



Opposite: Celebrity chef Lesley Waters' young students are eager to learn the cooking craft – especially where chocolate is concerned

Clockwise from left: the mini-chefs gather Easter eggs from the garden; the line between play and making dough is easily crossed; young pasta masters hang their creations out to dry; Lesley demonstrates the power of flour to her apprentices; bun-loving young bakers discover the joy of sampling their creations



fuelling young minds – and stomachs Words by Pippa Kelly Photographs by George Wright

(Josh's must be over 15ft long). They hang them on laundry airers to dry, before changing the setting to produce thin strings of tagliatelle.

This is a delicate operation, but nothing that the children can't handle – with puffs of magic from Lesley, who's flitting about, sprinkling flour here

and there. Soon everyone is covered in white dust, including her mum Fran, 63, who had arrived elegantly dressed in black, thinking she'd be making coffee in the kitchen.

It's now time to blow away the flour, and the children stream into the acre of walled garden.

Nestling like jewels in the branches of gnarled apple trees, above the first crocus spears and primrose posies, are scores of brightly wrapped Easter eggs, waiting to be discovered. The kids poke among fledgling yew hedges for chocolate that will be melted down to ice the chocolate

Hot cross buns

Makes 10

340g (12oz) strong white flour
55g (2oz) light brown sugar
1 level teaspoon grated nutmeg
1½ teaspoons mixed spice
Large pinch of salt
2 x 7g (¼ oz) sachets easy-blend yeast
Approx 170ml (6fl oz) warm milk and water, mixed
55g (2oz) melted butter
1 large egg

Milk sweetened with sugar for glazing
110g (4oz) sultanas or raisins

For the crosses
Plain flour
Cold water

- In a large bowl, mix the flour, sugar, nutmeg, mixed spice, salt and yeast.
- In a jug, beat together the warm milk, butter and egg. Pour into the mixture and mix to form a sticky dough.

Add extra milk if necessary.

- Turn the dough out on to a lightly floured surface and knead for 5 minutes until smooth. Place in a clean, floured mixing bowl and cover. Leave in a warm place for approximately 2 hours until risen and doubled in size.
- Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/gas 6.
- On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough, and work in the fruit. Divide

the dough into 10 equal pieces and shape into buns. Place on a non-stick baking tray and leave to rise again until they have doubled in size (approx 15-20 minutes).
● In a small bowl, mix some plain flour with cold water to obtain a glue-like paste. Brush the risen buns with the sweet glaze and, using a piping bag, pipe a paste cross on to each bun.
● Bake the buns in the oven for approx 15-20 minutes or

until golden. Brush the buns again with the glaze and cool on a wire rack.

