



The final ingredient
for the perfect
Christmas pudding



Treasure
for Life®

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

- 170g sultanas
- 140g currants
- 140g raisins
- 200ml water
- 30g plain flour
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp grated nutmeg
- 1/2tsp ground mace
- 1/2tsp ground ginger
- 55g breadcrumbs
- 85g shredded suet (if you cannot get hold of suet, softened butter works just as well)
- 40g dark chocolate (70%), grated
- 1 cooking apple, peeled and grated
- 85g soft dark brown sugar
- 20g chopped mixed peel
- 55g blanched almonds, roughly chopped
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 orange, zested
- 1 tbsp black treacle
- 3 tbsp brandy
- 1 egg, beaten
- Knob of butter for greasing

EQUIPMENT

- The Royal Mint silver six pence
- 1 litre pudding/heatproof bowl
- Greaseproof paper
- Large elastic band
- String
- Stock pot
- Steamer basket/Deep saucer/ramekin

1 Put the sultanas, currants, raisins and water in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, and simmer for 3 minutes. Leave to soak, uncovered, overnight.

2 Sieve the flour and spices into a mixing bowl.

3 Add the breadcrumbs, suet / butter, grated chocolate, grated apple, brown sugar, mixed peel, almonds, lemon and orange zest.

4 Mix well, using your hands to get rid of any lumps of butter and ensuring the mixture is fully blended together

5 Stir in the soaked fruit, which will have plumped-up over overnight. Next, stir in the treacle, brandy and beaten egg.

6 Mix well, and stand overnight. While this isn't necessary, the marinating helps the spices soak in. Before you're ready to cook, stir in the six pence. It's traditional for everyone to give the pudding a stir with a wooden spoon at this stage, and make a wish.

7 Use the knob of butter to grease the pudding bowl, and tip the Christmas pudding mixture into it.

8 Cut one circle of greaseproof paper, which is a few inches bigger than the rim of the bowl. Use a large elastic band to secure it over the pudding bowl with a folded pleat running through the middle. This room will allow the pudding to release excess steam. Cover the top with a piece of tin foil (same size as the greaseproof paper) and then tie it tightly with the string.

Make a loop of string across the top, to fashion a handle, so the pudding can be easily lifted in and out of the pan.

9 If you are using a steaming pot, pour some water into the bottom of the stock pot – about one eighth full – so that the steaming basket sits in the bottom, just above the water level. Bring the water to boil, and place the Christmas pudding in the basket.

10 If you don't have a steaming basket, simply use the

upturned saucer or ramekin so that the pudding basin is kept away from direct contact with the base of the pan. Then fill the stock pot with water to around half-way up the side of the pudding basin.

11 Put on the lid, and steam at a gentle simmer for four hours. Keep an eye on the water to make sure that the pan doesn't boil dry, and add more water from the kettle to keep it topped-up if needed.

12 If the lid of the stock pot doesn't fit on tightly, it's not ideal, but not disastrous – as long as there's plenty of steam circulating. Keep an even more careful eye on water levels though, as a loosely-covered pot is more likely to boil dry.

13 Lift the pudding out of the pan after four hours, making sure you keep the greaseproof lid on – that way you can store the Christmas pudding for up to two months.

14 On Christmas Day, steam the pudding again for another two hours, and serve – perhaps with a sprig of holly on top, and a splash of brandy to light.