

THE AGA KITCHEN

Why AGA-cooked
food tastes better



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How it all works

Why the AGA is simply better

Ask any AGA owner and they'll tell you that their food tastes infinitely better than dishes cooked in any other type of cooker. This is because the AGA cooker treats food differently...

For great food you need the right ingredients and recipe and then the correct application of heat. This is essentially an engineering question and it is one the AGA answers better than any other cooker. It is the radiant heat from the walls of the cast-iron ovens, that makes the AGA the world's best cooker.

The traditional AGA has one heat source, which allows the cast iron of the cooker to store heat at different levels within the cooker. This means when you use an oven, your food is being cooked gently from all sides by radiant heat. This is true, too, of the new AGA Total Control, except that each oven and hotplate is heated separately.

AGA cookers come in all shapes and sizes. Two, three and four-oven cookers are available, so there is one for every size of kitchen and style of cook. What they all have in common is the way they cook.

Using radiant heat that is kind to food, the AGA is perfect for every style of cooking. And because of the ingenious ways the ovens are designed, it's truly multi-functional. For example, you can grill at the top of the roasting oven, bake in the middle and fry on the floor of the oven – all simultaneously.

Conventional gas and electric ovens rely on convection within the oven rather than radiant heat, so the temperature gradients across the oven are likely to vary more than an AGA oven.

Kind-to-food heat

There is no chance of this in an AGA, which locks in both moisture and goodness, ensuring food tastes delicious and retains its nutrients. In fact, root vegetables cooked in the simmering oven can retain up to 20% more of their valuable mineral and vitamin content than those boiled in a saucepan.

AGA-cooked food tastes better for a number of very simple reasons...

- ✓ Cast iron is an excellent material for retaining and, importantly, diffusing heat.
- ✓ The AGA cooker has no dials to control temperature, so each oven is always at exactly the right temperature for the job.
- ✓ You can cook different types of food – such as a fish dish and a cake – in the same AGA oven and the flavours will not merge. This is because there isn't the convected flow of heat you would find in a conventional cooker.
- ✓ The temperature seals the food, locking in flavour, moisture and goodness, the temperature then naturally drops slightly to continue the cooking process.
- ✓ As the cooking process continues, this kind of radiant heat is far kinder to food than that generated by conventional cookers.



The new AGA Total Control follows in the footsteps of all AGA cookers in offering the gentle but effective radiant heat provided by cast-iron ovens

Boiling plate

Boil water quickly, cook delicious stir-fries or the perfect steak all with the minimum of fuss

Control panel

The AGA Total Control only features a discreetly housed touch-screen control panel which can be used to programme all elements of the cooker independently

This oven is also brilliant for tougher cuts of meat as it coaxes them into perfect tenderness.

Cast-iron evidence

The cast-iron AGA is made from 75% recycled materials and is itself 95% recyclable. Indeed, inside every new AGA cooker there is a little of an old one.

Baking oven

A moderate oven where you bake cakes and biscuits to perfection, but it's also brilliant for lasagne and any dish that requires slightly less heat than the roasting oven. As with all AGA ovens, you can cook different dishes at once with no fear of the flavours merging

Anatomy of a legend



Simmering plate

Holds three large pans, but you can also cook pancakes, toasted sandwiches, scallops and more directly on the surface

Roasting oven

Because heat comes from all sides in this oven nothing dries out. Shrinkage of meat is reduced and this oven can be used for roasting, baking, grilling and frying, all with perfect results

Cast-iron evidence

Cast iron is acclaimed as one of the most perfect mediums for good cooking because it retains heat well, distributes heat evenly and radiates kind-to-food heat, meaning food retains its flavours and succulence

Simmering oven

Perfect for slow-cooked dishes, such as casseroles, curries or belly pork, or for steaming root vegetables and rice. Most dishes are started off on a hotplate and then left to cook slowly and gently in the simmering oven, allowing them to retain their nutrients and goodness

Cast-iron evidence

Cast-iron cooking means ease of cleaning because oven splashes and spills are carbonised and simply require sweeping out. An AGA also means fewer intrusive cooking smells – its ovens are vented into the flue

The AGA is the best cooker in the world. Here's the inside guide to why its unique design works so well...

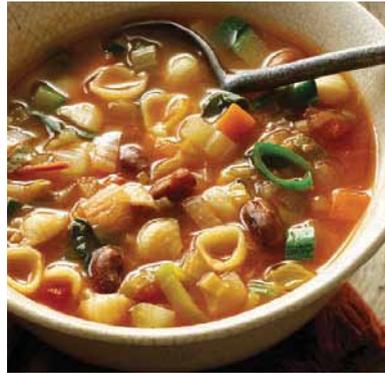
Cooking on an AGA

How the AGA ensures perfect results every time

The AGA is as flexible as it is capable. Here, we look at how it can help you master various cooking techniques with ease...

Boiling

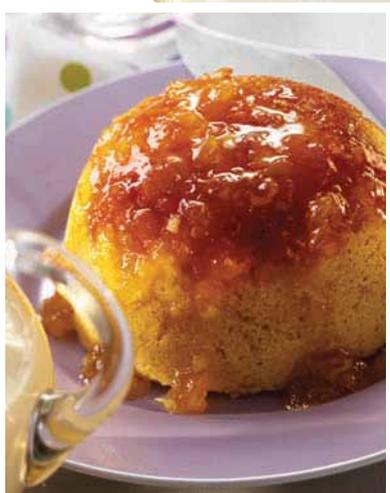
The AGA makes light work of boiling and can bring a kettle to the boil within three minutes. Not only is this brilliant when time is short, it's also incredibly good for food. For example, green vegetables will retain more colour and nutrients when cooked on an AGA boiling plate, because the process is so much quicker.



Simmering

This can be done on either the simmering plate or in the simmering oven. Generally things are brought to the boil on the boiling plate and then moved to one of these heat sources. Casseroles and sauces simmer perfectly in the simmering oven and because of the unique AGA heat, the flavours meld perfectly and vegetables and meat become meltingly tender.

TIP To get the very best from your AGA and gain valuable hints and first-hand experience why not book a place on an AGA Demonstration, held regularly at AGA shops. Simply visit www.agaliving.com or call into your nearest AGA shop.



Steaming

Everyone knows the health benefits of eating steamed food and AGA owners know how easy it is. For steamed root vegetables, start them on the boiling plate and then, having drained off the water, steam them in the simmering oven with no need to top up with water and no condensation in the kitchen.

Sautéing

The intense heat of the boiling plate make it perfect for sautéing. Food is browned quickly to retain its texture, moisture and develop flavour.

Cooking on an AGA



Frying

Frying can be done either on the boiling plate or on the floor of the roasting oven. Either way the results are perfect. When frying in the roasting oven, cooking smells are reduced, you don't have to worry about splashes or a smoky environment in the kitchen.



Stewing

The AGA cooker's simmering oven was made for stewing. It is impossible to imagine getting better results with any other cooker. The unwavering gentle heat of this oven allows food to slow cook for hours, without spoiling, while also allowing flavours to develop. Meat cooked this way becomes buttery soft and poached quince, for example, reach perfect tenderness.



Roasting

Roasting is done, as you would expect, in the roasting oven. This huge oven is big enough to fit a 13kg turkey, and because of the radiant heat used to cook, there is so much less shrinkage than with a conventional cooker. Plus, as the AGA offers the perfect warm environment to rest meat, you really will never eat better tasting meat.



Toasting

Anyone who has ever tasted AGA toast will not go back to the kind you get from a toaster. It's so famous even poems have been written about it. The AGA toaster is a legend in its own right and this odd implement, which looks rather like a huge ping pong bat, allows you to cook toast on the boiling plate and ensures that unique AGA criss-cross pattern.



Grilling

Grilling can either be done at the top of the roasting oven or in an AGA grill pan on the boiling plate or on the floor of the roasting oven. Either way, because of the AGA cooker's unique way with heat, you'll find whatever you are grilling is cooked to perfection. Steaks are tender, sausages perfect, fish just right.

Multi-tasking

The AGA has truly multi-functional ovens. The roasting oven, for example, can grill at the top, bake in the centre and fry on the floor – all simultaneously. The traditional AGA can cook in the ovens at high, moderate and low heats at the same time, with a choice of fast or slow hotplate cooking. Having an AGA also means you can dispense with many smaller electrical appliances – no need for a toasted sandwich maker, pizza stone, rice-cooker or a yogurt maker. Even the tumble drier can go as an AGA can dry clothes and 'press' towels and pillow cases.



Baking

In a 3-oven or 4-oven AGA baking takes place in the baking oven. Because the heat is so gentle cakes brown perfectly, but retain moisture, so you end up with the lightest cake possible. This is as true of cupcakes as it is of a Victoria sponge. In a 2-oven AGA baking is done in the roasting oven, either with a cold, plain shelf or using the ingenious AGA cake baker. Either way, the results speak for themselves.



How to cook...



Fish

Fish can be quickly roasted or baked in the cast-iron roasting or baking ovens without cooking smells permeating through the house (each oven is vented into the flue). The resultant moist flakes speak of perfection. Oily fish, such as salmon and mackerel, do not need any extra butter or oil as they will not dry out and roast a whole trout or salmon in the roasting oven and the skin will peel off so easily after cooking.

Stocks and Soups

Simmer in the oven to bring out the flavours of beef, chicken, fish or vegetable stock, which makes a perfect base for soups. Using the simmering oven for slow cooking means there is no constant pan watching on the hotplate, no boiling over, no danger of cooking too quickly and no condensation in the kitchen.

Vegetables

Delicious crisp roast potatoes are cooked on the floor of the roasting oven, where they benefit from the indirect base heat. Root vegetables are steamed in the simmering oven, where several saucepans can be accommodated at any one time. Green vegetables retain their vibrant colour from being quickly cooked on the boiling plate.

Rice

Perfect steamed rice with fluffy separate grains is so easy with an AGA. Simply bring the washed Basmati rice to the boil, on the boiling plate, then stir, cover and place in the simmering oven for 20 minutes. It's that simple.

Cakes

For the lightest sponges, nothing beats the indirect radiant heat of a cast-iron oven. Swiss rolls or sponge roulades are baked without cracks as the radiant heat does not dry out the mixture when cooking. AGA cup cakes are to die for and muffins rise to the heavens. If you like baking a 3 or 4 oven AGA is the one for you with a moderate heat for cakes and biscuits, in fact an AGA makes heavenly macarons at the moment the ultimate trendy treat.

Casseroles

The AGA simmering oven was simply made for cooking casseroles. Even the toughest cut of meat can become mouthwatering and tender because it can be left for hours in the oven without spoiling. You can cook anything from a juicy boeuf bourguignon to a rich cassoulet or a traditional Lancashire hot pot and all with come from the oven beautifully tender and full of flavour.

Kitchen basics

Breads

The AGA is probably the nearest you can get to a traditional pizza wood oven in a domestic kitchen. Cook pizzas on the floor of the roasting oven for quick and crisp results. Bread of all types – from olive and rosemary focaccia to the classic cottage loaf – benefit from the indirect radiant heat of the cast-iron ovens, which have a steady, penetrating heat just like a bakers' brick oven.

Breakfast

Cooked breakfasts are almost effortless with an AGA. Use the roasting oven to grill sausages and bacon, with mushrooms and tomatoes under the grill rack, with any fat splashes totally carbonised meaning less cleaning and reduced cooking smells. Heat through croissants in the centre of the oven. Perhaps a fat-free fried egg on Bake-O-Glide cooked directly on the simmering plate and toast made in the AGA toaster on the boiling plate. Or perhaps begin with real oatmeal porridge cooked overnight in the simmering or warming oven.

