



^{IRISH} COUNTRY LIVING **food** Summer

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Sizzle & stack

From smashing burgers
to fresh desserts –
it's time to get grilling
and start chilling

'A single recipe, flavour or smell can bring you back to childhood summers'

Some of my fondest childhood memories involve blueberries. This is because where I grew up, on Canada's east coast, they grow wild.

In late July and early August, they are ripe for the picking and found along the edges of the forest. When I was little, I spent a lot of time with my aunt Joan and uncle Allister, who farmed down the road. Uncle Allister's mother, Annie, also lived with them and would spend hours teaching me things like how to knit and play cards.

Editor | Janine Kennedy
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In high summer, she and Aunt Joan would take to the back roads of our community and I would tag along. We would bring 2 litre ice cream tubs – the ice cream long since eaten – and go to our usual blueberry-picking spots, in the same way many Irish kids go blackberry picking. While picking, I'd gobble as many berries as would make it into my tub. Once we had gathered enough, we would return to the farm for some blueberry muffins. The remaining berries would be frozen, to use throughout the year.

My Aunt Joan is now 86, lives on her own and is still my favourite person to visit. Last summer, when I was home with my daughters, I asked my dad to drive to our old blueberry-picking spot in his pickup truck. What I found was not the same place.

Decades of growth had transformed the old back road. The trees have gotten so thick; the blueberry bushes are no longer producing fruit. I found one bush down the lane and was able to pick enough berries to fill a coffee cup. I brought this measly harvest to Aunt Joan afterwards.

"You might be able to get one muffin out of this," I said, and we both laughed, but I was a bit sad, too.

I am lucky to come from a culture rich in recipes and food customs. I thought of this while visiting Fallon Moore for our Taste Tradition (page 8). I was completely enamoured by her collection of old, handwritten family recipes.

There is so much history at our fingertips, we sometimes forget they are there – the ghosts of our grandparents and great-grandparents, living on in these handwritten notes; sharing food customs from the great beyond.

Summer is a great time for revisiting old family food traditions, and for eating outdoors. In this edition of *Irish Country Living Food*, you'll find plenty of inspiration for summer recipes which take very little effort. After all, who wants to spend all day in the kitchen when the weather is fine?

Ciara Leahy provides perfect wine pairings with her summer sip guide (page 35) and Rosalind Skillen tells us about the art of fermentation through Co Monaghan-based Bia Cultures (p16).

I cheekily included a little taste of my food culture in this edition, and I hope you will be tempted to try my blueberry buckle. One slice takes me back to the hot summers of my youth. Food is transformative like that.

Janine



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The return of Irish Yogurts Clonakilty STREET CARNIVAL

It's carnival time... thousands expected to attend street carnival in vibrant Cork town on 14 June, 2025



Clonakilty is set to come alive once again as the highly anticipated Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival returns for another unforgettable day of food, fun, and festivities on Saturday, 14 June 2025.

Now in its seventh year, this vibrant event has become a staple of the West Cork calendar, drawing thousands of visitors to experience the region's largest outdoor dining celebration.

Pearse Street will be transformed into a colourful, bustling food hub, with long communal tables stretching through the town centre.

Fitness expert, radio and TV broadcaster, author and podcast host Karl Henry will officially open the festivities setting the tone for a full day of upbeat energy, family fun, and irresistible flavours.

Karl is a leading Irish fitness expert and he lives in West Cork with his family.

Speaking at the launch of the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival, he said: "I'm absolutely thrilled to be part of the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival this year. Living in West Cork, I get to experience the incredible sense of community and the amazing food culture every day, and this event really brings all of that to life. It's a celebration of everything that makes this part of the world so special: the passionate local producers, the vibrant town atmosphere, and of course, the fantastic food."

The event will feature food from renowned local venues including The Emmet Hotel, Inchydoney Island Lodge and Spa, Scannell's Bar and Restaurant, Clonakilty Park Hotel, O'Donovan's Hotel, The Alley Garden Bistro, Oak Fire Pizza, Casey's Bar & Restaurant, Lil's, Kirby's @ The Whale's Tail, and The Clonakilty Food Company (Clonakilty Black Pudding).



Karl Henry is gearing up to officially open West Cork's largest outdoor dining festival as he joined, Diarmuid O'Sullivan and Mary T Daly of Irish Yogurts with the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival committee. \ Dermot Sullivan.

In addition to its mouth-watering food offerings, the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival promises a vibrant line-up of live music and entertainment. Headlining the festivities are The Monks, The Kates, and Boola Boom, with performances taking place throughout the day and into the evening, including street entertainers, stilt walkers, jugglers, and face painters.

Diarmuid O'Sullivan, Managing Director of Irish Yogurts Clonakilty and lead sponsor said: "We're incredibly proud to support the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival once again this year. As a company rooted in the heart of Clonakilty, it's a

joy to see the town come alive with such energy, creativity, and community spirit. This event showcases the very best of West Cork, from its passionate food producers to the warm welcome it offers every visitor. We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Karl Henry for launching this year's event, and to all the volunteers, and organisers, who work so hard behind the scenes to make the day such a success. It's truly a celebration of community at its finest."

Meal tickets, which include adult and children's options and portion sizes, will offer a variety of meat, seafood, vegetarian and vegan dishes, along with desserts and drinks.

New for 2025, the kids meals will now be served alongside the adults in the main food tent from 3pm until 5pm, while the Family Fun Zone will remain open from 11am as in previous years, with entertainment continuing into the evening.

Admission to all non-food activities is free, but meal tickets should be pre-booked online at clonakilty.ie to secure a seat at the table.

Booking fees apply. Tickets can also be purchased at O'Donovan's Hotel and Fuchsia Footwear in Clonakilty.

Join the excitement by following [@clonakiltystreetcarnival](https://www.facebook.com/clonakiltystreetcarnival) on Facebook and Instagram.

WIN a family night away PLUS tickets

THE COMPETITION

We have a special prize for one lucky reader of *Irish Country Living*. We are giving away two adult and two children's tickets for the Irish Yogurts Clonakilty Street Carnival plus A one night B&B stay in Inchydoney Island Lodge & Spa for two adults and two children on 14 June.



TO ENTER

Scan this QR code and enter your details to be in with a chance to win. Closing date for the competition is Wednesday, 4 June. Terms and conditions apply.



Fresh Irish food

Irish foods that are light, quick and easy to prep for meals outside in the sun, writes **Rosalind Skillen**

The sun is out and let's be real, no one wants to spend more time than necessary faffing about in a steaming kitchen, especially when the big yellow diva is out in full shine. This is your cue to go on the hunt for foods for family barbecues or picnics in the park. Our summer selection of Irish produce will allow you to spend time on the patio instead of in the kitchen, without compromising on flavour and nutrition.

Green Earth Organics greenearthorganics.ie

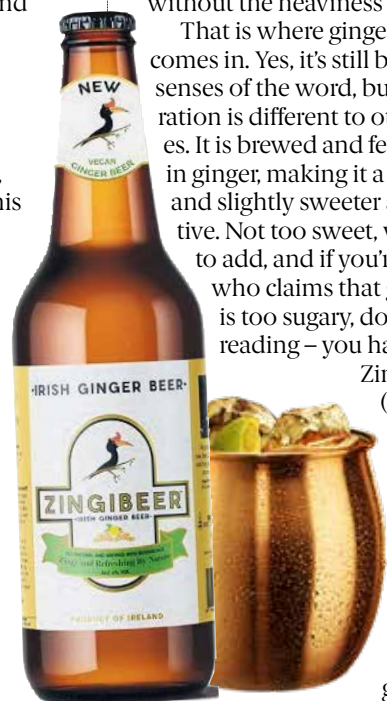
We hear a lot of chat about what the algorithm is "serving" us, and recently, ours have been filled with people unpacking Green Earth Organics boxes.

Green Earth Organics is a farm based just outside of Galway, and their vegetable boxes are available to order wherever you are around the country, starting from €25.49.

They contain a variety of colourful, in-season veggies, like Irish grown chestnut mushrooms, rocket, spinach, potatoes and, especially at this time of year, so much more.

What we are loving this summer are their impressive heads of lettuce (€3.59) – the kind of green goodness you might not stumble across in a supermarket. Sad, wilted lettuce will ruin a salad every time, but these leaves are full of texture and can stand up to even the boldest of toppings and dressings.

These are the lettuce heads worth including in those summer salad bowls, like our recipe on page 11.



Zingbeer zingbeer.ie

On a warm summer's day, sipping a cold beer might feel like a vibe, but hands up: do you want the vibe without the heaviness of the beer?

That is where ginger beer comes in. Yes, it's still beer in all senses of the word, but its preparation is different to other batches. It is brewed and fermented in ginger, making it a lighter and slightly sweeter alternative. Not too sweet, we hasten to add, and if you're a reader who claims that ginger beer is too sugary, don't stop reading – you haven't tried Zingbeer (pictured left, €3.75).

Made with natural ingredients, lemon zest and botanicals, this ginger beer

is fresh and flavourful, with just a bit of a kick. It is owned and operated by father-daughter duo, Kevin and Rachel Byrne, based in Smithfield, Dublin.

Where regular beer might make you feel bloated, Zingbeer is completely gluten-free. Enjoy it on its own, or mix into a summery cocktail with dark rum and lime.

Forest feast forestfeast.com

Not so long ago, there was a time when our snacking go-to options were Tuc biscuits and Tayto. Now we have a lot more options with so many new and nutritious offerings having emerged on the snacking scene. It's far easier to find healthier snacks for your picnic basket, especially when their bright and eye-catching packaging makes them impossible to ignore.

Enter Forest Feast, with their range of nutty and dried fruit snacking options. Made in Co Armagh, the brand has gained traction among mindful food-lovers and are well-known for their roasted savoury



nuts combinations as well as their chocolate-dipped nuts and fruits. One of their bestsellers, their salted dark chocolate almonds previously won a Great Taste Award. Another bestseller is their 60% dark chocolate sour cherries. Both options are a yes from us.

€34.80 for 8 packets (120g each); or you can find individual packets in shops across Ireland.

Kenneth Keavey started Green Earth Organics with his wife Jenny in 2006. Corrandulla, Co Galway. ©Claire Nash



Coolea cheese cooleacheese.com

If you're someone who thinks a cheese board only belongs at Christmastime, let us convince you otherwise. Summer is all about the grazing meal, and cheese boards are the perfect fit for casual dining outdoors.

Admittedly, you'll need a few seasonal upgrades to capture that summer vibe (think about the kinds of crisp accompaniments and those fresh flavours we crave in the heat) but first, the cheese.

It needs to be firm enough to withstand the heat so it won't get too melty. Coolea Cheese, hand-made on the mountain farm of the Willems family in Coolea, Co Cork, ticks all the right boxes for a summer snacking cheese.

Nothing but 100% fresh cow milk is used to produce this farmhouse cheese, and this is the way it has been since the Willems first



began their cheesemaking journey in the late 1970s.

Made using full cream cow milk, nothing is added or taken out. The small enterprise has come a long way from when they started, and their gouda-style cheese is now available in a few different flavours: plain, extra matured, cumin seeds, and the best-selling, Coolea Matured.

Serve on a big platter with plenty of cucumbers, carrots, radishes, and some dipping sauce like hummus.



Sharon Sugrue, Réalt na Mara Shellfish.
©Monika Coghlan.

Réalt na Mara Shellfish realtnamarashellfish.ie

Mussels are associated with Aphrodite, the goddess of love, and they're also said to be able to predict the weather. Whether or not you put any value in superstition, mussels deserve a place at your summer dining table.

Family-run business, Réalt na Mara, supplies fresh purified Irish mussels and oysters nationwide. These are farmed locally, in Castlemaine Harbour, which holds the largest natural mussel bed in Ireland. Micheál Sugrue, Emmet

Casey and Sharon Sugrue are keeping a family tradition alive; their fathers and grandfathers having previously worked together to help develop the Irish aquaculture industry.

The trio have also diversified the business, now offering private tours and educating visitors on the history and biodiversity of the area. A popular way to cook mussels is by steaming them in a white wine sauce with Irish cream, fried off with onions and served with crusty bread.

These mussels are €6 per kilo and available to order online.

O'Donohue's Craft Bakery pennyloaf.ie

Everyone knows about the Irish Mammy's 'salad', in all its randomised forms. Each household has their own unique version, perhaps featuring crinkle-cut beetroot and lettuce masked by a spoonful of coleslaw, and always adorned with rolls of pink, fleshy ham. You might even find canned sweetcorn in there. But one thing is for sure: a bread roll is always a non-negotiable.

