

# edible ireland

EXPLORING IRELAND WITH AN APPETITE

## Postcards from Ireland #13

by KRISTIN on MAY 16, 2014



*Inishowen, County Donegal*

You can see more of my photos on Instagram as [edibleireland](#).

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## Traditional Irish Recipes for Paddy's Day

by KRISTIN on MARCH 17, 2014

Here's the thing. Contrary to popular belief, we are not all having corned beef and cabbage for dinner in Ireland today. If you want to make something traditional that people really do eat, on all days of the year, try one of these dishes instead. *Lá Fhéile Pádraig Sona Duit!*

[Irish soda bread](#) — don't forget to put a cross on top to let the fairies out.



[Beef and Irish stout stew](#) — there's both eating and drinking in it.

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[Dublin coddle](#) - the capital's namesake dish of bacon, sausages and spuds; what's not to love?



[Colcannon](#) - Did you ever eat colcannon, made from lovely pickled cream? / With the greens and scallions mingled like a picture in a dream.

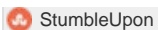
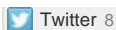


[Apple and blackberry crumble](#) — a good old-fashioned crumble is one of Ireland's best-loved desserts.



\* And remember too: [it's Paddy, not Patty!](#)

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## It All Started with the Dark Arts

by KRISTIN on FEBRUARY 4, 2014

It all started with the Dark Arts.

I was at [the first Inishfood festival in 2011](#), freezing in a marquee on a cold March night in Donegal, when I was given a cup of [Dark Arts](#) as part of a beer-tasting event. Having never been much of a fan of Guinness, my first thought was *Ugh, stout*. But then I figured that I might as well try it; it had already been put in my hand, after all.

Instead of the metallic tang of Guinness, I tasted roasted coffee. I took another sip, and tasted chocolate. Cue *Green Eggs and Ham*-style revelation: Say! I *do* like stout! I've been making up for lost time ever since. Oh hello, [Leann Folláin](#), [Knockmealdown Porter](#) and [White Gypsy Imperial Stout](#), where have you been all my life?

Fast forward a few years and that light bulb moment has evolved into a full-blown love of craft beer, especially beer and food matching. Come Friday night, you'll likely find me sitting at the kitchen table with my husband, sharing a beer and swapping notes on the taste and aroma – is that grapefruit? toffee? McVitie's biscuit? – and debating how well it matches up with whatever we're having for dinner that night, be it chicken fajitas and an IPA, homemade pizza and a lager or a stout and a brownie for dessert.



It also doesn't hurt that my very good friend [Caroline](#) just so happens to be married to a brewer who makes some of [the best beer in the country](#). I'm a cookbook editor and Caroline is a journalist, so when we'd get together we'd talk about beer, and books, and it wasn't long before we started talking about doing a book of our own.

And now, from that first dubious sip three years ago, we're writing a book about beer!



I'm thrilled to announce that [Caroline Hennessy](#) and I are co-authoring *The Complete Guide to Irish Craft Beer and Cider*, to be published by [New Island](#) in the autumn. My hope is that it will be the kind of book I wish I'd had when I first started exploring the world of craft beer, covering everything from the basics of how beer and cider are made to profiles of the people and stories behind the microbreweries that are fuelling Ireland's craft beer revolution, all the way through to tips on matching beer and cider with food and Irish farmhouse cheese and recipes that incorporate craft brews.



In the meantime, we've launched a new website, [Craft Beer Ireland](#), where we'll be keeping our fingers on the pulse of all things craft beer and cider. You can also follow along there on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). I'm writing a beer of the month column for [Georgina Campbell's Ireland Guide ezine](#), so be sure to check in there too.

It's an exciting time for craft beer and cider in Ireland, and I'm so excited to be a part of it. *Sláinte!*

(And if all this has got you curious about craft beer, get down to the [Alltech International Craft Brews & Food Fair](#) in Dublin this weekend or the [Franciscan Well Cask & Winter Ale Festival](#) in Cork from 14–16 February.)

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## Irish Cookbooks 2013

by KRISTIN on NOVEMBER 27, 2013

When you look at the Irish cookbooks that have been published this year, three words come to mind: **from the heart**. From the sweeping celebration of Irish food and artisan food producers in *Chapter One: An Irish Food Story* to the celebration of family and home in *Apron Strings*, many of the authors have poured their hearts onto these pages.

This has been a good year for food bloggers, with three new blog-to-book authors ([Fiona Dillon](#), [Rosanne](#)

[Hewitt-Cromwell](#) and [Nessa Robins](#)), while the original blogging superstar, [Donal Skehan](#), has just published his fourth book and [Lilly Higgins](#) has brought out her second. Meanwhile, several other bloggers have signed deals and are hard at work on their forthcoming books.

This year also saw a noticeable shift towards self-publishing. *Extreme Greens*, *From Lynda's Table*, *Relish BBQ* and *Buon Appetito* are all top-quality books that hold their own against the ones from the traditional publishers, and in fact even use some of the same professional photographers, stylists and editors. I think we'll be seeing more and more cookbook authors taking this route in the years to come.

Either way, there's never been a better time to be a home cook.

#### ***Apron Strings: Recipes from a Family Kitchen* by Nessa Robins**

I like to think of *Apron Strings* as a modern day *Mrs Beeton*, with thrifty tips for running a household, advice for expecting mothers, recipes for children's birthday parties, a home nurse chapter (Nessa's background is in nursing) and a chapter on keeping hens, making jam, composting and foraging. It's obvious that these recipes are treasured family heirlooms (Nessa's introduction to her gingerbread and scone recipes literally had me in tears) as well as what Nessa feeds her family on a daily basis. It's lovely to think that just as Nessa's contentment in the kitchen comes from her mother, her own children will have many happy memories of food and cooking and times spent around the kitchen table as a family. And of course now they have her cookbook to cherish too. To know [Nessa](#) is to marvel at her boundless energy and unflagging cheerfulness. How does she do it, you wonder, and with four kids besides? To read her book is to wish you could pull up a chair at her table. Having her recipes is the next best thing.

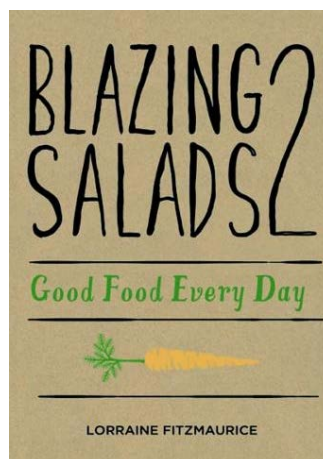


**Recipes to try:** White onion, potato and chorizo soup; chicken in an herby white wine sauce; baked sausages with a spicy tomato sauce; beef, potato and wild garlic lasagna; brown sugar and cinnamon scones; caramel and hazelnut shortbread squares; gingerbread; homemade cold remedy; carrageen moss pudding; blackberry vodka.

#### ***Blazing Salads 2* by Lorraine Fitzmaurice**

Raised on macrobiotic cooking, Lorraine Fitzmaurice and her siblings had quite an unusual upbringing when it came to food in Ireland in the 1970s. But far from being a passing fad, healthy, wholesome, whole food eating has become a lifelong passion, which saw them open the popular Blazing Salads deli in Dublin in 2000. In this, their second cookbook, Lorraine shares more of the quick, easy and healthy 'real food' recipes that have become their trademark.

**Recipes to try:** Avocado pico de gallo salad; chickpea, red onion and chilli salad; quinoa with roasted ratatouille vegetables and fresh basil; Mediterranean vegetable and feta turnovers; sweet potato and carrot bhajis; Moroccan minestrone; vegetable Wellington with onion gravy; summer leek tart; almond and raspberry fingers; plum cobber with flaked almonds.



#### ***Chapter One: An Irish Food Story* by Ross Lewis**

*Magnificent. Stunning. Breathtaking. Incomparable. Epic.* This is a book that will be talked about in superlatives. It painstakingly documents some of the recipes at Ross Lewis's Michelin-starred [Chapter One](#), one of Ireland's best restaurants — make no mistake, this is aspirational cooking even for the most serious home cooks. It also reads like a love letter to Irish artisan food producers, who are held in the very highest esteem, which is reflected in their beautiful portraits by photographer to the stars, Barry McCall. Ross Lewis takes their produce and elevates it to its

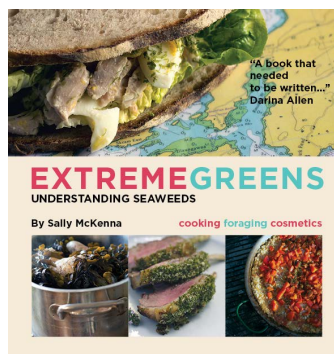
highest expression of itself. It's a book to inspire and savour and will stand the test of time as a beautifully crafted snapshot of Irish food at this time. It is not only the jewel in the crown of all the books published this year, but is surely the finest cookbook ever published in Ireland.



**Recipes to try:** These recipes are not for the faint of heart. Ross Lewis says straight out that “the home cook, no matter how talented or determined, is not blessed with a hardworking and talented brigade of chefs as I am, so it will be difficult to reproduce many of the recipes in full in a domestic kitchen. However ... most of the dishes can be broken down to simpler versions or perhaps just two or three elements from a recipe.” Having said all that, the spiced chestnut soup with hazelnut cream and white truffle; winter pickled vegetable salad; Dublin Bay prawn, smoked bacon and basil spring roll; [braised top rib of prime Hereford beef and Skerries new potatoes with buttermilk and Savoy cabbage, rich red wine and shallot sauce](#); carrageen set West Cork cream pudding with Pat Clarke strawberries and fresh yoghurt mousse, soda bread sugar biscuits and Irish apple balsamic vinegar meringues; [hot Valrhona Guanaja chocolate soufflé](#); and soda bread and Demerara sugar biscuits in chocolate with smoked sea salt caught this home cook's eye.

### ***Extreme Greens* by Sally McKenna**

Seaweed has been in the spotlight more and more recently. Did you know that seaweed has twice as much vitamin C as orange juice, 50 times the amount of iron as spinach and is 10 times higher in calcium than cow's milk? That it can be used as a fertilizer, a medicine and a food? And that's just for starters. By the time you've finished reading this book, you'll wonder if there's anything seaweed can't do. Sally McKenna (of [McKennas' Guides](#) fame) became enchanted with seaweed while exploring secret watery nooks in her kayak around the coast of West Cork, and her enthusiasm is infectious (take one of her [foraging tours](#) and see for yourself — [highly recommended!](#)). With 80 recipes, a guide to how to forage for your own seaweeds and even instructions on how to make your own natural beauty products with seaweeds, this is an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to incorporate this magical food into their life, and with dried seaweeds now commonly available in health food shops around Ireland, there's no reason not to.



**Recipes to try:** Mussel, coconut and kelp soup; seaweed and chilli popcorn; spaghetti and sea spaghetti with a tomato fennel sauce; seafood crumble with dillisk; sea grass and garlic butter; seaweed sausage rolls; kelp and sour cherry scones; dillisk and stout brown soda bread; sea grass blaa; chocolate, hazelnut and nori ice cream.

### ***Food for Friends* by Edward Hayden**

Life provides plenty of opportunities to push the boat out a little bit in the kitchen, and [Edward Hayden's](#) second book has it all covered, from brunch to children's birthday parties, food for romance, a movie night in or dinner party and straight through to Christmas. As such, this is also a great book for anyone who's just starting out in the kitchen or is only starting to build their cookbook collection.

**Recipes to try:** Sweet and sticky chicken drumsticks; sweet chilli noodle salad; pork and cider stroganoff; braised chicken with smoked bacon cream; Edward's apple and rhubarb crumble cake; whole roast duck with apricot and hazelnut stuffing; festive mince pie crumbles.

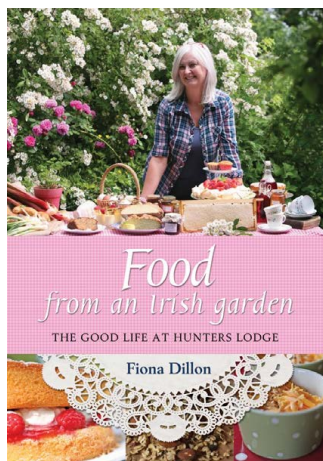




### ***Food from an Irish Garden* by Fiona Dillon**

Who hasn't dreamed of swapping the city office for a life in the country? In 2009, [Fiona Dillon did just that](#) and shows you how you can too. Fiona said that this is the book she wishes she'd had when she started her journey towards self-sufficiency. Part how-to, part cookbook, it covers everything from keeping poultry and pigs and a bit about beekeeping to maintaining a kitchen garden, then on to recipes for what to do with the things you grow and even a chapter about foraging, all illustrated with Fiona's own photos of the good life at Hunter's Lodge. If you don't already live in the country, this book will have you dreaming that you did.

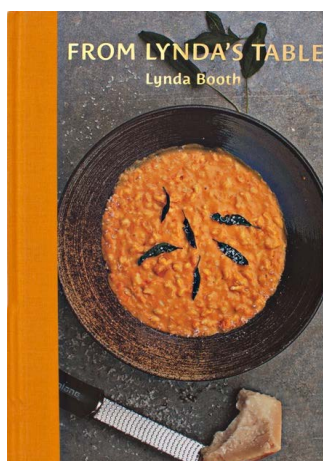
**Recipes to try:** Traditional Irish soda bread; baked eggs; tea loaf; sweet and sour cucumber pickle; raspberry gin.



### ***From Lynda's Table* by Lynda Booth**

Lynda Booth says that she likes a cookbook with plenty of reading, and she has written just that. Owner of the [Dublin Cookery School](#), this is her first book and is a treasure trove of wisdom, tips, tried and tested recipes and anecdotes from her years spent working in kitchens and with top chefs from around the world before she realised her dream of opening her own cookery school. Lynda's background as a teacher comes through in the way the recipes are written, guiding the cook every step of the way. The book has a wide scope of recipes and flavours. It starts with a chapter on foundations before moving on to the recipes Lynda makes on holidays in Connemara, a 'Branching Out' chapter that will help you to push your boundaries a bit, a chapter on the flavours of Thailand and India and one on desserts. A beautifully photographed, hefty hardcover weighing in at 360 pages, the book is a bargain and one you'll return to again and again. You can find it in bookshops or you can order it [online](#) from the school. As Willy Clingan of the Irish Times said, [writing so well about this being his favourite Irish cookbook](#), "Use it to cook for people you love, or hope to persuade to love you." After all, isn't that what most cooking is about? One of the best books of the year.

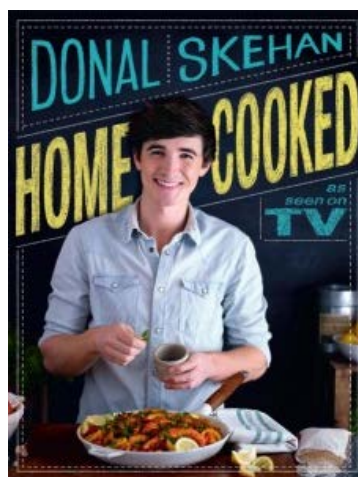
**Recipes to try:** Griddled lemon chicken with salsa verde; Connemara meatballs and tomato sauce; Turkish pizzas with lamb and harissa; biscotti with dried apricots and cranberries; linguine with shellfish sauce, pan-fried lobster and Dublin Bay prawns; spicy beef salad with Thai chilli dressings; Sauternes pots de creme with Armagnac prunes; Robert de Niro's chocolate hazelnut cake.



### ***Home Cooked* by Donal Skehan**

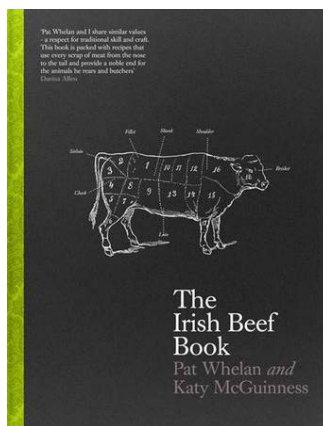
Equal parts comfort food and lighter, more exotic tastes, the thing that really appeals about [Donal's](#) food is its freshness and its bold flavour. *Home Cooked* is Donal's fourth cookbook and is easily his best yet. Donal is one to watch as he goes from strength to strength — one of his (many) new projects, the breathtakingly beautiful [FEAST: A Dinner Journal](#), is one of the most exciting things to happen in the Irish food world this year. We knew him when!

**Recipes to try:** Baked risotto all'Arrabiata; blue cheese beef sliders; butterflied rosemary chicken with romesco sauce; chilli and lemongrass chicken; deep, dark and delicious pork shoulder tacos; margarita chicken with smoky avocado corn salsa; polenta chips with rosemary salt; roast Asian beef stew with chilli noodles; chocolate pistachio espresso biscotti; crazy monkey brownie baked Alaska.



### ***The Irish Beef Book* by Pat Whelan and Katy McGuinness**

“In Ireland, we have the best climate in the world for growing beef.” So begins [fifth-generation butcher Pat Whelan](#) in his introduction to *The Irish Beef Book*. “The luxuriant green pastures of Ireland, and the good husbandry practised by our farmers, are responsible for the world-class quality of Irish beef. Sometimes I think we take this for granted, when really we should be pausing and taking time to celebrate this naturally superior product.” And celebrate it he does in this book, a comprehensive guide to the different cuts of beef and a wealth of recipes for how to cook them, from a classic Sunday roast or long, slow braises to an entire chapter devoted to cooking steaks and good things and sauces to eat with them. Put away the Post-its you might usually use to flag the recipes you want to try in a new cookbook — you’ll want to make them all in this one.



**Recipes to try:** Skirt steak with anchovies, red wine and garlic; roast fillet with wild garlic salsa verde; rich beef cheek ragu; braised beef chin and chorizo; barbacoa beef cheeks; short ribs with balsamic vinegar; slow-cooked pulled chipotle brisket; Spanish meatballs in a tomato chorizo sauce; Knockmealdown burgers.

#### *Like Mam Used to Bake* by Rosanne Cromwell Hewitt

No sooner did this book come into the kitchen than my eight-year-old daughter pounced on it and neatly wrote out a (very long) list of all the things she wants to bake from it. As for me, my search is over — Rosanne’s flourless brownies have proved to be the elusive perfect brownie recipe that I’ve been looking for my whole life. What is striking about this book is how approachable the recipes are, with many having just half a dozen ingredients that you probably already have in the house. These are comforting, nostalgia-tinged treats, many of which featured in Rosanne’s own childhood, that are easy and quick enough to rustle up on a weeknight. The recipes are unfussy favourites that have stood the test of time — classics like Victoria sponge, apple tart, gur cake or knickerbocker glory — as well as more modern ones too, like mojito cupcakes, individual blueberry clafoutis, biscotti or caramel macarons.

