Posted on 6 October 2014

by Liz Robb

Toad in the hole with onion gravy



Ingredients

150g plain flour
Pinch of salt
3 large eggs
175ml milk
125ml water
2 tablespoons of sunflower oil
6-8 sausages
30g butter
2 white onions, peeled and finely sliced.
Level teaspoon of soft brown sugar
500ml beef stock
[1 teaspoon of balsamic vinegar, optional]
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation

1. 1. Sift the flour into a large bowl and sprinkle in the salt. Beat the eggs. Make a well in the middle of the seasoned flour, pour in the beaten eggs and stir well into the flour. Combine the milk and water then add to the bowl, a little at a time, whisking really well until you have a smooth lump free batter. Leave to rest for about 30 minutes.
2. 2. Preheat the oven to 220 degrees, 200 degrees fan oven.
3. 3. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a small frying pan and cook the sausages over a medium heat for up to 15 minutes, depending on the thickness of the sausages, turning as you cook to brown the sausages on all sides. Alternatively, grill the sausages and turn them.
4. 4. Choose a roasting tin that is quite deep but not too big. Heat a tablespoon of oil in the tin until the tin is hot and the oil is sizzling
5. this should ensure that the Yorkshire pudding will have a crispy base.
6. 5. Place the sausages spaced out in the tin, pour over the batter mixture and quickly put the tin on a high shelf in the preheated oven. After 10 minutes, turn the oven down to 200 degrees, 180 degrees fan oven, and cook for about another 20 to 25 minutes until cooked. Try not to peep too much! If the edges of the pudding should cook before the centre is fully set, you can cover the tin with foil to prevent it browning too much and return it to the oven for a little longer.
7. 6. Whilst the toad in the hole is cooking, make the onion gravy. Melt most of the butter in the saucepan, reserving a knob of butter to add later. Cook the sliced onions in the butter over a fairly low heat for 5-10 minutes, or until they are soft. Sprinkle in the brown sugar and season to taste. Add the balsamic vinegar if using, and gradually stir in the

beef stock. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes or until the gravy has reduced and thickened.

8 7. Serve a generous wedge of the toad in the hole with new or mashed potatoes and fresh seasonal vegetables. Stir the reserved knob of butter into the hot onion gravy then spoon over the toad in the hole.

9 Notes:

10 - Some people prefer to use just milk as the batter liquid, but I've found that a mixture of milk and water gives me a better risen Yorkshire pudding.

11 - Some recipes include a little mustard in the batter mix, or add sprigs of herbs like thyme or rosemary when the pudding is cooked.

12 - Traditionally, beef dripping or lard are used to cook the toad in the hole instead of oil.

13 - For vegetarians, use veggie sausages and replace the beef stock in the gravy with vegetarian stock.

Cooks Note

This traditional British dish of sausages nestling in soft Yorkshire pudding with crispy edges, served with thick onion gravy, is always a family favourite.

Toad in the hole originated as a thrifty way of using up pieces of leftover meat at the end of the day, baking them in a "pudding" of batter to stretch the expensive meat a bit further. Some modern chefs experiment by using different types of meat in this dish, but it's hard to beat simply using your favourite sausages. Choose fairly plain sausages, lightly flavoured with herbs or spice if you prefer, but not so strongly flavoured that you lose the taste of the Yorkshire pudding.