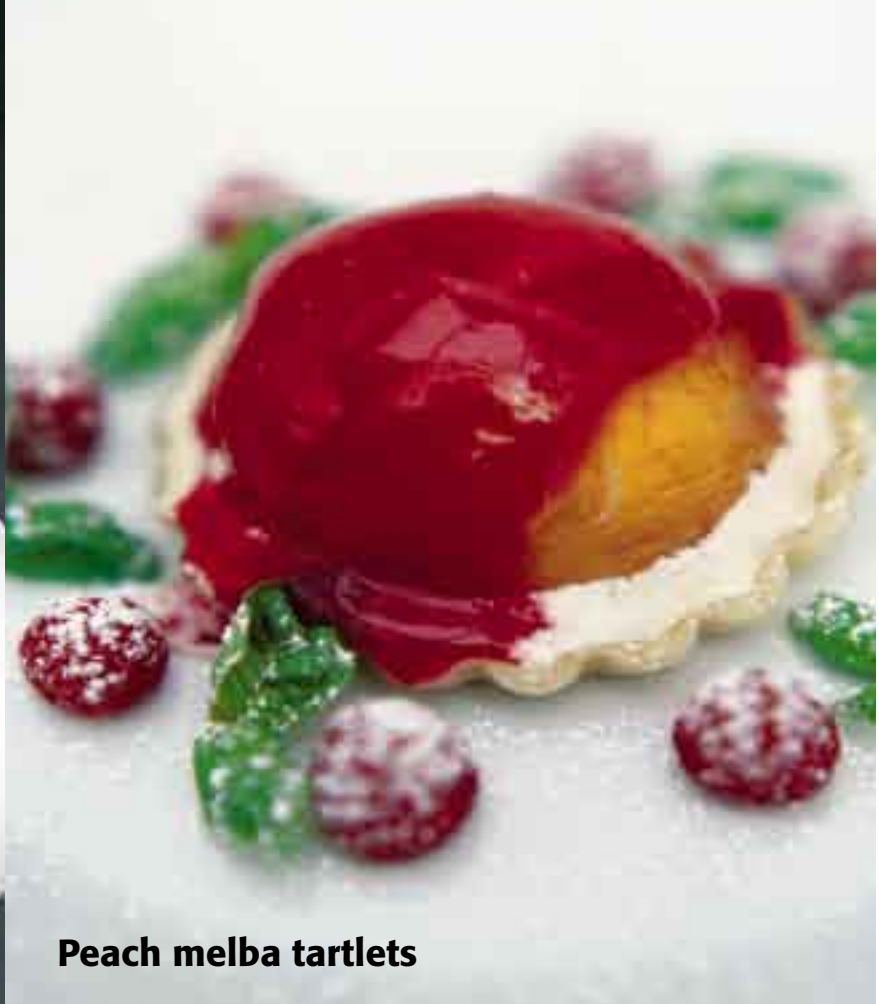




Risotto of spring vegetables

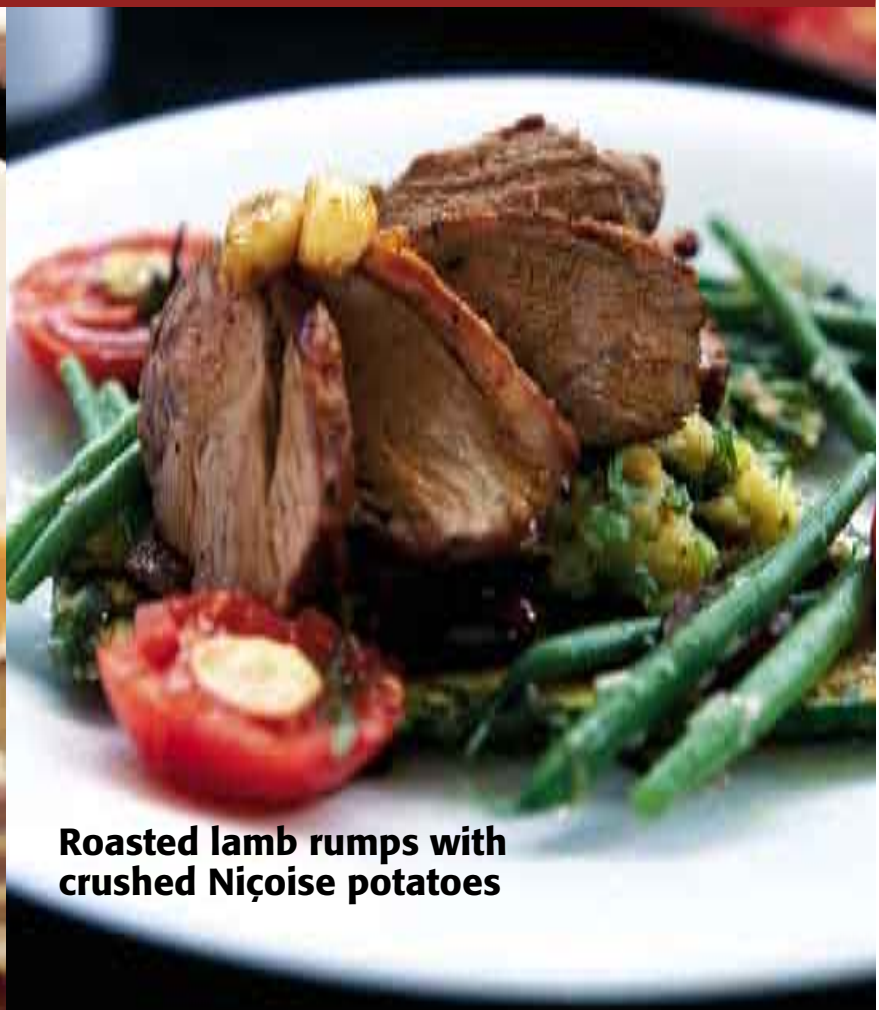


Peach melba tartlets

www.bbcgoodfoodme.com



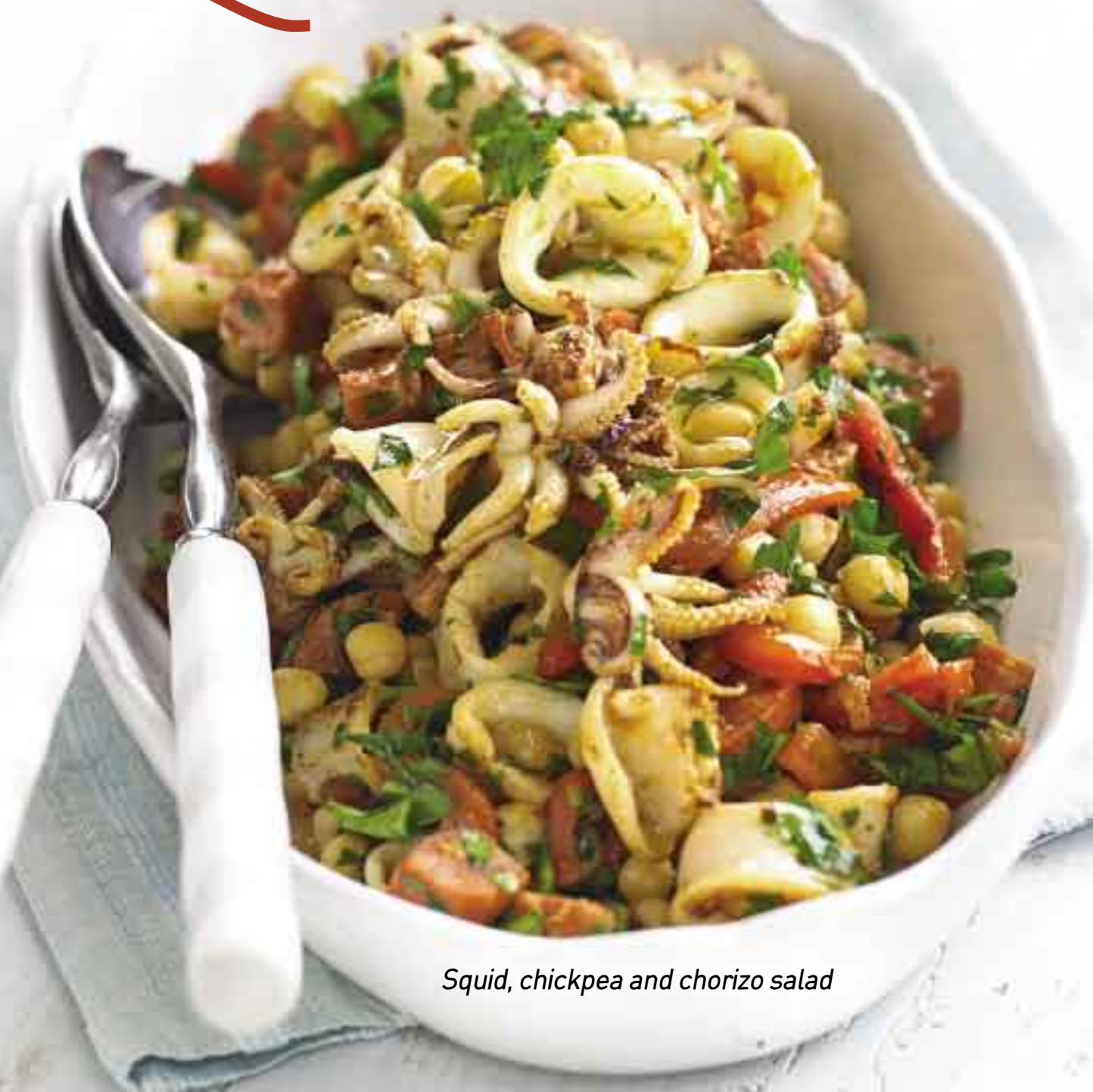
Shallot tatin with goat's cheese



**Roasted lamb rumps with
crushed Niçoise potatoes**

Buy the best SQUID

Found in every ocean, squid is the most widely available seafood in the world and one of the cheapest. CJ Jackson explains why we should make more of it
Photographs DAVID MUNNS



Squid, chickpea and chorizo salad

Although popular around the world, it is only in recent years that squid – or calamari, as it is also known – has gained recognition as an inexpensive ingredient. It is classified as shellfish, forming part of the cephalopod group, which includes cuttlefish and octopus. Like its close relations, if cooked properly it will reward you with a delicious firm texture and sweet flavour.

