

## Highland Beef Fillet Steak

*served with Garlic Leeks and Local Seasonal Tatties*



Highland Beef is quintessentially Scottish and tastes as good as it looks! Distinct in its flavour, it has a stronger, more powerful taste than other breeds. The meat is lower in fat and cholesterol due to the way the animal stores its energy reserves. Traditionally a wild, hill breed the fat would be stored around its internal organs and innards. This allowed it to be used in the long Scottish winters when food was scarce. Brig Farm in Perthshire produces its Highland Beef in a manner unique to them in the UK. There is no diluting of the brand, so all animals used for breeding are born and raised on the farm – traceability can be tracked back to the 1800's, a claim that not many could boast. Add to this a hanging time of 4 weeks and you have a product that is of exceptional quality and consistent taste. All cuts are delicious with most people having a favourite; we have chosen the fillet steak for our recipe for its leanness and melt in the mouth texture.

Leeks are hardy Scottish vegetables which are available all winter round. Part of the same family of veg that produce onions and garlic this distinctive tasting vegetable is sweeter than the onion making it a first choice vegetable for adding flavour to a meal without overpowering it. The leek, in many cultures is widely considered to have diuretic healing properties and it is also a well-known antiseptic. Leeks are rich in minerals and vitamins so are a wonderful source of nutrition in the winter months: iron, potassium, magnesium, copper and calcium and vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B9 (folic acid) and C will certainly help ward off flu and colds! Delicious when sautéed in butter or oil, this versatile vegetable can also be baked with cheese or added to soups and stews.

Perthshire's rich agricultural land is the perfect environment in which to grow one of Scotland's best loved foods – The Tattie. From mid October onwards we're into what is known in farming circles as Second Earlies. These are the potatoes that come after the summer new tatties but before the main crop which is only just with us now, in early November. The best second earlies are old-fashioned varieties which can be difficult to come across and certainly won't be available in the supermarkets. Duke of York, a medium to dry tattie and sharps express, drier still, are both wonderfully tasty potatoes. Due to their size they don't bake well and aren't that great for chips but they come into their own when boiled or mashed with lots of Scottish farm butter. Food of the Gods!

Highland Cattle produce only 4-6 fillet steaks per side of beef meaning Brig Farm Shop usually has about 10 packs of 2 each week. This delicious cut is very popular so they do go quickly. Brig is happy to take orders for beef which arrives fresh each week on a Friday.

# Highland Beef Fillet Steak

*served with Garlic Leeks and Local Seasonal Tatties*

## Ingredients:

### Serves 2

2 Highland Beef Fillet Steaks  
1 small leek, cleaned and diced  
1 Scottish garlic clove  
Tablespoon Rapeseed Oil  
1/2kg Sharp's Express or Duke of York Tatties  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Scottish Garlic Butter or Fresh Farm Butter – optional  
125ml Red Wine

## Method:

1. Wash and wipe your tatties and place in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil, reduce heat and leave to simmer for 15 – 20mins.
2. Meanwhile clean and dice the leeks and finely chop the garlic clove.
3. Rub the steaks with rapeseed oil and add to a medium heat frying pan.
4. Note: Due to the low fat content of Highland Beef cooking time is reduced by almost a third.  
So, cook steaks for:  
Rare: 3 mins each side  
Rare to Medium: 4 mins each side  
Medium: 5 mins each side  
Medium to Well: 6 mins each side  
Well: Never do this to Highland Beef! If you have to, 7mins each side.
5. Add the red wine to the pan and cook over a medium heat until the sauce thickens.
6. Place a wok or a deep frying pan on a high heat and once smoking add a tablespoon of rapeseed oil. Add the finely chopped garlic and leeks to the oil and stir-fry for 2 – 3 mins.
7. Drain the tatties and return to the pot, off the heat, to dry.
8. Serve the steak, leeks and tatties on a hot plate.
9. Season to taste and add the garlic butter or fresh farm butter to your steak and tatties if you wish.

We've added carrots to give colour and extra flavour – any seasonal Scottish veg will taste delicious with good quality beef and potatoes.

## Leek and Mushroom Quiche

*and Seasonal Leaves with Brig Dressing*



Feeding a growing family can often be really tricky; with likes and dislikes, different timetables and the demon credit crunch providing a meal that provides nutrition, tastiness and convenience is a real challenge!

Quiche is a great option. It can be eaten hot or cold and is just as good in a lunch box as it is with seasonal vegetables. This delicious quiche picks up the distinctive flavour of the leeks and earthy texture of the mushrooms perfectly; served with seasonal leaves and the tangy lemon dressing it makes an ideal lunch or supper dish. We've gone veggie but add Puddledub bacon bits for a carnivore's alternative!

Eggs are an excellent source of protein and iron and contain almost all of the B vitamins plus useful amounts of vitamin D, as well as some vitamin E. Choose Local and Free Range to ensure freshness and quality; Brig stocks organic and non organic varieties.

We've gone with leeks as a hardy Scottish vegetable which are available all winter round. Part of the same family of veg that produce onions and garlic this distinctive tasting vegetable is sweeter than the onion making it a first choice vegetable for adding flavour to a meal without overpowering it. The leek, in many cultures is widely considered to have diuretic healing properties and it is also a well-known antiseptic. Leeks are rich in minerals and vitamins so are a wonderful source of nutrition in the winter months: iron, potassium, magnesium, copper and calcium and vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B9 (folic acid) and C will certainly help ward off flus and colds! Delicious when sautéed in butter or oil, this versatile vegetable can also be baked with cheese or added to soups and stews.

# Leek and Mushroom Quiche

*and Seasonal Leaves with Brig Dressing*

## Ingredients

### **Serves 4 - 6**

175 g (6 oz) shortcrust pastry  
220gms mushrooms, wiped and sliced  
½ medium leek, diced  
2 tbsp (25 g) 1 oz fresh farm butter  
1 free range egg, plus 1 additional free range egg yolk  
150 ml (1/4 pt) fresh single cream  
1 tsp (5 ml) chopped fresh basil  
salt and freshly ground pepper  
Seasonal leaves

## ***Dressing***

20mls rapeseed oil  
5mls Lemon Vinegar  
Salt and Pepper  
Tsp freshly chopped parsley

## Method

1. Roll out the pastry and use to line a 21.5 cm (8 1/2 inch) flan dish.  
Bake blind in the oven at 200°C (400°F) gas mark 6 for 20 minutes until set.
2. Sauté the mushrooms and leeks gently in the butter for 4 minutes. Drain and place in the flan case.
3. Beat together the egg and yolk, add the fresh cream, basil and seasoning and pour over the mushrooms.
4. Bake at 190°C (375°F) gas mark 5 for about 35 minutes, until just set.
5. Mix all ingredients for dressing together.  
This can be stored in an airtight container or bottle in the fridge for up to one week.
6. Serve the quiche hot or cold with seasonal salad leaves and Brig Dressing

## ***Shortcrust Pastry***

100gms plain flour  
50gms butter  
Water to bind  
Salt and Pepper

1. Rub the butter into the flour until a breadcrumb consistency is achieved.
2. Add the water a small bit at a time until it binds together.
3. Wrap in cling-film and keep in the fridge or freezer.

## Beef Broth



The best thing about winter has to be piping hot bowls of thick, warming soup. Packed full of goodness from Scotland's seasonal vegetables good soup is the perfect welcome home after a hard day's work. Once it's made it's a simple case of reheating and a large bowl of broth and a hunk of bread fills you up nicely.

Like all Scots, I come from a long line of great soup makers. I love the tradition of passing down soup recipes, each family adding their own wee twist to the mix. We've all know that, along with football and cars, grown men in a pub will happily debate at length as to why their mum's soup is the best.

My Grandad made it the old Scots way when a bit of anything available was thrown into the pot and the beef or mutton was fished out and used cold and fatty in his pieces the next day. Not a thing wasted. My mum, of course, makes the best soup ever and the trick I've been assured is to use proper stock and dirty vegetables – no cubes crumbled into hot water or pre peeled carrots here! And it needs to be thick enough to stick to your ribs.

We're going for a Beef Broth here made with the strong tasting Boiling Beef from our Highland Cattle. It works equally well made with chicken to give hen broth or mutton to give Scotch Broth. Traditionally Broth is a bit of everything and in years long ago Scots would eat it as a main meal. It's cheap, nutritious and extremely filling and ingredients can be substituted depending on your own tastes. I'm a bit of a traditionalist in this way – throw what you have in and eat it second or third day when the flavours have all soaked through each other and it's good and thick. Perfect.

# Beef Broth

## Ingredients

1 large leek, sliced  
2 large carrots, 1 sliced and 1 grated  
1 Onion, finely chopped  
3 – 4 Stalk Celery, finely chopped  
1 small Turnip, cut into cubes  
Small – Medium Piece Highland Beef for Boiling  
250gm Broth mix or Pearl Barley  
3 – 5 litres of water depending on how thick you like it!  
Salt and Pepper

## Method

Sweat off the onions in a large soup pan and add the remainder of the vegetables. Cook slowly for a few minutes before adding your water, boiling beef and broth mix. Bring to the boil and simmer for an hour to an hour and a half. Any fat that gathers on the top of the soup (this is particularly relevant when using mutton) can be skimmed off as you cook. Alternatively, pop it in the fridge overnight and remove the disc of solidified fat before reheating.

Season to taste.

You can substitute boiling beef for stock cubes and it works well for vegetarians this way - but don't tell my mum.

## Brig Highland Beef Cottage Pie



Why is it that when you add a layer of mashed potato to anything it immediately becomes fantastically comforting and warming? Nothing beats it in winter months. In our house the more likely it is to stick to your ribs, the better the dish. My son adores his with lots of butter and lots of pepper and warm milk to make it extra creamy. Unfortunately this also brings added calories and fat, so I tend to split the pot and mix my half with mashed carrots for added flavour and goodness. That's the other wonderful thing about mashed potato; they are hugely versatile and can be adapted easily to suit all tastes.

And as a topping on pies you can't beat it. I much prefer potato to pastry and it would seem I'm not alone! Cottage Pie, Shepherd's Pie and Fish Pie are amongst our own nation's favourites but you'll find similar meals the world over. Let's be honest; left over beef and a potato crust is both cheap and nutritious so of course it's going to be universally popular. In Australia it's Potato Pie, New Zealand its potato top pie and in North America you'll find Chinese Pie or cowboy pie. Even the French, with all of their culinary skills have a similar dish called Hachis Parmentier. Being beef lovers down at Brig, we've gone for Cottage Pie. Our Highland Beef's distinct flavour and texture works wonderfully in cottage pie, making it rich and meaty. And because Highland Beef is naturally lower in fat, you don't get a greasy layer on the bottom of your dish. Just piping hot, delicious mince.

The recipe is a traditional one, using peas and carrots and I've stuck to creamy mash as the topping. The great thing here though is that you can vary this to suit your own tastes or veg basket. Mix parsnips or carrot mash through the potato or add mature grated cheddar and mustard to give a pub lunch kick. My favourite variation is a layer of mashed neep in between the beef and the topping; it brings a moist sweetness that is just perfect during cold winter months.

So experiment away! Cottage Pie has been recorded as early as 1791 – so I'm sure anything you do to change it won't be the first time!

This has been proving so popular as a special in our Café that we've added it as a permanent dish when our new menu starts next week.