If you want to whip up a quick dinner of picky bits, the Penny Loaf from O'Donohue's Craft Bakery in Tullamore will meet your need

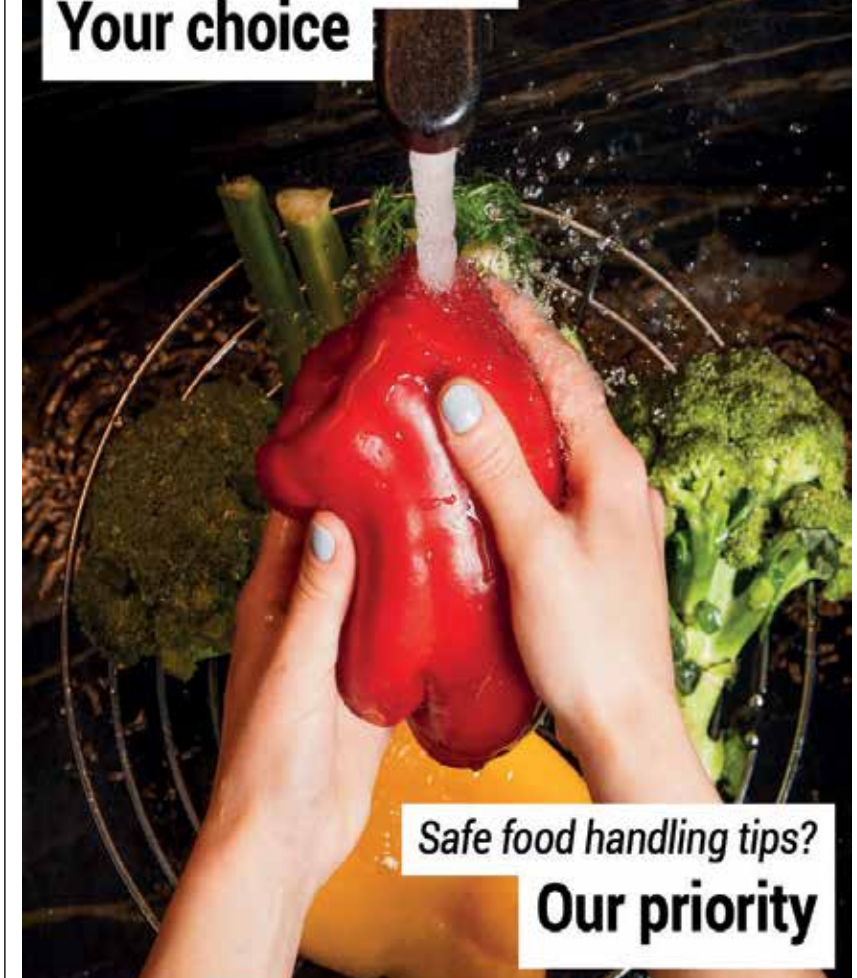
of summer convenience. A fourth-generation family-run business; the small loaves from O'Donohue's Bakery are Ireland's first freshly baked and frozen mini-Irish soda bread to come onto the market.

They are blast frozen on-site after baking and you simply thaw them at home to enjoy with a bit of butter.

These mini-loaves are a quick, easy (and super cute) accompaniment for a summer dinner in the garden. You can choose from varieties of white, brown or seeded loaves, depending on your taste buds, and pick up an eight pack in SuperValu (€4) or Centra stores nationwide.



Seasonal and sustainable? Your choice



Safe food handling tips?
Our priority

Trusted science,
safe food

Safefood

efsa
EUROPEAN FOOD SAFETY AUTHORITY

Go big or go home...having the

PRIME OF YOUR LIFE

Time to fire up the barbecue for the best burger of the season. We used prime Irish beef, a rich bacon jam and artisan farmhouse cheddar to create the burger of our (and probably your) dreams, writes **Janine Kennedy**

Photography Philip Doyle

A summer barbecue just isn't a summer barbecue without a big, delicious burger on offer. You'll find burgers of all descriptions along supermarket shelves this season, but the best ones are made from scratch.

Some burger recipes are more complicated than necessary. They actually require little more than great quality mince and some time and attention.

Did the *Irish Country Living Food* test kitchen go just a bit over the top with this massive double patty burger with bacon jam and Hegarty's clothbound cheddar? Maybe.

Each patty is around 115g, or ¼ lb (just like a certain fast food chain), so if you go with one patty per burger, you are still guaranteed a delicious, stick-to-your-ribs meal.

You might be surprised at how few ingredients go into our burger mix, but we can't reiterate this enough: an amazing burger is all about the quality of your meat.

For an all-beef burger like this one, you want to make sure you are buying prime Irish beef with a high percentage of fat. The higher the fat content, the more flavourful your burger will be.

If you're at the supermarket, we recommend buying mince which is at least 18% fat, but your butcher will be able to make you the perfect burger mince (if you ask nicely).

The ideal ratio you're looking for is around 20% fat to 80% meat.

We like a combination of beef cuts in our burger mince: chuck steak, short rib and even brisket are all really flavourful and, when combined, make a really amazing and memorable burger.



When making burgers, remember: they shrink while cooking so go big. © Ramona Farrelly

Some fanatics swear by eating their burgers medium or medium rare, like you would a steak. While there are many reputable restaurants around the world who serve their burgers this way, we do not recommend anyone try this at home for a few reasons:

- Mince goes through a meat grinder, which means it is exposed to much more bacteria than a whole piece of meat/steak would be.
- This means if your burger is under-done on the inside, it may be carrying bacteria which could cause serious food-borne illness.
- Restaurants who serve burgers medium or medium-rare often mince their own beef on-site, which gives them greater hygienic control, but there is always a mild risk of contracting food-borne illness from under-cooked mince.

• To avoid food-borne illness, always ensure your meat has an internal temperature of 75°C before consuming and never prepare your burger salads and toppings using the same knife or cutting board.

Our perfect homemade burger

Makes 8 single patty burgers

INGREDIENTS

For the bacon jam:

- 450g streaky, rindless bacon
- 200g finely diced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 tsp fresh thyme, finely chopped
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 60g light brown sugar
- 50ml apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp maple syrup

For the burger:

- 1kg prime Irish mince
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 200g Hegarty's clothbound cheddar, grated or sliced
- 8 sesame seed brioche burger buns, lightly toasted
- Chips and toppings, to serve

METHOD

1 Make the bacon jam: preheat the oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with parchment paper. Add the bacon slices to the tray; try to ensure they are laying flat and not overlapping.

2 Cook the bacon in the preheated oven for 15-20 minutes, or until it is crisp. Place the bacon on a platter lined with kitchen towel and collect the excess bacon fat from the tray.

3 Add 1 tbsp of bacon fat to a large, heavy-bottomed pan and heat on medium. Add the finely diced onion and cook for 5-8 minutes, or until soft. Add the shallot and garlic; cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.

4 Once the bacon has cooled, place it on a cutting board and chop until fine crumbs are achieved. Add this finely chopped bacon to the pan with the onions, shallots and garlic. **5** Keeping the heat on medium-high, add the thyme, chilli flakes, black pepper, brown sugar, apple cider vinegar and maple syrup. Stir gently and bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium-low.

6 Cook slowly for 20-25 minutes, until a jammy consistency has been achieved. Stir often to avoid any sticking or burning. If you find the jam is reducing too quickly, lower the heat again – you want the flavours to meld and develop over the 20-25 minutes.

7 When the bacon jam is of a sticky consistency and has cooked down, place it in a dish to cool at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.

8 While the jam is cooling, make the burgers: place the beef mince in a large mixing bowl. Season with the salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce and, using your hands, mix



→ OUR TOPPINGS: Onion, gherkins, lettuce, tomato, mayonnaise, ketchup and yellow mustard.

Making the best burger is all about using the best quality beef you can find, with a high fat-to-meat ratio.

well. Divide the meat into 8 equal balls and place on a tray lined with baking parchment.

9 Fire up your barbecue to a minimum temperature of 190°C, or a maximum of 230°C. Brush the grill with oil and shape each burger into a large disc (burgers shrink as they

cook, so shape each burger into a disc slightly larger than the bun). Place the burgers on the grill and close the lid.

10 Grill the burgers for 5-10 minutes; about 5 minutes per side, until completely cooked through with a nice char on the outside.

11 Toast your burger buns (you can toast them all at the same time in a 200°C oven for 5-8 minutes). While the buns are toasting, turn off the heat on the barbecue (with the burgers still on the grill) and add a dollop of bacon jam and even portions of Hegarty's cheddar to each burger.

Close the lid to let the cheese melt from the residual heat.

12 Place each burger on a toasted bun, then serve with fresh chips, salads and plenty of delicious toppings. Let your guests help themselves to their favourite toppings – then sit back and enjoy.

From shelf to stove: recipes with a history

Much family history is passed down orally through the generations, but it can also be found in our kitchens, writes **Janine Kennedy**

Photography **Claire Nash**

As a child, did you sit on your grandparents' knee while they regaled you with stories about your family? Perhaps there was a great-grandparent who valiantly fought in a war; or maybe an uncle was the first to have a motor car in the community.

Much of our personal history is passed down orally in this way – but not all. Often, you can find family stories sitting quietly on the kitchen shelf in the form of old, handwritten recipes. Like those passed-down stories, handwritten recipes contain details of our past and provide a glimpse into the lives of those who came (and went) before us.

For generations, women have written down recipes and household tips for practical reasons – to remember how to make something, or to steal a recipe they enjoyed from a friend. They likely had no idea they were imparting a form of living history as they scribbled in their notebooks.

Irish food historians have used cookbooks and handwritten recipes from throughout the medieval and late 19th century eras to gain an understanding of not just what we were eating at a certain time in history, but, ultimately, how we were living.

When Fallon Moore was studying for a diploma in Food Culture and Irish Foodways at University College Cork (UCC), she was able to delve deep into her own family's history and food culture. She did this by studying old recipe books, dating from the early part of the 20th century.

"These old cookbooks were stored at home, in my parents' kitchen," she says.



Eileen Keady was Fallon's great-grandmother. She kept detailed recipe books with tips on household entertaining.



"As a child, I would leaf through them and some of these recipes were just so wild to read. [For example], there was a recipe on how to prepare calf's head, which fascinated me."

"The timeline of the collection is not exact, however there are certain facts we can establish," Fallon's research report reads. "On the first page, the author has written her name, Eileen McMahon, and as this

is her maiden name, it indicates that it is pre-1922. There are newspaper clippings and notes throughout the book which carry various dates, the latest being 1963."

"I was curious about these books and I'd always loved reading cookbooks," Fallon tells *Irish Country Living Food*. "When I was doing my diploma, we had a chance to do a project on an original source. I asked if I could focus on these handwritten recipes. While researching, I was tempted to try so many of these recipes [except maybe the calf's head]. But even with that recipe, step one was 'remove brains' – so with many, there was an expected level of skill involved."

Fallon is no stranger to food culture. In Irish food circles, she is well-known as one of the main organisers of the annual Blas na h'Eireann awards. Her father, Artie, founded the awards in 2007 as a way to bring quality food awards to the island of Ireland. Now, Blas has become an annual pilgrimage for the Irish food community.

Culinary history

While food is very much Fallon's life's work, she says she learned much more than culinary history from her family's recipes.

"The collection started with my great-grandmother, Eileen Keady, and then it went to her daughter, Margaret, who was my dad's mother," she says.

"There's a collection of Eileen's handwritten recipes, and there's a huge amount of swapping with friends, where recipes are noted to certain people. There are recipes found on the back of shopping lists and bridge cards, and then the collection was added to by my grandmother."



Fallon Moore (pictured in her Dingle kitchen) with her great-grandmother's egg-less almond paste tart with strawberries.



"They were both domestic science teachers, and my grandmother also worked with the ESB as an instructor [when people first starting having electricity in their homes]. I have her notes from when she'd be going to houses, trying to get people to convert to electric power. They thought the farmers would be up for it, but it was actually the farmers' wives. She was able to talk through things like freezing and preservation."

Fallon discovered that these recipes were a beautiful example of her family's living history; providing insight into who her grandmother and great-grandmother were. Studying also helped explain why her family eats and gathers the way they do.

"As I was researching, I was talking to my dad and his siblings," she says. "There were things we were able to track back. Like rissoles – they would have made these to use up any leftover meat. Rissoles were a family food the siblings would all automatically think of. That was a lovely connection, knowing rissoles were something we continued to eat as children."

Social affairs

The old adage tells us that history tends to repeat itself. This is why it is so important to study our past and, perhaps, re-learn some skills we have lost to modernisation. Fallon says her great-grandmother was keen on avoiding food waste.

"Eileen came from a draper's family and her husband was secretary for the minister of social affairs," Fallon recounts. "She was expected to keep up with society and host dinners. However, my father and his siblings all described her as 'glamorous, but thrifty.'"

"Eileen is a bridge between the past and present," Fallon's research paper concludes. "The connection, for me, from the seeming distant historical collections such as the Townley Hall papers, to our own kitchen and how we live, had the most impact. Rissoles are still a regular on a Monday, macaroni is a family favourite in every one of her grandchildren's houses, and her fudge recipe, which sits alongside notes on how to make coffee in her collection, has been made by her grandchildren [and great-grandchildren]."

Egg-less almond paste Fallon's notes on the recipe:

"This egg-less almond paste recipe is not one of Eileen Keady's own recipes, but one of the little gems shared by her friends and tucked in between the pages of her book, which is almost 100 years old."

"This recipe is written by Mrs Seán Mac Bride. I think that this was Catalina Bulfin, wife of Seán Mac Bride, who was the son of Maud Gonne. A little historical connection."

"Our great-grandfather worked in government buildings at the same time as Seán Mac Bride, so I can only guess that a friendship was struck between the couples and recipe exchanges began."

Makes 1kg of almond paste INGREDIENTS

- 450g caster sugar
- 2 tbsp water
- 450g ground almonds
- 2 tbsp rum (or any other flavouring, like vanilla essence)

METHOD

- 1 Use a strong saucepan which will hold the heat well. Heat this saucepan over medium-low.
 - 2 Add the caster sugar and the water. Stir this mixture constantly over the medium-low heat until the sugar has entirely dissolved.
 - 3 Add the ground almonds and remove from the heat.
 - 4 Stir this mixture thoroughly until a smooth, thick paste has formed and the mixture is well-heated through.
 - 5 Add in the rum or your flavouring of choice (Fallon uses Mounre Dew's The Pooka Hazelnut Poitin) and stir through until completely combined.
 - 6 Store the paste in the fridge in an airtight container for 3-4 days, until ready to use.
- Fallon's suggestion**
- 7 Fallon uses Roll It Pastry, which is Irish, for this recipe. Add a layer of strawberry jam on the base of the pastry, followed by a thick layer of the almond paste. Layer sliced, fresh strawberries over the top, brush the edges of the pastry with beaten egg, and bake in a hot 200°C oven for 25-30 minutes.



Summertime entertaining should be easy and relaxed.



Come dine with me... **AL FRESCO**

You don't want to be stuck in the kitchen when the weather is fine; you want to be outside with friends and family. Try these fool-proof, summer-inspired recipes, writes **Janine Kennedy**

Photography **Philip Doyle**

Food that tastes great don't have to be complicated – especially during the summer months, when fruit and vegetables are at peak freshness. The last thing you want to

do while entertaining is spend too much time in the kitchen. So why not turn your back garden into the ultimate hangout spot? We've got you covered with some amazing recipes to help you entertain.

The summer days ahead have us dreaming about big, bold, crunchy salads; marinated, sun-ripened tomatoes, vibrant flavours and sweet treats using the finest fruits of the season. These recipes from our test kitchen are made to enjoy with fam-

ily and friends (perhaps with a nicely chilled glass of rosé). Whether it's a relaxed back garden barbecue, a picnic, or a spontaneous feast; grab your sunnies, friends and family, and take some time to dine al fresco.

Fresh summer greens with roasted chickpeas, chorizo and crumbled feta cheese

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 400g tinned chickpeas, rinsed and lightly dried on kitchen towel
- 200g good quality chorizo or salami, diced
- 2 tbsp Irish rapeseed oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp each of freshly ground black pepper, garlic granules, onion salt and paprika
- 2 tbsp Irish apple cider vinegar
- 200g fresh summer greens – a mixture of lettuce, spinach, rocket and fresh herbs
- ½ cucumber, seeded and diced
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced

- 100g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 100g feta cheese, crumbled
- 60g lightly toasted pumpkin seeds

METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the drained chickpeas and diced chorizo/salami in a casserole dish. Drizzle over the oil and season with salt, pepper and the listed spices. Give everything a toss and roast in the oven until the chorizo and chickpeas are crispy, about 25 minutes.
- 2 Remove the chickpeas and chorizo from the oven and immediately pour over the apple cider vinegar. Mix the vinegar in, ensuring you pick up all the crispy bits from the bottom of the dish, and set aside to cool slightly.
- 3 Make sure your salad greens are washed and dried in a salad spinner.

Place the mixed greens on a large tray, then sprinkle on the diced cucumber, sliced red onion and halved cherry tomatoes.

4 When the chickpea mixtures has cooled to nearly room temperature, give them another toss to ensure they are coated in the oil/vinegar mixture and sprinkle them evenly over the salad.

5 Add the crumbled feta and pumpkin seeds. Serve immediately.

➔ MAKE IT IRISH

- Use Gubbeen chorizo or The Wooded Pig salami.
- Source your salad greens locally, or grow them yourself.
- Try St Tola or Aran Island Goat's Cheese.

➔ **TOP TIP**
Roast the chickpeas and chorizo the day before and simply reheat before serving.



Fresh summer greens with roasted chickpeas, chorizo and feta is the perfect platter.



Marinated tomato flatbreads with Irish burrata

- Makes 4 flatbreads
- INGREDIENTS
- For the flatbread:
- 8g dry active yeast
 - 30g honey
 - 250ml warm water
 - 30ml Irish rapeseed oil (plus more for coating the dough)
 - 350g strong bread flour
 - 12g fine sea salt
 - Vegetable oil, for frying
- For the marinated tomatoes:
- 400g fresh tomatoes (a variety of plum, vine and cherry tomatoes work well)
 - 50ml Irish rapeseed oil or extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 garlic clove, peeled and finely grated
 - 2 tsp fine sea salt
 - ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- To serve:
- 2 balls of fresh burrata cheese
 - Freshly picked basil leaves

METHOD

1 Make the flatbread dough: in a mixing bowl, add the yeast, honey and warm water. Whisk to combine, then leave for 5-10 minutes for the yeast to activate. When the mixture has bubbled, you know it's ready. If the yeast hasn't activated, your water might be too hot or cold.

2 Add the oil, flour and salt to the water and yeast mixture. Stir lightly with

a fork, then, when the dough starts to come together, use your hands to mix it while still in the bowl. Lightly dust a working surface with flour, turn the dough out and knead for approximately 3-5 minutes. The resulting dough should be smooth, elastic and not too sticky.

3 Wipe out the mixing bowl and drizzle some oil into it. Place the dough into the bowl, turning once to coat the dough with the oil. Cover the bowl with a clean tea towel and leave to rise in a warm spot in the kitchen for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.

4 Punch down the dough and divide into four equal portions. Roll each portion into a ball and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover with a clean tea towel and let it rise for an addition 30 minutes.

5 While the dough is on its second rise, prepare your marinated tomatoes: slice and quarter the larger tomatoes and place in a mixing bowl. Halve the smaller cherry tomatoes and add them in with the larger tomatoes. Drizzle over the oil, then add the salt, pepper and finely grated garlic. Mix well and leave at room temperature until ready to serve.

6 When the flatbread dough has finished its second rise, place a large frying or grill pan on the hob and heat to medium-high. Thinly roll out one piece of flatbread dough on a lightly floured surface. Add some vegetable oil to the preheated pan and gently place the rolled-out dough on top.

7 Cook the flatbread for 1-2 minutes per side. It should bubble and puff up lightly as it cooks. You want a light golden-brown flatbread with darker spots where the dough has bubbled up (similar to an Indian-style naan). Place the cooked flatbread on the same parchment-lined baking tray while you cook the rest.

8 Repeat this process with the remaining three flatbreads; adding more oil to the pan before each piece.

9 To serve, place one flatbread on a large dinner plate. Divide the tomato mixture into four equal portions

and place each portion of marinated tomatoes (along with their juices) onto each flatbread. Slice each ball of burrata in half and gently tear each half over each flatbread. Add fresh basil leaves and another drizzle of oil, then serve immediately.

➔ MAKE IT IRISH

- Try Irish rapeseed oil, like Emerald Oil or Brighter Gold.
- Source Irish-grown tomatoes, like Flynn's or Grantstown Nurseries.
- Use Irish buffalo burrata from Mac-room Buffalo.

Sweet gochujang chicken drumsticks

- Serves 6
- INGREDIENTS
- For the gochujang sauce:
- 100g Korean fermented chilli paste (gochujang), available in Asian shops
 - 100g Irish honey
 - 60g butter
 - 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
 - 2 tsp light soy sauce
- For the chicken:
- 14-16 chicken drumsticks
 - 2 tsp salt
 - ½ tsp freshly ground pepper
 - 1 tsp each of onion salt and garlic granules
 - ½ tsp ground ginger
 - 30g white sesame seeds
 - ½ bunch scallions, thinly sliced

METHOD

1 Make the gochujang sauce: place all the sauce ingredients into a saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat.

2 Simmer the sauce for about 5 minutes, until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Set aside until ready to use.

3 Preheat the oven to 190°C. Line a large baking tray with parchment.

4 Prepare the chicken drumsticks to resemble lollipops: using a clean cutting board and a sharp knife, take a drumstick, and at the part where the meat ends, cut through the meat and tendons in a circular motion. This should release the chicken meat from the far end of the drumstick.

5 Using your hands, place the

Loaded pulled pork nachos

- Serves 4-6
- INGREDIENTS
- For the pulled pork:
- 1kg boneless pork shoulder
 - 2 tbsp light brown sugar
 - 2 tsp fine sea salt
 - ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 tsp each of ground cumin, oregano, onion salt, garlic granules and paprika
 - ½ tsp chilli powder (optional)
 - 2 tbsp Irish rapeseed oil
 - 500ml chicken stock
 - 2 vine tomatoes, halved
 - 2 onions, peeled and halved
 - 1 jalapeno pepper, halved and seeded
- For the pico de gallo:
- 3 vine tomatoes, seeds and pulp removed, very finely diced
 - 1 large onion, very finely diced
 - 1 fresh green chilli, seeds removed, minced
 - 2 tsp fine sea salt
 - Juice of 1 lime
- For the nachos:
- One large bag of good quality corn tortilla chips (about 200g)
 - 30g pickled jalapenos
 - 100g Irish cheddar, grated
 - 100g Irish mozzarella, grated
 - 100g tinned black beans, rinsed
 - 100g sour cream
 - Fresh coriander, to serve
 - Lime wedges, to serve

METHOD

1 Make the pulled pork: place the pork shoulder in a mixing bowl or non-metallic casserole dish. Using a sharp knife, poke holes all over the shoulder. Sprinkle over the brown sugar, salt, pepper and all of the listed spices. Leave to marinate for at least an hour, but overnight in the fridge is best.

2 Preheat the oven to 230°C. Place the halved tomatoes, onion and jala-



peno pepper on a parchment-lined baking tray and roast in the hot oven until blistered and slightly charred, about 20 minutes. Place the vegetables in a blender and add half of the chicken stock. Blend until pureed, then add in the remaining chicken stock. This is the pork's cooking liquid.

3 Place a large oven-safe pot over a high heat. Add the oil and then sear the marinated pork on all sides to seal in the meat. You want a nice

golden-brown colour all over the pork shoulder. At this stage, you can place the pork on a tray until ready to add back into the pot.

5 Preheat the oven to 160°C; you may need to remove an oven rack to ensure the pot will fit.

4 Add the blended cooking liquid to the pot and bring to a simmer, making sure you use a wooden spoon to scrape the bottom to bring up all those nice porky bits. Add the pork shoulder back into the pot (carefully,

➔ TOP TIP

You can make the pulled pork in your slow cooker on low for 10-12 hours a few days before serving.

so as not to splash any hot liquid). Cover with a tight-fitting lid or foil and place in the pre-heated oven.

5 Braise the pork shoulder for 2-3 hours, checking every 30 minutes after the first 1.5 hours. When cooked, the pork is easily shredded with a fork and the liquid will have reduced by about half. Shred the pork and let cool to room temperature in the braising liquid.

6 Make the pico de gallo: combine the finely chopped tomatoes, onions and green chilli in a bowl. Add the salt and lime juice. Mix well and leave to sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes. The juices from the vegetables will release and soften the onion.

7 Time to make the nachos: preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a baking tray with parchment and add ½ of the bag of tortilla chips. Layer with pulled pork, pico de gallo, cheese, black beans and pickled jalapenos. Add the remaining tortilla chips, then add all of those toppings again, finishing with a layer of cheese.

8 Bake the nachos for approximately 15-20 minutes, until the tortillas are crunchy, the cheese bubbly and the pork nice and juicy. Top the nachos with fresh coriander, dollops of sour cream and the last of the pico de gallo. Serve with lime wedges and cold pints of beer. Bring the entire tray to the table and let everyone help themselves.

➔ If you want authentic Mexican ingredients, like dried chillies and corn tortillas, see Viva Mexico (vivamexico.ie) or Picado Mexican (picadomexican.com).

➔ MAKE IT IRISH

- Try Blanco Nino tortilla chips – made in Co Tipperary.
- Use pork from smaller producers, like Newbard Farm in Co Waterford, Andarl Farm in Co Mayo or Lúnasa Farm in Co Clare.



drumstick on its meaty end and push the meat all the way down so it is gathered at the top. It should look a bit like a lollipop when this is done correctly (see picture).

7 Once all of the drumsticks are prepared, place them meat-side-down on the parchment-lined baking sheet. Mix the salt, pepper, onion salt, garlic granules and ground ginger in a small bowl and sprinkle this over the chicken. Mix well and place in the oven.

8 Roast the chicken drumsticks for 30 minutes, or until golden brown and juicy but cooked through.

9 Reheat the gochujang sauce and, using a brush, glaze each lollipop with a generous amount of sauce.

10 Place the chicken on a platter and sprinkle over the sesame seeds and scallions. Serve hot with steamed rice or roasted baby potatoes.

➔ TOP TIP

This also works with chicken wings – just toss the roasted wings into the sauce once they are cooked.

➔ MAKE IT IRISH

- Heat things up even more with an Irish hot honey, like Olly's Farm.
- If you can't find gochujang, use an Irish-made hot sauce like Chimac Korean Hot Sauce or any of the sauces from the Cork Chilli Company.

Blueberry buckle

Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

50g butter, softened

125g caster sugar

1 large egg, room temperature

1 tsp vanilla essence

170g plain flour

1½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp fine sea salt

80ml buttermilk

500g fresh blueberries mixed with 30g plain flour

For the crumb topping:

125g light brown sugar

60g plain flour

60g butter, cold and cubed

For the salted maple caramel:

100g caster sugar

100ml good quality maple syrup

60g butter, cubed and at room temperature

160ml double cream

1 tsp fine sea salt

To serve:

Vanilla ice cream

METHOD

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a square 28cm cake tin with parchment and set aside until ready to use.

2 In a mixing bowl, add the softened butter and caster sugar. Using a hand

mixer, cream together for approximately 3 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and mix for an additional 2 minutes.

3 In a separate bowl, combine the flour, baking powder and salt. Add half of the dry ingredients to the mixture and mix until just combined, then add half the buttermilk. Repeat with the remaining dry ingredients and buttermilk.

4 In another bowl, mix the fresh blueberries with the 30g of flour (this will ensure the berries do not sink to the bottom of the cake while baking).

5 In another bowl, combine all of the ingredients for the crumb topping. Rub together with your fingers until you have a clumpy crumble mixture and everything is well-combined.

6 Using a spatula, scrape the batter into the prepared cake tin. Using a palette knife, spread the batter out evenly along the base of the tin. Place the flour-coated blueberries on top of the batter, then add the crumble over the top of the blueberries.

7 Bake the buckle in the preheated oven for 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool in the tin for 20 minutes, then remove from the

➔ TOP TIP
If you don't like blueberries, try this with Irish in-season plums, gooseberries or apples.



Serve the blueberry buckle warm from the oven with some vanilla ice cream.

tin and cool for an additional 30-45 minutes.

8 While the cake is cooling, make the salted maple caramel: place the caster sugar in a clean saucepan and, stirring constantly, heat over a medium high. The sugar will clump and then melt into a light amber caramel.

9 Once the sugar melts, add the maple syrup and the butter. The mixture will need to melt again. Continue stirring and let it cook slowly until smooth.

