

THE COUNTRY RANGE GROUP
MAGAZINE FOR CATERERS

Stir it up

WINTER

JAN/
FEB
2026

SEAWEED

AN INTO THE WILD DEEP DIVE



THE 2026 ONES TO WATCH | NOURISHING YOUNG PATIENTS
CREATIVE WAYS TO CELEBRATE THE SEASONS

Ingredient

A new year, a fresh start and a year of challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

To help support and inspire you we have a bumper issue of features from industry experts and inspirational chefs to share.

Our Category Focus takes you through the trends to capitalise on in 2026 while our Melting Pot of ideas is sharing ways you can celebrate seasonal produce, whether you're a chef in hospitality, education or the care sector.

We're celebrating the incredible talent we have in our industry with the 2026 'ones to watch' on pages 14-15. If you would like to get involved in a feature, share your own story or an amazing recipe, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at editor@stiritupmagazine.co.uk

The Stir it up team



NEWS

04

Cooks Calendar

05

Readers' Lives

07

Customer Profile
Success at Embers Café

12-13

New From
Country Range

45

Marketplace

50-51

The Country Club

ADVICE

11

Education
*Sector Insights with
Stephanie Slater*

23

Health & Welfare
Nourishing Young Patients

25

Advice From the Experts
Leveling Up with Chris Basten

41

Heads Up
*Changing Legislation for
Shift Work*

INSPIRATION

09

Eat the Season
Chalk Stream Trout

28-29

Leading Lights
Brian Turner

31

Making Ends Meet
Smash it with Mash

39

On the Range
Double Chocolate Soufflé

42-43

Rising Star
Carlson Landles

49

Five Ways to Use
Ground Mixed Spice

TRENDS

03

Fresh from the Kitchen
*thefoodpeople's 2026 Cuisine
Trend Predictions*

14-15

Special Feature
The 2026 Ones to Watch

19-21

Category Focus
Food Trends for 2026

33-35

Melting Pot
*Creative Ways to
Celebrate the Seasons*

46-47

Into the Wild
Seaweed

Contact us...

Writers

Lindsey Hoyle
Sam Houston
Jackie Mitchell



@stiritupmag

Subscriptions

stiritup@countryrange.co.uk

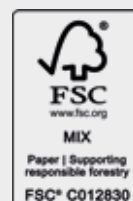
Design & Print

Eclipse Creative
www.eclipse-creative.co.uk

Front Cover

by ArtWork9

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



EDITORIAL PARTNERS...



N
National Allergy Research Foundation

ALLERGEN REFERENCES

VG - Vegan V - Vegetarian

ts

* RECIPES



*Jasmine Rice Salad with
Spicy Lamb and Thai Basil*

27

Double Chocolate Soufflé

39

Carrot Cake

49



Fresh FROM THE KITCHEN



To kick start the new year, we delve into thefoodpeople's 2026 cuisine trend predictions. Described as 'forever favourites, reimagined', diners are seeking familiar and comforting favourites, balanced with bold creativity and regional specialities. Here are some key highlights to inspire your menu...

AMERICAN – From diner staples to Midwestern oddities and seafood-rich Southern fare, curiosity is shifting towards hyper-local recipes and creative modern twists on iconic American comfort foods.

CHINESE – With diners exploring its diverse regional specialties and embracing fine-dining reinterpretations, Chinese classic dishes are being elevated without sacrificing authenticity, using bold flavours and versatile staples to create inventive dishes.

INDIAN – Chefs spotlight diverse flavours from across India, revive traditional kebabs and sweets, and create inventive fusion dishes—from naan paninis to caviar pani puri—while keeping authenticity, technique and big, impactful flavour at the core.

MEDITERRANEAN –Mediterranean cuisine is evolving beyond familiar classics. Lesser-known Italian, Spanish, French and Greek dishes gain attention, while chefs reimagine staples through inventive twists. From friselle to fideuà, bouillabaisse to baklava riffs, ingredient-led cooking and inventive formats define modern Med-inspired eating.

MEXICAN – Take a deeper exploration of regional Mexican dishes, masa-based staples and diverse taco formats. Tex-Mex is being reinvented with gourmet, creative versions, while fine-dining chefs elevate Mexican ingredients and techniques. From birria to aguachile to caviar-topped gorditas, cooks embrace authenticity, innovation and bold flavour across every format.

JAPANESE – The popularity of Japanese cuisine spans ramen, izakaya bites, kissaten comfort food and accessible sushi. Diners embrace rice-led formats, matcha everything, and bold fusion—from wafu pasta to croissant-onigiri. Meanwhile, technique-driven specialisms like tonkatsu, mochi and shokupan pastries highlight meticulous craft. Innovation, versatility and flavour exploration define today's Japanese food culture.

thefoodpeople.
inform | inspire | realise potential

From thefoodpeople 2026 – 2027 Cuisines and Ingredients trends report.

Cooks CALENDAR

JANUARY

ALL MONTH – NATIONAL SLOW COOKING MONTH

Warm up National Slow Cooking Month with this smoky, spicy Slow Cooker Chipotle Chicken from Opies. Packed with tender chicken, rich chipotle flavour, and their signature Silverskin Onions, it's a fuss-free feast!

ALL MONTH – VEGANUARY

Celebrate Veganuary with Kikkoman's delicious Pear and Apple Crumble with Plant-Based Topping. Juicy fruit meets a golden, vegan crumble made with Kikkoman's naturally brewed soy sauce for a hint of umami magic. Simple, wholesome, and irresistibly cosy.

20TH JANUARY – NATIONAL CHEESE LOVER'S DAY

Celebrate National Cheese Lover's Day with Knorr's indulgent Stuffed Turkey Toastie Melt. Layered with roast turkey, three cheeses, stuffing, and caramelised onion, it's served with a rich onion marmalade gravy for pure comfort in every bite.



FEBRUARY

9TH FEBRUARY – NATIONAL PIZZA DAY

Fire up National Pizza Day with this irresistible Pickled Walnut & Camembert Pizza with Hot Honey from Opies. Creamy camembert, gooey mozzarella, and tangy pickled walnuts meet a drizzle of spicy-sweet honey for a gourmet twist on a classic.

14TH FEBRUARY – VALENTINE'S DAY

Turn up the romance this Valentine's Day with Country Range's indulgent Cheese Fondue recipe — the ultimate sharing dish for two. Melt together rich, gooey cheeses with a splash of wine for a decadent dip made for lingering over. Pair with crusty bread, pigs in blankets and veggies for the perfect sharer.

MARCH

15TH MARCH – MOTHER'S DAY

Celebrate Mother's Day with Country Range's vibrant Pea and Spring Onion Soup. Bursting with flavour and colour, it's a simple yet elegant way to show a little extra love. Serve with homemade croutons and a parmesan crisp for the perfect heartwarming treat.

25TH MARCH – INTERNATIONAL WAFFLE DAY

Make International Waffle Day extra sweet with this irresistible Breakfast Waffle creation from KITKAT®. Crispy golden waffles meet chunks of creamy KitKat and a drizzle of chocolate for the ultimate morning indulgence.

Thanks to Opies, Kikkoman, Knorr, KITKAT® and Country Range.



The full recipes can be found at www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk



IN SEASON

Kale

Clementine

Grapefruit

Celeriac



Pear Tarte Tatin

Readers' lives



NAME: Keira Roe

BORN AND RAISED: The Yorkshire Dales

JOB TITLE: Director

PLACE OF WORK: The Pinwheel Patisserie

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED IN THE CATERING INDUSTRY? 20 years but Pinwheel just turned five this year.

PASSIONS OUTSIDE OF THE KITCHEN? My two-year-old son, dog, going for walks, crafting and I absolutely love bargain hunting in charity shops.

BIG TARGET FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS? To open some kind of retail shop.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE CUISINE TO EAT? Italian – great ingredients, simply prepared.

WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF YOUR JOB? It's when I'm working with the team. We have a family feel within the company which I love and it's a privilege to pass on my knowledge.

WHICH CHEF DO YOU RESPECT THE MOST AND WHY? Rick Stein, although I loved the Roux brothers. My bakery bible is The Roux Brothers on Patisserie.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN AND BY WHOM? My college lecturer said plan, plan and plan some more. He also told us to take inspiration from everything around us and be creative. I think about those things every day.

WHAT IS YOUR MUST-HAVE KITCHEN GADGET? Palette knife.

WHAT'S YOUR TIP TO CUT WASTAGE IN THE KITCHEN? Never waste a cake – it can be used in so many ways - crumbed for the base of a sweet tart, for tiramisu or for trifle.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COUNTRY RANGE PRODUCT AND WHY? The tinned fruit is exceptional - the pears, peaches, apples – they never let me down. The vegan Cooking and Baking block is fantastic as well.

WHAT IS THE LAST RESTAURANT YOU ATE IN? Rudy's Pizza but my favourite new haunt is Peaches in Leamington for amazing coffee and cocktails.

Country Range Pear Halves
in Light Syrup
Pack Size: 2.65kg



aah! PERFECT

flavours for every taste



BISTO CREAMY VEGETABLE RISOTTO

INGREDIENTS

50g butter	1.5l boiling water	275ml single cream
200g onion, finely diced	325g broccoli florets cut into 15mm pieces, blanched	75g parmesan cheese, grated
575g Arborio risotto rice		
200g red peppers, chopped		
450g mushrooms, sliced	225g frozen sweetcorn, defrosted	
40g Bisto Vegetable Bouillon Paste	2 tbs pesto sauce (*check for allergens)	
1.5l boiling water		

Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 35 minutes
Serves: 10

METHOD

1. Melt the butter and sauté the onion until slightly softened.
2. Add the rice, peppers and mushrooms and cook for a further 5 minutes.
3. Mix the Bisto Vegetable Bouillon Paste with the boiling water and gradually stir into the rice, bringing to a simmer, over a period of about 10 minutes.
4. Add the remaining vegetables and cook for a further 5 minutes until the rice is tender and most of the Bouillon has been absorbed.
5. Stir in the cream and pesto and sprinkle over the parmesan cheese.

ALLERGENS

Please check the ingredients declaration on the products you use making this recipe. This recipe may contain: Celery, Milk. Suitable For: Coeliac

TIPS

Want to make it vegetarian? Swap the Parmesan for a hard vegetarian cheese.

Whiting

Dates

Apples

Always on hand to help.



www.premierfoodservice.co.uk

NO
ADDED
SUGAR

Flavours they'll love, quality you trust!



Gluten
Free

No1
Jelly Brand in
Foodservice*

No
Allergens



**HFSS
Compliant**



**School
Compliant**



**Sets in
1 hour**



Low Fat



FANNING THE FLAMES

Success at Embers Café

Opening its doors in May 2023, Embers Café is beautifully based amidst the woods in Coalbrookdale and has been blazing a trail in Shropshire for its widely-acclaimed, locally sourced menu that is cooked over flames. The business is the culmination of an incredible decade for Adam Purnell, aka The Shropshire Lad, who has morphed from youth worker to a social media influencer, brand ambassador, TV star, chef and successful hospitality business owner.

"I remember catching and grilling mackerel as a 5-year-old," says Adam. "From the age of 10, I was experimenting at home and by my teens I was doing dinner parties for mates. Cooking was always a core passion but the weekend and evening shifts, plus shouty chefs, put me off it as a career."

"The food is unique in that it showcases how cooking over fire can truly enhance and elevate... and provide a different ambience to a meal."

"I trained and worked as a youth worker but whether it was dinner parties, big feasts for special occasions or testing new techniques or recipes, I was always pushing myself in my cooking at home. One day, a friend asked if he could video me making a recipe. We put it on social and that was the beginning of my Shropshire Lad platform."

"I always enjoyed cooking over fire but it became a specialism, partly due to the fact that for a time my house didn't have a kitchen, and because the videos I released on my social channels gained a lot of traction. Soon, brands in the fire arena were approaching me to be an ambassador and not long after, I was on the Netflix Show 'Crazy Delicious' and even featured on MasterChef."

"I wasn't hugely searching for my own place but a vegan café I frequented was made available. My partner had been thinking about a career change so we decided to go and have a look together. Things escalated

pretty quickly and before we knew it, we had the keys. We weren't from commercial hospitality backgrounds so it was a big learning curve but we're very proud of what we have achieved and what we stand for."

"The food is unique in that it showcases how cooking over fire can truly enhance and elevate the best locally sourced, seasonal ingredients and provide a different ambience to a meal. We have monthly theme nights, casual Sunday roasts and the menu is changed every two months to best celebrate the Shropshire seasons. Outside of seasonings and spices, everything we use is sourced locally."

In the winter months, Embers Café forgoes beef in favour of locally sourced venison. "Venison is an incredible but very underused meat. There is so much locally that goes to waste so we have made it our mantra to celebrate it. It's been nowhere near an antibiotic or vet and is as healthy as you can find. It's really versatile as well and is superb over flames so we utilise it across the menu during winter."

Embers Café www.emberscafe.co.uk



Above main, left and right: Adam Purnell at Embers Café

62%
of consumers
prefer the taste
of Hellmann's*



Say yes to better taste - try it today

- 35% less sugar compared to average sugar content in the market
- No allergens to declare** and 100% vegan
- Recycled-ready packaging, helping you meet your sustainability goals
- No artificial colours or preservatives
- Professional chef-friendly format – easy to store, pour and prep during busy service

*vs UK food service best selling ketchup, 62% of 445 consumers agree, UK based taste study - March 2025. For more information see <https://www.unileverfoodsolutions.co.uk/product/hellmanns-tomato-ketchup-jerry-can-4-8kg-1-EN-1247001.html#product-info>

**This product does not contain allergenic ingredients which require declaration under EU regulation 1169 | 2001.

EAT THE SEASON



Chalk stream trout



Raised in crystal-clear Hampshire waters, chalk stream trout grow slowly in natural conditions. Their delicate, slightly nutty flavour and firm flesh make

them versatile for grilling, curing, or pan-searing. Sourced from responsibly managed farms, chalk stream trout supports local producers and is a sustainable option to add to your menus.

This month's recipe inspiration comes from Deepak Shukla, founder of Pearl Lemon Catering, a full-service catering experience built on creativity and flavour. He leads ventures like Pearl Lemon Café and How Matcha. Now based in Italy, Deepak keeps growing brands that balance taste, purpose, and a bit of his own character.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

Use leftover chalk stream trout in fishcakes, pâté, or salads. Flake it into pasta or risotto for added richness. Simmer the bones and head for a delicate stock or soup base. Even the skin can be crisped for garnish, ensuring every part of the fish adds value and flavour.

1/ PAN-SEARED CHALK STREAM TROUT WITH LEMON AND HERBS

There's something about trout that just works. It somehow manages to feel a little fancy but never fussy. Crispy skin, tender flesh, and a hint of bright herbs. This is trout at its simplest and best.



2/ TROUT WITH BEETROOT AND FENNEL SALAD

Earthy beetroot, crisp fennel, and a light vinaigrette perfectly balance the delicate trout. This is fresh, colourful, and ideal for a light lunch or dinner. Thinly sliced fennel adds crunch and a subtle anise note that pairs beautifully with the trout.

3/ CITRUS AND HERB TROUT EN PAPILOTE

Cooking trout in parchment seals in all the flavour and moisture, giving you a tender, aromatic dish with minimal fuss. Swap vegetables based on what's in season.

4/ CHALK STREAM TROUT GRAVLAX WITH BEETROOT AND DILL

Cure trout fillets in a mix of grated beetroot, salt, sugar, and dill for 24 hours. Slice thinly and serve with rye bread, horseradish cream, and pickled cucumber for a vibrant starter.

5/ CHALK STREAM TROUT FISH PIE WITH LEEK AND HERB MASH

Gently poach chunks of trout in milk with bay and peppercorns, then fold into a creamy leek and parsley sauce. Top with buttery mash flavoured with chives and lemon zest. Bake until golden and bubbling. It's a comforting, sustainable twist on a classic dish.





THE VALUE FOODSERVICE BRAND YOU CAN TRUST.



Ask your local **Country Range Group** wholesaler for details on the full range

SECTOR INSIGHTS INTERVIEW

Stephanie Slater, founder and chief executive, School Food Matters



Stephanie Slater, founder and chief executive of the charity School Food Matters was awarded an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours last year for her services to children. After 20 years working in film

production, she set up the charity in response to the poor food served at her children's school. Stephanie co-chairs the School Food Alliance and is a founding member of the School Food Review, which unites over 40 organisations working together to achieve lasting improvements in the school food system. We caught up with her to learn more about her work and future goals.

WHAT IS THE CHARITY'S MISSION?

We believe that school food can unlock a happier, healthier, more sustainable future for every child. We want a school food system that delivers for all children, so they can enjoy nutritious, delicious and sustainable school food and leave school with an informed and positive relationship with food. To achieve this, we campaign for a better school food system, bringing the voices of children, parents, and teachers to government policy and deliver fully funded food education programmes in schools across the country.

WHAT WERE THE SCHOOL MEALS LIKE AT YOUR SCHOOL?

Terrible! Luncheon meat fritters with baked beans and instant potato was a particular low point.

WHICH CAMPAIGN OR ACHIEVEMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

The first school meals campaign, when School Food Matters was a grassroots campaign working in one London borough made the biggest impact as it got our charity on the map. We moved 38 schools from frozen ready meals to freshly prepared lunches, made with high quality ingredients.

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR SCHOOL CATERERS?

If you involve children in your service, it will work better and share your love of food and



your catering skills. I've yet to hear a child say no to a cooking session and it's always a big yes to any opportunity to grow veg at school or indeed, to visit a farm to see where their food really comes from.

WHAT IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE PART OF YOUR ROLE?

Talking to school children is illuminating and heart-warming in equal measures, especially when they've eaten their first carrot and found it to be delicious.

HOW DID YOU FEEL TO HAVE BEEN AWARDED AN MBE IN THE

KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS?

It feels good to be recognised but more importantly it raises the profile of the work of School Food Matters and its brilliant team - which is so well deserved.

HOW MANY SCHOOLS DO YOU WORK WITH?

So far, we've worked with 2,948 schools in England, with 375,600 children participating in our programmes! It's a nice big number but we have another 21,000 schools to go.

WHAT ARE YOUR BIG GOALS FOR 2026?

Scale! Over the next two years we'll be testing our programmes – both school food improvement and food education – in more cities across England. We want to scale our impact, not the size of our charity, so we need to work smarter and share our knowledge and expertise with local communities.

Visit <https://www.schoolfoodmatters.org/> for more information.

Clean Range Pro

Not all Heroes wear capes!

We know that behind every delicious plate of food there is a whole army of unsung heroes behind the scenes, armed with mops and sprays, protecting kitchens and keeping food safe for your diners.

From the cleaning professionals who quietly appear before, during and after service to keep every area clean, to the chefs and kitchen brigade who are constantly cleaning down and keeping food areas safe during busy services, not forgetting the front of house team who are seamlessly turning tables around whilst providing clean and welcoming environments for diners.

Clean Range Pro is our new brand of professional cleaning products – arming your foodservice heroes with powerful, reliable cleaning solutions to win the battle against bacteria.

SPRING CLEAN LIKE A PRO

As you ramp up for the busy season ahead, now is the perfect time for the big deep clean and we are ready with the ultimate toolkit to protect standards:

WASHROOM HEROES

From bleach to toilet cleaner, we've got you covered for keeping washroom areas clean and safe.

FOOD & BAR HEROES

Everything you need to keep dishes and glassware sparkling and kitchens safe.

EVERYDAY HEROES

Fresh laundry, clean hands, and gleaming floors and surfaces—everything you need to keep low-risk areas spotless and shining.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Mops, cloths, scourers and tea towels – everything your heroes need to get the job done.



I'm The Clean Ranger, and I'm here to power up your foodservice heroes—arming them with the ultimate tools to keep every area clean, protected, and food-safe!

SAVE IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Whilst you're saving your diners from harmful bacteria, by switching to Clean Range Pro, you're also making vital cost savings without compromising on high standards of safety and cleanliness.

Be a hero - contact your Country Range wholesaler today to find out how much you can save!

SAFETY FIRST

We use the British Institute of Cleaning Science (BICS) colour coding system for our chemical products, to ensure safe and effective use:

RED FOR WASHROOMS

GREEN FOR FOOD AND BAR AREAS

BLUE FOR LOW-RISK SPACES

On every product, you will find a QR code linking to the safety data sheet, so you can access full safety information quickly and easily.

Each product has a clear and simple code for easy and quick identification.

Clear area labelling

Simple, clear coding

Easy access to safety data sheet for full information

THE 2026 ONES TO WATCH



CARYS WILLIAMS
16, Pontarddulais School

Award won: 2025 Springboard FutureChef champion

How has the Award helped you? I have gained so much confidence and improved my cookery skills and knowledge. It's also helped me determine

that a career in the kitchen is what I want.

What are your future plans? I'm hoping to do an NVQ in professional cookery at college.



ANAS AL SAADI
(known as 'Ratatouille')
Group Executive Chef, MACC Care

Award won: Chef of the Year, Care Home Catering Awards

How has the Award helped you? It will help create awareness for the great work

chefs are doing in care homes. I take inspiration for menus from personal stories and memories of residents and tailor food according to residents' dietary needs.

What are your future plans? To carry on the good work and create food that residents will enjoy. Food isn't just about nourishment – it's about creating an experience.



AMBER FRANCES
Chefs in Schools' Head Chef and Senior Food Educator, Christ's College Finchley

Award won: Champion of champions in the 2025 series of BBC TV's Great British Menu

How has the Award helped you? My aim was to get further

or at least raise awareness about highly skilled chefs working in different sectors such as education.

What are your future plans? I adore TV work - I loved appearing on Saturday Kitchen and it's something I'm open to. One of my biggest goals is to raise awareness of the incredible work being done by school chefs, talk about food education and what needs to be done to improve it.



ALEJANDRO BEDOYA HERNANDEZ AND MANUELA MICCOLI
Lead Chef and Deputy Restaurant Manager, Wellspring restaurant at the Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust

Award won: NHS Chef of the Year

How has the Award helped you? Alejandro: It was really tough, but we were so glad to be in a team together. We are pleased we were able to demonstrate our passion for food in our cooking.

Manuela: It was great to network with people from other trusts, mentors and people, who are experts in their fields. This enabled us to share ideas and best practices.

What are your future plans? Since winning the competition, Manuela has been promoted to chef manager at the Wellspring restaurant, while Alejandro has started a new role in another hospital, still with Medirest.



