



MasterChef
**STREET
FOOD**
- OF THE WORLD -

Genevieve Taylor
with contributions from
MasterChef Champions
Photography by David Loftus

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the amazing world of MasterChef street food!

The proliferation of street food is perhaps *the* foodie phenomenon of the past decade and one that's been pretty much impossible to miss. Culinary entrepreneurs across the globe are bringing towns and cities alive with hip food trucks, buzzing night markets and thronging food festivals. It seems we just cannot get enough of this carefree, sociable way of eating and its popularity continues to rise and rise.

Yet street food is far from a recent fad. There is evidence of Aztec markets having had vendors selling snacks to hungry shoppers, including the still very much beloved guacamole! In ancient Rome food was normally bought and eaten on the street by the urban poor who didn't have kitchens of their own to cook in, whilst in medieval London, fresh oysters, pies and baked apples were all commonly eaten on the roadsides.

In these pages myself and 13 MasterChef champions from around the globe bring you a collection of mouthwatering recipes spanning a kaleidoscope of colours, flavours, textures and sheer taste sensations.

So why bother to make street food at home when there's so much good stuff out there on the real streets? For me and our MasterChef contributors it's about bringing a bit of adventurous spirit into your kitchen and transporting you to another place, perhaps stretching yourself from a cooking point of view into unknown territory. If you love food then

surely one of the most tantalising parts of travelling is to immerse yourself in the edible delights and eating on the street can connect you to a culture in a way dining in a fancy restaurant never will. And whilst you might not have the time, money or inclination to go roaming the world for tasty things to eat, you can really easily bring a sense of adventure and wanderlust into your home kitchen.

With a lifelong passion for travel, some of the most memorable meals of my life have been eaten on the go. My mind was blown by a fragrant Malaysian curry eaten at a bustling night market in Borneo and a steaming hot dog from a sidewalk cart in New York, slathered in vivid yellow mustard, was perhaps the best I'd ever eaten. I will never forget the ginger-heavy seafood stir fry at the crab market in Kampot in Cambodia, devoured greedily whilst watching the fishermen haul their catch onto land, or for the incredibly simple but impossible to beat – fresh pomegranate seeds tapped from the shell into my cupped palms by an elderly woman on a Cretan roadside – these are just a fraction of the things lodged deep in my mind.

This book is divided loosely by the continents of the world, and within these vibrant pages you will find the very best examples from the streets of the Americas, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, India and Asia. Some recipes will be instantly familiar – such as Marc Boissieux's banoffee crepes, Dhruv Baker's *pakor*s or Claudia Sandoval's fish taco – and who could write on this subject and not include the globally ubiquitous beef burger, the classic British fish and chips or the world famous pad Thai? But there is plenty within that will surprise and

delight: try Tim Anderson's *daigaku imo*, a delicious take on sweet potatoes; or the *midye dolma*, spicy rice stuffed mussels from Turkey; or *doro wat*, an exquisitely fragrant chicken and egg stew from Ethiopia; or *mirchi bhaji*, the Indian snack of crisp battered chillies stuffed with paneer cheese. Some of the recipes in this book will offer unique and unexpected twists on well-known favourites (see Brent Owen's take on a steak and onion pie), but all recipes are recipes packed full of authentic flavour, such as Ping Coombes' *chai tau kueh*, Andy Allen's fried school of prawns, Adam Liaw's triple-fried karaage chicken rolls or Woo Wai Leong's oyster omelette to name just a few.

Think of a street food experience and it's perhaps the cuisine of hot climates that spring to mind first – the intense tropical flavours of Jamaican jerk chicken, the fragrant spices of Christine Ha's traditional spicy lemongrass beef noodle soup or the cooling delights of Indian mango and cardamom kulfi lollies. However colder parts of the world have also embraced this way of eating, with the food designed to comfort rather than invigorate, so don't just save this book for cooking during the summer months. MasterChef champions offer recipes such as Simon Wood's black pudding Scotch eggs, or *biksemad*, Anders Halskov-Jensen's traditional Danish dish made of leftovers but brilliantly served with a fried egg, or delicious *gnocco fritto*, a fried bread sandwich from Luca Manfè. There's the famous *zapiekancki* of Poland, a moreish combination of oozing cheese and garlicky mushrooms on a simple French bread pizza; or *korvapusti*, the warm cinnamon and cardamom buns of Finland; or *leberkase*, the hearty meatloaf

burger of Germany, served with crunchy pickles and fiery mustard; or the utterly simple but awesomely good slow grilled short ribs from Argentina, which are perfect for a summer barbecue, but taste just as fabulous on a cold day alongside a generous glass of hearty red (Argentinian, of course!). There is plenty of year-round inspiration to be found within these pages.

Many of the recipes are straightforward and can be knocked up with ease, but others are quite involved and might stretch the cook a little. This is a MasterChef book after all, so you expect that, right? However, whether the recipes are simple or challenging, what characterises them all is a laid back approach to their eating. Street food is not food that stands on ceremony, it's chilled, casual and low key, eaten messily with hands or scooped from big bowls. This is food that celebrates the very best things in life, family and friends, eating, drinking, laughter and sharing.

Let your culinary global adventure begin – happy cooking!

Genevieve Taylor

THE AMERICAS



Think of classic American street food, and no doubt the first thing that springs to mind is a delicious fully loaded burger or a steaming hotdog, dripping with sweet onions and zingy mustard, but once you include central and south America into the mix the food is as colourful and varied as anywhere on the globe. With recipes stretching from Canada to Argentina and pretty much everywhere in between, this is a continent that embraces street eats with both hands.

The state of Louisiana excels at tasty things stuffed between bread, and hole-in-the-wall sandwich shops are wildly popular. Try the brilliantly named muffeleta, an Italian inspired layered cheese and meat supremo, or the legendary braised beef po' boy, a full fat, dripping down your chin extravaganza! Head down into central and South America and ground corn often replaces wheat as the carb of choice. Try the comforting steamed cornbread tamales, or my favourite, white maize arepas – think of them as sturdy, slightly chewy pitta pockets into which you can stuff all manner of delicious fillings. Claudia Sandoval offers a great take on a Mexican fish taco – definitely one to try. While in the Caribbean, the Indian influence is easy to spot, such as the chickpea curry in the trini doubles or the exquisite spicing on jerk chicken.

America has always been an epicentre for immigration, and this is mirrored in the street food, with cultural influences from far and wide. Simply put, in this diverse continent you can get whatever kind of food you want, whenever you want to eat it.



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Not just limited to the USA, mac 'n' cheese is a truly global comfort food, more recently adopted on the street as a beloved staple of food trucks and festivals alike. This is one of those recipes that can be twisted and turned almost infinitely to suit your own taste; this just happens to be my version as it's a variant of what I grew up on.

MAC 'N' CHEESE

SERVES 4

350g short macaroni
8 rashers smoked streaky bacon
(optional)
60g butter
60g plain flour
800ml milk (I used semi-skimmed, but any will do)
a dash of Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon English mustard
350g extra-mature Cheddar cheese, grated
freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to the boil and tip in the macaroni, stirring well to ensure it doesn't clump up. Boil until just tender but with plenty of bite, then drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, grill the bacon until crisp, if using. Chop it into snippets and set aside.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan set over a medium heat, then pour in the flour and stir thoroughly over the heat for a minute until you form a smooth roux. Reduce the heat to low and gradually add the milk, whisking constantly until you have dispersed the roux through the milk. Turn the heat back up to medium and bring to a steady simmer, stirring all the time, until thickened, about 3–4 minutes. Taste a little on the end of a teaspoon – it shouldn't taste floury at all; if it does, cook for another minute or so. Turn off the heat and stir through the Worcestershire sauce and mustard, and a generous grind of black pepper. Sprinkle in about three-quarters of the cheese, stirring until it has melted, then add the cooked macaroni and bacon snippets and stir to combine.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. Spoon the macaroni into a baking dish and sprinkle over the remaining cheese. Bake in the hot oven for 15–20 minutes, until the top is golden and bubbling. Serve immediately.

