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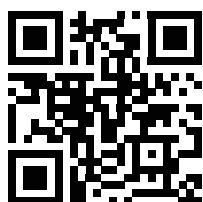
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# Ingredients

Our last issue of 2023 is a bumper one, filled with stories from caterers and chefs, advice from experts and tons of menu inspiration to get you through the next few months into the start of the New Year.

We wish you all a smooth-running, prosperous festive period and New Year. See you in 2024...

If you would like to get involved in one of our features in 2024 or have any feedback please contact us at [editor@stiritupmagazine.co.uk](mailto:editor@stiritupmagazine.co.uk)

*The Stir it up team*



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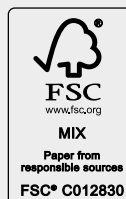
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### Front Cover

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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...



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# Readers' lives

**NAME:** Manisankar Kalaiselvan

**JOB TITLE:** Head Chef

**PLACE OF WORK:** Kingswood Golf Club

**PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE KITCHEN?** Reading, walking and nature

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE CUISINE TO EAT?** French

**WHICH CHEF DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST AND WHY?** Renee Emin – he is a great friend, mentor and has been like a godfather to me.

**WHAT'S YOUR TIP TO CUT WASTAGE IN THE KITCHEN?** I call it re-cheffing – it's about re-using cooked ingredients to make incredible new dishes. For example, if we have left over roast gammon from the carvery, we will make an incredible pie or sandwiches.

**WHICH CHEF SHOULD WE BE KEEPING AN EYE OUT FOR?** Johnson Ebenezer – he's an Indian chef I have known for 20 odd years. He's very

talented and he is pushing for his Farm Lore restaurant to be the first in India to be awarded a Michelin star. Hopefully it will not be long.

**WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU HAVE EVER DONE?** I worked in a factory where they took glucose from cassava. My job was to load the oven with charcoal which was hard and hot work.

**WHAT TRENDS DO YOU SEE TAKING OVER IN 2023?** I think a less is more approach with the ingredients central to everything. Simplicity rather than over-complicated techniques.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY RANGE PRODUCT AND WHY?** There are plenty of fantastic products. The spices are excellent, as is the bouillon and the custard and cream are also great.

**WHAT INGREDIENTS DO YOU MOST LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH?** I love truffles and I am always excited as the game season approaches. Wild boar and venison are two of my favourites.

## Fresh FROM THE KITCHEN

As we're getting into the season for turkey sandwiches galore, we thought it would be a good time to take a look at the latest trends in sandwiches.

**WITH A TWIST** It's a sandwich, but not as we know it. There are several interesting trends that break from the expected traditions of sandwiches. @gulasgrub on TikTok has made it his mission to cover the world's cuisines in chopped sandwich form. Much like the chopped salad but in sandwich form. Add to this the Naanwich trend, using naans in place of wraps and pittas to make it easier to fill with looser fillings such as curries and slow cooked meats. It's also a great way of using leftovers.

**A LITTLE EXTRA** This is all about taking sandwiches to the next level, either by experimenting with sauces and gravies both inside and outside the sandwich (and the flavours are getting a lot bigger than beef with gravy too) or adding luxury ingredients. In fact, the premiumisation of sandwiches suggests that consumers are willing to pay extra for a quality treat, if not a three-course meal.

**CHEAP AS CHIPS** The trend for all things nostalgic hasn't bypassed the humble sandwich. Think about all the childhood favourites, such as crisp sandwiches, chip butties and classic fillings, like ham and egg. Don't forget the tins either. Corned beef, Spam, tuna and sardines are also seeing a rise in popularity.

**VIBRANT VEGGIES** Plant based sandwiches are on the rise, with some delicious and interesting combinations, such as spicy cauliflower, BBQ mushroom and all things green. Not to mention the classic roasted vegetable sandwich remaining a popular choice.

Roast beef and salad whole wheat bread sandwich



Onion Bhaji and Chicken Tikka Naanwich



\*From thefoodpeople Sandwiches report 2023.

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# Cooks CALENDAR

## November

### WORLD VEGAN MONTH

Use GARDEN GOURMET® Vegan Fillet Pieces to create a fresh and zingy wrap.

### 3RD NOVEMBER – WORLD SANDWICH DAY

These Bacon and Cherry Tomato Mini Bagels with Philadelphia Intense Garlic & Herbs by Gok Wan are a great twist on the classic sandwich and could even be served as snacks or canapés.

### 10TH – 14TH NOVEMBER – NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS WEEK

Try this hearty Tomato and Bean Pasta Bake recipe from Maggi.

### 17TH NOVEMBER

#### – HOMEMADE BREAD DAY

This garlic and herb tear and share bread recipe from Country Range is a real crowd-pleaser.



## December



### 5TH DECEMBER – PIGS IN BLANKETS DAY

A decadent festive specials idea is this Pigs in Blankets Mac 'n' Cheese with an Opies Pickled Walnut breadcrumb.

### Three ideas FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

★ Create a festive display by turning your croissants into Christmas trees using this inspiration from DéliFrance.

★ Mulled wine has become a staple both in and out of home in the winter months. This non-alcoholic version using MONIN Spiced Red Berries Syrup can be enjoyed by all.

★ It's time to get creative and create some festive cookies using Country Range Cookie Pucks.





# Simplify this Party Season with Philly

One hero ingredient, multiple festive dishes



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# GLOBAL INSPIRATION

## CREM Kitchen

**A late starter in the hospitality industry, Megha Arora gave up her successful career in marketing for the culinary arts and is now receiving high praise for the inventive globally-inspired menu at her restaurant in Romford – CREM Kitchen.**

Hailing from a big family in Delhi where food played a pivotal role in socialising and family celebrations, Megha's parents were both excellent cooks but the thought of one of their children working as a chef was far from their wildest dreams. It was at the age of 26, on

**“I focused on a selection of unique dishes from around the world. We got an overwhelming response from the first day. We never really looked back.”**

a trip to Paris when Megha's eyes were truly opened to the delights of a professional kitchen and a career as a chef.

“When I first left India and visited Paris (on an internship) I realised what I was missing. The different ingredients and dishes, the food and drink culture – I didn't know that such beautiful things existed, and it literally blew me away and

changed the whole direction of my life,” says Megha. Enrolling in one of the best culinary schools, Cordon Bleu Paris, Megha passed with flying colours, and took her first professional internship in Paris at Pierre Herme before moving to the UK in 2013.

With a dream to one day run her own restaurant, Megha launched her first business - CREM Kitchen Supper Clubs - from her home in Romford in 2020, which specialised in seven-course tasting menus, showcasing her take on modern Indian dishes.

“I began by running the Supper Clubs but as the pandemic struck, we had a rethink and launched Pink Foodie, by CREM Kitchen on Deliveroo,” continues Megha. “I focused on a selection of unique dishes from around the world. We got an overwhelming response from the first day. The first two days the phone didn't stop ringing with orders. We never really looked back.”

Not one to rest on her laurels, Megha took advantage of the success and started looking for a bricks and mortar venue. “I would often walk past the café facing the beautiful lake in Raphael Park,



Romford and think that it would be a wonderful location. It often seemed to be closed. I contacted the owner, asked about availability and amazingly, nearly 24 months later CREM Kitchen launched for real.”

“When we started, I was just a cook with a vision for the food. I had never been a manager or leader before and I struggled to delegate and ended up doing everything myself. It burnt me out. I worked nonstop for 4 months, without any breaks, 7 days a week. Some of our most popular dishes include charcoal Korean wings, freshly rolled homemade fish tacos, 72 hour slow cooked BBQ pork belly and lamb and leek dumplings. I want to keep evolving the menu to offer different tastes and textures from around the world.”

**Above (main)**

Outside of CREM Kitchen

**Left (clockwise)**

Hand rolled corn tacos with crispy fish, loaded with jalapeño salsa, rose harissa mayo

Megha Arora



“I believe, where we are, the location and the space, it has huge potential. We host a lot of weddings and special occasion parties. Beautiful lake views matched with Michelin quality food is what we aim to offer and build on. Then I would like to look at a second site locally in Essex. After that - more restaurants, a recipe book, TV appearances or my own show. It's the same when I'm eating food, I'm greedy – I want it all!”



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# IN SEASON: *Venison*



## Official Tasting Notes provided by George McIvor, Chairman of The Master Chefs of Great Britain

Venison, a delicious and lean meat sourced from deer,

has been gaining popularity in the UK as a sustainable and healthy protein choice. Historically, venison was considered a luxury item, but its availability has increased in recent years due to efforts to manage deer populations and promote responsible hunting.

Venison is low in fat and high in protein, making it an excellent choice for health-conscious consumers. It is also rich in essential nutrients like iron, zinc and B vitamins. It is also seen as an environmentally friendly option. In the UK, deer populations have grown significantly in recent decades, leading to overgrazing in some areas. Controlled hunting of deer helps manage these populations and mitigate their impact on ecosystems.

Restaurants and butchers across the country have embraced venison, offering a range of dishes from traditional roasts to innovative creations. This culinary versatility has contributed to its growing popularity among food enthusiasts.



## WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Many delicious dishes can be made using leftover venison. Create a warming cottage pie or pastry topped pie, using a rich red wine gravy as the sauce. Use in Italian dishes, such as a ragu with pappardelle or added to a risotto. You could even use it to enhance street food dishes during the festive season, such as mac 'n cheese or loaded fries.

## 1/ VENISON MOUSSAKA

Minced venison in a moussaka gives it full-bodied flavour and combines well with the spices, stock, red wine and tomatoes. This contrasts with the creamy béchamel topping.



## 3/ BALKAN BURGERS WITH AJVAR

This is the iconic Balkan burger but made with venison. The secret ingredient here is Ajvar, a condiment made principally from sweet bell peppers and aubergines. Make Ajvar from scratch or buy a jar ready-made to save time.



