



Monday 18th March 2019

Dear Customer,

It's Saturday, and what fine, stormy weather we are having... pyjama weather. I hope you are well, and here are some tasty recipes using this week's ingredients :

Honey-Roasted Swede with Hazelnuts and Thyme

1 swede, cut into 2" pieces 2 tbsp olive oil
3 garlic cloves, whole and unpeeled 1 tbsp thyme, chopped
2 tbsp honey 3 tbsp blanched hazelnuts, roughly chopped

Preheat the oven to 220C/ Fan 200C/ Gas 7. Arrange the swede cubes on a large baking tray, toss with the olive oil and season. Add the garlic and thyme and toss again. Roast for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and toss with the honey and nuts. Return to the oven for another 10 minutes until tender and golden.

Braised Swede

½ swede, peeled knob of butter or margarine, approx. 25g
500ml vegetable stock

Halve the swede then cut it into 1½ cm thick slices. Melt the butter or margarine in a large, deep frying pan that will fit the swede in one layer. Cook the swede on a medium-high heat for a few minutes on each side without stirring, until golden brown. Add the stock, bring to the boil and let the swede bubble away for 20-25 minutes until tender and the liquid has reduced to a syrupy glaze. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper

Swede and Butter Bean Stew

2 onions 2 leeks
3 carrots 1 swede
4 garlic cloves 400g tin butter beans
150g pearl barley 2 vegetable stock cubes
handful flat leafed parsley 2 tbsp olive oil
salt freshly ground black pepper
1 litre boiling water

Peel and finely chop the onions. Wash and finely slice the leeks. Warm 2tbsp olive oil in a large pan or casserole and add the chopped leeks and onions with some salt and pepper. Cook for 10 minutes stirring occasionally until they start to soften. Meanwhile finely chop the carrots, peel and crush the garlic and add both to the pan, cook for another 10 minutes adding a little water if necessary and stirring occasionally. Halve and peel the swede then chop into 2cm chunks. Drain and rinse the butter beans and add the swede and beans to the stew. Add in the pearl barley. Pour in 1 litre of boiling water, cover and simmer for 30 minutes until all the vegetables and the pearl barley are tender. Add the chopped parsley and season to taste.

Richmond is the ancient Ascot. Up the road is High Moor where racing was held from the 1500's to 1765 after which it moved to Low Moor where racing continued until 1891. Low Moor is vast and wild, full of gorse and rabbit warrens and from up there one can see the whole sweep to the coast in the East and across the Dales to the West.

Anyway I was up there this evening as the gale was getting up. In the distance I could see the odd hooded, solitary figure with dog. I leaned into the cold wind and driving rain, pulling my hood tight round my ears. Suddenly my head was full of song, one particular song

".....maybe it's because I'm a Londoner, that I love London town, maybe it's because I'm a Londoner....tra la la la la la "

.....over and over again. It lasted the whole walk.

It's quite easy to feel alienated living up here. I picked up the bi-monthly 'What's on in Richmond'. As if I didn't already know the answer. But I saw something that really depressed me. 'NEW - Steak Night at the Station', the new monthly event at the café in our Arts Centre. What other Art Centre in Britain would have 'steak nights'. I googled their email address and wrote them a really angry email.....then deleted it. It doesn't matter how long I live up here for, or that I wasn't born in London, I will always be a Londoner. I picked up the takeaway menu for the local Indian restaurant. No shahi thalis, no sev puris, just chicken tikka masala and variations of. No mango lassis – just beer, lemonade and coca cola, no kulfis. Just writing this really upsets me. It's the nature that keeps me here..... and there's only one set of traffic lights.

Lainey is growing up. It will be one year this week that I went to collect her. She was passed into my arms asleep, she slept all the way home, she opened her eyes, and since then has not allowed me out of her sight. If she's asleep on the sofa and I tiptoe round the corner to the fridge she leaps to her feet, she sees me in her sleep. She is a very happy, feisty little alpha female....26 kilos. She loves everyone and everything and I am of course, as attached to her as she is to me.

The next act of the Brexit pantomime kicks off again on Monday and another meaningless vote to look forward to. I have to say though, I will never forget the sight, and sound, of Teresa May croaking like a dalek in the Commons last week. What a woman !

If anyone outside Britain tuned in and saw thatthe pathetic, hopelessness that we have been so audibly reduced to.....her voice said it all.

Hope you can bear it,

Kind wishes,

Isobel