Is it sustainable?

There are numerous species of squid, some of which are caught in the north-east Atlantic and, with a few exceptions, are in plentiful supply and are often under-used. They grow quickly, which is a key point for sustainability.

How to buy the best

Many supermarkets sell squid ready-prepared – saving you loads of effort. Freezing has little effect on the texture and flavour but, if the squid has been frozen at any stage, there will be a note to indicate this. Frozen fish of any kind can often be fresher than buying fresh as it is prepared and frozen within hours of being caught. You'll often see squid in frozen, pre-cooked seafood mix.

Good-quality squid, whether fresh or frozen, should have virtually no aroma. If it is unprepared it will have a delicate purple, brownish membrane, which often comes loose when it is jostled about in a box on ice. A key indicator of quality and freshness is the colour and texture of the main body of the squid: it should be pearly white with no hint or tinge of pink.

If buying battered or breaded squid rings, these will be ready-prepared – just check the 'use-by' date before purchase.

Preparing squid

If you buy a whole squid, the fishmonger will separate the tentacles from the head or 'tube'

(the term used to describe the main body of the squid). Eyes, ink sac and beak are also removed and the tentacles trimmed. The membrane covering the squid is pulled away, revealing white flesh underneath. The tentacles can also be eaten, as can the fins or wings, which form part of the head.

If purchasing squid 'tubes' ready-prepared, you have several options: leave them whole for a braise or stew, cut the tube into rings or open the tube out flat into a sheet.

For some recipes, the squid flesh can be scored, as it helps to ensure even cooking and looks attractive. Lay the squid flat on the chopping board (aim to score the outside of the squid that once held the membrane), and score it with a sharp knife marking a diamond pattern, slanting the knife at an angle to avoid cutting right through.

For cooking on the barbecue or easy pan-frying, leave the squid in one large sheet or 'steak'. For quick flash-frying, stir-frying or poaching, cut the scored sheet into pieces.

Cooking squid

The golden rule is to either cook squid for seconds or hours – but never in-between, otherwise it will become tough. Whole squid tubes can be stuffed and braised for a couple of hours in a low oven, or rings can be stewed in tomato-based sauces until tender.

Alternatively, squid can be stir-fried, barbecued, poached, steamed or dipped in batter and deep-fried. The essential key to quick cooking is to remember that squid is done in a flash, often requiring just a few seconds in a hot pan or liquid. The moment squid loses its translucency, turning white and opaque, it is cooked. It doesn't take long for the heat from a hot pan to penetrate through to the middle.



Squid, chickpea and chorizo salad

SERVES 6-8 with other dishes • PREP 40 mins
COOK 20 mins Moderately easy P

4 red peppers

2 x 400g cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained

huge bunch parsley, roughly chopped

1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

100ml/3½fl oz olive oil

600g/1lb 5oz cleaned squid, sliced into rings, tentacles kept whole

200g/8oz cooking chorizo, cut into chickpea-size chunks

juice and zest 1 large lemon

1 Cook the peppers whole under a grill, on a barbecue or griddle, until completely charred. Place the peppers in a bowl, cover with a plate until cool enough to handle, then peel, deseed and finely slice. In a large bowl mix the peppers and any juices with the chickpeas, parsley, chilli and garlic. Set aside.

2 Heat a large frying pan until smoking. Working quickly and carefully, add a splash of oil to the pan, then the squid. Stir-fry for about 30 secs. Scatter the chorizo over the squid, continue to cook for 30 secs more, then tip into the bowl with the peppers. Season everything with salt and pepper, then dress with the remaining oil, lemon juice and lemon zest. Mix together, pile onto a platter and let everyone help themselves.

PER SERVING (6) 443 kcalories, protein 29g, carbohydrate 22g, fat 27g, saturated fat 5g, fibre 5g, sugar 8g, salt 1.23g

To cook on the barbecue

Mix the peppers and chickpeas as stated, and fry the chorizo in a frying pan. Barbecue the squid tubes whole, then remove and slice into rings (watch out, they will be hot) before tossing through the salad.



WHY BUY SQUID?

- It is readily available all year round
- Great for the BBQ and summer eating
- Can be bought ready-prepared
- Quick and versatile to cook

HEALTHY BENEFITS

Squid is an excellent source of the immune-supportive mineral selenium, a lack of which has been linked with heart disease and cancer. It also supplies useful quantities of iodine which, with selenium, supports the thyroid and is vital for a healthy metabolism.

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