



“Cooking with Passion”

*Sian Hindle of
La Crème Pâtisserie & Catering Company in Neath*

Recipes featured in the South Wales Evening Post in 2008

Business Week

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SWEET TREAT Sian Hindle, of La Crème Patisserie, has seen her business boom in recent times.

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Business boom is icing on the cake

AWARD-WINNING patissier Sian Hindle, of Neath's La Crème Patisserie, is branching out with a range of exciting new business opportunities.

Last year, Sian was voted one of the top three patissiers in the UK at the British Bakery Awards in London.

Since then, Sian has been inundated with requests from brides to produce their wedding cakes.

Sian's skill is in working with chocolate, and brides looking for more contemporary designs and ideas have been flocking to La Crème to develop their dream cake.

La Crème specialises in a range of wedding favours, including heartshaped Welsh cakes and handmade chocolate truffles.

BY SHAUN GREANEY
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But the biggest change for the business is that La Crème is now being approached by local hotels and banqueting venues to produce a range of upmarket desserts for weddings, corporate and civic events.

Last year, 90 per cent of La Crème's sales were direct to the public. But this is about to change, as local food venues start to recognise the quality of the desserts La Crème has to offer.

One of the first venues to commit to using La Crème products is Margam Orangery.

Recently, the patisserie delivered 150 individual raspberry cheesecakes for a wedding breakfast.

The cheesecakes were topped with fresh raspberries sourced through Neath market and decorated with chocolate pieces.

Neath Port Talbot Council have placed orders for La Crème to produce mini-patisserie and choux swans for the mayoral inauguration in May, and Swansea's Brangwyn Hall has committed to do likewise for the lord mayor's inauguration.

And since writing an article in the spring supplement of the British Baker magazine on regional and traditional favourites, Sian has been approached by Nicholl's department store in Abergavenny to produce a range of cakes for their coffee shop and as gift items for sale in the store.

She has also been approached by an international retailer which is opening a new store in Cardiff later on this year.

They would like Sian to produce a range of Welsh cake products.

"The phone is ringing off the hook. We are finding that people are approaching us instead of the other way round," said Sian.

"People are no longer prepared to accept frozen supermarket cheesecakes as a finale to their meal when they are eating out. There is lots of disposable income in the locality, and having travelled abroad people expect something better when they go out to eat. La Crème is trying to bridge that gap," she added.

The company's success is such that Sian, who was runner-up in the business section of the Swansea Bay Woman of the Year awards last November, has been asked by the Assembly to go into schools to talk to children about entrepreneurship.

Inside:



Creme de la creme

PORT Talbot is in line to become the region's cake capital.

Husband and wife team Sian and Ian Hindle (pictured) have unveiled plans to open a new flagship centre of excellence.

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Couple's taste of success

PORT Talbot could soon be the cake capital of South Wales.

BY EMMA DENHOLM
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A husband and wife team behind an award-winning Neath patisserie and catering company have unveiled plans to open a flagship centre of excellence in the town.

Sian and Ian Hindle, of La Creme Patisserie, in Angel Street, have revealed the £250,000 centre will be set up in a newly built unit at Baglan Moors.

It will not only produce speciality cakes, but also provide training and offer an insight into the tricks of the trade.

Outlining their hopes for the centre, Mr Hindle said: "Our vision is to open a centre of excellence for patisserie and cake making in South Wales."

He added: "Sian will be promoted as our figurehead and we intend to run cooking lessons, as well as doing food demonstrations."

Among the features planned for the new centre is a wedding and birthday cake gallery.

Flat-screen televisions and interactive computer screens will showcase the best the La Creme Centre of Excellence has to offer.

Revealing how the couple looked to a number of sources to finance their dream, Mr Hindle said an Assembly grant and funding from the council provided a portion of the money.

However, the majority of the

funding for the centre came from the couple's efforts.

Mr Hindle explained: "The remainder of the money will come from personal savings, family loans and a mortgage from NatWest."

The couple, originally from Port Talbot, appear to be bucking the trend when it comes to the current economic crisis, but Mr Hindle added: "It has been really interesting trying to secure a business mortgage at this point in time."

La Creme Patisserie has been based in Neath town centre for around three years and Mr Hindle said they were hoping to keep it going once they opened the Baglan centre. They plan to be in their new premises within the next four months.

Mrs Hindle recently started writing a column for the Post.

Her skills have earned her a number of accolades and just last year she was voted one of the top three patissiers in the UK at the British Bakery Awards in London.

Town centre manager Terry Harvey praised the couple's efforts at this month's chamber of trade meeting and called Mrs Hindle "a credit to Neath".

●Readers can follow the progress of the centre of excellence by reading the couple's blog: www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk



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Recipe articles printed in the South Wales Evening Post 2008
Recipes have been reproduced in the order that they appeared in the paper.*



Introduction

What is cooking with passion and why have I decided on this title? Well the book is a tribute to my wife Sian and it features all her recipes that have been printed in the South Wales Evening Post in 2008.

Passion is a word that I will always associate with Sian. Foremost she is my beautiful wife, my life long friend, my lover and a very special, warm and loving person. She is the mother of our four children, who we both adored and we are both very proud of them all.

Sian loves food. She makes even the most simplest of dishes taste amazing. Sian is an extremely intelligent woman. She is very giving of her time, always warm and welcoming. Her vision of La Crème was for a happy place where people would enjoy good food and pleasant company. Sian takes a great deal of satisfaction from pleasing others with her food.

She cooks with a passion and the recipes included in this book are designed to be eaten by real people. The recipes are not pretentious. They were not written or chosen to showcase Sian's talents. Instead they were selected because they were recipes that could be easily followed and in lots of cases they can be prepared in advance to fit in with people's busy lives.

I hope that those who get to read this book will enjoy the recipes included within and will follow Sian's progress over the coming years.

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement.

Ian Hindle

23rd December 2008

Roast Red Peppers

I am always looking for quick and healthy ideas for tea when I get home from work, if can tempt the kids to eat it too its a bonus. These red peppers are simple and tasty. I buy the long shaped ones when they are on offer, otherwise this recipe works exactly the same with the bell shaped peppers. Allow ½ or a whole pepper per person, depending on how hungry you are.

Roast Red Peppers

Red Pepper
Cherry Tomatoes
Basil Leaves
Olive Oil
Black Pepper
Pesto (if liked)



1. Slice the pepper in half, lengthways, leaving the stem on for presentation.
2. Remove any seeds. Stand the peppers on a baking sheet.
3. Place @ 6 tomatoes along the length of the pepper, drizzle with olive oil and black pepper.
4. Roast in the oven for 15 minutes at 200°c/fan 180°c/gas 6
5. The roast pepper is lovely drizzled with pesto for a starter for a summer supper, or as an accompaniment with a piece of grilled meat or fish. I often cook it on the barbeque – if the weather is good enough.
6. Serve with crusty bread to mop up the juices.



