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Irish Soda Bread

Posted on 14 May 2012



Irish Soda Bread from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Justine van Mourik and I manage exhibition development at the National Library of Australia. It was slightly daunting to be the first ‘chef’ in Paddy’s Kitchen but I had excellent assistance from ‘the visitors’ – my mum, Jenny and aunt, Judy (aka Mavis & Esme) who just happened to be visiting at the right time! We made three recipes to start the blog rolling, the first of which is Irish Soda Bread.

I’m not an avid reader of Patrick White’s literary works but through the exhibition I’ve come to appreciate him as a complex human being – difficult and cantankerous but also witty, warm and generous. I’m easing myself back into his literary output by reading David Marr’s excellent biography then I just might be ready to have another go at *Voss*.

Irish Soda Bread

These recipes are verbatim from an Irish woman.

1 lb flour (plain flour)

1 teaspoon sugar (if you want a savoury bread add salt instead)

1 teaspoon bread soda (we used bicarb soda and it worked fine)

Buttermilk to mix (about 400 ml give or take)

Sift the dry ingredients several times through your fingers. Make a well in the centre. Pour in the buttermilk gradually, mixing in the flour from the side. Don't have the mixture too dry. Turn it out on a floured board, knead lightly for a few minutes, pat the dough to a round and cut a cross on it to keep from cracking in baking. Let the cuts go over the sides of the cake to make sure of this.



Make a cross over the bread to stop it from cracking or to 'let the fairies out' according to Irish superstition

Brush with milk and bake at once on a hot oven (450° F) for 45 minutes. (This was about 225 degrees celsius in my oven (not fan forced) for about 15 minutes then we reduced it to 200 degrees celsius for the remaining 30 or so minutes.) If you have any doubts about doneness, tap the bottom of the cake. If it sounds hollow it is cooked. (This is very true!)



The finished product

To make your own buttermilk:

The buttermilk plant is a kind of fungus made from sugar, yeast, milk and water. After a few weeks it will grow and grow and you'll be able to present your friends with a cutting. The milk it produces is very good for the health, particularly in rheumatic cases. I heard about this miraculous plant from Miss Florence Irwin who is the best cook in Ireland. To start the plant you'll need:

1 oz sugar

1 oz yeast 1 quart tepid milk and water

Cream the yeast with the sugar, gradually add the tepid milk and water. Put the mixture in some vessel that may easily be washed and scalded, cover it and leave in a warm place for a couple of days or until the milk smells and tastes like buttermilk. When you want to use it, put a piece of muslin in the bottom of a strainer and strain the milk through this. The funny-looking thing like lumpy cornflour which remains will be the plant. Rinse every drop of milk off it by pouring a cup of tepid water over it. Let the water run through the strainer into the buttermilk, it will all make excellent liquid for mixing cake-bread. To start a new lot of buttermilk, scrape the plant off the muslin and put it back into the scalded and well-rinsed vessel, add another quart of tepid milk and water, cover and leave as before. That first ounce of yeast will go on growing and multiplying giving you buttermilk till the end of time. If you don't want the buttermilk for baking you can always drink it. I know a woman so crippled with rheumatics that she could not kneel down to say her prayers. After six months of drinking this buttermilk she was able to do the Lough Derg Pilgrimage on her knees.

What's the verdict?

Don't be scared off by the length of this recipe, it is actually a quick and easy way of making a very impressive loaf of bread. Most of the original recipe is about making your own buttermilk plant at home – if you want the satisfaction of making bread with homegrown buttermilk from a stinky, festering yeast plant then I say go for it, but we went to the supermarket and bought a small carton for about \$2! It's a great base recipe and you could add sultanas or nuts to a sweet version or olives, herbs or cheese to a savoury version. We'll definitely be trying this one again. It doesn't keep as long as store-bought bread but two days later it was still good enough for us to polish off the leftovers by making it into garlic bread.

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Vegetable casserole

Posted on 16 May 2012



Vegetable Casserole from the recipes of Patrick White

Following on from Irish Soda Bread, we had a red hot go at Patrick White's vegetable casserole, mostly because 'the visitors' are both vegetarians. There was some dubiousness about the selection of vegetables specified for the casserole but we set off to the markets to purchase what seemed to be an obscene amount of root vegetables.

Vegetable casserole

2 onions (we used red onions)

2 or 3 carrots (2 is plenty)

Turnip (2 or 3) (don't go for three, this is a huge dish)

Parsnip (slice thinly if you are putting one in)

2 or 3 leeks (2 is enough)

¼ lb button mushrooms

1 tablespoon tomato puree (we used tomato paste)

½ pt stock or water (have a little bit more on hand ours looked a bit dry during cooking)

Grated cheese (2oz.)

Herbs (one thing my garden has plenty of, in this case fresh Greek Basil, Oregano and Thyme) plus some breadcrumbs (we made our own rather than use processed ones and they were very tasty)

Peel and slice onions and carrots. Soften them in butter. Prepare other vegetables. (Slice your turnips and parsnips as thinly as possible, we used a mandolin. To speed up cooking time I would par-cook all the vegies except the mushrooms either in the microwave or in the pan with the carrots and onions.)

When onion and carrot are cooked, add rest of vegetables in layers, seasoning as you go, and sprinkling each layer with herbs and a little grated cheese. (We seasoned the layers with black pepper and Judy's magic kitchen ingredient – truffle salt – if you have some, throw a little in; if you don't have some, go and buy some now, it makes everything taste better.)

When casserole is filled pour over the liquid in which the tomato puree has been dissolved. Cover and cook at 350F for about an hour. (160 degrees fan forced or 180 degrees in a standard oven. If your vegies are raw when you put the casserole in, it will most likely take longer than an hour.)

15 mins before it is ready, uncover, sprinkle top with breadcrumbs and more grated cheese and finish cooking without lid.

What's the verdict:

It was delicious! Despite our dubiousness at the inclusion of the turnips and the parsnip, this was actually really quite tasty. You could probably use any vegetables that you have to hand and this would turn out well. The vegetarians were most impressed by the flavours and as you can see from the image below, we made healthy dent in what was a very large dish! This would easily serve 6-8 people as a side dish.



