

Dear fellow maxfac patients,

the following booklet is a totally informal collection of some – hopefully – useful practical tips and tricks around preparing and enjoying food. However challenging you may find this for the time being, please do carry on! Some tried and tested recipes (credit for feedback and ideas goes to fellow maxfac patients in Munich where I used to be a patient for a while) are included, all of which can be adjusted to your needs and preferences, and most importantly can be varied widely with a range of ingredients. Some recipes may appear a bit exotic initially but do give these outside-the-box ideas a try to see if they work for you.

This is work in progress and I would hope that as time goes on some of you will want to contribute your own experiences, useful discoveries, recipes and tips for all to share. Between us there is such a valuable body of helpful expert know-how but it is highly unlikely that any commercial enterprise will ever collate such information for maxfac patients, simply because we are not a 'big enough market'. Nothing wrong with a little bit of non-commercial DIY and mutual support, I should think! The booklet will be updated regularly and together perhaps we can add a distinctive Yorkshire maxfac gourmet flavour to the current Bavarian flavour of the collection; it's a start... Currently the recipes are largely drawn from European cuisines and it would be marvellous if we had more recipes from cuisines from all over the world.

Comments, criticism and contributions are all very welcome. You can contact me by email ([angelika.sebald@york.ac.uk](mailto:angelika.sebald@york.ac.uk)) or phone (0791-2620797) or leave a message with your dietitian or speech therapist.

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## **Part I Some generally useful tools, ingredients and tips**

### **i) Useful tools**

Nothing unusual is needed as far as kitchen gadgets are concerned: a reasonably powerful blender or food processor and a couple of fine-meshed sieves is all that is needed. Clever combined use of fridge, freezer and microwave is useful to have an appetising selection of foods (almost) ready at all times.

Serve your food in small(ish) portions on/in small(ish) dishes – much less daunting when eating is hard work. Try to eat often and in small portions. It helps if your food looks pretty and is nicely presented.

If you suffer from restricted mouth opening using cutlery, in particular big spoons, is not exactly the easiest way to eat. Little flat plastic ice cream spoons work rather well if you can manage smooth and pureed, or soft, foods. For liquid food, most people find the good old mug the most versatile dish to handle (somehow). If you still prefer eating with conventional cutlery, have a look around for children's cutlery with fairly flat spoons. If you can manage small junks of soft foods once they have found their way into your mouth, you may want to try chop sticks, that also avoids inconvenient mouth gymnastics.

If the mechanics of swallowing is your main problem, in particular with liquids ending up in the wrong pipe, using a drinking straw can help.

### **ii) Useful ingredients**

Again, nothing unusual is required as far as store cupboard ingredients are concerned. Corn flour and gelatine (vegetarian gelatine is also available) are the two main staple ingredients for getting the consistency and texture of your food exactly right for your needs and preferences. If your meals are mainly based on liquids you may find that slightly thickening the liquids can make eating easier, or your meal may feel more satisfying in that way. That needs a little bit of experimentation and corn flour (mixed with a little bit of water, added to the gently boiling liquid food) is the perfect thickener to adjust the thickness precisely as you want it. The role of gelatine is slightly different: with the help of gelatine you can turn all liquids or thin purees into slippery jellies (sweet as well as savoury) which are particularly easy to eat. Sometimes a (cold) jelly can be easier to eat than the corresponding (warm) liquid, sometimes it may be the other way round. The gelatine slippery approach works well for liquefied fruit and vegetable purees, pureed meats, broth and juices which can all be turned into jellies (see part III). Again, it is all about your personal preferences but varying the thickness and degree of 'sliperiness' of your food will give you quite a diverse range of food textures; useful to battle any onset of food boredom.

Fine oat meal and all kinds of tinned or frozen pulses (chick peas, peas, butter beans, split red and yellow lentils) are convenient versatile bases for satisfying liquid meals that keep the hunger away for a while (and are good sources of proteins too). Use instant baby porridge

as a lazy breakfast option, it is perfectly smooth and designed to be easy to swallow (and you may feel young at heart...).

When you start feeling tempted by soft or increasingly compact foods but it is all just too much of a hassle and too much work to get it down because of a dry mouth, added lubrication may do the trick. Examples of useful lubricants are rich concentrated chicken stock (particularly nice with vegetables; make a large quantity, freeze in small portions in an ice cube container and use as you go), double cream or whipped cream, good quality olive oil (which will also go nicely with some sweet foods), other oils (walnut, pumpkin-seed or grape-seed oils are really nice but are a bit pricey), any variety of smooth rich gravy you may fancy, good quality mayonnaise (preferably homemade; easy, see part V), mascarpone (rich Italian cream cheese) thinned with single cream, custard, melted butter. There is no need to worry about these guilty pleasures. When you are on a diet of liquid or pureed foods these are by necessity diluted. In addition you will probably eat a little less than you normally would. In these circumstances these not-so-guilty pleasures are very welcome because they add calories and proteins to your diet without causing extra-efforts with eating.

Your taste buds are recovering, you are getting tired of bland foods but can't handle spicy foods? Your kitchen window sill or your garden can help: grow flavoursome herbs, lots of them (basil, lovage, mint, lemon balm, chives, flat-leafed parsley, sage, coriander, tarragon, dill). If you can manage finely chopped generous amounts of fresh herbs – just add these to your food. Some people find that freshly chopped herbs are helpful with dry mouth troubles. If you can't, or don't want to, have bits of chopped herbs in your food you can add fresh herbs while cooking and simply pass your food through a sieve before serving it. Should you be in the mood for a bit of kitchen experimentation, here is a clever little trick. Get yourself a rock-bottom cheap small Italian espresso jug (the version that you heat on your stove). Stuff roughly chopped herb leaves in the filter (where normally the coffee powder would go), put a little bit of water in the bottom part as usual and heat briefly as you would normally do for making espresso. The rising steam extracts the flavour from the chopped leaves and you will have an intensely herb-flavoured infusion in the bottom part of the jug (the steam-treated leaves will look a bit sorry). Use that infusion to add flavour to your food (freeze any surplus in small portions).

A selection of spices which add flavour and variety to your food without creating unpleasant sharpness / hotness are cloves, cardamom (pods or seeds), bay leaf, fennel seeds, coriander seeds, caraway seeds, ground nutmeg, cumin (seeds or ground), star anise. You can put the spices in a tea egg for easy removal after cooking. When spicy foods are problematic the most commonly 'offensive' spices are pepper (black more so than white), hot paprika, cayenne, any kind or form of chillies, hot curry-powder mixtures, vinegars, lime or lemon juice, hot mustard, horseradish.

There are several surprisingly disappointing candidates as far as pureed food is concerned. Long-grain rice fails miserably, it stubbornly remains crumbly. Pasta does not lend itself to blending, it ends up as a rather unpalatable rubbery lump (try some of the really tiny pasta shapes instead, such as 'stellette' = little stars or alphabet pasta). Soft white bread can be troublesome because it tends to be sticky. Mashed potatoes also can be sticky because of the relatively large amount of starch in potatoes; that can be overcome by using lots of lubrication (as an alternative use sweet potatoes which give a much less starchy mash). Minced meat in dishes such as Bolognese sauce tends to have a somewhat awkward

crumbly texture. It works better if you get lean mince from a butcher and ask them to mince it twice (as Italian house wives normally do), then puree the Bolognese sauce after cooking (see part V).

### **iii) Miscellaneous**

A visit to the baby-food aisle in your local supermarket may be a worthwhile excursion: if ordinary fruit juices or fruit purees are too acidic for you, try pear or apple juice or fruit purees for babies. These products are much less acidic and may just be working for you. Generally if fruit purees are too acidic try mixing them with some Greek-style yoghurt or whipped cream or crème fraiche (also see parts II, III, IV). That might be enough to remove the sharp edge (just adding loads of sugar does not work). Alternatively fruit purees can be used for producing milk shakes; whole milk also nicely masks the natural acidity of many raw fruits.

Naturally we all have an appetite for refreshing acidic tastes such as that of lemons or oranges. If these are far too acidic to enjoy by mouth, make use of your nose (much of our tasting experiences actually stem from the smell of foods): just clip a slice of lemon or orange on your cup or mug, that gets it close to your nose when you drink and can rather well satisfy an appetite for a refreshing lemon flavour without causing offense.

Texture is not the only aspect that can make all the difference between being able to eat something comfortably, or not. The temperature of your food also makes a huge difference. Many people find that the colder the food the easier it will be to swallow (that is the reason why we have a section on frozen foods, part IV). Some people find that they can happily enjoy some foods in the form of ice cream (including savoury foods) while the same food in its ordinary warm form is beyond reach or not nearly as enjoyable. Temperature contrast can also work in your favour. For example, if you take a sip of creamy tomato soup at 'normal' soup temperature followed by a mouthful of basil ice cream (see part IV) and so on, the temperature contrast may well be able to contribute to a less cumbersome dining experience. There are no fixed or golden rules but a little bit of experimentation around the temperature of your food is definitely a good idea.

What works best is individually very different but there are some general trends.

If your main problem is soreness of mouth and throat, creamy liquid and jellied foods are easiest to handle. Avoid acidic foods and choose dairy-based meals with little seasoning. Cold or frozen food is likely to be easiest to handle.

If you are affected by mucus and find that dairy products aggravate your problem, reduce the amount of dairy component in recipes and increase the amount of stock or water accordingly. Rinsing your mouth right after eating also helps.

