

THE COUNTRY RANGE GROUP
MAGAZINE FOR CATERERS

Stir it up

WINTER

JAN/
FEB
2025

Food Trends Focus

WHAT'S ON THE
MENU IN 2025



THE QUEEN OF HERBS, JEKKA MCVICAR | LEADING LIGHT, JAMES GOLDING
REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE - A YEAR IN REVIEW

Ingredient

We're excited to start the New Year with a fresh new look and fresh inspiration for you. You'll still find all your favourite articles, and we've listened to you and included even more recipes and menu ideas than ever before.

We're kicking off 2025 with trend predictions for the year, plus advice from our experts on the latest health hacks. If your New Year's resolution is to become more green-fingered, don't miss the Into the Wild article, and for cost-saving Valentine's menu ideas, check out Making Ends Meet.

If you would like to get involved in a feature or if you have any feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at editor@stiritupmagazine.co.uk

The Stir it up team



NEWS

- 04**
Cooks Calendar
- 05**
Readers' Lives
- 07**
Customer Profile
Sustainable Growth
- 10-11**
New From Country Range
- 45**
Marketplace
- 50-51**
The Country Club

ADVICE

- 17**
Health & Welfare
Catering for Dementia
- 23**
Education
Supporting Vegucation
- 26-27**
Special Feature
First Year of Partnership with NARF
- 28-29**
Advice From the Experts
A Threat to Hospitality
- 31**
The Green Gauge
Going Green Bite Size
- 38-39**
Into the Wild
The Queen of Herbs

INSPIRATION

- 09**
Eat the Season
Purple Sprouting Broccoli
- 25**
Five Ways to Use
Pitted Black Olives
- 37**
Making Ends Meet
Two to Tango
- 42-43**
Leading Lights
James Golding
- 46-48**
Rising Star
Jack Bond
- 49**
On the Range
Quill Trust Fajitas

TRENDS

- 03**
Fresh from the Kitchen
Viral Cucumber Salad
- 13**
Hospitality
A First for Fine Dining
- 14-15**
Special Feature
A Year in Review
- 19-21**
Melting Pot
Health Hacks
- 33-35**
Category Focus
Food Trend Focus

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As part of our environmental policy this magazine is printed using vegetable oil based ink and is produced to high environmental standards, including ISO14001 and FSC® certification. It is also fully carbon balanced.



OUR EDITORIAL PARTNERS...



ALLERGEN REFERENCES

VG - Vegan V - Vegetarian



RECIPES



BBQ Chicken with Gherkin Gravy

05

Panzanella

25

Ham Hock and Squash Salad with Maple and Truffle Vinagrette

43

Fajitas

49



Fresh FROM THE KITCHEN



This year, our Fresh from the Kitchen article will take a look at what's trending in the world of food. From viral recipes to the latest ingredient in the spotlight, we'll round up the latest crazes so that you can make your menu an Instagrammable Tik Tok sensation! This month, we delve into the viral cucumber salad which recently became a hit recipe on Tik Tok. Relatively low cost and quick and easy to make, some of these versions might inspire your sides and small plates menu.

ORIGINAL RECIPE – Moffitt's original recipe is inspired by his love of South Korea. An entire cucumber is sliced thinly and added to a reused takeaway pot with soy sauce, fish sauce, sugar, MSG, spring onion, sesame oil, garlic and toasted sesame seeds. He puts the lid on and shakes it vigorously until everything emulsifies into a dressing.

BAGEL BOOM – The classic lox bagel filling consisting of smoked salmon, cream cheese, capers and red onion are added to cucumber and avocado in this iteration of the cucumber salad.

PEANUT BUTTER – A popular version of the original recipe includes the addition of peanut butter, chilli and lime, bringing together the flavours of a satay sauce. Finish with some sesame seeds, crushed peanuts or crispy chilli oil.

PROTEIN BOOST – Health-conscious consumers are concerned about protein intake and this version of the salad includes high-protein yoghurt, as well as smashed potato and bacon. Other proteins such as tuna and charcuterie are also sometimes added.

MIDDLE EASTERN – This twist includes the addition of tahini, labneh, lemon juice and sumac, with dill being the herb of choice and sometimes Marmite being used in place of the umami flavour of soy sauce.

GREEK – A cross between tzatziki and a classic Greek salad, ingredients include feta, red onion, olives and tomatoes.



Cucumber salad with chili peppers and sesame seeds

Cooks CALENDAR

The full recipes can be found at www.stirupmagazine.co.uk



JANUARY

1ST JANUARY – 31ST JANUARY – NATIONAL SLOW COOKING MONTH

Can you think of a better way to kick off the chilly month of January than with a classic Slow Cooker Sausage Casserole recipe from Opies?

16TH JANUARY – INTERNATIONAL HOT & SPICY FOOD DAY

Spice up your January with Maggi's fiery Naga Ghost Pepper Honey Shrooms recipe—perfect for igniting your taste buds!

20TH JANUARY – NATIONAL CHEESE LOVERS DAY

There's no such thing as too much cheese after the festive period! Enjoy National Cheese Lovers Day with these Jacob's Cream Crackers topped with soft cheese, tomato and cucumber.



FEBRUARY

9TH FEBRUARY – NATIONAL PIZZA DAY

Why not switch up your standard pizza recipe this National Pizza Day with this delicious Béchamel and Mushroom Pizza recipe from Country Range.

10TH FEBRUARY – WORLD PULSES DAY

This February, celebrate World Pulses Day in style with Country Range's mouthwatering Chickpea and Cauliflower Curry recipe!

14TH FEBRUARY – VALENTINE'S DAY

There's nothing like celebrating Valentine's Day with something sweet to share with a special sweetheart. Why not try this ROLO® Cupcake recipe from Nestlé!

MARCH

3RD MARCH – 9TH MARCH – BRITISH PIE WEEK

Why not try something different this British Pie Week with these Mini Coronation Chicken pies with Pickled Walnut Chutney from Opies.

30TH MARCH – MOTHER'S DAY

Treat Mum to something special this Mother's Day with Country Range's delicious Salmon Broth recipe—the perfect dish to make her day memorable!

Thanks to MAGGI®, Nestlé, Opies, Pladis and Country Range.



IN SEASON

Apples

Pears

Beetroot

Brussels S



BBQ Chicken with Gherkin Gravy

COOK TIME 45 MINS

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 200ml Country Range Fine Instant Gravy Granules
- 1tsp Country Range Dried Mixed Herbs
- 1tsp Country Range Cajun Seasoning
- 75g Country Range Sliced Gherkins and 50ml of the vinegar
- 1 Country Range Bay Leaf
- 1 Country Range Star Anise
- 100ml Country Range White Cooking Wine
- 4 chicken legs
- 25ml vegetable oil
- 15g salted butter
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Drizzle the chicken legs with vegetable oil and season with the mixed herbs and Cajun spice.
2. Grill until golden and the centre is cooked to 75°C.
3. To make the gravy, sweat the diced shallot and bay leaf in the butter until soft and then add the gherkin vinegar and white wine and reduce by half.
4. Add the made-up gravy and add to the pan.
5. Add the star anise and diced gherkin and simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Serve the chicken with extra gherkins and lashings of gravy.

Readers' lives



NAME: Lynn Mortimer

BORN AND RAISED: Bolton

JOB TITLE: Head Cook

PLACE OF WORK: St Bede Primary Academy

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY? 23 years

BIG TARGET FOR 2025? To be fully staffed!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE CUISINE TO EAT? Chinese

WHICH CHEF DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST AND WHY? Delia Smith, I always use her recipes, classics never go out of fashion. I also appreciate Jamie Oliver, for how he improved school dinners.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN AND BY WHOM? My former manager, Mary. Taste, taste, taste! Always taste your cooking at every stage.

WHAT IS YOUR MUST-HAVE KITCHEN GADGET? The big blender to blitz all the hidden veggies in our sauces.

WHAT'S YOUR TIP TO CUT WASTAGE IN THE KITCHEN? We cook our food for the children in waves, rather than all at once. That way it stays fresh and tasty, so isn't wasted by the children, and it's easier to gauge what's needed. Also,

discarded broccoli stalks to make soup is a classic.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY RANGE PRODUCT AND WHY? The Country Range Gravy Granules: they're allergen free, vegetarian, tasty and easy to mix.

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM JOB? Own a cake shop.

WHAT TRENDS DO YOU SEE TAKING OVER IN 2025? African food from different regions and grab and go options seem to be increasing in popularity.

WHAT INGREDIENTS DO YOU ENJOY WORKING WITH IN WINTER? You can't beat a good butternut squash!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DISH TO COOK? Risotto.

DEAD OR ALIVE – WHICH THREE PEOPLE WOULD YOU LIKE TO COOK FOR THE MOST? Elvis Presley (I love him!), Delia Smith and Emily Pankhurst.

Country Range Gravy Granules Pack Size: 2kg



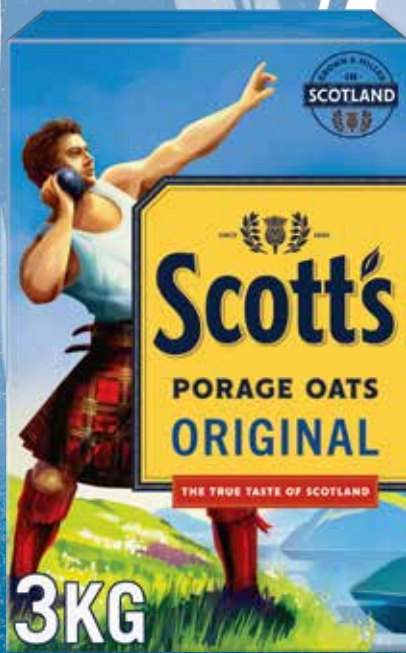


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SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Sustainable Community Hub & Café Continues to Grow

A vital hub that supports those less fortunate, connects and brings people together, educates, entertains and nourishes, @thegrange is a community centre based in Grange Park in Blackpool. Managed by Groundwork CLM on behalf of Blackpool Council, it consists of a community farm, shop, library, pharmacy, event space, meeting rooms and café.

With volunteering opportunities, bingo, health walks, theatre, social functions, luncheon clubs, sports and fitness classes, beavers and scouts, gardening clubs, armed forces and cadet events, Parkinson's drop ins and more, the centre has made a massive difference to people's lives since it was opened in 2018. Blackpool's Food Bank visits every Monday and the enterprise offers monthly low-cost community meals and a Winter Warmer Club to help visitors keep warm, save electricity and gain free access to the launderette.

Opening its doors in 2021, the café has quickly become a crucial part of the enterprise. Brenda Griffin, a former school cook who runs the café, explains:

"During the pandemic I was brought in to prepare meals for delivery in the local area to vulnerable residents. They were so popular that when the lockdowns finished, we launched the café and it's grown from there. We prepare everything fresh each day and we're passionate about working in a sustainable way, so we source locally, compost all our waste and don't use single use plastic. All our profits go back into supporting the work the centre carries out."

"We're incredibly lucky to be able to use fresh produce from our community garden throughout the year."

With a community garden and a host of volunteers, the café and its menu benefit from freshly picked fruits and vegetables.

"We're incredibly lucky to be able to use fresh produce from our community garden throughout the year. I simply ask Claire what we have, and she provides whatever is freshest and ready to go. Lettuce, herbs, tomatoes, courgettes and fruits – you name it, it's been on our menu. This not only enables us to cut food miles but ensures we have a vibrant, constantly changing menu for our guests."

"We offer the classics such as a quality English breakfast, breakfast rolls, sandwiches and paninis but we also provide homemade cakes and a daily special, which usually showcases something from the garden. We use loads of Country Range products, and I honestly can't tell the difference between them and the big brands when it comes to quality and taste. The cake mixes are personal favourites. They save a lot of time and they're so easy to use to create showstopping cakes."

Set to retire in February, Brenda will be sorely missed by the team, the visitors and customers but has promised that she won't be a stranger.