I believe this is what Patrick White used to refer to as 'Remains'

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Zabaglione Gritti

Posted on 28 May 2012



Zabaglione Gritti from the recipes of Patrick White

In my final foray into the recipes of Patrick White, we stray into dessert territory. I think Patrick White had a bit of a sweet tooth judging by the number of dessert recipes in his papers. In David Marr's biography, White recalls being given forbidden sweets after kindly by the family's watchman – his mother did not approve of sweets (or of potatoes apparently) and so they were an extra special treat for young Paddy. I wonder what Mrs White would have made of this recipe.

Zabaglione Gritti

Egg yolks 6

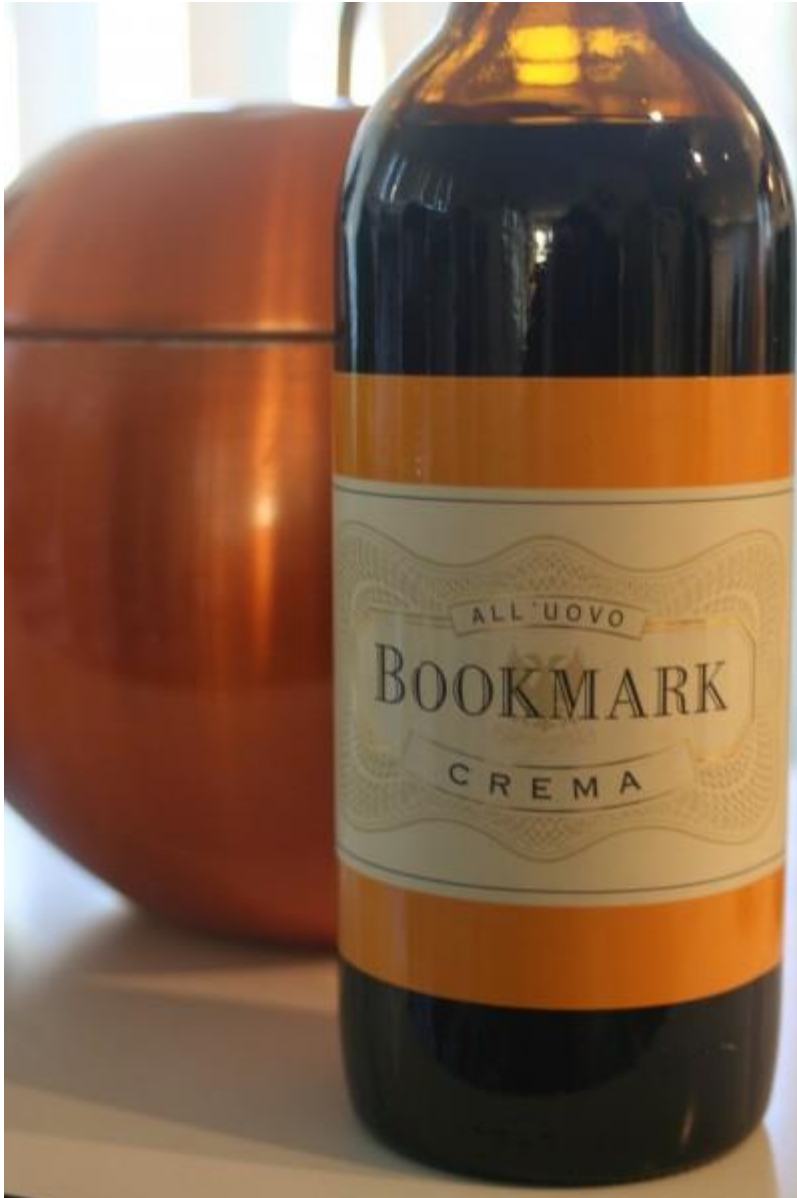
Sugar 2 ½ ozs

Marsala 2 ½ fl. ozs

Gelatine ¼ oz (one sachet)

Cream and grated chocolate (optional garnish)

Put egg yolks, sugar, and Marsala in top of double boiler. First you have to find Marsala at the bottle shop, it transpires that Marsala is a region (like Champagne) and so can only be used to name an authentic product – so what you are actually looking for is a cream sherry with added egg yolk.



This is what you are looking for in the bottle shop.

Dissolve gelatine in a little warm water (boiling water is better) and add. Beat pan constantly over hot water till mixture stiffens and rises. This is where we got into trouble on batch number one. We used a wooden spoon to beat the mixture – I think the word ‘whisk’ is more appropriate to this recipe than beat and if you have a hand beater that’s probably even better than a whisk.

When the mixture is thick, remove bowl from heat and continue to beat (whisk!) a moment or two longer, then pour into glasses and allow to grow quite cold. Garnish with blob of whipped cream and a little grated chocolate.

It makes enough for six small glasses or four large parfait glasses.



Batch number two had a much better consistency

What's the verdict:

Opinion in our house was sharply divided on this recipe. The addition of gelatine, to ensure that the mixture will set, is a little unorthodox and gives the finished product a distinct marshmallow taste. Those who like marshmallows (i.e. me) were in favour of a positive rating but the non-marshmallow eaters were inclined towards a rating of 'vile, vile, vile, vile'. We agreed to differ and met in the middle.

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

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Zuccotto

Posted on 5 June 2012



Emily Sykes with her Zuccotto from the recipes of Patrick White. Photo: Aaron Maras.

My name is Emily Sykes and I work in the Pictures and Manuscripts Branch at the National Library of Australia. I enjoy cooking and rarely cook the same dish more than twice – I enjoy being exploratory in the kitchen. This dish was made for and enjoyed by fellow colleagues and friends at the National Library for a self-described ‘Patrick White dinner party’.

Admittedly my knowledge of Patrick White is fairly limited. This is probably due to the fact that, unfortunately, his literature was no longer a part of the school curriculum by the time I entered High School. I was first introduced to Patrick White at the National Library and have gained substantial knowledge of his life and works. Now that I have conquered a recipe my next goal is to read one of his works – I welcome any suggestions as to which is the best one to start with.

I selected this dish because 1. I love desserts and 2. It seemed like the perfect dish to create on a weeknight – little cooking and mostly ‘assembling’. Clearly I underestimated the effort that is required to make Chantilly cream. However, the recipe was fairly easy to follow and I made slight adjustments when necessary.

Zuccotto

Sponge cake (or lady fingers)
Maraschino
6 cups of heavy whipping cream
1 cup of sugar

*¼ tablespoon of vanilla
1 cup candied fruit
3 oz semi-sweet chocolate
½ tablespoon of brandy
¾ cup of mashed strawberries*

Modifications

*You can replace maraschinos by Marsala or Amaro fino.
Pour strawberry syrup on the top of the zuccotto just before serving it
You can replace the cream by an already made Chantilly.
Strawberries can be only cut in two or three instead of being mashed*

Line a deep large bowl or mould with strips of sponge cake or lady fingers moistened with maraschino. (I was unable to source maraschino and substituted with Cherry Brandy – not necessarily a cheap alternative but a good drinking companion to the assemblage process.)



Line your dish with sponge fingers while you try to keep your fingers out of the cherry brandy

Whip two cups of heavy cream. Sweeten with ½ cup sugar and flavour with vanilla. Fold in ½ cup candied fruit. (I took culinary ‘licence’ with the candied fruit and purchased a couple of packets of fruit candy from the health food section at Coles. I figured that they at least contained fruit unlike my other option. I seriously considered folding Starburst into the whipped cream.)

Spoon the mixture into the cake lined mould. This makes the first layer of filling.

Melt 3 ounces of semi-sweet chocolate with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water in a double boiler. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon of brandy. Cool.

Whip two cups of heavy Cream with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar until stiff. Fold in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of mashed strawberries. Spoon over the chocolate filling to make a third layer.

Freeze the dessert until it is firm. To serve, unmould on a chilled platter and cut into wedges.

Serves 8

What's the verdict:

The most nerve-wracking part of the recipe was turning out the 'trifle' from the mould onto a plate. Hearing that 'plop' was very satisfactory and the Zuccotto was a triumph. I have rated the Zuccotto recipe 4 out of 5 as it 'has a genius'. It was moderately easy and delicious.



The end result

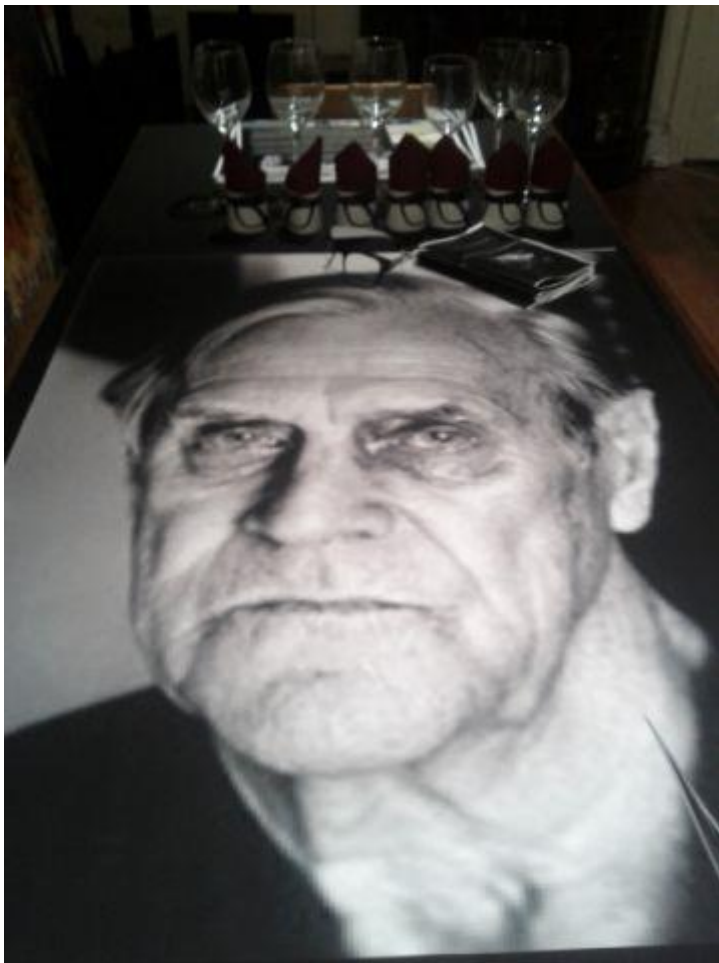
Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Haloumi Soufflé

Posted on 12 June 2012

This week's blog post is courtesy of our Twitter feed, when Paul and Milos sent us their Haloumi Soufflé pic, we just had to have the whole story!

For our *Evening with Patrick White* dinner on 26 May the second course was Haloumi Soufflé. "Chefs" Paul (Soufflé Base Boy) and Milos (Egg White Whippier) are inner Melbourne friends and home cooks. To set the scene for this august occasion, Milos organised a fabulous table setting replete with a giant picture of Paddy, and some "Novel" place settings.



The Patrick White Centenary Tablecloth



Preparing the Centenary Table



Patrick White Centenary Table

The Vivisector was the first Patrick White novel for both of us. Paul is obsessed and remains mad for all things Patrick White in 2012. Missed out on the exhibition (*there's still time – ed.*) but Whippier Milos went to the National Library of Australia and scoured the recipe box for dishes, as well as to pick up bit and pieces for the festivities (the “Glasses” bookmark makes wonderful napkin rings!). The soufflé was a must include but Patrick’s handwriting makes for difficult reading!



Martin as Patrick White is mad for Haloumi Soufflé

The first course (Iced Carrot and Orange soup) was served and devoured, and then it was time for the soufflé. The recipe is easy to reproduce, if not for the difficult scrawl of Paddy's handwriting.

Haloumi Soufflé

4 oz butter

4 eggs

4 oz grated cheese

2 tabs chopped mint -use more mint than prescribed (but very finely cut).

¼ pint milk

2 oz SR flour

½ tspn baking powder

Beat 4 oz butter with yolks of four eggs. (Make sure both eggs and butter are at room temperature before you attempt this!)

Add 4 oz grated haloumi and 2 tabs mint. Add 2 oz SR flour and baking powder, alternating with scant quarter pint of milk. Fold in well.



Paul as Patrick White preparing soufflé base

Beat in egg whites. Pour into a buttered soufflé dish of 2 pts capacity – and bake at 350° F for about half an hour. Near disaster when we realise temperature setting on oven is not quite right (Paul has temporary Theodora-esque breakdown), luckily the fan force brings it up fast and soufflé rises! The temperature in the recipe is in 350 Fahrenheit (about 180 Celsius for 30 minutes as a large single soufflé), but as we did them separately in medium sized ramekins (for dinner party convenience) the temperature used was 200 degrees Celsius for 12-13 minutes (roughly half the time). Oven must be at temperature before you put the soufflé in.

Serve plain or with tomato sauce. Enough for 4. With eight at the table, we doubled everything but used individual ramekins for serving (the only diversion from the recipe). Served on white plate on white napkin. Slightly gooey in middle and rich as Elizabeth Hunter!



Olwyn sneaking a taste of Haloumi Soufflé



Sara giving thanks to Patrick White for Souffle happiness

What's the verdict?

A COMPLETE SUCCESS!

Next Course?

Saddle of Lamb with Zeilook and Substantial Cranky Salad!

A big thank you to the National Library and the Exhibitions Team for giving us the means to carry off this fun dinner! Happy 100th Birthday Patrick!



Thumbs up to Haloumi Soufflé - perfection!

Rating: [Perfection](#)

Meat aux Trois Épices

Posted on 22 June 2012

The National Library celebrated what would have been Patrick White's 100th birthday on 28 May, but it was the hundreds of Library guests on the day who received the presents. ABC 666 presenter Genevieve Jacobs hosted a live broadcast in the Library Foyer with some very special guests including actress Kate Fitzpatrick and photographer William Yang who shared their memories of White with guests and listeners.

No birthday is complete without party food and Steve Scott and Rachel Romney-Brown from *bookplate*, the National Library's award-winning cafe, served up three of White's recipes with a modern touch. They were devoured faster than you could say *Voss*.



Genevieve interviews Rachel and Steve about recreating Patrick's recipes

So unlike our previous posts, this week's recipe has the distinction of being prepared by a professional chef. Steve Scott is the Executive Chef at *bookplate* but his career includes stints at the Savoy in London (something I'm sure Patrick would have approved of) and Chateau Lake Louise in Canada (fantastic scenery!)

Although Steve really wanted to have a go at last week's Haloumi Soufflé, it wasn't a recipe particularly suited to a horde of hungry birthday party guests. So instead he settled for Carrot Mould, Meat aux Trois Épices and the previously posted Zabaglione Gritti -something he used to make as a first year apprentice.



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The fabulous food, here now but gone in seconds!

Meat aux Trois Épices (Meat with three spices)

Sauce for chicken veal or turkey fillets. Any insipid meats.

6 spring onions

1 tsp coriander

1 tsp cardamom

1 tsp cumin

½ oz flour

½ oz butter

1 glass white wine

½ pint chicken stock

3 tbsp cream

Chop up spring onions. Cook for few mins in butter. Add spices with flour, stir and cook for 2 mins. Add wine and stock. Boil for 5 mins. Dip fillets in flour and fry lightly in butter. Add sauce, bubble up, and add cream.

What's the verdict?

Steve reckons this is a pretty typical 70's recipe, with probably more flour than is necessary if you stick to the original version. His advice would be to leave the flour out of one half of the recipe (either put flour in sauce or flour the chicken before frying but definitely don't do both!) He diced and poached four chicken breasts and then mixed them with the sauce and filled about 50 oyster cases to make the bite sized party morsels which were snapped up in seconds.



Kate Fitzpatrick cuts the birthday cake

Rating: [Inspid](#)

Kolokythopitta (Zucchini Pie)

Posted on 26 June 2012



Matt and Jo present their Kolokthyopitta.

My name is Matthew Jones, and I'm the supervising curator for the exhibition *The Life of Patrick White*. I'm also a world champion eater but when it comes to cooking, I'll never be anything more than a reserve grade benchwarmer . When faced with the task of tackling one of his recipes in the kitchen, I thought my knowledge of Patrick White's life might compensate for my culinary deficiencies. Perhaps not surprisingly, I found it was of no benefit whatsoever. Fortunately my partner, Jo – a curator at the National Portrait Gallery who, appropriately, has spent the last few months acquainting herself with Brett Whiteley's infamous portrait of White – was around to help select a recipe and then bring it to life.

We cooked the Kolokythopitta (a recipe given to White by someone named Mrs Louloudas) for a bash at a colleague's place to celebrate the launch of this blog. The recipe appealed for its simplicity and because – unlike some of the others transcribed from White's papers – it was without any vague, unfinished or esoteric instructions (the recipe for 'Liberal soufflé', for example advises a mixture of Philly cream cheese and jellied soup!)

Kolokythopitta (Mrs. Loloudas)

1 ½ kilos Kolokythakia (zucchini or marrow)
2 medium sized onions
200 grams feta
4 eggs
1 cup plain flour
250 grams olive oil
Parsley
Pepper (salt unnecessary because of the feta)

Grate marrows and place in colander. ('Mrs Louloudas', whoever she was, must have had remarkable stamina: grating 1.5 kilograms of zucchini is hard, hard work.)



This recipe involves a lot of grating.... both zucchini and feta. You may need to warm up before attempting it.

Boil chopped onions with a little water, & when water is absorbed, add ½ of the oil and fry lightly. (Not knowing what purpose would be served by the instruction to ‘boil chopped onions with a little water’ before sautéing them in oil, we omitted this step in the recipe.)



Why boil when you can sauté?

Squeeze marrows with the hands to remove moisture. Place in bowl and add chopped parsley, grated feta, 4 eggs whisked with flour, pepper onions and remainder of oil.



Four eggs in the foreground and a lot of grated zucchini in the background.

Mix together, place in oiled (oblong) holding dish and level. Cook in moderate oven about 45 mins until brown. Cut into squares when cold. Keeps well. Do not refrigerate.(Use the biggest size grater not too fine)

What's the verdict?

We also took the flagrantly extra-textual step of deciding to serve the dish with a side of garlic-dosed Greek yoghurt . The recipe instructs to 'Cut into squares when cold' which led us to assume it could be eaten both ways and we served it cold at the dinner party.

However we don't think this really worked and it tasted much better when we sampled a small slice not long after it came out of the oven.

When eaten warm it 'has a genius' but can be a bit 'humdrum' when cold.

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

Carrot Mould

Posted on 2 July 2012



Carrot Mould from the recipes of Patrick White.

My name is Erin Stephens. I was one of the project managers working on the Patrick White exhibition but now I work on the Library's sustainability and heritage projects. I quite enjoy cooking, it's my relaxation after work and something I enjoy when I've got time on the weekends. I try new recipes all the time and enjoy cooking for friends. I admit to enlisting the assistance of a friend and great cook, prior to cooking the carrot mould, who gave me some helpful tips on this recipe which I have included below.

I'm ashamed to admit that until I started working on this exhibition I had never read Patrick White. I have since rectified this dire situation and have to admit that I'm converted. I'm currently reading *The Tree of Man* which I'm finding captivating. White's descriptions of the bush and the people in this novel are incredible. I find myself re-reading sentences just to savour them.

Carrot Mould

1lb carrots

1 ½ oz butter

1 oz flour

4 tbsp milk

1 dessert spoon grated cheese

1 tbsp parsley

2 egg yolks

*2 egg whites
salt and pepper*

Sauce:

1 oz butter

1 oz flour

½ pint milk

1 dessert spoon of cheese

1 tbsp parsley

Cook carrots, mash or blend. Stir in cheese and parsley. Season.



First mash your carrots....

Melt butter add flour, then milk. Stir and cook till thickened. (I added more milk than stated in the recipe – it was too thick otherwise). Add well beaten yolks. (tip from friend: cool the mix before adding the egg yolks, otherwise the yolks will start to cook and the carrot mould won't rise properly).

Stir and mix into carrots – beat egg whites and fold in. Pour into well oiled ring mould (I didn't have a ring mould, so I substituted with a cake tin and a baking paper-wrapped glass to make a well in the centre). Put mould in bath of hot water –half way up. Bake at 400° (200 Celsius) for ½ hour.

At this point my husband walked into the kitchen, took one look at the bright orange mix and helpfully commented, “that does not look at all appealing...”



Ready for the oven....

Remove from oven. Wait a few moments before turning out. Serve with cheese and parsley sauce. Ring can be filled with leftovers or vegetables (this is my favourite part of the recipe – I couldn't resist adding some left over vegies.)



Carrot Mould or Carrot Mousse?

What's the verdict?

I was quite surprised at how light and fluffy the carrot mould turned out to be. It was really like a carrot mousse. My husband was right, not incredibly appealing, but carrot mould would certainly be fantastic to pull out for a 70s themed dinner party.

Tip from friend: add lots of cheese and parsley to the white sauce so you don't taste the carrot mould...

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

Java Macaroon

Posted on 10 July 2012



Java Macaroon from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Kate Ross and I coordinate image content for Publications at the National Library of Australia and find cooking about as confusing, chaotic and stimulating as I do tackling infamously difficult works of Australian literature.

In approaching both, I usually hope that a bit of courage and a lot of enthusiasm will see me through.

For a dinner party with some other White-buffs from the Library, I decided to attempt the Java Macaroon. Living in a post-Masterchef and Adriano Zumbo Australia, an entire macaroon cake was something I could not go past.



The dinner table and the ubiquitous Patrick White glasses.

The first step was to measure out the body weight of a young pug dog in almond meal, sugar and icing sugar.



That is a lot of sugar!

Java Macaroon

*½ lb ground almonds (almond meal)
1 lb sugar
6 egg whites
3–4 oz butter*

Icing:

*½ lb icing sugar
2 tablespoons water
1 heaped teaspoon instant coffee
1 teaspoon lemon juice*

Use an 8" tin with removable base. Mix ½ lb ground almonds & 1 lb sugar. Beat slightly, till they are frothy but not stiff, the whites of four eggs and add to almonds and sugar. When well mixed, add unbeaten whites of two more eggs and beat again.



Ready for the oven

Keep back about one quarter of this mix for a garnish and pour the rest into the prepared, well greased tin, and bake in a moderate oven (340 deg. F, 170 C) for about an hour or until inserted skewer comes out clean.

Leave to cool before removing from tin. Mix reserved uncooked mixture with equal quantity of butter, and when cake is cool spread over top, then glaze with coffee icing.

I made the executive decision to quadruple the quantity of instant coffee as I figured that the human race must have increased its collective caffeine tolerance level by at least that much since White wrote the recipe. Personally, I thought this was a great idea, until everyone at the dinner party woke up at four in the morning. I'd probably recommend sticking to White's quantities...

It seemed to me to be a bit of a mad genius move to spread some of the uncooked mixture over the top of the cake underneath the icing. Strangely it seemed to work, though I really couldn't say how or why!

My favourite of White's novels is *The Vivisector* which is a staggeringly expressive tribute to visual and tactile experience. I love how beautiful an artist Hurtle Duffield is and how horrible a human being. In *The Vivisector*, White explores the potential destruction of personal relationships by the artistic life. I like to think that perhaps cooking would have been the perfect foil for Hurtle. For what creative endeavour could be more artistic, more present and more sociable? White himself must have known this – the proof is in the java pudding!

What's the verdict?

For a killer sugar and coffee kick at the end of a meal, I'd recommend this puppy. Mine was a tad overcooked and over-caffeinated which brought my rating down to *humdrum*, but I'm definitely going to have another go.



Matt serving the Java Macaroon

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

Salty Biscuits

Posted on 18 July 2012



Salty Biscuits from the recipes of Patrick White

Hi, my name is Jill Gray and I am the Social Media Coordinator at the National Library of Australia. I enjoy cooking and made Patrick White's Salty Biscuits to share with my colleagues at work. I chose to make the Salty Biscuits as I'm a fan of savoury food and the recipe is quite simple – hard to go wrong with only four ingredients.

I have to admit I have never read a Patrick White novel, and did not know very much about him until *The Life of Patrick White* exhibition opened at the Library. Since then I've been promoting the exhibition on the Library's [Facebook](#) page and have been a frequent user of the #Patrickwhite hash tag on [Twitter](#) and now know a lot more about Australia's first Nobel Laureate in Literature.

Salty Biscuits

4 oz SR flour

1 oz grated cheese

*4 oz butter
½ tsp salt*

Mix flour, cheese, softened butter and salt.



Salty biscuit mixture

Knead quickly into a workable ball. Divide into small pieces as big as marbles. Roll.



Divide into pieces and roll in your hand

Put them on a greased baking tray and bake 15/20 mins at 350 deg (180 celsius).



Ready for the oven

This was a very easy recipe to cook, however I did tweak it a little. My first batch was way too buttery, so buttery in fact that it was difficult to even roll into balls and when I baked them they just went flat. (I realised later this was because I was using soft butter and not a block of butter). So I scrapped the first batch and halved the amount of butter in the other batches. I made three batches as I was bringing them in to work to share around. With the last batch I added a mix of Italian herbs for some variety – these seemed to be more popular than the plain salty, cheesy type.



The finished product

What's the verdict?

These biscuits live up to their name, leaving you quite thirsty. They have a similar texture to shortbread but are cheesy and salty in taste. As a biscuit they are rather plain on their own, however everyone here at the Library seemed to enjoy them (perhaps they were just being nice). A few people commented they would go nicely alongside soup.

