

21st November 2020

Vegan Winter Recipes Launched to Celebrate 'In Season' British Leeks

With the number of vegans in the UK set to hit over 2 million* by the end of 2020, demand for inspiring, seasonal, but cost effective vegan recipes is rising too. With leeks now at the peak of their season, the British Leek Growers Association has teamed up with vegan chef and nutritionist Julie Cleijne of Sustainable Food Consultants, to create a suite of delicious, new vegan recipes with leeks at their heart.

The newly created vegan recipes, which all feature British Leeks and range from store cupboard staples to celebratory indulgences include:

- A leek-based vegetable stock
- Leek pesto
- Leek, Potato & Cavolo Nero soup
- Glamorgan Mini Wellingtons
- Leek Wantons
- Leek 'heart' and spelt grain winter salad
- Leek Apple & Celeriac Christmas Wreath

Julie Cleijne says: "British leeks are one of the Country's most nutritious and yet under used and appreciated vegetables...until now. If there has been one silver lining to the pandemic, it has been to bring these nutritious, delicious and versatile vegetables centre stage and we've seen sales of leeks jump by 15.6% this year.

As one of the few indigenous British vegetables to be 'in season' throughout the winter months we really should be eating more of them, to reduce air miles, boost immunity and save the pennies. The recipes I've created are not only strong on flavour, they're easy on the pocket too with the cost per serving from as little at 0.48p.

Stewart Aspinall, Leek farmer and British Leek Growers Association chairman added, "The Coronavirus pandemic has made us all more aware of our health, while many consumers are starting to feel the pinch as the recession begins to bite. With research showing that those who eat meat spend £645 extra on food per year, compared to those on a meat-free diet and 35% of Britons saying they make a point of having a meat-free day or days each week, they has never been more demand for accessible, tasty and nutritious vegan recipes.

Easier to digest than onions, leeks have laxative, antiseptic, diuretic and anti-arthritis properties. A source of inulin, they are also a natural prebiotic, so great for gut health. Leeks contain one eighth of an adults daily potassium requirement, so encouraging the efficient functioning of kidneys.

Containing the equivalent of one eighth of an adult's daily potassium requirement, leeks encourage the efficient functioning of kidneys and are effective as a diuretic. Leeks are a very good source of manganese and vitamin B6, vitamin C, folate and iron. These nutrients all work together in the body to stabilise blood sugar by slowing down the absorption of sugars from the intestinal tract. Research has shown that eating leeks regularly can help protect against cancer, particularly, prostate, colon and stomach cancer. Quercetin, an antioxidant present in the Allium family, is recognised as a cancer-blocking compound.

-Ends-

Notes to the editor

High resolution recipe photography available from: carole@pendlepr.com

Facts about vegans

- Vegans and vegetarians look set to make up a quarter of the British population in 2025
- A record number of 400,000 Brits signed up to Veganuary in 2020
- The plant-based food market in the UK is worth £1.8 billion
- 10% of British children aged eight to 16 are vegan or vegetarian
- Those who eat meat spend £645 extra a year on food, compared to those on a meat-free diet
- Vegetarian and vegan product sales are expected to increase to £658m by 2021
- 50% of Brits said they know someone who is vegan
- 35% of British consumers say they make a point of regularly having meat-free days
- The number of vegan residents in UK care homes has almost trebled in the five years to 2019
- The UK was the most popular country for veganism in 2019
- Nearly one in four products launched in the UK carried a vegan claim in 2019
- Brighton was the most popular British city for veganism in 2019, followed by Bristol, Norwich and Cardiff

Research conducted by: The Vegan Society and Finder 2020

https://www.finder.com/uk/uk-dietrends?_ga=2.159763325.1980977180.1566535152-2100258465.1565068082

<https://www.vegansociety.com/news/media/statistics#vegandietintheuk>

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Appendix I

Leek Vegetable Stock

Makes approx. 1 litre of stock

Stock ingredients

- 1 tbsp of rapeseed oil
- 2 tbsp of margarine (vegan, dairy-free)
- 1 small onion, finely sliced
- Leek leaves, finely sliced – about 6 tbsp
- 1 stick celery, finely sliced
- 1 medium carrot, finely sliced
- 1 clove garlic, halved
- Water
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme
- Small handful of fresh parsley
- 1/2 tsp crushed black peppercorns

