



**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's been a blustery old weekend, but still mild. I think our winter has got lost somewhere on the Continent. Hopefully we might stay hidden from it a while longer at least. We have sweet potatoes in the bags, a rich source of fibre, they contain a generous amount of iron, calcium, and selenium as well as B vitamins, vitamin C, beta carotene and more. You could bake them – scrub first, prick a few times with a skewer or fork then run with oil and season. Bake in the oven at 200C/ 180F fan/ Gas 6 on a baking tray for 40-45 minutes or until tender.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

**Shepherds Pie with Sweet Potato Mash**

1 tbsp olive oil	1 large onion, sliced
450g carrots, cut in sugar-cube sized pieces	2 tbsp thyme chopped
200ml red wine	400g tin chopped tomatoes
2 vegetable stock cubes	400g tin green lentils
450g sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped	500g potatoes, peeled and chopped
25g margarine	85g cheese, optional

Preheat the oven to 190C/ 170C fan/ Gas 5. Heat 1 tbsp of oil and fry the onion until golden. Add the chopped carrot and most of the thyme. Pour in the red wine, 150ml water and the tin of chopped tomatoes. Crumble in the vegetable stock cubes and simmer for 10 minutes. Tip in the can of green lentils then cover and simmer for another 10 minutes until the carrots are tender and lentils a bit pulpy. Meanwhile boil the sweet potatoes and potatoes until tender. Drain and mash with the margarine and season to taste. Pile the lentil mixture into a pie dish, spoon the mash on top then sprinkle with the cheese if using and the remaining thyme. Put in the oven to cook for 20 minutes until piping hot all through and golden, or 40 minutes from chilled. Serve with broccoli.

**Sweet Potato, Chickpea and Kale Curry**

olive oil	2 onions
3 tbsp curry paste	1 chilli
3cm piece ginger	fresh coriander
450g sweet potatoes	400g tin chickpeas
400g tin chopped tomatoes	400ml tin coconut milk
300g kale	

Heat 2 tbs of oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Peel, finely slice and add the onion along with the curry paste. Mix well then cook for 10 minutes or until the onion is soft and golden. Finely chop the chilli then peel and grate the ginger. Pick the coriander leaves and finely slice the stalks. Chop the potatoes into 2cm chunks. Add the chilli, ginger coriander stalks and sweet potato to the softened onion. Drain and tip in the chickpeas and cook for 5 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes and 200ml water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Roughly chop the kale leaves and add. Remove the lid and cook for a further 15-20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender and the sauce thickened. Stir in the coconut milk and cook for a few minutes more. Scatter over the coriander leaves then serve with rice if desired.

**Braised Kale**

bunch of kale	2 tbsp olive oil
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced	½ tsp chilli flakes
olive oil	salt and black pepper

Prepare the kale by stripping the leaves from the stalk. Blanch the leaves in boiling salted water for about 3 minutes or until the leaves are tender. Drain and refresh under cold water. Squeeze out any excess moisture and chop the kale roughly. In a large shallow pan heat the olive oil and cook the garlic and chilli over a medium heat for 2 minutes without colouring the garlic. Add the chopped kale, season and mix thoroughly in the garlic oil. Cook gently for a further 5 minutes until the kale is warmed through. Squeeze in a little lemon juice if desired. Serve as a side dish or as a pasta sauce.

Results have been bad on the High street again, it's falling apart as we move online. I have to say, I don't think the death of the High Street is all bad. The last decade or so has seen the birth of hundreds of thousands of small businesses trading on the internet selling much more interesting and ethical things than Debenhams. As Thatcher famously said, 'we are a nation of shopkeepers', just that we are now a nation of internet shopkeepers, selling anytime, anywhere from Perth to Timbuktu. I think it's progress. It's a level playing field and is creating heaps of self-employment. The High Street will find another use for itself ... candy floss stalls, skating rinks and jazz bands.

It's our 25th Anniversary this year. 1994 was the year when I had this idea to deliver assorted bags of organic veg to the doors of Londoners fresh from the farm, and at a fixed weekly price. A thousand leaflets in Dulwich later and goodbye to the life I was planning to lead as a songwriter. Je ne regrette rien because I love it, it's my baby, and it connects me in a magical web to my outstanding and special customers and has done since before Facebook was a twinkle in Mark Zuckerberg's eye – maybe even before he was born.

1994 - John Major was in power, Blur released 'Parklife', Damon Albarn was one of Farmaround's first customers along with Bryan Ferry and Jools Holland. Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa, Jeff Bezos founded Amazon, the first passengers passed through the Channel Tunnel, shops could open legally on Sundays for the first time, the UK Lottery was launched, and David Dimbleby started hosting Question Time. And more notably, Leslie Crowther retired from show business ( now we feel old ! ) The Standard Vegetable bag contained potatoes, carrots, onions and 6 other veg, just as it does today. Plus ca change...

It's all set to be another horrible week with the vote on 'the deal' on Tuesday. Magnesium is very good for the nervous system so get your kale, broccoli, chickpeas and bananas down you. Who knows where we will be by this time next week

Kind wishes,

Isobel