

LEE COOPER

Executive Chef Hintlesham Hall · Suffolk

NEWMARKET SAUSAGE FESTIVAL — DEMONSTRATION STAGE

CHEF BIOGRAPHY

Lee Cooper is Executive Chef at Hintlesham Hall in Suffolk, where he leads a produce-led British kitchen cooking at 2 AA Rosette standard with the Michelin Guide firmly in his sights. His food is rooted in Suffolk provenance and kitchen-garden seasonality — an approach honed across a career that includes his time as Head Chef at The Bull Auberge. Beyond the pass, Lee hosts The Cheflife Podcast and food blog through chefleecooper.com. At Newmarket, he brings that fine-dining discipline to one of Britain's most underrated ingredients: the humble sausage.

ON STAGE AT NEWMARKET

Lee takes to the demonstration stage for a live session that treats the sausage with the same rigour as a restaurant plate — showing exactly where quality lives, how it changes the cooking, and how to turn a great link into a proper dish. Expect sharp technique, plenty of tips to take home, and a finish that punches well above the price tag.

Budget to premium — A side-by-side tasting from everyday value pack to butcher's premium link — showing where your money goes, how quality changes the cook, and which sausage belongs in which dish.

The hero dish — Toulouse sausage with braised farmhouse lentils and buttery braised savoy cabbage — a refined bistro plate that shows a proper link doing what a value banger simply can't.

The Recipe —

Serves 4

A refined bistro plate — coarse Toulouse sausage over glossy, mustard-and-sherry-lacquered green lentils with buttery braised savoy cabbage.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 Toulouse sausages
- 250g Puy or green farmhouse lentils, rinsed
- 100g smoked streaky bacon, cut into lardons
- 2 banana shallots, finely diced
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 1 celery stick, finely diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp tomato puree
- 100ml dry white wine
- 550ml chicken stock

- 1 bay leaf
- 3 thyme sprigs
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 40g cold unsalted butter, diced (for the lentils)
- 1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 1 savoy cabbage
- 30g unsalted butter (for the cabbage)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Sea salt & black pepper
- Freshly grated nutmeg

METHOD

1. PREP — Finely dice the shallots, carrot and celery to an even brunoise; mince the garlic. Rinse the lentils and set aside.

2. RENDER THE BACON — Warm the olive oil in a heavy pan over medium heat and render the lardons until golden and crisp. Lift out and reserve, leaving the fat in the pan.

3. SWEAT THE MIREPOIX — Sweat the shallots, carrot, celery and garlic in the bacon fat with a pinch of salt, gently and with no colour, until soft and sweet. Stir in the tomato puree and cook out for 1 minute.

4. BUILD THE LENTILS — Add the lentils and stir to coat. Pour in the white wine and reduce until nearly dry, then add the stock, the reserved bacon, bay leaf and thyme. Bring to a bare simmer.

5. BRAISE — Simmer gently for 20–25 minutes, until the lentils are tender with a slight bite and the liquid has reduced to a loose, saucy coat — not soupy, not dry. Top up with a splash of stock if needed.

6. SAUSAGES — Meanwhile, brown the sausages all over in a separate pan, then lower the heat and cook through gently (or finish in the oven), turning, until caramelised and just firm. Rest for a few minutes.

7. CABBAGE — Quarter the cabbage, cut out the core and shred (or keep neat wedges). Braise in the butter with a splash of stock and a lid on until just tender, then lift the lid to glaze. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg.

8. FINISH THE LENTILS — Off the heat, discard the bay and thyme stalks. Stir in the Dijon and sherry vinegar, then mount with the cold butter, swirling until glossy (a proper monte au beurre). Fold through the parsley and adjust seasoning — rich, buttery, with a clean sharp lift.

9. PLATE — Spoon the glossy lentils to the base, set the cabbage alongside and rest the sausages on top. Spoon over the resting juices and finish with a little parsley.

CHEF'S NOTES

Get the lentils on first — they carry the dish and hold well, so the sausages and cabbage slot into the braise window and everything lands together. For extra polish, hold back a spoon of the mounted lentil emulsion to glaze the plate, and lacquer the sausages in their own reduced pan juices just before serving. Puy lentils give the best structure; a farmhouse green lentil works for a softer, more rustic read.

Best,

Lee Cooper

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