## 5/ VENISON CHILI CON CARNE AND TACOS

Turn this popular dish into something different by substituting beef for minced venison. When ready to serve, warm the taco shells and serve with guacamole, sour cream, tomato salsa, lettuce and cheddar cheese.



## 2/ MOROCCAN VENISON STEW WITH COUSCOUS

This feisty, but comforting stew is a twist on traditional Moroccan tagine, but the venison makes it richer and heartier. It uses a wide range of ingredients including ras el hanout, a Moroccan spice blend, honey, prunes, chickpeas and tomato purée.



## 4/ VENISON GOCHUCHANG KEBABS

Cubes of venison are marinated in a spicy coating and left in the fridge overnight. Pop the cubes on a kebab and as soon as they hit the grill, start brushing them with the glaze made from gochuchang, a savoury, sweet and spicy fermented condiment popular in Korean cooking.



## Also In Season

Eat The Season recipe ideas this month are courtesy of Wild and Game, and Eat Wild



Beef



Brussels sprouts



Beetroot



Chestnuts



Turkey



# A

# Festive

# FEAST

With the festive finale to 2023 approaching fast, we're thrilled to unwrap and roll out some exciting new products to help chefs take advantage of the Christmas season and prepare for the year to come.

**NEW**

## COUNTRY RANGE CHOCOLATE, CHERRY AND RUM TART

Pack size: 1 x 14 Pre-portioned

This boozy on-trend tart features chocolate pastry filled with dark cherry compote and Belgian chocolate ganache, before being finished with dark chocolate shavings and a festive shimmer. Serve with freshly whipped cream for a decadent dessert this winter.

**NEW**

## COUNTRY RANGE CHOCOLATE ORANGE CHEESECAKE

Pack size: 1 x 14 Pre-portioned

A vegan-friendly, chocolate enriched, orange flavoured cheesecake on a chocolate and polenta biscuit base. Topped with a layer of orange flavoured jelly and covered in dark chocolate ganache. We've left this cheesecake unfinished, to provide you with a blank canvas to decorate how you wish. See our suggestion here of adding fresh orange slices for a bright and zesty display.

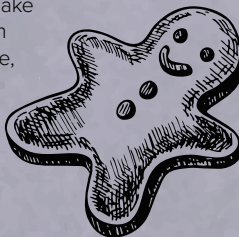


**NEW**

## COUNTRY RANGE GINGERBREAD CAKE

Pack size: 1 x 16 Pre-portioned

Three layers of ginger infused sponge filled with maple flavoured frosting and drizzled with caramel – a cake you definitely want to catch this Christmas. What's more, it's suitable for vegans, making it a versatile crowd-pleaser. Perfect for coffee and cake occasions.



**NEW**

## NEW COUNTRY RANGE SIGNATURE POTATO SIDEWINDERS®

Pack size: 2.5kg

This new addition to the Country Range Signature range of potato products provides you with a unique premium side to wow diners this festive season and beyond. This appealing potato style originates in the USA and features a crispy outside and soft, fluffy centre. The size and shape gives you great plate coverage per portion and the versatility is fantastic. Why not add some sunshine to your menu this winter by topping with Turkish lamb for an elevated version of loaded fries? Find this recipe and more at [countryrange.co.uk](https://countryrange.co.uk).



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# PLANT-BASED PERFECTION

World Vegan Month is celebrated annually in November, as is World Vegan Day (1st Nov) and Veganuary is on the horizon so it's a great time to add new dishes to the menu.

As it's the season to indulge, these vegan Portuguese custard tarts, also known as pastéis de nata, are bound to be an instant hit with vegans and non-vegans alike!

## Portuguese custard tarts



You can find all of the recipes on this page at [countryrange.co.uk/recipes](https://countryrange.co.uk/recipes)



## St Andrew's Day

A fisherman of Galilee, disciple of Jesus and brother to St Peter, St Andrew became the official patron saint of Scotland when the country's independence was signed at the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320. While St Andrew has stood as the patron saint of Scotland ever since, it wasn't until the 18th century that the day really started to be celebrated nationally by the Scots. Nowadays, the saint's feast day is celebrated across Scotland and by expats around the world with Scottish culture, dance, music, art and of course food all playing a vital role in the merriment.

Give your menu a Scottish spin for the day and try these Haggis Nachos using Country Range Salted Tortilla Chips and Grated Mozzarella Cheese.

30TH NOVEMBER



## Haggis Nachos



## Festive Cocktails

A traditional winter warmer in Germany, Glühwein is usually made with mulled wine, sugar, citrus fruits and then a medley of spices such as cinnamon, cloves and star anise. This version ditches the wine and features wheat beer and rum for depth of flavour. Replace the alcohol with orange juice for a booze-free version.

## GLUHBIER

Serves 2-3 depending on the size of your glasses



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 Country Range Cinnamon Stick
- 4 Country Range Whole Cloves
- 3-4 tbsp Country Range Honey, to taste
- 1 Country Range Whole Star Anise
- ½ tsp Country Range Ground Nutmeg
- 50ml dark rum
- 500ml wheat beer
- Pinch of salt
- 4 cardamom pods, crushed
- 40g fresh ginger, sliced
- Peel of one clementine or satsuma, plus more to garnish

### METHOD

1. Add all ingredients to a saucepan and bring to a slow boil over a low heat, regularly stirring to dissolve the honey.
2. As soon as the beer comes to the boil, remove pan from the heat and allow the ingredients to infuse for at least 10 minutes.
3. Strain well and reheat gently before serving.
4. Garnish with a twist of clementine or satsuma peel.

# MATCH MADE IN MAYO

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## HOW HOSPITALITY *is shaping a future for refugees*

**Trampoline Café in Camden, Central London provides barista and customer service training for refugees, helping them find employment and integrate into local society. The café was launched nearly two years ago by Pranav Chopra, founder of NEMI Teas and partners with The Hotel School, which supplies hospitality training for vulnerable people, and contract caterer Thomas Franks. Funding for the café is generated by sales and charitable donations by NEMI Teas.**

Pranav says "Most training takes place at The Hotel School in London's Victoria, although Ashkan, the café manager at Trampoline hosts

**"The café not only provides training and employment for refugees, it is also a springboard for emerging businesses."**

training sessions too. Sometimes partner brands such as Extract Coffee show trainees how to make coffees using signature blends."

On completing The Hotel School programme, participants are provided with a reliable reference and extensive work experience. They receive a certificate and find jobs at a range of hospitality venues through Trampoline's employment partner Thomas Franks. "Some trainees choose to further their learning," says Pranav. "For example,

Tetiana, a recent graduate, was selected to take part in a ten-week barista training course at Well Grounded and is now a qualified barista."

From Wednesday to Friday (8am to 4pm), Trampoline Café is run by Ashkan, the café manager, but at weekends, when it's open from 9am to 5pm, he is joined

by two other team members. The café has a small upstairs seating area for 15 people, as well as some tables outside on Camden Passage. There are plans to open Trampoline Café as a bar in the evenings.

The menu offers the full range of speciality coffee, Nemi Teas and soft drinks. The lunch-time menu includes dishes named after their creators such as Yogi's chilli chicken ciabatta roll, Nafa's epic veggie focaccia sandwich or Lidia's Ethiopian lentil soup. Weekend specials include ricotta and spinach rolls, sweet potato spicy pastry, and a variety of sweet treats such as banana bread and carrot cake are also available.

The café not only provides training and employment for refugees, it is also a springboard for emerging businesses. The team regularly make shelf-space for exciting new brands and products to help them get started.

There are plans in the pipeline to open 14 more Trampoline cafés. Pranav says, "That is still our

**Above**  
Pranav Chopra and team at Trampoline Café

long-term goal, but at the moment we're focusing on growing our sales at Trampoline Café and developing our business model."

Ashkan, café manager of Trampoline Café, is a former accountant, who moved from Iran to London four years ago. He says "Moving to the UK was overwhelming for me and when you can't communicate, it can lead to feeling depressed and isolated. Getting a job was my greatest achievement. Working at the café has definitely opened me up to the community and helped me feel more comfortable. Being promoted to manager has brought challenges but has given me more confidence. My favourite part of working with the team is that it has pushed me to be more outgoing and improved my English skills. It has made feel more settled in London and I've made new friends."

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# How Small Changes MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

**Getting schoolchildren to eat more vegetables has always been a huge challenge, but Blackpool Catering Services has managed to increase vegetable portions in its schools by 170% over a 12month period.**

Serving an average of 6,000 meals a day across 20 primary schools, 5 high schools and 4 special needs schools, the organisation has recently received a Veg-o-Meter Award for their achievement from Peas Please, an initiative developed by The Food Foundation to increase vegetable consumption.

"We changed the way staff ask students whether they would like vegetables with their meal. Instead

of asking 'Do you want veg?', it would be 'Would you like sweetcorn or peas?' Simple changes like this made a big difference," says Derek Wright, Catering Services Manager, Blackpool Catering Services. "More vegetables were put into the base ingredients, for example hidden in sauces, so youngsters sometimes don't know they are there. The way vegetables are presented and cooked is also important, so they look vibrant and inviting."

The salad bar is another way of increasing vegetable consumption.

"We make sure it looks inviting and as it's unstaffed, the older students can help themselves and make their own choices," continues Derek. "Menus, in a three-weekly cycle, are changed twice a year and include a weekly Meat Free Monday. Popular dishes include roast dinner such as beef, pork and turkey, although dishes such as quorn and sweet potato curry are well received."

Derek heads up a team of 150 including 32 chefs/unit managers, who are in charge of their own schools. Virtually all schools have a kitchen, where the staff are based.

He says "I'm proud of my team. With all the challenges put before them such as mobilising new schools and responding to the pandemic, they have stepped up to the mark and that's because we're all committed to the local town and the young people who live here."

