

Wild Nettle Soup

This stage of the 'hungry gap' is when perennial vegetables and herbs really come into their own: too late for many stored veggies, and too early for most young and tender new summer crops, so perennials herbs and greens offer some much-needed freshness and flavour. It's a great time for foraging: pungent wild garlic and stinging nettles abound everywhere, plus some dandelion and very young beech leaves make an interesting addition to salads. Nettles are superfoods in their own right, traditionally used for a cleansing spring liver tonic, and almost worth cultivating for their high levels of iron and minerals. You can also substitute nettles for any other greens in this recipe.

Serves 4

large bowl young nettles leaves
large knob butter
1 onion, finely diced
1 carrot, diced
1 celery stick, diced
1 stem fresh garlic, sliced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ l vegetable stock
pinch freshly grated nutmeg
salt & freshly ground black pepper



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Wash the nettles and remove any tough stalks. Melt the butter in a large saucepan and soften the onion, carrot, celery and garlic. Add the stock and nettles, bring to the boil and simmer for around 10 minutes, until everything is tender. Season to taste, and add a grate of nutmeg. Purée the soup in a blender (if you like a thicker soup, add some torn fresh bread or cooked potato while blending). Serve with a swirl of double or sour cream, season and add a little more nutmeg. You can also serve this as a chilled soup, with ice cubes dropped in and a little chopped cucumber sprinkled over the top.



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This week we love... National Vegetarian Week

Monday 20th to Sunday 26th May 2013 is National Vegetarian Week, and we're celebrating all our veggies, fruit and herbs in the shop. There are a huge number of meat-free meal ideas around at the moment; check out www.vegetarianrecipeclub.org.uk for some mouth-watering veggie inspiration to dinner time. The best thing of course is that meat-free doesn't just mean a meal with no meat: the flavours created are much more than that! From banana and coconut curry or apricot and chickpea couscous to spinach and mozzarella lasagna and roasted veggie wraps with salsa or guacamole, there's something to tempt the most ardent carnivore to try meat-free meals during the week.

Try making a few yummy veggie dishes at your next barbecue (perhaps on Bank Holiday Monday if we get weather like the last one?), alongside our Aberdeen Angus steaks, burgers and Berkshire sausages. As well as homemade coleslaw and green salads, try a warm pasta salad with char-grilled peppers, onions, courgettes and tomatoes; aromatic couscous with barbecued fresh garlic; or try making your own spicy bean burgers in breadcrumbs. Meat can still be a tasty treat, but hurrah for more veg!

www.nationalvegetarianweek.org



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