

FOOD NEWS FOR EARLY SUMMER 2008

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Good food; great cooking; healthy eating.

Hopefully you will all have sampled the new season asparagus and are celebrating its arrival. We have had two large servings, dressed with melted butter, a little sea salt and hollandaise sauce for dipping. Tonight I am planning to serve the fresh green stalks with softly poached eggs. The price in the shops has been around £5.50 a kilo which is not bad for something so wonderful. As the month goes on I will use it in recipes from quiche to risotto, raw in salads and as an accompaniment to roast chicken or salmon. Revel in it while you can as the season finishes on 21st June.



The other good news is the arrival of some longed for warmer weather. We are already eating outside and our dinners have taken on the air of summer meals. I don't really do barbecues (why stand next to a hot fire on a hot day in full sunshine) but prefer cool food that is full of summer flavours. I will be serving plenty of young salad leaves, new young veg, peppery watercress, sweet tomatoes and of course juicy summer strawberries.

I'm looking forward to trying some different recipes this month and have had fun with some new ideas at work. I've made Rosemary cake, which went down very well and I'll be making the scones from the recipe sent to me by Helen Parker I'm sure they will do down well at the café with our own fabulous jams and a refreshing cup of tea. Don't forget to call by if you are in Maidstone. To find where we are, have a look at the website. www.blackthorn.org.uk

Enjoy your food *Debbie Pryer*

Don't forget if you need someone to deliver cookery lessons, healthy eating workshop, sessions for parent and children or anything to do with food... CALL ME.01622 727543 or e mail debbie@debbiepryer.co.uk Check out my website to see some of the work that I have done. www.debbiepryer.co.uk

Honey, you can stop the sneezing As a hay fever sufferer I know what a



miserable it can be when it feels like you have a permanent cold, with runny nose, itchy eyes and a permanent sneeze. But help is at hand. It's been scientifically proven that local honey helps to rid you of your hay fever. So ditch that Australian honey and go and buy some from your local producer. All you need is a teaspoon per day. I drizzle it on my porridge or spread it on my toast in the morning and have found it works really well. In fact I notice if I stop eating it for a day or two because I start sneezing again.

Bluebell hill Apiaries are local honey producers. You can buy their honey in Waitrose and many other local shops. See their website for more info. They tell me there is a world shortage of honey so best get some in quick! www.bbha.biz

. Liven up you salads and sandwiches with peppery crunchy watercress. Watercress week is 11th to 17th May. Much of the watercress we buy is grown in southern England in clear running streams. It's rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants and makes a fab soup. Take...



2 or 3 bunches of watercress, 2 or 3 medium potatoes, about 1 pint of marigold stock, half a pint of milk, 1 small onion.

Chop the onion finely and place in a pan with a small knob of butter. Peel the potatoes and chop into small dice. Add to the onion and leave to sweat gently for about five minutes. Make up the stock and chop the watercress. Add the stock to the veg and leave to cook for about 10 minutes. Add the milk and the watercress to the pan. After 5 minutes, liquidize the mix. You may need to add more stock or milk if it is too thick. Season and serve.

SCONES DECLASSIFIED By Helen Parker



I work for Visitscotland, a government supported agency charged with developing tourism in Scotland. One of my many duties is quality assuring Visitor Attractions (mystery shopper sort of!), which involves 'benchmarking' the quality of catering – ahem! My favourite lunchtime snack, being a freshly baked scone, with butter and quality preserve, complete with a large cappuccino – well somebody's got to do it.

However making magnificent fluffy scones at home has always eluded me. Until recently! Now due to the generous nature of one of my colleagues, I can pass some secrets on! Thanks to Marc Robertson of HLTCC Consultants.

Some things to consider.

- Preheat the oven thoroughly
- Preheat the baking tray
- Use at least 12oz of self raising flour to make 6 to 8 scones
- Do not over handle the scone mix, i.e. butter at room temperature.
- Don't make the mix too wet or dry
- Roll out the dough to at least 1.5 to 2 inches thick
- Place the scones relatively close together on the baking tray
- To ensure freshness, consume with 4 hours – easily done!

