

hungry women.

recipes for the insatiable.

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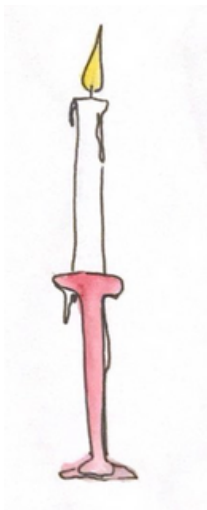
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In a corner of Islington, there is an attic flat that would become the home of three hungry women in the spring of 2017.

Joey and Rose had found one another whilst working at Padella, and quickly went from colleagues to housemates. I would enter their lives a year later when I started working at Trullo as a receptionist, where Rose was a chef. Joey was at Ducksoup by then, and I happily tumbled into their world of food and late nights and early mornings as their third housemate. Little did I know that living in that corner of the city, in that flat, with those two bright and brave ladies, would become one of the happiest times in my life.

“Hungry Women” is not a term that we use lightly. In this day and age, to be a woman, and to want things out of life, is a big risk. We were all hungry during that year: for our careers, for opportunities, for experiences. We used the drive and energy that each of us possessed to encourage and uplift one another, and I will forever be grateful for that springboard start to my time in London.

And, of course, as three self-proclaimed food fanatics, we were always hungry for our next great meal. Food became our shared language, and we all enjoyed eating together as much as we did cooking for one another. In that little home, we spilled out flavours and stories and our lives into one another, each bringing a unique take on cuisine and food that the other had not yet thought of. Joey, from Glastonbury, via cheffing in Calais before Padella, and then the beautiful small plates of Ducksoup. Rose, a real-life Londoner, who was artistic and untamed in her cooking, with so much creativity to offer Trullo and beyond. And me, a writer from South Africa, via Vietnam and Edinburgh to London, who loved hosting and caring for people just as much as I did cooking. It was during our time living together that I dreamed up my supper club, Londoners Who Lunch, and the first of these events were hosted with Rose and Joey. Unsurprisingly, they were a brilliant success. We were a trio to be reckoned with. We had so much to give, and we did it through food.

This little recipe collection is an ode to a family that formed through broken bread and shared cups of coffee. It is a reminder of a happy time in our lives- an interlude, of sorts- and the friendship that emerged out of it. Most of all, it is a celebration of women with an insatiable hunger: for growth, for success, for food and for life.

So much of the person I am today (brave, vulnerable, generous) was learned through Joey and Rose. I am the cook amongst the chefs, and glad to be able to give words and a platform to their great talent. This is a book by three hungry women, for all hungry people. I hope it does justice to the talent and creativity of the three of us (whether it be cooking, art, or writing). I hope we are never sated, and always driven to want more, do more, and be more than we could ever have imagined. And I hope that, if anything, it makes you hungry beyond your wildest dreams- for whatever it is that will make you most sated.

Notes on the recipes

Dishes are segmented by the seasons into - a reference to the four we spent together- but there is no reason you couldn't sub in ingredients to fit the time of year you find yourself in. We also think recipes are a good place to start but hope you will find ways to make them your own. In some cases (mainly my recipes), measurements are probably wrong. You'll figure it out.

We also have paired each meal with a song. Kitchen dancing was strongly encouraged in our house, and if these songs don't make you want to enjoy the process of cooking, then find ones that do.



Spring

Spiced fava beans with egg and tahini by Joey

Holding On - Tirzah

Inspired by the Egyptian staple *Ful Medames*, this simple dish of fava beans (dried broad beans) garlic and cumin makes for a satisfying and filling lunch or breakfast option (as it is eaten in Egypt and across the Middle East). I enjoy the combination of creamy beans, soft egg yolk and the bitter twist of tahini, but the toppings are endless, - fried onion, pickled peppers, or even crispy lamb would all work well.

