CHARLIE

A STRESS-FREE CHRISTMAS GUIDE

Christmas with Charlie

Christmas cooked in your Charlie

The whole lunch, from a smoked trout starter to the last spoonful of gravy, with the timings to cook it all in the Charlie oven and enjoy the day with your guests.



Recipes by Chef Mark O'Brien

MASTERCHEF: THE PROFESSIONALS FINALIST 2026

Luxury outdoor cooking. Made easy.

Leave it to Charlie.

A Charlie Charcoal Oven holds a whole Christmas lunch at once. The turkey legs confit low and slow while the crown roasts above them, and in the last hour the potatoes crisp, the parsnips turn sticky with maple and the sprouts catch at the edges. You get to be with your guests.

This is Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu, put in order for lunch at 2pm. Mark reached the final of MasterChef: The Professionals in 2026. Eating at 1pm or 3pm? Move every time by the same hour.

At a glance

1. **Christmas Eve morning:** joint and cure the turkey, cure the trout, boil the potatoes and brown the butter.
2. **Christmas Eve evening:** light Charlie, smoke the trout, roast the bones for the gravy and save their fat for the legs, bake the stuffing and make the cranberry sauce.
3. **Christmas Day, 09:00:** turkey legs in at 140°C (285°F).
4. **11:00:** the crown joins them, on the rack directly above.
5. **12:30:** the heat goes up to darken the turkey skin. Smoked trout and fizz with your guests.
6. **13:00:** turkey out to rest for 40 minutes to an hour, and the sides go in.
7. **14:00:** carve and sit down.

How the day works

The effort happens on Christmas Eve, so Christmas Day is mostly moving racks and pouring drinks. Charlie holds a steady low heat for hours, so the turkey looks after itself while you're with your guests.

How many it feeds

Everything serves 8, with leftovers, apart from the parsnips, which serve 6 to 8. Turkey sandwiches on Boxing Day are part of the plan.

The menu

- Hot Smoked Trout with Horseradish Cream and Watercress Salad
- Turkey Crown with Slow Roast Legs
- Lemon and Brown Butter Crispy Potatoes
- Maple and Pecan Roast Parsnips
- Sausage, Cheese and Onion Stuffing
- Chilli and Sesame Roast Sprouts
- Roast Turkey Gravy
- Fresh Cranberry Sauce

Temperatures are oven temperatures unless they say "in the thickest part". A probe thermometer is the one bit of kit worth having in your pocket all day.

GET READY

Kit and shopping

Have the kit ready the week before and the shopping in by the 23rd.

KIT	HOW MANY	WHAT IT'S FOR
Charlie Charcoal Oven	1	The whole lunch
Charlie Oven Cooking Rack	2	One for the turkey crown, and one to hold the stuffing in its ovenproof dish
Flat Bed Plancha Rack	2 or 3	You need at least two of these: one for the potatoes and one for the sprouts. A third is handy for the parsnips, or use any roasting tray. The raised edges hold the butter, oil and maple
Deep Roasting Tray Rack	1	The turkey bones on Christmas Eve, then the legs in their goose fat
Perforated Plancha Rack	1	The trout, smoked on Christmas Eve
Oven Detachable Drip Tray	1	Catches the goose fat when you pull a rack out to check
Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm	1	Lifting the legs out of hot fat and turning potatoes
Probe thermometer	1	Tells you when the turkey, trout and stuffing are done
Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal	About 1¼ footballs	Half a football on Christmas Eve, three quarters of a football on the day

Shopping list

Everything for all eight of Mark's recipes.

BUTCHER AND FISHMONGER

- [ ] 1 whole turkey, about 5 to 6 kg
- [ ] 1 kg side of trout
- [ ] 500 g sausage meat
- [ ] 250 g goose fat

FRUIT AND VEG

- [ ] 2 kg new potatoes
- [ ] 1.5 to 2 kg parsnips
- [ ] 2 kg Brussels sprouts
- [ ] 600 g leeks
- [ ] About 12 shallots
- [ ] 500 g watercress
- [ ] 1 bunch of spring onions
- [ ] 2 bulbs of garlic
- [ ] 3 red and green chillies
- [ ] 3 lemons
- [ ] 2 oranges
- [ ] 1 Granny Smith apple
- [ ] Small bunches of thyme, dill (or chives) and parsley, and a bunch of rosemary

DAIRY AND EGGS

- [ ] 750 g butter
- [ ] 200 g double cream
- [ ] 50 g sour cream
- [ ] 200 g smoked Cheddar
- [ ] 3 eggs

BAKERY

- [ ] 1 loaf of good quality brown bread, for the trout. Shop bought is fine, or bake our Irish Brown Bread
- [ ] 1 loaf of bread a few days old, for the stuffing

STORE CUPBOARD

- [ ] 300 g fine salt, for the cures
- [ ] Flaky sea salt and black pepper
- [ ] 200 g dark brown sugar
- [ ] 200 g light brown sugar
- [ ] 100 g caster sugar
- [ ] 50 g plain flour
- [ ] 15 g fennel seeds
- [ ] 1 tsp dill seeds
- [ ] 100 g sesame seeds
- [ ] 300 g pecans
- [ ] 200 g maple syrup
- [ ] 150 g rapeseed oil, plus a little extra
- [ ] 75 g extra virgin olive oil
- [ ] 100 g sesame oil
- [ ] 50 ml soy sauce
- [ ] 100 g horseradish sauce
- [ ] 25 g mayonnaise
- [ ] 100 g dried cranberries
- [ ] A handful of dry wood chips

FREEZER

- [ ] 1 kg frozen cranberries

DRINKS

- [ ] A bottle of good white wine for the gravy, and one for the cook

24 DECEMBER

Christmas Eve

By bedtime the turkey is curing; the smoked trout, stuffing, cranberry sauce, gravy stock and the fat for the legs are in the fridge; and the potatoes are ready to crisp.

Morning: prep

TIME	WHAT TO DO	WHERE
08:00	Joint the turkey: wing tips off, legs off, spine out, crown left on the bone. Leave the wishbone in; it comes out easily when you carve. Keep every bone and scrap for the gravy	Kitchen
08:30	Rub the crown and legs all over with the salt and dark sugar cure. Into the fridge for their 24 hour spa treatment	Fridge
08:45	Cure the trout: rub it with the salt, sugar, lemon zest, fennel seeds and dill seeds, wrap it tightly and chill for 8 hours	Fridge
09:00	Boil the new potatoes until just tender, drain well and chill overnight. Dry potatoes crisp, wet ones steam	Hob, then fridge
09:45	Brown the butter for the potatoes in a big pan, whisking until the centre turns mahogany. Cool it and chill	Hob, then fridge

Then, at your own pace: make the horseradish cream, peel and cut the parsnips, trim and halve the sprouts, toast and roughly chop the pecans, and mash the butter and flour into a paste for the gravy.

Evening: bake, roast, simmer

TIME	WHAT TO DO	OVEN	WHERE
16:00	Make the stuffing: soften the leeks in butter, fold everything into the egg and cream, add the sausage meat and pack it into an ordinary ovenproof dish	Off	Kitchen
16:30	Light Charlie with about half a football of charcoal. Door closed, both vents fully open	Heating	Charlie
16:45	Unwrap the trout, rinse it lightly under cold water and pat it dry. Skin side down on the greased Perforated Plancha Rack	Heating	Kitchen
16:50	At about 150°C (300°F), set both vents to the hold position. A handful of wood chips on the charcoal, trout in and door closed	160°C (320°F)	Upper
17:00	Cranberry sauce: orange zest and juice, sugar and both lots of cranberries in a saucepan, with a splash of water if the oranges aren't juicy. Simmer gently, crushing some berries as they pop	160°C (320°F)	Hob
17:15	Trout out when it's deep golden and 60°C (140°F) in the thickest part, or starts to flake when pressed with a fork. Cool, then chill. Both vents fully open	Rising	Fridge
17:25	Cranberry sauce off the heat when a spoon pulled through leaves a trail that fills slowly. Taste for sugar, cool, then chill	Rising	Fridge
17:30	At about 190°C (375°F), set both vents to the hold position. Turkey bones into the Deep Roasting Tray Rack on the lowest rack, where it's hottest. Stuffing in on the middle rack	200°C (390°F)	Low and middle
18:15	Bones very dark: pour off the fat and chill it for the turkey legs. A splash of water into the tray and back in for 5 minutes to loosen the sticky bits	200°C (390°F)	Low
18:20	Bones and sticky bits into a big pot with the wine, cover with water and simmer for 2 hours, skimming as you go. Onion and shallot skins and herb stalks in too	200°C (390°F)	Hob
18:30	Stuffing out when firm, golden and 75°C (165°F) in the middle. Cool, then chill. Push both vents in fully to put Charlie to bed	Off	Fridge
20:20	Strain the stock, reduce it by about a third, then cool and chill. Mulled wine while it bubbles is allowed	Off	Hob, then fridge

25 DECEMBER

Christmas Day

The turkey legs go in at 09:00, the crown at 11:00, and the whole bird comes out at 13:00 to rest for 40 minutes to an hour. Until 12:30, Charlie needs about ten minutes of your attention an hour.

Where everything goes

Upper racks are gentler, lower racks hotter. Charlie has nine rack positions; these are the four that do the work.

POSITION	09:00 TO 13:00	13:00 TO 14:00
Top	Empty, then the Flat Bed Plancha Rack heating from 12:35	Potatoes on the Flat Bed Plancha Rack
Upper middle	Empty	Sprouts on a Flat Bed Plancha Rack
Middle	The crown on a Cooking Rack from 11:00, directly above the legs	Parsnips
Lower middle	The legs in their goose fat, catching every drip	Stuffing, reheating

The heat through the day

WHEN	OVEN	WHAT'S HAPPENING
08:15 to 12:30	140°C (285°F)	Low and slow. The legs confit, the crown roasts gently above them and drips into them.
12:30 to 13:00	Rising to 180°C (355°F)	Vents open for the last 30 minutes to darken the turkey skin
13:00 to 13:55	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	The turkey rests; the potatoes, parsnips, sprouts and stuffing take over

The trout is smoked on Christmas Eve and served cold, which keeps Christmas Day simple. If you'd rather serve it warm, smoke it once the turkey is out at 13:00 and serve the starter at 13:30.

25 DECEMBER

The timings

For lunch at 2pm.

