

7 days of menus from Foodies Across the Pond

Monday

Tomato & Bacon Pasta with Pesto

Do not be scared by the amount of base tomato sauce, you will be dividing it in half - for you pasta, the soup on Thursday and the pizza on Saturday. We recommend freezing the pizza base sauce in batches and removing from the freezer when required.

Base Tomato Sauce

Ingredients

2 x onions finely chopped

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 x 400g chopped tomatoes

Passata - sieved tomatoes

3 cloves garlic - peeled and crushed

Sea salt and crushed black pepper to season

Pinch sugar

1/2 a vegetable stock cube - crumbled

Herbs: heaped teaspoon dried oregano, thyme

Directions

Heat the oil in a large pan and add the onions. Fry until translucent. Now add the garlic, chopped tomatoes, passata, seasoning, herbs, sugar and stock cube. Bring to a bubble then leave to simmer - stirring occasionally for about 20 minutes, until the consistency is thick. Check the seasoning. Divide into two batches and set aside one half for your pizza and soup later in the week. Cover this and store in the refrigerator.

Tomato and Bacon Pasta with Basil Pesto

Ingredients

Half of the tomato sauce (see above)

1 pack x 200g/8.5oz Bacon Lardon

1 chilli finely chopped or a teaspoon of chilli flakes (optional)

Your favourite dried pasta for four people

Salt

Olive oil

Two handfuls of fresh basil

2 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese and additional to serve

Directions

Bring a large pan of water to the boil. Add your pasta and a teaspoon of salt. Bring back to a rolling boil and then simmer according the instructions on your pasta packaging.

Meanwhile in a separate pan, add the chopped bacon lardon and put on a medium heat. The fat in the lardon should be sufficient to fry the bacon. Fry until crispy then add your tomato sauce to the lardon and add the chilli if it is being used and bring to a simmer.

Separate some basil leaves for garnish and set aside. Then shred the remaining basil, pop into a pestle and mortar. Drizzle over the oil and and grind down or alternatively, pop into a small food processor & blend. Add the 2 tablespoons of parmesan. Blend again. Add seasoning and more oil if required, so that it drizzles.

(I haven't added garlic to the pesto, as it is in the tomato sauce, but feel free to add a clove for a true pesto).

Once the pasta is cooked, remove 4 tablespoons of the water and stir into the tomato sauce to make it lovely and glossy.

Drain the pasta and either add to the sauce, or if the pan is too small, return to the pasta pan and coat with the sauce.

Serve, drizzled with the basil oil/pesto and a little extra grated parmesan. Garnish with fresh basil leaves.

Tuesday

Roasted Chicken with Balsamic Roasted Vegetables & Whipped Lemon Feta.

For the Roast Chicken — This is my back to basics for those who are not used to roasting a whole chicken.

NOTE: Be sure to reserve the carcass for Wednesday's dinner. Place on a tray, cover with saran/cling wrap or foil and store in your refrigerator.

Ingredients

1 x 2 kilo 4 1/2 lb bird

1/2 lemon

small bunch of herbs (parsley, sage, thyme)

75g/3oz unsalted butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven: 190°c/375°f/gas mark 5

Directions

Weigh and then put the bird into a roasting pan/tray, breast side up. Pat dry with kitchen paper or paper towels.

Wrap the lemon with the herbs and push into the cavity of the bird. This will enhance flavour. Spread the butter over the chicken and drizzle all over with the oil.

Season with salt and pepper.

Calculate the cooking time: 20 minutes per 1 lb / 450g weight plus an additional 20 minutes.

Place in the oven. For the perfect skin and moist chicken breast, baste with the juices in the roasting tray every 20 minutes.

If you want a crispy skin, increase the temperature of the oven at the end of cooking to 220°c/ 425°f/gas 7 (20 mins max).

To test the chicken is cooked: I use a metal skewer or the tip of knife. Insert into the thickest part - the part that the heat struggles to get to, between the leg and thigh and the breast. Remove

skewer/knife and if the juices that come out run clear the bird is cooked. If there is red, return to the oven to finish cooking process.

When you are happy, remove from the oven, rest the chicken for 10- 15 minutes if you are eating warm. Wrap in foil to keep warm.

Roasted Vegetables

Ingredients

Select a colourful selection of vegetables

I suggest per person, but go for it, they can always be reheated later.

