



#Let's Grow Together @ The Miners



This recipe e-book has been created for Caerphilly Miners Centre for the Community by Cardiff based food writer Mikey Bell.

The recipes in this book are inspired by the seasons. Mikey has created recipes based on vegetables we have planted with the children of the community during our **#letsgrowtogether** project that begun during the pandemic in April 2021.

We wanted to celebrate and mark a year of the project and what better way to do so than with food. For those that attended the sessions, we hope the e-book brings back lots of fond memories from our sessions. For our members of the community who did not, we hope you enjoy these mouth-watering recipes.

SPRING

Parsnip Muffins with Ginger & Orange Cream Cheese Frosting

(+ Parsnip Top & Hazelnut Pesto)



If like me you always find your fridge to be in abundance of root vegetables, this is the perfect way to enjoy them and make sure nothing goes to waste. You may think carrots are the go-to root vegetable in sweet bakes but adding parsnips to muffins provides a wonderful and sharper sweetness. However, you could still substitute the parsnip in this recipe for carrots or even use a 50/50 mix of both, which is also very lovely.

The trick here is not to overbeat your batter. By overmixing, you will be adding a lot of air into the muffin which means they will rise quite high in the oven and then collapse once they rest. So, this recipe is perfect for when you're feeling a bit tired and just want to do nothing more than some light stirring in the kitchen!

A quick tip – don't throw away the carrot or parsnip tops! Blitz them in a food processor with a small handful of hazelnuts, a clove of garlic, a handful of basil, a grating of Parmesan, some salt, pepper and enough extra-virgin olive oil to create a thick, velvety pesto that is just delicious with pasta or slathered in sandwiches.

For the muffins

- 85g soft brown sugar
- 85g caster sugar
- 200g plain flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

- A grating of fresh nutmeg
- 200g parsnips – peeled and grated to fine shreds
- 2 eggs
- 150ml vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the frosting

- 100g unsalted butter
- 250g soft cheese
- 50ml double cream
- 100g icing sugar
- A thumb-sized piece of ginger – peeled
- 1 orange

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C and line a 12-hole muffin tray with paper cases.
2. In a large bowl, combine the sugars, flour, bicarb, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and fork together to mix.
3. Add the parsnips shreds to the bowl of flour and sugar and stir through.
4. In a jug, combine the eggs, oil and vanilla and then pour into the dry. Stir the wet into the dry gently but not for too long, just until they are combined, but don't overmix.
5. Divide the batter evenly between the cases and put in the oven for 25 minutes until a small skewer (or strand of spaghetti!) can be pushed into the muffin and it comes out clean. Allow them to rest, still in the tin, on a cooling rack while you make your frosting.
6. For the frosting, beat the butter in a large bowl until soft and then stir in the soft cheese, double cream and icing sugar until thoroughly combined and the frosting is thick. It's easier to do this with a handheld mixer, but a whisk would be fine – just keep going until it's thick.
7. Grate the ginger and orange zest into the bowl and using a spoon, fold them into the frosting.
8. Once the muffins are cooled, remove them from the tin and using a spoon, swirl the frosting on top of the cakes and grate over a little more orange zest.

Saag Aloo



- 1kg potatoes – peeled and cut into small chunks
- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 1 white onion - cut into slices
- 1 clove garlic – minced or finely chopped

Saag Aloo is the perfect way to bolster a serving of potatoes with vibrant and nutritious vegetables and spices. A more authentic recipe would call for cumin seeds, mustard seeds and sometimes fenugreek but I've tried to make this as friendly as I can for a quick midweek nip to the shop. It's traditionally presented as a side dish, so I like to serve this with nothing more than a simple dal and a bowl of rice, but I have also eaten it on its own after a quick zap in the microwave the next day for a work lunch.

The only thing I ask is that when cooking this recipe (or any recipe that contains turmeric) please use a rubber spatula. Turmeric is a notorious troublemaker and will have your wooden spoons looking Simpsons the minute they meet in the pan.

Oh, and with any potatoes you peel – do not throw away the potato skins! Wash them, dry them, put them on a baking tray salt them, and roast them in an oven heated to 180°C for about 20 minutes. Homemade crisps and no waste!

- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp mustard powder
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 220g spinach leaves

1. Fill a deep pan with cold water and drop in your peeled and cut potatoes.
2. Put the pan on a high heat on the hob and once the water comes to a boil, add a generous pinch of salt, and allow the potatoes to boil for 8 – 10 minutes.
3. After the potatoes have had their boiling time, drain them into a colander but before you do, remove a small cupful of the salty, starchy potato water, and put to one side. Leave the potatoes to sit in the colander while you make the rest of your dish.
4. In a deep saucepan with high sides, heat the oil on a medium heat and add the onion with a small pinch of salt and fry for about 10 minutes until the onions start to soften.
5. Add the garlic and gently cook for a further 10 - 15 minutes until the onions start to go slightly golden and caramelised.
6. Now add the cumin, mustard powder and turmeric and stir into the onions and garlic, cooking for about 2 or 3 minutes just so the spices can heat up.
7. Add the cooked potato chunks and the small cup of potato boiling water you reserved earlier.
8. Carefully stir the potatoes into the onions and spices - the starch from the potato water will help thicken the liquid which meld with the spices and onions to create a golden sauce, which will help with coating the potatoes.
9. Now add in the spinach leaves and turn off the heat as the spinach will wilt down in the residual heat from the pan of ingredients. It may look like the pan is very overcrowded but do not worry, the spinach shrinks down. There's room at this party for everyone.
10. Once all of the spinach is used up, taste for seasoning and serve.

