
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
INSIDE OUR LAUNCH ISSUE
20-PAGE CHRISTMAS GUIDE
FOOD
WILD BEAN TO ARTISAN BAR
CHOCOLATE
HOW IT STACKS UP
CHINESE, INDIAN OR DUTCH?
A TASTE OF NEW WORLD WHISKY
WILD MUSHROOMS & CLOUDBERRY SORBET
THE FRUITS OF THE SWEDISH FOREST
MEET OUR COLUMNISTS
SABRINA GHAYOUR | ANNA JONES | LARRY LAMB | MITCH TONKS
DECEMBER 2017
LAUNCH PRICE £3.00
NATGEOFOOD.CO.UK
9 772515 162009 12

It’s not rocket science...

It’s rocket salad! Whether it’s a fresh salad straight from our organic gardens, or a gastronomic getaway with Michelin-starred chefs on a deserted sandbank, fine dining is a Soneva specialty, where every meal is an experience.

Discover more at soneva.com/NGT

For reservations, contact: 0 800 048 8044 (UK Toll-free number)
Reservations@soneva.com
Maldives | Thailand

Inspiring a lifetime of rare experiences

Escape for a moment...

Syrah AOC Valais

OCTAVE photo©Omarre

SWISS WINE VALAIS

Switzerland. Naturally.

Valais

ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.

Drink responsibly

lesvinsduvalais.ch

CONTENTS

DECEMBER 2017

CONTENTS
DECEMBER 2017

Starters

Food file

Food for thought

On the cover

Photography: Howard Shooter. Styling: Denise Smart

Afters

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE IN WAITROSE, MAJESTIC AND 31DOVER.COM

Pure Freude an Wasser

GROHE

KETTLE HOT WATER
STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP
INTRODUCING NEW GROHE RED

It's time to say goodbye to the kettle. Introducing new GROHE Red - a beautiful and convenient system that delivers kettle hot water straight from the tap - with childlock and automatic stop for guaranteed GROHE safety. **grohe.co.uk**

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
FOOD

apl media

Editorial Director: Maria Pieri
Consultant Editor: Alex Mead
Associate Editor: Glen Mutel
Acting Deputy Editor: Nicola Trup
Contributing Editors: Pat Riddell, Zane Henry, Sam Lewis
Digital Development Manager: Seamus McDermott
Editorial Assistant: Connor McGovern
Online Editor: Josephine Price
Sub Editors: Chris Horton, Lauren Hoffman, Nick Rutherford
Events Manager: Natalie Jackson
Art Director: Chris Hudson
Designers: Lauren Gamp, Becky Redman
Creative Consultant: Howard Shooter
Production Manager: Daniel Gregory

Special Projects Consultant: Matthew Midworth
Business Development Team: Cecilia Effa, Martin Brackenbury, Chris Dalton, Chris De la Prida, Nick Fisher, John Fox, Olivia Harper, Kevin Killen, Lianna Mazure, Danny Pegg, Brian Richards, Mark Salmon, John Stergides

Contributing Editors: Jo Fletcher-Cross, Stephanie Cavagnaro, Tamsin Wressell, Amelia Duggan, Farida Zeynalova
Sub Editors: Charlotte Wigram-Evans, Emma Holland, Ben Murray
Designers: Lauren Atkinson-Smith, Philip Lay, Danielle Humphrey
Production Controllers: Joaquim Pereira, Lisa Poston, Joanne Roberts, Anthony Wright, Karl Martins

Chief Executive: Anthony Leyens
Managing Director: Matthew Jackson
Sales Director: Alex Vignali
Sales Administrator: Melissa Jurado
Executive Assistant: Taylah Brooke
Financial Controller: Ryan McShaw
Credit Manager: Craig Chappell
Accounts Manager: Siobhan Grover
Accounts Assistants: Jana Abraham, Stefano Pica

National Geographic Food (UK) is published by APL Media Limited, Unit 310, Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TL
natgeofood.co.uk
Editorial T: 020 7253 9906. editorial@natgeofood.co.uk
Sales/Admin T: 020 7253 9909. F: 020 7253 9907.
sales@natgeofood.co.uk
Subscriptions T: 01293 312 166.
natgeofood@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS

Dominic Roskrow

There's a new generation of innovative distillers creating different, exciting malt whiskies. Having tasted an Icelandic whisky made with barley dried over a sheep-dung fire, and shared a malt in the world's highest maturation 'warehouse' — a cave in the Swiss Alps — nothing can surprise me in the future.

WHISKY, P.66

Alex Mead

I've always wanted to follow a 'farmer' home from the market — just to check that they are what they seem, and not simply some hipster in disguise. But Tim Pick is the real deal, born and bred, right down to his muddy boots. Along with his cousin Nicky, he makes the best sausages you'll ever taste.

FARM TO FORK, P.82

Lauren Hoffman

I've never really fancied eating grasshoppers — candied or otherwise. But I have been intrigued by talk that they and other insects could be our future in a dystopian world where protein is as scarce as petrol in a Mad Max movie. Or could the future be completely meat-free? For the sake of steak, I needed answers.

THE BIG ISSUE, P.43

Michael Raffael

The Sunday roast epitomises the best of no-nonsense British fare. Frills and fancies won't disguise second-rate meat, badly roasted. In all its apparent simplicity, it's a world-class meal that unites family and friends in a unique way. As a nation, it defines who we are and what we enjoy eating.

DECONSTRUCT THE ROAST, P.100

CREAMY

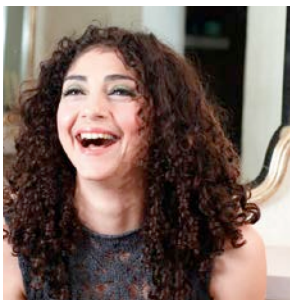
CHRISTMAS CALLS FOR CHEESE WITH CHARACTER

Celebrate the festive season with the sensation of new Extra Creamy Brie from Castello®. A double cream white cheese, soft in texture and rich in taste.

SINCE 1893
CASTELLO®

Editor's letter

DECEMBER 2017



Some may say you need your five a day. For me, it's all about the one a day — chocolate. When I was a child, my dad — a manager of a London newsagent — would let us have one chocolate a day. We also had access to a sweets cupboard at home. As it was always on tap, we rarely over-indulged (on the few occasions we did, we'd invariably regret it).

Today, my tastes have matured, yet I still eat some form of chocolate daily. On a trip to St Lucia, the Hotel Chocolat bean-to-bar experience was a revelation, while reading our chocolate feature (p.54) broadened my appreciation of the 'new' bars on offer; I might even join a chocolate club. Clearly, chocolate is still my thing. And it's probably one of your things too. But it's what we choose — bar, soft-filled, nutty or pure — and how we eat it — drizzled over ice cream, melted in a hot chocolate, or snatched furtively from a sweets cupboard — that makes each of us unique.

It's these differences we'd like to explore, celebrate and indulge in this first issue of *National Geographic Food* (UK). Sharing the table with me will be a smorgasbord of contributors — carnivores, vegans, pescetarians, coffee drinkers, tea lovers, craft beer nerds and gin connoisseurs — all with their own gastronomic story to tell.

Our aim is to delve behind the scenes to meet real people and see what they're cooking — to uncover the culture and history of each dish, and work out how we can join the feast. We believe there's a new tale to tell about food — and it's yours, your family's; it's the story of your favourite dish, the truth behind a new trend, a secret history or forgotten tradition, or even the bumpy journey from farm to fork.

Oh, and my one-a-day? Quite partial to Polish chocolate wafers right now.

Maria Pieri, Editorial Director

NATGEOFOODUK

IMAGE: GETTY

Trending this month...

Recycling paper cups
Caffè Nero, Costa Coffee, Greggs, McDonald's, Nestlé, Pret a Manger and Starbucks are among 14 big-name companies in the UK that have signed up to accelerate the recycling of polyethylene-lined paper cups from January 2018. About time, we say.

Gineration X
A new term for gin-loving millennials, says a report by Beefeater Gin. Apparently, it's their mix drink of choice.

Texture
Whether it's popping Firework Oreos or crispy seaweed, texture is in, says Mintel's 2018 food and drink report.

A daily shop
A marked increase in daily shops plus less wasteful buying habits, finds The Waitrose Food & Drink Report 2017.

IMAGE: GETTY

TRY IT NOW

Pickling

Why it's worth getting in a pickle about glorious roots, brassicas, gourds, fruit and more

The basics
It may be big news right now but pickling — a form of fermentation — is an age-old method of preserving food. Before refrigeration, it was a way of guaranteeing rainy day supplies of surplus fruit and veg. Whether it's beetroot, cucumbers or cabbage, a proper pickle should have crunch, flavour and a healthy dose of friendly bacteria. The best pickling solutions tend to be a salt-based brine, often with added herbs, spices and garlic.

The benefits
Fermented foods are teeming with probiotics, making them great for your gut. The buzz term is 'lacto-fermentation' — the chemical process that takes place when the salty brine converts the sugars in fruit or veg into lactic acid. A natural preservative, lactic acid locks in the nutrients and flavour, while controlling the spread of harmful bacteria. As a result, the stuff in the jar is easier to digest and more nutrient-rich than it was before it went in. Bear in mind, though, that most store-bought pickles are void of probiotics because they're pasteurised, which destroys the good bacteria they may contain.

Find out more
Read *Pickled* by Freddie Janssen (RRP £15, Hardie Grant) or sign up for a fermenting workshop at London restaurant Rawduck's new specialist spin-off, Little Duck: The Picklery. littleduckpicklery.co.uk

GO GLOBAL

The world's best pickled and fermented veg

Kimchi, South Korea
The national side dish of spicy fermented veg, typically cabbage and radish.

Sauerkraut, Germany
Although eaten in Germany since the 1600s, this sour cabbage side is thought to have originated in China.

Tsukemono, Japan
A collective term, commonly incorporating daikon, plums, ginger, cucumber and lotus.

Atjar, Netherlands
Sweet and sour Dutch-Asian pickles often made with carrots, cabbage and cauliflower.

THE STORY

IS MICHELIN'S STAR STILL SHINING?

As a new batch of restaurants join the guide's ranks, others are pushing back

Does attaining the *Michelin Guide*'s much-vaunted stars still represent the pinnacle of a chef's career? The jury is out after the restaurant bible dished out some eye-catching awards but also received a pair of high-profile rejections.

In its *Great Britain & Ireland 2018* edition, Michelin awarded its highest accolade — three stars — to a nine-seater sushi restaurant in London's Mayfair. One of only five UK restaurants with triple-star status, The Araki joins Alain Ducasse at The Dorchester, also in Mayfair; Gordon Ramsay's eponymous Chelsea restaurant; plus Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck; and Alain Roux's Waterside Inn, both in Bray, Berkshire.

Seventeen establishments debut on the list with a single star, among them The Forest Side (pictured), a much-hyped boutique hotel and restaurant in Grasmere, Cumbria. Claude Bosi at Bibendum, based at the former Michelin Tyre Company headquarters, in Chelsea, went straight in with two stars.

Yet, while these additions celebrate their new status, one establishment has asked to be stripped of its star. Boath House, in Nairnshire, has held the accolade for the past 10 years, but owners Don and Wendy Matheson say striving to meet the guide's exacting standards has caused them financial losses, and that customers prefer less formal dining. Their pleas came too late for the Michelin bosses, however, and the restaurant has retained its star. The Mathesons appear to have taken their lead from French chef Sébastien Bras, of Le Suquet restaurant in Laguiole, who begged Michelin to rescind his three stars. He reportedly wanted to cook without the pressure of the guide's judges potentially turning up at any moment.

At a time when many diners are turned off by traditional, starched-linen fine dining, and chefs are tiring of jumping through hoops for recognition, Michelin's response to this dissenting voice will be telling. The *France 2018* edition is published in February, so watch this space.

What's new?

PESTER POWER

Sick of being asked if you 'want fries with that' or 'want to make it a large'? New research from the Royal Society for Public Health has found that we experience 'upselling' in restaurants and shops every three days on average, and it's contributing to the obesity crisis. rsph.org.uk

GOURMET ESCAPE

Take your next food-themed break to another level at FICO Eataly World, a 20-acre gourmet theme park in Bologna, Italy. As well as six multimedia exhibits, there are over 40 restaurants, a farm, greenhouses and a brewery. eatalyworld.it

A TASTE OF HISTORY

Tried the Paleo diet? Then what about the Neolithic diet? Stonehenge's exhibition, Feast!, explores what the builders of the stone circle ate and how they cooked it. Until October 2018. english-heritage.org.uk

LOCAL HEROES

The people behind Greater Manchester stalwart Altrincham Market have opened a new food and drink hall on the edge of the city's Northern Quarter. The 400-seater Mackie Mayor has a regional slant, with outposts from local favourites such as Honest Crust Pizza and Black Jack Brewery. facebook.com/MackieMayorNQ

IT FIGURES

£3.31

The average price of a pint in Herefordshire or Yorkshire — the cheapest counties in which to buy a beer. Surrey is the most expensive, at £4.40.*

IMAGES: GETTY. *SOURCE: GOOD PUB GUIDE, SEPTEMBER 2017

ON THE MENU

THE BIG BLUE

Our love of a good cuppa has long been a defining characteristic of us Brits, and a host of new brews are brightening up tea time

WHAT WE'RE DRINKING

Over 70% of us opt for classic black tea (with or without milk).*
A third of us drink three or more types, including herbal and fruit blends.*
PG Tips is the nation's top brew, followed by Yorkshire Tea.*

IMAGES: GETTY; *SOURCE: MINTEL, JULY 2017; **SOURCE: EUROMONITOR, 2014

Search for *#bluetea* on Instagram and you'll soon see how much of 'a thing' it is — 8,400 posts-worth and counting. Hailed for its antioxidant properties, it gets its vibrant colour from the dried flowers of the butterfly pea (also known as the blue pea), a plant native to Thailand. Plus, and this might explain why people are so keen to photograph it, if you add lemon, it turns pink.

This Technicolor drink follows on from other tea trends that are taking over our cafes and kitchens, and are often touted for their supposed health benefits. Take matcha — a finely ground green tea with high levels of antioxidants — or kombucha, a fermented black or green variety (drunk cold) that exponents claim aids digestion and gut health. Then there's turmeric tea, which usually involves combining the spice — known for its anti-inflammatory properties — with a blend of other herbs or tea leaves.

Yet, there are also varieties that are rather more fun. A Taiwanese invention, bubble tea (also called boba) is served chilled, usually milky and sweet and spiked with little chewy tapioca 'pearls' — plus, you drink it through a straw. Now, isn't that more exciting than a cup of builders'?

STIR IT UP

Around the world

Tea is the most popular beverage in the world (water aside) and while it's most associated with China and India, Turkey is the country that consumes the most — over 3kg per person a year.**

BEST BUY

Hario Clear Tea Pitcher

You might balk at the idea of putting glass on the hob, but this hand-crafted pot is heat-proof. There's also a detachable filter for loose-leaf blends. £35. selfridges.com

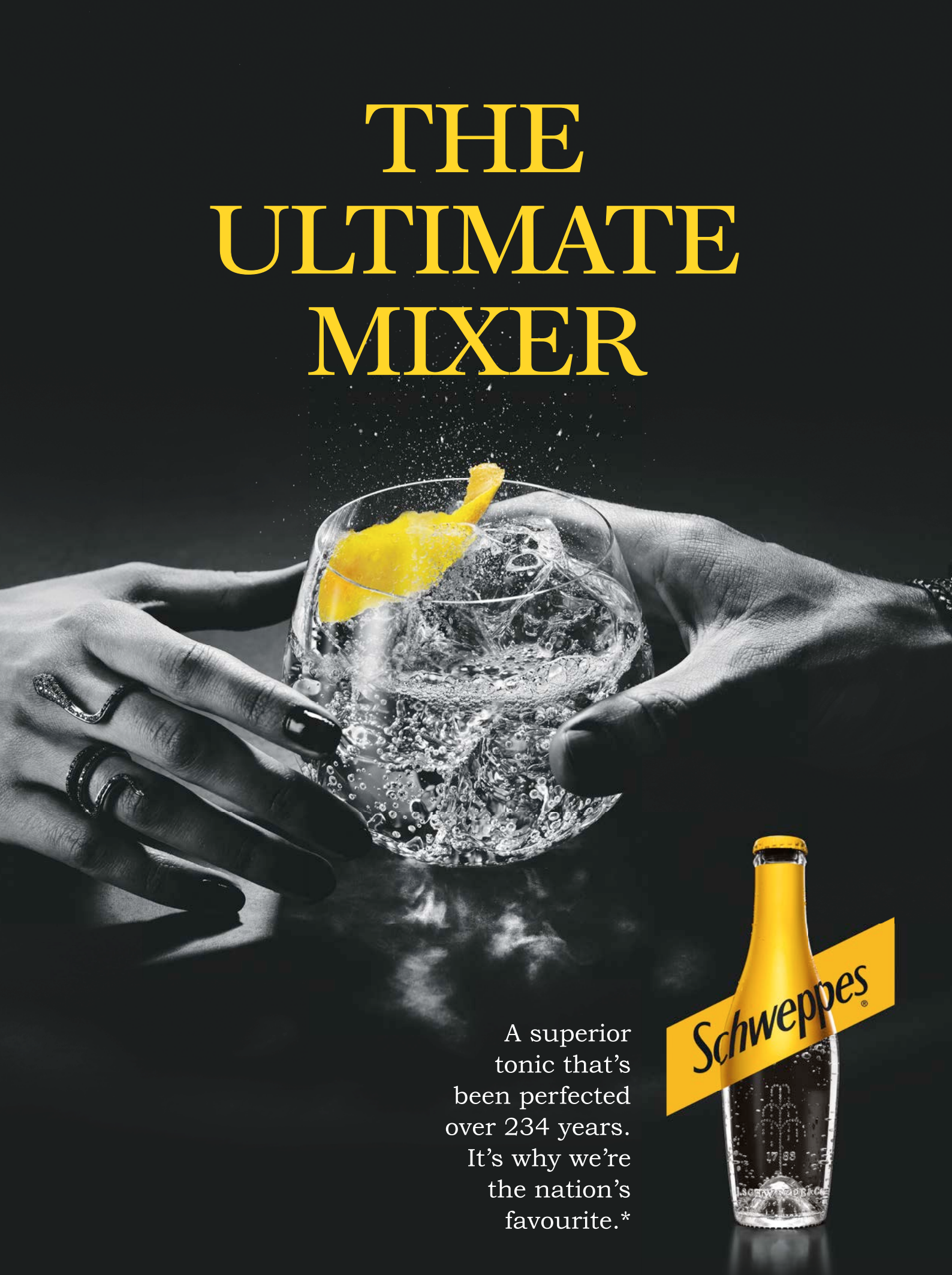
Tom Dixon Form Teapot

Made from spun brass dipped in gold wash, this metallic teapot adds a touch of class to teatime. £127.50. tomdixon.net

Purple Tenshi Cast Iron Teapot

The enamel interior of this Asian-style pot helps to keep tea hotter for longer, plus it has a removable infuser so you can ditch the bags. £27. exoticteapot.co.uk

THE ULTIMATE MIXER



A superior tonic that's been perfected over 234 years. It's why we're the nation's favourite.*

*Schweppes is the #1 branded product for tonic water. Based on Nielsen volume and value MAT 02/09/2017 & CGA volume and value 15/07/17.

WHAT THEY'RE EATING IN

NEW YORK CITY

Exuberantly multicultural, New York offers the best of almost every cuisine on the planet and its spirit of innovation means the city's food trends are always in flux. Here are five dishes to have on your radar

1

CECVICHE

DESNUDAS

Ceviche — Peruvian raw seafood cured in lime juice — is still attracting the in-crowd at Williamsburg's Desnudas (which has a sister branch in the East Village). For an interactive dining experience, take a seat at the bar and watch the chefs blowtorch potatoes and 'bong-smoke' oysters in lapsang souchong tea, before digging into the salmon belly special. desnudawbk.com

2

RADISH SPAGHETTI

DIRT CANDY

California may be America's home of healthy eating, but New York is catching up, with some inventive meat-free cuisine now on the menu. Head to the city's most innovative (and trendy) vegetarian restaurant, Dirt Candy, to try chef Amanda Cohen's black radish spaghetti — as visually striking as it is delicious — flavoured with spicy horseradish and topped with black and purple radishes. Or get your teeth into a grilled and smoked broccoli dog with broccoli kraut and mustard barbecue sauce. dirtcandynyc.com

3

DRY POT

MÁLÀ PROJECT

Sichuan cooking is increasingly replacing Cantonese as the Chinese food of choice for New Yorkers — and Sichuan dry pot is an up-and-comer on the culinary scene. It's a dish that involves diners selecting as many ingredients as they want, which are then sizzled with herbs and spices. Málà Project, in the East Village, has practically endless options, including lamb, short rib, chicken gizzards and hearts, tofu, veg and more. malaproject.nyc

4

CRISPY OKRA

DRUNKEN MONKEY

Despite the popularity of Asian fusion, Indian food in NYC has remained remarkably static. Not so at the eccentric Drunken Munkey — a kitsch Indian restaurant on the Upper East Side, modelled on the Anglo-Indian clubhouses of owner, Arun Mirchandani's youth. The gin-based cocktails are fantastic, but the highlight is the small tapas-style plates, including the restaurant's specialty: crispy lightly fried okra with fenugreek and other spices. A fork is provided, but you'll want to eat these with your fingers. drunkenmunkeynyc.com

5

KHACHAPURI

CHEESEBOAT

Georgian bakeries have been popping up all over the city, but the most exciting is Williamsburg's aptly-named Cheeseboat, which, in addition to its titular dish — essentially a cauldron of cheese with egg and butter, also serves bistro-style dishes like Georgian 'pizza' khachapuri, which is a decadent combo of cheese and pastry, plus kharcho, a hearty veal soup. cheeseboatbk.com

Tara Isabella Burton

THE DRINK

TEQUILA'S SUN RISES

Tequila is shaking off its reputation as noxious party fodder and staking a claim as a prestige spirit

Tequila? Lick the salt, knock it back, bite the lime. Smells like petrol, tastes of regret?
Well, yes, over the years it's acquired a bad rep as hangover fuel and a catalyst for contrition, but there's much more to this noble spirit. Most bad memories of tequila are staked on bottom-drawer versions fit for stripping varnish. Proper tequila is made from 100% agave cactus and distilled according to rigorous standards in the city of Tequila, Mexico. It's enjoying a surge in popularity as people realise you can actually sip and savour it — without making 'that face'.

What's behind the boost?
As cocktail culture has grown, bartenders are more actively educating their clientele and there's been a general refinement of tastes. People have become more interested in complex flavours and the stories behind the drink. High-end bottles have become more popular in bars and retailers, borne out by the ubiquity of aspirational brands such as Patron. Recently, drinks giant Diageo got in on the act by snapping up Casamigos — the top-shelf tequila brand started by George Clooney and Rande Gerber (aka Mr Cindy Crawford) — as part of a push into the world of 'super-premium' spirits.

How can I tell a decent quality tequila just by looking at the bottle label?
Generally, you'll want to avoid 'mixtos', which sell themselves as tequila, but are generally only 51% agave topped up with miscellaneous sugars. That's the stuff that usually makes you feel like radioactive mush the next day. As long as it's 100% agave, you're probably in safe hands. Tequila is typically divided into five categories: blanco (white and unaged); joven (unaged and flavoured or blended to achieve a gold colour); reposado (aged for at least two months); anejo (aged for at least one year) and extra-anejo (aged for at least three years).

OK, I get it. Tequila's great, but straight-up's not my bag. Does it lend itself to a cocktail?
The margarita is a tequila classic that's (thankfully) survived many attempts at ill-advised reinvention. Gin, vodka or rum can, of course, be swapped out for tequila in most classic cocktails, with varying degrees of success. Our personal favourite is the Juan Collins, a riff on a gin-based Tom Collins. The simple combination of citrus, sugar, soda and spirit allows a really good tequila to shine through (replace lemon and sugar with lime and agave syrup for a slightly sharper, twistier twist). Or try a tequila spritzer with grapefruit juice or lime cordial and soda.

Got it. Tequila is awesome. I can still do shots if I want to, right?
Sigh. Sure. *Zane Henry*

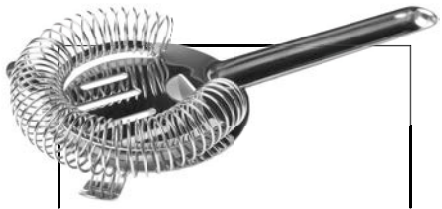
Blood orange margarita

Created in 2000 by Australian bartender, Ben Davidson. Notes of tequila, orangey triple sec, bittersweet Campari, blood orange and lime juice all sit in perfect kilter in this tasty riff on the classic Margarita.

INGREDIENTS
- 45ml Patron Silver tequila
- 22.5ml De Kuyper Triple Sec
- 7.5ml Campari Bitter
- 22.5ml blood orange juice
- 22.5ml freshly squeezed lime juice
- 7.5ml sugar syrup (2 sugar to 1 water)

METHOD
1. Shake all ingredients with ice and strain into an ice-filled Old-Fashioned glass tumbler.
2. Garnish with a half salt rim and a thick slice of blood orange.

Courtesy of diffordsguide.com



GLOSSARY
Dry-shaking

Not as tricky as it sounds, this technique simply involves mixing ingredients in a cocktail shaker without ice. This is almost always done with a drink containing egg white, as the dry shake more effectively froths and mixes it with the other ingredients before a second shaking with ice. Bartender's trick: remove your cocktail strainer's coil and pop it in the shaker to act as a makeshift whisk.

Young at heart

There's a new gin on the market, distilled with collagen and anti-ageing botanicals. It's called CollaGin, of course. collagin.co.uk

NEW ON TAP

Devilishly good

This winter, reach for Sympathy For the Devil, a session IPA from Cardiff-based Crafty Devil Brewing Company. It's heavily hopped with bundles of citrus and pine flavours. Brewed at 4.8%, available nationwide. craftydevilbrewing.co.uk

MAKE PERFECT

Pho

CHEF JEFF TAN WAS TAUGHT TO MAKE TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE NOODLE SOUP BY HIS GRANDMOTHER. HERE HE SHARES HIS TIPS FOR CHICKEN PHO

THE SPICE IS RIGHT
Aromatics are key for adding warmth and depth. Tan roasts a mixture of star anise, cardamom, cloves, bay leaves and ginger in the oven before simmering them in the broth.

BROTH BASICS
A pho is only as good as its broth, so cover beef and chicken bones, meat and marrow with fresh water and cook it low and slow — about six hours will give you the best base flavour.

USE YOUR NOODLE
Flat rice noodles are essential, but be careful not to overcook them before serving as sitting in the broth for too long will turn them soggy.

MEAT MATTERS
There's no set rule here – you can top your pho with any meat you like. Sliced flank, tendon and pork belly are popular, or try cold cuts such as shredded roast chicken.

SAVOUR THE FLAVOUR
For added potency, a generous dash of fish sauce will give your pho a welcome savoury punch. Balance the flavours with rock sugar and don't be afraid to adjust the seasoning as you go.

A BIT ON THE SIDE
For crunch and taste, a garnish of bean sprouts, lime, sliced red chillies and fragrant Thai basil and mint provides a refreshing contrast to the richly flavoured, umami broth.

THE CHEF
Former Hakkasan chef Jeff Tan can be found cooking at his restaurant Go Viet in London's South Kensington. Visit vietnamfood.co.uk/go-viet

MAKE ME
Check out the full recipe at natgeofood.co.uk

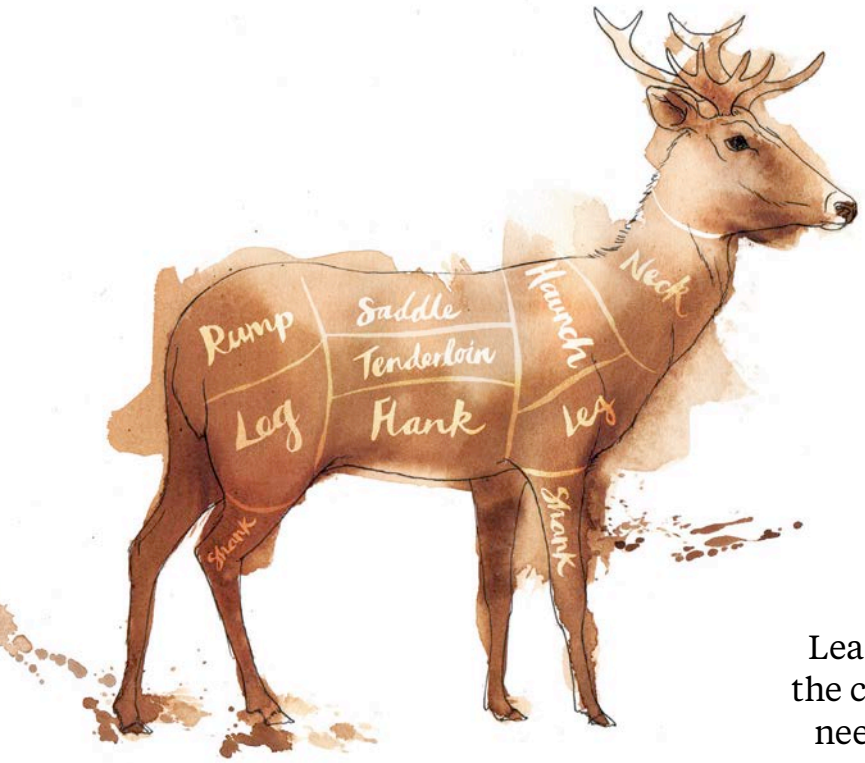
IMAGES: SARAH COGHILL; GETTY; ALAMY

AWARD WINNING

SHEPHERDS PURSE

Artisan Cheeses

SHEPHERDSPURSE.CO.UK



CUTTING IT

Venison

Lean, flexible and full of flavour, venison is the criminally underused king of game. All it needs is the right treatment in the kitchen

JAMES DURRANT
is head chef of The Game Bird at The Stafford, London.
thestafford london.com/ the-game-bird

Like most people, I grew up on roasts of beef and chicken, but I'm (not so secretly) convinced more people would eat venison if they knew how easy it is to cook.

Unlike other game, deer is in season all year round. From April to October there's roe dear, which has soft, mild meat that's fantastic when served raw in a tartare. Fallow deer is available from August. Like roe, it has a softer flavour.

Red deer are bigger and more common but, if hung for too long, can have a slightly overpowering flavour that might put off a venison novice. Other types of deer include the muntjac, which is smaller but has a lovely flavour, and the Chinese water deer, which is rare but similarly tasty.

With venison, there are three main cuts. Haunch, which is essentially the shoulders, is perfect for roast. It can be slow-cooked, but it doesn't take as long as other meats, because you can serve it pink.

Then there's the saddle, otherwise known as the loin or fillet. This cut should be treated like steak — simply sear it in a pan and eat it pink. It can also be braised, although not for too long.

And last but not least, you have the shanks, which are best diced and make an ideal base for a shepherd's pie. Venison mince can be treated just like beef mince, and is delicious turned into burgers with red berries, or meatballs with a rich tomato sauce.

Due to its lower fat content, venison can easily dry out so be careful not to overcook it. Deer tend to be wild so you wont find the marbling you get with grain-fed beef.

For me, the most important thing to check before you buy venison is that it's from a reputable supplier, it was shot in the right way, and the carcass was hung in the right environment at the right temperature — not in somebody's garden shed. The meat should also be a nice rich, red colour, not grey.

Venison's strong flavour means you can really experiment in the kitchen. It combines nicely with smoky bacon and cabbage, or sweet flavours such as chocolate and raspberries, but don't go over the top or you'll turn it into dessert.

One of my favourite approaches is to sear a loin fillet for a few minutes on each side and serve with roasted squash, braised red cabbage and gravy made using the same pan.

I feel that as a nation we should all be eating more venison. What a shame to waste a meat that's so versatile and tasty, and one which is right on our doorstep. It's sustainable, free-range and prevents us from having to cull a population that's simply grown too large.

Fact file

Venison, the meat of a deer, is often underrated. Containing almost 50% less fat than beef, this delicious and versatile, low-cholesterol, high-protein meat could become an essential part of a healthy diet.

TAKE THREE

TARTARE: Combine diced raw venison with capers, shallots, gherkins, ketchup, mustard and Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco. Finish with chopped tarragon, parsley and a raw egg yolk. Serve with a slice or two of toasted sourdough.

ROASTED LOIN: For a robust dish with a sweet-sour flavour that works perfectly with the richness of the meat, try serving roasted venison loin with some grilled hispi cabbage, salt-baked celeriac and a bitter chocolate and raspberry sauce.

BRAISED STEW: Braise venison haunch with onion, garlic, swede, carrot, and parsnip, then top with suet dumplings finished with horseradish and parsley. Serve with red cabbage braised with port, sugar and a splash of red wine vinegar.

ILLUSTRATION: GEORGINA LUCK

FISH TALES

Cuttlefish

Forget squid, cuttlefish is the black gold of the seafood world and it's about time we rediscovered it

MITCH TONKS is a seafood restaurateur, chef and author. He has six restaurants across the south of England. mitchtonks.co.uk

Our taste in seafood is becoming ever more adventurous as we discover the diversity of catch along our coastline. And at first sight cuttlefish does appear to warrant a spirit of adventure, arriving with heaps of midnight blue-black ink covering the bright white flesh.

As one of my favourite seafood varieties, the cuttlefish is well worth getting to know. It has a huge amount of flavour, and can be cooked in many different ways, from a quick stir-fry to a long, slow braise in red wine or in a curry. It's firmer than squid, but sweeter, and after slow-cooking the texture renders to that of pork fat: soft and wobbly, with the release of an almost shellfish-like flavour into the juices around it.

Nicknamed 'black gold' by fishermen, cuttlefish have increased in price fourfold over the past few years to meet growing demand. However, these are creatures that grow fast, and fishing for them isn't controlled by quotas — making them a sustainable and profitable catch.

I still marvel at the number of cuttlefish that are landed in Brixham in Devon; in one week in September a record £700,000-worth were sold. The auction takes place in a dedicated hall, to counter the black ink these animals emit. Once sold, the vast majority of this prized product heads for countries such as Spain and Italy, where it's always been highly regarded. Unless of course, more Brits decide to give it a try.

Fact file

Cuttlefish are predators, feeding off other small fish and crustaceans.

–

This highly intelligent, jet-powered cephalod is often compared to the more well-known squid, or calamari.

–

They are found all around the world, except in the Americas. The Japanese are said to be the biggest consumers.

TAKE TWO

CUTTLEFISH AND SQUASH CURRY WITH SWEET BASIL

Fragrant and flavoursome, simply adjust the spices to taste

Blend a few garlic cloves, an onion and 75g of fresh ginger. • Fry in oil, then add 1tsp mild curry powder, 1tsp cumin, a pinch of hot chilli powder and 1tsp garam masala. • Cook for a few mins, add a tin of chopped tomatoes and 165ml of coconut milk. • Add 300g prepared cuttlefish cut into strips, and 100g squash cut into rough chunks. • Cover and simmer for 1hr or until both are tender; taste, season, and stir in a handful of chopped sweet basil or coriander. Top with sliced red chilli to serve.

GRILLED CUTTLEFISH WITH LEMON AND GARLIC

In Spain cuttlefish is cooked on the plancha (a hot, flat grill); this creates a golden crust. At home I use a heavy-based frying pan

Cut a cleaned cuttlefish into 8cm square steaks. • Rub the cuttlefish with olive oil and salt and place in a really hot frying pan; the fish will curl, so place another pan on top of it as a weight to stop this happening and leave to cook for 5-6 mins. • Turn the fish over and repeat — add a little more oil if needed. • Make a quick dressing from olive oil, chopped garlic, a little salt, lemon juice and parsley and spoon over the cooked cuttlefish.

ILLUSTRATION: GEORGINA LUCK. IMAGE: GETTY

FOOD FRESHER FOR LONGER

At the heart of Fisher & Paykel refrigerators is the ability to sense and respond to daily use in an intelligent way. The combination of temperature sensors with smart electronics and variable speed fans creates a controlled environment and optimum temperature for better food care. We call it ActiveSmart™ Technology.

ACTIVESMART™
FOODCARE

FISHER & PAYKEL

fisherpaykel.com/UK sales@fisherpaykel.co.uk 08000 886 601

THE ONLY PARMESAN

Parmigiano Reggiano is a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) product made in the area surrounding Parma, Italy, according to strict principles that are protected by a Consortium. The result is a completely natural cheese produced with milk from northern Italian cows, following centuries-old processes. It is matured for a minimum of 12 months and can be aged up to 36 months or more. Enjoy it on its own or as the perfect ingredient for authentic recipes.

PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

Learn more at parmigianoreggiano.com

ROOTS & SHOOTS

Turnips & swedes

Almost always in season, and incredibly versatile, these vegetables are more delicious than you might think

ANNA JONES is a cook and food writer. Her latest book, *The Modern Cook's Year*, is published by Fourth Estate

Turnips and swedes have a bit of a PR problem. Neither has the elegance of the asparagus spear, the shine of an aubergine, the candy-shop colour of beetroot. Both of these affordable, British, long-seasoned veg get passed over time and time again for something prettier, juicier or sweeter.

I do it myself, pouncing on bobbly, deep-sea green cavolo nero, or rainbow carrots and bushy purple sprouting broccoli, leaving the swede and turnip sobbing in the vegetable aisle.

It seems that neither of these roots have kept up with our ongoing quest for more exotic flavours. Nor have they been singled out for a resurgence — like cauliflower or beetroot — by any of the chefs who influence our eating. But I would make a case for them being equally delicious, versatile and easy to cook.

To my mind, their dowdy reputation in the UK is down to the fact that, more often than not, they are served boiled. But done right, boiled swede, mashed with butter and thyme is wonderful and comforting, while boiled turnip dressed with lemon and oil is just as good.

Both are favourites of veg box schemes, too, as they keep well and are sturdy enough to survive the trip. Of all the unloved vegetables, it's these lonely leftover roots that I'm most often asked about.

The good news is there are a million ways to eat both turnip and swede (check out a few ideas below), but how to prep? Shorn of their thick outer peel, they have a dangerous habit of slipping as you try to cut them.

Get around the problem by cutting off a chunk from one side and standing the vegetable on its flat side while you chop. Once you've done this, a world of new culinary possibilities awaits.

Fact file

A good swede or turnip will feel heavy for its size, and smaller ones may be a little sweeter.

–

Both should have firm, tight skin – swede will have golden yellow flesh and purple skin, while turnip can be all white or white and purple.

–

Turnip tops can be used in the same way as spring greens or spinach leaves.

Eat them at...

