

Rogan



THE COOKBOOK

Simon Rogan

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Revered as a chef throughout the culinary world, Simon Rogan has a brilliant reputation for artistry, innovation and excellence, and is renowned for the talent, vision and clarity of ethos he brings to his different restaurants. Simon is the chef and restaurateur of L'Enclume, the two-Michelin-star restaurant in Cumbria which has won The Good Food Guide's Best Restaurant for the past four years. He was a winner on BBC2's Great British Menu and a mentor on MasterChef, and is the winner of GQ's Chef of the Year award for 2018. Within the village of Cartmel, where he set up L'Enclume 16 years ago, there is also Rogan & Co, the relaxed neighbourhood restaurant; Aulis, a chef's table and development kitchen; and Our Farm, where the team select what to grow, when it is harvested and how it is prepared, allowing Simon to truly set a benchmark for the calibre of ingredients he uses. In London there is Roganic, a permanent Marylebone site inspired by the original two-year pop-up which provides a window into the Cartmel operation, and Aulis London, an eight-seater chef's table which provides a preview experience for dishes that might feature at Roganic. Simon is uniquely placed to write a definitive cookbook that changes the tenor of cookery publishing. Here is a book that perfectly communicates his philosophy of taking farmed and foraged seasonal ingredients to create unforgettable dishes. Simon has led the way in showing that innovative cookery is at its best when using local ingredients with imagination and passion. His food is primal. And it's natural. But it's not rough or messy. It's beautifully refined and has transformed how we view locally sourced cuisine. Simon's book showcases recipes using beautiful ingredients that are accessible to people everywhere. It combines vibrant recipe pictures with photography that captures the life and landscapes of Our Farm in Cumbria. Breaking the boundaries of how people use their ingredients and cook their food, this will become the cookery book of the year.

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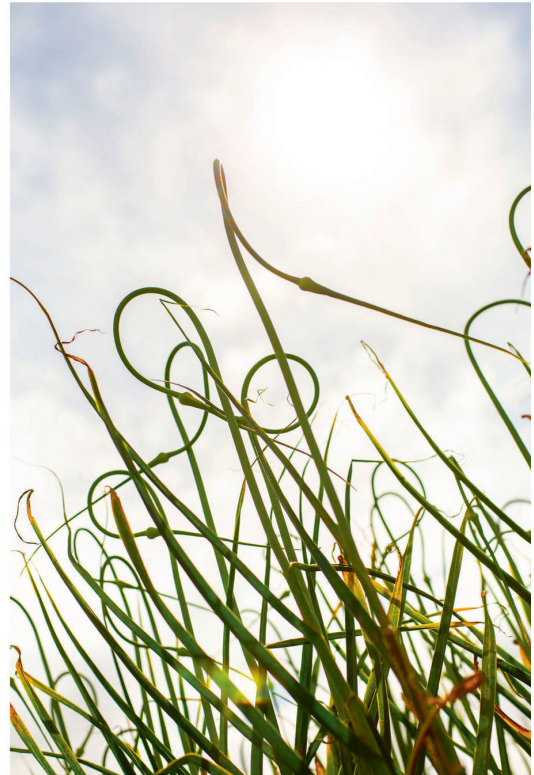
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INTRODUCTION

The rolling hills of Cumbria might not seem the obvious place for a city boy from Southampton to settle down, and once I thought so too, but now, sixteen years after setting up my restaurants and farm at Cartmel, I feel totally at home there. It is a place that has allowed me to fulfil my dreams, and to create the sort of food I have always wanted to, using ingredients produced to my specifications.

My passion for cooking began as a child, and by my teens I was working in the kitchens of some of the best restaurants in the world for the finest, most inspirational chefs. I was lucky to get such a fantastic training, but the basis of my cooking is not just about the combination of flavours, textures and colours on the plate; what matters most is the origins of the foods I am using. While working in other chefs' kitchens I always knew that what I really wanted was to cook my way, using the freshest, most seasonal ingredients that I could find, whose provenance I knew.

Opening my own restaurant was, of course, my ultimate goal, but for me the vision didn't end there. With taste and flavour at the forefront of my mind, my main aim then, as it is now, was to have a restaurant that used foodstuffs from its own world-leading, natural and sustainable growing operation. What I'd been dreaming of for so long was an organic farm designed by chefs, run by chefs for chefs.

My food philosophy has always been about connecting the restaurant and the food we serve to the local area and the seasons, but this also goes deeper. I believe, whether we are cooking at home or in a professional kitchen, we can't truly understand our food if we don't know where it has come from. The origins of our ingredients is crucial, not just for our enjoyment of it and our health, but also for the sake of our planet. We need to do more to protect the Earth; we are on the verge of a climate disaster and if we don't make changes fast, gastronomy will not be sustainable, and may not even exist as we know it today. It's not all doom and gloom, though; rather than be overwhelmed by anxiety over climate change, we should see this as the time to adopt a new approach, to create a positive future for the generations to come.

The way we eat now has shifted more in the last five years than in the last 10,000; we were once such simple creatures, working with the seasons and taking only what we needed from the land, but with the quest for cheap food and high profits we have created a world where any ingredient is available all of the time.

In the supermarkets, there are no seasons – you can buy tomatoes year round which are grown on the other side of the world, picked when green and ripened using ethylene gas. What you get looks like a tomato, but really it is just an idea of a tomato, lacking the flavours, textures and colours of the home-grown product.

This isn't only true of the foods that are imported from around the globe; the majority of non-organic locally sourced vegetables you find in supermarkets are grown 'conventionally' – meaning they have been sprayed with seriously dangerous, toxic chemicals to ensure 'perfect' blemish-free crops and high yields. Chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers are big business, and many farmers are wholly reliant on them. Thus the majority of commercial vegetables are actually bad for our health. To me, this just isn't right.

This food revolution shouldn't just be confined to fruit and vegetables, it is also relevant to the vitally important question of how we rear livestock. Fundamentally, although I do eat meat and would never call myself a vegetarian, I think we should eat less meat and try to change our mindsets so that meat and fish don't dominate the plate. I cook meat in the restaurants, but often only as the protein element of a dish, which plays a supporting role to fresh vegetables and herbs.



I'm not anti-animal husbandry per se, but the commercial farming of livestock has a huge impact on both the environment and the health and happiness of the animals themselves, which in turn has an effect on the flavour of the meat produced. Most of the processed foods that we consume every single day have a connection to chemically produced corn, wheat and soy bean fields, and these three commodities are also fed en masse to the world's cattle population.

Cows are not designed to eat these products, they are designed to eat grass and forage from woodlands, but instead they are pumped full of dangerous grains to fatten and finish them very quickly, then topped up with hormones and antibiotics to cope with the stress of such an unnatural diet. We are effectively producing meat that is damaging to our health.

Feeding these animals in this way has a very clear impact on the planet, as a staggering 45 per cent of the world's land mass has been cleared for animal agriculture and to cultivate the grains to feed them. Producing meat and dairy products also puts pressure on water supplies – animals consume 30 per cent of the world's water (humans consume 19.6 billion litres of water and 9.5 billion kg of food per day, cows 170.3 billion litres of water and 61.3 billion kg of food per day) and are fed water-intensive grains. In addition, waste and fertiliser run-off is the leading cause of water pollution and ocean dead zones, destroying habitats and causing species extinction on land and in waterways.

And the impact of commercially rearing livestock doesn't end there. Raising cattle in intensive systems produces more greenhouse gases than the world's transportation system combined. Livestock produce methane, which is 86 times more destructive than carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles. Animal agriculture produces both of these gases, along with nitrous oxide, which accounts for 51 per cent of 'human-caused' climate change.

To me, none of this makes sense. Nature provides such abundance when it is nurtured and respected, and in these days of overconsumption on a global scale, I believe we need to step back and appreciate what our local area offers us. And now is the time to make those major changes that are needed within our food system.

This wider environmental context was, and still is, very much a part of my vision and approach to food. As with everything we cook, I need to know that it has been produced in an environmentally sensitive way. If we purchase ingredients from outside of the farm, I want to know their history, and that they have been produced in a sustainable, organic way.

So, at the start of the new millenium, frustrated at the way in which I was cooking, I started to actively search for suitable premises to open up my own restaurant. Originally I looked in the area around my home on the south coast, but after months of searching and visiting sites, I drew a blank – nothing was quite right. Then, suddenly, I got a phone call from an old friend, telling me about a site ... in a village in Cumbria. Once I'd worked out where Cartmel actually was, and got my head round the fact that it was hundreds of miles from where I'd envisaged being based, I agreed to take a look.

Having been lured up north by the promise of an 800-year-old former smithy in a picturesque Cumbrian village, I left the south coast on a wet Friday morning and arrived at Cartmel that afternoon. The building, in the process of being converted into a restaurant, was tucked away in the corner of a sleepy, twelfth-century village famed for its medieval priory, the smallest horse-racing track in Britain and sticky toffee pudding, set amongst the rolling hills and valleys of the Lake District. Although it was in the process of renovation, I could see its potential. I had been sold a vision – and I bought it. Here was a restaurant that could be everything I dreamed of.

The original idea behind the restaurant, of course, was to be able to cultivate our own fruits and vegetables, so that we could then get these delicious, lovingly nurtured products from farm to plate in minutes, fresh from our own organic soil, rather than be dependent on suppliers shipping in produce from distant shores or across the length of the country.

So once the building had been acquired, stage two of the plan was finding an organic farm near the restaurant who could grow this for us. Being 100 per cent self-sufficient was not the intention – we knew the limitations of our abilities, being chefs, not farmers – but we wanted what we served to our guests to be locally produced and seasonal. The surrounding woodlands, the nearby coast, all the many local artisans – the cheese makers, farmers and brewers – meant that in the Lake District I could create a business that was just that, one that connected and worked in total harmony with its environment.