Serves 4

1 tbsp olive oil

1 small onion, diced

2-3 garlic cloves, finely grated or finely diced

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp chilli flakes

2 x 400g tins of fava beans (drained and rinsed) or 255g dried fava beans, soaked overnight

4 eggs

Fresh lemon juice

A handful of parsley leaves, roughly chopped

Pinch of paprika or chilli powder/flakes

Tahini sauce

4 tbsp tahini

4 tbsp water

1 small garlic clove, finely grated or finely diced

Salt and pepper

If using dried fava beans, drain and replenish with plenty of fresh unsalted water. Bring to a boil then simmer for 2 - 2 ½ hours or until fully tender. Drain but keep the bean cooking water. Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Fry the onion until lightly golden, around 5 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin and chilli flakes and saute for 1 minute. Stir in the beans and top up with a splash of bean cooking water (or fresh water if using tinned beans.) Bring to a boil then reduce to a medium-low heat and simmer for around 10 minutes. In the meantime, boil the eggs in a separate pan (6 ½ minutes for soft boil, 8 minutes for hard). Prepare the tahini sauce by whisking all the ingredients well together, and season to taste. After 10 minutes of simmering, semi mash the beans, adding a splash more water or olive oil if needed and season to taste with salt, pepper and lemon juice. Serve garnished with a boiled egg (quartered lengthwise), a drizzle of tahini sauce, freshly chopped parsley and a pinch of paprika or chilli flakes.



Spiced fava beans, tahini
& egg

Fennel, melon and pecorino / Buvette Beans by Joey

These recipes were born out of the produce grown in my partner Josh's parents' garden in late Spring to early Summer. We always ended our visits clutching bags bulging with seasonal vegetables, herbs, fruit and eggs, the foundations of our next meals already decided. Removing the overwhelming options available in supermarkets (which often acts as a barrier, rather than an enabler to creative cooking) and starting with what's been harvested in season, choices are refined and simplified. The same principle applies to fridge or cupboard foraged meals. See what you've got first, and go from there.

Fennel, melon and pecorino salad

Heaven - Talking Heads

This combination came into fruition based on a circumstantial meeting of garden and fridge pickings. Young pecorino leftover in the fridge from accompanying fresh broad beans. Honeydew melon lingering around to counter a heavy weekend of indulgent food and drink. Fennel, grown in a faraway garden and migrated to east London.

Serves 2-3 as a side

1 medium fennel bulb (or 2 small) trimmed and finely sliced. A mandolin would work, but a sharp knife is just as good

Fennel fronds (saved from the bulbs)

1 lemon, juiced

¼ honeydew melon, skin removed and flesh roughly chopped

A handful of hazelnuts, toasted and lightly crushed

Pecorino shavings (use a veg peeler or small knife)

Salt and pepper

Extra virgin olive oil

Assemble and season to taste.



Buvette Beans: fresh white beans, garlic oil and thyme

Ah bah d'accord - Juniore

This is inspired by a dish eaten at La Buvette in Paris. A beautiful succinct menu of small - medium ambient bar dishes, accompanied by deliciously exciting natural wines, in Paris' chic 11 Arr. The small plate of creamy, voluptuous butter beans in garlic lemon oil and fresh marjoram has lingered on my mind since visiting in April a few years ago, largely due to its genius simplicity but also exceptional taste.



Pod the fresh white beans (cannellini/butter/coco) into a pan, cover with plenty of cold water, add a couple of bay leaves and strips of lemon peel (use a peeler). Bring to boil then turn down the heat to a simmer and cook for 15-20 minutes till soft. If using dried cannellini beans, make sure to soak them overnight in plenty of cold water, then when you're ready to cook, rinse, bring to a boil in a pan with plenty of fresh water and simmer until cooked (20-40 minutes depending on the age of the beans).

Meanwhile place a small deep sided saucepan over a medium heat, and add about 2cm worth of olive oil. When it's very hot, add 1 - 2 cloves of finely diced garlic. Cook until just turning golden, then sieve the garlic oil over a bowl and keep the garlic golden nuggets. Reheat the beans in the garlic oil (if using tinned beans, drain and then heat in the oil), over a low heat. Off the heat, finish with plenty of lemon juice, salt, pepper and fresh thyme/marjoram leaves or the flowers of chives or thyme if you can find them (most likely spot is someone's herb garden). Sprinkle the golden garlic on top, and finely zest some lemon rind if you like.

Best served scooped up by chunks of fresh bread and accompanied by wine.

Focaccia by Anna

Song 32 - Noname

I was raised in a home that believed that baking was hard, and mysterious, and Something We Couldn't Do. This fluffy, crunchy bread is so easy, it dispelled all these myths the day I first made it. I know this recipe by heart now. You just can't go wrong.

