

Use your loaf

As much as a third of our daily bread is thrown out but if we started eating artisan loaves, we would learn to treasure this wonderful foodstuff, writes **Veronica Burke** of Scotland the Bread

Artisan bakeries are on the rise as more people become aware of what is likely to be in – or to be missing from – supermarket loaves and seek out unadulterated, naturally-fermented real bread. Meanwhile, the bread available to most citizens continues to be our most wasted food, with as much as a third of it being thrown away uneaten.

Scotland grows enough wheat to feed its people seven times over but imports almost all of its bread flour, made from wheat varieties that generally have smaller amounts of the nutrients needed for health than in the past. Scotland The Bread sprang from one simple idea – to grow more nutritious breadmaking wheat and bake it locally. Crop research has produced promising early results and the breads made from them taste delicious.

By training community bakers, we can help to create “more jobs per loaf”. When we know what is in our bread and who it was made by, it has value beyond the price. If you buy, or make, a loaf of real bread, be sure to use every last piece of it.

Here are some favourites dishes for the summer using various breads from recent training courses – a Borodinsky rye bread, a ciabatta and an enriched challah. ■

Veronica Burke hosts the Bread Matters breadmaking courses taught by her husband **Andrew Whitley** at their organic farm in the Borders. Together with five other directors, they lead Scotland the Bread, to establish a Scottish flour and bread supply that is healthy, equitable, locally-controlled and sustainable. Community shares in this social business are available until the end of the month. Visit www.scotlandthebread.org or scotlandbread.com

Croutons, green salad, honey and mustard dressing

Any sourdough loaf with an open, chewy texture is likely to make good croutons. Ciabatta or focaccia, which already have oil in them, are especially well-suited to the job. Croutons can be stored in an airtight box in a cold larder or the fridge, to be used several days later on salads or soups, as snacks and in packed lunches. This brief spell of summer, when – if we're lucky – we can pick fresh leaves, rinse, dry and serve them within minutes, is when a salad spinner comes into its own. The leaves need to be dry and crisp if they are not going to become a limp mess soon after the dressing goes onto them. I usually have a jar of this salad dressing in the fridge to liven up a cold lunch of eggs, potatoes and beans.

Serves six

100g leftover ciabatta, cut into 1.5cm cubes
40ml extra virgin olive oil
fresh herbs and sea salt
1 tbsp coarse grain mustard
½ tsp light honey
50ml white wine vinegar
300ml extra virgin olive oil
a generous handful of lettuce leaves, rocket and/or spinach per person

1 Pour the oil over the bread cubes and toast them in an ovenproof dish at 180C/Gas Mark 4 for ten minutes (or fry them on the hob, uncovered), turning them once or twice during cooking. When they are golden brown, remove them from the heat and add the fresh herbs and sea salt, turning the cubes once more in the oily dish or pan.

2 Place the honey and mustard together in a large bowl, then add the white wine vinegar. Pour in the olive oil, starting slowly and whisking the whole time. The dressing will be thick and pour slowly.



Blackcurrant bread and butter trifle, main; Hasselback-style courgettes with pangrattato, below



3 Rinse and spin the leaves and place them in a wide bowl. Scatter with the croutons and pour on the dressing at the last moment before serving.

Hasselback-style courgettes with pangrattato

Breadcrumbs are a quick and easy standby. They freeze well and can be used to make rissoles, fishcakes or to top a savoury crumble. The versatile pangrattato (grated bread) raises them to a new level. It can be sprinkled over almost any vegetable before cooking. You can vary the nuts and seeds – basil and walnuts work particularly well with tomatoes. A useful recipe when there is likely to be a glut of courgettes, this is a good way to use ageing bread and to extend a meagre portion of hard cheese such as Parmesan.

Serves six

6 large or 12 small courgettes
2 slices of any stale bread, grated or crumbed
a handful flaked almonds and pumpkin seeds
a handful of fresh herbs such as lemon thyme and oregano, finely chopped
grated zest of half a lemon
sea salt and black pepper
3 tbsp olive oil

1 Pre-heat the oven to 190C/Gas Mark 5.
 2 Mix the breadcrumbs or grated bread with the fresh herbs, then add the nuts and seeds, the lemon zest and salt and pepper to season.
 3 When you have a crunchy texture, add the olive oil and rub the crumb mixture until everything is moist but not wet (the result should be a crumble, rather than a paste). Season with sea salt and black pepper.
 4 Cut downwards across the length of the courgettes at a slight angle, at 5mm intervals, taking care not to cut them all the way through. Cut deeply enough to allow the courgette to fan out so that the pangrattato falls into the openings. If you do slice through it, use a small wooden skewer to hold the pieces together whilst they cook.
 5 Rub the breadcrumb mixture gently over each courgette and allow any extra crumbs to lie in the dish. Roast in the oven for ten minutes or so, until the topping is crispy and the courgettes are still firm.

Blackcurrant bread and butter trifles

Fresh blackcurrants are bursting with vitamin C as well as with flavour and it's a shame to diminish either by boiling or over-sweetening them. The combination of a little sugar with a generous teaspoonful of cardamom makes the blackcurrants zing – a great addition to granola or oats for breakfast. The berries contrast well with the buttery richness of the bread in this summery version of bread and butter pudding. It is topped with a thick, creamy vanilla custard – a crème without the brûlée!

Serves six

400g blackcurrants
1 tsp ground cardamom
2 tbsp vanilla sugar
100g leftover enriched bread such as brioche or challah
80g unsalted butter
2 large organic egg yolks
300ml double cream
½ vanilla pod
redcurrants, to garnish (optional)

1 Rinse and drain the blackcurrants. Any water remaining on the berries will be enough to cook them in. Heat them in a saucepan over a gentle heat with two teaspoons of the sugar and cardamom for five to ten minutes. Remove from the heat, before they boil or begin to fall apart, and leave to cool.

