



Monday 21st August 2017

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Weather has been slightly better with longer spells of sunshine between the grey and showers. Long enough on thursday to be able to get the rest of the sheep sheared. I'm so glad that's over for another year. The sheep may be ageing but they still produce beautiful wool.

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

Roast New Potato, Kale, Beetroot and Dill Salad

200g new potatoes, cut in wedges
100g kale, stems removed

2 beetroot, cooked to tender, cut in wedges
1 bunch dill, chopped

Dressing:

10g sesame seeds
15ml vegetable oil
75ml natural yoghurt

15ml sesame seed oil
1 tsp sherry vinegar
salt and pepper

Heat the oven to 200C. Boil the potatoes until just tender then roast in a little oil until golden and crisp and set aside. Spray the kale with some cooking oil and season well. Roast it until crisp, turning occasionally, about 10 minutes, then set aside. Mix the dressing ingredients together. Mix the beetroot with the kale and dill, season, and toss through the potatoes and serve with the dressing.

Potato, Peat and Mint Soup with Garlic Toasts

250g potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 onion, sliced
1 small bunch mint leaves
3 sliced of French bread
salt and pepper
1 bunch coriander

400g peas, frozen
1 litre vegetable stock
2 tbsp garam masala
vegetable oil
chilli flakes

Heat a saucepan with a little oil and gently cook the onion until soft, translucent and starting to caramelize a little. Stir in the garam masala. Add the potatoes and stock then bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 minutes then add the peas, coriander and mint leaves. Return to the boil until all tender then blend until smooth. Toast the bread then rub them with the garlic, sprinkle with a little garam masala and serve with the soup garnished with a little more garam masala, some chilli flakes, a few drops of olive oil and some mint leaves.

Sauteed Potatoes and Tomato

500g small potatoes
3 cloves garlic
8 basil leaves, shredded

400g tomatoes
4 tbsp olive oil
sea salt and black pepper

Slice the potatoes into thickness of coins. Put them in a deep pan of lightly salted water and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes until potatoes are almost tender and drain. Peel the garlic and flatten the cloves with a blade. Pour the olive oil into a shallow, non-stick pan then add the garlic and let it cook for a few minutes over a moderate heat. Add the sliced potatoes and leave them to crisp lightly, turning occasionally. Cut the tomatoes in half and place them in a single layer in a grill pan. Drizzle them with a little oil, season with salt and cook under a heated grill until the skins start to blacken here and there. Crush the tomatoes lightly with a fork. Stir the basil into the tomatoes with a grind or two of black pepper into the tomatoes and check the seasoning. Serve on top of the fried potatoes.

It's Sunday. My long-lost brother is visiting this week – impetus to do a bit of cleaning. He judges my house against his own which is freshly renovated, everything brand new. He finds my house shabby. It's shabby chic ! I took the curtains down in the living room to wash for the first time since they were hung. The room looks so much better without them, they partially obscure the view and absorb the light. They are supposed to be 'dry-cleaned' but that is a concept which I don't understand - put in a dry machine with some toxic chemicals - it's not very organic, I won't be doing that. I've just got my curtains out of the garden where I put them out to dry. They have returned to the colour they were originally – wow, 20 shades lighter. Then I hung them up but they barely touch the window sill, they've shrunk. I can just about get away with it for now but they won't stand the shrinking from the next wash due in 2025. Now I'm stripping all the sofas to wash the covers and cushion covers !

I also have my friend coming from France to stay for a week with her two little girls. I'm looking forward to seeing them but I'm not a very good hostess. I remember when I was younger thinking how I could never live on my own. Well now I couldn't envisage ever living with anyone again. I really like it just me and the animals. But we change through our lives don't we and at different stages we need different things. My life is so full of work and projects and problems there is no space left to accommodate anyone. When I saw Ernest yesterday he said I must wake up in the mornings, like a stone-age woman with a club in my hand, going out to fight for my survival each day. It was a good analogy, it's exactly how it feels.

The mammoth I'm considering hunting at the moment is my bank RBS. People in the know have for years been telling me that I should be pursuing a claim along with all the other businesses they put into the famous Global Restructuring Group and who they ruined. It was during the financial crisis, they moved us into this group, came in and wrote down the value of our commercial property by half, claimed they then no longer had sufficient security on our mortgages and other lending and withdrew facilities overnight. They seized and/ or forced the sale of properties, ours included and put many people out of business, destroyed their credibility, their credit-rating, destroying them as entrepreneurs, destroying their lives. We managed to survive, just about, but are still dealing with the consequences. It was all very harrowing.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel