

Weekend

Issue 768 | 30 October 2025

FREE



PERFECT MATCH

Waitrose cooks Alex Szrok and Charmaine Katz share six fabulous recipes and the best wines to pair them with, p17

WHISKY SPECIAL

Raise a glass to classic cocktails, top tipples and great gift ideas

12-page pullout

MINCE PIE NATION

Why our desire for the festive favourite is stronger than ever

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TIME FOR A ROAST

Shake up the British tradition – and how to use the leftovers

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CLODAGH MCKENNA

Good friends and homegrown food are chef's ideal weekend

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News & Views



FESTIVE FLAVOURS Waitrose No.1 Golden Mince Pies with Limoncello (left); chocolate and orange tarts, (below); No.1 Brown Butter Mince Pies (bottom)



‘Wherever you go over the festive season, there’s always a plate of mince pies – it just wouldn’t be Christmas without them’

Waitrose, the filling – of gold-hued fruits, including raisins, cherries and apricots – is laced with limoncello. Wrapped in lemon zest-infused pastry, they won Best Flavoured Mince Pie 2025 in the Good Housekeeping Institute Christmas Taste Test.

With mince pies by far the best-selling seasonal bake at Waitrose, the supermarket has widened its selection from seven to 10 this year. Also new are Chocolate & Orange Tarts, in stores from 1 November, which deliver three layers of festive flavour, but – ideal for those who don’t like mincemeat – without the vine fruit.

Few people have pushed the mince pie further than Coinneach MacLeod, aka The Hebridean Baker (below). He’s a regular on ITV’s *This Morning* with a debut BBC series, *Nordic Islands*, also about to air, and dedicated a chapter of his fourth recipe book, *The Scottish Cookbook*, to Christmas bakes.

“My recipe for mincemeat biscotti is in there,” he says. “I’m on a mission to make mincemeat a year-round thing – it’s so delicious, why only have it at Christmas? So I also make a mincemeat traybake, a mincemeat cookie, a mincemeat cocktail...”

Coinneach, who has also developed a gingerbread mince pie, replacing the usual pastry case with a spiced gingerbread cup, isn’t surprised that 32% of people pick a pie with a flavour twist.

Almost a third like theirs with cream (31%), followed by ice cream (24%) and custard (21%) – cheese is a niche choice (9%). After tea, coffee is the next most popular drink with a mince pie (28%), with hot chocolate (26%) and mulled wine (18%) also high on the list.

Whatever your flavour preferences, everybody likes a mince pie, says Coinneach.

“Wherever you go over the festive season, there’s always a plate of mince pies – it just wouldn’t be Christmas without them, would it?”

Findings from a survey of 2,000 UK adults conducted this month

NATION FEELING THE LOVE FOR MINCE PIES

The poll results are back and it’s official – we can’t get enough of them. Alice Ryan reports on the bake that kickstarts our Christmas

There’s something special about the first mince pie of the year. Whether you’re patient enough to warm it in the oven or can’t resist eating it straight from the packet, it signals the start of the festive season.

A nationwide survey conducted for *Weekend* shows that 71% of UK adults enjoy mince pies, with almost a third (32%) unable to wait until 1 December before biting into the buttery pastry – 7% start at the end of summer and 8% at the beginning of autumn. “Nobody is eating a Christmas cake or

a Christmas pudding ahead of Christmas, but as far as I’m concerned you can have mince pies from the moment they launch into stores in September,” says Leyla Page, Waitrose seasonal bakery buyer.

“It’s that klaxon that Christmas has started, isn’t it?” she adds. “A mince pie allows people to have a little bit of Christmas ahead of time – that’s their magic.”

The OnePoll survey shows most people take a traditional approach. Flavour-wise, we favour classic pastry and mincemeat (54%),

and when it comes to serving, we prefer them plain (39%) but warmed (35%). Tea is our top drink to enjoy them with (38%).

But what makes the perfect mince pie? Buttery pastry is key, say 57% of us, while generous (50%), fruity (47%) and boozy (21%) fillings are also important. Waitrose shoppers bear this out, with the No.1 Brown Butter Mince Pies with Cognac the season’s top seller to date, and All Butter Mince Pies in second.

“Overall, those two are by far the biggest lines – if I stacked all of the packs [sold] I could climb the Eiffel Tower 225 times,” Leyla adds. “Our customers love a boozy hit in their mince pies – 50% of the range now includes a tippie.”

Take the new No.1 Golden Mince Pies with Limoncello, due in stores on Saturday (1 November). A market first and exclusive to



City pub celebrates after being named best in the country

A Victorian pub in Leeds has been named best in the UK by *The Good Food Guide (GFG)*. The Highland Laddie – known as The Laddie – topped its inaugural 100 Best Pubs list, revealed this week.

The list celebrates pubs offering excellent food and drink without losing their core pub identity, and is based on *GFG* reader nominations and anonymous inspections.

“It’s about places with delicious, creative food, but where you can also have a nicely conditioned cask ale and sausage roll,” said *GFG* editor Chloë Hamilton.

Laddie nominators heaped praise on dishes such as lamb keema shepherd’s pie, treacle onion tart, and oysters – once commonplace in pubs – shucked to order.

The red-brick pub, in the shadow of student flats, reopened in April after renovation by its coowners, chef Sam Pullan and Nicole Deighton, and is ‘a counterpoint to the cliché’ that the best pubs are rose-clad and in photogenic villages, Chloë says.

TOP OF THE STOPS

Bone-in sirloin steak from The Laddie (above and below right); Scotch egg and soufflé at The General Tarleton (below left)

Sam, who also runs The Empire Café in Leeds with Nicole, said he was ‘humbled’ by the win. He says The Laddie is ‘a drinkers’ pub with a dining room’. “This is a pub for the community. We treat everyone the same, whether they’re spending £200 on a meal, or walking in with their dog for a pint of bitter,” adds Sam.



Fife gem The Kinneuchar Inn was in second place, while The Broad Chare in Newcastle (15th) was named Readers’ Choice, with particular praise for its generous Sunday roast and bar snacks such as Scotch eggs and cauliflower fritters with curry mayonnaise.

Also to feature on the list are The Bull in Charlbury, Oxfordshire (26), The Devonshire in London’s Soho (28), and Tommy Banks’ new North Yorkshire pub, The General Tarleton in Ferensby (44).
Tessa Allingham

Photographs: Andrew Hayes-Watkins

GOOD NEWS IN BRIEF

This week’s uplifting stories from Anna Shepard

A father’s love

A project asking fathers to write letters to their sons about what it means to be a man has been launched by actor Stephen Graham, star of Netflix hit *Adolescence*. To create a book about masculinity, fathers around the world are invited to submit contributions by 12 January. “We want to hear from men of all ages, first-time fathers, absent fathers and fathers who just want to find a way to say I love you,” says Stephen.



Scented stamp

France has introduced a special-edition stamp that releases the smell of a croissant when you rub it. La Poste, the French post office, launched its boulangerie-inspired creation in the hope that it would help unite the nation, as a symbol of the French way of life. Featuring the words ‘croissant au beurre’ with a drawing of the best-selling pastry, the smelly stamp – which costs €2.10 – follows a baguette-scented one that was released last year.

Asian-inspired flavours provide crisp shake-up

Watch out ready salted. Stand back salt and vinegar. Two new Walkers flavours are in town and they’re already winning over crisp lovers.

For the first time in decades, the British snack company has shaken up its range by introducing Sticky Teriyaki and Masala Chicken as permanent additions. According to its research, 73% of people already prefer Masala Chicken to Prawn Cocktail, while 65% would go for Sticky Teriyaki over Cheese and Onion.

It took more than a year of tests and recipe development before Walkers settled on the newcomers – available in 204 Waitrose stores from 10 November – describing Sticky Teriyaki as ‘a balance between sweet and tangy, while

Masala Chicken provides a rich and spicy taste’ similar to tikka masala.

Its development team followed a six-step process, assessing more than 60 possible flavour options, all inspired by real food and classic dishes.

“We conducted extensive research into the latest culinary trends to ensure we understood what the nation wanted,” says Wayne Newton, Walkers marketing director. “Tikka Masala takes the number one spot for Indian dishes in the UK, while online searches for teriyaki sauces grew more than 140% in 2024, so this helped narrow it down.” *Anna Shepard*



Nature first

The Wildlife Trusts is launching its vision for the biggest-ever nature recovery project in Northumberland at the Rothbury Estate, with the support of nature broadcaster David Attenborough. The charity aims to raise £30 million by next September to preserve this 9,500-acre chunk of countryside, to restore habitats for wildlife such as pine martens, beavers and golden eagles. “This huge, heart-shaped expanse of moorland, rivers, forest and upland in Northumberland needs your help,” says David.



Time to GET COSY

From chicken filled Yorkshires to a roast turkey dinner, dial up the comfort food as winter closes in with this fabulously tasty trio



Waitrose & Partners
Chicken Filled
Yorkshire Pudding
£5.25/365g



Waitrose & Partners
Cheese & Onion Bake
£4/380g or 3 FOR £10
(offer ends 14 April)



Waitrose & Partners
Roast Turkey Dinner
£6/450g

ADVERTISING PROMOTION

Prices correct at time of going to print. Selected stores. Subject to availability



DELICIOUS IS ROOTED IN NATURE

TRY OUR FRESH SOUPS

YEO GOT THIS!

Selected stores. Subject to availability.

NEW HOMEWARE CHANNELS THE SEASONAL SPIRIT



BOLD IMPRESSION Items from the new John Lewis x Sanderson range, including a Cantaloupe tablecloth (far left); table runner, bowls, side plates, dinner plates, placemats, candles and wine glasses (centre and bottom); cake tins (below)



Photograph: Ash Mazzina

The art of tablescaping is just that – an art. Elevating mealtime by layering the table with linens, ceramics, glass and a focal display of décor – candles, flowers, in-season fruit and veg – the trend is set to be bigger than ever this autumn as we lean into both cosy cottagecore and pattern clashing in our homes.

If you're not sure where to start, the latest John Lewis x Sanderson homeware collection, containing more than 50 new lines, is rich with inspiration. Alongside updated bedding, soft furnishings and

wallpaper designs, it includes a debut tableware range, which features elegant plains and maximalist prints, spanning everything from plates, bowls, cloths and napkins to wine goblets and flutes (prices from £7).

"[The new tabletop collection] celebrates the joy of layering pattern and colour," says Lucy Steer, head buyer of cookware at John Lewis. "Sanderson's archival florals and



botanicals bring richness and heritage charm, while our colour of the season, cocoa, adds warmth and depth to any setting."

Following the success of the first John Lewis x Sanderson launch in spring, which focused on furniture and furnishings, the autumn-winter collection is now at all John Lewis stores and at johnlewis.com.

Patterns include chintzy florals, leafy

botanicals and smart stripes in a palette of eau de nil, earthy ochre and autumnal russet.

Like the John Lewis Partnership, Sanderson was founded in the 1860s, as an importer of French wall hangings. It's now a globally renowned decorating brand – holder of a Royal Warrant, it's famed for combining quality with a quintessential English style.

Lucy adds: "Designed to mix effortlessly with what you already own, this collection makes every table feel considered, characterful and full of seasonal spirit." *Alice Ryan*

A Mexican-style celebration of life

The Day of the Dead – Día de los Muertos in Spanish – may sound solemn. But the Mexican festival, which runs from 31 October-2 November, celebrates the lives of deceased loved ones and is anything but.

Families and friends light candles and create colourful altars (ofrendas) to those who have died, festooning them with marigolds, sugar-paste skulls and photographs. Typical festive dishes include pan de muerto, a sweet brioche-like glazed bread flavoured with orange zest and aniseed. The belief is that the souls of the dead return to join the fun, so many shrines include their favourite foods.

Mexican restaurants around the UK are embracing the spirit of the festival. Wahaca – Thomasina Miers' lively chain with



sites in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Brighton and London – has dishes such as roast ancho mushrooms in soft tortillas, and a blood orange and hibiscus margarita shaken with fresh lime, aquafaba and blanco tequila.

At Cavita, Adriana Cavita's Marylebone restaurant, a Day of the Dead menu includes corn tamales filled with winter squash, corn, and spicy tomato sauce steamed in banana leaves, and pan de muerto stuffed with clotted cream and a berry compote. Guests might raise a glass to loved ones with Cavita's mezcal-based ofrenda cocktail.

On 2 November, a festive brunch at Santo Remedio's three London restaurants includes mezcal-warmed hot chocolate, and chicken enchiladas with chilli-spiced sauce. Customers can add pictures of their loved ones to the restaurant altar.

"I've always been fascinated by the colour and energy of Mexican culture," says Thomasina. "The Day of the Dead is a particularly magical celebration, reaching out to lost loved ones and revelling in memories." *Tessa Allingham*



IN THE SPIRIT

Cavita's pan de muerto (far left); Wahaca's blood orange and hibiscus margarita (left) and roast ancho mushrooms in tortillas (below)

News & Views

In focus

A TOAST TO THE MODERN ROAST

This British tradition is laden with meat-and-two-veg. But as habits shift, the meal at the heart of the weekend is often less formal and more about kicking back with friends and family over good food. Three chefs share their tips with Tessa Allingham



Ruth Hansom

Chef-owner, Hansom Restaurant, Bedale, North Yorkshire

"I love a rump roast. There's so much flavour in its layer of fat – do leave it on! – and I really like it as a pot-roast cooked low and slow. Tuck the joint up with some roughly chopped carrots, onions and celery, a little water or stock and a few sprigs of rosemary or thyme, then cook gently till the meat is tender. Mash up the softened veg for the base of a really tasty gravy. My secret? Fresh stock – it contains gelatine, which gives that lovely shine. And don't forget to stir in a knob of butter at the end for even more gloss.

"I'm from Yorkshire, so Yorkshire puddings are non-negotiable with all roasts, not just beef. Make the batter the day before to let the bubbles calm down (otherwise you can get more a soufflé texture) and use more fat than you think. I have it halfway up the pan, and I know that sounds a lot, but don't worry – the batter won't absorb it



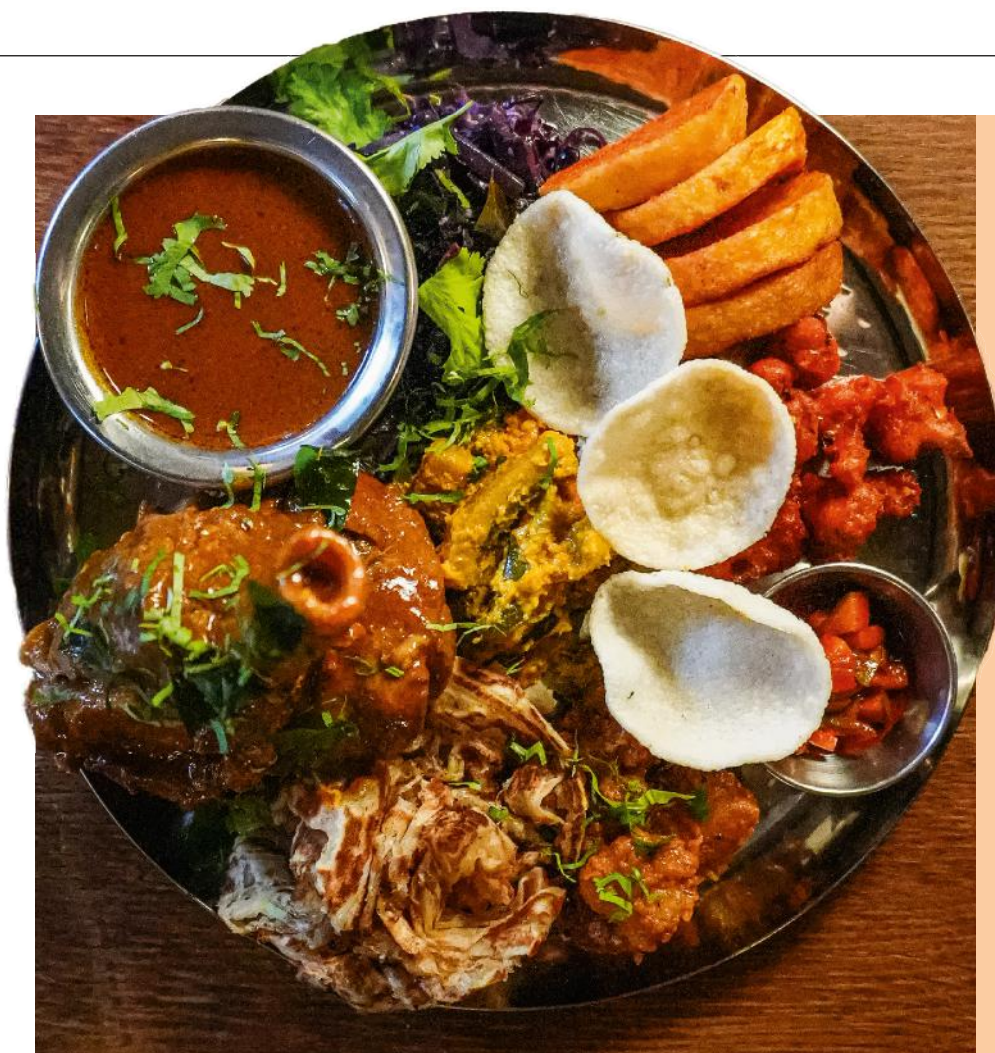
all, and you can pour it off after cooking, cool and refrigerate, then use it again.

"Try blanching your carrots in veg stock with a couple of cardamom pods and star anise, then roasting them with maple syrup or honey: a delicious change from steaming. And I love braised red cabbage, chopped and cooked down gently with port and apple juice, some star anise, cinnamon, salt, pepper and a pinch of sugar, which really brings out the flavour.

"Leftovers are a joy if you've cooked beef.

Pad Thai is a favourite after a rich roast – just slice up the meat and toss it through rice noodles with egg, plenty of beansprouts, fresh herbs, salad onions, ginger, some sliced red chilli and a squeeze of lime. Perfect."

Ruth and husband Mark serve roasts at modern British restaurant Hansom. hansomrestaurant.co.uk



FIT FOR A FEAST (Clockwise from far left) Ruth Hansom; Waitrose beef top rump with beefy roasties and anchovy hollandaise from waitrose.com/recipes; a Sunday roast, South Indian style, at The Tamil Crown; a succulent gammon joint

Prince Durairaj

Chef-founder of the Tamil Prince and Tamil Crown pubs, Islington, north London

“For me, a roast begins long before the oven is switched on. It’s all about the marinade. In South India, this is about building the layers of heat and flavours to chicken or lamb with simple pastes using classic household ingredients.

“Natural yogurt, lemon juice and fresh herbs usually do the trick. I like to add things like chopped garlic and ginger (a staple in South Indian cooking), curry leaves and warm spices like fennel and black pepper. The key is to marinate the meat for as long as possible – ideally overnight – so it absorbs these spice-laden marinades and tenderises beautifully.

“Why not jazz up your veggies, too? Instead of the classic carrots and broccoli, try beetroot thoran, a coconut-based stir fry with grated beetroot, whole spices, curry leaves, shallots and green chilli. And level up your roast potatoes with a coating of gunpowder (a fiery, nutty spice blend) after cooking. It’s a mix of mustard seeds,

fennel seeds, cumin seeds, dried ginger and garam masala. It’ll take your spuds somewhere entirely new, I promise! Sauce? Try swapping out traditional mint sauce for a bright mint chutney or spiced yogurt dip, which brings freshness without fuss.

“Leftovers are the real gift of the roast, though. Shred roasted chicken into warm flatbreads with a squeeze of lime and chutney (I love a pineapple one with chicken) or stir lamb through rice with a little leftover gravy for an easy midweek biryani.

“The idea is to cook once, then enjoy twice – or even three times.”

The Tamil Crown serves South-Indian style Sunday roasts. thetamilcrown.com



Alex Szrok

Waitrose cook and food content creator

“I like the ‘less is more’ approach – it’s so much more chic than everything being piled onto the plate at once. Think roast beef just with dauphinoise potatoes and braised red cabbage, or gammon with boiled potatoes and whole carrots.

“Gammon’s one of my favourites. It’s old-school and gets a bad rap, but it’s timeless and delicious, and deserves a rethink. Poach it gently in water with carrots, onion, leeks, bay leaves, peppercorns, and when it’s done, keep all that lovely veg to serve, straining off the liquor, some to make a parsley sauce, some to boil your potatoes. I love it.

“Serve a couple of slices, drowned in parsley sauce, two poached carrots, potatoes and a dollop of English mustard. And gammon leftovers are the best. Serve with cauliflower cheese (salty gammon loves dairy) and pickled beetroot, or sliced thickly for a sandwich with plenty of English mustard.

“Silverside is another old-school joint. Cook it low and slow with tons of chopped onions, a bottle of red wine, beef stock and thyme or rosemary. I love it with aligot, a French cheesy mash (see p22). I use both Gruyère and mozzarella to get that fantastic stringy cheese texture, with dressed watercress and a few cornichons on the side to cut through the richness.

“Talking of mash, it’s super-easy compared with roast potatoes, which are a lot of admin to do well, and leaves washing up too! Just don’t skimp on the butter – in fact, use so much that you really don’t need milk, and season it well. If I’m doing roast lamb with Mediterranean flavours like

anchovies, I might use olive oil, but mostly mash is all about butter.

“Think beyond the potato box too and go for root veg – it makes incredible mash and parsnips, swede, turnips, carrots and onions are in season now, great value and delicious.”



Alex is a Waitrose cook who was part of the senior chef team at London’s St John Restaurant @szroksauce



CREAM OF THE CROP Alex (above) loves buttery mash (top), and serving the carrots whole from the gammon pot



In my opinion

NIHAL ARTHANAYAKE

The broadcaster and author airs his views

My daughter started sixth form college last month. After dropping her off in an area affectionately known as the Curry Mile in the Rusholme area of Manchester, I decided to find somewhere to have breakfast. This small stretch of Wilmslow Road boasts a plethora of options – from Afghan to Syrian and Pakistani to Turkish food.

I chose a Turkish version of a thali, an Indian way of serving food whereby the plate is split into compartments with small bites nestling snugly in specific places. A woman from Eritrea explained my breakfast’s constituent parts. There were Turkish cheeses, honey, tomatoes, cucumber, olives, a pastry called börek filled with cheese, and scrambled eggs called menemen. I also had fresh Turkish bread. I’d never had a breakfast like this before, and I didn’t have to travel to Istanbul to sample it. I was in the beating heart of a gloriously diverse neighbourhood, brimming with culinary eclecticism. As I dipped in and out of each small portion, I enjoyed mixing and merging tastes, textures and aromas.

Once finished, I stepped back onto Wilmslow Road and felt a rush of joy. It was a bright morning with blue skies, in a buzzing city that was beginning its day. I looked around

‘I’d never had a breakfast like it before – I was in the beating heart of a gloriously diverse neighbourhood, brimming with culinary eclecticism’

and saw many people from different backgrounds – students late to their first lectures jumping off buses, commuters gliding along the cycle lanes towards work, and people having a morning coffee watching the world go by. I felt proud to be British, and proud of the different cultures mixing and merging to create something exciting and valuable.

I will soon launch a podcast called *The Immigrant Kitchen* in which the conversation will revolve around stories of food, family, community and memory. One of the greatest aspects of British culture is the variety of cuisines available to those in large cities, and it’s over a good meal that we share our experiences and become that little bit closer – a united nations of dishes, served in swanky eateries and rustic cafés, on high streets and from a food van.

I want to live in a world where we build bridges, not walls, and that day in Manchester, I saw students of all backgrounds chatting as they walked through the gates of their college. They had signed up to do academic and vocational courses, but beyond the books, they were getting to meet people from different worlds, and that made me hopeful for the future.

*Nihal’s book *Let’s Talk: How to Have Better Conversations (Trapeze)* is out now. @therealnihal*



Dinner is SERVED

SAVE 1/3

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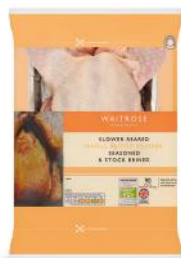
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Waitrose & Partners British Unsmoked Gammon Joint
SAVE 1/3 £7.33/kg (was £11)
 This glazed joint of British gammon is great for a roast or with egg and chips.



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Waitrose & Partners British Smoked Gammon Joint
SAVE 1/3 £7.33/kg (was £11)
 Tender and succulent with a savoury depth of flavour from beech smoking.

News & Views



The big picture

FARM TO TABLE

Feasting is in full swing at the organic Nancarrow Farm near Truro in Cornwall, with visitors tucking into its produce, including beef from the wood-fired kitchen and crown prince squash gnocchi with foraged mushrooms, at communal tables in its Oak Barn.

PLAYS FOR TODAY



As his latest state-of-the-nation masterpiece hits the West End and Broadway, James Graham tells Paul Kirkley why it's important to offer audiences a sense of hope

“I think we’ve lived through a chapter of our national life where we’ve all slightly lost faith in the country working for normal people,” says James Graham. “Whether that’s the trains, the health service or the justice system, our institutions just feel overwhelmed. Times are really tough. And yet I’m an optimist. Because when you see the passion, and the belief, of the people who work in those institutions – the probation officers, the charity workers, the people helping young offenders – that’s what inspires me. That’s what gives me hope.”

Arguably, no one has chronicled this chapter of British life more forensically than the Nottinghamshire-born playwright and screenwriter. *From Brexit: The Uncivil War* – his TV film in which Benedict Cumberbatch swapped Sherlock Holmes for the less obviously dashing figure of Vote Leave strategist Dominic Cummings – to *Dear England*, his Olivier Award-winning play about Gareth Southgate’s mission to reshape English identity through football, the 43-year-old has built a reputation for taking the temperature of the nation rivalled only by *Adolescence* writer Jack Thorne (who he jokingly refers to as his ‘nemesis’).

But while his latest play, *Punch*, has been hailed by *The Telegraph* as ‘another state-of-the-nation masterpiece’, James swears he doesn’t do it deliberately. “It sounds really arrogant, doesn’t it?” he smiles, talking to *Weekend* from his kitchen in south London. “That you’d sit down at your computer and say: ‘I’m going to make sense of this country, because I alone have my finger on the pulse!’ But if you make a conscious choice to look at our systems and our institutions at their most stressed – when they’re in crisis or at a crossroads – you do end up saying something about our culture, and about ourselves.”

Punch was inspired by the true story of Jacob Dunne, a teenager from Nottingham who, in 2011, killed 28-year-old James Hodgkinson with a single blow in an unprovoked attack. After serving 14 months in prison for manslaughter, Jacob was homeless, unemployed and seemingly destined for a life of crime – until Joan and David, the parents of his victim, asked to meet him through a restorative justice programme. It sparked a profound transformation, setting all three of them on a journey of hope, healing and forgiveness.

The play won rave reviews when it premiered at Nottingham Playhouse last year, but no one was more astonished than James to learn it would be getting a simultaneous London and New York transfer. “I’m bewildered, is the truth,” he says. “Writing a play set in a Nottingham council estate didn’t exactly scream ‘Broadway!’ To me, it felt like an unapologetically English story about the English working classes, and British masculinity.

“But I guess, across borders, we share the same anxieties about our culture,” he adds, pointing to the global success of *Adolescence*, another northern English tale of toxic masculinity. “The root causes are the same – you can be in Stockport or in Texas and still be fed the same content on the internet, or social media, that teaches you the wrong lessons.” James says he felt a huge responsibility to Jacob, David and

‘Writing a play set in a Nottingham council estate didn’t scream Broadway!’

News & Views

Joan. “I’ve done a lot of real-life stories before, but the likes of Dominic Cummings or Rupert Murdoch [the subject of his 2017 play *Ink*] are public figures, and there’s an expectation that maybe your story will be explored in art. But that wasn’t David, Joan and Jacob’s expectation. And obviously this is their pain, this is their trauma, which they’re still processing. So I had to work in a different way. I wrote the script with them, I sent them pages, which I would never normally do. I even went to stay with Jacob at his house, and he came to stay with me in London.”

The fact that *Punch* is a Nottingham production telling a Nottingham story is ‘huge for me’, says James. “For the first 10 or 15 years or so of my career, I found myself writing stories very much outside my community. I was really grateful to be able to walk into Westminster [the setting for his breakthrough play, *This House*, about parliamentary whips during the 1974-79 Labour government], or Fleet Street [*Ink*], or the *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* studio [for *Quiz*, his play-turned-ITV drama about the Major Charles Ingram ‘coughing’ scandal], and imagine myself in these worlds that felt so far from my own life experience in a Nottinghamshire mining village. It’s been the greatest privilege. But then, once I felt more confident and established, I was able to go to theatre and TV executives and pitch stories from my own world.”

These own world stories range from his acclaimed BBC drama *Sherwood*, which used two real-life Nottinghamshire murders as the jumping-off point for a thoughtful study of Red Wall politics and the deep divisions left by the 80s miners’ strikes, to the play *Labour of Love*, starring Martin Freeman as the MP for Kirkby-in-Ashfield, where James grew up.

A shy child with a passion for history, he shared a house with his barmaid mother and twin sister, while his council worker dad and older brother lived three doors down the street. He discovered his more confident, flamboyant side acting in school plays, and went on to study drama at Hull University, before landing a backstage job at Nottingham’s Theatre Royal, where he’d spend hours alone in the building, dreaming of one day staging his own plays.

Coming from a former mining community, with its proud history of education through the likes of the Miners’ Institutes, I’m interested to know what James thinks about the narrative – prevalent in conversations around everything from Brexit to Oasis – that intellectual aspiration is somehow a betrayal of working class ‘authenticity’. Quite a lot, is the answer. “The idea that to have an intellectual hinterland, or to be curious about the world, is somehow anti-working class – that’s not the working class I grew up in,” he says.

“My grandad had a passion for classical music, and taught piano. My dad was a huge fan of history. My window-cleaning stepdad voraciously read political biographies. That’s not a betrayal of the working class condition.

“Just because you do well, it doesn’t mean you become less black or less gay or less Muslim, or less a woman. But people do think that if you start to do well in your career, you need to stop referring to yourself as working class. It’s constantly demanded of me that I let go of a part of my identity. And that means we’ll never have successful working class artists – because as soon as you become successful, you’re not allowed to be working class. Sorry, that was a rant,” he laughs.

Moving to London in his early twenties, James got his career break as playwright-in-residence at the Finborough Theatre, where he immediately planted a marker as a very different type of dramatist. While his contemporaries were writing about sex, relationships and personal experience,



Photographs: Jason Alden/Getty Images, Getty Images, Marc Brenner, Alamy

his first three plays were about Albert Einstein, Anthony Eden and Margaret Thatcher.

In putting these big, often controversial personalities on stage, James has never shied away from playing devil’s advocate, and trying to see the world from alternative points of view. “Yeah, I should get some therapy,” he says. “Instead of spending time in Dominic Cummings’ or Rupert Murdoch’s heads...

“But theatre, in particular, is such a naturally empathetic and curious space – so different from social media, or newspaper comment threads – that you can’t just put people on stage that you agree with, and have the world reflected back at you exactly as you want. It’s more useful that you ask questions, as an audience, about *why* people are behaving the way they’re behaving.”

His terrific TV drama *Brian & Maggie*, screened earlier this year, was the ultimate stress test of this approach, in which he

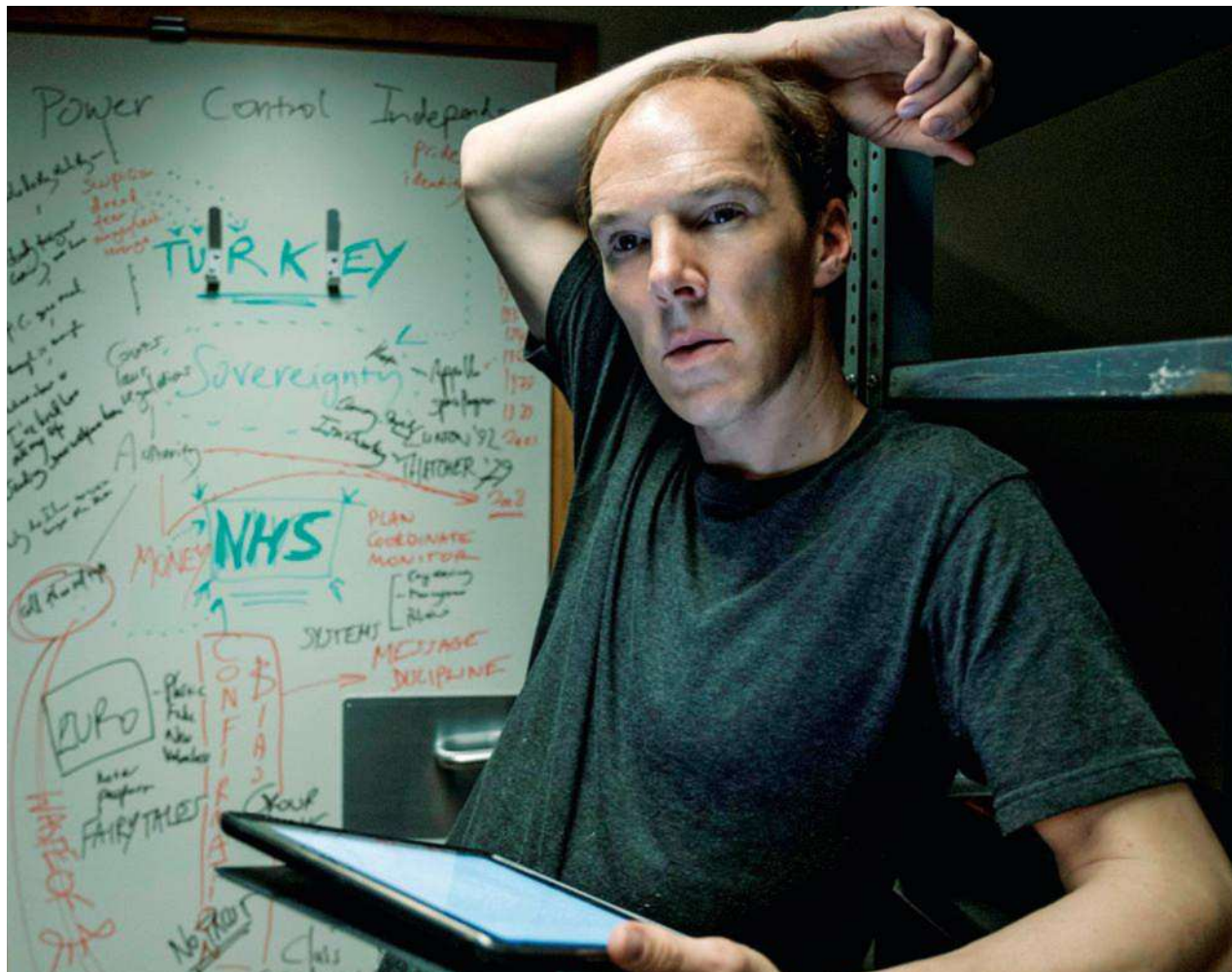
forced himself to find a sympathetic take on Margaret Thatcher – no easy task, he notes, when you grew up in a pit village in the 80s.

What’s it like to know, as happened with *Ink*, that Rupert Murdoch is in the audience? “That night I was next door in the pub, with a massive drink,” he recalls. “But I did go and meet him afterwards. It felt like the decent thing to do. It happened again a few weeks ago, with Gordon Brown. I did a play in Edinburgh called *Make It Happen*, about the 2008 financial collapse, and there you are, having a glass of white wine afterwards, feeling like a massive imposter, going: ‘What right do I have to put your premiership on stage, and invite you to come and see it?’”

With 30 plays and eight screenplays to his name, James has made the past two decades count – and has an OBE for services to drama and young people to show for it. But it has come at a personal cost – a pattern of isolating friends, sabotaging relationships and forgetting to eat – and a few years ago he sought help from Workaholics Anonymous.



ON THE PULSE (Clockwise from left) David Shields and the cast of James's latest play *Punch*; Benedict Cumberbatch as Dominic Cummings in *Brexit: The Uncivil War*; Sian Clifford, Matthew Macfadyen and Michael Sheen in *Quiz*; James with Joseph Fiennes on the set of *Dear England*; collecting his OBE in 2021



'I don't want theatre to be a tough night out, I prefer it to be hopeful, so that you leave feeling good about people, and their potential'

"Workaholic is a phrase that people use casually, but it's also an actual diagnosed challenge that people suffer from," he says. "I'm slightly uncomfortable talking about it, because it feels like the most hashtag first world problem in the world - 'I've got too much work! I'm too successful!' But I've consciously tried to overcome that discomfort in order to advocate for solutions to what is a real problem."

His own recovery is still very much a work in progress, he admits. "If you spoke to an alcoholic or a drug addict, they'd tell you you're never not an addict. And my challenge has always been that my drink, my drug, is something that makes me really happy. So I'm not quite sure how to square that circle. But I'm aware I've not always got a healthy relationship with work."

