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FRESH FOOD IN SEASON

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ASPARAGUS WITH HOLLANDAISE SAUCE



Now that spears of asparagus are beginning to poke their way through the soil, it's time to enjoy one of nature's most succulent vegetables. As its season is short and usually over by mid June, not one spear should be left to go to seed. Asparagus goes particularly well with salmon fillets which you can

buy frozen from Eynsham's family butcher, Richard Golsby, if you are unable to travel to Oxford or Witney and buy it fresh. Those delicious flavours of asparagus are also complemented by an egg sauce, Hollandaise being one of them. This is a really quick and easy way to cook the sauce at home.

To serve four you will need:

One bunch freshly harvested asparagus
Juice from half a lemon
3 tbspsn dry white wine
One bay leaf
6 whole peppercorns
One tbspn cold water mixed with three free range egg yolks
6oz (175g) butter - melted
One tbspn fresh parsley or chervil - chopped fine
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* To make the Hollandaise put the lemon juice, wine, bay leaf

and peppercorns in a small pan, place over high heat and allow to boil until the mix is reduced to just one tablespoon

* Strain the reduced liquid into the food processor, stir in the cold water and egg yolks and zap on high speed for three minutes, by which time the mix will have become frothy and lighter in colour.

* Leave the processor running on low and gently feed the melted butter onto the eggs until the mix has begun to thicken.

* Stop the machine, taste, and adjust seasoning, add the fresh parsley or chervil, give it another second or two in the processor and you are finished. Keep the sauce covered in a warm place while you cook the asparagus.

* To serve pour a little Hollandaise over the asparagus, keeping the rest in a jug so that your guests can help themselves to more when they need it.

ASPARAGUS FOR BREAKFAST



Because asparagus goes well with eggs, it's worth serving it for breakfast now and again as a special treat.

For two people you will need:

4 free range eggs
1oz (25g) butter
4 tbspsn single cream or milk
Salt and freshly ground black pepper corns
One bunch asparagus
Buttered toast

Method:

* This dish tastes best if you make the scrambled eggs while the asparagus is cooking in boiling salted water. If you can prepare the toast at the same time it will taste even better
* Prepare the asparagus by cutting away the woody ends. Rinse under cold water.
* Either steam the asparagus or cook for about five minutes in a frying pan filled with boiling water – the spears are easier to remove with a slatted spoon when cooked this way.
* While the water for the

asparagus is heating up, whisk the eggs and the cream/milk together, season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns.

* Place the butter into a non-stick saucepan, and place over a moderate heat.

* When the butter has melted, add the egg mixture and keep stirring with a whisk or fork to break up the curds.

* Remove from the heat before completely cooked as it will continue thickening for a moment or two and can go dry very quickly.

* Remove the asparagus from the pan and drain on kitchen paper, butter the toast and assemble the dish. Now enjoy a breakfast fit for a king.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS



There are loads of ways to cook asparagus. As its season is so short (May to mid June) it really is worth making the most of it while it's available by adding it to everything you cook.

Try roasting it for a change for example. Roasting is easy and really does keep all those delicious flavours locked in. Roasted asparagus certainly makes a flavoursome addition to the Sunday roast.

Method:

- * All you have to do is cut away the woody bits at the end, rinse the spears under cold running water and pat dry.
- * Place the spears in a pan or roasting dish large enough to take them comfortably.
- * Drizzle a little olive oil over the asparagus and roll the spears round until the olive oil coats them entirely.
- * 15 minutes before you serve up the rest of the meal, sprinkle a little salt over the spears and place in a hot oven (about 200° C/ 400°F or gas mark 6)
- * Serve immediately you remove them from the oven

RHUBARB FOOL WITH A MODERN TWIST



Rhubarb is one of those plants that suffers from an identity crisis. Is it a fruit or a vegetable? Some experts are still out on that one. Today's Michelin starred chefs solve the problem by using it to flavour savoury dishes as well as puddings.

Actually despite being considered a rather humble plant, rhubarb now features frequently on gastro pub menus.

At this time of the year gardeners are often giving it away because it is so abundant. If a gardener friend does offer you a bundle of fresh rhubarb from the allotment take it and enjoy making rhubarb crumbles, pies, tarts or rhubarb fools which provide a light summery pudding that everyone can enjoy.

For four people you will need:

One lb (450g) rhubarb
4 dspns honey
4oz (125g) mascarpone
200ml double cream
Grenadine

Method:

* Trim the rhubarb and cut into small chunks.
* Cook the rhubarb with the honey over a moderate heat until really soft, then remove from the heat and allow to cool.

* Remove four dessertspoons of the cooked pulp, pour a little grenadine over it and set aside.
* Place the mascarpone into a large bowl, beat until soft and smooth, then add the main bulk of cooked rhubarb and beat in well.
* Whip the cream until almost stiff and fold it into the mascarpone mix and taste. If the rhubarb was particularly sharp you may need to add more honey or a little caster sugar if you wish.
* Divide mix into four bowls, place a spoonful of the reserved rhubarb in grenadine on the top and allow to chill for at least an hour.
* Splash a little more grenadine on top just before serving if you want to add extra colour.

RHUBARB CRUMBLE



Fruit crumbles are a real village favourite – especially with the older generation, who like me, were probably brought up on them. Crumbles are very fashionable now – restaurants feature them on their menus often, though top chefs have played about with the basic recipe somewhat. Oxford's Michelin starred

chef Raymond Blanc, for instance, bakes the crumble mix separately, then adds it to the cooked fruit just before serving. He argues that this stops the juices of the fruit mixing with the crumble mix and turning it heavy. Others add all manner of things to the basic mix to enhance both texture and flavour. I give you the basic mix that my mother loves – but remember that this is a village recipe which is open to interpretation. All sorts of extra ingredients can be added to a crumble.

To feed a family you will need:

One pound (450g) rhubarb – chopped
Sugar to sweeten rhubarb
Juice of one orange (optional)
8oz (250g) plain flour
3oz (75g) soft butter
2oz (50g) sugar
Pinch salt

Method:

* Prepare the rhubarb and place it

in your favourite pudding dish, adding as much sugar as you think it needs to sweeten (2 tablespoons is usually enough), along with the juice of one large orange, or the equivalent measure of water.

* In a large bowl place the flour, butter, sugar and salt and rub together with your finger tips until the mix resembles breadcrumbs.

* Scatter the crumble mix over the rhubarb and cook in a moderate oven for about 20 minutes or until the rhubarb juices begin to flow and the topping has begun to brown.

NOTE: To give the topping a real crunch try making it with a bread flour such as Matthews Cotswold crunch to which you can add a couple of spoonfuls of sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds – delicious.

RHUBARB WINE



In 1983 the late Mollie Harris, whose delightful books about the countryside made such an impact on Eynsham, wrote “A Drop O’Wine”. My copy is now brown with age and the pages are dropping out, but I still count it as a kitchen Bible. Those lucky enough to own a copy too will know that these simple recipes, which call for basic ingredients, work every time. What’s more they are a great way of using up fruits and vegetables from the allotment that are suddenly so abundant you can’t even give them away. This is Mollie’s recipe for Rhubarb wine. She advises it should be made in late May or early June.

You will need:

4lb rhubarb

3 ½ lb sugar

1 gallon boiling water

½oz yeast (fresh or dried)

A piece of root ginger as big as a walnut.

Method:

- * Wipe the rhubarb with a cloth and cut it into small pieces – you don't need to peel it.
- * Place rhubarb in a clean bucket and pour a gallon of boiling water over it.
- * Add the ginger (chopped), cover with a cloth and leave in a warm place for four days, stirring each day.
- * Strain into a clean bucket, add the sugar, stir until dissolved, then sprinkle on the yeast. Cover again and leave for two or three days.
- * Strain through a muslin cloth into a sterilised demijohn using a funnel, topping it up with a little water if the demijohn is not quite full.
- * Fix a bung and an airlock which has a little water in it, make sure it's secure and then wait for the wine to begin working. When little bubbles begin escaping through the airlock, making a

comforting plopping noise as they go, you know the wine is ready to be placed in a dark place for a few months to allow the yeast to do its work.

NOTE:

Most of Mollie's wines are ready to be bottled off in about three to four months, though I prefer to give them longer. Demijohns and all the equipment you need for home made wine making, including labels, corks and funnels, can usually be found at car boot sales or you can search for it on the internet. Try Amazon for a copy of "A Drop O' Wine" – when I last checked there were several copies available at a very reasonable price.

RADISH & CHICKEN STIR-FRY



When friends admitted they were snowed under with radishes because they had scattered radish seeds before departing for a holiday, only to discover that their allotment was almost overrun with this spicy vegetable on their return – they cried for help. What could they do with

them? There was a limit to how many raw radishes they could munch when enjoying a glass of wine at the end of the day.

Add them to a stir-fry I said. And here's the recipe I offered them.

