

# Dublin Life

& Food travel

Chef Rachel Khoo has released a cookbook of Swedish recipes

# Khoo Khoo about Swedish food



## DINING

Food writer and TV presenter Rachel Khoo tells **Ella Walker** that meatballs are a non-negotiable necessity in Sweden

**W**HEN you're in another country, perhaps the easiest way to begin to fathom a culture is through its food and Rachel Khoo is an absolute expert at doing just that.

Born in south London, the food writer and presenter switched Croydon for Paris in her 20s, to study patisserie at the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu cookery school. It led to her breakout cookbook, *The Little Paris Kitchen* and now, it's Sweden's turn to get the Khoo treatment.

Khoo, now 37, moved to Stockholm in 2016 with her Swedish husband Robert, and *The Little Swedish Kitchen* sees her explore the country's tradition of 'husmanskost' or home cooking. The focus is simple, seasonal, affordable ingredients and "making the most of what you have."

Arguably, nothing is more Swedish or representative of husmanskost than meatballs.

"They're usually served with a smooth gravy, creamy mash, tart lingonberries and tangy pickled cucumbers," says Khoo, (yes, almost exactly like they do them at IKEA).

Here are three of Khoo's recipes for you to try at home...

## ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH WAFFLES

(Serves 8)

### Ingredients (for the waffles):

300g roasted butternut squash or pumpkin  
100g cooled melted butter, plus extra for greasing the waffle iron  
200g buttermilk  
200ml whole milk  
2 medium eggs  
½tsp ground cinnamon (optional)  
1tsp fine sea salt  
200g plain flour  
2tsp baking powder

### To serve as a sweet:

Strawberry jam  
Whipped cream

### To serve as a savoury option:

4-6tbsp creme fraiche  
1 red onion, peeled and finely chopped  
2tbsp finely chopped fresh chives  
2-4tbsp caviar

### Method:

1. Mash the roasted butternut squash or pumpkin and mix with the butter, buttermilk, whole milk and eggs.
2. Sift together the remaining waffle ingredients into the bowl and fold to incorporate. Don't overmix or you'll get a heavy batter. Leave to rest at room temperature for 20 minutes.
3. Heat up your waffle iron, brushing with melted butter if required (no need with non-stick ones). Pour a ladle of batter into the middle. Gently close the lid and cook for a couple of minutes, or until the outside is crisp (this will vary, depending on the heat of your waffle iron).
4. Leave to cool for a minute before topping with the garnish of your liking.



TURN OVERLEAF



# Meatballs are a must in the Little Swedish Kitchen

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## VASTERBOTTEN PIE

(Serves 8)

### Ingredients (for the pastry):

- 130g plain flour
- ¼tsp fine sea salt
- 1tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 80g cold butter, cubed
- 1tbsp vodka

### For the filling:

- 3 medium eggs
- 300ml single cream
- ½tsp fine sea salt
- 1tsp black pepper
- 300g Vasterbotten or mature Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 small onion, peeled and thinly sliced

### For the mushroom topping:

- 75g butter
- 250g chanterelle mushrooms, brushed clean
- A small handful of fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped

### Method:

- To make the pastry, mix together the flour and salt. Add the mustard and cold butter, then use your fingertips to rub it all together until you have a sandy texture. Add the vodka to bring it into a dough. Place between two sheets of baking paper and roll into a circle that is larger than your quiche tin (21cm, 4cm deep). Leave to chill in the fridge for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4.
- Remove the pastry from the fridge and use it to line the pie tin. If the pastry is too hard, leave to soften for five to 10 minutes before lining the tin. Prick the pastry in the tin with a fork. Line with baking paper and pour in baking weights. Bake for



20 minutes, then remove the baking weights and paper and bake for a further 10 minutes, or until the base is dry and firm.

- To make the filling, beat the eggs with the cream, salt and pepper until you have a smooth mixture. Stir in the cheese. Pour into the pie case, put the onions on top and bake for another 25-30 minutes, or until the mixture is set but still a little wobbly.
- When the pie has cooled, heat the butter for the mushrooms in a large frying pan. Once the butter is foaming, add the chanterelles and cook for four to five minutes, or until lightly golden and cooked through. Leave to cool slightly. Scatter the pie with parsley and top with the mushrooms to serve.

## WHITE CHOCOLATE COCONUT MOUNTAINS

(Makes 20)

### Ingredients:

- 100g golden caster sugar
- ½tsp fine sea salt
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 120g butter
- 200g desiccated coconut
- 150g sesame seeds
- 50g ground almonds
- 3 medium eggs
- 350g white chocolate
- 125g lingonberries or redcurrants

### Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6.
- Put the sugar, salt, lemon zest and butter into a saucepan and melt over a medium heat. Set aside.
- Pour the coconut on to a large tray, lined with baking paper, and place in the oven for five minutes, or until fairly well-toasted. Keep a close watch and stir the coconut occasionally to toast it evenly. When the coconut is ready, take out of the oven and pour into a large bowl with the sesame seeds and ground almonds. Mix together, then pour in the melted butter and mix again. Add the eggs, then stir together until everything is well-combined. Leave to cool slightly.
- Line a baking tray with baking paper. Form the mixture into 20 small pyramids (about 4cm high and 5cm in diameter) and set on the lined tray. Place in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until slightly golden on the peaks and firm to the touch.



- Remove from the oven and leave to cool on a wire rack while melting the chocolate. Break up the chocolate and put into a small heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water, ensuring the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Leave to melt, stirring occasionally. Once the chocolate has melted, dip the cakes into it and top each one with three to four berries of your choice.

**The Little Swedish Kitchen by Rachel Khoo is published by Michael Joseph, priced €28. Photography David Loftus**



Rachel Khoo



# Small is beautiful in the USA

## AMERICA

Rhode Island is tiny by American standards, but it punches well above its weight for food, history and tourist attractions, writes **David Gordon**

As the smallest of the US states, you might think that Rhode Island is a "blink and you'll miss it" kind of place. However, if you keep your eyes open, you will find that it is home to stunning colonial mansions, historic buildings, pristine beaches and a homely charm missing in many other parts of the USA.

Those lucky enough to have travelled to various parts of the US will be struck immediately by the sense of history that pervades Rhode Island's capital city, Providence. The city was founded in 1636 by Englishman Roger Williams, who fled the nearby Massachusetts colony due to his imminent arrest for spreading "new and dangerous ideas", which was basically his opinion that Church and state should be separate.

He befriended the Native Americans in the surrounding land and they gifted him land, on which he began the settlement of Providence as a refuge, offering freedom of conscience.

Williams was an interesting and forward-thinking character. He wrote the first Native American-English dictionary and was instrumental in correcting English attitudes of superiority over the Native Americans in the area. Another of his accomplishments was the establishment of the first Baptist Church in America, which is still in use today. His name has been lent to parks, universities, memorials and a zoo.

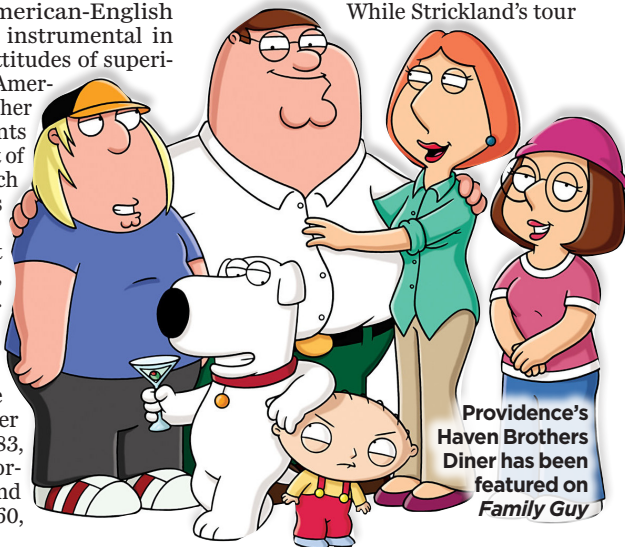
A 15-foot statue of Williams overlooks the city he created. In a rather macabre end to his story, after Williams died in 1683, his burial place was forgotten about for around 200 years. Then, in 1860,

the people of Providence decided to create a suitable memorial, and community leaders went in search of the remains.

All they found were nails, teeth, bones and a human-shaped apple tree root. This root appeared to have taken on the form of Williams, splitting at the hips and bending at the knee. You can see the tree root for yourself at the historic John Brown House on Benefit Street. The house is the base for the Rhode Island Historical Society, which manages a number of the buildings on Benefit Street and offers walking tours of the area and Brown University.

Both the statue and the John Brown House are sights you can see on a tour with Ted Strickland, president of Experience Rhode Island Tours. His bus tour takes visitors from the old to the new, and most places in between. His knowledge of the city is encyclopaedic and as we stood near to the City Hall, he told me: "Providence was a major location for early American heroes, early American industry and sits on the largest estuary in New England. It was the birthplace of religious freedom in the growing British Empire, and particularly in the Americas."

While Strickland's tour



The city of Providence, which is available by direct flight from Ireland



Islanders head to the beaches. Newport is the epicentre of this temporary mass migration and is home to some of the most historic mansions in the state. These huge houses are, in the main, open to the public and some command incredible views of the coast. At one time, they were owned by families like the Vanderbilts and Astors.

Newport was also the location of "summer white house" for both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy. These days, a famous nearby resident is Taylor Swift, who owns a huge beach house in the area.

The centre of Newport is quite compact. The many restaurants and shops crowd around the marina, which is host to some very expensive-looking cruisers. Whilst there may be a sense of money in Newport, when you walk around and start to peel the layers off the city, you will find it has a rich history and some surprising roots.

### HERITAGE

The Irish played a major role in creating the city. Fort Adams, the largest fortress in the US, overlooks Newport Bay and was built by Irish immigrant labour.

The Catholic church, which is a centre-piece in Newport and was the location of the wedding of John F Kennedy to Jacqueline Bouvier, was built by those same Irish labourers.

The Museum of Irish History is curated by a small team of local people from all walks of life, who also voluntarily look after the Irish cemetery, which, in testament to founding father Roger Williams' aim of religious freedom, is located next to the oldest synagogue in the US.

Shopping is a popular pastime in Rhode Island. Westminster Street in Providence has a number of independent shops, while nearby Providence Place is a three-storey shopping mecca. As well as having some well-known names, such as Macy's, what struck me is that the mall is fully carpeted throughout.

Rhode Island is a fascinating state. It has a proud, strong identity and the people are very friendly. It is possible to drive from one side of the state to the other in 45 minutes, yet within its borders are state parks, coastal drives, stunning islands, historic sites and many activities for all ages.

## 'The American diner concept started in Providence'

Fourth generation owner, Greg Stephens, is proud of the tradition: "I have been working here since I was a kid and most of the people behind the counter have been here over 15 years.

"We keep our offering consistent, people know what they get. We work at keeping it the same as it always has been."

While I was there, visitors from across the US came through the door, drawn by the tradition. One man I spoke to had been brought there through the years by his father and grandfather and he was visiting that day with his own son and grandson.

TV stars also frequent the diner, like Guy Fieri from *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives*, who stopped by for lunch a couple of days after me. I can personally vouch for the wieners and coffee milk too. Both are amazing!

On holidays and weekends, Rhode

From a dining perspective, Providence is renowned for its independent restaurants and dining establishments. The ubiquitous national chains can be found in the city centre area, but they aren't that easy to spot. While the American diner is well known throughout the country, the concept was started in Providence. In fact, one of the originals trades every night at the side of the city hall.

Haven Brothers Diner serves up burgers and shakes to the night-time crowd, as it has done since 1893. The truck has appeared on the small and big screen numerous times, including in *Dumb and Dumber* and *Family Guy*.

Current owner, Ian Giusti, said: "Originally, the business operated from a horse-drawn cart and was established to feed the factory workers who worked

## RHODE ISLAND FACT FILE

ACCOMMODATION of all descriptions is available in Rhode Island. In Providence, I stayed in the Dean Hotel ([www.thedeanhotel.com](http://www.thedeanhotel.com)), an independent boutique hotel in the city centre. It is home to one of the city's top coffee stops, Bolt Coffee, and is renowned for its Faust bar, Boombox Karaoke Rooms and The Magdalene Cocktail Lounge.

In Newport, I stayed in the Hilltop Inn ([www.hilltopnewport.com](http://www.hilltopnewport.com)), an

historic house which dates from 1905 and has been sympathetically restored to its original New England style. The rooms are large and comfortable and the hotel is minutes away from the restaurants, shops and bars of Newport.

30 minutes from Newport. The airport is served by direct train and bus services and is located on the I-95 Interstate.

For more information, see [www.visitrhodeisland.com](http://www.visitrhodeisland.com)



Charming Newport is home to singer Taylor Swift

## NEWS & OFFERS



# Exotic hols take off

We're travelling further afield than ever, and Tanzania, the Maldives and Hong Kong have been revealed as the top three fastest growing tourist destinations booked. That's according to Ireland's largest independent travel specialists, Travel Counsellors.

Since last November, bookings for the east African country of Tanzania have risen by 399pc; the Maldives by 196pc; and Hong Kong by 135pc.

Old favourites still dominate though. The US tops the list, up 30pc. This is followed by Mexico (up 36pc); Australia (up 14pc); United Arab Emirates (up 53pc); and South Africa (22pc).

Tanzania's popularity is being put down to its safari parks inland, combined with the beaches of Zanzibar.

The islands of the Maldives, meanwhile, are ever popular with honeymooners and also with families who fork out the money upfront for all-in-

clusive resorts. And Hong Kong is taking off thanks to the new non-stop flight between Dublin and Hong Kong with Cathay Pacific, flying four times a week.

Closer to home, Spain retains its top spot — and bookings are up 6pc in independent travel specialists, Portugal and France.

● If you think Dublin Airport is busy these days, you'd be right. More than 100,000 passengers a day used it in July, a record for the 78-year-old airport. And it shows that far-off spots are popular among fliers.

The number of passengers travelling to and from North America increased by 15pc, with almost 463,000 passengers taking transatlantic flights to and from Dublin last month.

Other international traffic, mainly to the Middle East, North Africa and the Asia Pacific region increased by 19pc, with almost 109,000 passengers travelling these routes in July.

## LATEST DEALS

LOOKING for something different, but close to home? Cassidy Travel is offering deals to the **Bulgarian Riviera** on the country's Black Sea for next year.

It's got flights and seven nights in the resort of Sunny Beach near Bourgas in June from €559pps. Staying at the three-star Hotel Palazzo on a self-catering basis, guests have direct access to Action Aquapark, while the rides and attractions of Sunny Beach Luna Park are around 25 minutes' walk away.

The flight from Dublin departs on June 20. Call Cassidy Travel on 01 9695550 or book in one of their nine stores.

● Tour America has a few good deals for cruise fans at the moment. If you fancy sailing direct from Dublin, it's got an eight-night **Norwegian Fjords** cruise

from €1,199pp, based on two adults sharing a interior stateroom and departing May 26 next.

For a bit of sunshine, it has a **Dubai** and the Emirates fly/cruise from €1,149pp. Price includes return flights to Abu Dhabi, transfers to/from the port and seven nights on board MSC Splendida, based on two adults sharing an interior cabin, departing January 13.

For mid-term 2019, it has an **Orlando** stay (three nights) and **Caribbean** cruise, with flights and car hire to/from the port, from €1,299pp on board the Royal Caribbean Oasis of the Seas. This is based on two adults and two children sharing a boardwalk balcony cabin and with \$200 on-board credit per cabin, departing February 21. See [www.touramerica.ie](http://www.touramerica.ie)