

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a stack of white plates. The hand is positioned on the right side of the frame, with fingers gripping the edges of the plates. The plates are stacked and slightly offset, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is soft, highlighting the smooth texture of the ceramic. The background is dark and out of focus.

Food Writers New Zealand
HANDBOOK
writing

WRITING

COMPANY STYLE

Food writers need to match the style of their prose to the type of publication they are writing for – whether it is for magazines, blogs, newspaper features and columns, cookbooks, brochures, leaflets, packaging, advertising copy, online features and more.

If the work is commissioned, the requirements and the style expected should be ascertained and agreed to before starting work. Most companies and publications will have a style guide to follow, in order to give uniformity and continuity.

Space and style often determine recipe writing, and this in turn determines the method of writing and layout. Note essential points before commencing work and follow these carefully. Wherever possible the food writer should be involved at the planning stage of any work. Size, format, style and emphasis of all content should be established before commencing writing. Style should remain consistent throughout all writing, especially in books, and when material comes from different sources.

CHECKING THE RECIPE

The unwritten law for food writers is never to publish a recipe that has not been made by you or someone in whom you have total faith. Where a writer is dependent on handout material they should check its reliability by preparing the recipe. Prepare the recipe initially as written. Repeat this test. If the results differ, prepare a third time. If the result is satisfactory the recipe can be used as is, otherwise modifications will need to be made and the testing procedure repeated. Failure to follow this procedure potentially leaves the writer in a position where their credibility is suspect. If the results are not good, their reputation as a food writer is damaged.

WRITING RECIPES

- Always request a full and detailed brief before commencing any work, including ensuring the aim is mutually understood.
- Understand the target market.
- Understand and agree to the format and presentation.
- Sample any products to be included before developing ideas and recipes.
- Ensure all deadlines are understood and met.

DOS AND DON'TS OF RECIPE TESTING AND WRITING

Do

- Have a draft recipe guide written up prior to commencement of testing.
- Measure ingredients accurately and make any alterations immediately on your draft recipe.
- State ingredients correctly, especially where the success of recipe would be in doubt, e.g. short grain rice vs long grain rice; 'lite' cream vs standard cream.
- Where non-standard items are used, state size, e.g. large or small saucepan, large or small onion.
- State cut and size of meat, poultry or fish accurately, e.g. fish, fillet or steak; meat cut in 2cm cubes.
- Where necessary, indicate the particular quality of an ingredient that can be variable and affect the end product, e.g. mashed pumpkin (dry or moist) for cake, pie or muffins.
- The list of ingredients must include all items, including salt, pepper and water.
- Specify whether ingredient is chopped before or after measuring, e.g. ½ cup of almonds chopped is different from ½ cup chopped almonds.
- If photographed, list garnishes or serving accompaniments as per photo/recipe.
- Check spelling of unusual ingredients and brand names where used.
- State serving sizes or yield using an average portion as a guide, e.g. 100–125g meat = 1 serve.
- Method should be easy to follow and is best in short sentences, covering one action.
- Do not suggest a recipe can be halved or doubled unless you test it that way.
- Proofread your typed recipe against the working copy.
- Proofread your material once formatted and before printing.
- Make sure the recipe writing style suits readership, e.g. a banana smoothie recipe written for children, or for a health food magazine readership.
- Always keep a copy of your final recipe.
- Where necessary, follow company style.
- Use plain, uncomplicated English.

Depending upon company style, or your own preference, you may wish to include accurate preparation time; nutritional information; whether suitable for freezing/microwaving.

Never

- Print a recipe without testing.
- Guess measures, cooking times or pan or dish sizes.
- State substitutions without having tested where the substitution may not work, e.g. raw sugar for caster sugar, lemon varieties.
- Use conflicting terms within the recipe, e.g. use wholemeal in ingredient list, and wheatmeal in method.
- Never presume the culinary knowledge of your audience. Some are still learning and need clear, accurate information. If your recipe doesn't provide this, they may skip it and seek another.

