



Don't Miss Out!
Free School Meals
registration



Chef's Corner
From our kitchens
to yours



Activity Ideas
Get crafty this
autumn



BALANCED TRAY

More than just lunch



Between now and the Christmas break, we'll be serving up lots of fun and delicious Theme Days!

These are special days where the whole menu is inspired by a fun topic.

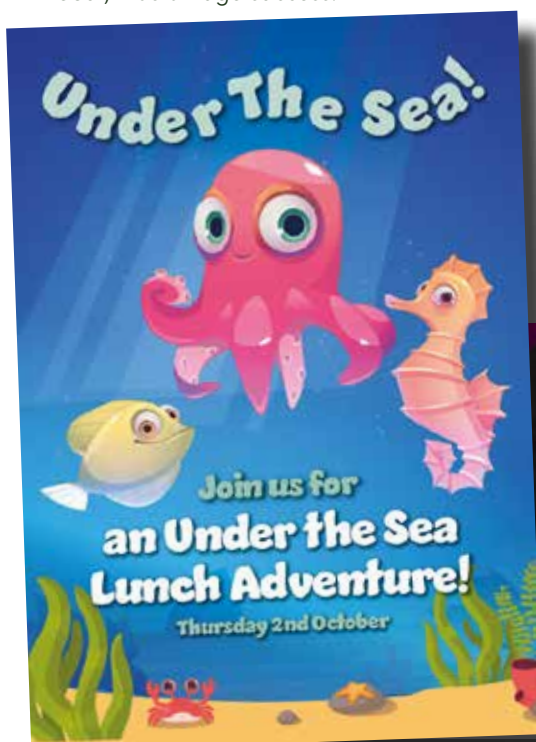
Our most recent Theme Day, *'Under the Sea'*, was a huge success!

Our catering teams did an amazing job transforming the dining hall and serving up a wonderful, themed lunch.

We received some fantastic feedback from pupils, and the plates were practically licked clean! We've included a few pictures so you can see the fun.

Keep an eye on your school's usual communication channels (like the school website or newsletters) for the new menu and the dates of the upcoming Theme Days.

We can't wait for your child to try all the delicious new food!



October Flavour Revolution: Discover Our Brand-New Menus!

Exciting News: Our Delicious New Autumn Menu is Here!

We're thrilled to announce that a brand new autumn menu will be in all our school kitchens right when your children return to school!

We know how important lunch is for keeping focused and bodies energised for an afternoon of learning and playing.

That's why our development chefs have been busy creating a menu that is packed with fresh, seasonal ingredients and, most importantly... tasty food!

What's Cooking?

Get ready for a mix of old and new!

- **Returning Favourites:** We've listened to the children and are bringing back some of the most-requested classics
- **New Dishes:** Be sure to check your school's menu for some exciting new meals that we hope will quickly become firm favourites!

Look out for the new menus across all our locations starting this November!

We look forward to your feedback on these new additions!



Don't Miss Out!

The Secret Superpower of Free School Meals Registration

As your school caterer, we believe that every child deserves a nutritious, delicious, and balanced meal every day to help them learn, grow, and play?

If your child is eligible for Free School Meals, we strongly encourage you to sign up! It's an easy process that offers significant benefits for your child, your family, and the whole school community.

Why Sign Up? The Benefits for Your Child

- **A Healthy Start to Learning:** A hot, healthy school lunch provides essential nutrients and energy, which helps children concentrate better in class throughout the afternoon. We work hard to create varied menus that meet high nutritional standards and introduce children to different healthy foods
- **Saves You Time and Money:** Packing a lunch every day can be time-consuming and costly.

Signing up for FSM saves you the hassle of daily preparation and ensures your child is getting a good meal without any cost to you.

- **Social & Emotional Well-being:** Eating a meal with their friends is a valuable social time for children, helping to build friendships and good table manners in a relaxed environment.

