

PLAYING WITH FIRE

If there's one thing Michael loves with a burning passion, it's flames.

Words **Michael Van de Elzen**

Our Good From Scratch Cookery School is back in its groove after lockdown.

Level 2 meant some adjustments, but we were thrilled to be able to welcome guests back into the school and share our knowledge. We're getting a fantastic response from people attending our winter classes.

One of the key features in and around the cooking school buildings are our fires. We've got an indoor pizza oven for the cooking classes, and an open fire to keep guests warm and toasty. There's an open fire pit in the gardens for the use of head gardener Aridanne Brae, but it's a nice bonus for guests.

The hero has to be the Engel fire (pictured below), which sits in the school's covered courtyard. It's an amazing piece of kit, and so much more than an outdoor fireplace that heats the area. You can:

- cook on the drop-down grill;
- bake a cheeky pizza on the stone;
- use the rotisserie bar for chickens, boned and rolled lamb shoulder, or whole scotch fillet.

I love it so much.

If you'd like to learn more about cooking from scratch, join one of our winter classes. This week, we've made fresh pasta with wild mushrooms, wilted kale, and parmesan cream. Delicious!



MICHAEL'S TIPS FOR FLAMING GOOD MEAT

There's a couple of rules to follow when cooking whole meat joints, such as a boned and rolled shoulder.

- **Season** or marinate well. It can be a big piece of meat and sometimes hard for the seasoning to penetrate the meat. If you are cooking a large piece of lamb, try marinating it in some lemon juice, crushed garlic, rosemary, salt, pepper, and a bit of oil. Leave it to stand overnight. The next day, cook it on the barbecue or a rotisserie stick. The lemon juice gets into the meat and tenderises it, leaving behind a lovely citrus flavour.
- **Soak** the meat. Submerge beef, chicken, pork, or lamb in some buttermilk, which is like watery yoghurt and helps to tenderise it. You can buy it in most supermarkets. Place the meat into a bag and pour in enough buttermilk to thoroughly coat it. Add a bit of spice such as chilli sauce if you want a little kick. Close the bag tight and leave in the fridge for a couple of days.
- **When** cooking any meat, season it well just before you start cooking for good flavour.

- **Get** the barbecue hot at the start – colour is flavour! Then turn it down to around 150°C and cook at a lower heat.
- **Once** cooked, allow the meat to rest for at least 15 minutes, perhaps more depending on its size. This is very important as the meat is under a lot of stress during cooking. Resting allows the meat to reabsorb juices, making it more tender.

COOK GOOD FROM SCRATCH WITH MICHAEL VAN DE ELZEN

For information on classes, visit:
www.goodfromscratch.co.nz

About Michael

Internationally renowned chef and TV host Michael Van de Elzen runs the Good from Scratch Cooking School with wife Belinda.

- 📍 www.vandeelzen.com
- 📘 www.facebook.com/VandeElzen/
- 📷 [@Mikevandeelzen](https://www.instagram.com/mikevandeelzen)



BONUS RECIPE

CHLANTI DUCK WITH AVOCADO OIL MASH

Find it exclusively online:
thisNZlife.co.nz

The hero is the enormous Engel fire in the cooking school courtyard.

Dinner

Mulligatawny:
pronounced
Mull-ah-gah-tore-nee,
a traditional South
Indian curry.

MULLIGATAWNY WITH CORLANDER BREAD

SERVES: 6-8

TIME: 60 minutes

The first time I ever made this soup was some 30 years ago, working in a West-Auckland restaurant. I've changed it slightly over time, but the basic flavours of the curry-spiced chicken and sweetness of the sultanas work so well together. This soup tastes better the day after you make it, when all the flavours have bonded together. I tend to make a big batch, then freeze it or pack it into the kid's lunchboxes.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil
3 large chicken breasts, roughly torn into strips
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
1 carrot, peeled and finely diced
2 tbsp curry powder
1 small knob ginger, peeled and grated
2 sticks lemongrass, crushed
1 cup paella rice
1 litre chicken stock
2 cups water
4 tbsp raisins
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp honey
coriander butter & ciabatta (recipe, below right)

