



Monday 9th July 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's Sunday and hot and sultry here. I think temperatures here are set to descend for a few days before climbing again. There is one raindrop forecast for 6am on Friday the 20th. Plenty of time to work out what to do with it and get the pipette ready.

We have round courgettes in the bags this week. Delicious thinly sliced and grilled then dressed in an olive oil, lemon and basil dressing which could be eaten as antipasti or served through pasta.

Here are a few other tasty recipe ideas you could try this week:

Italian Stuffed Courgettes

400g round courgettes, halved	3 tsp olive oil
50g breadcrumbs	50g pine nuts
quarter of an onion, small diced	1 garlic clove, crushed
5 sundried tomatoes in oil, drained and chopped	1 tbsp thyme leaves
25g vegetarian cheese, grated	

Heat the oven to 220C/ 200C Fan/ Gas 7. Place the courgettes in a single layer in an ovenproof dish cut-side up. Brush with oil and bake for 20 minutes. For the stuffing mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and season. Sprinkle the stuffing on top of the courgettes and drizzle with olive oil. Bake for a further 10-15 minutes or until the topping is golden and crisp.

Persian Cauliflower Omelette

medium cauliflower	1 medium onion
1 good tsp turmeric	70g parsley
1½ dessertspoons of plain flour	¾ tsp baking powder
6 Hen Nation eggs	pickles and fresh herbs

Cook the cauliflower, mash and leave to cool. Chop the onion and fry it in oil until soft and golden. Stir in the turmeric and put aside to cool. Wash and chop the parsley. When all the ingredients are cool, mix together the cauliflower, flour, baking powder, onions and parsley. Heat enough oil to cover the base of a large frying pan. While the oil heats, beat the eggs until frothy then stir in the cauliflower mixture. Pour into the hot oil then immediately reduce the heat, cover and cook over a gentle heat for 25 minutes until firm. Turn over and cook for a further 10 minutes. Serve immediately, hot, or cold, with fresh herbs and pickles.

Pickled Round Courgettes

400g courgettes, sliced	1 tsp salt plus extra for sprinkling
1 tsp turmeric	2 tsp mustard seeds
2 tbsp clear honey	300ml cider vinegar
2 onions, sliced into thin rings	

Mix the turmeric, salt, mustard seeds, honey and vinegar in a pan, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Leave to cool, skimming the surface is necessary. Slice the courgettes and pack into warmed, clean jars with the onion rings. Cover with the spiced vinegar. Seal well and store for 2-3 days before eating.

I have been getting over-engrossed in the World Cup, in fact I am now disappointed when there are no matches on. I've managed to glean who all the global stars are – Zumbo, Modritch, Moussaka, Mohican, Cocaine, Small Off - and how astonishing to discover there is a Schmicheal Junior. I'm not particularly supporting England but was very shocked when we won the penalty shoot-out. Given the current state of affairs it's a relief we aren't up against Russia in the semis. I've been adapting to our new Mediterranean climate – getting up early to work when it's cooler, going to bed early with the sun, and nodding off into a siesta most afternoons. The garden is shrivelling up. The ferns which had so gloriously unfurled only weeks ago are now dying off. I am watering sparingly a few of the flowers and the pots, the rest will have to try and cope on their own. Clean water pouring from the tap is one thing I will never take for granted. Still no sign of the sheep shearer, he's ignoring all my calls. I know he is very stressed working in this heat with a hernia. The grass is even deader this week than it was last week. I have been moving them into different fields, buying in supplementary feed and am splitting costs with the farmer to fence off a new area which runs alongside the river for them to forage and graze. The wooded riverbanks are so overgrown that you can't get to the river but the sheep will move into them like a plague of locusts and eat everything. Not applicable at the moment I know as the river is a trickle but I have nightmares about it flooding and them being swept away. The farmer assures me you get plenty of notice if the river is coming up. Always plenty to worry about.

I have a formidable 'to do' list which is really depressing me and which I can't face. I've spent so much time in the garden and with the sheep that the house is now a tip. The windows are filthy. Lainey has been pinching pots of plants off the wall and running in the house with them, tipping the plant and soil onto the carpet and running off with the empty plant pot. People keep asking me if I have taken her to puppy training. I haven't. I'm sure people used to manage quite nicely before puppy training classes existed. We are doing fine.

I scream 'nooooo' every time she does something naughty and adore her the rest of the time. People don't take their toddlers to toddler training classes..... or maybe they do.

I'm a bit annoyed with myself for listening to how important they say it is to socialise your puppy. I made the effort for her to meet lots of friendly dogs. Now she loves all dogs and thinks they will want to play with her. The problem here is that more than half the dogs in Richmond are vicious – lots of troubled rescued collies for a start. And it's amazing how many people say their dogs hate black Labradors. Just another thing to worry about. It just takes one bite in the wrong place. I now need to de-socialise her to stop her from being savaged. Having said that she plays rough. When she goes to see her friend Pick the Patterdale terrier, she is so joyful and super-charged, she drags his round by his cheek and the flesh on his neck, I have to break them up to protect him. He's so good natured.

So puppy, heat, sheep, cleaning, football, that's about it really,

Kind wishes,

Isobel