

# Tasty Matters

## The Hive

Glaslough St, Monaghan

SUN-DRIED TOMATO & ROASTED RED PEPPER MUFFINS

(Makes 10)

(Fairly low in calories and low in sugar)

### YOU WILL NEED:

- 170g Self Raising Flour
- 50g Reduced fat spread melted very gently
- 1 Egg lightly beaten
- 125ml Skimmed Milk
- 100g Roasted Red Pepper from a jar in brine, drained and thinly sliced
- 40g Oil-free Sundried Tomatoes thinly sliced
- 2tbsp Fresh Basil finely shredded plus extra leaves to garnish
- 1 tbsp Pine Nuts



### METHOD

- Heat the oven to 180°C gas 4 and line a 10 hole muffin tin with paper cases.
- Sift the flour into a bowl and make a well in the centre combine the low fat spread, egg and milk in a small jug. Then pour into the well. Stir until almost combined then add the peppers, tomatoes and shredded basil and season with a little salt and freshly ground black pepper.
- Spoon the mixture evenly into the cases then sprinkle over the pine nuts. Bake for 15 mins or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.
- Leave to cool in the tin for 5 mins or so then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. Serve with the extra basil leaves scattered over. Nice with a bowl of soup or just a knob of butter.

HAPPY COOKING KERRY @ THE HIVE

# Naturally Healthy

by Margaret Palmer

## Activated Charcoal

A rather unusual topic for this column this week; we usually associate charcoal just with something we can burn in a fire or even use to draw with, but activated charcoal is a useful supplement to keep in the medicine chest in every household. This odd-sounding supplement has been used since Egyptian times as a first aid remedy for people who have food poisoning, diarrhoea, or any other acute gastro-intestinal infections. Active charcoal is thought to work because it is a negatively-charged substance and it draws positively-charged substances towards it, it then binds to the toxins or poisons and helps to remove them safely from the body, preventing them from being absorbed. Over the years there have been many different studies showing that activated charcoal is safe and effective. It is inexpensive to purchase and it is usually taken in the form of capsules. Most of the activated charcoal supplements available in health food shops and pharmacies are made from coconut shells, the coconut shells are made into ordinary charcoal and then activated with oxidising gases.



The main reason for taking activated charcoal is therefore to help as a first aid for suspected food poisoning, but it has also become popular for alcohol poisoning – in other words for helping the stomach on a night out, and reputedly for helping to prevent hangovers. It has been shown to be one of the best natural remedies for gas and bloating, as it helps to bind to and trap some of the gasses present in the digestive system. It may also help to reduce cholesterol by preventing some of it from being absorbed. Other uses of activated charcoal are being explored, recently it has been added to beauty products and even to toothpaste. In skin creams it is said to help with deep cleansing of the skin and reputedly for skin rejuvenation and for clearing acne; and in toothpaste with natural teeth whitening, but there is not much evidence yet to back up these claims and the black colour does not appeal to everyone! It has, however, been used topically for hundreds of years to help with bites and stings, in a poultice to draw out the toxins. As an ingredient in natural deodorants it is being used to help with body odour. Activated charcoal is used in jug water filters to filter and clean the water.

There are a couple of pointers when taking activated charcoal, if you want to get the best out of it – an important one is to make sure to drink plenty of water with it. While activated charcoal is very safe, take it well away from any prescription medication, at least two hours before or after, as it could stop you absorbing your medication. For the same reason don't take it with any vitamins or other health food supplements. While activated charcoal is used in first aid, I would not recommend giving it to small children except on the advice of your GP, in this case the capsules are usually carefully opened and thoroughly mixed with water before giving to the child. It is normally not used at all for children under one year old and should not be taken by pregnant women. Activated charcoal should only be used for mild cases of stomach upset or diarrhoea, consult your GP if you have severe symptoms or are in any way concerned. Another warning – it will make your stools black, this is totally normal although quite an unusual side effect!

Margaret is a qualified and registered herbalist and naturopath. She works in Dolans health food shop and in her own clinic, by appointment, in Glaslough street. Tel 087 2024066. On Wed mornings she runs a workshop called "Budding herbalists" a fun, hands-on class to learn all about making home remedies. Booking is essential because places are limited to 10. Next week we resume classes after a long winter break and we will be learning about how and why to make herbal pesto.