These are guidelines for accurate recipe writing, but it is also important to develop a writer's voice that is unique and compelling – much of the pleasure of cookbooks and food writing comes from the inspirational style of the writer.

CONSISTENCY AND CLARITY IN STYLE

- Never mix metric and non-metric measures in the same recipe.
- Keep to standard terms, not interchanging words within the same recipe such as muffin pans and muffin tins.
- Fractions should be written in numbers in the list of ingredients, e.g. ½ cup. However, in the recipe text fractions should be written in words, e.g. half fill the tin.
- List ingredients in the order they are used.
- Where the same ingredient is listed more than once make it clear which measure is to be used by repeating the amount in the recipe text.
- If the recipe has sections, list the ingredients for each under its own subheading, e.g. for the filling, for the pastry, for the icing. Ensure these headings are then used in the recipe text, e.g. to make the filling, to make the pastry, to make the icing.
- If using cup or teaspoon measurements, indicate whether the ingredients should be lightly or firmly packed.
- Ingredients that must be measured after preparation should be written 1 Tbsp chopped parsley and not 1 Tbsp parsley, chopped.
- Be clear in measurements of prepared ingredients, e.g. 1 cup cream, whipped is not the same as 1 cup whipped cream.
- In baking, the terms such as press, spread and pour should closely relate to the consistency of the mixture.
- If you have the space, always start a new action within a recipe on a new line.
- Preheat, flameproof, reheat are not hyphenated words.
- Ensure illustrations and photography that accompany a recipe match exactly. Always check the recipe against the photo or drawing before it is finally issued, right down to the smallest detail of garnish that may have crept in during the photography session.
- All photos and illustrations should be clearly labelled as they can often appear on a different page from the recipe in a book, pamphlet or magazine.

HINTS FOR POLISHING FINISHED COPY

The real secret of good writing is revision. You can be sure that writing that seems light and spontaneous, and keeps you reading to the end, has been sweated over. Leave it overnight if you can, and come back with fresh eyes the next day and revise it again.

Your writing should be clear, simple and concise. Although the best writing appears to flow like speech, writing is not like speaking which often waffles. In journalism especially, you must boil down every sentence to its essence.

Check whether you have said the same thing twice in different ways. Combine them or cut one of them if you have. Could you have used fewer words or said it in a less complicated way? Avoid unnecessary words and phrases like 'very', 'quite', 'almost', 'nearly', 'it is the case that...', 'what I think is...', 'another thing is...', 'the fact is...'.

Vary sentence beginnings and lengths. Verbs quicken the pace while adjectives and adverbs slow it, but use the active voice rather than the passive. Cut the verb 'to be' whenever possible ('is', 'are', 'was', 'were').

Always check your spelling, punctuation and grammar. Put a note in your copy to confirm any unusual spelling – but check it twice first. Make sure you have spelled brand names the same way each time. If you leave it for a busy, inexperienced sub-editor to check, you will lose credibility. Of course, you will also have checked all your information and your figures.

Professional writers present clean, accurate copy to their editors and respect deadlines and length requirements. Many publications prefer electronic copy which saves the cost of a typist to input it, but if you are presenting hard copy (on paper by mail or fax) it should look inviting – wide margins, double-spaced and printed on one side of A4 paper. Include your name and contact details in case something needs to be queried.

Each page should be numbered. Put the word 'end' at the end of the article.

Any photos should be captioned, both in the file name and in the copy, or if using prints on the back of the picture. If you want your prints returned, put your address on the back of each and request their return.

HEADNOTES

Headnotes are an integral and crucial part of recipe writing. They're often attached at the last minute without enough thought. The following should help to determine the direction you choose for your headnote. Obviously readers won't want to see all these things covered in every headnote so be judicious in your choice of words.

Inspirational: The headnote is as important as the photography. It should inspire the reader to want to eat, and therefore cook, your dish. This can be done by mouth watering prose, or a small 'story' of taste that entices the reader.

"As the gratin cooks, the thinly sliced apple melts into the parsnip purée giving a subtle fruitiness, lovely against the mealiness of the oatmeal crust."