Today, perhaps, being a case in point - following his breakfast appointment with *Weekend*, James is heading off to watch a run-through of *Dear England* ahead of its regional tour, before nipping over to the set of the BBC TV adaptation. Then, later in the week, he's off to New York to oversee *Punch* rehearsals on Broadway. "Yeah, I've not nailed it at all," he says, ruefully. "It's still a disaster zone."

The four-part *Dear England* TV series will see Joseph Fiennes reprising his acclaimed National Theatre

performance as Gareth Southgate. Like the touring play, it's the updated version James wrote to incorporate the 2024 European Championships - which, early in the tournament, looked like ending in disaster for Southgate's England.

"There were definitely some sleepless nights around that time," he admits. "I was in Germany for the first couple of games, and was in a real existential crisis about it, thinking: 'This new ending is going to be s*** if we go out in the group stages.' The entire nation seemed to have a brief wobble about the Gareth Southgate project, wondering whether it was all smoke and mirrors. People seemed to be falling out of love with the England team again - and I was as guilty as anyone."

"I lost my faith. And then there we were, in our second consecutive Euros semi-final, and then our first ever final on foreign soil. So while I didn't quite get the ending the audience would have liked - England lifting the trophy - it at least gave me an ending I could work with."

As did the story of Jacob, Joan and David in *Punch*. "Jacob freely admits he would probably have got back into that reoffending cycle - he'd have been back in jail, time and again, harming people, harming himself," says James. "And it was this incredible act of forgiveness, and kindness, on behalf of the people he'd harmed the most, that basically saved his life."

"For me, that is such an unusually hopeful outcome. Which is what I like to write. I don't want theatre to be a tough night out that leaves you feeling really low about humanity. I prefer theatre to be hopeful, so that you leave feeling good about people, and their potential."

"That feels like a really important thing to do."

Punch is at the Apollo Theatre, London, until 29 November. punchtheplay.com

FOOD BITES

What's for breakfast?

I want to say avocado on toast, but it was corn flakes. I'm sorry. I'm such a child.

What sort of cook are you?

I often eat on my own, because I'm always working. I'm so lonely! I do a good chicken salad - I like throwing loads of vegetables into it, and playing with the flavours and spices and sauces.

Favourite restaurant?

There's a famous Indian one in Kennington called Gandhi's. This used to be an

area where loads of MPs lived, because you can easily walk to Parliament, and Gandhi's was a hotbed of political conniving.

Most famous person you've had dinner with?

Elton John. At his house. It was a good spread - we didn't have corn flakes, put it that way.

You're a bit of a whisky connoisseur - what's your favourite tippie?

If I'm drinking at home, I'll have a Lagavulin Single Malt Whisky (left). But if I'm out, I'll have a bourbon on the rocks.





Party food to make you go ooohOooohOooohOoooh

It may be spooky season, but there's nothing ghoulish about the range of treats at Waitrose for Halloween and beyond, with **4 FOR 3** on frozen party food. Offers end 1 January unless otherwise stated. Scan the QR code to shop

Prices correct at time of going to print. Selected stores. Subject to availability.



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A blend of halloumi and Greek-style medium semi-hard cheese coated in breadcrumbs.



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Chopped chicken breast coated in a spiced batter and herby crumb.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

And for those with
a sweet tooth...



Chupa Chups The Best Lollipops
SAVE 25p £1.40/10s (was £1.65, offer ends 4 November)
Assorted lollipops in strawberry, apple, cola and strawberry cream flavours.



Candy Kittens Disco Dreams
INTRO OFFER £1.80/140g
(£2.75 from 5 November)
Raspberry, blackcurrant, orange, lemon and apple gourmet sour chews.

Food & Drink



Photographs: Laura Edwards, Food styling: Seiko Hatfield, Styling: Max Robinson, Art direction: Kat Varnavides

SIMPLE PLEASURE
Alex Szrok's quick-pickled pears with hazelnuts – and the wine to pair it with, p18



**ALISON
OAKERVEE**

Partner & food editor

It's Wine Lover Week at Waitrose, with 4 for 3 on our whole wine range until 4 November, and we've got some fantastic pairings for this week's recipes. As Master of Wine Pierpaolo Petrassi explains, matching food and wine doesn't have to follow complicated rules. It's simply about finding a wine that catches the mood and makes a meal sing, and it's fun to experiment. So I plan to leave my go-to buys on the shelf this week, and take advantage of the promotion to see if I can find some new wines to pair with my favourite dishes. Why not try the same?

From Our Kitchen *with the Waitrose cooks* **p17**

The Best *with Martha Collison* **p24**

Weekend Menu *with Diana Henry* **p29**

Very Important Partner **p35**

Wine List *with Pierpaolo Petrassi MW* **p36**

Charlie Bigham's

Perfect pairings for every plate

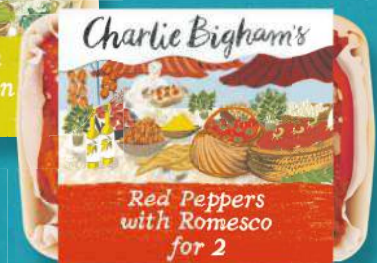
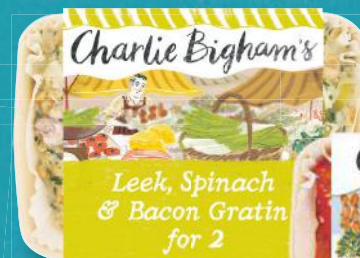
TRY CHARLIE'S
NEW SIDE DISHES



“Sometimes you might fancy cooking but don't have the time to make delicious sides. Well, that's where our side dishes come in. Roasted bell peppers in a Romesco sauce and finished with flaked almonds. I particularly love this served with a piece of pan-fried sea bass. Or braised leeks and spinach mixed with a creamy béchamel sauce and topped with a ciabatta crumb – perfect alongside a beautifully cooked Barnsley lamb chop.”



Charlie



Serving suggestion shown.
Selected stores. Subject to availability.

FROM OUR
KITCHEN

Dream pairings

It's Wine Lover Week at Waitrose, with 4 for 3 on wine and fizz until 4 November – so here are six fabulous recipes from our cooks Charmaine Katz and Alex Szrok, and the drinks to pair them with

'Everything' bagel nibblers with smoked salmon & loaded cream cheese

Turn the ultimate breakfast into party food, with a New York twist on the classic smoked salmon canapé. Of course, a canapé should be one bite and these are a generous two, so I call them nibblers instead, which feels approachable but more fun – *Charmaine Katz*

Makes 16
Prepare 20 minutes
Cook 5 minutes

- 30g butter
- 2 white bagels, halved
- ½ x 100g pack No.1 Chestnut Smoked Scottish Salmon, cut into strips

For the loaded cheese

- ½ x 250g pack full fat soft cheese
- 2 cornichons, drained, finely diced
- 1 tbsp nonpareille capers, drained
- 1 unwaxed lemon, zest and juice
- ½ x 20g pack dill, all but 4 sprigs chopped
- ¼ red onion, finely sliced

For the everything seasoning

- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp black sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds
- 1 tbsp caraway seeds

- ½ tbsp garlic granules
- ½ tbsp crispy fried onions

1 Put the cheese into a bowl, then mix in the cornichons, capers, lemon zest and chopped dill. Season with black pepper. Put the onion into a small bowl with half the lemon juice and set aside to take the edge off the raw flavour.

2 In a frying pan over a medium heat, combine the sesame, poppy and caraway seeds and toast until fragrant, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Transfer to a heatproof bowl. Once cool, add the garlic granules and crispy onions. Mix well and season with a pinch of salt. Taste – it should be punchy and vibrant. If you can't quite taste all the seeds, add a touch more salt.

3 Melt the butter in the same pan over a medium-low heat. Lightly toast the bagels in the butter until golden on both sides. Transfer to a board and cut into evenly sized quarters. Coat each one with the loaded cheese, drape with salmon strips, top with the lemony onion, a sprig of dill and the remaining lemon juice,

then sprinkle some everything seasoning over. Put the quarters back together and serve.

Per serving (using half the seed topping) 314kJ/75kcal/4.7g fat/2.5g sat fat/5.5g carbs/0.9g sugars/0.6g fibre/2.5g protein/0.4g salt

CHARMAINE'S TIP

Everything seasoning is having a moment – this recipe gives you extra so you can store it in a jar for up to a month, ready to sprinkle on eggs, in sandwiches, on cream cheese or straight into your mouth.

WINE MATCH

**Cave de Turckheim
Crémant d'Alsace**

£15/75cl or 4 FOR 3

'This organic Crémant is only at Waitrose and is the perfect apéritif to kick-start the party season' – *Alexandra Mawson, buyer*

OFFER





Quick-pickled pears with hazelnuts

Pears are in full swing at this time of year, and with a little love, they're a delicious accompaniment to a cheeseboard. The addition of skin-on hazelnuts adds a hedgerow-like depth of flavour and different texture to the plate – *Alex Szrok*

Serves 6 as part of a cheeseboard

Prepare 10 minutes + cooling

Cook 10 minutes

- 100g hazelnuts (skin-on)
- 250ml cider vinegar, plus a splash
- 175g golden caster sugar
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- 1 bay leaf, ideally fresh
- ¼ cinnamon stick
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- ½ tsp black peppercorns
- ½ tsp yellow mustard seeds
- 2 Conference pears, firm but not hard, ideally British

1 Place a large saucepan over a medium heat. Toast the hazelnuts until aromatic and a little coloured, then remove from the pan. Add the remaining ingredients, except the pears, to the pan, stir occasionally until the sugar has dissolved, then bring to a simmer.

2 Once simmering, cut the pears into long thin wedges, and immediately sprinkle with a splash of vinegar to stop them browning. Carefully place the pear wedges and hazelnuts into the simmering pickle liquor, then turn the heat off, cover with a lid and allow to cool.

3 Use straightaway or transfer to a sterilised jar, seal and keep in the fridge to use within 1 week. Serve with cheese, cold cuts and in salads.

LOW IN SAT FAT

✓ Per serving 1085kJ/259kcal/10.7g fat/0.8g sat fat/36.3g carbs/36g sugars/2.7g fibre/3g protein/0.3g salt/gluten free/vegan

ALEX'S TIPS

This works well with stubborn pears that won't ripen. Let them cook in the simmering liquor for a couple of minutes. If they're overripe, allow the pickle liquor to cool completely before adding, to avoid further softening the flesh. Experiment with different nuts and spices – walnut pieces are particularly welcome!

To sterilise a jar, wash the jar and lid in hot soapy water, rinse, drain, then dry in the oven at 160°C, gas mark 3 for 15 minutes. Simmer the rubber seals in water for 10 minutes. Fill and seal while the jars and lids are still warm.

WINE MATCH

Waitrose No.1 Chablis
£19.50/75cl or **4 FOR 3**

'A customer favourite blended in partnership with the producer'
– *Nicki Hobbs, buyer*





Rich slow-cooked brisket with tomatoes and creamy polenta

This is a hearty and umami-packed version of a classic Italian braised meat with cheesy, creamy polenta. Slow cooking is the way to a stress-free life, giving you maximum reward for less effort. Take your time to extract as much flavour out of each step as possible. Brown the meat, sweat the soffritto to within an inch of its life, then let it all cook in the oven for 4 hours or so. The braised beef will get richer and deeper a day later as the flavours meld, so make extra if you want leftovers
– *Charmaine Katz*

Serves 6

Prepare 10 minutes

Cook 4 hours-4 hours 30 minutes

- Essential British Beef Rolled Brisket (typical weight 750g), cut into 4-6 pieces
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 20g butter
- ½ x 500g pack frozen Cooks' Ingredients Soffritto Mix
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4-6 anchovies, drained, to taste
- 1 sprig rosemary
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 200ml red wine
- 2 x 400g cans Mutti Peeled Whole Plum Tomatoes
- Pinch caster sugar, if needed

For the polenta

- 350-500ml whole milk, depending on how you like it
- 1½ tsp salt, or to taste
- 200g quick cook polenta
- 50g unsalted butter
- 50g Parmigiano Reggiano, finely grated, plus extra to serve
- Pinch ground white pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4. Put a large casserole (enough to hold the beef and liquid) over a medium-high heat. Season the beef generously with salt all over, add the oil to the pan, then brown the beef in batches, on all sides. Once done, set aside on a plate and season generously with black pepper.

2 Deglaze the pan with a little water to scrape up any browned bits from the bottom, and reserve this liquid (unless it tastes burnt, and if so, discard). Melt the butter in the pan over a low heat, add the soffritto mix with a generous pinch of salt and sweat for 15-20 minutes, until soft, golden and smelling fragrant.

3 Increase the heat to medium, add the garlic, anchovies, rosemary and thyme and cook for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, until the anchovies melt into the soffritto.

4 Add the red wine, and allow to reduce by half, then add the plum tomatoes and break up with a wooden spoon. Bring to a simmer, then nestle in the browned brisket pieces so they are half-covered, then add the meat resting juices and reserved pan liquid. Cover with a piece of baking parchment so it's tucked in and protected, then put the lid on and cook in the oven for 4 hours to 4 hours 30 minutes, until the meat is soft and tender. Add a splash of water if it seems dry. Season to taste, adding a touch of sugar if the sauce is a little tart.

5 When the beef is ready, put 650ml water and 350ml milk into a large saucepan, season with the salt and bring to a simmer. It should taste very salty. Slowly whisk in the polenta, whisking constantly to avoid lumps. The polenta will thicken quickly and come away from the sides in around 3-5 minutes.

6 Off the heat, stir in the butter, parmesan and white pepper, then whisk to combine. Add more milk for a looser consistency if needed. I like this polenta to be looser and to fall off a spoon when serving, so it soaks up the sauciness of the beef. Serve a large dollop of polenta with plenty of beef and sauce and more cheese.

Per serving 2923kJ/701kcal/41.7g fat/19.9g sat fat/35.9g carbs/10.7g sugars/2.4g fibre/38.2g protein/2.5g salt/gluten free

WINE MATCH

Paolo Leo Primitivo di Manduria

£14/75cl or 4 FOR 3

'A plush, plump, velvety red from the sun-kissed south of Italy, packed with red cherry and mocha flavours. This has won 4.5 star ratings on Waitrose

Cellar and great reviews. "Big, bold, brilliant," is one. "Another says: "I'm so impressed that I've checked back on the price. Unbelievable value for a complex, beautiful wine. Primitivo at its best." – *Rebecca Hull, buyer*

OFFER



UNLEASH THE BUBBLES



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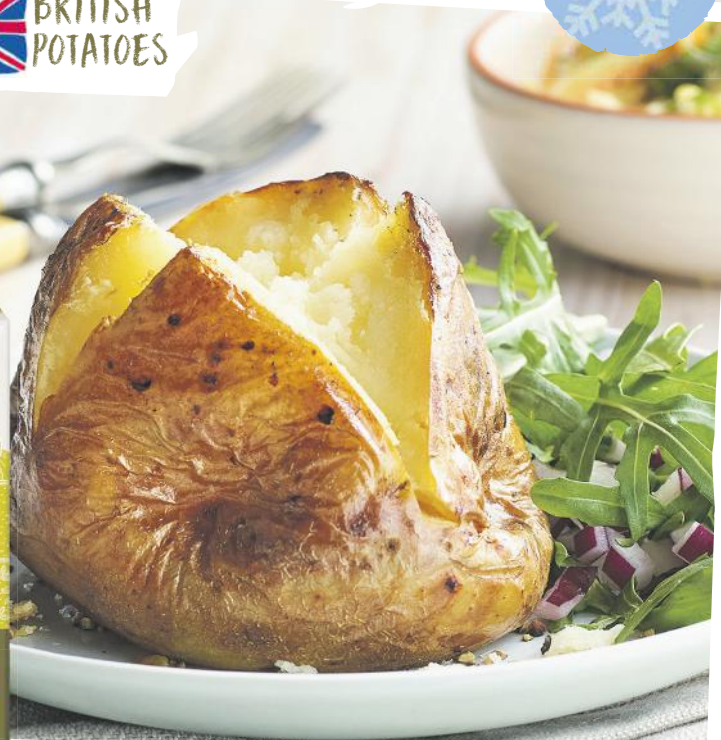
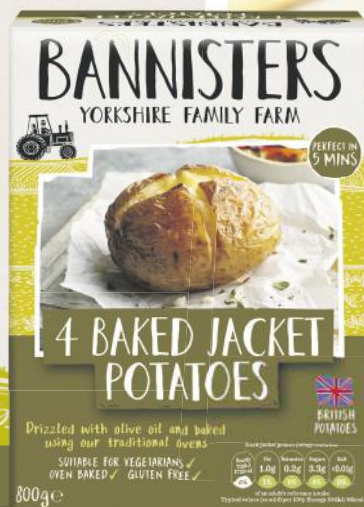
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FROM OUR
KITCHEN

Braised chicken with leeks & fennel

All the joys of a roast without the stress – a one-pot beauty of succulent chicken with tender leeks, fennel, potatoes and a liquid gold wine and crème fraîche broth. The beauty of this is that it's largely fuss-free. Cook in a pot with a lid, or use a deep roasting tray and cover tightly with foil – *Charmaine Katz*

Serves 4
Prepare 15 minutes + resting
Cook 1 hour 40 minutes

- 1.5kg slower reared medium chicken
- 2 leeks, thoroughly washed
- 3 carrots, peeled
- 1 bulb fennel
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 6 sprigs thyme
- 1 tsp salt

- 500g small waxy potatoes (such as La Ratte), halved
- 600ml white wine
- 1 lemon, halved
- 3 tbsp crème fraîche, more if liked

1 Take the chicken out of the fridge 30 minutes before you are ready to cook. Meanwhile, cut the leeks and carrots into 2cm rounds. Finely slice the fennel stalks, reserving any fronds, and cut the bulb cut into six wedges.

2 Preheat the oven to 180°C, gas mark 4. Heat a large casserole over a medium heat, add the

oil, sweat the fennel tops, garlic and fennel seeds and cook for 1-2 minutes, until fragrant.

3 Add the carrots, leeks, fennel wedges, thyme and salt and sauté for 5 minutes on a medium heat, stirring occasionally. Add the potatoes, cook for 5 minutes more, then pour in the white wine and bring to a boil.

4 Season the chicken generously all over with sea salt flakes and cracked black pepper and put the lemon halves into the cavity. Once the vegetables are boiling, turn off the heat and add the chicken to the pot, breast-side down, so it fits snugly (jig the vegetables around to make room). Cover with a piece of baking parchment, then tuck it around the chicken to protect the skin and lock in the moisture. Cover with a lid, then place in the oven and cook for 1 hour 10 minutes.

5 Remove the pan from the oven, take off the lid and remove the paper, then carefully flip the chicken so it's breast-side up (be careful of the liquid in the cavity). Turn the oven up to 200°C, gas mark 6 and roast for 10 minutes more until the skin is browned and the top layer of vegetables have taken on some colour.

6 Check the chicken is thoroughly cooked – the juices should run clear with no pink meat. Place on a plate or tray with a lip to catch the resting juices and leave to rest for 20-30 minutes. Check the vegetables – if they need a little more cooking, place back in the oven for 5-10 minutes more.

7 To finish the broth, take a ladle of liquid and place in a small bowl. Stir in the crème fraîche until fully incorporated, then stir back into the broth with the vegetables (this helps prevent splitting) and resting juices. Taste and season, adding more crème fraîche to your liking. Carve the chicken. Serve the vegetables in shallow bowls with plenty of broth and the chicken on top. Finish with the fennel fronds.

Per serving 3515kJ/844kcal/43.2g fat/13.4g sat fat/29.4g carbs/11g sugars/10.7g fibre/52g protein/2g salt/gluten free

WINE MATCH

Rapaura Springs Rohe Sauvignon Blanc

£19.50/75cl or 4 FOR 3

'A buyers' favourite and exclusive to Waitrose, it's a must for Sauvignon Blanc fans who want to try something new'

– *Imogen Bowen-Davies, buyer*

OFFER



Roast topside of beef with peppercorn gravy & aligot

Easy luxury, simple pleasure. This opulent crowd-pleaser has few moving parts. Aligot (creamy, cheesy mashed potato) is a personal favourite, but the proper cheese you need to make it – tome fraîche – is hard to find. I used Gruyère for flavour and mozzarella for that classic cheesy stretch. Cooking individual steaks for six can be a pain, so a joint of beef is easy and satisfying – *Alex Szrok*

Serves 6

Prepare 15 minutes

+ resting

Cook 30-45 minutes

- British beef topside (typical weight 1kg)
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 large red onion, grated
- 25g butter
- 1½ tbsp peppercorns, green or black, or a mix
- 100ml red wine
- 200ml beef stock, ideally fresh
- 50ml double cream
- Punchy salad, such as dressed rocket or seasonal greens, to serve

For the aligot

- 750g potatoes (Maris Piper or red), peeled and cut into large chunks
- 2 large cloves garlic
- 75g unsalted butter, diced
- 100ml double cream
- 150g Gruyère, grated
- 100g mozzarella, drained, broken into little pieces, liquid reserved (optional)

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6.

Lightly rub the beef with the oil and season generously with salt. Place a large, ovenproof frying pan or casserole on a medium-high heat and sear the beef all over, starting on the fattiest side. Once browned, add the onion, butter and 1 tbsp peppercorns to the pan, position the beef on top and place in the oven.

2 Roast the beef for 15 minutes, then add the wine and beef stock, turn the beef over and return to the oven for 15 minutes more for medium-rare.

3 Meanwhile, make the aligot. Put the potatoes and garlic cloves in a large saucepan with enough water to cover them, add the mozzarella liquid, if using, and season generously with salt. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft. Drain in a colander and allow to steam dry for 5 minutes.

4 Put the potatoes and garlic through a ricer (or mash thoroughly), into the same pan. Add the butter and cream, then place on a medium heat and stir until melted. Add the cheeses, a little at a time, beating thoroughly between each addition. The mash should develop a stretchy consistency. Season.

5 Remove the beef from the pan and allow to rest for 20 minutes, covered loosely in foil. Meanwhile, place the gravy over a medium heat, add the cream and bring to a boil to reduce slightly and thicken. Taste and adjust the seasoning accordingly (see tip). Carve the meat thinly, then serve with the aligot and a punchy salad or cooked greens, with the gravy spooned over and a final flourish of the remaining peppercorns, crushed.

Per serving (excluding greens, salad or mozzarella water) 3457kJ/832kcal/58.8g fat/31g sat fat/23.7g carbs/3.9g sugars/3.5g fibre/46.9g protein/1.6g salt

ALEX'S TIP

You can try adding a little Marmite, or a dash of Worcestershire sauce or lemon juice, to season the gravy and add depth.

WINE MATCH

Catena Malbec

£15/75cl or **4 FOR 3**

'A benchmark Malbec from one of Argentina's pioneering producers. Catena High Mountain Vines Malbec is exclusive to Waitrose and has been in the range for almost 20 years'

– Adam Kennedy, buyer

OFFER






Hero sharing sandwich

A cured meat and cheese sandwich that's nearly two-feet long is a simple, showstopping way to impress your mates. It's a riff on the classic Italian-American hero-style meal, but express yourself, the world is your giant sandwich – *Charmaine Katz*

Serves 6
Prepare 10 minutes

- 400g stonebaked baguette
- 250g pack Essential Sliced Mozzarella
- 2 x 105g Italian antipasto platters
- 75g pack Italian mortadella
- 100g wedge iceberg lettuce, shredded
- ½ x 400g jar Peppadew Sweet Piquante Peppers, drained, finely sliced
- ¼ onion, sliced as thinly as possible
- 1 tbsp olive oil, for drizzling
- 6 pickled burger gherkins, or a few sandwich gherkins (optional)
- 6 stuffed olives, drained (optional)

1 Slice the baguette lengthways through the middle, leaving a hinge so the top is still attached, creating the potential for the giant sandwich. Scoop out a little bread from the inside and freeze to use for breadcrumbs another time.

2 Lay slices of mozzarella along the whole length of the sandwich, across the hinge of the bread, so it is perfectly positioned for folding. Do the same with all the meats.

3 In a mixing bowl, add the iceberg, peppers, onion, some brine from the peppers jar and oil. Season. Mix well, then pack this shredded lettuce mix into the middle of the sandwich and close, pressing down firmly.

4 A fun way to present this is using baking parchment to wrap the sandwich, deli-style. You can also mark your portions with a burger gherkin or folded piece of sandwich gherkin, plus an olive, skewered onto cocktail sticks. Slice the loaf, then present as one giant long sandwich.

Per serving (excluding gherkins or olives)
1886kJ/451kcal/22.3g fat/10.7g sat fat/35.3g carbs/
4.7g sugars/2.4g fibre/26g protein/2.7g salt

WINE MATCH

M de Minuty Côtes de Provence Rosé
£18.50/75cl or **4 FOR 3**

'One of France's favourite rosé brands and another that's exclusive to Waitrose'
– *Nicki Hobbs, buyer*




Food&Drink

The Best

Bonfire parkin



with
Martha Collison

This is a Bonfire Night staple. Dense, sticky slabs of spiced parkin are exactly what you need coat pockets to be stashed with on a cold November night. If you've never tried parkin, think of it as the love child of a gingerbread loaf and a syrupy flapjack. The crux of parkin is five days of maturation – a real test of a baker's patience, especially when the spicy aroma of ginger and treacle fills the house on the day it's made. Do try a small slice when the cake is fresh, mainly so you can compare the flavour and texture to the gloriously mellow cake that emerges after five nights in an airtight container.

Makes 16 squares
Prepare 15 minutes
+ cooling and maturation
Cook 50 minutes-1 hour

- 100g porridge oats
- 125g butter, plus extra for greasing
- 120g black treacle
- 180g golden syrup
- 100g dark brown muscovado sugar
- 3 balls stem ginger, finely chopped (see tips)
- 200g self-raising flour
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp grated nutmeg
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 medium free range egg, beaten
- 4 tbsp whole milk

1 Preheat the oven to 150°C, gas mark 2 and line a 23x23cm square baking tin with baking parchment.

2 Place the oats into a food processor, spice grinder or blender and blitz until finely ground. They should look floury, with just a few small pieces of oat left for texture.

3 Combine the butter, treacle, golden syrup and sugar in a medium saucepan and heat on low, stirring often, until the butter melts and the mixture is completely smooth. Stir in the stem ginger.

4 Mix the ground oats, ginger, flour, nutmeg and bicarbonate of soda together in a large mixing bowl. Beat the egg and milk together in a separate jug, then set aside.

5 Pour the melted butter-syrup mixture into the dry ingredients and use a balloon whisk to fold everything together. It will froth as the bicarbonate of soda reacts, so work quickly. Pour in the beaten egg and milk and mix until combined, then use a spatula to scrape into your prepared tin.

6 Bake for 50 minutes-1 hour, until firm across the top and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out with sticky crumbs, but not raw batter. Don't overbake the parkin, or it can become dry (see tips). Leave to cool.

7 Once completely cold, remove from the tin. Leave it in the parchment, wrap in foil, then place in a cake tin or airtight container and leave to mature in a cool dark place (a cupboard or drawer away from any heat is ideal) for a minimum of 5 days, before cutting into squares.

V Per serving 945kJ/225kcal/7.6g fat/4.4g sat fat/35.8g carbs/21.9g sugars/1.1g fibre/2.7g protein/0.6g salt

MARTHA'S TIPS

Stem ginger

Slicing these balls of ginger can be messy, so try placing a piece into a clean garlic crusher and using that to create finely minced shreds. Pass it through twice to create a fine texture, if preferred.

Don't overbake

The best parkin is sticky and dense, with a chewy crumb. Maturation is important for achieving the ideal texture, but the first step to success is getting the bake right. Don't overdo it in the oven, or the sponge will dry out and you'll struggle to find that finger-sticking quality. Bake until just set, with a thin crust, and a few crumbs clinging to an inserted skewer.

Maturation

Ageing this cake creates the moist, chewy texture, as time allows the oats to soften and the syrup to absorb moisture from the air. It also allows the intense spicy flavours to mellow into a warming profile, rather than bringing a harsh heat. See if you can notice the difference in taste before and after.



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Bonfire Night treats



Deep-fried caramelised onion sausage rolls

These are indulgent and have a high meat-to-pastry ratio – the sweet onions in the sausage pair beautifully with the crispy sage leaves and parmesan

Makes 12
Prepare 15 minutes
Cook 25 minutes

- 2 x 400g packs **6 Pork & Red Onion Sausages**
- ½ x 20g pack sage, leaves only
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 tsp English mustard
- 15g Parmigiano Reggiano, finely grated
- 320g pack **Jus-Rol Ready Rolled Puff Pastry Sheet**
- 1 medium free range egg, beaten



- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Scrunch the sausages, in their skins, in a large bowl to the consistency of mincemeat. Drizzle 12 sage leaves with the oil and set aside. Finely chop the remaining sage, then add to the sausagemeat with the mustard and 10g parmesan. Mix well.
- 2 Unroll the pastry with the short end towards you. Cut across the middle horizontally to create two evenly sized rectangular pieces of pastry. Divide the filling equally in a sausage shape across the centre of each piece to the ends, compacting it as much as possible.
- 3 Brush the exposed pastry with some beaten egg, then fold over one side and roll up to wrap the filling inside. Press down with your fingers or the prongs of a fork to create a seal. Cut each sausage roll into 6 pieces and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet, sealed-side down. Brush all over with beaten egg.

Place an oiled sage leaf on top of each and sprinkle over the remaining cheese.

- 4 Bake for 25-30 minutes until golden, puffed, and the filling is cooked through with no pink meat and juices that run clear. Leave to cool slightly, then serve.

Per serving 1249kJ/301kcal/22.6g fat/9.1g sat fat/13.3g carbs/2.7g sugars/1.2g fibre/10.3g protein/0.8g salt

COOK'S TIP

Cool, then store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat in the oven until piping hot throughout.



Chipotle chilli hot chocolate

A luxurious, grown-up drink with a lovely chilli twist

Serves 2
Prepare 5 minutes
Cook 5 minutes

- 1 tsp **Bart Chipotle Chilli Flakes**
- 400ml whole milk
- 4 tbsp **Cocoa Canopy Smooth Milk Hot Chocolate Melting Beads**
- 4 tbsp Essential Whipping Cream
- No.1 Dominican Republic Milk Chocolate 49% Cocoa Solids, shavings, to serve

- 1 Grind the chipotle flakes to a fine powder using a pestle and mortar or spice grinder. Warm the milk in a small saucepan over a medium heat, then add the melting beads and ½ tsp ground chipotle.
- 2 Whisk over the heat for 2-3 minutes until the chocolate melts and the mixture is hot, adding more chipotle to taste. Pour the hot chocolate into a mug or a heatproof glass, leaving a 2cm gap at the top.
- 3 Whip the cream to soft peaks, spoon on top, then add the chocolate shavings and a pinch of ground chipotle.

V Per serving 1558kJ/374kcal/26g fat/16.1g sat fat/25g carbs/24.3g sugars/0.6g fibre/9.7g protein/0.3g salt/gluten free

COOK'S TIP

For more intense flavour, use Cocoa Canopy Rich Dark Hot Chocolate Melting Beads.



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Food&Drink



Food for sharing with Diana Henry

November is often thought of as dark, rainy and grey, but I see it more as a period of transition and anticipation, as it's the month before Christmas. It's the calm before the storm and that has an impact on how and what we cook.

Soups, pies and meals that don't take much effort are the order of the day. Dishes can make you feel as cosy as an old cardigan. You'll be putting on the ritz at Christmas, but for now, you can invite friends over and serve food from a roasting tin, or put risottos and soups on the table in the saucepan in which they've been cooked.

There's real happiness in not making a fuss about how the house looks and serving lunch in your yoga pants. I love having soup and decent bread. It's such a celebration of the basic. Most people don't know how good soup can be, but if you season it properly – and the spicing is important in this pumpkin soup as well – you can show them.

I do many versions of the vegetable salad here, some with a mustard and honey dressing (and no pomegranate seeds), some with a dressing that includes walnut oil. It's a crunchy salad for autumn and winter, using the seeds and nuts you fancy. I had it first when staying with a friend I was at university with. She was big on everything healthy. I'd never had raw cauliflower in a salad before, but I've been doing it ever since.

Banana cake doesn't usually make me excited – I can take it or leave it – but this one is gorgeous. It's best if the bananas are almost black. If you don't want to serve it as part of lunch, keep it for having with coffee or tea later in the afternoon.

Diana is The Sunday Telegraph's food writer. @dianahenryfood



Autumn vegetable salad with walnuts & pomegranate seeds

Serves 6 as main, **8** as a side
Prepare 20 minutes

- 1 small head fennel
- ½ lemon, juice
- 1 small Essential Cauliflower, trimmed, broken into small florets (keep the core for soup)
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 1 small raw beetroot, peeled and cut wafer-thin (a mandoline is best)
- 150g pack French breakfast radishes, trimmed and finely sliced

- 200g baby spinach leaves
- 30g walnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp mixed seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sesame)
- ½ pomegranate, seeds

For the dressing

- 2 tbsp white balsamic condiment
- 2 tsp harissa paste
- 6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (a fruity one)
- 1 tsp clear honey
- 1-2 tbsp pomegranate molasses

- 1** For the dressing, put the white balsamic, harissa and some seasoning into a cup, then whisk in the oil. Add the honey and 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses. Taste. You might want to add a little more molasses. It can be quite an assertive dressing.
- 2** Cut the fennel into quarters. Remove the tough outer leaves and slice off the base of each quarter. Using a mandoline or sharp knife, cut the fennel into wafer thin slices, then put into a bowl, add the lemon juice and toss.
- 3** Mix the vegetables together on a big plate or in a broad shallow serving bowl. Add the nuts and seeds. Keep the pomegranate seeds until last, as their juice bleeds over the other ingredients. Toss with the dressing and serve.

GOOD HEALTH LOW IN SAT FAT/ 11 PLANT VARIETIES

▼ **Per serving** 1078kJ/259kcal/17.8g fat/2.5g sat fat/16.5g carbs/13.2g sugars/ 5.5g fibre/5.6g protein/0.2g salt/2 of your 5 a day/gluten free



Pumpkin, leek & white bean soup with freekeh

I sometimes start making a soup without knowing where it will end up. The simplest combinations can be transformed into something surprising. I nearly did an Italian-influenced soup here, using a couple of parmesan rinds to flavour it, but took a path towards the Middle East instead. Seasoning is the most important thing about soup, so taste and taste again. Your guests might think: "Oh, soup" – but then they taste it...

Serves 6
Prepare 15 minutes
Cook 35 minutes

- 2 large leeks, trimmed
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 stick celery, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, grated to a purée
- ½-1 tsp cayenne pepper, to taste
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ stick cinnamon
- 650g pumpkin or squash, peeled, deseeded, and cut into 2cm cubes
- 1.2L chicken stock
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 85g freekeh, rinsed
- 400g can haricot or cannellini beans, drained
- ½ x 25g pack coriander, leaves chopped
- ¼ x 25g pack flat leaf parsley, leaves chopped
- 300g Greek yogurt, to serve

1 Remove the outer leaves from the leeks. Cut the rest into rounds about 2cm thick and wash thoroughly. Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan and add the onion and celery. Cook over a medium heat for 5-6 minutes, until the vegetables are softening, then add the garlic and the spices and cook for 1 minute more.

2 Stir in the leeks and pumpkin or squash with 75ml water. Season. Turn the heat down low and cook for about 10 minutes to sweat the vegetables in the oil and water and extract as much flavour as possible.

3 Add the stock, tomato purée and freekeh. Bring the soup to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes, covered, until the freekeh is tender and the pumpkin is soft but not falling apart. Add the beans and gently heat through. Stir in most of the herbs. Spoon some yogurt on top of each bowlful. Drizzle over some oil and the remaining herbs, then serve with the remaining yogurt on the side.

**GOOD HEALTH HIGH IN FIBRE/
8 PLANT VARIETIES**

Per serving (excluding extra oil) 1167kJ/280kcal/
13.4g fat/4g sat fat/24.9g carbs/8.9g sugars/9.8g fibre/
10g protein/1.6g salt/3 of your 5 a day





El's banana cake with Joss's tahini-honey butter

This is the best banana cake I've ever tasted. I begged El Kemp (she runs Kemp Kitchen) for the recipe and Joss Herd for the tahini butter it was served with. They did the cooking at one of the writing courses I teach in Devon and served this for afternoon tea. El puts dark chocolate chips in, but I use chopped dates. The cake is vegan, but the butter isn't

Serves 10

Prepare 15 minutes + cooling

Cook 40 minutes

- 80ml oil (vegetable, olive, sunflower or groundnut), plus extra for greasing
- 120g dark muscovado sugar
- 4 ripe bananas (if the skins are black, so much the better)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250g plain flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1½ tsp ground cinnamon
- About 20 cardamom pods, split, seeds ground to make 1 tsp
- 70g pecans, toasted and roughly chopped
- 70g pitted soft dates, roughly chopped

For the butter

- 75g butter, at room temperature
- 2 tbsp honey (I prefer set honey)
- 2 tbsp tahini
- ¼ tsp sea salt flakes (optional)

1 Preheat the oven to 190°C, gas mark 5. Brush the inside of a 900g loaf tin with oil and line it with baking parchment. Allow the paper to go over the short sides so you can use it to lift the cake out.