TIME	WHAT TO DO	OVEN	WHERE
08:15	Light Charlie with about three quarters of a football of charcoal, including last night's leftovers. Door closed, both vents open	Heating	Charlie
08:30	Turkey out of the fridge. Rinse the cure off the crown and legs and pat them dry. Crown back in the fridge	Heating	Kitchen
08:35	At about 130°C (265°F), set both vents to the hold position	140°C (285°F)	Charlie
09:00	Legs snugly into the Deep Roasting Tray Rack with the shallots, thyme, goose fat and rapeseed oil. Pour the fat saved from the gravy bones over them. Close the door and go and open a present	140°C (285°F)	Lower middle
09:30	Crown out of the fridge. Push the butter under the skin	140°C (285°F)	Kitchen
11:00	Crown onto a Cooking Rack directly above the legs, so its juices drip into them	140°C (285°F)	Middle
11:30	Stuffing, potatoes, brown butter and cranberry sauce out of the fridge	140°C (285°F)	Kitchen
12:30	A few chunks of charcoal on and both vents fully open for the turkey's last 30 minutes. Fizz poured, salad dressed, bread toasted	Rising	Charlie
12:35	Flat Bed Plancha Rack onto the top runners to heat	Rising	Top
12:40	Starter: smoked trout from the fridge, horseradish cream, watercress salad and toast, served round Charlie with a glass in hand	Rising	Outside
12:45	At about 170°C (340°F), set the vents to hold	180°C (355°F)	Charlie
13:00	Probe the turkey: breast 68°C (155°F), legs 85 to 90°C (185 to 195°F). Crown out to rest under foil for 40 minutes to an hour; legs out to rest in their hot fat. Potatoes crushed onto the hot plancha, brown butter spooned over	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Top
13:05	Parsnips in with the rapeseed oil	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Middle
13:15	Stuffing in to reheat for 30 to 40 minutes. Gravy stock back on the hob to come to the boil	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Lower middle, hob
13:25	Sprouts in, cut side down, with the rapeseed oil	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Upper middle
13:30	Turn the potatoes as they darken. Pecans and maple syrup over the parsnips	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Charlie
13:40	Sesame oil, seeds, chillies and soy through the sprouts. Whisk the butter and flour paste into the boiling gravy a spoonful at a time, then pour in the turkey's resting juices	180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Charlie and hob
13:55	Everything out. Flaky salt and lemon over the potatoes, and listen for the sizzle. Parsley through the sprouts. Stuffing 75°C (165°F) in the middle. Both vents in fully	Off	Kitchen
14:00	Carve the crown, pull the legs and sit down		Table

With cold racks going in, the climb from 140°C (285°F) to 180°C (355°F) takes about 15 minutes.

MAKE IT SOCIABLE

Jobs to hand out

A guest with a job is a happy guest, and one who isn't asking whether lunch is ready yet.

JOB	WHEN	WHO SUITS IT
Fizz	From 12:30	Whoever arrives first
Salad dresser	12:30	The one with opinions about vinaigrette
Toast	12:30	Anyone who won't wander off mid slice
Temperature check	13:00	A grown-up on the probe, with children calling out the numbers: 68°C (155°F) and 85 to 90°C (185 to 195°F)
Sprouts	13:40	The person who says they don't like sprouts. These ones change minds
Gravy	13:40	A steady arm and a whisk
Carving	14:00	Whoever brought the best bottle

The cook's only job after 14:00 is to sit down and enjoy it.

IF THINGS GO SIDEWAYS

They rarely do in a Charlie, but here's what to do if they do.

Turkey done early

Cover it with foil and a tea towel. It stays hot for a good while, and the meat only gets juicier.

Turkey running late

Carve the crown first and send the legs back in for 10 minutes.

Oven running too hot

Take a rack out, or slide in a deep metal tray of cold water. Closing the vents works too, just slowly.

Oven dropping on the long cook

Add a few chunks of charcoal, open both vents fully, then set them back once you're 10°C (20°F) short of where you want to be.

Fat flare in the oven

Keep the door shut and close both vents. Never use water.

Rain, wind or sleet

Carry on. The cooking chamber doesn't mind the weather.

Short of space

The stuffing and cranberry sauce are made the day before, so they only need a rack at the very end.



MEET THE CHEF

Mark O'Brien

Mark reached the final of MasterChef: The Professionals in 2026, the first Irish chef to get there. After more than ten years in top London kitchens, he brings serious chef skills to his love of American BBQ and cooking over charcoal.

His Charlie Oven masterclasses book up fast, and this is the Christmas menu he teaches in them.

MARK O'BRIEN'S CHRISTMAS MENU

The recipes

01 Hot Smoked Trout with Horseradish Cream and Watercress Salad

02 Turkey Crown with Slow Roast Legs

03 Lemon and Brown Butter Crispy Potatoes

04 Maple and Pecan Roast Parsnips

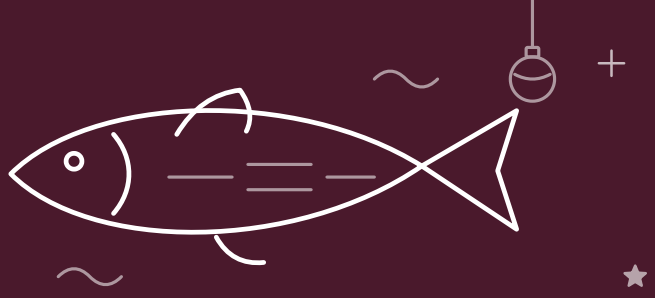
05 Sausage, Cheese and Onion Stuffing

06 Chilli and Sesame Roast Sprouts

07 Roast Turkey Gravy

08 Fresh Cranberry Sauce

09 Mince Pies with French Sablé Pastry · a bonus bake from the Charlie kitchen



STARTER | ABOUT 25 MINUTES | SERVES 8 AS A STARTER

Hot Smoked Trout with Horseradish Cream and Watercress Salad

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

A whole side of trout, cured with lemon and fennel, then smoked until it turns a deep golden colour. With the door closed, the smoke stays wrapped around the fish, so it takes on colour quickly and the flesh stays moist. Serve it warm or cold on sharing plates with horseradish cream and an apple and watercress salad, with toasted brown bread on the side.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
160°C (320°F)	Upper rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal, plus a handful of dry wood chips for smoke

INGREDIENTS

For the trout

- 1 kg side of trout
- 100 g fine salt
- 100 g caster sugar
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 15 g fennel seeds
- 1 tsp dill seeds

For the horseradish cream

- 100 g horseradish sauce
- 50 g sour cream
- 25 g mayonnaise
- A few sprigs of dill (or half a bunch of chives or parsley)

For the salad

- 500 g watercress
- 1 Granny Smith apple
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 75 g extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper

To serve

- 1 loaf of good quality brown bread (shop bought is fine)

From the Charlie range: Perforated Plancha Rack, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Cling film, probe thermometer

Allergens: Contains fish, milk and egg. Horseradish sauce and mayonnaise may contain mustard. The bread contains gluten.

METHOD

1. **Make the cure.** Mix the sugar, salt, lemon zest, fennel seeds and dill seeds together.
2. **Prepare the trout.** Remove any bones, excess fat and silverskin.
3. **Cure the trout.** Rub the trout all over with the cure. Wrap it tightly in cling film, place it in a tray and leave it in the fridge for 8 hours.
4. **Rinse and dry.** Unwrap the trout and rinse it lightly under cold water. Pat it dry and lay it skin side down on the greased Perforated Plancha Rack.
5. **Smoke the trout.** Scatter a handful of wood chips on the charcoal, slide the rack onto the upper runners of the Charlie at about 160°C (320°F) and close the door. The trout is done when it turns a deep golden colour and reads 60°C (140°F) in the thickest part. No probe? Press it with a fork: when it starts to flake, it's ready.
6. **Make the horseradish cream.** Finely chop the dill (or chives or parsley) and mix it with the horseradish sauce, sour cream and mayonnaise. Mix well and season with salt.
7. **Make the salad.** Cut the apple into matchsticks and put them in a bowl with the watercress. Dress with the lemon juice and olive oil and season well with salt and pepper.
8. **Toast the bread.** Cut the bread into slices and toast them.
9. **Serve.** Serve the trout warm or cold on sharing plates with the watercress salad, toasted brown bread and horseradish cream.

TIPS

- A probe thermometer is the surest test: take the trout out as soon as the thickest part reaches 60°C (140°F).
- Start the cure in the morning for an evening meal, or late the night before for lunch.
- Serve it warm from the oven, or smoke it the day before and serve it cold from the fridge. Don't reheat it, as it loses its texture.
- Fancy baking your own? Our Irish Brown Bread is made for this. Find it at charlieoven.com/blogs/charcoal-recipes/irish-brown-bread

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 160°C (320°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open. Add a handful of dry wood chips to the fire just before the trout goes in, so the oven is full of smoke.

MAIN | ABOUT 4 HOURS, PLUS 40 MINUTES TO AN HOUR RESTING | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Turkey Crown with Slow Roast Legs

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Cooking the crown and legs separately is how chefs get both right: the breast stays moist and the legs turn soft and tender. The bird is cured in salt and dark sugar for a day, which seasons it right through, then rinsed and dried before it goes in. The legs confit slowly in goose fat beneath the crown, catching its juices as it roasts.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
140°C (285°F), then 180°C (355°F) for the last 30 minutes	Legs in their dish on the lower middle rack, crown on the rack above	About three quarters of a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole turkey, about 5 to 6 kg
- 200 g dark brown sugar
- 200 g fine salt
- 200 g butter, softened
- 250 g goose fat, plus a little rapeseed oil
- About 12 shallots, peeled
- Small bunch of thyme

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 140°C (285°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open. For the last 30 minutes, add a few chunks of charcoal if the fire has burned low and open both vents fully. Set them back to the hold position once the oven reaches 180°C (355°F).

From the Charlie range: Charlie Oven Cooking Rack, Deep Roasting Tray Rack, Oven Detachable Drip Tray, Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Roasting tray (if not using the Deep Roasting Tray Rack), heavy knife, probe thermometer, foil

Allergens: Contains milk.

METHOD

1. **Prepare the bird.** Make sure the cavities are empty. Cut off the first two joints of each wing, leaving the drumette.
2. **Remove the legs.** Run a knife between each thigh and the body of the bird. Keep cutting down between the two until you reach the thigh joint, then cut through it. Remove each leg cleanly.
3. **Remove the spine.** Turn the bird upside down so the spine faces up. With a heavy knife, cut down each side of the spine, leaving the breast on the bone. The spine should come away in one piece.
4. **Cure the turkey.** Mix the salt and sugar, rub it all over the crown and legs and refrigerate for 18 to 24 hours.
5. **Rinse and dry.** Rinse the cure off the crown and legs under cold water and pat them dry.
6. **Start the legs.** Put the legs snugly in a Deep Roasting Tray Rack with the shallots, thyme, goose fat and rapeseed oil, so they confit. Cook at about 140°C (285°F) for 2 hours.
7. **Add the fat from the gravy bones.** Pour the fat from the roasted gravy bones over the legs.
8. **Add the crown.** Take the crown out of the fridge an hour or two before it goes in. Push the butter under the skin and sit the crown on a Cooking Rack directly above the legs, so its juices drip into them. Cook for about 1½ hours.
9. **Turn up the heat.** Bring the Charlie up to 180°C (355°F) for the last 30 minutes to darken the skin.
10. **Check it's done.** The breast should reach 68°C (155°F) and the legs 85 to 90°C (185 to 195°F), with golden skin all over. Lift the legs out and leave them to rest in their hot fat. Rest the crown under foil for 40 minutes to an hour before carving. The breast keeps rising as it rests and should be over 70°C (160°F) when you carve.

TIPS

- Mark starts the cure on Christmas Eve morning, ready to cook on Christmas Day.
- Leave the wishbone in. On a turkey it sits so far back that cutting it out damages the breast, and it comes out easily when you carve.
- Never baste with the pan juices. They're half water, which softens the skin. Baste with fat only.
- Keep the spine, wing tips and trim you cut away: they make the base of the turkey gravy.
- While the turkey rests, the potatoes, parsnips and sprouts finish in the oven.

SIDE | 45 MINUTES TO 1 HOUR | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Lemon and Brown Butter Crispy Potatoes

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

New potatoes boiled the day before, crushed onto a hot plancha and roasted in nutty brown butter until crisp on both sides. The lemon goes on as they come out, sizzling into the butter to make its own dressing. In the Charlie the heat comes from the walls as well as the fire, so the potatoes brown evenly across the plancha.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Upper rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- 2 kg new potatoes
- 250 g butter
- 1 lemon
- Flaky sea salt

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 180°C (355°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open. Anywhere between 180 and 200°C (355 and 390°F) works.

From the Charlie range: Flat Bed Plancha Rack, Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Large pan for the potatoes, a large deep pan and a whisk for the butter

Allergens: Contains milk.

METHOD

1. **Boil the potatoes.** Put the potatoes in a pot of cold water and salt it well. Bring to the boil and cook until just tender.
2. **Chill.** Drain well, then chill overnight.
3. **Brown the butter.** Put the butter in a pan much bigger than you think you need, as it foams up a lot. Set it over a medium heat on the hob and whisk as it melts and starts to bubble. It starts pale yellow with big bubbles. Stay with it, as it can catch or boil over quickly.
4. **Watch the colour.** As it cooks, the butter turns golden and the bubbles settle into a tight foam. Keep whisking until the centre turns from golden to a deep mahogany brown.
5. **Cool it.** Take the pan off the heat straight away and keep whisking for 5 minutes while it cools.
6. **Heat the plancha.** Heat the Flat Bed Plancha Rack on the upper runners of the Charlie at 180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F).
7. **Crush and roast.** Crush the potatoes and lay them in a single layer on the hot plancha. Add enough brown butter to coat them.
8. **Turn them.** Flip the potatoes when they start to go dark underneath. Once they are brown on both sides, season well with flaky salt.
9. **Finish with lemon.** As you take them out of the oven, squeeze the lemon juice over the top. It will sizzle a little and make a dressing with the butter.

TIPS

- Chilling overnight dries the surface of the potatoes, so the crushed edges crisp rather than steam.
- Keep them to a single layer on the plancha so the edges crisp.

SIDE | 40 TO 50 MINUTES | SERVES 6 TO 8

Maple and Pecan Roast Parsnips

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Large chunks of parsnip roasted until golden, then tossed with maple syrup and toasted pecans and returned to the oven until the syrup turns to a sticky glaze. In the Charlie the heat comes from the walls as well as the fire below, so the parsnips colour evenly across the rack.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
200°C (390°F)	Middle rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 to 2 kg parsnips
- 100 g rapeseed oil
- Salt
- 300 g pecans
- 200 g maple syrup

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 200°C (390°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

From the Charlie range: Flat Bed Plancha Rack, Deep Roasting Tray Rack, Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

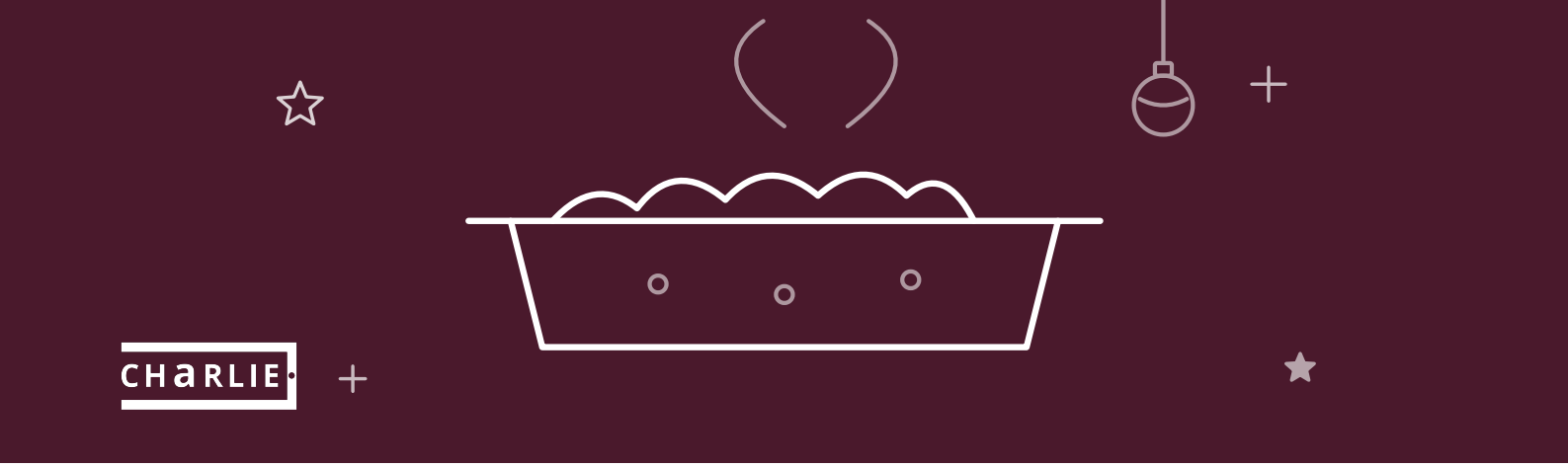
Allergens: Contains nuts (pecans).

METHOD

1. **Prepare the parsnips.** Peel the parsnips and cut them into large, even chunks.
2. **Toast the pecans.** Toast the pecans, then chop them roughly.
3. **Roast.** Spread the parsnips in a single layer on a Flat Bed Plancha Rack or a Deep Roasting Tray Rack and dress them with the rapeseed oil and a good pinch of salt. Roast in a hot Charlie at about 200°C (390°F), turning once, until golden.
4. **Glaze.** Add the pecans and maple syrup and mix well.
5. **Finish.** Keep cooking until the syrup has formed a glaze, then serve.

TIPS

- Cut the parsnips to the same size so they cook at the same rate.
- Don't move them too often or they break up. Let them steam off their moisture first so they crisp.
- Toast the pecans on the low rack while the turkey cooks. Keep an eye on them, as they colour quickly.
- Keep the parsnips in a single layer so they roast rather than steam. If they don't all fit, use a second rack.



SIDE | ABOUT 1 HOUR, PLUS REHEATING | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Sausage, Cheese and Onion Stuffing

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Torn bread soaked in egg and cream, folded through buttery leeks, sausage meat and smoked Cheddar, then baked until set with a golden top. Bake it the day before and reheats it while the turkey rests, which leaves the Charlie free on the day.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F)	Middle rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- 1 old loaf of bread
- 600 g leeks
- 1 bunch of spring onions
- 200 g double cream
- 3 eggs
- 500 g sausage meat
- 2 bulbs of garlic
- 200 g smoked Cheddar
- 250 g butter, plus a little oil
- 1 bunch of rosemary
- A few spoonfuls of turkey stock, from the gravy

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 180°C (355°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

From the Charlie range: Charlie Oven Cooking Rack, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Large pan, mixing bowl, ovenproof dish

Allergens: Contains gluten, milk and egg. Sausage meat may contain sulphites.

METHOD

1. **Cook the leeks.** Slice the leeks and start cooking them down in a pan with the butter and a little oil.
2. **Add the garlic.** Peel and crush the garlic and add it to the leeks.
3. **Add the rosemary.** Strip the rosemary from the stalks, chop it as finely as you can and add it to the pan.
4. **Make the custard.** In a separate bowl, mix the eggs and cream together.
5. **Add the cheese and spring onions.** Grate the cheese and finely slice the spring onions, then add both to the egg and cream.
6. **Add the bread.** Tear the bread into small pieces and add it to the egg and cream mix.
7. **Cool the leeks.** Finish cooking the leeks and let them cool slightly.
8. **Add the sausage meat.** Break the sausage meat into fairly large chunks, so it keeps its texture, and add it to the leeks.
9. **Combine.** Mix everything together and pack it into an ordinary ovenproof dish.
10. **Add a little stock.** Spoon a little turkey stock over the top, into each corner.
11. **Bake.** Put the dish on a Cooking Rack and bake in the Charlie at 180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F) for about an hour, until firm with a golden top and 75°C (165°F) in the middle. Cool, then chill overnight.
12. **Reheat.** On the day, reheat in the Charlie at 180 to 200°C (355 to 390°F) for 30 to 40 minutes, until piping hot and 75°C (165°F) in the middle.

TIPS

- Bake it the day before rather than mixing it ahead: left raw overnight, the bread breaks down.
- You can also bake it on the day alongside the turkey. At the turkey's lower temperature it takes longer, so check it reaches 75°C (165°F) in the middle.
- Any cheese that melts well works (Cheddar, Edam, Brie). Avoid hard cheeses like Parmesan.
- Bread a few days old soaks up the egg and cream best.

