

Taste

Cherry hype

WHEN black cherries are first in the shops around Christmas they are very inviting and very expensive. Now, at the end of the season, they are much more affordable and just as inviting.

Eating them when fresh, with the delicious musky juice stirring the taste buds and making it almost impossible not to try another and another, can hardly be bettered.

Today's recipes are very simple and delicious and yet a little exotic.

Try the French toast for a special brunch or breakfast treat.

If you want a quick, easy but adult recipe for black cherries, try the well-known English recipe for Cherries Jubilee, made by pouring brandy over a bowl of black, ripe cherries and serving them with cold, thin cream.

I think the most famous of all cherry dishes is the French recipe for Clafoutis Limousin. Negrita is the French rum that gives this dish an authentic French flavour.

Clafoutis limousin

750g fresh sweet black cherries

3 large eggs

3 tbsp plain flour

3 tbsp caster sugar

1 tsp vanilla essence or 2 tbsp dark rum

pinch salt

450ml whole milk, warmed

2½ tbsp butter.

Icing sugar for serving

Preheat the oven to 200C. Wash, dry and stalk the cherries.

Make the batter by combining the eggs, sugar, flour, salt and essence in a food processor or with a whisk. Make sure there are no lumps and the batter is smooth. Gradually whisk in the warm milk. Thoroughly grease a wide ovenproof dish that



Eating in

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will hold 1.5 litres and put the cherries in the base of the dish. Pour the batter over the cherries and then dot with the butter.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the top is golden brown and the batter is cooked. Dust with

icing sugar or caster sugar before serving. It is best served while still warm.

Cherry crepes

This recipe is for about two serves but can easily be doubled. Use a basic crepe mixture and have them prepared. Crepes freeze well and are great to have on hand.

4 crepes

25g butter

25g caster sugar

2 oranges zest and juice

200g black cherries

brandy

Melt the butter and add sugar. Add the orange juice into the pan. Stir well and add zest and cherries. Bring to the boil and reduce. Place crepes one at a time in sauce and fold. Add brandy and flambe. Serve on hot plate and serve with ice cream and cream.

French toast with poached cherries

600g cherries

½ cup caster sugar

¼ cup lemon juice

¾ cup milk

2 eggs

1 tbsp sugar, extra

½ tsp vanilla extract

Pinch nutmeg

½ vienna loaf cut into 6 thick slices

40g butter

Wash cherries, remove stems and pips if desired. Place cherries into a saucepan with caster sugar and lemon juice. Simmer mixture, covered, for 10 minutes. Remove cherries from the liquid; bring liquid to the boil for 2 minutes until thick and syrupy.

Meanwhile combine the milk, eggs, extra sugar, vanilla and nutmeg in a large bowl and whisk well. Dip each piece of bread into the milk mixture. Melt butter and fry bread in batches over medium heat until golden on both sides.

Serve toast with a spoonful of cherries and the syrup over the top. Dust with icing sugar.