

The **JELLIED EEL**

London's magazine for ethical eating

FEB-APR 2015
FREE
ISSUE 46

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Spring is sprung, the grass is riz, I wonders where the birdies is... And if poultry's not your thing, then what else is there to eat? A tenuous segue into this issue's menu, if ever I wrote one, leads me to the bugs on the cover.

The strain on the planet's ability to keep all of us fed in a way that doesn't give Gaia a sound kicking in the process is one of today's big questions. Given that they're high in protein and have carbon footprints about as small as their own shoes, could insects be part of the answer?

One thing's for sure, if meat forms part of the equation, then the right choice has to be less but better. This message is one being championed in this year's Head To Tail Week, which celebrates eating every little bit possible from the beast for the ethical and economical – and gastronomic – sense it makes.

At this time of the year, locavores – particularly those partial to plant-based diets – can find their choice limited, so our Greens With Envy column chews over some of the more interesting veg options on our doorstep.

A traditional method of seeing our way through 'the hungry gap' is food preserving. In our piece on pickling, we're not talking about a chemistry set of E numbers, but harnessing the skills of 'friendly' bacteria to keep food longer, unlock flavours and perhaps nutrients, too.

Feeling (to me, at least) more packed than usual, this issue also celebrates the first-ever Urban Food Awards winners, cafés with a conscience, fine foodie finds of Herne Hill, the FoodSave project, Notting Hill Farmers' Market, and takes a sip of greener tea. Oh, and there's Big Dig Day to look forward to as well!!

Chris
Editor

[@jelliedeelmag](https://twitter.com/jelliedeelmag)



We love eels but they're endangered, so please don't eat them, jellied or otherwise! fishonline.org/fish/eel-european-150.



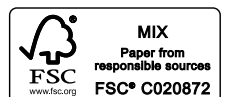
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At the mo, we rely on voluntary writers and photographers to make the 'Eel swim. If you'd like to showcase your work here to more than 50,000 lovers of good food from London's local larder, please get in touch!



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Urban designs

With productive city farms and hyperlocal veg boxes, urban agriculture is far from an incongruous concept. Building on the current movement, Second Nature Urban Agriculture: Designing Productive Cities is the new book by André Viljoen and Katrin Bohn, which follows their pioneering Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes. Here they present their ideas and vision for productive urban landscapes, including urban agriculture, and how food production in cities can become essential elements of sustainable urban infrastructure, with a nod to our very own Capital Growth.

routledge.com/books/details/9780415540582/



Move it

Across the city, the bell rings and schoolkids storm out to drop their lunch money at a nearby fried chicken shop. Shift Design is a social enterprise working to tackle this factor in unhealthy diets and childhood obesity by offering attractive, alternatives at locally competitive prices. Based on the success of their Box Chicken pilot project, Shift identifies schools and hospitals with junk food hotspots on their doorsteps and then encourages mobile vendors offering 'tasty, affordable, healthy food' to pitch up. The trial is now running at six pitches in Camden, Tower Hamlets and Hackney to find which menus and marketing are most successful.

shiftdesign.org.uk/products/healthy-fast-food @shift_org



Riojaes by Glenn McMahon

Seeding sovereignty

Dianne Abbott MP has tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) that calls on the government to help protect seed sovereignty. 'What's that,' you might ask. Well, it includes the right of farmers to save, grow and exchange or sell seeds from their own crops as they see fit. It is considered by many as essential in protecting livelihoods, biodiversity, choice and freedom from control (even legal action) by giant corporations. You can find out how to encourage your MP to support the EDM at: realseeds.co.uk/earlydaymotion.html



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On a buzz

"The nation's capital could be a place where more green spaces are transformed by the flush of wildflowers and a blizzard of blossom, which would be great not only for bees, but would also lift our spirits too," says TV gardener Alys Fowler, who is backing a new report from London Food Link's Capital Bee.

Find out what the buzz is about here:
<http://bit.ly/LdnBees>

Bulletin

Compiled by Lucy Bradley
& Catherine Shepperdley

Going swimmingly

Congratulations to Walter Purkis and Sons, who recently won Slow Food London's Best Fish Shop in London award. According to their fishmonger all the fish at their shops in Crouch End and Muswell Hill is MSC certified and comes either from Billingsgate or direct from fishermen, primarily in Devon and Cornwall. These fishy fellas smoke their own and are happy to advise what's in season: they suggest shellfish until April (their cockles are from Southend) and wild salmon from May.

purkisfishmongers.homestead.com
[@purkisandsons](https://twitter.com/purkisandsons)



Image: Fibbia, morguefile.com

Labelled with love... well, allergen advice



If you sell food, please make sure you're following the new Food Information Regulations, which came into force in December. You can find a few key pointers, and links to much more information relevant to all retailers of non-prepackaged food, on the

Real Bread Campaign website.
sustainweb.org/realbread/bakers-support/#bread_weights

Fare's fair

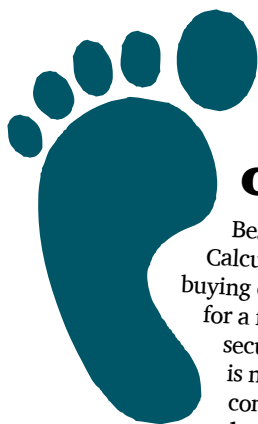
From 23 February to 8 March, this year's Fairtrade Fortnight celebrates the power of everyday shopping choices by sharing the stories of the people behind the products. As the world's largest Fairtrade City, London is the perfect place to get involved by going to an event near you, or simply stocking up on Fairtrade food and drink. fairtradelondon.org.uk



Albert Guevara, member of the CANN cooperative, Caba de Imbabura, West Africa



Photo by cmsavage, used under CC-BY-SA license



Good lardership

Best Foot Forward and LandShare have created the FoodPrint Calculator to help people understand the various impacts of their food buying choices. It has been designed for anyone to use, whether buying food for a family, an eatery, a deli/grocery, or even thinking about the food security of a whole city. Designed with ethical eaters in mind, the aim is not to preach but offer comparisons between the effects of a range of considerations when making food buying choices. landshare.org/how-to-feed-a-city

Meat beat manifesto

There is growing acceptance that to help tackle climate change, improve public health and feed the world more fairly and humanely, the so-called Western diet (now being adopted rapidly around the world) needs an overhaul. The omnivores amongst us need to eat less but better meat but the lack of research to understand how best to achieve this remains a big problem. Let's Talk About Meat is a new report from the Eating Better Alliance that aims to get policy makers, businesses and others who can encourage and enable the rest of us to make this change, to take action. eating-better.org/uploads/Documents/Let%27sTalkAboutMeat.pdf



A spread of the latest ethical food news

Sweet enough already? Vote now!