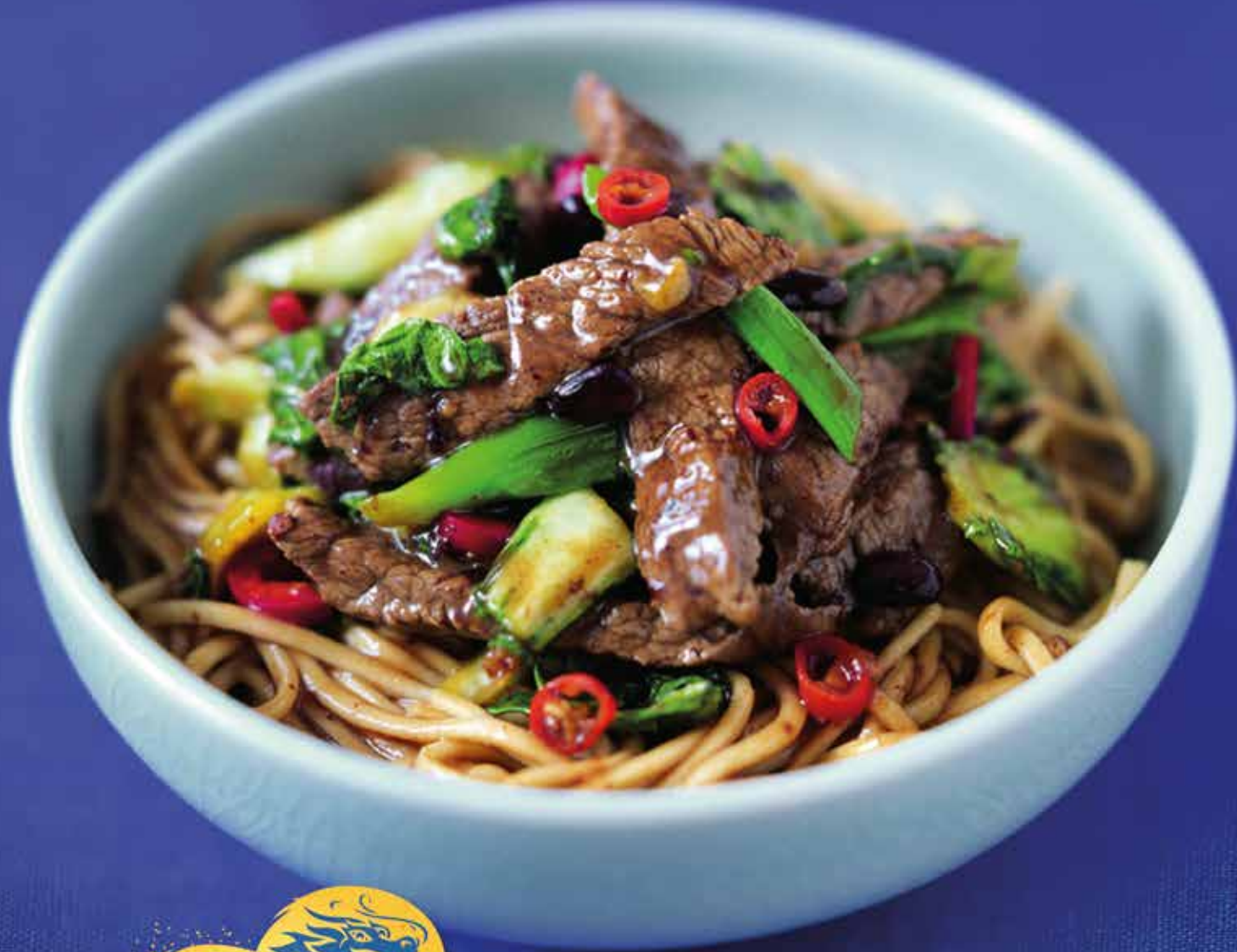
"I'd be lying if I said I'm not looking forward to a proper sleep in and a bit of travelling, but there's no doubt I will continue to be a familiar face at @thegrange. It's very much like family. Hopefully, I will be on the other side doing the eating, drinking and relaxing!"

For more information visit, www.atthegrangeblackpool.wordpress.com



Above Left: The Grange.

Above: Brenda Griffin picking produce in the greenhouse.



FIND
YOUR
DRAGON

THIS CHINESE NEW YEAR.



EAT THE SEASON



*Purple
Sprouting
Broccoli*



Purple sprouting broccoli, a vibrant member of the Brassica family, is celebrated for its striking purple florets and tender stems. Unlike its green counterpart, it

offers a slightly sweeter, more delicate flavour with earthy undertones. Rich in vitamins C and K, fibre, and antioxidants, it supports a healthy immune system and aids digestion. Thriving in cooler climates, it is typically harvested in late autumn and early spring.

This month's recipe inspiration is from Chef Nic Vanderbeeken. Nic has over 20 years of experience cooking in some of the world's most exclusive restaurants. Currently heading the team at Apéritif, a fine dining restaurant serving contemporary global cuisine in the lush valleys of Ubud in Bali, his one-of-a-kind creations are a nod to his progressive and eclectic cooking philosophy.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Chop and blanch leftover purple sprouting broccoli for 3 mins before freezing to retain flavour. Use discarded stalks in stir fries and salads or blitz with milk to make a creamy sauce for fish or chicken.



1/ BROCCOLI WITH GARLIC AND CHILLI

One of my favourite ways to cook purple sprouting broccoli is to blanch it quickly in salted water, then toss it in a hot pan with olive oil, garlic, and red chilli flakes. I love how the chilli's heat complements the broccoli's slight bitterness. Finish with a squeeze of lemon to brighten the flavours.

2/ GRILLED PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI WITH ALMOND ROMESCO

Grilling the broccoli brings out a smokiness that pairs wonderfully with a romesco sauce. I grill the broccoli with a little olive oil and sea salt until it gets some char marks, then serve it with a romesco made from roasted red peppers, almonds, garlic, and smoked paprika. It's a beautiful appetiser or side dish.

3/ BROCCOLI AND BURRATA SALAD

For a light yet flavourful dish, I like to blanch the broccoli and serve it warm with creamy burrata. Drizzle everything with a lemon and anchovy dressing and top with toasted pine nuts for some added crunch. The creaminess of the burrata contrasts nicely with the slightly bitter, earthy flavour of the broccoli.

4/ PURPLE SPROUTING BROCCOLI RISOTTO

I love incorporating vegetables into risotto, and purple sprouting broccoli adds a lovely green note. I make a creamy risotto base, stir in blanched broccoli towards the end, and finish with Parmesan and a touch of lemon zest. It's a comforting dish, perfect for the cooler months when this vegetable is in season.



A Fresh Start

As January brings its usual mix of challenges and opportunities, we've been scouring the globe for the latest tastes and trends to ensure you have the ingredients, products and solutions to smash your new year kitchen resolutions. Whether its creative ideas, trend products, cost-efficient dishes, seasonal showstoppers, waste-free recipes or something else, stay tuned for the latest Country Range inspiration.

New for February

DOUGH ON THE DOUBLE

NEW

One of the most versatile products for fast-paced kitchens, our Country Range Dough Balls have quickly become one of our most popular products. Utilised in a myriad of ways by chefs across the public catering and hospitality sectors, they're great for portion control, offer supreme quality and just need to be thawed before use. With National Pizza Day on the horizon on the 9th February, we're delighted to have extended our range with the introduction of larger 340g dough balls.

Great for larger sharing serves or for venues serving high volumes, doughballs are the perfect canvas for pizza, pizette, panzerotti and other regional Italian classics. This fully costed to our Calzone recipe uses one of the 340g dough balls, serves two and delivers a fantastic margin.

The doughballs are just as useful for starters, sweets, single serve snacks, creative dips, stuffed or even in other globally inspired dishes. For a stunningly simple, yet sumptuously sweet or dessert, our apple and raisin doughs balls are a thing of beauty.

THE NEW COUNTRY RANGE DOUGHBALLS COME IN A PACK CONTAINING 30 X 340G DOUGH BALLS.



Apple and Raisin Dough Balls

A NEW SAUCE STANDARD

Tangy, sweet and rich with tomatoes, our new Signature by Country Range Tomato Ketchup has set a new sauce standard. With a delightful artisan appearance, deep red colour and appetising aroma, the new Signature by Country Range Tomato ketchup is also free from the 14 allergens. While many well-known tomato sauces will only include 20-30% of actual tomato per bottle, our new Signature Tomato Ketchup contains a tomato content of 35%, which provides added punch, body and the ultimate flavour.

The new Signature by Country Range Tomato Ketchup is available in a 2.5kg catering bottle for easy storage and dispensing.

Signature
by Country Range



Chick Pea 'Minestrone'



Get Your Pulses Racing

An underused weapon in the armoury of chefs, pulses are the edible seeds from the legume family which includes beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas. Low in fat but powerful in the protein, fibre and with a low GI, pulses are great for fortifying dishes for the young and old but they're a functional ingredient and ardently adaptable as well.

A, soups, casseroles and curries, salads, stuffings, dips and starters or simply on toast, our Country Range tinned pulses are a great store cupboard ingredient throughout the year but extra valuable in the colder months.

With World Pulses Day celebrated on the 10th February, it's time to get pulses racing. Here's four fab ways with legumes:

CHICK PEA 'MINISTRONE'

FIVE BEAN CHILLI TOPPED SIDEWINDER® NACHOS

SAUSAGE AND BUTTERBEAN CASSEROLE

CANNELLINI BEAN GARLIC MASH



Country Range products feature a lot on my menu and provide great quality at a fantastic price. – Chef, Staffordshire



SCAN HERE
to see all of the
recipes featured
on this page

BEHIND THE BRAND

Every month we're going to be speaking to the creators, taste makers and quality controllers who ensure our portfolio remains unassailable when it comes to quality, choice and value. This month, we caught up with Moya Parrington, who is the Quality & Compliance Manager for Country Range.



Name: Moya Parrington

Role: Quality & Compliance Manager

Joined: 2017

Day-to-day responsibilities: I ensure all of the suppliers and manufacturers of our products are quality assured and BRC/ SALSA accredited where relevant.

Our customer's opinions are vital, so we also run rigorous product feedback and complaint procedures.

Best part of your job: Undoubtedly the regular testing of products in our development kitchen. It's a tough job but someone has to do it.

How do you ensure the Country Range portfolio remains the best? We continuously analyse and benchmark our products against other products in the market when it comes to price, shelf-life, taste, packaging and quality. This ensures we can continuously improve our products and the portfolio as a whole.

Favourite Country Range product: Our herbs and spices – they're such great quality. I also can't live without our baking paper!

Favourite Dish: I love Mexican or Chinese food – and my Mum's apple pie!

Favourite chef: Richard Corrigan – his food is beautiful and he's so down to earth.

Signature dish: My roast chicken pie, which has a full roast dinner in it. Delicious!

Hobbies outside of work: I love live music and my husband and I go to festivals and gigs regularly. I'm looking forward to seeing Ghost next year.

Roast Chicken Pie



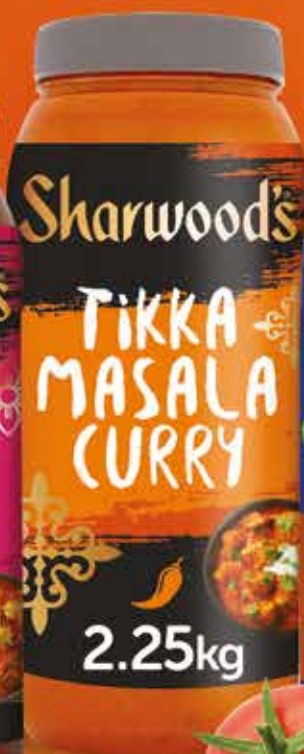
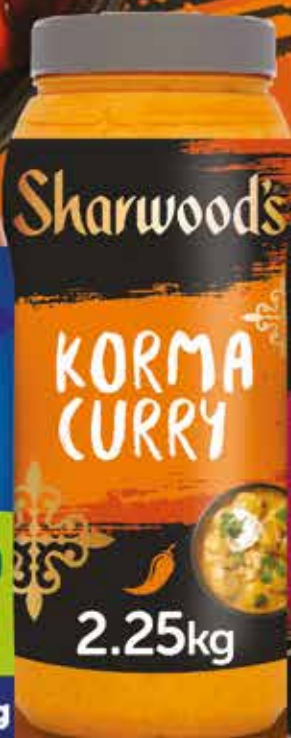
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A FIRST FOR FINE DINING

World's first fine dining restaurant staffed by homeless people

On the site of the former Odette's in London's Primrose Hill is a groundbreaking new initiative helping London's homeless get back on their feet. Run by Chef Director and two-time Michelin star winner Adam Simmonds, and supported by Soup Kitchen London, Home Kitchen employs 18 people from the homeless community who work in the kitchen and front of house.



HOME KITCHEN TASTING MENU

- Beetroot / Fig Leaves / Wildflowers
- Mackerel / Apple / Cucumber
- Plaice / Mussel / Kohlrabi / Smoked Butter
- 72 Hour Sourdough / Cultured Butter
- Lamb / Belly / White Onion / Thyme
- Dark Chocolate / Buckwheat / Coffee

The project is backed by a consortium of partners committed to ending homelessness and all profits will be reinvested into opening more restaurants. Candidates have a thorough interview process to make sure that the opportunity is a good fit. If successful, they receive a full-time contract at London Living Wage, and two tranches of training to acquire a professional qualification – The Beyond Food Foundation's City and Guilds Assured Fresh Life qualification.