We worked with the farm for a while, before we had the opportunity to take over the land. Soon, though, we had outgrown the site and found ourselves needing more space – and to be closer to the restaurants. So in autumn 2011 we took possession of a huge, flat grazing field on the outskirts of Cartmel. It was ideal for our purposes; very fertile, located in the bottom of valley with a beck running alongside for natural irrigation, and sheltered from winds by trees and hedgerows.

It took a lot of time and back-breaking work to get the land into shape for what we needed – we had to source a lot of good-quality soil to improve what was there – but it was worth it, because it is such a vital part of what we do in all our restaurants. Our Farm, as it is called, works hard for us, providing us with what we need for the kitchens on a daily basis, but also enough to preserve for the out-of-season months as well as to experiment with.

We grow our own not just because we fundamentally believe in strengthening the link between produce, its development, the environment and what we eat, but from a chef's perspective, working with fresh ingredients gives us ultimate control in the kitchen – we are able to enjoy the most diverse seasonal produce picked fresh for the plate.

And not only can we grow what we want, need and love, and be able to use it fresh when we need it, we also know that everything that comes into our kitchen has been grown naturally, free from chemical farming and without the carbon footprint that comes with imported goods.

The early days (make that early years!) were a steep learning curve, and we're still learning – even now we spend a lot of time researching how other people manage their organic growing operations around the world, and we have a go at putting the best ideas into practice on our own land. Some work, some don't; these are the vagaries of our soil and our location in a valley in the north of England, but we learn and we move on, designing our growing systems to reflect our beliefs about food and to serve the needs and demands of the restaurant. And that is the joy of having our land, as it allows us to experiment. When you are able to grow whatever you want, you can try different crops, which is how we have discovered some incredible new tastes, flavours and surprising combinations. My work often takes me to far-flung places around the world, where I love to wander through the markets, taking in the sights, smells and colours of interesting and exotic foods, and it's even more fascinating to watch what the locals do with them. I often come back from these trips with seeds for these unusual plants, which I have a go at planting at home. While most of the stuff we grow is indigenous (and it's indigenous for a reason, because that's what grows best!), if we can get an exotic seedling to grow and flourish in our soil without the need for expensive and unnatural special attention such as lighting and heating, I'll give it a go. The beauty is in knowing that I can take a rare herb, vegetable or fruit from anywhere in the world and try to grow it in Cumbria, then without any point of reference it becomes a new food experience for our guests. Apple marigold is one great example of this; originally from South America, we grow it at Our Farm because it brings something unique to our dishes both sweet and savoury, and because, despite its origins, it thrives in our climate.

So sometimes these seeds work out, sometimes they don't. We don't push it – over the years, amongst the successes there have been many failures, but that's Nature letting us know that it just isn't right for us. If it doesn't work, we let it go. It goes against everything we believe in to provide enhanced conditions for the sake of growing something – we have polytunnels but they are not artificially heated, and we won't bring in extra equipment for the sake of cultivating an exotic species.

We grow many varieties of vegetables, fruits, herbs, young plants and shoots, and they are all carefully chosen for maximum flavour and nutrient content.

We are always aware of new foods making their mark on the culinary scene, but we don't follow fads – what we grow, we grow because it works for us. We won't fall into line with a trend, or sacrifice our principle or ethos for any movement or accolade.





This is true for all our crops, and so perhaps intentionally and perhaps because of circumstance (our colder climate), we cultivate our crops slowly. However, although slow means lower yields than commercial growers, it does allow our crops to develop their flavours properly. We are not forcing plants to overproduce, we are attempting to get the best possible flavour from individual plants.

And perhaps this has been the most important lesson that we have learned over the years, that in order to get the amazing flavours we want on the plate and to nurture the best-quality ingredients, we must feed and respect the soil in which they are grown and work with nature. The best dishes have the best ingredients. It is an obsession of mine. Flavour is all-important. And that's our ethos; it's all about growing the perfect carrot rather than cooking it perfectly. Over my career I have used many of the fancy techniques or equipment that you find in many top restaurants, but since I have had access to the very best ingredients we can produce, my style of cuisine has become far simpler – both in method and execution. With the right ingredients, you don't need lots of technology and gadgets to produce amazing food. It is this simplicity that is the keystone of my recipes, and the foundation of everything we serve in our restaurants.

These amazing shoots and herbs can be simply dressed in a light vinaigrette and served up having only been growing in the ground half an hour before. You can't beat that freshness, that flavour, that message.

The success of our restaurants in Cartmel and London is the result of team effort. The land in the Lake District is called Our Farm because everyone who works with me has a stake in it. It is a vital cog in the business; every member of the team – whether in the kitchens or front of house – must spend one month on the land before they can work in the restaurant. Most chefs who join us have little or no experience with growing, and they can be a little overwhelmed at the sight of the rows and rows of beds and polytunnels, but once they've had this hands-on experience with the ingredients they have optimum respect for them and understand completely what they are working with. There's no set pattern to what we grow, and this is reflected in our menu, so the chefs need this knowledge to be able to think on their feet and be able to combine flavours quickly and effectively. You can go up to the farm in the morning and then later in the afternoon and in that time a bunch of flowers will have opened up, ready to use. It is that violently seasonal – you have to be there four or five times a day before you can make a final decision because stuff just appears from nowhere, and to use it at its freshest you have to be there, on site, ready to pick it. You need to know every single millimetre of the land to know what is going on – and to be able to realise its potential. I'll admit that at times this might seem a real pain to the chefs, and undeniably it means more work, but it is such a beautiful and simple concept.

Having the input from the chefs is also crucial because it means we can grow according to how they want to use the ingredients, cultivating leaves to the perfect size, nurturing live shoots in trays that can be delivered to the restaurant still in their soil ready to be snipped fresh for each plate. This

is where growing our own is truly invaluable; because we mostly use micro veg – such as baby leaves, pencil leeks and tiny sweet radishes – we have the opportunity to produce bespoke ingredients for maximum flavour and texture.

We use vegetables at micro size not just because of the way they look on the plate, but also because at this point in their growth they are very small, delicate, perfectly textured and at their flavoursome peak.

As we grow our crops slowly, it is really important to use every corner of the site. The polytunnels and beds at Our Farm are hard-working; from spring through to early autumn every available inch of space is crammed with seedlings or plants – we even have pallets hanging from the tunnels' struts in order to maximise growing space. These tunnels allow us to extend our growing season in a more natural way, to get a head start in spring and protect the plants from the British weather. If we need extra heat in the winter, we use the traditional method of using hot compost heaps to keep the roots of plants warm. In addition, we will place cloches, cold frames and hot beds around the site to keep the more tender plants warm in frosty conditions, and we have areas which are left untilled, to encourage the growth of edible wild plants, which we also harvest. The orchard beyond the beds is carefully planted not only to provide fruit, but to act as a natural windbreak against the wind that sometimes races through the valley.





Spring and summer are our key growing periods, when we need to get cracking to produce as much as possible. Often when we get to August we have so much stuff we can't get it all on the menu, there's no space for it all. Winter is the only time when the soil is visible and we can at last draw breath, after a long year the last of the crops are harvested in autumn and stored to supply the restaurant through the winter. This is when we go back to our roots, embracing good old-fashioned preserving techniques.

All the traditional methods are employed to prevent wastage from our summer excesses – pickling, drying, fermenting, smoking, freezing, clamping (storing root vegetables in boxes filled with sand). Many of these processes even enhance the flavours of our ingredients; clamping vegetables encourages the carbohydrates to turn to sugar, creating a tastier, sweeter veg, while pickling and preserving allows us to add other flavourings and produce a whole different taste.

Our crops work hard for us – we study each plant at every stage of its growth, discovering new ways of using different parts of even the simplest varieties. When you've taken all that time to grow and nurture a plant you want to use every part of it. What's left over and can't be used gets composted – along with vegetable waste, animal manure, charcoal from the wood-burning oven. What we take out of the land we must put back, in order to maintain our mutually beneficial and respectful relationship with it.

Here again we can control what goes back into our soil, as we know that we are not introducing any chemicals into our compost and therefore the earth, so we can ensure it is healthy.

To me, this sums up so much of what we are trying to achieve in Cartmel. Experimentation is so much a part of what we do in the restaurants and the test kitchen; we are constantly trying to innovate and push the boundaries of what we can achieve, using all our natural resources to create new dishes and combinations.

In the sixteen years that we have been growing and cooking in Cartmel, we have made improvements year on year, learning from every mistake and every success. Weather and pests permitting, we now know what grows well, what doesn't, and how we can get the best from what we are growing. But that doesn't mean we're going to stop there; the size of the farm has tripled since we first started and we now have chickens, pigs, sheep and cattle grazing the land around the tunnels and in the orchard, to produce a closed system where the animal waste is returned to the land, completing the circle of nature. This year we have our bees to provide honey and bee pollen – not to mention the benefits to our plants to have pollinators on site and doing our bit to help a dwindling bee population in this country.

For us, growing and rearing our own means being responsible for our levels of consumption – using what we have and not demanding more – and making best use of our natural resources.

We are proud of the unique way in which we stock our restaurants, and we are delighted to be at the forefront of a movement where chefs either produce their own ingredients or seek out local farmers to do it for them, with an awareness of the provenance of the food they are serving and a passion for their ingredients.

In the spirit of spreading the message and sharing our passion, this book was born. This isn't a L'Enclume cookbook; you won't find in these pages the recipes for some of the more complex dishes that we serve there, but these are variations of many favourites from our menu that have the essence of the flavours of our food. It isn't an everyday cookbook, the recipes here are perhaps best used for inspiration and ideas for trying out new and exciting combinations, flavours and ingredients.

Of course, my cooking tends to use some more unusual ingredients or varieties because I'm lucky enough to be able to grow, source or forage for them in my local area. I know that some of these are hard to find for many, particularly if you are based in a city, so the recipes here mostly include ingredients that you can get hold of without too much trouble. Not everyone has access to woodlands on the doorstep for foraging in, coastal fish markets or 12 acres of land, I know, but we do all have access to good local markets and suppliers where we can buy organic fruit and vegetables, or meat, poultry or fish, knowing its provenance, and even local cheeses.

My journey from Southampton to Cartmel has been a long, and at times agonising one, but I would do it all again. For me, and the chefs who work with me, the idea of seasonality and fresh ingredients isn't a gimmick, it's our passion, it underlies everything we do. I am fortunate to have a restaurant and a team who have helped me to achieve great accolades in the culinary world, but I would cheerfully sacrifice any of these to uphold my principles about food production and the

environment. It matters. It is our responsibility to future generations to nurture what we have now, and to leave them that legacy.

With this book I hope to share with you another way to eat – our way to eat – which will inspire you to demand more from your food. Think seasonal, think local, think organic, and if all else fails, think about the origins of your ingredients.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Rogan'. The 'S' is large and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.







AYNESOME VEGETABLE INFUSION

Simply created as a celebration of all the flavoursome and delicious herbs and baby vegetables that we produce, this is a showcase for the produce from Our Farm, demonstrating exactly what we are all about, so it seemed only right to call this dish after the land where we grow – Aynesome.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Vegetable broth

3 large onions, halved

6 red peppers, halved and deseeded

6 plum tomatoes, halved

2 sprigs of rosemary

2 bay leaves

2 sprigs of thyme

tapioca flour, for thickening

Aynesome vegetables

a few sprigs of bronze fennel tops

6 mixed colour cherry tomatoes, peeled (see [here](#)) and halved

4 baby pigeon cabbage leaves

2 courgette flowers, halved

2 baby turnips, halved

5mm-thick slice of kohlrabi, cut into 4 small discs using an apple corer

4 tiny baby radishes

32 broad beans, shelled

2 baby courgettes, 1 green, 1 yellow, each cut into 8

8 cooked simane onion petals (see [here](#))

Thai basil leaves and brassica flowers, to serve

To make the broth, preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. Place the onions cut side down on a baking tray and bake for 40 minutes until golden. After 5 minutes, put the peppers, cut side down on another baking tray and bake in the oven for 30–35 minutes until soft and starting to char, then add the tomatoes on another baking tray for the last 20 minutes of cooking. If the onions or peppers are beginning to brown too much, move them to a lower shelf or cover them with foil to avoid the stock becoming too dark.

Once cooked, put the vegetables into separate large, heavy-based saucepans and add 2 litres of water to each, adding the rosemary to the tomatoes, bay leaves to the peppers and thyme to the onions. Bring the pans to the boil over a medium heat, then cover with lids, turn the heat down as low as possible and cook for a further hour. Strain each liquid through a fine sieve into a measuring jug, making a note of how much stock you have – aim for 1 litre per pan – then stir them together in a large, clean saucepan.

For every 500ml of vegetable broth, blend 15g tapioca flour and 30ml water to a paste. Add to the warm liquid and whisk over a low heat for 5–10 minutes until it has thickened to a broth consistency (do not let it boil).

While the stock is thickening, arrange the Aynesome vegetables evenly into four bowls and sprinkle over some Thai basil leaves and brassica flowers. Pour over the hot thickened broth and serve immediately.

NOTE: This recipe yields around 1 litre of each broth, which is more than you need. Keep the leftover broth in the fridge for up to a week.



GRILLED COURGETTES AND QUAILS' EGGS WITH MARJORAM BUTTER

If you grow your own courgettes, use a few different-coloured varieties for maximum visual effect. We use whatever we have growing, but particular favourites are green Passandra F1 and yellow Easy Pick Gold. (This dish is a great way to use up a glut, too!) The grilled courgettes are served with butter sauce flecked with marjoram, which adds a sweet spiciness. Add this right at the end, though,

as these subtle flavours can be lost during cooking. The soft-boiled quails' eggs from our birds add a little extravagant luxury here.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Grilled courgettes

selection of mixed-size different-coloured courgettes, such as Partner, Passandra, Alena F1

2 tbsp sunflower oil

Courgette purée

75g unsalted butter

300g large green courgettes, thinly sliced

100ml double cream

Marjoram butter sauce

2 tbsp sunflower oil

140g white onion, finely diced

50ml white wine vinegar

150ml white wine

10g marjoram leaves

160ml double cream

300g unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Quails' eggs

50ml white wine vinegar

12 quails' eggs

salt, for seasoning

To make the purée, melt the butter in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium–high heat, then add the courgettes and sweat them for 5–6 minutes until tender and soft. Add the cream and cook for about 2 minutes to reduce the liquid, until the cream is almost split. Transfer to a blender and blitz until smooth. Season with salt and leave to one side.

Preheat a barbecue or grill to high.

To make the marjoram butter sauce, warm a large saucepan over a medium heat, add the oil and sweat the onion, stirring regularly, for 5–7 minutes until translucent. Deglaze the pan with the vinegar and wine, add half the marjoram and cook for 3–4 minutes until reduced to a syrup. Pass the syrup through a fine sieve into a medium saucepan, set the pan over a medium heat and add the cream, stirring well. Bring to the boil then reduce to a simmer. Gradually add the butter pieces, whisking constantly and adding more when the previous piece has melted and is incorporated into the sauce. Remove from the heat and season with salt.

Halve the courgettes, cutting any larger bits into chunks, coat in the oil and season with a pinch of salt. Cook on the barbecue or grill until charred and tender.

To cook the quails' eggs, pour 45ml of the white wine vinegar into a wide bowl and carefully crack in all of the eggs, slightly spaced apart. Allow the eggs to sit in the vinegar for 2 minutes. Meanwhile, bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil and add the remaining vinegar. Turn down the heat and reduce to a simmer. Swiftly but carefully remove the eggs from the vinegar one at a time with a slotted spoon, transfer straight into the simmering water and cook all the eggs together for 1 minute 20 seconds. Remove and season with salt. They will look like little hard-boiled eggs because the vinegar sets the white around the yolk.

Spoon the courgette purée on to plates, then divide the grilled courgettes among the plates, distributing the shapes and sizes evenly. Finish the sauce with the remaining chopped marjoram and drizzle over. Carefully halve the eggs and add to each plate.



HERITAGE POTATOES WITH LOVAGE AND ONION ASH

We grow heritage potatoes at Our Farm, because they have a deeper flavour than most ordinary new potatoes, but a good organic baby potato will do just as well here. The maltodextrin for the onions is optional; it adds a white speckling to the black powder that, visually, gives it more depth and the appearance of real ash, but you can leave it out if you can't get hold of it. Lovage is a staple in my mind and its pungent, musky overtones of anise, lemon and mint are perfect for livening up potato dishes – but be warned, a little goes a long way!

SERVES 6–8, AS A SIDE

Onion ash

1kg large white onions

50g maltodextrin (optional)
Confit potatoes
500g heritage baby potatoes, such as baby red King Edwards
300ml rapeseed oil
10g salt
2 bay leaves
1 tsp white peppercorns
4 garlic cloves, crushed
Caramelised shallot purée
350g shallots, sliced
1 tbsp sunflower oil
50g unsalted butter
70ml whole milk
salt, for seasoning
Lovage emulsion
100g flat-leaf parsley leaves
100g lovage leaves
300ml sunflower oil
2 soft-boiled eggs (cooked for 4 minutes)

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. To make the onion ash, cut the unpeeled onions in half and place on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment. Bake for 1½ hours until black. Leaving the onions in the oven, reduce the heat to 110°C/90°C Fan/Gas Mark ¼ and dry them out for about 3 hours.

Meanwhile, confit the potatoes. Put all the ingredients in a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat and cook slowly for about 2 hours until the potatoes are tender.

Meanwhile, make the purée. Cook the shallots in the oil and butter in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat for 35–40 minutes, stirring regularly. When the shallots have turned a deep golden colour, strain them, pouring off and reserving the ‘onion oil’. Blitz the drained shallots with the milk in a blender until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve, season with salt and leave to one side.

Blend the blackened dried onions and maltodextrin, if using, into a powder, then stir in the ‘onion oil’ to make the ash a little clumpy. Put to one side.

To make the emulsion, bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the parsley and lovage leaves for 1 minute. Scoop them out with a slotted spoon and refresh in a bowl of iced water. Drain, squeeze out the excess water and blitz the herbs with the oil in a blender until smooth. Pass the herb oil through a muslin-lined sieve. Blitz the soft-boiled eggs in a clean blender on medium speed, adding the lovage oil slowly until the emulsion has a mayonnaise consistency; season with salt.

Spoon dots of shallot purée on to a serving dish and sit the drained warm potatoes on top. Spoon a small amount of lovage emulsion on each potato and scatter over the onion ash.



BABY POTATOES WITH OX-EYE DAISY SPREAD AND CULTURED CREAM

In June you will see ox-eye daisies everywhere – along roadside verges as well as in domestic gardens. These yellow-centred white flowers grow like weeds, so there's no problem with foraging a few flowerheads for this dish. The flower buds are pleasingly aromatic and perfect for flavouring savoury vegetable dishes. Cultured cream is fermented crème fraîche, so including this helps you to stock up on good bacteria in your digestive system. The cultures take 4 days to activate, so you need to plan ahead, and make sure you use live culture crème fraîche to ensure proper fermentation.

