

12 Days of Christmas



To extend the Christmas Cheer!



Recipes to help you make the most of your Christmas Menus



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The disposal of unused food reaches a peak over the Christmas period. This guide provides some simple recipes which will help you to use up excess food and leftovers. Before the season starts it is worth doing some pre-Christmas planning to prevent food waste and save a bit of money.

1. Make a shopping list checking what items you already have in stock before leaving the house.
2. Think back about last year and try to identify what items remained unused at the end of the season. Was it because it was an unpopular food item in the household or a product that was bought in too large a quantity?
3. Go against tradition. If there is something on the Christmas menu that nobody really likes or more probable that no one has room for, why not leave it out this year?
4. Pay particular attention when planning parties or dinners for guests. Try to limit the amount of quickly perishable foods served on the night to what you know will be used. Unlike other times of the year the leftovers from a party are a hard sell when a house is full of goodies. Have some non-perishable snacks in stock which can remain unopened until the perishable items are used.
5. Don't overstock on basics such as bread and milk. Supermarkets and local shops re-open very quickly after Christmas so there is usually less need to have extra supplies.





Turkey Stock and Turkey Soup

All the leftover turkey bones and skin, all leftover vegetables and leftover sauces, gravies.

Turkey Stock

- 4 carrots, 4 celery sticks, an onion or two, two cloves of garlic
- 3-4 bay leaves, 12 peppercorns, about 3-4 whole cloves, two blades of mace (if you have it), some parsley and thyme or a bouquet garnish.
- (Mace is a spice that is made from the skin of the nutmeg and has a similar taste but a bit more peppery. It is really good with savoury foods and meat. It is sometimes hard to get and expensive but it is very good with stocks. If you're not sure leave it out.)

All quantities are approximate. Use as large a saucepan as you have. I always do this on St Stephen's Day as the fresh Turkey makes the best soup.

Trim off any pieces of meat from the carcass and keep for using in other recipes and in the soup. Break up the carcass and bones into pieces small enough to fit into a large saucepan. Add in any leftover skin, gravy, stuffing or giblets. If you have a ham bone add this in as well.

Wash and roughly cut up the raw vegetables. Add the herbs. Cover with cold water. Bring to a simmer. Don't boil the carcass but keep it at a simmer, just barely bubbling as this makes a nicer stock. If you boil it will become cloudy.

Simmer for 3-4 hours making sure that it never boils dry and that all the ingredients are covered with fluid.

Strain the liquid through a fine sieve while still hot. Leave the stock in the fridge overnight to allow any fat to harden. Remove the fat (good for using to make roast potatoes!).

To make the soup - add to the stock any leftover cooked vegetables, pieces of turkey and ham, a tablespoon of dried soup mix (the mixture of lentils, split peas and pearl barley), some chopped mixed herbs such as parsley, thyme, sage. If you don't have any leftover veg, chop a mixture of root veggies up into small cubes or use a frozen mix, plus a few peas. Add in some leftover cranberry sauce and bread sauce and some stuffing - if you have some. Bring to a simmer for about 20 minutes to half an hour. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with fresh bread after a long post Christmas walk or a day at the races. You could also add in some rice or noodles instead or as well as the soup mix. A dash of curry powder or chillies gives it a nice kick.

Turkey Noodle Soup

This is a really quick and easy soup. Chicken can be used instead of turkey and other leftover vegetables can be added if wished.

Ingredient - Serves 4



- 1 onion, chopped finely
- 1.1 litres turkey stock
- 50g vermicelli noodles, or some form of pasta
- 225g cooked turkey, or cooked ham, chopped fine
- A pinch of salt
- Some ground black pepper
- Spring onions and coriander



Instructions

1. In a large pan, cook the onion in a little of the stock until tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the remaining stock and the noodles. Cook following the instructions on the noodle packet.
3. Add the chopped turkey and/or ham and heat through. Adjust the seasoning.
4. Ladle the soup into bowls and top with the garnish.

Stocks

Made from your meat and fish bones. Frozen in ice cubes for gravies, risotto and cooking rice. Once frozen, remove from the ice trays and pack into freezer bags. Use stock powder or cubes if you do not have any home made available. See recipe for making stock.

