

Juliet's food diary

My family are an entrepreneurial bunch and I've been self-employed for so long I subsequently find myself unemployable.

Times of hardship are also periods of opportunity.

I'm certainly not saying the pandemic hasn't been terrible for the hospitality sector but it has been heartening to see businesses adapt and new ideas coming to the fore over the past year. In my neck of the woods it appears there will soon be four new establishments taking on empty premises, three of which had been vacated before covid struck. The old Sofi's bar on Parliament Street will become the Three Marys cocktail bar by Dale McPhee and Malt and Hops and Old Chain Pier owner, Calum Mackay.

Then there's the former Pizza Express on The Shore, set to welcome a Victor Hugo Delicatessen and the miserable unit that was Kcal Kitchen, where nobody has managed to make a success of in decades, is to be opened as a fine dining restaurant run by the two chefs behind the popular at home dining pop up, Bad Seeds.

Tomás Gormley and Sam Yorke have an impressive combined experience in some of Edinburgh's most revered restaurants. And for city centre fab food, Pizza Geeks are collaborating with Cask Smugglers cocktail and whisky bar for a new rooftop Waverly Centre experience. Lets hope for a good summer. Last but by no means least, The Pond is having a revival yet again. I'm not sure what the new name will be but let's hope they retain some of the Leith 'characters' the bar was well known

for. Ah yes, the drinks were cheap and the entertainment free...

In Wilson Manor, no fry up's complete without a lovely succulent slice of Black Pudding, so I was delighted to try some from Mathiesons of Ratcliffe Terrace in the Southside of Edinburgh, which has been serving locally sourced meat since 1880, making it the oldest butchery in the city. Their black pudding is made in house every week to a secret recipe. I can honestly say its the best I've tasted. Mathiesons pride themselves on history, skill and a passion for the trade. It certainly shows.



I've gone for a fancier supper dish for this month's recipe.

The combination of this special Black Pudding with the decadence of creamy cheese and bite of fruit and walnuts is scrumptious. Serve with a salad of rocket or watercress.

Serves two

- 2 1 inch thick slices of Black Pudding
- 2 1 inch thick rounds of ripe goat's cheese (or substitute with any soft cheese that you prefer)
- 2 ripe pears, peeled and quartered with the core removed
- 2 sprigs fresh Thyme
- 8 walnut halves
- Pre heat the oven to 200oC. Place the pear wedges on a baking tray with a drizzle of olive oil and a sprinkling of fresh thyme. Roast in the oven for 8-10 minutes depending how ripe they are. They should soften but hold their shape. Fry the black pudding for a couple of minutes each side then place on baking tray with the pears. Top with the cheese and roast in the oven for five minutes then add the walnuts. Roast for two minutes more. Serve with the pear and walnuts on top and the salad leaves on the side.

Now that bars have reopened it might be time to tone up and

shed some lockdown love handles. Let's face it, hiding an expanding waistline on a Zoom call is all too easy. I know a fair few people who never eat junk food, embrace salads and a flexitarian diet yet still can't shift the pounds. There's a huge misconception that healthy eating equals a slim figure, but as a nutritionist once told me, it ultimately it doesn't matter what you eat if you're consuming more calories than you're burning. Many healthy foods like olive oil and avocados are loaded with calories, so the key is portion control. I know, so boring.

I was delighted to try the new meal prep service, Good Stuff, as the meals sounded so tasty and come with all the nutritional info you need as well as all the allergy alerts and calorie counts. I opted to try the Harissa Cod, a mere 398 calories, and Chicken Pad-Thai, a throw the spanks to the wolves 561 calories. Both certainly delivered on the taste sensation front and were incredibly filling, so much so that I had each split between a lunch and dinner. But then again I'm only five foot nothing and straight out of The Shire. I was also impressed with the sustainable packaging and how well the food heated up, particularly the cod, without being overcooked. For the quality and flavour I think the meal bundles starting at 32 pounds for 5 meals is excellent value.

Spandex, here I come.



Good Stuff from Good Stuff