10 Add the cream and simmer for

5-8 minutes, until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat and immediately add the sea salt.

11 Slice the cake while still warm and add a scoop of vanilla ice cream over the top. Drizzle over the hot caramel sauce and enjoy.

➔ Once baked, this cake can be frozen for up to a month.

MAKE IT IRISH

- Source Irish-grown blueberries like Derry Duff in west Cork or Banner Berries in Co Clare.
- Use Irish sea salt, like Dingle Sea Salt or Achill Island Sea Salt.



➔ TOP TIP
This recipe will also work with your favourite brownie recipe or a moist chocolate sponge.

Strawberry brunch ice cream cake

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

For the sponge:

225g caster sugar

170g butter, softened

1 tsp vanilla essence

4 large eggs, room temperature

225g self-raising flour

½ tsp fine sea salt

50ml buttermilk

For the strawberry ice cream:

500ml cream

1 tsp vanilla essence

400g tin sweetened condensed milk

500g finely chopped, fresh strawberries

For the crunch:

200g digestive biscuits

60g butter

METHOD

1 Make the sponge: preheat the oven to 160°C. Grease a 25cm springform tin with butter and line the bottom with parchment paper. Set aside.

2 Using a hand mixer, cream the butter and caster sugar together for 3-5 minutes, until light and fluffy. Add

the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add the vanilla and mix to combine.

3 Add the self-raising flour and salt. Mix until just combined, then add the buttermilk and mix until smooth, about 20 seconds.

4 Pour the batter into the prepared tin and bake for approximately 60 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the cake comes out clean. Remove from the oven and cool in the tin for 20 minutes, then carefully remove the cake from the tin and cool completely.

5 Make the ice cream mixture: wash

and chop the strawberries. Add them to a mixing bowl and set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer, add the cream and vanilla. Using the whisk attachment, whisk the cream until soft peaks start to form.

6 With the mixer on low, add the sweetened condensed milk in a thin, constant stream. When the sweetened condensed milk is added, increase the speed and whisk until completely whipped (don't over whip or the cream will split).

7 Add the fresh chopped strawberries to the whipped cream mixture and fold them in.

8 Assemble the cake: using a serrated bread knife, carefully slice the sponge into two equal layers. Line the same springform cake tin with cling film, ensuring there is plenty hanging over the edges. Place one sponge half on the bottom and add half of the ice cream mixture.

9 Add the remaining sponge layer followed by the remaining ice cream (you might have a bit left over – perfect for a sweet snack).

10 Wrap the cake up in the overhanging cling film and place in the freezer for at least 4 hours, or until completely frozen.

11 Let the cake sit at room temperature for 20-30 minutes before serving.

12 In a food processor, blitz the Digestive biscuits with the melted butter and sprinkle the crumb over the top and sides of the cake. Top the cake with more fresh strawberries and slice into generous wedges for serving.

MAKE IT IRISH

- There is no better strawberry than an in-season Irish strawberry, so be sure to find your local grower for this recipe. Try Clarke's Fresh Fruit, Murphy's or The Apple Farm.



Take the cake out of the freezer about 20 minutes before serving.

Fermentation never tasted so good...

FOOD WITH CULTURE

From sauerkraut and kimchi to fermented lemons and beetroot, Co Monaghan-based Bia Cultures take seasonal Irish vegetables to another level, writes **Rosalind Skillen**

Photography Philip Doyle

Although it is an ancient technique that has been practised around the world for centuries, it is really only in the last decade that fermentation has amassed a loyal following of fans.

Fermentation is the process of changing the nutritional properties of food using bacteria. Fermented foods are reported to support our gut health, improve digestion and boost our immunity. Crucially, they also taste good – with sour and tangy notes adding a distinct flavour to a meal – which is perhaps why we're now seeing fermented foods on many restaurant menus. There are a few food fermentation businesses in Ireland, but not all of them use Irish ingredients. This is the focus that Rory Gartlan and Laura Pusceddu have taken with their small business, Bia Cultures.

Rory and Laura's story started out in an equally niche Irish destination, the small island of Inishbofin; found off the coast of Co Galway. Laura and Rory worked together in hospitality on the island before moving to the UK to work as chefs. "Laura was working in fine dining in some Michelin star places, and I was mostly in brunchy spots and cafés," says Rory.

The pair returned to Inishbofin in 2023 to set up a farm-to-fork café. "What we'd harvest in the morning, we'd bring back to the kitchen. That was the first time we really focused on what was available in Ireland, and more specifically what was available on the farm," says Rory.

The farm was big and the café was small, so Rory and Laura started to ferment their surplus vegetables,

➔ **TOP TIP**
If someone buys our jars, they should consume [the food] within six months from the date of production.



Laura Pusceddu and Rory Gartlan at Bia Cultures in Ballybay, Co Monaghan.

"We really enjoyed working with the Irish ingredients and saw there was a gap in the market. We wanted to start our own business, basically," says Rory.

This triggered a move back to Rory's home county of Monaghan to found Bia Cultures, which the pair started in February 2024 with little more than an idea and a mandolin slicer (the same one that Laura uses to cut vegetables as she speaks to *Irish Country Living Food*).

Bia Cultures fast gathered momentum, winning Best Artisan Food Producer only three months later at the Ballymaloe Food Festival 2024, and they are now stocked in 40 independent shops nationwide. Bia Cultures also have a stall at St Anne's Park Market every Saturday and Herbert Park Food Market every Sunday in Dublin.

Only Irish ingredients

The business' success may reflect the growing demand for 'gut-friendly' and 'gut-loving' consumer products, but Rory says they "actually try to stay clear" of that kind of brand marketing. "There's a lot of noise in that [healthy gut] space, and so much labelling, advertising and marketing. We're not nutritionists or microbiologists. We focus on the ingredients."

"We're super proud to be using Irish and that's really why the fermentation process works so well. If there are any kind of chemicals or pesticides [on the vegetables], that works against the whole [fermentation] process."

"Another reason why we use Irish is that the second the vegetable comes out of the soil, it starts to lose its microbes. The faster you get it harvested, salted and into a jar, the better the results. Vegetables from Spain and Holland look fine and taste okay, but they really lack in nutrients as they still have to travel for maybe a week. If you get vegetables from the farmer down the road, you get it fresh and that's what makes a really lively ferment."

"If you get vegetables from a farmer down the road, you get it fresh and that's what makes a really lively ferment"

Bia Cultures source all their vegetables [including radish, carrots, turnips, garlic, onion, mustard leaves and Jerusalem artichokes] from Irish farmers. "Most of our farmers would supply fine dining restaurants. They're very high quality," says Laura. "Generally, they are small scale, organic farmers or if they're not certified organic, they grow with organic practices."

"The rule is if you get good veg-



Making fermented beetroot (sauerbeet).



etables and you process in the right environment, you generally come out with a good result."

Rory and Laura tweak their recipes ever so slightly, depending on what they get from the farmers each week. "The names of the products stay the same, like sauerkraut [fermented cabbage] or sauerbeet [fermented beetroot] but the ingredient list may change a little. It makes it interesting for us as we're not making the same products, week in and week out, with the same ingredients," says Laura.

When asked the crucial question – how on earth do you eat this stuff? – Rory laughs. "That's the biggest, most asked question by a mile. At the markets, people ask: 'I've heard about this stuff, I've heard it's good for you, how the hell do I use it?'"

"Ferments are quite acidic, a little bit sour, a little bit tangy, so they work well with fatty things such as cheese and meats. At Christmas, we were selling it with cheeseboards and for the summer, barbecues. You could have it instead of a pickle in a burger."

Bia Cultures show people exactly what to do with fermented food at their workshops, which they host at food festivals nationwide and also at home in Co Monaghan. "We do a workshop and dinner in our home where we showcase what you can cook," says Rory. "For us, that's the best experience of all because you really have the time to chat and take questions."

The workshop (€70) lasts three and a half hours, and includes a fermented drink and a meal, largely featuring all the elements of fermentation.

Fermenting vegetables

The science of fermentation and all the talk of bacteria and enzymes could easily make you feel like you're back in biology class, but Laura and Rory, with their well-worn aprons

Fermented beetroot (sauerbeet)

Makes one jar

INGREDIENTS

100g beetroot
100g carrot
1 clove garlic, peeled
4g salt (2% of the total weight of vegetables)

METHOD

1. Cut the vegetables using a mandolin slicer or vegetable peeler. Keep the skin on, as this is where most of the bacteria is.
2. Slice garlic and mix with vegetables in a large bowl.
3. Add 4g of salt.
4. Massage the vegetables in salt,

covering every surface. This process draws out water.

5. Layer the vegetables in the jar, pressing down with your hands. Pack the layers tightly to prevent air bubbles until you reach the rim of the jar.
6. Take one slice of beetroot and cut to fit the rim of the jar, essentially making a vegetable lid. Press down to seal and then close with the lid of the jar.
7. Leave the jar on top of a plate for one month, in case some liquid spills out during the fermentation process. If this happens, wipe clean.
8. Leave it to rest for another five months.
9. Open and enjoy.



Journalist Rosalind Skillen attends a food fermentation workshop with Laura Pusceddu making fermented beetroot (sauerbeet).

and hands stained red with beetroot, bring the process to life.

"The meaning of the word is just food that get transformed by microorganisms," explains Laura. "There is a transformation, and it's living at the end of the day. What I put inside, like raw cabbage, and the end product [fermented cabbage] is so different in terms of vitamins, minerals and compounds."

That transformation happens with the help of salt. "There are good and bad bacteria in vegetables, and adding salt creates the right environment for the good bacteria to thrive. Bad bacteria doesn't like salt, the good bacteria does. The bad ones cannot live," says Laura. "The rule is 2% salt. So for 200g vegetables, it's 4g salt."

When it comes to fermenting, Rory and Laura say you can choose whatever vegetables you would like, but texture is important to bear in mind. "Some vegetables become mushy, like cucumbers, so the

softer the vegetable, the less [time] you want to ferment," explains Laura. "We're really lucky in Ireland, because our vegetables are all pretty 'hard'. Most ferments are going to keep their crunch."

Rory and Laura have a 'best before' on the backs of all their jars, dictated by the date of production. "If someone buys our jars, they should consume [the food] within six months from the date of production. Some research says that the peak of the probiotics is about six months after production, and then the probiotics slowly start to go down," says Laura. "After six months, the bacteria starts to taper off."

She stresses that this timeline is just for the nutritional value, not food safety. "The product is so acidic that it can stay good for 10 years; but then it would probably just become vinegar," she says, with a smile.

biacultures.ie



SUMMER IS SERVED

Summer is such a delightful time of year, especially with sunny days and warm evenings, making it the perfect setting for outdoor gatherings with family and friends.

I'm excited to share some of my new summer-inspired recipes with you! I've crafted some delicious dishes that are sure to brighten up your table and impress your guests, like my Charred

Salmon & Prawn Tacos or my Lemon Pistachio Roulade with Raspberries.

Don't forget you can find my cookware range in-store and online at www.dunnesstores.com

Neven Maguire

Neven Maguire and the Simply Better Team



Scan Here to shop the COOK with Neven Maguire range.

Our **NEW Irish Angus Ultimate Steak Burgers & Smash Burgers** are made from 100% Irish Angus Beef. They are so delicious and perfect for the Summer, just season to your taste and enjoy!



The **NEW Simply Better Stone Baked Pizza Bases** from the Dough Bros are fantastic. They are made with a slowly fermented dough and cooked in true Neapolitan style at over 400°C for a light base with a delicious crunch.

We are delighted to work with Florrie from The Scullery, Co. Tipperary to produce our **NEW range of 5 Simply Better Handmade Dressings**. They are so tasty and the perfect addition to your salads, with no artificial flavours, colours or preservatives.



Neven's PICKS

NEW in store this month!

The **NEW range of Simply Better Seasonings** from Epic Spice are so delicious and convenient. They are made with natural ingredients with no additives or preservatives. These seasonings have been sourced, tested and carefully blended to guarantee that your dish is full of flavour.



Strawberry season is finally here and I'm looking forward to using the delicious **Simply Better Irish King Strawberries** in my recipes. My good friend Pat Clarke has been supplying these strawberries to MacNean house for years and they taste amazing!



Selected Stores Only. All products subject to availability.



RECIPE

Seared Salmon with Smashed Potato Salad

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1 Pack Simply Better Charlotte Potatoes
- 4 Tbsp. Simply Better Italian Roast Garlic Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Pack Simply Better Dry Cured Unsmoked Irish Bacon Lardons
- 1 Carton Simply Better Handmade Buttermilk Ranch
- 3 Tbsp. Simply Better Garden Herb Dressing
- 30g Cornichons, finely diced (or use 1 Gherkin)
- 1 Small Red Onion, finely diced
- 2 Packs Simply Better Irish Organic Salmon Darnes
- 2 Tsp. Simply Better Expertly Blended Seafood Seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F/Gas Mark 6). Place the potatoes in a large pan with cold salted water. Bring to the boil and cook for 15-20 minutes until tender. Drain and leave to steam for a few minutes.
2. Spread the potatoes out on a large shallow baking tin and smash down gently with a potato masher. Season with salt and pepper and drizzle over the roast garlic oil. Roast for 40-45 minutes, turning once until the potatoes are crisp and golden.
3. When almost ready to serve, cook the bacon in a non-stick frying pan over a medium heat for about 3-4 minutes until golden. Tip on to a plate. Mix the buttermilk ranch and garden herb dressing together in a bowl with the cornichons or gherkin and red onion, then season to taste.
4. Wipe out the frying pan and put back on a medium to high heat. Dry the salmon darnes with kitchen roll and sprinkle the flesh with the seafood seasoning. Add the olive oil to the pan and add the salmon, skin side down. Cook for 5 minutes, then turn over and cook for another 3 minutes until tender. Set aside to rest.
5. Spread the buttermilk mixture on to plates and pile the smashed crispy potatoes on top, then scatter over the bacon (or you can mix it all together if you prefer - just leave the potatoes to cool a little first). Arrange the salmon darnes on top to serve.