Herbs

To keep cut parsley or coriander, put in a hole free polythene bag with a couple of tablespoons of cold water, give the bag a good shake and keep in the salad drawer of the fridge. Herbs should keep for a week like this.



Celery, Broccoli and Stilton Soup

Stilton or any strong flavoured cheese can often hang around for a bit too long in the fridge so try making this lovely thick soup, which would work well as a starter for a New Years Eve Party.

Ingredients - Serves 4

- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 sticks of celery, roughly chopped
- Some olive oil
- 1 large potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 litre turkey or chicken stock
- 300g broccoli, roughly chopped
- 100g of Stilton, Roquefort or other strong flavoured cheese
- Ground black pepper
- Pinch of nutmeg
- Chopped chives
- Warm crusty bread



Instructions

1. Cook the onion and celery in 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large pan until soft (about 5 minutes). Add the potato and stock and simmer until the potato is tender. Add the broccoli and cook for 3-4 minutes until just tender but still bright green.
2. Add half the cheese with the seasoning and nutmeg and whiz to a smooth soup in a blender. Crumble the remaining cheese over the top, sprinkle with chives and serve with warm crusty bread.

Tip! To grow celery choose a self blanching variety to make life easier. Individual stems can be cut as needed giving a longer harvest and preventing waste when a whole plant is not needed. Different varieties of broccoli and calabrese can be grown to have a crop in different seasons. Broccoli freezes well when in season.

Pea and Ham Soup

The ham bone with a little leftover ham forms the basis of a great traditional soup perfect for lunch on a cold winters day.

Ingredients

- 200g yellow or green split peas
- 1.5 litres water
- 1 ham bone (from cooked ham)
- 1 carrot
- 1 onion
- 1 leek
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Parsley



Instructions

1. Rinse and drain the peas before placing in the pan with water. Bring to the boil before skimming the surface if required.
2. Cut any ham off the bone, dicing some to be added to the soup at a later stage.
3. Add the carrot, onion and leek once chopped along with the ham bone and bay leaves to the peas. Season with salt and pepper

The flavour of home grown peas is unbeatable. Once harvested the sugars in peas will start converting to starch within hours so they are at their best going straight from the garden to the pot. They can be blanched and frozen to retain their flavour.

Tip! Bay laurel can be grown in the garden. It forms a large evergreen shrub which can be pruned to a desired shape.

Turkey Café Salad

No matter where you go throughout Europe, every country has its own version of a café salad; scattered seemingly at random on a big plate, using up all the 'bits and pieces' and freshening them up with leaves and crunchy vegetables. This one uses turkey, but you could just as easily base it on any leftover roast meat, ham, or charcuterie.

Ingredients - Serves 4

- 400g potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 200g fine green beans, top and tailed
- 250g green salad such as rocket or watercress
- 300g cooked turkey meat, shredded
- 100g feta cheese, crumbled
- 6 dried figs, finely sliced
- 2 tablespoons black olives, pitted
- 2 tablespoons pistachios
- Nuts - Walnuts add crunch to salad and are good in stuffing's. Have a bowl of walnuts at Christmas for people to enjoy with a glass of port .



Dressing:

- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine or balsamic v
- A pinch of salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon horseradish sauce
- Dash of water or dry white wine

Instructions

1. Cook the potatoes and beans in salt still-warm pan, off the heat.
2. To make the dressing, whisk the olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, mustard, and horseradish in a bowl, and add a dash of water or wine to thin it out.
3. Toss the leaves in half the dressing and scatter over four dinner plates. Toss the turkey, beans and potatoes in the remaining dressing and arrange on top. Scatter with feta cheese, figs, olives and pistachios, tweak a few of the green leaves out from under everything, and serve.

Tip! Plant potatoes in July to have a crop of new potatoes for Christmas.



Turkey, Mango and Lime Salad

This is a delicious way to use up leftover turkey and ham after the Christmas festivities. It works really well on Boxing day along with other salads and baked potatoes. Great as a light lunch.

Ingredients - Serves 8

- ½ cucumber
- 1 large ripe mango
- Grated rind and juice of 1 lemon or lime
- 150ml vegetable oil
- 250g cooked carved turkey, sliced into pieces
- 250g cooked carved leg of ham, sliced into pieces
- Handful of fresh coriander
- 3 spring onions, finely chopped
- A pinch of salt
- Some ground black pepper



Instructions

1. Halve the cucumber lengthways, then carefully remove the seeds with a teaspoon. Slice the cucumber flesh into thin slices.
2. Cut down either side of the mango stone. Cut away the flesh from the skin and place in a food processor, along with the grated lime or lemon and strained juice. Whizz, and whilst the motor is running add the oil until the consistency is smooth.
3. Pour the prepared mango dressing into a large bowl. Add the turkey and ham, cucumber, coriander and finely chopped spring onions and season to taste.

Tip! Spring onions are an easy to grow vegetable which does not require a lot of space. One of the best vegetables when starting a veg patch as they produce a reliable crop.

Turkey Curry

Perfect for Stephen's Day dinner or can be frozen once cooled for use at a later date.

Ingredients

- 450g of cooked turkey
- 1 eating apple
- 1 onion
- Juice of half a lime
- 250 ml natural yogurt
- ½ a red pepper
- 1 teaspoon curry powder or paste
- ¼ teaspoon of cayenne pepper or a little chilli powder
- 2 finely chopped garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon chopped ginger
- A little cornflour and water to thicken
- 2 teaspoon of mango chutney

Instructions

1. Cook onion, garlic and ginger until onions soften.
2. Add diced red pepper and cook for one minute.
3. Add curry paste or powder and mix well. Add cayenne.
4. Add yogurt and peeled sliced apple.
5. Add chutney and lime juice.
6. Gently bring to boil, thicken slightly with a little cornflour blended with water.
7. Add cooked turkey pieces.
8. Serve with boiled rice.

Tip! Grow your own garlic in the garden. It can be sown from October through to February, though avoid planting in very cold weather, particularly December and January. It can be planted in the border among flowering plants such as roses where it will act as a deterrent to green fly and other pests. Use bulbs of garlic produced locally as imported garlic will not be adapted to Irish conditions. Divide bulbs into cloves and plant individually.





Turkey Loaf with Nuts and Coriander

A good winter treat, which gives a very different way of serving the turkey meat with added flavour.

Ingredients

- 60g Pine Kernels or Almonds
- 150g coarse Bulgur Wheat
- 1kg cubed cooked Turkey meat
- 60g Fresh Coriander
- 350g of chopped onion
- The grated zest of one orange
- 1 Teaspoon cinnamon
- Olive oil
- Salt and black pepper



Instructions

1. Place the bulgur wheat in a mixing bowl and cover with tap water and set aside to soak for 10-15 minutes.
2. Place the pine kernels or almonds in a dry frying pan and toast them over a moderate heat stirring constantly until they are lightly golden and fragrant.
3. Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas mark 4.
4. Put the cubed turkey into a food processor with the nuts, coriander, onion, orange zest and cinnamon. Add salt and pepper and process to a coarse paste.
5. Drain the bulgur wheat pressing out as much water as possible and add to the food processor. Whizz again to combine.
6. Lightly grease a loaf tin and press the turkey mixture into it. Brush the top lightly with oil and cook in oven for 1 hour 15 minutes until done.
Remove the loaf from the oven and leave to rest in a warm place for 15 minutes before removing from the tin and carving into slices.

Tip! Growing onions from sets will produce reliable results. Onions sets can be planted in March. Harvest when mature in July or August and air dry. When skins and roots have dried they can be stored for use throughout the winter.



Turkey, Sage and Winter Vegetable Risotto

Go Italian over the Christmas. The ham or the stuffing can also be used in a risotto.

