

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

Dear Customer,

All the trees are budding up as spring comes to Swaledale – it is peaceful and balmy. I wonder if we will get away with it and manage to just skip winter entirely. There's no skipping Christmas though which will soon be upon us in this eerily temperate weather.

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

**Caramelised Onion and Parsnip Tart**

300ml milk	50g mature Cheddar cheese, grated
25g butter or margarine	3 onions, sliced
500g parsnips, peeled and quartered lengthways	3 free range eggs
<b>For the Pastry:</b>	
175g plain flour	75g chilled butter, diced

*Preheat the oven to 190C/ Gas 5. To make the pastry sift the flour into a large bowl with a pinch of salt. Rub in the butter to form fine breadcrumbs. Add 1-2 tablespoons of cold water to mix to 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 down the oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Meanwhile, heat the butter in a non-stick frying pan and add the onions and some seasoning. Cook over a gently heat for 10 minutes until golden and caramelised. Meanwhile cut any woody centres out of the parsnips and discard. Cook the parsnips in boiling water for 5-7 minutes until tender. Drain well, tip into a bowl and mash until smooth. Beat the eggs together and stir in half 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 salad.*

**Broccoli, Chilli and Garlic Pasta**

large head broccoli, chopped	100ml olive oil
5-6 cloves garlic	1 tsp chilli flakes
500g dried pasta	50g pine nuts
handful fresh basil leaves	salt and freshly ground black pepper

*Bring a large pan salted water to the boil, add the broccoli and simmer for 3-5 minutes until tender. Meanwhile heat the olive oil in a separate pan and gently cook the garlic and chilli for 2-3 minutes or until the garlic is golden brown. When the broccoli is tender, scoop out with a slotted spoon and add to the pan with the garlic and chilli along with 120ml of the cooking water reserving the remaining water. Using the back of a fork, crush the broccoli with the garlic to form a coarse puree. Return the pan containing the broccoli cooking water to the heat and bring to the boil. Add the pasta and cook to packet instructions to al dente. Drain thoroughly and tip into a large serving bowl. Top with the broccoli puree and drizzle with olive oil. Scatter with toasted pine nuts and basil leaves and toss until all evenly distributed. Season with freshly ground black pepper and serve.*

I've had a busy week rediscovering the joys of washing up. The new gifted dishwasher hasn't been plumbed in yet and with only a small sink and drying rack I can either do one little batch or one big item at a time – a saucepan. I wait for them to drip dry, put them away, then do another batch. I'm always fastidious about tidying up before I go to bed – even when I'm exhausted. But I need to come downstairs to a fresh, clean morning – to puffed up cushions and tea cup, crumb-free work surfaces. I have to protect my only resource – the liquid gold of optimism. I remember as a child how I would shudder at the sight of a broken biscuit – it made me feel physically ill. I have got over that one thankfully.

My brother has been tetchy with me these last weeks, having given up trying to get me to send the sheep to market he is now obsessed that I should sell my house to sort out my problems. It's easy for him to be dispassionate about my house because he doesn't live in it. He doesn't love the sun which pours into my living room in the early afternoon, the copper leaves of the birch in the autumn which flutter away to reveal the view across to Hudswell Woods, the owl which sits on the branch of the sycamore tree each evening silhouetted against the moody northern sky. It may solve one problem but would create one of far greater magnitude. I however remain optimistic. I've just spoken to him, he was nice to me on the phone for a change, hoped I would have a nice Christmas and was about to board a plane for Singapore, off to Australia until 18<sup>th</sup> January.

I hope all is good with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel

In case you didn't receive this last week, here is Christmas:

### **CHRISTMAS FRUIT AND VEGETABLES**

In the week leading up to Christmas we are as ever offering the Jumbo Christmas Organic Vegetable Bag £29.50 which will include large portions of all your Christmas vegetables, salad things and bits and bobs for your festive meals. We are also offering the Christmas Organic Fruit Box with heaps of fruit to fill your fruit bowls, also at £29.50. Details of both will be on the website by the end of the week. We are keeping it simple this year and are just doing the fruit and vegetables.

### **CHRISTMAS DELIVERY SCHEDULE**

In terms of deliveries, in the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> December, your order will come on your normal delivery day. On week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> December, if you are a Tuesday delivery, you will receive your order on Wednesday, if a Wednesday you will receive it on Thursday, if a Thursday, you will receive it on a Friday and if a Friday, you will still receive it on Friday. On week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> January you will receive your order on your normal delivery day.