

# pie minister



\* a pie for all seasons \*

Tristan Hogg and Jon Simon



# fat hen's hare pie

SERVES 8

**Caroline Davey is a professional forager who runs wild food courses at Fat Hen in Cornwall. She showed us how many different foods you can snaffle up for free, including alexanders, which grow in the spring, and which we used in this dish. The hare needs to be cooked nice and slow for best results.**

Put the marinade ingredients in a bowl, add the hare and marinate in the fridge for 4 hours or overnight.

Preheat the oven to 160°C/320°F/gas mark 3. Remove the meat from the marinade and pat dry on kitchen paper. Heat 4 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large frying pan, brown the hare well all over and transfer to a casserole. Remove the oil from the pan, pour in the marinade, including the vegetables, and bring to the boil. Add the beef stock and bring back to the boil. Pour this mixture over the hare, then cover the casserole and place in the oven. Cook for 3–4 hours, until the hare is very tender and starting to fall off the bone – keep an eye on the liquid level and top up with more stock if necessary. Take the casserole out of the oven, remove the hare and leave to cool slightly. Strain the stock and set aside.

Heat the butter and the remaining oil in a pan, add the baby onions, carrots and garlic (and the celery if you're not using alexanders) and cook gently for about 5 minutes, until golden. Add the bacon and cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in the flour, cook for a minute, then gradually stir in 750ml of the strained stock. Bring to the boil, stirring, until it thickens. Add the stalks of the alexanders and the sultanas and leave to simmer while you take the hare meat off the bone and shred it roughly. Add the meat to the sauce and bring back to a simmer. Remove from the heat, add the leaves from the alexanders and season with salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to a large casserole or an ovenproof dish about 25–30cm square and leave to cool.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface to about 3mm thick and use to cover the pie, trimming off the excess. Brush with beaten egg and make a couple of small holes in the centre to let out steam. Place in the oven and bake for 30–35 minutes, until golden brown.

the legs and shoulders of 2 hares

6 tbsp olive oil

600ml beef stock

40g butter

200g baby onions, cut in half

200g carrots, peeled and roughly chopped

3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

150g smoked bacon lardons

3 heaped tbsp plain flour

200g alexanders, stalks peeled and sliced, leaves reserved (if you can't get alexanders, use celery instead)

