

Monday 6th January 2014

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and haven't been having to swim to work and school. It has been blustery up here but we have nothing like the drama of the South. I am slightly worried to have seen images of Chicago on the news, minus 40 degrees, a cup of boiling tea thrown up and freezing in mid-air, 10ft of snow. I suspect that's what will be making it's way over to us next. Are we ready for it? We have Golden Globe beetroot from the Yorkshire Moors, we have Jonnie Watson's green curly kale, broccoli, spinach, red peppers and Butternut squash – a very nutritious post-Christmas selection to get us back on the straight and narrow. Butternut squash contains lots of vitamins A and C and is a good source of beta-carotene, magnesium, manganese, calcium and potassium. Here are a few delicious recipes you could try:

Butternut Squash Soup

1 butternut squash	2 potatoes
2 tbsp olive oil	1 onion
1 litre vegetable stock	salt and pepper

Peel, deseed and cube the butternut squash. Chop the potatoes and onions into cubes. Warm the olive oil in a pan and sauté the onions until soft and translucent, then add in the potatoes and squash. Cook for a few minutes then add the stock and seasoning. Allow to simmer for about 30 minutes or until tender. Using a blender, blend until soup is smooth. Re-season to taste.

Kale, Lentil and Red Pepper Stir-Fry

bunch kale	1 red pepper
1 onion	2.5cm piece root ginger
4 tbsp sunflower oil or sesame oil or mixture	1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
400g lentils, ready to use	2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted

Sauce:

1 tsp dark soy sauce	1 tbsp chilli sauce
3 tbsp water	1 tsp lime juice

Remove the stalks for the kale and shred the leaves. Halve, core and de-seed the pepper. Peel and thinly slice the onion. Peel and grate the ginger. To make the sauce, mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl. Blanche the kale and then drain. Heat the oil in a wok or deep frying pan. When hot, stir-fry the pepper, onion, ginger and garlic over a high heat for 3 minutes. Add the kale together with the lentils and sauce. Stir well, cover and cook over low heat for 3-4 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Scatter over the sesame seeds and serve at once.

Linguine with Broccoli and Red Peppers

450g linguine pasta	1 head broccoli, chopped
1 red peppers, thinly sliced	3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter or margarine	3 cloves garlic, minced
pinch salt	grated Parmesan (optional)

Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to the boil and cook the pasta to al dente according to the packed instructions. Steam or blanch the broccoli until just tender. In a frying pan, heat the olive oil with the butter or margarine over a low heat. Stir in the garlic, add the red pepper slices and sauté gently. Drain the broccoli and add to the frying pan, season with salt and sauté until broccoli and peppers are tender. Toss the vegetables with the pasta and sprinkle with Parmesan if using.

In the time since I started this letter – a really long time ago as I keep prevaricating and answering emails and doing a bit of googling – the sky has turned black and there is iced rain pelting at the window. My mind is awash with this year's 'to do' list and resolutions, and it's quite a heavy pile.

1 Organise a Live Aid type event for animals for July 2015 linking all the animal charities together, linking up the US, Australia and the EU into it – all the stars speaking and singing – footage of how every creature on the planet is used and abused - but no Paul McCartney finale of 'Hey Jude' and 'Let it Be'. Hope to get Bill Gates, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Paul O'Grady. Sure you know what I mean. Legacy – a Give Animals Voice Treaty for individuals, retailers, organisations, supermarkets, even countries to sign up. I have started, first steps taken and meetings this month

2 Write the song for it, it would be my first for 20 years (but dispel any thought of trying to creep in with the stars to sing on it - likewise do not try to get in on some backing vocals for David Bowie at the live event) I actually burrowed up into the roof and dragged down some keyboards last night and even wrote some lyrics.

3 Write the Izzy Lane story into a book

4 Write the film script for Izzy Lane / Ernest story to sell the book

5 Reinvent Farmaround – first steps taken – you will be shocked and hopefully delighted with what becomes of us in a 6 months time. I think I finally have partners after 20 years of solitude !

6. Try and re-populate all the lamps, spots and chandeliers in the house with light bulbs (every bulb is different – what happened to the days of one bulb fits all)

7 Try and restrain the amount of William Hague's time I take up so he can concentrate on Syria and Iran

Well the list just goes on and on but you can see I start the year burdened,

I know some of you are only just back this week so a very Happy New Year to you.

I can almost see the snow and burning cold air starting to puff over the Atlantic.

Kind wishes,

Isobel