



# Cooking with oysters

A compilation of  
**10 recipes**  
celebrating the cooked  
oyster from celebrity chefs,  
restaurateurs, professional cooks  
and seafood lovers, introduced by  
**Mat Follas, winner of MasterChef 2009**



# foreword

Moving here from my native New Zealand, I've noticed a curiously British phenomenon; traditionally, every other countries cuisine is regarded as better than our own ... French, Italian, Spanish, it's all more vibrant and exciting than ours (when I say 'ours'. I mean that although I grew up in New Zealand, I've spent most of my life here in Britain and I now consider it my home).

However, cooking in this country has changed enormously over the last 10-15 years and it is exciting and refreshing to be a part of a change in thinking, where British food is being rediscovered and embraced and can stand alongside the cuisine of any other nation. We have some of the greatest Chefs in the world (some of whom can be found in this booklet) as well as some of the best ingredients and food producers and we're right to be proud of where British cuisine is heading.

Oysters are one of the jewels of British cuisine. They are one of the wonderful ingredients we can find in abundance around our shores and have been eaten in this country for hundreds of years. They have a unique flavour which conjures the pure essence of the sea. I usually eat mine raw, with a squeeze of fresh lemon and

a drop or two of Tabasco; but when cooked, they compliment and enhance many other flavours and their delicate flesh melts in your mouth, making them the perfect ingredient for a special occasion.

This collection of Oyster recipes demonstrate the skill of some outstanding British Chefs. Chefs that I can only stand back and admire for creating dishes which not only demonstrate the versatility of Oysters, but also make them into very attainable and delicious food. This is a selection of delightful and inspirational recipes showing the versatility of the wonderful British Oyster. Try them, develop your own dishes from them, and most of all, enjoy the best of British Oysters.



Mat Follas  
Masterchef 2009 Winner  
& Proprietor of The Wild Garlic, Beaminster



theWildGarlic



# Introduction

Congratulations, you are one step closer to discovering new ways to enjoy oysters.

There is no denying that eating raw oysters is a uniquely invigorating experience.

No other food conjures up as strong a taste sensation as a bracing salty oyster: the essence of the sea in edible form.

While the oyster connoisseur may claim that cooking an oyster is blasphemy (preferring to eat them raw with nothing to overpower the delicate flavour), we believe that cooking oysters can afford different nuances, for example by intensifying the creaminess of the flesh.

There are two types of oyster readily available in the UK: the Pacific (or Rock) oyster and

the native (or Flat) oyster. Pacific oysters are available all year round but natives are only available when there is an 'r' in the month.

You can use either oyster in all these recipes and we urge you to try both varieties – they each offer different tastes and textures.

The photographs in this booklet have not been provided by the chefs who have kindly donated the recipes, but by an enthusiastic amateur cook whom we tasked with trying out the recipes. The results speak for themselves and clearly show that they are accessible to all and easy to accomplish.

Dr Tom Pickerell  
Director,  
The Shellfish Association of Great Britain.

The Fishmongers' Company is delighted to support the initiative of the Shellfish Association of Great Britain in producing this timely booklet, which we hope will encourage more people to enjoy oysters. We are keen to promote greater consumption of shellfish, including by building greater understanding of the health benefits. The booklet includes delicious recipes from both Stephen Pini,

our Executive Head Chef, and CJ Jackson, a Liveryman of the Company and Director of the highly successful Billingsgate Seafood Training School, which the Company helped establish. I hope that this guide inspires you to try cooking with this wonderful shellfish.

Nigel Cox  
Clerk, Fishmongers' Company



# Leek, celeriac and oyster broth

by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

**Serves 6**

## **Ingredients**

- 18 oysters
- 50g unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 400g celeriac, *peeled and cut into small, neat and evenly sized dice*
- 1 small potato (100g), *peeled and cut into small dice*
- 2 tender inner sticks of celery *cut into small dice*
- 1 large leek, *white part only, quartered lengthways and finely sliced*
- 1 small onion, *finely diced*
- 2 garlic cloves, *very finely chopped*
- 750ml fish or shellfish stock
- ½ glass of white wine
- 100ml double cream
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Set a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the butter and olive oil.
2. Add all the chopped vegetables when butter is foaming.
3. Cook gently for 5-10 minutes, until softened but not coloured.
4. Add the stock and white wine and bring to a gentle simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring once or twice until all the vegetables are tender.
5. Place a large pan over a high heat and add ½ a glass of water.
6. When boiling, place 6 oysters in the pan. Cover and allow them to steam for 2 minutes. This will open the shells and allow you to easily remove the meat. Make sure you collect the juices.
7. Finish the broth by stirring in the cream and the juice from the oysters and seasoning to taste.
8. Divide the warm poached oysters between warmed bowls and ladle over the hot broth, making sure everyone gets a fair share of the vegetables along with the liquor.

**Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, writer,  
broadcaster, campaigner © Fish Cookery**



# Oyster Rockafella

by Mitch Tonks

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

- 24 oysters, *opened*
- 1 stick celery, *finely chopped*
- 4 shallots, *finely chopped*
- A small handful of chopped chervil
- A small handful of chopped parsley
- 200g spinach
- 250g butter
- A handful of breadcrumbs
- A good splash of Worcestershire sauce
- A dash of Pernod
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Tin foil

1. Crumple up tin foil in bottom of roasting tray so the oysters can sit comfortably without spilling any of their juices.
2. Sweat the shallots, celery, chervil, parsley and spinach in a spoonful of the butter until softened.
3. Put into a food processor with the remaining butter, the breadcrumbs, Pernod and the Worcestershire sauce. Blend until smooth.
4. Season with plenty of black pepper and a small amount of salt.
5. Put a tablespoon of the mixture on top of each oyster and bake or grill for 3-4 minutes until the butter has melted and top is crisp and golden.

Serve with plenty of champagne and your favourite person!

© Mitch Tonks,  
Fishmonger/restaurateur/food writer

Oyster  
Rockafella



# Oysters with pancetta

and Pernod

by CJ Jackson

Serves 4

## Ingredients

- 24 oysters, *opened*
- 55g diced pancetta
- 1 small splash of Pernod
- 1 tbsp of chopped dill
- 4 tbsp of crème fraiche
- Cayenne pepper
- Sprigs of watercress (*to serve*)

1. Preheat the grill to its highest setting.
2. Arrange the open oysters on a baking tray (using tinfoil to prop them so they do not tip over).
3. Fry the pancetta in a non-stick frying pan for a few minutes or until brown.
4. Remove the pan from the heat and add a splash of Pernod, the dill and crème fraiche, season with a little cayenne pepper.
5. Spoon over the oysters and place under the grill for 3-4 minutes or until hot and bubbling.
6. Remove the oysters from the grill, sprinkle with a little more cayenne pepper, arrange on a platter with watercress as a garnish and serve straight away.

CJ Jackson, Director,  
Billingsgate Seafood Training School

# Oysters poached in red wine sauce

with duck confit and celeriac

by Tom Aikens

## Serves 4

*This dish requires for some preparations in advance*



## Ingredients

- 12 oysters, *opened and cleaned*  
*(Keep the shells and clean with a brush and cold water. Then warm the shells through the oven at 160°C for just 3 mins).*

### Duck confit:

- 2-3 duck legs
- 150g coarse sea salt
- 2g thyme
- 1g picked rosemary
- 4g black peppercorns *crushed*
- 4 Cloves garlic *cut in half and bashed*
- ½ tsp Juniper berries
- 2 Bay leaves
- 600-800ml duck fat (*or enough to cover the legs completely*)

### Red wine sauce:

- 400g shallots *thickly sliced*
- 500ml red wine
- 300ml port
- 3g of whole thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 10 crushed black peppercorns
- 25g butter
- 500ml chicken stock

### Celeriac mash:

- 400g peeled celeriac
- 35g unsalted butter
- 3g coarse sea salt
- 20ml lemon juice
- Pinch of pepper
- Pinch of dried thyme leaf
- 1 tsp caster sugar

1. First start the marinade by placing all the ingredients into a bowl and add the duck legs. Mix well and marinate on a flat tray overnight.
2. Once marinated, wipe off the excess seasoning.
3. Place the duck fat into a shallow pan, or even roasting tray and melt on the stove.
4. Add the legs to the fat and cook on a low temperature of about 90 °c for 3 hours in the oven. The legs will be ready when they are tender to the touch and be falling away from the bone.
5. Remove from the oven and take all the meat off the bones, breaking into large pieces, this will be warmed through in the red wine sauce at the end just before serving.
6. Start the red wine sauce by putting the red wine, port, shallots, pepper and thyme into a pan, bring to a simmer and reduce by two thirds, then add the stock. Bring back to a simmer and reduce by two thirds, add the butter at the end.
7. For the celeriac mash, place a medium pan onto heat then add the butter. When it has just melted, add the celeriac, salt, pepper and thyme.
8. Place a lid onto the pan and cook slowly for 15-20 minutes, till soft stirring now and again. Add the lemon juice and remove the lid. Cook this for a further 5 minutes then mash until finely crushed.
9. To serve this dish take the shredded duck leg meat and reheat it in two thirds of the red wine sauce.
10. Put the remaining red wine sauce into a pan and poach the oysters for no more than 90 seconds.
11. Place the crushed celeriac into the bottom of the oyster shells; add the poached oysters followed by the duck confit on top. Sprinkle a little chopped parsley to finish.

Tom Aikens, Michelin star chef and restaurateur

# Grilled Oysters

with Parmesan Cheese

by Rick Stein



**Serves 4**

## Ingredients

- 24 oysters
- 175ml double cream
- 25g parmesan cheese, *freshly grated*
- 50g butter, *melted*
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Pre-heat the grill to high.
2. Open the oysters, and pour off most of the juice.
3. Put the oyster, in shell, on a baking tray or the rack of the grill pan.
4. Spoon about 1 ½ teaspoons of the cream over each oyster and season with a little black pepper.
5. Sprinkle over the Parmesan cheese and then drizzle with the melted butter.
6. Grill the oyster for 1 minute (until the cheese is golden brown).

Serve straight away.

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Grilled  
Oysters



# Oyster risotto

with deep-fried Gutweed

by John Wright

**Serves 6 as a starter**

## Ingredients

### For the Oysters:

- 6 large oysters, *shucked, juices reserved*
- 20g unsalted butter

### Risotto:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 20g unsalted butter
- 2 leeks, *white part only, trimmed and finely chopped*
- 1 small onion, *peeled and finely chopped*
- 1 garlic clove, *peeled and finely chopped*
- 150g arborio or other risotto rice
- 1 small glass of white wine
- 500ml hot fish stock
- 1-2 tbsp wild fennel fronds *finely chopped (optional)*
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Gutweed\*:

- Sunflower or groundnut oil for deep-frying
- A small handful of gutweed, *well rinsed and patted dry*

\* You can replace the gutweed by cabbage if you are not able to go foraging for gutweed. And if really stuck you can use a pack of crispy seaweed.

