



Monday 31st August 2015

Dear Customer,

It is Bank Holiday Monday and I hope you have had a good one, but the rest is over and now it's time to cook !! I have lots of delicious recipes here to keep you busy.

It's terrible for everyone organising events today – it looks like a wash-out across the whole country. Our local Reeth Show is deluged. Wash-outs on Bank Holidays have been around for a long time. Prior to 1834, the Bank of England observed 33 saints' days and religious festivals as holidays. In 1834, this was reduced to just four: May Day, All Saints Day, Good Friday and Christmas Day. But then in 1871 Sir John Lubbock introduced the Bank Holidays Act – holidays with pay - these were Easter Monday, the first Monday in August, Whit Monday and Boxing Day. A keen cricketer, these dates coincided with home games in his village. Good Friday and Christmas Day were already considered traditional days of rest, as were Sundays, so it was not deemed necessary to include them in the Act.

A snap shot of life back in 1871 - just 14% of the population were now working in agriculture, a mammoth 32% in manufacturing, 5% in mining and 16% in domestic service serving the new professions, the middle-class. All came together to enjoy time off on a Bank Holiday.

We have purple sprouting broccoli in the bags this week. You can steam or boil it until just tender. Any thicker stems can be cut into short lengths and given an extra couple of minutes cooking time. It is delicious simply sprinkling the heads lightly with lemon juice and drizzling with, or dipping in melted butter.

Purple Sprouting Broccoli Pasta with Lemon and Chilli and Pine Nuts

<i>bag purple sprouting broccoli</i>	<i>400g penne pasta</i>
<i>100g pine nuts, toasted</i>	<i>2 tbs olive oil for frying</i>
<i>small onion, peeled and finely chopped</i>	<i>2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped</i>
<i>½ red chilli, finely chopped</i>	<i>sea salt and pepper</i>
<i>1 un-waxed lemon, zest removed and juice squeezed</i>	

Wash and trim the purple sprouting broccoli and cut the stems into 2cm pieces. Set aside. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions. In a small pan, blanch the purple sprouting broccoli for no more than 3 minutes. Drain and leave to cool. Toast the pine nuts in a dry frying pan. Keep shaking the pan to stop them from burning. In a big saucepan, heat the oil and add the onion, garlic and chilli with some salt and pepper. Soften the vegetables gently, adding a small amount of water to create steam in the pan. When soft, add the cooked pasta, the lemon zest, a little lemon juice and the toasted pine nuts. Mix well and fry for 3 minutes. Add the blanched purple sprouting broccoli, mix well then turn off the heat. Serve on a warm platter with extra lemon juice and a drizzle of olive oil.

Spicy Pea and Spinach Soup

<i>700g cooked peas</i>	<i>1 tsp sugar</i>
<i>¾ tsp harissa paste</i>	<i>250g spinach</i>
<i>1 handful parsley</i>	<i>700ml vegetable stock</i>
<i>2 tbsp margarine</i>	<i>2cm chopped fresh ginger</i>

Put all the ingredients in a large pot and let simmer for 15-20 minutes. Remove from the heat and puree the ingredients into a soup with the hand blender. Serve garnished with sprigs of parsley and croutons.

Plum and Pear Crumble Cake

Crumble:

<i>200g plain flour</i>	<i>1½ tsp cinnamon</i>
<i>110g cold butter</i>	<i>110g caster sugar</i>

Plum Layer:

<i>400g plums, chopped</i>	<i>450g pears, ripe or stewed a little to soften, and chopped</i>
<i>4 tbsp caster sugar</i>	

Cake:

<i>350g butter, softened</i>	<i>350g light brown sugar</i>
<i>4 large free-range eggs, lightly beaten</i>	<i>1 tbsp vanilla extract</i>
<i>350g self-raising flour, sifted</i>	<i>1 tsp ground cinnamon</i>
<i>grated zest of half a lemon</i>	<i>2 tsp baking powder</i>

Line a tin 10" x 10" square or with same area. Preheat oven to 170C / Gas 3. Stir in the flour and cinnamon together in a bowl and grate in the butter using the coarse side of the grater. Rub into the flour until it has the texture of coarse breadcrumbs. Stir in the sugar. In another bowl mix the plums, pears and sugar. In a food processor, whizz the butter, sugar, cinnamon, lemon zest and vanilla together until pale and creamy, then beat in the eggs a tablespoon at a time. Sift in the flour and baking powder and pulse until combined. Spread the cake mixture in the cake tin and scatter the pears and plums over the top. Bake for another 45 minutes, then sprinkle on the crumble topping and bake for another 45 minutes, until golden. Leave to cool in the tin. Cut into 24 or 25 small squares or 12 large oblongs.

Spinach Muffins

125g spinach

40g finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes

75ml milk

150g plain flour

75ml dry white wine

130g mature cheese, grated

1 tsp baking powder

2 tbsp olive oil

2 free range eggs

Preheat the oven to 220C / 200 Fan / Gas 7. Saute the spinach for 2 minutes in a frying pan over a medium heat and set aside. In a bowl mix the flour, baking powder and seasoning. Stir in the eggs, milk, wine and oil and add the spinach, sun-dried tomatoes and cheese. Spread the mixture into the greased and floured wells of a 12-well muffin tin. Bake for about 15 minutes and serve lukewarm.

Kind wishes,

Isobel