Ingredients

- 400-550 ml Turkey stock made from the bones of the turkey
- One onion
- Olive oil
- Glove of garlic
- 175g of risotto rice
- 200g of left over vegetables cut into cubes
- 200g of cooked turkey meat cut into cubes
- 2-3 springs of fresh sage or a teaspoon of dried sage
- 50g Mascarpone
- 100g Parmesan cheese



Instructions

1. Cook the onions in a large frying pan with the olive oil until transparent and soft.
2. Stir in the rice and cook until very hot. Add a ladleful or two of stock and cook until almost absorbed before adding more. Keep repeating this process until the rice is creamy but slightly al dente. This will take about 18 minutes.
3. Add the chopped vegetables and turkey meat and continue to cook for another two minutes. Make sure to heat the turkey thoroughly.
4. Finish the dish by stirring in the chopped sage, the mascarpone and Parmesan. Divide into 4 servings and garnish with parmesan shavings and cracked pepper. A drizzle of good olive oil will also enhance the flavour.

Tip! Sage can be grown in the garden preferring a warm sunny spot with well drained soil. Purple and variegated varieties are available to add a splash of colour to the garden. It is best not to harvest in winter as this will make the plant more prone to frost damage. Harvest and dry leaves in summer for use over the winter months.

Turkey, Ham and Leek Pie



If apple pie is the mother of sweet pies, then turkey and chicken must be the mother of all savoury pies. A traditional turkey or chicken pie contains lots of vegetables and is the perfect 'use up' dish. You can add almost anything to your pie, such as mushrooms, potatoes, sweetcorn, peas, spinach, parsnips, carrots and broad beans. This recipe makes use of the turkey stock from Christmas dinner, but you can make it richer if you prefer by adding cream or crème fraiche to the sauce.

Ingredients

- 90g butter
- 25g flour
- litre turkey stock
- A pinch of salt
- Black pepper
- 1 tablespoon English mustard
- 350g cooked turkey or chicken cut into chunks or strip
- 125g cooked ham cut into chunks
- 6 leeks, cleaned and chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
- 1 lightly beaten egg
- 200g ready made shortcrust or flaky pastry



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C (425°F) mark 7.
2. Melt the butter in a heavy based pan and add the flour off the heat. Whisk in the turkey stock and cook over a medium heat, stirring all the time until the sauce is smooth. Season well and add the mustard.
3. Place the turkey pieces, ham and leeks in the bottom of an oval pie dish, sprinkle with the fresh parsley and pour over the sauce.
4. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and cover the pie dish with the pastry. Brush the top of the pastry with a little beaten egg and bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes. After this time reduce the heat to 180°C (350°F) mark 4 and bake for a further 15 minutes.

Tip! Keeping hens is increasingly popular. Feeders that release food over a period of a week can keep the hens happy if you go away.



Merry Christmas!



Spinach and Ham Greek Pie

At Christmas time there is always plenty of leftover cheese that needs using up. For a vegetarian alternative replace the cooked ham with 225g sliced brown cap mushrooms which have been fried in butter until golden. Allow to cool before mixing with the cheese. This pie is also delicious served with a homemade tomato sauce

Ingredients - Serves 6 - 8

Prep time: 30 min

Cooking time: 1 hour

- 75g butter
- 200g onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 garlic cloves
- ½ teaspoon dried rosemary
- 4 tablespoons crème fraîche
- 175g filo pastry
- 450g leaf spinach, defrosted if frozen
- salt
- Ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp Ground nutmeg
- 200g any leftover cheese, such as Feta, Stilton, Brie, Camembert, Goats cheese, Cheddar etc
- 175g sliced cooked ham
- Beaten egg, to glaze
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- Tomato and olive salad to serve





Instructions

1. Heat half the butter in a large frying pan and cook the onions and garlic over a gently heat with the rosemary for a good 10-12 minutes or until very soft. Stir in the crème fraiche, remove from the heat and cool.
2. While the onions are cooking, squeeze the liquid from the spinach and stir over a low heat until it is completely dry. Roughly chop, season with salt, pepper and ground nutmeg.
3. Melt the remaining butter and lightly grease a 23 cm base measurement, 3cm deep loose based flat tin. Line with sheets of filo pastry, brushing with butter between the layers and overlapping them in a random manner. There should be no gaps in the pastry and the excess pastry should hang over the sides of the tin. (Remember to keep the filo covered with cling film whilst lining the tin, as filo dries out very quickly once exposed to the air and then becomes difficult to work with.)
4. Lay across the bottom of the pastry the sliced ham. Spoon in the cooled spinach, top with the onions, then the crumbled cheese. Wrap over the pastry to enclose the filling. Brush with egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds.
5. Put a baking sheet in the oven to heat up. Place the pie on top and cook at 190°C (375°F) mark 5 for about 45 minutes, cover lightly with foil after about 20 minutes so it doesn't over brown. Cool for 10 minutes before turning out and serving. Serve with a tomato and olive salad.