Good food fast

The AGA is ideal for good food fast. Toasted sandwiches made on the simmering plate without need for lots of butter. Quesadillas made the same way with tortilla wraps. Quick stir-fries are easy using the intense heat of the boiling plate to ensure the crispness of the ingredients. Even ready meals taste better with an AGA, with the added benefit that its ovens can fit in far more than a microwave.

Roasts

When roasting in an AGA there is no need to add extra fat or oil (venison is perhaps one of the few exceptions). This makes for healthier cooking and the result is succulent ribs of beef, pork or spatchcock lamb, with – if it is to your taste – a deliciously pink centre. Slow-cooked roasts can be left for hours in the simmering oven in the knowledge they will not dry out or burn. Belly pork and shoulder of lamb are excellent examples.

Puddings

From slow-cooked rice pudding to steamed syrup pudding, apple pie, roasted fruits, pavlovas and meringues there's not a sweet pudding or dessert the AGA does not cope with confidently.

Pastries

The crispiest pastry with no 'soggy bottoms' are made easy by placing the flan dish on the floor of the roasting oven, where the pastry cooks from underneath to give a golden brown base which is cooked through. All types of pastry benefit from the all-round radiant heat – from filo-topped pies, shortcrust apple pie, puff pastry salmon en croute, choux pastry buns and crusty meat pies. Another great benefit when cooking a quiche or frangipane flan is that there is no need to 'bake blind' (meaning you don't have to cook the pastry before adding the filling). Instead, the pastry cooks from underneath and around the sides and browns the top simultaneously because there's the cold plain shelf to protect delicate fillings from cooking too quickly.





The model cooker

Daisy Lowe has just taken delivery of her brand new AGA Total Control and so we caught up with her to find out what's cooking in her kitchen...

“My AGA Total Control is very, very lovely,” Daisy says with a smile. “It’s easy to use, makes food taste delicious and all in all I’m a very happy bunny.

“I’ve been cooking amazing roasted aubergines stuffed with tomatoes and ricotta on a bed of lentils. That’s become my new AGA dish because it makes the aubergines so crispy and yum.”

Daisy’s kitchen is utterly beautiful. It’s from the Fired Earth Bastide range designed by Charlie Smallbone and Daisy says it fits in beautifully with her way of life.

“I’m such a big fan of the Fired Earth kitchens that Charlie does,” Daisy says. “They’re really chic, pretty, homely and warm. They look inviting, which is exactly what you want.

“I spend most of my time in the kitchen. It’s where I hang out and there’s a little snug at the back so I’ll go and watch films in there and all of my cooking programmes. And, of course, I spend a lot of time cooking.

“I love cooking loads of things – roasts, Thai green curry and I’ve recently been making loads of fried chicken, which is really naughty. Also, shepherd’s pies and anything with a bolognese sauce. I’m really into big, hearty vegetable soups, like lentil stews or potato soup. I cook a lot. And I’ve learned from first-hand experience that AGA food tastes the best.

“It’s great having an AGA Total Control because I can turn it on and off. One of the best things it is that I could stick it in the island because my kitchen isn’t very big. But I also go away a lot, so I won’t be using energy when I don’t need to and that makes me happy.”

Testimonials

In their own words

We believe the AGA cooker produces the best food possible. But don't take our word for it. Here, a host of well-known faces tell us why they love the AGA and the delicious dishes it can help create...



