

Sundown supper

DRAG ALL YOUR TABLES OUTSIDE! DISTRIBUTE THE PASHMINAS!
SUMMER NIGHTS CALL FOR FARM-TO-TABLE FEASTS

Photography: MARTIN LOF / LIVING INSIDE





Laidback Malibu locals mingle with Arnold the pig, 23 chickens and the occasional Hollywood player.



When we think of Malibu, California, the first thing that springs to mind isn't a farm complete with bleating goats, a snuffling pig and several wailing peacocks. But Helene Henderson's Malibu Farm is the location for what might be the most memorable dining experience in a town not short of hot tickets.

Here, ten times a year, the Swedish-born chef serves guests a fresh organic menu stuffed with fruit and vegetables from her own land – rocket, carrots, chard, tomatoes, asparagus, herbs, raspberries, persimmons, grapes, figs, apricots, peaches, raw honey and eggs. Other organic farms nearby supply wine, olive oil, meat, fish and dairy.

"I'm inspired by what I want to eat," says Helene, who fell in love with cooking as a 12-year-old waitress. "I want a visit here to be truly original, and introduce the guests to local products that they might not be familiar with.

It makes the experience here more unique, while at the same time local, fresh ingredients taste better, and haven't wasted fuel by travelling long distances.

"It's all about getting the best possible ingredients and having the confidence to do as little as possible to alter them. A little good oil, a sprinkle of salt and a dash of lemon is really all you need for a great meal. Doesn't matter what it is: a fresh piece of fish, some baby potatoes, sliced ripe tomatoes and a little rocket. Add oil, salt, lemon and you're having a feast."

There's no need to curl up in a ball of Northern European envy. This friendly, farm-to-table approach translates well, whether your own land extends to rolling orchards or just a dinky patio, and your vista is stunning or suburban. So bring your dinner table outside and set it with a white tablecloth and mountains of freshly dug deliciousness. Drape a blanket or shawl over each chair. Don't skimp on lanterns, fairy lights and music. Organic tequila optional. »

MENU

- Mustard chicken with fennel *
- Smoked aubergine dip *
- Carrots and rocket salad *
- Fig balsamic hanger steak *
- Chunky farm hummus *
- Parmesan smashed potatoes *
- Cauliflower flatbread pizza *
- Basil ice cream



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THE SIMPLE MENU

Mustard chicken with fennel

LOW EFFORT, LOW FAT, BUT HIGH IN LEMONY, ANISEEDY, MUSTARDY FLAVOUR. A CHICKEN DISH THAT HAS IT ALL

Serves 6

6 chicken breasts, skin on, seasoned with salt
1 bunch of rocket

For the marinade:

180g Dijon mustard
Juice from 1 lemon
2 tbsp rosemary
2 tbsp olive oil

For the fennel garnish:

2 fennel bulbs, sliced thin with a mandoline
2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
Juice from 2 lemons
3 tbsp olive oil

1. Toss chicken with the marinade and refrigerate for 24 hours. Meanwhile, make the garnish by tossing the sliced fennel with the mustard, oil and lemon. Season to taste with salt.
2. Grill the chicken until cooked. Slice each breast into 3. Toss the rocket with the marinated fennel and serve the chicken with the fennel and rocket.

Oblong trays of beautifully red tomatoes, Burrata mozzarella and aubergine dip keep guests going until the main courses arrive.

Huge head count? Let guests help themselves from chunky platters.





Tonight the farm is offering only the best food available to man. Super fresh, newly harvested, just picked and digged.

Smoked aubergine dip

A HIGHLY SCOOPABLE DIP THAT CALLS ON TOMATOES FOR ITS COLOUR AND MUSTARD SEEDS FOR BITE

Serves 6

1 large aubergine
 ½ medium yellow onion, chopped
 1 tbsp mustard seeds
 200g tinned chopped tomatoes, drained
 Juice from 2 limes
 1 grated garlic clove
 Chopped dill, coriander or parsley

1. Place the aubergine in a dry cast iron frying pan, or on a barbecue, on high heat. Keep covered. Turn the aubergine every few minutes until it collapses (about 20 minutes) and poke to check for softness. It's going to get smoky!

2. While you wait for the aubergine to collapse, fry the onion in some oil until translucent. Add mustard seeds and tinned tomatoes, season with salt. Take the softened aubergine, complete with skin, and the onion/tomato mix, and blend in a food processor until smooth.

3. Transfer to a bowl and stir in lime juice, garlic and chopped herbs. Taste and add salt as necessary.

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Carrots and rocket salad

PLAY MATCHMAKER BETWEEN NATURALLY SWEET, HONEYED CARROTS AND PURE, PEPPERY ROCKET

Serves 6

1 bunch baby carrots, cut in half lengthwise
 2 tbsp olive oil
 2 tbsp honey or agave
 Salt and pepper
 Juice from 1 lemon
 1 bunch of wild rocket

For the basic lemon vinaigrette:

Juice from 1 lemon
 1 grated garlic clove
 Salt to taste
 3 tbsp olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (180° fan), 400°F, gas 6. Place your cut carrots on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper.

2. Roast for about 20 mins, or until lightly browned and just soft. Drizzle with honey or agave, and a squeeze of lemon. Toss the cooked carrots with rocket and the vinaigrette.



Fig balsamic hanger steak

TASTY, CHEAP AND EASY TO COOK - EVERY BUTCHER'S FAVOURITE CUT DRIPS WITH NUTTY, SYRUPY GOODNESS

Serves 6

6 hanger steaks or skirt steaks

180ml fig balsamic vinegar

120ml olive oil

2 sprigs rosemary

3 cloves minced garlic

1. Season steaks with salt. Toss with vinegar, olive oil, rosemary and garlic marinade and leave in the fridge for 24 hours. Grill for a few mins on each side until browned but still rare.
2. Slice thinly. Serve with sautéed red onions seasoned with salt and vinegar.



