

“PUT HERDWICK BACK ON TO BRITISH DINNER PLATES” URGES THE NWFTI

The North West Farm Tourism Initiative is urging meat lovers to do something a little different this Spring and get their chops around wonderful tasting Herdwick.

As Prince Charles and a host of top chefs spearhead a move to put mutton back on the menu, the NWFTI is seeking to introduce more people to the unique taste of Herdwick – a richer, leaner and sweeter style of lamb and mutton and also a source of Omega 3.

Its succulence derives from the fact that Herdwick sheep are raised on the fell and allowed to mature slowly, indulging in a mixed diet of grass, heather, berries and leaves. This produces fabulous, flavoursome meat that has been found to have a better texture and taste than ordinary lamb, according to an official study from Bristol University.

Beatrix Potter raised her own flock of Herdwick sheep with their distinctive grey coats, white faces and small stature. Yet, whilst Cumbrian farmers have appreciated the virtues of Herdwick for centuries, many of us have forgotten the fact that this meat was referred to as Queen’s Mutton, in Elizabethan times, when mutton was a prized dish to sport on the menu.

A farms that works within the North West Farm Tourism Initiative is helping to raise the popularity of Herdwick meat all over again. Yew Tree Farm, in Coniston, offers two Herdwick hampers within its Heritage Meats range. These provide a variety of different cuts of meat, from cutlets to joints, with the larger of the two also offering minced Herdwick and diced leg. Details of these are available from 015394 41433 or from <http://www.heritagemeats.co.uk>

NWFTI’s Katie Read says: “We want to see more Herdwick on British dinner plates and on British menus. It’s meat like it used to be and we are sure that we can convert the majority of traditional lamb eaters once they sample the wonderful taste of Herdwick, fresh from the Cumbrian farm.”

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Press calls: Jane Hunt/David Aaron, Catapult PR, 01253 851188

Recipe from Caroline Watson, Yew Tree Farm, Coniston

Herdwick Pinwheels

Ingredients

One sheet of puff pastry
A jar of Hawkshead relish minted Cumberland sauce
Mature cheddar (or a suitable local cheese)
Herdwick mince 1 lb (450g)
Beaten egg
Grease (for baking tray)

Method

Roll out the puff pastry on flour until about a foot square, smear the pastry all over with a good coat of minted Cumberland sauce adding extra mint if you like (leave about 2" (5 cm) on one edge free from ingredients).

Grate the cheese and sprinkle an even layer all over the sheet so that there is not much pastry showing through. Sprinkle a 1lb (450 g) of Herdwick mince over the top of the cheese.

Now starting at the opposite end to the ingredient free lip (this should be brushed with beaten egg), roll up tightly like a Swiss roll making sure you stick the lip down well. Place on a baking sheet in the fridge for 1/2 an hour. Pre heat oven to 180c.

Grease two baking sheets, when ready to cook take a sharp knife and tidy the ragged ends off the roll, slice each pinwheel about 1 1/2" (4 cm) thick then lay flat on the baking sheet.

Bake in the oven for approx 15 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown and the cheese is bubbling. Serve with seasonal vegetables or a mixed salad.