If you are affected by a dry mouth you may find it easiest to eat cold, or lukewarm, liquid or nearly liquid foods. Go easy with salt and sugar, both can make eating more unpleasant.

Using plenty of lubrication, sauces of all kinds, greatly help with swallowing soft foods.

Our senses of taste and smell are a complicated machinery, designed to distinguish bitter, salty, sweet and sour flavours. When this machinery is compromised this can take many different forms. You may find that the smell of food puts you off, that everything tastes like saw dust, that some foods taste 'wrong' or give you a lingering bad taste in the mouth, and so on. Most importantly, make sure that these effects do not cause an aversion to eating altogether, there are ways to manage impaired taste – and even enjoy food.

Avoid off-putting foods and look for foods that taste and smell good. These may be rather different from your normal favourite dishes and may include some apparently crazy combinations. You may find that cold food tastes better. Be prepared that taste confusions change over time. What is revoltingly horrible this week may well be back on the agenda two weeks on. Keep on trying what works best. Only you will know what works and if somebody else helps you with the cooking, do let them know about your current preferences.

If the smell of foods is a problem eat cold and frozen foods.

If everything tastes like saw dust, try tart foods and use strong flavours and spices. Try enhancing the flavour of your food with lemon juice or other fruit juices, or wine (the taste for sour is likely to be least impaired) if you can tolerate acidity.

Many people find red meats problematic, and most can enjoy food based on dairy, eggs, fish and white meats.

What if you can only manage liquid food or jelly but have just such a craving for, say a nice piece of fried bacon? Well, it is not very difficult to transfer the bacon taste to a manageable form of jelly. Here is how that works in principle. You fry bacon pieces, remove the fried bacon from the pan (keep the frying fat to start some bacon-flavoured pea soup, for example). Heat a small amount of whole milk in a small saucepan and add the fried bacon pieces, simmer for about 15-20 minutes, then set aside to cool, cover and leave overnight. Next day remove the bacon pieces (now reduced to some rather sad pieces of rubber) and discard them; all the bacon flavour is now in the milk. Dissolve some powdered gelatine and add, while stirring, to the flavoured milk. Pour into a mould and put in the fridge to set for a few hours. And then it's time to enjoy your bacon jelly! Infusing dairy products or mixtures of egg yolks and milk or cream works well for many meat-based and roasting aromas because all these flavours readily dissolve in the fat component of milk/cream/yolks. This is obviously a wide field for inspired and adventurous kitchen experiments!

Before we start with cooking: the good news is that there are really no restrictions as to flavours – almost everything and anything can be prepared in liquid, smooth or soft form. The only compromise is texture and that is quite straightforward to adjust according to what you feel is most comfortable and it usually does not involve a great deal of kitchen chores. Thinking a little bit outside the box and being imaginative and adventurous certainly helps.

It may seem counterintuitive to have a cookbook and recipes for times when eating is difficult. It makes sense because preparing your own food (or even better: having somebody help you with it) gives you the best options to get your food exactly right for your needs and appetite, no matter how unconventional that may be at the time.

The following collection of recipes reflects what most people can enjoy, mainly dishes based on dairy, eggs, vegetables and fish, as well as quite a number of sweet dishes. Many of the recipes are fairly high in calories, useful in these circumstances.

All recipes are written in their mildest form with a bare minimum of seasoning. If you find spicier foods more attractive, just freely add herbs/spices, whatever works best for you.

## Part II Liquid food

There are so many recipes for tasty soups that it is impossible to even just give some representative examples without turning this booklet into a massive door stopper. Most soups also taste good lukewarm or cold. In addition there are equally large numbers of tasty milkshakes and smoothies, sweet and savoury.

If you need thickening agents for your drinks, these are available from pharmacies and your GP can prescribe these for you. These thickening agents tend to absorb some of the flavour of your food.

While you are on a liquid diet it may be necessary to supplement your diet with fibre, ask your dietitian for advice.

### i) Savoury

#### Pear and leek soup

##### *Ingredients*

300g leek, cleaned and chopped  
1 small onion, finely diced  
2 pears, peeled and cored, chopped  
50g butter  
200ml pear juice  
500ml chicken stock  
200ml cream  
1 tbsp corn flour  
Salt and white pepper

##### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, add onion and sweat for a few minutes until softening. Add leeks and pear, continue to gently fry for a few more minutes, then add pear juice, cream and chicken stock. Cook over medium heat for about 20 minutes until leeks and pears are tender. Puree the mixture, season to taste, pass through sieve and return to saucepan. Heat to boiling point and adjust thickness as desired by adding corn flour (mixed with a little water) while stirring.

##### *Variations*

The pear and leek combination gives a very smooth silky soup. If you prefer a more robust flavour replace the pears by two medium sized potatoes, omit the pear juice and probably the corn flour.

## **Creamy chicken soup**

### *Ingredients*

500g chicken breast, with skin and bones  
1 onion, quartered  
2 bay leaves  
3 cloves, a few pepper corns  
1 tsp pepper corns  
1 small shallot, finely chopped  
a knob of butter  
125ml cream  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

In a saucepan cover chicken breast with cold water, add onion, bay leaves, cloves and pepper corns. Heat and gently boil for about 30 minutes until chicken is cooked. Remove from heat, remove chicken and strain stock, set both aside. Bone and skin chicken, chop meat, set aside. In another saucepan melt a knob of butter and sweat the shallot until softened. Add stock, cream and chicken meat. Puree mixture, season to taste, adjust thickness as desired.

## **Fish chowder**

### *Ingredients*

1 small onion, finely diced  
2 carrots, finely diced  
3 medium sized potatoes, peeled and finely diced  
60g butter  
250ml fish stock  
250ml vegetable stock  
salt and white pepper  
250g fish fillet, chopped  
50g shrimps  
125ml cream

### *Method*

In a saucepan melt butter, add onion, carrots and potatoes, gently fry for 5 minutes. Add fish and vegetable stock, cook over medium heat until vegetables are soft, about 20 minutes. Reduce heat, add fish fillet and shrimps, simmer for 10 minutes. Puree mixture, pass through a sieve, add cream. Return to saucepan and gently reheat while stirring.

## **Beef stock with egg and Parmesan cheese ('stracciatella')**

### *Ingredients*

500ml beef stock (shop-bought or home-made, avoid stock cubes for this recipe)  
1 egg  
1 heaped tbsp finely grated Parmesan cheese  
pinch of salt, pinch of ground nutmeg

### *Method*

Heat beef stock to boiling point. Break egg into a small bowl, whisk and add Parmesan, salt and nutmeg. Slowly pour egg mixture into boiling beef stock while whisking. Continue for 2-3 minutes until egg turns fluffy. Serve immediately.

## **Cheese soup**

### *Ingredients*

1 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp flour  
100ml white wine  
500ml beef stock  
125g Gruyère cheese, finely grated (or Emmenthal)  
5 tbsp cream  
1 yolk  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

In a saucepan melt butter, add flour, while whisking add wine. Keep whisking until you have a smooth thick white sauce. Add stock while whisking and boil for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Soak grated cheese in cream, season to taste. Remove saucepan from heat, add a little hot stock to cream/cheese mixture and mix well., then add to stock. Heat stock (but do not boil) and whisk in yolk, serve immediately.

## **Red lentil soup**

### *Ingredients*

100g red lentils, rinsed and drained  
2 small shallots, finely diced  
1 clove garlic, finely diced  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
50ml white wine  
salt and white pepper  
400g tinned chopped tomatoes  
200ml chicken stock  
olive oil  
50g Greek-style yoghurt  
50g crème fraîche  
salt

### *Method*

Dry roast cumin seeds in saucepan until fragrant. Add olive oil, shallot and garlic, sweat until softened. Add wine and reduce liquid. Season with salt and white pepper. Add lentils, stock and chopped tomatoes. Continue to cook over medium heat for about 30 minutes. Puree mixture and pass through a sieve with the back of a spoon. Return to saucepan and adjust thickness as desired. Mix yoghurt and crème fraîche, season with a little salt. Add a generous dollop of yoghurt / crème fraîche mixture to each serving.

## **Chickpea soup**

### *Ingredients*

400g tinned chickpeas, drained  
1 shallot, finely diced  
1 clove garlic, finely diced  
a stalk celery, finely diced  
200ml chicken stock  
1 twig rosemary  
salt and white pepper  
olive oil

### *Method*

In saucepan gently sweat shallot, garlic, celery and rosemary for about 15 minutes. When the shallot is soft but not browned, add chickpeas and chicken stock, simmer for about 30 minutes. Remove rosemary twig and puree mixture. Pass through sieve and return to

saucepan, season to taste, adjust thickness with hot water (or stock), add some olive oil to serve.

## **Asparagus soup**

### *Ingredients*

300g asparagus, prepared and chopped  
ca 500ml water with a pinch of sugar, a pinch of salt, a slice of lemon  
1 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp flour  
a pinch of salt, a pinch of white pepper, small pinch of nutmeg  
200ml cream

### *Method*

Bring water with sugar, salt and the lemon slice to boil. Add asparagus and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Strain, keep liquid and cooked asparagus, set both aside. In a saucepan melt the butter over medium heat, season, add flour and whisk until well mixed. Add cooking water in small portions, continue whisking until you have a thick white sauce. Remove from heat. Puree asparagus with remaining cooking liquid, pass through a sieve. Add to the white sauce and mix well. Heat gently and add cream to adjust thickness.

### *Variations*

This recipe also works for cauliflower and broccoli.