Blackpool Catering Services doesn't just provide school meals,

it also prepares young people for the future with their in-house Chefs Academy. The students who attend are those who are typically disengaged from their education and at risk of leaving school with no

**"Instead of asking 'Do you want veg?', it would be 'Would you like sweetcorn or peas?' Simple changes like this made a big difference"**

qualifications. Derek explains "The Chefs Academy gives them the opportunity to be in a real live working environment two days a week. They achieve a qualification and go on to further education colleges or apprenticeships. It sets them on a pathway to a hospitality career."

Academy trainees also get involved in catering for prestigious events. In 2023, they prepared lunch for Prince Edward, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was visiting Duke of Edinburgh Award participants in the area.



**Left:**  
Blackpool Catering Services  
Derek Wright

Plans are in the pipeline to launch a new Mini Chefs Academy for primary school children. Derek says "We want to introduce cookery to youngsters at an early age as part of what we do as a service and work alongside schools to educate them about food."





*Red Cherry Roulade created by Country Range customer Ian Clifton specifically as a texture-modified sweet treat*

# CATERING FOR CARE HOME RESIDENTS WITH *dysphagia*

**Dysphagia is the medical term for swallowing difficulties. It can be caused by a range of conditions, such as cancer, head injuries, a stroke or dementia. Depending on the severity of their dysphagia, a care home resident may find some textures hard to swallow or may have lost the ability to swallow at all, which makes eating difficult. Knowing what dysphagia is and how to best support someone with it is therefore vital - the condition must be carefully managed to prevent malnourishment and more extreme medical problems.**

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) gives mandatory guidelines for caterers on how to provide the right dietary support for residents with dysphagia. Under these guidelines, all food and fluids are graded on a 0-7 scale based on their viscosity, with zero being the lowest such as water, and seven referring to easy-to-chew foods.

Leni Wood, Head of Nutrition and Wellness at Nellstar, highlights how instrumental these guidelines are in their kitchens: "We have staff in some homes whose first language is not English, who find it easier to read and understand information in their first language. I can easily direct them to the IDDSI guidance in any language and they can read how to comply. I always say to everyone, the IDDSI framework is your bible when it comes to knowing the texture modified levels and we can all follow what is written."

Having the correct equipment to modify food is essential. For example, the chefs at Aria Care adapt their method for modifying texture depending on the IDDSI scale, using a Thermomix machine for levels 3, 4 and 5 and a fork for level 6 to crush food into soft and bite-sized 1.5cm x 1.5 cm cubes.

## The IDDSI Framework

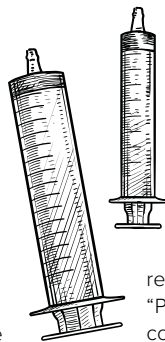
Providing a common terminology for describing food textures and drink thicknesses to improve safety for individuals with swallowing difficulties.



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The IDDSI guidelines make it easy for chefs to texture-check prepared foods, however for testing liquids, two syringes must be used to test the flow rate. Once the tools are in place, it's crucial that all catering staff are trained to the same level.



"Thanks to continuous training, at Aria our chefs are able to reverse engineer our menus, so all residents have the opportunity to eat the same thing - preventing anyone from feeling isolated or different - and we encourage anyone supporting residents with dysphagia to do the same. There are no limitations to what someone with dysphagia can eat - they need to eat a full, nutritious and balanced diet, just like everyone else and the IDDSI guidelines help us to deliver just that," comments James Clear, hospitality director, Aria Care.

When a resident has been

assessed for dysphagia, chefs at Aria Care create menus around their likes and dislikes, identifying any modifications that are required for a particular dish. "Presentation is also key," continues James. "We all eat with our eyes, so we focus on the presentation as well as the taste to ensure residents' appetites are stimulated by both the look and smells of the foods. With the IDDSI meals, you should always try to replicate the original dish regardless of the IDDSI level to maintain dining quality."

Regular tasting sessions are another way to keep menus fresh and inviting. "You can gain feedback, interact with those you are cooking for and respond to people," says Leni. "It is also important to have a tasting session with your kitchen team. The flavour is so important, especially with levels 3,4 and 5."

To find out more information on IDDSI please visit <https://iddsi.org/framework/>



## APRICOT GLAZED PANETTONE AND BUTTER PUDDING, BAKED WITH AMBROSIA DEVON CUSTARD

PREP TIME: 30MINS

COOK TIME: 30MINS

SERVES  
**10**

Suitable for Vegetarians: **Yes** | Suitable for Coeliac: **No**  
Allergens: **Gluten, Milk, Nuts, Sulphur Dioxide, Egg.**  
**May contain Mustard, Soya**

### INGREDIENTS

**750g** panettone, thickly sliced **400g** soft butter

### FOR THE CUSTARD

**400ml** whole milk **1** egg yolk  
**400ml** Ambrosia Devon Custard **5 tbsp** caster sugar  
**4** whole eggs

### FOR THE APRICOT GLAZE

**6 tbsp** apricot jam **3 tbsp** water

### METHOD

- Make the custard by whisking all the ingredients together in a bowl. Set aside.
- Next make the apricot glaze by mixing the water and jam together in a small saucepan on a medium heat and bringing the mix up to a simmer. Pass through a fine sieve. Set aside.
- Preheat a fan oven to 150°C ready to cook the pudding.
- Spread the butter onto the sliced panettone.
- Layer the panettone in an ovenproof dish. Pour a third of the custard mix on top of the panettone and repeat the process a couple more times.
- Set the pudding aside for a couple of hours for the custard mix to soak in.
- Cook for 30 minutes until set, but still wobbly.
- Rest for 10 minutes and then brush the apricot glaze on top of the pudding.
- Serve with pouring cream or Ambrosia Devon Custard.

### CHEF'S TIPS

- Mixed berry compote works well served with this dish.
- Instead of panettone, try this recipe with pain au chocolat or brioche.

*Always on hand to help.*



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# Culinary Wellness

Tempting diners  
with nutrition



*Barley  
and lentil stew*



After the excesses of the festive period, January is usually a time when consumers dust off the scales and put their plans for a healthier New Year into action. In this month's Category Focus, we explore how operators can help customers stick to their diet by making nutritional information more accessible, introducing healthier dishes or promoting healthy options to their audience.

## MASTERING THE ART OF INGREDIENT SWAPS

In the realm of health-conscious dining, ingredient swaps are the go-to strategy for reducing fat and sugar content without compromising flavour. Refined sugars are being replaced with natural sweeteners such as honey, maple syrup, or dates, and butter is often replaced with olive oil. Operators looking to reduce the amount of sugar, salt and fat in their meals can learn a great deal from their peers in the education sector. Here, caterers are often having to meet strict nutritional guidelines in a bid to slow the rate of childhood obesity.

#### Clockwise from top

Sicilian lemon and  
ginger kombucha

Broccoli and quinoa  
burgers

Porridge with cooked  
apple, vanilla, star anise  
and maple syrup drizzle

Protein energy bites  
with oatmeal, cinnamon,  
almond butter, tahini  
and sesame seeds

"When we look at healthier recipes, we tend to avoid adding processed products that are usually higher in fat and sugar," says Liz Greene, CMC School Food. "We also try to replace butter for olive oil or those containing monounsaturated fats and yoghurt for cream. Reduced-fat cheeses are another option as is using a mature cheddar instead of mild, so that you use less product to get the same taste. Easy swaps are reduced salt and sugar baked beans or replacing sugary cereals with wholegrain or porridge. In savoury recipes, swapping some of the flour and sugar for beetroot or sweet potato reduces calories and boosts the nutritional value of the cake in terms of vitamin, mineral and fibre content."

#### IMPROVING TRANSPARENCY

In April 2022, the government introduced a regulation requiring hospitality businesses in England employing more than 250 staff to clearly display the calories contained per dish on their menu, along with a statement regarding the recommended calorie intake for adults per day. Despite the bad timing and difficulties implementing the regulation, it does highlight an inconvenient truth that many dishes contain more calories than consumers assume. While calories don't portray the nutritional value of a dish, they are a good guide for those looking to reduce their intake. Not all businesses have the budget for an in-house nutritionist or specialist software, but rather than trying to nail specifics, it is possible to group menu items into calorie

bands using your supplier's nutritional information and the government approved database. As a smaller business, by labelling a dish as "under 500kcal" or with a traffic light system, you are able to give consumers enough of a guide to help them make healthier choices.

#### HEALTHY INDULGENCE

Often, the more we try to cut out of our diet, the more we crave what we shouldn't have. Offering a little light indulgence so your customers can 'have their cake and eat it too' helps them stay on track and not feel excluded when they eat out.

Using flour such as almond or coconut in conjunction with natural sweeteners such as date and apple puree, agave syrup or stevia maintain the enjoyment of

indulging on cakes and pastries while reducing the impact on blood sugar levels. This doesn't mean a cake becomes a health-food, but the calories and amount of sugar consumed will be less than a regular treat.

Indulgence doesn't always take the form of cake, many operators are now offering healthier options in the form of energy balls. Whether home-or-pre-made, they are perfect finger food for snacking and can help diners feel fuller for longer. Alternatively, air-popped and lightly seasoned popcorn is a good healthy snack that can take on many different flavours and is high in fibre. For desserts, look to fruit-based dishes such as a mango and yoghurt layer pot, made with low fat yoghurt, fresh mango and a dusting of high-protein granola. This can also be made in smaller pots for hand-held snacks in residential care homes.

#### NUTRITION-PACKED DELIGHTS

The right snack can be a nutritious way to fuel your body and keep you energised between meals – if they count towards your 5-a-day, it's even better. Nutrient-rich ingredients such as kale, quinoa, avocado and legumes are not only great ingredients for hearty main meals, they also pack a punch as savoury snacks too. Pret led the market with their protein pots a few years ago, adding a vegan pot to the range in 2021. The industry has responded with many operators creating their own versions.