Sian Hindle has a patisserie and catering business in Neath called La Crème Patisserie. Last year Sian was voted one of the top three Patisseries in the UK at the British Bakery Awards in London. Sian supplies desserts and cakes for private celebrations and also for large banquets at lots of venues across South Wales. To see examples of her award winning cakes and innovative menus visit www.lacremepatisserie.co.uk

Summer Strawberry Meringues

Last week, I was asked to cater 400 pieces of mini patisserie for an event at the Princess Royal theatre in Port Talbot. We made Profiteroles, Strawberry scones, filled with fresh cream, mini Lemon Meringue tartlets, Cherry frangipane bites, Chocolate Truffle Tartlets, Apple Turnovers and Meringue kisses. It is difficult to know what to choose, as any large dessert can be made into bite size miniatures. We find that fresh cream desserts are always the first to go !

A perfect dessert for the weekend is strawberries and meringue. Meringue is a simple dessert to make and will look fantastic and taste delicious when served with fresh summer berries, raspberries or fresh Gower strawberries. Sometimes I add a couple of drops of pink food colouring to the meringue to give a blush to the colour.

Meringue – Makes 10 nests or 1 large Pavlova

2 Egg Whites
110g Caster Sugar

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C/fan 120°C/gas 1.
2. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
3. Place the egg whites in a large clean bowl, using an electric whisk on a low speed start whisking. After 1 min, increase the speed and whisk until the egg whites are stiff. Whisk in the sugar a tablespoon at a time, until your mixture is stiff and glossy.
4. Spoon the mixture into either 10 nests or 1 large round onto the lined baking sheet. Bake for 1 hour in the centre of the oven. Turn off the oven and leave to cool completely.
5. Just before you want to serve the dessert, fill with whipped cream and fresh fruit. Don't fill the meringue too early, as the cream will make the sugar start to dissolve. Keep chilled before eating.



Smoked Salmon Roulade

When cooking for family or friends, it makes life so much easier to have a cold starter. Smoked salmon remains a popular choice as it is not too heavy to spoil your appetite, with the bonus that it can be assembled and chilled earlier in the day.

I have used this recipe many times to create a fantastic and impressive starter for a meal. I prepared this dish at a recent dinner party for 12 guests and served it with home made Brushetta. To make Brushetta, drizzle some thin slices of French stick with olive oil and bake in the oven for 10 – 15 minutes. To finish, I garnish this dish with Prawn & Mangetout Skewers, which give an added wow factor to the plate.

Smoked Salmon Roulade – Serves 6

250g Smoked Salmon
3tbsp Cream Cheese
1 1/2tbsp Creamed Horseradish
Salt & White Pepper
1tbsp Lemon Juice
120g bag Salad Leaves
250g Smoked Salmon Slices
Chopped Parsley



1. Place 250g salmon in the blender and whiz to chop coarsely. Add the cream cheese and horseradish, pulse to combine, Season with the salt, pepper and lemon juice.
2. Lay out the smoked salmon slices in a large rectangle on a sheet of Clingfilm, sprinkle with the parsley.
3. Spread the salmon pate over the smoked salmon. Starting from one side, roll up to form a large sausage shape. Chill overnight if possible.
4. To serve, slice into neat rounds, I find it easiest to use a hot knife, just dip it into boiling water between each cut.
5. Serve on a bed of lightly dressed leaves with some crusty bread.

Thai Chicken Noodle Soup

I never thought I would still be serving soup in my Patisserie in August, but with the weather being so changeable there is still much demand for our homemade soup.

Tonya, one of my chefs, is a whiz with savouries, together with the fact that she loves adding spice to food, means I have to hold her back with the red chillies and garlic that go into this recipe. When we serve this to our customers, we always give a glass of water to cool them down!

This soup is a really lovely, light broth type of soup that has the popular Thai seasonings of Chilli, Garlic, Lemon Grass and Fish Sauce. Just before you serve, add in a pack of ready prepared stir fry vegetables and the rice noodles.

4 Chicken Thighs, skin & bone removed
1tbsp Olive Oil
3 garlic cloves
2 medium red chillies, deseeded and finely diced
1 lemon grass stalk, finely sliced
5cm Root Ginger, finely chopped
1.2litres Chicken Stock
50g Rice Noodles, soaked and drained
4 Spring Onions, finely chopped
2tbsp Thai Fish Sauce
Juice of ¼ Lime
1 pack of Stir Fry Vegetables
Coriander, finely chopped



1. Cut the chicken into cubes. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the chicken, garlic, chillies, lemon grass and ginger. Cook for 3 – 5 minutes until the chicken is opaque.
2. Add the stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes until the chicken is cooked through.
3. Meanwhile, put the noodles in a heatproof bowl, pour on the boiling water to cover, soak for 4 minutes.
4. Add the spring onions, fish sauce, lime juice and stir fry vegetables to the stock, Bring to the boil and taste for seasoning.
5. Blanch the stir fry vegetables in boiling water for 3 minutes, drain and rinse with cold water.
6. Divide the noodles and vegetables into the serving bowls. Ladle the broth into the bowls and garnish with the coriander.

Spiced Duck Breasts with Red Wine & Blackberry sauce

Duck breasts are a wonderful convenient cut of meat, that can be easily prepared to make an extra special meal. I buy mine from Paul Cole Butchers at Neath Market. The quality of the duck is second to none. When you can buy such good produce locally you should make an effort to try it.

Duck breasts are simple to cook. Don't be put off by the fat, if you score the skin well before cooking, and roast on a rack over a baking sheet, you will be left with a beautifully thin, crisp layer of fat to complement the rich meat. Any fat cooked off can be saved in a jar for using to roast potatoes.

It is the sauce that completes any duck dish. Traditionally, duck is accompanied by a fruity sauce and at this time of year my preferred sauce is red wine with blackberries. The sauce can be made a couple of hours before you roast the meat and serve the duck with green beans and roasted potatoes.

Duck Breasts Allow ½ or 1 breast per person, depending on the size.
Chinese Five Spice Seasoning

For the Sauce

- ½ onion, finely diced
 - 50g Butter
 - 200ml Red Wine
 - 200ml Beef Stock (made with a cube)
 - 2 tbsp Redcurrant jelly
 - 200g Blackberries
- Seasoning



1. Sauté the onions in the butter until softened.
2. Pour in the wine and reduce to @ 4 tbsp juice. Add the beef stock and redcurrant jelly, boil until slightly thickened and glossy.
3. Pour in the blackberries, reserving 2 per duck breast for garnish.
4. Season to taste.
5. Pierce the duck breast with a sharp knife @ 10 times, rub the skin with the Chinese Five Spice.
6. Heat a heavy-based frying pan until hot, Place the duck breast skin side down and cook for @ 5 mins until the skin is well browned.
7. Place the breast, skin side up on a rack over a baking sheet.
8. Roast in the oven for 200'c / Gas Mark 7 for @ 15 minutes for medium rare. Drain off the fat and save in a jar for future use. Store the fat in the fridge once cooled.
9. Carve the duck into slices and serve drizzled with the sauce with roast potatoes and green beans.

