

Seasonal Recipes

Some plants can be poisonous. **Please** make sure that you are **certain** of what you are picking. **NEVER** pull out a whole plant or strip a plant completely of its flowers, leaves or berries. Always ensure anything that you pick is washed thoroughly.

N.B. - These recipes are followed at your own risk.

Acorn Coffee (Autumn)

Select some plump, round, sweet acorns. Shell and brown in the oven. Grind in a coffee mill and use as ordinary coffee.

Hull out a half cup of small acorns. Add a half cup cracked wheat. Mix. Roast in your oven. Pound in a mortar. Boil with water to get your coffee. Add honey, molasses, or brown sugar to sweeten.

Bramble Jelly (Autumn)

Ingredients

1.3kg/3lb blackberries, washed
2 large cooking apples, washed, cored and diced
450ml/3/4 pint water
1 lemon, juice only
preserving or granulated sugar
sterilized jam jars and jam pot covers

Method

1. 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.
2. Place the blackberries, apple, water and lemon juice in a preserving or large, heavy based saucepan.
3. Bring to the boil, then simmer over a low heat for 20-25 minutes or until the fruit is completely soft.
4. 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.
5. Prepare the jam jars by washing in hot soapy water and leaving to dry and warm in a cool oven - 130C/250F/ for 10-15 minutes.
6. 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. Bring to the boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until setting point is reached.
7. 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.

Nettle Soup (Spring)

Ingredients

half carrier bag full of nettles, tops or young leaves

55g butter

1 large or 2 medium onions, finely sliced

1 large carrot, chopped (optional)

2 celery sticks, chopped (optional)

1 large garlic clove, crushed (optional)

1 litre good chicken, fish or vegetable stock

a pinch of freshly grated nutmeg (optional)

3 tablespoons cooked rice or 3 rice cakes

2 tablespoons thick cream or crème fraîche

salt and freshly ground black pepper

To Garnish:

A little extra cream or crème fraîche

A small bunch of chives, chopped

A few sprigs parsley, chopped

Method

Pick over the nettles and wash them thoroughly. Discard only the tougher stalks, as the soup will be liquidised. Melt the butter in a large pan and sweat the onion, plus the carrot, celery and garlic if using, until soft but not brown. Add the stock and pile in the nettles. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the nettles are tender. Season with salt and pepper. Puree the soup in a liquidiser with the cooked rice or rice cakes (you will probably have to do this in 2 batches). Return to a clean pan, stir in the cream and reheat, but do not let it boil. Check the seasoning, then serve, garnishing each bowl with a swirl of cream and a generous sprinkling of chopped herbs.

To serve cold:

An alternative is to serve this soup cold. After liquidising and adding the cream, pour the soup into a bowl and leave to cool, then transfer to the fridge for a couple of hours before serving.