

Creative Catering

Two-Day Course

This exciting new course, designed by tutors Sarah Kearns and Marise Maddison, will provide delicious and imaginative ideas for anyone wanting to create inspiring vegetarian buffets. We also recommend it as part of the Cordon Vert Diploma programme.

The course will discuss and explore everything you need to consider when catering for a vegetarian function, such as how to cost recipes, menu choices, storage of ingredients and cooked dishes, as well as how to transport chilled or hot food to the function safely. There will also be a menu planning exercise and a project workshop. Tutors will guide students through the creation of dishes including Hot Water Crust Pastry with Hazelnut and Herb Filling, Spicy Bean Mini Wraps, Roasted Spicy Almond Dip, and Mini Leek and Courgette Muffins and, as usual, the students will then eat the food they have prepared!

Here are a few of the recipes from the course, which we hope will inspire you to come along and join us in the future!

■ MINI LEEK AND COURGETTE MUFFINS

Makes 36-40

120ml olive oil
200g leeks, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
200g courgettes, grated
300g self raising flour
2 tsp mild curry powder
2 tbsp black onion seeds
1 tsp paprika
250ml full fat milk
2 medium free range eggs, lightly beaten
to season: salt and black pepper

EQUIPMENT

Mini muffins tins x 3 or 4

Pre-heat oven to Gas 5/190°C / 375°F.

Heat 2 tsp olive oil in a large frying pan.

Sauté the leeks until soft and then add the garlic. Squeeze any excess moisture out of the courgettes, add to mixture and sauté for a further 2 minutes.

Mix the flour, curry powder, onion seeds and paprika together in a large mixing bowl, then add the vegetable mixture and the remaining ingredients including the rest of the oil. Mix together gently. Season to taste.

Lightly grease the mini muffin tins and place a tablespoon of mixture into each hole. Bake for 20-25 minutes until each muffin has a cake-like consistency.

Take out of tin and place on a cooling rack.

The muffins may be cut in half and filled with cream cheese, guacamole or any dip/paté of your choice. They can be stored in an airtight container for three days or frozen for up to a month.

■ ROASTED SPICY ALMOND DIP

Yield: 200ml
Vegan and gluten free

40g blanched, flaked almonds
1 clove garlic, crushed
a pinch cayenne pepper
2.5ml salt
2 small tomatoes, skinned and finely chopped
30-45ml red wine vinegar
150-200ml olive or almond oil

TO SERVE:

crudités

Lightly roast the almonds and allow to cool completely.

Grind almonds finely in a nut grinder.

Place ground almonds in a liquidiser with the garlic, cayenne, salt, tomatoes and vinegar. Blend well. While blender is still operating, add oil very slowly until amalgamated.

Chill well and serve with crudités or as a salad dressing.

■ SPICY BEAN MINI WRAPS

Makes 12-15 Canapes

250g drained/cooked kidney beans
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
½ juice lemon
15ml olive oil
5ml paprika
15ml sun dried tomato paste
10 green olives, chopped
2 25cm/10 inch tomato flavoured wraps
75g 'light' cream cheese
45ml chopped chives

Mash the first seven ingredients together and spread half the mixture over one tortilla wrap.

Cover with half the quantity of cream cheese and chives.

Roll up the tortilla in a sausage shape and wrap in cling film, twisting the ends tightly. Chill for 4 hours.

Remove the cling film and slice into 6 or 7 pieces alternating straight and diagonal cuts.

■ HOT WATER CRUST PASTRY

This makes an excellent centre piece for function catering and slices well.

Fits 7" spring mould cake tin

350g white or wholewheat flour – hard (strong) not soft

Pinch salt

5ml baking powder

100g solid vegetable fat, cut into small pieces

175ml water

Extra boiling water

Beaten free range egg

Mix the flour, salt and baking powder together in a large mixing bowl.

Melt the fat and water together in a saucepan and bring to the boil. When boiling fast, add the liquid into the flour and mix together quickly – this will be extremely hot – please take care!

As soon as you can handle the pastry, knead it to a smooth dough adding extra hot water if necessary.

Mould two-thirds of the pastry into the spring mould tin. Keep the remaining third warm while doing this by wrapping in cling film and placing on the upturned lid of a kettle which has just boiled (the heat and steam will keep it warm and moist).

Using your knuckles, work from the centre to the outside, building up the walls. Work up the sides of the mould and make sure you don't get thick edges round the bottom of the tin.

Fill the mould with your chosen filling, packing it down well, then doming the centre to give a good raised shape.

Roll out the remaining third of the pastry to form a lid. Moisten the edges and place the lid on top of the filling. Press the edges down and flute them with your thumbs and forefingers. Trim the edges and decorate with pastry leaves.

Glaze with egg. Make a hole for the steam to escape and bake in a preheated oven for 20 minutes at 220°C/425°F/Gas 7, then reduce to 190°C/375°F/Gas 5 for another 50 minutes until golden. Serve hot or cold.

See overleaf for Hazelnut and Herb Filling





HAZELNUT AND HERB FILLING

Serves 6 and fills 1 x 7" spring mould tin

- 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped**
- 30ml oil or 25 butter**
- 225g Brussels sprouts (use spinach in summer)**
- 110g hazelnuts, ground**
- 110g brazil nuts, ground**
- 110g wholemeal breadcrumbs**
- 5ml dried rosemary**
- 5ml dried marjoram**
- 5ml shoyu**
- 30ml tahini**
- 300ml light stock (using Friggs stock cubes)**
- Seasoning**

Pre-heat the oven to 210°C/425°F/Gas 7.

Heat the oil and fry the onion until soft.

Chop the sprouts fairly finely and add to the onion, fry for a further 10 minutes.

Mix together the nuts, breadcrumbs and dried herbs in a mixing bowl.

Add the onion and Brussels sprout mixture to the mixing bowl and add sufficient shoyu, stock and tahini to give a moist texture.

Season to taste. When using to fill your raised pie, raise the filling in a dome shape before covering with the pastry.

For cooking instructions, see Hot Water Crust Pastry recipe.



Tutor Profile:
Sarah Kearns

Sarah's route to the Cordon Vert School!

Sarah took her Cordon Vert Diploma Finals in 2000, but her passion for cooking was developed from necessity at a very early age, as Sarah's parents found the whole kitchen experience traumatic! Catering for a living began seriously in 1996 after leaving a senior marketing position and realising that cooking was a career change she could imagine doing for the rest of her life – from then on, Sarah was hooked. In 1997, with an ex-business colleague, Sarah opened a café in Manchester (and, of course, discovered the hard way that they understood very little about catering even though they were great cooks). In 1998 Sarah bought a restaurant in Stockport, which soon became a haven for those seeking veggie-friendly cuisine. In the middle of 2000 the flourishing restaurant was sold and Sarah returned to Cordon Vert to take her Finals.

Whilst in the process of completing her Cordon Vert Diploma, Sarah launched another business venture in order to keep her keen restaurant clientele happy, by providing sumptuous and creative catering for many varied functions and dinner parties. At the same time, Sarah trained to become a tutor and recipe developer for the Cordon Vert School. Together with tutor Marise Maddison, Sarah has written the new 'Creative Catering workshop' and passes on a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to all who attend.