



Monday 12th August 2019

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. The weather here is vile. It is dark, windy, wet and really cold. It looks like this weather will persist for the rest of the summer. That is as miserable as sin.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Carrot and Celery Soup

4 <i>tbsp olive oil</i>	1 <i>large onion, finely chopped</i>
2 <i>carrots, thinly sliced</i>	3 <i>sticks celery, thinly sliced</i>
1 <i>tsp dried tarragon</i>	1 <i>litre vegetable stock</i>
250ml <i>dry white wine</i>	

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Saute the onions until tender then stir in the carrots, celery and tarragon and continue cooking for another 5 minutes or until the carrots are tender. Stir in the vegetable stock and wine. Reduce to a simmer and continue cooking for 15 minutes more.

Celery Gratin

1 <i>head of celery, with leaves</i>	1 <i>litre vegetable stock</i>
1 <i>small onion, peeled and sliced</i>	6 <i>peppercorns</i>
1 <i>bouquet garni (bay leaf, parsley, thyme)</i>	1 <i>small knob butter, for greasing</i>
100ml <i>crème fraîche</i>	3 <i>tbsp finely chopped parsley</i>
1 <i>small handful white breadcrumbs</i>	30g <i>grated hard cheese</i>

Heat the oven to 180C/ 350F / Gas 4. Cut the leafy ends off the celery and reserve. Cut the sticks into 10cm lengths. Put the stock, onion, bouquet garni and peppercorns into a pan. Bring to a boil, add some salt and the celery. Simmer, partially covered until the celery is just tender, about 15 minutes. Remove celery from the liquid and arrange in a buttered gratin dish. Pour the strained poaching liquid into a pan and discard the onion, peppercorns and bouquet garni. Simmer until reduced to about 100ml, remove from the heat and whisk in the crème fraîche, about two tablespoons of chopped celery leaves and the parsley. Adjust the seasoning and pour over the celery. In a small bowl, stir together the breadcrumbs and cheese, sprinkle over the gratin and bake until golden and bubbling, for about 20 minutes.

Cider Glazed Roasted Celery with Crispy Topping

head <i>celery</i>	400ml <i>medium dry cider</i>
2 <i>tbsp cider vinegar</i>	
Topping:	
25g <i>cheese, grated</i>	25g <i>Panko breadcrumbs</i>
2 <i>tbsp parsley, finely chopped</i>	1 <i>tbsp olive oil</i>

Pre heat oven 200C/ 180C fan / Gas 7. Wash and separate the celery stalks and cut into 10cm lengths. Grease an ovenproof casserole generously, lay the celery in the dish, pour over the cider and vinegar, and cover with greaseproof paper generously coated in butter and then cover with foil. Place in the oven for 45 minutes, remove the foil and greaseproof paper. Mix together the cheese, breadcrumbs, parsley and olive oil, sprinkle over the celery and cook for 15-20 minutes until the topping is golden.

Red Cabbage Slaw

250ml <i>mayonnaise</i>	<i>zest and juice of 1 lemon</i>
2 <i>tbsp cider vinegar</i>	2 <i>tbsp wholegrain mustard</i>
1 <i>tsp celery salt</i>	½ <i>head red cabbage</i>
2 <i>carrots, julienned</i>	1 <i>onion, diced</i>

Whisk together the mayonnaise, lemon zest and juice, vinegar, mustard and celery salt in a small bowl then season generously. Add the cabbage, carrots and onion.

In the small window of dry weather last week, the shearer came. We are always last on the list. It's hard to be taken seriously in these parts given that I am a woman, and that the sheep aren't destined for the dinner plate, that I obviously live in some fantasy world. Anyway, our shearer is brilliant with the sheep which is what matters. The sheep were gathered up into the pen and one by one are pushed up a ramp onto the shearing platform. I then sort the fleeces as they come off, into the different breeds and colours. I don't trust anyone else with this job. I have several Swaledale sheep whose wool is like a Brillo pad and a mere handful finding its way into the fine Shetland or Wensleydale would ruin it. Once shorn, they leap off the platform and through the slightly ajar gate back into their field where instead of dispersing, they congregate to watch. Several of the very old sheep however would not go back into the field, preferring to hang out in the yard with us. Lainey is the sweetest, most affectionate dog. She loves the sheep and was licking the nose of one of the oldies in the yard who just ignored her. I've encouraged her to love all animals. It started with my guinea pigs, as a tiny puppy I would feed her next to them but with a barrier between – 'it's Coco and Kiki'...awww', she would stare at them chomping her crunchies on one side, they would stand chopping on the other, just inches apart.

Then I removed the barrier, they just carried on staring and chomping. 'Aw it's Benji the blackbird' and 'poor little spider' – she is just full of love. I was going to say she wouldn't hurt a fly, but actually she has chewed a couple up. I was putting a fleece in the DS bag, the 'dark Shetland' bag, and I heard a thud and a scream. One of the old sheep in the yard had headbutted her. She leapt into the car petrified – she was in shock, she looked completely broken. I was so upset, I am so protective of her. It's why I ensured all the sheep went back in the field, but these two little bony old ones I didn't think would be bothered by her. I cuddled her then took her for a walk. She was ok again after that. Shearing time is when I get to have a really good look at the sheep, into their feet, their body condition. On the whole they are looking really well. The youngest must be at least 7 years old, an age which few sheep reach, but most of the flock are at least 11 or 12 years old, many are a lot older. I held onto last years clip, will add it to this year's and send it to be processed.

I hope you have a good week,

Isobel