



# YULE LOVE THIS SCRUMPTIOUS X-MAS SPREAD

From a sumptuous spread to party-perfect nibbles and irresistible desserts, our country's top chefs have wrapped the perfect Christmas feast for you

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It's Christmas season again. A time to bond, exchange gifts and devour the most delicious meals with your loved

ones. But this Christmas, you don't have to slave the whole day in the kitchen or spend a fortune. We asked some top chefs in the country about their favourite easy-to-cook Christmas dishes, and this is what they shared:



## The Kerala Classic: Duck Mappas & Vattayappam

(Courtesies: **Chef Regi Mathew**, Co-owner & Culinary Director - Kappa Chakka Kandhari)

Chef Regi Mathew is passionate about reclaiming traditional Kerala food. The cuisine of the Syrian Christian community, from Central Travancore, features dishes with a strong Western influence blended with local spices. Christmas is a massive feast for this community.

Duck Mappas is the special, traditional centerpiece, paired perfectly with Vattayappam, soft, pillowy cakes made from fermented rice and traditionally finished with a splash of toddy, which provides a gentle, complex sweet-and-tangy contrast.

**Duck Mappas (Serves 4 | Cooking Time: 1 Hour)**

**Ingredients**

- 1 kg duck cut with bones
- 1 ½ cups sliced onion, 1 cup coconut oil
- A blend of whole spices: 8 cardamom pods, 10 cloves, 1 inch cinnamon stick, ½ tsp fennel
- 4 green chillies, 10 curry leaves
- 5 crushed garlic cloves, 1 tsp shredded ginger
- ½ tsp turmeric powder, 3 tsp coriander powder
- 1 cup 1st press coconut milk, 3 cups 2nd press coconut milk
- Salt to taste

**Method**

1. Smear the duck with coriander powder, turmeric powder, and salt and set aside for 15 minutes.
2. Heat oil in a thick-bottomed pan and add the whole spices: cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and fennel. Next, add the curry leaves, ginger, garlic, and green chillies, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the onion and sauté for 8 minutes until it becomes transparent. Add the duck meat and sauté for 5 minutes.
3. Add the 2nd press coconut milk and cook on a simmer flame without a cover for 30 minutes until the meat is cooked.
4. Check the seasoning, then add the 1st press of coconut milk and mix well. Remove from fire and serve hot.



## The Imperial Sweet: Stollen (Christstollen)

(Courtesies: **Chef Avin Thallath** (Co-founder and Director, Lavonne)



Stollen, or Christstollen, is a German tradition dating back to the 14th century. Its history is tied to the Advent fast. Early loaves were simple bread without milk or butter. The final, enriched version we know today, packed with butter and fruit, was only permitted after a mid-17th-century papal proclamation. The bread is highly symbolic: the hump on the loaf represents the humps of the camels that carried gifts to the Christ Child, and the candied fruits and raisins represent the precious jewels and gifts in their packs.

**Recipe:**

- Dry: 1440 g Flour, 24 g Dry Yeast, 180 g Caster Sugar, 10 g Cardamom, 20 g Cinnamon Powder, 150 g Sliced almonds.
- Wet: 510 g Milk, 540 g Butter, 144 g Rum, 20 g Fresh lemon zest, 5 g Vanilla bean.
- Filling: 144 g Marzipan (10% dough loaf weight).
- Fruit: 125 g Raisins, 100 g Sultana, 60 g Candied Orange, 75 g Lemon Peels.

**Method**

1. The mixing process involves 6 minutes at 1st speed, followed by 2 minutes at 2nd speed, aiming for a final dough temperature of 24°C.
2. The dough requires fermentation of 3 hours at 27°C.
3. Bake the Stollen in an oven at 200°C for 35 minutes.

## The Modern Indulgence: Chickpeas & Chocolate Mousse

(Courtesies: **Celebrity Chef and Restaurateur Varun Inamdar**)



The Chickpea Chocolate Mousse is a twisted and delicious take on the classic chocolate mousse. It is part of a contemporary trend to create dairy-free and protein-enhanced desserts. This recipe uses chickpeas to mimic the structure of traditional mousse, offering a lighter, nutrient-dense finish that still maintains the luxury expected of a festive dish.

**Chickpea Chocolate Mousse**

**Ingredients**

- 200 g boiled chickpeas (drained, skin removed for smoothness)
- 150 g dark chocolate (melted)
- 50 g honey or monkfruit syrup, 1 tsp vanilla extract, ¼ tsp sea salt
- 50 ml extra virgin olive oil, 30 ml warm water (adjust for texture)

**Sweet Crisp Chips**

**Ingredients**

- 150 g refined flour, 50 ml warm milk
- 1 tsp castor sugar, 1 tsp ghee, pinch of salt
- Oil for deep frying, 3 tsp powdered sugar (for dusting)

**Method**

**For the Mousse**

1. Melt the dark chocolate and keep it warm. Blend the boiled chickpeas until completely smooth. Add the melted chocolate, honey/monkfruit syrup, vanilla, and sea salt.
2. Stream in the extra virgin olive oil while blending for a glossy finish. Adjust texture with warm water if needed. Chill for 2-3 hours until set.

**For the Chips**

1. Combine flour, castor sugar, ghee, and salt. Add milk gradually to form a smooth, tight dough. Rest for 15 minutes.
2. Roll out very thin and cut into long strips. Deep fry on medium heat until crisp and golden. Drain and immediately dust with powdered sugar.

**Assembly**

1. Spoon the chilled mousse into a bowl. Drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil on top.
2. Add crushed pistachios for crunch and other festive garnishes. Serve with the warm, crisp, sweetened chips on the side.



