

Sussex Pond Recipe Reimagined With Parsi Flare

Description



My most favourite old English dessert has to be Sussex Pond. The name conjures up images of a dour looking plate of soupy stodge. Nothing could be further from this image though. Sussex pond is a beautiful dessert made by lining a pudding basin with suet pastry, placing diced butter and demerara sugar inside then putting an entire whole lemon, skin and all inside and sealing it shut with a suet pastry lid.

The pudding is then steamed for several hours, during which a magical transformation happens within the pudding, the sugar and the butter dissolve to make a rich creamy sauce which in turn cooks the lemon, turning it to a soft pulp, imbuing all its flavour and acidity to the sweet caramel like sauce. It’s as fascinating a pudding as it is deliciously memorable. My version of Sussex Pond takes things up a level, this 17 th century English pudding is reimagined in the 21 st century using sweet and fragrant tangerines, the raw unrefined flavour of sugar cane molasses and the subtle spike of cardamom pods.

For the Pastry

250g self raising flour

125g suet

large punch of salt

300ml milk with a bit more up your sleeve if needed

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For the Filling

1 tangerine

125g unsalted butter

60g demarara sugar

60g jaggery

4 cardamom pods crushed









1. To make the pastry: In a mixer, or by hand, mix the flour, suet and salt together until they form a fine crumb with no large lumps of raw suet visible. Slowly incorporate your milk and mix in to form a smooth, soft and slightly tacky dough. Wrap in cling film and plaice in the refrigerator.

2. Brush the inside of your 390ml pudding bowl, or any other suitable type of bowl you have that will withstand heat, with soft butter then liberally dust the inside with flour and tap out any excess flour. You should have a well-floured basin.

3. Roll your suet pastry into a half centimetre thick circle, the diameter of which being enough to line the pudding basin with a generous overlap. Place the dough into your pudding basin, pressing it to the bottom and against the sides until it lines the inside. Allow the overlap to flop over the side and trim it so that there is only 1cm of overlap around the circumference. Keep hold of your excess trimming.

4. To make the filling: dice your butter into small pieces about the size of your fingernail and then grate your jaggery or chop it up into small bits. With your hand, knead the jaggery, butter and the demerara sugar together until it becomes a sticky ball, dont play with it too much or the butter will start to melt, speed is of the essence!

5. Boil the tangerine for 5 minutes in hot water. Take it out of the water and poke some small holes in it. Wait for it to cool down. Take your boiled tangerine and your sugary butter paste and mould the paste over the tangerine, almost wrapping the butter paste all over.

6. On a well floured surface roll out your suet pastry dough to a large round about ten inches in diameter. Find a bowl about 130mm across. Butter and flour the bowl, so that the suet pastry doesn’t stick to it when it’s cooking. Place the disk of suet pastry inside the bowl so it fits snuggly pushing it firmly against the sides. Place the tangerine covered in butter and sugar into the middle of this bowl. Add the 4 cracked cardamom pods in there too.

7. Take your left-over suet pastry trimming and roll it into a circle large enough to make a lid for the bowl, place it over the top. Bring the overlap back over the top and pinch it onto lid, sealing the buttery tangerine and cardamom inside the bowl.

8. Cut a circle of parchment paper and 2 circles of tin foil one and a half times the circumference of the bowl. Place the parchment over the lid of the bowl followed by the two layers of tin foil, form it over the bowl and secure in place with string or an elastic band.

9. Steam the pudding in the oven. I like to place the bowl in an oven proof pot, half filled with water, bring this to a boil on the stove and place a lid on top. Put the entire pan in a 200c oven for 2 hours to steam, periodically checking that the water has not reduced down by less than half way up the pudding.

10. Pull it out of the oven allowing it to cool for 10 minutes. carefully take the pudding bowl out of the pot and remove the foil and parchment paper. Using a butter knife, gently tease away the suet pastry from the sides of the bowl taking care not to pierce the pastry. Invert the bowl onto the platter you want to serve it on, choose a deep platter to hold in the “pond”.

Serve immediately, cutting into it, the butter and sugar will have melted together to form a sweet buttery sauce spiked with the flavour of zesty tangerine and cardamom. I love to squish down on the tangerine so it gives all of its juices to the syrup.

Serve the pudding with generous servings of pouring cream or custard.

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