

# Sell Out

Foodie friends  
Nigella Lawson and  
Nigel Slater, on  
steak and chips  
respectively, cook  
up a storm overleaf.



## Whose soirée now?

The dinner party is dead. Long live getting your friends round for nosh and a natter. We asked six of the best known cooks in the biz to whip up speedy, no-fuss recipes for every eventuality, from pissed mates to hot dates; and for faking it rather than making it, check out London's top delis (p34), and the best ready-meals (p40).

Chef interviews **Lorna V** Introduction **Peter Paphides** Photography **Trevor Ray Hart**

## Pissed post-pub munchies

With Nigel Slater

No less a word than adorable will do to describe Nigel Slater, the man who, with his book 'Real Fast Food', gave us the confidence to dish up in under 30 minutes. While his high-ceilinged, light Highbury flat has blissful modern touches, his approach to food is basic but inventive.

'When you've been drinking, all inhibitions about food fly out of the window,' says Nigel. 'You couldn't care less about anything that's fashionable or healthy. That's why even health-conscious people end up going to the chip shop. If you're cooking when you're drunk, pasta isn't a good idea - pans with boiling water are a bit dangerous!'

### Chips in curry sauce (to feed a handful)

A bag of oven chips  
3 large onions

2 big cloves of garlic  
1 chilli (from a jar)  
Stock powder (Marigold's is the best)  
Curry powder (ideally Bolster's - 'People get really snooty about curry powder, which is silly. In India they buy spice mixes! Bolster's really is excellent')  
Olive oil (vegetable will do)  
Small carton of cream (single or double); if you haven't got cream, use coconut milk - always keep a tin in the cupboard!  
Salt and pepper

### Optional

small packet of frozen peas (about 200g)

1. Turn on that oven as soon as you get in!
2. Peel and chop onions. (If you've only got one, it'll do - the sauce won't be as thick, but it won't be a disaster).

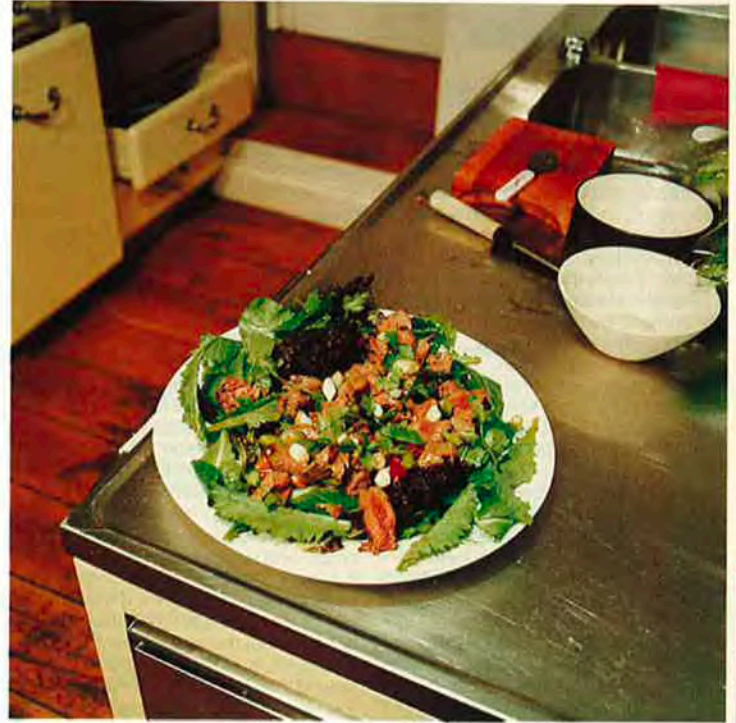
3. Cover a frying pan with oil; when hot, chuck in onions, stir around, and lower heat.
  4. Peel and slice garlic (or put through garlic crush) and chuck into pan. Leave to cook.
  5. Put the oven chips into oven dish and then into hot oven.
  6. Throw a tbsp of stock powder into the frying onions.
  7. Add a pint of water.
  8. Add chopped chillis, along with some salt and pepper.
  9. Add 2 tsp curry powder.
  10. Chuck in a small packet of frozen peas.
  11. Cook for about 20 minutes.
  12. Finally, stir in the cream.
  13. The chips will be ready by now. Serve up with the sauce and enjoy your binge!
- Nigel Slater's 'Real Food' is published by Fourth Estate at £18.99.



Nigel Slater goes back to basics with his chips 'n' curry combo.



Nigella Lawson chews open a bag of lettuce (left); and the low-fat Cambodian steak salad itself (below).



## A girls' night in With Nigella Lawson

Within minutes of meeting Nigella Lawson, you want her as a friend. You'd like to be able to dismiss her for her family name and connections, only her warmth makes this impossible. This is a woman who writes about food with a maternal instinct for nurturing and a childlike delight at discovery. Aside from writing about food (for *Vogue* and the *Spectator*), she contributes to newspapers and TV, has been a Booker Prize judge and has two little children with journalist husband John Diamond, who is fighting cancer.

Her recipe for a girls' night in is so simple it takes minutes to concoct, yet it's not without female planning. 'This is low-fat, which means afterwards you can pig out on ice-cream. It's also good pre-menstrual food as the steak gives you lots of iron!' The dish has the same qualities which make her special: feisty, down-to-earth and very stylish.

### Cambodian steak salad

(for two to three)  
A large fillet steak (about 250g, ideally organic, free-range; get it from a good butcher and keep in the freezer!)  
Sea salt  
Bag of salad  
Bag of ready-chopped coriander leaves (get these on the way home from M&S or Tesco Metro)  
3 tbsp Thai fish sauce  
Juice of a lime  
1-2 tsp sugar  
Shallot  
1-2 chillies

1. Heat up a griddle (or pan) until really hot, throw in the steak and cook on both sides.

2. Whilst cooking, mix fish sauce, lime juice and sugar in a bowl. Add chopped chillies and chopped shallot.
3. Arrange the salad and coriander leaves on a large plate; slice the steak and put into a bowl; pour any juices from the steak into the sauce.
4. Arrange steak slices on the salad leaves and pour the sauce over - and that's it!

### Vegetarian option

For fish-eaters you can grill some fresh tuna; for strict vegetarians go for mushrooms and/or marinated tofu.

### Pudding

With a low-fat dish like the above, you can afford to pig out for pudding. Recommended tubs of ice-cream are Waitrose's Organic Vanilla, Carte D'Or Coconut or, particular good after the salad, Salcombe Dairy's Stem Ginger. For an extra special topping, go for chestnuts in syrup - Marroni Mignon in Sciroppo (available from supermarkets and delis)  
Nigella Lawson's 'How to Eat' is published by Chatto & Windus at £25.





**Gordon Ramsay (left) adds the last crucial touches to his salad niçoise – ideal for when the lads come round to watch the footie; and the finished product (below).**



## A posers' lunch With Gordon Ramsay

There's something about London's most talked about chef/restaurateur that leaves you wanting more. As we wait (and wait and wait) in the kitchen of his new Chelsea restaurant, there's an undeniable buzz around him – even when he's not there.

'Why are so many of you French?' I ask the head waiter. 'Ahaaa,' he grins, preparing what turns out to be a supremely ace cappuccino. 'Because you know, only we understand Gordon, we know 'ow to 'andle him, we know 'ow to take ze sheet.'

As his team come to the end of lunchtime and commence with near-meditative concentration on the evening's preparations, the man himself reappears. In between cooking lunch and dinner, he's done a swift TV interview. With a playful (rather than charming) energy that ricochets through the kitchen, the ex-footballer takes over. Even the kitchen help who's told off for being late again looks up at Gordon, unable to resist a smile.

### The perfect niçoise salad

- Salad leaves
- Tomatoes, ideally skinned by plunging into very hot water
- Quails' eggs, boiled for three minutes
- Olives, pitted
- Green beans, cooked
- Boiled new potatoes
- One fresh tuna steak per person

Good quality balsamic vinegar  
Olive oil  
Sea salt  
Ground pepper  
Classic vinaigrette (olive oil and lemon juice)

