



Monday 26th October 2015

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Alas, there is no Halloween pumpkin in your bag this week. You have a butternut squash though. Maybe we could start a new trend. Pumpkin faces look too cute, a butternut would look more like 'The Scream'. Halloween figures are appearing in the local villages. Even in broad daylight they are scary. I took Myfa for a walk round Gilling West yesterday, a hooded figure outside the churchyard stopped her in her tracks, it had the head of a snarling bear – she barked, her hair standing on end. The nearby village of Hudswell is odd anyway, a long street which leads onto the moor where avocado toilets are used as flower pots. Its residents are in competition to produce the most disturbing exhibit - there are headless riders on horseback yielding axes, gruesome figures covered in blood. It's just horrible. We have the first parsnips in the bags this week. Good news if you need more folic acid, B6, thiamine, pantothenic acid, vitamins K, E and C, and minerals, iron, calcium, copper, potassium, manganese and phosphorus. As with all vegetables, nutrients and water are drawn up through the roots. Still, arguments continue as to whether organic food is better for us than non-organic. Yes it seems so obvious that a soil rich in nutrients will produce vegetables which are richer in nutrients than a depleted chemical dependent soil.

Indeed new research at Newcastle University analysing 343 studies has shown that organic crops are up to 60% higher in key antioxidants. The team found that switching from eating non-organic to eating organic fruit and vegetables and cereals, and the food made from them – would provide additional antioxidants equivalent to eating between 1-2 extra portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The study also showed significantly lower levels of toxic heavy metals. Cadmium, which is one of the only three metal contaminants along with lead and mercury which the EU has set maximum permitted levels of, was found to be almost 50% lower in the organic crops, than non-organic crops.

Here are some delicious recipes you could try this week with your antioxidants:

Parsnip and Potato Rosti

250g potatoes

1 tsp chopped thyme

salt and black pepper

250g parsnips

1 small onion, peeled and finely sliced

Peel the potatoes and cut into even-sized chunks. Put in a pan and cover with water, add some salt and bring to the boil. Peel the parsnips and cut into large chunks. When the potatoes are boiling, add the parsnips and simmer for 5 minutes, they should be underdone, then drain and leave to cool. Fry the onion for about 10 minutes in a little oil until soft and golden and set aside to cool. Coarsely grate the drained potato and parsnips into a bowl, add the thyme and onion and season generously and toss thoroughly. Pour enough oil into a non-stick pan to cover the base by about 1mm and put over a medium heat. Form handfuls of the mixture into shallow cakes no more than 1cm thick and fry without moving them for five minutes, so they form a golden-brown crust underneath. Carefully flip over and cook until golden brown and crisp on both sides, turning once or twice more – about 12 minutes in all. When cooked, slip onto kitchen paper then onto warmed plates. Sprinkle with a little flaky salt then serve hot. You could serve with a fried egg on top !

Roast Butternut Squash with Red Onion and Tahini

1 butternut squash, cut into 2cm x 6cm wedges

50ml olive oil

3½ tbsp tahini paste

3 tbsp water

30g pine nuts

1 tbsp roughly chopped parsley

2 red onions, cut in 3cm wedges

sea salt and black pepper

1½ tbsp lemon juice

1 garlic clove, crushed

1 tbsp fried mixed herbs

Heat the oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7. Put the squash and onions in a large bowl, add 3 tablespoons of oil, a teaspoon of salt and some black pepper, and toss well. Spread skin down, on a baking sheet and roast for 40 minutes until the vegetables have taken on some colour and are cooked through. Keep an eye on the onions as they may cook faster than the squash so may need to be removed earlier. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Put the tahini in a small bowl with the lemon juice, water, garlic and ¼ teaspoon salt. Whisk to the consistency of honey, adding more water or tahini as necessary. Pour the remaining oil into a frying pan on a medium-low heat. Add the pine nuts and ½ teaspoon of salt and cook for 2 minutes, stirring until the nuts are golden brown. Then tip the nuts and oil into a small bowl. To serve, spread the vegetables on a platter and drizzle over the sauce followed by the mixed herbs, salt and chopped fresh parsley.

Butternut Squash Curry

4 tbsp sunflower oil

salt and black pepper

2 tsp finely grated ginger

2 tsp ground coriander

2 tsp garam masala

100g red lentils, rinsed

400g tin plum tomatoes

3 onions, peeled, halved and thinly sliced

4 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced

1 small green chilli, halved, deseeded, thinly sliced

2 tsp ground cumin

1 butternut squash, peeled, deseeded, cut into 2cm chunks

700ml vegetable stock

handful fresh coriander, chopped

Heat the oil in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onions and saute with a pinch of salt until softened and turning gold, stirring frequently, about 15 minutes. Add the garlic, ginger and chilli, and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes. Add the ground coriander, cumin and garam masala, stir for a minute, then toss in the cubes of squash and lentils, and stir until well-coated. Pour in the stock and tomatoes, crushing the tomatoes against the sides of the pan to break them up a bit. Simmer part-covered, until the squash and lentils are very tender, about 30 minutes, stirring from time to time. Stir in about two-thirds of the coriander, taste and check the seasoning and add salt and pepper if desired. Serve with the rest of the coriander scattered over, rice and natural yoghurt.

Kind wishes,

Isobel