# TRAVEL

BY GEORGE KEEGAN

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## SPAIN'S HIDDEN GEM – LA PETITA COSTA BRAVA

Stretching along Spain's eastern seaboard in Catalonia (spelt Catalunya in Catalan) is the very beautiful Costa Brava. There are some 220km of coastline stretching right up to the French border containing many areas of natural beauty. It has a mild Mediterranean climate meaning dry warm summers and not so cold winters and is a perfect region for enjoying a family holiday. Last September I spent a few days touring around what local people have named 'The Small Costa Brava' (La Petita Costa Brava) which takes in the picturesque seaside towns of Calella De Palafrugell, Llafranc and Tamariu. All belong to the Municipality of Palafrugell in the province of Girona. Over the years thankfully no major developments have been allowed to take place which not only enhances the area as a tourist destination but means it will remain unspoiled for future generations. The town of Palafrugell is only 53 km, under an hour's drive, from Girona airport making it easily accessible from Ireland. I flew there from Dublin but another option would be to fly to Barcelona.

The Costa Brava is a wonderful mix of steep cliffs, headland trails, sandy beaches, and white washed fishermen's cottages from times past, many still in use today. A combination of sea, nature, and tradition with many interesting historical castles and houses to visit including Salvador Dali's home, a unique Cork museum and superb Botanical gardens. See the Las Vueltas – vaulted arches which once covered the beaches used by fishermen to carry out boat repairs. Everywhere I went I found people to be helpful and friendly. While public transport is good in peak season it makes much better sense to hire a car and be completely independent. Several companies have offices in the Terminal building. Another good idea on arrival is to obtain a Palafrugell + ticket which gives reduced admission prices to places of interest.

### ATTRACTIONS NOT TO MISS

Gala Dali Castle in Púbol – Surrealist painter Salvador Dali purchased this 11th century castle in 1969 and presented it to his wife Gala as a gift. She spent many summers here. It is widely believed he could only visit her on receiving a written invitation. Dali moved here for a time on a permanent basis after her death in 1982. The castle was opened to the public in 1996. On display are original works on paper given by the artist to Gala to decorate the home, an exhibition of haute couture formal dresses worn by her, including one with print designed by Dali himself. There is also an exhibition of photographs taken of the couple by Richardo Sans, who worked closely with Dali from 1949 to 1956. The extensive gardens are bedecked with surreal fountains and elephant sculptures. There is also a small pond decorated with busts of the German composer Richard Wagner. In the basement area is Gala's tomb. Everything connected to Dali seems completely over the top but nevertheless fascinating. This is one of 3 Dali museums in the region. The others are in Figueres (large selection of his work and jewel collection) and Portlligat (his private residence).

The Botanical Gardens Of Cap Roig – high up in a superb setting with a series of steep terraces reaching down to the blue sea below. These amazing gardens contain hundreds of plants and trees from all over the world. I was particularly impressed by the large areas of cacti in all sizes and shapes. On the estate is a red brick neo Gothic castle transformed from old ruins of a former monastery by a Russian Colonel and his aristocratic



Part of cacti area in Botanical Gardens.

Pic by George Keegan

Callella De Palafrugell – very small attractive fishing village along the sea with sandy beach, small coves and wooden boats dotted around. The harbour area has been declared a site of Cultural Heritage of National importance. Every July a Habanera Singing festival is held which began in 1967 as a meeting of singers in a local pub. Today it attracts many thousands of visitors. The Habanera is a form of music brought back from Cuba in former times by Catalan fishing.

Tamariu – just 4km from Llafranc this delightful fishing village is surrounded by pine covered headlands. There is a sandy beach (Platja de Tamariu) and sheltered coves to discover. Perfect for a quiet relaxing holiday.

### PALAFRUGELL

This busy market town has a number of interesting attractions; The Cork Museum in Placeta del Museu - opened in the early 1970s in order to preserve and interpret the history and workings of the famous Catalonia cork industry. In the region cork oak forests cover over 80,000 hectares and are found in the coastal mountain ranges. There are some 50 Catalan companies producing cork stoppers. Production was at its height during 18th and 19th centuries. The museum runs audio visual presentations of cork production from forest to factory - finished product. I knew very little about Spain's cork industry but left this exhibition space a whole lot wiser. Recommended.

Can Mario Tower – old water tank and symbol of the town. Climb the 182 steps for great views. The Market - extensive market area in town square with weekly enclosed fish and meat stalls (Sundays) and fresh fruit & vegetables outside on street (Tues-Sat).

Can Mario Museum - opened in 2004 in the former Cork factory. This impressive museum of contemporary sculpture gives visitors a history of art by local artists from the 1960s to present day. It is part of the Vila Casas Foundation set up to promote painting, photography and sculpture by Catalan artists. Other museums are in Barcelona and the town of Torroella de Montgrí.

### LLAFRANC

I really liked this small resort. A perfect way to approach it is by walking the coastal path (Camí de Ronda) from the Botanical gardens passing through Calella de Palafrugell - takes approx 1 hour. Close to the village is the 19th century lighthouse at Par de Sant Sebastia (165m above sea level) offering panoramic views of the stunning coastline. Be sure to take a stroll along the promenade in Llafranc as the evening sun sets. For parents trying to occupy young children there is safe bathing, plus adventure parks, waterparks and boat trips in the area to keep them busy. Parents can also enjoy a choice of 5 golf courses within a 20km radius.

### CITY OF GIRONA

Girona has over 2000 years of history from its Roman origins to a now modern contemporary city and is well worth spending time to explore. It has endured military invasions, sieges, floods, fires and various epidemics. The place to start is the Old Historic Quarter complete with Cathedral, Jewish Quarter, and 12th Arab Baths. I recommend taking one of the official walking tours to get a real insight into its history. The city has many bridges spanning the river between the old and new parts. A good spot for photographs is on the Peixateries Velles bridge built in 1827 by the creators of the Eiffel tower in Paris. From here you can view the famous multicoloured buildings overlooking the river Onyar. Climb the steep steps to find a promenade walk along the ancient city walls. Those who follow 'Games of Thrones' on television should note the city was the main place for filming the 6th series. Now there is a special city tour on Saturdays lasting 3 hours called 'The Game of Girona' experience taking you around the locations used.

The Cathedral - very large imposing building constructed between 11th & 18th centuries. It has the widest Gothic nave in the world.

Jewish Quarter - not far from the Cathedral in the old city and really well preserved. At one point in history it is thought that several hundred families resided here. A maze of tiny streets and courtyards mostly unchanged give visitors an insight into what life was like. The Museum of Jewish History in Forca street contains many priceless items from the period.

Temp de Flor - In May this festival takes place throughout the city and streets are bedecked with floral decorations.

### ACCOMMODATION

There are many hotels, apartments or camping sites to choose from all along the coast. I stayed in the following hotels which were recommended;

Hotel Ciutat de Girona – a very good city centre hotel but a little difficult to find as it is located at the end of a small narrow street. Rooms are large and comfortable, however I had an interior room with no window. Excellent breakfast, fresh orange juice and a self service Nespresso machine. Might be possible to book a parking spot opposite hotel, but there is free public parking a five minute walk away so best to leave luggage at the hotel first.

Silken Park Hotel San Jorge – large 4\* busy modern hotel in own grounds with great views beside the sea. Staff very friendly and all speak English fluently. A lovely terrace area for guests to sit out and enjoy the sunshine, or take a dip in the large swimming pool. There is also a Spa. The hotel has two restaurants and my evening meal and breakfast the following morning were both of excellent quality. Close to main Girona golf courses.

Hotel Terramar, Llafranc - small simple spotlessly clean and tidy hotel close to beach. It opened as a hotel in 1933. My room had a balcony on the first floor with views of the sparkling sea and sandy beach a few metres away. Restaurant has large windows also offering great views. There is an in-house gym. The selection of room types include double or twin, superior doubles on top floor and doubles with balcony. All rooms have air conditioning, free WiFi and complimentary bottle of water in the fridge (well done to the owner). Beach towels service is available on request. Private parking can be reserved for €12 per day.

### FOOD

Food is very important in this part of Catalonia. It's worth noting that in the 2017 Michelin Guide a total of 65 stars were distributed among 54 food establishments and during 2016 the region received the European Region of Gastronomy award. I enjoyed eating in the following restaurants;

Hotel Llafranc Restaurant – along the promenade this popular place serves good food and staff are friendly. In former times it was frequented by both Dali and Hemmingway and there are photos adorning the walls to prove it. Early arrivals can secure a table on the seafront terrace.

La Fabrica – Hundreds of cyclists both professional and amateur come to the Girona region to train for major events and last year it was promoted as 'Year of Cycling'. The excellent La Fabrica is a real cycling café with the owner a former professional cyclist. Walls and alcoves are decorated with all things cycling. When it is full a sign tells clients to grab a cushion and relax on steps outside. Great fun, good coffee and well worth visiting.

Centre Fraternal de Palafrugell – my final stop was in this Cultural Centre in the setting of a 19th century protected building on Placa Nova which has been in existence since 1887. The café is open from 8am to midnight and frequented by townsfolk who come to play dominoes, watch football matches or chat with friends. Perfect venue to experience the Catalan way of life – and the coffee is also good!

If you are seeking a quiet relaxing holiday and tranquillity as a couple or a safe place to bring the children then La Petita Costa Brava is waiting for you. My trip was courtesy of Palafrugell Tourism. Flights were arranged by the Spanish Tourist office in Dublin and car hire by Catalan Tourism.

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.visitpalafrugell.cat
- www.girona.cat/turisme
- www.hotelciutatdegirona.com
- www.costabrava.org
- www.museudeluro.cat
- www.parkhotelsanjorge.com
- www.catalunya.com
- www.salvador-dali.org
- www.hterramar.com



One of many forms of statues Gala Dali Castle.

Pic by George Keegan

English wife Dorothy Webster (closed for renovations on my visit). The couple began designing both park and castle in 1927 eventually completing the work in 1974.

Following their deaths it was bequeathed to the State on condition everything they had created would be conserved. 'La Caixa' Foundation took it over adding a sculpture park and every August in an outside arena the biggest music event in the region takes place featuring well known International artists.

Medieval Town of Peralada – an attractive fortified medieval village with very well preserved old stone walls and narrow stoned streets. It is dominated by the castle built on site of former fortress (1065). The Keep stands out in particular standing 10m high in the centre of the castle enclosure. There are several small hotels and restaurants within the village walls.

# New adult safeguarding policy and procedures launched by Clogher diocese

The Catholic Diocese of Clogher has launched a comprehensive policy on adult safeguarding, building on its significant work in the area of safeguarding children over the past decade and a half.

A media release from the diocese stated: "The new policy was launched at the pre-Easter deanery conferences held recently in both Monaghan and Enniskillen. The policy states the unequivocal commitment of the diocese to 'safeguarding as an integral component of the life and ministry of the church and recognises that we have a special responsibility towards adults at risk or in need of protection who are members of our faith community'."

"It goes on to reassure carers and advocates that it operates a policy of 'zero tolerance of harm to adults at risk of harm or in need of protection' and says that the commitment to the creation of a safe, caring and compassionate environment is based on gospel values and compliance with best practice."

"Fundamentally, the new policy states that: 'The Diocese of Clogher recognises that everyone has a fundamental right to be safe, and that there are many people with whom church personnel have contact who require special care and attention. We believe that all church personnel, including priests, religious, staff and volunteers must carry out their ministry respecting the rights of the individual in line with gospel values and civil or criminal law, including human rights legislation.'"

"The diocese values and encourages participation of adults in all parish liturgies and activities that enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual and social development."

"The guidelines replace those issued in 2014 and reflect the policy changes in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. They aim to put in place safeguarding arrangements for adults who are at risk from harm and to ensure that all church personnel in the diocese understand and commit to the policy."

"The scope of the policy also reflects shifts in understanding of the term 'vulnerable' to one of 'adult in need of protection'. The policy sets out the legal framework in this area north and south."

"It contains definitions of abuse as well as procedures for handling disclosure and reporting."

"As required in Northern Ireland, the diocese has appointed an Adult Safeguarding Champion. This is a person in the diocese who provides 'strategic and operational leadership and oversight in relation to adult safeguarding' and who is responsible for implementing the adult safeguarding strategy."

"The Adult Safeguarding Champion for the Diocese of Clogher is Seamus Gunn, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh. His role is to provide information and support for diocesan personnel on adult safeguarding, to ensure that the safeguarding policy is disseminated and implemented



Monsignor Larry Duffy PP, Carrickmacross; Seamus Gunn, Adult Safeguarding Champion for the Diocese of Clogher, and Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Diocesan Administrator



Monsignor Joseph McGuinness, Clogher Diocesan Administrator; the diocese's Adult Safeguarding Champion Seamus Gunn, and Canon Joseph Mullin PP, Lisnaskea & Maguirebridge

throughout the diocese, to advise and support staff regarding adult safeguarding training needs and to liaise with various agencies as appropriate."

"The Adult Safeguarding Champion will work closely with the two existing Designated Liaison Persons (DLPs) who are responsible for managing all concerns, allegations and complaints regarding actual or potential harm or abuse which come to the attention of the diocese. These are Brendan Kelly, Lattin and Anne Molloy, Irvinestown."

"The policy and procedures also emphasise the importance of values and principles in this area. These include access to information and knowledge, choice, confidentiality, consent, dignity and respect, equality and cultural diversity, independence, privacy and safety."