2 Whizz the sugar and 2 peeled bananas in a food processor. Add to a large mixing bowl with the remaining peeled bananas and mash with a fork. Add the oil and vanilla and mix well.

3 Put the flour, baking powder and ground spices into a smaller bowl, whisk to combine, then add to the wet ingredients. Stir in the pecans and dates and pour into the prepared tin.

4 Bake for 20 minutes. Check to see if it's getting too dark on top – cover with foil if it is. Cook for 20 minutes more until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then lift out and onto a wire cooling rack (it's delicious warm or at room temperature).

5 Meanwhile, beat the butter in a small bowl until soft and fluffy. Beat in the honey and tahini until blended. Sprinkle over the salt, if using, then cover and leave in the fridge until ready to serve.

V Per serving (excluding salt) 1760kJ/421kcal/22.4g fat/5.4g sat fat/47.8g carbs/27.4g sugars/3.2g fibre/5.4g protein/0.4g salt



WINE
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International Wine and Spirits Competition
Outstanding Drinks Supermarket 2025 &
Sustainable Supermarket 2025



Paolo Leo Primitivo di Manduria DOP
£14/75cl or 4 FOR 3

Can wine be described as plush and plump? This one gives off snuggle-up-on-the-sofa vibes. It's a red from sunny southern Italy that lets cherry and mocha loose in your glass. It's also velvety smooth to sip – and gets a reassuring 4.5 stars from Waitrose Cellar customers.

Goes with: Hearty, tomatoey dishes, a comforting lasagne, a cosy aubergine parmigiana or the rich slow-cooked brisket with tomatoes and creamy polenta recipe on p19.



Catena Malbec
£15/75cl or 4 FOR 3

Ultra smooth and super fruity. Made from 100% Malbec grapes, which means it's got bags of flavour. So the sipping is easy, and it goes as well with salmon as it does with steak. When you're in the mood for red, you'll want this one to hand.

Goes with: Rare roast beef, a huge Yorkshire pudding, your very best roasties and friends around the table. If you want a recipe for that, check out Alex Szrok's roast topside of beef with peppercorn gravy and aligot on p22.



Waitrose No.1 Chablis
£19.50/75cl or 4 FOR 3

It's a hot day, and you're eating a juicy peach while being misted with cool, lime-scented water. Capture that feeling even on chilly days with this No.1 Chablis. Crafted by one of France's oldest houses just for Waitrose, it's proper 'bring a bottle' material.

Goes with: Your favourite cheeses – like a farmyardy Brie and oozy Camembert – and good company, or try it with the quick-pickled pears and hazelnuts recipe on p18.



Rapaura Springs Rohe Sauvignon Blanc
£19.50/75cl or 4 FOR 3

The juicy ripeness of passion fruit meets tart blackcurrant in this fruity mash-up. From New Zealand's renowned Marlborough region, where so many wine legends are born, it's mouthwateringly dry – and seriously drinkable.

Goes with: Roast chicken (with all the trimmings) and a lazy Sunday afternoon. It's a brilliant match with Charmaine Katz's braised chicken with leeks and fennel recipe on p21.



M de Minuty Côtes De Provence Rosé
£18.50/75cl or 4 FOR 3

You can feel the Provence sunshine with every sip. Crisp, dry and pale as can be, this is from one of France's favourite rosé producers. Serve with picky bits or without, add ice or don't – there are no rules when it comes to rosé. And it's most definitely not just a summer drink.

Goes with: Picky bits, charcuterie boards and ice cubes, or try with the hero sharing sandwich on p23.



Cave de Turckheim Organic Crémant d'Alsace
£15/75cl or 4 FOR 3

Kickstart the party (in your mouth) with this organic Crémant. It's got lots of lovely fine bubbles, and hints of honey and green apples. It's not Champagne, but who cares when it tastes like this.

Goes with: Smoked salmon or any party snacks. Charmaine Katz's 'everything' bagel nibblers with smoked salmon and loaded cream cheese on p17 is the perfect recipe to bring this all together.

HEAD TO THE CELLAR

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VERY IMPORTANT
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Photographs: David Charbit. Selected stores. Subject to availability.

‘YOU ASKED, SO WE MADE THEM’

When customers said they wanted a juicier sausage, Waitrose product developer Tina Edwards and supplier Pilgrims set to work

‘They’re amazing with mash or in a sausage sandwich, but they’re all really versatile for cooking with as well’

“When it comes to sausages, everyone has their favourite,” says Tina. “Our original No.1 sausages have a really high meat content, and a lot of our customers love that. But looking at the reviews on waitrose.com – which I do pretty much every day – I could see that some customers preferred their sausages to be not quite so meaty, more juicy and succulent. We take a lot of notice of those reviews, because that’s customers telling us what they want, so we decided we ought to add some more sausages to the range.

“The new Extra Succulent No.1 Sausages are made with the same free range British pork, but we’ve adjusted the meat-to-fat ratio and used a combination of belly pork and shoulder, which gives lots of flavour with a really succulent bite. They’re quite a bit bigger, and they’re a real butcher’s style sausage. We use natural hog casings that wrinkle when you fry the sausages, and we leave them linked together.

“One of them is a classic pork sausage, perfectly seasoned, but we wanted to include some flavours too, so we looked at all the best butchers and delis for inspiration. Then we worked with our dedicated pork supplier, Pilgrims, to whittle the list down to three – spicy Calabrian, with ‘nduja, smoked paprika, chilli and fennel; Wild Garlic, which is lovely and herby; and Cheddar & Apple, made with vintage Cheddar. There was a lot of tasting and testing, but our sausages are so delicious that I never get tired of that part!

“Obviously, they’re amazing with mash or in a sausage sandwich, but they’re really versatile for cooking with as well. A favourite quick dinner in my house is spicy sausage pasta made with the Calabrian ones – I squeeze the meat from the skins, and cook it with onions, garlic, chopped tomatoes, red wine and chillies. Delicious!”



**Waitrose No.1 British Free Range
Pork Sausages/Cheddar & Apple/
Wild Garlic/Calabrian
£5/400g**

Food&Drink

International Wine and Spirits Competition
Outstanding Drinks Supermarket 2025 &
Sustainable Supermarket 2025



GET 4 FOR 3

OFFER

Wine list

PIERPAOLO PETRASSI

Partner & Master
of Wine

This great offer is a chance to try new food and drink pairings during Wine Lover Week, says our expert

We're celebrating our fantastic wine range this week with a not-to-be-missed offer: buy any four bottles and get the cheapest free until 4 November. Promotions are a great chance to have fun with your wine choices,

and one way to do that is to experiment with food and wine matching. If you always have Malbec with steak or white Burgundy with chicken, why not give something else a try and see if you like it better?

A really good wine match will turn a meal into more than the sum of its parts, with each element bringing out the best in the other. And it doesn't have to be complicated – you're just looking for a balance, where neither the wine nor the food dominates.

If you're serving something rich and creamy, you'll want some zingy sharpness to cut through that, and if a dish has been cooked long and slow, developing layers of flavour, a good wine match might be something that's been aged a bit.

The food recommendations on the back labels of bottles will always give you clues, and you can also ask our in-store drinks specialists for advice too. My best tip is, if it works for you, it's a good match.

**Cave de
Turckheim
Gewürztraminer**
£11.50/75cl or **4 FOR 3**



If you're cooking something spicy, Gewürztraminer is your grape. It has a touch of sweetness that balances well against spice, and lovely floral aromas that pair especially well with Chinese and Thai food. This one comes from one of the top-performing cooperatives in France's Alsace region, the original home of Gewürztraminer.

**Chapel Down
Flint Dry**
£16/75cl or **4 FOR 3**



When you're dealing with delicate flavours, you want a wine that whispers rather than shouts, and won't overpower what's on the plate. This crisp, dry English white from the Chapel Down Winery in Kent has fresh, zesty aromas of ripe apple, grass and citrus, and when you taste it, lovely floral notes and a clean, flinty dryness.

**Errazuriz
Estate Cabernet
Sauvignon**
£10/75cl or **4 FOR 3**



Rich, meaty dishes need a wine that can stand up to them, like this full, aromatic red, bursting with vibrant fruit. Time spent barrel-ageing gives it a silky texture, but it's not too oaky, with a fresher style than many Cabernet Sauvignons. It's a fantastic match with lamb or beef dishes.

**El Piadoso Rioja
Gran Reserva**
£18/75cl or **4 FOR 3**



Slow-cooked casseroles and roasts demand a wine with layers of flavour to match. This 10-year-old Rioja spends 36 months in the barrel, then continues ageing in the bottle before it reaches us, building up notes of soft, truffle wood and spice and plums. It's a treat for Rioja fans, and will probably make you one if you've not discovered it yet.

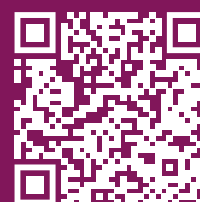


IT'S ABOUT THE VIBE

Sometimes when you're choosing wine, the mood is as important as the food. At a drinks party where you might only be serving crisps and nibbles, you want people to chat and have fun, not cogitate over the wine. So choose something uncomplicated and easy drinking. Valdo Elevantum Prosecco DOCG, (£14.50/75cl or **4 FOR 3**), is perfect party fizz, with aromas of golden apples, subtle sweetness, fresh citrus flavours and fine bubbles.

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Weekending



HOT STUFF

The best thing about autumn isn't woolly jumpers, walking through crunchy leaves or even hot chocolate. It's the return of the mighty Sunday roast. Helping you to make it even mightier this month is the SAVE 1/3 offer on roasts at Waitrose until 11 November, meaning you can go for the biggest, most flavoursome joints without stretching the budget. Yorkshire puds, fresh gravy and stuffing are also on offer, which means you might be able to introduce a weeknight roast dinner, too.

Weekending



What's hot

A classy combination

Want a taste of a French duo that are as perfect a pair as Napoleon and Josephine (and potentially a better match)? Make your next wine and cheese treat a bottle of No.1 Chablis (£19.50/75cl or **4 FOR 3**, offer ends 4 November), an elegant Chardonnay with zesty mineral notes and plenty of apple, and a slice of No.1 Comté AOP (£5.80/200g), with its nutty, toasty flavour. Delightful individually, but just dreamy together.



What's new

Melting magic

There's no dish that can't be improved by the addition of butter. And the new Waitrose No.1 Smoked Paprika & Chilli and Roasted Garlic & Herb Blended Butters (£2.50/100g, selected stores) will ramp up main courses with salty richness and fragrant, punchy ingredients. A disc of the roasted garlic and herb is perfection on top of a juicy steak, while the smoked paprika and chilli butter will give Bonfire Night jacket potatoes an extra sparkle.



DISHPATCH
FROM WAITROSE

What's hot Special delivery

Get a taste of game season without putting your coat on, with a meal kit delivery from Dishpatch. The newly launched Game Collection involves mouthwatering dishes such as muntjac keema masala biryani from the menu by Empire Empire (below left), partridge breast with caramelised onions and oloroso sherry sauce from Moro's Moorish Game Feast (above) and Michel Roux's slow-braised venison (below right). See the fabulous full menus and book yours at dishpatch.com.



'All our fresh pork now comes from free range pigs. They spend their whole lives outside, with room to run around and shelter from the weather'

JAKE PICKERING

Partner & senior agriculture manager



Jamali Maddix

Food combos including baked beans in spag bol, Wotsits in peanut butter sandwiches and even alligator in cheesecake (which he's genuinely eaten) are all topics of chat – though thankfully not on the menu – when the stand-up comedian visits Nick Grimshaw and Angela Hartnett in the podcast studio. Instead, they enjoy spiced whole chicken with herby rice followed by Ottolenghi ice creams, and discuss eating on public transport, aeroplane food and why Jamali went from 'head priest of the cult of air fryers' to not using one at all. But will he succeed in converting Angela to pineapple on pizza? waitrose.com/dish



ORLANDO MURRIN

Finding and eating the best food is a game you can never tire of

Food packaging is so beautiful nowadays – elegantly designed and mouthwateringly photographed – but it's the quality of the food inside that really counts. With this in mind, I'd like to share a shortcut that could fast-track you to your next delicious discovery when you're cruising the aisles.

I'm talking about a small black sticker, about the size of a 2p coin, with 'Great Taste' written across the middle, and gold stars (one, two or three) beneath. This modest little symbol marks out the product as a winner of a Great Taste Award, a scheme which for the last 30 years has been championing worldwide excellence in food and drink.

If you're wondering who gets to judge all the products – and this year a brain-numbing 14,340 were entered, from more than 110 countries – it's an astonishing feat of logistics. Over several weeks, panels of independent judges – chefs, technologists, retailers, buyers, food writers, critics and other specialists (more than 500 in total) – gather in London and Dorset to spend the day blind tasting. You never know what will be placed in front of you – meats, cheeses, sauces, breads, desserts, jams, chocolate – and there's no stylish packaging to distract you, just the product, plain and simple.

The judging sessions are a highlight of my year (I already have next year's dates in my diary) and enriching on so many levels. It's fascinating to focus so intensely on flavour, texture and aftertaste, and surprisingly hard to translate these sensations into words. Best of all, I've learnt so much from my fellow judges, often experts in their field, who have helped me tune up my taste buds and be more discriminating and appreciative.

A minor frustration of the day is that even if a product wins three stars (for which accolade the decision has to be unanimous, agreed by all the panels), its identity isn't revealed until the winners are officially announced, often weeks later. Anonymity is taken that seriously. On the plus side, after a day's judging you are pleasantly exhausted, and sleep like a baby.

After combing through this year's winners (they're all at gff.co.uk) I made a shopping list and headed to Waitrose. Among a feast of discoveries, I have so far fallen in love with No.1 Chicken Liver Parfait, Ottolenghi Pipelchuma Paste and a No.1 Beef Rump Roasting Joint – with many more treats still waiting to be tried, including Pip & Nut Crunchy Peanut Butter.

It's also a bit of a thrill to find many of my existing favourites scooping awards – including Clarence Court Eggs, Denhay Bacon, Flahavans Oats and a multitude of No.1 cheeses, including Cropwell Bishop, Chaource (from France's Champagne-Ardenne region) and super-creamy Robiola Bosina (from Piedmont).

I must end with a gentle warning – once you start looking out for the little black and gold stickers, it can become addictive. It's the simplest kind of treasure hunt, and every find delicious.

Orlando loves to hear from readers – you'll find him at orlandomurrin.com

McCain

CRISPY FRIES

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5 MIN AIR FRYER QUICK & CRISPY

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PINCHFUL

A SEA SALT YOUR DOCTOR WOULD RECOMMEND

great taste 2024

"We're all eating too much salt and it's putting pressure on our hearts and the NHS."

"Sodium is the bit we need to watch out for in salt, as it contributes to high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks. We all know people who have suffered from these horrible health conditions, and eating less sodium is one of the key recommendations I make as a GP - whatever your age - to reduce the long-term risks."

"Maintaining some salt in your diet is important, and I love a little salt in some of my cooking. That's why I've switched to Pinchful. It's a natural sea salt that's 30% lower in sodium, it tastes great and is rich in healthy minerals like potassium and magnesium."

"This is an easy way to do your bit for your family's health, without them even noticing the difference."

Dr Zoe Williams
NHS GP Presenter & Health Educator

pinchful salt @pinchfulsalt @pinchful.com
pinchful.com

Subject to availability. Selected stores only. Serving Suggestion.

Weekending

My weekend

CLODAGH McKENNA

The TV chef and cookbook writer, 50, lives on a Hampshire farm with her husband Harry Herbert and their dogs, Alfie and Teddy

Tea or coffee?

A flat white from my little barista coffee machine, with organic full-fat milk. And I juice every day. This morning, I went out and picked carrots, chard and celery, and juiced them up with ginger and turmeric.

Breakfast or brunch?

I bake bread on Saturday – it's my ritual – then we have brunch – a shakshuka with lentils, a croque monsieur bake or I'll do my husband's favourite, eggs Benedict. We have woodland pigs, so we have it with crispy bacon and hollandaise made with eggs from our hens.

What's in your shopping trolley?

Coconut milk, really good butter, bananas, Bold Bean Co beans, brown rice, crème fraîche, puff pastry, organic yogurt, pasta... I could go on! Because we grow vegetables and mostly have our own meat, it's all those fillers-in.

Savoury or sweet?

Savoury. As a rule, I don't get biscuits in, because if I did I'd eat them all. I had digestives left over from a cheesecake last week, and at 11 o'clock – that hunger point – I slathered some with butter and gobbled them all down.

Dinner party: host or attend?

I love entertaining. I've got people coming this weekend, and I'm doing chilled beetroot soup, because we've got so much beetroot in the garden, fresh tagliolini with sage butter and peas, and the apple tarte Tatin from my new book.

Weekend tippie?

I'll make margaritas in our private pub in the woods. During lockdown, I convinced my husband to allow me to turn this old shepherd's hut into an Irish pub, and it's gorgeous. It's called the Cork Arms, after where I'm from.

A dish you crave?

Chicken soup. Once a month, I buy an organic chicken and on Friday night I'll do a roast with yummy gravy from the juices, then use the leftover meat throughout the weekend. I make a



Photographs: David Loftus

HAPPY PLACE

(Clockwise from top) Clodagh with her buttery croque monsieur brunch bake; kid goat keema pao from Gymkhana; chicken cuddle soup; a digestive; The Devonshire



24-hour broth, and on Sunday night we have chicken noodle soup – it's my ultimate comfort food.

Pub grub or restaurant?

It's not really pub food, but I love The Devonshire in Soho – best Guinness in London! Because I have a farm, I'm very particular about the meat that I eat, and theirs is so well sourced. For Italian, Trullo in Highbury is amazing, just like being in Italy. And for an Indian, Gymkhana is so authentic.

Sunday lunch?

We roast one of our own meats, and I'm obsessed with the roast potatoes. I parboil them, squash them a little with a masher for fluffiness, pan-fry them with rosemary, garlic, orange peel and juices from the roasting tin, then it's into a hot oven and baste every 10 minutes.

A recipe from your book you'd like everyone to try?

The braised white beans with winter greens. It's easy and so good for you, especially during autumn when you need nourishing comfort food. I'd love people to cook more with pulses and greens. It makes a huge difference to your energy, and then you feel better mentally too.

