

Recipes

In the spirit of the Lynley mysteries, in which the upper-class Eighth Earl of Asherton, Thomas Lynley, and the working-class Barbara Havers are paired, consider offering pairings of food and drink that reflects both aspects of British society. For example, you might serve the English takeaway favorite of fish and chips alongside a more refined classic tea accompaniment, smoked salmon sandwiches. Or offer Book & Film Club members a choice between a single malt scotch (Lagavulin is Lynley's favorite) or a simple English beer like Newcastle Brown Ale. Below is a recipe for the fish and chips, as well as tips for making tea sandwiches.

Fish and Chips

Ingredients (makes four servings)

1 ½ pounds of white boneless fish (haddock or cod fillets)
3 quarts vegetable oil (for deep frying)
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1 bottle of cold ale (12 ounces)
1 egg, lightly beaten
4 large russet potatoes
malt vinegar and/or tartar sauce

Preparing the Chips

1. Wash and peel potatoes and slice them lengthwise into strips, each about the size of your index finger.
2. Submerge the sliced potatoes into a bowl of ice-cold water to chill for 30 minutes.
3. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pot or deep fryer until the oil reaches a temperature of 325 degrees.
4. Dry the sliced potatoes thoroughly.
5. Fry one-third of the potatoes at a time, until slightly golden but not brown (approximately three to four minutes per batch).
6. Transfer chips to paper towels to soak up the excess oil.
7. Reheat the oil until it reaches 375 degrees.
8. Preheat your oven to 250 degrees.
9. Refry the chips in three batches until they are brown (approximately four to five minutes per batch).
10. Remove excess oil from chips with paper towels and keep them warm in the oven as you prepare the fish.

Preparing the Fish

1. Reheat oil temperature to 375 degrees.
2. Sift 1½ cups flour into a large mixing bowl, saving ½ cup of flour for later.
3. Mix salt, pepper, and baking powder into the sifted flour.
4. Combine the ale and egg and then whisk mixture into the dry ingredients gently.
5. Cut fish diagonally into narrow finger-sized strips.
6. Pat the fish strips dry and dust each with flour (from the remaining ½ cup).
7. Coat each fish strip in the batter and then submerge it in the oil.
8. Fry the fish in separate batches for four to five minutes each, turning the strips frequently with a slotted spoon.
9. When the fish strips reach a deep golden brown color, transfer them to paper towels to drain and cool.

Your fish and chips are ready to serve! Furnish salt, tartar sauce, and malt vinegar to complement the dish.

Tea Sandwiches

Tea sandwiches are the dainty sandwiches that are traditionally served with the late afternoon tea meal. Cut your sandwiches into small, crustless triangles so they can be eaten in a few bites. Serve them, with the tea, using fine china.

Though the classic smoked salmon tea sandwich is usually served on white bread with smoked salmon and a light coating of butter, you can also substitute cream cheese for butter and use wheat, rye, or pumpernickel bread.

1 cup whipped cream cheese
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
1 lemon, juiced
8 slices white bread
½ cucumber, very thinly sliced
4 ounces smoked salmon

Combine the cream cheese, dill, and lemon juice. Divide the mixture evenly and spread it onto the bread slices. Place a layer of cucumber onto 4 bread slices and top with a layer of smoked salmon. Top with the remaining bread. Cut the crusts off, then cut each sandwich in half to make triangle-sized portions.

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page 2