Launching the new policy, Clogher's Diocesan Administrator and Safeguarding Director Monsignor Joseph McGuinness noted that the fundamental responsibility to safeguarding children also applied equally to the safeguarding of adults.

Monsignor McGuinness stated: "A significant part of our ministry involves the pastoral care and support of adults who, on account of reasons such as illness, disability, infirmity or other personal circumstances, need special consideration,

understanding and protection."

Monsignor McGuinness said the diocese would continue to build on the training already provided so as to enhance awareness in this vital area. He emphasised that the diocese was committed to working in a collaborative and supportive way with statutory bodies, health and social care agencies and community and voluntary organisations.

He thanked all who had worked to produce the new policy, as well as all those priests, staff and volunteers who worked at all levels in the diocese to serve people and be vigilant in the area of safeguarding.

The new policy and procedures take immediate effect and are available in all parishes and via the diocesan website and other social media outlets.

Contact details for the relevant personnel are as follows: Adult Safeguarding Champion – Seamus Gunn, 43 Old Rossory Road, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT47 7LF; telephone 004477 56812 8149

Designated Liaison Persons – Brendan Kelly, Tamlaght, Lattin, Castleblayney, Co Monaghan; telephone 00353 42 9741383

Anne Molloy, Dunene Avenue, Kesh Road, Irvinestown, Co Fermanagh; telephone (work) 028 68621133

Further information is available at [www.safeguarding.ie](http://www.safeguarding.ie) or [www.clogherdiocese.ie](http://www.clogherdiocese.ie)

# Vincent Browne launches ALONE housing campaign

ALONE, the charity that supports older people to age at home, this week launched a campaign to raise awareness of what it describes as "the hidden housing crisis among older people."

The organisation is calling on the Government to provide funding towards developing a new, age-friendly model of housing and to update the Rebuilding Ireland house construction programme to reflect the needs of an ageing Ireland.

The campaign was launched by journalist Vincent Browne, who urged the Government to prioritise housing for older people.

Mr Browne said: "I am here today to support ALONE as they work to prevent the housing crisis faced by older people from becoming a homelessness crisis. With the number of over 65s set to increase dramatically in the next couple of decades, the situation for older people trying to secure rented and lifetime accommodation is set to get worse."

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, commented: "As people age, they can often no longer afford to rent. Rents are currently exceeding their former peak in 2008."

"The contributory State pension is €1,032.63 per month, but average market rent in Ireland is €1,227. At the moment, an older person relying on their contributory pension can't afford to rent a home."

"There is an assumption within the pensions system that older people do not need to rent or do not have accommodation costs, yet in 2016 there were 15,883 people over 60 in the private rental sector."

"ALONE's campaign also highlights the falling rates of home ownership in Ireland which will impact on the housing crisis further as the population ages. In 2016 there were 876,423 people aged over 60 living in Ireland."

"By 2031 it is estimated that this will grow to 1.42 million. ALONE believes that the problem older people face in obtaining rented and lifetime accommodation will only get worse unless action is taken."

"The housing crisis will only get worse as our population ages. The current generation can't buy homes, but if nothing changes huge numbers won't be able to



FACTS AND FIGURES: Journalist Vincent Browne launched ALONE's housing campaign in Dublin.

afford rent as they age either. "The private rental market is not suitable long-term for older people. Rented properties offer little security of tenancy and, in the current competitive rental market, we have heard from older people who are afraid to tell their landlords about issues with their accommodation in case their rent is increased."

"For most people when they retire, they lose 60% of their income. The thousands of older people who retire every year in private rental accommodation face a very uncertain future. "ALONE works every day with older people who are losing their homes in the private rented sector, whose homes are unsuitable for them to live in, or who are homeless. We have begun to find locations where we can't provide a solution to some of the housing problems older people face, because appropriate rental accommodation and social housing is not available."

"From late 2015 to early 2018, the number of housing applications received by ALONE

more than doubled. ALONE receive 20 applications for every house available, and there are 174 people currently on our waiting list."

"In terms of housing, our resources are stretched to maximum capacity."

"We are calling on the Government to engage with ALONE and its partners in the Age Alliance to meet the commitments outlined in the National Positive Ageing Strategy since 2013, and to update Rebuilding Ireland to reflect the needs of an ageing Ireland. If nothing changes, the housing crisis is only going to get worse for older people."

"We need to act now to prevent a homelessness crisis among the over 60s, now and in the years to come."

For those who have concerns about their own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable older person in the community, ALONE can be contacted on 01 679 1032 or by visiting [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie).

# The Northern Standard

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