



Autumn Bhel Puri

With curried apple bhaji

Bhel Puri is a popular street snack found throughout India. It is based around puffed rice mixed with seasonal vegetables and cooked pulses dressed with a tangy sauce. Improvise with the ingredients and adjust the spices and chilli to your palate. The apple bhaji is not traditional, but it is delicious. The combination of sweet and tart apples with, the puffed grain, veggies and pungent spices makes for a delicious dish. Prep the parts in advance, but assemble just before serving or it goes soggy!

For the apple bhaji:

- 2 sweet eating apples, peeled, cored and cubed
- 2 tart cooking apples, peeled, cored and cubed
- 1 onion, sliced very fine
- 1 tsp green chillies, minced
- 1 tsp mustard seeds and 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ginger, minced
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 2 tbsp sunflower oil or gee
- 6 curry leaves

1. Heat oil or gee in a large pan over a medium heat. Add mustard seeds, when they start to pop, add the cumin seeds, curry leaves, green chillies, ginger and onions and sauté till the onions just start to turn brown.
2. Add the diced apples and turmeric and mix vigorously.
3. Add 2 tbsp of water, cover and cook on low heat for a few minutes and add salt to taste.

For the Bhel Puri

- 2 cups puffed rice, wheat or spelt
- 1 red onion, very finely chopped
- 1 large tomato, finely chopped
- ½ cucumber, diced
- Juice of one lime
- 250 ml natural yoghurt
- 2 tsp home made masala or a shop bought chaat masala powder
- 2 green chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
- 4 tbsp fresh coriander, chopped
- Salt to taste
- 2 tsp mustard oil

1. For home made masala powder, dry roast 3 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp coriander seeds and 2 dried red chillies. Cool and grind together with a tsp of salt to a fine powder.
2. To make up Bhel Puri, just before serving, toss the puffed rice with the chopped vegetables, chillies and masala powder. Dress this with lime juice, mix well and top with a spoon of apple bhaji, some yoghurt and chopped coriander.





Harvest Tortilla

This is a delicious and versatile variation on a Spanish omelette using autumn harvest vegetables. It is also a good recipe for using up leftovers. I tend to use a variety of harvest vegetables, but as a guide, use something strong from the onion family, something rich and dense like butternut squash, potato or swede, and something green like runner beans, kale or broccoli. It serves 4-6 people, can be eaten hot or cold, and makes a great packed lunch for adults and children.

6 free range eggs

½ medium size butternut squash, cut into slices about 3 mm thick

1 medium leek, washed and sliced

1 handful runner beans, topped, tailed, de-stringed and sliced

2 cloves garlic, chopped

½ tsp dried chilli flakes or a pinch of chilli powder

Olive oil

Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Prepare all of your vegetables first and bring a pot of water to the boil.
2. Place a metal colander or steamer over the boiling water and steam the squash for about 5 minutes and then add the sliced beans to the steamer and continue cooking until both are tender, about 5 minutes more.
3. While steaming, heat a large heavy bottomed pan over a slow heat, add 1 tbsp olive oil and gently fry the leek until browned.
4. Add the chilli and garlic and cook for a further minute.
5. In a large bowl beat all 6 eggs until light and fluffy. Add the leeks, chilli, garlic, and steamed vegetables to the eggs and season with salt and pepper.
6. Wipe the pan, reheat and add a tablespoon more olive oil. Add the mixture and cook gently, moving the set egg away from the sides and allowing the loose egg to take its place. Continue doing this until the egg starts to set, about 3 - 5 minutes.
7. To turn, place a plate over the tortilla, your hand on the plate, and flip the pan over so you are left with the cooked side up. Slide this back into the pan and cook for a further 3 minutes. If you don't want to attempt this stage, you can finish the tortilla off under a grill. The pan should be no closer than 5cm to the grill and make sure that the handle is not under direct heat. If you want, you can cover the handle in tin foil to protect it.
8. Allow the tortilla to cool for 10 minutes before you slice into wedges and serve.





Mushrooms stuffed with leeks, nettles and hazelnuts

I like to make this dish after the first frosts or in the spring when all that's left in my garden are leeks and new shoots of nettles. This dish is quick to prepare yet very impressive with bold, deep flavours. It lends itself to countless variations and can be prepared in advance and finished off just before serving. For children stuff a smaller sized chestnut mushrooms. Serves 4

4 large Portobello or 16 Chestnut Mushrooms
1 cup nettle tops, washed and chopped
2 cups of chopped leeks
½ cup toasted hazelnuts, crushed or chopped
150 g strong cheese such as stilton or mature cheddar
2 cloves garlic (sliced finely)
1 tbsp olive oil
Salt and pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 180c/380f and prepare the mushrooms by removing the stalks and dusting off any visible dirt.
2. Heat 1 tbsp of olive oil in a pan and slowly fry the leeks, chopped up mushroom stalks and garlic for 5 minutes.
3. Add the nettles, season with salt and pepper and cook for a minute or two more.
4. Transfer the leeks and kale to a bowl and mix together with the nuts and half the cheese.
5. Spoon the leek mixture equally into the mushrooms with the remaining cheese on top.
6. Place mushrooms into an oiled baking tray and bake in the oven for 20 - 25 minutes.
7. For fireside cooking, heat a large heavy frying pan over slow coals. Add a tbsp of extra oil or butter add the mushrooms and cover with a lid or foil. Slowly fry/braze the mushrooms for 10 minutes. Uncover and cook until the juices reduce a little before serving.





Apple Fritters

Spiked with perry and pepper

This is a truly delicious dish, sweet, hot and rich, which on cold winter days, really hits the spot. Serve it as a sweet, dusted in sugar or dipped in thick hot chocolate or with strong cheese, white meats or fish. Make sure the oil is up to the correct heat or the batter will drink up the fat and be greasy and soggy.

Sunflower oil, for deep frying
150 g self-raising flour, plus extra for dusting
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp ground black pepper
50g caster sugar
175-200ml perry or pear juice
4 firm eating apples such as Cox or Windsor

Method

1. Heat the oil in a deep fat fryer or large saucepan to 180 °C.
2. Cut out the core from the apples using an apple corer and peel. Remove the top and bottom from the apples and then slice the into about 2cm thick slices.
To make the batter, sift the flour and cinnamon into a bowl and stir in the sugar. Whisk in enough of the perry or pear juice, giving you a thick coating batter.
3. Dip the apple slices into the batter and carefully slide into the hot oil. Do just a few at a time, to prevent them from sticking together. Fry for about 1-2 minutes until they are light golden brown and crispy.
4. Remove from the oil, drain on kitchen paper and eat straight away.

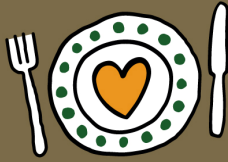
Butterbean and sorrel mayonnaise

1 tin butter beans, drained
1 handful fresh sorrel, washed and chopped
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp cider vinegar
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
1 clove fresh garlic
1tbsp chopped parsley
½ tsp salt

Method:

1. Blend the ingredients together while adding the oil in a slow and steady stream.
2. You are aiming to achieve a smooth and silky texture. Season to taste and keep refrigerated for up to a week.





Almond clafoutis

With caramelized apple

Clafoutis is the French version of an Eve's pudding. It is traditionally made with cherries or plums, but I love it made with apple. For simplicity, I make mine in an oven proof frying pan, but you can do this in two stages and transfer the apple to a baking tray before topping with the batter and baking. It is a very forgiving dish if you get your timing right and lends itself to countless variations. Serves 4

- 4 firm eating apples
- 1 tbsp/25g/1oz butter
- 1 tbsp/25g/1oz brown sugar
- 1 tbsp/25g/1oz butter, melted
- 3 tbsp/75g/3 oz caster sugar
- 2 tbsp/50g/2oz self raising flour
- 2 tbsp/50g/2oz ground almonds
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 100ml milk

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C/350F/Gas 4/5
2. Prepare the apples - peel, remove the core with an apple corer and cut into half horizontally through the core. Trim the rounded ends so that you have apple disks about 3 cm thick
3. Heat a medium sized frying pan on a low - medium heat and melt 1tbsp of butter
4. Add the apples and cook gently for 5 minutes, turning once. The fruit should start to soften and brown at the edges. Add the sugar and a few table spoons of water, apple juice or cider. Turn the heat up slightly and cook for a further few minutes or until a light glossy caramel has formed. Turn the apples to coat and then remove from the heat. Be attentive as it only takes moments for the caramel to catch and burn.
5. If your frying pan is oven safe you can finish the dish off in the pan, alternatively, transfer the caramelized apples to medium sided round or oval ovenproof dish.
6. To make the batter, beat the eggs, milk, caster sugar and melted butter together and then fold in the flour and ground almonds, you are after a batter with a smooth dropping consistency like loose double cream.
7. Spread the batter over apples and bake for 15 - 20 minute until golden.
8. Serve in the pan or baking dish or turn over onto a plate, and serve apple side up dusted with cinnamon spiked icing sugar.

