



Monday 24th December 2012

Dear Customer,

I hope you had a lovely Christmas.

For this the last week of 2012 you may have some fennel in your bag. You could slice it finely into a salad and it goes particularly well with orange. You could cut it into slices lengthways and roast it with other root vegetables. Or roast it and squeeze lots of lemon juice and grinds of black peppers over it or a sprinkling of Parmesan.

Cauliflower and Leek Gratin

<i>1 cauliflower, in small florets</i>	<i>2 or 3 leeks</i>
<i>half a lemon, zested</i>	<i>150-200g Cheddar, grated</i>
<i>300ml double cream</i>	<i>½ tsp curry powder</i>
<i>lime pickle, a little oil from top of jar (or improvise !)</i>	

Preheat the oven to 180C and butter a baking dish. Chop the leeks finely and put them in a saucepan with the cauliflower with a bit of water and cook until nearly tender. Drain well and arrange in the baking dish. Sprinkle over the lemon zest and the grated cheese and mix it together. Whisk the curry powder, salt, pepper and some of the lime pickle oil into the double cream. Pour this over the leeks and cauliflower and bake in oven for 30 to 40 minutes. Delicious.

Roasted Cauliflower with Onions and Fennel

1 cauliflower, cored and cut into 1" florets
6 tbsp olive oil
250g onion, halved lengthways and cut into ¾ inch-wide wedges
8 small cloves garlic, unpeeled
1 large fennel, halved lengthways and cut into ½ inch wide wedges
15 sprigs of fresh marjoram or equivalent of dried

Preheat the oven to 435F. Toss the cauliflower in a large bowl with 2 tbsp olive oil. Heat a big frying pan over a medium-high heat, add the cauliflower and sauté until beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet. Add 2 tbsp olive to the same frying pan, add the onion wedges and cook until browned on one side, about 3 minutes. Using a spatula, transfer the onions to the baking sheet, arranging wedges, browned-side up. Add remaining 2 tbsp oil to the frying pan and sauté the fennel until it starts to soften and brown slightly. Transfer to the same baking sheet. Scatter the garlic and marjoram over the vegetables, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast the vegetables until caramelised, about 25 minutes. Serve hot.

Well I don't want to dampen your festive spirit with my woes but.....

On Friday morning, with farmaround deliveries under our belt I drew up the list of things to do for my Christmas. I was hard at it all Friday, in the evening I dragged in the potted Christmas tree and festooned it with baubles, lights and tinsel, arranged my Christmas cards and mince pies, twiglets and bowls of fruit and nuts in readiness. I went off to bed late with a nagging pain at the base of my skull. Ominous. Saturday morning I woke up and had been invaded by a migraine..... but..... I got up and persevered through the 2nd page of the list – hoover, clean guinea pig cage out etc. By 3pm I'd had it. I had a hot bath and went to bed which is where I stayed all that night, all through the next day, Sunday, just mustering enough coherence to text friends who had come up from London to cancel the Sunday Christmas lunch and walk we'd planned. (well I came down for an hour in the evening, switched the trees lights on briefly but they made me feel sick, as did the Christmas cards and whole Christmas array so returned to bed) On Christmas Eve I got dressed and took Myfa for a walk thinking it might clear. It didn't, I came home and went straight back to bed and stayed there through to Christmas morning. Christmas morning I woke up, it was still there. I lay in bed with a spear through my head and every muscle in my body aching answering 'Happy Christmas' texts. I emailed my friend where I was going for Christmas day and Christmas dinner to warn her I might not make it. Given it was going to be just me and her, I tried, and drove across to her place. I sat aching for an hour, had half a cup of black tea, had to leave and came home. I was determined not to go back to bed, it was Christmas Day. I was starving, I'd eaten two biscuits in 4 days. I made a bit of mashed potato and peas and ate it with some cranberry sauce. I managed to watch Downton and Eastenders and then I went to bed. And basically, that was it - my miserable Christmas.

Well it's Boxing Day now and farmaround has started up again and I hate to add, I am still harbouring my migraine.
Roll on 2013.

Kind wishes,

Isobel