

## Summer paradiso

The recipes and photographs on these pages are from **Paradiso Seasons** by Denis Cotter, head chef at the internationally renowned Cafe Paradiso in Cork. In this new book, he creates sumptuous and thoughtful recipes using seasonal vegetables in their prime.

### BARBECUED VEGETABLES WITH A LEMON, THYME AND GARLIC MARINADE

A lovely way to start a long evening's cooking and eating in the open is to grill some vegetables, as many as are near to hand, and to present them as a simple antipasto before the richer kebabs, fritters, stuffed vegetables and so on. In a simpler meal where there is, say, just one type of kebab with potatoes and salad, then one or more of these grilled vegetables will add variety and freshness. It is essential that the vegetables are vibrantly fresh and in peak condition. The cooking instructions are the same for all the vegetables: simply brush them lightly with olive oil and grill them on the barbecue, turning as necessary, until lightly browned and just tender. However, the vegetables will need different preparation, as detailed below. I would suggest you cook one or two types of vegetable at a time, as they may have different cooking times. Transfer the cooked vegetables to a serving plate, drizzle them with some of the marinade, and move on to the next batch. I wouldn't fuss too much about trying to keep the vegetables warm; perfectly cooked vegetables at body temperature are more what you're after. Some vegetables cook better if they are very briefly cooked in water before grilling, and these can be put into the marinade while warm to absorb the flavours. It's not that they won't cook fully by grilling alone, but they will be more succulent for having taken on some moisture.

FOR THE MARINADE:

*the following proportions are good – multiply or divide them to the quantity you need, and simply whisk or stir the ingredients together.*

**250mls olive oil**  
**rind and juice of 1 lemon**  
**1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves**  
**4 cloves garlic, finely chopped**  
**salt and black pepper**

*Any combination of the following vegetables will be good to barbecue:*

**globe artichokes** – slice the artichokes in halves or quarters lengthways and take out the choke with a teaspoon; boil the artichokes for two minutes  
**fennel** – halve or quarter the bulbs, depending on size, and boil for two minutes  
**baby carrots** – simply wash them, don't peel  
**fat asparagus** – snap the ends off nice fat spears  
**new potatoes** – halve or leave whole if small, and boil for five minutes  
**spring onions or thin young leeks** – simply trim the top and any tough leaves  
**courgettes** – use small ones, whole or halved lengthways  
**sweetcorn** – boil for five minutes and slice each ear into two or three pieces  
**pumpkin or butternut squash** – chop into large chunks and boil for two minutes  
**runner or flat beans** – top and tail, and slice in half if very long  
**portobello or flat mushrooms** – leave whole, cook open side first

### GRILLED HALOUMI WITH LIME AND MINT

Haloumi loves the tang of lemon or lime and it is a certainty that even after you have dressed it with lime people will squeeze more precious drops directly on to the cooked cheese. The cheese has a slightly tough texture when raw, and it can become chewy if it sits around after cooking. Not to an unpleasant extent, indeed some people like it to take on this texture, but you should try to cook it just before serving. On a barbecue, cook small batches at a time.

**2 x 250g packs haloumi**  
**olive oil**  
**1 small handful mint leaves**  
**pepper, coarsely ground**  
**3 limes**



Cut the haloumi into slices of about 10mm thick – you should get ten slices from a 250g block. Brush the slices on both sides with olive oil and cook them for a few minutes in a frying pan, on a griddle pan or on a barbecue, turning once, until the slices are lightly coloured on both sides. Put the cooked haloumi on a serving dish; chop the mint and scatter it over the haloumi. Sprinkle a little coarsely ground pepper over also. Grate the rind of one lime and sprinkle it over the haloumi, and squeeze the juice of the same lime all over the dish too. Slice the other limes into wedges and serve them with the haloumi for those who like an extra tangy dimension.

### SUMMER SQUASH SALAD WITH CASHEWS, COCONUT, YOGHURT, LIME, GINGER AND CORIANDER

Squashes and pumpkins come in types all along a scale of starchiness, or flouriness, from dry, perfectly mashable, to moist and firm. Those at the dry end of the scale ripen mainly in the autumn and tend to have deep orange flesh, intense and sweet flavours. The moist and firm squashes ripen earlier and have more delicate flavours, sometimes vaguely nutty. While my true passion for pumpkins is almost exclusively devoted to the autumn ones, especially when roasted and spiced, I do admire the sprightly lightness of summer squashes



too. A combination of different squashes is lovely for this salad and if you can find a butternut or similar orange-fleshed one it will add a lovely splash of colour. The salad has some lively, tangy and spicy flavours, but the subtle taste of the squashes won't be lost if they are cut into large enough chunks. Use a mild chilli with the seeds removed – chilli should not be the dominant flavour here.

**FOR FOUR:**

- 2 tablespoons whole cashews**
- 1kg squash**
- 2 spring onions**
- 1 tablespoon sushi ginger**
- 1 mild fresh red chilli**
- rind and juice of 1 lime**
- 1 bunch fresh coriander leaves**
- large pinch salt**
- 100mls coconut milk**
- 200mls plain yoghurt**

Toast the cashews in a low oven for half an hour or so, until lightly coloured right through. Peel the squash, unless the skin is very thin and edible, and cut it into two-bite sized chunks. Steam or boil the chunks until just tender, then drop them into cold water for a few minutes to cool them. Chop the spring onions into thin diagonal slices, and the ginger into thin slivers. Scrape the seeds from the chilli and slice the flesh thinly. Put the squash in a bowl with the cashews, onion, ginger, chilli, lime

rind and juice, most of the whole coriander leaves and a large pinch of salt, and toss them gently. Stir the coconut milk and a pinch of salt into the yoghurt. When you are ready to serve the salad, either on individual plates or in a large bowl, pour the yoghurt dressing over the squash without tossing, and scatter the last of the coriander leaves over the top.

### ROASTED PEPPER ROLLS OF BLACK KALE AND PINENUTS

These pepper rolls make great barbecue food. Serve them with classic basil pesto or a lemony aioli. If you don't have black kale, use spinach or chard.

**FOR TEN ROLLS:**

- 5 large red peppers**
- 250g black kale**
- 80g pinenuts**
- 60g Parmesan, finely grated**
- salt and pepper, to season**

Blacken the skins of the peppers under a hot grill or over a flame. Pop them in a paper bag or into a sealed bowl for 20 minutes or so to cool, then peel off the skin and scrape out the seeds without breaking the peppers. Carefully, slice the peppers in half lengthways.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, drop in the black kale and cook it for five or six

minutes, then transfer it to cold water to cool. Drain it well, squeezing out all the liquid with your hands, then chop it quite finely. Toast the pinenuts for a few minutes until lightly coloured, then chop them coarsely. Don't blend or grind them – you want broken and halved nuts, not powder. Stir the pinenuts into the kale with the Parmesan, a little salt and black pepper.

Place a dessertspoon of the kale and pinenuts along one length of roasted pepper and roll up the pepper tightly, making sure the parcel is well packed. Repeat until all the filling or the peppers are used up. To cook the rolls, brush them lightly with olive oil and cook them on a barbecue, under a grill, in an oven or on a griddle pan, turning as required, until the rolls are browned in places and heated through.

**READER OFFER**



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