



Festive Recipes

Vegan Wellington - perfect for replacing the turkey in the middle of your Christmas table.

Ingredients

- 90g dried porcini mushrooms
- 2tbsp olive oil
- 1 finely chopped large onion
- 250g chestnut mushrooms finely chopped
- 2 crushed gloves of garlic
- 500g (about 2 large) sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
- 1 tbsp finely chopped rosemary
- 1 tbsp finely chopped sage, plus 4 whole leaves
- 100g soft white breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp pomegranate molasses (if you don't have this mix 1 tbsp of cranberry sauce with 1 tbsp of lemon juice)
- 40g dried cranberries
- grating of nutmeg
- 2 x 320g sheets of dairy-free puff pastry (most supermarket pastry is actually dairy free so check the ingredients)
- Plain flour to dust
- 3tbsp plant-based milk
- 1 tbsp English mustard or Dijon mustard with a pinch of turmeric

Method

1. Put the dried mushrooms in a heatproof bowl and pour over 500ml boiling water from the kettle. Stir and press them down so they're well covered, then leave to soak.
2. Heat the olive oil in a wide frying pan over a medium heat, and fry the onion and chestnut mushrooms until the veg is very soft and the mushrooms look wilted and reduced (takes about 20 mins)
3. Stir in the garlic and sweet potatoes, then the rehydrated mushrooms along with their soaking liquid being careful to leave the last dregs of the liquid in the bowl as this may contain grit from the mushrooms. Cover and cook for 15 mins until the sweet potatoes are just softened, and most of the liquid has evaporated. Add a splash more water halfway through if the liquid evaporates too quickly.

4. Remove the lid and stir in the chopped herbs, breadcrumbs, molasses and cranberries. Season well and sprinkle in the nutmeg. The mixture should resemble stuffing, but not dry - make sure all the breadcrumbs are coated and have absorbed some of the liquid. Remove from the heat and leave to cool in the pan
5. Once cool, unroll one of the puff pastry sheets onto a lightly floured non-stick baking sheet lined with baking parchment. Whisk the milk and mustard together with a pinch of salt and set aside.
6. spoon the cooled filling down the middle of the pastry sheet in a neat line, leaving a 5cm border around the edges. Use the mustard and milk mix to brush the borders, then use the second sheet of pastry to lay over the mixture, pressing it all around the edges to create a seal making sure there are no air pockets. I like to crimp the sides to make the seal more secure and also looks pretty or you can use a fork to press down the sides.
7. Cut a small steam hole in the top of the middle and brush the top with the mustard and milk mix. Ideally you want to chill the wellington down for 30 mins before putting in the oven. If you are making this for Xmas day you can actually make this up to 2 days in advance and leave it at this stage in the fridge until you are ready to cook it.
8. Heat the oven to 180c fan. Remove the wellington from the fridge and brush with more of the mustard and milk mix. I like to score a pattern into the top of the pastry with a cutlery knife - it gives a great affect once its baked. Bake for 35-40 mins until golden, puffed up and crispy. If you think it is browning too quickly cover with foil and then back in the oven. Arrange the whole sage leaves on top of the wellington and stick them down with the mustard and milk mix, then return to the oven for 10 mins more.
9. I like to transfer the wellington to a wooden chopping board and put the whole wellington in the middle of the table and cut it at the table - its a real centre piece!

For dessert why not try a super easy but beautiful looking rich Chocolate tart with some shop brought vegan ice cream

Ingredients

For the base

350g Digestive biscuits

2 tbsp cocoa powder

1 tbsp plain flour

1 tbsp golden syrup

125-175g vegan margarine (most margarines are so check the ingredients rather than looking for plant-based labelling) plus a little extra for the tin

For the Filling

2 x 400g cans coconut milk, chilled (full fat is best)

200g Dark Chocolate

1 tbsp golden syrup

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200c/180c fan/gas 6. Crush the biscuits to crumbs in a bowl using the end of a rolling pin or pop them in a food processor. Mix in the cocoa powder, flour, syrup and enough vegan margarine to create a dough. Butter a 23cm loose bottom tart tin and press the mixture in to the base of the tin, then going up the sides to cover the whole of the inside of the tin.

2. Bake in the oven for 10-12 mins, then set aside to cool in the tin
3. While the base is cooling make the filling. Open the cans of coconut milk which will have separated with the water at the top of the thick coconut at the bottom. Remove the water (I like to keep it to make a smoothie with or add it to a curry for extra flavour) and tip the thick coconut in to a bowl.
4. Break the dark chocolate into pieces and melt in the microwave on high in 10 second bursts, stirring in between (it's easy to burn chocolate in the microwave so don't be tempted to put it on for longer than 10 second bursts) once smooth, add the coconut along with the golden syrup and whisk together, beating hard until there are no lumps of coconut left.
5. Pour the filling over the base of the tart and put in the fridge to set for 3-4 hours or over night

The beauty of this recipe is you can make it 2 or 3 days in advance and leave it in the fridge, it actually tastes better on day 2 or 3 than it does on the day you made it. I like to make it a bit of a centre piece by adding raspberries, dark chocolate curls and edible glitter spray.