Ginger Cake

At my shop, La Crème Patisserie in Neath, I make lots of desserts for restaurants, patisserie and cakes for sale in my shop and other coffee shops and lots of cakes for celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries and weddings.

Nowadays anything goes in terms of wedding cakes. The trend has moved far away from the traditional three tiered fruit cake to more informal cakes. The cake must be fresh, moist, flavoured to the bride and grooms particular favourites and tastefully decorated.

Recently I was asked to make a wedding cake tower of Banoffee cheesecakes, topped with handmade chocolate butterflies, which looked amazing.

This month, one of the cakes, I am baking is a three tier cake with the base tier fruit cake, middle tier chocolate cake, with the top tier using the Bride's Mum's recipe for Ginger Cake. The cakes were covered with three different colours of fondant icing, white, pink and black. We decorated with ribbon and flower sprays supplied by her Florist.

The Bride's Mother came over from Ireland for the tasting session of the Ginger cake. Needless to say she was delighted with our version and it has become a favourite flavour in our shop.

I serve this cake frosted with ginger butter cream, but it is beautifully moist and keeps well for up to a week in an air tight tin (if it lasts that long !)

Mrs Doherty's Ginger Cake

To Make 1 x 2lb loaf + 1 x 1lb loaf, Make One, Freeze One !

200g Soft Margarine
250g Light Brown Sugar
300g Plain Flour
150ml Buttermilk
1 tbsp Black Treacle
8tsp Ground Ginger
Pinch Cloves
Pinch Salt
2tsp Baking Powder
2 Eggs

Ginger Butter cream
250g Unsalted Butter
50g Icing Sugar
3tbsp Ginger Syrup



Method

Place all the ingredients into a mixer and beat for 5 minutes.

Pour into the greased and lined tins.

Bake @ 160°C for 1 hour, covering with Baking paper halfway through the cooking time.

To make the Butter cream, beat the butter with the icing sugar and syrup until well combined. Colour with a little pink colouring if desired.

When the cake is cooled, split in half and fill the centre with butter cream. Swirl a thin layer of the butter cream over the top of the cake to finish.

Sian Hindle of La Crème Patisserie's recipe for Welsh Beef Chilli

Mexican flavours are all the rage nowadays, burritos, tacos, nachos, fajitas have all become part of everyday language, but there is no getting away from the old favourite of Chilli con carne. I make mine slightly differently, using welsh beef pieces instead of mince and cooking it slowly the day before eating.

Serve the chilli with brown or wholegrain rice and have separate bowls of grated cheese, jalapeno chilli peppers, tortilla chips and sour cream. For an extra special supper accompany with a frozen Margharita

The most important part in cooking this dish is that you brown the beef pieces sufficiently to caramelise the surface of the meat. This gives a rich sweet flavour to the meat. Rest the casserole overnight in the fridge, once it has cooled to allow the flavours to develop.

500g Beef pieces
Sunflower Oil
1 Onion, finely chopped
1 Garlic clove
Chilli Powder, mild or hot
2 cans Tomatoes
Splash of Red Wine (if desired)
1 beef Stock Cube
1 Red Pepper, chopped
1 Green Pepper, chopped
Seasoning
Red Kidney Beans



Method

Heat the sunflower oil in a casserole pan, add the beef pieces and sauté until lightly browned and caramelised on the surface. Add the onion and garlic, fry until softened. Stir in the chilli powder, add the tomatoes, splash of red wine and crumble in the stock cube. Cook for 1½ to 2 hours to tenderise the meat. Stir in the peppers and drained red kidney beans. Adjust the seasoning with salt, pepper and a little sugar if too hot. Serve with rice, tacos and Mexican accompaniments.

Black Forest Gateau-GLUTEN FREE by Sian Hindle

With it being chocolate week this week, I need no further excuse to bake up a fantastic chocolate dessert. This recipe has the added bonus of being GLUTEN FREE – so it is a definite hit with coeliac chocoholics looking for that indulgent hit.

This traditional German recipe uses Kirsch and Cherries for that authentic retro flavouring. Either use a can of Hartley's Black Cherry Pie filling or a jar of Morello Cherries in Syrup. If you use the morello's, you will need to drain off the cherries and reduce the syrup to intensify the flavour.

For the sponge:

9 Free range Eggs
200g Caster Sugar
90g Cocoa powder

For the Filling :

720g jar or Morello cherries or 1 can of
Cherry Pie Filling
50g Caster Sugar
50g Kirsch
425ml Double Cream, Whipped to stiff
peak consistency
150g Plain Chocolate, grated



- To make the sponge, separate the egg yolks and whites.
- Place the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl, using an electric whisk or mixer, whisk until very thick and mousse-like, when the whisk is lifted, a ribbon like trail of mixture will hold its shape on the top of the sponge. Sift the cocoa and gently fold in with a metal spoon.
- Place the egg whites into a clean bowl and whisk using an electric whisk or mixer until stiff peaks form. Fold in half the yolk mixture, taking care not to knock out too much air. Add the remaining yolk mixture.
- Divide the mixture between 3 lined sandwich tins.
- Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C/Gas 4 for @ 15-20 minutes.
- Cool the sponges in the tins before turning out onto a wire cooling rack.
- Make some sugar syrup by boiling 50g sugar with 50g water.
- When the syrup is cooled, add 50ml of kirsch.
- When the cakes are cooled, place one sponge as the base, brush with a little of the Kirsch syrup, spread with ¼ of the whipped cream. Top with 1/3 of the cherry mixture.
- Following this pattern, assemble the middle layer and the top layer. Use the remaining cream to coat the sides of the gateau and coat with a layer of chocolate shavings.
- Pipe a ring of cream rosettes around the top of the gateau if desired, finish off with the remaining cherries and chocolate.
- Drizzle with chocolate sauce if liked.

Sausages in a Spicy Tomato Sauce

Sometimes it is difficult to have the inspiration to cook a meal for the family out of what is left in the fridge midweek. It can be like a version of Ready Steady Cook, you have sausages, maybe chorizo and a few store cupboard basics like canned tomatoes, a tin of kidney beans, onions, pasta and chilli powder.

Everyone is hungry and its “what’s for tea, Mum ? – I’m starving.” If it was left to my husband, it would be sausage sandwiches or sausages and chips, but with a little thought, you can make up this economical and nutritious meal in no time at all.

Sausages in Spicy Tomato Sauce

Sausages – as many as you have. I buy good quality sausages with more than 80% meat – or from the butcher. Check the label on the pack.

1 Onion, sliced
½ tsp Chilli Powder
1 can tomatoes
Chorizo Sausage – if you have it
1 can kidney beans
I always cook the sausages in the oven, if you wish to grill them then that’s fine too.



Method

- . Place the sausages on to cook, either roasted in the oven or grilled, turn to cook evenly.
- . Fry the sliced onion in a little olive oil to soften and colour very slightly.
- . Add the chilli powder and the can of tomatoes.
- . Cook until the tomato is slightly reduced, add the chorizo and kidney beans. Season with salt and pepper
- . Cut the sausages into bite-size pieces and add to the tomato sauce. Drain off any of the oil that has come out of the chorizo, it will sit on the top of the sauce.
- . Cook the pasta according to the pack instructions.
- . Serve the sausages over the pasta



Soup by Sian Hindle

French onion, Scotch broth, Cawl, Tomato, Vegetable, Leek & potato
– What's your favourite ?

