



A Guide to Christmas Cooking

by

The Aga Cookery Doctor

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THE AGA COOKERY

DOCTOR'S GUIDE TO AGA CHRISTMAS COOKING

Introduction

With Christmas cooking it is important to bear in mind that most people like a reasonably traditional menu. It is not generally a good idea to jazz up every dish – by all means introduce a few new ideas, but keep the basics reassuringly familiar. Concentrate on cooking the vegetables well and work to a simple written out time plan so that nothing is forgotten.

This way you will enjoy everything too. With careful planning the work on Christmas Day can be kept to a minimum, so that you can enjoy opening presents and spending time with family and friends. Enlist help the day before for peeling vegetables and preparing the trimmings – children love to be involved with helping to lay the table, make festive place cards etc. Don't forget that Bucks Fizz makes Christmas Day more enjoyable for the cook! The following tips will help you enter the stress-free world of Aga entertaining.

Which Size Bird Should I Buy?

Turkey: Allow 450g (1 lb) per person, weighed when plucked and drawn
Allow 225g (8 oz) per person, for boned and breast-only roasts

Goose: Allow 900g (2 lb) per person, weighed when plucked and drawn
Allow 450g (1 lb) per person, for boned and breast-only roasts

This allows for second helpings and a manageable quantity of leftovers that can be safely used up within two to three days. If you are short of refrigerator space, a car boot in December may be cold enough for the safe storage of an uncooked bird once you have taken delivery of it from your butcher. Alternatively, consider using an unheated room or an animal-proof shed or garage.

Defrosting Frozen Birds

It is essential that you allow a frozen bird to defrost for the correct length of time:

METRIC	IMPERIAL	THAWING
2.25 kg	5 lb	20 hours
4.5 kg	10 lb	22-24 hours
6.75 kg	15 lb	24-28 hours
9 kg	20 lb	40-48 hours
11.25 kg	25 lb	48+ hours

Thaw the turkey in the coolest room – below 16°C (60°F). Remove packaging first, check regularly, once defrosted (no ice crystals remaining in the cavity and the legs are quite flexible), store covered, low down in the refrigerator at a temperature of no more than 5°C (40°F).

Giblets

Remove the bag of giblets from inside a fresh bird as soon as you take delivery of it, or in the case of a frozen bird, as soon as they become loose during defrosting. Use them to make your own giblet stock ready for making incomparable gravy, it really is worth it and it's so easy in the Aga Simmering Oven. For full details see the recipe section.

Stuffing

Rinse the inside of the bird with cold water and pat dry with paper towels. Season the insides of both cavities with salt and pepper and a generous amount of butter. In the interests of food safety with a turkey it is recommended to stuff the neck or breast end only. In the body cavity place a quartered peeled onion and lemon together with a stick of celery, a few batons of carrot with some sprigs of fresh parsley and thyme which will pervade the bird with aromatic flavour. Allow about 225g (8 oz) prepared stuffing for each 2.25 kg (5 lb) of dressed bird. Either use a home-made stuffing, or doctor two packets of a good quality Sage and Onion stuffing mix: make up with boiling water as directed, adding a good knob of butter and plenty of seasoning. When quite cold, mix well with 900g (2 lb) of sausage meat (taken from good quality sausages). Stuffing must be cold before being used and it is recommended to stuff the bird just before cooking. If liked, prepare the stuffing ahead of time, and then refrigerate or freeze it, but stuff the bird with stuffing at room temperature just before you are ready to roast it. Additional stuffing can be cooked in a separate dish, and given several basting of turkey roasting juices as it cooks. It is not recommended to truss a bird, this allows free circulation of heat to all parts. Use bathroom scales covered with clingfilm to weigh the stuffed bird.

Remember to weigh the bird after stuffing to calculate the correct cooking time.

Wishbone Removal

A tip to make the carving more elegant is to remove the wishbone before cooking. This will vastly facilitate carving the breast giving you lovely even slices. Either ask your butcher to do this for you, or do it yourself using a very sharp knife – the 10cm Aga Cook's Knife or 13cm Utility Knife is perfect. Cut carefully to avoid piercing the skin. Loosen the skin at the neck end and ease your fingers up between the breast and the skin. Cut the wishbone at the base end near the wing joints first, cut up along the bone to remove from the flesh and loosen at the top, twisting to remove. You might like to consider asking your butcher to remove the leg tendons before roasting. Beware cross contamination – after handling raw poultry wash all utensils, surfaces and your hands to prevent bacteria being transferred.

Turkey Crowns

A Turkey Crown has the legs, wing tips and back bone removed from the bird, leaving the double breasts still attached to the ribs and sternum. This is increasingly a popular choice these days, making for easy carving whilst retaining a traditional appearance on the Christmas dining or buffet table. If dark meat is liked, consider asking your butcher to make you a crown, and cook the legs separately, perhaps boned and then stuffed.

Roast from Room Temperature

It is vital that the bird is not roasted straight from the refrigerator. Roasting times allow for cooking a bird from room temperature, i.e. one that has been taken out of the refrigerator and left in a cool room for several hours before cooking.

Tenting with Foil and Basting

When you are roasting a turkey or goose, remember that you are cooking two different types of meat – the delicate light breast meat, which must not be allowed to dry out – and the darker leg meat which takes longer to cook. Generously butter the breast and cover with rashers of streaky bacon or lardons. Aim to make a roomy tent over the bird to protect the breast from over-browning, also use foil to protect the legs if they start to brown too quickly. With an Aga, basing is only needed very occasionally during periods in the Roasting and Baking Ovens. If necessary, remove the foil for the last 30 minutes to crisp the skin.

AGA TURKEY ROASTING TIMES

In the interest of food safety it is important that the internal temperature of raw poultry should rise from room temperature to 60°C (140°F) within four hours at the start of the cooking. With the slow method this is particularly important, this is why I recommend an initial period in the hot Roasting Oven.

All cooking times are approximate.

Whole Turkey and Turkey Crown

(whole bird with legs removed)

Fast Method

(2, 3 and 4 oven Aga cookers)

Rub liberally with butter. Place in the Aga roasting tin, on a grill rack if liked. Hang from the lowest set of runners in the Roasting Oven for one hour until nicely browned, then tent loosely with foil.

The TOTAL fast method roasting times are:

3.6 – 5.4 kg	8 – 12 lbs	1¾ – 2 hours
5.4 – 7.25 kg	12 – 16 lbs	2 – 2½ hours
7.25 – 9.0 kg	16 – 20 lbs	2½ – 3 hours
9.0 – 10.8 kg	20 – 24 lbs	3 – 3½ hours
10.8 – 12.6 kg	24 – 28 lbs	3½ – 4 hours

Medium Method

(3 and 4 oven Aga cookers only)

Rub liberally with butter. Place in the Aga roasting tin on a grill rack if liked. Hang from the lowest set of runners in the Roasting Oven for up to one hour until nicely browned, then tent loosely with foil. After the first hour in the Roasting Oven, transfer the turkey to the Baking Oven to finish cooking, for the following

ADDITIONAL times:

3.6 – 5.4 kg	8 – 12 lbs	1½ – 2½ hours
5.4 – 7.25 kg	12 – 16 lbs	2½ – 3½ hours
7.25 – 9.0 kg	16 – 20 lbs	3½ – 4½ hours
9.0 – 10.8 kg	20 – 24 lbs	4½ – 5½ hours
10.8 – 12.6 kg	24 – 28 lbs	5½ – 6½ hours

Slow Method

(2, 3 and 4 oven Aga cookers)