To freeze: Wrap really well with cling film and foil at the end of step 5 and freeze for up to 3 months.
To use: Thaw overnight in the fridge. Complete the recipe from step five.

Tip! Rosemary can be grown in the garden and will make an attractive small shrub in the border. It prefers a sunny south facing location. In late summer you can dry rosemary by cutting a few stems, tie them up in a bundle and place upside down in a brown paper bag. Place in a warm well aired location or the hot press. Beet spinach is in season in the garden over the winter months.

Pasta Carbonara



A quick meal that makes use of left over ham, cream and cheese.

Ingredients

- 500g of pasta
- 25g butter
- 150g leftover ham diced into small pieces
- 2 – 3 garlic cloves peeled and crushed
- A tub of double cream or crème fraiche
- 2 teaspoon mustard
- Salt
- 2 beaten eggs
- A handful of chopped parsley
- 50g of hard cheese grated
- Black pepper



Instructions

1. Cook the pasta in a pan of boiling salted water.
2. Place the butter ham and garlic in a large non stick pan. Stir for a few minutes and then add the cream or crème fraiche and mustard. Season with salt. Take off the heat and add beaten eggs.
3. Drain the pasta and return to the pan with the egg mixture. The heat from the pasta will cook and thicken the mixture but if serving to children you should cook the mix gently over a low heat for an extra minute. Serve with a sprinkling of black pepper and some grated cheese.

Tip! Fresh parsley is one of the easier herbs to grow in the garden and can be still in production for the Christmas season. It can be grown in a large pot. Sow according to instructions and add a kettle of hot water to encourage rapid germination.





Another quick pasta recipe. This one makes use of left over turkey or chicken and Leeks which are in season over the winter months.

Ingredients

- 500g of pasta
- A knob of butter
- 150g left over Turkey or Chicken shredded into small pieces
- 2 leeks
- A tub of double cream or crème fraiche
- 2 teaspoon mustard
- Salt
- A dash of white wine or water
- A packet of rocket or baby spinach
- 50g of blue cheese
- Black pepper



Instructions

1. Cook the pasta.
2. Slice up two leeks and fry with a knob of butter for about ten minutes making sure they don't go brown. Add a dash of wine or water.
3. Add the blue cheese and mustard to the leeks.
4. Stir in the tub of crème fraiche.
5. Add the mixture to the pasta along with the Turkey and return to the heat.
6. Add the rocket or baby spinach and mix it all together before serving with a sprinkle of black pepper.

Tip! Rocket sown in September can still be used in December but will need protection from severe frosts. Can be grown in containers or open ground.



Nutty Veggie Couscous

This is a great accompaniment or serve as a main course with some grilled goats cheese. Can also be made using the left over Nut Roast.

Ingredients - Serves 10 people

- 450ml vegetable stock
- 400g can chick peas, drained
- 50g ready-to-eat apricots
- 125g mixed nuts
- 25g butter or olive oil
- 125g leftover vegetables, roughly chopped
- A pinch of salt
- Freshly ground black peppercorns
- Chopped herbs such as coriander, parsley or mint
- 450g Couscous



Instructions

1. Place the couscous in a bowl with 200ml hot stock. Leave for 5 minutes and break up the lumps with a fork.
2. Add the remaining hot stock, chickpeas, chopped apricots and nuts.

Melt the butter in a frying pan and stir-fry the vegetables until piping hot. Add to the couscous and season well; add the herbs just before serving.

Tip! Mint is easily grown in the garden, too easy as it can spread rapidly if soil conditions suit. It is best sown in a pot which can be sunk into the ground if desired to control the spread of roots. Harvest in summer for drying in the hot press.