The Malibu Farm dinner has been announced in the local press and on the website, but the word also spreads on the Malibu wind. "A party in the mouth" follows.





Chunky farm hummus

THERE AIN'T NO HUMMUS LIKE A HOME-MADE HUMMUS. SMOOTH AND PALE AS MALIBU SAND

Serves 6

3 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp sesame oil
2 tbsp water
1 tsp salt
1 x 425g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
Juice of one lemon
1 clove garlic, grated
1 cooked jalapeno pepper (optional)
Salt and pepper
Additional olive oil

1. First, blend sesame seeds, olive oil, sesame oil, water and salt. If you have a high-speed blender, this would be preferable. Whirling in a standard blender works too, but it's going to be chunkier, and not perfectly blended.
2. Once the sesame seeds have been ground up, add the remaining ingredients. Blend again. If too thick, thin with additional water and/or olive oil. Season with additional salt, pepper and lemon juice, if necessary. Garnish with additional olive oil, paprika and green herb of choice.

Hummus as a side dish? With meat? Absolutely. It's great in a steak sandwich the next day, too. Add a jalapeno for extra kick and you'll never relegate it to dip status again.



Parmesan smashed potatoes

A TASTY GROWN-UP VERSION OF CHEESY MASH, FINISHED OFF IN THE OVEN FOR A CRISPY TOPPING

Serves 6

700g fingerling* potatoes
225g salted butter, or to taste
50g Parmesan cheese, or to taste
Salt and pepper
1 sprig rosemary, chopped

For the roasted garlic:

6 cloves of garlic
Olive oil to cover

1. Roast garlic by cooking it in the olive oil over lowest heat until soft and brown – about 20 mins.
2. Parboil potatoes in salted water for 10 mins, allow to cool and then peel. Place in an ovenproof container. Mash them with the roasted garlic, oil and butter. Season with salt and pepper, add fresh rosemary and sprinkle with grated Parmesan.
3. Bake this in a 200°C (180° fan), 400°F, gas 6 oven until browned and crispy (about 45 mins), or you can put the container on the barbecue.



***Fingerling potatoes** are small, elongated, knobby potatoes, with names such as 'Ruby Crescent' or 'Russian Banana'. You may be able to find Pink Fir Apple, Anya or Ratte potatoes in the shops.



Cauliflower flatbread pizza

OOZY, TANGY, CRISPY VARIATION ON THE CLASSIC PIZZA BLANCHE. RIP IT TO SHREDS!

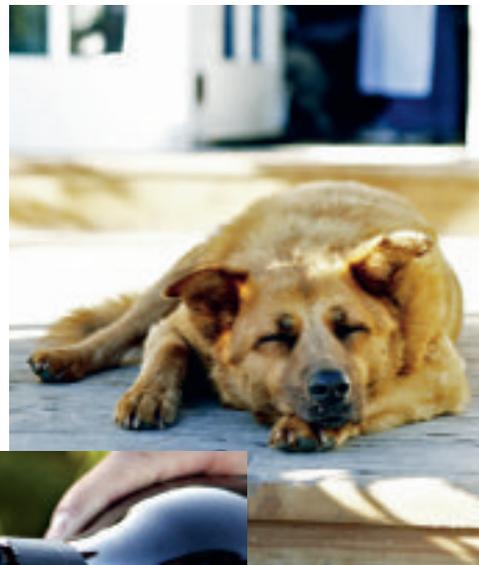
Serves 4-6

150g goat's cheese
 150g crème fraîche
 1 egg, optional
 150g grated cheese
 Handful thinly sliced cauliflower, broccoli or Brussels sprouts
 Lavash bread or flour tortillas
 Olive oil
 Salt and pepper

1. Whisk together a 50/50 mixture of goat's cheese and crème fraîche. Adding one egg to thin the goat's cheese will make it more spreadable, but this is not essential.
2. Spread the goat's cheese mixture on the flatbreads and top with grated cheese and lots of thinly sliced cauliflower, preferably sliced with a mandoline. Drizzle some oil on top and season with salt and pepper.
3. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C (160° fan), 400°F, gas 4 for 5 to 7 minutes until the edges of the flatbread are golden and crispy and the cheese is melting beautifully.



Your new favourite pizza? Roasted cauliflower, creamy goat's cheese and a thin and crispy crust. An unlikely combination, maybe, but just watch it fly off the tray.



No chance of a doggy bag, then? Helene's menagerie includes two rescue dogs.



Save guests from sluggish mornings-after by topping-up their glasses with fruity, clean-tasting organic local wines. Native wineries will thank you too.





Basil ice cream

ROUND OFF THE EVENING WITH THIS PALATE-CLEANSING DESSERT. JUST ADD FRESH BERRIES

Serves 6

1 bunch fresh lemon basil
(or plain basil)
400g sugar
Zest of 1 lemon
1 tbsp lemon juice
225g cream cheese
360ml whole regular yoghurt
240ml double cream, whipped
Berries to serve with or add to
mixture (optional)

1. In a food processor, whirl sugar with basil until incorporated. Add cream cheese, yogurt, lemon zest and juice. Blend until thoroughly mixed. Stir in the whipped cream and raspberries or other berries.
2. Cool the mixture in the freezer for about 1 hour. Then pour the chilled mixture into an ice-cream maker and churn until frozen.

Don't rush to clear up.
Wrap something round
your shoulders, pick at the
leftovers and linger awhile
as the sun goes down.