

Love Local

February is the month of love, and here at True Food we are celebrating our love of all things local. Throughout the month we will be promoting our local suppliers and their products and urging our community to also support local businesses. **Choosing to shop locally, is choosing to support your local community.**

Love Local lunchtime True Food shop events

Tuesday 3 February: sample local juice from Cross Lane orchard.

Tuesday 10 February: have you tried Tutu's delicious, very popular Ethiopian sauces yet?

Tuesday 17 February: it's Real Bread Week, come and try some of our fresh 'real' breads from local bakery Aston's Bake House.

Tuesday 24 February: it's sticky and delicious and unique in flavour, we love our local honeys!

Love the planet this Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a chance to show someone you love them, but it doesn't have to come at the planet's expense. Traditional gifts like imported roses and plastic-wrapped chocolates bulked out with palm oil, can come at a cost to the planet. So, this Valentine's Day why not show the planet you love it by making sustainable choices;

- treat your loved one to face and body care products from local producer Primrose Lady
- indulge with Booja-Booja organic, vegan chocolates
- write a love note in a handmade card from local artist Helen Lunn or Heather Upton
- toast their loveliness with British-grown, organic sparkling wine from Oxney in East Sussex.



How, what and where!

True Food Volunteer Colin Bates provides insight into some True Food-centric questions!

This month: What is de-alcoholised wine?

There's been a general trend away from alcoholic drinks over the past few years, with alcohol-free versions of beers, wines and even spirits available in stores and bars. But taking the alcohol out of drinks is a tricky business. And isn't alcohol-free wine really just grape juice?

As ever, it isn't quite that simple. Fermentation produces complex flavour compounds, which give wine its character and depth, and we don't want to lose those when taking out the alcohol. With conventional distillation, liquid is heated to 80c to evaporate alcohol before reaching the 100c boiling point of water. But this heat can be high enough to damage the delicate flavour profile of a wine. Vacuum distillation, where pressure is reduced to lower the evaporation point of water, can mitigate this to some degree.

Reverse osmosis is another popular method. Wine is forced through the membrane under pressure, allowing the alcohol to pass through while retaining the flavour and aroma compounds. This is a fast and efficient method that can be used to remove a significant amount of alcohol from wine, but not all of it, but it can still remove some of the desirable flavour compounds.

At True Food we stock Opia Alcohol-Free Sparkling Chardonnay which offers a bright, refreshing alternative to traditional fizz. Made without the addition of sulphites, this alcohol free fizz has big flavours of white pear, green apple and refreshing lime. For those who like a pint; St Peter's zero alcohol craft beer tastes as good as the real thing, and is suitable for both lager and ale drinkers. Distinctly zesty, citrus and biscuit flavours, followed by smooth, creamy, hoppy bitterness.



Opening Times

Tuesday to Saturday
9 am to 6 pm

61 Grove Road, Emmer Green, RG4 8LJ

Tel: 0118 946 1188 Web: www.truefood.coop



Is it forever?

New studies have highlighted high levels of ‘forever chemicals’ in everyday food items.

Pfas are a class of at least 16,000 compounds often used to help products resist water, stains and heat. They are called “forever chemicals” because they do not naturally break down and accumulate in the environment. The chemicals are used as an active ingredient in pesticides to kill weeds, insects or fleas on pets, or as inert, or inactive, ingredients that enhance how well a pesticide functions. PFAS and TFA have been shown to build up in our bodies, damage reproductive and hormonal systems, increase disease risk, and cannot be easily removed once exposure occurs.

Research published in 2024 revealed that:

Many common UK food items contain PFAS pesticides. Pesticide Action Network (PAN) UK analysed the latest results from the UK government’s residue testing programme, finding that ten different PFAS pesticides were present in spices and a range of fruit and vegetables including grapes, cherries, spinach and tomatoes. Strawberries were found to be the worst offenders, with 95% of the 120 samples tested by the government in 2022 containing PFAS pesticides.

There are 25 PFAS pesticides currently in use in the UK, six of which are classified as ‘highly hazardous’. The list includes the insecticide lambda-cyhalothrin which, in addition to being a ‘forever chemical’, is highly toxic to both humans and bees. In 2022, 9,200 kg of lambda-cyhalothrin was applied to 1.69 million hectares of UK land, the equivalent of eleven times the size of Greater London. PAN UK is urging the UK government to urgently ban the 25 PFAS pesticides currently in use and increase support for farmers to help them end their reliance on chemicals and adopt safer and more sustainable alternatives.



There is widespread contamination of everyday cereal-based foods with trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) across Europe. The research by PAN Europe reveals that some common breakfast cereals contain TFA levels more than 100 times higher than those typically found in tap water. TFA is a breakdown product of PFAS pesticides and fluorinated gases and is known for being extremely persistent and mobile in the environment. Because it dissolves easily in water, it accumulates in soils and waterways and is readily absorbed by plants. Research suggests wheat may be particularly efficient at taking up TFA, which could explain the high levels found in bread, pasta and cereal products. There are currently no specific EU maximum residue limits for TFA in food.



California farms applied an average of 2.5m lb of Pfas “forever chemicals” per year on cropland from 2018 to 2023, or a total of about 15m lb, a review of state records shows. The chemicals are added to pesticides that are sprayed on crops such as almonds, pistachios, wine grapes, alfalfa and tomatoes. The risk for uptake of Pfas is likely higher in water-rich fruits and vegetables, because water attracts the chemicals, and research has shown Pfas may concentrate at dangerous levels in some produce.

The European Union has already banned many Pfas in pesticides, including two of the chemicals most used on California crops - bifenthrin and trifluralin. The Pfas in pesticides are short chain Pfas, meaning they are small and move widely throughout the environment. Many break down into TFA, a type of Pfas that is accumulating around the world at levels higher than any other Pfas compound.

Choosing organic produce can help limit your exposure to these ‘forever chemicals’. Under the Soil Association’s organic standards, all weedkillers are banned, and farmers are only able to use a very limited number of naturally-derived pesticides as a last resort (like citronella and clove oil), but only under very restricted circumstances. Instead of relying on pesticides, organic farmers aim to create a natural balance between plants and animals to prevent pests. While it can be difficult to eat a diet of just organic produce, **to avoid Pfas consider prioritising organic wheat based products and water-rich fruits and vegetables.**