

THE COUNTRY RANGE GROUP MAGAZINE FOR CATERERS
OCTOBER 2024

Stir it up



Decadent Desserts

ELEVATING CHRISTMAS WITH
INDULGENT DESSERTS



KEN HOM

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
OF CHINESE COOKERY

Ingredients

Crisp days and cosy nights bring with them so many opportunities to delight diners young and old and we have all the menu inspiration you need this autumn.

Our Category Focus and Melting Pot features both draw on expert advice to help you to plan for the festive season which is just around the corner. Before that though, we have the ever-popular Halloween - check out New from Country Range for some spookily good ideas. And don't miss the legendary Ken Hom who celebrates 40 years in the industry this year.

If you would like to get involved in a feature or if you have any feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at editor@stirupmagazine.co.uk

The Stir it up team



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As part of our environmental policy this magazine is printed using vegetable oil based ink and is produced to high environmental standards, including ISO14001 and FSC® certification. It is also fully carbon balanced.



OUR EDITORIAL PARTNERS...



ALLERGEN REFERENCES

VG - Vegan V - Vegetarian



10



40

Fresh FROM THE KITCHEN

Italian food continues to be a staple on menus, from classic comfort food to authentic trattoria-style dishes, regional pizza and pasta, all the way through to global twists and innovative desserts. We take a look at the very latest trends in this popular crowd-pleasing cuisine.

RUSTIC – Fuss free, ingredient-led dishes remain at the forefront of Italian cuisine on menus. Think Bistecca alla Fiorentina, prosciutto sliced to order, bruschetta, panzanella salad and homemade focaccia.

REGIONAL – As diners continue to love all things Italian, their knowledge grows, with more interest in regional specialities and variations, especially when it comes to pizza mari and pasta. Examples include Neopolitan pizza frita, Roman pinsa and Sicilian pasta alla norma.

COMFORT – There is nothing quite as comforting as a plate full of delicious fried carbs. Try arancini, gnocco fritto (puffed, fried dough, ideally stuffed with mortadella!), and panzerotti (calzone style turnovers).

AMERICAN-ITALIAN – Going from strength to strength is the contemporary, American take on Italian cuisine, such as chicken parmo, vodka sauce and '100 layer' lasagne. All washed down with a Campari spritz!

DESSERT – Traditional Italian desserts such as tiramisu, cannoli, panna cotta and affogato are all highly on trend at the moment, but as people delve deeper into this cuisine, the demand is increasing for lesser-known delights such as pastiera (ricotta tart), maritozzi (cream filled brioche buns) and bombolini (dough nuts).



Multi-Layered Lasagne



Ricotta and Pistachio Cannoli

From thefoodpeople trends report 2024.

thefoodpeople.
inform | inspire | realise potential



Readers' lives

NAME: Holly Charnock

BORN AND RAISED: Formby, Liverpool

JOB TITLE: Cook in Charge for Sefton Council

PLACE OF WORK: Woodlands Primary School, Formby

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY?

20 years, I started in the pub industry at 18 and then moved over to schools 10 years ago.

WHICH CHEF DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST AND WHY?

Asma Khan. She's an inspiration. Not only with her cooking but also as an amazing role model for girls to look up to. It's an aim of mine to eat in her restaurant, Darjeeling Express.

WHAT'S YOUR TIP TO CUT WASTAGE IN THE KITCHEN?

Our kitchen is now zero waste. We have recently introduced a new local company who take all our food waste and turn it into fuel.

DEAD OR ALIVE – WHICH THREE PEOPLE WOULD YOU LIKE TO COOK FOR THE MOST?

I love this question! The first would be my mother-in-law, Viv. She sadly passed away a few years ago, but she was the person to start me off in school meals. I'd love to share my journey with her as I know she'd be so proud of where it's taken me. Second would be Elton John as he would have great stories and could entertain us! The third would be Gordon Ramsey, as maybe he'd return the favour and offer to cook for me.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE DISH TO COOK?

Probably curries, they have a great depth of flavour and I love teaching the kids that lots of spices doesn't necessarily mean spicy!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY RANGE PRODUCT AND WHY?

The bouillon powders. I think they offer a great base to a variety of meals.

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Cooks CALENDAR

October



1ST OCTOBER - INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY
Add a flavoursome special to your coffee menu like this salted caramel iced latte using MONIN syrups.

4TH OCTOBER - NATIONAL TACO DAY
This prawn taco recipe using Country Range Ranch Dressing is a great addition to your small plates menu.

25TH OCTOBER - WORLD PASTA DAY
This recipe for creamy leek and mushroom tagliatelle from MAGGI® is a crowd pleaser for all ages.

31ST OCTOBER - HALLOWEEN
Have some spooky fun creating these monster bites using HARVEST HOME® Corn Flakes.



November

1ST NOVEMBER - WORLD VEGAN DAY
Create this delicious BBQ burger using the Garden Gourmet® Sensational™ Vegan Burger.

3RD NOVEMBER - WORLD SANDWICH DAY
Sandwiches can be a challenge when catering for people with dysphagia. Head to the Country Range website for a guide to making these IDDSI Level 4 chicken salad sandwiches.

5TH NOVEMBER - BONFIRE NIGHT
Everybody loves a toffee apple on Bonfire Night. Opies add warming ginger to take them to the next level in this recipe.

11TH - 15TH NOVEMBER - NATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS WEEK
The tuna melt is a firm favourite on school menus. Add extra flavour (and veggies!) to it with this Italian twist.



Thanks to Monin, Maggi®, Harvest Home®, Garden Gourmet®, Opies And Country Range for their recipes.

Serve up smiles!

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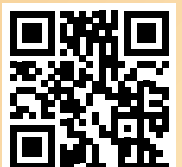
Dr. Oetker Baking	Size
Baking Powder	500g
Cocoa Powder	1kg
Vanilla Flavouring	500ml
Natural Vanilla Extract	95ml
Ready to Roll Marzipan	1kg
Soft Fondant Icing	1kg
Billionaire Chocolate Chips Mix	750g



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CUSTOMER PROFILE

ALL CLAAS AS BLITZ CATERING CONTINUES TO SOAR

Blitz Catering, UK

Celebrating 35 years in business next year, Blitz Catering is run by former RAF chef David Evans, whose father Frank set up the business on the 1st April 1990. Following nine years in the armed forces travelling the world, honing his skills and expanding his food horizons, David became his dad's wingman at Blitz before taking control when he retired in 2014.

With a small team including two chefs and two front-of-house personnel, Blitz Catering serve

the hard-working and hungry team at Claas UK. Founded in 1913, Claas is one of the world's leading companies in agricultural engineering and provide tractors, combine harvesters, loaders and forage harvesters, as well as digital solutions to the agricultural sector.

With over 120 employees based on site plus visiting suppliers, customers and guests daily, the days fly by for the Blitz Catering team who serve as many as 160 covers each day.

"There is no such thing as a quiet day here and no one day is ever the same. After running the catering

here for over 30 years, it's something the business has plenty of experience in and actually something we all thrive on. Our seasonal menu changes weekly and we source everything locally so a lot of creativity and care goes into the dishes," says David.

"I would describe it as great home-cooked food that you

"Nothing beats Country Range in my opinion. I'm proud to have used the brand for decades because the store cupboard ingredients offer fantastic flavour, consistency and value."

wouldn't always have time to cook yourself but we also have a salad bar, freshly made sandwiches and monthly specials. We want our guests to be excited by the lunch experience so everything is carefully cooked and produced from scratch."

"In addition to the regular menus and services in the restaurant, there is always plenty happening at Claas UK that requires some creative food solutions. It could be special breakfast conferences, snacks and nibbles for meetings and business lunches, grab and go options, canapés or even five-course menus for award nights. Our annual award dinners in particular, which recognise Claas UK team members, enable us to go big and offer a fine dining experience. Last year we served 120 fillet steaks."

A Country Range customer for over 30 years, David explains just why he has always kept faith in the brand; "When it comes to

price and quality nothing beats Country Range in my opinion. I'm proud to have used the brand for decades because the store cupboard ingredients such as seasonings, herbs, flour, pasta and sauces offer fantastic flavour, consistency and value. The salad dressings are a personal favourite of mine and very popular on our salad bar."

Still passionate about the armed forces, David works as an RAF cadet instructor in his spare time and is a strong advocate for chefs to travel the world and learn about the many different languages of food. "I would tell any young chef to travel and see the world. It just opens your eyes to so many new cultures, experiences, people, cuisines and ingredients," he says. "There is nothing better than seeing, learning or trying something new and then taking it back to the kitchen to put your own stamp on it."



Above (left to right)

King prawn linguine with garlic, lemon, parsley

A VIP buffet selection

Lamb Rump with slow cooked shoulder, asparagus, shallots & potato terrine



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IN SEASON: Chestnuts



Popular over the festive season, chestnuts are a versatile and tasty store cupboard ingredient, available fresh, ground, dried, puréed or vacuum packed. Dried chestnuts can be added to stews or soups, while puréed chestnut (available sweetened and unsweetened) can be used in various dishes.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Leftover cooked chestnuts can be added to recipes to give extra flavour such as stuffing, stews and soups. They can bring a caramelised nutty flavour to sprouts, Christmas puddings and desserts. Add chopped chestnuts to a classic risotto for added texture or make a purée from leftovers.

For recipes visit:

<https://www.justspices.co.uk>

<http://www.morewithmushrooms.co.uk>

<https://www.clearspring.co.uk>

<http://www.tropicalsunfoods.com>

<https://georgieeats.co.uk/mushroom-wellington>

1/ CHESTNUT SOUP

The sweet and nutty flavour of chestnuts can enhance many Autumnal dishes such as creamy chestnut soup. The team at Just Spices recommend chopping the chestnuts before adding them to a pan with onions and sautéing for a few minutes before adding vegetable stock. Add cream just before blending.



2/ VEGAN MUSHROOM WELLINGTON WITH CHESTNUTS

Food blogger Georgie Eats uses chopped chestnuts in her recipe for vegan mushroom wellington. They are added to mushrooms, onions, roasted squash and herbs to make a delicious filling for this pastry showstopper. When cut open, the chestnuts are clearly visible in the filling.

3/ PASTA PAIRING

Chestnuts make the perfect accompaniment to pasta and work well with other ingredients such as mushrooms. The Mushroom Bureau recommend pairing tagliatelle with mushrooms, chestnuts and chives, roasting the ingredients with capers and garlic to enhance the flavour of the sauce.



4/ A JAPANESE TWIST

Japanese chef Atsuko Ikeda has used chestnuts in a traditional recipe for Kuri Gohan. In Japan, this dish is described as a type of takigohan, where rice is cooked with seasonal vegetables. The chestnuts are boiled, the skins removed and roasted lightly, which makes the inner skins easier to remove.

5/ SWEET POTATO & CHESTNUT CHRISTMAS WREATH

What could be more festive than a pastry wreath filled with chestnuts and dipped in cranberry sauce? Tropical Sunfoods recommend making the filling for the puff pastry wreath with cooked chestnuts, sweet potato, onion, garlic and mushrooms. Once the filling has been made, it is spread over the pastry strip, which is rolled and shaped into a circle.



Also In Season



Cranberry



Guinea fowl



Grouse



Aubergine



Kale

WINTER *is Coming*

With the last rays and days of summer behind us, winter is coming so it's time to put the finishing touches to your autumn menu and ensure planning for the festive season is well and truly under way. To provide some added glitz to this year's proceedings, here is a preview of our new four-strong selection of frozen super sweets to pave the way to success this season.



SIGNATURE BY COUNTRY RANGE SALTED CARAMEL AND CHOCOLATE TART

Rich salted caramel topped with ganache in an all butter pastry case, finished with a mirror glaze and generously topped with Belgian chocolate pieces.

Signature
by Country Range



COUNTRY RANGE FRUITS OF THE FOREST CAKE

Three layers of forest fruit-filled marbled sponge, separated with a fruit and buttercream filling and finished with a decorative buttercream coating and dark chocolate shards.

COUNTRY RANGE BANOFFEE CAKE

Two banana infused sponges held together by a toffee buttercream and rich toffee sauce, finished with a banoffee coating, toffee drizzle and dried banana pieces.

COUNTRY RANGE MULLED BERRY TORTE

A silky vanilla sponge topped with mulled berry gel and white chocolate truffle ganache before being sprinkled with mixed berries and a dusting of sweet snow.

Mulled Berry Torte



Fruits of the Forest Cake



COUNTRY RANGE CRANBERRY AND WHITE CHOCOLATE COOKIE PUCKS

We're delighted to add to our popular Cookie Pucks range with this seasonal flavour, packed with chunky white chocolate pieces and tangy cranberries.

Changing of the Seasons



While it is sad to see summer end, a new season means new produce so there is plenty for chefs to look forward to. Apples, celeriac, beetroot, cabbage, carrots, mushrooms, pumpkins and squash are all in top form and perfect for seasonal stews, soups and low-and-slow classics.

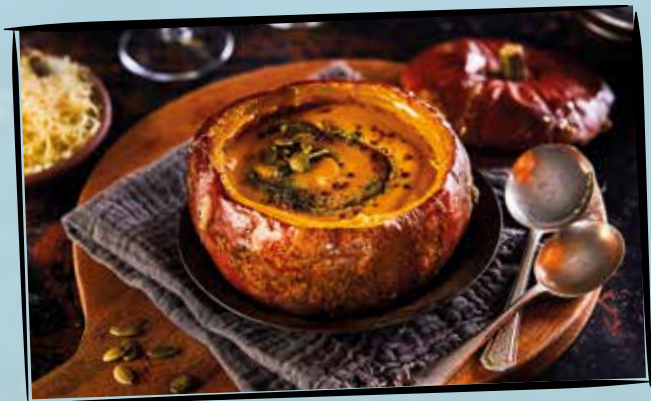
HALLOWEEN STUFFED PEPPERS

Pepper your Halloween menu with creativity this October with these stupendously stuffed roasted pepper pots. Great for using up leftovers or for a vegan masterpiece, we stuffed ours with rice, beans and vegetables.



"THE COUNTRY RANGE PORTFOLIO IS VITAL TO OUR MENU. THE SEASONINGS, HERBS, SPICES AND SAUCES ARE TOP QUALITY AND FANTASTIC VALUE."

CARON MEXOME, ST LAWRENCE CAFÉ, IPSWICH



CHEESY STUFFED SQUASH RECIPE

With a wide array of stunning squash and pumpkins available, try this Cheesy Stuffed Squash recipe for a dish to satisfyingly stun the senses.

Scan here to see all of the recipes featured on this page



Bake Share Win

The search is on for the Halloween Cookie Monster of the Year. For your chance to win a case of our incredible Country Range Cookie Pucks, we want to see your spookiest creations. Head to the Stir it up Instagram page to enter!



SOFT CENTRED CHOCOLATE AND STEM GINGER PARKIN

A beauty for Bonfire Night, a Parkin is a traditional ginger spiced cake from Yorkshire that was eaten at winter festivals and celebrations. There are lots of different versions of the recipe but a sticky centre is vital. Our Chocolate and Stem Ginger version is made with Country Range Oat Flakes, Coconut Milk, Ground Ginger and Ground Almonds and can be served with all types of toppings and accompaniments.



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UNLOCKING The revenue potential OF EVENTS

For the hospitality sector, events can be a lucrative business, generating revenue through ticket sales in advance, helping operators balance their books and maximise profitability. However, it is crucial that they are professionally managed from the initial enquiry through to the event.

In their new free online publication “The Ultimate Event Management Guide”, software company Tripleseat partnered with KAM Insight to help businesses navigate the potential pitfalls of event bookings and power up profitability, including tips such as:



DEFINE THE SPACE IN YOUR VENUE

Look at available spaces in your venue and think about what kind of event can be held from a smaller room for a team lunch to a larger space for workshops with food. Work out what spaces need which technical equipment.

TARGET UK CORPORATE EVENT PLANNERS

The power of social media can't be underestimated. Invest in a mix of organic and paid (targeted) social media activity across platforms. Focus on LinkedIn to target corporate event planners.

USE THE POWER OF REFERRALS

Use successful events as case studies. With permission, publish a video and picture with a written case study, showcasing your venue to other event planners.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL AREA

Research corporate businesses in your area. Drop into these businesses with cards, flyers and even special offers. Invite them for a happy hour, or even better, host an event at your venue to show it off and provide everyone who attends an offer if they book.

SHOW YOUR VENUE OFF

Make sure the website has a section targeting potential clients. Outline how each space can be used including capacity and any equipment or multimedia options like audio and TV. Include pictures, or even better, a fly-through video of the space.

Following research conducted by KAM Insight for the guide, it was revealed that over a third of restaurants and pubs rely on pen and paper for event bookings. Despite 60% of UK hospitality operators saying large bookings and events are important to business, 34% of restaurants and 39% of pubs still track event bookings the old-fashioned way.

Depending on the type of event, operators could request pre-orders from big groups to reduce food waste – 50% of operators participating in KAM Media's research said this was a high priority for their business. Understanding and tracking dietary requirements is also an important factor for consideration, ensuring details such as allergies are not lost as front of house teams hand over bookings to back of house teams.

Outline how each space can be used including capacity and any equipment or multimedia options like audio and TV

John Karemy, marketing manager of Tripleseat, says “Using an event management tool like ours can streamline the event booking and management process. This can improve the bottom line of hospitality venues and improve new booking sales by 30% or more creating a steady revenue stream.”

Visit <https://info.tripleseat.com/uk-ultimateevent-guide> to access your free copy of the full research report and guide.



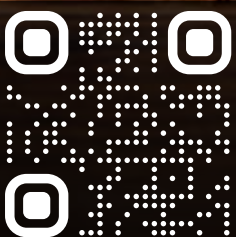
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THE POWER OF NUTRITIOUS HOSPITAL FOOD



INDUSTRY INTERVIEW: IAIN ROBERTSON, NATIONAL CHAIR, HOSPITAL CATERERS

Earlier this year Iain Robertson took the helm of the Hospital Caterers Association (HCA) as national chair. Formerly the vice chair, Iain has worked as catering operations manager at Solent NHS Trust for the past five years. He left school at 16 and joined the Army where he trained as a chef. After leaving the Army in 1999, he worked shifts at a hotel before moving to a local hospital as a pot washer. Iain has worked in the NHS ever since in various roles from chef to catering manager and exudes passion for the sector.



WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES AS CHAIR OF THE HCA?

I don't really see it as big challenges ahead, it is more a continuation of the good work of my predecessors and continuing to build upon that success. We have recently launched a new strategy for the HCA which outlines what we hope to achieve over the coming years. There are several areas of focus – membership, education, partnership and promotion, financial stability and governance. I aim to ensure we deliver the objectives within it.

WHAT MAJOR CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN IN HOSPITAL CATERING?

Many of the challenges we face have remained throughout my career, such as feeding patients on a budget. Probably the biggest

changes have been around the expectation of patients, staff and visitors. People are more conscious about what they eat now and expect a much wider range of choice. We cater for a much broader range of cultural and religious diets now than when I first started in the NHS and there are the legislative changes such as allergen laws.

YOU BELIEVE IN TASTY, WHOLESOME FOOD PLAYING A CRUCIAL PART IN A PATIENT'S RECOVERY, BUT THIS IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED OR UNDERVALUED. HOW DO YOU INTEND TO CHANGE THAT?

The role of food in recovery is clear - well-nourished patients recover quicker, go home sooner and ultimately cost the NHS less

money. We need everyone in the NHS to understand this and that can only happen through collaborative working between caterers, nurses and dietitians. Over the last few years, we have seen more dietitians and nurses becoming members of the HCA and this trend needs to continue.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP?

The HCA has in excess of 600 members. This is made up of 15 regional branches across the UK, with each branch holding local meetings, study days and social events. I always say the biggest benefit of membership is the networking opportunities, the contacts that you make both locally and nationally ultimately make you better at your day job as you share examples of best practice. In addition, we hold an annual leadership and

development forum – the next one is 1st to 2nd April 2025, at the Hilton Metropole, Birmingham.

HOW WILL YOU MAKE THE ASSOCIATION MORE INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE?

Historically the HCA was an organisation for managers and supervisors working in healthcare catering. If you have a passion for hospital food, you should be a part of the HCA regardless of the role you do. If you go into any catering department in any hospital in the country it will be one of the most culturally diverse teams in the hospital and this should reflect in our membership.

Visit www.hospitalcaterers.org/about/membership for more information.


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*Source: Canadian Brand Advantage April 2014.

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LEITHS ACADEMY

nurture our next generation of chefs



Leiths Academy provides schools with a range of cookery courses which they can deliver, whether they have cookery departments or no facilities at all. Courses are for different age groups from Key Stage One (KS1) pupils aged five to seven, to Key Stage Five (KS5) pupils aged 16 to 18. They include both life skill and accredited cookery qualifications, supported by lesson plans, student notes, fully tested recipes and step-by-step skills videos. For older pupils, the Level 3 accredited course can help them pursue careers in the hospitality and catering industry.

Alistair Turner, Head of Teaching and Learning at Leiths Academy, says, "As experienced teachers ourselves, we recognise that every school is different, so our courses have been designed to be flexible."

All courses are delivered by school staff through an interactive digital portal, which also allows access to teacher and student resources such as skills videos. For KS4 and KS5 courses, teachers from Leiths Academy mark coursework, exams, and run Career Professional

Development (CPD) sessions for staff. Prices of courses vary according to the number of students and the type of course.

For primary schools, courses consist of 17 classroom lessons for Key Stage One and 15 for Key Stage Two with accompanying recipes. Linked to the curriculum, the lessons focus on several themes – diet, provenance, food preparation and handling, food safety and labelling.

The recipes, taught via a step-by-step 50 minute video, have been designed to work in a classroom or 'pop up' kitchen in a school hall. Most recipes are

heat-free but sometimes use a plug-in induction hob or oven. Examples of recipes include Pea, Basil and Tomato Bruschetta; Greek Salad Pittas; Vegetable Laksa and Lime Cheesecake Pots.

Alistair says, "Schools with no cooking facilities can do the KS1 and KS2 courses as they include recipes that don't require heat or much equipment. If a school is considering introducing cookery facilities, we can advise them on how best to upgrade or transform spaces."

For secondary schools, Leiths Academy offers life skills and accredited cookery courses, with accreditation by the Confederation of Tourism and Hospitality (CTH).

The CTH Level 2 Certificate in Culinary Skills is a practical alternative to GCSE Food and Nutrition and is suitable for students in Years 10 and 11. In this course, food preparation skills are combined with themes such as seasonality, sustainability and cultural influences. It also helps students secure weekend and holiday jobs in the restaurant and hospitality sector.

Examples of recipes taught include rigatoni with chorizo and sage, soy glazed salmon with hot pickled carrots, courgette ribbon salad and crispy noodles, and banana and Rolo 'melting middle' cakes.

The CTH Level 3 Extended Certificate in Professional

Cookery, a sixth form A level style course, can help students forge a career in hospitality, as successful students are eligible to apply for career advice. For students wishing to go to university, it also helps with UCAS applications. It is a five-term course based on 46 core weeks of practical menus which will develop a variety of culinary skills. This includes making fresh pasta and choux pastry and

recipes such as hand cut tagliatelle with pizziola sauce and cinnamon beignets with an apple compote.

Visit <https://leiths.com/academy/> for more information on how your school can get involved.

“Schools with no cooking facilities can do the KS1 and KS2 courses as they include recipes that don't require heat or much equipment.”



Be Inspired this Cheese-mas!

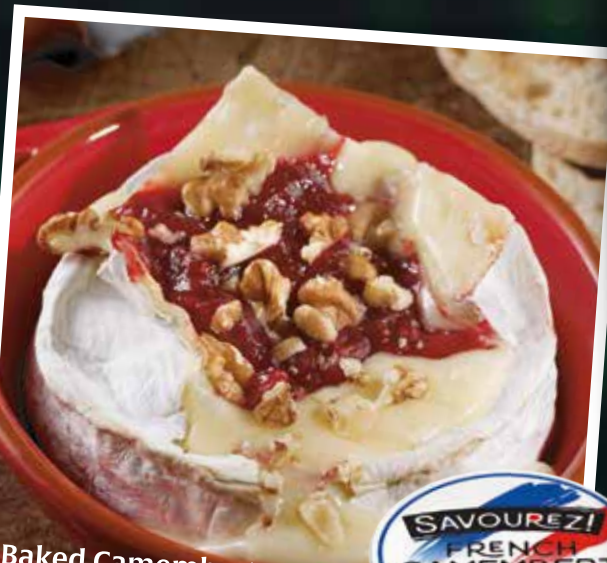
Festive Halloumi Burger



Squeaky Pigs!
Halloumi Pigs in Blankets



Baked Camembert
with Cranberry & Walnuts



Brie Festive Sandwich



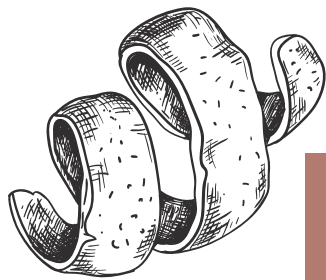
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The *Gift of Good Food*

Crafting a Christmas Menu to Remember

As the festive season approaches, the hospitality sector buzzes with excitement and preparation. Crafting a Christmas menu that delivers a memorable experience to guests, whether in care homes, schools, restaurants, cafés, or special events, requires creativity, sensitivity to dietary needs, and a strategic approach to time and cost management. In this month's Category Focus, we explore how to ensure your Christmas menu stands out and delights every guest, while also being efficient and cost-effective.



EMBRACING THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS WITH SEASONAL INGREDIENTS

Seasonal ingredients not only enhance the authenticity of your Christmas menu but also ensure the freshest and most flavourful dishes. Think of rich, earthy root vegetables like parsnips, carrots, and beets, which are at their peak during the winter months. Incorporate these into hearty soups, roasted vegetable medleys, or as sides to main courses.

Citrus fruits, such as oranges and lemons can add a bright, zesty twist to both sweet and savoury dishes. A classic example is an orange-glazed roast duck or a refreshing lemon sorbet. Cranberries are another festive staple; use them in sauces, desserts, or even in a tangy cranberry and walnut salad on a lunchtime menu to bring a pop of colour to the table.

CREATING INCLUSIVE MENUS FOR DIVERSE DIETARY NEEDS

One of the hallmarks of a truly exceptional Christmas menu is its inclusivity. With dietary restrictions and preferences becoming more prevalent, it's essential to offer options that cater to everyone, from vegans to those with food allergies.

For vegan guests, consider dishes like a lentil and vegetable Wellington, stuffed with a savoury mixture of lentils, mushrooms, and seasonal vegetables wrapped in flaky pastry. Another great option is a creamy butternut squash risotto, which is both comforting and satisfying. "There is a growing interest in innovative plant-based options during the holiday season for something different from the classic nut roast. Popular vegan ingredients can be incorporated to create delicious vegan roasts, hearty stews, or creative plant-based twists on traditional holiday dishes," says Adam Bateman, Executive Chef, Pan Pacific London.

For those with allergies, ensure you have clearly labelled gluten-free, nut-free, and dairy-free options. A gluten-free stuffing made with wild rice and cranberries can be a delicious alternative to traditional bread stuffing. Additionally, offering a nut-free Christmas pudding ensures everyone can indulge in dessert without worry.

Tempura mixed seasonal vegetables

COST-EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

To manage costs without compromising on quality, leverage ingredients that can be used across multiple dishes. For instance, a large batch of roasted vegetables can serve as a side dish, be puréed into soups, or incorporated into salads and frittatas. Similarly, a rich vegetable stock made from peelings and trimmings can be the base for soups, sauces, and risottos. "To save money, I recommend making as many of your own dishes as possible and limiting shop-bought/readymade items. Why not make your own pigs in blankets and sauces and use some more affordable, and sometimes more flavourful, cuts like a ham hock?" suggests Adam.

Buying ingredients in bulk can also save money. For example, purchasing a whole turkey allows you to use the prime cuts for the main dish, while the bones and less desirable parts can be used to make a flavourful stock or soup.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DIFFERENT SETTINGS

Each catering setting presents unique challenges and opportunities. In care homes, focus on familiar, comforting dishes that evoke nostalgia. Ensure that all food is easy to eat and digest, and consider smaller portion sizes and finger food such as pigs in blankets for residents with reduced appetites.

In schools, the priority should be on creating fun and engaging meals that appeal to children while still being nutritious. Christmas sandwiches, turkey curry packed with vegetables and inspiration from global festive menus will help inspire and engage children.

For restaurants and cafés, presentation is key. Elevate classic dishes with modern twists and sophisticated plating. A deconstructed Christmas pudding or dishes involving table theatre can make a memorable impression on diners.



TIME-SAVING TIPS

In a busy kitchen, time is of the essence. Incorporating pre-prepared elements can streamline the cooking process without sacrificing quality. Pre-made pastry dough can save time when preparing pies and tarts. Similarly, ready-to-use puff pastry can be a lifesaver for creating elegant appetisers like cheese and herb twists or mini sausage rolls.

Pre-cooked grains, such as quinoa or rice, can be quickly transformed into festive salads or sides. And for dessert, consider semi-prepared options like pre-baked tart shells that can be filled with a variety of sweet fillings, from chocolate ganache to fruit compote, with minimal effort.

Mustard & clementine glazed ham hock



“POPULAR VEGAN INGREDIENTS CAN BE INCORPORATED TO CREATE DELICIOUS VEGAN ROASTS, HEARTY STEWS, OR CREATIVE PLANT-BASED TWISTS ON TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY DISHES”

Cashew and cranberry nut roast

SUSTAINABILITY AND REDUCING FOOD WASTE

As sustainability becomes increasingly important to diners, incorporating eco-friendly practices into your Christmas menu can help build your reputation. Use locally sourced, organic ingredients wherever possible to provide provenance, reduce your carbon footprint and support local farmers.

Plan your menu to minimise food waste. Repurpose leftovers creatively, such as using leftover turkey in sandwiches or salads, and turning vegetable trimmings into soups or stocks. Encourage guests to take home any uneaten food in compostable containers.

Remember, the essence of a memorable Christmas meal lies not just in the food, but in the warmth and hospitality with which it is served. Whether you're catering for a care home, school, restaurant, café, or a special event, the goal is to create an atmosphere of joy and celebration that your guests will cherish long after the meal is over.

Cape Herb & Spice Louisiana Cajun Calamari with Cajun Dipping Sauce



Skill level: Easy

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

For the Cajun Mayonnaise

- 100g tomato ketchup
- 20g Dijon mustard
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced (zest reserved for calamari)
- 1tsp ground garlic
- 20g Cape Herb & Spice LOUISIANA CAJUN
- 500g mayonnaise

For the Cajun Calamari

- 1.5kg calamari tubes and tentacles breaded
- 30g Cape Herb & Spice LOUISIANA CAJUN

To serve

- 10 lemon wedges

METHOD

1. Prepare the Cajun mayonnaise, by mixing all the ingredients together, taste and adjust the seasoning. Set aside until ready to use.
2. Heat your oil for deep frying. Heat the oil to 180 °C.
3. Cook the calamari in the hot oil and fry until golden. Drain the cooked calamari on a piece of kitchen towel. Repeat until all the calamari is fried.
4. To serve, season with Cape Herb & Spice LOUISIANA CAJUN and the reserved grated lemon zest.
5. Serve with Cajun mayonnaise dipping sauce and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

Allergens: *Celery, mustard, egg, fish, molluscs, wheat
*Please check all ingredients declaration

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FIVE YEARS OF PROGRESS

The Evolution of Global Recycling in Hospitality

Over the past five years, the global hospitality industry has made significant strides in improving recycling activities. This shift has been driven by increased environmental awareness, consumer demand for sustainable practices, and regulatory pressures. As a result, the sector has adopted innovative recycling methods and initiatives that not only reduce waste but also contribute positively to the community.

One of the most notable advancements is the implementation of comprehensive waste management systems. These systems segregate waste into recyclables, compostables, and general waste, ensuring that a higher percentage of materials are recycled.

Nationwide chain Pret A Manger has taken a significant step by launching its "Rising Stars" programme, which not only focuses on recycling but also on hiring homeless people, addressing social issues alongside environmental ones. Pret has committed to reducing plastic waste and introducing recyclable alternatives. They have also expanded their efforts to recycle coffee grounds, turning them into biofuel and fertiliser, reducing landfill waste and promoting sustainable energy.



Another initiative is seen at Nando's, which has implemented a closed-loop recycling system. This ensures that waste oil from their kitchens is collected and converted into biodiesel, which powers their delivery trucks. This not only reduces their carbon footprint but also promotes a circular economy where waste is repurposed rather than discarded.

In Australia, the café chain Toby's Estate has introduced an innovative approach to recycling coffee cups. Partnering with Simply Cups, their used coffee cups are recycled into items such as outdoor furniture and reusable cups. This initiative addresses the significant issue of disposable coffee cup waste, which is often lined with plastic and difficult to recycle through conventional means.

Heading to Asia, MOS Burger in Japan has implemented a comprehensive waste management system that includes the separation and recycling of various materials such as plastics, paper, and organic waste. They collaborate with local farmers and waste management companies to turn food waste into compost. This is used to grow vegetables, some of which are supplied back to the restaurants, creating a closed-loop system.

This reduces waste sent to landfills whilst supporting local agriculture and reducing the carbon footprint associated with food transportation.

The global trend towards zero-waste kitchens has also gained momentum. For example, Silo restaurant, known as the world's first zero-waste restaurant, operates without a bin. All food scraps are either composted or reused, packaging is minimised, and suppliers are encouraged to adopt sustainable practices.

This holistic approach not only reduces waste but also sets a benchmark for the industry.

Consumer-facing initiatives have been instrumental in promoting recycling in the hospitality sector. Many establishments now offer incentives for customers who bring their own reusable containers or cups, reducing the reliance on single-use plastics. Starbucks, for

WASTE OIL FROM KITCHENS IS COLLECTED AND CONVERTED INTO BIODIESEL, WHICH THEN POWERS DELIVERY TRUCKS

instance, has introduced discounts for customers using reusable cups and has committed to eliminating single-use plastic straws globally.

There is no doubt that where we stand today is very different to 5 years ago, and new technologies have certainly aided progress when it comes to our global recycling efforts. However, the bar will continually (and rightfully) be raised to protect our planet and future generations for years to come. As these practices continue to evolve, the hospitality sector will play a crucial role in fostering a more sustainable and responsible future.

Decadent Desserts

Taking Christmas
to a new level of
indulgence



Synonymous with fanfare and fantastic food, Christmas is the time to let your culinary imagination run riot. As consumers, we are often drawn to extravagant desserts to end a special meal and the festive season is no exception, so while the diners are out and ready to spend on memorable experiences, we ask our panel of experts for their recommendations for tempting diners to indulge early.



DEAN PARKER
*Head Chef & Co-owner,
Celentano's*

Our affogato is our signature dessert, both at Christmas and all year round. Although it may not be your typical 'luxurious' dessert, we combine chocolate and malt to really up the indulgence, using a fruity chocolate so the dish doesn't taste too intensely rich.

I find texture to be super important when creating an indulgent dessert and tend to add something crunchy such as a rye crumb or toasted buckwheat. When it comes to making a dessert extraordinary, you really do just have to focus on flavour. Some people focus too much on how something looks or the technique when it comes to pastry and end up overcomplicating the dish. We tend to focus on showcasing each individual ingredient, as opposed to visual theatrics.



DEAN HARPER
*Chef and director,
 Harper Fine Dining*

My favourite indulgent dessert is the "Golden Chocolate Symphony."

This luxurious chocolate mousse, layered with edible gold leaf and a hint of cognac, is incredibly rich and opulent, with its top-notch ingredients, elaborate presentation and exceptional flavours distinguishing this signature dish from other lavish desserts. In my opinion, restaurateurs can enhance their regular desserts by adding premium elements in the form of exotic fruits or rare spices.

This Christmas, spiced gingerbread, caramelised chestnuts and boozy eggnog are likely to be common festive favourites. To craft a more memorable dining experience, I suggest incorporating flaming desserts, with surprising additions like popping candy for that extra sensory delight. Through interactive plating, restaurateurs can provide a choice of at least four varied desserts, encompassing a chocolate-based selection, a fruity option, a light alternative, and a seasonal special. In my experience, an extravagant dessert is usually priced anywhere between £15 to £50, based on the ingredients and the complexity of the presentation.



DAN MCGEORGE
Owner, Vetch

My favourite dessert has to be anything chocolate with salted caramel, it just hits all the right buttons such as chocolate namelaka with miso salted caramel, aero, chocolate tuile and a really good ice cream.

I think getting the right balance is everything, not to mention using good quality ingredients is a must to transform a dessert from ordinary to indulgent, and adding a little theatre to the occasion makes everyone feel special. One thing I like to do is to use liquid nitrogen, it just provides a total sense of drama.

There shouldn't be too many desserts on offer, quality is far better than quantity. Perhaps three desserts and a cheese option would be about right, usually in the following formats - something chocolate, something fruity and something warming or cooling depending on the time of year.

The price could be astronomical, as some really good ingredients can set you back a lot of money but for me, it should be about balance, and we always aim for less than £15.



Salted Caramel Sauce



FRANCESCO MANNINO
*Executive Pastry Chef,
 Pan Pacific London*

My favourite indulgent dessert is a Millefeuille.

I like the contrast of textures and the fact that it needs to be prepared fresh, but I am also a fan of our very own Pan Pacific Guanacoa Chocolate Mousse with Brownies.

I think using rich ingredients like a good high-quality chocolate or a rich caramel can make a dessert indulgent, and the chef can make it extraordinary by adding a final touch of theatre at the table.

Citrus and spices are trendy Christmas ingredients that can be added to a sticky toffee pudding for a delicious Christmas twist, or for a new take on a classic Christmas cake.

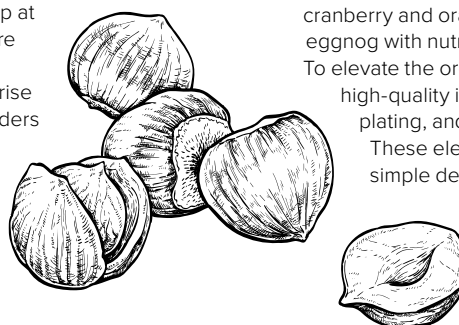


DANIELLE MAPERTUIS
*Executive Vegan Pastry
 Chef, Author, Presenter
 & Trainer*

My favourite Christmas dessert is the luxurious

Rose and Lychee Yule Log that I created. It's a delightful departure from the traditional chocolate log, prized for its lightness and the subtle marriage of flavours and textures. With an exotic touch, it offers a refreshing twist, embodying lightness, elegance, and originality for a truly successful dessert.

Best of all, it can be prepared in advance and stored in the freezer, needing only the decorations added on the day of serving. So, no worries about waking up at 2 a.m. to prepare your Christmas dessert! A surprise for Stir it up readers as well... this dessert is also vegan!



Chocolate Babka

"Enhance regular desserts by adding premium elements in the form of exotic fruits or rare spices."



DANIEL PEARSE
*Executive Pastry Chef,
 Rhubarb Hospitality
 Collection*

My favourite indulgent dessert is a Dark Chocolate

and Salted Caramel Tart, featuring rich ganache, buttery caramel, and homemade vanilla ice cream. An indulgent dessert combines premium ingredients, stunning presentation, and layered textures. This Christmas, trending flavours include gingerbread spice in cheesecakes, peppermint and chocolate in brownies, cranberry and orange in tarts, and eggnog with nutmeg in mousses.

To elevate the ordinary, RHC uses high-quality ingredients, artistic plating, and a mix of textures. These elements transform simple desserts into memorable indulgences, ensuring every sweet moment is extraordinary.



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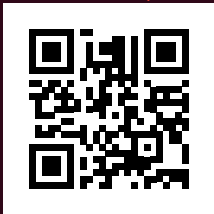
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PURE INDULGENCE

CHRISTMAS TREE BROWNIES

Perfect for the Christmas sharing occasion, these rich Christmas tree brownies are made with Callebaut's signature 811 dark chocolate. Brownies are a fan favourite and can easily be dressed up with Mona Lisa Crispearls for some festive sparkle.

* CGA X Callebaut Bespoke Insights

“Light desserts are particularly welcomed by diners over the festive season, when heavy starters and mains tend to dominate”



GORDON LAUDER

MD, Central Foods

Allow the freezer to be your friend – it'll make things easier during the festive season.

There are some tremendous frozen ready-made desserts available. Our Menuserve Black Forest Roulade is indulgent – containing real dairy cream flavoured with real Kirsch liqueur and dark chocolate shavings - and maintains its visual appeal on defrosting. With impressive plate coverage, it's gluten-free and vegetarian to appeal to even more customers and is easy to prepare and simple to serve.

Choose desserts like this which can be cut into portions while frozen to avoid unnecessary waste. Serve as is or decorate with more whipped cream, cherries soaked in liqueur and more chocolate shavings to ramp up the indulgence for the festive season.



MICHELLE YOUNGER

Head of Marketing,
Aimia Foods

In order to truly get into the spirit with sweet-treats this Christmas, and send orders

soaring, why not whip up an array of festive classics with a twist? At Horlicks, we have developed a malted twist on a Gingerbread Trifle, and it proves to be a real-crowd pleaser – especially when served in aesthetic, individual pots. For further warmth and appeal, why not serve your mini-Malted Gingerbread Trifle with a cup of Horlicks? It's a perfectly toasty, flavoursome and wintery combination.



SAMANTHA RAIN

Head of Innovation and
Training, Henley Bridge

Light but appealing desserts are particularly welcomed by diners

over the festive season, when heavy starters and mains tend to dominate the proceedings. It's important to offer the traditional Christmas pudding but a more delicate, and perhaps less sweet alternative is advised too.

I've been developing a range of recipes for Christmas 2024 aimed specifically at foodservice, which includes a deliciously light lemon and olive oil dessert. Called An Olive Branch, it features an olive oil and lemon sponge, olive oil and vanilla ganache, lemon curd, and cocoa tuille. All of the components can be made in advance for ease of service.



MANOJ PRASAD

Head of Food Development,
The Heartwood Collections

My favourite indulgent dessert is a Winter Spiced Christmas Bread & Butter Pudding - It is

a wonderful representation of a great British Classic but is also synonymous with everything about Christmas.

An indulgent dessert must have contrast whether it is in the form of flavour (sweet /acid/ salt) or texture (crisp / soft) and must evoke a memory. The fact that a dessert is made at the table in front of a customer makes it more personal or theatrical depending on the dessert or the occasion.

This Christmas I think there will be an increase in international flavours – think rose, pistachio, cardamom and using more seasonal berries and nuts as well as spices.



ZAREEN DEBO

Foodservice Channel
Operations Manager,
Ferrero UK & Ireland

Consumers are more likely to want to treat themselves

over the festive period. Nostalgia remains a top trend influencing desserts – and with the addition of Nutella®, operators can give their offerings a refresh. Why not give classic Christmas desserts, like Yule Log or profiteroles, a twist, and top with a drizzle of Nutella®?

There should always be a variety of dessert options for customers to choose from, as well as the flexibility to have these offerings meet different needs, for example, by offering sharing plates and catering to those on alternative diets.



Malted Gingerbread Trifle

INGREDIENTS

- 100g unsalted butter
- 70g dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 160g treacle
- 40g Horlicks Original
- 240g plain flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- Pinch of salt
- 150g whole milk
- 500g vanilla custard tub
- 300g double cream
- 2 tbsp icing sugar
- 400g store bought thick caramel
- 300g double cream
- 2 tbsp Horlicks Original

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan).
2. Grease and line a loaf tin with parchment paper.
3. Add butter and sugar to large mixing bowl and beat until light.
4. Add eggs and mix further until combined, then mix in treacle.
5. In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda, spices, salt and Horlicks Original, briefly stir to combine. Add to the wet ingredients, alternating with milk until fully incorporated and smooth.
6. Pour into a prepared tin and bake for 50-60 min, or until a toothpick inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Credit Horlicks





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THE MARKETPLACE

KEEPING YOU UP-TO-DATE ON PRODUCTS AND SERVICES WITHIN THE FOODSERVICE INDUSTRY

Shmoo Gets a Pro Makeover

SERVING UP SHAKES WITH STYLE!

Aimia Foods has rebranded its popular thick shake brand, Shmoo, to Shmoo for Professionals to better align with its focus on the out-of-home (OOH) and foodservice markets.

While the name has changed, the core offerings remain the same, featuring four main flavours—Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry, and Banana—alongside seasonal options like Mint Choc-Chip and Raspberry White Chocolate.

The rebrand aims to distinguish Shmoo's professional products from its retail line, with new colour-coded lids to help caterers easily identify flavours. Shmoo for Professionals shakes are quick to prepare, vegetarian-friendly, and free from artificial additives. This rebranding highlights Shmoo's continued commitment to providing high-quality, convenient products for foodservice operators.



PUMP UP YOUR PROFITS

NUTELLA® ON TAP WITH NEW DISPENSERS!

Ferrero Foodservice, in partnership with Sephra Europe Ltd, has introduced two innovative Nutella® dispensers—the Electronic Nutella® Dispenser and the Manual Nutella® Dispenser.

These tools are designed to offer a convenient way for foodservice operators to serve Nutella® in precise 15g portions, enhancing customer experience and reducing product waste to under 4%. Paired with the new 1kg Nutella® Cartridge, the dispensers ensure consistent texture through temperature control and are suitable for various settings, from self-serve stations to professional kitchens.

The dispensers have been well-received, with 80% of professionals likely to adopt them after a trial. The 1kg cartridge is also made from recyclable material, aligning with sustainability goals.

Zareen Deboo of Ferrero UK & Ireland emphasized that these dispensers not only cater to consumer demand but also help operators boost profits by leveraging Nutella®'s brand appeal.



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*Three in four kids preferred the taste of new VIVA Chocolate Milk Drink – No Added Sugar versus another leading brand of no added sugar flavoured milk in blind tests (Independent research, Feb 2020)

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MAGGI® Chicken Bouillon
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MAGGI® Vegetable Bouillon
2 x 2kg



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MAGGI® Rich & Rustic
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MAGGI® Rich & Rustic
6 x 3kg



GF

MAGGI® Coconut Milk Powder
6 x 1kg

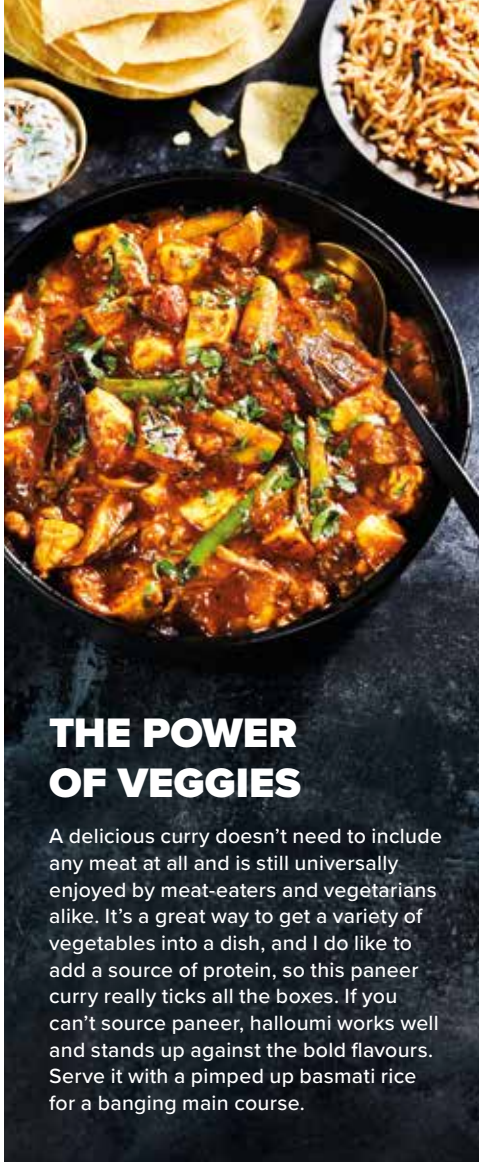


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THE POWER OF VEGGIES

A delicious curry doesn't need to include any meat at all and is still universally enjoyed by meat-eaters and vegetarians alike. It's a great way to get a variety of vegetables into a dish, and I do like to add a source of protein, so this paneer curry really ticks all the boxes. If you can't source paneer, halloumi works well and stands up against the bold flavours. Serve it with a pimped up basmati rice for a banging main course.

Making ends meet

KEEP CALM AND CURRY ON

To celebrate National Curry Week from 7th to 13th October, Paul Dickson shares some menu inspiration, with top cost and waste saving tips included.

I think it's safe to say that we all expect to see a curry of some description on most menus these days and for good reason. Not only is it as much of a national dish across the UK and Ireland as a pie or fish and chips, it's also such a versatile option for us chefs and caterers to change up depending on what we have available in the kitchen. For me, this makes it the perfect way to save costs and cut down on food waste. Here are some ideas to add to your repertoire.



Paul is a Home Economist and food stylist working in London and the North West, creating exceptional visual stories in film & tv, on social media and in print. All of the recipes and videos featured in the article can be accessed online at www.countryrange.co.uk/recipes or by scanning the QR Code.



COMBINE BEEF MINCE WITH A CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE SUCH AS PORK OR A PLANT-BASED MINCE TO REDUCE THE COST

A dough saving treat

When it comes to meat dishes, using cheaper cuts of meat which require longer, slower, cooking is a great way of keeping costs down in your curry offering. Another option is to use mince, as you can even combine beef mince with a cheaper alternative such as pork or a plant-based mince to reduce the cost without compromising on flavour. This keema flatbread recipe is made quick and easy by using Country Range Balti Curry Sauce and Country Range Dough Balls. And when I talk about saving dough, I really mean it, as you can split the dough balls into four to create the flatbreads, cutting costs even further.



Pakorras that pack a punch

Pakorras and bhajis combine vegetables with spices and batter, before being fried to crispy perfection. They're not only a great crowd-pleaser to have on your curry menu, they're also a real saviour in the kitchen when it comes to reducing waste. This works especially well with root vegetables, so ideal at this time of year and planning your menu for the winter months - you can even include peelings in your mixture, so absolutely nothing goes to waste.

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF CHINESE COOKERY

WITH KEN HOM

Chef Ken Hom, a name synonymous with Chinese cuisine, has left an indelible mark on the culinary world through his expertise, innovation, and dedication. Born on May 3rd, 1949, in Tucson, Arizona, Hom's culinary journey began in the modest confines of his family's Chinese-American restaurant. His early experiences in the kitchen instilled in him a deep appreciation for the flavours and techniques of Chinese cooking.

Ken Hom's professional journey took a significant turn when he moved to California to pursue higher education. While studying at the University of California, Berkeley, he funded his education by teaching cooking classes. His natural talent and passion for Chinese cuisine caught the attention of food enthusiasts and media alike. This exposure led to his first major break in 1984 with the BBC television series "Ken Hom's Chinese Cookery." The show was an instant success, captivating audiences with its accessible approach to traditional Chinese dishes and making Hom a household name.

In addition to his television career, Ken Hom has authored 37 cookbooks, many of which have become bestsellers. His writing, characterised by its clarity and enthusiasm, has introduced countless readers to the art of Chinese cooking. His seminal work, "Ken Hom's Chinese Cookery," remains a definitive guide for home cooks seeking to master the basics of Chinese cuisine.

Beyond the kitchen, his influence extends to the business world. He has consulted for numerous prestigious restaurants and hotels globally, contributing to the elevation of Chinese cuisine in fine dining establishments. His range of branded cookware has also become popular, reflecting his commitment to making high-quality cooking tools accessible to a broader audience.

Throughout his career, Ken Hom has received numerous accolades, including an honorary OBE (Order of the British Empire) in 2009 for his services to the culinary arts. His legacy is one of bridging cultural gaps through food, educating

the world about the richness of Chinese cuisine, and inspiring a new generation of chefs and home cooks. We caught up with the legend that is Ken Hom to reflect on his remarkable 40 years in the industry.

What was your first job in a professional kitchen?

At age 11, working in my Uncle's restaurant kitchen in Chicago Chinatown. King Wah was the top restaurant with a wide following with both Chinese & non-Chinese. Over 65 years ago, the restaurant still exists today. I washed dishes as well as doing lots of pre-work.

How have the challenges for chefs changed over the years?

I think the bar has been raised and there are more expectations of chefs today.

Is it more difficult to break through as a chef today?

I don't think so. It is just lots of hard work, but it's important to listen & learn. The more you work at it the better you will get.

How are you marking your 40th Anniversary?

I will be chilling out as usual - celebrating with family and close friends.

What has been your most memorable moment as a chef?

There have been many, from opening my cooking school in the early 70's teaching professional chefs, to getting an eight page profile in Bon Appetit magazine (which at that time was the biggest food magazine in the USA), this was followed by a two page spread in the New York Times! My first book was published in 1981 which I was very proud of, and I undertook a national book tour which was followed by an audition for the BBC.

You have written 37 books - do you have any plans to write more and how do you find new recipes to explore?

Yes, I want to do a book on food waste and how to transform what we want to chuck in the bin into a delicious dish. There are always new recipes on the horizon.

As the 'wokfather' of Chinese cookery, what ingredients can you not do without in your kitchen?

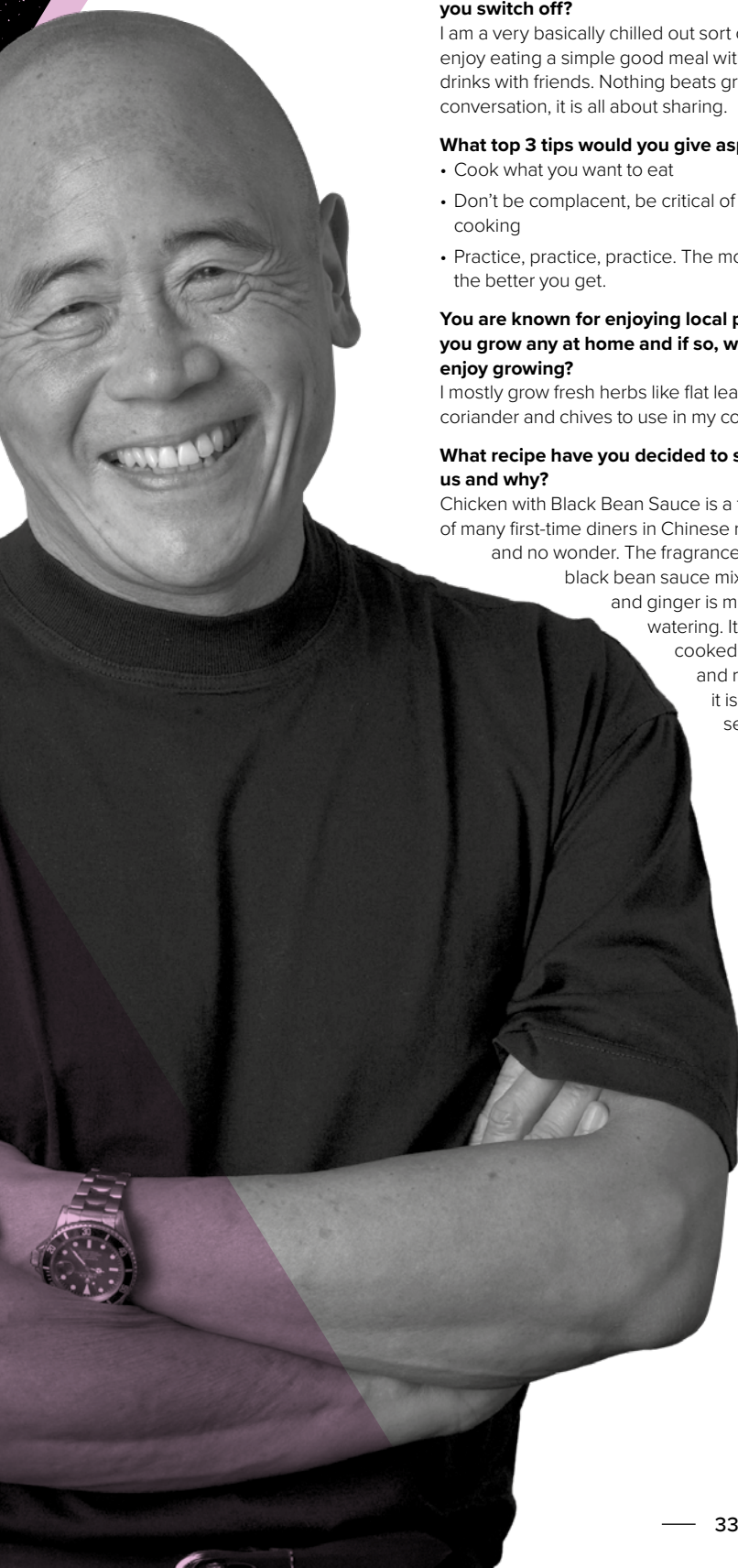
Garlic, ginger, spring onions, oyster sauce, soy sauce and Shaoxing rice wine.

Teaching others has always been ingrained in your practice, do you still get excited about it?

Yes, I think I am basically a teacher first and foremost - I want to share my culture, experience, taste and passion with as many people as possible.



Shopping with mum



When life gets too hectic, where do you like to retreat to and what do you enjoy doing to help you switch off?

I am a very basically chilled out sort of bloke. I enjoy eating a simple good meal with plenty of drinks with friends. Nothing beats great food and conversation, it is all about sharing.

What top 3 tips would you give aspiring chefs?

- Cook what you want to eat
- Don't be complacent, be critical of your own cooking
- Practice, practice, practice. The more you cook, the better you get.

You are known for enjoying local produce, do you grow any at home and if so, what do you enjoy growing?

I mostly grow fresh herbs like flat leaf parsley, coriander and chives to use in my cooking.

What recipe have you decided to share with us and why?

Chicken with Black Bean Sauce is a favourite of many first-time diners in Chinese restaurants, and no wonder. The fragrance of fermented black bean sauce mixed with garlic and ginger is mouth-watering. It can be cooked ahead of time and reheated, and it is also delicious served cold.



