




Nettle Soup

Harvest ingredients: March-May

Ingredients (serves 4):

- Half a shopping bag of nettle tops, washed and stems removed
- 1 large potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- Knob of butter
- Salt and pepper
- Crème fraiche or yoghurt to serve



Star Ingredient:
Stinging Nettles

You'll also need:

- Hand blender

Method:

1. Heat the butter in a large pan. Once melted, fry the onion in the butter under tender.
2. Add the stock, potato, carrot and nettle leaves. Simmer until all of the vegetables have cooked through.
3. Blitz with the hand blender until the soup is smooth (take care, as it will be hot).
4. Season to taste, and serve with a dollop of yoghurt or crème fraiche.



Nettles

Stinging nettles are found very commonly along the Lancaster Canal – and you may be familiar with how it feels to brush past one! If cooked correctly, they are very tasty and contain lots of vitamins. Nettles are best picked in spring, when they are young and tender. Using rubber gloves, pinch the tops off the nettle plants, where the leaves are smaller than 3 inches long. Store in a shopping bag. Remove any pieces of stem before cooking. The leaves will reduce in size dramatically when cooked, like spinach.

Do not pick any nettles which have flowered, because these are not suitable to eat. The flowers look like long tendrils hanging down from the plant, similar to catkins, and are usually yellowish or greenish in colour.

Tip – always cook nettles before eating, to destroy the stinging chemicals. Not suitable for salads!



Nettles close up. Photo by [Paul Morley](#) on [Unsplash](#).