Michael Brown, co-founder, says, "Not only does Home Kitchen give a marginalised group the chance to reshape their lives, but it also addresses a long-standing issue of rising job vacancies in the hospitality industry. The restaurant business is an ideal vehicle for our social impact because if you can change perceptions in this world, then you can do it in any other walk of life."

"After they pass their three-month probationary period, they will attend a day release course at Westminster Kingsway College, as well as training on the job with us at Home Kitchen until they get their City

& Guilds catering qualification. I'm guessing some will stay with us and train others, which is fantastic. Or we will find them a job in the industry and follow up with them and if they're not happy, find them other work," says Adam.

"The response from customers has been phenomenal. It gives our crew a sense of pride when guests say it's brilliant. Our new recruits (I refer to them as 'the crew') are enthusiastic and inspiring. We provide the platform for them to shine whether it's working in the kitchen or front of house, and they're all coming on leaps and bounds. We give them confidence and ability as a chef or front of house. They've faced a lot of uncertainty in life, but they still have a smile, and we have a great working environment."

Adam has designed a six-course tasting menu at £65 as well as an à la carte menu.

"The tasting menu gives an insight into what we do at Home Kitchen – and it is achievable which is most important. We are changing the menu due to seasonality, but not too often as the crew needs consistency. Running this restaurant has been one of the biggest challenges, but one of the most rewarding. We are mindful that they've never cooked or served in a restaurant before. They just need a routine which they're comfortable with. Our customers understand the concept and are very supportive."

There are plans to open another restaurant in Brighton, which has the second biggest UK homelessness population, and to expand the initiative throughout the UK and overseas.

Visit <https://homekitchendon.org/> for more information.



Above: Adam Simmonds chef director.

Right: Home Kitchen Adam Simmonds chef director with the crew.

REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENCE A YEAR IN REVIEW

A SUMMARY OF THE TRENDS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY BUSINESS OWNERS IN 2024

Although the festive season of 2023 was robust, with hospitality businesses reporting a 6.1% increase in sales compared to the previous year, nearly 25% of these businesses entered 2024 without any cash reserves, and almost one-third had enough funds to sustain operations for less than three months. Consumers were also feeling financial strain, with nearly a quarter planning to cut back on their dining budgets for the year.

In spite of facing several challenges in 2024, there are signs of optimism emerging with many operators innovating and adapting to changing economic and consumer demands. As we turn the corner into 2025, we took some time to reflect on the past year to help every business see how far they have come, and how the sector is indeed proving to be a role model for resilience.



1.7% DROP

WEATHER AND EVENTS IMPACT SALES

Wet weather in April caused a 1.7% drop in sales, the first year on year decrease in hospitality since September. However, in June, sales recovered and tracked 2.9% above the previous year.

As the summer of sport kicked off, drink sales soared. On the day of the Euros final, drink sales increased by 124% year on year.

LABOUR CHALLENGES

Restaurants had fewer vacancies going into 2024, but more than half (53%) were still looking for staff.

In the quarter to April 2024, there were 107,000 vacancies in the hospitality industry, 15% higher than pre-pandemic levels. However, in September 2024, the estimated number of vacancies decreased by 42,000 to 857,000.

The national minimum wage increase in April 2024 significantly contributed to the year's growing labour costs. The minimum wage rose 9.8% to £11.44 per hour and for the first time, the change applied to workers aged 21 and over. Previously the threshold was 23yrs.

The earnings threshold for skilled worker visas was introduced, meaning overseas employees must now earn over £15.88 per hour to qualify, increasing labour costs for hospitality businesses and reducing the available talent pool.

RESTAURANTS HAD FEWER VACANCIES GOING INTO 2024, BUT MORE THAN HALF (53%) WERE STILL LOOKING FOR STAFF.

HOSPITALITY SECTOR OVERVIEW

Lumina Intelligence predicted a 2.8% growth in the hospitality sector in 2024, reaching a total value of £99.4bn, outpacing pre-pandemic totals by 8.2%.

For the first time in 5 years, it was expected that the number of food outlets will have grown to 321,826 – a 0.2% increase in 2024. An expansion in retail formats, including drive-thru and kiosk-style services was expected to drive this growth.

Service-led restaurants face a 'challenging outlook' due to their exposure to increased business rates, inflation and a reduction in consumer spending.

2.8% GROWTH IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN 2024

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

Investment in new formats, digital transformation and new product development will drive the eating out market by £7bn from 2024-2027.

UK Hospitality predicts 12% job growth in the sector by 2025. This is due to a 20% rise in domestic tourism in 2024, driven by an increase in "staycations".

¹ UK Hospitality (2024) Survey of Hospitality Businesses from 15 Jan to 1 Feb 2024

² Lumina Intelligence

³ Consultancy UK (2024) UK Consumers Continue to Cut Spending for 2024

⁴ ResDiary (2024). UK Hospitality Industry Report

⁵ Office for National Statistics (Sept 2024). Labour Market Overview, UK

BRITVIC

ELEVATE YOUR SALES



STOCK UP NOW

CATERING FOR DEMENTIA

New Country Range Guide for residents with dementia

Catering for care home residents with dementia has many challenges; they may experience problems with eating and drinking such as being unable to use cutlery, dysphagia (swallowing difficulties), changes in food preferences and eating habits. As a result, they can be at a higher risk of malnutrition and dehydration.

Following the success of the Country Range guide for residents with dysphagia, a new full colour guide has been published to help care home caterers provide nutritious meals for those with dementia. It focuses on finger food or dishes that can be adapted so they don't need to be eaten with cutlery. There's also information on how they can be modified for different IDDSI levels. It has been devised in association with Andy Cullum, consultant, known as the 'IDDSI guy'.

Andy says, "This guide shows how recipes can be modified into a cutlery-free meal - most food can be - all it takes is imagination. For example, a roast beef dinner can become cutlery-free by leaving out the gravy and making sure all the items are bite-sized and able to be picked up."

The guide shows how to do this by making Yorkshire puddings smaller, mixing eggs into stuffing so it is held together and lightly braising beef strips so both items can be picked up. Andy says, "The only difference between a standard roast beef and ours is the

gravy is strained off the meat, but it can still be held, without making hands dirty. We make sure if a food is going to be picked up, it is bound together tightly, so it won't make a mess if dropped."

Even curry can be adapted into a cutlery-free meal. Andy says, "The chicken is cut into long strips, floured and seared. We prepare a pot of curry sauce so they can dip the chicken into it. Rice, made into rice bread, and naan bread are cut into fingers which can also be dipped into the sauce. You have to make sure everything is cut small enough so it can be held in the hand."

Trifle is made in small plastic tubs which residents can walk round with if needed, as some may find it difficult to remain seated for an entire meal. Sponge at the bottom is broken down into breadcrumbs and covered with vegetarian jelly as this doesn't require a thickener. The next layer is puréed fruit, thickened with semolina and topped with peach coulis. Another dessert recipe is banana milkshake made using leftover banana skins - a great waste-saver in the kitchen.

Guidance from the Care Home Digest is included in the guide with QR codes to download the full document. The guide is available through Country Range wholesalers or visit www.countryrange.co.uk for more information.

"This guide shows how recipes can be modified into a cutlery-free meal."

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING RESIDENTS WITH DEMENTIA

- Talk to residents and find out what their favourite foods are.
- Don't overcook vegetables – add a bit of vegetable stock in the water.
- Plate cutlery-free meals so they are visually appealing.
- Make the meal look the same as the person next to them using cutlery so they feel included.
- Focus on what they can do, not what they can't. Don't give them a plastic plate unless you have to.
- Although soup isn't suitable for finger food it can be put in a beaker for residents to carry around.



Above: Trifle made in small pots so that residents can walk around with it.

Right: Small Yorkshire puddings stuffed with nutrient-rich fillings which can be eaten without cutlery.



aah! **PERFECT**

flavours for every taste



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*Source Circana Foodservice data (c52% Coverage): 52we 05.04.24: Value sales

Health Hacks

As the New Year starts and diners seek cafés and restaurants to help them keep their healthy eating resolutions, we asked this month's panel of experts to inspire us with their favourite dishes to improve gut health, keep our immune systems topped up and reduce calorie intake.



SAMANTHA RAIN

Head of Innovation and Training, Henley Bridge

With all the best intentions in the world, it's hard to resist a dessert when eating out of home. However, operators can play an important role in ensuring healthier options are on the menu. Fruit-based desserts are a great place to start, and ready-to-use fruit purées are a great option to avoid the expense and potential food wastage from using fresh fruit. Boiron and Leonce Blanc both offer a wide range of ambient fruit purées in a wide range of flavour, which allow you to create products even when the fruit involved is out of season. Similarly, Cesarin's clean label real fruit pieces are perfect for use as an inclusion or decoration.



MATT BELLEROSE

Founder, LobsterOrder.com

I believe that healthy meals should balance both nutrition and flavour, and my go-to dish for feeling better from the inside out is grilled lobster with a citrus-kale quinoa salad. The lobster provides lean protein, while the quinoa and kale are packed with fibre and antioxidants, promoting gut health and sustained energy. I swap out heavier dressings for a light lemon vinaigrette, which adds immunity-boosting vitamin C. Adding calories can be beneficial, but they should come from nutrient-dense ingredients. This dish delivers on both taste and health, leaving you energised and satisfied.



*Hasselback roast beetroots
with a yogurt and herb sauce*



HAIKO DE POEL
Founder, The Great Greek

One favourite is our roasted beetroot salad with chickpeas, feta, and a honey vinaigrette. Beets are immunity boosting, and chickpeas provide protein and fibre. To make dishes

healthier, we use Greek yogurt instead of mayonnaise and courgette noodles or whole-grain pasta. We're incorporating more ancient grains like farro and quinoa.

For kids, our hummus and veggie cups are popular. We also donate our time to schools teaching students about the Mediterranean diet. One partnership with a local school led to a 23% increase in our web traffic. Look for unique ways to get involved; you'll build new customers and give back. For care homes, our turkey lettuce cups and trail mix are perfect handheld, energising snacks.



BRAD SAVAGE
CEO, GardenCup

I highly recommend our Super Green Salad. It's packed with spinach, kale, broccoli, edamame, and avocado and tossed in a lemon tahini dressing. The greens provide

folate, vitamin K and antioxidants while the edamame and avocado add protein and healthy fats. To make meals healthier, swap mayonnaise for plain Greek yogurt which has half the calories and twice the protein.

New trends we're incorporating include plant-based proteins like tempeh and ancient grains such as farro and quinoa which are more nutritious than regular wheat. Parents want convenient, nutritious snacks for kids, so we offer fruit and nut bars with just six ingredients: dates, oats, peanut butter, chia seeds, dried apples and cinnamon.

"To make any meal healthier, swap heavier dressings and sauces for lighter citrus juices or infused vinegars. Replace starchy carbs with leafy greens, crunchy veggies or ancient grains."



Grilled salmon topped with an avocado salsa



JIM CARROLL
Owner, Meat and Greet BBQ

One of my favourite dishes is Quinoa & Black Bean Stuffed Peppers. This dish is packed with protein, fibre, and essential nutrients. By using quinoa instead of rice,

you boost the dish's nutritional value while keeping calories in check. Additionally, incorporating spices like cumin and smoked paprika can enhance flavour without added fats.

For a healthier twist, consider swapping traditional ground meat with lean turkey or adding in extra veggies like courgette or spinach to increase vitamins and minerals.

Encouraging children to eat healthier can be as simple as making meals fun and colourful. Consider using fun shapes or arranging food in a way that sparks their curiosity.



LISA RICHARDS
Nutritionist, The Candida Diet

My straightforward Sheet Pan Chicken dish is a swift and convenient meal prepared on a single pan. Layering the ingredients sequentially ensures thorough roasting and a delightful golden brown finish. The addition of the sauce towards the end allows it just enough time to attain a thick and luscious consistency.

Opt for chicken thighs over breast for both economic and flavourful reasons. Baking the thighs with the skin intact results in a self-basting effect, yielding juicy and tender meat.

Green apples and berries, being low-sugar fruits, are suitable in moderation for low-carb diets such as the Candida diet. When incorporating carbs, it's beneficial to pair them with fats and proteins to prevent abrupt spikes in blood sugar.



