



Monday 17th July 2017

Dear Customer,

Weather moderate to good. Yesterday, Saturday, it rained all day but today was a perfect, sunny 23C even if it was a bit breezy at times. We had a picnic by the river and listened to the hum of cricket on the radio. 'Oh to be in England now that summer's here'.

'Oh to be in England now that it's Marrow Week !' Yours is unfortunately more modest in size than the largest ever recorded of 68 kilos, but there's still plenty to go at. You could peel your marrow, cut it into slices and stew it in butter or margarine with lots of salt and pepper and dress with lemon juice and mint or coriander. You could add it to any other vegetables you might be roasting like beetroot or carrots – cut the marrow in half then slice and cut into small chunks, drizzle with oil and roast for an hour or so at 180C/ 160C Fan/ Gas 4.

If you are a marrow beginner, here are some tasty recipes which may also help:

Stuffed Marrow

1 marrow	1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 x 400g tin red kidney beans	1 onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic minced	1 tbsp dried mixed herbs
pinch chilli powder	100-200g g grated cheese (optional)
1 tbsp tomato puree	1 tbsp olive oil
salt and black pepper	

Preheat the oven to 200C/ 180C Fan/ Gas 6. Leave the skin on and chop your marrow into 1.5" slices. Scoop out the centre and arrange in a flat baking dish. To prepare the filling heat the olive oil in a pan and fry the onion with the garlic and chilli until just softened. You could also add some finely chopped pepper or mushrooms at this point if you like. Add the tomato puree, stir to coat and cook for 2 minutes more. Once you have a nice paste add the chopped tomatoes, herbs and kidney beans. Simmer until saucy and season well with salt and pepper. Fill the centre of each marrow ring with plenty of the bean mixture so it is like a mound. Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Then remove the foil and sprinkle them with the grated cheese if using and bake for a further 15 minutes with or without cheese until golden and bubbling and the marrow is tender.

Marrow with Basil and Peas

1 small marrow	250g frozen peas
100ml olive oil	handful basil leaves
50g butter or margarine	juice of a lemon

Peel the skin from the marrow with a vegetable peeler. Halve it then pull out the fluffy core and the seeds. Cut the flesh into finger-thick slices. Warm the olive oil in a casserole to which you have a lid, then add the marrow. After 5 minutes of cooking over a moderate heat, pour in 100ml of water, the peas and a little salt and cover with a lid. Let the vegetables bubble gently over a low-ish heat until the peas are bright green and softening and the marrow is very tender. Add the basil, butter or margarine, some black pepper and a good squeeze of lemon juice.

Marrow and Pecan Cake with Maple Icing

250ml sunflower oil	300g self-raising flour
3 tsp mixed spice	½ tsp baking powder
250g light soft brown sugar	4 Hen Nation eggs
finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange	300g marrow flesh, coarsely grated and squeezed of any liquid
200g pecans, roughly chopped	

For the Icing:

50g butter, softened	250g cream cheese
4 tbsp maple syrup	

Heat the oven to 160C/ 140C fan/ Gas 3. Grease and line a 22cm round springform cake tin with baking parchment. Mix the flour, spice and baking powder in a bowl and crumble in the sugar. In a separate bowl beat the eggs with the orange zest and juice then pour in the oil. Add the marrow and 150g of the pecans to the oil mixture then beat in the flour until combined. Tip into the cake tin, smooth the top and bake for 1hr 20 mins, or until a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool for 30 minutes in the tin before removing to a wire rack to cool completely. While the cake is cooling, mix the icing ingredients together. When the cake is cool spread the icing on top with a spatula and decorate with the remaining pecans.

My friend Richard has come up from London to stay for the weekend but has so far spent most of the time marking his students' essays. He's a bit tetchy and stressed and just strode across the room with the words ... " they're usually quite good in class but whenever you give them any written work they're xxxxxxxx useless".... It happens that the text they are writing about is from his own book so they don't have a hope in hell really. I just sneaked a look at his comment on one of their papers, all in caps:

".....IT'S MEANT TO BE A RESEARCH PAPER. THERE ARE NO FOOTNOTES, NO BIBLIOGRAPHY, NO EVIDENCE OF INDEPENDENT WORK – NOT EVEN ANY CITATION FROM YOUR TEXT BOOK OF STATS/IDEAS ETC. CONSEQUENTLY WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN AN EXCELLENT PAPER DOESN'T REACH BEYOND A DIGEST OF CLASS NOTES....".

'Ooh', that brings back horrible memories. I couldn't stand written work, home-work, tests, exams. The last test I had to do was 15 years ago when we applied for an alcohol licence to deliver organic wine to the door. One had to attend a day-long class, swat up, then return for the test, and no licence was granted unless you passed. " How old does someone have to be before you can sell them alcohol ? " - " 18 years old". I got full marks which was a great shock.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel