



courgette

Issue 158

November - December 2020

CAMBRIDGE ORGANIC GAZETTE

IT'S THE SEASON ...

Looking forward to an organic Christmas, wherever we may be

A PIE HOLIDAY

Make our roast-veg pie your festive centrepiece

HI-TECH HAMPERS

This year select your own contents

DOUBLE UP FOR CHRISTMAS

Get two veg boxes delivered to feed you through the week we're closed

WE'RE APPEALING!

Contribute to our appeal for homeless charities

We wish all our veg-box members joy this Christmas!



This Christmas is going to be quite unlike any we have known before, but that's no reason not to get excited about it. If anything, the difficulties we face present a wonderful opportunity to try new things, and focus more on what Christmas is really all about: values such as community, helping others and showing appreciation, all of which came to the fore during the bleakest moments of 2020. Anyway, I think we could all benefit from being able to put our woes and anxieties on the back burner for a day or two and concentrate instead on enjoyment, rest and goodwill, and on that note I'd like to wish you a very merry Christmas.

Food insecurity has been, and still is, a massive issue this year. It has been marvellous to see the local community rally together to provide food to people who are struggling to get it. The community food hubs in particular have stood out as a very worthwhile initiative (aside from the rather unfortunate confusion of names with our own Food Hub project) which have helped a huge number of people. What they have meant for us is that we have a place where we can take our

own donations of surplus food, knowing it will all find a good home. Every year we also make a donation of fresh fruit and vegetables to Jimmy's Nightshelter and Wintercomfort on Christmas Eve, and this year will be no different. We always take them a financial gift as well, which is provided by the members of our box scheme. If you would like to make a contribution to this year's collection there is information how to do so on page 6 of this newsletter.

This year we have become acutely aware of the fragility of our food supply system. If I may say so myself, I believe Cambridge Organic performed very well in the circumstances – as did other organic box schemes throughout the country – and for that I need to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Cambridge Organic team. Importantly, we demonstrated the resilience of local food systems. This is something we plan to take to a whole new level with our Food Hub project. The concept underpinning the Food Hub project is the 'Local Food Ecosystem', and in an attempt to better explain this radically different and innovative new food-supply-chain concept I have written a book called 'Local Food Ecosystem: How Food Hubs Can Help Create a More Sustainable Food System'. The book will be coming out early next year and will be sold as part of a crowd-funding campaign to raise funds for the Food Hub building itself. 2021 should see a significant step forward for the Food Hub project which is the message of hope I wish to leave you with for this Christmas edition of our newsletter.

GIVE LOCAL

You may have seen some of the many messages on social media encouraging us all to buy gifts from local companies this year, rather than ordering from one of the online giants. It's a great idea! Why not make things really easy and add a gift from a local food producer to your veg box delivery? It's easy to order and will get paid for automatically in your direct debit payment.



Fitzbillies

Traditional mince pies from the famous Cambridge institution



Prospects Trust


AT SNAKESHALL FARM

Decorations and preserves from the organic farm offering therapeutic horticulture placements to adults with learning difficulties and disabilities



FEN END
Country Kitchen

Preserves both sweet and savoury from Heather's kitchen in Over



Prospects Trust
growing Differently since 1995
Gooseberry Jam



Prospects Trust
growing Differently since 1995
Christmas



FEN END
Orange Scented Plum Conserve



FEN END

We made this pie using the office halogen oven. It's a glass bowl, which ticks alarmingly, and cooks by the power of a frighteningly powerful halogen lightbulb. It's not the most sophisticated or controllable of cooking devices, but the fact that the pie turned out so nicely is proof that this pie will work wherever we end up this Christmas. At the time of writing, it's not clear what sort of Christmas will be possible. Maybe we'll make individual tarts and deliver them to locked-down front doors; maybe six can be served at the same table!

Serves 4-6
25cm pie tin

Ingredients:

Pastry:

- 155g wholemeal flour (we used Prior's Wholemeal)
- 45g ground almonds
- 100g butter or vegan alternative
- A sprig each of rosemary, sage and thyme

Filling:

- 1kg of vegetables for roasting (we used parsnip, squash, carrots and onions – but you could easily swap out for your favourites, or whatever you have in your veg box, such as leeks, swede or beetroot, etc.)
- A few sprigs of sage, thyme and rosemary
- 4 garlic cloves
- One tin of Biona Green Lentils (drained), or 100g of dried Hodmedod's Olive Green Lentils cooked according to instructions
- 180g packet of cooked chestnuts, chopped
- 3 tbsp Fen End Christmas Cranberry with Port and Orange
- Salt and pepper to season

Method:

1. Make the pastry. Weigh out your flour and ground almonds. Grate in the butter and rub together with the flour until the butter is gone. Remove the herb leaves from the stalks and chop finely. Add these to the pastry. Add enough water (around 2 tablespoons) to bring the pastry together into a dough. Wrap in cling-film and leave in the fridge to cool for about 30 minutes.
2. Peel and chop your vegetables. They shouldn't be too large, as they want to fit evenly in the pie tin, but not so small they'll burn. A couple of centimetres should be good. Put in a roasting tin with 2 tablespoons of oil, your sprigs of herbs, garlic, and seasoning. Roast at 180°C for 35-40 minutes or until all the vegetables are soft (check the carrots especially, as they take the longest).
4. Meanwhile, flour a surface and roll out your pastry so that it is large enough to cover the bottom and sides of the pie dish. Drape it over a rolling pin and lift it into the pie dish. Prick the bottom of the pie with a fork 10-15 times and cook in the oven at 180°C for 10 minutes.
5. In a bowl, mix your roast vegetables with the lentils, chopped chestnuts and the cranberry sauce. The cranberry sauce also helps to bind the mixture together. Season. Scoop this filling into your pie dish and smooth out the top.
6. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Enjoy!