Rub liberally with butter. Place in the Aga roasting tin without a grill rack. Roast on the floor of the Roasting Oven for up to one hour and as soon as it starts to brown, tent loosely with foil. After the first hour in the Roasting Oven, transfer the turkey to the Simmering Oven to finish cooking, for the following

ADDITIONAL times:

3.6 – 5.4 kg	8 – 12 lbs	3 – 5 hours
5.4 – 7.25 kg	12 – 16 lbs	5 – 7½ hours
7.25 – 9.0 kg	16 – 20 lbs	7½ – 10 hours
9.0 – 10.8 kg	20 – 24 lbs	10 – 12½ hours
10.8 – 12.6 kg	24 – 28 lbs	12½ – 15 hours

Special Turkey Roasts

Saddle of Turkey

(Two breasts of fillet meat, boned with wings inserted)

Butterfly Breast Turkey

(Two breasts of fillet meat)

Boned and Rolled Turkey

(White and dark meat)

Ballottine of Turkey

(Boned turkey with loin of pork and stuffing)

Turkey Stuffed

(with a Ham or Pheasant Breasts)

Boned Turkey

(Stuffed with Ox Tongue and Forcemeat)

Special Turkey Roasts - continued

Cockatrice

(Several birds of varying sizes, one inside each other)

Turducken

(A chicken inside a duck inside a turkey with sausagemeat stuffing)

Ten Bird Roast

(The ultimate "Russian Doll" assembly)

Unless expressly instructed otherwise in a specific Aga recipe, these are all best roasted in the Aga Roasting or Baking Ovens by the fast or medium methods. Have the roasting tin on the lowest set of runners. Because they are so dense it is essential to ensure that they are thoroughly cooked right to the centre. The use of a meat thermometer is strongly recommended.

The slow method is not suitable for these roasts and should not be used.

AGA GOOSE ROASTING TIMES

A 4.5-5.5kg (10-12 lb) goose will feed 8-10 people comfortably and is a popular choice. It is essential to cook a goose on a grill rack in a roasting tin. Do not prick the skin all over but do prick the heavy folds of fat just behind the wings by the back legs.

All cooking times are approximate.

Whole Goose

A whole stuffed goose 4.5kg (10 lb) will take approximately 3 hours total cooking time, a 5.4kg (12 lb) goose 3½ hours. Protect the legs and wings with fat bacon and foil, and tent the whole bird with foil leaving a slit in the top by the breastbone during cooking. Roast in an Aga roasting tin on the lowest set of runners in the Roasting Oven for 1 hour. Then drain the fat that has filled the tin, turn the bird upside down and roast for a further hour. Drain the fat and turn back the right side up to brown, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Recover with foil and continue roasting until cooked.

Boned & Rolled Goose Roasts

For roasts such as 'goose banquet rolls', 'birds within a bird' (a pheasant in a chicken in a goose, etc.) and turkey or duck breasts rolled in a boned goose, fast roast these only – using the turkey fast method timings as a guide. Because boned and rolled roasts are so dense it is essential to ensure that they are thoroughly cooked right to the centre. The use of a meat thermometer is strongly recommended.

The slow method is not suitable for these roasts and should not be used.

Testing for Doneness

To check that the bird is thoroughly cooked, ideally use a meat thermometer in the thickest portion of the thigh, behind the knee joint next to the body. It should read 70-72°C (158-160°F). Alternatively, pierce with a skewer and check that the juices run clear. If any tinge of pink shows, return to the oven and check again after 20 minutes. A further check is to “shake hands” with the legs – they should be easy to wiggle in their sockets and the thickest portion of the drumsticks should feel tender when pressed.

Aga trivets protect work surfaces from hot roasting tins



Keeping It All Hot

A cooked turkey or goose will keep hot for a surprisingly long time: a large mass of cooked food contains a lot of stored heat. I like to transfer the cooked bird to a second clean Aga roasting tin so that you have the fat and juices easily available to make the gravy. Having extra Aga roasting tins and baking trays are so useful when catering for Christmas and crowds. Once the bird is covered with a double thickness of foil, pile over several clean towels etc, as an insulating jacket. On a 4 oven Aga place on the Warming Plate or hob above the left hand ovens. On a 2 or 3 oven Aga use a warm area near your Aga or somewhere away from draughts. Left like this it will still be piping hot when you sit down for your Christmas meal.