## Asparagus and Green Pea Risotto with Fresh Herb Tarka

(Recipe Courtesies: **Chef Suvir Saran**, Chef, cookbook author, educator, and farmer specializing in bringing Indian cooking to the American kitchen)



This savoury recipe introduces flavour through a fresh herb tarka, a seasoned oil, rather than relying on heavy, high-sodium stock. The chef creates a water-based "scrap stock" from vegetable ends (like asparagus ends) to introduce depth and nutrition while controlling salt levels.

**Tarka Ingredients**

- 2 tsp unsalted butter, 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp finely chopped fresh basil, 1 tsp finely chopped fresh rosemary, 1 tsp finely chopped fresh thyme
- ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper, 7 tsp red pepper flakes

**Risotto Ingredients**

- 2 lbs/910 g asparagus, 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 Parmigiano-Reggiano rind (optional), plus 1 cup/100 g finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 1 tsp coarsely ground pepper (optional), plus 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 6 tbsps/85g unsalted butter, 1 medium red onion, finely chopped
- 2 cups/200 g Arborio rice, ½ cup/120 ml dry white wine
- 10-oz/280-g bag fresh or frozen green peas, finely chopped fresh basil for serving

**Method**

**For the Tarka**

1. Melt the butter in a medium frying pan over medium heat. Add the olive oil, basil, rosemary, thyme, black pepper, and red pepper flakes.
2. Cook, stirring often, until the mixture is fragrant, about 1 minute. Turn off the heat and set aside.



**For the Risotto**

1. Snap off the tough ends of the asparagus and add them to a large soup pot.
2. Slice the trimmed asparagus spears on the diagonal into 1-inch/2.5-cm lengths, leave the tips whole, and place both in a medium bowl and set aside.
3. Pour 12 cups/2.85 L water over the asparagus ends and add 1 tsp of the salt, the Parmigiano-Reggiano rind (if using), and the coarsely ground pepper (if using).
4. Bring the liquid to a boil over medium-high heat, reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and gently simmer until the broth is fragrant, about 25 minutes.
5. Strain the broth into a clean pot, cover to keep the broth warm, and discard the asparagus ends and the rind. (You should have about 10 cups/2.35 L of broth.)

6. Melt the butter in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the freshly ground pepper and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
7. Stir in the onion and ½ tsp salt and cook, stirring often, until the onion is translucent and soft, 1 ½ to 2 minutes. Add the rice and cook, stirring often, until the grains are opaque, 1 ½ to 2 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook, stirring often, until it is absorbed, 1 to 2 minutes.
8. Reduce the heat to medium and add 1 cup/240 ml of the warm broth. Cook, stirring constantly, until the liquid is mostly absorbed, and then add another 1 cup/240 ml of warm broth. Continue this process, adding broth one cup at a time. Once you have added 5 cups/1.18 L of broth total (after about 10 minutes), add the sliced asparagus, asparagus tips, peas, and the remaining ½ tsp salt.
9. Continue adding broth and cooking for 8 to 10 more minutes, until the rice is creamy and cooked to an al dente doneness. Turn off the heat.
10. Add the tarka and 2 tbsps of the Parmigiano-Reggiano, stirring to combine. Spoon the risotto into serving bowls, shower with some fresh basil and Parmigiano-Reggiano, and serve.



## GLAM SHAM

### Nivetha warns legal action over AI misuse

Actress directs those responsible to immediately remove the content

Following stars like Keerthy Suresh, Sai Pallavi, and Aditi Rao, actor Nivetha Thomas has condemned the circulation of AI-generated images misusing her identity, calling it unlawful and a serious violation of privacy.

In a strongly worded post on X, she wrote: "It has come to my attention that AI-generated images misusing my identity and a recent photograph I shared on my social media are being circulated online. The creation and circulation of such content without consent is deeply disturbing, unacceptable, and unlawful."

She has directed those responsible, including anonymous accounts, to



immediately remove such content and warned that any continued circulation will be treated as deliberate misuse and escalated legally. "It's serious invasion of my privacy. I am putting this on record. My continued circulation will be treated as deliberate misuse of my identity and escalated legally," she added.

**THOSE RESPONSIBLE, INCLUDING ACCOUNTS OPERATING BEHIND ANONYMITY, ARE DIRECTED TO IMMEDIATELY STOP AND TAKE DOWN SUCH CONTENT. I URGE OTHERS TO RECOGNISE THE HARM IN ENABLING THIS BEHAVIOUR. DO NOT RESHARE, ENGAGE WITH, OR LEGITIMISE SUCH MATERIAL IN ANY FORM. ANY CONTINUED CIRCULATION WILL BE TREATED AS DELIBERATE MISUSE OF MY IDENTITY AND ESCALATED LEGALLY."**

### Alan Cumming to host BAFTA awards

Succeeds David Tennant, who hosted for the past two years

Actor and director Alan Cumming will host the BAFTA Film Awards 2026, set to take place at London's Royal Festival Hall on February 22, 2026, according to Deadline.

Best known to recent audiences as the presenter of *The Traitors*, Cumming returns to the BAFTA stage after hosting the organisation's TV Awards last year. He succeeds David Tennant, who helmed the BAFTA Film Awards for the past two years.

An Olivier Award winner for his acclaimed performance in *Cabaret*, Cumming said he is eager to bring a touch of "mischievous" to the ceremony. BAFTA's executive director of awards and con-



text, Emma Baehr, praised him for his "sharp wit, warmth and vibrant energy." BAFTA will announce its longlists on January 9, and the nominations will be revealed on January 27.