



Monday 23rd April 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Here in the Dales we went from 5C to 26.5C in the space of hours accelerating us out of winter and into the bursting glory of spring. Every spring flower blossomed at once and the trees and hedgerows popped with new green leaves. I have never see such a rapid transformation – wonderful but creepy. The weather has gone awol.

We have our first spring greens in the bags this week. They belong to the brassica family, and to coin an old cliché, they are a superfood. They have high levels of vitamin C to support your immune system, vitamin K to build bone strength and natural compounds such as sulforaphane and indoles - plant chemicals with anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties - not to mention them being full of iron, potassium, fibre, vitamin E, calcium and omega-3 fatty acids.

You can use them raw in salads and juices, steam or stir-fry them, sautee them with a little garlic. The stems are even sweeter and tastier than the leaves.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try with them:

Spiced Red Lentil, Turmeric and Spring Greens Soup

1 onion, finely chopped	1 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed	25g root ginger, finely grated
2 tsp ground turmeric	1 tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp ground cinnamon	200g split red lentils, rinsed and drained
1 litre vegetable stock	handful fresh coriander, chopped
350g spring greens, shredded	1 lime, juice
4 tbsp natural yoghurt	

Heat a large pan over a gentle heat, soften the onion in the oil for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for a minute. Add the spices and cook for another 1-2 minutes until the seeds sizzle. Add the lentils and cook for another minute then pour in the stock and 500ml water, season and bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 15 minutes, stirring every so often until the lentils are tender. Pour half the soup into a blender and process until smooth. Return to the pan with the remaining soup then add the spring greens. Add some water to loosen if needed then cover and bring to a simmer for a few minutes until the greens are cooked. Add the lime juice and season. Serve with a dollop of the yogurt and coriander leaves.

Lemon-Dressed Spring Greens

1 lemon	2 tbsp olive oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper	spring greens

Finely grate the lemon zest and transfer to a jam jar. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze half the juice into the jar. Keep the other half for another recipe. Add the olive oil to the jar with a pinch of salt and grind of pepper. Put on lid and shake well. Finely shred the spring greens and add to a pan of boiling water. Cook for 3-4 minutes or until tender. Drain then steam dry and return to the pan. Shake the dressing again and drizzle over the greens. Toss well using tongs and serve warm.

Greens and Bean Patties

350g spring greens, finely shredded	small onion, finely shredded
20g butter or margarine	500g tin cannellini beans, drained
60g breadcrumbs	1 heaped tsp wholegrain mustard
1 Hen Nation egg, beaten	oil for frying

Blanch the greens in a pan of boiling salted water until tender. Drain and leave to drip dry. Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a large pan and saute the onion until soft and add the butter. Meanwhile mash the cannellini beans with a fork. Squeeze the greens to get rid of the excess moisture then roughly chop. Add the beans along with the breadcrumbs, onion, mustard and egg. Taste and season. Shape the mixture into 8 evenly sized cakes and chill for 15 minutes. When you're ready to cook the cakes, heat a splash of vegetable oil in a large frying pan and shallow-fry for 5-6 minutes on each side until golden brown and heated through.

I went round the sheep the other day at their new place in Kirkby Fleetham. The fields surround the farmhouse and farmyard. There are huge gates preventing intruders and a sign on the gate saying 'Beware of the Guard Dog'. The guard dog is a massive Mastiff. I met it once when his master who said it would be ok with me but advised I didn't bring Lainey my puppy into the yard. He said she would be ok in the fields as Mastiff couldn't get out of the yard.

So I arrived, it was a beautiful sunny day and I entered the fields over the fence so as not to go near the yard. Walked round the sheep with Lainey hopping merrily next to me. Headed back towards the car. Mastiff could see me and was trying to get to me running back and fore in the yard parallel to where I was walking. He started getting really desperate and manic trying to squeeze his massive head and body through the fence. It was a bit worrying but I had been assured he couldn't get out. I had already picked Lainey up by this time and was trying to get out the field as quickly as possible just in case. Then he stood up against a fencing pole which I could see was starting to give way under his massive weight. I rushed over and holding Lainey above my head tried to push it back to hold him in but the pole was rotten and it collapsed bringing the whole fence crashing down. His eyes were on Lainey. There was no one about, no one who could help. I broke out in a sweat and palpitations.

Mastiff was circling me, slavering over my coat, trying to get to Lainey who I held raised above my head – she's not very light any more. I rushed as quickly as possible, praying I could get across the field and over the gate before he snatched and ate her. It was like something from a horror movie. If Mastiff had jumped up at me he would have brought me down. I made it to the gate, clambered over, her still raised above my head and ran to the car. It was an absolute nightmare. He either wanted to kiss her or kill her, I have no idea which. Needless to say, she will stay in the car in future

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS We have recently changed the labels on the Hen Nation egg boxes to have the plastic element removed so they are now fully compostable.