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

Ceylon Chicken

Posted on 24 July 2012



Ceylon Chicken from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Margaret Dent and I retired four years ago after nine marvellously enjoyable years as a Curator in Exhibitions at the National Library of Australia. The Patrick White papers came to the Library not long before I retired; the excitement was huge and it was an obvious candidate for a wonderful exhibition. I knew Patrick White and Manoly Lascaris enjoyed cooking, but did not know just how many recipes would be found in the collection. I have always enjoyed cooking myself, and although I find White's books difficult, the recipes looked much more approachable.... The only one of his books I have managed to finish is *The Solid Mandala*, and I did find it worth persevering with. Long ago I bought a copy of *Voss*, and am now inspired to read it.

The occasion to try out some of the recipes was our weekly family get-together dinner. I like finding new recipes to experiment with for the dinners, and even my chef son usually approves!

Ceylon Chicken

1 chicken

1 or 2 bacon rashers

1 clove garlic

1 tsp ginger

Salt and pepper

2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tbsp oil

Water

Put jointed chicken in pan with garlic, ginger, bacon, pepper and salt. (I used chicken thigh fillets because they cook evenly and do not dry out as breast meat would in that sort of dish. For twelve fillets I used 2 rashers of bacon – they were large free-range ones and it was plenty – chopped and sprinkled over the meat. The recipe did not specify what type of ginger to use, and I suspect it assumed ground ginger, but I used finely chopped root ginger as I like the fresh flavour.)

Nearly cover chicken with cold water.

Cook fast without the lid for about 25 mins. Add 2 tbsp soy sauce and 1 tbsp oil. (I omitted the tablespoon of oil that was supposed to be added with the soy sauce, as there was a little fat on the meat and that was enough. I don't cook with salt so omitted that too. I packed the meat in a single layer in a baking dish and brought it to a simmer on the stove, then transferred it to a 200° (not fan-forced) oven for the rest of the cooking, basting it often along the way.)

Continue cooking, basting frequently til liquid almost absorbed and chicken cooked.

Serve with rice.

What's the verdict?

I'm no expert on Sri Lankan cooking so don't know whether bacon and soy sauce would normally feature in it, but Ceylon Chicken Patrick White-style was very good. There was still quite a bit of the cooking liquid left when the chicken was cooked, and it would have evaporated more quickly on the stove-top, but we didn't feel that the extra liquid was a problem as it was a good sauce to have over the rice. I used Basmati rice as we like it best.

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Savoury Strudel

Posted on 31 July 2012

Sadly *The Life of Patrick White* exhibition at the National Library of Australia closed to the public on Sunday 8 July, but do not despair for all is not lost. The exhibition is about to travel to Sydney where it will be on display at the State Library of New South Wales from 13 August until 28 October. We've also asked our colleagues at the State Library of NSW to don their aprons and join us here in Paddy's Kitchen. Here is their very first culinary outing courtesy of the talented Dominic Hon – yum!



Savoury strudel from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Dominic Hon, and I work at the State Library of NSW as a graphic designer. From the moment that I heard that there was a food blog set up by the National Library commemorating Patrick White's 100th birthday using his own recipes I was intrigued. My knowledge of Patrick White is admittedly very sketchy not having read any of his works but I do enjoy cooking and was up for a challenge. A dinner party for four was the impetus I needed to tackle his Savoury Strudel recipe – you had a choice of three different fillings, and instructions for making the third one. I chose his cauliflower and mushroom option, which did not include instructions. Incidentally having settled on the strudel recipe I googled and chanced upon this food blog which had an extract from *Patrick White: Letters*, edited by David Marr.

‘ ... in a letter to the director Neil Armfield in 1982, when White was 70 and his and Manoly's (White's partner's) health were failing in various ways. Manoly had arthritis and White glaucoma; he had also had a few 'shocks' to jump-start his heart.

“I'm still taking pills by the handful and putting in eyedrops every couple of hours. I went again to the heart man last week, and believe it or not, he wanted me to rush straight to the Prince Henry and have some more electric shocks. I refused because I'd planned to make a strudel stuffed with vegetables and a grüne Sosse at the weekend. I told him I had to have some little frivolity in my life, and this seemed the only way. I think he thought me completely nuts ... ” (taken from <http://howtoshuckanoyster.com/2009/03/02/patrick-whites-kitchen/>)

So it seemed appropriate that I try to recreate the vegetable strudel with a Grüne Sosse. The recipe as mentioned previously was so scant that other than the ingredients nothing else was provided to help a curious cook. The Grüne Sosse I gathered is a green sauce from around

Frankfurt and made with seven herbs (namely borage, sorrel, garden cress, chervil, chives, parsley, and salad burnet), hard-boiled eggs, oil, vinegar and crème fraîche.

So here is my attempt to reinterpret Patrick White.

Savory Strudels

1 cauliflower (blanched)
2 heaped tbsp fresh white breadcrumbs
1 dessert spoon chopped parsley
2 oz or more of chopped cooked mushrooms
2 oz of grated cheese
Salt, pepper, paprika



The ingredients

Firstly the cauliflower was cut into small flowerets. I bought a huge cauliflower so only used half. This was blanched in boiling salted water, drained, then set aside while I prepared the mushroom mix.



Blanching the cauliflower

The mushrooms were cut into small pieces, then sautéed in a hot pan with some olive oil (not in the recipe).



An ever so slight deviation from the original text.

At this stage the blanched cauliflower pieces were then added to the cooked mushrooms, along with the grated cheese, breadcrumbs, parsley and liberal pinches of salt, pepper and paprika to taste. The heat was turned off and the strudel mix was then left aside to cool.



The final filling for the strudel

As Patrick White described this recipe as a strudel it generally meant that the filling had to be encased in a puff or flaky pastry of some sort. I decided to use filo pastry sheets as I had some in the freezer. It was then a matter of brushing each sheet of filo with melted butter and you ended up with a pastry about 5 sheets thick.



Buttering the filo pastry layers

The cool cauliflower mix was then spooned on one end of the pastry, and it was carefully rolled up, much like rolling up a gigantic spring roll. I ended up with 2 strudels this way.



Rolled strudels ready for the oven

Finally the rolls were brushed with more melted butter and popped into a preheated oven at 200 degrees C for about 30 minutes or until the pastry was golden brown. The strudel was then sliced and placed on the Grüne Sosse.