## **White onion soup**

### *Ingredients*

200g white onions, peeled and chopped  
a knob of butter  
1tsp sugar  
50ml white wine  
400ml chicken stock  
2 bay leaves  
1 clove garlic, sliced  
2 slices fresh ginger  
300ml cream  
20g soft butter  
salt and ground nutmeg

### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, add sugar, then chopped onion. Sweat for a few minutes. Add wine and reduce liquid. Add chicken stock, ginger and bay leaves, simmer for 30-45 minutes until onions are very soft. Remove bay leaves and ginger, add cream and soft butter, puree the mixture. Pass through a sieve, season to taste.

## **Watercress soup**

### *Ingredients*

200g watercress, leaves only, rinsed and drained  
1 shallot, finely diced  
1 clove garlic, finely diced  
2 tbsp butter  
600ml chicken stock  
200ml cream  
Salt and white pepper

### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, sweat shallot and garlic until softened. Add chicken stock and cream, cook uncovered until liquid is reduced by about a third. Add watercress and puree mixture, pass through a sieve, season to taste.

## **Cucumber drink**

### *Ingredients*

200g cucumber, chopped, peeled and seeds removed  
200ml buttermilk  
50ml cream  
2 tbsp olive oil  
salt and white pepper  
fresh dill, chopped

### *Method*

Blend all ingredients, strain, adjust thickness as required, serve chilled.

## **Salty lassi**

### *Ingredients*

200ml water  
100ml Greek-style yoghurt (or curd, if you can find some)  
a pinch of salt  
1 tsp cumin seeds

### *Method*

Fry the cumin seeds in a small dry pan until fragrant. Whisk yoghurt and water, add a pinch of salt and the cumin seeds, mix well. Strain and serve chilled.

### *Variations*

For a creamier version, replace water by milk.

## **Green smoothie I**

The idea of green smoothies may sound a little bizarre but they are a tasty way to eat greens while on a liquid diet and they provide nutrients that would be otherwise missing from your diet.

### *Ingredients*

a handful of baby spinach leaves, washed  
a handful of watercress leaves or rocket, washed  
a stalk of celery, chopped  
1 ripe avocado, peeled and chopped  
½ cucumber, peeled and de-seeded, chopped  
1 pear, peeled and cored, chopped

### *Method*

First puree the green leaves with a little water, then add all other ingredients and puree again. Strain and adjust thickness with cold water. Serve immediately.

### *Variations*

Endless variations, whatever you prefer. If the taste is too tart for you, adjust thickness with whole milk instead of water.

## **Green smoothie II**

### *Ingredients*

a handful of baby spinach leaves or lambs' lettuce, washed  
a small handful of lemon balm leaves  
1 small apple, peeled and cored, chopped  
½ cucumber, peeled and de-seeded, chopped  
1 ripe banana, peeled and chopped  
coconut milk (or milk)  
water

### *Method*

First puree the green leaves with a little water. Add apple, cucumber pieces, banana and some coconut milk (or milk) and puree again. Strain and adjust thickness with cold water. Serve immediately.

## **ii) Sweet**

### **Milkshakes**

Just about any smooth fruit puree (or mixture of fruit purees) is suitable for making milkshakes.

### *Ingredients*

ca. 1 part fruit puree  
ca. 4 parts whole milk  
sugar to taste

### *Method*

Whisk fruit puree and milk together, sweeten to taste, serve chilled

### *Variations*

Omit the sugar and blend with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

## **Mango lassi**

### *Ingredients*

1 ripe mango, peeled and cored, chopped (or ready made mango puree)  
200ml water  
400ml Greek-style yoghurt  
2-3 tbsp sugar  
optional: a pinch of ground cloves, a pinch of ground cardamom

### *Method*

Puree all ingredients together, strain, adjust thickness with cold water, serve chilled.

## **Smoothies**

There are endless possibilities, whatever crazy or conventional combinations take your fancy, a few examples below:

### **Avocado smoothie**

#### *Ingredients*

1 ripe avocado, peeled and cored  
3-4 tbsp sugar  
3 tbsp cream  
150ml milk

#### *Method*

Puree all ingredients together, strain, adjust thickness, serve immediately (chilled, with a few ice cubes).

### **Carrot-coconut smoothie**

#### *Ingredients*

200ml carrot juice  
3 tbsp coconut milk  
3 tbsp Greek-style yoghurt  
sugar to taste

### *Method*

Whisk all ingredients together, serve chilled.

## **Cherry smoothie**

### *Ingredients*

200g tinned cherries, strained, keep liquid

300g Greek-style yoghurt

2 tbsp honey

Milk

### *Method*

Puree cherries, yoghurt and honey. Strain, adjust thickness with cherry juice and/or milk, serve chilled.

## **Mango-banana smoothie**

### *Ingredients*

1 ripe mango, peeled and chopped (or ready-made puree)

1 banana, peeled and chopped

100ml orange juice

1 tbsp honey

400ml Greek-style yoghurt

milk or water

### *Method*

Puree all ingredients together, adjust thickness with milk or water, strain, serve chilled.

## **Banana smoothie**

### *Ingredients*

1 ripe banana, peeled and chopped

100ml Greek-style yoghurt

2 tbsp honey  
a pinch of ground cinnamon  
milk

*Method*

Puree all ingredients together, strain, adjust thickness with milk, serve chilled.

**Pear-avocado-orange smoothie**

*Ingredients*

2 ripe pears, peeled and cored, chopped  
1 ripe avocado, peeled and chopped  
juice of 1 orange  
milk or water

*Method*

Puree pears, avocado and orange juice. Adjust thickness with milk or water, strain, serve chilled.

**Peach-raspberry smoothie**

*Ingredients*

2 ripe peaches or nectarines, peeled and chopped (or tinned fruit)  
40g raspberries  
300ml milk  
a scoop of vanilla ice cream

*Method*

Puree all ingredients together, adjust thickness, strain and serve immediately.

## **Melon-mango smoothie**

### *Ingredients*

½ ripe melon, peeled and cored, chopped

1 ripe mango, peeled and chopped (or ready made puree)

milk or water

### *Method*

Puree the melon and mango, adjust thickness with milk or water, strain, serve chilled,

## Part III Smooth food

This section gives examples of savoury and sweet smooth food, that is: jellies. Jellies are a good (sometimes even better, more convenient) alternative (and addition) to a purely liquid-based diet. Jellies are particularly easy to swallow and make a much wider range of foods and flavours accessible than is possible to provide on a liquids-only basis. If you find that currently your fingers are the best food-handling tool, that is no problem with a fairly firmly set jelly and that could be a part of the convenience factor.

While you are on a liquid and/or jelly diet it may be necessary to supplement your diet with fibre, ask your dietitian for advice.

The secret weapon is gelatine from the supermarket. Powdered gelatine is easier to use than leaf gelatine to get exactly the wanted degree of firmness. As a rough guide 8-10g of gelatine per 500ml liquid / thin puree will give you a wobbly soft set (too soft to turn out). Approximately 14-16g of gelatine per 500ml will give you a firmer set, with a jelly firm enough to turn out and cut into shapes. Because different people will want different firmness of set, the quantity of gelatine is not specified in the recipes. A bit of practice will help to get this right for your needs. It takes several hours for a jelly to set, so best to prepare a day in advance. Jellies prepared with ordinary supermarket gelatine can not be heated (they melt and disintegrate) but many people find it easier to eat cold food anyway. If you want to be able to eat warm roast-chicken jelly you have to use special gelatine, available from catering suppliers (for example Gellan Gum F, [molecularmixology.co.uk](http://molecularmixology.co.uk)).

### i) Savoury

#### **Vegetable jelly**

##### *Ingredients*

100g prepared broccoli  
150ml water  
salt and white pepper  
optional: a small knob of garlic, ground nutmeg  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Cook the broccoli pieces in slightly salted boiling water until tender. Add a small piece of garlic (if wanted) and puree. You should have a fairly thin puree, pass through a sieve if in doubt. Season to taste. Sprinkle the gelatine over a small amount (2-3 tbsp) of water, let sit for a few minutes, then heat gently while stirring until the gelatine is completely dissolved. Slowly pour into the puree while stirring. Let cool while stirring occasionally. Pour into small moulds or some other dish and put in the fridge to set.

### *Variations*

This works for many vegetables such as cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, fine green beans, kohlrabi, peas.

## **Carrot jelly**

### *Ingredients*

250 g carrots, peeled and sliced  
1 small shallot, finely chopped  
a knob of butter  
1 tsp caster sugar  
salt and white pepper  
100ml carrot juice or vegetable stock  
100ml cream  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, add chopped shallots and sweat for a few minutes, add sugar and carrot slices, stir for a couple of minutes. Add carrot juice (or stock) and cream and simmer until carrots are tender. Puree mixture. Dissolve gelatine and slowly add to carrot puree. Let cool stirring occasionally, then pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

### *Variations*

For variety of flavour, add a pinch of ground cumin, or add a slice of fresh ginger while cooking (remove before you puree the mixture), add chopped coriander or parsley leaves before you puree the mixture, then pass puree through a sieve).

## **Spinach jelly**

### *Ingredients*

500g spinach  
1 small shallot, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, finely chopped  
a knob of butter  
50ml cream  
salt and white pepper, ground nutmeg  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat, add chopped shallots and garlic and sweat for a few minutes until soft. Add washed (moist) spinach and let wilt. Add cream and simmer until very soft. Puree mixture and season to taste, pass through a sieve if in doubt. Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into spinach puree. Pour into dish and set aside to cool, then put in fridge to set.

## **Red cabbage jelly**

This jelly looks pretty stunning on a white plate.

