

THE JELLIED FEEL

LONDON'S MAGAZINE FOR GOOD FOOD | ISSUE 62 - AUTUMN 2020 | FREE



**FOOD FOR GOOD
CHAMPIONS**



- SUGAR'S DARK SECRETS
- GREEN RESTAURANT REVOLUTION



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ISSUE 62: AUTUMN 2020

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the alliance for better food and farming

URBAN FOOD AWARDS 2020: WINNERS ANNOUNCED



We are delighted to be able to finally announce the winners of the sixth Urban Food Awards.

CHILDREN'S FOOD CHAMPION: CHEFS IN SCHOOLS

Revolutionising school food, Chefs in Schools comes top of the class through its work with chefs to create a lunchtime norm of fresh, exciting, and nutritious food.

GOOD FOOD FOR ALL: LONDON INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE (LILS)

A social enterprise helping older people and those needing support to stay independent and healthy at home, through bespoke meals on wheels and access to nutritionists.

GROWING WILD: BROCKWELL PARK COMMUNITY GARDENS

An acre of inner city green space given over to the community to garden and grow food, providing a haven for local people and wildlife to come together.

COMMUNITY MARKET CHAMPION: MYATT'S FIELDS PARK PROJECT

Growing and selling vegetables direct to the local community, they also provides seedlings and advice for growers starting out in gardens and community spaces.

OCEAN-FRIENDLY CATERER: SOLESHARE

London's first community supported fishery providing a waste free, low-impact way to support small-scale fishers, while protecting the marine environment.

SUPER SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: BREADWINNERS

This grassroots social enterprise supports refugees through training, mentoring and work selling artisan organic bread across London's markets.

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS: THE CASTLE CLIMBING CENTRE CAFE (JOINT WINNER)

This cafe reaches great heights when it comes to sustainability. Using food mostly grown in the on-site permaculture garden, they strive to minimise food waste, plastic use, and food miles.

CLIMATE CHAMPIONS: WELL-KNEADED (JOINT WINNER)

From their sourcing and buying policies, to suppliers and ingredients - climate and nature friendly practices dictate the menu and processes of this sustainable pizzeria in Earlsfield.

YOUNG FOOD AMBASSADOR: HAMMERSMITH ACADEMY

Through creatively using the space they have to grow food and welcome nature, the whole school engages with wildlife as well as growing food for the community.

For the full list of winners visit: thejelliedeel.org



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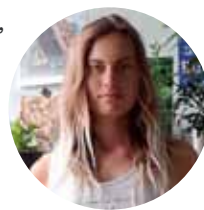


GROW 18
COMMUNITY HARVEST



THINK 20
GREEN RESTAURANT REVOLUTION

Merlin's Beard, 2020. What a year it's been so far.



We are in the midst of a pandemic and although it's an extremely challenging time, I've been inspired (during my first stint as guest editor), by how our London food and farming communities are pulling together and we are all adapting.


That's the crux of it, really – community. When all things are taken from us, community is what keeps us going: from the farmers growing our food, restaurants morphing into local supermarkets and the citizens of London seeking out local produce.

At Jellied Eel, we've also been adapting – for us this means our first virtual Urban Food Awards, honouring the people and organisations championing a better food system. Our main category celebrated diversity (page 12), which is especially poignant. We've been woken up, beautifully abruptly, to the dire need for all of us to take ownership over making this a world of equality and racial justice.

Now it's time for us to think: what is really important to us? Do we want to go back to the way things were? Or can we shape a better system, where we support local businesses, show empathy and kindness, and demand equality?

It's been a lot, I know. So, take half an hour to yourself, kick back with a cuppa and rummage through this issue of Jellied Eel. You deserve it.

Abi Aspen Glencross, GUEST EDITOR

 @jelliedeelmag
@londonfoodlink

 @jelliedeelmag

COVER: HADAS HAGOS (WASTE NOT WANT NOT BATTERSEA) BY MILES WILLIS, SEE PAGE 15

AROUND TOWN



Jed Coiley explores
London's Urban
Food Award Climate
Champions shortlist
and some lockdown
legend eateries

NORTH



The Lighterman

N1C

King's Cross

An epic space on Regent's Canal in the heart of King's Cross – which in lockdown cooked meals for the NHS – with a fantastic modern British menu focusing on sustainable and seasonal ingredients. Make sure you pop by on a Sunday for their prestigious traditional (or vegan!) roasts.

www.thelighterman.co.uk
[@thelightermankx](https://twitter.com/thelightermankx)

WEST

Iris & June

Victoria

An independent cafe in Victoria dishing up wholesome, seasonal grub and good coffee. Iris and June made it to the Urban Food Awards Climate Champion short list this year, and for good reason – the menu features the likes of delicious soups made from peels, stalks and trimmings, alongside cheese made from the cafe's leftover milk. Drop on by for a calm oasis in the busy city centre.

www.irisandjune.com @irisandjune



SW1P

La Goccia

Covent Garden

Dine out with some drama as the chefs at La Goccia prepare Italian-inspired small plates in front of you. Part of Petersham Nurseries, top-quality produce is picked straight from the farms of independent producers and brought directly to your plate. Enjoy pastas, frittos and coccoli (fresh dough balls served plain or stuffed with creamy gorgonzola) al fresco in one of London's most famous markets.

www.petershamnurseries.com/dine/la-goccia @petershamnurseries

WC2E



EAST

Barge East

Hackney Wick

During lockdown, Barge East has been cooking up meals to feed local hospital workers. Now, they've reopened to the public, with head chef Stefano Camplone back at the helm serving up a seasonal British menu, including his much-loved Sunday roasts. Al fresco dining at its best – floating on London's historic waterway.

www.bargeeast.com @bargeeast

E9

Hornbeam Café

Walthamstow

The Hornbeam vegan cafe creates socially conscious food using fresh, seasonal produce. During lockdown they became a local hub, providing a meal service with delivery to people in need. Ordinarily it operates as a pay-what-you-feel café as well as offering 'solidarity meals', whereby customers pay forwards for someone less fortunate.

www.hornbeam.org.uk/cafe/
@hornbeam_cafe

E17

Eleven98

Hackney

Aidan Brooks' chef's table supper club makes a welcome return. After a quirky welcome cocktail, guests will be taken on a seven-course tasting menu built on produce grown across Aidan's home borough of Hackney. With veg grown in his mother's garden and leaves foraged on the towpaths and marshes, this is locality dining at its best. Open again for special group bookings.

www.eleven98hackney.com
@eleven98hackney

E2

Silo London

Hackney Wick

This list would not be complete without a nod to revolutionary restaurant Silo. Its holistic approach sees everything from the furniture to the flour made on site, reused, or upcycled. Currently open as a wine bar and creative food experience. Check them out for a taste of what we hope the future holds.

www.silolondon.com @silolondon

E9



Flat Earth Pizzas

Homerton

Back after a successful pop-up last year at a new location in The Plough pub, Flat Earth's vegetarian pizzas cover all bases when it comes to sustainability. Their toppings are a lesson in saving food from landfill and making the best of British seasonality, featuring the likes of pickled and fermented wild mushrooms and kimchi.

www.flatearthpizzas.com
@flatearthpizzas

E9

SOUTH

The Roebuck

Borough

A striking Victorian pub packed with quintessential English charm cooking up traditional pub food, reinvigorated. Great suppliers and sustainability are at the heart of the business – that means a seasonal changing menu and local suppliers keeping you fed, and a broad selection of beers keeping your watered. Be sure to try the Food Made Good award-winning 'less meat' burger.

www.theroebuck.net @theroebuckse1

SE1

Well Kneaded

Earlsfield

Old 'Eel favourites (see issue 60) and the 2020 Urban Food Award Climate Champion, Well Kneaded's sourdough pizzas have been transforming lives since 2011 through their food internship scheme – training and developing skills to help build better futures for refugees. The menu is sustainability-focused, too, featuring organic local veg and ethically sourced coffee.

www.wellkneadedfood.com
@wellkneadedfood

SW18



CHECK OUT THE GOOD FOOD MAP

To help you find *good* food places to eat, shop, hire and learn all year round, we have an online map and directory. Search by your postcode and show some ♥ to your favourites. Of course if you are one of those great places get yourself listed.

www.goodfoodmap.org
#GoodFoodMap



THE PLANT PIONEER

Safiya Robinson is the founder of Sisterwoman Vegan, a plant-based social enterprise exploring wellness through food. She invites critical food conversation through supperclubs, private catering and cooking lessons. While focused on the black experience, most events are open to all.

WHY FOOD?

Culturally (I am Jamaican, African-American and British), food has always been what brings us together, and most of my food memories involve family, love, laughter and comfort. Food has always been the thing. It's my love language. I'm currently reading Notes on a Banana: A Memoir of Food, Love and Manic Depression by David Leite and he describes my love for food and, more specifically, cooking food perfectly: "(It's) the primitive, intimate connection it forges. The way it says 'you matter to me.' (It's) the naked vulnerability of hoping you'll please another."

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START SISTERWOMAN VEGAN?

Sisterwoman vegan came about while I was at university. I had just turned vegan and was experimenting with different dishes. Away from my beloved London, authentic Caribbean food was difficult to find and expensive. I cooked for my housemates every 'meat-free Monday' and this turned into a meal prep service in my final year. I was also studying politics and sociology and getting involved in student activism, so Sisterwoman seemed a natural next step in bringing all parts of me together.

TELL US ABOUT A MEMORABLE MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER.

Pre-Covid, I cooked a monthly lunch for the Islington Migrant Centre. A lot of the participants are West African, with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds. This

means they have no income, and usually little choice in what they eat. I cooked up a Ghanaian feast with red (stewed black-eyed peas), kelewele (seasoned plantain and peanuts) and yam. There was so much happiness in the room and they all thanked and embraced me. I really felt like I had given them a piece of home!

WHO HAS HELPED YOU MOST ALONG THE WAY?

I was so lucky to be part of Impact Hub's Feeding the City, a start-up incubator for sustainable food businesses. The business support and funding has been invaluable, and my mentors Emma and Harriet really helped me to develop my ideas. Shoutouts go to my big sis and my mum, who once raced down to my kitchen at midnight with a replacement blender when mine broke mid-job.

IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF LONDON, WHAT'S THE FIRST (FOOD-RELATED) THING YOU'D DO?

Introduce Universal Basic Income and extensive subsidising of plant-based whole foods. Being vegan is a privilege, because it assumes that you have choice or agency about what you eat and where your food comes from. The reality is very different.

WHO'S YOUR GOOD FOOD HERO AND WHY?

Ruby Tandoh! I love the way that she encourages a positive relationship with food and her passion and joy for food is infectious. Her belief that "a

balanced diet isn't balanced if it takes up all your time" has really inspired my approach to Sisterwoman and the way that I think about food.

WHAT LONDON FOOD SECRET WOULD IT BE SELFISH NOT TO SHARE?

My London food secret is definitely Fourteen87 in Catford. It has incredible vegan options and a great vibe, run by Caribbean chef Dom Taylor. I'm also super excited about Nyami Project, a collective of black chefs and creatives led by Kat Lopez.

WHAT'S NEXT ON THE AGENDA?

I've been working on a couple of e-books and launched an IG live series around food and wellness. I have also resumed my private chef's services – it's so great to get back into the kitchen! My supperclubs will definitely be resuming soon, Covid restrictions willing.

www.sisterwomanvegan.com
[@sisterwoman_veg](https://www.instagram.com/sisterwoman_veg)



PHOTO: ZOE WARDE-ALDAM



Check out other career stories in our Root to Work series at www.thejelliedeel.org or find your place in the field of good food at www.rootstowork.org

CUTTING COLA TO COOL THE PLANET

Our mass consumption of soft drinks is having a devastating impact on our climate and ecosystems. Sustain's climate and health campaigners **Ruth Westcott** and **Vera Zakharov** argue that turning our back on Big Soda could be one of the easiest ways to make ourselves and our planet healthier.

Sugar has a colossal environmental footprint and fizzy drinks are a big part of this. The average Brit consumes a staggering 63g of sugar per day (2.5 times the recommended intake) and more than 2 litres of soft drinks per week. Sustain has long campaigned for policy change and local action to tackle sugar overconsumption on health grounds. But with a raft of planetary issues caused by sugar farming to add to the sweet substance's list of sins, it is time to challenge the nation's love affair with sugary drinks.

EROSION OF THE PLANET (AS WELL AS TEETH)

According to the World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF), sugar has “arguably had as great an impact on the environment as any agricultural commodity”, thanks to the conversion of swathes of tropical and coastal habitats to sugar plantations, causing biodiversity loss and soil erosion. Soil erosion is especially problematic for climate change as healthy soil naturally

absorbs vast amounts of carbon.

Unbeknown to many, the UK produces vast quantities of sugar – in fact, as much UK farmland is used to grow sugar beet as is used to grow all other vegetable crops combined. Food and environment experts Feedback argue this is a grave misuse of soil and land, since sugar beet relies heavily on pesticides and degrades soil, while offering negligible benefit to healthy, nutritious food supplies.

And this is before we unpack the impact of soft drink bottles and cans. In 2019, a report by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation showed that Coca-Cola produces three million tonnes of plastic packaging a year. This is of serious concern: plastic production is expected to account for 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

DRINKING LAND AND COMMUNITIES DRY

Multinational soft drinks companies have a long and controversial tradition of exploiting people and resources – especially water – often in poorer

areas where they set up factories. For example, in San Cristóbal, Mexico, there are urgent concerns about local water exploitation and the impact of sugary drinks on public health. In 2017, the Tamil Nadu region of India boycotted Coca-Cola and Pepsi – accusing the firms of taking so much water from rivers that farmers struggled to irrigate land, at a time of severe drought.

ARE DIET DRINKS BETTER?

Following the introduction of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (sugary drinks tax), many companies reformulated, but sales of artificially-sweetened drinks in the UK have also increased. A 2009 study by the Carbon Trust (on behalf of the Coca-Cola company) found Diet Coke had a modestly lower carbon footprint than classic cola. But these still represent significant use of energy, plastic, aluminium and transport fuel for arguably negligible benefit – except to company profits. There is also divided opinion in the medical community about the health effects of artificial sweeteners.





UNSAVOURY OUTCOMES

The consequences of eating too much sugar are well known and have become distressingly evident this year. Type two diabetes costs the NHS more than £6 billion per year. What's more, diet-related health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity have been found to increase the risk of severe illness from Covid-19.

LONDON TAKES A STAND

London was one of the first UK cities to take a stand against the sugar giants and to stick up for the health of the capital's citizens. Backed by parents, teachers and health professionals, London government banned junk food advertising across the transport network. Health and environmental organisations have worked with communities to reduce sugar in schools, cafés and leisure centres. Public pressure made the fossil-fuel guzzling Coke Truck cancel its Christmas advertising visit last year. The government is beginning to follow suit in reducing industry

dominance, with the new obesity strategy promising a ban on TV junk food advertisements before 9pm and restricting in-store promotions of unhealthy food.

Government commitments are a good start, but more action is needed to stem the tide of unhealthy foods and open up the way to make healthier food more available, attractive and affordable. While we wait for the policymakers to catch up, cutting down on sugary drinks is one of the easiest steps we can all take to help our own and the planet's health.

Join London Food Link to get behind our campaigns:
www.londonfoodlink.org
[@londonfoodlink](https://twitter.com/londonfoodlink)



PHOTO BY ANDREW MARTIN



Sustainable Food Places' Local Action Coordinator, Vera Zakharov, offers climate-friendly alternatives:

- Choose tap water as the most hydrating and climate-friendly beverage.
- Get creative with making low sugar/no sugar flavoured beverages, such as water with mint or cucumber, or chilled fruit tea.
- In moderation, choose pure fruit juice, preferably diluted.
- If treating yourself to a sugary drink, choose ingredients with lower carbon footprint, such as stevia, organic honey or barley malt syrup

ON THE PULSE



Eco-chef Tom Hunt delves into the origins of one of our favourite legumes, chickpeas, and shares a recipe from his sustainability-focused restaurant.



Chickpeas are one of the eight ‘founder crops’ that mark the beginning of agriculture on our planet. Four legumes (chickpeas, bitter vetch, lentils and peas), three cereals (barley, einkorn and emmer wheat) and one seed (linseed) were first cultivated during the Neolithic era in the Fertile Crescent, a small region in the Middle East that was home to the earliest human civilizations.

Today this leguminous crop is still loved by many and grown all over the world – even here in the UK, with the first field scale grown crop harvested this summer by farmer Henry Raker

in conjunction with British bean and pulse legends Hodmedods.

This recipe is inspired by a dish served at my favourite brunch place in Brooklyn, New York, called Five Leaves. The chickpeas, batter, spices and tomatoes are all fried together to form a grand mess – brunch heaven! We’ve served a version of harissa scramble at our restaurant Poco in Bristol since we opened. This is a plant-rich version, made using ‘besan’ or chickpea flour instead of eggs.

PHOTOS BY JENNY ZARINS



HARISSA CHICKPEA SCRAMBLE

Serves 2

Mix 85g ‘besan’ or chickpea flour with 100ml water to form a batter, ideally 1–8 hours before making the dish.

½ tbsp apple cider vinegar

¼ tsp baking powder

½ tsp ground turmeric

A glug of extra virgin olive oil, for frying

½ small red onion, finely sliced

120g cooked chickpeas or other cooked beans

1 garlic clove, roughly chopped

½ tsp cumin seeds

½ tsp smoked paprika

20g sun-dried tomatoes, roughly chopped, optional

To serve (optional):

Thinly sliced wholemeal bread, yoghurt, plus toppings of your choice (eg sliced spring onions, dried chilli flakes, fresh coriander leaves, lemon juice)

Stir the vinegar, baking powder and turmeric into the pre-made chickpea flour batter and set aside.

