PEGGY'S KITCHEN

Peggy's Winter Cookbook: Bonfire Night to Boxing Day

49 old British recipes for one, from the bonfire to Boxing Day. Parkin to bubble and squeak, at today's prices.



RECIPES FOR ONE · POUNDS AND DOLLARS · LITTLEPEGGYSKITCHEN.COM

CONTENTS

What's inside

BONFIRE NIGHT

Toffee Apples 9
Hot Blackcurrant 10
Hot Dog with Fried Onions 11
Leek and Potato Soup 12
Cinder Toffee 13
Jacket Potato 14
Pie and Mushy Peas 15
Black Peas 16
Bonfire Toffee 17
Parkin 18

THE CHRISTMAS TEA AND THE PARTY

Chicken and Mushroom Vol-au-vents 20
Sugar Mice 21
Prawn Cocktail 22
The Snowball 23
Pickled Red Cabbage 24
Arctic Roll 25
Chocolate Yule Log 26
Black Forest Gateau 27
Sherry Trifle 28
Roast Chestnuts 29
Christmas Pudding 30

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE KITCHEN

Peppermint Creams 32
Cheese Straws 33
Smoked Mackerel Pâté 34
Devils on Horseback 35
Bread Sauce 36
Rum Truffles 37
Brandy Butter 38
Sausage Rolls 39
Mince Pies 40
The Christmas Eve Gammon 41

CHRISTMAS DINNER FOR ONE, IN ONE TIN

Christmas Eve Jobs 43
The One-Tin Timetable 44
Roast Potatoes and Parsnips 45
Turkey Steak or Chicken Thigh 46
Pigs in Blankets and Stuffing 47
Roast Sprouts 48
Gravy in the Tin 49
Christmas Pudding in a Mug 50

THE LEFTOVERS

The Boxing Day Sandwich 52
Turkey Soup 53
Coronation Turkey 54
Ham and Cheese Toastie 55
Turkey à la King 56
Fridge Cake 57
Fried Christmas Pudding 58
Ham, Egg and Chips 59
Turkey and Ham Pie 60
Bubble and Squeak 61

AND THE REST

A note from Peggy 3
How this book works 4
Peggy's rules for the winter kitchen 5
The Christmas Day kitchen for one 6
Oven temperatures and US kitchen words 7
Index 62

Peggy is an AI-made character. The recipes, prices and history are real.

Prices are rough UK supermarket costs per portion for the ingredients listed, with US dollars at about $1.33 to the pound. Sides are extra.

Ovens and hobs vary, so use the times as a guide. Make sure meat and fish are cooked right through, and reheat leftovers until piping hot. Check labels for allergens.

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A NOTE FROM PEGGY

Right then, love. Kettle's on.

This is the cold end of the year, from the fifth of November to Boxing Day, and it's my favourite bit.

It starts with a bonfire and a tray of toffee, and it ends with bubble and squeak on Boxing Day morning. In between there's a seventies Christmas tea, the Christmas Eve kitchen with the gammon on the boil, and a whole Christmas dinner for one, in a single tin.

These are the things our mums made, written out properly for one person, with what each one costs at the supermarket today. Nothing fancy, and nothing that needs a gadget you haven't got.

There are a few rules in here too, about hot sugar, frozen birds and leftovers, because some things haven't changed. I'll only nag the once.

So put the pinny on, and let's start at the bonfire. And if it's just you at the table this Christmas, you're in very good company.

Love, Peggy x

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BEFORE YOU START

Peggy's rules for the winter kitchen

The rules from the videos, all in one place. Three big ones, and the rest underneath. Then I'll stop nagging.

1

Hot sugar: nobody in the kitchen

Toffee is far hotter than boiling water. Children and dogs out while it's on, and a deep pan for cinder toffee, which foams up like a volcano. A burn goes under the cold tap for 20 minutes, no butter, and a big one gets seen to.

2

Thaw the bird in the fridge

On a plate on the bottom shelf: never the bath, never the worktop. A whole bird takes three or four days; a steak or a thigh, a day. And don't wash raw poultry. It only splashes germs round the sink.