For 2 hungry people you need:

A large handful of fresh radishes (at least 8)

Two chicken breasts – skinned and sliced

Flour to coat raw chicken

One clove garlic – chopped fine

One small onion – chopped fine

One handful small spinach leaves

Three sprigs parsley – chopped fine

One teaspoon horseradish sauce

Quarter pt water

One chicken stock cube

Oil to fry chicken

Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* Slice the chicken and toss it in seasoned flour.

* Remove foliage from radishes, wash, trim and cut into four.

* Heat enough oil to cover the bottom of a large saucepan, when it has reached full heat toss in the chicken slices and allow to fry until they begin to brown.

* Add radishes to the pan and stir for a few moments, then add the garlic, chopped onion and parsley and cook for at least three minutes, until the radishes begin to soften.

* Toss in the chopped parsley and the stock cube, and the horseradish sauce, then pour at least a quarter of a pint of water into the pan and stir well.

* Allow to bubble for a moment or two, taste, adjust seasoning, adding a little more horseradish if you wish, then throw in the spinach leaves, place a lid on the pan and turn off the heat.

* for a moment, until the spinach leaves begin to soften, and serve with rice of your choice.

SWISS CHARD



This is a quite remarkable vegetable which, if you cut it back but left the roots in the ground last autumn, will now be ready to harvest again and enjoy.

Swiss Chard is one of those rare spring vegetables that gives you two quite different textures and two different tastes.

You seldom see Swiss chard on the supermarket shelves as it tends to wilt quickly. It wouldn't cope with the bright lights of a supermarket for more than half a day.

It needs eating the moment it's harvested, or packed in a plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator to keep it crisp – but for no longer than a day – two at the most.

Chard gives you glossy green leaves and a massive white rib. The leaves and ribs can be cooked separately, or together by placing the ribs into a little boiling salted water about three minutes before you add the leaves to the same pot. The leaves will take just a little longer than spinach to cook.

Method

* To prepare, wash under cold running water, cut the leaf away from the rib, slice the green leaves quite fine, and cut the rib into strips.

* If you cook them separately, try cooking the white ribs in a mix of salted water and a knob of butter and placing the green leaves into another pan containing a little salted water. When served as separate vegetables they complement each other perfectly.

* Try adding Swiss chard to a stir-fry, adding the rib pieces first, and putting the green leaves into the wok only at the very end.

RADISH AND ALMONDS



There's a bonus that comes from growing your own radishes – you get to cook the leaves too. Radishes from the supermarket will be washed and wrapped in plastic. Pull them from the earth and you have both greens and a vegetable. When I first cooked freshly harvested radish tops, I made the mistake of

cooking the stems too. As they take longer to cook I soon learned to cut them off and simply pop the green leaves into a pan of boiling salted water. The result is a spinach-type flavour, which when served with a knob of butter is delicious.

This recipe is one I serve with cold meat that needs vegetables with a bit of a kick to complement the flavours. The mix goes particularly well with left over cold lamb, as red wine vinegar is the main flavouring agent.

For two people you will need:

A large handful of radishes – the amount is up to you

One tablespoon olive oil

Two tablespoons red wine vinegar

Half bunch spring onions – cut small

Dessertspoon sliced almonds

Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season.

Method:

* Cut the tops from the radishes and cook those separately in boiling water until soft.

* While the tops are cooking wash the radishes and cut them into quarters.

* Toast the sliced almonds in a pan over high heat until they begin to brown. Remove from heat and reserve.

* Pour a tablespoon of olive oil into a frying pan and heat.

* Add the radishes, stir for a moment or two, until they begin to soften. Once soft they lose their delicious peppery flavour, so don't cook them too much, allow them to retain a little crunch.

* Remove the radishes from the pan, pour the vinegar into the pan and turn the heat high so that the oil and vinegar mix bubbles and is reduced to half its original measure.

* Toss in the spring onions and almonds, return the radishes to the pan, stir well, season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns and remove from the heat immediately.

ASPARAGUS AND PASTA



This may be a way of encouraging children to try asparagus. It's easy to make and tastes great.

For four people you will need:

One bundle of freshly harvested asparagus (plus extra if you want to serve asparagus alongside this dish)

12oz (350g) dried spaghetti or dried pasta of your choice

One bunch fresh herbs to include marjoram if possible

Olive Oil

Salt and freshly-ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* Wash asparagus under cold running water and trim off any tough white stalks.

* Wash the herbs, remove their stalks and chop roughly.

* Cook the pasta in boiling salted water until al dente, which is a chef's way of saying until tender but still firm to the bite.

* While the pasta is cooking place the asparagus in a frying pan of boiling salted water and cook until it begins to change colour and becomes a superb translucent green.

* Remove half the asparagus at this point, drain on kitchen paper and keep warm, allowing the other half to cook on for a few moments until soft enough to

puree.

* Remove soft asparagus from the pan, drain on kitchen paper and place in food processor with a generous slurp of olive oil and the chopped herbs. Season, then zap into a puree, adding more olive oil if it appears too thick. You are aiming to produce a sauce that's will cling comfortably to the pasta.

* Pour the finished sauce back into clean saucepan and bring back to full heat.

* Chop the remaining cooked asparagus into small bits and stir gently into the sauce — try to avoid breaking the heads. Remove from the heat.

* Drain the pasta, stir in a few drops of olive oil, then serve with the sauce poured on top, and perhaps a few extra asparagus spears if you have loads to spare.

* Serve with a green salad. Grated Parmesan cheese can be used as garnish if you like.

STRAWBERRY PAVLOVA



The combination of cream, strawberries and soft meringue is irresistible which is why a pavlova is the perfect pudding for a party or family get-together.

This recipe calls for strawberries, which will be ripe and ready to pick any day now.

You will need:

One punnet of fresh strawberries
13 fl oz (375ml) double cream
4 egg whites
8oz (250g) caster sugar
1 tspn corn flour
1 tspn wine vinegar
Few drops vanilla essence
Pinch of salt
Non stick baking parchment or tinfoil

Method:

* Beat the egg whites until stiff then gradually add the caster sugar, one tablespoon at a time.
* When all the sugar has been added, beat in the cornflour, wine vinegar, salt and vanilla essence.
* Draw a circle about the size of a small dinner plate on the baking parchment, or form a circle from tinfoil and place on flat baking tray.
* Spread the mixture inside the circle, building up the sides so that they are slightly higher than

the centre.

* Bake at 150°C / 300°F or gas mark 2 for about an hour or until the meringue is firm to the touch. You are aiming for a crisp crunchy shell with a soft marshmallow centre. Turn the oven off, but leave the pavlova in the oven for a further hour to dry out a little, then remove from the oven and peel off the parchment paper.

* When the pavlova is cool whip the cream and pile it in the centre, then decorate with the strawberries.

NOTE:

Pavlova can be baked a day in advance and stored in a tin until needed – do not try to freeze it.

STRAWBERRIES AND AVOCADO



Strawberries don't have to be reserved for the pudding course. You can use them as a starter too with great effect.

This dish is so easy you don't need a recipe as such.

Just allow half an avocado for each person and enough strawberries to fill the space where the pip rested before you removed it.

Method:

* Cut the strawberries in half, stuff them into the avocado halves and drizzle some vinaigrette over them.

* Grind a generous amount of black peppercorns on top, decorate with a couple of green leaves (choice is up to you) and serve as a starter.

* You won't be disappointed providing you put this dish together at the very last moment so that both avocado and strawberries are freshly cut.

NOTE: Whenever you serve avocado halves, don't forget to cut a small slice from the bottom of the avocado so that it sits firmly on the plate.

EATON MESS



This is so easy to make that it's worth giving the children charge of this delicious pudding. Equal amounts of whipped double cream, crushed meringue shells and fresh strawberries are all you will need to make a superb affair that features on most high-class restaurant menus.

If you don't have time to make your own meringues, call in at the Cornucopia Deli and speak to Sandy – she sells the best meringues in the village – all crispy on the outside and delightfully squiggy and chewy inside. Sandy sells great locally produced Jersey cream too, which is so good it is also delivered to Buckingham Palace.

I could give exact amounts for this pudding, but children will be happier working out how much they want to eat, then putting equal amounts of whipped cream, strawberries and crushed meringues into three separate bowls.

Method:

- * Whip enough cream to fill one bowl
- * Crush enough meringues to fill another
- * Fill the third bowl with chopped strawberries
- * Wait until everyone has finished their main course and are ready for their pudding then tip the contents of the three bowls into a large mixing bowl, stir well together, then spoon the 'Mess' out into individual servings.
- * Decorate as you wish and eat immediately.

NOTE: This pudding has to be made up just before it's going to be eaten, because if you mix the three ingredients together too soon, the meringue will begin to soften and lose its delightful crunch that makes this pudding so special.

BROAD BEAN AND PESTO SALAD



Early broad beans that are ready to harvest at the end of May and beginning of June are so tender that you can actually cook the skins too if you prepare them the day they are picked. All you have to do is cut through the skin between each bean

and cook the pieces as you would the beans by boiling them until tender in salted water. Or if you wish cook the very small pods whole, having removed the top and tail, if they are no bigger than 7cm long. It's worth noting that broad beans steam well too.

For 4 people you will need:

12oz (350g) pasta of your choice
8oz (250g) podded broad beans
Handful fresh basil leaves
2 cloves garlic
Half oz (15g) Parmesan cheese
grated and a little extra to scatter
over salad before serving
100ml olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black
peppercorns to season

Method:

* Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet in boiling salted water. When cooked, drain and rinse under cold water and leave to continue draining in a colander while you

make the pesto.

* Cook the broad beans in boiling salted water for about five minutes or until soft and drain and rinse under cold water to cool them down.

* Place the beans, along with the garlic, basil and Parmesan cheese into a food processor and zap for a few seconds until combined but not completely smooth. Then, with the motor running, gradually add the oil in a steady stream until you have a thick sauce.

* Season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns and toss together with the pasta until it's coated evenly. Scatter a little more Parmesan cheese over finished dish before serving.

* Serve as a side salad.

NOTE: Broad Beans tend to discolour if left out too long once they are cooked, so this salad is best prepared just before you want to eat.

BEETROOT



Try cooking beetroot on the barbecue

* Young baby beetroot, harvested from the allotment or garden early in the season are becoming a popular vegetable these days as you can cook the young leaves as you would spinach and serve them alongside steamed, roast or baked beetroot.

* Whilst the leaves should be eaten within a day, the roots, if wrapped and stored in the vegetable box of the fridge, will keep for up to two weeks at least.

* Never be tempted to peel the beetroot before cooking as those bright red juices will be lost in the cooking process. Just brush them clean and leave the peeling process until they are cooked.

* Although the red variety is the most popular with gardeners and allotment holders, yellow and white varieties are often grown too.

* Beetroot is an ideal vegetable to cook wrapped in tinfoil on the barbecue, but don't use really large beetroots as they can take too long to cook.

* A reasonably small beetroot should take approximately 40 to 50 minutes over the hot coals and can then be served in its skin, having been chopped into quarters, and topped with creme fraiche mixed with chopped chives. You can test that it's done by inserting a skewer into the centre.

ELDERFLOWER CHAMPAGNE CORDIAL



By mid June, the late Mollie Harris would have made several bottles of elderflower champagne cordial and be out in the fields picking even more elderflower heads to top up her larder.

She would offer it to anyone visiting her Mill Street cottage, the rest would be offered to her fellow actors recording the BBC Radio 4 soap, The Archers, who would raise their glasses to Mollie, the English countryside and summer.

This is Mollie's recipe – it works and is delicious.

As the elderflowers are free, this cordial is easy on the purse so it's worth taking seriously while the flowers are still in bloom.

Children love it.

You will need:

25 elderflower heads
4 oranges – sliced
1 lemon – sliced
3lb sugar,
4 pts water
2oz tartaric acid

Method:

* Pour the water over the heads of the elderflowers - picked free from green and preferably in the morning in an area free from traffic fumes.

* Add the rest of the ingredients, stir and leave in a cool place for 48 hours, then strain and pour into sterilised bottles.

* Used diluted as a summer drink and enjoy.

ELDERFLOWERS AND GOOSEBERRIES



As soon as the elder tree bursts into flower and fills the countryside with that unmistakable musky fragrance that distinguishes it from other flowers you know it's time to begin harvesting the gooseberries. The elderflower, with its large creamy heads is worth seeking out as it's not only beautiful – it's edible too.

Once picked the flowers tend to wilt, seldom lasting more than a day. Even if you place them in water, they decline rapidly, which is why you don't see elder flowers on sale in the shops.

As the elder tree can be found in most Oxfordshire hedgerows, it's a matter of picking enough flowers for immediate needs – gooseberries flavoured with a couple of elderflower heads really is a marriage made in heaven.

- * Add a couple of elderflower heads to a bag of gooseberries destined for the freezer.
- * Elderflowers can be dipped into batter and fried, then served with a gooseberry sauce and cream for a very economical, but tasty treat.
- * To make a classic gooseberry fool, simply stew gooseberries with a couple of elderflower heads in a little water until soft, with enough sugar to sweeten. When the gooseberries have cooled a little, remove the elderflower heads and zap the cooked gooseberries in the food processor to produce a thick purée. When cool, add the same amount of whipped double cream to the gooseberries, stir in and chill. Served with home-made sweet biscuits, this is a really delightful summer pudding.

AMERICAN SIGNAL CRAYFISH



*Food for free – it sounds too good to be true – however the American Signal crayfish have now reached Eynsham and are there for the taking.
They can be trapped by using cat/ dog food, or pieces of fish – though they will eat almost anything,*

including crayfish smaller than themselves – and there lies the problem. If we trap only the adult American Signal crayfish, which are now invading our rivers, we are actually making the situation worse, not better, as the larger crayfish keep the smaller ones in check. To be effective at reducing the impact of these alien crayfish, which are crowding out our native crayfish from the Thames, we need to be trapping continuously all year round and setting traps on a daily basis particularly during the spring and summer months. This way the small crayfish will be trapped too.

Like lobsters, the American Signal crayfish is black when you trap it, the bright red colour only happens when it is cooked. Its body consists of a head, thorax, antennae and a delicious edible tail.

There are loads of complex recipes for these creatures, but I have found the best results come from eating them straight from

the cooking pot just as they are. In blind tastings the American Signal Crayfish tastes as good as any crayfish – though their shell is often slightly more difficult to remove.

All you have to do to cook them is heat up a saucepan of salted water. When the water reaches rapid boil, tip them in, they die instantly and within a few minutes will turn bright red – once they are bright red they are cooked. It's as simple as that. Once removed from the pot they can be enjoyed in the same way as you would enjoy prawns in their shell. They certainly make a colourful extra at a summer party, providing they are eaten fresh from the pot.

NOTE: I am ashamed to admit that I have never had the courage to tip them from bag to pot. When I caught my first crayfish a few years ago, I had to ask my mother to cook them up for me.

TABBOULEH



If you have such an abundance of mint flourishing in your allotment or garden at the moment that you don't know what to do with it, don't dig it up or throw it away — use it to make one of the most flavorsome classic salads imaginable.

You will need:

4oz (125g) bulgur wheat
Juice of two lemons
3 tbsps olive oil
A few spring onions – chopped fine
Half cucumber – chopped fine
6 tbsps chopped mint
6 tbsps chopped parsley
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Place the bulgur wheat in a bowl, pour boiling water over it and leave it to soak for about half an hour, until it begins to soften.
- * Drain well, stir in the olive oil, the lemon juice and season.
- * Now add the onions, cucumber, mint and parsley, stir well and allow to chill.

NOTE: When making this for myself I leave out the parsley and use twice as much mint as it has such a positive flavour and is great when dressed with lemon.

BROAD BEAN PATÉ



This dish makes a tasty starter or can be used to make summer canapés. Although it takes time to squeeze the beans out of their thick skins once cooked – be assured the result is well worth it.

You will need:

12 oz (350g) shelled broad beans
6oz (175g) cream cheese
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Boil the beans in salted water until tender.
- * Cool the beans down by straining under a cold tap.
- * Gently squeeze each bean out of its skin – this is a task that the children will enjoy helping with.
- * Discard the skins and mash the cooked beans.
- * Soften the cheese with a fork and stir in the mashed cooked beans, season and press into individual dishes.

NOTE: This pate is best eaten the day it is made to avoid discoloration.

STRAWBERRIES DIPPED IN CHOCOLATE



If you haven't tried dipping freshly harvested strawberries into warm chocolate – perhaps it's time you gave it a go.

Strawberries and chocolate make for a glorious taste sensation and are a great way of ending a meal.

All you have to do is melt a bar of good quality chocolate in a bowl suspended in a saucepan of hot water. The bowl must fit tightly and the water must not boil, but simmer, so that the chocolate melts gently and no water escapes into the chocolate. If it does the chocolate will clog up and refuse to melt properly.

Once the chocolate has melted, just dip the strawberries one by one, give them a quick flick to make sure no chocolate drips off, then place them on a wire rack. In moments the chocolate will solidify and you have a glorious summer treat on your hands. Try it, you won't be disappointed.

NOTE: one word of warning – never attempt to make them on a really hot day as you end up with a sticky mess that refuses to set.

COURGETTE SALAD WITH LEMON



There comes a moment when there are so many courgettes in the garden and allotment that you can't even give them away. As this is a vegetable that doesn't respond well to freezing, you must either watch them growing bigger and bigger or

add them to as many dishes as you can while they last. After all, courgettes are a sign that high summer really has arrived – they should be celebrated.

