

× GIANT SAUSAGE ROLL ×

SERVES 8

2 HOURS

PLUS CHILLING

530 CALORIES

- 2½ oz dried apple rings
- 4 slices of smoked bacon
- 2 onions
- ½ a bunch of fresh sage (½ oz)
- olive oil
- 1 lb ground pork shoulder (ask your butcher to do this for you)
- ¾ cup fresh bread crumbs
- white pepper
- 1 oz sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 whole nutmeg, for grating
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds

PASTRY

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter (cold)
- 4 tablespoons lard (cold)

The great British sausage roll is a beautiful thing to behold. It's perfect hot or cold, on its own or as part of a picnic, lunchbox, or ploughman's with a pint. In fact, so good it, you can even have it as a canapé with a glass of Champagne. I've blessed this sausage roll with length and breadth, to be enjoyed family-service-style on a big board so everyone can cut off exactly how much they want. If served hot, it's wonderful with mustard, ketchup, or HP sauce, and if warm or cold, it's better with pickles, savory jams, or piccalilli.

To make this rough puff pastry, put the flour into a bowl with a good pinch of sea salt. Chop the cold butter and lard into ¼-inch cubes and add to the bowl, then use a butter knife to roughly chop them into the flour until you've got smaller, evenly coated pieces. Add ½ cup of ice-cold water and continue chopping and mixing with the knife—keep your hands away—retaining some chunky bits of fat and keeping everything super-cold. If there are any dry bits, just add another splash of water. Quickly pat and bring together with your hands, then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, blitz the dried apple rings and bacon in a food processor until finely chopped. Peel, roughly chop, and add in the onions, pick in the sage leaves, then pulse a few good times until combined. Put a lug of oil into a frying pan on a medium heat, tip in the onion mixture, and cook on a low heat for 15 minutes, or until softened, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

Once cool, put the onion mixture into a bowl with the pork, bread crumbs, a pinch of salt, and a doubly good pinch of white pepper. Coarsely grate in the cheese, finely grate in half the nutmeg, then scrunch and mix together with your clean hands. To check the seasoning is right, simply cook a tiny amount in a pan and taste it—there's nothing worse than an under-seasoned sausage roll, so get it right now.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Roll out the pastry on a flour-dusted surface to a rectangle about 10 x 16 inches, then transfer it to a flour-dusted baking sheet of roughly the same size. Place the cooled meat just off center on the pastry and shape it into a nice, thick, even sausage. Beat the egg and use it to lightly brush all the exposed pastry, then fold the pastry over the meat. Trim the edges, then use a fork to seal the pastry together. Lightly brush all over with more eggwash and scatter over the sesame seeds from a height. Bake for 40 minutes or until dark golden and cooked through.