1. Heat the olive oil and butter in a large, heavy-bottomed frying pan over a medium-low heat.
  2. Add the leeks and onion and sweat gently for about 10 mins until softened. Add the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes.
  3. Add the rice to coat in the buttery oil, add the wine and bring to a gentle simmer.
  4. Cook while stirring, until most of the liquid is absorbed.
  5. Start adding one ladleful of fish stock at a time, making sure each ladleful is almost completely absorbed before adding the next one.
  6. Add the reserved oyster juice. (If you find you are running out of stock before the rice is cooked, just add some boiling water). The final result should be smooth and creamy with the rice still *al dente*.
  7. Stir in the fennel.
  8. Prepare the Gutweed by heating an 8cm depth of oil in a deep saucepan to 180° (until a cube of stale white bread dropped in turns golden within a minute).
  9. Deep-fry the gutweed in batches: carefully lower into the pan using tongs and fry for 4 – 6 seconds only, then remove with a slotted spoon and place on kitchen paper to drain while you deep-fry the rest.
  10. Melt some butter in a heavy non-stick pan and sauté the oysters until nicely browned.
  11. Check the seasoning of the risotto and divide between warmed plates or individual ramekins.
  12. Arrange an oyster on each one and sprinkle on the fried gutweed.
- Serve immediately

oyster risotto

John Wright, author of the River Cottage handbook the "Edible Seashore"



# Oysters in Guinness batter

with carrageen moss

by Mark Hix

**Serves 4** as a light starter  
or 2 as a main course

## Ingredients

- 12 oysters, opened and shells reserved
- 3 tbsp self raising flour
- 100ml Guinness Original
- Water to mix
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Vegetable or corn oil for deep frying
- A handful of carrageen moss\*, soaked overnight in cold water
- 2 spring onions, halved and finely chopped
- ½ tbsp cider vinegar

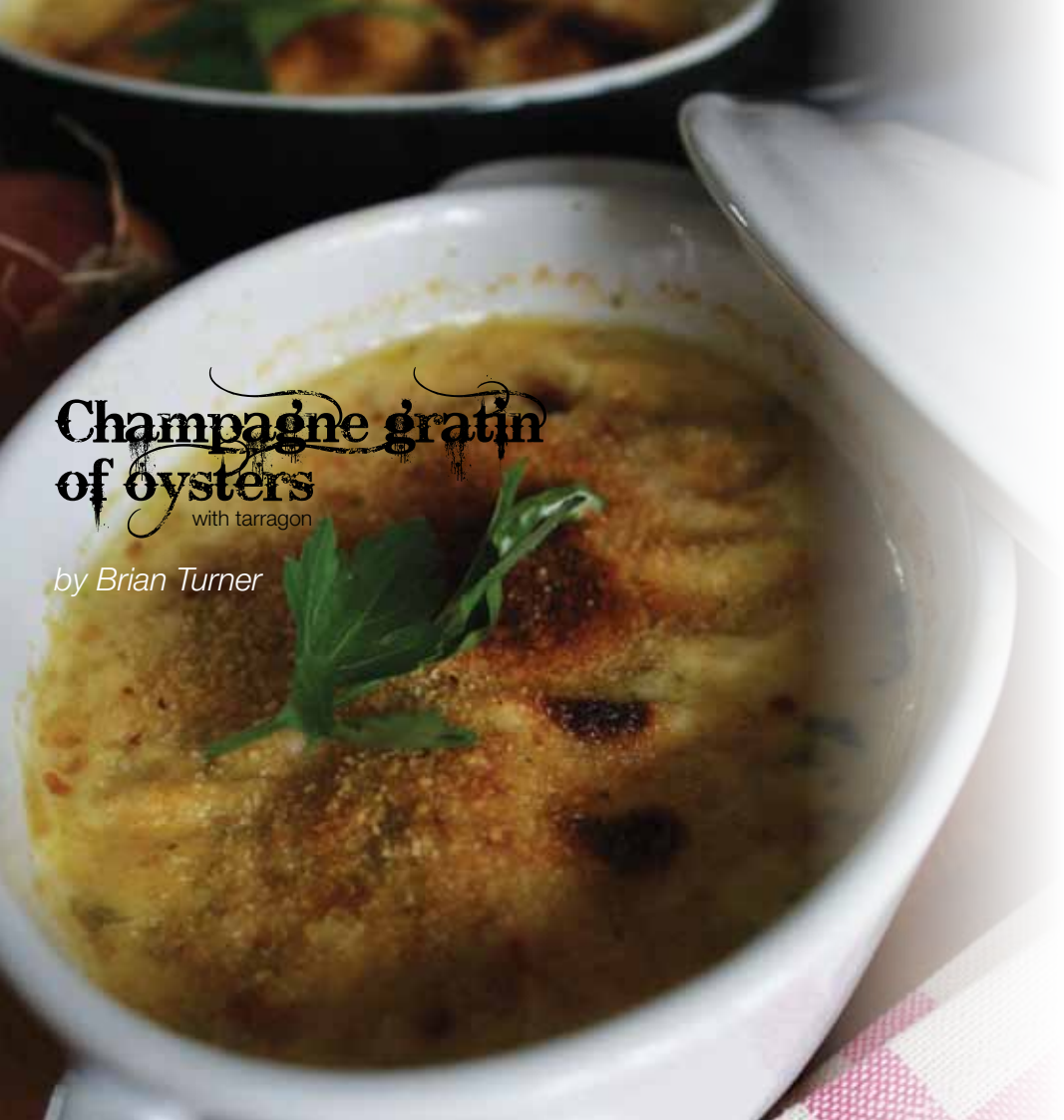
1. Mix the Guinness and flour together with enough water to make a light batter then season with the salt and pepper.
2. Blanch the carrageen moss briefly in boiling water for 30 seconds and drain.
3. Preheat about 8cm of oil to 160-180°C in a large thick bottomed saucepan or electric deep fat fryer.
4. Mix the spring onions with the carrageen moss and cider vinegar and season then spoon into the empty oyster shells.
5. Coat the oysters with the batter and fry them in the hot oil for about a minute until crisp, then remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.

