

Recipes for December

Ottolenghi's Celeriac and Beet Bake

My god this is good—I'm in love with Ottolenghi's recipes!

500ml double cream
1 medium onion, peeled and quartered
20g thyme sprigs, leaves picked but also keep the stems
2 bay leaves
6 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
Shaved skin of 1 large lemon
8 whole cloves
Salt and white pepper
4-5 medium beetroots (700g), boiled, peeled and sliced 2mm thick
1 large 900g celeriac, peeled and sliced widthways 2mm thick
250g extra mature cheddar, grated

Pour the cream into a medium saucepan and add the onion, thyme, bay, garlic, lemon skin, cloves, a teaspoon of salt and a teaspoon of white pepper. Gently bring the cream to a boil, then remove from the heat. Set aside to infuse for at least 10 minutes, then strain.

Scatter a third of the beetroot and celeriac on the base of a baking dish or high-sided roasting tray. Pour over a few spoonfuls of cream and sprinkle a third of the cheese and thyme leaves on top. Arrange another layer of vegetables followed by a little cream and another third of the cheese and thyme. Place the final layer of vegetables on top, pour over the remaining cream, holding back the last of the cheese and thyme leaves, and gently press down to level.

Cover with foil and bake for 50 minutes in 180c oven. Reduce the temperature to 160c remove the foil and bake for 20 minutes more. Sprinkle over the last of the cheese and thyme, and bake for another 15 minutes, until the cheese is golden brown and the vegetables are cooked through. Leave to sit in a warm place for five to 10 minutes before serving.

And three ideas for what to do with red cabbage this Christmas!

Braised Red Cabbage and Apple

1 small red cabbage, finely sliced

1 Bramley apple, peeled, cored and grated
25g butter
1 large onion, finely sliced
1/2 tsp allspice
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
4 Tbsp red wine vinegar
2 Tbsp light muscovado sugar
2 Tbsp red currant jelly

Melt butter in a sauce pan and saute onion until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in spices and then add cabbage, apple, vinegar, sugar and 100 ml of cold water and stir until sugar is dissolved; season mixture generously with sea salt and pepper. Cover and simmer until cabbage is very soft and liquid has evaporated, about an hour. Stir in red currant jelly until dissolved and serve!

Red Cabbage in Balsamic vinegar

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 small head red cabbage, thinly sliced
1 onion, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon dried marjoram, crumbled
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add cabbage, onion, garlic and marjoram and cook until cabbage and onion are tender, stirring occasionally, about 50 minutes. Stir in balsamic vinegar. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be prepared up to 3 hours ahead. Cover skillet and let stand at room temperature.

and here's an interesting one, with walnuts

Warm Red Cabbage Salad

1 small red cabbage
1 apple
1 clove garlic
1 Tbls balsamic vinegar
2 1/2 tsp olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced
3 to 4 oz goat cheese crumbled

1 Tbsp parsley
1/2 tsp marjoram
15 - 20 walnuts
2 tsp walnut oil

Toss walnuts in walnut oil and season with salt and pepper, then toast in the oven at 180c for 5 - 7 minutes until they give off a nice nutty aroma. Cut cabbage and apple into thin strips/slices. Put garlic, vinegar and olive oil in a wide saute pan or wok and fry onions until just softening, add cabbage and continue to cook stirring for about 2 minutes until cabbage has wilted. Season with plenty of sea salt and black pepper and more vinegar if necessary. Add goat cheese, apple, herbs and walnuts and gently toss.