VARIATIONS

Feel free to put your own twist on your mac 'n' cheese using the following ideas for inspiration. Purists may complain, but this is your dinner so add whatever takes your fancy.

- Cubed mozzarella sprinkled on top adds a lovely stringy stretch once baked; grated Parmesan adds extra punch, or try smoked Cheddar or Stilton – whatever's your favourite.
- A handful of fresh breadcrumbs sprinkled over the cheese topping adds extra crunch.
- A few tomato slices under the cheese topping add extra colour (and a few vitamins!).
- Replace the bacon with crisp-fried chorizo or chopped cooked sausage, or a little leftover pulled pork or baked ham.
- Add a handful of cooked veggies, such as peas, broccoli or cauliflower.
- Give it an Italian twist with a dollop of pesto, or a handful of torn basil and a few chopped sundried tomatoes.





In years past, shrimp were a really inexpensive ingredient in Louisiana, and so became traditional in the legendary 'poor boy' sandwiches. Much more of a treat today, these crisp and spicy fried prawns make for a pretty luxurious snack.

CAJUN SHRIMP PO' BOY

MAKES 4 GENEROUS SANDWICHES

4 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
2 large gherkins, finely chopped
100g plain flour
1 egg
100ml milk
300g large raw peeled prawns (about 20)
a large baguette, cut into 4 lengths
a couple of handfuls of shredded crisp lettuce
2 large tomatoes, sliced

for the Cajun seasoning

2 tablespoons paprika
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 teaspoons dried thyme
1–2 teaspoons chilli powder, to taste
1 teaspoon sea salt

For the Cajun seasoning, place all the ingredients in a large bowl and mix together thoroughly.

In a separate bowl, stir together the mayonnaise, parsley and gherkins. Stir through 2 teaspoons of Cajun seasoning, or to taste, and set aside.

Stir the flour through the remaining Cajun seasoning.

In another bowl, beat together the egg and milk. Line up the prawns, the flour/spice mix, egg and milk mix, and a large clean plate on the worktop. Take a prawn and dip it into the flour to coat all over, then dip into the egg and milk, then back into the flour for a second coating, before setting aside on the plate. Repeat until all the prawns have a double coating of spicy flour.

Heat the oil in a deep fat fryer to 180°C/350°F and fry the prawns in batches for about 3 minutes until golden and crisp. Drain briefly on kitchen paper.

To serve, slice the baguettes through, but leave top and bottom hinged together. If you like you can warm them briefly in a hot oven. Spread a little mayonnaise dressing inside each piece of bread and add some lettuce and tomato slices. Top with the crisp prawns and a further dollop of dressing and tuck in while hot.

Beef braised with garlic and red wine to the point of tender collapse, then stuffed into a fresh hunk of bread ... yes please! This, to my mind, is the king of the po' boys, the traditional Louisiana sub sandwiches. The debris gravy is made from all the lovely juices and caramelised bits left over from braising, thickened into a tasty sauce that soaks the bread with deliciousness. Be warned – you'll need plenty of napkins as po' boys are gorgeously messy!

Note: you will need to begin this recipe at least 8 hours before you want to eat, as the beef requires a long, slow cooking time.

SLOW-BRAISED BEEF PO' BOY WITH DEBRIS GRAVY

SERVES 6–8

1.4kg beef brisket
4 garlic cloves, sliced
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 large onion, finely diced
2 carrots, finely diced
500ml beef stock
250ml red wine
2–3 thyme sprigs
1 tablespoon cornflour
salt and freshly ground black pepper

to serve

2 large baguettes, each cut into 3–4 pieces
Little Gem lettuce, separated into leaves
3 large tomatoes, sliced
3–4 gherkins, sliced lengthways
2–3 tablespoons mayonnaise

Preheat the oven to 140°C/120°C Fan/Gas Mark 1. Take a small, sharp knife and pierce deep slits all over the beef. Poke the garlic slices well into the slits, ensuring they are completely hidden within the meat so they won't fall out and burn when you are browning the beef. Season generously all over with salt and pepper.

Add half the oil to a deep flameproof casserole dish – a heavy cast-iron dish is ideal – and set over a high heat. When the oil is smoking hot, add the beef and brown well all over – the deep caramelisation adds much in terms of flavour, so do get a bit of colour into it.

Remove to a plate, reduce the heat to low and add the remaining oil to the casserole dish, followed by the onion and carrot, stirring to soften a little for a couple of minutes. Return the beef to the pan along with any juices, then pour in the beef stock and red wine and tuck in the thyme. Bring to a simmer then cover with a tight-fitting lid and slide into the oven. Allow to cook very slowly for around 6–8 hours, turning the joint every couple of hours if you can to ensure even cooking, until it is really tender. You can test whether it's ready by trying to tease the meat apart with a fork – it should give easily; if not, cook for a little longer.

Turn off the oven. Lift the meat from the casserole dish and set aside on a plate in the oven to keep warm. Place 2 tablespoons of the cooking sauce into a heatproof glass and set aside to cool. Set the casserole dish on the hob over a high heat and boil for about 10 minutes until the sauce is reduced by half. Stir the cornflour into the cooled reserved juices until you have a smooth paste. Pour into the dish and stir until the sauce thickens. Turn off the heat.

Remove the beef from the oven and cut into thick slices, dropping them into the gravy as you go and stirring to coat.

To serve, slice each piece of bread through the middle and open out, but leave top and bottom hinged together. Add a few slices of beef to each, plus a little sauce. Top with lettuce, tomato and gherkin slices and finish with a little mayonnaise. Serve immediately.









Could any dish be more 'street' than the ubiquitous burger? It's famous across the world, thanks in part to global fast-food chains, but I think the very best burgers are the ones you build yourselves, adding all the extras you fancy and leaving behind those you don't. This one is my favourite – a smoked bacon cheeseburger slathered with smoky hot mayonnaise.

Note: you will need to begin this recipe the day before you want to eat, as the brioche dough is proved overnight. The burgers can also be made the day before, as they develop a great flavour in the fridge overnight.

THE ULTIMATE BACON CHEESEBURGER

MAKES 6 FULL-SIZED BURGERS OR 12 SMALLER 'SLIDERS'

1 onion, very finely chopped or
grated
2 teaspoons Marmite or other
yeast extract
1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
1kg good-quality minced beef
6 tablespoons mayonnaise
2–3 tablespoons Sriracha sauce,
or to taste
smoked paprika, to taste
18 slices smoked streaky bacon
6 slices extra-mature Cheddar
cheese
a handful of shredded crisp
lettuce
salt and freshly ground black
pepper
ketchup, to serve (optional)

for the brioche rolls

550g strong white bread flour
2 teaspoons fast-action yeast
2 teaspoons caster sugar
1 teaspoon fine salt
250ml warm milk
100g butter, softened
3 eggs, plus 1 beaten egg for
glazing
vegetable oil, for greasing
2 tablespoons sesame seeds

For the brioche rolls, place the flour, yeast, caster sugar and salt in the bowl of a food mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and mix briefly until combined. Pour in the milk and add the butter and eggs. Mix slowly at first, until well combined, then increase the speed and continue to beat for a further 10 minutes. During this time the dough should become smooth, shiny and stretchy. I would not advise making this dough by hand, as it is a wet and sticky dough and much easier to make using a food mixer. Scrape the dough into a clean, lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling film. Leave to prove at room temperature for an hour, then transfer to the fridge and leave overnight.

