

# Divinely decadent

Why wouldn't you want to indulge in a long, leisurely Christmas lunch with friends? This spectacular festive menu guarantees maximum impact for minimal effort

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**H**edonists unite. Think indulgent, wickedly good, delicious. This Christmas celebrate with decadence and style. Be lavish and generous with your table: dress it up with luxurious bonbons, candles, little gifts, flowers, your best tableware to give a sense of occasion. Organisation and planning are key if you are to actually deliver the food (with panache) and still have time and energy to kick back and enjoy yourself. Don't attempt to do it all yourself, gather those around you and make it a collaborative affair. Creating a festive table doesn't mean you have to be a slave to it.

This Christmas menu makes the most of delicious summer produce – great crunchy vegetable textures – and gives maximum impact for minimal effort. And if you keep flavours and textures light, your palate and stomach shouldn't be too overburdened. I have chosen a few of my

favourite festive salads, ideal partners for the roast meat. If beef is not your thing, try roasting a leg of lamb or a suckling pig, or baking a whole large fish.

The chocolate cake owes its life to the domestic goddess herself, a cake that is as voluptuous as she is, so thank you Nigella for sharing this utter wickedness with us. Cheers!

## **MENU** (all recipes serve six)

Salmon carpaccio, preserved lemon and chilli  
Roasted rib of beef  
Festive salads  
Decadent chocolate mousse cake and summer berries

### **Salmon carpaccio, preserved lemon and chilli**

600g sashimi grade salmon (or ocean trout) fillet, bones and skin removed  
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper  
1 tsp sea salt  
½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, strained  
2 tbsp verjuice

1 preserved lemon, finely diced  
2 small red chillies, finely sliced  
2 tsp small salted capers, washed  
1 tbsp chopped fresh oregano  
1 tbsp chopped flat leaf parsley  
1 tbsp chopped chives  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 tbsp fresh salmon (or ocean trout) roe  
1 punnet rocket cress, snipped  
Slice the salmon into 5mm slices, cutting across the fillet, and lay in a single layer on a large ceramic or glass plate.

Mix the lemon juice, verjuice, olive oil, salt and pepper together to make the dressing. Spoon half over the fish and leave to marinate for 10–15 minutes.

In a bowl, mix together the preserved lemon, chilli, capers, chopped herbs and rocket cress till combined.

Arrange the fish on each serving plate, drizzle with a little extra dressing and scatter the salad over the top of the fish. Spoon the salmon roe on top and serve immediately.

Y Grosset Polish Hill Riesling 2010.



- 01** Salmon carpaccio with preserved lemon and chilli.
- 02** Roast beef with much more than three veg.



## *You can vary the salads, just make sure the flavours balance and harmonise*

1 tsp sea salt  
 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper  
 8 green Kalamata olives, pitted and sliced lengthwise  
 2 tbsp coriander leaves, shredded  
 1 punnet mache (lambs' lettuce), snipped  
 10 small radicchio leaves, trimmed  
 To prepare the salad, peel and segment the grapefruit and save the juice.

Cut each grapefruit segment into three pieces.

Cut pomegranate in half and squeeze over bowl to remove seeds, keep the juice.

Make a vinaigrette with the grapefruit juice, 2 tbsp pomegranate juice and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss all salad ingredients together in bowl with the vinaigrette and serve.

### **Cauliflower and pine nut salad**

1 small cauliflower, cut into small florets  
 4 tbsp pine nuts, toasted  
 2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted  
 ½ cup coriander leaves, chopped

### **Ras el hanout dressing**

20ml lemon juice  
 ½ tsp ground cumin  
 ½ tsp ras el hanout  
 ½ tsp harissa  
 70ml extra virgin olive oil  
 Salt and pepper, to taste

Bring a pot of water to the boil and cook the cauliflower pieces for 2 minutes until softened.

Remove from heat and strain; refresh under cold water to stop cooking.

Whisk the dressing ingredients together in a bowl until emulsified, then season to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss the cauliflower with pine nuts, sesame seeds and coriander, add dressing and toss to combine, then serve.

### **Tomato avocado salad**

1kg heirloom tomatoes, sliced into rounds  
 1 avocado, sliced  
 1 punnet green basil cress, snipped  
 1 punnet red basil cress, snipped

### **Anchovy dressing**

Anchovy cream  
 Balsamic vinegar  
 Extra virgin olive oil  
 Salt and pepper, to taste  
 To make the dressing, blend the ingredients together with

### **Roasted rib of beef**

4kg beef rib joint with four bones, chine bone removed  
 100ml olive oil  
 3 tsp sea salt flakes  
 2 tsp cracked black pepper  
 1 tbsp ras el hanout

To prepare the beef, mix the oil with the salt, pepper and ras el hanout and rub liberally over the meat surfaces to season. Stand the beef rib in roasting tray, fat side facing up and roast in a 220C oven for 15 minutes until the meat starts to brown on the outside.