RECIPE

Charred Salmon & Prawn Tacos with Red Chilli Chimichurri

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 2 Packs Simply Better Irish Organic Salmon Darnes
- 1 Pack Simply Better Single Origin Black Tiger Prawns
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Expertly Blended Seafood Seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil PDO Terra Alta
- 1 Carton Simply Better Handmade Buttermilk Ranch
- 1 Pack Simply Better Italian Piadina Romagnola IGP Alla Riminese
- 1 Carton Simply Better Handmade Red Chilli Chimichurri
- 2 Ripe Avocados
- ¼ White Cabbage, cored and finely shredded
- 2 Simply Better Irish Red Chillies, thinly sliced
- Lime Wedges, to serve

Method

1. Preheat a griddle pan or barbecue over a high heat. Dry the salmon and prawns with kitchen paper and then drizzle with a little olive oil and sprinkle with the seafood seasoning. Brush the griddle pan with oil and cook the salmon for 8 minutes until cooked through and nicely charred, turning regularly. Add the prawns and cook for the last 3 minutes, turning once.
2. Heat a large frying pan over a high heat. Sear the flatbreads for about 20 seconds on each side. Spread over a couple of Tbsp. of the buttermilk ranch and then smear with a good dollop of the red chilli chimichurri. Slice the flatbread into four pieces.
3. Cut the avocados in half and remove the stones, then peel off the skin and thinly slice the flesh. Arrange half on each of the flatbreads and then flake the salmon into pieces and scatter on top with the prawns. Finish with the white cabbage and chillies. Put on plates and add lime wedges to serve. Put the rest of the buttermilk ranch and red chilli chimichurri in small dishes to serve alongside.

DUNNES STORES
Simply Better



RECIPE

Short Rib Beef Burritos

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1 Pack Simply Better Irish Angus Boneless Beef Short Ribs
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil PDO Terra Alta
- 1 Jar Simply Better Irish Made Chipotle Sauce
- 1 Tin Simply Better Italian Chopped Tomatoes
- 80g Simply Better Organic Basmati Rice, well rinsed
- 1 Pack Simply Better Italian Piadina Romagnola IGP Alla Riminese
- 1 Carton Simply Butter Organic Red Kidney Beans, drained and rinsed
- 120g Simply Better Greek Barrel Aged Feta Cheese, crumbled
- 2 Ripe Avocados, peeled, stoned & sliced (optional)
- 2 Simply Better Irish Green Chillies, thinly sliced
- 8 Simply Better Irish Tomistar Tomatoes, diced
- Good Handful Fresh Coriander Leaves
- Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- Simply Better Handmade Hot Chilli Sauce, to taste

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C (275°F/Gas Mark 1). Remove the ribs from the packaging and leave to come back to room temperature. Heat a skillet pan until smoking hot over a high heat. Season the ribs generously. Add the oil and then add the ribs. Sear all over until golden brown, turning them regularly with a tongs. Transfer to a plate.
2. Put the chipotle sauce in the skillet pan with the tinned tomatoes. Add the ribs and cover with a lid, then cook for 3 hours until the ribs are meltingly tender. Remove any excess fat from the top with kitchen roll. Then shred the beef with two forks.
3. Put the rice in a small pan of salted boiling water and cook following pack instructions until tender. Drain, then keep warm.
4. Heat a large frying pan over a high heat and warm the wraps for 30 seconds on each side. Warm the kidney beans in a small pan and drain in a sieve. Arrange the rice in lines on each wrap, leaving space at the bottom to fold up and enclose the fillings later.
5. Divide the kidney beans, feta, chipotle beef and avocado, if using between the wraps. Arrange all the remaining fillings and coriander leaves on top. Douse everything generously with hot sauce, then tightly wrap up each burrito, tucking the wrap at the bottom before rolling from the side, so that the filling doesn't fall out. Wrap in tin foil and leave for a few minutes, then cut each one in half and arrange on plates to serve.



RECIPE

The Best Ever Smash Burger

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 2 Packs Simply Better Irish Angus Ultimate Smash Burgers
- 1 Pack Simply Better Seeded Burger Buns
- 1 Pack Simply Better West Cork Co-Op Extra Mature Drinagh Cheddar Slices
- 1 Carton Simply Better Handmade Roasted Garlic Aioli
- Good Handful Green Lettuce, shredded
- 4 Simply Better Irish Tomkin Tomatoes, cut into slices
- 4 Tbsp. Simply Better Handmade Caramelised Red Onion Relish
- 4 Tbsp. Simply Better Handmade Hot Ketchup
- 4 Tbsp. Simply Better Handmade Hot Yellow Mustard
- Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- Simply Better Hand Cut Sweet Potato & Parmesan Fries, to serve

Method

1. Remove the burgers from the fridge and leave at room temperature for 30 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 100°C (200°F/Gas Mark ½). Slice the burger buns in half, then grill or toast the cut sides and set aside.
3. Open the burger packaging and season generously with salt and pepper. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Add two of the beef patties and working quickly cover each one with a square of parchment and use a potato masher or spatula to press each beef patty down as hard as you can. Cook for 2 minutes until crisp and golden brown. Flip the burgers over and cover with the cheese, then put on a lid and cook for another 2 minutes. Transfer to a baking tray and keep warm in the oven while you cook the rest of the burgers in the same way.
4. To assemble the burgers, spread each of the bun bases with 1 Tbsp. of the aioli and then scatter over the lettuce and tomato slices, then season with salt and pepper. Top each one with a smashed patty with melted cheese. Add 1 Tbsp. of the red onion relish to each one and put another smashed patty with melted cheese on top. Smear the bun tops with the hot ketchup and mustard, then use to cover the patties. Arrange on plates with the sweet potato fries and have dipping bowls with the rest of the aioli to serve.



RECIPE

Sweet & Smoky Barbecue Beef Short Ribs

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1 Pack Simply Better Irish Angus Boneless Beef Short Ribs
- 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Expertly Blended Sweet & Smoky Seasoning
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil PDO Terra Alta
- 1 Carton Simply Better Irish Made Slow Cooked Bone Broth
- 5 Heaped Tbsp. Simply Better Irish Made Hot Barbecue Sauce
- 3 Heaped Tbsp. Simply Better Hot Ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Organic Apple Cider Vinegar
- 4 Garlic Cloves, crushed
- Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt & Freshly Ground Black Pepper
- To Serve**
- Baked Simply Better Irish Challenger Jacket Potatoes
- Simply Better Handmade Roasted Handmade Garlic Aioli
- Buttered Corn Ribs seasoned with Simply Better Expertly Blended Sweet & Smoky Seasoning

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 140°C (275°F/Gas Mark 1). Remove the short ribs from the packaging and dry with kitchen paper. Drizzle the short ribs with a little olive oil and then toss in the sweet & smoky seasoning and leave to come back to room temperature.
2. Heat a skillet pan until smoking hot over a high heat. Add the oil and a knob of butter then add the seasoned short ribs. Sear all over until golden brown, turning them regularly with a tongs. Transfer to a plate.
3. Pour the bone broth into the skillet pan and allow to bubble down, scraping the bottom to remove any sediment. Add the hot barbecue and ketchup sauces with the vinegar, stirring to combine. Tip in the garlic and return the short ribs to the pan. Cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 3 hours until the ribs are meltingly tender. Remove any excess fat from the top with kitchen roll and shred the beef with two forks.
4. Serve the pulled beef on top of some baked potatoes and top with roasted garlic aioli and some corn ribs alongside, if liked.



RECIPE

Seared Chicken Tikka with Warm Rice Salad

- Ingredients (Serves 4)*

 - 2 Packs Simply Better Irish Corn Fed Skinless & Boneless Chicken Thigh Fillets
 - 1 Jar Simply Better Aromatic Tikka Masala Cooking Sauce
 - 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Organic Irish Apple Cider Vinegar
 - 250g Simply Better Organic Basmati Rice
 - 4 Spring Onions, thinly sliced (white & green separated)
- 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Irish Cold Pressed Rapeseed Oil
 - 30g Soft Fresh Herbs, leaves removed and roughly chopped (Coriander, Mint, Basil and/ or Flat-Leaf Parsley)
 - 50g Baby Spinach Leaves
 - 1 Pack Simply Better Baby Carrots, trimmed & pared into ribbons
 - Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt & Freshly Ground Pepper

- Method*
- Put the chicken thighs into a dish and mix with 4 Tbsp. of the Tikka sauce and the vinegar. Season generously, then set aside to marinade for at least 30 minutes or overnight is perfect covered with clingfilm.
 - Rinse the rice very well in a sieve under cold running water. Place the rest of the Tikka sauce in a skillet pan, then rinse out the jar with another 100ml of water and add that as well. Add the rice with the white part of the spring onions and season with salt and pepper, then bring to a simmer. Stir once, then cover and reduce the heat. Cook for 10 minutes, then switch off the heat and without removing the lid leave for another 10 minutes to finish cooking.
 - Heat a large non-stick frying pan or griddle pan over a high heat. Add the oil, swirling it around and add the marinated chicken thighs. Reduce the heat to medium, then cook for 3-4 minutes on each side until cooked through and nicely seared.
 - When the chicken is ready, fluff up the rice with a fork and put it in a bowl, scraping any crispy bits from the bottom. Fold in the green parts of the spring onions with the herbs, spinach and carrots. Arrange on a platter and arrange the griddled chicken on top to serve.



RECIPE

Chicken Satay Skewers

- Ingredients (Serves 6-8)*

 - 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Thai Coconut Milk
 - 4 Tbsp. Simply Better Irish Made Soy & Ginger Sauce
 - 2 Tsp. Curry Spice Seasoning
 - 1 Cube Simply Better Thai Palm Sugar
 - 2 Packets Simply Better Irish Corn Fed Skinless & Boneless Chicken Thigh Fillets
- For The Satay Sauce**

 - 370ml Simply Better Thai Coconut Milk
- 120ml Simply Better Irish Made Soy & Ginger Sauce
 - 1 Jar Crunchy Peanut Butter
 - 2 Tbsp Simply Better Simply Better Irish Made Sweet Chilli Sauce
 - 3 Cubes Simply Better Thai Palm Sugar
 - Juice of 1 Lime
 - 4 Tbsp. Chopped Fresh Coriander
 - Simply Better Thai Jasmine Rice and pickled cucumber, to serve

- Method*
- To make the chicken skewers, whisk together the coconut milk in a bowl with the soy sauce, curry spice and palm sugar. Cut each chicken thigh into 3 pieces and fold into marinade. Set aside for at least 1 hour or overnight in the fridge.
 - To make the satay sauce, heat the remaining coconut milk in a small pan with the soy & ginger sauce, peanut butter, sweet chilli sauce, lime juice and palm sugar over a low heat until smooth. Stir in the coriander and leave to cool.
 - Thread the chicken on to skewers and arrange on the barbecue over medium hot coals (or use a griddle pan if you prefer). Cook for 10-12 minutes, turning once or twice, until cooked through and nicely golden.
 - Arrange the chicken satay skewers on plates with dipping bowls of the satay sauce. Add some Thai jasmine rice and pickled cucumber to serve.

Neven's Tip
If you are using wooden skewers on the BBQ soak them for 30 minutes in cold water before cooking to prevent them from burning.



RECIPE

Duck Carnitas

- Ingredients (Serves 4)*

 - 1 Pack Simply Better French Barbary Duck Legs
 - 1 Carton Simply Better Irish Made Free Range Chicken Stock
 - 2 Red Onions, finely chopped
 - 4 Garlic Cloves, finely chopped
 - Finely Grated Rind of 1 Orange
 - 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Sweet & Smoky Seasoning
 - 1 Jar Simply Better Italian Sweet Red Datterini Tomatoes
 - 1 Tbsp. Simply Better Organic Irish Apple Cider Vinegar
- For the wraps**

 - 200g Plain flour, plus extra for dusting
 - 225g Simply Better Authentic Greek Yoghurt (10% fat)
 - 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Italian Extra Virgin Olive Oil, plus a little extra
 - Simply Better Achill Island Sea Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper
 - Pickled Red Onions and Fresh Coriander Leaves, to serve

- Method*
- Remove the duck legs from the packaging and dry with kitchen paper. Season generously all over and then allow to come back up to room temperature.
 - Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F/Gas Mark 6). Add the duck legs, skin side down to a large frying pan. Bring to a medium-high heat and then sear for 4-6 minutes until golden brown, turning once. Set this frying pan aside to use later, then transfer the duck to a 23cm baking tin and roast for 40 minutes until the skin is crisp.
 - Mix half the sweet & smoky seasoning into the stock. Remove the duck from the oven and drain off all the excess fat, then pour in the stock mixture and continue to bake for another 30 minutes until the duck is completely tender. Leave until cool enough to handle, then remove the skin and set aside. Using two forks, tear the duck meat from the bones and then chop with a sharp knife and return it to the baking tin, discarding the bones and duck skin.
 - To make the wraps put the flour into a bowl with a pinch of salt, then add the yoghurt and using your hands mix until evenly distributed. Add the oil and knead for 5 minutes to a soft dough. Put in an oiled bowl, then cover and stand for 30 minutes.
 - Return the frying pan with the duck fat to a medium heat and sauté the onions, garlic and orange rind with the rest of the sweet & smoky seasoning for 8-10 minutes to caramelise. Stir in the tomatoes and vinegar and bubble down until well reduced and thickened. Pour in the duck flavoured stock and reduce again until almost all of the liquid has evaporated. Fold back in the shredded duck, allowing it to warm through.
 - Cut the dough into 12, then on a clean surface roll each ball to a 10cm circle with a rolling pin. Heat a frying pan over a medium-high heat and cook each one for 2-3 minutes until cooked through, turning regularly. Wrap in a clean tea towel while you cook the remainder. Arrange everything on the table so guests can help themselves.



RECIPE

Lemon Pistachio Roulade with Raspberries

Ingredients (Serves 8)

- Softened Butter, for greasing
- 175g Caster Sugar, plus extra to dust
- 6 Simply Better Irish Free Range Corn Fed Large Eggs, separated
- 1 Jar Simply Better Pistachio Spread
- Finely Grated Rind of 1 Lemon
- 1 Carton Simply Better Single Source Irish Jersey Cream
- 3 Tbsp. Simply Better Lemon Curd
- 1 Pack Simply Better Handpicked Raspberries

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas Mark 4). Grease and line a 13.5 inch medium baking tray with buttered parchment paper. Place the sugar and egg yolks into a bowl and whisk with an electric whisk on high speed until light and creamy. The mixture should leave a thick ribbon-like trail when the beaters are lifted. Add the pistachio spread, reserving 1 Tbsp. for decoration with the lemon rind and whisk again until evenly blended.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gently stir two large spoonfuls into the lemon pistachio mixture to loosen the mix, then fold in the rest using a large metal spoon. Turn into the prepared tin and gently level the surface. Bake for 20 minutes until risen and the top feels firm and slightly crisp.
3. Remove the cake from the oven, leave in the tin for 15 minutes, then turn out on to a large piece of parchment paper dusted with caster sugar, then carefully peel off the paper. Using the paper to help, roll up into a tight roulade.
4. Whip the cream until soft peaks have formed then fold in the lemon curd. Carefully unroll the roulade and trim off the edges using a sharp knife, then cover with a layer of whipped cream (any extra can be kept and served in a separate dish). Scatter over most of the raspberries and then roll up like a Swiss roll, starting at the short edge and using the paper to help. It may crack a little but that is all part of the charm! Put on a serving plate and drizzle over the reserved Tbsp. of pistachio spread and decorate with the rest of the raspberries to serve.

Neven's Tip

Add some Simply Better pitted cherries or blueberries or sliced strawberries would also be delicious instead of the raspberries depending on what you fancy!



RECIPE

Raspberry Cheesecake Chocolate Slice

Ingredients (Makes 8)

- 1 Pack Simply Better Handpicked Raspberries, plus extra to decorate if liked
- 75g Caster Sugar
- Good Squeeze of Lemon Juice
- 1 Tsp. Cornflour mixed with 2 Tsp. Water
- 100g Butter
- 150g Plain Flour
- 30g Cocoa Powder
- 100g Light Muscovado Sugar
- 2 Cartons Simply Better Irish Original Cream Cheese
- 1 Carton Italian Mascarpone Cheese
- 2 Simply Better Irish Free Range Corn Fed Large Eggs, at room temperature
- 2 Tsp. Vanilla Extract

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas Mark 4). First make the raspberry sauce. Put the raspberries in a pan over a medium heat with 2 Tbsp. of the sugar and the lemon juice. Mash down with a fork and bring to a simmer, then stir in the cornflour mixture. Continue to cook until it begins to bubble and thicken. Remove from the heat and transfer to a bowl. Set aside to cool down completely.
2. Next make the chocolate base. Melt the butter in a small pan or in the microwave and leave to cool slightly, then stir in the muscovado sugar. Sieve the flour and cocoa powder into the bowl and mix well until combined. Using a spoon or palette knife, press the chocolate mixture into an even layer in a 20cm loose-bottomed square cake tin that has been lined with parchment paper. Bake for 20 minutes until slightly puffed up but not coloured. Remove from the oven and leave to cool down slightly.
3. Reduce the oven to 160°C (325°F/Gas Mark 3). To make the cheesecake filling, put the cream cheese in a large bowl with the mascarpone, eggs and vanilla. Add the remaining 50g of caster sugar and whisk until smooth. Pour this over the chocolate base and then add dollops of the raspberry sauce. Swirl in with a knife and bake for 20-25 minutes until the cheesecake is set around the edges with a very slight wobble in the middle. Leave to cool completely then chill for at least 2 hours. Decorate with more fresh raspberries, if liked and cut into 8 even slices to serve.



RECIPE

Pineapple & Rum Butterscotch Upside Down Cake

Ingredients (Serves 6-8)

- 175g Butter, plus extra for greasing
- 1 Tub Simply Better Handmade Rum Butterscotch Sauce
- 1 Simply Better King Pineapple
- 175g Caster Sugar
- 1 Tsp Vanilla Extract
- 3 Simply Better Irish Free Range Corn Fed Large Eggs
- 175g Self-Raising Flour
- 1 Tsp. Baking Powder
- Good Pinch of Simply Better Achill Sea Salt
- 2 Tbsp. Simply Better Jersey Milk
- Simply Better Irish Made Rum & Raisin Vanilla Ice Cream, to serve

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C (320°F/Gas Mark 3). Grease a 9" round non-stick baking tin and then spoon the rum butterscotch sauce into the bottom of the tin in an even layer. Peel the pineapple and cut into 1cm rings. Stamp or cut out the core from four or five slices and then cut the remainder into quarters removing the cores – you'll need about 425g of prepared pineapple in total. Put the rings around the base of the tin on top of the rum butterscotch sauce and arrange the quarter rings around it, packing them in quite tightly. Retain any excess trimmings and dice them up to add to the batter.
2. Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla together in a large bowl until pale and light. Mix in the eggs with two teaspoons of the flour. Sift the remaining flour, baking powder and salt into the bowl and whisk until combined. Pour in the milk and mix until smooth. Fold in the pineapple then spoon over the arranged pineapple pieces and using a palette knife spread level. Bake for 1 hour, or until risen and golden brown – a skewer inserted into the middle of the cake should come out clean.
3. Leave the cake in the tin to cool for 1 minute and then loosen the sides with a palette knife and carefully turn out on to a cake stand. This cake is best served warm or at room temperature cut into slices on plates with a good scoop of the ice cream.

Kloë designs gardens and leads foraging tours around the Esk Mountain on the Kerry/Cork border.



➔ FORAGING TIPS:

1. Always get a landowner's permission on other people's property.
2. Only forage plants you are 110% sure you've identified correctly.
3. Be mindful of pollution – where you are foraging may have recently been sprayed.
4. Make sure whatever you are foraging is abundant and only take what you need.

She Shoots...from the soil

Kloë Wood Lyndorff creates foraged food experiences in the uplands of west Cork with her eco-food business, Two Green Shoots, writes **Janine Kennedy**

Photography Philip Doyle

In the Caha mountain range, on the Cork-Kerry border, you'll often find Kloë Wood Lyndorff somewhere on the side of a mountain called Esk. This isn't just her home, where her family has been stewarding their land for many years – it is

where she has created a meaningful living in the wilds of west Cork. Kloë has spent her life immersed in and forging connections between people and green spaces. She spent a decade in the UK studying zoology, conservation, sustainable development and permaculture design;

gaining hands-on experience in environmental education and community work.

Eight years ago, she returned to Ireland and founded Two Green Shoots with her partner at the time, Adam, where they focused on design, garden tours and provided botanical themed accommodation. In recent years, Kloë has been connecting visitors with the wider landscape around her family's land. She has found this role challenging, but fulfilling.

"I became custodian to this site as my parents have moved into retirement; carving out some gentler, freer years," she says. "I went from helping care for a garden of a couple of acres to 280ac of land, which is an incredible privilege, but also quite daunting."

Kloë's aim is to restore nature at scale through a blend of regenerative agriculture, continuous cover forestry and eco-food tourism. She runs foraging walks throughout the summer months; giving people the opportunity to see, taste and learn about the site's diverse habitat.

"[The land] is really a large lump of rock which has been classified as 'disadvantaged' from an agricultural perspective," she says. "I see it as an

opportunity to do right by nature. Sheep have grazed this land for the last 20 years, and [this past] December, I welcomed eight Dexter cattle. I am using them in targeted conservation grazing through virtual fencing collars.

"There are no schemes, currently, that support landowners to restore nature as the key priority," she adds. "While I'm actively diversifying and scaling income through eco-tourism, we still rely on agricultural grants to fund the management of the site. This isn't a sustainable model, and I want to move towards a place where the land supports itself financially through a range of products and experiences."

Two Green Shoots

This means the eco-food tourism element of Kloë's business, Two Green Shoots, has become more important than ever. Her forage-and-feast tours not only supplement the farming income, but offer a freedom to continue to try out new ideas.

"People are so hungry to learn more about the landscape and what they might call weeds, which fill their local hedgerows," she says. "I've just seen huge energy from people wanting to find out what these plants are."

Kloë uses food and flavour as a gateway to the incredible world of wild Irish plants. For the summer months, she's offering four wild food and foraging experiences for visitors.

These include her original tour, which is foraging followed by a wild lunch feast; a new afternoon tea tour; and a three-course dinner feast. She has also crafted a package with Outdoors Ireland, which includes a kayak-guided foraging tour of Glengarriff Bay.

Her regular public tours run every Saturday and are open to anyone who wishes to join, while others can be booked privately for individuals or groups.

Kloë offers bespoke tours; tailored to guests' particular interests. "Some people are real foodies; they want to focus in on the flavour, cooking and processing of wild foods," she explains. "For others, it's more about the ecology and ways of working with the land."

"I love the double take people do when they've been battling a plant their whole life and suddenly realise what they've been missing out on," she adds, laughing.

twogreenshoots.com

Nasturtium "Cola"

Makes approximately 1 litre

- INGREDIENTS**
- 500ml water
 - 500g organic sugar
 - 50 nasturtium flowers (stalks and leaves removed)
 - 1 sprig fresh lemon verbena

METHOD

- 1 Add the sugar and water to a heavy-bottomed saucepan and place over medium heat.
- 2 Slowly heat the mixture, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has completely dissolved.
- 3 Add the nasturtium flowers and lemon verbena and mix well to ensure the botanicals are completely submerged in the hot liquid.
- 4 Leave to infuse at room tempera-



ture for 24 to 48 hours. The nasturtium, despite being red and yellow in colour, will turn the mixture a stunning shade of pink.

- 5 Filter the mixture through a sieve lined with a muslin cloth, or through a jelly bag, into a jog or bowl to separate the liquid from the flowers.
- 6 Decant the mixture into cleaned and sterilised jars or bottles and store in the fridge for up to 2 months. Mixture can also be frozen.
- 7 To make the "cola", add 30-60ml of syrup to a glass and add sparkling water to fill. Add plenty of ice and garnish with more lemon verbena and nasturtium petals. This syrup is also delicious drizzled over pancakes and whipped cream, or can make a delicious wine cooler as a cocktail.



Pineapple weed sorbet

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

For the pineapple weed syrup:

- 500ml water
- 500g organic sugar
- 100g pineapple weed, greens and flower heads
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon

For the sorbet:

- 400ml pineapple weed syrup
- 800ml water
- 1 egg white

METHOD

- 1 Make the pineapple weed syrup: in a large saucepan, add the water and sugar. Bring to a boil.
- 2 Simmer this mixture until the

temperature reaches 105°C and is a syrupy consistency.

- 3 Remove from the heat and add the pineapple weed, lemon zest and lemon juice. Let steep (covered) for 24-48 hours.
- 4 Strain the liquid through a jelly bag or sieve lined with muslin cloth. The syrup will keep in a sterilised jar in the fridge for up to two months.
- 5 Make the sorbet: in a large mixing bowl, combine the syrup, water and egg white. Mix well to combine.
- 6 Add this mixture to an ice cream maker. Churn for 30 minutes, or until an ice cream-like consistency is achieved.
- 7 Place the sorbet in a freezer-safe container with a tight-fitting lid. Store in the freezer until ready to serve.

Dandelion root latte

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

For the dandelion root powder:

- 1kg dandelion roots (the larger the better, as they shrink when roasted)

For the latte:

- 2 tsp dandelion root powder
- 500ml milk or Irish oat milk
- 2 tsp Irish honey

METHOD

- 1 Make the dandelion root powder: preheat your oven to 200°C and line a large baking tray with parchment paper.
- 2 Scrub the dandelion roots clean with a stiff vegetable brush under cold running water. You want to make sure you remove all of the dirt from the roots.
- 3 Once the roots are clean, ensure they are all roughly the same size. If they are different sizes, they will not roast evenly. Take the larger roots and slice them down the middle to ensure they are a similar size to the remaining roots.



- 4 Place the cleaned and trimmed dandelion roots on the prepared baking tray and roast in the oven for approximately 20-30 minutes. The roots need to be crunchy and brittle, but not burnt. They will smell sweet once ready.
- 5 Cool completely, then break the roots into coffee bean-sized pieces. If any roots are still bendy and not snapping, you need to roast them for longer. Add the pieces to a cof-

fee grinder and pulverise into a powder.

- 6 Sieve the powder to keep out any larger pieces, and store in an airtight container at room temperature until ready to use.
- 7 Make the lattes: add the dandelion powder to a milk frother and top with the milk of your choice. Froth this drink until hot and creamy, then add the honey and divide into two mugs.

1 Was it always your plan to be a chef?
No, not at all. I played semi-professional rugby for a while. I was on the young Munster team but, unfortunately, I kept getting injured. So I didn't really know what I was going to do. I hadn't tried that hard in school.

On a bit of a whim, I put down cooking as one of my options on the CAO form, and the year I did the Leaving Cert, the course dropped by 70 points. So I got in on pure luck, really. I went to MTU [Munster Technological University] Cork, although we still call it CIT, and I started cooking in The Titanic restaurant in Cobh. That's how it all kicked off.

2 Growing up, who inspired you to cook?

That would definitely be my nan, Ann. My grandparents lived next door to me when I was growing up, so I used to go in and out all the time. Nan was an excellent home cook; she would make everything from scratch. And all her sauces, her baking; so much of it was made from memory, with no recipe. It all tasted amazing, so she really got me interested in food from a young age.

