

...sister
...I use tinned
...Frank, who
...his son is an ope
...times he has my heart sm
...like Renaissance women. Th
...rella or crispy sardines.
...Oxheart tomatoes have th
...and rich fishiness of sardines. O
...we had a cook who served us sard
...that my love affair with these fish be
...but they are different from the Medite
...plump and seem to be more from the sea
...Australia; I get mine from little Portugal in
...obviously best. This dish could easily be my s
...Beaujolais. It's just a shame Olive won't be joinin

PAN-FRIED SARDINES ON OXHEART TOMATOES

Serves 2 people who like sardines

Overlap the tomato slices on two plates. Heat the oil in a large heavy-based frying pan until just smoking, add the sardines and garlic and fry over medium-high heat until the sardines are just cooked through, a couple of minutes on each side. Place on the tomato, squeeze a little lemon juice on top and scatter over the parsley. Serve with the lemon wedges and some bread to mop up the juices or with plain potatoes.

Introducing Manna from Heaven's cook book – over 150 sweet and savoury recipes for you to cook

- 2 oxheart tomatoes, thickly sliced
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 4-6 plump sardines, gutted and heads removed (ask your fishmonger to do this)
- 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 handful of flat leaf (Italian) parsley, roughly chopped
- lemon wedges



manna
from heaven

2010

Happy, happy 2010 to you all out there. I hope it's going to be a good year for all of us.

In the festive break I headed up to Byron to a house by the beach. As Olive and I walked through the bush to the water we thought what lucky creatures we were — and we had it for a whole week. We hardly went into town; it was all about swimming, cooking, eating, talking and drinking. Though while I was up there I did also cook for Geraldine's son's wedding party.

As it was a big catering event (forty people) Geraldine drove up with my equipment. This included my ice-cream machine, so during our stay we had lovely ice creams (I set it up in the bathroom). Geraldine made many lime tarts too (we took a case of limes up). Over the whole week I was reminded about holiday rentals and what you need to take if you want to cook and entertain. As when I go sailing, it is best to take almost all the food. In Byron the supermarket is quite good, but who wants to shop? I generally plan the menu beforehand (see below for the perfect sailing-trip menu); we certainly did this for the wedding. And there's usually a comprehensive shopping list to sort out, whatever the occasion.

As for the rest of the equipment I travel with: as always I took up my most valuable little red-handled serrated knife; I love having my pepper grinder as it's the perfect size; I will usually take my coffee pot for often in holiday homes they have horrible electric ones; and if driving I take a food processor.

In Byron, for the wedding food, we went sort of Cajun with lots of things on sticks; we used huge amounts of chili, garlic, lime and ginger. And we had marvellous freshly caught local fish with coconut.

On arriving at our beach house we unpacked. Olive and I had flown with our ubiquitous large poly box full of edible goodies. I said to Olive, 'Let's have a cup of tea before we hit the beach.' I put the kettle on the stove and sat back and relaxed ... and within minutes I was jumping up — there was an acrid smell drifting over. I turned to look and the stove was on fire and all the plastic was dripping onto the racks over the flame (note to self: electric kettles should not be put on gas cook-tops). It was a terrible mess and I had to boil water in a pan for my tea! I texted Geraldine, who was still on her way, and she immediately thought it was bad.



I was laughing at my stupidity and she suggested we put the rack from the cook-top in the freezer. This worked brilliantly as plastic and metal react differently to temperature, so later that night the melted kettle and the metal rack separated easily. The lid of the kettle survived and on Christmas Day Geraldine fashioned a necklace for me so I could wear the remains round my neck.

There was a glut of tomatoes after the wedding party and we made fifteen bottles of Burnt Kettle Ketchup; Olive and Geraldine made labels for the bottles. All in all the disaster gave us great inspiration and amusement.

For Australia Day, which we celebrated on a three-day sailing trip, my menu went something like this:

Sunday lunch

Nibbles of hummus, crackers, olives, slices of tomato and cucumber with chunks of feta cheese, grapes and dried apricots.

Sunday dinner

Tuna with chermoula, couscous and yoghurt sauce with lemon and sticks of Lebanese cucumber (see recipe), and we finished with some nougat and more fruit.

Monday breakfast

Well, I had orange juice and a swim, and the others had cereal. There was yoghurt too.

Monday lunch

Left-over tuna rolled up in flat pita breads with tahini and tomatoes.

Monday dinner

Totally delicious: I stuffed baby chickens with preserved lemon and roasted them with cinnamon and ginger, then I made a sauce of lemon juice, almonds, currants, garlic and brown sugar. We had this with plain basmati rice with saffron and a salad of eggplant with pomegranate dressing.

For breakfast on Australia Day, I cooked everybody bacon and eggs with fried bread (I had forgotten how good it was) and tomatoes.

The Vegetarian Option by Simon Hopkinson

Simon is one of my favourite food writers from England. He is one of the few chefs to have moved over to food writing successfully and with extreme skill. This new book, which follows his equally successful *Week In Week Out*, has fab photos by Jason Lowe and is a must-have. As I flick through the pages there are so many recipes I want to cook and lots of traditional stuff I feel like trying again. I especially love the little notes that accompany the recipes:

The texture of these little darlings is wonderfully wobbly and delicate, so do take the greatest of care when the moment of optimum set is reached. Practise makes perfect, as with all crucial cookery lore. When talking about "warm asparagus custards with tarragon vinaigrette."

This is great writing and very inspiring for the cook who wants to learn.

Feast your eyes on cauliflower cheese (what a comforting dish) and indulge in cheese-crustured fried parsnip strips with Romesco sauce, perfect to eat while watching television, and I am definitely going to make his croustade d'oeuf 'Maintenon', a kind of poached egg in pastry with hollandaise sauce — awfully rich but god what a treat. And of course this is a great book for vegetarians (I simply hate that word), a million miles away from brown rice and lentils and their usual applications.



Tuna steaks

- 6 tuna steaks
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds, ground
- 1 tablespoon cumin seed, ground
- 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- A handful each of mint, parsley and coriander
- 100 mls olive oil
- Juice of one lemon
- Salt and pepper
- Olive oil for frying

In a large bowl put the tuna steaks and mix with everything except the lemon and salt and pepper. Leave to marinate for a couple of hours or overnight in the fridge.

In a large fry pan heat a little olive oil and add the steaks (you may need to cook this in two batches or use two frying pans). Cook the tuna a couple of minutes on each side (I like my tuna pink in the middle). Lift on to a flat dish and serve with cucumber, yoghurt and couscous. All of this works well at room temperature so you can prepare it a couple of hours before you want to eat, or to take on a picnic (make sure you keep it cool).



Manna from Heaven is doing great things this year. We are happy to announce the great partnership we will have with ILVE, makers of Italian stoves.

I had the great pleasure of cooking with one at the Pyrmont Farmers' Market last week, where I cooked with the ingredients you can buy there. I served the dishes as breakfast for the shoppers; they can now get a real taste of what they are buying and, if you come along one weekend, there will also be recipes for all the things I cook there.

Upcoming Events

The ILVE showroom in Leichhardt is now going to be the home of all our parent-and-child cooking classes, which will start back up in the next school holidays in April.

For the dates of our cooking classes take a look at our website (www.mannafromheaven.com.au/news) OR call Michelle on (02) 9517 3688.

In October we will run beginner, intermediate and advanced one-day classes for high-school children, in conjunction with the Sydney International Food Festival.

All our passion for sharing our love of food will culminate in the second of the Manna from Heaven magazines, 'How to do Breakfast', which includes features from Paris, will teach you how to cook the perfect eggs and where to get the perfect breakfast in cafés around Australia. So, for long-standing readers of this newsletter, this will be our last edition, *but* you can catch me on my website for ramblings and my blog for cooking advice. Do have a happy year; I feel 2010 is going to be a good one.

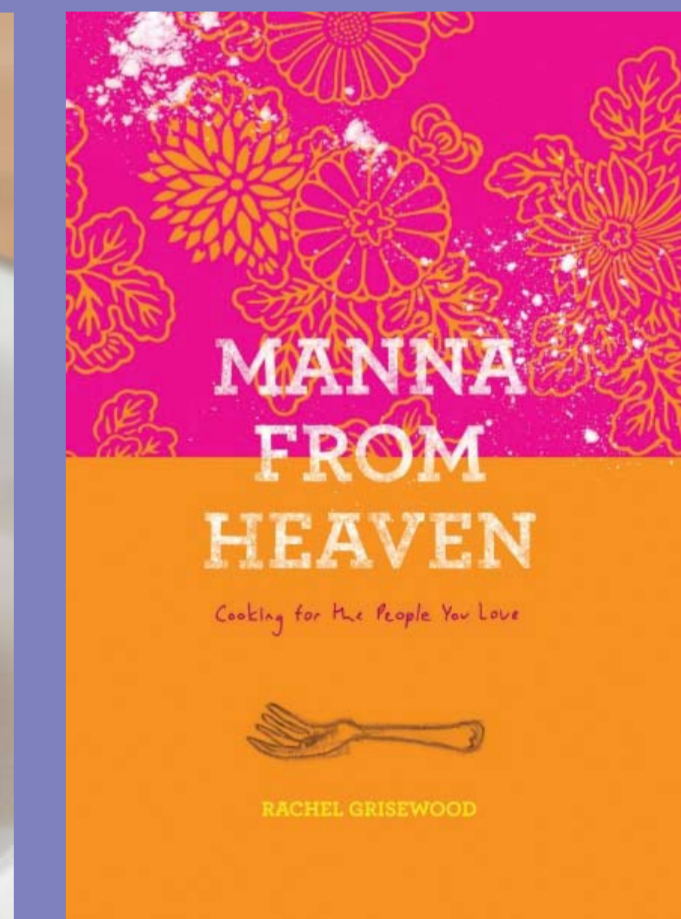
caramel cake

rich & sticky with toasted almonds



Special of the month

Caramel cake is our new special. It is a rich, sticky caramel cake topped with toasted almonds. Our wholesale customers can call Michelle for a sample box on 9517 3688 or come and taste them at the Pyrmont Market. Available to order from 1st March.



Rachel Grisewood