

# Summer

May the wind blow sweetness

The rivers blow sweetness

The herbs grow sweetness

For the People of Truth!

Sweet be the night

Sweet the dawn

Sweet be earth's fragrance

Sweet be our Heaven!

May the tree afford us sweetness

The Sun shine sweetness

Our cows yield sweetness—

Milk in plenty!

**Blue sea with breezes and white sails—**

**Picnics—Squid and prawn paella—**

**Mallorcan cocas—Huge green and red  
crispy lettuces—Tomato and basil salads—**

**Peaches and apricots —Tennis—**

**Charentais melon**

*Rig Veda*

## FESTIVALS

**Hag Shavuot**, which falls in June, is Hebrew meaning Feast of Weeks; in Greek it is called Pentecost. The feast normally includes dairy products, in remembrance of the lands flowing with milk and honey. It might also include cheese blintzes, cheese *kreplach* (stuffed pasta), borscht with sour cream, cheesecake, *pashkha*, cheese filas and *sutlage-muhallabeya* (fragrant milk).

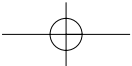
**Summer Solstice** (June 21-22) is the longest day of the year. Midsummer eve bonfires are in honour of St John's Day, that follows. Jumping over the fire was common, or throwing a garland into it that carried one's sins and diseases. Also, parading the fields with flaming torches to preserve the harvest.

**Lammas Day** (1 August) was when bread for the mass was made from the newly milled corn from the harvest. It seems to derive from Lughnasad, a much older Celtic observance held at the beginning of the harvest, in honour of Lug, a god of agriculture. In Ireland it was known as Lughnasa.

**Fraughan** Sunday, or Bilberry Sunday, the nearest Sunday to 1 August, which was celebrated by open-air jollifications on hilltops, by holy wells, rivers or lakes. The celebrants weave their own baskets out of rushes to collect the bilberries.

**Aquarids** (meteor showers) can be seen from 15 July to 25 August with an approximate zenithal hourly rate at maximum of 8.



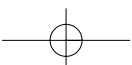


# Sea Bass at Thurlestone Sands



## SAMPLE MENU

*Sea Bass cooked over embers, stuffed with rock samphire and lemon, with Japanese sushi (various fillings), globe artichokes, aduki bean pâté, cucumber, radish and wakame salad and dipping sauce.*



The sky was hyacinth blue, the sun benevolent, silver undines flickered amongst the waves and Jeb, the Welsh sheepdog, lay in the dunes watching and waiting patiently. We came with our supper, the special treat were two plump sea bass and the location had been chosen not only for its rocky beauty but because there were many great clumps of salty rock samphire growing there with which to stuff our fish. This plant is succulent and has a fennel-like flavour. We harvested some and washed it in the sea. We filled our fish, stitching up the cavity with twine, using a curved needle. The whole was massaged with sesame oil and cooked in a skillet over glowing embers. The smell of woodsmoke mingling with the sea, and the activity of collecting wood and throwing sticks for the dog, all sharpened our appetite.

The sea bass was served as part of a Japanese meal, accompanied by sushi with varied fillings, aduki bean pâté, wakame seaweed and radish salad, and a large bowl of globe artichokes. Dessert was a ruby-coloured tayberry jelly, a bowl of strawberries and slices of Charentais melon.

## Sea Bass Cooked over Embers, Stuffed with Rock Samphire and Lemon

### SERVES 6

**2 fresh sea bass, approx. 1½ lb/1 kg each,  
cleaned but with heads on**

**2 lemons in slices**

**salt and pepper**

**shoyu or tamari (soy sauce)**

**enough rock samphire to fill the cavity of the  
fish (can be substituted by a mixture of chervil  
and chopped Florence fennel)**

**4 tbsps roast sesame oil or olive oil, for cooking  
curved needle and strong thread for stitching**

### Method:

1. Wash the fish and scrape off scales without damaging the skin. Dry and sprinkle lightly with sea salt.
2. Cut 3 incisions in the sides of the fish and insert slices of lemon. Sprinkle the inside of the fish with lemon juice, salt and some freshly ground pepper.
3. Stuff with rock samphire and sew up the cavity. Massage or brush the fish with sesame oil.
4. Cook over wood embers if possible (I used a cast iron skillet to ensure the fish kept its form) 10 minutes each side. Alternatively, bake covered in foil in the oven at 190°C/gas mark 5. Unwrap and expose to a hot grill for 5 minutes to brown.



## Sushi

Ayoko used to make sushi for our local fish shop. I looked at it admiringly, so much neater than the kind I make! I asked her to come and do a demonstration for photographs for this book. I watched her graceful fingers smoothing the ivory-coloured rice onto the sheet of ebony-coloured nori seaweed, placing tiny strips of green cucumber, pink smoked salmon and yellow flaky omelette in the centre and rolling it up, then slicing this piece of edible sculpture. What culture could invent this, for which our nearest equivalent is a sandwich?

**Required: a bamboo mat for rolling up the sushi**

**8 oz/225 g sushi rice**

**1 pt/570 ml good stock**

**1 tsp sesame oil for sautéing**

**1/2 tsp sea salt**

**1 packet nori seaweed (in sheets)**

**For vinegar bathe:**

**1 tsp cane sugar**

**2 tbsp rice vinegar**

**1 tbsp mirin or sherry**

**1/2 tsp sea salt**

Bring to the boil together, then turn off the heat.

### Method:

1. Wash the rice carefully and let it drain
2. In a heavy-bottomed pot with closely fitting lid heat up the sesame oil. Sauté the rice for a few minutes, but don't brown.
3. Add 1 pt/570ml of good flavoured stock to the rice and bring to the boil. Turn down the heat to the lowest possible and leave to simmer until all stock is absorbed (about 1/2 hour).

4. When the rice is thoroughly cooked and the stock absorbed turn it out onto something flat and wide—a large shallow bowl or plate would do. Then sprinkle with the rice-vinegar mixture to flavour it and make it stickier. Allow it to cool whilst preparing fillings.

### Fillings:

Fine strips of carrot, spring onions (halved), watercress, parsley, thin strips of cucumber. Sauté in a little sesame oil with 1 tsp grated fresh ginger and 1 dsp tamari sauce. Try to keep colour and crispness of the vegetables.

**Smoked salmon**

**Thin strips of omelette.**

**Assembly:**

1. Take each sheet of nori, allowing one per person, and lay it on your sushi mat, shiny side down. Then cover with a layer of rice, leaving 1 inch at the top and 1/2 inch as borders either side of the nori seaweed. Be careful not to allow grains of rice onto this area.
2. Make an indentation across the centre with a cooking chopstick and fill this with a layer of filling and press well down.
3. Moisten the strips of nori with water and then roll up in the sushi mat. Let it rest on the join.
4. Chill for one hour and then cut into slices with a sharp knife on a clean board. Arrange on a ceramic plate, and serve with dipping sauce.

### Dipping sauce:

**1 tsp sesame oil**

**2 tbsp tamari**

**1 dsp grated fresh ginger**

**1 tsp wasabi (powdered horseradish)**

**1/2 pt/280 ml dashi (stock)**

Bring to boil and then allow to infuse for a few minutes before serving in individual dishes.





## Cucumber, Wakame and Radish Salad

**1 cucumber**

**1 bunch radishes**

**2 oz/50 g dried wakame seaweed**

**sea salt**

**2 tbsp rice vinegar**

### Method:

1. Wash the seaweed, making sure no grit is left.
2. Soak for 30 minutes in warm water to cover. Then rinse, remove the thick spine and chop.
3. Peel strips of skin from cucumber.
4. Cut cucumber into four lengthwise and de-seed.
5. Slice finely on the diagonal (known as butterfly wings).
6. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt and leave for 10 minutes, then drain.
7. Wash, top and tail and slice radishes finely and then add to the cucumber.
8. Remove the seaweed from the water, saving the liquid for a dipping sauce.
9. Chop the rest and add to cucumber and radish.
10. Sprinkle with rice vinegar (you could substitute white wine vinegar or cider apple vinegar) and sea salt.

Serve with fish and aduki pâté.





# Soups

## V Almond Gazpacho

### SERVES 6

Created by the marriage of Spanish and Moorish influences, this is a delicate ivory-white soup with freckles of golden olive oil and white grapes floating atop. Traditionally made with young, milky almonds, this is a very nutritious soup.

Serve chilled, as a starter.