Heat a frying pan with a glug of oil over a medium heat. When hot, add the onion and chickpeas or beans and cook for a couple of minutes, stirring occasionally. Next add the garlic, spices and sun-dried tomatoes, if using, and fry for a further 2 minutes, stirring continuously.

Pour the chickpea flour batter into the pan and wait for 20 seconds for it to begin to set before scraping the bottom of the pan with a spatula. Repeat this process every 20 seconds, scrambling the mixture each time and taking care it doesn’t catch or burn.

Serve hot, either on its own or on bread with yoghurt and your chosen toppings.

www.tomsfeast.com
@cheftomhunt



FLOURISH PRODUCE

From one farmer to another, **Abi Aspen Glencross** chats to Flourish Produce founder **Calixta Killander** about new age farmers, organic growing and produce for chefs.

Flourish Produce is the talk of London. You can't chat to a chef about vegetables without Flourish being on their lips. Founded in 2017 by Calixta Killander on her family's farm in Cambridgeshire, Flourish produces specialty crops predominantly for chefs. However, this isn't any old produce – they're the most flavourful and beautiful vegetables you have ever seen or tasted

GROWING FOR CHEFS

Growing for chefs is completely different to growing for the general public. A balance must be struck between innovative and familiar, quality and economics. "I really enjoy producing things to the highest quality possible," Calixta tells me – which is why she's the grower for some of London's top restaurants, including Jolene, Esters, Brat and Lyle's.

Calixta shares the view of most farmers who sell direct to consumers: that it's much more rewarding to know where your produce is

being eaten and have an engaged community, "The direct link to our customers has always been a driving force for us."

NEW AGE FARMERS

Although Calixta grew up on a farm, she had no intention of picking up the trade until travelling the world taught her about how humans impact the world. "Farming seemed to be the best way to have a positive impact rather than a negative one," she muses. She moved to the US to study sustainable agriculture and forestry, where she developed her love of growing vegetables.

Farmers are now expected not only to tend the land, but to be salespeople, social media experts and delivery drivers. During the busy summer months, Calixta sometimes works long, 16-hour days. That said, farming can be incredibly rewarding. "I can't imagine doing anything else," she says. "It's amazing to get pushed to learn new skills, from welding to accounting. No two days are the same."

IS ORGANIC ENOUGH?

Organic produce is hailed by some as a saviour for the world's ecological crisis, yet by others it's shamed for not protecting and nourishing the earth enough. However, there's a new kid on the block: regenerative farming. Calixta explains: "The concept is to encourage life and diversity, investing more into our ecosystem and in the soil than what we remove." These practices include crop rotation, plant diversity, returning animals to the land and using green manures.

The future of Flourish looks bright. They are expanding their growing area and continuing their lockdown-initiated veg boxes, so pop online and order your produce. If you would rather be cooked for, check out their London restaurant supply list – you won't find finer regeneratively farmed food anywhere else.

www.flourishproduce.co.uk
[@FlourishProduce](https://www.instagram.com/FlourishProduce)



PHOTO BY KATIE HAMMOND

DIVERSITY: GOOD FOOD'S MISSING INGREDIENT

London is a city buzzing with diversity. But does our sustainable food scene reflect this vibrant mix of cultures? **Mecca Ibrahim** spoke to women working in the food industry to find out.



PHOTO OF RAVINDER BY RAHIL AHMAD

The Black Lives Matter Movement has forced us all to look at uncomfortable issues. We may feel that London is a natural melting pot, with all of its many voices given equal weight, but this is often not the case. And what effect does that have on the sustainability of our food system?

SUSTAINABILITY IS UNIVERSAL

Ravinder Bhogal is an award-winning food writer and founder of the Marylebone restaurant, Jikoni, inspired by the rich shared flavours of South Asia, the Far East, the Middle East, East Africa and Britain. Ravinder explains that “as well as celebrating our cultural similarities and the intricacies of our differences” she also wants to create a world that is kinder and greener. “All our energy is from sustainable sources. We try

our utmost to make sure nothing is wasted and all our packaging for our home delivery brand Comfort and Joy is 100% home compostable.”

Elainea Emmott is a London based chef and food and protest photographer who is interested in our ability to use science and culture to improve our food system. Her philosophy can be attributed to her Caribbean culture. “Due to our heritage and our parents’ economic status, we had to use ALL of the animal and plants to make ends meet,” she says. “My aim is to have zero waste or as near to it as possible.”

ADDRESSING ELITISM

Some fundamentals for a sustainable food system may not always seem possible in inner cities. Growing spaces such as allotments have long

waiting lists and are in scarce supply. Cooking from scratch, nose-to-tail eating, zero-waste and buying organically are often seen as the preserve of the White middle class. When asked about the pursuit of sustainable eating, Elainea comments: “As a single mum I am aware that this sounds very elitist. If you don’t have much money and most of what you have is going on bills and a roof over your head, then this can come across as being quite preachy.”

These preconceptions of sustainability bring to light the need for more cooking and story sharing, as if we look to our elders’ style of cooking across all heritages, they used all these techniques to survive in times less plentiful. This can only happen if role models from diverse ethnicities are given their

much-needed voice and accurately portrayed in the media. “We see when we are seen. Being part of the TV show Crazy Delicious on Netflix was important to me as it enabled me to tell my own story; show others excellence and inventiveness in food and food from my heritage.” explains Elainea.

Lorraine Copes is a senior leader within the hospitality sector and has set up the new not-for-profit organisation BAME in Hospitality. She echoes the need for greater visibility and appreciation of Caribbean, African and Asian foods and this means for those who cook those cuisines too. She sighs. “I have literally always had to search high and low for success stories, role models, and emerging talents, because they are not visible in the media.”

