

Seasonal & local

Veg box ideas

MARTIN MACKEY is on a mission to get Britain eating more kale, writes *Clare Hargreaves*. He grows five varieties on his organic farm in the Stour Valley and says: 'We started growing kale 20 years ago when we were looking for an alternative to cabbage for our veg box scheme.'

'At first, people were sceptical, but as we started growing more varieties, they loved it. People usually think of kale as the curly green stuff. But there are actually a variety of colours and leaf shapes, including red kale and cavolo nero – black cabbage – all of which are delicious steamed and dressed with butter and salt, or added to a casserole.'

Martin also grows the smaller, sweeter Red Russian and Hungry Gap kales, whose baby leaves can even be used in winter salads. 'Hungry Gap is my favourite,' he says. 'It's quite sweet and, when you steam it, it reduces like spinach.'

You can buy Martin's kale at Wye and Whitstable farmers' markets in Kent; Stoke Newington farmers' market in London; through the farm's veg box scheme



(ripplefarmorganics.co.uk) or through the Growing Communities box scheme (growingcommunities.org).

Dates for your diary

8 March Moretonhampstead Festival of Food, Drink and the Arts, Devon (moretonfestival.com)

15-16 March Leek Food & Drink Festival, Derbyshire (leekfoodanddrink.co.uk)

29-30 March Kendal Festival of Food, Cumbria (www.kendalfestivaloffood.co.uk)



KALE

Abundant, cheap and super-healthy, kale comes in a variety of hues from green and purple to practically black. Shredded or stripped of its stalks, kale suits quick cooking methods like blanching, steaming or stir-frying with a few punchy flavours like **garlic** or **chilli** added at the end.

EASY CHINESE Add Chinese flavours to steamed or boiled kale – toss through a dash of **oyster sauce** and some chopped **ginger, garlic** and a little **chilli**. Great with **salmon, duck** or **pork**.

SUPERHEALTHY SALADS Kale finely chopped in a food processor can be added to grainy salads like **tabbouleh** instead of chopped parsley.

SPANISH SIDE DISH Sizzle cubes of cooking **chorizo** in a wide pan until crisp. Add some shredded kale and a splash of water, cover the pan and steam until wilted. Lovely with meaty **white fish** or **roast chicken**.

Quick ideas for using up the best of this month's seasonal produce

CAULIFLOWER

Its mild flavour goes as well with spice as with a cheese sauce, and it's also worth remembering that it can be eaten raw. As well as ubiquitous white, look out for the stunning lime green romanesco or a light orange variety.

NEW WAY WITH MASH

Boil some cauliflower with **potatoes**, then mash with **milk** and **butter** as normal.

TRY SPICE-ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

As a new side dish, toss cauliflower florets with a little **oil** and your favourite spice, such as **cumin** or **curry powder**. Roast in a hot oven until lightly brown.

MAKE MORE OF CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

Add crispy **pancetta** to the mix before baking until golden and bubbling.

PARSNIPS

Small to medium parsnips are best for cooking. The bigger they get, the less sweet and more fibrous they become. Parsnips can be boiled, mashed, stewed or roasted, and work particularly well when paired with other sweet ingredients like maple syrup or honey.

SWEET PARSNIP CAKES

Use in place of grated carrots in your favourite carrot cake recipe – they add a sweet, earthy flavour.

FOR EXTRA-CRUNCHY ROAST PARSNIPS

Toss parboiled parsnip wedges with a little **oil, polenta, Parmesan** and **nutmeg**, then roast until golden.

BRUNCH DISH

Replace half the quantity of grated potato with grated parsnip in a hash brown recipe.





Food lovers' weekend

BATH



Saturday morning

With fewer tourists about, this is a good time of year to discover the city. Head to Bath Farmers' Market (bathfarmersmarket.co.uk) in Green Park Station. Established in 1997, this was the UK's first farmers' market. Look out for local produce like dreamy dessert tarts made by Paul Davis from Oven to You, bacon and sausages from Sandridge Farmhouse, choice cuts from The Thoroughly Wild Meat Company, and ewe's cheeses crafted by Homewood Cheeses.



Cheese heaven

Stock up on Somerset cheeses at the Fine Cheese Company (finecheese.co.uk), on Walcot Street in Bath's 'artisan' quarter. It has a café, too, offering delights such as Twice-baked Keen's cheddar soufflé.