Ingredients

12oz of self raising flour
Good pinch of salt
3oz of butter
2 oz of caster sugar
7 Fluid oz of milk

Method

1. Heat the oven to 220c/425f/Gas 7.
2. Spread flour on the baking sheet
3. Mix together the flour and salt and rub in the butter
4. Stir in the sugar and then the milk to get a soft dough
5. Turn on to a floured work surface and pat out to a round, at least 2 inches thick.
6. Use the cutter of your choice to stamp out rounds and place on baking sheet. Knead lightly together the rest of the dough, and stamp out more scones to use the dough all up.
7. Brush the tops of the scones with a little milk.
8. Bake for 12- 15 minutes until well risen and golden.
9. Cool on a wire rack and enjoy, with butter and an excellent quality preserve, and maybe whipped or clotted cream!

LEARN TO COOK at home

Would you like to improve your cooking skills or learn something new? My one to one sessions offer you the opportunity to learn how to cook exactly what you want to eat. You decide what you would like to do and on the day we go for it. So whether it's **roasting** a perfect **chicken**, baking a fabulous **French apple tart** or pan frying the **perfect steak**, I can help.

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In Season , early summer

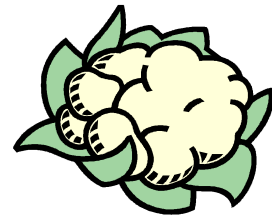
A fabulous selection of every different kind of young veg plus soft fruits in abundance. It's hard to go hungry in the summer.

Enjoy!



ASPARAGUS, BROAD BEANS, SPRING

**AND SUMMER CABBAGES,
Carrots, Cauliflowers,
Chard, Cherries, Endive,
Gooseberries, Kohl rabi,**



**All sorts of lettuce, Onions, Peas, Spinach,
New Potatoes** (serve with melted butter and fresh mint),
Radishes, Raspberries, Rhubarb



Salad onions, strawberries.



How to prepare asparagus, asparagus is at its sweetest when freshly picked so, for the best flavour, use as soon as possible and make sure you don't overcook!
Rinse in cold water, remove the woody ends by bending the bottom end. It will snap where the woody part begins. Place about 3 cm of water in a pan and bring to the boil. Cook the asparagus for around 4 mins in the boiling water or until just tender.

Do you need an extra pair of hands in the kitchen?



I can help you to prepare for a fun children's party, design and cook a special dinner party or bring together a tasty buffet for the office.

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Great Place to Shop Macknade Stores

www.macknade.com



If you love good food you will love this shop. I went in not knowing what to expect, (it looks like an overgrown shed) and came out loaded with goodies, most of which we ate for lunch the same day. My delicious finds included a fresh young goats' cheese made just down the road, sun dried tomato, olives, and ham from Italy, as well as a bottle of real Lambrusco from Emilia Roma for a bargain £6.00.

They stock almost everything from fruit and veg to flour and pasta a fantastic range of cooked meats to a wonderful range of wines. I saw everything from lemon grass and baby aubergines to smoked mozzarella, dry cured bacon and local honey. My favourite fabulous find was a bar of salted chocolate. And before you dismiss it, think about snickers bars but better. As I wandered round I kept saying wow. Not like me at all

What a great place to go to buy that special picnic as you head off to the beach or to stock up on some really good food.

New Ingredient! Edamame Beans



Edamame is Japanese for "beans on branches", which described the way the pods grow. The bean is picked when it is still young unlike other soy beans.

You might have seen this new magic bean on some menus or seen them for sale in the shops. Apparently this bean has virtually all the health benefits of eating meat, but none of the blood and gore. Edamame (or soya beans) look a bit like a broad beans and are the new super-food. Soya beans have been known to us all for a while now and have been used as a meat alternative for vegetarians. It's now had a makeover and with a new name and a hip and happening look, it's being sold as a new ingredient. The bean is said to be the only vegetable to contain all nine amino acids. So it is a really good source of protein. It is also high in fibre, vitamin C, folic acid and helps lower cholesterol.

M&S is selling Tuna and Oriental Edamame Salad, 200g, at £2.25 as a take-away snack. It also sells Oriental Edamame Salad with Dressing, at £2.49 for 150g. Birds Eye has launched a frozen version of the bean which is available to purchase in many supermarkets. I ate them as a starter in Dim T and they are included on the Wagamama menu.

I'm on my holiday for most of June so my next newsletter will be out in early July.

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.