SUMMER

Honey & Lemon Roasted Radishes



Roast radishes are the best kept side-dish secret. Once baked, the pepperiness of the radish disappears and is replaced by a pleasant, perfumed sweetness especially when they are touched with the goldenly vibrant tang of lemon. They make the perfect, crunchy side to a dish, even though they lose their shockingly vibrant pink once they are pulled out of the oven.

Serves between 6 and 8

- 400g radishes
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 1 tbs honey
- 1 lemon

To serve:

Handful of chives (finely chopped)

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Halve the radishes but don't slice off the little green tail and drop them on to a baking tray.
3. Pour over the olive oil, the honey and scatter over some salt and pepper.
4. Grate over the zest of half of the lemon and stir everything together so that all the radishes are evenly covered.
5. Slide them into the oven and roast for 20 minutes.
6. Serve with a final gentle scatter of salt, squeeze over the juice of the lemon and scatter over the chopped chives, if using.

Emergency Pesto



As a sauce or as a condiment, pesto will save you from an immense amount of trouble in the kitchen. Poured over pasta, spread into a sandwich, spooned over a pizza base, stuffed into chicken, or coated over roast vegetables – pesto adds a surge of flavour and texture to any meal it's added to.

The good news is, while the formula of a pesto pretty much stays the same, the ingredients can vary depending on what you have available to you. The mixed nuts swapped I specify here can be swapped for the traditional pine nuts on their own or can even be duped for pumpkin and sunflower seeds, the Parmesan can be for any crumbly, salty cheese and the basil can be replaced by any fragrant herb or leafy green. I've even made a pesto using a bag of leftover mixed salad leaves before now with no harm done! Just to note, you don't need a food processor to make this – it can be done with a pestle and mortar, it just may take a little longer and you will have a more nubby pesto. Not a bad thing at all.

Makes 1 jar

- 60g mixed nuts (or see intro)
- 80g basil leaves
- 225ml extra virgin olive oil + 1 tablespoon
- 100g Parmesan or other salty cheese
- 1 clove garlic
- ½ lemon

1. On a high heat, warm a frying pan and drop in the nuts. Shake the pan every now and then, toasting the nuts. Be careful not to burn them, just brown them slightly until they are hot.
2. Pour the nuts into the bowl of a food processor and add the leaves, the 225ml of oil, the cheese, the garlic, the juice of half the lemon, plus a little salt and pepper.
3. Blitz the ingredient to a rubbly paste – you may need to scrape the sides of the processor down with a rubber spatula or spoon every now and then to make sure all the ingredients are blitzed. Taste for seasoning as to whether you want to add more salt, pepper or cheese.
4. Spoon the paste into a jar and then pour the remaining tablespoon of oil over the surface to make sure the pesto is airtight.
5. Keep in the fridge and it will last up to a week.

AUTUMN

Burnt Garlic Hummus



This is my absolute favourite way of bringing the flavour of garlic into my meals. Gently baking a whole garlic clove in the oven caramelises the garlic cloves, taking away any acrid sting and leaving deep, sweet and smoky purée style morsels of garlic that inject intense flavour into anything it touches. It's perfect squeezed into soups, stews, dips and sometimes even, just on toast.

I tend to make a whole batch of these, roasting 4 – 5 garlic bulbs at a time so that I can stash the purée away in little pots so that I have access to this whenever I need it.

Serves 4 – 6

- 1 whole bulb garlic
- 1 x 400g can chickpeas (drained)
- 1 lemon
- 2 tbs tahini paste
- 50ml extra-virgin olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. Take the garlic and slice off the top so it has a flat top and the tips of the cloves are visible.
3. Wrap the bulb in a tightly sealed but slightly baggy foil parcel and when the oven is hot, fling in the foil parcel in the oven for an hour.
4. After the hour, take the foil parcel out of the oven, and allow to cool fully before handling.
5. For the hummus, in a food processor combine the chickpeas, the zest and juice of the lemon, the tahini paste, the oil, the paprika and some salt and pepper.
6. Take the cooled garlic bulb and squeeze the now silky caramel coloured garlic into the food processor and blitz everything to a rubbly, smoky orange hued purée.
7. Serve with a further sprinkle of paprika and some sesame seeds if you have them.

Pumpkin & Butterbean Soup with Crispy Sage



When I think of pumpkins, I think of one thing: soup. There's an earthy sweetness to pumpkins that means we can bolster with sharp, punchy flavours such as cumin and paprika, so it's dense texture can absorb the spiced smokiness, providing a warm and reassuring experience. You can, of course, substitute the pumpkin for a butternut squash or even to some degree a sweet potato (but increase the spices to a full teaspoon), but I personally prefer pumpkin as it has a far more distinct flavour.