SIDE | 30 TO 45 MINUTES | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Chilli and Sesame Roast Sprouts

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Brussels sprouts halved and roasted until they start to give up their juices, then tossed with sesame oil, soy, chilli and raw sesame seeds and roasted on until the seeds turn golden. The charcoal heat browns the cut sides while the closed door keeps the centres tender.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
180°C (355°F)	Upper rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- 2 kg Brussels sprouts
- 50 g rapeseed oil
- Salt
- 100 g sesame oil
- 50 ml soy sauce
- 100 g sesame seeds
- 3 red and green chillies, sliced into rings (the seeds can stay in)
- Small bunch of parsley, finely chopped

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 180°C (355°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

From the Charlie range: Flat Bed Plancha Rack, Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

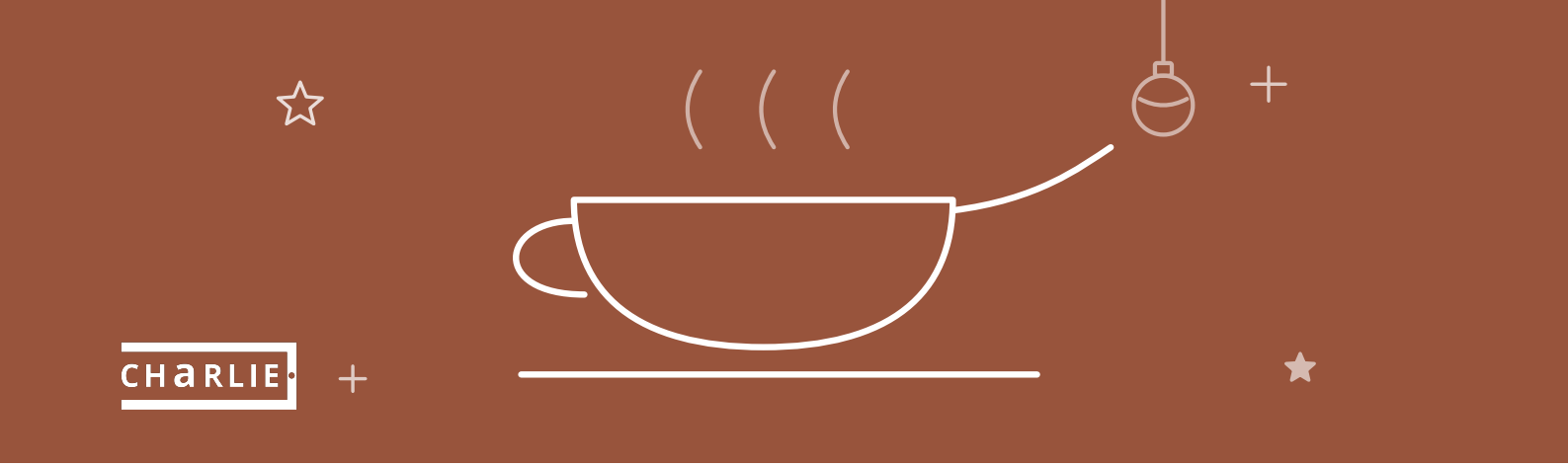
Allergens: Contains sesame and soy. Soy sauce usually contains gluten.

METHOD

1. **Prepare the sprouts.** Trim the outer leaves from the sprouts and cut them in half.
2. **Dress.** Spread them over the Flat Bed Plancha Rack, cut side down, and dress them well with the rapeseed oil and a good pinch of salt.
3. **Roast.** Cook on the upper runners of the Charlie at 180°C (355°F) until they start to sweat out their liquid.
4. **Add the flavourings.** Add the sesame oil, sesame seeds, chillies and soy sauce.
5. **Finish.** Keep cooking until the seeds are golden and the sprouts are cooked through. Toss through the parsley and serve.

TIPS

- Roast the sprouts cut side down in a single layer, so the flat plate browns the cut sides. For this quantity you may need two Flat Bed Plancha Racks.
- If your sesame seeds are already toasted, or black, add them at the end.
- Works with broccoli, cauliflower, kale or cabbage too.



SAUCE | ABOUT 3 HOURS | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Roast Turkey Gravy

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Gravy built from the bones up. The turkey bones roast in a very hot Charlie until deeply browned, which is where the flavour comes from, then simmer with white wine before being reduced and thickened with butter and flour. Charcoal heat from below and from the oven walls colours the bones far more than a domestic oven would.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
220°C (430°F) for roasting the bones	Lower middle rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal

INGREDIENTS

- The spine, wing tips and trim from the prepared turkey (not a whole carcass)
- 1 bottle of good white wine
- 50 g butter
- 50 g plain flour
- Salt and pepper

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 220°C (430°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

From the Charlie range: Deep Roasting Tray Rack, Charlie Oven Tongs 55cm, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Roasting tray, large stock pot, sieve, whisk

Allergens: Contains gluten and milk. The wine contains sulphites.

METHOD

1. **Make the thickener.** Mix the butter and flour together to form a paste.
2. **Roast the bones.** Roast the bones in a very hot Charlie at about 220°C (430°F) until very dark.
3. **Save the fat and loosen the tray.** Pour off the fat and keep it for the turkey legs. Add a splash of water to the tray and return it to the oven for 5 minutes to loosen the sticky bits.
4. **Start the stock.** Put the bones and the sticky bits from the tray in a large stock pot with the wine, then cover with water.
5. **Simmer.** Bring to a simmer on the hob and skim off any scum that rises to the top. Simmer for 2 hours. As you prepare the rest of your vegetables, add any trim or peelings to the pot. Onion and shallot skins and herb stalks give colour and flavour.
6. **Strain and reduce.** After two hours, pass the liquid through a sieve into another pan. Reduce it by about a third at a rolling boil.
7. **Thicken.** As it gets close to the colour and thickness you want, add a spoonful of the butter and flour paste and whisk well while it boils. Keep adding the paste bit by bit until you are happy with the thickness.
8. **Season and serve.** Season well and serve.

TIPS

- Use the spine, wing tips and trim from the turkey. As the turkey is prepared the day before, the stock can be made then too.

