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On the Menu

A beacon of good taste

The Brixton Beacons isn't on the surface of it, the most obvious place to spot the stars of the foodie firmament. But since its inception in 1999, the Aberglwyny Food Festival has made a name for itself as definitely the most eccentric, food festival in Europe. For a weekend in September, the market town hosts more than 35,000 visitors, all come to celebrate international "culinary craft" in a convivial, informal atmosphere. As well as tastings, and demonstrations from Bill Granger, Henry Harris and Angela Hartnett, there are "open mic" sessions in which visitors are invited to expound on their own particular food hobbyhorse. Best of all though is Saturday's Hangover Evening at the Borough Theatre, in which chef Fergus Henderson and writer Chris Hirst put their heads together to come up with the perfect cure, with which all guests will have a chance to fortify themselves. 17-18 September, aberglwynyfoodfestival.com

Rocket livens up salad days

Is there any better way to perk up a salad than with a handful of tangy rocket leaves? Certainly not if the rocket in question is the new Wasabi stuff from environmentally-friendly growers, Steve's Leaves. Despite its name, it's no relation to the Japanese mustard plant and is, in fact, a particularly peppery strain that has been cultivated by Steve Rothwell, the only man in England with a PhD in watercress. The leaves are pickled, washed in spring water, and packed within 60 minutes to ensure their freshness. £3.35 for 30g bag, stevesleaves.co.uk

Best of British with a pint

It might have slipped you by, but British Food Fortnight is nearly upon us. And, if you happen to live in London, it's worth taking advantage of an offer running at some of London's best gastro-pubs from 17 September to 2 October. For £10, customers can try a specially created "Best of British" menu at either The Cadogan Arms on The King's Road, The Hat and Tun on Hatton Wall, or The Gun in Docklands. The food on offer includes such all-English tropes as ale-battered fish and chips, boiled Essex ham hock, pease pudding and toad in the hole. Best of all, included in the price is a pint of British ale. thecadoganarmschelsea.com, thehatandtun.com, thegundocklands.com

Superior kinds of sausage

Until now, duja and salcisica sausage have been the preserve of chi-chi delis or specialist importers. As of this month, though, the Calabrian delicacies go on sale in selected Waitrose stores and online at Abel & Cole. The nduja is moist with a sharp kick and gives a rich flavour to tomato-based sauces. The chilli and fennel salcisica is much denser and a fine addition to a characterful board. Be warned, though, both harden quite quickly in the fridge – so it's best to eat them in one sitting. Nduja, £2.15; salcisica, £3.45. discoverunearthed.com

SAMUEL MUSTON

- THE CHEFS' CHOICE

<p>Head chef, Boundary said would have a bit of cheese added when I make it.</p> <p>Head chef, Texture is eggs – free range, or- speak for themselves. If andic twist you could</p>	<p>add flavours such as angelica or birch.</p> <p>Alan Pickett, head chef, Plateau I like some smoked fish in it. My wife and I will have a light omelette with some lovely Scottish smoked salmon.</p> <p>Paul Atinsworth, founder, Number 6 Padstow My favourite is a typical Spanish omelette with chorizo, spring onions, really ripe cherry tomatoes and finished with some manchego.</p> <p>For more chef's tips, visit www.independent.co.uk/omelettes</p>
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Spanish omelettes are not good – even in Spain," says Sam Hart, co-founder of the Barrafina tapas bar. Hart is open-minded in what goes into the tortilla but unwavering in what makes a traditional one. "It's just onions and potatoes, that's all. The biggest problem is that people don't allow the onions to caramelise enough, or they don't use enough. It really requires patience."

Just as laborious – in fact probably more so – is the Japanese omelette. It takes Silla Bjerrum, founder of Feng Sushi, around 20 minutes to assemble the boxy Swiss roll-like dish. "First, you mix your egg mix with some mirin and sake, gently breaking up the eggs – but not whisking – as you go. Then you strain the egg and brush a square pan with vegetable oil." The egg mix is poured in bit by bit. "As a sheet forms in the pan, it is rolled into a block and then another sheet begun. You do about five or six sheets, each time wrapping them around the block. Then you put it in a rolling mat and leave to rest for about half an hour."

When it is eventually ready, the Japanese omelette is served lukewarm, sliced alongside pickles or rice. "Because there is a slightly sweet taste to it, it often comes right at the end of a meal." Bjerrum fills hers with spinach or, less traditionally, red peppers, though not (as you'd think) also common. As egg-based dishes go, it couldn't really be more different from our straightforward, 30-second meal. Yet, it is fundamentally, the same thing.

"One of the joys of the omelette is its versatility," agrees Weeden. "It is a bespoke dish. You can have it exactly how you want. It is overlooked, I think, because there is this sense that if something's not complex enough, not modern enough, it's not worth eating. But really, the rise of the non-stick pan should herald a revival."