**6 oz/175 g blanched almonds**

**8 oz/225 g chopped onion**

**1 pt/570 ml milk**

**1 pt/570 ml good stock**

**1 tbsp sherry vinegar**

**1 leek (white part only), finely sliced**

**1 stick celery, chopped finely**

**3 cloves garlic**

**3 oz/60 g white bread**

**¼ pt/50 ml olive oil**

**12 peeled white grapes (optional)**

**salt and pepper**

### Method:

1. In a heavy saucepan sauté the onion, leek and celery in 2 tbsp of oil until translucent. Add a few pinches of salt.
2. Add milk, stock and almonds. Bring to the boil, then simmer on low heat for 30 minutes.
3. Add crumbled up white bread and leave for 5 minutes.
4. Whiz all this in a blender. If the almonds are not fresh you will need to sieve the soup and rerun the residues through the blender or a coffee-grinder (but remove any smell of coffee first!), until you have a smooth purée.
5. When cool, add finely minced garlic (use a garlic press), and whisk in the rest of the olive oil, sherry vinegar, finely grated zest and juice of lemon and chill for 2–3 hours. Serve with peeled, halved grapes floating on top.



## Roger Law's Knockout Fish Soup

### SERVES 6

Roger Law (he of the *Spitting Image* team) and I were in the same class at Cambridge School of Art in the late 50s, early 60s. One of my first memories of Roger was watching him devouring what looked to be a half leg of lamb that his mother had provided for his packed lunch. He was a giant of a young man with an appetite like Desperate Dan.

It has been great to reconnect with Roger and his wife Deidre, now we are all grandparents. He has become an amazing cook and made this memorable fish stew for me, the recipe featuring somewhat Desperate Dan quantities of fish and shellfish, which I have scaled down a little. I've also added carrot to give body and to help balance the acidity of the tomatoes. I served it with a dish of *rouille*, which you can spread on your bread and dunk in this delicious and fiery fish stew. Despite the various processes, it does not take too long to prepare.

**Cooking time about 1½ hours.**

### Method:

#### For fish stock:

**1½ lb/700 g fish trimmings, bones, prawn shells**

**½ onion, sliced**

**1 stick celery, sliced**

**½ tsp salt**

**3 pts/1.5 l water**

**bouquet garni**

#### Fish contents:

**About 2 lb/900 g mixed fish and shellfish (I used 12 oz/350 g fish pie mix—salmon, monkfish, smoked haddock, etc.)**

**4 oz/110 g white crabmeat**

**4 scallops, sliced**

**8 oz/225 g prawns (half shelled and shells used in stock, the rest whole)**

**For soup base:**

**3 fl oz/75 ml olive oil**  
**2 medium onions, sliced**  
**1 large bell pepper, red**  
**8 oz/225 g carrot, sliced thinly**  
**8 cloves garlic, roughly chopped**  
**6 ripe tomatoes, chopped, or**  
**400 g tin of chopped Italian tomatoes**  
**(if fresh ones not in season)**  
**1½ tsp fresh thyme, chopped**  
**3 generous pinches of saffron threads**  
**6 oz/175 g fresh Florence fennel, sliced**  
**zest and juice of 1 orange**  
**3 pts/1.5 l fish stock**  
**1 tsp Cajun mixed spice**  
**salt and pepper**

1. Make fish stock in a large saucepan by adding 3 pts cold water to the fish trimmings with salt. Bring to the boil, skim off any scum, and add vegetables and bouquet garni. Simmer for 20 minutes and strain.
2. Soak saffron in a little of the hot fish stock to release colour and fragrance.
3. For soup base, heat about two thirds of the olive oil in a heavy-based saucepan, add sliced onion and bell pepper and a few pinches of salt. Sauté till tender but not brown.
4. Add garlic, thyme, fennel, carrots and tomatoes, and sauté over low heat for 5 minutes.
5. Pour in the 3 pts fish stock. Check seasoning and simmer with the lid on for 45 minutes.
6. Strain through a sieve and put remaining solids through a mouli-de-legumes, which will keep back the fibres and skins. You can also whiz these solids in a blender and return them to the strained soup.
7. Slice the fish and scallops into generous bite-sized pieces. Heat the rest of the olive oil in a sauté or frying pan and sear the fish and prawns with a very little salt and sprinkling of the Cajun spices. Stir for 5 minutes, then add to the soup and bring briefly to the boil.

Serve with a sprinkling of parsley and some rouille if you like.

**For rouille:**

**3 large red peppers, roasted, de-seeded and skinned (may be bought in jars)**  
**½ tsp salt**  
**1 fresh chilli, de-seeded and chopped finely**  
**3 fl oz/75 ml water**  
**4 garlic cloves, chopped coarsely**  
**2 tbsp fine breadcrumbs**  
**5 tbsp olive oil**

1. Cook red peppers, salt and chilli in the water till tender (5–8 minutes).
2. Add garlic and breadcrumbs and whiz in a blender or stir with an electric hand-blender. Gradually beat in the olive oil little by little. You should now have a thick paste.

Serve with crunchy bread and the soup.