Reduce heat to 180C and baste with pan juices; continue to roast for 80 minutes for rare, or 100 minutes for medium.

Transfer meat to a carving board, cover with foil and leave to rest – so that the juices can settle – in a warm place for 20 mins before carving.

To slice, stand the meat with the bones facing upwards and cut between them. Then slice the meat lengthways into thick slices (like a steak) to serve.

Y Penfolds St Henri Shiraz 2006.

### **Purslane, eggplant yoghurt salad**

3 200g eggplants, cut into chunks  
 Vegetable oil, for deep-frying  
 3 garlic cloves  
 1 tsp sea salt  
 400ml Greek-style sheeps' milk yoghurt  
 ½ cup shredded mint leaves  
 ½ tsp chilli powder  
 100g summer purslane (or watercress)

Heat oil in pan and deep-fry eggplant pieces in small batches till golden. Drain on paper towel.

In a mortar and pestle, pound garlic and salt into a paste.

Mix all ingredients together in bowl to combine and then serve immediately.

### **Fennel, pomegranate and ruby grapefruit salad**

1 ruby grapefruit  
 1 small fennel bulb, finely shaved  
 1 pomegranate  
 2 green onions (scallions), finely sliced  
 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

There's no need to be a slave to the festive table, says chef Christine Manfield.



a stick blender till emulsified. Arrange the tomato and avocado slices alternately on a serving plate.

Drizzle with anchovy dressing and scatter the basil cress over top to serve.

#### Hot and sour coleslaw

1 long red chilli  
¼ green capsicum  
¼ red capsicum  
¼ small yam bean, peeled  
4 green onions (scallions)  
½ small green mango, peeled  
1 small carrot, peeled  
¼ daikon radish, peeled  
4 snow peas  
1 celery stick  
4 red cabbage leaves, finely shredded  
1 punnet micro watercress, snipped  
1 punnet coriander cress, snipped

1 handful watercress sprigs  
2 tbsp salted cashews, roughly chopped

#### Hot and sour dressing

80ml freshly squeezed lime juice, strained  
2 tbsp chilli oil  
¼ tsp sesame oil  
50ml fish sauce  
50ml tamarind water  
30ml sugar syrup

To make the dressing, whisk the ingredients together till combined. Keep refrigerated until ready to use.

To make the salad, slice all the vegetables into fine julienne strips and mix together in a bowl with the snipped cress leaves.

Add enough dressing to the vegetables to wet, and toss till they are lightly coated and seasoned.

Arrange salad on large plate or bowl, scatter with chopped cashews and serve.

# Smothered in berries, this cake satisfies chocolate addicts everywhere

#### Decadent chocolate mousse cake

300g dark chocolate  
50g milk chocolate  
175g unsalted butter  
8 eggs, separated  
100g brown sugar  
100g caster sugar  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
2 punnets raspberries

#### Topping

1 punnet blackberries  
1 punnet blueberries  
1 punnet small strawberries  
½ punnet redcurrants

Melt both chocolates with butter over water bath. Cool slightly.

Whisk egg yolks with both sugars and vanilla till pale and creamy, about 5 minutes.

Fold into the cooled chocolate.

Whisk egg whites till stiff, then fold gently and gradually into chocolate mix, keeping the mix as light and aerated as possible.

Brush a 24cm round spring-form cake tin with melted butter and coat with caster sugar.

Wrap the outside of the tin with three layers of foil, to prevent water seeping in during baking.

Pour the cake batter into the prepared tin and smooth top surface with spatula.

Sit the cake tin in a deep baking dish and add hot water until it comes halfway up sides of cake tin so the cake cooks in a water bath.

Put the baking tray and cake into a 160C still oven (not fan-forced) on middle rack and bake for 50 minutes until a crust forms and the centre is just starting to set.

Remove carefully from oven and transfer cake tin from its water bath to a wire rack. Leave cake to cool in the tin for 45 minutes.

Remove the collar from the cake tin and carefully transfer the cake to a large serving plate. Do not refrigerate – this cake needs to be served same day. It can be made a few hours before being served.

Mix the red berries together and cover the top of the cake with the berries.

Y Romate Cardenal Cisneros Pedro Ximenez Sherry.



For more information on our Christmas menu, go to [theaustralian.com.au](http://theaustralian.com.au)

Shot on location at Wolgan Valley Resort & Spa; [emirateshotelsresorts.com](http://emirateshotelsresorts.com)

