



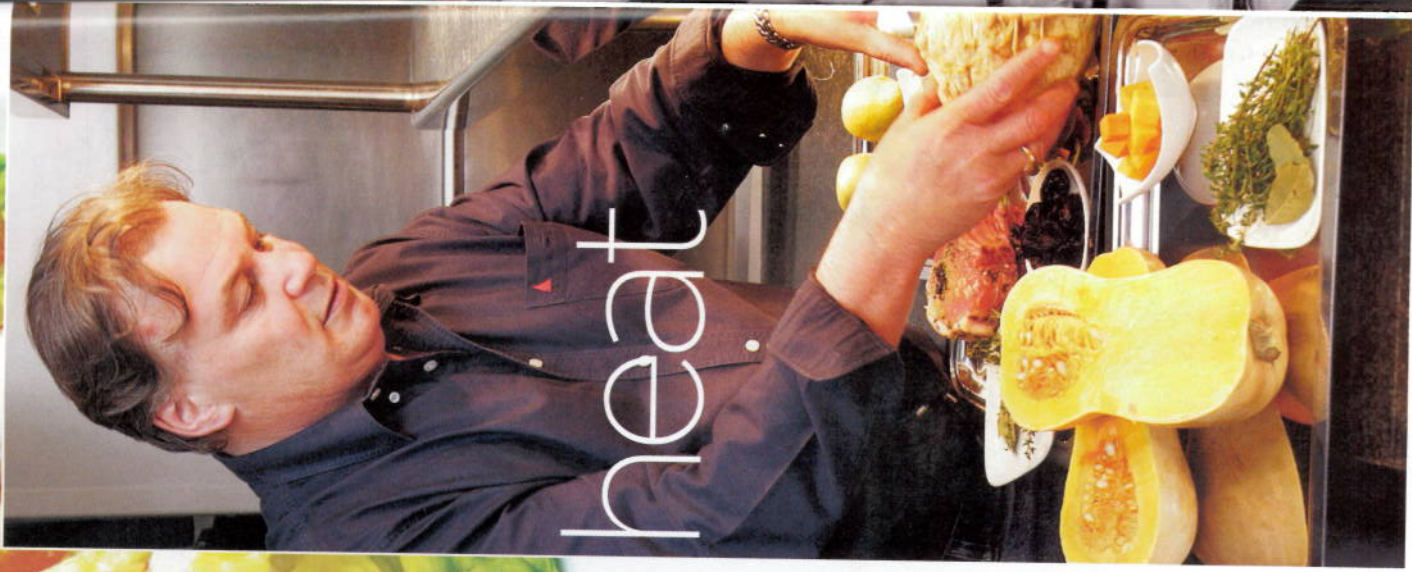
As summer heats up, we see what's cooking in the kitchens of some of Ireland's top chefs. They tell us about their favourite seasonal ingredients and offer some tips for home cooking.

If you can't stand the heat.

Derry Clarke, L'Ecrivain

Award-winning chef Derry Clarke, together with his wife, Sallyanne, owns the Michelin Star L'Ecrivain restaurant in Dublin. In summertime, Derry says, restaurant-goers are looking for lighter dishes with fresh ingredients: in particular, fish and salads see a boost in popularity. When it comes to his own summertime favourites, Derry says it has to be lobster. The best season for lobster is summer, he explains, noting that it is more affordable now than ever before. "Believe it or not, the price has come down. It goes quite low around July and August." Derry likes to mix things up and every year he serves his lobster in a different way. "Last year I did it with seaweed and smoky leeks. It was tough, earthy leeks with fresh seaweed. I love mixing the earth and sea." He adds: "With lobster you don't really have to do too much. Keep it as natural as you can." For dessert, Derry thinks Wexford strawberries

are the way to go. Again, he says, simplicity is key to serving this summertime dessert. "When you have new season foods everyone has them plain, maybe with a bit of cream. Obviously, when the season goes on people tend to get bored and you start doing different things with it, like white chocolate and strawberry parfait." Without a doubt, summertime is barbecue time and Derry believes Irish people should be more adventurous in their barbecue choices. "People don't do enough legs of lamb, or joints, or whole chickens. Things like that you can do on the barbecue, you just have to cook it slow." He says that people often miss the importance of slow cooking on the barbecue and says slow cooking leads to better results. "The trick is to cook at the edges; start where the heat is, at the centre, and then move your food out, off the heat, then put the lid down and let it cook really slowly. The slower the better."