ROBERT RESZ
Health & Wellness Writer

As a health and wellness writer, I often recommend clean, plant-based dishes with anti-inflammatory ingredients. One of my favourites is a black bean burrito bowl. I

simmer black beans with chilli spices, then serve them over rice and top the bowl with salsa, avocado, coriander and a drizzle of lime juice. The fibre, protein and healthy fats keep you full for hours.

To make any meal healthier, swap heavier dressings and sauces for lighter citrus juices or infused vinegars. Replace starchy carbs with leafy greens, crunchy veggies or ancient grains. I'm seeing more interest in functional ingredients like turmeric, peppermint and maca root which provide nutritional benefits. For kids, distraction is key. Arrange food into shapes, give foods funny names or present fruit and veg with interactive dipping sauces to keep little hands busy.

**DANIEL MEURSING***CEO/Founder, Premier Staff*

I've witnessed a growing trend towards health-conscious gourmet options at high-end events. Our chefs are increasingly crafting dishes that balance indulgence with wellness, catering to the sophisticated palates of our clientele.

One standout dish that embodies this trend is our "Omega-3 Boost Bowl." This vibrant creation features seared wild-caught salmon, rich in heart-healthy omega-3s. We incorporate fermented vegetables for gut health and a sprinkle of toasted pumpkin seeds for added protein and minerals. The bowl is dressed with a light, citrus-based vinaigrette infused with turmeric for its anti-inflammatory properties.

While we don't include calorie counts on our menus, we focus on ingredient quality and balance. Our chefs emphasise using whole foods and superfoods, steering away from processed ingredients. This approach not only enhances the nutritional value but also elevates the flavour profile, proving that healthy can indeed be luxurious.

**NIC VANDERBEEKEN***Executive Chef, Aperitif*

At *Àperitif*, we focus on meals that make you feel good from the inside out by emphasising fresh, whole ingredients.

One of my go-to dishes is grilled salmon. I add avocado, which is rich in healthy fats, and citrus for a vitamin C boost. To encourage healthier choices, I recommend simple swaps like using olive oil instead of butter and offering plenty of colourful vegetables for added nutrients and visual appeal.

ROAST CAULIFLOWER WITH CAJUN SEASONING, GARLIC BUTTERBEAN PUREE AND GRAVY

aah! BISTO



WE HAVE USED A SEASONAL PURPLE CAULIFLOWER FOR CONTRAST, BUT YOU CAN USE WHITE IF YOU WISH.

SERVES: 10 PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES
COOKING TIME: 25 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 100ML OIL
- 10 X CAULIFLOWER STEAK, LEAVES TRIMMED AND RESERVED
- 50G CAPE HERB & SPICE LOUISIANA CAJUN SEASONING (DIVIDED)
- 1 ONION, SLICED
- 3 CLOVES OF GARLIC
- 500G TINNED BUTTERBEANS, DRAINED AND RINSED
- 100ML PREPARED BISTO VEGETABLE BOULLION PASTE
- 75G BISTO REDUCED SALT GRAVY GRANULES FOR GLUTEN FREE GRAVY
- 100G HAZELNUTS TOASTED (OPTIONAL)

METHOD

1. Pre heat the oven to 180°C, 350°F, gas mark 4.
2. Mix 75ml of oil with 40g Cape Herb and Spices Louisiana Cajun Seasoning, and drizzle over the cauliflower steaks.
3. Heat the remaining oil in a pan and sweat off the onions. Add the garlic, then the butterbeans, and warm through. Then blend to a puree adding vegetable stock if needed to get a smooth finish.
4. Place the cauliflower steaks on a baking tray and roast in the oven until tender. Remove the tray from the oven, add the reserved trimmed leaves to the tray and leave to wilt with the heat from the tray.
5. Add 1 litre of boiling water to the Bisto Reduced Salt for Gluten Free Gravy, seasoning with the reserved Cape Herb & Spice Louisiana Cajun Seasoning.
6. To plate, divide the bean puree between plates, top with the roasted cauliflower steak and leaves and a sprinkle of hazelnuts. Serve with Bisto Gravy.



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SUPPORTING VEGUCATION

Educating catering teams to make vegetables more appealing to children

Chefs in Schools have joined forces with Riverford, the organic vegetable box company on a “vegucation” campaign. This teaches school catering teams how to make vegetables more appealing and encourages children to grow and eat more vegetables, as research shows that only 18% of children aged 5 to 15 eat five portions of fresh fruit and vegetables per day.

Riverford is donating £330,000 to the charity to train up school chefs in Devon and Cornwall.

Laura Mumford, Director of Transformations at Chefs in Schools, says, “This partnership aims to transform school food by ensuring that over 40,000 children in the region have access to nutritious, tasty, freshly made meals every day. What children learn about food in school, they take home to their families and communities too.”

There are two types of training – fully funded shorter training courses and in-depth transformations. The shorter training courses include a mix of online modules and one in-person workshop, spread over eight weeks so that it can fit in around a school’s staffing requirements. The workshop, held at Riverford’s Field Kitchen and Baddaford Farm kitchen, give school chefs a day out from the kitchen to update skills and knowledge. Laura says, “They cook new recipes, learn a few kitchen hacks and how to present food to make it more tempting.”

Chefs in Schools are also offering in-depth transformations where the charity works with a school for up to a year to revamp the food on offer and improve food culture across the entire school. “Everything is given an



TIPS FROM CHEFS IN SCHOOLS

- Blend veggies such as red lentils, peppers and onions into pasta sauces and pizza bases.
- In the school dining room, have sharing plates or displays of new food items to try and encourage youngsters to taste it and ask questions.
- Don’t assume what children will or won’t like – their tastes change, and they often surprise us!
- Grow a few herbs or vegetables to get children trying fresh produce.

overhaul including menus and ingredients to food education. We aim to ensure children experience new ingredients and flavours that spark curiosity. We also want to get schools growing produce so children can see where food comes from and help to grow it. These programmes are available at a subsidised rate to schools thanks to Riverford’s funding,” says Laura.

The aim of the four-year programme, which started in 2023, is to train 255 school chefs in Devon and Cornwall. With the intensive transformation option, the charity hopes to help 13 schools in the region, reaching 3,900 pupils.

Laura says, “We offer similar training in Yorkshire and London. We would encourage any school to get in touch to find out more if they’re keen to improve the food on offer. It’s not just the children that benefit but teaching staff too. School kitchen teams deserve to be invested in and given training so that they have the confidence to feed children well.”

Visit <https://chefsinschools.org.uk/> for more information.



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5 ways to use

PITTED BLACK OLIVES

TASTY TAPENADE

For a superbly savoury, punchy spread or condiment, a tasty tapenade is always a winner. Green and black pitted olives both work well and I like to blitz them with some capers or even anchovies.

PANZANELLA

A great way to use up old bread and vegetables, I love adding olives to my panzanella for added aromatics and taste. Whether it's summer or winter, panzanella always adds some sunshine to your diet.

FATTOUSH

Another fantastic side to accompany an array of Lebanese dishes such as batata hara or kafta, I like to add olives to my Fattoush salad alongside a zesty dressing.

SIMPLY DRESSED

Nothing can beat a simply dressed olive alongside a cold drink or aperitif. Easy to make and add your own twist or personality, we marinate our own olives using different spices, chilli flakes and herbs.

DELICIOUS DRESSING

Olive oil is a must in dressings, but I love to chop up some olives and add to the dressing as well. This adds depth of flavour and a terrific texture and consistency to the dressing.

Country Range
 Pitted Black
 Olives in Brine
 Pack Size: 1kg >>



Panzanella

INGREDIENTS

- 50 Country Range Pitted Black Olives
- 1 Country Range Ciabatta, torn into chunks
- 50ml Country Range Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 small shallot, finely chopped
- 1 sliced red onion
- 25ml Country Range Balsamic Vinegar
- 12 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 50g anchovies, roughly chopped
- 1tsp sea salt
- 1/2 tsp Country Range Dried Oregano
- Large handful of basil leaves, torn
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan.
2. Bake the torn ciabatta chunks for 5 minutes until golden and place in a large bowl with half of the olive oil and the oregano. Season to taste.
3. Add the olives, cherry tomatoes, red onion, some of the basil leaves, the rest of the olive oil and balsamic.
4. Spoon the panzanella onto a serving plate and top with the remaining basil.



SERVES
4-6



A PRODUCTIVE PAIRING

Country Range Group marks first year of partnership with The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation

Country Range Group (CRG) has completed the first year of our three-year partnership with The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation, the UK's food allergy charity to raise compassion, understanding and vital funds to #MakeAllergyHistory.

Martin Ward, Chief Executive, Country Range Group, said: "We're pleased to mark the first year of this partnership and want to thank all our members who have raised funds to help the charity with its important work. We're committed to supporting the charity's aims to make food allergy a thing of the past and are looking forward to growing our partnership over the next two years and bring about positive change."

Nadim and Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBEs, founders of Natasha's Foundation, said: "We want to thank everyone who is part of the Country Range Group for choosing to fundraise for our charity over the last year. We appreciate your on-going support. Thanks to your generosity we have been able to continue our important work, helping to improve the lives of the millions of people in this country living with food allergies, and working towards our ultimate goal of #MakingAllergiesHistory. Your donations have helped to fund bursaries to train the next generation of allergy specialists, education resources for schools and allowed us to continue campaigning for an Allergy Tsar, a national champion for the one in three people now living with allergic disease. We are grateful for your support, and we look forward to working with you in the future."

ABOUT THE NATASHA ALLERGY RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation was founded in June 2019 following the tragic death of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse. Aged 15, Natasha died after eating sesame seeds that were baked into the dough of a baguette. At the time, there was a legal loophole in food legislation that meant pre-packaged foods made and sold on the same premises didn't have to list their ingredients. The label on the baguette packaging didn't include sesame and they were invisible to the naked eye.

Set up by Natasha's parents Nadim and Tanya, the Natasha Foundation is the only charity in the UK dedicated to scientific and medical research into allergies. Through their campaigning, Natasha's Law came into effect on the 1st October 2021. Businesses now have to label prepacked food for direct sale with a full ingredient list that clearly details any of the 14 major allergens.

THE NATASHA CLINICAL TRIAL

A big focus of the charity's work is science and clinical research to understand what is causing the dramatic rise

FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

Together, during the first year of the partnership, we raised funds through a wide range of activities such as sponsored events, raffles and encouraging people to make donations at trade events. In June 2024, we raised over £6,000 from a raffle held at our annual exhibition and conference. Another initiative we are championing is the '1p tub donation' where 1p per tub of any Signature by Country Range ice cream purchased is donated to the Foundation.

If you're looking for inspiration on how to raise funds and support this fantastic cause, how about introducing a "Cook Off" competition between colleagues and chefs for the best 'allergen aware' meal; hold a raffle and donate the ticket sales to Natasha's Foundation or host a 'free from' bake sale and showcase delicious allergen free treats. You could also encourage your team to take part in a fitness challenge such as the National Three Peaks, Thames Footpath, Dalai Lama Himalayan Trek or a Trek to Machu Picchu.

in food allergies and new ways to treat them. The Natasha Clinical Trial is a £2.7 million project involving seven NHS hospitals across Scotland and England, treating up to 300 children and young people aged two to 23 with milk and peanut allergies.

The trial aims to prove that everyday shop bought foods containing peanut or milk, taken under strict medical supervision, can be an effective and low cost NHS treatment for people with food allergies, rather than expensive pharmaceuticals. This pioneering approach, known as oral immunotherapy (OIT), involves taking daily doses of everyday foods to train the body to tolerate an allergen. The results are expected in 2027 and, if successful, it is hoped the trial will provide evidence for the treatment to be made available on the NHS. Nadim says: "Parents of children with severe milk and peanut allergies have described how their lives have been transformed by this approach."



"We're committed to supporting the charity's aims to make food allergy a thing of the past and are looking forward to growing our partnership."

ALLERGY TSAR OPEN LETTER

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation continues its campaign for the Government to appoint an Allergy Tsar – a national lead to champion the one in three people living with allergies, making allergy services and treatments a priority within the NHS to prevent avoidable deaths and ill health. Reflecting the Country Range Group's partnership with the charity, we have signed an open letter urging the Government to prioritise this issue, alongside industry peers. The appointment of an Allergy Tsar would co-ordinate efforts across the food industry, healthcare and education sectors ensuring the necessary safeguards are in place to protect vulnerable individuals.

"For businesses like ours, managing allergies is not only about compliance with regulations but about actively preventing harm to our customers," says Martin. "A dedicated Allergy Tsar would help ensure more effective communication between the NHS, food suppliers, schools, and parents, creating a comprehensive approach to allergy management that can save lives. We are proud to be one of the 20 leading food companies that have signed the letter." Nadim adds: "I would urge everyone to write to their local MP and tell them why we need an Allergy Tsar. If you go to our website there is a letter you can download."



Visit <https://www.narf.org.uk/take-on-a-challenge> for more information or email fundraise@narf.org.uk

A THREAT TO HOSPITALITY

With extensive experience at some of the world's largest cybersecurity firms, Tracey Moon is an accomplished industry leader and is well versed in the tactics and motivations of the cybercriminal underworld. We spent some time with her to understand more about how cybercrime is affecting the hospitality sector, and how businesses can protect themselves from a breach.



WHY MIGHT A CYBERCRIMINAL TARGET THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR?

Any sector with a business model that relies heavily on personalising the customer experience must collect and store massive amounts of customer data. That customer data is a highly prized target by cyber criminals because they can use the data for identity theft, financial fraud, hold it ransom, and any number of uses for their financial gain. During the last several years, the hospitality sector has seen increasing attack activity due to its reliance on interconnected systems such as unsecured public WiFi for guests and the increased use of devices for hotel door locks and other uses growing the attack surface through IoT (Internet of Things).

DO THEY TARGET ONLY BIG BUSINESSES OR ARE INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES AT RISK?

When it comes to cyber crime, everyone is at risk. However, cyber criminals are going to

spend the majority of their effort on the large prize, which would be larger businesses. It takes time for them to gain access and collect enough data for a major ransomware breach, but they are patient and methodical - often working for several years before they achieve the big score.

It is important to note that even though a large company is a prize target, the independent businesses, vendors and contractors that are small and mid-size, are often targets because they are part of a large business supply chain. Threat actors target every area of the supply chain because they may be able to gain access to the big company systems through a smaller company's login or other access point.

ARE CYBERCRIMINALS LIVING LOCALLY, DO THEY KNOW THE BUSINESS THEY ARE TARGETING?

This is a great question! While it is difficult for researchers to pinpoint exactly how many cyber criminals are local, it is reported that it is more common for small businesses to be the victims of local cyber criminals. Locals have easier access to information about the business and its employees. Smaller businesses are less likely to prioritise cyber security and local criminals find it easier with their knowledge to use social engineering tactics (phishing and phone calls). Additionally, small businesses are more likely to experience attacks from inside since employees often have access to sensitive data.

“Independent businesses, vendors and contractors that are small and mid-size, are often targets because they are part of a large business supply chain.”

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON FORMS OF ATTACK IN THE SECTOR?

According to trend reports from some of the major players in the cyber security industry like Gartner, Splunk and Bitsight, the most common forms of attack in hospitality are data breaches targeting guests' personal information and payment systems. This is achieved through ransomware attacks, phishing scams (which refers to scam emails) aimed at hotel staff, attacks on unsecured Wi-Fi networks, and Point of Sale (POS) system breaches.



“In addition to training, businesses should make sure all software is properly configured and updated, use a firewall to protect your network and monitor it closely.”



HOW CAN SMALLER BUSINESSES PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST AN ATTACK?

There are many places, especially government agencies, that update and educate small businesses on what should be done to develop a robust cyber security strategy. The most important is to train your employees on cyber security and why you need to implement certain policies. The majority of breaches are due to human error so this point cannot be overstated. If employees understand the risks and are educated well, they can help prevent attacks.

In addition to training, businesses should make sure all software is properly configured and updated, use a firewall to protect your network and monitor it closely, create a mobile device action plan, regularly backup your systems and data, physically protect access to all computers, implement a strong password and authentication policy, and

secure all WiFi networks. You will sometimes hear employees complain about having to authenticate access to systems or witness them becoming lax about physical security, but you must stand firm! The relaxed practices are what a cybercriminal is waiting for and they will take advantage of it.

WHAT SHOULD A BUSINESS DO IF THEY FIND THEY HAVE BEEN A VICTIM?

The actions you take if you have been a victim will depend on the nature of the breach and the type of business. If you are breached and your team is not equipped to handle the incident themselves, there are many incident response experts out there to call and seek help – so make sure you know who to call should the worst happen.

The first thing to do is to isolate the network affected while you contact an expert for help. To do this, you can simply take the network offline at the switch or even disconnect the ethernet cables. Next step is to alert employees and take all devices off WiFi manually including work phones, any employees connected to WiFi with their personal phones, all laptops, all devices.

Once you have isolated the problem, you should then evaluate the impact to business partners, customers, and any other affected parties. You need to develop a communications plan and tell them what happened, if they were impacted, and what is being done. You should also inform the authorities.



Do your fries hold after being dunked in ketchup? **Ours do!**



A performance you can rely on



GOING GREEN BITE SIZE

Taking small steps towards a more eco-friendly business

As the world becomes increasingly environmentally conscious, organisations are getting creative, implementing impressive plans to help them achieve a net-zero carbon footprint. While such projects are inspirational, it can be overwhelming for smaller businesses to keep up or know where to start. Embracing sustainable practices doesn't have to mean overhauling operations or incurring significant costs. In fact, there are numerous small, easy, and low-cost ways to make your business more environmentally friendly while potentially saving money and attracting eco-conscious customers.



REDUCING FOOD WASTE

Food waste continues to be a pressing issue in the hospitality industry. National Food Waste Week this March aims to shine a light on the problem, offering the perfect opportunity for businesses to assess and improve their practices.

To reduce waste across your business, start by reviewing your menus to assess possibilities for using ingredients across multiple dishes. This could include amplifying fresh seasonal ingredients or batch cooking and freezing a standard tomato sauce in a school kitchen to produce curries, pasta dishes and vegetable bakes for the week.

If changing your menu is too time consuming, consider offering different portion sizes to cater for varying appetites or implementing a composting system for

unavoidable food scraps which can be used on your kitchen garden, or donated to local community projects. Alternatively, you can link up with local shelters and food banks to donate surplus food to prevent waste going to landfill sites.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Reducing energy consumption is both eco-friendly and cost-effective. Simple adjustments such as replacing incandescent bulbs with LED alternatives which use up to 75% less energy, regularly servicing appliances to ensure they operate efficiently, and encouraging staff to turn off lights and equipment when not in use can lead to significant savings.

EVERY DROP OF WATER COUNTS

Water is a precious resource and conserving it can be achieved by checking and fixing dripping taps or leaks, installing low-flow faucets and dual-flush toilets to reduce water usage, or scraping dishes properly before washing.

RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

Implementing a robust recycling program can divert significant volumes of waste from landfill, so make sure you place well-marked recycling bins in both customer areas and behind the scenes to encourage proper sorting, and select suppliers who use minimal or recyclable packaging to reduce waste from deliveries.

To reduce plastic waste, consider alternatives such as reusable or sustainable packaging and incentivise customers to bring their own containers.

An eco-friendly business thrives when everyone is on board. The most successful sustainable businesses have education at the heart of their activities, so invest a little time to educate employees and customers about the practices you want to introduce, inviting them to support your initiative and the importance of their role in achieving the end goal.



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GF

MAGGI® Beef Bouillon
2 x 2kg



GF

MAGGI® Chicken Bouillon
2 x 2kg



GF

MAGGI® Vegetable Bouillon
2 x 2kg



GF

MAGGI® Rich & Rustic
12 x 800g



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Food Trend **FOCUS**

WHAT'S ON THE MENU FOR 2025?

Welcoming the New Year with a bang, the hospitality sector is alive with fresh ideas and innovation to delight customers over the coming months. To support menu development and shape business strategies, we've explored the key culinary trends on the horizon, from the latest social media conversations driving consumer demand, to the next international flavours to try and the increasing need for allergen-friendly options.



GETTING SPICY!

Those looking to explore authentic spices should look no further than hawaj and black lime – two spices currently taking America by storm and will most likely head our way soon. Hawaj is a classic Yemeni spice blend and works in sweet, savoury, and beverage applications alike. Meanwhile, black lime offers a tangy, smoky twist, which is perfect for stews and marinades.

“Our residents often favour traditional British cuisine, but we add an element of excitement through regular themed events like Caribbean Day and Indian Curry Day, which introduce diverse ingredients and global flavours. Asian dishes, especially Korean, are a popular trend, and we’ve successfully added items like katsu chicken curry, bao buns, and gyoza through resident tasting sessions,” comments Matt Goodman, Catering Manager at The Royal Alfred Seafarers’ Society.

“Despite a preference for traditional menus, we consistently seek resident feedback and input through catering surveys and menu development sessions, ensuring all preferences are considered and allergies accommodated. For instance, we adapt trendy dishes like chicken katsu to meet dietary needs such as dysphagia by modifying ingredients and preparation methods.”

ALLERGENS – THE MODERN-DAY EPIDEMIC

Over 150million Europeans suffer from chronic allergic disease and current predictions estimate that by 2025, half of the entire population of Europe will be affected. “We have seen an increase in requests for halal, gluten-free, and dairy-free options over the past few months,” says Pavel. “We are committed to integrating these dietary preferences into our menu to ensure that all our customers feel comfortable and have a wide range of delicious dishes to choose from while dining at UBA. We have also noticed a growing demand for vegan dishes, so we are working on adding more sophisticated plant-based options to our menus.”

Not only does it make sense for operators to cater for this sector of the market to ensure they are accessible by the broadest consumer group as possible, it also helps with their visibility online too. Increasingly, websites listing allergy and intolerance friendly restaurants are appearing, helping consumers search for suitable locations both locally and nationally.

MICRO-TRENDS

PLANT-BASED AQUATIC INGREDIENTS:

Whole Foods Market has released its annual forecast for 2025 food and beverage trends, with the retailer’s Trends Council identifying plant-based aquatic ingredients as a notable area of growth. Foods such as sea moss, duckweed, and agar-agar, are gaining attention for their sustainability and nutritional value.

INTERNATIONAL SNACKING: Adding global flavours to create fusion foods that have mass appeal is a great micro-trend for cafés, event caterers, education catering and care homes. Combinations include mango sticky rice chips, chilli crunch edamame and nut mix and chilli masala popcorn.

FOOD TEXTURES: From crispy grains and granola to nuts and roasted chickpeas, consumers are increasingly seeking toppings and flavour enhancers that add texture to breakfast, lunch and dinner. Think about adding texture to salads, roasted vegetables, fruit cups and tray bakes.

ENHANCED HYDRATION: Consumers are demanding more from their H2O, adding electrolytes, protein and antioxidants as healthy alternatives to sugar-loaded sports drinks.

SWEET TREATS WITH PISTACHIO:

Delivering the perfect sweet and savoury balance in baked goods, pistachio is expected to be popular in sweet treats. Ingredients suppliers are already stocking up with coatings and paste fillings for croissants, brioche, cakes and tarts.



BOWLS
558,091

SPICY FOOD
496,876

FERMENTED FOOD
291,989

PORRIDGE
156,884

RAMEN
197,431

NUT BUTTER
218,796

MUSHROOMS
258,766

SMOOTHIES
124,411

BAGELS
105,161

**ALGAE/
SEAWEED**
98,429

BRANDWATCH
MOST TALKED
ABOUT TRENDS ONLINE

ONE TO WATCH – GOVERNMENT IDENTIFIED JUNK FOOD:

In 2024, the government laid out a list of foods it considers to be junk foods, and new laws set to be introduced in 2025 will see adverts for these items banned online and on TV before 9pm. A survey by YouGov has revealed that 16 of the 33 identified items, are not considered junk food by most Britons. These items include muesli, granola, porridge oats, rice cakes, fruit juice, frozen yoghurt, crackers, breakfast cereal, and smoothies.

Porridge oats (amongst other items) have been contested by the public, and after clarification, it has been revealed that food categories on the list that are not high in fat, sugar or salt would not be subject to any restrictions. While this largely affects the grocery sector, what is interesting is how foods that were originally healthy, have been distorted to become unhealthy. As such, there is a lesson to be learned to really pay attention to ingredients – you can easily turn a healthy dish into an unhealthy one.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS – WHAT’S THE BUZZ?

With social media being such a powerful tool in the creation and adoption of trends, it would be foolish to ignore it as a rich source of intelligence to guide menu strategies. Brandwatch, a consumer intelligence agency,

“We’ve seen a resurgence of spices and chillis, like hot honey”

recently analysed more than 179 million global online conversations to discover what’s hot and what’s not.

Based on discussions found online, Brandwatch has revealed that bowls are the most talked about trend. With their origins in Hawaiian poke bowls made with raw fish, bowls offer a myriad of opportunities for operators to use aesthetics to enhance the dining experience. Social media conversations rate rice bowls as the preferred meal for dinner, poke bowls as a lunchtime favourite, and smoothie bowls as the go-to choice for breakfast.

Visually stimulating and instagrammable, bowls have been taking social media by storm for the best part of 6 months and looks set to continue for some time to come.

Check out this example by The Avocado Show, a restaurant in Amsterdam, where they creatively served their vegan poke bowls using avocado halves as the bowl itself.

CHAIN REACTION

As disruption to our food supply chain becomes more frequent, the hospitality industry will need to encourage more consumers to try new ingredients and flavours, and right now Asian food is topping the trend charts.

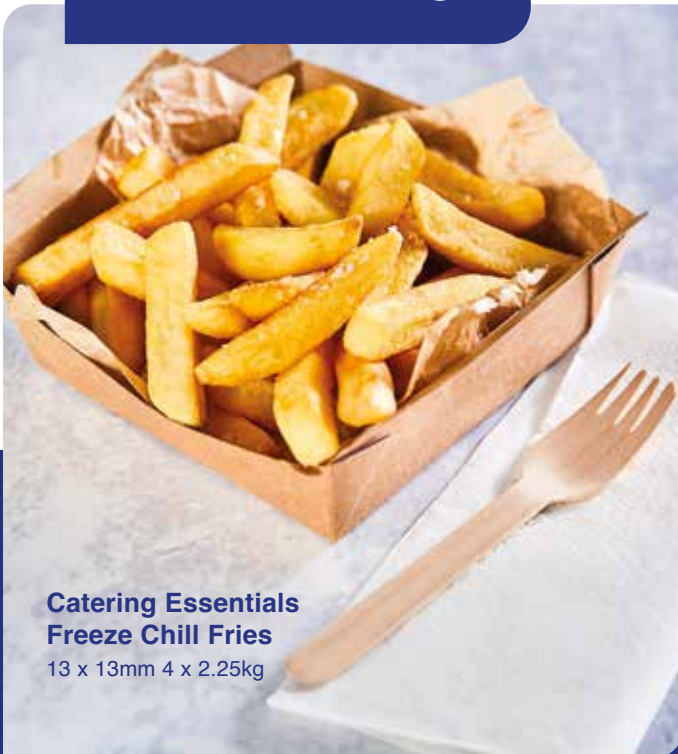
From Korean hotteok and Vietnamese banh mi to Japanese onigiri, Chinese jianbing and a burgeoning interest in Cambodian cuisine, we expect consumer interest for Asian cuisine to get stronger and stronger. “I’ve noticed a resurgence of spices and chillis, like hot honey,” says Eran Tibi, Founder and Executive Chef at Kapara and Bala Baya. “I’ve also noticed Kafir lime leaves are back in the limelight, which were always ‘trendy’ back during my days working for Ottolenghi - I love the fragrance they can add to a dish and visually they are so vibrant.”

Asian flavours are not just about food. Gen Z is diving into the world of Filipino coffee, pandan iced coffee and coconut milk coffee, and it’s not stopping there. “One popular trending ingredient we’ve incorporated into our menus is matcha, both in our matcha tiramisu and Matcha Dragon cocktail - both beautifully combine traditional flavours with modern twists,” says Pavel Baranovs, Head Chef at UBA.

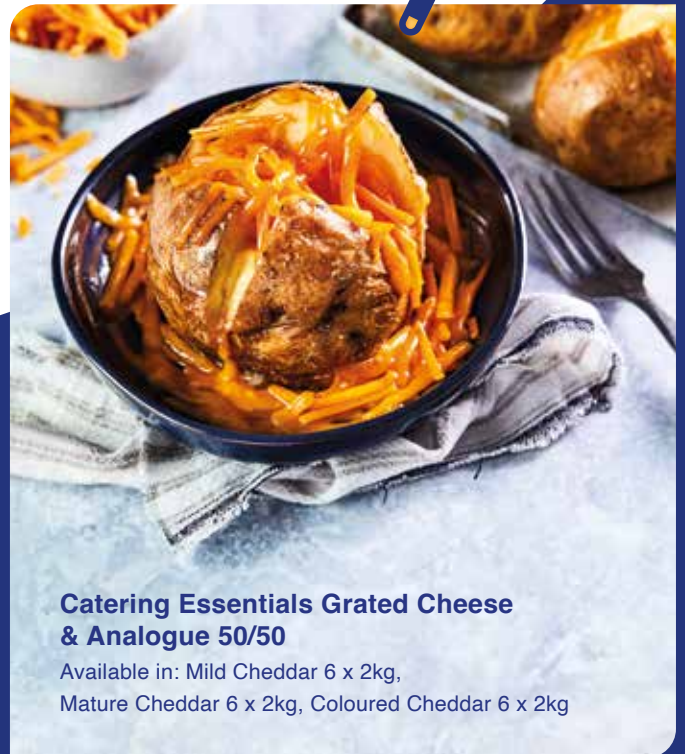
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Lamb Tagine

SPICE THINGS UP

We're craving warming, comforting stews at this time of the year, and with a tagine, the warming exotic spices transport diners to the warmer climes of Morocco. It's a perfect sharing dish and you can add on sides such as flatbreads and salads. The recipe includes dried apricots and tinned chick peas which help to add texture and flavour, whilst bulking out the dish, reducing the amount of meat required. You can also easily turn this into a vegan version.

Making ends meet

TWO TO TANGO

One of the first dining out occasions of the year is Valentine's Day and Paul Dickson gives some of his top tips to inspire your menu and maximise the opportunity.

At this time of year it can be a challenge to encourage customers through the door, and Valentine's Day can be a key turning point in the calendar, paving the way for the special occasions that spring brings. These days, it's not just romantic couples who decide to use this date as a reason to indulge. Increasingly, we're seeing friends taking over the date and calling it things like 'galentine's day', which is worth bearing in mind when you design your menu. My advice – keep it light, fun and informal. Sharing dishes are an absolute winner, creating an interactive experience and giving the opportunity to upsell sides to add to the feast.

Here are some of my favourite sharing dishes. As always, I have an eye on cost and these recipes use tinned and dry ingredients to reduce waste and keep costs down without compromising on the wow factor.

Paul is a Home Economist and food stylist working in London and the North West, creating exceptional visual stories in film & tv, on social media and in print. All of the recipes and videos featured in the article can be accessed online at www.countryrange.co.uk/recipes or by scanning the QR Code.



Turn their world upside down

Not many people know this, but tarte tatin has always been one of my favourite desserts to make. It's such a classic dish and can feel really special. Bringing this out, fresh from the oven, perfectly sized for two to share, can create a real sense of occasion. This version uses tinned pears, believe it or not, and it works perfectly. Serve with a good quality ice cream. I love Signature by Country Range Dairy Ice Cream for this.



Pear Tarte Tatin



Moules-Frites

NOTHING SHELLFISH ABOUT THIS DISH

There's something romantic about sharing a big bowl of delicious seafood and mussels are bang in season at the moment, making them particularly cost-effective to put on the menu. Here, I create the classic French white wine and cream sauce, but mussels are the perfect vehicle for robust flavours. Try a Thai twist using coconut milk, lemongrass and chilli.



The Queen of Herbs



In the first of our special interviews centred around master gardeners, growers, foragers and other nature loving specialists, we caught up with true royalty - the almighty Queen of Herbs Jekka McVicar. With a half century of herb growing experience, a successful nursery and business, countless awards and accolades plus fans such as Raymond Blanc, Jamie Oliver and the late Queen, we asked Jekka why all chefs should be growing fresh herbs.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO CHEFS WHO GROW THEIR OWN HERBS?

There is really nothing better than being able to go outside and pick fresh herbs to use on a dish. The smallest bit of gardening brings you more in touch with nature. The outdoors, fresh air, hands in the soil. I promise you; it heightens the senses.

The fact that you can also say on your menu 'grown here' is a real plus and adds value. It shows your herbs are local and they haven't been driven across the country or flown in from abroad, which a lot of the fresh cut herbs are, especially in winter.

“Remember, there is a labour cost to growing your own herbs. We have a mantra for pot grown herbs - feed on Fridays.”

Fresh herbs contain vital essential oils and provide a superior flavour. Even just as a garnish for that last bit of glitz, the flavour of the dish multiplies.

We also eat with our eyes, so edible flowers from herbs are a fantastic tool for visual effect and finishing dishes. For example, chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*) not only give you the leaves, but they also give you the beautiful flowers that

taste of sweet onion. Simply break up one of the flower bulbs and sprinkle over jacket potatoes or a potato salad.

The seeds are another underutilised part. I'm getting people to eat fresh fennel seeds (*Foeniculum vulgare*) – they're green and taste beautifully of sweet anise and you can use them when making bread. Seeds, leaves, stems and flowers – they can all be used in so many ways and across the menu. Cordials, shrubs, vinegars, oils - there is more to herbs than a garnish.

TIPS FOR CHEFS LOOKING TO START A HERB GARDEN

The first thing is to work out what you want first as there's no point in growing herbs you're not going to use. These are very ancient plants, and they've survived thousands of years by being invasive. So, if you don't pick them and use them, they will smother the other plants you are growing.

Unfortunately, we have a two - three track mind on herbs. Prior to planting, experiment with different herbs, explore the different herb species and varieties and always pay attention to the Latin name. For example, there are some great oreganos and rosemary varieties out there. I'm loving Green Ginger Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) at present.

If you have a raised bed that you can use that's great but, if not, containers and pots are fine. It might be you can make your herb garden a centrepiece.

I created a herb garden for Nathan Outlaw in an old rowing boat. Clear the soil for any erroneous weeds and put down a good mulch of well-rotted manure. Ensure you sow at the right time and check the temperature of the soil before you sow.

Keep your mint in pots as they will take over your valuable little space. Also, keep your mints in separate pots. If you put a peppermint (*Mentha x piperita*) and spearmint (*Mentha spicata*) in the same pot, after six months they will end up tasting the same. They won't taste of spearmint or peppermint – just mint.

Remember, there is a labour cost to growing your own herbs. You need to allocate chefs or members of your team to water and feed. You will need to water every day. People think of herbs as being wild so therefore they don't need feeding. We have a mantra for pot grown herbs - feed on Fridays. We use a liquid seaweed feed, which is the same as you taking multi vitamins. That keeps the plant healthy and productive, which is what chefs need.

LET MEDICINE BE YOUR FOOD AND FOOD BE YOUR MEDICINE

What you want in winter is herbs that will lift you spirits, aid digestion and be slightly antiseptic – believe it or not. That gives you thyme, sage, rosemary and even oregano.

They're made for foods of the season - warming dishes, at a time when our diet often becomes heavier and richer.



Thankfully, there is a growing understanding of the health benefits of food and how various ingredients can be used in a medicinal way. This certainly isn't a new idea but it's just that we have forgotten the knowledge. After all, Hippocrates said, let medicine be your food and food be your medicine – there is no truer saying. When it comes to medicinal foods, herbs are the leading light.

For more information on Jekka, her nursery, classes, books and more, visit www.jekkas.com

DID YOU KNOW?

- **You've probably heard the term pot herb – that's not because it grows in a pot. It's because it went in the pot over the open fire. Every plant used in food was called a pot herb back in the day. The term vegetable was invented around 1620/1625.**
- **Basil and mint are from the same family.**
- **Golden oregano and golden marjoram are the same thing – look at the Latin - both are *Origanum vulgare* 'Aureum'.**
- **The only tarragon you should grow is French tarragon – Russian tarragon tastes like upper class grass.**

Jekka's Magnificent Seven

PEPPERMINT MINT (*Mentha × Piperita*)

A great herb for chefs and for the bar as you can use it to make wonderful peppermint tea. Top tip – never make 100% peppermint tea because if you're serving someone of my age, you will give them indigestion. Three leaves of spearmint to 4 leaves of peppermint and you call it mint tea - everyone will love it.



CHOCOLATE MINT (*Mentha × Piperita* f. *Citrata*)

It tastes like posh After Eights and is wonderful in cocktails, desserts and for the best chocolate mousse you could ever eat.



LEMON VERBENA (*Aloysia Citrodora*)

I would say this is the most popular herb for chefs – don't get it mixed up with lemon balm as that's different. It's used by chefs for everything from crême brûlée, to cocktails, to jellies, to sauces and it's great with fish. It's an absolute must-have. Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir must have 15 plants. It has a gorgeous smell and it is the Rolls Royce of lemon. It also gives a dish a bit of luxury and a point of difference.



VIETNAMESE CORIANDER (*Persicaria Odorata*)

A beautiful flavour and underused. It starts off with lime and then blows your head off. It's not a hot heat – just a spicy flavour. You don't cook it, you add it at the end to stir fries or to a broth.