Try tossing a few into a casserole just a few minutes before it's ready to serve, so that they retain a little crunch; or turn them into soup which can be made in bulk and frozen. You can also use them as an extra salad for serving with the barbecue.

For 4 people you will need:

Four medium sized courgettes
One clove of garlic – crushed and chopped fine
Zest and juice of one lemon
Handful of fresh marjoram leaves taken from stem but not chopped.
4 tbspsn virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Using a sharp potato peeler slice the courgettes into thin strips and place in bowl, along with half the zest from the lemon, the garlic, fresh marjoram leaves, lemon juice and olive oil
- * Season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns, toss to ensure all courgette strips are coated with the mix, cover and leave to marinate for a couple of hours in the refrigerator.
- * When ready to serve, toss again, taste, adding a little more olive oil if needed, then sprinkle the rest of the lemon zest before serving.

NOTE: If you haven't got a sharp potato peeler it's worth popping into the Emporium and see what Corin can offer. She has some superb graters too, which not only do the job in half the time, but don't go rusty.

RATATOUILLE



Everyone has their favourite recipe for ratatouille and most include red and green capsicums – but this is one of those dishes that can be made from what ever comes to hand, though I usually make courgettes the main ingredient. In other words it's a fabulous way of using up handfuls

of this and that which you have harvested and don't know what to do with, including broad beans and peas if you wish.

Ratatouille can be made in advance, indeed it tastes better if the herbs have time to infuse their flavours overnight. This is one dish where courgettes and other vegetables can be cooked together until really soft and is best eaten warm not hot.

You will need:

At least one courgette per person – cut into round slices
Half a tomato per person – deseeded and chopped
A couple of mushrooms per person – roughly chopped
Handful of marjoram and parsley – chopped fine
Few sprigs thyme – chopped fine
One bay leaf
A few French beans chopped in half
Broad beans if you have some; peas can be used too
Clove of garlic – crushed and

chopped fine

One large onion – roughly chopped

Olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season.

Method:

- * Pour enough olive oil into a large frying pan to cover the bottom.
- * Fry the courgettes until they begin to turn brown, then remove them from the pan and add the rest of the ingredients and allow to cook slowly until they begin to soften and a delicious aroma of garlic is filling the kitchen.
- * Toss the courgettes back into the pan, cover and allow to cook for a few moments more.
- * Remove from the heat and allow to rest for a while if you have time to spare, or serve as it is and enjoy, having removed the bay leaf.

STRAWBERRY MERINGUES WITH A TOUCH OF CHOCOLATE



Call in at Cornucopia Deli and you will be able to pick up some delicious meringues – all crispy on the outside and soft and chewy in the middle. Sandy sells locally produced Jersey double cream too, which is so good, it's also delivered to Buckingham Palace.

So if you have a glut of strawberries and want to create a tasty, colourful dessert call in at the deli, picking up a bar of plain chocolate while you are there and make up a few strawberry meringues.

All you have to do is whip the cream, hull the strawberries and make up the meringues, first adding the cream, and then the strawberries. Then warm some chocolate in a bowl suspended in a pan of simmering water. When the chocolate has melted, simply take a spoonful and drizzle it over the filled meringue. If you are unsure how to do this, have a practice go on a plate first – then add that magic flourish to the meringues. A perfect summer pudding.

FRESH PEAS FRENCH STYLE



For 4 people you will need:

One pound of shelled fresh peas
One small lettuce
Bunch spring onions
Small bunch parsley – chopped
fine
2oz (50g) butter
1 tspn sugar
Salt and freshly ground black
peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Rub a little butter round the base of a saucepan large enough to contain all the ingredients.
- * Line the bottom of the saucepan with the lettuce leaves.
- * Remove the green and the roots from the spring onions and drop them in too.
- * Now add the butter, chopped parsley, sugar and peas and pour 4 tablespoons of water over the lot.
- * Season and bring slowly to the boil.
- * When boiling point is reached, reduce the temperature and allow to simmer without a lid until the water has evaporated and the peas are tender.
- * Adjust seasoning and serve.

NOTE: this is one of those dishes that tastes remarkably good when served warm rather than hot.

CIDER AND STRAWBERRY FIZZ



If you have a few over-ripe strawberries you don't know what to do with, don't throw them away, they can be turned into a perfect summer drink by adding them to a glass of chilled cider.

The combination is terrific — what's more it looks and tastes like a champagne cocktail.

For two glasses you will need:

One chilled bottle of
Wychwood's Green Goblin Cider
4 ripe strawberries
Generous dash of grenadine

Method:

- * Place the strawberries in the liquidizer along with a generous dash of grenadine and zap into a puree.
- * Pour half the puree into each glass and carefully top up with chilled cider.

STRAWBERRY WINE



If you have so many strawberries in the house that you don't know what to do with them, then turn them into wine. Strawberry wine is absolutely delicious. Turning strawberries into wine is certainly one way of enjoying your summer produce during the winter months. This recipe follows one written by the late Mollie Harris – she adds a few drops of whiskey to her strawberries whereas I prefer to let the flavour of the strawberries come to the fore.

For one demijohn, to fill 4/5 bottles of wine, you will need:
4lb (2kg) fresh strawberries
3lb (2 kg) granulated sugar
1 sachet dried yeast
Juice of 2 lemons
Equipment: One glass demijohn, one airlock, one cork designed to hold airlock, two buckets, large strainer, large funnel and a piece of muslin. Also sterilizing tablets.

Method:

- * Place the strawberries in a bucket and mash with a potato peeler or wooden spoon – or use your fingers which are usually far more effective.
- * Pour a gallon of cold water over the mashed strawberries, stir well and cover for three days – or until the mashed fruit begins to float to the top.
- * Strain into another bucket (discard the squashed fruit). Add the lemon juice and sugar, stir well then add the yeast and stir again.
- * Cover and leave for at least four days, only straining it into a sterilized demijohn using a funnel and muslin, when you are confident that the yeast activity has calmed down.
- * Top with a little water if needs be to ensure that the demijohn is full.
- * Fix the cork securely into the demijohn and add the airlock

having half filled it with water. Make sure the cork is secure and that bubbles are moving through the airlock, before placing the wine a dark cupboard until December.

NOTE:

You may discover that a sponge-like substance has formed in the middle of the demijohn once the wine begins to age. Don't worry — all strawberry wine develops this strange extra. It's the sign of an excellent wine.

Bottle when the wine is clear and you are quite sure all yeast activity has ceased. If you bottle too early the corks may shoot out due to the build up of gasses.

RASPBERRY CHOUX BUNS



Choux buns are really easy to make providing you remember that they need to be put straight into a very hot oven that has reached the required temperature. If you put them into a warm oven you will end up with a tray of soggy biscuits.

You will need:

4oz (125g) butter
4oz (125g) plain flour
Half pint water
4 free range eggs
Pinch salt
For Filling
150ml double cream
Raspberries

Method:

- * First turn your oven to 220°C/425°F or gas mark 7
- * Grease and flour a large flat baking tray to prevent the buns from sticking as they cook.
- * Place the water and butter into a saucepan and heat until the butter has melted.
- * Stir in the flour and salt and stir really well over a moderate heat until the mix begins to form into a soft ball.
- * Remove from the heat and beat in the eggs one by one. At this stage you should have a smooth shiny paste.

- * Use a couple of spoons or a piping bag place rounds of the paste on the greased tray. Size is up to you as long as you remember that if cooked properly they will double in size, so leave enough room for them to expand.
- * Bake in hot oven for ten minutes and then WITHOUT opening the oven door turn the heat down to 190°C/375°F or gas mark 5
- * Leave to cook a further ten minutes before carefully opening the oven door. When they are golden brown and puffed to twice their original size they are done.
- * For best effect – turn the oven off when they are done and allow them to remain in oven with the door open for another ten minutes to dry out.
- * Fill with whipped cream and oodles of fresh raspberries.
- * Serve with a raspberry sauce or a hot chocolate sauce.

GLOBE ARTICHOKEs



Globe artichokes are ready to harvest!

These delightful vegetables are a real treat to be enjoyed at leisure, preferably on a balmy summer evening when you have time to pull off the petals one by one eat slowly as you savour the taste sensations they provide.

They can be enjoyed hot or cold by plucking off the petals one by one and sucking away the fleshy part while sipping a glass of chilled wine under the apple tree. The much prized heart of the artichoke, which lies at the base of the globe, is eaten last with a spoon.

The first job, having harvested them, is to place them heads down in a large bowl of salted water for about half an hour. This flushes out any insects that might be lurking between the petals.