Stock Method

- In a large saucepan heat the oil and margarine or butter over a low heat.
- Add all the chopped vegetables and cook gently until they have sweated down, and starting to colour – approx. 10 minutes
- Add enough water to just cover the vegetables by a few centimetres.
- Bring to the boil then, using a ladle, remove the top layer of scum which rises to the top of the pan.
- Turn down the heat to a very low simmer.
- Add bay leaves, thyme, parsley and the crushed peppercorns.
- Gently simmer on the lowest heat for approx. 1 hour. Top up with water if it is getting too dry at any point.
- You can keep the stock for 3–5 days in the fridge, or freeze it for up to 6 months

Leek Leaf Pesto

- 5 tbsp leek green leaves, chopped super fine
- 6 to 8 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- ¼ cup pine nuts, or walnuts, or pecans or pistachios
- ¼ tsp sea salt
- 1-2 grinds of black pepper
- 1 lemon – (1 tbsp lemon juice) - optional
- 1 ½ cups basil leaves and stems, roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp chopped parsley leaves and stems, roughly chopped

Method

- Heat a little of the oil in a fry pan and gently sauté the chopped leek leaves over a medium to low heat for 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.
- Peel the garlic, and crush with a pinch of sea salt. Add to a food processor or blender and pulse until fine.
- Roughly chop the basil and parsley.
- Add the, basil, parsley salt, pepper, sautéed leek leaves, and nuts to the garlic and blend again.

- Drizzle in some of the oil – you will need some to bind the sauce and get it mixing to the right consistency.
- Season with salt and black pepper. Now taste, and keep adding a bit more oil or salt & pepper until you are happy with the taste and consistency.
- Add a squeeze of lemon juice at the end to give it a little zest, but it's not essential. Will keep in the fridge for a week, more as long as it is submerged in oil.

Leek, potato & cavolo nero soup – made with leek vegetable stock, and topped with potato rose centre

Serves 2-4

Cost per serve = £0.72 for 2 people, or £0.48 for 3 people

Soup Ingredients

- 15g margarine (vegan, dairy-free)
- 2.5 leeks – whites (approx. 250g), washed and sliced lengthways, and then into half-moons. (Save the green leaves for the vegetable stock, and leek 'hearts' for Leek heart & Spelt salad)
- 190g waxy potatoes – e.g. Charlotte, Maris Peer, or Jersey Royals, peeled and cut into cubes
- Sea salt
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 750ml vegetable stock (bouillon, or use the leek leaf vegetable stock (see separate recipe)
- 100g cavolo nero
- 2 tbsp coconut cream (vegan, dairy-free)
- White pepper
- Chilli flakes (optional)

Soup method

- First make the leek vegetable stock (see separate recipe).
- Melt the margarine or butter in a large saucepan over a low heat.
- Add the leeks, chopped potatoes and a pinch of salt, then cook over a gentle heat for 10 minutes, or until the leeks have softened.
- Add the garlic and cook for approximately 1 minute.
- Pour in the stock. Simmer on low heat for 10-12 minutes, and until the potatoes have softened.
- Add the cavolo nero and cook just until it has wilted, approx. 2-3 minutes.
- Using a handheld stick blender, blend until smooth. If adding cream, stir in the coconut cream or crème fraiche. Add more stock if you like your soup not too thick.
- Season to taste with white pepper, and salt
- Divide the soup between serving bowls, and top with the potato rose centre (see separate recipe).
- Top with a sprinkling of chilli flakes, if desired.

Potato rose

Potato rose ingredients

- 1 large potato, peeled and sliced into super fine round slices using a mandolin, or a knife
- 3 tbsp of margarine (vegan, dairy-free)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper

Potato rose method

- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius
- Melt 2 tbsp of the margarine or butter over a gentle heat
- Place the thinly sliced potatoes in a bowl
- Add the melted margarine or butter and toss the potatoes until they are all coated
- Add salt & pepper
- Toss potatoes again, until mixed through
- Lightly grease a muffin tray with the remaining margarine or butter
- Lay the slices of potato one on top of the other into a muffin hole, layering up until they reach the top
- Bake in the oven until they are golden, about 30-40 minutes