# Brig Highland Beef Cottage Pie

## Ingredients

2 tbsp rapeseed oil  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 large carrot, chopped chunky  
500g Brig Highland Beef mince  
300ml hot beef stock  
1 – 2 table spoons Worcestershire sauce  
½ cup of frozen peas  
500g floury potatoes – Kerr's Pinks or Maris Pipers are best  
25gms farmshop butter  
3 tbs warmed milk  
Salt and Pepper to season

## Method

Preheat the oven to 180C/fan160C/gas 4.

Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook until clear – about 5 minutes. Add the mince, turn up the heat slightly and stir until browned. Pour in the hot beef stock and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to the boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes.

While the mince is cooking, cut the potatoes into medium-size chunks and put into a large pan of cold salted water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes, or until tender. Drain and return to the pan. Mash well with the warm milk and butter. Season to taste and set to one side.

Uncover the mince, add the peas and cook for a further 5-10 minutes, until most of the liquid is absorbed. Season, then spoon into an ovenproof dish.

Spoon the mash onto the mince. Rough up with a fork and add a few knobs of butter. Bake for 25 minutes, until the mash is golden and crisp. Serve piping hot with crusty bread. YUM!

## Jim Fairlie's Lamb Shank & Elderberry Wine Casserole



When you work with food and feel passionate about local produce you quickly learn that there are many more cuts of meat than what's on the menu at this week's fashionable restaurant. Take the shank; the leg of the animal has bone, meat and just a little bit of fat. This wonderful combination makes it a flavoursome cut with great texture and versatility.

In recent years the shank was relegated to the soup pot. Now don't be mistaken, a piping hot bowl of lamb broth is right up there with the best that Scotland's produce has to offer. Thick and warming, there aren't many soups to beat it. But the shank has much more to offer – as many of our older customers will testify to. During times of hardship, this inexpensive cut of meat was a staple part of people's diet. That said, many remember it not as a poor man's meal but as a moist, meaty casserole full of goodness and taste.

Jim Fairlie, the man responsible for launching Perth Farmers' Market, has been producing quality, Perthshire lamb for many years. In early 2008 he took over Logiealmond Lamb as the tenant farmer. Jim's lamb has been renowned for many years; he famously had Jacques Chirac eat his words following the G8 summit at Gleneagles when the then French Prime Minister had to admit that his assumption that Scottish Lamb wouldn't be as tasty as its French counterpart was completely unfounded and most definitely wrong!

Jim's Logiealmond Lamb is packed full of goodness and consistent quality. Brig stock a full range, butchering the whole animal to give a weekly choice including shanks, racks, chops, shoulder, gigot, kidney's and liver. Customers love the rich flavour and satisfying meatiness it brings to their table.

This dish is perfect for winter. I've tweaked and changed it over the many years I've been using Jim's lamb shanks and the addition of the elderberry wine and parsnips came quite recently. The sweetness of the root veg is a perfect balance to the lamb and the elderberry wine adds a wonderful, fruity depth to the gravy. And with a long, slow cooking time of 2 to 3 hours you'll have the remainder of the bottle to enjoy while it cooks.

# Jim Fairlie's Lamb Shank & Elderberry Wine Casserole

## Ingredients

### *Serves 2*

2 Meaty Lamb Shanks  
2 tablespoon summer harvest rapeseed oil  
1 small red onion  
2 medium carrots  
2 medium parsnips  
Sprig of thyme  
2 bay leaves  
½ litre of lamb or chicken stock  
250ml glass of Cairn O'Mohr Elderberry Wine (optional)  
3 – 4 large Maris Piper potatoes  
25gms butter  
25mls milk, warmed through  
Salt and Pepper to season

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C / Gas Mark 6.
2. Chop the veg into large chunks, coat in rapeseed oil, season and place in the oven for approx 20 mins
3. While the veg is roasting, heat a heavy based frying pan on high and seal the shanks for about two minutes on each side until browned all over.
4. Place the lamb, roast veg and herbs into a casserole dish and cover with the stock and red wine. Cover with foil or a tight lid and cook for 2.5 hours.
5. 40 minutes before the end, boil the potatoes in salted water until soft, drain and mash well with hot milk, and butter. Season to taste
6. Once cooked, place the lamb and veg onto plates remove the bay leaves and thyme and reduce the stock by 2/3 to make a gravy – you may wish to add a little cornflour to thicken.
7. Serve the mash with shanks and roast veg and top with the elderberry wine gravy.

To make this meal go further, pull the meat from the shank, stir into the gravy and roast vegetables and serve with broccoli and crusty bread. You should serve 4 as a mid week supper no problem.

## Plain and Simple Roast Chicken



With all of the publicity that free range chicken has been gaining in the past 18 months you'd be forgiven for thinking it was a new and innovative food concept. The truth is, free range chicken is exactly what your granny would have eaten – and it's likely it would have been fresh from the farm down the road.

I don't think I need to get on my soap box about the horrific conditions surrounding factory farmed birds. Jamie and co have gone a long way to educating the British public on why choosing British, free range and if you can really afford to push the boat out, corn fed, poultry is by far the best choice.

At Brig Farm Shop we endorse and support this wholeheartedly and currently offer an organic free range chicken from Grierson's Organic here in Perth and a Corn Fed Free Range Chicken from Fife. Both would pass Jamie's strict standards with flying colours!

If you've not yet taken the plunge into paying a little bit more for a free range bird and aren't yet convinced it's worth the extra you really don't know what you're missing! Apart from the social and economic benefits – won't you feel all green and saintly!? – the smell wafting round your kitchen while it's cooking beats any glade plug in on the market. The skin is a golden yellow colour, the crisps up beautifully and when you taste it, it's moist, tender and full of flavour.

We've gone for a simple roast chicken here served with local seasonal veg and basted in fresh herbs and Perthshire Rapeseed Oil. Don't save it for Sunday is my only advice.

