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Welcome to your free  
preserving  
magazine - produced  
with help from our  
wonderful  
customers**

# **The Good Life**

**- All Things Preserving -**  
Autumn/Winter 2017

Recipes  
Articles  
Tips & Ideas  
Product Information

**WARES**  
— of —  
*Knutsford*

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# WARES — of — *Knutsford*

## Welcome to the 6th edition of 'The Good Life' our free preserving magazine for customers.

We are all full of expectation at Wares following reports of an excellent growing season for fruit and vegetables and in anticipation of our wonderful customers having a very busy autumn and winter producing all those delicious jams, chutneys, pickles and marmalade.

This edition is full of the usual tips, product information and recipes. We have also included some fantastic contributions from customers who have been kind enough to write in and share their adventures into artisan making, rural life and starting their own businesses.

Wares of Knutsford is a family business born from a hardware shop in Knutsford, Cheshire. Now 20 years later we are proud to offer the widest range of jars and bottles on the internet. We work very hard on our prices and customer service and we pride ourselves on supporting all the enterprising folk out there who still see the value and joy of growing, making, preserving, selling and eating homemade produce.

May I take this opportunity once again to thank you, our customers, for your loyal and enthusiastic support as always. We enjoy serving you and hearing all about your food and drink exploits. If you have a preserving story or favourite recipe to share why not write it up and send it to us for our next edition of 'The Good Life'!

All the very best to you,  
Valerie Byles, Managing Director



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Please see our website  
for a huge range and  
better prices!

[www.waresofknutsford.co.uk](http://www.waresofknutsford.co.uk)

## **Wholesale**

We also offer wholesale on all our jars and bottles. Unlike other companies you can make up a wholesale order from a range of different products ~ provided the total reaches £450.00 (ex VAT)

# The Good Life



## Jam or Preserve

What's the difference?



### Jelly

Translucent and firm enough to hold it's shape.  
Made with fruit juice.



### Jam

Cloudy and softer than Jelly.  
Made with crushed or chopped fruit.



### Preserves

Chunky with pieces of fruit.  
Made with crushed and sliced/whole fruit.



### Marmalade

Jelly with visible pieces of peel or rind.  
Most often made with citrus.



### Conserves

Jam made with dried fruits and/or nuts.  
May contain spices or liquor.



### Chutney

Sweet and savory or tangy version of jam.  
Made with fruit or veggies, vinegar and spices.



### Fruit Butter

Smooth and thick.  
Made with pureed fruit. No butter involved.



### Fruit Curd

Thick and creamy.  
Made with fruit juice, egg and butter.



### Fruit Spread

Generic term for anything fruity that spreads.  
Popular on labels for food-like products.



### Fruit Honey or Syrup

Sticky and thick.  
Made with fruit juice/puree and honey/sugar.

By RunningHutch.com

## This issue.....

### Fermenting Vegetables...

a beginners guide to a healthy hobby that is growing in popularity all the time

### Tips from Australia...helpful preserving hints from Australian Woman's Weekly

### Jane Hassell-McCosh...an interview with the queen of marmalade and hostess of the astonishing world marmalade festival and competition on her Dalemmain estate in Cumbria

### Artisan Tales...how it all started for some of our intrepid customers.

### Autumn and Winter

### Recipes...tasty and unusual, tried and tested winners.

### Nature's Bounty....

we hear from new author Fiona Holland who's new life on a small-holding in Wales has provided inspiration for her book, her cooking and for the children she cares for.

### Mary Berry Christmas

Pudding recipe



## New in for Autumn 2017 - German WECK Jars

Hugely popular across continental Europe and gorgeous to look at....



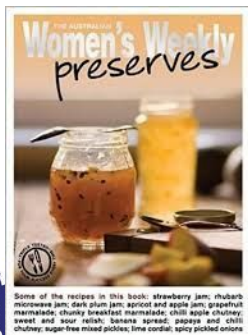
In manufacture since 1902 the Weck jar is a molded glass jar used in canning (bottling) and preserving. Popular for its minimal look and foolproof rubber gasket with a glass lid.

During the canning process the lids are secured by steel tension clips which can be removed once a vacuum seal has formed. During storage the vertical position of the rubber seal's external tongue indicates a good seal remains in place.

Spare clips and rubber seals are available - which is just as well as these jars will last the rest of your life!

We send a weekly special offer email and weekly newsletter with tips and recipes to our customers who request it - please email [info@waresofknutsford.co.uk](mailto:info@waresofknutsford.co.uk) if you would like to sign up...





# Preserving Tips from Down under

COURTESY OF AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY

Here are some tried and tested tips and techniques that will give you success every time. If you follow this guidance your jams, jellies, pickles and chutney's will be a triumph!

## - Choosing Fruit -

Fruit should be as freshly picked as possible and slightly under ripe; at this stage the pectin content (setting agent in preserves) is at it's highest.

