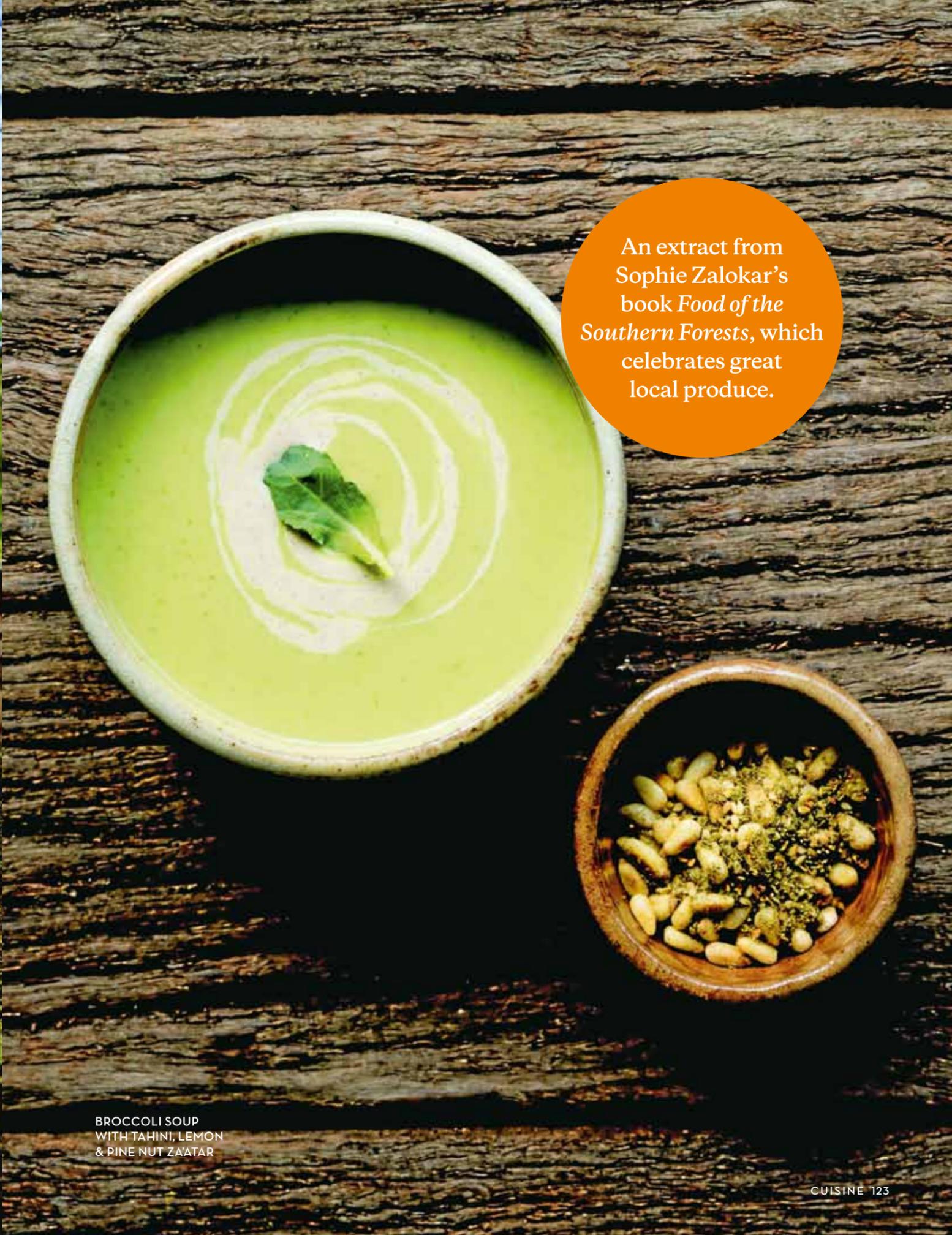


FRUIT
STALL
ORGANIC
FRUIT + VEG

DOWN TO EARTH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG KINDER



An extract from Sophie Zalokar's book *Food of the Southern Forests*, which celebrates great local produce.

BROCCOLI SOUP
WITH TAHINI, LEMON
& PINE NUT ZAATAR

“The Southern Forests region is in the lower south-west of Western Australia, approximately 300km south of Perth. It’s an extraordinarily beautiful place. Remarkably, over 50 different types of fresh produce are cultivated, harvested, ranged and caught here”

BROCCOLI SOUP WITH TAHINI, LEMON & PINE NUT ZA'ATAR

SERVES 4

Za'atar is a Middle Eastern seasoning mix of dried thyme, sesame, sumac and salt. The swirl of tahini sauce and the crunchy seasoning of the pine nut za'atar elevates this simple broccoli soup to a whole different delicious level.