What's the verdict?

My dinner guests loved it! I must admit that I was slightly surprised, as I was mildly sceptical beforehand about the crunchiness of the cauliflower and the dryness of the mix. But the end result worked wonderfully. The cauliflower flowerets had softened in the filling and, combined with the mushrooms and cheese, provided a cohesive whole to prevent the filling from falling apart as you sliced the strudel. The green sauce (although not part of the recipe) proved a good complement to the dish, balancing out the savoury strudel with the freshness of the herbs and the tartness of the sauce.

I would definitely make it again and, as we found out, the leftovers were even better the next day. Thank you, Mr White.

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Susan Previent Lee's Chocolate Mousse

Posted on 7 August 2012



Susan Previent Lee's Chocolate Mousse from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Kathryn Favelle and I am Manager of Events and Education at the National Library of Australia. In my work, I have the opportunity to meet lots of fantastic people, writers and other creative types, historians, biographers but I never met Patrick White. I do, though, have a Patrick White story.

When I was in Year 11, my drama teacher decided she wanted to mount a production of White's *The Ham Funeral*. Dutifully, she wrote to White, seeking permission for the production. The response came back: permission denied! Only professional productions of White's work were permitted and a college production certainly didn't meet that criterion. We were outraged as only a bunch of 17 and 18-year-olds can be. And I swore never to read his work – a vow I kept until David Marr's biography convinced me to take another look. I still haven't finished a novel, despite attempting *Voss*, *The Vivisector* and *Fringe of Leaves*, but one day I will.

Attempting one of White's recipes seemed a much more manageable prospect but finding one my finicky seven-year-old might enjoy was a little trickier. I settled on *Susan Previent Lee's Chocolate Mousse* – how can you go wrong with a chocolate mousse? When I was growing up in the 70s, chocolate mousse came out of a packet. In the 90s, I added a chocolate Toblerone mousse to my repertoire – sadly, I've lost the recipe but I do recall lots of eggs as well as lots of Toblerone. There are no eggs or Toblerone in Susan Previent Lee's recipe. But there is lots of chocolate, sugar and cream.

First, a bit of research. Who is/was Susan Previent Lee? White's recipe gives no clues. Nor does the index to the biography. A quick Google search revealed a Susan Previant Lee (note the small difference in spelling), who published *A New Economic View of American History* in the 1970s. Is this our mousse maker? If so, how did White come across the recipe? Did they meet somewhere? Did White eat the mousse at a friend's house? This is a lesson to me (and to you) to annotate my own exercise book of collected recipes – someone, one day, might like to know who Chocolate Winnies were named after.

Susan Previent Lee's Chocolate Mousse

6 tablespoons strong coffee

4 tablespoons cognac

8 ounces semi sweet chocolate (PDF confectioner's choc.)

¼ cup superfine sugar (I used ordinary CSR)

1 ¾ to 2 cups heavy cream

¼ teaspoon vanilla

Pour coffee and cognac into a double boiler; add chocolate and heat. I did make some substitutions, replacing the cognac and coffee with cointreau and water. Bless Google for converting 8 ounces into 226.796 grams. I used 250 grams of chocolate and then ate a square to balance things up.

After chocolate is melted stir until the mixture is well blended. Add sugar and continue stirring over heat until mixture is glossy. Let cool.



Will it melt or will it be a disaster?

Make crème Chantilly by mixing cream until very thick. Beat sugar and vanilla into cream.



Crème Chantilly AKA whipped cream with sugar and vanilla

With rubber spatula slowly and thoroughly blend mixture into cream. Cover and refrigerate. Serves 6.

The recipe is very simple – although I did dither a bit about how to divide the quarter cup of sugar (I used caster sugar, White used the normal stuff) between the melting chocolate and the cream. In the end, I put a quarter cup of sugar in with the chocolate and then added a dessertspoon to the cream and vanilla to create the Crème Chantilly.

There were a few scary moments when I wondered whether the chocolate would ever melt or if I would have to throw out the congealed lump and start again. But in the end, everything melted, blended and went into the fridge to set.

At this point, I became a little excited and decided that, for the purposes of this post, the mousse needed something to identify it as Patrick's. So I melted some more chocolate and made Patrick White chocolate glasses. I don't think Adriano Zumbo will ever be threatened by my piping skills but they do look like glasses, don't they?



My Adriano Zumbo moment - the mousse with chocolate Patrick White glasses

What's the verdict?

This is a very rich, solid mousse. Not much air in there and it would be difficult to eat a small bowl of it (well, we forced ourselves). Probably it needs to be served with a raspberry coulis and something not quite so rich.

I rated it a 3 – humdrum. My guests, however, rated it a 5 – perfection (this from a man who tells me he makes the best chocolate mousse ever but he hasn't made it once in 20 years!) and a 4. The seven-year-old refused to taste it. Let's give the mousse the average of those three scores – 4 -has a genius.

I will add it to my recipe book but I think I might call it Patrick White's Chocolate Mousse (with thanks to Susan Previent [sic] Lee), taken from his recipes, Papers of Patrick White, 1930–2002, Manuscripts Collection, MS 9982, Series 22, National Library of Australia – just so future researchers know it's provenance.

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Danish Rum Cream

Posted on 28 August 2012



Danish Rum Cream from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Dominic Hon, and this is my second attempt at cooking a recipe from Patrick White's collection. My first effort was his surprisingly delightful mushroom and cauliflower Savoury Strudel ([see previous post](#)).

In continuation of the Patrick White theme, I thought I would give his Danish Rum Cream a go. The recipe seemed easy and straightforward enough. My conversion measurements are in brackets for those more metrically-inclined. Call me old-fashioned, but I like the old measurements, there's something quite satisfying about not being so rigid to the nearest gram.

Danish rum cream

5 egg yolks

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup (4 oz) sifted icing sugar (100 – 125 g)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup rum (120 g)

1 tbsp gelatine (I used powdered gelatine as I didn't have the sheets)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (50 g)

1 pint cream whipped (600 ml – I just used a large carton)

5 egg whites stiffly beaten



The ingredients

Beat egg yolks with sifted sugar and stir in rum. Soften gelatine in water and dissolve over hot water. Stir into rum mixture till well combined.

Fold in cream using spatula and lastly stiffly beaten whites.



Folding in the beaten egg whites

Pour into glass bowl and chill for at least 3 hours.



