

Churston Traditional

FARM SHOP

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CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES SEPTEMBER 2019

If there's one product on the butcher's counter which has slipped out of favour in recent years it's liver. Flavoursome, low-fat and nutritious it might be but along with so much other offal (hardly an attractive description, admittedly) it's been pushed firmly to the side of the national plate.

Those of us who always looked forward – and indeed still do - to liver and onions for supper find this hard to understand: do these people really know what they are missing?

Sadly at a time when food trends are spread virally through social media it only takes a few adverse postings to turn thousands of people off a particular product or dish even before they have tasted it. Thankfully we still have an army of restaurant and pub chefs who continue to use liver in the most imaginative ways so as to make the most of its delightful flavour and texture.

So as a way of celebrating autumn's arrival a couple of lambs liver dishes this month followed by a simple way of preparing a true gourmet delight.

PEPPERED LAMBS LIVER WITH CARAMELISED SHALLOTS

Ingredients for four. Eight generous slices of lambs liver, two tablespoons coarsely-crushed peppercorns, teaspoon sea salt, 100g butter, six banana shallots, peeled and halved lengthways, half a teaspoon sugar, heaped tablespoon crème fraiche, teaspoon lemon juice.

Method. Melt half the butter in a heavy pan and when sizzling add the shallots cut sides up. Allow to colour gently for a minute or two then sprinkle with sugar, turn cut sides down, cover and cook over a very gentle heat for eight to 10 minutes until caramelised. Place the peppercorns and salt on a plate and press the liver slices down well into the mix to coat on both sides. Melt the remaining butter in a frying pan and cook the liver briskly for no more than two minutes each side. Remove to a warm serving dish. Add the crème fraiche to the pan, incorporating the cooking juices, add the lemon juice and cook gently for a minute or so to thicken then pour over the liver. Arrange the shallots around the dish and serve with mashed potato and steamed cabbage.

LAMBS LIVER WITH MORELLO CHERRIES AND SZECHUAN PEPPER

Ingredients for four. Eight slices of lambs liver, 250g tinned Morello cherries, drained, teaspoon Szechuan pepper, two tablespoons flour, 40g butter, two tablespoons vegetable oil, 20g golden caster sugar, four tablespoons water, three tablespoons wine vinegar, sea salt.

Method. Heat the water and sugar in a heavy pan until caramelised, add the cherries and the vinegar and cook over a gentle heat for five minutes. Mix the flour and pepper in a bowl, lightly salt the slices of liver and dip into the flour, coating well on both sides. Heat the butter and oil to sizzling in a frying pan and fry the liver for two minutes each side. Remove and keep warm between two plates. Pour off any excess fat from the pan, add the cherry sauce, heat through and serve with the liver.

CHICKEN LIVER PARFAIT

Ingredients. 450g chicken livers, four tablespoons each port and Madeira, one large banana shallot finely-chopped, tablespoon fresh chopped thyme, generous shot of brandy, one garlic clove, crushed, 400g unsalted butter, cut into small dice, five free-range eggs, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Trim the livers and soak for five hours in a half-and-half mixture of milk and water with a teaspoon of salt. Dry well. Boil the Madeira, port, shallot and thyme in a small saucepan until reduced by half, add the cognac and garlic and boil for a few seconds more, Allow to cool. Melt the butter in a separate saucepan without letting it boil. Puree the chicken livers in a blender for about half a minute then gradually add the butter, the alcohol mixture, and a generous seasoning of salt and pepper. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into foil trays, leaving half an inch of clearance, add lids, stand in a bain-marie and bake for 50 minutes at 150C gas mark 2. Allow to cool and cover the top with a layer of melted butter to seal. Refrigerate for at least a day before serving: stand the tray in hot water for a few seconds, run a hot knife around the inside of the mould and turn out onto a dish. Freeze for up to three weeks.

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