In a large bowl, combine the onion, Marmite, herbs and salt and pepper to taste, to make a paste. Add the minced beef and mix through lightly, trying to avoid overworking the beef. Divide the mixture into 6 even-sized balls and flatten each one between the palms of your hands until about 1.5cm thick and 12cm in diameter. At this point, you can interleave the burgers with cling film or baking parchment and refrigerate until you are ready to cook.

Once the brioche has had its overnight prove, remove from the fridge and tip on to a lightly oiled worktop, kneading briefly to knock it back. Cut into 6 pieces, weighing each for accuracy if you want to ensure even-sized buns. Take each piece and roll into a ball, then flatten slightly to a thick disc. Pinch up the sides by pressing and pleating on top, working all the way round, then flip over so its seam side down, cupping under your palm and rolling into a perfectly smooth, round bun. Repeat with the remaining pieces, placing them well spaced out on a lightly greased baking tray as you go. Leave to prove for another hour at room temperature.

For the smoky hot mayonnaise, combine the mayonnaise, Sriracha sauce and paprika in a bowl, and season to taste with black pepper. Set aside in the fridge until needed.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. Place a dish of water in the base of the oven to create a steamy atmosphere. Brush the tops of the buns with a little beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake the buns for about 25–30 minutes, until a deep golden brown. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

When you are ready to eat, grill the burgers on a medium-hot barbecue or under a grill for about 3–4 minutes on each side, or until cooked to your liking. Adopt a strict one-turn-only policy with your burgers – this not only allows a caramelised crust to develop, which adds much in the flavour department, but also minimises the chance of the burgers falling apart.

Once the burgers have been turned, grill the slices of bacon until crisp. With about a minute or two to go on the burgers, top each with a slice of cheese so it begins to melt a little. Split the buns open and toast the cut sides for a minute or so.

To assemble, dollop a little smoky mayo on the base of each bun. Add some lettuce to each and top with the burger and cheese. Finally, add 3 pieces of bacon, a squeeze of ketchup, if using, or a little more mayo, and top with the other half of the bun. Serve immediately.



The gloriously named muffeleta is another top-drawer sandwich from Louisiana, this time with Italian origins. Stuffed to the gunnels with a mixture of cured meats and cheese, and layered with a punchy olive salad, this just gets better with time, and is a great street food snack.

Note: you will need to begin this recipe about 4–5 hours before you want to eat, to allow time for the focaccia to prove and the sandwich flavours to mingle.

MUFFELETA

SERVES 6–8

for the focaccia

400g strong white bread flour
1 teaspoon fast-action yeast
a pinch of fine salt
225ml hand-hot water
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra
for greasing and drizzling
sea salt flakes, for sprinkling

for the olive salad

250g mixed pitted olives,
chopped
100g roasted red peppers,
chopped
50g sundried tomatoes, finely
chopped
1 banana shallot, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons wine vinegar (red
or white)
1 red chilli, finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf
parsley
1 teaspoon chopped fresh
oregano, or ½ teaspoon dried
freshly ground black pepper

for the filling

250g provolone, thinly sliced
75g coppa, thinly sliced
50g salami finocchiona (salami
with fennel), thinly sliced
250g scamorza, thinly sliced
50g salami ventricina piccante
(hot spiced salami), thinly
sliced
75g mortadella, thinly sliced

For the focaccia, place the flour, yeast and a pinch of fine salt in the bowl of a food mixer with the dough hook attached. With the motor running slowly, pour in the water followed by the olive oil. Knead together for 5 minutes until soft, smooth and elastic. You can also make the dough by hand if you prefer: the kneading will take around 10 minutes. Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl and cover with cling film. Set aside to prove for an hour or two until doubled in size.

Lightly oil a large baking tray and tip the dough on to it, pressing it out with your hands until it's around 24cm square and a generous 1cm thick. Leave to prove, uncovered and at room temperature, for a further 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. Poke deep finger holes all over the dough and pour over a generous drizzle of olive oil. Finish with a sprinkle of sea salt, then bake for 20–25 minutes, until golden. If you lift the loaf it should sound hollow when tapped underneath. Leave to cool on a wire rack then carefully slice through the middle, creating 2 thin squares.

Make the olive salad by mixing all the ingredients in a bowl, and season to taste with black pepper; it shouldn't need any salt because of the olives. Divide the salad between the two halves of bread, spreading it all the way to the edges. On one side of the bread, start layering up the fillings, again making sure to take them up to the edges. I start with a layer of provolone, then coppa and salami finocchiona, followed by the scamorza, salami ventricina piccante and finally the mortadella. Place the other piece of bread on top, pressing down firmly. Wrap the whole stuffed loaf tightly in cling film and set aside at room temperature for a couple of hours for the flavours to mingle. To serve, unwrap and cut into neat squares.

Brought to New Orleans by the French in the eighteenth century, beignets are crisp little doughnuts made from a rich yeasted dough. Served hot and rolled in cinnamon sugar, these make a very moreish treat. Best of all, they freeze brilliantly, so you can pop them in the fryer and enjoy them anytime you fancy.

Note: you will need to begin this recipe about 3–4 hours before you want to eat, or even the day before, to allow the dough time to prove.

BEIGNETS WITH CINNAMON SUGAR

MAKES ABOUT 28 BEIGNETS

350ml warm water
170ml evaporated milk
2 eggs
50g butter, softened
900g plain flour
100g caster sugar
1 teaspoon fast-action yeast
a pinch of salt
vegetable oil, for greasing
100g icing sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon,
or to taste

Place the water, evaporated milk, eggs and butter in the bowl of a food mixer and beat gently with the paddle attachment until combined. Add the flour, sugar, yeast and salt and continue to beat gently until well mixed in. Increase the speed and beat for another 3–4 minutes until you get a smooth, sticky dough. I would not advise making this dough by hand, as it is a wet and sticky dough and much easier made using a food mixer.

Lightly oil a large bowl and scrape the dough into it, turning it once or twice so it has a thin coating of oil all over. Cover the bowl with cling film (the oiled surface will prevent it from sticking should it rise that high) and set aside to prove for 3–4 hours on the worktop; it should double in size. You could also prove the dough in the fridge overnight.


Sift the icing sugar into a bowl and stir through the cinnamon. Set aside.

Turn out the ball of dough on to a lightly oiled worktop and slice into quarters. Roll each piece into a sausage shape of about 3cm diameter and cut on the diagonal into 2–3cm slices – you should get about 7 beignets from each quarter. If you wish to freeze a batch, space them out on a baking tray to freeze initially, then pack into a bag or tub and leave in the freezer until you want to eat (they cook from frozen so no need to defrost).

Heat the oil in a deep fat fryer to 180°C/350°F. Add about 4 or 5 beignets at a time and fry for 4 minutes until deep golden brown, carefully turning halfway with a fork to cook the other side. If cooking from frozen, add an extra minute or two to the cooking time. Drain for a few moments on kitchen paper before tossing in the cinnamon-flavoured icing sugar and setting aside on a plate. Repeat with the remaining beignets. Serve immediately while still hot.







These utterly delicious sweet tarts are said to be one of Canada's only indigenous recipes and are baked on the street and in homes across the land, with several festivals and 'food trails' dedicated to celebrating them. They are traditionally made with corn syrup to keep the texture soft and oozing; however this can be hard to find in the UK, so I've used maple syrup, as it seemed fitting, but do use corn syrup if you can find it, or even golden syrup will work.

