



January means slow-cooked comfort food with a touch of finesse according to Frederick Forster, head chef of The Boundary in London

Kitchen *confidential*

What I'm cooking with...

I always look forward to slow-cooking in January. At the restaurant, winter is all about balancing comfort eating with a bit of finesse, so I take a lot of time braising game meats to extract as much flavour as possible.

Whole boned rabbit with wild mushrooms is a favourite; the haunch goes wonderfully with poached rhubarb – or blood oranges, which are just coming into season. Fillet of venison is delicious, but the taste is quite delicate. I like to create a fuller-flavoured dish by pairing it with a pithivier of girolles and chestnuts mixed with haunch forcemeat and a little pork fat.

Pheasant and partridge are so good at this time of year. Both work well simply roasted and topped with a juniper berry sauce. I will often serve it with a salsify gratin on the side.

Root vegetables really come into their own in the new year. Jerusalem artichoke soup is very popular – I serve mine with braised frog's legs and truffles. Swede is particularly good slow-roasted and served in its own juices with kohlrabi and sea kale. With a little hollandaise flavoured with horseradish on the side it becomes a bit of a 'cooked crudités' dish.

The sweetness of roast beetroot makes it a natural foil to red meat and cheeses. Try baking red and golden varieties whole, then slice them, drizzle a balsamic vinegar and demerara sugar glaze on top, and add to a bed of goat's cheese and chicory leaves. I like to grate cobnuts over my salads to add a bit of crunch but, as they are now at the end of their season, they can be tricky to find – pine nuts are a good alternative.

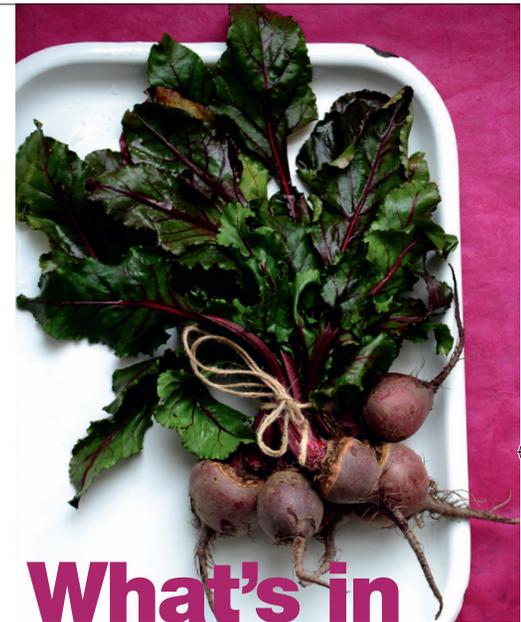
When it comes to seafood, there are countless things you can do at

this time of year. With mussels I make a *mouclade* (a saffron and curry cream sauce), served with a Pernod and tarragon cream. Scallops are at their best now. Try roasting them with vegetables *à la Grecque* and serve them with Morteau sausage – the smoky pork and the acidity from the vegetables is such a good marriage. When I want to do something special, I often opt for turbot. Baked in a champagne sauce and served with caviar and braised leeks, it's lovely and rich, and lends a sense of occasion. theboundary.co.uk

Who I'm using...

Cornish oysters are very good, but you can't beat the creamy flesh and sweet flavour of Colchester natives from the Wright Brothers (thewrightbrothers.co.uk). For game and poultry, Nigel Fredericks in north west London is a great family-run butcher (nigelfredericks.co.uk).

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What's in

At its peak

Almonds, beetroot, black truffle, brill, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, celery, clementines, cod, coley, haddock, hare, herring, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, kohlrabi, kumquats, leeks, mackerel, mallard, mussels, mutton, oranges, oysters, parsnips, partridge, pheasant, pomegranates, salsify, satsumas, scallops, Seville oranges, spinach, swede, sweet potatoes, turbot, venison, walnuts, whiting

Also available

Apples, broccoli, butternut squash, celeriac, chestnuts, chicory, fennel, goose, gurnard, horseradish, lychees, pears, plaice, potatoes, red cabbage, forced rhubarb, shallots, snipe, watercress, woodcock

Frederick's *recipe* for January

To make Jerusalem artichoke soup, sweat 240g peeled, thinly sliced onions with 1 sprig of thyme and 1 bay leaf until soft. Add 1kg of peeled, diced artichoke and cook for 5-6 minutes. Add 100ml white wine and reduce until the liquid is syrupy. Pour in 3 litres of vegetable stock and simmer for 30 minutes. Add 250ml of double cream and bring to the boil. Purée soup in a blender until smooth, then set aside. Place four quail eggs in boiling salted water for 2 minutes, then place in iced water for 8 minutes. Peel and coat them in flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs, in that order. Deep-fry the eggs in hot oil for 1 minute or until golden. Place 1 egg in each bowl. Return soup to stove, season and bring to the boil. Pour the soup over the eggs to serve.