Makes 1 medium sized focaccia

500g self raising flour, plus more for dusting

300 ml tepid water

7g instant yeast

1/2tsp caster sugar

Lots of good quality olive oil

Spring of rosemary

Salt

Place your flour in a large bowl. Add the sugar, the yeast and a pinch of salt. Mix lightly. Make a well in the middle of the flour, and add in a tablespoon of olive oil. Slowly pour in your water, gently bringing in the flour until it forms a sticky ball. You may have to abandon the spoon and use your hands.

Lightly dust a clean surface with flour and tip out the wet dough. Gently, lightly, knead it into a tight ball- don't over knead.

Grease a clean bowl with olive oil and place your dough in it, rubbing it with a bit of olive oil. Cover with a cloth and leave it in a warm place to rise for 30 minutes.

Preheat your oven to 200C Fan. Grease a medium sized roasting tray. After the 30 minutes rising time, stretch out your risen dough onto the tray so that it forms a rectangle. Using your three middle fingers, press lightly into the dough until the entire space has gentle craters in it. Add loads of salt, some fresh rosemary, and another good drizzle of olive oil. Don't hold back.

Leave to rise for 20 mins, then place it in the oven for 15 - 20 mins. You want it to be golden and crisp. Slice and enjoy straight way.

Summer

Squid or baby octopus, salmoriglio and bean mash by Joey

That's Us/Wild Combination - Arthur Russell

Sounds daunting, but if you have access to a good fishmonger the hard part of cleaning and prepping the seafood is already done for you. Most dried pea or beans work here; chickpeas, green peas, butter beans, coco beans, cichercia etc.

Serves 4

250g dried pea or bean of your choice, soaked overnight in plenty of cold water and ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 large onion, finely diced
125ml + 2tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 fat cloves of garlic, finely grated
1kg baby octopus or squid, (if frozen, defrost overnight)

For the salmoriglio

100ml extra virgin olive oil
3-5g pul biber/aleppo pepper flakes
2 cloves garlic, microplaned/finely grated
Zest of 1 lemon
Handful of fresh marjoram/oregano
Salt, pinch

Warm the 2 tbsp of oil in a pan over a medium heat, add the onion and warm through for a few minutes so it softens but doesn't brown. Add the drained beans, stir and cook together gently over a low heat for 10 minutes. Add 1 litre of water, cover the pan and simmer for 45 minutes, topping up with water as needed.

It's ready when the beans are fully soft and begin to mash together when whisked. Remove from the heat, and allow to cool slightly. Place the beans in a food processor and blitz. With the motor running, gradually pour in 125ml extra virgin olive oil and add the 2 grated garlic cloves. Taste, and adjust seasoning. If you don't have a food processor, you can use a potato masher and gradually add the oil while you mash.

Next make the salmoriglio (fancy name for an infused oil). Place the oil and red pepper flakes in a small saucepan, and heat very gently over a low heat for a few minutes. Don't let the oil boil or the pepper flakes will burn. Remove the oil from the heat, allow to cool slightly for 5 minutes, then add the garlic, lemon zest, fresh herbs and salt. Stir well.

When ready to eat, heat a large frying pan over a very high heat. Gently heat the bean mash in a separate pan. Toss the squid/octopus in a bowl with a drizzle of oil salt and pepper. Add to the smoking hot pan, careful not to overcrowd the pan. Pan fry until the squid/octopus turns white and opaque. Remove the cooked seafood into a bowl, and toss with spoonfuls of salmoriglio, fresh lemon juice and seasoning. Serve the salmoriglio squid on top of the bean mash, and garnish with a fresh drizzle of extra virgin oil.



Squid, salmoriglio, bean mash

Soft courgettes with tahini, garlic and mint by Joey Krisfish 'n Chips - Twit One

This is a great way to make a dent in the annual summer glut of courgettes. Incredibly comforting and versatile, it can be eaten on it's own as a dip scooped up by torn bread, piled high on a bed of bulgur wheat, or even tossed through pasta. It's a welcome new friend to a BBQ spread, and also complements more fiery tomato based bean stews. I ended up making it nearly every week last summer.

Extra virgin olive oil

2 large courgettes, washed and sliced into pound coin thick rounds

Salt and pepper

3-4 fat cloves of garlic, finely diced or microplaned

2-3 tsp dried mint

2-3 tbsp tahini

1-2 tbsp thick yoghurt

Fresh lemon juice

Fresh mint leaves, to garnish

Sumac

Heat a generous amount of olive oil (3-4 tbsp) in a deep wide lidded pan over a medium heat. Add the courgette rounds, try to spread them out as much as possible so they can take on a little colour. Once slightly browning at the edges, turn the heat right down, add a generous pinch of salt and black pepper and stir in the garlic. Cook for a couple of minutes, stirring occasionally, before placing the lid on the pan. Make sure the pan is on the lowest flame, and leave the courgettes to steam cook for 20 minutes.

Stir in the dried mint, then return the lid and continue to cook gently for a further 10 minutes or until the courgettes are soft enough to spread. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the tahini, yoghurt and lemon juice. The yoghurt may split slightly, but that doesn't matter. Adjust the components as you like (I am very heavy handed when it comes to tahini). Tear in fresh mint leaves, adjust seasoning if necessary and serve with a sprinkle of sumac and a drizzle of fresh olive oil.

Green Lasagne by Anna

When U Loved me -Hether

This lighter lasagne is brilliant for using up sad looking greens and transforming a heavy dish into something green and glorious.

Serves 8

2 packs of dried lasagne sheets - green pasta if possible
2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 spring onions, finely chopped
1 leek, washed and finely sliced
200g asparagus, stalks chopped and heads set aside
200g tender stem broccoli, stalks chopped and heads set aside
300g washed baby spinach
3 cups green peas, frozen or fresh
200ml chicken or veg stock
50ml single cream
200ml cottage cheese
Loads of grated parmesan
2 sprigs of thyme, leaves removed and stalks discarded
A handful of fresh mint, chopped

Preheat your oven to 200 C.

In a large pan or pot, sauté the spring onion, leeks and garlic in some olive oil until soft. Add in the chopped asparagus and broccoli stalks and fry for about 5 minutes. Add in your chicken stock, half the cottage cheese & the cream, then bring to a boil. Add fresh herbs, and salt and pepper to taste. Let it simmer on a low heat for about 10 minutes. Add in the baby spinach and use a lid or some tinfoil to let it wilt into the sauce.

Turn off the heat. Using a hand blender, blitz the sauce all together until it forms a thick, soupy consistency. Once smooth, add in your green peas - I like to keep these whole for some texture but you could blitz them too. Taste once more and season if necessary - it should be slightly sweet from the peas with a wonderfully rich undertone from the cream and veggies.

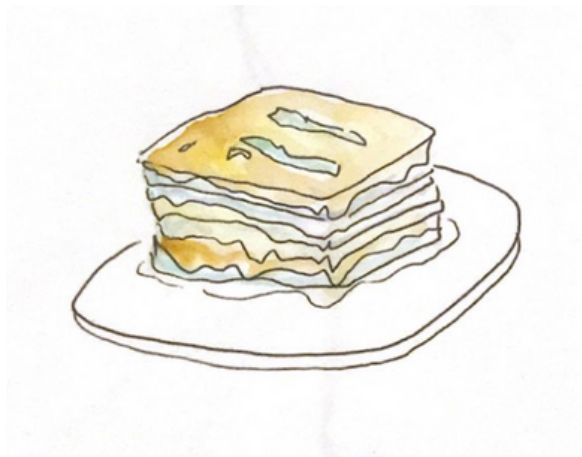
Lightly grease an oven proof baking dish with olive oil. You want to have a bit of depth to it to accommodate at least four layers of the lasagne.

Now time to build: layer the bottom of the dish with the sheets of lasagne. You will have to break off pasta to fit the dish. Then grate a good bit of parmesan, followed by a layer of your green sauce. Top with more pasta sheets, then parmesan, then sauce. Keep building until you reach the limit of your dish.

For the final layer, use up any of the green sauce and parmesan you have, then spread over the rest of the cottage cheese. Then place the asparagus and broccoli heads you set aside in neat lines on the top, and drizzle with olive oil. Before popping in the oven, I like to pour a bit of boiling water into the corners of the lasagne just to help the pasta sheets at the bottom have enough liquid to suck up while they cook.

The lasagne needs 20 mins in the oven. When done, the top should be crunchy and gnarly, and pasta al dente.

Let it stand for 10 minutes before serving. Delicious with garlic bread and a simple green leaf salad with toasted almonds.



