



Monday 2nd November 2015

Dear Customer,

Well who could have expected the return of August in November - a summer heat melting the misty golden autumn hues into a turquoise sky... ..wow ...it's been spectacular ! I wonder how many hurricanes and snow storms we will have to pay for it though.

I hope this finds you well. We have parsnips trending in the bags again this week and in the recipes. Also in the bags - red kale. I think once one realises one doesn't have to eat the tough stalks and can just strip the leaves off (the stalks can be cooked separately), it's such an easy and versatile leaf to use - and so healthy of course. I am a real convert to this 'now so popular', ex cattle fodder.

Here are some lovely, easy recipes you could try with your Yorkshire Moors parsnips:

Parsnip and Caramelised Onion Tart

300ml milk	50g mature Cheddar cheese, grated
25g butter	2 onions, sliced
500g parsnips, peeled and quartered lengthways	3 free range eggs
Pastry:	
175g plain flour	75g chilled butter, diced

Preheat the oven to 190C / Gas 5. To make the pastry, put the flour and salt in a bowl and rub in the butter to form fine breadcrumbs. Add 1-2 tablespoons cold water to mix into a soft dough. Roll out on a floured surface and use to line a 23cm x 2.5cm deep, loose-bottomed flan tin. Cover and chill for 15 minutes. Line the pastry case with parchment paper, fill with baking beans and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the paper and beans and set aside. Turn the oven down to 180C / Gas 4. Meanwhile, heat the butter in a non-stick frying pan and add the onions and some seasoning. Cook over a gentle heat for 10 minutes until golden and caramelised. Cook the parsnips in boiling water for 5-7 minutes, until tender. Drain well and tip into a bowl. Mash until smooth. Beat the eggs and milk together and stir in half of the cheese, season and stir in the onions and parsnips. Pour the mixture into the tin and scatter the remaining cheese over the top. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until just set in the middle. Remove from the tin and serve warm with greens or a crisp salad.

Parsnips Provencal

450g parsnips	400g tin chopped tomatoes
6 cloves garlic	2 tbsp olive oil
small bunch parsley	

Preheat the oven to 200C / 392F. Peel the parsnips and cut into batons approximately 2" long by ½ " wide. Crush the garlic and add mix them in a bowl with the chopped tomatoes, a tsp of salt flakes, black pepper and chopped parsley. Place the parsnips in an oven proof dish, cover in the olive oil and season well, set in the oven and cook for 60 minutes. After 30 minutes remove from the oven and pour over the tomato and garlic mixture. Cover the dish tightly in tin foil and return to the oven for a further 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and serve hot with crusty bread.

Carrot, Parsnip and Coconut Flapjacks

2 carrots	1 parsnip
1 apple	125g butter or margarine
80g brown sugar	3 tbsp golden syrup or agave nectar
150g porridge oats	75g raisins
50g desiccated coconut	1 tsp ground cinnamon
4 tsp mixed seeds eg poppy, linseed, sunflower, pumpkin etc.	

Preheat the oven to 180C / 350F and grease and line a roasting tin or shallow cake tin. Peel and grate the carrots, parsnip and apple. Set aside. In a saucepan, gently melt together the butter or margarine, sugar and syrup or nectar. In a bowl, mix together the oats, raisins, seeds, coconut, cinnamon and then stir in the grated carrot, parsnip and apple. Add the melted butter or margarine and combine. Press the mixture down into the prepared tin and press down firmly. Bake for approximately 30 minutes. Leave to cool in the tin and then cut into bars.

Musing on China, it is not so long ago that women had their feet bound so as not to exceed four inches – the optimum length. The foot binding process started at the age of four years old. Toes would be bound and slowly crushed under the soles of the feet, the pressure eventually breaking them. It was a symbol of beauty, and of status, as wealthy women didn't have to work so didn't need their feet, but it spread through society. It rendered women dependent on men. Disabled for life, barely able to walk, they could not engage in politics or a social life. Yet as a freak by-product of the one child policy, women will soon be taking over up to half of Chinese businesses. Two Chinese students who were studying in London visited me a while back and were both the daughters and only offspring of big Chinese businessmen – both set to take over the firms in due course. The women of China will rise to power.

I think I told you about those girls at the time, how despite being educated and international, one of their mothers boils live puppies for a stew when she is poorly. Anyway, don't let me put you off your parsnip flapjack.

I would love to fast forward 50 years to see what the world is looking like. I guess it could go either way couldn't it. I think one thing is certain, for better or for worse, our traditional British values, whatever they are, will have been obliterated. They will probably be commemorated in a sort of Remembrance Sunday procession – old croaks trailing along wearing a white paper rose. If we tip all the values and cultures of the world together in a jar, shake it up and then tip it back out into each country on each Continent – that is probably what it will look like. I just hope that humanity and logic will rise from that swill. I don't want to come back in a hundred years and find us all smothered in burkas, hobbling about with four inch long feet tucking into live monkey brains at the local trendy restaurant. Great battles of values lie ahead, of that we can be sure.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel