

Hook and Spoon's Ploughpersons' Picnic

Essentials joins Sandy Leatham, of Benalla's butchery and slow food mecca Hook and Spoon, for a picnic at Rose's Hut on her Boho-Warrenbayne farm.

Picnic at Rose's hut, Sandy's menu:

Good sourdough bread

Old-fashioned corned beef
Rolled chicken poached in chinese master stock
Potted mutton and potted hough
Berkshire pork terrine
Beetroot relish

Aged pyengarna cheddar
Grana padano parmesan
Pickled onions
Pickled eggs

Politini Wines Sangiovese Rosé
Shandi cocktail (beer and lemonade)

Gingerbread,
Chocolate and hazelnut
bon vivant cake
Coffee



Sandy Leatham

The Hook and Spoon staff enjoying the view from Rose's hut



Since opening in 2006, Sandy Leatham's Hook and Spoon, a butchery (known for its aged grass-fed beef, mutton and Berkshire pork), and that also specialises in slow food, has become a much-loved destination on the North East culinary map. With regular trips to the Collingwood markets, Hook and Spoon's produce, such as its grass-fed mutton, pork and pistachio terrines and slow-cooked braises, have gained a strong Melbourne following.

As a newly-wed living a largely self-sufficient lifestyle on a farm below Ben Lomond in Tasmania, Sandy developed a passion for slow food that continues to this day. 'One of our wedding presents was a milking goat,' she remembers. 'Another was a big bag of carrots, because we didn't have any vegetables in at that point. There were no towels!'

After years of having made an annual pilgrimage to the Victorian High Country to muster cattle with the Treasure family, Sandy decided she wanted to live in North East Victoria. In 1999 she and her then husband, Bob, relocated to Warrenbayne in the foothills of the Strathbogie Ranges, where she's been farming cattle ever since.

As both a farmer and butcher, Sandy oversees the production of her beef and mutton, from all aspects of the animal breeding and husbandry through to its hanging, butchery and cooking.

In the warmer months, Sandy loves cooking cold cuts and terrines for the shop that make ideal picnic fare. On her farm, picnics always start with a carefully-packed basket and the general notion of 'checking the stock.' The destination, reached either by ute

or on horseback, is Rose's Hut, a traditional cattlemen's hut that Sandy's daughter, Rose, built when she was only 15: 'Bob gave her a few instructions and off she went. She was so determined. She dug 20 post holes in one hit and afterwards couldn't move for a week, even to lift an apple to her mouth.'

'When I want to have a picnic,' says Sandy, 'of course I just grab a few things from the shop. Cold cuts and terrines, or corned beef made with old-fashioned spices, are ideal. They're easy to pack and you can lay them out with a couple of knives. Everyone can serve themselves from the one board. To go with these dishes, a good sourdough bread is essential, I would say from Milkwood (who sell at the Violet Town and Tatong markets) or the Milawa Cheese Factory Bakery, as well as really good aged cheddar. I think cheddar is underrated. The people who make Pyengarna

(a true cloth-bound farmhouse cheddar from Tasmania) are so unassuming.'

'To drink, I'd have a dry white (a chardonnay), or a light red like the Politini Sangiovese Rosé. I'd finish with a shandy, made with Boag's Beer — because it's Tasmanian. I rarely drink more than one. After that, coffee and choc-hazelnut bon vivant cake is the go.'

Open 9am-5.30pm, Mon-Fri; 9am-12pm Sat
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Gingerbread, chocolate and hazelnut bon vivant cake with a Boag's Shandy