For the best results in jam making, make small amounts at a time. The shorter cooking time will give better results in flavour, texture and appearance.

The best fruits for jam making are those with a good balance of acid and pectin. These tend to be the sour fruits, such as gooseberries, blackcurrants, apples and plums. However, the addition of lemon juice, high in both pectin and acid, will improve the setting of any of the low pectin fruits - such as strawberries, raspberries and apricots.

You can also reserve the seeds and pith/peel from your fruit. Both are high in pectin. Seeds can be soaked in half a cup of water and then drained - the gelatinous fluid is added to your pan. Alternatively, tie a muslin bag containing the pips, peel and pith to the side of the pan - great for setting and flavour.

## - Equipment -

Always use a wide topped stainless steel or enamel, heavy bottomed saucepan. Do not use copper, cast iron

or aluminium pans - they will all taint the flavour of the jam.

Make sure you have some muslin or a cheesecloth as part of your kit. Great for infusing flavours, straining jellies and adding pectin from pith and pips.

## - Cooking -

Don't be tempted to have more than about 3cm of fruit in the bottom of your pan. Any more and the water will struggle to evaporate and setting will be difficult. Take your time when simmering the fruit before the sugar is added. Much better flavour is achieved by not rushing. The time needed to soften fruit will vary from 10 minutes for soft fruit to 1.5hrs for citrus fruits.

Do not stir the jam once it is at a full rolling boil. Use a wooden spoon to check that it isn't sticking to the bottom of the pan and keep a very close eye towards the end of cooking.

If the jam contains pieces of fruit - let it stand for 5-10 minutes after setting point is reached so that the fruit is dispersed evenly and doesn't sink to the bottom of the jar - once decanted.

## - Setting Point -

Dip the wooden spoon into the mixture, hold the spoon above the mixture and tilt the bowl of the spoon

towards you; as the mixture cooks and thickens the drops will fall more heavily from the spoon. When it's time to test the set point the jam will roll to the edge of the spoon and join together in a heavy mass.

When this happens, remove the jam from the stove. Drop a little of the mixture onto a saucer that has been in the freezer. After a couple of minutes, push the mixture with a finger - you are looking for tiny wrinkles on the surface. If there are no wrinkles - return to the stove and test again in 5 minutes.

## - Jam not Set! -

This is due to an imbalance of pectin; or insufficient evaporation in the cooking process. Lemon juice can be added and the jam re-boiled until it will jell when tested. However, if the jam has darkened in colour and has a caramel taste (which happens when sugar is overcooked) it cannot be re-boiled. If the flavour is still palatable, commercial pectin will set the jam; follow manufacturers directions.

## - Sugar -

White sugar for jams, jellies, conserves and marmalades. Brown sugar gives a richer taste and colour in chutney's and relishes. Warm the sugar before adding for better clarity in your preserves.

Remember for a tastier more flavour filled jam, less than 50% sugar recipes with added pectin or apple/lemon will work best. Try to bring out the "optimum" flavour of the fruit by extracting the natural juices through slow-cooking without water. Then add the sugar. Bramley apples are full of pectin and are sweet when boiled down.





# Blackberry Jelly

.....seed free heaven!

**goodfood**  
Media brand of the year

## Ingredients

1.3kg/3lb blackberries, washed  
2 large cooking apples, washed, cored and diced  
450ml/¾ pint water  
1 lemon, juice only  
preserving or granulated sugar  
2-3 tbsp crème de cassis (optional)  
sterilized jam jars and jam pot covers

## Method

Prepare a jelly bag or tea towel by boiling in water for 2-3 minutes. Wring well and leave to cool. Arrange the jelly bag on a stand or up-turned stool with a large bowl beneath, ready for the fruit juice to drip through.

Place the blackberries, apple, water and lemon juice in a preserving or large, heavy based saucepan.

Bring to the boil, then simmer over a

low heat for 20-25 minutes or until the fruit is completely soft.

Tip the soft fruit and juice into the jelly bag and leave to drip for 8 hours or until all the juice has been released.

Prepare the jam jars by washing in hot soapy water and leaving to dry and warm in a cool oven - 130C/250F/Gas ½ for 10-15 minutes.

Measure the juice. For every 600ml/1 pint weigh 450g/1lb sugar. Put the juice and sugar back into the clean preserving pan, heat over a low heat until all the sugar has dissolved, add the crème de cassis, if using. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until setting point is reached.

Skim away any scum from the top of the jelly and fill the jam jars to the brim.

Cover, seal and label. Store in a cool, dark place until required.



Butter  
Muslin  
£4.20



Jelly  
Straining Kit  
£14.95

## Hedgerow Sling Recipe

1 Dash Blackberry Liqueur  
2 Parts Lemon Juice  
2 Parts Simple Syrup  
(basic sugar syrup)  
5 Parts Sloe Juice  
1 Sprig Mint Leaf

### How to mix

Fill a shaker with ice cubes.  
Add all ingredients. Shake  
and strain into a chilled  
glass filled with crushed ice.





# ADVENTURES IN MARMALADE



**Earlier this year, we were lucky enough to exhibit at the prestigious Dalemain Marmalade Awards in Penrith. This was a very memorable experience and prompted a lot of discussions with preservers and marmalade lovers. We are already looking forward to the 2018 Festival, and have been lucky enough to speak to Mrs. Jane Hasell-McCosh, who was happy to provide a detailed and intriguing insight into the House and Awards.**



**Mrs. Jane Hasell-McCosh**

**What first inspired you to host the marmalade awards?**

I was inspired by the terrible Foot & Mouth epidemic, which hit Cumbria particularly hard. We wanted to do something fun, to bring people back to the county whilst raising money for a wonderful cause in Hospice at Home. I have always loved marmalade, having made it with my mother as a child, and was keen to champion quality preserves in whatever way I could.

**We notice that you have a "campanologists" category in the marmalade awards – how did this come about and do you have a lot of entries from bell-ringing preservers? What is the most unusual category you have?!**

This category was actually inspired by one of our Patrons, who is the rector of St Mary-le-Bow in London. We were reminded of the famous nursery rhyme 'Oranges and Lemons' which mentions both the church and citrus fruits - and this in turn led to us launching a 'peel' of bells at St Mary-le-Bow in celebration of National Marmalade Week. We get lots of entries from campanologists, which is always lovely to see. The most unusual category we have is definitely the 'Macnab' - food to be eaten with fur, fish or fowl. This was inspired by the idea that marmalade cannot be confined to simply a breakfast preserve, but should be embraced at all times of the day, with foods both savoury and sweet - not to mention cocktails!

**A lot of our customers have allotments and veg. patches in an aim to live organically and be self-sufficient. Do you grow your own fruit and vegetables in your beautiful gardens?**

Absolutely - Dalemain has a collection of beautiful heritage apple trees, with fruits which date back to Roman times. We have even been inspired by the Marmalade Festival to grow oranges and lemons here in Cumbria, in our greenhouse! Our kitchen garden marmalade is made using an old recipe from Dalemain's archive, which was made using rhubarb from the gardens here at Dalemain.

**Is the house open to the public and can families visit for a day out?**

Dalemain is indeed open to the public, and it is always wonderful to welcome visitors to our family home. The House, Gardens and tearoom are open Sunday - Thursday between April and October. The historic gardens are a particular love of mine, and are beautiful all year round, especially when the Dalemain blue poppies and old fashioned roses are in bloom. Our guided tours of the house are incredibly popular, and allow visitors to really gain an insight into the history of the house and the wider estate. Finish up the day with one of our famous homemade scones, or some delicious marmalade gingerbread in our medieval hall tearoom!



**Do you have a favourite marmalade flavour – maybe something exotic? Can anything really beat the traditional orange taste?**

I always love it when we get entries with apricot and citrus. When I was a child I used to take both homemade marmalade and apricot jam back to school with me, and I have such fond memories of the tastes. Plus, it is such a delicious combination.

**What criteria do you use to recruit judges for the awards?**

We select people with a genuine love of food (in particular marmalade!) and true expertise in the food industry. All of our judges are guided by our well trained WI judges, whose expertise has been crucial to the Awards since their creation.

**If you could offer 3 pieces of advice to an amateur marmalade maker, what would they be?**

Start by making a simple marmalade

Always use fresh fruit

Don't rush - make sure you give yourself enough time to really enjoy making it, because it can be a long process, but such an enjoyable one.





### Who won the awards this year and what made their entry stand out?

Our 2017 Best In Show marmalade winner was Shona Leckie, from Angus in Scotland. She won the Tate & Lyle 'Marmalade with a Twist' category with her Treacle marmalade. What made her entry stand out was her ability to create a marmalade in which you can really taste the fruit. It can be difficult to ensure that this isn't overlaid by the sugar, and additional flavours.

### How can one enter the awards for next year?

The competition will open in January 2018, and you can enter by going to [www.marmaladeawards.com](http://www.marmaladeawards.com) and filling in an entry form. Or you can telephone us at 017684 86450, or drop us a line at [marmalade@dalemain.com](mailto:marmalade@dalemain.com)

### For those people who love marmalade but would much rather buy the final product, is there the opportunity to do so at Dalemain?

There definitely is! We have a Marmalade Shop that is dedicated to selling the best marmalades in the world - and people now regularly come on a pilgrimage to stock their larders up, depending on how many jars they eat a year. We also sell our marmalades online at [www.dalemain.com/shop](http://www.dalemain.com/shop) so that people from all over Britain can get quality marmalade wherever they are.

### Finally, we have heard that you have a whole room of marmalade heaven..... Please explain more!

The Marmalade museum is one of the most popular rooms in our guided tour of the house, and is an exhibition that reflects 12 years of the Marmalade Awards & Festival. Not only is it a wonderful way of teaching visitors about the Awards, but the room with its displays of our favourite entries also highlights the eccentricity and creativeness of the people who enter, including people using popcorn for packaging, and creating marmalade shred in the shape of goldfish!



## Felling Inspired? Never made Marmalade?

Why not try this delicious classic recipe from BBC Good Food

### Ultimate Seville Orange Marmalade (makes c.10lb jam, suitable for vegetarians too)

#### You will need:

- 1.3kg Seville oranges
- 2 lemons (juice only)
- 2.6kg preserving or granulated sugar

#### Method:

1. Put the whole oranges and lemon juice in a large preserving pan and cover with 2 litres/4 pints water - if it does not cover the fruit, use a smaller pan. If necessary weight the oranges with a heat-proof plate to keep them submerged. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer very gently for around 2 hours, or until the peel can be easily pierced with a fork.
2. Warm half the sugar in a very low oven. Pour off the cooking water from the oranges into a jug and tip the oranges into a bowl. Return cooking liquid to the pan. Allow oranges to cool until they are easy to handle, then cut in half. Scoop out all the pips and pith and add to the reserved orange liquid in the pan. Bring to the boil for 6 minutes, then strain this liquid through a sieve into a bowl and press the pulp through with a wooden spoon - it is high in pectin so gives marmalade a good set.
3. Pour half of this liquid into a preserving pan. Cut the peel, with a sharp knife, into fine shreds. Add half the peel to the liquid in the preserving pan with the warm sugar. Stir over a low heat until all the sugar has dissolved, for about 10 minutes, then bring to the boil and bubble rapidly for 15- 25 minutes until setting point is reached.
4. Take pan off the heat and skim any scum from the surface. (To dissolve any excess scum, drop a small knob of butter on to the surface, and gently stir.) Leave the marmalade to stand in the pan for 20 minutes to cool a little and allow the peel to settle; then pot in sterilised jars, seal and label. Repeat from step 3 for second batch, warming the other half of the sugar first.

**Want to know more?** You can find a wealth of information on the Dalemain website: [www.dalemain.com](http://www.dalemain.com) or contact the friendly team by phone on 017684 86450.

**Visit Dalemain Mansion in person at:  
DALEMAIN HOUSE & GARDENS  
Penrith, Cumbria  
CA11 0HB**





## Ratatouille Chutney

~ By BBC Good Food ~

Use up surplus peppers, aubergines, courgettes and tomatoes in this economical version of a French vegetarian classic

### Ingredients

1½ kg mix of red pepper, aubergines and courgettes  
500g ripe tomato  
500g onion  
500g apple  
500ml white wine vinegar  
2 tsp black mustard seed  
2 tsp lightly crushed coriander seed  
1 tbsp paprika  
Paprika  
1 red chilli (deseeded if you don't like it too hot)  
300g light muscovado sugar

### Method

Chop the peppers, aubergines and courgettes into very small pieces. You can chop them roughly and pulse them in a food processor, if you like. Peel and chop the tomatoes. Finely chop the onions. Peel, core and finely chop the apples. Put everything in a large wide pan with the vinegar, 2 tsp salt, the mustard and coriander seeds, paprika and chilli, if using. Bring to the boil, stirring, then simmer for 25-30 mins until all the vegetables are very tender.

Stir in the sugar until it has dissolved, then boil until the chutney is thickened and pulpy. Pot into warm, sterilised jars, seal and label.



## Marrow Chutney

~ BBC Good Food ~

### Ingredients

1½ kg/3lb 5 oz marrow, peeled and deseeded  
225g shallot, sliced  
225g apples, peeled, cored and sliced  
225g sultana, 2cm piece ginger, finely chopped  
225g demerara sugar  
850ml malt vinegar  
12 black peppercorns



### Method

Cut the marrow into small pieces, put in a bowl and sprinkle liberally with 2 tbsp salt. Cover and leave for 12 hrs.

Rinse and drain the marrow, then place in a preserving pan or large saucepan with the shallots, apples, sultanas, ginger, sugar and vinegar. Tie the peppercorns in muslin (or put into a small enclosed tea strainer) and place in the pan. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, stirring from time to time, until the consistency is thick.

Leave to settle for 10 mins, then spoon into sterilised jars, put on the lids and label. Will keep for a year in a cool, dark place.



212ml Chutney ~ a good size for hampers ~ £8.44 for 12



.....and winter.....