Home made soup is far superior to any tinned or carton of commercial soup that you can buy. It's incredibly simple to make, you can double the recipe and make a batch for the freezer. Soup is quick to reheat if your family comes in at different times. You can hide vegetables that your family may not eat, without a fuss.

Soups are generally low in fat. If you make soup using seasonal vegetables, you can make an economical meal that can feed the whole family, or satisfy the snacking desires of teenagers coming home from school.

My favourites at the moment are Celeriac and Watercress soup and Butternut Squash and Sweet Potato soup with an added finely chopped red chilli to give some winter warmth. You can make soup out of lots of different vegetable combinations. Check out my recipe for Butternut Squash on the Evening Post website.

Soup recipes are not an exact science, you can make soup as thick or thin as you like. You can blend to a smooth consistency or leave chunky. You can add cream if desired or use a starchy vegetable – potato or sweet potato to give more body to the soup.

To make a wholesome soup, sauté the chopped root vegetables - whatever you feel like using in a little butter or olive oil with a little finely chopped onion. Top up with vegetable stock or chicken stock. Use double the volume of liquid to vegetables. Season the stock and cook until the vegetables are softened. Blend with a hand held blender or cool and whiz in a magi-mix.

Curried Parsnip Soup

40g Butter
1 Onion, skinned and sliced
700g Parsnips, peeled & finely diced
5ml (1tsp) Curry Powder
2.5ml (1/2tsp) Cumin
1.4litres Vegetable Stock
Salt & Pepper
150ml Single Cream (if liked)
Paprika to Garnish

Curried Parsnip Soup cont

Method

1. Heat the butter and gently sauté the onion and parsnips for about 3 minutes.
2. Stir in the curry powder and cumin and sauté for a further 2 minutes.
3. Add the stock and bring to the boil.
4. Reduce the heat and simmer with a lid on for 30 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.
5. Use a hand held blender, blend the soup until smooth.
6. Adjust the seasoning. Add the cream (if using) and reheat to warm, do not boil. Serve sprinkled with paprika. Serve with fresh granary bread or warmed Naan bread.

If you check out our blog site www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk you will see a video hosted on youtube showing you how to make another of Sian's favourite soups - Butternut Squash



Savoury Tarts / Real Men eat Quiche by Sian Hindle

Pastry making is very quick and with my never fail recipe its really easy too. In the past, I have used bought shortcrust pastry, but I find that it shrinks, no matter how careful I am to roll out the pastry and not stretch it.

I always make my short pastry in a food mixer or processor. This method creams half the flour with the fat and crumbles in the remaining flour quickly before adding the water. This makes a short pastry that is very easy to handle and roll out, and is delicious to eat too

Use the pastry to make savoury tarts. Fill a tart shell with some of my favourite fillings.

Savoury Paste

500g Plain Flour,
215g Trex / White Shortening,
10g Salt,
140g Cold water



- Place 250g flour, together with the Trex into a food mixer or processor.
- Cream together for 5 minutes.
- Add the remaining flour and pulse briefly to make a crumble mixture.
- Pour in the water mixed with the salt, pulse briefly until the paste comes together.
- The pastry may seem slightly wet, but it should be a soft smooth dough.
- Rest for at least 30 mins before rolling out on a floured surface.
- Roll out to line a flan ring (This amount of pastry will make 2 x 25cm flan rings – Make one for now and freeze one for Christmas.)
- Line the tart shell with baking parchment and baking beans and bake blind at 200’c, Gas 6 for 10 minutes. Remove the baking beans before filling.

Leek, Blue Cheese and Bacon Quiche

Fry 200g bacon pieces, drain off the fat. Add 200g washed and sliced leeks and sauté until softened, Place into the tart shell with 100g Blue Cheese crumbled over the mixture.

Goats Cheese, Thyme & Red Onion Tartlets

Sauté thinly sliced 150g red onions in a little olive oil until slightly caramelised. Place into the pastry shell, crumble over 100g Welsh Goats Cheese and some fresh thyme leaves.

Classic Quiche Lorraine

Finely chop 200g bacon, sauté in a frying pan, add 150g finely chopped onion, use to fill the pastry case, top with 150g grated cheese.

Smoked Salmon Tartlets

Saute 200g finely onion in a little olive oil, place into the pastry case, top with 200g chopped smoked salmon and 100g grated cheddar cheese Sprinkle with fresh parsley.

Sunblush Tomato & Pesto

Saute 200g finely onion in a little olive oil, place into the pastry case. Top with 250g Sunblush Tomato and drizzle with pesto.

To top up the tarts, make a savoury custard with 3 Free Range Eggs, beaten lightly in a jug with 250ml Double Cream or Crème Fraiche, seasoned with salt and pepper. Pour over the filling in the baked pastry case. Bake for 20-25 minutes at 170°C / Gas 4 for 15 –20 minutes.

These tarts freeze well and are perfect for reheating for a quick supper or part of a buffet meal.



Chocolate Truffles

Chocolate Truffles are a fun gift to make for Christmas, I am flavouring mine with Penderyn Whisky and Merlyn liqueur this year.

To make simple home-made truffles,

225g Good quality dark chocolate

75ml double cream

45ml Flavouring - Brandy, rum, vanilla, or coffee liqueur

1. Stand a glass bowl in a pan of simmering water, add the chocolate to melt and stir in the cream until smooth.
2. Cool for 20 mins, then beat in the flavouring.
3. Beat for 5 minutes until the mixture is light, fluffy and paler in colour. It should be firm enough to stand in soft peaks. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours until quite firm.
4. To make rolled truffles, prepare plates of cocoa powder, grated chocolate and amaretti biscuit. Break off small bitesize pieces of the truffle mixture, roll quickly in your hands, then roll in the coating. Place on waxed paper and chill for 2 hours.

Truffles are suitable for freezing as they are made with fresh cream and should be consumed if stored chilled within a week. Make a larger batch and freeze as a special treat at Christmas time.



Squash, Apricot & Almond Chutney

Chutney is one of the most satisfying things to make at this time of year. The winter spice aromas fill the kitchen when you are cooking up the recipe, but then you have to wait at least a month whilst the chutney matures in your darkest cupboard.

When the time comes to add a tablespoon of the rich fruity chutney to a moist piece of ham or wedge of mature cheese, you can take satisfaction in the fact that you cooked it yourself.

Homemade chutneys also make great gifts for the foodies in your life. Fill the jar, make some labels and tie the lids with some Christmas printed material for a wonderful credit crunching gift.

