

Brigid's Well

From the makers of [Holy Goat](#) cheeses in Sutton Grange, Victoria comes a new ash covered, creamy goats cheese called Brigid's Well. *I'm pleased she is* was my husband's expected remark but when you see an entire 670 gram ring of this cheese you can imagine one of the many stone wells dedicated to St Brigid in Ireland that it is meant to represent. Brigid has been a figure in Irish folklore for centuries; originally thought to be the chief druid of the temple of the goddess Brigid in Kildare she later converted the site to a Christian monastery and adopted the name of Saint Brigid. Noted for many miracles, the list of her patronage is long and aptly includes dairy farmers and milkmaids. Her feast day, February 1st, is widely celebrated in Ireland, with elements of both the pagan and Christian custom, including the visiting of sacred Brigid wells. While no particular foods are part of the celebration, the Gaelic tradition is of marking the beginning of Spring on Brigid's Day. In the Southern hemisphere, while we are well in to Spring, it is a good time to enjoy this wonderful cheese and perhaps, for the Irish in you, add it to your cheese board on St Brigid's day too. Portions of the ring are packaged and available from farmers markets around Melbourne or check the web site for stockists.



[Transpacific FaceTime Meals](#)

With loved ones over in the West coast of the USA it was nice to be able to get together for a meal via FaceTime on the weekend. The time difference is such that you can co-ordinate a US dinner with an Australian lunch and even arrange the same menu, so there is an easy entree to conversation and laughter. If you have a few people at one end, like we did, it is best to be seated interview style at one side of the dinner table opposite a large screen TV (Apple TV or TV with laptop connectivity). We set up an ipad facing us as the camera. You might need a trial run to make sure you are all connected and the lighting is right to see faces clearly. Once the

connectivity is ironed out the fun can begin. Having the same menu was a hoot but make sure you keep it simple. As the meal progressed each course was presented for inspection and it was surprising how similar our baked chicken pieces with Mediterranean vegetables looked. I really did get a sense of a shared meal. We decided on a menu that made sense for the two different continents and now is a great time as both are on the cusp of seasonal change. Plating out a cold starter such as cured ocean trout with tarragon mayo was simple while the tech-heads in the family got the connecting underway and our oven-baked chicken was an easy one pan dish that could sit there once cooked and be served at the table without fuss. Some cheeses followed and then creme caramel for dessert, but any pre-prepared dessert is a good option. Co-ordinating the same wine can be a little tricky; we chose neutral European territory, so no Napa/Yarra valley rivalry could ensue. If this all sounds a bit silly and gimmicky to you believe me it wasn't, it was great. The next one is queued for Thanksgiving.

[Soulara – Clean, Plant-based Meal Delivery](#)

Cooking imaginative vegetable-based food does require the ability to seek out fresh seasonal produce, have a well stocked pantry of ideas and time for hands-on preparation. If time is of the essence or if cooking is not your thing but love of healthy, quality food is then [Soulara](#) may be the solution. Soulara home delivered plant-based meal plans may help you change your diet in interesting ways.

Source: [Soulara – Clean, Plant-based Meal Delivery](#)

Habituel Bakers & Coffee Roasters

One of my habitual pleasures has been to buy the sourdough bread from the Giant Steps/Innocent Bystander cellar door and foodie hub in the main street of Healesville whenever I passed through town. If I wasn't able to stop in for an excellent meal and glass of wine I made sure that I at least stopped for a coffee and secured some of their excellent bread. The businesses have now been split, the higher end [Giant Steps](#) label staying with founder, Phil Sexton, while the [Innocent Bystander](#) label was sold to Brown Brothers and relocated just across the carpark. Fortunately, "Leroy", the bread starter culture has found new digs at [Habituel Bakers & Coffee Roasters](#) further down the main road and is working its magic producing wonderful breads again. Deciding what to do in Healesville has just become a little more complicated: do you have a tasting of the Giant Steps elegant range of pinot noir and chardonnay and lunch there or do you taste Innocent Bystander's extensive line up and stay on for their lunch. Whatever you choose to do make sure you drop in at Habituel for a revitalising coffee and some of that excellent sourdough bread for the homeward journey. Be warned, it may become a habit.

Habituel Bakers & Coffee Roasters: 314 Maroondah Hwy,
Healesville VIC 3777

Millstone Cakes

Millstone is a cafe featuring French-inspired sweets; the words of chef, Alice Wright, who brings a modern touch to her traditional training at The Cordon Bleu in Paris. Her line up of pastries, individual and large format cakes are beautifully and tastefully decorated, featuring fresh berry fruit flavours as well as her signature salted caramel, rhubarb, hazelnut and chocolate cake (depicted). While this cafe is not new to the residents in the South East, it was a late find for me, who's always on the look out for beautiful cakes in Melbourne. Located in 10A Claremont Avenue, Malvern, Millstone also serves breakfast, lunch and good coffee but it is hard to pull your gaze away from the treats in the cake cabinet at this establishment. Cakes available from the cafe, through online ordering or for catering events.