SERVES 6, AS A STARTER

Cultured cream

250g double cream

40g crème fraîche
Ox-eye daisy spread
1 carrot, chopped
1 beetroot, chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
50g unsalted butter
1 tbsp plain flour
2 handfuls of ox-eye daisy
1 handful of mugwort
1 tsp ground ginger
juice of 1 lemon
1 tbsp tomato purée
Baby potatoes
350g baby potatoes
1 tbsp salt
Maldon sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, for seasoning
pea shoots, borage flowers, rapeseed oil, to serve

To start the cultured cream, warm the cream in a small, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat until it reaches 34°C (check with a thermometer). When the temperature is reached, remove the pan from the heat and stir in the crème fraîche. Transfer the mixture to an airtight container and leave for 3 days at room temperature, then transfer to the fridge for 1 day.

Heat a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Cook the carrot, beetroot, onion and garlic in the pan with the butter and a pinch of salt, stirring regularly, for 10–12 minutes until tender. Sprinkle in the flour, stir it into the vegetables and cook for a further minute. Add the rest of the ingredients, along with 20ml water, and cook for a further 5 minutes, stirring at regular intervals. When almost all the liquid in the mixture has evaporated, remove from the heat and blitz with a hand-held blender until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve. Keep warm.

Put the baby potatoes in a medium saucepan with the salt and cover with cold water. Cook over a medium heat for 10–12 minutes, or until tender, then drain.

Smear ox-eye daisy spread on each plate, add dollops of cultured cream and set the warm potatoes on top. Season with Maldon sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, sprinkle with pea shoots and borage flowers and drizzle with rapeseed oil.



DOCK PUDDING WITH RAMSON EMULSION

In Cumbria this is traditionally eaten at Easter and is better known as Lent pudding. It is eaten at this time of year because supposedly this combination of fresh spring herbs cleanses the system of the fats eaten during the winter. The flavours are fresh and aromatic; acidic dock and herby, vegetal nettles are accentuated by the garlicky hit from the ramson emulsion. This recipe is a forager's dream; nettle, dandelion and dock leaves grow across the country throughout most of the year, but ramsons,

also known as wild garlic, have a short season in late spring, so make plenty of emulsion then, as we do, when ramsons are available and freeze it for use over the next few months.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Dock pudding
200g pearl barley
6 Savoy cabbage leaves
10g nettle leaves
5g dandelion leaves
5g dock leaves
2 tbsp sunflower oil
½ onion, diced
1 leek, thinly sliced
75g porridge oats
2 hard-boiled eggs (cooked for 8 minutes)
Dock pudding crumb
250g panko breadcrumbs
5g dock leaves, dried
5g ramson leaves, dried
4 eggs, beaten
200g plain flour
Ramson emulsion
100g flat-leaf parsley leaves
20g ramson leaves
200ml sunflower oil
2 soft-boiled eggs (cooked for 4 minutes)
salt, for seasoning
vegetable oil, for deep-frying

First, make the dock pudding. Cook the pearl barley in 1 litre of water in a medium saucepan over a medium heat for 25 minutes until soft and tender. When cooked, rinse under cold running water to cool, then leave to drain.

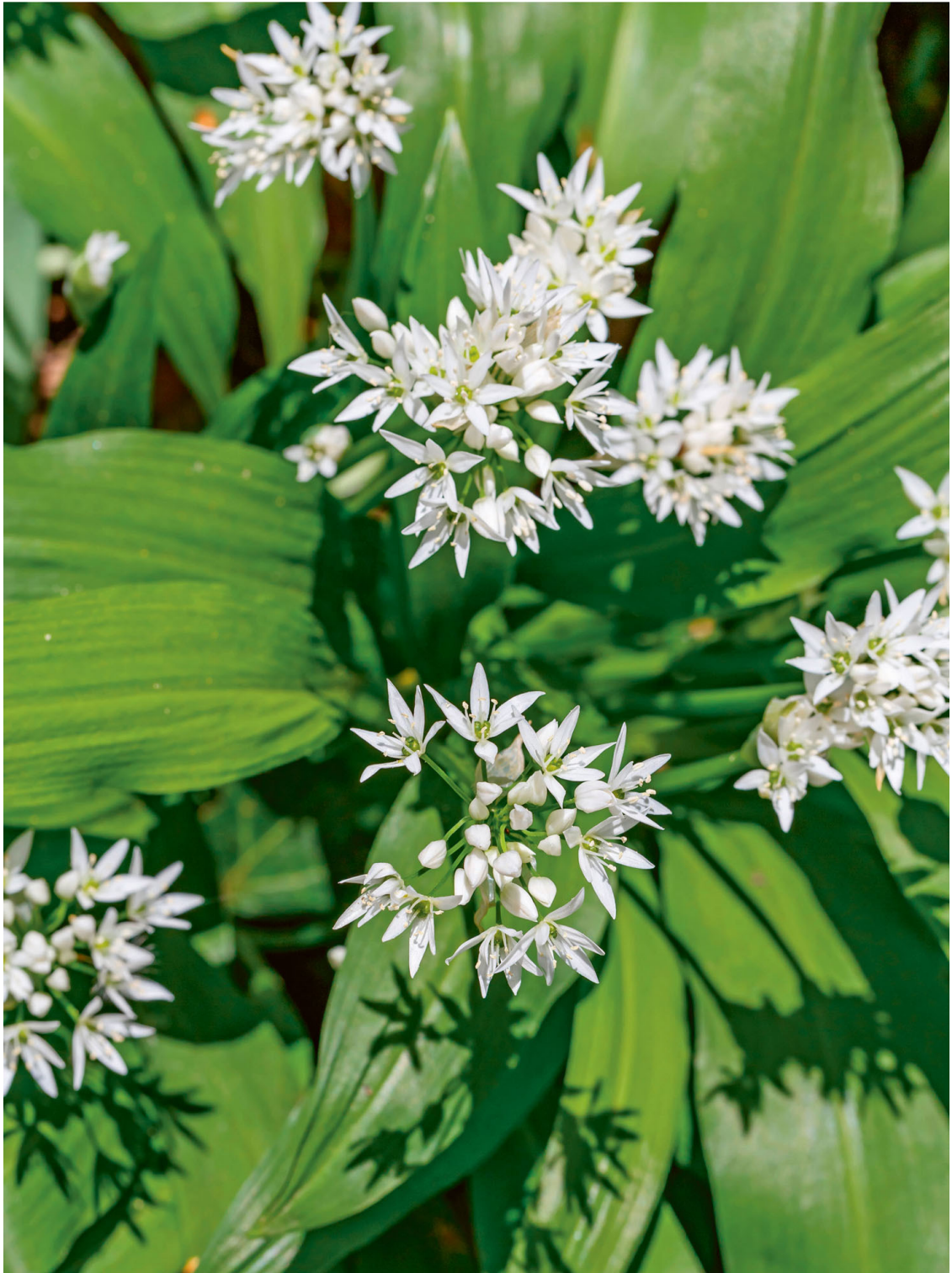
Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil and blanch the cabbage leaves for 2 minutes, then remove them with a slotted spoon and refresh them in a bowl of iced water. Drain and squeeze out the excess water. Repeat with the nettle, dandelion and dock leaves, blanching them for 1 minute each. Slice all the blanched leaves thinly and leave to one side.

Warm the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat, add the onion and leek and sweat for 3–5 minutes, or until translucent. Add the cooked pearl barley, blanched leaves and porridge oats, stir well and cook for a further 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Grate the hard-boiled eggs and add them to the mixture. Taste, season with salt and leave to one side to cool, then roll the mixture into golf ball-sized balls and chill.

To coat the dock pudding, blitz the breadcrumbs and dried leaves together in a blender to form a powder and put in a shallow dish. Put the beaten eggs in another shallow dish, and the flour in a third dish. Roll and coat the dock pudding balls first in the flour, then the egg and finally the breadcrumbs.

To make the ramson emulsion, blitz the parsley, ramsons and sunflower oil in a blender until smooth. Strain through a muslin-lined sieve and put straight into the fridge to chill. In a clean blender, blitz the soft-boiled eggs on medium speed. Add the green oil slowly until the emulsion has a mayonnaise consistency. Strain through a fine sieve to create a smoother texture and season with salt.

Deep-fry the dock pudding balls in batches in a pan of oil heated to 180°C until crisp and lightly golden, removing with a slotted spoon and leaving them to drain on kitchen paper. Serve with the ramson emulsion.



HALF-DRIED TOMATOES WITH ROSEHIP, MINT AND BONE MARROW CRUMB

Bone marrow is a much-neglected cut of beef shin, which is a shame because it gives a big protein hit and has an intense umami flavour. I've included rosehips here for their wonderfully fragrant aroma, and because I often forage for them near my home, so I'm always trying new ways to use them. For the best flavour, infuse the hips in the syrup for 24 hours. This recipe produces a lot of syrup, but it stores well and can be added to granola and yoghurt, drizzled over ice cream or tossed through summer berries.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Rosehip syrup

500g rosehips

125g caster sugar

peel of 1 orange

juice of 1 lemon

Semi-dried tomatoes

500g mixed-colour cherry tomatoes (we use Sweet Olive, Golden Grape)

20ml rapeseed oil

a generous pinch of salt

Bone marrow crumb

200g bone marrow

50g panko breadcrumbs

1 tbsp finely chopped chives

Mint maltodextrin

75g mint leaves

100ml sunflower oil

30g maltodextrin

texsel greens and rapeseed oil, to serve

For the rosehip syrup, put all the ingredients in a large, heavy-based saucepan with 375ml water and bring to the boil over a medium heat, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to cool. Cover, transfer to the fridge and allow to infuse for 24 hours. Pass through a muslin-lined sieve, discard the pulp and leave to one side.

Preheat the oven to 80°C/60°C Fan (if you have a gas oven, set it to the lowest setting and leave the door slightly ajar). Bring a large pan of water to the boil and blanch the tomatoes for 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and plunge them into iced water to stop the cooking process. Once cool enough to handle, peel away the skin. Place the tomatoes as a single layer on a baking tray, dress with the oil and salt and dehydrate in the oven for 5 hours until jammy and slightly dry. Remove from the oven and leave to one side.

Cook the bone marrow in a small, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat to release the fat. Strain the fat and discard the solids. In a medium pan over a medium heat, toast the breadcrumbs in the bone marrow fat for a few minutes, stirring continuously until evenly brown. Drain on kitchen paper and leave to cool. When cool, fold in the chives.

While the marrow crumb is cooling, bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the mint for 1 minute. Remove the leaves with a slotted spoon and refresh in a bowl of iced water. Drain, squeeze out the excess water and blitz the mint with the oil in a blender. Strain the mint oil through a muslin-lined sieve into a bowl. Put the maltodextrin in a small bowl, then add the oil a teaspoon at a time to create a crumb.

Pour a small amount of syrup into each bowl (the leftover syrup will keep for 1 week) and put the semi-dried tomatoes on top. Add small piles of the mint maltodextrin and marrow breadcrumbs, sprinkle each serving with texsel greens and drizzle with rapeseed oil.



KALIBOS CABBAGE WITH MUSSELS AND PARSNIP SAUCE

At Our Farm we grow a wonderful variety of cabbage called Kalibos. It is red with a firm heart and has a high sugar content, which gives it a delicious sweetness. Seeds are widely available if you fancy growing these yourself (it's well worth the effort), but if not, use any young red cabbage – you might need to cook the leaves a little longer, depending on how tender they are. Perilla is a sweet, yet strongly aromatic herb which adds notes of anise, basil, cumin and citrus to the wonderful early autumn ingredients on this plate.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Parsnip sauce and diced parsnip

1.4kg parsnips

1 litre whole milk
50g unsalted butter
Red cabbage
1 red cabbage, such as Kalibos
1 litre fresh apple juice
250ml red wine vinegar
1 red cabbage, juiced in a juicer
handful of perilla sprigs
Mussels
3 tbsp sunflower oil
2 shallots, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
24 live mussels, washed thoroughly under cold running water, beards and grit removed
200ml white wine
2 sprigs of perilla
salt, for seasoning
micro perilla shoots, to serve

Thinly slice 1kg of the parsnips. In a large, heavy-based saucepan over a low heat, warm the sliced parsnips and milk together, removing the pan from the heat before the milk boils. Leave to cool and infuse for 3 hours.

Strain the milk through a fine sieve and discard the parsnip. Thinly slice 200g of the remaining raw parsnip and cook in the butter in a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat for 15–20 minutes, or until soft. Add the parsnip-infused milk to the pan, bring to the boil and immediately remove from the heat. Blitz until smooth with a hand-held blender. Pass through a fine sieve and leave to one side.

Separate the cabbage into individual leaves, discarding the larger, coarse outer ones. Combine the apple juice, vinegar and cabbage juice in a large saucepan and bring to the boil. Blanch the cabbage leaves in the boiling liquid for 1–2 minutes until tender. Remove from the liquid with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Pour off 100ml of the blanching liquid and leave to one side. Add the perilla to the rest of the blanching liquid and reduce to a syrup over a low heat for 8–10 minutes. Remove the perilla sprigs and discard.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6.

While the liquid is reducing, dice the remaining 200g parsnips into pieces the same size as the mussels, scatter over a baking tray, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the sunflower oil and bake in the oven for 10–12 minutes, or until tender.

For the mussels, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons of the oil in a medium heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat, add the shallots and garlic and sweat for 3–4 minutes until translucent. Turn up the heat and add the mussels, wine and perilla. Cover and cook for 3–4 minutes, or until the shells have opened. Remove the pan from the heat and remove the meat from the shells. Discard any shells that have not opened.

Wrap the mussels and diced parsnips in the blanched kalibos leaves to make eight parcels and warm them through in the reserved 100ml of blanching liquid. When warm, remove from the liquid and brush with the kalibos syrup.

Divide the cabbage parcels among plates and finish with the parsnip sauce and micro perilla shoots.





DUNCAN CABBAGE WITH OYSTERS, PUFFED PORK AND HYSSOP SAUCE

Make sure your oysters are really fresh – the oyster season begins in September and lasts for as long as there is an R in the month. They should smell of the sea, be firm in texture and surrounded by natural juice, and the heel of the oyster should be a creamy white colour. Hyssop is a strongly aromatic herb, similar to Mediterranean herbs such as lavender and rosemary, and its potent, hot and bitter flavours add a real kick to the salty, briney oysters. The pork adds a crunchy contrast to the chewy oysters, but it needs at least 12 hours in the oven to dry out properly. Put it in overnight and it will be ready by morning.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

1kg pork skin
1 tight-headed cabbage, such as Duncan
12 large fresh oysters
vegetable oil, for deep-frying
Hyssop sauce
4 tbsp sunflower oil
2 shallots, thinly sliced
½ fennel bulb, thinly sliced
15ml chardonnay vinegar
200ml white wine
150ml double cream
250g unsalted butter
20g anise hyssop
a pinch of salt
hyssop flowers, to serve

Put the pork skin in a large heavy-based saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Simmer uncovered for 3 hours, or until soft and tender. Drain and remove any excess fat or meat from the skin. Cut the skin into 1cm squares, transfer to a baking tray and dry in the oven on its lowest temperature for at least 12 hours, or until completely dry.

To make the hyssop sauce, warm 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat and sweat the sliced shallots and fennel with the pinch of salt for 3–5 minutes, or until the shallots have become translucent. Deglaze the pan with the vinegar and white wine and reduce for about 3 minutes to a slightly thicker syrup consistency. Add the cream and 30ml water and bring

to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Whisk in the butter gradually, a small piece at a time, to thicken the sauce. Remove from the heat and add the hyssop. Cover and leave to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve and leave to one side.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. Remove any loose outer leaves from the cabbage to expose the heart, then cut the cabbage heart into quarters through the root. Warm the remaining 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large, ovenproof non-stick frying pan over a medium heat and colour both cut sides of the cabbage quarters until deeply golden, then finish the cooking in the oven for 10–12 minutes.

Shuck the oysters, keeping the juice and the meat separate. Pass the juice through a fine sieve into a small saucepan. Over a high heat, bring the oyster juice to the boil then immediately remove from the heat. Add the oysters and let them poach lightly for 30 seconds–1 minute in their own juices off the heat.

Deep-fry the pork skin in batches in a saucepan of oil heated to 180°C for about 1 minute until puffed and crisp like pork scratchings. Remove from the hot oil with a slotted spoon, leave to drain on kitchen paper and season them with salt.

Meanwhile, gently heat the hyssop sauce over a low heat to warm it through.

Fan the cabbage out on each plate, scatter the poached oysters and crispy pork on top, finish with the warm sauce and scatter over the hyssop flowers.

TORCHED MACKEREL WITH CHICORY MARMALADE AND TOASTED BARLEY SAUCE

Blowtorching is a simple but effective way of cooking fish; the flame comes into direct contact with the mackerel, giving it a smoky, charred flavour. Mackerel works really well with strong, slightly acidic flavours, so the bitter chicory and orange marmalade balanced with a touch of sugar is the perfect partner. Barley is often limited to soups and risottos, but toasting the grains gives them a wonderful depth of flavour and nuttiness. In the past I have given rosemary a supporting role because I've felt there are other, more interesting herbs, but I've come to really appreciate its qualities and here its warm, peppery notes allow the flavours of the pine and nutmeg to develop.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Toasted barley sauce

80g pearl barley, plus 25g cooked

375ml [White Chicken Stock](#)

4 sprigs of rosemary

125ml whole milk

1 soft-boiled egg (cooked for 4 minutes)

lemon juice, for seasoning

Torched mackerel

25g coriander seeds

25g fennel seeds

500g rock salt

250g caster sugar

zest of 1 lemon

4 fresh mackerel fillets, skin on

Chicory marmalade

1 tbsp sunflower oil

30g unsalted butter

600g chicory, thinly sliced

20g caster sugar

350ml orange juice

Maldon sea salt, for seasoning

land seaweed, to serve

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6.

For the sauce, toast the 80g pearl barley on a baking tray in the oven for 35–40 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven and leave to one side to cool. In a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a high heat, bring the chicken stock to the boil with the rosemary sprigs, then remove from the heat, add the toasted barley and allow to infuse for 1 hour.

Strain the barley from the stock and discard. Blitz the infused stock in a blender with the milk, egg and cooked barley until smooth, then pass through a fine sieve and season with lemon juice and salt.

For the mackerel, toast the coriander and fennel seeds in a dry non-stick frying pan over a medium heat for 4–5 minutes, then blitz them to a powder in a blender or grind them in a pestle and mortar. Combine the ground seeds in a bowl with the salt, sugar and lemon zest and mix well. Dust the mackerel fillets evenly on both sides with the salt mixture. Transfer to a plate and leave to cure in the fridge for 10 minutes. Rinse the fillets under cold running water and pat them dry with kitchen paper.

While the mackerel is curing, start the chicory marmalade. Preheat a medium heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Put the oil and butter in the saucepan with a pinch of salt, then add the chicory and sauté for 8–10 minutes until all the liquid has evaporated and the chicory is soft. Add the sugar and cook for a further 5 minutes to caramelize it, then add the orange juice, reduce the heat and reduce the liquid to a glaze.

Using a blowtorch, torch the skin side of the cured mackerel until lightly charred and smoky.

Spoon the warmed chicory marmalade on to the centre of each plate. Put the torched mackerel fillets on top and spoon the warmed sauce around. Finish with land seaweed and Maldon sea salt.

SALT COD MOUSSE, BLACK RADISH AND RAMSON SAUCE

In early spring, all around Cartmel ramsons fill the air with their distinctive garlicky aroma. The season is brief, so we like to make as much use of it as we can, such as in this vibrant and delicious green sauce. This recipe makes a good quantity of sauce, but any left over can be kept in the fridge, covered, for 3–5 days and used with any simple dishes, such as grilled lamb chops. You need to plan ahead with this dish – the fish needs curing for 1 hour and the mousse needs to set in the fridge for a minimum of 3 hours for perfect flavouring and consistency.

SERVES 6, AS A STARTER

Salt cod mousse

125g fresh cod fillet, skinned

15g fine salt

40g flat-leaf parsley leaves

50ml sunflower oil

2½ gelatine leaves

130g potatoes (preferably Maris Piper), peeled and cut into even-sized chunks

300g crème fraîche

Ramson sauce

250g ramson leaves

2 tbsp sunflower oil

2 medium shallots, thinly sliced

200ml whole milk

200ml double cream

Black radish

1 large black radish, or any other radish

4 tsp salmon roe

salt, for seasoning

tagetes leaves and flowers, to serve

Dust the cod fillets with the salt and place on a plate in the fridge to cure for 1 hour. Rinse off the salt under cold running water and pat the fillets dry with kitchen paper. Blitz the parsley and oil together in a blender until smooth, strain through muslin into a bowl and put to one side.

Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C Fan/Gas Mark 3.

Soak the gelatine in cold water for a few minutes until softened. Drain, squeeze out the excess water and leave the gelatine to one side.

Cook the potatoes in a saucepan of water over a high heat until tender. Bake the cod fillets on a baking tray for 6–8 minutes until flaky.

Drain the potatoes and flake the cod, and blitz them together in a blender with the softened gelatine leaves until smooth. Press through a fine sieve and fold in the parsley oil and crème fraîche. Transfer to an airtight container and leave in the fridge for 3 hours to set.

To make the sauce, bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the ramsons for 2 minutes. Remove from the water with a slotted spoon and transfer to a bowl of iced water to stop it cooking. Drain and squeeze out the excess water. In a medium, heavy-based saucepan, heat the oil over a medium heat and sweat the sliced shallots for 3–5 minutes, or until translucent. Add the milk and cream and bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer until reduced by two-thirds. Pour into a blender, add the blanched ramson leaves and blitz until smooth, then strain through a fine sieve into a bowl, cover and chill.

Just before serving, peel and slice the radish lengthways on a mandoline to create thin rectangles and season with salt just before serving.

Spoon the mousse into the centre of each bowl, shape the radish slices into curls and place alongside. Spoon the salmon roe on top of the mousse and finish with the green sauce and tagetes leaves and flowers.



ACCORD RADISH, CURED ARCTIC CHAR AND LEMON THYME

This is a real showstopper. The fish and prawn infusions need to be prepped two hours ahead, so you can prepare this in stages. This dish uses just the shells of the prawns, so either peel them off and freeze the prawns for another day, or use shells from another recipe. Arctic char is an underused fish similar in texture to salmon and trout but paler in colour; here it gets a lift from the lemon thyme gel, which adds spicy notes of clove, mint and camphor. We use pastry cutters to create a perfect flat mound of fish in the middle of the plate, but if you prefer a rougher look, pile it up and gently flatten it to support the radish discs.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Arctic char

25g coriander seeds
25g fennel seeds
500g rock salt
250g caster sugar
zest of 1 lemon
250g fresh Arctic char fillets
Prawn oil
heads and shells from 250g fresh prawns (freeze the peeled prawns to use another day)
150ml sunflower oil
Lemon thyme gel
20g lemon thyme sprigs
1 level tsp agar agar
a pinch of salt
140g low-fat natural yoghurt
Radish
2 long radishes, such as Accord (about 250g)
salt, for seasoning
lemon thyme leaves and flowers, to serve
3.5cm and 6–7cm pastry cutters (optional)

In a dry, non-stick frying pan over a medium heat, toast the coriander and fennel seeds for 4–5 minutes. When toasted, grind to a powder in a blender or pestle and mortar. In a bowl combine the ground seeds with the salt, sugar and lemon zest and mix well. Dust the Arctic char fillets evenly on both sides with the salt mixture. Put on a large plate and leave to cure in the fridge for 1½ hours.

While the fish is curing, preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6 and roast the prawn shells for 12–15 minutes, or until they turn a deep red colour. Blitz the roasted shells with the oil in a blender. Add the oil to a medium, heavy-based saucepan and warm through over a very low heat. Be careful not to get the oil too hot. Remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 2 hours.

Meanwhile, make the lemon thyme gel. Pour 200ml water into a small saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, add the lemon thyme, cover and leave to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain the infused water into a small, heavy-based saucepan and discard the lemon thyme. Add the agar agar and salt and cook for 1 minute. Take off the heat and strain through a fine sieve into a heatproof bowl, then put in the fridge to set until firm, about 5–10 minutes. Once set, blitz until smooth with the yoghurt in a blender.

When you are ready to assemble the dish, rinse the cured Arctic char fillets under cold running water and pat them dry with kitchen paper, then cut the Arctic char into 1cm dice. Strain the cooled infused oil through a fine sieve and season with a little salt. Slice the radish thinly on a mandoline – if you want a uniform finish, cut each slice into equal-sized rounds using a 3cm pastry cutter. Lightly season the slices with salt.

Divide the cured fish evenly among plates. For a smart look, press each portion of diced char into a 6–7cm pastry cutter to shape, or just mound the fish in the centre of the plate and gently flatten the top. Cover the fish with a circle of radish slices or discs. Drizzle the prawn oil and the gel around the plate and finish with a few lemon thyme leaves and flowers.



Sweet Cicely

(*Myrrhis odorata*)

From April right until October, the roadsides and fields around Cartmel are abundant with mounds of sweet cicely's fern-like leaves and tiny white flowers (much beloved of bees, and so important, as they are the first nectar plants in spring), growing in any bare patch of soil they can find. It's a prolific herb in Cumbria, where it is known as sweet brackens, which is how it appears on our menu. It has an incredibly long season, which is great for us as it has multiple uses in the kitchen, and this versatility is why this herb features so frequently in many of our dishes and why I also make

sure that we preserve as much of it as we can for our larder. I'm a huge fan of the anise flavour, and this herb has it in spades – you can often smell a clump of sweet cicely before you see it.

Although sweet cicely grows on the roadside near the restaurant, I prefer to get a dawn start and forage for it on Bigland Hill, about 20 minutes away from Cartmel. I love going here before I start work; it is a high point in the landscape and on a clear summer morning the views are spectacular – and as an added bonus there's no phone signal, so I can pick in peace!

We use every part of the plant: the light-green lacy leaves, the delicate white flowers, the long, pointed seeds, and even the roots – which make a great wine. Every bit is infused with the aroma of sweet aniseed when crushed. The leaves have more flavour when young and before the plant puts its energies into its flowers, or you can wait for the seed pods in late summer, which have a sweet flavour and nutty texture. Once picked, the scent and flavours fade quickly, so they need to be used fresh, or if they are being preserved for another day, do it immediately. Be careful when picking this herb in the wild, though, as it looks similar to poison hemlock.

Sweet cicely complements a real array of ingredients. It is a natural sweetener, so the leaves and green seeds will reduce the tartness of rhubarb and gooseberries and add an anise note when used raw in fruit salads (it is especially good with peaches, apricots and strawberries), it also lends a spicy tang to cakes and makes beautiful ice cream. In savoury dishes it marries particularly well with fish and seafood, chicken and root vegetables, and it really lifts a green or cucumber salad. I like to use the fresh, barely opened flowers scattered over salads or as a garnish. Although sweet cicely already has a really long season, we like to extend it further by pickling the buds, using the leaves to make oils, salts and sugars, and dry the leaves for use over the winter. Its flavour does dissipate on cooking, though, so you need to add it to a hot dish at the end to get the best from it – it's fantastic in soups, stews and sauces.

Sweet cicely is a real gift from nature; there is no end to the uses for this beautiful, hard-working herb, so do keep an eye out for it, or grow a clump yourself.





SWEET CICELY AND RHUBARB PICKLED HERRING

Rhubarb is a versatile ingredient that shouldn't be kept only for desserts, as its sharp tang works so well with meats and strong-flavoured fish. In order to really absorb the full flavour of the rhubarb, cicely and spices, the herring needs to be marinated in the pickling mixture for 24 hours. Here sweet cicely is in its element, not only lending its aromatic flavour to the dish but also cutting through the oiliness of the herring and adding a natural sweetness to the pickle.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Sweet cicely stalk and rhubarb pickled herring

8 rhubarb stalks, juiced in a juicer (should yield about 500ml)

100g sweet cicely stalks (leaves reserved to use below)

20g caster sugar

50ml white wine vinegar

3 cloves

3 allspice berries

4 fresh herrings, cleaned and filleted

Sweet cicely gel

350ml fresh apple juice (shop-bought is fine)

juice of ½ lemon

1½ tsp agar agar

30g sweet cicely leaves

Frisée lettuce emulsion

230g green frisée leaves from the outer lettuce

2 soft-boiled eggs (cooked for 4 minutes)

300ml grapeseed oil

salt, for seasoning

young, yellow frisée from the lettuce centre, chervil leaves, garlic flowers, pak choi shoots, to serve

To make the pickle liquid, bring the rhubarb juice to the boil in a medium saucepan, then remove from the heat and add the sweet cicely stalks, sugar, vinegar, cloves, allspice berries and 2 pinches of salt. Return to the heat and bring to the boil again, then reduce the heat and simmer for 4–5 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to infuse until it has cooled to room temperature. Strain through a fine sieve and chill. When the pickle liquid is cold, add the herring fillets, cover and leave to marinate in the fridge for 24 hours.