In addition to snack foods, antioxidant-loaded salads, grain bowls and lean cuts of meat or fish cater to diners seeking more than just a delicious meal. Not only do they satisfy cravings, they fuel the body with vitamins, minerals, and essential nutrients. Recipes such as a chicken hummus

**AIR-POPPED POPCORN IS A LOW-COST, HEALTHY SNACK THAT'S ALSO VERY POPULAR, SO CAPITALISE ON THE DEMAND BY CREATING YOUR OWN GOURMET FLAVOURS, ROTATING THEM REGULARLY TO KEEP YOUR CUSTOMERS COMING BACK FOR MORE. CONSUMERS EXPECT TO PAY MORE FOR ARTISAN POPCORN THAN FOR A PACKET OF CRISPS, SO THIS HAS POTENTIAL TO BE AN EASY-TO-MAKE, HIGH-MARGIN MENU ITEM.**







bowl, grilled bavette steak with tomato salad, lentil stew with salsa verde and baked halibut with quinoa are not just flavourful and nutritious, they are also visually appealing too – which is critical for encouraging healthy meal decisions.

Packing nutrition into dishes is second-nature to many care home caterers who take every opportunity to increase the protein, vitamins and minerals in every dish. During the cooler months, care home residents can benefit from comforting snacks such as baked vegetable crisps or warm, hearty soups. Smoked mackerel pâté on seeded toast, porridge made with steel-cut oats, chili made with ground turkey mince and stews made with a selection of beans are just a few ideas that deliver high nutritional value and a touch of nostalgia, without compromising on flavour.

### GUT HEALTH: SUSTAINING A TREND FOR WELLNESS

Gut health, a trend that has flourished over recent years, remains prevalent in the hospitality sector. The link between a balanced gut microbiome and overall well-being has inspired operators to incorporate gut-friendly foods into their menus. Fermented foods like kimchi,

sauerkraut, kombucha, and kefir are renowned for their probiotic content. As we venture into 2024, gut health will continue to develop, and we will see further innovation for introducing probiotics and prebiotics into menus.

### CULTIVATING HEALTHY HABITS

Schools are vital in shaping children's relationships with food. Many educational institutions are implementing holistic programs that combine nutritional education with hands-on experiences, such as school gardens, in-class activities and dining hall events.

"Schools can help to instill a healthy eating culture by including it as part of the classroom learning, and engaging with parents to encourage healthy breakfasts and lunchboxes. Also, involving pupils with growing your own produce in school has been shown by studies to increase pupils' intake of fruit and vegetables. Fruitilicious Friday is always a winner in our primary schools; the children argue who will eat the edible figure!" says Liz.

By exposing children to fresh produce and involving them in meal planning, schools can foster a lifelong appreciation for healthy eating and broaden a child's diet to include fruit, vegetables and flavours they had not previously considered.

The emphasis on health-conscious dining is more than a trend – it's a commitment to nourishing your customers whether young or old, in body and spirit. Through ingredient swaps, innovative dishes, and an unwavering dedication to nutrition, the hospitality sector is central to enjoying food that supports our well-being. As we count the year down to 2024 and a wave of New Year's resolutions begin, how will you adapt your menu to meet the opportunities that emerge?





Photo by Priscilla Du Preez

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# Making ends meet

## HEALTHY & HEARTY

This month, Paul Dickson looks ahead to the New Year with some healthy and nutritious menu ideas that can be adapted for different diners.

We're just gearing up for the season of indulgence and we all know that when it's all over, everybody will be going on their New Year health kick. However, we'll still be in the depths of winter and when it's cold and dark outside, a light salad just doesn't cut it. So how can we strike the balance of creating nutrient-rich, light and healthy options whilst providing the comfort food that keeps us warm? It's also the time of year when a variety of fresh produce can be scarce or expensive. My ideas below are versatile so that you can swap in frozen vegetables and fruit, as well as changing up the ingredients depending on who you are cooking for.



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](http://www.countryrange.co.uk/recipes) or by scanning the QR code.



### ONE-POT WONDER

*Chicken Tray Bake*

When it comes to nutritious comfort food in the winter months, chicken is up there with the most crowd-pleasing and versatile proteins. I wrap chicken breasts in bacon to add flavour and stop them from drying out. Try adding them to a hearty tray bake with seasonal vegetables. I also add pearl barley which is fantastic for bulking out dishes and makes a very comforting and nutritious winter one-pot meal.

### Nutrient Packed Broth

Salmon is a great source of protein and omega-3 fatty acids. There are various studies that suggest a range of benefits of eating oily fish to support the ageing process, including helping to improve memory, dampening the effects of inflammation and preventing muscle loss. It is also a very familiar flavour and soft to eat which makes it a good choice for menus in health and care settings. With this in mind, this recipe for salmon broth can be adapted depending on what ingredients you have available and the dietary needs of residents and patients. For example, you can easily use frozen vegetables for a cost-effective solution and add double cream to increase the calories for those who need it.



*Salmon Broth*

**"SALMON IS A GREAT SOURCE OF PROTEIN AND OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS."**



### SWITCH UP THE SEASONS

By the time we get into January and February, it can feel like winter has dragged on for long enough, whilst spring still feels far away. I like to keep frozen summer berries in the freezer for this time of year, so that I can create some fresh, healthy and summery flavours which people start to crave once the indulgence of Christmas is over. A great way to use frozen berries is to create smoothies, which are such a versatile way to pack in nutrients and vitamins. I use honey to add a natural sweetness and the ingredients can be adapted to suit the audience, for example low fat yoghurt for children and students, or full fat milk for care residents and patients. Another top tip is to add oats for additional fibre and other health benefits.

*Summer Fruit Smoothie*







# DECK your fridge WITH 20



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# HOW TO DEVELOP *a non-alcoholic beverage menu*



**Tim Pethick**  
is the  
founder  
and chief  
zerologist at  
Zero Zilch

**Zip, a specialist importer, distributor and retailer of a curated range of non-alcoholic drinks.**

## WHAT DRINKS SHOULD BE FEATURED ON A LOW AND NON-ALCOHOL MENU?

While some drinkers are sober for religious or health reasons and research suggests about 25% of Gen Z don't drink alcohol at all, the biggest market is moderators – those people who are cutting back their alcohol consumption either regularly or occasionally. Traditionally, drinkers are split roughly into thirds (beer, wine and spirits), although wine has a slight edge over the other two. It isn't quite the same in the non-alcoholic space yet. Non-alcoholic beers are about 75% of the market, but this is changing.

I would include a few beer choices, some wines and a spirit.

**“Some drinkers are sober for religious or health reasons and research suggests about 25% of Gen Z don't drink alcohol at all.”**

Customers choosing a low or non-alcoholic drink might equally be consuming alcohol on another night, but either way, they don't want to feel different from any other customer. So, it's best to include low and non-alcoholic selections in the one menu. Of course, if that isn't possible, the fallback is to have a separate low and non-alcoholic menu.

## HOW CAN OPERATORS IMPROVE THEIR PROFIT MARGINS WITH NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS?

Many people are drinking non-alcoholic beer because it is all that is available at many venues. This limits the revenue opportunity – they might spend £4.50 on a beer but would otherwise have spent £9 on a glass of non-alcoholic wine or £20 on a bottle.

Don't just carry a single supermarket-available non-alcoholic beer. If a customer knows they can buy it for a £1 in a supermarket, they will feel cheated by having to pay £4.50 for it in a restaurant. Instead offer them a craft beer that isn't as

readily and cheaply available. Better yet, upsell them to a non-alcoholic wine or spirit.

## ARE MOCKTAILS A GOOD IDEA?

Whether you call them mocktails or non-alcoholic cocktails, they are firm favourites with many drinkers. It can be tricky to stock a broad range of non-alcoholic options, so either use Ready-to-Drink (RTDs) pre-mixed drinks, often in cans or non-alcoholic wines as a base to create cocktails.

## WHAT ARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR NON-ALCOHOLIC WINES?

While de-alcoholised wines are improving, there is also a growing body of wine alternative products being produced. These drinks didn't start life as wine but have been crafted, in a variety of different ways, to be non-alcoholic alternatives for a wine occasion. The best de-alcoholised wines will often cost more than alcoholic ones. This is because they are more expensive to produce. They start life as wines and then are de-alcoholised and rebuilt and are currently produced in small volumes. The price will come down when volumes increase, and they are more readily available.

## DO YOU HAVE ANY SERVING TIPS?

Non-alcoholic red wines are transformed when slightly chilled. They will never be as complex as their alcoholic equivalent, but chilling red wine brings out the flavours and makes them a more acceptable alternative for traditional wine drinkers.





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# CATERING WITH COMPASSION

## DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE DINING

**Catering for care home residents with dementia has many challenges including a decreased appetite, lack of interest in food and the loss of taste. Some may have no concept of time, which makes regular meal-times problematic.**

Getting to know the resident, their likes and dislikes is essential in order to ensure they receive proper nutritious meals. Andy Cullum, national craft trainer, Four Seasons Health Care Group, says "The key is to concentrate on what a resident can do rather than on what they can't."

When a new resident arrives at one of their homes, the catering team has a meeting with the care team and family. Andy explains, "We issue a food passport (as a Word document) listing the resident's likes, dislikes and allergies. The chef manager has regular meetings, so the food passport is updated, and this helps us improve people's appetites. For example, one day a resident might like corned beef, the next day they don't want it."

### WORKING UP AN APPETITE

A decreased appetite is a common issue. Residents with dementia might not want the food on the menu and push their plate away. Offering alternatives is a good idea such as sandwiches, snacks, omelettes or even finger food if they wish to walk round with it. "The key thing to remember is not to give up," says Andy. "Just because someone pushed a meal away to start with and finds it hard to communicate, it doesn't mean

they're not hungry. It's just that they can't express that they don't like what's put in front of them. The more you communicate with someone with dementia you'll get to understand them. You learn how to tell if someone wants a pork pie or an ice cream."

Another factor to consider is that residents start losing their tastebuds or their perception of taste "so you have to add flavouring," says Dave. "For example, with a cauliflower cheese, we'll add ingredients such as Dijon mustard and chicken stock to get their tastebuds picking up on those flavours again."

