

Monday 6th August 2012

Dear Customer,

We have cauliflowers from Duncan Gielty in the bags this week and his cherry toms. We have spinach from Jonnie Watson. At Royal Oak in Ormskirk, they have just started harvesting carrots - still with their tops on and we have their first crop of broad beans and mixed varieties of courgettes. The peaches and nectarines are from Sicily - plenty of those in the bags as we make the most of the soft fruit while it's in season.

Here are a couple of recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Warm Cauliflower Salad

(reflecting our summer that doesn't feel much like it - but extremely delicious all the same)

1 cauliflower, broken into florets	2 tbsp olive oil
1 red onion, thinly sliced	3 tbsp sherry vinegar
1½ tbsp honey	3 tbsp raisins
small bunch dill, snipped	3 tbsp toasted, flaked almonds
50g spinach, very finely shredded	

Heat oven to 200C/180 Fan/ Gas 6. Toss the cauliflower with the olive oil, season and roast for 15 minutes. Stir in the red onion and carry on roasting for 15-20 minutes until tender. Meanwhile, mix the vinegar, honey and raisins with some seasoning. When the cauliflower is done, stir in the dressing, dill, almonds and spinach and serve.

Cauliflower Cheese and Spinach Pasta

450ml milk	30g plain flour
30g butter plus a good knob	65g Cheddar, grated
½ tsp Dijon mustard	20g blue cheese
¼ tsp grated nutmeg	cauliflower, cut into florets
320g spinach, finely shredded	20g toasted pinenuts
150g penne pasta	

For Tomato Sauce:

2 cloves garlic, sliced	1 tbsp olive oil
400g jar passata or chopped tomatoes	

For the tomato sauce: cook the sliced garlic in the oil for 1 minute then add the passata. Season, half-cover the pan and simmer for 20 minutes until rich. Meanwhile, make the cheese sauce. Put the milk, flour and 50g butter into a pan. Heat, whisking non-stop, until smooth, then bubble for 3 minutes, stirring. Cool for 5 minutes then stir in mustard, most of the Cheddar, half the blue cheese and half the nutmeg. Boil the penne and cauliflower for 8 minutes in salted water until both almost tender. Keep a tablespoon of water from the pan, then drain. Melt ½ tablespoon of butter in a pan and add the spinach, remaining nutmeg, salt and lots of black pepper and cook for a few minutes. Mix half of the cheese sauce into the cauliflower and pasta. Pour the tomato sauce into an ovenproof dish and add a layer of spinach then the cauliflower and pasta mix, then the rest of the spinach, the rest of the tomato sauce and top with the rest of the cheese sauce, the cheeses and the pine nuts. Heat oven to 200C/180C/ Gas 6 and cook on a baking sheet for 18-20 minutes until golden and bubbling. Excellent with a green salad and garlic bread.

It's Sunday morning and I have just had to call off the sheep shearing due for this afternoon as it's thundering and the rain is torrential. I'm feeling a bit drained after the emotion of our 3 Golds in last night's athletics. Isn't Mo Farrar brilliant! I only turned the TV on as my brother had tickets and I wanted to snoop on what he'd be seeing but then got very caught up. I could imagine him there roaring in the crowd. He told me it had been 'fantastic'. Life in Britain, it's just one massive party isn't it! We should build an enormous flag pole a mile high in the middle of Britain and hoist a Union Jack the size of Isle of Wight and get William and Kate, Harry and Paul McCartney on a permanent road tour. While the eurozone collapses, it doesn't matter 'cos we're rocking out. We'll just clap, dance, cheer, row, run, sing, throw javelins, bake special cakes and have street parties forever. It's a new script, the New Happy, Happy Britain. Boris as PM, the Queen in on it too, there's no stopping us, to hell with everything!

In general I love my life and doing what I do but there is always one small thing missing - apart from the luxury villa on the Riviera - London. I have to go there a lot but am sick of hotels, the cost and trying to park, and friends are sick of me on their doorstep with my laptop, suitcase and Myfa. It's been upsetting me that I no longer feel connected to or at home in the city where I've spent most of my adult life. I don't want to live there again, but decided I would like to try spending 25% of my time there. I found a flat where I could do just that - rent for a week a month at a good discount working around their other bookings. Perfect! It was in Primrose Hill. Perfect again! I arrived at the flat. Perfect! Two minutes walk to the village, two minutes to Regents Park. After a comfortable first night, I took Myfa into the park, past

the zoo, where she got spooked by the tigers and monkeys. We had a brisk walk down to Marylebone, we walked along Regents Canal then went for breakfast, sat in the sun at a café in the village. Heart pumping in anticipation of this new chapter I then headed for a meeting in Brick Lane. Good meeting – new opportunities. I drove back feeling so bloody happy. I got back to the flat at 6.10pm. It was in the basement of a lovely Georgian house. I walked down the steps and there was glass everywhere, I then saw a window had been smashed. I went in and my laptop had gone. I packed my bags, told the owner, met with the Met and forensics, met a friend for dinner then drove home stopping to sleep in a hotel on the M1. I'd been there one night, the owner hadn't had a break-in there in the 17 years he's owned it. What should I take from that ! I'll reserve judgement on that for another day.

Anyway I hope you are having a very happy week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel