

# **WINTER RECIPES**

*by Maurice Roche*

*OK, I know that these are not all typically Christmas recipes, but this is just a small selection of my favourite recipes for the winter season. Certainly some of the side dishes will always be found as part of the traditional Christmas day meal in Ireland, where I grew up (for example the pork sage and onion meatballs are usually served as a side dish to the roast turkey, as are Irish style mashed potatoes, Yorkshire puddings, Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and ham and crunchy roast potatoes). However, the other dishes are perfect for those long cold nights when you need something tasty to warm yourself up. There are a few soup recipes which make nice starters, followed by some meat dishes and a selection of side dishes. I also included some really tasty vegetarian recipes. After that, there are a couple of recipes for two very different cheese fondues and to round it all off there is my recipe for apple Charlotte, which is one of the easiest and tastiest desserts I know. These recipes are wholesome and tasty, though probably not a good idea if you are on a diet or calorie conscious 😊.*

## **Brussels sprouts, parsnip and blue cheese soup**

### **Ingredients:**

750g fresh Brussels sprouts

500g parsnips, peeled and sliced very thinly

1 large onion sliced in thin rings

Juice of 1 lemon

2 heaped teaspoons of vegetable stock powder

5 cloves garlic (peeled and sliced very thinly)

Blue cheese (e.g. Roquefort)

Whipped cream

Crushed pistachio nuts and crushed red peppercorns to decorate.

6 branches of parsley, finely chopped

Pepper

### **What you do:**

Peel off the outer leaves of the sprouts, cut off the thick stalk and make a cross shaped incision in the base of each sprout.

Get a large saucepan and put 40ml of boiling water into it. Add the onions and soften them over low heat. Sprinkle over the stock, mix well, then add the parsnips and add enough cold water to come to about 2cm above the top of the vegetables. Bring the pot to the boil, put on a lid and let everything simmer for 10 to 12 minutes (until the parsnips are almost cooked). Add the sprouts, bring the pot back to the boil and simmer for another 5 minutes. Then liquidize the soup, add the lemon juice and a few twists of freshly-milled black pepper. Finally, add in the parsley, mix well and serve the soup with some blue cheese on top.

However, this soup also makes a great aperitif if you serve it in small glasses with a froth of whipped cream sprinkled with crushed pistachio nuts and crushed red peppercorns on top, with a little chopped parsley for extra colour.



## **Simple French onion soup.**

### **Ingredients:**

1 kg onions, peeled and cut into the thinnest rings possible.

5 tablespoons of port wine

1 heaped tablespoon of flour

1,5 l of beef stock

Salt and pepper

40g butter

Slices of baguette

Some grated emmental cheese

Cress leaves and mild paprika powder to decorate

### **What you do:**

In one pot, bring the beef stock to the boil. In a larger saucepan, melt the butter, add the onions and fry until soft. Then sprinkle over the flour, mix in well and cook for 1 minute. Add the stock, port wine, a pinch of salt and some pepper, bring to boiling point, put a lid on the pan and allow to simmer for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, toast the baguette slices and cut them in half. Serve the soup in bowls, put 2 half slices of baguette on the surface of each bowl, sprinkle on some emmental and decorate with cress leaves and a dusting of paprika powder.



## **Yellow pepper soup.**

### **Ingredients:**

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 kilo yellow peppers (cut in 1 ½ cm squares).

2 large onions, roughly chopped.

2 large cloves garlic, crushed

800ml vegetable stock

200ml cream

salt

pepper

some freshly chopped marjoram

curry powder

100g feta cheese in small cubes.

### **What you do:**

Heat olive oil in a large pot. Fry the onions until they are soft. Add the peppers and fry for about 5 minutes until they start to soften. Add garlic, salt and pepper and stir well. Fry for another 2 minutes. Add the vegetable stock and cream and let it come to the boil very slowly. Let the soup simmer for 20 minutes. Blend the soup with a hand mixer. Serve soup in bowls with a few cubes of feta in the centre and add some freshly chopped marjoram to each bowl. To finish, sprinkle a small amount of curry powder over the surface. Eat and enjoy. This recipe makes enough for four bowls.



# **Oven-roasted tomato and mozzarella soup with basil.**

## **Ingredients:**

1 kg tomatoes, cut in half.

1 large onion, finely chopped

Olive oil, salt, pepper, a pinch of brown sugar, a tablespoon of white wine vinegar, 100ml water

Some basil leaves and red peppercorns to garnish

1 small ball of fresh mozzarella cheese cut into small cubes.

2 triangles of toast per serving.

## **What you do:**

Get a large roasting tin and put 4 tablespoons of olive oil into it. Shake it around to make sure the base is completely covered.

Preheat your oven to gas mark 6 (200°C) and then get a kilo of tomatoes and cut them across the middle into two halves. Put the tomatoes cut side down in the oil. When the oven is hot, put the tray in the oven and leave for 20 minutes. Then remove the tray and leave the tomatoes cool down.

In a medium sized saucepan, heat 4 tablespoons of olive oil. Chop your onion finely and fry them in the oil for about 15 minutes on very gentle heat, stirring from time to time.

When the tomatoes are cool enough to handle, peel off the skins, put them into the pan with the onions, add the water and stir until the liquid is boiling. Remove the pan from the heat and using a hand mixer, blend all the ingredients until you have a thick but very smooth soup. Add salt, pepper, brown sugar and white wine vinegar and stir well.

Dry the ball of mozzarella in kitchen paper and cut it into small cubes. Serve the soup in bowls and sprinkle on some mozzarella cubes, the red peppercorns, add a leaf of parsley and the toast slices on the side. Finally add a twist of pepper to each bowl and serve. It can be served hot in winter, but is also delicious served chilled in summer.



# **Beef in Guinness**

## **Ingredients:**

1 kilo of carrots, peeled and cut in thin slices

3 bottles of Guinness beer (each 33cl)

4 large onions, each cut into 8 wedges and then separate the layers

Several sprigs of fresh thyme

30g butter mixed with 4 tablespoons of olive oil

5 tablespoons of flour in a bowl seasoned with salt, pepper, dried rosemary, oregano and sage

1,5 kg of very lean stewing beef cut into 3 cm chunks

1 tablespoon of brown sugar

4 tablespoons of tomato concentrate

200g of prunes (optional)

6 cloves of garlic, peeled and halved

A 440g jar of thick beans (weight after draining off the water)

## **What you do.**

Start by mixing the beef in the seasoned flour. Make sure that all of the chunks of beef get well coated in the flour.

In a large ovenproof cooking pot, heat the oil and butter. At the same time, pre-heat your oven to gas mark 1.

When the oil is hot, fry the beef chunks in batches. They need to go a nutty brown colour on the outside, but they don't need to cook through. Don't put too much beef in the pan at one time, otherwise they will never brown. When one batch has browned, remove them and put them in a bowl before doing the next batch.

When all the meat has been browned, fry the onions until soft. Then add the carrots and garlic and fry as well for 6 minutes. Remove the carrots and onions to the bowl with the beef.

Now pour in the Guinness, bring it to the boil, add the brown sugar and stir it in well, then add the tomato concentrate and stir it in well also. When it boils, add the meat and the vegetables back to the pan, tuck in the sprigs of thyme, add the beans and the prunes (if using them).

Bring everything back to the boil, put a lid on the pot and put it in the oven for 3 hours to slow cook. This dish reheats easily, so it is a nice one to prepare when you have guests coming over.



## **Roast beef in winter spices sauce.**

### **Ingredients:**

1,3 kg very lean roast beef

A bunch of vegetables for making soup (a couple of carrots, a slice of turnip, some sprigs of parsley, whatever you have to hand)

2 large onions, roughly chopped

Salt and pepper

3 tablespoons of tomato concentrate

2 teabags of spices for making mulled wine

300ml vegetable stock

Teaspoon of brown sugar

3 tablespoons of dark sauce binder

Oil for cooking

### **What you do:**

Heat the oil in a very large casserole dish and chop the soup vegetables roughly.

When the oil is hot, season the meat well all over with salt and pepper and put it in the sizzling fat, turning it several times until it goes a nutty brown colour all over. Then remove it from the pan.

Now put the chopped soup vegetables in the pan, add the onions and stir for a while until they soften. Then add three heaped tablespoons of tomato concentrate and a heaped teaspoonful of brown sugar. Mix well, add the wine and open the "teabags" of mulled wine spices and add them to the pot. Stir well.

After 3 minutes, add the beef to the pot. Pre-heat your oven to gas mark 3, add half of the stock to the pot, bring it to the boil and put a lid on it. Put the pot in the oven for one hour.

After one hour, take the pot out of the oven, turn the beef upside down, add the rest of the vegetable stock and then put the pot back in the oven and cook for another hour.

When the time is up, take the beef out of the pot and wrap it in two layers of tinfoil.

To make the sauce, mash the vegetables a bit at a time through a sieve and place a bowl under the sieve to collect the juices which come out. When you have got all the juices out, add it back to the pot. Bring the pot to a fast boil and let the sauce reduce by about one third. Then add three tablespoons of dark sauce binder and stir it well to make sure that there are no lumps. Bring the pot to the boil, stirring all the time. When you are ready, carve the beef into thin slices and serve with some of the sauce drizzled over it. This dish tastes great served with polenta fritters and Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and bacon, the recipes for which you will also find in this book.



Beef in winter spice sauce with polenta fritters and Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and bacon



## **Pork chops with apples, maple syrup and cream**

### **Ingredients:**

4 pork chops

20g butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

2 large red sweet apples peeled, cored and each cut into 16 thin wedges

Salt and pepper

Maple syrup

Crème fraiche

Freshly chopped parsley and crushed red peppercorns to decorate.

### **What you do:**

Put the chops on a clean chopping board and season on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat the oil and butter in a large frying pan. When the oil and butter are quite hot, fry the chops for 2 minutes on each side. When this is done, transfer the chops to an oven dish. At this point, preheat your oven to gas mark 6 (200°C).

As soon as you have prepared the apple wedges, put them into a mixing bowl with the lemon juice and mix them well. This ensures they do not oxidize and go brown.

Place 8 wedges of apple on each chop. Then drizzle a generous tablespoon of maple syrup over the layer of apples on each chop. After this, add a heaped tablespoon of crème fraiche to each chop. Put into the oven, cook for 20 minutes and serve immediately, with some finely chopped parsley sprinkled over and some crushed red peppercorns for a touch of colour.



## **Irish style mashed potatoes.**

### **Ingredients:**

1,5 kg of potatoes (peeled)

Salt and pepper

125g butter

300ml milk

2 heaped teaspoons of dried thyme

### **What you do:**

Put the potatoes into a large pot of water with some salt added, bring to the boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes until the potatoes are done. Then drain off the water and return the potatoes to the pot.

Add the butter, put the lid on and let the butter melt from the heat of the potatoes for 5 minutes.

Now pour in the milk, add salt, pepper and thyme and then mash the potatoes well, making sure that all of the ingredients blend perfectly and serve immediately. For extra flavour add a handful of thinly sliced spring onions to the mash and mix it in well.



## **Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and bacon**

### **Ingredients:**

1 kg of fresh Brussels sprouts, with the outer leaves peeled off and a cross cut into the base of each sprout.

400g of vacuum packed chestnuts prepared according to instructions on packet and cut them in half

300g smoked bacon cut into tiny cubes (lardons)

Pinch of brown sugar

30g of butter

Salt and pepper

### **What you do:**

Put the sprouts into a large cooking pot, cover them with water, add salt and bring them to boiling point. Put the lid half on the pot, turn the heat down low (the sprouts should just be simmering) and leave for 10 minutes. When the time is up, taste one with a fork to make sure they are cooked enough.

In a large frying pan, fry the bacon cubes. Don't add oil as the bacon releases enough fat of its own. When they are cooked all over, add the butter and let it melt, then add the chestnuts and stir fry for 2 minutes. Finally, stir in the brown sugar.

