

Dorset Seafood Festival

If you have a passion for *fruits de mer* then beat a path to Weymouth's harbourside this July

What better way to enjoy the sea and all its bounty than at The Dorset Seafood Festival, from 9-10 July, on Weymouth's beautiful historic harbourside. Last year it attracted around 50,000 visitors and it is set to become the largest seafood festival in the UK thanks to the support of a raft of high-profile sponsors including Champagne Pommery, Condor Ferries, Ringwood Brewery, Lloyds TSB and Wines of Chile.

This year's event will see some new faces joining the celebrity chef line-up including Lesley Waters, Ed Baines and Shaun Rankin. They will be joining seasoned Dorset Seafood Festival regulars Mat Follas, John Wright and Giles Thompson. They will be sharing their top tips for getting the most from our local seafood and visitors will get the chance to learn more about sustainable fishing.

If your motivation for visiting the festival is purely gourmand you will not be disappointed. The Seafood Village, with over 100 stalls, will be serving freshly prepared seafood dishes. Showcasing many of Dorset's finest restaurants, this year's menu includes local fish cakes with a fennel and caper salsa, barbecued skewered mackerel, local sardine skewers, scallop and chorizo skewers, grilled stuffed squid, dressed Portland Crab salad. And of course there will be local oysters galore.

Not to be missed is the Cross Harbour swim at 10.30am on Saturday morning when locals compete to be the first to swim across the harbour and eat an oyster.

For more information visit dorsetseafood.co.uk



Mat Follas shows a lobster to a young seafood festival visitor

The Dorset Seafood Festival is set to become the largest festival of its kind in the UK



Some of the wonderful range of seafood

Chef in Focus: Mat Follas

Mat was born in Portsmouth, where his father had been posted with the New Zealand Navy. Although he grew up in New Zealand, Mat has spent most of his adult life in England, which he now calls home. After completing a degree in Electronics and Computer Science as a mature student, he subsequently built himself a very successful career in IT. Mat loves to travel and has spent time in Europe, North America and South East Asia, including a period living in Thailand teaching people to scuba dive. This wide exposure to different cultures and food is reflected in his cooking.

After moving to West Dorset with his family in 2002, Mat discovered that British waters offer great scuba diving opportunities, and with that came lots of fresh seafood. A day's cooking course at Rick Stein's Seafood School was the start of an extraordinary journey that encompassed winning BBC *Masterchef* and culminated in opening The Wild Garlic in Beaminster, realising Mat's long-held dream of having his own restaurant serving real food with something wild at its heart.

Mat is passionate about cooking with local and wild ingredients, including sea vegetables and tasty hedgerow finds. His dishes use naturally delicious ingredients to produce food that is full of flavour, such as this unusual recipe which combines a savoury dill-infused meringue with salmon. □



Seafood paella at the Basilica Stand

Salmon with Dill Meringue Crust

Savoury meringues are occasionally used in cooking. Here's a twist using an egg white omelette to steam a salmon fillet as well as hard meringue to decorate the plate. The dill permeates and seasons the fish wonderfully, and cooking it wrapped keeps the fish wonderfully moist. This would also work well using local trout.

**Serves 4****Ingredients:**

600g salmon or trout fillet (descaled and boned)
4 egg whites
Bunch of dill, destalked and finely chopped
2 tsp caster sugar
Salt and white pepper

Method

1 Preheat the oven to 160°C. Whisk the egg whites, adding the sugar, ½ teaspoon salt, a pinch of white pepper and a dessertspoon of finely chopped dill. When stiff peaks are formed spread the mixture on a silicon mat to a thickness of approx ¼ inch.

2 Bake in the oven for 10 minutes, until it forms an omelette (it should still be flexible). Leave one-third of the meringue on the silicon mat and return to the oven at 120°C for 20 minutes.

3 Meanwhile, wrap the other two-thirds of the meringue around the salmon fillet, sealing it so that it will cook *en papillote* (so the steam is kept in the meringue parcel).

4 Turn the oven back up to 160°C and cook the wrapped fish for between 15-20 minutes, until the fish is firm to the touch.

5 Remove fish from the oven and rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve on a plate, dressed with pieces of the hard meringue and pickled vegetables.



John Wright, wild food guru, in action at the festival