A note on Desserts by Joey

After inviting mates over for dinner the other weekend, I ran through some menu ideas on my way to work. The inevitable Dessert Questions arose: should I even do a dessert? Do we need one? Can I be bothered? These questions crop up every time and *every time* I kick myself because no one ever *needs* dessert. Ever. Cakes, ice cream, tarts, custards, - excessive quantities of sugars and fats aren't supportive to metabolic upkeep. Nutritional values are minimal (save for the odd lemon or banana lurking in the background).

Desserts are luxuries; pockets of indulgence sweetening the everyday. Their lack of necessity is precisely what makes them special. Spoons don't need to invade the marsala and espresso-soaked layers of *savoirdi* biscuits in a tiramisu. Fingers don't need to be licked before circumnavigating a plate to ensure total-brownie-crumbs consumption. Dessert is an indulgence, and eating it, sharing it, enjoying it, is one of life's greatest pleasures. Dessert has the power to transform a meal, occasion and mood.

So when faced with The Dessert Question, the answer is always: yes, of course you need to bloody make dessert.

I follow a dessert creation formula I developed during years of inadvertently being left with the dessert menu at Ducksoup. It breaks the prospect down: Fat, sugar, crunch. Seasonal produce. Personalise.

A banging dessert needs to have a balance of textures, flavours and colours. Pair something creamy and fatty, with something sweet, then something crunchy. For example: Cardamom ice cream, roasted pears, pistachio dukkah. Fat, sugar, crunch. Easy.

The quality of ingredients and seasonality is key. If using fruit or vegetables in a dessert, pay attention to the seasons. There's not a lot better than a fresh, juicy peach in the height of July and August, quenching your thirst for Summer. But a peach in November? Forget about it, use an apple or pear instead. Produce not only tastes best when it's eaten in season, but it's almost certainly faced a shorter journey from farm to plate.

Most people don't professionally cook in kitchens, where menus need to serve customers (rather than personal) preferences. For those who don't have to bear this in mind, it's important to remember that if you're going to go to the effort of making dessert, it's pretty flipping important that it's something you want to eat. Personalise it. Prefer vanilla ice cream to cardamom? Fine. Swap out roasted pears with peaches if you are in summer. And crunch up biscuits if you don't like the sound of pistachio dukkah.

Fat, sugar, crunch.

Seasonal.

Personalise.

Charred peaches, mascarpone & almond streusel by Joey Beth Kathini - Nguuni Lovers Lovers

I have a very sweet spot for mascarpone and its underrated charm. Why use cream if you can use mascarpone? The rich, velvety, European cousin to the sprightly American cream cheese. Injecting a touch of lemon zest sharpness lightens the load and hints at the essence of early Summer. During this time of year, fruits and berries are plentiful. Early season peaches, like most stoned fruit, can take on some heat to soften and release their juices whilst retaining their shape. Briefly grilling the peaches allows a smoky flavour to contrast with the richness of mascarpone.

To complement the soft creaminess of mascarpone and the smokey peaches, and almond streusel scattered on top brings all the components together. A mixture of ground and flaked almonds with just the right amount (more than you think is needed) of flaky sea salt resulting in a caramel crumb. A fail-safe crunch addition, almond streusel brings a golden, nutty umami final kick. This recipe makes more streusel than is needed, but it will also keep well in an airtight container for up to a week.

*if peaches are not in season, use plums, apples or pears. Or wait till summer.

Serves 4-6 (with leftover streusel)

Almond streusel

150g self raising flour

75g butter, room temperature

75g ground almonds

225g demerara sugar

150g flaked almonds

Large pinch of sea salt flakes

4 peaches*, ripe but not fully soft, torn into thirds

1 lemon, zested and juiced

Splash of water

Small handful of fresh thyme, picked (save flowers if available)

Small handful of unrefined caster or brown sugar

150ml double cream

250g mascarpone, room temperature

First, make the streusel.

Preheat the oven to 180°C and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper, ensuring there's enough overhang for you to grab on to and shake later

Rub the butter, flour and ground almonds to make crumbs.

Add cold water a spoon at a time (roughly 1-2 dessert spoons) then mix well to bring together.

Fork in the sugar, salt and flaked almonds and spread onto the parchment paper.

Place in the oven and after about 7 minutes, take it out and lift the parchment so the streusel crumbles back over itself (this is to ensure an even baking). Return to the oven.

