

Celebrate St David's Day and the arrival of Spring!



The first of March is the feast day of St David, the patron saint of Wales. In Wales and all over the world, Welsh men and women gather together and celebrate St David and all things Welsh through concerts, dinner and processions.

For many other people, St David's Day has come to symbolise the beginning of Spring: longer days, some warm sunshine and the cheering sight of daffodils in bloom.

Historic tales suggest that St David was a vegetarian who ate only bread, herbs and vegetables and who just drank water. For this reason he is known as the patron saint of vegetarians and vegans!

So, to help you celebrate St David's Day and the early days of Spring we've put together some delicious heart-warming vegetarian recipes.

Enjoy some freshly baked Bara Brith or a traditional Welsh Pancake – a Crempog. Often given to newly arrived family and friends, these quick tasty treats are sure to bring back many happy memories – perfect with a cuppa.

If there is still a chill in the air then why not enjoy some perfect comfort food: a delicious savoury Leek & Cheese Muffin or Crumble. Let your taste buds enjoy a cwch (a warm hug) with those perfectly combined savoury flavours!



Leek and Cheese Muffins

MAKES 10, VEGETARIAN

Ingredients

- 225g/8oz self-raising flour
- 1 leek, finely sliced
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 100g/3½oz half-fat cheddar, grated
- 175ml/scant ⅓ pint semi-skimmed milk
- 1 egg
- 50ml/3 tbsp olive oil
- 10 cherry tomatoes

- 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.
- 2 In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, leek, freshly ground black pepper and cheddar and mix well.
- 3 In a separate bowl, mix together the milk, egg and olive oil. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients and mix well.
- 4 Grease ten muffin moulds and half-fill each with the mix.
- 5 Prick each cherry tomato – this stops them popping when they cook – and press one tomato into the top of each spoonful of mix.
- 6 Spoon the remaining mixture over each muffin to conceal the tomato. Cook for about 20 minutes until golden brown.



Extra Special Leek Soup

SERVES 4, CAN BE VEGAN*

Ingredients

- 30ml/2 tbs vegetable oil
- 1 medium potato, peeled and very finely cubed
- 450g/1 lb leeks, washed and chopped
- 900ml/1½ pints vegetable stock
- 250g/9oz soft cheese with garlic and herbs*
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To serve:

- 4 slices white bread
- 100g/4oz soft cheese with garlic and herbs*

To garnish:

- Chopped chives

*For vegans use dairy-free soft 'cheese' such as Swedish Soft or Tofutti

1 Heat the oil in a large frying pan and gently cook the potato until tender.

Add the leeks, cover the pan and leave to sweat for about 5 minutes.

2 Add the vegetable stock, bring to the boil and cook for 20 minutes.

3 Put the soft cheese into a bowl. Add a few spoons of soup and blend together with a fork to make a thick, creamy consistency. Stir into the hot soup and season to taste.

4 Toast the bread on both sides and remove the crusts. Cut into bite-sized croutons and spread one side of each with soft cheese. Place on a baking sheet and pop under the grill for a few seconds until golden and bubbling.

5 Heat the soup through gently, but do not boil.

6 Ladle the soup into bowls and top each one with a few croutons. Sprinkle some chopped chives over and serve.



Leek and Cheese Crumble

SERVES 4, CAN BE VEGAN*

Ingredients

- 500g/1 lb 1½oz leeks (trimmed)
- 400ml/generous ⅔ pint light stock
- 100ml/⅙ pint single cream *or vegan cream
- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 100g/3½oz breadcrumbs (white)
- 30g/1oz skinned hazelnuts
- 2 tbsp parsley, roughly chopped
- 125g/scant 4½oz vegetarian cheese, finely grated or crumbled *or vegan cheese

1 Preheat oven to 200°C/400°F/gas mark 6.

2 Slice the leeks into circles (no thicker than 2 cm) and place in a large saucepan with the stock, cream and mustard. Cook gently for 15 minutes until starting to soften.

3 Transfer to a ceramic baking dish, saving 2 or 3 tbsp of the stock mixture.

4 Place the breadcrumbs, nuts and parsley in a food processor and whizz together until finely chopped.

5 Scatter the crumble and cheese over the leeks and drizzle the remaining stock mixture over the top. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes until starting to turn crisp and golden. If necessary, finish under the grill.



Ravishing Veggie Ribbons

SERVES 4, CAN BE VEGAN*

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 small leeks (well washed and sliced, retaining as much of the green as possible)
- 250g/scant 9oz carrots, peeled and cut with a potato peeler into 4 cm ribbons
- 150g/generous 5oz Brussels sprouts, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 large cloves garlic, crushed.
- 2 tbsp creme fraiche *or vegan cream cheese blended with a small amount of dairy-free milk and lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste, or use 1 tsp vegetable stock powder

To serve:

- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

- 1** Stir fry leeks, carrots and sliced Brussels sprouts for about 4-5 minutes until beginning to soften.
- 2** Add garlic and stir just long enough to heat through.
- 3** Add crème fraiche and plenty of salt and pepper, or use vegetable stock powder instead. Stir to heat through again. The crème fraiche will make a light sauce.
- 4** Serve hot, sprinkled with lots of chopped parsley.

Photo and recipe courtesy of The Vegetarian Society www.vegsoc.org



Welsh Crempog (Welsh Pancakes)

VEGETARIAN

Welsh crempog (also known as Ffroes) differ from the British/French crêpe. They're more like American pancakes and bigger than Scotch pancakes, and often served stacked in a pile and smothered with butter. The stack can be sliced like a wedge of cake and eaten as a teatime treat.

Ingredients

- 2oz/55g butter
- 15 fl oz/450 ml warm buttermilk
- 10oz/275g all purpose/plain flour
- 3oz/75g sugar
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- 2 eggs, well beaten

1 Stir the butter into the warmed buttermilk until melted.

2 Gradually pour the milk and butter into the flour, beating well.

3 Leave the mixture to stand for at least 30 minutes (or a few hours if possible) before stirring in the sugar, bicarbonate of soda, salt and vinegar.

4 Add the eggs and beat well until smooth.

5 Drop the batter, a tablespoon at a time, onto a heated, greased griddle or frying pan, and cook over a moderate heat until golden brown on both sides.

6 Keep the crempog warm and continue this method until all the batter is used up.

7 Spread butter on each pancake and eat while warm. Jam, banana, syrup, currants or even a chocolate drizzle are optional!

Bara Brith

MAKES 1 LOAF, VEGETARIAN

Bara Brith translates to 'speckled bread': it's a rich fruit tea loaf that's popular all over Wales. Serve it sliced and buttered.

Ingredients

- 450g/1lb mixed, dried fruit
- 300ml/½ pint cold black tea
- 175g/6oz dark brown sugar
- 1 medium free-range egg
- 1 tbsp orange zest
- 2 tbsp orange juice
- 1 tbsp honey
- 450g/1lb self-raising flour
- 1 tsp mixed spice
- Extra honey for glazing

1 Put the mixed dried fruit into a mixing bowl. Pour over the tea, cover and leave to soak overnight.

2 The next day mix together the sugar, egg, orange juice, zest and honey. Add to the fruit.

3 Sift in the flour and mixed spice, and mix well.

4 Pour the mixture into a buttered loaf tin and bake at 160°C/325°F/gas mark 3 for about 1¾ hours. The loaf should be golden in colour and firm to the touch in the middle. Baste with honey while still warm.

5 Allow to cool thoroughly before storing in a cake tin.



For more festive recipes, please visit
www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk/recipes



How can Vegetarian for Life support you?

Vegetarian for Life is a charity that supports older vegetarians and vegans and those who cater for them.

A quick visit to our website www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk will show you the scope of our work and the wide range of helpful resources that we can offer you. These include:

- UK List of veg-friendly care homes
- Catering and healthy-living guides
- Nutritional advice
- Charitable grants to aid independent living and respite care
- Subsidised caterer training for UK List members.

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