

# LIFE IN THE MAKING IS A QUARTERLY PRINT & DIGITAL PUBLICATION CONNECTING FOOD, LAND, PEOPLE AND PROCESS WITH SEASONAL FLAVOURS AND THEMES.

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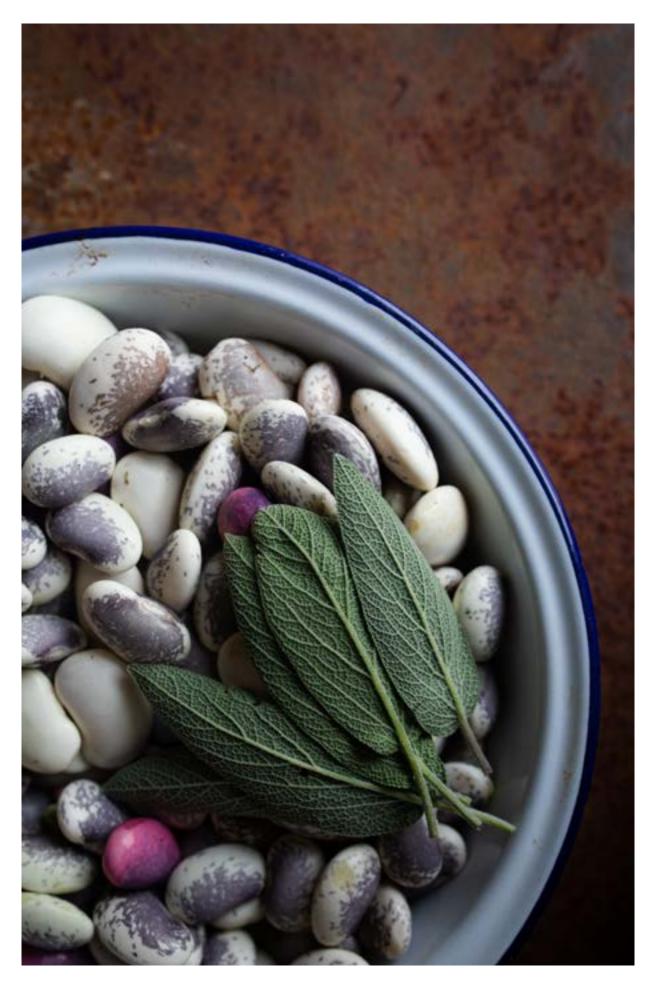
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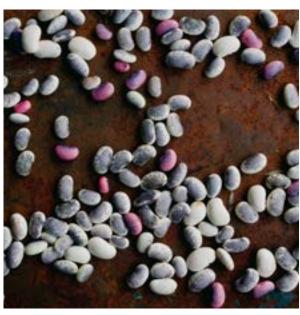


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No-Bake Oatmeal Chocolate Chunkers

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Homemade Vanilla, Almond, Mint & Orange Flavour Essences



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# SOUP SEASON

I tried not to write this chapter. Surely every magazine/cookbook/ newspaper has a segment in autumn all about soup. However hard I have tried to avoid it though, soup is inexorably linked to this time of year.

From September to April, one Sunday a month our tiny community gathers at the village hall for a Blether. From 12-1:30, we get together around the ubiquitous folding tables and under the orange heat lamps of every Scottish village hall eating soup and cake and catching up with friends and neighbours we may not have seen for the last month with the Scottish weather keeping us indoors. Those same tables and orange lights will line the perimeter of the dance floor for our Hogmanay (New Year's) ceilidh in late December. The stage that holds the band for the ceilidh also be the backdrop for the school play and the dance floor is a seniors yoga studio every Friday year round.

On a Blether Suday, the littlest kids run around with their school friends. Older ones graduate to clearing dishes and then working in the kitchen. We take turns making soup - with the Scottish staples of lentil and Scotch broth sitting alongside more adventurous offerings like curries and chillies.

The hall committee wanders around serving tea and coffee (Kevin forever gets the two pots confused and pours the wrong drink into people's cups). We catch up on families visiting and local gossip. Deals are negotiated around the table. I've managed to secure sheep grazing, timber and fish from the local lake over a bowl of Stevie's lentil soup and Mags' coffee and walnut cake. Jim sells his honey and Isabelle urges us along to the next charity event in aid of the village kirk.