### *Ingredients*

100g ready cooked red cabbage (shop bought)  
a knob of butter  
1 small shallot, finely chopped  
100ml apple juice  
150ml water  
3 cloves  
2 bay leaves  
salt and white pepper  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the shallots and sweat for a few minutes. Add the cabbage, apple juice, water, cloves and bay leaves. Cook for 15 minutes over medium heat. Remove cloves and bay leaves, then puree mixture (pass through a sieve if in doubt). Season to taste. Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into cabbage puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

## **Jellied pumpkin soup**

### *Ingredients*

125g pumpkin flesh, chopped  
125g cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped  
1 small shallot, finely chopped  
250ml vegetable stock  
a knob of butter  
30ml cream  
salt and white pepper  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, add chopped shallots and sweat for a few minutes until softened. Add pumpkin and apple pieces, then vegetable stock. Bring to the boil and cook until apples have disintegrated and pumpkin pieces are soft. Add cream, then puree mixture (pass through a sieve if in doubt). Season to taste. Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into pumpkin puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, then pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

## **Jellied beef stock with egg à la royale**

Use homemade or shop-bought stock for this recipe, avoid stock made from cubes.

### *Ingredients*

500ml good quality beef or chicken stock  
powdered gelatine  
2 eggs  
130ml milk  
pinch of salt, pinch of nutmeg  
a knob of soft butter (for greasing the baking dish)

### *Method*

Heat the beef stock, dissolve the gelatine in a little water, then slowly pour into the warm stock while stirring. Set aside to cool, pour into dish and put in fridge to set. To serve chop into small cubes.

Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease a small fairly flat oven-proof dish with butter, set aside until needed. Break the eggs into a small bowl, stir and season with salt and nutmeg. Heat the milk and pour the hot milk over the eggs, mix well. Strain egg milk into buttered dish. Place dish in a roasting tin, add hot (not boiling) water to the roasting tin about half way up the height of the egg milk. Place on middle shelf in oven and bake until set (10-15 minutes; you

may need to cover the baking dish with foil; make sure the water does not boil). When cooled keep in the fridge (covered) until needed. The egg royale should be perfectly smooth and just firm enough to chop into small pieces.

## **Roast chicken jelly**

### *Ingredients*

200g roast chicken meat  
200ml chicken stock (or chicken gravy)  
100ml cream  
salt and white pepper  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Chop the meat, add stock and cream and puree mixture. Pass through a sieve if in doubt. Season to taste. Gently heat the chicken puree. Dissolve the gelatine in a little water and slowly pour into the chicken puree, stirring constantly. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. When cooled, pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

## **Jellied chicken with mushroom sauce**

### *Ingredients*

100g chicken breast, diced in small pieces  
250ml chicken stock  
75g mushrooms, cleaned and sliced  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
50ml white wine  
ca. 150ml cream  
ca. 150ml water  
salt and white pepper  
2 knobs of butter  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Melt butter in pan, season meat and gently fry until done (about 5 minutes). Heat chicken stock, add cooked chicken pieces and finely puree. Pass through a sieve if in doubt. Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into warm chicken puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. When cooled pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

For the mushroom sauce melt butter in pan and sweat onions until soft. Add sliced mushrooms and gently fry for 5 minutes until dry. Add white wine and reduce liquid. Add water and simmer for about 10 minutes. Finely puree mixture, pass through a sieve, adjust thickness with cream, season to taste. Serve (lukewarm) with the jellied chicken.

### **Roast pork jelly**

Serve with red cabbage jelly (see above)

#### *Ingredients*

100g roast pork (loin, crackling removed), diced  
250ml gravy  
powdered gelatine

#### *Method*

Warm gravy, add diced pork and finely puree. Pass through a sieve if in doubt (you may have to puree the mixture a second time, with a little extra gravy). Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into warm pork puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. When cooled pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

### **Roast lamb jelly**

Serve with green bean jelly (and apple-potato mash, see part V)

#### *Ingredients*

100g roast lamb, diced  
250ml gravy  
powdered gelatine

#### *Method*

Warm gravy, add diced lamb and finely puree. Pass through a sieve if in doubt (you may have to puree the mixture a second time, with a little extra gravy). Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into warm lamb puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. When cooled pour into dish and put in fridge to set.

## **Jellied fried salmon**

Serve with mayonnaise (see part V)

### *Ingredients*

100g salmon fillet  
150ml milk  
oil for frying (or a knob of butter)  
salt and white pepper  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Heat oil (or butter) in a pan, season salmon and gently fry until just done. Crumble cooked salmon into milk and finely puree mixture, pass through a sieve with the back of a spoon. Dissolve gelatine and slowly pour into salmon puree while stirring. Pour into dish, set aside to cool then put in fridge to set.

## **ii) Sweet**

### **Jellied fruit juice**

#### *Ingredients*

400ml fruit juice  
powdered gelatine  
optional: double cream or whipped cream or custard to serve

#### *Method*

Gently warm the juice. Ladle some warm juice into another saucepan, sprinkle the gelatine powder over, allow to absorb some of the liquid, then gently heat while stirring until the gelatine is completely dissolved. Pour the juice/gelatine liquid into the warm juice while stirring. Pour liquid into small moulds or one larger dish, set aside to cool, when cooled put in the fridge to set.

#### *Variations*

This works with all juices or mixtures of juices.

## **Jellied fruit puree**

### *Ingredients*

200g peach pieces (tinned fruit)  
150ml juice and/or water  
powdered gelatine  
optional: double cream or whipped cream or custard to serve

### *Method*

Puree the peach pieces with the juice and/or water. Dissolve the gelatine in a little extra water, then add to the peach puree while stirring. Pour into moulds or one larger dish, put in the fridge to set.

### *Variations*

All fruit purees from poached or raw fruit can be made into jellies, with one exception: pineapple does not set. Tinned fruit in juice is a convenient starting material if you like it sweet. Homemade fruit compotes (or purees made from raw fruit) are more flexible if you prefer your puree / jelly not so sweet.

## **Jellied milk**

### *Ingredients*

500ml milk  
2 tbsp caster sugar (optional)  
2 large strips of lemon rind (unwaxed lemon)  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Gently warm the milk with sugar (if used) and lemon rind for 10-15 minutes. Dissolve the gelatine in a little water and slowly pour into the warm milk while stirring. Discard the lemon rind. Stir occasionally until cooled, then pour in small moulds or a larger dish and put in the fridge to set.

### *Variations*

Infuse the milk with a cinnamon stick or cardamom pods. Make a jellied milkshake: before pouring the cooled milk into moulds, mix it with some smooth fruit puree (same relative amounts as for a milkshake). For a more refreshing taste, use buttermilk instead of milk.

## **Panna cotta ('cooked cream')**

This is a classical Italian dessert traditionally served with fruit puree or fruit salad of the season, with strawberries the firm favourite south of the Alps.

### *Ingredients*

500ml double cream  
1 vanilla pod  
70g caster sugar  
powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Soak the gelatine in a little bit of water. Split the vanilla pod, scrape the seeds into the cream, add the pod and the sugar and bring the mixture to a boil. Take off the heat, dissolve the gelatine and slowly pour into the hot cream, discard the vanilla pod. Set aside to cool and continue to whisk occasionally until well cooled (to avoid that the cream and gelatine separate). When mixture starts to set, pour into small moulds and put in the fridge to set.

### *Variations*

This can be flavoured in many different ways (omitting the vanilla). Dissolve some cocoa powder in the hot mixture (before adding the gelatine) to get a slippery chocolate panna cotta. Add 2-3 tbsp of soluble coffee powder. A naughty flavour would be to add a shot of cognac or whisky. A more unusual flavour would be to replace the vanilla pod by a sprig of rosemary.

## Part IV Frozen food

If you happen to be the proud owner of an ice cream maker, this can be put to good use. However, none of the following recipes require an ice cream maker; all recipes can be prepared in your freezer or the freezer compartment of your fridge. When preparing frozen foods you need to use a bit more seasoning (or sugar) than you normally would because flavours are less intense in frozen food.

Some of the following ideas and suggestions may sound slightly crazy but frozen foods do work well for a variety of reasons. Ice creams tend to be less upsetting to a sore mouth and throat than warm foods. There is some evidence that the cold temperature triggers the swallowing reflex and thus can make eating easier.

### **Frozen coffee (granita)**

#### *Ingredients*

500ml strong hot coffee or espresso  
100g caster sugar  
optional: double cream to serve

#### *Method*

Dissolve the sugar in the hot coffee and set aside to cool. Pour the mixture into a shallow dish and place in the freezer. Stir the mixture with a fork when ice crystals start forming, after about 1 hour. Repeat stirring occasionally until all liquid is frozen and you have a mass of coffee ice crystals (granita). The more often you stir, the finer the crystals will be. Store the granita in a lidded plastic container in the freezer. If you prefer the taste of white coffee, serve the granita with some double cream poured over it. Serve straight from freezer.

#### *Variations*

Use strong tea instead of coffee. Fruit juices can be turned into frozen granules in the same way. When served with cream you may find that acidity is less of a problem than with liquid juices.

## **Mouth & throat soothers – frozen infusions**

These ice granules are a refreshing mouth soother.

### *Ingredients*

5 tbsp of equal amounts of fresh rosemary, thyme, marjoram and sage  
1 cinnamon stick  
3 cloves  
1l boiling water

### *Method*

Pour the boiling water over the herb and spice mixture, cover and let infuse for about 10 minutes. Strain and put aside to cool. Pour into a shallow dish and freeze and store as above.