1x thin carrot, cleaned

¼ courgette (zucchini), cut into big chunks

¼ red onion, thinly sliced

¼ aubergine (eggplant), sliced into chunks

¼ red pepper, deseeded and chopped into chunks.

In addition to your vegetables, you will need

1 tablespoon rapeseed oil (or olive oil)

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

2 x clove of garlic, grated or crushed

1 x lemon - zest grated and juiced

Seasoning — salt and pepper

Fresh thyme & chopped parsley

Directions

Preheat your oven 200°c / 400°f Gas mark 6. Place all of your selected vegetables into one big ceramic (ovenproof) serving dish.

In a bowl, mix together the oil, vinegar and garlic. Pour over the vegetables and give them a bit of a rub. Sprinkle on sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and the fresh thyme. Cook in the oven for 30 mins.

Carefully remove from the oven and add the lemon zest and juice and stir. Return to the oven and cook for 10-15 mins until the vegetables are starting to caramelize.

Sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley and some additional thyme and serve alongside the Roasted Chicken and with the feta whip.

Feta Whip

Ingredients

200g/8oz feta broken into pieces (you can use 50/50 with a cream cheese if you prefer)

Generous squeeze of lemon juice

Pinch of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

200ml Olive Oil

Hand full of freshly chopped fresh mint

Directions

Add the feta, salt, pepper & lemon into a food processor. If you don't have one you can whisk in a bowl. Pulse for a few times so that it blends the ingredients.

Gradually drizzle in the olive oil with processor on a slow speed. You are aiming to have the texture of a creamy, thick dressing.

Decant to an attractive serving dish, top with chopped mint. a twist of black pepper and a few salt flakes. This also looks lovely served alongside your vegetables!

Foodies note: If you add the oil too quickly and your mix has not combined add a little natural yogurt.

Wednesday

Chicken Leek and Mushroom Pie

Start your meal prep' in advance by stripping the chicken from the carcass from yesterday's roast chicken supper.

Create a stock from the chicken carcass, on the hob ready for tomorrow night's soup. (Recipe below).

It is midweek - make life easy for yourself. I have included a pre made white sauce in the ingredients list. As mentioned above, I'm a Virgo and like to go by the book, so I make my own, but I have a wonderful friend who cooked an amazing lasagne for me recently and she swears by a bought white sauce. I couldn't tell the difference!

Ingredients

2 x leeks - washed and cut into slices

2oz unsalted butter

1 x tablespoon olive oil

1 x punnet 250g/8oz closed cap mushrooms

Shredded meat from last nights chicken meal

Seasoning (salt & pepper)

Dried or fresh thyme & dried or fresh tarragon. (if you are not a tarragon fan, substitute for sage).

480g /1pint ready made white sauce (béchamel sauce.....adding an easy recipe for you!)

1 x pack - ready rolled puff pastry for the pie lid

1 egg beaten - to glaze.

Oven temperature: 190°c /370g°f/gas 5

For a homemade béchamel:

- ¼ cup (½ stick) unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups whole milk

Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat until foamy. Whisk in flour and cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is pale and foamy, about 3 minutes. Gradually add milk, stirring until mixture is smooth. Cook, stirring, until sauce is thick coats the back of your spoon, about 4 minutes.

Directions

In a large & deep frying pan, (saucepan is fine) melt half of the butter with the olive oil. Add the leaks and fry on a medium heat to soften the leaks, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, quarter the mushrooms. Add the remaining butter to the pan and then add the mushrooms. fry for another 5 minutes, turning occasionally.

Add the white sauce/béchamel, seasoning to taste and a heaped teaspoon of each of the herbs if dried. 2 teaspoons of each if using fresh herbs.

Warm through to a simmering point and then fold through the chicken. Transfer all of the mix to an oven proof serving dish.

Brush a layer of the beaten egg around the edge of the dish. Lay the ready rolled puff pastry over the top and cut to the shape of the dish with a slight overhang to allow for shrinkage. Press the edges to the edge of the dish. Glaze the pastry with the egg using a pastry brush. Cut a slit in the middle of your pie for steam to escape.

You can use the excess pastry to decorate the lid, glaze with egg once done.

Cook for about 25-30 minutes until golden and piping hot.

Serve immediately.