The Children's Food Campaign estimates that £39 million over 20 years could be saved on NHS and Public Health budgets, simply by adding a duty of 20p per litre onto fizzy pop and other sugary drinks. The money raised could be invested into a Children's Future Fund for programmes to improve children's health and protect the environment they grow up in. Boroughs likely to reap the most benefits include Croydon, Enfield, Southwark, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Hackney. You can see the potential benefits in your borough and have your say at: sustainweb.org/childrenshealthfund

Get Connected

As part of this year's Urban Food Routes initiative, London Food Link and Plunkett Foundation will be co-hosting a networking event on Tuesday 10 March. If you are a food retailer, grower, producer or run an eatery – big or small – and are interested in meeting potential suppliers or customers from other unique and vibrant businesses, then this is the do for you. Find full details and sign up at: www.urbanfoodroutes.org.uk

Photo by Vibol Moeung



HITTING THE SPOT

N15

Craving Coffee aims to make a real difference in the community by introducing people to producers at Team Tottenham Parties. The shop will highlight local, ethical and craft suppliers, including Weanie Beans, Wildes Cheese, Flourish Bakery, Beavertown and Redemption breweries, to name a few. Claiming to be the first of its kind in the area, the café will pay its workers a living wage while they serve up your cup o' Java.

cravingcoffee.co.uk @CravingCoffeeUK



ZOOMIN' BACK TO THE FUTURE

N1

Nanna's Café & Pantry is a new/old kid on the block in Islington. According to owner Sally Stall, they have 'a serious case of nostalgia and a passion for local produce.' With a 'seventies vibe', it gives a 'nod to the good old days when you knew what your food was made of and where it came from.' Complementing home-made, soups, stews, cakes and salads, is a growing range of fare from London producers, including pastries and Real Bread from Fabrique in Shoreditch, Sipsmith and Dodd's gins, and Kernel Brewery beers. And while the wine aint from capital vines, there's the refreshing refillable bottle option courtesy of Borough Wines.

nannasn1.com @nannasN1

NUTS TO DAIRY

W2

Pure Taste's 'cheeses' might sound conventional, but in fact they're made from nuts. It's not just vegans who are catered for, though. The dairy and gluten-free menu, which changes every eight weeks, has no fewer than ten dietary regime acronyms, including W30, WAP, LFM and SCD – we'll leave you to discover what each means. Director Adib says that most ingredients come from the UK; fruit and vegetables are all seasonal and certified organic or grown without agrochemicals; beef is organic and 100% pasture fed; other meats are mainly free-range or wild; fish is wild and the wine list is mainly certified organic or biodynamic.

puretasterestaurant.com
@ptrestaurants



AROUND TOWN

Compiled by
Lucy Bradley &
Catherine Sheppardley



NET FAIR

SW18

Faircatch is London's latest ethical fish box scheme (think veg box with fins), run on a Community Supported Fishery model, which promises that "your fish will be spanking fresh, seasonal, sustainable, local and delicious." As with the company Soleshare, customers pay up-front for a weekly or fortnightly share over an eight week season of the catch from dayboat fishermen and shellfish farmers around southern England, who in return receive a fair price and guaranteed income.

faircatch.co.uk

SUPERMARKET SWEEP

SE27

Community Shop is a 'fullscale social supermarket' offering discounts of up to 70% on food that 'the larger retailers and brands can't use' and would otherwise go to waste. Membership is open to local residents who receive government support and find it difficult to put food on the table.

community-shop.co.uk @CommunityShops

WASTE TO TASTE

E8

Save The Date is a new café in Dalston tackling the issue of food waste, which serves up lunches Tuesday to Thursdays as well as dinner on Fridays. In an outdoor setting provided by the Dalston Bee Garden, surrounded by containers of flowers, herbs and vegetables and the Real Junk Food Project's 'egalitarian eatery' brings together restaurant professionals and food lovers by cooking up surplus food, rather than it going to landfill. Operating on a not-for-profit basis diners donate a pay-what-you-feel for their meal from a menu devised entirely from what they are given.

savethedate.london
[@savethedatecafe](https://twitter.com/savethedatecafe)



GET FRESH IN THE EAST END

E8

Family-run Hackney Fresh is a new, independent organic fruit, veg and wholefoods shop on a mission 'to transform the way people think about fine provisions' and to be Hackney's 'champion in health and sustainable food.'

hackneyfresh.co.uk @hackneyfresh

KARMA, KARMA, KARMA, KARMA, KARMA MEALS IN CANS

WC1N

Inspired by Mumbai's mind-boggling lunch distribution network, Karma Cans is a new delivery scheme in Holborn. The 'generally super healthy' meals (though 'pulled pork and duck burgers are staying put') are packed up in returnable tiffin tins and wheeled round to local customers by bicycle. The former Petersham Nurseries cook supplements seasonal British veg from a supplier on Leather Lane with perfectly good stuff that would have ended up in a New Spitalfields Market skip, higher welfare meat from McKanna Meats on Theobald's Road, and non-endangered fish from Billingsgate.

karmacans.co.uk @karmacans



BRIGHT SPARKS

E17

As part of its Food Works initiative, Organiclea has launched a stall at the monthly Blackhorse Market. Led by young, local food growing entrepreneurs, the stall sells fresh, seasonal, organic fruit and veg, plus a range of jams, chutneys and much more. Profits are reinvested in the horticultural work scheme to help offer food enterprise opportunities to more young people, from work experience and paid placements, to business start-up support and grants. If you are aged 16-25 and interested in the scheme contact Darren at darren@organiclea.org.uk or on 020 8524 4994 for details of Food Works induction days.

organiclea.org.uk/we-help-you-grow-your-own/training-2/foodworks @organiclea
blackhorseworkshop.co.uk/market/



YOUR GRACE

N1

Following the wedding last year of the two companies' founders, Geetie and Guy, (a belated congratulations from Team 'Eel!) long-time London Food Link supporter The Duke of Cambridge has teamed up with fellow organic foodsters Riverford. Still the nation's only certified organic pub, Riverford at The Duke of Cambridge is 'as committed as ever to using only organic veg, fruit, meat and drinks' and still aims 'to ensure a fair deal for all: suppliers, staff, customers and the planet.' The key difference customers may notice is a shift towards a more vegcentric menu, and more activities from cookery classes and demos to farmers markets and supper clubs.

dukeorganic.co.uk
[@DukeOrganic](https://twitter.com/DukeOrganic)



TO MARKET

Food markets around London

Car park behind Waterstone's
Kensington Church Street London W11 3LQ
Saturdays 9am – 1pm
lfm.org.uk/markets/notting-hill



Notting Hill Farmers' Market



s a long-term resident in the area, I have witnessed the slow but steady evolution of London's second-oldest farmers' market, tucked in an unglamorous car park behind a well-known bookstore, since 1999. It has always been a locals' secret, from its humble beginnings as a low-key alternative to the neighbourhood's trendier organic food shops, to its current status as the place people in the know shop for sustainable, direct-from-the farm produce.

In its early days, I would come here to supplement my grocery shop with organic fruit and vegetables, including from stalwarts like Nigel Dyer of Nigel's Lettuces and Lovage who would peddle more unusual produce such as jalapeno peppers from his Cambridgeshire smallholding, or from Ted Dawson and his extensive variety of chemical-free seasonal vegetables. If I was lucky, Beatbush Farm might be selling their grass-fed Aberdeen Angus steaks or Romney Marsh lamb.

The market has since gone from strength to strength, and these days I can do a full weekly shop for all the essentials and more. For top quality dairy produce,

I join the long queue at Hurdlebrook Dairy for their creamy raw (unpasteurised) milk and yoghurts, Rookery Farm for their organic, free-range eggs, and Alham Wood Organics for buffalo milk cheeses. For meat and poultry, there are a plethora of producers to choose from, including Aylesbury ducks from Richard Waller, a good selection of game from Paul's Poultry and even lean and flavoursome goat meat from Ash Tree Farm. Then there's organic Real Bread from north London-based Celtic Bakers,

organically cultivated local wild mushrooms from the Mushroom Table, and even beautiful old-fashioned roses from M&R Morton.

* Featured stallholder Gary's Fresh Fish

Depending what's in season, live lobsters, large, juicy scallops and bright-eyed dover sole, sea bass and bream jostle with smoked mackerel and dressed crab on brightly-coloured clam shell tubs at Gary Haggis' seafood stall. Line-caught from managed stocks in the north Thames estuary, off the coast of Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex, the fish and shellfish are eye-catchingly fresh and the variety impressive. On the day of our visit, stallholder Tony showed us the brill and herring landed by Gary's day boat that morning, as well as by-catch such as sand sharks and squid to make sure nothing goes to waste. Gary and his team have also recently started to smoke their own fish, including cod and mackerel, the latter which I brought home to make a tasty paté..



Photo: Gary Haggis by Mark Handley

by Johanna Ashby



Grub's up!

As the world's population balloons towards a predicted nine billion by 2050, we need to think differently about how we feed the planet, particularly the protein in our diets. **Holly Brooke-Smith** asks if bugs are part of the answer.

It's estimated that insects form part of the traditional diets of about two billion people around the globe. In Britain, however, the phrase 'eating insects' might be more likely to inspire images of shrieking I'm a Celebrity... bushtucker trials.

The bug idea

Misperception is one of the main hurdles London's edible entomological entrepreneurs are trying to overcome. "It's all about education," explains Neil Whippey, co-founder of Eat Grub, which sells packaged insects and hosts pop-up events. "After all, we have no history of eating insects in this country. We know how to cook with beef, chicken or vegetables, but insects are a new idea". The first thing to understand is the enormous variety. "Saying 'insect' is like saying 'mammal', which doesn't make much sense when you're cooking – like saying pork and beef are the same."

Critter cuisine

This issue's cover star Louise Rezler creates arthropod alimentation under the name Hot Buzz. She describes some key flavours;

"Deep-fried locusts taste just like popcorn, whereas battered locusts are like prawns, while crickets are quite meaty. We've made an enchilada with fried garlic crickets and roast tomatoes, which was really great."

It's also important to view each critter in its own context. "Some bugs should be the main event, like crickets or grasshoppers, but others lend themselves to flavouring or as a base," Neil explains. "Mealworms taste quite similar to tamarind and we use them to form a paste which we then run noodles through. It was one of our most popular dishes this year, and also happens to be high in protein and omega oils."

Diet diversity

Aside from creating innovative recipes, the business of bug banqueting is a serious matter. Aran Dasan is co-founder of Ento, a company that runs critter tastings and events. He explains: "Insects are fed on vegetation that humans don't need. Diversifying our diet with other creatures also contributes to food security, making our food system more resilient. Gimmicks like scorpion lollipops are fun, but can damage the movement towards eating insects by

perpetuating the idea that it is a novelty food, rather than a serious proposition."

The more you look at it, the stronger the argument is to swap vertebrate meat for bugs. Louise expands: "They produce far less greenhouse gas than cattle and other livestock, need much less food and water to produce the same amount of protein, and they don't need large areas of grazing land." Before long, they could even be grown on our windowsills. Last year, kitchen brand KitchenAid collaborated with US designer Mansour Oursanah to create the Lepsis grasshopper pod, designed to breed insects in the domestic kitchen.

Caterpillar hungry

Generalising about the nutritional values of such a broad food group is fairly hard, but in 2013 the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) released a report on insects, showing that bugs often contain good levels of protein and minerals. For example, while beef has an iron content of just 6mg per 100g of dry weight, the mopane caterpillar has 31–77mg per 100g.

Hop to it

If you're tempted to try something different for supper tonight, try bugging out. As Neil says, "We really believe insects could become a staple food, much in the way sushi has become so popular over the last 25 years, when once it was so unusual."

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fao.org/docrep/018/i3253e/i3253e.pdf





URBAN FOOD ROUTES

The jaws of victory

The inaugural Urban Food Awards were announced on a damp but twinkly night in early December, to which we sent **Ellen Baker** for a chat with the winners.

In a clamour of winter coats, nominees and specially-invited guests flocked to Whole Foods Market on Kensington High Street to see Rosie Boycott, the Mayor of London's food tsar, present the first Urban Food Awards. "You feel that the city's in good shape when you see all this," she said. "I love it!"

Last summer, an open invitation saw over eighty enterprises enter, and more than 2,400 enthused Londoners vote for their favourites. Judges then mulled over the top three in each category, looking for sterling examples of enterprises making a real difference in their local communities.

The awards are part of Urban Food Routes' celebration of what the capital's community-focussed small food enterprises are achieving, generally in the face of stiff competition from bigger businesses, and more often than not equipped with modest resources.

When it comes to ethical eating and enterprise, we are of course all winners, but on the night it was the following fabulous four that came out on top...

Best Retailer

"Like a perfect market town high street. In Lewisham. In a car park," is how one customer simply and poetically described Brockley Market, which triumphed in a joint entry with its younger sibling in Wapping. "We all know how valuable markets are for London," said Boycott, and it's acknowledged borough-versally (and beyond) that this particular pair are bringing people in their local communities together in a new way. The markets were conceived and brought into bountiful being to showcase a spectrum of sublime small-scale food producers by photographer Toby Allen, who thanked "all of our traders...and all of our lovely customers who come along rain or shine."

Best Producer

Doing things incredibly, as well as organically, earned Lea Valley-based Organiclea its award. It was "an amazing feat for us," said Darren Springer of this winning workers' cooperative. Welcoming about 50 volunteers per week, this community food enterprise is doing absolutely huge things. Not only does the team nurture a whopping 10,000kg of top-class peri-urban produce per annum, peddled through their market stalls and wide-reaching box scheme, but their outreach training programme provides the city with a bigger vision of what green employment can achieve.

Best Educator

Bagging the gong rounded off an incredible year for community kitchen Made in Hackney, during which they shared food skills with 1,200 local residents and raised £13,000 through a hugely successful crowdfunding campaign.

Not only does this social enterprise offer lessons in 100% plant-based cookery, but also in eco-enlightenment, championing a real attitude change in the

Everyone's a winner, baby

Other awards presented on the night were:

Capital Growth Enterprise Award: Growing Kultur

Capital Growth Enterprising School Garden: Nightingale Primary School, Hackney

Good Food for London Best Borough: London Borough of Islington

London Markets Initiative Krys Zasada Memorial Award: Kingston Ancient Market

In honour of a considerable swathe of nominations across all categories, the judges created a special People's Choice award for Crisis Skylight Café, in Spitalfields. As well as running events for homeless people, the café works in close partnership with Switchback to help young offenders find their feet in the workplace – see feature on pages 16 and 17 to read more.

way we eat. In an innovative “virtuous circle of funds”, income from their full-price masterclasses are used to help make possible a weekly, volunteer-led pay-by-donation class. “Really, the award is for our amazing teachers,” says co-founder Sarah Bentley. “We couldn’t exist without our army of volunteers.”

“You feel that the city’s in good shape when you see all this”

Best Eatery

The merry bunch at Stepney have turned an ex-bomb site in “one of the country’s poorest boroughs” into a café to be admired, not just for its food but also its work helping to combat local unemployment. Operating in symbiotic harmony with Stepney City Farm, the journey from field to plate couldn’t be illustrated to curious consumers more immediately. The café uses produce straight out of the earth, where chef Joe Fennerty works wonders with ingredients that range from fully familiar to the lesser-known – sweet woodruff ice cream anyone?

A cut above

All sound like a cut above the capital’s cookie-cutter caterers? Well, precisely. The aim of the whole Urban Food Routes initiative is to support and celebrate the people driving what Bentley calls “little but mighty” enterprises that, with a bit of derring-do and a splash of ingenuity, are achieving such spectacular and unprecedented things.

According to Fennerty, our city is “just amazing...in terms of social enterprise, there’s no better place.” And thus, “Multiply, multiply!” was Rosie Boycott’s spirited parting message. “If we let this all go, our city will be a much poorer place.”

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All photos by Marcus Wright at the awards do, except Stepney City Farm by Vibol Moeung and Made in Hackney by Christian Sinibaldi.

Urban Food Routes

Urban Food Routes helps small food enterprises to thrive by providing business advice and funding, for the benefit of both the enterprises and people in their local communities. Its initiatives between March 2014 and 2015 also included Urban Food Fortnight, The Big Dig and support for this very ‘Eel. The project is co-ordinated by the Plunkett Foundation, with help from Growing Communities and London Food Link, and funded by the Mayor of London and Seeds of Change.
www.urbanfoodroutes.org.uk





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WHAT'S ON

February

Unpacking Food Packaging

20 February, Room 4426, SOAS, WC1B 5EA

Social anthropologist, sociologist and member of the UK Food Standards Agency, professor Anne Murcott discusses perspectives on food waste and the true cost of food packaging. soas.ac.uk/foodstudies/forum/seminarfilm/20feb2015-unpacking-food-packaging.html

Live Cultures and Ferments

28 February, Made in Hackney, N16 6PA

In this one day masterclass, nutritionist Åsa Simonsson will introduce the art of fermentation and benefits of the process. She will cover making nut cheeses, kombucha, sauerkraut and kimchi to name just a few. madeinhackney.org/whats-on/event/?event=live-cultures-ferments



March

How do we feed the planet sustainably?

3 March, House of Commons

Unphased by big questions, the People's Parliament gives food a look-in, flagging up critical issues about how we feed a growing population sustainably. Join David McAuley, Tara Garnett, and Lord Krebs at this free event to hear what they reckon needs to be done to get our food systems back in shape. thepeoplesparliament.me.uk/themes/feed-planet-sustainably/

Taste, Health or Ethics? The Value of Food Campaigning

6 March, Room 4426, SOAS, WC1B 5EA

Dr. Catherine Dolan, Dr. Karin Eli, and Dr. Tanja Schneider discuss the importance of food campaigning from anthropological, biocultural and science perspectives. The lecture is for members only, so to join free of charge contact soasfoodstudies@soas.ac.uk soas.ac.uk/foodstudies/forum/seminarfilm/06mar2015-taste-health-or-ethics-the-values-of-food-campaigning.html

Planning your food growing space

7 March, The Regent's Park, NW1 4NR

Part of the Capital Growth training calendar, this one day workshop is a must for anyone starting a food growing garden, and cost £25 for Capital Growth members, or London Food Link members. Full list of training available on the website. capitalgrowth.org/training

The Edible Garden Show

20-22 March, Alexandra Palace, N22 7AY

The UK's only dedicated grow-your-own garden show is coming back to London this March, with highlights including The Garden Industry Market Board launching the Love the Plot You've Got campaign. Organisations at the show include British Hen Welfare Trust, Capital Gardens, Capital Growth, School Food Matters, The British Beekeepers Association and The National Allotment Society.

theediblegardenshow.co.uk

The Big Dig

21 March, Various locations across London

As part of this national event, Capital Growth are working with community food gardens across London who will be opening their doors to welcome people to help get their gardens ready for the season ahead. Spend a day in the fresh air, learning how to grow and helping out these fantastic projects.

www.bigdig.org.uk/london

Outdoor Learning & Plot to Plate conference

23 March, Rhyl Primary School, NW5 3HB

The Eden Project, Jamie Oliver's Kitchen Garden Project and The Royal Horticultural Society are teaming up for a schools food growing training day. This event will help teachers develop successful outdoor learning and growing projects at school, with topics including classroom cookery, growing-to-sell, growing exotics, maths under blue skies, plot design, wildlife gardening and more.

outdoorclassrooms.wordpress.com/2014/12/11/outdoor-learning-conference-monday-march-23rd-2015/

April

Nursery open day

26 April, Hawkwood Nursery, E4 7UH

Celebrate seasonality in the Lea Valley on the last Sunday of every month with a look around the site, taking part in shared work tasks, and drop-in learning sessions. You will also have the chance to enjoy the seasonal dish, vegetable or fruit that is this month's star on the nursery's sagra calendar. Free but you can enjoy lunch prepared from seasonal produce for a donation.

organiclea.org.uk/whats-on/open-days-at-hawkwood/

What's going down in your part of town?

If you're looking for – or running – a good food market, class or other event in London, please visit our calendar at jelliedeel.org

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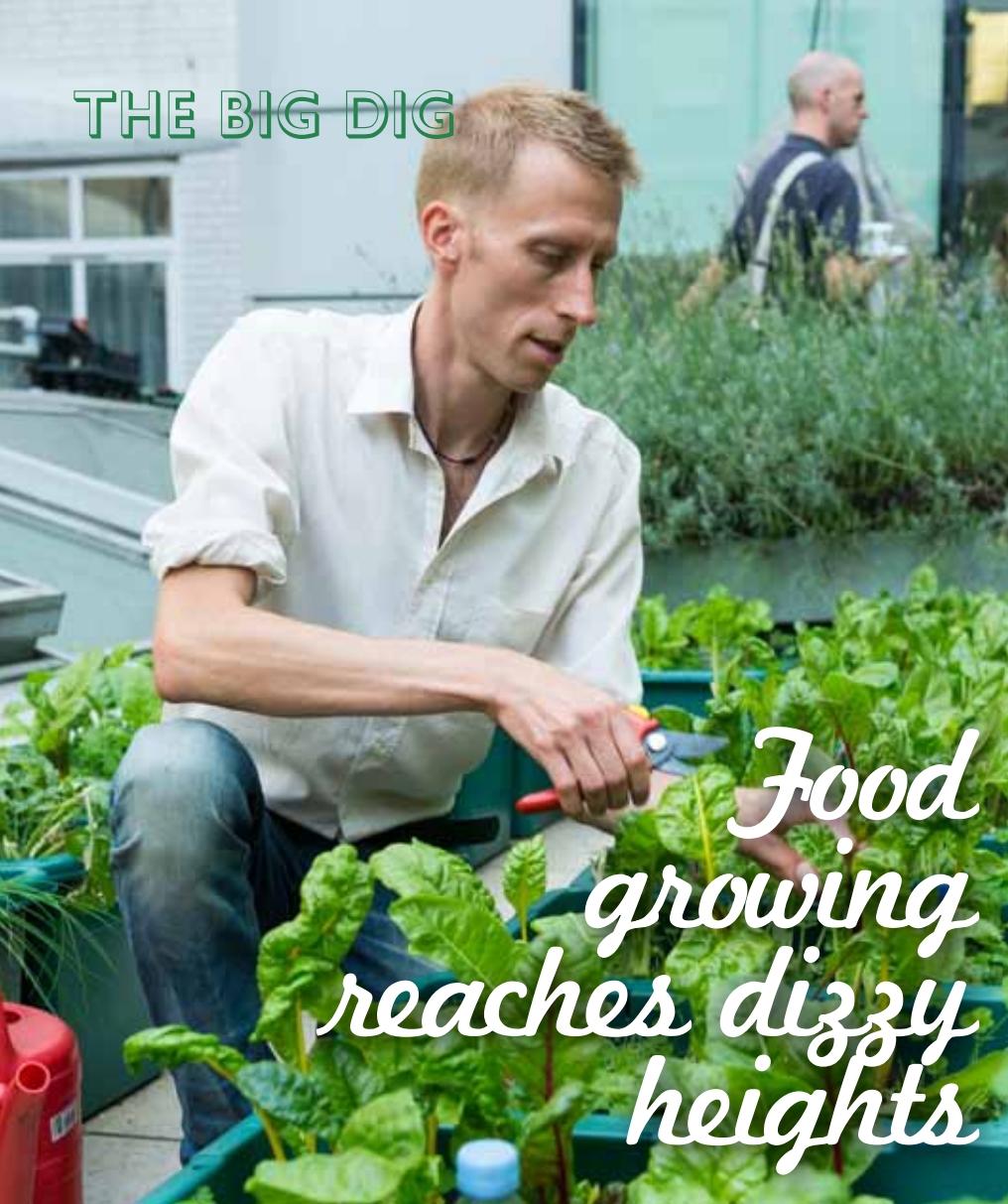


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www.organico.co.uk

THE BIG DIG



Food growing reaches dizzy heights

“it’s not just good for your health, it’s good for your soul as well!”

the season with a bang... The Big Dig is a really great way of doing this.” Similarly, when the Meanwhile Gardens discovered an amazing flat roof space, they were able to call upon a keen group of volunteers. “Before we knew it, we had a fantastic garden space,” said Chandrika Dilpat. Within the first year of growing, they had had bumper crops of potatoes, thanks to the work of volunteers.

Dig your own soul!

The exercise you get is obvious, but there’s increasing recognition of other therapeutic benefits of food growing. As Sarah Hewson of Roof East says of urban gardening: “it’s not just good for your health, it’s good for your soul as well!” For her, it’s really about getting people up on the roof to enjoy the space, which was set up to create a lasting legacy from the Olympics. Keeping this legacy alive can sometimes seem a challenge but The Big Dig day helps. “It’s amazing to get a lot of people up there in one go,” she adds.

But it’s not all hard work, many of the gardens put on a meal to reward their Big Dig day volunteers, like Louisa, who will be firing up her barbeque, ready to create a spread for anyone who visits the garden.

So what are you waiting for? On Saturday 21 March, visit a Capital Growth garden near you to give a hand. And if you have a thing about heights, please don’t worry as most of them are at ground level.

bigdig.org.uk/london
facebook.com/DoddingtonGarden
meanwhile-gardens.org.uk
[@meanwhilegdns](https://twitter.com/meanwhilegdns)
roofeast.com
[@roofeast](https://twitter.com/roofeast)

WIN!

For the chance to win a gardening goody bag, tweet a picture of you digging in on Big Dig day, remembering to include @capital_growth and the #bigdig2015 hashtag in the tweet, by 1 April 2015.

Parts of our city may seem like a concrete jungle, but across the capital people are creating fertile oases in every nook and cranny. **Clare Gilbert** meets some Londoners whose food-growing ambitions are making them reach for the sky.

London has seen a number of food growers scaling extraordinary heights to reap their harvests, with rooftop gardens springing up all over the capital, often in response to the lack of land in the capital.

But high level horticulturists can face difficulties that ground-dwelling diggers wouldn’t even consider. For one thing, how do we even get up there? And then there are the materials.

Big Dig to the rescue!

The Doddington and Rollo Community Roof Garden are currently facing such a problem. As Louisa Knight, the garden coordinator, explains, “we’ve very kindly been given five

tonnes of compost, but this could take a while to get upstairs.” When attempting to do such a job, volunteers are essential.

This is where The Big Dig comes in. This annual, nationwide event was launched in London by Capital Growth in 2012, where for the past two years it has been funded by the Urban Food Routes programme. Each year it sees an army of people don their boots and visit their local community garden to give them a hand for the day. Some of the one-off volunteers become regulars, seeing it as a ‘green gym’, or simply a place to meet and chat to new friends they’ve made.

Back up on the Doddington roof, Louisa says “for us it’s just really important to start

Fed up with food waste

FEATURE

Each year, the UK food and hospitality industry throws away over 920,000 tonnes of food, costing our economy about £2.5 billion.

Catherine Shepperdley discovers a project working to tackle this shocking waste and feed hungry Londoners.

It's a shocking fact that around 75% of the food waste generated by food producers, retailers, caterers and eateries could be avoided. This is where the Mayor of London's FoodSave comes in.

Since November 2013, this project has seen Sustain and the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in London to identify where they can eliminate food waste, and divert remaining surplus to local charities. Surplus, and the likes of whey from dairies and spent grain from breweries, go to farms to be used as livestock feed. According to the SRA's Victoria Moorhouse, "there's a huge area of opportunity financially for the bottom line, but also environmentally."

Super savers

With the help of knowledge brokers Plan Zheroes, one of FoodSave's biggest achievements has been connecting traders at Borough Market with local charities and initiatives, including Mental Fight Club's The Dragon Café. Within six months of the connection being made last June, this weekly pop-up café has served an estimated 3,800 meals created from the market's surplus food. Mental Fight Club's Sarah Wheeler speaks enthusiastically of the "beautiful social ecosystem" that has developed between the market, its traders and local charities. She also notes that the relationship has halved the café's food costs. Lisa Bennett, FoodSave's project manager at the Greater London Authority, is confident that such "relationships are long-term and sustainable."

Other community organisations receiving

surplus thanks to FoodSave include Brixton People's Kitchen, The Manna Society, and Women at the Well.

Benefits for businesses

According to Lisa Bennett, each of the hospitality businesses that the SRA has worked with on FoodSave has saved on average well over £6,000 annually. Meanwhile the retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers that Sustain has worked with have, on average, each prevented a whopping 26 tonnes of food from being wasted per year.

Thornton's Budgens in Belsize Park got involved with FoodSave at the request of staff, who wanted to find a sustainable way to deal with the store's surplus food. After meeting with Sustain's Charlotte Jarman, the team discovered the positive impact the programme can have on both a business and people in the local community. Food that can't be used in-store gets donated to Camden's Centrepont youth hostel, where young homeless people are taught how to cook using surplus – but fresh and seasonal – ingredients. Kate Avgarska, Thornton's Budgens'

facilities manager, says that their involvement in the initiative has really changed the morale of staff and that they can tell "what a difference a little amount of food can make to young people's lives."

FoodSave is funded by the Mayor of London, the London Waste and Recycling Board, and the European Regional Development Fund. Jellied Eel stockists and other London food SMEs wanting a free food waste audit, advice on how to reduce their waste, and help with diverting the remaining surplus to good use, have until the end of February to get involved. Businesses that have done the most to reduce food waste will be celebrated at the FoodSave Awards ceremony on 15 May.

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sustainweb.org/foodsave
london.gov.uk/foodsave
foodsave.org @FoodSaveLondon
planzheroes.org @planzheroes
boroughmarket.org.uk
@boroughmarket
thorntonsbudgens.com
@BelsizeBudgens



Food waste feed at Stepney City Farm by Chris King



Cafés with a conscience

Francesca Baker steps into some of the cafés run as charitable schemes and social enterprises to see how they are tackling a variety of issues while dishing up food and drink that helps keep the capital running.

Back in the 1700s, coffee houses were hotbeds of debate, political progress and social change, but somewhere along the line the ethical values of the places in which we drink and eat has become hazy. Recently this has become of greater concern to a growing number of people wanting to know that grabbing a coffee is not merely a financial transaction, but contributes towards a wider social good.

Positive changes

Being a conscious consumer is not just about the food on your plate, but also considering the meal in a wider context and its role in broader social commitments. Beyond paying close attention to issues including the welfare of animals and producers, provenance,

“Cafés are therapeutically and socially wonderful places”

seasonality, packaging and waste, a growing number of cafés are helping to make clear, positive social changes.

Crisis is a national charity for single homeless people, which runs three cafés across the country, including Café From Crisis in Spitalfields. Each is a training centre, supporting Crisis members (people who are homeless or have been in prison) to get work in the catering industry. Over the last decade, this recently revitalised London outpost has helped more than 230 people get into paid employment. “To just serve tasty food these days is a

given; customers want strong ideals and values from a place in which they choose to eat and drink. These informed decisions confirm their wider lifestyle choices,” says Alana Cookman, the charity’s head of cafés.

Skills and confidence

Working with HAIL, a local organisation that support adults with learning difficulties to live independently, and a small group of regular volunteers from Action for Kids, Hornsey Vale Community Centre launched its community café in April 2014 as a pop-up space three afternoons a week. Numerous local groups use the space, and through working in the café, trainees develop a wide range of skills to help them make the next step to employment.

As Susanna Hunter-Darch, who runs the café, says “there are lots of local cafés but ours is the only one that gives people a chance to gain much needed skills and confidence in a safe and gentle community to enable them to build their independence.”

“Don't under estimate that by giving you get so much back”

Breaking down barriers

Another important element is tackling prejudice - in both directions - helping to break down barriers to social inclusion. At The Crisis Skylight Café, members get to mix on a daily basis, both as trainees and as customers, with the vibrant mix of students, creative types, city workers, tourists and local residents also dining there.

It's a similar story at recovery café Paper & Cup. Set up by the Spitalfields Crypt Trust charity, this not-for-profit social enterprise offers barista training and employment for people in recovery from drug, alcohol and other addictions. The founders tend to downplay their social aims, allowing trainees to decide if, when and how to share their stories with the Shoreditch hipsters who make up much of the clientele.

Punter power

Jacqui Shimidzu, co-founder of The Hill Station in SE14, stresses the importance of customers in the system. “In these times of extreme inequality it's more important than ever we all try and support each other as much as we can, and keep educating ourselves in what can be done to address the extreme gap between the haves and have nots.”

This community café is a social enterprise that also aims to provide job opportunities for people under represented in the workplace, many of whom were formerly long term unemployed. In order to do this, the business relies on the support of customers. In case anyone needs further incentive to pop in, Jacqui adds “Don't under estimate that by giving you get so much back. It makes happiness.”

Ethical dining is about more than just food. It's also about doing right by individuals and society. As Susannah says, “Profit can come in many forms, not just monetary. We have to get away from everything being about financial gain and look at the wider impact.”

For Paper & Cup's Brent Clarke, the opportunity for cafés is obvious. “Cafés are therapeutically and socially wonderful places, and fine food and coffee and aspirational and key to wellbeing.”

So, let's raise a cuppa to those building a supportive environment where all of these aspects are allowed to thrive.

crisis.org.uk @crisis_uk
hillstation.org.uk @thehillstation
paperandcup.co.uk @paperandcup



Also raising a cup of kindness

Kahaila, Brick Lane: Invests all profits in charitable work and local community projects. kahaila.com/cafe

Gallery Café, Bethnal Green: Vegan and vegetarian spot run by the charity St Margaret's House to generate income for its work supporting other local charities and community groups. thegallerycafe.wordpress.com

Living Water Satisfies Café, Crystal Palace: Invests profits in supporting women to overcome domestic violence. livingwatersatisfies.org.uk

Café of Good Hope, Hither Green: Set up in memory of murdered teenager Jimmy Mizen. Offers job opportunities to young people and a CitySafe Haven to those who feel they made be in direct danger. cafeofgoodhope.co.uk

The Camden Society: Manages social enterprise cafés across London that offer catering and hospitality apprenticeships to disabled people. thecamdensociety.co.uk/ourbusinesses/cafes

Nana, Homerton: Home from home for older ladies, helping to reduce social isolation while passing on healthy cooking know-how to young 'uns. wearenana.com

Pie In The Sky, Bromley-by-Bow: FoodCycle's community café turns surplus food into affordable meals and offers young people opportunities to gain hospitality industry skills and confidence. foodcycle.org.uk/location/pie-in-the-sky

food to make you
feel good

Juice / Coffee /
Breakfast / Lunch

Open Mon - Fri,
8am - 3pm,
64 Commercial St
London, E1 6LT

All the money spent
at Café from Crisis
supports our training
programme for people
who want to work in
the catering industry.

café

from
Crisis

Mind the (hungry) gap

We will soon be entering the 'hungry gap', when the autumn stores have all but dwindled and

spring has yet to bring new bounty. But that's not to say a committed London locavore is restricted to the likes of just turnips, cabbage and spuds, oh no...

Cut (and grow) the mustard

According to Julie Riehl, gastronomic gardening guru at Global Generation's skip garden, The Regent's Park Allotment Garden and London Food Link's Capital Growth, plenty of more exciting vegetables can be unearthed on London lots. She says that growers including Calabaza, The Castle and Sutton Community Farm have been sowing the likes of "beautiful and unusual mustard leaves like Ruby Streak," cavolo nero and "quite sexy" heirloom red Russian kale.

Then there are plenty of things you can grow yourself and help is at hand. As well as year-round harvests



Need some vernal vegetable variety but don't want to go to the ends of the earth to get a break from the usual seasonal suspects? **Jo Creed** says if you dig a little deeper you might find some less common characters in London's larder.

of off-beat vegetables like Zimbabwean kale and oriental brassicas including mizuna and mibuna, Spitalfields City Farm also offers opportunities for local people to get involved. They include growing your own veg in the farm's community gardens, to monthly cooking events and training sessions in emerging vegetable varieties.

Plot plotting

Whether in an allotment, garden, or window box, the time to start planning for next year is now. As Julie puts it, when it comes to growing, you have to think "like a fashion designer, working a season in advance."

canteen and local eateries including The Fields Beneath' café. He says "it's essential you get crops going during late summer or early autumn, so they have time to reach the decent size. They'll then exist in a state of almost suspended animation, waiting for the first stirrings of spring. Then you can pick them as and when you need."

When you sow and whether you do so indoors or out depends of what you're growing. Tom says "chillies are first on the list, but you will need a snug spot or heated propagator to get them going. By late February or early March we are sowing trays of pea shoots, chick pea shoots, sorrel, bull's blood and lettuce."

So, step away from that airfreighted asparagus and join the urban vegetable revolution by getting creative in making London legumes (and other veg) the stars of the show!

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[@capital_growth](http://capitalgrowth.org/training)
[@tom_moggach](http://outdoorclassrooms.wordpress.com)
[@spitz_cityfarm](http://spitalfieldscityfarm.org/get_involved)

Other useful sites

- List of seasonal veggies:
eatseasonably.co.uk
- Join a food growing space:
capitalgrowth.org/spaces
- Farmers' markets:
lfm.org.uk/markets-home
- Seasonal growing guide:
rhs.org.uk/advice/grow-your-own

This is echoed by Tom Moggach, who runs the outdoor classroom at Rhyl Primary School in Camden, which continues supplying salads and herbs over the winter to the school



In a proper pickle

FEATURE

What do kimchi, sauerkraut, gherkins, salami, kefir, cheese and sourdough Real Bread have in common? All can trace their roots back to a particular type of fermentation. **Tess Riley** chats to people who are championing its revival.

If you ask Hackney-based Nick Vadasz what led him to launch his own business making traditional cabbage sauerkraut, fermented spicy apples, and cherry and smoked chilli kraut (to name a few), it soon becomes clear that his family have a lot to answer for. Also known as The Pickles Man, Vadasz learnt the art of fermenting from his relatives before dabbling in it throughout his career as a chef.

“I was inspired by my Hungarian Jewish heritage,” reminisces Vadasz. “The taste and smell of sauerkraut and pickles fascinated me from an early age, and now our new greens and fermented half sours are based on the very pickles my grandmother made every summer.”

Friendly bacteria

Vadasz’s method of preserving is known as lacto-fermentation, an anaerobic process dating back at least 6,000 years that immerses the food in a salt solution over the course of a day or more to encourage the production of lactic acid bacteria (LAB), rather than pickling in hot vinegar. As The Fermenters Club website notes: ‘All ferments are pickled, but not all pickles are fermented!’

As well as helping to preserve food, lacto-fermentation is a fantastic way to create delicious dishes and generate gut-friendly probiotics. Expert Sandor Katz, author of *Wild Fermentation* and *The Art of Fermentation*, points out that these bacteria help digest not just the foods that have been fermented but also others found in the digestive tract.

Today, Vadasz and his team sell their ferments made from locally-sourced ingredients at venues across London. “My favourite has to be half sours”, says Vadasz with enthusiasm. “Sour and tangy with dill, garlic and horseradish – they remind me of summer and granny’s great Hungarian cooking.”

Korea guidance

Another fermentation fan is Hanna Söderlund, whose Kimchinary street food stall can be found serving up Korean-

inspired burritos and tacos out at KERB Kings Cross every Friday. Her mission? To “get all of London hooked on kimchi!” Tasty treats such as a grilled aubergine and braised winter greens burrito comes with kimchi fried rice, pickled coleslaw, spring onion sour cream and gochujang sauce – a fermented Korean condiment whose ingredients include fermented soybeans and red chilli. Salivating? You should be.

For those who’d like to have a go at making their own, Urban Food Award winner Made In Hackney runs regular fermenting classes taught by nutritional therapist and naturopath Åsa Simonsson. “Fermenting is one of our flagship classes because of the wonderful health benefits of natural, plant-based ferments, which are packed full of beneficial bacteria to help maintain a healthy digestive system and improve immunity”, says Made In Hackney founder Sarah Bentley.

“They are easy to make at home and incredibly cheap - perfect for those on a low budget who want to improve their health.”

Whether you’re keen to try kimchi or desperate for some DIY sauerkraut, London is your oyster – or should that be your ogiri? – where all things fermented are concerned. As tasty, affordable, healthy and easy-to-make foods go, you’re onto a winner with this lot.

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[@vadaszdeli](http://vadaszdeli.co.uk)
kerbfood.com/traders/kerbanists/kimchinary/
@kimchinary
madeinhackney.org
@made_in_hackney



Pickled pleasure providers

A few more places for a LAB lovin’ Londoner’s little black book.

Blackhand: Fennel and pepper salami (Hackney Wick) blackhandfood.com

Cah-Chi: Kimchi (Raynes Park & Earlsfield) cahchi.com

Katzenjammers: Sauerkraut (London Bridge) katzenjammers.co.uk

Raw Duck: A range of fermented pickles (London Fields) rawdackhackney.co.uk

Photo: Hanna Söderlund by Chris Young

THE EEL LOVES...



Herne Hill

Think south London ends in Brixton? Well, suggests **Joanna Sopyło-Firrisa**, venture a little further than SW9 and you'll discover a gem called Herne Hill.

Herne Hill is home to previous 'Eel stars such as Olley's Fish & Chips (issue 43), and the eponymous market (issue 38) but there is much more to discover in the area. Most importantly SE24 is home to a vibrant community of people who care about what they eat. "Herne Hill benefited from Lambeth Council's actions to make the borough greener, as well as from the fact that it has always attracted more liberal people," observes Therese Stowell, director of Lambeth Food Network. Even the local Londis has plenty of organic food products.

BUTCHER / DELI: Dugard & Daughters

Arch 286, Milkwood Road, SE24 0EZ

Whoever you talk to in Herne Hill, you will hear about Dugard & Daughters, run by Rose and Nick Dugard...and their two little daughters. They sell free range chickens, rare breeds and red beef all sourced from farms in Southend or Colchester. They produce their own sausages: 12 types, including pork and leek; and rosemary and lemon. Yum! If you need something special, say a wine matching your next big meal or buns for your burgers, they'll source it for you too. And they're open until 8pm, so popping in on the way from work is not a problem.

dugardanddaughters.com

BAKERY: Blackbird

208 Railton Road, SE24 0JT

Real Bread Campaign supporter Eamonn Sweeney's bakery makes all loaves and pastries from scratch using flour from Shipton Mill. Their range includes walnut and onion, however, their specialty (and the bestseller) is a sourdough; their cereals bread is quite amazing too. They are also happy to sell you flour to make your own bread at home.

blackbirdbakerylondon.co.uk

BREWERY: Canopy Beer

Arch 1127 Bath Factory Estate, 41 Norwood Road, SE24 9AJ

(Available from Dugard & Daughters, as well as local pubs and in restaurants) Estelle Theobalds and her husband started brewing beer ten years ago in their home but they moved under a railway arches when it got more serious. They brew what they like to drink, with locally-inspired names, like Ruskin Wheat Beer, Brockwell IPA, Milkwood Amber Ale and 1891 IPA. "We're really excited about both our Belgian-style amber ale and our German-style wheat beers," says Estelle. Recently they produced a small batch in support of Herne Hill Velodrome, a historical sport venue that was used during the Olympics in 1948.

canopybeer.com

BOX SCHEME: Local Greens

Collection points in Herne Hill and across southeast London

They currently deliver around 300 bags a week full of seasonal vegetables from farms within 60 miles of SE2, including Ripple Farm Organics, Sarah Green Organics, Hughes Organics, Tablehurst Farm, Brockmans and Calabaza Growers. They also grow their own south London salad. Every bag contains different seasonal treats such as the winter sprouting broccoli.

localgreens.org.uk

FOOD NETWORK: Incredible Edible Lambeth

Around Lambeth

Incredible Edible Lambeth is a network of people who care how the food is produced. Among their members are local community groups, charities, GP surgeries and schools. Anyone who grows their own food is welcome to join the network, which can help to raise the profile of a business, or offer help writing funding bids. Once in a while they organise cooking lessons. Herne Hill members of the network include Ruskin Park

Community Gardens, a local NHS surgery that grows food for patients, Cressingham Gardeners, and St. Jude's School.

incredibleediblelambeth.org

GROWING: Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses

In the park, between the children's paddling area and the tennis courts.

