

# BEYOND THE SMOOTHIE

*Papaya Recipes for  
Every Occasion*

*by Hennie Fisher*





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Chef Hennie Fisher

# Foreword

Most of us think of papayas only as a component of breakfast, or as a key ingredient in a delicious smoothie. However, even though it is the ideal breakfast fruit, being refreshing, invigorating, and not overly sweet, it has much, much more to offer. This recipe book sets out to show that papaya has places to go beyond the smoothie.

Sometimes mistakenly referred to as pawpaw or papaw, the difference lies in that papaya has orange to red flesh and is narrower in shape, while the flesh of the pawpaw is yellow and it is generally larger and rounder than papaya ([www.taste.com.au](http://www.taste.com.au)). Papaya differs from the North American pawpaw (*Asimina triloba* Dunal), which is a member of the family Annonaceae (Singh and Rao 2011).

The book came into being when papaya farmer Willem Schmidt of Neofresh approached me to develop some recipes featuring papaya for the Neofresh website. After many months of creating new recipes to celebrate papayas, I have come to understand the fruit intimately. As a fruit often relegated to the breakfast table, where it is served very successfully with muesli and a drizzle of honey, it took some time to find papaya's true potential. Because it has a high moisture content, like melon or watermelon, it is suitable for certain uses, yet not appropriate for others.

Adding papaya to a fruit salad makes perfect sense, however, using it in a fruit mousse may pose problems because of its high moisture content. Personally, the fruit's savoury nature made it work well in any type of salad, while its relatively low sugar content posed some challenges in recipe development. Cooking with papaya also posed considerable challenges. Many fruits benefit from being cooked. However, fresh ripe papaya just does not like being cooked and would transform into a purée that could just as well have been made



with orange-fleshed pumpkin, or some other generic fruit with low acidity and sugar levels. Nevertheless, it has been shown that freshly cut papaya compared to other fruits that are cut and then stored, only deteriorate slightly – it is not chilling sensitive and can be stored for about 8–10 days at 4–5 °C (Singh and Rao 2011).

Despite these challenges, papaya turned out to be a very satisfying product to work with and presented with some inventive ideas. My experiments with the fruit and dealing with its complexities, such as its moisture content, provided many innovative possibilities. I learnt that one could drain the fruit purée to make a fruit leather that I used to wrap an entire cake in; this turned out to be an easy and delicious way to use over-ripe fruit that may have otherwise gone to waste.

The fruit tends to ripen fairly quickly. Generally, when you purchase it in a shop it is mostly perfectly ripe, meaning that after a day or two on the shelf at home one can already see it becoming too ripe. The caveat is, therefore, to use it sooner rather than later, but please do not discard it if it may have over ripened – there are numerous recipes in this book using very ripe papayas. The aim of this book is to encourage consumers to eat more papaya, since research shows that in some regions as much as 30–60 per cent of papaya is lost due to post-harvest losses along the market chain. The main reasons



include fungal diseases, physiological disorders, mechanical damage (Evans and Ballen 2012), and others such as water loss and chilling injury (Singh and Rao 2011).

To me, papaya is equally at home in savoury dishes as their obvious use in sweet dishes. However, a major concern is that papaya does not respond well to being cooked, since its flesh resembles pumpkin purée in both texture and taste.

South African papaya farmers appear reluctant to trade in green papayas, which has for a long time been a staple in the East. Green papayas are delicious and work equally well fresh or cooked. They are perfect raw, in salads, combined with sharp, interesting dressings, and in cooked dishes they absorb their surrounding flavours. Try out a few such recipes from this book.

To summarise, the book started out as a response to the papaya farmer who needed some innovative recipes to feature on the Neofresh website. However, as my curiosity for the product developed, I took up the challenge to use papaya in as many applications as one would be able to use apple, peach, or apricot.



I began my academic career by obtaining a BSc (Hons) from the University of Pretoria. I probably never saw myself working in a laboratory and soon after graduating made a 180-degree career change and enrolled at the Cordon Bleu School for an Advanced Cookery Diploma. After obtaining my cookery diploma, I spent several years working in the industry, starting under Shaun Hill at Gidleigh Park on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, Devon; at The Wilds in London; at Lucy's Restaurant in Hong Kong, and later at Sirocco in Gerhard Moerdyk Village. After working for others, I opened a modern Pan-African restaurant called Mufuti–Prince of Wales' Feather in Riviera with AB Heyns. At some stage I realised that I love the academic side of food and consequently obtained my Master's and PhD degrees from the Department of Consumer and Food Sciences at the University of Pretoria where I have been teaching Culinary Arts since 2006.

Publishing a book is a major task for anybody. What if it is totally horrible? Who will read it? Will people understand your way of explaining recipe methods? Well, all I can say is here it is, and I sincerely hope that you will enjoy this book, prepare some recipes from it, and more than anything else, I hope you look at papaya as more than just something to put in your smoothie.

If, for some reason you are not a fan of eating papaya, consider papaya's scientifically proven therapeutic potential against ageing. Fermented papaya preparation (FPP) has shown to cause a marked improvement in skin quality and integrity in treated patients (Bertuccelli et al. 2016; Nafiu et al. 2019).

***Enjoy!***



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# Background

## Let's meet the papaya

Papaya, or more correctly *Carica papaya* L. (belonging to the family *Caricaceae* from *Carica* genus (Samaram et al. 2014)), is a large, oval, yellowish fruit with touches of green and pink, which offers many explored and also unexplored nutritional and health enhancing properties. As far as we know, the entire papaya plant – including its leaves, seeds, unripe fruit, ripe fruit, fruit juice, as well as the milky latex plant juice – has been used by man in some form. In a time when we are desperately grasping at cures for many unresolved human illnesses, papaya is classified as a nutraceutical fruit, because of its many multi-faceted medicinal properties (Milind and Gurditta 2011). Of course, most of us eat papaya for its delicious taste, however, it is comforting to know that it offers many other health benefits such as being an anti-fungal, anti-bacterial, anti-tumour, wound-healing (and many more) food. Its specific pharmacological properties include antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, immunomodulatory, and antimicrobial (Nafiu et al. 2019).

## Origins and history

Even though the family *Caricaceae* has about 48 species, only *Carica papaya* (*Carica papaya* L.) produces fruits that are generally eaten (Mitra et al. 2017). The origins of papaya cannot be determined exactly, since the Spanish distributed it quite widely during their explorations of the world, perhaps because of its capacity to adapt to subtropical and tropical conditions (Fuentes and Santamaría 2013). However, strong evidence also exists that papaya may well have originated from Mesoamerica, as some populations of specific wild species have been found in remote areas of Mexico and Central America (Fuentes and Santamaría 2013). Papaya has also been found in Southern Mexico as well as in the Andes in South America. It was the Spanish explorer Christopher Columbus who translocated

the papaya to Europe and the Pacific islands (Milind and Gurditta 2011). There are, however, also references to papaya reaching Manila in the mid-sixteenth century, and shortly thereafter, Malacca (Chan and Tang 2012). Today, papaya is successfully cultivated across the globe as well as in South Africa.

## Types or variants of papayas

Within the papaya domain, there are many types and varieties. These include beautifully named cultivars such as Kamiha, Solo, Mexican Red, Mexican Yellow, Sunrise Solo, Sunset Solo, Vista Solo (Milind and Gurditta 2011) and others such as Khaek Dam, Khaek Nuan, Dampit, Caribbean Red, Maradol, Royal, Singapore Pink, Higgins and many more. Many of these have been selectively bred to foreground specific characteristics, however, there are also still some quirky ones around, such as the Berry PawPaw in the image below.



Credit: Reddit. How to grow the oak leafed papaya. (r/Caudex)

The papaya is described as a “large herbaceous dictyledonous plant” with a single stem which culminates at the top with a crown of large “palmately lobed leaves”. It is in fact classified as a herb because of its hollow, non-woody stem (Nafiu et al. 2019). It is understood that most trees are branchless with ‘flowers borne in modified cymose inflorescences which appear at the leaf axis just below the growing point’ (Chan and Tang 2012: 33). Papaya trees are either male, female, or bisexual (called dioecious or hermaphroditic). The flowers of the male tree are small, and found on long down-hanging stalks, while unopened female tree flowers are pear shaped and those of bisexual trees are cylindrical (Milind and Gurditta 2011). ‘Sex expression in papaya is strongly influenced by genotype and climatic conditions. Male and hermaphrodite flowers may undergo sex reversal and morphological changes under the influence of environmental conditions’ (Singh and Rao 2011: 87). However, true hermaphrodites, referred to as monoecious plants, are considered to have been cultivated as a result of adaptation after being introduced to different regions of the world, to the extent that some species of *C. papaya* have evolved to become gynodioecious plants. This means that they have female organs on some plants and hermaphrodite organs on others, while others have evolved into andromonoecious plants, meaning that they have both male and hermaphrodite organs on the same plant (Nafiu et al. 2019).

### Geography – growing conditions – planting/farming

Papaya is the third most cultivated tropical crop in the world. Although Mexico is the main exporter of papayas, Brazil and India are the largest producers (Chávez-Pesqueira and Núñez-Farfán 2017). This commercially and back-yard produced fruit generally grows between 30°N and 40°S, even though commercial production is mainly contained in a circumferential region around the equator from 25°N to 25°S (Mitra et al. 2017). The growth of papayas and pawpaws is adversely affected when the minimum daily temperature falls below 11 °C. Papayas achieve optimum growth and development during hot summer months when as much as two and a half new

leaves can be produced per week (Allan 2000). If you live in an area of South Africa where the papaya trees do not die during the colder winter months, you should seriously consider planting a few. Under cultivated conditions, papaya trees grow fast and can continuously produce mature fruits within nine to twelve months after planting (Chávez-Pesqueira and Núñez-Farfán 2017), while ripe papaya fruits can be harvested approximately five to six months after flowering (Daagama et al. 2020).

Even though the history of the introduction of papaya to South Africa is uncertain, the Spanish chronicler Oviedo first described it in 1526. Oviedo found papaya on the coasts of Panama and Colombia, from where Spanish and Portuguese sailors took the seeds to the Philippines, Malaysia, and India (Daagama et al. 2020), making one think that they may have rounded the Cape on their voyages. After being brought from tropical America to the Caribbean and South-East Asia during the Spanish exploration in the sixteenth century, papaya quickly spread to India, Oceania, and Africa, including South Africa (Nafiu et al. 2019; Verheij and Coronel 1992). How the fruit came to South Africa is not certain. However, during the 1940s, Hofmeyer introduced ‘Hortus Gold’ to South Africa as part of a government-funded breeding programme. Unfortunately, the mother material did not survive and the breeding programme was terminated (Mitra et al. 2017). Connolly (2008) explains that in the 1970s, Hopkins introduced the name “*papino*” as a brand name for all the smaller Solo types, considered to be the oldest variety of papaya (Nafiu et al. 2019). Connolly furthermore states that *papino* has become the common name for papaya in South Africa, although I do not fully subscribe to this statement. Villegas (1997) provides us with other interesting vernacular names; apparently it is also called a melon tree in the English language, while the French refer to it as *Papayer*, *arbre de melon*. In Indonesia it goes under the name papaya, *gedang* in Sundanese, and *kates* in Java. The Malaysians refer to it as papaya, *betek* or *ketalah*; the Filipinos use papaya, *kapaya* or *lapaya*; in Burma it is known as *thimbaw*; in Cambodia as *lhong* or *doeum lahong*, and in Laos as *houng*. Thailand central calls papaya



*malakor*; peninsular Thailand calls it *loko*, and Northern Thailand calls it *ma kuai thet*; while in Vietnam it is rather delightfully known as du du (Verheij and Coronel 1991).

### Storage and shelf life

Papayas are quick ripening fruits, meaning that their distribution must be a nightmare for farmers. If left outside the fridge, they turn from just-ripe to over-ripe in a matter of days. Papaya fruits are also not all the same. The *Sekaki* papaya from Malaysia has firm red flesh and low sugar content, but has limited export potential and is, therefore, mostly only available in local markets (Samaram et al. 2014). Even though it is not desirable to use very ripe papayas for dishes such as the carpaccio in this book, over-ripe papayas can be used to make fruit leather and other products. One could extend a papaya's shelf life by keeping it in the fridge, although eventually they turn spotty and dehydrate. When the papaya reaches this stage, resist the urge to throw it out and rather use it to make any of the cooked recipes in this book, such as the chutney or ketchup. Ripe papaya is used commercially to manufacture a variety of products, such as jams, jellies, nectars, ice cream and canned and dried fruit (Singh and Rao 2011). Papaya is also used as an important source of non-vitamin nutritional supplements (Nafiu et al. 2019).

In South Africa, ripe papaya fruits are dipped into a fungicide bath to reduce postharvest decay after picking. Once they are sorted, a wax is applied to maintain the healthy appearance of the papaya fruits before they are packed into crates for storage in the ripening rooms and finally moved to facilities where they are pre-packed for specific supermarkets (Connolly 2008). During the sorting process in South Africa, papayas are classified into various grades. Fruits classified as third grade are sent to produce fruit juice, second grade fruits are mostly sold to informal or street vendors, and first class fruit are sent to a ripening facility where they spend time in temperature and humidity controlled chambers (Connolly 2008).





Green papaya is another matter altogether. Unless you have your own tree, they are infamously difficult to buy in South Africa from any business other than greengrocers specialising in Indian vegetables. Like ripe papayas, they also wilt fairly quickly, meaning that they should ideally be used right after being picked. However, their uses are unlimited and there are numerous Asian recipes featuring green papaya. When cooked, green papaya is soft, while retaining a pleasantly firm and somewhat foamy texture. However, green papaya is most adept at taking on the surrounding flavours of the dish in which it is being used, such as vegetarian curries or stews. In the Middle Belt region of Nigeria, the Tiv tribe of the Benue State process unripe papaya fruits into chips or flakes (Daagema et al. 2020). Commercially, green papaya is also used to manufacture candies and fermented products (Singh and Rao 2011).

### Consumption

Papaya has become popular over the past few decades and is now the third most popular tropical fruit in the world. With a production ranging between 11- and 12.7 million tonnes (in 2014), it lags behind only mango and pineapple. India is reportedly the largest producer of papaya and contributes 25 per cent of the total world production (Mishra et al. 2007). For many developing countries, papaya has become a major export commodity and between 2007 and 2009, the top three exporting continents together (Asia, South America, and Africa) accounted for around 63 per cent of the total global

exports of papaya, as well as an annual growth rate of around 4.35 per cent (Evans and Ballen 2012).

### Papaya health

Of the common fruits that can be consumed daily, papaya ranks amongst the highest on nutritional scores for the percentage of vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, folate, niacin, thiamine, riboflavin, iron, calcium, and fibre (Chávez-Pesqueira and Núñez-Farfán 2017). Papaya is the only fruit containing all the essential amino acids and is rich in antioxidants. Furthermore, the vitamins in papaya are nutritionally superior when compared to many cereals and leguminous crops, and compared with bananas, apples and oranges, they have a higher protein and fat content (Daagema et al. 2020). Even though papayas consist mostly of water and carbohydrates, they are also low in calories.

Apart from the previously mentioned natural vitamins and minerals, papaya is also rich in ascorbic acid and potassium (Silva et al. 2007). For around 100 g of edible portion of papaya, the following approximate contents are: water 86.6 g, protein 0.5 g, fat 0.3 g, carbohydrates 12.1 g, fibre 0.7 g, ash 0.5 g, potassium 204 mg, calcium 34 mg, phosphorus 11 mg, iron 1 mg, sodium 3 mg, vitamin A 450 mg, vitamin C 74 mg, thiamine 0.03 mg, niacin 0.5 mg, and riboflavin 0.04 mg (Verheij and Coronel 1991).



Even the papaya milk latex has been shown to have excellent antibacterial properties, and the Malay people used leaves and extracts from the young fruit to eradicate intestinal worms and to treat boils. In Mauritius, the smoke from dried papaya leaves is used to relieve asthma attacks (Milind and Gurditta 2011), and in Indonesia, the latex is used to curdle water buffalo milk to make *dangke* cheese. The main component in the milky latex is papain, which has many industrial uses, such as the production of chewing gum, chill-proofing beer, and producing meat tenderisers, among others (Daagama et al. 2020). In Java, a sweetmeat is made from the flowers, while the young leaves are also sometimes eaten (Verheij and Coronel 1991).

In a traditional medicinal context, Vijay Yogiraj et al. (2014) write that papaya is used as a natural pain reliever, while a papaya paste was used to relieve burns, cuts, rashes, and stings. Papaya can be used to help against heartburn and indigestion, and the fruit's proteolytic enzymes and other compounds, including a substance called carpaine, are effective against intestinal worms and other parasites. It reduces swelling, fever, and adhesions after surgery, and is used

as a disinfectant as well as an anti-ulcer medicine. Papaya is used in treating celiac disease and Crohn's disease. Furthermore, papaya seeds are used as vermifuges, the leaves are used to dress wounds and injuries, and the papain in papaya aids in thinning blood and inhibits clotting.

In some countries, tea made from papaya leaves is consumed as protection against malaria. The seeds are excellent as a different version of pepper. The literature, however, does not indicate if it is necessary to remove the sarcotesta which envelops the seed before drying and consumption. When making seedlings, this is a necessary step as it inhibits germination, however, for food use it is uncertain if this process is necessary. Should you wish to do so, rub the seeds together against a fine-meshed screen or sieve under running water, dry them, and use in the same manner as whole peppercorns (Verheij and Coronel 1991). However, instances have also been recorded where peppercorns have been fraudulently adulterated with papaya seeds (Singh and Rao 2011).



# How to use this book

In this book, written over a period, including during the COVID-19 lockdown period, there may be slight oversights or inconsistencies in the recipes as a result of the protracted time-frame. Please let us know if you found such a problem.

In general, the recipes are for between four to six people, even though some of the cake recipes are for large cakes that could serve more than six.

Baking temperatures are for high-altitude baking, as all the recipes were conceptualised and tested in Gauteng, South Africa, which is at a high altitude.

For most of the recipes in this book, ripe papaya has been used; however, the ripeness of papaya can affect the sensory pleasure to be gained from a recipe. Although there are instances where very ripe papaya is suggested, generally the papayas used in recipes were ripe, but firm to the touch.

Sugar in most of the recipes implies granulated white sugar, unless otherwise stated.

Salt is always normal everyday table salt, however, feel free to use a higher quality salt if that is an important consideration for you, just be vigilant about the taste or flavour (saltiness) of the salt. Since certain salts are definitely saltier than others, it is wise to err on the side of caution – you can always add more.

Pepper is always freshly ground black whole pepper from a hand-held pepper mill, unless otherwise stated.

Onions are mostly large onions with the normal yellow-khaki outer skin, unless a recipe calls for a specific onion, such as spring onions, red onions, or even a white onion.

Eggs are normally large chicken eggs, and along with other ingredients for baking, at room temperature.

Blanching and refreshing means to dunk the ingredients into heavily boiling deep water, cooking it in that water until the desired doneness has been reached, and then immediately removed and placed in a bowl with iced water to cool, and then immediately removed as soon as the product is cold, and cooking has stopped.

In all recipes calling for lemon juice, only fresh lemon juice is used. Bottled lemon juice has a very particular taste that will not benefit your end product's taste.

In this recipe book “butter” mostly refers to normal salted butter – the author acknowledges the scientific and sensory intent of using unsalted butter. However, in a country where unsalted butter is often 25% more expensive, it does not seem to justify the cost.

Make garlic paste by peeling and finely chopping your garlic, then add a large pinch of salt. Use the tip of your knife (the flat side) and “smear” the garlic and salt together, so that the salt granules crush the garlic into a fine paste.

A concasse tomato means that the tomato is plunged into boiling water for around 10 seconds, removed and plunged into an ice bath. The tomato is then peeled, cut into quarters and the seeds

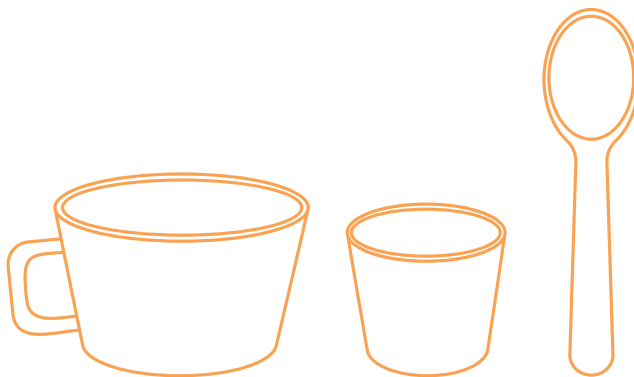
and “ribs” are removed. However, a “half” concasse tomato refers to only the removal of the skin and seeds of the tomato.

To brûlée an onion a dark brown colour, cut onion into halves or quarters. Then burn the onions in a medium hot pan without any fat.

To drain yoghurt place double cream unflavoured Greek yoghurt into a muslin lined sieve. Place the Greek yoghurt in the muslin lined sieve in another container. Then wrap this container in clingfilm and

leave in the fridge for a number of days, depending on the desired thickness of the drained yoghurt.

Most vanilla essences in South Africa are produced in a factory and may contain chemical compounds, as a consequence some readers might be opposed to using such a product. Therefore, if you are feeling flush, by all means use vanilla extract or pastes.



#### *Measurement considerations*

1 cup = 250 ml

½ cup = 125 ml

¼ cup = 62,5 ml

½ tsp = 2,5 ml

1 tsp = 5 ml

½ tbsp = 7,5 ml

1 tbsp = 15 ml





# Glossary

**Cornflour** is flour made from corn, NOT corn meal or *mealie meal*.

**Hock** is a knuckle of pork, which could be pickled, but not always smoked.

**Coloured chocolate**, as used in the bonbon recipes, could be just a little white chocolate that is coloured with special chocolate food colouring, however, it could also be cocoa butter that is coloured.

**Blood heat** refers to normal body temperature of a healthy human being, about 37 °C.

**Batons** – larger than julienne with sides around 3/4cm thick.





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# Starters and First Courses





# Feta Savoury Cheesecake



Most savoury cheesecakes are baked so that the eggs used in them can coagulate, creating a firm product that can be cut. This savoury cheesecake is not baked, but is rather a fridge cheesecake due to the papaya that is included. Papaya does not react well to heat, losing its elegant freshness. In this recipe, that freshness is retained along with delicious citrusy flavours, a bit of bite from onions and richness from cream cheese and feta.

If you make this recipe in a cake tin, it can be cut into pretty slices and served as a starter at dinner. You could also set it in a ceramic container and place it on a buffet table with crackers as a pâté. It is not complicated to make; most of the work lies in preparing the various ingredients.

For the best results, you would need a cake tin approximately 18 cm to 20 cm in diameter with a loose bottom. If your cake tin is not Teflon-coated (non-stick), and you plan to make the cheesecake ahead of time, it would be sensible to not let the acids used in the mixture, react with the metal of the tin. The easiest way to do this is to wrap the base of the cake tin in clingfilm and then secure it in the ring, tightening the clamp. Then, cut a band of acetate to fit inside the tin. This will prevent the mixture from touching the metal sides of the tin, ensuring not only food safety but also allowing for a pretty, smooth surface when the cheesecake is unmoulded.

The base of the cheesecake uses a combination of digestive biscuits and Provitas, however, one could easily use any savoury biscuits of the same weight as required in the recipe. The Marmite contributes a deeply rich umami taste (a pleasant savoury taste) that offsets the filling's fresh papaya and cream cheese.



**Ingredients for 1 large cheesecake, appropriate for  
12 - 16 portions, depending on size:**

**For the biscuit base:**

70 g butter  
10 ml Marmite  
60 g digestive biscuits  
125 g Provita biscuits

**For the filling:**

130 g red onions, very finely diced and blanched in boiling water  
100 g gherkins, finely diced  
Zest and juice of 1 lemon  
230 g unflavoured plain, dense cream cheese  
180 g papaya, finely diced or roughly mashed  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
150 g plain feta, roughly crumbled  
15 ml gelatine  
45 ml water  
30 g fresh broadleaf parsley, chopped

**To garnish:**

Selection of fresh edible flowers



**Method:**

Prepare the cake tin (see note above). Melt the butter and Marmite together. Process the biscuits in a food processor – add the warmed butter and Marmite mixture.

Scoop the mixture into the prepared cake tin and press down firmly in an even layer on the base of the tin. Refrigerate.

Sprinkle the gelatine over the 45 ml tap water and allow to bloom – melt (in the microwave if you wish).

Beat the cream cheese in the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the paddle attachment until smooth and aerated.

Gently fold in all the remaining ingredients, including the gelatine, and immediately pour into the prepared tin. Smooth down the surface and refrigerate.

Once the cheesecake has set, unmould it and decorate it with edible flowers. Cut in slices and serve with a papaya dressing and dark whole wheat bread, pita crackers or a side salad.

# Papaya and Smoked Snoek Rillettes



Rillettes (the correct French pronunciation is “ree-yet”) describes both a preservation method as well as a final product and is considered to be traditionally one of the staples of a French meat platter. Rillettes are made by cooking meat (traditionally pork) submerged in fat at very low temperatures for a reasonably long time. The meat is then shredded and mixed with some of the cooking fat and packed in jars so that it can last a long time. Because of this treatment, it is sometimes referred to as “pig jam”. It can be combined with other cold cuts, pickles, good quality biltong and crusty bread to create a winning starter to any meal. Whatever you do, writes Rebecca Franklin, do not refer to it as a *pâté* (and most certainly not in the company of a serious French foodie) or you should be prepared for a serious tongue-lashing (Franklin 2023). Even though Rillettes may have many similarities to a *pâté*, they are rarely as smooth as a *pâté*.

In this recipe, the smoked snoek changes this classic into a lovely South African version that marries superbly with papaya. Because the snoek is slightly salty, the papaya softens the spread into a deliciously moreish snack or starter that no one will be able to resist.





**Ingredients for a large portion of Rillettes that could serve between 6 - 8 people:**

200 g smoked snoek, all fish bones carefully removed, and flaked

230 g full-fat cream cheese

90 g butter, melted

1 lemon rind, finely zested

25 g shallots, finely chopped (these can be rinsed in boiling water if you dislike a sharp oniony taste)

4 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

10 g chives, finely sliced

120 g papaya, cut into small cubes



**Method:**

Beat the cream cheese with the paddle attachment in a freestanding mixer or with a wooden spoon. Beat in the melted butter. The mixture should be light and fluffy.

Gently fold in the snoek, lemon rind, salt, pepper, shallots, and chives. Finally, carefully fold in the papaya, being careful not to bruise the papaya too much.

Pack tightly in a presentation container and seal the surface with a thin layer of melted butter, should you wish.

Serve as is with activated charcoal and black sesame sourdough bread. The spread, however, also works perfectly with a crusty baguette, or other country-style loaves of bread or crackers.

# Mussel Escabeche



Fresh mussels are not always easy to obtain in South Africa, particularly in more remote areas. However, there are companies delivering boxes of fresh black mussels from the Cape Coast in pristine condition to Gauteng. They are inexpensive, and without a doubt worth the effort of cleaning. If you plan to buy a large volume of mussels (or are lucky enough to harvest your own from the rocks), consider making some into this delightful *escabeche* preparation to be savoured with papaya. The *escabeche* lasts several days in the fridge, and with any remaining mussels make that typical French Belgian dish of mussels braised in white wine, onion and copious amounts of fresh parsley to be enjoyed directly out of the shell with hot chips and mayo.

Should there not be any fresh mussels available, frozen mussels in the shell will also work. If all else fails, use the tinned ones, just skip the *escabeche* process and perhaps drizzle them with a little home-made vinaigrette.

This papaya mussel *escabeche* is a delightful summer dish that marries the earthy umami of fresh mussels with the distinct floral savoury flavour of papaya. The dish can be served individually, such as in a restaurant-style plated portion, or it could be made into a large communal platter that would work perfectly on an *al fresco* table.

The name *escabeche* covers a whole range of Spanish, Portuguese or Latin American dishes that are usually made of fish or meat that are marinated and cooked in a relatively acidic sauce that has a deep rich Spanish paprika flavour. Jenny Dorsey from SeriousEats.com says that this method for making *escabeche* dates back several centuries, with one of the earliest recipes appearing in the 1324 medieval cookbook Sent Soví (Dorsey 2023). It starts with a fish stock made with onion, olive oil, salt, and parsley. The fried fish is cooked with spices, milk and olive – it just needs to be checked for its sweetness or sourness. Thereafter, salt can be added, and the raisins must be soaked in wine or vinegar.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

2 kg fresh uncooked, unfrozen black mussels, washed, scrubbed and debearded  
200 ml olive oil  
6 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced thinly  
2 stems whole fresh rosemary  
3 stems whole fresh thyme  
4 bay leaves  
2 sticks cinnamon  
1 medium red chilli, cut open lengthwise and deseeded  
Zest of 1 lemon, removed and cut into thin julienne strips  
10 ml whole black peppercorns  
Juice of 1 lemon  
100 ml red wine vinegar  
20 ml paprika (use smoked paprika if you prefer a smoky taste to the final dish)  
5 ml salt  
1 whole papaya, cut into small cubes  
A selection of tiny lettuce and herb leaves and edible flowers, dressed with a splash of olive oil, salt and pepper



### Method:

Place the cleaned, fresh mussels in a large pot with a tight-fitting lid. Cook on the stove until the mussels start to open. Give the pot a vigorous shake now and again to ensure that all the mussels receive enough heat, though the steam generated should do the trick. Allow them to cool down and remove the mussels from the shells.

Warm up the olive oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, bay, cinnamon, chilli, lemon zest and pepper until slightly bubbly. Cook for three or four minutes.

Remove from the heat and add the lemon juice, vinegar, paprika and salt. Check for seasoning and add the shucked (opened) mussels. This mixture could be kept in the fridge for a couple of days for the flavours to develop and the mussels to absorb some of the marinade.

Spoon a few teaspoons of the mussel cooking liquid into the papaya, stir through and divide the papaya onto six or eight plates. Use a ring mould to press the papaya into a layer at the bottom of the ring.

Spoon some mussels and sauce on top of the papaya and press down lightly. Remove the ring and top with a nice bundle of mixed leaves.

Drizzle some extra sauce around the mound of papaya mussels. Enjoy with crusty bread.



# Gazpacho



This is a lovely summery soup, best served chilled, but by virtue of its rather robust flavours, one could even serve it as a fresh and healthy starter when the weather turns cooler. It could even be served warm, such as *Gazpacho Manchego* from the southwest and central Spanish regions, which is more like a meat stew, made with game such as rabbit or fowl.

Classic *gazpacho* is super easy to make and can be kept in the fridge for a day or two, making it perfect when one must plan for a dinner party and time is limited. The papaya contributes fruity sweetness, complementing all the other vegetables in the soup. Versions of *gazpacho* abound, there are numerous recipes using avocados, cucumbers, parsley, strawberries, watermelon, grapes, meat stock, almonds, orange segments and even seafood. This is a basic recipe for four generous portions, perfect for evenings when one may wish to serve soup as the main meal of the day. It is superb with toasted sandwiches made with fresh sourdough bread and some sharp tasty cheese. You can make the soup as smooth or chunky as you wish – in certain traditional recipes the soup is even pounded in a pestle and mortar as opposed to blending it to a smooth purée in a blender. It is a thick, unctuous soup (in fact, it is often classified in Spanish cookery books as a salad) that is often served in Spanish and Portuguese households on hot summer days. This recipe contains no bread, which some classic recipes call for. The bread of course provides some bulk and texture, but the papaya in this recipe ensures a smooth, homogeneous soup and without the bread, the soup is suitable for people suffering from gluten intolerance. *Gazpachos* are often classified according to their final colour such as the red version made with tomato, but also white, which contains no tomato but is made with dried fruit, and green versions where some herbs produce a greenish tinge.

Although the history of the *gazpacho's* development is slightly murky, it is quintessentially Spanish, from the Andalusian region. It is a dish that can be traced back as far as the Roman or Greek civilisations, even though two of the main ingredients, peppers and tomatoes, were only introduced to Europe around the sixteenth century, from the New World. The theory goes that a version of the soup made with bread, olive oil, water, vinegar and garlic came to Spain via the Romans.



**Ingredients for 800 ml (4 - 6 portions):**

140 g cocktail (or large Roma) tomatoes  
60 g (2 small) red onions, sliced  
7 g (2 medium cloves) fresh garlic, chopped  
90 g cucumber, peeled, deseeded and cut into pieces  
40 g celery, sliced  
140 g red pepper, slightly charred, cut into pieces  
140 g ripe papaya, peeled and cubed, and more for garnish  
2 fresh basil leaves  
125 ml extra virgin olive oil and more for serving  
60 ml red wine (or sherry) vinegar  
7,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
5 ml whole cumin, dry toasted  
5 ml sugar  
1 red chilli, deseeded  
Zest and juice of 1 medium lemon  
2,5 ml smoked paprika

**To garnish:**

Olive oil  
Balsamic vinegar glaze  
Small cocktail tomatoes, tomato flowers and leaves



**Method:**

Blend all the ingredients (except the garnishes) in a tall jug-type liquidiser until smooth. Check the seasoning and correct if necessary. Often, when the soup sits for a little while, the flavours mellow and become more integrated, so be careful to not over season initially.

Serve very cold on hot days, however, the soup is perfect when also served at room temperature. Garnish with a swirl of good olive oil, a splash of thick balsamic vinegar glaze, small cocktail tomatoes cut in half, and some papaya cubes.



# Carpaccio



*Carpaccio*, veering away from the traditional version made with beef, has become ubiquitous on restaurant menus in recent years. *Carpaccio* made from a range of ingredients such as courgette, biltong, and sweet pepper abound. Traditionally thinly malletted beef, game or even fish such as salmon or tuna, carpaccio is generally served as a starter, but it is equally excellent as part of antipasti or a self-help harvest table. It is said to have been invented by Giuseppe (Arrigo) Cipriani, the founder of Harry's Bar in Venice around 1961 (Chashman 2023). Cipriani apparently invented the dish for Countess Amalia Nani Mocenigo after she learned from her doctors that she should eat a lot of raw meat. The classic beef version is dressed with a mustardy mayonnaise or lemon, olive oil, parmesan, sometimes some truffle and perhaps even capers and onions. The traditional dish started as a Piedmontese specialty, *carne cruda all'albese*, and history tells us that Giuseppe named the dish after Vittore Carpaccio, a Venetian painter who used a lot of red and white tones in his work.

This reworked version uses the ever-popular and versatile papaya. As can be seen from the image, on first inspection it may well look like smoked trout or salmon, but it is sure to delight everybody, including our vegan and vegetarian customers. Be sure to use a papaya that is not overly ripe, as the pliability of the papaya decreases as it ripens. However, one would also not want an unripe papaya. The charm of this *carpaccio* lies in the combination of the sweet papaya, which offsets acidity and other flavours so well. Be creative and daring with the accompaniments you choose to combine with the papaya. The green sauce can be made with various other herbs if parsley is unavailable, such as mint, fresh fennel or even rocket.





### Ingredients for 4 portions:

1 medium to large papaya, peeled and deseeded  
30 g celery, cut into brunoise (very tiny blocks)  
40 g dried olives, chopped  
2 red chillies, deseeded and thinly sliced  
Zest of 1 lemon, cut into very thin strips  
40 ml good quality virgin olive oil  
80 ml green sauce  
A selection of edible flowers and tiny leaves, such as nasturtium flowers and leaves, rocket leaves and flowers, bronze fennel fronds, rue flowers, tiny wild clover leaves, wild red amaranth leaves  
Salt flakes to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

### For the green sauce:

30 g fresh broad-leaf (Italian) parsley, chopped  
Juice of ½ a lemon (about 45 ml)  
1 large garlic clove, cleaned and chopped  
2,5 ml sugar  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
5 ml salt  
80 ml olive oil  
Blend all the ingredients for the green sauce in a liquidiser or use a stick blender in a small upright jug



### Method:

Use a very sharp vegetable peeler and slice thin, even ribbons from the papaya. Randomly lay these onto four plates; do not be overly precise.

Scatter over the celery, olives, sliced chillies, and lemon zest. Drizzle over the olive oil and green sauce so that the liquids do not puddle too much in one area alone. Scatter over the flowers and leaves so that all the plates have a good variety and selection of leaves.

Grind over pepper and sprinkle with some salt flakes. Serve immediately. Even though this version of *carpaccio* may not work well with fresh bread, it could be served with crisps, such as wholewheat, or rye crisp bread or wafers.

# Avocado Ritz



Although we all remember some version of Avocado Ritz – a favourite on South African restaurant menus in years gone by – information on the history of this much-loved starter is scant. Even though this reworked version uses smoked trout and papaya, the tastiness and tongue-in-cheek retro fun of this recipe should enchant modern diners endlessly with its refreshing simplicity.

One can either prepare your own mayonnaise or simply use store-bought mayonnaise with the additional ingredients to make a version of an *Aurore* sauce. Although this is not strictly an *Aurore* sauce (the name is generally reserved for a warm sauce such as béchamel, to which tomato paste is added) and should more correctly be called a Thousand Island Dressing or Seafood Sauce, such salad dressings would be too runny for this recipe where nice thick mayonnaise is needed to hold together the papaya and other ingredients. But the name, '*Aurore*', which means dawn in French, is so delightful we may be forgiven for referring to this as an *Aurore* mayonnaise. Other ingredients that could work well in an *Aurore* mayonnaise would be chilli or Tabasco, a splash of brandy or even a dollop of plain yoghurt, should one want to extend the sauce but reduce the oil for health reasons.

Finally, feel free to replace the smoked trout with the more traditional, classic, poached prawns or shrimp, or even crayfish if you are feeling flush – you cannot go wrong with any of these.



### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

2 or 3 ripe avocado pears, skinned and cut in half

#### For the ritz:

±¼ to ½ ripe papaya, cut into similar-sized cubes

Segments from 1 large pink grapefruit

2 fillets of smoked trout, flaked

2 celery stalks, finely sliced

1 carrot, cut into ribbons with a potato peeler

A few stems of fresh parsley, finely chopped

Rocket leaves

Freshly ground black pepper

#### For the *Aurore* mayonnaise:

30 ml lemon juice and zest (about ½ of a medium lemon)

7,5 ml sugar

5 ml salt

3 ml (just more than ½ tsp) freshly ground black pepper

7,5 ml prepared mustard (any type)

1 whole egg

30 ml good quality bottled tomato sauce

30 ml ground smoked paprika

125 ml sunflower oil

#### To garnish:

Some more grapefruit segments, papaya cubes, flaked trout, and rocket leaves or simply grind over some fresh pepper.



### Method:

For the mayonnaise, place all the ingredients except the oil into a jug blender (or the jug of a stick blender), and blend.

Once a stable emulsion is achieved, drizzle in the oil to create a thick, almost pulpy consistency.

Gently toss together as much or as little of the Avocado Ritz ingredients (apart from the avocado) with some of the mayonnaise. Spoon artfully onto the avocado halves.

Garnish with the extra grapefruit segments, papaya cubes, flaked trout, and rocket leaves or simply grind over some fresh pepper.



# Papaya, Danish Feta, Spinach and Aubergine Terrine



Terrines are such great versatile items to master. They allow one to make a dish that will give the impression that you have gone to a lot of trouble, but the good thing is that while they require a little planning and preparation, the work is all done ahead of time. You will experience a super satisfying sense of accomplishment when you cut through those different layers and serve a beautiful starter. They can be made in advance and simply need to be sliced and plated, making them great for parties, as one can make them large enough to serve a whole group of people. If they are made mostly of vegetables, they can also be healthy (this recipe, which uses cheese, cream and animal gelatine is not vegan, however, one could easily substitute these ingredients if needed to). Terrines are also equally useful regardless of the weather – in winter they can be hearty and comforting, while in summer they can be light and delicious and great to take along on a picnic. This unusual recipe, which features fresh papaya, can be served as a starter to a meal or with a good wheat salad as a main course. Since papaya works well in a savoury context, the combo of papaya, aubergine, and feta is ideal for any meal.

The online blog, [www.thespruceeats.com](http://www.thespruceeats.com) highlights that a terrine is a 'deep, rectangular, straight-sided cooking vessel, usually made in ceramic, glass or cast iron, with a tight-fitting lid' (Lemm 2022). However, just to confuse the uninitiated, the actual food cooked or served in these containers is also called terrines (similar to casserole and tajine). The Spruce Eats believes that the literal translation of the French word 'terrine' means 'large earthenware pot', and that the English derivative of the word is 'tureen', is not exactly what a terrine is. The origins of the dish are without any doubt French, who are the masters of terrines. The careful layering of differing tastes and textures, precise spicing, seasoning, and gentle cooking is also typically French. The food – meat, fish, vegetables – is layered and cooked or allowed to set and served cold either from the terrine it was cooked in or turned out and sliced. The beauty of terrines is that they can be anything from a simple, rustic affair of modest meats, to an elaborate haute-cuisine creation of game, *foie gras*, and truffles. To confuse people who may think that terrine and pâté are the same – as is so often the case in the food world – pâté can also be incorporated in a terrine as one of the layers to add a smooth texture to the coarser ones of the terrine.





**Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:**

500 g large aubergines, cut into 2 cm slices lengthwise  
125 ml olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
50 ml tahini  
Juice of 1 lemon (for the aubergine)  
1 large (or 1½ medium) firm, but ripe papaya, peeled and sliced  
very evenly into slices no more than a few millimetres thick  
(if the slices are too thick, one will struggle to layer them)  
400 g whole block Danish feta cheese, cut into 2 cm thick slices

**For the spinach filling:**

15 ml granulated gelatine, and 45 ml water  
5 ml salt  
5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
200 g fresh spinach (not Swiss chard), blanched, refreshed and  
well-drained  
230 g cream cheese; the firm block variety works better as it has  
less moisture  
Juice and zest of 2 medium lemons  
125 ml pouring cream





### Method:

First, prepare the terrine mould. If you have one of the classic enamelled cast iron moulds, good for you. Alternatively, use a bread tin with sides which do not slope too markedly. The charm and aesthetic appeal of a slice of terrine is that it does not have sloped sides.

Run a large piece of clingfilm under cold water and lay it into the terrine mould, ensuring that there is an overhang of at least 10 cm on all sides of the terrine mould.

Use a dry tea towel to press the clingfilm against the bottom and sides of the mould with as few creases as possible and no air bubbles, if possible. Set aside.

Now prepare the aubergine slices, as they must cool down before they can be used. Heat the oven to 190 °C. Line a large baking sheet with tin foil and brush both sides of the aubergine slices well with the olive oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper on both sides and lay them in a single layer on the baking sheet.

Bake until they are light brown and completely soft, turning them over once during baking. As soon as they are cooked, mix the tahini and lemon juice lightly (it will thicken, so do not mix it too much otherwise you will end up with a paste) and spread over the slices. Cool down.

Now make the spinach filling. Sponge the gelatine in the water and let it bloom well. Melt using the microwave oven. Place the rest of the ingredients including the melted gelatine in a food processor and blitz to a smooth paste.

Now do not get distracted: as the gelatine will make the mixture set, one wants to assemble the terrine at this point. Spoon half of the spinach mixture at the bottom of the prepared terrine mould. Smooth down.

Place in the fridge for approximately 10 minutes to firm up. Now lay a layer of papaya, then half of the aubergine in one layer, then one nice thick layer of feta, then the remaining aubergine, the remaining papaya on top of that, and finally the remaining spinach.

Smooth it down and then fold over the clingfilm to cover the top completely. Should you feel uncertain about your ability to cut the terrine in nice slices without it falling apart, you might cut a piece of cardboard that fits snugly on top and weigh the terrine down with weight overnight. It is best to make the terrine a day ahead, as it will slice better when it is firmed up.

Use a large, very sharp serrated knife dunked in boiling water and cut 2 to 3 cm thick slices, laying them flat on dinner plates.

Note: Should you wish to make the terrine without gelatine, increase the spinach to 2 x 200 g packets of spinach and increase the cream cheese to 2 x 230 g block of cream cheese, and continue with the recipe in the same manner.



# Papaya and Orange Sweet Potato Soup

Cooked or heated papaya may be a challenging concept for many South Africans to wrap their heads around; as much as many may not consider eating an unripe papaya, which is a sought-after delicacy in many other food cultures. Sometimes what you are used to or what you grew up with must be challenged to experience something new and interesting. The problem with warming ripe papaya is that doing so changes its characteristics and it becomes more vegetative in taste. This is not a bad thing, since the healthy properties of papaya remain and the papaya can be viewed as a supporting ingredient, much like onions which are often included in many dishes. For this recipe, however, it is imperative not to boil the papaya, but to add it to the soup right at the end to warm through gently and release a bit more of its sweet, fruity taste. Although the soup makes an excellent winter dish, it is equally good served at room temperature, something we should enjoy and embrace more often in our country with its climate so reminiscent of the Mediterranean.

Leeks are not readily and consistently available in South Africa. Northern hemisphere inhabitants can find them for most of the year, often with stems as thick as a baby's arm, and predominantly white – created by using a forcing technique that reduces sunlight and the production of chlorophyll in the plant, which reduces the green part. In South Africa, we get excellent examples of leeks for a short period of the year – it is a good idea to harness their goodness as much as possible during this time. This recipe requires a large quantity of leeks, but they cook and meld into a soft gentle raft of flavour for the remainder of the ingredients. If you are unable to find large leeks, you could opt for shallots or perhaps smaller leeks (although their taste is a little sharper). If none of these are available, resort to using normal onions, but rather go for red onions for a softer taste. Should your leeks not have a nice big white section, then by all means cut into the green part which will have a much softer taste and increase the vegetative robustness of your soup. The charm of using the white part of the leeks is that it offers a gentle, deep, rich taste that will not overpower the other vegetables and papaya.



**Ingredients for 800 ml soup (around 4 - 6 portions):**

60 ml olive oil  
250 g leeks, very thinly sliced, across the grain of the leek  
3 large garlic cloves, crushed or thinly sliced  
5 ml fresh thyme, small leaves removed from the stalks  
2 fresh red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced  
30 ml fresh turmeric root, peeled and finely grated  
2 chicken bouillon cubes, or 750 ml fresh chicken stock  
2 large orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, peeled and coarsely grated  
5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
200 g firm ripe papaya, peeled and grated

**To garnish:**

More fresh thyme



**Method:**

Warm the olive oil in a large thick-based pot. Add the leeks and garlic and sauté very gently for a long time until the leeks are translucent and almost falling apart. Stir now and again. It may be necessary at some point to cover the pot when the leeks are browning too quickly – the lid will create a little steam that will further soften the leeks.

Add the thyme, chilli and turmeric and cook for a minute on high heat stirring all the time. Add the stock or bouillon cubes (in which case you would need to add around 750 ml water).

Bring to a boil, add the sweet potato and pepper and simmer for at least half an hour until soft. Do not cover the pot at this point, as one wants the mixture to reduce a little, however, ensure that the soup does not become too thick.

When you are ready to serve, while your soup bowls are warming in the oven, stir in the papaya and warm through slightly (see note above). Serve immediately with a small piece of fresh thyme as garnish. This is a coarse soup consisting of a light broth containing visible vegetables. If you like soups that are puréed, do so just before serving.



# Papaya and Caviar Starter



Although this combination of papaya and caviar is a breeze to assemble, it delivers both looks and bold flavour. It could be made as a large platter for a crowd or served in large, low bowls to effortlessly create smart individual starters for a meal. One could serve it with some crusty bread, but it is probably better to keep it simple and enjoy how well the few additional ingredients combine with the papaya.

In addition to being quite pricey, caviar is one of those divisive food items that people either adore or detest. Real caviar would give the dish a deep umami richness, so feel free to use it if you are feeling flush or opt for trout eggs, where their beautiful deep salmon colour would echo that of the papaya. However, this recipe uses seaweed or kelp caviar, an environmentally friendly plant-based alternative that is quite affordable at about (South African Rand) R60 for 250 g. While not entirely as rich as caviar from fish, the seaweed caviar still offers fresh sea flavours to complement the papaya and pine nuts.

To draw the dish together, this recipe uses a homemade mayonnaise made with boiled egg. A small amount of sesame oil and capers impart deeper complexity to the mayonnaise which combines surprisingly well with the earthiness of the pine nuts and the delicious umami notes of the caviar.



### Ingredients for 6 starter plates:

#### For the mayonnaise dressing:

20 g sourdough bread, without crusts  
1 soft boiled egg (5 minutes)  
±½ garlic glove, minced  
7,5 ml capers  
7,5 ml prepared mustard  
Juice of 1 small lemon  
30 ml water  
3 ml (just more than ½ tsp) salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
100 ml neutral oil such as sunflower or canola oil  
10 ml dark sesame oil

#### For the papaya plates:

1 just ripe, firm papaya, peeled and cut into thin ribbons using a sharp knife – the papaya should not be green, but one that is too ripe will not make pretty ribbons  
90 ml caviar or more affordable seaweed caviar  
125 ml pine nuts, toasted darkly  
30 ml flavourful olive oil  
Selection of edible flowers and herbs such as bronze fennel  
Grinding of fresh pepper



### Method:

First, prepare the mayonnaise. Soak the bread in the water for a few minutes, then squeeze the water out by hand.

Place all the remaining ingredients, apart from the oils, in an upright blender (or in a tall jug using a stick blender). Blend, and then slowly drizzle in the neutral and dark sesame oils until a thick emulsion is achieved.

Smear a large dollop of mayonnaise over the bottoms of six plates or wide bowls. Arrange the papaya ribbons over the mayonnaise. Dollop a few more teaspoons of mayonnaise in between the ribbons and dot a tablespoon of caviar per plate here and there.

Scatter a teaspoon of pine nuts over the plate, drizzle with some olive oil, decorate with flowers and herbs and grind over some black pepper.

# Ribollita



There are many soups available from around the world made with bread as the base ingredient. The noted online website [www.tasteatlas.com](http://www.tasteatlas.com) lists no less than 32 examples from around the globe, including a few famous ones such as *Pappa al pomodoro* from Italy, *Brotsuppe* from Germany, and *Leivasupp* from Estonia, a purée of rye bread with fruit juice, cinnamon and sugar (Tasteatlas 2024). Unfortunately, bread soups are often relegated to the bottom of the to-make list, probably because the idea of bread soaked in water is unpalatable to many people. Regardless of this squeamishness, bread soups should be celebrated, particularly from a waste perspective; they allow us to use stale bread in a delicious and conscientious way. If you are squeamish about the thought of wet bread, you could add the bread at the very last moment, toasted as in the recipe below, and served immediately. This should prevent the bread from becoming gummy, but rather adds some delicious crunch to your soup.

As with other soups, bread soups can either be chunky, such as in this recipe, or smoothly puréed. Puréeing would be a good way to deal with the potential gloopiness of the bread, since it would serve to thicken the soup. Chunky soups, however, offer an opportunity to experience the different elements in each mouthful.

Papaya is perhaps an odd ingredient to add to a warm soup, however, in this instance, it disintegrates and simply adds fresh fruitiness to a bowl of different ingredients. Try adding it to any of the many bread soups (see above) – you will be surprised at the gentle sweetness it adds.



*Ribollita* is a Tuscan bread soup. The word means “reboil”, as it was often made from the previous day’s minestrone rewarmed with bread. The soup often includes potato, but in this version, it has been left out because of the papaya. This soup is suitable to serve as a starter or as a light supper meal.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

140 g red onions, finely chopped or sliced  
3 large garlic cloves, finely sliced  
30 ml olive oil  
2 medium red or green chillies deseeded, thinly sliced  
250 g carrots, small dice  
110 g celery, small dice  
200 ml white wine  
750 ml water  
1 cube chicken stock (or vegetable stock, should you want to keep the soup meatless)  
10 ml salt  
7,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
1 (400 g) tin chopped or whole peeled tomatoes, crushed  
15 ml fresh thyme  
2 bay leaves  
70 g kale, thinly sliced  
125 g baby lima beans, pre-cooked  
100 g ciabatta, broken into pieces and toasted in the oven if you wish  
120 g papaya, cubed  
10 g fresh parsley, finely chopped



#### Method:

Gently sweat the onions and garlic over medium heat in the olive oil until soft. Add chillies, carrots and celery and fry for a few minutes more.

Add all the remaining ingredients, except the bread, papaya and parsley.

Cook until the vegetables are soft.

Add the bread and papaya, warm through and check the consistency – if the soup is too thick, add some more water.

Check and amend seasoning if necessary and serve with a generous sprinkle of parsley.

# Chicken Liver Parfait



Chicken liver pâté or parfait is often served with something sweet, like grape jelly or onion marmalade, perhaps because their sweetness accentuates the meatiness of the pâté or because it balances out the meatiness that some people may find overwhelming. Whatever the reason, adding papaya gives an added sweetness and freshness to the mixture.

The biggest difference between a parfait and a pâté is that a parfait is smoother and lighter. Adding papaya to this recipe makes the mixture even lighter and airier, which is more parfait than pâté. Whatever you wish to call this simple dish, be sure to serve it with good, hearty bread. It will pair well with a crusty baguette, seed loaf, focaccia, or crostini, liberally doused in olive oil, sprinkled with fresh rosemary and flaky salt, and toasted, as in this recipe.

Many people intensely dislike the flavour of liver. Adding the papaya will mellow the taste and could make it slightly more acceptable, although a drawback is that this lessens the shelf-life of the parfait substantially. Pâtés, particularly properly preserved in sterilised jars that are well sealed can last a very long time unopened. Because the papaya is only briefly warmed along with the already cooked onion and liver mix, it is not fully shelf-life stable and should be eaten within a day or three after making it. This recipe is not for a large volume; served as a snack before a meal for people to help themselves, it should disappear very quickly.

Some people may also be apprehensive about working with raw chicken livers – they must be cleaned very well as any gall or other innards that could end up in the same container will make the pâté bitter. However, if you are a high-end supermarket shopper, you may be able to buy chicken livers that are beautifully cleaned and ready to use. If you buy frozen chicken livers, defrost them very well in the fridge overnight. Use a very sharp small paring knife or even a pair of small sharp scissors, remove

any visible sinew or connective tissue, as well as any of the additional innards that could end up in the livers. To diminish the livery taste, soak the livers in milk for a couple of hours.

Chicken liver pâtés traditionally have a good slosh of sherry or brandy added, however, because of the papaya, it may not be necessary. If you miss that added taste, feel free to add it after the livers have cooked for a while and flambé the mixture to burn off the harsh alcohol taste.



#### **Ingredients for around 8 - 10 portions:**

50± g (1 large) onion, roughly chopped  
10± g (2 cloves) garlic, sliced  
2,5 ml fresh thyme leaves, no stalks  
80 g butter  
110 g papaya, cubed  
500 g chicken livers, cleaned  
3 ml salt  
5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
40 g butter, as the sealing fat



#### **Method:**

Fry the onion, garlic and thyme in 80 g butter until soft over low heat.

Add the chicken livers and turn up the heat – quickly fry the livers, tossing them around. This stage is important, as one wants quick evaporation of the moisture and a little bit of browning of the livers, but without scorching the onions. It is important not to overcook the chicken livers, as they will become dry, gritty and a most unpleasant colour. In fact, leaving them pink inside is preferable.

Add all the remaining ingredients, apart from the sealing butter and warm through.

Allow the mixture to cool slightly and purée in a liquidiser or with a stick blender until very smooth.

Pass the mixture through a very fine sieve and transfer to a jar or serving container.

Place the container open in the fridge for approximately half an hour (it will form a thin skin on top of the surface), then pour the warm melted butter over, moving it around to cover the entire surface to seal the parfait. Refrigerate for a couple of hours before serving.



# Vietnamese Pork and Green Papaya Soup



From the online recipes for this soup, it can be made with either ripe or green papaya. Both would be equally delicious, even though the method may change a little. If you wish to use ripe papaya, proceed with the following recipe, however, leave the papaya to the very last moment and add cubes instead of grated papaya. Traditional recipes for this soup include some kind of pumpkin or sweet potato, or orange fleshed sweet potato such as in this recipe; green papaya will offer something different in terms of taste, colour and texture. Furthermore, traditional *Canh Du Du* recipes use lesser cuts of pork, such as trotters or shank – feel free to amend the recipe below and use any pork cut that suit your requirements.

Whatever cut you choose, simmer or braise the meat slowly prior to making the soup. You could place your chosen pork meat in a broth (or even just water with an onion, a carrot, and a bay leaf or three) and simmer the meat until it is so soft it can be pulled apart with a fork. Replenish the liquid as you go, you want about 2 litres of liquid at the end of the cooking time and proceed with the recipe as below. This way all the nutritional value of the meat is retained in the stock and may add an additional meaty flavour to the soup. The additional ingredients need not be cooked for very long and may turn into an unappetising mush if everything is cooked together.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

450± g (1 medium orange-fleshed sweet potato), cut in halves, then thirds and then in thick slices  
140± g (1 medium) onion, cut in half, then in thirds and then in thick slices  
±50 g (1 large knob) fresh ginger, peeled and cut into attractive matchsticks (julienne)  
15 g (4 medium cloves) garlic, sliced into matchsticks (julienne)  
2 medium red chillies, deseeded and sliced  
45 ml olive oil  
15 ml dark sesame oil  
5 ml salt  
2 000 ml water (or the broth that one has simmered the meat in, see note above)  
5 bay leaves  
120 g green papaya, peeled and grated  
1 chicken stock cube (can be omitted if using your own stock to simmer the meat in)  
15 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml turmeric  
50 g sugar  
60 ml fish sauce  
1.2 kg pork neck roast (or alternative cut – see note above), simmered slowly in a broth or slowly roasted in the oven for an extended period (no less than 3 hours) until the meat is very soft and one can shred it coarsely with a fork.



### Method:

If you are not cooking the meat separately (see note above), combine the meat, broth, or the water option as suggested previously. If you have done the meat separately, reserve the liquid.

Using a large sturdy pot, sweat the sweet potatoes, onion, ginger, garlic and chilli in the olive and sesame oils.

Add all the remaining ingredients and simmer slowly until all the vegetables are cooked – top up the liquid with water if too much liquid evaporates. You want enough liquid in relation to the remaining vegetables and meat. Remember, if you replace the water in the recipe with the meat poaching broth, omit the stock cube.

Add the meat and warm through – serve.





# Green Papaya and Onion Tarte Tatin

*Tarte Tatin* is a wonderful upside-down caramelised apple tart on a puff pastry base from the Sologne area in central France. If you like the history of foods, do yourself a favour and read Francois de Melogue's account of how the *Tarte Tatin* came into being (De Melogue 2020).

