

# Cauliflower, Kale and Leek Soup

Serves 6

## Ingredients

Black pepper

1 large sliced leek

200g peeled diced potato

500g chopped cauliflower florets

150g kale

1.2l chicken or vegetable stock

100ml double cream

100g grated extra mature cheddar

## Method

To make this delicious soup, place the leek, potato and cauliflower in a large saucepan with the stock and bring to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes or until the potato and cauliflower are tender. After 5 minutes add the kale. Season with black pepper and then blitz until completely silky smooth. Add the grated cheese and allow it to melt, then stir in the double cream. Serve with a sprinkling of grated cheese and some homemade bread for a deliciously seasonal winter warmer.

# Blood Orange and Rhubarb Trifles

Makes 6

## Ingredients

### Rhubarb Compote

300g rhubarb

300ml water mixed with 200ml blood orange juice

200g caster sugar

### Vanilla Custard

4 large egg yolks

30g caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

15g-20g cornflour

400ml whole milk

### Chantilly Cream

300ml double cream

2 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla bean paste

### Other Ingredients

12 savoiardi biscuits

100ml sherry

6 amaretti biscuits

## Method

To make these delicious trifles, first set a saucepan over a medium heat and cook the rhubarb with the sugar and water mixture. Cook until the rhubarb is tender but still holding its shape. Leave to cool completely.

Now make the custard. In a large bowl whisk the egg yolks with the caster sugar and cornflour until pale. Set aside. In a saucepan pour in the milk and vanilla bean paste and bring to just before a boil.

Remove from the heat and cool for 1 minute. Gradually whisk the vanilla milk into the egg yolks, then pour back into the saucepan over a low heat and whisk continuously for 10 minutes or until thick. Place in a bowl and leave to cool completely. In another bowl, whisk the cream, sugar and vanilla bean paste together until you have reached a medium thickness. Set aside. Now time to build the trifles.

As you build each trifle, cut the savoiardi biscuits to fit whichever glasses you are using. I used 2 biscuits per trifle. Place the biscuits at the bottom of each glass and divide the sherry between them. Pour the sherry over and allow the biscuits 1 minute to soak up the sherry before you top the biscuits with the rhubarb compote. After you have topped the biscuits with the rhubarb compote, top with the custard and then the cream. Place in the fridge for 1 hour to allow everything to set a little. Before serving, sprinkle over an amaretti biscuit or biscuit of your choice, then serve for a delicious seasonal trifle.

# Valentine's Day Chocolate Chip Sugared Scones

Makes 8

## Ingredients

85g diced unsalted butter + 1 tsp  
350g self raising flour  
1/4 tsp salt  
4 tbsp caster sugar  
1 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
1 tsp vanilla bean paste  
200ml warmed milk + 2 tbsp  
100g milk chocolate chips  
8 crushed sugar cubes

## Method

To make these yummy Valentine's scones, preheat your oven to gas mark 6/180c fan. In a food processor, blitz the butter and flour together. Tip into a large bowl and mix in the salt, bicarbonate, sugar and chocolate chips. Use a culinary knife to mix in the warmed milk and vanilla but don't overmix it.

Tip the dough out onto a work surface and gently bring it together with your hands. Gently pat to 1cm thick, then cut out 8 scones with a fluted cookie cutter. Place on a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper, then melt the 1 tsp butter and 2 tbsp milk together and brush the tops of the scones. Sprinkle a crushed sugar cube over each scone and bake for 12-15 minutes until risen and golden. Serve with butter and jam for a scrummy Valentine's Day tea time treat.

# Jamaican Ginger Cake

Serves 8-10

## Ingredients

120g softened unsalted butter  
285g plain flour  
200g dark muscovado sugar  
2 tsp mixed spice  
1 tbsp ground ginger  
2 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
2 free range eggs  
2 tsp vanilla bean paste  
110ml coconut milk  
50g runny honey  
85ml syrup from jar stem ginger + 2 tbsp

## Method

Start by preheating your oven to gas mark 4 / 160°C fan—this will ensure it's lovely and ready for baking. Take a 900g loaf tin and generously butter it, then line it with greaseproof paper to prevent any sticking and make for an easy release later.

In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, mixed spice, ginger, and a pinch of fine salt. Give it a quick whisk to evenly distribute the ingredients and set it aside.

Now, in a separate, larger bowl, add the softened butter and sugar. Using an electric whisk, beat them together for about 3–5 minutes, until the mixture turns beautifully light and fluffy. This step is key to achieving a soft, tender bake.

Next, crack in the eggs one by one, followed by the vanilla extract, fragrant stem ginger syrup, golden honey, and creamy coconut milk. Continue whisking until everything is fully incorporated and smooth.

Gently fold the dry ingredients into the wet mixture, using a light hand to keep the batter airy. Mix only until no streaks of flour remain—overmixing can make the cake dense, so take care to keep it delicate. Carefully pour the batter into your prepared tin, smoothing out the top. Pop it into the oven and bake for 45–55 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Your kitchen will soon be filled with the warm, spiced aroma of ginger and honey!

Once baked, remove the cake from the oven and immediately brush over a little extra stem ginger syrup while it's still warm. This adds a gorgeous glossy finish and a hint of extra sweetness. Leave the cake in the tin until it has completely cooled before slicing into thick, comforting pieces. Enjoy with a steaming cup of tea for a moment of pure indulgence!