Riverford Field Kitchen in Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor – I've had fantastic braised swede there. Alternatively, seek out your local Middle Eastern restaurant for bright pink pickled turnips, which are often eaten as a starter and used in lots of dishes from that part of the world. riverford.co.uk/restaurant

Buy them at...

almost any supermarket. Both roots are easy to come by, but try farmers' markets for better flavoured ones, which are likely sourced from smaller growers. See our top 10 farmers' markets on p.87.

Store them in...

a cool dark place. Keep them out of the fridge as you would potatoes; unwashed they will keep for up to five months, just ensure they're not touching each other so that air can circulate.

COOK IT UP

TURNIP: Try them grated with carrot in a neat little salad dressed with lemon, a splash of olive oil and toasted cumin seeds. Tops can be quickly blanched, chopped and sautéed with chilli and garlic then tossed through warm pasta with some good olive oil.

SWEDE: Chop into 'chips', dust with salt and paprika; drizzle with oil and bake at 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6 for 30 mins. For a gratin, slice thinly and place in a baking dish; dot with butter, herbs and seasoning; cover with stock and bake for 1hr at the same temperature.

ILLUSTRATION: GEORGINA LUCK. IMAGES: MATT RUSSELL; GETTY

MEET THE MAKER

Raclette

THE MAN BEHIND THE CHEESE

THE MELTED CHEESE THAT'S LONG BEEN SERVED AS COMFORT FOOD FOR TIRED SKIERS IS HAVING A MOMENT BEYOND THE MOUNTAINS. WE TALK TO ONE SWISS PRODUCER TO FIND OUT WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE THAT GLORIOUS GOLDEN WHEEL

Who is he?
Eddy Baillifard. Artisan, farmer and cheese fanatic. He wears a cap with a 'raclette' logo on it; his T-shirt tells me he was 'raised on raclette' and he's even got cow-shaped studs on his belt. "I'm from the Valais — cheese is a way of life here." He swears by his three portions a day.

Where does he work?
His dairy, Fromagerie de Champsec, is in the Valais canton, south Switzerland — the birthplace of raclette. "It dates back to 1740 — though there are rumours that Roman emperors travelled here to fetch their cheese. It was even used as currency in the region," says Eddy. He commandeers a swathe of the valley with his dairy, his bucolic farm (home to a collection of Hérens cows), and his restaurant, Raclett'House, which is decked out with oversized cowbells and paintings of the beloved cattle.

How does he do it?
"Oh, là là!" he exclaims when I ask. It's complicated, apparently, but, in a nutshell, it's made from raw cows' milk. Once the curds have been separated from the whey, they're pressed into moulds to form the distinctive wheels of semi-firm cheese, each weighing about 6kg. The process takes three months, but before the raclette can be sold it must face the scrutiny of an official inspector — although Eddy has his own tried-and-tested method of assessing quality. Whipping out a Lilliputian hammer, he holds a wheel of cheese up to his ear and taps on it. He knows when they're ready just by the sound.

What makes a good cheese?
"The cows," Eddy replies, without hesitation. "They're so important to the valley — avalanche threats are even kept down by their grazing. When they're old we just let them off into the mountains, like we do with our grandparents." (I think he's joking.) The cheese can be eaten unmelted, but it comes into its own when it's heated and the liquid goodness is scraped — the name raclette comes from the French word for 'scrape' — onto potatoes, gherkins, charcuterie, or pretty much anything else. Legend has it this trend began when a shepherd accidentally left a wheel of cheese by the fire; since then, Raclette du Valais has become a culinary institution, gaining Protected Designation of Origin status in 2009.

What worries him?
Eddy is concerned about modern tastes, that we're becoming too accustomed to bland, factory-made produce. "More and more people hate things that taste of dairy — strong cheese, fresh milk, real butter — because they just don't know it," he says. And what does he think of vegans? With a vigorous shake of the head and wildly gesticulating hands, he ejects two words: "Gens fou!" Crazy people.
Interview: Josephine Price eddy-baillifard.com

Where to try it

Head to the Valais canton in Switzerland to taste it fresh at Eddy's restaurant, the Raclett'House chez Eddy (racletthouse.ch) in Bruson. Closer to home, in London, you can try it at Androuet (androuet.com), and The Cheese Truck (thecheesetruck.co.uk) at Maltby Street Market, which does a mean raclette toasted sandwich. In Edinburgh, wine bar Le Di-Vin (ledivin.co.uk) offers raclette evenings; or you can do it yourself at home with the Partyclette raclette server, available from John Lewis (johnlewis.com).

The Cheese Truck

ROLL OUT THE BLUE CARPET

A JUXTAPOSITION OF BRIGHT, CREAMY, MELLOW CHEESE WITH A HINT OF IRRESISTIBLE BLUE BITE

BLACKSTICKS® BLUE

YOU CAN FIND BLACKSTICKS BLUE IN ASDA, BOOTHS, M&S, MORRISONS, SAINSBURY'S & INDEPENDENT DELIS

butlerscheeses.co.uk @ButlersCheese #BlackstocksBlue


Yeo after hours
Introducing our organic double cream ice cream
Yeo Ice Cream
Sea Salted Caramel
Strawberries & Cream
Vanilla
Double Chocolate
Yeo Ice Cream
Made with double cream
SHOT ON OUR FARM FEATURING OUR FABULOUS DESIGNER AILISH
ROCKING SEQUINS & WELLIES (WITH VERY THICK SOCKS!)

THE COLUMN

LAMB DINNERS

An Eastender, Gav's dad and a Hatton Garden robber, actor Larry Lamb also turns out to be quite the cook — and it's all down to one very special scullery maid

I was lucky when it came to my culinary education, because I was brought up by two ladies who could really cook. They taught me food was something more than mere sustenance; something to be enjoyed, not endured. The first was my mother — she loved her food and that came through in everything she made. But, sadly, she couldn't deal with my father, so she took off for greener pastures when I was nine years old.

Fortunately, she left me in the extremely capable hands of my father's mother, Nanny Lamb. Like many respectable working class girls in the early 1900s, Nan had gone 'into service' after leaving school and, having started as a scullery maid, she worked her way up so that she knew everything there was to know about running a well-to-do household.

For Nan, it wasn't about how pretty it looked, it was how it tasted, and that was down to the quality of the ingredients and how they were put together. In short, there was a right way of doing things. She knew how to ensure the vegetables were good, that the fish was fresh and what to look for in the various cuts of meat the butcher boy would bring round.

Buying meat, fish, fruit and veg is so much easier if you've learned at the side of someone who has been properly trained, and that's what she did for me — all in preparation for the inevitable day when I had to do it for myself.

She taught me the basics of selecting, preparing, boiling, frying, roasting and baking — essentially, she made damn sure I knew how to put together a wholesome meal on a limited budget. I can't tell you how many times knowing how to make a decent meal out of a few spuds and odd bits of veg has come in handy — that time in the jungle for one!

It's not really about money though, the way Nan cooked is just the way I cook. I'm not one for messing around. If left to my own devices, I always make something simple. A warming vegetable soup, a nice roast dinner, a beef stew, lamb shanks — they're all staples for me.

I have to say, I do rate myself as a cook — a cook, mind, not a wannabe Michelin-starred chef. And over the years, I've added a lot things to my repertoire from my travels too: I've got a lovely arrabbiata recipe I picked up from friends in southern Italy; a beautiful slow-cooked rib of beef dish from France; and there's even a spicy stir fry from China.

But these dishes are simply what local cooks love to make every day — it's just what the French, Italian and Chinese Nanny Lambs of this world make: food that makes you feel good.

As hard as the breakdown of my parents was, in terms of my cooking, it certainly proved to be one of the great gifts of my life.

NEXT ISSUE Don't miss Larry's son, George, in our second Lamb Dinners column

LARRY'S MONTH IN MEALS

PRIMEUR, LONDON
A lovely locals' place in a converted garage that George introduced me to. They do lots of tasty sharing plates, but you can also order a main dish if you want something more

PIZARRO, LONDON
José Pizzaro is just so consistent — his dishes are simple but delicious every time. I had lunch there the other week — a bit of hake with salsa verde, clams and asparagus. I just can't fault it.

THE FISH SHACK, IBIZA
There's a fish shack at the end of Talamanca Beach in Ibiza, and they just do fresh grilled fish and seafood. I had a cracking bit of sea bass there — I'd recommend it to anyone.

ILLUSTRATION: VIKTOR MILLER-GAUSA

MY LIFE IN FOOD

Angellica Bell

THE TV PRESENTER AND CELEBRITY MASTERCHEF 2017 WINNER TALKS US THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES, MEALS, INGREDIENTS AND CHEFS THAT HAVE SHAPED HER TASTES

Cheese My gran lived near my primary school and I remember she would bring me bread and cheese to the school gates. She used to make the very best macaroni cheese as well, and my mum would make great cheesy leeks. So when I think of my childhood, I always think of a lot of cheese • **Cinnamon** I go through little pots of ground cinnamon all the time. I made cinnamon buns the other week and I have it on porridge, too. I also put it in carrot cake. I just love the flavour and it's really good for you • **Hot pepper sauce** I used to suck my thumb and my granddad put hot pepper sauce on my thumb to make me stop, so that put me off spice completely. But I have grown into it • **Al Veluu** One of my most memorable meals was eaten here, in Italy, with my husband [TV presenter Michael Underwood]. The restaurant is up in the hills by Tremezzo, overlooking Lake Como. We're massive Italian food fans — fresh pasta, fresh vegetables — and it's just really romantic • **New York Cult Recipes** Michael and I got married in New York, and we just love the city. And so I love this book [by Marc Grossman] because it has really cool recipes that remind me of being there. I'm a bit of a nerd so I do sit around and read cookbooks • **Neil Rankin and Jason Atherton** On MasterChef I worked in the kitchen with Neil Rankin (pictured right), who's head chef at Temper in London. He was incredible; so edgy and cool and fun. I'm also a fan of Jason Atherton, who I met years ago when I was doing a show on Channel 4, and I started going to his restaurant, Pollen Street Social. And then we ended up cooking with him in the MasterChef final. I really respect what he's achieved • **Spinach and ricotta lasagne** Obviously on MasterChef, the food I was cooking I don't do every day. When I'm at home it's a case of whatever I can whip up easily, that's also healthy. This lasagne is my go-to dish — the flavours can be bland on their own, so it's all about the seasoning • **Baked Alaska** This was by far my biggest triumph on MasterChef. It's a gamble; it's the hardest, most technical thing — I didn't know if it was going to come off. I was so thrilled when it did, and I think lots of people were chuffed for me, too. So many people have asked me for the recipe but I haven't made it since, although I think I will do soon — maybe with different fillings to mix it up a bit.

IMAGES: GETTY

MAYOR

HOTELS & RESORTS

Feel free to feel

The epitome of Mediterranean nutrition blends with the best of creative Greek cuisine, resulting in a feast of flavours that showcase Greece's finest gastronomic delights.

Mayor Hotels in Corfu place emphasis on taking their guests on a culinary journey with moreish recipes of traditional dishes with a gourmet twist.

Inspired by dedication to superior dining and using quality, local products that are handled with passion leads to an amalgam of fragrant aromas, sublime textures and heavenly flavours that will enthuse even the most demanding of gourmands.

For more information

www.mayorhotels.com

As co-owner of Soho restaurants Smoking Goat and Kiln, Ben Chapman has been at the forefront of a movement that fuses authentic — and fiery — Thai flavours with UK produce. And he's not finished yet; his mission to get Brits to embrace rural Thai dishes hitherto little tasted on these shores continues at his newly opened third restaurant

BEN CHAPMAN

THE PIONEER

You're a self-taught chef. How did you get into the restaurant business?
I did a variety of weird things on the way. I worked at an art gallery before moving into graphic design, where I designed restaurant menus and interiors, and it grew from there. I had the bug for doing my own thing early on. A lot of people with similar backgrounds to mine have ended up running restaurants because it gives them creative control. A restaurant is a tangible thing to work on.

Why open a Thai restaurant?
I had a formative Thai meal at Pok Pok NY, in New York, with Andy Oliver from [Thai restaurant] Som Saa. We ate the food the chefs were cooking for themselves and I was blown away. I'd never had food like it before. I also visited Thailand and fell in love with the food. I didn't want to present Thai food verbatim — I don't know enough about it — so I decided to do my own barbecue take on it. Not being a chef, there was stuff that went on in kitchens I didn't know anything about, but I knew how fire worked.

How was Smoking Goat born?
I did a pop-up at Climpson's Arch [in Hackney] and got some chefs to help me. I met Seb Holmes [formerly of Thai restaurant The Begging Bowl in Peckham, who went on to become head chef at Smoking Goat] and he came into the kitchen with us. Because he'd worked at The Begging Bowl, he taught us how to balance the flavours in Thai cooking — sweet, sour, spicy, salty and bitter. We then got a good deal on a lease for a site that nobody else wanted [on Denmark Street]. It was a DIY project. I built the grill we cook on because we had no money to buy one.

You then opened Kiln down the road...
With Kiln, we designed a restaurant for the supply chain I wanted. We didn't want to use vegetables flown halfway across the world but instead cook with UK-grown ones and use rare-breed meat. At Kiln, we don't add too many flavours to the main ingredients — I want to express their quality. It doesn't need to be as hard as I've made it.

You cook on clay pots there. Why?
If we were to cook over a wok burner we would scald the ingredients, but the range of heat we can get from the clay pots is very different. We have around 15 of them on the go each service — I'd only have space for two wok burners — which means we can have a large menu with 12 dishes cooked from raw to order at any one time. The clay pots also fit with my philosophy of making everything as simple as possible and removing needless cooking processes. We don't have chefs doing prep from 7am, as many restaurants do.

The food at Kiln is from rural Thailand. Is it very authentic?
In rural Thailand they cook simple dishes with great ingredients and they don't use loads of flavours. When I ate there I found people would bend the rules, so if they were making a sour curry and the turmeric wasn't good enough they'd use something else. Thai people are not aware of the rules of Thai cooking that we seem to have over here, and Kiln follows that spirit.

How much of your produce comes from Britain?
In the winter, around 30% of ingredients are British; in summer it rises to 80%. At Kiln, I'm getting closer to having all ingredients from Britain. We source a lot from Cornwall; there are times when we have 100%-Cornish dishes on the menu — even ginger, lemongrass and galangal. But it's incredibly difficult trying to cook rural Thai food with Cornish produce. Some is grown here in polytunnels — we have two acres of lemongrass under plastic.

Why is truly authentic Thai food so scarce in the UK?
You've always been able to eat well-put-together Thai food in London, in restaurants such as Patara [in Soho], for example. You can walk into any Thai kitchen in the UK and there will be chefs knocking out weird and wonderful food, but they don't think English people will want to eat it. Where it becomes difficult is when you delve into the regional differences and flavour profiles of Thai cooking. With Thai food, the first thing you learn is that some dishes are cooked mainly for their aroma and some are delicious because they're extremely bitter. Outside the Western prism of appreciation there's so much scope.

You've just opened a second Smoking Goat in Shoreditch — what's next?
The new restaurant is inspired by the late-night canteens we visited in Bangkok — it's about being informal and relaxed and accessible rather than being linked to regionality or a specific food type. We don't have any goals in terms of the number of restaurants we could have — we don't have any investors or plans to roll out at the moment, but we'll see. We'll never do something just for the sake of it, because it has to be right. Everything we do must be good.
Interview: Stefan Chomka. Photographs: Alecsandra Raluca Dragoi ●

Kiln's red mullet sour turmeric curry

This delicious spicy fish curry is typical of southern Thailand. It owes its umami flavour to gapi — a heady fermented shrimp paste.

SERVES: 6 **TAKES: 35 MINS**

INGREDIENTS

- 600ml fish stock
- 6 whole red mullet, gutted, scaled and cut into steaks, roe reserved for the stock (optional)
- 120g apple aubergine, cut into eighths
- oil, for frying
- tamarind water (mix 1 tsp of tamarind pulp with 250ml water, then press through a sieve)
- fish sauce, to taste
- a few spring onions, sliced, to garnish (optional)
- handful of sweet Thai basil leaves, to garnish

FOR THE CURRY PASTE

- 13g large dried chillies, chopped
- 40g small red chillies, chopped, plus extra to garnish (optional)
- 60g garlic, chopped
- 80g banana shallots, chopped
- 20g fresh yellow turmeric, chopped
- 30g gapi (shrimp) paste

1 Begin by making the curry paste: pound the dried chillies in a pestle and mortar with a pinch of salt. Add the small red chillies, garlic, shallots and turmeric and work to a paste. Work in the gapi.
2 Put the fish stock in a pan. Add the curry paste, fish roe (if using) and bring to the boil.
3 Add the aubergines, and then reduce the heat. Simmer for 15-20 mins, or until softened.
4 Meanwhile, pan-fry the fish, in batches, in a little oil for 2-3 minutes on each side, or until cooked through. Add the fish to the curry. Season with tamarind water and fish sauce to taste.
5 Arrange the fish curry on a serving plate and garnish with the basil leaves, extra chilli and spring onions (if using). Serve.

TIP If you're feeding fewer people, simply freeze the leftover curry paste for use another time.

La Española®

Oliography

100% Spanish olive oil

With more than 175 years of heritage, La Española is fast becoming the UK's first choice of Spanish olive oil.

Maybe it's because we bring quality, heritage and the true taste of Spain to the UK. Or maybe it's because we are the only olive oil manufacturer that can trace the origins of their extra virgin olive oil back to its olive grove in Spain, thanks to our new Oliography online platform.

Discover your extra virgin olive oil story

www.laespanolaoliveoil.co.uk

DANS LE NOIR?

Restaurant Bar Lounge

A UNIQUE CULINARY, SENSORY AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE IN LONDON!

tripadvisor®

Certificate of Excellence 2017

Already 1.500.000 visitors worldwide!

Enjoy also the experience in:

AUCKLAND
BARCELONA
MADRID
MELBOURNE
NANTES
NICE
PARIS
ST PETERSBURG

BRA BRITISH RESTAURANT AWARDS WINNER RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR 2017

Best Culinary Experience 2017

30-31 Clerkenwell Green – London – Metro Farringdon – Buses : 55/63/243/N35
Open every evening + Saturday and Sunday for lunch – reservation highly recommended
Booking, events, gift vouchers : online or +44 20 7253 1100 – www.london.danslenoir.com

HEALTH

EAT SLEEP EAT REPEAT

WE ALL KNOW DIET CAN AFFECT EVERYTHING FROM WEIGHT TO ENERGY LEVELS — BUT IS IT POSSIBLE TO MUNCH YOUR WAY TO A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP?

When did you last have a good night's sleep? According to a study last year by the Royal Society for Public Health, the average person in the UK is losing the equivalent of a whole night's sleep each week.

We go to great lengths to improve the quality of our sleep — from spritzing lavender on pillows to downloading mindfulness apps and buying high-tech mattresses. But how often do we question the role diet plays? What we eat affects our sleep in a big way, particularly so in the evening when we should be doing all we can to relax before we head upstairs to bed. Spicy or fatty foods, caffeine, booze — all can irritate our digestive system, prevent deep sleep or simply take a long time to digest. But cutting back on, or at the very least banishing these dietary villains to lunchtime, begs an obvious question: what to replace them with?

Foods containing tryptophan, for a start. Found in most protein-rich produce (milk, meat, eggs, fish and veggies), this essential amino acid aids the release of sleep-inducing hormone melatonin. It's also in cheese, but don't be tempted to reach for the crackers before bed — cheese also contains the amino acid tyramine, which, though not proven to give you nightmares, as the old wives' tale suggests, makes the brain feel more alert. *Josephine Price*

TAKE FIVE

Healthy foods to eat before bed for a great night's sleep

1 Marmite
Love it or hate it, the black stuff is rich in magnesium, which calms the nerves, relaxes muscles and improves sleep.

2 Turkey
Not just for Christmas, turkey is a lean meat that can help you slip into a successful slumber, thanks to its high levels of tryptophan.

3 Bananas
Packed with muscle relaxants magnesium, potassium, tryptophan and vitamin B, bananas have been touted as a natural sleeping pill.

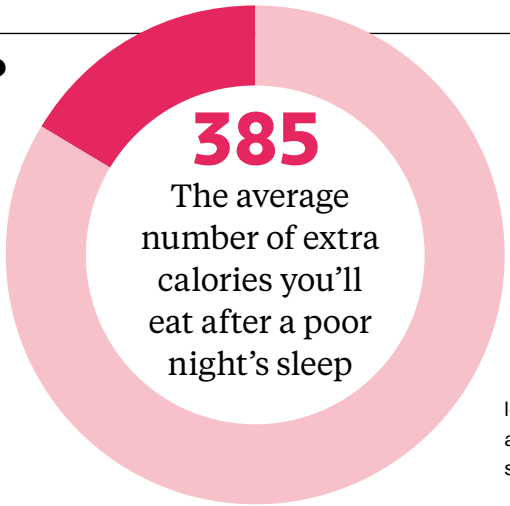
4 Almonds
Ticking the tryptophan box once again, these nuts will also supply you with a hearty dose of healthy fats and magnesium.

5 Oats
As well as being full of vitamins, minerals and amino acids, oats assist the body in producing the hormone melatonin, which causes drowsiness.

Sleep less, eat more?

Hands up who's ordered Deliveroo, reached for an almond croissant or dived into the office biscuits as soon as they've felt felt a dip in energy? If you're getting less than the recommended seven hours' sleep a night, there's a strong chance you'll eat more the following day than those who are getting their full quota of shut-eye.

That's according to a 2016 study in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition, which says that, on average, you'll consume an extra 385 calories. What's more, the food you'll seek out is likely to be comfort food. In other words: higher in fat and lower in protein.



The science behind the stats? Well, it's slightly more complex than 'When I'm exhausted I can't think straight'. In fact, scientists believe the cravings occur because sleep-deprived people have reduced levels of leptin (the chemical that makes you feel full) and increased levels of ghrelin (the hunger-stimulating hormone).

IMAGES: GETTY; ALAMY

PEPPADEW®

JUST ADD
PEPPADEW®

www.peppadew.com

REAL COOK

PARTY OF FOUR

I tend to do most of the cooking. But my husband, Luis, is a good cook too. He prepares meat, cleans and guts fish and is also a dab hand at baking.

I have to be careful about cross-contamination in the kitchen. Nuts are a serious issue for Luis, I'm gluten intolerant and my daughter has a dairy allergy. It's not easy! On a positive note, the allergies pretty much force us to make everything from scratch and to be experimental.

It's important to eat as a family. It means you can talk about food, and I try to encourage the kids to actually notice and, hopefully, appreciate the food they're eating. We hardly ever get a chance to do that during the week, however, at the weekend we make an effort to eat together twice a day.

I don't believe in banning certain 'bad' foods. If kids are old enough and have a good enough understanding, they usually make the right decisions for themselves.

Trying to make too many different things is a drama you don't need. Find dishes which work for everyone with just a few light additional touches. Adding cheese at the table to dairy-free pasta dishes for example. I also have a few strategies for making things easier in the kitchen, such as using different coloured plates and knives to remember who each belongs to.

We almost always have a roast on a Sunday. It's everyone's favourite; I make dairy-free Yorkshire puddings — they don't have a good rise but my daughter appreciates them. The potatoes must be crispy and the meat well-done in some places and medium to rare in others, to please the extended family if they come round. I do occasionally add a twist, like pulled pork or a root vegetable gratin.

We eat out often. It's sometimes stressful with the allergies but we've tried not to let that put us off. I'll often call ahead so I know what my daughter can have. Milk and its derivatives are in so many dishes you wouldn't expect.

WORKING LUNCH

Leftover lamb tagine, with bulgur wheat, to which I add a layer of grated carrot, a spoonful of beetroot and spiced, roasted cauliflower

I mostly take lunch into work. It saves money and, more importantly, I know what's in it and how it's been prepared. The kids opt for school dinners over packed lunches, which make them far more adventurous.

I still love 'retro' chilli con carne. I remember having it as a child in the '80s. The day my dad made us chilli for the first time felt so exotic. His recipe came from a collection of cookbooks my folks had arriving in the post every month.

WEEKDAY MENU

Breakfast
Hector and Luis: Cereal (with raisins for Hector)
Amalia: An egg and toasted bagel
Despina: Eggs with spinach or sheep's yoghurt with fruit compote and gluten-free granola, or gluten-free crackers with ricotta cheese and a handful of nuts

Lunch
Kids: School dinners (sausages or jacket potatoes)
Despina: Salad with roasted sweet potato and leftover chicken/ sardines/anchovies
Luis: Tomato-based soup with a roll and piece of fruit

Dinner
Kids: Steak and sweet potato fries with crudités
Adults: Herb-stuffed fish, roasted vegetables and rice

SATURDAY MENU

Breakfast
Kids: Toast, plus jam or honey with cheese (Hector) or Parma ham (Amalia)
Luis: Cereal... again!
Despina: Oven-baked 'fry up' with mushrooms, tomatoes, bacon and eggs

Lunch
All: Napoletana sauce, gluten-free pasta

Dinner
All: Prawn fajitas or pot-roasted chicken with sun dried tomatoes served on orzo pasta

PHOTOGRAPHY: ALECSANDRA DRAGOI

ACTIVE

PICK ME UP

DO YOU KNOW YOUR HYPOTONIC FROM YOUR ISOTONIC — AND WHAT ABOUT HYPERTONIC? ARE YOUR 'ENERGY' DRINKS GIVING YOU THE RIGHT SORT OF ENERGY?

Are you training for an endurance event or simply a sporty type looking for a pick-me-up? Dehydration and depletion of the body's carbohydrate stores can make you feel tired — and decrease your performance in the gym, on a hike or during a competitive race.

If you find it hard to eat before, during or after exercise, take care not to grab an 'energy' drink with high levels sugar and caffeine — you could end up consuming unnecessary calories, or too much caffeine that will leave you even more dehydrated. While small amounts of caffeine may give a slight competitive edge, most of us simply need to boost energy and hydration levels.

First consider whether a drink is hypotonic (lower concentration of solutes than blood), isotonic (about the same concentration) or hypertonic (higher concentration). This affects how much energy (carbohydrate) it can deliver and how quickly you can absorb it into your blood stream. Then take into account the sport, the intensity and the length of time you plan to do it for, and choose one that suits you. Don't forget, you can easily make your own sports drink at home; all you need is a litre of water, some orange squash and a pinch of salt. For a hypotonic solution use 100ml of squash, for isotonic make it 200ml, and for hypertonic it should be 400ml. *Sam Lewis*

FAST FACT

When consuming an isotonic drink, recreational runners can run for 27% longer on a treadmill before becoming exhausted*

Hypotonic

WHAT ARE THEY? Low in carbs (1-3%), these drinks contain fewer electrolytes than your body fluids and are quickly absorbed into the blood stream to rehydrate the body.
WHICH SPORT? Sports that involve watching your weight (such as dance or horseracing) but may not require a huge energy boost.

Isotonic

WHAT ARE THEY? Designed to quickly replace the fluids lost by sweating, these contain electrolytes plus a concentrated form of glucose (6-8%) as a source of carbohydrates. Most big brand sports drinks are isotonic.
WHICH SPORT? Middle- and long-distance runs plus other long, high-intensity workouts.

Hypertonic

WHAT ARE THEY? Containing more carbs than isotonic and hypotonic drinks, these will help increase muscle glycogen levels. Ideal after a race if you can't stomach food, these fluids are often drunk alongside an isotonic drink to rehydrate.
WHICH SPORT? Marathons and other endurance events.

FIVE ISOTONIC DRINKS

iPro Sport

A ready-made isotonic drink, available in three flavours (citrus blend, orange and pineapple, and berry mix) with added vitamins, electrolytes and minerals. Around 170 calories per 500ml bottle.
iprosport.com

For Goodness Shakes Nectar Sports Fuel Concentrate

Dilute this concentrate to make it hypotonic, isotonic or hypertonic. Available in orange and lemon, it contains glucose and fructose, plus B-vitamins.
nectarfuel.com

Lucozade Sport

This isotonic drink comes in a choice of flavours (orange, raspberry, Caribbean burst, Brazilian guava, mango and passion fruit). Each 500ml bottle contains 32.5g carbs, 250mg sodium and 140 calories.
lucozadesport.com

Gatorade

The ready-to-drink isotonic drink is available in three flavours (tropical burst, orange and raspberry) and contains artificial sweeteners (sucralose and acefulfame K). Each 500 bottle has 120 calories, 29g carbs, 380mg sodium.
gatorade.co.uk

High 5 Zero Hydration

For a no calorie option, take this sugar-free, carb-free electrolyte tablet — just add water. Contains Vitamin C, magnesium and sodium with no artificial colours or preservatives.
highfive.co.uk

IMAGES: GETTY; ALAMY. *SOURCE: THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY

THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE BLENDER FROM WOLF GOURMET® Powered by a 2.4 peak horsepower motor, the intuitive LCD display, 4 program settings and ultra-responsive speed control create consistency and inspire creativity. Discover the only line of kitchen tools and countertop appliances that assures precise control for delicious results at www.wolfgourmet.co.uk

WOLF GOURMET®

Discover Wolf Gourmet at Harrods, Knightsbridge and Sub-Zero Wolf, Knightsbridge

www.wolfgourmet.co.uk

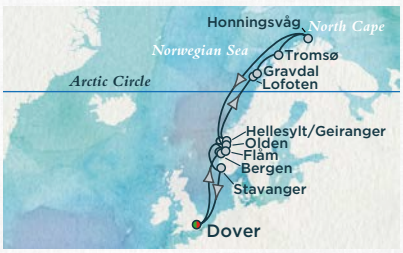
INTRODUCING THE NEW CRYSTAL®
THE WORLD'S BEST IS NOW EVEN BETTER.

Voted the World's Best more times than any other hotel, resort or cruise line in history, Crystal Cruises is more than just a luxurious way to explore the world. It is an adventure, opening up the globe just for you. Whether by Ocean, River or Yacht, we are taking luxury travel further than ever before. Welcome to the new Crystal.

INTO THE MIDNIGHT SUN

VOYAGE 8312

DOVER ROUND TRIP | 14 NIGHTS | 1 JULY 2018



CRYSTAL SERENITY

Cruise Only Fares

Deluxe Stateroom (C3 Grade)
from £4,467 per person

Deluxe Stateroom with Verandah (B3 Grade)
from £6,032 per person

Itinerary Highlights:
Dover • Bergen • Flåm • Geiranger • Å i Lofoten • Gravdal • Tromsø • Honningsvåg • Olden • Stavanger • Dover

23 years

20 years

CRYSTAL® CRUISES

Make a booking on cruise #8312 by 31 December 2017 and receive $250 per person onboard credit*

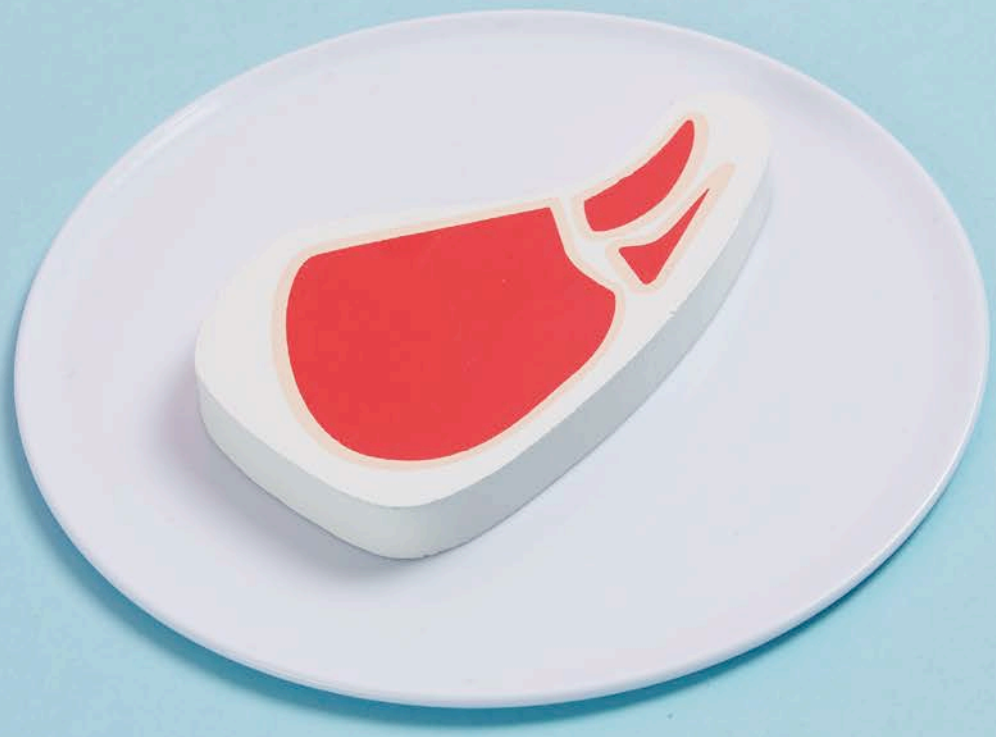
For further information or to make a booking, please contact your preferred travel agent, call **020 7399 7601** or visit **www.crystalcruises.co.uk**

ABTA ABTA No.V8548

*Applies to new bookings only on sailing #8312. Only applicable to the first two people in a stateroom. Please quote NGTF17 at the time of booking. Fares are per person, cruise only in UK sterling based on double occupancy in an outside stateroom and include port, security and handling charges, which vary by departure. All fares, offers and itineraries are subject to change and availability and can be withdrawn at any time. Fares may fluctuate and should be used as a guide only. Prices may go up or down. You should contact us on 0207 399 7601 before booking, or visit our website www.crystalcruises.co.uk. The fares are available to new bookings only and are only available to UK & Eire residents. Restrictions apply. See crystalcruises.co.uk for complete terms and conditions of all offers. ©2017 Crystal Cruises, LLC. Ships' registry: The Bahamas.

THE BIG ISSUE

WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT PROTEIN



With the world's population growing at an alarming rate, the planet's food supply is struggling to keep up. From creepy crawlies at breakfast to fake steak for dinner, what lies ahead for today's meat eaters? Are we all destined to go vegan?

WORDS: LAUREN HOFFMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS: BARRIE GORDON @ BLEND STUDIOS

What did you eat last weekend? Perhaps you took it easy on Friday night with a curry in front of the TV, tucked into a burger during a market stroll on Saturday, or spent Sunday in the pub with a roast. Whatever fuel kept you going, chances are you had at least one serious helping of animal.

Unless you're among the 3% of the UK population that's vegetarian or vegan, a considerable portion of your protein intake probably comes from meat. This vital nutrient is paramount for building muscle, tissue, antibodies, hormones and more; every cell in the body needs protein to function. But here's the catch — with the planet's population set to rise to 9.8 billion by 2050, experts predict that unless we take action to find alternatives, there won't be enough food to go around.

Take cows, for example. Not only do cattle take up a lot of room, they eat huge amounts of grain — and they fart. A lot. This methane gas is a significant contributor to global warming, so much so that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that agriculture is responsible for 30% of the total release of greenhouse gases worldwide. It's also costly. So what's the solution?

One answer could be right under our noses — almost literally if you happen to be reading this outdoors. More than two billion people around the world currently eat insects as part of their diet, and with food sustainability one of the most pressing concerns of our era, the UN believes it's about time for the rest of us to get on board. The argument has been a staple of TED conferences for some years, but tucking into creepy crawlies has yet to go mainstream. Could it really be the answer? "Absolutely," says Mercedesz Bondi, country manager for French edible insect company Jimini's:

> "Insects are high-quality protein. Not only do they require less food, water and space than cows, pigs and chickens but they're also rich in vitamins and amino acids.

"Millworms, crickets and grasshoppers contain three times more protein than the equivalent quantity of chicken per dried 100g." What's more, insects release 99% fewer greenhouse gases than cows, says Bondi.

Jimini's is the brainchild of friends Bastien Rabastens and Clement Scellier, who were inspired to do their bit to save the world after watching the French version of *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Outta Here!* So they did what anyone with a burning question and a laptop might do and Googled 'edible insects'. After sampling Asia's finest novelty scorpion lollies, and armed with the knowledge that crickets contain twice as much as protein as spinach, Jimini's launched its first cricket flour bars in 2012.

Pay a visit to any market in, say, China or Thailand and you'll see queues forming for all sorts of multiple-legged, winged delights. Spiders, silkworms, beetles, locusts — you name it, they eat it. Africa, meanwhile, has a taste for termites and bees. And while the insect-eating movement is still in its infancy in Europe and the US, it's on the rise in certain quarters. The first ever Brooklyn Bugs Festival took place in September, while the Texas equivalent, the Austin Bug Eating Festival, held its 10th event in June. And why not? After all, insects are a close cousin of crustaceans, which means they're not that far removed from prawns or mussels. Could it be that we just need to overcome our initial 'eugh'? Bondi thinks so. "Lots of people need a little push, but once they taste it they realise there's nothing to be afraid of."

Meat-free movement

Of course for some, insects — even those in powdered form — will always be a step too far. So instead of looking at ways to make them more palatable and meat more sustainable, might an easier option be simply to abstain altogether? Could a plant-based diet provide us with the solution to all of these problems?

An increasing number of people are coming round to this idea — particularly millennials. According to the Vegan Society, there are currently more than half a million vegans in Great Britain — three and a half times as many as there were a decade ago. Almost half (42%) are between the ages of 15-34, compared to just 14% who are over 65. And while it might be tempting to attribute this shift to misguided advice on social media and dismiss veganism as a fad, you'd be doing it an injustice.

Dominika Piasecka from the Vegan Society is keen to stress veganism is a lifestyle choice, not a trend. "People become vegan for many reasons — morality and environmental concerns or general health. I've yet to meet a vegan that has gone back to eating meat."

The problem is, arguably, that we're fixed on the idea that meat is the only real source of protein. But have you ever paused from your delicious, cheese-topped medium-rare burger to consider how much protein you actually need? According to the British Nutrition Foundation, the recommended daily intake for adults is 0.75g per kilogram of bodyweight. So for someone weighing 10 stone (63.5kg), this means they should be eating just under half a kilo in protein each day — which Piasecka argues is perfectly achievable for vegans. "A well-balanced plant-based diet can give you all the essential vitamins and nutrients you need," she says.

Although veganism may win egg-free brownie points from an ethical point of view, not everyone agrees it's the way forward. "I don't believe in veganism", says Richard Turner, the man behind some of London's most successful meat restaurants of the past decade (Hawksmoor, Pitt Cue Co, Foxlow) and Meatopia — a festival celebrating ethically sourced meat. He's also a butcher.

Turner believes humans have evolved as we have because of our omnivorous diet, though he's quick to acknowledge we eat too much meat. "Intensive farming practices are ruining our environment and creating unhealthy meat. Some people don't care but a lot of people don't know. And if they saw what was going on I think they would be more interested in finding an alternative way of eating. If you saw how they farmed chickens intensively, only a psychopath would want to eat that stuff — it's horrific."

