

# 365 things I learned in my kitchen

Exploring food and healthier eating in Belgium!

Wednesday, 21 May 2014

## Sustainability and supermarkets

The majority of us do our food shopping in supermarkets. In 2013, Colruyt took first place in providing consumers the Belgian food market, with Delhaize in second place, closely followed by Carrefour.

I think all of us are aware of the environmental issues surrounding growing and transporting food. As consumers, every decision we make has consequences. I'm not going to get into discussions over flying in green beans from Kenya versus growing bananas in artificially lit and heated environments in countries where they could not otherwise grow. Neither do I claim to offer exhaustive research on sustainable food - I'm just trying to throw a bit of light on the topic so that I - and maybe you - can make more informed decisions about how and where we feed ourselves.

First thing up is finding out how the supermarkets fill their shelves so, here we go! And before we go any further, just be aware that I got all of the information below from the supermarket's own websites, so of course they're all going to say that they are wonderful at this whole environmental thing! Hmmm.

I'm going to look at [Colruyt](#) in this first post, followed by [Delhaize](#) and Carrefour in the coming weeks.

By the way, Felicity Cloake wrote about the food shopping dilemma in [this article](#) recently.

No comments: 

Labels: [carrefour](#), [colruyt](#), [delhaize](#), [supermarket shopping](#), [sustainable](#)

Tuesday, 13 May 2014

## 365things relaunch! What do YOU want to see?

Hello, and welcome back to you (and to me) to 365thingsIlearnedinmykitchen. I've had a nice break, and thanks to all of you who commented and sent mails over my sabbatical.

I've had a minor rethink of 365things over the past few months, and I came up with a couple of topics I'd like to focus on a bit more. One of these new areas is looking at sustainable and locally sourced food in Brabant Walloon and Brussels. I'm also going to look at healthier eating, or at least food that does you \*more\* good.

I'll still be cooking and posting recipes here, hopefully reflecting my new year's resolution (remember those?) to reduce the amount of sugar I eat.

So, what do you think? Is there anything that you would like to see more or less of? Do you think about where your food comes from or sustainability? Let me know in the comments! Thanks ☺

Kx

No comments: 

Labels: [Belgium](#), [bio](#), [healthy eating](#), [organic food](#), [sustainable](#)

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### About Me

#### Katie

Hello! I'm Katie, and I've been living in Belgium for about ten years. Belgian food is delicious, but sometimes you just need something that reminds you of home. Finding this can pose a problem in Belgium, so I often make this from scratch. I don't grow our own or milk cows or anything like that, but I do cook with food that my grandmother would recognise. I also love Asian and Indian food and I often make this too (it's the only way to guarantee you get the spiciness you need!). I try to cook low-fat, although some things I just refuse to meddle with (such as sticky toffee pudding). I'll be blogging about my kitchen (mis)adventures here.

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Monday, 10 February 2014

## Farewell

It's been a while coming, and so, with a heavy heart, I've decided to stop blogging. I don't know (yet) if this is temporary or permanent but I will keep you posted.

2 comments: 

Friday, 29 November 2013

## A plethora of desserts – chocolate fondants and white chocolate and cranberry cake

I have a very sweet tooth, which I'm trying to keep in check, but that is a post for another day. I fell off the wagon this weekend when the family was over, and I made three desserts - I really like having a selection to choose from.

My SiL is allergic to cinnamon, so she couldn't eat the red fruit and apple crumble I made. She loves chocolate fondants, so I decided to try making some for her, which gave me the opportunity to test out some new molds I'd bought. Aaaaand dessert #3 came in as I figured the kids wouldn't eat either the crumble or the fondants, so I made a white chocolate and cranberry cake for them. Well, in the end, only the adults ate the cake, the kids were the biggest consumers of the fondants and only four portions of crumble went.

Felicity Cloake did the legwork on the [fondant recipe](#) - this is from her 'perfect' series. I doubled it to make four. This recipe makes two.

- 60g butter
- 1 tablespoon of cocoa powder
- 60g dark chocolate
- 1 egg and 1 egg yolk
- 60g caster sugar
- 1 tablespoon of plain flour

Heat your oven to 200°. Grease the inside of 2 small ramekins or pudding molds, and then put the cocoa in one and turn it to coat the inside, holding it over the second mold to catch any that escapes. Do the same with the other mold.

Put the butter and chocolate into a heatproof bowl set over, but not touching, a pan of simmering water and stir occasionally until melted. Allow to cool slightly.

Whisk the egg, yolk, sugar and a pinch of salt until pale and fluffy. Gently fold in the melted chocolate and butter, and then the flour. Spoon into the prepared molds, stopping just shy of the top - at this point the mixture can be refrigerated until needed, or even frozen, as the puddings will not wait around once cooked.