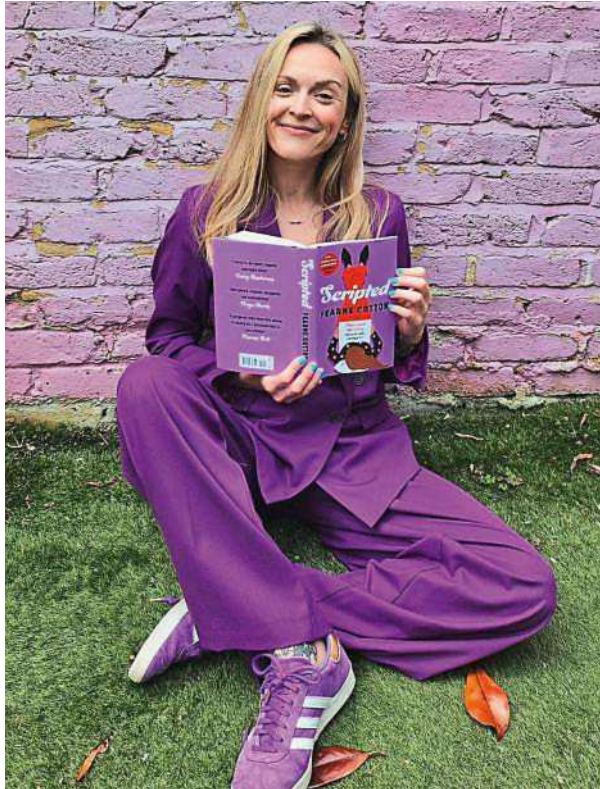
Hot drink before bed?

I have a lovely tea. Last night, it was sliced root turmeric, ginger, honey and fennel seeds. When my digestive system is cooled and calm, I sleep very well.

Clodagh's Happy Cooking: 100 Easy, Speedy, Healthy Recipes for Good Mood Food (Kyle Books) is out now. Interview: Emma Higginbotham



Weekending



This year's hottest accessory is a dog-eared novel, not a designer bag. Just ask Dua Lipa. The pop star, who runs an online book club, regularly posts pictures of herself holding new titles on Instagram. And she's far from alone. From Her Majesty The Queen to Fearné Cotton and Florence Welch to Oprah Winfrey, a host of celebrities are using their star power to push publishing sales, with impressive results.

When Oscar-winning actor Reese Witherspoon recommended Delia Owens' debut novel *Where the Crawdads Sing*, it had a print run of less than 30,000. It has since sold more than 22 million. The book club boom began three decades ago, thanks to Oprah (followed by our own Richard and Judy in 2004). But these modern iterations on Instagram, YouTube and TikTok are igniting a love of literature in a new generation.

Here are some of the best...

BEST FOR FEMALE-CENTRIC STORIES

Reese's Book Club

Reese Witherspoon has the power to create a global bestseller with a single post – she has 30 million Instagram followers for her main account and three million for her book club. Many of her picks (which include *Little Fires Everywhere* and *Daisy Jones & the Six*) have gone on to become successful TV series. Her recommendations range from comedies to dark academic thrillers – and all feature a female lead. @reesesbookclub

BEST FOR EMOTIONAL EPICS

Service95 Book Club

When Dua Lipa posted a picture of herself on Instagram in 2020 holding Hanya Yanagihara's heartbreaking novel *A Little Life*, its publishers reported a huge spike in sales. Inspired, she launched Service95 Book Club (named after her birth year, 1995, and her desire to be 'of service') with *Shuggie Bain*, a powerful tale of pride and poverty set in 80s Glasgow. Dua is not afraid of opting for emotionally challenging reads (recent picks include Max Porter's *Grief is a Thing with Feathers* – the story of a family grieving their mother's death), and posts author Q&As on her website, with lists of related books and accompanying playlists. @service95

BEST FOR THE CLASSICS

The Queen's Reading Room

"Books make for a happier, healthier and more connected society," according to The Queen, who recommends a different read each month on Instagram. Her choices range from classics such as Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* to popular fiction – Jeffrey Archer's *Kane and Abel* – and murder mysteries like Lucy Foley's *The Midnight Feast*. @thequeensreadingroom

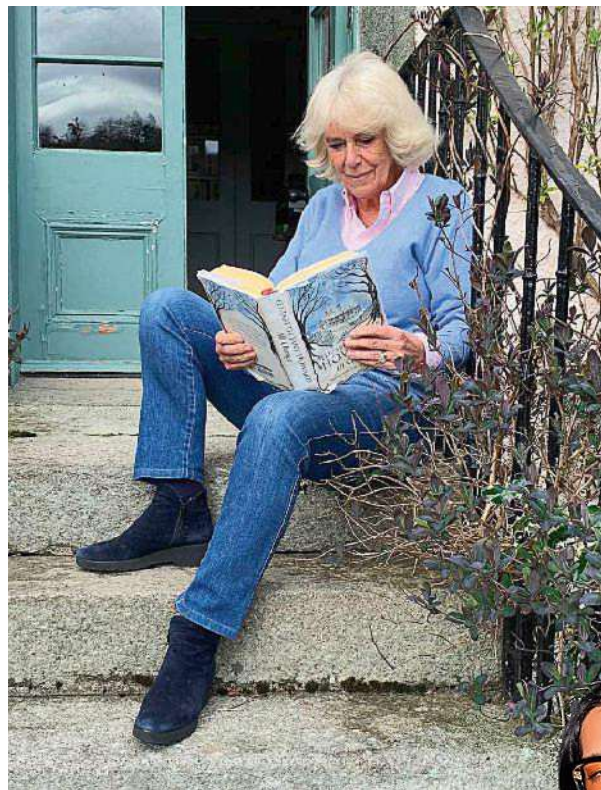
BEST FOR BIG THINKERS

Natalie's Book Club

Harvard-educated actor Natalie Portman challenges her followers to 'think deeply and read widely', selecting a range of thought-provoking fiction and non-fiction. Recent highlights include *Autocracy Inc* by Anne Applebaum, a guide to how autocracies rise and ways the democratic world can defeat them, and Yasmin Zaher's *The Coin*, which follows a Palestinian schoolteacher as she grapples with life in America. @natsbookclub

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Fearné Cotton (top left); Laufey (top right); Reese Witherspoon (above left); HM The Queen (above right); Dua Lipa (left)



BATTLE OF THE BOOK CLUBS

They're the new cool, and celebrity versions are drawing millions of readers on social media – Sarah Barratt shares some of the best



‘Celebrities are using their star power to push publishing sales, with impressive results’

BEST FOR JOY SEEKERS

The Happy Place Book Club

Books that boost joy, provide an escape and help readers cope with stress are the speciality of this serotonin-boosting book club, launched by Fearn Cotton, the DJ and presenter of the eponymous podcast. Recent recommendations include *Bare*, the inspirational true story of writer Lorna Tucker's fight to survive on the streets of London, and David Larbi's *Frequently Happy*. Mixing poetry, mindfulness and journaling, it encourages readers to rediscover the joy all around them. [@happyplacebookclub](#)

BEST FOR GEN ZERS

The Laufey Book Club

With more than eight million TikTok followers, the Grammy award-winning Icelandic-Chinese singer (full name Laufey Lín Bing Jónsdóttir) is a musical sensation. She's also a big literature lover, with a buzzy Instagram book club and a dedicated Discord chatroom, where fans can dissect each choice – from classics such as *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott to fantastical adventures including Madeleine L'Engle's *A Wrinkle In Time*. [@laufeybookclub](#)

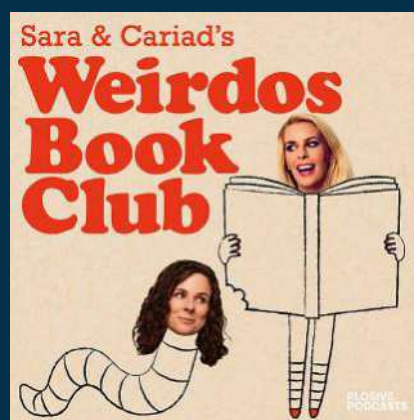
BEST FOR CREATIVE SOULS

Between Two Books

Book clubs are not a fad for Florence Welch, lead singer of Florence and the Machine – she's been running hers since 2012, inviting celebrity pals to make recommendations. *Barbie* director Greta Gerwig picked *The Argonauts* by Maggie Nelson, a moving memoir of motherhood and queerness, while musician Nick Cave chose *Here I Am* by Jonathan Safran Foer, a novel about modern family lives and the ties that bind. [@betweentwobooks](#)

5 OF THE BEST

BOOK CLUB PODCASTS



Sara and Cariad's Weirdos Book Club
Hilarity ensues as comedians Sara Pascoe and Cariad Lloyd invite their friends, including Aisling Bea, to talk about their latest reads.

The Book Club Review

Tune in once a month to hear publishing insiders Kate Slotover and Laura Potter chat candidly about the novels they've read in their respective book clubs.

Joel Golby's Book Club

The *Guardian* journalist (above left) reviews one book per episode in this punchy one-man podcast, while showcasing his characteristic wit.

The Radio 2 Book Club

Sara Cox celebrates the best new novels, interviews the authors and invites listeners to share their favourite fiction.

Off Air With Jane & Fi

Jane Garvey and Fi Glover (below) discuss books that may have been shelved too soon, in special bonus episodes of their popular podcast.



Photographs: Alamy, Shona Williams

DON'T MISS THIS WEEK



Film Bugonia

Emma Stone (above) plays a kidnapped CEO in this absurdist thriller from director Yorgos Lanthimos (*Poor Things*). Snatched by a conspiracy theorist (Jesse Plemons), she must use her wits to disprove his theory that she's an alien. Darkly funny, it's also disturbing in parts, but has terrific performances. In cinemas from tomorrow (31 October). *Anna Smith*



Music The Charlatans

The great survivors of the Madchester movement return with a bold and sometimes surprising 14th album. Although adored for engaging, anthemic rock, The Charlatans have never been afraid to experiment with their indie template, and *We Are Love* contains alluring hints of soundscapes and soul in a cinematic, confident collection. *Stuart Macdonie*



TV Art Detectives

Yes, it's yet another crime drama – but this one has a novel twist, as two detectives (Stephen Moyer and Nina Singh, above) investigate murders and thefts in the world of art and antiques. From *Old Masters* to the latest Banksys, it turns out to be a surprisingly deadly business. U&Drama, 8pm tonight (30 October). *Paul Kirkley*



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25% OFF

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HIGH IN PROTEIN



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beyondmeat.com

Subject to availability. Serving suggestion. 25% off Beyond Burger(r) and Beyond Meatballs(r). Selected stores. Beyond Burger was £4.75, now £3.55. Beyond Meatballs was £4.10, now £3.05. From 29.10.25 to 02.12.25.

NEW!

TRIBE WILDFARMED



Natural Energy. Nothing Else.

The UK's first oat bar made with regeneratively farmed oats

Introductory offer £2 from 22.10.25 to 25.11.25. (£3 from 26th November). Selected stores. Subject to availability.



Discover the Perfect Gift

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Please enjoy Silent Pool Gin responsibly

Subject to availability. Selected stores only.



Weekend walks

ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT



A coast-to-coast walk is usually a mighty undertaking – but this Cornish route can be achieved in a day, says Oliver Smith



Photographs: Shutterstock, Alamy, The White Hart

You might take seven days to complete the 84-mile Hadrian's Wall National Trail, or up to 16 to walk Alfred Wainwright's classic 192-mile route from St Bees on the west coast to Robin Hood's Bay on the east.

But there is one place in the UK where a coast-to-coast walk is manageable in a day – albeit a long one. The St Michael's Way runs for 13 miles across the neck of the Cornish peninsula, connecting the Celtic Sea in the north to the English Channel's most westerly stretches, where waves lap at the foot of St Michael's Mount.

True to its name, it's a pilgrimage route, the destination being that holy island where, according to legend, the Archangel Michael appeared in a flash of light before Cornish fishermen to warn them of danger around 495AD. St Michael's Mount is a familiar sight for tourists in Cornwall, who see it from the A30 or the train to Penzance. But approaching it on foot – its silhouette rising from patchwork fields, its ramparts caught by the late afternoon sun – you see it in a new light, with a fresh sheen of mystery.

Start early at Lelant in St Ives Bay, where the story goes that pilgrims sailing south for Santiago de Compostela in Spain would disembark, then reboard in Mount's Bay to avoid the treacherous seas beyond Land's End. Trace the coast path west to Carbis Bay, before veering inland past the sullen 18th-century Knill Monument. You soon come across other monuments that predate it – the prehistoric standing stone of Beersheba and Bowl



Information

Best map

OS Explorer 176
Blackwater Estuary

Start Lelant

Finish St Michael's
Mount

Distance 11-13 miles

Duration 4-6 hours

Difficulty Medium

COASTAL BEAUTY (From top) The causeway to St Michael's Mount; Marazion Marsh Nature Reserve; fish and chips at the White Hart



Rock – the latter supposedly flung by a local giant.

Scale Trencrom Hill, which rises, more or less, at the centre of the peninsula and idle here a while to take in the views of horizons to north and south, with the granite cliffs of Penwith in the far west. The tower of St Paul's Church in Ludgvan soon rises before you – allegedly the last to hold a service in the Cornish language in the 17th century. Stop for lunch here at the White Hart, which serves Newlyn-caught fish and chips.

You are now at a crossroads. The quickest route to the Mount runs beside the reed beds of the RSPB's Marazion Marsh Nature Reserve for an 11-mile walk, but one that involves crossing two busy A-roads. A longer route detours west to the striking Tremeneheere Sculpture Gardens, eventually totalling around 13 miles.

Either way, you'll find yourself on Marazion's vast sandy beach, gazing up at the walls of the 12th century castle – the monastery that originally stood there and first attracted pilgrims is now lost. At low tide, you can walk to the Mount, but at high tide, you have to take the boat – unless it's a Saturday, when the site is closed.

End your journey at the little Chapel of St Michael in the castle walls. In a shadowy nook, you'll find a bronze sculpture of St Michael vanquishing the devil – much as you have seen off the miles from Lelant.

Oliver's book [On This Holy Island](#) (Bloomsbury) is out now. @olismithtravel

NEW

HEROIC TASTE LESS SUGAR*

*Contains 30% less sugar than the market reference in kids flavoured milk drinks yoghurts and plant based alternatives. †Calcium & vitamin D2 are needed for normal growth & development of bones in children.

Selected stores, subject to availability.



CALCIUM &
VITAMIN D2
FOR HEALTHY BONES†

A photograph of a man and a young boy sitting at a table, focused on decorating Halloween biscuits. The boy is wearing a striped shirt and a small hat. The table is covered with various biscuit decorating kits and ingredients. In the background, there are Halloween decorations like pumpkins and a bowl of candy.

Dr.Oetker

**NO TRICKS
just tasty treats**

Subject to availability. Selected stores only. Serving suggestion.

A collection of Lily's Kitchen Halloween-themed pet food products. The products are displayed against a dark purple background with Halloween motifs like bats and pumpkins. The products include 'Spooky Pate' for cats, 'Hocus Pocus Stew' for dogs, and 'Howl-o-ween Mini Burgers' for dogs. Each product features the Lily's Kitchen logo and a 'PROPER MEAT' seal.

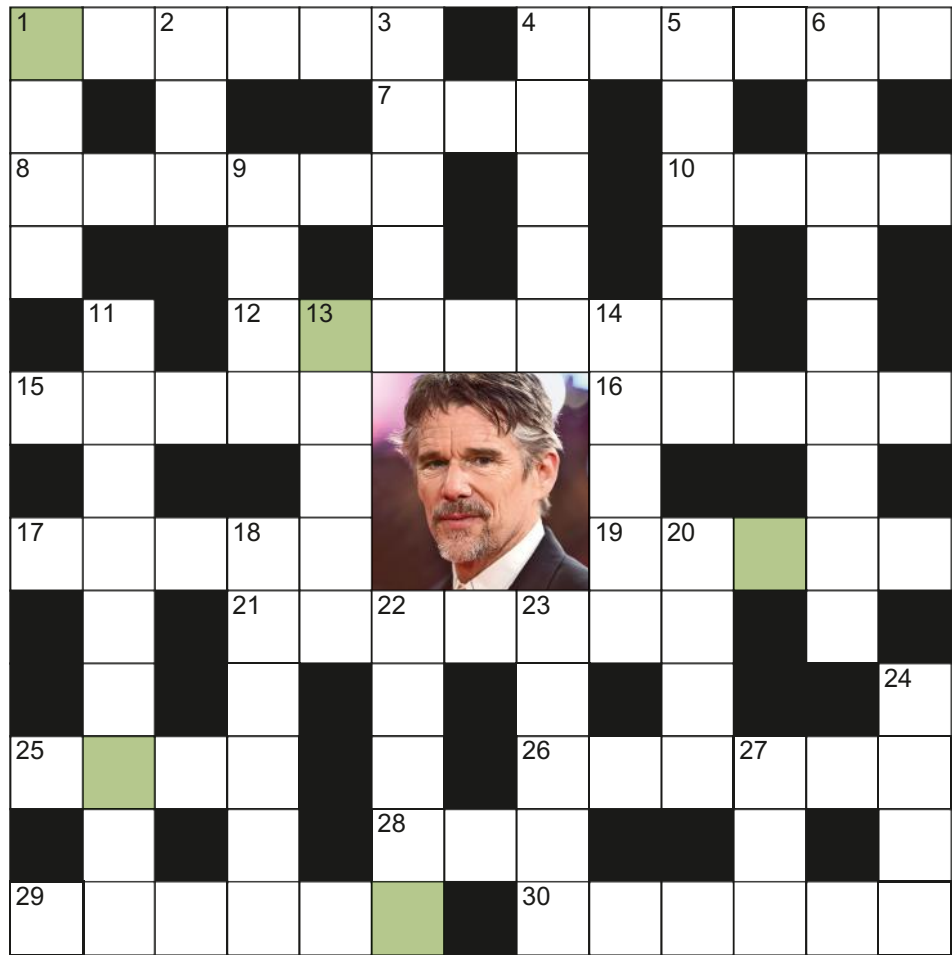
**FOOD TO SUMMON
MISCHIEF
MAKERS**

**NEW
IN-STORE AND
ONLINE**

**LILY'S
KITCHEN
PROPER FOOD FOR PETS**

Subject to availability. Selected stores only.

Weekending



Photograph: Getty Images

£100 Prize crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Basket material (6)
- 4 Edible bivalve (6)
- 7 Tavern (3)
- 8 Ointment, cream (6)
- 10 Let fall (4)
- 12 Playhouse (7)
- 15 Small boat (5)
- 16 Foe (5)
- 17 Northwestern US state (5)
- 19 Farmyard birds (5)
- 21 Very old (7)

- 25 Thick paper (4)
- 26 Truthful (6)
- 28 Health resort (3)
- 29 Fanatic (6)
- 30 Make tidy (6)

DOWN

- 1 Brick barrier (4)
- 2 Baby's bed (3)
- 3 Wash out soap (5)
- 4 Start (5)
- 5 Abrupt (6)
- 6 Make savings (9)

- 9 Enthusiastic about (4)
- 11 Applicant (9)
- 13 Fish-eating bird (5)
- 14 Rule (5)
- 18 Water Music composer (6)
- 20 Public school (4)
- 22 Large box (5)
- 23 - - - Hawke (pictured), actor (5)
- 24 Astound (4)
- 27 Dine (3)

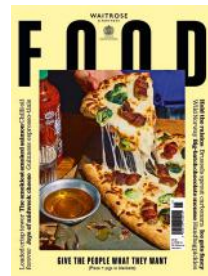
TO ENTER visit waitrose.com/weekendcompetition and select the correct food or drink-related answer from the list (revealed in the shaded squares). Closing date, Tuesday 4 November.

Solution to last week's crossword. **Across:** 1. Trauma, 4. Repose, 7. Hue, 8. Riddle, 10. Rope, 12. Arduous, 15. Range, 16. Relic, 17. Anger, 19. Avoid, 21. Asinine, 25. Must, 26. Errand, 28. Pea, 29. Ferret, 30. Lesley. **Down:** 1. Turn, 2. Aid, 3. Ahead, 4. Retro, 5. Peruse, 6. Soporific, 9. Drag, 11. Magnitude, 13. Rears, 14. Urban, 18. Easter, 20. Veer, 22. Inept, 23. Ideal, 24. Edgy, 27. All. **Prize Answer:** TROUT.

GB Residents only. 18+. One entry per person. Entries received after the closing date will not be accepted. No purchase necessary. Prize is a £100 John Lewis Partnership gift card. No cash alternative. One winner will be drawn at random from entries. Waitrose customers only. For full terms and conditions, visit waitrose.com/competitions. Promoter: Waitrose Ltd.



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Waitrose Weekend is printed on low CO2 emission paper produced from sustainable sources.

Sudoku

Medium

		6				8	5	
	3		9	5				
			3		7			1
	8	5		7				
6								7
				2		5	3	
5			4		8			
				9	2		7	
	1	8				4		

Tricky

	4	9	8				7	
7				4				
	6					8		
		2				9		3
	5		2	9		8		
8		6				2		
		5					6	
				5				9
	7				1	4	2	



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2 FOR £6

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250g/310g
£3.80 SAVE £1.60



SAVE 20%

Equinox Organic Kombucha
Raspberry & Elderflower
750ml
£4.75 - £3.80



£14 SOUTH EAST & EAST ASIAN MEAL DEAL

2 MAINS + 2 SIDES

Waitrose & Partners Beef Massaman Curry/Prawn Laksa/
Thai Sticky Rice/6 Vegetable Spring Rolls 216g-400g
£2.50 - £6



2 FOR £4

Waitrose & Partners Cooks' Ingredients Cranberries
250g
£2.20 SAVE 40p



SAVE 25%

Pies in the Minster Pie Moo/
Wild Shroom
255g
£5 - £3.75



SAVE 50p

GoodLife Vegan Spicy Beanburger
454g
£3.35 - £2.85



SAVE 1/3

Waitrose & Partners British Beef Silverside Roasting Joint per kg
£20 - £13.33
(OFFER ENDS 11 NOVEMBER)

WINE
WEEK
29 OCT - 4 NOV
LOWER

4 for 3
on wine & fizz



Waitrose Loved & Found
Castelão 75cl
£9.25



Waitrose No.1 Grüner
Veltliner 75cl
£12



San Leo Prosecco
Brut 75cl
£10



La Vieille Ferme
Rosé 75cl
£8.75

Weekend Guide

THE WORLD OF WHISKY



INSIDE

HOW TO SPEAK WHISKY p2

THE HIGHBALL MASTERCLASS p8

TOO GOOD TO MIX? p10



JOHN VINE

Partner & spirits buyer

It's whisky's time to shine

Where do you start? There's so much to learn about whisky – the value of age statements, single malt versus blend, or distilleries supporting more sustainable production. And as a proud member of Keepers of the Quaich (like-minded fans committed to the Scotch whisky industry), I love finding a new spirit.

You may be a whisky novice or a connoisseur, but we know choosing the right bottle can sometimes be a challenge. Hopefully, we can answer some of your questions – and tempt you with our offers in store and online. And, of course, inspire you to break out the cocktail shaker and create exciting serves. Now that's a great introduction!



WE'RE WINNING AWARDS...

Waitrose was named Outstanding Drinks Supermarket of the Year and Sustainable Supermarket of the Year at the International Wine & Spirits Competition 2025, so you know you're buying whisky from the very best!

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It's an age-old industry, but whisky distillers are now looking at ways to be more sustainable. This includes everything from the type of barley grown to make the whisky, to packaging and bottles. Big names such as Diageo and Pernod Ricard, and small independents such as Nc'nean, are all moving towards reduced water usage, lower carbon footprints and less wasteful packaging. Bruichladdich has also abandoned metal gift tubes, making bottles 32% lighter and using 60% recycled glass. Luckily, none of this affects the glorious spirit inside.

How to speak whisky

What difference does the cask make? And is older really better? We decipher the info on your bottle

Single malt or blend?

Of the many terms used when talking about whisky, this is one of the most useful to get your head around. For a bottle of Scotch to be labelled as single malt whisky, it must be made only from malted barley, in pot stills, at the same distillery. In contrast, blended whisky may be the product of more than one distillery and can also be made using grain whisky, though if no grain is used it's a blended malt. Neither is better than the other – it simply depends on what you prefer. A single malt reflects one distillery's personality, while a blended whisky can draw on as many whiskies as needed.

Region

Scotch whisky distilleries are grouped into five official regional designations. **Lowland** whiskies tend to be milder and lighter bodied, with honeyed notes. **Highland** whiskies vary greatly, ranging from light and delicate to rich and spicy. **Speyside** has the greatest concentration of distilleries – more than 50 – and a reputation for sweeter, fruity spirits, with a lot of ageing in

former sherry casks. **Campbeltown** has a proud distilling history, but now only three (excellent) distilleries remain. The whiskies produced there are complex with a maritime influence. **Islay** whiskies are often powerfully smoky and briny, but while that sea air is a constant, not all are peat heavy.

WHAT'S YOUR FLAVOUR?

These four simple categories are all you need to find your new favourite

When faced with shelves of bottles or lots of choice online, it can be hard to know where to start. To help, we've divided our whiskies into four groups so when you're shopping

online or in store and you like, say, a smoky, peaty whisky, it's easy to find something similar in flavour. The same categories are used in The Whisky Gallery (p6), so it couldn't be easier!



GREEN FRUITS & HONEY

Flavour profile:

Apple • Honey • Pear

A great starting point for whisky novices, these have a lighter body and more delicate finish, with honey, floral and fruit notes. Good with mixers, as an apéritif, or with seafood.



Maturing and age statements

Whisky as we know it doesn't emerge straight from the stills. For one thing, legally, whisky made in the UK has to be matured in wooden casks – almost always oak – for at least three years. (Bourbon can only be aged in new oak casks.)

The age statement on a bottle may also only refer to the youngest whisky

in the mix, regardless of the age of the oldest.

The strong, fiery, new-make spirit is clear when it comes off the still, but gets its colour from the cask it's matured in – the local climate also affects this process. The amount of time it's left to mature in the cask will determine the depth and complexity of flavour.

Scapa 10-Year-Old Orkney Single Malt Scotch Whisky £55/70cl

A stunning single malt from the Orkneys, this 10-Year-Old is matured in ex-American oak barrels. It has aromas of fresh pineapple and mango, with hints of crème brûlée, cinnamon buns and citrus peel. On the palate, there are flavours of stewed apple, warming spices and touches of banana and milk chocolate.



DRIED FRUITS & VANILLA

Flavour profile:

- Stone fruit • Vanilla
- Dried fruit

Warming and mellow, whiskies in this category are full of fruitiness, reflecting the oak casks they're aged in. Try in an old fashioned or with rich puddings.



SMOKE & PEAT

Flavour profile:

- Subtle smoke
- Intense peat

Rich and smoky as only peated whiskies can be, these have big, bold flavours and hidden depths. Pair with rich blue cheese, such as Stilton, or oysters.



SPICES & CARAMEL

Flavour profile:

- Nutmeg • Cinnamon
- Caramel

This type of whisky is a mix of spices with toasty caramel underneath. Great served alongside cured ham or intense dark chocolate.

A classic choice for a whisky and soda highball.

3 OF THE BEST CLASSICS

Old fashioned, Manhattan, boulevardier... They're classics for a reason. Here's how to make them



Old fashioned

In a mixing glass, dissolve 1 sugar cube in 50ml whisky. Add 2 dashes Angostura Bitters. Strain into an ice-filled rocks glass and garnish with an orange twist.

TRY IT WITH...

Monkey Shoulder Blended Malt Scotch Whisky

SAVE £7 £24.50/70cl (was £31.50)

A modern classic with rich aromas of orange, vanilla, honey and spiced oak. Get a free mini Angostura Bitters with purchase in selected stores, while stocks last.



Manhattan

Mix 50ml bourbon, 25ml sweet vermouth and 2 dashes Angostura Bitters in a small coupe. Garnish with an Opies Black Cherry.

TRY IT WITH...

Buffalo Trace Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey

SAVE £7 £20/70cl (was £27)

A classic Kentucky bourbon, smooth with aromas of vanilla, mint and molasses. Flavours of brown sugar and spice give way to oak, toffee, dark fruit and anise on the finish.



Boulevardier

Add 50ml bourbon, 30ml Campari and 30ml sweet vermouth to a mixing glass with ice. Stir until chilled. Strain into an ice-filled rocks glass and garnish with an orange twist.

TRY IT WITH...

Eagle Rare Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey

With 10 years' ageing in American white oak, this is a bold, dry, delicate bourbon with notes of candied almonds and rich cocoa. Aromas of toffee, orange peel, herbs, honey, leather and oak lead to a dry, lingering finish.





THE RISE OF RYE

Great in cocktails – and just as good neat – but how different is it to normal whisky?

Until Prohibition, rye was the most popular type of American whiskey. But when it ended in December 1933, the landscape had changed and rye fell out of fashion, particularly with younger drinkers who rejected the spirit their parents drank for purer spirits such as vodka. Now, strong flavours are back in style and spicy, herbal rye whisky is being made – and drunk – around the world.

So what exactly is rye whiskey? In the US, to be labelled a rye whiskey the proportion of grain, or mash bill, must be at least 51% rye, though some producers do create 100% rye whiskies. Rye can be difficult to ferment so other malted grains such as corn, malted barley and/or wheat are

often added. If it's aged for at least two years in new charred oak barrels, this whiskey is referred to as 'straight rye'.

America and Canada are the biggest producers, but European distillers such as Stauning (Denmark) and Kyrö (Finland) have been getting in on the act, making 100% rye whisky from local grain. However, since April this year, European whisky makers can't use the term 'rye whisky' on their bottles, due to an old trade agreement between the EU and Canada. (Ironically, Canadian rye whisky doesn't legally need to contain rye – it just needs to be made in Canada, aged for at least three years in wooden casks and be at least 40% ABV.) So now you know!

TWO TO TRY...



Sazerac Rye Whiskey*

£47/70cl

A classic example of rye whiskey, full of warming aromas of baking spices and dark caramel. Flavour wise, it starts with vanilla, ginger, black pepper and brown sugar, before rye's trademark notes of mint and dill add to a long, warm finish.

Wild Turkey 101 Bourbon Whiskey

£36/70cl

This is a great way to discover how rye impacts on a whiskey, even in small quantities. It's bolder than many bourbons – those classic vanilla and caramel notes are joined by cinnamon, cloves and pepper, with a minty note at the finish.

UK

A pioneer in the English whisky industry, Cotswolds has made a great spirit from local barley, aged in French red wine barriques and American oak. **Cotswolds Single Malt Whisky SAVE £12** £35/70cl (was £47), is light, with red fruit and honey.

Other home nations are getting in on the act, too. From the first Welsh distillery to open in over a century, **Penderyn Madeira Single Malt Welsh Whisky** £44/70cl, is finished in Madeira casks. It has notes of raisins, sultanas, biscuit and vanilla, a touch of citrus and a little spice.

Back in traditional Scotch territory, **Glen Scotia Campbeltown Harbour Single Malt Scotch Whisky SAVE £13.50** £26/70cl (was £39.50, offer ends 2 Dec), is matured in first-fill bourbon barrels and has a coastal influence. Expect soft peach and vanilla with a hint of smoke.

Scotland & beyond

It may be the spiritual home of whisky, but it's not the only country making a decent dram

Europe

From one of the best whisky-makers in Scandinavia, **Stauning Høst Danish Whisky* SAVE £10** £37/70cl (was £47), is a blend of single malt and malted rye whisky, aged in a mix of American oak casks and port barriques. More delicate than the addition of rye normally suggests, with oodles of fruit and a gentle floral note. There's more spiciness at the finish, without losing that lightness of touch.

Further west, **Jameson Irish Whiskey SAVE £8** £27/1L (was £35, offer ends 2 Dec), is a classic for a reason. It balances a light profile with that calling card of Irish whiskey – a full, oily mouthfeel. The delicate orchard fruit, nuttiness and a suggestion of raisins and sherry work perfectly with ginger ale.





North America

In Canada, **Bearface Triple Oak Canadian Whisky*** **SAVE £11** £27/70cl (was £38), uses what the distillery calls 'elemental ageing', harnessing the varying local temperatures in the wilderness to mature in a way that's impossible to recreate in milder climes. The result is smooth, with peppery notes alongside the vanilla and jammy fruit.

From one of the best-known distilleries in Kentucky, **Elijah Craig Small Batch American Whiskey** **SAVE £10** £33/70cl (was £43, offer ends 2 Dec), maintains its reputation for quality with this classic bourbon. It hits the mark with vanilla and oak, a little nuttiness on the nose, stewed apple flavours and cinnamon hints at the finish.



Rest of the world

Japan is big in the world of whisky and, as you'd expect from the name, **Hibiki Japanese Harmony Whisky*** £90/70cl, is all about the blending. Malt and grain whiskies from the Yamazaki, Hakushu and Chita distilleries, aged in five types of wood, create a floral, delicate spirit with a hint of Japanese oak.

Over in Australia, one Melbourne distillery doing great things is Starward. It always intended **Starward Left-Field Single Malt** **SAVE £10** £30/70cl (was £40), to be versatile and it's definitely succeeded. Finished in red wine barrels from local vineyards, it's juicy with tropical fruit and berries, toasty spice and a long, soft finish.

In the same corner of the world, **Scapegrace Anthem Single Malt Whisky*** **SAVE £15** £35/70cl (was £50, offer ends 2 Dec), from New Zealand, is made with Manuka-smoked Laureate barley, capturing notes of spiced walnuts, apples and sweet hay.

MEET THE PRODUCER

FILEY BAY



Joe Clark (above) has worked in whisky for 20 years, written two books on the subject and is now whisky director with Filey Bay Yorkshire Single Malt.

distilleries worldwide can claim this. Every drop of Filey Bay whisky that will ever exist has a complete, unbroken provenance back to the fields on the farm.

Did you always want to work in the whisky world?

I wanted to do something creative or something that could contribute in some way to the challenges of our time. Through whisky, I'm lucky I get to do both every day.

Can you explain more?

Distilling gives me a canvas to create flavour, and maturation reveals how those flavours play out, while also putting a spotlight on how we farm regeneratively. That's why I love our new Filey Bay Nurture so much. Taking the barley that our founders' family has been growing for three generations and transforming it into whisky is, quite simply, glorious.

Is this what you mean by farm-led whisky?

Yes, as a single estate farm distillery, our field-to-bottle process is immensely important. How we make whisky is absolutely not the norm. Only a handful of

Talk us through a typical day in your working life

No two days are ever the same. We work in a world of ever-changing flavours and surprises, like when you take the bung out of a cask that you hammered in many years ago and let the whisky rush out. At that moment, you see the reward of all your effort and patience. You see how oak and the passing of time have completely transformed the clear spirit you filled into that cask, all those years back, into delicious whisky that people will love. That's always rewarding.

Any processes that gives your whisky its edge?

We have a unique still configuration allowing us to make two very different styles of spirit. If you relate whisky to music, having one spirit style is like having a band with a singer, drummer and guitarist. But having the two styles is like adding in a keyboard and string section.

FILEY BAY REGENERATIVE EDITION YORKSHIRE SINGLE MALT WHISKY

SAVE £10 £50/70cl (was £60, offer ends 2 Dec)

Exclusive to Waitrose, this is light and fruity with a hint of honey aromas and notes of vanilla and ripe strawberries. **Try in a.... Filey Bay New York(shire) sour Shake** 60ml Filey Bay Yorkshire Single Malt Whisky, 30ml lemon juice, 20ml sugar syrup and 1 egg white† with ice. Strain into an ice-filled rocks glass. Slowly pour 20ml red wine over the back of a spoon to create a float and garnish with lemon zest.

THE WHISKY GALLERY

Looking for something new, or checking that your favourite has made the cut? There's lots to choose from

DRIED FRUIT & VANILLA



Johnnie Walker Black Label 12-Year-Old Scotch Whisky
£37/70cl

From the biggest Scotch brand in the world, Black Label is a testament to the blender's art, using single malt and grain whiskies from more than 25 distilleries. Smooth and silky, with raisin, dried fig, creamy toffee, a hint of citrus and a touch of smoke at the finish.



Whyte & Mackay Blended Scotch Whisky
OFFER £19/1L (was £22.50)

This triple-matured blended Scotch whisky punches well above its price point, skilfully assembling malt and grain whisky from across Speyside and the Highlands. It has delicate aromas of currants and creamy toffee; flavours include peaches in syrup, Seville oranges and spice at the finish.



Loch Lomond 10-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky
SAVE £15 £26/70cl (was £41)

The straight-neck stills at this innovative distillery give this single malt a unique flavour. It's matured in three types of American oak cask to create a balance of fruit, sweetness and gentle smoke. There are notes of fudge, apple and cinnamon, with a hint of citrus and toasted oak.



Bushmills Black Bush Irish Whiskey
£31.50/70cl

With over 400 years of whiskey distillation, Bushmills is nothing if not experienced. Black Bush combines single malt whiskey matured in Oloroso sherry casks with a sweet, batch-distilled grain whiskey. The result is rich notes of plum and dried fruit, followed by a long, biscuity finish, balanced with a unique smoothness.



Aberlour 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky
£46/70cl

A cracking single malt with Aberlour's citrusy house character mellowed by ageing in oak casks and sherry butts. It has honey and ripe pear aromas, with flavours of red apple, hints of almond, orange and even liquorice, before a long, smooth finish.



Tannavulin Sherry Cask Single Malt Scotch Whisky
£36/70cl

Whisky from Tannavulin typifies the richer end of Speyside and this single malt – finished in three types of sherry cask – doesn't disappoint. Aromas are mellow, with vanilla, banana and milk chocolate. Flavour notes include apple syrup, raisin and a touch of fresh ginger.



Michter's Small Batch Bourbon Whisky*
SAVE £6 £56/70cl (was £62)

As the name suggests, Michter's makes its whiskies in small batches, using traditional methods. Each batch is made up of no more than 20 barrels of carefully chosen mature whiskies. This Kentucky bourbon is mellow, rich and full bodied, with notes of stone fruit, baking spices and raisins.



Cardhu Gold Reserve Single Malt Scotch Whisky
£50/70cl

One of Speyside's oldest distilleries, Cardhu is a bit of a sleeping giant in the UK, though it has a massive following in Spain and France. The Gold Reserve balances aromas of sweet malt toffee and apple, with a lighter, drier palate before a little milk chocolate on the finish.



Haig Clubman Single Grain Scotch Whisky
SAVE £13.50 £18/70cl (was £31.50, offer ends 2 Dec)

Crafted in Scotland, this single grain whisky is carefully distilled using a combination of malted barley and corn, then matured in bourbon casks. It's light, sweet and vibrant, with notes of vanilla and dried fruit.

SPICE & CAMEL



The Sexton Single Malt Irish Whiskey
SAVE £6 £27/70cl (was £33, offer ends 2 Dec)

In a distinctive hexagonal bottle, this single malt is crafted from 100% Irish malt barley and triple-distilled in copper-pot stills. Matured in Oloroso sherry butts, it has layers of depth and flavour. Aromas of nuts and dark chocolate lead to marzipan, spice and fruit, finishing with mellow honey, oak and gentle sweetness.



Bulleit Bourbon Whiskey
 £32/70cl

This award-winning Kentucky straight bourbon is a re-creation of a recipe that was first distilled by pioneering whiskey maker Augustus Bulleit around 1830. It's aged for at least six years and has a higher-than-average rye content, which gives it a little spicy kick. A popular choice for an old fashioned in front of the fire.



The Woodsman Blended Scotch Whisky
SAVE £12.50 £19/70cl

(was £31.50, offer ends 2 Dec)
 A blended Scotch whisky that's perfect for mixing. It's matured in a mix of American white oak casks and double-scorched bourbon barrels, creating layers of vanilla and delicate smoke over a smooth, sweet body.



Woodford Reserve Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whisky
SAVE £12.50 £27/70cl (was £39.50)

The official bourbon of the Kentucky Derby, with roots going back over 200 years, Woodford Reserve is still a standard bearer for the spirit. It has a higher proportion of rye and aromas of nutmeg, dried fruit, mint and vanilla, with flavours of sweet pastries, toffee and spice.



Highland Park 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky
SAVE £14 £33/70cl (was £47)

This 12-Year-Old single malt is rightly legendary, beloved by Scotch connoisseurs and newcomers alike. The nose is grassy and floral, with spice, oranges and stewed fruit among the flavours, while the finish is long and lightly smoky, a mark of the local Orkney peat used in malting.

GREEN FRUITS & HONEY



Compass Box Orchard House Whisky*

INTRO OFFER £32/70cl (£42 from 2 Jan 2026)

A blended malt whisky, at the lighter, fruitier end of Scotch whisky's flavour spectrum. Here, Compass Box has created a whisky as happy to be sipped neat as used in a highball. It has lovely notes of shortbread, ginger and a hint of strawberry that go through to the finish.



Nc'nean Organic Single Malt Scotch Whisky

SAVE £6 £49/70cl (was £55)

Founded in 2017, Nc'nean uses only organically farmed Scottish barley and is very focused on sustainability – the bottle is 100% recycled glass. Aged in a mix of bourbon, sherry and wine casks, it's full bodied and sweet, with apricot and peach notes mingling with lemon curd and a hint of white pepper.



Glenmorangie The Original 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky

SAVE £11 £29.50/70cl (was £40.50)

From a distillery north of Inverness, Glenmorangie is most certainly a Highland whisky. From stills as tall as a giraffe, this fruity spirit is full of peaches, marmalade, caramel shortbread and floral notes, with almond, coconut and maple syrup on the finish.



Laphroaig Oak Select Islay Single Malt Scotch Whisky

SAVE £14.50 £24/70cl (was £38.50, offer ends 2 Dec)

This Islay distillery is known for producing whiskies with peat smoke and sea air character. In the Oak Select Single Malt, it's made something a little more subtle – still a peaty whisky, but there's space for red fruit, lime and delicate floral notes.



Talisker 10-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky

SAVE £21 £33/70cl (was £54)

The oldest distillery on the Isle of Skye, Talisker has nearly two centuries' worth of pedigree and this single malt has been made by the sea since 1830. Double-distilled, it has a rich, powerful peat-smoke flavour, with spicy, peppery notes and a long, sweet finish. Try it neat or in a classic cocktail.

SMOKY & PEATY

Find more than 150 single malts, blended whiskies, bourbons, imported whisky and whisky-themed gifts at waitrosecellar.com

MEET THE PRODUCER

MAKER'S MARK



Blake Layfield (above) became master distiller for Maker's Mark last year. He splits his time between blending, developing new products and ensuring the consistent quality of the whisky made at the Kentucky distillery.

Why are so many UK drinkers bourbon fans?

People are discovering that it offers warmth, depth and a different flavour experience to other whiskies. There's also been a real shift in values. More drinkers care about how things are made – from the ingredients right through to the land they come from – like Maker's Mark.

How does your land influence Maker's Mark?

Our story began when our founders chose our home in Loretto, Kentucky, for its great water source and high-quality grain growers. We believe that bourbon is fundamentally an agricultural product. The quality of our five ingredients – grain, oak, water, yeast and time – is dependent on our connection to the land. This guided our most famous choice: selecting fine soft red winter wheat instead of rye.

Was this such a big twist?

From day one, innovation has been in our DNA. Our

founders, Margie and Bill Samuels, proved this by famously breaking with 170 years of family tradition and burning the old recipe to create a revolutionary new bourbon. By choosing soft red winter wheat over rye, they achieved a signature sweetness and creaminess that defined our brand.

Quite pioneering then?

Absolutely, the Samuels family established a set of standards that endures today. It's the "challenger spirit" in every step of our process, from hand-dipping each bottle in our iconic red wax to rotating every barrel by hand. Most people would say these extra steps are unnecessary. But for us, quality over efficiency and craftsmanship over shortcuts is not a cost, it's essential.

So it's all a balance of heritage and innovation?

My team and I dedicate a lot of time to ensure we protect our rich history. It's a massive responsibility. Yet, it's not enough to simply sustain, we have to look forward, which is why we're so committed to regenerative agriculture. We believe our distilling process should make the land better over time, so we must be the ones willing to drive the industry into the future.

MAKER'S MARK KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKY

SAVE £12 £24/70cl (was £36)

Smooth with notes of bright cherry and warm vanilla.

Try in a... Maker's Mark whisky sour Shake 50ml Maker's Mark, 20ml lemon juice and 20ml sugar syrup with ice. Strain into a rocks glass. Garnish with a lemon twist and a cherry.

The highball masterclass

Add a mixer for a long serve that's less alcoholic... It makes that expensive bottle go further too

Highballs have dropped out of fashion a little recently. Where a whisky and soda was just part of the background rhythm of characters in a PG Wodehouse or Raymond Chandler novel, many highballs appear to have gone the way of the soda siphon. This is a great shame, as they're quick and easy to make and need no special extras. And, if you find neat spirit too strong, it's an accessible, lower-strength way to serve whisky.

In a nutshell, a highball is just a 3:1 ratio of spirit and sparkling non-alcoholic mixer, ie, soda, over ice, in a tall glass. You know – like Jack Daniels and Coke, the great

modern survivor of the form. But you don't have to stop there.

Fancy trying it for yourself? Sparkling or soda water is the perfect partner for highballs made with lighter whiskies, such as lowland Scotch, blended whisky or Japanese whisky. Take a moment to adjust to the lack of additional sweetness and you'll see how it really opens up the spirit.

Ginger ale also goes well with whiskies with spicy and fruity notes – Irish whiskies are a natural fit here. And ginger beer, being a bit more forceful, works well with punchier whiskies and American styles such as bourbon and rye.

TRY WITH...



Toki Suntory Whisky
£38.50/70cl

A great example of a light, blended whisky with a complexity that works beautifully in a highball. Aromas of green apple, with herbaceous mint and basil, grape and grapefruit notes, and a touch of thyme. It finishes with a gingery warmth.



Nikka Days Blended Whisky*
£44/70cl

Light enough for a fabulous highball or great just to sip, courtesy of single malts from Nikka's Yoichi and Miyagikyo distilleries. Bright, with fruity, floral flavours of apple, melon, vanilla, spice and citrus, complemented by delicate smoke.

CLASSICS WITH A TWIST**Apple highball**

With zingy lemon and barley sugar notes, balanced by crème brûlée, orange oils and warm spice, this single malt is a great partner for apple in a fruity highball. Add **50ml Deanston Virgin Oak Single Malt Scotch Whisky*** £38/70cl, to an ice-filled highball. Top up with **100ml No.1 English Apple Juice** £3.50/1L, and **50ml soda**. Garnish with **apple slices**.

**Plum highball**

A lightly peated whisky pairs perfectly with plum-flavoured spirits, like this sake. Add **50ml The Ardmore Legacy Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky** **SAVE £13.50** £21.50/70cl (was £35, offer ends 2 Dec), to an ice-filled highball. Top up with **15ml Akashi-Tai Umeshu Sake Liqueur*** £21/50cl, and **140ml soda**. Garnish with **3 blackberries**.

**Mandarin highball**

Smooth and creamy, with honey, caramel and butterscotch notes, this blended whisky works brilliantly in a citrusy serve. Add **30ml Chivas Regal 12-Year-Old Blended Scotch Whisky** **SAVE £11** £23/70cl (was £34), to an ice-filled highball. Top up with **150ml Fentimans Mandarin & Seville Orange Jigger*** £3.75/750ml. Garnish with **orange slices**.

**Kombucha highball**

Triple-distilled for extra smoothness, this single malt has fruity flavours of white peach and grapefruit, made more citrusy with the addition of kombucha. Add **50ml Auchentoshan American Oak Single Malt Scotch Whisky** £36.50/70cl, to an ice-filled highball. Top up with **150ml Sicilian Lemon Kombucha** £2.40/275ml. Garnish with a **lemon wheel**.

**MEET THE PRODUCER****TAMDHU**

With nearly 20 years' experience in the whisky business, Sandy McIntyre (above) joined Speyside distillery Tamdhu as distillery manager in 2014.

Was distilling always in your blood?

I started out working as an environmental chemist, but my grandparents had hotels and bars before I was born so I've always felt a connection to the drinks and hospitality sectors.

How important is the brand's heritage to you?

Walking through the distillery and the warehouses every day, I relish the weight of history. This place is a hidden gem that not many people get to see. Generations have rolled Tamdhu casks through the same doors and I know that generations to come will do the same.

That must feel like quite a responsibility?

Yes, and a privilege. I'm very conscious of being the current custodian of this historic name, following in the steps of others who have made whisky here since 1897. The methods and equipment are the same, but we keep looking at improvements we can introduce environmentally

and sustainably. I constantly ask, how can we create the same quality, but do it better?

Tell us a little about the brand name

The name Tamdhu means "little dark hill" and it comes from the hill and farm located behind the distillery. It was chosen way back in the 19th century when the distillery was built – and little has changed in 125 years.

Why age your whisky in Oloroso sherry casks?

Historically, they were the first casks supplied to us and, to this day, I believe we stand alone in maturing every drop in Oloroso sherry casks, from beginning to end. The fruity nature of our spirit marries particularly well with the rich, sherry notes from the wood of the casks.

Tell us about the Atlantic Salmon Trust connection?

We often work with partner organisations that share our values, such as the Atlantic Salmon Trust, a conservation charity working to protect these endangered fish. That's why we created our special 12-Year-Old whisky exclusively for Waitrose. Not only does it help raise awareness, but we also donate to the charity for every bottle sold.

TAMDHU SPEYSIDE 12-YEAR-OLD SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY* £50/70cl

Aromas include sweet malt, milk chocolate and cinnamon Danish, with flavours of fruitcake, plum and spice.

Try in a... Speyside highball Add 50ml Tamdhu and 2 dashes Angostura Bitters to an ice-filled highball. Top up with ginger ale and garnish with a lemon wheel.

MEET THE PRODUCER

BRUICHLADDICH



After joining Bruichladdich in 2004, Adam Hannett (above) has worked his way up, taking over as head distiller in 2015 and becoming master blender earlier this year.

Was a career in distilling always on the cards?

I've lived on Islay all my life, but I fell into whisky-making by accident. I started off my career at Bruichladdich as a tour guide and was able to soak up as much experience as possible. Latterly, I worked in warehousing, distilling and bottling – there aren't many jobs at the distillery I haven't done!

Is there such a thing as a typical day?

Not really. I may spend hours in the sample room, nosing, tasting and experimenting. Other days, I'll be checking inventory in our warehouses, visiting our farming partners, or overseeing the distillation process. We make four brands at the distillery – Bruichladdich, Port Charlotte and Octomore single malts, and The Botanist gin – so there's plenty of variety.

And the best thing about your job?

I've got real creative freedom so I'm able to really push the boundaries when it comes

to whisky-making. Trialling different grains and cereals, experimenting with distilling techniques, or working with new maturation profiles and wood types – it's all in pursuit of extraordinary flavour.

Why is Islay so good for whisky-making?

Islay is renowned for making outstanding whiskies and it's amazing to be part of that legacy. Community isn't just important here – it's the beating heart of our island. We have great relationships with the other distilleries on the island, coming together to help with maintenance work, production issues, or simply sharing knowledge. Living on a remote Scottish island, we face unique challenges so it's important that we support each other.

What makes The Classic Laddie so special?

It's distilled using 100% Scottish barley, some of which has been grown on our island home, so every grain is traceable from farm to glass. The spirit is slowly distilled on site before maturing entirely on Islay in a variety of oak casks. The result is a barley-forward single malt, with a subtle mineral quality – a beautiful reminder of its island origins.

BRUICHLADDICH CLASSIC LADDIE ISLAY SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY*

SAVE £16 £35/70cl (was £51)

Made with unpeated malt so more of the barley's fruity characters come to the fore. There are lovely aromas of sea breezes and baked apple, with flavours of citrus and honey. It's perfect served neat, just as it comes.



Too good to mix?

Some whiskies are just too special to meddle with, particularly the more expensive ones. These are some of our favourites to drink neat

Good ingredients are definitely the building blocks of great cocktails, but some whiskies feel just that bit too special to throw into a glass with a mixer and a fancy garnish. That kind of spirit is best savoured neat, possibly with a dash of water. Have a jug of room-temperature water to hand, just in case you want to add a splash, then sit back, sip and take your time.

ISLAND STAR

The Arran 10-Year Old Single Malt Whisky* **SAVE £7** £37/70cl (was £44), is one of those whiskies, matured in bourbon casks and then finished in Oloroso sherry casks. The distillery defies the sea-air stereotype of an

island whisky, with rich apple, caramel and citrus flavours. Of course, it would sit happily in an old fashioned, but there's enough complexity in the dram for it to be perfect just as it is.

THE SPEYSIDE TOUCH

Celebrating the distillery's multi-year partnership with the Aston Martin Formula One team, Glenfiddich 16-Year-Old Single Malt £75/70cl, is a limited-edition whisky, hence the price. It's a fuller-bodied Speyside whisky, crafted using a mix of American oak casks previously used for wine, new barrels and second-fill bourbon casks. On the nose there are aromas of rich cheesecake, maple

syrup and caramelised ginger, while the palate offers fruit-salad flavours, vanilla and sweetened cream. With a long, sweet, smooth finish, this is an exceptional whisky.

Representing the distillery's signature style, The Glenlivet 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky **SAVE £16** £30/70cl (was £46), is a classic whisky with mineral-rich water from Josie's Well, a natural spring close to the distillery, which helps develop flavour during fermentation. The height and width of the copper stills add complex notes. It's got fruity aromas and flavours of citrus and vanilla. All it needs is a drop of water to open up the character.



A FLAVOUR OF HISTORY

Many distilleries have a rich heritage, but The Dalmore's legacy is impressive. In 1263, King Alexander III of Scotland awarded the 12-point Royal Stag emblem to Clan Mackenzie's chieftain for saving his life from a charging stag. Six centuries later, Mackenzie descendants at The Dalmore distillery honoured that legacy by placing the stag on every bottle, including **The Dalmore 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky***, £73/70cl. Matured in American white oak ex-bourbon barrels, it builds a base of soft vanilla and honey, and is finished in Oloroso sherry casks, adding layers of rich dried fruit and spice.

Find even more whiskies at waitrosecellar.com

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AND THEY MAKE SUCH GREAT GIFTS...

So Waitrose Cellar comes in very handy

Christmas is coming and if you're looking for a special gift for a whisky lover, you can't go wrong with a nice-looking bottle. Some even come in boxes or tubes, so wrapping is simple too.

The remote island of Jura has just one distillery, producing exceptional whiskies that are on many wish lists. Tall stills help create **Jura 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky*** £43/70cl, a golden spirit with layers of peach and citrus, finished with toasted walnut.

Glenfiddich has been making whisky since the 19th century and this experience shows in **Glenfiddich 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky*** **SAVE £5** £18/35cl (was £23). It's got pear on the nose, with flavours of fruit and pine, and hints of peatiness and spice – and the half bottle makes it an affordable treat.

Fans of Japanese whisky

will appreciate **Hatozaki Small Batch Pure Malt Whisky** £52/70cl. Produced in batches of less than 20 casks, it spends years in ex-bourbon, ex-sherry and Mizunara (Japanese oak) casks to create smoky flavours with a honey finish.

A Speyside classic but in mini form, **The Balvenie DoubleWood 12-Year-Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky** £21/20cl, makes a great stocking filler, or a taster for someone new to whisky. It's got soft notes of honey, vanilla, spice and a gentle nuttiness.

Finally, if you really want to push the boat out, **The Macallan Double Cask 12-Year-Old Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky** £75/70cl, will bring a smile to anyone's face. Smooth and creamy, it balances vanilla and fruit with spice and dried fruit.

Find these and even more gift ideas at waitrosecellar.com



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