It's clear the big food retailers need to do more to tackle the problem. "Supermarkets stack it high and sell

Where to try... insects

GRUB KITCHEN
Housed on a Pembrokeshire bug farm; try the 'bug wellington'.
grubkitchen.co.uk

ARCHIPELAGO
This trailblazing London restaurant serves up crickets, bees and more.
archipelago-restaurant.co.uk

it cheap," says Turner. "But I think ultimately the price is going to go through the roof at some point, and people won't be able to eat it like they can now."

With the true cost of food gradually becoming known, it's clear there's no silver bullet to solve all our problems. And Turner's not alone in his views that we need to rethink how food is farmed. Scientist Abi Aspen Glencross spent two years growing meat in a lab. The premise of cultured meat is to replicate the sensory experience of conventional meat for die-hard carnivores who are also worried about the environmental impact of meat production. But how does it work?

"You take a population of cells from an animal and feed them a mixture of vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates and protein," Glencross explains. "The cells contract and form small muscle fibres, which you'd then combine together with others and make a sort of processed meat."

The world's first lab-grown burger was created in 2013 by scientist Mark Post of Maastricht University. It took three months to make at a cost of €250,000 (£221,400), which doesn't sound like the most affordable way to fix the crisis. So is fake steak the future of farming? Glencross isn't so sure. Having hung up her lab coat to devote her time to crop development, she says: "I think lab-grown meat is likely to be part of the future, but I also believe that we're going to move away from meat as the centre of our diet."

Chowing down on insects may work for some, while veganism will tick the box for others, but could the answer for the rest of us lie somewhere in between? Despite his meat-heavy background, Turner believes the solution lies in education and 'flexitarianism', eating a primarily vegetarian diet with occasional meat and fish.

"I don't think I'll ever be 100% vegetarian but I'm going to be eating that way more and more," he says. "Trying to eat locally and seasonally, with no extremes of just meat or vegetables. It's a more natural approach that'll hopefully make us all healthier and fitter." Now that's certainly something to chew on. ●

Sustainable meat

RICHARD TURNER SAYS:

"Get to know your butcher. Find out exactly where the meat comes from. Ask questions, like what breed was the animal? Native breeds are slow growing so if they're pure bred they're less likely to be intensively farmed. And ask what the animal was fed; if a butcher can't tell you that, don't use them. Asking questions is the answer — do your research and eat less of the stuff."

Vegan protein sources

DOMINIKA PIASECKA SAYS:

"Many people are surprised to learn how easy it is to get enough protein from plant foods; they can provide all the essential amino acids. Whether you're vegan or not, a balanced diet involves including a good source of protein in most of your meals. Examples include beans, lentils, chickpeas, soya products, peanut butter, cashew nuts and pumpkin seeds."

WATCH
Marcel Dicke's 'Why not eat insects?' TED talk. ted.com

READ
FutureFood 2050's 'Alternative Proteins' interviews with innovators in the sector. futurefood2050.com

SHOP
Jimini's sells a range of spiced bugs, protein bars and pastas. jiminis.co.uk

ELSINORE

An exquisite range of fish & seafood

Available in Waitrose

For more information visit our website: www.elsinorefoods.co.uk

Follow us:

THE REPORT

ON TINY ISLAND FARMS, BIODIVERSITY IS A WAY OF LIFE

The agricultural industry has much to learn from the small farms of Jamaica, which live in harmony with nature and embrace biodiversity

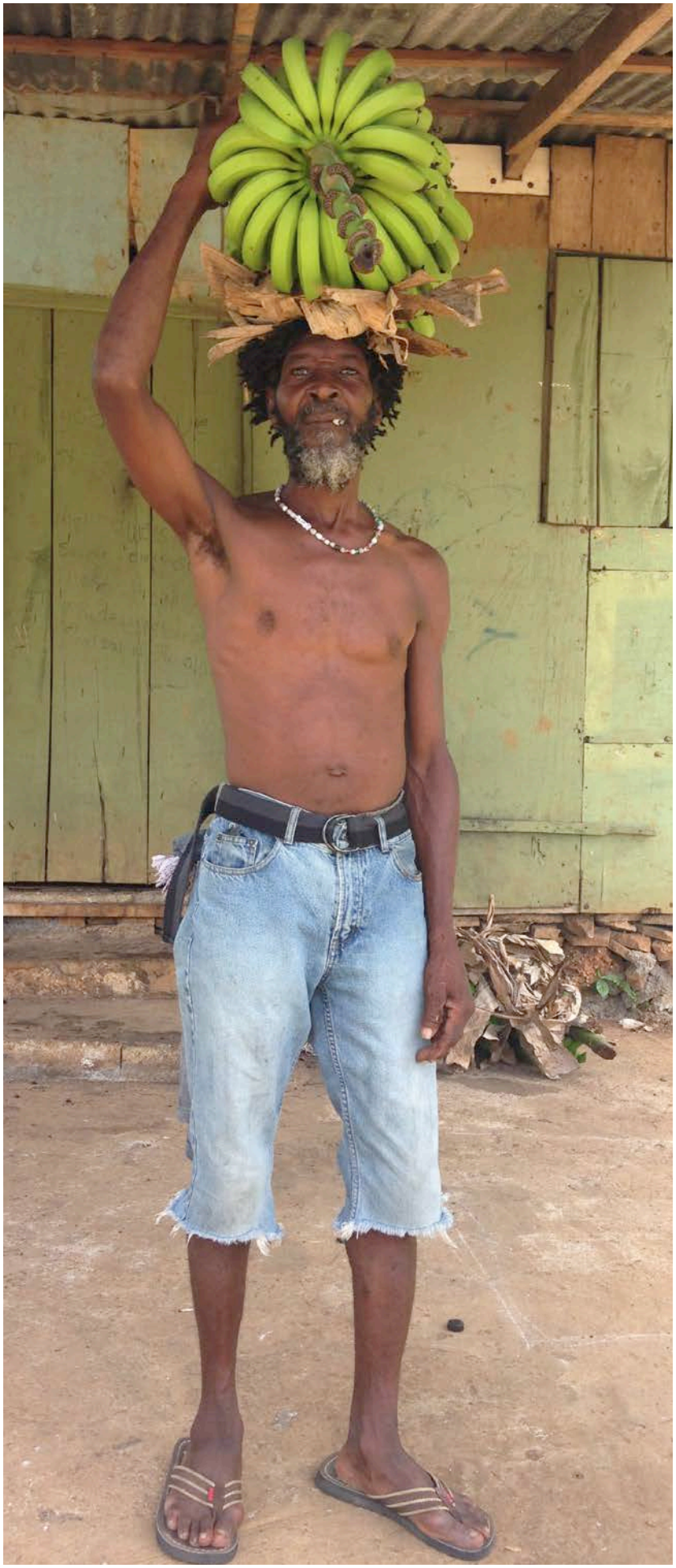
WORDS: KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI. PHOTOS: INA VANDEBROEK

In the remote John Crow Mountains of northeastern Jamaica, it's difficult to tell where the lush forests end and cultivated land begins. By growing food in harmony with the wild flora, small-scale farmers in the region are helping to preserve crop varieties and other plant species that are unique to the Caribbean island.

A recent study of this mountainous region in the US journal Economic Botany (part funded by the National Geographic Society Committee for Research and Exploration) found that its farmers grow an average of 87 useful plant varieties per plot. Very often, it noted, crops as diverse as yam, plantain, banana, mango, beans, pepper, coconut, breadfruit and medicinal plants grow amid wild trees and shrubs that help to hold nutrient-rich soil in place on the steep slopes.

"In rural Jamaica, small farms blend in with the forests," says study co-author Ina Vandebroek, Caribbean program director at the New York Botanical Garden. "In that variety lays the protection of biodiversity. The farmers know that to keep the soil healthy and food production up, they need the wild trees and native shrubs."

By growing a variety of plants, the farmers in northeastern Jamaica boost food security by maintaining agricultural biological diversity (agrobiodiversity). But protecting that diversity is becoming increasingly difficult, however, since most of the world's cultivated land is dedicated to growing the handful of staples we eat. According to the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization, as much as three-quarters of the world's food comes from just a dozen plant species.



Agrobiodiversity can ensure there are plentiful food-source options in case one crop fails. The Great Famine in Ireland (1845-52) — caused by successive episodes of potato blight devastating the island's main food source — is the classic example of something going wrong.

"If we depend on only a handful of crops and something happens, like a disease wiping them out, then we're putting our food security at risk," Vandebroek says. "Why limit what's available for our diets when having more variety can help us survive as human beings?"

Vandebroek and her research partner, Logan Sander, of Yale University, found that farmers in rural north-eastern Jamaica tend to raise a wide variety of food crops, including timber trees they can quickly harvest if a cash flow crisis arises; in home gardens, their focus is on medicinal plants that can be harvested when health issues arise.

Considering its relatively small size, the Caribbean is extremely biodiverse; furthermore, cultural traditions vary widely from island to island, which has led to the development of many unique crop varieties and diets.

"Even though Jamaican farmers only use machetes to work their lands, it's amazing the different crops they've independently developed without the help of institutions," Vandebroek says. "It's a testament to their creativity and skill."

By exchanging seeds — a process Jamaican farmers call 'catching breeds' — varieties with desirable characteristics can be developed over generations. If farmers like the taste of a scotch bonnet pepper or if there's an ackee plant that doesn't get too mushy after it's been cooked, for example, they'll keep the seeds to grow in the future.

Government support is much needed in Jamaica, since many roads are so poor that getting produce to market can be difficult. Vandebroek hopes her work will not just help build support for farmers here but boost awareness of how agroforestry can help to safeguard biodiversity.

Protecting crop varieties — through agroforestry techniques like those used by Jamaican farmers — goes hand in hand with efforts to safeguard woodlands, not least because forests are home to around 80% of Earth's terrestrial biodiversity, and yet modern agriculture has led to massive deforestation and species loss.

Getting government funding to build community seed banks could also help preservation efforts in Jamaica, Vandebroek claims. Doing so is particularly important in a country where one hurricane could wipe out all crops and seeds suited to local growing conditions, just like the earthquake of April 2015 did in parts of Nepal.

Vandebroek, an ethnobotanist and neuropsychopharmacologist, is also studying how people use plants, and their effects on the body. Last year, she co-wrote a book on the medicinal uses of plants in northeastern Jamaica.

'It's my sincere hope that this book will stimulate Jamaican youth to follow in the footsteps of their farming relatives, and learn from them as much as I did,' Vandebroek writes in her book. "The true riches of Jamaica are in the land." ●

EARTH PRODVCTS

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL FROM THE **ISLAND OF CRETE**

Olea Secret is an excellent quality extra virgin organic olive oil. It is produced in the mountainous area of Kalo Chorio,Monofatsi by Kandemilis family,and is harvested from certified organic olive groves and mills. The early harvest of the fruit and the "cold pressing"method we apply, which ensures the maintenance of the oil at low temperature (under 20 C) during its extraction, allow us to produce,in less than 4 hours an olive oil of very low acidity (0,1 to 0,3). High concentration of vitamin E and phenols. The olive fruit is 100% of the Koroneiki variety. Fruity aroma of freshly cut unripe olives. Slight bitter and spicy flavour.

www.oleasecret.com

BITTERSWEET SYMPHONY

Chocolate has a long, and at times torrid, history — but just how has it changed? How have our tastes evolved and what is being done to make trade 'fair'? We take a look at the world's favourite confectionery, from bean to bar and beyond

WORDS SARAH JANE EVANS
PHOTOGRAPHS SARAH COGHILL

Christopher Columbus's lack of interest in the bitter, brown 'almonds' he stumbled upon in the New World has to go down as one of culinary history's great missed opportunities. Had the Italian explorer realised the transformative effect of fermenting, drying and roasting these cacao beans, generations of schoolchildren would've grown up crediting him with 'discovering' not just America, but chocolate too.

As it was, it took the Spanish adventurer Hernán Cortés, and the priests travelling with him, to recognise the true value of the bean and bring it back to Europe. From there it conquered the world. The Spanish took it to their colonies in the Philippines, the Dutch to Indonesia, the French to Madagascar, while British control of the cacao industry stretched from Trinidad to Sri Lanka; the Portuguese, meanwhile, introduced it to the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, off West Africa. Today, Ghana and the Ivory Coast are the main commercial producers of cocoa (the powder processed from the cacao bean), responsible for around two-thirds of the world's supply.

It's believed the cacao tree was first cultivated in the Amazonian jungle several thousand years ago. Found between 20 degrees north and 20 degrees south of the Equator, the evergreen's white flowers and seed pods remarkably sprout directly from the trunk and branches. Archaeological evidence suggests the Mayans consumed cocoa as a drink, as did the Aztecs, who called theirs chocolātl (from which, via Spanish, the word 'chocolate' was born).

The bean was valuable currency for the Aztecs, and in Europe, chocolate became a drink of the privileged classes. Filtering down in the 17th century from the courts of monarchs and noblemen, it spawned its own culture, centred around the chocolate and coffee houses that had sprung up across the continent. Hotbeds of political debate, by the late-18th century these smoky, wood-panelled gentlemen's clubs had started to earn a reputation, particularly in London, as dens of iniquity and political machination.

Then the Industrial Revolution swept all of this away, transforming chocolate from a luxury item — handmade for the wealthy few to sip from dainty cups and saucers — into bars pounded into shape by steam-powered factory mills to be eaten by the masses. This was the age when the legendary European confectionary brands emerged: Menier in France, Suchard in Switzerland, van Houten in the Netherlands. In England, the Quakers — among them Rowntree and Terry's of York, Bristol-based Fry, and Cadbury in Birmingham — dominated the chocolate market, keen to promote the sweet brown stuff as a substitute for the demon drink.

By the late-20th century, chocolate had become an industry dominated by multinational corporations, and the public's preference for filled chocolates over solid bars was putting the art of chocolate making at risk.

HOW IT'S DONE

And it really is a fine art. With more than a dozen steps involved from bean to bar, the scope for error is large. Firstly, the pods have to be hand-harvested by machete, and split to uncover up to 40 tightly packed beans, coated in a sweet pulp. These are then spread out and covered to allow various chemical reactions to take place; the pulp disappears, the beans darken and the fermentation lessens the bitterness (a chocolate expert can easily taste incorrect fermentation). They're then dried in the open air until they lose about half their weight, before they're graded, loaded into sacks and shipped out for manufacturing.

At this point, the beans are roasted. Temperature management is critical — over-roasted beans will be bitter, under-roasted green. They're then shelled and winnowed to remove the husks and reveal the nest of cocoa nibs (shards of roasted bean) inside. The nibs are ground to a liquid paste, which releases the cocoa butter, some of which will be extracted to sell to the cosmetics industry.

To make a bar, the chocolate is then conched (put through a special machine to break down the particles) or milled — sometimes for days. The longer the process, the silkier and more refined the chocolate, although some producers prefer the bolder expression of a short conch. During this time, other ingredients, such as sugar, milk and vanilla, may be added. The final stage of production, whether the end product is a bar or a block of couverture for coating a filled chocolate, is tempering. The purpose is to control the crystallisation of the fats in the cocoa butter; to make a chocolate that has a bright sheen and a good snap, the chocolate

CACAO OR COCOA?

FOR SIMPLICITY'S SAKE, 'CACAO' TYPICALLY REFERS TO THE TREE, AND THE RAW BEAN UP TO THE STAGE OF FERMENTATION. FROM THEN ON, IT'S USUALLY KNOWN AS 'COCOA'.

needs to be melted and cooled to ensure the crystals form correctly. It's an elaborate process; as one producer told me: "Have you seen how few people are making chocolate from the bean, compared to artisan coffee roasters? Look at the risks. You'd be mad to do it."

Yet, a growing number are — a new generation of artisan companies that have sprung as a counterpoint to the huge conglomerates that dominate the industry. One of these is Dormouse Chocolates, an award-winning start-up founded by Isobel Carse that specialises in high-end bean-to-bar chocolate. After learning her trade at Hotel Chocolat, Isobel began dabbling with a bag of beans at home. She roasted them in the oven, crushed them with a rolling pin and blew off the husks with her hairdryer. Her business has since expanded to occupy a space in Manchester's Old Granada Studios complex.

This is just one example of how, in just 20 years, the chocolate scene has been transformed. After a vogue for filled chocolates, bars are back. And flavour is in.

THE CHALLENGES

The chocolatier's art may have come a long way since the Aztecs were drinking chocolātl, yet the industry that makes the raw material is stuck in the dark ages. An estimated two million children work in cocoa production in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, most toiling in hazardous conditions. Farmers here in West Africa — many of whom earn less than 40p a day — have little choice but to employ their children, since they usually don't make enough money to send them to school, or to employ adult labourers.

There are, however, steps being taken in the right direction. NGOs, cocoa and chocolate companies and government have begun working together to tackle child labour and improve conditions and pay for cocoa farmers. One of the longest-standing projects is Divine Chocolate, a Fairtrade company that's 44% owned by local farmers.

Communications director Charlotte Borger is cautiously optimistic: "When people are very poor there's no magic wand, but when programmes are farmer-driven, with proper education about the dangers and the need for children to be in school, as well as reliable payment and investment in communities, farmers work together to eliminate the problem at the grassroots level."

Around a third of the four million tonnes of cacao produced in the world each year is Fairtrade- or Rainforest Alliance/UTZ-certified. Fairtrade has its critics, however. Some say it doesn't go far enough, while others claim the burden of red tape is unrealistic for many smaller producers. Sainsbury's, a Fairtrade pioneer, recently began phasing in its own 'fairly traded' label and other retailers could well follow its lead. Many producers are already committed to paying growers a premium for better beans, whether or not they aim for the Fairtrade label.

Historically, cacao has been transformed into chocolate far from its origin. Once the cacao has been exported away from where it's grown, it's the manufacturers who add value, and keep the profit. Today, however, a handful of 'tree-to-bar' producers are doing every stage of the processing within the region or country of origin, ensuring the farmers retain a larger share of the profits. Those include the Grenada Chocolate Company, Chocolat Madagascar, Marou and Belvie (both in Vietnam), and Montecristi and Pacari (both in Ecuador). As Neil Kelsall, director of Chocolat Madagascar, notes, "The only way to reduce poverty is to export value-added products." And we, as consumers, can play our part by questioning producers on their methods and policies.

Sarah Jane Evans is the author of Chocolate Unwrapped

The trends

Chocolate lovers have been indulged with a number of trends in recent years: single origin, high-percentage cocoa solids (including 'dark milk'), non-deodorised white chocolate (less processed for a more chocolatey flavour)...

Looking forward, it's all about subtle flavours, with chilli on its way out and Himalayan rock salt and Japanese influences, such as matcha tea, in. Sea salt, meanwhile, remains popular.

Cocoa nibs are an addition that definitely work — even more so than coffee beans — while juniper berries create interesting, gin-inspired bars. Different milks are a mixed bag: camel's is a no-no, but US brand Askinosie Chocolate's goat's milk is a winner; while coconut milk is catching on. And, as in many areas of gastronomy, bacon bits have wheedled their way into chocolate — perhaps a step too far for some?

TAKE THREE

1 Choco-story, Belgium
A Bruges museum dedicated to chocolate, from historic texts to local recipes and statues. Refuel with a spiced hot chocolate at the museum's Choco-Jungle Bar. choco-story-brugge.be

2 The Chocolate Boutique Hotel, UK
This themed Bournemouth bolthole holds tastings as well as 'chocolate sleepovers'. thechocolateboutiquehotel.co.uk

3 ChocolART, Germany
Held in Tübingen, this annual celebration of all things chocolate includes tastings, workshops, theatre and art. 5-10 December. chocolart.de

TAKE FIVE ONLINE

1 Cocoa runners
Members' club selling bean-to-bar chocolate from around the world, plus smart gifts and tasting courses. cocoarunners.com

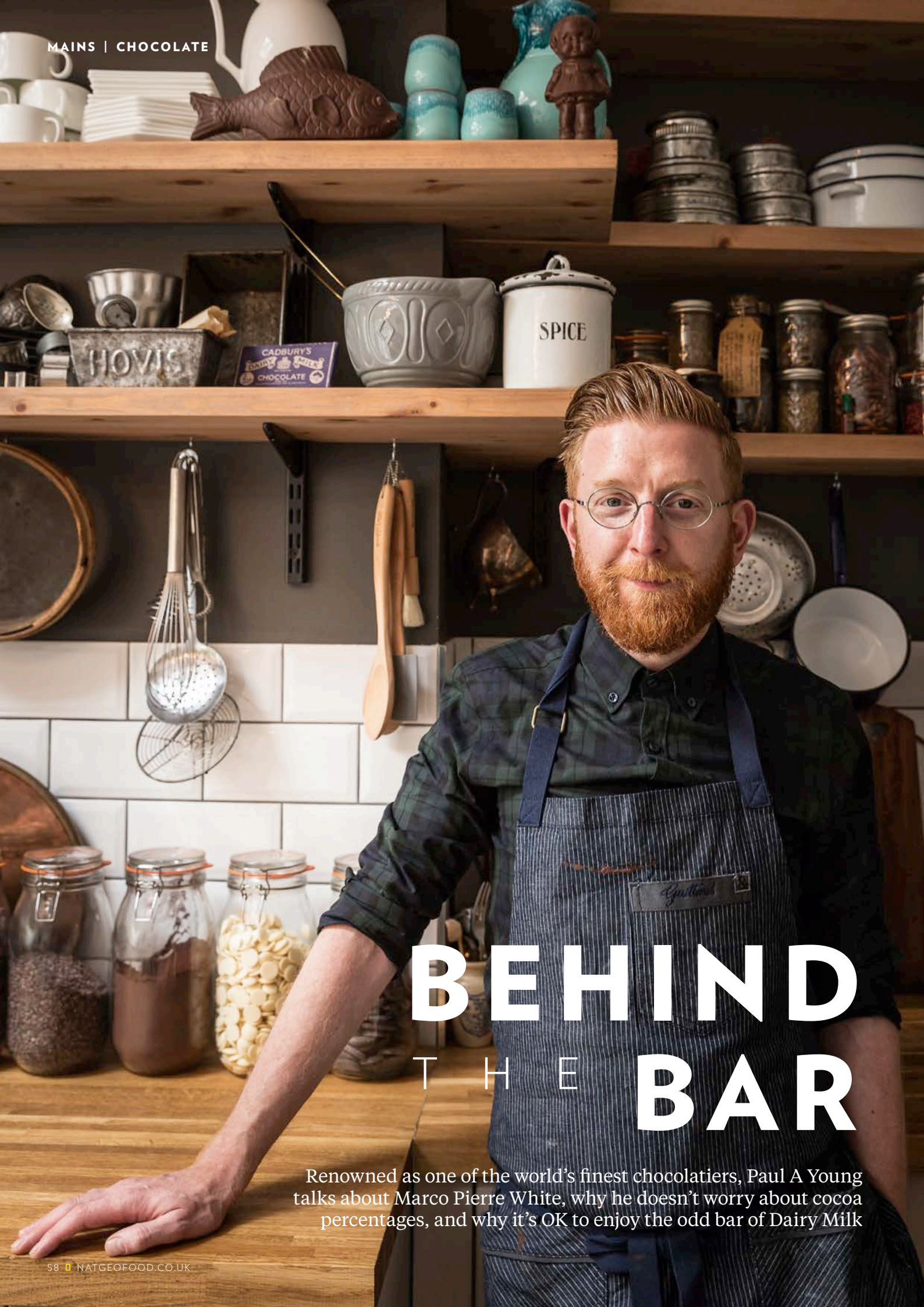
2 Bean to Bar
Supplies cocoa beans, nibs, sugars and milk powders for home chocolate-makers. bean-to-bar.co.uk

3 Chocolate Trading Co
Luxury chocolate specialist with a large 'free from' selection for allergy sufferers. chocolatetradingco.com

4 International Fine Cocoa Innovation Centre
A project in Trinidad and Tobago to develop research facilities, a training centre and museum. ifcic.center

5 Heirloom Cacao Preservation Fund
A not-for-profit project aimed at saving an endangered type of cacao tree and supporting farmers. hcpcacao.org


HOVIS
CADBURY'S
DAIRY MILK
CHOCOLATE
MASON CASH



BEHIND THE BAR

Renowned as one of the world's finest chocolatiers, Paul A Young talks about Marco Pierre White, why he doesn't worry about cocoa percentages, and why it's OK to enjoy the odd bar of Dairy Milk

My whole family has a sweet tooth, it's in our chemistry. You have to have savoury and sweet and never just savoury on its own — simple as that. We lived in a village with no convenience shops nearby, so we made everything. My mum and grandma would put on amazing spreads of cakes and scones every Sunday for tea. We did have the odd convenience food that was trendy — like Findus Crispy Pancakes when they'd just been invented.

There were no pastry chefs in the North when I started out. So I trained as a chef and that meant doing everything. Even when I left Leeds in 1996, I'd go to places and say, "You don't have a pastry chef, I could do that." But they wouldn't invest, they just had all their desserts sent up from London.

I got offered a job by Marco Pierre White in 1996. I had just bought a little house in Leeds, but I packed up and went to live on a friend's sofa in London. I stayed with Marco for six and a half years, working through Criterion, Oak Room, Titantic and then as head pastry chef at Quo Vadis.

It was both hard and amazing working for Marco. If you didn't pull your weight, you were out — and there was a queue of chefs trying to get in to work for him. I saw so many people who lasted just a week. They couldn't handle the aggression and pace of work — everyone was focused on being the best they could be. You'd start at 8am, get home at 2am and start again a few hours later — and if you were late more than once you were out.

I got bored of seeing James Martin make another rhubarb crumble. I was a bit arrogant and just got fed up of seeing the same thing being made over and over on television, so I wrote to Great Food Live (on UK TV Live) and basically said I could do something better. I was on the show for seven years, mainly doing things with chocolate.

I'd never planned to be a chocolatier. I just hit upon making chocolates in a new way: with no preservatives, no artificial flavours, seasonal ingredients, and all handmade on site. After my salted caramels won a Chocolate Academy Award, the press asked where they could get them, so we had to find some premises. We opened in Islington in 2006, and on the first day there was a queue outside. We've since gone from one employee to 30, from one site to three. Selling boxes of chocolate is just a fraction of the business. We supply hotels, restaurants and corporate events too.

Chocolate isn't hard to cook with. It's more about the quality of the chocolate you use, because while the method is perceived as being very technical and difficult, everyone can melt chocolate. And if you can melt it, then you can put things in it, spread it, pour it and make things.

Paul's top three chocolate tips

Chocolate sauce over ice cream

Sounds basic, but it's the nicest of desserts. Buy a tub of £5-£10 ice cream with no cream in it. Make a thick sauce with equal amounts of cream and 75% chocolate, fold in chopped hazelnuts and pour over the ice cream.

Fudgy pastry

Egg-wash a square of shop-bought puff pastry, put a bar like a Curly Wurly or Snickers in the middle. Fold it up like a pasty, seal it, bake it. Sounds filthy but sometimes it's what you want — warm, gooey and fudgy.

Truffles

A decadent end to a meal. Whisk equal amounts of chocolate and cream together until smooth, set in fridge, then roll into balls. Have them with whisky or cognac.

There are a few rules to follow. Melt the chocolate slowly, not in the microwave; it's very hard to control chocolate when you can't see it. Just melt it in a bowl over hot water, stirring regularly. Don't let the water get into the chocolate or it will make it seize into a block. Don't overheat it because it will burn — it's sugar and fat. Buy the best quality you can afford, but mainly go for something that tastes good. You can't make something that tastes bad taste good.

I don't look at percentages, I think that's all nonsense. The percentage is just the amount of cocoa and cocoa butter in the chocolate — that's it. It doesn't tell you about the quality, the taste, the texture or anything like that. There is crap 70% and amazing 70%, it's all about tasting it. If it tastes rounded and not burnt, it's a great 70%; if it's burnt and really bitter, it's not good 70%.

Aldi and Lidl chocolate is better than a lot of others. It's not expensive, it's made by a German company and the quality is great, and it's only about £1.20 a bar or something. They've got origins too and it's accessible. Tesco Finest is good too. Own brands are fantastic because their product developers are going to chocolate makers and chocolatiers and trying to emulate what they're going. A lot of the bigger brands don't do that.

I always get asked what the difference is between cooking and eating chocolate. You shouldn't be using chocolate you wouldn't eat. If it says it's not chocolate, it's not chocolate, so don't use it — cake covering is not chocolate. People also ask if they should use single

origin. Well, if it's costing you £10 a bar, I wouldn't bake it into a brownie — enjoy it on its own instead. Within reason, you should use the best you can afford, but practise your cooking with cheap chocolate first.

Don't use the same chocolate all the time. Try different brands, because they all have different flavours and textures. You can transform a dessert just by changing the chocolate. Switch from a Venezuelan to Madagascan and it'll taste different. The characteristics on the back of the bar give you an indication of the flavour profile — whether it's fruity, acidic or earthy. That's why people get into it like wine, they look for characteristics at certain times of year.

The first time I went to Ecuador, the growers had never seen chocolate. They'd seen beans but that's it. They're in the middle of the rainforest and there are no shops so they'd never seen a box, bar or anything, just cocoa beans. That was unusual and frightening, really — that they'd never seen the end product. But then I'd never seen their product because I lived nowhere near a rainforest.

I sometimes have a bar of Dairy Milk because it reminds me of being young. You should never be arrogant enough to think your palate is too good for something — after all, who doesn't have a hankering for a McDonald's after they've had a few?

I never understand why people get snobby about food. It keeps you grounded to eat the things you had when you were young — I always sit down with a tin of Quality Street at Christmas.

I love the versatility of chocolate. After 11 years we're still learning, still making new recipes. It can be sculpted, melted, poured, baked, chipped, chopped, piped, spread, and the variety of things you can make with it is huge. Sweet, savoury, drinks, boozy drinks, hot, cold — you can tick a lot of boxes. And it can be complementary as well, it doesn't always have to be the hero. paulayoung.co.uk *Interview: Alex Mead*

PAUL A YOUNG started life as a pastry chef, and that training shows through in his creative choices for chocolates, which go well beyond regular truffles and ganaches paulayoung.co.uk

Ones to watch

William Curley

Award-winning chocolatier and patissier, a Master of Culinary Arts, and member of the prestigious Relais Dessert International. Sells his elegant chocolates online. williamcurley.co.uk

Alistair Birt

UK World Chocolate Master who trained with William Curley. Enjoy his amazing pastries and chocolate work at Harrods restaurants, where he's head pastry chef. harrods.com

Damian Allsop

A pioneer of water-based ganaches, he's now making bean-to-bar chocolate, and plans to open a to open a chocolate factory with Spanish pastry chef Jordi Roca in 2018.

PAUL A YOUNG'S CHOCOLATE RECIPES

Ganache with beer, brambles and brittle

A rich ganache offset by crunchy textures and sharp blackberries

SERVES: 4 **TAKES: 1 HR, 15 MINS**

FOR THE BRITTLE
- 100g golden caster sugar
- 50g cocoa nibs

FOR THE GANACHE
- 270g dark chocolate
- 200ml hop-heavy beer or ale
- 50g unrefined light muscovado sugar

TO SERVE
- 25g dark chocolate, melted
- 25g jumbo rolled oats, toasted
- 16 blackberries, some halved
- 4 tsp virgin olive oil
- 24 rosemary leaves

1 For the brittle, dissolve the sugar in a frying pan set over low-medium heat. Shake the pan but don't stir, otherwise the mixture will turn lumpy. Once dissolved and golden, mix in the cocoa nibs until evenly dispersed. Pour the mixture onto a baking tray lined with silicone paper and leave to cool. Once cooled, crumble into small pieces.
2 For the ganache, melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of boiling water, stirring until smooth. Remove from the heat.
3 Meanwhile, in a separate pan, warm the beer and sugar over a low heat, stirring until the sugar has dissolved.
4 Pour the beer mixture over the chocolate and whiz with a hand blender until smooth and combined. Set aside to cool and thicken.
5 To serve, position a 6-7in tart ring in the centre of one serving plate. Dip a pastry brush in the melted chocolate and, using the inside of the ring to guide you, paint an arch on the plate. Repeat x 3.
6 Fill a piping bag with the ganache and pipe 8 different sized domes onto each plate.
7 Arrange the blackberries among the plates, sitting them close to the ganache domes. Sprinkle over the brittle and oats, then drizzle over the oil using a teaspoon. Garnish with the rosemary leaves.

TIP

If you have leftover ganache, roll into balls and dust in cocoa powder for an easy truffle.

Cocoa bean crème brûlée, nibs and nuts

A twist on a classic, with the nibs providing a touch of chocolate flavour

MAKES 2 **TAKES 50 MINS**

INGREDIENTS
- 250ml double cream
- 85ml milk
- 40g cocoa nibs
- 5 egg yolks
- 45g golden caster sugar

FOR THE TOPPING
- 40g golden caster sugar
- 20g each pecans, hazelnuts and almonds
- 10g cocoa nibs

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 110°C, fan 90°C, gas ¼. Put the cream, milk and cocoa nibs in a pan and bring to the boil. Turn off the heat and leave to infuse for 15 mins.
2 Meanwhile, in a bowl, lightly whisk the egg yolks and sugar.
3 Bring the cream mixture back to a gentle simmer, then strain over the eggs; whisk well.
4 Divide the mixture between 2 x 5in flat brûlée dishes and transfer to a baking tray. Bake for 30 mins until set but wobbly in the centre. Leave to cool thoroughly.
5 For the topping, scatter 20g sugar over each brûlée and blowtorch until caramelised. Alternatively, melt under a hot grill.
6 Arrange the nuts and nibs over each brûlée in a crescent shape. Enjoy at room temperature.

PACARI®

PREMIUM ORGANIC CHOCOLATE
FROM TREE TO BAR

Enjoy the best chocolate made at its origin.

www.pacarichocolate.com

Dark chocolate, hot buttered rum and sea salted caramel cocktail

This indulgent concoction makes for a decadent, grown-up end to a meal

MAKES 2 **TAKES 15 MINS**

INGREDIENTS

- 25g dark chocolate, melted
- 2 double shots dark rum, such as El Dorado
- 2 single shots double cream

FOR THE CARAMEL

- 150g butter
- 50g unrefined light muscovado sugar
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 150g double cream

FOR DECORATION

- 30g butter, melted
- 40g chocolate shavings

METHOD

1. Dip the rim of your glasses in melted chocolate and set aside.
2. To make the caramel, melt the butter and sugar in a pan set over medium heat; simmer for 5 mins. Stir in the salt and double cream.
3. Meanwhile, warm the rum in a separate pan.
4. Combine the warm rum, caramel mixture and cream in a cocktail shaker; shake well. Divide between glasses.
5. To decorate, pour the melted butter over the back of a dessert spoon so it floats on each cocktail, then pile on the chocolate shavings. Enjoy immediately.

TIP

To make the chocolate shavings, scrape down the side of a bar of chocolate with a blunt knife to create curls.

Milk chocolate toffee apple cheesecake, thyme, chocolate twigs and hazels

A showstopper of a dessert, ideal for a special occasion

SERVES 6-8 **TAKES: 30 MINS, PLUS CHILLING**

FOR THE FILLING

- 500g cream cheese, at room temp
- 150g icing sugar
- 300ml double cream, at room temp
- 250g 38% Guittard or other milk chocolate, melted

FOR THE BASE

- 200g chocolate-coated cookies, crushed
- 40g white chocolate

FOR THE TOFFEE APPLES

- 80g butter
- 80g unrefined caster sugar
- 3 Braeburn apples, peeled, cored and cut into wedges
- 25ml brandy, whisky or rum

FOR THE CHOCOLATE TWIGS

- 200g dark chocolate, melted
- bowl of iced water

FOR DECORATION

- handful of toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- handful of thyme leaves

METHOD

1. Line a 10in loaf tin or 8in springform tin with silicone paper.
2. For the filling, combine the cream cheese and icing sugar in a bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk the cream to soft peaks, then fold in the melted chocolate and cream cheese mixture until fully combined. Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and chill for 1 hour.
3. For the base, heat the cookies and chocolate in a pan over a low heat, stirring until the chocolate has melted. Spoon the mixture over the cheesecake, smoothing out the crumbs and chill for a further hour.
4. For the toffee apples, in a frying pan, melt the butter and sugar over medium heat. Add the apples and simmer for 20 mins, until soft and golden. Add the brandy and allow to bubble for 1 min more. Leave to cool a little.
5. Meanwhile, prepare the chocolate twigs. Fill a piping bag with the melted chocolate, cutting 5mm off one corner to make a hole. Pipe the chocolate into a bowl of iced water to create wiggly and distorted twigs. Leave the chocolate in the water for 5 mins, then carefully remove and leave to dry on kitchen paper.
6. To assemble, turn the cheesecake out onto a presentation plate. Spoon over the toffee apples, allowing the caramel to run down the sides. Scatter over the chocolate twigs, hazelnuts and thyme leaves.

TOP 10 MUST-TRY BARS

1

Marou Coconut Milk & 55% Ben Tre

55%, £7.95/80g

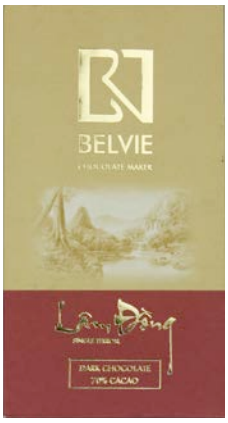
Marou put Vietnam on the chocolate map with its beautiful packaging and wild, intense flavours. This rich, fudgy bar is a nod to the coconut trees that grow among the cacao in Vietnam. marouchocolate.com

2

Waitrose 1 Single Origin Indian Ocean Chocolate with Coconut

54%, £2.19/100g

Part of the new range of Fairtrade, single origin bars at Waitrose, this one is made using beans from Kerala, South India. waitrose.com



3

Belvie Lam Dong

70%, £6.95/80g

Vietnam-based Lam Dong first hit the tree-to-bar scene in 2015. It sources beans directly from farmers and specialises in single-origin 'terroir' bars (where factors like climate, soil type and even fermentation are key). belviechocolate.com

4

Original Beans Femmes de Virunga

55%, £4.95/70g

Some of the profits from this organic dark milk bar go towards supporting women cocoa farmers in Eastern Congo. Smooth in texture with a mildly nutty flavour. originalbeans.com

5

Åkesson's Trinitario Cocoa & 'Wild' Voatsiperifery Pepper

75%, £4.95-£5.95/60g

This multi-award-winner from Bertil Åkesson's Madagascan estate blends cacao with a local pepper to add an earthiness to the subtle fruity notes. akessons-organic.com

6

Chocolat Madagascar

100%, £5.35-£5.95/85g

An Amazon best-seller and winner of the Golden Bean Award at the 2017 Academy of Chocolate Awards – a well-deserved accolade for this tree-to-bar producer. It's extremely intense, but exceptionally pure. chocolatemadagascar.com

7

Duffy's Corazon del Ecuador

72%, £4.95-£6.95/80g

Former motor racing manager Duffy Sheardown was an early UK bean-to-bar producer. He champions paying well for directly sourced beans, and this bar is rich in aromatics and spice. duffyschocolate.co.uk

8

Damson Buffalo Milk

55%, £5.50/50g

Dom Ramsey, the Academy of Chocolate's 'One to Watch' in 2015, is now based at Damson Chocolates, which produces this creamy Madagascar enriched by buffalo milk. damsonchocolate.com

9

Dormouse Chocolates Milk Guatemala

51.5%, £6/60g

At a surprisingly specific 51.5% cocoa solids, this wonderfully rich bar has an indulgent character and a smooth finish, with double cream and fudgy Muscovado sugar flavours. dormousechocolates.co.uk

10

Chocolate Tree Whisky Nibs

69%, £4.95/90g

This Edinburgh-based brand started making bean-to-bar chocolate in 2012 and the range includes some experimental flavours. In this bar, the nibs have been marinated in a peaty Islay single malt whisky. choctree.co.uk ●

What next?

Hotel Chocolat Bean to Bar Experiences

Classes in London and Leeds that illuminate every stage of manufacture. £65 for 90 minutes, including a goody bag and store discount. hotelchocolat.com

Rococo Chocolates Chocolate School

Rococo offers tastings, workshops, and children's classes at its base in London. £35 for two hours. rococochocolates.com

Spice up your G&T with FRANKLIN & SONS

AWARD-WINNING FRANKLIN & SONS 500ML NATURAL INDIAN TONIC WATER IS AVAILABLE AT SAINSBURY'S AND BOOTHS. **RRP: £1.70**

Inspired by the spices and fresh ingredients of India, Franklin & Sons takes us on an inspired journey to spruce up the classic G&T

In 2015, Franklin & Sons turned back the clock — all the way back to 1886 — relaunching its range of premium tonics, mixers and soft drinks by paying homage to the original Franklin brothers' insistence on using natural, hand-selected ingredients.

Riding on the crest of the gin wave that's sweeping the world, this exciting new range complements even the most sophisticated and complex of gins.

Franklin & Sons' latest take on the G&T is a real head-turner — spicing up a classic with a hearty dash of Eastern-inspired ingredients.

Drawing on the delicious selection of tonics and mixers available across the range, Franklin & Sons shares its favourite spiced G&Ts:

The Eastern Lotus

Top up 50ml of The East India Company London Dry Gin with Franklin & Sons Natural Light Tonic Water. For an earthy flavour, garnish with kaffir lime leaves, which complement the amchur and galangal used to distil the gin.

Franklin's Indian Infusion

Top up 35ml of Star of Bombay gin and 15ml of St Germain elderflower liqueur with Franklin & Sons Natural Indian Tonic Water and garnish with fresh lemon peel and cardamom pods for a refreshing, earthy note.

FRANKLIN & SONS LTD
London 1886

franklinandsons.co.uk
@franklinandsons

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY

NEW WORLD ORDERS

THE SINGLE MALT SUPERPOWERS ARE BEING CHALLENGED – AND WE'RE NOT JUST TALKING ABOUT JAPAN ANY MORE. EMERGING PRODUCERS AS DIVERSE AS AUSTRALIA, SWEDEN, ARGENTINA AND ISRAEL ARE HELPING TO REDRAW THE WHISKY WORLD MAP

WORDS: DOMINIC ROSKROW
ILLUSTRATIONS: GEORGINA LUCK

It's hard to pinpoint when the ongoing revolution in the traditionally sedate and stately world of single malt whisky began, but many observers point to Christmas 2002 as the moment the touchpaper was lit. Whisky journalists across the country had headed home for the festive break with boxes of samples to be judged for the annual World Whiskies Awards. And in the box marked 'Rest of the World' were two metaphorical time bombs, one a bright lemon colour, the other an attractive mahogany red — both marked 'China.'

Back in the early years of the Millennium, the idea that whisky could be produced anywhere outside of the traditional heartlands (Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Kentucky) was hardly a revelation. After all, Japan, which had begun commercial production in the early 1920s, had long been seen as a member of the whisky establishment and other countries as far-flung as Sweden and Australia were making tentative steps of their own.

But the Chinese samples were different. For a start, they were outstanding — more than capable of holding their own among a good proportion of the malt whisky Scotland was making. Secondly, it turned out they actually hailed from Taiwan, a fact that raised a few urgent questions. Not least, how do you make whisky in a tropical — or sub-tropical, depending on the part of the island — climate? And did this mean malt whisky could be made just about anywhere?

The answer to the latter question is yes it pretty much can. And indeed, in the past decade it has been. What started as a couple of exciting samples in a box marked 'Rest of the World' has grown into a much bigger phenomenon, today known as New World whisky — a development that's forced the establishment to sit up and take notice.

This emerging crop of producers has acted as a magnet for an army of new, young whisky enthusiasts; a catalyst stirring up a passion and excitement that the drinks sector has barely seen before.

Exaggeration? Not at all. Just consider this: when renowned whisky writer Michael Jackson's Whisky: The Definitive World Guide was first published in 2005, it dedicated just four pages to 'The Rest of The World' — two to Europe and two to Asia and Australasia. In the updated version, published this autumn, that page count has swelled to 50.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

In the first few years of the millennium, whisky was hit by a perfect storm. Consumers, more travelled and adventurous in their eating and drinking habits, were on the lookout for exciting drinks brands with provenance and heritage. They were drinking less but better, and there was a growing demand for 'craft' and 'micro' products. At the same time, single malt whisky had become fashionable among the

10 TO TRY

NEW WORLD WHISKIES

Due to the huge demand for New World whiskies, and the fact that many were initially made in small and modest distilleries, it can still be very hard to find them. But if you manage to get hold of any of these, you're in luck. The list below is made up of specific releases but any whisky from the distilleries mentioned comes recommended.

THE ENGLISH WHISKY COMPANY THE ENGLISH — SMOKEY, ENGLAND

Bold smoky and earthy, but with attractive notes of vanilla, citrus, menthol and aniseed.

ZUIDAM DISTILLERY MILLSTONE 100 RYE WHISKY, NETHERLANDS

A spicy rye with pepper, coriander and cumin on the nose, but it's also soft and creamy, with cocoa notes.

SULLIVANS COVE DISTILLERY
SULLIVANS COVE FRENCH OAK, AUSTRALIA
Fruity, with nutmeg and cinnamon on the nose, candy and fruit and gentle spice on the palate.

AMRUT DISTILLERIES
AMRUT FUSION, INDIA
Made with barley from Scotland and India, this has a toasted oak nose with a hint of smoke, and a complex taste, revealing notes of light summer fruits, creamy trifle and chocolate.

professional younger drinker, and members of the classic 'dual income, no kids' generation were seeking out quality whisky- and malt-based cocktails.

Scotch whisky was in demand, shortages occurred, prices started to rise, and a new generation of distilling entrepreneurs across the world sought to fill domestic shortfalls by producing their own whisky.

In the early days of the revolution, Sweden and Australia set the pace, but for very different reasons. Swedes have long been passionate about Scottish single malts and the country boasts more whisky clubs than any other.

"But it also has ideal whisky-making conditions," says Angela D'Orazio, master blender at Mackmyra, Sweden's first, and biggest, distillery. Angela explains that Mackmyra was set up by a group of friends who asked why Sweden shouldn't make whisky, and not only that, but make it in a style suited to the Swedish palate.

There are now four distilleries in the country bottling whisky, with several more waiting for

KAVALAN DISTILLERY
KAVALAN SOLIST EX-BOURBON CASK, TAIWAN
This cask-strength whisky has hints of banoffee pie, vanilla ice cream and tropical fruit chews.

PENDERYN DISTILLERY
PENDERYN SINGLE MALT WELSH WHISKY, WALES
Floral and liqueur-like, with sweet wine notes, juicy sultanas and custard.

their spirit to mature. What Sweden offered the world of whisky was top-quality malt production guided by a scientific attention to detail, and whisky distinct from that made anywhere else. The Swedish distillers have sought old strains of grain, which are costly and lower yielding, but produce high-quality malt. They're experimenting with unusual oak types for their casks. They're also using their own peat — often saltier than Scottish peat — to dry their barley over. And they're drying some of it over juniper fire, a traditional smoking method in Sweden. The results have been uniformly impressive.

Meanwhile, the Australians are taking a very different approach to making whisky that's brash, noisy and very in your face. In most cases, it bursts with fruity flavour, menthol and spice, and earthy, smoky peatiness. Unlike the respectful Swedes, the Australians aren't afraid of upsetting the whisky establishment. As a result, they've let the world know there really is another way. Take that term 'rest of the world', for instance; it's used by magazines and whisky competitions across the Northern hemisphere. To some Australian producers, this is an affront. "So you have various categories for judging the five established regions in competitions, and then there are the rest of us, thrown together for no proper reason," says Bill Lark, founder of Lark Distillery, the first in Tasmania, and advisor to many of the island's 10 or so distilleries. "It makes us feel second rate. What have we got in common with a whisky from India, or one from Belgium?"

And then there's the matter of age. In the Northern Hemisphere, whiskies tend to be judged based on the award categories 'under 12 years old', '12-20 years old' and 'above 20 years old'. But, says Cameron Syme, the owner of the Great Southern Distilling Company — one of Australia's oldest distilleries — those categories don't apply in Australia.

"How can you say a whisky needs to be 12 years old to be top quality?" he asks. "How can you say that when you don't know the size of the cask, or what it's been used for before, or how many times it's been used? What about the issues of heat, extremes in temperature, and humidity? The conditions for maturation

7 PLACES TO BUY
RARE WHISKY

1 Royal Mile Whiskies
Two shops, in Edinburgh and London, but also a wide range of whiskies available to order online.
royalmilewhiskies.com

2 The Whisky Exchange
Online retailer offering over 9,000 whiskies and spirits.
thewhiskyexchange.com

3 Master of Malt
Stocks Indian, New Zealand, Australian and Dutch whiskies amid its comprehensive range.
masterofmalt.com

4 Arkwrights
Not just a shop in the Wiltshire town of Highworth but a vast online collection to explore too.
whiskyandwines.com

5 Whisky Marketplace
Like a whisky search engine, it helps you find the retailers who stock the spirits you want.
whiskymarketplace.co.uk

6 Gordon & MacPhail
A whisky shop in Elgin, Scotland, that dates back to 1895 – descendents of the original owners are still involved today.
gordonandmacphail.com

7 Milroy's of Soho
Renowned central London specialist retailer with a whisky bar that stocks more than 200 varieties and offers tastings.
shop.milroys.co.uk

MOST PEOPLE LIKE TO CAPTURE THE COTSWOLDS IN A PHOTOGRAPH...

...WE PREFER TO PUT THEM IN A BOTTLE.

FROM OUR AWARD-WINNING **COTSWOLDS DRY GIN** TO OUR BRAND NEW **COTSWOLDS SINGLE MALT WHISKY**, EVERYTHING WE MAKE IS ABOUT QUALITY AND FLAVOUR ABOVE ALL ELSE.

WORLD GIN AWARDS 2016 BEST LONDON DRY GIN
SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS COMPETITION 2016 GOLD MEDAL
SAN FRANCISCO WORLD SPIRITS COMPETITION 2017 GOLD MEDAL
IWSC GOLD 2017 JUDGES' SCORE: 93+ OUTSTANDING

Estd 2014

COTSWOLDS
DISTILLERY

outstanding natural spirits

JIM MURRAY'S WHISKY BIBLE 2016 LIQUID GOLD 94 POINTS
JIM MURRAY'S WHISKY BIBLE 2017 LIQUID GOLD 94 POINTS

COTSWOLDSDISTILLERY.COM

THE COTSWOLDS DISTILLERY. PHILLIP'S FIELD, WHICHFORD ROAD, STOURTON, WARWICKSHIRE CV36 5HG TELEPHONE: +44 (0) 1608 238533

THE JAMES SEDGWICK DISTILLERY THREE SHIPS 10 YEAR OLD SINGLE MALT WHISKY, SOUTH AFRICA

Easy-drinking, rounded and fruity Speyside-like whisky, with a clean moreish taste and a spicy finish.

MACKMYRA MACKMYRA TEN YEARS SWEDISH SINGLE MALT WHISKY, SWEDEN

Buttery, vanilla nose with some fresh pastry notes, apple turnover and lemon meringue with sweet spices. The palate is clean and citrusy, with some vanilla notes.

are totally different in Australia and maturation happens a whole lot quicker."

Observations like these have stirred passionate debate within whisky circles, a debate that seems to have piqued the curiosity of a new generation of whisky drinkers and, in particular, bar people and mixologists. Nor do you have to be in Australia to benefit from climatic advantages. In the East of England and the Cotswolds, maturation is faster than in Scotland, while some of the world's finest New World whisky is coming out of India and Asia, where the climate presents significant problems. India's Amrut Distilleries produced an eight-year-old single malt and it tasted like a 30-year-old Scotch. They called it Greedy Angels, because three-quarters of the cask was lost to the atmosphere — to the 'angels' share'. In Scotland, that figure is typically just 1-2%.

COMING OF AGE

Of course, the key question regarding New World whisky is this: is it any good? And, if so, can it match the whiskies from the traditional countries? For many years, much of it wasn't, and it couldn't. But that's no longer the case, and for two very different reasons.

Firstly, this new wave of producers have improved. They've ironed out distillation problems, successfully experimented with cask and drying methods and recruited the best people working with the best materials to driving their whiskies forward. The likes of Mackmyra, South Africa's James Sedgwick Whisky Distiller, St George's Distillery in England, and Zuidam Distillers in the Netherlands have whiskies that have aged for over 10 or 12 years.

Secondly, producers in Scotland have responded to the high demand for its malts by bottling whisky much earlier than the traditional 10 or 12 years — although by law they have to be three years or older. In some cases, these 'non-age-statement' whiskies (no age listed on the bottle) have at best not been great and, at worst, have been undercooked and immature. What's more, by offering such a product at a higher price than the consumer might have expected to pay for a 12-year-old, some Scottish producers have played into the hands of their New World rivals. Younger whisky drinkers, irked at the cost of Scottish single malt and fired up by social media, have turned to New World whisky in their droves.

For their part, the new distillers have benefited from a double whammy. On the one hand, a four- or five-year-old New World whisky can wipe the floor with a sappy young Scottish single malt; and on the other, the decision to take the age off a bottle has neutered one of the traditional industry's most potent weapons against the new upstarts.

"Every time a Scottish distillery releases a whisky without an age statement, my job gets that little bit easier," says Andrew Nelstrop, owner and managing director of Norfolk-

WARENGHEM DISTILLERY
ARMORIK MAÎTRE DE CHAI, FRANCE
Very fruity, with trifle on the nose and a berry fruits, wrapped in gentle oak, some sweet spice and an attractive nuttiness.

STAUNING WHISKY
TRADITIONAL, DENMARK
A distinctive and unusual malt with a pleasant sweet and grassy note retuning through its heart. Easy drinking, with nougat, grain, fresh, sweet hay and some ginger spice.

based The English Whisky Company. When setting out, all new whisky producers are faced with a simple choice: make it the way the Scots do — in which case they need to be extremely good at it; or find another way. Like the Irish have — using unmalted grain as well as malted barley in their pot still whiskeys. Or the distillers of Kennedy have — using mainly corn and maturing their spirit in new oak barrels to make bourbon. Among New World distillers both methods are being adopted.

In recent years, there's been a massive surge in the number of American micro distillers — and they're experimenting in every way imaginable: with different woods, different grains and different drying methods. Because they're distilling outside Europe they're not bound by the strict definitions of what whisky and single malt whisky must be. Instead, they're free to create hybrid spirits, effectively forming new drinks categories. Of particular note are the American single malts being produced by the Westland Distillery, Balcones Distilling and Corsair Distillery — distinctive and different to the whiskies of Scotland.

It makes for a fascinating and dynamic marketplace, and it's not going to end any time soon. The investment required to make quality whisky means it's much less likely that distillers will disappear in the way that some craft brewers have. More than that, there are distillers across the world patiently waiting to bottle their first distillates. Scores of new and exciting Alpine distilleries are yet to export their single malts, and there are exciting projects underway in countries as diverse as Israel, Argentina and Denmark.

For an industry in which little changed for generations, what's happening in the world of whisky is nothing less than revolutionary. In just a decade, whisky lovers have turned curiosity into passion, and whisky from non-traditional regions has flourished. Those two 'Chinese' whisky samples now seem a very long time ago. ●

WHERE TO TRY IT

Salt Whisky Bar & Dining Room, London
Indian restaurant just around the corner from Marble Arch that stocks over 180 whiskies. saltbar.com

The Briton's Protection, Manchester
Pub with over 200 whiskies and a wide selection of real ales. manchesterbars.com/britonsprotection.htm

Black Rock, London
Multi-award-winning, jet-black basement bar in Shoreditch dedicated to all things whisky. blackrock.bar

TAYLOR'S®
PORT

BOTTLE SHAPES MAY CHANGE.
TAYLOR'S PIONEERING SPIRIT NEVER WILL.

When our enterprising founder Job Bearsley arrived in Portugal in 1692, his superb Ports were enjoyed in elegant, round bottles known as 'onions'. Bearsley could never have guessed that, 325 years later, his firm would be the most famous shipper of Vintage Port, the leading producer of Aged Tawny and the creator of Late Bottled Vintage, one of the most successful of all Port styles.

TAYLOR.PT

PLEASE ENJOY TAYLOR'S PORT RESPONSIBLY

WHEN ONLY TOO MUCH IS ENOUGH

Greek cuisine is all about abundance — of food, company and conversation. In Hertfordshire, we enjoy a taste of Greek-Cypriot life, and find out why barbecuing can be an all-weather activity

WORDS: ALEX MEAD. PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK PARREN TAYLOR

Andy Michaels is holding court at the kitchen sink of his riverside home in a Hertfordshire village on the fringes of the M25. He's getting stuck into a giant bag of prawns. "You've really got to get right in there to devein it," he explains, "I'm leaving the skin on them though, otherwise they'll dry out on the barbecue."

Midway through our impromptu lesson in Greek food preparation, 14-month-old Luca toddles in on his walker, takes one look at the strange man chatting to his fishy-fingered granddad and bursts into tears. Luckily, uncle Marcus is there to scoop him up. At least, I'm guessing it's his uncle, because having arrived only minutes before, I'm not entirely sure who the muddle of children of varying shapes and sizes belong too.

It turns out they all belong to Theo, the man who invited me to his parents' home to experience a Greek-Cypriot Sunday lunch. Not that this is about Theo. While he does happen to be the Theo Michaels off the telly — the one who impressed Greg and John on MasterChef a few years back — today he's not even cooking. That job lies with his parents, Helene and Andy. And because it's a barbecue, Andy's running the show.

Born and bred in London to Greek parents, Andy's more than happy to share his story — there are a lot of prawns to get through after all. "We lived in an English area, in Shoreditch, so we were dating English girls," he says. "My mum always had this thing about me marrying a nice Greek girl, but it was actually just a fluke that I met Helene, in The Grapes [an old Mods and Rockers hangout]. I saw her and, I'll be honest with you, I fell in love with her immediately. I went away and told my cousin 'that's the woman I'm going to marry'. I was 17 or 18 at the time and, of course, it wasn't long before her brother-in-law had me by the throat asking what my intentions were."

As Andy's talking, more people start arriving through the back door — an aunt? A daughter-in-law? Is that the same small person who came through earlier? We're clearly going to need a family tree soon.

"My mum always used to cook Greek food: meatballs, avgolemono [a chicken soup], stuff like that," Andy continues, amid the bustle. "We didn't make moussaka much though; it's tedious to make, so we made a fake version with lasagne sheets," he adds, while dipping again into the never-ending bag of crustaceans.

"I think I can cook, I think I'm very good — the problem is I'm not that good at presentation," he laughs.

As Andy works on the prawns, Helene is moving plates around. Beautiful desserts, salads and dishes of veg, potatoes and dips get transferred from table to surface, like a game of culinary Tetris.

As well as Theo (40) and Marcus (28), Andy and Helene have a middle son, Stephan, who's 34 and apparently the worst cook of the family — though he's not here to defend himself. "Stephan is a bit wild," laughs Andy. "Most people learn to cook at uni, but I think he came back more weekends than most, always asking, 'Mum, have you made chocolate mousse?'"

Even without having tried a single mouthful of food you get a sense of what a Greek lunch is about. "It's about

noise and mayhem," says Andy, reading my mind. "Only too much is ever enough — if there's 10 people, cook for 20." A glance around the kitchen, every surface covered, confirms that.

"Most of what we cook is Greek," he continues. "Helene does the ladies fingers [okra] and all the bean dishes, and the salads, and I'm doing the souvla, which is like kebabs but with big chunks of lambs rather than small bits, and it'll all go onto the rotisserie."

If you know nothing else about Greek get-togethers, just remember it's all about the barbecue — whatever the weather. Andy tells me he'll persist even if it's "bucketing down". Today though, it's not; it's a gorgeous sunny day and we're dining al fresco with several tables bundled together to create enough space — both for the crowd and the vast piles of food.

In the garden, which backs onto the river, Marcus is firing a Nerf gun at his five-year-old nephew, Alexi, while Theo's wife, Anna, a Scouser, is telling me what it's like to marry into a Greek family. "I knew it would be chaos," she says, "People are always talking over each other — in a nice way. There's always so much banter and an abundance of food — always so much food."

As we chat, a call of "coming through, coming through" heralds the arrival of Andy as he walks past with two giant skewers — more like lances, really — of meat. And don't go thinking of the smallish meat cubes on 10-inch metal sticks — that's souvlaki. This is its much, much bigger brother. Fist-sized chunks of chicken and lamb, dressed in nothing more than a bit of olive oil, salt and pepper — oregano if they feel like it. "Is that not the most clichéd picture of a Greek man ever?" says Theo, looking at his dad.

With Andy getting the equivalent of a small farm's worth of chicken and lamb cooking over the charcoals, I sit down and chat with Theo and Helene. She is without doubt the beating heart of the household.

"She's an amazing cook," says Theo, "We always come here when the family gets together. I think the Greek household is very matriarchal, we always used to go to Yiayia's [Grandma's] before — she was the boss."

"And then when she passed away, everyone would come here," adds Helene. Her story begins in Egypt, where her parents met. Both were of Greek origin, and, "when Nasser started throwing everyone out", they moved to Cyprus.

"Food was the centre of everything, as a family we'd always sit down and talk about our day," she says. "And we'd only have meat once a week." The family would keep rabbits, pigeons and chickens and each week Helene's father would slaughter one, her mum would prepare it with "a lot of spices and vegetables", and on Sunday it would be taken to the only oven in the village.

"Not everyone had their own cooker in those days — we didn't. We'd drop it off at the communal oven before church and then pick it up afterwards when it was ready to eat — it was such a treat," she says.

"Everything we eat nowadays is born out of that village mentality," chips in Theo. "We've gone full circle; people talk of 'Meat-free Mondays' as if it's an original idea, but you used to just eat meat once a week."

At this point, as it's been a whole five minutes since I was offered anything to eat or drink, Andy puts a plate of lukaniko — thickly sliced, spiced sausages, in front of me. Piping hot from the grill, they're incredibly flavoursome. The meatiness of the pork is accentuated by the red wine in which it was marinated last night. It's also flavoured with peppercorns, coriander seeds, juniper berries and, of course, olive oil, which, along with lemon, is a mainstay of Greek cooking — and life.

"Olive oil is in everything," confirms Theo. "When we're born they mark a cross on our heads with it, when we die, they pour it over the coffin — you never escape."

There isn't really a dinner-bell moment — here the food is ready "when it's ready". How long does souvla take to cook? "When the bone starts to show through the meat," Theo tells me.

With the barbecue sending its sweet smoke signals in our direction, the time seems to have come, and we decamp to the table, somehow finding space for our cutlery and plates among the myriad dishes. Andy relieves the perfectly charred hunks of meat from their skewer. The lamb is indeed slowly easing itself from the bone, juicy, tender and ready to be eaten. Likewise, the chicken now has a crispy, caramelised skin, all sweet and smoky. The flesh beneath is still pillowy, as you find when the juices remain within and not in a puddle at the bottom of a barbecue. Those prawns, too, are delicious.

Andy has done well. Helene though, as effortless as she makes everything seem, has created a feast for both the eyes and belly. The Greek salads with their fresh tomatoes, mint, feta, cucumber and lettuce make you feel healthier just by looking at them. The okra, which has been soaking up the best bits of the tomatoes, shares a bowl with potatoes, but is fully deserving of its own show. The stuffed vine leaves have been packed with so much pork, rice, herbs and spices, that they look as full as we surely will be once the meal is over.

"SOME THINGS ARE READY WHEN THEY'RE READY — WE'RE NOT GOVERNED BY TIMINGS"

Even the famously tricky moussaka has made an appearance. "It's made with layers of potatoes, aubergine, courgettes and red peppers," explains Helene, "and then in the middle you've got lamb mince sauce with onion, spices, salt and pepper topped with béchamel sauce. And perhaps a little halloumi on top."

"Did you get any bread?" asks Andy, ever conscious that we all may waste away in front of his very eyes. "There are pittas in there," Helene responds, before handing someone else the homemade tzatziki.

The criss-cross of plates makes the meal feel like a culinary Spaghetti Junction, though you don't mind if you find a giant bowl of lamb parked in front of you. Conversations are four, five, six a time, but you keep track and join in whichever you fancy. More guests arrive — numbers go up, never down — but there's more than enough to go around.

As some plates begin to empty, talk turns to dessert. And not just one. The carnival parade of sweets floats its way around the table: carrot cake (a recipe from an old Polish neighbour), baklava (made with wonderfully

JAPAN CENTRE

UNFOLD

GIFTS FOR ALL THIS CHRISTMAS

Discover Japanese Gifts

Japan Centre Panton Street
35b Panton Street SW1Y 4EA

Japan Centre Ceramics & Sushi
19 Shaftesbury Ave. W1D 7ED

Umai by Japan Centre Westfield Stratford
Umai, 1 Fresh Food, Great Eastern Market,
Westfield Stratford City E20 1GL

instore. online. www.japancentre.com

golden sweet filo pastry topping a syrup-covered bundle of nuts), galombrama (crumbly, yet moist, it's a scientific anomaly, but tasty — I take two pieces). There could have been more too, but they only make tables so big.

Like many families, Greek or otherwise, Helene and Andy's life is pretty much displayed on the table. There are dishes inspired by friends, family, neighbours, places they've lived, places they grew up.

Things do bind it, making the mealtime Greek in essence, if not exclusivity. There's the barbecue (Anna recalls a family gathering of 150 in which everyone brought their own grill), and the holy trinity of ingredients: lemon, olive oil and mint. There's the souvla and lukaniko instead of burgers and British bangers, and, of course, dishes such as moussaka, dolmades and galombrama.

Yet, according to Theo, "it's less about the food that's enjoyed — although that is important — it's more about the environment; there's no structure," he says, "Some things are ready when they're ready, we're not governed by timings. When we have barbecues we have a lot of people coming and going, and I think it's more about a culture of embracing. Everyone is always welcome at our table."

Andy has his own take on what sets Greek barbecues apart. "I went to an English barbecue over the summer and while cooking the sausages I had a little taste. I was like, 'Well, you know, you've got to try it before you serve it — chef's privilege and all that.' The guy looked horrified."

For Helene, Cypriot potatoes can make all the difference. "I tried to get some for today, but couldn't find any," she says. "They just taste better, I don't know why, maybe it's the soil, or the way they're grown. Or maybe it's just the childhood memories."

And with that she hits on the answer. Amid the moussaka and meat, souvla and semolina pudding, the Greek dinner isn't just about the food that's made, it's the memories made while eating it. Even as I depart, I'm invited back: "We'll get those potatoes next time." And unlike so many similar invites, Helene means it.

Helene's galombrama

A traditional semolina cake that's sweet, moist and best eaten at room temperature.

MAKES: 24 SQUARES **TAKES: 40 MINS, PLUS 2 HRS SOAKING**

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CAKE MIXTURE

- 4 eggs
- 250g caster sugar
- 240ml milk
- 240ml vegetable oil
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 2-3 drops rose water
- 500g semolina
- 24 skinned almond halves, to decorate

FOR THE SUGAR SYRUP

- 750g caster sugar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp rose water
- 3 cinnamon sticks

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, fan 150°, gas 3. In a large mixing bowl, whisk the eggs. Whisk in the sugar, milk, oil, baking powder and rose water. Add the semolina and mix again.
2. Pour the mixture into a greased 12x9in baking tray (you want the mixture to be about 3 inches deep).
3. Arrange the almonds in even rows over the mixture. Bake for 30-40 mins, until golden. (Test if the cake is ready by inserting a skewer or knife. If it comes out clean, it's ready).
4. Meanwhile, make the sugar syrup. Put the sugar along with 480ml freshly boiled water, lemon juice, rose water and cinnamon in a pan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for around 10 mins. To test if it's done, put your open palm in the steam. It should feel sticky.
5. Cut the cake into squares and, while still warm, pour over the syrup (discarding the cinnamon sticks). Leave to soak in for 2 hrs before serving.

TABLE TALK

Theo Michaels

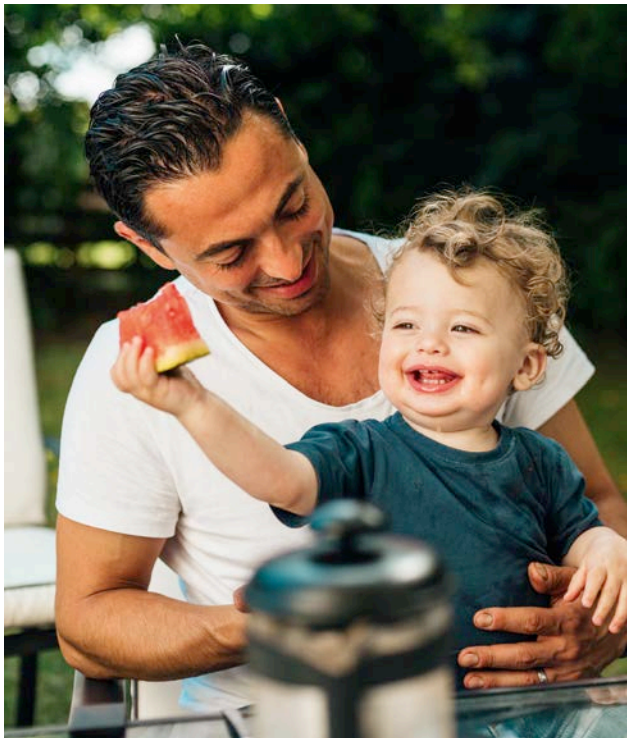
Why did you apply for MasterChef?
I got really fed up with my job. I'd worked in IT and the engineering business for about 15 years, and for the last couple of years I hated going in every day. I fell out of love with it. I remember coming back from holiday and being massively depressed about going to work and I saw the application form and thought I'd fill it out.

Were you worried about how far you'd get?
A bit! People come over to your house and say, 'That's amazing, you should be on MasterChef', but they have to say that, they're in your living room and you've just cooked for them, they're not going to say it's rubbish.

What did you learn from the experience?
I didn't win, so there was no book deal — though that did come later. But you do go from whipping up dinners in the week to thinking about food in competitive sense — you think about texture, execution and taste. I felt that drive again, that ambition, so I thought I'd try and make a living out of food.

How's your food career going?
In a way, you're like the one who doesn't win on X Factor, so you have to graft to get anywhere because there's no great PR machine behind you. I've been doing private catering, pop-ups and written a book (Microwave Mug Meals), and I'm paying the mortgage, so that's good. I don't know what the master plan is really; I've made a living so far, so we'll see how it goes.

Is your cooking Greek-influenced?
I did a pop-up for 40 people in Harpenden (Hertfordshire) not long ago, and it sold out really quickly. I was crapping myself because I'd told everyone I was going to do eight courses, and then I actually had to come up with them. All of the dishes were inspired by Greek food and Mediterranean ingredients. It was a bit mad though, Mum came and I had to ask her to help with the washing up.



Do you ask your mum's advice often?
Being a private chef is an isolating job, so it's great having someone like Mum who is an amazing cook to ring up and ask how to do something, or ask what she thinks of this or that.

Are you ever tempted to change the recipes?
A lot of dishes get slightly bastardised over time. Traditional Greek food gets westernised, so I do like being able to speak to Mum and try make it as if I'm cooking in a village in Cyprus — that's about as authentic as you can get. I would love to do a Greek-inspired recipe book though. A lot of Greek cookery books are a bit old fashioned, or written by Greeks in Cyprus or Greece where you have particular ingredients that are hard to track down in the UK, so it would be nice to do a more modern one reflecting the real lives of a Greek-blooded family in England.

What's next for Theo Michaels?
I've got a second book planned, one on soups you make in a microwave. I was a bit put off by the microwave angle at first, but, you know what, I use those recipes. It means I can cook something healthy from scratch for my kids in a few minutes — and you don't have to spend hours testing recipes either. You know if it's going to work or not in about three minutes. Other than that, I'm just going to keep grafting away.

Finally, do you have a favourite Greek dish?
I'm a sucker for lamb souvla — slow-cooked lamb. Salt and pepper, oregano, squeeze of lemon, a good cut of meat, over charcoal — you don't need much else. ●

Oilalà

Naturalmente differente.

Award-Winning Extra Virgin Olive Oil
100% Italian from Apulia

New York International GOLD AWARD 2017 Olive Oil Competition

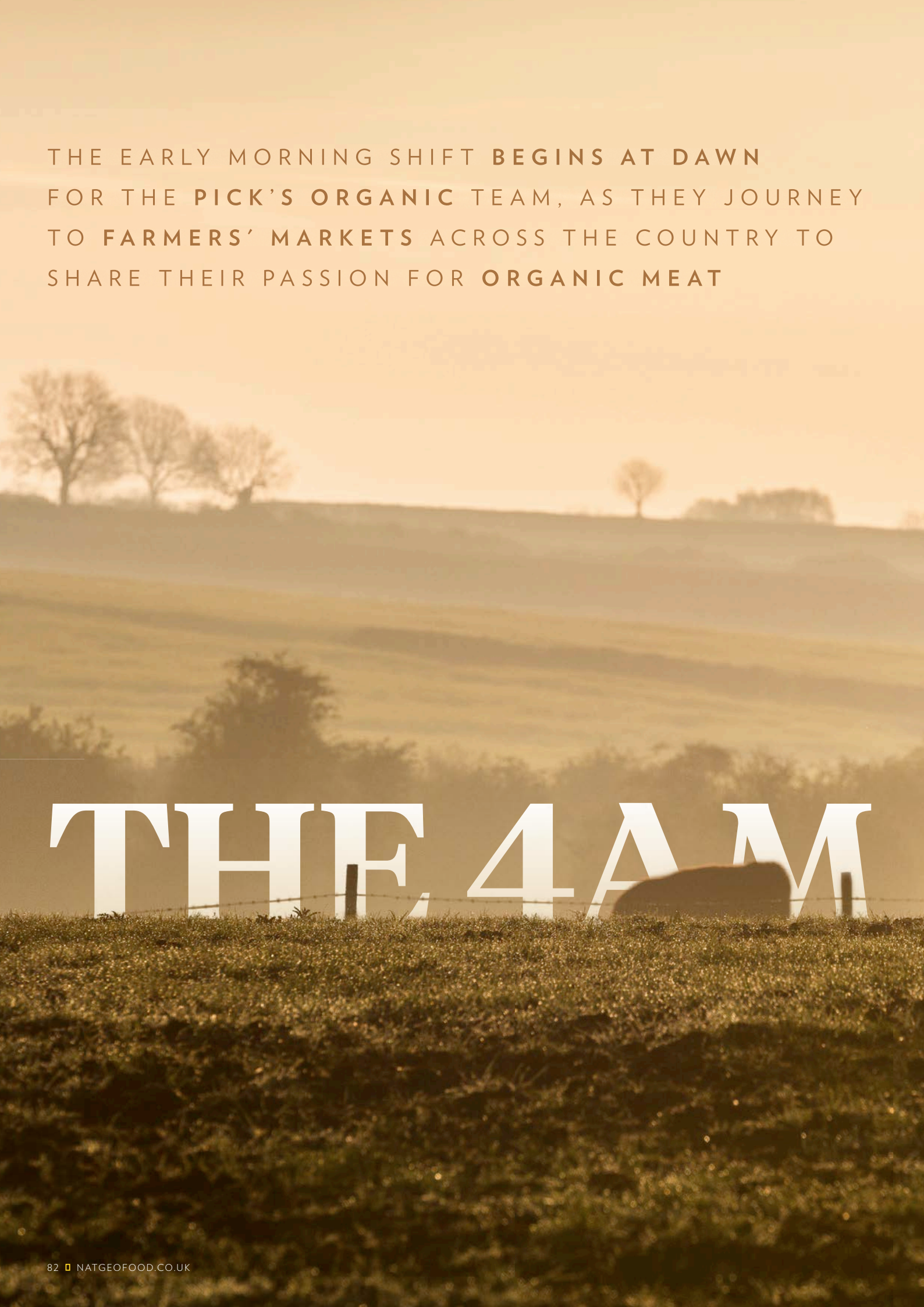
Domina IOOC Gold Medal 2017

Silver Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition 2017

Get now your fresh and tasty olive oil from new harvest 2017. Enjoy one of the best olive oil in the world according to the most influent olive oil contests. Shop on oilala.com. **Use "goldaward17" to get 15% off – until 07/01/2018**

VISIT US ON: OILALA.COM / / OILALAOIL

THE EARLY MORNING SHIFT **BEGINS AT DAWN** FOR THE **PICK'S ORGANIC** TEAM, AS THEY JOURNEY TO **FARMERS' MARKETS** ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO SHARE THEIR PASSION FOR **ORGANIC MEAT**



THE 4AM

CROWD

WORDS: ALEX MEAD
PHOTOGRAPHS: GARY LATHAM

Clockwise from left: Tim feeds his chickens; making scones in the tea room; Gloucester old spot pigs; free range eggs

***Tim Pick** has been a regular at Hinckley Farmers' Market for the best part of a decade. Every fourth Saturday of the month you'll find him there — up at first light, getting the pan sizzling with sausages from the Gloucester Old Spot pigs he rears on his farm a few miles down the road. It's not just sausages that entice his regulars, but also the burgers from his Dexford cows, lamb shoulders and legs, sirloins, topsides, silversides of beef and free-range eggs, not to mention seasonal favourites like game, goose and turkey.*

Tim's personal journey has been somewhat fraught. It's seen him go from working the ditches on his uncle's farm to running his own farming business, Pick's Organic — a name you'll see most weekends at a dozen farmers' markets in London alone, not to mention at numerous others in the Midlands, including Tim's beloved Market Bosworth spot.

