



Apple punch

1 litre/1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints apple juice

5cm/2-inch piece of fresh root ginger, peeled

2 dessert apples

1 litre/1 $\frac{3}{4}$ pints dry ginger ale

Ice

1. Put the apple juice into a large bowl. Bruise the ginger with a rolling pin. Quarter, core and thinly slice the apples and add with the ginger to the apple juice. Leave to marinate overnight or for at least 2 hours.
2. Remove the ginger and add the dry ginger ale just before serving. Chill with ice cubes.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prue's Tip: Use English apple juice for a cloudy variation.



Orchards are a quintessential scene from the English countryside, yet more than 60 per cent of traditional orchards in England have been lost in the last 50 years. They are home to a wide variety of species including wax cap fungi, long-eared bats, noble chafer beetles and turtle doves.

Natural England is working with the National Trust and others to look after our traditional orchards, providing advice on everything from planting to propagating. If you want to meet others who are looking after, restoring and celebrating the traditional orchards in your area, there are now many local orchard and apple groups around the country. Try to buy traditional orchard produce such as fruit, cider, perry, juice and chutney from local markets and suppliers.

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Hazelnut sables

Makes about 24

225g/8oz butter

110g/4oz icing sugar, sifted

2 egg yolks

340g/12oz plain flour

55g/2oz ground hazelnuts

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4.
2. Cream the butter and icing sugar together until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolks.
3. Sift the flour and mix with the ground hazelnuts. Stir into the butter mixture and bring together to form a dough.
4. Roll out the dough to the thickness of a 50p coin and stamp out biscuits with a small round pastry cutter. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate for 10 minutes.
5. Bake the biscuits for 20 minutes, or until golden-brown.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prue's Tip: Kentish Cobnuts (a type of hazelnut) offer a true taste of the English countryside.



Traditional hazelnut orchards, more accurately known as cobnut 'platts', are a unique feature of Kent and other counties – giving the name 'platt' to many place and house names. Depending on planting distance, the nut orchards may take on the character of a young wood or may have pasture beneath, traditionally grazed by sheep.

The Kentish Cob produces a medium-large hazelnut, thin shelled and elongated with a long husk. The flavour is milky, slightly sweet, with a crunchy texture. It's important to cherish and support food that has a positive relationship with the natural environment – Kentish Cobnuts are a great example to look out for. Occasionally, the endangered hazel dormouse is spotted foraging in cobnut platts.



Rich vanilla ice cream

Serves 4

70g/2 1/2 oz granulated sugar

8 tablespoons water

1 vanilla pod, split lengthways

3 egg yolks

425 ml/ 3/4 pint double cream

1. Put the sugar, water and vanilla pod into a heavy saucepan and dissolve the sugar over a low heat, stirring.
2. Beat the egg yolks well. Half whip the cream.
3. When the sugar has dissolved completely, boil rapidly to 120 °C/248 °F. Remove the vanilla pod. Scrape out the seeds and add to the syrup.
4. Whisk the egg yolks and gradually pour in the sugar syrup. Whisk until the mixture is very thick and will leave a trail when the whisk is lifted.
5. Cool, whisking occasionally. Fold in the cream, pour into a freezer container and freeze.
6. When the ice cream is half-frozen, whisk again and return to the freezer.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prue's Tip: Serve the ice cream with the Hot Winter Fruit Salad which can be found in Prue Lieth's Cookery Bible (page 660).



Dairy farms in the UK produce over 13 billion litres of milk a year. Nearly half of the dairy farms in England are part of Environmental Stewardship schemes, which means that almost 4,500 English dairy farms are doing something to help wildlife, landscapes and public access on their land.

One of the best ways to celebrate England's dairy produce at Christmas is by enjoying traditional British cheese – including Wensleydale. The limestone pastures of the Yorkshire Dales, where Wensleydale is customarily eaten with Christmas cake, are dependent upon the continuation of traditional farming practices. Hawes Creamery in Wensleydale is the only producer of the cheese in the area. It has recently applied for special protected status for the cheese from the European Union.