GARLIC CHIVES (*Allium Tuberosum*)

Chives will give you flowers and leaves in early spring and May, Garlic Chives will flower later in July and will give you leaves all winter because it doesn't die back like chives. With the wild garlic season done by May, garlic chives can be a great alternative.



CORIANDER (*Coriandrum Sativum*)

Sow it in late September – when the soil is warm. Direct into the garden – you will have a crop within 10 days and you will pick it all winter long. It's related to carrots so in the spring you pull it like you do carrots and eat the roots. Plant families go together – flavour matching.



LOVAGE (*Levisticum Officinale*)

An aphrodisiac, it grows to 6ft so you need to be careful, but the seeds are great for bread making or with mashed potato.



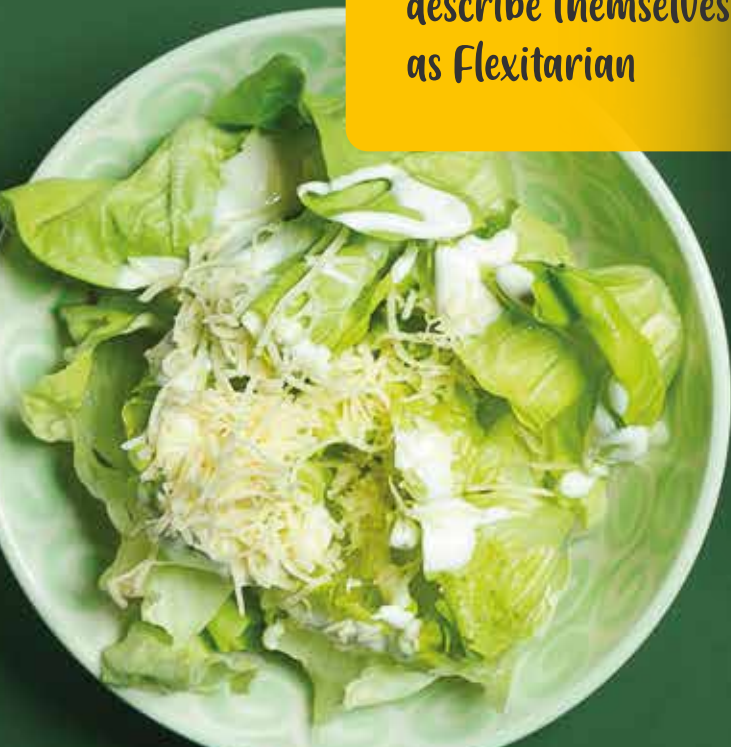
Kara

FOODSERVICE BAKERS



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HEAD CHEF AT THE TABLE TALK FOUNDATION

James GOLDING

Often, we meet chefs who exude enthusiasm for their work and have a CV packed full of aspirational restaurant and hotel brands. James Golding is one such chef. Having graduated from The Savoy Hotel scholarship, Le Caprice, Limewood and The Pig are just a few of his career achievements and he is also no stranger to Channel 4's Sunday Brunch. Much like other chefs who have excelled in hospitality, James has branched out and now works as Head Chef for the Table Talk Foundation, a charity that's inspiring the next generation to build a foundation in food.

How and when did your passion for food and cooking begin?

When I was a child, there used to be a rule in our house where we had to cook together as a family before I was able to play on my Mega Drive, which at the time was very frustrating, but, now I can see it inspired me to get into the world of cooking and hospitality as well as obviously eating all the amazing food that I was exposed to as a child. I think cooking at home with parents or family really helps kids understand how to eat well, and the joy of cooking.

Can you tell us about Prept?

Prept is an educational charity that helps kids build a foundation in food and cooking. Its purpose is to build and support the foundations of food culture in the UK - inspiring a new generation through food, to live happier and healthier lives. We work in primary and secondary schools, as well as holiday clubs to give young people the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and tuck in!

What inspired you to make the change from working at Michelin star restaurants, to working for a charity?

After years cheffing in London, New York and along the south coast I've always been learning new things, and I believe kids have an inherent interest in food - it's one of the many joys of childhood after all - so being able to work with Prept, as Head of Food Education, seemed a natural progression for me. It's incredibly rewarding and I love it. I also run my own company

called nomadic sporadic, running trips to our house in Tuscany and curating exciting food experiences.

You have been in the role there for just over a year now, how different is it to working in a restaurant?

It's very different to working in a restaurant, but I've always had the belief that you should nurse and train the young staff coming up through the ranks and I'm doing the same with our Prept workshops. It doesn't come with the same stress of service, but you still have a responsibility to teach young people the important life skills of cooking and the knowledge of food provenance and sustainable practices.

What do you enjoy most about your role at Prept?

I love it when you get direct feedback from the students on how they're going to show their parents or siblings how to cook what they have done that day or understanding methods and information that we have taught them throughout the sessions. They are learning real life skills and it's very rewarding when you see how happy they are when they leave.

What are your plans for Prept over the coming 6 months?

We're focusing on our secondary school sessions. It's an amazing opportunity as we inspire as well as teach the kids about all aspects of hospitality and front of house as well as cooking demos on the classics like risotto, meat and fish dishes which are sometimes too expensive for schools to

be able to demonstrate. We are also starting to build our online content, making our education more accessible to all children regardless of location, so it's hugely exciting for us.

“I’ve always had the belief that you should nurse and train the young staff coming up through the ranks and I’m doing the same with our Prept workshops.”

Have you experienced any setbacks in your career and how did you deal with them?

Yes, when I was Head Chef at Soho House in New York, I broke my heel bone into five pieces and was off my feet for about a year. It was extremely stressful as we had just had our first child Rex, but we were very lucky to have support from family and friends. I think you just have to stay positive, keep moving forward and realise that you have the time now to learn more about food and try out recipes which I never had time to do before.

What inspires you to continue working in the hospitality sector?

Hospitality I think is one of the most exciting sectors to work in. We're like one big family even though it's such a big industry, our common interest in food and drink keeps us going. The excitement of finding a new product, eating a new dish or trying a new wine always creates enjoyment and fulfilment. I don't think I'll ever leave hospitality because there are so many different elements that keep things exciting and relevant.

How would you like to see the industry change in the future?

I think the industry changes every year mainly for the better and has come a very long way since I became a chef back in 1994. I think it's continuing to improve with regards to our kitchen culture, pay and quality of food, so I would like to see it continue to go onwards and upwards. I would like to see more involvement from chefs to inspire young people, I know that time is always a factor, but to help young people understand, we need to give them an insight into how amazing the life of a chef can be.

What recipe have you selected to share with us and why?

I've selected a beautiful autumn salad that I eat at home, it's roasted pumpkin with shredded ham hock, British salad and a Maple and truffle dressing. It's actually the same salad that I cooked on Sunday Brunch recently so check that out if you need any pointers.



Left to right:
Children enjoying cooking
and tasting new recipes at the
Table Talk Foundation

*Ham hock and squash
salad with maple &
truffle vinaigrette*



PREP & COOK TIME 10 MINS

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ham hock (about 1.6kg), unsmoked & cooked
- 1 x butternut squash raw & cooked
- 50ml maple vinegar
- 50ml pure maple syrup, preferably amber syrup for its rich taste
- 2 chicory hearts, with leaves separated
- 1 x whole curly endive
- 50g butter
- 1/3 bunch parsley leaves
- 1/3 bunch fresh mint
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds
- Truffle oil & preserved truffle

METHOD

To cook the ham hock

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180°C.
2. Cook the ham hock in the vegetable stock until the centre bone can easily be removed.
3. Once your oven is up to temperature, place the ham on a roasting tray, glaze with maple syrup and roast for 15 minutes.

To make squash salad

1. Keep the oven at 180°C following ham hock cooking time.
2. Cut the squash into slices and cover with olive oil, salt and pepper and thyme, and roast in the oven until soft.
3. Spread the pumpkin seeds on a tray and roast at 180°C for 5 minutes.
4. Mix the mustard, maple vinegar and maple syrup in a bowl and slowly add the olive oil and parsley until all ingredients have been combined. Plate the squash and ham hock on top of the chicory, scatter the pumpkin seeds on top, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Pour over the vinaigrette dressing and enjoy.

Meet Enzo,

The Sicilian Chef and brand ambassador for Cirio!

We are delighted to share with you Enzo's favourite winter recipe featuring Cirio Chopped Tomatoes – a traditional Italian recipe often chosen for Sunday dinners. With simple ingredients this tasty and comforting dish is a real crowd pleaser.



Polpette e Patate

Ingredients (serves 4 people)

400g minced meat,
Splash white wine,
400g potatoes,
800g Cirio Polpa Chopped Tomatoes
1 onion white,
8 basil leaves,
4 tablespoons olive oil, salt and pepper

Cooking Method

Peel, chop and boil potatoes for 15/20 minutes.

Slice the onion julienne and shallow fry with the oil until a golden colour.

With the minced meat make little meat balls and shallow fry with the onion, when darkened splash the wine and add salt and pepper.

After 2 minutes add the boiled potatoes, the tomato polpa and half of the basil, bring to boil then lower the heat and simmer for 20/25 minutes.

Serve with some bread and use the rest of the basil to decorate the plate.

Enjoy your winter dish



THE MARKETPLACE

Keeping you up-to-date on products and services within the foodservice industry

DÉLIFRANCE REPORT UNVEILS BRITS' INCREASING PASSION FOR PASTRIES

Délicfrance's recent "Prove It: Viennoiserie" report reveals a growing British love for pastries, especially viennoiserie, which now surpasses overall bakery market growth. Key insights include a rise in impulse purchases and price taking precedence over freshness as a primary factor after quality. Sustainability awareness is also increasing, with many consumers wanting more transparency about the origins of their pastries. Classics like croissants and pain au chocolat remain favourites, while innovation and visual appeal continue to drive sales. Délicfrance highlights that pastries offer a sense of indulgence, particularly amid challenging times.

Scan the QR code to read the full report



Nutritious and School-Approved:

CHEERIOS MULTIGRAIN FOR UK STUDENTS

Cheerios Multigrain Cereal, now available for the education sector, meets England's school food standards, making it a nutritious choice for school breakfasts.

This popular UK cereal, packed with oats, wheat, and barley, provides high fiber and is fortified with essential vitamins (B2, B6) and minerals like iron and calcium, supporting students' energy and immune function. Cheerios aims to give students a tasty, nutritious start to the day, aligning with its commitment to balanced diets.

BRING AUTHENTIC GLOBAL FLAVOURS TO YOUR KITCHEN WITH LION'S NEW SAUCES

Lion Sauces, a brand from AAK Foodservice, has expanded its range of globally-inspired cooking sauces, making it easier for chefs to quickly create authentic, flavourful dishes. With nine new sauces, including Arrabbiata, Balti, and Tikka Masala, these ready-to-use options blend convenience with high-quality ingredients, allowing chefs to serve diverse international flavours without the added prep time. Lion's sauces, which are vegetarian, vegan-friendly, and free from artificial additives, aim to meet modern demands for both taste and simplicity in the kitchen.



Nestlé Professional Report Shows Regenerative Agriculture Boosts Communities

Nestlé Professional's new report, "Unlocking the Community Benefits of Regenerative Agriculture from Field to Fork," highlights how regenerative farming revitalizes ecosystems and local economies. Collaborating with Footprint, Nestlé showcases how these practices benefit rural communities by creating jobs, boosting farmer incomes by up to 49%,

and strengthening community connections. Initiatives like Nestlé's partnership with First Milk provide financial incentives to farmers adopting sustainable practices, improving water quality and biodiversity. The report calls for industry-wide collaboration to maximize regenerative agriculture's positive impact on local economies and ecosystems.



GRILLED STEAK WITH A STOUT GRAVY

aah! BISTO



Stout brings a rich, robust depth to gravy. The natural malt sweetness balances out the bitterness, creating a rounded, full-bodied flavour that pairs beautifully with steak.