ENDING CULTURAL APPROPRIATION

Sustainability extends beyond our physical environment to our food culture. The industry should pay more credit and respect to the original cultures from where dishes are borrowed. “Our philosophy at Jikoni is one of pluralism and diversity. In the food we cook we are breaking down borders. We celebrate immigrant food and make a statement about celebrating our cultural similarities, and the intricacies of our differences,” says Ravinder.

Lorraine sees learning and development as one way of levelling the playing field for people from Black, Asian or ethnic minority backgrounds who may not be from privileged backgrounds. Her organisation aims to conduct research into greater understanding of the Black or Asian experience, without exoticising or “white-washing” their food.

Many organisations used Blackout Tuesday as a reaction to Black Lives Matter, but more is required beyond ticking boxes. The food industry needs



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELAINEA EMMOTT

to look at how it can be anti-racist every day. “Centuries of systemic racism aren’t going to go because one day you ‘woke up,’” says Elainea.

Inherently, a good sustainable food system should be founded on opportunities for all, regardless of financial and physical traits, including ethnicity and skin colour. For people to not feel marginalised, there needs to be daily recognition of the integral

role the black, Asian and minority ethnic communities’ play in food history, current cuisines and the sustainable food industry.

Mecca Ibrahim is co-founder of Women in the Food Industry



www.womeninthefoodindustry.com
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MEET THE LONDONERS HUNGRY FOR GOOD

This year's Urban Food Awards were announced virtually, but the issues battled by its Food for Good winners are very real. Kirsten Foster checks in with a few of these inspirational champions.



The annual Urban Food Awards, organised by London Food Link and the Mayor of London, celebrates people putting good food on the capital's plates. This year's Food for Good award honours those using food to bring communities together and to celebrate diversity.

EATING THE RAINBOW

The sight of a yellow pepper delights Clair Battaglino in a normal year. So you can imagine how she feels in 2020. "They're so gorgeous! I don't want to pick them." Italian-American Clair is co-coordinator of LGBTQI+-led community gardening project Rainbow Grow. Their Dalston garden brings not just colour to the inner city, but also fresh food, new skills, a sense of community and, as lockdown eases, a much-needed distraction from the Covid crisis.

The project has been a unique source of support for this community, giving people of all generations and

backgrounds an alternative place to socialise. This includes providing LGBTQI+ youth group, Project Indigo, with a meeting space and intergenerational supported gardening. "Some of the young people were really excited to be able to cook and eat something they'd grown," Clair continues. Sadly, lockdown has put this on hold. But ever hopeful, Clair is looking forward – particularly to Rainbow Grow's first mushroom, due this season. "I'm throwing the biggest party when we finally get a shiitake!"

LOOKING FOR A HOME

Usman Khalid of Walthamstow social enterprise HAVEN Coffee is also looking ahead – to next spring, when hopefully he'll have a permanent space in Walthamstow's revamped mall. Then he can feel settled, something that, as a refugee, is important to him – and to the many other refugees and migrants he helps with his coffee business. Founded

'I HOPE EVERYONE GETS UP IN THE MORNING AND DOES SOMETHING ABOUT SOMETHING THEY SEE IS NOT OKAY.'

in 2019, HAVEN Coffee runs pop-up coffee shops for workspaces and events across London. Each cup helps support refugee communities by promoting refugee artists, organising events and providing barista training to refugees.

During lockdown, Usman focused on online sales of his Fairtrade, organic, single-origin Honduran and Sumatran coffees, promoting refugee artists' work on the packaging. But as things open up again, he's looking for wholesale customers and a temporary home for HAVEN. Once that's found,



he can start planning events, like his ‘Laffucino’ comedy night, headlined by Nish Kumar, helping more marginalised people feel at home in our city.

DINNERS NOT BINNERS

“I hope everyone gets up in the morning and does something about something they see is not okay.” This challenge is laid down by possibly one of the busiest people in lockdown (and *Jellied Eel* cover star) Hadas Hagos, founder of Battersea-based waste-food rescue organisation Waste Not Want Not Battersea (WNNWB).

Hadas was described in her nomination as ‘an amazing community activist who despite challenges works tirelessly to make Waste Not Want Not Battersea the success it is.’ WNNWB has been diverting ‘unwanted’ food from local markets to people’s plates since 2017, through weekly events and workshops at community centres. Until Covid struck. Hadas reflects: “When lockdown began, I was going

to sit down but there was too much to do.” From doing a couple of shifts a week, the group were suddenly picking up produce five days a week from New Covent Garden, turning it into food aid for a massively expanded clientele, including those isolating as well as those who had always been in need. But, Hadas adds, one silver lining is that the crisis has led to stronger bonds with market traders, who have gained a deeper understanding of why the group exists – and why, in an ideal world, it wouldn’t.

RESPECT, LOVE AND CARE

Many of us have used lockdown to learn new things, but if you haven’t upskilled yourself silly yet, Migrateful has a lot to teach you. Founded in 2017 by Jess Thompson, Migrateful helps refugees and migrants to lead cooking classes (currently online), teaching their home cuisine. In return they make connections, build confidence and exchange skills. So

far 8,000 participants have taken part in almost 800 classes by 45 chef-teachers – one of whom, Noor from Pakistan, explains the difference the project makes: “Coming to this group we are not called a refugee or asylum seeker. We are called a person which means we get respect, love and care.”

This year it’s more important than ever to show ‘respect, love and care’ and what better way than how we grow, buy, sell, make and share our food.

Full list of winners at:
www.urbanfoodawards.org



@RainbowGrow
@haven_coffee
@wastenotproject
@migratefulUK

PHOTOS: USMAN (LEFT) AND HADAS (RIGHT)
BY MILES WILLIS

A BETTER MEAL DEAL

Hot food provision for the elderly and vulnerable has never been more necessary than since the outbreak of coronavirus. The challenge was risen to admirably – but with lockdown easing, what happens now? Ellie Costigan explores.