# Plain and Simple Roast Chicken

## Ingredients

1.5kg – 2kg Free Range Chicken  
1 lemon  
Small bunch fresh thyme or rosemary  
Scottish Garlic Clove  
50mls rapeseed oil  
Salt and Pepper

Seasonal veg and potatoes to serve.

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2. Slice the lemon in half. Insert half the fresh herbs into the cavity and pop the lemon into the end.
3. Crush the garlic cloves and add the remaining herbs and the rapeseed oil. Mix this thoroughly and spoon about half over the chicken. Get your hands in there and rub into the creases at the legs.
4. Place the chicken in a roasting tray and pour over the remaining flavoured oil. Season the chicken generously with sea salt and black pepper.
5. Cover the chicken loosely with foil and roast in the oven for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, remove the foil and roast for another 20-30 minutes and reduce the temperature to 160C-180C/320F-350F/Gas 3-4.
6. Turn off the oven and let the bird rest for at least ten minutes.
7. Stir the pan juices over the hob to heat through, thicken with flour if necessary to make a light, tasty gravy.
8. Carve the chicken and serve with potatoes and vegetables topped with the gravy. Delicious!

## Roast Shoulder of Herdwick Mutton

*with Seasonal Perthshire Vegetables*



Mutton has long since had a reputation as the poor man's meat of choice but to those in the know it is a flavoursome meat which can be used in a variety of dishes. This meat from ovine more than two years old has an intense, rich taste and unique texture. The flavour mellows and sweetens during gentle cooking making it perfect for roasting, stewing and braising. The Herdwick sheep raised on Brig Farm are a hardy, hill breed producing just the right amount of fat to give highly renowned, tasty mutton. Slightly slower at maturing, this ancient breed is unsurpassed in flavour and is delicious at this time of year.

In the recipe below we've used rapeseed oil rather than olive oil. This locally produced oil has come from the August harvest of rapeseed at Fernyfold Farm who use cold pressing to ensure all of the health benefits remain intact; this Scottish oil contains half the saturated fat of olive oil, is as high in "good for you" unsaturated fats and has no trans-fats. It also contains Omega 3 and Vitamin E, both essential for good health and difficult to fit into vegetarian diets. It has a subtle, nutty flavour and is extremely versatile; it works well for dressings and stir-fries and makes tremendous roast potatoes! It's also one of the few single oils that can be heated to high temperatures and used for deep frying.

Fruit vinegars from Dalchonzie in Crieff are a wonderful Scottish alternative to the stringent flavour of traditional varieties. They are wonderful when used in marinades or salad dressings and mixed with rapeseed oil make a fantastic dip that's a healthy alternative to butter with bread.

This unusual mix of flavours is enriched by the raspberry vinegar – the gravy is exceptional! All ingredients are currently in season and production in Perthshire making food miles from farm to plate as low as they can go! Brig Farm Shop stocks all ingredients listed.

# Roast Shoulder of Herdwick Mutton

## *with Seasonal Perthshire Vegetables*

This unusual mix of flavours is enriched by the raspberry vinegar – the gravy is exceptional! All ingredients are currently in season and production in Perthshire making food miles from farm to plate as low as they can go! Brig Farm Shop stocks all ingredients listed.

## Ingredients:

### **Serves 6**

1 shoulder of Brig Herdwick Mutton, boned and rolled – approx 1kg / 2.2lbs  
250mls of Dalchonzie Raspberry Vinegar  
125mls of Fernyfold Farm Rapeseed Oil  
1 large local carrot, washed and sliced  
1 medium local onion, sliced  
1 clove crushed Scottish Garlic  
1 teaspoon local rosemary  
1 teaspoon local thyme  
1 small bay leaf  
Salt and milled pepper  
Corn Flour

### **Marinade:**

Pour the vinegar, rapeseed oil, sliced vegetables, garlic herbs and seasoning into a non metallic roasting dish – metal will react with the vinegar. Place the mutton shoulder into the marinade and leave overnight. If you can, turn the meat occasionally to marinade evenly.

## Method:

1. Preheat your oven to 170C / 325F / Gas Mark 3
2. Drain the shoulder from the liquid and place the meat on a trivet in a casserole dish. Pour over the marinade.
3. Roast for approx. 1 hour and 20mins – as a rule of thumb mutton should be cooked for 25mins per pound and then an additional 25mins. Baste every 20 mins with the marinade.
4. When cooked, remove the meat and allow it to rest. Meanwhile, pour the juices into a saucepan and allow to stand for a few minutes until the fat comes to the surface.
5. Skim off excess fat, reheat the juices and lightly thicken with cornflour, premixed with water. You may wish to add a little stock to bulk out your gravy.
6. Strain the gravy to separate from the veg – remember to remove the bay leaf.
7. Carve into slices and serve with your vegetables and gravy. Delicious!

Cold left-over mutton is delicious in sandwiches with a rich chutney such as Dalchonzie's Aubergine and Pepper chutney.

## **Puddledub Sausage Casserole** *and Kerrs Pink Mash*



From childhood through to pension book one of Scotland's favourite foods has to be the sausage. One of the oldest and most widespread forms of food preservation, the recorded history of sausage making begins in the ninth century B.C. when Homer mentions it in the Odyssey. A high brow beginning for our humble banger!

Traditionally made from beef or pork there are now over 400 sausage varieties in the UK alone. Most meat producers now offer sausages and far from being the off cuts and discarded offal of previous years these have a high, prime meat content, low salt and are stuffed full of quality ingredients.

The wonderful meat producing area we live in makes for some of the tastiest and juiciest sausages Scotland has to offer. I don't know anyone who doesn't like them in one variety or another; thick, Highland Beef sausages between two bits of bread and a dollop of brown sauce; Lamb and Mint Sausages lightly grilled and served with rice and a spicy Moroccan sauce; Wild Boar and Cider, chopped through pasta with a tomato and basil sauce. From Pigs in blankets to Toad in the Hole the glorious sausage brings us the weird and wonderful of the culinary world. And are not perfect, eaten cold from the fridge the following day?