SERVES: 10 PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES
COOKING TIME: 15 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS

- 50ML SUNFLOWER OIL
- 1 ONION, DICED
- 2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
- 500ML STOUT
- 30ML KETCHUP
- 5G FRESH THYME
- 75G BISTO FOR MEAT GRAVY GRANULES
- 10 X SIRLOIN STEAK

METHOD

1. Heat the oil in a pan. Add the onion, then the garlic, and cook without colour for 5 minutes.
2. Add the stout, ketchup, and thyme and simmer for 10 minutes, to reduce by half. Blend the reduction, then add 750ml of water. Bring back to the boil and whisk in the **Bisto for Meat Gravy Granules**. Reserve until needed.
3. Season and cook the steak on a chargrill until it is cooked as ordered.
4. Serve the steak with the sauce on the side and seasonal vegetables.



www.premierfoods.co.uk



Image credit Lara Luis Photography

Rising Star JACK



Scallop, Green Tomato, Basil

Image credit Rob Whitrow Photography

BOND

HEAD CHEF AT THE COTTAGE IN THE WOODS



Interior table setting at The Cottage

With a CV that would make many a chef sick with jealousy, Jack Bond spent over a decade learning from the likes of Marcus Wareing, Daniel Humm and Gordon Ramsay in London and New York, as he quietly established himself as one of the most exciting young chefs to watch in the country. Born in Crosby, Liverpool, Jack and his wife Beth took ownership of The Cottage in Woods earlier this year in the UK's Michelin hotspot – the Lake District. We caught up with Jack to discuss his journey and his incredible year, which has seen him become a hospitality business owner, win three rosettes, retain a Michelin star and even become a father.

When and how did your passion for food and cooking begin?

Growing up I was always interested in what was going on in the kitchen at home and in my friend's and family's kitchens. I had some friends whose parents were really good cooks, and I was probably that fairly unusual young kid who would eat and try absolutely everything.

What was your first job in hospitality?

When I was in secondary school and needed to sort out work experience, I didn't get it organised. Thankfully my form tutor, who taught Food Tech arranged for me to work at a new deli that had just opened in Crosby called The Pickled Walnut. I worked as a kitchen porter, and they showed me a little bit about cooking and I got to see how a business and kitchen worked.

Did it instil anything in you?

The business sold classic British dishes and solely sourced products and ingredients from the British Isles. It was probably what you would call a posh deli. I owe a lot to the owners who took me on as it gave me a great understanding of seasonality and provenance of ingredients from a young age. It also opened my eyes to so

many different tastes, flavours, ingredients and products. My epiphany moment was when I was asked to try a savoy cabbage cooked in bacon and cream. I remember being amazed and confused at how something could be so tasty. It set something alight inside and I knew I wanted to cook.

After some time working abroad, was it always the plan to come back to the UK?

My time at Eleven Madison Park gave me a real understanding on how to run, develop and build a team and culture. I wanted to bring that back with me to the UK and hopefully show I was ready to be head chef. Unfortunately, Marcus didn't see it. I think they knew that something was still missing.

Eleven Madison Park invited me back as a Sous Chef, but I couldn't get the visa so had to decline. Thankfully, they replied that they were opening a counterpart in London called Davies and Brook and wanted me to be part of it. Dmitri Magi, who I worked under, was given the role of opening the restaurant in Claridge's for Daniel Humm. We had a custom-built kitchen, and I was able to be part of the process from ground zero. All the work, preparation, training that goes into the opening and bringing a team together

– I was able to see it. I quickly realised that this was what I had been missing. I was there for two years and was promoted to the Executive Sous role. When Eleven Madison Park went fully plant-based in New York, they wanted to do the same at Davies and Brooks in Claridge's but Claridge's said no so we had to close.

How did The Cottage in the Wood come about?

Beth and I were married in the Lake District and we celebrated at the Cottage in the Wood. Normally, I can have a bit of impostor syndrome, but we were sat there and I thought – this is for me, I'm ready for this. We both felt that if we were to have our own place, this is what it would look like.

We didn't speak to the owners Kath and Liam about it but strangely we were recommended to them a couple of months later as someone who would be interested in taking over the place. We visited again and it was surreal. It felt like it was meant to be.

In January 2024, we decided with them that we would take over the running of the business. We had a slow handover. Kath and Liam wanted to pass on the legacy to the right people and they had faith in us, but we didn't have masses of capital. It was a rush to sell everything we owned and get the money and plans together to make it happen. In June, we bought the business, and we have plans in place to own the lease on the space within five years.

Who are your food heroes?

Keith Floyd was a pure genius. He definitely played a role in getting me interested in food. He was a one-off. I loved to see him go into some French lady's house and tell her she's doing it wrong, or she can't cook.

Did you have any mentors?

I owe a lot to Marcus. He taught me the proper side of the kitchen. The hard work. His work ethic is incredible. What he instils on his team is immense but his head chefs - Mark and Shauna Froydenlund - were also central to my development. They looked after me and were there with me from the beginning to the end of the day. I learnt so much from them. Without them, I don't think I would have stayed, as eight years is a long time.

Describe your cooking style?

It sounds cliché but we try to do honest food. It's pretty minimalist in how it's presented. We look outside at what's around us and that's what inspires us. Every part of every ingredient has a purpose, so we don't waste

anything and try to make as many different elements out of each ingredient. I get an ingredient and try to make as much from it as possible – purée, powders, gels, sauces etc. When I can do no more, I pass it to my wife who then sees how she can use it on the bar. After that it's vinegars and then worst case scenario is our compost bins to grow our next batch of ingredients.

What's the best thing about the hospitality industry?

The friends I have made and the support you receive. The people I have worked with are always there. I can always pick up the phone, tell them my woes and they pick you up. When we took on the cooking in January, pretty much every top chef in the Lake District messaged me to say 'congratulations, we're really excited to see what you can do, let us know if you need any help'. That is something that I had never seen before.

What's the big plan?

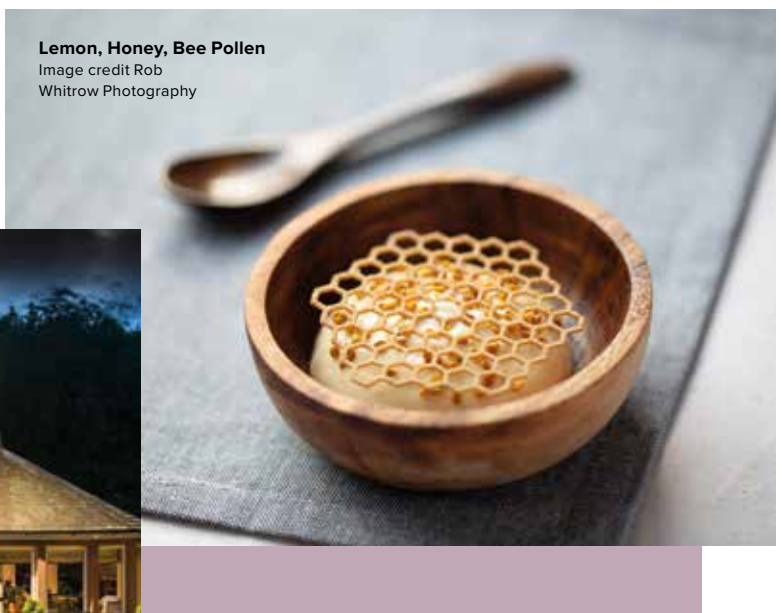
It's hard to think too long term but this year we've taken over a restaurant and we've retained the star, which was my all-time dream in life. We've also picked up three Rosettes so there is no rush. We have exciting plans and there are some changes we want to make. We would like to gradually transform the cottage into something super personal to Beth and I and to create an environment where the team love being there. I want to build on the legacy of this restaurant, do it justice and grow the reputation.

My number two is Guy Ripley who is a super talented guy and an intelligent chef. He was a philosophy graduate who did a 360 and followed passion for food. I worked with him in London before he headed off to Copenhagen and Berlin. He was working in a two-man team in Berlin so similar to us at the Cottage and thankfully he accepted my offer to come and join us. He works ingredients, he knows how to get the best out of them, he has a great sense of taste, flavour, seasonings, combinations and his general food knowledge is incredible.

For more information or to book, visit www.cottageinthewood.co.uk



The Cottage at night



Lemon, Honey, Bee Pollen

Image credit Rob Whitrow Photography



Quill Trust FAJITAS

While recent generations may say it was Gordon or Jamie who first got them interested in food, it was Ready Steady Cook that hooked James Palmer and set him on the road to life as a chef.

After 10 years honing his skills across restaurants and hotels in the north, James became a chef at University of Central Lancashire, where he passed his professional cookery NVQ qualifications. He then moved back into fine dining before working in gastro pubs prior to the pandemic.

“The pandemic made me assess my career,” says James. “I wanted more security and life balance, but I also wanted to make a difference. I joined the Quill CofE Trust in March 2022, and it was the best decision I could have made.”

The Quill CofE Trust is made up of a non-faith Academy called Tonge Moor Primary Academy and a Church of England Academy – St Bede CofE Primary Academy.

“The Trust breeds a great culture across our academies and food plays a big role in that.”

“We blitz vegetables into pizza tomato sauce, hide carrots and swede in cottage pie, it’s about being creative to fortify dishes. We use plenty of Country Range products, which are flavour fail-safes and great value. The spices, herbs, pulses and sauces are all heavily used in our kitchen. This Fajita recipe is a favourite with our kids and uses the Country Range Fajita Seasoning and Five Bean Salad.”



**JAMES
PALMER**

10 PORTIONS

INGREDIENTS

- 400g Country Range Five Bean Salad
- To taste - Country Range Fajita Seasoning
- 600g diced chicken 50/50 (breast & thigh)
- 300g Diced white onion
- 300g Diced mixed peppers
- 10 x 6-inch tortilla wraps
- Oil for frying/roasting

METHOD

1. In a frying pan heat enough oil for frying and get the pan very hot.
2. Add the chicken to the pan or roast in oven at 180°C.
3. Cook for 10-15 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and achieves a temperature of 75°C for two minutes.
4. Add the diced vegetables and mixed beans and cook gently for a further 10 minutes.
5. Add the seasoning to taste.
6. Serve in the tortilla wraps.



The Country Club

Exclusively for customers of the Country Range Group

TWO AIR FRYERS IN ONE

With the inevitable New Year's resolutions to make healthier choices, using an air fryer can be an easy solution to guilt-free, quick and tasty meals. This month, we're giving away a Tefal Easy Fry Dual Zone Digital Air Fryer to one lucky reader.

With two different sized drawers (5.2L/3.1L), you can have a single and dual air fryer in one compact footprint. Heat the small drawer on its own (and save energy) or use both to cook two foods, two ways, at once! The small drawer is perfect for single portions, or double up with the XL drawer with a combined 8.3L capacity.

Not just for chips, this double air fryer roasts succulent chicken and vegetables, sears seafood and steaks, and even bakes cakes. Fancy dehydrating fruit for snacks? It does that, too. There are eight programmes for you to use to get creative whilst saving time and energy in your kitchen.

Exclusive Extra Crisp air frying technology means there's no need for preheating. Simply choose from 8 automatic programs or set your own temperature (40-200°C) and time.

For your chance to win, enter online or send an email titled 'Tefal Easy Fry' along with your name, contact details and name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk



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Jekka's Complete Herb Book

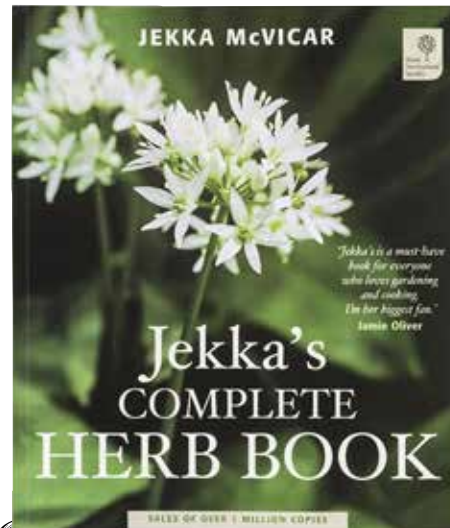
WIN
Jekka's
Complete
Herb Book

If you've been inspired by Jekka McVicar in our **Into the Wild** article, this is the prize for you.

This is one of the all-time classic gardening bestsellers by the Queen of Herbs, with over 350 varieties of herb to grow and over 200 delicious and inventive recipes. Each spread brings together all aspects of an individual herb - history and folklore, species to grow and cosmetic, medicinal and culinary uses.

Chapters on propagation, harvesting and making herb oils are complemented with ideas for 10 different designs for herb gardens and a yearly calendar. This really is the only book you'll ever need to know all you need to know about herbs and their uses.

For your chance to win, enter online or send an email titled 'Complete Herb Book' along with your name, contact details and name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk



You can now enter all of our competitions online. Simply scan this QR code or visit www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk



Closing date for the competition is 28th February 2025. All winners will be notified by 31st March 2025. Postal entries can be sent to: Country Range Group, 4 & 5 Jupiter House, Mercury Rise, Altham Business Park, Altham, Lancashire, BB5 5BY. Full terms and conditions can be found at: www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk/about

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