

As fresh as it gets

Chef Chris Coubrough explains why excellent local produce means the coast is no longer a culinary outpost – and shares some recipes

When I moved to Norfolk it was not a destination most knew of, regarded by many in my line of work as behind the times and a no-go zone for food lovers.

Although still one of the most undiscovered counties in the UK this is now what makes it so special, that and the fact that it provides chefs like me with such a wonderful array of seasonal produce. Norfolk is now a hotspot for food lovers who want variation in the menus they try whilst at the same time appreciating locally-grown produce.

As someone who prides himself on only using the best I now know that I can get what I want by talking

and working with local farmers. Inspiration for the menus in my hotels and inns is created for me by passionate farming individuals. As someone once said: 'This is farming land – you'll soon notice the benefits when you're sampling its food and drink.'

It is easy to help solve the problem of food miles and strengthen our local economy when we have so much on our doorstep. I love that my wife can now produce one of my most popular beers from wheat grown five miles from where I live, that I can pull over to the side of the road and grab a punnet of sweet juicy strawberries or call into a farmer's yard and pick up a bundle of tender asparagus.

And let's not forget the seafood –



See over for our new improved directory of where to shop for fantastic local ingredients

it is exceptional and offers such variety: from the tasty Cromer crabs and fabulous mussels, to orgasmic oysters and succulent little Lynn shrimps; your taste buds are guaranteed to have an enjoyable time!

I am proud that Norfolk is now blessed with dozens of excellent chefs who choose to create everything from sophisticated menus to traditional home-cooked dishes with produce grown on their very doorstep.

Chris Coubrough runs the Flying Kiwi Inns which include the Kings Head, Letheringsett; the Ship Hotel, Brancaster and the Crown Hotel, Wells-next-the-Sea. Flyingkiwiinns.co.uk

Tried and tested Four Chris Coubrough recipes using local delicacies (ALL RECIPES SERVE FOUR)

ASPARAGUS, PARMESAN AND SOFT-BOILED EGG SALAD

- 2 bundles of Norfolk asparagus
- 4 soft-boiled free-range eggs (shelled)
- 1 small block of Parmesan
- 1 bag of mixed leaves
- 20 ml white truffle oil

Blanch the asparagus in salted boiling water until tender and refresh in iced water. Quarter the eggs and season with salt and pepper. Using a potato peeler, slice the parmesan into flakes. Mix together all the ingredients including the salad leaves. Serve on a plate, drizzled with the white truffle oil.



NORTH NORFOLK LOBSTER COCKTAIL WITH BATTERED CLAW

- 2 1lb lobsters cooked and de-shelled, including the claw
- 1 iceberg lettuce
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes
- ½ cucumber
- 100 ml mayonnaise
- 50 ml Heinz tomato ketchup
- 1 lemon
- 4 pinches of paprika

Make Marie-Rose sauce by mixing the mayonnaise and ketchup with the juice of half the lemon in a bowl. Quarter and season the tomatoes and slice the cucumber thinly. Mix the tomatoes, cucumber and iceberg lettuce together and place in four bowls. Divide the lobster between the four bowls and top with the Marie-Rose sauce, a lemon wedge and one pinch of paprika each.

- For the battered claw*
- ¼ pint ale
- ¼ pint soda water
- 1 tsp tumeric
- 100g self-raising flour
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place all the ingredients into a mixing bowl and add the soda water and ale until you have the consistency of double cream. Cover the meat from the lobster claw in the batter and fry in hot oil until golden brown

BINHAM BLUE & RED ONION TART

- Puff pastry discs
- 1 red onion
- 2 free-range eggs
- ½ pint double cream
- 250g Binham Blue cheese
- Small bag rocket leaves
- ½ lemon
- Splash of olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Pre-heat oven to Gas Mark 8 / 230°C. Whisk the eggs and cream together and season with salt and pepper. Lay the puff pastry discs on a pre-heated baking tray, then roll the edges up and prick all over with a fork. Break the cheese into nuggets, slice the red onion into rings and divide between the pastry discs. Spoon 2-3 tablespoons of the egg mixture over the cheese and onion. Place in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden and cooked through.

Remove from oven and place on plate. In a separate bowl dress rocket leaves with the lemon juice and olive oil. Serve the tart warm with a ball of salad on top.

SUMMER PUDDING

- 2 tbsp water
- 5oz / 150g sugar
- 1lb/450g mixed summer fruits. Fruits used for summer pudding must have a rich, strong, color and flavour like raspberries, strawberries, red and black currants, damsons and blackberries.
- 100 -150g thin sliced white bread, crusts removed
- Whipped cream or custard sauce, to serve

Stir the water and sugar together and bring to a gentle boil. Add the berries and fruits and stew very gently until softened but still retaining their shape. Line a 1½ pint pudding basin with the bread slices ensuring there are no gaps. Fill with the stewed fruits and cover the top with more bread slices. Place a saucer with a weight on top (a can of tomatoes or beans is ideal) and leave overnight in a cool place. The next day, before serving, turn the pudding out onto a plate. Serve with the whipped cream or custard sauce.

GLANDFORD SHELL

STOCKERS GALLERY

MANNINGTON HALL