SEASONED

RECIPES FOR RAIN, HAIL & SHINE

CASEY LISTER

This is one of those recipes that can be endlessly adapted to whatever ingredients are in season at the time. In summer, as well as apricots, you could try using peaches, nectarines, raspberries or plums. In autumn you could go for soft, ripe, juicy pears. In winter you could glaze sweet, tart blood oranges or mandarins, and in spring you could try strawberries or mulberries. They key is to fry the fruits until they are deliciously soft and caramelised - almost breaking apart. The softness and sweetness of the seasonal fruit contrasts beautifully with the nutty, crunchy tahini oats and the zesty citrus clouds of whipped cream on top. So there's your excuse - this dish is *always* in season. You can eat it *all year round*. So have at it!

HONEY GLAZED APRICOTS W/ TAHINI OAT CRUNCH

Serves 6 as a side

INGREDIENTS

For the tahini oat crunch
¼ cup butter
3 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp tahini paste
1 cup rolled oats
½ cup slivered almonds
½ cup whole almonds

For the glazed apricots
1 Tbsp butter
1 Tbsp honey
6 apricots, halved, with stones removed

For the lemony cream
1 cup pouring cream
1 Tbsp icing sugar
1 tsp lemon verbena leaves, very finely diced
Juice of half a lemon

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 200˚C conventional (180˚C fan forced).

To make the oat crunch, melt the butter and honey together in the microwave, then whisk in the tahini until a smooth paste forms.

Put the rolled oats, slivered almonds and whole almonds in a bowl, and pour the butter, honey and tahini mixture over the top. Mix until well combined, then tip onto an oven tray. Bake until the oats and nuts have started to brown and crisp up (about 15 minutes). Leave to cool to room temperature.

For the glazed apricots, melt the butter and honey in a frying pan, then add the apricots, cut side down. Fry the apricots on both sides until they have softened and started to caramelise.

Put all ingredients for the lemony cream in a jug and whip with a stick blender or an electric whisk until the cream has thickened (don't over-whip or the cream will split). Keep in the refrigerator until serving.

To serve, fill four glasses with the oat crunch, then top with the glazed apricots (pour any apricot juice left in the frying pan into the glasses too), then put the whipped lemony cream on top.

This dish is best eaten when the cream is chilled and the apricots are still warm.

NOTES

If you can't find lemon verbena leaves you can use 1 Tbsp finely grated lemon rind instead.

There are so many things to love about sweetcorn. A freshly picked cob has enough juicy, sugary goodness to make you giddy. Grilled, slathered in butter, heavily salted and sprinkled with cracked pepper it is pretty unbeatable. But there will always be those who avoid the call of the cob. Put off by the - admittedly real - risk of stringy corn teeth and the struggle of gnawing a hundred kernels off an unwieldy, butter-slicked cob.

If you are one of those people (or, let's be honest, even if you're not) you *need* this salad in your life. The sugary kernels (cut from the cob and blessedly easy to eat) will pop in your mouth like golden jewels. With salty, squeaky haloumi, chewy barley, fresh fennel fronds and a bright green chimichurri packed with basil, this salad is filled with the flavours and colours of summer (it just so happens to be perfect for a picnic, too).

BARLEY & CHARRED CORN SALAD W/ CHIMICHURRI

Serves 4-6

INGREDIENTS

1 cup barley
1 stock cube
3 corn cobs
3 tsp butter
1 packed cup of fennel leaves, chopped
225g haloumi, sliced thinly
1 large red chilli, finely sliced

For the chimichurri
¼ cup white wine vinegar
½ cup olive oil
1 packed cup of basil leaves
2 cloves garlic

METHOD

Put the barley and stock cube in a medium saucepan with 3 cups of water. Bring to the boil then reduce heat and simmer (with the lid off), stirring occasionally, for 35 minutes or until the barley is tender and the water has totally evaporated (stir more frequently as the water starts to evaporate to stop the grains at the bottom of the pan from sticking).

Spread 1 tsp of butter over each corn cob and place on the grill or BBQ until the corn has a nice tasty char. Slice the kernels off each cob and into a bowl. Add the cooked barley to the corn and, while everything is still hot, add the chopped fennel leaves. Mix well.

Blend together all the chimichurri ingredients until smooth. Just before serving, grill the haloumi until hot and nicely browned on both sides (about 10 minutes) then cut it into pieces and add to the barley and corn along with the sliced chilli. Drizzle the chimichurri over the top, then serve.

Can a cookbook really have two pesto recipes? Should it??

I feel like this is a question for philosophers, theologians - maybe even doctors, and to be honest I'm not sure I'm adequately equipped to comment. But let me just ask you this: if you have two perfect children, two delightful, delicious and interesting children, would it be fair to the world to put one on display and relegate the other (equally delightful, interesting and delicious) child to the neglected annals of history? No. I don't think it would be fair. I think you should eat both of your children.

BASIL PESTO W/ SMOKY PICKLED ONION

Serves 2-3

INGREDIENTS

For the pesto
¼ cup roasted almonds
3 cups of fresh basil leaves
3 big garlic cloves
⅓ cup pine nuts
½ cup grated pecorino cheese (plus extra, to serve)
½ cup olive oil
A generous pinch of salt

For the pickled onion dressing
½ red onion, finely diced
1 Tbsp white vinegar
½ tsp smoky paprika
¼ tsp caster sugar
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 ½ Tbsp capers

300g spaghetti (or enough for 2-3 serves)

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 200˚C conventional (180˚C fan forced). Put the almonds on an oven tray and roast for 10 minutes. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then blend together with all the other ingredients for the pesto until a smooth paste forms.

If you're not eating it straight away, your pesto will keep in the fridge for 2-3 days in a clean jar. To help retain the bright green colour, pour a little olive oil over the top of the pesto once it's in the jar.

Cook your pasta according to the instructions on the packet. While the pasta cooks, make the pickled onion dressing. Whisk together the onion, vinegar, paprika and caster sugar. Let this sit for 5 minutes, then whisk in the olive oil and capers.

Once the pasta is al dente, drain and toss with a drizzle of olive oil and a pinch of salt. Serve into 2-3 bowls and top with a generous dollop of pesto and a few teaspoons of the pickled onion dressing.

Serve with a bowl of the dressing on the table so you can add as much as you like (I like to add lots).

NOTES

For another variation (and if you have some in-season eggplants to enjoy) pop a large eggplant, sliced lengthways into thirds and drizzled with olive oil, under the grill. Grill for about 15-20 minutes on each side until the flesh goes deliciously, silkily soft and brown, then chop it up into bit sized chunks and toss with the pesto and pasta before serving (see photo on the front cover of this book).

My Mum says this is her favourite cake!!! Which makes me happy for two reasons: first, because I invented it! Second, because she makes it all the time now, so I never need to. Laziness and cake - who could ask for more! The rhubarb, swirled through in the final stages, adds a delicious zing that you get every second bite, and the cream cheese frosting and zucchini makes the whole thing taste like carrot cake's secret (and better) cousin. I hope it becomes your favourite cake too!

ZUCCHINI & RHUBARB CAKE W/ CREAM CHEESE ICING

Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

For the stewed rhubarb
2 cups rhubarb
1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 vanilla bean, sliced in half
¼ cup brown sugar

For the cake mix
2 cups wholemeal self raising flour
1 tsp salt
½ tsp allspice
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp coriander
1 tsp ginger
2 cups coarsely grated zucchini (about 2-3 medium zucchinis)
3 eggs
¾ cup brown sugar
1 cup olive oil
¾ cup walnuts, roughly chopped
1 Tbsp Demerara sugar
1-2 tsp poppy seeds (to serve)

For the icing
160g cream cheese, softened
120g butter, softened
220g icing sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract

METHOD

Preheat your oven to 180˚C conventional (160˚C fan forced).

Put the rhubarb and lemon juice in a medium saucepan. Slice the vanilla bean in half lengthways and scrape the seeds out into the saucepan (throw the bean in too). Cook down for 5-10 minutes. Once the rhubarb has softened and started to disintegrate add the brown sugar. Continue cooking and stirring until the sugar has dissolved. Allow to cool then remove the vanilla pod.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, salt, allspice, cinnamon, coriander and ginger. Mix well.

Coarsely grate the zucchini, wrap it in a clean tea towel and squeeze out as much water as possible. Set aside. In another bowl, whisk the eggs with an electric beater until creamy. Gently stir in ¾ cup brown sugar, the olive oil, zucchini and walnuts. Add the flour mix and stir until well combined. Pour into a lined cake tin 20cm in diameter.

Pour the stewed rhubarb on top of the cake mix and use a fork or skewer to very lightly swirl the rhubarb through the mix. Don't overmix - you want the rhubarb to be in nice big clumps through the cake. Sprinkle the demerara sugar on top then place in the oven for 1 hour and 20 minutes.

While the cake bakes, whisk the icing ingredients together until smooth. Let the cake cool to room temperature before icing. Once iced, sprinkle with the poppy seeds. Serve as is or with some fresh cream.