





### Cockles and clams

Although technically a different species, cockles and clams are very similar and, with my two, are interchangeable. I like a huge pot of New England chowder with onions, potatoes and potatoes. Taste-wise, they are superior shellfish and they have a lovely flavour to pasta or in a risotto. I find them to be visually appealing. It's sometimes nice just to steam them open using stock or water and then place them as a garnish on a larger piece of fish.

### Whelks

Whelks are underutilised in Scotland, because we're not adventurous enough. They are lovely when lightly boiled in water and sliced thinly to taste. I like them fantastic minced up and added to Caribbean conch chowder, as a perfect alternative to scallops. I'd never fly conch chowder when you can always find a whelk. This chowder is

zomato, rather than cream, based – with bacon, green peppers, chillies, bay leaves, tobacco, lime juice and spices. Any time I've had it in the Caribbean I've been given a bottle of sherry with it. A few glugs in the dish sets it off.

### Winkles

A winkle is like a smaller version of a whelk. They are small, black shellfish found around the coastline of Scotland. To me they are a snacking food. I boil them up in heavily salted water, as it's about trying to re-create the seawater environment they came from. I then add a dozen peppercorns and a couple of bay leaves, boil for a maximum of five minutes and then eat them as finger food. They are also good in a stir-fry: just take the pan off the heat and fold them through at the last minute. Due to their size they will cook in the steam.



### Crabs

The first thing to look for is whether the crab is male or female. On the underside of the shell, between

the small legs, the female has a wider 'purse' and the top side of her shell is more rounded. The female has more brown meat, because of her bigger body, and the male has bigger claws and so more white meat. Always pick a crab with a rich, brown coloured shell and lots of energy (ie fast moving legs). Feel for a weight of meat – depending on season, they can be light and watery. Often I use both white and brown meat in the same dish, like a nice crab salad with chunky guacamole, home-made crispy tortilla and lime granita. The brown meat gives an intense flavour and the white meat adds a nice texture.

### Spots (Razor clams)



A nice way of doing them is in a ribbed steak griddle pan. Get the pan fairly hot and then angle the clams into the spars of the griddle and it will help keep them closed for long enough. Cook them for a minute to 90 seconds in butter and wine, then take the clams out and put the pan back on the heat, reduce the juices and add butter and chopped herbs. Serve them as they are, with just the clams and a little of the juice. And get away from the idea that it has to be piping hot to serve, that's often when you ruin the fish.



### Lobster

This is the king of fish to me, but be careful when choosing lobster – usually you can instinctively tell

a good one, as it will be lively and heavy of body. They shed their shell each year, so you want one with a strong shell that hasn't just been cast. If it's not in season, I refuse to put it on the menu. The first thing I do when lobsters enter my kitchen is put them in a pan of salted boiling water for three to four minutes. This puts them out of their misery, as I believe that nothing gives us the right to be cruel to another creature. Then it's a case of deciding whether to grill the meat in olive oil and herbs or steam it and use it as it is; it can also be left to cool for a salad.



### Langoustine

The ethics of fish use are changing and we're beyond the days of just using part of a fish and

discarding the rest. Langoustine is a good fish for allowing you to use all parts – even with the shell you can make good bisque. Be careful only to heat the meat through once, however, because if you stir it through a pasta, for example, and then continue cooking it, you will ruin the meat. It's also particularly good in a stir fry with chilli, ginger, fried rice and some crunchy vegetables – but there's no need for a sauce. No fish needs a heavy sauce – it's about complementing it, not smothering it.



### Shrimp

Shrimp is excellent for poaching and shelling in risottos, pastas and stir-fries – but potted

shrimp is a favourite. Take the shrimps and add butter, herbs, mace, cayenne pepper and nutmeg and cook in a hot pan. Then put it in little clay ramekins and let it all mingle together, before leaving it to set in the fridge. The butter solidifies and then you can serve it with warm toast. I don't have shrimp on my menu, because I can't get it locally and I don't buy fish outwith a 50-mile perimeter. It just means I look forward to shrimp when I travel elsewhere.

## CHEF'S CHOICE

KEVIN BROOME ON LOCH TORRIDON LANGOUSTINES



To some, the langoustine or Dublin bay prawn is the jewel in the crown of shellfish. Many top London restaurants pay high prices to allow this wonderful prawn a prime position on their menus. *Nephrops norvegicus* (the binomial name) are commercially fished around Scottish shores and some 40 per cent of the world's stocks caught and sold from Scotland, with Spain being one of the main buyers.

Based in Shiekaig, the award winning Loch Torridon fishermen are among a handful of collectives in the world to be accredited as a Marine Stewardship Council sustainable fishery and they're the only certified crustacean fishery in the UK today. Around the loch there's a three-mile ban on large commercial trawling which allows the langoustine to be caught only in traditional creels. This allows the prawns to grow to a proper size and protects healthy stocks for years to come.

Typically we'll serve Loch Torridon langoustines grilled simply with basil, lemon and chilli butter. We place the fresh, live langoustines in the freezer which sends them to sleep, allowing a humane way of cooking without all the movement you get in the pot or oven. Spread the flavoured butter over the cooled prawn then put them under a hot grill for eight to ten minutes, finishing in a hot oven for a couple of minutes further, then serve on fresh summer leaves.

■ Kevin John Broome is head chef at the Torridon, [www.thetorridon.com](http://www.thetorridon.com)



■ **An Lochan**

Shore Road, Tighnabruach, Argyll  
01700 811239, [www.anlochan.co.uk](http://www.anlochan.co.uk)  
Mon-Sun noon-3pm, 5.30-9pm.

£28

Owned and run by the McKie family since 1997, the original branch of this award-winning restaurant is nestled on the shores of Loch Fyne, facing the Isle of Bute – An Lochan meaning ‘by the loch’ in Gaelic. An outpost in Glasgow and, most recently, the conversion of a 17th-century coaching inn at Tomauddin, Perthshire, completes the trio. Loch Fyne scallops, Perthshire venison, Stomoway black pudding – all the usual suspects are present on a modern, French-influenced menu with a decidedly inventive twist.

■ **The Anderson**

Union Street, Fortrose  
01381 620236, [www.theanderson.co.uk](http://www.theanderson.co.uk)  
Sun 1-3pm; Mon-Sun 6-11pm

£18

Scottish ingredients are given an international makeover in this restaurant and bar in the village of Fortrose, near Inverness. A Manhattan seafood chowder is loaded with queenie scallop and Shetland mussels, or there is a decidedly un-Highlands-style coconut shrimp starter, served with a banana and sweet chilli dipping sauce. For those who feel like making a long weekend of it, there are nine ensuite bedrooms above the dining room.

■ **Applecross Inn**

Shore Street, Applecross, Wester Ross  
01520 744262,  
[www.applecross.uk.com/inn](http://www.applecross.uk.com/inn)  
Mon-Sun noon-9pm

Prawns from Applecross Bay are a regular favourite here, as is the fluffy haddock and chips, but otherwise the menu changes daily to showcase the best of local, seasonal produce. Seafood is prominent on the menu, with rolltop herring from Orkney or salmon from Tomoon sitting alongside land-dwelling options like venison sausage on bubble and squeak. A lively bar and summer beer garden, not to mention those gobsmacking views over to Skye, are also large plus points.

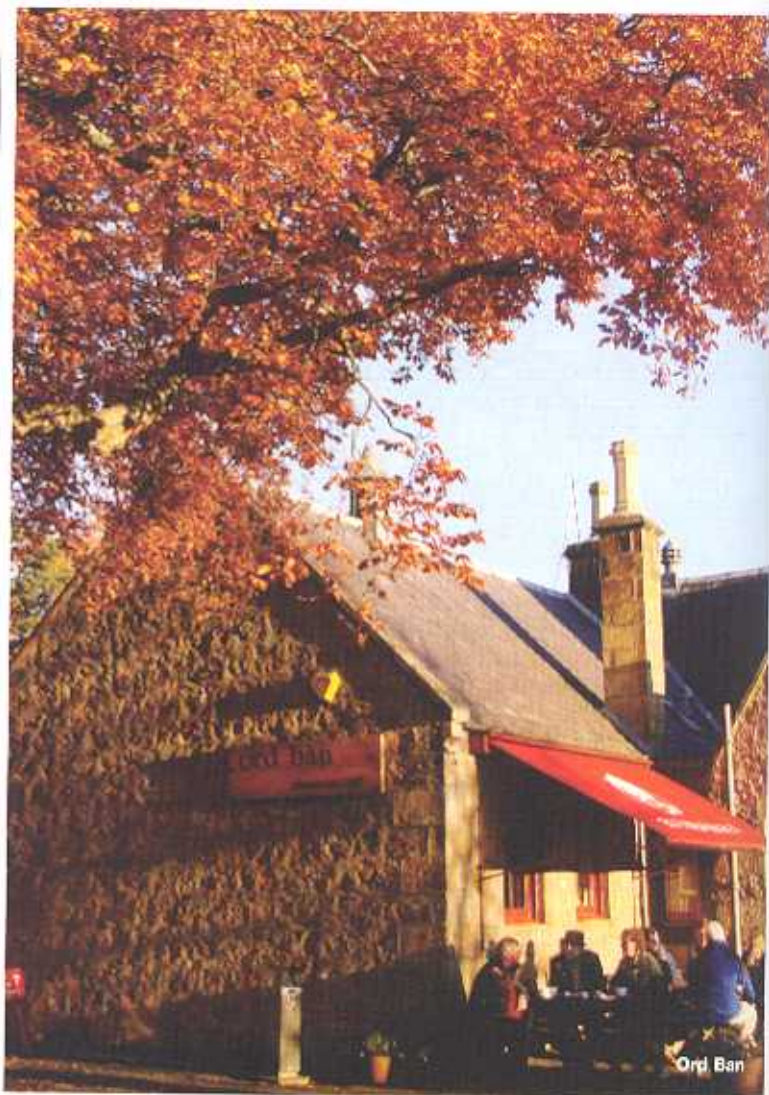
■ **Argyll Hotel**

Isle of Iona, Argyll  
01681 700334, [www.argyllhoteliona.co.uk](http://www.argyllhoteliona.co.uk)  
Mon-Sun 12.30-1.30pm, 7-8pm.

£18

The Argyll Hotel makes fine dining feel a little rather homely and unpretentious with meat sourced from Mull, seafood from the waters around the island and organic vegetables from the restaurant's own garden. A weekend brunch menu is also available.

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■ **The Boath House Hotel**

Auldearn, Nairn  
01667 454896, [www.boath-house.com](http://www.boath-house.com)  
Mon-Sun 12.30-1.30pm, 7pm til late.  
Michelin-starred head chef Charles Lockey is in charge of the cooking at this Georgian mansion, which has been operating as a luxurious country house hotel since a large-scale refurbishment in the 90s. Those popping in for a champagne afternoon tea or upmarket dinner are reminded of Boath House's smart-casual dress code, and for those looking to make a night of it, there are eight opulently decorated rooms upstairs. Booking is essential.

■ **Busta House Hotel**

Busta, Shetland  
01806 522506, [www.bustahouse.com](http://www.bustahouse.com)  
Mon-Sun noon-2.30pm, 7-9pm.

£35 (set dinner)

At Busta House Hotel, unsurprisingly, Shetland produce plays a starring rôle in

the dining experience. Shetland hill lamb, free-range pork and organic salmon from Unst, Muckie Rice mussels, halibut from Bressay, Yell Sound scallops and, most recently (and a world first), organically farmed cod from Vidlin. A nod to neighbouring Orkney is also made with beef and cheese on a menu heavily influenced by island life.

■ **The Captain's Galley**

The Harbour, Scrabster  
01847 894999, [www.captainsgalley.co.uk](http://www.captainsgalley.co.uk)  
Tue-Sat 7-9pm.

£39.75 (set dinner)

A renovated old Scrabster ice house and salmon bothy, this restaurant has a quirky charm – with stone walls and low ceiling beams. It serves up the freshest of fish straight from the pier and due to the unique freshness, sushi and sashimi (raw fish) are also often on the menu. With only eight tables, booking is very much recommended.

■ **Cranna**

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