

Monday 21st July 2014

Dear Customer,

It is on the whole very warm and sunny up here at the moment, and far more pleasant than London in my opinion. Triumph at last. The potatoes in the bags this week are Ambo from Jonnie Watson who is back on the block now too. We also have his spinach, Batavia lettuces and spring onions – depending on which assortment you have. The broccoli and courgettes are from Peter Richardson in Newby Wiske. Here are a few recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Spinach Fruit Smoothie

<i>1 banana, chopped</i>	<i>1 apples, peeled, cored and chopped</i>
<i>50g spinach leaves</i>	<i>100g vanilla yoghurt</i>
<i>100ml milk</i>	

Place ingredients in a blender and blitz until smooth. Serve chilled in tall glasses.

Spinach and Tomato Salad

<i>250g spinach, washed and stemmed</i>	<i>2 free range, hard-boiled eggs</i>
<i>2 large tomatoes</i>	<i>2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed</i>
<i>1 small onion, peeled and chopped</i>	<i>2 tbsp lemon juice</i>
<i>1 tbsp vinegar</i>	<i>salt and pepper to taste</i>

Dry the spinach leaves and tear them up. Chop the eggs and mix them in a large salad bowl with the garlic, onion, lemon juice and vinegar. Add the spinach, toss well and serve immediately.

Spinach and Rice Soup

<i>1 onion, peeled and finely chopped</i>	<i>225g spinach, stemmed and shredded</i>
<i>4 tbsp olive oil</i>	<i>2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed</i>
<i>pinch thyme</i>	<i>pinch rosemary</i>
<i>fresh coriander</i>	<i>¼ tsp cayenne pepper</i>
<i>grated zest of ½ lemon</i>	<i>125g Arborio rice</i>
<i>1.2 litres vegetable stock</i>	<i>4 tbsp pesto</i>
<i>salt and pepper</i>	

Heat half the oil in a large saucepan and add the onion, garlic, herbs, lemon zest and spices and gently fry for 5 minutes until softened. Add the remaining oil, then add the rice and stir for 1 minute until all the grains are glossy. Add the stock, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 20 minutes until the rice is tender. Stir the spinach and pesto into the soup and cook for a further 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot drizzled with olive oil.

Diane wanted to write the newsletter this week so 'voici'.....

"This is my newsletter, if Isobel is brave enough to send it to you, about a day in my life at Farmaround.

It's 4am and the alarm is going off, do I slap it to give me an extra 5 minutes or do I drag myself out of bed! Oh God, best get up, can't be late, first things first though, coffee. Nobody can talk to me before I have had a coffee in the morning, still in my pj's, dog to take out, it's a good job it's too early and not a soul to be seen, all windows in darkness. I get so tempted to play the old game we all used to play on mischief night, knock and run, if I am up so should everyone else be !!

Shower-and-out time, rushing about, even though I have had an hour to do my morning ritual like everyone else does, time to run my poor, old dog over to my mum and dad's as quiet as I can. If I wake them up there will be hell to pay. I pick up one of the packers and off we go, the best part of the day, my journey to work in the morning is the most beautiful scenery you will ever see, you can see for miles and miles, one day I am going to set off extra early and bring my morning coffee and sit on the grass and enjoy the peace and the view. I go over the 'tops' as we call them, dodge the rabbits running across the road, the Army are out waiting for a lift back after night manoeuvres, give them a beep and wave to cheer them up, they most probably think I am some batty woman with nothing better to do. I pass the same car every morning, he always flashes (and I do mean his lights) God knows who he is, but a typical, friendly Northerner. He is usually the only car I see all the way to work ... bliss. 5.30am I turn up at work, first job, yep, get the kettle on, need lots of caffeine to get me through the day. No day is the same in Farmaround, you never know what is going to get thrown at you. Will all the packers come in? Will all the produce come in looking nice? Will customers be happy? Will Isobel be happy or am I in trouble yet again? And most important of all, will the kettle work all day? I need a nice table to sit outside for my coffee breaks, (hint, hint Isobel) maybe I could get my customers to start up a petition, "get Diane a sun lounger" yes I class you as my customers, not Isobel's. I have spoken to a lot of you for the past 8 years, I have cried with some when they have been upset, and laughed till I have cried with others, yes you know who you are!! Better leave a little bit of room for Isobel to have her say and add a recipe or I will be in trouble again, see Isobel, I am not a mad Northerner, quite normal really"

And she is never in trouble with me. Farmaround wouldn't exist without Diane.

After the newsletter where I mentioned OCD, I asked everyone in the office what theirs were. I didn't expect any results - I thought it may only southerners and not 'no-nonsense Northerners' who were so neurotic. Results: if anyone drinks out of one of Diane's mugs she has to throw it away. Eve, who takes credit card payments had only one word on the subject – "cleaning". Debbie our bookkeeper has to arrange the plates in her cupboard so the patterns are all in exactly the same place – her husband, our accountant, has to have his cruise control on an even number. Lorraine, my Izzy Lane right-hand, has to have baked beans, chick

peas, red kidney beans all lined up with their own row each in the cupboard. Noone is immune ! I'm sure you have some great ones you'd like to share with us, email me: isobel@farmaround.co.uk . 'Out' your obsessive compulsions !

It's my first day in the recording studio tomorrow to work on arrangements and lay down vocal tracks for the session singers to follow. My producer (mine !), has been programming two tracks. He's a genius, I am so happy about that !

Hope all well and kind wishes,

Isobel