Put on to a hot baking tray and cook for 12 minutes (14 if from cold, 16 if frozen) until the tops are set and coming away from the sides of the molds. Leave to rest for 30 seconds and then serve in the ramekins or turn out on to plates if you're feeling confident - they're great with clotted cream or plain ice cream.



Chocolate fondant - still in the mold

The cake I made was the one we tasted at the last [Clandestine Cake Club](#). I used this [recipe](#) - here is the UK/gram equivalent. It actually looks really festive, so it would be great for a Christmas party. It looks as good as it tastes too.



Cranberry and white chocolate cake

For the jam

350g of fresh cranberries

150g sugar

the rind and juice of an orange

a teaspoon each of ground ginger and cinnamon

a couple of cloves - just remember how many you put in

(if all this is too much, just use a jar of cranberry jam - Carrefour does a delicious cherry, cranberry and red currant (I think...) jam)

For the cake

225g of white chocolate

300g of plain flour

a small sprinkle of salt

140g of soft butter

270g of castor sugar

4 eggs

a good teaspoon of vanilla - I use a jar I got in Ireland of Madagascar Bourbon Vanilla Bean Paste. I've seen the same brand, but not the vanilla, in the International Home of Cooking at Rue Léopold 3, 1000 Brussels (its near Sterling Books).

A good dash of milk

For the icing

170g white chocolate  
100g of soft butter  
50g icing sugar  
another good teaspoon of vanilla

You start off by making the filling. In a saucepan, mix all the filling ingredients for it and bring to the boil. Once boiling, simmer for 10 minutes and then remove from the heat. Once its cool enough to not scald yourself on, go through it and fish out all the cloves you added. Then, whizz it through a food processor for a few seconds.

For the cake, melt the chocolate in a bowl over some boiling water until it is fully melted.

Pop your oven on to 190° and grease and line two 20cm cake tins.

In another bowl, beat the butter with the sugar until light n fluffy and its gone white, or at least a lot paler. This will take about 5-7 minutes of mixing. Add the eggs, one at a time, mixing well between each addition and add the vanilla with the last egg. Finally, mix though the flour, baking powder and salt until it's just about combined and then mix though the melted chocolate. If your mixture is a bit thick, add a few dessertspoons of milk to loosen it. It should be the consistency of honey.

Spread the batter into the prepared cake tins.

Bake for about 30 minutes or until a toothpick or skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool the cakes in their tins on wire racks for 10 minutes before removing them and cooling completely.



The vanilla bean paste I use

For the icing, melt the white chocolate in a bowl over boiling water. Leave it to cool for about 20 minutes (I didn't pay attention to this, and added the warm chocolate to the rest of the icing, and well, the whole lot curdled. Bin!). Even after 20 minutes, it hadn't started solidifying again, so no worries in that department.

In a large bowl, beat the butter, vanilla and the icing sugar until fluffy. When the chocolate is cool, mix it through the icing.

To construct the cake, slice each of the cakes in half horizontally and slather the jam on layer 1, put the other half on, slather that, then layer 3 - more jam - and then the lid of the cake. I only covered the top of the cake with the icing.

No comments: 

Labels: [cake](#), [cranberry](#), [dessert](#), [fondants](#), [white chocolate](#)

Tuesday, 26 November 2013

## Venison casserole

I was a bit late to the table regarding the annual game season, and when I eventually got to the supermarket last Tuesday, there was not a whole lot left. I picked up a filet of venison, which was a bit more expensive than I would have liked to have paid for dinner (+/-350g for €15.52!).



Venison casserole

I used [this](#) recipe from the BBC. It fed three of us well.

### Ingredients

- a knob of butter
- 1 chopped onion
- 4 crushed garlic cloves
- 1 packet of lardons
- 500g of wild mushrooms
- 350g filet of venison
- a glass of red wine
- 200ml water and a couple of stock cubes
- 1 good tablespoons redcurrant jelly

Melt the butter in a casserole dish and cook the onion for a few minutes, until softened. Add the diced venison and brown the outsides of the meat. Once they are browned, add the garlic, bacon and mushrooms and cook for a further minute.

Add the red wine, water, stock cubes, redcurrant jelly and salt and pepper.

Heat all of this until it begins to bubble and then lower the heat until the liquid is just simmering. Cook the casserole for about an hour or so, until the meat begins to break easily under a fork.

If the sauce is too liquid, you can thicken it by mixing a dessertspoonful of the sauce with a teaspoon of cornflour until it forms a paste. Pour the paste into the casserole and heat until it bubbles and thickens.

I served this with potato and celeriac mash.

1 comment: 

Labels: [casserole](#), [dinner](#), [game](#), [mushrooms](#), [venison](#)

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