### *Variations*

Use a camomile infusion and add a small amount of honey while still hot.

## **Rich ice cream (parfait) in many flavours**

This recipe will give you a rich and very smooth delicate ice cream that can be made in many different fruit flavours. It is a little bit of work but worth the effort: because of its richness it may allow you to enjoy fruit that may not be so enjoyable to eat in other forms. Only use fresh eggs for this recipe.

### *Ingredients*

#### *for the fruit puree:*

400g blackberries  
100g caster sugar  
juice of ½ lemon (don't be afraid – there will be no trace of acidity in the ice cream, it only serves to break up the fruit and enhances the flavour)  
2-3 tbsp water

#### *for the ice cream base:*

500ml whipping cream  
a pinch of salt  
3 eggs  
2 yolks  
100g caster sugar

### *Method*

Line a loaf tin with cling film.

To make the blackberry puree, put all puree ingredients in a saucepan and heat, stirring occasionally, until the berries are broken up. Blend the mixture and pass the puree through a fine-meshed sieve, pressing with the back of a spoon. Set aside to cool.

Whip the cream with a pinch of salt, put in the fridge until needed. Whisk the eggs and yolks with the sugar (over a hot water bath, a 'bain marie') until you have a pale and creamy mix, thick enough to coat a spoon. Remove from the water bath and continue whisking until cooled. Then add the whipped cream and the blackberry puree, mix everything carefully.

Pour mixture into lined loaf tin, cover with cling film and freeze for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

### *Variations*

This ice cream base mixture works for many smooth fruit purees (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, apricots, peaches, mango, black currants). You can omit the fruit puree altogether and instead flavour the creamy egg mixture with a tsp of ground cinnamon for a delicate cinnamon parfait.

## **Cheat's lazy version of parfait in many flavours**

### *Ingredients*

100ml pumpkin puree (for the ultra-cheat version use a jar of baby puree)

2 tbsp caster (or icing) sugar

200ml whipping cream

optional: pumpkin-seed oil to serve

### *Method*

Whip the cream with the sugar. Fold the pumpkin puree into the whipped cream. Freeze mixture for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving. Drizzle with pumpkin-seed oil for serving, if wanted.

### *Variations*

This can be widely varied and will work with many fruit and vegetable purees; omit the sugar when using vegetable purees. You can also use this recipe to make chocolate parfait: replace puree by 100g melted dark chocolate (melt chocolate gently over low heat, let cool for a few minutes and fold into whipped cream, freeze).

## **Simple banana ice cream**

### *Ingredients*

80g honey  
400g bananas  
juice of 1 lemon  
250ml whipping cream

### *Method*

Puree bananas, add lemon juice and honey, mix well. Whip the cream and fold the banana puree into the whipped cream. Freeze mixture for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

## **Apple sauce ice cream**

### *Ingredients*

400g apple sauce  
grated zest of 1 unwaxed lemon  
4 tbsp honey  
pinch of ground cinnamon  
250g Greek-style yoghurt  
100ml whipping cream

### *Method*

Mix apple sauce with honey, lemon zest, cinnamon and yoghurt. Whip the cream and fold into the apple sauce mixture. Freeze in a shallow container and whisk mixture during freezing every half hour until firm. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

## **Basil ice cream**

Herb ice creams make pleasant and flavoursome accompaniments for many dishes. Only use fresh eggs for this recipe.

### *Ingredients*

3 yolks  
70g caster sugar  
200ml whipping cream  
1 large bunch of fresh basil, leaves only  
ca. 2 tbsp natural yoghurt  
a drop of vanilla essence

### *Method*

Line a loaf tin with cling film. Whip the cream. Blend the basil leaves, yoghurt and vanilla essence to a smooth puree. In a separate bowl whisk the yolks and sugar carefully until you have a pale creamy mixture. Add the basil puree and the whipped cream and mix gently. Pour into the lined loaf tin, cover with cling film and freeze for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

### *Variations*

Use fresh mint or lemon balm leaves instead (and omit the vanilla essence).

## **Tomato ice cream**

### *Ingredients*

300 g chopped (tinned) tomatoes  
200ml whipping cream  
a good pinch of sugar  
pinch of salt, pinch of white pepper (if wanted)  
1 tbsp chopped parsley

### *Method*

Put chopped tomatoes in a saucepan, heat over moderate heat, add seasoning and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Add chopped parsley and set aside to cool. Blend mixture and pass through a sieve with the back of a spoon. Whip the cream and fold into the smooth tomato puree. Freeze for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

## **Avocado ice cream**

### *Ingredients*

3 ripe avocados  
juice of 1 lemon  
350ml cream of coconut

### *Method*

Peel, stone and chop the avocados. Toss in lemon juice and finely puree. Mix with the coconut cream. Freeze for ca. 3 hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

## **Vegetable ice cream in many flavours**

### *Ingredients*

rich ice cream base (see above) but use half the amount of caster sugar (50g)  
300g smooth vegetable puree instead of fruit puree

### *Method*

Same method as for rich ice cream (see above)

### *Variations*

This works for cooked carrots, cauliflower, parsnips, pumpkin, broccoli, green peas.

## **Goats cheese ice cream**

Only use fresh eggs for this recipe. This ice cream goes well with many vegetable purees and jellies as a side dish.

### *Ingredients*

250ml whipping cream  
200g soft goats cheese (Picandou)  
200g crème fraîche  
70g caster sugar  
4 yolks

### *Method*

Line a loaf tin with cling film .

Whisk the yolks and sugar over a bain marie until pale and creamy, remove from bain marie and continue whisking occasionally until cooled. Add cheese and crème fraiche in small portions, whisk in well before adding the next portion. Whip the cream and fold it into the cheese mixture. Pour into lined loaf tin, cover with cling film and freeze for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

### **Stilton ice cream**

Only use fresh eggs for this recipe. This ice cream is nice with spinach or carrot puree or jelly.

### *Ingredients*

50g Stilton cheese, rind removed

3 yolks

50g icing sugar

300ml whipping cream

3 egg whites

### *Method*

Line a loaf tin with cling film

In a large bowl beat together the yolks and sugar, finely crumble the cheese and add to the yolks, beat until well mixed. In another bowl whip the cream, then add to the cheese mixture. In another clean bowl whisk the egg whites until firm, then fold into the cheese / cream mixture. Pour into lined loaf tin, cover with cling film and freeze for several hours. Move from freezer to fridge for about 30 minutes to one hour before serving.

## **Part V Moving on to soft, easy-to-swallow food**

This part comes in three sections. Section a) collects some ideas around pureed foods, savoury and sweet. Section b) lists some ideas for sauces – and could do with a few more ideas. Section c) moves on to some general ideas about soft but not pureed foods, with a few recipes given but this section definitely needs more tried and tested recipes.

### **a) Soft food (no junks and bits)**

#### **i) Savoury**

##### **Cucumber mousse**

###### *Ingredients*

300g cucumber (peeled and seeds removed)  
100g soured cream  
salt and white pepper  
2 tbsp finely chopped fresh dill  
150ml whipping cream  
12g powdered gelatine

###### *Method*

Roughly chop the cucumber flesh, add the soured cream, seasoning to taste and the finely chopped dill and puree the mixture (pass through a fine sieve, if in doubt). Dissolve the gelatine in a little water and slowly add to the cucumber puree while stirring. Whip the cream and fold into the cucumber puree. Put in the fridge to set.

##### **Egg mayonnaise**

This makes more mayonnaise than you need for one egg. You will probably be lost forever for commercial products, homemade mayonnaise beats them all by lengths. Only use fresh eggs for this recipe.

###### *Ingredients*

1 hard-boiled egg  
3 yolks, at room temperature

1-2 tsp lemon juice (or white wine vinegar)  
½ tsp salt, a pinch of white pepper  
ca. 150-200ml sunflower oil (or a mixture of sunflower / rapeseed / olive oil)

### *Method*

Roughly chop the hard-boiled egg and press through a fine sieve (with the back of a spoon), set aside. Warm a big bowl with hot water, empty and dry the bowl. Add the yolks and whisk vigorously for a few minutes until they thicken and are pale. Add the lemon juice, salt and pepper, continue whisking. Start adding the oil while whisking, initially drop by drop, and making sure that every addition is well absorbed before adding more. When about a third of the oil is used up you should have a thick sauce similar to thick cream. Now you can add the remaining oil in teaspoon portions, always whisking. Keep the mayonnaise covered in the fridge where it will keep for a couple of days.

Add (some) mayonnaise to the strained hard-boiled egg and mix well.

## **Vegetable terrine**

This is a bit of work but the reward is an impressive dish; serve with cider vinaigrette if acidity is not a problem.

### *Ingredients*

#### *for the red layer:*

200g pre-cooked beet root, chopped  
500ml vegetable stock  
1 tsp red wine vinegar  
10g powdered gelatine  
90g Greek-style yoghurt  
100ml whipping cream, whipped  
salt and white pepper

#### *for the white layer:*

250g celeriac, peeled and chopped  
1 apple, peeled, cored and chopped  
500ml vegetable stock  
½ tsp lemon juice  
10g powdered gelatine  
90g Greek-style yoghurt  
100ml whipping cream, whipped  
salt and white pepper

#### *for the cider vinaigrette (optional):*

100ml dry cider  
1 tbsp cider vinegar  
1 small shallot, finely diced

1 small apple, peeled, cored and finely chopped  
salt and white pepper  
3-4 tbsp sunflower or rapeseed oil

### *Method*

Line a loaf tin with cling film and set aside. Cook the beetroot in the vegetable stock until very soft, puree, pass through a sieve and return to saucepan. Continue to cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until you have a rather thick puree. Add the vinegar and seasoning. Dissolve gelatine in a little water and slowly pour into the beetroot puree while stirring. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. When cooled, add yoghurt and whipped cream. Transfer to the prepared loaf tin, even surface, refrigerate for an hour until firmed. In the meantime prepare the celeriac-apple mousse in the same way. Top the beetroot layer with the celeriac-apple mousse, cover with cling film and return to fridge. Remove from loaf tin and cut in slices to serve.

