

# food for thought

with Benjamin James

Our resident foodie Benjamin James of the **George & Dragon** in Chipstead reveals what's been keeping the pub busy this month and shares his favourite recipes



*Wild garlic and spinach stuffed mushroom*

For the latest news, visit our new website at [www.georgeanddragonchipstead.com](http://www.georgeanddragonchipstead.com) and follow us @GeorgeChipstead on Twitter

## Wild garlic and spinach stuffed mushroom

At the George & Dragon, Chipstead we use wild garlic generously throughout April and May when it is in abundance and at its best. From side orders, to hearty soups and even raw in salads, this plant is a winner. My favourite way to eat wild garlic is with cheese; a perfect combination. For a satisfying yet light lunch choice (which also makes a great starter), why not make this delicious wild garlic and spinach stuffed field mushroom with Kentish blue cheese?

- 125g wild garlic leaves
- 125g spinach leaves
- 80g Kentish blue cheese
- 2 x large field mushrooms
- 6 x sprigs of fresh thyme
- Salt & pepper

Wipe the mushrooms with a damp cloth and place on a baking tray, sprinkle with salt and pepper; a drizzle of olive oil and chopped thyme. Place in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for around 15 minutes. Meanwhile, place a handful of spinach leaves and wild garlic into a pan with a small knob of butter; place on the heat and stir until the heat wilts the leaves down to a tenth of the original size, season and remove from the heat. To serve, place a dessert-spoon amount of the wilted garlic on to a mushroom, stack one mushroom on top of another and place a slice of Kentish blue cheese on top. Grill or place in a pre-heated oven until the cheese melts. Serve with a drizzle of olive or rapeseed oil and a sprinkling of pine nuts for extra crunch.

■ Visit the pub at 39 High Street, Chipstead, TN13 2RW and for more information or to book, call **01732 779019** or visit [www.georgeanddragonchipstead.com](http://www.georgeanddragonchipstead.com)

Regular readers will recall that last month I mentioned the imminent arrival of the much-loved foraging favourite, wild garlic. Since my last article many of my regulars from the George & Dragon, Chipstead have commented on how much they enjoy picking and using this wonderful little plant. One particular regular was quick to tell me how much enjoyment she got out of picking wild garlic at Riverhill Himalayan gardens in Sevenoaks and mixing it with another George & Dragon favourite, Winterdale Shaw cheese. This combination makes a fantastic wild garlic and cheese quiche which is on offer to visitors of the gardens.

March saw the launch of our new website and loyalty card scheme, and I have been thrilled with how well they have both been received. Both regulars of the George & Dragon, Chipstead and first timers alike are pleased about the future benefits they can get by collecting card points each time they enjoy dinner or drinks at our pub and dining room. If you don't already have a card, fear not – pop along in the next couple of weeks and I can make sure we have one ready for you. For new readers of Food for Thought who want to find out more about what our loyalty card has to offer; visit our website for more information and to see an archive of previous articles and a copy of today's menu.

## Cocktail of the month: Sapphire Rose

The Sapphire Rose is a perfect seasonal cocktail. Crisp and refreshing, it perfectly mirrors a spring morning walk. As the cocktail for the month here at the George & Dragon, Chipstead why not give one a try when picking up your loyalty card?

- ½ Pink grapefruit squeezed
- 1 x wedge of lime
- 35ml Bombay sapphire gin
- 15ml maraschino cherry liqueur
- 10ml sugar syrup
- 4 x wedges of lime
- 1 x tsp white sugar

Place all ingredients into a cocktail shaker and cover with cubed ice. Place the lid on top and shake vigorously, double strain (straining both the ice and any sediment) into a chilled martini glass and serve immediately.