Personality: The headnote is your chance to communicate with the reader and stamp your personality on your work. Some sort of short relevant personal tale can endear you to the reader.

"This is a terrific fresh, zingy tasting starter if you can get fresh crab meat. I love the fresh crabs we often gather in traps not far from our beach house, but it's terrifically hard work and always seems to take ages to shell the crabs and extract enough meat. Luckily you can buy Waikanae crab meat from a good fish supplier."

Confidence: Headnotes should convey a sense of confidence. This is where you have a chance to explain how the recipe can be broken down into its various components, cooked ahead or include other advice.

"This soup may be made a day in advance up to the point of adding the mussels and the cream."

or

"This is an elegant dish and because the lamb is poached in a light broth there is never any suspicion of dry meat. The timings given will produce lamb that is cooked to 'the pink side of well done'. If you like your meat cooked a little more, it is a simple matter: just leave it a while longer. Indeed you can fish out the rack, carve off a chop and if it's not to your liking, put the whole thing back in to cook some more."

Attribution: Readers need to know where your ideas spring from. And we all turn to other writers, chefs, menus and books for inspiration and ideas. It is important that we give credit where it is due for our recipes, and acknowledge our sources, even if they're not copied word for word (let's hope not!).

"This recipe was given to me by the chefs of the Divan Hotel when they arrived in London en masse for a week's celebration of Turkish cooking."

Substitutions: If one of the ingredients may be hard to get or very expensive you should mention in the headnote what substitutions are possible.

"In my opinion veal kidneys make a nicer meal than lamb kidneys but they are not as readily available. However, if you can get them, just cut the walnut-sized pieces off the main 'lump' and use as for lamb kidneys in this recipe."

Explanations: You can use the headnote to introduce a new ingredient or technique.

"If you've never tackled celeriac before this is an excellent way to start enjoying a terrific vegetable. Look out for a large roughly spherical object, 10–12cm across and slightly off white. At one end there will be a tangle of knarled stubby fingers. The flavour is similar to celery, and it has a sweetish edge to it that benefits from a dash of lemon to sharpen it up. A whole celeriac root will keep well but use it within a week or two of buying it."

Techniques: Use the headnote to amplify a technique in the recipe.

"Making sausages is a fairly daunting task and one made a good deal easier if you do happen to have one of those food mixers that has a sausage-making attachment. If you do not have this gadget, do not despair: simply use a piping bag. It will work just as well, despite being a touch more messy. The sausages will keep for up to 2 days in the fridge and should be rested for at least six hours before cooking."

With thanks to Sophie Grigson, Charles Campion, Raymond Blanc, Peter Gordon and The Confident Cook.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE INTERNET

In this brave new world that is the 21st century, nothing is more certain that whatever holds true today will have changed by the time we awaken tomorrow. There's a real place for food writing on the internet, but it is always a case of being very aware that the proverbial grain of salt is needed when seeking information. The internet is accessible to all and useful for taking advantage of such public spaces as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and each new innovation to build and maintain a profile for any food writer.

As a resource, the internet can be very useful. Google has dropped the world into our offices and if using the internet for research it is important to remember to check, check, and cross-check every item or fact that seems interesting or useful. Even Wikipedia is constantly changing, being updated and maybe even corrupted by the simple ability of anyone, anywhere, to contribute. Anything read on the internet is not necessarily accurate or even true.

The recipe resources on aggregated sites like recipes.com, [food 52](http://food52.com), allrecipes.com, and [epicurious](http://epicurious.com) are far more likely to have been professionally examined and tested than recipes found on most blogs that are the work of keen amateurs. Be wary of lifting recipes from the internet. Treat it as a place for inspiration.

Many a food blogger sets up a site as the first step towards a food writing career. Some go on to actually sign a book deal but few around the world attract enough followers and fans for this. Few manage to make their sites commercial and often integrity can be questioned when commercial businesses provide goods and money to post on blogs and websites. Always declare such interests. More often than not a blog is a place to express passion for food, to create a following for work in the culinary world and to create a community around the food, cooking and eating of a passionately interested individual or group.

