

Blue chip cookbook for the slopes

FISH AND PIPS is a thoroughly blue chip British chalet company run by Londoners Holly Fisher and Philippa Eyles, who have served up an eclectic and mouth-watering collection of recipes in their self-published title *A Portion of Fish and Pips: The Cookbook*.

If self-catering ski holidays are your thing, look no further than this fun and comprehensive work to ensure that your holiday grub will be top notch - though frankly I would go the whole hog and leave it in the capable hands of Holly and Pip's team, who have helped them compile these mouth-watering recipes. Though clearly designed for the winter sports market, there's no doubt that many of these recipes will grace dinner party menus in London and the shires before long.

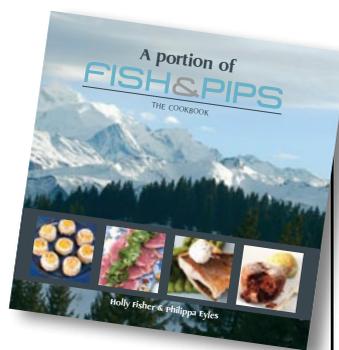
Personally, I would have preferred to have seen a few more ideas for main courses and less detail on breakfast - not withstanding the importance of plenty of nourishment ahead of a day on the slopes. To be honest, you can either do an omelette or scrambled eggs or you can't. Minor quibble aside, the rest of it is saliva inducingly appetising.

There are cakes that I would miss the last run for, and a great range of both elegant and hearty canapés - tomato basil and vodka shots, delicious sounding Yorkshire pudding with confit duck and caramelised red onions, oxtail wellingtons, and prawn and ginger dumplings are just a few. Hungry yet?

Starters are no less appealing, with some nice modern touches. Puddings are all you could wish for, and the book concludes with with some good information on cheese and two nice recipes for tomato chutney and quince Jelly. I'm hanging on to my copy! **Jeremy Ashpool**

A Portion of Fish and Pips is available for £20 (incl 2nd class postage in the UK). Payment by cheque, cash, transfer or credit/debit card. For more information or to buy a copy email cookbook@fishandpips.com or call +44 1483 421 777. www.fishandpipsmeribelskichalet.co.uk

Jeremy Ashpool is the owner-chef at Jeremy's Restaurant, Haywards Heath (www.jeremysrestaurant.co.uk). One of his recipes features in Lord Tebbit's recently published book, *The Game Cook*.



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Kyo no yuki wa dou desu ka? (What's the snow like?)

At last – a really good guide to skiing in Japan: *Snow Search Japan*. What a shame more British skiers don't venture there since it's unlikely to be a best seller – which it deserves to be. It's bright and breezy and generously illustrated with maps and inspirational photography, with sections on culture, history, food (of course), and the vexed question of the confusing signals many Japanese resorts send out about skiing or snowboarding in the backcountry. I have been watching this problem ever since I first skied in Japan during the 1980s. Back then there was an almost evangelical attitude to westerners wanting to ski powder. For some reason it was alien to the Japanese ski culture. Then, gradually, Japanese snowboarders making regular visits to

New Zealand resorts like Coronet Peak and The Remarkables saw how much fun the Kiwis were having boarding off-piste and brought the habit home with them – sometimes risking the wrath of Japanese ski patrols. It's still confusing – some resorts ban it, others turn a blind eye to it. A great stride forward happened in the Hokkaido resort of Niseko which Australian skiers have almost adopted because it is relatively close to home and has munificent powder. They came, they skied, they built homes and even for a while owned some of the lifts. And of course they brought their own off-piste culture with them. Now Niseko even allows cat-skiing. *Snow Search Japan*, published by Steve Dowle of WSG (World Snowboarding Guide) Media has pooled the talents of a number of writers and photographers, so it's hard to work out who's written what, but in the chapter about backcountry and off-piste, the author writes: "I came to the conclusion that it's not about the snow, or terrain, but about the people. To operate a successful ski patrol team at a mountain prone to avalanches, or a resort that allows off-piste, is challenging at best... Unfortunately, in Japan, there's no national qualification framework for this... Without the skills to assess the risks and control avalanches, how are resort management supposed to open off-piste terrain to the public? It's a tricky situation, but times are changing, and some resorts are really taking the bull by the horns, under the realisation that steep-and-deep powder is one of the main things attracting many international visitors." **Arnie Wilson**

Snow Search Japan is published by WSG Media www.wsg-media.com at £14.95