

# Five decades of changing taste



**CRINGLETIE HOUSE**  
AN ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL NEAR EDINBURGH

This week sees the first of our new foodie columns from Cringle House hotel near Peebles. Food blogger Seren Charrington-Hollins takes a look at changing food trends and offers an alternative recipe for chocolate cake.

Today I am experimenting with a recipe for chocolate mayonnaise cake and I can't help wondering what my granny would have made of the incorporation of mayonnaise in a cake. Indeed our tastes in food have changed dramatically in the past 50 years.

If we were to travel back to the 1960s then we would find that just the very concept of mayonnaise was a rather alien one, indeed if you wanted a salad dressing in the 1960s you'd probably be reaching for the salad cream.

Yes, the good old tangy salad cream reigned supreme over the lettuce leaf at one time, but alas it has become typecast and the traditional British favourite has been in the doldrums for some time whilst its rival the French-inspired mayo was enjoying its moment of dining table fame next to the focaccia and sundried tomatoes.

However, as Salad Cream



Tastes have become more exotic over the years

announced it's possible name change to Sandwich Cream in a bid to increase its appeal to younger generations; mayonnaise has

reported a drop in sales and it seems that today's calorie, fat, sugar and salt counting diners palette is looking for fresh and exotic flavours.

Indeed salad cream, brown sauce, English mustard and tomato ketchup: have all been celebrated mainstays of the greasy spoon fry-up or no-nonsense mid-week supper, but the condiments of our childhoods are in terminal decline, usurped by both their more sophisticated international cousins such as aioli, chipotle sauce and a new generation of healthier, no-added-salt, organic badge-wearing products in slick packaging have taken centre stage. Today food is 400 times spicier than 1960s dishes as chilli sales soar. It is certain that us Brits have developed a love for spicy sauce. Sauces such as chipotle, piri piri,

Sriracha hot sauce or jalapeño chilli ketchup are now taking pride of place in our pantry shelves and it is reported that we are all getting hooked on capsaicinoids, the chemicals in chilli which gives us a boost.

During the 1960s the idea of a mild curry seemed rather adventurous for us Britons and the hottest thing we had in terms of condiments was often English mustard. By the '70s our taste buds were up for a challenge as increasingly exotic and spicy cuisine became introduced and the love affair with the curry house really took off and this trend has been like a runaway train with today's cuisine seeing a fiery explosion.

Our palates have been changing over the past 50 years as we become acclimatized to the wide and varied international cuisine now on offer in the UK and it seems that as every decade passes our taste buds become more accustomed to the ever hotter food that has now become part of our national cuisine. Such is our love of hot food that it's not even unusual to find chilli flakes adorning breakfast dishes, perhaps sprinkled over a

dish of smashed avocado, on spelt bread with poached eggs and there lies another change in our culinary tastes, the enjoyment of the avocado. In the café society we live in it seems perfectly normal to see avocado sliced, smashed, diced and chopped on a variety of toasted breads for breakfast, brunch and lunch, but when Marks & Spencer marketed them as 'avocado pears' in the 1960s, they received letters of complaint from women who'd stewed them and served them up with custard. My how times have changed! Seen as something rather curious, the avocado was served up with a good dose of suspicion and a drizzle of olive oil usually reserved for earache from the bathroom cabinet.

Whilst, during the 1970s the avocado was popular as a starter being paired with prawns only for it to be branded a fatty food by the 1980s and to fall from the grace of the black ash dining table of yuppie '80s Britain. Today, the avocado has become one of the most versatile of soft fruits, appearing routinely on top flight menus, in our sandwiches and on our toast.

So as I remove my chocolate mayonnaise cake from the oven and place it on the dining table next to my heritage tomato salad before drizzling my fennel slaw and avocado wraps with chilli oil; I can't help reminiscing about the tea-times of my childhood that consisted of a simple salad of cos lettuce, homegrown tomatoes and cucumber; ham sandwiches and simple sponge cake. In today's world of turmeric lattes and rainbow coloured unicorn food, I can't help wondering what we will make of today's food trends in 50 years time.

● More of Seren's food nostalgia and recipes can be found at [www.serenitykitchen.com](http://www.serenitykitchen.com)

**DREAM JOB**

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## Seren's chocolate mayonnaise cake recipe

I was worried about how this recipe would turn out, the results are a moist and deliciously rich cake.

### Ingredients

- For the cake**
- 285g self raising flour
  - 225g caster sugar
  - 1½ teaspoon baking powder
  - 200g full-fat mayonnaise
  - 8 tablespoons cocoa powder
  - 8fl oz boiling water
  - 1 teaspoon orange flower water

### For the icing

- 2 teaspoons camp coffee essence
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons hot water
- 85g softened salted butter
- 225g sifted icing sugar,

### Method

- Mix the flour, sugar, baking powder, orange flower water & mayonnaise until well combined.
  - Dissolve the cocoa in the boiling water & stir into the mixture along with until completely incorporated and well blended.
  - Place the mixture into a 7 inch greased & lined cake tin. I find a loose bottomed cake tin best for this recipe.
  - Bake at gas mark 4/ 180C/ 350F for 40 minutes.
  - It is essential to cool the baked cake in the tin before removing.
- For the icing**
- Dissolve the cocoa in the hot water and stir in the coffee essence and mix until well combined.
  - Cream together the butter & icing sugar. Beat in the cocoa/ coffee liquid and mix well.
  - Spread over the top & sides of the cooled cake.
  - Enjoy and debate whether to tell anyone that the cake contains mayonnaise!