But no matter how early you find yourself at a Pick's stall — whether in Hampstead or Highgate, Bosworth or Brook Green — for Tim and his cousin and business partner, Nicky, the day will have started several hours earlier — at 4am to be precise.

Pick's Organic farm is spread over 65 acres and across three sites, one of which surrounds the house in which Tim grew up. It's on this site that he and Nicky meet up with their team — a muddle of people who are part of the farm family; some literally so, others as good as, having been involved for many years.

When we arrive, it may not be 4am, but it's early enough. As we climb into their 4x4 to begin our tour, it's clear getting a story from Tim and Nicky isn't going to be a problem.

Firstly, about that early start. "The butchers [Pick's has two full-timers] will have been working all week, preparing for the weekend," explains Nicky. "The sausages, burgers and cuts are all packaged, and some of the markets want us to butcher on site, so they've also prepared the joints we're going to cut. We get here at 4am, then we're on the road by about 4.45am and our three refrigerator vans head to London. We did about seven markets there on Saturday and Sunday last week."

"Around here, we do about 15 markets," adds Tim. "I do the local ones — after I've let the chickens out, that is."

The Pick's farm was certified as organic in 1999, after a two-year process that essentially involved allowing it to return to nature. "One of the organic inspectors reckons we should just be called a farm, and that the non-organic ones should be called chemical farms," says Nicky, as we drive through the meadow where they keep sheep and cattle.

"It's just farming with nature," she adds. "You don't use weedkiller — we spend hours puling ragwort up by hand, because you can't spray it. It's hard work and you've got to believe in it because it can be frustrating, and feed is twice the price. But when summer comes, you see all the wildlife here. The same family of rabbits live on the corner, the meadow is filled with butterflies and there's a pair of pheasants that live just over," she says, pointing.

"Do a worm count here you'll find lots of them," adds Tim. "But do the same in some of the fields on non-organic farms and you won't find a single worm."

To maintain their organic status, Pick's is assessed twice a year, with everything checked, from the number of worms to animal feed. On top of that, there are regular inspections from two industry organisations: the National Farmers' Retail and Markets Association, and London Farmers Markets.

But for all the hassle, organic farming is something Tim and Nicky believe in strongly. Nicky's passion began after the birth of her first child. "I remember a scare on carrots — they were saying we needed to peel them before we ate them. It made me take notice. And Tim's dad died when he was 46, we think from chemicals. He just walked in one day and collapsed. He used to mix chemicals for the farm with a stick in a tank. He'd just have a handkerchief over his mouth to protect himself."

The sudden death of Tim's dad started a chain of events that would also see his mother lose the tenancy of the farm. "The land was rented and had to be retendered. I was only 16 at the time, so my mother bid for the land — but she was outbid by my uncle."

Tim admits this caused "a bit of a rift" in the family, but he and his mother kept the small plot on which they lived and, as the years went by, Tim started doing work for his uncle: ditch digging. It was the intervention of Nicky, a cousin on his mother's side, that sowed the seeds of what would become a hugely successful organic farm business. "I remember pulling up outside your house and you were sowing veg in the garden," she says. "And then we started talking about doing veg boxes."

"When mum passed," Tim adds, "Nicky came by to help. We had a little honesty box at

FROM THE FARM

Chicken cacciatore

Nicky's take on a rich and creamy Italian classic

SERVES: 4 **TAKES: 50 MINS**

INGREDIENTS

- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 4 large chicken breasts
- 4 tbsp mascarpone
- handful of basil, roughly torn

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, 150°C, gas 3. Heat half the oil in a large frying pan. Add the onion and garlic and gently sweat until just softened.
2. Add the tomatoes, season well, and then simmer for 10-15 mins until thickened.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in the mascarpone and half the basil.
4. Meanwhile, in a clean pan, fry the chicken in the remaining oil until golden on both sides. Transfer to a roasting tin and pour over the sauce. Roast for 25-30 mins, or until cooked through.
5. Scatter over the remaining basil just before serving.

Bœuf bourguignon

Nicky's slow-cooked French stew, best served with a glass of good red wine

SERVES: 6 **TAKES: 3.5 HRS**

INGREDIENTS

- 6 tbsp goose or duck fat
- 1-1.2kg shin beef, cut into large chunks
- 200g smoked streaky bacon, sliced
- 700g shallots, peeled
- 500g chestnut mushrooms, halved
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 bouquet garni (parsley, thyme and bay leaf)
- 750ml red wine, such as Burgundy
- handful of fresh parsley, chopped, to serve

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C, fan 130°C, gas 2. Heat 2 tbsp of fat in a large casserole dish. Sear the beef in batches until golden. Remove to a bowl and set aside.
2. In the same pan, fry the bacon, shallots, mushrooms and garlic until golden. Stir in the tomato purée and drop in the bouquet garni.
3. Return the beef and any juices to the pan, along with the wine and enough water to cover the meat. Bring to the boil, scraping all the caramelised goodness from the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon.
4. Cover the casserole with kitchen foil to seal, then top with the lid and cook for 3 hrs.
5. If the sauce is too watery, remove the solids and boil briskly until thickened. Return the meat and veg to the pan. Scatter over the parsley just before serving.

first. People would help themselves to the veg and leave money."

This evolved and soon locals were signing up for a weekly box of whatever Tim had just picked or pulled from the ground. But after too many all-nighters spent filling boxes for a relatively meagre return, the pair decided another approach was needed. Tim already had pigs and hens, plus experience rearing cattle, so a switch to livestock seemed natural. As they began converting Tim's plot to organic, the stable of animals grew — more pigs, specifically Gloucester Old Spot, Dexter cattle, North Country Cheviot sheep, chickens, turkeys, ducks — whatever was seasonal and whatever they felt people wanted.

Soon they turned fully organic and secured a grant to help with start-up costs, but their first foray into farmers' markets was less than successful. "We started doing Nottingham and Birmingham markets but we were sinking a bit," admits Nicky. "Then we were at one market and this scrap of paper flew onto our stand from the chicken stall. It was a receipt showing his takings from London the week before — £1,000! We'd been taking about £300, so this was the stuff of dreams."

A few false starts on the London scene later, and, with a little concept tweak, they made it. "We did Queen's Park and we couldn't believe it," says Nicky. "They wanted a butcher, so we brought one and we made £800."

The success of Pick's Organic has justified Tim and Nicky's belief in organic produce. And, as well as the financial returns, it's had a transformative effect on Tim. Today he's chatty and amiable, but people weren't always his thing. "At the beginning, I would get in a state before we went to a market. When you're on a farm you don't see anyone or go anywhere."

"Tim was a recluse," Nicky explains. "He'd give out these samples but never talk to anyone and never make eye contact."

"You do become a recluse," Tim agrees. "Farmers are like that, though — you're just working, working, working. It's changed me though. I've always been on the farm and not gone anywhere — I've only been abroad once. But now I want to go away."

For the moment, though, Tim is staying put; sticking with the farm that bears his name, living in the cottage his dad built, working with his cousin to spread the organic word around the Midlands and across London.

Not that you'll see Tim in the capital any time soon — it'll be Nicky, or her daughter Sophie, or Hettie, who runs the farm's teashop. Luckily for those of us who live in London, they still reckon we're worth the 4am starts.

Clockwise from left: English butternut squash; North country sheep; English cauliflower; Nicky feeding orphaned lambs; purple sprouting broccoli

Bwyd a Diod Cymru
Food & Drink Wales





www.llyw.cymru/bwydadiodcymru
www.gov.wales/foodanddrinkwales

e-bost: bwyd-food@llyw.cymru
e-mail: bwyd-food@gov.wales

@BwydaDiodCymru
@FoodDrinkWales

10 FARMERS' MARKETS

Twenty years after the first UK farmers' market set up its stalls, there are thought to be about 700 in the UK. And with a growing number of us taking an interest in eating seasonal, local and traceable produce, even more are sure to spring up. Here are our current top 10

Stroud Farmers' Market, Gloucestershire

1 Stroud Farmers' Market, Gloucestershire

Twice named FARMA's UK Farmers' Market of the Year, Stroud is currently enjoying something akin to celebrity status, having appeared in two of the BBC's best-loved food shows, Hairy Bikers and Rick Stein's Food Heroes. It's held every Saturday and caters to a broad range of tastes. fresh-n-local.co.uk/trader/stroud

2 Abingdon Farmers' Market, Oxfordshire

Held on the third Friday of every month, this market showcases everything from farm produce to arts and crafts, plants, artisan chocolate and chillies. tvfm.org.uk

3 Deddington Farmers' Market, Oxfordshire

More than 40 stalls, covering everything from beer and bread to fish and flowers, plus there's even music too. It's held on the fourth Saturday of the month. deddingtonfarmersmarket.co.uk

4 St Ives Farmers' Market, Cambridgeshire

The historic town, not to be confused with its Cornwall namesake, plays host to a farmers' market on the first and third Saturdays of the month. Rare-breed pork, game, fish, chutneys and charcuterie are among its bountiful offerings. stivestowncouncil.gov.uk

5 West Malling Farmers' Market, Kent

Taking up the high street of this pretty historic Kent village, the West Malling market is renowned for its game. westmallingfarmersmarket.co.uk

6 Moseley Farmers' Market, Birmingham

A huge market with over 60 stalls that take over the entire village. Expect beer, pies, fruit, veg and some great street snacks too, including pulled pork and falafel. Last Saturday of the month. moseleyfarmersmarket.org.uk

7 Edinburgh Farmers' Market

This popular Saturday market, facing the castle, hosts more than 40 stalls, piled high with everything from pies, olive oil and soap, to pork, knitwear and slow food. edinburghfarmersmarket.co.uk

8 Newcastle Farmers' Market, tyne and Wear

Everything is grown within 50 miles of this city-centre farmers' market, held at Grey's Monument on the first Friday of every month. newcastle.gov.uk

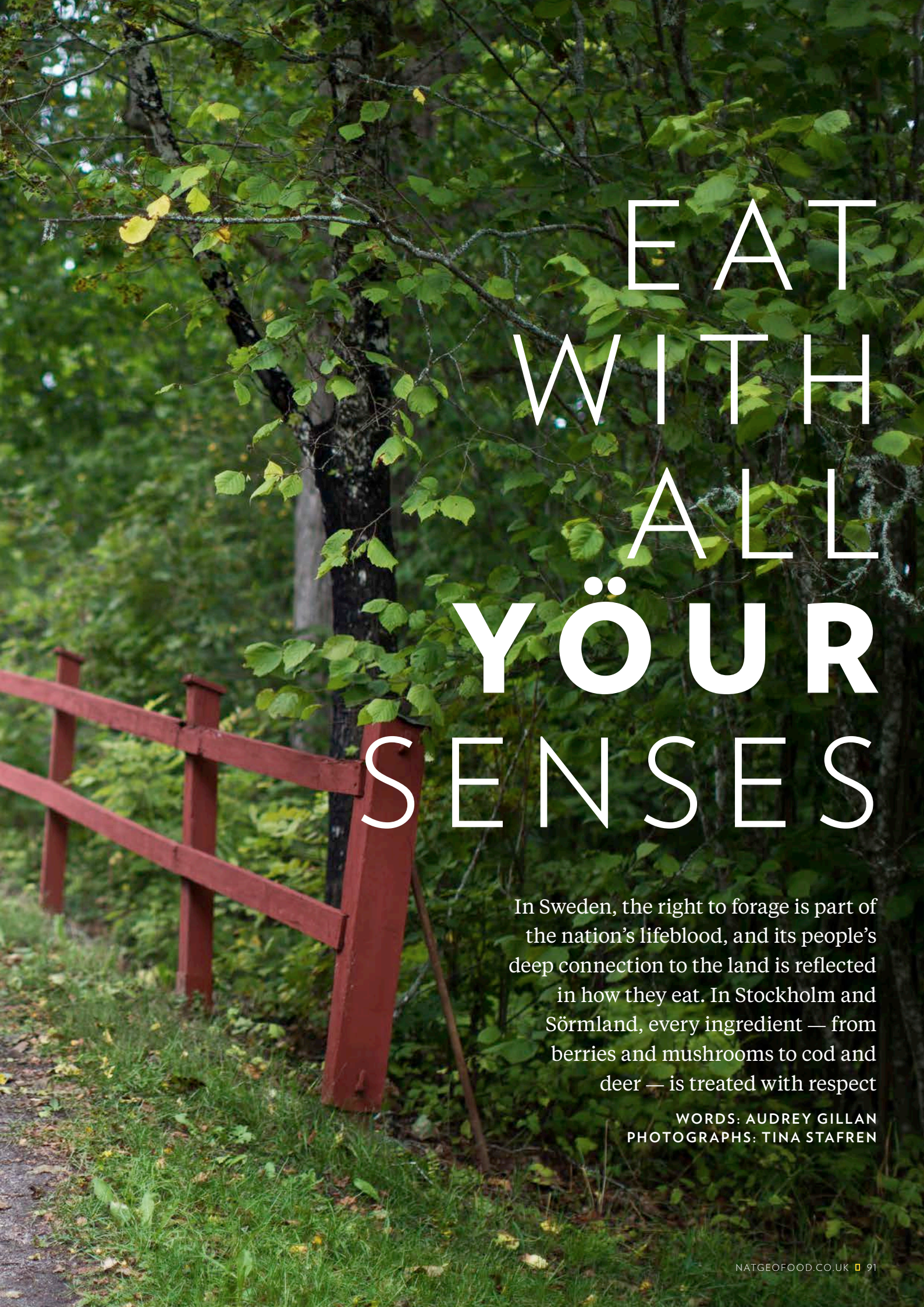
9 Taunton Farmers' Market, Somerset

Juice makers, brewers, bakers and even British biltong makers are among those gathered in the county town for this weekly Thursday market. tauntonfarmersmarket.co.uk

10 White House Farm Farmers' Market, Norwich

A farmer's market on an actual farm – you can't get closer to source than that! There's also a butchers and an on-site cafe, not to mention pick-your-own. norwich-pyo.co.uk ●

IMAGE: ALAMY



EAT WITH ALL YÖUR SENSES

In Sweden, the right to forage is part of the nation's lifeblood, and its people's deep connection to the land is reflected in how they eat. In Stockholm and Sörmland, every ingredient — from berries and mushrooms to cod and deer — is treated with respect

WORDS: AUDREY GILLAN
PHOTOGRAPHS: TINA STAFREN

THE AIR SMELLS OF **SPRUCE** AND **MOSS**, OF THE **DAMP EARTH** AND **MUSHROOMS**. WITH A **WICKER BASKET IN ONE HAND** AND A **CURVE-BLADED KNIFE** FOR CUTTING **EDIBLE FUNGI** IN THE OTHER, **LENA ENGELMARK EMBERTSÉN** MOVES THROUGH THIS **SWEDISH FOREST** GENTLY, WITH **ALL HER SENSES ALERT.**

Here, amid the pine and spruce trees, she finds all manner of fungi — penny buns, parasols, shaggy ink caps and wood hedgehogs. The cartoon-like, red-and-white-spotted fly agaric sticks its head up, seeming to shout 'eat me, eat me!' but Lena is very clear: this is a trick, this toadstool is a vomit-inducing hallucinogen.

As I follow in her path, my eyes become sharper and I'm pleased to find one little chanterelle, which, to me, is particularly beautiful. As I stoop to the forest floor to retrieve my buttery bounty, I observe the tiny world at my feet — a bed of hundreds of different mosses, lichens and fungi — many of them once commonly used for cooking and general household purposes — lichens for insulation and for babies' nappies, moss to top roofs...

Earlier, I'd met up with Lena at Högtorp Gård, the 150-acre farm she and her husband, Ola, have owned for over a decade. She's a chemical engineer, he's a biologist and forest ecologist; together, they've turned their land into a kind of eco-gastro experiment, declining to exploit their spruce and pine for logs and instead turning the fruits of their forest — spruce buds and needles, birch sap and leaves, berries — into oils, syrups, jams and jellies of such high quality that they're in demand from many of Scandinavia's great chefs.

"What we do is produce tastes in food. We manage the forest in certain ways so that we can produce different flavours. It's completely different than a coniferous forest in the rest of the world. We earn more money from the needles than the logs and in that we're quite unusual," Lena explains as we explore her domain in Sweden's southeastern Sörmland province. "When we started our food business six years ago, we thought, what type of knowledge do both of us have? I've always been interested in foraging and really great food — going to really niche restaurants when I was a student. I like good raw material and quite pure tastes and not a lot of mixtures. I'm a food innovator, combining my tastes and interest in wild food with Ola's knowledge of trees and flowers."

In a tiny off-grid cottage on the farm land — the oldest in the area — Lena and Ola serve up a soup of nettles, sorrel, garlic, rapeseed oil, toasted sunflower seeds and parmesan. I taste her spruce oil — extracted from shoots — as well as a syrup made from tiny spruce buds, her pickled rowanberries and more. "Marinated wild reindeer meat, cold-smoked trout, chanterelle mushrooms fried in butter — these are all hallmark flavours of Sweden," Lena explains. "And when we top them with seasoning oil such as spruce, we add freshness and depth and the experience of the Nordic is enhanced significantly."

IN FIVE

The sandwich
The räksmörgås (or räkmacka) is an open-faced shrimp sandwich, topped with lettuce, tomato, cucumber, boiled egg, North Atlantic shrimp, crème fraîche and dill.

The sweets
Swedes love liquorice — particularly the salty version, which can be a challenge for visitors. Another favourite is kanelbulle, a cinnamon bun, usually served with coffee.

The fruits
Berries are adored in Sweden. Popular varieties are cloudberries, lingonberries, bilberries, arctic brambles, blueberries, wild raspberries and strawberries.

The side
Knäckebröd (Swedish crispbread) is eaten at breakfast, lunch and dinner and as a snack. In the 1970s, a government campaign advised eating six to eight slices a day.

The stalwart
Köttbullar (meatballs, most commonly made from pork or beef) are typically served with a light, buttery sauce and a lingonberry condiment.

Clockwise from above: Lena serving soup. foraged mushrooms. Lena's soup. lingonberries. Previous page: Lena and Ola lead a forage

Cooking class with Claus Jarding

Berries feature prominently in the Swedish diet and picking them in the wild is part of the lifeblood of its people. Allemansrätten (the public's right to freely roam the countryside) is a cherished tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, which was fully exploited in the late-19th and early-20th century when extreme poverty helped to create a nation of thrifty foragers.

There are numerous species of wild berry in Sweden, most of which feature on restaurant menus and in råröords (raw-blended jams) across the land. Cloudberries, lingonberries and bilberries are arctic berries that are key elements in the New Nordic Cuisine, a cooking movement founded in 2004 by a group of top Scandinavian chefs, centred around local, seasonal and natural ingredients. Michelin-starred Swedish chef Mathias Dahlgren, a member of this group, said at the time: "Chefs should dig wherever they are standing and use as many local ingredients in season as they can. The only next trend in gastronomy is whatever is growing next season."

AS WE EAT OUR DESSERT, MAGNUS EXPLAINS THAT "ALMONDS AND CLOUDBERRIES ARE BEST FRIENDS", AND THAT IT'S IMPERATIVE WHEN COOKING TO RELAX AND ENJOY IT

This 'on-your-doorstep' philosophy manifests itself at Äléby Gård, a hunting-focused family farm that boasts a restaurant and farm shop, as well as holiday homes to rent. Owner Jacob Högfeldt tells me the guiding principle on this vast estate is conservation — of both the countryside and the game animals that call it home. These include fallow deer, moose, wild boars, hares and mallards. Here, you can hunt, butcher and cook your own dinner and pick your own vegetables to go with it. As Jacob shows us around the small butchery area next to the kitchen, he talks reverently about the preparation of the game: "It's quite a unique dinner. You get to talk about humbleness and the way you should take care of an animal. It's not a bloody thing, it's a very respectful thing." Jacob — who's also the local mayor — describes Sörmland as "a factory without roof or walls". There are so many farms here that the region is, in effect, Sweden's larder.

I next drive further into the forest, around 70 miles south west, to Virå Bruk, a farm and all-round mecca for field sports, with a conference centre, farm shop, restaurant, hunting lodges and a game kitchen to hire. Chef Claus Jarding greets me in an open kitchen warmed by a wood fire and hands me a bottle of God Lager from the local Nils Oscar Brewery. We smoke wild duck breasts, sauté mushrooms in butter and sear fallow deer — combining our bounty with meat hunted on the estate and other raw materials from the forest.

In Stockholm, a final cooking class awaits, the dishes of which seem to be a perfect distillation of Swedish cuisine: lamb tartar with smoked sour cream and crispy beets, oven-baked cod with sprats, potatoes and broad beans, and, to finish, chilled cloudberry soup with almond crème brûlée and cloudberry sorbet. The menu has been devised by Magnus Albrektsson, a consultant chef who's showing me the ropes at Restaurangakademin, a gastronomic school for chefs and restaurant workers that also hosts classes for the public.

WHERE TO DINE

Tak, Stockholm

At this 13th-floor restaurant, overlooking the rooftops of Stockholm's Old Town, chef Frida Ronge pioneers Swedish-Japanese fusion cuisine, the main focus being sustainable wild and farmed fish. "The concept here is like Nordic Japanese," she says. "All the fresh ingredients are from Nordic countries, as much as possible." Frida's signature dish is chirashizushi — soy sauce-cured salmon, trout roe, ginger-pickled Swedish turnip, sesame mayonnaise and furikake (Japanese seasoning mix). *Three courses from 485 krona (£44) per person, without wine.* tak.se

Rutabaga, Stockholm

At Rutabaga, acclaimed chef Mathias Dahlgren focuses on lacto-ovo-vegetarian cuisine. The ethos is 'quality fresh produce, with the whole world as a source of inspiration'. Dishes include braised, grilled lettuce with chimichurri oil and a 63C egg — the white just set — with chanterelles, porcini, black trumpet mushrooms and spinach sautéed in soy butter sauce. *Set menu, 795 krona (£72) per person, three à la carte small plates from 375 krona (£34), without wine.* mdghs.se

Virå Bruk, Stavsjö

Driving towards this remote restaurant, farm shop, cookery school and field sports centre, you might spot a wild boar or duck and know that one of its brethren will grace your plate later. Being aware of what you eat and where it comes from is the ethos here. You can cook your own dinner under expert tutelage, using game from the estate, or you can simply eat. As well as moose and deer, the restaurant also serves its own lamb, local fish and vegetables, and mushrooms from the surrounding forests. There are small cabins at the edge of a nearby lake should you wish to stay the night. *Three-course dinner 527 krona (£48) per person, without wine.* virabruk.se

Norway has perfect living conditions.

For salmon.

Why did humans settle in this inhospitable place? Because it´s a perfect place for fish. Ice cold waters make the Norwegian salmon grow slowly and develop a perfect taste.

seafoodfromnorway.co.uk

SEAFOOD FROM NORWAY

THE SWEDISH WAY

Fika
In England, we have afternoon tea; in Sweden, there's fika — a coffee break, often accompanied by a kardemummabulle (cardamom bun) or kanelbulle (cinnamon bun).

Kräftskiva
Popular across Sweden on warm August evenings, the kräftskiva (crayfish party) is an end-of-summer ritual. Friends and family gather together, don paper hats, drink too much, sing songs and dance and feast on crayfish. Once the preserve of the rich, cheap imports of the juicy red critters has meant it can now be enjoyed by all.

Herring
The Swedes have devised seemingly endless ways to eat herring: pickled, cured, baked, roasted, smoked, raw... But the most famous, most grimace-inducing of them all is surströmming — sour, fermented Black Sea herring that stinks to high heaven.

Smörgåsbord
The smörgåsbord buffet originated in Sweden but is now common across all of Scandinavia. It typically involves various types of herring and smoked fish, cheeses and meats, plus crackers, rye bread, sausages, meatballs, shrimps and other seafood.

Pea soup and pancakes
Traditionally eaten on a Thursday, this quirky combo is a staple at old-school restaurants in Sweden, usually served with a dollop of lingonberry jam on top of the pancakes.

Lördagsgodis
The Swedes love sweets. So much so that in 1957 the country's Medical Board — alarmed at rampant levels of tooth decay — advised that children should only eat sweets on Saturday. And lo, the tradition of lördagsgodis ('Saturday sweets') was born.

Cooking class. Below: almond and cloudberry dessert

As we put the pieces of cod loin into an oven set to a very low temperature, Magnus explains that this species of fish has made a great leap, in gastronomic terms. "It was previously regarded as a lower-standard fish. Now it's treasured and it's sustainable."

The sauce for the cod is flavoured with tinned ansjovis (not anchovies, surprisingly, but sprats), another essence of Sweden. Their sweet flavour is essential for this dish, as well as the husmanskost (traditional Swedish cuisine) classic, Jansson's frestelse ('Janson's temptation': a potato gratin, with a cream sauce flavoured by sprats). It's lain on a bed of soft potatoes and broad beans and the whole thing is sprinkled with sourdough croutons scented with caraway and aniseed — two very Swedish spices that, like another favourite, cinnamon, was brought to this land by the Vikings.

"You eat with all your senses," Magnus tells me, as we prepare the dish. "You need two textures to make everything happen on your palate." As we eat our dessert, he explains that "almonds and cloudberries are best friends", and that the most important thing to do when cooking is to relax and enjoy it. "I'm teaching restaurant cooking for home cooks, but nothing is too complicated," he says. "The first priority is to see your friends — the second priority is fantastic food."

What next?
Norwegian has return flights from Gatwick to Stockholm Arlanda from £70.
Doubles at Vira Bruk in Stavsjö from 1,995 krona (£182) a night, B&B.
Doubles at Haymarket by Scandic, in Stockholm, from £150 a night, B&B.

norwegian.com
scandichotels.com/haymarket
visitsweden.com
visitsormland.com
visitstockholm.com

SWEDISH BAKED COD

Chef Magnus Albrektsson of Restaurangakademien uses classic Swedish ingredients for this dish

SERVES: 4 **TAKES: 1 HR**

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 4 skinless cod fillets (approx 160g each)
- your choice of dressed seasonal vegetables and herbs, to serve (optional)

FOR THE BRINE

- 400ml water
- 40g sea salt

FOR THE SAUCE

- 300ml whipping cream
- 1 shallots, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 100ml white wine
- 250ml fish stock
- 2 sprat fillets, such as Grebbestad's Ansjovis, plus 2 tsp brine
- 50ml whole milk, cold

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 110°C, fan 90°C, gas ¼. Grease a large baking dish with oil. For the brine, dissolve the salt in the water and pour into a large bowl. Add the fish and soak for 10 mins.
2. Drain the fish and rinse under cold water; discard the brine. Pat dry with kitchen paper. Put the cod in the baking dish, then cover with heat resistant clingfilm and bake for 20 mins, or until the fish reaches an internal temperature of 40° (when tested with a kitchen thermometer).
3. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce. Put the cream in a pan and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until thickened and reduced by half.
4. In a separate pan, sauté the shallots in the rapeseed oil until softened. Add the wine and simmer over a high heat until reduced by half.
5. Add the fish stock and reduce once again until half remains.
6. Add the cream, bring to the boil, and then add the sprats. Whizz with a hand blender until smooth. Strain through a sieve into a clean pan. and season to taste with sea salt.
7. Whizz again to a thick foam, adding a little milk to help the foam develop.
8. To serve, arrange one fillet on each plate (on a bed of seasonal veg, if using) and spoon over the sauce. Garnish with your choice of fresh herbs. ●

Sheffield. Beer city.

OUR FAVOURITE PLACES™

Crammed full of brilliant boozers, unique bottle shops and smashing breweries, Sheffield can rightly lay claim to the title of UK real ale capital.

The city's home to over twenty breweries, and its pubs offer hundreds of different beers between them on a typical day. So whether it's over a perfect pie and chips, by a fire with friends, or in a beer garden overlooking the hilly city – you're sure to find a brew to suit you.

Begin your beery adventure with tips from in-the-know locals: ourfaveplaces.co.uk/beer

DECONSTRUCT

THE ROAST

WORDS: MICHAEL RAFFAEL
PHOTOGRAPHS: VINCENT WHITEMAN

A Sunday roast can make many of us feel undeniably warm and fuzzy inside, bringing back family memories, or new memories we'd like to create. Though devoured in minutes, the humble roast can take hours to prepare, and this English classic — or dying tradition depending on your outlook — can make or break your cookery esteem

Culinary gurus tackle their roasts every which way. Heston Blumenthal slow-roasts his ribs of beef for five hours to a core temperature of 55°C. Jamie Oliver stuffs his 'ultimate' chicken with pancetta and rosemary. Gordon Ramsay's belly of pork is baked on a fennel bed, steaming in its fragrant juices. Nigel Slater, meanwhile, focuses on the gooey substratum under his joint: "Concentrated essence of the meat, some charred herbs, sizzling fat and sticky smudges of roasted garlic."

The Sunday roast has come a long way. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, patron saint of gourmets, wrote: "Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are." Today's food fashions would probably leave him scratching his wig. We ordinary folk may dine off different china than society's upper echelons (Ikea versus Crown Derby) and have different drinking habits (New Zealand pinot noir, rather than Château Pétrus). But what's on our plates will often be the same: same joint, same recipe, same accompaniments.

A generation or three ago, the family patriarch stood at the head of the table, carving knife poised. He knew — or thought he did — how to slice the statuesque joint before him. Now, the meal's axis has shifted to the kitchen. So much the better. It does though beg one question: what exactly is a 'roast'?

THE FLAME GAME

In a pre-oven world, food was roasted in front of an open fire. Cooks engaged their physical senses in watching, sniffing and touching. They moved the skewered joints closer to the spit or further from it. They turned it faster or slower. They poked and prodded. They dredged, dusted, frothed, powdered and basted, transforming the meat's surface to an aromatic crust. 'Done to a turn' meant just that.

It's a vanished art. The cooking range sealed its fate. "Perhaps the best of English cooking," wrote food historian Dorothy Hartley, "was lost when the oven door shut on the English roast and turned it into a funereal feast of baked meats."

Today's Sunday joint is baked meat, rather than roasted. We've adopted the older word and invented a whole new branch of cookery around it. Now, we 'flash' or 'slow-roast'. Vegetarians 'nut-roast'. Instead of sniffing and prodding we probe electronically for doneness. Charts guide us with advice on times and temperatures.

Cooks of yore would recognise the cuts we choose. How butchers dismember carcasses hasn't changed in a century. Ribs or sirloin, the 'Roast Beef of Old England', still rule in Brexit Britain. Legs of homegrown lamb (called gigots in Scotland) have to vie with New Zealand's finest. Bleached chickens have yet to cross the Atlantic.

There are anomalies, of course. Not so long ago, nobody ate pork in a month without an R – now it's readily available year-round. Only Prince Charles and his admirers source three-year old mutton. Most venison is farmed these days, and veal is a rarity in supermarkets.

The biggest shift, however, has been us. Carveries and buffets have a virtual monopoly on heavyweight forerибs, saddles and barons. Only a handful of stalwarts still buy a large mound of, say, topside for Sunday roast, dish it up cold on Monday and mince the leftovers for Tuesday's cottage pie.

HOW TO ROAST

It starts with a fundamental: how much meat to buy per person. To that there is no set answer. It depends on the eaters' appetites. Weight can be misleading. Bone-in, oven-ready or lean-to-fat all matter when choosing. Shrinkage during roasting can spiral up to 40% of raw weight. Dry-aged beef loses less, but costs more. The same applies to rare-breed pork.

There's no such thing as the ideal thermostat setting. It's counterintuitive, but the bigger a joint is the lower the temperature should be. Guidelines help up to a point; they

MICHELIN-STARRED
JOHN CAMPBELL

on gravy

"The best gravy is made in the pan in which you roasted your joint. It should be more like a juice and not like brown cheese sauce. Remove the joint, but leave the fat and sediment. Place on the stove and add light veg or chicken stock (because you don't want to dilute the flavour of the roasting juices). Treat the meat juice like liquid gold, a little for everyone."

FOOD STYLINAG: LAURIE PERRY. PROPS: CYNTHIA BLACKETT

aren't fool-proof. The meat's shape matters as much as its weight. Electronic temperature probes are safer, with a proviso; one person's 'medium' is another's well-done.

Personal taste is the final arbiter. It also influences how to roast. Which is more important: meat or gravy? Stand a joint on the roasting pan and juices will drip into it. Caramelised, they'll make the concentrated glaze that sets the likes of Nigel Slater drooling. Laying meat on a rack or in a cradle lets the air circulate around it. A drier, crisper crust forms on the outside. Inside, it will be more succulent.

Basting with the dripping is a throwback to spit technology, and lets cooks peek in the oven at the state of play. Done once, it gilds a chicken's skin or puffs up crackling on a leg of pork. With red meat it stops exposed surfaces hardening. Overdone it's little more than a nervous tic.

Salt and seasonings add a personal touch. Which, when and how much influence the outcome. Freshly ground pepper loses its aroma within minutes; only the hotness remains. Fashionable *fleur de sel* belongs on the table. Rubbing or sprinkling it over the raw material destroys its special character. The classic combinations — lamb with rosemary, pork with sage, chicken with thyme or tarragon — withstand the test of time.

Chefs rest meat on a shelf above the stove before sending it out. Even with smaller portions it serves a dual purpose. Cooking continues via the residual heat at the surface. At the same time, the texture on the inside evens out. Even a modest Sunday roast benefits from a 20-minute wait. This is when families once ate Yorkshire pudding.

ROAST POTATOES AND THE REST

One smart food writer described a roast as an "enormously elaborate excuse for a tray of roast potatoes". Their outer crunch delivers colour, taste and texture. The fluffy meal inside mops up juices. No single variety outshines others. Any floury one will work.

BEYOND NUT ROAST: THE VEGGIE WAY

Whole roast cauliflower

Nothing could be simpler; all you have to do is cut off the leaves and stalk to get the cauli to stand upright in an oven dish, rub with your chosen dried spices, season well and pop it in the oven. Asian flavours such as chilli, cumin or turmeric work well; as does natural yoghurt spiked with tahini, drizzled over the finished product.

Mushroom Wellington

This veggie take on a British classic has a lower risk-factor than its beefy counterpart (you're not likely to under-cook your pre-fried mushrooms, for example). Use any mix of fungi you like, adding traditional Sunday roast flavours such as thyme. And if puff pastry isn't in your repertoire, there's no shame in shop-bought.

Stuffed squash

This works with any squash or pumpkin, but butternut is the easiest to come by. And the beauty is, you can fill it with almost anything: herbs, spinach, cheese, nuts or grains, mixed together with some of the scooped-out squash flesh. Just halve, de-seed and pre-roast your squash before stuffing.

Root gratin

Whether you're a fan of carrots, parsnips, beets or celeriac — slice them finely enough and you can turn them into a gratin. Layer the slices in a roasting dish and pour over veggie stock or a creamy sauce (a la dauphinoise). Want more gratin inspiration? See Anna Jones's column on p.25 for her swede version. *Nicola Trup*

HOW TO ROAST A CHICKEN

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6.
2. Wipe the chicken inside and out with kitchen paper. Alternatively attack it with a hairdryer. This stops the flesh steaming and helps the skin to crisp.
3. Dissolve a pinch of salt in a tablespoon each of melted butter or rendered chicken fat and oil. Massage the bird with the fat — rub some where the sun don't shine too.
4. Stuff the cavity with selected herbs.
5. Perch the chicken on a rack or nest of chopped onion and carrot. For added flavour, add halved lemons, whole garlic bulbs and onions to the roasting pan.
6. Cooking time depends on size, but also on whether the meat is chilled. Stuffed birds take an extra 20 minutes.
7. Test if it's ready with a meat thermometer (72°C).
8. Baste twice to make skin glossy.
9. Rest for 10 mins to even out the bird's juices.

PERFECT YORKSHIRE PUDS

Make either as popovers (individual puds) or as one large pud to slice in a roasting tin. Prepare a batter with 220g flour, 3 eggs, 375g semi-skimmed milk and a pinch of salt. Whisk for 5 mins and rest for 1 hr. Heat dripping in a roasting tin until smoking. Pour in the batter and bake for about 20 mins at 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6, until golden.

Parboiling or boiling is an essential first step. Whether you coat them in oil, dripping, lard or any other fat is a matter of choice. Juggling time and oven temperature — anything between 160°C and 220°C — is up to the cook. Anything goes.

A motley crew of accompaniments support the Roast. All have histories predating it. Beef's horseradish sauce evolved from grated horseradish root, piled like snow on diners' plates. Folding it into whipped cream softens the blow. Mint sauce didn't emerge fully formed either. The herb was chopped up, mixed with a cocktail of lemon juice, wine vinegar and sugar. Redcurrant once vied with rowanberry and barberry jellies. Pickled samphire or laver went with marsh mutton.

Pork and apple sauce owes as much to tradition as creative kitchen genius. Pigs like eating apples. Farmers and smallholders treated them to windfalls in the autumnal days before slaughter; accompanying the fatty meat with the fruit seemed a natural choice.

Similar logic must have applied to the bread sauce served with roast chicken. Long before factory farming transformed the poultry industry, fattening chickens for the London market was a profitable business. The thick sauce, flavoured with boiled onion and cloves, echoed the cramming diet of milk and cereal, while matching the milky-white meat.

THE ART OF THE CARVE

The Cook and Housewife's Manual, a 200-year-old tome, gives advice that still resonates: 'A person of refinement will eat much more when his food is served in handsome slices, and not too much at once, than when a pound clumsily cut is laid upon his plate. To cut warm joints fairly and smoothly, neither in slices too thick, nor in such as are too finically thin, is all that is required of the carver.'

EATING OUT

For when you want a roast, but you don't want to cook...

1. FREEMASONS AT WISWELL, RIBBLE VALLEY
Steven Smith's Lancashire gastropub has a hatful of awards, including this year's AA Restaurant of the Year for England. Smith is an innovator who hasn't forgotten how traditional cooking should taste. Three courses £29.95 including aged- sirloin, Yorkshire pudding, duck fat potatoes and cauliflower cheese.
Chef's tip: Infuse chopped mint in reduced chicken stock and finish with white balsamic to go with slow-cooked shoulder of lamb.
freemasonsatwiswell.com

2. GRAVETYE MANOR, EAST GRINSTEAD
The Tudor mansion has one of the finest walled market gardens. Vegetables win the prize for Best Supporting Act. Three courses £35 with Irish beef or loin of Sussex pork and vegetables harvested daily from the hotel's garden.
Chef's tip: Ask the butcher for some beef fat. Dice it, add a little water and heat gently in a pan to render it. Pour through a sieve, skim off the fat for roasting and use the liquid for gravy.
gravetyemanor.co.uk

3. THE HAND AND FLOWERS, MARLOW
Tom Kerridge's flagship retains its pub atmosphere while dishing up two-Michelin-starred masterpieces. Mains include treacle-cured Chateaubriand (£35); half a beer-roast chicken (£34.50); and tenderloin Wiltshire pork with pickled cabbage and garlic sausage (£29.50).
Chef's tip: Marinate a beef fillet in black treacle and chicken stock overnight, slow-roast to 55°C, then glaze in a hot oven.
thehandandflowers.co.uk

4. LONGUEVILLE MANOR, JERSEY
Granite walls outside, oak paneling in the dining room — this is low-key luxury. Even if Sunday lunch is about meat, don't neglect the fish on the four-course menu. For two it's £90, including slow-roast belly of pork with apple sauce and ginger stuffing, or roast Lough Erne lamb rump with fondant potato and garlic jus.
Chef's tip: Use new-season Cox's apples and vanilla for a great apple sauce.
longuevillemanor.com

5. SIGN OF THE ANGEL, LACOCK
A pretty, half-timbered restaurant (pictured above) in an equally beautiful beautiful National Trust village just outside Bath. The three-course menu, £24, has a choice of roasts, including loin of beef and guinea fowl breast.
Chef's tip: Stand joints on a bed of bones, begged from the supermarket, for better gravy.
signoftheangel.co.uk

6. SWAN AT HAY, HAY-ON-WYE
The Welsh Marches town has a hotel fit to house celebs during its annual book festival — and food to match. Three-courses £18, including Welsh Black beef rib and goose fat potatoes, or roast chicken breast with honeyed parsnips and greens.
Chef's tip: Boil potatoes with rosemary and oregano, drain and shake the pan to fluff them before roasting.
swanathay.com

7. THE WOODSPEEN, NR NEWBURY
Part cookery school and part restaurant, it's the brainchild of John Campbell, a chef at the forefront of Modern British Cooking. Rib of Red Sussex Beef £25; loin of pork, crackling, black pudding and apple sauce £23.
Chef's tip: To make the ultimate crackling, rub pork skin all over with kitchen paper and leave to dry 30 mins before roasting.
thewoodspeen.com

8. WHITE HORSE, EATON SOCON
A Dickensian coaching inn on the old Great North Road that TV chef Mark Poynton revamped earlier this year. Mains include slow roast rump of beef with horseradish cream and roast leg of lamb dauphinoise and minted gravy, from £12.50.
Chef's tip: To Coleman's horseradish cream add fresh grated horseradish and strained crème fraîche for a more delicious version.
whitehorseeatonsocon.co.uk ●

ASK THE EXPERTS

Whether you're looking for advice on the best kitchen equipment, ingredients, recipes or restaurants, our culinary experts have the answers...

THE EXPERTS

GERLA DE BOER
Founder of Cambridge Food Tour

MICHAEL RAFFAEL
Food writer

RUSSELL BROWN
Michelin-starred chef, food writer and photographer

DARRIN HOSEGROVE
Chef director of Ashburton Cookery School

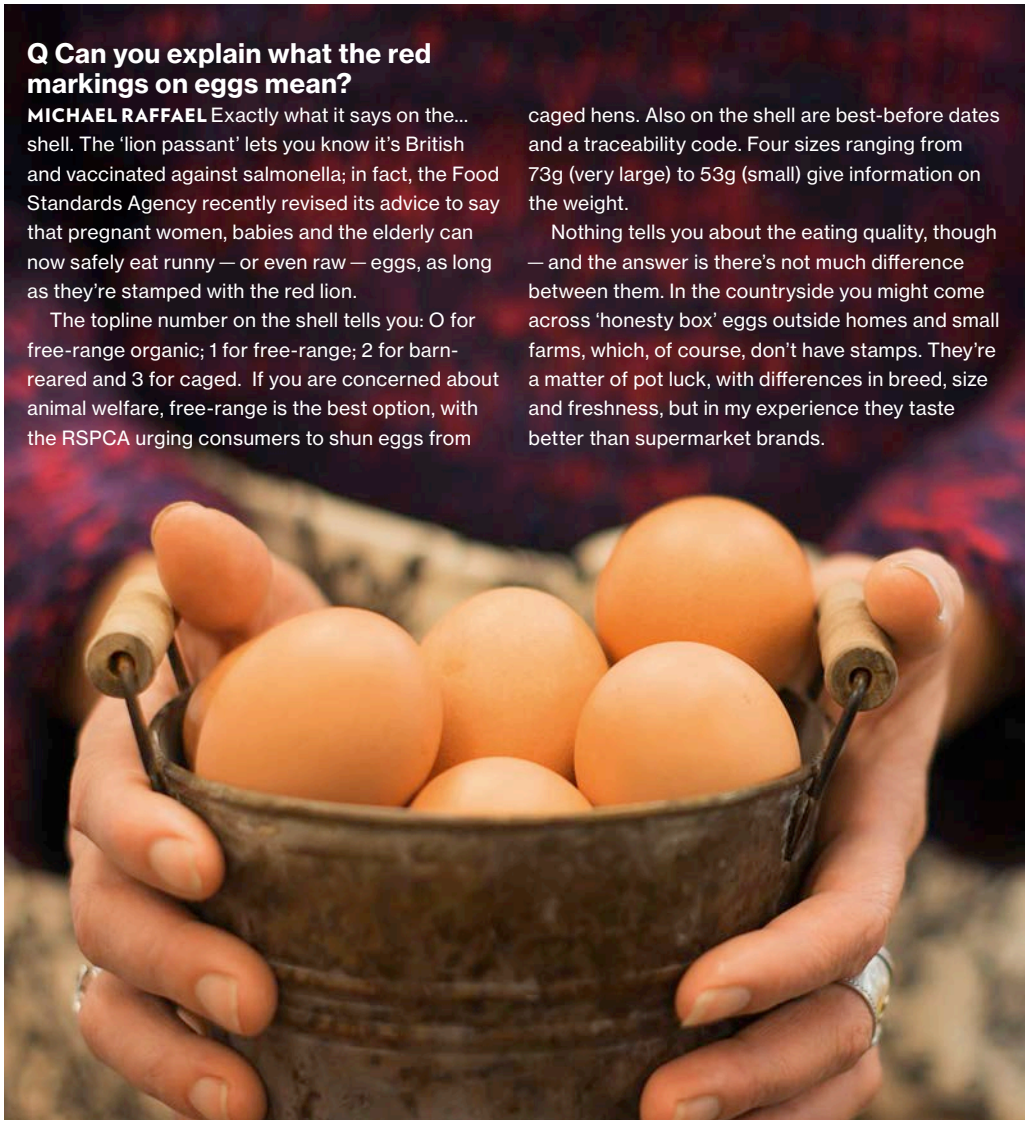
CLAIRE CLARK, MBE
Patissière, Pretty Sweet catering service

Q Can you explain what the red markings on eggs mean?

MICHAEL RAFFAEL Exactly what it says on the... shell. The 'lion passant' lets you know it's British and vaccinated against salmonella; in fact, the Food Standards Agency recently revised its advice to say that pregnant women, babies and the elderly can now safely eat runny — or even raw — eggs, as long as they're stamped with the red lion.

The topline number on the shell tells you: O for free-range organic; 1 for free-range; 2 for barn-reared and 3 for caged. If you are concerned about animal welfare, free-range is the best option, with the RSPCA urging consumers to shun eggs from caged hens. Also on the shell are best-before dates and a traceability code. Four sizes ranging from 73g (very large) to 53g (small) give information on the weight.

Nothing tells you about the eating quality, though — and the answer is there's not much difference between them. In the countryside you might come across 'honesty box' eggs outside homes and small farms, which, of course, don't have stamps. They're a matter of pot luck, with differences in breed, size and freshness, but in my experience they taste better than supermarket brands.



Q Which are the best chefs' knives to buy?

RUSSELL BROWN No two chefs think alike. My feeling is that you shouldn't stick to a single brand when building up a collection. In other words, buy for purpose. It will save you money in the long term — what's the point in buying a whole set when you only want two or three for most tasks? As an all-purpose paring tool, Victorinox Swiss Classic Paring Knife, 8cm, has a serrated blade and only costs around £5.

Your basic cooking knife should have a 15cm or 20cm blade, depending on how it feels in the hand. I O Shen knives are a class act, but Robert Welch makes a cheaper, yet extremely reliable range. You may also want to add to these. I recommend one or two boning knives, a flexible bladed one for fish and a more robust one for meat.

If you pay for pro knives, keep them sharp. If you sharpen them on a steel before each use, they'll keep their edge for longer. My personal favourite? A palette knife. If I can't find it I stress out.

Q Do you have a fail-safe baked cheesecake recipe?

CLAIRE CLARK I was given this recipe by David Loewi when I worked at the Wolseley in London's Piccadilly. You'll need a 25cm springform tin.

INGREDIENTS
FOR THE CHEESECAKE

- 70g unsalted butter
- 260g digestive biscuits, whizzed to a crumb
- 1kg Philadelphia
- 250g caster sugar
- 6 medium eggs, beaten
- 1 vanilla pod and
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract

FOR THE TOPPING

- 175g crème fraîche
- 25g caster sugar
- ¼ vanilla pod, seeds scraped

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4. Line the tin with nonstick baking paper.
2. Combine the melted butter and digestives. Spread over the base of the tin. Bake for 15 mins, then remove and leave to cool. Reduce the oven temp to 140°C, 120°C, gas 1.
3. Meanwhile, cream the Philadelphia and sugar. Beat in the egg a little at a time. Stir through the vanilla seeds and extract until combined.
4. Spoon the cream cheese mixture over the base and smooth the top. Bake for 1 hr, or until a skewer comes out clean. Cool for 10 mins.
5. Combine all the topping ingredients and spread over the cake. Bake for 10 mins. Chill before turning out.

Q I'm heading to Cambridge for a short break – where should I eat?

GERLA DE BOER Over the last five years, Cambridge's food scene has changed almost beyond recognition. Less than an hour from London King's Cross, the city draws in huge numbers of visitors – but far from being geared simply towards feeding tourists, it has a vibrant culinary identity.

The city's luxury flagship restaurant is Great British Menu judge Daniel Clifford's Midsummer House, while one of his ex-head chefs owns Alimentum, where you can find a great-value set lunch. Fitzbillies teashops are famous for their Chelsea buns – but with food writer Tim Hayward at the helm, they offer a whole lot more, especially Sunday brunch.

There's also a dynamic street food scene, thanks largely to the efforts of Heidi White, founder of foodPark – a collective of traders ranging from a Provençal-style wood-fired pizza van to a stall selling churros and hot chocolate. They pop up at a series of lunch and night markets throughout the year.

Calverley's craft brewery is off the quirky Mill Road, but it pays to take a walk along the river to Grantchester – weather permitting – where there are some lovely pubs.

Venture a bit further afield and you'll find The Plough at Fen Ditton. Crucially, don't hang around the King's Parade all day. Go out and explore. cambridgefoodtour.com

DARRIN HOSEGROVE The first rule is: don't panic — all it takes is a bit of organisation. Go for straightforward recipes that you can trust, and once you've settled on what you want to cook, do as much as you can in advance. The freezer can be a friend, especially if you have to make stock or pastry dough. You have to be cautious about the amount of time it takes to do even the most routine tasks, though. A tip: if you have time and it's a new dish, practise it in advance and you won't stress so much. If you've done your homework, you shouldn't be rushing in and out of the kitchen during dinner. Sit down and enjoy the fruits of your labour.

IMAGES: GETTY; ALAMY

THE
EAST INDIA
COMPANY
LONDON

Quintessentially British, renowned globally

The East India Company was founded to explore the mysteries of the East in search of the very best teas, spices and more. This passion of exploration is still what sets us apart today and every critical ingredient and innovative flavour combination takes you on a journey of the senses. Make this Christmas one to remember with our range of wonderfully indulgent festive treats and hampers, the perfect gifts to share.

Every gift has a tale to tell, a personal story from one to another.

www.theeastindiacompany.com

Mayfair | Covent Garden | Westfield | Edinburgh

FIVE WAYS WITH...

HARISSA

Run out of ideas for what to do with that open jar of North African chilli paste? Sabrina Ghayour has you covered — from ice cream to pasta

1 Arrabbiata

People are surprised when I tell them I add a tablespoon of harissa to tomato ragout to make a spicy penne arrabbiata, but it really works. I've also added it to stews, soups, pies and bread dough, with great results.

2 Marinade

Harissa makes the perfect hot marinade for steak (or pretty much any other meat), as well as fish, seafood, halloumi and tofu.

3 Dressing

Stir a little harissa into Greek yoghurt — adding some water to thin it down to a drizzling consistency. Use on salads, wraps and burgers.

4 Sticky sauce

Harissa goes well with anything sweet and sticky. Honey is wonderful when paired with a dollop of the stuff. Try it on chicken wings, aubergine, prawns and roast meats.

5 Ice cream topping

If your tastes are a little unusual, like mine, you'll find it goes well with vanilla ice cream — in small doses. This started out as a dare, but the Cornetto involved was transformed by a spike of harissa.

Perhaps one of the most misunderstood ingredients, harissa is seen by many as a mysterious stranger or a one-trick pony, but its versatility knows no bounds. The name comes from the Arabic word 'harasa', meaning 'to pound' or 'break into pieces'. This spicy paste is made using many different recipes, though most commonly it features a blend of chillies, garlic and a few different spices. Some versions also contain inauthentic additions, such as smoked paprika, onions and herbs. But there's no shame in buying it ready-made — most people do, even in countries where it's widely used.

My favourite variety is rose harissa. It's as fiery as it should be, but contains rose petals, which balance the heat. I've found that when you use it directly, pan-frying or grilling whatever's been coated in it, the chilli heat dissipates a little, but when stirred into liquids the heat intensifies, ranging from a gentle warming tickle to a full on fiery assault on the senses. It's my absolute kitchen essential.

SABRINA GHAYOUR is a the author of three award-winning recipe books, including *Persiana*, *Sirocco* and *Feasts* (see our review, p.122)

IMAGE: GETTY

Laithwaite's WINE

The 'Merlot and More' Collection – SAVE £53

Enjoy a case of Laithwaite's smoothest reds for just ~~£9.40~~ £4.99 a bottle plus FREE delivery

FREE DELIVERY USUALLY £7.99

JUST £4.99 PER BOTTLE

Tuck in to our smoothest, food-friendly reds and discover the Laithwaite's difference. Hand crafted wines from smaller family estates simply taste better!

Hawke's Bay is "one of New Zealand's best regions for Merlot" says Oz Clarke and plummy Lone Leaf is a riveting example ... save for fine dining. Equally outstanding is Chile's Don Cayetano, exuding wonderfully pure black fruit. South Africa's renowned Bruce Jack contributes with his tempting Stumble Vineyards Merlot from the ocean-cooled Western Cape. Bergerac's Grand Gaillard Merlot is classic claret in all but name with sun-drenched fruit and a hint of wild herbs. Across to Spain next for Valencia's Orange Grove Merlot – fabulous with grilled lamb kebabs. We end with Italy's bestselling Il Papavero, an easy-drinking charmer that everyone adores.

Order for only ~~£112.88~~ £59.88 and save £53 on equivalent single bottle prices. Furthermore, enjoy free delivery and our 100% money back guarantee. Terms and conditions apply – see below.

Merlot & More Collection

12 bottles ~~£112.88~~ **£59.88**

Equivalent to **£4.99 a bottle**

ORDER TODAY

ORDER ONLINE AT **laithwaites.co.uk/VYQ1D**

OR CALL **03330 148 188** Offer Code: VYQ1D

OUR GUARANTEE

IF YOU AREN'T HAPPY WITH A BOTTLE, DON'T PAY FOR IT

Tony Laithwaite

WINE

DO AWAY WITH THE TASTING NOTES

Knowing your wine is one thing, but articulating what you're tasting can prove tricky. All you really need is a few choice terms

Even if you know your way around a wine list, it's easy to become tongue-tied when asked for your views on what you're drinking. What are you supposed to say? That it's 'fruity' and, er, 'very nice'? To the unpractised, the correct wine terminology can seem frustratingly out of reach. But master a few simple concepts and you'll look like an old hand in no time.

Though some wines are instantly recognisable — like moscato, one of the few wines that actually tastes of grapes, or rose- and lychee-scented gewürztraminer — the majority are hard to distinguish, even, sometimes, for experienced wine tasters. Italian whites, for example, are really quite nondescript until they explode into life when accompanying a meal. (Tip: call them a 'good food wine'.)

Assessing a wine is not just a question of taste, but of sight — the colour is the first clue — and smell, the latter being the most important element. They also evolve as you drink them. Can you still detect their lingering taste once you've swallowed? That's what wine pros call the length. They rate a wine if it has a 'long finish'.

Sneak a look at the label if you can. The alcohol (ABV in the trade) will tell you whether the wine is light (say 11% or 12%), or full-bodied (more like 14% or 14.5%). If it seems a little strong, you can say it's 'a bit hot', by which you don't mean just off-boiling, but high in alcohol. The vintage will tell you if it's a young wine or an older, more delicate, one. If you think it's over the hill you could observe that it's 'a bit tired'.

Wine people also use more mysterious words: 'acidity' for one. That doesn't sound particularly appealing, but it's a plus point. It means the wine is fresh and appetising. What about 'mineral' though? Should a wine taste of stones? Seriously, sometimes you can pick that up — in Chablis for instance or Pouilly-Fumé from the Loire, which can taste of flint. Mineral, you'll be relieved to hear, is a good thing.

What about tannic? Not so great — it can mean the influence of the oak barrels in which the wine is aged is too obvious and the wine isn't 'balanced' (another quality to look for). Just think what tea tastes like when you've left the teabag in for too long.

If in doubt, and pressed for a comment, say a noncommittal 'interesting', returning your nose to the glass to give the impression you're finding something fascinating within. It's just a question of practice. And confidence. *Fiona Beckett*

IMAGE: GETTY

5 WINES TO... TEST YOUR TASTEBUDS

+ The crisp, fresh white

Villemarin Picpoul de Pinet 2016 • Can a wine be crisp? Substitute 'fresh' and you get the idea. This popular white from the Languedoc coast is great with seafood. £9.99. majestic.co.uk

+ The aromatic white

Dopff & Irion Cuvée René Dopff Gewürztraminer 2015 • A touch of the exotic with flavours of lychee, rose and Turkish delight. Try it with a Thai red curry. £11.95. tanners-wines.co.uk

+ The light, fruity red

Taste the Difference Beaujolais Villages Coteaux Granitique 2015 • Beaujolais, from south Burgundy, is back in fashion. Serve it lightly chilled with fish. £9. sainsburys.co.uk

+ The full-bodied red

Wrattonbully Shiraz 2016 • If you like a big walloping (not a technical term) red, this Australian shiraz (14.5%) has your name on it. Surprisingly it ages well, too. £8.99. aldi.co.uk

+ The dry sherry

Hidalgo La Gitana Manzanilla • Sherry is not all dark brown and sweet. Chill this bone dry 'man-zan-eeya' and pair it with fried calamari or fish and chips. £10.99. ocado.com

KITCHEN HACKS

WE WISH WE'D KNOWN EARLIER...

Eight easy tips that can help simplify — or even rescue — the cooking process

1 Peel garlic without touching it

Crush a garlic bulb with the back of a knife to separate the cloves, tip them into a jar, and shake the life out of it — about 90% will be skinned.

2 Use every part of the prawn

Don't discard the shells when preparing prawns. Like chicken bones, they can be used to make delicious stocks, which can form the base of soups and risottos.

3 Chillies straight from the freezer

The trouble with chillies is they ripen very quickly. Rather than waste them, chop them finely, pack into ice trays and freeze. Then, if you need a hit of heat in your curry or chilli con carne, you can pop a cube straight in.

4 Too much salt?

Pop in a piece of apple or potato, simmer for 10 mins and then discard (it acts like a salt sponge). Or try adding a small amount of citrus juice and sugar to counteract the saltiness.

5 No buttermilk?

Save yourself a shopping trip and add 1 tbsp lemon juice to 250ml semi-skimmed or whole milk and leave it to stand for five minutes. It won't be quite as creamy but it does the trick — and it even works with dairy alternatives, such as soy or almond milk.

6 Perfectly peel your eggs

The story goes that the fresher the egg, the harder it is to peel. But you can improve matters by adding bicarbonate of soda or vinegar to the water when boiling; they permeate the egg shells, helping to separate them from the whites.

7 Keep your ginger fresh

Ginger should last a couple of months in the fridge. Simply pat any exposed ends dry with a paper towl and keep in a resealable plastic bag.

8 Ripen fruit overnight

Green banana? Hard avocado? Place in a paper bag with an overripe apple or tomato and store in a cool, dry place overnight for ready-to-eat results.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Share your best kitchen hacks with us on Twitter, Instagram or Facebook.
@natgeofooduk facebook.com/NatGeoFoodUK

PHOTOGRAPHY: BARRIE GORDON @ BLEND STUDIOS

Nudo
Straight from the grove

GIVE THE *finest* OLIVE OIL *to someone with a* TASTE FOR THE WORLD

MADE FROM 100% ITALIAN OLIVES

the original Italian olive tree ADOPTION PROGRAMME

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW TO RECEIVE OIL FROM YOUR OWN OLIVE TREE IN ITALY

WWW.NUDOADOPT.COM/NGFOODUK

LISBON: JOURNEY TO THE CULINARY SOURCE

ONE OF LONDON'S HOTTEST CHEFS, NUNO MENDES, DISCUSSES THE FOOD OF HIS HOME CITY, LISBON, AND SHARES EXTRACTS FROM HIS LATEST BOOK, *LISBOETA: RECIPES FROM PORTUGAL'S CITY OF LIGHT*

What inspired you to write the book?
I wanted to pay homage to Lisbon — the city I was born in — and have a place to put all my memories, from stories of growing up there to the food I used to eat. Beyond that, I really wanted to showcase what Lisbon is today, so the recipes are reflective of what's been eaten there for all these years but also what people are eating now.

What defines the food of Lisbon?
Lisbon was the base for the spice trade and it's also where most of the voyages to the New World departed from, so the food is reflective of our rich history and the ingredients we picked up along the way. Chilli peppers, cinnamon, black pepper, cloves and more — it's all part of Lisbon's cuisine. And its proximity to the sea means that the fish is pretty special too.

Did this book change how you see the city?
Before I started this project, visiting usually meant a calendar full of stuff to do and people to see, so it didn't give me much time to wander. But when you go there with a mission to write a book and to really capture what's happening with an observant eye, it propels you to be a bit more active and to search a lot more. I found great old places that I didn't know existed, and some really amazing new places, and had the chance to see quite how much it's grown. It's a city I really miss.

What are your go-to Portuguese dishes?
Portugal has a huge wealth of ingredients, but I find that perhaps one of the most understated — or under-represented — is rice. We cook it in a very specific way that's different from Spain or Italy. For one, the grain is smaller and we do a lot of really delicious baked dishes, like duck rice, which is great for home cooking.

What most reminds of you home?
When you go to Portugal, and especially Lisbon, everything comes on a platter. Modern restaurants do individual portions but when you go to the really cool, old-school restaurants, everything is on a big platter or in a terrine and I feel like that's the heart of Portuguese cuisine — this is how I love to cook.

Lisboeta: Recipes from Portugal's City of Light, by Nuno Mendes, £26 (Bloomsbury). Nuno is executive chef at Chiltern Firehouse and owner of Taberna do Mercado

What dish means the most to you?
I feel like this whole journey started because of the salgados [small savoury pastries]. Some years ago, my partner — who's from Cape Town, where there's a huge Portuguese contingency — wanted to make some. We got in the kitchen and started cooking and they were just so tasty. When you eat one freshly made with a little squeeze of lemon, a little parsley, a little salt, you're like, wow, this is incredible — and that's what propelled me. I want to show people how amazing Portuguese food is, and this is the dish to try.

How important was the influence of family when it came to writing this book?
My father was an amazing cook and recognised my passion for food very early on. He taught me how to eat and challenged me by giving me more and more interesting things to try. My grandmother also loved to cook — she was my favourite person. She lived in our house with her husband and they used to cook together all the time. I'd sit in the kitchen all day watching; I learned so much from that. Sadly, she died when I was 12, but sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and I remember the smell or taste of something she made and then I'll want to make it. Half of the book is inspired by her.

What's next for Nuno Mendes?
Writing this book really helped me define these memories and make them more vivid, so I want to work on that. I want to spend a lot of time at Taberna [Taberna do Mercado, Nuno's restaurant in Old Spitalfields Market, London] and start doing even more traditional stuff, even more Lisbon. *Interview: Lauren Hoffman*


ALADA


CONSERVEIRA
ATUM THON
BACALHAU
ESPECIAL +.
ISLANDIA
17.20 €
BACALHAU
ESPECIAL
ISLANDIA
BACALHA
GRAUD
ISLANDIA
25 kg

Bacalhau à Gomes de Sá

Baked salt cod with caramelised onions and potatoes

SERVES: 4 TAKES: 1 HR

There are at least 365 salt cod recipes in Portuguese cuisine — one for every day of the year — but this is one of the few that everyone knows. I've replaced dried salt cod with freshly cured cod, which makes the dish creamy rather than salty. Make sure the onions are caramelised slowly, to bring out their sweetness.

INGREDIENTS

- 400g Maris Piper potatoes
- 3 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
- 4 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped, plus 1 halved clove
- 300g cured cod
- 3 eggs
- small handful black olives, sliced into rings
- handful parsley leaves, finely chopped
- sea salt flakes and ground white pepper

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 210°C, fan 190°C, gas 6. Cook the potatoes in boiling, salted water until soft. Once cool enough to handle, cut into 1cm slices.

2 Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook gently for 10 mins, until soft, and season well. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Increase the heat to caramelise the onions, stirring well to ensure they don't stick. Remove from the heat.

3 Oil a large ovenproof dish and rub it with the halved garlic clove. Cut the cod into bite-sized chunks. Arrange an even layer of potatoes on the bottom, then one of onions, followed by one of cod. Repeat with another layer of each and finish with a layer of potatoes and onions. Cover and bake for 25 mins, or until golden and cooked through, removing the lid after 10 mins.

4 Put the eggs in a pan of cold water. Bring to the boil, then remove the pan from the heat, cover and leave for 10 mins. Put the eggs in iced water to stop them cooking any further and peel them once cool. Slice into wedges.

5 Scatter the eggs, olives and parsley on top of the potatoes and onions. Serve hot with a drizzle of olive oil.

Cogumelos com puré de grão à alentejana

Mushrooms with alentejo-style chickpeas

SERVES: 4 AS A SIDE TAKES: 45 MINS

The mushroom season is much enjoyed in Lisbon. I've stuck to only a few varieties in this recipe, which means it can be made throughout the year. The purée is based on another commonly used ingredient in Portuguese cooking: the chickpea. It's super tasty and will find its way into other dishes.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKPEA PURÉE

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 200g tinned plum tomatoes
- 1 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained (liquid reserved); or 160g dried chickpeas, soaked and cooked (cooking liquid reserved)
- freshly squeezed lemon juice
- smoked paprika, to taste
- sea salt flakes and white pepper
- extra virgin olive oil, to serve

FOR THE MUSHROOMS

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 150g whole portobello mushrooms
- 20g butter
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 150g oyster mushrooms
- splash dry white wine
- small handful parsley leaves, roughly chopped
- freshly squeezed lemon juice

METHOD

1 To make the purée, heat the olive oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 10 mins, or until soft. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant. Season with sea salt, pepper and paprika. Add the tomatoes and increase the heat to cook until caramelised.

2 Add the chickpeas and cook to warm through. Pour in 150–200ml of chickpea liquid and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20 mins, or until the chickpeas are starting to fall apart. Season to taste and add a dash of lemon juice. Remove from the heat and purée briefly with a stick blender.

3 For the mushrooms: heat the olive oil in a large frying pan over a high heat. Season. Add the portobellos and cook for 3 mins on each side, or until golden. Remove from the pan. Reduce the heat, add the butter and garlic and cook gently until soft and fragrant.

4 Return the portobellos to the pan. Increase the heat, then add the oysters and cook 1-2 mins, basting with the butter. Add the wine and cook for 1 min more. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley with a squeeze of lemon juice. Drizzle the chickpea purée with extra-virgin olive oil and a pinch of paprika and serve it alongside the mushrooms.

Cataplana de tamboril

Monkfish and chouriço cataplana

SERVES: 4 TAKES: 30 MINS

A cataplana is a large metal cooking vessel made from two domes hinged together, like a clam. Introduced to Portugal by the Moors, it gently steams to create a fragrant stew with stock that's full of flavour. I par-cook some of the ingredients first so that the fish and potatoes will be perfectly cooked. If you can't find a cataplana you could use a wide, shallow pan with a lid — just resist the temptation to open it before the cooking time is up.

INGREDIENTS

- 200g ratte or Charlotte potatoes
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 150g chouriço, skin removed and finely chopped
- 8 plum tomatoes, finely chopped
- 50ml single cream
- 100ml dry white wine
- 500g monkfish, cut into thin medallions
- 20 large clams, rinsed under cold running water and soaked in cold water for 30 minutes
- small handful parsley leaves, finely chopped
- sea salt flakes and ground white pepper

METHOD

1 Cut the potatoes in half, keeping any smaller ones whole. Cook them in plenty of boiling salted water for 8–10 mins, or until just soft but not mushy. Drain and set aside.

2 Heat the olive oil in a cataplana or wide, shallow pan over a low heat. Add the onions and cook gently for 10 mins, or until soft and juicy, then season with salt and pepper. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, then add the chouriço and cook until the edges are crisp.

3 Pour in the tomatoes, cream, wine and 50ml water and simmer for 1–2 mins. Add a little more water if it seems too dry. Stir in the monkfish and clams, cover with a lid and shake the pan. After 2 mins, take the pan off the heat and discard any unopened clams. Season to taste, stir through the parsley and serve.

Pastéis de nata

Custard tarts

MAKES: 6 TAKES: 40 MINS, PLUS CHILLING AND COOLING TIME

When you mention Portuguese food, most people think of these. The filling here has a soft citrus scent and should be really runny.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 320g sheet all-butter puff pastry
- melted butter, for greasing
- sugar and cinnamon, for dusting
- 20g butter
- 2 tbsp plain white flour
- 1 tsp cornflour
- 2 egg yolks

FOR THE CUSTARD

- 250ml whole milk
- 1 cinnamon stick
- few strips lemon zest

FOR THE SUGAR SYRUP

- 225g caster sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- few strips lemon zest

METHOD

1 Brush a 6-hole muffin tin with butter; chill. Roll the pastry into a large 2–3mm-thick rectangle, then roll it up lengthways into a tight sausage shape about 5cm in diameter. Slice into 6 discs 1–2cm thick. Press the discs into the tins, stretching them out to fit, ensuring they come to just below the top of the tins. Chill.

2 To make the custard, heat 150ml of the milk in a pan over a medium heat with the cinnamon, lemon zest and half the butter, bringing it to just below boiling point. Leave to infuse for 10 mins.

3 Remove the cinnamon and lemon zest. In a bowl, mix the flour and cornflour to a thin paste with the remaining milk, adding it gradually to prevent lumps. Pour over the warm infused milk, stirring well, then return the mixture to the pan. Cook, stirring gently, over a low heat for a few minutes, or until it thickens to a double cream consistency. Whisk in the remaining butter and remove from the heat.

4 To make the sugar syrup, put the ingredients in a pan with 75ml of water and cook over a medium heat for 5 mins, until the sugar dissolves. Cook over a low heat until you have a light brown, fragrant caramel, swirling the pan occasionally.

5 Add 75ml of water and return the pan to a low heat to dissolve any solid caramel; strain into a bowl. Pour half into the custard; whisk well.

6 Preheat the oven to its highest setting and put a baking sheet on the top shelf. Just before cooking, pour the custard into a measuring jug and stir in the yolks. Add a splash of milk to bring the quantity up to 300ml, if necessary. Pour the custard into the muffin tin and bake on a hot baking sheet for 9–13 minutes, or until the tops are dark.

7 Brush the tarts with a little remaining sugar syrup, then leave to cool slightly in the tins before removing to a wire rack. The custard will continue to set as it cools but should still be creamy and soft in the centre. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

SO JUST SHOP

JEWELLERY · HOMEWARE · GIFTS

So Just Shop is an online accessories, homeware and gifting marketplace working directly with women-led artisans from some of the most impoverished communities in the world.

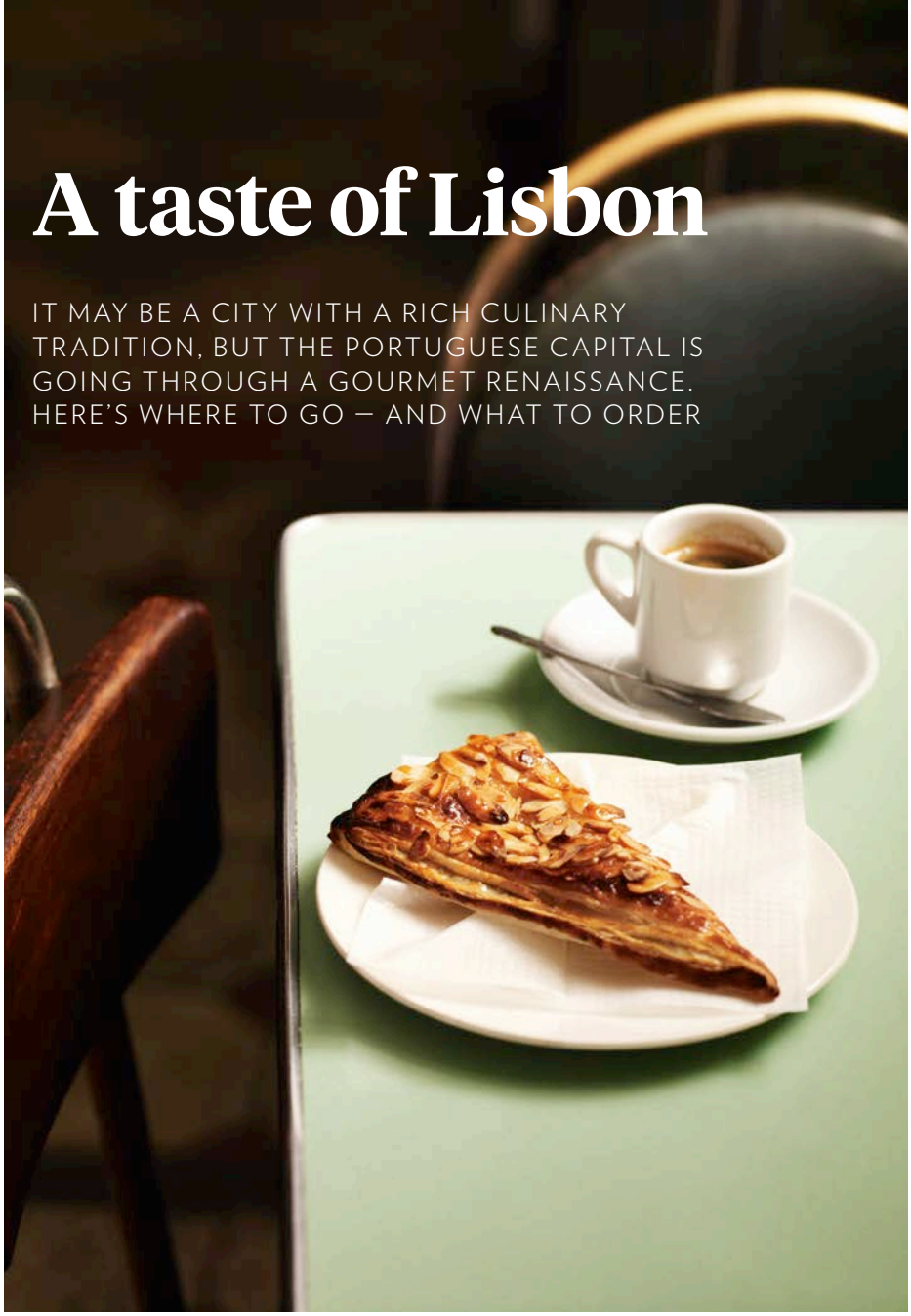
Our mission is to empower women through sustainable economic development by developing design and technological solutions to overcome barriers to international trade.

www.sojustshop.com

Follow us on: @SoJustShop facebook.com/SoJustShop Sojustshopaccessories

A taste of Lisbon

IT MAY BE A CITY WITH A RICH CULINARY TRADITION, BUT THE PORTUGUESE CAPITAL IS GOING THROUGH A GOURMET RENAISSANCE. HERE'S WHERE TO GO — AND WHAT TO ORDER



You might know it best for fresh sardines and flaky custard tarts, but in recent years, Lisbon's culinary scene has undergone something of revolution, with innovative young chefs shaking things up and helping the city earn itself a pin on the food lovers' map. New restaurants are popping up across the city, while the old places are absorbing this youthful energy and upping their game.

With the Atlantic on its doorstep, Lisbon is blessed with some of the best seafood in Europe — and Lisboetas love nothing better than tucking into fabulous small plates (petiscos) of sizzling, garlicky prawns or freshly fried cod croquetas. All washed down, of course, with a chilled glass of lightly sparkling vinho verde (green wine) or a bottle of cold, local lager. *Audrey Gillan*

TAKE THREE

1 For fine dining
BELCANTO

José Avillez's two-Michelin-starred restaurant takes classic dishes, such as suckling pig, to a new dimension. Here, the meat is slow-cooked for 36 hours, the crackling is compacted and it's served with crisps (not chips), hanging from metal wire in a plastic bag. belcanto.pt

2 For casual fare
RAMIRO

The city's most famous cervejaria (seafood and beer hall), Ramiro is a Lisbon legend. The quality and diversity of the shellfish and fish is astonishing — prawns in garlic butter, dressed crab, clams with coriander and lemon and percebes (goose-necked barnacles). cervejariaramiro.pt

3 For drinking
QUIOSQUES

Discover beautiful kiosk-cafes adorned with domes, filigree latticework and awnings at the heart of squares and miradouros (viewpoints). These are the best places to sit and sip a caipirinha or iced porto tónico and watch the world go by.

THE TREND

It's a classic but almost every chef in town is doing their take on prego — a flash-fried tender piece of beef steak, served with mustard in a crusty roll — and proclaiming it the best. Served the old-school way, it's drenched with sweet, bright yellow mustard but chefs are now using unusual sauces of their own creation.

THE LOCAL SPECIALITY

Pastéis de nata, that classic Portuguese custard tart, was invented in the town of Belém, just a little way along the coast out of Lisbon. Monks at the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos needed to eke out a living and use up all the yolks that were left over from the egg whites they used to starch their vestments.

THE DRINK

Ginjinha is a liqueur made by infusing sour cherries with alcohol, most commonly aguardente. It's served in a shot glass, costs around €1 (£0.90) and comes 'com ou sem elas' — with or without cherries. Look out for tiny, hole-in-the wall shops, such as Ginjinha Sem Rival and A Ginjinha, where locals gather from 11am for a pick-me-up.

