

Monday 4th November 2013

Dear Customer,

It's a beautiful sunny day here but with a distinct chill in the air. I think the change is upon us, it's dropped down a good notch. We have purple haze carrots in the bags this week and it's lucky dip on the cauliflowers – either Plain Jane, Romanesco or Purple to match the carrots – both from Ormskirk. We have brussel sprouts, leeks and Desiree potatoes from the Yorkshire Moors and green curly kale from Jonnie Watson in Tadcaster. Did you see that Yorkshire has just been voted the 3rd best region in the world to visit (in the whole world) Here are a few easy recipes you could try with whichever cauli you find:

Oven Roasted Cauliflower with Garlic, Olive Oil and Lemon Juice

<i>1 cauliflower, in florets</i>	<i>1 tbsp sliced garlic</i>
<i>2 tbsp lemon juice</i>	<i>1 tsp salt</i>
<i>½ tsp black pepper</i>	<i>2 tbs grated Parmesan (optional)</i>
<i>olive oil</i>	

Preheat oven to 250C / 500F/ Gas 9. Place the cauliflower florets in a large roasting pan and drizzle liberally with olive oil. Season with the garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Place the roasting pan in the oven and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to ensure even roasting. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with the Parmesan. Serve immediately.

Braised Carrots and Cauliflower

<i>1 cauliflower</i>	<i>250g carrots</i>
<i>3 tbsp sunflower oil</i>	<i>175ml hot vegetable stock</i>
<i>1 tsp thyme</i>	<i>1 tsp marjoram</i>

Cut the cauliflower into small florets. Thinly slice the carrots. Heat the oil in a large frying pan on a high heat. Add the cauliflower and carrots and stir-fry them for about 2 minutes. Pour in the stock and then bring to the boil. Add the herbs and then cover the pan and cook for 10 minutes – most of the liquid will evaporate. Serve hot with crusty bread.

Cauliflower and Lentil Dahl

<i>1 onion, chopped</i>	<i>1 clove garlic, chopped</i>
<i>2.5cm root ginger, grated</i>	<i>4 tbsp sunflower oil</i>
<i>1 tsp ground coriander</i>	<i>1 tsp ground cumin</i>
<i>½ tsp turmeric</i>	<i>75g red lentils, ready to use</i>
<i>300ml vegetable stock</i>	<i>2 tbsp hot curry paste</i>
<i>1 cauliflower, cut in florets</i>	<i>300ml coconut milk</i>
<i>125g frozen peas, thawed</i>	<i>2 tbsp chopped coriander</i>
<i>1 tbsp lemon juice</i>	

Heat about half of the oil in a saucepan and add the onion, garlic, ginger and dry spices and fry gently for 5 minutes. Add the lentils, stir well and pour in the stock. Bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan, add the curry paste and fry gently for 3 minutes. Add the cauliflower and stir-fry for another 3 minutes. Remove from the heat. Add the coconut milk and cauliflower to the lentils and return to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the peas, coriander and lemon juice. Heat this through for 3 minutes. When the peas are tender it is ready to serve. Delicious with rice or warmed naan bread.

So why did the milk vanish ! I received an email a few weeks ago from the dairy farmer to say that they didn't want to do it anymore with immediate effect, they were finding it too stressful doing all the processing and bottling and they definitively wanted to return to just selling their raw milk. My immediate concern was of course for the cows, but it actually isn't a concern as they love them and would keep them into old age anyway. I have a written agreement that should their farm or the lives of the Cow Nation cows ever be in jeopardy, that we would be notified, buy them for their market price, and bring them to sanctuary.

I can't tell you how mortified we are by this though. We had just 3 months previously, spent a fortune on pasteurising and bottling equipment and have thousands of pounds worth of cheese and milk labels which we now have to dump. Not to mention letting you down on the supply. We have taken a financial and moral battering. The concept it so important to us and making it work, it is part of who we are. But we are not giving up and are talking to other famers to try and find someone suitable to work with who might prefer this kinder way of being a dairy farmer. I don't think most people are aware of the extent to which UK dairy farms are moving towards systems where the cows are indoors all year round. I have a friend who has rallied a group of dairy farmers from around the country and is attempting to get a 'free-range' label for milk, a differentiation sadly needed. I think he is struggling in the same way I did, when blocked by the British Wool Marketing Board from being allowed to establish an animal welfare standard on wool - it was reckoned this would undermine the wool which didn't carry the standard. It is a truly abysmal thing. We think we are progressing, with more free-range pigs and hens and yet for dairy cows, their perpetual incarceration is just beginning – that is their new dawn. The supermarkets have as ever, a lot to answer for.

I had yet another bad migraine over the weekend. I guess I have seasonal blues – the clocks have gone back. I tried watching X Factor from my sick bed but all the cheering made me vomit and for the first time Nicole Scherzinger really irritated me. I wouldn't recommend watching it with a migraine, on balance, it is better to just miss it. Post-migraine insomnia again, I slept for 20 minutes last night and had to get up for my hairdresser who was arriving with a cut and highlights which she kindly did while I sat at the computer catching up on emails. Now I have to take Myfa out to end the high pitch whine with which she has been serenading me all morning. I

can't blame her, she is very patient when I am ill and is now bored out of her mind. She wants us to go out and play ! I must also go and attend to one of my poor sheep which has pneumonia.

I hope all is well with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel