

Ode to the Humble BOWL

On a cold day, nothing warms the hands – or the heart – more than curling up with a steaming bowl of deliciousness. Without the discomfort of the knife-fork-plate set-up, it's the most relaxed way to eat – especially when it comes to rustic dishes, where you'll want to scoop up every bit of sauce. Tuck in!

Photographs by ADEL FERREIRA
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From starters (roasted tomato salad and sweet yet spicy carrot-and-lentil soup) to mains (a robust, creamy tomato-and-aubergine pasta) and more, serving food in individual dishes is pleasing to both the palate and the eye. ➤

Comfort
Zone

Delicious as a starter
or light lunch, the
best part about this
mussel-and-prawn
tomato stew is
mopping up the sauce
with garlic toast.

IF THERE'S ONE thing that can be said of winter, it's that it reminds us all to be grateful for life's creature comforts. While we're waxing lyrical about the warm baths, fluffy slippers and comfort food that help ward off the chill, it's high time for a nod to the beauty of the basic bowl.

Asian cultures have known the practical benefits of eating out of a bowl for some time; now the rest of the world is realising you can serve more than soups into deep circular shapes. So ditch dinner-party formalities with meals that can be doled out from one pot, saving you prep time (and a stack of dishes), and focus on sharing good times with your loved ones. While a set of bowls with pretty patterns is soothingly symmetrical, mismatched ones in a complementary colour palette have their own offbeat charm. You could even take bowl food that step further, with edible dishes made from bread, tomato or gem squash, for instance.

Though not limited to warm food (who says you need to eat salad on a plate?), the bowl shape lends itself to the food of the season, big on comfort and heat, like broths, pastas and stews. These easy-to-follow recipes, most of which can be prepared ahead, are guaranteed to hit the right spot. Dig in, slurp away and delight in the simple pleasure of hearty food – all in one bowl. 



There's little as comforting as tender meat served with roasted root veggies. This tagine delivers both with a touch of the exotic.



Give every guest their very own chicken pie for the soul. Home-made tomato sauce brings a bit of sweetness. LEFT: Lentils and carrots go together like ... soup in a bowl. ➤



Comfort
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Berry sauce and
crème fraîche lighten
the richness of a warm
chocolate-espresso dessert
- a heavenly fusion of
flavours. For recipes,
turn the page.

Comfort
Zone

Tomato, Aubergine and
Bocconcini Mozzarella Pasta
with Carrot and Lentil Soup.

RECIPES

ODE TO THE HUMBLE BOWL

Fill gorgeous bowls with hearty fare for fuss-free meals that are sure to impress.

Tomato, Aubergine and Bocconcini Mozzarella Pasta

200 g spaghetti
¼ cup oil
400 g aubergine, diced
1 cup baby tomatoes
1 yellow pepper, seeds removed and diced
3 Tbsp. sun-dried tomato pesto
200 g bocconcini mozzarella, quartered
Fresh basil, to serve

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil. Add spaghetti and cook according to packet instructions. Strain.
 2. Gently fry aubergine in oil for 5 minutes, add baby tomatoes and yellow pepper. Fry until tender and season.
 3. Toss pesto with pasta and add fried vegetables.
 4. Divide among serving dishes, top with bocconcini and basil.
- Makes 2 servings.

Carrot and Lentil Soup

1 Tbsp. olive oil
100 g leeks, thinly sliced
2 Tbsp. crushed garlic
¼ tsp. dried chilli flakes
800 g carrots, peeled and sliced
1 cup lentils
1½ litres vegetable stock
2 cups diced bread
Olive oil
1 tsp. crushed garlic
2 Tbsp. fresh coriander, finely chopped
Cream, to serve

1. Heat oil, and gently fry leeks and garlic for 2 minutes. Add chilli and carrots, fry for another 4 minutes without browning.
2. Add lentils and stock, and simmer gently for 20 to 25 minutes until tender. Season.
3. Let it cool slightly, then remove and blend half of soup until smooth. Add it back into remaining chunky soup.

4. Preheat oven to 200°C. Place diced bread onto a baking tray, drizzle with some olive oil and scatter with garlic. Gently toss to combine. Season lightly with salt, and bake until golden and crisp.
 5. Combine warm croutons with coriander and scatter over soup. Add a drizzle of cream.
- Makes 4 servings.

Chicken Pies with Smoky-Sweet Tomato Sauce

⅓ cup butter
3 leeks, thinly sliced
2 Tbsp. crushed garlic
1 cup diced bacon
2 carrots, peeled and diced fairly small
3 cups mushrooms, sliced
6 chicken fillets, thinly sliced
1 Tbsp. paprika
⅓ cup cake flour
500 ml chicken stock
500 ml milk
1 cup frozen peas
600 g puff pastry
1 egg, whisked
Smoky-sweet tomato sauce:
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 onion, roughly chopped
2 tsp. crushed garlic
1 tsp. paprika
2 Tbsp. sugar
600 g tinned tomatoes

1. Preheat oven to 220°C. Heat butter and gently fry leeks, garlic, bacon, carrots and mushrooms for 5 minutes. Add chicken pieces and fry for 5 more minutes.
2. Stir in paprika and cake flour. Add stock, milk and peas, and whisk until thickened. Boil for another 10 minutes and season to taste. Let mixture cool completely.
3. Divide mixture between 6 individual oven-proof dishes. Cut 6 rounds out of pastry, slightly bigger than dishes. Lightly moisten the rim of each and place pastry on top. Firmly press pastry onto rims.
4. Brush pastry with whisked egg and bake for 20 to 30 minutes, until golden and risen.
5. To make tomato sauce, heat oil, and fry onion and garlic until translucent. Add paprika and sugar,

and fry for another minute. Stir in tomatoes and simmer for 15 minutes, until slightly thickened. Season.

