

Let's face it, there's a lot to love about a royal wedding, especially this most recent one. For starters, the bride is American. Across America, loads of little girls dream of becoming a princess but it rarely happens. In case you haven't been counting, Meghan Markle is only the twelfth American to find a real live prince. She seems truly delighted with him and he with her.

Having moved to the other side of the pond last November, Meghan should be used to all things British. Well, more or less. Alternatively, the newness and excitement may have just about worn off. That could mean she's good and ready for a major culture shock meltdown. I had one about five months after landing in Switzerland. I remember it well, it wasn't pretty and, no, I won't share.

Now, I am hardly an expert but I did know quite a few British people when I lived in Switzerland. (There are a lot of foreigners in Geneva, more than forty percent of the population. Imagine that.) One English friend liked to kid me about my Americanisms. He loved to quote or misquote George Bernard Shaw saying, "America and England – two countries separated by a common language."

So Meghan, here are a few tips. In case any of the following comes up ... just remember –

***I'm knackered* means that you are very tired.** After the weekend you've had, you're probably feeling that about now. It's shorthand for being ready for the knacker's yard or slaughterhouse. It's not particularly polite, so, you might not want to use it in front of your new grandmother-in-law.

This next one is good, especially if you feel a meltdown coming on. *Don't get your knickers in a twist*; it's a fun way to say don't get all riled up. Again, it might be best to avoid using this one in front of the Queen.

Before you drive off for the honeymoon, don't forget the storage compartment at the back of the car, it's called a boot. The bonnet is in front and covers the engine. The windscreen is the thing with the wipers. The whole thing is still a car but a zebra is a crosswalk and the British drive on the wrong side of the road.

Since you are known for your fashion sense, you'll need to remember a jumper is a sweater as long as it isn't a cardigan and then it's a cardigan. Trainers are sneakers. Braces are suspenders and suspenders are garters, the sexy kind.

As a foodie, you'll want to shop the local farmers market. Take note, an aubergine is an eggplant, a courgette is a zucchini, maize is corn and a tomato is a tomato but pronounced tomahto. In addition, a biscuit is a cookie, a scone is not unlike a biscuit and double cream is heavy cream. Crisps are chips and chips are French fries but, more important if you're knackered, takeaway is takeout.

This next one can be tricky. The ground floor is the first floor, the first floor is the second, the second floor is the third and up and up you go. Don't get lost. Homely is homey so don't be miffed if someone uses it as a compliment for your flat (that's your new apartment at Kensington).

Finally, a chinwag or natter is what you do when you sit around with friends and a cuppa (tea) or glass of wine. However, if you drink too much wine, you may get pissed as in drunk not angry.

Congratulations, good luck and bon appétit!




Grilled Asparagus with Lemony Tarragon Butter Sauce

Meghan and Harry's wedding menu was all about local, seasonal fare. I was delighted to find the first spears of local asparagus a few days ago. Enjoy!

Serves 8 as a starter or side dish



2 pounds (more for fanatics) asparagus*, trimmed
Olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat a charcoal or gas grill to medium-high. Put the asparagus in a large dish, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss to coat.

Arrange the asparagus on the grill and, depending on thickness, cook for 1-3 minutes. Do not overcook, the asparagus should be tender-crisp.

Remove from the grill, arrange on a large platter or individual plates. Serve with Lemony Tarragon Sauce.

** Forget the pencil thin asparagus; get the nice thick ones if you can. They are perfect for the grill.*

Lemony Tarragon Butter Sauce

Makes about 1 cup

1 cup dry white wine
3 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) cold butter cut into small cubes
1 clove garlic, minced
Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
Zest and juice of 1/2 lemon
1-2 tablespoons champagne or white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons fresh, chopped tarragon



Put the wine and shallots in a heavy saucepan, season with salt and pepper and simmer over medium heat until the wine has reduced by 3/4, about 10 minutes.

Reduce the heat to low and, a few cubes at a time, whisk in 1/4 cup butter. Add the garlic and cayenne and cook, whisking, for 1 minute. Continue whisking and adding butter, a few cubes at a time.

Remove from the heat and whisk in the lemon zest and juice, vinegar and mustard. Add the tarragon, give everything a final whisk and serve.