

A DUSTING OF COUNTRY - STYLE COOKING WITH GRAHAM MANVELL



*M*ost people would agree that a great meal is about more than just good food. It's a combination of tantalizing flavours, good wines and great company.

It's one reason why western-style cuisine is so popular, because its roots are embedded in good old-fashioned home cooking that everyone can relate to.

"For people who love good food, using your palate is an art, where the recipe is simply a roadmap that allows you to go in any number of directions."

For successful restaurateur, Graham Manvell, owner of the SSS BBQ Barn restaurants, country cuisine triggers those delicious memories of grandma's cooking and allows you to revisit those good times.

"For me, country-style food is about hospitality. Country people are very hospitable, they want to feed you. The experience lingers in the memory, whether it is out camping or at an up market restaurant, the memory of the flavours and the jovial atmosphere stays with you," Graham said. "I can remember a BBQ at home with a couple of great chefs who prepared octopus with Dorrigo pepper. It was mouth-watering, I've never forgotten it. So I pride myself

on making sure our food matches customers' memories. That's one of the most common comments we get in the restaurant, that it was exactly how it tasted the last time," he said.

What sets country-style food apart from other types of cuisine is the relaxed, down-to-earth attitude that accompanies it, Graham said.

"If you can get customers to be comfortable and to kick back then the experience is good, it becomes an occasion in its own right," Graham said.

"I have worked in some of the best restaurants in the world and nothing upsets me more than uptight waiters and a stuffy atmosphere. How many times have you gone into a fine dining restaurant and there are items on the menu that you have no idea what they are and when you get your meal; it's not much bigger than the credit card it's racking up?" Graham asked.

"Country cooking is about the hearty good old fashion recipes, we can get too prissy now days," he said.

So what defines western-style cooking?

Graham said there are three main types of flavours that are the basis of most recipes.

They are smoky flavours from the BBQ, sweet flavours gen-



erally from tomatoes or plums and the bite from pepper like Dorrigo pepper or chilli.

Every region has its own style and every person their own preference. Graham said it's a balance of flavours and local ingredients that shapes those styles.

"In the States, each region has its own BBQ base, they all have their own uniqueness," he said. "Each region put its own twist on the basics."

Many years ago, country-style food in Australia was mainly about camp oven cooking or cooking over the fire in the kitchen. Now we have it easy and use outdoor barbeques but there is no reason why we can't still use the old original recipes.

Graham said a good supply of spices and peppers is essential.



"One of the easiest ways to prepare a tasty meal with some twang on the tongue is to use what I call a dusting, a mix of spices that can be used in many ways whether to flavour a roast, or a medallion of beef, it's a good way to introduce western-style flavours into your cooking," Graham said.

Essentially anyone can make a good dusting but Graham Manvell has provided a great recipe here. "It has a great balance of dynamic ingredients including the sweetness of paprika and the sting of Dorrigo pepper, with garlic and cumin giving it a full-bodied taste."

Graham said to prepare a medallion, cover it completely with the dusting. Then in a really hot fry pan using good quality olive oil, quickly seal the meat. With meat you want to keep all the juice inside, so the hotter the pan, the better he said.

"It's a great dinner party meal as you're not stuck in the kitchen for hours."

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With a roast, Graham said to generously cover the joint with the dusting, seal the flavour in a hot pan and then put the meat in a camp oven with the lid on and back the heat off. Let the steam keep the moisture in and cook for around 1.5 hours. Half way through you can add all your vegetables so they can also soak up the spices. Graham said there's no reason why you can't take the vegetables or meat out when they're ready, add flour, and a bit of red wine to the meat sauce, season with salt and pepper and some more dusting to create a fantastic gravy.

The dusting can be used on all types of meat, red and white. With fish, just remember to keep the pan really hot for that blackening effect.

"You can use the sprinkle in many ways, for example, its great in stuffing. Your imagination is your only limit. Just think about what it compliments then go for it," he said.

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A great accompaniment to a beef medallion is a really fresh salsa made from Bowen-region tomatoes or mangoes served with a dollop of sour cream (see recipe).

For a fabulous desert, Graham recommends a simple recipe that produces a great result called "Grandma's Pudding". He said the ingredients are straight out of the cupboard such as flour, 'cocky's joy' (golden syrup), sultanas and sugar.

"It is really rich and wholesome for a cold wintry night," he said.

Recipies

sSs Spicy Outback Red Dusting

125 Grams Seasalt
¼ cup chilly powder
½ cup Sweet Paprika
2 tblspn onion powder (use dry garlic if going to store)
1 tspn finely chopped garlic
1 tsp black cumin seed
1 good pinch of cumin powder
1 tsp thyme powder for fresh leaves
2 tblspn cracked black kibble pepper
2 tblspn dried basil
2 tblspn dried oregano
2 tblspn ground coriander
6 leaves Native Dorrigo Australian Bush pepper finely crushed (substitute with a little white pepper if unavailable)

Combine all the ingredients cover your meat generously. Left over dusting can be stored in an air tight container.

Pepper Mango Salsa

Finely chopped ripe mango
Green Pepper corns
Spanish (purple) onion diced very finely
Vinaigrette dressing

Fresh Tomato Salsa

800 gms ripe tomatos finely diced
250 gms spanish onion finely diced
100 ml good olive oil
½ cup fine chiffonade fresh basil
Season to taste with fine cracked New York pepper and salt

Grandma's Date and Sultana Pudding

500g Vanilla Sponge
125g Melted Butter
4 Eggs (55g each)
125g Castor Sugar
250ml Golden Syrup
100g Sultana
100g Chopped Dates

Whisk egg whites and sugar to a stiff meringue. Crumble sponge and add butter, golden syrup and egg yolks. Lightly fold in meringue followed by sultana's and dates. Butter or oil individual pudding moulds and fill to ¾ full and bake bain-marie style (water bath) and bake at 190 degrees C for approximately 30 minutes.

Rum Butterscotch Sauce

350g Castor Sugar
350mls Water
500ml Cream
50g Butter
15mls Bundy Rum
30ml Port
30g to 40g Roux (equal parts butter and flour melted)

Boil sugar and water till toffee, add rum and port and then cream and butter, reduce lightly on low and simmer for 5 minutes. Whisk in roux to thicken, until light sauce consistency

Great compliment to Grandmas Date and Sultana Pudding, serve with King Island cream and ice cream.