To cook globe artichokes:

- * Trim the bottom of so that it will sit flat, having snapped off the stem, and pulled out any strings attached to the heart.
- * Using scissors trim the spikes of the petals about half an inch then rub a little lemon juice on the cut to prevent it browning. (You don't have to do this, trimming the petals is optional)
- * Place the artichokes head down in a pan of boiling salted water to which a teaspoon of lemon juice or wine vinegar has been added, lower the heat and allow to simmer for about 35 to 45 minutes. If they float to the top, try weighting them down with a saucer or small plate.
- * When cooked remove from water and drain upside down in a colander.
- * Allow them to cool a little then serve with melted butter, lemon wedges or Hollandaise sauce.

ROAST GARLIC



Once you have eaten one clove of garlic you might as well eat a dozen – your breath will be no different. Garlic plays an important role in seasoning all manner of dishes but it can also be served whole either as a starter served with wedges of crunchy bread, or as a side vegetable.

To roast garlic:

- * Trim away the roots and bottom so that it will stand firm on the roasting tray and plate.
- * With a really sharp knife cut away about half an inch of the top which will expose the cloves.
- * Trim away any of the papery skin that will come away easily and place each head of garlic on a baking tray.
- * Dribble a little olive oil over the garlic, season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorn and roast in a hot oven for about 35 minutes or until the cloves are soft and the flesh begins oozing out of the top.
- * Serve just as they are, along with any of the oil in the roasting pan poured over them. You can always add a little olive oil to the plate too.
- * Eat by picking out a clove and squeezing the cooked flesh onto a piece of bread that has been dunked in the warm oil first.

SPINACH AND ORANGE SOUP



The wonderful thing about cooking soup is that you can keep throwing things into the pot until you are happy with the flavour. This soup is really easy to make but how it finally tastes is up to you. I began by adding the juice and zest of one orange to this soup, but on final tasting decided that the juice and zest of two gave it far more punch.

For 4-6 people you will need:

8 oz (250g) spinach
Grated zest and juice of one/two oranges
2 medium potatoes peeled and diced small
One clove garlic – chopped
One medium onion – chopped
One ounce (25g) butter
One pint chicken stock
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorn to season
Grated orange zest to garnish

Method:

- * Wash spinach well and drain.
- * Place spinach in a saucepan with the chicken stock and cook until soft.
- * In another pan, warm the butter, add the chopped potatoes, chopped onion and garlic and cook gently until the potatoes begin to soften.
- * Add the juice and zest of one orange and season.
- * Place the contents of both saucepans into the liquidizer and zap into a puree.
- * Taste, adjust seasoning, and if you think it's needed add the juice and zest of the second orange.
- * Return to a clean saucepan, reheat and serve with crusty bread or croutons.

RUNNER BEANS



There are fancy recipes that can be used to help you use up a glut of runner beans from the garden and the allotment, but I am not going to give you one.

This superb vegetable needs no garnish, no fancy cooking techniques. It stands alone. The flavour of runner beans, picked fresh from the garden or allotment is so scrumptious, that all you need is a pot of boiling salted water to cook the beans and a sharp knife to slice them thin.

The knife in the photograph is a cheap little knife I picked up from Eynsham Emporium, Mill Street, about three months ago. I wanted a paring knife for vegetables and Corin, who owns and runs The Emporium, suggested I try this one.

I was slightly apprehensive at first, having never owned a green knife that came in its own sheath before. I needn't have been. It has proved a real wonder. Indeed I now consider it a real friend as it cuts through tomatoes and vegetables such as running beans as if it is cutting through butter.

Thanks to this little knife, which is very reasonably priced, preparing my runner beans for the pot have been so easy, I really wonder how I ever managed before.

RICH CHOCOLATE CAKE AND RASPBERRIES



Sometimes there are not quite enough fresh raspberries to give everyone a full bowl served with cream, but there are often enough to tip on top of a rich chocolate cake to make it look lavish. As chocolates and raspberries make the most delicious combination, it's worth thinking of ways to combine the two. This chocolate cake is so easy to make, even the children can cope with this recipe, because all you do is tip all the cake ingredients into a bowl and mix until you have a soft creamy texture, then bake for about an hour and 15 minutes. I made this one for my brother John's birthday as he simply adores chocolate cake. It fitted the bill perfectly.

You will need:

8oz (250g) SR flour
8oz (250g) caster sugar
Generous pinch salt
2oz (50g) cocoa powder
5oz (150g) soft butter or margarine
8 fluid oz milk
2 free range eggs

For the icing:

142 ml single cream
One bar rich dark chocolate (150g)

For the filling:

Raspberries, raspberry jam, chocolate butter cream or whipped double cream.
Icing sugar to garnish finished cake.

Method:

- * Turn the oven to 180°C/350°F or gas mark 4
- * When the oven has reached full heat, prepare 8 inch cake tin, by rubbing butter over the surface and then shaking flour into the tin so that the butter is completely coated. This will stop the cake sticking when you come to turn it out.
- * Place all the cake ingredients into a large mixing bowl and gently mix well together, then beat furiously for a moment or two until the mix looks glossy.
- * Spoon into cake tin, smooth the top and place in heated oven for one hour 15 mins.
- * Test that it is done, by inserting a skewer into the centre, if it comes out clean it's done.
- * Remove from oven, leave to settle a moment or two then turn out and allow to cool on cake rack.

- * When the cake is cool, cut it in two horizontally with a sharp knife.
- * Make up filling of your choice. I used chocolate butter cream, but fresh double cream is delicious too.
- * Spread a little raspberry jam over the surface of first half, add filling and a few raspberries if you have enough., but don't worry if you haven't.
- * Place the second half on top.
- * Place the cream in a small saucepan, bring to the boil, break the chocolate and whisk that in until it thickens and takes on a lovely glossy shine.
- * Very, very, gently pour the melted chocolate and cream topping over the surface of the cake, allowing it to ripple down the sides.
- * Smooth with a palette knife, and when cool top with fresh raspberries and garnish with a little icing sugar.

RASPBERRY AND ORANGE PUDDING



If the cold wet windy weather continues we are going to be looking for comfort food rather than salads. This easy-to-make, raspberry pudding combines that wonderful summer flavour of freshly picked raspberries with the comfort-food feel of warm sponge pudding.

For 8 small puddings you will need:

4oz (100g) caster sugar
4oz (100g) soft butter or margarine
4oz (100g) SR flour
2 free range eggs
Grated zest of one lemon and one orange
8oz (250g) fresh raspberries
4 dspns golden syrup
Pinch salt

Method:

- * Turn the oven to 180°C/ 350°F or gas mark 4.
- * Grease and flour 8 dariole moulds (150 ml size)
- * Divide the raspberries between the moulds and then pour a dessertspoon of golden syrup on top of the raspberries.
- * Beat the sugar, butter and orange and lemon zest until the mix has become creamy and light.
- * Beat in the two eggs and then carefully fold in the flour and salt.
- * Divide the mixture between the moulds and cover each with a circle of buttered greaseproof paper, place on a baking tray and bake for 25 minutes or until the sponge feels firm to the touch.
- * Serve warm with cream or yoghurt.

TOMATO SOUP



Sometimes all the tomatoes seem to turn red at once and soften quickly in the muggy weather. Don't throw them away! These are the tomatoes you can set aside for soup. They can also be chopped and packed in small bags in the freezer so that they can be used to flavour stews and casseroles during the winter, or you can use them to make a sauce for serving with pasta.

This soup is easy to make and because it's chunky it can be used as a main course lunch dish if you wish.

For 6 people you will need:

2lb (900g) ripe tomatoes – chopped
3 medium onions, chopped fine
3 sticks celery cut into small dice
3 medium carrots cut into small dice
1 clove garlic chopped fine
1 to 1 ½ pints (600 – 900ml) vegetable or chicken stock
1 bay leaf
½ bunch fresh basil chopped
½ bunch tarragon chopped
Salt and freshly ground fresh peppercorns to season
2fl oz (50ml) olive oil
1oz (25g) butter
Parmesan cheese to garnish
finished soup (optional)

Method:

*Place the olive oil and butter in large saucepan and heat gently.

- * When the butter has melted add the chopped onions, carrots and celery and sweat for a few minutes until the onions soften.
- * Add the chopped garlic, herbs and bay leaf and cook for about five minutes.
- * Chop the tomatoes roughly (if you wish, skin them first by dropping them in boiling water for a moment, then pull away the skin which should remove easily)
- * Add tomatoes to the pot, cover the pan with a lid and allow to simmer for 15 minutes, stirring now and again to help the tomatoes break up.
- * Once the tomatoes have softened you can start adding the stock. How much stock is up to you, which is why it is important not to add it all at once.
- * Season to your taste, and let it cook for a further 15 minutes.
- * Serve as it is or with a garnish of basil leaves and Parmesan cheese.

APPLE CAKE



With the high winds and inclement weather, apples are falling from the trees in their dozens at the moment. Although this means that many are bruised and damaged, it doesn't mean we have to throw them away. The good bits can be sliced and cooked, then frozen so that the pulp can be used as a pie filling in the winter.

