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Today's

Take Stock

CHAMPIONING INDEPENDENT BRITISH CATERING • SEPT - OCT 2015

Healthier Pub Grub

According to new research customers want healthier options when they eat out.

Research by HospitalityGEM found that two-thirds of customers surveyed see a healthy option on the menu as a priority. And thanks to changing attitudes the industry is responding to this.

But while counter service outlets and restaurants are meeting consumers' needs, the pub trade is lagging behind in terms of offering nutritious options, so there's a clear gap in the market for pub operators to offer reasonably priced, nutritious food served quickly.

"It's fantastic that so many people believe the availability of healthy options has significantly improved in the last 12 months for all day parts of the sector, although this is slightly less so for breakfast," says Steven Pike, managing director, HospitalityGEM.

"It's great to see that over half of customers are satisfied that grab and go chains are doing enough to provide healthy options, but it looks like pubs could be doing more. There is an obvious link to accessibility and the time it takes to sit down and eat at a pub as opposed to the increasing grab and go culture, particularly at lunchtime when we tend to be a bit more virtuous. But this also presents an opportunity for landlords and other operators to evaluate their offering of healthy food to check it's the best it can be for their target audience, possibly through greater menu differentiation for various day parts."

Here are some light but filling recipes perfect for the chillier months.

Chicken, Leek and Kale Pie

By Sven Hanson for *Spelt* by Roger Saul

Serves 4

Preparation time: 30 minutes, plus 40 minutes resting
Cooking time: 30 minutes

SPELT ROUGH PASTRY
INGREDIENTS

500g refined spelt flour
500g cold butter, diced
2 tsp sea salt
100g wholemeal spelt flour, for dusting
1 tbsp cold water

METHOD

1. Mix together flour, butter and salt and gradually start to add water and knead

2. Shape dough into a rectangle about 2cm/⅓in thick, wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 20 minutes

3. Once rested, roll out in one direction on a lightly-floured surface into a long rectangle. Fold the bottom up two-thirds and the top down one-third to meet it. Fold over exactly in half. Give the dough a 90-degree turn and repeat the process. Wrap in cling film and rest in the fridge for 20 more minutes, before rolling it out into a sheet or circle or any other appropriate shape for a lid