ILONA TOMZA
Senior Head Chef, Cotswold Gate Care Home

Award won: National Association of Care Catering (NACC) Care Chef of the Year 2025

How has the Award helped you? I hope that winning

NACC Chef of the Year will give me an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of catering for the elderly and its complexity.



LUKE PAYNE
Chef-owner, The Pack Horse and Almanac

Award won: Pub Restaurant Chef Award in the Craft Guild of Chefs Awards

How will the Award help you?

It's always important in such a competitive industry to stay

in people's minds as much as possible, so to be out there on such a huge platform in eye of the industry is really important. It will hopefully encourage those based outside of the northern food scene to make the journey and visit.

What are your future plans? I recently opened Almanac restaurant. It's been an immense project, and that is keeping me busy for the time being!



DAVID MILLAR
Executive Chef at Carlowrie Castle

Award won: 2025 Scottish Chef of the Year

How will the Award help you?

It certainly helps to attract excellent staff into the business, who are eager to work and learn in a high quality kitchen.

What are your future plans? To continue innovating and pushing forward with our quality dining experience at Carlowrie Castle. I also plan to take the Scottish culinary team to the culinary Olympics in Luxembourg next year and will endeavour to get the best possible result for the country.



ALEC TOMASSO
Chef/Owner, The Weeping Chef

Award won: Street Chef Food Award in the Craft Guild of Chefs Awards 2025

How will the Award help you?

This is not just a serious honour but an accolade that can set me apart from some of the competition.

What are your future plans? For the past couple of years, I've been putting myself out there away from my comfort zone, to try and get some significant recognition, I will continue to push myself as these challenges have helped me grow.



GARETH WARD
Chef Owner of Ynyshir Restaurant and Rooms

Award won: AA Chefs' Chef of the Year 2025

How will the Award help you?

Each award we are given pushes us to do better and be better.

The AA Hospitality Awards is

highly respected and appreciated in this industry, it's a great way to celebrate your achievements as a team. Chefs bring their team here to dine or send their chefs here for a week to crack on in the kitchen. We all have the same desire to share knowledge and hopefully inspire the next generation.

What are your future plans? Plenty of renovation projects to work on, lots of Japan trips to organise and exciting collaborations. The plan is to have multiple crafts people on site! I'd like a potter, glass blower and clothing designer - this place will be like a little village!



JUN AU
Chef/Patron, Pomelo restaurant

Award won: Acorn winner 2025 – awarded to rising stars under 30

How will the Award help you?

Winning this Award has been a great way of cementing the fact

that the direction I'm taking the business in is the right one. For small businesses - such as mine - these awards are great touch points to know you are doing something right and evidence that hard work really pays off.

What are your future plans? To keep growing the restaurant, and really just trying to survive this really tough economic period!



BISTO GRAVY GRANULES IS GOING GREENER!



Our new Packs save **928kg of cardboard per year**. That's equivalent to the weight of a small car!



Removing the shrink film from our pallets **saves 15.2 tonnes of Co2 per year**. That's equivalent to two homes energy use for a year!



Removing the shrink film from our pallets saves **5.6 tonnes of plastic (LDPE) per year!**

SMALLER BOX, SAME MIGHTY AMOUNT

PREMIER FOODS ROLLS OUT 100% RECYCLABLE BISTO FOODSERVICE PACKAGING TO HELP OPERATORS REDUCE WASTE

Bisto, the nation's favourite gravy, has introduced a fully-recyclable packaging format across its foodservice range, saving almost 1,000kg of cardboard and 5.6 tonnes of plastic from entering the value chain each year.

The FSC-certified cardboard cases for Bisto's Original, Poultry, Reduced Salt and Vegetarian Gravy Granules have each been reduced in height by 20mm. The plastic shrink wrap has also been removed from the outer packaging – a move that cuts plastic use and prevents the output of more than 15 tonnes of CO2 emissions each year. The Bisto foodservice range, which previously had a 92% recyclability rate, is now 100% recyclable.

Bisto's new, 'leaner' look will help caterers and chefs reduce waste and make more sustainable choices, while delivering more storage space for busy kitchens. While the amount of cardboard used has been reduced, the packs still contain the same amount of product.

The innovative redesign is the latest example of Premier Foods' continued commitment to close the gap to 100% packaging recyclability under its Enriching Life Plan, articulated through three strategic pillars: 'Product, Planet and People'.

Commenting on the packaging improvements, Sadia Allam, foodservice customer controller at Premier Foods, said: "As one of the UK's leading food producers and home to some of the nation's most loved and iconic brands, we have both an opportunity and a responsibility to forge a healthier future for our planet and everyone on it. Therefore, we're proud to continue to deliver the trusted Bisto quality our customers rely on, but now in packaging that's kinder to the environment. Crucially, it helps our foodservice customers make more sustainable choices without compromising on the great taste they expect."



Stealth Fries

Long-lasting crispiness, generous length and extended holding time.
Delighting chefs and guests for over 30 years.



Lamb Weston[®]
POSSIBILITIES IN POTATOES

ORDER NOW

THE FUTURE ON YOUR FORK

FOOD TRENDS FOR 2026

Following the release of thefoodpeople's predictions for the forthcoming year, we've identified some of the most prominent trends to help your business grow and reach new audiences. From emergent to mainstream, here's what's cooking in 2026.



*coffee rubbed salmon,
fried capers and
seaweed butter*



*vegetable
chickpea curry*

GREEN POWER ON EVERY PLATE

Plant powered eating keeps growing and the UK food scene is leaning into veg with real creativity. Diners want flavour first and plants happen to carry it brilliantly. Think Jerusalem artichoke on toast with ricotta and mint oil, or smashed peas with dukkah and parmesan. These dishes feel hearty and fit the moment.

Care caterers can explore soft textured favourites like lentil shepherd's pie, cauliflower cheese bakes boosted with extra pulses or a chickpea and squash stew that keeps residents satisfied. Schools can nod to global flavours with miso garlic mushrooms on toast or a mild coconut and vegetable curry. For hospital menus, plant-first bowls work well when they're simple to portion and gentle to digest. A roasted tomato and barley risotto or a carrot and chickpea mash bowl brings comfort without fuss.

Restaurants and cafés can explore fun formats from the trend with koji-infused tomato butter and dry-roasted edemame garnishes. Pubs and event caterers can run with veg led grazing boards featuring smashed broad bean dip, roasted roots, pickles and whipped carrot hummus or labneh. Even a loaded jacket potato bar with plant-based toppings inspires with its simplicity.

WASTE NOT, WANT MORE: SMARTER WASTE & PACKAGING

Food waste has officially lost its "inevitable" status. This trend is all about prevention, not just finding clever ways to deal with it. From extended shelf-life tech to edible coatings and compostable packaging, the food industry is rethinking waste as a design flaw, not an outcome.

For caterers, this is about reimagining value. Care and hospital kitchens, where consistency and safety are critical, can make simple but meaningful swaps: freeze surplus soups and purées in portioned trays, turn stale bread into savoury puddings, or batch-cook using predictive meal data. Schools can turn waste reduction into a learning moment by running "zero-waste lunch" days or upcycled snack bars that transform surplus fruit into flapjacks.

Cafés and restaurants are pushing further, reusing by-products in creative ways, like pickle brine vinaigrettes, carrot-top pesto, or spent coffee rubs for meats. At events, edible spoons, pulp-based plates, and refillable drinks stations are stepping in for single-use plastics, giving eco-efficiency a sleek, modern look.

Packaging design is also levelling up. Compostable trays, mushroom-based wraps, and reusable delivery containers that have been recently introduced are getting scaled up. Reducing waste is no longer about incremental fixes, it's about redesigning the system so that waste doesn't exist in the first place.

EMERGENT TRENDS

TREND BECOMING MAINSTREAM

TRENDS GAINING MOMENTUM

QUALITY, QUICK FOOD

Convenience has a new identity in 2026, it's about ease without sacrificing freshness or joy. Fast-food menus are moving toward dishes that cleverly satisfy diners quickly yet still feel cooked with care. From mackerel with pickles and herbs on sourdough, to brunch style crispy prawn toast with chutney, and mini-pies made with wonton wrappers, convenience is no longer bland and basic.

Caterers in education or healthcare can keep things speedy with ready to assemble bowls and trays. A base of warm grains or rice, topped with roasted veg, cooked chicken or beans, a flavourful sauce and a crunchy garnish. Cafés can prep mix-and-match pots for grab-and-go moments or re-imagine dishes such as smashed potato waffles using baked potatoes pressed in a waffle iron with cheese, pickles and a burger patty.

To maximise this trend, preparation and tech such as air fryers are key to reducing waiting times and creating nutritionally balanced meals that can be produced in less time than it takes to boil an egg.

NO NASTIES

Diners are reading labels and checking ingredients more than ever. They still want pleasure from food but fewer additives and clearer recipes win trust. Dishes built from recognisable ingredients will catch attention because they are easy to understand.

For care and hospital catering, a leek and potato soup enriched with olive oil instead of emulsifiers or a baked rice pudding thickened naturally will feel safe and satisfying.

Schools can offer snacks like fruit and nut bars without mystery sweeteners, or seed-topped crackers with a simple cheese dip. Cafés and restaurants can give dishes a gourmet twist with homemade crisps seasoned with herbs or a whipped bean dip dressed with flavoured oil and roasted nuts.

Event caterers can build menus around transparency. Think whole roasted chicken pieces, simple salads, and dessert pots that rely on natural flavour from fruit curds or dark chocolate.

SMALL BITES WITH BIG PERSONALITY

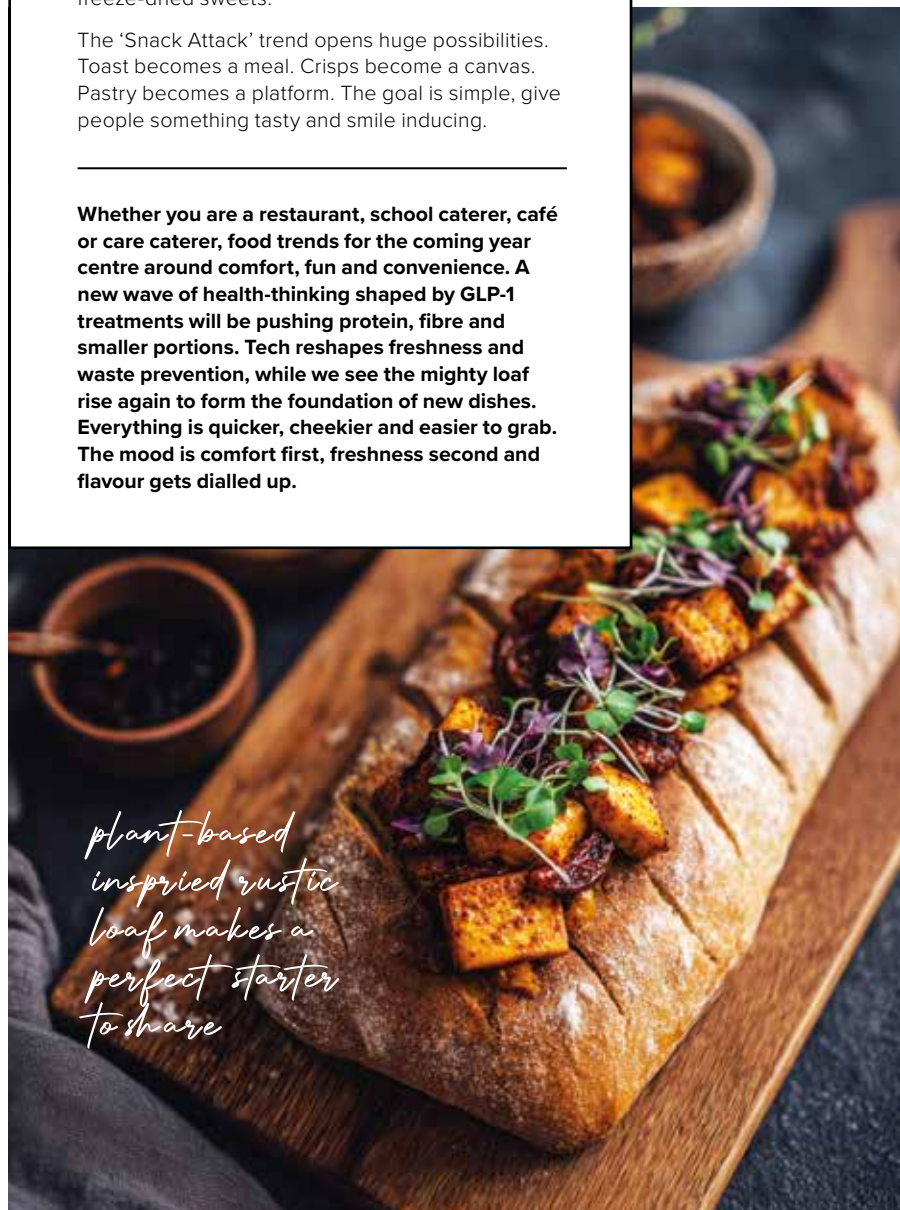
Snacking has become the new mealtime. People graze, nibble and share throughout the day and the trend has sparked wild creativity on social platforms. Curried fried egg on sourdough or tomato and jamón toast are just a few examples of this trend playing out. Watch out for mini and XL formats such as little doughnut bites with dips or giant pork scratchings with cod roe, offering a touch of playfulness for diners.

For cafés, snack style menus boost spend throughout the day. Toast flights, pizza cups and tubs of mini-cookies will encourage add-ons as consumers purchase a combination of small plates.

Playing with texture will also be important within this trend. The popular Dubai chocolate bar will be re-imagined to produce new options such as angel hair chocolate, which reveals Turkish cotton candy when broken open, mochi-style doughnuts paired with boba, or ice cream topped with freeze-dried sweets.

The 'Snack Attack' trend opens huge possibilities. Toast becomes a meal. Crisps become a canvas. Pastry becomes a platform. The goal is simple, give people something tasty and smile inducing.

Whether you are a restaurant, school caterer, café or care caterer, food trends for the coming year centre around comfort, fun and convenience. A new wave of health-thinking shaped by GLP-1 treatments will be pushing protein, fibre and smaller portions. Tech reshapes freshness and waste prevention, while we see the mighty loaf rise again to form the foundation of new dishes. Everything is quicker, cheekier and easier to grab. The mood is comfort first, freshness second and flavour gets dialled up.



plant-based inspired rustic loaf makes a perfect starter to share

Tilda
FOODSERVICE

NEW YEAR'S RICE-SOLUTIONS!



2026 menus fuelled by Tilda,
an all-round solution for
health driven customers

JANUARY PROMOTION



FEBRUARY PROMOTION



ELEVATE YOUR MENUS AT
TILDAFOODSERVICE.COM

@ tildafoodservice



We support
**mary's
meals**



NOURISHING YOUNG PATIENTS

New cookbook to inspire catering for children in hospital

A new cookbook “Even More Please” aims to transform hospital food for children and their visitors by providing a fresh approach. Veggie Chow Mein, Katsu Fish Finger Wrap, Naan Pizza, Popcorn Bars and Wibble Jelly are some of the recipes in this cookbook, produced by NHS Supply Chain: Food in association with the charity Sophie’s Legacy.

The charity was set up in memory of Sophie Fairall, daughter of Charlotte Fairall, who was sadly diagnosed with cancer in September 2020 at nine and had a long stay in hospital until she died at ten.

Nick Vadis, Culinary Ambassador, NHS Supply Chain and an ambassador of Sophie’s Legacy, who led the project, says “This book is a supporting tool in helping chefs and culinary staff to cater for children in hospitals. It was very much a team effort, produced by the dietetics and culinary team. We’ve included recipes we know Sophie would have liked such as Katsu Chicken Curry and Rice and these carry a yellow symbol.”

The full colour cookbook, aimed at feeding children from five to 15, provides an array of simple to make recipes, as well as information about nutrients, the nutritional value of foods, portion control and how to present food to children. It follows on from the original cookbook “More Please”.

Tips are given on how to serve food to children. “One of the biggest mistakes is giving a small child a big portion. It puts them off, but if it’s a sensible portion, it not only tempts the child to eat it, but also helps stop food waste. When serving food, think how you would like it to be presented. I always think hospital food should be something you want to eat, not have to eat. It’s important for children to eat all the nutrients they need, but if the food doesn’t look attractive, they won’t eat it,” continues Nick. “Some children don’t like food touching on the plate – they prefer space in between. They may not like food mixed with sauces, while others prefer everything combined.”

The recipes in the book reflect high street trends and what children enjoy. Nick says “Families travel all over the world, so children expect global influences. They visit high street chains, so we’ve incorporated that into the recipes. They are dishes you would

see in a fast casual restaurant – for example katsu chicken burger and our desserts are funky and fun.”

Visit <https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/> for more information or email food@supplychain.nhs.uk



Left and Below: Some of the dessert recipes from Even More Please such as Waffles and Toppers, Weetabix Flapjack and Popcorn Bars.

Even More Please cookbook from NHS Supply Chain Food.

Other dishes include Loaded Hash Browns covered with spaghetti hoops in tomato sauce and grated cheese and Loaded Taco Boats with chicken, tomatoes, peppers and rice. Some recipes can be customised to suit patients’ tastes. For example, the Cheese Dog with a quorn frankfurter, can be served with mustard, ketchup, BBQ sauce and onions. In the desserts section, Weetabix Nests has the option for children to create their own topping such as fresh fruit, squirty cream, chocolate and sprinkles. Or there’s Wibble Mousse which can be made fun and exciting with different toppers, sprinkles and sauces.





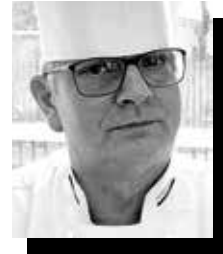
Your
break just

*Got
Hotter*



LEVELING UP WITH BASTEN

Former chair of the Craft Guild of Chefs, Chris Basten, Commercial Development Chef, Capital City College, has guided many a student on their hospitality career path. From teaching at Westminster Kingsway College, to mentoring budding young chefs participating in national competitions, his passion for the industry seems to be unending. It is therefore unsurprising that when we wanted to shine a light on how to level-up skills in the kitchen, we naturally turned to him for advice.



IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, WHAT'S THE SINGLE MOST OVERLOOKED SKILL THAT SEPARATES A GOOD CHEF FROM A GREAT ONE AND WHY?

A good chef can always cook with flair and imagination and can turn ingredients into good and well executed dishes; a great chef can turn ingredients into technically creative and showstopping dishes with elevated flavours using a range of tried and tested methods.

WHAT TECHNIQUES DO YOU THINK CHEFS IN THE UK SHOULD BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO RIGHT NOW AND WHAT NEW COOKING TECHNIQUES OR SKILLS ARE YOU SEEING MORE OF IN HOSPITALITY?

Chefs in the UK would benefit from concentrating where possible on zero waste cooking, and creative usage of trimmings into stocks sauces and garnishes. This is very much appreciated by eco-conscious diners. Fermentation and preservation, the ability to make our food last longer so we are less reliant on importing foodstuffs from overseas is important.

WHAT CORE PRINCIPLES OR HABITS SHOULD JUNIOR CHEFS INSTILL EARLY ON?

Junior chefs should focus on building strong fundamentals: discipline, consistency, respect for ingredients, and a willingness to learn. These habits will form the start of a successful culinary career and separate those who simply cook as a job, into those who grow into kitchen and restaurant leaders.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CHEFS WHO WANT TO PUSH THEIR CRAFT FURTHER – ARE THERE ANY ACCESSIBLE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES YOU WOULD RECOMMEND?

Never stop learning, even seasoned chefs benefit from refresher courses in fundamentals like sauces, butchery, and pastry. Travel through food – Explore cuisines outside your comfort zone; global influences are shaping modern dining. Take advice from a mentor, working under a master chef, or joining professional networks accelerates growth.

MANY CHEFS TALK ABOUT “DEVELOPING THEIR PALATE.” HOW DO YOU TRAIN YOUR OWN PALATE AND KEEP IT SHARP?

Focus on the five basic tastes (sweet, sour, salty, bitter, umami). Ask yourself: What's dominant? What's missing? How do the flavours evolve? Chefs often taste components separately before combining them.

Undertake blind tasting exercises, cover labels or have someone prepare small samples of spices, herbs, wines, or sauces. Identifying them without visual cues strengthens memory and sensory recall. Smell is a huge part of taste. Practise identifying aromas in spices, teas, wines, or even fresh herbs.

FERMENTATION, CURING, AND AGEING HAVE BECOME POPULAR AGAIN. WHICH TRADITIONAL METHODS DO YOU THINK DESERVE A BIGGER PLACE IN PROFESSIONAL KITCHENS?

Beyond fermentation, curing, and ageing, traditional methods like smoking, drying, dehydration, pickling, and confit, deserve a bigger place in professional kitchens. These techniques not only preserve food but also unlock unique flavours, textures, and sustainable practices that modern diners increasingly value. They can also help with heritage-driven dining trends.

“Ask yourself: What's dominant? What's missing? How do the flavours evolve?”



**KIKKOMAN®**

CHOOSE
ALL NATURAL



UK'S NO.1 SOY SAUCE BRAND*

- **Purity** - made with just 4 pure ingredients and zero additives
- **Unhurried** - naturally brewed for several months
- **Unique** - rich in umami taste
- **Authentic** - made to the same traditional recipe dating to 17th century
- **Versatile** - perfect for seasoning Asian dishes as well as everyday soups, stews, dressings

*Circana we 06.09.25

**KIKKOMAN®**

THE PURE SOY SAUCE

Made with only the finest natural ingredients, authentic Kikkoman soy sauce is the ideal all-purpose seasoning for professional kitchens. The signature fermentation process, perfected over 300 years, produces high levels of umami flavour and aromas which perfectly enhances flavour of both classic Asian and western dishes, from sauces, soups and salads and even in desserts.

First created in 17th century Japan, the traditional soy sauce recipe remains unchanged, and today Kikkoman is the leading global producer of soy sauce. Quality is at the heart of the company which is why only four pure ingredients – soybeans, wheat, salt and water – go into each bottle of Kikkoman Soy Sauce. The unique, unhurried natural brewing process provides a full-bodied taste, meaning your diners can enjoy the very best flavour experience with zero artificial additives.

In addition to its classic Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce, Kikkoman also make a Less Salt Soy Sauce with 43% less salt, and a Gluten-Free Tamari Soy Sauce to suit wider dietary needs, but without compromising on flavour. The foodservice range also includes versatile Teriyaki Marinade and Teriyaki Glaze, ideal for stir fries and barbecue; a Lemon Ponzu, Sesame Sauce and Poke Sauce that are perfect for dips and dressings, plus many more specialist products, all available in 1L PET bottles.

Chefs can find more info and recipe inspiration on <https://www.kikkoman.co.uk/food-service>
Trade enquiries: RH Amar 01494 530200

What sets Kikkoman Soy Sauce apart from other soy sauces:

- 100% pure, made with only 4 natural ingredients
- Naturally brewed resulting in a rich umami taste
- Versatile universal seasoning across all cuisines

KNOW YOUR SOY SAUCES

Not all soy sauces are the same. Japanese and Chinese soy sauces are the most famous varieties. Also known as 'shoyu', Japanese soy sauce (like Kikkoman) consists only of four natural ingredients and is distinguished by its full-bodied and aromatic flavour. Chinese soy sauce is either dark or light in colour and often contains artificial ingredients and colourings and generally has a higher salt content. As Kikkoman is neither light or dark, it can be used widely across all kinds of dishes.

The rule of thumb for a good soy sauce is the shorter the list of ingredients, the better. And "naturally brewed" on the label means more umami, coveted by chefs for bringing out the flavours of other food.



JASMINE RICE SALAD WITH SPICY LAMB AND THAI BASIL



10 PORTIONS
PREP: 7 MINS
COOK TIME: 25 MINS

INGREDIENTS

For the salad:

- 700g jasmine rice
- 20g rapeseed oil
- 10g garlic cloves, chopped
- 10g ginger, chopped
- 700g minced lamb
- 100ml Kikkoman Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce
- 170g red pepper, julienne cut
- 315g cucumber, deseeded, julienne cut
- 70g carrot, julienne cut
- 50g Thai basil

For the dressing:

- 40ml Kikkoman Naturally Brewed Soy Sauce
- 5g fish sauce
- 15g rice vinegar
- 20g honey
- 10g sriracha sauce

METHOD

1. Wash the rice then boil in salted water with twice the amount of water for 10-15 minutes. After cooking, rinse under cold water and set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the chopped garlic and ginger and fry for 2 minutes.
3. Add the minced lamb to the pan and fry for about 8 minutes until cooked through. Season to taste with the Kikkoman Soy Sauce.
4. Mix the cooked rice, lamb, red pepper, cucumber, carrot and Thai basil leaves in a large bowl.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients. Pour over the rice mixture and mix until well combined. Serve on a large platter or individual plates.



KIKKOMAN

ADD A WORLD OF FLAVOUR TO YOUR KITCHEN

NEW

USE AS A QUICK MARINADE

TERIYAKI MARINADE

6 x 975ml

Endlessly versatile - use
as a base to develop your
own glazes, sauces, dips,
and dressings



IDEAL READY TO USE

TERIYAKI WOK SAUCE

6 x 975ml

Sweet, savoury, and
umami-rich - crafted
with Kikkoman
Naturally Brewed
Soy Sauce



PERFECT FOR HEALTHY COOKING

PONZU CITRUS SOY SAUCE

6 x 1 litre

Naturally brewed soy sauce
meets refreshing citrus for a
tangy, savoury flavour that
brightens any dish



Kikkoman.co.uk



@Kikkomanuk



@Kikkomansoyssauce



Brian TURNER

LEGENDARY CHEF & SPRINGBOARD FUTURECHEF AMBASSADOR

One of the giants of the British restaurant industry, Brian Turner has truly earned his status as a legend. From helping out at his dad's transport café after World War II, he went on to work and lead in some of the UK's most exclusive kitchens, won a Michelin star and played a key role in the mighty Ready Steady Cook. He has also enjoyed roles as President of Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and President of the UK's team for the Bocuse d'Or. A vital ambassador and former Chairman of the Springboard FutureChef competition, we caught up with Brian ahead of this year's final in March.

Tell us about your first memories of food growing up

My dad owned a transport café, and as the eldest of four children, I was sent to work with him from about the age of eight, probably to get one child out of the house! I still remember the smell of bacon and tomatoes sizzling on the grill. One of my fondest memories is from Sunday lunches at home, Dad would slice the end off the roast beef and give me a little taste. First without salt, then with. The difference was amazing. It taught me, even then, the power of seasoning, a simple but vital lesson I've never forgotten.

What do you think would have become of you if you hadn't become a chef?

I loved playing in the Salvation Army band when I was younger, though I doubt I'd have made a living as a musician. I used to fancy myself as a bit of a spy too, I was a huge James Bond fan. So perhaps a chef with a licence to grill, rather than kill!

How did you get into the industry?

When I was 17, I moved to London to work at Simpson's in the Strand, where I met my late, great friend Richard Shepherd

Left to right:
David Mulachy, Brian Turner
and Adam Handling

“There’s a new generation of chefs who really give me hope for the future, chefs who combine creativity with a deep respect for ingredients and tradition.”

CBE, who went on to fame at Langan’s. From there, I joined The Savoy, then Claridge’s, before heading to Lausanne in Switzerland to further my training. Eventually, I came back to London and started to make my own mark.

Who were your key mentors during your career?

Miss Bibby, my schoolteacher, was the first to set me on my way. Later, chefs like Richard Shepherd CBE and the teams I worked with at The Savoy and Claridge’s had a huge influence. Eric Scammon, sauce cook at the Savoy Grill is still an inspiration today. I learned from everyone around me, good mentors make you think differently, push you harder, and remind you that standards matter.

What do you consider your greatest achievements in your career?

Owning my own restaurant on Walton Street, London for 16 years is something I’ll always be proud of. It was a special chapter in my life. And, of course, being awarded a CBE for services to the industry, that was a great honour, not just for me but for everyone who’s worked alongside me over the years.

How has the hospitality industry changed for the better — and for the worse?

For the better, I think there’s far more creativity, diversity, and opportunity than when I started. The talent coming through now is incredible, and there’s a real pride in food and the industry that maybe didn’t exist 40 or 50 years ago.

For the worse, I’d say the industry has become tougher in lots of ways, the pressures are greater, the margins tighter, and the work-life balance still a big challenge. But the spirit of hospitality remains, and that’s what keeps it alive.

Are you still in the kitchen as much as you’d like?

Sadly not. I suffered a stroke in 2022, and that’s affected how much I can physically do in the kitchen. But my passion for food hasn’t dimmed one bit. I still love talking about it, thinking about it, and of course, eating it!

How would you describe your cooking style, and did it change or evolve during your career?

I’ve always been proud to cook British food, proper, honest cooking using good seasonal ingredients. The heart of it has always been about flavour and simplicity. Good food doesn’t need to be complicated; it just needs to be cooked with care.

Are there any chefs who are exciting you right now?

There’s a new generation of chefs who really give me hope

for the future, chefs who combine creativity with a deep respect for ingredients and tradition. It’s fantastic to see so much young talent coming through and carrying the mantle forward through associations and competitions like the Springboard FutureChef competition, the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, The Roux Scholarship, the Craft Guild of Chefs and many more.

Do you have a favourite dish to cook or one you consider your signature?

Roast stuffed shoulder of lamb. It’s a dish that brings back great memories and represents everything I love about cooking, warmth, generosity, and flavour.

How important is the Springboard FutureChef competition for the hospitality industry?

It’s hugely important. Getting young people involved at an early age, when they have such enthusiasm and teachers who believe in them, really helps them thrive and build confidence. It can spark a genuine love for the industry. You only have to look at the list of alumni to see how this competition benefits participants, it’s amazing how many have gone on to have successful careers in hospitality.

How proud are you to have played an integral part in the competition’s incredible heritage and success?

I couldn’t be prouder. I’ve always championed this competition and believe deeply in what it stands for. I’m absolutely thrilled that the Springboard FutureChef team have created the Brian Turner Taste Award in my name since I stepped down as Chairman, it means a lot to know that my passion for the competition will continue as part of its legacy.

How does it help prepare youngsters for a career as a chef?

It teaches them so much about what life in a professional kitchen is like, working under pressure, in a new environment, with a sense of discipline and focus. The process of practising again and again, refining their dishes, and learning from feedback, all builds skills and enthusiasm that will serve them well if they decide to pursue a career in hospitality.

What are your tips to competitors ahead of the final in March?

Stay calm, enjoy it, it’s meant to be enjoyable too! Taste, taste, and taste again. Trust yourself and remember how far you’ve already come.

Signature
by Country Range

NEW

Elevate YOUR MENU

Elevate Comforting Classics with New Signature by Country Range Sausages

- 80% pork content
- Gluten free
- Free from the 14 major allergens
- Cook from frozen for less waste and more convenience
- Compact 1kg bags for limited freezer space



Find your local Country Range wholesaler and recipe
inspiration at www.countryrange.co.uk

Making ends meet

SMASH IT WITH MASH

Vegetable paratha

PARATHA PERFECTION

This is one of the most versatile and easy recipes, which can be served as a starter, lunch, handheld snack or part of a small plates menu. The options for fillings are endless and this is where I find a frozen mash really works. I portion out my proved doughballs, roll them out and stuff them with a spiced vegetable and mashed potato filling. Seal them up and bake until golden. Light, fluffy and crowd-pleasing. You can make them as big or small as you wish.

This month, Paul Dickson has been working with frozen mashed potato and shares the benefits of incorporating it into your menu.

Now, I'm going to start by saying that I have to admit, as a chef, I have always been sceptical about using a frozen mashed potato. However, there are some fantastic quality products out there now - take the Signature by Country Range Mashed Potato with Butter for example. It only contains five natural ingredients, the exact same as when making mash from scratch, and it can be such a saviour in a busy kitchen. It reduces labour time, waste and ensures a consistently high standard of finish every time, with no worries about seasonal potato changes. If, like me, you've never even considered using a frozen mashed potato, here is my guide to some ways that you can use it as a major time saver with the same results as making it from scratch.

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



Pillowry Goodness

I've talked before about gnocchi being a great way to use up leftover potato, but what about if you want to feature it on your menu and don't have enough? The prep time makes a potentially quick and easy dish a lot more labour intensive. A good quality frozen mash cuts out that prep time without having any impact on the end result – giving you the perfect quick seasonal special that you can switch up throughout the year.

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH & SHALLOT GNOCCHI



Corned beef hash

Load it up

For a winter warmer, why not swap your loaded fries for loaded mash? A great upsell opportunity, as well as becoming a main dish in its own right. It's also a perfect street food style grab and go option which is bound to draw a crowd! The beauty of using frozen mash for this is that it can be ready in minutes and you can keep on top of portion control. Load up with anything you like – here, I've baked it with cheese, bacon and leeks – the ultimate comfort food!