After about 15 minutes it should be evenly golden (not brown). As with flapjacks and brownies, the streusel will firm up considerably as it cools, so avoid overbaking. Not a problem if you do, it'll just result in a more snap-biscuit texture as opposed to a softer digestive bite. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

Heat the griddle pan to medium-high (use the grill or a regular pan if you don't have a griddle pan). Griddle the peaches on all sides. The aim is slightly softened peach segments, but with their shape intact.

Remove the peaches from the pan. Deglaze the pan with the lemon juice and a touch of water. Add the sugar to the pan, along with the thyme leaves (reserve a few for decoration) and allow to bubble away to form a syrup. Remove from heat, and allow to cool separately before pouring over the peaches.

Finally, whip the double cream to soft peaks. Fold in lemon zest, mascarpone and a pinch of salt (if needed).

To assemble, place a dollop of mascarpone in each bowl and create a crater with the back of a spoon. Spoon over a few peach segments making sure to get a good serving of syrup. Top with almond streusel crumbled over, and a few thyme leaves or flowers.



charred peaches, lemon mascarpone
& almond streusel.

Tomato Salad by Anna

*Gee baby, ain't I good to you? - Ella Fitzgerald & Louis
Armstrong*

A summertime favourite. I have a memory of eating this salad alone in our garden in the summer, with a gin and tonic and my book for company and feeling totally, completely satisfied. A happy memory alongside a happy dish.

Serves 2 - 3 as a side, or 1 as a light lunch

A mix of ripe, in-season tomatoes. Go for colour as well as size and shape. 400g should be enough.

Salt

A handful of fresh basil leaves

Good quality olive oil and balsamic vinegar

Mozzarella di bufala, or bocconcini

Clunk up the tomatoes and salt well. Leave in a sieve over a bowl for a minute or two to drain their excess liquid. Tumble them into a bowl with the cheese, torn up roughly. Glug with very good olive oil and then even more balsamic (it should sit in a shiny pool). Toss well. Tear in the basil. Enjoy with some good bread as a meal for one, or as a side salad. This dish shines with meat or chicken or a veg quiche.



Autumn

Dahl with Spinach and Feta by Anna

Come Live with Me - Dorothy Ashby

In the very first lockdown, Rose and I cooked a dahl together over Zoom. It was a nostalgic experience: these golden lentils were a go-to dish for my two old housemates, and I would often scrounge my way into getting a last-minute bowl out of them at dinner times (my intended meal always far less exciting when weighed up next to this spicy adventure). Cooking dahl feels like a dance to me; some sort of magical, witchy potion of spices and ingredients that suddenly comes together in this wonderful and wholesome meal. I make batches of this and freeze it for lazy days ahead.

Serves 4

1 red onion, finely diced
Thumb of ginger, grated
5 garlic cloves, finely sliced/ grated
1 cup of yellow lentils, well rinsed
1 tin of chopped tomatoes
1 tin of coconut milk
Olive oil/ coconut oil/ ground nut oil
Half a lemon, juice only
Fresh coriander, to serve
Handful of spinach
Feta

Spices

Whole

1 tsp mustard seeds
1/2 tsp coriander seeds
1/2 tps cumin seeds
1 cinnamon stick

Powdered

2 tsp turmeric
1 tsp cumin
1 tsp coriander
1/2 tsp paprika
1/2 tsp chilli power OR 1 fresh sliced chilli
(if you like it hot, go for it. Curry Leaves
will also work)
Salt and pepper

Heat a generous glug of oil in a deep pan or pot. Add your whole spices, save for the cinnamon stick, and when the mustard seeds start to pop, turn the heat down. Add the onions, and let them soften slowly. When soft, add the ginger, then the garlic, stirring continuously. You don't want the spices or garlic to burn. After about 5 minutes, add all of your powdered spices and the cinnamon stick. I usually place them all in a bowl beforehand to make this bit easier. Stir the spices in with the mixture, adding a splash of oil if you feel they are burning. They should foam slightly- you are essentially cooking the spices.

After about 3 mins, add your rinsed lentils. Stir them about the spice and onion mix - you are lightly toasting them. Turn up the heat, and add in the tin of tomatoes. They will sizzle when they hit the pan. Then in goes the coconut milk, and one tin-full of water. Stir well. Bring to the boil, then simmer, lid ajar, for about 15 minutes. The best way to tell when they are done is to taste them. I like mine softened but still holding onto a bit of bite.

