

Taste



Eating in

JUDITH SWEET



RARE FRUIT: There are a lot more gooseberries around this summer.

UNUSUALLY, gooseberries have been readily available this summer in fruit and vegetable shops and also by the roadside.

The gooseberry plant is vulnerable to mildew, which may explain their absence in recent years.

Gooseberries have been around for many years and at one stage in England there were more than 400 varieties listed with the Royal Horticultural Society.

There were gooseberry clubs in many English villages where keen members competed for the largest single fruit. Special gooseberry scales were designed to record the tiniest differences in weight. They are now collector's items.

The white or green gooseberry is best for cooking and makes delicious purees to use in foos, pies, ice cream and sponge puddings. You will need to add quite a lot of sugar to counteract the acid tartness.

Unsweetened or very slightly sweetened gooseberry puree works well as a sauce for oily fish such as tuna, cocky salmon and even atlantic salmon.

I usually poach the gooseberries in very little water then puree and strain them. To one cup of puree stir in a dessertspoon of butter and salt and pepper to taste and a little sugar — the quantity required will vary depending on the sweetness of the gooseberries you use. Finely chopped mint or spinach can be stirred through the sauce and is good with roast pork or gammon. A little chopped dill or a julienne of fresh fennel added to the basic sauce creates a good flavour when combined with fish.

In France it is traditionally combined with a bechamel sauce and a little nutmeg.

The red, sweeter varieties combine well in fruit salads or with other berries and don't usually require sweetening when eaten fresh.

Gooseberries combine well with raspberries, elderflower, orange and cherry, which gives a lot of scope when it comes to composing recipes.

They also freeze well fresh or as a puree. They go well with apples and the frozen puree will make a delicious pie in autumn using the first apples of the season.

This simple recipe for gooseberry chutney is delicious served with mature cheddar cheese and cold roast pork and ham. It keeps for up to a year but must be put into sterilised jars and be well sealed.

Chutneys need more than cellophane sealing tops as the vinegar will gradually evaporate and leave the chutney dry.

Cover the filled jar with vinegar-dipped cellophane and then with a solid lid. Store the chutney in a cool dark place.

Gooseberry chutney

Makes about 1.75 litres.

1kg gooseberries, topped and tailed

2 medium onions, diced

300g sultanas

1 litre malt vinegar

1 tbsp salt

500g Demerara sugar

2 tbsp ground ginger

1 tsp mustard seeds

Put all the ingredients in a preserving pan or large pan.

Bring to the boil slowly, stirring continuously until the sugar is dissolved. Simmer, stirring occasionally until thick and the volume is reduced by about one-third. It will take about an hour.

While the chutney is cooking, prepare the jars. Wash them in very hot water then put them to dry in the oven on a very low heat. Bottle while the jars and chutney are still hot. The jars can be sealed with wax and then cellophane or as described above.

Gooseberry fool

For this recipe you can use a ready-made custard or a rich egg custard.

The gooseberries don't require topping and tailing as this mixture is strained to remove the pips. If you don't mind the pips, then top and tail the gooseberries. Allow time for the gooseberry mixture to cool completely before combining it with the custard.

350g gooseberries

1 tbsp water

75g sugar (or to taste)

250ml cream, whipped to soft peaks

200ml cold custard

½ tsp good quality vanilla essence.

Put the gooseberries in a saucepan with the water and cook over a medium heat.

Bring to a simmer and cook for five to 10 minutes until the gooseberries are very soft, squashing them with a wooden spoon as they cook.

Puree the cooked mixture and then push through a strainer to remove the pips.

Stir in the sugar, adding more if the mixture is still tart. Leave to cool completely.

Stir the vanilla essence into the whipped cream, then fold the cream lightly through the custard.

Fold the gooseberry puree through the custard mixture so the fool has a marbled effect. Serve chilled in small glass bowls and accompany with a sponge finger biscuit.

Good berry, gooseberry



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This position is honorary and all Directors must be independent (i.e. they cannot hold any official position with any other football club or league). Expressions of interest should be forwarded via email to:

Scott Wade, General Manager AFL Tasmania
swade@footballtas.com.au

Expressions of interest close February 4th 2005