

Food News For August

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Good food; great cooking; healthy eating

Debbie Pryer

August and time for holidays. Think picnics, days on the beach, family days out, open air concerts and hopefully sunny weather. Time then, to make wonderful food for all these occasions and make sure we keep happy and healthy by eating foods that are good for us and not giving in to the greasy burger and chips served up at so many places we visit.

It's such a shame that so often, the food on offer is so poor. Whoever is managing the attraction or event is missing a great opportunity to delight people with something really good to eat. A pleasant surprise then, when I visited the World Gardens at Lullingstone Castle, last weekend to find they have made their best efforts to offer refreshments, even though they have no catering facilities. I found what I needed, a good cup of tea, served by a very nice lady and a lovely slice of coffee and walnut cake. If you fancy a morning or afternoon out with a difference, do go and have a look at the garden. It's great fun. To find out more have a look at their web site. www.lullingstonecastle.co.uk

Meanwhile I hope you have a go at some of the recipes I've included this time. I've kept everything simple and quick so you can eat well and still have time to enjoy the sunshine. (fingers crossed)

Take care Debbie

Take a Quick Dip (no not in the pool silly) in the pot!

Spicy Salsa Take 500g of fresh tomatoes, and finely chop. Add 1 small, very finely chopped, red onion, 2 finely chopped chillies, and a handful of finely chopped coriander, 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and a squeeze of lime juice. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Season and add more lime/ salt to suit you.



Homemade Humous Open a can of chick peas and mash them up with your favourite flavourings, (you can use a food processor for this). Try cumin seeds, lemon or lime juice, dried or fresh chill. Add some crushed garlic and salt and pepper. To finish add some good olive oil until the mix is nice and soft.

Aubergine Dip Cut an aubergine in half lengthways and make deep criss cross scores into the flesh. Slice a couple of cloves of garlic and push the slices into the cuts. Take a couple of sprigs of rosemary and do the same. Put the halves back together and wrap in foil. Bake in a hot oven for about 30 mins. They should be soft when you touch the flesh. Take off the foil and remove the garlic and rosemary and scoop out the flesh into a dish. Add flavourings, lemon juice salt and pepper and olive oil to make it a little looser. Serve at room temperature.

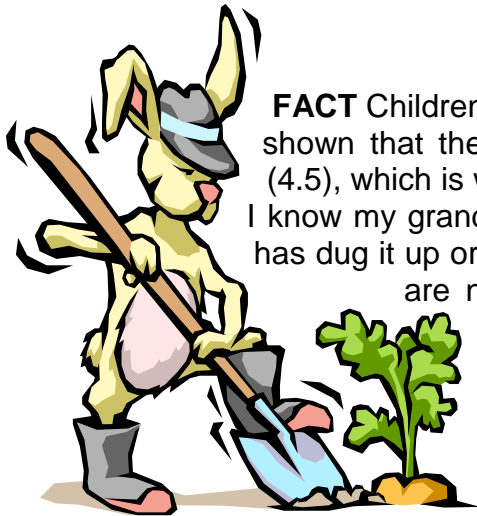
Hey Sugar, how sweet are you?

We all know that before we go to work we should make sure we have eaten a good breakfast. And cereal in its amazing never ending varieties should be able to offer something for everyone. But I've just been looking at the amount of sugar in some of the cereals on offer and it's amazing how much sugar they contain even when they declare 'no added sugar'. This can be because of additions of things like dried fruit which are high in sugar content but some just add in the sugar to make it taste sweet! Just look at this difference in sugar.

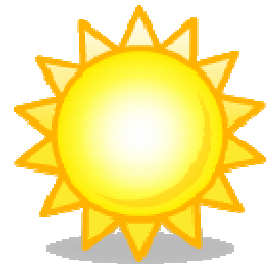
Dorset Cereals	8.1g per 100 g
Crunchy Nut cornflakes	35g per 100g!
Waitrose Fruit and Nut Muesli	27g per 100g
Porridge Oats	1.7g per 100g
Porridge with fruit and Nuts	10.7g

For it to be truly healthy it should be below
5g per 100g

Grow your own, with your kids.