THE DESSERT

If you're a fan of rich, egg-based desserts made with lots of sugar and spice then Lisbon is the place for you. Arroz doce (rice pudding) features another Portuguese favourite — rice — together with eggs, cream, sugar and cinnamon, and is served at most celebrations. You'll find it on the menu pretty much everywhere you go.

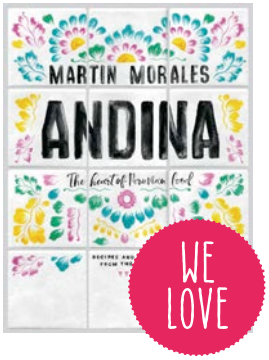
IF YOU ONLY TRY ONE DISH...

In summer, the smell of sardines is everywhere in Lisbon, but never more so than around 12 June, the festa de Santo António, a citywide carnival of dancing, singing and food. Ad-hoc grills are set up on pavements and sardines are served with charred peppers and rustic bread. ●

PHOTOGRAPHS: ANDREW MONTGOMERY; PAULO BARATA

COOK THE BOOKS

OUR PICK OF THE LATEST RELEASES



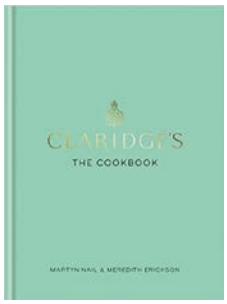
MUST READ

Andina

Martin Morales

Until fairly recently, many Westerners' perception of Peruvian food began and ended at deep-fried guinea pig — even Paddington Bear (from 'deepest, darkest Peru') thought it wise to stick to marmalade sandwiches. Thankfully, restaurants like Martin Morales' Ceviche in London have helped opened our eyes to the country's diverse and delicious cuisine.

Morales wasn't merely transplanting the flavours of South America to British shores, he was adding his own contemporary twist. And with the demand for pisco sours and tiger milk showing no sign of abating, he opened a further three outposts in the capital. And now there's a new cookbook: Andina. This gorgeously 'tiled' opus, delves deep into the ancient, seasonal cuisine of the Andes through recipes, stories and stunning photography. It delivers a broad mix of light and fresh dishes, from prawn ceviche and trout tiradito to nose-to-tail winter warmers such as Puno-style ox tongue stew, lamb's head and vegetable consommé, and Mamita Naty's roast suckling pig, plus a hearty, vegetarian-friendly artichoke pie. RRP: *£27 (Quadrille)*

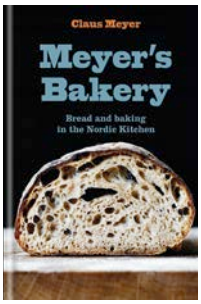


COFFEE TABLE

Claridge's The Cookbook

Martyn Nail & Meredith Erickson

This landmark London hotel is synonymous with the best of the best, so when you rustle up a Claridge's cheeseburger, bolognese or chicken pie, it's likely going to be the most delicious version you've ever tasted. This sleek volume is full of five-star recipes – there's even a section devoted to elevenses... well, this is Claridge's, after all. RRP: £30 (*Mitchell Beazley*)



IN DEPTH

Meyer's Bakery

Claus Meyer

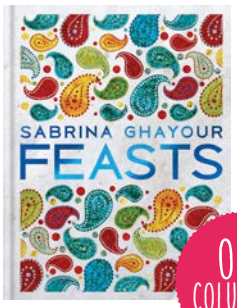
As co-founder of game-changing Copenhagen restaurant Noma, it's clear Claus Meyer knows good food, but it's his passion for bread that gets its moment in the spotlight. Meyer's Bakery is as thorough as an apprentice baker course, covering grains, starters, yeast, mixing methods, equipment and recipes, such as heritage wheat baguettes and cinnamon loaf. A true baking bible. RRP: £26 (*Mitchell Beazley*)

SUNDAY BEST

Meat & Game

Tom Kitchin

Michelin-starred chef Tom Kitchin is a master of recipes, and techniques for handling, less-used meats – everything from rabbit and hare to pigeon and partridge. Chapters are divided by ingredient and include dishes that are spot-on for this time of year, such as venison sausage stew, rabbit au vin and Asian poached pheasant. Plus roast topside with all the trimmings. RRP: £26 (*Absolute Press*)



IDEAL GIFT

Feasts

Sabrina Ghayour

In her third cookbook, *National Geographic Food* writer Sabrina Ghayour tackles feeding a crowd the Middle-Eastern way, with menus for every imaginable get-together, from brunch to special occasions. Stand-out dishes include chicken, pistachio and black pepper curry, plus cardamom and coconut dhal. For more of Sabrina's recipes, check out her top tips for cooking with harissa (p.109). RRP: £20 (*Mitchell Beazley*)

WORDS: LAUREN HOFFMAN

lights.co.uk

Find all top brands on Lights.co.uk

Quality house brand

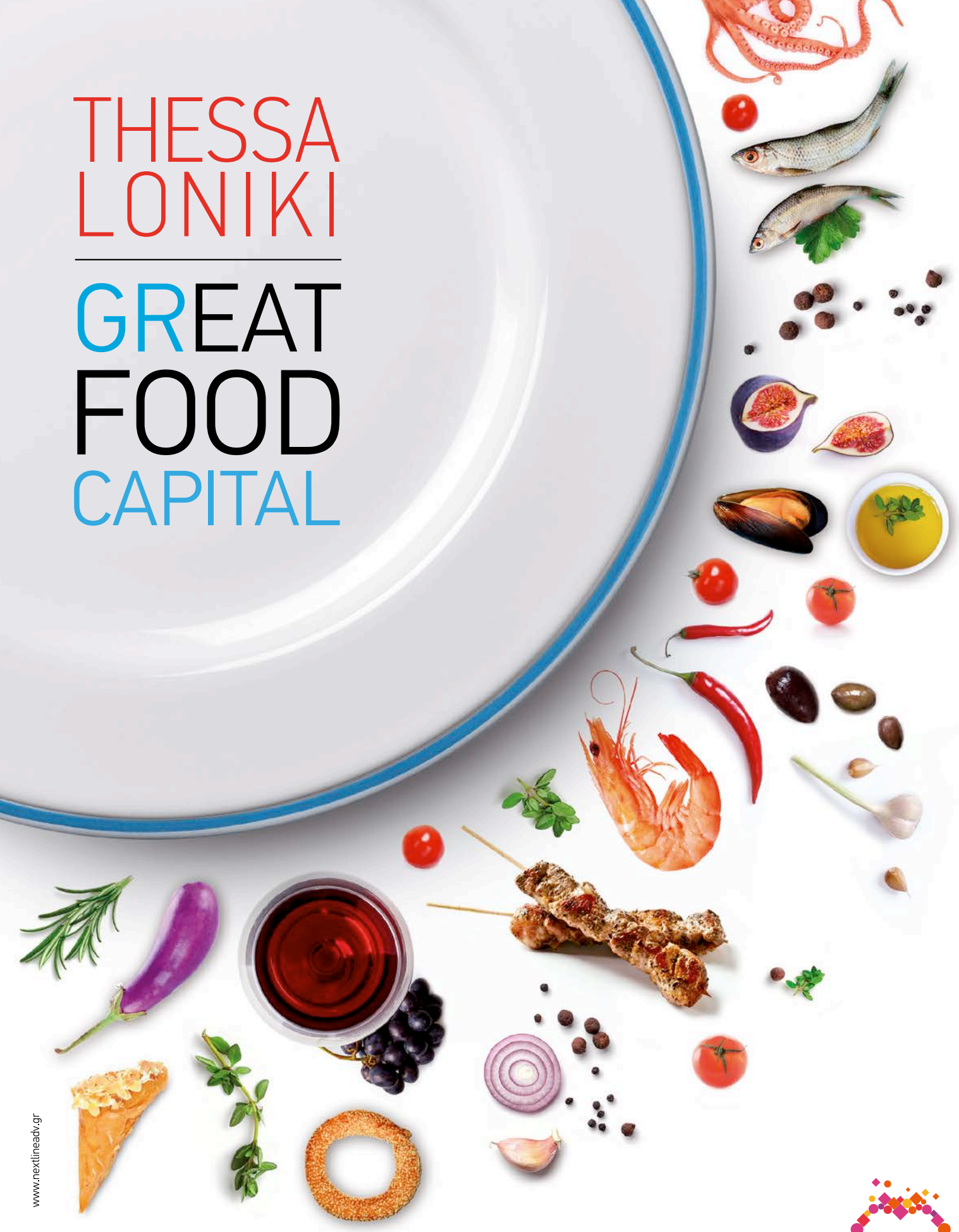
Free return shipping
(for most parts of the UK)

Service rating 4.8

020 3514 3658

THESSALONIKI

GREAT FOOD CAPITAL



Thessaloniki, in **Greece**, is famed for its Mediterranean cuisine. The food here is made with heart to give joy and pleasure. Natural ingredients, delicious flavours, traditional recipes and taste sensations bring friends and family together around the table. This is **Thessaloniki**. The **Greek** capital of gastronomy. Discover it.

Thessaloniki
Many stories, one heart

EXPERIENCE

Pasta-making at Il Verrocchio

FLORENCE, ITALY • VILLALAMASSA.COM

WITH THE RIGHT TEACHER, EVEN CHILDREN CAN LEARN TO MAKE PROPER PASTA, THE ITALIAN WAY

Andrea tips a pile of flour onto the wooden board, adds a handful of semolina and makes a well for the eggs and the olive oil. He massages the dough, gesturing and smiling all the while; having been a pastry chef, he's been making perfect pasta for over 30 years now.

We watch and copy as best as we can. This is old-school cooking — and I love it. I can't tell you how much flour we use, except it's a pile big enough to accommodate at least three eggs. Olive oil? A generous swig. There are no scales or measuring jugs here. This is not a class for those who need precise quantities. Andrea is an Italian master, the kitchen is his studio, this is his creation, and the details are all part of his grand design.

He looks the part too — tall, imposing, grey haired, moustachioed, slightly rounded and, to top it all off, he doesn't speak much English. You'd think this might be an issue, given the fact he runs the cooking school here at the Il Verrocchio restaurant. Not so much.

Setting the dough aside to rest for three hours, he retrieves one he's made earlier, and we move on to make the spinach and ricotta filling. And then we're ready to roll out the pasta. One child feeds it through the machine the other drawing it out slowly. Soon we have sheets of the stuff ready to be shaped.

Andrea begins with tagliatelle, then we move on to ravioli, tortellini, tortelli, cannelloni and even stars and squares, which are filled and and sealed with water or a fork. In boiling water, the pasta takes just a minute to cook. Meanwhile, a few sauces have been prepared for us to try. The best? Butter and basil. Simple, yet delectable.

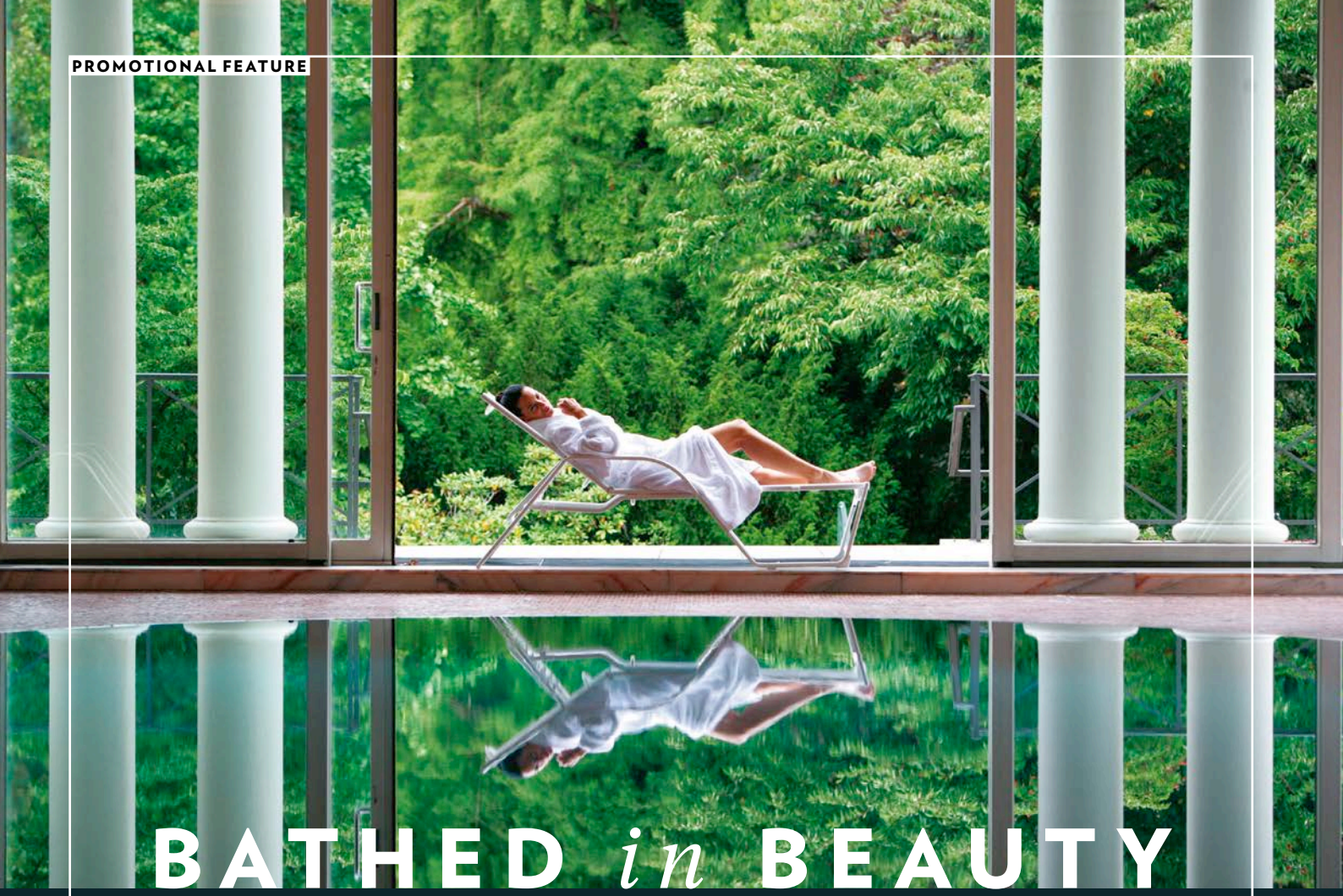
Three weeks later and we're making pasta for the extended family, back in the UK. Like fledging artists, we've not quite mastered the quantities. Too much semolina and it's dry and won't roll out — add water, flour, knead and adapt. We're even trying a gluten-free version. At one point, I've got four under-16s working on dough, cutting and shaping, while the parents are rolling. Andrea has inspired us and we're busy creating our own work of art. *Half-day cookery lessons from €160 per person. Maria Pieri*

ANDREA QUAGLIARELLA is exective chef at Il Verrocchio at the Villa La Massa, Florence

FYI

Andrea's most popular creation? Tortellini filled with potato, cheese, lemon, salt and pepper.

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



BATHED *in* BEAUTY

Tucked away in the Black Forest, Baden-Baden is one of Germany's timeless gems. Offering visitors everything from world-class culture to world-famous waters, there's no better time to discover the charm of this historic spa resort

Tuck in

Foodies will be in their element among the gourmet restaurants, offering first-class fine dining inspired by the region's strong culinary heritage. For a more rustic touch, hearty fare is served in a number of traditional taverns.

Take five

Baths have long been a part of Baden-Baden – *Bad* is German for 'bath'. People have flocked to the thermal springs that bubble beneath the town for more than 2,000 years. For rest and relaxation, head to Caracalla Spa, with its domed roof and over 4,000sq m of thermal waters, or bask beneath the intricate frescoes of the Friedrichsbad bathing complex.

Out and about

One of Baden-Baden's greatest assets is its enviable location amid some of Germany's most green and beautiful scenery. A short distance from the town is the Rebland, with its vineyards overlooking the Rhine Valley, or tee off among rolling hills on one of the area's eight golf courses.

Splash out

At the heart of Baden-Baden is the renowned Kurhaus, a former haunt of Marlene Dietrich. This iconic casino and conference complex exudes regal elegance. Elsewhere, the town offers plenty of shopping, with everything from luxury boutiques to charming antique dealers.

State of the art

From opera to *oeuvres d'art*, Baden-Baden has plenty on offer when it comes to cultural experiences. The magnificent Festspielhaus Baden-Baden is Europe's second-largest opera and concert house, regularly hosting world-renowned artists and performers, while a short stroll away is the Fabergé Museum, showcasing more than 700 masterpieces by the legendary Russian jeweller. Also worth visiting is the Museum Frieder Burda, set in the beautiful Lichtentaler Allee park and gardens, which has a fascinating collection of classical modernist works on display.

baden-baden.com/en

EAT & STAY

Cuisine Wat Damnak

SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA • CUISINEWATDAMNAK.COM

COME TO TOWN FOR THE TEMPLES, BUT STICK AROUND FOR THE BIG FLAVOURS AND BOLD COMBINATIONS AT THIS INNOVATIVE RESTAURANT

Crispy beef tongue with fermented tomato sauce; boneless frogs' legs with green giant eggplant salad... Cuisine Wat Damnak's menu can certainly be attention-grabbing, and it's dishes like these that have earned it a place on Asia's 50 Best Restaurants list.

Here, in a traditional two-storey wooden house in Siem Reap, French chef patron Joannès Rivière combines Cambodian flavours with the gastronomic techniques of his homeland. He seeks out the freshest local ingredients from the market, and from foragers, fishermen and farmers, to produce a menu that changes every two weeks.

"We don't offer 'à la carte'," Cuisine Wat Damnak declares on its website. Instead, guests choose between two different set menus, which, according to the restaurant, is "to ensure we make the most of Cambodia's freshest seasonal produce."

The menu also depends on what's available at the market. On my visit to the restaurant, the selection included Mekong langoustine grilled in cassava leaves, with tomalley coconut and peanut emulsion and puffed rice; plus pan-fried Tonle Sap croaker with fresh rice noodles, coconut and finger ginger sauce, and resurrection lily leaves. Desserts were krolan cake with a cinnamon chocolate pot de crème; and banana and mango cashew nut crumble with green mango jelly, vanilla and white chocolate cream.

This was the most creative, modern food I ate during my time in the country.

A passionate advocate of Cambodian cooking, Rivière has extensively researched classical Khmer cuisine. And, as you'd expect, his dishes give a nod to this rich culinary history but are given a stylish, contemporary take using local herbs and flowers. New flavours and textures are layered together with exceptional skill.

Sitting upstairs under the swirling fans, surrounded by wood-panelled walls, is like taking a step back in time to the Cambodia of days gone by, while downstairs in the air-conditioned room the décor is more modern. Front-of-house is managed by Rivière's wife Carole Salmon, who is rightly persuasive when she suggests you must try one of the fabulous house cocktails. *Open Tuesday to Saturday. Six courses US$31 (£23); vegetarian options available on request with advance notice. Booking advisable. Audrey Gillan*

The stay: Nuvutu Dreams

Hidden down a dirt road, this lovely wellness resort has just 28 rooms and villas. Interiors are modern, while outside you'll find tropical gardens, three pools and shaded lounging areas to retreat to after a busy day's sightseeing. Doubles from US$82 (£62). navutudreams.com

On location

ANGKOR COMPLEX
The reason most people stay in Siem Reap is to visit the temples of Angkor, one of Southeast Asia's most important archaeological sites. This was the seat of the Khmer empire and various 'capitals' were built here over 700 years.

PHARE
Theatre, dance, music and modern circus are used to tell the story of Cambodia, illuminating the horrors of the civil war and the Pol Pot regime. It's run by an NGO, and many performers have powerful stories of hardship themselves. pharecircus.org

VESPA TOUR
Hop on the back of a scooter to take an after dark food tour of Siem Reap. Try fried crickets, water beetles and barbecued frogs at the local market, plus check out restaurants, bars and food shops. vespaadventures.com

IMAGE: GETTY

DINE OUT

Wellbourne

BRISTOL • WELLBOURNE.RESTAURANT

THIS NEW WEST COUNTRY OPENING FROM THE TEAM BEHIND DABBOUS MAY CELEBRATE THE VOL-AU-VENT, BUT THE CONCEPT IS MUCH MORE THAN A RETRO REVIVAL

Veal, shrimp and girolle vol-au-vents

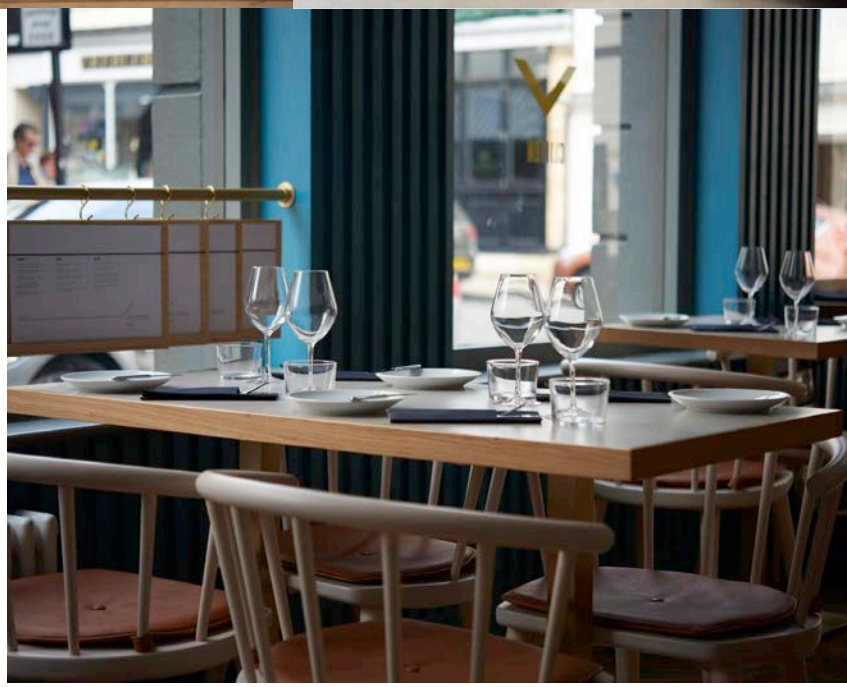
Those of a certain age will remember the vol-au vent — that airy little whisp of a canapé that used to be passed around at Christmas parties (although, truth be told, it often turned out more stodgy than airy). Who would have predicted it would make a comeback in 2017, in Bristol of all places? Albeit in the genteel neighbourhood of Clifton 'Village', where Wellbourne recently opened its doors.

Chefs Ross Gibbens and Michael Kennedy, working alongside front-of-house business partner Martin Irwin, thought they would tackle what might be a slow lunchtime trade by putting on a vol-au-vent menu — a trio of dainty little mouthfuls for the local ladies who lunch to sample alongside a glass of cava (there's no prosecco here, surprisingly).

The fillings are spot on — prawn with a pinch of cayenne, veal (like me, you might find you want this one to morph into a full-size version) and, most tempting of all, girolles. Three of which will set you back a modest £6. Purists may baulk at the fact that they're topped with edible flowers rather than pastry lids, but otherwise this is a reincarnation of a classic.

Still, restaurants cannot live by vol-au-vents alone, so what else is there on offer? Well nothing too run-of-the-mill, as you'd expect from the trio of young owners who have done time at the Manoir, The Square and the much-feted Dabbous (now closed, but for a couple of years one of the toughest reservations to score in London), where all three worked and Gibbens was head chef.

Dinner is where the main culinary fireworks happen. A pearly chunk of



cod wrapped in silky skeins of sea-lettuce, or a tranche of tender duck served with bright, sour cherries and an irresistibly crisp shard of finely sliced potatoes were two delicious options when I visited. Incidentally, the rest of the duck — including the neck — is frugally fashioned, in the tradition of the best French kitchens, into an elegant ballotine, which is served at lunchtime with cherry compote and homemade brioche. Subway this certainly ain't.

By day the restaurant operates more like a cafe and wine bar, serving sandwiches and snacks — yes, those vol-au-vents — during the week and brunch at the weekend. Although there's the usual, granola, avocado on sourdough toast and eggs Benedict, my winner is a mackerel tartare on homemade crumpets. A gaggle of students seems more concerned with examining their phones and stressing about whether there is sanitiser in the loos than ordering their food, while the charming staff are unfailingly patient and polite.

What will the relatively conservative local clientele make of it? I can already predict mutterings of 'small portions'. But Wellbourne brings a welcome breath of London pizazz to the already vibrant Bristol dining scene. Michelin-standard food, unstuffy, friendly service, fair prices — and, of course, those nostalgic 'puffs of wind'. What's not to like? *Three-course meal for two with wine: approximately £90. Fiona Beckett*

Magpie

LONDON • MAGPIE-LONDON.COM

Magpie, which opened this summer on Mayfair's Heddon Street, could be the perfect millennial restaurant: no waiting for food, Instagrammable plates, delicious flavours and enough moustachioed, tattooed, blue-haired staff to make you feel cool just by being there.

You don't order from a menu (aside from a few larger dishes). Instead, a 'hot' tray and 'cold' trolley of sharing plates are brought to every table. On my visit, cold stand-outs included raw trout with blueberries, fennel and violet mustard — the berries cutting through the richness of the fish — and a glistening beef tartare made more decadent with taleggio and truffle crisps.

As for the hot stuff, the pumped-up prawn 'toast', in which the shellfish shared its deep-fried coccoon with lardo, and was dipped in jalapeño coriander ketchup, came top. And of the bigger plates, lamb neck with kombu seaweed glaze and almond pesto, on a bed of miso masa polenta, was so good it caused me a pang of regret when it was all gone. *Selection of small and large plates plus dessert and wine for two: approximately £115. Alex Mead*

Simply Fish Bar & Grill

BRIXHAM, DEVON
ROBERTS-FISHERIES.COM

Finding quality fish in England's biggest fishing port should be easy, but locals often get priced out of the market for the good stuff — unless you know someone. And Simply Fish, on the harbour, do know someone. Indeed, they are someone. Owned by fish merchant Robert Simonetti, the restaurant has a steady supply of Brixham's best catches, something evident in the quality of the dishes on the menu.

Here you'll find cod in light, crisp batter — with bite and substance but never chewy — or you can opt for pouting, cod's under-used cousin. All fish and chips should be like this. And a charcoal grill should be standard in every restaurant; it caramelises the skin while keeping the flesh that lies beneath nice and tender, as the turbot here testifies.

Seasoning is nearly always light touch, as it should be — a squirt of lemon, a few herbs, garlic, maybe some butter. This is one place that really lives up to its name. *Three-course meal for two with wine: around £80. AM*

DINE OUT

Ormer

JERSEY • ORMERJERSEY.COM

SHAUN RANKIN'S LONDON RESTAURANT MAY BE MAKING WAVES, BUT HIS JERSEY ORIGINAL STILL PACKS A SERIOUS PUNCH IN THE FLAVOUR DEPARTMENT — JUST DON'T LET THE MICHELIN STAR PUT YOU OFF

Max reaches for the soufflé — the purple, soft, fluffy chocolate dust-covered top of a perfectly risen dessert. He achieves his goal and plunges his pudgy little hand into it; were he able to talk he would no doubt remark on how surprised he was that his fingers could thrust straight through something that looks so solid, as though it were the fluffiest of clouds. Taste wise, I'm sure he agrees with me: it's sweet and tangy, just on the right side of tart, making the mouth tingle before dissolving into a sugary blanket of creaminess.

Being less than a year old, Max probably shouldn't even be here. This is a white-linen establishment, adorned by a star from that white tyre-bellied guy chefs seem keen to impress. But the staff don't mind Max's presence, genuinely.

Yes, I'm that annoying dad who brings his baby to lunch at a place that doesn't have colouring-in tablemats. In my defence, I'm on holiday in Jersey and, well, I fancied eating here — I'd heard good things.

It's lunchtime, and it's a relaxed vibe —there's a nice amount of bustle without too much hustle. The comparative bargain of a set lunch (£22 for two courses, £27 for three), has drawn a mixed crowd.

This isn't necessarily a 'cool' place to be. The kickback against Michelin-starred dining has been stark. Unless food is served in brown paper bags and you sit on rickety mismatched chairs, people don't tend to be interested. 'I just like my food simple' has become the call-to-arms for trendy types — but they forget that before dining went all molecular and novel, Michelin was just about brilliant chefs making

Venison loin, medjool dates, quinoa, parsnips, chocolate tortellini

delicious dishes put together with enough care that they happened to look pretty, too.

It wasn't my intention to review Shaun Rankin's Ormer, but his crab starter was so good it forced my hand. Sweet white crab meat, with a gingerbread wafer, a few nuts, and a lime-vanilla jelly — the latter being the killer component. It's basically a childhood dessert turned into a savoury starter; jelly and ice cream with the dairy swapped for crab meat — even the hipsters could get on board with this one.

A second starter of crab, scallop and lobster snuggled up inside a soft quilt of ravioli, floating on a creamy veloute was as good as it sounds.

Mains follow the pattern set by the starters: simple flavour combinations executed exceptionally well, by an exceptional chef. Pork belly with chorizo and tomato purée, fennel and apple (for dipping) and a curl of grilled, meaty calamari brings together two flavour brothers from different mothers in one dish. It transpires that the pork and the calamari were clearly made for each other.

Our other main — for the second adult at the table, Max's mum — was turbot with a pine nut crust and the trimmings. Firm of flesh, the turbot's typically mild flavours were pimped up deliciously with the nutty crust, samphire and sea purslane, not to mention crunchy greens and a cauliflower salad.

And then it was on to desserts, and for that, my son's paw print is the only seal of approval you need. Perhaps these younger generations will appreciate the craftsmanship of chefs after all. *Three-course meal for two with wine: around £130.*

Alex Mead ●

ON LOCATION

Cheltenham

WITH ITS ELEGANT REGENCY ARCHITECTURE AND BEAUTIFUL VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING COTSWOLDS, CHELTENHAM OFFERS A HOST OF GASTRONOMIC HOTSPOTS TO PLEASE THE GOURMET VISITOR

Koj Having started out as a pop-up, this bijou Japanese restaurant run by Masterchef finalist Andrew Kojima has become a firm favourite among locals and food critics. Koj has an enticing menu of grazing dishes and not a sushi roll in sight. kojcheltenham.co.uk • **The Grape Escape** With a core list of 100 wines from 17 different countries, the highlight of this atmospheric wine bar is its mystery flight of five wines, complemented by plates of cheese or charcuterie. thecheltenhamgrape.com • **The Natural Grocery Store** This organic food store on the buzzing Bath Road sells everything the ethical food-lover could wish for, from specialist baking ingredients to vegan chocolate. The choice is overwhelming but staff are on hand to advise. naturalgrocery.co.uk • **Prithvi** Meaning 'Earth' or 'Mother Earth', in ancient Sanskrit, Prithvi has all the class of a fine dining restaurant and offers its own take on gourmet subcontinental cuisine. prithvirestaurant.com • **The Suffolks** This charming area of cafés, bars and restaurants (not to mention galleries and shops selling antique décor and gifts) is the place for a brew. Try Baker & Graze for its great coffee and tempting cakes. bakerandgraze.com • **John Gordon's Whisky and Wine Bar** Take a tour of the world's best tipples at this cosy spot at the heart of the chic Montpellier area. Along with a superb collection of wines and whiskies, it has a dedicated gin bar. johngordons.co.uk • **Farmer's market** The twice-monthly farmers' market takes place on the elegant Promenade in the town centre. It brings together some of the Gloucestershire countryside's best produce, as well as preserves and pickles, cakes, bread and cheese. *Carolyn Boyd*

ILLUSTRATION: TANYA COOPER

Have you noticed?

Wine does not have a list of ingredients on the label.

How about no headaches caused by excessive sulphites and additives?

Would you like to love your mornings after?

Introducing:

ORGANIC WINE CLUB.co.uk

Delicious wines with no excessive sulphites

Diet friendly and allergen free wines for vegan, paleo, keto, low sugar and low carb lifestyles

FREE DELIVERY on all orders over £50 with code NGF1217 **VISIT** organicwineclub.co.uk

THE TWELVE DAYS OF *Christmas*

FROM MARMALADE VODKA TO BABKA AND EGGNOG CURD, WE'VE ROUNDED UP THE BEST FESTIVE GOODIES TO MAKE YOUR 2017 YULETIDE EXTRA SPECIAL — YOU'RE WELCOME

1

CARLUCCIO'S PANDORO

Meaning 'golden bread' in Italian, this traditional star-shaped cake is a Veneto Christmas classic. Get creative by cutting yours into slices and arranging in the shape of a tree, before dusting liberally with icing sugar for a final festive flourish. £16.95. carluccios.com

2

FORTNUM & MASON SIR NIGEL'S THICK-CUT MARMALADE VODKA

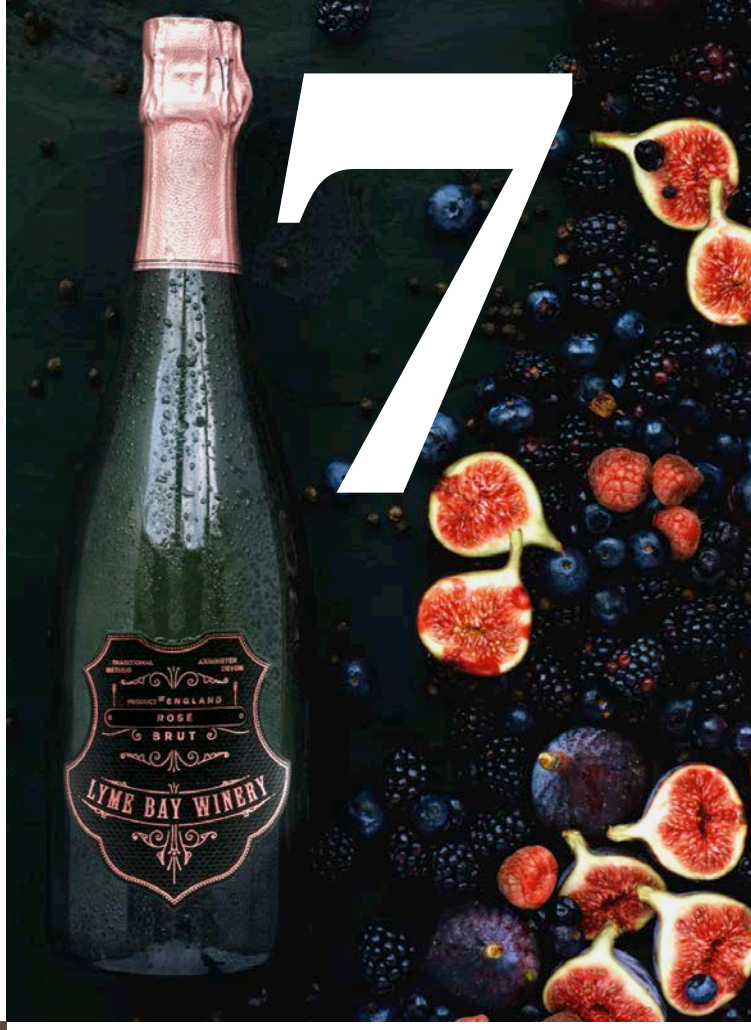
Fortnum's has been making a decadent, bitter-sweet, thick-cut marmalade ever since 1920s actor Sir Nigel Playfair requested one. And one can only assume he'd approve of its use in this vodka, distilled in Cognac-infused oak casks for a deep, rich flavour. Perfect for a cocktail or with tonic. £25.20. fortnumandmason.com

6

SELFRIDGES FESTIVE EGGNOG CURD

Few things conjure up Christmas better than the aroma of eggnog: rich, warming and brandy sweet. So it makes sense to have an eggnog curd to dollop on hot mince pies and spread on fruit-studded toast and panettone. £5.99. selfridges.com

7



LYME BAY WINERY SPARKLING ROSÉ

Gone are the days when we're surprised by good quality English sparkling wine, but throw in rosé's resurgence and you can't fail to impress guests with this fruity Devon sparkler. It's lightly honeyed, with notes of almond and brioche. £24.50. lymebaywinery.co.uk

5

RIVERFORD ORGANIC CHRISTMAS VEG BOX

West Country-based Riverford Organic distributes some 47,000 veg boxes a week, and it can help with your Christmas lunch, too. Choose from a selection of festive boxes filled with the best organic veggies plucked from Riverford's chemical-free soils (meat options can be added). From £10.95. riverford.co.uk

4

FORTNUM & MASON RUM, RAISIN AND CUSTARD FLORENTINES

It's hard to beat a good florentine, and this festive offering might just take the biscuit. Rum-soaked raisins with nuts on a custardy chocolate base – we challenge you to stop at one. Other combinations include orange, lemon and pine nut and the delicious salted caramel, nut and date. £9.95. fortnumandmason.com

3

JOE & SEPH'S MINCE PIE POPCORN

Posh popcorn makers Joe & Seph's caramel-coated mince pie popcorn (£4), flavoured with fruit, almonds and brandy, makes a moreish treat. If mince pies aren't your bag, try the Christmas Shop tin – it contains six varieties, including toffee apple and cinnamon. £18. joeandsephs.co.uk

8

CHASE DISTILLERY ADV ENT CALENDAR

The ever-inventive Chase Distillery showcases 24 of its gins, vodkas, liqueurs and even a limoncello in this grown-up advent calendar. Behind each door you'll find a different 5cl miniature, including rhubarb vodka, smoked vodka, sloe and mulberry gin, pink grapefruit gin and a blackcurrant liqueur. The best way to get into the spirit of things. £140. williamschase.co.uk

9

WHOLE FOODS MARKET SHARING MINCE PIE

What could be better than a mince pie at Christmas? How about a giant one with more fruity filling? Topped with buttery shortcrust stars, this family-sized treat is meant for sharing, but we won't judge if you get carried away. £12.99. wholefoodsmarket.com

12

BRINDISA GASTRONOME'S HAMPER

When it comes to a celebration, Spain knows how it should be done. Generous shavings of acorn-fed Iberico bellota ham, plump olives, buttery Manchego and don't forget those addictive salted marcona almonds. Get a bit of everything, sourced from the best, with this indulgent Brindisa hamper. £160. brindisa.com ●

11

THE GOOD EGG CHRISTMAS BABKA

Step aside panettone, this Christmas it's all about babka. Hailing from Eastern Europe, this sweet bready cake has been given a festive makeover by London restaurant The Good Egg. The enriched dough is twisted with marzipan and spiced butter and studded with currants, raisins, cranberries and and toasted almonds. £32. thegoodeggn16.com

10

HESTON FROM WAITROSE THE EDIBAUBLES COLLECTION

Heston Blumenthal's chocolate baubles come in imaginative flavours, such as Earl Grey stollen and chocolate wine. There's even a mini version of his Hidden Orange Christmas Pudding. £13.50. waitrose.com

SEASONAL PICK

Pomegranate

CHERISHED FOR ITS INTENSE, SWEET-SOUR FLAVOUR AND HEALTH-BOOSTING PROPERTIES, THE LONG-REVERED POMEGRANATE IS FULL OF HIDDEN GEMS

What makes it great?
Cultivated since ancient times, this leathery-skinned fruit is bursting with tightly packed clusters of edible seeds, enclosed in ruby-coloured juice sacs. Pomegranates are prized for their sharp-sweet taste and deliver a festive fruity hit to all manner of dishes, from Middle Eastern-inspired savouries to spectacular puds. It's name is taken from the Latin 'pomum granatum', meaning 'apple of many seeds'. In fact, some people have even suggested a pomegranate, not an apple, was the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve found so irresistible in the Garden of Eden.

