The knobbly veg

harvest festival

Last November we launched our We Love Knobbly Veg campaign to encourage food-lovers to embrace vegetables that look the way nature intended: a little irregular and gnarly with a bit of soil clinging to their skins. Our campaign, supported by the National Trust, struck a chord with readers – and an array of chefs, who’ve backed the initiative throughout the year. This month, as a final celebration, a stellar cast cooks up lip-smacking seasonal recipes with their favourite knobbly veg.

PHOTOGRAPHS LAURA EDWARDS
FOOD STYLING LUCY WILLIAMS
STYLING POLLY WEBB-WILSON

Hurrah for Kirstie Allsopp’s toffee apples! Recipe p68
**WHAT’S IN SEASON**

**Apples**
Apples bobbing, apple scrumping, cider... the list of ways to enjoy apples is long one. With more than 1,200 native varieties, we Brits are spoilt for choice between sweet and tangy eaters or sharp and robust cookers.

*HERO CHEF* Kirstie Allsopp has created a wonderful variation on the Bonfire Night favourite, the toffee apple (see p68).

**Brussels sprouts**
These emerald spheres are not just for eating with Christmas dinner. In season from October through to March, brussels sprouts are at their best now. Try them boiled, steamed, roasted or stir-fried.

*HERO CHEF* Galton Blackiston gives sprouts a satisfying, flavourful twist by cooking them with garlic and bacon (see p68).

**Celeriac**
This tough-looking root vegetable is a savoury treat, whether used to add aromatic flavour to creamy mashed potato or blended up for a hearty soup.

*HERO CHEF* Tom Kitchin shows how the subtly spicy, celery-like flavour of this wonderful vegetable complements other ingredients and is great with gutsy late-autumn fare (see p71).

**Jerusalem artichokes**
As knobbly vegetables go, the jerusalem artichoke (a relative of the sunflower) deserves a standing ovation. Peel or scrub off its rough exterior to reveal smooth, creamy flesh - wonderful in soups, stews, gratins, stir-fries and purées.

*HERO CHEF* Michel Roux Jr champions using them raw, allowing the fine, nutty flavour to shine through (see p68).

**Parsnips**
This yellow-white cousin of the carrot is hugely popular throughout Britain. Look out for smaller ones, which have less of the woody pith at their core than larger ones. The subtle, sweet flavour makes it a great sidekick to roasts, and you can let it take centre stage in soups and stews.

*HERO CHEF* Brian Turner from the National Trust shows how this favourite vegetable of the roast dinner plate can also be used in cakes (see p72).

**Potatoes**
Mash them, boil them, try them, bake them or chip them, it matters not - we love them. Since potatoes arrived in Europe from the Americas in the 16th century, the handy tubers have become a staple. There are countless varieties, falling into two main categories: firm and waxy or starchy (though there’s a lot of overlap).

*HERO CHEF* Anjum Anand’s recipe demonstrates how well this most versatile of vegetables takes to a variety of flavours (see p70).
Kirstie’s toffee apples

1. Dunk the apples into a large pan of boiling water for 30 seconds. Remove with a slotted spoon and allow to cool slightly, then wipe the toffee away with a slotted spoon and set aside.

2. In a large pan, melt the butter and slowly bring to the boil, then bubble gently over a low heat, stirring. When the thermometer reaches 110°c, it will be quite a dark caramel colour and there will be a distinctive toffee smell. Apples will appear sticky when you first add them, but they will stick well to the apple, it could be because of the apple’s waxy skin. Applys straight from the tree work best.

3. Pour leftover toffee into a greased cake tin and chill. Cut into squares and wrap in baking or wax paper.

SERVES 6

TAKES 10 MINUTES TO MAKE, 10-15 MINUTES TO COOK, PLUS CHILLING

6 eating apples (such as British-grown braeburns)
150g unsalted butter
150g maple or golden syrup
150g unsalted butter

It comes to the boiling and coating. “Try this all-time favourite at home and you will also need

1. Place the apples into the nuts. Place the toffee-covered apples on the baking paper, then chill for at least half an hour until hard and ready to devour.

DELICIOUS. TIPS This makes a lovely chewy caramel, different to the brittle toffee you may be used to. A sugar thermometer is the best bet here, but a good test of ‘readiness’ is to drop a small bit of toffee into ice-cold water. If it forms soft and squidgy balls (softer than ‘softball’ stage), it’s ready. If your toffee doesn’t stick well to the apple, it could be because of the apple’s waxy skin. Apples straight from the tree work best.

Pour leftover toffee into a greased cake tin and chill. Cut into squares and wrap in baking or wax paper.

