

# Food



Mulled wine and champagne sorbets served together (top) and an ice cream Christmas pudding (above)

PICTURES: RICHARD AUSTIN

## Cheese ice cream and birds galore – dinner with a twist

Try something slightly unusual this December 25, says Food Editor **Becky Sheaves**



I've done a lot of odd things in the name of culinary research as the food editor of this paper. My "offal day" of eating tongue, sweetbreads and heart was definitely memorable. As was the day I had to eat 40 different sausages as judge at the Devon County show.

But I can honestly say that eating cheese ice cream has to be even stranger still.

It all came about when I visited Salcombe Dairy in South Devon, to investigate unusual Christmas recipes. And their new port wine sorbet with Ticklemore Cheese ice cream was a must for me to try.

Operations manager Kevin Laphorne and retail manager James Tregelles looked on anxiously as I took an (admittedly small) spoonful. "Be honest," says Kevin. "We're very keen to know what you really think."

Well, it looked like vanilla ice cream. It felt like normal ice cream in my mouth. And then it hit me in sudden, rather shocking, stages. This ice cream was not sweet. In fact, it was savoury. Good Lord, it tasted of blue cheese!

And guess what, once the initial amazement has worn off, it was fabulous. Definitely one to try out for a bit of a change to your more usual cheeseboard.

Salcombe Dairy in south Devon was the only food producer nationwide to win not one but two three-star Golds at the Great Taste Awards 2010. Those gongs were for their wonderful mango sorbet and their clotted cream ice cream.

Encouraged by this success, the dairy is now trying out all sorts of new ideas. And so it has dreamed up a wild and wonderful range of festive ice creams this December.

"We just felt it would be fun to try something a little different this year," explains retail manager James Tregelles.

"Ice cream can be seen as such a seasonal product, tied to the summertime. But it makes a fantastic addition to a Christmas festivity too."

So, how do you fancy Salcombe Dairy's champagne or mulled wine sorbet as a palate cleanser between courses on Christmas Day? Or there's a mince pie ice cream, complete with chunks of sweet pastry. Then there's a Christmas pudding shaped ice-cream that tastes just like the real thing, right down to a brandy butter ice cream topping.

Finally, let me recommend Salcombe Dairy's port and blue cheese pud, half port sorbet and half – remarkably – this very mild blue cheese

ice cream flavoured with Devon Blue Cheese from Ticklemore Cheese in Totnes.

Salcombe Dairy's products are top quality, made with all-Devon cream and milk and not an artificial ingredient in sight. They can be bought from many good delis and farm shops, as well as Kingsbridge Farmers' Market on December 18 and at Darts Farm Shop, where James will be offering tastings today and tomorrow.

So, that's the pudding and cheese course of Christmas dinner sorted out. But what about the main event? Is there any alternative to turkey, especially if – like me – you have a lot of hungry mouths to feed on the big day?

Well the Barrett family of Trevilley Farm near Newquay certainly think so. Five years ago Keith and Gill Barrett decided to diversify their 300-acre farm to start a farm shop selling their own produce and delicious local food.

Now, their multi-bird roasts have become something of a legend at this time of year, dispatched as far afield as Scotland. And when their large, extended family sits down on Christ-

**'Ice cream can be seen as tied to the summertime. But it's a fantastic addition to Christmas'**

James Tregelles

mas Day, chances are the Barretts will be tucking into a roast that looks like a turkey but, when you carve it, reveals itself to be six different birds, one inside the other like a nest of Russian dolls.

"It's a lot of fun and a real talking point on the day," says Gill. "You can have turkey, duck and goose, then go into the smaller game birds like partridge, pheasant and pigeon."

This Christmas the family will certainly be celebrating the success of the farm shop which has assured the farm's future right down to the fifth generation of the family.

What's especially heartwarming about this venture is that Gill's daughter Georgie, 33, and her husband Errol, 34, now also work on the farm, having returned from London where they lived in their 20s, to start a family back in Cornwall.

Now, their children, Isla (two) and Lleyton (11 months) will also be happily tucking into Christmas dinner with their relatives on the farm.

You could make your own multi-bird roast this Christmas, says Gill. "Just ask your butcher to de-bone the birds for you, unless you are very confident with a sharp knife. Even just three birds will make a delicious Christmas roast. It is also nice to put a



The Barrett family tuck into one of their multi-bird roasts. Gill carves watched by Isla, Georgina, Errol and Keith

PICTURES: STEVEN HAYWOOD



Layers of birds are placed one inside another, like Russian dolls (above and far right). For a savoury treat, why not try Salcombe Dairy's port and blue cheese ice cream (right)



layer of stuffing in between each one."

Gill makes sure the meat of the smaller birds is evenly distributed by cutting them up and distributing them right across the outside bird.

"That way everyone gets a slice that has all the different meats in it," she explains. After that, you just carefully roll it up and sew up the joint with a large needle and thread."

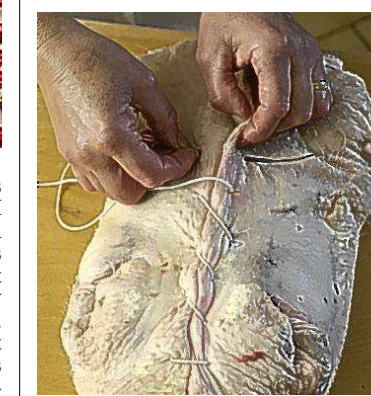
She makes it sound so easy. It may be simpler, though, to order one of Gill's from Trevilley Farm Shop or one of the other excellent local farm shops we have here in the Westcountry.

"When it comes to cooking a

multi-bird, calculate your timings as though it was a solid joint of meat. I allow about 30 minutes for each pound in weight," adds Gill, who gets up at 6am on Christmas Day to put hers in the Aga. "There isn't a cavity in the middle as there is with a turkey, so it will take longer to cook right through. A meat thermometer is really useful to make sure it is thoroughly cooked."

Wise words indeed from a woman who knows. Happy Christmas!

To order a multi-bird roast from Trevilley Farm Shop, visit [www.trevilleyfarm.com](http://www.trevilleyfarm.com) or call 01637 872 310 before December 20.



Different birds varying in size are placed inside each other, ending with the multi-bird filling being placed inside a deboned turkey and sewn up. Gill Barrett says that just three birds inside one another will taste wonderful

## This week

### BUY... local treats

**The Simplest Turkey (Piper's Farm, £22/kg)** This top-quality bronze turkey from Devon comes boned, rolled and filled with apricot and hazelnut stuffing. Order online at [pipersfarm.com](http://pipersfarm.com).



**Red Cornishware (from £10, T G Green)** Blue and white Cornishware is oh-so-familiar but this "lost" red design from the 1920s is now rediscovered. Perfect for Christmas, buy online at [tggreen.co.uk](http://tggreen.co.uk).



**Christmas pudding truffles, left (£4, Rick Stein)** Made of delicious chocolate and as pretty as can be. On sale at Stein's Deli in Falmouth and Padstow or online at [rickstein.com](http://rickstein.com).

### TRY... foodie events

**Christmas traditions** Enjoy a Victorian Christmas lunch of plum pudding and roast goose at The Arundell Arms, Lifton, tomorrow, with live music. £39.50 per head, visit [arundellarms.com](http://arundellarms.com) to book.

**Evenings at Eden** The Eden Project opens until 9pm on Fridays and Saturdays until Christmas for delicious food, carols and lantern parades. Visit [edenproject.com](http://edenproject.com) for details.

**Festive drinking** Taste Christmas wine at Ellis Wharton Wines, Par, on Thursday December 16 from 3-7pm. Visit [ewines.co.uk](http://ewines.co.uk) for details.

**Christmas Fayre** See local chefs in action at Mount Edgcumbe near Plymouth, plus many food and craft stalls between 10am and 5pm today and 10am and 4pm tomorrow. Visit the website: [www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk) for details.

## By The Glass with KIM COULSON



I love Christmas but like many working mums I can find preparations a bit frantic. December means lots of promotional events for us, often in the evenings or at weekends. So preparations for a family Christmas tend to be done in a last minute rush.

I can do my present shopping at a Christmas tree. This week no fewer than 500 of them arrived... happily not a case of me over-ordering! Our friend Jamie grows the trees a couple of miles away and is selling them from outside the winery.

They make the farmyard look festive and even inspired me, at the end of a long day, to brave the cupboard under the stairs. Soon one of Jamie's beautiful trees was laden with decorations and lights. Even though many baubles were being grabbed by Georgia, four, our cottage now has lots of sparkle and glitter. And I've discovered that tinsel and holly are a great way to cover up cobwebs where I haven't had time to dust!

I'm not sure exactly what that is but he seems to be dealing with it. As our knowledge of wine-making still has huge gaps, anything that doesn't go to plan is quite a challenge. This, of course, means present buying for all six of our children and putting up the decorations is definitely my job.

Kim Coulson runs Polgoon vineyard, near Penzance, with husband John. See [polgoon.co.uk](http://polgoon.co.uk).