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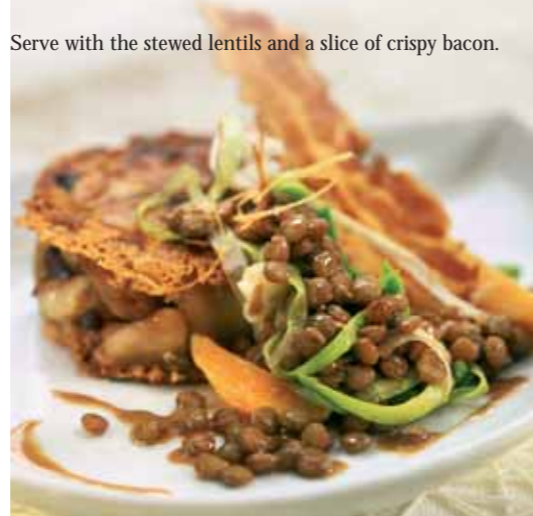
Pardina Lentils with pig's trotters (Zampone e lenticchie)

4 pig's trotters
200 g pardina lentils
2 carrots
1 onion
1 leek
1 potato
Vegetable stock
1 black sausage

Peel and chop the onion, chop the carrots and slice the leek and put them all in a saucepan with plenty of water along with a bay leaf and a few black peppercorns. Bring to the boil and add the pig's trotters. Cook over a medium heat until they are cooked through, about 1 hour. Remove, allow to cool and debone. Spread sheets of clingfilm on the worktop and arrange rectangles of the boned pig's trotters on top with a small pile of crumbed black sausage in the centre. With the help of the clingfilm, roll the trotter up into a cylindrical shape. You may need to use several layers of clingfilm to ensure it is tightly enclosed. Put in the fridge to chill.

Meanwhile, put the lentils on to cook in the vegetable stock along with vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, leek and onion, cut into small dice, until they are all cooked. When the pig's trotters are cold, slice into medallions 3 cm thick and sear on the griddle with a little olive oil and a pinch of salt, without removing the clingfilm, until both sides are crispy. You can then make a cut in the clingfilm and remove it.

Serve with the stewed lentils and a slice of crispy bacon.



Roast rack of lamb and Blackeye beans

4 racks of lamb, with 3 ribs each
200 g Blackeye beans
Vegetable stock
1 garlic clove
1 sprig fresh rosemary
Salt and pepper

Having previously soaked the Blackeye beans, put them on to cook in the vegetable stock until tender. Drain and reserve. Sear the racks of lamb in a frying pan with a little olive oil until golden and then finish cooking in the oven at 180°C for around 4 minutes.

When ready to serve, heat a splash of olive oil in the frying pan and put in the mashed garlic clove and sprig of rosemary; stir them round for a few minutes until the oil has taken on the flavour, then remove the garlic and rosemary and add the cooked Blackeye beans. Sauté for a few minutes and season with salt and pepper.

Form a bed of beans on each plate and top with the roast lamb racks.




Pulses at Christmas



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Reinventing cuisine is always an art




but attempting it at Christmas can present a real challenge in breaking with the traditions typical of this time of year. Canapés that break the monotony, unusual little tapas that surprise and delight, all find an excellent ally in the range of pulses available to us.


Visualise the table on Christmas Eve as the perfect setting for your creativity: the place where the usual old canapés always used to sit is now taken by mouth-watering morsels based on colourful little beans with different toppings served in spoons; in the place of the traditional prawn cocktail there is now a warm salad of wild mushrooms, vegetables and Pedrosillano chickpeas, the most 'chic' of pulses. Another wonderful starter would be pasta with an unusual filling: lentils with sautéed vegetables on a creamy leek sauce with a layer of fresh truffle shavings for that final luxurious touch.



If you wish to continue on the theme, pulses can even make an excellent garnish for meats such as pork or rack of lamb. In Italy, for example, it is traditional to eat pig's trotters with lentils; to make a more refined version, think of medallions of boned pig's trotters stuffed with black sausage and seared on a very hot griddle so the outside is deliciously crispy, accompanied by lentils stewed in a rich vegetable stock topped by a slice of crispy bacon.