Pop in for a visit from 12-4pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

A hive of activity, and not just for their bees. In 2014, in addition to all the usual vegetables like carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, squashes and pumpkins, they grew sesame, peanuts, bitter melon, watermelon, artichoke, Jerusalem artichoke, cape gooseberries and tomatillo. There's also a herb garden and orchard with apple, pear, cherry, medlar and quinces. The organisers offer volunteering opportunities, seasonal cookery workshops for children and adults, and host London Beekeepers' Association hives.

brockwellgreenhouses.org.uk

PUB: The Florence

131-133 Dulwich Road, SE24 0NG

Led by author, pub historian, and beer sommelier Peter Haydon, this 'Eel stockist

has brewed its own beer at the back of the pub since 2007. You can choose from Weasel, a hoppy, fruity golden ale; the dark Bonobo; and Beaver wheat beer. They also offer typical pub food with a modern twist, making it as good for a community event as for family Sunday roast.

florencehernehill.com

CAFÉ: The Lido Café

Dulwich Road, Brockwell Lido, SE24 0PA

For a seasonal meal made with ethically-sourced ingredients, head to this eatery located in a Grade II listed Art Deco building. Their lemonade, ginger beer and cider come from Luscombe Drinks in Devon, meat from The Rare Breed Meat Company, all baked things from Clarke's in Kensington, beer from Meantime Brewing Company in Greenwich and coffee from Allpress roaster in Shoreditch.

thelidocafe.co.uk

Photos: facing page - The Lido Café. This page from left to right - Dugard & Daughters by Stephane Gregoire; chilli harvest from Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses; and The Florence Bar



GLUG!



Greener tea

As Brits brew up a staggering 60 billion cups a year, **Lucy Bradley** goes in search of a capital cuppa for the conscious consumer.



Although coffee culture has blossomed in recent years, tea retains its crown as the most popular national beverage. Yet as the film *The Bitter Taste of Tea*, and Forum for the Future's Tea2030 report highlight, this caffeinated commodity can present a challenge for those who care about people and planet.

Rosy Lee

Alex Holland, self-confessed idealist and the brains behind social business *The Real Tea People*, is on a mission to convert people to loose leaf. His new Brixton venture, *Brew: a Pub for Tea*, will serve cocktails made from alcohol infused with loose leaf "tea with dignity." Alex says this means tasty teas that set new standards in terms of the benefits those who grow it receive. "One tea we source is from Dalim Bora in Assam. As part of a pioneering cooperative the grower is able to earn several times better than what he'd get from Fairtrade."

But it's not just people outside the UK Alex wants to help; in partnership up with the charity *Switchback*, his tea pub provides work experience and employment opportunities to young ex-offenders.

Char

Jennifer Wood, founder and director of London Food Link supporter *Canton Tea Co*, explains how her company selects tea from small-scale growers who farm sustainably. For example, the distinctive taste of *Oriental Beauty* tea, she says, "relies on the tea jassid (a little cricket) to nibble the edges of the leaves before picking. When the tea bush is under attack, it releases an enzyme that lends a slight citrus note to the tea. This is a great example of the farmer working in harmony with the native wildlife and without the need for pesticides." Choosing seasonal teas and paying the price set by each grower she adds "we have a relationship with the farmers and know the provenance and production of all our teas."

Loose leaves might be more environmentally friendly too. Research by *Tea Craft's* Nigel Melican concluded tea can even be carbon negative, depending on how the leaves are grown, processed, packaged and transported. A variety of other London-based purveyors with loose leaf 'digni-teas' include *Postcard Teas*, who source directly from microproducers with 15 acres or fewer; *Rare Tea Co*; the *Urban Tea Rooms*; and *Good and Proper*.

Nice little urner

But what of the local food lover? While plantations have yet to spring up within the M25, tea from Cornwall's *Tregothnan*, and Perthshire's *Wee Tea* plantations prove it is possible in the UK. Looking beyond his own company, *Wee Tea's* managing director Tam O'Braan has been sharing their knowledge with budding growers. After all, as the UK Tea Growers Association founder, he says "it's an industry, not just one farm." Meanwhile, *Tregothnan's* Jonathon Jones tells me the estate also sells tea bushes to curious green-fingered tea-lovers, so perhaps a capital cuppa is on the horizon...

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weeteacompany.com
@WeeTeaPlant
tea2030.tumblr.com
tomheinemann.dk/the-bitter-taste-of-tea

Ooh you are offal... but I like you

Tom Hunt is ready to get his trotters in the trough for Head to Tail Week, the new name for the annual celebration the joys of delicious forgotten cuts and wobbly bits.

When it comes to meat, a philosophy I feel rather strongly about is eating the whole animal from nose to tail, wasting nothing in between. That's what Head To Tail Week (9-15 March) is all about.

Everything but the oink

Not so long ago we ate a lot more of the parts of the animal that are now generally overlooked. My grandma tells me stories of how she used to eat dishes like boiled sheep's head and poached calf or lamb sweetbreads: cooks' names for the thymus and pancreas. In much of Europe this is still commonplace, but in the UK we're a little more squeamish when it comes to delicacies like tripe, chicken feet and bull's testicles. Many even wave the white flag beyond chicken breast.

At the end of the day, these forgotten parts are not only nutritious but also very affordable, making choosing meat from higher welfare animals easier. As demonstrated by Fergus Henderson, the chef whose St. John's restaurant and book

Nose to Tail have led the repopularisation of offal since the late '90s, they're also mouthwateringly delicious when cooked in the right way.

The fifth quarter

This year's Nose-to-Tail Week is being co-ordinated by Grub Club, a platform co-founded by Olivia Sibony for entrepreneurial chefs. She says "It's so exciting to work with chefs who are so keen to rediscover the forgotten cuts which are so delicious and nutritious. It's brought about so much creativity with modern twists on ancient recipes, and it's amazing to see so many people appreciating these fantastic flavours and textures."

Already signed up is Rosie Llewellyn of A Little Lusciousness. She'll be taking a very user-friendly approach, representing what I call 'the acceptable face of offal', serving dishes like oxtail stew and duck liver paté. Rosie says 'I've come up with an accessible menu, which takes into account that a lot of potential customers are not necessarily as much as an omnivore as me!!' There

Use your brains

Brain is an intriguing offal that is well worth a try. Breadcrumbed and deep fried they are surprisingly delicious to eat, crunchy and melt-in-the mouth. Take one fresh lamb's brain and cut it from front to back separating the two lobes. After carefully removing and discarding the outer membrane, rinse under a tap. Bring to a simmer in a light veg stock, turn off the heat and leave for one minute. Remove from the pan and leave to cool. Breadcrumb the brains by dusting them in flour, patting off any excess, then coating in egg and finally rolling in seasoned breadcrumbs. Fry in a pan of light olive oil, cooking both sides until golden brown. Serve hot with lemon and tartar sauce. Bon appetit!

are also events organised by Quinto Quarto, Italian for the fifth quarter (ie offal), who will be cooking up a hearty Roman meal with yummy dishes like fettuccine spare ribs with artichoke cream.

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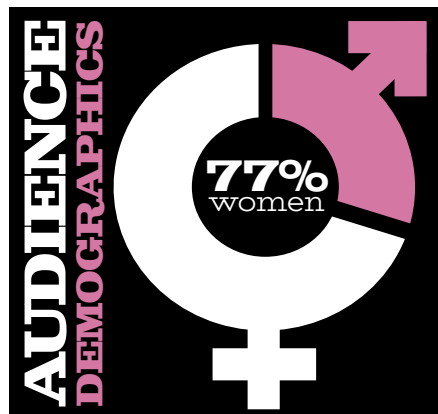
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