



Knife Skills and Wild Game with Chef Evan Michaelson
July 12, 2025

Menu

Rosemary focaccia with roasted beetroot hummus, seared venison fillet
and foraged herbs

Marinated grilled Venison loin with Winter Slaw

Tagliatelle with venison osso bucco

Plant-based Chocolate Mousse

Hibiscus and Wild berry kombucha punch



Roasted beetroot hummus

3 medium roasted beetroots (I wrap them in foil and bake at 200c for a half hour until tender)

1 15-oz. can cooked chickpeas, drained, 1 3/4 cup)

1 large lemon (zested)

1/2 large lemon (juiced)

1 healthy pinch salt and black pepper

2 large cloves garlic (minced)

2 heaping Tbsp tahini

1/8-1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

Method:

1. Once your beet is cooled and peeled, quarter it and place it in your food processor. Blend until smooth.
2. Add remaining ingredients except for olive oil and blend until smooth.
3. Drizzle in olive oil as the hummus is mixing.
4. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed, adding more salt, lemon juice, or olive oil if needed. If it's too thick, add a bit of water.
5. Will keep in the fridge for up to a week.



Marinated grilled Venison backstrap/loin with Winter Slaw

Adapted from Mark Kempson, head chef at Michelin-starred Kitchen W8 in London.

Venison is lean, healthy and bursting with protein (much more than most other meats we eat). Often, it's overcooked. It's a very lean meat so it's important to either marinate it, then flash cook the more tender cuts like loin and fillet, used here.

For the venison:

- 500g venison loin, silver skin removed.
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper
- 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 ½ tsp finely chopped rosemary
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 minced clove of garlic
- Zest of 1 orange
- Juice of 1 orange
- Sea salt



For the winter slaw:

- 1 small turnip
- 1 red or green apple
- 1 carrot (yellow and orange if you have both, for colour)
- 1 small red onion
- ½ small savoy or green cabbage
- Dressing: 10ml cider vinegar, 50g mayonnaise, 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Salt & pepper

Method:

1. For the venison, make the marinade by whisking together all the ingredients, apart from the salt. Pour over the venison loin in a suitable sized dish. Cover and allow to marinate for 12 hours in the fridge. I recommend turning the venison once during the marinating.
2. To make the slaw, peel the vegetables and finely shred or julienne; season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Allow to sit for 5 minutes and then gently squeeze out any juice.
3. Mix the dressing ingredients, taste for balance and seasoning, then add to the vegetables. Mix well, adjust the seasoning and set aside until serving.
4. To cook venison medium rare, remove the venison from the fridge 2 hours before cooking. Preheat a cast iron pan or barbecue. Remove the venison loin from the dish and scrape off all the marinade. Season the venison with sea salt and cook on all sides until slightly brown, roughly 3 minutes per side depending on the size of your loin. Remove from the heat and allow to rest for 8 minutes before carving. Or you might also wish to finish the meat in the oven to make sure it's cooked through. Place in a preheated oven at 140°C (normal) | 120°C (fan) | gas mark 1. After you've browned the meat in a heavy based frying pan over a high heat, place in the oven for 4 minutes, turn and cook for a further 4 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes. Again, the timing really depends on the size of your meat!
5. Carve the venison into even sized pieces and put it onto a large, warmed platter. Serve immediately with the winter slaw.



Tagliatelle with venison osso bucco, inspired by recipe for beef brisket in Cuisine Mag., 23 Jun 2025 (serves 4)

1.5kg venison shoulder or osso bucco (on the bone)

75g plain (all-purpose) flour seasoned with

salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons mild olive oil

1 litre beef stock

500ml red wine

¼ teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns

4 cloves

4 star anise

4 cardamom pods

½ tsp cinnamon

1 tablespoon coriander seeds

4 thick slices fresh ginger, skin on

3 thyme sprigs

400g fresh pasta

freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano, to serve

SPICED SOFRITO

1 brown onion, diced

1 carrot, diced

1 celery stalk with leaves, diced 4 garlic cloves, chopped ¼ teaspoon dried chilli flakes ¼ teaspoon fennel seeds

**Method:**

1. Make the sofrito by sauteeing onion, carrot and celery in olive oil. Then add the chili and fennel seeds.
2. Wash the meat and pat it dry with a paper towel. If you have a large piece, cut into smaller pieces. Roll the meat in the seasoned flour and shake off any excess. Heat the oil in a large enamelled cast-iron casserole pot over a medium-high heat and sear on all sides until golden brown.
3. Turn the heat down to medium, add the spiced sofrito ingredients, nuzzling them in and around the meat. Gently cook for about 2 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat, then add the stock, wine and all of the spices and herbs. Cover the pot and transfer to the oven to cook for 4 hours. (Alternatively, continue to cook it on the stovetop over a low heat for the same amount of time.)
4. When it is ready, it's time to shred the meat. Remove the meat from the pot and use two forks to shred it apart. Return the shredded meat to the pot and keep it warm on the stovetop while you prepare the pasta.
5. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, add salt and cook the pasta until just before al dente. Add the pasta to the pot with the brisket and stir. Cover and rest for a few minutes.

To serve, divide between bowls. Don't forget to offer a big bowl of freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano for everyone to help themselves.



Plant-based chocolate mousse

- ¾ cup / 180 ml (room temp) aquafaba from low-sodium canned chickpeas
- 1 tsp lemon/lime juice or scant ½ tsp cream of tartar
- 140 g / 5 oz dark 70% cacao vegan chocolate
- 10 g / 2 tsp coconut oil (to help with chocolate seizing)
- 25 g / 2 tbsp caster (superfine) sugar (optional, adjust to taste)
- Pinch salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

GARNISH (optional)

- 1 tbsp chocolate shavings/cacao nibs
- Dried berry powder

Method:

1. Place broken up chocolate and coconut oil in a glass or metal bowl suspended over a water bath. Make sure the bowl with chocolate does not touch the water underneath. The key to success is not to overheat the chocolate and to be gentle with it – it's a temperamental ingredient.
2. Allow the water to come to a simmer slowly. Once it does, turn the heat off and allow the chocolate to melt in the residual heat.
3. Once chocolate looks melted, give it a slow and gentle stir. Take the bowl with chocolate off the heat and allow it to cool down – you want it as cool as possible but still liquid.
4. Once chocolate is almost cool, drain room temperature chickpea water (aquafaba) into large bowl. The bowl and the utensils you'll use to whip aquafaba need to be completely grease-free as even the tiniest grease residue



can prevent aquafaba from reaching stiff peaks. I usually wipe my bowl with lemon juice first.

5. Add acid (lemon/ lime juice or cream of tartar) to the chickpea water to stabilize the aquafaba – it helps to reach stiff peaks.
6. Using an electric egg whisk, whip chickpea water into stiff peaks – this is SUPER important as otherwise your mousse will deflate completely once the chocolate has been added. The best way to check if you have achieved stiff peaks is to invert the bowl with whipped aquafaba. If aquafaba slides down even a tiny bit, you are not there yet – keep on whipping until it does not move at all. The good news is that (as opposed to egg whites) aquafaba cannot be overwhipped.
7. Once you reach stiff peaks, start adding sugar, bit by bit, whipping the whole time. If sugar has caused the stiff peaks to perish, whip the mixture until you get stiff peaks again. Caster (also known as superfine) sugar or icing sugar work well, other sugars are known to make aquafaba deflate. Add the salt and the vanilla, and blend in well.
8. Check that the chocolate has cooled down sufficiently – it should not be warm to the touch or else chocolate is likely to seize and you will end up with grainy mousse.
9. Gently and gradually fold a portion (approx. a third) of melted chocolate into whipped aquafaba – using a silicone spatula and a gentle folding motion. Continue adding the chocolate to the aquafaba in two-three more batches until all of it has been incorporated. Do not worry if your fluffy mixture deflates a bit once all of the chocolate has been added – that's perfectly normal – but you should still see plenty small bubbles in the mixture. By the time you've added all of your melted chocolate, the mousse MAY have more of a pourable than spoonable consistency – that's ok.
10. Divide the mixture between 4 glasses. Once in glass, decorate as you like.
11. Put glasses into the fridge overnight for the mousse to set.



NOTES

SEIZED CHOCOLATE – dark chocolate isn't an easy to work with ingredient as it is prone to seizing (i.e. it turns grainy and oily). I know that it's frustrating, but it's something that may happen regardless of whether you make a chocolate mousse with aquafaba or whether you make it in a traditional French way (using eggs). Like with most things, it takes some practice to be able to avoid it.

Here are some common reasons WHY CHOCOLATE TENDS TO SEIZE:

- being exposed to heat for too long
- being exposed to too intense heat (I therefore do not recommend using microwave to melt it)
- stirring too much or too quickly
- due to coming into contact with even a drop of water
- due to a thermic shock between ingredients (aquafaba needs to be as close in temperature to the chocolate as possible)

To minimise the risk of CHOCOLATE SEIZING:

- melt the chocolate slowly and using as little heat as possible (switch the heat off once the water barely starts to simmer)
- stir gently and as little as you can get away with
- make sure aquafaba and melted chocolate are at similar temperatures

Recipe adapted from <https://www.lazycatkitchen.com/fluffy-vegan-chocolate-mousse/>