

THE WORLD'S FINEST PARENTING MAGAZINE

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NATURE'S CHILD

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Confessions of a chaotic mother

WHAT'S THE FUSS ABOUT PHONICS?

Read all about it

SUMMER FASHION

For surfer dudes, flower girls & domestic goddesses

Magical ways to host the perfect party

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FASHION * HEALTH * LIFESTYLE * EDUCATIO



My food diary Ann's May

THE NEWNESS OF spring has passed and yet summer is not quite officially here. Even though it's not safe to pack away the hats and scarves just yet, I notice my six-year-old daughter, Hallie, is already asking when her school term ends and what lies ahead for the summer holidays. But before we can contemplate summertime, we must honour the traditional celebrations of the merry month of May.

In the past, the first day of May was celebrated at a great colourful festival with dancing around the maypoles. Children sang and danced in the fields and dramas were performed at the fairs. This ancient festival is still celebrated at one of our local schools. It's a big event with food, maypole dancing, music, games and crafts to create a fun and festive environment. We love to pack a basket of fresh fruits and crackers spread with almond butter, along with some fizzy citrus water and head down to watch. My son, Walker, who's nearly three, loves to grab the colourful ribbons of the maypole and run around in circles.

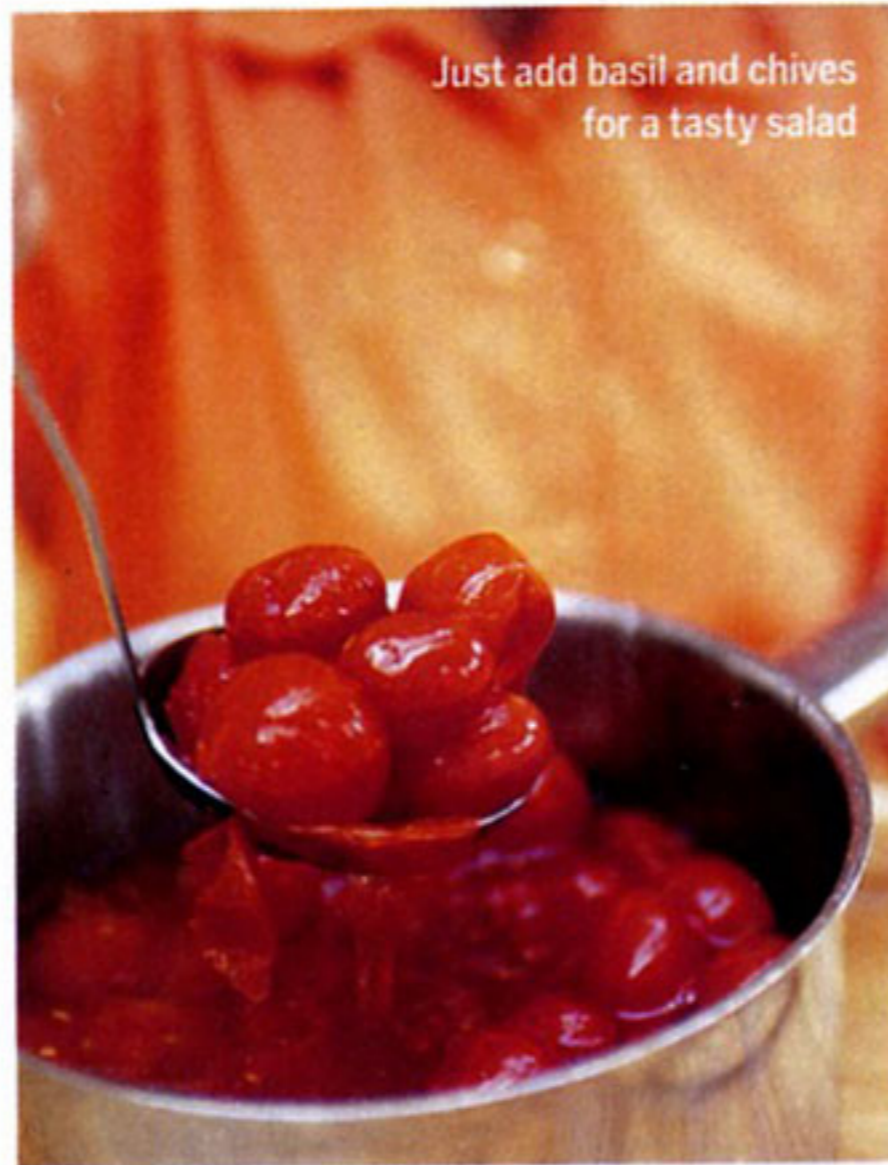
May is a bountiful month at the local farmers' market, too. You will see the first sight of seasonal fruits, such as strawberries, raspberries, cherries and red and white currants – all packed full of healthy vitamins and antioxidants.