Serve on the seaweed mix immediately.

\* Carrageen Moss is a seaweed (available from mail-order shops online). As only a small amount of this is required for presentation, you can choose to use finely shredded cabbage or crispy seaweed

© Mark Hix, Guild of Food Writers Winner, 2009

# Oysters in Guinness batter



# Champagne gratin of oysters

with tarragon

by Brian Turner

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

- 24 oysters
- ½ glass dry champagne
- 140ml double cream
- 1 egg yolk
- ½ tsp Dijon mustard
- 1tbsp chopped tarragon
- 1tbsp chopped parsley
- 2tbsp white breadcrumbs
- 230g raw spinach
- 60g butter
- Nutmeg
- Salt & pepper

1. Open the oysters and collect the juices.
2. Add the champagne to the oyster juice and strain through a fine sieve into a saucepan.
3. Reduce by half over heat.
4. Add the double cream and reduce by half again.
5. Take off the heat and whisk in the egg yolk and mustard.
6. Add the tarragon and parsley and pepper.
7. Meanwhile cook the spinach in the butter and season with salt and pepper and nutmeg, strain off excess liquid.
8. Put a bed of spinach into 4 gratin dishes.
9. Pat dry the oysters then lay on top of the hot spinach.
10. Cover with sauce, sprinkle with breadcrumbs and colour under the grill until golden brown.  
Serve hot.

Champagne  
gratin of  
oysters

© Brian Turner CBE, chef & restaurateur



# Oysters with spinach

and tarragon butter

by Richard Corrigan

Serves 4

## Ingredients

- 6-20 oysters opened (*retain bottom shells*)
- 150g butter, *cubed*
- 300g spinach
- A handful of watercress – *leaves only*
- 1 stick celery, *peeled and finely diced*
- 3 shallots, *peeled and finely diced*
- 1 teaspoon chopped tarragon
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon fresh breadcrumbs

1. Preheat the grill. Have the butter at room temperature.
2. Blanch the spinach in a pan of boiling salted water for 30 seconds, drain well under cold running water and squeeze out as much water as possible.
3. Put the butter, blanched spinach and all the other ingredients except the oysters into a blender and whiz until smooth.
4. Spread over the oysters in their shells and put under a very hot grill, until a crust forms. The oysters underneath will warm through rather than cook.
5. If you like, you can spray some Pernod over the oysters just before serving.