Chicken with Black Bean Sauce

INGREDIENTS

450 g (1 lb) boneless, skinless chicken breasts	1 tbsp finely chopped fresh root ginger
1 tbsp light soy sauce	11/2 tbsp coarsely chopped garlic
11/2 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry	2 tbsp finely chopped shallots
1/2 tsp salt	31/2 tbsp finely chopped spring onions (scallions)
1 tsp sugar	21/2 tbsp coarsely chopped salted black beans
1 tsp sesame oil	150 ml (5 fl oz) chicken stock
2 tsp cornflour	
2 tbsp groundnut (peanut) oil	

METHOD

1. Cut the chicken into 5 cm (2 inch) chunks and place in a bowl. Mix with the soy sauce, rice wine or sherry, salt, sugar, sesame oil and cornflour.
2. Heat a wok over a high heat, then add the groundnut oil. When it is very hot and slightly smoking, add the chicken and stir-fry for two minutes.
3. Add the ginger, garlic, shallots, 11/2 tablespoons of the spring onions and the black beans and stir-fry for two minutes.
4. Add the stock, bring the mixture to the boil, then reduce the heat. Cover and simmer for 3 minutes or until the chicken is cooked. Garnish with the remaining spring onions and serve.



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Rising Star

DAN MCGEORGE

HEADCHEF AND CO-OWNER, VETCH

After ditching a degree in law and doing an about-turn into food, Dan McGeorge hasn't looked back. With stints working for the likes of Simon Rimmer, Sam Moody, and Ben Mounsey, he joined Rothay Manor as Head Chef, where he secured three AA Rosettes, was listed in the Michelin Guide and was awarded a Michelin Plate. Dan has also achieved the top slot in Great British Menu's Champion of Champions in 2021. We caught up with Dan just after the eagerly awaited launch of his first restaurant called Vetch in Liverpool earlier this year.

What was your first job in hospitality?

My first ever job was as a waiter at what is now the M&S arena but used to be the Echo Arena near the Albert Dock in Liverpool. It would be working on the kiosks or helping out with functions. There was no cooking involved and at the age of 16, a career as a chef wasn't anywhere in my thought process.

What were your next steps?

I enrolled at Liverpool Community College and threw myself into it. I was pretty terrible when I started, especially compared to the rest of my class but I felt an instant connection and desire to learn more and improve. When I enrolled, I had never been to a fine dining restaurant, so when I carried out a stagiaire at a one-star restaurant under Will Holland in Ludlow – it honestly blew me away and changed my whole mindset.

Tell us about Vetch

It's a fine dining restaurant with a more casual atmosphere. We want people to feel like they can relax. Sometimes fine dining can be a bit stuffy and over formal, and it affects the experience. We want people to enjoy themselves. It's people's night out, not just something to eat. It's just 26 covers but it's been a great start.

What has been the biggest challenge in getting up and running?

It's the unknowns. When you open a business, you don't know all the stuff that you need to know. You didn't even realise that you would need to know most of it. When you're running a kitchen, it's easy. You know the processes, the costings and what needs to be done. Setting Vetch up has opened my eyes to everything else that needs to be done behind the scenes to launch and run a business. Contracts, pensions, fire safety, countless forms – it's been challenging but a great learning experience. We're self-funded, just a family business with no big backers, so we have had to juggle and do things a bit differently at times to stretch the budget.

How was the Great British menu experience?

It was brilliant, very surprising but such a huge moment for me. It's a completely different sort of

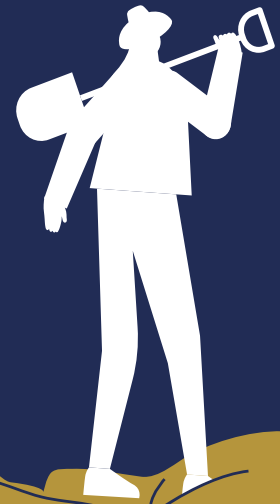


pressure and you always have to have your game face on – the camera is always on. It's a long day and there are always five cameras around you.

What have you learnt in the last few years?

A negative review doesn't mean something is wrong. It's an opinion and everyone has one, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they're right either. I understand that better now and don't let things affect me quite as much and use them to develop and grow.

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Summer Fruit CRÈME BRÛLÉE

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz Country Range Frozen Summer Berry Mix
- 1 pt double cream
- 6 egg yolks
- 4 oz caster sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla paste

SERVES
4-5

METHOD

1. Pour double cream into a saucepan and add the vanilla paste. Heat up to 80 degrees.
2. Whisk the egg yolks together with sugar. Save a little of the sugar for topping.
3. Pour the warm double cream over the egg mix.
4. Layer each ramekin with the Country Range Summer Berry Mix to cover the bottom.
5. Pour the egg mixture into each ramekin.
6. Sit the ramekins in a tray and half fill the tray with warm water.
7. Place trays in the oven at 140 degrees for 1 hour until set.
8. Take care when taking out of the oven and leave to cool in a tray.
9. Finish each one with a little of the leftover sugar and caramelize for a crispy layer to break through.

Born and raised in Burnley, Head Chef Graham Gardner has over 30 years of experience in the catering game and continues to raise standards at the iconic Hotel Sheraton in Blackpool.

Beautifully situated on Queen's Promenade with stunning views of the Irish Sea, the family-run hotel offers a salubrious holiday setting with nightly live entertainment, a heated indoor swimming pool and jacuzzi, plus some of the finest food and drink to be found on the Fylde coast.

In the recently refurbished restaurant, Graham and his team wow guests throughout the day and night with their thoughtful and flavour-forward approach to food. Offering a bountiful breakfast with classics such as kippers, a varied all-day bar menu, an indulgent afternoon tea spread and a seasonal three-course dinner menu, Graham is passionate about taking advantage of the fantastic local ingredients, growers and producers.

"We're blessed to have some fantastic produce on the Fylde coast," says Graham. "We try to utilise it wherever possible, whether it's the freshest catch of the day from Fleetwood Docks, magical meat from our local butcher or the best seasonal veg from the incredible growers and farmers. This recipe can be made in the summer when the fresh berries are in season but with the frozen Country Range Summer Berry Mix, it can be a classic all year round."



GRAHAM
GARDNER

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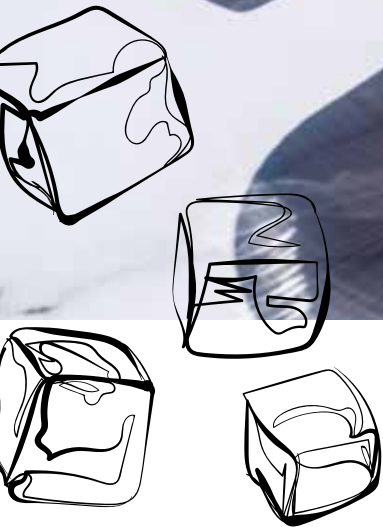
OF SNACKING PURCHASES
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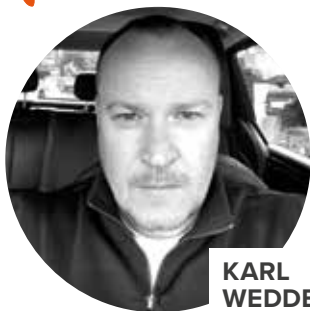


Negroni with an edible flower ice cube



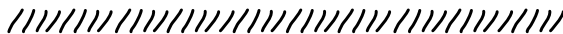
Smoky spiced cider margarita

WINTER *pour-fection*



**KARL
WEDDELL**

Karl Weddell has over 30 years of experience in the hospitality business, consulting, supplying and importing drinks and running bars, pubs and event businesses such as Pin Up Events. We picked his brains on the key considerations when creating a drinks menu for the colder months.

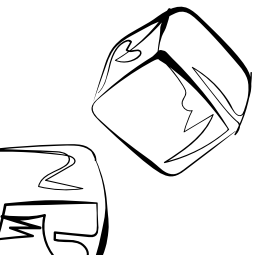


HOW IS A SUMMER DRINKS MENU DIFFERENT TO A WINTER DRINKS MENU?

In the summertime, a drinks menu doesn't take much work. If the sun is shining, people will generally drink. Lager rules the beer roost, the whites, rosés and bubbles reign supreme in the world of wine and longer, fruit-forward drinks and spritz serves dominate in the land of spirits. During the winter months, it's a completely different landscape. Consumer habits change and hospitality venues have to work extra hard to entice consumers off their couches and out of their homes. An electrifying drinks menu is a powerful weapon to have in the armoury. Here are my tips for the coming colder months....

LESS IS MORE

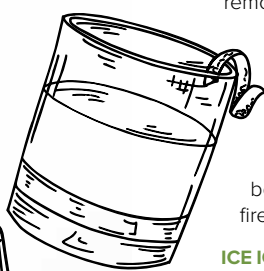
Huge drinks menus where bars try to stock and offer absolutely everything are often a big mistake, especially during the winter months. A shorter, more concise menu that provides high quality, good value and incites interest will work harder for the business. It's easier to manage, it means less stockholding, better deals on the lines you choose, less waste and it makes it simpler for staff training. Get it right and it can also be a vital tool in positioning the venue, building a strong identity and





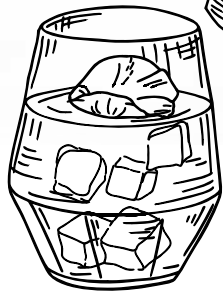
Cranberry caipirinha

in popularity, fat-washing is where you infuse an oily ingredient into a spirit before freezing it. The fat resolidifies and can be removed but the flavour remains along with a special silky texture. A relatively simple technique, I expect to see a lot of experimentation in this area. A fat-washed hot buttered rum is a thing of beauty, especially in front of a fire at Christmas.



ICE ICE BABY

Poor quality, boring ice cubes that dilute a drink too quickly are a thing of the past. Make your own in different moulds and shapes or infuse them with fruits, edible flowers, botanicals or herbs. Providing visual standout and infusing drinks, it's time to roll the ice dice.



WHAT ABOUT THE BEER?

