

Monday 14th September 2015

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. The stars of the bags this week are Rosemary Wass' bunched golden beetroot and her extraordinary Romanesco cauliflowers which are rich in antioxidants and vitamin C. For a tasty salad you could chop the Romanesco into florets, blanch, dunk in iced water to fix the colour, and mix with olives, capers and a peppery olive oil and lemon dressing. It's great with pasta – chopped, steamed and mixed with garlic, chilli and olive oil. You could bake it as a gratin. Dot the blanched florets with crème fraiche mixed with Parmesan and sprinkle with Parmesan and breadcrumbs on top, and bake until tender and golden.

Your golden beetroot, you could wash, arrange in a roasting tray, drizzle with a tablespoon of balsamic vinegar and 2 tablespoons of olive oil, season with salt and pepper, cover (the tray) with foil and roast until the skins are wrinkly and the beetroot tender. Or you could peel them first, chop, season and oil them and roast them until they caramelize.

Romanesco Cauliflower and Tomato Bake

3 tbsp olive oil	2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tsp crushed chillies	2 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 Romanesco cauliflower, cut into 2-5cm wedges	1 large slice sourdough
3 tbsp Parmesan, or other hard cheese (optional)	1 tbsp flat-leaf parsley

Preheat the oven to Gas 6/ 200C/ Fan 180C. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a pan over a medium-high heat. Add the garlic and chilli and cook for 1-2 minutes until golden. Add the tomatoes, season and cook for 5 minutes or until thickened slightly. Transfer the tomato mixture to a large roasting tin or oven dish. Top with the cauliflower and brush with the remaining oil. Season well, cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes, or until the cauliflower is tender. Meanwhile, put the bread in a food processor and whizz to fine crumbs. Combine the breadcrumbs, cheese and parsley in a small bowl and season. Remove the foil from the roasting tin and scatter the breadcrumb mixture over the cauliflower. Return to the oven for a further 15 minutes, or until golden.

Romanesco Cauliflower Pasta

150g penne or fusilli pasta	1 Romanesco cauliflower
1 lemon	2 cloves garlic
60ml sunflower oil	1 small red onion
100g pine nuts	50g sultanas
50g Parmesan, or other hard cheese (optional)	drizzle olive oil
fresh herbs	

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions and put in a bowl with a drizzle of olive oil to prevent sticking. Cut the cauliflower into florets and slice the stem thinly. Cook for 2-3 minutes in boiling salted water, drain and refresh in cold water to prevent further cooking. Juice and zest the lemon, peel the garlic and chop the onion. Toast the pine nuts in a dry pan to golden brown. Grate the hard cheese and chop the fresh herbs.

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan and fry the cauliflower for a couple of minutes until it starts to turn golden. Add the chopped onions, crush in the garlic and fry for 2 more minutes. Add the toasted pine nuts, cooked pasta, lemon juice and zest and combine. Divide into bowls, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with cheese. Serve with raita or Greek yoghurt.

Beetroot Halva

2 large beetroot	1 litre milk
3 tbsp caster sugar	5 tbsp unsalted butter
3 tbsp raisins	small handful chopped cashew nuts
pinch ground cardamom	

Coarsely grate the beetroot. Place in a large, non-stick saucepan with the milk and cook, stirring occasionally, until the milk has dried off. It will take more than an hour. Add the caster sugar and 4 tbsp of butter and cook, stirring for another 15-20 minutes to help the beetroot caramelize. Meanwhile gently heat 1 tsp of unsalted butter in a pan, then fry all the raisins with the cashews and a pinch of the ground cardamom until the nuts are lightly golden. Stir into the halva. Taste, adjust the sugar and serve hot.

I'm still trying to recover from having opened and closed the Farm Shop / Café and fathom what the point of it was. You know....you try and find a reason, believing that everything is for a reason. Or, is it just utterly random, haphazard..... a bit of a stumble. Who knows? Nobody knows. Whatever it is...it is testing.

It's Sunday and in deep reflective mood I drove over to Kiplin Hall, a local Jacobean Manor house. Myfa jumped out the car and raced ahead of me down the path, past the herbaceous borders straight into the toilet block where she turned right into the Ladies and waited for me there. We are creatures of habit. Then it's round the walled vegetable garden, out the gate at the far end, up through the woods, through a gate into the parkland, a big loop round behind the house, across the footbridge and over to the lake where the pace slows. I sit on a tree stump staring into the distance while Myfa wades around amassing a collection of rocks, logs and other debris from the lake floor. I rouse and congratulate Myfa as she emerges proudly from the water with a rusty piece of corrugated iron. "Oh wow that's brilliant, well done", and she wags her tail. It's hard to stay miserable when your dog's soooo happy.

Saturday was a good day. A fantastic Farmaround family came to visit us on a 'day trip' from Wandsworth with their three little dogs. I don't think they realised how far it was. Original 'eta' was midday but they got caught in roadworks on the M1 and didn't get here until past 4pm. We had lunch in the ghost café and walked on the moors. It felt very cold, wintry even, as the sun was going down behind the hill, they said it had been 23C when they left London. They said the weather hadn't been great in London this summer.....mmmm..... Anyway, I was humbled as I always am by what amazing customers you are. I am so privileged.

Kindest wishes,

Isobel