To finish, squeeze over the lemon juice and season to taste. I find my dahl always needs a lot of salt. Place your spinach in a colander over the sink, rinse well, then pour over some boiling water. It will wilt quickly. Squelch out the excess water, then stir into your lentils.

To serve, top with crumbled feta, coriander leaves, and some more lemon juice. You could sub out the spinach with pre-roasted butternut, aubergine or even some blistered tomatoes. Use the dahl as a base and build onto it as you like. Will freeze well for up to two months.



The Ultimate Toasted Cheese by Anna

Sympathy for the Devil - The Rolling Stones

Few things can mend as many ailments as a toasted cheese sandwich. I stand by my choice of it as my Final Meal On Earth. This is my ultimate version, and any variations of it are not welcome in this church.

Serves 1

2 cups of grated cheddar

1 cup grated mozzarella

2 slices of thick sourdough bread

Butter. Lots of it.

Toast your bread until they are crisp but not browned. Place 2/3rds of the cheese mix inside the sandwich, then butter each side of it generously.

Place a pan on high heat, then place the buttered sandwich in it. On the top side of the sandwich, add half of the remaining cheese. Flip the sandwich - you have to be agile here - so that the remaining buttered and cheese side hits the pan. Let this fry for a few minutes (turn down the heat if it is starting to burn). Crown the other side of the sandwich with the remaining cheese. Flip again. Press down the sandwich to really get the cheese stuck on there, and let the bread caramelize.

What you want is a cheesy crust to form on either side of the sandwich. It's a magical thing.

The toastie is ready when you see the cheese oozing out the sides. Serve with a crisp salad and maybe a glass of red wine. Or just eat as it is, over the pan.



Winter

Roast Chicken by Anna

Desafinado - João Gilberto

This is my show-stopping dish, something I love to spend a little more time preparing for friends and family on a lazy Sunday or special occasion. There is little cooking to it, to be honest. But no one will ever be able to tell that.

Serves 5 -6

1 large organic chicken

2 white onions

3 large carrots

Bunch of rosemary and thyme

4 cloves of garlic

1 lemon

Salt (so much salt)

Olive oil

Before you start cooking, let your chicken rest out of the fridge for 30 minutes. Preheat your oven to 200 C. Slice your onions straight down the middle, and clank up the carrots in chunky disks. Place the onions in the tray so they form a sort of square. Scatter the carrots around it. Place one sprig of rosemary on top, and a couple of thyme leaves.

Now time for the chicken: Slice the garlic cloves into thick chunks. Then slide these under the skin of the breast- you may need to use your knife to make a small incision to slip them in. Add the fresh thyme under the skin, too. Then drizzle the chicken generously in olive oil, and really go to town with the salt. Make sure the underside of the bird is well salted, too. Once satisfied, prick a lemon and place it in the cavity, along with the rosemary.

Place your prepped bird on the bed of carrots and onions and gingerly place it in the oven. Immediately turn the heat down from 200 to 180 C. The drop in heat will mean the skin will go super crispy before the heat evens out to a gentle roasting temperature.

It should take 1hr20 minutes to cook through, depending on the size of the bird. End result is a fully cooked chicken with fabulously crispy skin. Let it stand for at least 7 mins before carving.

Serve with roasted potatoes and green beans steamed and tossed in EVOO and garlic.



roast chicken

Brodo by Anna

Pêche II - h hunt

Waste not, want not. If you have made a roast chicken, always follow on by making a broth. It will totally transform the way you think of stock, trust me. You can use any vegetables you have lurking in the fridge - celeriac and potatoes would be excellent accompaniments to the ones listed below.

Makes 1 large pot of broth (roughly 2L)

Chicken carcass, all meat stripped

1 carrot

1 onion

1 celery stick

1 leek, washed

1 tomato/ 1 tin tomatoes

Any fresh, woody herbs: rosemary, thyme, sage



Clunk up all your veg. Place them in a large pot with the carcass and the fresh herbs, and cover with enough water so that the carcass is totally submerged. Place the lid on and bring to a boil, then turn down to a low simmer for an hour.

Once the pot has totally cooled, use a sieve to drain off all the liquid into a clean bowl, discarding everything. You only want the broth. You can skim off the fat now if you prefer. Salt well.

My favourite way to serve is with fresh tortellini and a good grating of parmesan. You could also add fresh veg and transform it into a more substantial soup, or use it in a stew. Options are endless. Freezes well for future meals, too.

