



This month's mailer comes to you all the way from paradise! Paul and I are on honeymoon in the Maldives getting some much needed R&R and spending our days diving with millions of fish, sharks, rays, Moray Eels and turtles. The only problem is that I've become rather attached to our Piscean friends - a few nights ago I was served a whole reef fish for dinner and found that I simply could not bring myself to tuck in until I'd covered his/her face with the garnish! So, I'm afraid, I give you my best fillet of beef recipe instead! The following recipes are perfect for a lazy summer's lunch.

SPICE FILES

It's hard to think of any dish that wouldn't benefit from a pinch or two of black pepper. This pungent little berry comes from a woody vine that's native to India. Black, green and white pepper is actually the same fruit, harvested at different times and processed in different ways.

In ancient times, this seemingly ordinary spice was so highly prized that it was used to pay taxes and ransoms, and became a huge catalyst for the spice trade, resulting in the discovery of many new lands.

Not only does pepper add flavour, but it also stimulates the taste buds, improves digestion and (the very best part) stimulates the breakdown of fat cells, keeping you slim. Look out for heavy peppercorns that are free of blemishes, and grind them yourself at the very end of the cooking process, so that they don't lose any flavour.



RECIPES



post-marinated fillet of beef

I used to spend ages preparing various marinades in which to soak my meat before grilling or BBQing, but would always end up with little pieces of garlic and herb charcoal. So I've decided to start post-marinating instead - and the results are truly delicious!

1.5kg mature fillet of beef

Marinade:

- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 heaped tbsp Maille Dijon Mustard
- 2 shallots, sliced paper thin
- A handful of fresh rosemary and thyme, roughly chopped
- 2-3 garlic cloves, peeled & chopped
- 1 red chilli, seeds removed and finely chopped
- A small squeeze of fresh lemon (or dash of balsamic if you prefer)
- 1 tsp **NoMU Beef Rub**
- NoMU Just Salt**
- NoMU Just Pepper**

Begin by placing all the marinade ingredients in a small saucepan and gently heat to cook the garlic and infuse all the flavours. Set aside.

Lightly brush the fillet with olive oil and sear on all sides on a hot griddle pan or BBQ. Turn regularly to ensure even cooking, but do not overcook! (Note: The fillet must still be very rare in the middle as it will continue to cook while it rests.)

Remove from the heat and place in a small dish. Pour over the marinade and leave to rest for at least 15 minutes, turning the meat once or twice to distribute the flavour.

Place the thinly sliced fillet onto a platter and season well with freshly ground salt and loads of pepper. Drizzle the marinade over the fillet and serve with peppery wild rocket and shavings of parmesan.

- TIP 1:** If you'd like to eat it at room temperature, you can cook and marinate it hours in advance. The longer the better!
- TIP 2:** If shallots are not available you can use red onions instead.

moroccan chickpeas

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 onion finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp **NoMU Moroccan Rub**
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- A squeeze of lemon
- A large handful of roughly chopped Italian parsley and/or coriander

Sauté the onion in the olive oil until translucent. Add the garlic and Moroccan Rub and sauté for another 2 minutes. Add the chickpeas and gently toss and stir to ensure that they are heated through and completely coated in the aromatic oil. Add a squeeze of lemon and the herbs. Season well, toss again and serve warm or at room temperature.

TIP: Alternatively, for a delicious dip or spread, smash the chickpeas with a fork or pulse lightly in a processor, adding a few more glugs of olive oil as you go.





fine bean & mint salad

500g fine green beans
 1 shallot, very finely sliced
 1 garlic clove, sliced paper thin
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 ¼ cup vinaigrette (see recipe below)
 A handful of fresh mint

Place the finely sliced shallot, garlic and vinaigrette in a bowl and leave for 15 minutes to infuse the vinaigrette and soften the onion and garlic.

Trim the stalks of the beans and blanch in boiling salted water for 2-3 minutes. Drain and plunge immediately into ice-cold water to refresh. (Note: I usually throw in a tray or two of ice-cubes to make absolutely sure that the beans stay bright green and crunchy.) Once cooled, drain well, pat dry and add to the bowl. Season well with salt and pepper before adding the mint and tossing well to ensure everything is thoroughly coated.

Place on a beautiful platter and serve immediately.

chocolate guinness cake

225g butter, softened
 350g brown sugar
 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
 225g plain flour
 ½ tsp baking powder
 2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
 400ml Guinness beer
 100g **NoMU Cocoa Powder**

Pre-heat your oven to 180°C. Butter and line a 20-25cm cake tin with greaseproof paper. Cream the butter and sugar until pale and creamy. Slowly add the beaten eggs, mixing well to incorporate.

Sift together the flour, baking powder and bicarb.

Stir the cocoa powder into the Guinness. (Strange I know, but trust me!)

Bit by bit, alternating between the two, add the flour and the stout mixture to the egg mixture, mixing well until completely combined.

Spoon into the tin and bake for 1-1¼ hours or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out fairly clean. The top will begin to crack but the cake should still be moist inside. Remove from the oven and leave to rest for 10 minutes before turning out on a wire rack to cool. Once completely cooled, drizzle the top with ganache (see recipe below). Serve with fresh berries, berry coulis or slow roasted, caramelized quinces. Alternatively home-made vanilla ice-cream from Recipe Mailer #3 will always do the trick!



ganache

200g dark or white chocolate
 (depending on which you prefer)
 200ml fresh cream
 15g butter, chilled

Place the cream and chocolate in a bowl over a pot of simmering water and gently heat, stirring occasionally, until all the chocolate has melted. Remove from the heat and whisk in the chilled butter.

BACK TO BASICS

classic vinaigrette

An absolute necessity in any kitchen! A classic vinaigrette will keep refrigerated for 3-4 weeks, but please note that by adding fresh ingredients such as herbs, garlic or onion, you're shortening the shelf-life. Try drizzling over hot, just boiled new potatoes - seriously yummy!

1 cup of good quality extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
 1 tbsp Maille Dijon Mustard
 ½ tsp caster sugar
NoMU Just Salt
NoMU Just Pepper
 (set the grinder on the fine grind setting)

Place all the ingredients in a blender or processor and blend until well combined. Adjust the seasoning if necessary. Place in a clean or sterilized bottle and keep refrigerated until needed.

TIP: If you do not have a blender, simply place the ingredients in a Tupperware or screw top jar and shake vigorously!

Experiment with other ingredients to create entirely new and exciting vinaigrettes. For example:

- Add a small clove of finely grated garlic or chopped shallots.
- Use balsamic vinegar instead of lemon juice.
- Add fresh herbs such as basil, Italian parsley, chives, oreganum, lemon thyme or tarragon.
- Use a drizzle of honey instead of the sugar and wholegrain mustard instead of Dijon.
- Substitute the lemon juice with verjuice and replace half the olive oil with walnut oil.
- Use lime juice instead of lemon juice, add a dash of soy sauce, a finely chopped chilli and an inch of grated ginger.