What to look for
The juiciest pomegranates are the heaviest; the healthiest have unblemished, bright, shiny skin. They have a shelf life of about two weeks, but they do keep for longer if stored in the fridge. To free the seeds from their armour-like peel, slice the fruit in half and bash, cut-side down, with a wooden spoon or rolling pin over a bowl. Leftover seeds can be frozen.

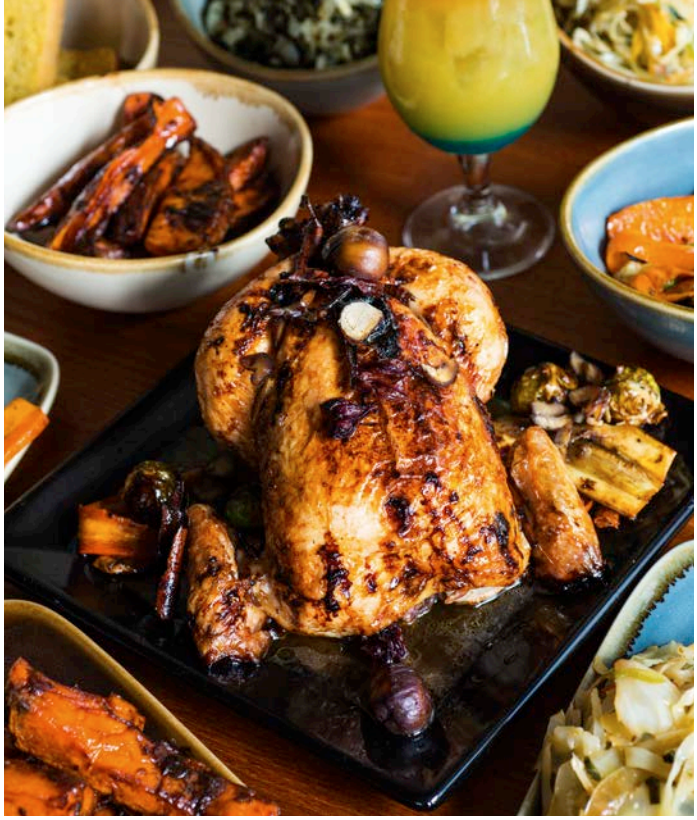
How to use it
The seeds, known as arils, are the treasures of this beauty. Best enjoyed sprinkled over cooked dishes, they're a great match for rich meats like lamb and duck, and add a welcome jewelled touch to rice, couscous, roasted veg, salads and breakfast bowls. Juiced they make a deliciously fragrant drink with antioxidant benefits, to boot. For more fruity goodness, pomegranate molasses is a dark, syrupy condiment made from reduced juice. Use sparingly in marinades, dips and dressings. Grenadine, the key ingredient in a Shirley Temple mocktail, is also made from pomegranate.

When is it in season?
Pomegranates are native to a swathe of land stretching from Iran to northern India. In the Northern Hemisphere, they're in season from October to February, so this is where most of our pomegranates come from during our autumn and winter. They're also cultivated in countries that enjoy a warm climate year-round, so at other times of year they're imported from further afield. *Lauren Hoffman*

TAKE FIVE

1. FIZZ For a festive sparkler, drop a few seeds into a glass of Champagne with a splash of rose water.
2. CARPACCIO Try a twist on a fruit salad by thinly slicing clementines and scattering with pomegranate seeds and fresh mint leaves.
3. STEW Enjoy a taste of Persia by slow-cooking chicken with pomegranate molasses and a sprinkling of pomegranate seeds.
4. SOUP Garnish spiced soups, like butternut squash or sweet potato, with pomegranate seeds and fresh coriander.
5. RAITA Cool a curry by topping with yoghurt mixed with diced cucumber and pomegranate seeds.

IMAGE: GETTY



A CHEF'S *Festive Feast*

UK-BASED CHEFS GIVE US A TASTE OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON AROUND THE WORLD, FROM ICELAND TO THE CARIBBEAN

St Lucia

HEAD CHEF — SHOREDITCH, COTTONS RUM SHACK & RESTAURANT

Marlon Edward

How would you describe a Caribbean Christmas?
In St Lucia, everyone comes together at Christmas, and I mean everybody. We all get together in one house and everyone cooks. We're all one big family — no matter what happened the year before. Growing up, the house was separate from the kitchen; we had this big yard and we would put up little huts with coconut palms, there'd be candles and little kerosene lamps. We had no electricity and yet the food always came out perfect — bread, pudding and cakes all cooked to perfection on the charcoal grill.

Tell us about your Christmas recipe
This dish [right] is inspired by my grandmother back in St Lucia. From about the age of 12, I'd be sent out to catch the birds for dinner. My grandmother would say, "Marlon, I want that one, that one, and that one," and I'd have to chase the chickens through the community. There'd be a pot of boiling water ready to help make plucking easier. My grandmother would grill it, and make a molasses with honey and mixed spice for glazing, and we'd just sit down and wait for it. Chicken always brings back good memories.

What would you look forward to?
My mum liked to bake so we'd have a lot of banana cake, coconut cake and something called pone, which is basically cassava bread flavoured with vanilla and raisins. And there were sweets and lollipops in just about every flavour. My grandmother would also make a hot drink with grenadine syrup, cinnamon and our famous white rum — now that was the bomb.

What's Christmas like for you now?
In England, I basically take requests from everyone. My wife demands her turkey, and the kids love lamb and beef. But I try and do bits and pieces from home. We have fried plantain fritters and sweet potato, and I like jerk salmon for the main. It's these little things that jog the memory and remind me of Christmas at home.

Roast chicken with cornbread stuffing, sorrel conserve and honey-glazed jerk vegetables

SERVES: 6 **TAKES 2.5HRS**

INGREDIENTS
- 1 whole chicken with giblets (see stuffing)
- 60g butter, melted
- 600g mixed root veg
- 3 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp jerk seasoning

FOR BASTING
- 3 tbsp honey
- 60g butter, melted
- 60ml water
- 3 cinnamon sticks
- 2 star anise
- 50ml spiced rum

FOR THE CORNBREAD
- 60g fresh or frozen corn
- 60g cornmeal
- ½ tbsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp sugar
- ½ tsp salt
- 30g plain flour
- 2 tbsp melted butter
- 60g heavy cream
- 120ml milk
- 1 egg

FOR THE STUFFING
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 small onions, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced giblets (from the chicken), finely chopped
- 225g chestnuts, sliced
- 3 sprigs thyme, chopped
- 3 sprigs parsley, chopped
- 60ml milk

FOR THE CONSERVE
- 900g sorrel, cleaned
- 450g white sugar
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp Chinese five-spice

METHOD
1. Begin by making the cornbread. Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6. Grease a 14in x 2in baking tin. Put the corn and cornmeal in food processor and whizz for 30 secs to combine.
2. Combine the remaining dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl and add the corn mixture.
3. In another bowl, combine the butter, cream, milk and egg. Add to the dry ingredients; mix until smooth. Spoon into the tin and bake for 35 mins, or until firm.
4. For the stuffing, heat the oil in a pan. Gently fry the onion and garlic until softened. Add the giblets and chestnuts and continue cooking until browned.
5. Crumble the cornbread into a bowl and add the chestnut mixture and herbs; moisten with the milk.
6. Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6. Combine all the basting ingredients in a pan and boil over a high heat until slightly thickened.
7. Season the cavity of the bird and fill with the stuffing mixture. Truss the chicken and place in a heavy-bottomed roasting pan. Rub the skin all over with butter. Roast for 1 hr; then baste with every 20 mins for the last hour and a half of cooking.
8. Combine the mixed veg in a roasting tin and toss with the honey and jerk. Roast with the chicken for the last 30-40 mins of cooking, until golden.
9. Meanwhile, make the sorrel conserve. Put all the ingredients in a heavy pan and simmer for 1 hr or until the mixture thickens. Leave to cool.
10. Carve the bird and serve with all the trimmings.

MARLON'S TOP TIP
Add a little rum to your celebration — it works for me.

OWNER & CHEF, JOSÉ & PIZZARO

José Pizzaro

Where do you spend Christmas?
I promised my mother when I left Spain that I would always come home for Christmas. I've been living in London for 18 years and I've only ever missed one — and that was because the flights were cancelled. We live in a small village in Extremadura and I love going for a Christmas day walk in the crisp weather — we visit the local farms and always bump into old friends. Christmas is all about relaxing, eating, drinking, listening and arguing — there's always plenty of that, it's tradition.

Is there one thing you can't do without?
We always have a whole leg of jamon — 100% Iberico, acorn-fed; the best you can buy. Nothing else will do. It can be up to 8kg, and we'll get through it in three days. It's not just me and my family though, it's all the friends who come over for a glass of cava or sherry (I love my fino, so it's always here) — there could be up to 20 people around the house.

What other food says Spanish Christmas?
Turrón [nougat]; we have big plates of it and I always make a turrón mousse — people love it. As well as jamon, we always have prawns; the big ones we just boil and the small ones we do al ajillo [with garlic]. And because it's La Matanza [Spain's annual pig slaughter festival], we always have fresh pork too. Black pudding, the trotters, all of that is there too. It's just eating, eating, eating.

Why this dish?
This [right] is what we always have at home — it's all about being able to share. Christmas is the one time we're all together and there's nothing better than a lovely bit of fish. We have it on Christmas Eve because that's the big night for Spanish people when it comes to Christmas — it's more important than the day itself and it's when everyone is together for the first time in a while. On Christmas day itself, we'll have roast kid with a big green salad and fried potatoes.

Whole sea bass baked with anchovy and garlic potatoes

SERVES: 6 **TAKES 1HR 15 MINS**

INGREDIENTS

- 1.5kg large waxy potatoes, such as Desiree or Charlotte, cut into 8mm slices
- 4 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 8 anchovy fillets in olive oil, drained and sliced
- 1 whole (aprox 1.75kg) sea bass or red snapper, cleaned and scaled
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 lemon leaves (optional)

FOR THE DRESSING

- 8 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 1½ tsp salt
- a few good grinds freshly cracked black pepper
- 3 tbsp chopped oregano

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200ºC, fan 180°C, gas 6. To make the dressing, whisk the olive oil with the lemon juice, salt and pepper; stir in the herbs. Set aside.
2. Put the potatoes in a roasting tin large enough to fit the fish. Add 6 tbsp of the dressing, the garlic and anchovies and toss well. Spread out in an even layer and roast for 30-35 minutes.
3. Slash the flesh of the fish 5-6 times on each side. Season the cavity, then stuff it with the lemon slices, bay leaves and lemon leaves (if using).
4. Remove the potatoes from the oven and release any slices if stuck. Brush the fish with a little of the remaining dressing and season well. Put it on top of the potatoes and pour any remaining dressing into the cavity. Return to the oven for a further 35 minutes or until the fish is cooked through and the potatoes are tender. Serve hot.

JOSÉ'S TOP TIP

People try to do too many things at the same time — I say have as much as you can ready beforehand. Don't get stressed; keep it simple, do everything early and enjoy.

Spain

Iceland

CHEF PATRON, TEXTURE

Aggi Sverrisson

Describe a typical Icelandic Christmas
We open all the presents on the 24th, not the 25th. We love our drinking, but we don't drink on the 24th — no way. It's very serious, even people like who love a drink or two don't drink on the 24th. Most people are in the kitchen all day cooking, listening to Christmas music, eating chocolate and helping each other. A typical start would be herring, smoked salmon and gravlax to start with, then the lamb, then you always have risalamande [a cold, rice pudding dish] for dessert.

Tell us about your Christmas dish
This [right] is what we've been eating for hundreds and hundreds of years back in Iceland, and we only ever eat it at Christmas — not at any other time. And I love it, it's amazing. The smoky scent of the lamb is always Christmas to me. When I start making the white sauce too, the smell that comes from it — all sweet and sour — it's delicious. We serve it with a bit of leaf bread, which is very thin, deep fried bread. It's all very traditional. It has a very special place in my heart. Everyone in Iceland does this dish — if you don't do it, it's not Christmas.

How does Christmas in the UK differ?
Everybody loves Christmas in Iceland, it's such a big thing. OK, so Christmas is big in the UK, but it's completely different — it's just so much more traditional back home. On the 23rd nobody works, and on the 26th nobody works either — everything is shut. I used to love Christmas, then I got a bit bored of it, but now I have young children, I'm back.

What flavours say Christmas to you?
Ginger cake, we do a lot of ginger cake. Chocolate is everywhere too. Anything sweet basically. When you're cooking the risalamande you can put cinnamon, apple compote or vanilla in it. We also do cinnamon gingerbread houses, everybody does one of those. The mothers and kids do them together in advance, and they can get very competitive and elaborate — they can be massive. They'll decorate them with icing in all sorts of colours and with sweets too, of course.

Smoked leg of lamb with red cabbage, white sauce potatoes and leaf bread

SERVES: 6 **TAKES: 3HRS, PLUS CHILLING**

INGREDIENTS

- 1.3-1.7kg smoked leg of lamb "hangikjöt" (from nammi.is)
- peas, to serve

FOR THE BRAISED CABBAGE

- 3 red cabbages, halved and thinly sliced
- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- 12 juniper berries, toasted and placed in a muslin bag
- 3 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3.5 ltr red wine
- 200ml red wine vinegar
- 300g caster sugar

FOR THE LEAF BREAD

- 200g plain flour
- 13g sugar
- 8g yeast
- 20g cumin
- 5g baking sodium
- 4g salt
- 15g butter
- 1.4 ltrs milk

FOR THE WHITE SAUCE 'UPPSTÚF'

- 100g butter
- 100g plain flour
- 500ml milk
- 15g salt
- 50g caster sugar
- 24 boiled new potatoes

METHOD

1. Begin by making the cabbage: sweat the cabbage in a large pan for 10-15 minutes with a little oil and salt.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer for 2-3 hrs, stirring from time to time, until the cabbage is tender. Check for seasoning and leave to chill.
3. For the leafy bread, mix together the dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In a pan, gently melt the butter in the milk. Pour over the dry ingredients and mix to form a dough. Roll it out thinly and cut into 6in discs. Deep fry in oil heated to 150°C (tested with a thermometer or cube of bread — if it turns golden its ready for frying) until crisp and golden. Drain on kitchen paper and leave to rest for 5 mins.
4. Put the lamb in a large pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 45 minutes. Leave to cool in the water. Drain.
5. For the white sauce, melt the butter in a pan. Whisk in the flour and cook for 1-2 mins over a low heat. Add the milk and season with the salt and sugar. Mix with the cooked new potatoes.
6. Slice the lamb and serve with the red cabbage, potatoes, peas and leaf bread.

AGGI'S TOP TIP

A cold starter is great as it can be ready to serve with minimal fuss. I love smoked salmon and gravlax as it can be sliced beforehand.

CO-OWNER & CHEF, ROCHELLE CANTEEN

Margot Henderson

Why have you chosen to share your turkey recipe with us?
We have a turkey every year — my mother-in-law always makes sure of it. And because of Fergus [Henderson, Margot's husband, the chef and founder of London's St John restaurant], we have no choice anyway, but it's a great bird. It's delicious and goes well with all the trimmings. I like the danger of cooking it too: is it done? Isn't it? Am I drying it out? Should I brine it? I love cooking like that, even if it's just once a year — having 10 people putting their suggestions in as to how to cook it. I just love the discussions. The drama of the turkey is great — it looks good on the table.

You're from New Zealand — how does a British Christmas compare?
British Christmas is great. Back in New Zealand, you might have duck, crayfish, chicken, but never a turkey. I've been doing British Christmas for 33 years now and I think the traditional meal suits Britain far better. I love all the lights and the fact it's cold, although I've only seen snow once since I've been here.

What family food traditions make the big day special?
On Christmas Eve, Fergus's mum always does smoked salmon with spinach and a white sauce with a blob of Parmesan, which is delicious. On the day, we get up early and start drinking champagne as soon as possible. Once we've done the stockings, we get all the food in the oven and then it's presents before dinner. We tend to stop for a bit, and then have Stilton followed by Christmas puddings that have been waiting for us from the year before. We always get two St John Christmas puddings — we flame them up and have them with brandy butter, which is probably one of my favourite things.

What wouldn't it be Christmas without?
Bread sauce. It took me years to understand bread sauce, I just didn't get it, and now I love it. And it's much better cold too. It's Fergus's job to make the bread sauce. We also like to experiment. One year, Fergus tried making a turkey and foie gras toasted sandwich. ●

Roast turkey

SERVES: 10-12 **TAKES: 5-6HRS**

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 6kg free-range turkey, at room temp
- 375g unsalted butter, softened
- 2 lemons, zested and juiced
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 400g streaky bacon, sliced
- 1 kg stuffing (find the recipe online)
- a little water or chicken/turkey stock

FOR THE GRAVY

- 600ml chicken or turkey stock
- 1 tbsp plain flour
- 100ml white wine
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C, fan 160°C, gas 4. Untruss the bird's legs. Put the butter, lemon zest and juice, salt and pepper in a bowl. Gently slide your hands in between the skin and flesh of the bird, separating the two. Make a thick blanket of the butter between the flesh and the skin — this will help protect the breast and legs and keep them moist. Season the skin and cover with the bacon, like an overcoat.
2. Generously fill the inside of the bird with stuffing and place it in a roasting tin. Pour in a little water or stock to keep the juices flowing. Keep topping up the juices at the bottom of the pan so they don't burn, and baste away, once every hour or so. A 6kg bird with 1kg of stuffing should take about 4.5hrs to cook, based on 40 mins per kilo.
3. Check the bird is ready by piercing deeply into the thickest part of the thigh with a skewer — the juices should run clear. A meat thermometer, if you have one, should read 80°C.
4. Lift and move the bird to a platter. Wrap in foil and leave to rest for at least 30 mins.
5. Tip the juices from the roasting tin into a jug and leave to settle. Once the fat has risen to the surface, skim and discard so you're left with just the lovely juices.
6. Meanwhile, prepare the gravy by heating the roasting tin over a medium heat. Add a little stock and loosen any bits that are baked onto the bottom. Whisk in the flour, then pour in the juices, turn up the heat a little and add a few splashes of white wine. Cook for a few minutes, then add the stock and simmer, whisking until you have a smooth gravy. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with the turkey.

MARGOT'S TOP TIP
For a moist, succulent meat, always put butter under the skin of your turkey.

PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMIE LAU

MAKE ME

From spuds to stuffing, find the recipes to go with Margot's turkey at natgeofood.co.uk

Britain

© FTBW & © S. De Kempeneer

WATERLOO BEER

© WBT-Denis Erroyaux

TARTE AL DJOTE

© WBT-Denis Erroyaux

TRADITIONS

Waterlooandbeyond.be

TASTE OUR DELICIOUS
LOCAL PRODUCE

Wallonia.be
TOURISM

Wallonia
2017 A Taste of the Good Life

VILLERS ABBEY
CHEESE AND BEER

© Villers Abbey

FAMILY KITCHEN

Deck the halls

THERE ARE FEW BETTER WAYS TO GET INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT THAN BY MAKING EDIBLE DECORATIONS WITH THE LITTLE ONES

Baking and making decorations was always a big part of my Christmas growing up. My mother is Danish, so we'd spend ages baking mountains of biscuits like pebernødder (small, spiced shortbreads that you eat by the handful). We'd put them in cones with nuts and hang them on the tree. Even simpler were the red apples that we used to buff until shiny and hang alongside the cones.

Kids absolutely love to make all kinds of festive decorations, and if it's something that can be eaten, so much the better. Not only is it a fun way to spend time together, but their sense of pride as they present their efforts to visitors will beam as bright as buffed, red apples.

While you can make biscuits and gingerbread that'll last a while on the tree, these days I prefer to make the decorations on Christmas Eve. It's a lovely ritual and the whole family loves getting stuck in. Plus, when you're doing it the day before (or even on the day itself), it means you can be a lot more flexible with what you make.

For instance, you can make chocolate truffles with Christmassy flavours like cinnamon, ginger, orange or chestnut. A quick dip in edible glitter and you have something that looks super festive and is, more importantly, easy.

Meringue also makes great decorations. All you need is a good piping nozzle and the children can be put to work beating the mixture before they make all kinds of shapes, or — as Sonja likes to do — freeform. Add some food colouring before you mix and you'll get pink angels, green trees and red Santa hats. A drop of oil such as peppermint, lavender, lemon or orange adds a nice twist too.

A QUICK DIP IN EDIBLE GLITTER AND YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT LOOKS SUPER FESTIVE AND IS, MORE IMPORTANTLY, EASY TO DO

Perhaps the prettiest of all though, are boiled candy ornaments. You can just take any boiled sweets or even liquorice, break them all up — Sonja's favourite part — and then put them into different shapes of metal cookie cutter. Melt them in the oven on a low heat, and when it sets you've got a pretty decoration, even the slightly shambolic ones. A guaranteed crowd-pleaser.

ANNA HANSEN runs acclaimed London restaurant The Modern Pantry and is mum to four-year-old Sonja

TWO TO TRY

Liquorice, rose & green apple glass

Preheat the oven to 140°C, fan 120°C, gas 1. In a coffee grinder or food processor, grind about 20 boiled sweets of each flavour (liquorice, rose and apple), one flavour at a time, to a fine powder. Alternatively bash with a rolling pin. Arrange festive cookie cutters on a parchment- or Silpat-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle the powdered candy liberally inside the cutters then bake for 10 mins, or until melted. Remove from the oven and swirl the colours with a metal skewer. Leave to cool a little then pierce a small hole for hanging on the tree.

OUR PICK

Lavender meringue kisses

Preheat the oven to 100°C, fan 80°C, gas ¼. Line a baking sheet with parchment or a Silpat mat. Put 4 large egg whites, 320g sifted icing sugar and 2 tsp of lemon juice in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on high for 15 minutes until thick and glossy. Add a drop of food grade lavender oil and beat for an additional 30 secs. Spoon the mixture into a piping bag and pipe meringue kisses in rows onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 45-50 mins until completely dry. String up with festive twine.

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WARNER. IMAGE: GETTY

CREATE THE PERFECT

Cheeseboard

YOUR FESTIVE CHEESE SELECTION NEEDN'T FOLLOW THE SAME FORMULA YEAR AFTER YEAR. INSTEAD, SHAKE THINGS UP WITH A FEW UNUSUAL ADDITIONS

BEAUFORT CHALET D'ALPAGE
SAVOIE, FRANCE
Aged for two years, this mountain cheese owes its sweet, nutty flavour and creamy texture to cattle grazing on pastures studded with aromatic alpine flora. As it matures, little cracks appear, helping the cheese to ripen.

THE IMPERIAL BUCK (CENTRE)
WISCONSIN, USA
A handmade, bandage-wrapped cheddar, aged for longer to allow even greater development of its richly nutty flavour and sweet butterscotch finish. It's creamy, with a slight crystalline crunch.

ST. TOLA
CO CLARE, IRELAND
Made with organic, unpasteurised goat's milk, this fresh, crumbly goat's cheese has a nutty, mellow flavour. It's aged for a closer texture and a slight citrus taste, and the natural, wrinkled rind is dusted in ash.

COLSTON BASSETT STILTON
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, ENGLAND
A deep and richly textured pasteurised cow's milk blue with a rough, pitted rind. The blue is introduced at a later stage, allowing the curds to mature before the veins impart their spicy blue tang.

TALEGGIO DI VAL BREMBANA
LOMBARDY, ITALY
Produced in the hills surrounding Bergamo, this taleggio is much thicker than the alpine version. Not too salty, it boasts a lovely floral flavour and creamy texture with a rich, melting quality. Eat the rind too – it's delicious.

TOMME FLEURETTE WADTLÄNDER
ALPEN, SWITZERLAND
Cheesemaker Michel Beroud is an icon of Swiss cheesemaking. From the Canton du Vaud, this complex, unpasteurised, cheese has a thin, bloomy rind clinging onto an almost melting centre, with subtle floral notes.

SÃO JORGE
AZORES, PORTUGAL
One of Portugal's rare cow's milk cheeses, this one is produced on São Jorge in the Atlantic archipelago of the Azores. The sharp nuttiness is redolent of cheddar, with a simmering undertone of the farm that extends the depth of flavour, and lends a persistent finish.

TORTA DE DEHESA
SALAMANCA, SPAIN
Made with milk from an ancient herd of Churra sheep, that graze on organic pastures, this rich cheese has a clean, balanced acidity with an earthy mushroom aroma, courtesy of thistle vegetable rennet.

RECOMMENDED BY PATRICIA MICHELSON, owner of La Fromagerie. lafromagerie.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY: FRANCESCA TURNER

LE GRUYÈRE®
SWITZERLAND AOP

A Family Recipe for 900 Years

Le Gruyère AOP Switzerland - a centuries-old tradition of artisanal cheesemaking.

For over 900 years, our milk producers, cheese makers and affineurs in Western Switzerland have followed the same strict protocols and procedures. This is the only way that we can ensure that Gruyère AOP carries the quality and flavour that is known and trusted for generations. For artisans such as these, this is what matters above all.

This authentic recipe and the care that goes into every wheel makes Gruyère AOP the finest choice for your family and friends. Enjoy it as it is, or in your favourite dishes.

For recipes and more, visit us at gruyere.com

Gruyère AOP
Born in Switzerland in 1115.
#GruyereAOP

All Natural, only from Switzerland.
Naturally Gluten- and Lactose-Free.
www.gruyere.com

AOP = PDO (Protected Designation of Origin)

SCHWEIZ SUISSE SVIZZERA SWITZERLAND

Switzerland. Naturally.

AOP

Cheeses from Switzerland.
www.cheesesfromswitzerland.com

GRAN CANARIA, AN ISLAND WITH A GREAT FLAVOUR AND A LONG HISTORY

The capital's local markets show just how the traditional and the modern can live side by side in harmony

One of the top attractions for visitors coming to a city they have never been to before is to visit the traditional local markets, and to enjoy the fine local cuisine. Gran Canaria is no exception. The characteristic aromas, colours and flavours of the fresh produce blend in with the fruit, vegetable, meat and fish stalls that adorn the corridors of the local markets in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the island's capital, thus creating an original space for buying the best basic ingredients, or if they prefer, for trying out the cutting edge local gastronomy.

The Market of El Puerto is located at the isthmus that connects the bustling area of the Port of La Luz y de Las Palmas with the stunning Las Canteras Beach. It features a modernist architectural style, and is the first food market in the Canaries to have added a range of gastronomical choices. It was inaugurated back in 1891, the design of Frenchman Gustave Eiffel, the designer behind the famous Eiffel Tower in Paris.

The market has a varied choice of culinary delights which sources its ingredients from all around the world, while alongside these featuring some delicious local recipes, made from the finest seasonal products and the truly special touch of the expert local chefs. The building's terrace, which has been declared a Site of Cultural Interest, has become one of the city's trendy hotspots for those coming for a social drink after work.

In another part of the city, at the historical town centre, the Vegueta Market stands proud. Opened in 1858, its near 160 years of

history have left their indelible mark on its walls. Nevertheless, this emblematic site has kept pace with the times and has become a top location which treats us to some delightful locally sourced Canary farm foods, plus the finest fish and seafood grown in the Atlantic Ocean.

'La Barra del Mercado' is a restaurant that is part of this modern day initiative here, called 'Taste the flavours', created by chef Ángel Palacios and his 'Traddiction' seal. His culinary offerings include a range of counters that offer a range of creations developed from the highest quality raw materials on the island. If they wish, clients can purchase fresh produce directly at the market, or ask the cooks to make their novel and original dishes from the à la cart menú on site.

An island's gastronomy provides a great insight into its history. Visitors can perfectly distinguish the origins, customs and traditions of a people in this way. Gran Canaria is bathed in the sea, and possesses a rich and fertile soil that is gently caressed by the sun throughout the year, and as such has shaped its traditional cuisine with different flavours that have come in from Europe, Latin America, their sentimental partner, and Africa. So to try their special recipes will prove to be a unique experience, and now its cuisine is one of the island's top tourist attractions.

MARKET OF EL PUERTO

Calle Albareda, nº 76
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
www.mercadodelpuerto.net
@mercadodelpuertolpa
@mercadopuerto

VEGUETA MARKE

Calle Mendizabal, nº 1
Las Palmas de Gran Canaria
www.mercadodevegueta.com
@mercadovegueta

---

mygrancanaria
gctourism
visitgrancanaria

www.grancanaria.com
www.bloggrancanaria.com

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

YORKSHIRE BLUE

Indulge in mild and buttery Shepherds Purse Yorkshire Blue — handmade on a family farm in Yorkshire. **£3.15/170g.** shepherdspurse.co.uk

THE DELICIOUS GIFT BOX

Containing a bottle each of Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Balsamic Vinegar (2x200ml), The Delicious Gift Box is the ideal present for food lovers. **£17.28.** oilala.com

CASTELLO® CREAMY WHITE

A white mould cheese made with double cream for a soft texture and buttery taste — just the thing for your Christmas table. **£1.95/200g.** castellocheese.com

FRANKLIN & SONS LTD NATURAL INDIAN TONIC WATER

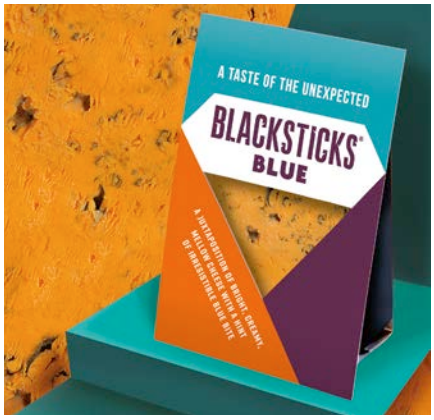
This award-winning Natural Indian Tonic Water is available at Sainsbury's and Booths. **£1.70/500ml.**

BENARES RESTAURANT

Enjoy a meal to remember at this Michelin starred Indian restaurant, led by chef-patron Atul Kochhar. **From £35 for three courses.** benaresrestaurant.com

CASTILLO ARMADO RESERVA 2009

Matured in oak for three years, this award-winning Spanish red is perfect with cured meats and cheeses. **£64.20 for a case of 12.** laithwaites.co.uk/VYQ2E



BLACKSTICKS BLUE

Made by Lancashire dairy, Butlers, this mellow, creamy cheese has an irresistible blue bite. Available from major retailers. **£2/150g.** butlerscheeses.co.uk

COTSWOLDS SINGLE MALT WHISKY

Rich and fruity, this lovingly crafted tipple is the first single malt ever distilled in the Cotswolds. **£44.95/700ml.** cotswoldsdistillery.com/shop

IMAGE: GETTY

WHAT WE'RE POSTING

INSTAGRAM

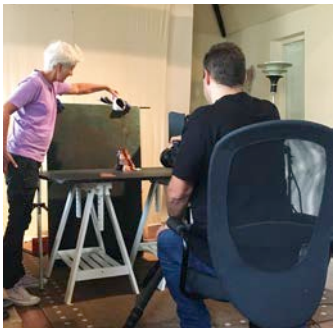
Follow us for all the visual food inspiration you need to get you through the week, including exclusive behind-the-scenes videos and pictures.

FACEBOOK

Like us on Facebook for great recipes, tips and ideas, all courtesy of celebrity chefs, top culinary personalities and the National Geographic Food team.

TWITTER

We want to hear from you. Whether it's your top kitchen secret, your favourite chocolate bars or your favourite seasonal ingredients — tweet us now!



WEBSITE

Check out the website for lots of extra food content, including our blog, recipes and competitions. Plus, great subscription deals and special offers.

NATGEOFOODUK

FIND IT ONLINE

natgeofood.co.uk

How to make the perfect chicken pho
Take the plunge with Jeff Tan's recipe for this Vietnamese classic dish.

Curries: try something new
Rohit Ghai, executive chef of Mayfair's Jamavar, shares some of his favourites.

Breaking bread
Broaden your culinary knowledge with our regular blog, looking at the dining habits of different cultures.

Exclusive extras
Check our website for additional recipes, including Christmas dinner trimmings and Cypriot favourites.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

BUTTER

The butter renaissance; tackling food waste; the future for craft beer; what El Bulli's Ferran Adrià did next; breaking bread in a Jewish household; and what goes in to the perfect tagine.

THE MAIN

What's your ultimate gourmet experience? Some of the biggest names in food, including Jason Atherton, Monica Galetti, Fuchsia Dunlop and Tom Kitchin, reveal theirs.

ON SALE 1 FEBRUARY

IMAGE: GETTY

THE INSTAGRAMMER

@candidsbyjo

THIS MONTH WE TALK TO A BOSTONIAN IN LONDON, JOANNA YEE, AKA @CANDIDSBYJO

FOLLOW ON

The mouthwatering Instagram accounts Joanna keeps an eye on

@ladyandpups
Mandy's dishes really stand out from the oversaturation of Instagram brunch pics.

@oliahercules
I'm not very familiar with Ukrainian cuisine, but everything Olia cooks makes me want to learn more.

@skye_mcalpine
Skye makes me want to crash one of her dinner parties. She shares the most incredible scenes of her Venetian meals.

@theboywhobakes
I have a sweet tooth, so I want everything Edd (2010 champion of The Great British Bake Off) posts.

How did you get into photographing food?
Five years ago I was working in finance and decided to take on the 365 Project challenge, where you take one photo a day for a year. During that time I got completely immersed in capturing food and food culture, and finally decided to pursue it as a career in mid-2014 — I'm now a food and travel photographer.

What's the key to taking a good food picture?
Good use of light is key for any social media platform. Instagram generally favours bright and colourful food photos, but I'm drawn to moody scenes and comfort foods. In terms of 'likes', homemade cakes and bakes tend to be a crowd-pleaser, as are noodles and dumplings.

Are there any downsides?
Definitely! I'd say the major downside is having to eat cold or lukewarm food.

What's the best meal you've eaten out?
I've been spoiled with great meals both in London and on my travels, but my two dining experiences at Sushi Tetsu in Clerkenwell are among my favourites. It's not just about the quality of food, but also being able to see the chef's skills and passion for his craft at the intimate seven-seater restaurant.

What's your signature dish?
I'm a big fan of somen noodles in dashi broth with miso pork belly (or with tofu for my pescetarian husband) — it's simple and understated, but so satisfying.

What's your favourite comfort food?
There's nothing a good bowl of ramen can't solve.

Who's your food hero?
As a child I took for granted the culinary talents of the women in my family — my grandmother, mother and aunts — but now I'm constantly in awe of what they can produce purely by feel and taste. Anthony Bourdain is a distant second to them; I love his food stories and fondness for Southeast Asian cuisine.

THIS MONTH...

WHAT WE'VE BEEN EATING, DRINKING, ENJOYING AND LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE WORLD OF FOOD

I'M DESPERATE TO EAT AT... MILDREDS, DALSTON
If it's as good as the original in Soho, it'll be worth enduring the walk-in, no booking policy at this new east London branch. It's Mildreds' fourth outlet — I'd be quite happy to see them take over the high street. mildreds.co.uk/dalston *Glen Mutel*

I CAN'T STOP EATING... SKYR
This Icelandic import is thick like Greek yoghurt but without the tang. It's high in protein so it's my go-to afternoon pick-me-up or post-workout snack. Great with peanut butter and honey stirred in, but just as delicious on its own. *Lauren Gamp*

I TRIED... ELDERFLOWER CHILLI JELLY
You know it's good when the cheese is of secondary importance to the jam. It's made by South Devon Chilli Farm, and perfect for Christmas, too. I can't get enough. southdevonchillifarm.co.uk *Lauren Hoffman*

I'VE BEEN WATCHING... DINERS, DRIVE-INS & DIVES

A huge, greasy slice of Americana. Loud-but-charming bottle-blond host Guy Fieri eats his way around the US, declaring — mid-mouthful — that everything is 'righteous' or 'out of bounds' (both good things). Available to download from Amazon. amazon.co.uk *Nicola Trup*

I'VE BEEN SHOPPING AT... ITALO, LONDON
From aromatic espressos and delicious pastries to fresh bread and jars of spices, this deli in Vauxhall, London, is my go-to for all things Italian. italodeli.co.uk *Connor McGovern*

This Christmas I'll be eating...

Brussels three ways
The classic way with butter; Jamie Oliver's 'Brussels with hustle' (shredded with pancetta); and cauliflower and sprout mash. *LG*

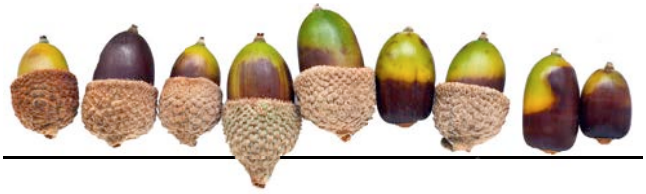
Chocolate pralines and bubbly
Christmas is the one day of the year when I'll allow myself to indulge in chocolate and prosecco for breakfast. *MP*

Plane food
I'll (hopefully) be en route somewhere sunny. *NT*

Snails
They're the perfect special occasion starter. *GM*

7 kilos

The number of acorns consumed every day by an Iberian black pig — which is why they tasted so good when served across six courses for Brindisa's 30th birthday. brindisa.com *Alex Mead*



3 THINGS I LOVE

CURLY CUKES A novelty to some but these are my favourite cucumbers from Polish, Greek or Turkish delis.
BLACK DOUGH PIZZA With charcoal added to the base — from 'O Munaciello in Florence.
TAHINI-BASED HALVA I rediscovered this in chocolate bar size in Tesco. Yum. *Maria Pieri*

IMAGES: GETTY; STOCKFOOD

Think inside the gift box.

We all have our own unique gifts. King Edward VII knew this more than most. Not only did he give us the gift of The King's Ginger (a revivifying and refreshing antidote to the 'same old, same old') but, with his colourfully generous character, he showed us all how to celebrate what life has to offer.

Break with tradition this Christmas.
Give the gift of The King's Ginger.

The King's Ginger

A Tradition
of Breaking Tradition

drinkaware.co.uk for the facts

#KingsTonic

gorenje
Life Simplified

PARK IT IN YOUR KITCHEN

GORENJE RETRO SPECIAL EDITION FRIDGE WITH A CHARACTER

gorenje.co.uk

Official Licensed Product