



# TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

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## The Cumbrian Kitchen

I write as I sit in a wee cottage in the wee town of Grasmere, England. It's morning with a slowly clearing sky. Yesterday we walked up and down trails around beautiful Lake Grasmere. Today we head toward Tarn How for another hike. Life is truly good.

Earlier this week I did a little 'work' by taking a class at a nearby cookery school called Lucy's. The topic was Cumbrian (the part of England we are sitting in) Foods. One dish was traditional (Cumbrian Pork Pies) and another made use of traditional ingredients in a more contemporary way (Spicy Brown Shrimp Doughnuts). A Westmorland Pepper Cake was a local twist on traditional 'fruit bread.'



The pies were accompanied by a Tomato Chutney which I will most certainly recreate often at home. Chef Tim Bestwick calls it a Spiced Relish noting that a nearby port was one of England's busiest in centuries past making cinnamon, ginger, chilies and star anise easily available in the region. Chef's best tip, worth the price of admission, was to

include fragrant tomato stems in the simmering pot of relish as it bubbled and thickened. Why hadn't I thought of doing that? It adds a depth of tomato essence to the chutney.

We've been enjoying this chutney on the eight pies I brought from class, on cheese and in sandwiches, and on spoons straight out of the container!

The Westmoreland Pepper Cake filled with raisins, currants, ground ginger, ground cloves and black pepper was meant to be a tea time restorative snack slathered with butter and jam. I find it great straight up or topped with some local cheese.



## Oregon's Bounty

Fall-flavored Cocktail featuring Gin  
(or vodka, if you must)

*Pear liqueur, honey, lemon juice and gin team up to make a pretty (and tasty!) drink. When I served it to a group of personal chefs recently, they dubbed it adult lemonade.*



### Honey Syrup:

1 cup honey  
½ cup of very hot water

Stir to combine, thinning the honey with the water. I heat it over a low flame to make sure it's thoroughly dissolved. Set aside to cool before using.

### Cocktail:

½ ounce honey syrup  
1 ounce gin  
1 ounce pear liqueur  
1 ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice

Put everything in a shaker. Add ice and shake well.

Strain into a glass filled with crushed ice. Garnish with a thyme sprig and a bit of lemon peel.

You can sub vodka for the gin if you are so inclined.

*Recipe from: Sauce Magazine online from Justin Cardwell, general manager at BC's kitchen in St. Louis.*

## Cumbrian Chutney

Call it chutney or cooked spiced relish, this recipe is just a stepping off point for your creativity. Change up the accent fruit or the spices and put your own mark on this dish. How much chili and fresh ginger root you add is a matter of personal preference/heat tolerance.

This recipe also makes good use of end of season tomatoes or store-bought ones that typically don't have the punch of home-grown. I recommend buying the ones on the vine and using the stem to bump up the tomato essence.

If you aren't strictly tied to tradition, this could replace cranberry sauce in turkey sandwiches!

NOTE: This makes a HUGE batch – you can halve this recipe with no issues.

2 tablespoons ginger root, minced  
4 fresh red chillies, chopped (no seeds if you don't want heat)  
4 pounds tomatoes, chopped  
1 pound Granny Smith apples, peeled & chopped  
1 cup golden raisins  
3 large shallots, chopped  
2 ½ cups brown sugar  
2 1/3 cups malt vinegar  
pinch sea salt  
1 cinnamon stick  
2 star anise  
stems of the tomatoes (optional)

Put all ingredients (including tomato vine/stem if you have) into a medium size pot. Bring to a boil.

Reduce to a simmer and cook for about 40-50 minutes or until you have a fairly jammy consistency. Keep in mind it will thicken as it cools.

Remove from the heat and cool thoroughly before refrigerating.

Recipe source: *Lucy Cooks Cookery School, Stavelly near Kendal, England*

## What I've Been Reading

*The Hundred-Foot Journey: A Novel* by Richard Morais

I stumbled across this last Spring while looking for something to read on my Kindle – what a find it was. It's also been made into a movie produced by Steven Spielberg & Oprah Winfrey. I generally don't like books I've read made into movies so I've passed on seeing this one – let me know if you have and if you liked it.

*Everything Under the Sun* by Matilde Asensi

An independent Spanish widow living and painting in France travels to China to settle her husband's estate only to discover he was a nearly penniless drug addict. Thus begins Elvira's adventure to find a lost first century Emperor's treasure to pay off her debts. She picks up an interesting cast of 'helpful' characters along the way. I enjoyed this book enough to also read Asensi's other translated book, *The First Cato*.

*Bury Your Dead* by Louise Penny

I am a huge fan of Louise Penny's Inspector Gamache series set in Canada near the US border. This one which is about the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> in her series (I can never keep track) is a stand-out. The hero is in Montreal recovering physically and psychologically from a terrible incident that is revealed as the book progresses. In the midst of this recovery there is, of course, a murder he must solve and as well as a past murder he solved incorrectly that needs to be rectified. If you have time and like intelligent murder mysteries start at the beginning of the series, *A Still Life*. I don't think you'll be disappointed.

*600 Hours of Edward* by Craig Lancaster

The title character is a nearly 40-year Asperger's gentleman living independently with financial support from his father. A rigid daily schedule which includes nightly watching of *Dragnet* re-runs (in chronological order) is thrown into chaos when a single mom with a 9 year old moves in across the street. It's a lovely book with cringe-inducing moments along with teary chapters. I'm of two minds about reading the sequel *Edward Adrift*.

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