



Monday 23rd November 2015

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. We had a sprinkling of snow at the weekend, enough to freeze the last of the leaves off but the wet and winds have resumed I can't believe it is only a few weeks until the days start lengthening again, it's gone so quickly.

Here are some hearty, healthy recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Potato Hash with Red Pepper and Onions

2 <i>tbsp olive oil</i>	1 <i>tbsp butter or margarine</i>
6 <i>medium potatoes, peeled and cut in 1/2 " cubes</i>	1 <i>onion, diced</i>
1 <i>medium red pepper, diced</i>	2 <i>tsp fresh parsley, chopped</i>
3 <i>garlic cloves, minced</i>	<i>Parmesan cheese, grated (optional)</i>

Preheat the oil and butter in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the potatoes, toss to coat and place a lid on the pan. Allow to cook, covered, for 10 minutes, Remove the lid and increase the heat to medium high. Add the onion and red pepper. Cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes and vegetables turn golden brown. Add the parsley and garlic and cook for 2 minutes then season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with Parmesan if using and serve.

Spicy Butternut Squash and Lentil Soup

2 <i>tbsp olive oil</i>	1 <i>large onion, finely chopped</i>
2 <i>garlic cloves, finely chopped</i>	2 <i>carrots, finely grated</i>
1 <i>stick celery, finely chopped</i>	300g <i>butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and chopped</i>
2 <i>tsp smoked paprika</i>	2 <i>tsp ground cumin</i>
½ <i>tsp cayenne pepper</i>	300g <i>red lentils</i>
1.5 <i>litres vegetable stock</i>	

To serve:

<i>natural yoghurt (optional)</i>	<i>sesame and sunflower seeds</i>
<i>red chilli</i>	<i>fresh coriander, chopped</i>

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the onion and cook for 7 minutes until soft. Stir in the garlic, carrots and celery and continue to cook for a further 5 minutes. Add the squash and the spices, toss together well and cook for 1 minute. Stir in the lentils and mix to coat in the oil and spices. Pour over the stock, bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and the lentils soft. Allow to cool slightly then whizz with a blender until smooth and creamy. Ladle into bowls and serve with a spoonful of yoghurt if using, a sprinkling of seeds some chopped chilli and fresh coriander.

Stuffed Butternut Squash

1 <i>butternut squash</i>	2 <i>tbsp rapeseed oil</i>
2 <i>onions</i>	5 <i>sprigs thyme</i>
35g <i>dried cranberries</i>	3 <i>tbsp parsley, roughly chopped</i>
185g <i>cooked brown rice</i>	1 <i>tsp apple cider vinegar</i>
200g <i>feta crumbled (replace with chopped walnuts for dairy-free)</i>	

Preheat the oven to 180C. Peel the butternut squash, cut in half lengthways and deseed. Cut in half lengthways again so you have quarters. Cut out a bit of the flesh to have room for stuffing. Cut this extra flesh into cubes and set aside. Place the quarters in a snug baking dish, drizzle with half the oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in the oven until tender. While the squash is roasting, heat the remaining oil in a frying pan. Peel and thinly slice the onions and add to the pan with a pinch of salt and the thyme leaves. Sweat for ten minutes over a low-medium heat. Add the dried cranberries, the cubed butternut flesh and the rice and cook for a further 5 minutes with the apple cider vinegar. Add half the feta cheese, stir through and season with salt and pepper. When the squash is tender, remove from the oven and scatter with the stuffing. Crumble the remaining feta on top and return to the oven for 15-20 minutes. Garnish with the parsley and serve with greens or salad.

Further to my letter the other week, I saw my previous doctor in the supermarket. I immediately pushed Myfa's pork pie down the side of the basket and put my wholesome loaf of bread on top of the biscuits. Then he appeared ahead of me in the queue so I could scrutinise him instead. His basket was full of reduced price tomatoes and a flat parsley plant. Mmmm lots of lycopene then ! Seeing your doctor evokes the same feeling as when you have a police car on your tail or pull alongside - you struggle to drive in a straight line, don't know where to look, know that in over-trying to look normal you're looking really dodgy - full of the fear, guilt and trepidation of having absolutely nothing to hide.

A friend of mine recently said they were worried about having an incident in the car because they have no idea who their insurers are. Snap. I have worried about this for the last few years. I have absolutely no idea who I'm with. All hail the 'compare' websites ! You see the name of your insurer for a split second having selected the cheapest deal and then it's gone. Then follows the unease of driving around not knowing who your insurers are, or when the renewal date is, and now that the tax disc has gone, whether you are taxed, or even MOT'd as the tax was the prompt for the MOT. Maybe a good diary is called for.....and a nerdy willingness to write in it.

Kind wishes,

Isobel