3 From Hayfield Manor, Bastian, Liss Ard and Sage, you have some of the best restaurant names in Cork on your CV. What's the most valuable lesson you learned while working in those kitchens?

"Work for people, not places" – that's the number one lesson I have learned. Alex Petit, head chef of the Trigon Group [whose hotels include The Metropole] is someone I have learned a lot from in the kitchen. I first met him when I was working in the Celtic Ross in Rosscarbery, so I must have been about 18. Even though I was young [at that time], I could see he had things figured out.

He was really good at what he did – calm, hyper-organised and really efficient, but he also had good work-life balance. He's a good family man and present at home, while still managing to do those intense kitchen hours. I later moved to Bastian in Kinsale, but when I went to Liss Ard, I worked there again with Alex.

I was really taken by his emphasis on ingredient provenance, and the importance of pairing them, which is something I didn't know much about until I met him. He's super proud to support farmers, and has a really good relationship with local producers. These are all things I took on board.

4 How daunting was it, stepping into the head chef role in Sage?

Daunting! I mean, it's got such a good name and it was my first head chef role. So yes, it was daunting and hard, at times, but I loved it. We had a great team and I'm really proud of

YES CHIEF!

Cobh native Eoghan O'Flynn has come home to lead the fine dining experience at The Cove at Fota Island Resort, writes **Ciara Leahy**

Photography Donal O'Leary



what we accomplished. It was an interesting time to be there. Sage already had a big name when I joined, but Kevin [Aherne] was really keen to get back to where they started; the original ethos and a return to form. It was a really cool, exciting time to be there.

Unfortunately, the floods [in 2023] put a damper on things but they [Kevin and Reidin] closed the chapter at Sage on a good note.

5 Tell us about exploring the world of fine dining as head chef of The Cove.

For me, fine dining is fun and really gives me a chance to be creative. With à la carte, you have that set format of starters, main course and dessert to follow.

With fine dining, every dish can have elements of each – there are no set rules, which makes it really interesting both for the chef and the diner. When I became head chef at The Cove, my main focus was figur-

ing out our style and how that would be achieved in every dish.

6 So, what is your fine dining style?

I love working with local ingredients and suppliers, but I want a blend of everything. You know, we have incredible producers here in east Cork, but it's exciting to fuse them with flavours from further afield.

I build a dish, and then I pick the best ingredients I can find, and if it's local, that's a bonus.

7 Has fine dining had its time in the spotlight?

It's definitely uncertain at times. What is important to me, with fine dining, is that people can afford to engage with and enjoy it. It should be accessible to everyone. For example, we have a five-course tasting menu for €75, which is very good value for the experience. It's not as long and less intimidating.

Service is also key and Amelia McGrath in our dining room really puts our diners at ease.

So I think it's just really important to get people in at a fair price, get them well-fed and give them a really enjoyable dining experience.

8 Talk us through how you created one of the stand-out courses on the tasting menu – the grilled Garryhinch maitake where the mushrooms are topped with a Korean BBQ glaze, kimchi and button mushrooms.

I was researching ways to cook mushrooms and I came across this method in which you braise them and then press them heavily so the outside gets really caramelised while, inside, it poaches. The Garryhinch mushrooms work perfectly for this – they are meaty and nearly beef-like.

I had made a load of kimchi and I knew that it would pair well. I felt a foam would be a nice, delicate touch. Prior to creating the recipe, we had been getting a lot of button mushrooms in and we always had that little bit more than we needed at the end of the week. So I started dehydrating them, and I built up a stock of powder.

"It's [fine dining] definitely uncertain at times, but what is important to me is fine dining that people can afford and engage with and enjoy, making it accessible to everyone"

To make the foam, I cooked shallots, low and slow, until they were heavily caramelised. Then I mixed in the mushroom powder and mushroom stock, cooking until everything was completely soft. After adding cream and reducing it, we developed the most delicious foam which adds a real elegance to the dish. It is quite moreish.

9 What producer has stood the test of time for you?

I've been dealing with William and Avril Allshire from Caherbeg Free-Range Pork in Rosscarbery for as long as I can remember. The quality of their products is absolutely superb. I really think their free-range pork is the best in Ireland. It's not just the quality, although obviously that is really important – they are really reliable, will never leave us in a bind, and will always help us out if we're in a pinch. Nothing is ever too much trouble.

We work hard to create a consistently great dining experience for our visitors and reliable food producers, both in terms of quality and their delivery, are key to making that happen.



Cobh native Eoghan O'Flynn, head chef at The Cove, Fota Island Resort, Co Cork; below, plating McCarthy's beef fillet with white asparagus, mushroom and madeira; right, chocolate mousse with praline yuzu and strawberry dessert.



John Relihan at
Pitt Bros BBQ
in Dublin.

Fire chef sends SMOKE SIGNALS

➔ **TOP TIP:**
Start off your
steak on the hot
side and move it to a
cooler area so you
don't have any
flare-ups.

Cooking on fire is magic, but also a craft and one which fire chef and native of Duagh, Co Kerry, John Relihan has been immersed in since the early days of his career, writes **Caroline Hennessy**

Photography **Philip Doyle**

The first time I spoke to Kerryman and chef John Relihan was in a field in Dublin while he carefully monitored a breeze block barbecue set-up. It was a balmy August afternoon, with everyone wearing sunglasses and squinting through the aromatic wood smoke that hung over the 2015 Big Grill Festival in Herbert Park.

As I interviewed him about his career up to that date – training in Jamie Oliver's Fifteen restaurant, stints at renowned spots like St John

in London and Incanto in San Francisco, and back to London to work at Jamie's Barbecoa; all by the age of just 29 – John never lost focus on the food, happy to talk to me but always keeping an eagle eye on timings to get the meat just right.

It was his second time at the Big Grill, a barbecue festival that started in 2014. This was a time when Irish people were learning 'grill' or 'barbecue' didn't necessarily have to mean burnt sausages and hockey-puck burgers frazzled to a crisp over flames on a tinfoil tray.

American-style barbecue, based

on African-American cooking methods from the American south, had spread throughout the US and was just starting to make major inroads in Europe. It's a low and slow way of cooking, using indirect flame and making for delicious, fall-apart, richly flavoured food.

That first Big Grill Festival was dedicated to this style of barbecue; bringing international experts, including John, to cook over fire in a smoke-swathed Herbert Park. This was food as theatre. People came to watch chefs labour over their coals and wood, savour the appetite-whet-

ting aromas and eat good food.

The weather was ideal, the beer was flowing, and everyone had a great time. Irish interest in barbecue was piqued: the Big Grill has become a fixture on the food festival menu ever since.

Although he was then based in London, that wasn't the first time that John cooked barbecue in Ireland. The previous weekend he had returned to his rural hometown of Duagh, north Kerry, organising a gathering of international grill chefs and friends to feed the village and raise money for a church bell tower

restoration. With barbecue trailers, a seven-foot brick barbecue pit and even a hangi – a traditional Maori underground oven – it became an event that had local Listowel writer and barman Billy Keane describing "Duagh as the culinary capital of the world, at the moment."

The Naked Chef

Big Grill founder Andy Noonan met John there and invited him to cook in Herbert Park, kicking off an association that has continued every year since.

The boy from Duagh had already made good, but he was only just starting. John's dedication to barbecue and love for the craft of cooking over fire has been a big part of his hard-working career, starting off as a teenager with three jobs.

"I was working at Allos Restaurant in Listowel after school and on weekends. I worked at Johnny Bob's [nightclub] as a cleaner and bartender, and I worked for my uncle doing landscaping," John explains. At that stage – he was 16 – he knew he wanted to be a chef. While looking at Irish catering college options, John caught an episode of *Jamie Oliver's Jamie's Kitchen*, and with "all the young kids messing around," it struck a chord.

This popular documentary series followed Jamie as he attempted to train a rag-tag group of unemployed young people for jobs in the catering industry. John applied for the second intake in 2004, flew from Shannon to London for an interview – his first time leaving the country – met with Jamie, and secured himself a place. The once-upon-a-time Naked Chef became, and remains, a friend to and influence on John.

"During that time," John says, "I learned from Jamie about his passion for food, flavours, herbs and fresh fish. We went to Scotland to eat oysters, visited farms to see where the meat comes from and flew to Italy with Jamie and Gennaro [Contaldo, London-based Italian chef and Jamie's mentor] to taste wine. It gave me a bigger appreciation of food and wine. I could see how much work goes into every job, whether you're a waiter, a winemaker or a chef – everyone has their own responsibility and they all have to appreciate other people's work."

Industrious, passionate and talented, John absorbed these lessons and thrived in the pressurised kitchen environment. When he graduated from Fifteen, he was hungry to learn in other places, and from other chefs.

There were a couple of years spent at Fergus Henderson's nose-to-tail cooking mecca, St John's, in London, and also at San Francisco's Incanto, a restaurant known for Chris Cosentino's offal-oriented Italian cuisine.

A call from Jamie Oliver in 2010 brought him back to London to work at Barbecoa. This was a new barbecue restaurant, which Jamie opened in collaboration with US grilling expert, Adam Perry Lang, with 300 seats and the capacity to feed over 1,000 people a day. John came in as the senior sous chef and rose to the role of executive head chef before he left, five years later.

That was when bringing barbecue to Irish festivals played a part in his next step.

John was getting tired of the London life, saying, "I love London, but it sucks the energy out of you. You don't see anything outside work and your house...you don't get much

time to go and eat in restaurants when you're working 80 to 90 hours a week." So when an offer came in to set up a meat and smoke-focused restaurant in Cork called Holy Smoke, he decided to make the move. "I thought I'd be six months in and out, get the job done and back to London," he says ruefully. "But I'm still here. I fell in love with my own people. In London, you keep your head down, you keep to yourself. In Cork, everyone was saying 'good morning' as I went to work."

Irish barbecue

His next move was to Dublin: in 2022, John partnered up with Dublin's Pitt Bros BBQ founder, David Stone, to work on the restaurant menu, developing a range of branded sauces and rubs – now in more than 100 outlets around Ireland – and figure out a festival offering. It was great pairing.

On George's Street since 2013, Pitt Bros was an early adopter; one of the earliest barbecue restaurants in the country, always careful when it comes to sourcing (the meats are from FX Buckley) and slowly smoking over wood for the best flavour. They were at the Big Grill that first year in 2014 and have returned for every festival since, with John involved for the last three years.

The Big Grill is far from the only place you'll find barbecue these days, with most festivals featuring at least one truck with pulled pork, brisket and buffalo wings.

Barbecue is also a part of Bord Bia Bloom at the Phoenix Park (29 May to 2 June), which is where you'll next find John, cooking with fire. "It's a primal thing," he says. "When people are at something like Bloom, they see the smoke rising and are drawn to it. When you eat food cooked over fire, it's been slow-cooked – something like brisket takes up to 11 hours – that's when the magic happens and you can appreciate the time dedicated to it." Just follow the smoke.

JOHN'S TOP GRILLING TIPS

1. All year barbecue

"We are instinctively drawn to the sight of meat cooking over fire," says John, "and we should do it all year round, not just in the summer. If you're new to barbecue, buy a simple grill, a firelighter and some good fuel. Fuego Fuels and Goodwood Fuels are Irish companies that sell charcoal with no weird chemicals. Spend the money on charcoal – you'll only need a handful."

2. Heat zones

"Think about the barbecue like a pizza with different heat zones: direct heat for fast cooking, indirect heat for low-and-slow, and a warm zone. You can start off your steak on the hot side and move it [to a cooler area] so that you don't have any flare-ups and it's safe."

3. Local butcher

"Speak to your local butcher. Tell them that you're having a barbecue and pick up steak for you and the family, some chicken, pork and cook it on the fire." For John, cooking it over fire doesn't need to be a big mystery: "there's so much knowledge out there online if people want to give it a go. Don't be afraid. Just light up the barbecue and cook outside."

4. Talk to John

If you have questions about barbecue, find John at Pitt Bros during summer festivals, or @johnrelihan on Instagram. He's always happy to talk barbecue: "tell people to feel free to pop me a message about barbecue and I will respond."



John Relihan at Pitt Bros BBQ in Dublin.



Kelly's Resort and Hotel Rossclare is a family-run business in Co Wexford.

Sunny Southeast to Wild Atlantic charm&craic

Ireland is full of hidden food gems. **Ciara Leahy** and **Janine Kennedy** pick their favourite spots for a 2025 summer food adventure

Ciara's pick: Rossclare, Co Wexford

A few years ago, I travelled from Cork to Roscoff and was pleasantly surprised to find a French town full of character and fine foods. It encouraged me to look at Irish port towns with a fresh perspective, specifically Rossclare, which I previously associated with rushed trips to the ferry. But to drive in and out is a missed opportunity.

With a cone in hand, filled with a Wexford strawberry Scúp gelato, wander up the quaint village, crossing onto the pebbled beach and follow the ships as they voyage out to sea.

Where to eat 1. Sea Rooms at Kelly's Resort Hotel

The Sea Rooms at Kelly's Resort Hotel may be the newest dining addition to the family-run hotel, but since it opened in June 2023, it has been the culinary talk of the south-east.



Kilmore Quay crab and a cheese and onion tartlet on the tasting menu at the Sea Rooms; below, Johnstown Castle and Gardens. \ Irish Heritage Trust



Chris Fullham is a young chef with a promising culinary career, making his impressive mark on every one of the seven dishes presented in his tasting menu.

Using the best local ingredients, his scallop ceviche is bright, fresh and exciting with a white miso dressing adding earthy undertones. A beef fillet served with a celeriac purée and black truffle is excellently executed, and my favourite is the barbecued halibut served with white asparagus, garden peas and pesto; the fish beautifully seared on the outside with a delicate flaking within.

Housed in a modern glass building, it has stunning sea views and the service is exceptional. Whether you're staying in the hotel or not, it's a unique dining experience.

The Chef's 7-Course Tasting Menu is €78 per person, while the Chef's 3-Course Dinner Menu is €60 per person. Lunch is served Saturdays and Sundays (from €32 per person). •kellys.ie

2. Karoo Farm Shop and Café

Clint and Nessa Engelbrecht aren't Wexford natives, but the South African couple were captivated by the small town of Killinick, just outside Rossclare. The food offering they have created, fuses international flavours and local ingredients.

For salads, stay local with a grilled goat's cheese option, or go for a Buddha bowl loaded with quinoa and spiced chickpeas. But it's the sandwiches that really impress, including slow-cooked pork on brioche, Asian shredded duck wraps or baked chicken on focaccia with Brie. Explore the farm shop which celebrates local producers.

•karoo.ie

3. Johnstown Castle

You could spend days exploring Johnstown Castle and Gardens. Tour the castle, where you can follow the story of the Grogan family (who, in the 19th century, remodelled the castle), or wander around the historic gardens and woodlands on the 120ac estate.

The menu at the Peacock Café is simple, with a nice selection of sandwiches, paninis and traybakes, for its diverse range of visitors. Through the dishes, they are showcasing the best of Wexford producers. Duncannon fish, Meadowfield Goat's Cheese, Wexford Home Preserves, and of course, Wexford strawberries all feature on the menu. The estate produces and sells its own honey. If you're there when they harvest in August, grab a jar as they sell out fast. •johnstowncastle.ie

Where to stay Kelly's Resort Hotel, Rossclare

The history behind Kelly's Resort Hotel is quite impressive. Starting as tea rooms in 1895 by William J and Mary Kelly, it is now run by their great-grandson Bill Kelly. And the future looks bright with Bill's daughters, Laura and Grace, the fifth-generation of the Kelly family, also involved.

Visitors come for the spectacular sea views, but repeatedly return for the food and experience. What's remarkable about Kelly's is how it seamlessly caters for so many members of the family. Let's start with the kid's buffet at 5pm with all their favourites – pasta, sausages, chips. Full tummies and kids' entertainment means happy parents – who can actually enjoy their dinner in the relaxed surroundings of the Ivy Restaurant. Children can also dine here, and on our visit, it hosted numerous celebratory family meals.

For adults looking for a relaxed dinner, La Marine Bistro is where you'll find an impressive rib-eye steak while Beaches restaurant has a more formal dining experience, where seafood is celebrated with medallions of monkfish and pan-fried Atlantic prawns with puff pastry feuilleté.

The aforementioned Sea Rooms in its impressive glass building, away from the main area of the hotel, gives a modern twist on the fine dining experience.

Remarkably, these diverse dining offerings, all gel together into a hotel experience where everyone – no matter what age – has their taste buds catered for.

•kellys.ie

What to do 1. Explore Hook Lighthouse

A trip to Hook Lighthouse makes for a great road trip, with stunning sea views along Hook Head. Stop at the famous Loftus Hall along the way.

2. National Opera House

The National Opera House has a stellar line up of events for the summer months and make an ideal night out in nearby Wexford town.

Janine's pick: The Burren, Co Clare

The landscape around the Burren National Park, in Co Clare, is equal parts glorious and mystifying

Inland, what looks barren is actually thriving with wild flora and fauna. Along the coast, pristine beaches and seaside villages offer those charming vibes you only find in rural Ireland. Everywhere you look, old stone walls and neolithic sites dot the landscape.

The Burren region is the perfect place for a food-focused road trip.



Janine enjoying the scenery on the shores of Lough Bunny; below; halibut with three cornered leek and beluga caviar at Homestead Cottage, Doolin; The Wild Honey Inn.



Take a few days: start off in Ballyvaughan, work your way along the coast and head back down to Ennistymon. During the summer, there is great food, drink and craic on offer, with something for the whole family.

Where to eat 1. Homestead Cottage, Doolin

Chef Robbie McCauley and his wife, Sophie, run this one Michelin-starred gem in a revamped seaside cottage just outside of Doolin. Here, Robbie creates a hyper-local tasting menu which delights and surprises in equal measure.

On our visit, we particularly enjoyed the delicate halibut topped with beluga caviar. The menu constantly changes; using home-grown, seasonal produce, fresh Co Clare seafood and Burren beef and lamb.

As with many fine dining establishments, your only option is the chef's tasting menu. For food lovers, this is a memorable experience.

The Chef's Tasting Menu is served Thursday to Sunday (booking essential; €125 per person). Lunch is served Saturdays and Sundays (€85 per person). •homesteadcottageDoolin.com

2. The Cheese Press, Ennistymon

When you're a dairy farmer and get a rare night away, you are often on the road home very early the following



morning to get back to your many jobs. This usually means grabbing a breakfast roll in a service station.

If you find yourself in Ennistymon on a Saturday, though, you can get a delicious breakfast, great coffee and stock up on some locally-sourced ingredients at The Cheese Press.

Owned by Sinead Ni Gairbhith, this speciality food shop and eatery is packed full of knickknacks, art and – of course – food. They are home to what they call "Ireland's best cheese toastie", and they aren't too far off the mark: it comprises of local sourdough, savoury tapenade and a variety of deliciously melty Irish cheeses. Pair it with a dirty chai latte made with locally roasted Anam coffee, and you've got yourself a true breakfast of champions (for less than €20 per person).

•wildhoneyinn.com



Dirty Chai Latte at The Cheese Press in Ennistymon. \ Janine Kennedy

3. Linnane's, New Quay

Fancy some fresh fish by the sea? Definitely check out Linnane's Lobster Bar. With stunning scenery, water-side dining and outdoor seating for fine summer afternoons; this is the spot to get your fill of fresh, local seafood.

Start off with a half dozen Flaggy Shore oysters (€17) before moving on to some freshly steamed mussels (€17.50). For mains, try their classic fish and chips in White Hag beer batter (€21.50) or their warm seafood platter for two (€100) with lobster, prawns, crab and mussels with baby potatoes.

•linnanesbar.com

Where to stay Wild Honey Inn, Lisdoonvarna

You can't mess with a classic, and the Wild Honey Inn in Lisdoonvarna has been offering the very best of Irish hospitality since 2009. They have also been the only gastropub in Ireland to be awarded a Michelin star (first in 2017), thanks to their stellar food offering; masterfully executed by chef Aidan McGrath.

While, sadly, Aidan and the team have ended their dinner service offering, the breakfast at the Wild Honey Inn is the best you will find in any hotel or restaurant in the region.

They also have plans for other daytime food experiences over the summer months, so be sure to ask if any are in the works when you make your booking.

This absolute gem is located in the heart of the Burren National Park and is central to all the sights you'll want to see. The beautifully restored inn, with a history that dates back to the mid-1800s, is cosy and comfortable.

Availability for June is tight, but there are still plenty of options for July and August. Rooms start at €200 per night for bed and breakfast.

•wildhoneyinn.com

What to do 1. Burren Perfumery

The family-owned Burren Perfumery has been in business for over 50 years making natural and organic cosmetics and it is so much more than a shop – it is a destination. Wander the garden, check out the scent apothecary room and then decide which of their flagship perfumes is the one for you (I'm a Frond girl, myself).

2. Lough Bunny

Take a picnic basket full of local goodies (like Burren Smokehouse smoked eel, St Tola Goat's Cheese and Sourd'Farrell bread) and set down beside this stunning lake. Enjoy your lunch among the rocks and gently lapping waves.

Summer wine & the living is easy

Crisp whites, elegant rosés and a splash of prosecco – it’s time to uncork the season. These chilled favourites are your passport to a sippable summer, writes **Ciara Leahy**

**Specially Selected
Buenas Vides Viognier**
€8.99, Aldi

Here’s hoping the sunny days we had in May will last all summer long. But let’s be realistic, we live in Ireland and a few dreary, wet spells are inevitable. On those cosy evenings, this rich Viognier is going to do just the trick, especially if you pair it with a Thai curry, a creamy risotto or barbecued pork chops. A viognier from Argentina is not one you’d usually find on Irish wine shelves, but its aromatic flavours should be explored; especially at this price point. It’s got exotic fruit flavours of apricot and peach, with a touch of lemon and jasmine adding nice balance. Some minerality adds to a smooth finish. Mendoza is a region famous for its red wines, but its whites are also well worth trying.



**Specially Selected Baron
Amarillo Godello**
€11.99, Aldi

Let’s head to another part of the world known for its red grapes but which also has some notable whites to offer. Bierzo, in north-west Spain, is known for its mencia grape, but the vibrant godollo (once nearly extinct) is now making a comeback. It could be one to watch in the same way albariño was a few years ago. A crisp white wine, it has fresh fruit flavours of Granny Smith apples, peaches and pears, with a zingy acidity. Plenty of vibrancy and a lingering minerality gives this youthful wine some nice complexity and a clean finish. Think Spanish and tapas when planning your food pairings – try seafood, like grilled white fish or gambas with chorizo. This wine can handle a bit of spice.



**Tesco Finest Monteforte
Pinot Grigio**
€12 on Clubcard, Tesco

I’m all about pairing wine with the finest of fresh ingredients, but sometimes, you just want to chill with a movie, some salty crisps and a nice glass of wine. Time to pour an easy-going Pinot Grigio. Pinot gets a bad rep for being a bit insipid, but there are plenty of good bottles out there to challenge this. Grown on the Cantina di Monteforte’s vineyard, the grapes for this wine are picked slightly later to ensure peak ripeness. As a result, refreshing crisp flavours of apple and pear are complemented by lime and tropical notes. Notably, it has a long, smooth finish. If you want more from your wine pairing then crisps, think Italian – a creamy carbonara or pesto pasta, or throw on a prosciutto and mozzarella pizza.



Geal Albariño
€27.95, on offer at €21.95 until 3 June, O’Brien’s Wines

A few years ago, I was at the airport on my way home from the Galicia area of Spain when we bumped into O’Brien’s Wines director Lynne Coyle. She was working on something special, and the result has been Geal Albariño, one of the most talked about albariños on our wine shelves. Many of the vineyards in the Rias Baixas region are family-owned and small including Lagar de Costa winery where this wine is produced. Hand-picked from traditional pergolas and aged on lees for eight months, the result is a memorable wine. Up front, you get all those fresh green apple and peach flavours with citrus adding a nice zesty acidity. But it is the saline notes which really make it distinctive, with a creamy mouthfeel on the finish.



Les Cinq Rameaux
€9.99, Lidl

Provence has become one of most popular areas in the world to source good rosé. Back to the basic economics of supply and demand, unsurprisingly, the price point can get steep. But it is still possible to find good value. At €9.99, Les Cinq Rameaux has all those characteristic flavours of a nice rosé, including lots of wild strawberry and raspberry, a decent pop of peach and subtle citrus acidity to give balance. It’s not overly complex, but good value for money. Light and easy, this is one to sip in the sun. If you’re serving with food, keep it simple. A piece of baked salmon or a cheeky plate of fish and chips will go down a treat with this rosé.



Gaia Rosé 4-6H
€19.95, on special at €14.96 until the end of summer, O’Brien’s Wines

From a very popular area for rosé to a lesser known one, Greek rosé isn’t too widely available here, but this Gaia 4-6h is worth sampling. The 4-6h on the label refers to the skin contact time, which, at four to six hours, is relatively short. The result is a wine with a pale colour but still plenty of vibrancy. You’ll pick up the usual strawberry flavours, but others, too: some blackcurrant and pomegranate. A hint of wild cherry adds an interesting subtle sour note, with a little spicy feel in the finish. Let’s just embrace the Greek vibe here. I’m thinking a Mediterranean mezze plate with roasted vegetables, hummus and crudités. It’ll put a whole new flavour on your rosé night.



Les Magnolias Languedoc Rosé
€16.95, on special at €12.71 until the end of summer, O’Brien’s Wines

While Provence has the name, the Languedoc region also produces exceptional rosé and the price tag can be a bit more forgiving. So it’s really worth exploring this region, with its terroir-driven wines that are aromatic and expressive. The stylish bottle is just the start of this elegant Languedoc experience. Wild strawberries and redcurrants draw you in, but it’s the creamy berry mouthfeel and distinctively crisp finish that makes this wine really stand out. This rosé will work great with Thai food, but seafood is where it really meets its match. For our tasting, we paired it with some crispy calamari, spritzed with fresh lemon. Simple, but with a little bit of wow.



Tesco Finest Prosecco Doc
€15 on ClubCard, Tesco

Let’s finish with a pop, and a great prosecco to round out our summer review. From prestigious producer Cantine Maschio, who uses innovative techniques for optimal freshness, this prosecco hits all of our summer tasting notes. It has lots of citrus and pear flavours with peach blossom aromas. A vibrant and consistent bead with good longevity and a lingering finish makes this a party favourite. This is one to pop open if you’re serving aperitifs, as it’s a real crowd pleaser. Alternatively, if you’re chilling out in the garden with friends, consider serving up a charcuterie board with some creamy Camembert, and round it off with a delicate dessert. A strawberry cheesecake or some light pastries are a great match for prosecco.



Whispering Angel 2024
€26.65, Avoca Stores, Brown Thomas, O’Brien’s Wines and Molloy’s

Back to Provence, and one of the most popular rosé wines to come out of the region in recent years, Whispering Angel. There has been a lot of hype about it – is it really as good as they say? At its core, it’s a quality and enjoyable wine with interesting flavours of raspberry, cherry and lavender that elevate that berries and cream experience, with a subtle spicy minerality on the finish. Try pairing it with some sushi; especially seared tuna or salmon. The 2024 vintage may feel a little lighter – but that’s not due to less wine. The bottle itself is lighter, a 20% weight reduction as part of the company’s commitment to reducing its carbon dioxide emissions by 50% before 2030.



From farm to fork



BRING TASTE TO THE TABLE