The perfect book for the baker in your life, it’s also very popular with children, thanks to its cute and colourful design, and is sure to be under the Christmas tree for lots of little girls this year (and grown-up ones too). Be sure to check out Rosanne’s [blog](#) too, where her deadpan Dublin humour will have you laughing out loud.

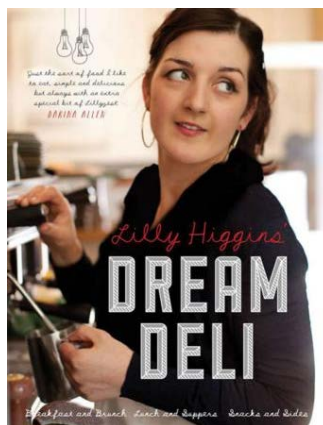


**Recipes to try:** Rosanne’s famous pavlova; coconut cake; coffee cake; RoRo’s rocky road; Brazil nut toffee; sticky toffee buns; double chocolate peanut butter cookies; apple bake; cappuccino mousse; millionaire’s shortbread; and of course those incredible flourless brownies (seriously, the book is worth buying for the brownie recipe alone).

#### *Lilly’s Dream Deli* by Lilly Higgins

After graduating from Ballymaloe in 2007, [Lilly Higgins](#) dreamed of opening up her own restaurant. While the recession might have forced her to shelve those plans for now, she’s realising a different dream as a food writer and has pulled together a collection of recipes for what might be on the menu of her dream deli some day. For the home cook, this is a snazzy collection of fast, easy, healthy cafe-type fare: breakfast and brunch, light lunch and supper dishes and, of course, plenty of teatime treats too, and all with Lilly’s trademark colourful, vibrant flair.

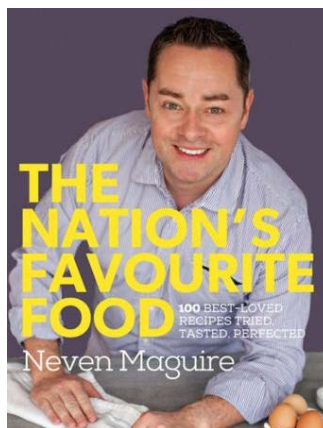
**Recipes to try:** Peanut butter granola; quinoa salad with pistachios and pomegranate; mango and shredded chicken salad with garam masala yoghurt; ham cooked in cider; fennel, pork and apple sausage rolls; sea salt, honey and macadamia nut popcorn; coffee streusel cake; ginger and white chocolate flapjacks; raspberry and coconut buns.



### *The Nation's Favourite Food* by Neven Maguire

This book is sure to be a winner with Neven's many fans around the country: the best 100 recipes from one of Ireland's best-loved chefs, all tried and tested favourites. What makes this book even better is the way it's organised: broken up into 20 short chapters (plus a basics chapter at the end), each chapter has five classics that would be right at home in anyone's repertoire. If you have only one of [Neven Maguire's](#) many cookbooks in your collection, it should be this one.

**Recipes to try:** Lamb cutlets with garlic, lemon and paprika; pan-fried fish with lemon and herb butter sauce; smoked salmon and leek quiche; sweet potato cakes with chilli and feta; meatball pasta bake with spinach and mozzarella; braised blade of beef with celeriac purée; French beans with hazelnuts and garlic; Vietnamese pot noodles; raspberry chocolate brownie with salted caramel sauce; MacNean wheaten bread; maple glazed ham with pineapple salsa.



### *Relish BBQ* by Rozanne Stevens

After the scorcher of a summer we just had, [Rozanne Stevens's](#) new cookbook couldn't have been better timed. Rozanne, who is originally from South Africa, has put her own al fresco spin on 10 different world cuisines (South African, Irish, Thai, Indian, Italian, Mozambique, Chinese, Mexican, Greek, American). The salads are particularly tempting and you'll never want to settle for a bottled barbecue sauce again after trying these marinades, bastes and sauces.

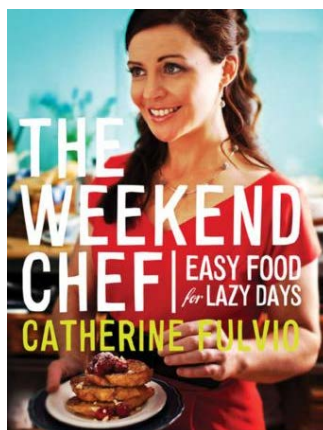
**Recipes to try:** Black pudding burgers; soy-glazed salmon burgers; strawberry chilli flattie chicken; smoked paprika BBQ pork chops with guava salsa; BBQ prawn, avocado and melon salad; Monica's berry Baileys meringue roulade.



### *The Weekend Chef* by Catherine Fulvio

For home cooks, one of the best things about weekends is the chance to happily potter in the kitchen, luxuriating in long, leisurely breakfasts over coffee and the papers, a bit of baking or a proper Sunday lunch with family and friends. [Catherine Fulvio's](#) fourth cookbook was made for this kind of cooking, with chapters dedicated to play dates, curry night, movie night, late night supper, food for the match, afternoon tea, baking day, tapas night, dinner parties, Sunday brunch and Sunday lunch. Forget about hurried midweek meals, this is food to unwind with.

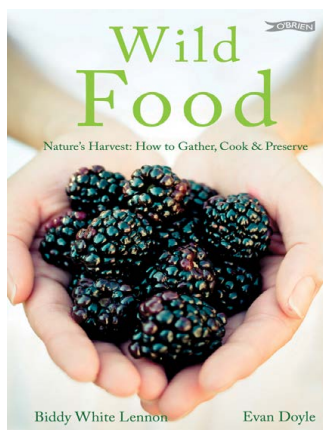
**Recipes to try:** Chilli bhajis with spicy apricot pickle and coconut raita; spicy chicken tacos with lime and avocado salsa; celeriac soup with lemon gremolata; Greek lamb with feta topping; crispy pork belly with chilli ginger caramel and sweet potatoes; cinnamon and walnut rolls; coffee cheesecake; wicked mousse layers.



### *Wild Food* by Biddy White Lennon and Evan Doyle

There are few things as simple and satisfying as foraging for wild food and turning it into something tasty in your kitchen. Far from being a passing fad, foraging is more popular than ever, which makes this a well-timed book. It looks at 25 wild foods and is helpfully organised according to what's in season, from February straight through to December. Each wild food is broken into sections on where to find it, what it looks like, how to pick it, how to prepare it, traditional uses, how to preserve it and a few recipes for it. Written by [Biddy White Lennon](#),





an active Slow Food member who has been foraging for wild food for as long as she can remember, and [Evan Doyle](#), who owns the BrookLodge Hotel and Ireland's only all-organic restaurant, The Strawberry Tree, with its famous wild food pantry, this small but mighty book is an invaluable guide.

**Keep your eye out for the following Irish cookbooks too:**

- [30 Years at Ballymaloe: A Celebration of the World-renowned Cookery School](#) by Darina Allen (click [here](#) to buy a signed copy)
- [Buon Appetito: The Campo de' Fiori Cookbook](#) by Marco Roccasalvo
- [Celebrating Irish Salmon](#) by Máirín Uí Chomáin
- [Eat West 2013: Eat the Best of the West at Home](#)
- [Gluten-free Treats](#) ebook by Vicky McDonald
- [Irish Pantry: Traditional Breads, Preserves and Goodies to Feed the Ones You Love](#) by Noel McMeel
- [Kevin Dundon's Modern Irish Food](#) by Kevin Dundon
- [Master It: How to Cook Today](#) by Rory O'Connell
- [Rachel's Everyday Kitchen: Simple, Delicious Family Food](#) by Rachel Allen
- [Wild and Free: Cooking from Nature](#) by Cyril and Kit Ó Céirín

And while they're not cookbooks, these food books were also published in 2013:

- [A Taste of Ireland.com Food Heroes Vol. 1](#) by Sean Monaghan
- [Georgina Campbell's Ireland: The Best of Irish Food and Hospitality](#) by Georgina Campbell (12th edition)
- [Good Food: Can You Trust What You Are Eating?](#) by John McKenna
- [Put the Kettle On: The Irish Love Affair with Tea](#) by Juanita Browne

*\*I received review copies of the following: Apron Strings, Extreme Greens, Food for Friends, Like Mam Used to Bake, Lilly Higgins' Dream Deli, The Nation's Favourite Food, The Weekend Chef and Wild Food.*

*In addition, I was the editor for the following: From Lynda's Table, Good Food, Lilly Higgins' Dream Deli, Relish BBQ, The Nation's Favourite Food and The Weekend Chef. If you're working on a cookbook and need an experienced editor, email me at [kristin \(at\) edible-ireland \(dot\) com](mailto:kristin@edible-ireland.com).*

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## Blackberry Jam

by KRISTIN on SEPTEMBER 6, 2013

It was a verb that stopped me in my tracks last Friday: *was*.

'The best Irish poet since Yeats, Heaney was 74.' And then the sinking realisation of exactly what that past tense *was* meant — the death of Seamus Heaney, Ireland's most beloved poet. One week on, the nation is still reeling from the loss.

Heaney often wrote about food:\* oysters, potatoes, grain, sloe gin, milk, mint, butter, blackberries. Scones 'rising / to the tick of two clocks'. Butter being churned into 'coagulated sunlight'. Fodder 'falling at your

feet, / last summer's tumbled / swathes of grass / and meadowsweet'. 'I was all hers as we peeled potatoes.'  
Threshed corn that 'lay piled like grit of ivory'. Oyster shells that 'clacked on the plates' and whose 'tang /  
Might quicken me all into verb, pure verb'. Mint 'Growing wild at the gable of the house' that 'spelled  
promise / And newness'.



Food is part and parcel of what I love best about Heaney's poetry: the way he could shine a light on ordinary moments of quiet, everyday domesticity to reveal their beauty and grace, like these lines from 'Mossbawn: Sunlight', where the act of baking is elevated into an expression of love:

*here is a space  
again, the scone rising  
to the tick of two clocks.*

*And here is love  
like a tinsmith's scoop  
sunk past its gleam  
in the meal-bin.*

If you are at all literary minded and live in Ireland, chances are that you associate the end of August or the first sighting of fat, ripe blackberries in the hedgerows with Heaney's poem 'Blackberry-Picking':

*Late August, given heavy rain and sun  
For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.  
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot  
Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.  
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet  
Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it  
Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for  
Picking...*



We headed down to a nearby lane two nights ago and picked a heaping bowl full of wild blackberries. But what to do with them? I had to make my mind up quick, for ‘Once off the bush ... the sweet flesh would turn sour’:

*I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair  
That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.  
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.*

I turned them into jam that night, suspending the sunny September evening in darkly gleaming jars — a way to make them ‘keep’ after all, even when so much else is fleeting.

### **Wild Blackberry Jam**

Makes about 1 litre

*A few tips before you begin:* You'll be working with a big pot of boiling sugar, which can burn badly. Keep kids out of the kitchen (or make your jam after they've gone to bed) and be mindful of your own safety too. Don't be tempted to lick the spoon for a little taste!

When making preserves, you need to use spotlessly clean, sterile jars, lids and rings (if using a Kilner/Le Parfait type of jar). If you have a dishwasher, you can simply run everything through a hot cycle. Otherwise, wash everything in hot, soapy water, rinse well, then place the jars and lids on a baking tray in an oven heated to 140°C (285°F) and keep them there until you're ready to use them.

1kg (2lb) blackberries  
1kg (2lb) caster sugar  
juice of 1 large lemon (about 100ml/3.5 fl oz)

Place a saucer in the freezer for testing the jam later (have a look at [this one-minute video](#) on how to test jam using the wrinkle test).

Gently wash the blackberries, discarding any stems. Tip them into a large preserving pan or a non-reactive pot



along with the sugar and the lemon juice. Cook over a medium heat until the sugar dissolves, stirring frequently with a long-handled spoon, then raise the heat and bring everything to a boil. Keep at a steady boil for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Start testing the jam after 10 minutes. Place a teaspoonful of the jam onto the freezer-cold plate and push it with your finger — when it wrinkles up, it's ready. Remove from the heat and skim off any foam that might still be on the surface.

Pour the jam into warm, dry, sterilised jars (see above) to within a few millimetres of the rim and seal immediately. Store in a cool, dry place and use within 2 years.

*\* Here are some of Heaney's poems that deal with food if you would like to seek them out. His book Opened Ground: Selected Poems 1966–1996 is a good place to start: 'Digging', 'Churning Day', 'The Barn', 'Fodder', 'Mossbawn: Sunlight', 'Oysters', 'Sloe Gin', 'The Milk Factory', 'Mint', 'When All the Others Were Away at Mass'.*

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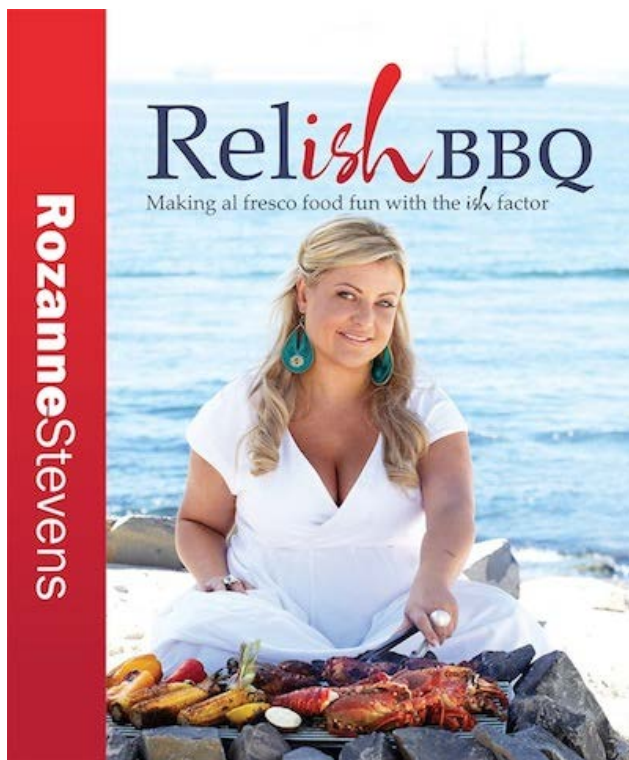
## 5 Irish Summer Cookbooks

by KRISTIN on JULY 25, 2013

For the first time since I moved to Ireland 14 years ago, I've been avoiding turning on my oven for the past month. I've also kept the shades drawn to keep rooms cool, thrown open every window and the kitchen door all day long and dragged the fan down from the attic. In a country whose climate is usually more suited to stews and casseroles and long, slow braises on a cold rainy day, a spate of hot sunny weather like we've been having this July can leave you at a loss for what to cook outside of your usual repertoire. After all, we're more accustomed to the dark, cozy pub than sunny poolsides. Here are some cookbooks — some new and some oldies but goodies worth revisiting — that have been getting a lot of play time in my kitchen this summer.

### ***Relish BBQ* by Rozanne Stevens**

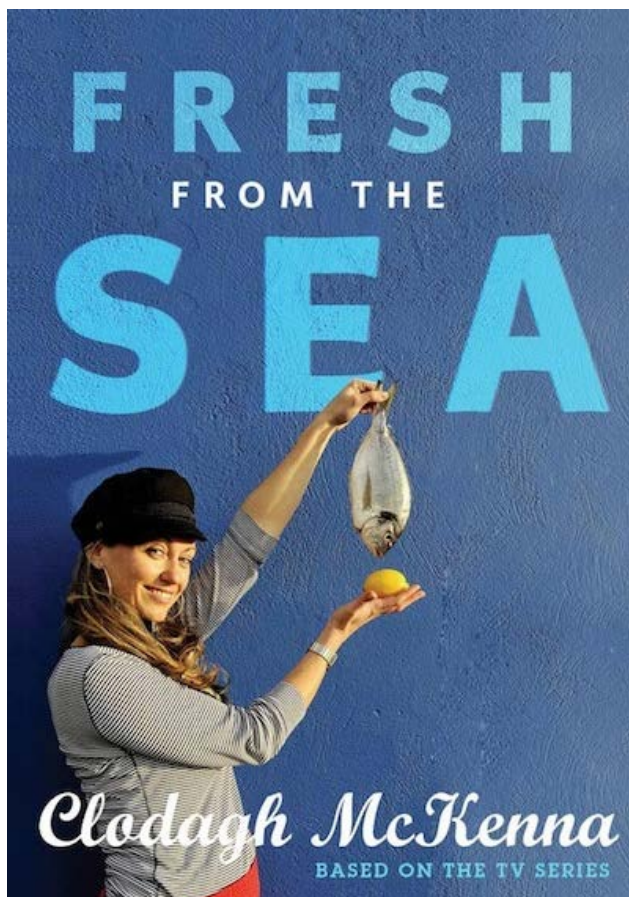
Launched in May, Rozanne's new cookbook couldn't have been better timed. Rozanne, who is originally from South Africa, has put her own al fresco spin on 10 different world cuisines (South African, Irish, Thai, Indian, Italian, Mozambique, Chinese, Mexican, Greek, American). The salads are particularly tempting and you'll never want to settle for a bottled barbecue sauce again after trying these marinades, bastes and sauces.



**Recipes to try:** Black pudding burgers; soy-glazed salmon burgers; strawberry chilli flattie chicken; smoked paprika BBQ pork chops with guava salsa; BBQ prawn, avocado and melon salad; Monica's berry Baileys meringue roulade.

***Fresh from the Sea* by Clodagh McKenna**

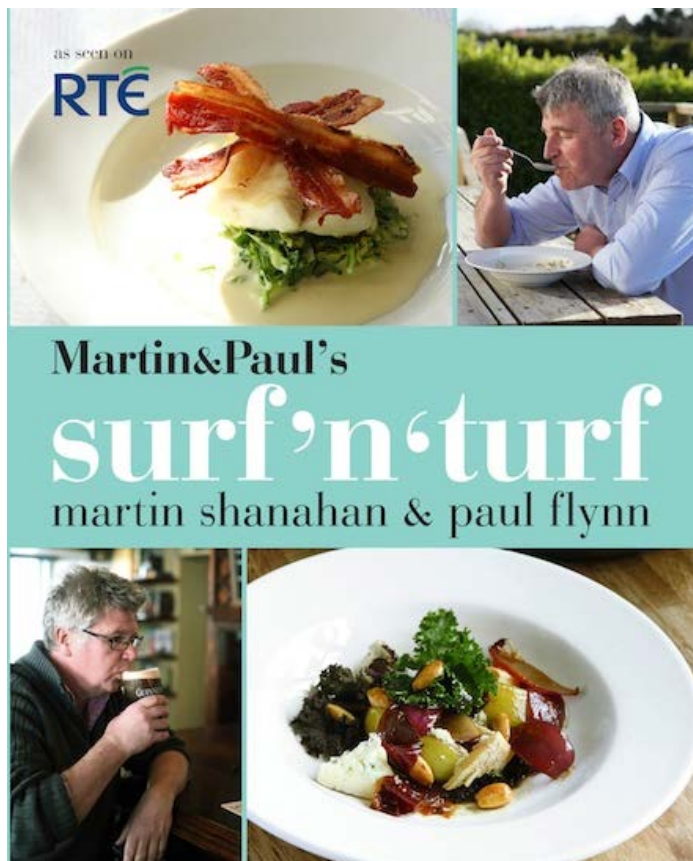
Fish is the ultimate fast food, often taking only minutes to cook, which makes it perfect for those summer evenings when you want to escape the heat of the kitchen. With beautiful photography and celebrating some of Ireland's fishermen and artisan producers, this cookbook focuses solely on seafood (with a few sides and desserts thrown in at the end for good measure) and is made for summer, when you want fast, light food.