Crucially: The Benefit to the School

Did you know that signing up for Free School Meals, even if your child is in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2 (and already receives a Universal Infant Free School Meal), is vital for the school's funding?

When you successfully register for FSM eligibility, the school receives additional funding called Pupil Premium. This extra money is used to support your child and all students at school through initiatives like:

- Providing extra support staff or small group tuition

- Funding school trips, clubs, and resources
- Purchasing new equipment for the classrooms or playground

This funding is allocated based on the number of eligible students who are registered, so every registration truly makes a difference to the school resources!

Are you eligible? It's Quick and Confidential!

Checking your eligibility is simple and confidential. Eligibility is usually based on certain benefits, such as Income Support or Universal Credit.

If you need any support, please speak to the school office who will be able to assist you.

If you would like to see a particular dish on the menu at your school, please let us know by either having a chat with the catering team or emailing us at business.support@elior.co.uk

From our kitchen to yours

Meet Nik, with over 30 years in the culinary industry, Nik's passion for food and sharing his expertise is truly inspiring!



Pumpkin Soup - serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (or one dessert spoon of garlic puree)
- 500g pumpkin, peeled and chopped
- 1 ltr vegetable stock
- 1 tsp salt (or to taste)
- 1/2 tsp black pepper (or to taste)
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger (optional)
- Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional, for a hint of heat)

- Add garlic, ginger, black pepper, and cayenne (if using). Cook for about 1 minute until fragrant
- Stir in the pumpkin, vegetable stock, and salt
- Bring the mixture to a boil, then immediately reduce the heat to a low simmer
- Cook for about 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally
- Blend until creamy (if you don't have a blender, simply mash the ingredients until smooth)
- Taste and adjust the salt, pepper, or other spices as needed
- Serve

Instructions

- Heat the oil in a pot
- Add the chopped onion cover and cook until softened and translucent, about 5–7 minutes

Serving Suggestions

- A swirl of coconut milk or double cream before serving will give it a creamy flavour
- A sprinkle of toasted pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds

NOTE – although we have used pumpkins these can be switched with any squash.



He's a key part of our team, working closely with our onsite chefs to provide training and support, ensuring the delicious meals you enjoy are always top-notch.

You may even have seen him at one of our popular pop-up food counters!

Nik regularly contributes to this newsletter, sharing valuable tips, tricks, and some of his favourite recipes.

In preparation for National School Meals Week, we are sharing some fabulous menus that you can cook at home with your little ones.

We have focused on pumpkins for this edition as it's such a versatile vegetable and often only used to make a lantern! Pumpkins are also very reasonably priced due to the volumes that supermarkets sell in October.

We do hope you and your family enjoy cooking and eating the recipes.

Top Tip

If you struggle to peel the pumpkin you can lightly roast it first as this will soften the skin making it easier to peel.

Do you have a dish you'd love to see featured? Let us know, and we'll happily consider including the recipe and expert advice in a future edition! Send your recipe request to business.support@elior.co.uk

Flatbread - serves 4

Ingredients

- 300g self-raising flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 150g natural yoghurt
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp water
- Pinch of salt

Top Tip

Brush the cooked dough with garlic butter for a twist.

Method

- Put all the ingredients in a bowl and mix until you have a rough dough
- Place the dough on a lightly floured surface
- Knead the dough until it's smooth (this will only take a few minutes)
- Divide the dough into 8 and roll out (you can use a bottle filled with water if you don't have a rolling pin)
- Heat a frying pan
- Fry the flatbread on each side until lightly golden and slightly charred in spots

Allergen Tip

Simply replace the flour and butter for GF and dairy-free alternatives!

