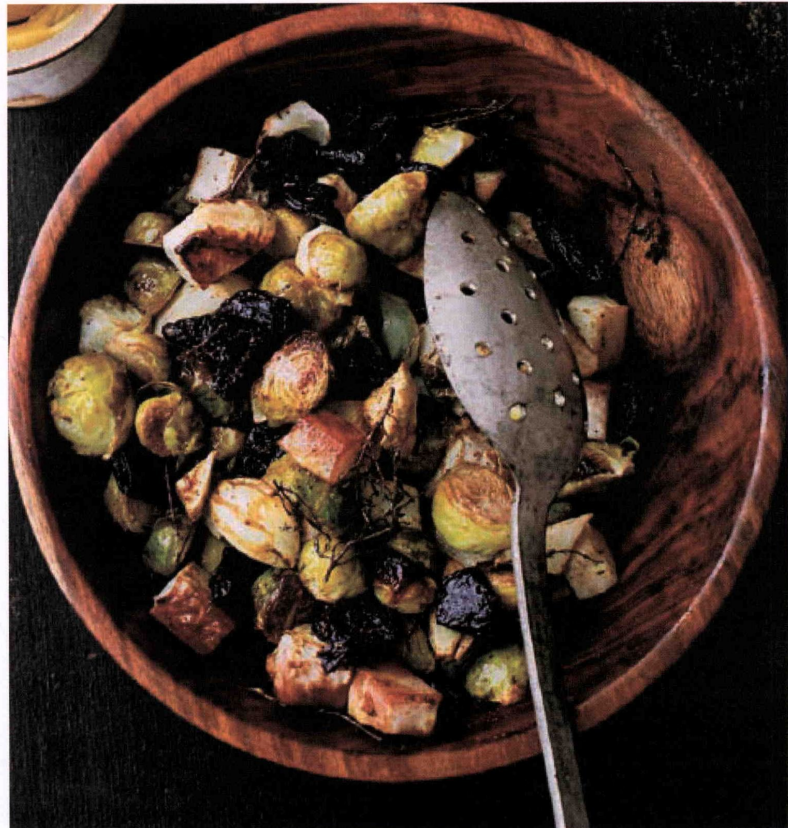
1 medium celeriac (about 600g)
 3 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
 a few sprigs of thyme, roughly torn
 500g Brussels sprouts
 150g pitted prunes, halved
 6 cloves garlic, peeled and bashed
 1 tbsp balsamic (or red wine) vinegar
 sea salt and black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 190C/fan 170C/gas 5.
2 Prepare the celeriac: slice off the rough skin, cut the flesh into roughly 2cm slices then cut each slice into bite-sized chunks. Put the celeriac chunks into a large roasting tray. Add 2 tablespoons of the oil, the thyme and some salt and pepper and toss together. Roast in the oven for 20–25 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, peel away any dirty or damaged outer leaves from the sprouts, trim the stems if necessary, then cut each sprout in half. Put the sprouts into a bowl with the halved prunes and the bashed garlic cloves. Add the remaining tablespoon of the oil, the vinegar, some salt and pepper and toss together well.

4 Take the celeriac out of the oven and give it a good stir, then scatter over the sprouts and prunes, along with any vinegary juice from the bowl. Return to the oven for another 20–25 minutes, until both the celeriac and sprouts are tender and golden brown in places. Serve straight away.

COOK'S TIP Use parsnip, potato or carrot – or any combination thereof – in place of the celeriac.

■ PER SERVING 247 cals, fat 11g, sat fat 2g, carbs 22g, sugars 20g, protein 7g, salt 0.37g, fibre 17g



Roast squash and apple with raw sprouts

This wonderful autumnal salad, from my ever-brilliant collaborator Gill Meller, is hot and tender, spicy and aromatic, crisp and raw – the range of textures and flavours is superbly satisfying. And it's so easy to throw together.