4. Keep trimmings for other pastry items or pie decorations

FILLING
INGREDIENTS

2 chicken thighs
4 Agen pitted prunes
2 tsp Dijon mustard
2 chicken breasts, cut into chunks
55g unsalted butter
60g refined spelt flour
500ml chicken stock
2 tbsp parsley, chopped
Splash dry sherry (fino or manzanilla) (optional)
2 large leeks, cut into 2cm slices
2 large kale sprigs, spines removed, finely chopped
To glaze milk or beaten egg
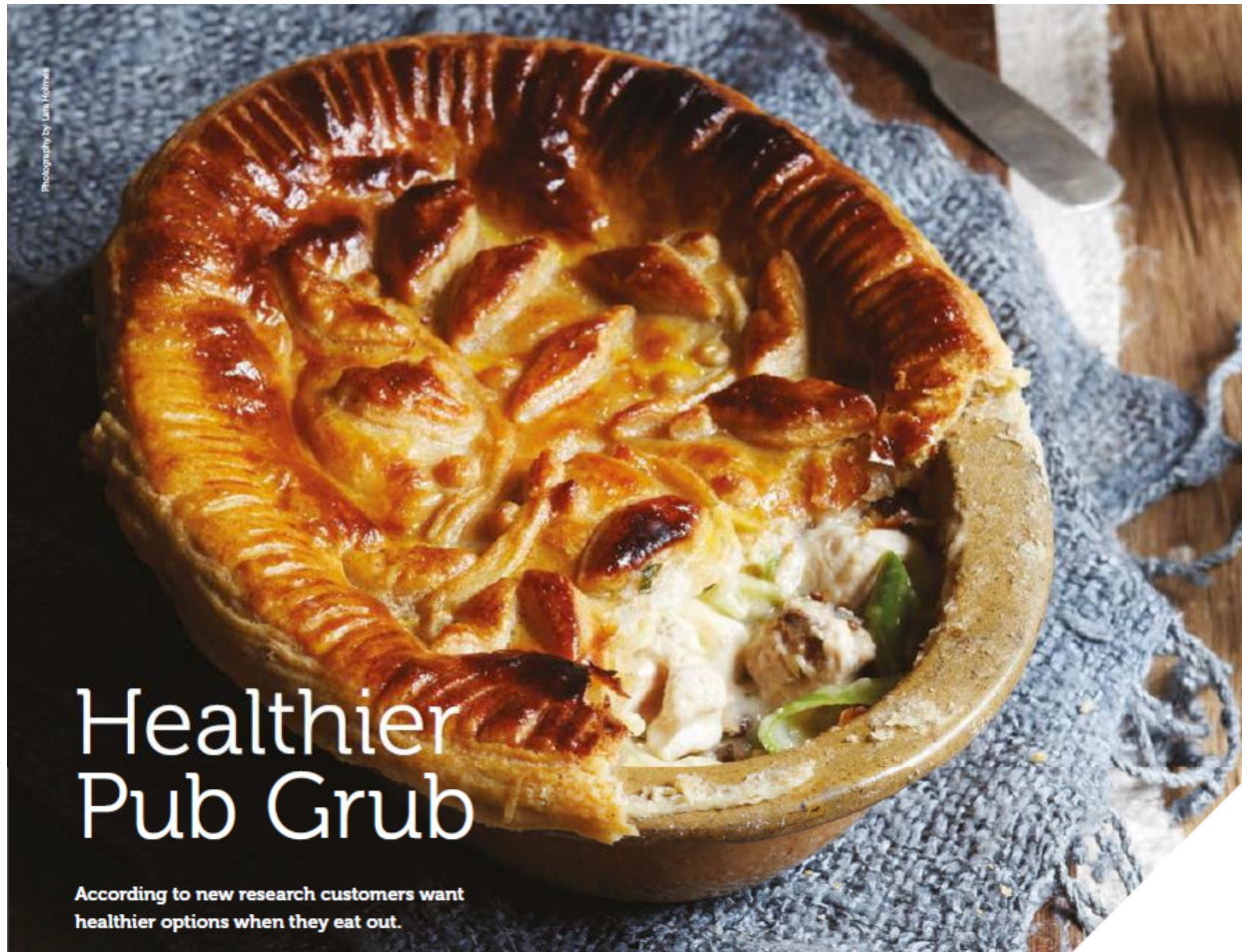To season sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

1. Remove bones and skin from the thighs and pulse meat in a blender with the prunes, 1 tsp of mustard, salt and pepper

2. When chopped enough to form into small dumplings, shape and set aside

3. Preheat oven to 180°C

4. Melt butter over a low heat. Add flour and cook for 1 minute, then slowly whisk in chicken stock

5. Add remaining mustard and chopped parsley, then season to taste with salt and pepper

6. A splash of sherry or other white fortified wine is also a good addition

7. Add leeks to sauce and simmer for a few minutes until starting to soften. The sauce should be reasonably thick but not gloopy. Add kale and stir again

8. Add pieces of breast and thigh dumplings to sauce and put into an ovenproof dish to which a pastry lid can easily be attached

TO ASSEMBLE

1. Lay rolled out pastry on top of dish and decorate

2. Brush with a little milk or beaten egg and bake for 30 minutes, or until the pastry is flaky and looks golden brown

"Spelt is a great whole grain to add to dishes such as casseroles and soups, as it adds texture to a dish. High in fibre it slowly releases energy, giving it a low GI and making it easy to digest. It has a delicious nutty flavour and is a good source of vitamins."