This version is meant to be served as a starter or light meal, rather than dessert. It could be served with a salad of cold meats, or even just a few tossed salad leaves. It could also work as a side dish with a piece of grilled fish or a hearty cut of meat. Because it is quite rich, it does not really need any sauce, but perhaps a small dollop of parsley sauce with the meat when it is served as a main could work well. The filling could be enhanced by a sprinkling of fresh rosemary, thyme, or summer savoury; however, this recipe is intentionally simple so that the green papaya can shine. Green papaya easily takes on flavours of surrounding ingredients, and pairs beautifully with the soft onions in this recipe. You could make this with good quality shop bought buttery puff pastry.





**Ingredients for 4 - 6 people, depending on it being served as a starter, side dish or main course:**

**For the pastry:**

200 g butter  
200 g bread flour  
5 ml salt  
100 ml chilled/ice water  
40 ml fresh lemon juice

**Add:**

60 g butter  
50 g sugar  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
350± g (around 3 medium) onions, peeled and cut in half  
1/3 of a green papaya (depending on size) cut into thick fingers, approximately 12 cm long and 2 x 2 cm wide



**Method:**

First prepare the puff pastry. If you prefer, feel free to make a traditional puff pastry. Alternatively, pulse the flour and salt along with the butter in a food processor for a few seconds until the butter is roughly chopped.

Add water and lemon juice to bring it all together and then do five book-fold layers to finish off the puff pastry.

Wrap the pastry in clingfilm and place in the fridge until you are ready to use it.

Use a heavy-based pan with a handle that can also go into the oven, around 25 cm in diameter.

Melt the butter, sugar, salt and pepper over high heat until the sugar starts melting. Melting the butter and sugar together creates a caramel – it is best to let the caramel become a little darker in colour.

Remove from the heat and place the onions cut side down in an attractive pattern over the caramel. Place the green papaya fingers in the spaces between the onions.

Place back over high heat and cook for approximately 5 minutes to sear the onions and papaya on the bottom. Take off the heat, lay a round of rolled out puff pastry (±1 cm thick) over the onions, tucking the edges in neatly.

Bake in a preheated oven (200 °C) for approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes. The *tarte tatin* needs enough baking time for the puff pastry (particularly if you are using home-made puff pastry) and the onions to fully cook through. Once the puff pastry is fully puffed, crisp and golden, remove from the oven and allow it to settle for a moment before placing a wooden plank over the pastry.

Place one hand on the plank and swiftly turn the pan around – take care not to let any of the cooking juices drip out onto your arms.

Serve warm or at room temperature, but never cold from the fridge.





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# Salads and Platters





# Papaya, Lentil, Radish and Smoked Trout Plates



Lentils – despite their slightly homespun look and reputation – could easily be the most underrated product in the broader food world. They are, however, a critical staple in Middle Eastern and Indian pantries because they are delicious, extremely nutritious and, if treated with the same respect as meat proteins, easily provide the same satisfaction. The following recipe is for a salad made from lentils and very finely shredded carrots and radishes, all bound together with a deeply satisfying, rich dressing that oozes umami and deliciousness. The salad is wrapped up in papaya which provides a lovely, sweet counterpoint without making one feel like you are having a fruit salad. The carrots provide some crunch and the radishes a little exotic pepperiness, you could also add finely diced green pepper or celery if you wish.

In this recipe, smoked trout is piled on top of the salad for a little luxury, but you could easily leave it out for a fully vegetarian starter or light main meal. Smoked salmon or peppered mackerel would work equally well. The dressing calls for a large volume of deeply toasted cumin. It is best to use whole cumin seeds, toast them well and then grind them in a spice grinder to a fine powder. The cumin contributes a warm nuttiness to the lentils (no wonder so many lentil recipes call for this wonder spice). It is important to add the dressing to the warm lentils so they can soak up all the rich, nutty flavour of the spices. This recipe explains how to plate the salad for individual portions, however, it could also be very easily served as a large platter for people to help themselves.



### Ingredients for 4 individual plates of salad, or 1 medium-composed salad:

#### For the dressing:

7,5 ml whole cumin, dry toasted until dark, cooled and then ground to a fine powder

7,5 ml white miso

80 ml fresh lemon juice

140 ml quality olive oil

1 garlic clove, cut into small pieces

5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

7,5 ml sugar

7,5 ml prepared mustard

#### Additional:

180 g brown or black whole lentils

60 g split yellow/orange lentils

5 ml salt

2 carrots, peeled and sliced into a very fine julienne

6 radishes, cut into very fine rounds

100 g to 150 g smoked trout

1 medium papaya, peeled and seeds removed, the flesh sliced into very thin slices

#### To garnish:

Selection of herbs and edible flowers



### Method:

First, make the dressing. Add all the ingredients to a jug liquidiser or a tall jug if using a stick blender. Blend until a smooth emulsified dressing is obtained.

Boil the brown or black lentils in plenty of water for about half an hour. The exact cooking time would depend on the quality of the lentils. The lentils should not be undercooked, but they should also not burst or fall apart.

Test them regularly towards the end of the cooking time. If you do not feel comfortable adding the split lentils towards the end of the cooking time of the brown lentils, cook them separately – they cook very quickly, so one should be vigilant. However, if the brown lentils are about 6 or 7 minutes away from being cooked, add the split lentils and salt together with the other half-cooked lentils. In the end, they should all be cooked at the same time. The split lentils provide a little bit of body to the salad and bind the other ingredients together.

Drain the lentils, tip them into a bowl, immediately add the dressing and mix well. You could reserve a little of the dressing to serve later. Cool off well.

When you are ready to serve, mix the carrots and radishes into the lentils. Reserve a few slices of radish for the garnish.

Place a ring mould on a plate and wrap the papaya slices around the outside, overlapping each slice with the next. Add one quarter of the salad to the ring mould and press down slightly.

Remove the ring mould and repeat the same procedure on the other plates. Garnish with smoked trout, herbs, flowers and slices of radish. Grind a bit of fresh pepper over, along with a sprinkling of flaked sea salt.



# Papaya, Pumpkin and Black Seed Dressing Platter

The dark chocolate-brown dressing in this recipe is a perfect accompaniment to papaya – the dressing is a good match with the papaya, providing such a good level of savouriness and depth that one could consider skipping the pumpkin altogether, and add feta and olives to the papaya to create another version of the well-known watermelon salad. However, the roasted pumpkin elevates this recipe from just another salad to a creative side dish. This recipe also calls for a julienne of fresh lemon zest to be sprinkled over it, but one could also garnish the platter with microgreens. As the dressing is made from Nigella seeds, onion seed sprouts would be a perfect choice instead of the lemon zest. Toasting the pumpkin seeds provides not only crunch, but also a slightly deeper, toasty flavour. The black garlic used in this dressing is aged; the colour turns deep brown through the process of fermentation.

The hero of this salad dressing is a product called black seed oil, or black cumin oil. The name is misleading, since the oil is not extracted from cumin at all, but rather from Nigella or onion seed. The oil, therefore, has quite a distinctly sharp flavour and should be used sparingly, however, the papaya mellows out the harshness of the onion flavour sufficiently. On its own, the oil tastes slightly medicinal, but combined with the other ingredients and the papaya, it becomes quite rich and delicious. Black seed or black cumin oil comes from the flowering Nigella sativa plant which originated in Southwest Asia and has a long history.

Apart from being listed as one of the items found in King Tut's tomb, Hippocrates also recommended it as a cure for digestive issues. Black cumin oil contains a key phytocannabinoid called beta-caryophyllene (BCP), which binds exclusively to the CB2 cannabinoid receptor. The CB2 cannabinoid receptor dominates our nervous and immune systems which include our gut, liver, skin and bones. Black seed cumin oil contains antioxidants that offer anti-inflammatory, anti-allergy, anti-viral and immune-supporting properties.



Such antioxidants are reported to reduce the number of free radical molecules in our bodies which may damage healthy cells and inhibit new cell growth, allowing cancerous cells to grow and spread. Black seed oil, furthermore, is reported to alleviate symptoms of arthritis, eczema, acne, and psoriasis. It is, therefore, an important product that would be particularly beneficial when combined with the equally healthful papaya.



### Ingredients for 6 portions:

#### For the dressing:

7 g ( $\pm$ 4 cloves) black garlic – rehydrated in 2 tablespoons boiling water if they are somewhat dry  
5 ml black miso  
10 ml prepared mustard, such as Dijon  
10 ml brown sugar  
15 ml thick soy sauce  
30 ml lemon juice  
5 ml black seed oil  
40 ml olive oil  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

#### For the platter:

$\frac{1}{2}$  small pumpkin, such as Queensland Blue or butternut, peeled and cut into attractive slices  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
30 ml olive oil  
1 medium papaya, peeled, seeds removed and sliced attractively  
Small handful of toasted pumpkin seeds  
Zest of 1 small lemon (or sprouted onion seeds – see note above)  
A few sprigs of chives, finely sliced  
Fresh pumpkin flowers or another garnish



### Method:

Preheat the oven to 200 °C. Toss the pumpkin slices in the olive oil, season and place on a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat.

Roast in the oven for approximately 20 minutes until the pumpkin is soft and has attained a nice golden-brown colour. Allow to cool down.

For the dressing, blend all the ingredients in the jug of a liquidiser or with a stick blender. The dressing should be emulsified and thick.

Layer the papaya and pumpkin attractively on a platter. Drizzle some of the dressing over these and scatter over chives, lemon zest, and pumpkin seeds.

Dollop some more dressing over the dish and finish off with pumpkin flower petals.



# Papaya, Feta and Green Olive Salad with Braaied Sausages

South Africans are notoriously divided about the definition of a braai, not to mention how hot under the collar we get when our favourite pastime, the braai, is compared to open-fire cooking methods employed by other cuisines. However, things have changed, and South Africans are certainly now a little more amenable to experiment, not only with the foods being cooked on the open fire – occasionally conceding to braai something vegetarian – but also with the way they cook their meat, as well as the accompanying dishes they enjoy on the side. Fatty sausages are not always easy to cook on the open fire with all that fat sputtering and combusting into flames, but they can also be done in a ridged skillet to control the heat and flames a little better.

This salad is ideally suited to accompany rich, fatty sausages made with lamb or good-quality Frankfurters. The freshness of papaya, married with the saltiness of feta and olives and a handful of fresh herbs, is an excellent foil for the richness of the sausages. A large platter of salad with enough sausages, and one needs nothing more for a full, satisfying meal.

Even though versions of this recipe made with watermelon have become something of a South African staple, my inspiration for this version came from the ever-glamorous Nigella Lawson, who adds red onions soaked in lemon juice to her watermelon, feta and olive salad (Lawson 2005). The red onion and chilli slivers in this recipe add a sharp contrast to the other ingredients. One could easily also use black olives – the fat, plump green olives are not quite as rich as black olives.

If you are flummoxed by your inability to find good old feta on the shelves these days, it is because South African producers now pay heed to the long, drawn-out battle by the Greek nation – which they won – premised on the IP ‘Geographical Indications and Appellations of Origin’ that the cheese received in 2015 (Ungphakorn 2018). This means that South African cheese producers may no longer call their cheese “feta” and chose to settle for the rather unglamorous term “modified cheese” to describe their product. I guess we have no choice but to concur with what Shakespeare famously wrote in Romeo and Juliet, ‘A rose by any other name would smell as sweet’.



#### Ingredients for 1 large salad, which should be ample for 4 portions:

½ large (or 1 medium) red onion, sliced through the length of the onion  
Juice of 1 medium lemon  
1 large very ripe but firm papaya, peeled, deseeded and cut into large cubes  
10 large green olives (pitted if you wish)  
3 red chillies, deseeded and sliced along the length into very thin strips  
4 stalks flat leaf (Italian) parsley, cut roughly  
4 stalks mint, leaves removed  
125 g creamy feta  
60 ml good quality olive oil  
Freshly ground black pepper  
A selection of fresh or processed sausages, braaied on the open fire or in a skillet



#### Method:

Marinate the onions in the lemon juice – the longer they are soaked, the less sharp they will be; however, it should be sufficient to leave them in the lemon juice while you prepare the other ingredients. If you are averse to raw onion, you could also rinse them in boiling water, which takes away much of their sharpness.

Starting with the papaya cubes and olives, layer the salad attractively, and scatter over the onions, chillies, parsley and mint.

Dot over the crumbled feta and finish the salad with a few teaspoons of lemon juice (optional), a few generous glugs of olive oil and freshly ground black pepper.



# Papaya, Roasted Beetroot and Sumac Platter



Sumac is made from the ripe berries of approximately 35 species of plants of the genus *Rhus coriaria* (some sources indicate as many as 250 different plants), related to the cashew family (*Anacardiaceae*). The dried berries are ground to produce a wonderfully flavoursome, burgundy-coloured spice called sumac. The plant grows in subtropical and temperate regions of the world such as East Asia, Africa and Northern America. It has a distinct lemony smell and taste, although slightly milder than fresh lemon, and is used abundantly in the cooking of Arabic, Lebanese and other Middle Eastern cultures. Although not well known in its original form, a common use for sumac is in the spice blend called za'atar.

As the festive season approaches, we inevitably start planning our celebratory menus, and December in South Africa means having to consider the heat of summer. Salads and food at room temperature are therefore ideal. This papaya, roasted beetroot and pickled onion/radish platter can be served as a side to a braai, or as an accompaniment to simple roast chicken or grilled fish. Blood oranges are suddenly making waves in South Africa, although they are not that easy to find. If you can find them, they offer a different element to this salad. The citrus and papaya pair perfectly with beetroot and the pickled vegetables for a perfect side dish to savoury food. One could also serve this platter as a starter along with cold poached prawns and a crisp baguette.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

#### For the pickled onion and radishes:

15 ml salt  
45 ml sugar  
250 ml water  
125 ml white wine vinegar  
2 red onions, finely sliced  
8 - 10 bright red radishes, thinly sliced

#### For the sumac dressing:

1½ fresh garlic cloves, finely chopped  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml prepared mustard  
5 ml sugar  
30 ml sumac  
15 ml fresh lemon juice  
125 ml olive oil

1 large ripe papaya, sliced into thin wedges  
6 large beetroots, roasted in their skin in the oven until soft, peeled and sliced into medium-thin slices  
4 blood oranges, segmented

#### To garnish:

Edible flowers, such as nasturtiums or rocket flowers



### Method:

First, pickle the onions and radishes. Bring all the radish/onion pickle ingredients (apart from the onions and radishes) to boil in a non-reactive pot.

While hot, pour this mixture over the sliced onions and radishes. Set aside to cool until you are ready to assemble the salad.

Make the dressing by blending all the dressing ingredients in a liquidiser, NutriBullet-style blender or a stick blender in a tall narrow jar. The dressing should be creamy, well-emulsified and perfectly smooth.

Lay out the papaya evenly on a large platter. Place a layer of beetroot over the papaya and finish with a layer of the drained onion radish pickle.

Place the bright red orange segments attractively on the platter and then drizzle the dressing in between. Decorate with flowers and serve.

# Russian Salad



According to the blog [www.EatingEuropean.com](http://www.EatingEuropean.com), one of the world's most delicious salads, Russian Salad, also goes by the names *Ensalada Rusa*, Olivier Salad or Salad *Olivieh* (Hannas 2019). Other sources say that a version of the Russian Salad may be called a *Stolichny* salad, which translates as Capital City Salad. Nowadays, it is a popular item on Russian *zakuski* tables, a special celebratory New Year's Eve event.

EatingEuropean.com continues by saying that the salad was apparently invented in the eighteenth century by Lucien Olivier, and widely recreated throughout Eastern Europe. Over the course of centuries, different regions of Eastern Europe have developed their own variations of this salad; however, a few core ingredients are common to them all: potatoes; eggs; carrots; pickles; onions and peas. They continue by saying that it was invented at a restaurant in Moscow called the Hermitage in the 1860s. Of course, like so many popular food items, local variations abound, and the Russian salad is nowadays also found in many Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary. In Poland, it is called *Salatka Jarzynowa*, which means vegetable salad. Some recipes include a different combination of ingredients – along with the obligatory diced boiled potatoes, carrots, brined dill pickles (or cucumber) and green peas – such as hardboiled diced eggs, celeriac, onions, diced boiled chicken or bologna sausage (and sometimes ham or other sausages), tart apples, all of it flavoured with salt, pepper and mustard and dressed with mayonnaise.

This version, with medium-diced firm papaya, takes on a new life. The little hint of sweetness pairs beautifully with the ham and other vegetables. By all means add even more papaya if you like the flavour of papaya and meat, and turn on the seasoning if you prefer a more flavoursome salad. This is the ultimate picnic food, but it works equally well on a buffet table or along with a braai, or even a piece of fried fish.





### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

#### For the dressing:

Julienne zest of 1 lemon

Juice of 1 lemon

5 ml sugar

5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

45 ml olive oil

150 ml thick high-quality mayonnaise

#### For the salad:

2 large potatoes, peeled and cut into perfect medium cubes, boiled in salted water until cooked

3 large carrots, peeled and cut into perfect medium cubes, boiled in salted water until cooked

125 ml fresh or frozen peas, blanched

200 g ham, cut into perfect medium cubes

125 ml Italian broad leaf parsley, finely chopped

2 large dill cucumbers, cut into perfect medium cubes

$\frac{3}{4}$  large, firm papaya, peeled and cut into perfect medium cubes

Handful of fresh dill, finely chopped (optional)



### Method:

First, make the dressing by combining all the ingredients and whisking them together. Check for seasoning; it should be somewhat tart, but with enough flavour to support the entire salad.

Gently fold in all the remaining ingredients and serve.

# Panzanella



*Panzanella* – tomato and bread salad – may not be the prettiest salad on the block, but darn, it is good. The inclusion of papaya provides just a little hint of sweetness that turns it into a superstar. Serve it at a braai, with cold meats or a whole roasted chicken and you need nothing more. It is healthy and satisfying, and even eating too much of it need not be a concern because it is light and lovely.

Various sources inform us that the traditional *panzanella* was initially made with onions and not tomatoes – that is, until the twentieth century (probably when tomatoes became an everyday commodity). Despite its origins, tomato *panzanella* remains an Italian favourite and is most often served in summer. Initially, it was made with bread that was soaked in water and then squeezed dry (Scarpaleggia 2022). Later additions included cucumber, purslane for a bit of acidity, and basil. The name *panzanella* is believed to be a portmanteau of *pane*, Italian for bread, and *Zanella*, a deep plate in which it is served (Kramer 2023).

According to [www.serious-eats.com](http://www.serious-eats.com), Florentine painter and poet Bronzino said ‘*Un’insalata di Cipolla trita con la porcellanetta e cetriuoli vince ogn’altro piacer di questa vita*’ (Kenji López-Alt 2024). This translates into ‘A salad made with chopped onions, purslane, and cucumbers surpasses all other pleasures in this life’, of course referring to *panzanella*. We can safely assume that Bronzino, if he tasted this version with papaya, would concur.



**Ingredients for 1 large salad, enough for 4 - 6 portions:**

200 g country bread, or a ciabatta or a French loaf, cut into 1,5 cm cubes

40 ml olive oil

80 g cocktail tomatoes, cut in half (one can also use small wedges cut from 1 or 2 whole tomatoes)

7,5 ml salt

25 g onion, finely minced

1 garlic clove, finely minced (smashed)

7,5 ml prepared mustard

60 ml good quality sharp red wine vinegar

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

60 ml olive oil

250 g papaya, cubed

A few large leaves of fresh basil, torn into pieces



**Method:**

First prepare the bread – toss the cubes in the olive oil and spread out on a baking sheet fitted with a silicone mat. Bake in a preheated (180 °C) oven for 15 minutes. Remove and set aside to cool.

Toss the halved tomatoes with the salt in a colander over another bowl to collect the draining juices.

After approximately half an hour, mix the drained tomato juices with the finely minced onion, garlic, mustard, vinegar, pepper, and 60 ml of olive oil.

Taste the dressing and correct the seasoning if necessary, remembering that the tomatoes will already be somewhat salty.

Toss the bread cubes in the dressing and then gently toss in the papaya, tomatoes and basil.





# Bokkom Niçoise

Salade Niçoise is a classic dish which originated in the French city of Nice, where it was called *la salada nissarda* in the Niçard dialect of the Occitan language. While traditionalists will undoubtedly frown upon any additions or adaptations, the salad – which is savoury because of the tuna, anchovies or in this recipe, *bokkoms* – in fact benefits tremendously from the sweet, fruity freshness that papaya contributes.

The dressing for a *Salade Niçoise* is classically made with anchovies in oil, which are often added to food to impart a subtle umami flavour. Our own South African *bokkom* makes for a worthy replacement. In fact, the *bokkom* dressing is what allows the papaya to work in concert with the rest of the *Niçoise*. *Bokkoms* are those small whole salted and dried fishes from the West Coast of South Africa. They are made from mullet (particularly Southern mullet, *Chelon richardsonii*), also known as *harders*. One can find them all over the country and they keep very well, therefore, they make an excellent pantry staple.

The *Niçoise* works very well with any meal where salads are required, but because of the complexity and number of ingredients, it is probably best served on its own. It works very well as a side for a main course with a simple piece of grilled fish or a good steak, or as a pretty and filling starter.



### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

#### **Bokkom dressing:**

10 g garlic (2 cloves), peeled and sliced  
60 ml fresh lemon juice  
60 ml red wine vinegar  
Zest of ½ a lemon  
5 ml salt  
3 ml (just more than half a tsp) freshly ground black pepper  
7,5 ml sugar  
7,5 ml prepared mustard  
15 g *bokkoms*, cut into smaller pieces  
20 ml (1 heaped tbsp) fresh thyme leaves  
100 ml extra virgin olive oil  
100 ml neutral-flavoured oil, such as sunflower

#### **For the salad:**

400 g (1 punnet) large Roma cocktail tomatoes, halved (or use the equivalent quantity of ripe salad tomatoes cut into wedges)  
280 g (1 packet) fine French green beans, blanched  
6 medium red potatoes, boiled in their skin until soft, sliced  
6 hardboiled eggs, quartered  
1 (or possibly 2 if the salad is served as a main course) tinned tuna in oil (one could also grill a piece of fresh tuna)  
½ medium papaya, sliced into wedges  
½ cup black olives without pips  
¼ cup chopped parsley

#### **Optional:**

Some sliced red onion  
A tablespoon of capers  
A selection of sturdy lettuce, torn into pieces



### Method:

Use a stick blender in a tall jar, an upright liquidiser, or make the dressing in a pestle and mortar, by blitzing all the ingredients (except the two oils) together into a smooth, homogeneous mass.

Slowly add the oil, trying to keep the mix in suspension – but there is no harm if it does not fully emulsify.

The salad can be either served mixed together or on a platter where all the ingredients are kept separately. However, you choose to serve it, guard against over-mixing your ingredients to retain their visual appeal.

Dress the salad and serve.

# Cube Salad



Fruit salad is probably not something that one needs a recipe for. However, since most people just cut up fruit and place it in a bowl, it often lacks that little extra to make it spectacular, particularly if all the fruits used are not perfectly ripe. Fruit salad made well could be a thing of wonder and make a wonderful dessert, with little hints of lemon, possibly a dash of honey or a little note of fresh mint. Macerating the fruit is non-negotiable and a step most people skip. To do this, boil together sugar and water with fragrant spices such as a cinnamon quill, star anise, a sizeable piece of fresh ginger, or a strip of lemon rind to create a simple syrup. The elements that one can add to the sugar syrup to impart subtle flavour are almost endless and can include flavours from across the globe, such as lemongrass, lemon verbena, saffron, cardamom, a bit of mandarin brandy or a good, old-fashioned schnapps. The aim here is to give the sugar syrup just a hint of flavour that will enhance the fruit. Once the sugar syrup has steeped sufficiently, cool it, place the fruit in it and allow the fruit to mellow in the syrup for an hour or two. Afterwards, drain the syrup (do not serve it with the fruit salad, as it will be too sweet and cloying – use it for something else, such as making a papaya cordial) and serve the fruit bright and glistening from a coating of syrup. Alternatively, as in this recipe, simply toss the fruit in fresh lemon juice and some castor sugar. Whatever you do, please do not serve the fruit naked and without giving it a little love and affection.

Massimo Bottura is a world-renowned Italian chef who invited soccer legend David Beckham to play along in his restaurant kitchen (there is an entertaining video you can Google to see their interaction) (Anon 2021). The plating below is inspired by their dance around the service table, each splattering a colourful sauce onto the plates. Here the offcuts have been turned into three brightly coloured and intensely fruity sauces to accompany the fruit salad, preventing food wastage and elevating your fruit salad from a humdrum bowl of home food into something one can serve with confidence at a smart dinner.



In this recipe, no kiwi or green melon was included, however, either could be a suitable addition. One could also use these fruits to make a green sauce. In this instance, green sauce was made by blending banana with a few stems of parsley in a liquidiser (do not be alarmed: the parsley merely adds a fresh grassy note to the sauce and imparts an intense green colour). This salad could easily be converted into a delicious starter by adding something savoury, like smoked trout or salmon.



#### Ingredients for 4 plated fruit salads:

½ pineapple, cut into 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm cubes – reserve the leftovers  
½ papaya, cut into 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm cubes – reserve the leftovers  
2 red plums, cut into 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm cubes – reserve the leftovers  
4 large strawberries, cut into 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm cubes – reserve the leftovers  
2 bananas, cut into 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm cubes – reserve the leftovers  
4 raspberries, cut in half  
12 blueberries  
Juice of 2 whole lemons  
60 ml castor sugar

#### To garnish:

4 sprigs fresh broadleaf parsley  
Edible flowers



#### Method:

Toss the fruit in 30 ml of castor sugar with the juice of half a lemon or in a flavoured sugar syrup as described above.

Make three sauces by separately liquidising all discarded bits of the red fruits for a red sauce, the papaya for an orange-coloured sauce, the banana and parsley for the green sauce with the juice of half a lemon and 30 ml of castor sugar for each colour.

Purée until smooth, strain and set aside until you are ready to plate. Splash the three sauces in a random pattern over plates, attractively arrange the cubes of fruit on the sauce and decorate with parsley and edible flowers.



# Copper Penny Salad

Copper penny salad, that firm favourite on South African tables, is more a relish than a true salad. Apparently, it got its name from the carrot rounds used in its making that resemble copper pennies, for those who can still remember what a copper penny looked like. Despite the uncertainty of its origins, it has become an undeniably South African dish. The salad consists of carrot rounds and other vegetables in a tasty sweet and sour sauce that is often quite thick and gloopy. While some recipes use a sauce that is not cooked at all, this recipe calls for the sauce to be cooked to thicken it slightly so that it coats the vegetables and papaya with a deliciously tangy red sauce. The papaya in this copper penny version is delicious and adds a fruity sweetness and a hint of gentleness to the salad. In some recipes, the other vegetables, such as the onions, celery and green pepper are sautéed along with the carrots, while in other recipes they are used raw. Because of the added papaya in this recipe, the onion and green pepper are used raw. This has some advantages – the salad is very crisp and fresh, but the disadvantage is that it will not last long. Generally, if all the vegetables and the sauce are cooked together, then the relish type of salad can last a very long time if correctly bottled. As a relish, this salad is particularly delicious as an accompaniment to a braai or as a condiment with any savoury pie, sausages, or a cottage pie.

Be gentle and peel your carrots evenly all around, so that you have beautiful round disks; you do not want a hexagonal shape. Add the papaya at the last minute and take care not to toss the salad too vigorously – you do not want to turn it into mush.



### Ingredients for 1 medium salad suitable for 6 - 8 portions:

#### For the dressing:

200 ml (1 small tin) tomato juice or tomato cocktail

Juice of ½ fresh lemon

50 ml red wine vinegar

7,5 ml prepared English mustard

5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

30 ml sugar

15 ml Worcestershire sauce

Optional: 10 ml corn starch, mixed with 15 ml water

#### Additional:

4 carrots (450 g) peeled, cut into rings

2 stems celery (leaves attached if you wish), thinly sliced

1 green pepper, cut into small dice, or thinly sliced

½ medium onion, thinly sliced or diced (you could blanch these for a minute should you wish)

2 small fresh red chillies, deseeded and thinly sliced

Zest of 1 lemon

½ papaya, cubed

#### To garnish:

60 ml finely sliced chives



### Method:

First, blanch the carrots. You want them only slightly cooked, not overcooked or falling apart. Depending on how thin they are sliced, the cooking time could be 2 minutes or so, or somewhat longer if they are cut thicker. Once cooked, refresh under cold running water, and set aside.

To prepare the dressing, place all the ingredients (except the corn starch if you are using it) in a small, non-reactive pot. Bring to the boil. Taste for seasoning and correct if necessary.

Add the corn starch, mixed with the cold water, and bring the sauce to a boil. Boil for a few minutes for the starch taste to cook out.

You can decide whether to add the sauce to the remaining vegetables while still hot, in which case it will wilt the raw vegetables such as celery and green pepper slightly, or you can let the sauce cool and mix it with the vegetables later.

Once the salad is completely cool, mix the papaya in carefully, and sprinkle the chive garnish over the dish.





# Caprese

*Caprese* salad, more often just called *Caprese*, is a delightful, tri-coloured red, white and green salad mimicking the Italian flag (like Pizza Margarita) consisting of tomatoes, mozzarella and basil. It is most often only seasoned with salt and olive oil, even though a little pesto is not frowned upon. The *Caprese* is named after the smart and exclusive island Capri, off the coast of Naples.

This recipe is an adaptation of the original, incorporating papaya as one of the core ingredients along with cocktail tomatoes and bocconcini, instead of the more traditional style in which slices of tomatoes and mozzarella are layered. There is, however, a proviso here: use the best quality mozzarella (stored in water), and not the processed pizza cheese most often sold in South Africa. Mozzarella was traditionally made from water buffalo milk, and sometimes this version is also available in South Africa.

This recipe also incorporates a green sauce, made with basil, but not in the style of pesto with nuts and cheese – this is just a simple sauce to add a deeper, more complex flavour to the salad. Should you wish to make the salad with pesto, it is deemed acceptable to do so in Italy, so go ahead.

The papaya for this recipe was made into large balls similar in size to the bocconcini, using an ice cream scoop (not those with the little lever, but the simpler ones) or you could also use a large Parisian ball scoop to make bigger papaya balls.



**Ingredients for 1 large salad, enough for 4 - 6 portions:**

**For the green sauce:**

40 g fresh basil  
1 clove garlic  
2,5 ml sugar  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
5 ml salt  
5 ml whole cumin, dry toasted in a pan  
40 ml lemon juice  
80 ml olive oil

**For the salad:**

1 small punnet of multi-coloured cocktail tomatoes  
About 8 bocconcini mozzarella balls  
½ large firm papaya, made into large papaya balls  
A little freshly ground black pepper

**To garnish:**

Small basil leaves

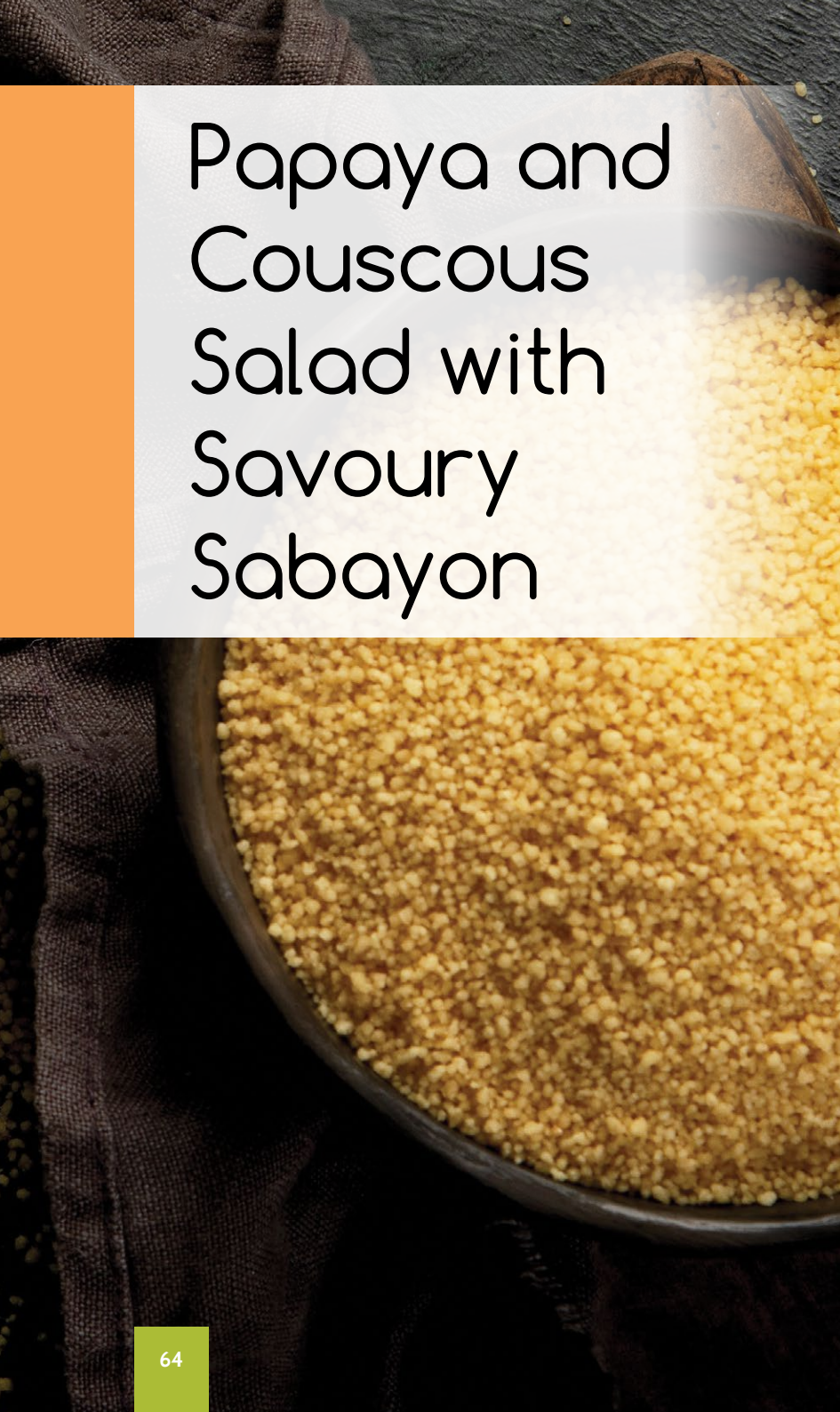


**Method:**

First, make the green sauce – blend all the sauce ingredients in a liquidiser or by using a stick blender until you have a smooth sauce. Do not prepare it too long in advance as it oxidises fairly quickly and the vibrant, green colour would be lost.

Arrange the salad ingredients attractively on a platter, spoon some of the sauce over, dot small basil leaves all over and finish with a grinding of fresh pepper.





# Papaya and Couscous Salad with Savoury Sabayon

Nowadays we are all on the lookout for life hacks – ingenious ways to take clever and hopefully beneficial shortcuts and make our lives less of a humdrum. Salads are a great hack, since they allow you to consume all your recommended daily portions of fruit and vegetables in one go, with the added benefit that the veggies and fruit are still raw, nutritious, and delicious. However, salads need not always consist only of raw ingredients. This papaya and couscous salad, for example, is not a fresh summer salad, but rather a more homely salad suited for winter. There seems to be doubt if a salad may still be called that if it is not served cold or at room temperature, because some would say that it has become a vegetable stew. That aside, this salad is not warm, however, the sabayon with which it is dressed is indeed warm. Since all the ingredients are served at room temperature and topped with the warm sabayon, it becomes a great salad for winter. It is hearty and comforting and not fridge-cold. In this recipe, the papaya provides a delightful sweetness that complements the butternut, carrot, onion and tomato in both flavour and colour.

This salad can certainly be presented as one large communal salad, but it has been slightly elevated here by serving it in individual portions either as a small starter, or a more substantial main course for lunch. Because the couscous is served at room temperature, it must be well seasoned and full of flavour. For this recipe, a whole bottle of white wine was reduced to around 125 ml, with added lemon juice, olive oil and commercial stock along with salt and pepper. This, however, is all to personal taste, and the couscous could be seasoned simply with salt and pepper if you prefer that. The couscous should in no way be served al dente, but it should also not be



steamed within an inch of its life and become mushy or porridge-like. Follow the package instructions carefully to ensure the right ratio of liquid to couscous.

Finally, the recipe calls for *labne*, which may be available in some shops and delis, preserved in olive oil. *Labne* is essentially a thick and creamy Middle Eastern-style yogurt cheese, with a slightly tangy flavour. It is super healthy because of the probiotics in cultured yoghurt. One can very easily make your own, which would need a little planning in advance. Drain 500 ml (or more) double thick, full cream plain Greek yoghurt through a sieve lined with muslin cloth. Place over a container and wrap entirely in clingfilm. Leave in the fridge for at least a day or anything up to a week. The longer the *labne* drains, the thicker it will become, to the point where it can be rolled into little balls; those are the ones usually preserved under olive oil. One could even flavour the *labne* or the oil for additional interest.

*Sabayon* is usually a sweet, frothy sauce made by whisking egg yolks, a little sugar and sweet dessert wine over a bain-marie. This is a savoury version, which provides deep and complex flavour on one hand, but also lightness because of its frothy nature and the sharpness from the vermouth and lemon.



**Ingredients for 1 large salad or individual lunch portions  
for 4 - 6 portions:**

**For the salad:**

250 g instant couscous (see discussion above) freshly made  
and allowed to reach room temperature

2 carrots, peeled and made into ribbons with a potato peeler

¼ large butternut, peeled, cut into 5 cm batons, seasoned,  
tossed in oil, and roasted until cooked

½ ripe, firm papaya, cut into attractive cubes or balls

3 tomatoes, concassé (skinned and cut into tomato tongues)

2 red onions, cut in half, darkly brûléed, and slightly cooked,  
separated and cut into wedges

250 ml *labne* (see discussion above)

62,5 ml toasted pine nuts

Fresh broad-leaf or Italian parsley torn into smaller bits

**For the savoury *sabayon*:**

4 cloves of garlic, roasted in tinfoil in the oven until super soft

Juice of 1 small lemon

60 ml dry (but sweet would also work) clear vermouth

4 egg yolks

3 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper



**Method:**

First assemble the salad before making the *sabayon*, as it should be prepared at the last minute and served warm over the salad. To plate individual portions, set out 4 to 6 plates (see note above if you want to make a large salad on a platter for diners to serve themselves).

Place a large pastry ring on a plate, spoon a good portion of couscous in and lightly press down. Repeat on the other plates. Arrange the rest of the salad ingredients on the couscous and dot a few blobs of *labne* here and there.

Make the *sabayon* by having a pot ready on the stove, quarter filled with boiling water maintaining a gentle simmer.

Add the *sabayon* ingredients to a bowl with a rounded bottom that fits snugly over the pot. For the best results use a metal bowl, since glass and other materials have very low heat conductivity, meaning that your mixture may take too long to warm up.

Whisk the mixture with a large balloon whisk over the *bain-marie* until it is very frothy, but also cooked. One can test it if you are cautious and have a thermometer handy – the egg is cooked once it reaches 71 °C.

Spoon your beautifully frothy *sabayon* over the salad, garnish with parsley and pine nuts and serve.





# Papaya and Red Cabbage Slaw



Coleslaw, particularly when made with white cabbage and carrots – those found close to the check-out counters of takeaway shops in little round plastic containers – although often quite satisfactory in taste, does lack a little glamour. This version, made with red cabbage and papaya, homemade mayonnaise and finely sliced Florentine fennel, is nothing like that.

Sources inform us that today's coleslaw may be derived from a dish that the ancient Romans ate, since they often had cabbage with seasoning such as vinegar. However, the word coleslaw seems to have been derived from the Dutch word *koolsla* (*kool* in Dutch and Afrikaans, of course, sounded like cole, and cole could have been derived from the Latin word "*colis*", which means cabbage). It may also be through this route that cabbage salad became such an institution in American households, going as far back as 1770.

The salad has become a regular fixture in many South African meals, and it is a pity that we do not spend a little more time making it into something we want to relish. The cabbage should be sliced very fine, preferably on a mandoline. Because the cabbage is served raw, all those nasty hard ribs and white bits should be removed. The cabbage should also be mixed with the dressing a little in advance so that the acid has time to soften the cabbage ever so slightly – again, so we do not feel as if we are chomping on huge pieces of raw cabbage. Properly seasoned with a good balance between acidity, salt and a little sweetness, it is a great standby that can be made ahead of time and will not wilt like salads made predominantly with fresh green leaves, particularly in our hot South African weather.

The papaya, of course, offers a delightful surprise that is both nutritious and complementary to the red cabbage and the fennel. Be careful not to over-mix the papaya into the rest of the ingredients – the julienned papaya looks great, but also tends to break easily. If one does not mind little cubes, cutting it that way may prevent this.



#### Ingredients for 1 large salad, enough for 4 - 6 portions:

##### For the hand-made mayonnaise:

6 g (1 large clove) garlic, finely chopped

5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

5 ml (1 tsp) white sugar

15 ml grainy prepared mustard

1 egg yolk

Zest of 1 medium lemon

20 ml fresh lemon juice

125 ml sunflower oil

60 ml extra virgin olive oil

40 ml dark sesame oil

##### For the salad:

¼ to ½ (depending on size) red cabbage, very finely sliced on a mandoline

2 medium fennel bulbs, finely sliced

A small handful of fresh fennel fronds, finely chopped

A handful of fresh Italian broadleaf parsley, finely chopped

½ medium-sized, medium-ripe papaya, peeled and cut into julienne sticks



#### Method:

First, make the mayonnaise: on a cutting board, using the blade of a large kitchen knife, work the garlic and the salt into a fine paste.

Add the garlic paste to a large bowl with the pepper, sugar, mustard, egg yolk, lemon zest and juice and whisk together until a homogeneous emulsification has been achieved.

Slowly add the sunflower oil and continue whisking until the mayonnaise is nice and thick. Add the remaining two oils. Check for seasoning and add a bit more salt and lemon juice if required.

Mix in the red cabbage and leave for about 10 minutes before mixing in the remaining salad ingredients. It is best served slightly cool, but not fridge-cold.





# Papaya and Grapefruit Salad with Pickled Mustard Seeds

Pickling mustard seeds seems to have become one of those social media trends; however, it has a long history in various parts of the world. In the preparation of whole grain mustard, the same technique is used where the mustard is plumped up, but not ground to a fine paste to produce what we know as prepared mustard. Unlike prepared mustard where the aim is to produce a very pungent product, pickling whole mustard seeds gives a more rounded product, almost like a little dressing suspending juicy and plump mustard seeds, making it understandable why pickled mustard is sometimes referred to as poor man's caviar.

Given how easy it is to make, one should always have some pickled mustard in your fridge. It goes well with any salad, but more so with a piece of grilled or braaied meat, fish, or even on a gourmet hotdog or *boerewors* roll. To find mustard seeds, shops with Southeast Asian or Indian ingredients will likely have a variety available. There are about 40 different types of mustard seeds available, and those used in the kitchen classified as brown (*Brassica juncea*), black (*Brassica nigra*), or white (*Sinapis alba*). White mustard seeds are also sometimes referred to as yellow. Please feel free to use any of these in this recipe, but keep in mind that they may require more or less time to plump up. Black mustard seeds may need more time to absorb the pickling liquid and may remain hard for up to two or more weeks while the yellow ones swell up quick and easy like fat glossy pearls of caviar.

This is an uncomplicated salad made with a considerable amount of fruit, so take care not to let it become a proper fruit salad. It should remain a savoury salad; therefore, seasoning and dressing are important. Grapefruit is often limited only to the breakfast table and deserves to be celebrated in many more dishes. This salad, combined with papaya, *spekboom*, nasturtium leaves, and freshly picked herbs promises to be deliciously fresh and tasty.





#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

##### For the pickled mustard seeds:

60 ml yellow (white) mustard seeds  
120 ml white wine vinegar  
22,5 ml sugar  
5 ml (each) salt and freshly ground black pepper

Optional: a few springs of fresh herbs such as thyme or marjoram

##### For the salad:

1 firm ripe papaya, peeled and cut into attractive slices  
1 (each) white and red large grapefruit, perfectly segmented, with no remaining pith left on the segments  
½ lemon, zest and juice  
62,5 ml (¼ cup) good quality extra virgin olive oil  
A few small nasturtium leaves  
¼ cup of freshly picked *spekboom* leaves  
Selection of edible flowers  
A grinding of additional salt and pepper to taste

Optional: a few dried chilli flakes to perk up your salad if you wish



#### Method:

First prepare the pickled mustard seeds – these should preferably be left to stand for a week or so to really plump out.

Warm the vinegar, sugar, and seasonings together – bring to a boil and immediately pour over the mustard seeds in a sterilised jar.

Add the optional herbs. Cover and leave in the fridge.

Arrange the papaya and grapefruit segments attractively on a platter.

Mix six generous tablespoons of the pickled mustard seeds (or use all the mustard seeds if you prefer) with the lemon juice, zest and olive oil. Drizzle over the fruits.

Scatter over green leaves and edible flowers.

Finish with a grinding salt, pepper and a few chilli flakes.

# Three Bean Salad



Three bean salad is an institution in South Africa, featuring at many a braai or Sunday lunch. Unfortunately, it is often treated as an afterthought, being made with a variety of tinned beans chucked together with store-bought dressing. A combination of pulses, such as large white butter beans, speckled sugar beans, chickpeas, and some plump brown lentils could provide a good nutritional injection to your diet. For this salad to shine, it should not be left to the last minute. Dried beans always require some forethought and planning. One must soak the beans ahead to hydrate them slowly and gently. Then they should be cooked with care so they do not fall apart, however, they also should not have retained too much bite.

In this recipe, each bean variety should preferably be cooked separately to ensure they are just done. It is difficult to make this salad elegant – it is what it is. However, the shapes, colours and sizes of the ingredients will make a salad of great variety, depth and contrast. As a South African cultural dish, everyone has their own favourite combination, with people adding corn, peas or other pulses to the mix. In this recipe, the papaya provides a delightful fruity interplay between the beans and the other ingredients.

Some people do not appreciate the taste of raw onion – you may pour some boiling water over the onions to remove some of that pungent oniony taste. This recipe calls for red onion, which provides that sharpness needed to elevate the beans, but is slightly mellower and softer than more pungent varieties. Raw onion can sometimes reduce the longevity of this salad, and its taste can be overwhelming, but because this recipe also uses raw papaya, it should not hang around the fridge for too long.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

200 g green beans, blanched, topped and tailed and cut into 2 cm long pieces  
150 g dried red kidney beans, soaked overnight and cooked in plenty of salted water until fully cooked  
150 g dried chickpeas, soaked overnight and cooked in plenty of salted water until fully cooked  
100 g red onion, cut finely into medium small dice cubes – rinsed in boiling water if you wish  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
10 ml prepared Dijon mustard  
15 ml honey  
1 fresh lemon, zest (either long slivers/julienne strips or fine zest on a micro-plane) and juice  
100 ml olive oil  
180 g firm ripe papaya, cubed  
A couple of fresh rocket leaves for garnish



#### Method:

If you can, make your dressing ahead of time and pour approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$ 's of the dressing onto the pulses as soon as they are drained after cooking. This way, the hot pulses will soak up some of the dressing and absorb all that zesty flavour.

Make the dressing by blitzing the garlic, salt, pepper, mustard, honey, lemon, zest (or keep the thin strips to add as visual interest) and olive oil together in a tall container with a stick blender, or in the jug of a liquidiser until smooth. Check for seasoning and adjust. The dressing should be balanced, yet carry enough seasoning impact to make the salad delicious.

Toss the remaining ingredients and salad dressing together once the pulses have cooled, folding the papaya in carefully to avoid breaking them up.

Garnish with the fresh rocket.



# Som tum



Some sources maintain that *Som Tam* originated in Laos, where it is considered a national dish, while others consider it to be from Thailand. In fact, many countries around the Indochine peninsula, such as Burma, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and even China each have a version of *Som Tam*. Whatever its true origins, it is a delightful fresh recipe full of flavour and wonderful tastes, in which green papaya is a non-negotiable ingredient. Certain recipes call for carrot julienne; feel free to add these.

This is an ideal recipe to practice your knife skills, since it requires vegetables to be cut in perfect julienne matchsticks, approximately 10 cm in length, easy to eat with chopsticks. If you are not inclined to hand-cut the vegetables, the green papaya could be cut into julienne on a mandoline with a julienne attachment. These days inexpensive plastic food slicers abound at markets, give them a try if you do not have a mandoline. Slice the papaya into thin slices and then slice those by hand into julienne sticks. Some Thai recipes provide a more authentic way to do this from the outside of the papaya, holding the fruit in your hand and cutting with a cleaver on the fruit itself. The beans and tomatoes are going to require some hand cutting as well, so you might as well use the opportunity to practice those knife skills.

The green papaya, which is traditional in this recipe, makes perfect sense to balance the tamarind dressing with garlic and fish sauce, typical of Southeast Asian cuisine, but could be somewhat in your face if one is not used to those flavours. Foods that can support such complex flavours, such as green papaya, are therefore an ideal component, while tomato provides a bit of softness.

For the dressing you will need dried shrimp – those tiny little crustaceans that are dried “boots and all” – which are easily found at Asian ingredient shops. If you keep a jar of shrimp paste on hand to make Thai Green Curry Paste, go ahead and use some of that instead – the shrimp paste is fermented and somewhat saltier, so adjust your other seasonings accordingly. For this recipe the dressing is puréed by machine, however, one could make this in a large pestle and mortar for a somewhat chunkier end product.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

##### For the dressing:

6 g fresh garlic, peeled and sliced  
3 g fresh green or red chilli (deseeded, or not, depending on your heat tolerance)  
30 g palm sugar, chopped  
25 g tamarind paste (mind, some brands have seeds in the paste – remove them first)  
20 ml fish sauce  
30 ml lime juice and zest  
22,5 g of dried shrimp

##### For the salad:

250 g green papaya, cut into perfect julienne sticks  
60 g fine green beans, blanched, refreshed and cut lengthwise either in two or three julienne sticks (cut in half if they are too long)  
240 g (around 1 large) tomato, skin removed, the inside bridge and seeds removed and then cut into thin wedges  
60 g unseasoned dried peanuts, dry toasted in a hot pan and coarsely crushed



#### Method:

First make the dressing by puréeing all the ingredients in the jug of a liquidiser, or in a tall upright container using a stick blender. If the palm sugar is hard, soak it in the lime juice to soften before it is used.

Keep the peanuts aside to scatter over the salad and toss all the remaining ingredients together and serve as a large salad or in individual bowls.

Finish by scattering the peanuts over the salad and enjoy.







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# Main Courses





# Papaya, Red Cabbage and Crisp-Crusted Chicken Wraps



Chicken in a crust, such as the Colonel's chicken, is something our South African nation along with much of the rest of the western world, cannot get enough of. American internet food pages abound with many versions; everyone believes their marinade is the best, or their special blend of spices bears the closest resemblance to the real thing. What could be nicer than juicy chicken in a really tasty, crisp crust, piping hot and somewhat decadent? Combining it with papaya and red cabbage slaw in a wrap is a sure winner. For this recipe, the chicken is coated in a potato crisp crust, an idea from Leandi Archer, a recipe developer at The Food Design Agency in Johannesburg, and a former student at the University of Pretoria. To gain another insight into South Africans' fascination with potato crisps, read the indomitable Anna Trapido's anthropological investigation into our nation's captivation with the crisp available as an article on the Daily Maverick website (Trapido 2022).

In this recipe, plain shop-bought *roti's* are used as wraps, but be adventurous if you dare and place the same filling in a warmed-up pita, or in an Iranian *lavash*, all of which are readily available in South Africa today. The piping hot crispy chicken should not sit around – this is a meal that should be assembled at the speed of light, so that one has a nicely warmed-up wrap, coleslaw, fresh papaya and herbs, all working together for an explosion of taste.



### Ingredients for 1 large salad, enough for 4 - 6 portions:

#### For the coleslaw:

250 g very finely sliced (use a mandoline) red cabbage – all the hard ribs and stem parts removed

20 g salt

#### For the dressing:

2 garlic cloves, finely minced (use the 3 ml salt in this part of the recipe to smear it into a fine paste)

3 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

5 ml sugar

5 ml prepared mustard

Zest and juice of ½ a lemon

50 ml very thick (preferably home-drained) plain full cream

Greek yoghurt

50 ml very thick commercial mayonnaise

#### For the chicken:

4 - 6 medium or large skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into strips from top to bottom

50 g cake flour with 10 ml salt and 5 ml freshly ground black pepper

2 eggs, well beaten

120 g potato crisps – any flavour could work, but perhaps keep it simple with salt and vinegar, smashed into small pieces in the packet

Oil for shallow frying

6 wraps (see note above) warmed

2 or 3 handfuls of herb leaves, such as large rocket leaves, or wild rocket or bitter lettuce such as radicchio

¼ to ½ nice ripe papaya, cut into thick fingers lengthways



### Method:

First, drain the cabbage – mix the cabbage and salt in a colander and allow it to stand for about half an hour to 45 minutes. The salt will draw out some of the moisture and soften it.

After the draining period, rinse the cabbage well, then drain it very well by pressing it between your hands to expel as much of the water as possible.

Mix all the dressing ingredients, then mix the dressing with the cabbage. Set aside – this step may even be prepared a little ahead of time.

Crumb the chicken by dipping the chicken first into the seasoned flour, then the egg and lastly the crunched-up potato crisps. Fry the chicken strips in fairly hot, shallow oil. Drain on kitchen paper and keep warm.

When you are ready to make the wraps, warm it, spread a good dollop of coleslaw on, then papaya slices, herbs and lastly the chicken. Roll up tightly and serve immediately.



A photograph of a roasted chicken on a white plate. The chicken is golden brown and glistening. To the left of the chicken is a small pile of green salad. In the foreground, there is a white bowl filled with a dark, chunky sauce, which is the Zouave sauce. A silver spoon is resting on the plate next to the chicken. The background is a light-colored surface.

# Papaya Zouave Sauce with Roasted Chicken

In his book *Kos vir die Kenner* (originally issued in 1933 and reprinted in 2011) culinary anthropologist – and this was just one of many interests he pursued successfully – C. Louis Leipoldt provides a very basic recipe for a *Zouave* sauce (Leipoldt 2011). Frustratingly, no other background or historical information is given about the sauce. An internet search also provided no reference to the name of *Zouave* sauce in a culinary context, it did, however, highlight a post detailing the elaborate dress uniform of the Zouave military units. Apart from Leipoldt, the only other culinary reference is from Hering's *Dictionary of Classical and Modern Cookery*, which simply reads: demi-glaze mixed with tomato purée, seasoned with mustard and garlic, garnished with chopped tarragon (Bickel 1991). It is therefore, a fairly obscure sauce which gives considerable leeway for interpretation.

In a military sense, the word *Zouave* refers to a class of light infantry regiments of the French Army who served in French North Africa between the years 1830 to 1962 alongside the indigenous Tirailleurs Algeriens. They were a regiment of Berber volunteers from the *Zwawa* group of tribes in Algeria, hence the French word *zouave*. Their extravagant uniforms included short open-fronted jackets, baggy trousers (called *serouel*), sashes as well as a fez-like *chéchia* head-dress. In contrast with most of the world's military uniforms today, which consist of camouflage and *ghillie* suits, it is rather absurd to think one would march into combat in red silk pants, a bright blue tunic adorned with shiny gold buttons and a garnished *fez*. The uniform became so famous that several armies around the world adopted the dazzle of the North African-inspired Zouave uniforms, such as American *Zouave* units that fought for both the Union and the Confederacy in the Civil War, and the 5th New York Volunteer Infantry and the Louisiana

Tigers. Perhaps this sauce – studded with little bits of dried fruit and sparkly papaya cubes – does remind one of the glorious deep rich red of the *Zouave* uniform.

The sauce should ideally not be served straight from the fridge, but given time to reach room temperature. It would be very well suited to cold cuts and other room-temperature buffet items; it could work equally well as a pasta sauce. The sauce would also be an ideal accompaniment for roast chicken, steak grilled or done on the braai or any other roast meat.

Although cooking programmes have made *jus* an everyday term, if you are unfamiliar with it, go for a simpler option. What one wants for this recipe is good homemade brown stock, strained and reduced for a long time until one is left with a concentrated, almost viscous brown reduction (called a *jus*), or one could also use good old-fashioned brown sauce. If none of these options work for you, simply dissolve some good commercial brown stock powder or concentrate (or a stock cube) in a little water. However, be wary of the high salt content in these products, which are generally much more concentrated than homemade *jus* or demi-glace.



#### Ingredients for 4 – 6 portions:

8,5 g (2 medium) fresh garlic cloves, finely chopped  
125 g (2 medium) red onions, finely chopped  
60 ml olive oil  
60 ml tomato paste  
120 ml red wine vinegar  
120 ml jus, demi-glace or brown sauce  
15 ml peach chutney  
15 g currants, roughly chopped  
50 g sultanas, roughly chopped  
7,5 ml chilli sauce, such as *sriracha*  
5 ml prepared mustard  
100 g papaya, cut into tiny blocks



#### Method:

Gently fry the onions and garlic together in the olive oil until soft. Add the tomato paste, red wine vinegar and jus or brown sauce. Bring to a boil and then simmer for a minute or so.

Add the chutney, currants and sultanas and simmer for another minute or so.

When the sauce has reached the desired consistency (slightly thickened), remove from the heat and add the chilli sauce, mustard and papaya. Warm it up, but do not boil.

Serve the sauce over roasted chicken with vegetables such as buttered green beans, cauliflower bake and a healthy fresh salad.



# Papaya Raita, Served with Pork and Orange-Fleshed Sweet Potato Curry





The combination of papaya and yoghurt is nothing new; we often enjoy papaya at breakfast with yoghurt and possibly muesli. *Raita*, also referred to as a *pachadi* in Southern India, is a little sauce or condiment that may also sometimes be called *dahi*, referring to the curd-like sour milk mixture it is made of. The *raita* in this recipe is a typical Indian condiment – it lacks salt and acidity and is, therefore, dissimilar to traditional western condiments that are generally more flavourful, pungent or spicy. Instead, a *raita* is supposed to have a cooling effect to contrast the spicy curries they are served with. This papaya *raita* is gentle and refreshing. It is in no way tasteless, on the contrary, the papaya combined with the spices and herbs creates a fantastic contrast of flavours and textures. Even though this *raita* was created to have with a pork curry, it would be equally great with any other curry, or even just as a spread with cold meats on sandwiches.

Since papaya contains the proteolytic enzyme, papain, which breaks down proteins into smaller protein fragments called peptides and amino acids, one should be careful not to mix the papaya and yoghurt too long in advance as the *raita* will become soft and runny. It is, therefore, a good idea to use thick yoghurt (or drain some in a muslin cloth for a few hours), while similarly draining the papaya will also help to strain away some of the inherent moisture in these two ingredients. You do not have to rigorously stick to the amounts or combination of spices added to the papaya and yoghurt in the recipe, however, the *raita* should be vibrant and complementary to the curry, so do try this combination of flavours.



### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

#### For the pork meat marinade:

150 g plain yoghurt  
80 ml fresh orange or naartjie juice  
4 whole bay leaves  
5 ml whole cumin, toasted and crushed  
2,5 ml whole fennel, toasted and crushed  
2,5 ml smoked paprika  
2,5 ml curry powder (medium or hot) or even more if that is your preference  
Zest of 1 lemon  
670 g deboned medium-fat pork cubes (not too small, otherwise the meat becomes dry)

#### For the curry:

2 medium white onions, sliced medium thickness  
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely sliced  
7 cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely julienned  
10 cm piece of fresh turmeric, peeled and finely julienned (replace with 15 ml dried turmeric)  
2 red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced  
60 ml sunflower oil (or other neutral-flavoured oil)  
1 chicken stock cube (optional – or use another flavour)  
30 ml tamarind paste (seeds removed), added to 125 ml water  
3 carrots, peeled and cut into medium-thick rings  
2 orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks  
5 ml salt

#### For the raita:

160 g firm, ripe papaya, peeled and coarsely grated  
60 ml plain full cream yoghurt  
1 cm piece of fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated  
10 medium-small fresh curry leaves, tightly rolled up and very finely sliced  
15 fresh mint leaves, torn up  
2,5 ml onion seeds, toasted, but not crushed  
2,5 ml fenugreek, toasted and slightly crushed  
2,5 ml whole cumin, toasted and crushed

#### To serve:

Boiled or steamed white or brown basmati rice  
Some good quality *roti*  
Large coconut flakes, toasted



### Method:

First make the marinade. Mix all the ingredients for the marinade together, and then mix with the pork cubes in a non-reactive covered bowl to marinate in the fridge for 24 to 48 hours.

To prepare the curry: sauté the onions; garlic; ginger; fresh turmeric; garlic and chillies gently with the oil in a large enamel casserole, stirring often until the onion mix takes on a good colour.

Tip the bowl containing the pork into the pot (no need to drain the marinade off) and continue sautéing on high heat until the pork has taken on a little colour. At this point, the yoghurt in the marinade will curdle, but ignore it.

Now add the stock cube and tamarind then cover the casserole and cook on the stove or in the oven on a gentle heat for two to three hours until the pork is nice and soft.

Midway through, add the carrots, stir, and approximately half an hour before the end, add the sweet potato. It is unlikely that the curry will become too dry, however, should it happen, simply add a little water. Correct the seasoning at the end by adding the salt.

Should the sauce be somewhat curdled, you can bind it with a tablespoon of cornflour mixed into a quarter cup of water. Cook well to ensure no starchy taste remains.

In the meantime, prepare the *raita* – carefully drain the coarsely grated papaya by laying it out on a tea towel for approximately half an hour. Then mix super-gently with the remaining ingredients.

Serve the curry piping hot with steamed rice, a good dollop of *raita* per person, a sprinkle of toasted coconut and *roti* on the side.







# Quesadilla on the Braai

This recipe is an adaptation from one of Suzan Najjar's inventions that uses rotisserie chicken. The smoked chicken, however, adds another layer of depth and complexity. The papaya, toasted between flour tortillas, layered with the smoked chicken, hot sauce, oozy melted cheese and fresh spring onions and parsley delivers a very unusual, but satisfying light meal that can be very easily adapted as a snack or starter at a traditional South African braai. Even though the *quesadilla* toasts better on coals that are slightly burnt out, if you are planning to serve them at the beginning of a braai, scoop some coals out to the side (they do not need a lot of heat) and toast them slowly and lovingly until the cheese starts dripping out. *Quesadillas* translate as "little cheesy things", which is a lovely description for an item that is basically a toasted sandwich or closed type of mini pizza. Even though they are more traditionally made from maize tortillas to the north of Mexico, they are also made with wheat tortillas. The papaya in these *quesadillas* may also not be way out, as *quesadillas* were traditionally stuffed with pumpkin. The warm papaya resembles slightly fruity butternut when eaten straight off the grill, but as they cool down the fresh fruitiness of the papaya and the smoked chicken work best.



### Ingredients for 3 whole quesadillas:

6 flour tortillas or wraps  
150 g mozzarella, grated  
3 whole spring onions, cleaned and thinly sliced on a slant  
¼ of a medium papaya, peeled and sliced thinly  
1½ (about 200 g) smoked chicken breast, shredded  
6 stems flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, finely sliced  
Salt to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
30 ml hot chilli sauce, such as *sriracha* (or more if you like a hot *quesadilla*, or less)  
150 g Brie, sliced  
2 limes (cut in half)



### Method:

Lay three tortillas or wraps on a work surface. Start with the mozzarella cheese and sprinkle evenly over the three bases.

Layer all the remaining ingredients in no particular order, ending with the Brie cheese. Having the cheeses at the outer ends of the tortilla ensures that the *quesadilla* sticks together.

Drizzle over a few drops of lime juice and cover with the second layer of tortilla. The *quesadillas* will be easier to manage on the braai in a two-sided grid, sprayed with a bit of baking spray to prevent sticking.

Note: Although it was not done for this recipe, it may be a good idea to brush the outside of the *quesadillas* with some herby olive oil.



# Poulet au Yassa Burger



Even though the following recipe is for a chicken burger, *yassa*, which originates from Casamance in Senegal, is traditionally prepared with chicken, lamb or fish. The region of Casamance is named after the Casamance River in the southwest of Senegal and is situated between The Gambia and Guinea Bissau. In an authentic *yassa* dish, the meat or fish is usually marinated and carries distinct lemon and mustard flavours. In this recipe, the *yassa* is further enhanced by adding papaya, which blends beautifully with the soft onions and mustard and mellows the flavours somewhat. Not all recipes for *yassa* include sweet peppers (you could easily leave them out), but in this recipe, they do count as an additional vegetable. If, however, you plan to use other items on your burger such as fresh tomatoes or gherkins, the peppers may not be necessary.

In an authentic *yassa*, the chicken is marinated in a sliced onion mix. This means that the onions are moist from the lemon and other ingredients, making it difficult to fry them and they are, therefore, often just boiled in the lemon mixture. In this recipe, the onion mix is fried separately, which means you could also brown the chicken separately and then add it to the *yassa* sauce to cook further for a more authentic dish.





### Ingredients for 6 burgers:

#### For the yassa sauce:

30 ml olive oil  
2 large onions, thinly sliced  
2 medium garlic cloves, sliced  
Knob of fresh ginger, peeled and grated  
1 large red, yellow, or green sweet pepper, sliced  
1 large red chilli, deseeded and sliced (or more if you would like your yassa a little hotter)  
15 ml prepared mustard, such as Dijon  
Zest and juice of 1 lemon  
4 bay leaves  
100 ml fresh chicken stock (or a stock cube dissolved in 100 ml boiling water)  
½ medium ripe papaya, peeled and smashed  
Handful of fresh parsley, finely chopped

#### 6 burger buns

6 deboned skinless chicken breasts, not flattened completely, but slightly batted out so that they are easier to manage on a burger bun, rubbed with olive oil and seasoned

#### Additional:

Burger elements such as aubergine pickle, piccalilli, cucumber pickles and butter  
Selection of fresh leaves and herbs such as rocket, basil or lettuce leaves  
Oven-baked rosemary potato wedges to serve



### Method:

Warm the olive oil in a large heavy-based casserole dish. Add the onions and garlic and cook slowly until they are soft.

Add the ginger, sweet peppers, chilli, mustard, lemon and bay leaves and cook for another minute or two. Turn the heat a little higher and add the stock.

Cover and cook the mixture until the vegetables are cooked and the liquid has become thick, stirring often.

Add the papaya and cook uncovered for a few minutes until the sauce has reduced to a nice, thick consistency. Add the fresh parsley just before serving.

Toast and butter the hamburger buns, top with a good dollop of yassa, grill the chicken and add to the buns, along with any other burger accompaniments. Serve with hot potato wedges.

# Moroccan Chicken with Minty Couscous



Moroccan food is one of the great cuisines of the world. Morocco forms part of the Sahara-Sahel region, which means that there are many similarities between the various countries of the region and influences shared across borders. Despite these cross-border influences, Morocco has a unique and independent cuisine of its own.

One cannot think of the food of Morocco and not acknowledge the influences that geography and landscape, the weather and how people live, exert on it. It is easy to romanticise cream-coloured buildings with large, terraced roofs, or magic courtyards with large ponds and deep overhanging walkways that cast gentle shadows against the relentless sun, where one can lounge on a large mattress covered in beautiful cloth. We all imagine a desert oasis with tents, filled with lush carpets and people lying around, eating and enjoying the cool evening air around warming fires. Although these reflect the dream vision of Morocco, these imagined images also contribute to our understanding of the country's cuisine.

Preserved lemons are as Moroccan as biltong is South African. Their deep and assertive flavour permeates any dish in which they feature, even only in small pieces. Do not forget about rose water, cinnamon, dates and many other unique flavours that typify this special food type. Moroccans make a stew-like dish called a *tagine* that often incorporates dried fruits, nuts such as almonds, green olives and the previously mentioned preserved lemon. Google one of those recipes, they are just the best in the world. But to make a true *tagine*, one also needs a *tagine* cooking vessel – a ceramic base with a cone-shaped lid with a little hole in the top. They are not easy to cook in, as one needs to be fairly skilled to cook in them over direct heat.

The recipe below is, therefore, aimed at the modern cook, who may not have time for gentle, slow cooking. By all means, try one out, but also try this simpler version, which still delivers a



### Ingredients for 4 portions:

#### For the sauce:

4 whole cardamom pods  
5 ml whole cumin  
4 whole cloves  
1 large clove of fresh garlic, cut into small pieces  
Zest and juice of 1 medium lemon  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
5 ml salt  
150 g ripe papaya, peeled and cut into chunks  
2,5 ml ground cinnamon  
2,5 ml ground turmeric  
2,5 ml ground ginger  
60 ml high-grade olive oil (for a different dimension replace the olive oil with plain thick Greek yoghurt)

#### For the couscous:

350 ml instant or Israeli couscous  
4 large Medjool dates, pips removed, cut into slices  
7,5 ml paprika  
5 ml salt, or a chicken stock cube  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
7,5 g fresh mint leaves, removed from the stems  
7,5 g chives, finely sliced

#### To serve:

4 (or more) bone-in or boneless roasted chicken breasts or other chicken portions  
Freshly steamed and buttered green vegetables, such as long-stem broccoli

punchy Moroccan flavour in a lighter style suited to summer's warmer weather. You can, of course, prepare the chicken in a casserole-style, however, the recipe below uses roast chicken, either shop-bought or homemade. The couscous contributes sweet freshness from the dates and mint, but it is the slightly spicy, fruity yellow papaya sauce in this recipe that brings all the elements together. It is simple to make and can be used in many other incarnations, such as a spread on a nice leftover roast chicken sandwich or simply served alongside a braai.



### Method:

First, prepare the sauce. Dry toast the cardamom, cumin, and cloves until fragrant. Stir them often so that they toast evenly. Cool and grind finely.

Place the ground spices and all the remaining sauce ingredients in a liquidiser and process until smooth. Set aside.

If you are using Israeli couscous, gently simmer the dates, couscous, seasoning (either salt or the chicken stock cube), pepper and paprika together, with just a little more water than needed to cover the surface of the couscous. Cook until all the water has evaporated, and the couscous is slightly al dente.

If you are using instant couscous, add all the ingredients (apart from the mint and chives) to a bowl, cover with boiling water along with the stock cube and cover with clingfilm. Set aside to steam for at least 10 minutes.

Afterwards, stir in the fresh herbs. Serve alongside some buttered green vegetables and the roast chicken. Dollop generous amounts of the sauce over and garnish with whole chives.



# Lettuce Wraps



It is not only people suffering from diabetes and other lifestyle diseases who could benefit from restricting their carbohydrate intake. In fact, healthy people could also benefit from cutting back their consumption of carbs, which could assist in alleviating and reduce the adverse effects caused by our diets. As we all know, cutting back on carbs is not that easy; they are all so deliciously comforting, and they provide a level of satisfaction that replacements cannot easily achieve. Is there anything better than a slice of warm freshly baked bread and butter? Part of the problem is that other foods are rarely as satisfying. It is, therefore, good to have a few recipes up your sleeve that are not satisfying and pleasurable, but equally good in terms of nutrition and health. These wraps, completely carefree, are an example. They are somewhat complicated to fold, but once you get the hang of it, it should pose no problem.

The cream cheese mix below is the vehicle for all the seasoning of the whole wrap, so be generous. You could spice up the cream cheese by adding some hot sauce, a little smoked paprika or other spice. The recipe lists some suggested veggies and protein, but feel free to add your favourites, such as sliced avocado.

These wraps are ideal as picnic food. The wraps fit very nicely into those paper food bags that one cuts into a triangle. You could also serve them as a starter to a meal, although they are somewhat messy to eat by hand and are perhaps better enjoyed outside or around the pool.



### Ingredients for 8 medium-sized wraps:

#### For the cream cheese spread:

200 g spreadable full-fat cream cheese  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
1 garlic clove, smeared into a paste using the salt  
45 ml finely chopped fresh parsley  
Zest of 1 lemon  
Juice of ½ a lemon  
30 ml finely chopped additional fresh herbs, such as tarragon, chervil or sorrel  
15 ml good quality olive oil  
1 large head of iceberg lettuce  
8 red radishes, very finely sliced (use a mandoline)  
2 large red peppers, charred, skin removed, and divided into 8 pieces  
200 g cured trout or salmon  
1 medium papaya, cut into thin slices



### Method:

First, make the cream cheese spread. Mix all the ingredients for the spread. Ensure that the spread is soft, or it will break the lettuce when you try to spread it on the leaves. If the spread remains too thick, add a little more lemon juice and/or olive oil.

Very gently pry the lettuce head apart. Select the eight largest and best-looking leaves and set aside. When all the remaining ingredients have been prepared and you are ready to assemble, lay the lettuce leaves out on two or more cutting boards (or you can assemble them one by one).

The aim is to have a lettuce leaf as large, round and flat as a small dinner plate. Make one cut from the outside to the centre of the circle through each of the lettuce leaves.

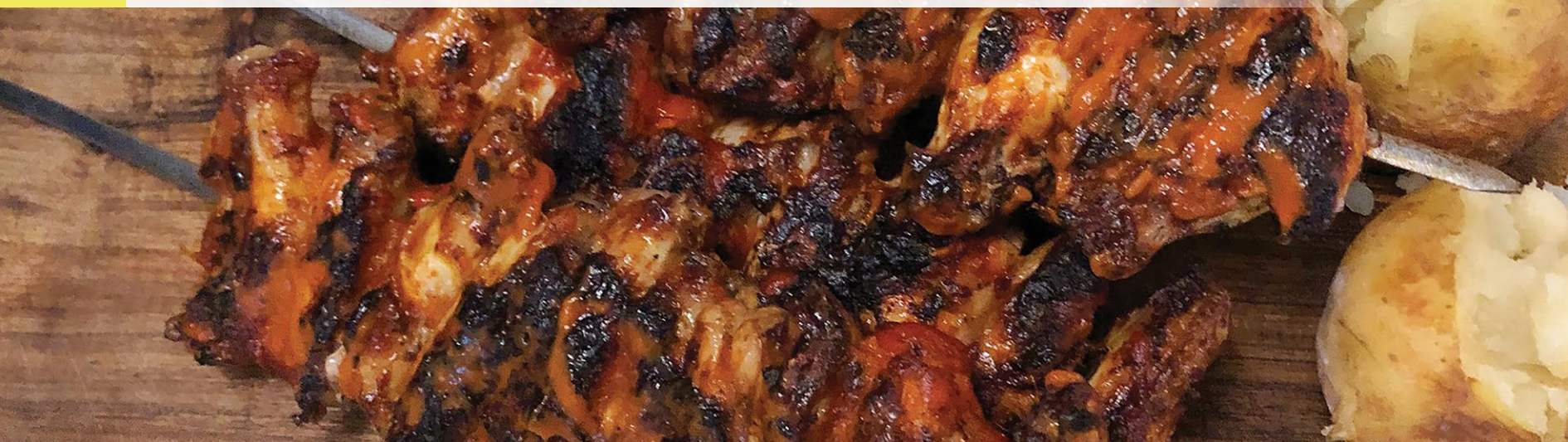
Now imagine the circle being divided into four quarters. On one quarter, spread an eighth of the cream cheese mixture. Place slices of the radish over the spread on the one quarter.

On each of the remaining three quarters, place the cured fish, the roasted red pepper and a couple of papaya slices. Now fold the quarters over onto themselves to form a triangular packet that is the shape of one quarter of the circle.

Finish the remaining packets and enjoy.



# Korean-Style Papaya and Sesame Chicken Kebabs



This recipe celebrates the wonderful flavours of Korean cooking, namely ginger, soy and sesame. Adding papaya to this mix creates a winning combination of flavours to spice up chicken cooked on the braai.

Cooking chicken on the braai is not always easy. Whole chickens in particular, may need to be cooked in a kettle braai to ensure the chicken is cooked thoroughly. There are all sorts of tricks to ensure that the chicken is fully cooked, but not burned by the flames, such as pre-cooking the chicken. However, these methods limit the sensory pleasure one gets from chicken fully cooked on the braai from raw – it should be crusty and golden on the outside, with a nice crisp skin, juicy and moist inside. Another idea that requires a little more effort but is also relatively inexpensive, is to use lesser cuts of chicken such as the wings. Since they are much thinner, they do not need such a long time to cook. To minimise the waste of the chicken tip or pinion that is discarded, freeze and use them to make a nice broth somewhere down the line.

Because the basting in this recipe is slightly red, check carefully that the chicken is properly cooked in strong light. In the same vein, because the basting contains sugar that could burn easily, it is better to only baste the chicken after it has been cooked through.





**Ingredients for 6 generous kebabs (but one may need to double the ingredients for 2 kebabs per portion):**

1,2 kg chicken wings, pinion removed and cut into two joints at the natural joint section

30 ml soy sauce

60 ml dark sesame oil

55 g fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

**For the basting:**

90 g papaya

50 ml lime juice

50 ml tomato sauce

20 ml *sriracha* sauce (add more if you prefer a little more bite)

20 ml soy sauce

40 ml sesame oil

A spot of red food colouring (optional)

**To serve:**

A small handful of toasted sesame seeds



**Method:**

Mix the chicken wing pieces, the soy sauce, the sesame oil and ginger. Marinate the chicken for at least two hours.

In the meantime, blend all the basting ingredients and set aside until ready to use.

String the wings onto metal skewers and braai them over medium coals, turning often. Towards the end of the cooking time, brush the papaya basting over the kebabs while turning them over a few times.

Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds.

# Kedgerree



Kedgerree is a rather strange dish – it is not exactly luxuriant and gloopy like risotto, nor is it dry and flaky like a pilaf. What makes kedgerree even more of an oddity is that it is primarily a breakfast item, particularly for cultures where rice at breakfast sounds a little incongruous. Sudi Pigott from the *Economist* writes that it is a ‘beguiling melange of smoky, salty fish, spiced rice and hard-boiled eggs that is possibly the greatest gift from the Anglo-Indian entanglement to our breakfast tables today’, while the *Larousse Gastronomique* describes it as a ‘concoction’ that originated as a dish of spiced lentils, rice, fried onions and ginger, known as *khichiri*, that can be traced back to fourteenth century India (Pigott 2017). Pigott continues that when the dish travelled back to English Edwardian homes from India, via letters and regiments, the lentils were usually left out and flaked smoked haddock added instead. Alexander Lee from *History Today* says that the best kedgerree is a rich and satisfying dish made from flaked fish, hard-boiled eggs, rice, butter, spices and sultanas (Lee 2018).

Kedgerree is mostly served warm, but with some added papaya it is excellent served cold. Papaya to a certain extent provides a lovely fruity freshness, probably mimicking what sultanas would do in the original recipe. In this recipe, the South African context is amplified by using fresh snoek that has been grilled after being rubbed with salt, pepper and smoked paprika. You can also use smoked snoek or the more traditional smoked haddock. In fact, the dish could probably be made with any freshly cooked fish that flakes into large pieces.

This recipe also uses a standard, commercially available brown and wild rice mix. Try other rice varieties such as Basmati rice; simply adapt the amount of water/stock and cooking time accordingly so you do not end up with mushy rice.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

2 onions, finely sliced  
45 ml olive oil  
10 ml medium heat curry powder  
3 whole cardamom pods, ground finely  
2,5 ml whole cumin, ground finely  
1,5 ml whole fenugreek, ground finely  
5 ml ground turmeric  
5 ml salt  
A pinch of onion seeds  
3 bay leaves  
250 g rice (see note above)  
1 fish stock cube, dissolved in 750 ml water  
300 g grilled snoek, roughly flaked (see note above)  
20 g chopped fresh broadleaf parsley  
Zest and juice of a medium lemon  
4 hard-boiled eggs, quartered  
¼ papaya cubed



### Method:

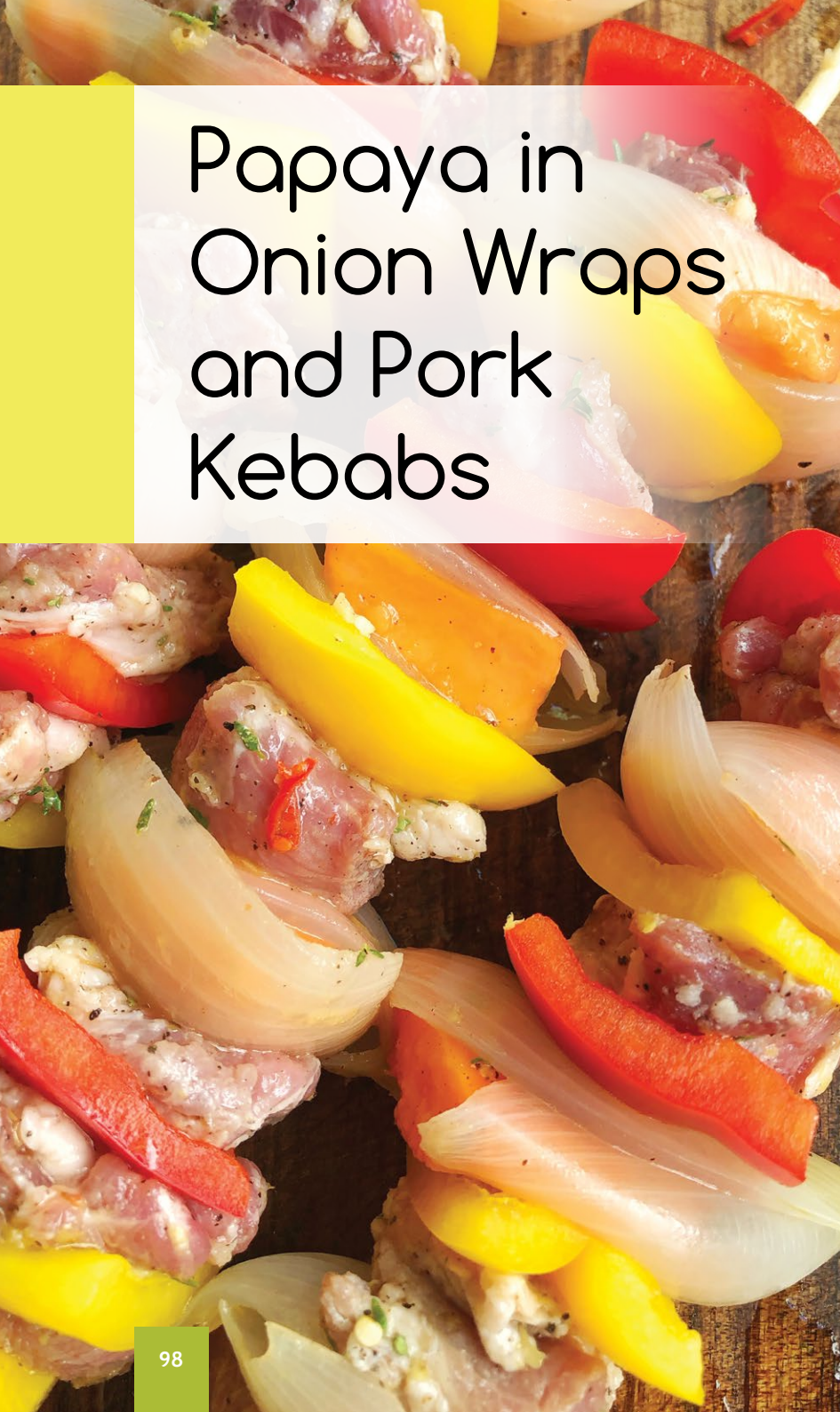
Gently sauté the onions in oil in a large sturdy casserole dish with a lid. When the onions are almost soft, add the curry powder, cardamom, cumin, fenugreek and turmeric.

Fry for a minute or two to release the flavours and lightly toast the spices.

Add the rice, onion seeds, salt and bay leaves, as well as the warm stock. Gently simmer the rice (depending on the variety) until the rice is fully cooked, but by no means falling apart or becoming overly soft.

Once cooled, stir in the fish, parsley, lemon zest and juice, cooked eggs and papaya, and serve.





# Papaya in Onion Wraps and Pork Kebabs

As we have seen in many other recipes in this book, cooking papaya is a complicated, somewhat risky undertaking. Apart from the fact that it falls apart, its taste and texture change dramatically. However, wrapping the papaya in a little protective duvet, which is then seared over high heat on the braai, delivers papaya that is just warmed through and works perfectly in this recipe with fast cooked pork and seared peppers. In fact, because the onion is already cooked, these could be cooked fast on really hot coals, depending on the cut of pork you opted for. A cut of pork with minimal fat could work because it would cook quickly without drying out. Of course, pork with a little internal fat such as pork neck would need slower cooking. If that is the case, ensure that the papaya is very well wrapped in the onion “duvets” to prevent overcooking and falling apart.

The marinade for the kebabs is fairly straight forward and Mediterranean in nature, bar the chilli and sesame oil. Jazz it up a bit by adding some freshly grated ginger, a spot of soy sauce, or for a more indigenous flavour, adding a bit of curry powder.



### Ingredients for 4 skewers:

#### For the marinade:

2 garlic cloves, crushed into a paste  
7,5 ml sugar  
½ lemon, zest removed with a fine micro-plane and juiced  
30 ml olive oil  
15 ml sesame oil  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml fresh thyme leaves, pulled from the stalks  
Optional: 2 fresh chillies (seeds removed, depending on how tolerant you are to chilli heat), sliced or minced

#### For the kebabs:

300 g (approximately 3) whole yellow onions, or even a little more  
500 g (±16) pork fillet or pork neck roast, cut into large cubes (see note above)  
Approximately 16 large papaya cubes (about 3 cm x 3 cm x 3 cm)  
Approximately 8 (each) red, yellow and green sweet pepper squares (so eloquently referred to as Robot Peppers in South Africa), or any combination of these colours  
A grinding of additional salt and pepper  
4 - 6 metal skewers – or in an emergency wooden skewers soaked in water



### Method:

First make the marinade by mixing all the ingredients together. Place the pork cubes in the marinade to absorb flavour for a couple of hours.

The real trick with the onions is to boil them whole in their skin. Large onions would work better, as you would get enough layers of onion to wrap snugly around a piece of papaya. You can always use the inside of the onion for another purpose (add it to your next batch of bolognaise sauce). You will need about four onion-wrapped papaya cubes per kebab, meaning you will need 16 usable layers of onion.

Boil the whole onions in plenty of water, remove them when cooked and place them on a cooling rack until they are cold, draining away any excess moisture.

Remove the outside skin, and then carefully remove the root point, and slip as many usable layers off the onion as possible.

Wrap the papaya cubes in the onion and string onto skewers, alternating with pork cubes and pepper squares.

Grind some additional salt and pepper over the kebab and braai on gentle coals or grill under a salamander (grill) or even on a ridge pan until the pork is just cooked.

Serve with warmed pitas or freshly cooked Basmati rice.





# Guacamole Chicken Braai Burger

Even though chicken remains one of the most consumed meats in South Africa, it takes a back seat to the obligatory boerewors and lamb chops when we braai. This reticence probably stems from the fact that it is not so easy to braai chicken from raw on an open fire although there are many tricks, such as par-cooking it, or, as in this recipe, deboning it. To successfully braai chicken, one needs a good sense of the heat of the braai, with partially burnt-out coals, and constant attention to ensure that the meat does not burn while maintaining food safety levels to ensure the chicken is cooked right through. In this recipe, the skin was left on the deboned chicken thighs for taste and juiciness although removing them would have sped up the cooking process; skinless chicken cooks much easier on the braai, even though it is never as tasty without the delicious crispy skin. The chicken is given a nice South African peri-peri-inspired coating before being placed on the braai, and is served with lettuce leaves, some ribboned carrot, and papaya guacamole. One can of course add much more, such as a slice or two of soft white cheese, possibly even goat's cheese, tomato slices or even a slice or two of crispy bacon. However, this burger is relatively simple, with exciting fresh fruity flavours and delicious crispy chicken with a hint of chilli.

*Guacamole* is a delicious mixture of avocado and other ingredients that originated in Central and Latin America. It is traditionally made by mashing ripe avocados in a *molcajete y tejolote* (mortar and pestle), often with additions such as lime, fresh coriander leaves, onions and chillies such as jalapeños. Other non-traditional ingredients may also be added, such as tomatoes, sour cream and even basil or peas. This recipe, which incorporates papaya, is subtly fruity and pairs extremely well with a hot, crispy piece of chicken straight off the braai. Of course, you do not have to only use the guacamole in or on the burger, it is equally good with nachos. One could also skip the burger, and simply enjoy braai'd chicken with guacamole and salads.





### Ingredients for 6 burgers or 3 double burgers:

#### **Marinade for the chicken:**

½ garlic clove, made into a paste  
Juice of ½ a lemon  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml olive oil  
2,5 ml chilli powder (or more if you like a hot touch)  
15 ml soy sauce  
15 ml honey

#### **For the *guacamole*:**

½ garlic clove, made into a paste  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
7,5 ml smoked paprika  
30 ml olive oil  
Juice and zest of 1 lemon  
1 small, or half of a medium red onion, finely diced  
8 cocktail tomatoes or ½ of a large, normal tomato, finely diced  
A few sprigs of parsley, finely chopped  
1 ripe avocado pear, peeled and mashed  
⅓ of a medium papaya, cut into small cubes

6 burger buns, buttered  
6 large (or 12 small) deboned chicken thighs (skin on or skin off)  
Selection of lettuce  
2 carrots, cut into ribbons with a potato peeler, dressed in a little olive oil, salt and pepper  
Chips or oven-baked orange sweet potato wedges to serve



### Method:

Mix all the ingredients for the chicken marinade. Marinate the chicken in the mixture for at least an hour, then braai the chicken pieces gently until they have a good, crisp skin and are properly cooked on the inside.

Gently mix the ingredients for the *guacamole* and then assemble the burgers in any order, dividing the ingredients between the six buns. Serve with chips or oven wedges.



# Gado Gado

In this recipe, the original Indonesian *Gado Gado* is transformed from a salad to resemble a platter of food with a sauce on the side, much like the French *Le grand aioli*, which is served with a large bowl of garlic mayonnaise on the side. One could still serve this as a salad where the ingredients are tossed together with the sauce, however, it is an elegant starter that people can help themselves with or, with the addition of some deep-fried chicken strips, as a main course. The original recipe does not include chicken or papaya, but papaya and Asian food work perfectly well together, and the *Gado Gado* peanut satay sauce benefits even more from the addition of a little papaya. It tempers the sauce somewhat and provides a wonderfully gentle fruitiness. As for the constitution of the platter itself, one could add any number of vegetables and hard-boiled eggs, while some vegetarian *Gado Gado* recipes include pieces of fried tofu as well. It is an ingenious plate of food, with the sharp, spicy, peanut sauce providing moreish yumminess.

Most of the vegetables on this platter have been blanched – plunged into rapidly boiling salted water for a couple of minutes, according to the type of vegetable, and then immediately plunged into a bowl of ice-cold water with some ice cubes to arrest the cooking. One could do all this ahead of time, and when you are ready to serve, lightly spritz them with a little olive oil to return their vibrancy. Other vegetables could be left raw and fresh, such as cucumber, cocktail tomatoes and radishes.



**Ingredients for a substantial platter that can serve  
6 – 8 portions:**

**For about 600 ml of peanut satay sauce:**

1½ onion, roughly chopped  
3 (or more) red or green chillies (depending on the level of heat  
you prefer), seeds removed and roughly chopped  
2 (or more) garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped  
45 ml olive oil  
60 g unsalted dried peanuts (or the equivalent quantity of  
sugar-free peanut butter)  
15 ml shrimp paste  
40 g palm sugar or brown sugar  
80 ml fresh lime juice  
40 ml fish sauce  
40 ml normal soy sauce (not the thick variety)  
250 ml coconut milk  
80 g ripe papaya, cubed

**For the platter (determine the quantity of vegetables according  
to the number of guests you want to serve):**

Blanched green beans, trimmed  
Blanched asparagus, trimmed  
6 or 8 medium hard-boiled eggs, peeled and cut in half  
Young cucumbers, sliced in half lengthways  
Handful cocktail tomatoes  
Handful small radishes  
About 8 to 10 new potatoes, softly boiled and cut in half  
Handful of julienned carrot sticks, blanched  
3 or 4 chicken breasts cut into strips lengthways, dipped in  
seasoned flour and deep-fried on high heat  
⅓ ripe papaya, sliced into wedges

The word *Gado Gado* comes from the Indonesian word *digado*, which comes from the Indonesian Betawi culture – a culture that we know in South Africa as Batavia, the current Jakarta (Tanumihardja 2024). The word apparently implies that the dish is not eaten with rice, which is why rice is not included as a key ingredient in *Gado Gado*. However, a few rice cakes (like *lontong*) are sometimes added along with shrimp chips.

The satay sauce for this recipe has specific volumes, however, feel free to adapt them. If you like a peanut flavour, increase the amount of peanut butter or peanuts, and if you like it hotter, increase the chillies.



**Method:**

Make the *Gado Gado* sauce by gently sautéing the onion, garlic and chillies in the olive oil until soft.

Add the peanuts (or paste), the shrimp paste and palm sugar and cook over a medium heat for the flavours to develop.

Add the lime juice, fish sauce, soy sauce and coconut milk and boil gently until the sauce is slightly reduced. Cool down.

Add the papaya and purée in a liquidiser to a smooth sauce.

Serve the sauce in a large sauce boat as an accompaniment to all the other items on a large platter.

Note: one can find ingredients such as shrimp paste, palm sugar and fish sauce from Asian grocery shops.



# Coronation Chicken



Although we in the Southern Hemisphere should probably opt for room-temperature food around our holidays in December, many people still cling to old traditions and often serve a heavy, warm-cooked meal in the heat of the day. Often this meal will feature turkey, which is closely associated with Christian Christmas celebrations, and can often be tough and dry. One can try this version of Papaya Coronation Chicken with turkey or any other fowl, poached and cooled in the poaching liquid, and served with a delicious, savoury curry and papaya sauce, along with an array of other cold buffet food items, such as rice salad (perhaps a simple version to balance out the spiciness of the Coronation sauce with cooked peas, diced cucumber, finely chopped fresh mixed herbs and a French dressing) and/or other salads. It is, however, an excellent dish any time of the year, and the sweet and spicy fruitiness will even work well in winter.

This recipe was inspired by the classic British favourite, Coronation Chicken, which is said to have been created by Constance Spry and Rosemary Hume in 1953. These two ladies would eventually have a longstanding association with the Cordon Bleu Cookery School in London, but in those years, Constance Spry was the royal florist. Regardless of how it happened, she and Rosemary Hume ended up creating a buffet dish called Coronation Chicken to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, inspired by “Jubilee Chicken” which was created for George V’s silver jubilee in 1935. The traditional recipe is a bright yellow, curry-flavoured dish, but other more sophisticated versions use fresh herbs and spices and additional ingredients, such as flaked almonds, raisins and *crème fraîche*. The original dish is also made with dried apricots, however, in this version, papaya adds fruitiness to the dish. The papaya is not cooked, so do not let the sauce stand for an extended period.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

60 ml sunflower oil  
2 medium onions, sliced or roughly chopped  
2 - 3 garlic cloves, chopped  
15 g fresh ginger peeled and chopped  
1 medium-sized red chilli (optional)  
Zest and juice of 1 lemon  
3 g cumin seeds  
4 g coriander seeds  
1 g ground cinnamon  
1 cardamom pod  
4 g ground turmeric  
2 g fennel seeds  
1 whole star anise  
2 g ground paprika  
3 ml salt  
5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
200 g papaya  
80 ml olive oil  
7,5 ml sugar  
1 whole chicken, poached and shredded



### Method:

Fry the onion, garlic and ginger in the oil until somewhat softened. Add the chilli (if using), the lemon zest and all the remaining spices and seasoning.

Fry a little longer to allow the spices to release their fragrant smell.

Cool the mixture and then place in a liquidiser along with the lemon juice, the sugar and 140 g of the papaya. Purée to a smooth paste and then gradually add the olive oil to create a thick emulsion.

The sauce can now either be mixed with the shredded chicken or spooned separately over with some additional papaya cut into attractive cubes as garnish.



# Chirashizushi





*Chirashizushi* or *Chirashi* Sushi is a fantastic and special festive dish that could prove a favourite with anyone, even those who may not like sushi. It is a type of sushi bowl that is served on very specific occasions. If you are interested in the detailed history of *Chirashizushi*, read Namiko Hirasawa Chen's (Nami), author of Just One Cookbook (JOC), explanation (Chen 2024).

You could make it much more traditional by adding pieces of fresh fish, or you could make it vegetarian (bar the bonito and plaice powder), as in this recipe. You could also make it far more luxurious (for example, when you are at the sea and know how to open sea urchins or uni) or keep it a festive yet affordable dish. The papaya in this recipe provides a delightfully sweet surprise and ensures that there is enough dressing for flavour

and to moisten the rice and other ingredients. Be sure to crank up the heat with the chilli powder in the *furikake* if that is your thing, and most importantly, ensure that the *furikake* is delicious and moreish.

Even though, in this recipe, all the separate elements are made by hand, you could purchase pre-made elements such as the *furikake* sprinkles to make it a little easier. *Furikake* is a dry Japanese seasoning that livens up even an ordinary bowl of steamed rice. Kelp is dried seaweed and is easily found in Asian stores. To dry toast it, place it in a dry pan on medium-low heat, moving it around continuously until it becomes brittle and discolours slightly – there will also be a marked change in the aroma, which will be a deep, toasty smell.



### Ingredients for 6 portions:

#### For the dressing (15 ml per person):

10 g sugar  
20 g soy sauce  
30 g white or dark vinegar  
30 g vegetable oil  
7 g wasabi paste

#### For the *furikake* seasoning (the recipe makes 80 g in total, and one needs approximately 5 - 6 g per person, so store the rest or adapt the recipe for a smaller volume):

18 g kelp, dry toasted (see above) and powdered or ground in a pestle and mortar or electric spice grinder  
10 g nori, ground in a pestle and mortar or electric spice grinder  
30 g white sesame seeds, dry toasted (see above)  
10 g bonito flakes, powdered  
7 g castor sugar  
4 g salt  
1,5 g chilli powder  
3 g fish powder (such as plaice) – optional

#### For the rice:

30 g sugar  
30 ml white vinegar  
200 g sushi rice  
375 ml water  
15 ml salt

#### For the main bowl:

120 g white button mushrooms, fried in a little vegetable oil until cooked, with a splash of mirin and soy sauce added along with a large pinch of sugar  
2 eggs, mixed with 10 ml of chicken stock powder and 30 ml of water  
90 g papaya, cut into julienne  
60 g carrot (or red or yellow pepper), cut into julienne and steamed  
24 g fresh ginger, peeled and cut into julienne  
60 g fresh young spinach, blanched  
30 g radish, cut into thin coins  
18 g spring onions, thinly sliced at a slant  
60 g cucumber, cut into julienne  
24 g edible lichen from an Asian store, plumped up in hot water (optional)



### Method:

Mix the ingredients for the dressing and set aside. Mix the ingredients for the *furikake* and set aside.

Gently fry the egg mixture in a medium non-stick pan. Roll up like a pancake and cut into thin rings. Prepare all the remaining ingredients and set aside.

Mix the sugar and vinegar for the rice and set aside. Be very sure to follow the rice cooking instructions meticulously. Soak the rice in plenty of water (not the 375 ml measured water) for exactly 15 minutes. Drain, and then allow the rice to rest for 20 minutes.

Now boil the rice in the 375 ml water in a large pot, covered, for 20 minutes. Switch off the heat, lift the lid, drape a damp tea towel over the pot, and replace the lid – allow the rice to steam for another 15 minutes.

Open the rice, sprinkle the sugar/vinegar mixture over, and fluff the rice loose with a flat spatula or palate knife, making sure to not compress the rice in any way.

Divide the rice between six flat bowls. Divide all the ingredients of the main bowl list over the rice – you can arrange them in little clumps or spread them out evenly.

Drizzle the dressing generously over the rice, and sprinkle with the *furikake*. Serve immediately with forks, spoons or chopsticks.





# Buddha Bowl



Buddha bowls are a relatively new trend in the restaurant world, with many different versions popping up – perhaps because the concept is loosely defined and open to interpretation. Some contain no protein at all, in deference to the dietary restrictions of Buddhists, while some may perhaps include some cheese. The Epicurious writer Katherine Sacks believes that they may well be an offshoot of what macrobiotic restaurants served as macro bowls, often consisting of grains, legumes, blanched leafy greens, steamed vegetables, a pickled vegetable and a delicious sauce, which is basically what our Buddha bowls these days also consist of, particularly the delicious sauce (Sacks 2017). Sauces can be anything sharp and full of flavour, such as peanut sauce, lemon vinaigrette, green goddess dressing or coriander lime dressing – all suggestions from [loveandlemons.com](http://loveandlemons.com). For this recipe, a tahini sauce was chosen, which works well to draw all the different elements, including the fresh papaya, together.

What is of importance is a variety of cooked, pickled and fresh vegetables. Carefully consider colour, texture, and complementary tastes. Some starch or pulses should also be included. In this recipe, we have suggested tiger nuts, also called *chufa* or *atadwe*, yellow *nutsedge* or earth almond. They are from the *sedge* family (*Cyperus esculentus*) and grow all over the world, including the African continent. Tiger nuts can be found in health shops, usually dried, and should be rehydrated before being cooked or eaten raw. For this recipe they were rehydrated, boiled and then pan-fried in sesame oil with a sprinkling of salt and smoked paprika. They have a remarkably crunchy texture and are quite filling. Alternatively, some chickpeas can be treated in the same way, that is, soaked, boiled and then pan-fried.



### Ingredients for 4 portions:

#### For the Buddha bowl:

250 ml cabbage salad – in this recipe, the red cabbage was cut into a very fine chiffonade, sprinkled with salt and left to wilt. Then washed, drained and mixed with olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar and minced garlic. However, a simple coleslaw would also work

250 ml tabbouleh – in this recipe, the tabbouleh was made with brown rice, but could also be made as in the traditional recipe with bulgur wheat or perhaps something slightly more South African such as cooked sorghum

4 each, oven-roasted red and golden beetroots, sliced, cubed or halved

250 ml spiced tiger nuts (see above)

1 whole medium ripe papaya, thinly sliced

Fresh herbs, such as purple basil and nasturtium flowers for garnish

#### For the tahini dressing:

1 clove garlic, minced

100 ml olive oil

50 ml fresh lemon juice

10 ml prepared mustard

2,5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

10 ml sugar

50 ml tahini



### Method:

Liquidise (or use a stick-blender) all the ingredients for the dressing together. Taste for seasoning.

Divide all the remaining bowl ingredients between four deep bowls and artfully arrange them so that there is an interesting play of colour and texture.

Drizzle some sauce over and garnish.



# Eisbein



The traditional German *Schweinshaxe* (pig shank), better known as *Eisbein* (ice bone) in South Africa, are very popular here, perhaps because they are smoky, full of flavour, quite generous and hearty. *Eisbein* is a northern German delicacy where the hock is white and resembles snow, primarily because it has only been brined and not smoked, and perhaps because they are mostly served when it is cold in the northern German parts. There is also a difference in cooking preparation: true *Eisbein* in Germany would not be roasted, but boiled. In South Africa, *Eisbein* is mostly cured and smoked, and sometimes even slightly cooked. We are, therefore, strictly speaking enamoured of *Schweinshaxe* rather than *Eisbein*. Be that as it may, however you like your *Eisbein*, cured or cured and smoked, the meat of South African *Eisbein* is generally quite pink because of the Prague powder used to brine or pickle the hocks in. Other variants also exist, such as the Polish dish *Golonka* or *Golonko*, the Swedish *Fläsklägg med rotmos* (grilled on the braai), another from Switzerland called *Wädli*, as well as an Austrian version called *Stelze*.

Somehow pork always marries well with something sweet – a little stewed apple, some sharp, spicy-sweet chutney, perhaps a red wine and cherry sauce, or even something simple like a sweet mustard sauce. Sweet fruit sauces specifically, work very well, such as the meat-based papaya sauce in this recipe which is just the right partner for a bit of smoked pork. The cooking liquor in which the *Eisbein* was slowly braised forms the perfect base for the sauce, to which roughly mashed papaya is added at the last minute and swirled around off the heat, allowing the papaya to just warm up in the gravy, but not cook (which would alter its taste too markedly), resulting in a splendid fruity sauce with a smidgeon of sweetness to offset the savouriness of the meat.



One can allow one *Eisbein* per person, however, if the meat is removed from the bone and shredded, a single hock can easily provide for up to three people as a main course, when augmented by starch and vegetables. Should you wish to serve each person their own *Eisbein*, it may be advisable to follow the recipe below and then finish them over some coals on the braai, so that the skin can crisp up (which one can also do under the grill or salamander, but without that lovely smoky flavour). If you decide to pull the meat from the bone, one can regulate the fat a little, and of course, serve the crisp skin on the side.



**Ingredients for 4 - 8 portions (depending on whether you serve the *Eisbein* whole, or the meat removed from the bone):**

4 or 8 *Eisbein* (depending on whether they are served whole or shredded)

600 ml white wine or beer

200 ml mixed fruit juice

1 small/medium very ripe papa, peeled and mashed coarsely with a fork

2 whole dried cloves

1 whole allspice berry

1,25 ml aniseed

1,25 ml chilli powder

1,25 ml smoked paprika

1,25 ml mustard seeds



**Method:**

Place the *Eisbein* in a large oven-roasting tin. Pour the wine (or beer) and fruit juice over the *Eisbein*. Cover tightly with tinfoil and braise slowly for 3 hours at 150 °C.

Afterwards, keep the meat warm while the sauce is being made. To make the sauce, reduce the liquid from the roasting tin in a pot to around 300 ml.

Grind the spices together and add to the sauce. There should be no need for any salt, as the meat should have flavoured the liquid sufficiently, however, check the seasoning in any case, adding a little salt and pepper if needed. The sauce should be the same consistency as thin cream.

Either shred the meat from the *Eisbein* bones or crisp the skin of the whole *Eisbein* over the braai or under a grill. Add the mashed papaya to the sauce and serve spooned over the meat.

Mash potato and mixed vegetables are excellent accompaniments to this hearty dish.

# Papaya and Egg Curry



Many countries in the south-central Asian peninsular region, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka make various versions of egg curries. Where the climate allows, many of these recipes incorporate boiled green papaya. Green papaya is not something we associate with everyday South African cuisine, and therefore, it is not that easy to find. For this reason, the following recipe is made with ripe papaya, which imparts a wonderful gentle fruitiness to the curry. Even though the papaya is grated, it should not cook for so long that it disintegrates. The charm lies therein that one can still recognise and distinguish the papaya's taste. Many of these recipes also fry the whole hardboiled eggs before incorporating them into the curry. This step is, however, not included (although it is something that one may want to experiment with), rather opting for hardboiled eggs of which the white and yolk were just set, so that they would remain creamy after being added to the curry, instead of turning rubbery. Frying the hardboiled eggs and then cooking them in the curry sauce essentially cooks the eggs three times, which would make retaining any creaminess, something that is necessary for this recipe, rather impossible.

This is an ideal recipe to entertain vegetarian guests, as it is suitably unusual to surprise, extremely flavourful and quite pretty to look at. Even though the recipe includes chickpeas and cauliflower, there is no reason why you cannot add any number of other vegetables, as long as they complement the papaya.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

2 medium yellow onions, sliced  
5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced  
25 g fresh ginger, peeled and julienned  
2 red chillies, deseeded and thinly sliced (optional)  
80 ml sunflower or other mild-tasting oil  
7,5 ml turmeric  
7,5 ml paprika  
5 ml ground cinnamon  
5 ml mild curry powder  
7,5 ml whole coriander  
7,5 ml whole cumin  
4 whole cardamom pods  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
7,5 ml sugar  
15 ml fresh lemon juice  
200 ml vegetable stock  
400 ml coconut milk  
160 g ripe, but firm papaya, coarsely grated  
200 g cauliflower, cut into smaller florets  
250 g cooked chickpeas  
8 (or 12 if you are serving 6 portions) hard-boiled eggs, shelled  
Handful of chopped parsley

#### To serve:

Rice  
*Roti*  
Fresh coriander



#### Method:

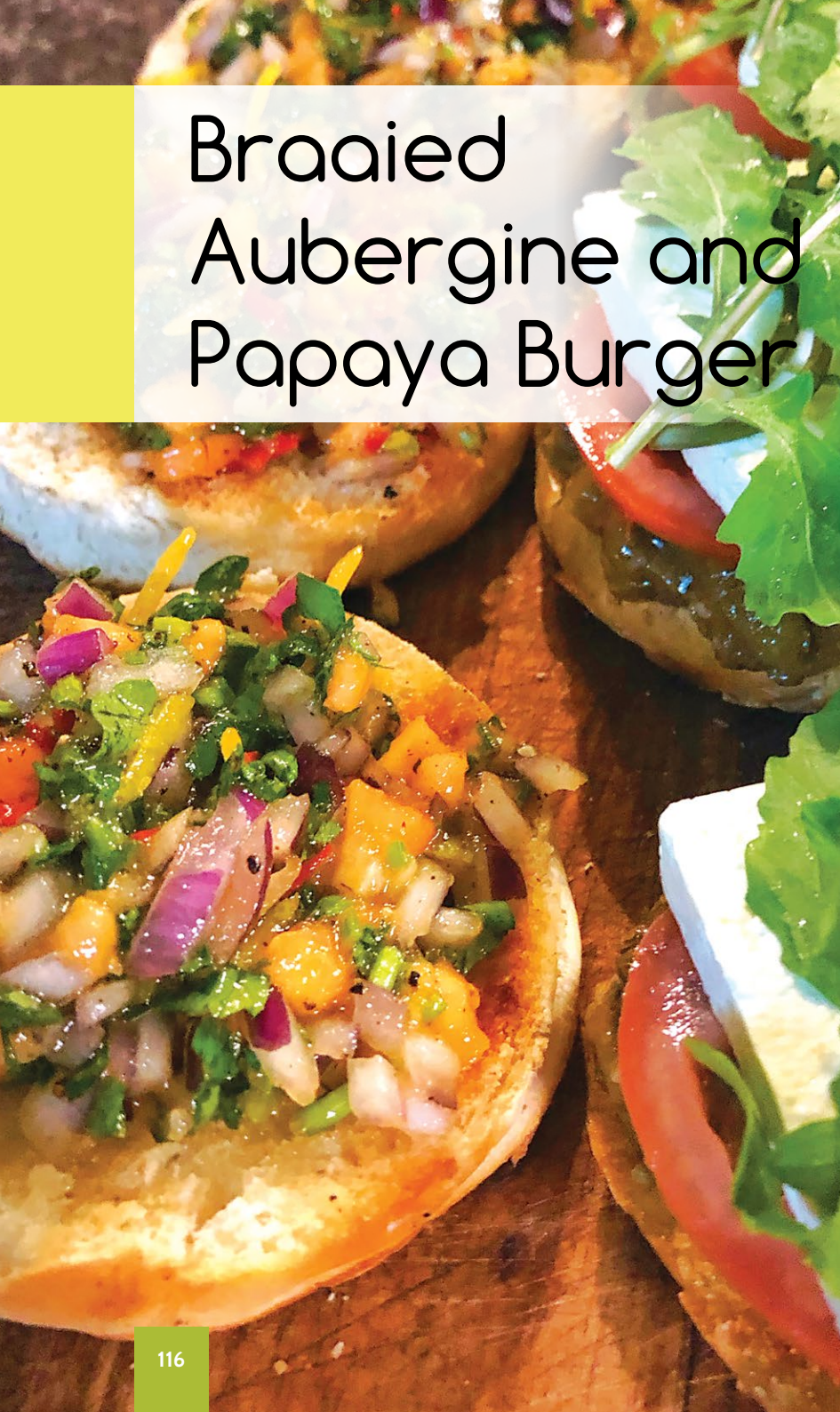
Gently sauté the onions, garlic, chilli and ginger in the oil. Grind the coriander, cumin and cardamom finely. Add this, together with the turmeric, paprika, cinnamon and curry powder to the onion mix.

Fry, stirring continuously until the spices develop a good aroma. Add the stock and coconut milk as well as the cauliflower. Simmer gently until the cauliflower is slightly cooked.

Add the chickpeas, salt, pepper, sugar, lemon as well as the papaya. Cook on medium-high until all the ingredients are well integrated. Add the eggs and chopped parsley and warm thoroughly.

Serve with rice, *roti* and a sprinkling of torn fresh coriander. One may want to cut some of the eggs in half to show the beautiful egg yolk.





# Braaied Aubergine and Papaya Burger

Burgers on the barbeque are not something that South Africans would consider a braai. Probably because we hardly ever braai on a solid plate, generally using a type of grill that has direct exposure to open coals, and braaiing patties made from minced meat on a grid with spaces has many potential problems. Furthermore, most South Africans would run a mile if they were invited to a braai without meat. So, meat-free burgers on the braai are probably totally anomalous for us, however, since pulled meat (such as pork or beef) burgers are so trendy at the moment, we encourage you to try these vegetarian burgers.

One of the problems with aubergines, and a reason why people may not immediately have an affinity for them, is that they are often undercooked. Make sure to braai these extremely well. Furthermore, it is advised that you buy aubergines that are fairly mature – young aubergines have a different texture that would not work well in a recipe where the aubergines are cooked whole.

Barbeque sauce is somewhat of a sore point – some are not piquant, being neither tomatoey nor spicy, and bad-quality brands are just nasty. If you feel like making your own, Google a good recipe or buy a brand you trust – one wants a deep umami flavour that is simultaneously sweet, acidic and savoury.

Accompany these burgers with whole corn on the cob, braaied on the open fire.



### Ingredients for 6 portions:

#### For the pulled aubergine:

2 large or 3 medium aubergines ( $\pm$ 800 g), pricked all over with a fork  
2 garlic cloves, mashed  
60 ml olive oil  
5 ml smoked paprika  
5 ml sugar  
60 ml barbeque sauce  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
Juice of  $\frac{1}{2}$  a lemon

#### For the papaya parsley salsa (all mixed together):

1 medium red onion, finely diced  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  medium papaya, diced small  
1 red chilli, seeds removed, finely sliced  
50 g fresh Italian (broad leaf) parsley, finely sliced  
Zest of 1 lemon  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  garlic clove, mashed  
2,5 ml salt  
15 ml olive oil

6 burger buns, cut in half, spread with a flavoured parsley (or similar) butter and toasted  
12 slices of tomato  
6 thin whole slices of hard feta cheese  
2 handfuls of leaves (rocket, basil, lettuce, or any mix)



### Method:

On medium-high coals, braai the aubergines whole, turning often until they are quite soft and pulpy – it will take a good 30 to 45 minutes. Allow them cool, then cut the aubergines in half, lengthways and strip (shred) out the inside in long pieces.

The aubergine should come away from the charred skin quite easily, however, if small bits should remain, do not try and get them all off. Those little bits of charred skin provide a nice braaied flavour to the aubergine. The shredded pieces should look like shredded lamb or beef.

Gently stir through all the remaining aubergine ingredients.

Assemble the burgers in whatever order suits you, dividing the papaya salsa and aubergine between the six buns. Secure them with a large cocktail stick.





# Braaied Chicken Nachos

It might be difficult to imagine how a plate of maize crisps – or chips, as they are called in South Africa – covered with melted cheese and other ingredients could be both delicious and addictive. Yet, this dish truly offers a complete meal, featuring plenty of fresh vegetables, nutrient-rich beans, and in this case, the mellow sweetness of papaya to provide balance. When paired with braaied chicken breasts, the combination works beautifully, making it easy to over-indulge.

For the papaya *pico de gallo* (a type of salsa commonly used in Mexican cuisine), the papaya was cut into small cubes, although larger cubes might better highlight the fruit's sweetness. The addition of chicken, braaied over an open fire, introduced a rich smokiness that complemented the other ingredients seamlessly.

Refried beans might seem unfamiliar to many South Africans. Despite the name, they are simply mashed-up cooked beans (of any type) combined with cooked onions and flavourings. In this recipe, tinned beans were used for convenience, although dried beans can certainly be soaked and cooked from scratch. While some recipes recommend mashing the beans into a smooth paste, leaving a few whole or partially broken beans, as done here, adds texture and interest.





### Ingredients for 6 portions:

#### For the papaya *pico de gallo*:

3 ripe tomatoes, cut into small dice  
½ red onion, finely diced  
2 or more (depending on taste) green or red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced  
⅓ of a ripe, but firm papaya, diced into medium cubes  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
7,5 ml salt  
60 ml fresh lime juice  
15 g fresh coriander, finely sliced

#### For the refried beans:

60 ml olive oil  
1 red onion, finely diced  
1 large clove garlic, minced  
5 ml salt  
Pinch (or more depending on taste) chilli powder  
7,5 ml whole cumin, coarsely ground  
1 tin (400 g net mass) red beans, drained (reserve half of the brine liquid)  
50 ml fresh lime juice

4 chicken breasts, coated with olive oil and salt and pepper, gently braaied on the fire until cooked, but not dry, shredded with two forks  
2 x 200 g packets of nachos or tortilla crisps, any flavour  
250 g white cheddar cheese, coarsely grated  
200 ml sour cream, whipped until airy  
2 avocado pears, scooped with a spoon into rough chunks or made into your favourite guacamole

#### To garnish:

10 g fresh coriander  
5 or 6 pickled chillies, sliced  
Wedges of fresh lime



### Method:

Mix all the ingredients for the *pico de gallo* together – set aside until required.

