



# Josephine O'Hare

## on mastering the perfect British Christmas

Trained at the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Ireland, Josephine O'Hare studied culinary arts at Westminster Kingsway College. She pursued her food passion by working in several London restaurants and in private homes across the UK and abroad.

Josephine O'Hare cooking for #hareonthehill

Josephine's cooking philosophy celebrates fresh seasonal ingredients, mindful cooking, the wonders of flavour, and the pleasure of eating well in great company.

*BBC's MasterChef: The Professionals* is a cookery competition that pushes chefs to the top of the culinary world and awards the winner a MasterChef title.

Want a picture-perfect traditional British Christmas with all the trimmings but none of the stress? In recent years, there has been an increase in demand for fine dining experiences in the comfort of the UK's homes. And occasions rarely get more special (or busy) than during the Christmas period. Ever-changing trends in British cuisine have also led to an appetite for modern twists on traditional festive dishes.

Well-known *MasterChef: the Professionals* finalist Josephine O'Hare is a chef for Greycoat Lumleys. Here, she speaks to FOCUS exclusively about modern twists on traditional festive recipes, planning and preparation and the ingredients for a perfect Christmas.

### What advice would you give to people reaching out for support during the Christmas season?

Christmas can be rather stressful, so I would advise clients to get in touch well in advance. I like to use suppliers local to the client – a local butcher is key in particular.

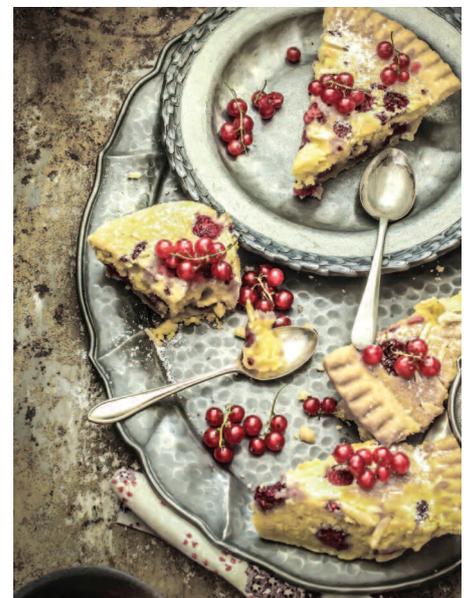
### Have you ever had any unusual Christmas-themed requests?

One year I was cooking for a family who had a poodle. They were very strict as to what he ate...and he was never allowed in the kitchen or the dining room. At Christmas lunch however, the father requested a small plate of turkey to be brought to the dining room, so that the dog could eat with the family.

### Not everyone is keen on traditional dishes and Christmas pudding seems to divide the nation. Do you have a modern twist or an alternative that is still festive?

For those who aren't keen on the traditional Christmas pudding, I would make a Christmas frangipane tart. It's a nod to the

classic Christmas pudding, but isn't too overpowering for those who aren't as keen on the old-fashioned, boozy, fruity flavours. I line a removable-bottomed tart case with sweet shortcrust pastry, spread the base with mincemeat, pipe or dollop a classic frangipane mix on top, scatter with flaked almonds and bake as you would a normal Bakewell tart. I love adding some tangerine zest to the frangipane mix for a Christmas twist! This can then be served with pouring cream or brandy butter for traditionalists.



## What would you suggest for left-overs, outside of the usual turkey sandwich?

I love to make a turkey pilaf. This might sound odd, but it's totally delicious and a lovely change from the usual style of food over the Christmas period. I make a stock out of the turkey carcass first, then sauté some onions and celery in a large oven-proof pot, add basmati rice along with any spices or curry powers you might like, before covering the rice with the turkey stock, and adding in the left-over turkey meat – picked brown meat is particularly good! It can be cooked slowly on the hob, or in a moderate oven. Fresh herbs, and pomegranate seeds scattered over at the end add a lovely, festive pop of colour.

I also love a very simple turkey broth with lots of winter greens such as cavolo nero, leeks, celery and purple sprouting broccoli; a teaspoon of Dijon mustard in the broth is a nice addition.

## Can you share one of your favourite Christmas recipes with us?

A favourite Christmas recipe of mine is one I learnt at Ballymaloe Cookery School years ago. It's perhaps a bit [quaint], but at this time of year that seems to work. It's a very simple tangerine sorbet, which, if you have the patience, you freeze in the hollowed-out tangerine skins. They look so pretty and are wonderfully light and refreshing – a lovely antidote to the heavier food on Christmas day and the perfect seasonal palate cleanser after turkey and before the pudding.

## Do you hope to bring out a cookbook, and if so, will you feature any Christmas recipes?

Yes, this is something I've always dreamed of and something I am working towards. A Christmas recipe or two will definitely feature as I always cook seasonally. It wouldn't be possible to write a cookbook that celebrates seasonal food without some Christmas recipes in the winter pages.

## Who is your favourite chef?

There are so many inspiring chefs. After their support and kind words on

*MasterChef: The Professionals*, I would have to say Monica Galletti and Marcus Wareing – they are inspirational chefs and lovely people. I've always loved Valentine Warner's food and his food ethos; again, it's simple, seasonal food done incredibly well - this is the way I love to cook.



Gregg Wallace, Monica Galletti and Marcus Wareing, the judges of Masterchef: the Professionals

Interview by **Natalie Cleary** of Greycoat Lumleys.

**A discount is offered to FOCUS members on any booking received before the end of October 2016.**

[www.greycoatlumleys.co.uk](http://www.greycoatlumleys.co.uk)

Let Greycoat Lumleys find the very best staff for your home and your family



Candidates are carefully vetted by us and matched to your specific requirements. We won't charge you a fee unless we find someone for you. No obligation client home visits to discuss your recruitment needs.

Dinner Party Chefs  
Christmas Day Cooks  
Waiting Staff  
Housekeepers  
Couples  
Nannies  
Chefs & Cooks  
Chauffeurs  
Maternity Nurses  
Gardeners  
Nanny/Housekeepers  
PA's



+44 (0)20 7233 9950  
[info@greycoatlumleys.co.uk](mailto:info@greycoatlumleys.co.uk)  
[www.greycoatlumleys.co.uk](http://www.greycoatlumleys.co.uk)

Don't forget to mention Focus for 10% discount on our fees

  
**GREYCOAT  
LUMLEYS**

*Setting the Standard in Recruitment*