Provision also needs to be made for residents with dementia who have no concept of time and don't understand mealtimes. Dave says, "If they walk round the corridors all day, have finger food available. Place small plates around the home where they go. They may be in the "Midnight Club" – what I mean by that is some people with dementia may wake up at 1am. We would have a meal on hand for them. This would have been cooled down safely, with staff trained to regenerate and serve them."

### SUPPORTING LIFE DECISIONS

A resident who has dementia may forget that they follow a vegan or vegetarian diet. A vegetarian may

ask for meat because they see others eating it or they may eat off the plates of others who are meat-eaters. Amanda Woodvine from charity Vegetarian for Life (VfL) says, "We have introduced the Memory Care Pledge for care homes containing five key measures to ensure that vegetarian and vegan residents can continue living their lives the way they intended. This includes respecting how people want to eat as well as what they eat, for example seating residents who are vegan or vegetarian on a meat-free table or providing a vegan birthday cake. We recommend holding a tasting session including foods such as vegan ice cream, vegan cheese and plant milks."

### THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Encouraging residents with dementia to eat and enjoy their food, is not just about the meal itself, the environment needs to be relaxing and inviting. Andy Cullen says "Don't have the table legs the same colour as the floor as the resident might have problems finding where to sit. Dining should be an experience. Put flowers on

the table and play relaxing music. When residents first visit, ask them what their five favourite songs are. Do that with all the residents, then put the songs on a memory stick and play them in the dining room. The area should be well lit. Have old pictures on the wall – maybe the old Oxo cubes ads. Arrange a nostalgia table with the activity team for more interest including items such as giveaway cars that were available in old Kelloggs cereal packets that remind them of their childhood."

Lianne Garland, head chef from Elmfield Care recommends serving food on brightly coloured plates so they stand out from the tablecloths. "Add a variety of differently coloured food as it's been found people with dementia can sometimes struggle with seeing colours. A dementia friendly table will have lots of contrasting colours for cutlery, crockery, tablecloths and plates. Heavier plates with a lip can help as they're less likely to slip or spill."

You can read more tips in the extended version of this article at [stirupmagazine.co.uk](http://stirupmagazine.co.uk)



# Rising star SHAUN HURRELL

**BARRIO COMIDA & LA MESA**

**Having worked for-and-with some of the biggest names in food, chef Shaun Hurrell has been bringing the real Mexico to the north-east through his award-winning Barrio Comida restaurant. We caught up with Shaun to discuss his path to success and his latest restaurant, La Mesa.**

**When did you start cooking and when did you first think about it being a career?**

I cooked a little bit growing up at home and my Grandma was a proper gourmand, who loved eating out at great restaurants to which she would often take me along. She also had loads of old cookbooks, which I would peruse and take home.

**What were the key steps in your development and career?**

My first kitchen roles were in a small bistro in the wine country of North California and then a seafood restaurant, but I knew I wanted to go down the fine dining route. You can't work in the high-level US kitchens until you're 18 and most prospective chefs go to culinary school but because I had dropped out of school at a young age and due to the costs involved in college, that wasn't an option for me. As I was born in York and retained my British passport, I decided instead to head to England and planned to spend a year or two there and in Europe learning classical French cooking.

**Did you have any mentors?**

I would say Terry Laybourne more than anyone else. He's certainly the person

I would call if I ever had an issue and couldn't work out what to do. He is a great teacher and person.

**Who do you look up to in the industry?**

JKS in London are incredible, Danny Meyer in New York and in Mexico, Enrique Olvera is the king.

**What makes a great restaurateur?**

I think it is all about finding balance and doing everything well. The food, the service, man management, costs,

I cooked, researched, and tested recipes, the more I got hooked on the depth, choice and variety of Mexican food. It was almost like when I first discovered classical French cooking.

**How did Barrio Comida come about?**

We used to do pop-ups in Durham and the students would go mad for our food and we would always sell out, so we started looking for prospective sites in that area. My partner's cousin found a site, but

it was a hole in the ground and would need a full build and kit out, which we just didn't have the funds for. Thankfully the developer of the land liked the sound of the business, and we became partners, which put us in an enviable position of building our own restaurant

from scratch and having everything exactly where it should be.

**Tell us about the food at Barrio**

Barrio isn't about my style of cooking, it's about taking inspiration from Mexico and its food heritage, while utilising the very best produce around us in England. There is no massive spin – it's just about great execution and respecting the culture.

**And you recently launched La Mesa – how is that different?**

La Mesa is where we get to be more creative and refined. There are just 20 covers, and everyone eats around one big table so it's a different experience all round. We will take a Mexican ingredient, technique or dish and see how we can

**“Barrio isn't about my style of cooking, it's about taking inspiration from Mexico and its food heritage, while utilising the very best produce around us in England.”**

promotion - you have to be good and in control of everything. This is when you can create that magic that you can't quite put your finger on where everything works in harmony.

**What brought you to the North-east of England?**

My partner and I were expecting our first child, so the plan was always to head back to where she was from. As I was brought up on great Mexican food in California and the choice and quality in the UK was lacking to say the least, I decided on that route. I took out a credit card for £3K, bought some basic equipment, tortilla press, trestle tables griddle etc, and started cooking at street food markets, festivals, and private events. It was starting to pay off and we were getting great feedback. The more







in often hostile environments. My team work around 45 hours over 4 days, they're paid well, they have breaks, free food and are spoken to nicely. It is far better than it was.

#### Any tips to deal with the challenge of rising costs?

I think chefs and managers have to get good control over labour costs. We look closely at rotas and break down all the jobs throughout each day. We know where people should be, what they should be doing and how long each task should take. It makes it easy to monitor labour better. With regard to food costs, we price check all our suppliers every single week to ensure we're getting the best produce and prices. You have to be extra vigilant, or you won't survive.

#### Three tips vital for success in a professional kitchen

1. Attention to detail
2. Quality work ethic
3. Grit, determination, and the will to succeed.

#### Outside of work, what are your passions?

The one sport I follow is basketball and my team is the Denver Nuggets who won this year but everything I do revolves around food and restaurants. I love the industry, and I love eating in and being in restaurants.

#### Left (clockwise)

Shaun Hurrell

Chocolate from chiapas with café de olla spices and mostachones with pecan and worm salt

High table seating

Tuna tostada, chintextile and peanut



adapt it to the best seasonal produce available throughout the year. This summer, we created a traditional Tres Leche Cake with British cherries and buffalo ricotta ice cream.

#### Can the industry do anything better? How would you change it?

Things can always improve but there is no better time to be a chef. When I was a young chef, I worked 90-hour weeks, for half of the minimum wage,



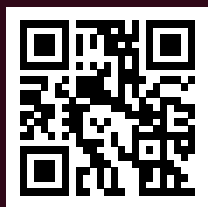


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# 5 WAYS TO USE Pecan Nuts



A true nut of the Americas, the majority of the world's pecan nuts come from the southern states of America and Mexico. Brilliant in the kitchen, pecans are widely used in cake, cookie, muffin, tart and sweet pie recipes but they're just as useful in savoury dishes too.

## ABOUT: ANDREW GREEN

Andrew Green is the Chief Executive of the Craft Guild of Chefs. Established in 1965, the esteemed Chef's association celebrated 50 years in 2015 and continues to lead the way when it comes to representing, training, testing, developing and supporting chefs from across the foodservice spectrum. Here are his five ideas for using Country Range pecan nuts:



### 1/ Pecan perfection

For the true glory of the pecan, look no further than a traditional pecan pie and for a stunning accompaniment, I love to serve with homemade butter pecan ice cream.

### 4/ Winter wonder salads

Toasted pecans are fantastic when paired with fresh and dried fruits. In the winter months, I enjoy making a simple apple, cranberry and pecan salad with a punchy dressing.

“Brilliant in the kitchen, pecans are widely used in cake, cookie, muffin, tart and sweet pie recipes but they're just as useful in savoury dishes too.”

### 2/ Crust is a must

Great for texture and flavour when used as a crust on all manner of meats and fish, my all-time favourite is pecan crusted salmon with a lemon glaze.

### 5/ Brownie twist

For added visual effect, contrast, texture and taste, try adding pecans to your brownie recipe.

### 3/ Brilliant for baking

Whether for cakes, puddings or bread, pecans are a powerful ingredient. One of my favourite loaves is a beautiful banana bread made with the addition of pecan nuts.



Country Range Pecan Nuts  
Pack size: 1kg



# Eating for a Better Planet

## Veganuary 2024

Veganuary has been hitting new heights every year and 2024 looks like it will be no different. With the number of participants growing and maintaining the change in their diet beyond January, it is an event operators can no longer ignore. As the festive season dies down, Veganuary is a great way to capitalise on an international trend to boost sales in what has traditionally been a quieter trading month. No matter the sector or catering specialism, this is an event that can be tailored to meet audiences young, old and every stage in between.



**BING-YU LEE**  
*Kikkoman*

Kikkoman Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce is a must have ingredient for a vegan menu because it's very rich in umami. With vegan foods umami can add that deep savoury flavour and intensifies the taste of the other ingredients too. It can be used in vegan burgers, drizzled on the burger after it has been cooked, or use it in combination with other umami ingredients such as tomatoes and mushrooms in stir fries, for stuffings, pancakes and dumplings. It is also great in rice dishes from risotto to crispy baked rice. When cooking tofu-based dishes, Kikkoman Soy Sauce is a must as it imparts the flavour that is synonymous with Asian dishes.



