

FOOD

Root-to-leaf eating: a tasty way to cut waste

From carrot-leaf soup to radish-top pesto, dishes that use the whole of the veg are the latest sustainable food trend. By **Clare Hargreaves**

Did lockdown change your eating habits? Have you been cooking more from scratch, growing your own vegetables, maybe keeping a closer eye on how much food you waste?

For my part, starved of my usual work, I spent lockdown on a 40-acre farm on one of the Isles of Scilly growing vegetables (and I'm still here). The produce is sold to locals via weekly boxes and also, since the lifting of travel restrictions to the island, to holidaymakers who buy them from an honesty stall outside the farmhouse.

Naturally, the farmer's family and I live largely off our own just-picked veg (otherwise there's just what's in the island's tiny shop). So this has been a rare opportunity to eat plot-to-plate for three delicious months.

But if there's one thing I have learned during my time as a farmhand (apart from the back-breaking toil that goes into producing our veg) it is just how little of our vegetables we normally use. Buy a bunch of carrots or beetroots in a supermarket, for instance, and the leafy tops have usually already been discarded. Feast on pretty florets of broccoli or cauliflower and we rarely consider that the leaves and stalks might be tasty, too.



Clare's carrot-top pesto and galette made from beetroot roots, stems and leaves CLARE HARGREAVES

So I decided to investigate just how edible the bits we normally throw away actually are. We currently waste around a third of our food, which in turn contributes to global warming. Could eating root-to-leaf be a good, if tiny, start at tackling that staggering statistic? I call this way of eating a "gleaning diet" (gleaners historically being the poor who gathered leftover crops after harvest).

I got nibbling. First there were carrots with their lacy green plumes. At my farmer's market at home they usually advise me to discard these as soon as possible to make the carrots last. But did you know that humans have been savouring the carrot plant's fragrant leaves far longer than we have been eating its roots? For example, carrot is included in a list of vegetables grown in the royal garden of Babylon in the 8th century BC, but it is classed as an aromatic herb rather than an ordinary vegetable. Not until the 12th century do we find written descriptions of Europeans eating the roots, then dark red (orange ones didn't arrive until the 18th century). Armed with this knowledge I turned my farm-grown leaves into a pesto by blitzing them with garlic, walnuts or pumpkin seeds, and Twineham Grange (Parmesan-style) cheese. Drizzled over cumin-roasted



Harvest time: Clare picking chard at the farm where she is staying in the Isles of Scilly; she makes sure she uses the stems as well as the leaves

Crop a load of this How to get involved

■ While the nose-to-tail movement advocates eating every part of an animal – eyes, offal and all – root-to-leaf eating is all about making the most of the parts of vegetables we usually discard.

■ The plant-based restaurant **Stem & Glory, in Cambridge and London, was among the first to use the leaves, tops and stalks of vegetables that are usually discarded, in all its dishes.**



■ A new cookbook, **Root Stem Leaf Flower, by the River Cottage chef Gill Meller (Quadrille, £27), explores delicious ways to good with the whole of nature's bounty.**

■ To link with others to rescue farm produce and turn it into value-added products, join **Feedback's Gleaning Network**, which works with UK farmers – see gleaning.feedbackglobal.org

carrots, the resulting dish was a carrot soup. Equally successful was a soup made from the tops (along with celery and spring onion – stems and leaves) that I scattered with amber-hued jewels of diced butter-sweated carrot.

Soon I discovered that the greens you can use in pesto are almost limitless. Move over basil, time to give our neglected leaves a look-in. Radish, turnip, and swede tops, provided you use young, tender leaves, are all delicious – and radish leaves have a feisty kick, too. These tops have plenty of other uses. In winter, young swede leaves make a great seasonal salad leaf, and turnip tops are wonderful sweated

in butter. Try sprout tops too – as good as cabbage.

One day I was tasked with pinching out a field of broad beans. Again, the pinched-out tops were delicious, both raw in salad and cooked along with farm-grown spuds and eggs in a frittata. (Greeks eat the young pods, too, stewed with lemon, dill and artichoke hearts).

