



Monday 18th July 2016

Dear Customer,

Summer has arrived in Richmond. It is hot and sunny and a bit humid so not the weather to exert oneself. Anyway it is Sunday, so a day of mooching and rest. We have that on great authority.

Broccoli is in the bags this week, one of the world's healthiest foods, full of vitamins A, B, C, E, K, protein, and minerals - iron, zinc, calcium, magnesium, potassium and much more.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

New Potato Salad with Broccoli Pesto

600g new potatoes, washed
6 basil leaves
25g hazelnuts
100ml rapeseed or olive oil

200g broccoli florets
juice of ½ lemon
1 clove garlic
salt and black pepper

Leave the potatoes whole or cut into smaller pieces if necessary, cover with water, add a pinch of salt and bring to the boil. Cook until tender, drain and leave to cool. Place the remaining ingredients in a food processor with 2 tablespoons of water and blend for 1 minute, or until all the ingredients are thoroughly combined into a smooth pesto sauce. Check seasoning and adjust as necessary. Place the potatoes in a large bowl and toss in 5 tablespoons of the pesto, adding more if necessary once mixed. Cover and chill until needed.

Carrot and Courgette Gratin

3 medium courgettes, sliced
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
2 heaped tbsp flour
250ml milk
80g breadcrumbs

2 medium carrots, sliced
2 heaped tbsp butter
250ml vegetable stock
salt and black pepper to taste
80g cheese, grated – Gruyere or Cheddar

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Heat the butter over a medium high heat until foaming. Add the onions then turn the heat down to low and cook, without colouring, for about 10 minutes until very soft. Add the carrots and courgettes. Cook and stir until the courgettes are beginning to wilt. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir. Mix the milk and stock together and then slowly pour this over the top, stirring gently and cooking until it thickens then season to taste with salt and pepper. Butter a shallow gratin dish. Pour the courgette mixture into the gratin dish. Mix together the bread crumbs and the cheese and sprinkle it evenly over top of the vegetables. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until bubbling and lightly browned on top. Allow to sit for about 10 minutes before spooning out to serve.

Courgette and Broccoli Pasta

2 cloves garlic, finely grated
small bunch parsley, finely chopped
400g pasta
2 courgettes, chopped

zest of 2 lemons, plus squeeze of juice
200g broccoli, in florets
1 tsp olive oil

Mix the garlic, lemon zest and juice with the parsley and some seasoning. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the broccoli and cook for 2-3 minutes until just tender. Use a slotted spoon to remove then set aside. Bring the water back to the boil, add the pasta and cook according to packet instructions. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan, add the courgettes and cook over a high heat for 3-4 minutes until starting to turn golden. Tip in the broccoli and continue to cook for 1 minute until warmed through. Drain the pasta, reserving about 2 tbsp of the cooking water then add the pasta and cooking water to the pan with the vegetables and the garlic, lemon and parsley. Mix well.

As for my Izzy Lane crowdfunding, my Kickstarter campaign, I had launched it and set it for 30 days. After 4 days of tweeting and Facebooking night and day I completely gave up, there wasn't a hope in hell of reaching the target, or anywhere near it. I knew that I would have to reach millions of people. It was a coup that the CEO of the ISPCA (Irish equivalent to the RSPCA) who has 270k followers, retweeted it but of them, just one person saw it and liked it - social media saturation. Despondent, I saw it was an impossible and hopeless waste of time.

About 6 days before the end of the campaign I suddenly decided to give it another go and paid to boost on Facebook. That's when all the trouble started and sheep farmers across the world piled in to threaten me and give me abuse for not killing the sheep, but the pledges started to climb and remarkably in the final minutes of the campaign, we reached our target. It was quite incredible. Amidst the abuse came amazing support from wonderful people. So I can now can start manufacturing again, which is what I love, and get Izzy Lane back on track and the sheep self-sustaining.

I have been warned off calling the wool 'slaughter-free', which it is. I have not yet produced the labels. I am now faced with the dilemma. Do I keep them kooky and quaint and uncontroversial and say it's from 'rescued sheep who will live out their lives in the Yorkshire Dales', or do I stay true to myself and emblazon the words 'Slaughter-Free' across them knowing the effect this will have. Mmmm.....

The sheep shearers are coming tomorrow and Wednesday. The sheep will be so relieved and happy to run around without their fleece on.

Kind wishes, Isobel