As the spouse of a hall committee member, I am usually called upon to make soup. And thats ok, because I was brought up by soup people. The Christmas Eve meal in my family is always soup. Huge pots sit on the stove, welcoming the arrivals from far and wide, whatever time they get there. Matzo ball soup was the highlight with my grandpa at the Jewish deli. My brothers' chilli-off is writ in legend, with one particularly memorable year left one of their girlfriends in bed for the weekend after a particularly fiery batch. Whether in rural lowa or a small village in Scotland, soup skills are transferrable.

This chapter is an ode to the power of soup to bring people together. Some old family recipes, some new traditions and some new takes on old standards. They are meals to savour and gather over, to make deals over and to welcome you in after a long, cold, dark day.





# WHITE BEAN & CHICKEN CHILLI

Serves 6

At any cold weather gatherings, my brothers have a chilli-off. Each one makes a pot of "their" chilli and we gather around to taste who has the best chilli. They take such pride in their secret recipes that I never have the heart to tell them that actually it is my sister who makes the best chilli.

Where they go big on spiciness and meat, my sister's white bean and chicken chilli is delicate and delicious. Green chillis give it the flavour, while harder to get here in the UK, some mild jalepenos work well. The secret is to use some of the brine from the jalepenos to flavour the dish.

1 TABLESPOON OLIVE OIL

3 CHICKEN BREASTS, OR THE MEAT FROM A ROASTED CHICKEN

1 WHITE ONION, FINELY CHOPPED

3 CLOVES GARLIC, CHOPPED

1 TABLESPOON SMOKED PAPRIKA

1 TEASPOON CORIANDER SEEDS

10 JALAPENO ROUNDS, SLICED

2 TABLESPOONS JALAPENO BRINE

1.5L (51OZ) VEGETABLE OR CHICKEN STOCK

2 CANS CANNELLINI BEANS

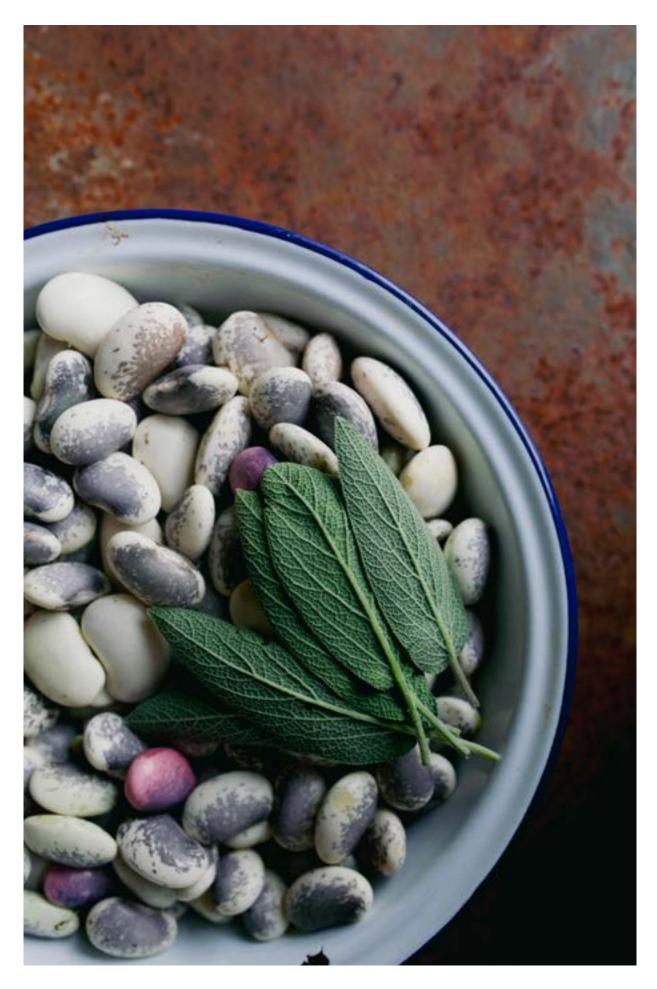
1 LIME

CHEESE, SOUR CREAM AND TORTILLAS TO SERVE

- 1. In a pot, over a low heat, sautée the onion until translucent.
- 2. Add garlic, spices, jalapeños, jalapeño brine and chicken to the pot.
- 3. Cover and cook on low heat for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once the chicken is cooked, let it rest for 15 minutes.
- 4. Shred the chicken with 2 forks. Add the beans, stock and salt to the pot and set to simmer for 10 minutes.
- 5. Add the juice of one lime and stir.
- 6. Serve with cheese, sour cream, tortillas and fresh coriander.

#### MAKE IT PLANT BASED:

WHILE YOU CAN ABSOLUTELY SUBSTITUTE A MEAT ALTERNATIVE HERE, I BULK UP THE BEANS AND USE VEGETABLE STOCK WHEN WE HAVE PLANT-BASED FOLK AT THE TABLE AND NO ONE MISSES THE CHICKEN AT ALL.



# RUNNER BEAN & HAM SOUP

Serves 6

Runner beans are such an underrated vegetable in my opinion. Not only are they absolutely bountiful with handfuls of long, luscious beans throughout the summer, but they are the gift that keeps on giving. Eaten fresh off the vine, they are my favourite chore snack. Then when they come into the house, I like them pan fried in butter. As the season goes on, the green pods thin and the beans inside bulk out. Each bean is like a tiny watercolour painting, dappled pinks and whites and blues.

They do far better for me than any other shelling bean in terms of productivity and this year I planted far more runners than we could eat in the hopes of making this soup. Sadly, the colourful beans don't keep much of their colour when cooked, but are delicious none the less.

Shelled beans fresh from the garden need cooking times somewhere between a dried bean and a tinned one. So that I don't need to stand over them, I generally will cook them in a heavy pot in the oven like a casserole or if I am pressed for time, in a pressure cooker. If you don't have dried runners, butter beans would work perfectly here.

20G UNSALTED BUTTER
2 LEEKS, HALVED AND FINELY
SLICED
2 CARROTS, CHOPPED

1 GARLIC CLOVE, CHOPPED 2 STICKS OF CELERY, DICED 180G LEFTOVER HAM

300G SHELLED RUNNER BEANS OR 400G TIN OF BUTTER BEANS, DRAINED

750ML CHICKEN OR VEG STOCK
1 TEASPOON SAGE, CHOPPED
SALT & PEPPER TO TASTE

- In a pot, over a low heat, sautée the leeks, carrot and celery until soft.
- 2. Add the remaining ingredients. Cook on low for approximately 45 minutes. Depending how dry your beans are, you may need to cook them a bit longer and top up with water.
- 3. Serve.

#### MAKE IT PLANT BASED:

SMOKED GARLIC WORKS WELL AS A HAM SUBSTITUTE IN DISHES LIKE THIS. ALTERNATIVELY, A BIT OF SMOKED PAPRIKA WILL ADD THAT SMOKEY DEPTH.

# CHEESE SCONES

It is only because I have lived here in Scotland for so long that I would call these "scones" because truth be told, in my mind, these are cheese biscuits. Whatever, you call them, the sourdough discard pairs perfectly with the cheese for a hit of savoury umami deliciousness. These are a fab quick win recipe and its worth having some recipes for discard up your sleeves so that you can refresh your starter and keep it active, without always having to make bread.

Not a sourdough baker, don't worry. Substitute a thick greek yoghurt for the starter and you will get a similar flavour.

150G SHARP CHEDDAR - GRATED
230G PLAIN FLOUR
1T BAKING POWDER
1/2 T BICARB
1/2 T SALT
125G COLD BUTTER
200G 100% HYDRATION STARTER
(OR GREEK YOGURT)
120G MILK (BUTTERMILK IF YOU HAVE IT)

- 1. Cut the cold butter into small pieces and mix with the flour, salt, bicarb and baking soda until it resembles crumbs.
- 2. Mix in the grated cheese.
- 3. Mix the starter and milk and add to the flour mix.
- 4. Mix just until everything is incorporated.
- 5. Pat or Roll the dough out to about 3cm thick and cut scones. Or, this recipe is perfectly sized to fit into 12 muffin tins.
- 6. Bake at 180c/350f for 20 minutes or until brown.

TRY ADDING OTHER CHEESES OR ADDING 100G COOKED, CHOPPED BROCCOLL





NOVEMBER 2021

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