



THE MENU



Food news with Joe McNamee

EATS AND LEAVES

It takes a special kind of cookbook to earn a mention in *The Menu* and *The Farmette Cookbook: Recipes & Adventures from My Life on an Irish Farm* (Roost Books), by Imen McDonnell, is certainly such a tome. Imen jettisoned a burgeoning career in the US broadcast industry to hotfoot it after her new swain back to his Co Limerick family farm and don her first pair of wellies. It was hard going initially, but Imen gradually embraced life in rural Ireland, learning to cook and grow with much help from her new mother-in-law. But romantic biographies fill no bellies, most especially *The Menu*'s so, dabbing a tear from the corner of his glass reading eye, he began delving to find a culinary tale of equal merit and, while Imen is understandably besotted with our traditional farmhouse cooking based on superlative native produce, and seeks to share her new-found love with an American audience, there is much to glean for an Irish readership in her simple, clear yet alluring recipes, the baked comestibles, sweet and savoury, being especially commendable, a Fraughan Cobbler exemplifying the culinary collision that happens when New World meets the Old. www.farmette.ie

GO WEST WATERFORD, YOUNG MAN

Next weekend sees *The Menu* up to his oxters once more in the very wonderful West Waterford Festival of Food in lovely Dungarvan, where *Gourmet Garbage* (April 16) sees him cooking with his great comrade-in-chaos, one of the great Irish chefs, Michael Quinn, at *Nude* restaurant, and *Taking the Leap* (April 15) sees him meeting some brave young graduates of Dublin Cookery School who've taken the plunge and opened their own new food businesses before then sampling their wares. The programme is, as always, crammed with splendid options for all ages but a special mention for two twinned events with appeal for anyone interested in *Real Bread*. *Ancient Grains* (April 16) is a discussion hosted by food historian Regina Sexton and *Bread, Gluten and Coeliac Disease* (April 17) is a panel discussion with a short demo from panel member Denise O'Callaghan of *Denise's Delicious Gluten Free*. www.westwaterfordfestivaloffood.com

EAT YOUR GREENS

Greening Cork's Historic Spine (April 14, 6pm-8pm) is a collaboration of Cork Food Policy Council, Cork Social Good Team, and Reimagine Cork at Elizabeth Fort with the aim of making Cork city an increasingly edible city. To find out more, email greeningcork@gmail.com. Sisters Rachel and Hannah Dare offer another cooking demo at *Organico* in Bantry, covering mostly plant-based dishes packed with natural healthy ingredients (booking essential www.organico.ie) while Regina Sexton crops up again, this time at *May Day Milk Magic* (April 14), a free event in UCC: Prof Alan Kelly looks at the science of buttermaking, Regina covers history and folklore, and buttermaker Breda McDonald demonstrates the practice (www.ucc.ie/en/llf).

TODAY'S SPECIAL

Carrigaline Farmhouse Cheese was first produced by Pat and Ann O'Farrell in the late 1980s on their farm just outside Cork city as part of the second wave of the modern Irish farmhouse cheesemaking movement. The original unflavoured version re-

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mains a popular choice at The Menu's family soirées because the deceptively simple semi-soft cheese wears no airs or graces, no ebullient honk or palate-tingling extremities of flavour, rather a gentle fermented buttery mouthful with a pinch of piquancy at the tail.

www.carrigalinecheese.com

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