

Nut Roast en Croute

8 oz organic flour
Pinch sea salt
4 oz butter, cut into small cubes
2-3 tbs cold water
Beaten egg to glaze

To prepare pastry:

Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl; rub the butter into the flour with finger tips. Keep the action very light to incorporate lots of air.

Stir in just enough water to hold the mixture together and form a ball.

Cover or place in greaseproof paper and chill for at least 30 min.

Roll out pastry to a rectangular shape on a lightly floured board and trim the edges.

Nut/vegetable filling:

- 1 leek, cleaned well and diced small
- 2 carrots, diced small
- 1 stick celery trimmed, washed and diced small
- Few brown mushrooms, chopped
- 8 oz mixed chopped nuts, (walnuts, brazil, hazelnuts, for example)
- 6 oz fresh whole meal breadcrumbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp mixed dried herbs
- ½ tsp ground chili
- 1 tbs chopped parsley
- 2 eggs beaten

(Taste the filling and the sauce and allow yourself to be creative. Add more of one thing, less of another or use up some vegetables that you have and need to use up)

Put the nut mixture along one side of the pastry and wrap it like a blanket with the other side, sealing the two sides together with water. Roll it to look like a rolled yoga mat and make a few slits on the top.

Brush with the beaten egg. Cook in a pre-heated oven 400 for about 15 min. before adjusting heat to 350 for the remainder of the cooking time which is about 20 min. or until pastry nice and brown and the inside is hot.

Serve with the brussel sprouts, mashed potatoes and leek and cranberry gravy.

Mushroom/Cranberry Gravy:

- 8 oz brown mushrooms, chopped finely
- White part of a chopped leek
- Nob of butter
- ½ oz plain flour
- About ½ pint vegetable stock
- 1 tbs of freshly made cranberry sauce
- Salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a small saucepan. Gently fry the chopped leek and mushrooms. Add the flour. Mix and cook for 1 min. then add the stock, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and simmer for about 10 min. Adjust flavors to suit you and your family.

You can stick a hand blender into the saucepan and wizz for a bit to make a more interesting texture. Serve the nut loaf with some of the gravy drizzled on the top and maybe garnished with chopped parsley.

Stir-fried Brussel Sprouts with Sliced Almonds:

- About 6 Brussels sprouts per person
- 2 tsp sliced almonds per person
- 1 tbs olive oil
- Peel and juice from one large lemon
- Salt and black pepper

Wash and tail the brussel sprouts, slice them thinly.

Lightly toast the sliced almonds until golden and set aside.

In a wok or large frying pan, heat a tbs of oil and when hot, add the brussel sprouts and lemon. Cook over a medium high heat until slightly brown but still bright green in color.

Turn off heat, season and sprinkle with toasted almonds and lemon peel.

Garlic Mashed Potatoes:

- 1 medium potato, such as russet, per person, peeled and sliced thickly
- 1 small garlic clove per person
- Nob of Butter
- Little milk

Boil the potatoes and garlic in a covered saucepan in just enough water to cover them.

Test with a knife when you think they are done and potato gives in easily to the knife.

Strain off the water and smash with a potato masher or fork.

Add the butter, salt and pepper and enough milk to desired consistency.

Bedfordshire Clanger:

An old fashioned favorite from my neck of the woods! Simply use the pastry recipe above and if you can find vegetable shredded suet, substitute 2 oz of the flour with that. You would add it after rubbing the flour and butter together. It adds a sort of spongy texture to the flour.

The idea of this is that the field workers would have a nice tasty lunch in one item. They would start to eat it at one end and simply eat to the other. You chose savory to sweet or sweet to savory.

A nice treat for the kid's lunch boxes also.

When you have the pastry rolled out you can cut rectangles and fill half with a savory such as cheese and onion and the other half with a sweet such as sliced apples or jam.

Seal the "clangers" and brush with a beaten egg before cooking in a moderate oven until brown.

Delicious hot or cold for a picnic!