## Pumpkin Marmalade

~ Oded Schwartz ~

### Ingredients

1.25hr

1.5kg (3lb) pumpkin  
1 Litre (1.75 pints) water  
2 Oranges, sliced into semi circles  
3 Lemons sliced into semi-circles  
100g (3.5oz) fresh ginger root, finely shredded  
1kg (2lb) preserving or granulated sugar

### Method

Peel the pumpkin and remove all the seeds and fibres. Slice the flesh into pieces and grate coarsely lengthways, so the strands are as long as possible.

Put the grated pumpkin in the preserving pan with the water, oranges, lemons and ginger. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 25-30 minutes or until the citrus peel is soft.

Add the sugar, stirring until it has dissolved. Return to the boil, then cook over a medium heat for 25-30 minutes or until the mixture is thick enough for a wooden spoon drawn through the centre to leave a clear channel.

Remove the pan from the heat and leave the fruit to settle for a few minutes. Ladle the marmalade into sterilised jars, then seal.



## Christmas Cream Liqueur

~ BBC Good Food ~



### Ingredients

300g dulce de leche (we used Merchant Gourmet)  
1 tbsp instant coffee dissolved in 1 tbsp boiling water  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
300ml brandy  
284ml/9½fl oz and 142ml/5fl oz pot single cream

### Method

Spoon the dulce de leche into a bowl, then beat in the coffee, vanilla and brandy until smooth. Stir in both pots of cream until well mixed.

Pour into 1 large or several smaller sterilised bottles. This will keep in the fridge for 2 weeks. Drink in liqueur glasses or serve over ice.



Our most popular  
liqueur bottle for  
gifts ~ 200ml Nocturn Bottle  
with wooden cork £2.38 each



*Artisan Tales*

Lots of our customers have made a business out of thier hobby. We thought we would share some of thier stories with you by way of inspiration.....you just never know where it could lead you.

**Kingston Preserves**

**Cheryl Russell, Devon**

I love cooking & have been doing it since I was 6 and after leaving school in the seventies I went to catering college & trained as a chef but then family life & children took over & my catering career came to a halt.

I have always loved to cook & Kingston Preserves has grown out of a hobby that got a little out of control! I began by selling my jams & chutney outside my house & with encouragement from family & friends, a small article in Devon Life mentioning my "delightful wayside stall" & a postcard from Sierra Leone thanking me for my "delicious Strawberry Jam" I plucked up the courage to start my business. So Kingston Preserves was born. My first foray into selling was February 2016 at Ivybridge Market & since then I haven't looked back. I now sell regularly at a further 3 markets, our local village shop & am regularly invited to attend seasonal & Good Food events.

I pride myself on being a local producer with everything made in small batches in my kitchen. We are lucky enough to have a space for a few chickens, a poly tunnel & greenhouse so wherever possible I use our home grown produce or I buy my ingredients as locally as I can. I also try to work with the seasons so if I run out of something my customers might have to wait a few months for a new batch to be made. To me this is important as in Devon we have some of the best seasonal produce available. You can't beat the taste or freshness of home grown fruit & vegetables.

I've just finished making some batches of Blackcurrant, Gooseberry and Cherry jams from our own home grown fruit .....picked, prepared & bottled in 3 hours, now that's fresh!

*Tasty*  
**LOOPY'S PICKLES**

Louise Thompson  
Wolverhampton

About 3 years ago I was working in a pub and I made some Chilli pickled onions. I tried them out on the locals and to my surprise they loved them! So I made them now and again, making no money but loving doing it none the less.

So next I decided to try chilli jam, it was a bit hit and miss to begin with....some jars being rock hard and some far too runny but I persevered and happy days - the same locals in the same pub liked the jam as well!

So, I did a couple of tables at my son's school fayre and then another one, not making much money at all, but loving peoples reactions when they tasted my jam. Eventually, I decided to start up a proper little business. I am a single mother, just working part time, so I have had to do things slowly, having NO MONEY!! I was advised by my local job center to go and see my local chamber of commerce - who turned out to be really helpful. The explained about doing the online basic catering certificate and how to contact the environmental health people who would assess my kitchen. When they eventually came to see my kitchen I was terrified, but I got my 5 stars !!

Last Christmas, I did about 5 tables locally. I now also have my chilli jam in 3 local shops, and people keep re-buying it - so I must be doing something right. I plan to get in a few more shops as well. At the end of this August, I am going to do 'The Big Feastival' which is Jamie Oliver and Alex James from Blur's festival. I am really scared but also REALLY excited. If it all goes well I have a few ideas of what I want to do next - sometimes, you just have to go for it, life is too short isn't it?

I have always used Wares of Knutsford's Jars and I have started using the little cardboard presentation boxes, which are lovely, and I can put some crackers in with my jam, they make great little gifts !