Walker loves to take each berry out of its case and line them up in a neat row. He stands at the sink on a kitchen stool and dunks the berries in a bowl of water and shakes them clean. He takes his job quite seriously and can actually manage to do this without making too much mess, though I still make sure I have plenty of kitchen towels handy. I may well have a chef in the making!

It's wonderful to involve your children in all aspects of food and eating – from shopping to putting away the groceries, setting the table and cleaning up. These basic tasks that we take for granted are the building blocks to healthy attitudes about where our food comes from and how it gets on the table. It's a good lesson in life and a rewarding family experience, too. So here's to a fruitful summer – when it finally arrives ■

“ Sometimes I make toast for my children with 'plastic' squares of ham and cheese. And you know what? It tastes great ”

Cook, Nigella Lawson admits to feeding her children processed food



Recipes of the month

Roasted Spring and Summer Vegetables

Serves 4

This dish is a fantastic way to encourage your children to eat their vegetables. Depending on what the market has or what you have in your kitchen, almost any kind of vegetable can be substituted. If the taste of herbs is too strong, just leave these ingredients out or find a few herbs that your family likes best.

Ingredients

2tbsp olive oil
 ½ tsp sea salt, plus more for seasoning
 ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more for seasoning
 2 yellow courgettes, halved crosswise, then cut lengthwise into ½-inch-wide strips
 1 green courgettes, halved crosswise, then cut lengthwise into ½-inch-wide strips
 1 red pepper, cut into ½-inch-wide strips
 3oz thin green beans, trimmed
 1 small leek, cut diagonally into 1-inch slices
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill

Preheat the oven to 450°F/230°C/gas 8. Whisk the oil, salt and black pepper in a large bowl to blend. Add the squash, courgettes, red pepper, green beans, and leek, and toss to coat. Arrange the vegetables evenly over a heavy large-rimmed baking sheet. Reserve the bowl. Roast the vegetables for 20 minutes, stirring after the first 10 minutes, or until they are tender. Return the vegetables to the reserved bowl. Add the dill and toss to coat.

Cherry Tomato Salad with Basil and Chives

Serves 6

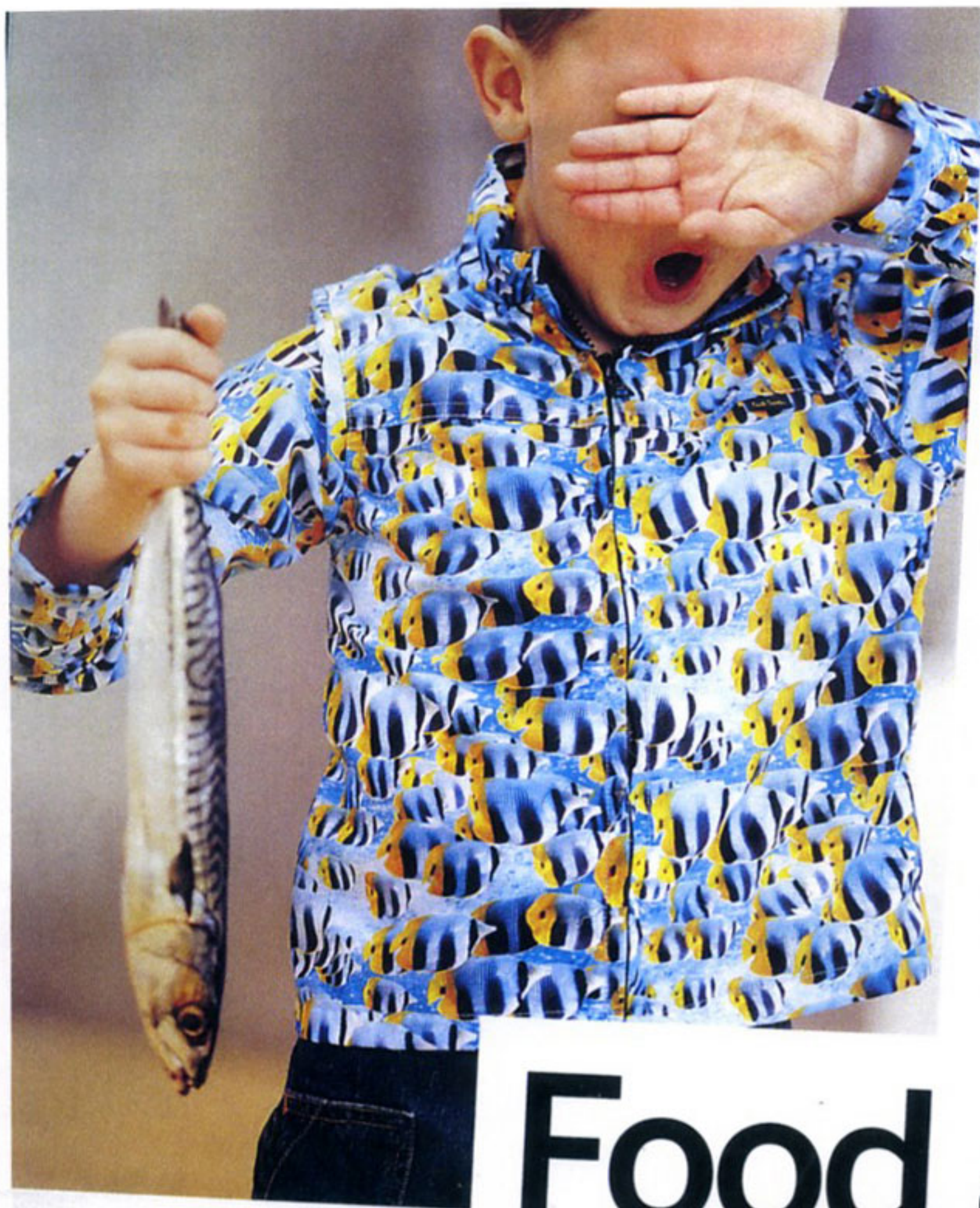
This is a perfect side salad to accompany a light main course. It can be eaten with other simple dishes and teams up beautifully with sandwiches. Children love the vibrancy of the colours and, of course, the squishiness of the tomatoes popping inside their mouths. It's also extremely healthy as tomatoes are classed as a superfood. One serving is an excellent source of vitamins A & C, a good source of potassium and has antioxidant phytonutrients that help promote a healthy heart. Several studies have also shown that the phytonutrient lycopene – abundant in tomatoes – is a potent antioxidant that may prevent the oxidation of LDL 'bad' cholesterol.

Ingredients

2tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 2tbsp white wine vinegar
 4tsp Dijon mustard
 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 ½ tsp sea salt
 12oz cherry tomatoes, halved
 12oz yellow teardrop tomatoes, halved
 2oz finely chopped shallots
 2tbsp chopped fresh chives
 2tsp chopped fresh basil

Whisk the oil, vinegar, mustard, pepper, and salt in a large bowl to blend. Add the cherry tomatoes, teardrop tomatoes, shallots, chives, and basil, and toss to coat.





What's all the fuss about... Omega oils

YEARS AGO, PARENTS gave their children a small daily dose of cod liver oil because it was considered a good way to build their immune system. I remember my grandmother giving me a few tablespoons from time to time when I complained about a tummy ache or not feeling well. My grandmother didn't know anything about essential fatty acids (EFAs) – she was just following her instinct and continuing a traditional fix-all remedy that had been passed down through several generations.

EFAs are naturally occurring unsaturated fats that are considered essential because they are not produced by the human body. There are two essential fatty acids, linoleic (sometimes referred to as the Omega-6 fatty acid) and alpha-linolenic (referred to as the Omega-3 fatty acid).

EFAs are essential to the good health of your children and are important for the proper function of the brain and nervous system. Often, our children's diets are deficient in Omega-3s, which are found mainly in fish, nuts and seeds. The best sources of Omega-3 are flax seeds, cod liver oil, chia seeds, walnuts and walnut oil, the Mediterranean plant, purslane, cold water fish, such as tuna, halibut, mackerel and cod, grass-reared meat, and dark green leafy vegetables.

Depending on the age and size of your child, a teaspoon to tablespoon of flaxseed oil stirred into a small amount of water or juice is enough to make a difference in your child's diet. Alternatively, grind flaxseeds in a coffee grinder and sprinkle onto their morning porridge or on buttered toast; they can even be mixed into your pancake batter.

Food & drink

Ann Gentry on the benefit of Omega-3s, summer vegetables and the joys of juicing...

On Junior's shopping list this month



* Mums4 Organic Fruit Yogurt is the only organic yogurt sweetened purely with fruit and not added sugars, sweeteners or fruit concentrate. A box of four costs £1.89 and is available from Tesco, Waitrose and Asda. Visit www.mums4.com



* Kidz Break Bars by Lyme Regis foods are a healthy snack with no added salt, sugar, preservatives, additives or colourings.

Available in Raisin, Chocolate and Blackcurrant, they cost £1.59 for five bars from Waitrose, Tesco, Sainsbury's and Holland & Barrett. For more information, visit www.lyme-regisfoods.com



I can't live without... Citrus Juicers

If I only have a few lemons to squeeze, and don't mind including the pulp, I'll use the simplest of juicers – the manual squeeze-it-yourself variety, like this gorgeous porcelain Juicer (left) by Sophie Conran for Portmeirion.

To prepare fresh juice more efficiently, with or without pulp, I use an electric juicer. If you want a large glass of freshly-squeezed juice first thing in the morning, this is a must. Easy to use and clean and stylish to boot, I especially like the premium citrus juicer by Krups.