Mackerel with gooseberry sauce

Serves 4

4 x 225g/8oz mackerel

340g/12oz young gooseberries

30g/1oz caster sugar

30g/1oz butter

A pinch of ground ginger

Lemon wedges

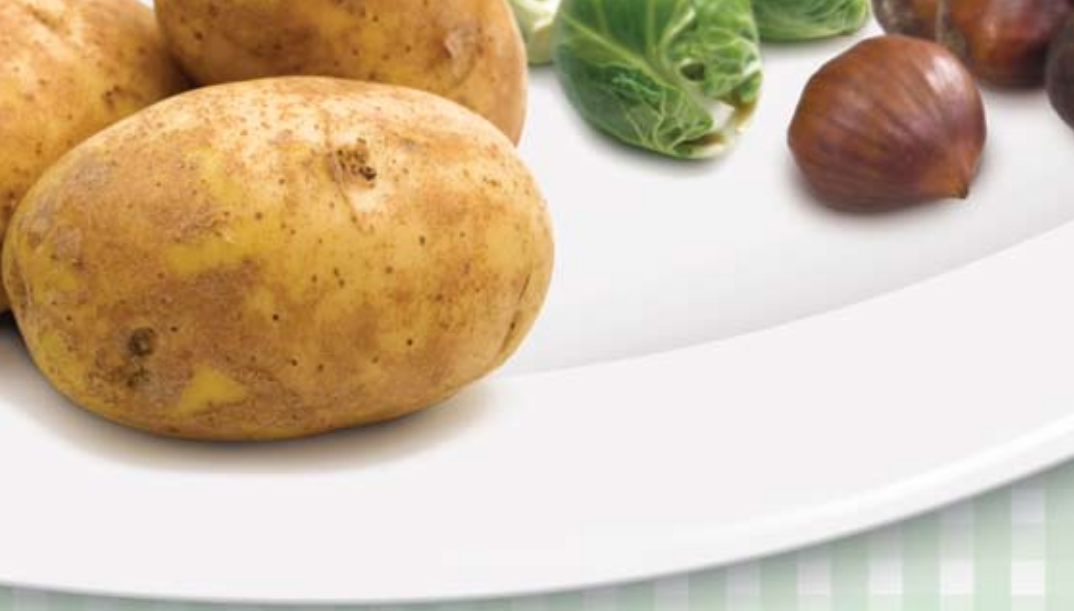
1. Preheat the grill.
2. Clean the mackerel, cut off the fins and make 2 or 3 diagonal slashes into the flesh through the skin.
3. Prepare the gooseberry sauce: top and tail the berries and place them in a saucepan with a little water and the sugar. Simmer until tender.
4. Push the gooseberries through a sieve. Beat in the butter and ginger and taste for sweetness. It may be necessary to add extra sugar.
5. Grill the mackerel for about 5 minutes on each side, depending on size, or until cooked.
6. Arrange the mackerel on a warmed serving dish. Garnish with lemon wedges. Hand the sauce separately.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prove's Tip: Look out for line-caught mackerel from British fishermen.



England's seas are amongst the most biodiverse in Europe, but a long history of overfishing has contributed to a decline in the populations of many important species such as skate and cod. Line-caught mackerel, however, is one of the more sustainable, healthy and affordable fish you can buy. Many people are aware of the problems of overfishing and are willing to help turn things around. A recent Natural England survey revealed overwhelming public support for encouraging fishing practices that help protect the marine environment, with the majority of respondents wanting action to address overfishing.



Roast potatoes

900g / 2lb potatoes

Salt

4 tablespoons dripping, oil or

Goose fat

1. Preheat the oven at 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6 and wash and peel the potatoes.
2. Bring them to a boil in salted water. Simmer for 5 minutes. Drain well, return to the pan and shake the potatoes to roughen their surfaces.
3. Melt the dripping, oil or goose fat in a roasting pan and when hot add the potatoes, turning them so that they are coated all over. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Roast, basting occasionally, turning the potatoes halfway through cooking.

Brussels sprouts and chestnuts

450g /1lb very small Brussels sprouts

225g /8oz fresh chestnuts

30g /1oz butter

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Freshly grated nutmeg

1. Wash and trim the sprouts, removing the outside leaves if necessary.
2. Slit the skin of each chestnut and put them into a pan of cold water. Boil for 15 minutes, remove from the heat. Remove 1–2 nuts at a time and peel.
3. Melt the butter in a frying pan, and slowly fry the chestnuts, until brown.
4. Tip sprouts into a large pan of boiling salted water. When cooked, drain well.
5. Mix the sprouts and chestnuts together with butter from the frying pan. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prue's Tip: The skins of the chestnuts will come off easily if the chestnuts are hot but not too well cooked.



Roast potatoes are the crowning vegetable of the Christmas dinner and in Britain we consume around 94kg per person, per year.

It is easy to grow potatoes at home in a veggie patch or containers and they can be a money saver when stored in the right conditions, as one year's harvest can be eaten throughout the year.

More seasonal than potatoes, the humble Brussels sprout is an essential ingredient at Christmas and in Britain we grow around 80,000 tons. A member of the Brassica family, the Brussels sprout could hold answers to resistance to climate change.

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Christmas turkey stuffed with ham

2.3kg/5lb boiled bacon or ham

6.7kg/15lb turkey, boned

For the stuffing

30g/1oz butter

1 large onion, finely chopped

900g/2lb pork belly, minced

450g/1lb mashed cooked chestnuts

225g/8oz fresh white breadcrumbs

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 tsp dried sage

2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

Salt & freshly ground black pepper

For roasting

55g/2oz butter

1 onion, sliced

3 bay leaves

2 parsley stalks

425ml/¾ pint water

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
2. For the stuffing: melt the butter in a saucepan, add the onion, cook until soft but not coloured. Allow to cool then add all the other stuffing ingredients.
3. Open the turkey out flat on a board, skin side down. Spread the stuffing on the turkey and put the skinned ham or bacon on top.
4. Draw up the sides and sew together with a needle and fine string.
5. Smear the butter over the turkey and place in roasting pan. Add giblets (except the liver), onion, bay leaves and parsley stalks. Pour in the water.
6. Roast for 1 hour, then lower temp to 180°C/350°F gas mark 4 and roast for a further 3 hours. Baste occasionally, cover with kitchen foil or greaseproof paper if it is browning too much.

All recipes can be found in Leiths Cookery Bible

Prue's Tip: For extra flavour, use British dry cured bacon or air-dried ham. The turkey is also delicious served cold with a herby mayonnaise.



England has a rich farming heritage and, as a result, the sights and sounds of rural England have evolved through the management of land for farming. More than 60% of English farmland is now part of an Environmental Stewardship scheme, delivered by Natural England. Farmers in these schemes are helping to look after wildlife and landscape features, create better public access and improve the quality of soil and water.

Although **turkey** is a non-native species to Britain, it is now the most popular meat eaten at Christmas with many produced in the East of England. The turkeys at Woodlands Farm in Lincolnshire are reared in the most natural setting possible. Farmer, Andrew Dennis, has planted fruit trees and willows to provide outdoor space for the turkeys, which is also home to a wide variety of wild birds, animals and insects.