

Monday 5th August 2013

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well, still sweltering. Isn't this weather incredible. It's a true summer, even up here. It's hard to sleep though, I have to take wet flannels to bed ! It is perfect growing weather with rain, sun and warmth.

We have broad beans, cauliflowers and courgettes from the Yorkshire Moors this week - hard to imagine - and Bambino new potatoes.

Broad Bean and Courgette Pilaf

1 tsp cumin seeds	1 tsp coriander seeds
50ml vegetable oil	1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed	1 cinnamon stick
10 cardamom pods, lightly crushed	2 cloves
225g basmati rice, soaked in water for 20 mins and drained	7oz podded broad beans
400 ml vegetable stock	4 courgettes, cut in 1" rounds
50g butter or margarine	
To serve:	
chopped parsley	lemon juice
yoghurt (optional)	

Heat a dry frying pan and add the cumin and coriander seeds. Fry over a medium heat, moving the spices around the pan to prevent them burning, for 2-3 minutes. Transfer to a mortar and grind with a pestle. In a pan heat the vegetable oil and fry the onion and garlic over a medium-high heat for 6-8 minutes, or until softened. Add the ground toasted spices, the cinnamon stick, ground turmeric, cardamom pods and cloves and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add the rice, broad beans and stock, cover the pan with a lid and cook over a low heat for 10-12 minutes, or until the rice is tender. Meanwhile heat a griddle pan until smoking. Brush the courgettes with the olive oil, season with salt and pepper, then cook on the griddle for 2-3 minutes on both sides, or until charred and softened. Set aside. To serve, stir the butter or margarine into the pilaf until melted, then spoon into serving bowls and top with the griddled courgette pieces. Garnish with chopped parsley, a squeeze of lemon juice and a dollop of yoghurt.

Roasted Cauliflower with Almonds and Spices

florets of a cauliflower	sea salt
olive oil	a knob butter or margarine
2 tsp cumin seeds	
2 tsp coriander seeds	
1-2 dried red chillies	
1 handful blanched almonds, crushed	
zest and juice of 1 lemon	

Preheat your oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Blanch the cauliflower in salted boiling water for a couple of minutes then drain in a colander, allowing it to steam-dry before roasting. It won't roast properly with too much water in it. Toss it in a good glug of olive oil and the butter or margarine. In a pestle and mortar, grind the spices and chillies with a pinch of salt. Then put the spices with the almonds in a hot, dry ovenproof pan to slowly toast them. After a few minutes, add the cauliflower. When it starts to take good colour, add the lemon zest and juice and mix around well. Fry for a minute longer then pop the pan into a preheated oven for about 15 minutes to crisp up.

My dental appointment was a nasty affair. For one and a half hours I had a piece of rubber clamped tightly over my mouth so I couldn't breathe and metal clamps over my teeth and jaw. A bitter chemical trickled down my throat, and as she drilled, the smoke of burning tooth went straight up my nostrils and filled my sinuses. Then I had to put on special glasses and the tooth was laser-blasted. My dentist said she was pleased with the work and I stumbled, asphyxiated, out of the surgery. I tried stopping at reception but as she dithered with "...well let me see when the next available appointment is.....", I apologised and left. At least the tooth lives to fight another day, outlive me even.

I went to see Ernest last week. I don't see much of him since he has given up the sheep. I called at his bungalow on the edge of town. He was sitting in his armchair, the large unopenable windows face into the afternoon sun and it must have been 40 degrees in there, a kiln. I asked if we could sit in the garden where there might be some air. He went off to make a cup of tea and while he was away my eyes fell upon a small window in his garage. It was thick in grime and cobwebs, but I could clearly make out the outline of a garden gnome. I never said anything when he came out with the tea.

Whilst I love this time of year, I also feel full of grief. This is sheep country. In the spring, I watch the baby lambs growing, discovering their joy of life. You see their personalities develop, the ones permanently with mum, lying nestled into the wool on her back, or mimicking her every move, never straying more than a foot away. Then the mischievous, gregarious ones who form little gangs and sneak out onto the lanes - but they of course, are always mindful of where mum is. This is the time, now, when they are taken from their mothers, separated for fattening, and their wailing fills the valleys as they cry out for each other. I don't cry often, but I am crying now as I'm trying to write this. Some, which were born in early spring are already 'fattened'. It's a hive of activity, there are makeshift pens in the fields, many with small drifts of soft white belly clippings. Abattoirs have recently instructed that all lambs should be presented for slaughter with shaved bellies. They are penned up usually the day before taking them to livestock markets. Most will never eat or drink again. Most livestock transporters ask that of farmers to keep the lorries clean for transportation. They are then penned in the livestock market for hours stressed, terrified, dehydrated, until their lot is called and they are herded into the sale room to be auctioned. Then back to the pen while transport is organised to take them away, a long wait. The lucky ones will travel within the UK. For the others however, their final destination could be the suburbs of Paris or Marseille or further. I have heard that 80% of abattoirs in France are halal, meaning, like kosher, that the animals are not stunned before being killed with the knife. Many of the lambs may go to Holland or Belgium to be re-traded and end up as far away as Turkey. The live export trade is regaining momentum after having diminished to almost nothing after the foot and mouth epidemic. Dover is the port they are leaving from. The shipment last friday had 5000 sheep on it. Some go to religious festivals. What these

animals go through is unimaginable. Some of these lorries carry up to 1000 animals. They can barely breathe in summer temperatures here and on the Continent, no air, the mass heat of a thousand crushed, gasping, frightened little animals. I have friends who have witnessed this at the docks and they are haunted. No creature deserves this. Whether we eat meat or not is irrelevant. Live export is barbaric.

This Saturday, Compassion in World Farming has organised a march to demand a ban on live exports. Please, please try to come and support it, even if you just stay a short while, it will make a difference.

Meeting 11.30am, on Saturday the 10th August, Covent Garden Market, London WC2E 8RB (on corner of Henrietta St and Southampton St).

Kind wishes, Isobel