Meals on wheels are a vital part of adult social care – not just in terms of the provision of food for those who can't cook for themselves, but for the sociability and connectedness they bring to many isolated disabled and older adults across London. While the precise number who require or would benefit is unknown, Sustain estimates that roughly 200,000 people in Greater London fall into this category.

MEALS WITHOUT WHEELS

Despite this obvious need, council run meals on wheels services have reduced drastically in recent years, leaving many at risk of hunger and malnutrition. Then, coronavirus hit. Older adults and many with health conditions were advised to 'shield', while others were advised or felt it necessary to keep contact with others to a minimum. "It was terrifying. It made us realise how stripped back our support systems and safety nets are," says Morven Oliver-Larkin, London Food Poverty Campaigner at Sustain.

HEALTHY MEAL APPEAL

Inspiringly, Mutual Aid groups sprung up across the country and many organisations pivoted their offering to help address the critical need to get

healthy meals to those who needed it. "It was a real lifeline for people," adds Nynke Brett of Made in Hackney, which at its peak was providing 500 meals a day to residents across the borough. "The way that people came together to address that need was humbling and very touching. Communities showed real resilience." Social enterprise and Urban Food Award winner London Independent Living service (LILS) was already providing hot food delivery, and so could quickly shift a gear. "We saw a dramatic increase in meal numbers, with a 70% increase during the first month of lockdown," explains Bronagh Stewart at LILS.

POST PANDEMIC WELFARE

But as lockdown eased, the kitchens and spaces used during lockdown resumed their usual purpose, and volunteer numbers dropped as people returned to their day jobs. Yet the reality is, even without Covid, wider scale and further reaching services are desperately needed. "It's essential that meals on wheels services are integrated with social services and there are welfare checks. That can be tricky for new groups if they don't have the skills or connections," Morven continues. "We need legislation that ensures money is ring fenced—not

'THE WAY THAT PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THAT NEED WAS HUMBLING AND VERY TOUCHING. COMMUNITIES SHOWED REAL RESILIENCE.'

loads, just enough so that all older or vulnerable adults can access at least one hot meal per day."

"A new, pan-London (and national) settlement for meals on wheels is much needed," adds Bronagh, "as is long-term investment in sustainable solutions to food insecurity, in which meals on wheels plays a valuable role."

To help play a part in getting hot food to those who need it, sign up to volunteer via Made in Hackney website.

@Made_In_Hackney
@foodpoverty_uk

#mealsonwheels



PHOTO COURTESY OF LONDON INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE

RADICAL RETAILERS

We know that to eat sustainably, we should buy food that is local and has minimal impact on the environment. However, one part of the chain often overlooked is the retailers we're buying from. Here Emma Weatherill explores a new way to shop.



PHOTO JEAN BERGIN, LOCAL GREENS BY JONNY HEIGH

How do we know if the shops we use are ethical? A new network of Better Food Traders has found a way to assure standards and asks hard questions on our behalf.

The roots of the network are in veg box schemes. In 1993 Julie Brown and friends set up what was to become Growing Communities, getting 30 households signed up to buy produce from an organic farm in Buckinghamshire. "These were the early days of box schemes," says Julie. "It really felt very subversive to be unloading vegetables fresh from the farm at 6am right under the nose of the local Sainsbury's!" Since then Julie has helped other box schemes start up around the country. More recently, she noticed that enterprises seem isolated and needed a way to amplify their voices. And so, the idea for Better Food Traders was born.

THE ROLE OF RETAILERS

While we may think buying food direct from the farmer is the perfect solution for traceability, Julie argues the person in the middle has an important role; while the traders focus on what they are good at doing – sourcing, logistics and marketing – the farmer is freed up

to do what they do best: growing food.

Natasha Soares leads the Better Food Traders (BFT) network. "Like many people in the UK, I pick most of my food from a shelf rather than a field. A supermarket offers a one stop shop and choice but at a cost to our communities, our farmers and our planet." BFT accreditation helps people buy food with the confidence they are making an ethical choice. Jean Bergin, who runs Local Greens, feels the benefits run both ways. "We are very proud to be members of the network. This support and recognition for retailers doing the right thing fills a gap in the sustainable food movement."

SETTING THE STANDARD

While rooted in organic, the BFT principles are set far and above any single certification. Retailers signing up need their produce to be seasonal, healthy, sustainable, fairly-traded, low carbon, regeneratively farmed and "kind to people", which sets the bar high. Their ethos is that food should be good for the planet, our communities and for our bellies.

Currently there are 10 Better Food Traders serving 3,902 customers, with six in London. Many are seeing

customer numbers jump during lockdown, as this model of trading proved much more reliable than traditional routes in a crisis. And while currently their accreditation only covers fruit and veg schemes, it is set to expand to other retailers, such as markets, very soon.

@betterfoodtraders



JOIN THE BETTER FOOD MOVEMENT

Buy from a Better Food Trader including Crop Drop (Haringey), Enfield Veg Co., Growing Communities (Hackney), Lee Greens (Lewisham), Local Greens (Lambeth), Sutton Community Farm (Sutton).

www.betterfoodtraders.org

GROWING PLACES

When coronavirus hit, many Londoners stepped up to grow food for those who needed it. Enter Community Harvest – helping gardens grow fresh produce for their local communities. Ayesha Badat and Ellie Costigan find out more.



If there's one good thing that can be said to have come out of Covid, it's the inspiring number of people who pulled together to do what they could to make the best of a bad situation. Volunteers signed up in force across the capital to support their communities, not least in the form of gardeners and growers making the most of green spaces to help feed those in need.

In response to this surge in enthusiasm, Capital Growth launched Community Harvest, with funding from The A Team Foundation, providing gardens with soil, seeds and equipment, alongside training and mentoring. Those running the gardens were given a helping hand with the logistics and to connect with mutual aid and community groups such as food banks, lunch clubs and cook ups, as well as directly with local families.