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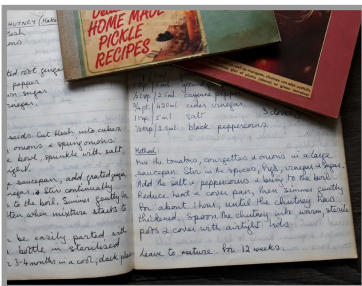
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[www.loopypickled.co.uk](http://www.loopypickled.co.uk)







## My Story

I started preserving when a local charity in Wolverhampton called 'Pride In Penn Fields' needed some help with fund raising.



My name is Larney Ray and I am the Owner and Creator of my small preserve business 'The Pickling Duchess' based in Brighton, in the South East.

From the beginnings of my husband and I's relationship we have always made our own Christmas presents, with a few sisters and brothers between us and 13 nephews and nieces, it can be an expensive time of year! Every year we give everyone foodie presents and every other year we do a hamper, it started with shortbread and cakes and developed into Jams, Pickles and other preserves. Soon it became apparent that we could start selling these hampers to friends and colleagues and before we knew it we were inundated with orders! 5 months later we applied for a business license (turning a childhood nickname into a business name) and just over a year later I am able to call it my sole employment.

I couldn't love it more, especially pickling! I attend local craft and food fairs and events and I am now able to accept orders through Facebook and deliver locally.

As we use a family members kitchen our dream is to own our own home, grow our own fruits and veg and be able to run the business from home, hopefully that dream isn't too far away!

This recipe for '**Westfield Chutney**' was a favourite of my Nan's and my Mum used to make this for her at Christmas.

- 1lb tomatoes
- 1lb onions
- 1lb apples
- mustard
- 1lb prunes



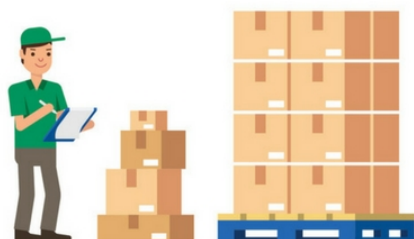
Skin and chop tomatoes, onions, apples and if applicable stone the prunes before chopping. Put all ingredients except the vinegar into a pan and heat slowly until the sugar is dissolved; then simmer for a further 30 minutes. Add the vinegar and cook for a further 30 minutes. Pour into sterilised jars and seal in the normal way.

### Mums Notes

- Adapted from an Orkney Recipe
- Makes approx. 4 ½ lb
- Sweet Chutney
- May need skimming



**Enjoy!**



**Bargain Packs of Jars and Bottles for Artisan Makers**  
£7.95 delivery regardless of the size of the order!

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How to guides:

# FERMENTING VEGETABLES

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## Simple Sauerkraut

By Jane Hornby

 **goodfood**  
Media brand of the year



### Ingredients

2kg very firm, pale green or white cabbage (any leathery outer leaves removed), cored  
3 tbsp coarse crystal sea salt (or 6 tbsp flaky sea salt)  
1 tsp caraway seeds  
1 tsp peppercorns

### Method

Thoroughly wash a large tub or bowl (mine was the size of a small washing-up bowl), then rinse with boiling water from the kettle. Make sure that your hands, and everything else coming into contact with the cabbage, are very clean. It's wise to use a container that will comfortably fit the softened cabbage, allowing several inches of room at the top to avoid overflow.

Shred the cabbage thinly – a food processor makes light work of this. Layer the cabbage and the salt in the tub or bowl. Massage the salt into the cabbage for 5 mins, wait 5 mins, then repeat. You should end up with a much-reduced volume of cabbage sitting in its own brine. Mix in the caraway seeds and the peppercorns.

Cover the surface of the cabbage entirely with a sheet of cling film, then press out all the air bubbles from below.

Weigh the cabbage down using a couple of heavy plates, or other weights that fit your bowl, and cover as much of the cabbage as possible.

The level of the brine will rise to cover the cabbage a little. Cover the tub with its lid (or more cling film) and leave in a dark place at a cool room temperature (about 18-20C) for at least 5 days. It will be ready to eat after 5 days, but for maximum flavour leave the cabbage to ferment for anywhere between 2-6 weeks (or until the bubbling subsides).

Check the cabbage every day or so, releasing any gases that have built up as it ferments, and give the cabbage a stir to release the bubbles. If any scum forms, remove it, rinse the weights in boiling water and replace the cling film. You should see bubbles appearing within the cabbage, and possibly some foam on the top of the brine. It's important to keep it at an even, cool room temperature – too cool and the ferment will take longer than you'd like, too warm and the sauerkraut may become mouldy or ferment too quickly, leading to a less than perfect result.

The cabbage will become increasingly sour the longer it's fermented, so taste it now and again. When you like the flavour, transfer it to smaller sterilised jars and keep it in the fridge for up to 6 months.



# The Basics of Fermenting...

Do you ever wonder how people who lived thousands of years ago preserved food, before the advent of refrigeration? One of the ways was through lacto-fermentation. Fermentation is a form of preservation that dates back thousands of years.

