

## Gooseberry gastronomy

### Raymond Blanc talks gooseberries for an online exclusive from Kew on a Plate

N = narrator

R= Raymond Blanc

**N:** Gooseberries were once a common feature of the British kitchen garden, but in recent years have sadly fallen out of favour. This is a shame because these zesty berries can be a perfect addition to sweet and savoury dishes.

**R:** Do you know, in terms of flavour, I notice first that the purple gooseberries are much sweeter than the green one. The green ones are much sharper, and that, of course, is used in the gooseberries pies in the north of England and so on, which is rather lovely.

**N:** The humble gooseberry was brought to Britain by the Normans who named it groseille à maquereau: currant for mackerel – because that's the fish they served them with. In England they were used to both stuff and accompany roast goose, which is believed to be the origin of the British name. But Raymond is using his gooseberries to make a delicious dessert: a gooseberry cheesecake.

**R:** So, only five per cent sugar because I want my gooseberries to be sharp. I want my gooseberries to be triumphant and punchy, so very little sugar.

Et-voilà. Now I want to cook them for about ten minutes maximum. A little bit of water. So slow cooking okay – I want to keep the freshness of the fruit and I want to slow cook it so that it's really destroyed. And the flavour is as much in the skin as it is actually in the flesh.

I am very proud because I managed to make a beautiful cheesecake with gooseberries. It's wonderful as well the incredible other flavours they go with: honey, elderflower, lemon, a bit of ginger, anise (I love anise, okay). And I'm really convinced gooseberries are going to make a big comeback. They will be part of our gastronomy again. And now I understand how beautiful those fruits are, I'm going to celebrate them for a long time.