

A detailed still life illustration of autumnal produce. At the top, there are several pumpkins and gourds in shades of orange and yellow, surrounded by large, detailed leaves in various colors including green, yellow, and red. Below the pumpkins are clusters of dark purple grapes. In the center, there are several bright red apples, some with green leaves. To the right, a wooden cutting board holds a pear and a wooden spoon. At the bottom, there are cinnamon sticks and other smaller fruits and vegetables. The entire scene is set against a dark, almost black background, which makes the colors of the produce stand out. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the different items.

# Shakespearean Summer Recipes

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## *Prologue*

*"Away with us to Athens. Three and three,  
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity."  
(Theseus, 4,1, Ll 181-182)*

There is nothing better than basking in the summer sun or relaxing on a long summer's evening with delicious food and drink, whilst being serenaded by the Bard.

Food, drink and Shakespeare go happily hand in hand, and there is no shortage of references to mankind's favourite pastimes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, perhaps the most magical and sensuous play of all.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* conjures up images of secluded lover's picnics in forested glades, of dancing and merriment throughout balmy nights, and feasts of sweet and savoury delicacies fit for a (fairy) King.

So, in summertime, and with Shakespeare's blessing, "How shall we beguile/The lazy time if not with some delight?"

## ***Deep Forest Herby Soup***

*1 oz/25 g butter  
6 spring onions, finely sliced  
5 oz/125 g potatoes, peeled and chopped into small pieces  
5 oz/125 g spinach leaves, washed and shredded,  
and with any very tough stalks removed  
15 fl oz/435 ml vegetable stock (fresh is preferable)  
2 ½ tbs fresh herbs, chopped (sage, tarragon, thyme,  
rosemary, mint – any combination is good)  
5 fl oz/145 ml single cream  
juice of half a lemon  
salt  
freshly ground black pepper*

- 1) Melt the butter in a pan, and add the spring onions and potatoes.
- 2) Cook over a low heat to soften the vegetables, stirring occasionally.
- 3) Stir in the spinach so that it is thoroughly coated in the butter.
- 4) Add the stock and bring to a simmer. Cover the pan and cook for about 10 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft.
- 5) Put the contents of the pan in a blender adding the herbs and cream. Liquidise until of a smooth consistency.
- 6) Return this mixture to the pan and reheat, seasoning with the salt, pepper and lemon juice.
- 7) Serve hot with a crusty baguette.

*"Fetch me that flower, the herb I showed thee once"  
(Oberon, 2,1, L 169)*



## ***Watercress, Tarragon and Chicken Salad, with Grapes of the Gods***

*3 lb/1.5 kg chicken  
5 fl oz/145 ml mayonnaise  
3 fl oz/85 ml double cream  
1 dsp of fresh tarragon, chopped  
3 spring onions, chopped  
1 cos lettuce  
4 oz/100 g seedless green grapes, halved  
a handful of watercress  
salt  
freshly ground black pepper*

- 1) Cook the chicken, allow to cool and remove the skin. Cut the flesh into thick strips.
- 2) Place in a bowl and season with salt and pepper.
- 3) In another bowl, combine the mayonnaise, cream, tarragon and onions.
- 4) Pour the mixture over the chicken, ensuring the chicken is thoroughly coated.
- 5) Arrange on a bed of lettuce, garnish with grapes and watercress and serve. This dish goes well with a light rice salad, perhaps with chopped green peppers and sultanas stirred through the cold, cooked rice.