*Viva! White Wine lentils*





**JASMINE CLARK,**  
*Senior Environment  
Campaigner, Viva!*

Going vegan this  
Veganuary? Viva!'s  
support materials

and Vegan Recipe Club can help! As the number of vegans grows, restaurants can join in too, helping pave the way towards planet-friendly food by making 50 per cent of their menu vegan by the end of 2025. This is the focus of Viva!'s latest 50 by 25 campaign. Expanding plant-based options enables customers to choose dishes that are better for the environment and just as tasty. It's the perfect time to try vegan fish, our Vegan Salmon Fillet shows you can have the taste of the sea without fish. Our Spanish White Wine Lentils, Vegetable Dhansak, Golden 'Chicken' and Leek Pies are full of plant-based protein but have a lower carbon footprint than their meaty equivalents, while our Easy Rocky Road and Raspberry & White Chocolate Blondies are dairy-free, so have a low carbon footprint but score high in taste!



**KATIE ATKIN**  
*Brand Manager,  
Cooks&Co*

Our Cooks&Co vegan pesto is a useful addition to busy kitchens looking to add flavour and colour to vegan dishes this Veganuary. It is perfect when added to breadcrumbs to add extra texture and flavour to dishes or simply drizzled over soups to bring added taste and colour. The pesto is made from a blend of fresh Italian basil and sunflower seeds. It brings a delicious, rich and distinctive flavour to meat-free or plant-based dishes and is perfect with pasta, as a dip, or spread on pizza. It is Vegetarian Society Vegan Approved and nut free.



**MICHAEL HARRIDENCE**  
*Consultant, CMC  
School Food*

We're always looking  
at new recipes to

encourage pupils to eat less meat. Ideally, schools should offer at least one vegan/vegetarian meal each day, even something as simple as pasta with tomato sauce. With schools being so culturally diverse, often this dish is the most inclusive option on the menu.

We encourage vegetarian options in school by getting them to discuss the impact on the planet and the many health benefits associated with a plant-based diet. Schools should avoid labels like meat free and vegan on the menu, and instead use phrases like plant powered. The dish should sound indulgent and exciting making it as attractive as possible.

This year, our vegan Katsu curry with brown rice was a winner in schools. For 2024 we're adding Sticky-Toffee Plant-Powered Pudding, Butternut Squash & Coconut Dhal with Rice and Plant-Based Kofta Flatbread with Pickled Slaw and Lemon & Garlic Mayo.



**GRETA STROLYTE**  
*Brand Manager,  
Lucky Boat*

According to Finder,  
an estimated 7.8% of  
the UK population

will be following a vegan diet at the beginning of 2023 and there are plenty of consumers who don't identify as vegan but are curious to try it. A survey of 2,000 UK adults revealed 'a third of people (32%) choose to eat vegan out of home because they want to try something new and different'. Tap in to the huge popularity of Asian cuisines, tasty stir-fries and noodle soups that are easy to adapt to suit vegans. Our entire noodle range is suitable for vegans and vegetarians as they are free from egg.



**Vegan chocolate crêpes with  
blueberry and chocolate paste**



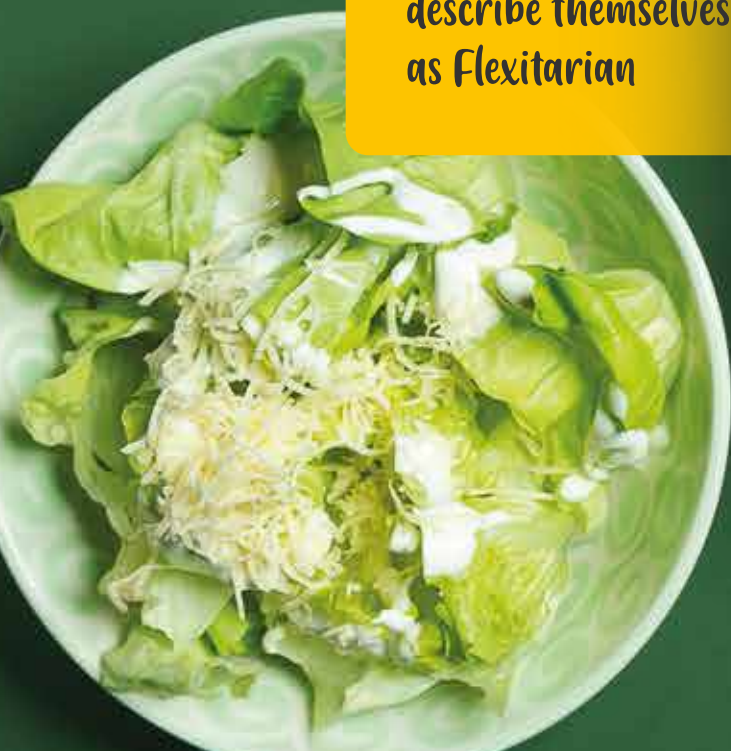
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# THE MARKETPLACE

KEEPING YOU UP-TO-DATE ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WITHIN THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

## Premier Foods launches vegan jelly range

Having listened to requirements for plant-based products, that meet the whole nation's school standards on sugar, Premier Foods is launching a new McDougalls vegan jelly that's certified by the Vegan Society.

A versatile jelly that can be enjoyed on its own, topped with fruits, or set with fruit encased, McDougalls Jelly Crystals are available in 3 flavours (orange, strawberry, and raspberry) and can be prepared and served on the same day, with a mere two-hour setting time.

Unlike traditional jellies that require a mix of boiling and cold water, McDougalls vegan jelly is made using 100% boiling water.



## CENTRAL FOODS LAUNCH A DUO OF MEAT- FREE RANGES

The frozen food distributor has launched vegan Asian-style prawns and meat-free tikka kebab skewers to its plant-based range for the food service sector.

The Shicken Tikka Kebab Skewers feature tasty meat-free chicken-style pieces in a medium-spiced vegan tikka marinade, threaded onto a biodegradable bamboo skewer. At approximately 80g per skewer, the tikka kebab skewers are available in packs of two, with each pack containing ten kebabs. Oven cook from frozen or chilled.

The Menuserve gluten-free, vegan Asian prawn snack selection features three different varieties of snack – the



torpedo, which is a filo-wrapped vegan prawn, the breaded, which is a crumbed vegan prawn, and the bubble, which is a battered vegan prawn. It is available in cases of 48, featuring 16 of each variety, and simply needs heating before serving.

Gordon Lauder, MD of frozen food distributor Central Foods, said: "Our aim is to offer delicious meat-free alternatives that will appeal to all, not just those with dietary requirements."

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# HEADS<sup>UP</sup>

## *From Tips to Savings: How to improve the financial well-being of your employees*

**Financial well-being encompasses the peace of mind and security that comes from effectively managing your financial resources. It's about having the ability to cover your basic needs, plan for the future, and handle unexpected expenses without undue stress. In a world where financial stability often feels elusive, achieving and maintaining financial well-being has become increasingly important.**

The nature of the hospitality industry can pose challenges to the financial well-being of staff, who often face irregular working hours, fluctuating income, and limited benefits. To support their employees, operators can introduce the following strategies:

### *Provide stable working hours and schedules*

Stability not only helps your team plan their budgets more effectively, but also fosters a sense of security. This can be bolstered with retirement plan assistance, paid sick leave and refraining from zero-hours contracts to reinforce a culture where employees feel the company cares about their well-being beyond the workplace.

### *Financial education*

Financial literacy is a critical skill. Employers can offer workshops or training sessions on budgeting, saving, investing and managing debt with local financial advisors. This empowers employees to make better financial decisions.

### *Flexible pay options*

Introducing flexible pay options, such as the ability to access a portion of earned wages before their regular payday, can assist employees when they are managing unexpected expenses without resorting to high-interest loans.

### *Support and counselling*

Employee assistance programs can provide confidential counselling and resources for financial matters. This support can be invaluable for employees facing specific financial challenges or seeking guidance on managing their money.

### *Career development*

Offering opportunities for career growth and advancement within the hospitality sector boosts earning potential and job security.

### *Savings initiatives*

Implementing programs that encourage employees to save, such as employer-matched savings plans, or pension contributions can reinforce positive habits and contribute to long-term financial planning.

### *Recognition and rewards*

Recognising hard work through rewards and incentives such as

performance bonuses, fair distribution of tips or employee of the month programs, can provide both a financial boost and a sense of appreciation.

### *Transparent communication*

Openly discussing pay structures, benefits and any changes in your financial policies can build trust, clarity and loyalty among employees – especially those who are struggling financially.

Whether large or small, all businesses can help to minimise the stress caused by financial instability or uncertainty. Financial security is intrinsically linked to mental health and well-being, which in turn affects how your staff perform at work. By implementing a few processes and offering expert support from third party providers, your employees can benefit from a wealth of experience and gain clarity in an increasingly uncertain world. Not all support needs to be expensive, many counselling services are charities and pension firms also offer free financial advice as part of their financial package. With a little time and effort, you can alleviate one of the biggest causes of stress your employees face.



# Gelf ALDERSON

RIVER COTTAGE, GREAT ROASTS



**With responsibility for the kitchens and cooking school at Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's River Cottage, no one day is ever the same for Culinary Director Gelf Alderson. Working for one of the UK's pioneers for seasonality and sustainability, we caught up with Gelf to discuss his route into the world of food, industry trends and the latest book in the River Cottage Great Series – Great Roasts.**

**How did your love of food develop?**

We were always home from school before my parents got back and while we weren't allowed to watch TV, we would always sneak in Ready Steady Cook before they got home. We loved it. It made food fun and interesting. I had worked as a pot wash but I actually dropped out of school so started an apprenticeship in a kitchen. I always loved food – the dexterity of it - and I loved the buzz and the comradery of the kitchen immediately. I played plenty of team sports and it felt very similar. Everyone pitching in and working together. I was lucky that I started where I did as it was a great learning experience. I learnt how to butcher animals, how kitchens were structured, what was important to success and the discipline.

**Tell us about your current role?**

I'm currently Culinary Director at River Cottage where I have worked for 11 years. I started as a senior sous chef, then head chef and then became executive chef across the River Cottage restaurants, which unfortunately had to close after the pandemic. My role offers real variety – overseeing the restaurant at the River Cottage farm, designing and producing the River Cottage products, helping with the running of our cookery classes and working on the books. Vegetables are obviously our passion and focus so it also involves keeping a close eye on the farm and what seasonal produce is coming from it.