Coffee break

The cakes at Sam's Kitchen (samskitchendeli.co.uk), a laid-back café a few doors up,

Clare Hargreaves finds plenty of great places to shop and eat in this picturesque city

are all baked on site. For lunch, there's soup, stew and Ottolenghi-style salads, served with meat or charcuterie from owner Sam Wyld's family farm. You can buy the farm's honey, apple juice and charcuterie to take home, too.

Veggie bites

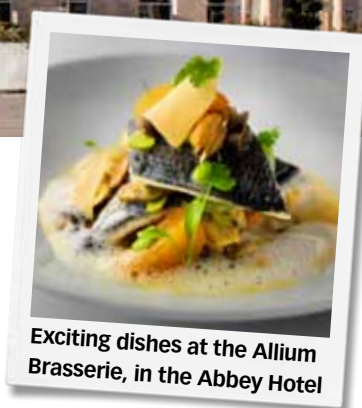
For inventive food and great coffee, try the Green Rocket vegetarian café on Pierrepont Street. Look out for dishes such as Maple & thyme roasted vegetable salad with seared halloumi. It's open for dinner from Thursday to Saturday, too.

Afternoon pit-stop

The stylish shop and café at Hartley Farm (hartley-farm.co.uk) in Winsley, south of Bath, are worth the brief drive. Aberdeen Angus beef and Gloucester Old Spot pork is off the farm, and the lamb is reared by owner Tom Bowles's uncle on the next-door farm. There's a great selection of local vegetables and cheeses. The café is a good spot for lunch, and the homemade cakes are amazing.

Dine in style

Chef Chris Staines has taken Bath by storm since heading up the kitchen at the Allium Brasserie (abbeyhotelbath.co.uk) in the Abbey Hotel, bang in the city centre. Enjoy imaginative dishes with fusion flair (for seven years Chris held a Michelin star at London's Mandarin Oriental Hotel). He uses ingredients such as wasabi and miso to flavour sauces to great effect – so a main might be Gilt head bream with a scallop mousse and cucumber & wasabi beurre blanc. The set early-dinner menu, at £21 for three courses, is a steal.



Exciting dishes at the Allium Brasserie, in the Abbey Hotel

Where to stay

After dinner, drift upstairs to one of the Abbey Hotel's 60 rooms, some with views of the city's historic Abbey. Rooms start at £95, a bargain in well-heeled Bath.

Sunday lunch

Explore Bath's Georgian streets then head to the King William for award-winning gastropub food (kingwilliampub.com) such as Slow-cooked lamb shank and Vanilla rice pudding with pears, marshmallows & honeycomb.

LOCAL SPECIALITY

You can't visit Bath without tasting its famous bun, supposedly first baked in Bath in 1680 by a Huguenot refugee called Solange Luyon – or Sally Lunn, as she was nicknamed by locals. You can still enjoy the bun, a large brioche, at Sally Lunn's tearoom at 4 North Parade Passage (sallylunns.co.uk).



3 OF THE BEST Restaurants for Mother's Day

Talbot Hotel, Malton, Yorkshire
(talbotmalton.co.uk)

BBC chef James Martin has returned to his home town to head up the kitchen at this refurbished Grade II-listed hotel. Enjoy Yorkshire produce, from Wakefield rhubarb to Whitby crab. As well as the lauded Beer-braised beef cheek, we loved the North coast halibut with Yorkshire chorizo and the Malton honey parfait. *Set lunch from £18; Sunday lunch, from £20.*



The Seagrave Arms, Weston Subedge, Gloucs
(seagravearms.co.uk)

Settle beside the fire in one of the various rooms in this Cotswolds manor. The atmosphere is cosy yet slick – much like the food. Starter might be a Breast of wood pigeon with Puy lentils and main a Confit of Madgett's Farm duck cassoulet. You'll also find real ales from local breweries. If you fancy making a weekend of it, there are eight swanky ensuite rooms. *Mains from around £14.*



Y Polyn, Nantgaredig, Wales
(ypolynrestaurant.co.uk)

This gorgeous gastropub may be out in the Carmarthenshire sticks, but it's worth the trek to enjoy hearty regional fare inside a fine old inn. Starters include Carmarthen ham with slaw, while main might be Salt-marsh Gower lamb. There are also fabulous desserts and Sunday lunches. *Set Sunday lunch from £18.50; mains from around £10.*

