

News For June

News For June

Good food; great cooking; healthy eating

Debbie Pryer

It's June and it's hot. This afternoon I will be picking strawberries from my allotment and enjoying eating dinner 'al fresco' tonight. It seemed like a long time coming but at last, summer is here. Meals are now made up of different elements that are pulled together to make something full of flavour that involves minimal work in the kitchen. And its time to buy a bottle of Pimms!

This month I have included some news about some controversial issues. One around air miles v organic and another about the amount of food that we throw away. I've also decided to give an award but it's not for what you think! Plus there is info on a place that we love to visited every summer. If you want a day out in the open air with the bounty of fresh picked raspberries or strawberries to take home make sure you give them a visit. I hope you enjoy it and some of the ideas in my newsletter will inspire you to eat some great food.

Take care *Debbie*

The Farmer Giles Award

Years ago when I ran a pub kitchen the landlord used to give a Farmer Giles award, but it was for something quite rude! However, mine is for the most outrageous **piles** of rubbish involving marketing and food.



This month I can't decide if it should go to Tesco for their 'Willow Farm Chickens' or Marks & Spencer for their 'Oakham Farm Chickens'. These names are supposed to evoke for us pictures of chickens running about in a farm yard and pecking and scratching about as chickens do. The reality is that these chickens are fed slightly different food and have windows in their barns through which, we are assured sunlight shines, and they have straw to lay on. **BUT** and here is the rub, they never go outside and run about. They do not live on a farm and live a natural life as per free range chickens. So there you have it. These names are simply brand name and no more. Don't be fooled. Make your choice but make it knowing the full facts.

Anyway after that rant they can both have the award. I will be sending it to them and I will let you know their responses!

What to eat in June

It's warm enough to start enjoying your meals outside and it's time to use food that needs less cooking. Take pleasure in using all the wonderful early summer produce to make meals that everyone will love.



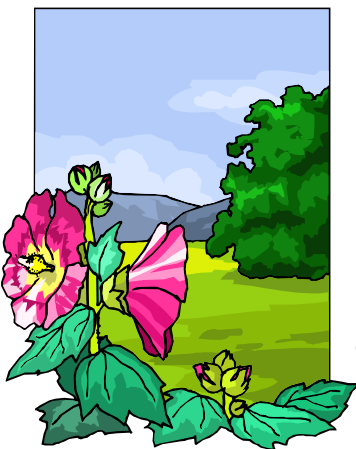
Summer and English strawberries are in season. Steer well away for the supermarket disappointments and head for the fields. Find a local farm shop or stop and pick your own. There are many lovely farms in Kent where you can spend a delightful afternoon picking basketfuls of these red sweet, juicy fruits. (See my recommendation later). Look for unblemished fruit with bright green hulls. Taste a sun warmed strawberry while you are in the field. Only then will you know what a strawberry should taste like. Take home your treasures and serve at room temperature with jugs of thick yellow cream.

After the first flush you may want to try mashing and stirring into whipped cream and meringue to make an Eton mess or serve with shortbreads or scones for something classic. For something different, try with a twist of black pepper and splash of balsamic vinegar or add a little orange liqueur, sweet wine or champagne.

Gorgeous red and green gooseberries will be ready. They can be tart but the red dessert types are really sweet. Gooseberries go really well with the taste of elderflowers. Add elderflower cordial to Gooseberry fools, ice creams, crumbles, cakes, tarts and pies and really enjoy the short gooseberry season.

Juicy, red and delicious, who doesn't like the taste of cherries. I love them eaten straight for the bag but if you want to cook with them try pies, cobblers, and tarts. And don't forget cherries go well with chocolate, (remember black forest gateaux) brandy and almonds. Why not try the classic French dessert clafoutis, a type of batter pudding with cherries scattered through it.

June is full of fabulous new vegetables for us all to enjoy. The traditional salad ingredients of soft leaved lettuces, crispy hot radishes, and long cool cucumbers will all be around as will local grown tomatoes. A good tomato is full of flavour and makes a summer salad complete. Once again, avoid the supermarket and seek out local grown fruits that will surprise you with their delightful scent and flavour. Complete your salad with some warm, gently boiled, free range eggs, some crispy grilled, dry cure bacon, tiny new potatoes and a sharp lemon and honey dressing. Eat in the garden with strawberries for dessert.



The Barn Yard at Gore Farm is the best place to pick your own and have a lovely day out. I recommend you go early and take children with you for a lovely day out. (They do school trips). Throughout the summer there will be every kind of soft fruit to pick and enjoy, plus there are walks through wildflower meadows or woods, a pond full of wild fowl and you can take a picnic to enjoy. On site there is a restaurant and deli as well as a gift shop and greengrocers. There are no nasty signs telling you to do this or that. Clean loos, easy parking and access and free to visit. What more could you want. It's full of big skies and seems to be a million miles away from anywhere.

It's just off the A20 at Upchurch.

call the Barn Yard on 01634 235059 or

e-mail them on gorefarm@the-barnyard.co.uk

The Soil association is the UK's leading environmental charity promoting sustainable, organic farming and championing human health. They are leading a debate on whether they should include the environmental impact of air freight in their organic standards. In other words, can food that has been flown half way round the world still be called organic when it has such an impact on the environment. They are asking us to join in the debate. Read more about the case for and against and have your say by clicking on the link below.

<http://www.soilassociation.org/airfreight>



Celebrate with food

This year I was asked to take part on the Medway Council Early Years multicultural Festival. It was held in Rochester castle gardens on a lovely warm day in May. I presented some fun workshops on '**Food from around the world**' and '**Celebrate with food**'.

People who attended were all in education roles and included pre school teachers. We all had a lovely time playing and tasting the food and cutting and pasting pictures to make celebrations around food of their own. The idea was to give ideas that people could take back to their classrooms. The ones worthy of note were a strawberry celebration, involving fetes, tasting, cooking and dances and a pie celebration which included throwing the pies! My favourite celebrated beans and made them into pictures, musical shakers, necklaces, as well as exploring all the different types to cook and eat.

If you would like me to visit your child's school, pre school, primary or secondary then give me a call. I have workshops suitable for all ages and I promise you the children will have a good time while learning about healthy eating and how to make good choices for themselves.

t 01622 727543 e debs@freshlands.me.uk



Ever heard of a Freegan?

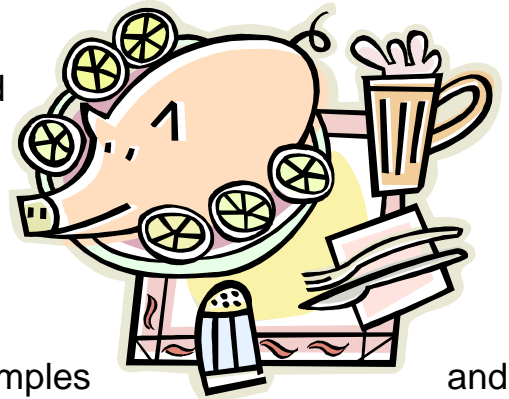
Freeegans are people who live off other people waste and leftovers. They rummage in bins for food that would other wise end up in landfill. Ok I know what you are thinking, YUK. But there is a very serious side to what they do.

Across the country Health and Safety laws mean that thousands of pounds of perfectly good food produce is simply thrown away. Foraging in bins is obviously not for the squeamish but, according to Freeegans, you can get nearly all of your food from bins behind markets and shops. For Freeegans it's the ultimate in recycling.

Researchers estimate that a quarter of all food waste that goes to landfills is actually still edible. This equates to over 3 million tonnes of perfectly good food. The food is still fit for purpose with quite often a lot of life left in it. It's all products that would have been wasted.

If you want to know more have a look at their website. <http://freegan.info/> It's really interesting. I don't know if I'm brave enough to go but they certainly have a point. The website is American but it seems it is happening here as well as a recent BBC programme featured British Freeegans.

The Flavours of Faversham Food will be held on June 16 and 17. It runs from 10am to 4pm and features local food and drink. There sounds like there will be something for everyone with sausage and beer challenges to talks and demos.



You can take a trial around the town and try samples and some of food and drink place or take a tour of the brewery. For more details www.faversham.org. You have to go to community pages, then what's on, and scroll down.

I'm really pleased to send you my newsletter and I hope you find the news and info interesting and useful. If you are no longer interested in receiving this type of information or have received it in error, please let me know and I will remove you from my list. I would also like to spread the word, so please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone who you feel would be interested in food news.