

Santa's kitchen...

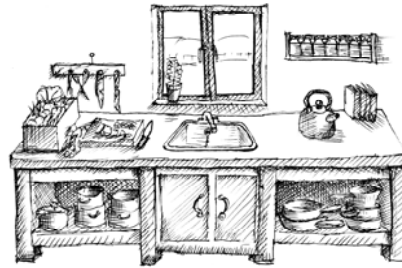
Little parcels to gobble up

Charlie Bigham's kitchen is a bit like Santa's workshop. But instead of wooden train sets, Bigham's brigade of elves (or chefs) is busy making our organic Christmas nibbles: little stone baked pizzas, mini beef & stilton en croûtes (a must try!), heavenly bacon and cheddar pastry parcels...

This is Charlie's dream job. In a past life, he worked as a management consultant. It paid well, but he'd always dreamed of working for himself. So, he did what any sensible person who has a dream does: he bought a camper van and spent nine months driving overland to India in search of inspiration!

He found it while eating food in local markets. 'If you go to a market stall, you sit down in front of them, they toss a few things in a pan, and it's ready,' he said. 'Convenience doesn't have to mean putting something in a microwave. It can mean quick, fresh food.' That's what he does. He uses a handful of delightful ingredients to make memorable morsels.

André Lewis, the man who picks out all of our cheeses, cured meats and pastry-wrapped delights (another great job!), went to visit Charlie a few weeks ago.



"The thing that struck me," André says, "was just how 'hand-made' it all is - they really make it all as you would in your kitchen. They use buttery, organic Dorset pastry. They butcher all the meat themselves," he marvels.

Even though they're billed as party food, you most certainly don't need to get the tennis club around to eat them. Pop a box of mini pizzas in the freezer and grab a handful to pop in the oven while you're wrapping your presents with Christmas carols on, or watching "It's a Wonderful Life"!

Christmas Day sommelier

Looking for the perfect wine for your turkey? A red to go with your cheese or the perfect partner for smoked salmon? Nick Mason's created the ultimate pairings in his Classic & Serious Christmas wine cases. See the web or ring for details.

I'm dreaming of a...

White cabbage

Ok. So maybe not. We're getting into the thick of winter and while a bowling ball-like head of cabbage may not be at the top of your Christmas wish list (or is it?), we have a few gorgeous recipes to get you more enthusiastic about this cold-month staple. Each recipe serves 4-6

Ale-braised cabbage

1 white cabbage, roughly chopped
1 large onion (or 2 small), peeled and sliced
1 clove garlic, crushed
8 cloves
4 bay leaves
1 tsp fennel seeds
1 tsp caraway seeds
2 tbsp light brown sugar
4 sprigs fresh thyme
500ml ale
50g butter

Preheat oven to 190°C/375°F/gas 5.

Layer all of the ingredients in a deep ovenproof dish (you'll need one with a lid, or wrap tightly with foil). Pour the beer over the ingredients, dot with the butter and braise in the oven for about an hour. Serve with any kind of meat or with thick pieces of dark rye bread.



Shredded cabbage and cranberry salad

1 white cabbage, shredded
160g dried cranberries
100g slivered almonds, toasted
120 ml mayonnaise
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
3 tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley

Combine all the ingredients in a serving bowl and mix until well combined. Serve at once or cover and refrigerate until needed.

Customer service hours next week:

Mon 21 st December	8.30am- 7.30pm
Tues 22 nd December	8.30am- 7.30pm
Wed 23 rd December	8.30am- 7.30pm
Thu 24 th December	8.30am- 6.00pm
Fri 25 th December	Closed
Sat 26 th December	Closed
Sun 27 th December	Closed