Smoked Salmon and Cream Cheese Vol au Vents

Ingredients

- Leftover Smoked Salmon, cut into small pie
- Cream Cheese at room temperature
- Cream
- Some chopped chives or parsley
- Salt and pepper
- Lemon wedges
- Frozen Vol au Vent Cases
- A little bit of beaten egg



Instructions

This recipe uses whatever ingredients that are at hand and the amounts are not critical. Cream the cheese until soft with a beater or in a food processor. Add the cream until the cheese and cream are the consistency of stiffly whipped cream. Add in the parsley or chives, salt and pepper, a squeeze of lemon juice and the salmon. Mix well. Coat the top of the vol au vent cases with the egg and bake according to the instructions on the box. Allow to cool. Fill with the salmon/cheese mixture and garnish the dish with lemon wedges and some parsley. Serve cold. The above may be also be made in a lower fat version by replacing the cream with crème fraiche and using a low fat cream cheese.

Turkey or Chicken Vol au Vents

Ingredients

- Onion, finely chopped
- Some mushrooms
- Small amount of oil or butter
- Leftover turkey or chicken chopped into cubes and gravy or stock
- Thyme chopped finely
- Small amount of cream
- Salt and pepper



Instructions

Cook the onion and mushrooms in oil/butter until transparent and cooked. Allow to cool. Add stock or gravy and the meat, thyme and seasoning. Cook for 5-10 minutes until completely heated through. Ensure that it is thickened using cornflour or roux until it is like a very thick gravy. Allow to cool. Stir in a small amount of cream. Cook the vol au vent cases and allow to cool. Fill with the meat mixture.

Tip! Thyme and Chives are both easily grown in the garden. Can be planted in the flower border.

Penne with Asparagus and Smoked Salmon

Ingredients

- 450g fresh asparagus spears, cut on a diagonal (2-3" in length)
- 60g unsalted butter
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
- ¼ teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper
- 60g Pinot Grigio or other dry white wine
- 180 ml low fat milk
- 120 ml cream
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 250g smoked salmon
- 450g penne pasta (dry weight) boiled /cooked according to package directions and drained
- 120g pine nuts, toasted
- 20g fresh grated cheese



Instructions

1. Bring a large stock pot of salted water to a boil.
2. Add the asparagus and blanch uncovered for about 2-3 minutes just until tender.
3. Drain asparagus and set aside. In a large skillet over medium heat melt the butter.
4. Toss in the cooked asparagus, garlic, and pepper. Increase heat to high and add the wine.
5. Stir constantly for 2 minutes. Reduce heat back to medium and add the milk, cream and salt.
6. Gently break up the smoked salmon into bite sized pieces and add to the skillet.
7. Simmer for 3-4 minutes just until salmon is heated through, stirring occasionally being careful not to break up the salmon too much.
8. Toss in the cooked penne and stir until it's evenly coated with the cream and asparagus mixture.
9. Serve garnished with toasted pine nuts and cheese.

Don't forget a simple way to use Smoked Salmon is to add it to Scrambled Eggs for Breakfast.

Tip! Asparagus can be grown in the garden but prefers a well drained soil



Brussels Sprouts with Garlic and Ham

Two recipes to use up those left over Brussels Sprouts. Can also be made with other vegetables such as Broccoli.

Ingredients

- Leftover Brussels Sprouts
- Leftover Ham or Bacon cut into small pieces
- Butter or Olive Oil for Frying
- 1-2 Garlic Gloves very finely chopped
- One small onion chopped finely
- (The amount of onion and garlic depends on your own taste)



Instructions

1. Place oil or butter in a frying pan.
2. Cook onion and garlic till transparent and cooked.
3. Cut spouts in half and toss in the pan with the chopped ham.
4. Cook until heated through.

Brussels Sprouts with Honey and Mustard

Ingredients

- 500g Leftover Brussels Sprouts
- 2 tablespoons Grainy Mustard
- 2 tablespoons Honey
- 300 ml Vegetable stock or Turkey Stock



Instructions

1. Place oil or butter in a frying pan.
2. Cut spouts in half. Cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add the mustard and stock carefully and cook for 3-4 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat, stir in the honey and serve.

