

Stirrup

THE COUNTRY RANGE GROUP
MAGAZINE FOR CATERERS

SUMMER

JUNE
2025



QUEEN OF THE POTATO

POPPY O'TOOLE
SPECIAL FEATURE



SCHOOL MENU PLANNING | BREAKFAST & BRUNCH TRENDS
FAMILY FRIENDLY DINING

Ingredient

We can't believe that we're halfway through 2025 already! If you're feeling the same, this is your sign to pop the kettle on and take five minutes to reflect on your achievements so far and look ahead to what's still to come.

If you work in education, our Category Focus is all about planning menus for the new term whilst we also find out more about the NARF Allergy School. Our Melting Pot feature delves into the latest breakfast and brunch trends, whilst our Leading Light, Roopa Gulati, gives us an insight into her career in Indian cooking.

Don't miss our special guest - 'Potato Queen' Poppy O'Toole, who will inspire you to give the humble spud a new lease of life.

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

The Stir it up team



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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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VG - Vegan **V** - Vegetarian

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Fresh FROM THE KITCHEN



We're continuing to explore the ongoing trend for nostalgia and joy in food this month by looking at the 'newstalgia' trend – where everything old becomes new with modern twists on classic dishes and childhood favourites popping up on menus everywhere.

CHILDHOOD FAVOURITES – Innovative chefs are bringing a fresh lease of life to classics whilst preserving the emotional connection associated with dishes that bring comfort and familiarity during times of global unrest. Kids' classics such as fish fingers and even the humble chip are getting a gourmet revamp for adults and winning flavour combos are being given a new lease of life.

CASUAL MEETS CLASSY – The elevation of comfort food to luxury continues, from tater tots topped with truffle, to posh hot dogs. As for dessert, reimagined classics are being taken up a notch with the creative use of savoury ingredients. Think celeriac dark chocolate shards in a Viennetta style dessert and saffron spiced Eton Mess.

CEREAL REVIVAL – The nostalgia continues in desserts with the addition of favourite cereals. We're seeing frosted flakes in tiramisu, fancy cornflake tarts and even chef-branded cereal boxes. Loaded cereal is also a viral TikTok trend, starting as a pregnancy craving and soon taking off amongst other mums-to-be.

LOL FOOD – This term was coined by American food writer Jaya Saxena referring to the humour and "sheer stupidity" of some menu dishes. In reality, this is accessible comfort food that's different enough from shop-bought or home made to warrant spending hard earned cash but with the same instant gratification of the original product. Think hand-rolled spaghetti rings poured at the table, or hot dogs served beside homemade pasta.



Gourmet
Hot Dogs

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From thefoodpeople trend report 2025.

Cooks CALENDAR

JUNE

1ST JUNE – WORLD MILK DAY

Celebrate World Milk Day with a nostalgic treat reimagined! This Apple Crumble Milkshake recipe from Country Range is creamy, comforting, and utterly irresistible!

17TH – 24TH JUNE – NATIONAL PICNIC WEEK

Level up your picnic game this summer with a delicious twist on a classic favourite. Try this Shredded Wheat Summer Quiche from Cereal Partners®.



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



JULY

16TH JULY – NATIONAL CHERRY DAY

Celebrate the sweetness of cherries with a showstopping dessert. This Black Cherry Mousse Cakes recipe from Opies combines rich fruit flavour with creamy indulgence—perfect for a summery treat.

17TH JULY – NATIONAL HOTDOG DAY

Take your summer hotdogs to the next level with a bold, flavour-packed twist. These Sticky Ginger Glazed Hotdogs from Opies are both sweet and savoury —perfect for your summer menu!

20TH JULY – NATIONAL ICE CREAM DAY

Celebrate National Ice Cream Day with this tropical combo of delicious coconut and mango gelato created by Henley Bridge, it is sure to be a summer sensation.



AUGUST

4TH AUGUST – NATIONAL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE DAY

Transform your chocolate chip cookies into a decadent delight with this indulgent Pistachio Cream Topped Cookie Pucks recipe from Country Range.

31ST AUGUST – INTERNATIONAL BACON DAY

Celebrate in style this International Bacon Day by giving your loaded fries a gourmet twist! Try Lamb Weston's delicious recipe for Smoked Salmon & Crispy Bacon Loaded Fries with Salad.

Thanks to Cereal Partners®, Opies, Henley Bridge, Lamb Weston and Country Range.



IN SEASON Courgettes Strawberries Watercress Beetroot Rhubarb



Readers' lives

NAME: Andy Morris

BORN AND RAISED:
Ramsbottom

JOB TITLE: Head Chef

PLACE OF WORK: Lavender Hills Care Home - a 43-bed home situated in Ramsbottom. Specialising in dementia care with unrivalled views across the Lancashire countryside, the home prioritises healthy living, person-centred care and tailored activity.

BIG TARGET FOR 2025?

I want to create a Lavender Hills Cookbook with the residents' favourite recipes! We always want to know our residents' favourite meals and treats so we can recreate them, but we want to go one step further this year and create a recipe book for their loved ones and friends of the home.

WHICH CHEF DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST AND WHY?

Macauley, my Sous Chef, because he inspires me to be good at my job. He keeps me on my toes, we bounce ideas off each other and are a great team.

WHAT'S YOUR TIP TO CUT WASTAGE IN THE KITCHEN?

Being a certified B Corp we're all about waste management and doing our bit for the environment. We love sourcing locally and try to do this as much as possible. This ensures we have great quality, less waste and happy residents.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY RANGE PRODUCT AND WHY?

Chicken Bouillon Powder, it's versatile and we can use it in loads of dishes. The more flavour the better!

WHAT'S YOUR DREAM JOB?

Ski Instructor – being out on the slopes is the only thing that beats creating smiles with my food!

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DISH TO COOK?

Home-made steak and ale pie, it's an art form!

DEAD OR ALIVE – WHICH THREE PEOPLE WOULD YOU LIKE TO COOK FOR THE MOST?

Pep Guardiola, not only does he manage my team, but he knows his food! He has an amazing restaurant in Manchester. Jamie Oliver, down to earth and from my generation – he made it cool to cook and is also focused on creating a healthier and happier nation. Finally, Anthony Bourdain. I'm sure he would have some amazing stories to tell and secrets to share.

CAN YOU SHARE THE RECIPE FOR YOUR SIGNATURE DISH?

No, it's a top-secret family recipe! My steak and ale pie wouldn't be the same without it.

Country Range Chicken Bouillon Powder Pack Size: 2kg



Bird's TRADITIONAL TRIFLE



PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES
COOKING TIME: N/A 3 HOURS TO SET
SERVES: 10

INGREDIENTS

200g STRAWBERRIES, FRESH OR FROZEN, PLUS EXTRA FOR DECORATING

200G COOKED McDUGALLS PLAIN SPONGE

100ML SHERRY (OPTIONAL)

175G McDUGALLS VEGAN STRAWBERRY JELLY

100B BIRD'S INSTANT CUSTARD MIX

600ML FRESH DOUBLE CREAM

50G DARK CHOCOLATE CHUNKS OR GRATED CHOCOLATE

50G FLAKED ALMONDS, TOASTED

METHOD

1. Place the strawberries into a serving dish. Cut the sponge into chunks and place on top of the strawberries then drizzle over the sherry.
2. Bring 1 litre of water to the boil and whisk in the McDougalls Vegetarian jelly, stir until all the crystals are dissolved.
3. Allow to cool for a few minutes then pour over the sponge and fruit. Leave to cool, then place into a fridge to set for two hours.
4. Meanwhile bring another 1 litre of water to the boil, then whisk in the **BIRD'S INSTANT CUSTARD MIX** to make a thick custard. Cover with cling-film to stop a skin forming and leave to cool. Place in the fridge, until you are ready to assemble.
5. Whip the double cream until you have soft peaks. Place into a piping bag with a star nozzle, and save in the fridge until needed.
6. When the jelly is set and the custard is cold, place the custard on top of the jelly, to create a thick custard layer. then pipe a layer of cream on top of the custard.
7. Sprinkle over the chocolate, toasted almonds and strawberries (optional) to serve.



CHEF TIPS:

You can make this into individual pots and sell as part of your takeaway offer.

ubarb Cauliflower Peppers



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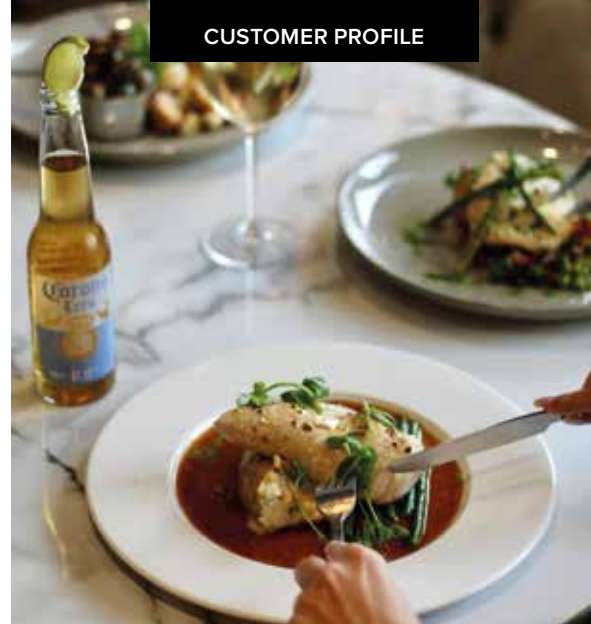
Prosciutto Crudo

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SUCCESS FOR LISINI

People First Mantra Breeds Success for Lisini

One of the biggest and most successful names in Scottish hospitality, the proud family-run Lisini Pub Company was set up in 1969 by Harry and Kathleen Hood, and continues to be a beacon for the finest food, service, entertainment, events and functions in Scotland. The Lanarkshire-based hospitality group employs over 300 people and the business has grown organically over the last sixty-plus years.



Offering a wide array of luxurious rooms, bars, restaurants, wedding venues, function rooms, conference facilities and even a golf course across the different sites, the family business has been built on hard graft plus a love of hospitality and the people working within the sector.

Group Executive Chef Chris Forbes was out of work after being left severely injured by a car accident before joining Lisini. "While the drunk driver got out of the vehicle and sparked up a cigarette, I was left with three crushed discs and a long recovery period," says Chris.

"Struggling to pay my mortgage, I contacted the Benevolent Association for the Licensed Trade (The Ben). Lisa Wishart, Harry and Kathleen's daughter, was a director of the charity, in addition to her role at Lisini. Lisa supported me for several months as my case worker before telling me that she was

getting me back into the kitchen. I joined Lisini around 12 years ago and haven't looked back. Lisa was a remarkable lady who sadly passed away in 2023. I owe her so much and she is missed greatly throughout the Lisini family."

Responsible for the food across all the company's bars, restaurant and function rooms, Chris is immensely passionate about nurturing the next generation. Each venue aims to change the a la carte menu at least three times a year with an additional Christmas menu. The company also creates fresh menus for Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Easter, Father's Day and other key occasions. This year, they ran successful menus for Burns Night, which included specials to showcase the very best of Scottish produce.

"Our ethos is to make sure the staff of today are retained and move up to senior positions, so the menu development and specials are crucial in developing our team. No one gets promoted until there is someone beneath them who can do their job. As a young chef, there is nothing better than seeing your dishes on the menu, being bought and enjoyed. It gives you a huge buzz and you learn so much about the process."

Passionate about the future at Lisini, Chris has big plans for the year; "Our aim is to challenge ourselves every single day and continuously strive for improvement. Our target for 2025 is to increase turnover by 20%, while decreasing overheads. To help drive growth and reach our targets, we are looking to revamp Dalziel Park with a major overhaul to improve the experience for our guests."

For more information on The Lisini Pub Co and its venues, visit www.lisini.co.uk

Above Right:
Dining and food
prep at Lisini.

Right: Chef
Chris Forbes.

Below: Angels
Hotel.





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EAT THE SEASON



Sorrel



Sorrel is a hardy perennial herb belonging to the Polygonaceae family, known for its edible, tart-tasting, arrow-shaped leaves. It is high in fibre, vitamins and minerals and is easy to grow from

seed, suiting most types of soil in sun or light shade.

Chef Josh Barnes who runs 'Chef's Table' restaurant, part of the 20,000-acre Swinton Estate in North Yorkshire, says "At Swinton Estate, we grow bronze sorrel in the greenhouse, where the bronze-coloured leaves stand out as a rich contrast. We forage for wood sorrel in the woods surrounding the estate. Sorrel contains oxalic acid and it is this which gives the herb a characteristic, tart flavour, making it taste quite sour. In general, it's the bitter flavour of sorrel that works best with rich ingredients and can add another level to dishes. On the flip side, sorrel needs to be balanced to avoid overpowering milder plates of food."

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Chop sorrel and freeze it in ice cube trays with a little water or olive oil. Alternatively, incorporate it into egg dishes such as scrambled eggs, add to smoothies, stir finely chopped sorrel into mashed potatoes or use it instead of lettuce in wraps or sandwiches.

1/ ADD FLAVOUR TO WHITE FISH OR CHICKEN

According to Josh, sorrel's high concentration of oxalic acid brings bright acidity to any dish. "This is a herb that brings a citrusy hit to food. You can use it like a seasoning and in place of lemon juice, for example. It takes white fish like haddock, or chicken to another level."

2/ IT'S SOUPER

Soups can be enhanced by the addition of sorrel as demonstrated by food blogger Mary Margaret Chappell from My Cancale Kitchen who blends it with onion, leek, potato and garlic. The soup has an amazing ability to remain bright green. "This is thanks to a nifty trick that calls for blending sorrel and butter into a paste that is added just before the soup is served," she says. "The soup remains this colour even after a day in the fridge and some intense reheating." Visit <https://mycancalekitchen.com/sorrel-soup/> for the complete recipe.



3/ WHAT A SAUCE

Sorrel can be mixed into sauces and dressings. Josh makes a sorrel sauce, which is poured over smoked haddock and topped with a poached egg. "The sorrel cuts through and balances the strong flavour of the fish, while eggs are a natural partner for the herb. Another interesting recipe is a sorrel ricotta, created because the high oxalic acid splits the milk," he says.

4/ GIVE SALADS A ZING

Josh Barnes says "One of the simplest ways to use sorrel is just to toss the herb leaves with radicchio in a salad of rocket and other lettuce leaves. Wood sorrel has a more sour and still lemony flavour, which makes it an ideal addition to salads. It's a case of balancing flavours with a selection of interesting leaves."



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FAMILY VALUES

Uncovering the value of family-friendly dining

The Family Dining report by KAM Insight, supported by HGEM hospitality platform states that 91% of families dine out together at least once every three months with most families spending an average of £4,015 per year on eating and drinking out. Dinner (69%) is the primary dining out occasion for families followed by lunch (66%). Most parents (68%) would like to see venues being more family friendly, while 49% of parents consider kids' menus generally uninspiring.

With over 8.2 million families in the UK, the research suggests that there are nearly 600 million family dining occasions per year, presenting a huge opportunity for the hospitality sector.

Blake Gladman from KAM Insight says, "Moving beyond the typical nuggets and fries, operators can introduce more adventurous options such as colourful pasta dishes with hidden vegetables, build-your-own tacos or mini sliders served in fun and engaging ways. Offering dishes that balance nutrition with a playful presentation will go a long way towards impressing both kids and parents." Another idea is to clearly indicate kid-friendly options and special offers using visual cues like icons and colourful illustrations. This makes it easy for parents to spot family deals or kid-specific options.

Parents also said they wanted to see a variety of choices (86%), affordable prices (85%), and appropriate portion sizes (82%). "Being flexible in portion sizes can enhance value," says Blake. "Rather than serving toddler-sized meals to older children, offer tiered portion sizes that cater to different age groups. This not only boosts satisfaction but also helps

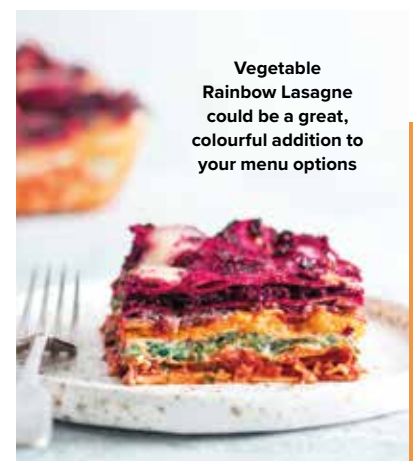
families feel they are getting better value for their money. Fixed-price meal deals that include a main, a side, a drink, and a dessert are particularly popular and encourage families to order more without worrying about the final bill."

With 41% of parents saying service is too slow, clearly this is an important issue. "Families, particularly those with younger children, appreciate quick service to minimise restlessness," says Blake. "A great way to achieve this is by introducing a 'Fast Track' option for kids' meals or serving simple snacks like breadsticks as soon as they're seated. It's important to educate staff about the need for quick service – getting food to the table quickly reduces the chance of boredom and frustration setting in. Families will remember efficient service and return."

It is essential to train team members to be empathetic and patient when it comes to families. "Staff should be prepared to proactively offer high chairs, children's menus, or small distractions like crayons or stickers without being prompted," adds Blake. "Train staff to suggest add-ons such as kid-friendly desserts or sizing up to a 'large' kids' meal for older kids."

Loyalty schemes tailored to families are also a good idea. "You can also reward repeat visits with discounts or exclusive deals especially during quieter periods which will fill tables that might otherwise remain empty," he says.

Visit www.kaminsight.com for more information.



Vegetable Rainbow Lasagne could be a great, colourful addition to your menu options

"It's important to educate staff about the need for quick service – getting food to the table quickly reduces the chance of boredom and frustration setting in."



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AWAY FROM HOME

1: Craft Guild of Chefs product testing of Heinz Banz, September 2024.

Top of the Class

MENU PLANNING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL TERM

As the final bell of the school year rings out, catering teams across the country are already preparing to refresh their menus. Balancing flavour, nutrition, and popularity, caterers face the ultimate test: keeping children of all ages happy and healthy. In this month's Category Focus article, we explore some fresh ideas for nursery, primary, junior and secondary school catering teams as they plan next year's menus.

ALLERGEN ICONS



BE ALLERGEN AWARE

With more children diagnosed with allergies and dietary restrictions than ever before, school caterers must offer appealing and safe options that cater to all. "It's crucial that school caterers provide safe, inclusive options that don't compromise on taste," says Julianne Ponan MBE, CEO, Creative Nature. "The best approach is to create meals that are naturally free from the top 14 allergens rather than relying on substitutions that use ultra processed alternatives. When growing up I had to sit on what was called 'the allergy table' which made me feel segregated and also made me feel like I had a target on my back, so making dishes more inclusive would reduce bullying."

Clearly marking dishes using friendly visual icons, such as colour-coded signs or allergen-specific symbols, can help children quickly identify allergen-free options and easily avoid dishes containing ingredients they cannot eat. Caterers can also involve children with allergies in menu planning or feedback sessions to enhance their sense of inclusion, allowing them to suggest dishes they enjoy and making them feel valued and heard.

When building your menu, consider dishes such as plant-based pasta pots, using gluten-free pasta with a tomato and hidden vegetable sauce, topped with dairy-free cheese – they are easy to prepare, free from major allergens, and popular with younger taste buds. "By focusing on fresh, wholesome ingredients and simple preparations, caterers can offer meals that meet dietary requirements without compromising on taste. It's also worth adding vegan and vegetarian options, as these are growing in popularity and appeal to a wider group of children" says Dean Harper, Chef, Harper Fine

Greek Gyros



ALLERGEN-FREE MEAL INSPIRATION

Julianne Ponan MBE, suggests the following dishes for an allergen-free school menu

- **Hearty Soups & Stews** – A vegetable-packed stew with potatoes, served with allergen-safe flatbreads is nourishing and filling.
- **Customisable Wraps or Bowls** – Using allergen-safe tortillas, rice, or gluten-free grains, students can pick their fillings while staff manage allergens.
- **Street Food-Inspired Menus** – Many cuisines can be adapted to be allergen-free, such as rice-based burrito bowls, Greek-style chicken with safe pita, or allergen-free sushi rolls.
- **Snackable, Protein-Packed Foods** – More kids (and parents) are looking for high-protein, nutrient-dense options like seed-based snack bars and gluten free oat-based energy bites.
- **Rice Cakes with Safe Spreads** – With sunflower seed butter or dairy-free cheese.

Dining. Rainbow Buddha bowls, featuring rice or quinoa, colourful vegetables, chickpeas or lentils, and optional proteins like grilled chicken or tofu, are a great example of how a single dish can be both visually appealing and satisfy a number of different dietary requirements. Build-your-own fajitas, which include gluten-free wraps, grilled vegetables, shredded chicken, dairy-free cheese, and allergen-free sauces like guacamole or salsa is another great option.

MAKE MEALTIMES AN EXPERIENCE

Introducing new dining concepts can revitalise the school dining experience, making it fun and engaging for students. A street food festival can capture the excitement of global cuisine, featuring dishes like Korean bibimbap bowls, Mexican taco stands, or Greek gyros. Must-have dishes to include are crispy chicken bao buns, falafel wraps, and vegetable-packed samosas. "For those introducing a new dining concept, I recommend something interactive, like build-your-own meal stations. A salad bar or taco station, where children can choose their fillings and toppings, encourages them to try new things while still giving them the flexibility to pick what they enjoy. Including a balance of dishes like pasta, grilled chicken wraps, and fruit bowls ensures there's something for everyone, and these options are always popular with children," says Dean.

SOCIAL AND ETHICAL INFLUENCES

From a very young age, students are forming their own opinions and preferences based on friendships, social media and the news. Providing options that speak directly to their beliefs or outlook will help your team forge better connections with diners. This may take the



*Energy
bites*

form of engaging eco-conscious students by offering more sustainable food options and marking meals containing sustainable ingredients, providing students focusing on nutrition with fermented foods that promote gut health like kombucha, yoghurt-based smoothies, and pickled vegetables, or adding a wealth of global flavours to your menu with Korean kimchi fried rice, Vietnamese noodle salads, or Caribbean jerk chicken wraps.

SOLUTIONS FOR ALL DAY PARTS

Convenient and nutritious handheld snacks are perfect for fuelling active children during breakfast and breaktimes, as well as topping

up a lunchtime meal. Breakfast wraps filled with scrambled eggs, spinach, cheese, or veggie sausages are filling, nutritious, and cater easily to dietary needs. "Handheld snacks like homemade granola bars, veggie wraps, and fruit skewers work perfectly for breakfast and breaktimes. These can be prepped in advance, are easy to eat on the go, and offer a healthier alternative to traditional options," comments Dean.

Nut-free energy bites, made from oats, seeds, dried fruit, and honey, provide easy grab-and-go options or mini savoury muffins made with broccoli and cheddar, are popular with younger children and ideal for small hands. Fruit and yoghurt pots layered with natural yoghurt, nut-free granola, and fresh berries make for nutritious, appealing snacks suitable for all age groups.

Refreshing your school menu isn't just about introducing new dishes; it's about listening to your toughest critics—the students themselves. Running taster sessions, gathering regular feedback, and remaining open-minded about incorporating new trends and ideas helps ensure menus stay fresh and engaging. Creating a welcoming dining experience encourages children to explore new foods, make healthy choices, and look forward to mealtimes. This academic year, let your refreshed menu pass the ultimate taste test: satisfied students who leave your dining hall with smiles—and empty plates!

"Convenient and nutritious handheld snacks are perfect for fuelling active children during breakfast and breaktimes."

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PLUM AND APPLE *cake*



Didem Aysem Dogru moved to Edinburgh with her family five years ago from Turkey before launching Krem Karamel in 2022. Last year, the café was voted in the top ten cafés to visit in Scotland by The Herald Scotland Magazine.

A food stylist, chef and baker, Didem specialises in making a wide range of classic British, Turkish and international cakes that are baked fresh each day as well as simple breakfasts, soups and sandwiches. Becoming a key part of the community since opening its doors, Didem also sells cards created by local artists and promotes Edinburgh authors. She is even looking to publish an art book to raise money for some children's charities featuring artwork created by kids who have visited the café.

However, it hasn't all been plain sailing with the worry and threat of closure hanging over her head. "We converted the premises from a sports shop to a café in 2022 and we asked for retrospective permission for restricted class 3 use again," explains Didem. "Unfortunately, the council refused stating that the risk of 'food odours' could affect the local environment. We don't fry or grill, so the only smell is freshly baked cakes."

"Thanks to the support of our customers we appealed, and the council eventually agreed to grant us a 'change of use' licence but they continue to insist that we install a ventilation system. In 2023, the cost quoted was around £10,000 but now it is closer to £18,000. It's very worrying but the support from our customers and local community is giving me the strength to fight and I hope that common sense may prevail eventually."



DIDEM
AYSEM DOGRU

This cake recipe below was created by Didem to try and raise awareness of her plight and hopefully generate some more support.

INGREDIENTS

- 150g Country Range Plain Flour
- 115g unsalted butter
- 115g caster sugar
- 1 tsp Country Range Salt
- 1 egg (beaten)
- 1 tsp Country Range Baking Powder
- 4 apples (peeled and chopped)
- 1 tsp Country Range Ground Cinnamon
- 4 plums (chopped)
- 1 tbsp icing sugar

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Grease a 23cm cake tin and line the base with non-stick baking paper.
3. Beat room temperature butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until creamy.
4. Gradually beat the egg in until smooth.
5. Sift in the flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon and fold in gently until thoroughly combined.
6. Stir in the chopped apples and plums. Spoon into the tin and spread evenly.
7. Sprinkle with sugar on top.
8. Bake for 30-40 minutes until golden brown. Cool in the tin for 5 minutes then place on a rack to cool before serving.



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DEVELOPING SKILLS

NHS Skills Academy offer training for hospital catering assistants

Following the success of the award-winning Chef's Academy, which provides training for NHS hospital chefs, the newly launched Skills Academy aims to raise the profile of NHS catering assistants by providing new skillsets for their personal and professional development.

The free one-day programme incorporates hospitality operations, teamwork and knife skills, as well as training on nutrition, allergens and food waste. The training takes place at various venues throughout the country.

Michael Sharp, Culinary Specialist at NHS Supply Chain: Food, says, "There's not much focused training available for catering assistants to develop their skills. They do a lot of groundwork such as portioning, serving and prepping the kitchens, so it's important to give something back to them. Without them, the whole operation falls apart. The idea for this training came to me when I was an executive chef at a hospital in Bristol for two years during lockdown. I utilised the catering assistants as much as I could, as they are the unsung heroes of the catering operation at hospitals."

Michael is the lead trainer, although the training is delivered as a team. The session begins with an 'ice breaker' featuring a recipe using bananas. "This gets them communicating with each other," says Michael. "We ask them to write on the banana what's important to them at work and outside work and get them to discuss this. We identified there were lots of bananas going to waste in hospitals, so we demonstrate a flapjack recipe using the bananas, which they replicate. This shows attendees there is something they can do with bananas to save on food waste."

While the flapjacks are in the oven, there is a theory session hosted by Idrees Anwar, Lead Dietitian and Pirianka L-Montfort, nutrition compliance manager. This includes education about allergens. "Attendees are given some everyday ingredients and asked to identify the allergens," says Michael. "This raises awareness for products like soya."

Other topics covered include portion control and how to serve the correct amount of food so it looks appetising to eat. Basic recipes

using fresh ingredients, which require no cooking, are demonstrated. Michael says, "All the recipes have been nutritionally analysed so they are suitable to serve in hospitals. We show delegates how to be more adventurous with salads, and to make dishes as fresh as possible. For example, we section out ingredients on a tray in a line and make the dish the next day, rather than mix it all together and then serve it the following day when it won't be as fresh." Michael also presents a session on knife skills covering knife safety, how to sharpen a knife and how to work efficiently on a chopping board.

Michael hopes the course gives catering assistants more skills and confidence to support chefs and develop their careers in the care catering sector.

For more information about the Skills Academy, visit <https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/event/skills-academy/>

"The free one-day programme incorporates hospitality operations, teamwork and knife skills, as well as training on nutrition, allergens and food waste."



COOKING WITH POTATOES

Michelin trained cook, celebrity chef and Tik Tok sensation Poppy O'Toole nearly broke the internet when she first posted about her 15-hour potatoes. Quickly becoming known as the 'Potato Queen', it was only a matter of time before Poppy's potato prowess put publishers on high alert. We caught up with Poppy as the British spud season begins in earnest to discuss potatoes, potatoes and more potatoes.

ARE THERE ANY VARIETIES OF POTATO YOU'D RECOMMEND?

Vivaldi are lovely and brilliant for mash and jacket potatoes. Desiree are another beautiful variety with gorgeous red skin that are amazing when chipped, wedged or roasted. Charlotte potatoes are superb in salads and Pink Firs are the smaller knobbly potatoes, almost like thick fingers, that look unique on the plate and have a slightly nutty flavour. New Early Comber potatoes,

which are grown in the town of Comber near County Down in Ireland, are also very special. They are similar to Jerseys but I actually think a little bit better so keep an eye out for them.

"Never waste the peel. I'm a big air fryer fan, which are great for making the most out of your potato waste."

SHOULD WE BE LOOKING AT POTATOES MORE SEASONALLY?

I was speaking to Claire Koffman – Piere Koffman's wife who makes stupendously good potato dishes. She says it is so upsetting that people don't quite understand the season of potatoes. Because of the storage qualities of potatoes, the seasons are often forgotten. It's so important to use the right potato for the right dish. For me in winter, I stick to the King Edwards and Maris Piper. They provide a great yield and are perfect for Sunday roasts. In spring, I get really excited about the coming of the earlies when the new potato season kicks off. In season, they're generally cheaper and as good as they get so all chefs should be making the most of them. During summer, I like a waxier potato such as Fingerling or Pink Fir to provide a twist to dishes. In autumn, I start to move back to the bigger boys such as Vivaldi and Desiree, and I absolutely love a Cyprus potato for chips or fries.





Honey and Chilli Noisettes

SERVES 2

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Maris Piper potatoes, peeled
- 50g butter
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon chilli flakes
- 2 teaspoons runny honey
- Flaky salt, to serve

METHOD

1. Using a 25mm melon baller, cut balls from your potatoes. You should get about 5 balls per potato.
2. Get your balls in a saucepan of heavily salted, cold water. Place the pan over a high heat, bring the water to the boil, then lower the heat and gently boil the balls for about 5–7 minutes, until falling off the tip of a knife. Don't let them get too soft as you don't want them to lose their shape and go mushy. Drain the balls in a colander and leave to steam-dry for 5–10 minutes.
3. Place a frying pan over a medium heat and add the butter. Once it has melted and turned frothy, add the potato balls and cook for 10–15 minutes, stirring to turn the potatoes throughout, until the butter has turned brown. Add the garlic, chilli and honey and leave to cook for another 5 minutes or so, until the potatoes are golden all over and you can smell the nuttiness.
4. Carefully tip the balls into a serving dish with the butter from the pan, and sprinkle with flaky salt, to serve.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP TIPS WHEN WORKING WITH POTATOES?

Never waste the peel. I'm a big air fryer fan, which are great for making the most out of your potato waste. Load your peel with salt, maybe a bit of parmesan and air fry at 180°C for 5-10 min for little crispy strips of peel pleasure. You can also do it in the oven. When I do dauphinoise, fries or anything that is being baked like a leek bake - I leave the skins on. It makes no difference, provides texture and adds to the flavour. Peel on means the dish tastes more potatoey.

HOW DO YOU MAKE THE PERFECT FRIES?

I'm a triple cooked girl. I have tried all the techniques for chips, fries and all that's in between, but it's triple cooked all the way for consistency. Parboil, drain onto a rack, into the fridge to cool for an hour and then in to the fat at 140/150 and then increase it. Take them out, dry off the oil and then back in to finish.

WHAT ABOUT MASH? JOHN TORODE SAYS HE ONLY USES A FORK TO MASH – AGREE?

I peel and cut my spuds into 2cm round slices, not cubes. This means they cook evenly. Cold water and bring to a boil and I use the most heinous amount of salt in the water – saltier than the sea. I don't add any more salt though. A bit like pasta. I made a batch at work and didn't use enough salt in the water so added salt after.

I parboil, drain, steam dry, like with my

roasties and then I pass them through a sieve or you can use a ricer. A drum sieve is fantastic. You can keep your fork Mr Torode. I will add lots of cubes of butter as I push the potato through the sieve as the fat will help the molecules stay together – the fat coats the starch molecules. Then only stirring the hot cream in until it is just in. Stir too much and it will go gloopy, rather than silky fluffiness.

WHY DO YOU LOVE POTATOES?

The question should be - how can anyone not love potatoes? Spuds are life. They are one of the most versatile, easily accessible ingredients that everyone can get their hands on. A huge part of life in a British kitchen, there are so many ways to use them to create deliciousness. If anyone says that they don't like potatoes, they're liars. You can't tell me you don't like chips.





Green Goddess Potato Salad

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 500g baby potatoes
- 30g flat-leaf parsley, stalks removed
- 30g chives 4–5 dill sprigs
- 4–5 mint sprigs, leaves picked, plus optional extra to garnish
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained
- zest and juice of
- ½ lemon
- 3 tablespoons full-fat cream cheese
- 2–3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
- 1 x 50g tin of anchovies, drained and roughly chopped
- ½ shallot, finely sliced
- 2 spring onions, finely sliced
- Salt and black pepper

Kara

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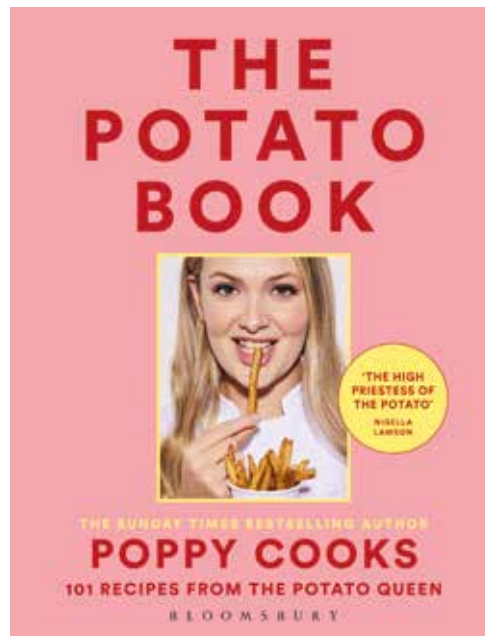
METHOD

1. Tip the potatoes into a saucepan of cold, heavily salted water. Place the pan over a high heat and bring the water to the boil. Boil the potatoes for 15–20 minutes, until they fall off the tip of a knife. Drain in a colander and leave to cool completely.

2. In a small blender, add all of the herbs, along with the capers, lemon zest and juice and cream cheese. Season well with salt and pepper, then blitz until smooth, dribbling in the olive oil and a splash of water to loosen and help everything blend. Taste for seasoning and set aside.

3. Slice the potatoes into large chunks and put them into a large bowl with the pine nuts, anchovies, shallot and spring onions. Spoon over the dressing and toss everything together to coat. You can sprinkle a little extra chopped mint on top, too, if you like.

“How can anyone not love potatoes? Spuds are life. They are one of the most versatile, easily accessible ingredients that everyone can get their hands on.”



Extract taken from *The Potato Book* by Poppy Cooks
(Bloomsbury, £22 Hardback)

Photography © Ellis Parrinder

WIN!

We have one copy of *The Potato Book* to give away to one lucky reader! See page 46.



Explore the range!



F02404

MK4.5 Sliced Brioche Bun

Unit Weight: 73g | Case Size: 6 x 8



F02405

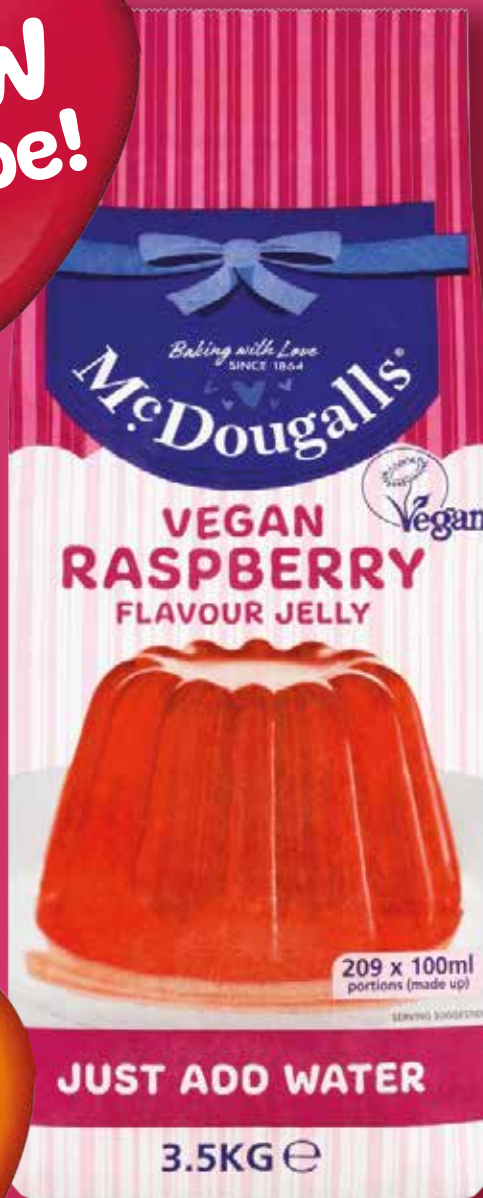
MK4.5 Sliced Seeded Brioche Bun

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REPAIR NOT REPLACE

Giving kitchen gadgets a second life

The pace and number of covers served by hospitality operators every day means kitchen equipment can take a beating. From blenders to ovens, microwaves to mixers, these hardworking gadgets can eventually break down under constant use. But before you consign your trusty equipment to landfill, consider the benefits of repairing rather than replacing your kitchen gadgets.



Electrical goods waste (also known as e-waste) is a growing concern. The UK generates approximately 6million tonnes of e-waste annually, making it one of the largest producers per capita worldwide. Although this number combines household and commercial e-waste from all sectors, it is staggering to discover that we only recycle 31% of it. Stainless steel elements, plastic components and glass items can take hundreds to thousands of years to decompose, presenting a solid case for repairing equipment wherever possible, rather than renewing it.

Repairing kitchen equipment is cost-effective. High-quality catering equipment often comes with a hefty price tag, so repairing a broken appliance can be significantly cheaper than purchasing a replacement. There's also the benefit of familiarity. Chefs and kitchen staff become accustomed to the feel and operation of their equipment. Fixing a trusted gadget rather than replacing it means less downtime retraining staff or adapting to new equipment.

Getting your kitchen gadgets repaired is easier than you might think. Repair services specialising in commercial catering equipment are widespread, and for those in smaller villages or out-of-town locations, repair cafes are springing up in church halls and community sites around the country.

Originating in the Netherlands in 2009, the Repair Café movement has grown globally, with numerous locations across the UK and Ireland. These cafés offer free meeting places where volunteers help visitors repair their items, ranging from electrical appliances to clothing. Those attending get to learn from a variety of experts who volunteer their time, while enjoying refreshments as their item is fixed. Many communities already have their own group set up, but there is also a great opportunity for operators to host their own repair café, benefitting from trade

while encouraging consumers to act more sustainably.

Initiatives such as The Restart Project encourages people to fix their electronics, aiming to reduce waste and change our relationship with technology. They organise "Restart Parties," where volunteers assist in repairing gadgets, and they advocate for the right to repair on a broader scale. Similarly, the Hampshire Repair Café Network supports both new and existing repair cafés throughout Hampshire by facilitating the sharing of knowledge and best practices among members.

Opting to repair rather than replace kitchen equipment is a win-win for the hospitality sector - it saves money, reduces environmental harm, keeps familiar equipment running smoothly and hosting a repair event can boost revenue. So next time your trusty kitchen companion falters, consider repairs first—it's good for your pocket, your kitchen, and our planet.



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Rise & Shine

Breakfast and brunch have become more than just meal times; they've transformed into pivotal experiences shaping guest satisfaction, loyalty, and even brand identity within the hospitality sector.

We asked this month's panel for insights and inspiration to take breakfast and brunch to the next level. From reimagining classic dishes to introducing global flavours and catering to diverse dietary preferences, these practical ideas will help your diners start their day the right way.



MATT GOODMAN

Catering Manager, The Royal Alfred Seafarers Society

By offering various breakfast options to suit different tastes and needs, we aim to make morning mealtimes an enjoyable and nutritious experience for our residents.

Earlier this year, we offered pancakes for Pancake Day, which was a real hit among residents! In the summer months, we feature a selection of fresh seasonal fruits alongside classic breakfast dishes like crumpets, toast, eggs and bacon.

A key part of our catering approach is ensuring that all residents, regardless of their dietary requirements, can enjoy a fulfilling meal, and breakfast is no different. For those who might struggle with solid foods, we prepare fresh smoothies, which are not only delicious but easier to consume. We also fortify smoothies with natural yoghurt and cream, helping to boost calorie content where necessary – especially important for individuals with smaller appetites.



Protein is the most satiating macro alongside fibre – so including protein and fibre rich foods are ideal.



REBEKHA WHITE

Brand Manager, Amia Foods for Professionals

As the saying goes, breakfast is the most important meal of the day, therefore providing caterers with ample opportunity to send sales flying in the AM – that is if the right menu is mastered.

As well as offering indulgent options such as fry ups and pancakes, classics such as porridge should be incorporated into a breakfast offering. In fact for many Brits, a bowl of porridge is a non-negotiable when it comes to breakfast... but that doesn't mean caterers should shy away from taking a twist on this breakfast staple. Caterers can now bring the nation's favourite malt to the breakfast table thanks to the launch of Horlicks Malted Porridge.

Enriched with clusters of baked jumbo oats combined with the trademark creamy and malty taste of Horlicks, this comforting option not only delivers when it comes to taste and texture but also sets customers up for a full-on day thanks to the slow release of energy from oats.



ASH LILES

Trade Marketing Manager UK & Ireland, Lamb Weston

With more consumers looking for Gluten-Free and Vegan options, it's easy for operators to offer varied and on-trend breakfasts by including a range of Hash Browns. Golden, crisp treasures of finely chopped and seasoned potato, Hash Browns give a consistent shape and hand-made appearance. They are an easy way to boost breakfast as the entire range can be quickly cooked in the oven or fried, and make for easy portioning.

A breakfast sub can be boosted with Hash Brown Rounds - you'll need Lamb Weston Mini Hash Brown Rounds, a baguette, crispy bacon, scrambled egg, grilled cherry tomatoes.

Horlicks Porridge



JULIANNE PONAN MBE

CEO, Creative Nature

Having grown up with severe allergies, I often felt left out at snack times at school because there were so few safe options available. Schools should provide handheld, allergen-friendly snacks that all kids can enjoy. Some great choices include; Allergen-Free Muffins made with gluten free oat or rice flour, fruit-based sweetness, and dairy-free alternatives, Oat & Seed Snack Bars and Mini Pancakes or Waffles made from safe flours as a great grab-and-go option. Caterers should focus on cross-contamination prevention when handling these snacks, ensuring they are stored and prepared separately from allergens.



HANNAH MCCOLLUM

Founder, ChicP

For both kids and adults, to be able to have the utmost productivity you need to not have sugar in your breakfast. A lot of us grew up with cereal and milk being the breakfast norm, and it's just really not beneficial. Studies have shown that a higher protein breakfast is key - and this has already started to drive some trends for breakfast and brunch but it needs to be more prominent in places such as schools, hospitals and more mainstream consumer outlets. My go-to currently is a toasted sourdough topped with hummus, spinach and egg with some kimchi for added fermentation and probiotics on the side.



MAYS AL-ALI

Nutritionist & Founder, Healthy Mays

Starting the day with a protein rich breakfast is key to keep blood sugars balanced for the day, avoiding that afternoon crash and also keeping you satiated so you don't reach for unhealthy snacks a few hours later. Protein is the most satiating macro alongside fibre – so including protein and fibre rich foods are ideal.

Things like eggs, avocado, spinach on sourdough even with a side of broccoli and tempeh rashers or even tofu work well, as does shakshuka with eggs, tomatoes, spinach, beans and rocket, porridge with plenty of seeds nuts or savoury pancakes made with banana, oats and eggs.

Ham Topped Dauphinoise with Mustard Sauce



This Signature by Country Range recipe is a great all day brunch option that's quick and easy to prepare and looks stunning on the plate.

SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Signature by Country Range Potato Dauphinoise
- 4 slices Country Range Gammon Ham
- 50ml Country Range White Wine Vinegar
- 1 pinch Country Range Dried Thyme
- 1 tbsp Country Range Wholegrain Mustard
- 4 sliced Country Range Cocktail Gherkins
- 1 diced shallot
- 125g diced cold butter
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 50ml cream
- 4 sprigs dill
- 4 sprigs parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 180°C fan.
2. Cook the Dauphinoise for 25 minutes from frozen and keep warm.
3. Place the diced shallots in a small saucepan with the vinegar, thyme and garlic and reduce the vinegar until it has almost fully evaporated.
4. Add the wholegrain mustard and cream and simmer.
5. Reduce the heat and whisk in the diced butter until it forms a smooth velvety sauce.
6. Season to taste and keep warm.
7. Place a slice of folded ham on top of each Dauphinoise, spoon over a generous amount of sauce and garnish with sliced gherkins and the sprigs of herbs.

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WELCOME

TO THE NARF ALLERGY SCHOOL

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation, the UK's food allergy charity and the charity partner of Country Range Group, has launched a new £1 million Allergy School programme, which aims to transform the understanding of food allergies in schools so that children with food allergies feel empowered, included and protected. It provides practical resources for nurseries, primary schools and out of school clubs and groups looking after children aged three to 11, with plans to extend Allergy School to secondary, further and higher education. The resources are completely free and are all compatible with the national curriculum.

Martin Ward, Chief Executive of the Country Range Group, says: "We are delighted to be supporting The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation in delivering such a ground-breaking and essential educational programme. Studies show around two children in every classroom now has a food allergy and 20% of food allergic reactions occur in schools."

New research shows that 95% of teachers now have children with food allergies in their school and yet 67% have had no allergy awareness training. The survey of almost 1,900 members of the NASUWT, the teachers' union, in collaboration with Natasha's Foundation, revealed that one in five teachers has never been taught how to administer an adrenaline auto-injector which could save a life in a food allergy emergency, and almost two thirds (60%) don't know or are unsure if their school has an allergy policy.

Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBE, founder of the charity, whose daughter Natasha died aged 15 from a food allergic reaction, said: "It can be hard to keep a child with food allergies safe in school. Finding a nursery where Natasha would be safe was extremely difficult. Natasha at times was bullied at school because of her food allergies and this was incredibly stressful and isolating for both her and our family. The government, schools, teachers, parents and pupils need to come together to support children with food allergies. Our Allergy School will transform levels of awareness and understanding of food allergies to ensure all children are safe and able to participate fully at school."

The free, national programme has been developed in partnership with The King's Foundation, St John Ambulance, Coram Life Education the children's charity and Tesco Stronger Starts.

A WEALTH OF RESOURCES

The Allergy School website (www.allergyschool.org.uk) offers a wide range of resources. This includes an online self-assessment tool for early years and primary schools, school clubs and out-of-school groups to complete to understand how food allergy-friendly their organisation is and how they can improve the safety and wellbeing of students with food allergies. Once this has been completed, they will receive an Allergy School certificate and logo for use on their website and in marketing materials; information and advice on the Allergy School

journey and details on how to sign up for the free, online training course "Allergy and Anaphylaxis for Schools" delivered by High Speed Training.

The "Welcome To Allergy School" film gives invaluable advice for teachers, schools and clubs. This includes information for staff training, off-site trips and how to respond to a food allergy emergency. Other films for pupils and teachers include a quiz and first aid advice. The films are sponsored by Tesco Stronger Starts, and they introduce Arlo, a friendly armadillo who has food allergies, a puppet created and brought to life by Sesame Street puppeteer Warrick Brownlow-Pike. Arlo helps to educate children about food allergies in a positive and engaging way. There are also lesson plans and assembly packs for key Stages 1 and 2.

Jan Parnell, Director of Education at Natasha's Foundation, said: "We recognise that nurseries, schools and out-of-school settings are seeing more children with food allergies come through their doors than ever before. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding about the seriousness of food allergies and how to manage them. We want to end the challenges that children with food allergies face so that they can be fully involved in all activities in and out of school. We would urge all schools to use our free resources."

The programme aims to transform the understanding of food allergies in schools so that children with food allergies feel empowered, included and protected.



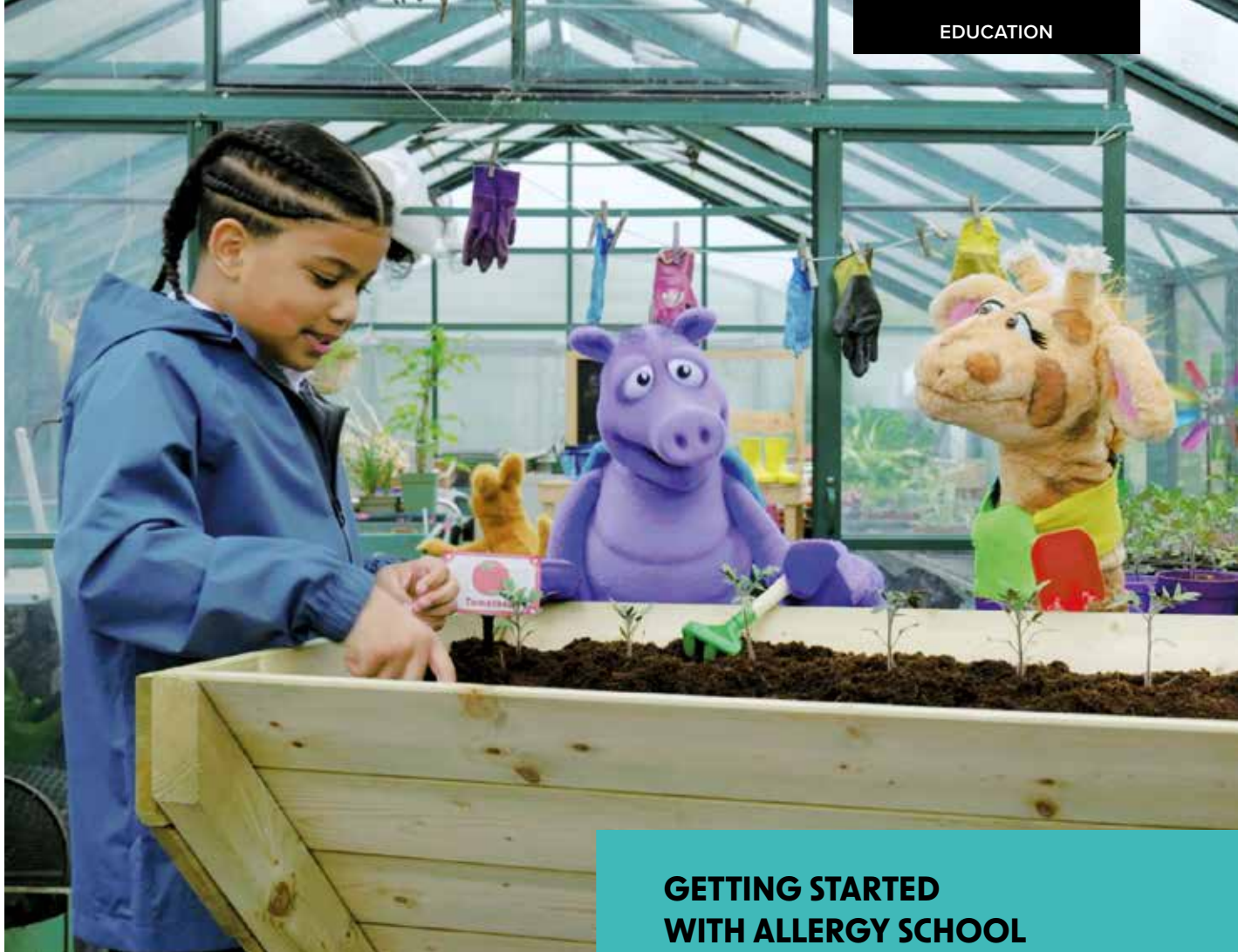
Front Page: Tanya and Nadim Ednan-Laperouse OBEs, founders of The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation

Above: St John Ambulance Film Still, In the event of anaphylaxis, lie the person down with their legs raised

Right: Jan Parnell, director of education at The NARF

Top right: Arlo the Armadillo and Harold the Giraffe learning about food allergies





A WELCOME APPROACH TO EDUCATION

As Royal Founding President of The King's Foundation and Royal Patron of St John Ambulance, His Majesty King Charles has sent a message of support saying: "I am delighted to hear of the launch of 'Allergy School', the new educational programme by The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation. Improving understanding of this issue is so important for keeping children with food allergies safe and ensuring they are able to participate fully in activities at school or in our wider communities. I am particularly heartened that my King's Foundation has been closely involved with the project, helping all of us to become more aware of the many ways we can support one another, especially the more vulnerable in our society."

Stephen Morgan, Minister for Early Years Education, has congratulated the work of the charity, saying: "The safety of our children is the most important thing both in and outside of school, and I welcome the important work being carried out by the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation. I encourage all settings to make use of engaging programmes such as these, alongside taking the necessary steps to manage allergy risks as clearly set out in the government's allergy guidance."

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

GETTING STARTED WITH ALLERGY SCHOOL

1. Sign up online for free at www.allergyschool.org.uk.
2. Explore the resources ranging from fun films to lesson plans and assembly packs.
3. Choose resources to suit your school – tailor training to your goals whether it's helping children to understand food allergies or responding to a food allergy emergency.
4. Take the online self-assessment tool to see how food allergy-friendly your school is.
5. Get the top tips for schools, out-of-school clubs, group settings, parents and carers.
6. Display the Allergy School logo and certificate in your school, nursery, club or on the website.
7. Sign up to free online training.
8. Share your success stories – celebrate your success and inspire others to grow their confidence around food allergies.
9. Check out the Frequently Asked Questions on the website.
10. Be allergy-friendly – put what you've learnt into action and help children with food allergies feel empowered, included and protected.



Rising Star

KRAY TREADWELL

HEAD CHEF AND OWNER 670 GRAMS

After starting out as a pot washer as a 15-year-old for legendary Brummie chef Glynn Purnell, Kray Treadwell embarked on an exciting career that has seen him work for some of the biggest names in the industry. While Head Chef at Michael O'Hare's The Man Behind the Curtain, Tray wowed judges and viewers on Great British Menu 2019 before opening his own place called 670 Grams and being crowned Young Michelin Chef of the Year in 2021.

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

I got kicked out of school when I was 15 for being a naughty boy and I just needed to get a job. I started washing dishes at the Michelin-starred restaurant Jessica's in Birmingham and that's where it all began for me.

Can you remember what it was that hooked you?

Just seeing what could be done with food, certain ingredients and the seasons blew me away. It aroused my curiosity and for the first time, I found something positive that captured my imagination. It was also the first time in my life outside of school that someone showed me how to do something and invested time in me. I've never been very academic and at school, I wasn't interested in what the teachers were telling

me. If I didn't enjoy it, I didn't want to do it. But at the restaurant, I was being given one-on-one training and attention. I could feel they believed in me. It made a huge difference.

Has professional cooking become easier due to technology?

Technology has definitely made the processes easier but at the same time, the shortage of skilled chefs means that the technology is crucial. The water baths and probes are great for consistency but just not as fun.

So, is the technology helping to fill the skills gap?

It's like when you go into a supermarket, there will only be one till open and the rest are self-service machines. No one is ever going to be brilliant on the till anymore as



there is simply less need for talented till operators. It's probably a bit similar in the kitchen. People don't need to be able to judge whether a piece of meat is ready by touch or eye as they simply have a probe for it now. Fifteen years ago, if I were making a lemon curd, I would weigh out the ingredients and cook it in a bain-marie on the stove to ensure it doesn't scramble. Our recipe now is to scramble the eggs in a pan and then add that to the Thermomix. The old technique is forgotten and instead, you learn a new skill or a new process that saves you time and makes life easier.

When did you feel you were confident enough to run your own place?

I still don't to be honest. I have a great team around me and my wife is brilliant at the business side of cooking and running a restaurant so I'm very lucky.

You seem confident in your food though?

I have always had confidence in my own food and palate. Even at 17 or 18, I wasn't scared about creating dishes and backed my creativity and combinations. I remember we once had a mushroom soup on and a sherbet pastry. I remember putting them together and giving them to the chef. He said it was great but didn't do anything with it. Even at that age, I remember thinking – you're going to regret that!

How do you approach cookery?

When I worked at The Man Behind the Curtain, it taught me to back and trust my instincts. It was about doing what I wanted to do, not what everyone else wanted me to do. I don't mean to sound self-important, but I don't really cook for customers. I cook for myself. I cook what I think will work and hopefully, the people who come will enjoy it. It's a bit like a painting. The artist doesn't create it for someone – they create it to express themselves, a feeling or how they see the world. My menus are my take on an ingredient or a season or a combination of both.

Who have been your key mentors?

I always decided my next career move based on who I looked up to and who I wanted to work for. I have two key mentors, and they help me in different areas really. On one side, when it comes to the business, professionalism, recipes and how something should be done properly, Glynn is still my key sounding board. If it were anything a bit more spontaneous and quirkier, it would probably be Michael O'Hare.

Any goals for 2025?

To stay open would be good. Obviously, a Michelin star would be nice as well, and as I have been working in that area for over 15 years, it is definitely an aim, but I don't think people realise how difficult they are to get. Don't get me wrong, there are some venues

that have stars that I think we're better than, but there again Paul Ainsworth only has one Michelin star as does Adam Smith at Woven and for me, they both deserve at least two. I don't think we're at that level yet, so I'm relaxed about it for now.

What about TV?

Yes, I would love to do more TV but it's competitive and you have to fit a certain niche to be chosen. For example, if you have 250,000 social media followers, it will make you more attractive to TV producers than a chef with a restaurant and reputation. I would like to see some of the TV shows like Saturday Kitchen showcase some different chefs.

What trends do you see hitting in 2025?

Parker House rolls and tart cases. Everyone seems to be going crazy for them.

What annoys you most at the moment in the restaurant scene?

I think a lot of venues at the top look very similar. They all have the same tablecloth, the same plates, the same glasses, the same dishes – it's becoming so generic. This isn't a dig at the restaurants or chefs because they're extremely talented but if someone took a picture of one and showed me, it could be one of ten places. I would like to see a bit more personality, individuality, and variety.

What was the last place you ate at?

Woven by Adam Smith.

What are your three desert island ingredients

Garlic, vinegar, and caviar.

For more information on 670 Grams and Kray, visit <https://670grams.com/>





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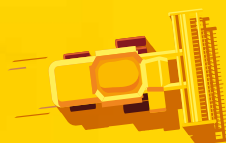
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*Nielsen 52 w/e 05.10.24 - Total Coverage. **Farm office situated within 50 miles of Weetabix Mills.

Making ends meet

EASY CHEESY

Perhaps one of the most-used ingredients in most kitchens, cheese comes in so many varieties and can be used across so many dishes and courses that its versatility is second to none. Paul Dickson shares some of his favourite ways to hero this hard-working kitchen staple on your menu.

Whether we're melting it on top of a pizza, stirring it into a sauce or serving it as part of a ploughman's platter, cheese is used throughout the day and evening on menus across the world. So much so, in fact, that we can often take the humble Cheddar for granted. Let's give this versatile ingredient the star treatment it deserves and bring it front and centre on your menu this summer.



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



PAIR IT WITH PASTRY

Whether it's a homemade cheese and onion pie, a grab-and-go cheese pasty or a cheese and ham filled croissant, cheese and pastry in all of its forms are a match made in heaven. I like to use Signature by Country Range Extra Mature Cheddar and Country Range Puff Pastry to create some delightful cheese tarts which work perfectly as a starter or lunch option. With only a handful of ingredients and using a ready-made puff pastry block, they're also a real time-saver in the kitchen whilst packing a punch when it comes to flavour and decadence.

Mature Cheddar Tarts

“With diners looking for more theatre when they eat out, why not bring the drama.”



SEASONAL SPECIAL

This is a dish that works well at different times of year using what is in season. In the summer, courgettes are plentiful and at their absolute best. They're delicious stuffed with cheese and baked until there's a crispy golden top and unctuous centre (with satisfying cheese pull!). This works really well served simply with a fresh and vibrant salad, or as part of a small plates menu. In the autumn, recreate the same recipe but using a seasonal squash.

Cheese Stuffed Courgettes

Put the Spotlight on Sides

The versatility of cauliflower has led to this vegetable rising up the ranks to centre of plate status, replacing meat altogether in some cases. With diners looking for more theatre when they eat out, why not bring the drama with a whole baked cauliflower smothered in creamy cheese sauce? Make it vegan with plant-based cheese. You could even serve it as a table centrepiece as part of a sharing roast dinner. Even the Yorkshire puds might be competing for attention!



Cauliflower Cheese



*Chana Dal
with Spinach*

Roopa GULATI

CHEF, AUTHOR AND BROADCASTER

After growing up in Cumbria, Roopa Gulati has cooked in Delhi's hotel kitchens, street bazaars, palaces, TV studios and in homes across India. We caught up with Roopa ahead of the launch of her new book *Indian Kitchens*, which was published at the end of March.

Tell us how and why you first became interested in food?

I was ten years old when I was finally given permission to use the oven without supervision. It took a while for me to appreciate the nuances of mum's instinctive style of cooking - the carefully blended spices, puffed chapatis, and fragrant biryanis. Initially, I was more inclined towards making towering cakes, decorated with ruffs of buttercream.

Can you remember the first dish/recipe you cooked?

Not satisfied with a simple Victoria sponge, I over-extended myself and baked a Danish layer cake from a Marks and Spencer cookbook when I was 10 years old. I remember the layers of sponge and whipped cream sliding in different directions over the kitchen counter. The washing up afterwards was epic. It didn't put me off cooking though!

Your mum's legacy continues through your cooking – what will be your legacy?

I would like to think it is my freshly made and ground garam masala. That is what I would like to see my children and their children making, using and appreciating. A garam masala is a very personal thing and every family or cook will have a slightly different take on it. Making your own garam masala or just grinding your own spices makes a huge difference to your final dishes and flavour. Pre-ground spices just don't have the freshness and many garam masalas are often bulked out with coriander seeds for volume. Whole spices are not adulterated, and the quality of your spice mix will move to new levels if you use whole spices and roast and grind them yourself.

What's the key to a good garam masala?

It's about getting the blend right. No one spice should dominate. Instead, they should all work in

perfect harmony. For me, I use brown cardamom seeds for earthiness and black cumin because they add a beautiful smokiness to the final blend. Then sweet cinnamon for balance and black peppercorns for warmth. Nutmeg and mace finish it off. I use a coffee grinder as life is often too short but when you pound the spices by hand, it releases the oils and provides more aromatics.

How do you use the garam masala?

You can use it in so many ways but it is a great addition towards the end of the cooking time to lift flavour. When I make a curry, I will add garam masala when I add the liquid because I don't like the spices to get scorched. Sometimes I will add a teaspoon straight to a tamarind and date sauce or simply sprinkled on some roast potatoes with 5 mins to go.

How has Indian food progressed in the UK since you were a child?

It's completely different. It used to be the stereotypical curry house alongside Indian community cafes, but thanks to some incredible Indian chefs who came over to work in the UK, it has been transformed. We're seeing them use fantastic British produce alongside the spices and ingredients of India. The likes of Karunesh Khanna, Vivek Singh and Atul Kochhar have led the way when it comes to fine dining but there are also the small cafés and then the casual dining brands such as Masala Zone, Hoppers and Dishoom that have helped present Indian food in such a different and exciting way.

Is there plenty more for us to discover then?

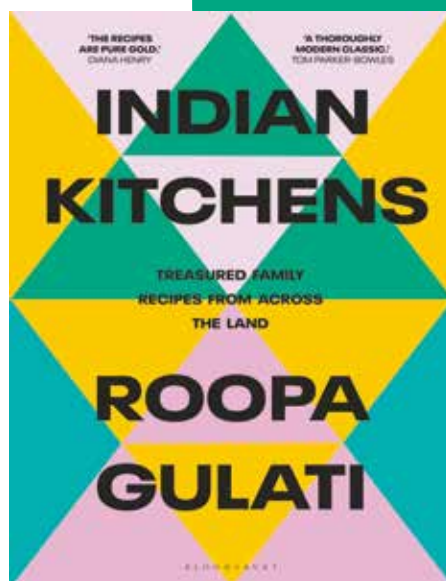
I think we're only at the tip of the iceberg when it comes to discovering the cuisine and ingredients of India. Thanks to the innovation of the last decade, the fact that people are travelling further and due to the rise of street food, I think there is a greater understanding of the Indian regions and the different cooking styles, ingredients and techniques within them. That means that you no longer go out for an Indian but instead for Bengali, Rajasthani, Keralan, Gujarati or something else. I think that is a trend that is going to continue as there is a real curiosity for the regional intricacies, recipes and cooking styles of India. My dream is for people to be aware that the food from these Indian regions is as different as Italian food is from French or Greek food. Each region has a distinct identity so I am passionate about people discovering and enjoying the intricacies.

What do you love most about your job?

The best thing about starting a new project, such as a cookbook, is to open a word document and fill it with ideas and thoughts. Perhaps I begin with a rough outline of a recipe, a childhood memory of a dish I'm keen to recreate, or a description of a kitchen that evokes emotional connections. Gradually these ideas take shape and evolve into the beginnings of a book.

Tell us about the new book?

Indian Kitchens is a book about the talents of India's home cooks, who, without fanfare, put meals on plates and keep cultural traditions alive and communities together. I travelled to India to meet twelve talented home cooks, who have each provided a recipe for Indian Kitchens. I've also shared their backstories, which helps contextualise their recipes. Dishes include coconutty Mangalorean chicken curry, Gujarati dal, Rajasthani poppadom curry, and slow-cooked pork in black pepper masala. My favourite recipes also feature in the book with many drawn from my mother's cooking style and others gleaned from almost two decades spent living in New Delhi.



Salmon with Red Chilli Ground Fennel



SERVES 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 red chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
- 20g ginger root, peeled and finely grated
- Juice of 2 limes
- 2 rounded tsp jaggery or light muscovado sugar
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves
- 1 tsp roasted and ground fennel seeds
- 1 tsp sunflower oil
- 4 skin-on salmon fillets (about 125g each)
- Sea salt

METHOD

1. Mix the chillies with the ginger, lime juice, jaggery or sugar, coriander and ground fennel, and season with salt.
2. Line a roasting tin with baking paper. Put the salmon fillets into the tin and spoon over the marinade. Drizzle with oil and leave to one side for 30 minutes.
3. Heat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan, then roast the fish for around 7–10 minutes, until just tender.



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50g Plain Omelettes**

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**50 x 50g
Round**

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5 ways to use

RED COOKING WINE

PRISTINE POACHING

I love to use a tin of fruit such as pears and poach them in red cooking wine and cinnamon. It's a great way of turning an inexpensive everyday item into something special.

GORGEOUS GRAVY

I use red cooking wine to deglaze the meat roasting tray or pan before cooking it down with my meat juices, veggie water and some herbs to create a gorgeous gravy with an irresistible shine and silkiness.

I'VE GOT MY MIND SET ON STEW

Anything cooked slow and low such as your favourite stew or casserole can benefit from a glug of red cooking wine. For something a bit more luxurious, you can't beat coq au vin or beef bourguignon.

PERSUASIVE PASTA

Red cooking wine is brilliantly versatile with Italian dishes. My personal favourite is to use it in a creamy chicken pasta recipe. I sauté the onions in red cooking wine at the beginning before adding the chicken and cream.

ON THE MULL

Mulled wine is a classic during the festive season and sangria is a lovely libation for summer. We simply pimp up the red cooking wine with an array of fruits and/or spices to create a non-alcoholic version.

Country Range
Red Cooking
Wine

Pack size:
4 x 3
litre boxes



This month's guest chef, Luke McClean, discovered his passion for cooking at a young age after helping his nan in the kitchen. After completing his cookery qualifications, Luke forged a career as a chef in pubs and restaurants across Birmingham, whilst also spending the last 20 years running YoungStars Community Hub for kids in the Castle Vale area, helping to build positive relationships with food.

The dealcoholised Country Range Red Cooking Wine provides an intense flavour, vibrant colour and consistency to dishes.