Fermenting food may seem weird but almost any food can be preserved using this technique. Some examples from around the world are: sauerkraut, kimchi, pickled vegetables, kvass, sourdough, kombucha, yogurt, sour cream, kefir, crème fraîche, even chocolate—just to name a few!

## How Does Fermentation Happen?

Fermentation is essentially a sort of pre-digestion that takes place when naturally present bacteria in foods, often of the *Lactobacillus* strains, begin breaking down the sugars and starches in the food.

As these bacteria divide, they produce lactic acid, which halts the growth of the bad or putrefying bacteria. This lactic acid preserves the food and prevents it from rotting. Lactic acid is responsible for the sour taste that is inherent to fermented foods. It also promotes the growth of the healthy bacteria already in the gut.

You can see why this process is sometimes called lacto-fermentation: *Lactobacillus* – lactic acid – lacto-fermentation.

As long as the foods are kept under a brine or a liquid, and in cool storage (a root cellar, for example, or a refrigerator for the rest of us who don't have root cellars) fermented vegetables will last for months and months, sometimes even over a year.

## Benefits of Fermenting Foods

> Fermented foods are more digestible. Because they are predigested by the bacteria, they can be easier for your body to digest.

> Fermentation can create new vitamins, particularly B-vitamins and vitamin K2.

> Fermented foods are full of good bacteria (probiotics). The lactic acid produced during fermentation encourages the growth of healthy bacteria already living in our intestinal tract.

> Fermenting grains can neutralize the anti-nutrient phytic acid naturally present in grains, making them less damaging to the body.

> Fermented foods can help boost our immune systems.

> Fermented foods can curb cravings for sweets and other overly processed foods. In fact, if you add fermented foods to your diet daily, your sugar cravings may go away completely! It takes time, but it does happen.



> 1/3-cup serving of fermented vegetables can contain around 10 trillion good bacteria.

## How to Ferment

Following this simple process will get you on your way to fermenting ANYTHING! Fermenting is not a perfect science. Just relax and go for it!

Gather the fruit or veggies that you want to ferment. Wash. Peel and Chop to preferred size.

Put fruit/veggies in a clean quart-size mason jar (1 quart = 2 pints/1.1 Lt)

Add garlic, herbs, or spices if desired (example: garlic and dill with carrots)

Add between 1 teaspoon and 1 tablespoon sea salt, depending on how salty you like things (If you are not using culture starter or whey, use a bit more salt)

Add ½ tsp culture starter or 2 tbsp liquid whey (optional for vegetable ferments)

Fill with filtered water, leaving about 1 ½ inches headspace. Press down to ensure food is below brine. Tighten lid and leave at room temp.

How long? Rule of thumb is that your food will be ready to eat in 24–48 hours for fruit, or 5+ days for veggies. Taste to see if it is to your liking. When your ferment is ready it should have a pleasant sour taste and smell. If your ferment smells rotten or putrid, then throw it out. Pleasantly sour is what you are going for. Over time, you will learn this well.

**TOP TIP:** You don't need fancy equipment or cultures to ferment - screw top mason jars and clip top jars are fine - provided the veg are fully submerged under the brine and you remember to 'burp' your jars. Weights can be used to help. Have a google!



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# Nature's Bounty

The richness and variety of the countryside can provide us with plenty of inspiration to get creative.

Whether it's making the most of wild blackberries, elderflowers, rosehips in our hedgerows or the raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries fresh-picked from our local Farmers Market or back garden – there's nothing like getting up close and personal to the rich colours and textures and aromas of nature's bounty.

The number of people migrating to the countryside is increasing year-on-year, very often to start a business or fulfil a long-cherished dream. One such woman is Fiona Holland – author and foster carer. Living in the country on what she calls her 'much-loved slice of a Welsh hillside' has allowed her to realise several ambitions at once.

"I live on a five acre small-holding where pretty much every blade of grass has some creature's name on it!" Managing several horses, two Kune Kune pigs, a flock of Texel-cross lambs and breeding ewes together with assorted ducks, hens, dogs and cats - is a dream come true.

In addition, Fiona opens up her home and the small-holding to children in care. "We offer respite weekends to children and young people who won't necessarily have come snout-to-snout with a muddy pig before or watched a chick hatch or thrown sticks for a dog. Spring time is very popular as we have bottle-lambs, which is always a hit. The children are always amazed how gustily a lamb can empty a feeding bottle of milk!

"Animals have an incredibly calming effect on children. We have a farm cat, MegMog, who always makes a beeline for the kids. She will curl up on their knees and fall asleep purring. It's such a simple thing, but they have this look of total awe on their faces."

