



Five years ago Jim and Anna Harbridge switched to organic fruit and veg.

They were won over and now run a franchise delivering the natural stuff to hundreds of people's front doors.

'I think five years ago it was just starting to be absorbed into the mainstream,' says Jim. 'Now it's no longer a fad or a buzzword. I think we've moved past that and people are making it an important part of their lifestyle.'

The Southsea couple liked the idea of organic – that their food would be grown without the use of pesticides and that it would be free of colours and additives.

But Jim says it wasn't only ethical and health issues that made them stick with it. 'You could take away all the health and environmental factors, but you would still be left with the taste. The fact is that it tastes so much better.'

Jim runs the local franchise and delivers for organic food firm Riverford, which recently won Best Online Retailer in the Observer Ethical Awards for the second year in a row.

The company runs several farms in the UK and much of the produce is from those or other UK producers. There are some imported foods, particularly out of season, but no air freight is used.

Other practices that have marked out the company for an award include using recycled boxes and reducing waste by selling produce that's less than perfect in appearance but tastes fine.

Riverford is concerned with reducing food miles and encouraging people to eat seasonal produce. As far as possible, the produce delivered in this area has come from the company's farm in north Hampshire and other county or UK producers.

Current seasonal produce includes French beans, courgettes, new potatoes, celery, spinach, bunched carrots, beetroots, raspberries, currants and blackberries.

The problem for many people is that organic food is more expensive. Although Jim says Riverford produce is generally cheaper than supermarket organic food, it can't compete with other supermarket fruit and veg.

'It's a choice really,' says Jim. 'But more people seem to be concerned with what they're eating.'

Enjoy this tasty recipe from Riverford quality food

Spinach and mushroom lasagne

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil

300g spinach

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

300g mushrooms, sliced

1 tin chopped tomatoes

basil and oregano (handful of fresh or a tsp of dried)

300g lasagne (fresh or non pre-cook sheets)

400ml crème fraîche

150g cheddar cheese

½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg

salt and pepper to season

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C /gas mark 5. Heat half the oil in a large pan, add half the garlic and all of the spinach leaves.
2. Cook for a couple of minutes. Remove from the pan and season with salt and pepper. Add the rest of the oil to the pan with the mushrooms and remaining garlic and cook for five minutes or so. Stir in the tomatoes and herbs, bring to the boil and cook for a couple of minutes more.
3. Remove from the heat, season to taste. Mix the crème fraîche with the nutmeg and season.
4. Lightly oil an ovenproof dish. Starting with the lasagne sheets first, layer with the mushroom mixture, the spinach, crème fraîche and cheese. Finish with a final layer of lasagne and add a little crème fraîche and cheese to cover.

Bake for 30-40 mins or so until the lasagne is tender and the top golden brown.

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