1. Heat a pan until it's incredibly hot; add olive oil.
  2. Season the tuna and potatoes with salt and pepper.
  3. Put potatoes (flat side first) in the pan, swish around for about a minute. Once browned, take out.
  4. Give the pan a clean (professionals just wipe pan with tea towel) and add some fresh oil. When hot, sear both sides of the tuna – it's ready when lightly browned on both sides. Lightly smear with vinaigrette.
  5. Layer salad leaves (don't forget to season) with green beans and olives. If you want to be mega fancy, use a pastry cutter to hold the arrangement. Arrange tomatoes, quails' eggs and potatoes around the salad. Take off the cutter if you've used one, place tuna over the salad. Drizzle with vinaigrette and balsamic vinegar, and garnish with chervil.
- Gordon Ramsay, 68 Royal Hospital Rd, SW3 (0171 352 4441) Sloane Square tube. Open Mon-Fri 12noon-2pm, 6.45-11pm.  
Gordon Ramsay's 'Passion for Flavour' is published by Conran Octopus at £25.*





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That's shallot! Hugo Arnold gets frying (below) and prepares the veg (left).



### Posh lunch for parents With Hugo Arnold



#### Put aside! Now go on to...

##### Potatoes

Don't worry about quantities, just get enough to fill a baking dish. Put some olive oil in the dish; slice and add the potatoes; add sea salt, pepper and some rosemary. Put into hot oven (Gas Mark 6/200°C) and get them going. Remember to stir them after about 20 minutes. (They should take around half an hour in total.)

#### Meanwhile, time for...

##### Plum crumble

1. Thoroughly rinse the plums, peel, core and roughly slice the apples and put them into a saucepan (still thoroughly wet); add sugar, cardamoms and cloves. Cover and simmer on a low heat.
2. For the crumble, put dark muscovado sugar, flour and butter into a bowl; lightly mix with your fingers until you get those doughy crumbs (or get your mum to do it!); leave aside.

##### For the bruschetta:

###### The short form!

1. Chop up the shallots and fry on a low heat in a little olive oil. When soft, add Puy lentils and cover in boiling water from the kettle; chuck in a stock cube, a clove of garlic (don't worry about peeling), a bay leaf. Leave to simmer. Remember to add more water as you go along – it'll take about 20 minutes for the lentils to become soft.

##### Back to that chicken!

If you're a fancy cook and have a Le Creuset casserole dish, you can brown the chicken on the stove. Otherwise, brown the chicken in a pan on a high heat. This seals the juices, gives it more flavour and speeds up the cooking time in the oven. Once browned, pop into the oven. Check the potatoes at this point – if they're ready, take them out.

##### Back to that bruschetta!

1. Roughly slice and toast the bread. (If you're a fancy cook, do it on a griddle). If you can be bothered (it's worth it for the taste), rub the toasted bread with a clove of garlic.
2. Add some chopped flat-leaf parsley to the lentils, which will be cooked by now (they should be soft).
3. Pile red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes and Puy lentils on to the bread. Top with some olive oil and lemon juice.
4. Hand round and get everyone eating!

##### And that crumble!

Plonk those plums (don't worry about the stones) and apples in their juices into a dish, and top with the crumble – but don't put in the oven just yet.

##### Don't forget the green beans!

1. Plonk the green beans (topped and tailed) into a pan of boiling water for about 2-3 minutes.
2. Drain, add chopped beetroot, some olive oil and lemon juice.

##### Almost there!

The chicken takes about 20-25 minutes, so by now it'll be ready. If you want to be fancy, take out the chicken, add 1/4 bottle white wine to the juice, and heat up the sauce (in a pan if you haven't got a Le Creuset casserole dish).

Serve up, and don't forget to put the crumble in the oven – it takes about half an hour.

Enjoy!

'The Fifth Floor Cookbook', by Henry Harris with Hugo Arnold, is published by Fourth Estate at £25.

Food writer Hugo Arnold's is a fine example of a perfect and precise style of cooking. In the Hackney house which is home to him, his TV producer wife and their three-year-old son, Hugo is king in the zinc-topped state-of-the-art kitchen. But just as Tesco sausages nestle alongside Italian speck in the fridge, Hugo is at ease cooking both elaborate dishes and simple, rustic meals.

His advice for a family lunch is to keep it simple, and not to worry about everything looking perfect or being ready before they arrive. 'Hand them a drink and get them involved.' The best thing for novices about the following 'menu' is that it's more about assembling ingredients than fancy cooking; and aficionados will go for the quality of ingredients.

##### Bruschetta

Good quality country bread  
2 or 3 shallots  
400g pack or tin of Puy lentils  
Stock cube  
Jar of roasted red peppers  
Jar of sun-dried tomatoes  
Garlic cloves  
1 bay leaf  
Flat-leaf parsley  
Olive oil  
A lemon

##### Marinated roast chicken

A good quality chicken, jointed  
1 chopped chilli pepper  
3 cloves garlic  
Sea salt  
Pepper  
Olive oil  
Spanish or balsamic vinegar  
Flat-leaf parsley  
Potatoes  
Rosemary  
Green beans  
A pack of cooked beetroot  
Optional: 1/4 bottle white wine

##### Plum and apple crumble

1lb plums  
1lb apples  
4 cardamoms  
4 cloves  
3tbsp sugar – more to taste  
For the crumble:  
3tbsp plain flour  
2tbsp muscovado sugar  
Generous tbsp butter

##### First...

##### Prepare the chicken

1. Turn up your oven to maximum heat.
2. Instead of a whole chicken which is difficult to carve, divide it into pieces before cooking. Plonk joints in an oiled baking dish/tray.
3. Add chopped chilli pepper (if you can't be bothered to get rid of seeds, that's fine, it'll just be hotter!), garlic (don't worry about faffing around with skinning the cloves – roughly chop and chuck in!), sea salt and freshly ground pepper, a few dollops of olive oil, a few splashes of Spanish vinegar (balsamic will do), a handful of chopped flat-leaf parsley.



Peter Gordon mashes the raspberries (above, top) and crushes the amaretti (above, bottom) for the dessert-cum-breakfast. Then it's time to cook the pak choy (right). Gordon's full-to-bursting fridge testifies to his passion for food (below).



Sell Out

## Romantic dinner/ breakfast! With Peter Gordon



The Sugar Club's chef Peter Gordon has the sunshine background to match his rugged good looks. As you'd expect from a Kiwi who has also lived in Australia, he's warm, open, and blissfully chilled out. The welcoming West Hampstead mansionblock flat he shares with his partner has a kitchen crammed with foodie treats, from Safeway mince pies to Maggie Bear's quince paste. And simple treats are the secret to his romantic, sexy dinner... Buy everything from a supermarket near you!

**Salmon in coconut sauce with couscous and pak choy**  
2 fillets of salmon  
Bunch spring onions  
1 red onion  
1/2 chilli pepper  
Small piece of root ginger  
Lemongrass  
Fish sauce  
Soy sauce

Sesame oil  
Tin unsweetened coconut milk  
Bunch coriander leaves  
One cup couscous  
Pak choy

### Raspberry fool

Punnet of raspberries (or can of good fruit)  
Small carton of thick double cream  
Carton of Greek sheep's yoghurt  
Unrefined sugar  
A couple of amaretti biscuits

### Get the oven on – red hot!

#### Start with the couscous

1. Put just under a cup of couscous into a bowl and cover in tepid water.
2. Chop the tops off a bunch of spring onions and add to the bowl. Add pinch of salt and stir.
3. That's it! Leave aside.

#### Move on to the salmon

1. Chuck into your baking dish: a red onion sliced and chopped; half a chilli chopped; a thumb of ginger (peeled, sliced and chopped); smash the stem of a lemongrass stalk and chuck this in too. Add the salmon steaks, skin side up.
2. Add two splashes of fish sauce, and two splashes of soy sauce. Pour in half a tin of coconut milk.
3. Bung into hot oven for 15-18 minutes!

4. Chop up a small bunch of coriander leaves (for later).

#### For the greens!

Chop the bottoms off the pak choy, and give them a good rinse. Leave for a few minutes.

#### Stir the couscous!

#### For pudding

1. Chuck the raspberries into a bowl, sprinkle with golden caster sugar, and mash with a fork.
2. Whisk the double cream with the yoghurt. If you don't possess a whisk, you can use a potato masher.
3. Crumble two to four amaretti.
4. Layer a bowl with amaretti, raspberries and cream.
5. Leave in the fridge (make sure there's nothing pongy in the fridge – this might be in there until breakfast!)

#### Back to the main course

1. Heat a wok or pan and add some sesame oil. Chuck in the pak choy and give a stir. Leave for a couple of minutes.
  2. Take out the salmon (it needs about 15-18 minutes); discard the lemongrass, which is inedibly tough.
  3. Serve with couscous and pak choy. Add chopped coriander.
- Peter Gordon's 'The Sugar Club Cookbook' is published by Hodder & Stoughton at £13.99.