Lager will continue to lead and be your volume line but the colder months see the darker beer styles fight back. Bitters, stouts, brown ales – it's a great time to run some specials or even offer some complimentary beer and food matching offers. Tempt consumers into trading up by offering special beers with a story behind them. At our festive events, we often use Meteor Biere de Noel – a special spiced dark ale sold and drank in the Christmas markets of Strasbourg.

generating word-of-mouth promotion.

POINT OF DIFFERENCE

There's no point offering exactly the same drinks and brands as your neighbours or the same drinks that can be bought for a pittance in the supermarket. Look at what's happening in your local area, what are your competitors doing and what are they stocking. Speak and collaborate with your local suppliers, producers, distillers,

brewers, mixologists, growers and even foragers. Find those unique, great tasting drinks and ingredients that can give your line-up and business a point of difference.

PROMOTION

Don't spend time on creating a drinks menu that is a work of art and then not shout about it. Promote it in the venue, on social media, on your website and digital channels. Try running festive promotions, aperitivo offers or tastings to entice people in and build a loyal local following.

SPIRIT TRENDS

Rum, mezcal, gin, whisky, vodka, brandy, liqueurs, cachaça, pisco – the spirit category is bursting with innovation. You don't have to do it all though so play to your strengths. While gin, whisky, vodka and rum will always be the big four, the agave train continues to gather pace so don't forget the tequila and mezcal. Freshly shaken and prepared, pre-blended, batch-made cocktails, slushy cocktail machines – there are lots of solutions out there depending on your space, resources and the skill level of your staff.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

While highballs and longer drinks are popular in the summer months, as the night's draw in, it's the smaller, more refined serves to

savour that are the order of the day. Leave the tiki cocktails, over-the-top garnishes and volume heavy serves behind in favour of the more minimalist, yet indulgent and quality-laden tipples and drinks. Let the liquid shine - it's about quality over quantity.

SERVES FOR SUCCESS

As more and more consumers eat seasonally, it's a good idea to try and inject seasonality into your drinks menu, especially your cocktails. A pumpkin bourbon smash, a cranberry caipirinha – the opportunities are endless. As margaritas continue to have a moment, I expect to see plenty of seasonal autumn and winter twists. Coffee-inspired cocktails is another area to watch during the festive season. The Espresso Martini has been all-powerful this last decade but a new raft of creative serves are vying to knock it off the caffeine cocktail top spot.

HOT, HOT, HOT

Glühbier, mulled wine and mulled cider are fantastic products in the lead-up to the festive season, providing inner warmth on a cold day. Create your own blend, they're easy to prepare in advance, it's a simple, speedy serve and they provide a great margin.

SOMETHING NEW TO TRY - FAT-WASHING

Definitely a technique that has been growing



SAVOURY AND SPICE
 The Bloody Mary is thought to date back to the 1920s so the idea of savoury and spicy flavours in a cocktail is definitely not a new idea, but the hunger for this style of cocktail is growing at a fast rate. Imaginative mixologists are behind the surge in interest so keep an eye out for umami martinis, porcino old fashioned, spicy margaritas, smoky negronis and much more. Vegetables, bacon, wagyu, salmon - nothing seems to be off limits so it's a great time to experiment.

Pumpkin martini



Reduced Sugar Tulip Muffins



Flavours

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Meets 2024 sugar and salt guidelines - Public Health England

Elevate your
Christmas menus
with Kara



FOOD & INDUSTRY *news*

EDUCATION

Primary School Meals: Who Decides?

Veg Power's recent report, "Primary school meals: Who decides?" examines the decision-making dynamics around school meal uptake and the barriers families face.

The survey, involving 3,000 UK parents and carers, reveals that children significantly influence over 60% of decisions regarding school meals. In households where parents are the sole decision-makers, children are more likely to consume school meals. The survey also shows that 26% of children rarely or never have school meals, with 43% of parents stating they would opt for school meals if they were free. However, for 10-15% of primary-aged children, the issue goes beyond cost, as 54% prefer packed lunches, despite only 1.6% meeting government food standards.

The report also highlights a decline in school meal consumption as children age, with older children eating fewer meals at school. Notably, children from households with incomes between £30,000 and £60,000 consume fewer school meals, reflecting the financial pressures on the "squeezed middle" who are often ineligible for free school meals.

Veg Power advocates for universal free school meals for all primary children or at least extending eligibility to lower-income families. They recommend increasing "per meal" funding to at least £3.00 and improving the school food culture to make lunchtimes



more appealing and inclusive, with an emphasis on greater variety and student input in menu design.

The full report can be accessed here <https://vegpower.org.uk/insight/> or by scanning the QR code



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9%	7%	10%	8%	4%

of an adult's Reference Intake. Typical values per 100g (as sold): 1575kJ / 374kcal



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WAYS TO USE

Custard Powder



Historians seem to concur that custard first appeared in the Middle Ages before flourishing into the limelight and becoming a key

component in many of the treats and sweets we enjoy today. Whether you're looking for a speedy yet sensational pouring custard or an ingredient to lift your favourite biscuits, cakes, puddings, flans and tarts to grandeur, Country Range Custard Powder is the ultimate, adaptable store cupboard ingredient, which is also suitable for vegans.

ABOUT: MARIA CARBONE

A former Country Range Student Chef Challenge champion, Maria Carbone was one of the New City College trio that swept to glory in 2022. Tipped for big things by the judges, Maria followed up the win in 2023 by making the final eight of the National Pastry Chef of the Year competition and finishing runner up.

With the completion of her Level 3 Professional Cookery qualification, Maria spent time working at the renowned Michelin-starred Frog restaurant in London before moving to the kitchen at Chick 'n' Sours, who offer the finest fried chicken and cocktails from their two restaurants and food truck.

"I wanted to see and experience a different part of hospitality and develop my skills in other areas so when the role at Chick 'n' Sours came up, I jumped at it. It's such a vibrant brand with an amazing product so it's been a fantastic place to gain experience and grow," says Maria. "It's hard work but I'm seeing the country, no day is the same and I'm constantly learning."

With pastry still very close to her heart and entrepreneurial energy flowing through her veins, Maria has big plans to launch her own food business in the next few years.



1/ Coconut custard tart

A custard tart is one of the most common ways to use custard and it is a favourite dessert of many. The good thing about this dish is that you can always play with it and give it your own twist by infusing the milk with spices, herbs or nuts. My favourite will always be coconut custard tart with caramelised pineapple for a topping.

2/ Burnt butter ice cream

One of my biggest passions is to make ice cream and custard is the base for numerous ice cream recipes. Make a basic custard and mix with desired flavouring. My choice will always be burnt butter. Burn the butter that is used to make the custard and mix it in with the ice cream. Trust me, you'll fall in love with it.

3/ Choux buns and orange chocolate custard

Airy choux buns filled with orange chocolate custard can be the perfect choice for a petit four - one of my favourite pastries to make.

4/ Sankaya Faktong

This is basically pumpkin and custard. Once in Thailand when I was doing a traditional Thai cuisine cookery course, I learnt how to make this beautiful desert. Steam coconut and palm sugar custard in a pumpkin. A tale of exotic flavours and enchanting aromas, each spoonful is a journey through the lush landscapes of Thailand.

5/ Grano Padano savoury custard

Add Grano Padano, or any cheese of your preference, into the custard without any sugar. Let it set in small containers and add toppings of your choice. I would go for toasted pancetta and chives, it's a great canapé option.

Country Range
Custard Powder
Pack Size:
4 x 3.5kg bags >>



The Country Club



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MASTER STIR-FRYING WITHOUT THE HARD WOK

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The Ken Hom Classic Non-Stick Carbon Steel Wok is your perfect kitchen companion for high-temperature stir-frying. Crafted from lightweight carbon steel, it heats up quickly and evenly, ensuring perfect results every time. The non-stick coating makes food

release and cleanup a breeze. With a 31cm size, it's ideal for all your cooking needs, and the comfortable wooden handle adds a touch of elegance. Its flat base fits various stovetops, except induction. The set includes a lid, wooden utensils, and a recipe book to kickstart your culinary adventures. Whether you're a novice or an experienced cook,

this wok set will enhance your creativity and efficiency in the kitchen.

For your chance to win, enter online or send an email titled 'Ken Hom Wok Set' along with your name, contact details and name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk



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Unleash Your Baking Potential

If, like us, you've been inspired by this month's Melting Pot to create delectable desserts, we have the perfect kitchen companion for you. Whether you're baking bread or whipping up cupcakes, unleash your culinary creativity with the Kenwood Prospero 6-in-1 Compact Stand Mixer.

The Kenwood Prospero KHC29.NOSI is truly a versatile kitchen helper. With its powerful 1000W motor, you can tackle any recipe with ease. The spacious 4.3L stainless steel bowl is perfect for mixing large batches, whether you're kneading dough, whisking eggs, blending



smoothies, or processing food. The multiple attachments, including a dough hook, whisk, K-beater, blender, and food processor, ensure you have the right tool for every job.

Its compact design fits neatly into smaller kitchens, so you don't have to worry about countertop space. Despite its size, it delivers powerful performance, making it suitable for



both novice and seasoned chefs. Cleanup is a breeze too, with dishwasher-safe parts that save you time and effort washing up.

The Kenwood Prospero+ simplifies the cooking process, letting you focus on creativity and fun in the kitchen this mixer makes every step easier and more enjoyable. It's not just a kitchen appliance; it's a partner in your culinary adventures. With the Kenwood Prospero, the possibilities are endless, and your kitchen creations will turn out fantastic.

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You can now enter all of our competitions online. Simply scan this QR code or visit www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk



Closing date for the competition is 31st October 2024. All winners will be notified by 30th November 2024. Postal entries can be sent to: Country Range Group, 4 & 5 Jupiter House, Mercury Rise, Altham Business Park, Altham, Lancashire, BB5 5BY. Full terms and conditions can be found at: www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk/about

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