Ross Lewis, Chapter One

Michelin star-winning head chef and co-owner of Chapter One, Ross Lewis says that in summer the trend leans towards fish instead of meat. "In particular, we notice marinated fish such as ceviche or scallops or pickled mackerel are very popular," says Ross. When it comes to seasonal ingredients, Ross agrees with Derry, saying: "It has to be lobster – the queen of the sea! It is very versatile, sublime and elegant with a briny, sweet flavour." For non-seafood lovers, Ross suggests lamb. "July brings the wonderful Achill black-faced lamb and Connemara Hill lamb," he says, adding: "It's probably the best lamb I've ever tasted." As well as good quality ingredients, Ross says it's important to have the right equipment. When it comes to home barbecuing he recommends investing in a good barbecue unit. "You could look no further than The Big Green Egg – it's really an amazing unit." He advises using good quality charcoal and waiting until the flame dies down to ensure the food doesn't burn. "Try and avoid overly sugary marinades as this too can cause the food to burn." He says barbecuing isn't all about meat and says fish makes a good alternative. "People can be apprehensive about barbecuing fish but wrapping it *en papillote* is a pretty fail-safe way of cooking it and produces great flavour." Ross suggests adding some punch to a traditional summer salad for a little variety. He mixes raw grated ginger and garlic 2:1, soy sauce, chardonnay vinegar and light olive oil. "That really gives a zing to salad."

Who is your local craft butcher?



There are over 400 members of the Associated Craft Butchers of Ireland (ACBI) and you can identify your local craft butcher by the 'Certified Craft Butcher Plaque' above the door of their shop. Julie Cahill of the ACBI encourages customers to talk to their local craft butcher, get to know the staff, and ask them questions. "That type of knowledge, expertise and interaction gives the customer peace of mind." She adds that craft butcher shops take great pride in knowing where their products come from, have full traceability and can reassure customers on the quality of their produce. "Craft butchers ensure they know their suppliers, and the majority of products sold in craft butcher shops are freshly prepared." Find your local craft butcher online at: www.craftbutchers.ie

Neven Maguire, MacNean House and Restaurant

Award-winning celebrity chef and owner of MacNean House and Restaurant, Neven Maguire understands that an Irish summer can be unpredictable, and just as the weather changes so do people's choices in food. "It is very weather dependent," he says. "People move to lighter foods with good weather. Salads and fish are perfect. I like to serve seasonal vegetables like peas, beans, broad beans, cherry vine tomatoes and courgette flowers, which I grow in my own garden." At the moment, Neven says he is using a lot of home-grown salads in his cooking. "I particularly like purple sprouting broccoli, ruby chard, and peas. I also love courgette flowers, which we should have very soon. I like to fill them with crab mousse and serve with sea bass or sea trout." When it comes to dressing a salad, Neven recommends making a dressing with Irish rapeseed oil, balsamic vinegar, lemon zest and a touch of honey and mustard. Meat is central to most barbecues and Neven recommends letting meat marinate overnight. "Good food needs good ingredients," says Neven, adding: "To get the best quality meats go to your local craft butcher" (see panel). Barbecues are about having fun and relaxing and Neven believes simple dining adds to this. "Barbecues are about simple, great and tasty foods and letting our delicious meats and home-grown produce speak for itself. They are a great way to catch up with friends and family."