3

Leftovers: 2 hours, 2 days, heat once

In the fridge within 2 hours, eaten within 2 days or frozen, and reheated once, till piping hot all the way through. Rice is stricter: cooled within an hour and eaten within a day.

THE FIREWORK CODE

Never go back to a firework once it's lit. Sparklers aren't for the under-fives: gloves on, arm's length, and into a bucket of water when they're done. Pets indoors.

COOKED RIGHT THROUGH

Chicken and turkey are done at 75°C / 165°F in the thickest part. No thermometer? Cut in: no pink, juices clear. Sausages, pigs in blankets and gammon the same: steaming hot, no pink.

FAT AND HOT TINS

Never pour fat down the sink. Into an old cup, let it set, and bin it. Oven gloves for the tin, and tip potatoes into hot oil away from you, because it spits.

COINS, STICKS AND STRINGS

A coin in the pudding goes in wrapped in baking paper, and you tell everyone it's there. Cocktail sticks come out of the devils on horseback, and the string tails come off the sugar mice.



1

BONFIRE NIGHT

Toffee Apples

Hob · small heavy pan | About 30 minutes, plus setting | Makes 4 · 1 for you, 3 to give away

About 45p each ($0.60)

YOU NEED

- 4 small red apples
- 4 lolly sticks
- 200g sugar
- 50ml water
- 2 tbsp golden syrup
- ½ tsp vinegar
- A few drops of red food colouring

FROM THE CUPBOARD

A kettle of boiling water for the apples, and baking paper to stand them on

METHOD

1. Pour a kettle of boiling water over the apples to take the shop wax off, or the toffee slides straight off. Dry them well, and push a lolly stick into the top of each one.
2. Put the sugar, water, syrup, vinegar and colouring in a small heavy pan. Boil it without stirring for about 10 minutes, till a drop in cold water snaps. That's 150°C / 300°F on a sugar thermometer.
3. Now listen, love. That toffee is far hotter than boiling water. Children and dogs out of the kitchen while it's on.
4. Dip each apple in the toffee, twirl it to coat, and stand it on baking paper to set.

PEGGY'S TIP

If you've got false teeth, slice it before you bite it. And if hot sugar catches you, it's 20 minutes under the cold tap, and no butter on it.

KEEPING IT

Eat them within a day or two, kept somewhere cool and dry. Not the fridge, or the toffee goes sticky and weeps.

You bought one at the fair, or your mum made a tray of them, and you spent the whole night trying to get your teeth through. The toffee always ran down the stick and glued itself to your mittens.



11

THE CHRISTMAS TEA AND THE PARTY

Chicken and Mushroom Vol-au-vents

Oven 200°C · 180 fan · gas 6 · 400°F | About 35 minutes | Makes 12 | About 40p each ($0.55)

YOU NEED

- 12 frozen puff pastry vol-au-vent cases
- 1 cooked chicken breast, diced
- A handful of mushrooms (about 75g), sliced
- 25g butter
- 25g plain flour
- 250ml milk

FROM THE CUPBOARD

A little oil for the mushrooms, salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Bake the frozen cases on a tray, as the box says, till they're puffed and golden, about 15 to 20 minutes. Press the middles down with the back of a teaspoon.
2. For the sauce, melt the butter in a small pan, stir in the flour and cook it for a minute. Add the milk a little at a time, stirring, till it's smooth and thick.
3. Fry the mushrooms in a little oil till soft, then stir them and the chicken into the sauce. Season it, and heat it through till it's piping hot.
4. Spoon the hot filling into the warm cases and serve them straight away. If it's chicken, the filling must be piping hot right through.
5. Or fill them cold, with prawns in the pink sauce from the prawn cocktail.

PEGGY'S TIP

You bought the cases frozen, in a box, and it felt ever so posh. They still come that way.

KEEPING IT

Fill them just before you serve them. Leftover chicken filling: fridge within 2 hours, eat within 2 days, reheated once till piping hot.

It's French for 'flying in the wind', because the pastry's so light. We just called them vol-au-vents, and none of us could spell it.