

### What the experts recommend

**The Pig on the Beach** *Manor House, Manor Road, Studland, Dorset (01929-450288)*

There is now a “modest litter” of Pig hotels across the Southwest, says Tim Hayward in the FT. All located in renovated country houses, they are “hip” without being “egregiously Shoreditch” – and the Pig on the Beach at Studland in Dorset “might well be the best addition to the herd” yet. It’s in a stunning, and rather glamorous, setting. And when it comes to the food, the policy – as with the other Pigs – is to source as many ingredients as possible locally (or indeed from the hotel’s own kitchen garden): there’s smoking, pickling and preserving on site, too. A chicken and pork terrine is “breathtaking” – light, packed with fresh herbs and bedecked in flowers. Cornish sardines are filleted, flash-fried and served on sourdough toast with a vegetable purée. And a half pig head slow-cooked to a state of collapse, then crisped to a crackling crust, is astonishing. Staying here is like having your own small stately home – one with a “brilliantly stocked larder” and a kitchen full of “talented, pork-obsessed chefs”. *About £30 a head for three courses, plus drinks and service.*

**Frog and Scot** *86 High Street, Deal, Kent (01304-379444)*

Down in “bijou, pastel-painted” Deal, a Frenchman, Benoit Dezecot, and his



*The Pig on the Beach: rather glamorous*

partner, Sarah Ross (the eponymous Frog and Scot), have created the “Platonic ideal of a neighbourhood bistro”, says Marina O’Loughlin in The Guardian. In fact, this place is so good – and so pleasingly unpretentious – that I’m reminded of those other Kent luminaries, The Goods Shed and “my beloved Sportsman”; it’s no surprise then, to learn that the chef, David Hart, has worked at the latter. Come here for French onion soup and snails; for Whistable oysters with shallot-vinegar *mignonette*; for chicken livers “bellowing with booziness”. Brill, water-bathed then grilled, is beautifully moist-crisp, with an alluring Avruga caviar sauce. Lamb chops

have a depth of flavour “you’d associate with hogget”. A fine sirloin steak is topped with a pat of “reeking garlic butter” and comes with “lustworthy” chips (“double-cooked until almost nutty, all crisp and fluffy”). What are you waiting for? *£25-£30 a head, plus drinks and service.*

**Oshibi** *9 Franklins Yard, Fossgate, York (01904-593649)*

My verdict on Oshibi may not be much use to you, says Michael Deacon in The Daily Telegraph. That’s because at this tiny Korean restaurant in York, diners get to make a key part of the meal themselves on a special grill fitted to the table. The serving staff bring you a selection of vegetables and dips, and then you cook your choice of main course. I went for beef and squid, and they were “great, if I do say so myself, and went especially well with the *ssamjang* (a livid-red spicy dipping sauce)”. Essentially, you’re holding your own little indoor barbecue – and as such, Oshibi is best enjoyed as part of a big group. If you prefer, there’s also a non-grill menu with lots of dishes that require the diner to do nothing but eat; I especially enjoyed the “succulent” *yachae mandu* (pan-fried vegetable dumplings). I liked this place, even if you do have to cook your own supper. “Fortunately, I was quite pleased with my efforts, and made sure to slip myself a generous tip.” *Around £20 per person, plus drinks.*

### Hygge home-baking: Loki’s brownie

A hugely popular concept in Denmark, *hygge* (pronounced who-guh) refers to the “sublime state of cosiness you feel when you are with loved ones and nothing else matters”, says Brontë Aurell. And it is a feeling the Danes often achieve by tucking into lovely homemade Scandinavian cakes. This moreish *chokoladekage*, or brownie, will definitely make everything *hygge*. I call it Loki’s brownie, after the shape-shifting trickster Norse god. Do experiment by adding your own choice of treats to the mix

*Makes 9-12 200g good-quality 70% dark chocolate 250g unsalted butter 275g caster sugar 3 eggs 75g plain flour 50g good-quality cocoa powder (we use Fazer Cacao) a pinch of salt 1 tsp vanilla sugar or extract, or use the seeds from 1 vanilla pod 150g filling of your choice – see method for suggestions a 20cm x 20cm square baking pan, greased and lined with baking parchment*

- Preheat the oven to 170°C. Melt the chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water: do not let the base of the bowl touch the water. Alternatively, you can use a microwave, but take care to just melt, rather than cook, them. Set aside to cool.
- In a large mixing bowl, beat together the caster sugar and eggs by hand using a balloon whisk. There is no need to beat in loads of air as you don’t want the brownie to rise too much. Ensure the melted chocolate-butter has cooled sufficiently, then stir into the sugar-egg mixture.
- Sift the plain flour, cocoa powder and salt into the bowl. Add the vanilla and fold with a spatula until smooth. Take care not to overwork the mixture. Fold in 100-150g of your chosen filling. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and sprinkle the remaining filling on top.



- Filling suggestions: nuts such as walnut, pecan, macadamia or Brazil nuts. Your favourite sweets: marshmallows, chopped Daim bars, toffees, liquorice, soft nougat praline chunks, mint chocolates or chocolate buttons. Dried fruit such as raisins or cherries.
- Bake in the preheated oven for 25-30 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the side comes out clean – the middle can still be gooey, but the brownies should not wobble when you shake the pan. Note that baking times will vary. Brownies are quite forgiving if you cook them on a lower heat for a longer time – so keep checking the edges. It’s better to slightly underbake a brownie, if anything, so take it out a bit earlier rather than give it that extra few minutes.
- Leave to cool, then cut into squares to serve.

*Taken from ScandiKitchen: Fika and Hygge by Brontë Aurell, published by Ryland Peters & Small at £16.99. To buy from The Week Bookshop for £12.99, call 020-3176 3835 or visit www.theweek.co.uk/bookshop.*