Tip! Brussels sprouts are in season for December. Home grown sprouts may tempt younger members of the family to give them a try.

Christmas Pudding Ice Cream

A kind of cheats version of rum and raisin using leftover Christmas pudding and cream.

Ingredients

- 150ml chilled ready made custard
- 150ml double cream, whipped
- 125g leftover Christmas pudding, crumbled
- Liquor such as brandy, rum, whiskey or Baileys (optional)



Instructions

Mix together the custard and whipped cream then stir in the crumbled Christmas pudding. Freeze in a large Tupperware and stir every half hour or so until it's the consistency you want. For a softer freeze, add a little brandy or leftover Christmas liquor such as rum, whiskey or Baileys.

Cranberry Brownies

This is a great quick recipe to finish off the cranberry sauce. You can add other festive leftovers such as nuts or dried fruit.

Ingredients

- 100g of butter
- 50g of plain chocolate
- 150g of caster sugar
- 4 tablespoons cranberry sauce
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 40g of flour
- A pinch of salt



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius, Gas mark 4.
2. Melt the butter and chocolate in a heavy pan over a low heat, stirring frequently until melted and smooth.
3. Beat the sugar with the eggs and cranberry sauce in a bowl and pour in the chocolate mixture with the vanilla extract, flour and salt.
4. Pour into a 21 cm square tin and bake for 15 to 20 minutes.

Tip! Cranberries can be grown in the garden but need an acid soil. Grow in a pot or hanging basket if soil conditions don't suit in the ground.



Bread and Butter Pudding

The traditional way to use up leftover or slightly stale bread. You can add a bit of cranberry sauce to give it a seasonal touch.

Ingredients

- 2/3 of a loaf of leftover or slightly stale bread
- 50g of butter
- 100g of raisins or other dried fruit
- 3 large eggs
- 650g milk
- 50g of sugar plus extra for topping
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt



Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 180 degrees Celsius or Gas Mark 4.
2. Butter the bread, cut into triangles and place in an oven proof dish.
3. Sprinkle over raisins or dried fruit.
4. Mix together the eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla extract and salt to make a custard.
5. Pour the custard over the bread and allow to soak for 20-30 minutes.
6. Sprinkle a little extra sugar over the top and bake for 25-30 minutes.

Tip! Many people feed bread to birds in the garden. Bread provides little value to birds in very cold weather. High energy foods such as nuts, seeds and fat balls are more appropriate to help birds get through cold spells.

Freezing Christmas Dinners

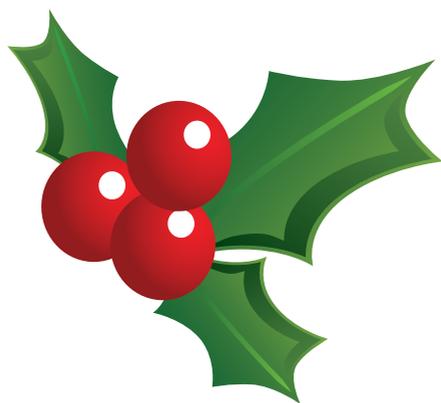
Instead of getting fed up with turkey and ham dinners, why not freeze individual dinners. Reuse the type of box that takeaway curries come in and make up batches of one, two or more dinners that can go straight from freezer to oven or microwave.

Place slices of turkey and ham in the boxes, topping it off with slices of stuffing. Pour gravy or stock over the meat, just enough to cover. Finish it off with some cranberry or bread sauce and freeze.

To cook – remove from the freezer and place in an oven proof dish in a medium oven for about half an hour to 45 minutes until it is thawed and heated through completely. To microwave, thaw it out first and heat through according to your machines instructions.

Why Avoid Food Waste?

1. One third of the waste we purchase is wasted without being used.
2. Throwing out food contributes to Climate Change through energy usage in production and through emissions from landfill.
3. There are ethical and moral arguments for avoiding waste when food is scarce in many parts of the world.
4. More immediately it will save you money, with the average Irish Family throwing out €700 worth of food each year.





STOP FoodWaste.ie



12 Days of Christmas Recipes