PER SERVING 349kcals, 14.2g fat (8.2g saturated), 2.8g protein, 63.5g carbs (60.2g sugars), 0.1g salt, 4g fibre

Galton’s creamy sprouts with garlic and bacon

Galton Blackiston has written several cookery books and is a favourite on Saturday Kitchen. “Sprouts tend to be a somewhat neglected and maligned winter vegetable, particularly among the younger generation. So many people boil sprouts to death, which ruins them. In this recipe they are blanched in boiling water for a couple of minutes, then refreshed in iced water to help maintain their colour, texture and flavour, before being gently fried.

The addition of bacon and cream takes the sprouts to another level.”

PER SERVING (BASED ON 6)

275kcals, 26.5g fat (15.5g saturated), 5.3g protein, 3.9g carbs (13g sugars), 0.7g salt, 4.3g fibre

WINE NOTE: Fresh, fruity, light reds are the way to go with this one. Try a simple Chilian Pinot Noir.

Michel’s Jerusalem artichoke and prawn salad

Michel Roux Jr heads up Roux at Parliament Square and Le Gavroche, both in London, and is a regular judge on BBC’s MasterChef. “I love it when Jerusalem artichokes come into season. I adore their versatility, plus they have a nutty depth of flavour which works fantastically well with the sweetness of the tiger prawns in this dish. It’s a simple but delicious recipe and would be the perfect light starter for any autumn dinner party, as the flavours complement each other so well.”

PER SERVING 215kcals, 12.2g fat (2.9g saturated), 0.7g salt, 4.3g fibre

Galton comes up trumps with his fabulous sprout recipe

75g smoked streaky bacon, chopped
4 tbsp double cream
4 fresh sage leaves, chopped (optional)

1. Bring a large pan of salted water to a rapid boil, drop in the sliced sprouts and blanch for about 2 minutes. Drain, then refresh in a bowl of iced water to stop the cooking and retain the colour.

2. Melt the butter in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat, add the shallots and garlic, then cook for 5 minutes or until soft. Throw in the bacon and continue cooking until it just starts to colour and crisp.

3. Drain the refreshed sprouts, squeeze out any excess water or pat dry on a tea towel, then add to the shallots and bacon and cook gently for 8-10 minutes until the sprouts have really softened. Add the cream and the sage, if you like. Adjust the seasoning to taste, then serve with red meat such as venison.

PER SERVING 0.7g salt, 4.3g fibre
Anjum’s three-seed potato salad

* London-born chef Anjum Anand advocates healthier Indian-inspired cooking. She has written books on Indian food and hosted two TV series on Indian cookery made easy.

**Tom’s celeriac, turnip and beetroot gratin

This earthy dish calls for twice as much celeriac as you like – try finely sliced fennel, for example – but you can add other veg if you like. The combination is key.

**Michel’s Jerusalem plain potato salad

This is a fusion of a creamy American potato salad and the potato salad from India known as aloo chaat. Chaat masala, a key ingredient in the Indian salad, is a combination of tangy, full-flavoured spices and can be found in Indian grocers and online. You can leave it out if you can’t find it and the potato salad will still be sublime. I’ve used desiree potatoes here, but any waxy variety will be fine, so see what’s in season. The matchsticks add crunch, and their leaves have a piquant flavour – but you can add other veg if you like – try finely diced fennel, cucumbers, celery or even fine beans.

Tom’s celeriac, turnip and beetroot gratin

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C.
2. Place the potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with water, add salt, then bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 5-6 minutes until partially cooked, then drain. Heat 1 tbsp of the vegetable oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Slice the artichokes into thick lengths and gently fry for 3 minutes, turning once, until golden. Add the prawns and continue to cook over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes until cooked through.
3. Meanwhile, make the dressing by whisking the honey, lemon juice, remaining vegetable oil and the sesame oil together. Season to taste, then stir through the remaining oil in a small pan, then set aside.

FOR THE DRESSING

Juice of 1⁄2 lemon
4 tbsp mayonnaise
2 rounded tbsp soured cream
2 tsp clear honey
2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
1-2 green chillies, deseeded and finely sliced
100g radishes, finely sliced
½ small red onion, finely sliced
1-2 knobs of butter (optional)
Large handful of chopped fresh coriander

**PER SERVING** (based on 4)
153kcal, 7g fat (1.3g saturated), 0.3g salt, 3.3g fibre

**Tom Kitchin is chef-patron of The Kitchin restaurant in Edinburgh, star of the BBC’s Great British Menu and a regular on Saturday Kitchen.**

This is a great combination, but you can use any other root veg for this – the method remains the same. Rodicade a low-temperature oven when the cream will split.