450g Butternut Squash
2 Onions, peeled and sliced
225g Dried Apricots, cut into quarters
600ml Cider Vinegar
450g Muscovado Sugar
225g Sultanas
30ml Salt
2.5ml Turmeric
2 Cardomon pods, crushed
5ml Mild Chilli seasoning
10ml Coriander seeds
125g Blanched Almonds



Method

1. Peel the squash, cut in half and scoop out the seeds.
2. Cut the flesh into 1cm cubes.
3. Place the vinegar and sugar into a large heavy saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the squash, apricots and onion, with all the remaining ingredients, except the almonds. Stir the mixture well and bring back to the boil.
4. Reduce the heat and cook until soft and thick, stirring more frequently as the chutney thickens, be careful it doesn't burn – due to the sugar. The mixture may take 45 to 75 minutes to thicken and cook, do not let it become too dry. To test, draw a wooden spoon through the mixture it should leave a clear trail at the bottom of the pan which fills up slowly.
5. Stir in the almonds and pack the chutney into warm sterile jars. Seal and store for at least one month in a cool dark place before using.

Watch Sian prepare this chutney on our blog site : www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk

Have a Chocolate Christmas

During December, most of us over indulge in chocolate, from the chocolate advent calendars that give us a tiny taster every day to the tins of Roses, Quality Street, Heroes and Celebrations we munch through at Christmas time.

I am the worse culprit as I use chocolate so much in my job, baking Chocolate and Cherry Roulades, Brownies, Chocolate Birthday Cakes, Chocolate Truffles, making Hot Chocolate in the Café and so on. I thought therefore I would give you a few of my favourite chocolate recipes.

Chocolate Truffles are a fun gift to make for Christmas, I am flavouring mine with Penderyn Whisky and Merlyn liqueur this year.

To make simple home-made truffles,

225g Good quality dark chocolate

75ml double cream

45ml Flavouring - Brandy, rum, vanilla, or coffee liqueur

1. Stand a glass bowl in a pan of simmering water, add the chocolate to melt and stir in the cream until smooth.
2. Cool for 20 mins, then beat in the flavouring.
3. Beat for 5 minutes until the mixture is light, fluffy and paler in colour. It should be firm enough to stand in soft peaks. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours until quite firm.
4. To make rolled truffles, prepare plates of cocoa powder, grated chocolate and amaretti biscuit. Break off small bite size pieces of the truffle mixture, roll quickly in your hands, and then roll in the coating. Place on waxed paper and chill for 2 hours.

Truffles are suitable for freezing as they are made with fresh cream and should be consumed if stored chilled within a week. Make a larger batch and freeze as a special treat at Christmas time.

Melting Chocolate Puddings

Very chocolaty individual baked puddings that have a melted fudge-chocolate sauce inside that oozes out as you put your spoon in.

Serves 4

100g dark chocolate (75% cocoa solids), broken into pieces

100g butter, diced

1 tablespoon brandy

55g golden caster sugar

2 large eggs, plus 2 large egg yolks

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

30g plain flour

1. Stand a glass bowl in a pan of simmering water; making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Add the chocolate, butter and brandy and melt slowly. Then remove from heat and stir until it's smooth and glossy.
2. Place the sugar, whole eggs, yolks and vanilla extract in a large mixing bowl and whisk at high speed until the mixture has doubled in volume and is a thick mousse-like mixture.
3. Pour the melt chocolate mixture around the edges of the mixing bowl and sift the flour over the mixture. Carefully but thoroughly fold everything together.
4. Divide mixture into pudding basins, place on a baking tray and put into a pre-heat oven 200c, Gas mark 6 and cook for 12 minutes.
5. Leave to stand for 1 minute then turn out using a palette knife.
6. Serve warm with pouring or whipped cream.

Chocolate Roulade

Big, classic and brilliant! Using 10 eggs gives you a massive chocolate roulade, perfect for special occasions. Optional, stir 2 tablespoons of brandy into the whipped cream to make it even more special.

Serves 8-10

275g plain chocolate

275g caster sugar

10 eggs, separated

To finish

450ml double cream

Icing sugar



1. Grease and line a large roasting tin with non-stick baking paper.
2. Melt the chocolate in a bowl then cool slightly.
3. Put the sugar and egg yolks into a mixing bowl and whisk on a high speed until mixture is light and creamy. Add the cooled chocolate and stir until evenly blended.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg white until stiff.
5. Carefully fold in the chocolate mixture and turn into the lined roasting tin.
6. Gently spread the mixture and level the surface.
7. Bake the roulade in the centre of the pre-heated oven 180c Gas mark 4, for 25 minutes, or until firm to the touch.
8. Remove from oven and place a cooling rack over the roasting tin and place a damp tea towel on top of the rack and leave until cool.
9. Whip the cream until it just holds its shape and dust a large piece of greaseproof paper with sifted icing sugar.
10. Turn out the roulade and peel off the paper. Spread the cream and then roll up like a Swiss roll.
11. Roll up very tightly using the paper to help. Do not worry when the roulade cracks – a good one should!
12. Dust with more sifted icing sugar to serve.

DON'T MISS

Neath chef
Sian Hindle's
taste of
Christmas

in **Monday's Post**



this is swansea.co.uk

Want to know how to make the perfect Christmas dinner but don't know how? Log on now for our fantastic step-by-step video and text guide taking you from the turkey to the trimming to the table, starring Sian Hindle of La Crème Patisserie in Neath.



Visit our website www.thisiswales.co.uk

WALES EVENING POST MONDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2008 11

Festive recipes for big success

ALL set for your big day in front of the cooker yet? Neath chef and Post cookery writer SIAN HINDLE says the festive food showdown needn't all be about frayed tempers and burned roasties. Follow her tips for a great, but easy, Christmas.



Starters

If you intend serving a starter for Christmas lunch, choose something that can be made in advance and frozen or simply prepared on Christmas Eve. Bear in mind that Christmas lunch is probably one of the largest meals to be eaten in the year — so keep that starter simple.

Starters include favourite soups, terrines or pâté, prawn cocktails or savoury tarts.

I prefer to serve canapés as a starter for when my extended family arrives to nibble when exchanging presents.

I serve simple smoked salmon or smoked mackerel pâté on crostini — which means you don't need a great deal of it, and it gives the cook extra time for getting the lunch on the table.

Smoked Salmon Pate for Canapés

This is what you need:

- 100g smoked salmon
- 20g cream cheese
- 20g creamed horseradish
- Salt and white pepper
- 10g lemon juice
- Chopped parsley
- 1 French stick

This is what you do:

- Place 200g salmon in the blender and whiz to chop coarsely. Add the cream cheese and horseradish, pulse to combine. Season with the salt, pepper and lemon juice.
- To serve, spread the pâté onto thin slices of the French stick. Sprinkle with parsley to give colour.

Main course

FOR Christmas dinner, find fresh Turkey from Cole's at Heath Market at 75p per kg.

Use guidelines to order the bird to feed your family for lunch with enough left over for sandwiches on Christmas night and a turkey curry on Boxing Day.

This is what you do:

- Heat the butter in a pan and gently sauté the onion and garlic. Tip into a bowl and allow to cool. Add the remaining ingredients. Mix together and season well.
- Use to stuff the neck and of the bird only. Or roll into stuffing balls to cook and serve separately.