Beetroot leaves are equally good. (At home when I buy a bunch of beets at my farmer's market and they offer to remove the leaves, I irritatingly tell them that for me they're the best bit.) The stalks are also good, and I've spotted them, like little pink worm casts, coiled up

on plates in some top restaurants. For a simple salad that's hard to beet (scuse the pun), sweat the chopped stalks and leaves in a bit of olive oil until soft. Combine them with quartered roasted beets, dress with a garlicky vinaigrette, and scatter with crumbled feta.

Or if you want to impress, stuff the smaller leaves with rice, the way the Greeks stuff vine leaves.

Another revelation is broccoli. On the farm, once we'd harvested the green florets, I turned to the tender leaves growing around them, and discovered they were as tasty as cabbage or kale. Equally delicious are the stalks. They're good pickled, but my favourite way to prepare them is spirals into "broccolettini", which even the vegetable-wary kids guzzled. Use them in place of egg noodles in a lo mein, or sauté them in butter or oil with chopped garlic and anchovies as a carb-free "pasta". Do the same with cauliflower or romanesco leaves and stems.

Obviously we don't all have farms or gardens we can raid, but even if you shop at the supermarket, there are still plenty of leaves and stems you can harness. Is it time to embrace our vegetables – roots, stems, leaves and all?

Twitter: @larderloutUK

CONSUMER

Politics and ice cream is a recipe for hot debate

Why are big brands such as Ben & Jerry's taking on politicians? By **Kasia Delgado**

In an odd turn of events, Ben & Jerry's ice cream has involved itself in the issue of migrants crossing the channel.

On Tuesday, the official Ben & Jerry's UK Twitter account posted several tweets tagging the Home Secretary, which began: "Hey @PritiPatel, we think the real crisis is our lack of humanity for people fleeing war, climate change and torture." This was in response to the Government saying the UK must consider changing asylum laws to deter migrants from crossing.

A Home Office source replied: "Priti is working day and night to bring an end to these small boat crossings, which are facilitated by international criminal gangs and are rightly of serious concern to the British people."

"If that means upsetting the social media team for a brand of overpriced junk food, then so be it." Many consumers have cheered Ben & Jerry's on, while some have accused the brand of being "woke" and "virtue signalling".

Ben & Jerry's used to be seen as a kind of corporate hippie when its founders, Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, opened their ice cream shop in a renovated petrol station in 1978, and it became a symbol of social enterprise. But it was sold two decades ago to Unilever, the UK's biggest listed company, which has faced criticism over workers' rights, lobbying, animal testing, environmental issues and more.

Some feel that the ice cream brand causing a stir simply distracts from the migrants we should be focusing on.

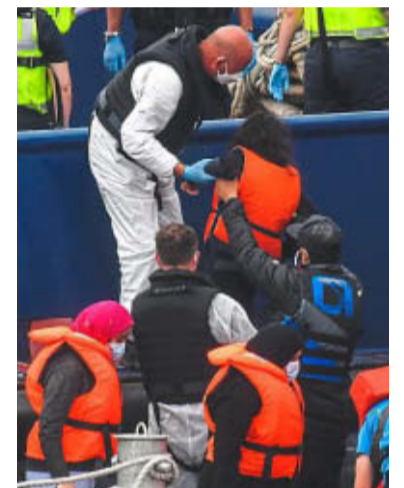
Away from this, what is telling about Ben & Jerry's comments is that it shows how corporate statements, which used to be bland and safe, have changed.

"Brands have grown in confidence in regards to having an opinion on highly politicised topics or debates online," says Matt Navarra, a digital consultant who previously worked for the UK Government as a digital communications expert.

"This has led to a rise in cause-led marketing where brands hook into the values and opinions of many of their customers."

The PR firm Edelman recently found that 57 per cent of consumers are buying or boycotting a brand based on its social or political purpose. The strength of feeling was clear when Rishi Sunak posted a photo on social media of himself

6 Fifty-seven per cent of consumers are buying or boycotting a brand based on its social or political purpose



The Home Secretary has attracted ire for her response to refugees trying to cross the Channel GETTY

making Yorkshire Tea ahead of his first budget as Chancellor. The poor soul manning the tea's social media spent days inundated by boycott-promising tea drinkers.

But most brands still try to stay as neutral as possible. So why has Ben & Jerry's commented on migrants? "This isn't the first issue they've been vocal about," says Katie King, the chief executive of Zoodikers & AI in Business. In 2016, the firm published a long article in support of Black Lives Matter, and it has waded into LGBTQ+ issues.

How do we know when brands are simply employing a cynical, short-term marketing ploy? As 1 writer David Woode pointed out after the killing of George Floyd: "My email to an organisation for an unrelated article was met with: 'We are supporting Blackout Tuesday. Please expect a delay in reply #blacklivesmatter.' The cynic in me wondered whether Black Lives would still matter on Wednesday."

Perhaps the test, Ms King says, is whether a brand is willing to practise what it preaches on the other 364 days of the year when they aren't talking about it. "The past few months have provided some really strong – and some really shocking – examples of this. We've seen fast fashion brands support Black Lives Matter, but not use black models in their campaigns."

Over the next few days, it is likely that Ben & Jerry's will turn up on some new shopping lists and be crossed off others. "These brands know that they may well isolate some customers who don't agree with them," says Ms King.

"But if a brand is this committed to its cause, then maybe these people aren't the type of customers they would want associated with their brand."

PEOPLE

'It was a reminder of the power of the human spirit'

The gruelling challenge in Bear Grylls' new TV series almost came to a sticky end. By **Kerri-Ann Roper**

Filming an endurance race involving 66 teams was never likely to be an easy task. But Bear Grylls has revealed that the challenge of making his latest show proved so hazardous that at one point he had to stop the race for eight hours.

Some members of the teams, which were racing non-stop across rugged Fijian terrain, became trapped in remote ravines. Others had to be airlifted to safety after developing injuries and life-threatening infections. "My biggest concern is always getting people

home safe at the end," Grylls says. In the wilderness, he adds, there is a lot to go wrong.

"It only takes three or four small, inconsequential things and suddenly you've got a disaster."

Thankfully, everyone made it home safely, including Grylls, who

is talking to me now by video from his home in north Wales. He sits on a green hill with a view of the ocean sprawling behind him in the distance.

"We live on a little island up here," he explains. "The mainland is a couple of miles that way." He points into the distance.

The new show, *World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji*, was filmed last autumn. Grylls is the host as the 66 teams from 30 countries race for 11 days, 24 hours a day, across 417 miles of Fijian terrain complete with mountains, jungles and oceans.

The 10-episode series features 330 competitors who form teams of five, including four racers and an assistant crew member.

Racers had to contend with "high mountains that are freezing cold, down to 100 per cent humidity

rainforests, miles of swamps, grasslands and rivers".

It is, Grylls says, truly the world's toughest race. "You've got the ocean, so these adventure racers really went through it all, and then you have the human factor of what it's actually like of trying to keep a small team of four people alive and moving and going forward when you haven't slept for 10 days and you're dehydrated and exhausted and you're hungry, and you're still having to make good decisions about your navigation."

A former SAS serviceman and chief scout, Grylls is no stranger to braving and conquering the elements himself. His *Running Wild With...* series has had him take on the most stomach-churning environments, with prominent guests including the former US

president Barack Obama. So, for him, the outdoors is home. But how did he feel presenting and not participating? "Inspirational. When you see blood being poured out of boots and blisters, and yet relentless positivity and determination to hold the weakest member of the team and to still go on, it was really mind-blowing at times," he says.

"It was a reminder of the power of friendships and what you can do together, when you help each other and when you're honest and vulnerable with each other. But also a reminder of the power of the human spirit."

The diversity of the teams was another heartening element of the series. Twins Tashi and Nungshi Malik, from India's Team Khukuri Warriors, wanted to inspire women.

"For us, climbing all these massive mountains, skiing the Poles and adventure racing really affirms our belief that if we dream big and we commit to it, we can achieve the impossible."

"That's what our message was for the girls in India and across the globe. Nature doesn't discriminate based on gender," they say. For Team Endure, with



adventure race veteran Mark Macy and son Travis among its members, the series was a poignant journey.

Mark, 66, has Alzheimer's disease, but participates in the race alongside the team.

"It was amazing to see, when you see humans overcome incredible adversity, it's impossible not to be moved and inspired," Grylls says.

"That's what I loved about the *World's Toughest Race*: the regular people, the regular rookies, who've already battled so much in their life, digging deep and leaning on the power of togetherness and taking on what looks like the impossible and coming through it, almost against unbelievable odds."

World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji launches on Amazon Prime Video in the UK on Friday