You can also use some up by adding apple slices to cakes to give them a tasty moist finish. This easy-to-make cake is a great way of using up bruised apples.

You will need:

Equivalent of a couple of whole apples
5oz (150g) caster sugar
5oz (150g) soft butter or margarine
8oz (250g) self raising flour
2 free range eggs
4 tbsps milk
Pinch of salt

Method:

- * Turn the oven to 180°C/350°F or gas mark 4.
- * Cut away the bruised parts of the apples, dice one small and cut other into slices.
- * Grease or oil a loaf tin, scatter a little flour onto the oiled surface to prevent sticking
- * Cream the sugar and butter together until light and fluffy, then add the eggs one by one and beat well.
- * Fold in the flour, adding enough milk to create a dropping consistency.
- * Toss the diced apple into the mix, stir in well and spoon mixture into the cake tin.
- * Smooth the surface and garnish with apple slices.
- * Bake for about an hour, or until risen and firm to the touch.
- * Remove from the oven, but leave in the tin for about five minutes to allow it to settle.

RED ONION TARTE TATIN



It's been a good year for onions so make the most of them with this easy to make and very tasty tart. This dish is best cooked in a 9 inch cast-iron oven-proof pan if you have one. The classic recipes call for perfect red onions of the same size so that they can be cut in half. As onions you grow yourself don't always conform to size, I've made this tart with sliced onions instead. It tastes just as good

and looks pretty good too.

For 4 people you will need:

2lb (900g) red onions – sliced

1oz (25g) butter

1tsp caster sugar

1 tbs balsamic vinegar

Salt and freshly ground black

peppercorns to season

For the pastry:

5oz (125g) plain flour

2oz (50g) butter or margarine

1oz grated cheddar cheese

Pinch salt

Method:

* Turn the oven to 180°C/350°F or Gas mark 4

* Remove skins from onions and slice thin.

* Melt the butter, add the caster sugar and the onions and cook slowly and gently until the onions begin to brown.

* Add the balsamic vinegar and bring to high heat, so that you reduce liquid by half. Remove from heat and adjust seasoning.

* While the onions are cooking make the pastry by rubbing the butter and flour together with a pinch of salt, until the mix resembles breadcrumbs.

* Add the grated cheese and then gradually form into a dough by adding chilled water until all the crumbs are gathered together. Do not over handle.

* Roll the pastry into a circle that is at least an inch larger than the size of the pan.

* Carefully place the pastry on top of the onion mix, tucking the excess pastry in all round the inside of the pan.

* Place the pan into the preheated oven and allow to cook for about 20 to 25 mins, or until the pastry is crisp and beginning to brown.

* Remove from the oven, allow to settle for a moment or two, then place a plate over the pan and turn it over, so that it's onion side up.

* This dish is best served warm.

APPLE & SAUSAGE ROLL



The combination of freshly picked cooking apples and Richard Golsby's pork sausage meat is great at this time of the year. This dish can be served hot or cold, though it's best enjoyed straight from the oven.

For 4 people you will need:

1lb (450g) Richard's pork sausage meat
2 large Bramley apples
2 sprigs of sage and extra for garnish
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns

For the pastry:

8oz (250g) plain flour
4oz (125g) soft margarine or butter
One free range egg – beaten for egg wash
Pinch of salt
Sprinkling of salt crystals for garnish (optional)

Method:

- * Turn the oven to 220°C/425°F or gas mark 7
- * Prepare a flat baking tray by rubbing it with oil or margarine, then sprinkling flour over the surface (this prevents the finished dish from sticking).
- * Prepare the pastry by placing the flour, salt and margarine/butter into large bowl and rubbing contents between our fingers until it resembles breadcrumbs.
- * Add a little chilled water and gradually work into the mix until you have formed a soft dough.
- * Cover the pastry with a cloth and leave to rest in a cool place while you prepare the apples.
- * Peel and core the apples, cut one into really thin slices and the other into small dice.
- * Finely chop the sage leaves.
- * Mix together the diced apple, chopped sage, and sausage meat, season and shape into a flat roll

approximately 12 inches long.

- * Roll out the pastry to make a rectangle approximately 14 inches by 8 inches and place it on the baking tray.

- * Place the sausage meat in the centre of the pastry and brush the sides with the egg wash.

- * Arrange the apple slices along the top of the sausage meat and along the sides.

- * Using a sharp knife, make cuts half an inch apart into the pastry either side of the sausage meat at a 45° angle.

- * Weave the cut edges together, overlapping each side to create a plaited pattern.

- * Brush with egg wash, sprinkle with a pinch or two of salt crystals (optional) and place in the oven for about 25 minutes or until the pastry is a delicious golden brown.

- * Allow the roll to settle for five minutes before removing from the baking tray with a fish slice.

SPICED CAULIFLOWER AND CORIANDER



Have you ever tried frying cauliflower? The result can be very tasty, especially when you spice it up with a little curry powder and some chopped coriander.

You will need:

One fresh cauliflower
2 cloves garlic – chopped fine
One small piece fresh ginger the size of a walnut
Half a bunch coriander
Oil to fry cauliflower
One level dspn of your favourite curry powder
Salt and to season

Method:

- * Remove the outer leaves of the cauliflower and cut the head into little florets.
- * Chop the garlic and peel and chop the ginger as fine as you can.
- * Rough-chop the coriander leaves.
- * Take a large frying pan, pour in enough oil to cover the bottom, heat and then toss in the cauliflower florets.
- * Stir and continue to cook until the cauliflower begins to brown a little.

- * Toss in the garlic, ginger, salt and continue frying until the garlic begins to give off a delicious aroma.
- * Place a lid on the pan and allow it to continue cooking on a low heat until the cauliflower begins to soften – this should not take more than a few minutes and you don't want the cauliflower to get too soft.
- * Sprinkle the curry powder over the cauliflower and stir, taking care that it doesn't burn on the bottom of the pan.
- * Toss in the chopped coriander and serve hot or warm. It is a useful dish to serve with cold meat.

BAKED APPLES



Now's the time to make the most of this year's abundant apple harvest by popping a few into the oven while the roast is cooking.

For a slightly different flavour, try flavouring them with a little beer, it makes for a great taste combination. I am not giving exact quantities for the ingredients, as this is one of those dishes that calls for a handful of this, that and the other. You can use loads of sultanas, or just a few, you can add extra sugar if the apples need – or just a little.

You will need:

Sultanas, beer, brown sugar and some apples.

Method:

- * Remove the core of the apple with a sharp knife and score each apple round the centre, so that the top can puff up as it cooks.
- * Place each apple on a baking tray
- * Mix together a little sugar and sultanas and stuff this mix in the centre, letting some sultanas spill out into the pan.
- * Now pour a little of your favourite beer over each apple and splash some onto the tray too and cook in a hot oven.
- * The apples are done when the top puffs up and the beer begins to caramelize – they normally take no more than half an hour to cook.

PARSNIP & APPLE SOUP



Adding an apple to root vegetables such as parsnip heightens the flavour of the parsnip.

This recipe is a great way of using up the glut of apples many gardeners are facing this year.

To serve 4 people you will need:

4 medium parsnips
1 large cooking apple
2 medium potatoes
1 large onion
2 tspns chopped fresh sage leaves
1 tspn chopped parsley
1 oz (25g) butter
1pt (600ml) vegetable stock
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* Peel and chop the parsnips, apples, potato, onion, parsley and sage leaves.
* Melt the butter in large saucepan and toss in all chopped vegetables and herbs and cook gently for ten minutes.
* Add the vegetable stock and seasoning, and allow the soup cook until the vegetables soften.
* Remove from heat, allow to cool for a few moments then liquidise in food processor until smooth.

* If you feel the soup is too thick, add a little water to bring it to desired consistency, taste, adjust seasoning and return to high heat.
* Serve with crispy bacon pieces or croutons.

NOTE: for a different and very tasty soup, you can omit the sage leaves and add a couple of teaspoons of your favourite curry powder to the mix when the vegetables are cooking in the butter.

AUTUMN HARVEST VEGETABLE PIE



And so we reach that moment when the harvest is gathered in. Marrows, carrots, parsnips, celery, pumpkins, potatoes, green tomatoes and all those glorious autumn fruits are now waiting to be used up.

Don't waste them. Even bruised and damaged fruits and vegetables can be used up, and either frozen for later, turned into pickles and

chutneys or baked in a pie.

I'm not writing a recipe as such for your autumn harvest vegetable pie, as its content will depend on what you have gathered together during the past few weeks.

* Look at the vegetables you have, peel those that need peeling and cut them all into bite sized chunks. Green vegetables such as chard or spinach leaves can be added to the pie just before the pastry topping.

* Add to the mix of vegetable chunks, a couple of chopped onions and a couple of cloves of garlic chopped fine, also a few fresh herbs if you have any.

Marjoram, parsley and thyme will add a touch of magic to the mix.

* Mix all your chopped vegetables and herbs together.

* Using enough oil to cover the bottom of a large roasting pan, add the vegetables to the pan and using a pastry brush, ensure that

they are all coated with the oil, adding a little more oil if you need to.

* Season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns, then roast at a medium heat until the vegetables begin to soften and brown, then remove from the oven.

* Scatter a few frozen peas to the mix if you want more colour contrast, and if you have spinach leaves or chard you wish to use up, add them at this point too.

* Place the roasted vegetables into a pie dish, pour on a little vegetable stock, and when cool add a short crust pastry top and cook to a delicious golden brown.

NOTE: I have sometimes added a few chunks of cooking apples to my autumn harvest vegetable pie to great effect.

This pie is certainly one way to ensure that family members get their daily vegetable allowance.

PUMPKIN BREAD



If you are faced with a large pumpkin and have no idea how to use up the flesh before it begins to deteriorate – think BREAD.

Method:

- * Cook your left-over pieces of pumpkin by boiling in water until soft enough to mash.
- * Weigh out two-thirds of the flour for your favourite bread recipe and make up the remainder with cool, mashed pumpkin flesh.
- * Make the bread as normal, with the flour/pumpkin mix plus yeast, salt, sugar and water.
- * Add water with CAUTION or the dough will become too sticky, because the pumpkin is moist already - but that's all you have to worry about.
- * You will achieve an amazingly moist loaf which tastes great and lasts for several days.

ROAST PUMPKIN AND APPLE



With Halloween over, bonfire night too, there's a surplus of pumpkins on sale at bargain prices, so now is the time to make the most of this versatile winter vegetable. But not just because they are cheap – they are easy to cook and really do provide a wonderful vehicle for other flavours.

Adding small cubes of pumpkin to a vegetable curry is one very tasty way of incorporating them into a meal; they are great in stir-fries too. This pumpkin and apple dish is easy to make and can be served as an extra vegetable or vegetarian main dish if served with green vegetables.

For 4 people you will need:

1lb (500g) prepared pumpkin flesh in reasonably large chunks
1 large Bramley apple – peeled and sliced
12 shallots – peeled but left whole
Handful fresh herbs including marjoram – chopped fine
2oz (50g) butter
Dash of vegetable oil
2oz pine nuts
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Prepare pumpkin, apple, herbs and shallots.
- * Heat the butter together with a dash of vegetable oil in a large heavy bottomed frying pan until it begins to sizzle.
- * Add the pumpkin, apple and shallots and fry at a temperature that keeps the butter bubbling but not burning.
- * When the pumpkin, apple and shallots begin to brown, stir the pine nuts and herbs.
- * Season, then place a lid on the pan, turn down the heat and allow to continue cooking gently for about ten minutes until the pumpkin, shallots and apple are a golden brown and fairly soft.

NOTE: I added a couple of rashers of bacon, cooked crisp and chopped into this dish once and it worked really well. You can add chopped garlic too.

WALNUTS



According to Roman lore, the gods feasted on walnuts while their lowly subjects subsisted on lesser nuts such as acorns, beechnuts, and chestnuts. Walnuts were thrown to Roman wedding guests by the groom to bring good health, to ward off disease and increase fertility. Young boys eagerly scrambled for the tossed walnuts, as the groom's gesture indicated his passage into manhood. In Rome, the walnut was thought to enhance fertility, yet in Romania, a bride would place one roasted walnut in her bodice for every year she wished to remain childless. During the Middle Ages, Europeans believed walnuts would ward off fevers, witchcraft, epileptic fits, the evil eye, and even lightning. The Chinese believe crickets to be a creature of good omen, and would often carry musically-trained crickets in walnut shells covered with intricately-carved patterns.

From [Peggy Trowbridge](#)
[Walnut recipes](#)

STUFFED BAKED SQUASH



If you have a basket of small round squash that have survived the early frosts, that you don't know what to do with, worry not. You can turn them into a fantastic main course if you are prepared to use your imagination.

As they are difficult to peel, by cooking them whole, having spooned out the pips in the centre and then stuffing the cavity with a mixture of vegetables and rice, you have a very easy-to-prepare dish which even the children will enjoy.

I am not going to give a list of ingredients for this dish.

Instead I am going to advise you to look in the vegetable box of the refrigerator and see just what you have got lurking there that can be used for the filling.

If you have a few: tomatoes, mushrooms, leeks, celery and herbs, you are off to a flying start.

Method:

* Cut the top off the squash, and carefully spoon out pips and soft flesh from the centre.

* Boil the squash and their tops in salted water until they begin to soften (this will probably take about 10 minutes), remove from the water with a slotted spoon and allow to cool upside down to drain off the cooking fluid.

* Using a spoon, remove some of the cooked flesh, chop it into chunks along with all the other vegetables that you want to use up.

* Pour a little vegetable oil to a large frying pan and add the chopped vegetables and a dessertspoon of Basmati rice, along with chopped garlic and a few fresh herbs if you have them to hand.

* Season and cook together for about ten minutes, stirring as you go.

* You should not need to add moisture to this dish, as the rice should cook in the vegetable juices, but if the mix looks dry, a little water or vegetable stock can be added.

* Once the rice begins to swell, check seasoning and remove from the heat.

* When the mix is cool enough to handle without burning yourself, spoon the stuffing into the squash, and place the top into position.

* Place the stuffed squash onto a baking tray and cook for at least 30 minutes in a moderate oven, or until they begin to brown and the filling is bubbling away.

NOTE: Grated cheese can be added to the stuffing. Indeed, adding cheese to this dish is a great way of using up that small wedge of cheese at the back of the refrigerator before it goes off.

ROMANESCO & ROAST ROOT VEGETABLES



The first time I encountered a romanesco – which is a type of broccoli – I had to ask what it was and how it should be cooked. Apparently it dates back to 16th century and is particularly popular in Italy.

Having experimented with this remarkable vegetable several times, I finally decided that it was best cooked whole, having trimmed away the greenery, then used as a centrepiece for other vegetables. It doesn't have a distinct taste as such, call it a mix between cauliflower and broccoli. But it looks superb when served whole. Cut it into pieces and it loses the one thing it has going for it – it's appearance.

Take a sharp knife to the table when you are serving the meal and cut it into portions once the guests have made the appropriate noises of approval. If set in a bed of roast mixed root vegetables, it looks great.

Method:

Simply trim away the green, and place it in a large pan of boiling salted water and allow to simmer until cooked. It usually takes about 10 to 15 mins. Insert a skewer into it to check it is done, then remove from the pot, drain and serve with the roasted root vegetables. Be very careful not to overcook, as like broccoli, it can break up when cooked too long. The root vegetable mix can include chunks of carrot, parsnip, potato, celeriac, turnip, pumpkin or squash, cut into cubes and roasted in vegetable oil in a moderate oven for at least 45 minutes, or until they begin to brown.

ALMOND APPLE PIE



The difference between this apple pie and the traditional one is the use of ground & sliced almonds to flavour and decorate the dish. Almonds and apples go particularly well together and sliced almonds certainly give the pie an attractive finish.

To serve a family you will need:

3 lb (1½ kg) cooking apples
1 red skinned apple
6oz (175g) plain flour
2 tbspsn caster sugar
2oz (50g) ground almonds
4oz (125g) butter
2 egg yolks – beaten
Pinch salt
Sugar to sweeten apples while cooking
1 beaten egg for eggwash
1oz (25g) sliced almonds to decorate
Sugar to decorate

Method:

- * Turn the oven to 190°C/375°F or gas mark 5.
- * Peel and slice the cooking apples and cook with a little water and sugar to taste until tender but not cooked to a pulp.
- * Remove apples from heat, drain off surplus juice and set to one side to cool a little.
- * Place flour, ground almonds, caster sugar, salt and butter into large mixing bowl and rub together until the mix resembles breadcrumbs, then add egg yolks and bind together to a smooth dough.
- * Wrap the pastry in cling film and place in refrigerator to rest for 20 minutes.
- * Roll out the pastry into a circle that's big enough to line a deep 9 inch (23cm) deep pie dish with at least an inch over, which you will need to wrap over the top.
- * Line the pie dish, allowing the

extra pastry to hang over the sides while you fill the dish with the cooked apples.

* Cut the red skinned apple into quarters, remove core but to not peel, then slice into chunks, and place these on top of cooked apples.

* Pull the extra pastry on top of the apples, to make a top, allowing gaps so the apples show through.

* Brush pastry with beaten egg, scatter sliced almonds over the pastry, sprinkle sugar over the entire pie and bake for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the pastry has turned a delicious golden brown and the apple filling is bubbling.

CARROT DUMPLINGS



This recipe is ideal for a cold winter's day when only a warming stew or casserole will do. It celebrates the humble carrot, which when cooked, mashed and rolled into the dumpling dough adds colour and extra flavour too.

