

Over 100
budget-friendly,
quick and easy
family meals
with mince

Dean Edwards

MINCESPIRATION!



About the Book

Pizzas, pasties, curries, cobblers, hotpots, stroganoffs, burgers and pies. Soups, salads, koftas, kebabs, pilafs, moussakas, wraps and melts...

Mighty mince has long been a handy and budget-friendly standby found in fridges and freezers up and down the country. But there's more to this tasty staple than spag bol and shepherd's pie...

In this, his first collection of easy-to-follow recipes bursting with big flavours, TV chef Dean Edwards takes inspiration from all over the world to whip up super-quick, versatile meals with mince for every day of the week.

Chili beef hotpot

Chicken and chorizo burgers

Thai lamb and tomato curry

Sizzling beef pizza

Smokey turkey fajitas

Moroccan meatball tagine

You'll never again be left wondering what to cook for dinner ...

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Turkey Tom Yum Soup

Tzatziki

Vietnamese Pork Lettuce Wraps

Dean Edwards

MINCESPIRATION!

Over 100 budget-friendly, quick
and easy family meals with mince

MARVELLOUS MINCE

You may be wondering why I've chosen to dedicate such a large chunk of my life to an ingredient as humble as mince? The reason is simple – passion! I know we hear the word in every other sentence on television cookery shows, no more so than on *Masterchef*, where I started my journey in the professional world of food, but I mean it. So many fantastic dishes can be created from ordinary minced beef, lamb, pork, chicken or turkey. You might not often find mince on the menus of high-end restaurants, but it does appear on family dinner tables up and down the country every day, and it's one of the most useful ingredients we have in the kitchen.

Like so many people, I grew up eating mince. When I started to think of mince-inspired meals, I quickly realized that the boundaries for inspiration were limitless, hence the title of this book – *Mincepiration*. I've discovered that every cuisine has ways of making delicious food with economical minced meat. For example, my South African nan used to cook an amazing Malay mince and pea curry – I can still taste it now. It was packed with flavour and, best of all, it would feed the whole family with minimum impact on the shopping budget.

In fact, one of the many great things about mince is its price. You can make hearty meals that will go a long way for a small outlay. This also made mince the perfect subject for my first cookbook, as my friends call me 'the fork' and not for cooking reasons. Apparently it's because I'm tight with money. One friend says that I'm so tight that when he came round for a cup of tea I'd put a fork in the sugar bowl to make it go further!

When I was a child, I used to love watching my dad mincing meat at home to use in lasagne or curry. For a relatively small sum, you can buy your own mincer and grind up pretty much anything from pork belly for adding fat and flavour to a burger, to more exotic meats such as game and venison. Nowadays, though, most of us buy our minced meat from the supermarket or local butcher. A 500g pack of beef mince can cost as little as £2.50, so I reckon a great many of these dishes will suit even the tightest of budgets while still delighting the taste buds. As always, the better the meat the better the dish and I recommend buying the best you can afford for top results. Mince also freezes well so take the opportunity to stock up and you'll always have the ingredients for a good meal to hand.

As well as using mince, try removing sausages from their skins and, with the help of herbs and spices, transforming the meat into amazing dishes such as an Asian-inspired tom yum soup. Or how about turning chorizo sausage into a fiery topping for a carnivore's adaptation of Spanish patatas bravas?

I love every one of the recipes in this book, but feel free to switch and swap ingredients to suit your tastes and diet requirements. I believe that some of the best home-cooked meals start with a basic recipe that gradually evolves as you add a few tweaks here and there and make it your own. These are the sorts of recipes that you end up cooking for your family for years to come. Mince is inexpensive, versatile and, most important of all, delicious. Have fun!

USEFUL TIPS

Onions, garlic, shallots, potatoes and other vegetables should always be peeled before preparing, unless otherwise specified.

I always use medium eggs in my recipes, and I generally prefer to cook with free-range eggs, but this is up to you. I have specified free-range in recipes where eggs are the star of the show, such as my beef hash with poached eggs.

I usually use olive oil in my cooking and vegetable oil for deep-frying, but go with your personal preference.

Chillies can vary a great deal in heat and everyone's tolerance to them varies as well. In some recipes I've suggested deseeding the chillies, but again it's up to you.

Lemon grass is becoming much more familiar and is easy to find in supermarkets and greengrocers. Don't be put off – it's easy to prepare. Simply give a good bash with a rolling pin before using it to release its fragrant oils.

I've tried to keep things as simple and straightforward as possible so you won't need loads of special equipment for making these recipes. A proper non-stick frying pan makes life much easier though, and a good-quality item will last for ages.

BROWNING MINCE

There really is no right or wrong way when it comes to browning mince, but here are a few pointers that might help. One question I'm often asked is whether or not to use oil. I've suggested adding a dash of oil when browning mince, but it really does depend on the quality of the meat. Most of the beef mince you buy in supermarkets and butcher shops will have a 20 per cent fat to meat ratio so you'll probably need a dash of oil to help start the frying process, but a fattier mince may need none at all.

I like to get my pan searing hot before adding the oil (if any) and mince. There is nothing worse than letting your mince stew away in its own juices. Avoid overcrowding the pan too, or the mince will stew rather than brown. I like to start to caramelize my mince so it's really lovely and brown, as I think this adds a greater depth of flavour to the finished dish.

You'll notice that in many of the recipes I say to chill the meatballs or burgers for 30 minutes before cooking them. This helps the fat set, so once you start cooking, there's less chance that the meatballs or burgers will break up and lose their shape. If you just don't have time, skip this step, but be gentle when cooking your mince.



CHAPTER 1

BEEF MINCE

Beef is the most familiar minced meat and probably the most popular. I grew up on it and still fondly recall the hearty meals of spaghetti bolognese and chilli con carne that my parents cooked on a regular basis. This chapter includes all the old favourites but also introduces you to some new, exciting dishes that I hope will become family standbys for years to come – recipes such as beef kofta curry (see [here](#)), the ultimate blue cheese and jalapeno burgers (see [here](#)), and my warming spicy minced beef cobbler (see [here](#)).

When you are buying beef mince, always check the labels specifying the fat content. Standard mince should contain no more than 20 per cent fat and lean mince no more than 10 per cent fat. Look for the amount of white marbling of fat within the mince. I know that many of us are on a tight budget these days, but try to buy the best minced beef you can afford. For some recipes, such as burgers, I've specified lean steak mince for the best results.

BEEF AND MUSHROOM CANNELLONI

I love Italian food. The dishes have such bold flavours but they're usually so simple to make. Oven-baked cannelloni is right up there for me as the ultimate comfort food. The only thing I ask is that you make the white sauce from scratch – no shop-bought tubs here! The sauce is very simple and once you get the hang of it you'll never use ready-made again. Making your own is much cheaper too. SERVES 4

olive oil

300g mushrooms, wiped and sliced (chestnut and Portobello are both great)

400g beef mince

1 onion, finely chopped

3 garlic cloves, crushed

100ml white wine

200ml passata

4 sheets of fresh lasagne pasta

70g Parmesan cheese, grated

sea salt

black pepper

White sauce

40g unsalted butter

40g plain flour

400ml milk

small grating of nutmeg

1 Heat a dash of oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the mushrooms until browned. Remove the mushrooms from the pan and set them aside.

2 Using the same pan, add a little more oil and fry the beef for 4–5 minutes until browned. Add the onion and garlic and continue cooking for 2–3 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook until the liquid is reduced by half, then pour in the passata and simmer for 5 minutes. Put the mushrooms back in the pan and season with salt and pepper.

3 To make the white sauce, melt the butter in a small saucepan over a medium heat, then whisk in the flour and cook for 1–2 minutes. With the pan on the heat, gradually pour in the milk and keep whisking until you have a smooth sauce. Turn down the heat, cook for 7–8 minutes, then season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

4 Grease a baking dish measuring about 33 × 23cm. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas 6. Lay a sheet of lasagne on a board, spoon on some filling, a little cheese and a dash of the white sauce. Roll up the lasagne sheet and place it in the dish. Repeat until you've used all the beef mixture, then pour over the remaining white sauce and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes or until browned.



Beef and Mushroom Cannelloni

BEEF KOFTA CURRY

This kofta curry is a beauty. Dry-frying and grinding the whole spices will give you a much punchier taste, but use ground spices if you like. Bear in mind, though, that ground spices do go out of date and lose their flavour, so no using the spice rack given to you on your wedding day in 1982! Delicious served with rice and naan bread.

SERVES 4

500g beef mince
½ onion, finely chopped
3 tbsp chopped fresh coriander, plus extra for serving
2 tsp garam masala
1–2 tsp chilli powder (or to taste)
olive oil
2 handfuls of baby spinach
sea salt
black pepper

Sauce

1 tsp coriander seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp mustard seeds
olive oil
1½ onions, finely sliced
4 garlic cloves, crushed
1 thumb-sized piece of fresh root ginger, peeled and grated
1 tbsp garam masala
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp cinnamon
500ml passata
1 × 400g can of coconut milk

1 First make the koftas. Put the mince, onion, 3 tablespoons of fresh coriander, garam masala and chilli powder into a bowl, season with salt and pepper and mix thoroughly. Shape the mixture into about 12 golf ball-sized balls. Heat a dash of oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the koftas for about 5 minutes, until browned. Remove them from the pan and set aside.

2 For the sauce, dry-fry the coriander, cumin and mustard seeds in a small pan for 1 minute, then grind them in a pestle and mortar.

3 Add another dash of oil to the pan you used for frying the koftas and cook the sliced onions, garlic and ginger for about 10 minutes until softened. Add the freshly ground spices and the other spices

and cook for a further 2–3 minutes. Pour in the passata and coconut milk, bring the mixture to a simmer, then put the koftas back in the pan. Cover and cook for 40–50 minutes over a gentle heat.

4 Just before the end of the cooking time, add the spinach and cook until wilted. Season and stir in the extra coriander just before serving.



Beef Kofta Curry

BEEF RAGÙ PASTA

Spaghetti bolognese, or pasta with beef ragù sauce, is now one of Britain's best-loved dishes, but the version many of us eat is far removed from the Italian classic. This is the recipe that I was brought up on and have grown to love, and even if I have to throw on some Cheddar instead of Parmesan it's still great! Definitely has to be served with garlic bread. SERVES 4

olive oil
500g beef mince
2 onions, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, crushed
100g smoked, cubed pancetta
300ml red wine
2 × 400g cans of chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée
300ml beef stock
1 tbsp dried oregano
small pinch of sugar
300g spaghetti
small bunch of fresh basil, leaves torn
grated Parmesan cheese, for serving
sea salt
black pepper

1 Heat a large saucepan, add a dash of oil, then fry the mince for 5–6 minutes over a high heat until browned. Add the onions, garlic and pancetta and cook for another 6–7 minutes, then pour in the red wine. Continue to cook until the liquid has reduced by half.

2 Add the tomatoes, tomato purée, stock and oregano and mix well. Bring the sauce to a simmer, then cover and cook over a low heat for 1½ hours – a long time I know, but well worth the wait! Season with salt, pepper and a small pinch of sugar.

3 Cook the pasta in plenty of salted boiling water according to the packet instructions, then drain. Toss it with the ragù sauce and fresh basil, then serve with grated Parmesan.

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