



THE WILD LARDER

A SUB-TROPICAL LANDSCAPE PACKED WITH NATURAL INGREDIENTS



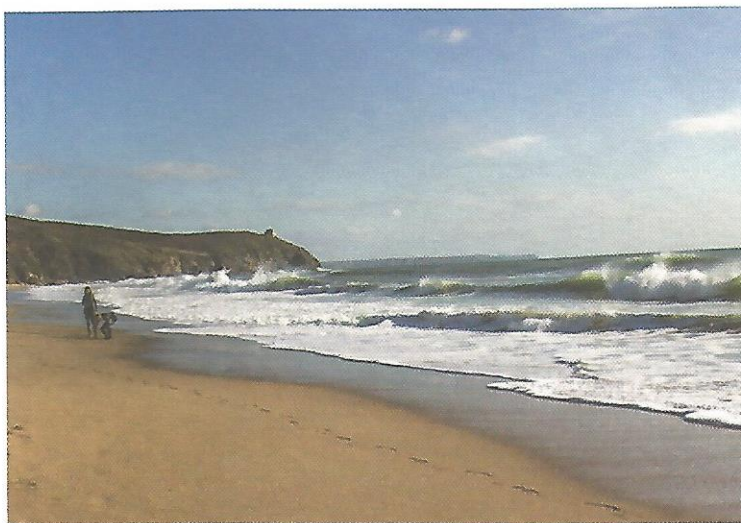
FORAGING IN ROCK POOLS AND HEDGES AT THE TIP OF CORNWALL


The coastline curling around the western toe of Cornwall is teeming with wildlife, shipwrecks and sub-tropical foliage. Follow the coast path from Marazion to Sennen and discover wild, white-sand beaches at the foot of towering granite cliffs, encounter rare sea birds such as soft-plumaged petrels and black-browed albatrosses, and clap your eyes on marine life from basking sharks to seals and dolphins.

Aside from Land's End, one of the most visited parts of this rugged hunk of coast is Porthcurno. Here the Minack Theatre stages plays in an amphitheatre at the water's edge, and Porthcurno Telegraph Museum marks what was once the epicentre of international communications when the first undersea telegraph cables were laid in 1870. However, it's Porthcurno's easy-to-reach pearly sands lapped by Caribbean-blue seas that are the real crowd puller.

While visitors flock to the area to snorkel, swim and stomp along the South West Coast Path, many of them overlook the abundance of wild ingredients that flourish from the seashore to the hedgerows.

CLIFF-TOPS ARE THRIVING WITH SAMPHIRE, GORSE FLOWERS AND WILD GARLIC, BOULDERS ARE STREWN WITH EDIBLE SEAWEEDS, AND HEDGEROWS ARE BURSTING WITH ALL SORTS OF BERRIES AND HERBS. Take a spin to Sennen and you can top-up foraged ingredients with fresh seafood and crabs from the local fishermen.



A woman with short blonde hair, smiling, stands in front of a rustic stone wall. She is wearing a grey t-shirt, a dark blue apron with white vertical stripes, a silver chain necklace, and brown leather boots. She holds a white rectangular sign with both hands. The sign has the words 'WILD' and 'LARDER' written in a simple, hand-drawn black font, one above the other.

WILD
LARDER

fat hen

THE WILD COOKERY SCHOOL

SEASONAL TREASURES

{FAT HEN}

It's not often that you compare the scenery of South West Cornwall to a supermarket. But under the tutelage of expert forager Caroline Davey you soon start to see the beaches, cliffs and moorland as a wild larder, and the best place to gather ingredients for a gourmet dinner. "I just want to show people the potential of wild ingredients in the kitchen. It's about using foraged foods like any other ingredients you would buy from the supermarket, and making interesting, delicious dishes with them," says Caroline.

A keen cook with a background in ecology and botany, Caroline conceived Fat Hen in 2007, originally supplying local restaurants with her foraged ingredients. "I got – and still get – a lot of inspiration from working with talented and creative chefs using wild ingredients," she says. By 2008 she was running her own foraging and wild cookery courses, and now her repertoire has expanded to include all sorts of disciplines from seaweed, shellfish and game, to wild Italian cookery. The name Fat Hen comes from the name of a wild edible green that was one of Britain's staple crops about 2,000 years ago, and it still flourishes here in Cornwall after the potato crop.

Caroline's renovated barns in St Buryan are the perfect base for the courses; her huge country kitchen sitting right on the doorstep of West Cornwall's prime foraging territory. "As well as gathering ingredients along the shoreline in places like Marazion, we also run foraging trips on bikes from here – usually cycling about 20 miles on a loop via Sennen, where we top up our ingredients with a fresh crab or fish from the fishermen there," Caroline explains.

On a typical foraging day you might spend the morning gathering greens, herbs, salad, veg, seaweeds, flowers, seeds and roots, before

returning to cook them up into restaurant-worthy dishes. "I love helping people appreciate the ingredients that are out there. People start identifying edible plants in a bunch of greenery or seaweed and realise not only that they can eat them, but that they actually taste really good," says Caroline. "More people want to forage these days. It's the natural progression from the organic movement. People have more desire to know where their food has come from," she says.

"THE PROFILE OF WILD FOOD IS CHANGING. IT'S REALLY EXCITING TO SEE MORE CHEFS USING IT, WHICH MAKES IT MORE VALID."

As more people open their eyes to our edible landscape, it's not just eating wild food that's important; it's the process of foraging for our own ingredients that is changing, and emphasising, our relationship with food and our environment. "I love being outside foraging," says Caroline. "Being out and having a connection with the landscape and food feels so good – and so right. When you get down to the beach and you're out foraging you're living so much in the moment, everything feels perfect."



Rabbit Loin with a Mustard and Cream Sauce, Wild Spinach & Nettle Gnocchi

This is a great wild food recipe and isn't season dependent, as there's no closed season for hunting rabbits. As rabbits are shot for pest control it's a plentiful meat and never in short supply. This recipe uses the leanest part of the rabbit (the loin) which is rather like the breast of a chicken and needs very little cooking.

I love to combine the local greens – nettles and wild spinach – with wild rabbit shot just a few fields away. Everything is as fresh as can be and all the ingredients have come from within a few miles or metres of my kitchen.

(Serves 4)

Ingredients

- 4 rabbits skinned and jointed, loins removed.
- 50g (1.8oz) butter
- 2 cloves of garlic finely chopped
- 1 tblsp flat leaved parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tblsp thyme, finely chopped
- 1 tsp whole grain mustard
- Splash of white wine
- 3 tbsps double cream
- Large bunch of wild spinach (sea beet)
- Just over 1kg (2.3lbs) potatoes (choose a floury variety such as King Edward or Maris piper).
- 300g (10.5oz) plain flour
- 2 egg yolks
- A bunch of nettles
- 50g (1.9oz) parmesan
- Salt and pepper

Method

Gnocchi:

1. Wash and blanch the nettles in salted boiling water for 1 minute. Drain, squeeze out as much excess water as you can from the nettles and chop them finely.
2. Boil the potatoes in their skins – until just cooked erring on the side of undercooked. Peel the skins and pass the potatoes through a potato ricer. Put the potato into a large bowl.

3. Add the flour, egg yolks, chopped nettles, grated parmesan and salt.
4. Bring together all the ingredients with your hands to form a dough. Turn the dough out onto a floured worktop and knead it bringing in plain flour to stop it sticking.
5. Break off small balls of dough and roll out into a long sausage shape on the worktop. Cut pieces off the 'sausage' all the way along.
6. Roll each piece up the back of a fork using the back of a teaspoon. Roll it the alternate way to the knife cut to get the lines across the gnocchi.
7. Blanch in boiling salted water. The gnocchi are ready when they float to the top of the pan.
8. Either serve now, or if you want to use them later or pan fry them (which is totally delicious and the way I like them), put them straight into a bowl of cold water to stop them continuing to cook, drain and run through a further jug of cold water. Set aside.

If you want to store them drain off the water and mix the gnocchi with some olive oil. You can store them like this overnight in an airtight container in the fridge.

When you want to serve the gnocchi heat some butter and olive oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. Add the gnocchi and sear each

piece until golden, turning once during cooking.