Makes 6 servings.

Lamb Tagine on Lemon Couscous with Apple Chutney

This makes more chutney than needed, but it will keep in the fridge for a week.

Lamb tagine:

2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 lamb shanks (about 500 g each)
2 onions, quartered
5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
¼ tsp. dried chilli flakes or 1 small chilli, chopped
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. cumin seeds
2 tsp. cardamom pods
1 cinnamon stick
1 Tbsp. sugar
4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 red or orange peppers, cut into bite-sized chunks
300 g sweet potatoes, cut into bite-sized chunks
250 g baby potatoes
1 cup baby tomatoes
250 ml white wine
750 ml beef stock
400 g tinned tomatoes

Apple chutney:

500 g apples, roughly chopped
1 red onion, roughly diced
1 celery stick, thinly sliced
375 ml white wine vinegar
250 ml sugar
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
125 ml orange juice
100 g raisins
Lemon couscous:
500 ml couscous
500 ml vegetable stock
2 spring onions, finely sliced
3 Tbsp. fresh coriander, chopped
Juice of 1½ lemons
Zest of 1 lemon
1 small chilli, finely chopped (optional)
¼ cup flaked almonds, toasted, to serve

1. To make tagine, preheat oven to 160°C. Heat olive oil in a large pan and fry lamb shanks, ensuring meat is evenly seared. Remove from the pan and place in a deep oven dish.

Fry onions and garlic in the same pan as meat for 2 minutes.

2. Add chilli, ground cumin, cumin seeds, turmeric, cardamom and cinnamon to onions, and fry for another minute. Add remaining tagine ingredients and simmer for 5 minutes. Season and pour everything over meat.
 3. Cover dish with foil and bake for 2 hours, until meat is fork-tender and falls away from the bone.
 4. To make chutney, place all ingredients except raisins in a pot. Gently heat until sugar has dissolved. Simmer for 30 minutes, then add raisins. Simmer for another 10 minutes. Add a splash of water if it thickens too much.
 5. Heat a clean glass jar in the microwave for a minute; add warm chutney and seal. Let it cool completely before placing in the fridge.
 6. To make couscous, place grains in a bowl, top with warm stock and cover with plastic wrap. After 10 minutes, remove plastic and loosen grains with a fork. Stir in remaining ingredients and season.
 7. Serve couscous topped with tender tagine, toasted almonds and chutney on the side.
- Makes 4 servings.

Mussel and Prawn Tomato Stew with Garlic Toast

1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 leeks (about 100 g), thinly sliced
1 Tbsp. crushed garlic
2 bay leaves
5 whole peppercorns
250 ml white wine
1 cup baby tomatoes
600 g tinned tomatoes
12 to 15 mussels, cleaned and bearded
12 to 15 prawns, deveined
3 Tbsp. butter, soft
1 Tbsp. crushed garlic
1 tsp. parsley, finely chopped
6 to 8 slices baguette loaf
Chopped coriander, to serve

1. Heat oil, and gently fry leeks and garlic for 2 minutes. Add bay leaves, peppercorns, wine, baby and tinned tomatoes.

2. Cook for 25 minutes and season. Add mussels, cover and cook for 2 minutes. Add prawns, cook for 2 to 3 minutes. Discard unopened mussels.
 3. Heat oven grill. Mix butter, garlic and parsley together. Spread mixture onto baguette slices and grill for 1 to 2 minutes, until bubbly and golden.
 4. Top stew with coriander and ground pepper, and serve with toast.
- Makes 2 servings.

Chocolate and Espresso Pudding with Berry Sauce

Pudding:

250 ml flour
7.5 ml baking powder
125 ml cocoa
310 ml brown sugar
80 g softened butter
125 ml buttermilk
1 egg, lightly beaten
Pinch of salt
250 ml boiling water
250 ml double espresso thinned with water

Berry sauce:

500 ml water
250 ml sugar
Seeds from half a vanilla pod
2 cups frozen or fresh berries
1 tsp. lemon juice
Zest from ½ lemon
250 ml crème fraîche, to serve
Fresh mint, to garnish

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Lightly grease a medium-sized oven dish. Sift flour, baking powder, half cocoa and half sugar into a bowl. Whisk in butter, buttermilk and egg. Add salt.
 2. Spoon mixture into greased dish. Sift remaining cocoa and sugar over mixture. Pour boiling water and warm coffee on top.
 3. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until slightly firm to the touch.
 4. While pudding bakes, prepare sauce. Gently heat water and sugar until sugar is dissolved. Bring to boil for 8 minutes.
 5. Add vanilla, berries, lemon juice and zest, and simmer for another 8 minutes, until slightly thickened.
 6. Serve pudding warm, topped with crème fraîche and berry sauce. Garnish with mint.
- Makes 4 servings. □