

Steamed Up

I love steam oven cooking and want to share some of the tips and tricks that enable us to get the most out of this method of cooking.

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February 2017

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The latest new buzz word in cooking is Sous Vide, or a Water Bath. You don't need another appliance in order to try this precise and interesting way of preparing meat.

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Sous Vide

If you are an avid reader of cooking blogs and cooking web sites you'll have come across this new way of home cooking.

Cooking using a sous vide method has been around for hundreds of years. It is not a new technique as it is used in restaurants the world over.

What is Sous Vide Cooking?

Modern Sous Vide cooking involves vacuum sealing food in a plastic bag and then immersing the bag in water. The water has been heated to a precise temperature. The actual temperature required depends on the type of food.

Most examples of Sous Vide cooking are demonstrated in specialist machines that maintain the temperature over a long period of time.

Your Steam Oven can be used as a Sous Vide. You need the following kitchen equipment:

- thermometer
- zip lock bags
- deep pot



Perfectly cooked steak with Parsnip Puree. The consistency of cooking has been achieved using a Steam Oven to replicate cooking Sous Vide style.

Why is this method gaining popularity?

This method of low precise temperature cooking means that all the nutrients are retained in the food. Apart from any seasoning that is added, there is no loss of nutrients as the bag containing the food is sealed. Nothing in the cooking process can dilute or affect the food.

The food also retains its texture as it is cooked at a low temperature so there is no "shock" to the food causing shrinkage. Being able to cook the food at precise temperatures means that you can cook to the level of "doneness" that you require. Have you ever wanted to cook a medium rare steak only to misjudge it and end up with a well done steak?

Well, if you have, you'll appreciate how easy this method is in preparing steak and other meats to your exact liking.

The flavour of the food is intact as it has not been affected or altered by the cooking method. The oil you use or the style of cooking such as BBQ or grilling all have an impact on the final flavour of the food. Sous Vide cooking allows you to add the flavours that you want to add to the food and nothing else.

The food that is cooked this way can emerge from the sealed bag looking gray and unappetising. Duck breast is a good example. Once finished cooking in the sous vide method, the duck breast is dried off using paper towelling then placed on a heated pan skin side down. This has the effect of rendering the duck fat and browning the duck skin. Once the duck breast has been browned off it looks delicious and is ready to eat.

Steaks can also be browned off using a hot pan and little knob of butter.

Sous Vide isn't a new technique at all. This method cooking has been used in homes and restaurants all over the world for a very long time. Give it a go using your Steam Oven as the water bath and see what you think of this technique and how it shapes the food you prepare.

STEAMED CHOCOLATE CAKE

Equipment:

Scales, Mixing Bowl, Whisk, Rubber Spatula, Baking Paper, Cake Tin, Small Saucepan, Scales

Ingredients:

180gms Butter, 200gms Castor Sugar, 200gms Evaporated Milk, 180gms Self Raising Flour, 50gms Dutch Cocoa, 2 Eggs and Vanilla Extract

Method :

To begin sift flour and cocoa into a large mixing bowl

Put butter, sugar, milk and vanilla into a medium size saucepan and heat over a medium/low heat until sugar had dissolved

Crack eggs into another bowl and whisk briefly

Cool butter mix for 5 mins and then add eggs and whisk until combined.

Add the butter mix to the flour and whisk until well combined

Pour mixture into a lined cake tin and cover lightly with foil

Steam the cake for 1.5 hours @ 100 degrees

Remove from the oven and test with a skewer, cool completely before turning cake out.

Hints & Tips :

If you decide to "ice" your cake wait until it is completely cool

This cake is extremely moist you can even serve it warm

To serve it warm, cut portions and place on a tray and cover very well with foil, place into



the steam oven for 6-8 mins on 100 degrees

Steam Ovens: Are they just the latest craze in kitchen trends?

It seems like every few years another kitchen appliance comes along and is revolutionary or time saving or the healthiest way to cook. Any number of marketing slogans are bandied around in an effort to sell more units.

So, is a Steam Oven just the latest hot new item? Steam Ovens have been used in commercial kitchens for years. While smaller than their commercial cousins, domestic Steam Ovens punch above their weight in functionality.



Does a Steam Oven replace other appliances?

No two kitchens are the same. No two home cooks will use exactly the same appliances.

Rather than replacing any other appliance we see the Steam Oven adding a huge range of cookery styles and techniques for the home cook to use.

Really, with very few exceptions, anything that can be cooked in a normal oven can be cooked in a Steam Oven and it will be better. Really.

Snitzels are crunchy on the outside and moist inside.

It is amazing for making Bread, bread rolls, buns and brioche

It can be used as a Pizza Oven

It can be used to Sous Vide food

It is great at reheating and defrosting

Why aren't Steam Ovens on cooking shows yet?

Have you ever watched a cooking show? Whether it is hosted by a chef

celebrity or by home cooks competing for a prize you don't see steam ovens in their TV kitchens.

TV kitchens are so well equipped. They provide the TV home cook or TV Chef the ability to showcase their skills using these amazing arsenal, most of which aren't available in the average home kitchen.

I wouldn't know what to do with a dry ice machine if I had one.

It won't be long before we see Steam Ovens in these TV kitchens.

Shannon Bennett is a public face of a major manufacturer. He is also on the most popular cooking show in Australia. You have to imagine that at some time his 2 brands will overlap.

On the general cooking shows I've watched, the "death dish" always seems to be Risotto. Imagine being able to prepare an amazing Risotto and while it is cooking, have a cup of coffee and a read of the paper!