Rabbit:

1. Remove the loins from the saddle of a rabbit and set aside the other parts of the rabbit to be used in other recipes.
2. Heat the butter in a frying pan until melted and quite hot. Add the garlic, parsley and thyme and cook gently for a minute. Then add the rabbit loins and cook for a couple of minutes on each side, remove to a warm plate.
3. Pour the white wine into the frying pan. Stir and reduce. Add the cream and the mustard, stir and reduce.
4. Season to taste. Put the rabbit loins back into the pan, stir and cover with the sauce.

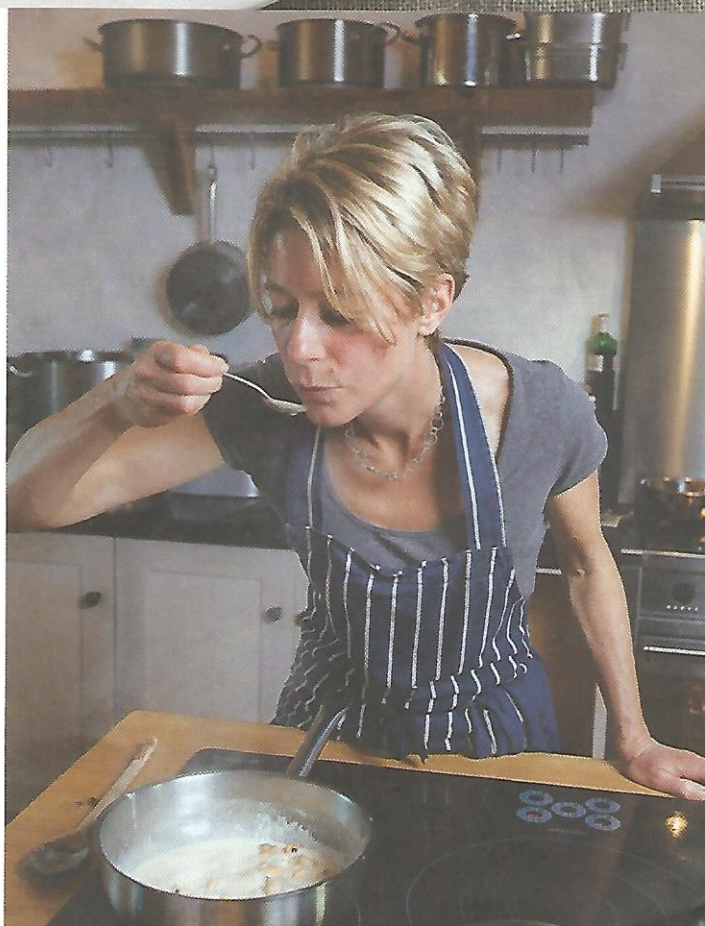
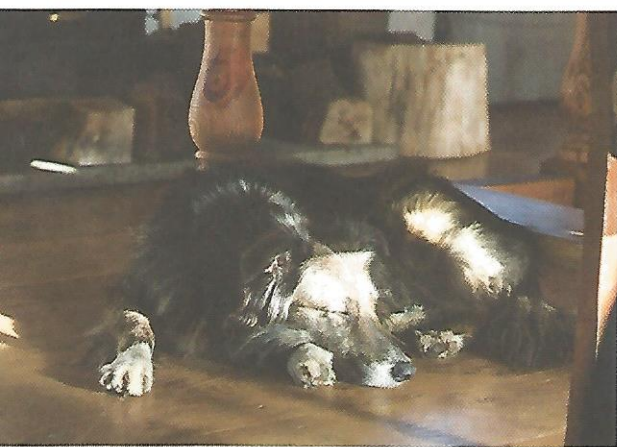
Wild spinach:

1. Whilst you are preparing the sauce put a large pan of salted water on to boil for the wild spinach.
2. When the water has boiled add the spinach for 2 minutes, drain, put back into the pan and add a splash of olive oil, a squeeze of lemon juice, salt and pepper.

To serve:

Serve the rabbit on top of a bed of wild spinach with the gnocchi surrounding it.





Laver Seaweed and Pancetta Cakes with Wild Garlic or Fennel & Mussel Sauce

Laver seaweed has to be up there with my top 3 seaweeds and it features heavily on most of my menus. It's very versatile and can be roasted, fried and boiled. You can 'go Welsh' and boil it or 'go far eastern' and roast, fry or air dry it. It's very closely related to Japanese nori so this is our 'Cornish nori.' It has a deeply savoury, mineral rich flavor. This recipe is my take on the Welsh laver bread. I simmer the seaweed for a couple of hours to tenderize it but I don't boil it all day like they do in Wales as I prefer the texture of the seaweed to come through. This recipe is for a lunch starter but it can equally be served for breakfast without the sauce but with a poached egg on top.

Serves 4 as a starter

- Small bowl of cooked laver seaweed (enough to form into 4 fishcake-sized patties)
- 1 small onion
- Scattering of oatmeal
- 2 pieces of pancetta or smoked bacon
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- 1 egg
- White breadcrumbs
- Oil for frying
- Knob of butter
- Salt & pepper
- 16 mussels
- 150ml (1/4pt) good quality dry cider
- 300ml (1/2pt) double cream
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp chopped wild garlic or wild fennel fronds

1. Pick laver seaweed from the rocks. Take home and wash very well. This may need up to 8 washes to remove all the sand and small creatures hiding amongst the fronds.
2. Once washed put the laver into a saucepan and simmer on a gentle heat for 2 hours until tender but still with some texture. You may not need to add any water to the seaweed as it will hold quite a lot of water naturally. However, check to ensure it doesn't stick to the pan. If it does stick add some water.
3. Whilst the laver is cooking trim and chop some smoked bacon, fry until crispy, set aside.
4. Saute the onion until caramelised.
5. Add the bacon, onion, oatmeal, butter, salt and pepper & lemon juice to the warm laver seaweed and stir until thoroughly mixed and the butter has melted.
6. Cool and leave in the fridge for at least an hour or overnight.
7. Remove from the fridge and make the mixture into fishcake sized patties. Dip into whisked egg followed by breadcrumbs and lay on a fry until ready to fry.
8. Fry the laver cakes until golden, place in a warm oven to keep hot.
9. Now make the sauce. Get a saucepan very hot on the stove. Throw in your cleaned mussels. Add the cider and cook until the mussels have opened. Remove the mussels and set aside.
10. Now reduce down the cider to half. Add the cream and mustard and reduce the cream by half. Season and add the chopped fennel fronds or wild garlic and the reserved mussels (out of their shells) at the end of cooking.
11. Serve the laver cake surrounded by a couple of spoons of the sauce.



Crab and Sea Lettuce Tagliatelle

I live three miles from Sennen Cove and during the summer there's nothing I like more than to pop down to the cove to pick up my crab from a local fisherman. I ring him the night before to place my order and he brings in crab, lobster and mackerel for me, fresh from the sea that morning. I love to go direct to the source for all my ingredients. The other wild ingredients in this dish are sea lettuce (seaweed), rock samphire and wild fennel. These three ingredients are all coastal and have a real affinity for seafood. It makes perfect sense to me to serve ingredients growing on the seashore with crab freshly brought in from the sea a few metres away.

Serves 4

Ingredients

For this recipe you also require a pasta machine

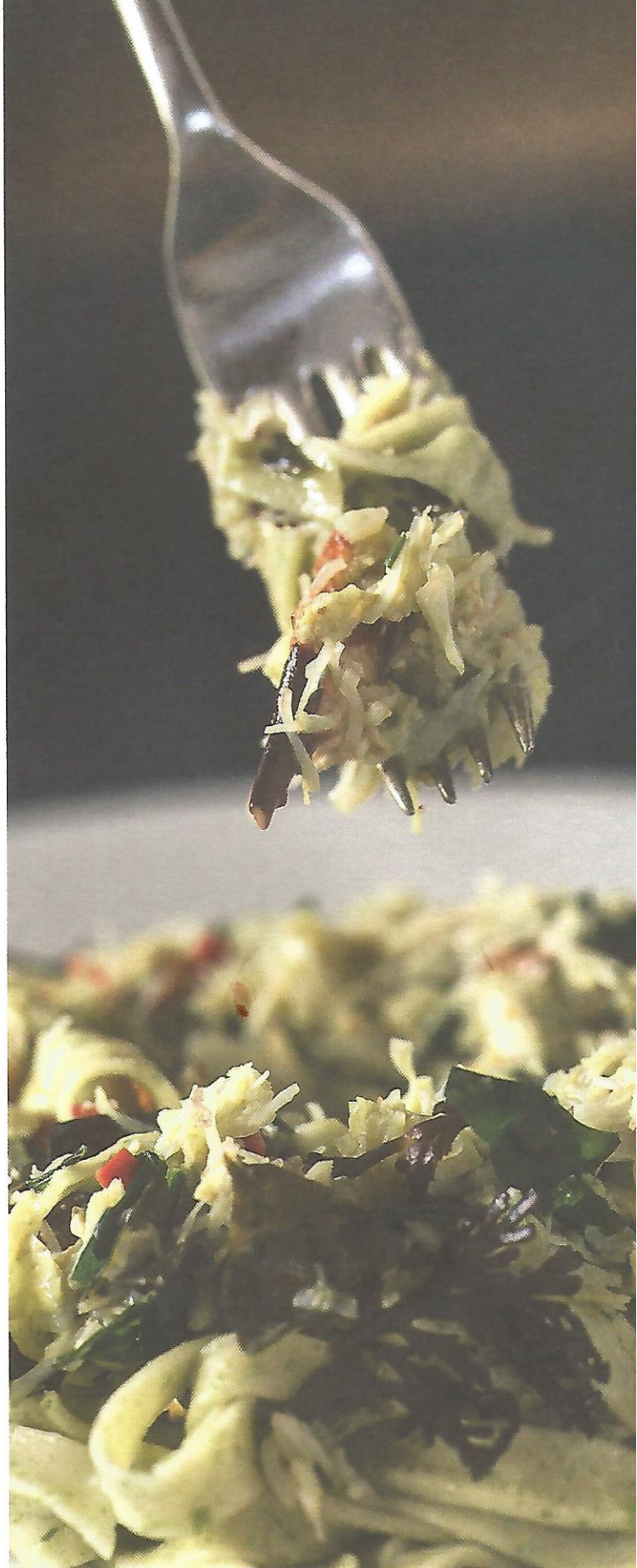
- Meat from 1 large brown crab or 2 large spider crabs (both white and brown) or 120g (4oz) picked white crab meat, 50g (1.8oz) brown meat
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 100ml Olive oil
- 300ml light chicken stock
- Handful of wild fennel fronds, chopped
- Handful of rock samphire, chopped
- 150g (5oz) sea lettuce
- Salt and pepper
- 400g (14oz) '00' pasta flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 3-4 whole eggs
- 1 tsp olive oil

Method

1. Boil 100g of the sea lettuce until tender (15 minutes). Liquidise the sea lettuce with a little water. Pass the green liquid through a muslin cloth and retain the green puree left in the cloth.
2. Mix the sea lettuce puree, flour, salt, eggs & olive oil in a bowl and bring together to form a dough.
3. Turn the dough onto a table and knead until it is smooth and shiny (10-15 minutes). Cover in cling film and leave to rest in the fridge for at least one hour (no more than 24 hours). Pasta dough freezes really well so if you have any excess you can freeze it at this point.
4. Roll the dough through a pasta machine starting on the widest setting. Roll it through this setting about 5 times,

each time folding the dough back on itself before feeding it into the machine.

5. Now run the dough through each of the settings until you get to the penultimate setting.
6. Now run each sheet of pasta through the tagliatelle cutter. Once cut drape the tagliatelle over the back of a chair or broom to air dry for a few minutes to prevent it sticking together and clumping up.
7. If you are preparing the crab yourself, bring a large pan of heavily salted water (10g per litre to mimic the salinity of sea water) to the boil.
8. Dispatch your live crab by skewering through the depression behind the tail and also between the eyes.
9. Place the crab in the boiling water and cook for approximately 15 minutes once the water comes to the boil again.
10. Remove the cooked crab, leave to cool and pick out the meat.
11. Pick through the crabmeat to make sure it's free from any bits of shell
12. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil ready for the tagliatelle.
13. In a sauté pan heat the olive oil. Add the chilli and garlic and cook until softened without browning, stirring regularly. Add the remaining sea lettuce (chopped), rock samphire and fennel fronds and cook gently for a minute or so. Then add the brown crab meat. Add the chicken stock and lemon juice to the pan and bring to the boil.
14. Meanwhile cook the fresh pasta in the boiling salted water for 3 minutes. Once cooked drain and add to the pan with the other ingredients including the white crab meat. Toss together until everything is evenly mixed. Taste and season. Loosen with a little of the cooking water if the pasta looks too dry.