SAUCE | 20 TO 25 MINUTES | SERVES 8, WITH LEFTOVERS

Fresh Cranberry Sauce

From Chef Mark O'Brien's Christmas menu

Frozen cranberries for freshness and dried ones for a chewy sweetness, simmered with orange and light brown sugar until the berries pop and turn jammy. Mark makes it on the hob, or you can cook it in a skillet in the Charlie at 180°C (355°F) while the oven is lit for something else. It keeps well, so make it a day or two ahead.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
180°C (355°F)	Middle rack	None on the hob. In the Charlie, cook it while the oven is lit for something else

INGREDIENTS

- 2 oranges
- 200 g light brown sugar
- 100 g dried cranberries
- 1 kg frozen cranberries

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 180°C (355°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

From the Charlie range: Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Saucepan, zester, cast iron skillet and oven gloves (if cooking in the Charlie)

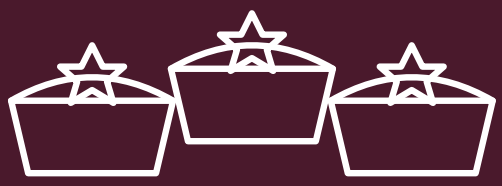
Allergens: None of the 14 main allergens.

METHOD

1. **Orange.** Zest and juice the oranges into a saucepan. Add a splash of water if the oranges aren't juicy.
2. **Add the rest.** Add the sugar and the dried and frozen cranberries.
3. **Cook.** Simmer gently on the hob, stirring now and then, until the frozen berries have softened and the dried ones have plumped up. Crush some of the berries with the spoon as they pop.
4. **Check it's ready.** It's ready when a spoon pulled through it leaves a trail that fills slowly. Taste and add more sugar if you like. Mark keeps it quite sharp.
5. **Cool and serve.** Take the pan off the heat. Allow to cool, then serve.

TIPS

- Make it a day or two ahead and keep it covered in the fridge.
- Already have the Charlie lit? Cook it in a cast iron skillet on a rack at 180°C (355°F), stirring once or twice. Lift it out with oven gloves, as the handle gets very hot.



DESSERT | 20 TO 25 MINUTES | MAKES 20 TO 24 SMALL PIES

Mince Pies with French Sablé Pastry

A bonus bake from the Charlie kitchen

A really good mince pie starts with the pastry. This one is a French pâte sablée, rich with butter, delicate and crumbly. Fill it with good shop-bought mincemeat or make your own. With the door closed, Charlie holds a steady 180°C (355°F) and bakes the pastry evenly from below and from the oven walls. Bake them on Christmas Eve while Charlie is lit for the stuffing.

OVEN TEMPERATURE	RACK	CHARCOAL
180°C (355°F)	Middle rack	About half a football of good quality lumpwood charcoal, or none extra if Charlie is already lit

INGREDIENTS

For the sablé pastry

- 300 g plain flour
- 200 g cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 100 g caster sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- Pinch of fine sea salt
- 1 to 2 tsp cold water, if needed
- Icing sugar, to finish

For the filling

- 1 to 2 jars of good brandy mincemeat, or homemade

Homemade mincemeat (optional)

- 150 g raisins, 100 g sultanas, 100 g currants
- 1 small Bramley apple, peeled and grated
- 75 g soft brown sugar
- 50 g each of mixed peel, vegetable suet and chopped almonds
- Zest and juice of 1 orange
- ½ tsp cinnamon, ¼ tsp ginger, pinch of nutmeg
- 50 ml brandy

From the Charlie range: Charlie Oven Cooking Rack, Stag British Premium Lumpwood Charcoal

You'll also need: Mince pie tin, round pastry cutter, rolling pin, cooling rack

Allergens: Contains gluten, milk and egg. Homemade mincemeat contains nuts and sulphites.

METHOD

1. **Make the pastry.** Rub the cold butter into the flour and salt until sandy, or pulse briefly in a food processor. Stir in the sugar, then the egg yolk, and bring together gently, adding a little cold water only if needed.
2. **Chill.** Flatten into a disc, wrap and chill for at least an hour, or overnight. Light Charlie meanwhile.
3. **Line the tin.** Roll the pastry to about 3 mm and cut rounds to line a mince pie tin without stretching.
4. **Fill and top.** Add a heaped teaspoon of mincemeat to each. Top with pastry stars, or full lids with a small steam hole. Chill for 15 minutes.
5. **Bake.** Bake on the middle rack at 180°C (355°F) for 20 to 25 minutes, until golden and bubbling.
6. **Serve.** Rest in the tin for 10 minutes, then lift onto a rack. Dust with icing sugar and serve warm with brandy cream.
7. **Homemade mincemeat.** Mix everything but the brandy in a covered ovenproof dish. Warm in Charlie at 110 to 120°C (230 to 250°F) for 1 to 1½ hours, stirring now and then. Cool, stir in the brandy and keep sealed in the fridge for a few days.

TIPS

- Keep the pastry cold and handle it as little as possible. That is what keeps a sablé short and crumbly.
- Baked pies freeze well. Warm them through gently in Charlie before serving.

Setting up Charlie

Light a small pyramid of charcoal in the centre of the grates with one or two natural firelighters. Close the door and open both vents fully. When the oven is about 10°C (20°F) short of 180°C (355°F), set both vents to the hold position, about 2.5 cm (1 in) open.

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