I couldn't be without an AGA. They are brilliant. They tempt you to cook and they keep the house beautifully warmed and aired. **Mary Berry** (above)



We had an AGA when I was growing up. My mother won't cook on anything else. The AGA is an iconic part of British life. **Tom Parker-Bowles**

I love it. It's lovely to have something that's warm all the time and we never turn ours off. It's like a member of the family that never loses its temper and is very equable. **Lucy Young** (left)

I love AGA cooking because an AGA turns you into an innovative and intuitive cook. Also, entertaining doesn't have to be done in a hectic rush as you can prepare so much in advance with an AGA and have so much more time to spend with family and friends. Quite simply home is where the AGA is. **Amy Willcock** (right)



I love it. We all love it. It's lovely to have something that's warm all the time and we never turn ours off. It's like a member of the family that never loses its temper and is very equable. **Jilly Cooper**

I was brought up around the AGA. It has always symbolised for me such wonderful things: good food, warmth and protection. **Jodie Kidd**

I think the AGA makes people better cooks; they're generally technically better cooks because they understand cooking. **Jamie Oliver**

That's the magic of cooking on an AGA: all the different cooking techniques you can use at the same time while still staying in control. Before I thought of the AGA as a sedate cooking station; now I view it more as the dependable oven for a busy life. **Dan Lepard**



All those clichés are true – it really is the heart of the home
Sophie Conran (left)

An AGA is the heart of the home – it makes life so much easier and warmer. **Jasmine Guinness**

Draped with socks and Irish linen, tea towels and always containing something crumbly in the roasting oven, the AGA – like a lovable old Labrador – is the warm heart of the country kitchen.
Rachel Johnson

I love the simplicity of the AGA – you just bung a dish in and leave it and the AGA works its magic, leaving you with food that always tastes great. The AGA is brilliant for fish stews. You cook them long and slow in the simmering oven. It's fantastic.
Mitch Tonks (right)



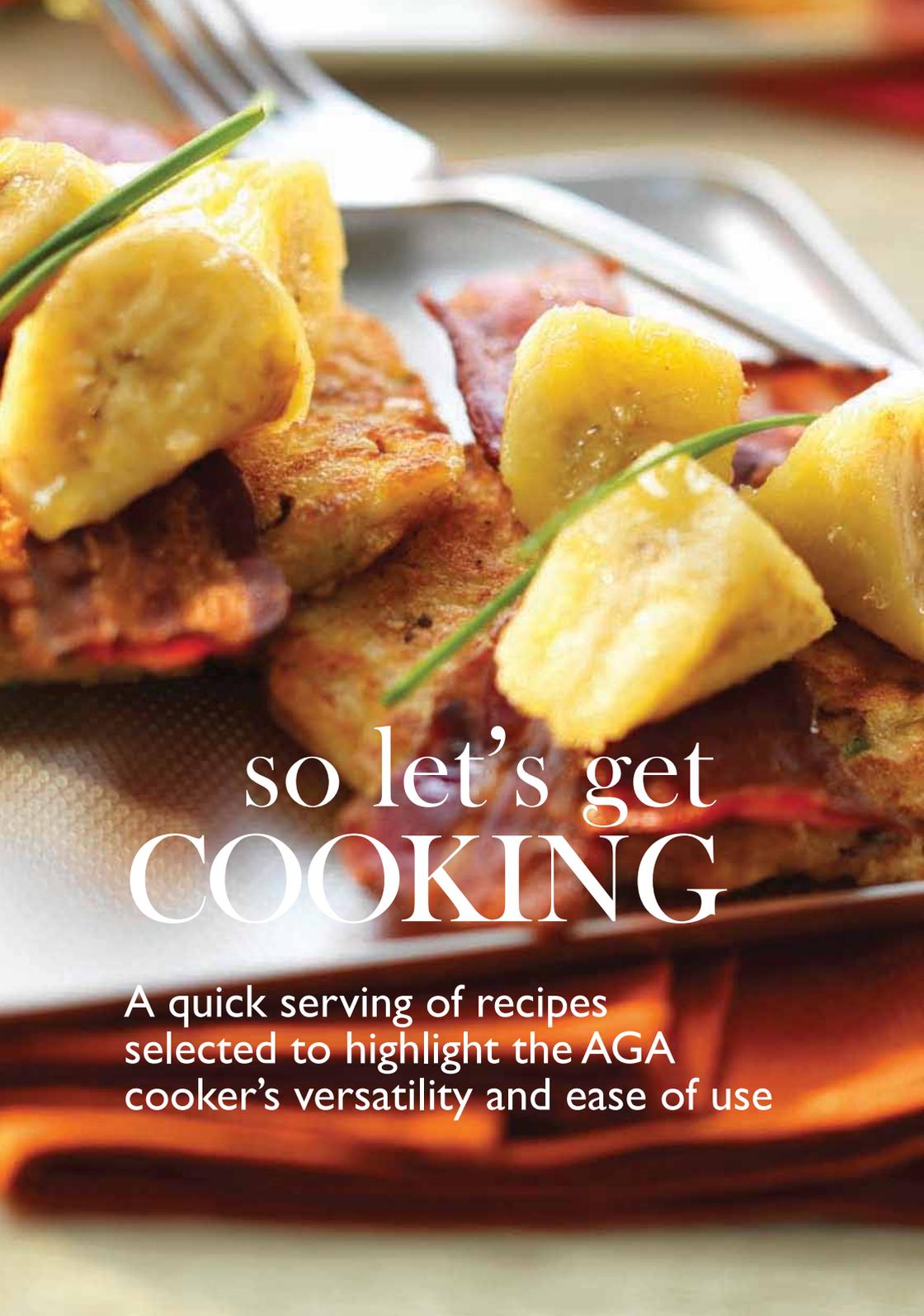
AGA Cookshop essentials

The best cooker deserves the best cookware, so here's our guide to 12 kitchen must-haves – all available from your local AGA shop or at www.agacookshop.co.uk





1 2.5-litre oval casserole dish in claret, featuring a flat lid design for easy stacking. **2** Traditional cook's gauntlet made in the UK and featuring an integral steam and grease barrier. **3** White ceramic baking tray made in the UK for AGA by Portmeirion. **4** Cast-iron grill pan with vanilla enamel and suitable for use on all heat sources. **5** AGA 28cm ceramic-coated cast-aluminium sauté pan with glass lid featuring a silicone rim. **6** The iconic and indispensable AGA toaster **7** Classic design hard-anodised kettle with heavy base for maximum hotplate contact. **8** Three-piece stainless steel saucepan set with clever lid design for easy stacking in the AGA ovens. **9** The AGA Cockerel chef's pad features a timeless classic print framed with contrasting claret binding. **10** Traditional AGA cast-iron trivet in claret. **11** Hard-anodised roasting tin – ideal for roasting, grilling or traybakes. **12** Hard-anodised baking tray designed to fit the AGA cooker's shelf racks perfectly.



so let's get
COOKING

A quick serving of recipes
selected to highlight the AGA
cooker's versatility and ease of use

Sweetcorn Pancakes

These savoury pancakes (left) are delicious with crispy bacon and cooked bananas and are ideal for breakfast or brunch. The recipe illustrates how, with an AGA, cooking can be done directly on the simmering plate

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 4)

115g self-raising flour

1 egg

125ml milk

Small can of sweetcorn,
drained

2 tbsp chopped parsley

Salt and black pepper

Olive oil

To serve

Crispy bacon rashers

4 barely ripe bananas

25g butter

For the garnish:

Chives

METHOD

Place the flour in a basin and make a well in the centre. Add the egg and half the milk.

Whisk together and thin to a dropping consistency with the remaining milk.

Mix in the sweetcorn, parsley and seasoning.

Wipe the simmering plate with a little oil on a piece of kitchen paper.

Drop tablespoons of the mixture on to the simmering plate.

When bubbles rise to the surface, turn over

and cook the other side.

Grill the bacon at the top of the roasting oven and sauté the bananas in the butter until heated through.

Serve the pancakes with crisp grilled bacon, topped with banana, garnished with chives.

