



**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Dear Customer,

We have seen no sun at all here for months on end, just variations of an endless grey mass. There is such a difference in climate between up here and the South. I don't know why anyone lives up here. All it has going for it is that we don't seem to have many ticks. Myfa has never picked up one single tick on these moors. She gets covered in them in the West Country. I know a number of people who have been diagnosed with Lyme Disease, so for outdoor, walksie types and picnickers it is an issue. So anyway, from here in tick-less Yorkshire, here are some fantastic and easy recipes you could try while this week's storm batters us:

#### **Roasted Diced Potatoes and Brussel Sprouts**

4 medium potatoes  
2 tbs olive oil

200g brussel sprouts  
salt and pepper, to taste

*Preheat the oven to 200C /400F / Gas 6. Peel the potatoes, then dice them to ¼" pieces and put into a bowl. Cut the Brussel sprouts in 1/4" pieces too and put them in the same bowl. Add the olive oil and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper and mix well. Transfer the potatoes and sprouts into a roasting tray in a single layer. Bake for approximately 25 minutes in the oven until the potatoes are tender and golden.*

#### **Dijon-Braised Brussel Sprouts**

450g brussel sprouts  
1 tbs olive oil  
120ml white wine  
½ onion, thinly sliced  
1 tbs Dijon mustard

1 tbs butter or margarine  
salt and pepper  
250ml of vegetable stock  
2 tbs cream

*Trim the sprouts and halve lengthways. In a large frying pan heat the butter and oil over a moderate heat. Arrange the halved sprouts in a single layer, cut-side down and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook until undersides are golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add the onion, wine and stock and bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cover with a lid. Cook until tender. Remove the lid and remove the sprouts leaving the sauce in the pan. Add the cream and simmer for 2-3 minutes then whisk in the mustard. Taste for seasoning, adding more salt, pepper and mustard if necessary. Pour over the brussel sprouts and serve. You could garnish with chopped flat parsley.*

#### **Potato, Cheese and Broccoli Bake**

600g peeled potatoes  
25-300g broccoli, in florets  
2 sprigs thyme  
50g butter, melted  
zest of ½ lemon (optional)  
15g cheese, grated

salt and pepper  
200ml milk  
1 large clove garlic, crushed  
½ tsp Dijon mustard  
75g of cheese, cubed (eg Gruyere, strong Cheddar, Port Salut )

*Preheat the oven to 180C. Boil or steam the potatoes until fork-tender. Meanwhile, in another pan of boiling water, cook the broccoli florets for 2 minutes, then drain and rinse well under cold water. When cooked, drain the potatoes and return them to the pan and set aside. Add the milk to a small, heavy saucepan along with the thyme and garlic. Remove from heat just before boiling point, then remove from heat. Mash the potatoes with a masher or fork, pour in the melted butter and stir through. Strain the milk to remove the thyme and garlic and then stir it into the potatoes to create a loose mash. Add the mustard, salt, black pepper and lemon zest to taste. Stir in the cubed cheese. Spread the broccoli florets in a layer in an ovenproof dish and pour over the potato and cheese mixture. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and bake for around 25 minutes until starting to brown. You could also add toasted hazelnuts to the mash.*

#### **Broccoli Tarka Dahl**

200g red lentils  
1 onion, chopped  
½ - 1 tsp chilli powder  
1 tbs cumin seeds  
head broccoli, broken in florets

800ml water  
6 cloves garlic, crushed  
½ tsp salt  
2 tbs vegetable oil

*Soak the lentils for at least 20 minutes then rinse in clean water. Put them in a medium-large saucepan, add the broccoli then the water and bring to the boil before turning down to a simmer. Add half the garlic, half the onion and half the cumin seeds and the rest of the spices. Cook for 20-40 minutes until tender, stirring occasionally. At the end of the cooking time, fry the rest of the onion with the remaining onion, garlic and cumin seeds, until they start to turn golden. Stir this into the lentil mixture. Sprinkle with fresh chopped coriander and serve with rice or nan or wholemeal bread.*

Well I have written my synopsis and it was hell. You apparently get 'pantsers' and 'plotters'. Some writers know the exact story they are going to write and plot each chapter – for them a synopsis is easy. For the pantsers, they just sit down and write spontaneously with no idea what is going to come out. Stephen King writes like this. Although a natural pantsers I do know the story, but I don't want to know what I'm going to write, I want it to surprise me. Anyway I did it, so I am just waiting for a few opinions from friends before I send it all off.

It's Monday afternoon, the wind's getting up. I complain about our weather but it must be horrendous living in the West Indies and being told that a 200mph storm is on its way. You look on the weather map and see that the 'eye' of the storm is coming over your house. Or maybe it's exciting !

Kind wishes,

Isobel