

# cook like a pro

Smart ways to improve your kitchen skills

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## COOK'S INGREDIENT MIRIN

Mirin is a sweet, syrupy liquid used in Japanese cooking, made from glutinous rice and distilled liquor that has fermented for around 60 days. The two most common types are hon and shin mirin. Hon mirin at 13% alcohol is sometimes referred to as a Japanese rice wine, but is only occasionally served as a drink. Shin mirin at 1% alcohol is only used in cooking. Mirin is a clear golden colour; it adds sweetness and balances out sauces, marinades and glazes that might be overpowered by salty flavours such as soy sauce, or sour ones such as rice vinegar. Hon mirin helps to mask the smell of very fishy dishes, and makes teriyaki sweet and sticky. It also adds shine to sauces, including those used on stir-fries and noodles. Used to season sushi rice, it helps to keep it soft yet firm.

Available in Japanese supermarkets like Wing Yip ([wingyipstore.co.uk](http://wingyipstore.co.uk)) as well as oriental sections in British supermarkets. Good quality mirin is made in the Mikawa region of Japan and is available from Clearspring ([clearspring.co.uk](http://clearspring.co.uk)). Another good brand is Yutaka (available from [tesco.com](http://tesco.com)).

## GASTRONERD CRUBEENS

The Irish word for pigs' trotters - traditionally salted, boiled then roasted. Sold as snacks in Irish pubs or on the street, they are now on menus such as Corrigan's in London, boned, crumbed and fried in small pieces.



## GADGET GURU CAKE TINS

Using the right cake tin will help you make the perfect cake. Spring-form tins are good for easy release and are watertight for more liquid batters, whereas loose-based tins work for stiffer batters. It is always a good idea to butter even non-stick tins before baking.

### Upside-down berry cake

1 hour 15 minutes ■ Cuts into 12 ■ EASY

**butter** 200g  
**golden caster sugar** 200g  
**eggs** 4  
**self-raising flour** 225g  
**ground almonds** 25g  
**frozen mixed berries** 200g, defrosted  
**golden syrup** 2 tbsps

■ Heat the oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Line a deep 20cm spring-form cake tin with paper and grease it. Beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs and then fold in the flour and almonds. Fold in enough water to make the mixture spoonable. Drain any excess juice off the berries and tip them into the base of the tin. Add the golden syrup, then spoon the cake mixture on top. Bake for 1 hour or until the cake is cooked through. Cool the cake in the tin, turn out and remove the paper.

■ PER SERVING 311 kcals, protein 5.1, carbs 35.5g, fat 17.5, sat fat 9.5g, fibre 1.2g, salt 0.53g

## HOW TO TIE A JOINT OF MEAT

Follow these steps to tie the fillet for Valentine Warner's recipe on page 30



1 For a flat cut of meat, such as breast of lamb or brisket, roll the piece up as tightly as possible. For fillets, trim neatly.



2 Start in the middle of the roll and tie the string around the joint and knot firmly. Trim off the ends.



3 Don't tie knots too tightly or the joint will pull out of shape. Continue along the length at 2.5cm intervals.

FOODIE WEBSITE [britishcheese.co.uk](http://britishcheese.co.uk) should appeal to regional enthusiasts with its recipes from Welsh rarebit to Wensleydale soufflé.