To make the refried beans, warm the olive oil in a medium pot. Fry the onions and garlic on medium heat until they are fully cooked and translucent – stirring all the time.

Add the seasonings and fry for another minute or so.

Add the beans and brine water and cook on high heat smashing the beans as much or as little as you wish. Cook for a few minutes, but do not dry out the mixture too much. Add the lime juice.

Place all the crisps in one spread out layer on an oven-proof platter. Warm them in the oven for approximately 10 minutes at 160 °C until they are fragrant.

Sprinkle over the grated cheese and return to a slightly hotter oven (180 °C) for another 10 minutes or until the cheese is nicely melted.

Immediately dollop over the refried bean mix, followed by the *pico de gallo* (keep some of the collected vegetable water back), the shredded chicken, the scoops (or *guacamole*) of avocado, dollops of whipped sour cream, and finally the fresh coriander.

Garnish with any of the optional additions and enjoy.

# Papaya and Prawn Vindaloo



Nowadays, there is hardly an Indian restaurant outside of India that does not have a *vindaloo* on the menu. However, if one deciphers its core culinary components, it becomes a little murky, as there are numerous versions going around. If you are one of those cooks who likes to investigate the back story of a recipe, do yourself a favour and read Kendra Phillips' post on the origins and history of *vindaloo*, it is detailed and full of little bits of useful information (Phillips 2022). Phillips writes that this dish is intricately linked with colonisation and appropriation; in her words 'the dish is a poster child for global integration'. Even though it is now viewed as an Indian curry, it has apparently been adapted from a Portuguese Goan dish called *carne de vinho e alhos*, and *vindaloo* arose from a 'garbled mispronunciation of *vinho e albos*' according to Lizzie Collingham in *Curry: A tale of Cooks and Conquerors* (Collingham 2006: 68). Cookbook author Dan Toombs writes in his book *The Curry Guy Bible* that *vindaloos* often pack a vinegary punch, while Madhur Jaffrey in *The Ultimate Curry Bible* seems to favour the inclusion of wine that turned vinegary from the long journey on a Portuguese ship (Toombs 2020). In many *vindaloo* recipes the protein is marinated, however, the prawns in this curry do not really need marinating, so this step was excluded.

The incorporation of papaya with prawn in this version of *vindaloo* contributes a gentle fruity sweetness. The natural sweetness of the prawn meat marries the papaya perfectly in this curry, resulting in a mellow taste profile. Because prawns generally cook very quickly, the papaya will not fall apart and disintegrate completely in the sauce. If you live in an area where fresh prawns are difficult to come by, use frozen ones – just be sure to defrost them fully, pat them dry in a tea towel, pressing down to remove some of the excess moisture. *Vindaloo* recipes tend to include meat or fish, but do not feature vegetables. Adding some papaya, adds a bit more interest. Serve with simple, steamed Basmati rice, or go to town and add chutneys or Indian breads. They would all work well.



#### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

7,5 ml whole coriander seeds  
5 whole, green (or white) cardamom pods  
5 ml whole black pepper  
7,5 ml yellow mustard seeds  
5 ml ground cinnamon  
2,5 ml ground cloves  
45 ml sunflower oil  
3 (or more if you like a little more heat) large red chillies (deseeded or not, for even more heat), sliced  
200± g (one medium) onion, sliced from top to bottom  
11± g (3) garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
35±g (1 large) knob of fresh ginger, peeled and grated (or sliced if you do not mind pieces of whole ginger)  
10 ml salt  
15 g tamarind paste (remember to look out for brands containing seeds in the paste which should first be removed)  
25 g tomato purée  
400 g prawns, cleaned  
200 ml coconut milk  
150 g firm, but fully ripe papaya, cut into medium chunks



#### Method:

First, dry fry the coriander, cardamom, pepper and mustard in a clean pan – take care not to burn them. As soon as they release a good flavour, tip the cinnamon and cloves in. Immediately take off the heat and continue to stir to avoid scorching the ground spices.

Grind everything finely in a spice grinder or pestle and mortar.

In a large heavy-bottomed casserole, add the oil and gently fry the chilli, onions, garlic and ginger until they are soft.

Add the ground spices, salt, tamarind and tomato purée and cook together for a minute or two, stirring occasionally.

Add the prawns and coconut milk and bring to a simmer. Immediately add the papaya and cook for a minute or two longer. Should the curry appear a little dry, soften it with a small amount of water. Remember that both the prawns and the papaya will release moisture, and one does not want sloppy curry. Serve immediately.



# Bobotie



Like many other recipes, the exact origin of *bobotie* is murky. Peet du Toit writes in his book *Skottel en Spens* (stories, rhymes and recipes from the Afrikaans food culture) that the word *bobotie* comes from the Indonesian word *bobotek*, for which a recipe appeared in a Dutch cookbook in 1609 (Du Toit 2013). It is one of those recipes in the South African culinary repertoire that people have many diverse and opposing opinions about.

One of the foremost points of contention is whether the meat should be cooked prior to being baked. Many food historians concur that *bobotie* was often served on a Monday, after Sunday lunch, from which there would likely be leftover meat – in which case it obviously would have been made from cooked meat. In that case, it would likely be from a roast or meat of a similar nature. In modern households it is unlikely that more than one meat protein would be served on a Sunday, let alone preparing so much that there would be leftover meat. The question remains whether the mince should be cooked prior to baking it in the oven. In this recipe the meat is used raw, which poses many potential risks, but also many delights. Then there is the debate whether *bobotie* is better made from lamb or beef mince. Purists would not even look at this recipe which features papaya, making it even less traditional. However, the papaya contributes both fruity sweetness and keeps the *bobotie* moist, without taking anything away from the gentle spiciness expected from a traditional *bobotie*.

Because raw meat is used in this recipe, there will be a large amount of cooking juices separating from the meat during the initial cooking, which could make many cooks apprehensive. This, however, makes the *bobotie* deliciously moist and juicy. Be careful to use a large enough oven dish, rather than one that is too small. It is advisable to opt for a flatter dish that will help you control the cooking time so that the *bobotie* does not dry out – in fact lamb mince cooks fairly fast.

This recipe does not contain almonds, but you could easily include a small handful of crushed almonds. Serve the *bobotie* with the classic accompaniment, yellow rice, or forego a starch and just add a simple tomato and onion salad.



#### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

30 ml sunflower oil  
1 onion, thinly sliced  
1 garlic clove, minced  
330 g firm ripe papaya, coarsely grated  
500 g lamb, finely ground  
2 slices of stale white bread, crust removed, soaked in  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup milk and squeezed to remove excess moisture  
2,5 ml ground cloves  
5 ml salt  
10 ml medium prepared curry powder  
5 ml ground turmeric  
2 eggs  
30 ml hot water  
20 ml fresh lemon juice  
30 ml sugar  
10 ml smoked paprika  
15 ml apricot jam  
15 ml fruit chutney  
120 g raisins or sultanas

#### For the baked topping:

1 egg  
150 ml milk or plain yoghurt (for a more modern interpretation)  
4 bay- or fresh lemon leaves



#### Method:

Lightly sauté the onion and garlic in the oil.

Allow to cool. Mix all the remaining ingredients (apart from the topping ingredients) in a large mixing bowl.

Transfer the mixture to a greased/buttered oven casserole and bake for approximately 15 to 20 minutes in a preheated (190 °C) oven. Check the meat after the first 15 minutes, and lightly press the mixture down – if it is firming up rapidly, reduce the cooking time. If the mixture feels uncooked, cook a little longer. The aim is to have meat that is almost entirely cooked, but not dry. At this point a substantial amount of cooking liquid and fat would have separated from the meat, leaving the mince sitting in a puddle of liquid – do not fear. As soon as the meat is cooked, carefully tip out this liquid and mix some of it (or all if you do not mind the fat) into the yoghurt for the topping.

Beat in the remaining egg and then pour this mixture carefully back over the meat. Insert the leaves upright and return to the oven.

Bake for another 10 minutes at a little lower temperature (170 °C), until the custard is set. Some people believe the custard must have a little browning on top – one could do this under the grill (but your leaves will burn) or carefully brown the custard between the leaves with a blowtorch.

# Green Papaya and Fish Tacos



Even though this recipe uses tacos (or more specifically soft wheat tortillas) to enclose a few yummy ingredients, including thin ribbons of green papaya, it is not really a Mexican recipe. One could probably add some beans, fresh corn, a nice spicy green tomatillo *salsa verde* and many others, or use corn tortillas if you wanted to make a more original Mexican version of this. One could give it a completely different identity by using any other soft flatbread or wrap, or even give it a South African twist by using Cape Malay *rotis*.

The idea is to bring the green papaya to the forefront; hence the other flavours are mellow and mild. The possibilities are endless – the important thing is that the seasoning, either in the marinades or salsa, should be sharp and zingy to offset other ingredients like the fish. In this recipe, simply grilled white fish fillets are used, however, you could use some cleaned grilled prawns, or even a simple piece of grilled chicken, shredded. The green uncooked papaya is nice and firm, and even though this recipe suggests marinating it, you could use it fresh and simple for extra texture and crunch. You can also play around with the other contents of the taco, perhaps adding some finely julienned carrot (or shaved into ribbons like the papaya and courgettes in this recipe), or even add interesting colours by using purple cabbage instead of green. In this recipe the cabbage is also “wilted” through salting, but again, if you like uncooked, crunchy cabbage, go ahead and use it as is.

You could also make these with smaller wraps or hard taco shells for delicious cocktail snacks.





### Ingredients for 2 tacos:

130 g green cabbage, finely cut into chiffonade on a mandoline or Asian slicer, hard white ribs removed

50 g salt

5 ml fish sauce

1 lemon zest (fine) and juice

85 g courgettes, sliced into ribbons using a vegetable peeler

40 g green papaya, peeled and sliced into very thin ribbons using a vegetable peeler

2 white fish fillets, grilled (simply baste with some olive oil, salt and pepper and cook on a hot ridge pan or under the grill, or on the braai if you want to make this into an outdoor meal)

1 medium tomato, cut into cubes

A small handful of mixed green lettuce leaves or herbs, such as frisée, radicchio, rocket or others – moistened with a small drop of olive oil

2 wheat tortillas



### Method:

Place the cabbage chiffonade in a colander, sprinkle over the salt and mix through.

Place the colander on a plate, as the salt will extract liquid from the cabbage, and allow it to rest for half an hour. Rinse the cabbage thoroughly under cold running water and thereafter, squeeze as much of the liquid as possible out, using both your hands.

Mix a little of the lemon juice into the cabbage and set aside.

Prepare the courgettes and green papaya ribbons.

Splash on the fish sauce, lemon zest and remaining lemon juice, and mix through.

Warm the tortillas on a cast-iron flat grill, or in a large pan – take care not to make them crisp in any way.

Assemble the tacos with cabbage at the bottom, then some papaya and courgette ribbons, followed by some tomato cubes and the fish and lastly, add some herb or lettuce pieces.

Fold over and enjoy immediately.

# Santula



This is a wonderfully simple yet very satisfying vegetarian dish. Perhaps more of a soup than a stew, it is perfect for Meatless Mondays or when you must feed vegetarian guests. The delight of green papaya is that it takes on the flavours of the spices and other seasonings; you would be hard pressed to immediately identify green papaya in a dish on taste alone. You could play around with a mixture of vegetables, depending on what the fridge or the grocery shelves deliver.

The foodie website [www.tasteatlas.com](http://www.tasteatlas.com) informs us that a *Santula* is a dish of mixed vegetables from the state of Odisha in India (Taste Atlas 2024). It is most often made from a combination of seasonal vegetables that can include any of the following: aubergines; tomatoes; green beans; carrots; peppers; onions; unripe bananas; potatoes and green papaya (which they refer to as raw papaya). According to TasteAtlas, the vegetables are first boiled, called *sijha*, and thereafter, fried in oil with whole spices called *panch phoron*, if fried in oil it is called *bhaja*. The spices in *panch phoron* include mustard, cumin, fenugreek, fennel and nigella seeds – use this opportunity to really dig into the world of Indian spices (TasteAtlas 2024). Since this recipe does not call for much chilli, one could easily omit it altogether, but by all means make it a little hotter if that is to your liking. Serve the stew over lovely white steamed rice, or with a *roti*, *puri* or *phulka*.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

130 ml sunflower oil  
250± g (2 small) aubergine, cut into large cubes – salt these to extract excess moisture  
150± g (1 medium) yellow onion, medium sliced  
2 large garlic cloves, cut into thin julienne sticks  
25± g (1 large knob) ginger, peeled and cut into thin sticks  
1 small red chilli, deseeded (or not, if your preference is for a bit more heat), sliced  
300 g small (baby) potatoes, skin on if you prefer them that way, cut in half  
300 g carrots, peeled and cut into rounds  
15 ml whole black mustard seeds  
25 ml ground cumin  
15 ml salt  
15 ml (½ a small) lemon, juiced  
300 g green papaya, peeled and cut into medium cubes  
75 ml vegetable stock (feel free to make your own, however, in this recipe a good quality cube dissolved in a little boiling water would work very well)  
500 ml water  
Fresh coriander for garnish



#### Method:

In a large heavy-based pot, fry the aubergines on high heat in the oil until they are well browned all over.

Remove with a slotted spoon, draining/pressing them to remove some of the oil.

Add the onion, garlic, ginger, chilli, potatoes and carrots to the oil.

Fry on high heat until the onions and vegetables take on some colour.

Add the spices and fry a little longer to release the aromas.

Add the salt and lemon, along with the papaya.

Add the dissolved stock and add only two-thirds of the water.

Cover with a lid and cook gently until the vegetables are all cooked, but not falling-apart soft.

Add some of the reserved water if the dish becomes too dry. At the end of the cooking time, soften the liquid with more of the reserved water to create a little sauce that surrounds the vegetables.

Serve piping hot, garnished with torn fresh coriander.



# Sticky Duck Dogs with Green Papaya Pickle



In South Africa we truly relish one of our cultural culinary icons, the *boerewors* roll. For this reason, we perhaps experiment less with other varieties and interpretations of hot dogs and let the rest of the world invent new gourmet dogs. However, it is useful and exciting to venture outside one's comfort zone periodically to expose your palate to new taste adventures.

Duck is both delicious and easy to cook, and the duck breast even more so. One secret is to avoid overcooking it, but also to rest it properly after cooking before slicing. When you cut into it as soon as it comes off the heat, it will bleed and look very raw. When fully rested, it will just be nice and pink and juicy. It is also important to cook the skin side very well – one wants to render as much of that fat as possible and get the skin really nice, crisp and crackly. Once the duck skin is fully rendered, pour the duck fat into a little container to solidify, duck fat spread on the rolls in place of butter will be even more delicious.

What you add to the duck and papaya on your dog is open to interpretation. To retain the simplicity and elegance of this dog, rather forego mayonnaise or other sauces, perhaps opting for a little freshly grated raw or pickled carrot to keep it fresh and elegant.



### Ingredients for 2 duck dogs:

1 whole fresh duck breast  
2 good quality hotdog rolls (even café rolls if you are so inclined), cut in half, spread with duck fat (see note above)  
A handful of mixed lettuce leaves, herbs, and edible flowers, dressed with a small drop of olive oil

### For the duck marinade:

3 ml (a little more than ½ tsp) freshly ground black pepper  
2,5 ml smoked paprika  
5 ml prepared mustard  
10 ml Worcestershire sauce  
30 ml tomato sauce  
15 ml honey  
15 ml white wine vinegar  
5 ml brown sugar

### For the pickled green papaya:

15 ml sugar  
5± g (1 large) garlic clove, minced  
15 ml salt  
15 ml red wine vinegar  
1 medium red chilli, deseeded (or not if you prefer a little more heat), sliced  
15 ml olive oil  
15 ml lemon juice and zest, julienne strips  
50 g green papaya, thinly sliced into strips that would fit the length of the hot dog rolls



### Method:

Mix all the marinade ingredients together and marinate the duck breast in the mix for as long as you want – even starting the day before.

Mix all the ingredients for the papaya together and set aside.

When you are ready to cook the duck breast, warm a heavy-bottomed pan or pot (note, the pan should be hot, but not scorching) thoroughly.

Remove most of the marinade from the meat, place the duck breast in the pan skin side down and allow it cook for a good 10 minutes, moving it around now and again. After 10 minutes, turn it over and cook on the other side – see note above about pinkness. Rest as above.

In the meantime, put the reserved marinade back into the pot with a splash of water to make a sticky glaze by scraping all the cooking residue from the bottom.

When the duck breast has sufficiently rested, cut it in half lengthways into two strips of meat resembling hot dog sausages, and pass them through the sauce.

Assemble the duck dog buns (with a lashing of duck fat) by placing some pickled papaya, some dressed leaves and a duck breast “sausage” onto the bun.

Serve with a decorative napkin on the side.







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# Snacks, Savouries and Side Dishes





# Papaya, Roasted Beetroot and Goat's Cheese French Toast





As is the case with so many other dishes, the origins of French toast are murky and uncertain. Something akin to French toast can be traced back to the Roman Empire, and their version was apparently called *Pan Dulcis*. However, some sources believe the idea of moistening and then heating bread was something people in the medieval period had to do. Necessity required them to find ways to get by with very little food.

The term “French toast” is first recorded in writings of seventeenth century England. One slightly fanciful story goes that the dish was invented by an American man called Joseph French, who got the apostrophe wrong, while other tales suggest that French toast has similar etymological origins as French fries, which refers rather to the verb “to French”, which, in old Irish, apparently means to slice. Whatever its history, this deliciously simple dish is called *pain perdu* in France and means lost bread, as it was initially made from stale bread that may have otherwise been thrown away. In England, French toast is also referred to as eggy bread, gypsy bread, French-fried bread, German toast, Poor Knights of Windsor, Spanish toast, or nun’s toast. A similar version from areas of Bavaria is called *pafese* or *pofese*, in Italy it is referred to as *zuppa pavese* (from the town of Pavia), and *pain doré* or golden bread in Canada. Hungarians call it *bundáskenyér*, which means coated bread.

Even though one may choose to make French toast from more rustic bread such as a country loaf or sourdough, it can be made from any bread, even enriched breads such as *brioche* or *challah*. If you cannot bear your French toast slightly soggy and soft inside, then by all means soak it less and fry it dry, but there is nothing more luxurious than a somewhat wobbly inside, which resembles a well-prepared bread-and-butter pudding. French toast can be served at any time of day, for breakfast, brunch, lunch, or a light supper meal on a Sunday evening. It can also be dressed up or down by literally adding anything from icing sugar or syrup to bacon, cheese and delicious gravy. Follow the Scottish example, where a sausage between two slices of French toast is eaten as a sandwich, or the famous Mumbai sandwich or Indian Masala French toast made with fluffy white bread dipped in a spicy savoury egg and milk mixture.

This recipe combining papaya with roasted beetroot and goat’s cheese is most suitable for a smart Sunday brunch, but one could easily make much smaller circles of bread and transform the dish into an elegant starter. The papaya pairs perfectly with the roasted beetroot, perfectly offsetting the creamy/savoury goat’s cheese (or a mix of *chèvre* and Danish feta as suggested in this recipe) while the drizzle of reduced roasting liquid brings the topping and the French toast together perfectly.





#### Ingredients for 6 portions:

3 medium-sized whole unpeeled beetroot, washed  
200 ml white wine  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml sugar  
80 ml balsamic vinegar  
6 thick slices of raisin bread  
5 eggs  
250 ml cream  
5 ml salt  
15 ml sugar  
120 g butter  
½ medium ripe papaya, peeled and sliced into short  
triangular slices  
200 g goat's cheese (or a mix of half goat's cheese and half  
Danish feta for a more savoury version)





#### Method:

First, roast the beetroots. Place them in an oven pan or oven-safe casserole, add the wine, salt, pepper, and sugar, and roast them uncovered for two hours at 170 °C, or until soft when pierced with a knife.

Remove from the oven and set the beetroot aside to cool. Peel and slice the beetroot into 5 mm thick slices, when cool enough to handle.

In the meantime, add the balsamic vinegar to the oven pan and reduce the liquid on the stove to around 90 ml. Warm six dinner plates to be ready when your French toast is cooked.

Mix the eggs, cream, salt and sugar. Melt the butter in two or three pans if you want to serve all six slices at once or do them in one pan two at a time, keeping the others warm until they are all done.

Dip the bread into the egg mixture in a flat rectangular container. Allow the bread to soak up as much of the custard as you prefer (see note above) and transfer it into the bubbling butter in the pans.

Cook the slices of bread on medium heat, turning only after the first side is sealed and a wonderful golden crust has formed. The sogginess of the inside will greatly depend on the type of bread used and how long the bread was soaked, however, one can at this point fry the toast until dry in the pan or remove it when it is still slightly wobbly inside.

Immediately spoon a little of the cheese over the toast, top with slices of beetroot and slices of papaya and crumble more cheese over. Spoon the reduction sauce over and garnish with a few sprigs of herbs.

Serve immediately.





# Vietnamese Spring Rolls





Since papaya is rarely overly sweet, it can be successfully incorporated into savoury foods. In these lovely Asian-inspired rice rolls, the papaya offsets the prawns, herbs, and leaves beautifully.

These rolls can be made with several ingredients other than those suggested in this recipe, allowing one to be quite creative. The rolls are often made with prawns of which the tail part of the carapace has been left on; the rolls are then folded in such a way that the tail part with the inedible hard part sticks out. What is of the utmost importance, is that they are served on the same day they are made. They do not like hanging around, as the rice wraps continue softening to the point where they start sticking to each other and become unmanageable. Once they are made, keep them on a serving tray in the fridge, wrapped in clingfilm until it is time to serve them.

Called *gỏi cuốn*, most people consider these fresh versions of Chinese deep-fried spring rolls. They are, however, not made from the same dough as traditional spring rolls, and neither are they deep-fried, which makes them super healthy. In western contexts, they are sometimes also called summer rolls, Vietnamese rolls, or cold rolls. Aside from *pho* and *banh mi*, *gỏi cuốn* is one of the most iconic Vietnamese dishes.

Although beginners may find it challenging to work with the rice wraps, just keep on trying. It is best to use hot water to rehydrate the wraps, which allows them to soften quickly. Place one into the water and using a wooden spatula, move it around until it only just starts to soften. One does not want the wraps to become completely soaked, as they then become very difficult to fish out of the water. If you take the wraps out of the water as soon as they become slightly pliable, there should be enough residual water left around them to allow them to

soften further on the cutting board where you assemble your rolls. This allows one a little bit of extra time to work with them before they become totally soft and unmanageable.

On the other hand, of course, your rice wrapper needs to have softened sufficiently so that it can be rolled, so the wrap should have no more brittleness left in it. Traditionally, the prawn is placed last, after one has rolled up some of the other ingredients. As these are papaya and prawn rolls, the papaya should also be added in after one has given the rest of the ingredients a roll, so that the papaya and prawn have only one layer of wrap over it which will allow them to be visible through the wrap. Some recipes suggest that one should use one of the larger lettuces, such as cos, to wrap all the other herbs and leaves before wrapping them in the rice wrap. Doing this makes it much easier to roll up the wrap.

One may also employ quite a bit of artistic license when making your dipping sauce. Some recipes add some unsweetened peanut butter, while others include Hoisin sauce or soy. What is of crucial importance is that there is a good balance of flavours; the sauce should be acidic from lime juice and/or rice vinegar, slightly sweet from the palm sugar, slightly spicy from the garlic, fresh ginger and chilli and slightly salty from the fish sauce. Play around and tweak it this way or that to suit your personal taste.

The rolls are easier to eat if they are cut in half. It is, therefore, important to roll them up tightly so that the filling does not spill out. Another advantage of cutting them in half is that one can see the pretty ingredients that you filled your roll with. Most importantly, however, is that the cut side will soak up a little more of the dipping sauce, which is important as none of the ingredients inside the roll are seasoned.



### Ingredients for 14 spring rolls:

14 rice wraps

14 medium-sized prawns, cooked and shells removed

1 medium papaya, peeled and cut into 10 cm to 12 cm strips

80 g Asian-style rice noodles (cellophane noodles) or thin Asian egg noodles, cooked and cooled

2 courgettes, cut into thin julienne sticks (one can of course add other vegetables, such as bean sprouts, blanched mange tout peas, etc.)

A selection of lettuce leaves, such as cos, frisée, or other bitter lettuce leaves

A selection of herbs, such as Thai basil, broad leaf parsley, fresh coriander, fresh mint or chives

### For the dipping sauce:

80 ml fresh lime juice

10 ml palm sugar

2 red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, made into a fine paste

20 g whole fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated

10 ml dark rice vinegar

30 ml fish sauce

A small handful of fresh mint, finely sliced



### Method:

To make the dipping sauce, mix all the ingredients for the sauce together and adjust the seasoning and other flavours. On its own, the sauce may seem fairly strong, but remember that only a small amount will stick to the rolls when they are dipped into the sauce. The sauce should, therefore, have enough flavour to ensure that the rolls are tasty.

Lay one rice wrap at a time into the hot water. As soon as it softens slightly, remove it and smooth it out on a cutting board. Add a bundle of lettuce/herb mix, some courgette julienne, some glass or Asian noodles.

Roll up firmly, and once the roll has turned a full circle, add the prawn and papaya slice. Fold in the sides and finish rolling up the roll.

Cut in half and serve with the dipping sauce.







# Salsa with Orange Sweet Potato Rösti and Smoked Trout

The charm of a good *rösti*, also called *rööschtli*, is really crispy outside, with a cooked interior that is not soft and mushy. This Swiss invention, made with grated potato, may seem like a straightforward item to prepare, yet getting it right requires one to be aware of some watch points. Moisture seems to be the greatest problem, and as potatoes have a lot of it, one should squeeze the mixture dry before use. For this recipe, however, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes were used because they have much less moisture and therefore, fry nice and crisp on the outside without too much squeezing out of any excess moisture. Some recipes advise using a binder such as egg or even flour, however, the starch in the tuber itself should be sufficient to bind the ingredients together.

Although the pairing of your normal garden variety potato and papaya may still require some debate, orange sweet potato and papaya are a match made in heaven in terms of both colour and flavour. The sweet potatoes are earthy and substantial, yet flowery and fragrant. The papaya provides a great tropical lift to a classical Northern Hemisphere dish and offsets the smoked trout and creamy horseradish to perfection.



**Ingredients for 4 large main course *röstis* – these can, however, also be made into cocktail-sized snacks:**

Between 80 - 100 g smoked trout ribbons per person (if you are feeling flush, use smoked salmon)

**For the *rösti*:**

30 ml olive oil  
50 g butter, melted  
60 g onion, grated  
500 g orange sweet potato, peeled and grated coarsely  
7,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

**For the cucumber *raita*:**

75 g cucumber, finely grated  
80 ml thick, plain, double cream Greek yoghurt  
2,5 ml salt  
10 ml horseradish (grated, not prepared horseradish)  
Zest and juice from 1 medium lemon  
2,5 ml sugar

**For the papaya *sambal*:**

150 g papaya (½ a small papaya), peeled and cut into medium cubes  
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely sliced  
1 small clove garlic, minced  
2,5 ml salt  
1,25 ml freshly ground black pepper  
15 ml olive oil  
15 ml red wine vinegar  
Some chopped fresh parsley (optional)

**To garnish:**

Fresh herbs



**Method:**

Make the *rösti* one by one: either keep them warm or warm them up afterwards in the oven. They need not be served piping hot, but should not be cold, and definitely not served from the fridge.

Warm the olive oil in a small non-stick pan. Mix all the remaining *rösti* ingredients and divide it into four. Place one portion in the warm pan and flatten slightly. Fry for a good 5 to 8 minutes on medium heat. Check that they do not brown too quickly by lifting a small corner. It is, however, important that a nice brown crust is created.

Once the *rösti* is nice and brown on one side, place a small wooden cutting board over the pan – do this off the heat.

Place your palm flat over the board and press down firmly on the board and frying pan. Now flip the frying pan and board over. The *rösti* should be released very easily onto the board.

Slide it carefully back into the pan and fry the other side in the same way as the first side. Repeat with all the remaining *rösti*.

Mix the *raita* ingredients and set aside. Mix the *salsa* ingredients and set aside.

When you are ready to serve, place one *rösti* each on four individual plates. Divide the *raita* between the *rösti* and spread out slightly.

Drape a portion of smoked trout ribbons over the *raita* and then top with a quarter of the papaya *salsa*, spooning it artfully over the trout.

Garnish with some fresh herbs and edible flowers tossed in a little olive oil and a drizzle of lemon juice, finishing the plates off with a grinding of fresh black pepper.



# Salsa with Lentil Hummus



A very formal American organisation, the Association for Dressings and Sauces (ADS), has been in existence since 1926. This august entity informs us that salsas have been around since ancient times, going as far back as the Aztec civilisation, even though the western world only recently fell head over heels in love with it. The word salsa literally means sauce, and is found in numerous formats, even though most people immediately think of salsa as something made of tomatoes, onions and chillies. The ADS continues to advocate for salsa as a way to incorporate healthy additions to a balanced diet, containing very little fat and generally being low in calories. Depending on the contents of your salsa, they can contribute healthy vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A and C, and potassium and lycopene to our diets.

This is an extremely simple recipe; however, it packs a punch. By all means feel free to add to this recipe – perhaps some fresh coriander, a little fresh corn, or even some avocado should you like.





### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

#### For the lentil hummus:

150 g dried lentils, soaked  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
2 garlic cloves  
80 ml extra virgin olive oil  
100 g tahini  
5 ml cumin  
5 ml salt  
3 ml freshly ground black pepper

#### For the salsa:

130 g papaya, cut into medium cubes  
2 fresh limes, zested and juiced  
5 ml salt  
5 ml sugar  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
2 red chillies, deseeded (or not if you want a little more heat) and sliced  
30 ml fresh parsley, chopped  
30 ml fresh mint, chopped  
20 ml good quality olive oil  
1 small red onion, finely diced

4 - 6 slices of quality sourdough bread such as ciabatta, fresh, or drizzled with olive oil and lightly toasted  
2 whole pieces of feta or Danish feta



### Method:

First make the hummus.

Cook the soaked lentils in plenty of boiling water. Check them regularly to prevent them from falling apart. They should be fully cooked, but not exploding.

Drain and reserve a small handful for garnish.

Place the rest of the lentils and all the other ingredients for the hummus in the jug of a liquidiser or pulse in a tall jar with a hand-held stick blender.

Check for seasoning and set aside.

Mix all the salsa ingredients together and then assemble the bread slices.

Spread liberally with some of the hummus, sprinkle some reserved lentils over, dot all over with feta and pile on the salsa. You could also make these into canapé sized hand snacks, just do not overload the bread slices, which would make them difficult to eat by hand.



# Puff Cups with Home- Made Sweet and Sour Chilli Sauce

Although there are many versions of sweet and sour chilli sauce available on the shelves, this homemade sauce is totally different and worth the extra effort. It is fresh and vibrant, has a good flavour balance and is not as gloopy as the store-bought examples. It is also super healthy because of the fresh garlic, ginger and turmeric, and if you are concerned about the amount of sugar, by all means, cut back on it – taste as you go along. This homemade sauce pairs perfectly with papaya and whatever else you include in the cups, delivering a bit of interest and excitement to your dish.

One could serve the cups as a starter, but you could probably also use those individual puffed shrimp chips and top them with a smaller portion and sauce for a perfect canapé. You could make the cups either from Indian *poppadoms* or Asian rice wraps. *Poppadoms* are possibly a little tastier, often including ingredients such as cumin or chilli, while the rice wraps have a beautiful white colour. The puffed cups do not last a long time after they are deep-fried, as they become chewy and somewhat soft. You could make them an hour or two in advance and keep them in an airtight container after they were drained and cooled. Although this recipe is for some suggested ingredients – this particular version is vegan – you could easily add other ingredients such as cubed feta, shredded smoked chicken or even some smoked trout.

*Sambal Oelek* is an Indonesian chilli paste, sometimes with additions such as salt and vinegar that you should be able to buy from speciality supermarkets. If it is not available, you could use any number of chilli preparations, or perhaps mash up your own fresh, deseeded chilli's, or use dried chilli flakes.



### Ingredients for 4 - 6 puff cups:

#### For the homemade sweet and sour chilli sauce:

10 g ginger, peeled and finely grated  
2 cloves fresh garlic, peeled and finely grated  
15 g fresh turmeric, peeled and finely grated  
2,5 ml *Sambal Oelek* (use as much or as little as you want, depending on the heat. It is important that the sauce has a nice bite, however, the amount will greatly depend on the type of chilli used – see the note above)  
60 ml white vinegar (use rice vinegar if you prefer)  
60 ml water  
60 ml dry sherry (one could use a medium dry sherry, however, avoid cream or old brown sheries)  
50 g white sugar  
15 ml soy sauce  
15 ml tomato sauce  
1 tiny, tiny drop of red food colouring (this is optional and will only give a light red colour to your sauce, it can be omitted should you wish to)  
7,5 ml cornflour mixed into 45 ml cold water  
4 - 6 *poppadoms* or rice wraps  
Enough oil for deep-frying  
½ ripe papaya, sliced  
1 or 1½ ripe avocado pear, sliced  
12 to 18 small aubergines, well cooked and seasoned with salt, pepper and fresh lemon juice  
Selection of fresh lettuce, such as the small inside leaves of cos, or frisée lettuce  
Edible flowers to garnish



### Method:

Make the sweet and sour chilli sauce by placing all the ingredients, apart from the cornflour, in a small non-reactive pot. Bring to a boil and then simmer gently for about 6 minutes.

Mix the cornflour with cold water and add to the boiling sauce. Cook for another minute or so until thickened.

To make the puffed cups, choose a smallish pot, so that the sides of the pot will keep the sides of the wafer upright as it fries. Warm up the oil, and have ready the wafer, a handleless wooden rolling pin, and a pair of tongs as well as kitchen paper to drain the wafer on.

Place the wafer in the oil and use the rolling pin to submerge it and form a hollow to hold your filling ingredients. As soon as the wafer starts puffing, release the rolling pin and allow the wafer to puff up completely.

Drain and repeat with the other wafers.

Arrange the papaya and other ingredients attractively inside the cup, drizzle liberally with sauce, and decorate with flowers or herbs.



# Papdi Chaat



*Papdi* Chaat, also called *papri chaat*, is a North Indian/Bangladeshi/Pakistani food mostly served on the street and consists of crisp fried flat *puris* (*papdis*) that are served topped with boiled potatoes, boiled chickpeas, moong beans, onions, some curds, crispy *sev* (Indian snack food), green and sweet chutneys, dustings of spices and fresh coriander. *Papdi* refers to the crunchy pastry base. The Spruce Eats ([www.thespruceeats.com](http://www.thespruceeats.com)) says that “*chaat*” is a generic term that encompasses many versions of sweet, salty, tangy and crunchy dishes that are served throughout the Indian subcontinent. (Sarkas 2022). They continue to say that in Hindi “*chaat*” means “to lick”. These small, modern versions or canapés are indeed delicious enough to lick one’s fingers and lips.

Incorporating a traditional *papdi chaat* in a normal meal may not be so simple – which may be why it is a street food, a small snack that one eats when one feels a little peckish. In this recipe, which has been adapted to create individual canapés, the whole, boiled chickpeas have been replaced by hummus, which is of course not Indian at all. However, the spreadability of the hummus helps keep the canapé together, and it is much easier to use than it would be to balance individual chickpeas on a small, puffed biscuit. The canapés are elegant and have a lovely combination of flavours. The addition of papaya gives freshness and lightness to the *papdi chaat*, making it perfect as an arrival snack at a party. The onion in the recipe is marinated for mellowness.

Remember that Indian chutneys differ from the traditional idea South Africans have of chutney. Chutneys in India are flavoursome sauces, such as a date and tamarind chutney or coriander chutney. In this recipe, the coriander chutney is just a simple green sauce, or *salsa verde*, a combination of coriander, garlic, chilli, lemon juice, salt and olive oil puréed with a stick blender. You can be creative and make it from any green herb.



### Ingredients for 24 small individual canapés:

#### For the *papdi*:

150 g cake flour  
60 g butter (or ghee if you can source it)  
5 ml onion seeds  
5 ml salt  
80 ml water  
Any seed oil for deep-frying

#### To serve:

24 slices ( $\pm 3$  mm thick) potato, seasoned and fried in a little oil  
24 x 10 ml = 240 ml hummus  
24 round slices ( $\pm 3$  mm thick) of ripe papaya  
24 thin slices of small onion ( $\pm 4$  cm in diameter); pour 100 ml boiling vinegar over and steep until cold, drain  
24 x 10 ml = 240 ml thick Greek full cream yoghurt  
24 x 2,5 ml = 60 ml green sauce (see note above)  
Small packet of sev (crispy chickpea flour paste Indian noodles)  
Toasted ground cumin  
Flavoursome masala  
Some coriander leaves



### Method:

First, make the *papdi* pastry. Mash the butter or ghee into the flour. Add all the remaining ingredients and then knead the dough to a medium soft dough. Wrap and chill.

After about half an hour, remove from the fridge and thinly roll out about a quarter of the dough at a time on a lightly floured work surface.

Cut out 8 cm circles with a pastry cutter. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Warm up the oil and test a little scrap dough. The pastry should immediately bubble and turn nicely golden brown.

Fry all the *papdi* and drain on kitchen paper.

To assemble the papaya *papdi chaat* canapés, lay all the *papdi* crisps out on to a cutting board. Top with a slice of fried potato, then a slice of papaya, thereafter, a small spoon of hummus, then the onion.

Then, blob a small amount of yoghurt on, make a small indentation in the yoghurt and spoon some green sauce in.

Last, pile some sev on top, use a small tea sieve, dust with cumin powder and masala and decorate with fresh coriander leaves. Serve immediately.



# Muhammara



If the original of this classic Levantine sauce is not yet part of your cooking repertoire, make haste to learn it. The original *muhammara* recipe hails from a city in Syria called Aleppo, however, it has become part of the broader Mediterranean repertoire. A good recipe can be found in a book on Jewish cooking by famed author, Claudia Roden (Roden 1996). Meaning “reddened” in Arabic, *muhammara* is a paste-like sauce with numerous uses in the kitchen; made from walnuts, roasted red peppers (or as the Americans refer to them, bell peppers), breadcrumbs, pomegranate molasses and seasonings. *Muhammara* has rich umami flavours and is one of those things that once you start eating it, you cannot get enough of it. The only negative aspect is that its shelf life is somewhat limited, even if stored in the fridge, since the peppers tend to ferment within two or three days. Therefore, resist the temptation to make too much at a time. If you should happen to get some inexpensive peppers, roast, peel and store them in the freezer to make smaller batches at a time.

This recipe uses drained papaya pulp in place of the red peppers to create a totally new version of *muhammara*. Since it does not contain red peppers, it will last somewhat longer than the original recipe. It has a deep, rich meaty flavour and compliments a range of cooked meats and vegetables. It is fruity and earthy and not entirely as Mediterranean as the original recipe. Try it as a spread on biscuits or even mixed with freshly cooked pasta for a quick weekday meal. Use *muhammara* when you are planning a Mediterranean-style platter or as part of your *mezze* setup. In this instance, it was used as a condiment in a hot dog, but it would also work well as a burger sauce.



Pomegranate molasses and sumac may not be easy to come by, but it is recommended that you try and source them. Pomegranate molasses is essentially just pomegranate juice that has been reduced to a beautiful gooey richness. Combined with the sumac, it provides complex acidic and sweet notes to a dish that would be difficult to recreate with alternative ingredients.

The recipe requires a bit of forethought and preparation, as the papaya pulp needs two or three days to drain. You could probably make the sauce with fresh papaya pulp, however, that will result in a runny sauce with nothing of the thick unctuousness that you want. One day of draining would still be good, however, the ideal would be to let the pulp drain for at least two or three days. This is also a great way to use a papaya that is a little overripe and not entirely suitable to serve fresh anymore. Peel and cube the papaya, purée until very smooth in a liquidiser, and pour the pulp into a muslin-lined strainer over a bowl. Cover the entire bowl/strainer with clingfilm and leave in the fridge to drain.



**Ingredients for a large portion of *muhammara* that could serve between 4 - 6 portions (depending on the use):**

60 ml olive oil  
50 g toasted macadamia nuts (or any other nuts, such as cashews)  
1 garlic clove, cut into small pieces  
15 ml tomato paste  
50 g good quality fresh white bread (try to avoid overly soft loaf)  
30 ml pomegranate molasses  
1 small red fresh chilli, seeds removed and cut into pieces  
15 ml sumac  
5 ml salt  
250 g thick drained papaya pulp



**Method:**

Place all the ingredients into a liquidiser or a NutriBullet and blend on high for a few minutes until the mixture is evenly smooth. The smoothness of the sauce depends on how you want to use it as well as personal preference.

If you are going to pile it on toasted pita triangles, you want a sauce that is slightly chunkier and coarser and not smooth and runny.

If you are planning to use it as a pasta sauce, purée it to a smooth, even consistency.

Store in the fridge.

# Ketchup



In South Africa, we love bottled tomato sauce, the stuff you eat with your *slap-chips* (soft, deep-fried potato chips), burgers, *kotas* and *bunny chows*. It has become an integral part of our South African culture and is eaten with everything at any time. Although we never ever refer to tomato sauce as ketchup, foodie writer Matthew Zuras writes that ketchup is a 'culinary chameleon that's as comfortable with burgers and hot dogs as it is with scrambled eggs and baked beans' and that without ketchup, there would be no Russian or Thousand Island dressing, no steak sauce, no Kansas City-style barbecue sauce, no cocktail sauce (Zuras 2023). Tomato sauce certainly has a place; when the world seems chaotic and only a perfectly cooked burger and chips will make it better, few things beat a fat dollop of that oozy red sauce. If you are into the history and origins of foods, read Zuras's thoroughly researched article on the development of the condiment from its Asian roots, through Britain to the first tomato sauce (or ketchup) bottled by Heinz in America in 1876.

Commercial tomato sauces are unfortunately not always well made, often containing bulking agents such as pumpkin purée added to increase the yield. Of course, you can make your own version, which may turn out runnier than the commercial versions we are used to, but at least one can regulate the ingredients and avoid any guilt about lashings of it over your *slap-chips*.

This recipe, which includes fresh papaya, creates a light and fruity sauce. It does not have the typical deep red colour of traditional ketchup, but is a lighter sauce that will go particularly well with fish, sweet potato chips or even roasted vegetables.



**Ingredients - makes 400 ml:**

170 g (1 medium) onion, diced  
2 garlic cloves, sliced  
15 g (1 small knob) of fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped  
1 small whole red chilli, deseeded (or not if you want a hotter sauce), sliced (optional)  
45 ml olive oil  
110 g nice ripe tomatoes, diced  
100 g tomato paste  
130 g papaya, cubed  
15 ml sugar  
7,5 ml salt  
7,5 ml yellow mustard seeds  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
1 whole clove  
7,5 ml whole coriander  
3 all spice berries  
1,25 ml ground cinnamon



**Method:**

Fry the onions, garlic, ginger and chilli in the olive oil over medium slow heat until soft.

Add all the remaining ingredients, cover and cook for at least 10 to 15 minutes, stirring often, until the tomatoes and papaya are thoroughly cooked and falling apart. At this stage the mixture should be relatively thick.

Transfer to a liquidiser or tall upright jar and purée with a stick blender until completely smooth.

Pass through a fine sieve if you want a completely smooth sauce, but part of the charm of home-made ketchup is that it has a little body.

Store in the fridge or in sterilised jars if you want to keep it outside of the fridge.



# Coppa Roulade



This is a messy recipe, apologies in advance for it. It requires you to shave papaya into thin slices, which you use to form a roulade enfolding cream cheese, cucumber, and *coppa*. It must be made a day before to firm up in the fridge and should be sliced with a very sharp hot knife, wiped between each cut, to produce beautiful clean slices of roulade that can go onto a crostini or savoury biscuit for a smart snack. You could also serve a few slices as a starter with a salad of lettuce, herbs and edible flowers, perhaps with crusty bread on the side.

*Coppa* is an Italian pork cold cut made from the pig's neck (or the neck roast as it is often known in South Africa). In Italy it is known as *Capocollo*, which translates as the head of the neck, cured with an array of spices such as fennel, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, juniper berries, bay leaves and even cayenne pepper, paprika or red chilli flakes for some spicier versions, and hung to dry. It works very well with papaya, as its intense meaty flavour offsets the sweetness of the papaya and the richness of the cream cheese.



**Ingredients for 6 - 8 canapé portions, or 4 - 6 starter portions – around 20 cm full roulade or 12 slices:**

½ ripe, but firm papaya, thinly sliced  
100 g *coppa*  
230 g very sturdy thick cream cheese (the expensive type)  
½ fresh lemon zest (fine) and juice  
15 ml extra virgin olive oil  
20 g fresh chives, thinly sliced  
5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
3 - 5 baby/small gherkins



**Method:**

Lay a piece of clingfilm over a piece of tinfoil, the size of an A3 page.

Layer thin papaya slices over the area of an A4 page size in the middle of the A3 plastic.

Overlap where necessary. Then cover the entire piece of papaya with layers of *coppa*.

Now, beat the cream cheese with the lemon juice and olive oil in the bowl of a freestanding mixer, using the paddle attachment. Beat well until it is silky smooth and soft – this is important as one must spread this mixture over the *coppa* and papaya layer. This step could also be done before doing the papaya or *coppa* layers, but do not refrigerate or the cream cheese may firm up again.

Mix in the chives and seasoning.

Now spread this mixture over two-thirds of the A4 *coppa* piece, from left to right, leaving a small band uncovered lengthwise from the top of the A4 to the bottom.

Place a row of gherkins in the middle of the cream cheese and roll the roulade up in the length – so you should turn the A4 page in such a way that the top of the A4 page is on your left and the bottom at your right and then roll up in that way. Tighten the tinfoil in such a way that you have a very secure sausage that is the length of the A4 page. Tightly secure the ends of the roll. Cut off any additional clingfilm and tinfoil.

Place on a baking sheet in the fridge and refrigerate for no less than 4 - 5 hours.

Open the roll and on a cutting board, use a very sharp serrated slicer (the thinner version of a bread knife) that you dip into a jug with boiling water and then wipe dry, cut 1,5 cm thick slices from the sausage. Dip the knife into the boiling water and dry between each slice – it is a pain but do it anyway – you will be rewarded with beautifully clean crisp slices with an amber gold papaya *coppa* layer outside, and a speckled white interior with the green gherkin in the middle.





# Papaya and Cold Cut Cocktail Rolls

The combination of cold meats and papaya is a match made in foodie heaven because the meat's savouriness and the fresh, sweet papaya complement each other to the best advantage. These little papaya bundles could probably be made with an infinite number of other ingredient combinations, so feel free to play around and use what you have in the pantry. Cocktail food is often a difficult item for venues to provide, with many places relying on starch-driven items such as cocktail sausage rolls or deep-fried items. They can, however, be super healthy and deliciously light. These are just such an example. They are simple to make, and one could probably make them well in advance and just keep them in a covered container in the fridge, to whisk them out right before your guests arrive for a smart party or as part of a traditional cocktail event.

Cocktail or finger foods, also referred to as canapés, are mostly built on a bread or baked pastry base. French canapés have been around since the late 1700s and like Italian *crostini*, began as a toasted or fried piece of bread with various toppings. The word “canapé” literally means sofa, and one can quite easily envision why if you consider the way a topping “sits” on a small sliver of bread. Today, the word “canapé” refers to a variety of small bite-sized food items to be eaten by hand at parties. The evolution of healthy eating habits means that they no longer have to be toppings on a starch base. Canapés and cocktail parties became fashionable during the American Prohibition of the 1920s when people could only drink alcohol secretly in speakeasies. These establishments often served finger foods throughout the night so that guests would not appear intoxicated after leaving. These foods were always small bite-sized items that allowed guests to eat while drinking. Afterwards, they continued to be popular at cocktail parties because they were easy to handle and transport.



Cold meats, or cold cuts, also referred to as luncheon or deli meats, are mostly cured or cooked meats that are sliced and served cold. Often used in sandwiches, there are numerous varieties. This recipe uses Parma ham, but one could easily use Black Forest ham or *Bresaola*, or any other cold cut that suits your taste or pocket. Take note that even though they are not super healthy because of their higher levels of fat, nitrates, and sodium, one only eats a small amount together with the other ingredients. Premium deli meats are low in calories and are a source of vitamins B and E, lean protein, iron, zinc and magnesium (Markys 2023). Additionally, deli meats can build muscle strength and bones, boost the immune system, and hinder the harmful oxidation of cells. Since papaya is such a super healthy food, it may well sufficiently counteract concerns about the lack of cold meats' healthful properties. Be sure to use enough filling – in other words, do not skimp on the vegetables that are wrapped up in the bundles.



#### Ingredients for ±10 rolls:

150 g sliced cold-cut meat (±10 slices) such as Parma ham, Black Forest ham or *Bresaola*  
100 g green beans, blanched, refreshed and finely julienned (one could also use bulb fennel or possibly even courgette)  
100 g firm papaya, cut into julienne sticks  
100 g *Emmental* cheese, cut into julienne sticks  
15 ml pesto  
15 ml grated horseradish (from a jar)  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
10± fairly long chives, blanched and refreshed



#### Method:

Mix the pesto, horseradish, salt and pepper. Lay the meat slices open on a large cutting board and smear a dollop of the mixture over all the slices.

Divide the beans, papaya and cheese equally between the slices and place a small bundle on each slice of meat. It looks nice if some of the vegetables, papaya and cheese stick out of the side of the meat, so, if necessary, tuck some of the meat in so that the meat is shorter in width than the filling.

Roll up tightly and tie the bundles together with the chives.

Serve them cool, but not straight from the fridge, although on warm days you may want to ensure they do not hang around outside the fridge before being eaten.

# Chutney



Chutney differs slightly, depending on where in the world it is made. In India, these little side dishes are an integral part of almost every meal, being a simple nut and yoghurt mixture or some fresh herbs and other ingredients pounded finely. In South Africa, we primarily refer to a relish cooked from some type of fruit, onions, vinegar and sugar and a selection of spices as chutney, which is often eaten with spicy food such as a curry stew. South Africans have made this condiment their own, eating it with an array of dishes, such as *bobotie*, *vetkoek* with mince, in a *kota* or along with the braai. It satisfies our nation's love of sweet and sour with our savoury foods.

This recipe is the perfect way to utilise a glut of papayas, however, it may be successfully halved in case one does not want to make quite so much. Of course, if one does decide to cook up a big batch, these make excellent gifts. As this is a bottled item, the ingredients must be cooked through, however, the idea is to not cook the papaya until it turns into an unrecognisable mush. Timing is, therefore, important to retain the fresh vibrancy of the papaya. Papaya chutney is an excellent accompaniment to any dish that needs a little sweet and sour highlight, such as cold meats and even something slightly more delicate, such as smoked or cured fish.



**Ingredients for approximately 8 x 250 ml jars:**

80 ml sunflower oil  
5 medium onions, finely sliced  
30 g (8 whole) garlic cloves, finely sliced  
60 g fresh ginger, peeled and finely sliced  
500 ml white vinegar  
400 g white sugar  
Thinly sliced zest and juice of 2 lemons  
5 g ground cinnamon  
1 g ground nutmeg  
1 g crushed allspice berries  
10 g salt  
15 g dry English mustard  
10 g dried turmeric  
250 g golden raisins  
1,5 kg (±3 medium or 2 large) papayas, peeled and grated  
3 bay leaves



**Method:**

Fry the onions, garlic and ginger in the sunflower oil until soft and translucent – do not brown.

Add all the remaining ingredients, apart from the papaya, and boil until slightly thickened.

Add the grated papaya and simmer until the papaya is well integrated, but not turning into a soft mush. Stir gently while doing this. Taste for seasoning.

Bottle and seal while the chutney is piping hot in sterilised jars. Allow the jars to stand for a few days for the flavours to mellow.





# Chimichurri with Braaied Rump Steak

*Chimichurri verde* – also referred to as Argentine pesto, and not to be confused with the red variant – is a fresh, piquant green sauce that packs considerable punch from a fair amount of garlic, chilli, lemon and coriander. Although the sauce does not keep for longer than a day or two, because the fresh ingredients such as parsley, coriander and papaya will oxidise relatively quickly, it is super easy to make more every time you need it. This amount is good for the four steaks suggested in the recipe. If some should be left over and you wish to keep it, place it in a small cup and place a layer of clingfilm directly on the surface of the sauce, or pour a generous amount of olive oil on the surface to keep any air out.

This recipe is perfect as a starter for a braai. Braai some large steaks, slice across the grain and serve with papaya *chimichurri* to nibble on before the main braai. The sauce is the perfect accompaniment to all sorts of meat; from medium-rare steaks to well-done chops with a crisp, savoury layer of fat; chicken or even a beautiful piece of tuna or other fish. The fresh sweetness of the papaya will mellow the heat from the chillies.

The origin of the word “*chimichurri*” is unclear. Food writer Joyce Goldstein says it is believed that the name of the sauce is a corruption of English words, most commonly the name Jimmy Curry or Jimmy McCurry, a supposed meat wholesaler (Goldstein 2012). The Argentine gourmet chef Miguel Brascó claimed that the word came about when the British were captured after the failed British invasions of the Rio de la Plata in 1806 – 1807 (Goldstein 2012). Other sources suggest that the name of the sauce may be a corruption of the Spanish word *chirriburri*, or the Basque word *zurrumuru* for noise or rumour, or *tximitxurri*, which means hodgepodge or a mixture of several things in no particular order.



**Ingredients for ±300 ml *chimichurri*, sufficient for 4 portions of steak:**

4 steaks of your choice, however, beef rump usually does well on the braai, cut medium thick. Rub generously with olive oil, salt and pepper.

**For the *chimichurri* sauce:**

80 g red onions or shallots when in season, cut into smallish chunks

10 g red chillies (seeds in if you like a hotter sauce), chopped

13 g garlic (two large cloves), chopped up

40 ml red wine vinegar

8 g salt

1 g freshly ground black pepper

20 g fresh coriander

70 g fresh curly parsley, or Italian or flat-leaf parsley if you like a stronger parsley flavour

3 g fresh oregano

60 ml olive oil

30 ml lemon zest

30 ml fresh lemon juice

60 g papaya, cut into cubes

70 g papaya, cut into small brunoise cubes



**Method:**

Blend all the sauce ingredients – except the small papaya brunoise cubes – in a food processor or liquidiser, or with a stick blender. Should you prefer a chunkier sauce (more authentic), the ingredients could also be pounded using a large pestle and mortar.

Adjust the seasoning if necessary and stir in the remaining papaya brunoise cubes.

Serve with the steak.



A log of Chèvre cheese, a soft goat's milk cheese, is presented on a white surface. The cheese log is wrapped in a white cloth and decorated with vibrant orange slices, green leaves, and purple flowers. A large, dark metal cheese knife with a wooden handle is positioned to the left of the cheese log.

# Chèvre

*Chèvre* is the name for a really delicious, soft and creamy goat's milk cheese sold in fat little logs, these days flavoured and enhanced with a range of ingredients either inside the cheese or on the outside. These may include sundried tomatoes, cranberries, crushed black pepper or herbs. Given that goat's milk cheese lends itself to all kinds of complementary flavours, flavouring it with papaya is not entirely unexpected or to be frowned upon.

Since unflavoured goat's milk cheese is tart, savoury and creamy, it is a delicious partner for any type of cracker, as part of a cheese board, or even as part of an antipasti board. In this papaya-enhanced version, the cheese is softened slightly by the papaya and gains a little complexity from the seasoning and lemon. This version would be excellent on good, crusty bread or even spread liberally on a well-charred piece of steak.

The recipe uses two logs of *chèvre*; however, you could do it with just one log, or even combine one log with an equal quantity of another soft cheese. Please remember that some recipes use *chèvre* to refer to any other goat's milk cheese. This is incorrect and misleading, since various cheeses that behave and taste differently can be made from goat's milk.





**Ingredients for 8 - 10 portions:**

Zest of 1 lemon

Juice of ½ a lemon

2 x 100 g *chèvre*

1,25 ml salt

1,25 ml freshly ground black pepper

5 ml cumin, toasted whole, then ground fine

20 g finely diced papaya

**To garnish:**

Additional thinly sliced papaya slivers

Edible flowers and leaves



**Method:**

Mix all the ingredients together, apart from the garnishes. Roll the cheese into a log about 4 cm in width, using some clingfilm.

Have another piece of clingfilm ready and place the edible flowers and thin slices of papaya in the same size and shape as the log, flat on the clingfilm.

Transfer the log onto the flowers and roll it tightly in the clingfilm. Store in the fridge for a couple of hours to firm up before using.



# Butter for Steak Sandwich

Working additional ingredients and flavours into butter is a relatively easy job. Ensure your butter is taken out of the fridge before you want to use it, so that it is no longer so stiff that you cannot work with it, but also not too soft. It should still retain a little chill, so that one can almost whip it slightly, aerating it in the process. Thereafter, one can go to town in terms of what you want to add to your flavoured butter (also referred to as compound butters), from the more classical combinations such as fresh herbs, salt and pepper, to boundary-pushing flavours such as cocoa or activated charcoal.

Even though butter is a relatively expensive product these days, it would be justified for this recipe to buy good quality butter, as the more affordable ones sometimes are already quite aerated and have a higher moisture content. In South Africa, not many butter manufacturers produce an unsalted version, which tends to be the option preferred by most professional chefs because of their high fat ratio. One can make a compound butter with any type of butter. Adding non-liquid flavourings such as chopped herbs and ground spices poses minimal risk. It is when one is forcing a relatively moist ingredient such as papaya pulp into the butter that one risks splitting the butter. In this instance, the butter may well benefit from being slightly warmer (and thus softer) than normal, even though the resulting butter will initially be fairly soft until it firms up in the fridge again. If one is going to shape the butter, such as rolling it into a log (an excellent hostess gift when wrapped in parchment paper and a piece of raffia string) or even rolling it into old-fashioned balls, be sure to chill it slightly before moulding.

The papaya lends a delicious meaty earthiness to the butter that works well with savoury ingredients in a steak sandwich, however, one could also omit the seasonings, lemon and herbs and add a bit of sugar for a sweet version that could be delicious on a freshly baked scone.



#### Ingredients for 4 portions:

80 g drained papaya purée – see note below  
125 g softened unsalted butter  
10 ml salt  
3 ml (just more than ½ tsp) freshly ground black pepper  
7 g (±4 tbsp) thinly sliced chives  
Zest of 1 lemon, plus the juice of ½ a lemon

#### Other steak sandwich ingredients:

4 fresh ciabatta buns, sliced open (and toasted if you wish)  
1 large piece of rump steak or other meat/cut, pan-fried to your desire, sliced  
2 large ripe tomatoes, sliced  
A selection of fresh green leaves, such as rocket or small cos lettuce leaves  
4 slices of sharp cheese per sandwich



#### Method:

Whip butter until fluffy and pale in a mixer with the paddle attachment, or with a wooden spoon by hand.