Serves 4 | Prep 20 mins | Cook 45 mins

about 1kg squash, such as a medium butternut or acorn squash, or ½ Crown Prince
 2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
 4–5 bay leaves, roughly torn
 2 sprigs of rosemary, roughly torn
 small handful of sage leaves, roughly torn (optional)
 1 tsp fennel seeds
 pinch of dried chilli flakes
 about 175g Brussels sprouts
 2 medium eating apples
 25g sunflower seeds (or other seeds of your choice)
 sea salt and black pepper

For the dressing:

2 tbsp extra-virgin olive or rapeseed oil
 2 tsp English mustard
 1–2 tsp sugar
 1 tbsp cider vinegar

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6.
2 Halve the squash and scoop out the seeds, but don't remove the peel. Cut into slim wedges, about 2cm wide at the outside edge, and place in a large roasting tray. Trickle over the oil then scatter over the herbs, fennel seeds, chilli flakes and some salt and pepper. Turn the pieces of squash over in the oil and seasonings, then place in the oven and roast for about 30 minutes until tender and nicely browned in places.
3 Meanwhile, combine all the ingredients for the dressing in a large bowl, adding salt and pepper to taste.
4 Trim the sprouts and remove any damaged or dirty outer leaves then slice very thinly. Add them to the bowl of dressing and mix well, breaking up the layers of sprout a bit as you go.
5 Quarter the apples, remove the cores and cut

Season's eatings



each quarter into two or three wedges (again, no need to peel). Set aside.

6 When the squash is tender and starting to brown, add the apple wedges and stir them in with the squash and seasonings. Return to the oven for about 15 minutes or until the apples are tender but not broken down. Scatter the seeds over the veg and apple for the last few minutes of cooking, so they toast lightly.

7 Spoon the dressed sprouts over the hot squash and apple wedges, then serve.

COOK'S TIP You can replace the squash with a combination of peeled and roughly chunked-up parsnips and carrots. Use finely shredded Savoy cabbage instead of the sprouts.

■ PER SERVING 298 cals, fat 15g, sat fat 2g, carbs 29g, sugars 19g, protein 6g, salt 0.22g, fibre 9g



Recipes adapted from *River Cottage Much More Veg* by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (Bloomsbury, £26). Photography by Simon Wheeler.

Season's eatings

VIVEK SINGH'S

Malabar Christmas cake

Unlike the traditional western Christmas pudding, this is a much lighter, cake version that is delicious served on its own or with custard. I find the spices are much better expressed in this cake than in a traditional Christmas pudding where they get too cloyingly intense as the texture is much denser and the fruit closely packed. Give this a go!

**Serves 10 | Prep 25 mins + soaking
 Cook 1 hr 5 mins**

200g dried fruits (such as raisins, prunes, figs, dates, cherries), chopped
 200g mixed candied orange and lemon peel, chopped
 40ml dark rum or inexpensive brandy, to soak the fruits (optional)
 3 tbsp sugar, for the caramel syrup
 300g plain flour
 1 tbsp baking powder
 5 cloves
 5 green cardamom pods
 5cm piece of cinnamon stick
 ½ tsp ground ginger
 ½ tsp grated nutmeg
 200g caster sugar
 250g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
 4 free-range eggs
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 60g cashew nut halves

1 If you wish to soak the dried fruits in the rum or brandy, place them in a bowl and set aside for 2 hours (or overnight).

2 Preheat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Grease a round 25cm diameter cake tin.

3 To prepare the caramel syrup, heat the sugar in a pan until the sugar melts and turns a dark brown colour. Mix with a wooden spoon to even out the colouring, then carefully pour 75ml of water into it and mix in well. The liquid is very dark and close to burnt (it's referred to by some pastry chefs as 'Black Jack' and used to impart a very dark colour to

cakes/sponges). Remove the liquid from the heat and set aside to cool.

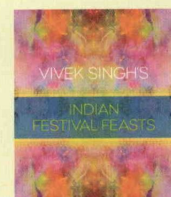
4 Sift the plain flour with the baking powder and set aside. Grind the whole spices to a fine powder.

5 Cream the caster sugar and butter together for 5-7 minutes to incorporate all the sugar into the butter and get the mixture light and fluffy. Add the eggs one by one and mix well between adding each egg. Add the vanilla extract and cooled caramel syrup, followed by the powdered spices and flour. Finally, add the dried fruit and candied peel

and fold in slowly (adding the fruit last ensures that no pockets with lumps of fruit are formed).

6 Pour the mixture into the prepared cake tin and decorate the top with the cashew nuts. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes, then reduce the heat to 165C/fan 145C/gas 3 and bake for a further 45 minutes or until a knife inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Let it cool well before cutting.

■ PER SERVING 583 cals, fat 26g, sat fat 14g, carbs 76g, sugars 49g, protein 8g, salt 0.61g, fibre 3g



Recipe adapted from *Indian Festival Feasts* by Vivek Singh (Absolute Press, £26). Photography by Jodi Hinds.