Asparagus & Goat's Cheese Tart

No need to bake blind and cooking directly on the floor of the roasting oven ensures the pastry is cooked perfectly from below

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 6)

1 tsp melted butter

1 rectangular piece
ready rolled puff pastry

450g asparagus,
blanched

3 free-range eggs

300ml double cream

1 goat's cheese, no rind

Salt and black pepper

Grated cheese



METHOD

Brush a baking tray with the melted butter and line with the puff pastry. Place the asparagus spears over the surface.

Beat the eggs with the cream and goat's cheese, then season to taste.

Pour the mixture over the asparagus and sprinkle with grated cheese.

Cook on the floor of the roasting oven for about 25 minutes until golden.

Serve warm or cold with a salad.

Venison & Orange Casserole

The AGA cooker's cast-iron simmering oven ensures that long, slow cooking brings out the full flavour of this dish

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 6)

3 tbsp oil

675g stewing venison, cut into 2.5cm cubes

2 medium onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tbsp wholemeal flour

300ml beef stock

2 oranges, grated zest and juice

1 tbsp tomato purée

5 tbsp brandy

1 tbsp black treacle

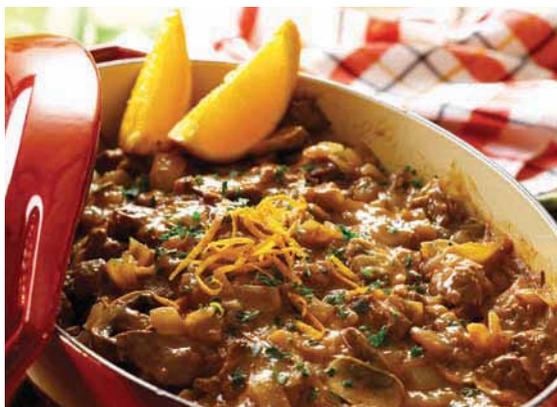
Salt and black pepper

175g mushrooms, thickly sliced

For the garnish:

Orange wedges

Chopped parsley



METHOD

Heat 2 tbsp of the oil in an AGA cast-iron casserole and fry the meat in batches until browned, then place to one side. Add the remaining oil to the casserole and sauté the onion and garlic for 2-3 minutes. Stir in the flour and cook for 1 minute. Gradually blend in the stock, orange zest and juice, tomato purée,

brandy and treacle and stir well. Return the meat and juices to the casserole and season. Bring the contents to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, then cover with the lid. Transfer to the simmering oven for 2 hours or until the meat is tender. Then stir in the mushrooms and return to the simmering oven for a further 30 minutes. Check seasoning and garnish with orange and parsley.

Passion Fruit Macaroons

The moderate heat of the cast-iron baking oven is perfect for these deliciously trendy treats

INGREDIENTS

(Makes 18 macaroons)

3 free-range egg whites

55g caster sugar

Yellow food colouring

200g icing sugar, sieved

125g ground almonds

For the filling:

300ml double cream

2 ripe passion fruit



METHOD

Beat the egg whites until they reach the 'soft peak' stage, then whisk in the caster sugar until it has dissolved.

Whisk in the yellow food colouring.

Fold in the icing sugar and ground almonds. Place this mixture into a piping bag with a 1¼ cm plain nozzle.

Pipe rounds on to Bake-O-Glide placed on a baking sheet, about 2 cm apart.

Tap the baking sheet on the worktop to level off the mixture. Leave to stand for 30 minutes until no longer sticky.

In a 2-oven AGA Place the baking sheet on the grid shelf on the floor of the roasting oven, with the cold plain shelf on the third runners down. Bake for 10-15 minutes until firm.

In a 3- or 4-oven AGA Place the baking sheet on the grid shelf on the floor of the baking oven and cook for 15-20 minutes until firm.

Leave the cooked macaroons for 5 minutes, then move to a cooling rack to cool. For the filling, whip the cream and fold in the passion fruit pulp. Sandwich the macaroons together with the filling.



AGA