100g sultanas

1 quantity of rough puff pastry (see page 10) or 500g puff pastry

1 free-range egg, lightly beaten, to glaze

sea salt and black pepper

## For the marinade

1 bottle of red wine

8–10 allspice berries

2 cinnamon sticks

8–10 juniper berries

6 cloves

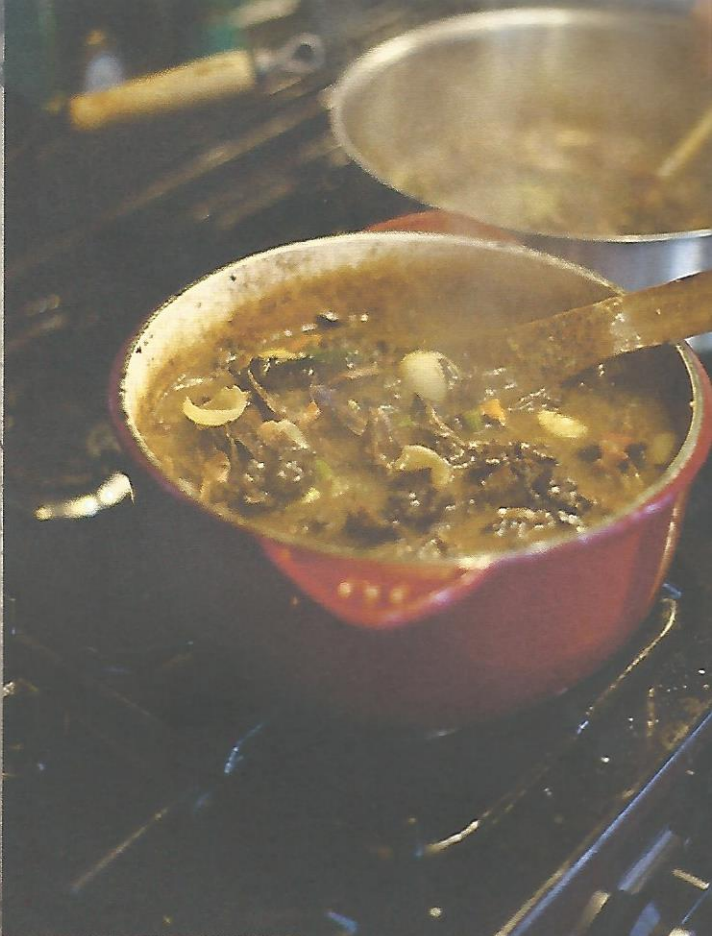
¼ tsp grated nutmeg

2 carrots, roughly chopped

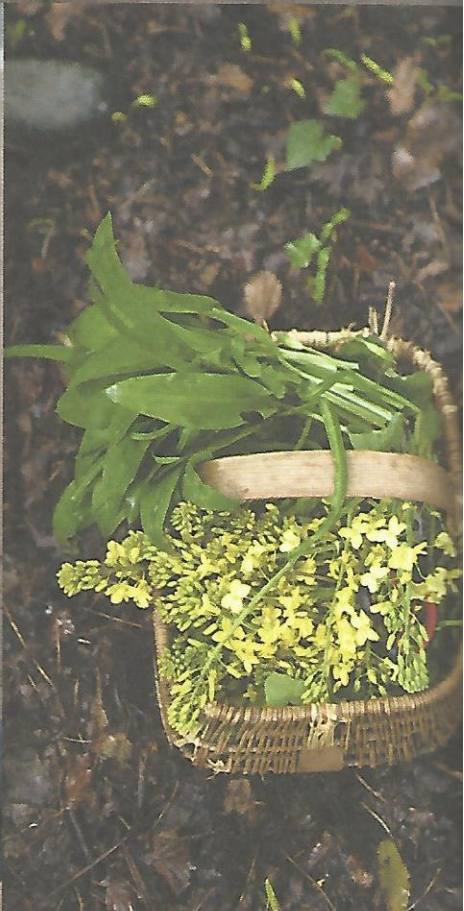
1 onion, roughly sliced

6 garlic cloves, bashed with the flat of a large knife

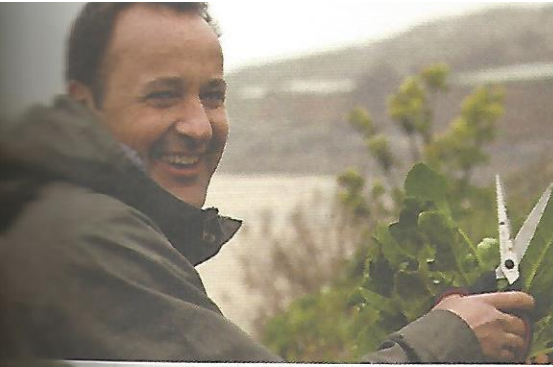














# let's go foraging



While making this book we went on a fascinating foraging expedition in sunny Cornwall. Under the expert guidance of ecologist and cook Caroline Davey, of Fat Hen wild food school, we searched the seaside and the woods, and along fields and hedgerows. We found all sorts of tasty morsels and discovered that there is plenty of delicious free stuff all over the place – you just need to know where to look.



## Here are our top 10 tips for foraging

- ① Start with species that are easy to identify. You'll soon recognize the strong aroma and leaves of wild garlic, and the signs of a hazel bush. Only pick what you have a 100% positive identification of – it's not worth taking chances as some plants and fungi are deadly.
- ② Take your foraging kit on walks or load it in the car when you go on trips:
  - A basket – good for holding delicate leaves and mushrooms
  - Several plastic tubs – many hands make light work of gathering fruit, and berries will get less squashed in smaller containers
  - Scissors – use these to cut leaves cleanly
  - Rubber gloves – for nettle protection
  - Identification guides
- ③ You don't need to travel miles to forage. If you have a garden, it may well have nettles, elderflowers in early summer and elderberries in autumn, and edible leaves such as bittercress and Jack-by-the-hedge.
- ④ No garden? Then try local parks for the likes of crab apples, sweet chestnuts and walnuts.
- ⑤ Follow the responsible foraging code. Only take very common plants such as nettles, alexanders and sorrel so that you won't be responsible for depleting stocks of rare species. Don't take the whole plant, but leave more than half of it to grow back.
- ⑥ Do not trespass to forage for wild food. Either get the landowner's permission or stick to public footpaths. Only dig up plants if you have permission from the landowner, or if you are the landowner, of course!
- ⑦ There are some precautions worth taking. Find out if fields have been sprayed before picking from them, and avoid picking along busy roads or immediately next to the path on dog-walking routes. Avoid riverside plants growing downstream of land used by grazing animals, because of the risk of liver fluke.
- ⑧ Take only what you want to eat. Never strip the woodland or fields bare as other people might be hungry too.
- ⑨ Start foraging at the seashore – it's the most productive habitat for wild food and many of the seaweed and coastal species are quite easy to identify.
- ⑩ Organize your foraging expeditions with family and friends, bring back the wonderfully fresh seasonal produce and cook it together to create a feast fit for kings.

