

## NATURALLY NOURISHING

SUMMER means plenty of salads and JANE HUTTON wants to put the case for using plenty of herbs...



### So much more than a garnish

As we ease into Summer with plants and flowers bursting out all over gardens planted and tilled, and the winter slipping into distant memory, our thoughts turn to lighter eating. One thing I really love about sunny Summer food is the abundance of herbs available, especially in my dedicated herb garden.

Herbs are often overlooked as anything more than a flavour hint, garnish or condiment; herbal highlights go far beyond that, though! Did you know that parsley has more

iron, weight for weight, than spinach or steak? Not that you'd necessarily think of eating more than a sprinkle of parsley at one time, and that, of course, is the point. We can, and definitely should!

While we're familiar with herbal medicine, and are turning to more natural personal care products, often featuring herbs, we don't usually consider using them as natural edible healthcare we can incorporate in a bigger way. The first step is pinpointing what the nutritional benefits are, and then picking which ones to use more extensively.

Basil doesn't just go well with tomatoes and slices of creamy mozzarella; it's known for helping digestion and calming an overactive nervous system. Coriander, marjoram and

oregano have similar digestion-soothing properties, and if you have a tummy ache or tension headache, get oregano and marjoram into your meals too.

Certain herbs have become linked to particular foods or dishes over time, and considering the knowledge of nature and the environment that our forebears had, it will be no real surprise to find these pairings grew from a reliance on natural methods of healthcare. Rosemary will help to digest fats and stimulate

circulation, which may be why it's traditionally used with fattier meats like lamb and beef, while sage, tarragon and thyme have an efficacious effect on rich food and digestion. Our ancestors certainly knew a thing or two, without the aid of scientific labs and testing equipment!

Medicinal properties go even further with many herbs, making foraged eating easy to achieve. Turmeric, sage, garlic, lemon balm and borage, to name but a few, all have researched effects, from antifungal and antibacterial properties to soothing rheumatism and sore throats.

So, how do we get more of these wonders into our food? One simple answer is to replace some of our usual lettuce choices with herbs. Add edible flowers for a work of art on a plate that's almost too pretty to eat.

### Supercharged Salad Base

GIVE this one a try - it's bursting with ingredients particularly high on the alkaline scale, and leaving with such a broad spectrum of nutrients, you'll be dancing on the ceiling! Adorn with any extra toppings you choose - chicken, avocado, goat's cheese, feta, halibut, salmon, chorizo, smoked mackerel, the possibilities are endless. Your body (and mind) will thank you! Serves one for a big summer boost. Enjoy!

1 handful of spinach; 1 handful of rocket; 1 handful of coriander leaves; a scattering of mint leaves; half head cos lettuce, chopped; 1 bunch of parsley, chopped; 3 celery stalks, chopped; 1 pepper, sliced; handful of roasted pumpkin seeds and almonds. Mix the salad greens together in a bowl. Top with celery, green pepper, almonds/seeds, parsley, and the other toppings of your choice. Dress with a light lemon and olive oil dressing or a balsamic glaze.

Naturally Nourishing is written by nutritionist and "confirmed foodie" Jane Hutton. Find out more about her eating plans, masterclasses and recipe blog at [www.trinityholistics.co.uk](http://www.trinityholistics.co.uk).

## Building a happier economy

MANY agree our current economic system is failing, but don't know why, or what to do about it.

Localisation movement pioneer Helena Norberg-Hodge is running a four-day course, The Economics of Happiness at Embercombe, near Exeter, focusing on 'how and why the global system is failing and how we can practically build a more sustainable and happy economy'.

Helena is founder and director of Local Futures and advisor on Russell Brand's YouTube channel The Trews. She explained: "Local economies are being destroyed worldwide because of the blind promotion of global businesses. Our GDP measure of growth is an indicator of commercialisation, not progress."

The course aims to help participants develop strategies to reach



Helena Norberg-Hodge

individuals and organisations that are already tackling these issues and demanding economic policy change.

Hel Gilmore from Transition Town Totnes will run the practical element of the course, taking participants to see local 'transition' projects in action.

Embercombe's

Becks Scarratt said: "This course resonates clearly with Embercombe's mission to inspire positive action in the world. We've kept the course cost minimal to encourage as many forward-thinkers and social entrepreneurs as possible to join in."

The course runs June 24-27 and costs £245, including meals, accommodation in Embercombe yurts and return transport to Totnes. Visit [www.embercombe.org](http://www.embercombe.org).



Student Anya working with Anita Reynolds in her Newton Abbot workshop.

### Town plea for plan volunteers

TOTNES Town Council have recruited a new coordinator and chair to work with the community in designing a Totnes Neighbourhood Plan.

Local people are being invited to join task groups to look in detail at issues like infrastructure and energy, economy, housing, open spaces, culture, heritage, environment and traffic and transport.

Project coordinator Theo Platt explained: "Neighbourhood Plans are community-led and can decide the future of the places where local people live and work.

Theo said the plan gives the community the chance to: inform where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built; have a say on what new buildings should look like; help protect and enhance culture, heritage and environment; influence how we get around; protect and create open space, nature reserves, etc; and, in some cases, grant planning permission for new buildings.

The council is recruiting volunteers to join task groups and get involved. Email Theo Platt on [info@totnesneighbourhoodplan.org](mailto:info@totnesneighbourhoodplan.org) for details.

### Whole community making

A NEW exhibition shows the results of local artists and makers working with people from right across the community.

Freshard, at the Devon Guild of Craftsmen, is a celebration of a series of projects run in partnership with a range of organisations through 2014/15.

The Guild's Simon Williams said: "Our artists and makers have produced truly inspirational work by creating with children and young people from mainstream schools, young people supported by social services, young people with complex needs, older people living in supported communities, refugees, adults with learning disabilities and prisoners from HMP Dartmoor."

The exhibition, at the Guild's HQ in Bovey Tracey, runs until July 5. Visit [www.crafts.org.uk](http://www.crafts.org.uk).