We've gone for Bangers and Mash using Puddledub Pork Sausages and Kerrs Pinks Tatties. The name banger is thought to date back to World War 2 when meat was scarce and butchers used water to bulk up the sausage – the result was, of course, a pan full of banging!

# Puddledub Sausage Casserole

*and Kerrs Pink Mash*

## Ingredients:

1 oz ( 25g ) butter;  
1 lb ( 454g ) Puddledub Pork Sausages – use any variety you like!  
2 medium onions, peeled, cut into wedges;  
2 tbsp plain flour;  
3/4 pint ( 300ml ) ham stock;  
3 large local carrots, chopped and par cooked;  
small cup peas  
1 tbsp Dijon mustard;

### **Mash Potato**

2 lbs ( 1 kg ) potatoes;  
50mls milk  
knob of butter  
salt and pepper

## Method:

Melt the butter in a heavy roasting tin over a medium heat. Pierce the sausages and add to the tin. Cook to colour them lightly before taking them out of the tin.

Add the onion wedges and cook slowly, turning occasionally until golden and softening.

Set the oven to 180 degrees C/ 350 degrees F or Gas Mark 4.

Turn up the heat in the pan and sprinkle in flour. Cook for a couple of minutes whilst stirring to brown, then add the ham stock and bring to the boil to thicken the gravy. Add the sausages and par cooked carrots and bake, uncovered for 30-40 minutes. Add the peas 5 minutes before the end of cooking time. Stir in the mustard & seasoning just before serving.

Place the potatoes in a pan of boiling salted water and cook until tender. Drain once soft and mash with salt and pepper. Warm the milk and add to the potatoes along with the butter. Beat until smooth.

Serve the sausage casserole on a bed of mash.

For a dinner party alternative try venison sausages and use red wine instead of stock and Cannellini beans at the start of cooking instead of peas at the end. Delicious with crusty bread!

## Savoury Smoked Salmon Stack



Sometimes the simplest of food is the best. Smoked Salmon has to be one of nature's most delicious ingredients. Of course, Scottish salmon is amongst the best in the world with many small artisan smokehouses still using traditional smoking methods of production.

The trick, I'm told, is to keep it simple and stick to old fashioned tried and tested methods. At Dunkeld Smoked Salmon they've been smoking fish for over 30 years and have won many prestigious awards for their small, niche range of smoked salmon products.

They dry-cure the fish in salt and smoke it in small kilns using a combination of whisky barrel chips and oak to give it a soft yet distinctive flavour. As well as a traditional smoked salmon they produce a fabulous hot smoked salmon which crumbled through pasta or salad is just heavenly. And don't get me going on their smoked salmon pate; spread it thick on chunky oatcakes and enjoy with a cheeky wee glass of chilled white wine.

This recipe uses a creamy cheese sauce which has always been fantastic with salmon. The strong flavour of the cheddar compliments the delicate smoky fish wonderfully. You can use other seasonal veg – thinly sliced parsnips are delicious here - but I find broccoli adds a bit of colour and gives a nice chunky bite to the smooth sauce.

# Savoury Smoked Salmon Stack

## Ingredients:

### *Serves 4*

100gms plain flour  
1 egg beaten well  
275ml skimmed milk  
Rapeseed oil  
1 small garlic clove  
1 small chopped onion  
1 head broccoli broken into small florets  
200gms pack Dunkeld Smoked Salmon  
30gms farmhouse butter  
40gms plain flour  
275ml skimmed milk  
60gms strong Scottish cheddar  
Tablespoon fresh chopped dill  
Seasoning

## Method:

1. Mix the beaten egg and the milk. Sieve the flour and the salt into a bowl, make a “well” in the centre and gradually whisk in the beaten egg and milk.
2. Heat a wide frying pan, add the rapeseed oil and a ladle of pancake batter. Swirl round to cover the pan and cook for about a minute until the batter begins to bubble through all over.
3. Flip the pancake over – go on, toss it high – and cook for a further minute on the other side. Repeat this 3 times until the batter is complete and you have 4 large pancakes.
4. In a pan, heat some oil and add the garlic and onion until it has softened. Add the broccoli and cook for a further 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. For the sauce, melt the butter in a pan. Add the flour and beat into a roux. Slowly add the milk stirring all the time until thick. Take off the heat and stir in the grated cheese and chopped dill.
6. Add the vegetables to the sauce. Cut the salmon into thick strips and add to the sauce.
7. Place a pancake on a large plate. Spoon a ¼ of the mix down the middle of the pancake and fold the sides into the centre. Roll into a sausage shape and serve with seasonal roasted veggies or winter salad.

## Spicy Perthshire Vegetable Hotpot



There is truly nothing tastier than Scottish vegetables in season. Full of flavour and packed with goodness most are versatile enough to be boiled, steamed, stir fried or roasted. Scotland's seasonality makes for a varied array of vegetables, bringing a different taste to the table almost monthly. We have become so conditioned to expecting vegetables all year round and the truth is, we have an abundance of wonderful varieties right here on our doorstep. Don't be afraid to try new ideas and different ways of cooking old favourites. You'll be surprised at the number of glorious dishes and garnishes you can create with a little imagination.

The experts say that the best way to get your five a day is to use a variety of different coloured fruit and veg. Scotland in October can certainly offer that. Try dark green leafy Broccoli heads packed full of vitamin C, orange carrots with beta-carotene essential for good eyesight, golden butternut squash roasted with mixed seeds, pale green brussels sprouts and red, white or Savoy cabbage, delicious dark green watercress, white cauliflower in soup, runner and French beans to add vitamins A and C to meat and fish dishes and the eternal favourites white onions and mushrooms – great with everything!