More importantly, the bird will have benefited from having a chance to rest while you finish preparing the rest of the meal. Allow a minimum of 30 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours before carving. Fill the Simmering and Warming Ovens several hours before the meal and plan beforehand how to best pack with plates, serving dishes and saucepans.



Dishwasher Tip

If you have a lot of plates and serving dishes to heat, fill your dishwasher with all your china and put it on a heat only (drying) cycle, or on the shortest wash option.

Do a dummy run beforehand if necessary to time the length of the programme, and then you can set the dishwasher off at just the right time to result in hot dry dishes ready for your Christmas meal. This tip never fails to impress onlookers. It is especially useful if you are cooking for more than ten people with a 2 or 3 oven Aga – the Simmering Oven can then be used exclusively for cooking and keeping food hot.

Vegetable tureen lids and gravy boats are best warmed at the back of the top plate of the Aga where they heat through without the handles getting too hot. Protect the enamel by using a cloth, chef's pad or piece of kitchen paper.

Painless Carving

The trick to making carving a pleasure at every roast meal is easy: use a really sharp carving knife. The Aga Carving Set features a superb 20cm Sheffield stainless steel carving knife and a 15cm carving fork, beautifully presented in a Cook Shop Collection gift box and makes a great gift. Once the turkey has rested, cut the skin between the leg and the breast. Bend the leg outwards and cut through the joints to remove the legs. Bend these to find the joint between the thigh and drumstick and separate. Hold the drumstick in a wad of kitchen paper and carve slices along the bone.

For white meat, starting from the lower end, slice the breast meat at an angle, to give elegant thin slices. Carefully transfer each slice as it is carved to a plate to prevent the meat from breaking.



Leftovers

Once served, cool the cooked bird as quickly as possible and refrigerate the leftover meat, stuffing and gravy separately. Putting it on its platter on an Aga grid shelf in an unheated room or animal-proof garage for three hours will allow it to cool sufficiently ready for storing in the refrigerator. It is recommended to store cold cooked turkey in the refrigerator for a maximum of three days, so freeze what you will not be able to use in that time. Break down the carcass and either make turkey stock or freeze it to make some at a later date. Turkey stock makes fabulous turkey soup and is well worth trying.

Top Aga Tips

- Remember the Aga 80:20 rule: 80% of your cooking should take place in the ovens, 20% on the hotplates, typically these are things which take less than seven minutes to accomplish.
- When cooking a lot of food requiring a high temperature in the Roasting Oven, avoid using the Simmering Plate apart from essential tasks such as heating milk and making sauces. Keep the Simmering Plate insulating lid down as much as possible.
- If the Simmering Oven is completely full of food cooking, allow a longer composite cooking time than for when cooking just a couple of pans, especially in the case of root vegetables. The cooked food will keep hot without spoiling.

AGA COOKERY DOCTOR RECIPES



Spiced Cranberry Compote with Port

As well as serving with turkey, this is excellent as a component in a fruit starter, for example with ripe melon. It goes superbly well with most cuts of cold meats – it is sensational with traditional spiced beef – and I use a variation of it as a Christmas cheesecake topping: substitute half of the cranberries with blueberries and use ground cinnamon instead of allspice.