**Recipes to try:** Roasted herb-crusted mussels; pan-seared scallops with smoked streaky bacon; crab cakes with lime guacamole; hake seared in a sun-dried tomato tapenade; smoked salmon mousse; chilli fried mackerel; marinated salmon in mint and lemon.

***Martin & Paul's Surf 'n' Turf* by Martin Shanahan and Paul Flynn**

One of my favourite new cookbooks last year, this is a collaboration between [Paul Flynn](#), chef/owner at The Tannery in Co. Waterford, and [Martin Shanahan](#), chef/owner at Fishy Fishy in Cork. At this time of year, the Salads and Quick chapters are the most well-thumbed, with plenty of recipes that are perfect for weeknight suppers, no matter which camp — surf or turf — you fall into.

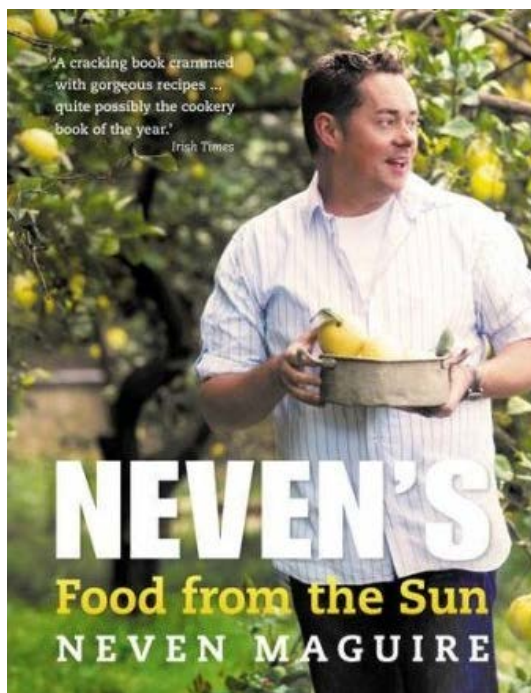


**Recipes to try:** Crab claws, lemon, chilli and basil cream; mussels with sweet chilli and lime butter; butterbeans, chorizo and cider; grilled scallops, black pudding, lemon and thyme dressing.

***Neven's Food from the Sun* by Neven Maguire**

Inspired by Neven's annual travels abroad, this book brings a bit of the sunny holiday flavours of Spain, Thailand and the Mediterranean to your kitchen. A little taste of the costas here at home in Ireland.





**Recipes to try:** Oven-roasted Dublin Bay prawns with tomato and chilli; crispy fried squid with harissa and creme fraiche; spicy chicken and mango noodles; baked Mediterranean vegetables with tomato, Cooleeney cheese and Parmesan; pineapple tarte tatin; coconut creme caramel.

***Murphy's Ice Cream Book of Sweet Things* by Seán and Kieran Murphy**

Summer. Ice cream. Need I say more? But if you need further convincing, Murphy's is one of Ireland's best-loved ice creams. Handmade in Dingle with milk from Kerry cows and premium ingredients, they say it best themselves: it's ice cream that knows where it's coming from. Head over to [Bibliocook](#) for an in-depth review of the book.



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## Elderflower Fritters

by KRISTIN on JULY 16, 2013

With the [hot, sunny weather](#) we've been having these past two weeks, the musky scent of elderflower hangs heavy in the still air, perfuming the countryside and drifting in the open windows at night as we fall off to sleep.



The elderflower was late to bloom this year, but the trees have made up for the delay by being especially abundant. After making the obligatory batch of [cordial](#), I wanted to experiment with something new to me this year: elderflower fritters. The fritters are basically just deep-fried flowers; it's like crossing the notorious [fried foods of an American state fair](#) with the Irish countryside. Delicate, crisp, sweet and floral, they are ethereally delicious.



The elderflowers are already starting to turn and by next week the flowers will be past their prime, so if you want to bring them into your kitchen, do it quick, before it's too late this year.

*\*For more elderflower and wild food recipes, check out the [archive](#).*

### **Elderflower Fritters**

adapted from Nigel Slater in [The Guardian](#)

Serves 4–6

The best time to pick elderflowers is on a dry, warm day, well away from traffic and roadsides. Shake the flowers gently to get rid of any insects.

100g plain flour  
175ml sparkling water  
sunflower oil  
caster sugar  
1 egg white  
12–16 elderflower heads  
[gooseberry and elderflower compote](#), to serve (optional)

Sift the flour into a large bowl, then add the sparkling water and 2 tablespoons of the sunflower oil. Whisk together until a thick paste forms, then stir in 1 tablespoon of the caster sugar. Set aside for 30 minutes (don't be tempted to skip this resting time, it's essential for a light result). Just before you're ready to fry the elderflowers, beat an egg white and fold it into the batter.

Gently swirl the elderflower heads in a bowl of cold water to clean them, then lightly shake them dry. Line a plate with some kitchen paper and sprinkle a good few tablespoons of caster sugar into a shallow dish.

Pour about 3cm (1 inch) of sunflower oil into a heavy-bottomed, deep-sided pan and heat the oil until it reaches 180°C (350°F). (If you don't have a thermometer, you can test that the oil is hot enough by dropping in a cube of bread — the oil is ready when the bread turns golden in just a few seconds.) Dip the elderflowers



into the batter and lower them into the oil. Fry for 1 to 2 minutes, until the batter is golden and crisp. Lift out and blot on the kitchen paper-lined plate to soak up any excess oil, then dip into the dish of caster sugar. Eat the fritters straightaway, while they are hot and crisp, pulling the fried flowers off the thick woody stems. You can serve them with a gooseberry and elderflower compote, but they are a delicious, decadent summertime treat just on their own.

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## Shandy

by KRISTIN on JUNE 20, 2013

Oh, Ireland. On a warm, sunny day, all is forgiven. The coldest spring on record that we just had? Let's not speak of it. The past few washout summers? A distant memory. That day last year in July that I looked out my window at yet another cold, rainy day and actually cried? I'm not holding a grudge.

I'm not greedy. I don't need, or even want, sweltering Continental temperatures. 20°C (70°F) qualifies as a scorcher here and suits me just fine: warm enough to sit outside with a book, *maybe* even without a jacket. Is a mere 20°C too much to ask for? Well, yes, apparently. Two weeks ago we had the best weather we've seen in years and it was "only" in the low 20's (70's) — old American me is laughing at how I now consider that to be a heat wave. In the 14 years I've been living here, I've never seen the beach as crowded as it was that weekend. Just look at that blue! Not a cloud in the sky, not a care in the world.



Such (rare) spectacular summer weather calls for something cold and refreshing to drink. There are the obvious choices — Pimm's, G&Ts, maybe even an [elderflower Bellini](#) — and those are all fine if you just want one or two. But if you're looking for something to sip over a long, hot afternoon, a shandy is the drink for you.

Beer cocktails are all the rage now, but the old school shandy isn't getting much air time. In Ireland, a shandy is simply half beer, half lemonade, but [check out all the versions of a shandy around the world](#), from a black

shandy in Canada (stout and lemon soda) to a brass monkey in the US (beer and orange juice) or a *tango* in Portugal (beer and gooseberry cordial). A rock shandy refers to a non-alcoholic shandy, usually half lemon soda, half orange soda. And despite its wimpy image, shandy is a great drink if you're out for the night and want to pace yourself.

My idea of a perfect summer day is pretty simple: a good book, a lounge, plenty of sun and something nice to drink. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for lots more shandy weather this year.



## Shandy

sparkling lemonade  
light lager beer or pilsner

Half-fill a pint glass with the beer, then top up with sparkling lemonade — though you can of course adjust the ratio of beer to lemonade to your own taste. You could also try some of these variations in place of the lemonade:

- Ginger beer or ginger ale (in which case, it becomes a shandygaff)
- Orange soda (called a *quianti* in Argentina)
- 7Up (called a Snow White in the Netherlands or a [panaché](#) in France)
- Cola (called a *diesel* in Portugal and Germany)
- Apple juice
- [Strawberry chile syrup](#)

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## Postcards from Ireland #12

by KRISTIN on JUNE 14, 2013



*The Great Beech of Balrath Woods, County Meath.*

You can see more of my photos on Instagram as [edibleireland](#).

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## Honest2Goodness Market

by KRISTIN on MAY 2, 2013

I have high expectations when it comes to farmers' markets. Before I moved to Ireland I was living in Madison, the capital city of Wisconsin and home to [the biggest producer-only farmers' market in America](#). With 300 vendors, it completely encircles the huge capitol building and has everything you could possibly need or want and a great buzz. It's pretty hard to compete with.





*Nicola from The Big Red Kitchen*



I've been to plenty of fantastic markets around Ireland — the [English Market](#) in Cork, Limerick's [Milk Market](#)

or Belfast's [St George's Market](#) — but there's no market in Louth, where I live, where you could do all your weekly shopping. A weekly market has finally started up in Drogheda, but only after I moved away and it's on Fridays, which would mean taking a day off work to go to it. Until recently, any local markets were usually only run once a month, which is all well and good for a fun little weekend outing and if all you want is some nice olives or a pot pie to have for lunch or some handmade candles. But it's no use at all if you're hoping to connect with and support local producers in a meaningful way.



*Lisa from The Natural Sauce Company*



Which is all to say that [Honest2Goodness](#) is the market I've been hoping to find all these years. It does what it says on the tin — it's a real deal, honest to goodness market where you can buy everything from basics like bread, milk and eggs to meat, fish and preserves through to baked treats and wine. Brid Carter, who runs the market, also set up [The Pantry](#) section specifically to stock everyday essentials so that regular market customers would only need to visit a big supermarket about once a month.





*Pat O'Dwyer, aka The Spud Man*



There's a café on site too, where everything is sourced from the market. You can have a ham sandwich, then

go meet the people who baked the bread and raised the pigs for the ham. How's that for provenance?



*Beautiful treats from The Wild Flour Bakery*

The market is full of many, many good things, but here are some of my highlights:

- The [pineapple and chilli chutney](#) and [pear and vanilla jam](#) from [The Big Red Kitchen](#). The (very!) good news is that you can also order Nicola's products [online](#).
- The romesco, muhammara and harissa sauces from Lisa and Ailbhe's [Natural Sauce Company](#) are the best new products I've tasted this year. I was blown away by the bold, fresh flavours. The sauces last for a month in the fridge and can be frozen too, so stock up if you can.
- Gorgeous sourdough breads from [Arun Bakery](#), made by Vlad Rannis, a master baker from Prague.
- Old school treats like homemade marshmallows, florentines and [chocolate biscuit cake](#) from Blas na Talún.
- Pat O'Dwyer, aka the Spud Man, sells a wide range of seasonal fruit and vegetables, which are Irish wherever possible. Anyone looking for Irish apples or picture perfect produce (food bloggers, I'm looking at you), head here for beautiful French garlic or unwaxed lemons with the stems and leaves still attached.
- The delicious treats from [Sticky Fingers Bakery](#) — you'd never guess they're all gluten free.
- Anything and everything from [My Mexican Shop](#). I've been buying toritllas, tostadas and chipotles from Lily since she launched her business, but I'm crazy about the [Gran Luchito Chili Paste](#) she just started stocking.
- Kate Packwood at the [Wild Flour Bakery](#) is surely one of Ireland's most innovative, creative bakers, layering flavours in imaginative and beautiful ways. Weeks after visiting, I'm still thinking about her caramel and sea salt brownies — the best I've ever had. Get to her stall early though, because she regularly sells out.

[Brid's](#) enthusiasm, energy and generosity are infectious and I only wish her market was closer to where I live. Couldn't the Honest2Goodness market be copied elsewhere, especially given all the empty industrial estates all over the country? And wouldn't everyone — farmers, food producers, consumers and the community — all be the better for it if it was?

**Honest2Goodness**  
136a Slaney Close

Dublin Industrial Estate  
Glasnevin  
Dublin 11  
Open Saturdays, 9:30 to 4:00  
[@brid\\_h2g](#)  
[www.honest2goodness.ie](http://www.honest2goodness.ie)

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