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May

The month with 4 bank holidays!
Hopefully all of them sunny...

by Hazel Foster

Coconut Cream with Poached Rhubarb (makes 4)

(If you can't find rhubarb it would work well with pineapple, although you won't need the sugar when you poach – just a little water and vanilla)

- 2 sheets leaf gelatine
- 400ml can coconut milk
- 6 tbsp caster sugar
- 1 vanilla pod
- 300g rhubarb, cut into short lengths

Put the gelatine into a bowl and cover with cold water. Leave to soak for 5 mins until softened. Heat the coconut milk with 2 tbsp sugar in a pan. Bring to a gentle simmer, then remove from the heat. Lift the gelatine from the water and stir into the coconut milk. Keep stirring until the gelatine has dissolved, then pour into four small glass dishes or dessert bowls (if using glass, leave the milk to cool a little first). When the creams are cool, transfer to the fridge and leave to set.

Split the vanilla pod down the centre and put into a pan with 2 tbsp water and the remaining 4 tbsp sugar. Bring slowly to the boil to dissolve the sugar, then add the rhubarb and poach gently until softened but not mushy, about 3-4 mins. Leave to cool. Spoon the rhubarb over the coconut creams to serve.

Rhubarb is a good source of fibre, vitamin C and calcium. It is also good as part of a low-cholesterol diet as it has cholesterol-lowering properties

*Please note that if you tried to make last months hot cross buns you will have noticed that the Easter Bunny stole the first ingredient from the list – so, if you do want to use the recipe sometime, the first ingredient is 300ml milk.

I usually take longer trying to decide what recipes you, the readers might like, than actually typing up my article! If you have any feedback or requests on the types of things you'd like to see and try yourself, please email me! E: homechef79@gmail.com

We appear to have turned the corner weather wise and have already enjoyed some lovely sunny days in the 20's, you might even be getting your BBQ's out! – So this month I thought something lighter for those sunny days, using the delicious asparagus that is in season at the moment (and low-fat, especially if you leave the dressing off – as sun = bikini!). Then another seasonal ingredient, rhubarb – which reminds me of childhood, picking it straight from the garden and just dipping it in sugar for a snack, heaven! Enjoy!



Warm Poached Chicken and Asparagus Salad

(adjust ingredients according to how many you are cooking for)

- Whole chicken
- Green or white asparagus
- Rocket and baby spinach leaves
- New potatoes
- Red onion, sliced into thin half moons

Dressing

- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2-3 tps runny honey
- 1 tbsp water
- Sea salt and ground black pepper

To poach the chicken simply place the chicken breastside down in a large pan with about 1 litre water (depends on size of pan – you want the water to be about 2"-3" deep – don't let it boil dry), put the lid on the pan and leave it on low simmer for around 1hr 10 mins (depending on the size of your chicken) and turn it over about half way through cooking. Once cooked and cool enough to handle you will find that the chicken falls off the carcass very easily. (for those of you with cats and dogs, the poaching liquor will go jelly like as it cools and they will love it).

To make the dressing place all the ingredients into a jar, put the lid on and shake until combined – adjust to taste.

Snap the woody ends off the asparagus and steam for 3-6 mins.

Simmer new potatoes in salted boiling water until tender (about 10 mins) – once cooked, drain and you can toss them in a little of the dressing or butter whilst still warm. Depending on their size you may wish to half them at this stage.

To assemble the salad toss the salad leaves in a little dressing and heap onto plates, then add your slices of red onion, chicken, asparagus and new potatoes.

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