A Very Merry Christmas for One

If you are on your own this Christmas, it can be hard to decide what to cook. However, eating alone doesn’t mean you have to forgo your Christmas meal, but rather it may take a slightly different form.

Christmas Meal for One

Treat yourself. Choose something special, something that you don’t often get to eat, but also make sure that it’s manageable and won’t leave you frustrated with too much work in the kitchen.

Menu suggestion (see recipes below):

**Main**
- Tender baked chicken
- Vegetable roasties
- Stove top cranberry stuffing
- Green veggies or Garden salad

**Dessert**
- Mini Christmas pudding with custard

To keep your Christmas day relaxing, you can prepare some of the recipes the day before. For example, on Christmas Eve you can chop the vegetables for roasting, prepare the chicken pan, mix up the salad dressing and prepare the fruit for the Christmas pudding.
And don’t forget about presentation and atmosphere. Play your favourite music, set the table with nice napkins and candles, and use freshly cut flowers or incense for an inviting smell. You might even want to dress up.

![Image of a beautifully set table with candles and flowers](Picture courtesy of Annabel Langbein)

![Image of a beautifully set table with a Christmas card](Picture courtesy of stuff.co.nz)

**Christmas Day Activity Ideas**

Plan your day ahead and make it special. Below are some suggestions:

- Take a walk in the gardens or on the beach.
- Watch your favourite movie or read a relaxing book.
- Phone a long-lost friend or relative.
- Volunteer to help others less fortunate – City Mission 03 365 0635 or volunteer@citymission.org.nz

However your day unfolds, remember it is only one day.

**Happy cooking and Merry Christmas!**

![Image of a beautiful garden](Picture courtesy of CCC)
Tender baked chicken

This chicken breast adds a traditional element to your Christmas dinner. Covering the chicken during cooking keeps it moist and tender. Prepare your roasties and chicken so that they can cook in the oven at the same time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>1 Serve</th>
<th>2 Serves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken breast, bone and skin removed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>2 t</td>
<td>4 t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt and pepper</td>
<td>To taste</td>
<td>To taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil, dried</td>
<td>½ t</td>
<td>1 t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsley, dried</td>
<td>1 t</td>
<td>2 t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

1. Heat the oven to 200°C with a rack in the middle of the oven.
2. Prepare, either a baking tray and a sheet of non-stick baking paper to wrap chicken or a loaf tin and a sheet of tin foil to cover. Brush surfaces that will come in contact with chicken with 1 teaspoon olive oil; this prevents the chicken from sticking.
3. Brush the remaining oil over the chicken breast. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, basil and parsley or use any other favourite seasonings.
4. Place the chicken breast in the baking dish. Lay the baking paper, oil-side down, over the chicken. Tuck the edges into the pan and press the baking paper down so that it's snug around the chicken. The chicken breasts should be completely covered with the parchment.
5. Bake the chicken for 30-40 minutes. The juices will run clear and there will be no pink when the chicken is cooked.
6. Serve with a cranberry chutney. Tastes great with the stove-top stuffing

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN RECIPES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t = teaspoon</th>
<th>T = tablespoon</th>
<th>ml = millilitre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>g = gram</td>
<td>°C = degrees Celsius</td>
<td>cm = centimetre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Vegetable Roasties**

The perfect partner to your chicken – warming, sweet and a little bit crunchy. Left overs are great for a roast veggie salad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>1 Serve</th>
<th>2 Serves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A mix of pumpkin, kumara, yams, potato, red onion Cut in to 2-3 cm pieces.</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>2 cups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>1 T</td>
<td>2 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsamic vinegar</td>
<td>1 T</td>
<td>2 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon juice</td>
<td>1 T</td>
<td>2 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey or brown sugar</td>
<td>1 t</td>
<td>2 t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary, dried</td>
<td>¼ t</td>
<td>½ t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed herbs, dried</td>
<td>¼ t</td>
<td>½ t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt and pepper</td>
<td>To taste</td>
<td>To taste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method**

