

*Churston Traditional*

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# **FARM SHOP**

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## CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES NOVEMBER 2017

Given the way the food industry stuffs everything with additives and preservatives it's hardly surprising so many of us are rebelling against the mass-market offerings and going back to making our own, whether it's jam or pickles, bread or biscuits or paté. At least we can be sure of what we are eating.

There's also a huge amount of satisfaction in discovering that home-made foods taste vastly superior to those bought off the shelf, and that's certainly the case with mincemeat.

With Christmas just over the horizon now's the time to be getting ready and laying down a store of easy-to-prepare (and it really couldn't get much easier) mincemeat not merely to put into pies but into several sorts of seasonal treats.

Mince pies have a very long pedigree. They date back to the times when the Crusaders, fresh from their excursions, brought back the notion of cooking meat with fruit – still common, of course, around the eastern Mediterranean rim and in North Africa.

Right up to Victorian times they would indeed have contained meat – usually lamb or mutton – but gradually they slipped down the menu and the meat content diminished until today only the suet remains as a reminder (an essential one, though) of their origins.

The escargots are particularly good served warm with clotted cream.

### TRADITIONAL MINCEMEAT

Ingredients. 450g cored and finely-chopped Bramleys, kilo dried mixed fruit, 225g shredded suet, 350g soft dark brown sugar, zest and juice of two lemons and two oranges, 50g flaked almonds, four teaspoons ground mixed spice, teaspoon ground cinnamon, 20 gratings nutmeg, six or more tablespoons brandy.

Method. Combine all the ingredients (crumble the almonds first) except the brandy in a large, oven-proof bowl and leave to stand overnight. Preheat the oven to 120C gas mark ¼, cover the bowl loosely with foil and cook for three hours. Remove and allow to cool, stirring from time to time to mix in the fat. When totally cold stir in the brandy. Pack in sterilised jars, add half a tablespoon of brandy to each, top with a wax disc and seal.

### MINCEMEAT ESCARGOTS

Ingredients for six. 450g mincemeat, two dessert apples, 24 sheets filo pastry, 75g melted butter, one beaten egg, two teaspoons each ground cinnamon and icing sugar.

Method. Heat the oven to 190C gas mark 5. Peel, core and finely chop the apples and mix with the mincemeat in a bowl. Lay a sheet of filo pastry on the work surface with its long edge towards you and brush it with butter. Place another sheet on top and repeat the process with two further sheets (keep the remaining pastry under a damp cloth until needed). Spread some of the filling along the edge nearest you then roll the pastry up tightly. Press both ends together to seal, shape into a spiral and transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining pastry and filling. Brush the spirals with beaten egg, put the sugar and cinnamon in a tea strainer and dust over the tops and bake for 12-15 minutes until lightly browned.

### MINCEMEAT CRUMBLE BARS

Ingredients. 225g oats, 150g plain flour, 175g soft brown sugar, half a teaspoon baking powder, good pinch of salt, 175g softened butter, 250g mincemeat.

Method. Heat the oven to 180C gas mark 4. Combine the oats, flour, sugar, baking soda and salt in a bowl, add the butter and work in well then press half the mix into a nine-inch square baking pan. Spread the mincemeat evenly over the top then add the remaining crumb mix, press down well and bake for 35-40 minutes. Allow to cool completely before cutting into squares.

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