Richard Corrigan,  
Michelin star and Restaurateur,  
Bentley's oyster bar and grill

# Chilli coated oysters

with red onion salsa

by Stephen Pini

Serves 4



## Ingredients

- 24 oysters (*do not open until all of the ingredients and preparation is complete*)
- 300ml milk
- Sunflower oil for deep frying
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 4 limes cut into wedges and chopped chives to garnish prior to serving

For the salt and chilli coating:

- 175g plain flour
- 1 tsp white pepper
- 2 tbsp chilli powder
- 1 tsp monosodium glutamate (*optional*)
- 1 tsp oriental five spice powder
- 1 red fresh chili *deseeded and finely chopped*
- 2 tbsp finely chopped coriander
- 2 tbsp chopped chives
- 1 tbsp Maldon sea salt

For the red onion salsa:

- 4 tomatoes *deseeded and roughly chopped*
- 1 red onion *finely chopped*
- 1 red chilli *finely chopped*
- 1 clove garlic *finely chopped*
- 1 lime
- 3 tbsp coriander *finely chopped*
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 2 tbsp tomato ketchup

1. First start the chilli coating by placing all the ingredients into a food blender except for the salt flakes, and blend into a homogenous mix, then remove and add salt flakes.
2. Now start on the onion salsa. Mix together all ingredients in a bowl, cover with cling film and place in fridge. (Adjust seasoning when ready to serve).
3. Open the oysters, remove the meat and place on a tray. Retain any liquid from the oysters and add it to the onion salsa mix.
4. Clean the empty oyster shells, dry and place on dishes ready to serve.
5. Heat the oil to 180 degree (or follow manufacturer's instructions for your fryer).
6. Place the milk in a small bowl and dip in the oysters one by one then dredge them in the chilli coating.
7. Place the coated oysters on parchment paper. If you require a thicker coating, repeat the operation.
8. Once the oil has reached the required temperature, carefully lower in the oysters and cook for 1-3 min depending on size. The oysters are cooked when they float and have turned golden brown and crispy.
9. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain onto kitchen paper. It is best to cook the oysters in small batches and keep warm in a low temperature oven.
10. Place the oysters back in the half shells and put a small dish of salsa onto the serving plate. Garnish with a small wedge of lime, a little spoon of salsa on each oyster, and chopped chives before serving.

Stephen Pini, Executive Head Chef,  
Fishmongers' Company & author of Simply! Fish

Chilli coated oysters



- The Shellfish Association of Great Britain supports the “enjoy seafood twice a week” campaign run by Seafish, the authority on seafood. This campaign actively promotes seafood consumption based on recommendations from the UK Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition that all adults should eat at least two portions of seafood every week, at least one of which should be oil rich. This is endorsed by the Food Standards Agency, the British Heart Foundation and the British Nutrition Foundation.
- Half a dozen oysters form one of your “2 a week”.
- Oysters deserve the status of “superfood” as they are extremely high in vitamin B12, and zinc, contain 8 times more iron than chicken and contain the all important omega-3 fatty acids. (Check our website for full nutrition values of oyster and other shellfish.)
- Unsure of how to choose, store, open your oyster? Check out our “How to” videos on You Tube: [www.youtube.com/ShellfishGB](http://www.youtube.com/ShellfishGB)
- Like your oysters raw? Take a look at our “Oyster tasting guide” on our website: [www.shellfish.org.uk](http://www.shellfish.org.uk)

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The Shellfish Association of Great Britain is the industry's trade body based at Fishmongers' Hall, and supported by The Fishmongers' Company, one of London's oldest livery companies. First founded as the Oyster Merchants' and Planters' Association in 1903, and renamed The Shellfish Association of Great Britain in 1969, the association has steadily extended its range of activities from "harvest to sale" in over a century of support to the industry.



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