

Paddy's Rhubarb recipes:

RHUBARB FOOL

700g 1 1/2 lbs rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 25mm/ 1 inch lengths

175g / 6 oz soft dark brown sugar

grated zest of one orange

15g / 1/2 oz butter

10 - 15 ml / 2 - 3 tsp orange-flavoured liqueur - we use Grand Marnier

150ml/ 5 fl oz thick cream

Put rhubarb, sugar, zest and butter in large, heavy-based saucepan and mix well. Medium heat - bring to simmer; cover pan, reduce heat and cook until rhubarb is tender.

Strain through nylon sieve. Puree the rhubarb. Leave to cool completely. (The juice which was strained off can be kept as a drink)

Stir liqueur into cold puree.

Whisk cream to soft peaks. Fold into puree - not too much so that you have a marbled effect.

Spoon into four glasses, wine glasses for example.

Chill for at least one hour before serving.

RHUBARB BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

450g/ 1 lb rhubarb

12 slices bread - We use sliced pan, that kind with square slices suited to the toaster.

450ml / 16 fl oz cream

230ml / 8 fl oz milk

4 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla essence

175g / 6 oz sugar

1 tablespoon sugar for sprinkling on top of pudding.

We use a square dish which will hold 4 slices of bread in one layer.

Butter the bread

Put 4 slices butter side down in the dish.

Scatter half the rhubarb on top of this layer

(Note: later on in the year when the rhubarb becomes sharper we sprinkle some sugar on each layer of rhubarb - a matter of taste)

Another 4 slices of bread on this

Rest of rhubarb on top of this layer of bread

Last 4 slices of bread on top.

Beat eggs, add cream, milk, sugar and vanilla essence and whisk all together.

Pour over bread and rhubarb.

Cover with clingfilm and leave overnight - a few hours will do if you did not plan ahead but the longer time allows the custard mixture to soak into the bread.

Preheat oven to 180C/350F/Gas mark 4

Sprinkle top of pudding with sugar. Bake in a bain-marie with boiling water coming halfway up the sides of the dish for about 1 hour. Top should be crisp and golden.

Serve with whipped cream.

Your own doctor will advise re cholesterol.

Enjoy! Paddy