

Monday 29th April 2013

Dear Customer,

I hope you are having a good week. A cold wind is blowing constantly up here but today we have the sun and everything is starting to look gloriously springy. We have leafy English sprouting broccoli in many of the bags this week and the first English rhubarb of the season. We have Nicola new season potatoes and new season carrots from Sicily, and Breton cauliflowers...des chouxfleurs.

Here are some delicious recipes you could try with your rhubarb and cauliflowers this week:

Rhubarb and Apple Crumble

75g plain flour	50g butter or margarine
25g rolled oats	15g chopped almonds
25g light brown sugar	200g rhubarb, cut in pieces
350g eating apples, peeled, cored and chopped	

Preheat the oven to Gas 6 / 200C/ 180C Fan. Place the flour in a mixing bowl and rub in the butter or margarine until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the oats, almonds and 25g of sugar. Place the fruit in a 1 litre ovenproof dish and scatter over the crumble mixture. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the fruit and soft and the top golden.

Caramelised Cauliflower Soup

1 cauliflower	olive oil
½ tsp grated nutmeg	½ onion, chopped
1 clove garlic	750ml vegetable stock
1 tsp thyme	1 tsp balsamic vinegar
50g bread, torn into 2cm pieces	60g hazelnuts, toasted
fresh thyme leaves	shaved Parmesan (optional)

Preheat oven to 220C/450F/Gas 8. Cut the cauliflower in florets and spread on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with nutmeg, season with salt and pepper and toss everything to coat. Bake for 35-45 minutes, tossing halfway through, until florets are roasted and with some brown edges. Remove and cool. While the cauliflower is roasting, heat 2 teaspoons of olive oil in a saucepan and sauté the onions and garlic until soft. Add the stock, thyme and vinegar and warm through. When the cauliflower is cool to touch, add to the stock and then blend until smooth. Season to taste and return to pan to keep warm. For the croutons, heat the remaining oil in a pan, add the torn bread and a pinch of black pepper and stir for 5-8 minutes until crisp with browned edges. Serve each portion with a few croutons, chopped hazelnuts, some thyme leaves and shaved parmesan, if using.

Cauliflower and Lentil Dahl

1 onion, chopped	1 clove garlic, chopped
2cm piece root ginger, grated	4 tbsp sunflower oil
1 tsp ground coriander	1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp turmeric	75g red lentils
300ml vegetable stock	2 tbsp curry paste
1 cauliflower, in florets	125g frozen peas
2 tbsp chopped coriander	1 tbsp lemon juice
300ml coconut milk	

Heat half the oil in a saucepan and add the onion, ginger and dry spices and fry gently for 5 minutes. Add the lentils, stir well and pour in the stock. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan, add the curry paste and fry gently for 3 minutes. Add the cauliflower and stir-fry for another 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the coconut milk and cauliflower to the lentils and return to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the peas, coriander and lemon juice. Heat this through and when the peas are tender, it is ready. Serve with rice or warmed nan bread.

I have decided, for a reason which I can't yet disclose, but that I must trade my car in. On Friday morning, I checked my diary and saw that at 2pm, I was to meet a teacher at the sheep fields who was going to carry out a Health and Safety assessment before arranging to bring her class to discover the art of pouring all one's money down the drain. I wasn't sure what this would entail and how I could help her evaluate any risks - for example - the probability of whether the sheep, on seeing a procession of pairs of schoolchildren, would charge them - or - the probability of a child tripping over a clump of grass or swallowing a sheep dropping. It was a glorious sunny morning and I decided that I would have time to drive down to Ilkley to see a car I'd been eyeing up on Autotrader and be back for 2pm. This was the last time I thought about the teacher until my phone rang at 2pm while I was walking round Pateley Bridge admiring the Georgian architecture and about to get a cup of tea at the riverside café. It was the teacher saying she had just arrived at the gate. I had completely forgotten about her and hadn't even reached Ilkley yet. I do worry sometimes. I was always pretty sharp with numbers. Now when I'm trying to pay for something I stare vacantly at the collection of coins in my palm and just can't configure the right ones to pay, say £1.84. I have the humiliation of having the shop assistant pick the coins from my hand like a foreign currency. My beautiful little guinea pig Badgie died on Thursday aged 6. I dug a hole and buried him in the garden. After covering him with earth, it flashed through my mind that I should fetch the watering can to water him in..... then remembered he wasn't a shrub or a tulip bulb. Well.... at least I did remember, which is something. Hopefully this lack of brain function will be fleeting and is just a symptom of needing a holiday !

I hope this finds you well and having a good week,

Kind regards,

Isobel