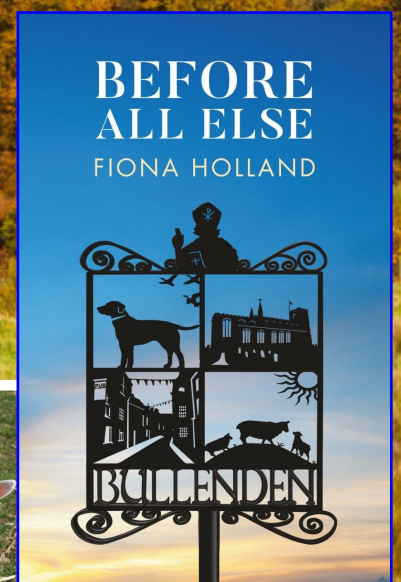
As well as animal care, the children also work on the farm allotment and help bake in the kitchen, often with produce they've helped grow or pick.

Fiona's small-holding has also been the inspiration for her recent book, *Before All Else* – a bitter-sweet, gentle tale of a Suffolk village in which an ancient and holy space is accidentally unearthed, exerting its own magic and mystery and purpose on the village's many and varied characters.

So, did life on the small-holding have an influence on Fiona's writing? "Oh most definitely", she laughs. "It's all in there – Jasper the donkey, wayward sheep, the changing of the seasons, a much-loved but somewhat challenging young boy – and cake! Lots of cake! Cakes of every flavour and from every region."

For Fiona Holland, the countryside has offered an opportunity to discover and develop her talents as an author while sharing her passion with children and young people in care. Why not write in and tell us about your passion for the natural world.

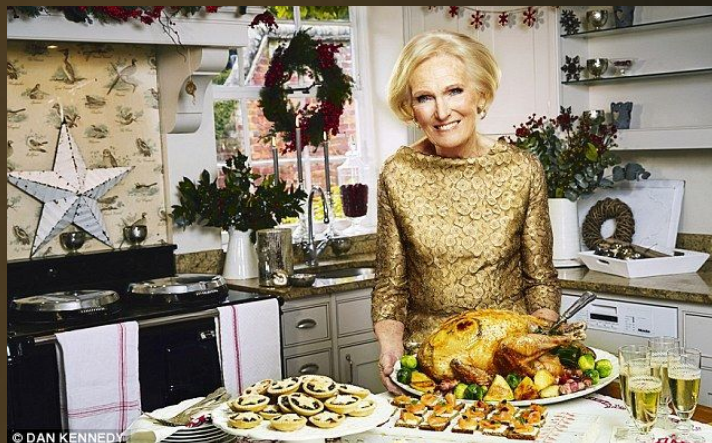
And if you'd like to read Fiona Holland's book 'Before All Else' ask your local bookshop, check out Amazon or contact Fiona via [www.fionaholland.co.uk](http://www.fionaholland.co.uk).



Some of Fiona's friends on the farm.



# Mary Berry ~ Christmas Pudding



## ~ Ingredients ~

90g (3oz) self-raising flour  
125g (4oz) shredded vegetable suet or  
grated chilled butter  
30g (1oz) blanched almonds, shredded  
125g (4oz) carrot, grated  
250g (8 oz) raisins  
currants – 125g (4oz)  
sultanas – 125g (4oz)  
125g (4oz) fresh breadcrumbs  
~ ¼ tsp grated nutmeg  
60g (2oz) mixed candied peel, chopped  
90g (3oz) light muscovado sugar  
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon  
2 eggs, beaten  
butter for greasing  
75ml (2½ fl oz) dark rum or brandy  
brandy butter, to serve

## ~ Method ~

- ~ In a large bowl, combine the flour, suet or butter, almonds, carrot, raisins, currants, sultanas, breadcrumbs, nutmeg, candied peel, sugar and lemon zest. Add the lemon juice and eggs and stir until well combined.
- ~ Lightly butter the pudding bowl. Spoon in the pudding mixture and level the surface.
- ~ Cover with buttered greaseproof paper then foil, both pleated in the middle. Secure the paper and foil in place by tying string under the rim of the bowl.
- ~ Put the bowl into a steamer or saucepan of simmering water, making sure the water comes halfway up the side of the bowl. Cover and steam, topping up with boiling water as needed, for about 6 hours.
- ~ Remove the bowl from the steamer or pan and leave to cool. Remove the paper and foil covering. Make a few holes in the pudding with a fine skewer and pour in the rum or brandy.
- ~ Cover the pudding with fresh greaseproof paper and foil. Store in a cool place for up to 3 months.
- ~ To reheat for serving, steam the pudding for 2-3 hours. Serve at once with brandy butter.

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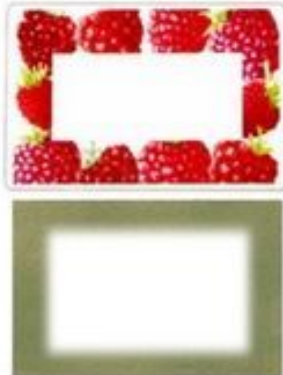
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