

Christmas in Brixton: Boqueria

Written by [Contributor](#) on December 8, 2014 in [Brixton People](#), [Brixton Stories](#), [Food](#) -



As part of our series of inspiring tips on how to celebrate Christmas and New Year through food and drink, we talked to Jerusalem Gunning from Boqueria about what a traditional Spanish Christmas dining experience looks like. **Interview by Claudia Moselhi.**

My top Christmas cooking tip:

Christmas Day eating traditionally includes *escudella I carn d'olla*, a two course meal that comprises *escudella*, a rich meat broth that is stuffed into *galets* – a traditional tubed pasta – and baked. The second course is usually a roast chicken or cockerel.

On Boxing Day I celebrate the feast day of San Esteve, which is only celebrated in Catalunya. The meal would include this Italian dish that has entered the Catalans' hearts. The ingredients for this dish would be made from the leftovers from the day before.

That's my top Christmas cooking tip, always use the leftovers!

My failsafe recipe for Christmas is *capó farcit a la Catalana* or stuffed Catalan capon.

This is made using a castrated cockerel. You can use a free range organic chicken as an alternative.

Serves 4 people generously:

- 1 whole cockerel or chicken
- 25g lard
- 125ml of a sweet wine like Marsala or similar
- 125 ml water
- 50ml brandy
- sea salt and black pepper

For the stuffing:

- 250g pork meat (minced shoulder works well)
- 6 sausages, skinned
- 150g dried apricots

- 300g dried plums
- 50g pine nuts
- 50g raisins
- 2 apples, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 of teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 25g fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 125ml Marsala wine

Preheat the oven at 200°C.

Put the olive oil into a frying pan and lightly fry all the stuffing ingredients. Season well with the salt and pepper, fresh parsley, cinnamon and one glass of the Marsala wine. Fry it all until the wine is cooked off. The stuffing should be moist but not overcooked.

Take the cockerel and insert the stuffing in the cavity. Close the cavity with toothpicks and spread the lard or butter all over the skin of the bird. Season well with salt and pepper. This will make the skin crisp and golden. Pour the brandy and the marsala over the bird.

Put the stuffed cockerel into the hot oven for 10 minutes to seal the skin. Then reduce the temperature to 160°C for 1 hour's cooking time per kilo weight (ie: a two kilo bird will need 2 hours.) Baste the bird with the beautiful cooking juices every half an hour. Check the chicken is cooked by piercing the skin at the thickest part where the leg meets the body with a knife and check the juices run clear.

Remove the bird from the oven and allow to rest for 30 minutes covered loosely with foil. This allows the meat to relax and be even more moist and tender. Carve and serve.

My drink recommendation is:

Cava Codorniu! The best and most typical Catalan drink! For New Year we serve it with *neules*, which is a type of Catalan biscuit – which is a thin rolled biscuit like an ice cream wafer and often dipped into Cava.

What do you eat or drink after you've over indulged?

After I over indulge I make a chicken broth from the carcass of the cockerel which settles my stomach. It is also very economical.

What's your favourite post festive healthy comfort food?

My post festive healthy comfort food will be a nice piece of hake, baked en papillote (wrapped in greaseproof paper or tin foil) with olive oil, white wine and parsley baked in a hot oven for 15 minutes.

Claudia tweets @ClaudiaMoselhi