



The Edible Garden - with Alison Alexander

With the Festive Season fast approaching it is time to think of food for sharing with family and friends. The recipes below are perfect for serving with drinks but also make excellent gifts when spooned into a bowl and gift wrapped but remember to keep them refrigerated. They also travel well in a chilled container on those occasions when you are asked to “take a plate”. I’m sure many of you have cucumbers planted out for summer and the cucumbers required for the hearts are large. If wanting the heart shape, I cut the slices on the diagonal to give a larger surface area. If you are growing smaller Lebanese cucumbers then just cut diagonal slices, dry as described and pipe on the mixture. Both recipes can be prepared ahead of when needed.

I wish you all a Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you in 2021.



Smoked Trout Mousse on Cucumber Hearts

250g smoked trout
1/4 cup cream
salt and pepper
lemon juice to taste
1-2 tablespoons horseradish cream
500g cream cheese
2 continental cucumbers
1/3 cup baby capers

1. Wash cucumbers and cut into 1cm slices. Cut out heart shapes with a small cutter or any shape cutter of choice. The slices can also be left whole. Line a plate with two sheets of kitchen absorbent paper and cover with cucumber slices. Top with a double layer of paper on top and leave for at least 20 minutes. This can be done ahead with the plate wrapped securely with plastic wrap and refrigerated overnight. Cucumber weeps liquid and this step prevents the hearts from being too wet.
2. Remove skin and bones from trout and put the flesh into a food processor with remaining ingredients and process until smooth.
3. Spoon trout mixture into piping bag with star nozzle and pipe onto cucumber hearts. Decorate with baby capers and store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Note:

- The ingredients given here make a large quantity and can easily be reduced. Any leftover Mousse is delicious spread on toast with poached eggs for breakfast.
- Smoked salmon can be used in place of the trout.
- The hearts can be also garnished with tiny sprigs of dill or fennel, snipped chives or for a total look of glamour, some salmon roe.
- The mousse can be spooned into a bowl and used as a dip served with vegetable sticks and crackers.

Roasted Capsicum, Walnut and Ricotta Dip

2 red capsicum, quartered lengthwise and deseeded
185g fresh ricotta
90g dry roasted walnuts, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon horseradish cream
juice of ½ lemon
salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper

1. Place the capsicum on a grill tray and grill until skins are blackened. Remove and place on a plate. Cover the plastic wrap and leave for 10 minutes. Slip off the blackened skins.
2. Place all ingredients into a food processor and process until smooth. Spoon into a serving bowl and refrigerate. Accompany with crackers.

Note: Roasted natural almonds can be used in place of the walnuts.