Chicken & Pumpkin Risotto - serves 4

Ingredients

- 500g pumpkin (peeled & diced)
- 1 tbs oil
- Salt & pepper
- 500g diced chicken thigh
- 30g butter
- 1 x white onion (finely diced)
- 1 x clove garlic
- 250g Arborio rice (pudding rice)
- 125ml chicken stock
- 80g spinach leaves
- 10g roasted pumpkin seeds

Instructions

- Pre heat oven to 200°C
- Place the pumpkin cubes onto a non-stick tray
- Drizzle with a little oil & season with salt & pepper. Bake for 25 mins until just tender. Set aside
- While the Pumpkin is cooking, heat a large frying pan over a medium heat and add 1 tbs of oil
- Cook the chicken pieces until browned & cooked through. Set aside in a bowl & cover with foil to keep warm
- Turn the heat to medium. Add the butter & melt
- Sauté the onion & garlic for 3 minutes or until softened
- Add the Arborio rice & stir for 30 seconds to coat the rice well
- Add a quarter of the chicken stock and leave on the heat stirring occasionally
- When the liquid is almost absorbed, repeat the process with more stock until the stock has gone
- Add the chicken & pumpkin pieces, stir in the washed spinach leaves
- Optional – top with toasted pumpkin seeds.
- Serve



Apple & Pumpkin Cobbler - serves 4

Filling

- 300g pumpkin puree (cooked pumpkin mashed)
- 1 ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp mixed spice
- 150g light brown sugar
- 4 cooking apples

Topping

- 210g plain flour
- 150g light brown sugar
- pinch of salt
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 110g unsalted butter

Instructions

- Pre heat oven to 180°C (160°C if using an air fryer)
- Lightly grease a suitable dish

The filling

- Place the pumpkin puree, spices, salt and sugar into a large bowl and mix until well combined
- Peel and slice the apples ensuring that you remove the core and pips

- Add the sliced apples to the pumpkin mix & stir until the apples are coated in pumpkin
- Tip the pumpkin apple mixture into your greased dish & spread evenly

Make the topping

- Place the flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, egg and vanilla essence into a large bowl and mix until the mixture starts to come together
- Add the butter, a little at a time, while stirring continuously until the mixture comes together into one sticky ball
- Spoon the mixture over the fruit, this doesn't need to be precise
- Place in the oven for 30–35 minutes, until browned around the edges, bubbling and the top is firm to the touch & golden all over (if you want the apples to be softer simply cook for longer; you can cover with foil to stop the top from browning further)
- Leave to cool a little before serving with ice cream or custard

Allergen Tip

Simply replace the flour and butter for GF and dairy-free alternatives!





What's in season?

Did you know that eating what's in season is not only good for the planet, but also for your taste buds and your wallet?

Seasonal fruits and veggies, like juicy berries in summer or crunchy root vegetables in winter, haven't travelled far to get to your plate, meaning fewer food miles and a smaller environmental impact.

Plus, they often cost less because they're plentiful, and they taste amazing because they're picked at peak ripeness. Why not check out your local greengrocer or farmer's market to see what delicious seasonal goodies they have on offer?

You might discover some exciting new ingredients to experiment with in your kitchen!

In season right now...

Apples, Beetroot, Brussels Sprouts, Butternut Squash, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chestnuts, Chicory, Cranberries, Elderberries, Jerusalem Artichokes, Kale, Leeks, Onions, Parsnips, Pears, Potatoes, Pumpkin, Quince, Red Cabbage, Salsify, Savoy Cabbage, Swede, Swiss Chard, Turnips, Watercress, Wild Mushrooms, Winter Squash, White Cabbage.



Seasonal fruits and vegetables

Why Not Try Homemade Kale Chips This October?

With kale in abundance this autumn, it's the perfect time to make a super-healthy, crunchy snack that satisfies a crisp craving.

What You'll Need:

- 1 bunch of curly kale (ensure it's fresh!)
- 1 tbsp oil
- Pinch of salt (or try sprinkling over your favourite spice, like smoked paprika or peri peri)

Simple Steps:

- 1. Prep the kale:** Wash the kale thoroughly. This is the most important step: the leaves **must be completely dry** before you add oil, or they will steam instead of crisp! Spin them in a salad spinner or pat them dry with a clean tea towel. Tear the leaves into chip-sized pieces, discarding the tough centre stems.
- 2. Season and massage:** Place the dry kale in a large bowl. Drizzle with a small amount of oil and a pinch of salt.

Use your hands to **gently massage** the oil into the leaves until every piece is lightly coated.

- 3. Bake to perfection:** Spread the kale in a **single layer** on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake in a preheated oven at a low temperature (around 150°C) for about 15–20 minutes, rotating the tray halfway through.
- 4. Cool and crisp:** The chips are done when they are crispy but still vibrantly green (avoid letting them turn brown, which can make them taste bitter). Let them cool completely on the tray—they will get even crispier as they cool!

Dietitian's tip

Kale is rich in vitamins A, C, and K, plus iron and calcium, which support the immune system, bone health, and may help reduce tiredness.



Half Term Activity Ideas



Stuck for Half Term Fun? Try a DIY Autumn Leaf Bowl

Are you searching for a creative and low-cost activity to do this half-term? Why not embrace the beautiful colours of the season and try crafting!

This simple project is perfect for all ages and results in a beautiful, decorative keepsake.

You could even save the finished bowl to gift to someone over the festive period – it makes a wonderful, unique present!

Enjoy your crafting and have a safe and happy half-term!

What You'll Need

Gather these simple materials:

- **Fallen autumn leaves:** Ensure they are dry. The flatter they are, the better!
- **Crafting glue:** A standard PVA glue works best
- A small paintbrush or sponge brush
- **A balloon:** Inflate it to the size you want your bowl to be

Simple Steps to Create Your Bowl

Follow these four easy steps to craft your beautiful autumn bowl:

1. **Prepare your surface:** Lay down some newspaper or a plastic sheet to protect your work area – this can get a little messy!
2. **Glue the leaves:** Blow up the balloon to your desired bowl size and rest it, knotted-side down, in a cup or small bowl to keep it stable. Starting from the top, brush a layer of glue onto the balloon. Place your first leaf onto the glue, then brush a light layer of glue over the leaf.
3. **Build your bowl:** Continue layering leaves, overlapping them slightly, until you've covered about half of the balloon's surface. Make sure to glue the top of every leaf to seal and strengthen the structure. If you leave a small gap at the top (the very centre of the balloon), it will ensure the finished bowl has a flat bottom.
4. **Dry and reveal:** Let the bowl dry completely – this could take up to 24 hours. Once the glue is totally dry and the structure feels hard, carefully pop the balloon with a pin. The balloon will shrivel away, and you'll be left with your beautiful, unique decorative leaf bowl!

Bonfire Night Treats: Chocolate Apples

While your decorative bowl is drying, why not get a head start on some delicious treats, like chocolate apples, ready for Bonfire Night!

Ingredients You'll Need (for the treats)

- **Apples:** Small, crisp eating apples (like Gala or Granny Smith) are best
- **Sticks:** Strong wooden skewers or lollipop sticks
- **Chocolate:** Melting chocolate or good-quality chocolate chips, plus any toppings like sprinkles or chopped nuts

The Basic Process

1. **Prep the apples:** Wash and thoroughly dry the apples (wax coating can stop the coating from sticking!). Remove the stalks and push a stick firmly into the core of each apple.
2. **Removing the wax coating:** Place the apples in a bowl of boiled water, this will melt the wax coating. Then dry the apples thoroughly.
3. **Melt your coating:** Melt your chocolate in a microwave (stirring every 30 seconds) if you don't have a microwave add a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Place the chocolate in the bowl and stir until completely melted.
4. **Dip and decorate:** Dip the apples in the melted chocolate, letting the excess drip off. Immediately roll in or sprinkle with your favourite toppings (nuts, sprinkles, mini marshmallows). Place on baking parchment to set.