FACT Children who grow their own fruit and veg eat more of them. Research has shown that they increase their servings from around 2 per day to around five (4.5), which is what we should all be trying to achieve. I know my grandson loves to eat our home grown fruit and veg but only when he has dug it up or picked it. And most of all he loves to eat it there and then. If you are not sure about growing your own, try something really easy like lettuce or radishes. Plant today and they will be ready to eat before the summer is out.



What's in Season. August.

Salads and more salads. Who wants to cook in this heat anyway. Try different sorts of **leaves** from soft buttery traditional lettuce to spicy rocket and mizuna and crispy cos.

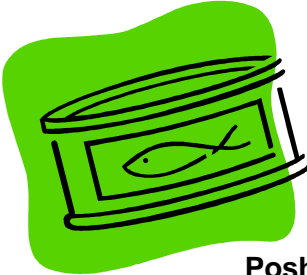
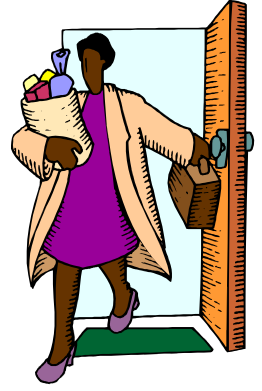
Crisp and incredible sweet, fresh cobs of corn are in season now. Make sure you don't store your **sweet corn**. Buy it and cook it on the same day because the sugar starts to disperse as soon as the cobs are picked. This is one vegetable that all children seem to enjoy as they love chewing the cobs and getting in a mess with dripping butter on chins. Make sure you buy plenty.

The deep red root veg **beetroot** is jam packed with goodness. Cook in a hot oven with thyme or orange to scent it. Once cooked, peel away the skins and serve warm with a salad. Beetroot goes well with goat's cheese. Try serving goat's cheese and roasted beetroot stacks for a stylish looking starter that tastes fab.

Also available will be piles of **runner beans**, **courgettes** by the armload, out door grown **tomatoes** ripened in the summer sun, **lettuces** of all kinds and sweet **peppers**. All easily made into bright and flavoursome lunches to take to work and enjoy outside in the sunshine.

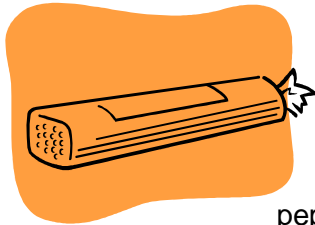
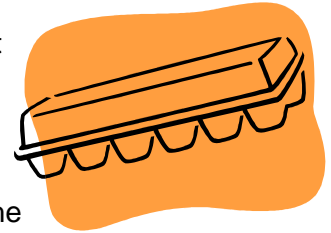
When you get home from work.....

there is no need to reach for a convenience meal full of salt and fat. Keep your self feeling great and looking good by making yourself a tasty and nourishing meal every evening. Here are **five** to see you through the week that take no more than 30 mins from beginning to plate. ENJOY.



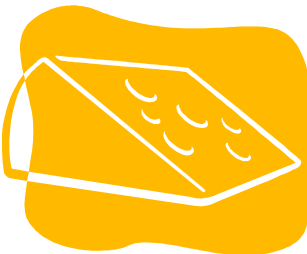
Tuna bean salad Open a can of tuna in spring water or brine, rinse and place in a largish bowl. Add a can of drained and rinsed mixed bean salad. If you want add some salad veggies such as peppers, salad onions, cucumber, tomatoes and radishes. Add a splash of red wine vinegar and a splodge of good olive oil. Season and serve.

Posh Omelette (Italian style) Good for using up leftovers! Beat a couple of eggs per person and chop up some nice things to go in your omelette. Try bacon, chorizo, ham, cooked new potatoes, peppers, peas, mushrooms, onions, courgettes, tomatoes. Put a knob of butter in a pan and add the veggies, cook until they start to soften then pour in the eggs. Cook over a med heat until the eggs are nearly set. Add some cheese on the top, try cheddar, feta, mozzarella, or goat's cheese and place under a hot grill for a couple of minutes until the cheese melts. Serve cut into wedges with a big crunchy green salad and crusty bread.



Spaghetti Carbonara for two. Cook 200g spaghetti according to the instructions on the packet. Meanwhile, chop and cook 6 rashers of bacon in frying pan. Beat together 2 eggs, a small carton of cream and plenty of black pepper. Drain the spaghetti and put it back in the pan with the egg mix and the chopped bacon. Add a handful of parmesan over the top and extra black pepper. Serve with ciabatta bread and a green salad.

Chicken Ceaser (my favourite) Season 1 chicken breast or 2 chicken thighs per person. Fry in a little olive oil in a pan. Cut up some bread into small cubes and put in the pan with the chicken. Meanwhile, break up some little gem lettuce, about 1 per person, and shave some parmesan cheese of a large block. Place the little gems on serving dishes and sprinkle over the croutons (fried bread), slice up the chicken and place on the lettuce, add the parmesan and dress with some good bought ceaser salad dressing. (I like Caldinis)



Potato salad with feta cheese. Cook some new potatoes. Make a dressing from half yoghurt and half mayo and chopped mint. Add to the potatoes while they are still warm. Crumble some feta cheese on the top. Serve with a salad of spicy leaves such as rocket and mizuna and some cool cucumber.



This month the **Farmer Giles Award** Goes to Hugh Fernley-Whittingstall and all other TV/Celebrity cooks who cash in on their celebrity status by offering cookery books, courses and their own products and make loads of money out of all of us and don't give anything back.

Every month I receive a newsletter from Hugh, (I signed up for it) but over time it has become more and more about his products and what I can buy from him. No advice, no recipes, no help, no where to contact to ask questions, just if I send him money he will sell me stuff. Well stuff it Hugh. I'm off to talk to people who want to sell me their goods but are happy to talk to me about how to cook and store their products and who care about what they sell. Not just how much money they make.



Talking of which, let me introduce you to Jenny Hursell, at **Hursell Farm in Upchurch**. This lovely lady sells her outstanding flavoursome pork at Farmers Markets and also delivers to your door. She lets her pigs wander outside and you can tell from the pictures of her pigs on her stall that they are happy pigs.

Last year they were winners of the Taste of Kent Awards Best Meat producer/Butcher category. You can contact them of **01634 260883** or find

them at Farmers Markets around Kent. Prices are good with a leg joint coming in at £4.49 per kilo and the taste is fantastic. They also sell pigs ears which I just have to try.

New Maidstone Farmers Market I missed the first one but visited the second outing, early in the morning on the 28th July. A good few stalls were set up outside County Hall and I enjoyed a pleasant wander, tasting and talking to the local producers. There was a good selection of cakes and bakes, fruit and veg and meat including game, plus flour, potatoes, plants, jams and juices.

I was really delighted to find Hursell Farm (featured above) and bought a hand of pork which we had for Sunday lunch. The meat melts in your mouth and the crunch of crackling is just so good, it's making my mouth water as I think about it. I also bought some granary bread from the Italian baker, a nice loaf but nothing special. What I really wanted were his cheesy, ham, tomato breads but at £3 I thought they were too expensive.

I forgot to buy eggs, which I always buy at Farmers markets but I did buy cherries and a lemon grass plant. I always think lemon grass is expensive so I'll see if I can keep my own going.



I'll definitely be back there next month, Sat 25th August, 9 till 1pm, see you there.

Don't forget in the heat of the summer you need to drink more.

If you are running around on the beach or in the park

you should aim for 1 litre per hour.

For children, little and often is best,

about 100ml every 20 mins or more if it's really hot



Just try it!

With children home for the holidays, meal times can become difficult with you worrying about what they are eating and often trying to get them to try new foods. I've watched my daughter offer her son a new food. She tells him he doesn't have to like it but she would like him to try it. He does this by barely letting the food touch his mouth, sometimes it goes in but it's never eaten. He then says he doesn't like it and she and he are happy. But what is happening is the list of foods he has tried but doesn't like is getting very long and the foods that he will eat happily are limited. I have about three options that I can give him. I'm not sure this is achieving anything at all except to confirm to him that he doesn't like lots of different foods.

Surely it would be better if he liked loads of different foods. I've done some research and this is what I've found.

- It's better to offer a non food reward for eating (not trying) a new food. So do not offer pudding if they eat their greens. Try star charts stickers etc
- Keep offering the new food again and again. Research shows that a child will be suspicious of a new food and rejection is automatic. But don't give up. Try at least ten times before you accept they don't like prawns!
- Be a good role model. Children will eat broccoli if they see their parents eating and enjoying it. So eat with them and tuck in. Most of all don't make it a battle. If it's getting stressful, take the food away and offer it again a few weeks later.

In focus this month **GARLIC**

Garlic has long been considered an aphrodisiac and has been used to treat many conditions from asthma, to snake bites, tonsillitis and blisters to headaches.

Garlic has been called Russian penicillin as the Russian soldiers carried cloves to treat their wounds. Today, herbal medicines often contain garlic. It contains nearly 100 active chemical compounds and really does have antibiotic, decongestant, anticancer, anti-inflammatory, anti-fungal and even some anti-viral properties.



Garlic has fantastic effects on the blood vessels, reducing the likelihood of stroke and heart disease. Experiments have shown that it lowers blood cholesterol and it is also suggested it can lower blood pressure.

Allicin is the important chemical in garlic and research is showing that this has the potential to prevent or treat cancer, malaria, TB and even shows promise against the hospital superbug MRSA.

Garlic breath is caused by compounds that contain sulphur. Parsley is a natural breath freshener or you could munch a coffee bean.

To get the best eat at least three cloves a day. Raw is best.

Cook for no more than 10 minutes. Research has shown that the best garlic is Spanish Morodo which is the one found in most supermarkets.

Off to see the latest film at the cinema?

Having a tub of popcorn?

A 100g tub contains 600 calories, and 43 g of fat!

How about taking some low fat snacks with you or try eating nothing.

It really doesn't spoil the film. Honest!



Pinch me I must be dreaming (or is it a nightmare!)

Early evening in July, myself and friends Helen and Haidee met up for some girly chat and something good to eat. West Malling is a good choice as there are several places to try. I'd read about Pinch and wanted to give it a go and the others were happy to go along with my choice. We glanced quickly at the board outside and noted a £10 menu.

First impressions were good with a modern look of leather sofas and shiny fittings. A lack of greeting meant we hovered for a while. Once seated, we looked over the menus properly and I was disappointed to find the budget £10 menu a little boring. However, I went with a Turkish dip and flat bread starter, then chicken ceaser salad. Haidee ordered lamb koftas and chicken ceaser. Whilst Helen, who it has to be said, was very hungry, ordered from the main menu. No starter but a main of a vegetable and goats cheese tart with a side of sweet potato chips.

We were brought some freshly baked warm bread and butter while we waited for our meals. Happily chatting we didn't notice how much time it took for our food to come but I suspect it was over long. Meanwhile, the restaurant filled up which was surprising for a Monday night.

My dips and bread arrived and Helen and I shared a tasty beetroot dip, a homemade well flavoured humous and a disappointing shop tasting commercial guacamole. Haidee enjoyed her starter' commenting that it was very tasty.

Our mains arrived as two smallish dishes of ceaser salad and a gigantic plate of food for Helen. The ceasers were dressed with a mayo based dressing and a little parmesan but it was really just a chicken salad. Boring but edible.

Helen meanwhile struggled on with her plate of food. She said 'I was very hungry after a busy day at work and was looking forward to trying the new Pinch Bar with the girls. I ordered a vegetarian main meal thinking I was being healthy, however it was not a delicate tart but a huge greasy pie looking pile of food. The look of the food put me instantly off as it was far too much for me to eat and the sweet potatoes in the tart was very hard'.

We all shared her side order of sweet potato chips which were hot and tasty but again the dips were mayo based or a commercial chilli dipping sauce.

Eyes ever bigger than our tummies, Helen and I ordered desserts of mango and pistachio parfait, which was sickly sweet, and hot chocolate brownie which was bathed in hot chocolate sauce and served with a delicious ice cream. I liked her dessert much more than mine. Go again? I don't think so.

Research has shown that families who sit down and eat together have 30% less rows than families who rarely or never sit and eat together.

(I wonder if they have a teenager at the table).

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.