The beans should only be reheated once so if you want to get ahead, you could make the soup minus the butterbeans and crispy sage and keep covered in the fridge for 4 – 5 days and then add the beans on reheating and then make the crispy sage alongside. If you can't get hold of sage, you could still make the brown butter because it creates a silky, golden drizzle for the soup, its richness balanced with the swirl of double cream.

- 3 tbs unsalted butter
- 1 large onion (peeled and roughly chopped)
- 1 clove garlic (peeled and roughly chopped)
- 1 pumpkin (roughly 850 – 900g, deseed, peeled and roughly chopped)
- ½ tsp ground cumin

1. On a medium heat, melt 1 tbs of the butter in a large pot that comes with a lid. Once the butter has melted, add the onion and garlic with a little salt and cook for roughly 10 minutes until the onions have lost their raw edge.
2. Add the pumpkin and stir into the onions, cooking for roughly 5 minutes before adding the cumin, paprika and a further small scattering of salt and some black pepper. Stir and continue to cook for another 5 minutes.
3. Pour in the vegetable or chicken stock and bring the pan the boil. Once at boiling point, reduce the heat to a simmer, pop the lid on the pan and allow to bubble for 40 minutes until the pumpkin is soft and can be crushed under the weight of a fork.
4. Take the pan off the heat and carefully blend the contents of the pan until smooth – either using a stick blender or carefully transferring to the bowl of a blender. Once smooth, pour back into the pot and taste for seasoning.
5. Put the pot on a gentle heat and add the drained and rinsed butter beans. Allow the soup to simmer gently to warm the beans through.
6. While the beans warm, make your crispy sage. On a separate hob and on a medium heat, put the remaining 2 tbs of butter into a shallow frying pan. Melt the butter until it begins to froth. Once frothy, add your sage leaves and continue cooking the butter on a medium heat until it begins to brown and smell like a roasted hazelnut and the sage crisps up. Remove from the pan from the heat and set aside.
7. Carefully ladle the now warmed through butter beans and soup into bowls, swirl the double cream into the soup and spoon over some of the sage leaves and the golden-brown butter and serve.

WINTER

Cardamon & Ginger Biscuits



Food during the festive season has connective properties and can act as the culinary bonfire that you hunker around joyously celebrating the year that's passed, the moment that's shared and the year that's to come.

But let's be realistic, not everybody's going to have a big grand ambassadorial dessert on the table at every waking moment. So, I think it just makes good sense to have a quick batch of biscuits on standby to offer up with tea and coffee.

The gentle but sharp warmth of the cardamom and ginger in these biscuits are perfect with a hot drink, and they are spiced enough to make it feel like a treat but not bolstering enough to overwhelm. Don't feel obliged to cut them into little gingerbread people like I do, but there's something jubilant and childish about a shaped biscuit that just makes a McVitie's look pale in comparison.

Makes roughly 24 biscuits

- 275g plain flour
- ½ tsp bicarb
- ½ tbs cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground cardamom
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp all spice
- A grating of fresh nutmeg
- 50g caster sugar
- 50g soft brown sugar
- 75g unsalted butter
- 100g golden syrup
- 75ml double cream

1. In a bowl, combine the flour and bicarb.
2. Now add the cinnamon, cardamom, ground ginger, all spice, a grating of fresh nutmeg and a pinch of salt.
3. Scatter in the caster sugar, soft brown sugar, butter, golden syrup and double cream.
4. Mix everything together with a strong forearm until you get a dough.
5. Get yourself a large sheet of cling film and place the dough on to it, wrapping the dough up snugly and rolling it into a log. Chuck this in the fridge for a few hours to stiffen.
6. When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 200°C and on a floured surface, roll out the dough quite thinly with a rolling pin. Use a cookies cutter to cut up the dough.
7. Place the biscuits on a roasting tray lined with baking parchment and slip in the oven for about 5 or 6 minutes until a dark, golden brown.
8. Remove from the oven and allow to cool before removing from the tray and serving.

Useful Chilli Sauce



This is a very useful chilli sauce that I like to make when I have an abundance of chillies to use up, it's fabulous served cold with some nachos, but could also be drizzled over some noodles and warmed up or stirred through some fried rice. The key thing to remember with chillies is that the heat is contained in the seeds, so if you want the heat of chillies, but not the fiery bite, halve the chilli and scrape out the seeds with a spoon. It's also worth keeping in mind that longer, thinner chillies tend to be fierier than the thicker versions.

Makes about 200ml

- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 100g red chillies
- 5 tsp vegetable oil
- 5 tbs honey
- Juice of 1 lime

1. In a frying pan, gently fry the garlic cloves in the olive oil until they start to brown. Once browned, put them into the bowl of a food processor.
2. Add all the other ingredients and blitz to a puree.
3. Decant the sauce into a jar and store in the fridge until you need it and I would advise allowing it to rest a little before you serve it, as the flavours will continue to amalgamate and the colour will deepen.