As more manufacturers enter the Steam Oven market the price is becoming less prohibitive. Celebrities and Chefs are now aligning themselves to their particular brand of Steam Oven. Even on the home renovation shows, Steam Ovens are being installed.

It won't be long before we tune into a cooking show and one of the contestants will prove their bread dough or make a puree in a Steam Oven.

Steam your way to perfect Gnocchi

Makers of (good) gnocchi will tell you that every time they make, it the recipe changes a little bit. Gnocchi is made by feel not by exact weights and measures.

By steaming the potatoes you reduce the risk of overcooking resulting in wet, soggy potatoes.

In the Steam Oven, you can also keep the potatoes warm if you aren't quite ready to start mixing the dough. Anybody that has tried to use cold potatoes knows that you can't make good gnocchi.



While there are many stories and legends surrounding the origin of this historical dish, one of the most famous dates back to September 1574.

“As the story goes, the Flemish master artist Valerio di Fiandra and his assistants, who were working on the stained glass window of Milan’s Duomo Cathedral at the time, would mix saffron into their glaze to achieve a golden color.

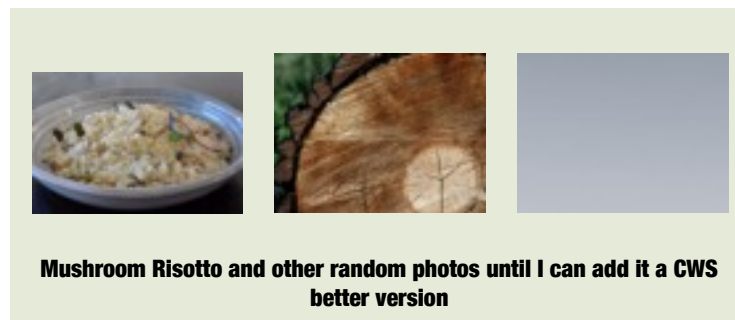
This habit led to a lot of teasing about how the artists loved the plant so much, next thing you knew they would be eating it. When time came for Master Valerio’s daughter to marry, steaming plates of saffron risotto appeared at the wedding banquet as a joke, but the humorous addition was appreciated for its beauty and aromatic taste.

By the 19th century the dish that according to legend started out as a joke was appearing in recipe books with the name Risotto alla

milanese. In “Il nuovo cuoco milanese” (The New Milanese Cook) Felice Luraschi sets down the recipe for yellow Milanese

milanese, one with ox marrow and white wine, the other without”

Ganzo - www.ganzomag.com



Mushroom Risotto and other random photos until I can add it a CWS better version

rice as including butter, saffron, ox marrow and grana padana cheese. In his legendary masterpiece of Italian cuisine, “La scienza di cucina e l’arte di mangiar bene” (The Science of Cooking and the Art of Eating Well), Pellegrino Artusi offers two versions of Risotto alla

Modern Risotto takes on many varieties and every family will have their favourite. The dish that started out as a wedding feast joke is now eaten across the world in nearly every country.

There are few other dishes that come to mind that allow the cook to add all manner of vegetables, meats, spices, herbs and wine and still retain its essential character.

One way to cook Risotto is to heat the stock and gradually stir the liquid into the rice giving each addition time to be absorbed by the rice. This can be time consuming and tiring as you stand stirring a large pot continuously.

Being able to make your Risotto in a Steam Oven not only gives you back time but it also stops your stirring arm from tiring.

The best thing is the taste. It is much harder to overcook your Risotto in a Steam Oven.

How to choose a steam oven.

When we started attending food demonstrations we were trying to understand what a steam oven was.

Then when it was time to get serious it was all about the Functionality.

We'd had our last oven for over 20 years and there wasn't a timer or heat probe. It just turned of and heated up. It was fan forced though so it wasn't completely from the dark ages.

The technology has changed so much and now there are telescopic doors, a number of heating options, meat probes, pyrolytic and now steam.

The functionality that we were looking for was Simplicity. It seemed enough of a leap to start using steam without trying to come to learn complicated digital settings.

My husband doesn't like cooking that much so I knew that if the ovens where too complicated he'd never feel confident to use them.

We opted for an oven with a simple knob for heat and one for either

- Steam only
- Heat only
- Combination

My advice when looking at what sort of oven you should buy is:

- attend a variety of cooking demonstrations
- read forums
- decide on not only yours but any other oven users ability and confidence in the kitchen

Price and style are the remaining choices. Every oven manufacturer now has a steam oven in their range. Prices range from about \$1,400 to \$7,500.

3 "Must Do's"

There are 3 things that you simply must do with any pure Steam Oven cooking:

Pre-Heat the Oven. The maximum temperature for steaming in 100c (or 212 degrees fahrenheit). With low cooking temperatures and short cooking times the result will not be as you expected it to be if the Oven has to first heat up. No matter how short the cooking time, if you are only cooking with steam, and not a combination of heat and steam, the oven needs to be pre-heated.

All food is prepared at Room Temperature. You will not be successful if you take food out of the fridge and place it straight into the Steam Oven. The low cooking temperature will not be sufficient to overcome the initially cold temperature of the food and the cooking times will be greatly delayed. Even a simple egg dish will not turn out as you expected it to if the eggs are at fridge temperature when put into the Steam Oven. And no, just removing the egg from the shell does not mean the egg is now at room temperature.

Fill the Water Reservoir prior to pre-heating your Steam Oven. Each time you have to open the oven door, the inside temperature drops 30% so it is vital that door openings during the cooking process are kept to a minimum.

Follow these 3 "must do's" to minimise food wastage.

Steamed Up

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