To make the gel, put the apple juice, lemon juice and agar agar in a small saucepan over a high heat and bring to the boil. Once the mixture has come to the boil, pour it into a heatproof container and leave to cool. Once cold, chill in the fridge until set firm – this will only take a few minutes.

Transfer the firm gel to a blender and blitz with the raw sweet cicely leaves until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve and chill until ready to serve.

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the frisée leaves for 1 minute 30 seconds. Remove and refresh in a bowl of iced water. Drain and squeeze out the excess water. Blitz the lettuce with the soft-boiled eggs in a clean blender until smooth, then gradually add the oil until the emulsion has a mayonnaise consistency. Pass through a fine sieve for a smoother texture and season with salt.

Divide the pickled herring among plates, add the sweet cicely gel and frisée lettuce emulsion and sprinkle each serving with the leaves, flowers and shoots.



LEEK AND LANGOUSTINES WITH SWEET CICELY AND FENNEL SAUCE

This is one for lovers of aniseed flavours – like me. The combination of fennel, sweet cicely and star anise packs an aniseed flavour punch against the sweet, delicate flavours of the langoustines and cream sauce. The whitecurrants are a lovely addition when in season as they add little bursts of sweetness and freshness. The recipe makes more oil than you will need, but it keeps in the freezer or for 3–5 days in the fridge – it might discolour over time but it's still fine to use.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Langoustine and cream sauce

12 whole large fresh langoustines

4 tbsp sunflower oil

2 shallots, sliced

1 carrot, sliced

1 celery stick, sliced
1 garlic clove, sliced
1 small leek, sliced
2 tsp tomato purée
1 star anise
1 bay leaf
200ml white wine
25ml Cognac
400ml [White Chicken Stock](#)
100ml double cream
juice of ½ lemon
Sweet cicely oil
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 star anise
200ml grapeseed oil
50g spinach
50g sweet cicely leaves and young stalks
Fennel and sweet cicely purée
1 tbsp lemon juice
325g fennel, thinly sliced
75ml double cream, reduced by half over a low heat
40g sweet cicely leaves
Wispy leeks
16 small baby leeks
a pinch of salt
whitecurrants, to serve

Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C Fan/Gas Mark 4. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the langoustines for 20 seconds. Remove and refresh in a bowl of iced water. When cold, remove the tails from the heads with a short twist and pull. Peel the tails carefully and set the meat to one side. Roast the heads and shells in a roasting tin in the oven for 15–20 minutes.

Warm 2 tablespoons of the sunflower oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat, add all the vegetables and sweat them for 5–6 minutes. Add the tomato purée and cook for a further 2 minutes, stirring continuously. Add the star anise, bay leaf and roasted langoustine shells and heads, deglaze with the alcohol and reduce until almost all the liquid has evaporated. Cover with the chicken stock and bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 2 hours. Strain through a fine sieve into a heavy-based saucepan over a low–medium heat and reduce by half. Add the cream and lemon juice and simmer for a further 5 minutes. Pass through a fine sieve and leave to one side.

While the sauce is infusing, make the sweet cicely oil. Toast the fennel seeds and star anise in a small dry frying pan over a medium heat for 3–4 minutes. Warm the oil in a small, heavy-based saucepan until it reaches roughly 80°C (check with a thermometer) then add the toasted spices. Remove from the heat and allow to infuse for 1 hour. Bring a heavy-based saucepan of water to the boil over a high heat and blanch the spinach for 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon, refresh in a bowl of iced water, drain and squeeze out the excess water. Blitz the cicely, blanched spinach, spices and oil in a blender until smooth. Strain the herb oil through a muslin-lined sieve and chill immediately.

To make the fennel and sweet cicely purée, stir together 250ml water and the lemon juice. Add the finely sliced fennel to the acidulated water and allow to soak for a couple of minutes, then drain and transfer the fennel to a plastic container. Cover with microwave-safe cling film and microwave

on full power for 5–6 minutes. After this time check the fennel is soft; if it still has a firm texture, cook it in 1-minute blasts until the fennel is soft and tender. When cooked, squeeze off the excess liquid. Transfer the fennel to a blender along with the reduced cream and sweet cicely leaves. Blitz until smooth and pass through a fine sieve for a smoother texture. Chill to maintain the vibrant green colour. Warm slightly before serving.

Fry the leeks in a non-stick pan over a high heat in 1 tablespoon of the remaining sunflower oil for 2–3 minutes until slightly charred and crispy and season with a pinch of salt. Remove from the pan, add the remaining tablespoon of oil to the same pan and cook the langoustines over a medium heat for 30 seconds on each side.

Drizzle each plate with the sauce and green oil, then divide the leeks and langoustines among the plates with the purée. Finish with whitecurrants that have been slightly warmed in the langoustine roasting tin.



SWEET CICELY CAKE

Sweet cicely might seem an unusual ingredient for a cake, but this herb is a natural sweetener, so you don't need sugar, and pairing it with star anise highlights its aniseed flavour. The leaves also add a wonderful colour to baking, so slice this cake in front of friends to show off the vibrant green in each piece and serve with a dollop of the creamy aniseed buttercream.

SERVES 10

Sweet cicely cake
200ml whole milk
2 medium eggs
400g runny honey

80g sweet cicely leaves
440g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground star anise or 5–6 whole star anise, ground
Star anise buttercream
80g unsalted butter, softened
135g cream cheese
2 star anise, ground
150g icing sugar, sifted
juice of ¼ lemon

Preheat the oven to 190°C/170°C Fan/Gas Mark 5 and line a 900g (2lb) loaf tin with baking parchment.

To make the cake, blitz the milk, eggs, honey and sweet cicely leaves in a blender until the mixture is bright green and smooth. Sift the flour, baking powder and ground star anise into a bowl. Fold the wet ingredients into the dry, transfer to the loaf tin and bake for 45 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove from the oven, leave to cool in the tin, then turn out on to a wire rack to cool completely.

To make the buttercream icing, cream the butter and the cream cheese together in a stand mixer until stiff, light and fluffy. Add three-quarters of the ground star anise and mix well to combine. Turn the speed down to low and gradually add the icing sugar, a tablespoon at a time, until fully incorporated. Remove from the machine and fold the lemon juice into the mixture. Transfer to the fridge for a couple of hours to set.

Put slices of the cake on plates with star anise buttercream, sprinkled with some of the remaining ground star anise.



STRAWBERRIES WITH SWEET CICELY SYRUP AND SHEEP'S YOGHURT

Sweet cicely adds an aromatic natural sweetness to the syrup here, which is the perfect complement to the tart yoghurt and ripe strawberries, finished off with the tangy citrusy leaves of sheep's sorrel. If you think you are not familiar with sheep's sorrel, think again: it is probably best known to most people as an irritating perennial weed that appears in summer on acidic grasslands, along roadsides and even in domestic gardens. It is widespread, so the leaves can be easily foraged or even cultivated.

SERVES 4

Macerated strawberries

20 strawberries, hulled
juice and zest of ½ lemon
50g caster sugar
½ vanilla pod, split lengthways
Sweet cicely syrup
75g caster sugar
juice of ½ lemon
35g sweet cicely leaves
a pinch of xanthan gum
Sheep's yoghurt

750g natural sheep's yoghurt, hung in muslin over a bowl overnight to strain the whey from the curd

sheep's sorrel, to serve

Slice the strawberries in half lengthways and put them in a bowl. Add the lemon juice and zest, sugar and split vanilla pod and stir gently to coat the strawberries in the mixture. Leave to macerate for 1 hour at room temperature, stirring at 10-minute intervals.

To make the sweet cicely syrup, boil the sugar, lemon juice and 150ml water in a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a high heat until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat and chill (you can do this in a freezer for quick results). Once chilled, add to a blender with the sweet cicely leaves and blitz on high speed until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve. Pour back into a clean blender, add the xanthan gum, blitz to thicken then chill again.

Put a large spoon of sheep's yoghurt in each bowl, create a well in the top with the back of a spoon and fill with the sweet cicely syrup. Drain the macerated strawberries and arrange them around the outside. Finish with sheep's sorrel.



SWEET CICELY ICE CREAM

This is a gently fragrant ice cream, infused simply with sweet cicely. The best way to retain the flavour of this herb is to keep cooking to a minimum, so here it is briefly blanched to preserve its colour, then added to the ice cream mixture at the last minute.

SERVES 4

60g sweet cicely leaves

150ml whole milk
225ml double cream
50g caster sugar
4 egg yolks
juice of ½ lemon

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the sweet cicely leaves for 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and refresh in a bowl of iced water. Drain and squeeze out the excess water.

In a medium, heavy-based saucepan, bring the milk, 175ml of the cream and 25g of the sugar to the boil. Once the mixture is boiling, remove it from the heat and gradually pour it on to the egg yolks in a large heatproof bowl, whisking constantly to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Return to a clean saucepan and cook over a low–medium heat, stirring constantly, until the temperature of the mixture reaches 80°C (check with a thermometer). Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a clean bowl, cover and leave to one side.

Put the remaining 25g of sugar in a small, heavy-based saucepan with the remaining 50ml of cream and warm over a low heat. Once the sugar has dissolved, add the mixture to a blender with the blanched sweet cicely and blitz to a purée, then cool it down as quickly as possible by transferring it to a bowl set over ice to maintain the green colour.

Once cool, combine the two mixtures, then add the lemon juice and churn in an ice-cream maker until frozen. Serve at once or transfer to a freezerproof container and store in the freezer until required.