1. Butter a 1 litre gratin dish and set aside. Bring the cream and nutmeg to a simmer in a saucepan, then season.
2. Peel the remaining oil in a small pan, tilting it so the oil collects in one area. When hot, add the mustard and cumin seeds, roasted. If the veg are still not tender when checked with a knife, put back in the oven for another 10 minutes.
3. With kitchen gloves for the beetroot) in the same way. Pour the cream mixture over the vegetable in the dish, finishing with a layer of celeriac.
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**PER SERVING** (based on 4)
280kcal, 27.9g fat (4.8g saturated), 0.2g salt, 4.1g fibre

1. Boil the jerusalem artichokes in salted water for 5-6 minutes or until partially cooked, then drain. Heat 1 tbsp of the vegetable oil in a large non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. Slice the artichokes into thick lengths and gently fry for 3 minutes, turning once, until golden. Add the prawns and continue to cook over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes until cooked through.
2. Meanwhile, make the dressing by whisking the honey, lemon juice, remaining vegetable oil and the sesame oil together. Season to taste, then stir through the remaining oil in a small pan, then set aside.

FOR THE DRESSING

Juice of 1⁄2 lemon
4 tbsp mayonnaise
2 rounded tbsp soured cream
2 tsp clear honey
2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
1-2 green chillies, deseeded and finely sliced
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½ small red onion, finely sliced
1-2 knobs of butter (optional)
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1. Butter a 1 litre gratin dish and set aside. Bring the cream and nutmeg to a simmer in a saucepan, then season.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/ gas 4. Peel the celeriac and slice very thinly, ideally with a mandoline. Peel and slice the turnip and beetroot (use the remaining oil in a small pan, tilting it so the oil collects in one area. When hot, add the mustard and cumin seeds, roasted. If the veg are still not tender when checked with a knife, put back in the oven for another 10 minutes.

**PER SERVING** (based on 4)
280kcal, 27.9g fat (4.8g saturated), 0.2g salt, 4.1g fibre

**WINE NOTE** This earthy dish calls for a ripe, rounded Languedoc red with a twist of pepper, such as Fitou or Minervois.

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½ small red onion, finely sliced
1-2 knobs of butter (optional)
Large handful of chopped fresh coriander

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**PER SERVING** (based on 4)
280kcal, 27.9g fat (4.8g saturated), 0.2g salt, 4.1g fibre

**WINE NOTE** This earthy dish calls for a ripe, rounded Languedoc red with a twist of pepper, such as Fitou or Minervois.
Turn the heat down and cook for 10 seconds more or until the popping dies down. Stir into the dressing with the chaat masala, if using.

3. Drain the cooked potatoes and peel as soon as they are cool enough to handle; halve if small or quarter the larger ones. Stir into the dressing along with the red onion. As they cool, the potatoes will absorb the dressing. Stir in the radishes, chilli and the coriander just before serving. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

DELICIOUS TIP
if you’re not a fan of raw red onion, blanch it first. Put the sliced onion in a bowl, pour over boiling water, then leave for 1 minute. Refresh with cold water, drain, then continue with the recipe.

PER SERVING
282kcal, 19.9g fat (3.8g saturated), 4g protein, 22.6g carbs (2.6g sugars), 0.2g salt, 2.7g fibre

NOTE
Want to find out which potatoes are waxy, which are floury and which are in season when? Visit deliciousmagazine.co.uk/articles/know-your-spuds for our handy seasonal chart.

WINENOTE
A rich, malty ale is a treat with this – try Innis & Gunn oak-aged beer from Scotland or a similar bottled brew.

Brian’s parsnip and golden syrup cake

★ Brian Turner is the catering food specialist of the National Trust, which champions the growing of local British produce at many of its properties throughout the country. “Most root vegetables are packed full of natural sweetness, which makes them a good, if unusual, cake ingredient and can turn an ordinary vegetable into something quite special. For an even richer cake, try substituting half the golden syrup with clear honey... Terrific!”

PER SERVING
175g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing
250g demerara sugar
100ml golden syrup
3 medium free-range eggs
2 tsp baking powder
½ tsp ground mixed spice
250g (about 3 medium) parsnips, grated
1 eating apple, peeled, cored and grated
50g walnuts, roughly chopped
Grated zest and juice of 1 orange (about 2 tbsp)
Icing sugar for dusting

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Grease and line the bottom of a deep 20cm, loose-bottomed cake tin. Melt the butter, sugar and syrup together over a low heat and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Allow to cool. Whisk the eggs into the mixture.

2. Mix the flour, baking powder and mixed spice together, sift over the egg and syrup mixture, then fold through, followed by the grated parsnips, apple, walnuts, and the orange zest and juice.

3. Carefully pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes or until the top springs back when lightly pressed with a fingertip.

4. Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely. Once cool, dust with icing sugar.

DELICIOUS TIP
Ensure all your ingredients are at room temperature before making the cake. This will allow much more air to be incorporated into the cake mixture.

PER SERVING (BASED ON 10)
435kcal, 21g fat (10.4g saturated), 6.4g protein, 54.5g carbs (36.1g sugars), 0.7g salt, 3.2g fibre

WINENOTE
Forget about parsnip wine, this needs a cool, sweet and refreshing glass of golden dessert wine such as Moscatel de Valencia.