

R I V E R

C A F E

C O O K

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

B O O K

G R E E N

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About the Book

The first two River Cafe cookbooks were landmarks in cookery publishing. Now *River Cafe Cook Book Green*, with its focus on seasonal vegetables and fruits, will bring about another change in the way we approach food. With over 200 wonderful new Italian recipes, using everything from artichokes and figs to porcini and chestnuts, Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers share their knowledge of the superb produce that is the key to their cooking.

For them the choice of ingredients has always been important and they believe passionately that the best fruit and vegetables are those which are harvested in season and have been grown organically. *River Cafe Cook Book Green* is divided into 12 months, with each month suggesting what to buy and cook at that time. Delicious, easy recipes then follow, ranging from White Asparagus Risotto and Minestrone of Broad Beans to Tomato, Butter and Nutmeg Penne and Pear, Honey and Polenta Cake.

‘fresh ideas shining from every page ... the authors’ enthusiasm for vegetables and fruit and their relentless search for quality is legendary, but somehow the recipes seem even more tempting in this, their third book. This is as dazzling and imaginative a collection of vegetable recipes as you are ever likely to find in one book. I love their restaurant and I love their recipes. Ruth Rogers and Rose Gray have done it again.’ **Nigel Slater, The Observer**

‘Like Jane Grigson’s Vegetable Book, written way ahead of its time, I have a hunch that this will turn out to be similarly far-sighted.’ **Harpers & Queen.**

‘Their two astonishingly successful books have already sold over a million, but in many ways the latest is the best of the lot.’ **Sunday Express**

About the Authors

Ruth Rogers is the American-born wife of architect Richard Rogers. Rose Gray ran the kitchen at Nell's Club in New York before joining Ruth Rogers to launch the River Cafe. Together they have made the River Cafe one of the most respected restaurants in the world and have trained many of the new generation of star chefs, from Samuel and Samantha Clarke to Jamie Oliver.



River Cafe Cook Book Green Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Ebury Press London Design the Senate Photography Martin Gray



Introduction

Word spread. People started arriving at our door. A woman from our local allotment began to bring her surplus sorrel in the early spring. In April, a friend would pick stinging nettles by the bag-full from his farm in Hampshire. Other enthusiasts appeared with sea kale from the south coast beaches. Later in the year our builder exchanged the huge puffball mushrooms that grow near his house for bottles of Chianti Classico. When people realised we at the River Cafe were interested in fresh, unusual, wild produce they wanted to participate.

Our passion for vegetables and fruit in season has been at the heart of the River Cafe since we first opened in 1987. Every day, outside the kitchen, we pick from our organic garden many varieties of basil, marjoram and mint, and interesting leaves such as purslane, cicoria, and trevise to use in our recipes. And the simple pleasure of all this, of fresh, seasonal eating, is behind River Cafe Cook Book Green, our third cookbook.

Like the others, it is heavily influenced by our love of Italy, our many visits over many years, and our growing appreciation of the glorious variety of Italian food. All cooking starts in the market, the market reflects where you are, and the season around you. There is the joy in April when the first delicate broad beans arrive; that rich day in October when every stall is loaded with wild mushrooms gathered only that morning; the gentle sadness of biting into that last fresh cherry knowing that soon the brief season is over.

Over the years we have worked with our suppliers from New Covent Garden, encouraging them to bring Italian market produce to London. Now lorries arrive laden with trevise from Verona, artichokes from Rome, borlotti beans from Puglia. These wonderful vegetables are slowly spreading throughout Britain and more and more greengrocers and supermarkets are selling them. If you have a garden you should experiment with growing your own. If not, try farmers' markets, pick-your-

own farms and organic box schemes. But above all develop a relationship with your greengrocer, urging him to supply interesting varieties.

We thought the moment was ripe for a book of this kind, in which we have divided the year not simply into seasons but into months. We wanted to show how specific vegetables are used in specific months for specific recipes – romanesco artichokes for deep-frying whole, the violettas for slicing finely to be eaten raw in salads; how to choose different varieties of tomatoes – cherry vines for fresh pasta sauces, plums for slow-cooked ones and the huge yellow tomatoes for rubbing on to bruschetta. There are recipes using wild ingredients, stinging nettles, sorrel and thistles – for flavouring pastas or simply combining to make a delicious *insalata di campo*.

Our cooking has become increasingly focused on the garden and its produce. In the summer we make fresh pasta with olives and tomatoes and a risotto of summer squash; in October when the chestnuts appear we put them in soup with celeriac; in the winter we eat salads of puntarelle with anchovies and vin santo, and for Christmas we make a cake with crystallised clementines; in the spring we make a raw artichoke pesto to go with homemade tagliarini.

These are not complicated recipes, and our message is simple too: good cooking is about fresh seasonal ingredients, organic whenever possible, used thoughtfully. It is something the Italians have always known and we hope that with this book you will share our pleasure in rediscovering this simple truth.

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers London 2000



january

cime di rapa

pasta

penne with cime di rapa and pancetta

ravioli with cime di rapa and ricotta

polenta

fried polenta with cime di rapa

chickpeas

antipasto

deep-fried chickpea slices

vegetable

chickpeas, potatoes and anchovies

antipasto

chickpea pancake with rosemary

dried porcini mushrooms

antipasto

braised porcini and spinach

risotto

porcini and tomato risotto

vegetable

baked porcini and potatoes

soup

porcini and clam soup

parsley

pasta

spaghetti with parsley, pancetta and parmesan

antipasto

parsley, squid and cannellini bean stew

savoy cabbage

soup

savoy cabbage soup with anchovy and ricotta crostini

salad

savoy cabbage and bresaola salad

risotto

savoy cabbage, pancetta and fontina risotto

vanilla

pudding

vanilla risotto ice-cream

vanilla and chocolate sorbet

vernazza cake

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cime di rapa

Cime di rapa, broccoletti di rapa and rapini are the Italian names for this delicious green winter vegetable, part of the turnip and cabbage, or Brassica, family. It is grown for its greens, which form like sprouting broccoli. It tastes bitter and peppery, a little like turnip. Cime di rapa should be picked before the shoots have started to flower, and when the leaves are still green and tender.

Even in Italy this vegetable was only found in particular regions ten years ago. Now it is found in shops and markets all over the country. In Britain it is still hardly known, and is only available in a few speciality vegetable shops. We are starting to grow it on a small scale from Italian seed, and hope that in a few years it will become established as the market widens.

Look for bright green, tender leaves on crisp strong stalks, with tightly closed flower heads. Discard the tough or blemished outer leaves and cut the younger leaves and flower stems from the main stalk.

The leaves of cime are fine and cook very quickly, like spinach. Drain them well and season with extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper. In Rome, plates of cime di rapa cooked in this simple way are always part of antipasti di verdura.



penne with cime di rapa and pancetta

penne con cime di rapa e pancetta

for 6

2 kg cime di rapa
400 g penne rigate
150 g pancetta, finely sliced, then cut into matchsticks
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 × 800 g tin peeled plum tomatoes
Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper
zest of 1 washed lemon
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
extra virgin olive oil
150 g Pecorino staginata cheese, freshly grated

Heat the olive oil in a thick-bottomed frying pan and fry the garlic with the pancetta until lightly browned. Add the tomatoes, half their juices and a little salt, and cook over a moderate heat, stirring to prevent sticking, for 20–30 minutes.

Prepare the cime by discarding the tough stalks and outer leaves. Keep the budding flower shoots and the smaller tender leaves. Wash well and roughly chop. Cook the cime in a large saucepan of boiling salted water for 5 minutes, then drain well. Put in a bowl, add the lemon zest, parsley and plenty of extra virgin olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Separately bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil, and cook the penne for the stated time, usually about 8 minutes. Drain and mix into the tomato sauce. Test for seasoning. Toss around to allow the penne to be coated, then stir in the cime. Serve with the freshly grated Pecorino.

ravioli with cime di rapa and ricotta

ravioli di cime di rapa e ricotta

for 6

1.5 kg cime di rapa

Ligurian Basic Pasta ([see here](#))

Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped

1 dried red chilli, crumbled

250 g buffalo ricotta

150 g Pecorino staginata cheese, freshly grated

plain flour for dusting

extra virgin olive oil

For the filling, remove the tough stalks and outer tough leaves from the cime. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil, and cook the cime for 5–8 minutes. It should be tender but still bright green. Drain, cool and chop quite finely. Heat the olive oil in a thick-bottomed saucepan, and soften the garlic. Add the chilli, cime, salt and pepper, stir briefly to combine the flavours, then remove from the heat and cool.

Beat the ricotta lightly with a fork, and season. Mix in the cime and 3 tablespoons grated Pecorino. Cover and place in the fridge.

Dust your work surface with flour. Roll the pasta dough in the machine as outlined [here](#). Make long thin strips the width of your pasta machine, then cut into manageable lengths. Place half dessertspoons of filling at 7 cm intervals down the middle of each strip. Fold the pasta over the filling and gently press around each mound to seal the pasta. Cut into ravioli of about 4 cm square, using a serrated pasta cutter that seals as it cuts. Place the ravioli on to floured trays until ready for cooking.

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil. Cook the ravioli, uncovered, in batches. They will take about 5 minutes. Drain well, and serve with freshly grated Pecorino and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

fried polenta with cime di rapa

polenta fritta con cime di rapa

for 6

1.5 kg cime di rapa, washed, tough leaves and stalks removed

4 tablespoons olive oil

3 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced

2 dried red chillies, crumbled

Maldon salt and freshly ground black pepper

anchovy and polenta fritters

450 g Polenta ([see here](#)), made without butter and Parmesan

10 g (1 sachet) granular dried yeast, dissolved in 80 ml warm milk

300 g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

sunflower oil for deep-frying

12 salted anchovies, prepared ([see here](#))

Pull away any skin from the top of the polenta and discard. Mash the polenta in a bowl, then add the yeast and milk. Sieve in the flour and mix together to form a soft dough. Cover and leave in a warm place to rise for 1 hour.

Heat the olive oil in a thick-bottomed saucepan, add the garlic and fry until beginning to brown. Add the chilli and washed cime, season generously with salt and pepper, cover and cook until tender, about 8–10 minutes.

Preheat the sunflower oil to 180°C/350°F.

Scoop up tablespoon-sized pieces of the dough, and push an anchovy fillet into the centre of each. Roll around in plain flour to form golfballs. Place in the preheated oil and deep-fry, turning to allow the balls to brown on all sides. Serve the cime with the polenta fritters.



Fried Polenta with Cime Di Rapa