Mix in the remaining ingredients. If the mixture looks as if it may be separating, warm up the bowl ever so slightly, so that the fats and liquid can emulsify again.

If the butter is of a good working consistency, use it immediately, alternatively chill briefly. This butter would, however, need to be brought to room temperature for it to not crumble.

Spread the cut sides of the ciabatta generously with the butter and lay the remaining ingredients on these.

Wrap the sandwiches up if you are making them for a picnic, they should stay deliciously fresh for a couple of hours.

Note: the overall moisture content of papaya purée may be too high to incorporate directly into butter. To make the heavy papaya purée, peel and deseed a thoroughly ripe, aromatic papaya.

Blend the papaya flesh in a food processor, liquidiser or with a stick blender in a tall jar, to get a smooth purée (strain through a fine sieve if you are uncertain that your purée is lump-free).

Line a sieve with a clean, rinsed layer of high-quality muslin cloth. Pour the purée onto the muslin, cover with clingfilm wrap and leave overnight in the fridge for the liquid to drain out and the papaya purée to become thick and jelly-like.





# Blue Cheese Blintzes

Cheese blintzes – those delightfully crisp, fried pancake parcels – can be either sweet or savoury. In this recipe, they are filled with a mixture of fresh ricotta, cream cheese, and a dash of blue cheese, which is complemented by a bit of papaya dressing and fresh leaves on the side. The enzymes in the papaya react with the vinaigrette, so do not mix them too early, as the mixture will thicken and become more of a salsa than a chunky dressing. You could make the filling without the blue cheese; however, it is a perfect match with the papaya so give it a go.

Apparently, these little parcels are from Ashkenazi Jewish or Polish origin and are sometimes referred to as *blini* in Russian and *palascinta* in Hungarian. In Austria, they are often filled with apricot preserve or walnuts finely ground with sugar. *The Generalissimo* writes that the English word for *blintzes* comes from the Yiddish word *blintse* which in turn, comes from *blin* (Siva 2022). Furthermore, the word *blin* is derived from an Old Slavic word *mlin*, which means “to mill”. These parcels had a ritual significance for early Slavic peoples in pre-Christian times, being a symbol of the sun due to their round form. The Generalissimo continues to say that they were traditionally prepared at the end of the winter to honour the rebirth of the new sun. Over time, this tradition was adopted by the Russian Orthodox Church and continues to the present day. In this extensive piece of food history writing, The Food Dictator continues to say that the *bliny* was once also served at wakes, to commemorate the recently deceased. Jewish people folded them into a rectangular shape, stuffed with farmer’s cheese. Coincidentally, two fried blintzes side-by-side bear a remarkable resemblance to the tablets of the Ten Commandments and are a traditional delicacy eaten on the Jewish holiday of Shavuot, when it is customary to eat dishes containing dairy.



### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

#### For the crêpes:

280 ml milk  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk  
120 g flour  
15 ml melted butter  
Pinch of salt

#### For the crêpe filling:

80 g darkly toasted and roughly chopped macadamia nuts  
230 g fresh ricotta  
50 g blue cheese  
125 g thick cream cheese  
Zest and juice of 1 small lemon  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

#### Additional:

Olive oil for frying the *blintzes*

#### To serve:

Make a simple dressing by whisking together one-third fresh lemon juice with two-thirds good quality olive oil, some salt, pepper, prepared mustard, a pinch of sugar, a fine paste of 1 garlic clove and 15 ml pickled mustard seeds  
½ papaya, cut into small cubes  
Some green leaves, such as wild rocket or a bitter lettuce, such as radicchio



### Method:

First, make the crêpe batter. It should stand for at least half an hour, even a little longer before you use it. Use a jug blender or liquidiser or even a tall jug and a stick blender. Pour the milk and eggs into the jug. Add the flour and salt and blitz to a smooth liquid with no lumps. Blend in the melted butter.

After the resting period, fry very thin crêpes. This recipe should give approximately 8 - 10 crêpes, depending on the size of your pan.

Turn them out on top of each other as they are fried, with the side fried first at the bottom. For the best results, use a small piece of paper towel dipped in oil to wipe out the pan before and between each new crêpe.

For the filling, mix all the ingredients with a fork, taking care to distribute the blue cheese evenly without mashing it into a grey, pasty mush. Divide the mixture between six or eight of the crêpes, piling it into a small square right in the centre. Fold the crêpes into tight squares.

The *blintzes* can be made up to this point, covered and stored in the fridge. When you are ready to serve them, fry both sides of the *blintzes* in a pan in more olive oil until they are crisp and acquire a rich golden colour.

Toss the papaya in some of the dressing as well as the pickled mustard seeds and dot over and next to the blintzes. Toss the rocket/radicchio leaves with more of the dressing and serve them alongside the blintzes for a bit of freshness.





# Bhajias

The fantastic thing about living in multicultural South Africa is that we have many opportunities to indulge in what is known as “cross-over cuisine”. We learn from each other, we influence each other, and sometimes we celebrate together, which means that our food cultures are shared and appreciated more broadly.

These little flat cakes, known as *bhajias*, come in a variety of shapes and sizes and as many names. Whether you call them *bhaji*, *bhajji*, *bhajiya*, *bajji*, *pandellas*, “chilli bites”, *dhaltjies* or any number of other names, they are essentially all very similar – small shallow or deep-fried dough patties with a variety of vegetables and spices bound together in a batter. Of course, there are just as many recipes as there are names for these savoury snack items. Serve them as snacks before a meal and you will truly impress your guests. Make them as savoury, spicy and hot as you like, make them with as many vegetables as you like, and if you are not up to measuring and grinding the spices, buy a packet of pre-mixed chilli-bites, they are equally delicious.

The recipe below is packed with ingredients that are all known for their health properties, such as fresh ginger, fresh turmeric, fresh garlic and fresh chilli. Combining them with fresh papaya makes these little puffs even healthier, even though they are fried. Remember when frying, that the oil temperature is critical – if the oil is too cool, the fritters will absorb too much oil. If the oil is too hot, they will burn before being cooked inside. One ingredient that is consistent in all the different recipes we consulted is chickpea flour, which one can easily buy from most supermarkets these days. It provides a deep rich nuttiness. There should be no need for an additional binding liquid such as egg or milk, as the liquid from the mashed papaya provides enough moisture.



These *bhajias* may be served as is, however, they could also be made a little larger, and then used as a starter along with a yoghurt sauce and a small side salad, or, if one were to add some additional grated vegetables (butternut, courgette, potato or any number of other vegetables), they would make a suitable side dish for a main course or at a braai.



#### Ingredients for around 8 - 10, 6 cm *bhajias*:

5 ml nigella (or poppy) seeds  
5 ml each whole coriander, fennel, cumin seeds, dry toasted in a pan and roughly ground  
5 ml salt  
5 ml sugar  
2,5 ml baking powder  
80 g chickpea flour  
2 onions, extremely finely sliced – preferably using a mandoline  
1 clove of garlic, finely grated  
4 cm piece each of fresh turmeric and fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated  
1 red fresh chilli, deseeded (optional) and finely sliced  
200 g papaya, mashed  
Sunflower oil for frying



#### Method:

Mix all the ingredients to form a loose mixture. Warm a large non-stick pan to medium heat and wipe out with a little oil on a piece of kitchen paper (or add about 3 tablespoons of oil to a regular pan).

Spoon about four portions of a tablespoon each into the hot pan and flatten them slightly. Of course, one could also deep-fry these if you should wish to – their shape will be rounder and more irregular.

Cook them gently without turning. Use a spatula to loosen them, the sugars in the mix will make them stick a little, however, be patient and they will come loose as soon as a little cooked skin has formed at the bottom. After a few minutes, flip them over and continue cooking until they are slightly puffed up.

If you are unsure if they are cooked, taste one, the vegetables should be cooked, but can still have a little crunch, however, the flour should not taste raw anymore.

Place the *bhajias* on a plate with draining paper and repeat with the remaining mixture.

# Papaya and Blue Cheese Braaibroodjies



These quirky sandwiches will no doubt raise a few eyebrows. South Africans do not associate a traditional heritage *braaibroodjie* (grilled cheese sandwich cooked over an open fire or coals) with any other filling than onion, tomato, and cheese. Some people may consider a *braaibroodjie* with blue cheese and papaya filling sacrilege. These were originally conceptualised as a dessert, given that few things that can be prepared on the braai are suitable as a dessert. As a dessert, these are great – they are not overly sweet, even though a little rich. This means that one only needs half or a quarter of a sandwich per person. However, since they are not overly sweet, they work well as an accompaniment to a braai.

The raisin bread is slightly different from the traditional white bread while cutting the blue cheese with cream cheese ensures that the blue cheese does not overpower. Blue cheese and fruit work well together, and even though more traditional matches would be pear or apple, the papaya and blue cheese pair in perfect harmony. Since the taste of cooked or warmed papaya may not appeal to all, it is important to spread the cheese mixture evenly over the bread slice, ensuring that the full surface of the bread slice is covered. This way, when the sandwiches are toasted on the braai, the heat does not penetrate right through to the papaya, but still manages to melt the cheese.

Many different types of blue cheese are available in our stores. If you like a heavy, pungent Roquefort type, go ahead. For this recipe, a milder Italian *dolce de latte* creamy blue cheese or Danish blue cheese is recommended for its mild, softer flavour that complements the papaya excellently.



**Ingredients for 4 full sandwiches (that may be enough for 8 portions as a dessert):**

660 g raisin bread (one needs two slices of raisin bread per sandwich, which could be enough for two or 3 people, depending on how many quarters you want to serve)

40 g of thinly sliced papaya per sandwich

230 g cream cheese

100 g *dolce de latte* or Danish blue cheese

15 g softened butter for each two slices of bread



**Method:**

Beat the cream cheese and blue cheese together until well combined (it should be soft and spreadable, as raisin bread is often fairly soft). Allow 60 g for every two slices of bread.

Lightly butter one side of all the slices of bread. Turn these over, so that the buttered side is underneath.

Now spread the correct amount of the blue cheese mixture on each slice, ensuring that the bread slice is fully covered from corner to corner. Lay a nice thick layer of sliced papaya over half of the sandwiches, and then turn the other slice over the papaya, so that the papaya is covered on both sides with the cheese spread.

Toast these on low coals so that they do not brown too quickly. However, do not leave them too pale – one wants a good brown crust on your toasted sandwich.

Cut in quarters and serve.



# Papaya and Beetroot Fried Mealie Meal Squares



Apart from the famous 1980s innovation, the *paptert* (porridge tart), and *pap* combined with pumpkin, most people prefer to eat their *pap* in its original form without too much fiddling or faffing. That is the beauty of cultural cuisine; we have strong emotional connections with certain foods which we mostly like the way we remember them. This recipe is for one of those diversions from the tried and trusted, namely fried *mealie meal* squares, which will hopefully, once you have made them, become a part of your culinary repertoire. The *mealie meal* is cooked to a stiff porridge with stock, cream, butter and cheese, then poured out and cooled completely, after which it is cut into shapes and fried or grilled. This recipe is versatile in many ways – one can cut the set *mealie meal* into cubes to make croutons for a salad or cut smaller squares as a base for canapés. In this recipe, the fingers are served fried with a papaya and beetroot side dish, dressed with green lettuce leaves and smoked chicken. There are numerous options to serve with the fried *mealie meal*; with cold accompaniments, one can create a slightly more summery dish, while in the colder months, one can serve it with rich stews or casseroles.

Italians eat a lot of polenta, which is made from yellow mealies and is very similar to *pap* (porridge). They eat it soft, often with a stew such as *osso bucco*. They also allow the soft polenta (enriched with stock, butter and parmesan cheese) to cool on a baking sheet, which they later cut into pieces and fry. This is essentially what *Gnocchi alla Romana* is, although it is made with semolina instead of maize. Polenta is an important comfort food for northern Italians, so much so that they are sometimes called *polentoni* or “polenta-eaters”. Read food writer Francine Segan’s account of the history and importance of polenta in Italian cuisine for more detailed information (Segan 2023).

This recipe combines the earthiness of beetroot (and of course its lovely colour) with the sweetness of papaya. It is important not to add the beetroot or the papaya too early, as the beetroot would lose its colour and the papaya its flavour. The problem is that different types of *mealie meal* need different times to cook – instant pre-cooked *mealie meal* takes a fraction of the time needed to cook coarse yellow “*braai pap*”. Whatever you do, add the beetroot and papaya right at the end, with only just enough time to give the beetroot a light cooking. If the beetroot is grated finely, it will cook very quickly, and the papaya needs hardly any cooking at all.



#### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

##### For the *mealie meal* squares:

60 g butter  
½ onion, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, finely minced  
250 g *mealie meal* (fine or coarse, white or yellow, or a mix of any)  
1 vegetable stock cube dissolved in 500 ml boiling water (or 500 ml homemade liquid vegetable stock)  
250 ml cream  
1 medium beetroot, finely grated  
80 g ripe papaya, mashed  
2,5 ml salt  
Grinding of fresh black pepper  
80 g parmesan cheese, finely grated  
Olive oil for frying

##### To serve:

2 roasted beetroots, peeled and cut into chips  
½ papaya, cut into fingers  
Selection of green leaves  
Smoked chicken or other cold meat equivalent



#### Method:

Fry the onion and garlic in the butter in a medium pot with a thick base until soft and translucent.

Combine the stock and cream with the *mealie meal* in the pot and cook slowly, stirring often, until the *mealie meal* is fully cooked when tasted.

Just before the *mealie meal* is entirely done, add the grated beetroot and papaya and cook for another 5 minutes.

Add the seasoning and parmesan cheese and turn the *mealie meal pap* onto a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat or clingfilm wrap. Depending on whether you want to cut squares or fingers, flatten the *mealie meal* evenly in the pan.

Cool completely, cut into desired shapes, fry in olive oil, or grill until the *mealie meal* shapes have a good colour.

Serve with papaya and beetroot salad, dressed green lettuce salad and smoked chicken/cold meat.



# Papaya and Bacon Filled Tomatoes





If you have never made a filled, uncooked tomato, you have not experienced one of the great food delights. They most certainly are delicious and delightful. In Anatolian cuisine, stuffed or filled tomatoes are often cooked along with a myriad of other filled vegetables. However, uncooked filled tomatoes have an added advantage in that they are almost like “pocket” salads – everything neatly wrapped and packed in a round, easily accessible and compact pouch, ready for eating. They transport well, so they are ideal for picnics, and often when we braai a bit later in the day, the lighting may not be so good, making dishing up a salad that scatters all over the plate problematic. In those situations, opt for these ready-to-go instant salads that can be dished up and eaten quite easily.

If you believe skinning a tomato is too much fuss, by all means go ahead and keep the skin on – it is in any case probably healthier that way. But if you like the idea of a skinless tomato, learn to do it well. They should in no way be “furry”, meaning that only the thinnest bit of tomato skin is removed and the flesh under the skin should remain firm, not watery or mushy. To do this, you need good, evenly ripe firm tomatoes. You need to make a small cross on the flower-end of the tomato, piercing just through the tomato skin. This will help release the skin after its baptism in boiling water. You may remove the stem end at this point if you wish. For filled tomatoes,

it is imperative not to gouge out the stem too deeply – just cut the shallowest part of the stem area away leaving a small “dent” in the tomato. Have ready a deep pot with plenty of boiling water, and a deep bowl with ice water and some ice cubes floating in the water. Now dunk the tomatoes one by one into boiling water, using a slotted spoon. If your tomatoes are evenly ripe, they should not need more than 10 seconds under the water. If there is any slight greenness to the tomato, you may need to hold it under the boiling water for a few more seconds. Immediately place in the ice-cold water. As soon as they are cold, remove from the ice bath. Using a sharp small paring knife, wedge the blade under a bit of loose skin where you have cut the cross into the tomato to loosen and pull the skin away. Reserve the skins for the dressing – see below in the ingredients list. The secret to a perfectly peeled tomato is very hot boiling water and an immediate ice bath to arrest the cooking.

There is papaya both in the filling and the dressing. The tomatoes need the dressing, and the papaya offers a fresh fruitiness to the filled tomatoes. If you wish for a vegetarian version, omit the bacon, or replace it with something such as soft Danish feta cheese. These tomatoes are great as a side dish, but with a crusty baguette they will be an excellent starter.



**Ingredients for 6 - 7 tomatoes, depending on the size:**

1 kg firm, but very ripe, large tomatoes (approximately 6 - 7 tomatoes) – you could use smaller tomatoes and prepare more than one per guest, but scooping out the inside of the tomato is already a cumbersome and fiddly job which becomes fiddlier when you have smaller tomatoes

80 g firm papaya, cut into small dice

150 g bacon (a nice fatty cut), cut into relatively small pieces and fried until crisp in 15 ml olive oil (one could also cook the bacon in the microwave or air fryer)

60 g *atchar*, finely chopped (choose an *atchar* which suits your level of hotness – a little heat would be better, but mild will also do)

60 g pickled peppadews, finely chopped

8 g (±4 tbsp) fresh parsley, finely chopped

**For the papaya dressing:**

60 ml sunflower or light olive oil

5 ml sugar

5 ml salt

2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper

15 ml fresh lemon juice

80 ml tomato water (see instructions below)

50 g ripe papaya

5 ml prepared mustard

½ garlic clove, finely chopped

Reserved tomato skins (see comments above)



### Method:

Skin the tomatoes as per the discussion above. Use a very sharp serrated knife and cut away a “lid” on the flower end of the tomato – set aside (keep track of which lids belong to which tomatoes). Use a very pointed teaspoon (a grapefruit spoon would be even better) to scoop fibre and seeds out of the tomato – be careful not to damage the tomato in any way.

Reserve everything that is removed from inside the tomatoes. Place tomatoes upside down on some kitchen paper to drain a little.

Make the filling by combining all the ingredients.

Make the dressing by first juicing the parts removed from inside the tomatoes. Squish all of this through a sieve.

Place the required volume and all the other ingredients in a small liquidiser or in the jug of a hand-held immersion (stick) blender. Blend until smooth and emulsified. Correct the seasoning if necessary.

Divide all the filling between the tomatoes, packing them generously full. Replace their lids and drizzle lavishly with dressing.





# Papaya and Gravad Lax Waffles



In South Africa, we mostly associate waffles with ice cream and syrup – a sweet waffle is many people's favourite treat. However, many cultures in the world serve waffles as a savoury dish, adding all sorts of ingredients that range from simple ones such as crispy bacon and potato to complex flavours such as *kimchi*-cheddar. The recipe offered here is loaded with many complementary ingredients, however, feel free to play and make different combinations. The papaya in this recipe marries perfectly with the avocado and the cured fish while providing a hint of sweetness along with the poached egg and the avocado cream cheese.

The thing with great waffles is that one should have a really hot waffle iron. Waffle irons that can be heated on a gas stove are easier to manage as one is better able to control the heat, since some commercial waffle irons have fail-safe temperature devices built in that allow them only to reach a certain temperature, while one may require a hotter temperature. Irons that do not get hot enough or not warmed up sufficiently beforehand will make tough, dry waffles. When the waffle iron is hot, one gets moist waffles that are slightly crisp on the outside, but not dry inside. If your iron is not non-stick, use a bit of food spray as the indentations of the waffle iron make it complicated to get grease into all the little spaces, preventing your waffle from releasing when cooked.

*Gravlax* or *gravad lax* or *lox* is a Nordic preservation technique for fish, which literally translates to “graved” (or buried) salmon. The origins of *gravad lax* can be traced back to fourteenth century north Sweden when salt was very expensive and people had to find other preservation methods – from there the “buried salmon”, hence the

name “*gravad lax*” or graved salmon. It is most often cured with salt and sugar and perhaps a bit of dill and is sometimes cold smoked afterwards. You can make your own if you wish, but if that sounds more trouble than you are willing to go to, you could replace it with smoked trout or peppered mackerel. In this recipe, the uncooked cured fish is complimentary.



### Ingredients for 6 portions:

#### For the savoury waffles:

250 g cake flour  
12,5 ml baking powder  
5 ml salt  
250 ml milk  
2 egg yolks  
50 g butter, melted  
5 ml of fresh thyme leaves  
2 egg whites

#### For the topping:

1 medium avocado, ready to eat  
230 g cream cheese  
Salt and pepper to taste  
About 300 g *gravad lax* ( $\pm 50$  g per person), thinly shaved  
12 stalks green asparagus, trimmed, blanched and cut into two or three sections  
1 medium papaya, cubed  
6 poached eggs  
Selection of green leaves, such as wild rocket, or fennel or some lettuce, tossed in olive oil, fresh lemon juice, salt and pepper  
Selection of edible flowers  
A dash of good quality olive oil for garnish  
Freshly ground black pepper from a hand mill



### Method:

First, make the avocado mash by combining the avocado and cream cheese and roughly mashing it together with some salt and pepper to taste. Set aside. Have all the remaining ingredients for the topping ready – do not toss the leaves.

Make the waffle batter by mixing all the ingredients (including the egg yolks), except the egg whites, together. Beat the egg whites to a medium stiff peak and fold it into the batter.

Warm up the waffle iron (spray if necessary) and bake the waffles one after the other. Keep them warm until they are all cooked.

Place six waffles out on individual plates, divide the avocado mash between the six waffles and spread liberally over each. Divide the asparagus pieces over the avocado mash and then sprinkle all the papaya cubes over.

Dot with the thinly shaved *gravad lax* and place a poached egg on each. Toss the leaves with olive oil, lemon, salt and pepper and pile high on the six plates.

Decorate with edible flowers, drizzle a little olive oil over each plate and grind a little fresh black pepper over. Serve.

# Tzimmes



There are as many versions of this lovely side dish – a staple of the Rosh Hashanah table – as there are individual Jewish households, ranging from vegetable stews to something resembling a condiment or chutney – something that would probably find better use in a South African kitchen. Barbara Bensoussan writes that adding sugar to vegetables is a strange idea in the Jewish culinary tradition – something that South Africans of course love to do (Bensoussan 2021). Tori Avey writes that *tzimmes* (sometimes written *tsimmes*) is a traditional Ashkenazi Jewish side dish made with sweet root vegetables, which can include carrots, sweet potatoes, yams and dried fruits, and that the word is a Yiddish expression for making a fuss over something (Avey 2023). Avey explains that carrots are usually cut into circles, to represent coins symbolising prosperity. Eating sweet food during Rosh Hashanah is meant to ensure a sweet year ahead. Like referring to the upper crust of society in English, one would refer to someone from the upper echelons of society in Yiddish as coming from the *tzimmes* (Baur 2021).

Using papaya in this recipe gives both sweetness and moisture, so you need not start your *tzimmes* with any added liquid. If it becomes too dry, add a splash of water. Reduce the cooking time for a more vegetable-like side dish, but cooked in the way described below, you will have something more alike to a chutney that will keep in the fridge and is an ideal accompaniment to cold meats, cured fish or to spread on crackers along with a nice piece of cheese at the end of a meal, instead of dessert. Even though *tzimmes* is traditionally a side dish to accompany a holiday meal, go ahead and serve it with meat, such as short ribs, roasts or piled onto a sandwich or burger.





#### Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:

20 g butter

100 g carrots, peeled and grated

50 g dried apricots, snipped into pieces with scissors,  
or chopped roughly

30 g pitted prunes, snipped into pieces with scissors,  
or chopped roughly

80 g firm, but ripe papaya, cut into cubes

20 g honey

20 g brown sugar

5 ml ground cinnamon

15 ml fresh lemon juice



#### Method:

Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed medium-sized pot. Add the carrots and cook for a minute or so over medium heat, stirring occasionally.

Add all the remaining ingredients and cook on medium heat, covered, stirring often in between for 10 minutes.

Remove the lid and inspect the consistency. If the *tzimmes* is too dry to your liking, add a few tablespoons of water. If the mixture is too moist, continue cooking uncovered to dry out.

The *tzimmes* can be bottled, but should be kept in the fridge, since the sugar and acidity are not high enough to keep it unrefrigerated as a bottled item.

# Aubergine Ghanoush



Apart from the foods we grew up with that is our own, many of us have a favourite cuisine from another part of the world. South Africans abroad always talk about their home food and can easily tell you that the *boerewors* in Hong Kong is different from what we have at home. When people say that Thai food is their favourite food, it probably implies that they often opt for Thai food when they eat out. But others actively pursue a particular cuisine they like at home, becoming experts in making home-made pasta from Italy or *Ramen* noodles from Japan.

One such favourite is the varied and encompassing Middle Eastern cuisine. Also sometimes referred to as West Asian cuisine, it includes the foods of countries such as Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Despite the constant political difficulties in several of these countries, it is wonderful to think that their food practices are remarkably similar. Many ingredients are ubiquitous across this geographical area, such as olives, olive oil, honey, sesame seeds, dates, sumac, chickpeas, mint, rice and parsley. *Baba ghanoush* is one of this area's most delicious spreads. Although considered to be of Lebanese or Levantine origin, it can be found in Morocco, where an equivalent is called *zaalouk*, to Armenia, where it is called *mutabal*.

The papaya provides a wonderful aromatic element to the more traditional *baba ghanoush* ingredients. Many people dislike aubergines, probably because most people do not cook them properly – there are few things more horrendous than undercooked aubergines. However, if they are properly cooked with a drizzle of olive oil and garlic, they become marrow soft and have a delicious umami flavour. Somebody once wrote that when you think your aubergine is cooked, just cook it a little more.

Although this recipe calls for roasting your aubergines over an open flame, you could also bake them in the oven on a baking sheet. You could simply rub them with some oil and bake them whole or cut them up and fry them in olive oil over medium heat for a long time in a casserole on the stove. You also do not need to purée this to a smooth paste – one can easily make a chunkier version by simply chopping up all the ingredients together. *Baba ghanoush* does not have a particularly long shelf-life, but should keep in the fridge for 4 – 5 days if properly covered. However, including uncooked papaya will lessen its shelf life, therefore, it would be better to make small quantities more often.



#### Ingredients for 6 – 8 portions:

500 g (±3 medium) aubergines  
2 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped  
Zest of a whole fresh lemon  
Juice of ½ lemon  
80 ml quality olive oil  
6 g fresh parsley, roughly chopped  
15 ml salt  
3 g cumin (whole or ground)  
3 g smoked paprika  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper  
30 g tahini  
120 g papaya, peeled and cubed



#### Method:

With a knife, poke a few holes in the whole aubergines.

Roast them directly on a medium open gas flame (or the braai if you have one going) until they are well charred, but soft and pulpy inside – this will take some time, and they need to be turned regularly. See note above for other methods to cook your aubergines, however, charring over an open flame gives an intense and delicious smoky flavour. If you are nervous about adding all the charred bits to your mixture, scrape most of the flesh out of the charred skin, however, it will give your *baba ghanoush* a rich, nutty flavour.

Add all the remaining ingredients to a liquidiser or tall jug and with a stick blender, purée to a paste – you can decide how smooth you want it.

Check for seasoning and serve on a Middle Eastern platter with warm pitas and other breads.



# Aji Verde



This spicy Peruvian green sauce, like many other green sauces of the world, uses green culinary herbs. Other examples of green sauces celebrating the vibrant colour and flavours of green herbs include *chimichurri* from Argentina, *salsa verde* from Italy and Mexico, *bagnetto verde* from the Italian north, *chermoula* from Morocco, *zhoug* from Yemen, and even pesto from Italy. *Aji verde* is often made from *huacatay* paste or *huacatay* leaves, a marigold that produces leaves known as black mint, *aji amarillo* and fresh coriander. Some of these ingredients may not be readily available, hence the recipe below. A true *Aji verde* seems to always contain a good dollop of mayonnaise, and you can use jalapeño and/or serrano chillies, however, in this recipe, good old South African green chillies are also suitable.

This recipe includes green papaya – which does not mean that it contributes to the green colour of the sauce – it simply implies that the papaya is unripe; which is a strange thing in a sauce, as one would be inclined to think that ripe papaya would give better texture and make the sauce fruitier. This may well be; however, the green papaya contributes to the sauce's savouriness, making it ideal to serve with meats and spread on sandwiches. The green papaya also contributes slightly to the texture; as green papaya is somewhat dry, it does not add much moisture, but rather helps with the amalgamation or binding of the sauce, which supports the mayonnaise. It probably does not add much flavour, however, one is aware that there is an indistinguishable fruit in the sauce although you may not be sure what it is.

This sauce will keep for several days in the fridge. If you do not want the surface of the sauce to oxidise, drizzle a thin layer of oil over the top. Serve the sauce with a braai, mix it into some roasted oven vegetables, dollop it onto boiled potatoes for a different version of potato salad, spread it on bread for a good meat or cheese sandwich, or simply hand it around with a platter of goodies when one is serving drinks.



#### Ingredients 6 - 8 portions:

25 g fresh coriander leaves, also referred to as *dhania* – one could also use a mix of other fresh herbs, such as parsley, however, avoid herbs with a very distinct flavour, such as basil  
40 g green papaya, peeled and cut into smaller pieces  
1 green chilli – deseeded if you wish, but also keep the seeds for a hotter sauce  
1 garlic clove, cut into pieces  
45 g plain unflavoured cottage cheese  
15 ml fresh lemon juice  
50 ml sunflower oil, or other neutral oil  
20 ml good quality mayonnaise  
2,5 ml salt  
2,5 ml freshly ground black pepper



#### Method:

Blend all the ingredients together in a liquidiser or tall jar with a stick blender.

Add a little more oil or lemon juice if the mixture is too thick, but be careful not to make the sauce overly acidic.

Check for seasoning and adjust if necessary.

# Green Papaya and Apple Chutney



This is not the most attractive looking chutney around, because the predominantly white ingredients cook down into a chunky paste that looks dull. Thane Prince, in *Jellies, Jams & Chutneys: Preserving the Harvest* (2008) comments that Anglo-Saxon chutneys probably originated from Anglo-Indians during the times of the British Raj (Prince 2008). These chutneys were apparently created using fruit from English orchards such as acidic apples and other fruits such as rhubarb, and mostly included sugar, vinegar, and dried fruit such as raisins, currants and sultanas. This is probably why we associate chutney with just one sweet and sour chunky jamlike compote, while true Indian chutneys are complex, colourful, and flavourful. The recipe below is, alas, also for one of those sweet-sour jamlike condiments. However, the inclusion of green papaya does create a little more interest here. Green papaya recipes often call for just a small amount (see other recipes using green papaya in this book), which means that one may have some leftovers. When that happens, make this recipe, and give small bottles of it away to family or friends. It is vibrant in flavour and texture, even though the colour may be slightly less exciting. Spoon generously over a boerewors roll and be amazed what one can do with a piece of green papaya. This chutney would also work well with nice greasy bacon on a BLT sandwich, or some gammon over the festive season. You could swop the raisins for some dried apricots or peaches, however, guard against overpowering the delicate flavour of the green papaya.





#### Ingredients 6 – 8 portions:

110 g green apples, peeled and grated – make sure they do not discolour while you are busy with other prep – just add the white vinegar below to stop the oxidation  
60 g sugar  
50 g black seedless raisins  
120 g yellow onion, sliced  
6 g black mustard seeds  
6 g (a smallish knob) fresh ginger, peeled (or not if you have nice fresh ginger) and grated  
60 ml white vinegar  
130 g green papaya, grated  
5 g salt



#### Method:

Combine all the ingredients in a thick-based medium pot.

Cook over medium heat, initially covered, for about 8 - 10 minutes, stirring often, and later without the lid to determine the consistency. The vegetables, and particularly the green papaya should cook through for the sake of food safety, but also because it needs to be soft and gooey to amalgamate into a unified product. Cooking the chutney with the lid on at first will create moisture that will soften the apples, onion and papaya.

Once the lid is removed, cook the mixture to reduce moisture, stirring often to avoid burning, until the desired thickness is reached and the chutney looks beautifully glossy and jammy.





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# Desserts





# Papaya Japanese Pancakes



Living in a time of social media is simultaneously fascinating and daunting – one minute no one has ever touched a slab of chocolate and the next everyone is making a Dubai Chocolate Bar, a trending Tik Tok recipe that was (because it has already been overtaken by something else) milk chocolate loaded with pistachios and *kataifi*. A friend who operates a craft chocolatier in Zaandam, Amsterdam, mentions that they were forced to produce a Dubai chocolate slab since all their customers were getting iffy because they did not stock it. Some other foods that have hit star-status on social media food platforms include Italian chopped sandwich, pizza toast, and Asian cucumber salad. Given this long preamble, Japanese pancakes may already be an old hat to some, but they still pop up now and again, being made in pretty Japanese shops making hundreds of pancakes every day.

These pillowy, fluffy cakes are delicious and impressive enough to give the impression that they are difficult to make, which they in fact are not. Although similar to a soufflé omelette, they are actually more pancake than omelette and are therefore, a little more stable than the soufflé omelette. The naming of pancakes in a South African context is in any case a thing on its own – South African pancakes are very distinct and no one in South Africa has any doubt about what that is. When we talk about pancakes, we think of something slightly thicker than a crêpe, of which thousands are fried on any given Saturday at food markets, bazaars and sporting events. A crêpe contains no rising agent and is just an extremely thin layer of batter fried in a pan. South African pancakes differ from how other countries view pancakes; the pancakes consumed in North America and Canada as well as Japan would be described by the average South African as a crumpet, and we will not even delve into the differences between flapjacks and crumpets.

The papaya in this recipe is not included as an ingredient in the pancake batter, but is served on the side. This means that you could serve these as a light dessert, or as a breakfast item. You could enhance the papaya by adding some chopped up dried fruit, very finely sliced mint, or even a little cinnamon for added flavour.



### Ingredients for 10 - 12 pancakes:

4 eggs, separated

#### For the yolk mixture:

15 ml sugar

60 ml milk

43 g cake flour

2,5 ml baking powder

#### For the egg white mixture:

1,25 ml cream of tartar

30 ml sugar

#### For the papaya side cream:

250 g ripe papaya, peeled and cut into small cubes

60 g cream cheese, not necessarily the very thick compact type

½ fresh lemon, juiced

10 ml sugar

Additional icing sugar for garnish.



### Method:

Since these little pancakes deflate quite quickly, they must be served straight after cooking. Therefore, make your papaya cream first by beating the cream cheese with lemon juice and sugar until a soft mixture is achieved.

Fold in the papaya cubes, check the seasoning and add a small dash sugar if desired.

Set aside and when the pancakes are ready, dollop some papaya cream next to them.

The pancakes are made in two stages. First cream the egg yolks and sugar together until they are very pale and thick – do this with a balloon whisk, or even with a small hand-held electric mixer.

Add the milk, then fold in the flour and baking powder.



# Papaya, White Chocolate Mousse and Meringue Dessert





A “plated dessert” is how professional restaurant people refer to a dessert that is assembled on a plate in the kitchen and served to the guests at a table. Even homely favourites such as malva pudding can be jazzed up with garnishes and accompaniments when offered as a restaurant or plated dessert; restaurants will seldom plate a malva pudding in a little pudding bowl, as one would at home.

This recipe, which combines papaya with white chocolate mousse, is elevated to restaurant standards by using meringue shards. Meringue shards are made by spreading a good old-fashioned meringue mixture thinly onto a baking sheet and bake until dry. After baking, the meringue is broken into irregular shards. The mousse is attractively piped onto the plate, creating little mounds to help keep the shards upright. The papaya offers refreshing cleanness amongst all the chocolate.

The problem with chocolate mousse is that the success of the recipe depends on the cocoa butter content of the chocolate to make the mousse set. As white chocolate is in

fact not real chocolate, the setting potential is even lower. Of course, one does not want to use very cheap white chocolate at all, because it must taste good. White baking chocolate, in particular, has very high percentages of vegetable fat and is known for its horrendous taste, therefore, you are advised to buy the highest quality white chocolate you can afford. Fortunately, in South Africa, the big commercial brands all sell a relatively good quality white chocolate that is suitable for the ice cream in the recipe as well as the mousse.

This dessert does not need the white chocolate ice cream, which “happened” by accident as part of researching the recipe. Because of a mistake, the ice cream became part of the recipe – and the cool freshness of the ice cream provides a further lovely dimension to the dessert.

Even though there are many elements that appear fairly sweet upon reading the recipe, the fresh papaya helps to cut the sweetness of this dessert, which is simple to make and ultra elegant.



**Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:**

**For the white chocolate ice cream:**

3 egg yolks

30 ml white sugar

125 ml cream

100 g white chocolate, broken into pieces (see note above about quantity)

200 ml cream, whipped

**For the meringue shards:**

2 egg whites (55 ml)

100 g castor sugar

Pinch of salt

**For the white chocolate mousse:**

250 g mascarpone

150 g white chocolate, broken into pieces (see note above about quantity)

**To serve:**

½ nice firm rice papaya cut into smaller wedges

Selection of edible flowers



### Method:

First, make the ice cream. Cream the egg yolks and sugar together. Then add the 125 ml of cream and mix. Pour into a small heavy gaged pot and cook on low/medium heat, stirring all the time until the custard has fully thickened.

Remove from the heat, add the pieces of broken chocolate and stir until all the chocolate has melted. Strain if you wish and set aside to cool.

When cold, beat the 200 ml of cream to stiff peaks and fold into the chocolate custard. Pour into a freezer container, cover and freeze until solid.

Make the meringue shards. Preheat an oven to 100 °C. Beat the egg whites and salt until frothy and partially aerated in the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the balloon attachment. When soft peaks have formed, add the sugar a little at a time and beat on high speed until the mixture is very stiff and shiny.

Spread with a palette knife onto a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat. Bake for no less than 1,5 hours until the layer is completely dry and crisp. They often still appear somewhat soft in the oven, but firm up as soon as they reach colder air outside the oven.

To make the white chocolate mousse, melt 150 g of white chocolate. Stir and set aside until cool, but do not refrigerate. Whip the mascarpone until stiff (be careful not to split it), and then fold it into the cooled chocolate. It is best to do this close to service, as the mixture will melt and become oily outside, while in the fridge it will become stiff and difficult to pipe.

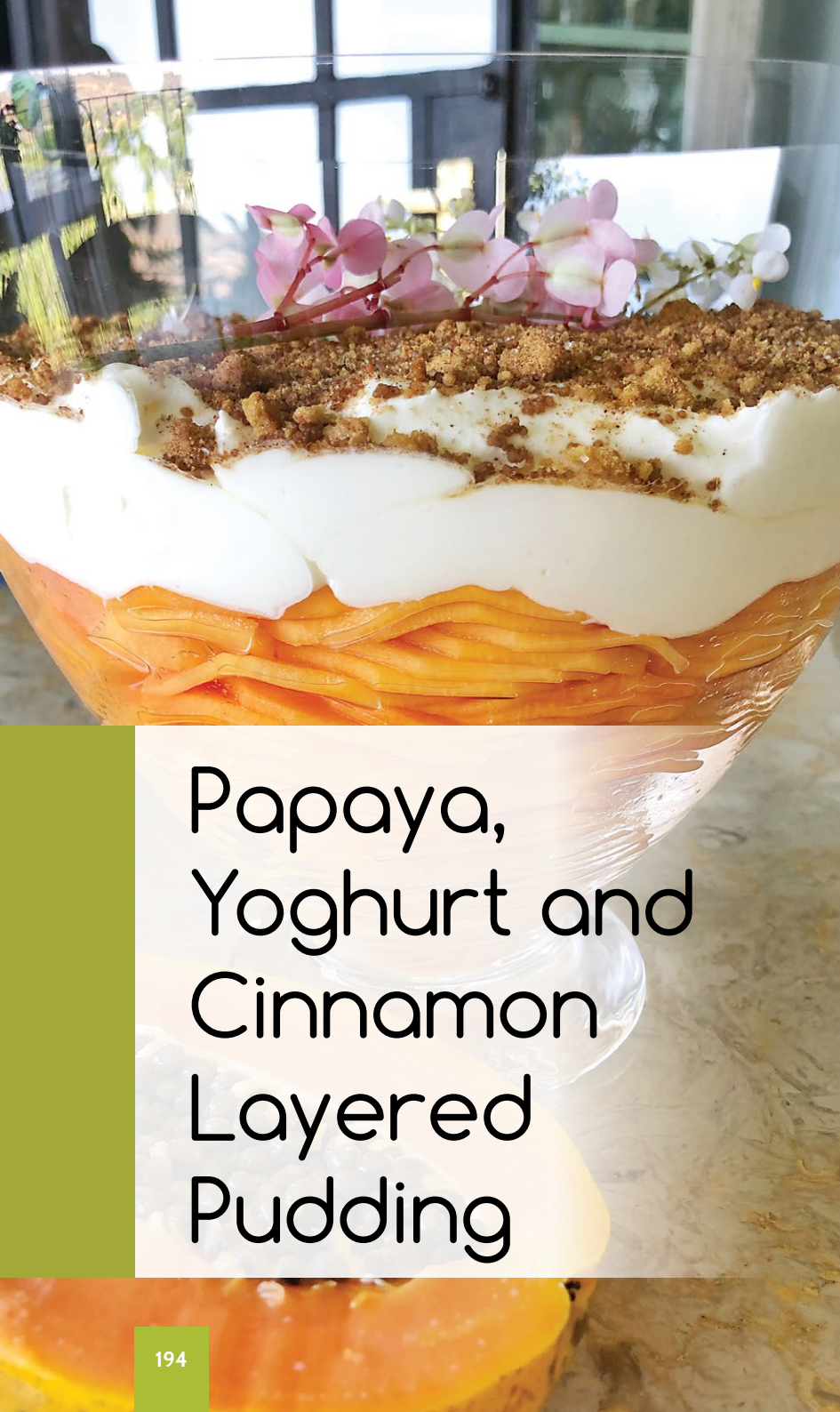
To serve, have four or six flat dinner plates ready. Use a piping nozzle with a slit that is somewhat wider on one side and tapers to a narrow slit on the other.

Pipe a small portion of white chocolate mousse onto the plate in a left-to-right side motion. Then stack a piece of broken meringue shard standing up against the mousse.

Repeat on all the plates and with all the mousse and shards, so that each plate has at least four pieces of upright meringue shards.

Place the papaya attractively around, scoop a portion of ice cream, or even a quenelle if you are deft at it, and decorate with edible flowers.





# Papaya, Yoghurt and Cinnamon Layered Pudding

Even though this recipe has a decidedly late twentieth century feel, it is a simple and elegant dessert that will continue to steal hearts, even today. It is an adaptation of a similarly light, yet comforting, mango dessert perfect for those hot summer days. The layers of fruit and thick blanket of lightened yoghurt with a dusting of cinnamon provide the same satisfaction that a baked pudding delivers in winter. The papaya is even lighter than the mango, which has a lot of flavour and sweetness, so one can make quite a large version without any guilt. Make sure to use thick and rich yoghurt instead of a low-fat version. The whipped cream helps to hold the yoghurt in suspension, so it is preferable to make the pudding in a flat, wide dish instead of one that is tall and upright.

For this version, the cinnamon is mixed with crushed ginger biscuits for some added crunch and flavour, so be sure to spoon right through to the bottom of the dish so that each person receives a good serving of papaya and the yoghurt layer, with the crunchy sweetness on top. Letting the dish sit in the fridge for a couple of hours or even overnight ensures that the flavours meld together and the sugar layer on top melts somewhat. Of course, one could also make these in pretty, individual glasses and if you wish, you could make various layers of papaya, yoghurt cream, and cinnamon crunch instead of just one layer. The dessert needs no other accompaniments; however, you could garnish it with a scattering of edible flowers.



**Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:**

100 g ginger biscuits (finely pulsed or crushed with a rolling pin)

90 g dark brown sugar

15 ml ground cinnamon

450 g full fat thick plain Greek-style yoghurt

300 ml cream, ice cold

2 to 3 whole papayas, depending on size



**Method:**

Mix the sugar, cinnamon and ground-up ginger biscuits. Set aside. Whip the cream until fairly stiff and then gently fold in the yoghurt. Set aside.

Peel and slice the papaya as thinly as possible – the thinner the slices, the better you will be able to layer them.

Lay all the papaya in the container as tightly as possible, avoiding too many open spaces. Pile all the cream/yoghurt mixture onto the papaya and level it off.

Sprinkle with the biscuit and sugar mix. Refrigerate for no less than 5 hours, but preferably overnight and enjoy!

# Verrine



The French word “*verrine*” apparently has no English equivalent, hence we will explore the item here. *Verrine* describes food that is served vertically – meaning that the food is served in a little glass container in different layers, such as in this dish. A *verrine* does not have to be a dessert; there are also recipes for savoury *verrines*. Choose a nice clear glass without too many patterns or designs on the glass – you want to see the layers. In this recipe, wine glasses without stems were used. They are finicky to work with, being very fragile and because the opening of the glass is much smaller than the base, but in a sense that contributes to the delight of the end result.

This recipe pairs pomegranate with papaya and yoghurt – it is a refreshing, not too sweet dessert that is perfect for hot summer days. You can use other fruit such as strawberries or red plums; just think about the colours and complementing flavours. It is also better to use fresh juice, rather than store bought juices which are often cut with apple or grape juice. Whole pomegranates juice very easily; simply cut them in half and twist them on an orange hand-juicer in the same way you would juice an orange.

Remember that papaya contains a proteolytic enzyme called papain, which basically breaks down protein. For this reason, you should not assemble the glasses too long in advance as the cream and papaya layer may separate. A little trick to overcome this effect is to drain the papaya ahead of time, which seems to delay the process. Simply purée the papaya indicated in the recipe below in a liquidiser until very smooth. Pass it through a fine sieve, and then pour it into a piece of muslin cloth laid into a sieve – wrap everything in clingfilm and leave in the fridge for at least 24 hours. Afterwards you will have a semi-set thick paste that will aid in achieving the desired consistency. Before you mix the paste into the whipped cream, be sure to smooth it out again by blending it in the liquidiser or using a stick blender.





#### Ingredients for 4 portions:

##### For the papaya and whipped cream layer:

360 g papaya, peeled and cubed (and a little extra, cut into very small blocks for garnish on top, along with some edible flower petals)

30 g sugar

60 g double cream

##### For the set yoghurt layer:

250 ml thick double/full cream unflavoured Greek yoghurt

30 ml honey

3 sheets leaf gelatine

15 ml fresh lemon juice

##### For the pomegranate jelly layer:

250 ml fresh pomegranate juice

3 sheets gelatine



#### Method:

It is better to first make the pomegranate jelly, which could benefit from becoming a bit thicker, then the papaya layer and lastly the yoghurt layer.

Soften the sheet gelatine in cold water, warm the pomegranate juice slightly (do not boil or make it overly hot) and melt the gelatine in the juice.

Set it aside.

Soften the gelatine for the yoghurt layer in cold water.

Warm the lemon juice and melt the gelatine in the lemon juice.

Add this to the Greek yoghurt and mix very quickly with the honey.

Set aside for a moment until you are ready to assemble the verrines. Since the gelatine will start setting, you need to work relatively fast. See the comment above in the notes for the papaya pulp.

Beat the cream until stiff with the sugar, then fold in the papaya purée. Assemble the layers any way you want; perhaps start with the yoghurt layer, then the papaya and lastly the pomegranate.

Repeat as many layers as you want. Place in the fridge until completely set, and garnish with more papaya cubes and edible flowers.

# Trifle



Like rugby, trifle is one of those South African things that people have very strong opinions about. If you are from the Free State, you probably grew up thinking about trifle a certain way. Some like it very fruity with raspberry purée or jam added, others like it with loads of jelly and canned fruit, while some even like it with some toasted coconut added. This recipe, which is probably a little more English inspired, is made without any jelly, but with loads of custard and cream between layers of cake. English trifles are often just layers of sherry-soaked cake with whipped cream, custard, glacé fruit and toasted nuts. This is a rich recipe, so make it when you have ripe papaya around and when there are friends or family visiting for a special occasion. This version calls for fresh papaya, which is an unusual trifle ingredient. To some extent this reduces the shelf life of the trifle – many people claim that trifle is way nicer after a day or two in the fridge. Therefore, make this when there are enough people around to polish it all off, as it will not really improve. Soaking the cake in a milky mixture of evaporated and condensed milk protects the cake from any adverse effects caused by long-term exposure to papaya.

The cake used in this trifle is a version of Natasha Sideris and Elze Roome's *Tres leches* cake (Sideris 2020). Soaking the layers in the sweet, milky sauce ensures a trifle that is rich and decadent, and never dry. Should you want to add sherry, just decrease the soaking liquid a little and add sherry to make up the difference. If you are a purist and do not want to make a custard using commercial custard powder, by all means make an egg custard, slightly thinner than a *crème pâtissière*.



**Ingredients for a large trifle that could easily serve 8 - 10 people:**

**For the cake:**

90 g cake flour  
3 g baking powder  
1 g salt  
70 g + 40 g sugar  
3 eggs, separated  
60 ml milk  
15 ml vanilla essence or extract

**For the soaking liquid:**

½ tin evaporated milk  
½ tin condensed milk

**For the custard:**

750 ml milk  
75 ml custard powder  
60 ml sugar  
10 ml vanilla essence or extract  
Pinch of salt

**To assemble:**

¾ to 1 medium ripe papaya, peeled and sliced  
375 ml cream, stiffly whipped with 15 ml of vanilla added  
100 g pecan nuts, darkly toasted and roughly chopped



**Method:**

First bake the cake. Paper and grease an A4 sized baking pan with 2 cm high sides.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C.

Mix the cake flour, baking powder and salt together.

Cream the egg yolks and 70 g of sugar until very light and creamy and thick.

Add the milk and vanilla and fold in the flour mixture.

Whisk the egg whites to a medium peak, add the remaining 40 g of sugar and beat to a firm meringue, then fold into the batter.

Pour onto the prepared tin and bake for 22 minutes in the middle of the oven. Then let it cool.

For the soaking liquid, simply mix the evaporated and condensed milk together.

While the cake is baking, prepare the custard by mixing all the ingredients, except the vanilla together and cook on top of the stove or in a jug in the microwave until thick – add the vanilla.

Assemble the trifle by starting with a thin layer of custard at the bottom, whipped cream over that, then cake and then fruit. It is easier to cut and layer pieces of cake over the cream and then soak it with spoonfuls of soaking liquid. Soaking the cake in the tray will make assembly more difficult.

Finish with a layer of cream and sprinkle the nuts over generously.





# Tiramisu

The delight on people's faces when you present them with *tiramisu* never fails to lift one's spirits. The traditional combination of mascarpone cream and coffee-soaked biscuits could have originated in culinary heaven, however, this recipe for a variation on the classic, which includes slices of fresh papaya, most certainly also does not disappoint – in fact, now and again a big portion of traditional *tiramisu* might be a little too rich. In this recipe, the fresh papaya cuts some of that richness and adds a hint of further interest.

Historical records state that tiramisu originated in Treviso in 1800, when the dessert was invented by a clever *maitresse* of a house of pleasure in the centre of Treviso. The word “*tiramisù*” literally means “pick me up” when the phrase *tireme su* in the Treviso dialect became Italianised into *tiramisu* in the latter half of the twentieth century (Bansal 2022). These ladies apparently needed to serve their clients something sweet at the end of an evening to rejuvenate them before their return home. Whatever the history is, *tiramisu* remains a favourite dessert around the world.

If you are a traditionalist, by all means bake your own finger biscuits, however, commercial ones work just as well. People may also have preconceived ideas about the mascarpone they use, but any brand will do, as long as it is thick and rich.



### Ingredients for 6 - 10 portions:

2 rooibos teabags  
120 ml hot water  
2 lemon leaves  
15 ml honey  
500 g mascarpone  
2 egg yolks  
500 ml thick cream  
50 g icing sugar  
15 ml vanilla extract or essence  
Zest of 1 lemon  
200 g Boudoir biscuits  
½ medium-large, ripe papaya, peeled and sliced thinly

### To garnish:

A selection of edible flowers



### Method:

Although one can make the tiramisu in a flat serving dish, this recipe was made in a terrine mould, which makes it easy to unmould and cut into slices. The choice is yours.

Line a terrine mould (a medium-sized bread tin would work equally well) with clingfilm wrap. If you have struggled with this before, consider wetting the clingfilm with some water, which makes it less sticky and easier to get into the terrine mould.

Ensure that there are not too many creases and folds around the side.

First, prepare the soaking liquid (to replace the traditional coffee) by warming 2 rooibos teabags in 120 ml hot water with two lemon leaves and honey. Cool slightly, but leave the teabags and lemon leaves in the liquid.

Beat the mascarpone and egg yolks together with the whisk attachment of a freestanding mixer. Slowly add the cream and be careful that the mixture does not become too thick. Add the sugar, vanilla and lemon zest.

Spoon a thin layer of the mixture into the bottom of the terrine mould, spreading it out evenly. Dip some of the Boudoir biscuits one by one in the soaking liquid and lay them in an even layer over the first layer of mascarpone cream.

Spoon another thin layer of mascarpone cream over the biscuits, then a layer of papaya slices. One could slightly overlap these.

Continue with more biscuits, mascarpone cream, papaya until all the ingredients have been used up, ending with a thin layer of mascarpone cream.

Fold the clingfilm overhang over the sides to cover the terrine or cover it with a reusable food cover.

If you plan to unmould the tiramisu, allow enough time for it to set overnight. Open the terrine and turn a cutting board or serving platter over the terrine.

Flip it over and then gently use the clingfilm to loosen the terrine from the mould. Remove the clingfilm and cut into thick slices.

Garnish with edible flowers.



# Summer Pudding



Historic accounts tell us that the summer pudding comes from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, and one can see how this rather peculiar pudding would be popular during that time – perhaps people were looking for ways to use up old bread, or their pastry skills were limited to some extent. Some historic culinary references show that the pudding may even have been known as a hydropathic pudding or a Malvern pudding, dating as far back as the middle of the nineteenth century. They are mostly made from a selection of fresh red berries encased in a bread “crust”, layered into a pudding basin lined with muslin cloth so that it absorbs some of the excess moisture and one can turn it out the following day.

To most people summer pudding would be an oddity – it is one thing to have fruit jam on bread or toast, but it is not the norm for most people in South Africa to have uncooked fruit with fresh bread. In traditional summer puddings, the selection of red and dark berries is mostly cooked a little with some sugar to release their juices. However, some recipes keep some of red fruits such as strawberries whole and uncooked. The main purpose for warming up the fruit is to create some liquid to dip the bread in. Some recipes suggest that one use slightly older bread, which would probably work better than the super fresh, sliced government white loaf used in this recipe. The problem with fresh bread is that, while it soaks up the sauce very well, it becomes slightly gummy, while less fresh white bread gives better texture. Another suggestion is to make the pudding with a slightly sweeter bread such as *brioche* or even raisin bread, which works very well as a base for other desserts, such as French toast or bread and butter pudding. Whatever one may think of eating fruit and bread together, this recipe is super easy, refreshing, and delicious.





**Ingredients for 6 individual portions or 1 large summer pudding:**

**For the moistening sauce:**

500 g papaya, cubed

100 g sugar

Zest and juice of 1 lemon

60 ml water

**For the pudding:**

10± slices white bread, crusts removed (see note above)

½ papaya, cut into small cubes



**Method:**

First, make the moistening sauce that the bread will be brushed with – place all the sauce ingredients together in a saucepan and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring often. Lightly spray six metal *dariole* moulds with food spray.

Transfer to a liquidiser and purée to a smooth pulp – strain and cool. Cut out six circles of bread that fit in the base of the *dariole* moulds. Brush these liberally on both sides with the cooled sauce and secure at the bottom of the mould.

Cut bread fingers, ±½ cm wide, that will run up the side of the mould from the bottom (that will later be the top) to the open end of the mould. Brush these on both sides with more sauce and then overlap them in a pretty pattern on the sides of the mould, covering the sides completely.

Now fill the inside with the cubed papaya, filing it right to the top. Press down lightly to even out the papaya at the top and then cut a larger bread disk, brush with sauce and cover the opening.

Wrap these in clingfilm and place them on a small tray; cover with another small tray and place a weight on the top tray. Leave overnight to set.

When you are ready to serve them, unmould the puddings by placing the uncovered *dariole* mould onto the palm of one hand and then with a substantial shake, loosen them from the mould.

Serve them with more sauce if you wish, or custard, ice cream or a dollop of slightly sweetened whipped cream.

# Sticky Black Rice and Coconut Pudding



People often harbour rather unkind feelings towards rice pudding, and the same goes for sago pudding – they either truly love it or view it with extreme distaste, most often caused by horrible childhood memories of which they have yet to recover. Whatever your feelings towards it, rice pudding is another of those traditional South African puddings that are most often eaten warm in our country. However, there are as many different versions of rice pudding as there are different cultures. This much lighter version originated in Thailand and is classically served cool, with mango. Even though mango may provide a richer, more rounded taste, the papaya is refreshing and healthy. In this recipe, the papaya cubes are dressed in a little spicy syrup that provides additional sweetness, however, if you feel like cutting down on sugar, lessen or even omit the spicy syrup.

Black glutinous rice may be found at Asian supermarkets and is a naturally sweet, dark rice that is more deep, dark purple than

black and has a high fibre and antioxidant content. One can of course make the pudding as successfully with white glutinous rice; however, the black rice provides a deep nutty flavour that is important in a predominantly starch-based pudding. One could make the pudding with risotto rice such as Arborio at a stretch, however, pre-soaking and cooking times may vary. The black rice requires ample soaking, preferably 24 hours and no less than 8 hours. The rice cooks very well in a rice steamer, but as rice cookers are not such a standard South African appliance, this recipe is for normal stovetop cooking.

One can easily make the rice pudding base ahead of time, but do not be tempted to chill it in the fridge, since starches such as rice tend to become quite firm and unappetising once chilled. Serving the pudding at room temperature allows one to plan, such as cutting and macerating the papaya with a little of the syrup until you are ready to serve.





**Ingredients for 6 - 8 portions:**

300 g black glutinous rice

200 ml ( $\pm \frac{1}{2}$  tin) coconut milk (one can also use coconut cream, but the pudding may become too rich and cloying)

190 g ( $\pm \frac{1}{2}$  tin) condensed milk

15 ml vanilla essence or extract

3 ml salt

**For the spiced syrup:**

120 g sugar

150 ml water

2,5 ml ground cinnamon

1,25 ml ground cloves

1,25 ml ground all spice

1,25 ml ground cardamom

300 ml whipping cream

1 medium ripe papaya, peeled and cut into attractive smaller cubes and tossed in 30 ml of the spiced syrup

$\pm \frac{1}{2}$  cup toasted coarse coconut



### Method:

Pre-soak the rice for 24 hours before use – the rice should be soaked for no less than 8 hours – in enough cold tap water so that the water is 3 cm above the rice.

After soaking, place the rice and the soaking water in a pot with a lid and season with the salt. Bring to a boil and then simmer until the rice is cooked, but does not fall apart. The water may seem too little before the rice is cooked, in which case one should turn the heat down even more and cover with a lid so that the rice can steam. On the other hand, if the rice is cooked (this may vary according to what type of rice you use) before all the water has been absorbed, drain the remaining water off, and place the cooked rice back in the warm pot and cover with the lid and leave to steam.

Once the rice is completely cooked/steamed, it should be cooled slightly. It is best not to keep the rice in the pot, as it may continue cooking from the residual heat of the pot. Once slightly cooled, add half of the coconut milk and condensed milk.

Cool the rice right down to room temperature, without refrigerating it. Now, add the remaining coconut milk, condensed milk and vanilla.

In the meantime, make the spiced syrup – place the sugar in a small dry pot with high enough sides to prevent the caramel from spattering when water is added and place on medium-high heat. The sugar will slowly start to melt. If it looks as if the sugar is turning too dark in certain spots, stir with a wooden spoon.

As soon as all the sugar has melted, increase the heat gradually to brown the sugar slightly. Be careful that it does not become too dark, or it will taste burnt, but on the other hand, the sugar needs a nice deep rich caramel flavour.

As soon as the sugar has the right colour, pour all the water in at once – it will splatter wildly, so be careful. Continue cooking until all the lumps of sugar have dissolved and then reduce the sauce until it has a good consistency, such as thin cream. Now add the spices and set aside.

When you are ready to serve, whip the cream until stiff. Place a small portion (around 100 ml) of cooked rice in a bowl and spoon over a generous amount of the spiced syrup.

Scatter generously with papaya cubes and place a nice quenelle of whipped cream on top and finish off with toasted coconut.

# Soufflé Omelette



Many people would be horrified at the thought of having eggs for dessert, since we have come to associate them with breakfast. Soufflé omelettes probably resemble cake or dessert soufflé, or perhaps it is slightly more acceptable to serve them as dessert. This papaya version could most certainly be served for breakfast as well as dessert. Some old-fashioned recipes simply fill a soufflé omelette with jam, but this recipe using fresh papaya as a filling is much less sweet, and therefore, hopefully also slightly healthier. Be creative in assembling the filling. You could add various nuts, some chopped sultanas soaked in a little dessert wine or chopped mint. In the past when these recipes were more fashionable, cooks would “burn” or sear a lattice pattern into the folded omelette before service, using searing hot metal kebab sticks. Avoid cooking the omelette over too high heat, you do not want the bottom of the omelette to become too brown.





### Ingredients for one large omelette:

#### For the omelette filling:

250 g papaya, cut into small cubes

30 ml honey

½ fresh lemon, zest removed and juiced

50 g macadamia nuts, toasted and chopped

More icing for dusting before service

#### For the omelette:

3 eggs, separated

40 g icing sugar

15 ml water

5 ml vanilla essence or extract

40 g butter



### Method:

First make the papaya filling – mix all the ingredients together and set aside. Some liquid might collect in your mixture, which you can address by simply placing it in a sieve for a while before making the omelette. However, your mixture should not be too dry.

Prepare the omelette mixture by creaming the egg yolks with a balloon whisk in a mixing bowl until they are creamy and pale in colour.

Add the water and vanilla.

Whisk the egg whites until they have become a little frothy in another clean mixing bowl, add the icing sugar and beat the meringue until stiff. It is probably easier to fold the egg yolk mixture into the egg whites, although the correct way is the other way around.

Melt the butter in a heavy-based medium-large pan until foaming all over, and tip the egg mixture in.

Move the pan around to ensure your mixture covers the entire base of the pan.

Now, allow the omelette to set and brown lightly.

Pop the omelette under a grill/salamander for a moment or two to cook the top a little, be cautious not to dry it out. The French have a special word for the centre of a soufflé that should not be dry, namely *baveuse*.

As soon as the middle has slightly set, take the omelette out and immediately place the filling onto half of the omelette.

Flip the other half gently over to form a half-moon, and tip it out onto a serving platter.

Dust liberally with icing sugar and serve immediately.

# Raspberry Eton Mess



This recipe could be considered a silver bullet in anyone's cooking arsenal. It is super easy and simple to make, and if you feel disinclined to make the meringues yourself, you could buy them ready-made. The only consideration with store-bought meringues is that they are purposely dried out much more than one wants for this recipe, to extend their shelf-life. Homemade meringues are gooey, soft and sticky inside, and meld with the cream and fruit to create one of the best puddings ever. This is a golden opportunity to learn how to make meringues, as they need not be perfect in any way; if they are broken up, and even if a few tiny prettily piped meringues as garnish look great, one need not have them. So, even if your meringues are a total flop, they would still be usable.

What makes Eton mess great, is the perfect harmony between sweet meringue (with a little crunch), acidity from the fruit sauce and the lusciousness of the cream. Papaya purée is slightly sweet as a sauce on its own, so a little acidity introduced by the raspberries counterbalances it perfectly. Although Eton

mess is traditionally made with strawberries, the combination of papaya and raspberries creates a complex tropical and European forest flavour mix that is totally delicious.

Like so many times in the culinary world, the name for this dessert is indeed also somewhat of a convoluted mess. Caroline Waldegrave and Sandra Robinson, who wrote a recipe book for Eton College, cite two different stories – one about a famous cricket match between Eton and Harrow in the late nineteenth century, where the pudding was dropped and had to be reconstituted, and another story from the 1930s that involves a Labrador (Waldegrave & Robinson 2012)! The two authors interviewed many famous people who attended Eton, including Tory minister William Waldegrave, who declared that the dessert actually did not have any connotation with Eton, and should rather be called strawberry mess. Whatever its name, this remains a delicious dessert that one can whip up in no time and would satisfy most people's need for something a little sweet at the end of a meal.





**Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:**

300 ml whipping cream

**For the meringues:**

75 ml egg whites (3 medium to large egg whites)

180 g castor sugar

5 ml vanilla extract or essence

**For the two purées:**

90 g papaya, peeled and cubed

30 ml icing sugar

Juice of ½ a small lemon

90 g raspberries

30 ml icing sugar

Juice of ½ a small lemon

**Additional:**

Tiny meringues

A selection of edible flowers and petals

Fresh mint leaves

A few more whole raspberries

A few shapes (balls or cubes) of papaya



### Method:

Preheat the oven to 110 °C. Place the egg whites in the bowl of a freestanding mixer, ensuring that it is completely clean, dry and grease free. Beat the egg whites with the balloon attachment until frothy.

Turn the mixer to high speed and beat the egg whites until they are fully volumised. Add the sugar slowly, little by little, ensuring that the mixture remains as stiff as possible between additions of sugar.

When all the sugar has been added, add the vanilla and beat for just a second to distribute. Either pipe or dollop the meringue in quarter cup volumes onto a baking sheet lined with baking paper or a silicone mat.

Place in the oven and bake for an hour. One can also pipe a few small button-sized meringues to be used as garnish. Once the meringues are done, remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Make the two purées by first placing the papaya, lemon juice and sugar into a liquidiser and making a very smooth purée. Repeat with the raspberries, lemon juice and sugar. Set aside.

Beat the cream stiffly and divide in half. Swirl the two sauces into each half. Do not over mix, you want the sauces to be visible in the whipped cream to create a marbled effect.

Decide if you are assembling the Eton mess in one large glass bowl, or individual glasses. Blob a bit of fruit cream at the bottom of the container (it does not matter which of the two cream mixtures you start with), and then break some meringues over.

Alternate the remainder of the cream and meringues on top of each other, until all the cream and meringues have been used up. Finish off with some tiny meringues and fresh fruit and garnish with edible flowers.

Make the Eton mess a little ahead of time to allow the cream to soften the meringue slightly, however, do not make it too long in advance (such as the day before), because the cream will cause the meringue to melt away completely.

# Pumpkin Fritters



It is possible that previous generations did not eat pumpkin fritters for dessert, but loved them as a sweet accompaniment to heavily laden Sunday lunch tables. The pumpkin puffs with a caramel sauce nowadays served as a vegetable in parts of our country, is also a relatively new development. Back in the day, pumpkin fritters were little blobs of pumpkin batter fried in a pan, resembling crumpets, and dusted with cinnamon sugar. They probably had little or no sugar in the batter. This version relies on batter that is deep-fried and drenched in a caramel sauce, making it perhaps too sweet to serve as a vegetable accompanying mains. Including papaya in this dish is what makes it a proper dessert, which would be good with a dollop of unflavoured unsweetened whipped cream or even a little ice cream on the side. If you frown about the instant pudding sauce, feel free to make a proper caramel sauce with caramelised sugar, cream and butter. However, the stabilisers in the instant pudding allow the sauce to penetrate the puffs and make them juicy, but not soggy. One wants to have a good balance between papaya and pumpkin puffs and the sweet, delicious sauce.

The only thing difficult about this recipe is ensuring the correct oil temperature. Too cold and your puffs will be oily; too hot and they will become too dark too quickly while remaining raw inside. Play around to find the ideal oil frying temperature, drain them on lots of kitchen paper once removed from the oil, and remember that although an overly dark puff is not desirable, it is better if they are slightly darker, rather than too pale.



**Ingredients for 18 puffs:**

360 g butternut, peeled and cubed  
30 ml sunflower oil, or other neutral oil  
1 egg  
100 g papaya, peeled and cut into very small blocks  
95 g self-raising flour  
5 ml baking powder  
Pinch of salt  
Oil for deep frying

**For the sauce:**

750 ml milk  
1 packet of instant caramel pudding  
15 ml sugar  
Pinch of salt  
10 ml vanilla essence or extract

**Method:**

After tossing in the oil, bake the butternut (or other firm orange pumpkin such as Queensland Blue, or even Hubbard) on a baking sheet with a silicone mat until completely soft.

Purée with the egg to a smooth paste.

Fold in the flour, baking powder, salt and papaya.

Deep-fry small spoonfuls and drain well – see note above. Since instant puddings do not require warming, heating it up may adversely affect its thickening ability. However, this sauce will benefit from quick cooking to remove some of the pudding's starchy taste.

Mix all the sauce ingredients together and cook for a minute in a small pot, or in the microwave.

Serve generously poured over the fritters.



# Posset

Other recipes in this book have dealt extensively with the adverse effect of papaya on dairy products. Papaya contains a proteolytic enzyme called papain which 'possesses a wide variety of nutritional, medical, and pharmaceutical applications. Papain primarily breaks peptide bonds present in basic amino acids, especially arginine, lysine, and phenylalanine' (Mishra et al. 2022: 16). It is, therefore, not good for desserts that have any dairy as a base, such as this recipe that is made with so few ingredients. A true posset consists only of lemon juice, sugar and cream. The lemon juice thickens the cream into a jelly-like custard, probably in the same way that curdling happens when cheese is made. Because this is such a simple, elegant little dessert, you might be tempted to make it too often, which may bore your guests. Therefore, try this papaya version, even if it may be fraught with complications and dangers!

There is a scientifically untested trick to using papaya along with dairy. Make a purée of more than the weight equal to papaya in the recipe below, using a liquidiser or a stick blender in a tall jug. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve and then place it in a piece of cheesecloth or muslin that you drape into a sieve – place in another small bowl that the sieve will fit in to collect the draining juice, wrap the entire thing in clingfilm, and place in the fridge for at least 24 hours. After 24 hours the papaya pulp would have thickened substantially and a jelly like liquid would have collected at the base of the bowl – discard this. Purée the papaya again so that there are no lumps (resulting from the jellification) in it.

This recipe can be served with some dessert biscuits such as *tuile* or shortbread; although it does not require more than a pretty plate with a small cocktail napkin to place the glass on.



**Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions depending on the size of the glasses you make these in:**

500 ml double cream – sometimes the fat content of single cream is inadequate to ensure that the posset sets all the way to the bottom of the glass. If the double cream has become stiff, you may need to loosen it up a little before warming.

140 g sugar

4 limes, zest removed and juiced

130 g papaya pulp (see important note above)

More papaya, cut into pretty blocks along with some edible flowers for garnish



**Method:**

Warm the cream and sugar together until the sugar is melted.

Boil the cream hard for one minute, stirring all the time. Immediately add the lime juice, zest and papaya purée.

Stir through and immediately pass through a fine sieve.

Divide between the different glasses. Leave it open and place in the fridge to cool. After about two hours they should have begun to set sufficiently to wrap them tightly. They tend to take on the smell of the fridge, so be sure to wrap them very well.

Serve only after being in the fridge for about 8 - 10 hours, by which time they should have set completely.

Dollop a small portion of extra papaya cubes on top, along with some edible flowers for garnish.





# Meringue Roulade

Although this recipe is somewhat messy, do not fear. Like Eton mess, which is always messy, few things are as deliciously decadent as the combination of crisp meringue, cream and fruit. However, unlike a true *pavlova* or Eton mess, which could both still work even if the meringue is dry, for this recipe you want meringue that is dry and crispy, but still flexible so that you can roll it up. You need a crisp A4-sized meringue layer that is still a little pliable so you can roll it up like a Swiss roll.

The papaya in this recipe provides a lovely tropical flavour, and combined with the sharp acidity of granadilla, is even more tropical. You could probably introduce some other fruits such as strawberries or raspberries that also work well with papaya. Be generous with the papaya, even though it will make slicing the roulade slightly more difficult.



### Ingredients for 1 roulade - approximately 6 portions:

3 egg whites

175 g castor sugar

5 ml vanilla essence or extract

5 ml cornflour

5 ml white vinegar

300 ml cream (if you like a lighter filling, use 150 ml full fat unflavoured Greek yoghurt plus 150 ml cream)

1 medium-large ripe papaya, peeled and cut into medium blocks

50 g nuts, such as flaked almonds (and a few more for garnish), toasted

Icing sugar for garnish

A large handful of edible flowers, such a plumbago, dianthus, salvias and others



### Method:

Cut good quality baking parchment (sometimes referred to as silicone paper) to fit on A4 size Swiss roll pan.

Fold the edges and cut a little slit in the corners to make a flat paper box that will fit securely in the base of the baking sheet, with 2 cm edges all round.

Grease the paper well – non-stick spray will probably be best. Preheat the oven to 140 °C.

In the bowl of a free-standing mixer, using the whisk, beat the egg whites until frothy.

Increase the mixer speed to high, and add the castor sugar teaspoon by teaspoon until the mixture is very thick, all the sugar has dissolved, and the meringue is glossy and shiny.

Beat in the vanilla, cornflour and vinegar.

Spread the mixture onto the prepared baking sheet and even the meringue out. You can dot the meringue at this point with some of the nuts or keep them for the filling.

Place the pan in the oven and bake for 40 minutes.

Immediately after taking the meringue out of the oven, cover tightly with a piece of tinfoil and allow it to cool.

When cold, carefully turn the meringue out onto a large clean kitchen towel and peel off the baking parchment.

Beat the cream stiff (if you are using yoghurt, beat only the indicated portion of cream, and then fold in the yoghurt).

Fold the papaya into the cream (followed by the nuts if you chose to keep them for the filling), and spread over the bottom, short part of the meringue roll closest to you.

Using the towel to assist you, roll the meringue up. Some recipes say that one can freeze the whole roulade wrapped in tinfoil. Perhaps freezing fresh papaya is not such a great idea and this dessert is way too yummy to keep.

Decorate the roulade with a liberal dusting of icing sugar, more toasted nuts, and big piles of edible flowers.



# Pavlova



Despite considerable disagreement between Australia and New Zealand about who actually invented the famous *pavlova*, it has become a much-loved favourite throughout the world, and in South Africa, perhaps because of the great variety and quality of fruit in our country. There are few desserts that have such a wide audience as *pavlova*. Caitlin Rawling, provides a detailed record of the origins of the *pavlova*, and where it may have been created the first time, as well as its connection with the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova (Rawling 2022).

This is an adaption of a recipe developed by the queen of *pavlovas*, Nigella Lawson. In some of her cookery books, namely *How to Eat* and *How to be a Domestic Goddess* and others, she makes a range of *pavlovas* featuring blood orange and granadilla, strawberry, a prodigious *pavlova* with passion fruit and lychees, and even some Christmas inspired *pavlovas* (Lawson 1998: 373). Lawson herself confesses that the recipe here is a version of Australian (how else) Stephanie Alexander's *pavlova* from the book *Cook's Companion* (Alexander 1996).

Shaping the *pavlova* base is really the only slightly complicated part of this recipe. Nigella Lawson turns hers upside down once it comes out of the oven, a trick that allows one to have a nice crisp base, allowing the cream to sit on the part that was previously the bottom of the *pavlova* which may not be very crisp. You can use a pallet knife to make pretty walls for the *pavlova*, you could pipe it with a large star nozzle into pretty rosettes or other shapes. These days there are even *pavlovas* where the meringue and cream are piped in a complementary fashion, such as large tear-drop shapes piped from the outside of the circle, thinning out towards the inside. Choose your own style, or keep it traditional, such as this recipe where the cream is simply piled high onto the *pavlova*, followed by the fruit. Because the meringue is so sweet, you rarely need to add anything to the cream or the fruit – simplicity works best.





### Ingredients for one large *pavlova* 6 - 8 portions:

4 egg whites  
Large pinch of salt  
250 g castor sugar  
10 ml cornflour  
10 ml white vinegar  
5 ml vanilla essence or extract  
350 ml cream, stiffly beaten  
1 whole ripe papaya, made into medium sized round balls with a Parisian scoop  
A few other fruits (optional) such as 1 mango, cubed and 1 punnet gooseberries  
About 15 crystalised/sugared rose petals  
A few lemon verbena leaves



### Method:

Place a sheet of good parchment paper or a silicone mat on a large baking sheet, grease with non-stick spray.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C.

Beat the egg whites and salt in the clean bowl of a freestanding mixer with the whisk attachment until frothy and the volume has substantially increased. Be sure to whisk on the highest setting of the mixer and add the sugar one tablespoon at a time until all the sugar has been incorporated and the meringue is really stiff and firm.

Beat in the cornflour, vinegar and vanilla.

Pile the whole lot onto your baking parchment or silicone mat.

Shape or pipe it in an attractive circle with a hollowed-out centre. The *pavlova* does expand substantially in the oven, so take care about spreading the circle too big, and keep your serving dish in mind.

Place in the oven and turn the oven down to 150 °C. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Switch the oven off and leave the *pavlova* to cool in the oven. See note above about turning the *pavlova* upside down, or not.

Pile the beaten cream on top and pile the fruit onto the cream.

Decorate with crystalised rose petals and lemon verbena leaves.

# Panna Cotta



*Panna cotta*, although now acknowledged as an iconic Italian dessert, only appeared on the Italian culinary scene after 1960 from the Langhe wine region in Piedmont, northern Italy, where cream is abundant. The mark of a perfect *panna cotta* is stability, writes foodie Roberta Schira, so that the quantity of thickener (often gelatine) can be reduced as much as possible without compromising structure, consistency and creaminess (Schira 2023). It should not wobble 'like a girl perched on high-heeled shoes', but should only just hold together. It should be so slightly set that it should barely make it intact from the kitchen to the table. Schira continues that ultimately, one should strive to never exceed 8 g of gelatine for every 500 ml of liquid, which is highly challenging when one makes a papaya *panna cotta*, as in the recipe below.

The culprit here is a cysteine protease enzyme (papain) in the papaya, which breaks down the peptide bonds between amino acids and can only be rendered inactive by the application of heat. Papain is the English translation of *papaïne*, the name given by Wurtz and Bouchut to a proteolytically active constituent in the latex of the tropical papaya fruit (*Carica papaya*) (Storer & Ménard 2013). The enzyme is also often used in toothpaste as a teeth whitener. Cooking papaya, however, is not a good solution, since doing so will dull the freshness of the fruit. Food Science guru Harold McGee writes in his eminent food reference guide, that several other fruits, like pineapple and kiwi, also contain protein-digesting enzymes that break gelatine chains into short pieces and prevent them from setting into a gel (McGee 2004: 607). Information on how long it takes for the enzyme to digest the protein is scarce, therefore, it would be best to make and chill the *panna cotta* until fully set, and then serve it immediately before the enzymatic action turns it into a soupy mess. This is a real balancing act for the cook who wishes to achieve a gentle wobble and not a puddly soup.



#### Ingredients for 4 portions:

115 g heavy papaya purée (see note below)

Scraped out seeds of 1 vanilla pod

150 g fresh cream

30 g honey

15 ml granulated gelatine (vegans may also experiment with agar-agar as a setting agent)

150 g thick double cream plain Greek yoghurt



#### Method:

Sprinkle the granulated gelatine on half of the fresh cream. Leave it to fully bloom. Melt it down in the microwave oven or over boiling water.

Stir and add the remaining cream into the mixture. Ensure that the drained papaya purée is smooth, or whisk it thoroughly together with the yoghurt.

Stir in the vanilla, honey, and the melted gelatine cream mixture. Pour into four lightly greased moulds or in pretty presentation cups if you do not plan to unmould the panna cottas.

Serve with small balls of fresh papaya, papaya coulis and decorate with small, edible flowers.

Note: the overall moisture content of papaya purée may be too high to incorporate directly into a panna cotta mixture. To make the heavy papaya purée, peel and deseed a thoroughly ripe, aromatic papaya (unripe papaya contains higher levels of papain than ripe papayas).

Blend the papaya flesh in a food processor, liquidiser or with a stick blender in a tall jar, to obtain a smooth purée (strain through a fine sieve if you are uncertain that your purée is lump-free).

Line a sieve with a clean, rinsed layer of high-quality muslin cloth.

Pour the purée onto the muslin, cover with clingfilm wrap and leave overnight in the fridge for the liquid to drain out and the papaya purée to become thick and jelly-like.



# Nougatine Semifreddo



A *semifreddo* can be described as a type of ice cream that does not require churning in an ice cream machine. It is essentially a frothy egg-yolk custard made with sugar syrup, into which whipped cream is folded, almost like a frozen mousse. Many additional ingredients may then be incorporated into the base to flavour it, such as fruit purées, or in the case of this recipe, a whole selection of dried and glacé fruit and nuts. For this recipe, dried papaya is used, which one can either purchase or make yourself by slowly drying thin slices in the oven for several hours.

In a *semifreddo*, one does not want the added ingredients to be too large or too difficult to cut, since the frothy base in which these ingredients will be embedded is fairly fragile and any inclusions will push straight through the frozen mix when you slice it. Because the dried papaya can be too tough to cut, it is best to soak it before use which can be done in a variety of warmed liquids, such as rooibos tea, apple juice (or a mixture of the two) or even a little brandy. *Semifreddos* are often made

in a loaf or terrine tin, from which portions are sliced, but also lend themselves to being frozen and served in individual small moulds or parfait glasses.

This is one of those recipes where one can actually play around a little with the additional ingredients. The suggested nuts and dried fruits in the recipe below could be used as a rough guide to what one can add – just be sure to stay roughly within the volumes provided, however, feel free to play around. Some pistachio nuts or sultanas would be as delicious. The papaya in this version adds a gentle tropical background that juxtaposes the warm nuttiness of the hazelnut *nougatine* perfectly.

Assembling the *semifreddo* requires a little dexterity. In fact, it is considerably easier if one has access to three mixing bowls to an upright freestanding mixer, as one is used for the egg yolk base, one for the meringue and one to stiffly beat the cream.





**Ingredients for 8 - 10 portions:**

**For the *nougatine*:**

100 g castor sugar

80 g toasted skinned hazelnuts

**For the *semifreddo* base:**

120 g castor sugar

100 ml water

5 egg yolks

**For the meringue base:**

2 egg whites

80 g castor sugar

Juice of 1 lemon

**For the final *semifreddo*:**

50 g dried papaya, soaked (see note above), chopped

50 g ginger in sugar syrup, chopped

100 g *makataan* preserve, cut into small pieces (or use watermelon preserve)

70 g glacé cherries, quartered

70 g glacé orange, cut into small cubes

Zest of 1 lemon

300 ml whipping cream (ice cold)





### Method:

Decide whether you are making the *semifreddo* in a terrine shape or individual glass parfait glasses. If using a bread tin, line the tin or terrine mould with clingfilm – it is often easier to do this by wetting the clingfilm with water and then laying it into the mould, thereafter using a dry tea towel to press it firmly into the corners to avoid pleats and creases.

First make the *nougatine* by gently warming the sugar in a small pot until it starts to melt. Stir the sugar a little to ensure that all the sugar is melted before the hazelnuts are added. One wants the sugar to attain a nice caramel colour, being careful that it does not burn.

As soon as the desired colour is reached, add the nuts, stir through and immediately transfer to a baking sheet covered with a silicone mat. Press the *nougatine* flat and allow to cool.

Once cool, grind coarsely in a food processor or pestle and mortar – you do not want any large pieces, but also guard against ending up with a powder.

Now make the *semifreddo* base – warm the sugar and water together and then turn up the heat so that the sugar boils vigorously until it reaches 120 °C.

In the meantime, whisk the egg yolks in the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the whisk attachment until the egg yolks are light, pale, very frothy and thick.

As soon as the sugar reaches the right temperature, pour in a steady stream onto the whisking egg yolks, trying to get none of the syrup on the whisk attachment.

Set aside when all the syrup has been whisked in and the mixture is thick and stiff.

Next, make the meringue. Whisk the egg whites until frothy and voluminous, but not dry. Add the sugar in slowly and beat until very shiny and glossy. Whisk in the lemon juice.

Beat the cream until stiff. Assemble the *semifreddo* by folding the meringue into the cooled yolk mixture, followed by the stiff cream.

Last, fold in all the remaining ingredients and immediately spoon into the terrine mould or parfait glasses.

Freeze overnight. The terrine should be cut into 1,5 cm thick slices with a sharp serrated knife that you have dipped into hot water.

Serve on a plate with some fresh fruit if you wish.

The image shows three glass bowls filled with a creamy, light-colored ice cream (Kulfi) topped with bright orange, diced mango cubes. The bowls are arranged on a light-colored, possibly marble, surface. The top bowl is partially visible, the middle one is in the center, and the bottom one is in the foreground, showing two scoops of ice cream. A green vertical bar is on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Kulfi' in white text.

# Kulfi

*Kulfi* is the Indian version of ice cream – milky, exotically spiced, yet comforting – which has apparently been around since the sixteenth century. Technically speaking it is a milk ice rather than an ice cream and is, therefore, traditionally made in moulds and served as a lolly, exactly like those milk ices we grew up with. If ever you should visit New Delhi, India, be on the lookout for those special moulds, which come in the most delightful shapes, mostly made from inexpensive tin. The street vendors selling *kulfi* on the streets are referred to as *kulfiwallahs*. Similar ices are also popular in places such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Middle East with their warm climates.

Traditional *kulfi* is a delicious combination of creamy milk, subtly flavoured with spices such as cardamom or nuts, such as pistachios or almonds. Other flavours that have become established in the *kulfi* repertoire include rose, mango and saffron. The base for *kulfi* is made in the style of Italian *gelato*, but differently from *gelato*, is not churned which creates the silky mouthfeel that *gelato* is prized for. *Kulfi* is a no-churn ice cream, resulting in a somewhat icier texture with evident crystals, but this is what makes it an absolute winner on a hot day.

This traditional recipe is fairly laborious. The milky richness comes from reducing the milk on the stove for an extended period. If simmering milk for hours to reduce it does not appeal to you, many recipes for instant or easy *kulfi* can be found using tinned evaporated milk, with only a slight loss of flavour. For this recipe, the *kulfi* was made and frozen in a two-litre ice cream container, but as previously mentioned, you can also freeze them individually in lolly moulds. If you choose to freeze the *kulfi* in one batch, be sure to remove the container from the deep freeze to the fridge an hour before serving to

soften slightly, otherwise scooping it will become a Herculean task. This recipe does not contain too much sugar, which contributes to the hardness of the ice cream and the iciness of the texture. By all means feel free to increase the quantity of condensed milk if you would like the final product somewhat sweeter. The papaya in this recipe ensures a lovely freshness to the *kulfi*, which may be slightly heavy and overly rich for some palates.



#### Ingredients for 1400 ml *kulfi*:

2 litres full cream milk

250 ml cream

250 - 385 g condensed milk

16 cardamom pods, ground finely in a spice grinder or pestle and mortar

450 g ripe papaya, peeled, seeds removed, cut into large chunks



#### Method:

If you have a Teflon-coated casserole, this would be ideal. Be forewarned that it is almost impossible to reduce the milk and not have a little burnt layer at the end of the cooking process. Do not be tempted to scrape the pot and know that it takes some serious cleaning afterwards.

Add the milk to a large pot and bring to a rapid boil.

Thereafter, turn the heat down and simmer for nothing less than two and a half hours, by which time the two litres of milk would have reduced to 500 ml. Cool the milk.

Place the cooled, reduced milk, and all the remaining ingredients in a large liquidiser and blend to a smooth purée.

Strain through a fine sieve and freeze until hard.

See the note above about removing the *kulfi* from the fridge in advance to thaw somewhat. Scoop and serve with more papaya cubes.



# Gelato Ice Cream Cones



This ice cream recipe follows the Italian style of making ice cream, referred to as *gelato*, or *gelati* in the plural. Some ice creams can be made without churning, but because the fat content of *gelato* is much lower than traditional ice creams which are made with an egg custard base, the *gelato* would freeze into a solid block if it were not churned. Therefore, one needs an ice cream machine to make *gelato*. There are many excellent ice cream makers available commercially, and not all of them overly expensive. However, some of them require a little pre-planning, such as those where the container needs to be frozen before it can be used. In South Africa, with our abundance of excellent quality fruit at affordable prices, we should all have an ice cream machine to use this abundance, particularly at the end of the season when fruit is often at their most affordable, or when one has a batch of fruit that is a little over-ripe.

*Gelato* gurus Oh So Gelato say that *gelato* is much healthier than American-style ice cream, since it contains fewer calories and less butter fat (two-thirds less butterfat and it also does not have as much air, therefore, has a more intense flavour) (Oh So Gelato 2023). *Gelato* is served around 2 °C warmer than ice cream, which also means it will melt much faster, so be careful about that. Since it is less solidly frozen, *gelato's*

taste is further enhanced as it melts in the mouth. There does not seem to be a certainty if all *gelato* is made without egg, some recipes are made in the style of an egg custard, but what seems to be an absolute, is that the fat content is much lower.

Oh So Gelato believes that this pleasurable wonder dates back to the sixteenth century, and even though there appears to be some confusion about who really invented *gelato*, it may well be Bernardo Buontalenti, a native of Florence, who delighted the court of Catherina de Medici with his creation. However, Italians certainly introduced *gelato* to the rest of Europe, with Sicilian-born Francesco Procopio dei Coltelli being the first to sell it to the public. Summoned to Paris in 1686, he opened a cafe named after himself, “Cafe Procope”, which quickly became one of the most celebrated meeting places of the literary establishment in France.

The *gelato* does not have to be served in an ice cream cone, however, it may be a good way to encourage children to eat healthier fruit laden ice cream. As *gelato* is refreshing and cool, it is a great way to end a meal. One could serve it with elegant Italian biscuits and more macerated, cubed, fresh papaya for a dashing dessert.



**Ingredients for around 15 medium-small ice cream cones with papaya *gelato*:**

**For the *gelato*:**

500 ml full cream milk  
140 g normal whipping cream (not pouring cream and not extra thick cream)  
40 g honey  
130 g castor sugar  
40 g full-fat milk powder  
5 g granulated gelatine (sponged in 25 ml water, melted)  
350 ml smooth papaya purée, strained

**For the ice cream cones:**

80 g egg white  
45 g castor sugar  
40 g brown sugar  
30 g honey  
28 g seed or nut oil (hazelnut oil, but dark sesame oil also works well)  
7,5 ml water  
7,5 ml dark rum  
1 g salt  
1,25 ml bicarbonate of soda  
90 g cake or bread flour



**Method:**

Warm together all the *gelato* ingredients apart from the gelatine and papaya purée. Bring to the boil and simmer for approximately 5 minutes.

Remove from the heat and while it is still very hot, add the melted gelatine. Cool and add the papaya purée.

Chill the mixture well before churning in an ice cream maker, and store in the deep freeze afterwards. Gelato is always brought out of the deep freeze a little ahead of service, however, be very attentive as it also melts very quickly.

For the ice cream cones, one would need an ice cream waffle cone maker. In addition to modern electric versions, there are also stove-top versions that resemble a jaffle maker.

Mix all the ingredients for the cone batter. Chill slightly and spread a spoonful over a greased hot iron. Close and bake until deep dark golden in colour.

Immediately roll them around a pastry horn and keep tight until they harden. Keep in an airtight container.

Scoop balls of ice cream in the freshly made cooled ice cream cones.







# Dutch Baby



This is one of those very simple, yet unbelievably impressive recipes that one should include in your repertoire to whip up a dessert in a pinch. The ingredients are standard items in any pantry, therefore, this is an ideal fall-back dessert in case one needs to present something unusual and smart at the last minute. The only drawback of this dish is that it cannot be made in advance – it must be served as soon as it is taken from the oven. However, one should make the batter well in advance so that the flour has time to fully hydrate. This means that one can switch on the oven when you sit down for the main course, pour the batter in the pan halfway through your meal and when the time comes for dessert, the “baby” will be fully puffed and deliciously crisp around the edges. It deflates fairly quickly, so it is important to bake it long enough so that the structure is fully cooked.

A Dutch baby is nothing other than a slightly sweet large Yorkshire pudding or an American popover. The critical factor is that they should be light and airy inside and have a beautiful, crisp exterior. Other names for a Dutch baby are German “*pfannkuchen*”, Bismarck pancake, Dutch puff or a “*hootenanny*”. Now if this does not sound like a load of fun then it is unclear what does. It is believed that the Dutch baby was introduced at Manca’s Café in Seattle, Washington around the first half of the 1900s, when the owner’s daughter corrupted the word “*deutsch*” to coin the name Dutch baby.

Adding some papaya into the centre is not traditional, as the Dutch baby is most often served with forest berries and the like. However, the papaya provides a nice tropical touch to the Dutch baby and balances the baked batter perfectly. The papaya for this recipe is macerated with a little sugar and fresh lemon juice with some fresh granadilla added in. The papaya does create some liquid, so do not place all of that into the centre of the “baby”, but reserve some to spoon over portions when it is served for a little extra sauce.



### Ingredients for 4 - 6 portions:

#### For the Dutch baby:

120 g cake flour  
2,5 ml salt  
45 ml brown sugar  
3 eggs  
240 ml milk  
45 g butter, melted  
45 ml neutral flavoured cooking oil

#### For the papaya filling:

1 whole medium sized very ripe papaya, peeled and cut into attractive cubes  
Juice of 1 lemon  
30 ml brown sugar  
2 fresh granadillas, seeds and flesh removed  
Powdered/icing sugar for decoration



### Method:

Make the batter for the Dutch baby in an upright jug liquidiser. First, place all the liquid ingredients, except the neutral oil, in the jug and thereafter, the dry ingredients. Blitz for a minute or two until you have a smooth batter. Set aside to rest for no less than an hour, the best would be to let it rest for a few hours.

Preheat the oven to 200 °C with the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Place a 20 cm to 22 cm pan with high-sloping sides in the oven (check that the handle of the pan is ovenproof). Heat the pan for at least 20 minutes in the oven.

When you are ready to make the Dutch baby, whip the pan out of the oven – mind that it is hot – and place it on high heat on the stove. Add the oil, swirl around, and immediately add the batter.

Immediately place the pan back in the oven and bake for 20 minutes. Thereafter, turn the oven down to 190 °C and bake for another 10 minutes.

Remove from the oven, dust with icing sugar, and spoon the papaya filling in the centre of the Dutch baby.

Cut into wedges and serve with a drizzle of the papaya juices.



# Cookie Butter Layered Pudding



Lotus Biscoff Spread is the brand name for a global cookie butter that is sometimes available in South African supermarkets. The dessert below uses cookie butter in one of the layers to assemble individual puddings. Many versions of these layered desserts abound, probably because of the pretty layers that are visible through the glass. Use any type of glass or glass container to assemble these, however, for the best results, the glass should be clear with no patterns. You could also make these in plastic containers suitable for travelling to take on a picnic, or you could make a large one.

Since Biscoff biscuits are not readily available, you could make the butter with other cookies. The spread works best if it is made from biscuits with a good, caramel colour rather than pale cookies. Alas, because of its nature, this spread is probably not a very healthy food item; if that is an important factor in your life, substitute the spread with peanut butter or even chocolate spread. The concept of cookie butter is something of an anomaly in any event; why would one want to spread biscuits on your toast? However, in this dessert, which marries the cookie butter with papaya and a cheesecake layer, it is perhaps not entirely unjustified, as it mimics the biscuit crust that generally supports an unbaked cheesecake. The papaya layer works perfectly to counter the richness of the other layers. Feel free to experiment and make as many layers as you wish. For assembly, it is easier if the cookie butter is soft; refrigeration sets it into a proper firm spread.



### Ingredients for 6 individual pudding cups:

1/3 ripe papaya, peeled

#### For the Cookie Butter:

150 g Nutticrost cookies, finely broken up

2,5 ml cinnamon powder

80 g melted butter

140 ml milk

7,5 ml instant coffee

15 ml honey

#### For the cheesecake layer:

Zest of 1 lemon

Juice of 1/2 fresh lemon

230 g cream cheese

15 ml castor sugar

125 ml cream



### Method:

First, make the cookie butter. Place the cookies in the jug of a liquidiser or NutriBullet. Blend to a fine powder. Add the cinnamon and honey.

Warm the milk with the coffee to boiling point and add the butter. Ensure that the mixture is piping hot and add to the cookies.

Blend to a smooth paste, scraping the inside of the jug to ensure that all the cookies are blended. Transfer to a piping bag with a plain nozzle attachment.

Mash the papaya with a fork to a coarse consistency.

In the bowl of a freestanding mixer and using the paddle attachment, beat the cream cheese and sugar with the zest and lemon juice to a smooth consistency. Scrape down the bowl and add the cream.

Switch to the whisk attachment and beat the mixture until it starts to thicken. Transfer to a piping bag with a plain nozzle attachment.

Assemble the dessert by piping a small amount of cookie butter at the bottom of each glass or cup. Pipe a layer of cream cheese mixture over, trying to keep the layers as level as possible.

Spoon over the papaya. Repeat the layers if you wish, or end with another layer of cookie butter and cream cheese mix.

Decorate with finely diced papaya and/or fresh edible flowers. If you wish, sprinkle a little more crushed biscuit over.



# Chocolate Crème Brûlée



Like so many food dishes in the world, the history of *crème brûlée* is also fraught with contestation. Some sources indicate that a similar recipe may have appeared in the 1691 cookbook *Cuisinier of François Massialot*, while others cite a much earlier reference, from the fourteenth century, for the Spanish *Crema Catalana*, which could have inspired European cooks to develop the classic *crème brûlée* (Gershenson 2012). Of course, desserts such as Trinity cream, Cambridge burnt cream, and English cream further complicate the matter of establishing an exact timeline for the origins of this darling of the dessert table. It gained massive popularity in the 1980s, so much so that restaurateur Sirio Maccioni, of New York restaurant Le Cirque, apparently said that he had made it ‘the most famous and by far the most popular dessert in restaurants from Paris to Peoria’. Whatever food anthropological belief one holds, the most important criterion for a perfect *crème brûlée* is the glorious thin crust of burnt sugar that lies on top of a smooth, silky custard. Under no circumstance be tempted to pour a layer of caramelised sugar on top, a deplorable shortcut favoured by dubious restaurants.

Chocolate and fruit in combination do not always deliver the desired results, although there are some tried and trusted exceptions, such as banana and chocolate or pear and chocolate, as in *Poire belle Hélène*. Although tropical fruits may not immediately strike one as a perfect partner for chocolate, in this recipe, the papaya inside the chocolate custard somehow acts as a link with the fresh papaya served on top of the *crème brûlée*. Furthermore, the papaya in the custard seems to soften the texture of the custard.



Do not place the fruit on the *brûlée* custard too long in advance, as the moisture in the fruit will melt the delicate sugar crust. Also, because the custard is dark, it is somewhat difficult to see how dark the sugar is browning. So be careful. Many recipes for *crème brûlée* use brown sugar to form the crust, but this may also prove to make the darkness of the crust difficult to gauge.



#### Ingredients for 4 portions:

50 g castor sugar  
4 egg yolks  
40 ml milk  
340 ml single pouring cream  
100 g papaya  
20 g good quality cocoa powder

#### Additional:

Castor or brown sugar for the *brûlée* topping  
Papaya, cut into small cubes and mixed with a little fresh lemon juice

#### To garnish:

Edible flowers



#### Method:

Place all the ingredients for the *crème brûlée*, except the topping sugar and fruit, into the jug of a liquidiser. Blend until smooth and strain through a fine sieve.

Pour the mixture into 4 x 150 ml flat ceramic ramekins or other purposely made *crème brûlée* containers.

Place in a flat oven roasting tin in the oven, and then fill the roasting tin to three-quarters of the way up the ceramic dishes with boiling water. This is a difficult, but important step. You do not want to have ANY water splash into the ramekins, but at the same time, you want the water to reach as high against the sides of the dishes as possible. This will help maintain the temperature and ensure that the egg yolks do not overcook to produce a smooth, silky custard.

Bake for 45 minutes at 140 °C. Remove from the oven and carefully lift the ramekins out of the water.

Leave them to cool. It is not a great idea to serve *crème brûlée* straight from the fridge. However, to ensure that one does not curdle the custard when you *brûlée* the top, it is advisable to place them in the fridge once cold to firm up properly.

Take them out a few minutes before serving to warm up a little. Sprinkle the surface of the custards evenly with a thin, but substantial amount of sugar and brown them with a butane torch.

Allow them cool down for a few minutes and place a nice spoonful of diced papaya on each ramekin with a decoration of flowers.

# Brûléed Sabayon Fruit Plate





*Sabayon*, or *zabaglione* in Italian, is a frothy, billowy sauce made by whisking together egg yolks and sweet dessert wine. In Italy, it is often served in a dessert glass with fresh fruit, biscuits and even chocolate. The biscuits are called *Lingue di Gatto* (cat's tongue biscuits), *Amaretti* or *Savoardi*. In this recipe, the fruit is served under the sauce, and the sauce is slightly browned with a blowtorch for a caramelised finish, enhancing interest and texture. Some recipes (and please feel free to experiment – *sabayon* is quite forgiving) call for the fruits to be frozen hard, placed on the plate and then for the *sabayon* to be *brûléed*, creating a lovely contrast of temperatures, textures and flavours.

The following recipe is an adaptation of a Raymond Blanc recipe from his book *Kitchen Secrets*, published by Bloomsbury (Blanc 2011). Chef Blanc provides all sorts of tips for making a *sabayon* that is particularly stable, making it perfect to spoon over fruit and *brûléeing* it. He recommends adding some gelatine to increase the stability of the sauce which allows it to be *brûléed* without melting too quickly. Despite this safeguard, one should work fast and use a very hot flame so that only the thin layer of icing sugar dusted over the sauce caramelises and the sauce does not melt.

The wine or alcohol in the recipe is very important (usually Moscato d'Asti or Marsala wine) to regulate the sweetness. If you do not like a sweet version, you could make a much drier version with Brut sparkling wine. Because Old Brown Sherry is such an institution in South Africa, we used that to give a rich caramel flavour to the dessert.

Like many foods, the origins of *sabayon* are somewhat murky and uncertain. According to [www.philosokitchen.com](http://www.philosokitchen.com), the dessert has been well known since the fourteenth century in Tuscany and was very popular at the court of Caterina de' Medici (Trapella n.d.). In Piedmont, the story goes that it was invented by the Franciscan monks to help with men's vigour. There are claims that it was originally named *Sambayon* in honour of Saint Pasquale Baylon. The best story, however, comes out of the Emilia-Romagna region, where, in 1471 in the city of Reggio Emilia, a mercenary captain Giovanni Baglioni and his army camped out around the walls of the city. Baglioni ordered his men to plunder the farms for food, which on that occasion was quite disappointing: they only found eggs; wine and sugar. Apparently, the captain instructed that all these should be mixed together, and voilà. Hence, the dessert or custard is named after the captain "Zuan Bajoun" in the local dialect, which has been shortened to "*Zabaglione*".





**Ingredients for 4 - 6 *brûlée* fruit portions:**

4 egg yolks

60 g castor sugar

120 ml Old Brown Sherry

15 ml fresh lemon juice

100 ml fresh cream

5 ml powdered gelatine (granulated gelatine)

15 ml water

Icing sugar to dust

½ firm ripe papaya, cut into attractive shapes

Selection of red fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries, red prickly pear, pomegranate seeds, num-nums – all attractively cut

A few sprigs of fresh mint



#### Method:

Have a pot that is slightly smaller than the bowl of a freestanding mixer ready, or a separate, large metal bowl. Fill the pot with approximately 10 cm of water and bring to a boil. Ensure that the mixing bowl does not touch the water when it is placed over the pot.

Sprinkle gelatine over the 15 ml of water. Allow it sit for a while to fully “bloom”.

Melt the gelatine in the microwave (or over low heat). In the mixing bowl, add the yolks, castor sugar, sherry, lemon juice and melted gelatine.

Place the bowl over the barely simmering water in the pot and beat the mixture with a balloon whisk until it is very frothy and has increased significantly in volume.

Use an insert thermometer to establish that the mixture reaches a temperature between 72 °C and 78 °C, this ensures that the eggs are food safe, but also stable.

When the *sabayon* looks sufficiently stable, take it off the heat and then whisk every now and again until the mixture is cool. Alternatively, one can warm up the mixture over the pot of simmering water, and then place it in the electric mixer and beat it until thick.

Beat the cream to very firm peaks and fold into the cooled *sabayon*. Divide the fruit amongst 4 - 6 plates. Spoon enough of the *sabayon* over the fruit without covering it entirely. Dust the *sabayon* thickly with icing sugar using a small sieve.

Use a blowtorch to *brûlée* the sugar until it is caramelised and beautifully browned, taking care not to scorch the exposed fruit. Decorate with mint leaves.





# Iced Papaya Parfait



The definition of a parfait varies, as is often the case with food terminology, from one country to another. In some contexts, such as the US, a parfait is a layered dessert in a parfait glass consisting of fruit, custard, ice cream and whipped cream. Nowadays, in some parts of the world, the term could imply something made with granola, yoghurt, fruit and nuts. Of course, parfait does not exclusively apply to sweet items. A chicken liver parfait describes chicken liver pâté that could be aerated or lightened with something like whipped cream or beaten egg white. “*Parfait*” means “perfect” in French, which is probably a great description for something light, airy and delicious. This recipe, however, is for a frozen parfait, to be eaten as dessert, which means that it has the texture and mouthfeel of an un-churned ice cream.

This is an easy, health-conscious dessert that can be dressed up or down. One can make it much more elaborate by incorporating different layers of fruit, or even add toasted and chopped pecans to the mix. However, this simplistic version allows the papaya to shine and come into its own. It is a delicious, cool finale to end a meal on a hot summer’s day or a braai.

Even though it is advisable to make this parfait at least one day ahead of time, it should not hang around the deep freeze for too long. It becomes affected by the chill of the freezer quickly which will diminish its fresh fruitiness and soft gentle mouthfeel. One could set it in various ways – individual moulds, in a terrine pan to be cut into slices, or even in little freezer-safe ceramic cups if you do not want to turn it out. Serve it simply as is, with a dollop of papaya purée on top, or with some cubes of papaya macerated in a little honey.





### Ingredients for 12 - 16 portions:

45 ml water

150 g castor sugar

6 egg yolks

500 g smooth papaya purée, strained

200 ml fresh cream, whipped to firm peak stage

Selection of edible flowers



### Method:

Line a suitable container, such as a 20 cm cake tin, with clingfilm wrap. In the bowl of a freestanding mixer, using the whisk attachment, beat the egg yolks until frothy, pale and very light.

In the meantime, boil together the sugar and the water until it reaches 110 °C on a thermometer.

Immediately pour the very hot syrup in a gentle stream onto the very well-beaten egg yolks. Be careful that the syrup does not land on the whisk attachment, as it will set in a hard sugary mass on the whisk and may even splatter out of the bowl which could cause serious burns.

Beat the mixture for at least 10 minutes or even longer, until it is very thick, and the mixture has cooled down slightly.

Fold in the papaya purée, followed by the cream which should be folded in lightly. Pour into the prepared mould and freeze overnight. Do not try to cover the container immediately while the mixture is still soft. Allow it to set somewhat before covering it with clingfilm wrap.

To serve, turn the parfait out onto a cutting board, remove the clingfilm cut into cake slices, and decorate with fresh edible flowers and whatever garnish you prefer.





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# Confectionaries and Sweets







# Fruit Pastille Squares (Pâte de Fruit)

We often find ourselves perplexed by the fluctuating prices of fresh produce at different times of the year. These fluctuations may not be kind to our farmers, but indicate that we do to a certain extent, still eat according to the seasons in South Africa, and that is a good thing. In the old days, people would make good use of a glut of fresh fruits and vegetables by preserving them for leaner times when they were unavailable, because they were out of season. People would dry peaches, bottle tomato sauces, and use many types of innovative culinary techniques to keep such products for a long time. Fortunately, we do not live in a time or country where severe winters render us totally reliant on such foods, which was one of the main objectives of preserving foods in times gone by. However, when fresh ingredients are in abundance and consequently inexpensive, and one has the time and ability, it is a good idea to make such items.

Making these fruit squares is not difficult at all, even though it might sound intimidating. The big secret is patience, as one needs to cook the fruit pulp until it is really thick, and a lot of the moisture has evaporated while checking that it does not stick or burn. A very heavy pot with a thick base is essential. Fruit *pastilles* or *pâte de fruit* are delicious at the end of a meal as part of a *petit four* plate, and despite containing some sugar, fairly healthy. The only real problem with the recipe is that the papaya needs to cook for a long time and consequently loses some of its fresh tropical flavour, but one cannot win them all. One could set the pulp with either gelatine or agar-agar, however, the problem with these ingredients is that they will give your *pastilles* a different mouthfeel and they are not always temperature stable. This traditional method of cooking the fruit pulp for a long time allows the *pastilles* to be stored outside for an undetermined time.



### Ingredients for approximately 25 - 30 squares:

500 g papaya, puréed and strained through a fine mesh sieve  
500 g castor sugar  
30 g pectin (usually bought in a powdered form, and can then be mixed with the sugar)  
2,5 g powdered citric acid

### Additional:

The tiniest drop of orange food colouring – but that greatly depends on the ripeness and deepness of the papaya's colour (optional)  
Granulated white sugar to coat the blocks



### Method:

First, prepare the container the mixture will be poured into once it is cooked. This recipe makes roughly one litre of mixture, so the container that one will pour it into should be around 20 cm x 20 cm, with a height that would accommodate at least 2,5 cm. One does not want to spread the mix too thinly, since one wants nice, fat squares of *pâte de fruit*. Each block should ultimately be approximately 2,5 cm x 2,5 cm x 2,5 cm.

Line the container with tinfoil. It is easier to cut a piece of tinfoil that fits snugly into the bottom of the container and then place thin strips of tinfoil around each edge. A single large piece of tinfoil will result in crumpled edges. Spritz the container very lightly with baking spray; too thick a coating will cause your sugar coating to clump.

Place all the ingredients (including the optional food colouring), apart from the additional coating sugar, in a thick-based, non-reactive stainless steel or preferably enamel pot. Bring the mixture to the boil, stirring frequently.

Lower the heat and simmer the mixture – it may take as long as an hour, depending on the moisture content of the papayas, for the mixture to become thick. Remember to stir often.

You could gauge your progress with a food thermometer that should read around 110 °C at the end. If your mixture does not reach the desired stage of thickness, your *pâte de fruit* will be too soft and will not set.

Once the desired thickness and/or temperature has been reached, pour the mixture into the prepared container. Work quickly at this point; you want to pour the mixture into the tin when it is super hot and still runny, to create a flat, smooth surface without having to try and achieve this manually.

Give the tin a few hard bangs on the work surface to level off the mixture, so that it is glossy and smooth on top.

Allow the fruit mixture to cool down completely, turn it upside down onto a cutting board, remove the tinfoil and use a ruler and a large, sharp chef's knife dipped in boiling water and dried with a cloth, to cut even blocks (see note above for measurements).

Coat the cubes in sugar on all sides and place them on a surface for another day to dry. Store in an airtight container.



# Nougat





Nougat is unfortunately not the easiest of confectioneries or candies to make. It is, however, super delicious. In this recipe, the nougat showcases two of the Lowveld's (Mpumalanga) most iconic ingredients, papaya and macadamia nuts. You could add an array of different nuts and dried fruits to the recipe, however, in this recipe we want to highlight and celebrate the slight chewiness and delightful tropical fruitiness of dried papaya. The macadamias provide crunch, richness, and complimentary nuttiness. Search the internet for fascinating facts about the origins and history of nougat, as well as the lovely names for different versions across the world, such as *turrón*, *torrone*, *mandorlato*, *cupeta*, *cubbaita*, *mandolato*, *mandola*, *qubbajt*, *alviță* and *luka*.

The problem with nougat is that the egg white is cooked and stabilised using a saturated, high-temperature sugar solution, and if this base mixture is not stable, the candy will become overly soft, sticky and unmanageable over time. One must be vigilant when working with sugar at such high temperatures – apart from the fact that it can cause really bad burns, it can also change radically from one instance to the next. So, be very well organised when you make this confectionary, with all the required tools and ingredients pre-measured and ready.

The macadamias for this recipe are best when they are very well toasted. They can burn quite easily, but you should be daring and toast them somewhat darker than you would have thought possible – they seem to become more delicious the

darker they are. You can toast or dry fry them in a pan which is probably a more cost-effective way, however, they acquire a more uniform toastiness when done in the oven. Simply spread them out on a baking sheet and toast them at 180 °C in the oven, stirring them often, until they are a deep caramel colour. Remove them immediately from the baking sheet so that the heat from the baking sheet will not overheat (over toast) them. They could be kept whole for this recipe; however, the mixture becomes difficult to manage if all are left whole. Bash a few of them into smaller pieces – no need to chop them elegantly, it is better if they are a little irregular.

For this nougat recipe, the other core ingredient is the papaya. Since fresh papaya would not work and fully dried papaya would be too hard, you need papaya cubes that are dried on the outside, but are still chewy. To achieve that, cube the papaya into medium dice. Lay them out in a single layer on a silicone mat on a baking sheet. Put them in an oven at 100 °C for at least two hours. Check them regularly to ensure that they do not dry out too fast, but also to toss them over so that they dry out evenly. The papaya should be completely dry to the touch, but retain a little softness when squeezed.

This recipe is for 12 to 15 fairly large pieces of nougat – you could cut them smaller as they are relatively sweet. Working with one egg white may be difficult, so it may be better to double the recipe to have a more manageable mixture.



**Ingredients for approximately 12 - 15 domino-sized rectangles:**

160 g toasted macadamias, see note above

70 g semi-dried papaya, see note above

155 g sugar

55 ml water

30 g glucose

115 g honey

1 egg white

10 ml vanilla essence or extract

A little sunflower oil

2 sheets of rice or wafer paper (not rice wrap paper)



### Method:

Place the sugar, water, glucose and honey in a small, heavy-bottomed pot. Bring gently to the boil. When the mixture is boiling, do not stir or move the pot too much, as the mixture that may splash up the side of the pot could crystallise and cause the whole mixture to seize. Have a digital food thermometer ready and take a reading.

When the sugar mixture reaches around 130 °C, beat the egg white until foamy, in the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the balloon whisk attachment. Do not over-beat the egg.

Now, increase the temperature of the sugar and cook until 154 °C, and immediately pour the mixture in a thin, but steady stream over the whipped egg whites, while the whisk is running at a high speed. Avoid getting any of the mixture on the balloon whisk, as it will immediately cool and harden – therefore, pour the mixture between the beating whisk and the bowl. The mixture will expand tremendously, which it should.

Now beat on high speed until the mixture is really thick and glossy – this will take a good 10 to 15 minutes. Immediately turn the nuts, papaya and vanilla into the mixture and with deft actions, mix together. The nuts and papaya will cool the mixture which will make it stiff, so you should work fast.

As soon as all the nuts and fruit have been incorporated, turn the mixture out onto a lightly oiled work surface such as a granite or marble slab.

Use a rolling pin and flatten the mixture to about 2 cm to 3 cm thickness. If you leave it thicker, you will have square blocks when you cut it, try to keep to the shape of the wafer paper so you do not end up having any round corners that may not cut into perfect shapes.

Place a sheet of wafer paper over the top and bottom and leave to harden and cool completely for a couple of hours. Use a piece of kitchen paper and lightly oil a large, very sharp kitchen knife and cut the nougat into desired shapes, either staves, squares or rectangles. Store covered.



# Coconut Marshmallows





Coconut is one of those things people either love or hate. Although it might not be to everyone's liking, coconut lovers very fondly remember those fluffy marshmallows coated in light brown toasted coconut from their childhood days. They were delicious and incredibly moreish. This recipe calls for a good dollop of papaya to give the marshmallows a delicate fruit salad flavour and a wonderful pale orange colour. One would be hard-pressed to call them healthy, but at least the incorporation of the papaya and the coconut provides a little more nutritional value than the commercial versions with their artificial colours and flavours.

The origins of marshmallows can be traced back to ancient Egypt, as far back as 2000 BC. Those ancient Egyptians made a similar treat that was considered very special and was reserved for gods and royalty (Rothstein 2022). Apparently, the word marshmallow was derived from the mallow plant (*Athaea officinalis*) which originally grew wild in marshes in Asia and Europe. The Egyptians squeezed the sap from the mallow plants, and then mixed it with nuts and honey. However, around the mid-1800s, the French started whipping the mallow juice to produce the light, airy candies we know now. Industrialisation of the process eventually led to extrusion of the candy, and the mallow was eventually replaced with gelatine.

Marshmallows are not difficult to make, however – as with most things in life – preparation is key. One must ensure that all the ingredients have been correctly weighed and that you have all the tools ready. The size of the baking sheet is of the utmost importance, since the relationship between the surface area and the thickness of the marshmallows is important. One wants marshmallows that can be cut into perfect cubes, so you want them to have sufficient depth. This recipe makes enough mixture for two tins that are roughly 20 cm x 20 cm and 5 cm deep. This allows one to cut the marshmallows into cubes of approximately 5 cm x 5 cm x 5 cm. Use good quality baking parchment to line the tin, as the meringue will stick to any inferior baking paper – and for good measure, give it a good spray with some non-stick cooking spray. When lining the tin, be sure to mark the bottom edges and fold neat lines where the paper folds up against the sides, with stapled corners – ideally creating a little box of paper that fits perfectly inside the tin.