SCHOOL'S OUT

One such garden was Surrey Docks Farm, whose Young Farmers' programme sees eight to 14-year-olds grow their own food from seed, using organic methods, on a farm in Southwark. "As the site has been closed due to the pandemic, the

'THE COMMUNITY GARDEN NOT ONLY PROVIDES RESIDENTS WITH FRESH, HEALTHY FOOD, IT HELPS PEOPLE LEARN ABOUT WHERE FOOD COMES FROM, AND ENHANCES WELLBEING AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT'

produce the young people sowed in March has been cared for and harvested during the lockdown by the youth manager," Gemma Hooper explains. "All of the food grown on the youth allotment was donated back to the young farmers' families, during what proved a difficult time for many of them. We've been really touched by the families who have collected produce and shared it with other local families they know who are in more need at the moment."

BLOOMING COMMUNITY SPIRIT

This sense of community was shared not just among those receiving food, but those growing it. "We joined forces with the Victoria Park gardeners, who said we could donate their produce for the project," explains Zainab Hazel of Cordwainers Grow, which has been donating produce to Akwaaba refugee social centre throughout lockdown. One of the benefits of initiatives such as these is they avoid the stigma that can be associated with receiving 'handouts', as often beneficiaries are involved in growing produce. "The community garden not only provides residents with fresh, healthy food, it helps people learn about where food comes from, and enhances wellbeing and community spirit," agrees Cath Raitt of the Palace Road Estate Residents' Association community garden, which is run by and for residents.

URBAN FOOD FUTURE

The causes of food poverty are complex and deeply rooted. While projects such as Community Harvest won't solve those issues, they shine a light on the role urban gardens



PHOTO: YOUNG FARMERS AT SURREY DOCKS FARM
BY ZOE WALDE-ALDAM

can play in providing healthy food within the capital. “We have been so impressed by the gardens, large and small, that mobilised so quickly,” says Fiona McAllister at Capital Growth. Many have grown produce at an impressive scale, too. Glengall Wharf in Peckham doubled their salad production, providing weekly produce to the Southwark Food Bank, while The Castle Climbing Centre in Hackney contributed towards a bigger effort with the National Food Service, helping cook 8,375 meals and deliver 1,350 grocery packages. The question we’re left asking is, says Fiona, “could community food growing play a more significant role in feeding London than we think?”

Given support, access to land and proper funding, “urban food growing could be one of the many jigsaw pieces needed in building a more sustainable food system,” she continues. “Initiatives like Community Harvest are starting to show us what is possible.”

@Capital_Growth
@surreydocksfarm
@CordwainersGrow



AUTUMN

As the nights draw in and the days become cooler, **Julie Smith** shows us how to prepare our gardens for winter.

Avoid bare soil in your garden: if you have no crops planned for an area and it looks like it will be just a patch of soil, plant overwintering green manure. These fast growing plants avoid nutrients being washed out with the rain, while keeping a good soil structure over winter. I like Phacelia or caliente mustard for milder climates, and field beans, forage peas or vetches if you get hard frost over winter.



Plant your garlic: Garlic is best planted around the shortest day of the year, 21st December. Plant each clove at a depth of 2.5cm and space them 15cm apart in good quality, soft soil with plenty of compost. I like Early Purple Wight and Germidour. Your garlic will be ready to harvest around the longest day of the year, 21st June. A good source of seed bulbs is Tamar Organics.

Protect your cabbages: be wary of hungry pigeons in the winter! Cover your prized cabbages with a net or a fruit cage to avoid disappointment. Make sure the top and sides of your plants don’t touch the net, otherwise they will be pecked.

Plant your bare root trees and bushes: dig a wide hole (much wider than the root ball of your tree/bush), then drop the plant in, add some mycorrhizal fungi (a naturally occurring fungi that lives in symbiosis with plants and increase their root’s reach), and fill the hole with a mix of the soil you took out and good quality compost. While you fill the hole, gently shake the tree to avoid any big air holes. Once filled in, heel the soil in by walking on it, and mulch with a thick layer of woodchip. Water only if the temperature is above freezing point.

www.sowandgrow.net

Want to perfect your growing skills or start growing your own? Check out Capital Growth’s seasonal workshops, with discounts for London Food Link supporters.
www.capitalgrowth.org

THE GREEN RESTAURANT REVOLUTION

Along with many other parts of the food industry, restaurants were hit hard by Covid-19. Ellie Costigan looks at how London's most socially and environmentally conscious eateries are putting sustainability at the centre of their Covid recovery.

"The common thread is, it's been a nightmare," says Tom Tanner of the Sustainable Restaurants Association (SRA) with a dark laugh. "Some of our restaurants hunkered down – furloughed their staff and sat tight. Others couldn't afford to do that." As Covid hit and restaurants were forced to close almost overnight – with staff to pay, and suppliers and rent to consider – a dark cloud descended over the hospitality industry. While the impact of lockdown shouldn't be understated, what seemed a catastrophically bleak picture back in March inspired impressive creativity from many. Make-aways, takeaways and veg boxes became the order of the day, while others dedicated their efforts to feeding frontline workers.

TIME TO REFLECT

When restaurants were given the green light to reopen, the response was similarly mixed. "Some were chomping at the bit to open and

made plans for new ways of doing things; others, those with a small space or for whom Covid had taken too much of a toll, did not reopen." Hawksmoor—which offered 'Hawksmoor at home' and barbecue boxes during lockdown, as well as working with Magic Breakfast and Action Against Hunger among others to help get food to the UK's vulnerable—opened cautiously, one restaurant at a time, with reduced capacity and socially distanced tables. Others took the opportunity to reflect on the sort of restaurant they wanted to be. "It was a real opportunity to restart," says Tredwells' Chantelle Nicholson.

VEG CENTRIC MENUS

For Chantelle, that meant a chance to refurb—DIY style. Filing cabinets were upcycled into planters; tables were sanded and painted. The menu underwent a refresh too. "We completely scaled back, made it more

'WE COMPLETELY SCALED BACK, MADE IT MORE PLANT-BASED'

plant-based. We wanted to take this time to evaluate and see how we could be more sustainable." Tredwells' approach was one the SRA was wholly on board with. "We advised our members to review their menus. A lengthy menu with lots of different dishes, ingredients and suppliers is challenging for a restaurant with fewer staff, less money and reduced covers," Tom explains. "Slim it down and put fantastic seasonal, local produce centre stage. Focus on the most popular dishes and switch to veg-based menus—for sustainability reasons, but also because the cost is lower and the return is higher."

While many have been hard hit economically, there is evidence





to suggest customers are more interested than ever in local and sustainable food, says Tom. “So talk about it. Champion it and be proud of it. Help customers eat their way to a better food future and use their appetite wisely.”

A TASTE FOR WASTE

Of course, challenges remain—not just in terms of maximising revenue in restaurants with reduced capacity, but in terms of what the ‘new normal’ means for sustainability, particularly in terms of food waste and packaging. “Olio redistributed 85 tonnes of food waste between April and August,” says Tom. “A lot was rescued and redistributed, but sadly a lot ended up in the bin.” With unpredictable footfall and the continued problem of ‘no shows’ making it hard to plan, this remains tricky. “But our restaurants are doing their best to reopen right.”

Doug McMaster of Silo shares Tom’s concerns. “Unfortunately,

we are now further behind with plastic pollution than we’ve been in a long time, as everything has to be single-use,” he laments. “I do however believe that the pandemic has brought people together, causing a wave of belief in fighting for what’s right. I’m hopeful change will happen.” Imogen Davis, co-founder of Native, agrees. “I feel concerned that the progress to becoming a more sustainable industry has been undone,” she adds. “There is a need to ensure we eliminate the risks of Covid, but with a little imagination, this could still be achieved with sustainability in mind.”

Indeed, already we’re seeing a fightback, with compostable packaging company Vegware teaming up with Paper Round to ensure its customers can dispose of their packaging sustainably, and the rise of the #contactlesscoffee movement. “It sounds simple, but these little things add up,” Tom enthuses. “It’s

not rocket science to find ways round this kind of stuff. It may be that for a short period we take a step back, but hopefully it’s a temporary one before moving forward again.”

Find out what good food restaurants are opening by checking our [Good Food Map](#) and [SRA listings](#)

www.goodfoodmap.org
www.foodmadegood.org

@LondonSilo
@EatnativeUK
@Tredwells



PHOTO: DOUG AND THE TEAM AT SILO
BY XAVIER BUENDIA

THE DINNER LADIES



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DINNER LADIES

Excited to meet a whole new type of dinner lady, **Abi Aspen Glencross** headed down to Putney Embankment for a ‘Supper at Sea’.

For me, the words ‘dinner ladies’ conjure up memories of women wearing hairnets, ladles in hand, serving up hot school meals of rice pudding with jam and potato smileys. These ‘dinner ladies’ are very different. Lily Cai and Emily Plunket founded the bespoke events and catering company in 2015, cooking up food inspired by flavours from around the globe while championing British suppliers.

They have shown extreme kindness and resilience in the face of Covid-19, converting to online

deliveries offering whole tarts, picnics and breakfast boxes. They also set up a meal service using their kitchen to cook food for key workers and those in need.

Lucky for us they host regular supperclubs, and on a warm August evening we attended their ‘Supper at Sea’ dinner at the London Rowing Club HQ on Putney Embankment.

The first stop on the magical mystery ride was oysters with a ginger granita. The cold fiery granita cut through the salty oysters refreshingly well.

Chilled fennel and grapefruit soup with crab gougère (little cheese choux buns) was to be our second course. The grapefruit provided a tart lift, while the crab-filled choux gave a pleasant salty tickle on the tongue.

A delicately interesting take on tartare with mackerel came next, followed by crowd-pleasing fish tacos.

The final savory course was red mullet laksa with mussels and aubergine puree. Inspired by Dinner Ladies sous chef Nikika, the authentic laksa paste gave the curry a gorgeous punch.

For dessert, the ladies did not disappoint with a coconut ice cream with mango coulis and a sweet brown butter crumble. Cool, sweet, tangy, fruity and crunchy.

After dinner we had a chat with the ladies about their fish sourcing. They expressed gratitude to their sustainability focused fishmonger James Knight, who sends monthly Marine Stewardship Council reports. The ladies opted for predominantly British fish. It worked well. Sustain’s Sustainable Fish Cities co-ordinator Ruth Westcott said: “Oysters and mussels are some of the most sustainable fish you can eat” but for some fish like red mullet you might need to dive in for more information.

This was our first dinner since the start of Covid, and what a dinner it was. Great hospitality, incredible cooking and the perfect setting. At £35 with a welcome drink included, the price was perfect for a ‘little bit fancy’ date night. Alternatively, you can try one of their online picnic hampers.

Visit Sustainable Fish Cities at www.sustainweb.org/sustainablefishcity to check the sustainability of the fish you are eating.

www.dinnerladiesltd.com
[@Dinner_Ladies](https://www.instagram.com/Dinner_Ladies)



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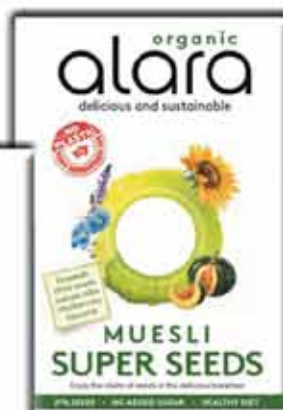
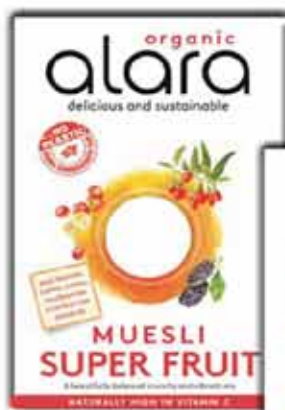
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