### What do you love about your job?

River Cottage has blazed a trail when it comes to veg, which is something we're all very proud of. My role is incredibly diverse and offers plenty of variety. No day is ever the same, it's an ultra-seasonal life whether it's working with the latest, freshest veg to show its face or wild foraging. I realised I need to be around food, you can't distance yourself

too much from it or you lose touch. Things move fast in the industry.

### What is your latest book about?

The book highlights how a roast can be cooked in 1-2 trays and doesn't have to be the messy, time laborious meal to cook. It's also about getting people to look differently at roasting. They can be very diverse – roast fruit, roast breakfasts, roast snacks – so much can be done.

### Can you share 3 tips to improve your roast?

1. Turn the oven up – if it says 220, cook at 220. Don't be scared. You need the

**“Take your team to an abattoir. It gives perspective, and chefs will look at meat as an animal giving its life instead of a commodity.”**

heat for a roast. Otherwise, the water released from the ingredients will create steam and you won't get the crispness, the texture or the colour.

2. Get to know your oven – they're all very different and some aren't that precise. Get a temperature thermometer and check your oven. You may be surprised but being precise with your roasting temperature is key.

3. Good solid roasting trays/tins. Make sure they're thick bottomed – retains the heat, buy one and it will last 10 years – better finish and colour.

### What do chefs and businesses need to do to survive and thrive in the next year?

I expect the number of times that people will eat out will be lower next year so businesses will have to react. Chefs are going to have to work hard to keep their offering interesting. Good food and good service still sells – people will always come back if you can provide this. It doesn't have to mean Michelin and businesses don't need massive teams. Don't be scared to close a few nights, it's far better for business having 3-4 busy days and nights than 7 half-busy days.

### What can we expect next from River Cottage?

It's exciting times as we look to further develop the restaurant on the River Cottage farm and cookery school. It's about continuing to showcase provenance, seasonality and ethics around food. Educating people on veg, foraging, gut health and how what you eat can have a dramatic effect on your all-round health and the world.

### What are your tips for waste reduction in the kitchen?

- Don't have a big bin – our chefs each have a plastic tub for compostable waste and then one for other waste. It makes it easy to measure and keep a close eye on what goes in the bin.

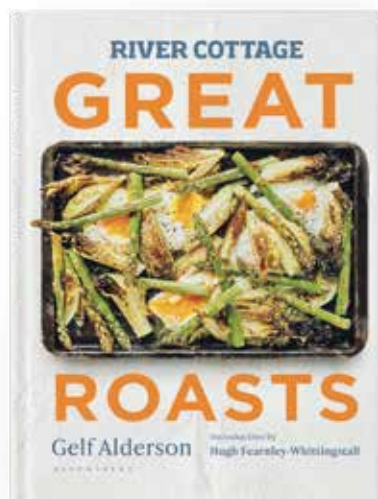
- Keep a close eye on the fridge. Anything going slightly old – pickle and ferment – meats and fish can be cured or frozen.

- Take your team to an abattoir. It gives perspective and means chefs will look at meat as an animal giving its life instead of a commodity. You will find chefs have a new perspective when they work with meats.

### What Signature Dish would you like to share?

I'm going to share my rolled lamb breast with herbs, lemon and tomatoes recipe. Lamb breast is a part of the animal which has gone truly out of fashion and turning it into something wonderful is such a rewarding experience.

Recipe from River Cottage Great Roasts by Gelf Alderson (Bloomsbury, £20 Hardback)



## Rolled lamb breast with herbs lemon and tomatoes



### INGREDIENTS

2 lamb or hogget breasts (about 500g each)  
4 ripe tomatoes, chopped into 1cm pieces  
Finely grated zest and juice of 2 lemons  
A small bunch of parsley, leaves picked and roughly chopped

2 tbsp tomato purée  
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
3 sprigs of mint, leaves picked and roughly chopped  
A small bunch of coriander, roughly chopped  
Sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper

### METHOD

1. Take the lamb out of the fridge around 30 minutes before cooking, to bring it to room temperature.
2. Preheat the oven to 230°C/220°C Fan/Gas 8. Put the tomatoes, tomato purée, lemon zest and juice, garlic and herbs into a bowl, mix together well and season with salt and pepper.
3. Lay the lamb breast out flat, flesh side up, on a clean surface. Smear the tomato mixture evenly all over the surface to cover generously. Starting from a short side, roll up the lamb to form a fat roll. Tie securely with butcher's string every 2–3cm, then season the outside with salt and pepper.
4. Place the rolled lamb breast in a roasting tray and roast in the oven for about 30 minutes until deep golden brown on the outside. Add a glass of water to the tray and lower the oven to 170°C/150°C Fan/Gas 3. Roast the lamb for a further 2 hours until the meat is tender.
5. Now turn the oven up to 230°C/220°C Fan/Gas 8 for 15 minutes to crisp up the outside of the lamb.
6. Take the tray from the oven and leave the lamb to rest in a warm place for 5–10 minutes, then remove the string and carve into slices. I like to serve it with five-root mash and/or roast purple sprouting broccoli with kimchi butter.



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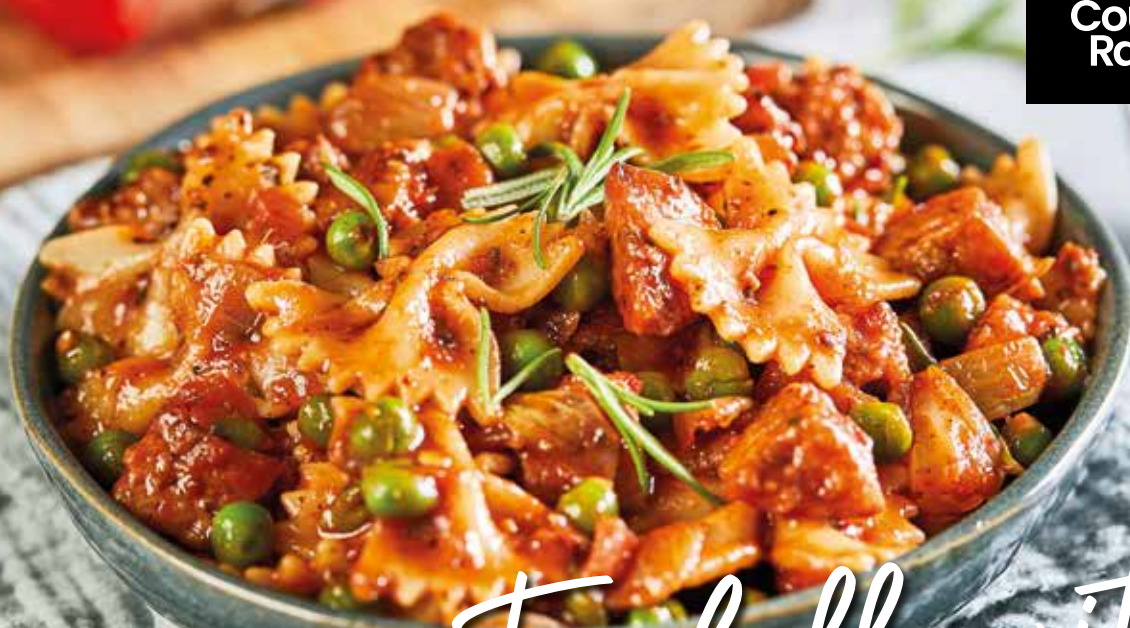
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# Farfalle with Sausage Ragu

SERVES  
4

This month's recipe is by the Country Range Development Chef, Paul Dickson. After finding a talent and passion for cooking at school and encouraged by his teacher, Paul moved from the North East to London at the age of 17 in pursuit of becoming a chef.

Starting at Holiday Inn, Paul worked for some top restaurants during his time in London, including being executive chef at Yo Sushi as well as leading corporate banking kitchens including being executive chef for JP Morgan where he led a kitchen of 18 people. During this time, he cooked for celebrities and even the Queen and had the opportunity to be creative without strict budgets. Paul and his family moved to Lancashire when his two children were young for a different pace of life. He converted part of his home into a cookery school and also works as a food consultant and stylist, working on film and TV, on social media and in print.

Paul draws on his over 30 years of experience in foodservice and food styling to work with us on product testing and innovation, recipe development, and creating inspirational menus for all sectors and budgets. Paul is passionate about reducing food waste and supporting caterers with practical and versatile solutions to create economical and sustainable dishes.

"I love working with Country Range ingredients as they are created specifically for foodservice and strike the perfect balance between quality and value. This recipe is a great way to use up leftover sausages. It works particularly well with farfalle, as the sauce is thick enough to coat the pasta well and gives extra flavour when the sauce is held in the folds of the shape of the pasta. The bow shaped pasta is also appealing to children, making it a good option for education settings."



PAUL  
DICKSON

## INGREDIENTS

- 200g Country Range Chopped Tomatoes
- 200g Country Range Farfalle Pasta
- 200g Country Range Dried Mixed Herbs
- 200g Country Range Fancy Peas
- 25ml Country Range Rapeseed Oil
- 8 cooked sliced sausages
- 1 crushed clove of garlic
- 1 diced onion
- 1 diced red pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped rosemary

## METHOD

1. Cook the onions, peppers and sliced cooked sausages in a large pan in rapeseed oil until the vegetables start to soften.
2. Add the crushed garlic, mixed herbs and chopped tomatoes and simmer for five minutes.
3. Season to taste and finish with chopped rosemary and the peas.
4. Boil the pasta until al dente in plenty of salted water and drain well.
5. Toss the pasta in the sauce and finish with the grated hard cheese of your choice.



