

# POSH NOSH IN A BOX

**UNTIL THE PANDEMIC CHANGED OUR WAY OF BEING, EATING OUT WAS ON THE RISE. NOW, THE NEW DINING OUT IS DINING IN. GISELLE WHITEAKER BRINGS THE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE HOME.**

When the word 'lockdown' entered the vernacular, it seems every man and his dog became a home chef. I know I did. I used all that extra time and energy to craft restaurant-worthy meals, blogged about it, took up baking and made bread from scratch. Now, though, my enthusiasm is beginning to wane. I'd happily trade my apron for a dinner date in a bustling restaurant.

It's no secret that restaurants are struggling, barely open before they are required to close their doors again. Many have had to pivot to survive these on-again, off-again lockdowns, relying on the nation's desire for a takeaway meal to keep them afloat. Uber Eats, Deliveroo and Just Eat are booming, but none provide that restaurant vibe.

I tried to replicate a restaurant from recipe boxes – there's a plethora on the market. The food was delicious, but I was still the chef. Then I found Noble House Prepared.

Led by Conrad and Emma Baker, the Noble House brand is no stranger to fine dining, operating in the events, weddings and high-end bespoke contract catering sectors. The Noble House Prepared kitchen is led by Executive Chef extraordinaire Owen Sullivan, who previously worked for Gordon Ramsay at Maze, the Maze Grills and the Savoy Grill. He's also catered events for the glitterati, including Elton John's celebrated Oscars Viewing Party in LA. If it's good enough for Elton, it's good enough for me.







Deliveries are often the most excitement I get in a day, so when a (sustainably sourced recycled cardboard) box arrived on the doorstep, with the promise of food within, I tore it open like a Christmas present. Nestled within biodegradable wool insulation and reusable ice packs were frozen treats as good as any gift – and better than many – ready to go straight into the oven or freezer. Microwave is an option too, but it seems like sacrilege preparing fine food with a fast-food appliance.

Over the coming days, we ate out at our own dining table. We feasted on dishes like Slow Braised Beef Bourguignon, the rich and tender

beef marinated in red wine, herbs and spices for 24 hours, endowed with flavour and enhanced with mushrooms, bacon, petit onions and Dijon mustard. We shared a Salmon Wellington, the sustainably farmed Loch Duart Scottish Salmon and creamy spinach rolled and baked in buttery pastry. And then there was the Butter Chicken Tikka Curry. The succulent diced chicken breast marinated in spices and yoghurt, cooked in an Indian butter sauce with onions, peppers, ginger, tomatoes and coconut milk, is clearly deserving of the Great Taste award it garnered in 2020. These were supplemented by sides of creamy cauliflower cheese, sag aloo, broccoli florets and French green beans.

Dessert was also a winner. We shared portions of apple crumble, the traditionally stewed Bramley and Braeburn apples topped with a rich butter crumble and a hint of cinnamon. British cheesecake with passion fruit jelly also made its way into our bellies, and perhaps one of the best sticky toffee puddings I've ever tasted – the secret is in the super-moist sweet date and cola sponge cake pudding.

I've already shortlisted the dishes on our next menu – how can I resist Prawns in Prosecco and another award-winning dish, Lamb Tagine? We'll order wine – yes, Noble House Prepared does that, too – and dress for dinner. It's a date.



The Noble House Prepared service is available nationwide and delivery slots are confirmed with the customer by the company's dedicated delivery service. Full nutritional and allergen details are clearly provided for every product and special dietary requirements are well catered for. Each dish is also supported by notes from the chef. [www.noblehouseprepared.com](http://www.noblehouseprepared.com)



## IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO RECREATE THE RESTAURANT VIBE, HERE ARE A FEW MORE FANTASTIC OPTIONS:



### SABOR'S COUNTER MENU BOX WITH ESTRELLA GALICIA

Need a holiday? The Counter Box Menu with Estrella Galicia from Michelin-starred Sabor offers a grazing tapas feast for two, transporting diners on a virtual holiday to the Iberian Peninsula. The experience includes an on-demand cookery tutorial and some of Sabor's best-selling dishes – Ham Croquetas; prawns in garlic oil; Pulpo a la Gallega – a traditional Galician dish of sliced, paprika-dusted octopus atop a bed of potatoes; and more. Don't forget to add a drink or two for the ultimate dining experience.

[www.saborencasashop.com](http://www.saborencasashop.com)



### MANDIRA'S KITCHEN

Mandira's Kitchen is an award-winning producer of authentic Indian food. Their all-woman team, based out of a 400-year-old cowshed in the Surrey Hills, creates delicious freezer meals and accompaniments, as well as providing food experiences like cookery lessons and spice tours. Handmade in small batches, Mandira's Kitchen meals are available for delivery UK-wide. They provide a luxury Indian banquet at home with gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian options that can be eaten when they arrive or frozen for up to six months.

[www.mandiraskitchen.com](http://www.mandiraskitchen.com)



### ANTONA AT HOME

Antona at Home offers meals that arrive pre-prepared, simply needing reheating and plating. Inspiration for the delivery boxes came from Andreas Antona, a chef restaurateur who owns two Michelin-starred restaurants – Simpsons in Birmingham and The Cross at Kenilworth. Both restaurants inspire the meals, which are prepared by *MasterChef: The Professionals* 2019 winner, Stu Deeley, and a team of talented chefs. Each dish is individually packaged so you can choose per person as you would in a restaurant.

[www.antonaathome.co.uk](http://www.antonaathome.co.uk)



### KOOKALONEY

Kookaloney is taking the faff out of falafel, hummus and shawarma by making them super easy to prepare. This Levantine food is delicious, but it's time-consuming to prepare at home. Kookaloney's meal kits minimise the time needed, without compromising on taste or quality. The authentic recipes, which have been made the traditional Middle Eastern way, have been curated by Kookaloney and tweaked by Lebanese Master Chef Joe Barza. The meal kits are full of authentic flavours and take 20 minutes or less to prepare.

[www.kookaloney.com](http://www.kookaloney.com)

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## IN CASE YOU NEED SOMETHING TO WASH DOWN YOUR GLORIOUS FEAST:

### THE COCKTAIL DELIVERY COMPANY

Ready to shake up nights in, The Cocktail Delivery Company delivers delicious premium cocktails and mocktails nationwide. Created by world-class mixologists with decades of cocktail experience, the delivery service couriers premium, freshly made cocktails straight to your door, so all that's needed is to select, shake and serve. Choose from classic cocktails, club signature cocktails, club mocktails and party boxes.

[www.thecocktaildeliverycompany.co.uk](http://www.thecocktaildeliverycompany.co.uk)

