

Ham and eggs, Spanish-style
José Pizarro's jamón and asparagus

Yotam Ottolenghi
Savoury breakfast
bread pudding

Felicity Cloake
How to make
perfect ceviche

Nancy Birtwhistle
£1 chickpea meals

Benamina Ebuehi
No-bake lemon
cheesecake

Stosie Madi
Stuffed spring
cabbage leaves

Tom Hunt
Berry muffins

Niki Segnit
The best flavour
matches for miso

Rachel Roddy
Asparagus spaghetti

Kitchen aide
Green peppers

Grace Dent
'A restaurant built
on pure heart'

Feast

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Yotam Ottolenghi



I love seeing what people are eating for breakfast. In our test kitchen, for example, there's a range of wonderfully different things in everyone's morning bowl: Noor and Verena have their berry- and seed-filled porridge, Tara seems to eat a za'atar-doused variation on salad niçoise most mornings and Chaya usually comes up with some take or other on seafood with roti. The mix is eclectic, but savoury seems to be the theme that unites the team each morning, the celebration of which defines this week's recipes.



Strata with tomatoes and capers

Prep	35 min
Rest	4 hr+
Cook	1 hr 35 min
Serves	8
Cost	About £2 a head

3 large onions, peeled and cut into quarters (600g)
4 garlic cloves, peeled
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp pickled thyme leaves
250g streaky bacon, cut into 1cm dice
Fine sea salt and black pepper
70g parsley, 30g leaves and fine stems finely chopped, the remaining 40g stems finely chopped and kept separate
120g lancashire (or cheddar), coarsely grated
70g parmesan, finely grated
450g stale sourdough, cut into 1½cm-thick slices
3-4 plum tomatoes (300g), grated (discard the skins)
8 eggs
700ml full-fat milk
300ml double cream
2 lemons, zest finely grated, to get 2 tsp, then juiced, to get 3 tbsp
30g wholegrain mustard

For the salsa
130ml olive oil
30g fine capers (drained weight)
150g cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters

This savoury bread pudding is the ultimate make-ahead brunch for a crowd. If you like, swap the bacon for chunks of hot smoked fish.

Pulse the onion and garlic until coarsely chopped. Put a large saute pan on a medium-high heat, add the oil, the onion mixture, the thyme, bacon, half a teaspoon of salt and plenty of pepper, and cook, stirring often, for 25-30 minutes, until lightly golden. Off the heat, stir in the 40g chopped parsley stems and set aside.

Mix the two cheeses in a small bowl, then stir 140g into the cooled onion and bacon mixture.

Lay out the bread on a large tray, spread the grated tomato on top, then arrange in a 30cm x 20cm baking dish, so they overlap a little. Stuff the remaining onion and bacon mixture in between the slices.

Break the eggs into a bowl, add the milk, cream and a half-teaspoon of salt, and whisk. Sieve into a second bowl, then stir in the lemon zest, mustard and a good grind of pepper, and pour all over the bread. Lay a sheet of greaseproof paper on top of the dish, weigh it down with a heavy baking dish, then chill for at least four hours, or overnight.

An hour before you want to serve, take the dish out of the fridge. Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/gas 6. Remove the weight and paper, then scatter the remaining 50g cheese over the top of the strata. Cover with foil, bake for 30 minutes, then take off the foil and bake for 25-30 minutes more, until golden. Set aside to rest for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, put all the remaining parsley in a bowl with the olive oil, capers, tomatoes and lemon juice, add a half-teaspoon of salt and a good grind of pepper, and mix. Spoon a quarter of the salsa over the strata, then serve hot with the remaining salsa on the side. →

Chilaquiles with charred salsa verde

GF

Prep **20 min**
Cook **40 min**
Serves **4**
Cost **About £1.70 a head**

For the salsa verde

3 garlic cloves, peeled
1½ onions, peeled and cut into quarters (270g)
2 green chillies (20g), stems removed
1 avocado (170g), skinned and stoned, flesh roughly chopped
2 kiwi fruit (100g), peeled and roughly chopped
20g coriander, roughly chopped
2 limes, 1 juiced, to get 1 tbsp, the other cut into wedges
Fine sea salt and black pepper

For the chilaquiles

3 tbsp vegetable oil
8 corn tortillas, each cut into 8 triangles - I like the ones from Cool Chile Co
20g unsalted butter
6 eggs, beaten
½ onion, finely chopped
1 tbsp coriander leaves
1 green chilli (10g), cut into thin rounds
75g feta, crumbled

The late, great Diana Kennedy described *chilaquiles* as “Mexican soul food”, and I couldn’t agree more. They’re essentially yesterday’s corn tortillas, broken into pieces, cooked in salsa and sprinkled with cheese, making a great brunch dish that oozes comforting familiarity.

Start with the salsa. Put a griddle pan on a high heat and, once hot, char the garlic, onions and chilli, turning them as necessary, until they are blackened all over - the garlic and chilli will take about eight minutes and the onion about 20. Lift out on to a plate as they’re ready, then leave to cool. Once cool, put the garlic, onions and chilli in a blender with all the other salsa ingredients except the lime wedges, add two tablespoons of water, a quarter-teaspoon of salt and a good grind of black pepper, and blitz smooth. Scrape into a small bowl and set aside.

To make the chilaquiles, put a large frying pan on a high heat, pour in a tablespoon of oil, then add a third of the tortilla triangles and fry, stirring constantly, for four to five minutes, until golden and crunchy. Lift out with a slotted spoon and drain on a plate lined with kitchen roll, then repeat with the remaining oil and tortilla triangles.

Once all the tortillas are draining, turn down the heat under the pan to low and drop in the butter. Once it has melted, return the tortillas to the pan, then add the eggs, a quarter-teaspoon of salt and a good twist of pepper, and gently and quickly fold the eggs over the tortillas three or four times, until they’re just set.

Transfer to a platter and spoon half the salsa over the top. Scatter on the onion, coriander, chilli and feta, and serve hot with the remaining salsa and the lime wedges on the side.





Breakfast udon with mushrooms and soy



Prep	10 min
Cook	10 min
Serves	2
Cost	About £2.10 a head

1/3 cucumber, cut into 6cm-long julienne strips (120g)
Fine sea salt
2 tsp rice-wine vinegar
35g unsalted butter
1 portobello mushroom, finely chopped (65g)
2 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped (30g)
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp white miso
2 large egg yolks (save the whites for another use)
2 x 150g packets ready-cooked udon
1/2 tsp sesame seeds, toasted

These are inspired by my colleague Katja Tausig's time working at Koya, a wonderful restaurant in Soho that's rightly renowned for its udon noodles and Japanese breakfasts. This is her version of Koya's *kama tama*, a simple dish of udon, egg, soy and spring onions. I've used ready-cooked udon for ease, but frozen would be fine, too. Have all the ingredients measured out before you start cooking, though, because it all comes together very quickly.

Half-fill a medium saucepan with cold water and bring it to a boil. Meanwhile, put the cucumber and a quarter-teaspoon of salt in a small serving bowl, toss to combine and set aside for five minutes. Discard any liquid from the bowl, then stir the vinegar into the cucumbers and set aside to pickle.

Put a medium saute pan on a medium-high heat and, once hot, add the butter, chopped mushroom and spring onions, and cook, stirring occasionally, for five minutes, until browned. Take the pan off the heat, set aside two tablespoons of the mushroom mixture, then stir the soy sauce, miso and egg yolks into the pan.

Drop the noodles into the boiling water for about 30 seconds (if cooking them from frozen, give them a minute or two), until the strands separate. Reserve two tablespoons of the cooking water, then drain the udon and tip into the saute pan with the reserved water. Using tongs, mix well until the noodles are coated, then transfer to two shallow bowls. Sprinkle the reserved mushrooms and the sesame seeds on top, and serve with the cucumber pickle on the side.





José Pizarro

Ham and eggs, Spanish-style



Asparagus isn't worth eating at any other time of year than spring, which is one of the reasons I look forward to the new season so much. Today's dish is a classic combination of ingredients used throughout Spain, where the rich creaminess of good-quality egg yolks meets the deep saltiness of delicious jamón; they make the perfect match for the distinct, bittersweet earthiness of asparagus. There are many other ways to enjoy this vegetable, but, to my mind, simple is best: just three main ingredients make this exquisite dish.

Asparagus with jamón and crisp fried egg

GF DF

Prep	5 min
Cook	10 min
Serves	4
Cost	Under £3 a head

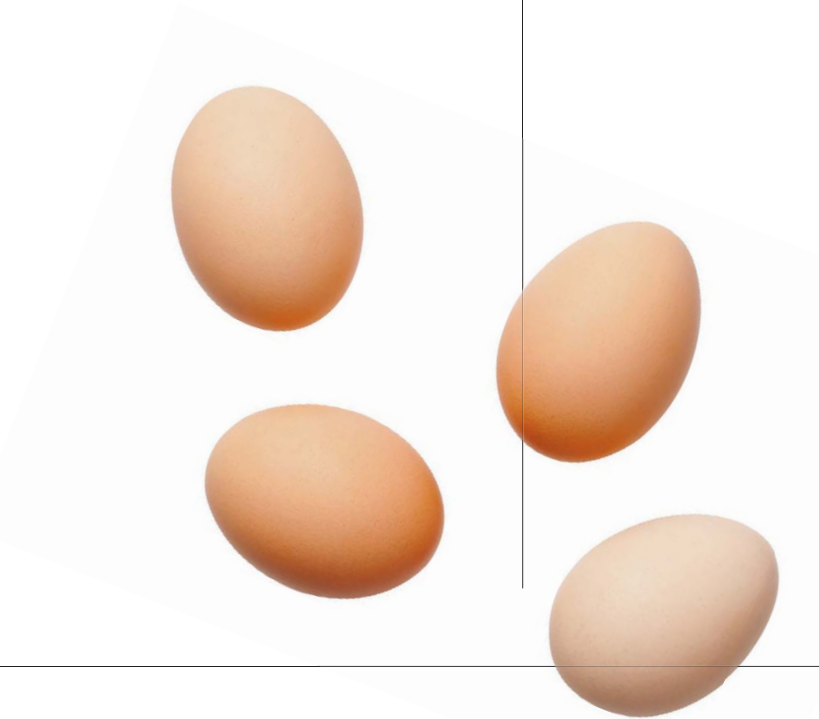
2 bunches new-season asparagus (about 500g)
75ml olive oil
4 eggs, free-range for preference
75g sliced jamón
A good drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil, to finish
Flaked salt and black pepper
1 handful chives, snipped, to finish

If you grow your own herbs, they should be starting to flower around about now, so pick a few of those beautiful purple petals and use them to garnish this lovely starter or light lunch.

Trim the woody ends off the asparagus, then steam the spears for three to four minutes, until tender to the tip of a knife.

Meanwhile, put the oil in a nonstick pan on a medium-high heat, until it starts to shimmer. Add the eggs and fry until the whites are bubbly and crisp at the edges but the yolks are still runny. Remove with a spatula and pat their bottoms dry on a sheet of kitchen roll.

Arrange the asparagus on four warmed plates, top each portion with an egg and the slices of jamón, then drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil and scatter with flaky sea salt and black pepper. Sprinkle over the chives and serve.



Nancy Birtwhistle

The £1 store cupboard



This colourful, satisfying soup is great for those wanting to cut down on their meat intake, and ticks the gluten- and dairy-free boxes, too. It can be cooked on the hob, or in the oven, slow cooker or pressure cooker. And save the liquid from the tin of chickpeas and whip it up into a deliciously light chocolate mousse for afters.



V	VG	GF	DF
Prep	15 min		
Soak	12 hr		
Cook	1 hr 30 min+		
Serves	4-6		
Cost	About 40p a head		

1-2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions, peeled and chopped small
2-3 garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
1 stick celery, chopped
1 tbsp mixed dried herbs, or 2 tbsp chopped fresh herbs
Salt and black pepper
800g mixed vegetables (eg carrots, sweet potato, leeks, potatoes), all cut into 2cm dice
½ tsp chilli powder, or 1 tsp hot chilli sauce or 1 medium fresh chilli (green or red), finely chopped
100g dried lentils, beans and/or pulses (puy lentils, red lentils, green lentils, yellow split peas, green split peas), soaked in 300ml cold water for 12 hours, then drained
1 x 400g tin chickpeas, drained and liquid reserved for the chocolate mousse opposite
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes, or passata
800ml vegetable stock (see method)
185g frozen peas

A chunky vegetable soup

Save all of the vegetable peelings and trimmings, and use them to make the flavourful stock.

First, make the stock. Put all the vegetable peelings and trimmings, including the onion skins, any parsley stalks and garlic skins, in a large, microwave-proof bowl, pour on 800ml boiling water, cover, microwave for 10 minutes on high, then set aside.

In a large pan, pressure cooker or ovenproof casserole, heat the oil, then fry the onion and garlic on a low heat for five to 10 minutes, until they start to soften. Stir in the celery and herbs, a hefty pinch each of salt and pepper, and cook for a few minutes, to soften. Add all the diced mixed vegetables, turn the heat to high and fry, stirring regularly, until they start to catch and colour at the edges.

Add the chilli and the drained lentils and chickpeas, then stir in the tomatoes and stock. To cook in the oven, cover with a well-fitting lid and bake at 220C (200C fan)/gas 9 for about an hour, or until the vegetables are tender and the pulses have absorbed much of the liquid and thickened the soup. If using a slow cooker, cook for five to six hours, until the vegetables are tender and the soup has thickened; for a pressure cooker, cook on high for 20 minutes; on the hob, bring to a boil, turn down to a simmer, cover and cook for 40-50 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

Taste and adjust the seasoning, if necessary, then stir through the peas until cooked, and serve in warmed bowls.



Egg-free chocolate mousse



Prep	5 min
Cook	15 min
Chill	1 hr+
Serves	4-5
Cost	About 30p a head

Strained liquid from 1 x 400g tin chickpeas, about 180ml (see previous recipe)
½ tsp cream of tartar
45g icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
100g dark chocolate (or milk, white or vegan), broken into small pieces
Sprinkles, to decorate

You will need four or five ramekins, or similar, for setting the mousse.

Put the reserved chickpea water in a bowl, add the cream of tartar and whisk, ideally with a hand-held electric whisk, until light, white and standing in soft peaks (much as egg whites would). Add the icing sugar in two parts, whisking well between each addition, then whisk in the vanilla.

Put the chocolate in a microwave-proof bowl, then microwave on high in two 30-second bursts, until it's fully melted; stir to help it along.

Stir a spoonful of the mousse mix into the melted chocolate to loosen it, then pour the lot into the mousse bowl and whisk to combine.

Divide the mix between ramekins, small bowls or serving glasses, then tap each one on a work surface to smooth them out and release any air pockets. Top with a few sprinkles to decorate, then chill for an hour or two, until fully set.

Nancy Birtwhistle is the author of The Green Gardening Handbook: Grow, Eat and Enjoy (One Boat, £14.99). To order a copy for £13.19, go to theguardianbookshop.com

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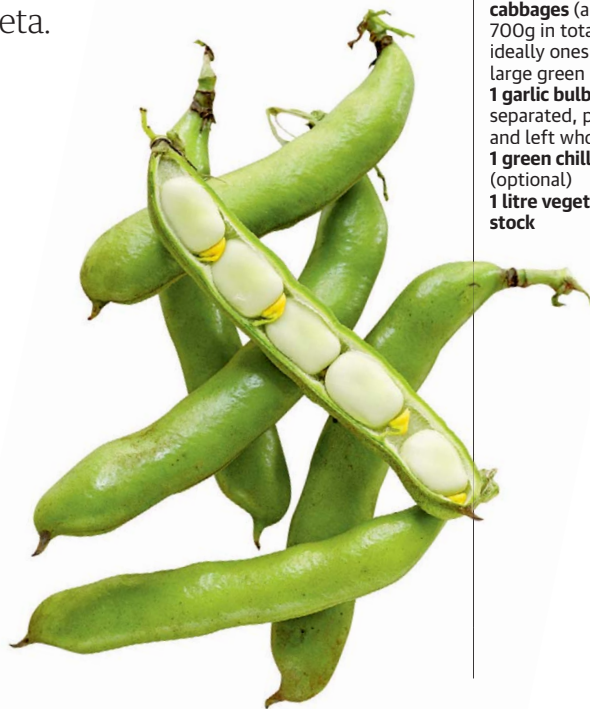


Stosie Madi

The new vegan



Stuffed vegetables, or *mehshé* in Arabic, are among my all-time favourite dishes, and cabbage-leaf rolls are especially hard to beat. As a child, I'd spend many happy hours helping my Lebanese *teta* (grandma) meticulously fill and roll cabbage or vine leaves with gorgeous spiced rice. She always made light work of huge panfuls of delicate, pretty little rolls. I've always preferred larger ones, so often got a ticking-off for not making them smaller and tighter, because larger rolls do not taste or look as good, and are apparently a sign of impatience. She knew me well, my *teta*.



Prep **15 min**
Cook **1 hr 30 min**
Serves **4**
Cost **About £2.20 a head**

Salt and black pepper
200g basmati rice
100g cooked fresh broad beans (frozen and defrosted will do, but at this time of year, it's a shame not to use fresh)
1 bunch spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped
50g toasted pine nuts
Zest and juice of 3 lemons
50g coriander, leaves and soft stems chopped
50g mint, leaves and soft stems chopped
2 tsp ground cumin
100g vegan butter, softened (not melted) - I use Flora
2 large spring cabbages (about 700g in total), ideally ones with large green leaves
1 garlic bulb, cloves separated, peeled and left whole
1 green chilli (optional)
1 litre vegetable stock

Stuffed spring cabbage leaves

These can be prepared up to 24 hours ahead and baked the day after; they freeze well, too.

Fill a large pan with a litre and a half of water, add a good 10g pinch of salt and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, wash the rice under cold running water until it runs clear. Drain the rice, drop it in the boiling water, cook for 10 minutes, then drain and rinse under cold water to cool it down and stop it cooking any further.

Put the beans, spring onions, pine nuts, lemon zest, coriander, mint and cumin in a large bowl, add the cooled rice and season generously. Stir in half the softened butter.

Fill the rice pot with another litre and a half of water and 10g salt, bring to a boil, then plunge in the whole spring cabbages and blanch for two minutes. Drain, refresh under cold water, then carefully cut off eight of the largest leaves and set aside. Finely chop the cabbage hearts and stalks, then stir into the rice mix.

Divide the rice mix into eight. Lay one of the reserved cabbage leaves on a flat surface and put one portion of the stuffing in the middle. Fold over the sides of the leaf, to cover the filling, then roll up the leaf away from you, to seal. Repeat with the remaining leaves and stuffing.

Heat the oven to 180C (160C fan)/ gas 4. Melt 50g butter in a small pan, then brush over the base of an ovenproof earthenware dish or oven tray. Add the peeled garlic, toss to coat in the fat, then arrange the cabbage rolls tightly next to each other in the dish. Drop in the whole chilli, if using, then pour the stock over the lot and bake for 40 minutes.

Serve hot or at room temperature, with good bread and/or a cucumber and mint salad.

Meera Sodha is away. Stosie Madi is chef/co-owner of The Parkers Arms in Newton-in-Bowland, Lancashire

Niki Segnit

Miso meets its match



Miso is a flavourful paste made from fermented soybeans. As a rule, the paler it is, the sweeter and lighter it will be. Some maintain that the complexity of its flavour makes it hard for westerners to describe, but I'd beg to differ. Miso is so flavourful that it's hard to stop describing it - you might detect barnyard, nutty, brown butter, caramelised, exotic fruit, olive, briny, boozy or chestnut notes. Miso is especially good with rustic flavours such as alliums, root vegetables and seaweed, but it has some less likely partners, too.



Carrot

The food writers John and Jan Belleme advise that sweet white miso can be used where you might otherwise use dairy, say in mashed potato, added to tofu to make a cream cheese-style dip, or stirred into a soup. No one would mistake carrot and miso soup for cream of carrot, but the miso does have a pleasingly enriching effect.

Chives

Scatter a loose mosaic of chopped chives over red miso soup and wait a few minutes - it will taste like onion soup laced with sherry.

Chocolate

The miso brownie was probably conceived in about 2014, and recipes generally call for a small amount of sweet white miso, which will barely scrape your salted chocolate receptors. Red miso, meanwhile, will deliver a pronounced fermented tang, which is pleasing and authentically brownie-like, because chocolate has many of the same flavour notes. In a ganache, miso and dark chocolate make for an extreme combination of sweet, salt and bitter that I like to spread on a digestive biscuit, which has its own roasted, malty flavours and a hint of salt; its crumbly texture also offsets the smooth ganache. Miso chocolate digestives are going to make my fortune.

Corn

Mix miso with butter, oil or mayo and spread on a corn cob. The cereal-vegetal, fermented funk of the miso hits first, before the sweetness reveals itself, with the salt teasing out the corn flavours that might otherwise be sweetened into undetectability. Or try miso ramen with a brood of bright kernels nesting on the noodles. The experience is no less enjoyable for being less intense.



Egg

Misozuke are foods pickled in miso, and are usually served as a snack or accompaniment. Carrots, radishes, kabocha squash and cauliflower are all popular. The technique is also used for meat and fish, but my favourite misozuke are boiled eggs, which taste a bit like they've been pickled in gravy. Boil four eggs for six to seven minutes, then let them cool before peeling. Loosen 200g miso with 50ml mirin, then sweeten with a tablespoon of sugar - you're after a consistency soft enough easily to coat the egg, so if it seems too thick, add a little water or sake. Pour into a freezer bag, followed by the eggs, and put in the fridge for half a day to two



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days, gently palpating the bag now and then. Tell your loved ones that this is to ensure the eggs are properly covered, although you and I know it's just because it feels nice.

Green beans

Miso lends a salty meatiness. For two to four servings, simmer 250g green beans until al dente, then refresh. Mix two teaspoons of red miso into two tablespoons of softened butter. Put two teaspoons of vegetable oil in a frying pan on a medium-high heat, add the beans and warm through for a few minutes. Add two tablespoons of finely chopped shallot and a crushed garlic clove, and cook for another minute. Add four

Miso shares a tanginess with chocolate (above), lends a salty meatiness to beans (below) and can even pep up a drab tomato (top right)



tablespoons of sake, simmer until reduced by half, then pour in four tablespoons of water and simmer until reduced by half again. Add the miso butter and warm gently until it has melted and coated the beans.

Honey

Used as a dressing or condiment, *neri miso* is a combination of miso, honey (or sugar) and water (or sake) that has been simmered for a short spell. Its extremes of salt and sweet are so balanced, it's as if your tastebuds have been put into a painful yet very soothing yoga position. Simmer five tablespoons of red or white miso, two tablespoons of honey and two tablespoons of sake or water in a small pan for two minutes, stirring until thick but pourable; you might also like to add two tablespoons of mirin. Make a batch and experiment with popular additions such as nuts, seeds, vegetables and seafood; peanuts and sesame are a much-loved combination in Japan.

Pecan nuts

Buttery is the most common flavour note for pecans, though it reveals itself late in the chewing. Some pecans, however, have more of a plant-dairy quality, like warm, slightly sweetened soy milk, which makes miso a natural pairing. The



combination of sweet white miso and pecan is cake-like, whereas red miso and pecan recalls stone fruit.

Tomato

Miso has the boldness and richness of balsamic vinegar, and, like balsamic, its pronounced sweet-sourness can redeem average tomatoes. And let's face it, on average, tomatoes *are* average. Dissolve a heaped tablespoon of red miso in two tablespoons of rice vinegar with a pinch of salt, then stir in three tablespoons of rapeseed oil. Slice the tomatoes, toss them in the dressing, then leave them for a good few hours to soak it all up.

Yoghurt

"Miso-tahini is a vegetarian classic," writes fermentation expert Sandor Katz, "but miso-peanut butter and miso-yoghurt combinations are just as delicious." Fattiness is the key, he says, because it acts as the carrier for miso's "dense, salty flavour". Katz stipulates four parts fatty ingredient to one part miso, with a bit of sourness added for balance - use sauerkraut or kimchi liquor. Even if you don't like them, you can at least bore on for hours about gut bacteria. *This is an edited extract from The Flavour Thesaurus: More Flavours, by Niki Segnit (Bloomsbury, £20). To order a copy for £17.60, go to guardianbookshop.com*



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Fiona Beckett

Tipples for nibbles

I was in Greece the other week for what I appreciate few of you would regard as work, and every winery we visited offered some kind of food at their tastings - usually a selection of cheeses, a few olives, assorted dips and spreads, and addictive, sesame-coated breadsticks. It's much the same in Spain, but rare in the UK, where you'd be lucky to get so much as a water biscuit at a professional wine tasting. The theory seems to be that food somehow detracts from your ability to assess a wine, but why taste it in isolation when almost every reader will probably drink it with food?

Even if you're not having a full meal, it's nice to sit down in the evening with a glass and a snack of some kind. The Greeks and Lebanese have their meze/mezze, Spain has

its tapas and Venetians their *cicchetti*, while even the French generally run to a few slices of saucisson and a cornichon or two. Wine is just so much nicer with a nibble, after all.

While you obviously don't want to stress too much about finding the perfect match, the fact is that some wines work better than others with certain foods. Anchovies, for example, are much better with a fino or manzanilla or crisp white than with a full-bodied red. Similarly, a juicy red tends to be more enjoyable than a glass of rosé with a slice of pizza. Anything fried and crisp, even a piece of KFC, is brilliant with sparkling wine, just as it is with beer. (I've recommended a really nice crémant in today's pick, but given that it's Eurovision finals weekend, you might want to splash out on a bottle of Kylie prosecco, which generally seems to sell for at least a couple of quid more than the competition. The power of celebrity, eh?)

Cheese is the interesting one in the snacks context. Everyone automatically thinks of red to go with a cheeseboard, but white actually works just as well, particularly in summer, when you might be eating lighter cheeses. Goat's cheese, for example, is a natural soulmate for sauvignon blanc, as you'll probably know already if you've ever holidayed in the Loire, but English dry whites such as bacchus and pale, Provençal rosés are great with it, too. I generally go for a white with a dip such as whipped feta (after my Greece trip, I'm a bit obsessed with the stuff) or my not-so-secret vice, namely Boursin and crackers. An aromatic white works much better than a red with stinky, washed-rind cheeses such as epoisses, too, while a sweet wine such as a sauternes is delicious with a blue. You go for it!

Wines that go well with a snack

Williams & Humbert Alegria Manzanilla £5.75 (half-bottle) Waitrose, 15%. Super-dry and saline. Try chilled with fishy tapas



Simmonet-Febvre Crémant de Bourgogne £15 Tesco, 12%. A light, fresh sparkling wine. Goes with fried chicken



The Society's Greek White £8.95 The Wine Society, 12.5%. Irresistibly moreish Greek white to sip with your tarama



Vinos Barco Mencía Mencíaño 2021 £8.99 (on mix-six) Majestic, 12.5%. An easy, breezy, juicy red. Great with pizza



The good mixer

Yuzuito

25ml yuzu sake - we use Akashi-Tai Ginjo Yuzushu
35ml white rum - we use Havana Club Anejo Blanco
12½ml simple sugar syrup (homemade or bought in; they work the same)
25ml fresh lemon juice
Soda water, to top
Lemon slices, to garnish

While thinking about how to devise a refreshing summer cocktail, I took as a starting point our head chef Daniel McGeorge's menu, which draws a huge amount of inspiration from Japanese cuisine, but is all sourced locally and seasonally. This twist on the classic mojito was the result. The yuzu gives it a lovely, citrus kick that is smoothed by the syrup and soda. If you like, make a slightly tarter drink by replacing the yuzu sake with 12½ml bottled yuzu juice and 12½ml extra white rum.

Put the yuzu sake (or yuzu juice), rum, sugar syrup and lemon juice in a shaker filled with ice, shake hard, then strain into a highball glass or similar filled with fresh ice. Top with soda water to taste, garnish with a slice or two of lemon, and serve. *Craig Macfarlane, bar and restaurant manager, Rothay Manor, Ambleside, Cumbria*



Benamina Ebuehi

The sweet spot



If I'm after a quick, make-ahead dessert that works for a crowd, nine times out of 10 I'll go for a no-bake cheesecake, because it's so easy to put together and hard to mess up; it's just a case of mixing and chilling. This one isn't sickly-sweet and is brightened with the classic summery combination of lemon and elderflower. Build it in a square tin to make it go further, though it works just as well in a round tin.

No-bake lemon and elderflower cheesecake



Prep	10 min
Cook	20 min
Chill	6 hr+
Serves	9-12
Cost	About 70p a head

For the base
175g shortbread
Zest of 1 lemon
100g unsalted butter, melted

For the filling
560g cream cheese
90g icing sugar
1½ tbsp lemon juice
3 tbsp elderflower cordial
250ml double cream
1 tbsp lemon curd

To top
150ml double cream
2 tbsp lemon curd
50g white chocolate shavings

Line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper (if you're using a tin without a loose bottom, leave enough overhang to help you lift out the cheesecake later).

Blitz the biscuits and lemon zest in a food processor until fine, then pour in the melted butter and give everything a quick pulse to combine. Tip into the lined tin, press it down firmly and evenly, then chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling. Put the cream cheese and icing sugar in a bowl, whisk until smooth, then pour in the lemon juice and cordial, and stir to combine.

In a separate bowl, lightly whip the double cream - you want it to thicken only a little, so stop just before you get to soft peaks. Fold this into the cream cheese mixture, then stir in the lemon curd. Spoon on top of the chilled and set biscuit base, smooth the top and chill in the fridge for about six hours, and ideally overnight.

Lightly whip the remaining cream to soft peaks, then spoon dollops on top of the cheesecake. Make a small dip in each blob of cream with the back of a teaspoon, fill with a little lemon curd, top with shaved white chocolate, then slice into portions.



Felicity Cloake

Masterclass: ceviche



The pleasures of Latin American cuisine are still far too little known in the UK. Ceviche, which is popular from Panama to Peru, where it's the official national dish, is a good place to start for fish-lovers, because it's quick and easy to make, yet far more than the sum of its few parts. An ideal - and very healthy - starter or light lunch.



GF DF

Prep **10 min**
 Marinate **10 min**
 Serves **2**
 Cost **About £4 a head**

½ red onion, trimmed and peeled
250g sustainably sourced sea bass or sea bream fillets, skinned and boned (see step 2)
½ tsp fine salt, plus extra to season
Juice of 4 limes
Juice of ½ orange
1 red chilli, mild or hot as you prefer, or 1 tsp aji amarillo paste (optional)
1 small bunch coriander, roughly chopped

1 Chop and soak the onion

Finely chop the onion (or use a shallot instead or, at a pinch, a yellow or spring onion, though those last two lack the sweetness that makes red onion the best choice). Put in a bowl of iced water, and leave to soak for five minutes while you prepare the fish - the onion will soften in flavour so it won't overpower the delicate seafood.

2 A word on the fish

The fish in ceviche is not cooked, but marinated in acidic ingredients that denature the proteins in much the same way that heat would. This gives it a dryer, firmer texture, so it's important to choose a species that's robust enough to stand up to such treatment. I find a firm-fleshed white fish such as sea bass or bream works best.



4 Cut a fillet of firm white fish into cubes, then salt and mix with soaked diced red onion and citrus juice and zest



6 Add some finely chopped chilli to the ceviche mixture, then leave it all to macerate for about 10 minutes



3 Alternative seafood

That said, even in ceviche's home region, no single species is particularly favoured - inland, freshwater fish such as trout or piranha might be used, while at the coast, tilapia, octopus or shellfish such as clams, prawns and even barnacles are common - so play around as you fancy, but adjust the marinating time to suit both the seafood you use and your own tastes.

4 Dice the fish evenly

Cut whatever fish you're using into roughly 1½-2cm chunks - if they're too wildly different in size, the fish will "cook" at different rates. You could slice it very thinly for a more elegant, restaurant-style presentation, but I find this eliminates the pleasing contrast between the soft middle and the "cooked" exterior, so I prefer to dice it.

5 Salt the fish, prep the citrus

Put the fish in a medium bowl with half a teaspoon of salt, then rub it in gently - I find it easiest to do this with my hands. Leave it to sit for a minute while you prepare the citrus. Juice the limes and orange (or use limes alone, or seville oranges, when in season) directly into the fish bowl, and add a little of their grated zest, if you like, though don't go overboard.

6 Add the chilli

Finely shred the chilli, if using, removing the seeds and pith if you're averse to heat, then stir this into the fish bowl, or dollop the paste on top and toss to combine. (Aji amarillo is a hot yet fruity chilli that's hard to find in the UK, though you can buy it powdered or as a ready-made paste online.)

7 Macerate for 10 minutes

Leave the fish to sit for about 10 minutes - traditionally, the marination time was several hours, to allow the acid to penetrate the fish properly, "cooking" it all the way through, but in the past few decades, the trend has been for a shorter soak, so the centre of the fish remains raw. Experiment to see what suits your taste.

8 Finishing touches

Meanwhile, roughly chop the coriander (or parsley, if you prefer). Once the ceviche is sufficiently marinated to your liking, check the seasoning, and adjust as necessary (a little more salt, perhaps, or orange juice for sweetness). Stir in the coriander, then divide the fish and its marinade between two bowls and serve immediately.

9 Serving suggestions

It's delicious on its own, but you can bulk ceviche out by serving it with a sprinkling of giant corn kernels, some plantain chips (make your own or buy one of the Caribbean brands) or wedges of steamed, boiled or baked sweet potato. It's also pretty good on tacos or with unseasoned tortilla chips, Central American-style. *The Guardian aims to publish recipes for fish rated as sustainable by the Marine Conservation Society's Good Fish Guide.*

7 When the fish has marinated to suit your taste - it's best if the centre is still a little raw - adjust the seasoning



8 Stir chopped coriander into the ceviche and taste again - if it needs it, add a little orange juice for sweetness

9 Serve the ceviche in tacos, or with plantain, sweetcorn, sweet potato wedges and/or tortilla chips on the side



Kitchen aide

What can I do with green peppers?

Supermarket packs of peppers always have a green one - nasty, bitter things that I use only in soup. What else can I do with them?

Mel, Evesham, Worcestershire

This is all too familiar to Luis Gonzalez-Castro, founder of London-based Cuban supper club *Cocina Cuca*, who “doesn’t love their raw, bitter flavour, either”. That said, green peppers have always featured in his family’s cooking, so he has “learned to appreciate them” - and you can, too, Mel! The road to recovery might start with *aji rellenado*, a favourite of Gonzalez-Castro’s father: “Cut the tops off a few peppers, gently coat in olive oil, then fill with picadillo [a mix of mince, herbs, raisins and olives].” Into the oven they go and, “oddly, the results are astounding. The peppers soften and, together with the sweetness of the raisins and saltiness of the olives, the bitterness evaporates.”

Another who suggests that Mel should, er, get stuffed is Maunika Gowardhan, author of *Tandoori Home Cooking*: “My mother would do this with spicy, crushed potatoes, and it’s so good,” she says. First heat some oil in a pan, “stir in asafoetida, cumin seeds, green chillies, ground coriander, chilli powder, and turmeric, then add [boiled and] crushed potatoes and season.” You’ll also want some mango powder “for tang” and chopped coriander, before piling the lot into halved green peppers brushed with oil and grilling them. “They still have some bite when you cut into them, but you get this lovely, charred flavour.”

Skewers are another contender to cure a green pepper plight. These, Gowardhan suggests, could be threaded with *murgh malai tikka* (for which chicken is marinated in garlic, ginger, chilli, malt vinegar and yoghurt) or paneer (“infused with saffron, cardamom and fennel”)

alongside sliced green peppers: “They help secure the meat or paneer, while adding more flavour.”

Eggs are another good shout: “An omelette is a very good way to use green peppers,” says restaurateur and *Feast* contributor José Pizarro. “Caramelize onions in olive oil, then stir in [sliced] potatoes and peppers, add plenty of salt and pepper, and fry.” Tip in beaten eggs and cook until they just start to set. Flip, cook on the other side for a few minutes more, and you won’t notice any bitterness, Pizarro says reassuringly.

Then there’s that perennial weeknight saviour, the stir-fry. “If you’re using soy and honey to get a sweet-savoury mix, green peppers make a lovely addition,” says Paul Ainsworth, chef-owner of The Ainsworth Collection in Cornwall. Otherwise, throw caution to the wind and lean into the bitterness: “They add flavour and body to the right dishes because of their slight bitterness - they’re great in a green tomato chutney, for instance.”

Miguel Barclay, author of the *One Pound Meals* series, deploys covert tactics. “Hide them,” he says, with sauces being an obvious vehicle: “In Mexican salsas, say, or put softened green pepper in chimichurri or salsa verde - they add a beautiful, earthy tone, and the salsa hides the bitter notes that so many people hate.”

Anna Berrill

Got a culinary dilemma?

Email feast@theguardian.com



Waste not ...

Over-ripe berries

Tom Hunt

Save squishy berries from the food-waste bin by making today’s streusel muffins, based on the classic German blueberry *kuchen*, which feature a cake base moistened with berries, all covered in a crunchy, crumble-style topping. I’ve boosted the flavour and fortified the mix by using whole spelt and rye flours with rapadura sugar, though regular wheat flour and sugar will work as nicely. As for the fruit, even a small handful of over-ripe berries will do.

Berry streusel muffins

To make the topping, combine 20g wholemeal flour (I used rye) with 25g unrefined brown sugar (I used rapadura), 10g rolled oats, 30g optional chopped nuts, a pinch of sea salt and an optional pinch of freshly grated nutmeg (or a quarter-teaspoon of cardamom or/and cinnamon). Mix in 30g cold butter cut into pea-sized cubes, then set aside.

To make the base, in a large bowl mix 180g wholemeal flour (I used spelt; rye is too heavy), one and half teaspoons of baking powder, 90g unrefined brown sugar (again, I used rapadura), the grated zest of half an organic unwaxed lemon and a quarter-teaspoon of sea salt. Pour in 100ml whole milk, 40g softened butter, a large egg and a teaspoon of vanilla extract, and beat until smooth.

Grease and line a deep, six-hole muffin tray (or an eight- or 12-hole cupcake tin), divide the batter between the moulds and top with 125g over-ripe berries. Cover with a spoonful of the streusel mix, then bake in a 200C (180C fan)/gas 6 oven for 30 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.

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Rachel Roddy

Tales from an Italian kitchen



Spaghetti with asparagus, butter and lemon

A 10cm x 10cm wooden square with a large hole crossed with wire strings: it could be a tiny harp if it didn't also have another set of 12 strings that cross the first, forming a mesh. Even so, it can be strummed with a long nail, the basic strum audible, if you get in close. Its actual purpose is for slicing puntarelle, the inner tubes of a variety of chicory called *cicoria di catalogna* or *cicoria asparago* (asparagus chicory). A late winter-to-early spring vegetable, succulent puntarelle, with its asparagus-like tips, or *punte*, is a popular salad in Lazio, so the basic, nifty and cheap square cutters (*tagliapuntarelle*) are common and easy to come by in hardware stores. And much as puntarelle migrates and thrives in soil all over the place, so do the cutters. Of course, you don't need a cutter; a knife works just as well, only more slowly.

I also know several people who have made themselves a tagliapuntarelle, inspired by the larger cutters you sometimes see on market stalls: wooden boxes or frames strung with wire. Big or small, it is a fantastically satisfying tool, the crisp tubes of chicory cutting like butter into thin strips, or, if you want to keep the tips intact, puntarelle octopi! And it isn't only for puntarelle: celery, courgettes and red pepper work on this tool, too; large vegetables turned into fat strings in two musical seconds.

Last week, while I know I can't be the first to have done so, I did feel like a genius when I pushed asparagus through the mesh. I took off the tips first, so as not to offend them, but later wondered if they could go through, too. Asparagus stems are even more satisfying than puntarelle, because they sail



through the wires and splay out like straight tentacles more or less the same proportions as spaghetti. Which is why, if the strips are wilted down in oil and given plenty of butter and lemon zest, they pair so well with spaghetti, for what is a two-tone joy and maybe my favourite recipe so far this year.

Trim the ends off a large bunch of asparagus, either by snapping off the woody ends or paring away the woody parts with a peeler. Cut off the tips, then, either with a knife or a puntarelle cutter, cut the spears

String theory: Rachel Roddy's spaghetti entwined with strips of asparagus, butter and lemon

lengthways into thin strings as close in size to spaghetti as possible. Trim three or four spring onions, then slice the bulbs into arcs and the green parts into short lengths.