For the vinaigrette cook cider, vinegar, onions and apple until liquid is reduced to about half and onions and apples are soft. Puree mixture, add oil and whisk until well combined.

### *Variations*

Replace by other colourful layers, for example a green layer based on green beans or peas puree, or a yellow layer made from carrot puree.

## **Salmon rilette**

### *Ingredients*

200g salmon fillet without skin  
80g soft butter  
1 tbsp finely chopped fresh dill (or tarragon)  
1 tbsp crème fraîche  
1 tsp very finely chopped shallot  
1 unwaxed lemon, grated zest and juice of ½ lemon  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

Gently fry the salmon fillet until just done, put aside to cool. Tear meat into pieces, add ca. 60g butter and remaining ingredients, puree mixture, pass through a sieve and season to taste. Divide mixture into small ramekins. Melt remaining butter and pour on top. Put in fridge for a few hours, serve chilled.

## **Smoked trout mousse**

### *Ingredients*

200g smoked trout fillet, skinned  
100g full fat Philadelphia cheese  
100g crème fraiche  
a few tbsp milk  
juice of ½ lemon  
salt and white pepper  
optional: add a tbsp of grated horseradish

### *Method*

Flake the trout fillets, add to the cream cheese and crème fraiche, add about two tbsp of milk, puree mixture. Add lemon juice, mix and season to taste. Refrigerate for a few hours before serving.

## **Smoked mackerel mousse**

Serve with thin carrot puree or any other vegetable sauce

### *Ingredients*

ca. 350g smoked mackerel  
a handful of fresh dill leaves, chopped  
1 tsp lemon juice  
150g crème fraiche  
Salt and white pepper  
100ml whipping cream  
10g powdered gelatine

### *Method*

Skin and debone the mackerel, tear flesh into pieces. Add dill, lemon juice and crème fraiche, puree the mixture. Pass through a sieve, season to taste. Dissolve gelatine in a little water and slowly add to the mackerel puree while stirring. Whip the cream, then fold into mackerel mixture. Put in fridge to set.

## **Potato – baked apple mash**

This is a tasty way to make potato mash more slippery.

### *Ingredients*

2 portions of potato mash, ca. 100g  
1 cooking apple, peeled, cored and quartered  
2 knobs of butter  
1 tbsp sugar  
1 tbsp marzipan, diced

### *Method*

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Butter a shallow ovenproof dish, add the apple quarters, the diced marzipan, sprinkle with sugar and top with butter flakes. Bake for ca. 30 minutes, heat the potato mash. Puree the baked apple mixture and mix with the potato mash.

## **Sweet potato mash**

### *Ingredients*

500g sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped  
1 large white onion  
100ml milk  
50g butter  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

In a saucepan cover the sweet potato pieces with cold water, bring to the boil and cook over medium heat until soft, about 15-20 minutes, drain and set aside. In another saucepan cook the chopped onion in milk until tender. Add milk and onion to the sweet potato pieces, puree the mixture and adjust thickness, season to taste (pass through a sieve if in doubt). Beat in the butter.

## **Vegetable purees, from vegetables cooked in water or stock**

### *Ingredients*

250g prepared vegetable pieces  
enough stock or salted water to cover

white pepper  
herbs and/or spices to taste  
some butter or olive oil

#### *Method*

In a saucepan bring salted water or stock to the boil, add vegetable pieces and cook until tender. Strain and keep cooking liquid. Puree vegetable with enough cooking liquid to get the wanted thickness, pass through a sieve as required, season to taste and work in a knob of butter or add a little olive oil.

#### *Variations*

This method works well for vegetables such as green peas, green beans, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, savoy cabbage.

### **Vegetable purees, from vegetables braised in butter or oven-roasted**

#### *Ingredients*

250g prepared vegetable pieces  
butter or oil for braising, a little stock or water  
or olive oil for oven-roasting  
salt and white pepper  
herbs and/or spices to taste  
stock or cream to adjust thickness

#### *Method*

If braising in butter or oil, heat fat in saucepan, add seasoning, prepared vegetable pieces and a little liquid to prevent burning. Cook over medium heat until vegetable pieces are tender. Puree with a little liquid, pass through a sieve and adjust thickness as required. For oven-roasting toss the vegetable pieces in olive oil (or sunflower oil, if preferred) in a roasting tin, add seasoning and herbs and bake in the oven (180°C) until tender. Stir a few times for even cooking. When cooked, puree with a little liquid, pass through a sieve and adjust thickness and seasoning to taste.

#### *Variations*

Oven-roasting works well for root vegetables such as parsnips, carrots, celeriac, sude, turnips, beetroot. It also works well for butternut squash, pumpkin and aubergines. Braising in butter works well for carrots, fennel and courgettes (remove seeds before cooking).

## **Yellow lentil puree (daal saag)**

### *Ingredients*

200g yellow split lentils  
2 slices fresh ginger  
500ml water  
2-3 tbsp sunflower oil  
1tsp black mustard seeds  
½ tsp turmeric  
1/4tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp fennel seeds  
100g spinach, rinsed  
2 spring onions, finely chopped

### *Method*

In a saucepan bring water, lentils and ginger to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 1 hour until lentils are very soft. Remove ginger, strain and keep cooking liquid. In a frying pan heat the oil, add spices and fry for a few minutes. Add spinach leaves and spring onion and keep frying until spinach is completely wilted and soft. Add pan contents to the lentils and puree the mixture, use cooking liquid to adjust thickness, pass through a sieve. Return to saucepan and reheat.

## **Pumpkin flan**

Serve with spinach sauce (see part V b)).

### *Ingredients*

200g pumpkin puree  
4 eggs  
salt and white pepper  
60g finely grated cheese, such as mature Cheddar cheese  
soft butter for greasing

### *Method*

Preheat the oven to 180°C, grease well two dariole moulds (or two large cups). Briefly whisk the eggs, add the pumpkin puree and mix well, add grated cheese, season to taste. Divide mixture into greased moulds, put moulds into a roasting tin. Add hot water about half way up the moulds and bake for about 30 minutes until firm. Turn out and serve immediately.

### *Variations*

This works with many vegetable purees such as cauliflower, broccoli, peas, green beans. Vary the cheese, grated Parmesan cheese works well.

### **Spinach flan**

Serve with Gorgonzola cheese sauce (see part V b)).

#### *Ingredients*

½ quantity of basic white sauce (see part V b)) made with stock  
2 eggs, separated  
500g spinach, rinsed and drained  
60g finely grated cheese (Parmesan, for example)  
soft butter for greasing  
30g bread crumbs  
salt and white pepper, a pinch of ground nutmeg

#### *Method*

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease an oven-proof dish with soft butter, sprinkle with bread crumbs and turn to coat, turn out excess crumbs, set dish aside. Wilt the spinach leaves in a large saucepan (no extra-water added) for 5 minutes. Drain and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Melt a little butter in the saucepan, season to taste and cook over low heat for another 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Puree the spinach and pass through a sieve. Add to the white sauce and mix well. Beat in the yolks, add the grated cheese. Stiffly whisk the egg whites and fold into the spinach puree. Pour mixture into prepared dish, place dish in a roasting tin, add hot water to the roasting tin about half way up the side of the dish. Bake for 45-50 minutes.

### **Cheese soufflé**

It is a total myth that it is difficult to prepare a cheese soufflé, you just need to hold your nerve and not open the oven door before the soufflé is ready to serve.

#### *Ingredients*

4 eggs, separated  
150g Gruyère cheese, finely grated  
4 tbsp flour  
2 tbsp butter

250ml milk

salt and white pepper, a pinch of ground nutmeg

optional: if wanted, add a tbsp of green pepper corns to the mixture before baking, adds a nice zing but is not recommended if you prefer a less spicy soufflé.

#### *Method*

Butter a suitable oven-proof dish (with straight walls) and set aside. In a saucepan melt the butter, add seasoning and the flour while whisking. When combined add the milk and whisk until you get a smooth, fairly thick sauce. Remove pan from heat, add yolks one by one, beat in well. Mix in the grated cheese. Set aside to cool. Preheat the oven to 190°C. Whisk the egg whites until stiff. Fold egg whites into cooled cheese mixture, pour into buttered baking dish (size such that it is half full before baking). Bake for 25 minutes and serve immediately – it will collapse when standing.

### **Tuna mould**

Serve with leek sauce (see part V b)) and mashed butter beans (passed through a sieve, add a little olive oil)

#### *Ingredients*

200g tinned tuna in water, drained

4 eggs, separated

salt and white pepper

butter for greasing

#### *Method*

Preheat the oven to 180°C and grease a cake tin, set aside. Add the tuna flakes to the yolks and puree the mixture, pass through a sieve if in doubt, season to taste. Stiffly whip the egg whites and fold into the tuna puree. Pour mixture into the greased tin, place tin in a roasting tin and add hot water to the roasting tin about half way up the side of the cake tin. Bake for about 45 minutes.

### **Trout mould**

Serve with spinach sauce (see part V b)).

#### *Ingredients*

500g trout fillets, skinned and chopped; well chilled

1 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 yolk

1 tsp corn flour

125ml double cream

salt and white pepper  
butter for greasing

### *Method*

Grease three dariole moulds (or large cups), set aside. Puree the chilled chopped trout fillets with parsley and seasoning. Add the yolk and corn flour, mix well. Pour mixture into the prepared moulds (or cups). Place moulds in a roasting tin, add hot water to the roasting tin to about halfway up the side of the moulds. Bake for about 25 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before turning out.

## **ii) Sweet**

### **Raspberry mousse**

#### *Ingredients*

250g raspberries  
125g icing sugar  
juice of ½ lemon  
300ml whipping cream  
12g powdered gelatine

#### *Method*

Add sugar and lemon juice to the raspberries, puree mixture, pass through a fine sieve. Dissolve gelatine in a little water, then slowly add to the puree while stirring. Whip the cream, fold into the raspberry puree. Pour into a bowl and put in the fridge to set.

#### *Variations*

This works for many fruit purees such as strawberries, black currants, peaches, apricots, blueberries, blackberries, avocado (add a little vanilla essence).

## **Custard floating islands ('œufs à la neige')**

A classical French dessert, much loved by just about all kids on the continent.

### *Ingredients*

6 yolks  
100g caster sugar  
500ml milk  
½ vanilla pod  
6 egg whites  
200g caster sugar

### *Method*

To make the custard whisk the yolks with 100g sugar in a large bowl until thick and pale. In a saucepan bring the milk with the split and scraped vanilla pod to the boil, remove from heat, remove vanilla pod. While whisking slowly pour the hot milk to the eggs. Pour the egg/milk mixture into a clean saucepan and gently heat (do not boil), whisking constantly until the custard is thick enough to coat a spoon. Strain into a bowl, set aside to cool, then refrigerate until needed.

Stiffly whisk the egg whites and gradually add the sugar while whisking. Heat water in a large saucepan to just under boiling point. Wet a tablespoon and take small meringue dumplings from the stiff egg white, place into the hot water. Simmer for 3-4 minutes, the turn dumplings and simmer for another 3-4 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and let dry. To serve, float the meringue dumplings on the chilled custard.

## **Chocolate mould**

Serve with double cream or custard.

### *Ingredients*

3-4 tbsp corn flour (3 for a soft set, 4 for a slightly firmer set)  
2 tbsp caster sugar  
2 tbsp dark unsweetened cocoa powder  
500ml whole milk

### *Method*

Put all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to the boil while stirring constantly, keep stirring for 1-2 minutes when mixture starts to thicken. Take off the heat and pour in a bowl, set aside to cool. There will be a skin forming on the top, the skin can be easily pulled off before serving.

### *Variations*

Replace the cocoa powder by 2 tbsp of soluble coffee, or by a few tbsp of caramel sauce (add to the thickened basic mixture of milk, sugar and corn flour just before pouring it into a dish).

### **Semolina mould**

#### *Ingredients*

250ml milk  
1/2 vanilla pod  
1 cinnamon stick  
2 pieces of lemon zest  
a pinch of salt  
25g caster sugar  
25g semolina  
1 yolk  
6g powdered gelatine  
250ml whipping cream  
optional: a little shot of dark rum

#### *Method*

In a saucepan bring milk, scraped vanilla pod, cinnamon stick, lemon zest, sugar and salt to the boil. While stirring slowly add the semolina. Reduce heat and continue to cook for 5 minutes, stirring continuously. Remove the vanilla pod, cinnamon stick and lemon zest. Beat in the yolk. Dissolve gelatine in a little water and add to the semolina mass, mix well. Set aside to cool, stirring occasionally. Whip the cream and add to the semolina mass when cooled, add shot of rum (if wanted). Mix well. Rinse moulds or ramekins with cold water before filling with the semolina mass. Refrigerate overnight. Turn out to serve.

### **Crème caramel**

#### *Ingredients*

70g caster sugar  
1tbsp butter  
500ml whole milk  
80g caster sugar  
1 vanilla pod  
4 eggs

### *Method*

Preheat oven to 190°C. First make the caramel: in a small pan heat 70g sugar with a tbsp of butter while stirring with a wooden spoon until the sugar melts and turns a dark-golden colour. Pour the liquid caramel into a loaf tin and set aside to cool (attention: the caramel will be very hot), it will turn solid. In a saucepan bring the milk with 80g sugar and the split and scraped vanilla pod to the boil, remove from heat. Briefly whisk the eggs in a big bowl, then pour the hot milk over the eggs while stirring, remove the vanilla pod. Strain the milk/egg mixture into the prepared loaf tin. Place loaf tin in a roasting tin, add hot water to the roasting tin to come up about half way of the loaf tin. Bake for about 50-60 minutes until it feels 'wobbly' and set when touching the top (you may have to cover the loaf tin with aluminium foil if the surface darkens too quickly). Set aside to cool, then refrigerate over night. To turn out, run a sharp knife around the edges of the tin, then put the bottom of the tin into a shallow puddle of hot water in the sink for a minute. Remove and dry tin, place a suitable dish over the top of the loaf tin and turn upside down – the set crème and the liquid caramel should easily slip out.

### **Peach and chocolate pudding**

A moist and soft pudding that tastes best lukewarm, served with double cream.

#### *Ingredients*

500g peach puree (from fresh or tinned fruit)  
70g caster sugar (if using fresh peaches)  
2 tbsp dark unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 eggs, lightly beaten  
100g amaretti biscuits, crushed to fine crumbs  
soft butter for greasing

#### *Method*

Place amaretti biscuits in a freezer bag and crush them with a rolling pin (or a bottle) to fine crumbs. Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease an oven-proof dish generously, then sprinkle with caster sugar, turn to coat and tip out any excess. In a big bowl mix the peach puree, the beaten egg, sugar (if used), biscuit crumbs and cocoa powder. Pour mixture into prepared dish and bake for about 30 minutes.

## **b) Sauces**

### **Basic white sauce**

A very useful and flexible basic sauce that can be / needs to be flavoured and varied in many different ways.

#### *Ingredients*

50g butter  
50g plain flour  
500ml milk or stock  
salt and white pepper

#### *Method*

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the flour and whisk until combined. Increase the heat to medium and start adding liquid in portions, bring to the boil while continuously whisking until all liquid is added and the thickness of the sauce is as required. Lower heat and keep simmering for 10 minutes, stirring often.

#### *Variations*

This basic white sauce is very bland. Add any herbs and/or spices that come to mind, the basic sauce can be made from subtle to rather spicy. Replace some of the liquid by white wine, or by cream (which gives a more delicate flavour), or add a little lemon juice. You may also use the cooking liquid of vegetables if you prepare a sauce to go with vegetable. To make a simple cheese sauce, add 60g of finely grated cheese to the cooked white sauce.

### **Gorgonzola cheese sauce**

#### *Ingredients*

200ml cream  
100-150g Gorgonzola cheese (not the creamy variety which is called Gorgonzola dolce)

#### *Method*

Heat the cream in a saucepan nearly to boiling point, crumble the Gorgonzola cheese, add to the cream and keep stirring until smooth, do not overheat. Serve immediately.

#### *Variations*

If you prefer a stronger blue cheese taste, use Roquefort or Stilton cheese.

## **Leek sauce**

### *Ingredients*

4 leeks, trimmed and sliced  
25g butter  
double cream  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

Melt butter in saucepan, add 3 tbsp cream and the leek slices, simmer until leek is tender. Puree mixture, adjust thickness and pass through sieve. Season to taste.

### *Variations*

Use any other vegetable puree, thinning with cream or stock to wanted thickness.

## **Spinach sauce**

### *Ingredients*

100g spinach leaves, washed  
optional: 1 clove of garlic, finely diced  
50ml cream  
salt, a pinch of ground nutmeg

### *Method*

Heat cream in a saucepan, add spinach and garlic (if used) and cook for a few minutes. Puree mixture, pass through a sieve if in doubt, season to taste.

### *Variations*

Try watercress or sorrel leaves instead.

## **Tamed Bolognese sauce**

Use lean twice-minced meat. You may want to replace minced beef by minced lamb, pork, turkey or a mixture of minced meats.

### *Ingredients*

400g lean minced meat  
100g pancetta (or bacon), finely chopped  
2 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp olive oil  
100g onions, finely chopped  
50g carrots, finely chopped  
50g celery, finely chopped  
a good pinch of dried oregano (or marjoram)  
100ml red wine  
200ml beef stock  
3 tbsp tomato puree  
salt and pepper

### *Method*

In a large saucepan heat olive oil and butter. Add pancetta, the oregano and the chopped vegetables, gently fry for a few minutes. Add minced meat and continue to gently fry until meat is slightly browned. Add wine, increase heat and cook until liquid is reduced. Add tomato puree and stock, lower heat and cook, covered, for about an hour (add more stock or water if necessary), season to taste. Puree the sauce before serving.

## **Creamy anchovies and garlic sauce**

Don't be afraid of the ingredients – the result is much 'kinder' than you might think; this sauce goes well with vegetables..

### *Ingredients*

200ml extra-thick double cream  
4 tbsp butter  
8 anchovy fillets, washed, drained and chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely diced

### *Method*

Melt the butter in a saucepan, add anchovy and garlic and cook over low heat while stirring until garlic is soft and anchovy have disintegrated; pass mixture through a sieve and return to saucepan. Warm double cream in another saucepan and gradually whisk into the warm butter/anchovy mixture. Heat mixture while whisking but do not let boil. Serve immediately (mixture will split on standing).