Homemade Chicken Stock

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons sea salt salt
- Reserved chicken carcass from Roasted Chicken dinner
- 3 large yellow onions, unpeeled and quartered
- 6 carrots, unpeeled and halved
- 4 stalks celery with leaves, cut into thirds
- 4 parsnips, unpeeled and cut in half, optional
- 20 sprigs fresh parsley

- 15 sprigs fresh thyme
- 20 sprigs fresh dill
- 1 head garlic, unpeeled and cut in 1/2 crosswise
- 2 teaspoons whole black peppercorns

Directions

Place the chicken, onions, carrots, celery, parsnips, parsley, thyme, dill, garlic, and seasonings in a 16 to 20-quart stockpot. Add 7 quarts of water and bring to a boil. Simmer, uncovered, for a minimum of 4 hours. I've simmered for as long as 12 hours. Strain the entire contents of the pot through a colander and discard the solids. Chill the stock overnight.

You may need to split in two different soup pots. The next day, remove the surface fat. Use immediately or pack in containers and freeze for up to 4 months.

Make sure that you pop some in the refrigerator to make your soup.

Thursday

Tomato & Roasted Red Pepper soup with lentils, Soda Bread and Cheese

Before you start to cook, remove enough of your tomato sauce to make your pizza on Saturday.

Ingredients

Tomato base sauce

Olive oil

If you have any left over veg' from you chicken meal, chop into small cubes and use them in this soup.

1 x jar of pre roasted red peppers. (You can chop these into small cubes or blend in a processor)

1 x cup red lentils

a handful of green leaf like (spinach, Cavallo Nero)

500ml / 1 pint of your chicken stock made earlier in the week.

Seasoning

Directions

Heat two tablespoons of oil in a large pan. Add the peppers and any small cubes of left over vegetables to reheat them.

Add the lentils, tomato sauce, stock, seasoning. Bring to a simmer and cook until the lentils are tender. (20-30 mins). Now add the shredded green leaf and wilt down. This should take no more than 5 minutes. Check for seasoning.

Serve in warmed bowls, with slices of soda bread (recipe below) and a wedge of cheddar cheese.

(Any surplus soup can be frozen)

Soda Bread

This makes one good sized loaf or make into smaller rolls.

If you have bits on bobs left in the fridge, you can add these to the bread mix – chopped up olives, or thinly shredded sundried tomatoes. Or sprinkle the top with oats or seeds.

Ingredients

500g plain white flour (all purpose flour)

2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

1 x teaspoon salt

400ml Natural live yogurt (or buttermilk if you can get some)

A little milk

Directions

Preheat an oven to 200 degrees c./ Gas mark 6 Combine all of the dried ingredients in a large bowl and make sure that they are well mixed. Add the yogurt and any extras that you want to add.

Bring the mix together (if too dry just add a little milk). Work quickly, as soon as the bicarb hits moisture it will start to work. Remember - this is not a conventional bread, it does not need kneading and will not benefit from over working. Shape into a round loaf, put on a baking tray, cut a cross on the top and then into the oven. As simple as that.

Cook for 40-45 mins. If you are making rolls, less time is needed.

Friday

Flavours of Herefordshire Fish Finger Sandwich

This fab' recipe is courtesy of our friends at Photopia. They created a great Cookbook a few years back called, "Flavours of Herefordshire". Tyrrells who are a Herefordshire based company create crisps/chips but they are available nationally. Any alternative is good. If you don't want to use crisps - consider using the left over Soda bread from yesterday's meal, turned into breadcrumbs.

Tyrrells Potato Crisps Handmade Crispy Coated Fish Finger Sarnies with Tartare Sauce

Serves 4

For the tartare sauce

- 275 (1/2pint) local rapeseed oil (or olive oil)
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon mustard powder
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 1 pinch freshly ground pepper
- 3 tablespoons capers chopped
- 3 tablespoons gherkins chopped (small miniature pickles)
- 1 small shallot finely chopped
- 1 squeeze lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley chopped

For the fish fingers:

- 1 large bag Tyrrells Lightly Salted Crisps
- 450g (1lb) skinless sustainable white fish (e.g. cod)
- 1 egg beaten
- 2 tablespoons plain flour

- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 splash local rapeseed oil (or olive oil if you don't have rapeseed)
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

To Serve:

8 miniature bread rolls

2 small bags of Tyrrells Sea Salt & Cider Vinegar crisps.

For the tartare sauce, put the egg yolks into a bowl, add the mustard powder, salt and pepper. (I highly recommend the Myrtle's tarragon seasoning at this point!)

Mix together well, add the rapeseed oil (or olive oil) drop by drop whisking constantly with an electric whisk, once a few drops have been thoroughly combined the mixture will start to thicken, add the teaspoon of cider vinegar and continue whisking.

Now pour the rest of the oil in a very thin but steady stream, keeping whisking all of the time. Mix in the capers, gherkins, shallot, lemon juice and parsley and set aside in the fridge until needed.

For the fish fingers, heat the oven to 200c 400f Gas mark 6. Brush a non-stick baking sheet with oil. Cut the fish into 16 even sized strips. Make a hole in the bag of Tyrrells to allow the air out, and gently roll with a rolling pin to crush the crisps. Tip onto a plate and sprinkle with lemon zest.

Season the flour with the pepper and paprika on another plate and pour the beaten egg into a shallow dish. Coat the fish strips in the flour, then dip into the egg, then roll them in the crisps. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 20 mins until golden.

Assemble the fish finger into the miniature bread rolls with a good dollop of the tartare sauce.

Serve with Tyrrells sea salt and cider vinegar crisps.

Saturday

Pizza & TV Night

Remove the tomato base that you made on Monday for the pizza from your freezer to defrost.

The best and one of the easiest Pizza bases to make from scratch is from River Cottage “Everyday” cookbook by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Of course you can buy ready made ones or frozen dough - which is an excellent alternative.

Pizza Dough Recipe

250g /9oz Plain white flour (all purpose flour)

250g/9oz strong white flour (bread flour)

10g /0.35oz sea salt

5 g/0.18oz dried yeast (or fast action)

2 tablespoons olive oil

Cornmeal, or fine polenta or semolina for dusting

To make the dough, combine, the flours and salt in a large bowl. If using fast action yeast, mix it straight into the flour, if using ordinary dried yeast, dissolve in 325ml/11.5 fluid oz warm water and leave for ten minutes or so to activate the yeast. Then add this to the flour. Add the oil to the flour and mix to form a dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for ten minutes, until silky and elastic. Don't be tempted to add too much extra flour, even if the dough seems extremely sticky. It will become less so as you knead it.

Put the dough into a lightly oiled bowl, turn it so that it gets a coating of oil, cover with cling film and leave in a warm place until it has doubled in size. (This will probably take at least an hour).

Gather together your chosen toppings, including the tomato sauce that you made earlier in the week. Choosing of the toppings & construction of the pizza can be a fun family event!

Preheat your oven to 250°c/ 480°f/ gas mark 10

Punch the raised dough to knock it back on a floured surface and cut it into the required number of pieces (4/5). Using a rolling pin, or your hands or a combination of both, flatten into a circle or square for your pizza bases. It should be no more than 5mm thick!

Heat the baking trays in the oven. When ready to construct the pizza, remove the pan from the oven and sprinkle on some oatmeal or polenta.

Place the pizza base onto the baking tray and top with some tomato sauce, toppings of your choice and cheeses.

Bake for 10 - 12 minutes until the base is crispy and golden at the edges.

Sunday Roast

Slow Cooked Shoulder of Lamb

Serves 6-8

Give me any recipe that involves the words “slow cooked” and I will take it and run with it! For a dinner party or entertaining friends, a slow cooked dish is perfect. All of the preparation, cooking and a lot of the washing up has been done well in advance, giving you the opportunity to enjoy your company while eating great food.

Ingredients

2.5k – 3k should of lamb

500ml / 1 pint chicken stock

100ml / dry white wine

3 fennel bulbs

2 white onions

1 tablespoon of fresh thyme

2 teaspoon fennel seeds

Grated rind of one unwaxed lemon

200ml Madeira Wine (substitute with Marsala wine if not available)

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions

Preheat oven to 160°c / 310°f / gas mark 3

Prepare vegetables: slice the fennel bulbs into wedges that will hold their shape during cooking. Peel and cut the onions into wedges.

Season the joint of lamb and put it in your chosen cooking vessel. Add half of the stock and white wine. Cover with foil or lid. Cook in the oven for 2 hours.

Add the fennel, onions, lemon rind and fennel seeds. Add a bit more stock if needed. Return to the oven uncovered for another 1 1/2 hours. Check that the meat is succulent and tender.

Remove the lamb to a platter, carefully remove the vegetables and place around the joint and cover with the foil to keep warm.

Strain the juices from the pan, removing the fat from the surface. Add the meat juices to a small saucepan, add the remaining half of your stock and Madeira and simmer to reduce to a wonderfully rich gravy.

Add any juices that have escaped from the lamb to the gravy. Serve alongside the shoulder of lamb and vegetables.