You want to coordinate the cooking so that the vegetables (which take eight to 10 minutes to soften) are ready at the same time as 450g spaghetti (which, depending on the brand, can take anything from seven to 11 minutes), so throw the pasta into salted boiling water accordingly. In a large frying pan on a medium-low heat, warm four tablespoons of olive oil, soften the onion for a minute, then add the asparagus strips and tips and a pinch of salt, and cook, stirring, until they wilt; carry over a ladleful of the pasta cooking water, all cloudy with starch, to help it along - by the end of the cooking, the asparagus should be soft with just a little green juice. Stir 40g butter, two tablespoons lemon juice and the finely grated zest of an unwaxed lemon into the asparagus pan, then drain the pasta (or lift it directly into the asparagus mix) and toss and swish vigorously for a minute, so everything combines. Serve immediately, with grated parmesan for those who want it.

As always, the final stirring is crucial. It's when the pasta, asparagus, starch, fat and pan juices combine and everything comes together, so don't be afraid to swish the pan and stir vigorously. I would also like to apologise vigorously for going on about a kitchen gadget that most people won't have. Which is why this column is also an advert for the various makers of this good-value object and, more importantly, calls to anyone capable of stringing wire or adapting instruments. I am also interested in commissioning a larger model, for both oversized courgettes and strumming practice.

Grace Dent

'It refuses to be up itself in any way'



PHOTOGRAPHS: ELAINE LIVINGSTONE/THE GUARDIAN



This week's restaurant has been on my to-do list for about three years now, not least because it sounded so intriguing. Home in Dumfries has a tasting menu with puzzling dish names such as "messy mozzarella", "steak and lasagne" and "cheese and potato", which read as if a child had written out the courses for a pretend dinner party, though online reviews suggest the place is actually rather fancy, as well as much loved.

Still, it got sidelined in my rush to the shiny, big-city openings of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen or, well, anywhere but Dumfries. This town of 30,000 is not terribly far from England, so it tends to fly under

the radar for both tourists and fellow Scots, who perhaps feel it's "not Scottish enough", which is flagrant nonsense. Circa 1605, James I of England and VI of Scotland, ever the optimist, decreed that the vast border area of Cumberland, Dumfriesshire, Selkirkshire and Northumberland should be called the Middle Shires. This new, inclusive, touchy-feely name would reflect the cosy unity he planned to usher in during the 17th century. Scotland? England? Who cares? Lines on maps don't matter - we can all come together as one! The big, soft sod.

Four hundred years on, and Dumfries is still very much in

Home

50 White Sands, Dumfries, 07896 355074. Open Thurs & Fri only, 5-10pm. Seven-course tasting menu only, £45 a head, plus drinks & service

Scotland; the white saltire waves from flagpoles, the accent is gorgeously impenetrable for soft southerners and, when you eat at Home, they begin by giving you a map of all the local farms that supply them. The Ethical Dairy in Gatehouse of Fleet is celebrated alongside Kedar mozzarella from Mouswald, and there are Nith Valley eggs from Gatelawbridge and veg from Loch Arthur in nearby Beeswing. This is an unashamed celebration of Scotland, of its produce and the place that Home's owners, Louisa and Thomas Thorne, call home.

It is also defiantly unswaggering. To book, you call Louisa's mobile. There's no Resy or Open Table to contend with, no fancy website full of loquacious piffle. The name "Home" itself makes it almost impossible to find on Google, and the opening hours are so limited - Thursday and Fridays only from 5pm to 10pm - that you wonder if Home believes it's a real restaurant at all. Yet, once you've found it and been taken to your table while Belle and Sebastian play in the background, it all makes complete sense and is incredibly likable.



Home once lived above a pub, but has now moved into a rather large industrial space titivated only by a few fairy lights, some wall hangings, a big, warm welcome and some very good hummus and focaccia. I'd take that over snootiness, chandeliers and caviar any time. Home is indeed, as so many had told me, a restaurant built on pure heart, serving a menu that's at times quite fancy, but still has an utter dearth of pretension, and house pinot grigio at £3.50 a glass. You could blow up to £24 on a bottle of carmenere, but that's where the list peaks (although someone has drawn a lovely mermaid on the single-sheet paper menu).

Then a perfect smoked haddock scotch egg (pictured top) arrives, crisp outside and runny-centred, on an emerald velouté of wild garlic, followed by that beguiling "messy mozzarella", which turns out to be the polar opposite of slapdash. Rather, it's a gloriously executed plate of the innards of a fresh, handmade mozzarella with basil and heritage tomato. "Cheese and potato", meanwhile, turns out to be a classy dish of baby potatoes in an emulsion of something cheddary. Steak and lasagne is exactly what it

says it is, albeit designed to complement each other, with the steak on the rare side and the lasagne fried yet still oozing with bechamel - a nigh-impossible task that I've seen many chefs mess up. Perhaps Home is so incredibly Scottish because it refuses to be up itself in any way, including the doodle-covered menu and the Haribo-style sweets that turn up with the handwritten bill at the end.

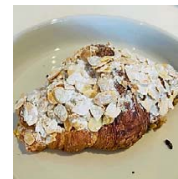
When it comes to the cooking, however, it's probably one of the best restaurants within 100 miles or more. They'll hate me for saying so, though, because they'll perhaps feel as if they now ought to open on Saturdays, serving their glorious squab pigeon on confit potatoes or the light, sweet, deliriously good honey panna cotta in a jar with a honeycomb-style tuile on top (far left).

"Who is cooking?" I asked Louisa as we settled up. "My husband," she said. "He's very good," I said. "Oh, I won't be telling him," she smiled, handing me my sweeties to take home. "It will only go to his head." This might be the most Scottish thing I've ever heard. Home, never change, please. You are authentically, refreshingly perfect.

Instafeed



Wildly addictive, not overly fiery chilli oil from Poon's. I've been bulk-buying the stuff



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