

# Taste

THE BEST IN FOOD AND WINE



## Baked vegetables

An easy alternative to last-minute preparation of vegetables for baking is to peel and dry them and cut them into equal sized chunks. Keep the pieces at least 5cm across so that they have sufficient interior to stay soft.

When using celeriac it requires deep peeling, so you will lose quite a bit of the weight. Remove any of the brown bits. Serves six.

**500g butternut pumpkin, peeled and deseeded**

**500g celeriac, peeled**

**12 golden shallots, peeled**

**2 knobs garlic, cut in half**

**500g potatoes, scrubbed or peeled**

**500g parsnip, peeled**

**3 tbsp lightly flavoured extra virgin olive oil**

**½ tsp salt**

**few twists of black pepper**

**2 sprigs of thyme or rosemary**

Prepare all the vegetables, leaving the celeriac until last as it goes brown very quickly. Put the olive oil, salt, pepper and herbs in a large bowl and combine. Add all the vegetables and toss with your hands so all the chunks are coated in the oil mixture.

If you're preparing the vegetables in advance, place them in a plastic bag and seal it. They can then be refrigerated for the day (up to 24 hours) until they are required.

Preheat the oven to 220C. Tip the oiled vegetables on to a large tray with sides. Make sure they all have a space on the base of the tray so that they become crisp and don't sweat and steam.

They will take 30-40 minutes to cook and become crisp. You may wish to turn them part way through the cooking.

## Apple or rhubarb crumble

Usually I cook both apple and rhubarb in apple or orange juice, rather than water. It gives a lot more depth and flavour to the dish; a teaspoon of orange or lemon zest also adds extra "zing". A combination of apple and rhubarb makes for a delightful base for a crumble, pie or sponge topping. Taste the cooked fruit mixture before adding the sugar and, depending on the sweetness, estimate the quantity of sugar required. Extra sugar will most likely be needed to sweeten a rhubarb crumble.

**1.5kg apples or rhubarb, peeled and sliced**

**2 cups apple or orange juice**

**¼ to one cup of sugar**

**5cm strip lemon or orange zest**

**Crumble topping**

**4 Weet-bix, crushed**

**½ cup soft brown sugar**

**½ cup self-raising flour**

**½ tsp ground cinnamon**

**125g butter**

**1 tsp vanilla essence**

Preheat the oven to 180C. Combine the juice, fruit and zest and cook in a saucepan until the fruit is soft. Taste, then add the sugar a quarter of a cup at a time until the desired sweetness is established. Obviously rhubarb will require more sugar than the apples. In a bowl, mix together the flour, sugar, crushed Weet-bix and cinnamon. Rub the butter and vanilla into the dry ingredients.

Remove the zest from the fruit and discard. Put the stewed fruit into an ovenproof dish and scatter the crumble evenly over the top.

Place the dish on a tray and cook for 20 minutes or until the topping is golden.

Serve warm with ice cream, runny custard or thin cream.

# Roast is dad's own favourite



## Eating in

JUDITH SWEET

**W**ITH Father's Day next Sunday in mind, I spoke with my elderly father and asked what he would choose as his favourite meal. He decided it would be roast beef or corned silverside served with lots of green vegetables, roast pumpkin and parsnip and baked or boiled potatoes.

Dad has always grown copious amounts of vegetables so he could be sure that there was never a shortage of absolutely fresh vegies straight from the garden to the table.

Gravy (these days more often called sauce or jus) is also an important accompaniment for him. It's usual that a gravy for roast beef or roast lamb is quite thin and more the juices from the meat.

For pudding, his favourite is a rich plum pudding — Christmas pudding-style — and an apple or rhubarb crumble came next. I have a feeling the roast dinner idea would be a popular answer from many fathers.

We quite often use the term "roasting" rather loosely.

Roasting is when meat is cooked on a spit or rotisserie and is turned throughout the cooking. Baking is when the meat is cooked in a dish or tray and basted from time to time throughout the cooking.

Yorkshire pudding is a traditional accompaniment to roast beef, as is horseradish cream.

A dusting of flour combined with a little dry mustard makes a good coating for a roast of beef before cooking.

Roast potatoes can be greatly enhanced

by boiling the potatoes until they are just tender. The slightly fluffy edges make for crisp pieces and a crunchy outside and lovely soft interior.

I consulted with wine writer Graeme Phillips, as he produces some of the best roast beef I've ever eaten. Catch any juices when you carve the meat and use them to sauce the meat.

His comments on how to cook it:

"There is no formula or anything special about what I do. Depending on the cut of beef, crisscross any surface fat with a sharp knife, then oil, salt and pepper the exterior.

"Put it into a really hot preheated oven or a lidded barbecue for 15-30 minutes to char and crisp the surface.

"Reduce the heat to medium until done (test for springiness with a finger), then rest the meat for 20-30 minutes and then carve. I have no set number of minutes per kilo — just the finger test."