Coq au Vin



INGREDIENTS

- 750ml Country Range Red Cooking Wine
- 1 tbsp Country Range Plain Flour
- 3 Country Range Bay Leaves
- 1 tsp Country Range Dried Thyme
- 1 tbsp Country Range Tomato Puree
- 3 rashers of Country Range Bacon cut into small pieces
- 1 whole chicken cut into eight
- 50g butter
- 3 sliced cloves garlic
- 1 diced small carrot
- 1 diced stick of celery
- 16 small shallots
- 16 small button mushrooms
- 8 cherry tomatoes cut in half
- Salt and pepper to taste

Garnish:

- Chopped parsley
- Thyme leaves

METHOD

1. Pre-heat the oven to 160°C / 140°C fan. Marinate the chicken pieces in the red cooking wine with the sliced garlic and dried thyme for four hours.
2. Remove from the wine (keep the wine for the sauce), dust the chicken in flour and shallow fry in a large oven proof saucepan in 25g butter until golden brown.
3. Remove the chicken and add the diced celery and carrot to the pan. Add the tomato puree and continue to fry for 30 seconds.
4. Add the wine, garlic, tomatoes and bay leaves and gently simmer. Cover with a lid and place in the oven for 45 minutes.
5. Meanwhile fry the shallots, mushrooms and bacon in 25g butter until golden.
6. Remove the coq au vin from the oven, add the mushrooms, bacon and shallots and simmer for 5 minutes. Season to taste and garnish with thyme leaves and chopped parsley. Serve with creamy mashed potatoes.

Get for summer

With summer officially beginning on the 21st of this month and the alfresco season upon us, it's the ideal time for chefs to shine and help their guests create some magical moments and memories. From start to finish, there's an array of new produce coming into season this month and a host of occasions providing opportunities for chefs to astonish and astound. Here's our top tips to hit a hot streak this summer.

While there are more food occasions to shake a stick at nowadays, there is no doubt that specials and promotions around certain days can help you create noise, excitement and buzz. Whether it's for specials boards, social media promotion or at the point of service, tapping into the myriad of national food celebrations each month can provide direction, focus and be beneficial to the development of the team.

NATIONAL FISH & CHIP DAY 6TH JUNE

Flex your mussels, hook in some top reviews and catch yourself some new customers this National Fish & Chip Day. Rather than the usual cod or haddock, why not cast your net a bit further and get creative with your seafood. These satay skewers are made with our Country Range King Prawns and are a tasty twist for the BBQ alongside your favourite chips or fries.

Prawn satay skewers

Gin Day 14TH JUNE

A beautifully boozy celebration, Gin Day doesn't need to mean alcohol in abundance though. Think gin-fuelled cakes, tarts, crumbles, ice-lollies or even gin-cured fish.



Smoked paprika and king prawn paella

Father's Day 15TH JUNE

While Mother's Day is one of the biggest celebrations in the hospitality and catering calendar, it's a shame that Father's Day doesn't always generate the same hype. With World Tapas Day falling on the same day, why not create a Spanish fiesta for fathers and serve up a paella for the whole family to enjoy?

Picnic Week

7TH-25TH JUNE

While the French can lay claim to being the founders of the picnic or 'pique-nique', the British and Irish have certainly made it their own over the last hundred-plus years. Now very different from the squashed soggy sandwiches, crisps and basic snacks of your youth, the picnics of today are a much more discerning, delicious and global affair. So, tempt your guests and customers into the great outdoors or even just the garden ahead of National Picnic Week later this month and ensure you have the delicacies to delight.

Our Country Range Quiche quartet are the perfect ready-to-go solutions, our cooked meats, cheeses and condiments ensure super sarnies, and antipasti including our juicy olives and sundried tomatoes can guarantee a little continental pleasure. For the sweeter side of the picnic, our Cookie Pucks selection are terrific for creating special biscuits for the occasion and with a little care, our frozen desserts such as our eclairs and muffins can be thawed for the big day.



Our head chef uses an array of Country Range ingredients in the kitchen including Country Range Smoked Paprika to season the salt and chilli squid and Signature by Country Range Sweet Potato Fries.

— Restaurant, Northern Ireland



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to see all of
the recipes
featured on
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Neapolitan
Sauced Pizza
Base*



BEHIND THE BRAND



This month, we caught up with Karl Buckel, who is a Category Buyer of the Country Range Group. A foodie at heart, Karl is an avid home cook who loves experimenting with the latest ingredients and trends to create magical seasonal moments throughout year.

Name: Karl Buckel

Role: Category Buyer

Joined: August 2024

Day-to-day responsibilities: My role revolves around building strong relationships with suppliers, keeping an eye on emerging food trends, and identifying gaps in the product ranges I manage. I oversee a diverse mix of categories—from Frozen Chicken to Herbs and Spices—so no two days are ever the same.

Best part of your job: Discovering and tasting new products, but also the people. Being relatively new to the foodservice industry, every day is a learning experience—there's always something new to take in.

How do you ensure the Country Range portfolio remains the best? Staying ahead of trends, working closely with suppliers, and listening to customer feedback. We make sure we're always innovating and offering the best quality products that cater to evolving tastes.

Favourite Country Range product: Signature by Country Range 12" Neapolitan Sauced Base. So easy to use and an instant menu elevator.

Favourite Dish: Chicken or Lamb Tikka Pathia (or a mix of both!)

Go-to drink in the summer: Nothing beats a Premium Lager in a beer garden when the sun's shining!

Favourite chef: It has to be Gordon Ramsey.

Favourite restaurant: My local Indian spot, Mitali. It's unbeatable.

Signature dish: Butter Chicken Curry made with Country Range Chopped Tomatoes.

Hobbies outside of work: I'm a big football and golf fan, following my beloved Blackburn Rovers home and away. I'm also a family man—my two-year-old daughter Rosie keeps me on my toes! Plus, I love getting out for walks with my Springer Spaniel, Fern. I'm also big into live music and always enjoy spending time with friends.

THE MARKETPLACE

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



PLANT-BASED CROWD- PLEASERS JOIN FRANK DALE'S FROZEN FOOD LINE-UP

Frank Dale Foodservice, the event catering specialist, has launched two new vegan- and vegetarian-friendly products: a Mini Topped Naan Bread Selection and a Mini Chocolate Sponge Cake Selection. Perfect for buffets and afternoon teas, the savoury option features flavours like Bombay potato and aubergine curry, while the dessert range includes cookie, ginger, and double chocolate cakes.

Managing Director Edward Miles emphasised the focus on creating

plant-based products that appeal to all diners, simplifying service for caterers. Available via Central Foods, these frozen, heat-and-eat or thaw-and-serve options are produced in a BRC AA+ facility free from nuts, sesame, and celery.

These additions build on Frank Dale's reputation as the "unseen chef" and complement a broad menu of classic British-inspired canapés and finger foods tailored for events, parties, and afternoon teas.

PLANT POWER



GLUTEN
FREE

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Meatballs
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1 x 1.5kg



IQF
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GLUTEN
FREE



GLUTEN
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VG
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How will you serve yours?



Discover
our full
range



serving suggestions

Honouring Heroes of Care Catering - NACC Awards 2025 Launched

The NACC National Awards 2025 are now open, inviting nominations that celebrate the passion, care, and commitment within the UK's care catering sector. Neel Radia, National Chair of the NACC comments: "These awards are always about recognising excellence, innovation and dedication within care catering. The NACC will continue to shine a light on the social care sector that is often undervalued."

Categories include Care Establishment of the Year, Meals on Wheels, Catering Team and Manager of the Year, and the Care Catering Hero Award, which honours frontline staff who go above and beyond.

Open for NACC members, the deadline for entries is Monday 30th June 2025 and the gala awards dinner is at the NACC Training & Development Forum on 2nd October at the East Midlands Conference Centre. This is your opportunity to highlight the impact and importance of care catering—whether nominating yourself, a colleague, or an inspiring team.

For more information visit
www.thenacc.co.uk.



PLANT-BASED INNOVATION DRIVES AAK'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

AAK has released its 2024 Annual and Sustainability Reports, showcasing a year of strong performance and progress toward its 2030 sustainability and profitability aspirations. The company's decentralized model and strategic execution enabled impactful innovation, enhanced collaboration, and measurable results—highlighted by a 91% deforestation-free palm supply and 97% traceability.

AAK aims to achieve SEK 3+ per kilogram profitability and grow volumes faster than the market, while maintaining a focus on Scope 1 and 3 FLAG emission reductions. As a leader in plant-based oils and fats, AAK continues to replace fossil-based products with eco-friendly alternatives, supporting stakeholders in their shift to greener solutions.

CEO Johan Westman credits the success to AAK's talented team and diversified product portfolio, reinforcing the company's long-term commitment to "Making Better Happen™" through sustainable and scalable growth.



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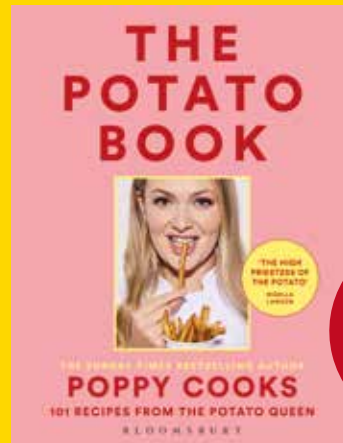
WIN POPPY COOKS: THE POTATO BOOK!

From TikTok sensation and self-proclaimed Potato Queen Poppy O'Toole comes **Poppy Cooks: The Potato Book** – the ultimate celebration of everyone's favourite comfort food!

Packed with 101 mouthwatering recipes, this all-potato cookbook takes you way beyond mash (though it's the best mash ever). Master roasties, fondants, gnocchi, wedges, chips, and more with Poppy's

foolproof tips, flavour twists, and global classics like latkes, tartiflette, and patatas bravas. Whether you're craving curly fries or 15-hour potatoes, this book is your golden ticket to spud perfection.

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



WIN
The Potato Book!

KitKat[®]

break

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KitKat[®] is the fastest-growing top 5 singles brand +16.5% YoY*

KitKat[®] CHUNKY DUO

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*Circana All Outlets and KWP Discounters, Total Singles, Value Sales year on year, 52 w/e 28th December 2024

**Circana All Outlets and KWP Discounters, CBB's, Singles and Multipacks, Value Sales year on year 52 w/e 28th December 2024

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



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Mixer and
Baking Set

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



Closing date for the competition is 30th June 2025. All winners will be notified by 31st July 2025. Postal entries can be sent to: Country Range Group, 4 & 5 Jupiter House, Mercury Rise, Altham Business Park, Altham, Lancashire, BB5 5BY. Full terms and conditions can be found at: www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk/about

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