Cooked well, vegetables should be al dente, this ensures the vitamins and minerals remain sealed in. Roasting is a wonderful way to enjoy veg and a light drizzle of oil and some mixed herbs and seeds gives a delicious accompaniment to meat and fish, or, makes an entire meal when stirred into pasta, rice or risotto.

Honey is delicious with many different vegetables but is particularly good with carrots and parsnips as it brings out the sweetness of the veg. Local honey eaten all year round can help combat summer hay fever – take a spoonful each day either over your veggies, spread on toast or stirred into hot drinks. Of course, its medicinal uses go further with that old Scottish cold remedy, the hot toddy. Add local honey to hot water and whiskey - if it doesn't cure you it'll certainly cheer you up! Perthshire's local honey comes in two varieties – blossom and heather. The blossom is runny to begin with but will set with time. This is made from the spring and summer pollen and in this area, the fruit farms are a particularly good source of pollen for the bees. In July, the hives are moved to the hills and the bees collect the heather pollen which gives us the rich, strong tasting heather honey.

# Spicy Perthshire Vegetable Hotpot

## Ingredients:

### ***For the Base:***

2 local onions  
3 Scottish Garlic cloves  
100mls lemon juice  
100mls rapeseed oil  
1 dessert spoon honey  
1 teaspoon each of cumin, paprika, turmeric and chilli powder  
Handful of fresh coriander, chopped roughly

### ***For the Hotpot:***

1 tablespoon rapeseed oil  
3 carrots cut into chunks  
3 large parsnips cut into chunks  
3 onions cut into chunks  
4 duke of York potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks  
Half a cauliflower, cut into chunks  
400mls water

### ***To Garnish:***

2 mint leaves, finely chopped  
Spoonful of natural yoghurt

## Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 220C / gas 7.
2. Whizz all of the ingredients for the base into a blender.
3. Tip the vegetables and the oil into a casserole dish and cook on the hob until beginning to brown.
4. Add the base and the water, cover and roast for 45mins. Reduce heat to 180C / Gas 4 and cook for a further 45 mins. .
5. Stir the chopped mint into the yoghurt.
6. Spoon into bowls and serve with the minty yoghurt.

## Venison Burger

*with Kerr's Pinks Wedges and Seasonal Scottish Slaw*



Fletcher's Venison, available at Brig Farm Shop, is farmed in Auchtermuchty. The wide open hill farm is run by husband and wife team Nicola and John Fletcher who are experts in the field of deer management and venison production. Their product is truly superb and they have been featured in programmes by the likes of Gordon Ramsay and Rick Stein. If you don't fancy the task of cooking the burgers from scratch you can buy them ready-made in packs of two or four – these along with Fletcher's VeniSausages are gluten free and suitable for celiac diets.

Potatoes are naturally low in fat and as a good source of carbohydrate, they are essential for energy particularly if you've enrolled in an exercise regime. We've chosen Kerr's pinks for our wedges, an old fashioned variety, floury and dry and perfect for making these oven-baked wedges.

Without seasonal Scottish salad it's often difficult to find an accompaniment to meals. We've used shredded carrots and cabbage bound in low fat mayonnaise to give a tasty coleslaw. If you're being really good, skip the mayo and season with black pepper, lemon juice and mixed herbs.

We've gone for a deliciously lean Venison burger with potato wedges instead of chips – this is guaranteed to be a hit with the whole family. Venison is naturally lean, low in fat and low in cholesterol and comes packed with iron. It has a delicious, rich flavour and in a homemade burger, gives a great texture and consistency. Many are put off of this meat for family meals as the worry is that children will find it too gamey. Not so. My son loves our venison sausages and burgers with a dollop of sauce and let's face it – if it comes in a bun they'll eat it!

# Venison Burger

*with Kerr's Pinks Wedges and Seasonal Scottish Slaw*

## Ingredients:

### **Serves 4**

1/2lb venison mince  
1 clove garlic (optional)  
½ onion chopped finely  
tablespoon rapeseed oil  
Black Pepper  
Wholemeal Bun  
4 large Kerr's Pinks potatoes  
Rapeseed Oil  
¼ small cabbage  
2 carrots

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180C / Gas mark 6.
2. Mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl. This is great fun for kids to get involved in. mix through with your hands and shape into four burgers. Place on a plate, cover with cling film and pop into the fridge while preparing the wedges.
3. Scrub your potatoes but don't peel. Chop into long wedge shape pieces and pat "dry" with a clean tea-towel. Place on a baking tray and drizzle with the rapeseed oil. Turn the wedges so they are coated. Season to taste.
4. Pop the wedges into the hot oven for about 30 mins, turning once half through cooking.
5. Finely shred the cabbage and carrots, mix with mayo or lemon juice, cover and place into fridge.
6. Run oil onto the burgers directly and cook on a griddle pan or under the grill for around 5 minutes each side, depending on how thick you make them. If you stick a skewer or fork into the burger the juices will run clear. Alternatively, eat them medium rare and go for pink juices. Delicious!
7. Serve hot with chutney or relish in a wholemeal bun. Stack up your wedges and take a good side of veggies. Tasty and good for you!

## Wicked Chocolate Cheesecake



All you need is love, but a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt – so said Charles M Schulz and who would disagree? Since the days of the Aztecs chocolate has been used as a gift and associated with passion and love. They believed that it brought spiritual wisdom and heightened energy and, as such, was traditionally served at weddings in drink form as a nuptial aid! And it wasn't just the Aztecs who saw the association between chocolate and love; the scientific name for the cocoa plant, *Theobroma Cacao*, translated from Greek, means "food of the gods".

Real chocolate has none of the added fat or chemicals that mass produced confectionary does. Although unlikely ever to be listed as a health food it is good for you in many ways! Phenylethylamine, a substance found in quality chocolate is part of a group of chemicals known as endorphins. These are found naturally in the body and when they are released into the bloodstream, the mood is lifted. Heightened phenylethylamine levels in the brain have also been linked to "falling in love" – so dare I say, it's scientifically proven to make you feel delicious?

With St Valentine's Day tomorrow, we had to give a truly wicked, rich and decadent recipe for lovers. Smooth and creamy, we've gone for a wonderful chocolate cheesecake using 70% dark chocolate buttons from Perth based company, Wicked Chocolate. If this is too rich for you, mix with some milk, plain or white buttons.

I've mixed the base with stem ginger biscuits from Scottish based McKenzies. I prefer this to a traditional digestive base as it gives another layer of intense flavour. Serve with cold, sharp tasting mixed berries and you'll have won your Valentine's heart in one smooth spoonful.

# Wicked Chocolate Cheesecake

## Ingredients:

150g (5 oz) McKenzie's Stem Ginger Biscuits  
45g (1 1/2 oz) farmhouse butter  
150gms Wicked plain chocolate buttons (or mix with milk and white if you prefer)  
340gm tub of full fat soft cheese such as ricotta or mascarpone  
2 eggs, separated into yolks and whites  
200ml tub crème fraîche  
60gms castor sugar  
3 leaves gelatine  
2 tablespoons milk  
Use a 20cm loose bottom tin or for the romantics, two smaller love heart shaped tins

## Method:

### **Base:**

Melt the butter over a low heat. While this is happening, place the biscuits in a plastic food bag and bash with a rolling pin to crush them.

When the butter is melted, remove from the heat and stir in the biscuit crumbs. Once this binds, press the mixture into the base of the tin and put into the fridge.

### **Filling:**

Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water. Remove it from the heat and let it cool.

Whisk together the soft cheese, yolks, crème fraîche and sugar until smooth.

Prepare the leaves of gelatine as per instructions on the packet.

While they are dissolving, heat the milk in a small saucepan until simmering. Squeeze the excess water from the gelatine and add it to the milk. Whisk until it has dissolved.

Stir the gelatine and milk along with the cooled chocolate into the cheese mixture, until it is all thoroughly blended. In another bowl whisk the egg whites to the soft-peak stage. Fold a tablespoon of egg white into the cheesecake mixture to loosen it, and then carefully fold in the rest of the egg white.

Next pour the mixture on to the prepared base, cover with clingfilm and chill in the fridge for at least 4 hours (or overnight if you can).

About half an hour before serving, take some frozen mixed berries out of the freezer. Serve the cheesecake with cold berries and dust lightly with cocoa powder or icing sugar

## Highland Beef Chilli



Not so much a traditional Scottish Recipe as Tex-Mex, Chilli Beef nevertheless has become a real favourite with many. I've never really had a recipe for this; it's just taken shape over the years and now exists as this simple one pot dish.

In my youth, when bravado meant more to me than my tastebuds, I'd make huge pots of really hot chilli with cheap mince – I was a poor student – and glugs of red wine! I served it up with spicy salsa and tortilla chips to armies of equally poor and gallous mates and we thought we were in culinary heaven. The moral of the story; you can't really go wrong with chilli!

It's a great, really sociable dinner for large numbers; stick it in the middle of the table with bowls of rice, grated cheese, flour tortillas and dips such as salsa, sour cream and guacamole. It makes a perfect meal for friends coming round or feeding squads of hungry kids!

Biased I may be but our Highland Beef makes a perfect chilli. Its rich distinctive taste gives a strong flavour and is the ideal partner for fiery chilli flakes and tomatoes. And because it's naturally leaner than other beefs you don't have that greasy film that sometimes appears in one pot dishes.

It's even better second day – and my oldest mates will testify to that. Our very favourite "after the dancing" food was Nicki's cheap chilli on cheap toast. Gorgeous!

# Highland Beef Chilli

## Ingredients:

### *Serves 4*

1 pack Highland Beef Steak Mince  
2 large Scottish garlic cloves  
1 medium local onion  
1 – 2 teaspoons chilli flakes (depending on your desired "heat")  
1 – 2 teaspoons paprika  
1 red pepper  
1 tin kidney beans  
2 tins chopped tomatoes  
1 tablespoon tomato puree  
Small bunch of fresh coriander  
1 tablespoon rapeseed oil  
Salt and Pepper

## Method:

1. Heat the rapeseed oil in a large pan and add finely chopped garlic and onions.
2. Fry until the onion looks clear and add chunky chopped red pepper. Cook for about 3 minutes.
3. Add the chilli flakes and paprika and stir through.
4. Add the mince, breaking down with a wooden spoon as you go. Brown the mince thoroughly before adding the tins of chopped tomato.
5. Stir well and bring to a bubbling boil. Add the tin of kidney beans.
6. Reduce the heat, cover the pot with a lid and cook for about 20 – 30 mins.
7. Chop the coriander finely and add to the pot – don't stir at this point – about 5 mins before the end of cooking time.
8. Season to your tastes – it doesn't really need much as the chilli and coriander flavour it well.
9. After 5 mins, stir the coriander into the chilli and remove from heat.
10. Serve with rice, tacos or tortillas and sour cream

## Fruity Apple and Bramble Pie



Perthshire is renowned for its wonderful summer soft fruits and gorgeous autumn Orchard fruits but winter can prove a difficult time to stick to seasonal and local produce. Our choice of fruit is more limited and it's tempting to turn to imported fruit to keep up your 5-a-day. Let's be honest, there are only so many carrots and sprouts you can get a child to eat!

That's why, a number of years ago, Rendall's Frozen Fruits based in Blairgowrie came up with the idea of freezing their delicious summer soft fruits and autumn plums and apples as soon as they were picked. This locks in all the flavour and goodness and gives an all year round convenient and delicious product. The myth that frozen isn't as nutritious as fresh has long since been expelled. In fact, fruit picked and blast chilled immediately has more of the beneficial vitamins, antioxidants and minerals than its fresh counterpart, picked and transported hundreds of miles.