125g (5 oz) granulated sugar
200ml (8 fl oz) orange juice
225g (8 oz) fresh cranberries
1 rounded tsp ground allspice
1 tsp of arrowroot
2 tbsp port

Dissolve the sugar in the orange juice in a 2 litre Aga stainless steel pan on the Simmering Plate and then add the cranberries and spice. Cover, bring to the boil and cook in the Simmering Oven until the berries are tender, about 15 minutes. Slake the arrowroot in a little cold water and stir into the sauce and cook for a minute on the Simmering Plate until thickened slightly and glossy. Cool and stir in the port before storing in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Bread Sauce

A small onion
2 cloves
1 bay leaf
300ml (1/2 pint) full-fat milk
115g (4 oz) fresh white breadcrumbs
25g (1 oz) butter
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2-3 gratings of a fresh nutmeg
A little cream

Stud the onion with the cloves and place with the bay leaf in the milk in a 1.5 litre Aga stainless steel pan. Scald the milk on the Simmering Plate and then cover and leave the pan at the back of the Aga for the milk to infuse for at least an hour. Remove the bay leaf and onion and add the breadcrumbs and butter. Season to taste, and add the cream just before serving. Add extra milk or breadcrumbs if too thick or thin. Once made it will keep hot in the Simmering or Warming Oven, covered with cling film.

Giblet Stock

Wash the giblets and place the heart and gizzard in a 3.5 – 4 litre Aga saucepan. Cover with cold water and bring to the boil. If you have a cleaver or large knife, cut the neck into several sections before adding to the pan. Otherwise in one piece. Don't use the liver, however – save that for pâté but if you have some chicken wings from your butcher, add those for extra flavour.

Simmer for five minutes, then remove from the heat and add a cup of cold water. This will encourage scum to rise to the surface for easy skimming – a nylon tea-strainer is best here. Now add a clean unpeeled onion, halved, a roughly chopped carrot and a stick of celery, a bay leaf, some parsley stalks and a few peppercorns. Bring back to the boil and cover and transfer to the Simmering Oven for three hours. Cool, strain and refrigerate.

Sherried Turkey Gravy

For every 600ml (pint) of thin gravy wanted, in an Aga saucepan make a roux with 25g (1 oz) of turkey fat taken from the roasting tin and 25g (1 oz) plain flour. For a thicker gravy use 55g (2 oz) of each per 600ml (pint). Cook for a couple of minutes, adding a little extra turkey fat if at all dry. Pour off all the remaining turkey fat and reserve for cooking, but leave all the congealed cooking juices in the roasting tin. Add some turkey stock to the roasting tin and preferably place on the floor of the Roasting Oven or onto the Simmering Plate for a few minutes. Off the heat, use a flat ended wooden spatula to deglaze all the concentrated juices and sediment. Pour this gradually onto the roux and whisk in thoroughly. Repeat the deglazing process until the roasting tin is rendered clean and all the turkey juices have been whisked into the roux. Add more stock to thin to your preferred consistency, adding salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Add a good slug of sherry and a little cream. This gravy will have an excellent turkey flavour but may be pale; a little gravy browning may be added to darken it slightly. When transferring the turkey from resting to its serving platter, add to the gravy the juices that will have accumulated.

Maple-roasted Cocktail Chipolatas

Toss baby Chipolatas in 4 tablespoons of maple syrup and 4 tablespoons of oil and roast in Hard Anodised Aga Baking Trays in the Roasting Oven until cooked and golden brown. Honey may be used in place of maple syrup. Do use a piece of pre-cut Bake-O-Glide from the Cook Set to make washing up easier.



Extra large Hard Anodised Aga Baking Trays
are a brilliant investment

Bacon Rolls

With the back of a knife stretch rindless rashers of streaky bacon across a board and then roll up and secure with a cocktail stick. These will grill on a grill rack set in the high position in a roasting tin on the highest set of runners at the top of the Roasting Oven.