CHEESE, BACON AND LEEK LOADED MASH

COOKING WITH CARE

We recently worked with IDDSI and care catering trainer, Andy Cullum, who gave us his top ways of using frozen mashed potato:

1. Protein packed fish cakes
2. Cutlery-free croquettes
3. Comforting corned beef hash
4. Decorative duchess potatoes
5. Velvety nutrient-rich soup

HELLMANN'S
EST. 1913

MORE THAN MAYO

WITH
THOM BATEMAN

THE ONE & ONLY

Key Benefits:

- Suitable for vegans & vegetarians
- Better nutrition, rich in Omega 3
- Sustainably sourced oils, no preservatives or artificial colours
- Ideal for mixing, blending, dipping and topping
- Sustainably sourced oils



NO PRESERVATIVES

NO ARTIFICIAL
Colours



Scan the QR code to discover how to
get more from vegan mayo



Unilever
Food
Solutions

Creative by nature

Creative ways to
celebrate the seasons

Chefs are constantly looking for ways to keep their menus fresh and engaging while reflecting seasonal ingredients. In this month's Melting Pot, our panel of experts dive into the creative decisions behind choosing ingredients, refreshing classic dishes, and experimenting with new flavours while balancing customer expectations to encourage repeat custom.

*Glazed Pork &
Chilli Bao Buns*



MARK WEIR

Head Chef, RAILS Restaurant, Kaya Great Northern Hotel

I refresh existing dishes by introducing new flavour pairings and using techniques like pickling, smoking, or fermenting. I also rebrand favourites slightly each season - adjusting recipes to feature seasonal herbs, fruits, or vegetables. It's about keeping a balance between familiar favourites and new, seasonal specials. Some signature dishes stay on the menu year-round, but I use seasonal accents, or limited time offers to keep things fresh and exciting, encouraging guests to return. Some seasonal dishes on our menu with these accents include the truffled ravioli and spiced pumpkin bavaroise.



DYLAN JAMES

Head Chef, Cambium Restaurant

One way to refresh a dish is to change the cooking techniques. This could be from the way you cook a piece of protein or simply how you prepare it. We have just added a smoked element to our roast cod dish, which is served with smoked bacon, potato, tempura oyster, mustard lettuce and smoked butter sauce. The smokiness makes it somewhat warmer and heartier – the kind of experience our guests will be looking for when dining in the colder seasons. Flavour combinations must also be perfect to make a dish pop and feel complete. This comes with a lot of trial and error - especially when we are going from a bright, light season to a darker, heartier season like autumn/winter.

“One way to refresh a dish is to change the cooking techniques. This could be from the way you cook a piece of protein or simply how you prepare it.”



JAMES CLEAR

Hospitality Director, Aria Care

At Aria Care, we refresh our menus seasonally to reflect both the best local produce and the changing needs of our residents. In autumn, for example, our chefs might elevate a classic cottage pie by using sweet potato and root vegetables from local farms, adding both warmth and nutritional value.

We use our Chef Academy and CaterCloud technology to help teams experiment confidently while staying mindful of individual dietary needs. Residents are also involved in food activities like herb growing, cooking, and tasting sessions, which inspire creative touches in the kitchen. The key is balance keeping beloved dishes familiar, but refreshing them with seasonal colour, texture and nutrition so every mealtime feels special.

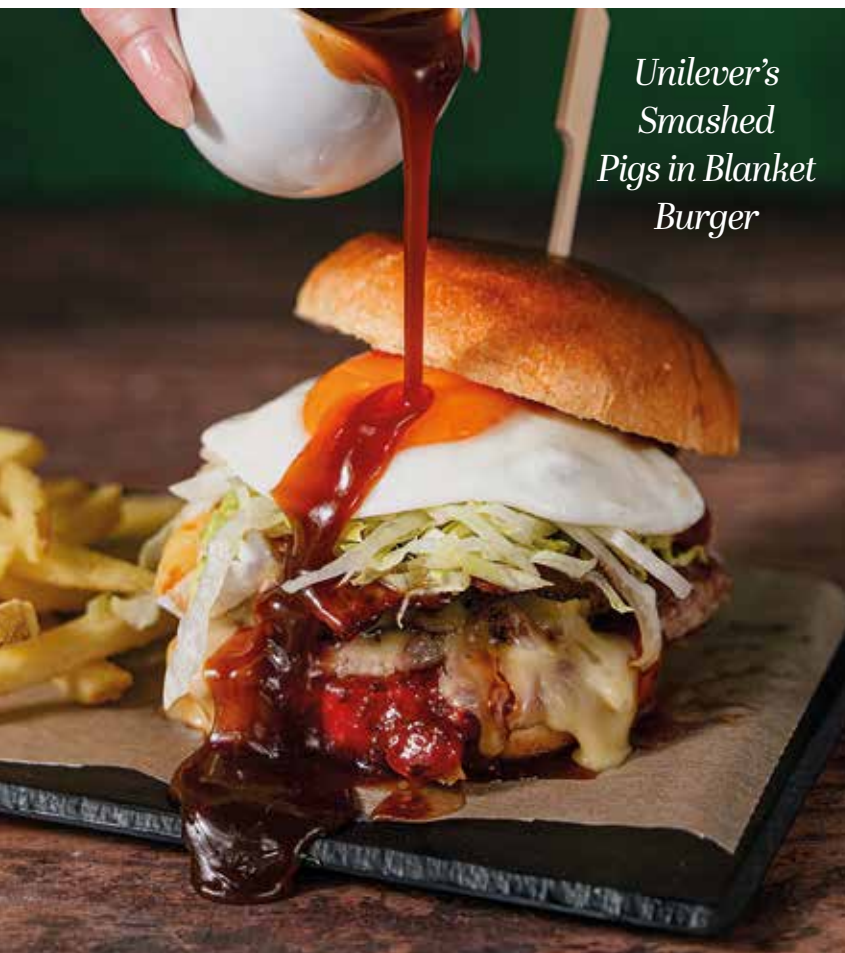


JAMES BROWN

Executive Chef, Unilever Food Solutions UK & Ireland

We work closely with our suppliers and use AI to guide the seasonal availability of produce in the UK. Customers expect these traditional favourites and want innovative and tasty ways of using them. To refresh existing dishes, like our smashed burger, we incorporate the popular trend to produce a deliciously caramelised brunch alternative. The combination of salty bacon, creamy brie, and sweet cranberry resonates with people.

Balancing customer expectations with seasonal experimentation is a case of reformatting - from a plated dish to a wrap, taco or bao bun, for example. Other than that, the tried and tested flavours work and make people happy. Make sure those flavours sing and add some interesting textures!





Add a smoked element to your dishes



ADAM CLAYMAN

Licensed RTM Manager, Opies

Seasonal ingredients can bring freshness and energy to menus. Turning them into well-balanced, commercially viable dishes can be trickier. Achieving balance between

innovation and kitchen practicality requires creativity.

Your secret weapon? Smart use of store-cupboard staples to add layers of complexity without overcomplicating preparation. Cheese, for example, pairs beautifully with seasonal veg. Introducing an additional element - like pickled walnuts - enhances depth of flavour and a more distinctive, memorable dish to capture diners' interest.

Aligning with key events can create standout menu offerings. A Chinese-inspired dish like Soy Chicken or Glazed Pork Belly gains a sophisticated twist by using Opies stem ginger in syrup. The result is an approachable, yet fresh, familiar option.



DEEPAK SHUKLA

CEO, Pearl Lemon Catering

Updating a well-known dish doesn't require any major overhaul. Often it can simply mean a few minor adjustments.

Use flavour pairings you might not typically think of, for example, beef wellington paired with black garlic or risotto with roasted beetroot and horseradish crème fraîche.

Finding the right balance between what diners expect and what's new is a delicate balancing act. We tend to start small. A new ingredient here, a little twist there. The comforts of familiarity act as anchors on our menu, while applying a little "curiosity" keeps people interested. My biggest tip is let the ingredients speak for themselves. Keep it fresh and simple, and don't be afraid to try tiny differences that take a dish to the next level.



Truffle Ravioli

Authentic

YAMAS!

INTRODUCING YAMAS! COATED HALLOUMI RANGE!

NEW



The **NEW** frozen range from YAMAS! showcases authentic Halloumi PDO cheese, wrapped perfectly in a range of crispy coatings! Delivering a premium eating experience, with taste, texture and provenance. Yum!

HALLOUMI POPCORN

A mellow, savoury flavour with a springy texture, wrapped in a crispy breadcrumb coating – mouth-wateringly moreish!



Indulgence

Snackification

Serving suggestions

Level up your dish!

Tirokafteri Dip with Popcorn Halloumi

Versatile day-part usage

Roasted Tomato & Pepper Pasta with Popcorn Halloumi Toppers

Branded POS Available

CHILLI HALLOUMI BITES

Bring the fire with these delicious Halloumi pieces coated in a spiced, crispy breadcrumb. Tongue-tingling tastiness with a fiery kick.



Artisanal & Authentic

Multi-Sensorial



Protein Meal Centre



Chicken Burger with Chilli Halloumi Bites

Middle Eastern Grazing Board with Chilli Halloumi Bites

Versatile day-part usage

Serving suggestions

GARLIC & HERB HALLOUMI BITES

Savoury Halloumi pieces coated in a rich garlic and fragrant herb breadcrumb. Golden, garlicky, gone in seconds.



Provenance Ingredient

Mezze/ Tapas

Indulgence

Portion Control

Versatile day-part usage



Caesar Salad with Garlic & Herb Halloumi Bites



Italian Grazing Board with Garlic & Herb Halloumi Bites

Serving suggestions

To find out more, pick up with your Account Manager today
or email: hello@yamasdairy.uk

create dishes
that are creamy,
not cow-y

skip the cow





Double chocolate SOUFFLÉ



Situated on the quaint seafront in Lytham St Annes, a short journey away from the bright lights and iconic sights of Blackpool, the Inn on the Prom has been famously welcoming guests for over 86 years.

Known for providing some of the best food on the Lancashire coast, Vettriano's Restaurant, Bistro and Outside Inn Terrace is led by Head Chef and Lancashire lad Kasim Khemili, who studied at Lancaster University before globe-tasting his way around the world.

"We have a lot of loyal customers who come time and again, so we still offer the much-loved set menus and traditional classics, but our Bistro and Outside Inn Bar & Terrace menus allow us to be more imaginative with specials," says Kasim. "We offer fantastic burgers, pizzas that are made using the Country Range Doughballs, salads, skewers and have recently run a great range of curries including a Katsu Curry and an Indian Madras."

"Along with the curries, winter is a time for slow and low cookery, so I love doing lamb shanks or lamb Henry. They're such warming dishes and you build great depth of flavour. I actually use a lot of the Country Range store cupboard seasonings and spices with my one pot creations. Outside of a warming stew or soup, everyone needs a sweet treat in January to beat the blues and this Double Chocolate Soufflé is my all-time favourite."

For further information, visit
www.innontheprom.co.uk



**KASIM
KHEMILI**

MAKES 10 SOUFFLÉS

INGREDIENTS

- 125g Country Range Fat Reduced Cocoa Powder
- 130g Country Range Cornflour
- 375g Water
- 500g Sugar
- 125g Valahrona Araguani 72% chocolate
- 500g Cold water
- 100g Egg white
- 45g Sugar
- 25g Chocolate ganache rolled per ramekin



METHOD

1. Mix the cornflour and the cocoa powder together and gradually add the cold water to make a smooth paste.
2. Bring the water and sugar to the boil.
3. Melt in the chocolate then whisk in the cocoa powder.
4. Mix in the cornflour mix and then cook until thick.
5. To make the souffle, mix 90g of souffle base with meringue made from the egg white and 45g sugar
6. Put one piece of chocolate ganache in the bottom of the ramekin and then top up with the soufflé mix.
7. Bake for 15 minutes.



