



**Monday 1st May 2017**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Weather check up here – not too bad.

We have Jerusalem artichokes in the bags this week. They are full of iron, potassium and vitamin B. They are sweet, crunchy and nutty chopped raw into salads. You could try an artichoke and carrot salad, grating them and dressing with a lemony vinaigrette. You can also make a traditional French Jerusalem artichoke salad - boil them to tender, then slip off their skins, cube them and mix with a mustardy vinaigrette. To roast, boil for 5 minutes, slip off the skins then roast them for 40 minutes or so in a tray of hot oil. Scrubbed and sliced you could also saute them in butter or olive oil with a few sage leaves until crisp on the outside and soft on the inside, finishing them with some salt and a squeeze of lemon. You can boil and mash them on their own or mash them with potatoes or add them to the potatoes in a Gratin Dauphinoise. You can do all that with them! As for aubergines – they are great baked. Preheat the oven, halve the aubergine lengthwise and score it into chunky diamonds on the cut side. Drizzle it with oil and bake until super soft. You can roast them in small cubes or slices. You can grill them – simply cut them lengthwise and put under the grill with no other ingredient. If you fry them, make sure the slices are very thin so as not to absorb too much oil and fry on both sides in olive oil until brown. You can add to stews and stir-fries. They are a good source of vitamins B1, B6, manganese, magnesium, copper, niacin, potassium and folate.

Or, you can try one of these tasty aubergine recipes:

#### **Aubergine Pot**

2 <i>tblsp</i> olive oil	1 <i>medium</i> onion, sliced
2 <i>garlic</i> cloves, crushed	2 <i>bay</i> leaves
4 <i>tblsp</i> <i>thyme</i> leaves	<i>chilli</i> flakes, good pinch
1 <i>aubergine</i> , cut into 1cm cubes	300g <i>orzo</i> or other small pasta
900ml <i>vegetable</i> stock	1 <i>lemon</i> , zested
2 x 400g <i>tin</i> chopped tomatoes	<i>fresh</i> basil, bunch
<i>vegetarian</i> hard cheese ( optional )	

*Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion with a pinch of salt and cook for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally until softened. Add the garlic, bay leaf, thyme and chilli then cook for 2 minutes. Add the aubergine cubes then cook for 3 minutes stirring occasionally. Stir in the orzo, tomatoes, stock and lemon zest. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat. Simmer for 12 minutes or until the aubergines and orzo are cooked through. Shred the basil and stir in with some seasoning to taste. To serve, divide between bowls and scatter with grated cheese if using, extra basil and grinding of black pepper.*

#### **Moussaka with Tahini**

<i>large</i> aubergine	2 <i>tblsp</i> olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
<i>large</i> onion, finely chopped	4 <i>garlic</i> cloves, crushed
400g <i>chopped</i> tomatoes	1 <i>tblsp</i> <i>tomato</i> puree
400g <i>tomatoes</i> , sliced	400g <i>tin</i> chickpeas, drained
<i>salt</i> and <i>black</i> pepper	<i>flat-leafed</i> parsley, chopped

#### **Tahini Dressing:**

125g <i>yoghurt</i> , dairy or alternative	40g <i>tahini</i>
<i>couple</i> pinches <i>za'atar</i>	

*Chop half the aubergine into bite-sized cubes and half into rounds. Heat 1 *tblsp* of the oil in a large pan and fry the onion for 10-15 minutes until it is starting to soften and caramelize. Add the cubed aubergine to the pan with another *tblsp* olive oil. Cook, stirring from time to time for about 10 minutes until the cubes have softened and turned golden. Stir in the garlic and cook in the heat of the pan for a couple of minutes until you can smell the aroma. Pour in the chopped tomatoes and puree and bring everything to a simmer. Cover and cook over the lowest heat for 15 minutes. Preheat the grill and oil a baking sheet. Brush the aubergine slices liberally with oil and grill until golden, turning halfway through. Preheat the oven to 200C/ 400F/ Gas 6. Place a layer of aubergine sauce in the bottom of an ovenproof dish then cover with the sliced tomatoes, chickpeas and finally the grilled aubergine. Drizzle with a little extra olive oil. Bake for 20 minutes until bubbling and golden on top. To make the dressing stir together the yoghurt, tahini and za'atar to taste. Scatter the chopped parsley over the moussaka and serve with the tahini dressing.*

I hope you had a nice Bank Holiday. I spent mine deciding whether or not to drive to France with my friend who has a house in Le Poujol sur Orb, a village somewhere in the mountains over the Millau Bridge towards Montpellier. She's booked a couple of weeks off work to go down there. I can work from anywhere as long as there's internet. She doesn't have the internet in her house but 'Phillippe' does. Myfa's rabies vaccine isn't up to date but Caroline assured me I could have it done in France and providing I waited 3 days could get her back into the country. I wasn't overly concerned. Extricating myself from here is the difficult thing – once I'm out it wouldn't bother me to be stuck there for 6 months – I'd make my way down to the Med and spend 6 months sunbathing and swimming! I really annoy myself, I put so many obstacles in my path. The main problem is packing, clothes packing. My car engine lights have been on since it returned from the garage for its MOT and there is a crunching noise when I do a hard left or a hard right. One of my sheep has been spotted in the grounds of Hornby Castle having no doubt slipped under the fence.

We are supposed to be doing a photo session of our Autumn Collection on 17<sup>th</sup> May and would have to reorganise. It's Monday morning and if I want to go, I have to go within the next couple of hours and collect her in London. Two hours will pass and I will be kicking myself, longing to belting down from Paris across the Massif Central and into the sunshine, stopping at 'airs' along the way.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel