

Mango Chia Pudding

Mango chia pudding is a great combination of luscious fruit and a super food, both grown locally in Northern Australia. Chia originated in Mexico and its status as a super food, while sometimes exaggerated, is certainly impressive. Chia has high levels of fibre (34%), calcium (5 x milk calcium), omega-3 fatty acids (18%) as well as being a good source of protein and minerals. A couple of tablespoons of chia in your diet, perhaps as a summer breakfast option, will provide you with about a third of your daily fiber requirements. If you are a vegetarian it is even more valuable as a source of protein, calcium and fat. If you like things like sago pudding topped with fruit then you will probably enjoy a chia pudding and with the added bonus that it is good for you, unlike sago, which has little nutritional value.

Mango Chia Pudding

serves 4-6

- pulped flesh of a mango and juice of an orange, approximately 1 cup
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup yoghurt
- 3/4 cup black chia seeds

Mix ingredients together and chill overnight, ready for breakfast the next day. The chia seeds will absorb 10 times their weight in liquid, swelling like sago, so a liquid mix is good as it will all be absorbed overnight. Serve with slices of mango. Store refrigerated for a couple of days.

[Australia Chia, Atherton Tableland region of Northern Queensland](#)

[Australian Chia, The Kimberley, WA](#)

Australian Chia Co brand of black chia seeds are available at Woolworths \$13/500g

Buy bulk Australian chia from wholefoods shop [The Source](#) or buy online [direct from the producers](#)

Good review by [Choice : Chia seeds, Superfood or Fad](#)

[Chocolate Plum Spice Cake](#)

I decided to get a bit inventive by using mixed spice and plum compote when doing a scale-up test of the chocolate sponge for my black forest cake. As a result I created a chocolate plum spice cake that was very nice indeed. If you have a cake recipe that you love and consistently rely on, why not tinker with it and take it in another direction. We learn to play with savoury food, adding our own touches and omitting ingredients depending on circumstances, but most people rarely muck around with a cake. I think as long as you respect the proportions of eggs, flour and fat, there is certainly room for creative maneuver. I added [mixed spice from Gewürzhaus spice shop](#) to the cake batter. The cassia bark, ginger, nutmeg, allspice and clove mix gave the chocolate cake a lovely deep, Christmas pudding flavour that I contrasted with a home made plum compote. I would recommend using a plum compote similar to the middle European, *powidl*, a cooked down plum paste without the addition of sugar to give some tartness. If you have a plum tree, think about using some of those plums for a compote this summer. Alternatively, you could use black or red currant jam or plum jam. This cake has a rather nice Christmas feel to it and could be popular for families not so fond of traditional Christmas pudding.

Line a rectangular 25 cm x 36 cm x2 cm baking pan with baking

paper.

Preheat the oven to 150°C

- 5 eggs, separated
- pinch salt
- 66 g caster sugar
- 33 g icing sugar
- 21 g cocoa powder
- 105 g flour
- 2 tbs neutral vegetable oil
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 250 g plum compote
- 150 ml pure cream, whipped*
- 60 g dark 70 % cocoa chocolate
- 60 ml cream, extra

Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until foaming. Gradually add the caster sugar and beat until stiff but with the tip of the peaks still drooping. Set the beaten white aside and now beat the egg yolks with the icing sugar until pale and thick. Sift the cocoa, flour and spice mix. Fold the beaten egg whites through the beaten egg yolk, followed by the mixed dry ingredients. Add the oil and fold through the mix. Spread the batter evenly in the pan and bake for approximately 10 minutes.

Cool the cake on a wire rack. Once cool peel off the baking paper and then cut the cake in half crosswise and trim edges neatly.

Sandwich the two slabs of cake with plum compote and whipped cream.

Prepare the chocolate ganache by heating the cream in a small saucepan until it comes to the boil. If not using chocolate callets, cut up the chocolate into small pieces and place in a bowl. Add the hot cream to the bowl of chocolate and mix well with a spatula until all the chocolate has melted and is

smooth and shiny. When cooling and slightly thickened, pour the ganache over the top of the cake and quickly smooth it out to the edges evenly. Decorate with dried rose petals or edible flowers.

*Tip: add a tablespoon or two of natural yoghurt to the cream and whip to lighten the load.





One Bowl Wonder

The Japanese donburi or rice bowl truly is a one bowl wonder. The Japanese make cooking for one a simple affair. It is partly the mindset of simplicity and partly a frugal approach to eating that is not only healthy and economical but practical when your fridge contents don't look that promising. Probably one of my favorite one bowl wonders is oyakodon, *don* referring to the rice bowl and *oyako*, meaning parent and child, which in this dish refers to the chicken and egg. It is a very comforting dish and can be made with one chicken thigh fillet or even left over cooked chicken. All you need is a bowl of a rice, an egg, onion or a couple of spring onions,

your chicken and the usual suspects of the Japanese pantry; dashi stock powder, soy sauce and mirin. Cook your Japanese rice and while it is resting gently fry the onion and the chicken pieces (if using cooked chicken you just need to heat it), add 100 ml dashi stock and a tablespoon each of soy and mirin. Bring that to the simmer and then turn off the heat. Put your hot rice into a rice bowl then gently beat the egg in a small bowl with your chopsticks. Pour it onto the still hot chicken, mix it through quickly and then scrape it immediately onto the rice. You want the egg to retain a creamy texture. Done.

For a vegetarian donburi I use silken tofu, a couple of spring onions, one shiitaki mushroom and maybe something green like a handful of shaved Savoy cabbage, some spinach leaves or a few small florets of broccoli. For the sauce I like the one used for the dish, mapo tofu. For one serve you just need a dessert spoon each of sweet chili sauce, oyster sauce, soy, mirin and water. You can also add a teaspoon of miso. Simmer a small block of silken tofu in water for 5 minutes, drain it in a sieve and let it cool to firm it up a bit before cutting into cubes. Fry the sliced onion and shiitaki, mix in the sauce and the vegetable, letting it cook for 2-5 minutes, depending on what vegetable you are using and then finally add the tofu and heat it gently. Add to the top of your rice bowl. Done.

The most important part of these frugal meals is the rice. Japanese short grain rice is really beautiful and once you try it you will find it hard to go back to other types. I recommend getting a big bag from an Asian grocery that stocks Japanese goods. For one-person cooking using a small cast-iron enameled casserole dish, like Le Creuset, is the best way to prepare the rice or alternately you can buy a small ceramic Japanese rice pot at a specialty store. A rice cooker is useful when cooking for more people. For one person you only need 90 grams of rice.

To prepare your rice. Weigh out 90 grams of rice and then wash it in a sieve under running water, moving your fingers through the grains to saturate them with water. Put the rice into the cast-iron pot along with 110 mls of water and leave that to soak for about 30 minutes. Heat the rice and when it starts to boil, cover with the lid and place the dish on the lowest heat setting possible for 13 minutes. Once the time is up turn the heat off and rest the rice for a further 13 minutes. During that 13 minutes of rest time you can cook the topping for your one bowl wonder. Use a plastic or wooden paddle to transfer big scoops of the rice to your rice bowl. It should be a little bit sticky and hold together nicely, so it is easy to eat with chopsticks. Cooking the rice until it is just right might take a few goes but once you get the hang of it you can virtually do it blindfolded. If you are concerned about eating too much white rice, try brown rice for a change or add some mixed grains or cooked adzuki beans to the rice. Grain mixes for rice can also be purchased at Japanese grocers.

[Tokyo Hometown Supermarket, Elizabeth Street, Melbourne](#)

[Suzuran, Camberwell](#)

[Hinoki, Fitzroy](#)

[Fuji Mart, South Yarra](#)



Quail – the boned and the beautiful

I enjoy eating quail; those little packages of tender, dark meat that are not quite chicken and not quite a game bird, somewhere in between, much like the middle child of the poultry family. I often want to serve them to dinner guests, split, marinated in olive oil, lemon and garlic and quickly barbecued but am reluctant because few people enjoy dealing with the little bones. To give the little birds a chance to grace the dinner table in style and be enjoyed by all I decided to bone the little buggers and stuff them with wild

mushrooms and chestnuts as a last farewell to winter. YouTube was my learning tool and I found an excellent de-boning class with Jacques Pepin. By the time you are onto your second or third quail you'll find it quite a routine operation. But if it looks too difficult or icky for you then ask your friendly butcher if they will do it for you but don't ask them on busy Saturday morning, ask ahead, so they can do it in a quiet time on a Friday. If you haven't secreted away some wild mushrooms in your freezer then I suggest using a more flavoursome commercial variety, such as chestnut or shiitaki. I am sure everyone will enjoy these boned and beautiful little roasts, so much so that they will probably suck on the tiny drumsticks remaining.

For 4-6

- 6 quail, deboned
- 3 leeks, sliced
- olive oil
- 2 anchovy fillets
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4-6 wild mushrooms (slippery jacks or pines), finely diced
- handful of chestnuts, chopped
- 1 tbs fresh thyme leaves
- 4-6 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbs chopped parsley
- 2 thick slices white bread, crusts removed
- 1 tbs butter, room temperature
- black pepper

De-bone the quail as shown in the youtube instructions. To make the stuffing: saute the leeks in olive oil with the anchovies until softened but not browned. Do this by covering the frypan with a lid. Add the garlic, herbs and mushrooms and cook for a few minutes. Stir in the chopped chestnuts. Put the bread in a food processor and process to crumbs. Add half the

mushroom mix and the butter and process to combine. Remove the stuffing from the food processor and mix through the remaining stuffing left in the frypan. This will give the stuffing a little more texture. Season with black pepper. There should be enough saltiness from the anchovies, so no need to add salt. Stuff the boned quail, securing each end with string or toothpicks. Rub the outside with olive oil and roast the birds at 180°C for approximately 35 minutes, turning the birds over half way through cooking. Serve the birds cut in half lengthwise.





To Buy Quail:

Donati's Fine Meat, 402 Lygon Street, Carlton

[Cannings Free Range Butchers](#)

[Peter Bouchier](#)

[MeatSmith](#)

Prahran and Queen Victoria Markets

Design Your Own Chocolate Bars

Small personalised gifts are delightful, both at the receiving and giving end. In giving you have the added pleasure of creating the gift, as I recently experienced with making my own chocolate bars. Chocolate bars are an easy inroad into chocolate making, as they do not require the multiple and fiddly steps of creating pralines or filled chocolates. The first step to making good chocolate bars is to learn to temper couverture chocolate and this is easily done in a microwave. Tempering chocolate is a process of melting the chocolate gently so that a particular cocoa butter crystal, the beta crystal, becomes the dominant form in the molten mass, thus ensuring that once the chocolate hardens it is shiny, smooth in texture and snaps crisply. Once you have mastered that technique you are ready to pour it into your chosen moulds and start decorating.

[The Savour Chocolate and Patisserie School](#) in Brunswick has a shop with everything you need. They stock milk, dark and single origin Callebaut chocolate buttons and polycarbonate moulds which are rigid, easy to use, quality moulds. You can shop online too.

Ensure your moulds are completely clean and dry before use. After tempering your chocolate, immediately pour it into the mould, overfilling it slightly and using a metal scraper, scrape off the excess into a bowl for re-use at another time.

You can decorate the back side of the chocolate bar with cocoa nibs, nuts, glace fruit or dried rose petals while the chocolate is still soft. Place the decorated bars in the fridge for 15 minutes to harden and shrink away from the sides of the mould. To remove the bars, place a clean piece of grease proof or baking paper on the kitchen bench. Grabbing opposite corners, slightly twist the mould and then tap upside down on one corner over the paper. They should drop out immediately. Use disposable gloves to handle the bars; they will prevent finger prints and melted edges spoiling your creations.

Your creative process doesn't stop at this point. Wrapping the bars in tissue paper and beautiful slips of printed paper is an important part of making this artistic product and great fun. Start collecting interesting paper and remember you don't need much of it, so some bits can be re-cycled from other decorative packaging. Beautiful papers, including rice paper, can also be bought quite cheaply on your travels to exotic countries or obtained from craft and art suppliers. Try [papermarc](#) in Hawthorn for a great selection of Japanese papers. If you are very artistic you could even hand paint a design.