For 4 people you will need:

4oz (125g) self raising flour
2oz (50g) beef or vegetarian suet
4 large carrots, boiled, mashed and cooled
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * First prepare your favourite braised beef or beef stew dish and allow to cook in a moderate oven until almost cooked.
- * Prepare the dumpling mix 20 minutes before the stew is ready to take out of the oven. Do this by placing flour, suet and a little salt and pepper into a bowl and rubbing together until well mixed.
- * Add enough chilled water to form a reasonably soft paste.
- * Place the dough on a clean floured surface and roll into an oblong about the size of a small Swiss roll tin.
- * Carefully spread the cooked

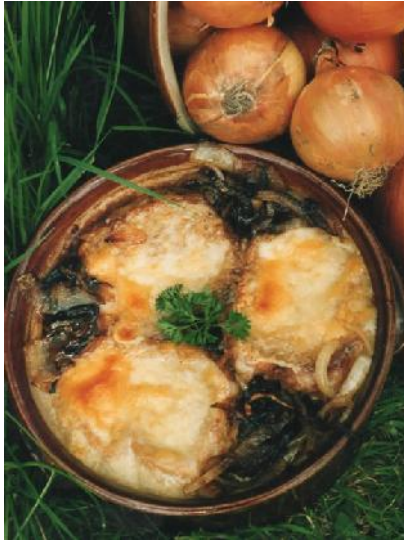
carrot puree over the dough and roll up as if it were a Swiss roll.

* Cut into eight rounds.

Remove the casserole from the oven and place the slices on top of the cooked dish.

* Pop the lid back on to the pot and return to the oven for at least 15 minutes or until the dumplings are cooked right through, having risen and become light and fluffy.

FRENCH ONION SOUP



This tasty soup with its crunchy, cheesy toast topping is just what you need at this time of the year. It's both nourishing and filling and very easy to make.

For 4-6 people you will need:

1 ½ lb (700g) onions
4oz (125g) butter
2 cloves garlic – chopped fine

1 tbspn plain flour
7 fl oz (200ml) dry white wine
2 ½ pts (1.5ltrs) vegetable stock
1 bay leaf
Fresh herbs to include parsley and thyme or 1 tspn dry mixed herbs
French bread cut into reasonably thick slices – two per portion
4-oz (125g) Gruyere or Cheddar cheese
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* Gently fry the onions in the butter, stirring frequently, taking care to keep the heat low. This is a job that should not be hurried.
* When the onions have turned soft and are beginning to turn a golden brown, add the garlic and cook for a further minute or two, then stir in the flour.
* Next, carefully pour in the wine and let the mix bubble until the liquid has reduced by half.
* Add the stock, herbs and bay

leaf and season with salt and freshly ground black peppercorns.
* Bring to full heat and allow to continue cooking at a reasonably high heat for at least 20 minutes without a lid.

* Remove from the heat and allow to cool a little – then liquidize a third of the soup (this will give a deeper onion flavour when mixed back into the remaining two thirds).

* Place a thin slice of cheese over each slice of bread and toast under the grill until the cheese begins to bubble.

* Portion out the soup, having mixed the liquidized broth with the remaining soup and brought it back to full heat.

* Check the seasoning, then carefully place two toasted cheese slices into each bowl.

NOTE: If you feel like adding an extra flavour sensation, a drop or two of brandy will do wonders.

WARM TURKEY SALAD: CRANBERRY SAUCE DIP



Last Christmas I found myself trying to come up with a new way of using up the turkey left overs and the cranberry sauce and came up with this, which went down very well as we just needed a light snack.

This is one of those recipes that can be adapted and changed according to your own taste buds. If you are using up commercially produced

cranberry sauce, which is often quite sweet, you may need to add more lemon or lime juice to get the right balance of flavours.

For 4-6 people you will need:

12oz (500g) cooked turkey flesh
3 tbspsn cranberry sauce
¼ pt (150ml) olive oil
Juice of two limes or one lemon
1 tspn mustard powder
Vegetable oil to fry turkey
Flour to dust turkey
Bag of mixed salad leaves
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

* First make the dip by placing the olive oil, lime juice or lemon, mustard powder and cranberry sauce into a liquidizer with a little salt and freshly ground black peppercorns. Zap for a few moments until you have a smooth purée.

* Taste the dip adding more lime/

lemon or cranberry sauce according to your own taste and zap again until you are satisfied with the balance of flavours.

* Cut the cooked turkey flesh into small bite sized pieces, dust with seasoned flour.

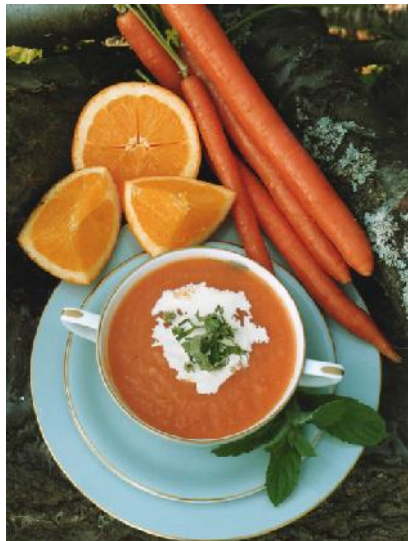
* Pour enough vegetable oil into a frying pan to cover the bottom and raise to high heat.

* Toss the turkey pieces into the hot fat and fry quickly, turning often until it begins to brown.

Remove from the heat and drain on kitchen paper.

* Divide the salad leaves onto serving plates, pour a little of the cranberry dip into small containers and place on the plate, then tip the turkey pieces on top of the salad leaves.

CARROT / ORANGE SOUP



By adding orange to a few carrots you may have stored from this year's harvest, you can come up with a simply delicious soup that can be made in under an hour.

For 4-6 people you will need:

2lb (900g) carrots
One medium onion
Grated zest and juice of one large orange
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pt vegetable or chicken stock
Sunflower oil
Half tsp paprika
Half tsp nutmeg
Cream to garnish (Optional)
Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns to season

Method:

- * Peel carrots and chop into small rough dice
- * Peel and roughly chop the onion
- * Grate the zest of the orange and squeeze out the juice.
- * Pour enough oil into large pan to cover bottom, bring to moderate heat and add the chopped onion and carrots.
- * Cover the pan with a lid and allow the carrots and onion to sweat for a couple of minutes,

stirring now and again until they begin to soften.

- * Add stock, spices, orange zest and juice and bring to the boil having added a little salt and freshly ground black peppercorns. Place lid on the pan and cook for about 40 minutes or until the carrots are really soft. Remove from heat and allow to cool a little.

- * Pour soup into liquidizer and zap into a purée, adjusting with a little extra stock if it's too thick.
- * Adjust seasoning and return soup to a clean pan and reheat ready to serve.

- * Garnish with a swirl of cream and chopped parsley if you wish.

NOTE: If you have some fresh coriander in the house, add a generous handful of these leaves finely chopped to give extra flavour.

SPICED CHRISTMAS PEARS IN RED WINE



This is one of those dishes that can be served hot or cold. It requires just a bit of effort and a really sharp little knife to create an attractive pattern on the pear – but this is the time of the year when it is worth putting yourself out to ensure the food you serve not only tastes great, but looks good too.

If you need a really sharp knife that will tackle this job easily, go and speak to Corin at the Emporium, she's got some great little knives in stock at the moment. They even come in Christmas colours!

For 4 people you will need:

- 4 firm even-sized pears
- Half pint (300ml) red wine
- 4oz (125g) caster sugar
- One cinnamon stick
- 3 cloves
- Grated rind of one orange
- Small piece of ginger the size of a walnut, grated fine
- Generous dash brandy (optional but nice)

Method:

* Find a saucepan large enough to hold all the pears standing upright and fill it with the wine, caster sugar, cinnamon stick, cloves, grated orange rind and grated ginger.

* Bring the wine slowly to a reasonably high heat to dissolve the sugar, then let it simmer gently for about five minutes while you peel the pears.

* First make a mark on each pear to show where the decoration should be (as pictured), then carefully cut away the rest of the skin. Leave the stalk on, but take just a sliver of pear from the bottom to enable it to stand firm.

* Place the pears carefully into the wine mixture, check that they are all standing upright, place a lid on the pan and allow to cook gently for at least half an hour.

* The cooking time for pears can vary a great deal, depending on how firm they were in the first

place, so at this point check they are done by inserting a skewer into one of the pears to see if they are soft enough.

* Take the pears out of the pot using a slotted spoon and place in serving bowl.

* Raise the heat of the wine and allow it to boil rapidly without a lid until it begins to thicken a little and is reduced in volume by at least two thirds.

* Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly, adding a little brandy for extra taste if you are feeling festive.

* Pour the sauce over the pears or serve them with a little of the sauce (as pictured) placing the rest in a jug so that people can add more if they wish.