Frozen fruit is hugely versatile and is a great addition to all mealtimes. It gives you a great burst of the vitamins needed to fight off winter germs and keep you full of get up and go. Stir it into hot porridge or natural yoghurt at breakfast or blend it with orange juice for a mid morning smoothie – no need to chill! It makes perfect sorbet with little fuss, simply let it thaw a little and stick in the liquidiser with just a little sugar and, if you're cooking for adults, a splash of fizzy wine.

Of course, flu busting smoothies and high energy porridge toppings make frozen fruits a health conscious choice for the winter months. But my favourite way to enjoy it is in a very naughty fruit pie, served hot with cream or ice-cream. It reminds me of my nana, standing in the kitchen rolling out pastry and then spooning the deep red filling into the blind baked case. Thoughts of sitting on the draining board with the heavy mixing bowl, licking leftover berry mixture off of her big wooden spoon, the smell of fresh baked pie wafting through the wee house makes every bite of this wonderful winter pudding so much more delicious. So whether it's your mum's custard with apple crumble or stewed rhubarb stirred into thick creamy rice, try a hot, fruity pudding to whisk you back to childhood and fill you with warmth and comfort.

We've used frozen apple and bramble filling but all Rendalls Frozen Fruits work equally as well and require a similar quantity. The pie filling is also delicious spooned warm over custard, ice-cream or rice pudding. Glorious!

# Fruity Apple and Bramble Pie

## Ingredients

Shortcrust Pastry (to line and lid)  
250gms plain flour  
125gms butter  
70gms Castor Sugar  
½ beaten egg  
water to bind if needed  
Knob Butter  
100gms Castor Sugar  
1kg bag of Apple and Bramble Mix  
1 teaspoon nutmeg  
Dash of Port (optional)  
Cornflour to thicken  
8" diameter Pie Dish, about 1" deep

## Method

### *For The Pastry*

1. Preheat oven to 180C / Gas Mark
2. Rub together flour, sugar and butter until the mixture resembles bread crumbs.
3. Add the egg and mix until it binds together – you may require a little water for this to happen.
4. Take a third out of the mixture and lay aside for the lid.
5. Roll out the remaining pastry until about ½ cm thick. Tip: flour on your work top will make this job much easier.
6. Line your pie dish with the pastry and trim the edge into a neat finish.
7. Bake blind (add a circle of greaseproof paper to the bottom of the pie and pour in either baking beans or broth mix if you don't have any) in oven for 10 – 12 mins.

### *For the Filling*

1. On a medium heat, caramelize the butter, sugar and port and add the apple and bramble mix and nutmeg. This cooks from frozen no problem.
2. Bring to the boil, stirring occasionally.
3. Thicken with corn flour (follow instructions on your corn flour pack) and remove from the heat.

### *To Make Pie*

1. Spoon the filling into the baked pie.
2. Roll out the remaining pastry and top the pie dish with this lid.
3. Sprinkle with brown sugar.
4. Place back in the oven for a further 10 – 15 minutes until the pastry is golden brown.

Serve hot or cold with custard, cream or ice cream. This pie will keep in the fridge for at least three days.

If you're pushed for time or under the banner that says life is too short to make pastry you can cheat and use ready to roll shortcrust pastry!

## Spicy Wild Boar and Elderberry Stew



Traditional winter food has to be the most comforting of all dishes. Thick chunky stews and warm filling soups; all the ingredients thrown into one big pot giving wholesome goodness and wonderful flavours. Simple to make and easy to serve – ladle into bowls and dip in crusty bread – everyone has a favourite one pot wonder.

This wild boar casserole was a wonderful accidental discovery. Andrew Johnson of Hilton Wild Boar called into the farm shop with some new products. We've always stocked his sausages and burgers – they are gloriously fat and juicy – and decided to give his wider range of joints and meat cuts a try. Amongst this was diced boar and being the foodie that I am I was eager to try it out. Of course, doing this while moving house meant that the cupboards were a bit bare and it was a case of what do we have to throw in a pot? The result was a simple, peasant like stew, rich, meaty and oh so comforting.

Wild Boar has been hunted by man for centuries due to its dense flavour and wonderful texture. They have been extinct in Britain since the 17th century but have been reintroduced to farms over the past few years. Low in fat and cholesterol and high in protein the farmed beasts that we have here in Perth have a less gamey flavour than their truly wild cousins.

Due to the richness of the meat the only wine to add to the pot is Cairn O'Mohr's elderberry. Full bodied and almost black in colour this wine is made using fruit from the Carse of Gowrie. Solid, heavy and smooth the remainder of the bottle should be served at room temperature with the casserole or afterwards with oatcakes and strathdon blue cheese.

# Spicy Wild Boar and Elderberry Stew

## Ingredients:

### *Serves 4*

½ kg diced wild boar  
½ small savoy cabbage, leaves sliced thinly  
2 large carrots, scrubbed and sliced thickly  
½ kilo of floury potatoes such as Maris Pipers  
1 red chilli pepper, seeds out, finely chopped  
100mls of Cairn O'Mohr Elderberry wine  
2 to 3 cans chopped tomatoes  
Tablespoon of Rapeseed Oil  
Seasoning  
Sprig of Rosemary (optional)  
Plain flour for dusting

## Method:

Its this easy. Coat the diced meat in flour and brown off in a pan. Add the vegetables and with the lid on cook slowly until they begin to soften (about 15minutes). Add the wine and the tomatoes and give it a good stir through. Add the rosemary and seasoning. You may wish to add a little water at this stage. Leave to cook slowly for a couple of hours while you enjoy a large glass of the remaining wine! Serve with crusty bread.

You can use borlotti or cannellini beans instead of potatoes for an earthy alternative.