

OK! RECIPES WITH...



# TONIA BUXTON

THE TV PRESENTER SHARES TWO RECIPES FROM HER NEW COOKBOOK 'THE SECRET OF SPICE'

## PITTAKIA

MAKES 2, EACH SERVING 2-3

### INGREDIENTS

- 450g white or brown bread flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp salt
- 7g sachet fast-action dried yeast
- ½ tsp caster sugar
- 280ml lukewarm water
- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for coating

### For the topping

- 250ml crème fraîche
- 2 medium red onions, finely sliced
- 150-200g combined weight of the following: Crumbled feta/ pitted Kalamata olives/ roasted artichokes/ sundried tomatoes, sliced/ oregano/ chestnut mushrooms/ hiromeri/ capers/ anchovies
- Freshly ground black pepper

This way of cooking was originally developed by Greek settlers who, in the fifth century BC, founded Neapolis (New Town, Italy). They adapted a pre-existing baking tradition to develop this new 'pita' which, through experimentation, luck and linguistic distortion, became pizza. It ALL started with the Greeks!

1. Mix the flour, herbs, salt, yeast and sugar together in a large bowl. Stir in the water and oil and mix together to form a soft (but not sticky) dough.
2. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead well for 10 minutes.

Return the dough to the bowl and coat with a little oil. Cover with cling film and leave at room temperature until it has doubled in size.

3. Preheat the oven to 230°C/450°F/gas mark 8. Prepare the topping of your choice. Knock back the risen dough, then turn it out onto a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 2 equal portions. Roll one portion out into a very thin rectangle, about the same size as your baking tray. Don't worry if the dough stretches or overlaps the edges, as they can be folded in at a later stage.

- Repeat with the second piece of dough on the second baking tray.
4. Spread one sheet of dough with half the crème fraîche, then sprinkle on half the onion slices and half your toppings. Season with black pepper to taste. Fold over the edges to make a narrow border of about 1cm.
  5. Repeat with the second sheet of dough. Bake for 12-15 minutes until golden and crisp. Eat immediately.



# ORANGE, CARDAMOM AND ALMOND CAKE

SERVES 12

## INGREDIENTS

- Zest and juice of 2 large oranges
- 250g dried, pitted dates, chopped
- 200g butter, softened
  - 150g light muscovado sugar
- 4 medium eggs
- 250g spelt flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Seeds from 10 cardamom pods, crushed
- 100g ground almonds
- 50g pistachio nuts, bashed
- A pinch of salt
- 1 small orange, finely sliced, to decorate
- 4 tbsp icing sugar

**W**hen I bake this cake, the kitchen fills with the warming smell of cardamom. I serve it on its own or with Greek yogurt that I have mixed with icing sugar and rose water to make it even more aromatic.

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 140°C/275°F/gas mark 1. Line the base of a 21cm loose-bottomed cake tin with baking paper.
- 2.** Set aside 2 tbsp of the orange juice and a little of the zest, then place the rest in a small saucepan with the dates and heat for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.
- 3.** Using an electric whisk, beat the butter and light muscovado sugar together in a bowl for 3 minutes until pale and creamy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, adding 1 tbsp of the flour to stop it from curdling. Fold in the remaining flour, the baking powder, cardamom seeds, ground almonds, pistachios and a pinch of salt.
- 4.** Stir in the cooled dates and juice mixture, then spoon the mixture into the prepared tin. Level the

surface and decoratively lay the orange slices on the surface of the cake mixture. Bake for 1 hour 50 minutes to 2 hours, or until a knife inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cover with foil if the top of the cake is browning too much during cooking. Allow to cool in the tin for 30 minutes, then remove and cool on a wire rack.

**5.** When the cake has cooled completely, mix the reserved orange juice and zest and the icing sugar together to make an icing. Drizzle over the cake and serve. **OK!**

'THE SECRET OF SPICE' BY TONIA BUXTON (LAGOM PUBLISHING, £20) IS OUT NOW.

## TONIA BUXTON THE SECRET OF SPICE

Keeps you there to help yourself to get the most out of your food.

