

Monday 16th September 2013

Dear Customer,

I know you will hardly be able to contain your excitement to see a swede in your bag this week – the perfect accompaniment to gale force winds and driving rain. I've been checking out recipes but they all try too hard and nothing works better than to boil and mash – with some cream and butter, or margarine, and flaky salt and freshly ground black pepper. The peeling and chopping is hard labour but it's worth it. I'm keeping going with spinach- chard – spinach – chard, as before long, temperatures will drop and their season will be over. We have Purple Haze carrots again this week and not just for their fun colour. The purpleness reflects their levels healthy antioxidants, the same ones present in blueberries.... as well as the vitamin A and beta-carotene of normal orange carrots. They aren't so new and novel, they pre-date orange carrots and have been around for over 5000 years. They lose a lot of their colour when boiled so you could try grating them into a salad or coleslaw. To enhance their inherent sweetness try coating them, whole or sliced, in olive oil, sprinkle with thyme, season and roast until tender, You could also sauté them lightly in olive oil and serve them with a maple glaze. Jonnie Watson's Bambino potatoes are also in the bags, he is as yet undecided as to whether your cauliflower will be white, or the green Romanesco. We are also making the most of the Galia melons and greengages in the fruit bags as they come to the end of their season. The English pears and apples are from Dennis Goatham 's orchard in Kent.

Puy Lentil and Spinach Soup

2 tbsp olive oil
1 carrot, finely diced
3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
150g Puy lentils, rinsed
salt and freshly ground black pepper
150g spinach, chopped

1 onion, peeled and finely sliced
fresh thyme leaves, picked and finely chopped
3 tomatoes, diced
1.3 litres vegetable stock
handful parsley, finely chopped

In a large saucepan, warm the olive oil over a medium-low heat. Add the onion, carrot and thyme and sauté gently for five minutes. Add the tomatoes and garlic and sauté for another minute. Tip in the lentils, stir then add the stock and salt and pepper. Bring to boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 25 minutes, or until the lentils are tender. Add the parsley and spinach, simmer for five minutes, season to taste and ladle into warmed bowls. Trickle over with more olive oil to serve.

Spinach, Lentil and Bean Curry

200g red lentils
200g pot natural yoghurt
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp chilli powder
1 onion, chopped
1" piece fresh root ginger, grated
4 sprigs fresh coriander

4 tbsp tomato puree
1 tsp garam masala
½ tsp ground cumin
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, chopped
100g spinach, coarsely chopped
400g tin mixed beans, rinsed and drained

Rinse the lentils and place in a saucepan with enough water to cover. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low, cover the pot and simmer over a low heat for 20 minutes, then drain, In a bowl, stir together the tomato puree and yoghurt. Season with the garam masala, turmeric, cumin and chilli powder. Stir until creamy. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Stir in the onion, ginger and garlic and cook until the onion begins to brown. Stir in the spinach and cook until dark green and wilted. Gradually stir in the yoghurt mixture then mix in the tomatoes and coriander. Stir the lentils and beans into the mixture until well combined and heat through for about 5 minutes.

It's Sunday and the weather is as dreary as can be. Not the 60mph we'd been looking forward to, just moderately bad. The Coast to Coast walkers generally walk from West to East. They pass my house on their descent into Richmond having set off at the crack of dawn from Reeth. By the time they pass my house they are on their last legs and great number of them are stumbling past, weather beaten, today. They book their B & B's months in advance so whatever the weather, walk to the schedule they must. I'm contemplating putting on my wellies and kagoul and going on the Great North Walk – down to the shop. I awoke to a heavy thud at 6am this morning as Myfa, who sleeps curled up in a ball on the left-hand corner of the bed, rolled off.

Someone brought it to my attention this morning that our sunflower spread has palm oil in it. It has been amiss of me to not notice so we are now replacing it with an olive oil spread. Borneo and Sumatra are two of the most bio-diverse regions of the world with the longest list of endangered species. They are so rich in life, containing around 20,000 plant species, 3000 tree species and 300,000 animal species. Every hour, an area of rainforest the size of 300 football fields is destroyed in Indonesia and Malaysia to grow palm oil. Orangutans are some of our closest relatives, sharing approximately 97% of their DNA with humans. Orangutan means, in Indonesian, 'person of the jungle', they are said to be the most intelligent of all the primates. They are the largest tree-dwelling mammal on the planet and with their amazing intellect have the ability to reason and think. One rescued orangutan was taught a vocabulary of 500 words through sign language. Already, 50,000 have been killed through the deforestation and this is ongoing. It is reckoned they will be extinct in the wild within 3-12 years and that their jungle habitat will be completely gone within 20. The orangutans can't live without the rainforest but the rainforest can't live without the orangutans. In this delicate ecosystem, there are many tree seeds which can only germinate once they have passed through the gut of the orangutan. One story in the millions of stories, each creature has a story, has a place, has a function, has intelligence, is an integral part of our world. None should have to compete with the human species for it's survival, and yet it does have to. God knows it's hard to be a wild animal in England. I can't watch these current TV programmes about 'The Harvest' as I know that the combine harvesters and heavy

machinery mince every living creature in their path. And if they do make it out the field in time, they are dazed, confused and get killed on the road. We should have more National Parks and in these and our existing National Parks it should be illegal to kill any creature whatsoever. Shame on us that there is nowhere at all, nowhere that animals are safe from our killing.

Kind wishes,

Isobel