METHOD

- 1 Heat the olive oil in a large pot. Sear the chicken strips until just coloured, then add the onion, carrot, curry powder, lemongrass, and ginger. Sauté for 2 minutes.
- 2 Add the rice and sauté for another 2 minutes.
- 3 Place the chicken back in the pot. Pour in the stock and water, bring to the boil, then simmer for 35 minutes.
- 4 Add the raisins. Season to taste and serve with coriander-buttered bread.



CIABATTA WITH CORLANDER BUTTER

INGREDIENTS

200g unsalted butter
1 tsp coriander seeds, roasted and crushed
1 tsp cumin seeds, roasted and crushed
1 tsp flaky salt
1 handful fresh coriander, chopped
good amount of cracked pepper
1 loaf of ciabatta bread

METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C. Soften the butter and combine with the rest of the ingredients
- 2 Slice the ciabatta bread and spread with the coriander butter. Place onto a roasting tray and cook for 15 minutes. The bread should have a light golden colour; if not, bake for a further 5 minutes.



CAULIFLOWER FRITTERS WITH FRIED HALLOUMI AND LIME EMULSION

SERVES: 2

TIME: 20 minutes

Halloumi is a very firm, salty cheese. It's also one best cooked just before eating, or it can be very chalky. When used correctly, it has the most amazing flavour kick. Buying halloumi can be trial and error. I recommend you look for a middle of the road one, price-wise, and keep trying different brands until you find one you really like.

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked cauliflower florets, chopped
2 eggs, lightly beaten
2 tbsp flour
1 tsp baking powder
pinch salt
3 tbsp chopped spring onion
2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves
4 tbsp canola oil
1 tbsp flour
4 slices halloumi (approx. 100-150g)
6 stalks coriander with leaves
1 lime, cut into wedges for serving

METHOD

- 1 In a bowl, mix the first seven ingredients until combined.
- 2 Heat 2 tbsp of oil in a large frying pan and fry spoonfuls of the cauliflower batter until golden, remove and clean out the pan.

Dessert



The secret to this topping is LSA:
linseed, sunflower seeds,
and almond.

DATE, BLUEBERRY, AND APPLE CRUMBLE

SERVES: 6

TIME: 30 minutes

This is the perfect winter crumble, with crisp tartness from the winter apples and the vibrant colour of blueberries. The topping is slightly different as I've added some LSA (linseed, sunflower seeds, almonds). It adds nutrition and gives it an amazing nutty flavor. I serve this crumble with yoghurt, but go ahead and add some ice cream if you want.

INGREDIENTS: CRUMBLE MIX

2 cups oats
1 cup LSA
½ cup brown sugar
1 cup plain flour
1 cup dates
200g butter
½ cup shredded coconut

METHOD

- 1 Preheat oven to 170°C. Blitz all of the ingredients in a food processor until just combined.
- 2 Spread the mix out on a large baking tray. Bake for 15 minutes, then remove from oven. Turn the mix over with a spatula or wooden spoon, and return to the oven for a further 15 minutes until crunchy and golden. Allow to cool.

INGREDIENTS: APPLE-BERRY MIX

3 cups chopped apples
2 cups frozen blueberries
2 tbsp honey
2 tbsp water

METHOD

Bring all the ingredients to a simmer in a large saucepan, then cook until soft, stirring occasionally.
To serve: put 2-3 big spoonfuls of the apple mix into six glasses (about 300ml capacity), then top with the same amount of the crumble mix and serve. Garnish with a dollop of yoghurt or ice cream.

Michael's TIP

Slice the halloumi into 5mm-thick slices and then dredge it in flour. Fry in a good amount of oil until golden on both sides. Serve it quickly while it's tender and soft.