

Chelsea Flower Show

Summer is on its way and so, inspired by the Chelsea flower show, here are a few simple and pretty dishes to bring your garden to your plate!

There are a few rules, however! Pick your edible flowers early in the day and in dry weather and don't use blossoms that have been sprayed with chemicals (do not eat shop-bought flowers). Rinse them quickly under gently running cool water and before using, remove the pistils, stamens and the white part at the base of the petals; these can lend a bitter flavour. Even if you don't want to eat these edible flowers, they will still look pretty on the plate especially if you are enjoying your meal 'al fresco' (bliss!) in the sun! Not all flowers will be in season when you read this, so hang on to these pages for the summer!

01. Tulip leaves

They look so pretty on a plate or board with little fillings of your choice. We've filled some of ours with **100g crab meat** mixed with **75g cream cheese**, a few squeezes of **lemon juice**, **black pepper**, some **snipped chives** and a sprinkle of **paprika**. Others are filled with a mixture of **cream cheese** and **gorgonzola dolce**, **black pepper**, a couple of chopped **walnuts** and **lemon juice**. You could try spicy humous sprinkled with paprika and marigold petals. Decorate them with more edible flowers and use whatever is in season!

02. Baby leaf salad

You can be as creative as you

like! Toss baby leaves, including nasturtium leaves in the summer, together in a dressing made of **25g frozen peas**, **lemon juice** to taste, **salt and pepper** and **150ml olive oil**. Blend this mixture until smooth and mix with your salad leaves. Decorate with lots of pretty edible flowers. Or use a dressing of white wine vinegar or lemon juice with hazelnut oil and a sprinkle of toasted hazelnuts.

03. Spring vegetable salad

Steam or briefly boil a mixture of your favourite spring vegetables. Perhaps some fresh asparagus, Jersey Royal new potatoes, green beans, baby courgettes, baby leeks, carrots and/or fresh young peas? Toss them in a little butter or olive oil and snipped chives or mint and serve with a cream and mustard sauce with wild mustard flowers. Lightly whip **150ml double cream**, add a generous **1tbsp Dijon mustard** and some **wild mustard flowers** and decorate with more colourful edible flowers such as chive, borage, nasturtium, marigold, cornflowers, carnations, honeysuckle, dandelion leaves or even a few scented geraniums!

More ideas!

Use the pea dressing for your spring vegetable salad instead of the cream and mustard sauce and decorate with sweet violets, broad bean or pea flowers, chive flowers, rocket flowers, violas, or the common

mallow, depending on the season. Stuff courgette flowers or nasturtium flowers with one of our fillings. Add courgette flowers and ribbons of courgettes to your green salad. Scatter some dry-roasted pine nuts on your salads or vegetables or chopped hazelnuts. Top a cracker or thick round of cucumber with feta cheese or a smear of cream cheese and chopped herbs topped with a borage, viola or primrose flower. If you have no time to make the flower ice cubes, just pop a pretty edible flower into the glass as you serve the drink. Be creative!

04. Edible flower ice cubes

You may choose any flowers you have growing in your garden as long as they are edible. Pansies, cornflowers, geranium, honeysuckle, pea blossom, borage, carnation and many more. Mix your flowers and colours to make them as pretty and as colourful as you like. Add the ice cubes to a cold glass of prosecco and enjoy!

Boil a large bottle of **distilled water** (this ensures your ice cubes will be clear) for 2-3 minutes and allow to cool. Fill a large ice cube tray (the larger the cubes, the longer the ice will last in your drink and silicone ice trays are easier) about a third full with the water. Rinse all the flowers gently and remove any stems. Add your **edible flowers**, some face down, and freeze. Fill to two-thirds, add another flower if there's space and freeze again. Finally fill to the top and freeze.



01.



04.



02.



03.