Drain the water from the sprouts, add the sprouts to the frying pan and add salt and pepper to taste. Mix well and serve.



# **Crunchy Roast Potatoes.**

## **Ingredients:**

1,5 kg of peeled potatoes (if large, then cut them in half)

125g of clarified butter OR the juices from whatever meat you are roasting with a little oil added.

Salt

## **What you do:**

Pre-heat your oven to gas mark 7 and put a large oven tray containing the clarified butter into the oven for 15 minutes until the clarified butter gets sizzling hot.

Put the potatoes into a large pot of water to which some salt has been added, bring the pot to the boil and let the potatoes boil for 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the size. They should not cook through, but should just be “half cooked” for this recipe.

After having drained off the water from the potatoes, return them to the pot in which you cooked them and then put a lid on the pot. Holding the lid on the pot tightly with both hands, shake the potatoes hard. The idea is to get the surface of the potatoes to go all floury and this is the secret to the perfect roast potato!!.

Take the tray out of the oven and you need to work fast here. Add the potatoes to the hot clarified butter, rolling them around in it to get them completely coated. If the fat cools down while you are doing this, then keep the temperature up by lighting the hot plate on your cooker and putting the dish on that while you add the potatoes. The essential thing is that the oil stays as hot as possible.

Put the dish into the oven and after 30 minutes turn the potatoes and then cook for another 30 minutes, by which time they will be all crunchy and crispy on the outside and soft and tender in the middle, which is just the way the perfect roast potato should be.



# Simple Yorkshire Puddings.

## Ingredients:

3 eggs

200ml milk

220g flour

Salt

Clarified butter

160ml water

## What you do:

Put the eggs, salt, water and milk into a bowl and mix well

Use a fork to whisk the flour in bit by bit until you have a nice smooth batter. Leave the batter to stand for about 30 minutes.

Put half a teaspoon of clarified butter into each of the holes in a muffin tray (this recipe makes 12 puddings). Do not use normal butter as it doesn't stand high heat. If you can't get clarified butter, then use a little neutral oil.

Preheat your oven to gas mark 7, then put the muffin tray in for 10 minutes to melt the clarified butter and get it piping hot.

Remove the tray from the oven, spoon the batter evenly into each of the holes, then put the tray into the oven for 30 minutes. This is the perfect dish to accompany any roast meat main course.



# Potato and Appenzeller gratin

## Ingredients:

4 litres boiling vegetable stock

350g Appenzeller cheese, rind removed cut into very thin slices

2kg potatoes (not floury) peeled and cut into very thin slices

Butter

Salt and pepper

200ml milk

Freshly snipped chives and some crushed red peppercorns to garnish.

## What you do:

Get a high oven dish and grease the bottom and sides well with butter. Preheat your oven to gas mark 4 (180°C)

Add the potato slices to the boiling stock, bring back to boiling point and boil for 5 minutes. Drain the potatoes into a sieve and let them cool.

When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, arrange a layer of the potatoes on the base of the greased oven dish. Add a few twists of freshly-milled black pepper and a layer of Appenzeller cheese to cover. Then repeat with a layer of potatoes, pepper, cheese and keep going until all the ingredients have been used up. The top layer should be a layer of potatoes. Then pour over 200ml of milk, add some salt and pepper and add some flakes of butter all over the top layer of potatoes.

Put in the oven for 45 minutes, cool for 10 minutes and serve.



## **Cheese, white wine and broccoli quiche.**

### **Ingredients:**

Enough ready-to-use puff pastry to line the base of a 24 cm diameter quiche dish.

500g broccoli

3 eggs

200g emmenthal cheese.

2 heaped tablespoons of finely chopped parsley

1/8 of a bottle of dry white wine

Nutmeg

Salt

Pepper

200g of cream cheese

### **What you do.**

Start by running the quick dish under really cold water and line the dish with the pastry, making sure that the pastry comes up the sides of the dish.

Prick the pastry all over with a fork.

Sprinkle 100g of the grated emmenthal over the pastry.

Cut the broccoli into really small florets and then spread them evenly over the pastry.