One of the major plus points of pulses in general is that they marry well with almost everything: vegetables, white meats, red meats, fish, rice and pasta. American pulses guarantee an excellent result; they are more tender and have thinner skins. Another argument in favour of American pulses in particular is that their soaking and cooking times are so much shorter than those of other pulses - and saving time at Christmas is something we're all grateful for.



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Three spoons canapé of beans

Spoon of black beans, potato and squid in its own ink

Cooked black beans
Boiled potato
Grilled squid
Squid ink
Salt and pepper

Clean the squid and griddle for a few minutes, slice into rings and then put in a bowl with a tablespoonful of ink dissolved in a little fish stock; stir until it takes on the colour. Place a few black beans at the base of the spoon, topped with a slice of boiled potato and finally a squid ring. Season to taste and serve.

Spoon of red beans, chistorra sausage and mangetout


Cooked small red beans
Chistorra sausage
Mangetout
Salt and pepper

Cut the mangetout into julienne and blanch for a minute in boiling water. Cut the chistorra sausage into small dice and sauté in a little olive oil. Put some beans at the bottom of the spoon, then the mangetout julienne and finally the diced chistorra. Season to taste and serve.

Spoon of haricot beans, white sausage and Romesco sauce

Cooked haricot beans
White sausage
Romesco sauce

Assemble the spoons by placing a few beans at the bottom, topped by a few dice of sausage and a dollop of Romesco sauce and serve



Tapa of pardina lentil ravioli with leek cream and truffle

4 wonton wrappers
Cooked pardina lentils
Assorted vegetables: young garlic shoots, carrot, red pepper

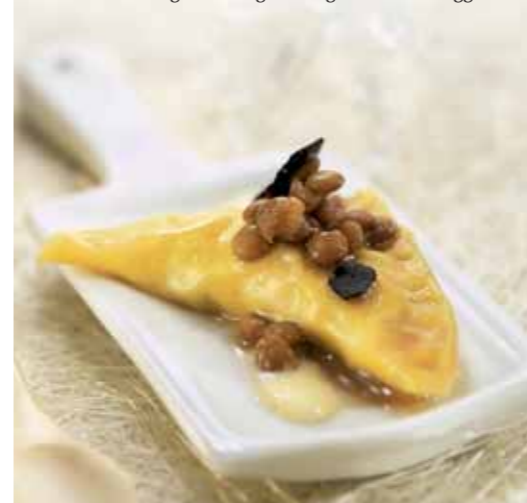
For the leek cream:

1 potato
1 leek
1 onion
1/2 litre single cream

To make the leek sauce, peel the potato and onion and chop finely along with the leek. Sweat for a few minutes with a little olive oil and add the cream. Cook until the vegetables are tender and then put through the blender until you have a creamy sauce. Press through a chinois strainer and keep aside. Chop the garlic shoots, carrot and red pepper and sauté with a little olive oil. Add the cooked lentils and season with soy sauce and black pepper.

In the centre of each wonton wrapper, place a teaspoonful of the sauté mixture, fold up into a triangle and seal the edges with egg*; press the edges with a fork to seal well. Steam the ravioli for 2 minutes and remove from the heat. Serve the ravioli with the leek cream and a few shavings of fresh truffle on top.

*To make even smaller canapés, stretch the wonton wrapper out a little, fill with the mixture, fold into a triangle and then into another triangle, sealing the edges well with egg.



Warm salad of vegetables, wild mushrooms and Pedrosillano chickpeas

2 carrots
80 g flat green beans
1 leek
100 g wild mushrooms
150 g cooked Pedrosillano chickpeas

For the dressing:

Olive oil, balsamic vinegar, soy sauce and a teaspoonful of honey

Clean the vegetables. Julienne the carrots, green beans and leeks. Blanch in boiling water for one minute, then refresh in cold water. Keep aside.

Clean and slice the wild mushrooms.

Sauté the mushrooms in a frying pan with a splash of olive oil; remove and add the julienne vegetables and chickpeas. Sauté for a couple of minutes, then remove and add to the mushrooms.

Mound the mixture on plates, drizzle with dressing and serve.