2 Slice the bread, then stack the slices and cut them diagonally into thin, irregular pieces. Place the butter in a heavy frying pan and fry the pieces of bread until they turn a light, golden colour. Sprinkle on a tablespoon of the sugar and leave to cool.

3 Whisk the egg yolks and mix them with the remaining vanilla sugar. Heat the cream with the vanilla pod until it begins to “wobble” but remove it from the heat before it boils. Pour it slowly onto the egg yolks and sugar, whisking all the time. Return it to the saucepan and cook over a medium heat, leaving the vanilla pod in it and stirring until it thickens enough to coat the back of the spoon.

4 Remove the pan from the heat and turn the custard into a cold dish. Give it a light whisk from time to time as it cools to prevent a skin from forming.
 5 When the custard is cool and the fruit and bread are at room temperature, layer them into six individual glass bowls or one serving dish. Start with the berries, followed by the pieces of sugared, fried bread. Finish with the custard, after giving it a final whisk and removing the vanilla pod. As a quick and light alternative to the topping, use a live, natural yoghurt such as one from Loch Arthur Creamery. Add a few redcurrants to garnish.

Cooler Western Australia offers vibrancy and depth

Western Australia is where it is all going to happen in the next 25 years – as it has the greatest capacity to grow whilst still producing premium wines,” says leading Australian critic James Halliday, speaking during the launch of his new *Wine Companion* in Perth recently. Halliday believes Australia's cooler climates, notably Western Australia and Tasmania, offer the brightest future as warmer parts of the country face increasing temperatures and drought conditions.

Western Australia produces just five per cent of the nation's wine, but quality is more important than quantity here and it is hard to find wines under £10.

What I love about Western Australian wines is their vibrancy and depth of ripe fruit. The whites have a delightful flintiness and natural tight acidity and the reds are always elegant.

Riesling Blind Spot Frankland River Riesling 2015

Our tasters loved this cool, sleek, very dry riesling with its limey aromas and vibrant natural acidity. They found it poised, with good length for the price. It could benefit from more time in the bottle. **£9.50, The Wine Society, www.thewinesociety.com**

Sauvignon blanc and semillon white blends

M&S Margaret River Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc 2014 Evans & Tate
 Fresh, zippy, limey unoaked blend with a slight austere greenness and herby edge – showing the typical elegance of Margaret River whites. **£10.50, Marks & Spencer**

McHenry Hohnen Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc 2013

David Hohnen, creator of New Zealand's Cloudy Bay returned home to Western Australia,



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setting up with brother-in-law Murray McHenry. Tropical fruit meets zippy, fresh, grassy flavours – just 10 per cent oaked. A good classic introduction.

£14.25, Oddbins; £14.95, Berry Bros & Rudd, www.bbr.com

Cullen's 'Mangan' Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc 2014

Mangan is Cullen's dry-farmed biodynamically run vineyard and this is a lemony cinnamon textural blend (59 per cent semillon, 39 per cent sauvignon blanc and 2 per cent verdello) with a tiny proportion aged four months in one year French barriques. **£19.99, Cornelius Wines; Drinkmonger; WoodWinters, Edinburgh; St Andrews Wine Co; Whole Food Market, Giffnock**

White blend

Laissez Fair Blend 2014 Larry Cherubino
 Alsace meets Australia in this wild fermented ‘field blend’ of pinot gris, gewurztraminer, sauvignon gris and riesling in unknown proportions, picked and fermented together. Exotically perfumed, lychees, musk and honey with a rich, peachy, textural palate. A superb match with Thai food. **£19.15, Berry Bros & Rudd, www.bbr.com**

Chardonnay

Prelude Chardonnay 2012 Leeuwin
 Beautifully structured oaked chardonnay from leading Leeuwin estate, with lovely creamy depth, ripe citric finish and impressive length. **£23-£29, www.secretcellar.co.uk; www.winedirect.co.uk; www.luvians.com**

Filius Chardonnay 2014 Vasse Felix

Ripe, fresh, elegant style so typical of Margaret River's pioneering estate Vasse Felix, which focuses on lighter-weight, affordable styles. **£14.39, Majestic Wine**

Shiraz

Madfish Shiraz 2014
 Named after Madfish Bay near Denmark, this is a very different take on Aussie shiraz – with dark cherry notes it's spicy and peppery – and more in the lightweight, fleshy and elegant style compared to Barossa or Hunter heavyweights. A good price. **£10.79, Valvona & Crolla, Edinburgh**

Cabernet sauvignon and red blends

Axis Cabernet Sauvignon 2014
 Listed by Lidl, but hard to find in store. Of the two Axis cabernets (one from Coonawarra, one from Margaret River); the Margaret River wine is medium bodied with blackcurrant, almond notes, quite tannic and a reasonable price. **£6.49, Lidl**

Filius Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 Vasse Felix

During our recent trip Down Under, Vasse Felix scored highly with tasters for elegance and affordability. This delicious, minty, smoky blend of cabernet and merlot is soft, smooth and easy-going; and a great introduction to Margaret River cabernet. **£12.99, Waitrose; £14.39, Majestic Wine**

Amy's Blend 2014 Moss Wood

Another pioneer – Moss Wood is best known for superb (and pricey) cabernets, so this blend of four grapes (cabernet, petit verdot, malbec and merlot) looks like a real steal. The taste is pure eucalyptus, mint and blackberries with spicy vanilla undertones. Exceptional for the price. **£14.99, Waitrose, Ocado, Secret Cellar**



Join Rose's Western Australia Masterclass in Edinburgh on 2 November, £42, www.rose.murraybrown.com