Apple and cranberry Sausage and stuffing

This is what you need:

- 80g butter
- One onion, peeled and finely chopped
- One clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 75g dried cranberries
- 20g parsley, finely chopped
- 275g Lincolnshire sausage meat
- One red apple

This is what you do:

- Heat the butter in a pan and gently sauté the onion and garlic. Tip into a bowl and allow to cool. Add the remaining ingredients. Mix together and season well.
- Use to stuff the neck and of the bird only. Or roll into stuffing balls to cook and serve separately.

Braised Red Cabbage with Cranberry

This is what you need:

- 900g red cabbage, finely shredded
- 2.5cm root ginger, peeled and finely grated
- 200g fresh cranberries
- 25ml olive oil
- 15ml vegetable stock
- 10g butter
- 30ml balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 20g muscovado sugar

This is what you do:

- Heat the oil in a large saucepan and sauté the cabbage and ginger over a high heat for four minutes.
- Add the stock and seasoning, bring to the boil, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- When cabbage is tender, bubble down excess liquid.
- Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and vinegar.

Dessert

If you are not a fan of the traditional Christmas pudding, I think this recipe for rich chocolate dessert is better than anything you can buy.

Chocolate mud pie

This is what you need:

- 225g chocolate digestive biscuits
- 80g unsalted butter
- 180g plain chocolate
- 180g unsalted butter
- 4 large free range eggs
- 180g brown sugar
- 160ml double cream
- 22cm springform tin, well buttered

This is what you do:

- To make the base, place the biscuits into a food processor and blend.
- Melt the butter in the microwave and pour over the biscuit crumbs.
- Gently melt the chocolate with the butter in the microwave, giving short bursts of heat and stirring well in between, stir gently, then let cool.
- Place the eggs and sugar in a mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, whisk until thick and foamy. Whisk in the cream and then the melted chocolate mixture. Pour over the biscuit base and bake at 170°C, Gas 4 for 45 minutes until just firm.
- Serve the pie at room temperature.

For further recipes and Christmas ideas visit our blog site www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk throughout December.

For Sian's cookery video visit our website www.thisiswales.co.uk

Christmas Cooking Tips by Sian Hindle

I was listening to Delia on Radio 2 this week and she was suggesting Braised Turkey legs as an alternative to your Roast Christmas Turkey this December 25th. We may be in the middle of some hard times, but I think that Christmas Day is the one day of the year where families sit down to eat together. We really are in trouble if we can't find the funds for a turkey dinner whether it is an "Organic Bronze" or a frozen turkey from a supermarket.

There are many ways to stretch your food budget this year; all involve extra planning and preparation. If you are having family or friends over on Christmas Day, why not share the cost and preparation of the meal. If you cook the main course for lunch, encourage others to bring the starters, dessert and cheese board.

Shopping

Buy local. Buy from markets as opposed to supermarkets. The supermarkets are usually only closed on Christmas Day and maybe Boxing Day. Be realistic in what you need and what you can eat during the one day, maybe two that the shops are closed.

Starters

If you intend serving a starter for Christmas lunch, choose something that can be made in advance and frozen or simply prepared on Christmas Eve. Bear in mind that Christmas lunch is probably one of the largest meals to be eaten in the year – so keep that starter simple. Starters include favourite soups, terrines or pate, prawn cocktails or savoury tarts. I prefer to serve canapés as a starter for when my extended family arrives to nibble when exchanging presents. I serve simple smoked salmon or smoked mackerel pate on Crostini – which means you don't need a great deal of it, and it gives the cook extra time for getting the lunch on the table.

Smoked Salmon Pate for Canapés

100g Smoked Salmon
3tbsp Cream Cheese
1-2 tbsp Creamed Horseradish
Salt & White Pepper
1tbsp Lemon Juice
Chopped Parsley
1 French Stick



- Place 250g salmon in the blender and whiz to chop coarsely. Add the cream cheese and horseradish, pulse to combine, Season with the salt, pepper and lemon juice.
- To serve, spread the pate onto thin slices of the French stick. Sprinkle with parsley to give colour.

The Turkey

Fresh Turkey from Cole's at Neath Market is @ £6.00 per Kg. Use guidelines to order the bird to feed your family for lunch with enough left over for sandwiches on Christmas night and a turkey curry on Boxing Day. You can extend and enhance your turkey by making tasty sausage meat stuffing for the bird.

Apple & Cranberry Sausage meat stuffing

50g butter
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped
75g dried Cranberries
2tsp Parsley, finely chopped
275g Lincolnshire sausage meat,
1 red apple
Seasoning

- Melt the butter in a pan and gently sauté the onion and garlic. Tip into a bowl and allow to cool. Add the remaining ingredients. Mix together and season well.
- Use to stuff the neck end of the bird only. Or roll into stuffing balls to cook and serve separately.
- You can use this recipe to make lovely sausage rolls for a buffet table too.

Pigs in Blankets (Chipolatas wrapped in bacon)

Pigs in blankets are one of those trimmings that are simple to make and taste far superior to any you can buy. Involve the children in the kitchen by getting them to help you.

Choose your favourite quality sausages from the butcher or supermarket and wrap up with streaky smoked or unsmoked bacon. Prepare these in advance and freeze ahead of time. On Christmas Day I cook these in a disposable foil tray to save on the washing up!

To cook, line a roasting tray with baking parchment. Place sausages into the tray and drizzle with olive oil. Roast in the oven until lightly browned, approximately 15 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally.

The Trimmings

I never buy expensive prepared vegetables. On Christmas Eve, we have a family tradition where we all peel and prepare the vegetables for Christmas lunch. We put the Christmas Eve film on and get into the festive spirit cooking together. This not only teaches the children, but also adds to the excitement of Christmas.

I checked with Mark Reynolds at Neath Market on the price of vegetables for Christmas lunch. For roast and boiled potatoes, carrots, parsnips, sprouts and cauliflower, he estimates £7.50 for vegetables for a family of 4, using top quality fresh local produce. M&S has a pack of ready prepared vegetables for 4 servings priced at £14.99.

When cooking the vegetables, keep it simple, roast potatoes and parsnips, boiled sprouts, carrots and maybe cauliflower will be a plateful with the turkey and gravy. If you want to add more colour to the plate, then this recipe for red cabbage is brilliant as it can be made in advance and frozen. This recipe makes quite a lot so divide it up and freeze. It is perfect with Pork and winter casseroles.

Watch Sian preparing Christmas dinner on our blog site

www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk

Braised Red Cabbage with Cranberry



900g Red Cabbage, finely shredded
2.5cm Root Ginger, peeled and finely grated
200g Fresh Cranberries
25ml Olive Oil
150ml Vegetable Stock
Seasoning
40g Butter
30ml Balsamic Vinegar or Red Wine Vinegar
2tsp Muscovado Sugar

- Heat the oil in a large saucepan and sauté the cabbage and ginger over a high heat for 3-4 minutes until reduced in bulk, stirring continuously.
- Add the stock and seasoning, bring to the boil, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.
- When the cabbage is tender, uncover and bubble down the excess liquid.
- Remove from the heat and stir in the butter and vinegar. Adjust the seasoning and keep warm until serving.
- This recipe is great made in advance and reheated in the microwave.
- It freezes well too.



Dessert

If you are not a fan of the Traditional Christmas Pudding, then I think these recipes for rich chocolate dessert and sherry trifle are better than anything you can buy. Make the mud pie soon and freeze it for Christmas Day. You will only need a thin slice, dusted with icing sugar and drizzled with cream to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Indulgent Baked Chocolate Mud Pie – Serves 8

225g Chocolate Digestive Biscuits
60g Unsalted Butter
180g Plain Chocolate
180g Unsalted Butter
4 large Free Range Eggs
180g Brown Sugar
180ml Double Cream

23cm Springform Tin, well buttered



- To make the base, place the biscuits into a food processor and blend until you have biscuit crumbs, alternately, place the biscuits in a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin.
- Melt the butter in the microwave and pour over the biscuit crumbs. Using the back of a spoon, press over the base and halfway up the sides of a buttered tin.
- To make the filling, gently melt the chocolate with the butter in the microwave, giving short bursts of heat and stirring well in between, stir gently, then let cool.
- Place the eggs and sugar in a large mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, whisk until thick and foamy. Whisk in the cream and then the melted chocolate mixture. Pour over the biscuit base and bake at 170°C, Gas 4 for 45 minutes until just firm. Leave to cool for a few minutes, then remove from the tin.
- Serve the pie at room temperature with a drizzle of single cream and a dusting of icing sugar. The pie can be made two days in advance and kept in the fridge or made in advance and frozen.

Classic Trifle

300g Madeira Cake, homemade or bought
3 tbsp Strawberry Jam
5tbsp Sweet Sherry
568ml pot of Vanilla Custard
284ml pot Double Cream
White Chocolate Shavings to decorate



- Slice the cake in half horizontally; spread one half with jam and sandwich together.
- Slice into 3cm slices and use to line the base of a glass bowl.
- Drizzle with the sweet sherry.
- Pour over the vanilla custard.
- Whip the double cream until it is softly holding peaks then spoon over the top of the custard.
- Decorate with white chocolate shavings.
- Chill for at least one hour or overnight.
- Remove from the fridge 30 minutes before serving.

To save money on your food shopping this year,

- Buy only what you can realistically eat.
- Plan a shopping list and stick to it.
- Buy local, support your independent traders.
- Don't buy ready prepared foods.
- Get your recipe book out, plan your menu now.
- Encourage all the family to get involved with the preparation.
- Share the catering by encouraging your family to "Cook a Course".
- Cook in advance and freeze to save time on the big day.

For further recipes and Christmas ideas visit our blog site
www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk throughout December.



Spice up that Cold Turkey by Sian Hindle

By the end of Christmas week, I have had enough of traditional food and I am looking for something spicy or curried or Chinese. Our tastes have changed greatly over the last ten years and dishes such as curry, chilli, stir fries make up everyday dishes for weekday meals.

If you have any turkey or ham left over, and need some inspiration for using up the leftovers, look no further than the recipes that follow. Some of these recipes can be prepared and frozen for eating later in the month when the memories of all those turkey sandwiches have faded.

Turkey Stock

In a large pan, place all the bones and leftover turkey with an onion, a carrot, bay leaf and six peppercorns. Top the pan up with cold water, add a small amount of salt and bring to the boil. Skim the scum off the surface of the stock, then reduce the heat and simmer very gently for approximately one hour. Drain the stock through a colander. Remove all the tasty pieces of meat from the bones and add back to the stock. Cool overnight, when the stock is cold remove any fat from the surface of the pan to leave you with fresh turkey stock which is perfect for using in soup.

Simple Thai Turkey Noodle Soup

1tbsp Olive Oil
1 Onion, finely chopped
3 Red Chillies, finely chopped
1 stick of Lemon Grass
1 pack stir fry vegetables
1 pack thin rice noodles, softened as per pack instructions
1 bunch Coriander, finely chopped

- Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion and gently sauté, add the chillies and lemon grass. Pour in the turkey stock, reserving the turkey meat to add in later.
- Bring to the boil, add the spring onions, stir fry vegetables and rice noodles.
- Add the reserved turkey and chopped coriander.
- Add salt and pepper to taste. If the stock needs to have more body, add a chicken stock cube to enhance the flavour.

Turkey Quesadillas

Take two flour tortillas, sprinkle over a generous amount of grated cheddar or Monterey jack cheese. Top with slices of red onion, cubes of turkey, chopped jalapeno chilli peppers, sun dried tomatoes (if liked). Place the second tortilla on top to seal. Place a non stick frying pan on the hob over a medium heat. Place the tortilla into the pan, warm through until the cheese has melted. Serve with sour cream, salsa and guacamole and a few tortilla chips.

Ham, Cranberry & Brie Wrap

Using the same method as above, fill a tortilla with thin slices of Brie, chopped ham and a few small dollops of cranberry sauce. Top with the second tortilla then heat as above.

Turkey Meatballs with Cranberry Relish

125g Celery
50g Walnuts
450g Roast Turkey Meat
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
1tbsp olive Oil
1tsp Italian Seasoning
2tbsp Cranberry Sauce
125g Fresh Breadcrumbs
2 eggs
50g grated Parmesan
Sunflower Oil for Frying

- Finely chop the celery, walnuts and turkey.
- In a frying pan heat the oil, add the garlic, celery and Italian seasoning.
- Cook, stirring for 5 minutes until softened, then add the cranberry sauce, set aside to cool.
- In a bowl, mix together the turkey, celery mixture, breadcrumbs, eggs, walnuts and cheese, season well.
- Divide the mixture into 12 golf ball sized pieces.
- Heat the oil in a frying pan, cook the meatballs for 5 – 7 minutes turning gradually to cook on all sides until golden brown.
- Drain on kitchen paper, serve immediately with a green salad and a spoonful of cranberry relish.
- The meatballs can be frozen before cooking if you wish to save them for another time.

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16 pages of the best weekend sporting action



FREE Inside tonight

KIDS AT RISK IN DATA SLIP-UP

SOME of Neath Port Talbot's most vulnerable children are said to be at risk after a council worker lost a memory stick containing confidential information.

BY ALEX BROWN

Authority chiefs have launched an investigation, but one carer said: "We're in a

very vulnerable position, because the fact that information has gone missing is disastrous."

Page 13 Full story



'I never wanted to be famous'

Full story — page 3

Inside:



Our chef's tasty tips

IT'S a big job, but someone's got to do it — and thanks to Neath chef Sian Hindle, rustling up Christmas dinner needn't mean a trip into hell's kitchen.

Our cookery writer has all the top tips when it comes to a stress-free yuletide.

Full story — page 11

Joke is not on trader

A PORT Talbot trader has had the last laugh on whoever called in the cops over his festive jokes.