Marshmallows, unlike other meringue-based confectionaries, are not overly weather sensitive because of the stabilising gelatine. However, when conditions are too humid the meringue might not reach the required volume, so choose a warm, sunny day to attempt your marshmallows.



**Ingredients for 30 large square marshmallows:**

200 g desiccated coconut

160 g ripe papaya purée (cube and purée the papaya in a blender or with a stick blender, strain)

380 g sugar

110 ml water

90 g glucose

15 g granulated gelatine

40 ml water

120 g egg whites at room temperature





### Method:

Dry toast the coconut first: place the coconut in a large pan (or even two) and gently toast it on medium heat, stirring all the time, until the coconut takes on a uniform light caramel colour. You can toast the coconut as light or dark as you wish. Dark has more flavour, but could become rancid quicker, although it is doubtful that these marshmallows will last that long. Turn out of the pan(s) and set aside to cool.

Have all the ingredients for the marshmallows ready, including the baking trays to pour the mixture into (see note above).

Sponge the gelatine by pouring the 15 g (note that all the ingredients are weighed and not in volumes) of gelatine powder over the 40 ml of water and set aside to fully expand and hydrate. Have a strong, freestanding mixer with a whisk attachment ready.

Place the papaya, sugar, 110 ml water and glucose in a heavy-based pot. Bring to the boil slowly while stirring.

Melt the gelatine in the microwave until fully melted, cool a little. Place the egg whites in the bowl of the mixer, along with the slightly cooled gelatine. On the highest setting, beat the egg mixture until it is fully aerated then turn off the machine. Once the sugar has melted in the mixture on the stove, stop stirring, and turn the heat up to high. Boil the mixture hard (boil vigorously), to 120 °C.

Once the mixture is almost at the correct temperature, turn the mixer back on and whip the egg white/gelatine mixture until stiff, but not dry (it should be a smooth, single mixture). As soon as the sugar mixture on the stove has reached the correct temperature, pour it into the egg mixture, beating on high speed.

Take care not to splatter any of the sugar mixture directly onto the whisk – pour carefully and steadily between the whisk and the bowl. Beat the mixture until it is stiff and shiny. It will increase substantially in volume.

Immediately pour into the prepared baking tray – do not allow the mixture to cool before pouring it out, or it will firm up too much to spread out. Level the mixture off so that it is an even thickness all over. Set aside to cool completely, preferably overnight.

Cut into equal-sized cubes with a lightly oiled knife (dip a small piece of kitchen paper in oil and use to oil the blade of the knife).

Do not cut with a sticky knife, clean it between cuts, otherwise, you will not achieve clean cuts and perfect cubes. Roll your marshmallow cubes in the coconut and store them in an airtight container.

# Macarons





Macaroons, or more correctly macarons, require considerable skill and dexterity to get right. However, once one understands a few core principles, they are not so intimidating. Their origins are uncertain, with some sources claiming that they originated from an eighth or ninth century Italian monastery, while other references mention that macarons come from Commercy in France, around the year 791. They more likely originate from Venice, as the word macaron is derived from the Italian word *ammaccare* (to crush) or *maccherone* (to paste).

To achieve perfect macaron shells requires some practice, as most ovens have their quirks that will affect the baking time, while the best place in the oven (higher up rather than lower) could also play a role. Other aspects that may affect macarons are the thickness of the baking sheet one uses to bake them on, as conductive heat through the metal plays a significant role in heating the macarons from the bottom. In the same vein, if one pipes them onto baking parchment or a silicone

mat, it could also influence their success, as silicone mats have a more profound impact on conductive heat than piping on parchment paper or on a baking sheet. Humidity may also impact on one's success when making macarons: if it is your first time, rather do not make them when it is very rainy or humid. The height above sea level could also impact the exact amount of sugar required to make successful macarons. But by all means, experiment making this recipe – if they fail, one always has nice almond meringues to make a version of Eton mess from.

Incorporating the papaya paste into the buttercream should also be done with a bit of care. The papaya pulp is drained to reduce the percentage of moisture in the purée before mixing it into the buttercream. The papaya buttercream is deliciously earthy and marries extremely well with the nuttiness of the macarons.





**Ingredients for 16 medium or 25 small, sandwiched macarons:**

120 g icing sugar  
90 g ground almonds  
90 g egg whites  
70 g castor sugar  
A few drops light salmon coloured food colouring

**For the papaya buttercream:**

42 g egg yolks (about 3 medium or 2 large eggs)  
40 g white sugar  
10 ml rum  
2 ml vanilla essence  
Pinch of salt  
120 g butter, room temperature, but not melting soft  
60 g papaya paste (see note below)



**Method:**

Line a large baking sheet (Swiss roll pan) with baking parchment or a silicone mat (see note above). Draw smallish circles on the parchment paper (or on normal paper placed as a guide under the silicone mat).

In a food processor, blitz the ground almonds and the icing sugar. The aim is to get the mixture as fine and powdery as possible, without oiling the almonds. Rather pulse the machine, than run the machine at full speed, and scrape the bowl down often.

Sieve the mixture more than once to ensure a very fine powder – discard any bits of almond that remain in the sieve, without changing the volumes too much. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the egg whites until fully volumised, but not dry, using the mixer's whisk attachment. It is important to attain the full bulk of the egg whites, without letting them become dry. Add the castor sugar and beat to a stable meringue, but again, not too much, so the meringue should not be dry.

The next step is referred to as the “*macoronage*”, when the almond sugar powder is folded gently into the meringue. Add the almond sugar powder on top of the meringue along with the desired drops of food colouring to achieve a nice papaya colour. Fold the mixture together until it is soft, but still droopy. When to stop folding takes a little practice – if the mixture is not folded in enough, the piped macarons will stand up too firm and round, and if it is folded too much, they will spread too much when piped.

Fill a piping bag with a plain nozzle and pipe onto the circles until they reach the edge of the circles. Once the baking sheet is filled, bang the sheet fairly hard on the surface to “spread” the macarons

slightly. Pedantic bakers may wish to pop any small bubble with a pin, to achieve an ultra-smooth shell.

Set them aside for at least two hours or until the top is dry and a little skin has formed. Pre-heat the oven to 135 °C.

Bake for 14 minutes, until they have puffed and a nice foot (the puffy frilly sought-after edge around the base of the macaron) has formed. Test one of the macarons in the centre of the baking sheet. It should come off fairly easily, with a shiny underside.

Do not under-bake them or the base will stay behind on the paper/silicone mat, but also do not overbake them or they will be too dry. Rather do not bake two sheets simultaneously; instead bake one after the other. One can do some spattered decoration before or after baking.

Make the buttercream by warming all the ingredients (except the butter and papaya paste) in the large whisking bowl of a freestanding mixer placed in a pot of water on the stove until it reaches 68 °C, stirring all the time. Ensure that the bowl does not touch the water. Remove and with the whisk attachment, beat the mixture until it is pale and light yellow.

By this time the mixture should have cooled down sufficiently. Drop small blocks of butter into the mixer while it is running and continue beating until all the butter is incorporated and one has a smooth, light icing. Beat in the papaya paste (see note above).

Fill the macarons with a small spoonful of mixture, and sandwich two rounds together. They are best served a few hours after being made, to give them time to soften slightly.

Note: the overall moisture content of papaya purée may be too high to incorporate directly into buttercream mixture.

To make the heavy papaya purée, peel and deseed a thoroughly ripe, aromatic papaya. Blend the papaya flesh in a food processor, liquidiser, or with a stick blender in a tall jar, to get a smooth purée (strain through a fine sieve if you are uncertain if your purée is lump-free).

Line a sieve with a clean, rinsed layer of high-quality muslin cloth. Pour the purée onto the muslin, cover with clingfilm wrap and leave overnight in the fridge for the liquid to drain out and the papaya purée to become thick and paste-like.



# Ice Lollies

When summer is firmly on your doorstep, and the prospect of spending sunny days next to the water, on the beach, or perhaps in the cool shade of a large tree, it is the time to start thinking of some holiday snacks. Instead of buying ice lollies that have hardly any nutritional value, and are packed with artificial colourants and flavourants, opt for these super healthy, refreshing and cooling home-made ice lollies. Whether you make them just with fruit or with some dairy added, they are simple, cost-effective and super healthy.

Although one does not really need a recipe for this, it is important to get the sweetness to fruit pulp ratio right, or the lollies may separate while being frozen, could become too hard or not freeze at all. The amount of sugar is important not only for taste, but also to ensure the right texture. You could strain the fruit pulp before pouring the mix into the individual lolly moulds, however, if your liquidiser does a good job, the resulting purée should be smooth enough without sacrificing any of the fibre from the fruit.

It is also possible to make these in colourful layers by adding another fruit and setting the layers one after the other to excite the young ones even further. If you feel like making a grown-up version, add a small splash of gin, or for a very trendy option, make thinner lollies and serve them in a glass with a nice tot of fruity gin at the bottom, or top up with sparkling wine.





**Ingredients for 6 lollies:**

350 g ripe papaya

50 g castor sugar – for an even more nutritious or healthier version, replace with honey

50 ml lemon juice



**Method:**

Purée all the ingredients in a liquidiser until super smooth and glossy. It should not be necessary to strain at this point, however, if you want to ensure that there are no bits of fruit in the mixture, go ahead.

Alternatively, you could blitz the mixture for a shorter time which will give you a chunky, irregular mixture – remember that any bits of fruit will probably freeze hard.

Pour the mixture into a rinsed lolly mould – secure the sticks if your lolly maker allows for them to be inserted from the beginning, alternatively, partly freeze and insert ice cream sticks when the mixture is semi-frozen.

Freeze overnight, unmould and enjoy.

# Date Balls



For this recipe, one needs dried papaya cubes. They should, however, not be rock hard – they should have a nice little chew to them, but should be dry enough on the outside that the papaya will remain food-safe inside the date balls. Cube the papaya into medium dice. Lay them out in a single layer on a silicone mat or a baking sheet. Place them in an oven at 100 °C for at least two to three hours. Check them regularly, ensuring that they do not dry out too fast, but also turning them over, so that the bottom also dries when they are facing up. They should be completely dry to the touch, but should retain a little softness when squeezed.

This is an adaption of a much-loved South African favourite, but the papaya added to the recipe is a sure winner – it provides a little additional fresh fruitiness that is not found in dates alone. Even though these date balls are probably fairly healthy (dates have a good health track record), they are somewhat sweet – the papaya breaks the sweetness and adds an additional nutritional component. The recipe does not make too many balls, but you could easily double the quantities. The date balls are rolled in untoasted desiccated coconut, but for a little additional flavour you could dry-toast the coconut to a nice golden colour.



**Ingredients for around 12 - 15 walnut-sized balls:**

125 g butter

75 g sugar

250 g dates, stones removed, chopped roughly

30 g dried papaya cubes

1 egg, beaten

5 ml vanilla essence

Pinch of salt

150 g Tennis biscuits, roughly crumbled

Desiccated coconut to roll the balls in



**Method:**

Melt the butter and sugar together in a medium pot. Add the dates and cook on low heat for a little while until the dates are somewhat soft.

Remove from the heat, add the papaya, egg, vanilla and salt and mix. Add the crushed biscuits and mix everything well.

Cool the mixture and roll walnut-sized balls. Roll the balls in coconut and store in an air-tight container.





# Daisies

This is a fiddly, yet not overly complicated recipe. The fiddly bit comes from the fact that these little tartlets, and particularly the tartlet shells, are tiny and therefore, not easy to work with. Furthermore, the daisy pattern that the pastry is cut into makes the little pastry shells very fragile. However, do not be put off by this – they are beautiful and entirely worth the extra trouble and fidgetiness. If cutting the pastry into daisy shapes is an unnecessarily complicated step that you do not want to attempt, simply cut small pastry circles and line a small patty pan (a small muffin pan) to make much sturdier, but far less complicated tartlet shells. These are ideal as part of petit fours with coffee to end a meal, however, one could also make them slightly larger and serve them as mini tartlets at a tea.



**Ingredients for at least 24 extra small tartlets:**

**For the pastry:**

2 egg yolks  
60 g cold (but not rock hard) butter, cubed  
60 g castor sugar  
120 g cake flour

**For the crème *pâtissière*:**

125 ml milk  
20 g sugar  
1 egg yolk  
18 ml cornflour  
Small pinch of salt  
2,5 ml vanilla extract or essence  
15 ml butter

**Additional:**

200 g white chocolate, melted (couverture if you wish,  
providing the chocolate is then tempered)  
Around 24 to 30 papaya balls  
Edible flower petals











### Method:

In a medium mixing bowl, combine the egg yolks, butter and castor sugar. Use a dinner fork to mash these ingredients together, without letting the butter melt. It should be a homogeneous mass, but should in no way become oily from the melting butter, so work quickly.

Add the flour and mix into the butter/yolk mixture. Do not overwork the mix at this point – if it becomes difficult to combine all the ingredients with the fork, it is totally acceptable to use your hands.

Knead the dough lightly to achieve one combined mass of dough. Shape the mass into a ball and flatten it into a 5 cm thick disk.

Wrap in clingfilm and store in the fridge for a couple of hours until the pastry has sufficiently firmed up. The time needed for this to happen will depend on how cold the fridge is.

Remove from the fridge and again, mash the pastry together to make it slightly pliable, but under no circumstances should it become soft. Dust the work surface with flour and roll the pastry out to about 2,5 mm thickness.

Cut out daisy patterns with a pastry cutter. Transfer the pastry cut-outs to an upturned half dome silicone mould, of which the size is somewhat smaller than a golf ball. Place in the deep freeze to firm up completely.

In the meantime, ensure that the rack is in the middle of the oven and heat to 190 °C. When the oven is hot and the pastry is completely frozen, remove from the freezer and place the silicone mould on a baking sheet. Bake for approximately 10 to 15 minutes. The little shells should be sufficiently golden, but not deep brown.

Remove from the oven and once they have slightly cooled, slip them off the mould onto a cooling rack. Repeat with the remaining pastry.

Once the tartlet shells are completely cold, either paint the inside of the shell, or dip them entirely (with the aid of kitchen tweezers) in melted white chocolate. Ensure that the chocolate provides just the thinnest coating layer.

In the meantime, make the *crème pâtissière*. Cream the sugar and egg yolk together until light in colour and add the cornflour and salt. Warm the milk, and then add about a third to the creamed yolk/sugar mix.

Mix well and return this mixture to the remaining milk.

Cook over very low heat, stirring continuously, until the mixture is thick, and no trace of uncooked egg taste remains.

Remove from the heat and immediately stir in the butter (which will melt into the custard) and the vanilla. Set aside to cool.

When you are ready to serve, pipe a small rosette of custard in the centre of each tartlet and top with a papaya ball. Decorate with edible flower petals.

# Brandy Snaps



Brandy snaps are sweet, brittle, lacy biscuit tubes; perfect vehicles for a creamy filling. They are decadent and delicious, and are very easy to make. However, given that the batter from which they are made contains a high percentage of sugar (which attracts moisture), they are unfortunately quite fragile and once filled should be eaten quite quickly. On the positive side, since they are so easy to make, you can make the dough ahead of time and bake them as needed, so that they do not go to waste.

For this recipe, the brandy snaps are filled with slightly sweetened whipped cream into which very finely cut papaya is folded. The papaya provides a fruity surprise in the whipped cream filling that is both uplifting and of course healthy. Various other fillings, such as *crème pâtissière*, *crème chiboust*, *crème diplomate*, or Bavarian cream can be used.

Treacle sugar was used to make the brandy snap dough in this recipe, however, you could use normal brown sugar or any of the other specialty sugars, such as Demerara, Turbinado or Muscovado. The treacle sugar makes fairly dark brandy snaps, and they should be watched carefully because they can burn fairly easily.

Brandy snaps may contain some brandy; however, the name does not refer to brandy. Apparently, the name for brandy snaps was derived from the words *brand-schnap*, which refers to branded or burnt. They come from the Victorian era, where they were originally sold at the annual Hull Fair, a travelling funfair that has been in existence for centuries.



### Ingredients for 12 large brandy snaps:

#### For the brandy snaps:

55 g butter  
55 g brown or other dark sugar  
55 g golden syrup  
50 g cake flour  
2,5 ml ground ginger  
2,5 ml lemon juice

#### Optional:

5 ml brandy

#### To serve:

125 ml very finely cut blocks of papaya – left on kitchen paper to drain  
250 ml stiffly whipped cream (flavour with 15 ml castor sugar)



#### Method:

Set the oven to 180 °C with the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Have a large baking sheet with a silicone mat ready.

Bring the butter, sugar, syrup and optional brandy to a gentle simmer in a small heavy-based pot. The aim is to have the sugar completely melted, which will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Do not boil the mixture too vigorously.

When all the sugar has melted, set the pot aside for the mixture to cool a little – around 2 to 3 minutes. Mix in the flour, ginger and lemon juice. The mixture may firm up once it cools entirely, so it is best to divide the mixture before it is entirely cool.

Divide the mixture into 12 to 15 balls the size of a smallish apricot (at this point one could just set them aside if you wish until you need to bake them – see note above). Alternatively, place about three at a time on the baking sheet and bake for 12 to 14 minutes.

As soon as they come out of the oven, you need to work fast, but take care – if they are still piping hot, you will not be able to roll them up, and if they cool too much, they will become too stiff to roll. This is the reason why one should not bake more than 2 to 3 at a time, because they will all cool down at the same time.

As soon as they cool down sufficiently to handle, but are still pliable, use a spatula to flip them over and roll around a cylinder of approximately 2,5 cm in diameter to create a cigar-shaped tube. Some balloon whisks have handles of the right thickness, and the fact that they are made of metal prevents the brandy snaps from sticking. Press the ends of the rolled-up snap tightly into itself to make a good seal. Repeat with the other two snaps.

When they are cooled, they can be safely removed from the cylinder. Bake all the remaining snaps. Once they are completely cooled, fold the papaya into the whipped cream and using a piping bag with a wide plain nozzle, fill the snaps by piping in some of the mixture from both ends.

Decorate with a dusting of icing sugar and edible flowers if you wish.



# Bonbons



Various definitions for the word *bonbon* exist. An old word that was recorded as far back as the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *Food Lover's Companion* describes a *bonbon* as a piece of chocolate-dipped candy, of which the centre may be fondant, sometimes mixed with fruit and nuts (Herbst and Herbst 2009). According to Alan Davidson of *The Oxford Companion to Food*, it is the French word for a small sweet or candy (Davidson 1999). These days the word *bonbon* generally refers to four categories of sweets, namely sweetmeats made from fruits, nut-based confectionary, chocolates (such as our recipe here), and traditional boiled sugar items.

When making moulded chocolates, there are two important considerations that need attention. The first is the quality of the chocolate which may require tempering, and second is the filling. Following are two possible filling options. The first is for a filling that uses uncooked papaya, with the danger that the filling may ferment if left outside. The second filling is made from cooked papaya, where the natural freshness is

somewhat lost because of the heat. The choice is yours, taking into consideration where and how soon after they are made, they will be enjoyed.

If one is going to make homemade chocolates, one wants them to be as tasty as possible to justify the effort and expense. High-end chocolate, often referred to as couverture chocolate, has the best taste. However, tempering chocolate and lining polycarbonate moulds requires some experience. Please go ahead and try making these with couverture chocolate, but if you lack previous chocolate making experience, perhaps start with good commercial eating chocolate, such as a South African brand of dark or milk chocolate. These do not need tempering and can just be melted; the chocolate will reset by itself once used. Whatever one chooses, avoid using baking chocolate at all costs – those are not good quality and have an unpleasant mouthfeel and taste.





**Ingredients for approximately 25 - 30 bonbons:**

**First filling (with uncooked papaya):**

200 g drained papaya (see note below)  
40 ml Amaretto liqueur  
2,5 ml citric acid powder

**Second filling (with cooked papaya):**

130 g very ripe papaya, peeled and cut into small blocks  
30 ml of lemon juice  
30 ml orange juice  
30 ml honey  
100 g white chocolate  
80 ml cream

**For the chocolate shell:**

400 g chocolate (either white or dark, couverture or high-end commercial eating chocolate), chopped  
Food colouring suitable to colour chocolate





### Method:

First, prepare the fillings. For filling one, simply beat together the drained papaya, Amaretto and citric acid with the paddle attachment of a freestanding mixer until the mixture is smooth and creamy.

For filling two, cook the papaya, lemon juice, orange juice and honey in a small casserole dish over gentle heat until the papaya becomes pulpy. Liquidise and strain through a fine sieve. Melt the white chocolate and cream together and cool slightly. Stir in the papaya purée.

Use silicone chocolate moulds if you are uncertain about tempering chocolate and lining polycarbonate moulds. Melt the white or dark chocolate, either in the microwave or over a water bath. Paint the inside of the silicone moulds with a thin layer of the melted chocolate. Allow the chocolate to set, and then repeat the process for a chocolate shell that is sturdy and even in thickness.

Be careful to keep the top of the chocolate (the end that is open) clean and smooth. Allow the chocolate shells to set completely and harden.

Now fill the cavities with either filling one or two. Placing the filling in a smallish piping bag with a medium-small plain nozzle is best. Ensure that the surface of the filling is smooth and does not extend above the chocolate shell – remember that you still need to leave space for a thin layer of chocolate over the filling that will trap the filling inside the chocolate shell. Leave the filling to firm up.

Cover the top of the chocolate shells with more melted chocolate – a procedure that can also be achieved with a small piping bag and a small plain nozzle. Allow the chocolates to firm up completely and then carefully unmould them.

If you did not decorate the inside of the moulds with coloured cocoa butter, then simply colour a little melted chocolate and drizzle, paint, or splatter some over the chocolates. Any number of other chocolate decoration techniques may be applied.

Note: the overall moisture content of papaya purée may be too high to be used directly as a filling in a chocolate bonbon. To make the heavy papaya purée, peel and deseed a thoroughly ripe, aromatic papaya. Blend the papaya flesh in a food processor, liquidiser or with a stick blender in a tall jar to get a smooth purée (strain through a fine sieve if you are uncertain that your purée is lump-free). Line a sieve with a clean, rinsed layer of high-quality muslin cloth. Pour the purée onto the muslin, cover with clingfilm wrap and leave overnight or for two days in the fridge for the liquid to drain out and the papaya purée to become thick and paste-like.

The image is a composite. The top half shows a halved papaya with its black seeds. The bottom half shows a white plate filled with several 'Papaya and Coconut Maki Roll Sushi'. These rolls are cylindrical, cut in half to reveal a bright orange papaya filling surrounded by a white, rice-like substance, all encased in a thin, reddish-brown outer layer.

# Papaya and Coconut Maki Roll Sushi

Dried fruit leather is an old South African tradition – like most cultures, it was initially made to preserve excess fruit for later use. Papaya fruit leather is easy and simple to make. However, made at home without any preservatives, the colour deepens a little over time. As we live in times where the food system gives us access to papayas year-round, it is probably no longer necessary to make fruit leather for the sparse months, but one can make it when you need it. However, fruits are often somewhat cheaper when in season, so one could make fruit leather to keep for later.

*Maki* or *makiushi* (also sometimes referred to as California rolls) are in most instances a cylinder of rice wrapped in *nori*. These papaya and coconut *makis* should rather be referred to as *hosomaki*, which is the correct name for a *maki* made with a single ingredient (in this case papaya) wrapped in rice and *nori*. But here we have gone totally rogue – this little after-dinner coffee snack has nothing to do with sushi aside from looking like a *maki* roll. The *nori* is replaced by papaya leather, the fish is replaced by fresh papaya, and the sushi rice is replaced by coconut ice. Apart from making the papaya leather beforehand, these are simple healthy snacks that would make anyone smile. Toasting some of the coconut provides additional taste and depth. Please feel free to toast all of it, in which case the coconut ice will be less white and traditional, but with a much deeper, more intense flavour.



### Ingredients for approximately 16 *maki* rolls:

2 ripe papayas for the papaya leather  
½ firm ripe, but not soft papaya, peeled, seeds removed, and cut into 1 cm x 1 cm strips (as long as you can manage)  
40 g desiccated coconut, dry toasted  
80 g desiccated coconut  
130 g condensed milk



### Method:

For the papaya leather, drain the pulp of one or two ripe, liquidised papayas in a sieve lined with muslin over two days.

Then, whisk the drained puree and spread the puree evenly over two silicone mats and dry at 80 °C in the oven for two or three hours until the leather easily pulls away from the silicone mats.

To make the coconut ice, mix the two types of coconut and the condensed milk.

Cut the papaya leather to resemble two or three 15 cm x 15 cm squares.

Layer some coconut ice over the square, pressing it down to form an even layer about 1 cm thick. Leave a little open edge on one side of the square and place a line of fresh papaya sticks down the coconut ice on the opposite edge.

Roll the sushi from the side with the line of papaya sticks. When you get to the end, lightly brush the open edge of papaya leather with some water so that a thin strip of papaya will adhere to the rolled-up part. Compress the sushi roll into a neat even roll.

Use a piece of parchment paper or clingfilm wrap to help with the rolling process. Slice the papaya sushi into 2 cm thick slices with an extremely sharp knife, applying a firm definite cut – avoid squashing your *maki* roll out of shape.







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# Sweet Baked Items







# Yoghurt Condensed- Milk Tart

This recipe should be part of everyone's cooking repertoire. It is incredibly easy to make, and with the decoration of fresh fruit and flowers, very easily a beautiful and delicious treat to serve to your guests. In fact, you might be inclined to think that the recipe could not work since the filling consists only of yoghurt and condensed milk, bar some papaya and lemon juice. A dairy expert speculated that it is probably because the dairy proteins are heated that the filling sets, or possibly from the interaction between the acid from the lemon juice and the sweet condensed milk. Whatever the reason, the yoghurt and condensed milk mixture sets into a beautifully smooth and shiny filling that gives a perfect surface for beautiful decorations. Although the recipe has been around for a long time, this version incorporating papaya is a beautiful salmon-coloured version with a delicious fruity filling.





**Ingredients for one large tart, either rectangle or round for 8 - 10 portions:**

**For the pastry:**

3 egg yolks  
90 g castor sugar  
90 g butter, cubed  
5 ml vanilla extract or essence  
180 g cake flour

**For the filling:**

500 ml thick full fat unflavoured Greek yoghurt  
385 g (1 tin) good quality condensed milk  
60 g smooth papaya purée (ripe papaya cubes, blended in a liquidiser or with an immersion blender, strained)  
Juice of 2 fresh, medium-sized lemons

**To garnish:**

Small papaya *Parisienne* balls for decoration  
Selection of edible flowers and leaves





### Method:

For the pastry, combine the egg yolks, butter, castor sugar and vanilla in a large bowl. Mash the ingredients together with a dinner fork without letting the butter melt. It should be a homogeneous mass, but should in no way become oily from melting butter.

Once an amalgamated mass has been achieved, drop in the flour and mash it into the butter/yolk mixture. Do not overwork the pastry at this stage. However, if it becomes difficult to combine all the ingredients with the fork, use your hands.

Knead the dough ever so lightly to achieve one combined mass of dough. Shape the pastry into a ball and then flatten the ball into a 5 cm thick disk. Wrap the pastry in clingfilm and store it in the fridge for a couple of hours until the pastry has sufficiently firmed up.

Remove from the fridge and again, knead the pastry together to make it slightly pliable, but under no circumstances should it become soft.

Dust the work surface with a little flour and roll the pastry out to the size of your desired tart tin, either round or rectangular. Ensure that the pastry never sticks to the work surface, keeping it moving around the whole time.

Roll the pastry up onto the rolling pin and transfer it back into the tin. Lift the sides a little so that it fits nicely into the corners of the tin. Press the pastry firmly into the corners and then use a knife to cut off the excess from the side of the tin.

Press the corners of the pastry well into the corners of the tin. Ensure that the sides are of even thickness. Smooth off the top edges of the tin. Place open in the deep freeze to firm up completely.

In the meantime, place a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 200 °C. When the oven is hot and the pastry completely frozen, remove and line the inside of the tart with a piece of crumpled-up and opened baking parchment from the freezer. Add baking beans/rice on top of the baking parchment.

Reduce the oven's heat to 180 °C, place the tin on another baking sheet and blind bake in the oven for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, remove from the oven and carefully remove the baking parchment and the beans/rice.

Slip the tart shell back in the oven and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes until the pastry is fully cooked, but not overly browned.

While the tart shell is in the oven, mix the yoghurt, condensed milk, papaya purée, and lemon juice. Remove the tart shell from the oven and pour in the custard.

Return to the oven and bake for another 20 to 30 minutes until the filling is set. Check regularly and do not overheat it. Remove, cool and decorate with fresh papaya balls and flowers.





# White Fruitcake



Fruitcake has long been a bone of contention in the culinary realm, divided into two distinct camps – people either truly love it, or despise it. For some mysterious reason, dark, rich brandy-soaked fruitcake or Christmas cake has lost a considerable amount of its erstwhile lustre. White fruitcakes, which are featured in this recipe, are somewhat different from those rich, dark fruitcakes being considerably lighter in both colour and richness, and do not require extensive preparation such as soaking fruit or long baking. Assuming that the rich heaviness of those fruitcakes laden with brandy-soaked raisins, sultanas, dried currants, dried orange and lemon peel, glacé cherries and other preserved fruit such as figs and pineapple drives their aversion, this recipe may convince them otherwise. This fruitcake, an adaptation from a recipe that according to *Petits Propos Culinaires* (also cited as *PPC*, a journal covering the history of food and cookery), comes from County of Kirkcudbrightshire in the United Kingdom and is extremely easy to make (Van Tulleken 1980). It essentially consists of a large scone with some fruit, but because of the fairly high fat content, it lasts a long time – not exactly as long as the traditional fruitcake, but much longer than sponge cakes, for instance. There is no creaming of eggs and sugar or sugar and butter and no complicated folding in of flour or egg whites. It really is a simple, straightforward cake, relying on the simplest possible method that everyone should try.

The papaya in the recipe should preferably not be fully dried – which probably means that one should make it at home. If the time and effort of drying fruit in the sun at home does not appeal to you, you could buy commercially dried papaya and give it a bit of a soak in some rooibos tea or fruit juice. To make the home-dried papaya, cut peeled papaya into cubes the size of large macadamia nuts – spread them out on a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat and place them in direct sunlight for around six hours. Turn the cubes every now and again, and they should quickly form a nice skin on the outside, while maintaining a soft pliable centre.

The recipe makes a fairly large cake, so be sure to use a cake tin no smaller than 25 cm in diameter or else the cake will take too long to bake in the centre and then start drying out on the sides. It could be decoratively garnished with Christmas cake items such as cherries and nuts, however, it is equally elegant when dusted with icing sugar.



**Ingredients for one large fruitcake that can easily be cut into  
16 - 20 portions:**

500 g cake flour  
250 g butter, cool, but not rock-hard, cubed  
250 g sugar  
2 tsp baking powder  
80 g partially dried papaya, chopped (see note above)  
200 g dried fruit cake mix  
90 g raisins  
30 g cake flour  
180 ml milk  
5 ml bicarbonate of soda  
30 ml white vinegar  
1 large egg



**Method:**

Preheat the oven to 190 °C and place the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Grease a cake tin anything between 25 cm to 30 cm in size and line with a circle of baking parchment.

One can either rub the butter in by hand or place the flour and baking powder in the mixing bowl of a large freestanding mixer, and then using the whisk attachment, “rub” the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles really nice coarse yellow *mealie meal*. Do not over-rub the butter or it will become oily and make the cake dense.

Mix the dried fruit with 30 g of additional flour, which will prevent the dried fruits from sinking to the bottom of the cake batter. Mix the dried fruit and sugar into the flour-butter mix.

Split the milk in two – warm one half and add the bicarbonate of soda. Beat the egg and vinegar into the other half of the milk.

Now, swiftly mix the two milk mixtures into the flour/fruit mix. Transfer the batter to the cake tin and smooth the top.

Bake for 30 minutes and then turn the oven down to 150 °C and bake for a further 60 minutes. The cake should be firm and no sticky dough should come out if tested with a skewer or cake testing stick.

Cool slightly and turn out onto a cake cooling rack. Serve plain, or with more cubed papaya and cream or ice cream.



# Sponge Cake



Although recipes for easy-to-make classic sponge cakes abound, the results are often disappointing, being dry and lacking taste. This could explain why many modern consumers opt for pre-mixes to avoid a disappointing result. A good sponge cake should be light, elegant and have a fine crumb – the term used to describe the desired light and moist interior of the cake.

This papaya sponge cake uses a relatively modern cake-making technique, referred to as the reverse creaming method. In traditional recipes, the butter is creamed with sugar and/or eggs, and the flour is only added later. The aim is to lessen the flour's contact with any moisture that will activate the gluten in the flour, resulting in a tough cake. Instead of butter, this recipe uses oil, and the contact time between the flour and the moisture is limited, resulting in a super fine and elegant cake. As the cake is somewhat fragile and contains the fruit purée, it is important to bake it long enough and cool it thoroughly before turning it out. It can be successfully baked as either two traditional cake layers or in a tube cake tin (as one would use for angel food cake).

This recipe calls for a relatively large proportion of papaya purée, which contributes to its moist crumb. For this reason, it hardly needs any icing; in fact, a nice big dollop of whipped cream or even thick yoghurt should suffice. If one should wish to decorate the cake with icing, a simple butter icing would work well. The cake is also made with everyday ingredients, which makes it a super standby recipe if one should need to bake a cake in a hurry. The papaya purée gives the loveliest colour to the cake, varying from light salmon to sunrise orange depending on the colour of the fruit you use, and contributes a superb light fruitiness on the palate. For a simple, but satisfying dessert, one could also serve the cake with ice cream and more fresh papaya.





**Ingredients for one large sponge cake that can easily be cut into 12 - 16 portions:**

340 g cake flour  
240 g white sugar  
80 g white sugar  
15 ml baking powder  
5 ml salt  
140 ml sunflower or other flavourless oil  
250 g ripe papaya  
6 eggs, separated  
Zest of 1 lemon  
15 ml vanilla essence or extract

**For the icing (optional):**

250 g butter  
375 g icing sugar  
10 ml fresh lemon juice

**Additional:**

Selection of small, orange-coloured edible flowers and petals  
Selection of cut-out papaya designs



**Method:**

Preheat the oven to 180 °C and place the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Prepare either a large tube cake tin (such as one would use for angel food) or two normal 20 cm cake tins by greasing or spraying them thoroughly, then papering them with

pieces of parchment paper cut precisely to fit the bottom and the sides of the tin and greasing it again. Papering a tube pan may be slightly complex, however, the cake has such delightful height and drama, that it would be worth the effort.

Mix the flour (no need to sieve), the 240 g of sugar, baking powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. Blend the papaya with the oil, vanilla essence, lemon zest and egg yolks to a smooth purée in a liquidiser or using a stick blender in a tall upright jar. Set aside for a moment.

Make a stiff meringue by beating the egg whites and then adding the remaining 80 g of sugar once the egg whites are somewhat frothy. Beat until shiny and glossy, but not dry and crumbly.

Use a large spatula and fold the papaya purée into the dry ingredients. Ensure that no pockets of flour are left, however, guard against over folding/beating at this point to prevent toughening the mixture.

Now mix in one-third of the meringue to loosen the papaya/flour mixture, and do not worry too much about losing volume. Then, firmly fold (do not beat) the remaining meringue mixture carefully into the papaya/flour mixture to retain as much air as possible.

Pour the mixture into your chosen tin and give the tin a fairly firm bang on the work surface to dispel any large air pockets. Place the tin onto a baking sheet and into the oven. The large cake should bake for no less than 60 minutes, while the two separate layers may be done in 50 minutes – check accordingly. Take them out of the oven and allow them to cool in the tins; do not be tempted to turn them out too early. The cake structure must firm up before the cake is inverted. Decorate and enjoy.

# Pull-Apart Bread



Pull-apart breads are quite the rage on social media sites lately. Everyone is making a slightly different version from the next person – they are loaf-shaped or bun-shaped. In the latter category there is even a truly South African version with cream and brown sugar poured over it. The similarity they all share, however, is that the bread consists of individual pieces of yeast dough interspersed with ingredients that make it easy to separate the pieces after baking. This recipe uses dried papaya in the dough and fresh papaya pulp mixed with melted butter, sugar and spices between the dough pieces, which resemble a little spread of jam after baking. Because of the papaya pulp, the layers do not separate as cleanly as layers spread with fat would, however, that is small sacrifice for the delicious jammy layer that forms between the layers.

There are some dried fruits in the recipe, mostly complimentary to the dried papaya, however, feel free to add alternative selections of dried fruit, such as dried banana or even nuts.

If you cannot find dried papaya to purchase in stores, make your own. Peel and slice papaya into 1 cm thick slices. Lay on silicone mats and dry in a low oven (not higher than 70 °C) for 48 hours, turning them over now and again.



**Ingredients for 1 large pull-apart loaf, for approximately  
8 portions:**

**For the dough:**

400 g cake flour  
15 ml (1 packet of 10 g) instant yeast  
3,75 ml ( $\pm 3/4$  tsp) salt  
70 g granulated sugar  
70 g dried pear, finely chopped  
70 g raisins, finely chopped  
30 g dried papaya, finely chopped  
5 ml vanilla essence or extract  
2 whole eggs  
150 ml full cream buttermilk  
60 g butter

**For the separation butter:**

60 g butter  
40 g sugar  
2,5 ml each of ground cinnamon and ground ginger  
80 g papaya pulp (freshly puréed papaya)







### Method:

Butter a 20 cm x 25 cm loaf tin very well. Set aside.

Melt the butter for the dough and add the buttermilk. Warm slightly, but be careful not to overheat the buttermilk as it may split. Mix the butter/buttermilk mix and all the other ingredients for the dough well, in the bowl of a freestanding mixer.

Using the dough hook attachment, knead the dough until it is smooth and glossy and comes away from the sides of the bowl.

Cover the bowl with a damp cloth and leave it in a warm place until the dough has fully doubled in size.

Tip the dough onto a floured working surface and roll it into a log. Divide the log into 12 pieces. The tricky part here is to have a nice glossy smooth part that will be the “top” of the slice. If you have ever made traditional yeast rusks, you will know how to pinch a piece of dough to have a smooth surface.

Try to pull the sides of the individual piece of dough into the middle, so that the sides will be nice and smooth.

Now flatten out the piece of dough, either by hand or with a rolling pin, to resemble the shape of the loaf tin. Repeat with all 12 pieces.

Melt the separation butter, add the sugar, cinnamon, ginger and papaya pulp and mix well. Divide this mixture onto the 12 pieces of dough and spread to the sides.

Lay the first layer upright into the loaf tin as well as all the remaining pieces apart from the last piece with the spread side in the same direction.

Turn the last piece around so that the spread part faces back to the bread and not the outside.

Cover the loaf tin with a damp cloth and set aside in a warm place until the bread has increased in size, slightly more than double. Be careful not to over-proof the bread; a little more than double will produce a light and fluffy bread.

Bake for 45 to 55 minutes in a preheated oven at 175 °C check that the bread is fully cooked. Remove from the oven and immediately run a knife carefully around the side of the tin; some of the papaya mixture may have cooked out and if you let the bread cool down in the tin, it may stick.

Carefully turn out onto a wire cooling rack. Serve when cold.







# No-Bake Cheesecake

In addition to a myriad of other issues on which the world's population differ vehemently, there is one more – baked versus non-baked cheesecake. Whichever side of the divide you are, there is no denying that cheesecake has become a firm favourite in the world's culinary repertoire. Although often served as dessert, cheesecake is probably too rich and decadent to be eaten after a meal, however, as a mid-afternoon teatime treat, it is just the best thing, whether baked or non-baked. The papaya in this non-bake version, and the large amount of fruit that goes into it, makes this a lighter version that may even make one feel a little bit virtuous.

For any non-baked cheesecake, the quality of the ingredients such as the cream cheese one uses and the flavourings you add, are crucial. The problem with lesser quality cream cheeses is that they are slightly watery and often too “thin” to give the required substance to one's cheesecake. These days it is easy enough to find good quality cream cheeses, whether local or imported, which was not always the case in the past. The imported bricks of cream cheese seem to be slightly denser and more compact, but even the better-quality local cream cheeses (sold in plastic containers) seem to work just fine. Whatever you do, do not use cottage cheese, and always be sure to check that you buy plain, unflavoured, full-fat cream cheese.

Be sure to use a loose-bottomed metal cake tin of high quality. If you use a cake tin that has not been treated with Teflon or some other non-stick treatment, remember to line it with clingfilm wrap as the ingredients will react with the untreated metal and impart a metallic taste to your cheesecake. The easiest way to do this is to wet a square of clingfilm and wrap the base of the loose-bottomed tin separately, then assemble the tin and line the sides of the tin with clingfilm. The water makes the clingfilm less “sticky” and one can smooth it out nicely. One does not want any plastic lines or creases showing on the sides of the cake after it has been unmoulded. For an even more professional finish, insert a band of thick acetate around the edge of the loose-bottomed cake tin – this band of acetate can be washed and re-used if you make cheesecakes often. Please note that this recipe uses two types of papaya purée, a drained thicker version (see note below) as well as a fresh papaya purée.





### Ingredients for 12 - 16 portions:

300 g biscuits, such as Tennis or Marie biscuits, or even digestive biscuits or a health biscuit  
120 g butter, melted  
2 x 250 g full-fat plain unflavoured cream cheese  
180 g stiff papaya purée (see note)  
400 ml cream  
130 g castor sugar  
60 ml fresh lemon juice  
15 ml agar-agar  
60 ml water  
60 ml fresh lemon juice  
400 g fresh papaya purée (not drained as the previous papaya purée)  
40 g castor sugar

### To garnish:

More fresh papaya for sliced decoration  
Selection of edible flowers



### Method:

Pulse the biscuits in a food processor until it becomes fine crumbs. Mix with the melted butter and press into the bottom of the prepared cake tin. Ensure that the edges are even all around. Chill.

Beat the cream cheese and stiff papaya purée with the paddle attachment in a freestanding mixer. When light and fluffy, add the 130 g castor sugar and the cream. Beat until well combined. Mix in the lemon juice. Pour into the tin on top of the biscuits. Chill.

Add the agar-agar to the water and mix. Melt in the microwave or stove, then mix in the remaining papaya purée, sugar and lemon juice and carefully pour the topping over the cream cheese mix in an even layer. Chill.

When the jelly layer on top is set, decorate with more thinly sliced fresh papaya and edible flowers.

Note: the overall moisture content of papaya purée may be too high to incorporate directly into the cream cheese mixture. To make the heavy papaya purée, peel and deseed a thoroughly ripe, aromatic papaya. Blend the papaya flesh in a food processor, liquidiser or with a stick blender in a tall jar to get a smooth purée (strain through a fine sieve if you are uncertain that your purée is lump-free). Line a sieve with a clean, rinsed layer of high-quality muslin cloth. Pour the purée onto the muslin, cover with clingfilm wrap and leave overnight in the fridge for the liquid to drain out and the papaya purée to become thick and paste-like.

# Meringue Tart



Everybody loves the old-fashioned lemon meringue pie we grew up with, made with condensed milk and lemon. Although one may also find similar versions in places like Australia or America from time to time, this is a truly South African favourite. It is uncertain how condensed milk has become such a staple and why there are so many recipes in our culinary repertoire that include it. Lemon meringue pie does the product justice, given that condensed milk on its own can be extremely sweet and cloying. The addition of a large proportion of fresh lemon juice cuts back the sweetness and gives the filling a clean, elegant taste. There is a fair number of recipes for lemon meringue pie, however, in the recipe below we did not want to bake the filling (as in many recipes where egg yolk is mixed into the filling), to retain as much of the tropical freshness of the papaya as possible. Instead, the suggested filling will set or thicken by curdling the proteins. This recipe does include a baked crust, using the egg yolks leftover from making the meringue, but feel free to make a biscuit crust if you like. The four egg whites produce a fair amount of meringue, however, if you want one of those show-off meringue pies with the massive cloud of meringue piled on top, increase the egg whites to six (adjust the sugar accordingly).



**Ingredients for one large meringue tart that can easily be sliced into 12 portions:**

**For the pastry:**

4 egg yolks  
120 g cold (but not rock hard) butter, cubed  
120 g castor sugar  
5 ml vanilla essence or vanilla extract  
240 g cake flour

**For the papaya filling:**

1 tin (385 g) sweetened condensed milk  
250 ml whipping cream  
200 ml smooth papaya purée  
180 ml fresh lemon juice

**For the meringue topping:**

4 egg whites  
200 g granulated sugar







### Method:

Make the pastry by combining the egg yolks, butter, castor sugar and vanilla in a large mixing bowl. Use a dinner fork to mash these ingredients together, without letting the butter melt. It should be a homogeneous mass, but should in no way become oily from melting butter, so work quickly.

Add the flour and mix into the butter/yolk mixture. Do not overwork the mixture at this point – if it becomes difficult to combine all the ingredients with the fork, it is acceptable to use your hands. Knead the dough lightly to achieve one combined mass of dough. Shape the mass into a ball and then flatten the ball into a 5 cm thick disk. Wrap in clingfilm and store in the fridge for a couple of hours until the pastry has sufficiently firmed up. The time needed for this to happen will depend on how cold the fridge is.

Remove from the fridge and again mash the pastry together to make it slightly pliable, but under no circumstances should it become soft. Dust the work surface with a little flour and roll the pastry to the size of your pan. Remember that it would need to be a little larger than the base of the tin for it to edge up the tin's sides. Ensure that the pastry never sticks to the work surface, keeping it in a round disk and moving it around the whole time.

One can make this in a fluted, loose-bottomed pie or quiche tin – the tin might be a little larger (between 20 cm and 30 cm) or smaller in diameter (not less than 18 cm), but deeper. Roll up onto the rolling pin and transfer back into the loose-bottomed tin. Lift the sides a little so that it fits nicely into the corners of the tin. Press the pastry down firmly in the corners and then use a knife to trim the excess from the side of the tin. Smooth off the cut edges. Place it in the deep freeze to firm up completely.

In the meantime, ensure that the rack is in the middle of the oven and heat to 200 °C. When the oven is hot and the pastry is completely frozen, remove it from the freezer and line the inside of the tart with a large piece of baking parchment, crumpled up and smoothed out again. Add baking beans or rice on top of the baking parchment.

Place on a baking sheet and blind-bake in the oven for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes remove it from the oven and carefully remove the baking parchment and the beans/rice.

Slip the tart shell back in the oven and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes until the pastry is fully cooked, but not overly browned. Remove it from the oven and set aside to cool.

To make the filling, whip the cream until stiff in a freestanding mixer using the whisk attachment. Whisk in the condensed milk – the mixture will loosen somewhat, but do not be alarmed.

Pour in the lemon juice, which will firm up the mixture. Remove from the machine and fold in the papaya purée. Transfer to the crust and place in the fridge – do not cover.

After about an hour or so, once the filling has set, cover it with clingfilm. It is best to make the filling the day before for it to firm up well; after a few hours of chilling in the fridge, proceed with the meringue topping.

Place the egg whites and sugar into the bowl of a freestanding mixer (preferably metal). Heat water in a pot on the stove that will accommodate the bowl, ensuring that the bowl does not touch the gently simmering water in the pot.

Stir all the time, until all the sugar has dissolved into the egg white. If you are uncertain and worried about food safety aspects at this stage, the temperature of the egg mixture should read 46 °C on a food thermometer.

Remove it from the stove and beat the meringue on high speed with the whisk attachment until the mixture is thick and voluminous. Pile on top of the set papaya filling, using a rubber spatula to create great clouds of meringue. One can serve the pie as is, or *brûlée* or slightly brown the meringue with a blowtorch.





# Griestorte





This is a delightfully simple cake to whip up in a jiffy. It is super easy to make, delicious and a beautiful canvas to celebrate papaya. There are a few meticulous steps to follow in making the cake, such as understanding that the cake has no additional chemical (or other) leavening agent, apart from the very well-beaten eggs. Therefore, ensure that the eggs are aerated very well. The cake can be baked in two tins should you wish. However, as there is no fat in the cake batter it dries out fairly easily, so take care when you make it in two tins not to overbake them. Often one wants a simple cake that does not require much work, when a cake in one tin is just what you need. You could then split the single cake layer in half, but Europeans often bake just one layer as a simple tea cake with icing and/or fruit decoration.

Apart from the fact that *griestorte* has German, or Bavarian origins, there is little information about its history on the internet or any encyclopaedic books on food which were consulted. The German word *gries* translates to “gritty”, which makes sense because of the semolina. A few commonalities exist between recipes – most recipes for *griestorte* combine semolina, ground almonds (also sometimes referred to as

almond flour), lemon zest and fresh lemon juice. The grittiness that comes from the semolina is also the cake’s redeeming health aspect (apart from making it quite delicious, since it is somewhat heavy on sugar). Semolina is made from the endosperm (the very nutritious part that is often removed in the normal flour milling process) of durum wheat. Durum wheat grains are golden in colour and produce flour that is pale-yellow. Semolina flour is mainly used to make couscous, pasta and sweet puddings and is quite readily available in South Africa.

The cake is finished off with a layer of cream cheese icing; however, it could also be finished off with a simple layer of whipped cream. Some skill is required to make the papaya ribbons – the papaya should be ripe, but not overly ripe. One could try a potato peeler when making the ribbons. However, vegetable peelers generally produce a ribbon that is too thin, therefore, it is best to make the ribbons using a mandoline. Be brutish – grab onto a piece of papaya and slide it lengthwise over the mandolin blade, but be careful of your fingers!



**Ingredients for one large cake that can easily be cut into  
12 - 16 portions:**

6 eggs, separated  
220 g castor sugar  
120 g semolina flour  
60 g ground almonds (almond flour)  
1 lemon, grated rind and juice  
1 orange, grated rind

**For the icing:**

120 g butter  
120 g heavy cream cheese  
240 g icing sugar

**Additional:**

½ medium papaya, cut into ribbons  
A few papaya Parisian balls  
About 10 whole gooseberries  
Selection of small edible flowers and petals



### Method:

Place an oven rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 190 °C. Prepare either a 25 cm cake tin (rather 20 cm when making two cakes) by greasing or spraying them thoroughly. Cut a piece of parchment paper to fit the bottom precisely and grease again.

Dust the bottom and sides of the tin(s), first with castor sugar, and then a dusting of semolina over that – lightly tap out any excess. This will produce a nice crisp outside crust.

Place the egg yolks and sugar in the bowl of a freestanding mixer with the whisk attachment. Beat on high heat until the mixture is very thick and almost white.

Gently fold in the almond flour and semolina flour, and thereafter, the two citrus zests and lemon juice. The mixture should now sit for a little while – 5 to 8 minutes, for the semolina to soften slightly.

In the meantime, whisk the egg whites to a firm, but not dry peak in another clean bowl with the whisk attachment. Gently fold the egg whites into the mixture.

Pour into the tin(s) and give them a fairly firm bang on the work surface to dispel any large air pockets.

Place the cake in the oven – the large cake should bake for approximately 40 minutes, while two cakes should be done in approximately 25 minutes. Touch the surface of the cake to establish that it is cooked – the cake should feel dry to the touch and make no indentations.

Take the cakes out of the oven and allow them to cool for approximately 8 minutes in the tin. Turn out on your cake plate or cake stand and remove the paper. Allow them to cool properly.

In the meantime, make the icing by beating all the ingredients together until aerated and fluffy. Spread on the cake. Decorate with flowing ribbons of papaya, papaya balls, gooseberries and edible flowers.

Because there is no fat in the cake, it will not last for a very long time, but it becomes better over a two- to three-day period.



# Fridge Cake (or Tart)



That good old South African standby, the fridge tart, mostly made in a rectangular see-through glass casserole dish, is reinvented here as a cake. By all means, do not be put off by the shape it takes and continue to make it in a container you feel comfortable with.

This version, which features fresh papaya, is such a celebration of the senses that one may well make a little extra effort and turn it into a visual spectacle as well. Many versions of recipes for fridge tart exist in our country, some of them made with instant pudding, others with caramel treat and some with jelly as the binder. This is another one of those made with lemony condensed milk, a rich custard, the obligatory Tennis biscuits and of course, fresh papaya. Because it uses fresh papaya, it may not last for days, but it is so delicious that it is doubtful if it would hang around for too long in any case.

This version is not overly sweet, and all that fresh papaya makes it slightly healthier, so be generous and cut large cubes. The recipe is for a large cake, but one could easily halve the recipe and make a smaller version. Should you wish to make the dessert slightly less rich, make the custard using only milk and not a combination of milk and cream. Should you want to attempt transforming this recipe into a cake, the preparation of the cake tin is imperative, as it is important to make the cake a day in advance for it to firm up. Many cake tins are not made of high-end, non-reactive material, and if this high dairy cake would have contact with the metal for such a long period, it could be dangerous. Use a 25 cm springform cake tin with a loose bottom. First wrap the bottom of the cake tin in clingfilm and then tightly secure it in the spring ring. Although one can also wrap the sides of the tin in clingfilm, this is finicky. The simplest way to deal with the sides is to cut a band of acetate paper that fits around the inside of the tin and exceeds the side of the tin by 2 cm.



**Ingredients for one large fridge cake or tart, enough for 16 - 20 portions:**

1 whole ripe papaya, peeled and cut into similar-sized dice cubes  
2 packets of Tennis biscuits  
2 tins condensed milk, cooled in the deep freeze, for no less than two hours  
250 ml fresh lemon juice  
500 ml milk  
500 ml cream  
45 ml cornflour  
45 ml cake flour  
5 ml salt  
150 g granulated sugar  
15 ml vanilla extract or essence  
3 eggs, separated  
Selection of small colourful edible flowers and petals



**Method:**

First, make the custard. Combine the milk, cream, two flours, egg yolks, salt and sugar in a heavy-bottomed pot.

Cook on medium heat whisking often and continuously at the end until the custard is fully cooked, has thickened, and no longer tastes of raw flour or egg. Add the vanilla.

Beat the egg whites to a soft whip and fold them into the hot custard – this will effectively cook the egg whites and prevent any food safety concerns.

Pack a tight-fitting layer of biscuits at the bottom of your chosen cake tin or pie dish. Remove the condensed milk from the deep freeze and empty both tins into the bowl of a freestanding mixer.

Whip with the whisk attachment until it has doubled in volume and has become pale and white. Slowly add the lemon juice until it is all incorporated and you are left with a frothy, stable, fairly thick mixture.

Pour one-third over the biscuits and flatten to the edges, covering all the biscuits. Dot with one-third of the papaya cubes and cover with one-third of the custard.

Flatten out and repeat with biscuits, condensed milk mousse, papaya cubes and custard. Repeat for a third layer.

Smooth the top out and give the entire container a fairly hard bang on the work surface to expel any air pockets that may have formed.

Refrigerate until set, cover with clingfilm, and refrigerate overnight. Remove the outer ring of the springform tin, slide a large pallet knife under the bottom layer of biscuits above the clingfilm, and transfer to a flat cake plate.

Gently remove the acetate paper and decorate with edible flowers.





# Florentines

Although their name may lead one to believe that these simple biscuits originated in Florence, Italy, food writer Emiko Davies claims that is far from the truth, explaining that the city of Florence never really had any traditional biscuits to lay claim to (Davis 2016). Emiko Davies believes they are quintessentially French. This comes as no surprise thanks to the Florentine Queen, Catherine de Medici, who happened to be one of history's most influential gastronomes, whom we must thank for the invention of eggs Florentine and quiche Florentine. Ms Davies continues by saying, 'Florentine cookies were most likely created in the late 17th century kitchens of French royalty in honour of their Tuscan in-laws'. Florentines are essentially thin, crisp toffee biscuits strewn with glacé and dried fruits. In this recipe they are topped with dried papaya and other dried and glacé fruits. Although one could probably top the biscuits with dried papaya only, it is a slightly chewy product and having only those on the biscuit would make them not only difficult to eat, but also slightly one-dimensional. Some preserved ginger could be a nice addition, however, the papaya is very delicate in taste and could easily be overpowered by other ingredients with more robust flavours. Because of the delicate flavour of the dried papaya, this recipe does not include fruit such as candied orange and lemon peel which traditional florentines call for, but again, feel free to experiment before baking. You could also top the biscuits with some more flaked nuts or even some seeds if you were feeling slightly adventurous.

The recipe calls for dark chocolate to coat the underside of the biscuit. As the biscuits are already somewhat sweet, it is advisable to use high quality dark chocolate (couverture) with as little sugar as possible. The problem with this type of chocolate is that it requires tempering once melted, or it will not harden. A compromise would be to use dark eating chocolate. It, however, remains a problem to keep the chocolate solid in high temperature conditions, as you do not want to place the biscuits in the fridge, because the sugar in the toffee will absorb moisture and become soft. It is, therefore, important that when baking the biscuits, to ensure that they do not burn, but that they are well browned – they will not crisp up sufficiently if they are not fully browned. Rather make them in



small batches and bake fewer at a time and then repeat the process. The biscuits on the sides of the baking sheet may turn brown before the ones in the middle. You could take those out and place the ones in the middle back in the oven until they are fully browned.

You could make these all the same size by pressing out a perfect circle with a pastry cutter once they are baked – but that is not necessary, and they are perhaps more authentic if they are somewhat irregular in shape.

The recipe makes only ten large florentines. You could make them smaller and have more or you could easily double the recipe.



#### Ingredients for 10 florentines:

70 g whole blanched or unskinned almonds (these may be slightly healthier if you do not mind the skins), or even a mix of almonds and other nuts such as cashews

16 g (2 tbsp) cake flour

Zest of 1 large orange

⅛ teaspoon salt

90 g sugar

15 ml cream

15 ml syrup

40 g butter

2,5 ml vanilla extract or essence

80 g high-quality dark chocolate (not baking chocolate)

#### Additional:

Handful of dried papaya, cut into smaller bits

Handful of dried apricots, cut into smaller bits

Around 10 glacé cherries, cut into smaller bits



#### Method:

Set the oven to 180 °C with the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Have a large baking sheet with a silicone mat ready.

Pulse the nuts, flour, zest and salt into a coarse crumble in a food processor. Boil the sugar, cream, syrup and butter until the sugar has dissolved (since it is such a small amount, you can do this in the microwave if you wish).

Add the vanilla and then stir this mixture into the almond crumble. Mix it thoroughly and set aside until it is cool enough to handle.

Roll the mixture into medium-small balls, about a heaped tablespoon full. Flatten them somewhat (they will spread substantially in the oven) and place on a silicone mat on the baking sheet. Sprinkle the dried fruits over, pressing them slightly into the mixture.

Bake for about 10 minutes (or more – see comment above), until they are nicely browned and no longer pliable. Remove from the oven and allow them to cool down on the baking sheet.