Ready for the fridge

Raspberry sauce

Push 1 cup tinned raspberries through sieve.



Drain the raspberries and push through sieve

Bring to boil with syrup from tin. Chill.

I made the rum cream mixture to instructions and left it to set overnight in the fridge. The following day, just before serving, all that was to do was to spoon the chilled raspberry sauce over the rum cream, then finished it off with a blob of light whipped cream as an added garnish.

The only comment about the recipe would be to reduce the amount of gelatine, according to one's taste. The old imperial measurements are a bit of a mystery – Was it an American, English or Australian measurement? How much is one tablespoon – is it a heaped tablespoon? Or rounded? Or leveled flat? Is a dessertspoon considered a tablespoon? I ended up with a rounded tablespoon as a compromise. While this was probably fine, the end result was a bit 'marshmallow-like'. It may not suit modern palates more used to smooth mousses.

As to the taste – lovely – the tart raspberry sauce balanced out the sweetness from the rum cream very well, and you could taste the subtle rum flavour. I liked it, and from the photo at the end of the meal, so did my guests.



Nothing left except some very satisfied diners

In future if I were to make this again, I would probably reduce the gelatine, or skip it altogether, and use fresh raspberries instead for an even more intense flavour and colour punch.

Definitely the right dessert to go with White's *The Eye of the Storm* on DVD –acerbic, rich and slightly heady. Wonderful.

Rating: [Has a genius](#)

Birijani

Posted on 4 September 2012



Birijani from the recipes of Patrick White

I'm Anne Doherty, and I work as a consultant in the State Library of NSW's services for public libraries. I'm not quite sure what this has to do with what follows.....

I studied Patrick White at school and university (*Tree of Man*, *Solid Mandala*), and loved the recent film version of *The Eye of the Storm*. A quick perusal of Marr's biography of White and the collected White letters shows often food and cooking is mentioned—clearly an important component of his household and social routine.

The birijani recipe was fine, though somewhat wetter than birijanis/biryanis I have eaten at restaurants. I made a few substitutions – currants for sultanas, and added some garlic and vegies. The occasion was Saturday night dinner at home with my partner Denis and our friend Orlando. Denis and Orlando enjoyed the meal and I'd recommend the quantity in the recipe for four diners. We enjoyed raita and some riesling with our curry - Mr Mick's, which seemed apt given White's diminutive Paddy.



An appropriately named accompaniment to the meal

Birijani

*1 lb lamb
½ carton yoghurt
1 chopped onion (I also added two garlic cloves)
1 tbsp curry powder
1 pint stock
2 potatoes or 2oz lentils
2 oz rice
1 oz sultanas*

Marinate diced lamb in ½ carton of yoghurt. Fry onion in oil and place in casserole. Fry meat (and curry powder) about 3 mins, add to casserole. Pour 1 pt stock in pan add potatoes (or lentils) and bring to boil.

Sprinkle rice and simmer for 10 mins. Add sultanas, pour into casserole. I added one diced carrot and a handful of broadbean pods and substituted currants for sultanas.

Season, cover and cook for 1 hr at 350 (200 celsius).

What's the verdict?

I would use only about 2/3 of the stock prescribed in the recipe and limit the yogurt marinade to 2 dessertspoons to make the recipe less 'wet' on a future making.

Lamb birijani is mentioned in White's letters—a "memorable dish" cooked by theatre director Neil Armfield from a Charmaine Solomon recipe. The Charmaine Solomon recipe (thanks Google books) is not the same as this recipe.

It's a little creaky, but tasty.

Rating: [Humdrum](#)

Baked Beans

Posted on 21 September 2012



Baked beans from the recipes of Patrick White

My name is Gretchen Irvine and I work in event management in the not for profit sector in Canberra. I'm a big fan of the National Library and am also very interested in all things food and cooking.

I managed to bypass Patrick White at school and have never had much success with him as an adult (however I don't give up easily) and I wondered whether cooking the man's recipes would inspire me to tackle his writings again. I felt the exhibition gave such an interesting insight into the time of Patrick White, as much as his life, and these recipes are a big part of that.

Choosing which recipe was a challenge. My two favourites from the collection were the soul of brevity and reminded me very much of some of my mother's recipes from the same era.

Pork Crackling

1 lemon

Anoint with juice before; then baste from time to time. Potatoes 2 ½ hours. (Boil for 5 mins if roast is small).

Liberal Souffle

(6 small 10 big)

Packet Philadelphia cream cheese. Put in vitamiser with jellied soup. Keep some jellied soup till set and put on top. Chives in soup.

However, needing something a bit family friendly, I went with the baked beans. I do make my own baked beans and so was interested to see how Patrick White's would compare.

Baked beans

Soak overnight 2 cups of beans in a lot of water. Drain. Cover with boiling water and a pinch of carb soda. Simmer for 15 mins. Drain. Put fresh boiling water on – simmer 5 – 10 mins drain, save the last water.



First, soak your beans....

In separate bowl mix 1 large chopped onion, 2 level teaspoons of salt, 1 tablespoon treacle, $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp powdered mustard, 4 tablespoons brown sugar, 6 tablespoons tomato sauce 1 cup boiling water.

Put salt pork in bottom of dish, pour on beans and mix tomato sauce etc. into it. Add enough bean water to cover well. Cover casserole.



Ready for the oven

Cook 4-6 hours at 350 degrees F (175 celsius) for last ½ hour take top off. During cooking may need more water – use bean water.

I needed to buy treacle and mustard powder – not items I use often in my cooking (although now I might make some gingerbread because I now have treacle). Rather than salt pork, I used some Bundawarrah Pork speck from the Farmers Markets, which is what I normally put in my baked beans.

The recipe called for treacle and four tablespoons of brown sugar as well as tomato sauce. I was unsure of whether Mr White meant a dollop of Rosella or a straight tomato puree, so I went with the puree. Given the sweetness of the recipe, I think it was a good call. The treacle gave it a slightly smoky flavour.

What's the verdict?

We ate it with pork and fennel sausages and a salad. One of three children thought it was horrible, but she doesn't like my baked beans either. Some goat's cheese grated on the top rounded out the flavours a bit. While I found this recipe to be very sweet, next time I make my baked beans, I will add a spoonful of treacle.



The final product!

I'd rate it a bit humdrum but baked beans are never more than middle of the road, are they?

Rating: [Humdrum](#)