

Cooking for Christmas day



Lunch on Christmas day has a mystique which is almost burdensome. This year I decided to take up the challenge of preparing the whole lot myself. You have to be a strategic planner. Different foods take different times to prepare so that which takes the longest to cook, normally the meat offering, has to go in the oven first. It sounds complicated when you have 10 different foods to prepare but actually it can become quite fun. I need to be on my own in the kitchen and not having people walking around. I would make a hopeless chef.

In this case the ingredients were chicken, stuffing, red cabbage, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, cauliflower cheese, extra special delicious gravy, followed by Christmas pudding. If I rearrange this list according to time taken to prepare it would be chicken 2.5 hours followed by Christmas pudding, 2 hours followed by cauliflower cheese, fiddly but the best part of two hours. I don't know how people manage in restaurants when there are many tables to serve at different times. I think you have to be somewhat of a juggler or maybe everything is prepared beforehand and heated in a microwave.

I tend to go into a panic at this sort of meal but actually when you get on with it it's a classical operation. We are talking about 4 people not 16 or 100. You would have to be positively military to serve 100 people.

It is not possible to cook a perfect meal but if it's home-prepared food, fully cooked and made with care, and you are not going to poison anybody then I guess it's take it or leave

it. People should never apologize for their own cooking for example 'oh sorry there could have been more salt'. If guests want more of anything they can just ask.

Anyway, as I write, people are snoozing on the sofa. We shall shortly start the ritual of watching TV programmes and recording those that we cannot view immediately.

It starts to rain.