Transfer the florentines onto kitchen paper to absorb a little of the oiliness. Once the florentines are cool, melt the chocolate and spread their undersides generously. Allow the chocolate to firm up before serving them.

Note: If you cannot find dried papaya to purchase in stores, make your own. Peel and slice papaya in 1 cm thick slices. Lay on a silicone mat and dry in a low oven (not higher than 70 °C) for 48 hours, turning them over now and again.

# Dacquoise





Some people might consider this a complex recipe and rather not attempt it because of the many different ingredients and components involved. However, if one plans properly and makes the components beforehand, it is not so much work and worth every minute spent preparing. The deep toasty flavour of the meringue and the silky smoothness of the *chiboust* is a perfect vehicle for the freshness of the papaya. It is a light and elegant cake that can be served as a show-stopper dessert. If things go horribly wrong, do not despair, and simply serve all the ingredients in individual glass cups, similar to Eton mess, another delicious and far less finicky dessert.

*Dacquoise* (pronounced “dakwəz”) is the name used for the assembled dessert or cake, but also for the circular meringue layers. They range from airy, pillowy white, to deep nutty and

crisp, more akin to Italian meringue biscuits, such as those needed for this recipe. There are many different versions of this recipe, some assembled with whipped cream, others with buttercream and so on.

This recipe incorporates fresh papaya which lends itself well to using almond flour, but one could also make the meringue disks with hazelnut or other nut flours. It is, however, important to assemble the *dacquoise* some time before being served for the other ingredients to soften the meringue. This recipe, which uses a *chiboust* cream and orange curd, is relatively stable and can stand around for a couple of hours in a cool place without softening or melting, which could happen if one uses only whipped cream.





**Ingredients for one large *dacquoise* that can easily be sliced into 12 portions:**

**For the three layers of *dacquoise* (meringue discs):**

330 g almond flour, toasted in the oven at 180 °C for approximately 15 minutes, stirring often, until lightly toasted to intensify its nuttiness and then cooled  
130 g castor sugar  
30 g cornflour  
8 egg whites  
260 g castor sugar  
1,25 ml salt  
1,25 ml cream of tartar

**For the orange curd:**

8 egg yolks  
200 g white sugar  
Zest of 1 orange  
100 ml orange juice  
60 ml lemon juice  
170 g butter (cut into cubes)

**For the crème *chiboust*:**

300 ml milk (or cream if you are feeling decadent)  
30 g white sugar  
200 g white sugar  
4 large egg yolks  
30 g cornflour  
10 g gelatine (this might be bumped up to 12 g if you are uncertain about stability)  
60 ml water  
270 g sugar  
70 ml water

4 large egg whites  
15 ml vanilla essence  
Zest of 1 lemon

**Additional:**

4 fresh granadillas, pulp removed  
1 large ripe papaya, peeled and cut into small cubes  
Icing sugar for dusting  
¼ sheet edible gold leaf  
Small pink edible flower petals



**Method:**

Plan a little and make the orange curd a few days before the time. Place the yolks, sugar, zest and two juices in a bowl over a double boiler.

Whisk all the time until the custard has fully thickened – it is important for both safety aspects (the egg) and taste, that the mixture should thicken thoroughly.

Take off the heat and beat in small cubes of the butter. Place in a sealed container and keep in the fridge for up to two weeks.

The meringue discs can also be made a day or three in advance and be kept in a sealed airtight container. Draw three 22 cm circles on good quality baking parchment paper, if you are not using silicone mats.

Pre-warm a convection oven to 150 °C with three oven racks evenly spaced in the oven. The toasted, cooled nut flour can be ground to an even finer powder in a food-processor and sieved if one does not like the bit of grittiness of some larger pieces of nuts in the *dacquoise*.

Mix the nut flour with the 130 g castor sugar and 30 g cornflour. Whisk the egg whites with the salt and cream of tartar until fully aerated. Add the 260 g castor sugar slowly and beat until firm. Fold in the nut flour mixture. Transfer to a piping bag with a plain nozzle and pipe three even spiral circles on the three baking sheets.

Bake for one hour and then cool in the same oven for 45 minutes with the door slightly ajar. If you want perfectly round meringue disks, one could remove them from the oven three-quarters of the way and cut a perfect circle with a cake ring.

The *crème chiboust* is the only component for which one needs to be really well-organised. The hot Italian meringue mixture must be folded into the warm custard, so one should do a few things simultaneously.

Measure the egg white into an electric mixing bowl with the whisk attachment. Place the 270 g of sugar and 70 ml of water into a small pot. Melt the sugar and water slightly, but do not boil. Mix the gelatine and water and set aside.

Now, make the custard by warming the 300 ml of milk or cream with the 30 g sugar. Whisk the 200 g sugar, egg yolks and cornflour. Add a little of the warmed milk or cream to the egg mixture, then add the egg mixture back to the pot containing the milk/sugar mixture and mix everything.

Cook over medium heat, stirring continuously until the custard has thickened properly. Remove from the heat and add the vanilla and zest.

Melt the gelatine and mix it into the custard. Leave the custard in the same pot, and set it aside close to where you are working with the sugar syrup.

Bring the sugar and water to the boil and read the temperature. When it is close to 115 °C, whisk the egg whites until fully aerated. When the sugar syrup reaches 119 °C pour slowly onto the meringue being beaten.

Be careful that the hot syrup does not fall onto the whisk attachment. Rather pour it between the whisk and the bowl.

When the meringue is very shiny and glossy, mix it into the warm custard mixture. If the mixture is firm, it can be used immediately to assemble the *dacquoise*.

If slightly soft, cool down, however, be careful not to get the mixture too cold, or it will firm up from the gelatine and could be difficult to pipe. It should, therefore, not be made in advance.

To assemble the cake, pipe a little *crème chiboust* onto a cake stand. Press the first meringue disk down, being careful not to break the fragile meringue.

Pipe a ring of *chiboust* around the edge, fill the centre with a thin layer of *chiboust*, a layer of orange curd, the pulp of two granadillas and half the papaya cubes. Repeat with the second meringue layer.

The final meringue layer can be decorated with piped *chiboust* on the edge of the disk, dusted with icing sugar and pretty cubes of papaya, gold leaf and edible flowers.



# Coconut Cake





Coconut cake recipes abound, from complex to fairly simple (always preferred), but quite often the results are far from what one envisioned. They are, unfortunately, quite frequently dry and lack the moist richness that most of us have in mind when we think of coconut cake. The following recipe is an adaptation of a coconut cake recipe by food blogger extraordinaire Sally McKenney (find her on [sallysbakingaddiction.com](http://sallysbakingaddiction.com)), where she explains that the moistness in her coconut cake recipe is partly due to the use of sweetened coconut – a product that we do not seem to have easy access to in South Africa (McKenney 2022). For this recipe, some minor changes were made to compensate for the sweetened coconut – you can use the usual desiccated coconut from any supermarket. Sally McKenney further explains that the use of desiccated coconut, coconut milk, and coconut extract enhance the overall coconut flavour of the cake, although coconut extract may also be easy to find in South Africa. If you can lay your hands on some, by

all means add a teaspoon or so to the batter and icing. For a flavour that is in better harmony with the papaya, the coconut in both the batter and icing of this cake is toasted fairly dark. Simply place the coconut in a dry pan and toast on medium heat while stirring all the time. The coconut will become slightly browner until it has a lovely deep, rich flavour; then you should remove it immediately from the pan to avoid further toasting. In this recipe, the coconut for the icing is stirred into the icing and not only used as a sprinkle on the outside, partly because the papaya leather must stick to the icing.

For the papaya leather, drain the pulp of one or two ripe liquidised papayas in a sieve lined with muslin over two days. Thereafter, whisk it up and spread the pulp evenly over two silicone mats and dry at 80 °C in the oven for two or three hours until the leather easily pulls away from the silicone mats.



**Ingredients for one large sponge cake that can easily be cut into 16 - 20 portions:**

**For the cake:**

285 g cake flour  
10 ml baking powder  
2,5 ml bicarbonate of soda  
5 ml salt  
170 g butter  
330 g granulated sugar  
125 ml egg whites  
125 ml sour cream  
10 ml vanilla extract or vanilla essence  
240 ml coconut cream  
80 g desiccated coconut, toasted

**For the icing:**

230 g butter (at room temperature)  
200 g full-fat cream cheese (the solid block type)  
500 g icing sugar  
30 ml coconut cream  
2,5 ml vanilla extract or vanilla essence  
Pinch of salt  
160 g desiccated coconut, toasted (see note above)  
½ ripe papaya, peeled, seeds removed and cut into small blocks

**Additional:**

Two sheets of papaya leather (see note above)  
Two sheets of edible goldleaf



### Method:

Preheat the oven to 180 °C and place the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Prepare two 28 cm cake tins by greasing them and covering the bottom and sides with perfectly cut sections of parchment paper. Mix the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt – set aside.

Cream the butter and sugar in a freestanding mixer with the paddle attachment until the mixture is pale, light and fluffy. Slowly add the egg whites and beat well until fully incorporated.

Beat in the sour cream, then the vanilla and coconut cream and lastly, the desiccated coconut and flour mix. Beat for a short while until fully mixed.

Divide the mixture between the two cake pans and smooth the surface. Bake for 35 minutes or a little longer, until no raw batter is evident in the centre.

Remove from the oven and cool the cakes in the tins. The cakes are fairly fragile at this point, so be sure to cool them properly.

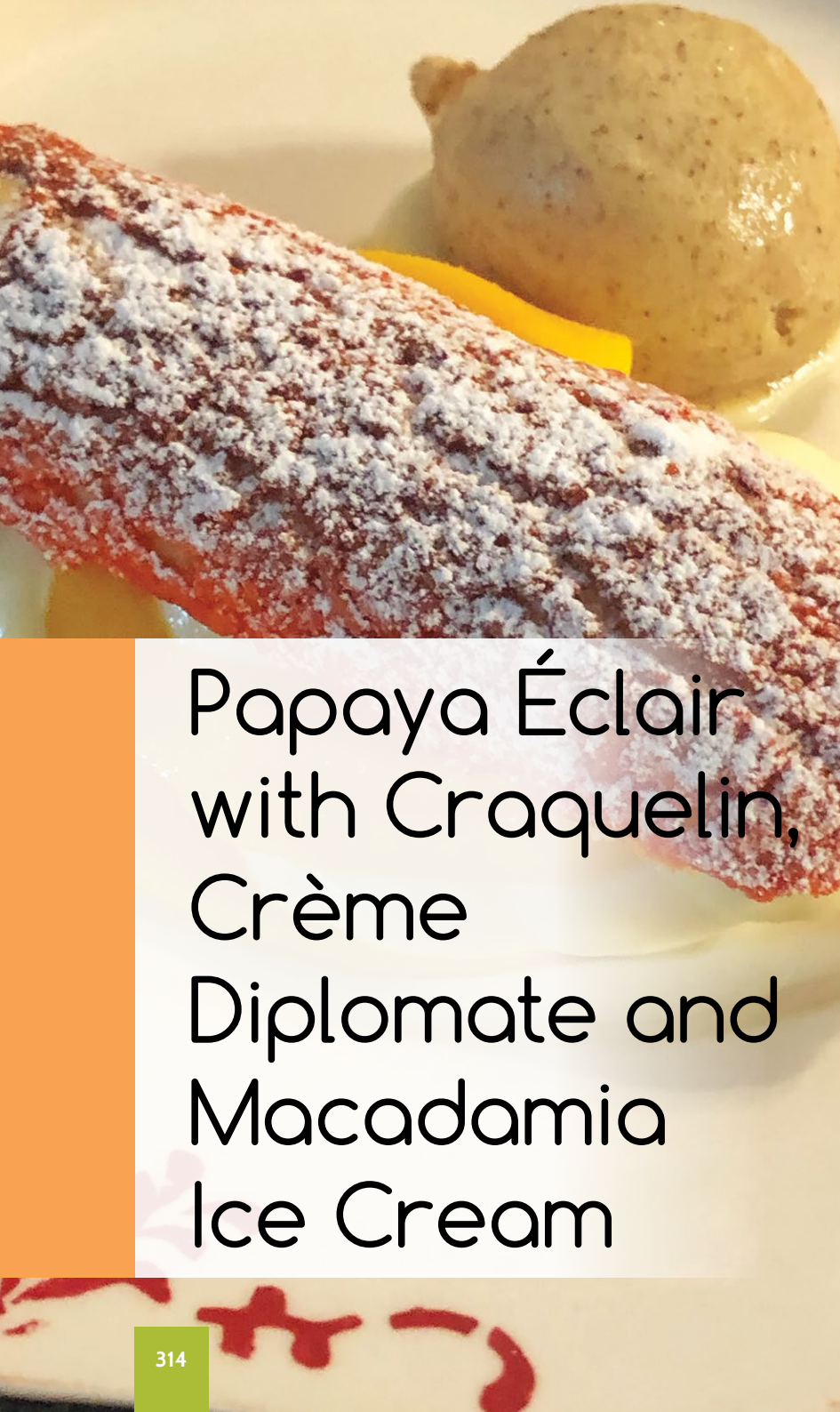
In the meantime, make the icing. Beat the butter and cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add the icing sugar, coconut cream, vanilla and salt and beat well until airy and light.

Fold in the desiccated coconut. Turn out one cooled cake layer and turn it upside down. Spoon on about one third of the icing. Level to the edge, dot with the papaya blocks, and then turn the second layer onto the icing. Use all the remaining icing to cover the sides and top of the cake evenly.

Decorate the cake with the papaya leather by artistically wrapping the leather around the cake, giving some height on top of the cake by bunching the leather up a little. Add the edible goldleaf.

The cake will last approximately three to four days outside, temperature dependent, and even a bit longer in cooler weather.





# Papaya Éclair with Craquelin, Crème Diplomate and Macadamia Ice Cream

Éclairs are made from *choux* pastry, and for that reason the pastry is often referred to as éclair pastry, particularly in America. *Choux* pastry is a rather strange animal, starting off as a dough cooked on the stove that later transforms in the oven into a light, airy pastry. Meticulous measurement of the ingredients is crucial, otherwise your pastry will definitely not attain the light crispiness one desires. If you are a novice at making *choux* pastry, just follow the instructions below for great results. The addition of the thin colourful *craquelin* layer is not required and may be skipped altogether, however, modern-day pastry chefs have added this relatively new invention to ensure that their éclairs stay crisp for longer. One wants to eat *choux* products as fresh as possible, while they are crisp and crunchy. Unfortunately, they do not stay that way very long and the *craquelin* layer helps to achieve that crispiness for longer. It is also quite the rage to make the *craquelin* very brightly coloured, adding visual pleasure. The pastry is not easy to work with, but persevere; it is worth it in the end. *Crème diplomate* is nothing other than thick custard, like in custard slices of old, but with whipped cream and gelatine folded in to increase its stability. The custard is light and airy and makes the éclairs much more suitable to serve as dessert instead of just a patisserie.

The papaya in this recipe – the filling in the sandwich – is integral to the recipe, providing some acidity to cut through the rich dairy and giving a fruity balance to the pastry. In fact, pile the papaya on generously. If you have read this far and you are still willing to try out this recipe, you are also encouraged to try making the macadamia ice cream. Your dessert may be delicious enough when paired with bought vanilla ice cream at a pinch, however, few things are as delicious as deeply toasted macadamias turned into ice cream.



**Ingredients for 10 - 12 ample éclairs, depending on the size they are piped:**

1 medium papaya, sliced into thin slices

**For the macadamia ice cream:**

375 ml milk

120 ml cream

4 egg yolks

150 g sugar

120 g macadamia nuts – toasted very darkly

**For the *crème diplomate*:**

480 ml milk, warmed

75 g sugar

Pinch of salt

35 g cornflour

15 ml vanilla essence or vanilla extract

3 egg yolks

45 g butter

7,5 ml granulated gelatine

45 ml water

30 ml cream

250 ml cream

**For the *craquelin* pastry:**

50 g light brown sugar

50 g butter

50 g flour

Pinch of salt

Few drops food colouring

**For the choux pastry:**

120 g cake flour

96 g butter (room temperature)

225 ml boiling water

3 large eggs



### Method:

First, make the ice cream, as it will last in the deep freeze for a good few days. Cream the yolks and sugar together with a whisk until airy and light.

Warm the milk and cream together and then temper the yolk mix by adding a little of the warmed milk/cream mix to the yolk/sugar mixture. Add this back to the milk/cream mixture and cook on low heat until the custard starts to thicken, stirring all the time.

It is important to fully cook the egg, however, take care not to split or separate the mixture. The best is to cook your custard using a thermometer until it reaches a temperature between 70 °C and 80 °C.

As soon as the custard is fully cooked, strain and cool. Blend the custard and nuts in an upright jug liquidiser. If you prefer a super smooth ice cream, you could strain the mixture again, however, if you do not mind a little texture from the nuts, process in an ice cream machine as is. Store in the deep freeze until ready to serve.

Next, start the *crème diplomate* by creaming together the sugar, salt, cornflour, vanilla and egg yolks until light and airy. Pour on the warmed milk, mix well and cook on medium heat, stirring all the time, until the mixture is thick and glossy.

Remove from the heat, stir in the butter and cover with a piece of clingfilm set directly on the surface of the custard. Set aside to cool.

Prepare the *craquelin* pastry by mixing all the ingredients well. Chill very well, and then roll out (only a quarter of the pastry at a time) between two layers of kitchen parchment to no less than 2 mm thickness. The pastry will become soft very quickly, if it becomes unmanageable, simply pop the two sheets of paper with the pastry in between into the fridge to firm up.

Cut rectangles of 3 cm x 10 cm, place on baking parchment and return to the fridge until needed. You need approximately 12 pieces, however, you could make an extra one or two just to be safe.

Make the *choux* pastry by adding the soft butter and boiling water to a medium pot. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil and then tip all the flour into the water/butter mixture at once.

Stir vigorously until a big lump of doughy pastry forms. Set aside to cool. Once cool to the touch, beat the eggs together and slowly drizzle the egg mixture into the cooked dough in the bowl of a large freestanding mixer with the paddle attachment.

Beat on a high speed until the mixture displays a uniform texture and a high gloss. Transfer the mixture to a pastry bag fitted with a large plain nozzle and pipe bars measuring about 2 cm x 10 cm onto a baking sheet covered with a silicone mat.

Top each of the bars with a layer of *craquelin* pastry, which you cut earlier.



Bake at 190 °C until the éclairs are well-risen and very firm. It is best to bake them until they are quite dry, however, near the end of the baking, one should use a serrated bread knife or very sharp serrated slicer to split the éclairs in half and pop them back in the oven for their insides to dry out for a few seconds. Remove from the oven and cool.

Bloom the gelatine by sprinkling it over the water.

After 10 minutes, melt the gelatine in the microwave. Stir in the 30 ml of cream – cool for a few minutes. Whip the 250 ml cream until it is stiff and then stir in the melted gelatine.

Remove the cooked custard from the fridge, beat until smooth, fold in the cream and cool the mixture in the fridge to firm up.

Assemble the éclairs by spooning or piping a generous amount of the *crème diplomate* onto the base of each of the split éclairs.

Place a generous amount of papaya into each éclair. Top the éclair with the coloured top half. Dust with icing sugar, should you wish, and serve with a ball of ice cream on the side.



# Chocolate Almond Biscuit Sandwiches



The verdict is not out yet regarding the combination of chocolate and fruit. Some fruits – think banana, pear or raspberries – pair extremely well with chocolate. The fact that these biscuits are made with a portion of almond flour makes them less chocolate candy and more chocolate confection. The papaya lightens the chocolate and provides a nice, fruity aspect to these tea-time treats.

Because of the softer chocolate *ganache* in the centre of these biscuits and the firmer papaya *Parisian brunoise* around the side, the filling may squish out if bitten in half. It is, therefore, recommended that one makes them slightly ahead of time, so that the *ganache* and the moisture of the papaya can soften the biscuits slightly, or alternatively, make them small enough to pop into your mouth in one go. The combination of softened biscuit, *ganache* and papaya may also work excellently as a dessert. Cut the biscuits substantially larger, put a small spoon of *ganache* on your dessert plate and secure the bottom biscuit on the plate. Make the papaya balls a little larger, assemble as per the instructions below and top off with the top biscuit. Serve with a nice dollop of whipped cream with vanilla or even a small scoop of vanilla ice cream and a generous dusting of cocoa. These should also be made somewhat ahead of time to allow the biscuits to soften slightly.

For those who are sensitive to wheat flour, it is quite possible to find a suitable recipe for similar biscuits made of almond flour, making them suitable for people with such dietary restrictions.

If you do not have a tool to make these small papaya balls, cut them in equal-sized blocks.





**Ingredients for approximately 24 double-sandwiched biscuits, depending on size:**

100 g icing sugar  
70 g butter, softened, but not melted  
50 g (1 whole, depending on size) egg  
100 g flour  
30 g good quality cocoa  
Good pinch of salt  
90 g almond flour  
Small balls cut from one medium-large papaya

**For the *ganache*:**

150 g good quality dark chocolate  
125 ml cream



**Method:**

Combine the icing sugar, flour, cocoa, salt and almond flour. Work the butter in with a wooden spoon and then add the egg.

Bring the cookie dough together and flatten it into a thick disk. Wrap in clingfilm and cool in the fridge until substantially firmed up, which may take as long as two hours.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C with the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Flour a working surface and roll small, workable pieces of the dough out at a time. The dough softens fairly quickly, therefore, do not be tempted to roll out all the dough at the same time.

Press out rounds of the desired size (see note above) and place on a baking sheet with a silicone mat. Repeat with all the remaining dough. It is possible to rework the cut-offs into the remaining dough, but be careful not to incorporate more flour into the dough, or the biscuits may become tough.

Place another silicone mat lightly over the biscuits to ensure that they bake flat and evenly. Bake for approximately 10 minutes. Because the biscuits are so dark, it is difficult to see when they are done. Use your senses and smell for when they are cooked. It is fine to open the oven door and check under the top silicone mat if they are firm. They should be well-baked, however, should not burn, or they will turn bitter.

Remove from the oven onto a cooling rack.

While the biscuits are baking, make the *ganache* by breaking the chocolate into small bits in a bowl. Warm up the cream to almost boiling point and pour over the chocolate. Stir until all the chocolate is melted. Cool the *ganache* so that it sets firmly – the *ganache* can also be made ahead of time.

When the biscuits are cool and the *ganache* is firm, place the *ganache* in a piping bag and pipe a small round of *ganache* in the centre of half of the biscuits.

Remember to put the bottoms of the biscuits on the inside, so that the tops (the better-looking side) are on the outside.

Place a ring of papaya balls around the *ganache*, securing them firmly in the *ganache*. Pipe a bit more *ganache* if needed and secure the top biscuit on the sandwiches.



# Chelsea Buns





All sorts of dried fruits abound; however, dried papaya is not common. Although drying papaya at home in the oven is mildly tedious and time-consuming, in addition to having chewy, flavour-filled and highly nutritious snacks on hand, it is worth the effort to extend their shelf life and increase their application possibilities. Homemade dried fruit need no additives or preservatives, which means one should watch them closely after drying so they do not become overly dry and unappetising. In this recipe, they add a wonderful hint of fruit salad to a classic Chelsea bun and stand up well to the blend of spices. One can decrease the spices if preferred; however, the papaya tolerates their assertive flavours and makes for a great inclusion in this classic English baked product.

In her book *The Food of London: A Culinary Tour of Classic British Cuisine*, Kathryn Hawkins writes that the first Chelsea bun

contained currants and was baked in the eighteenth century at the Bun House in Chelsea/Pimlico, an establishment favoured by Hanoverian royalty before being demolished in 1839 (Hawkins 2002). Over time, the Chelsea bun evolved into a rich yeast dough flavoured with lemon peel, cinnamon or mixed spice. Food writer Sejal Sukhadwala established that the Chelsea bun is a rare example of a food item associated with just one place (Sukhadwala 2015). She continues to say that the buns should proof nicely and snuggle up to each other, restricting further movement, which accounts for their distinctive form. In this recipe the Chelsea buns are drizzled with a papaya sugar glaze while still hot, leaving a sweet sticky glaze when the residual heat of the buns causes the water in the glaze to evaporate. When serving Chelsea buns, be sure to tear them apart instead of cutting them.



### Ingredients for 12 substantial Chelsea buns:

#### For the dough:

450 g bread flour  
100 g dark brown sugar  
10 ml instant yeast  
7 ml salt  
2,5 ml bicarbonate of soda  
115 g butter  
150 ml buttermilk  
150 g full cream plain yoghurt  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk  
Zest of 1 lemon

#### For the filling:

115 g butter, room temperature  
100 g dark brown sugar  
2,5 ml ground nutmeg  
15 ml ground cinnamon  
1,5 ml ground allspice  
1,5 ml ground cloves  
5 ml ground ginger  
85 g dried papaya, medium roughly chopped (see note)  
60 g raisins  
60 g dried cranberries

#### For the papaya glaze:

120 g papaya puree  
150 g icing sugar  
10 ml lemon juice





### Method:

Melt the butter for the dough and warm the buttermilk slightly in the microwave oven. Add all the dry ingredients as well as the lemon zest to the bowl of a freestanding mixer. Add the melted butter, warmed buttermilk, yoghurt, egg and egg yolk.

Mix the ingredients, then knead the dough with the dough hook until shiny and glossy – this will take about 8 to 10 minutes of kneading.

Cover the bowl with a damp tea towel and leave in a warm place to proof until double in size. The dough is fairly soft at this point. Do not be tempted to add any additional flour.

Once the dough has doubled, press or roll out the dough in a rectangle of about 25 cm x 35 cm on a heavily floured work surface.

Mix the spices and the sugar of the filling ingredients.

Carefully spread the softened butter over the rectangle with a spatula and sprinkle over the spiced sugar and the dried fruit. Roll up the rectangle from the shorter side and cut it into 12 portions.

Cut with a very sharp serrated knife dipped into a jug with water in between cuts. Turn the portions on their side, shape them into rounds and place them loosely next to each other in a buttered oven pan, such as a roasting tin. Proof a second time until doubled in size.

Bake in a preheated oven (180 °C) for approximately 45 minutes, until the Chelsea buns are well-baked and lightly browned. Mix the papaya glaze ingredients and drizzle over the hot Chelsea buns.

Note: if you cannot find dried papaya in stores, make your own. Peel and slice papaya into 1 cm thick slices. Lay on silicone mats and dry in a low oven (not higher than 70 °C) for 48 hours, turning them over now and again.

# Peanut Fresh Fruit Tart



This is a lovely large tart for a celebration. It combines pastry, custard and fresh fruit into a wonderful showcase for the subtle sweetness of papaya. Peanut flour and peanut butter, of course, add an additional taste and health dimension. Adding a glaze of jam on top is not essential – if health and additional sugar are of concern, this can be omitted. The glaze is simply a preventative measure to keep the fruit from drying out, so if one adds the layer of fruit on top at the end, close to when the tart is being served, it will not dry out.



**Ingredients for one large fresh fruit tart that can easily be sliced into 16 portions:**

**For the pastry:**

3 egg yolks  
90 g cold (but not rock hard) butter, cubed  
90 g castor sugar  
5 ml vanilla essence or vanilla extract  
130 g cake flour  
70 g peanut flour

**For the cooked custard filling:**

500 ml milk  
500 ml normal cream  
80 g castor sugar  
4 egg yolks  
60 g corn starch  
15 ml vanilla essence or vanilla extract  
60 ml peanut butter

**Additional:**

1 large ripe, but firm papaya, cut into thin attractive slices  
200 ml apricot jam  
15 ml water  
15 ml fresh lemon juice







### Method:

First, make the pastry. In a large mixing bowl, combine the egg yolks, butter, castor sugar and vanilla. Use a dinner fork and mash these ingredients together, without letting the butter melt. It should be a homogeneous mass, however, must not become oily from melting butter, so work quickly.

Add the flour and peanut flour and mash these into the butter/yolk mixture. Do not overwork the mixture at this point – if it becomes difficult to combine all the ingredients with the fork, it is acceptable to use your hands. Knead the dough ever so lightly to achieve one combined mass of dough. Shape the mass into a ball and then flatten the ball into a 5 cm thick disk.

Wrap in clingfilm and store in the fridge for a couple of hours until the pastry has sufficiently firmed up. The time needed for this to happen will depend on how cold the fridge is.

Remove from the fridge and again mash the pastry together to make it slightly pliable, but under no circumstances should it become soft.

Dust the work surface with a little flour and roll the pastry out to the size of a 25 cm fluted loose-bottomed tart pan. Remember that it would need to be a little larger than the base of the tin so that it can edge up the sides. Ensure that the pastry never sticks to the work surface, keeping it in a round disk and moving it around all the time.

Roll up onto the rolling pin and transfer back into the loose-bottomed tin. Lift the sides a little so that it fits nicely into the corners of the tin.

Press the pastry down firmly in the corners and then use a knife to cut off the excess from the side of the tin. Smooth off the cut edges and place in the deep freeze to firm up completely.

In the meantime, preheat the oven to 200 °C with a rack in the middle. When the oven is hot and the pastry completely frozen, remove it from the freezer and line the inside of the tart with a large piece of crumpled-up and opened baking parchment.

Add baking beans or rice on top of the baking parchment. Place on another baking sheet and blind-bake in the oven for 20 minutes.

After 20 minutes, remove from the oven and carefully remove the baking parchment and the beans/rice.

Slip the tart shell back in the oven and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes until the pastry is fully cooked, but not overly browned. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

Make the pastry cream or baker's custard by warming the milk and cream to blood heat. Lightly cream the egg yolks and castor sugar and then add in the corn starch.

Tip a little of the warmed milk into the egg mixture and whisk well. Return the egg and dairy mixture back into the remaining milk/cream mixture and cook over medium heat until the custard has fully thickened, and no trace of the corn starch can be tasted.

Cool slightly and then stir in the vanilla and peanut butter. Immediately spread evenly in the pre-baked tart shell. Cool completely.

Arrange the peeled, sliced papaya attractively over the custard, leaving no gaps and trying not to let the fruit go over the edge of the tart.

Warm up the apricot jam with the lemon juice and water. As soon as it bubbles remove from the stove and strain into another container.

Use a large pastry brush, stippling the jam mixture from the outside of the tart towards the inside to cover the entire surface in a thin, even blanket of glaze. Serve and enjoy.

# Olive Oil Bundt Cake



*Bundt* cakes are named, not because of a particular cake recipe, but rather because of the shape of the cake tin or Bundt pan, an American invention originally made from heavy cast aluminium. However, Bundt cakes may be an offshoot of the European brioche-like cake called *Gugelhupf*. In northern Germany, *Gugelhupf* is known as *Bundkuchen* (a combination of *Bund* and *Kuchen*). There appears to be uncertainty about the word *Bund*, which may mean “bunch” or “bundle”, a reference to the particular way that the cake batter is bunched around the tube pan.

Although olive oil is not commonly used in cakes, it is a frequently used ingredient in cakes of the southern Mediterranean countries such as Liguria, Crete or even Tunisia. Be careful not to use overly powerful flavoured olive oils, as they will affect the taste of the cake. Mild fruity olive oils work excellently with the papaya purée.

This recipe requires a dessert wine, offering a little additional sweetness, but also some flavour interest. It is probably not a great idea to use your very best Noble Late Harvest for this; deeper, richer dessert wines will provide a fuller-flavoured cake. One could probably get away with using a little muscadell or even a sweet sherry or a white port. The cake lasts a couple of days, but because it does not contain butter, its shelf life is limited and after day three, the texture deteriorates somewhat. However, it is not a very large cake, and one should easily use it up in a day or so. It could be served with whipped cream, but because of the olive oil, it has a distinct Mediterranean flavour, and is, therefore, much better with double thick, full cream plain yoghurt. It could be equally well served as dessert – increase the glaze and keep some extra to dollop along with a nice thick slice of cake and yoghurt.





**Ingredients for one large sponge cake that can easily be cut into 12 - 16 portions:**

3 large eggs  
165 ml olive oil  
50 ml dessert wine (see note above)  
150 ml papaya purée  
300 g cake flour  
165 g castor sugar  
10 ml baking powder  
1,25 ml bicarbonate of soda  
2,5 ml salt

**For the glaze:**

150 g icing sugar  
150 ml papaya purée  
60 ml olive oil

**Additional:**

Selection of edible flowers and petals  
Cut out papaya designs, such as cubes or large Parisian balls



**Method:**

Set the oven at 170 °C, placing an oven rack in the middle of the oven. Liberally grease and flour a *Bundt* pan, ensuring that all the little indents and design of the tin are carefully prepared – tap out any excess flour so that any decorative pattern in the tin remains sharp.

Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt and set aside. In a freestanding mixer, beat the eggs with the whisk until very foamy, pale in colour and somewhat thick.

Mix the olive oil, papaya purée and dessert wine, and add to the egg mixture. Beat lightly – some of the volume of the eggs will deflate, so do not over-mix.

Add the flour mixture and whisk only until all the flour is evenly mixed into the liquid mixture. Transfer to the *Bundt* pan, smooth the surface lightly and place the cake on top of a baking sheet into the oven.

Bake for 35 to 40 minutes until a testing skewer comes out clean. Remove the cake and allow it to sit for approximately 5 minutes, then turn it out onto a cooling rack on another baking sheet.

Mix the glaze ingredients and pour over the warm cake so that most of the glaze can be absorbed into the cake. Carefully spoon up some of the excess glaze that may have run down the cake and pour again over the cake, however, be careful not to incorporate any cake crumbs.

Cool the cake and decorate it with edible flowers and papaya shapes.

# Papaya Almond Tart



This is basically an old-fashioned Bakewell tart. The Bakewell tart is an English classic made from shortcrust pastry, jam, *frangipane* and chopped almonds (Brain 2024). Allegedly, the Bakewell tart dates to the nineteenth century when a woman named Mrs Greaves, the landlady of the White Horse Inn in Derbyshire, created the Bakewell pudding. Like so many other dishes, it apparently came about as a mistake when she asked her cook to create a jam tart, but instead of incorporating the almond paste and jam into the pastry, the cook spread the mixture on top, creating an egg custard resembling a pudding. Bakewells are ideally made with a sharp, acidic jam, such as apricot. Papaya jam is unfortunately not sharp, so be generous with the lemon juice to give it a good acidic kick.

This tart also borrows from the talent of bakers such as pie maker and cookbook author Lauren Ko, who wrote a fantastic book with beautifully decorated pies and tarts, *Pieometry* (Ko 2020). Of course, fresh papaya and some sliced watermelon do not have a very long shelf life. While a Bakewell tart made the traditional way can hang around for a good couple of days, improving in flavour after about two days, the fresh fruit decoration will make the surface of the tart soggy and less palatable. Therefore, rather make this tart when you invite a large group of friends over and know that you will finish it in one go; it is so attractive that no one will want to leave it alone.

Most Bakewell tarts are baked as a fully assembled item. However, if you wish, you can pre-bake (blind bake) the crust. If you place the tart tin on a thick, flat baking-sheet so that it comes directly in contact with the bottom of your tart tin, the surrounding metal will conduct enough heat into the pie that the pastry will cook through and not be soggy.





**Ingredients - makes 1 large tart:**

For the papaya jam (only half of this recipe is used in the tart; make the full recipe and keep the remaining jam to spread on toast):

500 g ripe papaya, peeled and chopped or grated

500 g sugar

1 large lemon, juiced

**For the pastry:**

215 g cake flour

120 g butter, cut into small cubes, ice cold (could also be frozen)

30 g icing sugar

2 egg yolks

30 ml cold water

**For the almond filling:**

115 g ground almonds (almond flour)

115 g butter, soft

115 g caster sugar

2 eggs

¼ lemon zest

**For decoration:**

A quartered papaya, sliced in thin slices and then shaped into rectangle shapes

A few watermelon slices, sliced in thin slices and then shaped into rectangle shapes

Icing sugar for dusting

A few edible flower petals







### Method:

First make the jam. Cook the papaya, sugar and lemon juice together, initially on low heat until the sugar is dissolved, and then on high heat until the mixture reaches between 104 to 106 °C on a food thermometer.

Bottle half of the jam for another use and set the other half aside to cool for the tart.

Now make the pastry. Rub the butter into the flour until it resembles fine *mealie meal*. Do not allow the butter to clump; you want the mixture to be light and airy. Stir in the icing sugar.

Mix the water and the egg yolks together and add to the crumb mixture – do this gradually (start with three-quarters of the liquid first) rather than all at once, although the flour will probably absorb all the liquid.

As soon as the pastry is one cohesive mixture, knead it a little, flatten it into a disk, wrap it in clingfilm and place in the fridge to chill.

Once the pastry has chilled for approximately an hour, remove from the fridge and knead again very lightly to make the pastry pliable and homogenised.

Roll the pastry out into a circle, and line a loose-bottomed scalloped tart tin of approximately 25 - 28 cm diameter. Neaten the edges.

Spread half of the cooled jam over the bottom of the pastry (blind baked or not, see note above).

Beat all the ingredients for the almond filling, called a frangipane, together in the bowl of a free-standing mixer with the paddle attachment.

Spread carefully over the jam, ensuring that all the jam is covered, slip the tart onto another baking sheet and bake for 45 minutes in a preheated oven at 180 °C.

Remove from the oven and cool, and remove from the tin.

Decorate the top of the tart in a geometric fashion using the papaya and watermelon shapes, if you include them.

Dust with icing sugar and dot small petals of edible flowers around the tart.





# Papaya and Carrot Sweetie Pie Cupcakes





Many of you may have noticed a recent trend, most probably driven by our ever-increasing need for instant gratification or our need to have it all, to combine existing pastries into new, exciting delights such as the “cronut” (croissant and doughnut), the “cretzel”, “duffin”, “dagel” and the “boughnut”, among others. While their names may leave us puzzled, they are alive with a range of new possibilities – baked cheesecake atop a red velvet cake, anyone?

Taking a page from the musical world, where a good old mash-up resulted in some amazingly melodic new songs that we all love, this mashing up of carrot cake with a sweetie pie may sound abhorrent to some, but in fact the marshmallow topping acts very much as a replacement for the cream cheese icing which traditionally adorns a carrot cake,. The inclusion of fresh papaya enveloped by marshmallow fluff lessens the sweetness and adds an interesting surprise. Purists may frown at the chocolate with the carrot cake, however, it works well,

and if one uses high-quality chocolate, it is not very sweet; it provides a perfect foil for the sweetness of the meringue. One could use white chocolate which would look pretty, but will up the sweetness factor considerably. The dark chocolate is lovely when one bites into it to reveal an intensely bright white interior.

A word of advice on making the meringue fluff: It is better to use egg whites that are not too fresh. A good solution is to keep excess egg whites frozen and to remove what you need – older egg whites whip much easier, and warming up the egg whites and sugar creates stability. Do not be tempted to over-fill the paper cups – even though carrot cake does not rise as much as an ordinary sponge cake will, any overrun will ruin the outside of the cups. One wants just the smallest bit of space between the top of the cupcakes for the meringue fluff to perch on. These cupcakes last very well for a few days and become even more moist and delicious the older they get.



**Ingredients for 15 cupcakes:**

**For the papaya and carrot cupcakes:**

200 g flour  
5 ml baking powder  
2,5 ml bicarbonate of soda  
10 ml ground cinnamon  
5 ml ground ginger  
200 g light brown sugar  
2 eggs  
125 ml neutral oil (such as sunflower or canola)  
5 ml vanilla extract or essence  
60 ml fine apricot jam  
50 g almonds, chopped  
30 g dried papaya, chopped  
60 g apple, peeled and finely grated  
130 g carrot, peeled and finely grated  
130 g tinned pineapple pulp, drained  
30 g desiccated coconut, toasted if you wish

**For the meringue fluff:**

150 ml egg white (approximately 6 egg whites)  
500 g white sugar  
125 ml water  
2,5 ml cream of tartar  
10 ml vanilla extract or essence

**Additional:**

360 g dark chocolate  
45 ml sunflower oil  
½ medium ripe fresh papaya, small cubes



### Method:

Set the oven to 180 °C, with the oven rack in the middle of the oven. Place 15 medium-sized paper cups into muffin trays.

Mix the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, cinnamon, ginger and brown sugar. Mix the eggs, oil, vanilla and apricot jam. Turn the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients with all the remaining ingredients. Mix well.

Divide the mixture equally between the 15 paper cups and bake for approximately 20 to 25 minutes until they are dry to the touch. Remove from the oven and cool on a cake rack.

Place the egg whites, sugar and water in the bowl of a freestanding mixer. Place the bowl in a pot with hot water and warm until the egg mixture is hot to the touch. One should stir it around while the mixture is warming up so that the sugar can dissolve.

Once the mixture is warmed up, add the vanilla and cream of tartar. Put it in the mixer and beat it with the whisk attached at high speed for no less than 15 minutes until it is a very thick, foamy and stable mixture.

Transfer the mixture to a piping bag with a large plain nozzle and pipe a small amount of marshmallow on each cupcake. Top with a small amount of fresh papaya cubes and cover the papaya with more meringue.

Melt the chocolate with the oil, then allow the mixture to cool, without setting. Transfer to a narrower container to have more chocolate available to dip the cupcakes in.

Hold the cupcakes at the base and turn them upside down, dipping them swiftly into the chocolate and then out. Set them down and repeat with all the cupcakes. They could be firmed up in the fridge, however, the chocolate should also set naturally outside.

Decorate with cut-out papaya flowers or edible honeysuckle.



# Dried Papaya Hot Cross Buns





Hot cross buns are traditionally served over Easter. They are a simplified representation of the Jesus crucifixion, where the cross on the bun references the cross He died on, the spices represent the embalming, and the orange peel represents the bitterness Jesus endured on the cross. In Cape Town, Cape Malay pickled fish is often served with hot cross buns, where the vinegar in the pickled fish symbolises the vinegar that was offered to Jesus to drink at His crucifixion.

Being a quintessential component of Easter celebrations, hot cross buns start appearing on South African store shelves early in the New Year. In fact, they have become so popular that some chain stores keep them all year, albeit with only one line and not the cross. Despite the ubiquity of store-bought hot

cross buns, nothing beats a fresh-baked batch, particularly since one can regulate the spices and fruit you incorporate to your liking. Feel free to play and experiment with this recipe, as some people like them less spicy and fruity and others cannot get enough and want them dark and laden with dried fruit.

Because of the delicate flavour of the dried papaya, these contain no other fruit (apart from raisins and sultanas), such as candied orange and lemon peel, but again, feel free to experiment. Even though there are other ways to make the crosses, such as thinly rolled out unflavoured dough, the method provided in the recipe using a slightly pastier dough is very simple and looks great, even though the crosses are slightly tasteless.



**Ingredients for 12 substantial hot cross buns:**

100 g large raisins  
100 g sultanas  
60 g dried papaya, coarsely chopped (see note)  
100 ml old brown sherry  
100 ml fresh orange juice  
500 g flour (cake or bread will be suitable)  
7,5 ml salt  
15 ml ground cinnamon  
7,5 ml ground ginger  
5 ml ground mixed spice  
10 g instant yeast  
Zest of 1 medium-large lemon  
100 g castor sugar  
120 g butter  
250 ml milk, warmed, but nowhere near boiling  
2 eggs

**For the dough crosses:**

100 g flour  
120 ml water

**For the glaze:**

55 g castor sugar  
60 ml water or cream





### Method:

Macerate the dried fruit in the sherry and orange juice the day before you bake the buns. Keep it covered, but not refrigerated. Mix often to ensure that all the fruit plumps up and absorbs most of the liquid.

Mix the flour, spices, sugar, salt and instant yeast. Add the lemon zest. Melt the butter in the warmed milk, add the eggs and beat well.

In the bowl of a freestanding mixer, using the dough hook, knead together the spiced flour and egg/milk/butter mixture. Knead until very smooth and shiny.

Squeeze-dry the macerated fruit and add to the dough. Initially, it will be difficult to incorporate the fruit, however, simply turn the dough over and over distributing the fruit evenly.

Tip out the dough into a lightly oiled mixing bowl, cover it with a damp towel and leave in a warm place to double in bulk – this may take anywhere from 1 hour to several hours, depending on the ambient temperature, but also because of the additional ingredients in the yeast dough.

Once the dough has doubled its original size, divide it into 12 even portions. Using a cupped hand, roll them into nice round shapes, trying to tuck all the fruit into the dough so that it does not sit on the surface of the dough, since the fruit may burn during baking.

Place on a greased baking sheet or use a silicone mat. Cover the buns with a lightly dampened tea towel and leave them again in a slightly warm place until they have again doubled in size.

Mix the flour and water to make the crosses and pipe a cross over each bun. Bake the buns at 200 °C in the middle of the oven until they are nice and light brown.

Mix the castor sugar and water or cream for the glaze and brush them liberally once they come from the oven. Enjoy with lashings of butter.

Note: If you cannot find dried papaya to purchase in stores, make your own. Peel and slice papaya into 1 cm thick slices. Lay on silicone mats and dry in a low oven (not higher than 70 °C) for 48 hours, turning them over now and again.

# Dried Muesli



Apparently, muesli was invented by Doctor Bircher-Benner around 1867, which is why it is still called *Bircher müesli* in many Germanic countries. Even though this is likely to be predominantly oats soaked overnight, most people associate muesli with the American way of eating cereal for breakfast (House of Switzerland 2020). Although breakfast cereals such as puffed rice or corn flakes are touted as healthy breakfast food throughout the world, we have become wary of them for their often high sugar content. It is, therefore, useful to know how to make a really delicious breakfast item that is relatively healthy, despite containing some sugar and honey, at home. This recipe is adapted from one shared by Gerrie du Rand, who adapted a recipe for granola by Andy Fairfield calling for apple sauce, but also incorporating coconut shavings, dried cranberries and pumpkin seeds. It seems that the apple sauce decreases the shelf life of this home-made muesli and it was, therefore, omitted. After a couple of weeks, despite being kept in a sealed container, the oils in the seeds and nuts begin to taste a little rancid, which could also be due in part to the muesli being toasted until relatively dark – which is imperative for its flavour. The quality of the oats is also important; rather opt for traditional or steel-cut oats instead of quick or instant oats. You are welcome to add even more dried papaya, it has a delicious chewy fruitiness that goes wonderfully with the other textures in this muesli.



#### Ingredients for 15 - 18 portions:

450 g oats, the best quality you can lay your hands on  
(see note above)  
120 g sunflower seeds  
120 g sesame seeds  
10 ml cinnamon  
5 ml ground ginger  
120 g honey  
100 g sugar  
250 g whole almonds  
5 ml salt  
30 ml neutral oil, such as sunflower oil  
300 g raisins, preferably seedless  
40 g dried papaya, cut into small pieces



#### Method:

Mix all the ingredients, apart from the raisins and papaya, together in a large bowl.

Ensure that all the ingredients are coated in honey and oil.

Spread the mixture onto a large silicone mat covered baking sheet and bake in a preheated oven (150 °C) for approximately 40 minutes or longer.

Be sure to stir the muesli in the oven regularly so that it does not brown around the edges too quickly; you want a nutty golden colour all round.

Add the raisins and papaya once the muesli has toasted properly and has cooled completely.

Store in an airtight container and enjoy with thick yoghurt, a drizzle of honey, and big chunks of fresh papaya.



# Papaya and Banana Bread



This recipe is based on one of the best banana bread recipes around – and an additional portion of papaya makes it even better. The original recipe is from Phillippa Cheifitz, published in the iconic *South African Cookbook* (Reader's Digest Association 1994) (Le Roux 1994). Like so many things in life, the moment you think you have something fully in hand, out pops a little gremlin. You need a specific type of banana to make this bread really delicious. Those very large, long bananas most commonly available in our shops tend to become starchier rather than fruity when they ripen. You could experiment and bake two or more banana breads at the same time using different bananas. For the recipe, those small bananas that ripen quite easily and retain a bit of firmness even when fully ripe, was used. Fortunately, in the case of papayas, their variety does not affect the product too much. Pop fully ripe bananas directly in the deep freeze until you want to make banana bread. The pulp of the banana becomes almost transparent inside the pitch-black skin, and the banana bread made from these sweet, ripe bananas appears softer and stays fresher for longer. The only caveat is to ensure that these frozen bananas defrost properly before you purée them. If one uses the bananas while they are still frozen, the butter mixture will seize up when added to the batter. It is always a good idea to ensure that all ingredients to be used for baking are at room temperature before you start.

This recipe is for one smallish bread, but because this papaya version also lasts very well and improves a little with age, it is a good idea to double or even treble the recipe. The breads freeze very well, making them handy to have when unexpected guests come to visit.



### Ingredients - makes 1 loaf:

125 g butter, softened

180 g sugar

2 eggs, room temperature

5 ml vanilla essence or extract

250 g cake flour

5 ml bicarbonate of soda

3 ml salt

45 ml soured milk (add about 10 ml of lemon juice to some milk)

3 large bananas, very well mashed – see note above about the type of banana and ripeness

85 g ripe papaya, puréed



### Method:

This recipe requires a loaf tin of approximately 15 cm x 8 cm.

Grease the bottom and sides and cut parchment paper to cover the bottom and all four sides of the tin. Although this is a tedious job, rather do it properly beforehand, as doing so will ensure your bread slips out of the pan without any difficulty.

Preheat the oven to 180 °C.

Beat the butter and the sugar very well together in the bowl of a freestanding mixer, using the paddle attachment until pale, light and airy.

Now, add the eggs and the vanilla.

Mix the dry ingredients together and add to the wet mix, alternating dry ingredients with the mashed banana and the papaya purée in two rounds.

Pour the batter into your loaf tin, bake for approximately 45 minutes and check if the batter is cooked all the way through by inserting a thin cake tester or a toothpick in the centre. If the tester comes out clean, the bread is cooked. If not, bake for another 10 minutes or so.

Cool for approximately six minutes before turning the bread out onto a cooling rack.

Be sure to cut the bread with a very sharp, serrated knife into neat slices and serve with softened butter.





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# Drinks



# Spiced Papaya Vodka Ice Lollies



These are lollies for grown-ups – apart from the fact that they contain a good measure of alcohol, they are laced with spices and chilli. They are perfect as a little *amuse-bouche* before dinner, but one could also stand them up in glasses – with another shot of vodka – as a cocktail. Despite the alcohol, these are packed with numerous health-giving ingredients from not only papaya, but also the cumin, chilli, basil and turmeric. The spices convey a deep, savoury flavour to the lollies that pair well with the vodka. If you are not a fan of vodka, substitute it for the same amount of gin or perhaps dry vermouth for extra interest and complexity. You could also top it up with soda or tonic or a combination of both – test what works for you.

The brownish-orange colour of the spice mix may not appeal to everyone, in which case simply toast the cumin slightly less (which will make the flavour less pronounced). Instead of adding the chilli and basil to the blender with the other ingredients, rather chop them finely to include some flecks of colour in the mix.



#### Ingredients for 6 lollies:

5 ml whole cumin, deeply toasted and ground fine in a spice grinder  
1 medium (or more if you like more heat) red chilli, finely chopped  
5 large leaves fresh basil  
30 ml vodka (see note above)  
1 medium papaya (best if nice and ripe)  
5 ml ground turmeric  
30 ml fresh lemon juice  
2,5 ml salt  
15 ml sugar

#### To serve:

10 ml fresh lemon juice (60 ml in total) per person



#### Method:

Purée all the ingredients in an upright jug liquidiser or with a stick blender until smooth. Alternatively, blitz the mixture for a shorter time, which will give you a chunky, irregular mixture – remember that any bits of fruit will probably freeze hard.

Pour the mixture into rinsed lolly moulds – secure the sticks if your lolly maker allows them to be inserted from the beginning; alternatively, freeze partly and insert ice cream sticks when the mixture is semi-frozen. Freeze overnight.

Unmould and serve as is, or upright in a glass with more vodka, some fresh lemon juice and soda (or your other preferred mix).



# Papaya and Lemongrass Fruit Frappé

One must pace oneself carefully to avoid getting brain-freeze with this drink, which is perfect for a hot, African summer's day. It is the best non-alcoholic (bar the inclusion of bitters) grown-up party drink around. Apart from the fact that it is super healthy, it packs a satisfactory punch and will certainly aid in relieving hunger pangs, should one be trying to cut back a bit. The small amount of honey adds a little luxury, while the lemongrass adds some zing and interest.

A *frappé* (sometimes also written as *frappe*, without an accent) is a Greek iced coffee made with instant coffee, water, sugar and milk, having been invented through experimentation by Dimitris Vakondios, a Nescafé representative, in 1957 in Thessaloniki (Souli 2018). The *frappés* are among the most popular forms of coffee in Greece and Cyprus, having become a hallmark of the post-war Greek coffee culture (Tsolakidou 2022). However, the origins and distinctive features of a fruit *frappé* are slightly less certain. Although some recipes mention a dairy product such as milk or yoghurt while others do not, everyone agrees that the ultimate *frappé* should be made with a copious amount of crushed ice.



**Ingredients for 2 - 3 substantial drinks, or 4 smaller, slightly more elegant drinks:**

500 g ripe, deliciously sweet papaya, peeled

40 g honey

40 ml fresh lemon juice

12 g fresh lemongrass, finely chopped

350 g ice cubes

**Optional:**

Splash of bitters



**Method:**

Blend all the ingredients apart from the ice in a large jug liquidiser until it is super fine and smooth. Have some chilled serving glasses ready, with an additional stalk of lemongrass that can act as a stirrer.

Add the ice to the purée and blitz on high until the ice is smooth, but in no way starts melting.

Serve immediately with a sprinkling of edible flowers as garnish.

# Papaya Mary



Many stories abound on the origins of the classic bloody mary, such as that it was invented in the 1920s by an American bartender, Fernand 'Pete' Petiot, at an American bar in Paris called Harry's New York Bar. Legend goes that he then moved to the King Cole Bar at the St. Regis Hotel in New York City and took the recipe with him. But as is often the case with culinary history, many theories persist, such as that the cocktail refers to the rule of ruthless Queen Mary I of England in the mid-1550s. The tomato juice is said to represent the spilled blood of the Queen Mary I, and the vodka symbolises the queen's brutal means of executing martyrs (Curtis 2010).

What appeals to home bartenders about the bloody mary is the fact that it is not a spirits-driven drink. The tomato juice and vodka can be seen as a blank canvas where one can add an array of spices, like horseradish or black pepper for some, or a touch of clam juice. The drink does not require a jigger or extensive equipment, just a dash of culinary instincts.

In this papaya version of the bloody mary, tomato juice is replaced by papaya purée. It makes the "mary" delightfully earthy and savoury while at the same time, the fruit lends a gentle, floral lightness. There is no "hot" element, such as Tabasco or cayenne pepper in this recipe because it might overpower the gentle lightness of the cocktail, however, feel free to experiment and add some. This recipe uses celery salt, which is not easily found in South Africa. Make your own by drying some chopped up celery and salt in a low oven or food dehydrator and thereafter, pulverise to a powder. Of course, this is just a base, and one can go to town with all sorts of other additions and garnishes.





### Ingredients for 2 papaya marys:

90 ml vodka

240 ml papaya purée

45 ml fresh lemon juice

2,5 ml Hoisin sauce

7,5 ml Worcestershire sauce

5 ml celery salt

A good grinding of fresh black pepper

160 g ice cubes



### Method:

Combine all the ingredients in a pitcher filled with ice, stir to make it chilled, and strain into tall glasses.

Garnish it with a stick of celery that doubles as a stirrer. One can have the papaya mary either straight or over ice.

Since the papaya mary is slightly rich, serving it over ice seems to mellow out the richness somewhat.

# Papaya Ritz



Dale DeGroff of New York is credited for inventing and popularising the *ritz* cocktail as a desirable drink in the 1980s and 1990s at the Rainbow Room in New York, (DeGroff 022; Drinking Hobby 2018). André Dominé, author of *The Ultimate Bar Book* (Dominé 2013), makes his *ritz* with cognac, cointreau and champagne. By all means make such a lavish version, however, for everyday drinking, this version – using a good brandy, Maraschino liqueur and papaya purée – is just as good. The Maraschino liqueur contributes a nice, deep colour which enhances the papaya's colour.

Since this is a fruity cocktail, fight the urge to add more bubbly – you want an elegant cocktail, not a drink that is too large and too sweet.



#### Ingredients for 1 cocktail:

15 ml brandy (nothing overly expensive or too smart)

5 ml fresh lemon juice

5 ml (1 tsp) Maraschino liqueur

50 g fresh papaya purée (very smooth, passed through a fine sieve)

1 cup of ice

45 ml sparkling wine (any good quality bubbly will do, and you can use a dry or even slightly sweeter one if you wish)

A curl of lemon rind (one whole piece of zest)



#### Method:

Combine all the ingredients, except the sparkling wine in a cocktail shaker with plenty of ice.

Shake fairly forcefully to cool the mixture down as fast as possible.

Pour into coupe glasses, top up with the bubbly and decorate with the lemon rind.



# Papaya Negroni



As in fashion, cocktails have their moment in the spotlight when everyone adapts or invents new versions, until a new fad appears on the social media horizon. A while back it was the turn of the *negroni* to shine, and rightfully so – it is a lovely easy drink that definitely adds sparkle to any gathering.

*The Food & Wine* website has wonderful content on the historical development of the *negroni*, saying that it is understood to have originated at Caffè Casoni in Florence, Italy, in 1919, when Count Camillo Negroni asked bartender Forasco Scarselli to give his favourite cocktail, the Americano, a little va-va-voom by replacing the usual soda water with gin. Scarselli added an orange garnish, instead of the usual lemon associated with the Americano. The New York Bartender's Guide makes theirs with only gin, Campari and sweet vermouth, served in an old-fashioned glass (Berk 2006). The recipe below suggests dry vermouth, on account of the papaya purée that could make the cocktail too sweet. André Dominé's *The Ultimate Bar Book* makes theirs with vermouth rosso for an even darker coloured drink (Dominé 2013). Regardless of how you choose to make yours, be sure to have all your ingredients and equipment ice cold, the papaya purée silky and smooth, and enjoy many on a sunny afternoon with friends.



**Ingredients make 1 cocktail:**

30 ml dry or sweeter vermouth

30 ml Campari

30 ml clear unflavoured gin

50 g smooth papaya purée, strained through a fine sieve

1 cup of ice

A large decorative ice ball

1 orange peel or twist



**Method:**

Place all the ingredients, apart from the orange peel and the ice ball, in a cocktail shaker.

Shake vigorously and strain over the ice ball into a nice flat cocktail glass or a short tumbler. Decorate with an orange peel or twist.

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"Most of us think of papayas only as a component of breakfast, or as a key ingredient in a delicious smoothie. However, even though it is the ideal breakfast fruit, being refreshing, invigorating, and not overly sweet, it has much, much more to offer. This recipe book sets out to show that papaya has places to go beyond the smoothie."

*Hennie Fisher*

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