

# It's fine dining – and it's from your school dinner cook

School cooks are holding their own in busy restaurants this month as they prove there's far more to their cooking than mashed potato and boiled cabbage!

**T**ake a look at the modern day school lunch menu and it reads far more like a restaurant menu than ever before.

A quick peek at the current seasonal offerings reveals everything from succulent roast pork loin with apple sauce to courgette and tomato frittata, hearty beef bolognese, mild chicken tikka masala, vegetarian bean chilli and puddings include: autumn feast sponge, flapjack, local ice cream, shortbread with apple and orange wedges and apple crunch with natural yoghurt.

There's barely any of the boiled cabbage or mashed potato the parents – and grandparents – of today's schoolchildren will no doubt remember.

With National School Meals Week just around the corner, (November 13-17), Norfolk Food and Drink is working with Norse, which provides four million school meals across 250 schools in Norfolk annually, to showcase the talents of the cooks and chefs working in our school kitchens.

School cooks and chefs will now



Jamie Oliver, who caused a stir over school dinners.

Picture: DOMINIC LIPINSKI/PA WIRE

join kitchen teams in various top restaurants throughout National School Meals week – and we're all invited to book tables.

Shirley Peet, Norse brand manager said: "Our school cooks are very talented chefs and can hold their own in top restaurants."

She added that this year's forays into commercial kitchens followed the success of a similar event last year when chef patron Daniel Smith was joined at The Ingham Swan by school cook Marion, from Garrick Green Infant School in Old Catton in 2016.

He was so impressed with her enthusiasm for the school meals service that, when he was asked to take part once again in National School Meals Week for 2017, he was delighted to accept.

Daniel said: "It's so important that children can have the opportunity of a wholesome midday meal at school, trying new things and sharing that experience with others, helping to develop what will hopefully be a lifelong interest in what's on their plate."

"I look forward to having a Norse cook join me in my kitchen at Warwick St Social."

Also during National School Meals Week chef Richard Hughes will be going to Dereham Church Infant School to give some of the pupils a cookery masterclass.

While the school cooks are busy in the restaurants, chefs from Norse's mobile chef team will be taking their place in their school kitchen so children know they can expect the same high standard meal, said Shirley.

She said Norse is working hard to change the perception of school meals. "A lot of parents do think of boiled cabbage and lumpy custard, and then Jamie Oliver caused quite a stir with his talk of turkey twizzlers. Our school dinners today



Daniel Smith cooking with school cook Marion from Garrick Green Infant School.

Pictures: CONTRIBUTED

are all about giving children healthy, nutritional food they will enjoy," she said.

She added that school cooks prepare a variety of meals, ranging from meat, fish or vegetarian options to packed lunches and meals for special diets.

"Everything at school has to be nut-free anyway, but we also do a lot of other special diets, right down to individual menus for individual children," she said.

Norse has an independent nutritionist, and a registered dietician is also available to talk to parents about their child's dietary requirements.

School dinners have evolved over the years and, while favourites such as roast Wednesday and fishy Friday are still the most popular days, and favourite puddings have remained too, there are a host of new dishes on the menu.

The Norse school meal service is even more varied at secondary school with a variety of options, including "grab and go" for students who don't want to sit down and eat.

"We want to encourage them to eat as well as they possibly can," Shirley added.

**National School Meals Week runs from November 13-17.**

**Members of the public have the chance to enjoy dishes cooked by school dinner chefs as part of the team at:**

■ **Tuesday, November 14**  
**White Horse at Brancaster**

■ **Wednesday, November 15**  
**Benedicts, Norwich**

■ **Thursday, November 16**  
**The Assembly House, Norwich**

■ **Friday, November 17**  
**Warwick Street Social, Norwich, and Brasted's, Framingham Pigot**



Top, Forget boiled cabbage, today's school dinners are packed with variety. Middle, Daniel Smith cooking with school cook Marion from Garrick Green Infant School. Bottom, School dinners today are designed to be nutritious and fun to eat

With thanks to our sponsors

**ADNAMS**  
SOUTHWOLD

**Anglia Culinary Suppliers Ltd**

**Cozens-Hardy LLP**  
SOLICITORS

**Foodcare**  
Dining & Catering Supplies

**HARGREAVEHALE**

**Lovewell Blake**  
Different because you are

**Norfolk**  
Country Cottages

**Norse**

**NORWICH**  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



**deliveroo**

With thanks to our supporters

**101**

**Website Design & Development**



**CHAPEL ROAD CREATIVE**

**Creative Sponge.** We create great.

**NORWICH**  
PRINT • SOLUTIONS

**The Red Cat Partnership**  
Health and Safety Consultants

## Norse is a gold Food for Life provider, which means:

- At least 80pc of the food it offers in school is prepared from scratch
- All the meat served is Red Tractor assured
- The fruit and vegetables are seasonal and locally grown, wherever possible
- The food is free from GM ingredients, trans fats and undesirable additives
- A minimum of 5pc of all the ingredients is spent on organic produce