COMING UP THIS CHRISTMAS

DATES FOR CHRISTMAS

We'll be delivering veg boxes right up to Christmas Eve, but then we'll take a break. We'll be closed on Friday 25 and Saturday 26 December and the whole of the following week. Veg-box deliveries will resume on Tuesday 5 January.

Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Special deliveries available for Friday and Saturday members

The way the days fall this year means that Friday and Saturday members will miss out on deliveries on both 25/26 December and 1/2 January. We are therefore offering Friday and Saturday people the chance to have a special delivery earlier in the week. You'll need to let us know in advance that you'd like to have a special delivery: please contact us by email or through the website by Saturday 12 December. The numbers of slots will be limited and filled on a first-come-first-served basis. There will be a £50 minimum order value to make it worth us including you in our special delivery rounds.

Double up your veg box

As you will all miss out on at least one delivery over the Christmas period, everyone has the chance to double up on their last delivery before Christmas. To do this, just enter the code DOUBLE20 on your basket page online. Or you can give us a ring on 01223 873300 or email admin@cofco.co.uk. We'll deliver two of your normal veg box and we'll knock 20% off the price of the second one.

Those of you with Choice boxes, please make your selection as usual and we'll pack both boxes to the same list. You can also increase your order by adding additional quantities of fruit and veg as extras to accompany any veg box.



For many years, we have asked our veg-box members if they'd like to contribute to our collection for the homeless charities in Cambridge. Last year, we went a little bit high-tech and gave you the option of adding a donation to your veg-box order online so it could be paid automatically in your direct debit. It was an enormous success. We raised three times our previous record, collecting over £900!

If you'd like to donate, just go to our website and add a £1, £5 or £10 donation to your order. It will appear on your next invoice as a product to be charged and be paid for in your next direct debit payment. As we've suspended the option to pay by cash during the pandemic, we won't be accepting cash donations this year.

We'll divide all the donations between Jimmy's Nightshelter and Wintercomfort.

We'll also be making our own donation of fresh produce to the two charities on Christmas Eve – always one of the highlights of the festive period!

25 Jimmy's nightshelter is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year.

Do you know who Jimmy was?

Jim Dilley was a rough sleeper who spent many nights under the bridge at junction 13 of the M11. He was hard of hearing, so managed to get some sleep despite the noise of the traffic. Joan and Richard Howlett made it their mission to prevent others from being in Jimmy's situation.

FARMER CHRISTMAS HAMPERS 2.0

Farmer Christmas hasn't been idle since last year – far from it! Not only has he been tending a magnificent beard (which is now almost as luxurious as his Father's, albeit not quite as white), he has also been taking his range of hampers to the next level. Last year, he offered a range of themed hampers with quirky names (my favourite was the Fruit and Nut Case). This year though, he's developed a high-tech system that allows you to select the contents of the hamper yourself. The only problem is that you'll have to think up your own excruciating pun ...

OK, when we say 'high-tech system' what we mean is that the Farmer realised that we could use the points-based system which allows people to select the contents of their Choice box to give people the opportunity to select the contents of their hamper. For those of you already have a Choice box it's going to be very easy to use the new system. For those of you don't have a Choice box, well, it should still be very easy for you as well!

Just add the hamper to your basket on the day you would like it delivered to you. Then go to your basket and click on 'Select your box items'. That will bring up a page with all the hamper items you can choose. You just add what you'd like until you've used up all the points allowed. Don't forget you'll need to go back to your basket to press the 'Checkout your order' button to confirm your selection.

All the hamper items are made by the Cambridge Food Hub's team of producers. These are manufacturers of quality foods who are (nearly all) local to Cambridge. With our 'Cambridge Food Hub' hats on, we provide a distribution service, which supplies Cambridge shops and cafés with these Cambridge goodies.

As last year, our hampers are presented in stylish, but environmentally friendly packaging. The medium size comes in Vegware boxes: the cardboard has a high proportion of recycled board and the window is made from compostable plant-based PLA. The large one is packed in an open, white cardboard box. For packing material, we put our own used potato sacks through the offcreshredder. It's very noisy but very eco!





Draw your own Santa

Draw your own Santa getting ready for Christmas Eve. Either return your entry back to the driver or ask a grown-up to post a photo of it to their Facebook or Instagram page tagging us @camorganic to make sure we see it. The best one will win a goodie bag.

20% off your first veg box

If you're not yet getting veg boxes delivered, why not join us? Just sign up on our website and enter the code 'SANTA20' to get 20% off your first veg box.

Joining Cambridge Organic is a great way to ensure a regular supply of fresh, locally grown, organic vegetables, delivered to your door (or left wherever you like, if you're not in). With our veg boxes, you can choose the contents yourself, if you prefer – or trust us to put together a great selection, which can be tailored to exclude anything you dislike.

This offer doesn't apply to existing loyal members: sorry! But if you know someone who might like to join, then please pass it on. If they join – and put your name in the 'How did you hear about us?' box when they sign up – we'll make your next veg box 20% off as well.

**NOT
GETTING
A VEG BOX
YET?
Sign up
here**



COMMITTED TO LOCAL
veg boxes sourced from local farms and
delivered to the Cambridge area