## **Tuna sauce (cold)**

### *Ingredients*

200g tinned tuna in oil, drained, flaked  
3 tbsp olive oil  
4 anchovy fillets, rinsed and drained, chopped  
2 tbsp capers, rinsed and drained, chopped  
2 tbsp lemon juice  
1 hard-boiled egg yolk, chopped  
ca. 150ml cream  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

Puree tuna with olive oil, anchovy, capers, lemon juice and yolk. Adjust thickness with cream and pass through a sieve, season to taste.

## **c) Soft food (with junks and bits)**

By now the journey has taken us nearly back to 'ordinary' food and to the inspirations from 'ordinary' cookbooks. It may still be useful to sketch a few ideas about foods that can help to make the transition away from pureed foods and getting used to soft and tender junks in your food. It is probably easiest to rely initially on dishes with plenty of sauce or gravy. Recycle some of the recipes for pureed foods and just omit the pureeing step.

There are the obvious suspects such as omelettes (plain, with cheese, or fresh herbs), cauliflower cheese, or pasta (or polenta) with any kind of sauce you enjoy. All kinds of cooked vegetables in sauce, or served cold as a salad with plenty of dressing, are suitable. Gently fried tuna or swordfish steaks are tender and go well with mayonnaise and/or vegetable sauces. Chicken and rabbit are good sources of tender meat. Starting from twice-minced meats you may start thinking about meatballs, burgers (filling them with feta cheese makes for a moist burger) or meatloaf and the like.

For sweet foods think about moving on to fruit compotes, sponge puddings with custard or compotes, trifles of all kinds, sweet omelettes.

A few ideas below:

## **i) Savoury**

### **Potatoes in parsley sauce**

#### *Ingredients*

1 quantity basic white sauce, made with stock (see part V b))  
a good handful of finely chopped flat-leaf parsley  
4 medium potatoes, cooked and chopped into bite-size cubes

#### *Method*

Heat the white sauce and add the chopped parsley, puree the sauce and return to the saucepan. Adjust thickness as required, add potato cubes and reheat.

#### *Variations*

Variations of the basic white sauce work well for many cooked and chopped vegetables, for example:

cauliflower (make white sauce with milk, add ground nutmeg and some grated cheese)

carrots (make white sauce with chicken stock, add fresh tarragon or dill and a splash of lemon juice)

broccoli (make white sauce with stock and a little white wine, add some cream)

Serve cooked chopped vegetables with some other sauce (see part V b)).

### **Mushroom filled pancakes**

#### *Ingredients*

*for the pancake mix (makes 6-8:thin pancakes)*

50g butter

180g flour

3 eggs

350ml milk

a pinch of salt

*for the mushroom filling:*

1 quantity of white sauce, made with milk and 60g finely grated Parmesan cheese

a knob of butter

100g mushrooms, cleaned and thinly sliced

1 tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

salt and white pepper

a shot of brandy

soft butter for greasing  
a few tbsp of Parmesan cheese and butter flakes

### *Method*

Melt the butter. In a bowl whisk the eggs, milk salt and flour until you have a smooth mix, add the melted butter. Set aside for 30 minutes. Whisk again before making the pancakes. Ladle some pancake mix into a preheated non-stick pan, move pan around to cover base (no need to add fat to the pan because of the melted butter in the mix). Cook until lightly browned on the bottom side, turn and cook the other side. Set pancakes aside.

Melt a knob of butter in a frying pan, add the prepared mushrooms and parsley and cook until fairly dry. Add a shot of brandy, increase heat and reduce liquid until fairly dry. Season to taste.

Preheat oven to 200°C. Grease a shallow ovenproof dish with soft butter, set aside. Smear each pancake with a little white sauce, top with a tbsp of cooked mushrooms and roll up. Place pancakes in one layer in the prepared dish. Pour over the remaining white sauce, sprinkle with finely grated Parmesan and a few flakes of butter, Bake for 10-15 minutes until golden and bubbling.

### *Variations*

There are endless variations for the filling, for example use thick Bolognese sauce, or cooked asparagus in white sauce, or a thick paste made from cooked spinach, yolk and ricotta cheese.

## **Chicken ragout**

### *Ingredients*

500g chicken breast, with skin and bones  
1 onion, quartered  
2 bay leaves  
3 cloves, a few pepper corns  
1 tsp pepper corns  
1 quantity of white sauce, made with chicken stock and cream  
salt and white pepper  
1 tsp lemon juice  
optional: 1 tsp of prepared mustard  
a handful of cooked chopped carrots  
a handful of cooked green peas

### *Method*

In a saucepan cover chicken breast with cold water, add onion, bay leaves, cloves and pepper corns. Heat and gently boil for about 30 minutes until chicken is cooked. Remove from heat, remove chicken and strain stock, set both aside. Bone and skin chicken, chop meat, set aside. Prepare white sauce with the chicken stock and a little cream, season to taste with salt, white pepper, lemon juice and mustard (if used). Add chicken pieces, carrots and peas and reheat.

### *Variations*

Use other cooked vegetables such as chopped cooked mushrooms or asparagus. Try a different flavour altogether and flavour the white sauce with a tsp of mild curry powder and add banana slices (just before serving) instead of vegetables.

## **Fish pot (or fish pie)**

### *Ingredients*

350ml milk  
1 bay leave  
100g smoked fish (salmon, mackerel)  
300g cod fillet  
100g shrimps  
2 leeks, cleaned, and sliced  
2 tbsp butter  
2 tbsp flour  
1 tsp prepared mustard  
some finely grated lemon zest  
salt and white pepper

### *Method*

Heat the milk with the bay leave in a saucepan. Add the fresh and smoked fish and poach for 5-10 minutes. Remove the fish and set aside. Strain the milk and set aside. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add leek and cook for 5-10 minutes until soft. Add the flour and use the poaching milk to prepare a white sauce, stirring constantly. Season to taste with mustard, lemon zest, salt and pepper. Adjust thickness as required. Tear the poached fish into pieces, add fish and shrimps to the sauce and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.

### *Variation*

If you are not yet tired of potato mash, make this into a fish pie. Place fish and sauce in a shallow baking dish, cover with potato mash (made from 750g potatoes) and bake at 200°C for ca. 30 minutes.

## **Rabbit stew**

### *Ingredients*

300g rabbit meat, diced, small pieces  
2 tbsp oil  
salt and pepper  
2 tbsp butter  
150g mixed mushrooms, prepared and sliced  
200ml stock  
150ml cream  
3 bay leaves  
8 crushed juniper berries  
5 pepper corns  
1 clove  
ca. 1 tbsp corn flour, mixed with a little water  
ca. 1 tsp lemon juice

### *Method*

Heat oil in a pan and gently fry the meat pieces for a few minutes, season, remove from pan and set aside. Add butter to the pan and fry mushrooms. When mushrooms are fairly dry, add stock and cream. Place spices in a tea egg and add to pan. Bring to the boil and cook for 10-15 minutes, uncovered. Remove spices. Adjust thickness with corn flour, add meat pieces and cook over low heat for another 5-10 minutes. Season to taste with a little lemon juice, salt and white pepper.

### *Variations*

Use turkey or chicken meat instead.

## ii) Sweet

### **Baked apples**

#### *Ingredients*

2 cooking apples (Bramley)  
1-2 tsp lemon juice  
soft butter for greasing  
3 tbsp caster sugar  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
ca. 150-200ml double cream  
optional: 2-3 tbsp sultanas, soaked in rum or brandy

#### *Method*

Mix sugar and ground cinnamon. Preheat oven to 190°C. Grease a shallow baking dish with soft butter, sprinkle with half the cinnamon sugar, turn dish to cover. Peel apples, half horizontally and remove core. Put apple halves in baking dish, cut side up. Brush with lemon juice and sprinkle with remaining cinnamon sugar. If used, divide sultanas in apple halves. Cover everything with double cream and bake for about 30 minutes until apples are soft. Serve lukewarm.

### **Pears poached in red wine**

Serve with whipped cream

#### *Ingredients*

2 ripe pears  
400ml red wine  
2 tbsp caster sugar  
1 cinnamon stick  
2 cloves  
finely grated zest of 1 lemon (unwaxed)

#### *Method*

Peel and core the pears, cut into quarters. Heat all other ingredients in a saucepan, add pear quarters and simmer until soft. Remove pear pieces and place in a bowl. Turn up heat and cook wine uncovered until much reduced to almost syrup consistency (all alcohol will have evaporated by that stage...). Spoon syrup over pears and refrigerate before serving.

## **Soft dark chocolate biscuits**

These soft biscuits are not particularly sweet and go well with custard or sweetened double cream. Can be kept in a tin for several days.

### *Ingredients*

125g butter  
3 eggs, separated  
90g caster sugar  
50g plain flour  
100g dark chocolate (70 % cocoa), broken into pieces

### *Method*

Preheat oven to 180°C. Melt butter and chocolate in a bowl over hot water, stirring occasionally, set aside to cool. Whisk sugar and yolks until creamy and pale. Add melted butter/chocolate to the creamed yolks, mix well, add flour and stir in. In a separate bowl stiffly whip the egg whites. Fold egg whites into chocolate mixture. Line a large baking tray with greaseproof paper and pour mixture on, spread out to about ½ cm even thickness,. Bake for 15 minutes. Cut into small squares and set aside to cool.