Roast Potatoes and Parsnips

Choose a good, floury potato such as Desirée, Maris Piper or King Edward. Place even sized pieces of potato or parsnip in cold salted water and bring to the boil in a large Aga saucepan – I like broad based Aga saucepans for really rapid boiling. Parboil for 8-10 minutes, until the potatoes are starting to soften, then drain well for 5 minutes, until the steam subsides. Shake well in the colander or dry pan, to roughen the edges of each potato. Heat your chosen fat or oil in an Aga roasting tin on the floor of the Roasting Oven until good and hot, then add the potatoes and turn so that they are well coated. If using several roasting tins or the Hard Anodised Baking Trays, rotate them so that they all enjoy a spell crisping up on the floor of the oven. Goose fat makes great roast potatoes, failing that I find that a mixture of two fats gives the best results, e.g. solid vegetable fat and sunflower oil, used 50:50.

For parsnips, if not using honey or syrup elsewhere in you menu, a little added near the end of the cooking gives a great glaze, perhaps with a couple of tablespoons of brown or white mustard seeds. Alternatively, dredge with a little grated parmesan and parsley

Get Ahead:

To cook ahead, pre-roast the potatoes and parsnips the day before, until they just start to colour. Drain off the fat, cool and then keep covered in the refrigerator till the following day. Bring back to room temperature for several hours before finishing off on the floor of the roasting oven for 20-30 minutes. Don't place cooked roast potatoes in the Simmering or Warming ovens or they will not remain crisp. Instead, place the filled ovenproof serving dish on the Aga toaster on the floor of the Roasting or Baking oven, with a cold plain shelf above to prevent them over browning.

Get Ahead:

Most vegetables can be prepared the day before: peel potatoes and keep covered with water in the fridge, with carrots and parsnips in polythene bags. Shred cabbage and trim tiny Brussels Sprouts – remove any discoloured leaves, then store in a polythene bag with a little water in the refrigerator overnight.

A Purée of Winter Vegetables

Get Ahead:

Follow the recipe in The Aga Book by Mary Berry on page 73 for Carrot and Swede purée. It tastes delicious, is a great colour on the table and plate, and can be made early in the morning and happily kept hot in the Simmering or Warming Oven once made, another thing less to worry about. Carrot and Sweet Potato or Squash variations also work well – use a little of the reserved cooking liquid plus some crème fraîche when mashing to get the right consistency, with some assertive seasoning including a little freshly grated nutmeg.



Braised Red Cabbage with Apple

Get Ahead:

Follow the recipe in The Aga Book on page 80 or use your favourite recipe with the timings stated (bring to the boil then about an hour in the Simmering Oven). This keeps hot for a long time without deteriorating and also re-heats well so it can even be made the day before.

Brussels Sprouts:

Choose sprouts that are all the same size so that they cook at the same rate. Discard tired outer leaves and make a cross on the base in case of large ones. Cook very fast at the last minute in salted boiling water on the Boiling Plate for 6-9 minutes until just tender. For the fastest boiling select a large Aga pan with a very broad base which is ideal to get really bright and vibrant green vegetables. Drain and toss in a little melted butter or toasted sesame oil. Brussels Sprouts can also be cooked ahead of time. Boil in salted water for 6 minutes until just cooked, then drain and refresh by plunging into iced water for five minutes to arrest the cooking and set their bright green colour. Drain again and chill. Re-heat in a pan with a small amount of water and a knob of butter just before serving. Alternatively, they can be puréed with a little stock, cream or crème fraîche, seasoned and kept hot until wanted. The purée also re-heats well so can even be made the day before if necessary. Freshly ground black pepper and a little freshly grated nutmeg bring out the full flavour of Brussels Sprouts.

Michaelmas Mushroom Strudel

175g (6 oz) butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove of garlic, crushed finely
450g (1 lb) mixed mushrooms,
Chestnut, Field, Oyster, Shiitake etc.
2 tbsp mushroom ketchup
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp fresh Thyme, finely chopped
25g (1 oz) pine nuts, toasted
25g (1 oz) white breadcrumbs
55g (2 oz) dried cranberries, soaked in
50ml (2 fl oz) brandy
8-10 small sheets filo pastry
2-3 tbsp sesame seeds
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Melt half the butter in a saucepan and add the onion. Cook on the Simmering Plate for two minutes, and then add the garlic, cover and transfer to the floor of the Simmering Oven for 20 minutes to soften. Place the remaining butter in a ramekin to melt at the back of the Aga top plate on a piece of kitchen paper. Return to onions and garlic to the Simmering Plate and add the mushrooms and stir well so they become coated with the buttery juices. Continue to cook here for a few minutes until they are cooked.

Transfer to a large bowl and spread out in a thin layer so that the mixture quickly cools. After 20 minutes stir in the mushroom ketchup, soy sauce, Thyme, pine nuts and breadcrumbs. Season well with salt, pepper and a good grating of nutmeg. Keep a clean tea towel handy for covering the opened filo pastry until it is used as can dry out quickly in a warm kitchen.

Build the strudel on a large piece of Bake-O-Glide or baking parchment. Place one sheet of pastry on this with the longest side towards you and brush with a little melted butter. Repeat with three layers added on top of the first. Fill lengthways using half of the prepared mixture. Down the middle of the top of the filling scatter half of the soaked cranberries in a tight line. Fold in the ends and roll using the Bake-O-Glide or parchment. Transfer to a full size baking tray or plain shelf lined with Bake-O-Glide or parchment. Make a second strudel with the remaining pastry and filling.

Brush the strudels well with the remaining butter and scatter the sesame seeds over. Bake on a grid shelf on the floor of the Roasting Oven with a cold plain shelf on the second set of runners above. Cook for 30-35 minutes until golden brown, turning once. Serve each slice with spiced cranberry compote or kumquat chutney or relish.

Tip: This recipe can be assembled ahead of time and cooked from frozen. Start with the first ten minutes with the baking tray on the floor of the Roasting Oven before moving onto a grid shelf for the remaining cooking time, and allow an extra 5 minutes.

Christmas Pudding

To re-heat your Christmas pudding on Christmas Day you don't need to re-steam it in the conventional way. Simply wrap the china, plastic or foil pudding basin in several layers of foil and place in the Simmering Oven all morning, next to the turkey if necessary. Over several hours it will slowly heat through ready for serving piping hot at the end of your meal. Custard and brandy sauce may be made towards the end of the morning and kept hot until wanted, covered, in the Warming or Simmering Ovens.

Richard's Velvet Pastry for Mince Pies



450g (1 lb) plain flour
200g (7 oz) butter
85g (3 oz) vegetable fat
Grated rind of 1 large orange
Chilled orange juice

Sift the flour and rub the fat in until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the grated rind and bind with the juice. If making in a food processor go gently as it is easy to over-process. Chill before using for 30 minutes. The mixture is very rich, and is best handled as little as possible. Roll and cut out 24 x 5cm (2¼ inch) lids first. Then cut out 24 x 7cm (3 inch) bases, re-rolling as necessary. Grease and line the tins then add just enough mincemeat before topping with the lids using milk to stick them securely. Brush with milk and make a small slit in each pie. Bake for 20-30 minutes on the grid shelf on the floor of the Roasting Oven until golden. The pastry is wonderfully crumbly, so I usually freeze the pies raw in the tins and then when hard store them in bags or boxes. They are then quick to bake from frozen as required.

Tip: Use Aga Mini Muffin trays to make double the quantity of baby mince pies – roll the pastry slightly thinner.



For further Aga Cookery Doctor recipes, including fabulously easy canapés, delicious traditional turkey soup and fresh ideas for using leftovers, visit the Food channel at www.agalinks.com

www.agalinks.com

For more Aga hints, tips and recipes see:

The Little Book of Aga Tips

The Little Book of Aga Tips 2

The Little Book of Aga Tips 3

The Little Book of Aga Christmas Tips

The Complete Book of Aga Know-How



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