In a bowl, mix three eggs, the white wine, the cream cheese, the parsley and add salt, pepper and nutmeg. Pour this over the pastry.

Sprinkle the rest of the emmenthal cheese on top. Put the dish into a pre-heated oven (gas 6/200°C) for about 40 minutes. This can be eaten hot or cold.



# Homemade vegetarian sausages

## Ingredients (for 12 sausages):

300g of breadcrumbs and 200g grated emmenthal cheese mixed together in a large bowl

1 tablespoon of dried mixed herbs

Salt and pepper

One large onion, finely chopped

2 heaped tablespoons of sweet mustard

2 eggs (separated)

Another 200g breadcrumbs mixed with 200g grated parmesan cheese

Oil for frying.

## What you do:

In the bowl with the breadcrumbs and cheese, add the herbs, salt, pepper, mustard and the egg yolks. Mix well and then use your hands to form 12 sausages from the mix.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan, dip each sausage in the egg white and then roll it in the breadcrumbs and parmesan. Fry the sausages in batches and serve with chutney, salads or whatever else takes your fancy.



# Vegetarian stuffed baked potatoes

## Ingredients:

10 large potatoes, pricked all over with a fork, smeared with olive oil all over and salted

1 large bunch of chives, finely snipped in a bowl, to which you add 2 packs of cream cheese with herbs and garlic, 200g grated cheddar OR grated gouda, salt, pepper and a handful of chopped parsley.

Red peppercorns to decorate.

## What you do:

Put the potatoes on a roasting dish into a pre-heated oven (gas 7) for about an hour, turning them at half time. You know they are done when the skins are all crunchy. Remove the dish from the oven and let the potatoes go cold enough to handle.

In the bowl, use a fork to mix all the ingredients together into a smooth paste.

Cut each potato in half lengthways, scoop out the soft white part and keep the skins. Add the potato mass to the bowl with the cheese and herbs and mash everything well.

Scoop the mix from the bowl into the potato skins, stuffing them well. Put the potato halves back in the roasting dish, sprinkle over some red peppercorns and a little more parsley, then put the tray in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes at gas mark 2. Serve with oven roasted tomatoes, carrots in butter and some turnip puree.



## **Zucchini stuffed with couscous and saffron.**

### **Ingredients.**

4 medium sized courgettes

250g of couscous, prepared according to the instructions on the packet and left go cold.

2 onions, very finely chopped.

1 red pepper, very finely chopped

1 small amount of red saffron strands

60g of grated Parmesan cheese

Olive oil, salt and pepper.

### **What to do:**

Cut each courgette in half lengthways, use a spoon to scoop out a hollow all the way down into each courgette half. Place the courgette pulp you remove into a mixing bowl.

In a saucepan, add the olive oil and heat it. Add the onions and fry them until soft. Add the red pepper pieces, the pulp extracted from the courgettes, some salt and pepper and fry for a further few minutes. Stir in the couscous, mix well, remove from the heat and let it go completely cold.

Use the cold vegetables and couscous to stuff each courgette half, pushing it down with the back of a spoon. Put them in an oven dish, preheat your oven to gas mark 6 (200°C) and before putting the courgettes into the oven, drizzle a string of olive oil over each one. Allow them to bake in the oven for 20 minutes, then remove them from the oven and sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese and return them to the oven for a further 10 minutes. Eat hot or cold.



## **Peppers stuffed with beans, cheese and potatoes.**

### **Ingredients:**

6 large bell peppers of different colours, with a "lid" cut off the top, seeds and white pith removed.

250g tin of small white beans, drained and rinsed

250g of boiled potatoes, left go cold and chopped in fairly small cubes.

1 finely chopped onion and 2 grated carrots and 2 beaten eggs

60g emmental cheese (or mild cheddar)

5 tablespoons of breadcrumbs

The leaves from 3 branches of thyme, salt, pepper, 1 branch of parsley to garnish

100ml of dry white wine

4 tablespoons of freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

### **What you do:**

Fry the onions on gentle heat in a medium sized saucepan for 10 minutes until they go clear and soft. Add the potatoes, carrots and beans and fry for a couple of minutes. Let it go cold, then add the eggs, the cheese, breadcrumbs and the thyme, mix well and add salt and pepper to taste before mixing again.

Stuff the peppers with the mix, put them into a greased oven dish. Pour the wine into the oven dish with 100 ml of water and put the dish into an oven preheated to gas mark 6 (200°C) for 30 to 35 minutes. Serve hot.



# **Appenzeller cheese and tomato fondue**

## **Ingredients:**

75g tomato concentrate

300ml tomato juice

50ml Kirschwasser (clear cherry schnapps) with 2 heaped tablespoons potato flour mixed into it

1 heaped teaspoon of brown sugar

800g grated Appenzeller cheese

1 large clove garlic, peeled and chopped finely

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 tablespoons of butter

Half a teaspoon of cayenne pepper

250ml dry white wine

Salt and pepper

## **What you do:**

Put your fondue pot over the heat and melt the butter until it is frothing. Add the onions, stir to coat them well in the melted butter and leave them to soften for about 10 minutes. Stir from time to time. Add the garlic and fry for a further 5 minutes.

Add the wine, add the tomato juice and turn up the heat. Add the tomato concentrate and bring the pot to simmering point, stirring all the time to make sure the tomato concentrate is well dissolved. Add the brown sugar and leave the pot simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the cheese bit by bit, stirring all the time, making sure one handful is fully dissolved before adding the next. Keep going until all the cheese has been added.

Give the Kirschwasser and potato starch a good stir to make sure there are no lumps in it and add it to the fondue pot, stirring all the time until the fondue thickens.

Add a little salt and a good few twists of freshly-milled black pepper, then add the cayenne pepper. Stir well and serve with plenty of crusty baguette and raw vegetables.



# Traditional cheese fondue

## Ingredients:

400g grated emmenthal cheese

400g grated gouda cheese

200g Münster cheese cut into small pieces (you can leave the orange crust on it)

1 heaped tablespoonful of potato starch dissolved in 20 ml of cherry schnapps (Kirschwasser)

5 cloves of garlic, peeled and cut in half lengthways

30g butter

1 bottle of dry white wine

Grated nutmeg

Freshly-milled black pepper

## What you do:

Get a fondue pot and rub the base and sides all over with one of the garlic halves. Add the other halved garlic cloves to the pot with the butter. Melt the butter on low heat and as soon as it has melted (it should not be too hot), pour in 1/3 of the wine and let it get very hot.

Add the cheeses in handfuls (you can even mix them all together in a big bowl before you start, which is what I do). Keep adding cheese and stirring constantly.

When it starts to feel quite thick, add another third of the bottle of wine. Keep adding cheese and stirring.

Add the last third of the wine and add the remaining cheese, stirring all the time until the cheese has fully melted.

Mix the potato starch into the cherry schnapps again and pour it into the fondue pot, stirring constantly for a few minutes until the fondue thickens. Add some grated nutmeg and some pepper and stir it all well. Serve the fondue with chunks of bread to spear on fondue forks and plenty of Serrano ham on the side.



# **Apple Charlotte**

## **Ingredients:**

Several slices of brown bread from a sliced loaf

Cinnamon powder

4 to 5 tablespoons brown sugar

6 sweet apples, peeled, cored and cut into thin slices

## **What you do:**

Get a high cake tin and grease the base and sides with butter. Press a layer of bread slices onto the base, add a layer of apples and shake over half a teaspoonful of cinnamon powder and 1 heaped tablespoon of brown sugar. Add another layer of bread, apples, cinnamon sugar and keep going until everything has been used up. The last layer should be a layer of apples dusted with some sugar and cinnamon. Leave the dish to rest for 20 minutes.

While the dish rests, preheat your oven to gas mark 4 (180°C).

After 20 minutes, put the dish in the oven and let it cook for 45 minutes. Remove from oven, let it rest for 20 minutes then put a large plate on top of the bowl and turn it upside down to tip the cake onto the plate. Serve in wedges with plenty of whipped cream.

