



It's always a challenge with this mailer not to make our themes too seasonal. We are always trying to figure out more universal ideas that have the widest possible application. That said since our earliest days together, Paul and I have always prided ourselves on being Olympic-level competitors in this month's theme (or 'Event' if you like) which is the '100m Freestyle Couch Potato.' After all, what's better than an elite squad of friends invited over for a lazy evening of DVDs or boardgames and a delicious meal served on a comfy couch or on the floor.

Now since Joseph has given us the best ever excuse to stay home a lot more, we have had to innovate loads more Couch-Cuisine to keep meals interesting, flavourful, wholesome and healthy. We hope that you will agree that this month's recipe mailer sports a serious array of great excuses to call in the friends, open a bottle of wine and hit the sofa. For those of you in the northern hemisphere, at this time of year we suggest skipping the fire.

Enjoy!

Tracy



eat. drink. live.

flavour files

thyme



Although delicate in appearance, Thyme will add a heavenly fragrance and flavour to your cooking. It is perfectly suited to chicken, lamb, potatoes, tomatoes and mushrooms. Lemon thyme is also delicious with fish! In French cuisine, it forms part of the classic Herbes de Provence and along with sprigs of parsley and bay leaves it forms a part of the bouquet garni used to flavour stocks, stews and soups. It also partners beautifully with sumac to form part of the Middle Eastern spice blend Za'tar, which is actually the Arabic word for thyme.

Like Oreganum, Thyme retains its flavour on drying better than most other herbs. Dried thyme needs to be kept in a tightly sealed container in a cool, dark, dry environment. Store fresh thyme in the refrigerator wrapped in a slightly damp towel. With over sixty varieties to choose from such as the common French thyme, lemon thyme, orange thyme and silver thyme, try growing your own in a hot sunny spot with good-draining soil. It is one of the more tolerant and hardiest of herbs and is extremely forgiving even to a slightly dodgy gardener like me!

Thyme has been used since ancient times for its culinary, aromatic and medicinal properties. The ancient Egyptians used it as an embalming agent to preserve their deceased pharaohs to assure passage into the next life. Thyme was also a symbol of admiration to ancient Greeks who bestowed praise onto others by repeating the phrase "the smell of thyme". Thyme's association with bravery continued throughout medieval times when it was a ritual for women to give their knights a gift containing thyme to bring courage to the bearer. Fortunately today most of us don't spend our days riding into battle, but thyme should definitely give you courage in the kitchen!

cinnamon hot cocoa

- 4 tablespoons **NoMU cocoa powder**
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Sweet Rub**
- A pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup hot water
- 3 1/2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon **NoMU vanilla extract**

In a medium saucepan, combine the cocoa, sugar, Sweet Rub and salt. Stir in the water and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly for 2 minutes. Gradually stir in the milk and continue to heat until heated through, stirring frequently. Do not boil. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla extract.

Serve in your favourite mugs.

Serves 4

TIP: It pays to adjust sweetness to taste and you can also add a shot of brandy when it feels like the right thing to do



roast tomato soup



- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 kg plum tomatoes, halved
- 1 onion (or 2 shallots), thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and halved
- 6 marinated sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 tsp thyme leaves
- 1 tsp sugar
- A pinch of **NoMU Provençal Rub**
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**
- 500ml good quality chicken or veggie stock
- A handful of basil leaves

Pre-heat your oven to 200°C.

Place all the ingredients, except for the stock and basil leaves, in a roasting tin and toss well to coat everything in oil. Roast for 20 – 30 minutes until everything is nicely caramelized, stirring once or twice in between. Remove from the oven and tip everything into a large saucepan. Add the stock and basil and simmer for 10 minutes.

Pour carefully into a food processor or blender and whiz until smooth. You may need to do this in batches. Return the soup to a clean saucepan and re-heat if necessary.

Serve in warm bowls with a dollop of fromage frais or mascarpone, freshly cracked black pepper and griddled country bread or freshly baked focaccia. (Recipe Mailer # 31).

