

frequent feasters

Dear Frequent Feasters,

The best of the season's greetings to you. I hope you've had a fabulous year and are saddling up for an even bigger and better one next year.

Well, my mission this year was to get all my Christmas shopping done before a hint of fake snow or a squeaky version of *Silent Night* could be heard over my local supermarket's PA... and I did it. It was all over before a horse had galloped at Flemington! To say I am delighted and a smidge smug about my achievement would be an understatement!

Now I have more time for catching up with friends and family – which is what I love most about this time of year, and of course making my edible gifts.

Cheers, Flip



food in focus: panforte



Panforte is one of my favourite Christmas foods. It's full of nuts, spices, glazed fruit, honey and sugar and only a small amount of flour.

Panforte is best eaten cut into very thin slices and served as a desert with a dessert wine, tea or coffee.

Panforte translates as "strong bread," due to its heavily spicy flavour. It was a specialty pastry from Siena in Italy and so it's sometimes called Siena Cake.

Its history dates back to the 13th century when legend has it that servants of one of the monasteries in Siena, were obliged to give the nuns specially prepared bread with pepper and honey. Later on, more spices were added and soon panforte crossed the boundaries of Siena and found its way into the homes of rich noble men in every part of Italy. Today – everyone gets to enjoy it! To make your own panforte, check out my recipe over the page.

buy what's in season?

- Plum pudding
- Mince pies
- Fruit cake
- Panforte
- Shortbread
- Turkey
- Ham
- Champagne
- Stollen
- Pashka

new

On-line ordering is now available! Our belief is eat like a king at breakfast, so be like a modern day king and click your fingers (on your keyboard) and order your favourite breakfast be delivered to your door. (We also deliver to houses, flats and shacks). With seven different muesli and porridge combinations there is something to suit all tastes and budgets.

<http://www.flipsmuesli.com.au>

do

Every Sunday at 3pm, Bob Valentine plays at The Great Provider's Gazebo on Beaconsfield Parade, Elwood. It's a perfect way to spend a lazy Sunday arvo with fine wine and food only an arm's length away!

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take,
but by the number of moments that take our breath away.

Anon

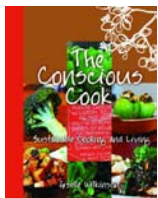
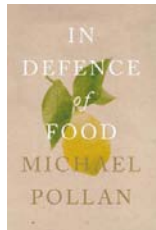
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gifts

I promised this edition would have some Christmas present suggestions, so here they are:

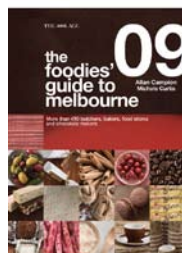
BOOKS:

"In Defence of Food" written by Michael Pollan tells us to 'vote with our forks'. Some tips are obvious but there are some great reminders and interesting facts. While I am not usually one for having Americans tell us what to do, this Berkeley Professor was in Australia mid-year for the Sydney Writers Festival and is articulate, humourous and logical when talking about what we should be eating.



Closer to home, "The Conscious Cook" is packed full of mouth watering recipes is by Giselle Wilkinson and published by Brolga. It will inspire you to start a veggie garden – no matter what the size of your backyard.

"The Foodies' Guide to Melbourne 2009" by Allan Campion and Michele Curtis is an excellent resource if you live in Melbourne but a brilliant gift to give to friends interstate so they know exactly where to find Melbourne's edible treasures. Chef's hat off to Allan and Michele for yet another brilliant book – although I suspect they have a lot of fun in the process. They have no doubts whatsoever that Melbourne retains its crown as the culinary capital of Australia.



BOOTS:

Wanna give something practical and powerful – and an original gift for yourself or someone else? Blackspot sneakers (which I am wearing right now!) are made from organic hemp uppers and recycled car tyre soles. They are environmentally sound and are considered the world's first global anti-brand. For orders, go to www.goodie.com.au.

FOOD:

Nothing beats a home made gift. They are both delicious and practical. Wrap them in clear cellophane with a nice red ribbon for the perfect gift. Here is a list to get your creative juices flowing - panforte, mince pies, shortbread*, rumballs, gingerbread houses, lemon cordial and fruit cake*.

* recipes available on website: Go to Frequent Feasters, Back Issues, Summer 2006 and Summer 07-08



make flip's panforte

Use baking dish size : 3 cms x 15 x 20

ingredients

1/3 cup plain unbleached flour
1 tablespoon carob (or cocoa)
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon mixed spice
100 grams mixed glazed cherries
100 grams mixed peel
50 grams glazed ginger (or 250 grams favourite glazed fruit ie., citron, figs, orange)
75 grams blanched almonds
75 grams hazelnuts
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup brown sugar
icing sugar for dusting

method

Grease and line a shallow baking tray (approx)

Preheat oven to 170 degrees / 325 F.

Toast almonds in either the oven for approx 5 minutes, frypan or microwave (high, 4 mins, checking after each minute) until golden brown.

Toast hazelnuts as above. Wrap hazelnuts in a teatowel and let stand for a minute, then rub to loosen skins. Remove as much skin as possible and disregard.

Combine flour, carob, spices, toasted nuts and all fruit in a bowl and mix well.

In a small saucepan add sugar and honey and over a medium-low heat stir until well combined and sugar has dissolved, approximately 5 minutes. Do not brown or burn this mixture.

Add to flour mixture and working quickly, stir until well combined.

Transfer mixture to prepared baking tray and cook for approx 30 minutes.

Allow to cool slightly in baking tray before turning out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Cut into desired shapes and package up.

cracker photo: freedigitalphotos.net

Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts.

Janice Maeditere