

HOMES & GARDENS®

BRITISH

THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL INTERIORS MAGAZINE

Christmas presence

Where to buy gorgeous
wreaths, glittering baubles,
sparkling glasses

Pretty stockings to make

Decorating the tree,
mantelpiece and table

How to wrap and send gifts

PERFECT GIFTS BY POST

From under £25 to blow the budget

Tamsin Burnett-Hall's delicious
recipes for the season

Seasonal homes

A romantic snowy castle
elegant Georgian house
perfect country cottage
an eclectic family home

EXCLUSIVE

Day-by-day organiser
stress-free celebrations

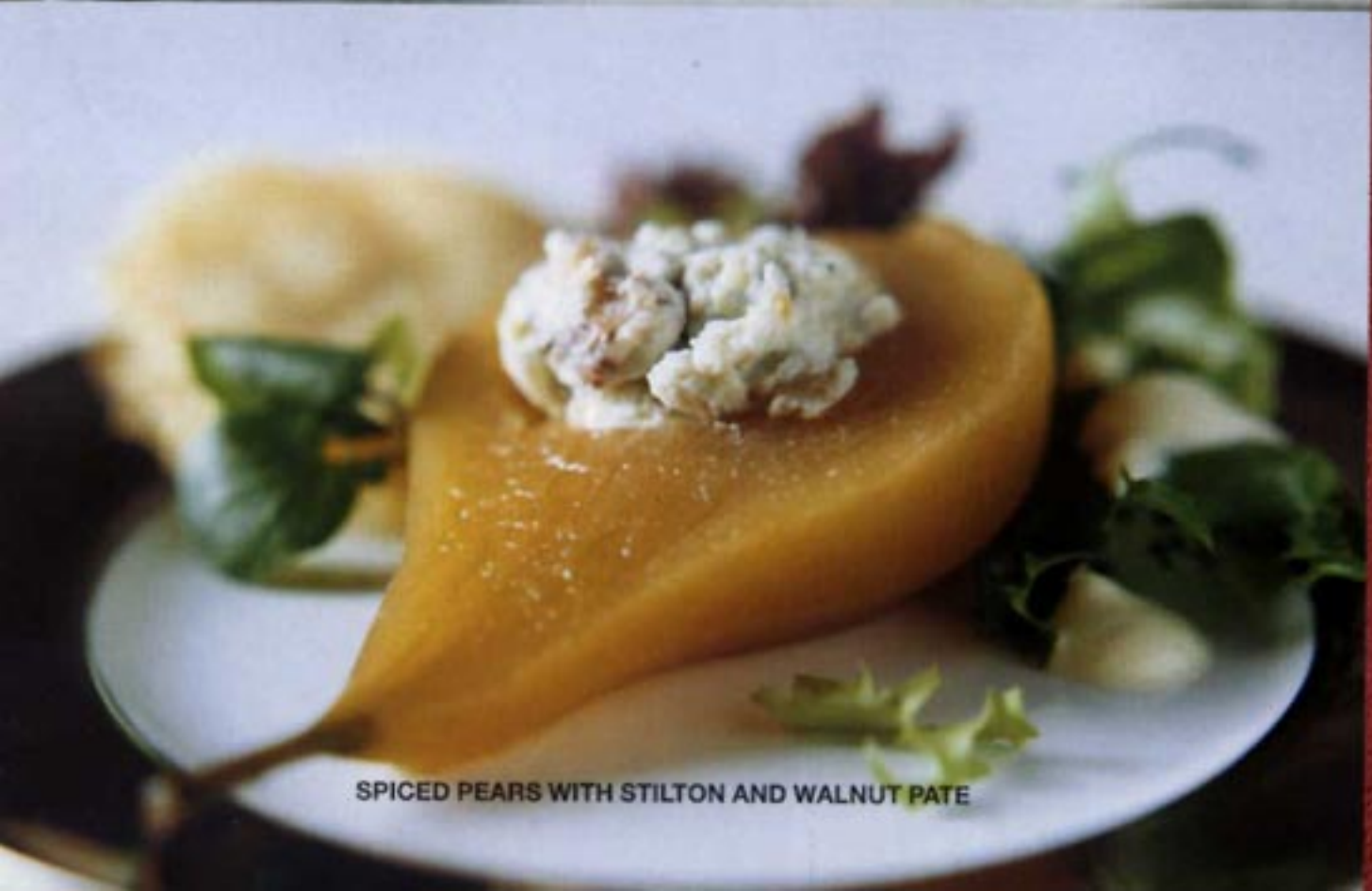
At home for

Christmas





BUTTER-BASTED TURKEY WITH MARSALA GRAVY



SPICED PEARS WITH STILTON AND WALNUT PATE

However much we might talk about doing something different at Christmas, in the end most of us stick to the old family favourites, which usually means turkey taking centre stage. Many people dismiss turkey as bland and dry, but if you buy a good-quality free-range bird, such as a KellyBronze from Kelly Turkeys, you will be rewarded with plenty of flavour. And as these birds are slow-grown and properly hung, they are much less likely to dry out during cooking. Try an Italian-style stuffing using ciabatta crumbs, lemon, garlic, pine nuts, raisins and Parmesan for a delicately flavoured alternative to the usual sausagemeat version.

A creamy white and sweet potato gratin accompanies the bird, and is a perfect dish to make ahead. Similarly, the first course can be prepared in advance (in this case up to three days ahead); pear halves poached in a spicy syrup are cooled and stuffed with a creamy Stilton and walnut pâté.

Pudding is once again a traditional affair; a moist, dark pudding full of vine fruits, figs, prunes and dried cranberries. While it is true that a home-made pudding requires a rather long initial cooking time, the flavour makes the effort worthwhile, and the actual preparation is only about 15 minutes plus overnight soaking. Folklore dictates that the Christmas pudding should be made by the last Sunday before Advent (23 November this year). The idea is that the pudding's flavour will have time to mature in the run-up to Christmas, but it will still taste wonderful if you cannot make it as early as that.

KellyBronze turkeys are available by mail order, from around £51 including delivery for a 5 kg turkey. Kelly Turkeys, (01245) 223581; www.kelly-turkeys.com. Order by 18 December 2003 for Christmas delivery.

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Where to buy items listed, page 173

WORDS AND RECIPES TAMSIN BURNETT-HALL
PHOTOGRAPHS DIANA MILLER
STYLING CAROLE BARROW