

The Purple Kitchen

Real Food Education

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DIARY DATES!!!!

New Mini Chef Spring term started 16th January and we have some availability and can accept taster bookings.

Play and Bake this term will be on Saturday March 14th

Summer Mini Chef term starts April 24th -

See web site for full details

Happy New Year!

What a busy and eventful year it was! The three of us managed to have a summer holiday—Sally went to Greece and enjoyed lots of delicious fresh and flavourful food like moussaka, stuffed vine leaves and tomatoes that actually taste of tomatoes. Kate packed up her rookie chop sticks and flew off to Beijing for all things Chinese with a quick stop off in Thailand on the way home which included a lesson in Thai cooking. Sam escaped to Croatia where the food is rich and flavourful with lots of home produced fruit and vegetables—and the sun shines down on you!

And we don't just enjoy food—we also get active—Sally loves playing tennis to keep fit—though with her 2 Labradors to walk everyday there's not much couch potato in her, Kate has been running a bit more and managed the Great North Run in October, while Sam, as a non driver, walks everywhere which keeps her fit.

A new year for us also means that we take a step back to review what we have been cooking. This term at Mini Chefs we are going to have lots of completely new recipes to try which we hope will become just as much a part of your families fare as some of the old favourites. We always try to balance a range of sweet and savoury dishes including main courses and snacks with an eye on health—keeping sugar low and we don't use salt at all. Of course all our recipes are nut free and we try to keep all the ingredients easily accessible with an occasional challenge like last terms Winter Sausage Bake where we used Curly Kale—it may not be a favourite of yours but hopefully you will use it with more confidence from now on.

Kate Morris and Sally Brown

Spring Clean Your Larder

If, like us, the new year finds you reviewing your life then what better place to start than the larder. Statistics show that we throw away 1/3rd of the food we buy—what a waste! This hits both our pockets and the environment (see http://www.wrap.org.uk/retail/food_waste/index.html) so it is time for us all to smarten up our acts.

Take a long hard look at what is in the larder before you go shopping and try to find recipes to help you use up what you have—the trick is not then to buy a further 5 ingredients that will sit half finished in the larder afterwards! At Purple Kitchen we try to minimise the duplication of similar ingredients in our recipes, for example often we will use ground mixed spice in place of ground cinnamon or ground ginger, you still get the lovely aroma and flavour without having 3 packets of different ground spices in the larder!

This is also a great time of year for making soups with those sorry looking vegetables—just some softened onion, add some good quality stock (we recommend the new Bouillon low salt stock powder) cook and whizz with a liquidizer.

And although it sounds like a bore, planning your meals ahead can save you time and money as you can duplicate your cooking—make twice as much ragu and make a shepherds pie for the evening as well as a lasagne for the freezer. One trick is to plan with the children—what would they like to have for tea on each day of the week? You can get them to help you check for their 5 a day in the plan, and have they had fish this week? Involving the children can help with meal time battles as they will know in advance what they are having, and you can negotiate—your favourite tomorrow for my new recipe on Friday.

Don't forget to share your tips with us and your favourite recipes too, please!