BUTTER TARTS

MAKES 12 TARTS, SERVING ABOUT 6–8 (ONE IS NEVER QUITE ENOUGH!)

100g raisins
180g soft brown sugar
180g butter, softened
3 eggs
100ml maple syrup, or corn syrup/golden syrup
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
a large pinch of salt

for the pastry

200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
110g cold butter, cut into 1cm cubes
4–5 tablespoons ice-cold water

you will need

a 12-hole muffin tin and a 12cm cutter (if you don't have a big enough cutter, flatten out a paper muffin case and use it as a template to cut around)

For the pastry, place the flour and butter in a food processor and pulse until you have coarse crumbs. Trickle in the water, pulsing as you go, until the mixture comes together into loose clumps. Don't overmix as you will end up with tough rather than crumbly pastry. You can also make the pastry by hand: rub the flour and butter together between your fingers and thumbs until it resembles breadcrumbs, then add the water and stir through with a knife to incorporate it, bringing the mixture together with your hands. Place the pastry on a sheet of cling film and draw up the edges, gently pressing it into a ball. Chill in the fridge for an hour.

Once the pastry has chilled, roll it out on a lightly floured worktop until it's about 2–3mm thick – the thinner the better, so each bite is all about the filling. Using a 12cm cutter, cut out 12 circles. You may need to re-roll the pastry trimmings to get all 12 circles, but if you roll it thin enough there should be plenty.

Press and fold each circle gently into place in a 12-hole muffin tin; little folds and crimps are traditional here, so don't worry about making the tarts look too perfect and neat. Chill the tin in the fridge for 30 minutes to relax the pastry and reduce shrinkage on baking.

While the pastry is chilling for the second time, make the filling. Place the raisins in a small bowl and pour over boiling water to cover. Leave to soak for 30 minutes before draining well.

Meanwhile, add the brown sugar and butter to the bowl of a food mixer and beat until smooth and creamy. You can also do this by hand with a wooden spoon and a bit of elbow grease. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well between each addition. Then add the syrup, vanilla and salt and beat until smooth.

Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C Fan/Gas Mark 7. Divide the drained raisins evenly between the pastry cases, then pour over the filling mixture. Bake in the hot oven for 15–20 minutes until the pastry is cooked and the surface of the tart slightly crisp. Don't be alarmed if the filling seems to come over the top of the cases, as it will sink back down when out of the oven. Allow to cool a little before easing them from the tin. Serve warm or cold.

Ubiquitous in Jamaica, and also found all over the Caribbean, these tropical patties are said to have their roots in the traditional Cornish pasty, thanks to a long colonial history going back centuries. Here, they are made of a tender golden turmeric pastry stuffed with a classic curried minced beef filling. They make a tropical addition to a picnic feast.

JAMAICAN PATTIES

MAKES 8 SNACK-SIZED PATTIES

1 tablespoon olive oil
400g minced beef
2 carrots, finely chopped
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 red pepper, deseeded and finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 teaspoon curry paste
a pinch of dried thyme
1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
salt and freshly ground black pepper

for the pastry

450g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon fine salt
225g butter, cut into 1cm cubes
about 8 tablespoons ice-cold water

To make the pastry, place the flour, turmeric and salt in a food processor and pulse together briefly. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture looks like coarse breadcrumbs. While pulsing, add just enough ice-cold water to bring the mixture together into loose clumps. You can also make the pastry by hand: rub the dry ingredients and butter together between your fingers and thumbs until it resembles breadcrumbs, then add the water and stir through with a knife to incorporate it, bringing the mixture together with your hands. Place the pastry on a sheet of cling film and draw up the edges, gently pressing it into a ball. Chill in the fridge while you make the filling.

Pour the oil into a deep frying pan and set over a high heat. Add the mince and fry for about 10 minutes or until lightly browned, breaking the clumps up with a wooden spoon as it cooks. Reduce the temperature to medium-low, then add the carrots, onion and red pepper, along with the garlic, curry paste and thyme, and fry for a further 10 minutes, stirring every now and then.

Add the tomatoes along with 150ml cold water and season well with salt and black pepper. Bring to the boil and simmer, uncovered, for around 30 minutes or until the sauce is well reduced, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat, taste to check the seasoning, adding a little more salt and pepper if necessary, then set aside to cool completely.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. On a lightly floured work surface, cut the pastry into 8 equal-sized pieces, gently rolling each one into a ball. Roll out each ball into a circle about the size of a large saucer and about 3mm thick. Brush all around the edges with a little cold water and then spoon some filling on to one half of each circle, leaving a generous 1cm border around the edge. For each patty, bring the pastry up and over the filling, pressing down firmly at the edges to completely seal the filling inside. Trim each one with a sharp knife to give you a neat 'D' shape, then take a fork and press down the sealed edge to give you a traditional finish.

Place the patties on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 25 minutes until the pastry is cooked; because of the turmeric, they won't turn golden brown like traditional shortcrust pastry, but should instead be a bright yellow. Serve hot or warm.





Deep, dark and delicious thanks to an intensely aromatic blend of herbs and spices, jerk chicken is perhaps the best-known Jamaican street food. It's always cooked outside, often in old oil barrels converted to grills, and it's pretty much always served with rice and peas – although the 'peas' are actually black beans. This is a recipe to save for a barbecue as it just won't taste the same if cooked in the oven.

Note: you will need to begin this recipe several hours before you want to eat, or even the day before, as the chicken needs time to marinate.

JERK CHICKEN, RICE AND PEAS

SERVES 6

6 large chicken legs
300g rice
1 x 400ml can coconut milk
1 teaspoon allspice berries,
bruised, or ½ teaspoon
ground allspice
1 tablespoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
1 x 400g can black beans,
drained
1 lime, cut into wedges
salt and freshly ground black
pepper

for the jerk spice paste

4cm piece fresh root ginger,
finely grated
3 garlic cloves, crushed
2 Scotch bonnet chillies, finely
chopped (seeds removed for
less heat)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons ground allspice
2 tablespoons ground
cinnamon
2 tablespoons paprika
2 tablespoons dried thyme
2 tablespoons soft brown sugar

For the jerk spice paste, place the ginger, garlic, chillies and oil in a small bowl and stir to combine. Add the allspice, cinnamon, paprika, thyme, sugar, salt and pepper, and stir well. Rub the spice paste all over the chicken legs – you may want to wear gloves for this as the chillies are mighty hot! Cover and leave to marinate in the fridge for 2 hours, or preferably overnight.

When you are ready to cook the chicken, light the barbecue. If you are using a gas barbecue, fire up one side to get it really hot; if you are using charcoal, heap the coals to one side to give you a hot side and a cool side. Place the chicken on the hot side and cook for about 10–15 minutes, turning regularly until lightly charred all over. Then move to the cool side of the grill and shut the lid. Leave for 20–30 minutes, until cooked through, turning occasionally – the cooking time very much depends on the temperature of the grill and the size of the chicken legs. It's better to cook low and slow than end up with a charred outside and a raw inside. If you have a meat thermometer, the internal temperature should be 75°C/170°F.

While the chicken is grilling, make the rice and peas. Take a medium-sized saucepan with a snug-fitting lid and add the rice. Pour in the coconut milk and 200ml water and add the allspice, thyme, oregano and chilli. Stir well and leave to soak for 30 minutes.

Stir the black beans through the rice and set over a medium heat. Bring to the boil, clamp on the lid and boil for exactly 1 minute. Turn off the heat, but do not remove the lid. Leave the rice to finish cooking undisturbed for 13 minutes. Remove the lid and fluff lightly with a fork. Season to taste with a little salt and freshly ground black pepper, then serve the chicken alongside the rice and peas with lime wedges on the side.