Serves 6

WINE SUGGESTIONS: *Glen Carlou's Tortoise Hill Red*. A great blend which picked up a stack of awards recently but didn't let them go to its head. Well priced and perfect for lunch.

roasted butternut, taleggio and sage risotto



- 1 butternut cut into 2cm cubes
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- salt & pepper to taste
- 30g butter
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 300g Arborio rice
- 250ml white wine
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 1 handful fresh sage leaves
- 1tsp **NoMU One for All Grinder**
- 200g soft, young Taleggio cheese
(Mature Taleggio is too hard)

Preheat the oven to 180°C

Place the butternut on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil, season with salt and pepper and roast in the oven till tender and caramelised.

Over a medium heat, gently sauté finely chopped onion in olive oil and butter in a heavy based pot or saucepan until soft and translucent, but not browned. Add some garlic followed by the rice and cook until the grains of rice have become translucent around the edges. Add the wine and simmer until all the alcohol has evaporated.

Turn down the heat and begin adding the stock one ladle at a time, only adding more once the rice has absorbed the liquid. Season during cooking, but be careful not to add too much salt if your stock is fairly salty.

After approximately 20 minutes of stirring and adding stock, your rice should be cooked. Keep tasting the rice throughout the cooking process until the rice has become tender.

Follow the risotto method and fold in the sage leaves, butternut and nutmeg towards the end of cooking.

Just before serving the risotto fold in the ripped or cubed Taleggio which will gently melt into the risotto. Season with freshly ground pepper and serve immediately in warmed bowls.

Note: If you can't find Taleggio, a young brie, rind removed, is just as delicious.

WINE SUGGESTIONS: Bring on a rich, butterscotchy *Marklew Chardonnay* to match your creamy risotto. Gorgeous.

prawn pilau

- 1 tbsp Sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 "thumb" of ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 tsp **NoMU Indian Rub**
- 1 tsp **NoMU Masala Rub**
- 500ml good chicken stock, heated
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves
- 1 cup Basmati Rice
- 16-20 large de-veined prawns in the shell
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**

Pre-heat your oven to 200°C.

In an oven-proof pan, gently sauté the onion in the oil and butter until soft and translucent. Add the garlic, ginger, Indian and Masala Rub and fry for 2 minutes. Add the rice and fry for another minute, coating the grains of rice in the spicy oil.

Pour in the stock and quickly arrange the prawns on top in a concentric circle. Place a circle of wax or baking paper over the pan with a hole in the centre for steam to escape. Place in the oven and bake for 15 minutes until the rice is tender and the liquid has been absorbed.

Delicious served with Butter Naan (Recipe Mailer # 11).



coppa, artichoke and olive pizza



- 1 ball of pizza dough
(Recipe mailer # 18)
- 5 tbsp prepared **NoMU Tomato & Chilli STIR**
- 6 slices Coppa (Italian Ham)
- 2 marinated artichoke hearts,
sliced into quarters
- 6 sun-dried tomatoes
- 12 pipped black olives
- A large handful of grated
mozzarella cheese
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**
- A drizzle of extra virgin olive oil
- Roughly chopped Italian parsley

Pizza is synonymous with staying in! When you order take-away pizza however, it's almost always ice cold by the time it gets to you or the entire pizza is scrunched up in one side of the box because the driver went round a corner too fast on his scooter! It's FAR more fun making your own and everybody can choose their own favourite combination. This is one of mine.

Tip: Instead of Coppa, you can use salami, bacon, pancetta or Parma ham.

Preheat your oven to the hottest available temperature.

Roll or spread your dough into a circle, no more than 1/2 cm thick. Place onto a lightly floured baking tray and spread evenly with the tomato STIR. Evenly arrange the coppa, artichoke hearts, sun-dried tomatoes and olives. Top with the mozzarella, season with salt & pepper and bake in the hot oven for 10-15 minutes until nicely browned and crispy.

Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with Italian parsley and tuck in!

lemongrass and coconut curry

6 skinless, deboned free range chicken breasts
1 tin coconut milk
Sugar snap peas, halved lengthways
Baby corn, halved lengthways
A splash of sunflower or peanut oil

marinade

2 shallots, roughly chopped
1 green chilli
1 stick of lemongrass, sliced
1 tbsp grated ginger
1 tbsp **NoMU Oriental Rub**
3 garlic cloves, crushed.

A large handful fresh coriander leaves & stalks
1 tbsp fish sauce
A squeeze of lime

At the risk of sounding repetitive, this is so easy to make and so delicious! With every mouthful you get a burst of Oriental flavours with a nice hint of chilli.

Cut the chicken breasts into bite-size pieces and place in a mixing bowl.

To make the marinade, simply put all the marinade ingredients into a food processor and whiz to a coarse paste. Pour over the chicken and leave to marinate for 30 minutes.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and pour in the chicken plus all the marinade. Quickly fry to seal and lightly colour the chicken. Before the marinade starts burning, pour in the tin of coconut milk and stir well.

Add the sugar snaps and corn and allow to simmer for 10 minutes until the chicken is just cooked.

Serve hot with bowls of jasmine rice.

WINE SUGGESTIONS: Ice cold *Tiger Beer* is all I need. But if you're not a beer fan, a saucy little *Fairview Viognier* should do the trick; its aromatic flavour complementing the Thai spices.



sicilian chicken on caponata

6 free range or organic chicken breasts
6 tbsp prepared **NoMU tomato & herb STIR**
A few glugs of Extra virgin olive oil
2 red peppers
2 yellow peppers
2 aubergine
12 baby marrows
3 celery spears
NoMU Veggie Rub
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper

Slice all the vegetables into bite-sized pieces.

Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over a relatively high heat and quickly fry the vegetables until they are nicely browned but not cooked all the way through. You may need to do this in batches if your pan is not big enough.

Place the vegetables in a baking dish, sprinkle with **NoMU Veggie Rub** and set aside. Rub the prepared tomato pesto over each chicken breast and season well. In the same pan, brown the chicken all over, before placing on top of the vegetables. Drizzle any remaining pesto over the vegetables.

Place in the oven and roast for 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and the skin is crispy.

Delicious served with oven balsamic roast potatoes (Recipe mailer # 7) or Pommes Dauphinoise (Recipe mailer # 10)

Serves 6

WINE SUGGESTIONS: *Warwick Wines Professor Black Sauvignon Blanc* – fresh, fruity and with enough acidity to meet the peppers in your caponata, head on!

warm mushroom, pine nut, chevre and spinach salad

These flavours just work so well together and it's a scrumptious option for vegetarians!

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp butter
3 cloves garlic, lightly smashed
250g of your favourite mushrooms, halved.
100g pine nuts
A few sprigs of thyme
Generous grindings of **NoMU One for All**
A squeeze of lemon
4 handfuls of washed baby spinach
100g plain chevre
(or any soft goat's cheese)

Begin by dividing your baby spinach leaves amongst four bowls.

In a large frying pan melt the butter with some olive oil.

Add the garlic cloves, mushrooms, pine nuts, thyme and **NoMU One for All** and fry until golden brown and just cooked.

Note: Keep the pan moving so that everything cooks evenly and not just on one side. Add a small squeeze of lemon and pour over the spinach.

Add chunks of goat's cheese and serve immediately while still warm.

TIP: Try sprinkling over some **NoMU Egyptian Dukkah** for added flavour and crunchiness





malva pudding

- 225g caster sugar
- 2 large organic eggs
- 1 tbsp smooth apricot jam
- 135g cake flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- A pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 cup full cream milk
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Sweet Rub** syrup
- 1 cup cream
- 100g unsalted butter
- ½ cup caster sugar
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tsp **NoMU vanilla extract**

Comfort food at it's best! This is a traditional South African dessert which is incredibly rich but worth every calorie!

Preheat your oven to 180°C. Lightly butter an oven-proof dish.