SWEET CICELY POT WITH LEMON VERBENA AND BLUEBERRIES

Lemon verbena is an intense herb that has a floral, citrusy scent that is released when you crush the plant's leaves. Its flavour is slightly softer than its aroma, but you still get a good lemony tang, without the bitterness of a real lemon. It works beautifully with cream and juicy blueberries. The anise flavour of sweet cicely is the perfect partner to the citrus notes, making this a real celebration of fresh, summery ingredients.

SERVES 4

Sweet cicely pot
50g sweet cicely leaves
450ml whole milk
2 star anise
1 tsp salt
150ml double cream
1 heaped tsp pectin
5 egg yolks
Lemon verbena crème fraîche
500ml double cream
25g fresh lemon verbena
250g crème fraîche
Lemon verbena poached blueberries
100g caster sugar
juice of ½ lemon
10g dried lemon verbena
200g blueberries
young sweet cicely leaves, to serve

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and blanch the sweet cicely leaves for 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and refresh in a bowl of iced water. Drain and squeeze out the excess water. Put to one side.

Put 300ml of the milk in a medium, heavy-based saucepan with the star anise and salt. Warm over a medium heat to 80°C (check with a thermometer), remove from the heat and leave to infuse for 30 minutes. Discard the star anise. Put the milk and blanched sweet cicely in a blender and blitz until very smooth. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a clean bowl, cover and leave to one side.

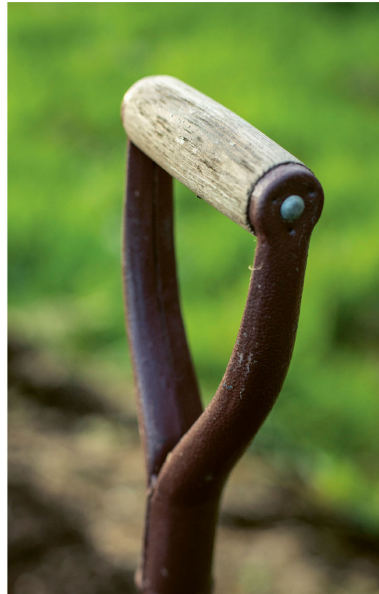
Put the remaining 150ml of milk in another medium, heavy-based saucepan with the double cream and pectin. Warm over a medium heat until it reaches 90°C (check with a thermometer). Remove from the heat and pour this liquid on to the egg yolks in a heatproof bowl, whisking constantly to prevent the eggs from scrambling. When fully incorporated, mix the two liquids together and skim any excess foam produced by the whisking from the top using a dessertspoon. Divide into four serving bowls and chill for about 6 hours until set.

Next, prepare the crème fraîche. Put the cream and the lemon verbena in a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a low–medium heat and simmer until reduced by half. Strain through a fine sieve into a heatproof bowl and discard the lemon verbena. Slowly fold the crème fraîche into the cream, cover and chill until needed.

To poach the blueberries, combine the sugar, lemon juice and dried lemon verbena with 100ml water in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil and remove from the heat. Strain the liquid and discard the lemon verbena. Return the liquid to a clean saucepan and bring to the boil again. Add the blueberries, then remove from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Strain the blueberries from the liquid before serving.

Spoon dots of the crème fraîche on to the set sweet cicely. Scatter the poached blueberries in and around the dots so you can see all the colours. Top with the young sweet cicely leaves.





RADISH STEW

There are a few elements to this dish, but the radishes take centre stage. We use many different varieties; each offer something unique, but all are nutritional powerhouses. Use a few varieties if you can – we use Cherry Belle, bright red with crisp, mild, sweet white flesh; Albena, a white-skinned and white-fleshed mild variety; and Viola, with its bright violet skin and crisp white flesh. The truffle granola is one of my favourite recipes; it's really moreish and if it's around I can't help but pick at it. You can make a big batch and store it in an airtight container – but I promise you it won't hang around for long!

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Aubergine purée

1 large aubergine (about 450g)

½ tbsp tahini paste

1 tbsp natural yoghurt

½ tsp roasted chopped garlic

Radish sauce

1 tbsp sunflower oil

1 shallot, sliced

40g button mushrooms, sliced

1½ tsp tomato purée

250g red radishes, thinly sliced

500ml [Vegetable Stock](#)

sherry vinegar, for seasoning

5g unsalted butter

Truffle granola

135g honey

35g black truffle oil

35g chilli oil

150g porridge oats

Radishes

12 mixed radishes, such as Cherry Belle, Albena and Viola

2 tbsp rapeseed oil

8 stalks of rhubarb chard (or Swiss chard), stalks removed and cut in half

salt, for seasoning

rapeseed oil, for drizzling

assorted radish flowers and sea purslane, to serve

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6.

First, make the aubergine purée. Wrap the aubergine in foil and bake it in the oven for 35–40 minutes until completely soft, then halve it lengthways and scoop out the flesh. Put the flesh in a blender with the tahini, yoghurt and garlic and blitz until smooth. Pass through a fine sieve and season with a pinch of salt.

While the aubergine is cooking, make the radish sauce. Warm the oil in a medium, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat, add the shallot and sweat for 5–6 minutes, or until translucent, stirring regularly. Add the mushrooms and sweat for a further 3 minutes, or until soft and tender. Stir in the tomato purée and cook for 3–4 minutes. Add the radishes and vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and blitz with a hand-held blender until smooth, then strain through a fine sieve. Finish the sauce by seasoning with sherry vinegar and salt and whisking in the butter.

Reduce the oven temperature to 160°C/140°C Fan/Gas Mark 2.

To make the granola, warm the honey, oils and 1 teaspoon of salt in a small saucepan over a low heat until the honey has melted and the salt dissolved. Mix in the oats. Transfer to a baking tray, spread it out in an even layer and bake for 15 minutes, or until golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool, then break into small pieces. Leave the oven at the same temperature.

Put the radishes on a baking tray, chopping any larger ones in half, season with a pinch of salt, drizzle over half the oil and roast for 10–12 minutes.

Heat the remaining oil in a medium, non-stick saucepan and add the rhubarb chard leaves along with a splash of water. Cook gently until the leaves have wilted and season with a little salt.

Warm the radish sauce. Put a spoon of the purée in the centre of four plates and place the roasted radishes on top. Add the chard, purslane leaves and flowers. Spoon the sauce around the outside and sprinkle with truffle granola. Drizzle with rapeseed oil.





SALT-BAKED TURNIP WITH EGG YOLK AND PORK LARDO

Once Britain's staple vegetable (until potatoes came along and took its crown), turnip has lost popularity in modern times, but it deserves a resurgence for its versatility and because it is a great source of vitamin C. Baby turnips have a sweet, delicate taste, while larger ones are stronger and more peppery, but even the more mature roots can burst with flavour when cooked in salt dough. This recipe makes a lot of lardo, but it can be frozen once cured. It needs almost 2 weeks to cure, so make it well ahead ready to use or store it in the freezer until you need it.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Pork lardo

1 tsp black peppercorns

1 tsp fennel seeds

1 tsp ground allspice

1 tsp juniper berries

55g coarse sea salt

30g sugar

1kg pork back fat

Slow-cooked egg yolk

4 eggs

Salt-baked turnip

300g coarse salt

500g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

4 large white turnips

Turnip broth

2kg large white turnips, juiced

200ml double cream

50g unsalted butter

2 tsp xanthan gum

juice of 1 lemon

salt, for seasoning

turnip tops and cornflowers, to serve

For the pork lardo, finely grind the spices in a blender or pestle and mortar. Add the salt and sugar and pulse or grind to combine. Rub the spice mix over the pork fat. Wrap the pork fat tightly in cling film and chill for 11 days. Remove the fat from the cling film and brush off the spices. Place it on a wire rack set over a tray and chill, uncovered, for a further 2 days until dry to the touch.

When you are ready to cook the whole recipe, preheat the oven to 140°C/120°C Fan/Gas Mark 1. In a Pyrex dish or high-sided oven tray, cover the eggs with water and bake for 2 hours. Chill in a bowl of iced water to stop them cooking further. Once cool enough to handle, crack the eggs, remove the yolks and leave to one side. Discard the white.

For the salt-baked turnip, increase the oven temperature to 200°C/180°C Fan/Gas Mark 6. In a large mixing bowl, combine the salt, flour and enough cold water to form a dense dough (about 300ml). Dust a work surface with flour and roll out the dough to a thickness of 1cm. Wrap the turnips in the salt dough, covering them completely. Place on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment and bake for 25–30 minutes. Allow to cool to room temperature in the dough, then break open. Peel and grate the turnips into a bowl and leave to one side.

Put the turnip juice in a medium saucepan over a medium–high heat and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, strain through a fine sieve to remove the scum that rises to the top and return the juice to a clean pan, on the heat. Stir in the cream and butter, add the xanthan gum and blitz using a hand-held blender. Season with salt and lemon juice. Remove from the heat and warm through before serving.

Cut 12 thin slices of lardo straight from the fridge. Warm the grated turnip and divide it among bowls. Sit an egg yolk on the turnip and top each with 3 slices of lardo. Finish with turnip tops and cornflowers and serve the broth hot on the side.

PICKLED RED PEPPERS AND FENNEL WITH SMOKED TOMATO STOCK

This light and fresh dish is perfect for the hot days of summer, using a selection of ingredients that are at their best in the height of this season. Fennel packs my favourite aniseedy flavour, and it works so well with this chilled mousse, which is made from vegetable purée folded with cream and set with gelatine. The pickled red peppers make the most of summer surplus, as does the smoked tomato stock – leftovers can be sipped as a chilled soup or consommé with pearls of cooked courgette, carrot and torn basil leaves.

SERVES 4, AS A STARTER

Smoked tomato stock

2kg cherry tomatoes

1 garlic clove, chopped

1 celery stick, sliced

1 shallot, sliced

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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