



Fruit scones

Ingredients:

- 50g butter
- 225g plain flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 30g caster sugar
- 50g sultanas
- 150ml milk
- 1 egg beaten

Method:
Heat the oven to 205°C/gas 6. Grease a baking tray with butter, then sprinkle with flour.

Sieve the flour into a bowl, add butter, cut into small pieces, the baking powder and salt.

Rub the butter into the flour using your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add the sugar and the dried fruit, mix well. Make a well in the middle of the flour, and using a blunt knife, stir in enough milk to make a soft, pliable dough.

If the dough is too sticky sprinkle with a little flour. Turn the mixture on to a floured surface and knead very lightly until just smooth then lightly roll out to 2cm thick.

Cut rounds with a cutter or cup. Place on the baking tray and brush with the beaten egg.

Bake near the top of the hot oven for 15 minutes or until golden brown and well risen.

Cool on a wire rack before eating. Serve with butter or jam and cream.

A taste of Lampeter

The Falcondale Hotel is unusual for a luxury hotel as it welcomes both two-legged and four-legged guests

When guests arrive at the Falcondale in Lampeter, many choose to kick back and enjoy afternoon tea in the conservatory.

As this late afternoon splurge is making a big comeback, the hotel is keen to provide a good spread – washed down with a glass of champagne if guests fancy a treat.

Dogs are welcome too, which is unusual for a luxury hotel, and man's best friend can join his owners for tea by tucking into home-made dog biscuits.

The Falcondale has been in the hands of Chris and Lisa Hutton since 2000, and they have created a warm and homely ambience in the spectacular former gentleman's residence.

"What we have created here at The Falcondale, is what we hope to find for ourselves when we go away for a break," says

Chris. "We decided to welcome dogs, as we know how hard it is to find a stylish hotel that accommodates them."

The hotel is set in 14 acres of landscaped grounds, and has stunning views over the Teifi valley.

Food is a big deal at the hotel too. The county of Ceredigion offers a rich larder, providing lobster, crab, sea bass, sewin, Welsh black beef and Welsh lamb.

Neighbouring Carmarthenshire provides speciality cheeses and excellent cured ham. "Buying local has become fashionable, but it also makes perfect sense. Why source ham from another country, when we have our own on the doorstep?" adds Chris.

"Our guests like to see regional produce on the menu, and it helps the local economy too."

Test out the theory with two desserts and one main course from the menu.

■ www.thefalcondale.co.uk



>> The Falcondale Hotel is nestled on a hillside in Lampeter

Chocolate fondant



Ingredients:

- 50g plain flour
- 55g icing sugar, sifted
- 90g ground almonds
- 2 egg whites
- 100g butter, melted
- 160g dark chocolate, melted
- 4 squares dark chocolate, extra

Method:
Preheat oven to 150°C/gas. Place the flour, sugar, almond meal, egg whites, butter and melted chocolate in a bowl and mix well to combine.

Spoon half the mixture into four lightly greased 125ml dariole moulds (or use ramekins).

Divide the extra chocolate squares between the moulds and top with the remaining mixture.

Bake for 20-25 minutes or until cooked but soft in the middle.

Leave in the moulds until cooled slightly before turning out.

Smooth pork terrine

Ingredients:

- 25g butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 400g fatty pork, coarsely minced
- 50g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs, leaves picked
- 14 rashers streaky bacon

Method:
Melt the butter in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for 8-10 minutes, until soft.

Add the garlic and nutmeg and cook for 1 minute.

Put into a bowl with all the other ingredients, except the bacon, and mix well. Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas 4. Line a 22cm x 11cm x 6cm deep loaf tin with enough bacon to completely cover the base, overlapping slightly and overhanging the tin.

Press the mince mixture in the tin, smoothing the top.

Bring the bacon up and over the mixture, then lay more bacon on top so the terrine is completely covered.

Cover with a double layer of foil and seal

tightly around the tin.

Put the terrine in a deep roasting tin and pour boiling water around the tin, so it comes about halfway up the sides of the terrine.

Bake for 1½ hours or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out hot. Remove from the bain-marie and cool, then chill for at least 24 hours.

Remove the terrine from the fridge 30 minutes before serving.

Cut into slices and serve with fresh bread, chutney or pickled baby beetroot.



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STRAIGHT OFF THE VINE

Neil Cammies

You may have noticed that a warm yellow thing has appeared in the sky for a couple of days on the trot this week and as a result Nature is going a little crazy.

Everything is growing like wildfire, flowers are blooming and barbecue tongs have been liberated from garden sheds everywhere.

Also the hedgerow fruits are around in abundance, a reminder of days of summer as a youngster, carrier bag in hand, romping through the brambles covered in scratches and insect bites, but not a care in the world. No mortgage, no school, no worries!

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Back in the real world and the responsibilities of this column, I thought I'd look at fruity reds that have a touch of the hedgerow about them.

The JEAN LUC COLOMBO CÔTES DU RHÔNE BONNE ROCHE 2009 (£9.99, Rhythm & Booze, Bottle Shop, www.yourfavouritewines.com) is a southern Rhône favourite that has a big stewed bramble fruit nose packed with liquorice and deep floral notes. On the palate the tart fruit explosion is rich, dark and savoury while the defined tannins are not overbearing and it shows a drop of acidity through the mid palate. This is not a Côtes du Rhône for the faint of heart so you have been warned.

The DOMAINE GRAND NICOLET VIELLES VIGNES CÔTES DU RHÔNE VILLAGES RASTEAU 2009 (£13.95, www.oldbridgewine.co.uk) has a brooding black purple colour and aromas of intense liquorice and spicy chocolate tones that kick in

alongside those abundant hedgerow fruits. On

the palate the liquorice notes continue to run alongside a weft of blackberry fruit.

Tannins are pronounced yet silky and there's a touch of acidity through the mid palate. Power is delivered with a well-engineered throttle as the more unctuous tarry notes come through on the dry lingering finish.

Moving away from the Rhône Valley the ERRAZURIZ COSTA SINGLE VINEYARD SYRAH 2010 (£13.99, Avey's of Bristol) from the Aconcagua Valley in Chile, has smoky edged aromas from black fruits, elderflower and lavender with a lift from black pepper spice. In the mouth the initial attack is quite tart from the deep dark fruits with showy tannins that show some restraint as the wine grows in the glass. There is evidence of pencil lead to the wood tones and plenty of acidity to jolly things along.

This style of syrah doesn't overplay the spice notes which leaves a satisfyingly rich conclusion that drenches the palate.

Finally to New Zealand and the ESK VALLEY HAWKES BAY SYRAH 2009 (RRP £13.99, Cambridge Wine Merchants, Askew Wines, www.nzhouseofwine.co.uk). Syrah is becoming quite 'the thing' in New Zealand and is causing a similar stir to tastings of their now world-renowned pinot noir in the '90s. It's easy to know why, with a bouquet of expressive blackberry fruits with that, now familiar, touch of spicy heat and a little violet expression in there.

On the palate the fruit comes barreling in with little restraint, with the peppery tones just wandering in. The terroir of Hawkes Bay on the east coast of the North Island is so suited to this style, with free draining gravels, among 25 other soil types. In this wine it results in a fresh green leafiness and an invigorating finish. The style of syrah that is getting everyone in a vinous tizz!



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