Glamorgan mini Wellingtons, with celeriac and potato mash with leek leaves, crispy cavalo nero

Makes 6 mini Wellingtons

Cost per serve (just the Wellingtons, not the side dishes) = £1.09

Mini Wellington Ingredients

- 6 tbsp margarine (dairy-free/vegan)
- 175g leek, shredded – white part, (save the green leaves for the celeriac and potato mash (see separate recipe)
- ½ clove garlic, crushed
- 225g breadcrumbs
- 125g Any hard grateable vegan cheese
- salt and pepper
- 1 teaspoon English mustard
- 1 heaped tbsp of fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 3 flax eggs
- 1-2 tbsp oat milk
- 6 sheets filo pastry

Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius
- Add 1 tbsp of the margarine or butter to a fry pan and sauté the leeks and garlic over a low to medium heat until softened, approx. 2-3 minutes
- Add the cooked leek and garlic to a mixing bowl
- Add the breadcrumbs, cheese, salt and pepper, mustard, and fresh parsley to the bowl with the leeks. Stir through to mix well.
- Lightly beat the eggs, and add to the bowl. (If using flax egg instead mix 3 tablespoons ground flaxseed with 6 tablespoons of water. Mix together, and let sit in the fridge for 15 minutes to set up and thicken.)
- Stir the eggs (or flax egg) through with the other ingredients until a firm dough is formed. Add a little of the milk if the mixture is a little dry. Add a little at a time, and mix through. Be sure to not add too much, as you don't want the mixture to be too wet.
- Divide the mixture into 6, and with your hands form each into a ball (just smaller than the size of a tennis ball). Put into the fridge to firm up, whilst you prepare the filo sheets
- Separate one individual filo sheet from the sheets very carefully, making sure not to tear them. Lay the individual sheet out on a flat surface.
- You now want to make the individual sheet into a square. To do this, gently take the bottom left corner of the sheet, and fold it up until the edge is level with the top edge. You will now see that there is a square, and you can now trim off the section of filo sheet that is left over by gently

running your knife along the edge of the square section. Remove the trimmed off section (you can save it for another recipe).

- Now open out the square sheet.
- Melt the remaining margarine or butter, and with a brush, or the back of a teaspoon, gently brush a thin coat of the margarine or butter over the entire top of the filo sheet
- Now place one of the formed balls of the filling mix to the centre of the filo sheet, and placing a little pressure with your hand, lightly push down just about half a centimetre.
- To form the parcel (mini wellington) gently take one of the corners of the sheet and fold it in to the centre of the ball, keeping the corners of the sheet protruding at the top. Repeat with the other corners of the sheet and then gently twist and then pinch the pastry around the top of the ball to form.
- Repeat with all remaining balls and filo sheets.
- Place on a baking tray lined with baking paper, being sure to keep up to 2 centimetres apart
- Using a brush, brush the entire outside of the sheets with the remaining margarine or butter
- Bake in the oven until they are golden and slightly crispy, about 15-20 minutes

Celeriac & potato mash, with leek leaves

Serves 2-4

Ingredients

- 350g potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 185g celeriac, peeled and cubed
- 35g margarine or butter
- 3 heaped tbsp green leek leaves, cut super fine into match stick sized pieces, then diced
- 65ml oat milk mixed with 3/4 tsp plain flour
- ½ tsp salt

Method

- Place the potatoes and water in a saucepan and boil the potatoes until tender, about 20-25 minutes, adding the celeriac 5 minutes after the potatoes.
- While the potatoes are cooking, melt the margarine or butter over a medium heat in a frying pan, add the chopped leek leaves and gently cook over a medium heat until just soft, approx. 1-1.5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.
- Once both the potatoes and celeriac are tender, drain the water from the saucepan.
- Put the saucepan back on a very low heat until any remaining water evaporates. Turn the heat off.
- Add the drained potato and celeriac to the dry saucepan and mash well with a potato masher.
- Return the pan with the cooked leeks to the hob, and warm gently on a low heat – 10-20 seconds. Add the cream (or oat milk mixed with flour) to the leeks, and stir through.
- Season with the salt and stir through
- Bring to a simmer, then cook for another few mins until the cream thickens slightly.
- Add the creamy leek leaves to the mashed celeriac and potato, and stir through until well combined, then serve.

Leek Wantons with Cauliflower

Makes approx. 5 wantons – serves 1 with a salad

Cost per serving £0.64 per person

Ingredients:

For the cauliflower 'rice':

- 1tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 large clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- ½ head of cauliflower, grated to a fine 'rice' like texture – (keep the leaves for a pesto)
- ½ tsp oregano
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Method

- Gently heat the oil in a fry pan and fry the crushed garlic over medium to low heat, until translucent
- Add the paprika and cayenne pepper to the saucepan and fry for 1 minute, to release the spices
- Add the grated cauliflower and fry over medium heat, stirring to combine with the spices. Approx. 1-2 minutes is enough. You want to make sure that the cauliflower does not become too dry.
- Add the oregano, and sea salt and stir through. Set aside to cool whilst you make the wanton wrappers.

For the leek wanton wrappers:

Ingredients

- 10 leek leaves – dark green part
- 1 – 2 leek lengths of the white part, cut in half and laid flat
- Water for blanching

Method

- You want to make sure that you separate the leek leaves so that they can be laid flat, and cut into a square, so you need to ensure each leaf still has a 'spine'. To do this, cut lengthways down the centre of the leek leaves, on one side only, along the entire length.
- Gently separate the leek leaves, and lay them as flat as possible. They will still be slightly rigid, which is okay at this point.
- Trim off any rough edges of the leaves, and discard.
- Cut the leaves into squares, approximately 8cm square.
- Prepare 2 saucepans with cold water, approximately 4 cm height of water in each.
- Boil the water in only one of the saucepans, leaving the other water cold.
- Once the water has boiled in the one saucepan, reduce the heat to a very low simmer.
- You will now very quickly blanch each square of leek leaf in the simmering water, to make them pliable enough to form into a wanton. This will take only 3-4 seconds. To do this, take 2 leek leaf squares at a time and plunge them in the boiling water for 3 seconds. Then immediately plunge them in the saucepan of cold water. Then place each on a dry board to dry out.
- Take a cloth and gently blot the excess water from the leek leaf squares.
- Repeat until all squares have been blanched. They are now pliable enough to form wantons.
- Once you have removed the excess water from the wanton wrappers you are ready to cut the ties from the white part of the leek.
- Cutting horizontally down the white part of leek, cut a thin ribbon approx. ½ cm wide. Cut the ribbon the full length of the leek. Repeat until you have enough ribbons for each of the leek leaf squares, with 1-2 extra spare, to account for any possible breakages. You want to make sure each ribbon is about 15 – 20 cm in length, and as long as possible.
- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
- With each leek leaf square lying flat on a board, ensure each is laid out like a diamond shape. Work with each individually, and take a toothpick and gently poke a small hole in the leek leaf in diagonally opposite corners of the square.

- Take a leek 'ribbon' and thread it through the right hand hole in the leek square first, towards the left hand hole. Thread it through the left hand hole, and make sure the ends of the ribbon are protruding evenly on each side.
- Now you can fill the leek leaf wanton wrapper. Using a teaspoon, take a tsp of your filling and place it in the centre of the leek leaf.
- Take the ribbon on either side of the filled leek leaf wanton wrapper and gently pull them together and tie in a single knot, then a double knot.
- Trim the excess ribbon with some scissors, so that only approx. 1-1.5 cm ends remain.
- Place the wantons on a lined baking tray and bake in the pre-heated oven, just until the leek leaf wanton is tender, approx. 6-8 minutes
- Remove and serve – serving suggestions: serve on a bed of salad, cous cous or pearl barley, with some fresh herbs and fresh vinaigrette.

Leek 'heart' and Spelt Grain Winter Salad

Serves 2

Cost per serve = £2.04 for 2 people

Ingredients - salad

- 180g spelt grain
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 12 tbsp thinly sliced leek 'hearts' – the centre light green section of the entire leek
- 2 figs
- 30g watercress, stems removed
- 1.5 tbsp crushed walnuts
- 2 tbsp crumbly vegan cheese

Method - salad

- Rinse the spelt grain under cold water. Add the rinsed spelt to a saucepan, and cover with enough cold water to cover it by at least 1.5 -2 cm. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
- Simmer until tender, approx. 45 minutes. Meanwhile prepare the leek 'hearts'.
- Cut the leek hearts lengthways, and cut into matchstick size pieces.
- Heat the oil in a fry pan over a medium heat. Add the leek hearts and sauté for 1-2 minutes until just tender. Remove immediately and set aside.
- Wash the watercress, crush the walnuts into rough pieces and crumble the cheese. Cut the figs in quarters lengthways, then cut into wedges.
- To assemble the salad - In a large bowl add the cooked spelt grain, stir through half of the pear salsa, and stir to combine.
- Add the watercress, half of the leek hearts and half of the walnuts. Stir through to combine. Divide the salad amongst 2 serving bowls. Top each bowl with the remaining leek hearts, walnuts, and finally the wedges of fig. Drizzle more of the salsa dressing over the top, and finally sprinkle the crumbly cheese over the top of the salad, and serve.

Ingredients – pear salsa dressing

- 1 tsp margarine or butter
- 2 pears, peeled and diced
- 200 ml water
- 2.5 tbsp runny honey
- ¼ tsp turmeric

- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper

Method – salsa dressing

- Melt the margarine or butter in a shallow fry pan on a low heat. Add the diced pears and cook until tender, but still firm and starting to golden.
- Mix the honey and water and add to the pears in the fry pan, and cook at a low simmer.
- Add the turmeric and cayenne pepper.
- Cook on the lowest heat until the pears are tender and the salsa sauce has reduced and thickened.

Christmas wreath – Leek, apple, celeriac, chestnuts, sage, rosemary and shallots

Serves 4 – 6

Cost per serve = £1.04 for 4 people

Ingredients

- 400g celeriac, peeled and roughly chopped
- 10 shallots
- 1 whole leek, entire leek – whites & green leaves
- 3 apples
- 4 slices bread, crusts removed
- 1.5 tbsp fresh sage leaves
- 1/2 tbsp fresh rosemary
- 7-8 chestnuts
- 1 500g block of shortcrust pastry
- Plain flour for rolling
- A little plant-based milk – we recommend oat milk
- Rosemary sprigs and dried cranberries to garnish

Method

- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius
- Place the chopped celeriac in a bowl, and drizzle with oil. Toss through the oil until each piece is lightly coated.
- Place the celeriac on a baking tray and bake in the oven until tender, about 20 minutes
- On a separate baking tray place the shallots and drizzle with oil.
- Slice the leek lengthways and lay facing up on the same baking tray as the shallots. Drizzle with oil. Place tray in the oven and bake both the shallots and leek until lightly caramelised, about 15 minutes.
- Peel the apples, remove the core, and thinly slice. Boil sliced apple in water until tender, drain well, then mash into a puree. Set aside.
- Remove the celeriac, leeks and shallots from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
- Add to a food processor or blender and pulse until a roughly textured puree.
- Break up the sliced bread roughly and add to the puree mix. Pulse a few times until the bread is mixed through. Add the apple puree, and pulse 1- 2 times.
- Add the chopped chestnuts, sage, rosemary and salt and pulse 1-2 times until mixed through. Remove and add this mixture to a bowl, ready to use to fill the wreath.
- Dust a work surface well with flour, and roll out the pastry block into a rectangle, approx. 60cm x 20cm.
- Starting one cm in from the edge of the pastry, spoon the wreath filling mixture along the length of the pastry, making sure to leave a 2cm gap at the left and right ends of the pastry.

- Fold the left and right ends in to the mixture, to stop it from coming out, then roll the pastry away from yourself to start making a long sausage shape, enclosing the filling.
- To make the long sausage a wreath, gently bring the two ends together to create a circle shape, and stick them together with a little plant-based milk.
- Carefully transfer the wreath to a baking tray lined with baking paper.
- Place in the fridge for at least 20 minutes to firm up. Can be made up to this point a day in advance and kept covered in the fridge.
- Once the wreath is chilled, heat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius.
- Cut small slashes in the top of the pastry using a sharp knife, approximately 2.5 cm apart, all around the wreath.
- Mix a little plant-based milk with some oil and brush all over the wreath, to prevent it from getting too dry, and also to help give the pastry a nice golden colour.
- Bake for 40-45 mins until golden brown.
- Leave to cool for 5 minutes, then transfer to a serving platter and decorate with rosemary sprigs and some dried cranberries.