IQF for waste reduction with a 48hr defrosted shelf life.

CELEBRATE **INTERNATIONAL PANCAKE DAY** BY TREATING YOUR CUSTOMERS TO OUR SWEET AND SOFT VANILLA FLAVOURED AMERICAN-STYLE PANCAKES.

American Style Pancakes

40g
1 x 120

VEGETARIAN

How will you serve yours?

serving suggestion



Elegantly French

Heart Shaped Macarons
1 x 20



serving suggestion



FR-135-007
Gluten-free

VEGETARIAN



Sweeten your afternoon tea menu this Valentines' Day with our defrost and serve, authentic heart-shaped macarons that melt hearts.

How will you serve yours?

HEADS^{UP}

Changing legislation for shift work

Shift work, especially nights and irregular hours, is associated with higher risks of sleep problems, stress and poorer mental health. In hospitality, where peaks are predictable but volatile, these risks are amplified if rotas move at the last minute.

The government has undertaken a consultation process to understand the impact of good shift practices, the results of which highlighted the impact of last-minute changes on pay, family life and mental wellbeing. In particular, there was a distinct gap between employers who plan rotas, and the experience of many other hourly workers where rotas were inconsistent or changed rapidly.

The resulting Government's Employment Rights Bill, due to be introduced early this year is reshaping how shifts are offered, changed and cancelled for employees, including agency workers. Ministers have confirmed employers will now need to give reasonable notice of shifts and proportionate pay when shifts are cancelled, curtailed or moved at short notice. "We are turning the tide with the biggest upgrade to workers' rights in a generation," said Angela Rayner, Deputy Prime Minister, when the Bill moved forward in March 2025.

The first wave of measures is set to begin from April 2026, with detailed rules on guaranteed hours and predictable shifts not expected until 2027. UKHospitality welcomed the clarity on sequencing while warning that costs will bite. "Clear and precise timelines on when aspects of this legislation, and the processes to deliver them, will come into force are essential," said Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive, adding that changes on guaranteed hours and shift predictability are the "most complex for hospitality businesses" and need a long runway.

PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Map typical notice periods across your sites.

Identify roles with heavy last-minute changes and design alternatives, such as standby teams with clear compensation rules.

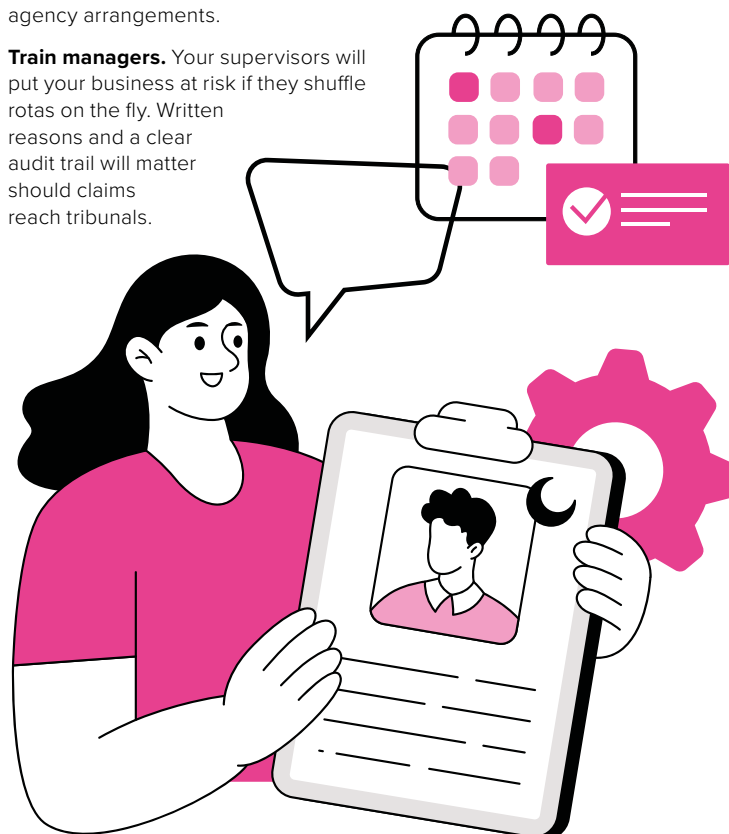
Plan your rota processes. Build in lead times for issuing schedules and set a standard for what counts as reasonable notice for your business format. The legislation will require you to justify last-minute changes and to pay compensation when you can't. Pilot a seven or fourteen-day

rota release and measure no-show and overtime impacts. Track actual hours worked. If an employee regularly works the same shift pattern, you'll soon be expected to offer a contract that reflects those hours. The new rules will require proof of what's typical for each worker, so tracking actual shifts becomes essential. The Government has indicated that staff will have the right to more predictable schedules, and businesses could face penalties if their working patterns are inconsistent without good reason.

Budget for short-notice costs. Factor in a contingency for cancelled shifts and curtailed hours once the compensation rules switch on. The hospitality sector is already struggling with cost pressures, and although trade bodies continue to press for proportionate implementation, planning for compensation costs will help your business through the period of transition.

Update contracts and staff handbooks. Align zero-hours and variable-hours templates with the new framework, including any agency arrangements.

Train managers. Your supervisors will put your business at risk if they shuffle rotas on the fly. Written reasons and a clear audit trail will matter should claims reach tribunals.





Born and bred in the glorious north, Carlson Landles has been busy making Six Restaurant at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, one of Newcastle's hottest culinary tickets. We caught up with Carlson ahead of a big 2026.

What are your first memories of food?

I grew up in a Jarrow council estate in quite a deprived area of the North East, so I wasn't eating refined dishes daily or visiting fancy restaurants. The first proper food that sticks in my memory was the mince pies that they used to sell at our local butchers. They were 19p each and absolutely immense. Proper pies with proper meat and gravy.

What did you do following school?

I was a bit of a Jack-the-lad at school and not studious, so on leaving, I followed a few mates into bricklaying. I quickly found out that bricklaying in the North of England isn't for the faint-hearted, though it's tough work carrying bricks around all day. I didn't learn much from the experience, but I knew I wanted a job where I would be creative. A kitchen seemed like a good place to start.

Tell us your route into the kitchen?

I loved the cookery shows on TV with the likes of Marco and Gordon so I decided that would be my next career

Rising Star

CARLSON LANDLES

**Cheese & Apple
Tartlet, Chive
Emulsion, Mead Veil**

stop. I knew zero about the industry outside of what I saw on the box, and that was probably a good thing because if I realised it was going to be 60–70-hour weeks, I'm not sure I would have gone for it. I was 17, though, and the kitchen was infectious. I fell in love with the camaraderie and cookery immediately.

Do you remember your first days in a professional kitchen?

I went to college to study cookery and was working in a professional kitchen as well. I remember my first day vividly. There was this angry chef, and I was making Salt Beef, which was completely new to me and passing mash through a drum sieve. I loved it.

How did you develop your skills?

After a year at college, I felt I was learning more in the job, so I left and took an apprenticeship at SIX Rooftop, Gateshead, under Greg Lambert in 2011. I started as an apprentice, worked my way up to Commis Chef, and I'm now Head Chef. I left for a short period with Greg to work at a small restaurant in Whitley Bay and I had three months travelling around the US and Canada to broaden my horizons and complete a stage at Blue Hill, but I returned to SIX in 2019.

What are your career goals?

We're always working towards awards, but for myself, the key goal is to keep learning and improving. I learn something new every day, whether it's a new skill, technique or working with a new product or ingredient. That's the beauty of the job.

Do you want your own place one day?

I'm not sure, to be honest. I enjoy working for someone else and having that security. I also think it's easier to take more risks and be more creative. If it were my own money, I think the worry of keeping a roof over my head would take over and would limit some of my decisions.

What is your favourite dish to cook?

I really don't have one as I don't like dishes to stand still, and every dish can evolve. I'm always looking to tweak, change, improve and elevate. We have a chicken and Foie Royal parfait canape that I'm very proud of, but ask me again in a year, and I'm sure it will be something else.

Describe your cooking style?

My cookery education has been classical French, but I want my food to be a celebration of the best British produce.

What is your favourite dish to eat?

Pizza – there is a place near me in Sunderland called Wild Fire Pizza. They are phenomenal.

If you were on a desert island, what five ingredients would you take with you?

Salt, pepper, butter, potatoes, beef.

I'm giving you salt from the seawater surrounding you - one more.

Corn on the cob.

Favourite restaurant to eat at?

It was The Patricia in Newcastle. I would eat there once a month at least. Unfortunately, it is currently closed, but I'm hoping it will return. The industry has never been as tough.

The last restaurant you ate at?

The Forge at Middleton Lodge Estate near Darlington. They have one Michelin star and totally deserve it. The meal and service were excellent.

Who have been your key mentors who have helped you on your journey so far?

Greg Lambert has been instrumental in my career as a mentor, friend, and boss. He's a great chef, leader, and person.

Favourite cookbook?

White Heat, Marco Pierre-White.

What are your other passions?

I'm a big Newcastle football fan, and I still play once a week and go to the gym whenever I get the chance. I also have a 2-year-old daughter, so she takes up the rest of my time off.

Three kitchen secrets for success

Stay clean.

Stay organised.

Been passionate about improving.

What trends are you excited about currently?

I think tasting menus are going to continue to grow in popularity and evolve. We offer them five days a week here. They're great for development and creativity in the kitchen and brilliant for adventurous and slightly more discerning consumers.

Dream job if you weren't a chef?

I would be a paramedic. I have a deep respect for what they do and would love to help people.

**Isle of Wight Tomatoes,
Burrata, Sherry Vinegar Gel,
Garlic Tuile**

NDLES

HEAD CHEF AT SIX ROOFTOP AT BALTIC



DaVinci
GOURMET®

YOUR PARTNER FOR PERFECT DRINKS

- 2 in 3 European consumers are consciously trying to reduce their sugar intake by opting for less sweet flavour profiles *
- Same taste profile and taste delivery than DaVinci Classic syrups while providing an alternative for health focused consumers

APPLICATIONS



Coffee



Hot Chocolate



Tea



Milkshakes



Lemonade



Cocktails & Mocktails



Smoothies



Frappes



Iced Tea & Iced Coffee



Flavoured Water



*Mintel, 2020



emea.davincigourmet.com



[@davincigourmet_europe](https://www.instagram.com/davincigourmet_europe)



[@DaVinciGourmetEMEA](https://www.facebook.com/DaVinciGourmetEMEA)

THE MARKETPLACE

Keeping you up-to-date on products and services within the foodservice industry

PACIFIC WEST HELPS CATERERS STAY TREND-PROOF WITH HFSS-COMPLIANT SEAFOOD

Education and care caterers face the challenge of meeting HFSS nutritional standards while keeping menus appealing and up to date. Pacific West's Fully Cooked Seafood range offers the perfect solution — a versatile, healthy protein base that's fully cooked and adaptable to various menu styles.

With five easy reheating methods, the range saves valuable kitchen time and allows chefs to add flavour twists like hot honey or truffle drizzle for modern appeal.

Certified by MSC/ASC for sustainability, Halal, and HFSS compliant, Pacific West's seafood helps caterers create meals that are nutritious, flexible, and responsibly sourced, all while boosting engagement and efficiency in busy kitchens.



Lamb Weston celebrates gold for its game-changing fries

Lamb Weston has scooped Gold at the National Restaurant Pub & Bar Show Innovation Challenge for its standout Frenzy Fries. The competition celebrates the most innovative products launched over the past year, with finalists pitching live to an expert judging panel featuring leaders from Greene King, Hawksmoor, and Pizza Express.

Judges praised Frenzy Fries for "innovating with food as an experience" and predicted they would be "a big hit."

Ash Liles, Trade Marketing Manager at Lamb Weston, said, "The win recognises the team's mission to create a product that delivers a memorable food experience and helps operators stand out in a competitive market."

Scan the QR code to request a free sample and see why Frenzy Fries are taking menus by storm.



Nestlé Professional brews innovation with coffee ground furniture

Nestlé Professional has developed an innovative Nestlé Recycled Plastic Coffee Board, made from 70% recycled plastic waste and 30% used coffee grounds, now used in its NESCAFÉ® self-serve units. Created with UK manufacturer Regency, the new boards replace MDF and virgin materials, cutting carbon emissions by up to 70% and embodying a closed-loop design that allows refurbishment up to five times.

This initiative also streamlines production, reducing supply chain stages from five to one and cutting lead times from 12 weeks to just 10 days. Even condiment holders are now crafted from coffee grounds.

Recognised with the 2025 Footprint Award and 2024 waste2zero Best Closed Loop Project Award, the project reflects Nestlé's commitment to innovation, waste reduction, and circular sustainability.

Learn more about Nestlé Professional's sustainability initiatives: <https://www.nestleprofessional.co.uk/sustainability>





INTO THE WILD

Seaweed

BY LUCIA STUART

I'm not getting into the debate on the actual size of the UK & Irish coastline – let's just agree there are thousands upon thousands of miles of it and we're blessed to have it. Many of us already enjoy the jewels of our coastal arenas, whether that's the fishing, walking, nature, swimming, sand-castling or sunbathing but there is one seaside gem that we all see but for the most part remains underused - seaweed.

The UK & Irish coastlines have a plentiful supply of seaweed with over 600 different types classified in three main groups – green, brown and red.

GREEN SEAWEEDS

Green seaweed is more plentiful in summer. Some of the most common include sea lettuce (*Ulva Lactuca*). The thin silk-like fronds resemble lettuce leaves which usually grow on a hard substratum. I like to powder these and combine it with sesame seeds to add texture to seashore picnics.

BROWN SEAWEEDS

The tough brown fibrous seaweeds are not related to land plants but come from a different evolutionary lineage that includes some fungi. These macro algae are very iodine rich and include Serrated wrack (*Fucus serratus*), which has flat fronds with a distinctive mid-rib and serrated edges. It dominates the lower shore of the British isles and turns green when cooked. I prefer to roast or pickle it.

RED SEAWEEDS

There are over 350 red seaweeds in Britain. All seaweeds have green (chlorophyll) but the red seaweeds have blue, orange, red and brown pigments, which enable different wavelengths of light to be absorbed from the sea. One of my favourites is Pepper dulse (*Osmundea pinnatifidia*). The moist dark brown fronds grow in a tuft on rock faces. Cut the tiny fern shape off with scissors. It has the strongest taste of all the seaweeds. The taste is designed to keep fish predators at bay.



Cooking with seaweed

When it comes to cooking, seaweed is one of the most versatile, functional, flavour enhancing and valuable ingredients you can find but its so underused. We need more chefs to take on the seaweed baton and experiment. It's not that you can eat it, it's HOW you can eat it. It's all about the cooking.

Nature and foraging are very slow processes and seaweed reveals itself bit by bit – you have to be patient and put the time in. It's a slow burn but all the time I'm discovering new dishes and ways of using it. The other day I had some brown seaweed stock leftover. I decided keep reducing this right down, using a similar process that I would for birch sap. I was left with an incredible soy sauce-like concoction that was delicious. Forget oyster, the world is your seaweed.

I started my seaweed adventure 15 years ago and back then all anyone said was boil it up with beans but seaweed is quite fibrous and you have to think about texture and colour when using it. Here are some of my favourite ways:

ROASTED, FRIED AND DEEP FRIED

I love seaweed crispy and to melt on the tongue so that means I roast it or even batter it and deep fry it.

POWDERS

Powders are one of the modern approaches that have gained popularity. Cut the seaweed fresh and healthy, wash well to get rid of the sand, dehydrate to remove the moisture and blitz it up with some toasted sesame seeds and chilli. Delicious as a seasoning or flavour enhancer.

Powders are great for preserving and last a long time if well stored in the dry away from the light. I use the powder in pastries and biscuits as it's brilliant with seeds and nuts for texture. It is intense and more like a flour, so you have to think about that in your approach.

To make a powder, which has an herbaceous, complex almost garlicky flavour, dry it in strong sunshine on your car dashboard, greenhouse, a low oven or dehydrator. Then simply rub it through a sieve to become a powder.

FLAPJACKS

Dulse is a red seaweed, full of iron, which I cook down and add to my flapjack mix. It provides a beautiful

salty aspect that cuts through the sweetness. I've covered it in chocolate before as well.

MARMALADE

Dulse can also be added to marmalade – just don't overcook it. Snip it up and stir it in at the end.

SAUCES

I make a lovely tomato sauce with the addition of dulse seaweed flakes. It complements the tomatoes wonderfully.

RISOTTO

A little fresh seaweed and seaweed stock is great for depth of flavour in a risotto.

SEAWEED BUTTER

Another super way of using seaweed is to infuse meats, fish and veg. Fish cooked in a pan with seaweed butter takes some beating.

BREAD

I never make bread without a big load of fresh seaweed in it. I keep it frozen and I knead it into the dough. It oxygenates the bread, boosts the loaf's mineral content and enhances flavour.

DRINKS

You have to try a Bloody Mermaid. We infused vodka with a truffle seaweed called pepper dulse. We then use a spicy tomato sauce and pickled seaweed on top.



FORAGING FOR SEAWEED

There is no toxic seaweed, so you don't have to worry about eating the wrong one and killing yourself. Make sure you research and visit clean beaches or coastal areas though.

Get yourself a tide table and go out at low tide about an hour before the tide comes in. Different seaweeds grow at different sea levels so you can find a diverse selection. Take some scissors so you don't have to yank it from the rocks and so you leave at least a third to keep growing.

If it looks older or has been nibbled by fish – leave it alone. You will have plenty to choose from. Look for the fresh, clean looking seaweed where the pigments are uniform in colour.

Simply take some samples of different types and colours as they all offer slightly varying flavour and nutrient profiles. Then it's time to get them home and experiment in the kitchen.



This article was contributed by Lucia Stuart from The Wild Kitchen in Kent. For more information about Lucia's Seaweed Masterclass in May or numerous other foraging workshops, visit <https://www.thewildkitchen.net/>. Telephone 07810317866 for bespoke excursions.

GREAT COFFEE
made easy

Choose the
UK's No. 1 coffee brand*



*Circana, All Outlets, Hot Coffee, 52 w/e 30th November 2024

NESCAFE



5 ways to use

GROUND MIXED SPICE

BANGING BUNS

A breakfast bun of champions, I love to make my buns with apple, cinnamon and a generous helping of mixed spice to provide aromatics and depth.

PIQUANT PIES

Global fusion in pie form, our chicken curry pie is one of our stand out favourites. Rather than being blazing hot and spicy, the spice mix used including mixed spice provides a lovely warmth, flavour and fragrance.

IT'S WRAP

Alongside fajita seasoning, I also like to add a little mixed spice for complexity and gravitas in my chicken fajita wraps.

CARROT CAKE

An all-time classic and another one of our top sellers, carrot cake needs a hit of mixed spice to complement the sweetness of the carrots without overwhelming.

GINGERBREAD BLONDIE

A superior spicy twist on a blondie, the mixed spice combines beautifully with the ginger in this recipe.

Country Range
Ground Mixed Spice
Pack Size: 480g



This month our guest chef is Alison Raw from Darlington in the northeast of England. Starting out as a pot wash at the age of 15, Alison went on to have a successful 20-year career as a chef in hotels before launching her own bakery and café in 2024. The business offers creative cakes, decadent desserts and pristine pies and pasties alongside bespoke bakery boxes for special occasions. For more information scan the QR code:

Here's Alison's five ways with Country Range Ground Mixed Spice.



Carrot Cake



INGREDIENTS

- 275g Country Range Self-Raising Flour
- 1.5tsp Country Range Bicarbonate of Soda
- 2tsp Country Range Ground Mixed Spice
- 1tsp Country Range Ground Ginger
- 1tsp Country Range Ground Cinnamon
- 100g Country Range Walnut Pieces
- 100g Country Range Raisins
- 225ml oil
- 5 eggs
- 275g light brown sugar
- 300g grated carrot
- The rind of one orange

METHOD

1. Mix together the eggs, oil and sugar.
2. Add in the carrots, raisins and orange rind and combine well.
3. Sift in all of the dry ingredients and spices, and fold together.
4. Add the walnut pieces and incorporate well.
5. Bake at 180°C for 30 minutes.
6. Top with American butter cream.

The Country Club

Exclusively for customers of the Country Range Group

WIN A KITCHEN DEEP CLEAN!

To celebrate the exciting launch of Clean Range Pro, we have a huge prize up for grabs for one lucky winner. We are giving you the opportunity to win the ultimate spring clean ahead of the new season, as we are funding a professional kitchen deep clean up to the value of £1,000!

The winner will be contacted to arrange a deep clean with a local professional cleaning company to organise the appropriate service and date. What a sparkling way to start the year!

For your chance to win, enter online or send an email titled 'Spring Clean Like a Pro' along with your name, contact details and name of your Country Range Group wholesaler to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk



try something
“Tyrrellbly Tyrrellbly
Tasty”



stock up on the *nation's No. 1*
hand-cooked crisp brand*

Tyrrell's
hand-cooked English crisps

Relax. Recharge & Explore: An Unforgettable Experience Awaits!

After the festive whirlwind, it's time to treat yourself!

Two lucky winners will each receive £100 in Virgin Experience Days vouchers, ready to be used for unforgettable experiences, from luxury spa days and gourmet dining to exhilarating adventures and relaxing escapes. Whether you're craving adrenaline or serenity, these vouchers offer freedom to choose your perfect break. You've earned it!

Now unwind, explore, and make the most of your well-deserved down-time with a memorable experience you'll treasure.

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



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



Closing date for the competition is 28th February 2026. All winners will be notified by 31st March 2026. Postal entries can be sent to: Country Range Group, 4 & 5 Jupiter House, Mercury Rise, Altham Business Park, Altham, Lancashire, BB5 5BY. Full terms and conditions can be found at: www.stiritupmagazine.co.uk/about

A SQUEEZE AWAY FROM A TASTE SENSATION

The nation's favourite honey brand.*



Rowse. The squeeze that protects the bees.



Clean Range Pro

Spring Clean like a Pro

**At Clean Range Pro, we believe
not all heroes wear capes.**

Some work tirelessly behind the scenes, armed with mops and sprays, protecting kitchens and keeping food safe. We see you – and we're here to equip you with powerful, reliable cleaning solutions to win the battle against bacteria.



Washroom – Kitchen – Floor Care – House Keeping

Contact your Country Range wholesaler
to find out more or visit countryrange.co.uk