



A night at the movies

MAKE THE MOST OF THE LAST WARM EVENINGS WITH A GARDEN CINEMA. SUMMON FRIENDS, SET UP A SCREEN AND SETTLE IN WITH A SPREAD OF SALADS AND FINGER FOOD

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When the evenings are still warm but dusk begins to fall a little earlier, it's the right time to transform your garden into a temporary outdoor cinema. String up a white sheet as your silver screen, rig up a DVD player to a projector, then enjoy an evening of food and film with friends. Serve up a summer spritzer, tasty wraps and colourful salads as the sun goes down, then get comfy on rugs and deckchairs (wrapped up really well in blankets – this is Britain, after all) and enjoy the screening with homemade popcorn, brownies and a beer or two. »





Butternut squash falafel with carrot and feta salad

A LOVELY GOLDEN
ALTERNATIVE TO
TRADITIONAL FALAFEL

For the falafel

1 kg butternut squash or pumpkin, peeled, deseeded and cut into wedges
1 tbsp olive oil
400g tin chickpeas, drained, rinsed and dried
1 garlic clove, chopped
½ tsp chilli flakes
1 tsp ground cumin
small bunch of parsley, roughly chopped
2 slices white bread, blitzed to crumbs in a blender

For the salad

2 carrots, coarsely grated
½ small red onion, finely sliced
100g feta cheese, crumbled

For the dressing

150g plain yoghurt
handful of parsley, finely chopped
handful of mint, finely chopped
wraps, pitta or flatbreads to serve



Keep it away from the screen, but a fire pit is a brilliant idea, as it can get chilly, while throws and blankets are a must. Ours came from Atlantic Blankets (atlanticblankets.com) and Howkapow (howkapow.com)

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/Fan 180C/400F. Toss the butternut squash with the olive oil and spread out over a large baking tray. Roast for 25-30 mins or until tender. Set aside to cool slightly.

2 Meanwhile, put the chickpeas, garlic, chilli flakes, cumin and half the parsley in the bowl of a food processor. Blitz until the chickpeas are finely chopped but not smooth.

3 Mash the cooked and cooled butternut squash in a large bowl, then stir in the chickpea mixture. Add the breadcrumbs, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper,

stir, then shape into 12 little patties with your hands. Transfer to a plate and chill for 10 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, for the salad, mix the remaining parsley with the carrots, onion and feta in a bowl. In another bowl, combine the yoghurt, parsley and mint for the dressing. Season and set aside.

5 Preheat the grill to medium, then cook the falafels on a baking tray for 3-5 mins on each side until golden. Fill wraps, pitta or flatbreads with the warm falafels, adding some of the carrot and feta salad and a spoonful of the yoghurt dressing.

Unless we say otherwise, all of the recipes serve four, but they can be doubled or tripled easily.



Rosado de verano

Makes 1.5 litres

750ml rosé wine, chilled

750ml sparkling water

150ml agave syrup

1 unwaxed lemon, sliced

1 unwaxed lime, sliced

Stir everything together in a jug with lots of ice, then pour into tumblers.



MENU

Rosado de verano



Butternut squash falafel with carrot and feta salad



Fish goujons with tartare sauce



Red and green market salad

Farro with feta, lemon and pine nuts



Raspberry and pistachio brownies

Showtime sticky toffee popcorn and spiced popcorn



Fish goujons with tartare sauce

THESE ARE A STEP UP FROM FISHFINGERS, AND THE SAUCE IS SO EASY

For the goujons

olive oil

450g skinless firm white fish fillets

50g plain flour

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

1 tbsp sweet smoked paprika

2 large handfuls breadcrumbs

For the tartare sauce

200ml mayonnaise

3 tbsp capers, drained and chopped

3 tbsp gherkins, drained and chopped

1 small shallot, finely chopped

squeeze of lemon juice

3 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 Preheat the oven to 220C/Fan

200C/425F. Lightly oil a baking tray.

2 Cut the fish fillets into finger-width

strips. Season the flour and tip it

onto a plate. Put the eggs in a shallow

bowl. On another plate, mix the

paprika with the breadcrumbs.

Coat the fish strips in the seasoned

flour, dip in the eggs, then coat in

the breadcrumbs. Transfer to the

prepared baking tray and bake in

the preheated oven for 10-15 minutes

until crisp and golden.

3 Meanwhile, make the tartare sauce

by mixing together all the ingredients

in a small bowl. Chill until needed.

4 Serve the fish goujons with the

tartare sauce for dipping. »

Red and green market salad

THIS UNUSUAL FRUIT AND VEG COMBINATION WORKS REALLY WELL

1 small head of celery, sliced, including leaves
2 avocados, stones removed, peeled and cut into chunks
2 handfuls of cherry tomatoes, halved
2 large handfuls of cherries, halved and stones removed
1 small bunch of fresh flatleaf parsley, leaves picked and finely chopped
juice of ½ lemon or to taste
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 Gently mix together all the vegetables, fruit and herbs in a large serving bowl. Add the lemon juice and olive oil. Season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, and toss to coat in the dressing.



Farro with feta, lemon and pine nuts

CREAMY, NUTTY AND HERBY, THIS SALAD WILL BECOME A STAPLE

250g wholegrain farro
250g cherry tomatoes, quartered
1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
80g pine nuts, toasted
½ small red onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 large handful of fresh flatleaf parsley, finely chopped
1 large handful of fresh basil, finely chopped, plus extra whole leaves to garnish
1 large handful of mint, finely chopped

1 large handful of rocket, finely chopped
200g feta
finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 Put the farro in a pan with 500ml water. Cover, bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes or until tender. Drain and rinse well under cold running water, then drain again to get rid of as much moisture as possible.

2 Transfer the farro to a large serving bowl. Add the tomatoes, chilli, pine nuts, onion, garlic, herbs and rocket. Toss to combine, then crumble in half the feta. Toss in the lemon zest and juice, and olive oil. Season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper.

3 To serve, crumble over the remaining feta and garnish with the extra whole basil leaves.



Raspberry and pistachio brownies

SAVE ROOM FOR ONE OF THESE RICH AND FRUITY BROWNIES

Makes 12

150g unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing

200g dark chocolate (70%), roughly chopped

250g soft brown sugar

3 eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

150g ground almonds

125g fresh or frozen raspberries (do not defrost if frozen)

50g pistachio nuts, roughly chopped

A big pile of cushions and rugs is essential (above), while a stack of brownies passed around mid-film always goes down well



1 Preheat the oven to 180C/Fan 160C/350F. Grease a small brownie tin (about 20cm x 20cm) with butter and line it with baking paper.

2 Place a heatproof bowl over a pan of gently simmering water, making sure the bowl doesn't touch the water. Put 150g of the chocolate into the bowl with the butter and melt, stirring from time to time. Take the bowl off the heat and stir in the sugar, followed by the beaten eggs, one by one. Stir in the vanilla, ground almonds, half the raspberries and half the pistachios. Roughly chop the remaining chocolate and fold through the mixture.

3 Pour the mixture into the lined tin and scatter over the remaining raspberries and pistachios. Bake for 25-30 mins, until just cooked but still a little soft in the middle. Cool for at least 20 mins before cutting into 12 squares. If you used frozen raspberries, put the brownies in the fridge after cooking to firm up. »

Showtime sticky toffee popcorn

NO SCREENING IS COMPLETE WITHOUT POPCORN, EITHER SAVOURY OR SWEET

1 tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
75g popping corn
50g salted butter
100g soft light brown sugar
2 tbsp golden syrup

- 1 Line a flat tray or baking tray with nonstick baking paper. Heat the oil in a large heavy-based pan. Add the popping corn and swirl to coat. Put the lid on and leave over a low heat until all the popping has stopped, shaking occasionally.
- 2 Meanwhile, gently heat the butter, sugar and golden syrup in a separate pan until the butter has melted. Turn up the heat and bubble for 1½ minutes. Pour over the popcorn and stir well to coat.
- 3 Transfer to the prepared tray or baking tray and set aside to cool for 15 mins before eating.

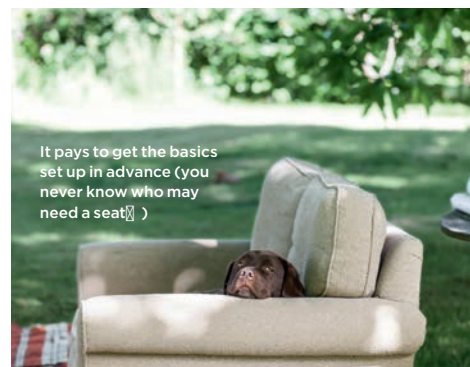


We used straws and popcorn boxes from My Little Day (en.mylittleday.fr), with drinks from Fentimans (fentimans.com) and beers from Green & Pleasant (greenandpleasant.com). The deckchairs are from Plum & Ashby (plumandashby.co.uk)

Spiced popcorn

1 tbsp sunflower or groundnut oil
80g popping corn
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground cinnamon
½ tsp black pepper
1 tsp salt

- 1 Heat the oil in a small heavy-based pan over a medium-high heat. Add the popping corn so that it covers the base in one layer. Sprinkle over the spices and ½ tsp of salt. Shake to coat. Put the lid on and leave over a low heat until all the popping has stopped, shaking occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in ½ tsp of salt.
- 2 Tip into a serving bowl or airtight container, where the popcorn will keep for a few days.



HOW TO HOST GARDEN CINEMA

Our gathering took place at the home of Nicky Mason and Ian Creek in West Sussex. They host a cinema programme for friends and family in their garden most summers; here they share what they've learned.

What do you need?

We have a cheap DVD player, a good-quality projector, an average amplifier and speakers all hooked up to an extension cable from the house. Screen-wise, we use the side of a pop-up marquee. You need something that doesn't have too many creases and won't rip. The more tension you can put on it, the better the picture. We string ours up to two handy trees. Over the years, we've become more elaborate and eccentric with our set-up. Now we put down a groundsheet, add rugs and carry out our sofas. Our labradors, Bertie and Velvet, always join us and usually sit on the end of someone's blanket.

When's the best time?

We plan a programme of films throughout the summer and alter the start times according to when it gets dark. We send out an invite and specify film start times and duration. We usually invite people for drinks and nibbles before the film starts. It often ends up being a group of people who don't know

each other very well, so a bit of time for chit-chat before the film is a good idea, since they may end up sharing the same blanket later on! We show longer films at the beginning or end of the season, when it gets dark earlier. Saturday or Sunday nights on bank holiday weekends work best. Although we have shown children's films, you really do have to wait until dark to get a good picture.

What about bad weather?

Have a back-up plan. We send out a link to a local weather website and warn that the evening will be cancelled if it's raining (because of the electrics). Wind can be a problem, too, as the screen distorts. The back-up plan then is strapping the screen to the house.

Eats and drinks?

Serve food first, while it's still light; you can't light the cinema area, so keep snacks simple during the film. Beforehand, food you can stand and hold, or pass around and share, is best, as it's not a sit-down affair. A batch of brownies passed around during the film is always well received. We usually have tea and coffee inside afterwards as it can get a bit nippy, and sometimes I bake a cake. This also encourages people to stay and help to clear up. It's essential to do it that night or the dew will get into the electrics.



These films have gone down well:

Cinema Paradiso
Monsieur Hulot's Holiday
The Italian Job
 (the old one)
Life of Pi
The Shining
Jurassic Park
The Adventures of Tintin
House of Flying Daggers
Romeo and Juliet
 (Baz Luhrmann)
The Red Balloon
Sideways
Little Miss Sunshine

What do you always tell guests?

Bring a chair, a torch and warm clothes. Most people underestimate how cold you feel when you're sitting still outdoors at night. We always have to bring out duvets and blankets for people who have dressed for style rather than warmth. Veterans come with layers to add and start robing up just before the film starts. Invite your neighbours, because you like them/it's friendly/they will wonder what's going on if you don't.

What's good to show?

We tend to think of the different genres and list our favourites. We usually have one black and white film, one world cinema film and so on. It's often the least mainstream films that people say they've enjoyed the most. You need films where scale or atmosphere is important; if the film is going to look as good on a TV screen, don't bother. We also try to avoid films that are very bright as you're more likely to notice wrinkles and flaws in the screen. S