

Monday 12th August 2013

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. In the bags this week we have new season Golden Globe beetroot, emerald and purple cauliflowers and some yellow courgettes, all from Royal Oak Farm in Ormskirk.

If you are twiddling your thumbs, here are a couple of great recipes you could try:

Golden Beetroot Pasta

450g golden beetroot, roasted
2 tbsp pesto
thyme

300g penne, cooked according to packet instructions
olive oil
sea salt and black pepper

To roast your beetroot, preheat the oven to 400F/ 200C/ Gas 6. Wash, then pat dry the beetroot leaving at least 1" of stalk. Put the beetroot in a roasty roasting tin, drizzle with oil and roll the beets into it to cover, then sprinkle with salt and thyme. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until beetroot is soft but not shrunken. Remove the skin and chop the beetroot into small dice. Place the cooked pasta in a warmed serving bowl, add the pesto and stir thoroughly, then add the rocket and cooked beetroot. Mix together then drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Spinach and Cauliflower Dhal

200g red lentils
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 green chilli, finely chopped
2 tsp garam masala
300g fresh spinach, chopped
800ml vegetable stock
fresh coriander

1 onion, finely sliced
1 tsp tomato puree
1 tsp yellow mustard seeds
1 tsp turmeric
1 small cauliflower, in small florets
squeeze lemon juice

Heat a slug of olive oil over a moderate heat in a large casserole pan and add the onion. Cook for 5 minutes, then add the garlic and chilli and continue to sweat until softened and translucent. With the pan still on the heat, add the tomato puree, mustard seeds, garam masala and turmeric and fry for 2 minutes more. Stir to stop the onion and spices sticking to the bottom of the pan. If it seems very dry, add more olive oil and then the lentils, stirring well while cooking for a further minute. Add 400ml of the stock, bring to a gentle simmer, stir, cover and leave to cook for 5 minutes. Add the cauliflower florets and another 300ml stock along with plenty of salt and pepper. Stir again, cover with a lid and leave it to very gently simmer for 12-15 minutes. Meanwhile, wash the spinach and put in a large pan on moderate heat. Cover with a lid and allow to steam until the spinach has completely wilted but is still bright green. This should only take 2 or 3 minutes. Once wilted, place spinach in a colander and squeeze out any excess moisture. Keep stirring and checking the lentils and cauliflower which should be cooked after 12 minutes. Add more stock if necessary to keep it thick but not dry. When the cauliflower is tender and lentils completely cooked, stir in the spinach and lemon juice and taste to check seasoning. Add roughly chopped coriander. Serve with naan bread, chapati or rice, or all three and a handful of coriander and some natural yoghurt.

It's a big week for our little hens. On Tuesday they are being collected from their farm in Sussex and are being brought to our friends at The Great British Farm project. Stephen and Tracey have the tenancy of a beautiful farm hidden away in the Gisburn Forest on the Yorkshire/ Lancashire border where they have lived for 2 years. They had had a dream of a place where they could rescue and live with animals and educate people about their sentience. Two years ago they bought a piece of land in Caithness and put their life savings and more into an eco-build property on the site. They handed over £140,000 to the developer and the next day this developer put his company into administration and they lost everything. They were devastated but it didn't kill their dream. Two kinder, more wonderful people, it would be hard to meet. So in this rented farm, they set about their Great British Farm project, rescuing sheep, goats, ponies, horses, ducks, donkeys..... Stephen does two jobs, a day job and a night job to pay for their keep while Tracey spends all her time looking after them. Now that our hens are going to live there, it is our hope that we will be able to provide them with enough income that Stephen can give up one of his jobs.

Please check out their website, they have launched the 1000 Club. They are trying to find 1000 people to pay £1 per month to pay for the food of all their other rescued animals. I think they have about 250 people so far. They are definitely people worthy of support.

The hens will have their own stone barn which Stephen has been kitting out for them with nest boxes and perches. They will loll about, roam and scratch in a huge paddock surrounded by stone walls and forest. I am very happy. They are the perfect people and this is the perfect place. The hens will travel from Sussex on Tuesday evening, the cool part of the day, and park up at the farm, to be released in their new home at first light. I will take some video footage to show you.

As for my sheep !! On Friday evening as I was departing for Live Exports march in London, I received another abusive text message from a farmer in Galphay telling me that there were sheep out and that one was now living in a ditch between two fences. I called the transporter and the shearers and asked if they could go and get them the next morning and bring the whole lot back here to Hornby, so that is what they did. I'd brought Rocky back in the boot of my car last week as he was found wandering the village. I'm not sure if he is a real sheep or just an illusion. He passes through walls and fences. Even having brought him back to a well-fenced paddock in Richmond, he disappeared the next day for 36 hours and I was about to have 'missing' posters made offering a reward when he was spotted in a nearby meadow, came home and slept under the tree for 12 hours. Heaven knows what he'd been up to, he was exhausted.

I may be about to announce a large and frightening project, one which is keeping me awake at night. I should find out in the next few days. I will keep you posted. It's the biggie, the mother ☺

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS If you came to the march on Saturday, thank you so much and wish I had met you !