

STUFFED ROAST ONIONS

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

4 medium onions – around 250g each
1 stalk of celery – about 50g
40g butter
50g walnuts
40g white breadcrumbs
50g cheddar cheese, finely grated, plus extra for garnish
12 tender, young sage leaves, finely chopped
Nutmeg, freshly grated
4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

DIRECTIONS

Set the oven to 180°C and bring a large pan of water to the boil.

Remove any loose papery skins from the onions, retaining one complete layer of dried skin. Remove the root with a sharp knife being careful not to cut through the skin, then cut through the top of the onion to remove about 1cm, so that you all of the layers are visible.

Simmer the onions in the pan of hot water with a lid on for about 30 minutes until soft to the point of a knife. Remove with a slotted spoon and allow to drain and cool in a colander.

When cool enough to handle carefully remove the centre of each onion with a teaspoon, leaving a shell 2 to 3 layers thick. Put the onion shells into a buttered ovenproof dish.

Toast the walnuts in the oven for about 3 minutes until lightly coloured and fragrant. Chop finely.

Finely chop the celery and garlic and the centres from the onions. Melt the butter in a small pan over a high heat until foaming and smelling toasty. Turn the heat down and sauté the celery and garlic for about 3 minutes until translucent. Then add the onion and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes until the flavours have combined.

Remove from the heat and add the chopped walnuts, sage, the grated cheddar cheese and breadcrumbs. Season generously with salt, black pepper and grated nutmeg. Stir well and then spoon the mixture into the onion shells. Press the stuffing down well so that there are no air pockets and mound it up on the top so as to use all of the mixture.

Grate a little more cheese over the top of each onion and then put into the oven for 30-40 minutes until brown and bubbling.

Serve as a main course with a green salad and boiled potatoes or as a side vegetable with other dishes.

These can be made in advance and then, before roasting, kept covered in the fridge for up to three days until needed or wrapped in foil and frozen. Once defrosted you should add 10 to 15 minutes to the cooking time from cold.