Full story — page 12

THE NUTCRACKER

The world's most famous Christmas ballet comes to St David's Hall for 6 performances only!

Runs until Monday 22 December

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To watch a video of Sian Hindle making cakes
 Visit our website www.thisisswansea.co.uk



LIFE IS SWEET Sian Hindle and husband Ian of La Crème Patisserie.

local news walesonline.co.uk
Cakes put Neath on the map

THE best Welsh cakes are made in Neath – and that's official. Not only that, the town is also the home of Wales' ultimate mince pies.

Both products have won gold awards for La Crème Patisserie. The Angel Street business received the highest recognition at the Great Taste Awards, considered by some to be the Oscars of the food industry.

Confidence was high before judging took place because Neath townfolk had already given their seal of approval.

Sian Hindle, who co-owns the patisserie with husband Ian, said: "We were confident that we had a winning product because, after two years of trading, everyone who comes to the patisserie comments on the great taste of the Welsh cakes and most leave the shop buying a box to take away."

"Also, last Christmas we sold our frangipane mince pies in a gift pack and we couldn't keep up with demand."

The products, blind-tested by judges, went on display at the Speciality and Fine Food Fair at Olympia last weekend and could provide the business with a huge boost.

Award organisers claim their recognition has generated more than £2.6m in additional sales for winners over the past five years – and Mrs Hindle is ready for the rush.

She said: "Both products are available in our presentation gift packs and they make perfect gifts for real food lovers."

For more information about the business and its products, visit www.lacremepatisserie.co.uk

GOLD WINNERS: Sian and Ian Hindle with their award-winning Welsh cakes and mince pies

Welsh cakes travel well and were a top seller at Harrods' Best of British promotion. Sian Hindle, baker and co-owner of La Crème Patisserie, Neath, South Wales, gives her recipe

WELSH CAKES



Sian's Welsh cakes: just don't calla them drop scones! (Photo: Alan Jones)



Day on 3 March, we serve mini Welsh cakes. We find that having one is just not enough, so we sell our Welsh cake petits fours in bags of 10 to nearly everyone who samples them.

When it comes to the former, there can be no more traditional food produced in Wales than the Welsh cakes. The scent of the spiced cake cooking on the bakestone and rolled in sugar produces fond memories for locals and visitors to Wales alike.

"Welsh cakes are produced by every bakery, market, outdoor fair and supermarket in Wales," says Hindle. "Today, they are sold over the internet and offered to brides as traditional wedding favours in Wales and beyond."

Welsh cakes (picau ar y maen) are similar to scones, but baked on a traditional bakestone rather than in an oven. The bakestone is a cast-iron griddle placed on a hob.

The cakes, made from flour, butter or lard, with sugar, currants or raisins and mixed spice, are cut out roughly circular 4-6cm in diameter and 1cm thick. They are sometimes baked plain, then split and filled with jam or butter.

Hindle says: "At La Crème, we give a petit four as a taster with every latte, cappuccino and tea we serve. From January to St David's

Ingredients
 Self-raising flour 1.75kg
 Baking powder 10tsp
 Butter 750g
 Caster sugar 575g
 Currants/raisins 500g
 Mixed spice 5tsp
 Eggs, beaten 5
 Milk 10tbsp

Method
 1. In a large mixer, using a K beater, mix the flour, baking powder, butter and caster sugar to a crumble. Add the sugar, currants and spice.
 2. Add the eggs and milk to form a firm dough.
 3. Roll out to a depth of 5mm, cut into rounds, 4-6cm in diameter and 1cm thick.
 4. Place the cakes on a griddle or heavy frying pan over a low heat, cooking for 3-4 minutes on each side, until golden-brown.
 5. Remove from pan, dust with caster sugar and cool.
 6. Best eaten warm, they may be microwaved to reheat, if required.



Traditional & Regional Favourites 2008

6th November 2008

2008

local news walesonline.co.uk

Award-winning patissier meets mayor



AN award-winning Neath patissier was invited to meet with the mayor and mayoress of Neath Port Talbot, Malcolm and Mary Gunter, during a visit to Neath Civic Centre.

Sian, who runs La Creme Patisserie, specialises in the creation of bespoke gateaux, cakes and desserts.

Sian's high standard of work was recognised when she was awarded the prestigious Welsh Master Baker Award for Petit Fours.

AWARD-WINNING: Sian Hindle, centre, with mayor and mayoress of Neath Port Talbot, Malcolm and Mary Gunter.

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Civic Centre, Port Talbot PA43 1PZ
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It's Saturday! Food & drink

Healthy, tasty summer treat

Touch of spice on a budget

DAVID HENCKE, from health's fast-growing professional and catering company La Colina Professional, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

They, and other chefs and food experts at the British Food's Awards, searched for new recipes with a recipe for roasted chili peppers.



With the summer months in full swing, it's time to think about how to make the most of your summer produce. The British Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

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It's Saturday! Food & drink

Sweet summer strawberry pud

Sweet stuff can prove seductive

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They, and other chefs and food experts at the British Food's Awards, searched for new recipes with a recipe for Summer Strawberry Meringues.



Looking for a new recipe to impress your guests? This week's Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

They, and other chefs and food experts at the British Food's Awards, searched for new recipes with a recipe for Summer Strawberry Meringues.

It's Saturday! Food & drink

An easy way to impress diners

Pedro has more than a Lidi taste

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It's Saturday! Food & drink

Delicious duck always delights

Rich red fits the bill perfectly

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They, and other chefs and food experts at the British Food's Awards, searched for new recipes with a recipe for Rich red fits the bill perfectly.



Duck is a versatile and delicious meat that can be cooked in a variety of ways. This week's Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

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It's Saturday! Food & drink

Spice and tiers for any occasion

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Having lots of cherries on top

Indulgent treat for a sweet tooth

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It's Saturday! FOOD & DRINK

Soup it up for a healthy treat

Kitchen buys

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For a healthy and delicious treat, this week's Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

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It's Saturday! FOOD & DRINK

Tart up quiche the simple way

Kitchen buys

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Perfect for a quick and easy meal, this week's Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

They, and other chefs and food experts at the British Food's Awards, searched for new recipes with a recipe for Tart up quiche the simple way.

It's Saturday! FOOD & DRINK

Festive feast of chocolate treats

Kitchen buys

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Delightful and delicious, this week's Food's Awards, which celebrates the best in British food and drink, has asked the Food's team to find out how to get the most out of your summer produce.

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Sian Hindle from Neath's fast growing patisserie and catering company, La Crème Patisserie joined the South Wales Evening Post's team of top chefs to share some of her favourite recipes during 2008.

Voted one of the top three Patisiers in the UK at the British Bakery Awards in 2007, Sian has won awards at both the Great Taste Awards and the Welsh True Taste Awards for 2008.

Catch up on all her latest news on the La Crème blog site www.lacreme.typepad.co.uk

“Cooking with Passion” by Sian Hindle

reproduced from articles written by Sian and featured in the South Wales Evening Post in 2008