*"This recipe is a great way to use up leftover sausages. It works particularly well with farfalle, as the sauce is thick enough to coat the pasta well. Bow shaped pasta is also appealing to children, making it a good option for education settings."*





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# THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAN *now*

If you ask most top cooks whether there has ever been a better time to start a career as a chef, most will give you a resounding “No!”. With kitchens of all levels having to fight hard to recruit and retain staff, opportunities for the next generation to fast-track their careers have increased. However, there are no shortcuts to success, individuals still need key skills, knowledge, experience and confidence if they are to take advantage of these opportunities and adapt to life in a professional kitchen quickly.

## THE COUNTRY RANGE STUDENT CHEF CHALLENGE

This is where competitions like the Country Range Student Chef Challenge can play a massive role. Set up by the Craft Guild in 1993, the Country Range Student Chef Challenge has played a pivotal role in the industry and in the careers of thousands of young chefs over the last 30 years. Carefully designed in line with the NVQ syllabus to assess both classical and modern cooking techniques, the Challenge tests students' basic knowledge, skills and creativity, whilst also allowing them to experience the vital teamwork aspect and intense pressure of a professional kitchen.

Looking back at some of the previous winners there is no doubt that winning the Challenge not only helps to boost the CV but can also open doors and pathways into top kitchens. The 2019 challenge winners Chi-Hin Cheung and Beth Disley-Jones from City of Liverpool College are at the immense Gilpin Hotel and Lake House and The Art School Restaurant respectively, while 2022 winner Maria Carbone is a Pastry Chef at Adan Handling's Michelin-starred Frog restaurant.

The 2023 Country Range Student Chef Challenge winners from Westminster Kingsway College are only just about to embark on their careers but the names Marta Sagan, George Oakes and Jack Georgiou are already being whispered about in the industry after they were shortlisted for the Foodservice Cateys Trainee Chef of the Year Award (winners announced October 13th).

# TO BEGIN YOUR CAREER AS A CHEF



## THE 2023 / 24 CHALLENGE

The focus for this year's competition is “Love Local” and challenges teams to discover and showcase the best of their local area. Each team of three culinary students need to prepare, cook and present a three-course, four-cover menu showcasing the produce, history, heritage and culinary traditions of their local area to meet the below criteria:

### STARTER

Vegetarian - can contain dairy and eggs.

### MAIN

Seabass, one whole (suggested weight 1.2kg) can bring gutted but must be filleted as part of the competition. Served with a mollusc or bi-valve garnish, a starch, and seasonal vegetables.

### DESSERT

Chocolate - at least 50% of white or dark Country Range chocolate must be used or a combination of both.

This year's challenge has an added twist! To celebrate the Country Range rebrand, each team's menu needs to include five key Country Range kitchen staples, the list of which can be found at the link at the bottom of this feature.

“We need to do more to show the opportunities for personal development that careers within the kitchen can offer,” he says. “We need to paint a better picture and give a better reflection on future growth, prospects and the potential that the sector offers. It doesn't just have to be a steppingstone or a part-time career, the opportunities are endless.” Kerth Gumbs, Executive Chef at Fenchurch Restaurant

## THE 2024 DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

With the deadline for entries fast-approaching on the 1st December, young chefs and lecturers are being urged to complete and submit their applications before it's too late. Teams must submit a paper entry form, which will include details of their three-course, four-cover menu, the ingredients and methodology used for each course and the associated costs of each element. Following the paper judging, regional heats will take place in early 2024 before the live grand final at the HRC Show at Excel in March 2024.

For further information, application forms and to enter, please visit <https://countryrange.co.uk/about/student-chef-challenge-registration/>



# FOOD & INDUSTRY *news*

## ACQUISITION

### RADNOR HILLS ACQUIRES HIGHLAND SPRING GROUP'S WELSH PRODUCTION SITE

**The deal, completed last week, will protect jobs at the site located in Blaen Twyni, Swansea, and support the ongoing strategic growth of the Radnor Hills business.**

The acquisition also includes a 40-acre water source in the heart of Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the site has serviced major supermarkets in the UK with still, sparkling and flavoured water drinks for several years.

Established in 1990, independent and family-owned, Radnor Hills has a turnover of £64.4 million and produces over 400 million

drinks every year. Its brands include a full range of Radnor Hills spring water, Heartsease Farm, Radnor Splash, and their market-leading range of school-approved children's drinks, Radnor Fizz.

William Watkins, Founder and Managing Director of Radnor Hills, said: "We're excited to welcome the highly skilled and dedicated workforce from Blaen Twyni to our Radnor family. The opportunity for us to continue to safeguard jobs in Wales and to offer further employment opportunities to the local area in the fullness of time is extremely important to us."



## HOSPITALITY

*Hospitality leaders call for unity and collaboration to improve the perception of hospitality careers*

**Senior leaders from the hospitality and foodservice industry came together at the Arena Event for a roundtable, hosted by Nestlé Professional®, to discuss one of the most pressing issues facing the industry – youth employment.**

10 experts in the fields of HR, operations and food and beverage were in attendance representing companies with a combined UK workforce of more than 130,000, including the likes of BaxterStorey, Greene

## COMPLETES *cheeseboards*



Scan here for more recipe ideas.



## SPLENDID *in salad*



King and Compass Group UK&I.

Negative stereotypes perpetuated by parents (47%), friends (35%), and teachers (34%) were identified as the main barriers preventing young people from considering a career in hospitality.

Katya Simmons, managing director at Nestlé Professional UK&I said: "Hospitality needs to deliver consistent messages about hospitality careers to young people. We all need a clear focus on topics we know are key drivers for young people such as culture and career progression."

One initiative already uniting the industry to inspire young people is the Choose Hospitality Pledge. Co-founded by Nestlé Professional, it aims to educate secondary school students about the industry's wide range of entry-level roles and training opportunities, the breadth of roles available – dispelling the 'only chef or waiter' myth – as well as the many career pathways on offer.



## DINING TRENDS

# HOW RESTAURANTS CAN CATER TO THE GROWING TREND OF DINING ALONE

**Adam Castleton, CEO at Startle has created a guide for venues to cater for this trend and to make solo diners feel welcome.**

Adam says: "Over the past year, online searches for solo dining options have increased by 57%. It is seen by some as self-care and promotes 'mindful eating', while others have no choice to eat alone when travelling for business or in between appointments."

So, what can venues do to cater for this growing trend and create an exceptional experience that makes solo diners feel welcome and turns them into repeat customers?

### 1. Mix up seating arrangements

Ensure your seating accommodates the different preferences of diners, whether they're looking for privacy or a more sociable experience.



### 2. Consider menu formats

Small plate menus work well for the solo diner, or a prix-fixe menu is also a great way to encourage solo diners to boost their spending.



### 3. Cater for remote workers

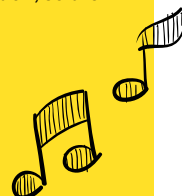
By offering free Wi-Fi and convenient charging stations, business owners can encourage remote workers to pick their venues during quieter periods in the day and increase customer loyalty outside of working hours.

### 4. Ensure no judgement from front of house

It may feel natural to ask someone on their own if they are waiting for someone or delay taking their order until their unknown guest(s) arrive. Train staff to remove unconscious bias from the equation, so the solo diner doesn't feel out of place.

### 5. Create the right vibe

Background music can make diners feel more at ease. To create the perfect atmosphere, restaurants need to be in control of their playlists and ensure they are responsive to factors such as time of day, busyness, and even the weather.



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We're giving two lucky readers the chance to win a £100 Love2Shop voucher to spend on whatever you like from a choice of over 90 high street brands and attractions.

With such a wide selection of places to shop using the voucher, you'll be spoilt for choice. If you're looking to update your wardrobe for the new season, check out New Look, River Island, Loofe's and TK Maxx. Need a new comfy pair of shoes for those long days in the kitchen? You'll

find what you need at Foot Locker, Schuh and Clarks to name just a few.

There are so many more retail options too, from The Perfume Shop and H Samuel to The Works, Waterstones and WH Smith. If you're sprucing up your home for spring, you can even spend it at Argos, Denby and Bensons for Beds.

If you'd rather treat yourself to a day out, you'll be pleased to know that the vouchers are accepted by a range of attractions, such as Lightwater Valley, London Bridge Experience, Gulliver's Theme Parks and Red Letter Days to name a few.

What are you waiting for? For your chance to win, send an email titled 'Love2shop' along with your name, contact details and the name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to [competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk](mailto:competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk)

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## Music to your ears

**Whether it's audiobooks, podcasts, sports commentary or your favourite tunes, you can't beat some audio entertainment to keep you going on a busy day. That's why we're giving away a set of new Echo Buds, which are wireless Bluetooth earbuds with Alexa built in.**

These premium sound and noise cancelling earbuds deliver crisp, balanced stereo sound with three built-in microphones. Echo Buds are small, light and come with customisable ear pods to get a sealed headphones fit sound. The IPX4 sweat and water resistance protects the wireless earphones and makes it the perfect set of running earphones.

Get up to five hours' music playtime in just one charge and up to fifteen hours with the charging case. A 15-minute quick charge provides up to two hours of music.

With the built-in Bluetooth 5.0, the range allows you to use your voice to make calls, set reminders or add items to your shopping list, which is made easy due to being compatible with Alexa and other assistants such as Siri and Google Assistant on iOS and Android phones.

For your chance to win, send an email titled 'Echo Buds' along with your name, contact details and the name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to [competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk](mailto:competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk)

**WIN**  
a pair of  
Echo Buds

Closing date for the competition is 31st December 2023. All winners will be notified by 30th January 2024. 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](http://www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk/about)

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TO ANY MEAL**



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**KEEP EXPLORING**



# Chance to *Win*\* a NESCAFÉ® Dolce Gusto® machine



Purchase a NESCAFÉ Original 750g, NESCAFÉ Gold Blend 750g or NESCAFÉ Azera 500g tin in November or December 2023 for the chance to win a NESCAFÉ® Dolce Gusto® Genio S Plus machine.

\*Terms and conditions apply  
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