Using an electric mixer, beat the eggs and sugar until pale and fluffy. Add the jam and mix to combine. Add the vinegar to the melted butter and stir into the egg mixture alternating with the milk and the sifted flour, baking powder, salt and bicarb. Beat well.

Pour into your prepared dish and bake for 45-55 minutes. The cake needs to be completely dry, so rather overcook it than undercook it so that it can absorb all the syrup.

Remove from the oven and prick the cake all over with a fork or skewer and pour over the syrup. Leave to cool slightly before serving with warm home-made vanilla custard (Recipe mailer # 2).

To make the syrup simply place all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil over medium heat, stirring well to dissolve the sugar.

coffee, chocolate and walnut cake

- 250g butter
- 250g demerara sugar
- 4 large organic eggs
- 1 tsp **NoMU vanilla extract**
- 50 ml espresso coffee
- 250g cake flour
- 1 level tbsp baking powder
- 200g walnuts
- 200g **NoMU hot chocolate chunks**
- coffee buttercream icing**
- 200g softened unsalted butter
- 300g icing sugar
- 3 tbsp **very** strong espresso coffee

Preheat your oven to 180°C. Butter a non-stick 23cm spring-form tin and line the base with parchment paper.

Toast the walnuts on a baking tray in the oven until lightly golden. Cool and chop fairly finely.

Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, followed by the vanilla and coffee. Don't be concerned if it appears "curdled".

Add the sifted flour and baking powder and mix well. Fold in the walnuts and the chocolate. Pour into the cake tin and bake for 1½ hours. To test if it is cooked pierce the centre of the cake with a skewer. If it comes out without any wet cake mixture on it, it is ready. Leave to cool before icing.

Cream the butter and icing sugar until pale and light in texture. Add the coffee and mix well to incorporate.



beef bourguignon

- 2 kg beef shin, cut into large bite-size pieces
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**
- 1 cup flour
- A few glugs of olive oil
- 50g butter
- 200g smoked bacon or pancetta (optional)
- 12 shallots, whole, peeled
- 2 stick of celery, sliced
- 3 carrots, peeled and sliced in ½ on the diagonal
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp ground **NoMU One For All**
- 750ml bottle of scrumptious full-bodied red wine
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- mushrooms**
- 1 tbsp butter
- 150g whole button or chestnut mushrooms
- A splash of brandy

Everybody needs a great, basic stew in the repertoire!

Preheat your oven to 160°C.

Season the beef and dust with flour, shaking off the excess. In a heavy based, oven-proof casserole dish, brown the meat **very** well. Do this in batches so that the meat browns beautifully and does not stew. It is this caramelization that will add tons of flavour to the finished dish! Remove from the pot and set aside.

In the same pot, add the butter and gently sauté the shallots, bacon if using, celery, carrots and garlic. Stir in the One For All and a handful of fresh thyme leaves. Return the beef and it's juices to the pot, followed by the wine. Season with salt & pepper. Stir in the tomato paste, cover with a lid and bring to the boil before placing into the oven for 3 hours.

In a pan, melt the butter and sauté the mushrooms until just cooked and golden brown. Flambé with a splash of brandy and add to the casserole.

Serve in warmed bowls with creamy mashed potato, a sprinkling of chopped Italian parsley and more scrumptious red wine!

Serves 6-8

WINE SUGGESTIONS: *Glen Carlou's Tortoise Hill Red*. A great blend which picked up a stack of awards recently but didn't let them go to its head. Well priced and perfect for lunch.



contributor of the month

This month's wine pairing has been offered up by Stefan Gates, author and presenter of the brand new BBC series 'COOKING IN THE DANGER ZONE'. Stefan has graciously taken time out from his preferred pastimes of dodging mines, attempting kickboxing diet routines with Fijian princesses and evading Communist party handlers in China to talk to farmers to share his wine pairing thoughts with us for our far more docile dishes, best enjoyed from the relative safety of the couch! We will be giving away three copies of Stefan's fantastic new book in next month's draw.

