

Eating with the seasons

Whether you grow your own or buy from local suppliers, discover ways to create luscious meals with your favourite seasonal fruit and vegetables

RECIPES AND PHOTOGRAPHS RYLAND PETERS & SMALL
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Sitting down to a meal of home-grown fruit and vegetables can bring a great sense of satisfaction; from seeing the 'fruits' of your labour to appreciating what is seasonally available. It means greater gratitude for the environment; food with more taste, without the carbon footprint, pesticides or plastic. *Home-grown Harvest: Delicious Ways To Enjoy Your Seasonal Fruit And Vegetables* provides recipes for creating tasty meals from fresh produce all year round, many of which are uncomplicated and rustic, allowing the natural flavours to speak for themselves.

Recipes include a 'Fennel and lemon risotto', great for lunchtime visitors, served with crusty bread; a creamy 'Asparagus tagliatelle' with the option to switch the asparagus for courgettes; and a comforting 'Pan plum crumble', which is served warm with vanilla ice cream. It's time to explore what nature has to offer this season and taste the difference.

ROAST SWEET POTATO & CHICKEN PIE

A hearty and warming dish, this pie is a great way to recycle leftover roast chicken, as well as finish a glut of vegetables. Use the end pieces of a loaf of bread and toast in the oven, alongside the sweet potatoes.

SERVES 4-6

- 1.5kg sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 3-4 tbsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 onion, diced
- 100g bacon, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 150g mushrooms, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 tsp dried thyme
- 75-100g sausages, cooked and chopped
- 100g vacuum-packed peeled chestnuts, chopped
- Large handful of fresh parsley leaves, chopped
- ½ a chicken, cooked and meat shredded
- 125g stale or toasted bread, broken into small pieces
- 5 tbsp milk
- 180ml chicken stock or water
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 220°C, gas mark 7. Meanwhile, toss the sweet potatoes with the olive oil and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast for 45 minutes, until tender and browned. Allow to cool, then mash with butter, to taste. Season with salt and set aside. Reduce the oven temperature to 200°C, gas mark 6.

2 Heat some of the oil in a frying pan. Add the onion and cook for 2-3 minutes, until softened. Season with salt, then add the bacon, celery and mushrooms and cook for 3-5 minutes more, stirring. Add the garlic, thyme, sausages and chestnuts and cook for another minute. Stir in the parsley and chicken, then set aside.

3 In a bowl, combine the bread pieces and milk. Toss to coat. The bread should be moist; you may need to add more milk. Add the bread to the chicken mix, along with the stock. Stir well and season.

4 Spread the chicken mix evenly in a 25-30cm round baking dish. It will dry out slightly with baking, so add a bit more liquid – stock, milk or water – if needed. Top with the mashed sweet potato and spread out evenly. Bake in the preheated oven for about 45 minutes – the sweet potato should start to blacken slightly where peaked – then serve. >>>





PARSNIP, CHORIZO & CHESTNUT SOUP

This recipe makes a thick and unctuous soup; the kind you can wolf down after a long walk in the depths of winter!

SERVES 4-6

- 125g raw chorizo, cubed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 celery stick, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 3 parsnips, chopped
- ¼ tsp dried chilli or hot red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 200g peeled, cooked chestnuts (fresh or vacuum-packed)
- 1 ltr hot chicken or ham stock
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Put the chorizo in a large saucepan and heat gently for 2-3 minutes, until the oil seeps out and the chorizo is slightly crispy. Lift out with a slotted spoon, leaving as much of the oil behind as you can. Set to one side.

2 Add the onion, garlic, celery, carrot and parsnips to the pan. Stir, then cover and cook for 10 minutes, until softened. Add the chilli or hot red pepper flakes and cumin. Season, then stir to release the aroma. Add the chestnuts and stock, then cover and simmer over a low heat for 25-30 minutes more.

3 Transfer the contents of the pan to a blender (or use a handheld blender) and liquidise until smooth. Reheat the chorizo in a frying pan. Divide the soup evenly between the serving bowls, scatter with crispy chorizo and serve.

BABY SQUASH STUFFED WITH PINE NUTS & CURRANTS

This squash recipe is full of Sicilian flavours, and the unexpected mix of sweet currants with the saltiness of the capers and the cheese is quite wonderful. The tart lemon and zingy mint lift the dish. Serve warm or at room temperature.

SERVES 4

- 4 small acorn squashes or 4 good-sized courgettes
- 1 tbsp salted capers
- 30g currants
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 5-6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2-3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 120g fresh white breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbsp freshly chopped mint leaves
- 1-2 tsp grated lemon zest
- 50g Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- 50g pine nuts, lightly toasted
- 1 egg, beaten (optional)
- 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 If using acorn squashes, slice off a thin piece from their base, so that they stand upright without wobbling, then cut off a lid and scoop out the seeds to make a cavity. If using courgettes, halve lengthways and, with a teaspoon, remove the seeds in the centre to leave a 'boat' shape. Season the cut surfaces with salt and leave them upside down to drain.

2 In two separate bowls, cover the capers and currants with warm water and leave them to soak.

3 When the squashes or courgettes have drained for 45-60 minutes, rinse them, pat dry, then steam for 10-12 minutes, until just tender. Drain on some paper towel. Preheat the oven to 190°C, gas mark 5.

4 Meanwhile, fry the onion in 2 tablespoons of oil for 10-15 minutes with a pinch of salt, until soft. Add the garlic and cook for 3-4 minutes more. Drain the capers and currants.

5 Mix the onion and garlic with the other ingredients, except the remaining oil and lemon juice. Stir in the beaten egg for a firmer stuffing, if using.

6 Put the squashes or courgettes in a baking dish and fill the cavities with the stuffing. Mix together the remaining oil and lemon juice and spoon over the vegetables.

7 Bake in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes, basting once, until the squashes are golden and crisp on top. Serve warm with a Greek-style salad.



Reader offer

Psychologies readers can buy a copy of *Home-Grown Harvest: Delicious Ways To Enjoy Your Seasonal Fruit And Vegetables* for £10 (RRP £14.99) with free UK p&p, until 20 December 2019. See rylandpeters.com and quote 'HARVEST10' at checkout.