For the soup

1 leek, roughly chopped
2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
1 teaspoon sea salt
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 whole broccoli, heads and stems roughly chopped, reserving a few small leaves for garnish
1 ½ litres water or vegetable stock
400ml can coconut cream

In a medium-sized saucepan, gently fry the leek and garlic, together with the sea salt and the ground cumin, in the olive oil until softened. Stir through the broccoli and then add the water or stock. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until the broccoli is soft. Puree together with the coconut cream until smooth and season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

Tahini sauce

1 clove garlic, whole
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground allspice
1 tablespoon pine nuts
4 tablespoons tahini
¼ cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
2 tablespoons za'atar

In a large mortar and pestle, crush the whole clove of garlic together with the salt, allspice and pine nuts until a thick paste. Using a spoon, mix in the tahini, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons water and the extra virgin olive oil to make a creamy sauce. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Mix the toasted pine nuts together with the za'atar.

Serve the soup drizzled with a little of the tahini sauce and garnished with a small broccoli leaf, along with a small dish of the pine nut za'atar.

CAULIFLOWER CHEESE WITH CARAWAY SEEDS

SERVES 6 AS A SIDE DISH

Cauliflower cheese is an old favourite for many, but often doesn't present in the most appealing way. Serving the whole cauliflower to be cut in wedges at the table is a far more spectacular option.

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs
olive oil for cooking
50g butter
1 tablespoon caraway seeds
4 tablespoons plain flour
500ml full cream milk
100g strong cheddar cheese, grated
1 whole large cauliflower
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 200°C. Spread the breadcrumbs out on a baking tray and drizzle with a little olive oil. Bake in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes until golden, stirring every 5 minutes to ensure they're evenly browned.

Melt the butter with the caraway seeds in a heavy-based saucepan over a low heat and stir through the flour. Continue to cook until the caraway butter has absorbed the flour and appears crumbly. Slowly pour in the milk while whisking until smooth.

Place the saucepan on a simmer mat with the heat on a low setting and gently simmer while periodically stirring for 10 minutes. Stir through the cheese until melted. Cover and reserve to the side.

Preheat oven to 220 °C. Bring a large pot of water to the boil and place either a bamboo steamer or a large colander over the top. Using a small paring knife, core out the thicker end of the cauliflower stalk and trim away the remaining leafy-ribs. Place the cauliflower inside the steamer and cover with a piece of baking paper and aluminium foil and then a lid to cover as completely as possible. Steam for 20 minutes until a paring knife easily cuts into the thickest part of the cauliflower.

Remove the paper and foil and transfer the cauliflower from the steamer to a baking dish. Pour the cheese sauce over the top of the cauliflower to cover and bake in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes until the surface is golden. Serve scattered with the toasted breadcrumbs, thyme and sea salt flakes.



CAULIFLOWER CHEESE WITH CARAWAY SEEDS





GINGERBREAD WITH PRUNE BUTTER, TAMARILLOS & ORANGE BLOSSOM MASCARPONE

SERVES 4

The very grown-up tastes in this unusual combination of flavours beg to be served with an aromatic tea such as jasmine or soursop. Alternatively, the smoky lapsong souchong would also work very well as an accompanying afternoon tea beverage.

Prune butter

MAKES 3 CUPS

500g pitted prunes
250ml orange juice
finely grated zest of 1 orange
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup soft brown sugar

Combine all of the ingredients in a saucepan except for the brown sugar. Stir and bring to a gentle simmer and cook with the lid on for 20 minutes, stirring every few minutes. Remove the lid and continue to simmer and stir for 3 to 5 minutes until approximately 3 tablespoons of liquid remains. Stir in the brown sugar and when dissolved, puree with a stick blender to a coarse consistency.

Gingerbread

MAKES 2 SMALL LOAVES

125g butter
1 cup molasses
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups plain flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup self-raising flour
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon mixed spice
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
1 cup caster sugar
1 cup milk
2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 170 °C and grease and line two 23.5cm x 7.5cm bar cake pans with baking paper. Warm butter and molasses together in a small saucepan over low heat. Sift the flours, bicarbonate of soda, spices and salt into a medium-sized bowl. Stir through the caster sugar.

Make a well and beat the eggs and milk together in it before incorporating the flour mixture to make a smooth batter. Fold the butter and molasses into the batter and divide into the cake pans. Smooth the top before baking in the oven for 40 to 45 minutes.

Leave to stand in the tin for 15 minutes, then turn out and leave to cool completely.

For the orange blossom mascarpone & tamarillos & to serve

250g mascarpone
2 teaspoons orange blossom water
2 tablespoons icing sugar
2 tamarillos (or allow $\frac{1}{2}$ tamarillo per person)

Mix the mascarpone, orange blossom water and icing sugar together until smooth.

Bring a saucepan of water to the boil. Remove the tamarillo stems and score a cross into the base of each tamarillo before blanching for 30 seconds. Place in a bowl of ice water and then peel the skin away using a paring knife.

Slice the gingerbread into pieces 1cm thick and thickly spread with the prune butter and orange blossom mascarpone. Thinly slice the tamarillos and place on top of the mascarpone. 🍷

* This is an extract from *Food of the Southern Forests* by Sophie Zalokar, photography by Craig Kinder. RRP \$59.99 AUD, published by UWA, available from uwap.uwa.edu.au

