



**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

Dear Customer,

I hope this find you well. I think winter is coming this week, or so I hear, and here are some warming recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

### **Roasted January King Cabbage**

January King cabbage  
oil  
salt

*Cut the cabbage into 8 equal wedges. Pop them in a bag with a few tablespoons of oil and some salt and give them a swoosh to get them evenly coated with salt and oil but avoid breaking them up. Lay the quarters, core-side up, in a roasting tin. Leave the core on while roasting them to keep the leaves together during the cooking. Roast them in the oven at 180C/350F/Gas 4 for 30-40 minutes until tender and starting to golden on top. Cut out the core and serve.*

### **Linguine with Red Pepper and Broccoli**

500g linguine  
3 tbsp olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
grated Parmesan-type cheese (optional)

head broccoli, chopped  
1 tbs butter or margarine  
1 red pepper, thinly sliced

*Cook the pasta to al dente according to packet instructions and drain. Steam or boil the broccoli until just tender. In a large frying pan, heat the olive oil and butter or margarine over a low heat. Add the garlic and the red pepper slices and saute gently. Drain the broccoli and add to the frying pan and saute the broccoli and peppers until soft. Toss the vegetable mixture with the hot pasta and sprinkle with the cheese if using.*

### **January King Cabbage and Bean Soup**

1 tbsp olive oil  
200g January King cabbage, shredded  
150ml dry white wine (1 glass)  
400g tin peeled plum tomatoes  
400g tin cannellini or butter beans, drained  
50g mature Cheddar, grated

1 small onion, chopped  
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced  
2 tbsp fresh thyme leaves  
600ml vegetable stock  
4 thick slices baguette

*Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the onion and cook over a medium heat for 3-5 minutes until softened. Add the cabbage and garlic and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the wine and thyme and simmer for 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 minutes then stir in the beans. Season and simmer for 2 minutes and set aside. Arrange the baguette slices on a baking tray and toast under a hot grill on one side. Turn the toast over and top the untoasted side with cheese. Return to the grill for 2-3 minutes until the cheese is golden and bubbling. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve with the cheesy toasts.*

On Saturday morning I had a visitor who flew up from London to see me about Izzy Lane. When she left, my first quiet time after a frantic week, I prepared a lovely buffet of crudites for the guinea pigs with carrot batons, beans, pieces of apple, carrot and cucumber and set it out for them on their terrace. Kiki and Tub hurried out and started feasting. That was strange, where was Pippy. I was worried as she is always ravenous. I opened up the snug part of their hutch expecting to find her inside, perhaps poorly. It was empty. She was nowhere. Though they have all the freedom they want, they never exercise it, never step off the newspaper in front of their hutch. I wondered if anyone had been in the house with a dog while I'd been out. As I thought that, a sick feeling rose from my stomach. Had I thrown her in the bin when I cleaned the cage out several days earlier. I started remembering that evening, I cleaned them out just before I went to bed as an afterthought. They get so excited when I clean them out and put in the fresh clean bedding. I remember the bedding feeling heavy as I pulled it out, but it always does, layers of newspapers with magazines stuffed inside and hay on top. I remembered a rustle in the bin bag which I thought was just rubbish falling down.

There was no other explanation, I had chucked her out with the rubbish. She had spent 24 hours outside the back door, then the night before the bin men came, I remember being so pleased with myself that the neighbours who don't live there but were there for Christmas, their bin was empty. I rolled it round and up my drive and put my three surplus bags in it and rolled it back.

Sadly there is no other possible explanation. As you can imagine, I am struggling to come to terms with what I've done and what she went through. The other two guineas are very subdued, her sibling is grieving and I've had a terrible migraine all weekend. A friend said I was probably on 'automatic' when I did it. I'm sure I was, my mind completely elsewhere. I thought back to the big tabby cat which I hit and killed on the way back from Waitrose one evening when I was living in London. I was driving slowly, I didn't see it, just heard it. I crawl round these roads terrified of hitting rabbits or pheasants. I've been thinking of rescuing another guinea pig in her memory, and I think it will help the other two. I probably need a trip to Specsavers first though.

Kind wishes,

Isobel

RIP Pippy and Bowie