Wassail apple cake by Joey

Here We Come A Wassailing - The Waterstones

Growing up in Glastonbury, I have always been fond of apple cake. In that corner of the south west, you can't move for apple orchards, gnarly trees are laden with promises of juice, cake and of course, cider. This cake is made throughout the year, for birthdays, for overdue catch-ups with friends, or simply for cake's sake.

There is, however, one time of the year when this cake comes into its own: Wassail. Wassail translates as "be in good health", and is an ancient pagan ritual held on 17th January, the old twelfth night (before the Gregorian calendar was introduced), to awaken and bless the eldest apple tree in the orchard in the hope of a bountiful harvest. A piece of cider or ale soaked toast is placed in the tree to feed the robins who are regarded as the guardians of the orchard. Cider is poured around the base of the tree, the branches tapped to awaken it from its wintery sleep, before the toast is shot, pots are banged and a raucous is made to ward off any evil spirits. A night of singing, dancing and cider drinking ensues well into the early hours.

The Wassail cake is baked before the Wassail ceremony, with a hard bean hidden somewhere amongst the crumbly batter. The apple cake is then distributed amongst all attending the event. Whoever eats the piece with the bean is crowned the Wassail King or Queen, and is responsible for leading the procession and shooting of the toast in the tree. Despite attending many Wassails throughout my life, I have never been crowned the Queen. As a young child, I misheard and was terrified a bee, not a bean, was hiding in the cake, so I always dived straight for the middle piece, believing it to be too obvious a place to hide the supposed stinger.

Makes one 20cm round cake

225g plain flour (I do 100g plain wholemeal, 100g plain or spelt and 25g buckwheat flour)

2 tsp baking powder

Pinch of salt

1-1.5 tsp ground spices (mixture of ground cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger, whatever you like)

175g light soft brown sugar (any sugar will do though)

150g butter, melted (I like to brown it for a nutty taste)

2 large eggs, beaten

4 medium apples (e.g cox or russet or a mix of any local varieties) skin on, diced into 1 cm cubes

1 hard bean (not a bee)

1-2 tbsp demerara sugar to sprinkle on top

1. Preheat oven to 160°C, and grease and line a 20cm round tin
2. Place the flour(s), baking powder, salt, spices and sugar into a bowl and mix well
3. Stir in the slightly cooled melted butter and eggs and beat well till combined
4. Stir in the apples and bean. Pour into the tin, sprinkle with demerara sugar and bake for 50 minutes - 1 hour or until cooked through
5. Allow the cake to cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin. It's almost more apple than cake, so expect quite a moist crumbly result.

Happy Wassail!



Wassail

Closing notes

I learned so many wonderful things about food and friendship whilst living with Rose and Joey, and working at Trullo. In a world that seems madder about food than ever, it still feels worth saying them:

Salad dressings should always be simple. Lemon juice and olive oil with a good pinch of salt are all you really need.

Toast some nuts and add them to your salad. It is always a good idea.

Invest in a good knife. Look after it. Keep it sharp.

Proper Maldon Salt is a game-changer.

Music will make a dinner party. So will candles, a few flowers, and a nice tablecloth and pretty plates. This stuff isn't expensive and it is worth collecting if you like entertaining.

You might think hosting a dinner party is too much effort, but it is worth the time. Always.

If you are going to eat meat, get it from a butcher. If you can't get to a butcher, shop organic. The increase in cost is not outlandish, but a realistic reflection of what we should be paying. It will also help you cut down on your meat intake, and allow you to appreciate and use up every bit of the cut when you do purchase it.

The same goes for fish.

Cooking should be fun. Recipes are guidelines - try cooking once from a recipe, then the second time allow yourself some freedom and confidence to sub things in or out to make a meal more to your taste.

Try something new: making labneh is not difficult. Baking bread is not impossible. If it flops, it's ok. But a meal is rarely unsalvageable.

Throwing away food should be a last resort: carrot tops can be made into a pesto. Hard stalks of leafy greens can be cooked down slowly with anchovies and garlic into a delicious side dish. The internet is full of ideas.

Lastly: being unapologetically hungry for more out of life, especially as a woman, is a radical act. Find yourself friends who support this and lift you up. Who will eat with you, and travel with you, and dream with you. Incredible things happen when you do.



"Like most humans, I am hungry...our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write of hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it."

MFK Fisher