

# XCentric Ideas

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two onions. One is a whole, golden-brown onion with some peeling skin, and the other is a sliced onion showing its white interior. The background is a light blue gradient.

“It's probably illegal to make soups, stews and casseroles without plenty of onions.”

Maggie Waldron, American author and editor

All photos my own

31 March 2012  
Volume 7 — Issue 3  
by  
ALMA PRETORIUS  
alma@xcentricideas.co.za  
www.xcentricideas.co.za

# Onion Tips

## ***How To Store***

Store onions in a cool, dry place, not in the fridge, and not near potatoes. Potatoes give off moisture and a gas that causes onions to spoil faster.

## ***Onion tears***

The more tears they cause, the more health benefits onions have. To stem the flood while you're chopping, try chilling onions for about a half hour before cutting, and slice them from the top, leaving the root end intact; it has the strongest concentration of eye-burning compounds. And if you chew gum, it will prevent tears.

## ***Raw onions***

If you want to use raw onions in a salad, cut the onions as you like, then soak them in whole (100%) milk overnight – it will sweeten them. Drain, rinse & pat dry with kitchen paper towel.

## ***Flu myth***

To keep colds & flu at bay, keep a whole, unprocessed onion in each room. If you see black spots or areas on your onion, you'll know they've absorbed many of the microbes in your home. Replace regularly.

## ***Onion danger***

Any unused raw onion is dangerous. Even if you keep it in Ziploc bag in the fridge. It attracts bacteria as soon as you cut it. So use it immediately or throw it away.



Onion Tarte Tatin

# Onion Tarte Tatin

4-5 onions, peeled, sliced into chunks (u can also use whole, peeled shallots)

Butter

Olive oil

Dried thyme

Salt, pepper

1 x Puff Pastry, defrosted

Preheat the oven to 200 oC (400 oF, Gas Mark 6).

Use an oven frying pan\* (a pan with no wooden handles). Melt butter & oil and fry onions till brown. Season and let it simmer for 5 minutes. Roll out the pastry a bit thinner, cut in a circle just a little bigger than your pan. Remove the pan from your stove, place the pastry on top of the onions and tuck the edges of the pastry down the pan. Bake the tart for 20-25 minutes, until pastry is crisp. Cool the tart in the pan for 5 minutes, then place a large plate over the pan and invert the tart onto it. Serve warm or cold – as a side or main dish.

*\*If you don't have such a pan, fry your onions, spoon it in a pie dish and top with the pastry and bake. My friend Pam used tinned tuna, mushrooms & onions and said it was lovely! U can use roasted baby tomatoes, steamed butternut/ cauliflower/ broccoli/ mushrooms ... let your imagination go wild!!*



Curried Onions & Eggs

# Curried Onions & Eggs

3 onions, peeled, sliced

Butter

Oil

3 tbsp curry powder (*any mixture – less or more according to your taste*)

1 tsp white vinegar

1 tsp brown sugar

Hard boiled eggs (chicken or quail)

Grated cheddar cheese

Fry the onions in the butter/oil mixture.

Stir continuously, add the curry powder, vinegar & sugar. Stir till the onions are nice and soft.

Spoon mixture into a pie dish.

*I used quail eggs.* Halve the hard-boiled eggs, place them cut side up, sprinkle the cheese over and bake in a hot oven till cheese is melted.

*Yummy as a side dish or as a main with a lovely green salad.*



Onion & Leek Quiche

# Onion & Leek Quiche

3 onions, peeled, big chunks  
2 leeks, rinsed, big chunks  
3 x-large eggs  
½ cup milk (*I used skim milk*)  
Salt, pepper, thyme, rosemary (*or any herbs you prefer*)  
1 tsp mustard (*any kind*)  
½ cup grated cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 180 oC.

Spray a big 6-muffin pan, or a smaller 12-muffin pan.

Fry the onions & leek till brown & soft, but not squishy.

Beat the eggs, mustard & milk together. Add the egg mixture to the onions & leeks, season, add the cheese and pour into the muffin pans. Bake for 30 min.

*Lovely on its own or perfect for a starter portion or a side dish.*



Onion Bread & Butter Pudding

# Onion Bread & Butter Pudding

Oil

3 long whole-wheat hotdog buns

2 small onions, chopped finely

Cumin seeds

Mustard seeds

Salt, pepper

½ cup grated cheddar

3 eggs

2 cups skim (or other) milk

Preheat your oven to 180 oC.

Tear off chunks of the hot dog rolls to fill your dish/ramekins.

Fry the onions in little bit oil with cumin & mustard seeds and season with salt & pepper.

Spoon onions over the bread chunks. Beat the eggs & milk and pour over the bread/onion mixture. Sprinkle the cheese on top and bake for 30 minutes.

*Lovely as a side dish to meat, poultry & fish.*

# Red Onion Marmalade



# Red Onion Marmalade

550 g red onions, thinly sliced  
120 g brown sugar  
125 ml red wine vinegar  
50 ml (about 3 tbsp) balsamic vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a large saucepan, combine the red onions and 2 tablespoons of the brown sugar. Cook over moderate heat for about 25 minutes or until the onions begin to caramelize. Add the vinegar and the rest of the brown sugar, stirring often until most of the liquid has evaporated (about 15 minutes).

Season to taste with salt and pepper and pot in sterilised jars. Keeps for three months in the fridge.

*Microwave recipe (devised myself):*

*In a large microwave ceramic bowl, combine the red onions and all the brown sugar. Microwave for 15 minutes on High. Add the balsamic & red wine vinegar, stir and microwave for 10 min on High, stir, 4 min on High, stir, 3 min on High – till most of the liquid is gone. Season and spoon into sterilised jars.*

*Delicious with any meat, poultry, fish or a cheese platter.*

# Onion & Mint relish



# Onion & Mint Relish

*(This is actually called mint & onion chutney, but I thought it's more a relish.)*

2 tablespoons ghee or oil

1 large onion

2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint *(I used about a cup full - use to your taste)*

1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice

1 teaspoon of light brown sugar

1 fresh green chili, de-seeded and finely chopped

Salt to taste

Heat ghee/oil in a wok or large pan over a medium heat and fry onions until soft. Don't brown, allow to cool.

Put all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. *(I used a stick blender, the result is smoother.)* Serve chilled with curries, meat, fish or poultry.

- If refrigerated in an airtight container it will keep for about a week.