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Line a baking pan with baking paper.
3. In a bowl combine oil, vinegar, honey, rosemary, salt and pepper.
4. Add vegetables to oil mixture and mix to coat.
5. Put vegetable mix into baking pan and arrange in a single layer.
6. Roast for 30-40 minutes, turning every 10-15mins until vegetables are cooked and slightly browned.
7. Serve hot.
**Stove-top cranberry stuffing**

Enjoy delicious “stuffing” without the hassle of actually stuffing your chicken. Serve as an accompaniment. Prepare while chicken and roast vegetables are cooking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>2-3 Serves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onion, finely minced</td>
<td>½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried cranberries</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage, dried</td>
<td>½ t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyme, dried</td>
<td>½ t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parsley, dried</td>
<td>½ T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken stock</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table spread or butter</td>
<td>2 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stale wholemeal bread, toasted and cut into cubes</td>
<td>4 slices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method**

1. Add the onion, cranberries, herbs, stock and table spread to a pot. Heat on medium heat and bring to the boil.
2. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Stir in the bread cubes, cover and remove from heat. Let stuffing stand for 5-7 minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving.
4. Stuffing will keep in the fridge, covered for 2-3 days or can be frozen for later use.

**Side vegetables**

Don’t forget your greens (or your reds). Serve immediately after cooking.

**Suggestions:**

- Minted peas
- Fresh green beans
- Asparagus
- Baby beets (from a can) – nice cold or warmed through
**Fresh Garden salad**

For something a bit more Summery...

**Choose lettuce and at least three of the following ingredients:**

- spring onion, chopped
- celery, chopped
- radish, chopped
- tomato, sliced
- cucumber, sliced
- red, green or yellow pepper, sliced
- bean sprouts (mixed combo)
- gherkin, sliced
- carrot, grated
- parsley or chives, chopped

**Method**

1. Wash torn lettuce and other chosen ingredients well. Shake off excess water and place in a bowl.
2. Mix together and chill slightly before serving.
3. Either mix with dressing immediately before serving, or serve the dressing separately.
4. Use a pre-made dressing from the supermarket or make your own dressing using the following recipe.

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**French Dressing**  (makes ¾ to 1 cup)

**Ingredients**

- ½ to ¾ cup olive or salad oil
- ¼ cup vinegar
- 1 t prepared mustard
- ¼ t paprika
- 1 t clear honey or sugar
- salt and pepper

**Method**

1. Put all the ingredients in a screw-topped jar, adding salt and pepper to taste.
2. Shake well before serving.
3. Store unused dressing in the refrigerator.
Christmas pudding in a cup  
(1 generous serve or 2 modest serves)

**Ingredients**
- ½ cup dried mixed fruit (currants, raisins, mixed citrus peel, cranberries, glace cherries, dates, apricots)
- 1 T brandy or sherry (or 1 t brandy essence)
- 1 egg
- 1 T brown sugar
- ½ T table spread or butter
- 1 t cocoa
- 1 t mixed spice
- 1 T milk
- 1 T canola oil
- 2 T molasses or golden syrup

**Method**
1. Mix fruit and brandy in a cup, set aside for 10 mins (while you make the custard)
2. Mix in all remaining ingredients until a smooth batter is formed.
3. Microwave on high for 2 minutes
4. Run a knife around the inside of the cup to loosen sides of pudding.
5. Tip upside down onto serving plate
6. Serve with hot custard and garnish with fresh cherries, raspberries or strawberries

Custard in a cup

**Ingredients**
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 t white sugar
- 1 T cornflour
- ½ t vanilla extract
- 1 cup milk

**Method**
1. Mix the first 4 ingredients into a smooth paste
2. Add ¼ cup milk and mix into smooth paste (ensuring no lumps remain)
3. Add remaining milk, stir to combine
4. Microwave on high for 30 seconds then stir.
5. Microwave for a further 90 – 120 seconds, stirring every 30 seconds until thickened but not solid (needs to be of pouring consistency).
6. Set aside until pudding is ready. Pour gently over hot Christmas pudding.