

Monday 9th February 2015

Dear Customer,

In last week's newsletter it was winter and now it's looking like spring with glorious sunny days and blue skies. Swarms of midges have hatched, the buds are popping out on the branches and the birds are singing. Can finally turn the heating down and go outside without a hood up.

There's a lot of greenery in your bags this. We have Swiss chard. It isn't actually Swiss – just a tax evader I guess. Dodgy chard. The leaves are full of cash, iron and minerals. You can separate the leaves from the stems to use in different recipes. The stems can be steamed or boiled until tender and eaten like asparagus. And then we have model, law-abiding British spring greens.

Here are a few recipes you could try this week:

Lemony Spring Greens

1 lemon
2 tbsp olive oil
400g spring greens
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Finely grate the lemon zest and put in a jam jar. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze half the juice into the jar. Add the olive oil with a little salt and pepper and shake well. Half fill a large saucepan with cold water and bring to the boil. Meanwhile, finely shred the spring greens then add to the saucepan and cook for 4 minutes or until tender. Drain, then return to pan and steam dry for a minute. Give the dressing a good shake then drizzle over the greens, toss and serve.

Swiss Chard and Garlic Saute

1 bunch Swiss chard
2 tbsp olive oil
1/8 tsp crushed chillies
250ml water
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
salt to taste

Wash and cut the chard into 2.5cm strips. Separate the thick stalk sections from the upper leafy strips. Bring the water to the boil and add some salt. Cook the stalk sections in the boiling water for 2 minutes. Stir in the leafy strips and cook until the leaves are wilted and the stalks are fork tender, about 6 minutes. Drain and set aside. Heat the olive oil, garlic and crushed chillies in a large frying pan over a medium heat until aromatic, about 3 minutes. Add the drained chard, cook and stir for 2 minutes and season with salt to taste.

Red Lentil and Chard Soup

500g split red lentils
2 medium red onions
200g Swiss chard
2 tsp ground cumin
1 tbsp coriander seeds
50g butter or margarine
sourdough bread
salt and pepper
2.5 litres cold water
2 tbsp olive oil
50g coriander leaves
1 tsp ground cinnamon
3 garlic cloves, crushed
grated zest of 1/2 lemon
4 lemons, cut in wedges

Wash the lentils in cold water and place in a large saucepan with 2.5 litres water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 35 minutes or until soft and skim off any scum. Remove about half the lentils from the cooking liquid with a slotted spoon and set aside in a bowl. Blend the lentils left in the saucepan then return the reserved lentils back to the pan. Peel, halve and thinly slice the red onions and cook in the olive oil until they soften and become translucent. Meanwhile chop the washed chard leaves, setting aside the stems for another recipe. Add the chard into the soup with the coriander then season with the cumin, cinnamon and some salt and pepper to taste. Reheat the soup and simmer for 5 minutes. In a pestle and mortar crush the garlic and coriander seeds together. Melt the butter or margarine in a small pan, add the garlic and coriander seeds and fry for 2 minutes until the garlic starts to colour. Stir this into the soup, remove the soup from the heat, cover with a lid and leave to infuse for 5 minutes before serving. Serve garnished with lemon zest. Pass round the sourdough and lemon wedges to squeeze into the soup.

Sweet Potato and Cinnamon Muffins

2 free-range eggs
80ml vegetable oil
200g self-raising flour
250g sweet potato, mashed
180g caster sugar
50ml water
3/4 tsp ground cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 180C / 350F / Gas 4 and line a muffin tin with 10 paper cases. In a large bowl, beat the eggs with the sugar. Add the oil and water then mix well. Sieve the flour and cinnamon together then add them to the egg mixture. Fold everything together before adding the sweet potatoes. Pour the mixture into the muffin cases, filling them about 3/4 full. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the muffins are cooked.

I hope all is well with you.

Kind wishes,