Once a blog or website is created it is important to keep it up to date. Visitors will not return unless the site has been refreshed daily or weekly.

Social media tools can be useful for raising awareness of any food writer, advancing a career and for engaging with others. It is important to think carefully about posts on sites like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook etc. Do not criticise peers or others and try to keep to the point. Make it relevant and, as with all food writing, know your audience and address them. And always use your own name rather than hiding behind a pseudonym. Be professional.

PROOFREADING

Whenever possible proofread the material before final printing. It is not always easy to insist on doing this, but try to establish at the beginning of the work that this is required and be persistent. Your reputation is at stake and could be damaged by someone else's carelessness.

Proofreading is an essential part of the writing and publishing process; it ensures that the reader is seeing what you want them to see, that the text is readily understood, is not ambiguous and that English is used correctly.

To be a good proofreader requires concentration, a good eye, and knowledge of syntax, grammar and spelling. Placing a ruler under each line as you read helps ensure that you don't skip a line of text.

Unless you are a professional, it takes two to proofread a long text or book adequately. One person reads the original text out loud spelling out each word that could be misspelt and including punctuation as it occurs. The other reader checks the original against the proof. For shorter articles the writer can, with care, also be proofreader.

When proofreading recipes make sure all ingredients are used in both the ingredient list and the method. Check captions and recipe names are correct.

Check all doubtful spelling against a recognised dictionary. **Never** rely on your computer's spell-check.

Most newspapers and magazines have their own style for layout and construction. Ask your editor if there is a style book or a house style; if so, get a copy before you start writing. The overall quality of the completed work will be superior and your editor will be happier.

PUNCTUATION

The role of punctuation is to make the text clear and to avoid misinterpretation. The basic rule for putting in punctuation is 'When in doubt, leave it out'. An uncluttered text is easier to read.

If you feel your sentence needs punctuation it may be too long. A good rule of thumb is to keep sentences no longer than 33 words. By doing so you can avoid many of the commas which would otherwise be necessary.

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are used in two ways – to indicate missing words in a contraction and to indicate ownership or possession.

Use an apostrophe:

(a) when there is a contraction, e.g. when it's is short for it is; when don't is short for do not.

(b) when it follows a noun to denote possession, as in the cookbook's recipes (one cookbook) and the cookbooks' recipes (several cookbooks). If you still can't work it out, think whether you want to say the recipes in the cookbook or the recipes in the cookbooks.

Do not use an apostrophe in its when it is used to define ownership, as in the cookbook and its recipes. Compare this with (b) above.

ABBREVIATIONS

Writing measurements in full avoids accidental errors occurring during the many stages of the printing process. It also prevents any misinterpretation on the part of the reader. Publishers may also have different requirements.

Where space does not allow for the full word to be used, use the standard abbreviations for the metric system. These are usually lower case (except for tablespoons, dessertspoons and Celsius), always singular, and not followed by a full stop.

Be consistent in the abbreviations used.

CAPITAL LETTERS

The trend in publishing is to use all lower case (riesling, parmesan etc). When the place of origin is in a name, capitals may be used (Brussels sprouts, Worcestershire sauce).

FRENCH TERMS

Many commonly used French cooking terms require accent marks to conform with correct French language usage. Customary usage is continued in this book. However, the use of accents is becoming less prevalent and it is grammatically acceptable to omit them.

Avoid using a mix of English and foreign words in a recipe name, e.g. Beef Daube; Leek Potage.

Dry goods measures
1 teaspoon = 5ml
1 dessertspoon = 10ml
1 tablespoon = 15ml
1 cup = 250ml

Culinary measurement abbreviations
t or tsp = teaspoon
T or Tb or Tbsp = tablespoon
D or dt or dsp = dessertspoon
c = cup

Metric standard abbreviations
L = litre
ml = millilitre
g = gram
kg = kilogram
mm = millimetre
kJ = kilojoule
°C = degrees Celsius

MEASUREMENTS

Be consistent. Use metric measurements only. If the article or book is also intended for sale in America or Britain, non-metric measures should be shown in brackets, following the metric measure. If published material using metric measurements is to be sold in the UK or US, include a conversion table. The term non-metric covers both British imperial measures and American measures.

Converting imperial or non-metric to metric measures

When including a non-metric measure in a recipe, or to convert non-metric measures to metric ones, use 25g for an ounce, and 25ml for a fluid ounce. Avoid using 30g for an ounce. Where exact amounts are important for the success of a recipe, as in much baking, test the converted recipe then make any adjustments.

Dry goods

Use New Zealand standard metric teaspoons and tablespoons for small amounts up to a quarter of a cup. For larger amounts use $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup New Zealand standard metric measuring cups. Note: There are no $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{2}{3}$ cup measures in the New Zealand standard metric kitchen measures; however the use of $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup measures allows more flexibility and can be used if wished.

All spoon or cup measures are taken level, not rounded or heaped. For most accurate measuring it is recommended that dry ingredients be spooned into the measuring cup rather than dipping the cup into the container.

In Australia the standard metric tablespoon has a capacity of 20ml. If material is to be offered there, avoid any problem by using 3 teaspoons instead of 1 tablespoon.

Liquids

When using spoon or cup measures follow the appropriate guidelines in the chart on the left. Where these are inappropriate, state amounts in cups or part thereof unless a more exact measure is needed, then use millilitres, e.g. 100ml. For amounts over 1 litre give as litres and parts thereof, e.g. 1.25 L.

Fats

Small amounts of fat can be measured using metric measuring spoons. For larger amounts, i.e. greater than 2 tablespoons, state the weight. If butter is used in a recipe, give amounts in 50g or multiples to match the marking on the wrapping.

Weighing ingredients

Use weights for foods normally bought by weight, e.g. butter or meat. For fruit and vegetables use either the weight or number of units, e.g. 750g or 5–6 apples.

Few domestic scales will weigh small amounts accurately; use multiples of 25g for weighing, e.g. 325g rather than the more precise measures, 330g or 315g. Give weights up to 1 kilogram in grams, e.g. 750g. For weights over 1 kilogram, give as kilograms and parts thereof, e.g. 1.25kg.

Seasonings and flavourings

Seasonings are ingredients added to enhance or modify the flavour. Flavourings are ingredients used to impart a particular flavour.

Measurements of seasonings are very much personal taste and can be given as 'to taste' or as a specific amount. Where unusual amounts are needed, or less common seasonings and flavourings used, a measurement should be given.

Cake pans and baking dishes

Baking pan sizes are given in centimetres – diameter for round, length and width for others. Where necessary, the depth is also stated, e.g. loaf pans. Give the cup capacity for other cooking containers such as dishes or jelly moulds.

Few utensils and bakeware are now made of tin.

Miscellaneous

Carton, tub, pot, pottle, chip and punnet are regional terms. Give the volume or the weight of the contents to avoid confusion.

When using canned foods, a full descriptive name, e.g. whole peeled tomatoes in purée, and the weight, e.g. 400g, should be used.

Packets, sachets, pouches, packs, bars and blocks should always state weight by volume to avoid an incorrect result, e.g. 1 x 400g can whole peeled tomatoes.

Temperatures

Temperatures should be given in degrees Celsius. While many new gas stoves have thermostat dials calibrated in degrees, there are ovens which still use the Gas Mark Regulo. These can be given following the celsius temperature as, e.g. Gas Number 4.

Conversion of degrees Celsius to gas number

DEGREES CELSIUS	GAS NUMBER
110–140	¼–1
150–160	2–3
180–190	4–5
200–230	6–8
250–260	9–10

SUB-EDITING

After your copy is submitted it will be audited. Sub-editing is what happens to the material after it reaches the editor and before it goes for layout and printing.

A sub-editor reads through the material to make sure:

- it makes sense
- the text flows
- it has a beginning, a middle and an end
- it gets to the point (and that it has one)
- that it is aimed at its target readers.

RECIPE FORMATS

Basic recipe format

Recipe name	
Introduction	Preferably a short sentence, see page 5 for information on headnotes.
Ingredients	Listed in order of use. Also think about listing in order of quantity, e.g. if you have 1 cup milk and ½ cup cream in a recipe, list the larger measurement first.
Method	Each paragraph to represent a complete step in the process. (Keep consistency of style, e.g. if you are writing the method for a quiche, then keep referring to it as a quiche, don't suddenly refer to as a flan. Likewise, use the correct term for an action and use the same term throughout e.g. place in the preheated oven and bake. Don't suddenly change to cook or roast).
Serves or makes	Depending on publication writing style this could be placed elsewhere.
Preparation time	Give in 5 minute intervals rather than 6 or 8 minutes. Remember the reader is not as efficient as you so ensure preparation time reflects their skill level, not yours. Also you will probably have more equipment in your kitchen.
Cooking time	Includes all cooking time, cooking and resting time, unless otherwise stated by your particular publication. Try to write e.g. 25-30 minutes not 30-40 minutes as the latter is not as accurate for the home cook.
	<i>You may also be required to submit tips, variation(s) or did you know? Any further information that could be useful for the editor/reader or recipe.</i>

Recipe format where the recipe has more than 2 sections.

Recipe name	Chocolate walnut slice
Introduction	Preferably a short sentence, see page 5 for information on headnotes.
Ingredients	Base <i>list ingredients</i>
	Chocolate and walnut filling <i>list ingredients</i>
	Chocolate icing <i>list ingredients</i>
Method	Base <i>write up base</i>
	Chocolate and walnut filling <i>write up filling</i>
	Chocolate icing <i>write up icing</i>
Serves or makes	Depending on publication writing style this could be placed elsewhere.
Preparation time	If required
Cooking time	If required

On the following pages the same recipe appears in different formats. You can use these as a guide, deciding which is most suitable for the publication you are writing for. If the recipes are for a book, the standard form is probably best. If space is an issue, use the shortened form. Use the action forms to accompany videos on YouTube or other websites.

Leek and smoked chicken tart

STANDARD FORM

SHORT PASTRY

1½ cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
125g chilled butter
4–6 tablespoons chilled water

FILLING

250g leeks
2 cloves garlic
1 single breast smoked chicken
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
3 eggs
1 cup milk
¼ cup cream
salt and pepper to taste
½ cup grated gruyère cheese

METHOD

SHORT PASTRY

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Sift flour and salt into a bowl.

Dice butter and cut or rub into the flour until the mixture resembles fine crumbs.

Use a knife to cut in sufficient water to form a soft dough. Knead lightly and form into a ball.

Roll out to a 27 cm round and use to line the base and sides of a deep-sided 24 cm loose-bottom flan dish. Trim edges and press pastry firmly into the sides.

Line with baking paper and fill with blind baking beans. Place in the refrigerator and chill for 20 minutes.

Bake blind for 15 minutes. Remove blind baking beans and backing paper and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. While cooking prepare filling.

FILLING

Finely slice leeks. Crush, peel and finely chop garlic. Remove and discard skin from the smoked chicken. Slice chicken finely.

Heat oil in a frying pan and cook leeks and garlic over a moderately high heat for 3 minutes until the leeks have wilted. Turn off heat and toss in smoked chicken and parsley. Cool, then spread evenly over prepared pastry shell.

Beat eggs, milk and cream together until smooth. Season well with salt and pepper and pour evenly over leek mixture. Sprinkle cheese on top.

Bake at 180°C for 40–45 minutes until the filling is set. Stand for 5 minutes before removing from the flan dish and serving.

Serves 6

Leek and smoked chicken tart

SHORTENED FORM

SHORT PASTRY

1½ cups flour
½ teaspoon salt
125g chilled butter
4–6 tablespoons chilled water

FILLING

250g leeks, white parts only, finely sliced
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 single breast smoked chicken, skinless, finely sliced
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
3 eggs
1 cup milk
¼ cup cream
salt and pepper to taste
½ cup grated gruyère cheese

METHOD

SHORT PASTRY

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

Sift flour and salt into a bowl.

Cut or rub butter into the flour.

Add sufficient water to form a soft dough. Knead into a ball.

Roll pastry out large enough to line the base and sides of a deep-sided 24 cm loose-bottom flan dish. Trim edges and press pastry firmly into the sides. Place in refrigerator and chill for 20 minutes.

Bake blind for 15 minutes. Remove blind baking beans and baking paper and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. While cooking prepare filling.

FILLING

Cook leeks and garlic in the oil in a frying pan over a moderately high heat for 3 minutes until the leeks have wilted. Turn off heat and toss in smoked chicken and parsley. Cool, then spread evenly over prepared pastry shell.

Beat eggs, milk and cream together until smooth. Season well with salt and pepper and pour evenly over leek mixture. Sprinkle cheese on top.

Bake at 180°C for 40–45 minutes until filling is set. Stand for 5 minutes before removing from the flan dish and serving.

Serves 6

Leek and smoked chicken tart

ACTION FORM 1

PASTRY

Sift 1½ cups **flour** and ½ tsp **salt** into a bowl.

Rub in 125g **butter** until the mixture resembles crumbs.

Cut in 4–6 Tbsp **chilled water** with a knife to form a soft dough. Turn out and knead lightly.

Roll out to a 27 cm circle and use to line the base and sides of a deep-sided 24 cm loose-bottom flan dish. Trim edges and press the pastry firmly into the sides. Chill in fridge for 20 minutes.

Line with baking paper and fill with baking beans. **Bake blind** at 200°C for 15 minutes. Remove blind baking beans and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. While cooking prepare filling.

FILLING

Cook 250g finely sliced **leeks** and 2 cloves finely chopped **garlic** in 30ml vegetable **oil** in a frying pan over a moderately high heat for 3 minutes until the leeks have wilted.

Turn off the heat and mix in single breast of skinless, finely sliced **smoked chicken** and 2 Tbsp chopped **parsley**. Cool, then spread evenly over prepared pastry shell.

Beat 3 **eggs** with ¼ cup **cream** and 1 cup **milk** then season with **salt** and **pepper** and pour evenly over the leek mixture.

Sprinkle ½ cup grated **gruyère cheese** on top.

Bake at 180°C for 40–45 minutes until the filling is set.

Stand 5 minutes before removing from the flan dish and serving.

Serves 6

Leek and smoked chicken tart

ACTION FORM 2

PASTRY

Roll out 1 x 400g packet defrosted **savoury short pastry** to line the base and sides of a deep-sided 24 cm loose-bottom flan dish. Trim edges and press the pastry firmly into the sides. Chill in fridge for 20 minutes.

Line with baking paper and fill with baking beans. **Bake blind** at 200°C for 15 minutes. Remove blind baking beans and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes. While cooking prepare filling.

FILLING

Cook 250g finely sliced **leeks** and 2 cloves **garlic** finely chopped in 30ml vegetable **oil** in a frying pan over a moderately high heat for 3 minutes until the leeks have wilted.

Turn off the heat and mix in single breast of skinless, finely sliced **smoked chicken** and 2 Tbsp chopped **parsley**. **Cool**, then spread evenly over prepared pastry shell.

Beat 3 **eggs** with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **cream** and 1 cup **milk** then season with **salt** and **pepper** and pour evenly over the leek mixture.

Sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated **gruyère cheese** on top.

Bake at 180°C for 40–45 minutes until filling is set.

Stand 5 minutes before removing from the flan dish and serving.

Serves 6

Our first handbook was produced in 1991, with the purpose of providing a reference tool that in turn would establish standards for New Zealand food writers. In 1999 the handbook was updated to reflect the growing needs of members.

Food Writers New Zealand is indebted to our hardworking, talented, innovative and active contributors who provided their specialist input for this latest edition.

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KATHY PATERSON, PRESIDENT, 2016

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HANDBOOK DESIGN

Katherine Habershon habershon@xtra.co.nz

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ORGANISATIONS

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