Carragheen Panna Cotta with Blackberry Compote

I always marvel at the properties of carragheen seaweed and its ability to thicken and set other ingredients. Most of you will have eaten carragheen inadvertently as it's a food additive used in many processed ice-creams and desserts. I love to use carragheen for panna cotta as it creates a lovely soft set (if you don't use too much) and it negates the need for gelatine, which is fantastic if you're cooking for vegetarians.

Blackberries, in my opinion, are one of the finest wild foods and I've had a love affair with them since my childhood. I still don't think you can beat blackberry jam on thick doorsteps of white toast dripping with butter! It was a bumper blackberry year this year and my freezer is full of them. They go so well with this panna cotta. The sweet geranium imparts a delicate floral background note to the blackberries.

Serves 6

Ingredients

Panna cotta

- 6 moulds – these can be ramekins, coffee cups, small bowls or darioles
- Handful of dried carragheen seaweed
- 300ml (½pt) double cream
- 300ml (½pt) whole milk
- 50g (2oz) caster sugar
- 1 vanilla pod
- 1 strip of lemon peel - no pith

Blackberry compote

- 100g (3½oz) sugar
- 100ml (3½fl oz) water
- 150g (5oz) blackberries
- 2 sweet geranium leaves

Method

Panna Cotta

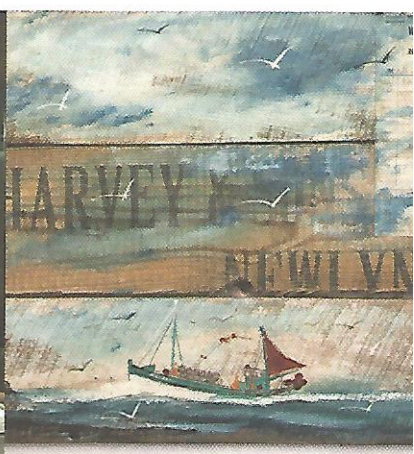
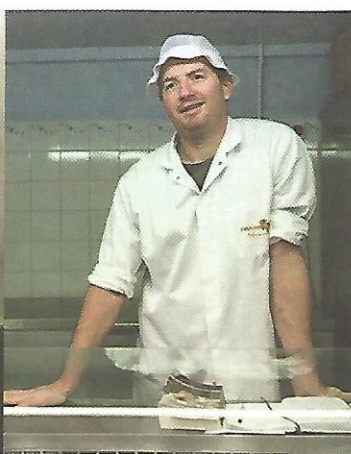
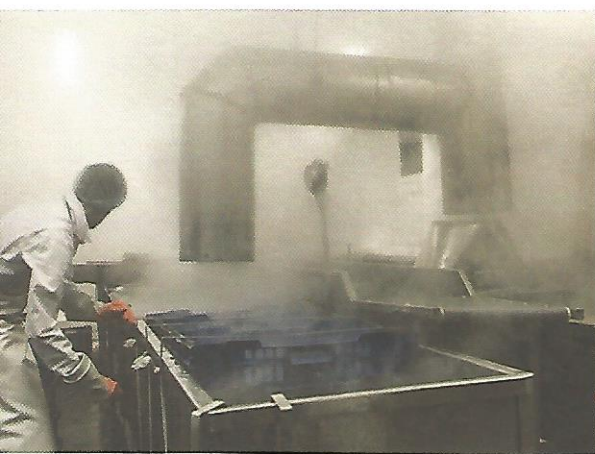
1. Soak the carragheen in warm water until soft and slightly jelly-like.
2. Warm the milk and cream gently with the sugar, lemon peel and vanilla to dissolve and infuse respectively.
3. Drain the carragheen well and add to the milk and cream - gently bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 10 minutes and when the mixture begins to thicken (it should coat the back of a spoon or the side of the pan), remove from the heat and strain into a jug.
4. Immediately pour the mixture into moulds.
5. Allow to cool and thicken. These can be refrigerated for later on if required.
6. To turn out the panna cotta you may need to dip the mould into hot water to loosen and press gently around the outside edge of the panna cotta to release from the side of the mould. Turn out onto a plate.

Blackberry Compote

1. Add the sugar to the water in a saucepan and heat until the sugar has dissolved into a sugar syrup.
2. Wash and pick over the blackberries, discarding any hard, unripe or mushy berries.
3. Add the blackberries to the sugar syrup with the sweet geranium leaves and poach gently for 20 minutes.
4. Leave to cool and serve with the panna cotta.







WE ♥ CORNISH CRABS

The Fat Hen's Caroline Davey gets her fresh crabs from the fishermen at Sennen and Newlyn. Based on Newlyn's quayside, Harvey & Sons has been sourcing the best shellfish from fishermen all over the county for 60 years, and supplies crabs to restaurants all around Cornwall and the rest of the UK.

"CATCHING CRABS IS ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND, PASSIVE FISHING – THERE IS NO BY-CATCH AND ANYTHING THAT IS TOO SMALL GETS PUT BACK INTO THE SEA TO CARRY ON

BREEDING," explains Paul Harvey, one of the trio of brothers that run this family business. Many of his customers favour the white meat, but the brown crab meat is better for soups and crab cakes, while the waxy, red meat from the hen crabs tends to be sweeter and is full of iron too.

John Tonkin, a crab fisherman from Cadgwith, supplies much of his catch to Harvey & Sons. Crabbing off the Lizard for as many days

of the year as the weather and tides permit, he can haul in around 400 crabs a day. "I've been crabbing for about 24 years and it's a good living," says John. "In summer, when you're out on the ocean as the sun comes up, there's nowhere better to be on the whole planet. Sometimes we get dolphins and porpoises around the boat – we've even seen a fin whale and its baby."

Not only does John get a buzz from hauling in shellfish, he's also keen to emphasise that it's a very sustainable way of fishing: "We only take what is good and the rest goes back alive," he says. "It's nonsense that we're running out of fish – there's more fish now than there was when I started. We've just had our best crab season in years. Nature is very good at looking after itself."

James Bosustow – one of Newlyn's fishermen who supplies Harvey & Sons as well as selling his catch in the market – agrees that there is no shortage of fish off the coast of Cornwall: "There's masses of fish out there lately," says James. "Hake and haddock are coming back in abundance, and just off Newlyn we get plenty of monkfish, turbot, brill, pollock and ling."

CAROLINE'S TIPS ON HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CRABS

- **Put the crab in the freezer for about one hour.** This makes the crab sleepy and is the most humane way of preparing it.
- **To minimise the suffering of the crab, I prefer to kill it immediately before cooking.** To do this, in quick succession, insert a skewer and wiggle it, firstly into the depression below the tail and then between the eyes.
- **Once it stops moving, put the crab straight into a large pan of salted water on a rolling boil.** Bring the water back to the boil and cook for 20 minutes.
- **Remove the crab and leave to cool.**
- **Twist and break off the claws and legs from the body.** Put the body to one side.
- **The claw is in three sections.** Break off the section closest to the body, put to one side and place the remainder of the claw on a chopping board. Give the claw a sharp tap with a rolling pin/small hammer to crack the shell.
- **Pull the two remaining sections apart and, using a crab pick or the handle of a teaspoon, ease the meat away from the shell into a bowl.** Repeat for the first section. Be careful not to break the thin cartilage of the claw into the crabmeat.
- **Follow a similar pattern for the legs.**
- **Prize the crab shell away from the body, drain any water from the shell and scoop the brown meat into a bowl.** Using a fork, mix the brown meat into a paste.
- **Remove grey gills (or dead man's fingers) from the body and discard.** Despite the name these are not actually poisonous, merely tough and indigestible. Carefully tease the white meat from the leg cavities and body comb.
- **Chill the crabmeat before eating.**

Top tip: A clean pair of mole grips is useful for cracking claws and legs too. You can adjust the pressure to ensure the shell cracks but does not shatter, making it less likely that you will end up with shell in your crabmeat.

