



**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Dear Customer,

I am writing this with a fuzzy head. I did come down with the cold and have been groggy and useless all week. It has now turned into a horrible hacking cough, so bad that it turns heads. The sky is black today and the rain is torrential. The prospect of us having any summer up here has been written off and a mass exodus underway.

The good news is that the sheep shearers came on Friday and Saturday and all but 140 of the sheep are now looking very smart and pleased. The shearers did eventually get rained off telling me 56 sheep shearers have been killed, electrocuted clipping in the rain. I can't see a dry day in the forecast for the rest to be done though. It's actually very handy having the café. Instead of making sandwiches for them I just stopped off there and asked for some pieces of quiche and a big tray of chips. There were three shearers and a girl who wrapped the wool. As I pulled up, they were all busy shearing with their tops off and all singing along as loud as they could to the radio: ".....we don't have to take our.. clothes off.... to have a good time....oh no". God knows what the sheep thought. They were the most cheerful shearers I have ever met, and it is extremely hard work. Maybe the sheep were mesmerised and distracted by the singing I didn't see one single sheep with a cut which can happen if they struggle. I use that tactic when I clip the guinea pigs toe nails. If I sing or make bird noises they dangle motionless in one hand while I clip them with the other. Otherwise they try and bite me.

It's Rosemary Wass all the way at the moment. We have her bunched beetroots in the bags and her new potatoes, Cos lettuces, spinach and Savoy cabbages – all from the North Yorkshire moors.

Here are a few recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

#### **Spinach and Roasted Pepper Frittata**

350g new potatoes

1 tbsp olive oil

4 organic eggs

6 tbsp milk

250g spinach

200g roasted red peppers

100g soft cheese

pinch salt and grinding of black pepper

*Roast the peppers in the oven, remove any blackened skin. Cook the potatoes in lightly salted boiling water for 15-20 minutes, until tender. Drain, cool and slice. Meanwhile cook the spinach in a tiny amount of water for 3-4 minutes until the leaves wilt. Drain well, squeezing out the excess moisture with the back of a spoon. Chop roughly. Preheat the grill. Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the sliced potato and spinach then tear in the roasted peppers. Beat the eggs, soft cheese and milk together. Season, then pour into the pan. Cook on the hob over a low heat until the base sets, then transfer to the grill to set and brown the surface. Check with a knife to make sure that the frittata has set completely, cooking for a little longer if needed.*

#### **Spiced Beetroot Rice with Lemony Beetroot Leaves**

1 litre vegetable stock

1 onion, finely chopped

1 tsp cumin seeds

300g basmati rice

½ - 1 chopped red chilli

2 tbsp olive oil

25g ginger, grated

crushed seeds of 2 cardamom pods

2 large beetroot with stems and leaves

juice of ½ lemon

*Bring the stock to a simmer in a pan. Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan, then soften the onion for 7 minutes over a medium heat. Add the ginger and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the cumin seeds and the cardamom pods. Turn the heat to a medium-high and stir in the rice. Stir in half the stock, season, then cover and cook for 5 minutes. Meanwhile; peel the beetroot. Finely chop the stems and roughly chop the leaves, then put in a colander and pour a kettle of boiling water over. Grate the flesh then stir into the rice with the remaining stock. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan then fry the chopped red chilli for 1-2 minutes over a medium heat. Add the beetroot stems and leaves and the lemon juice. Cook for 2-3 minutes then serve with the rice.*

#### **Beetroot Dip**

2 beetroots

300g crème fraiche or Greek yoghurt

2 tbsp pinenuts or cashews

1 tsp cumin seeds

fresh mint

1 large clove garlic

2 tbsp sesame or sunflower seeds

½ tsp ground coriander

drizzle of olive oil

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

*Peel and finely grate the beetroot and garlic. Mix them into the crème fraiche then put in fridge. In a small frying pan, over a medium heat, toss the sesame seeds, pinenuts and cumin seeds in the pan and warm until the spices are fragrant and the seeds and pinenuts are just golden. Remove from the heat and pour warm mix into a pestle and mortar or food processor. Pound or grind into a paste. Swirl in the ground coriander. Allow to cool. Then fold in the beetroot. Finish with a drizzle of olive oil and pinch of fresh, finely chopped mint leaves. Serve with celery stick and or warmed pitta bread.*

I just read in the paper that the lovely, friendly Lesley in our local Nat West and who always impressed me by knowing our business bank account number and sort code off by heart, has just been in court charged with stealing over £250,000 from elderly customers over a 7 year period. I thought I hadn't seen her in a while. One elderly man who she stole £120,000 from has since died. I am also appalled that I found this out from the newspaper and that all users of this Nat West branch had not been contacted to check their own accounts. I've now asked the bank for proof and to see the signature on every cash withdrawal from our account since we came to Richmond. It's usually the case isn't it, it's the ones you would least expect. Not great Nat West is it that she was able to get away with it for 7 years....or more.

I hope this finds you well and if you're going off on holiday have a fantastic one and please smuggle the sun back with you and boot it up here,

Kind wishes,

Isobel