



## **Monday 20 November 2017**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's a foggy old Monday morning. I'm not complaining as the weather has been beautiful till now – sunny and with a refreshing nip in the air.

Here are a few nippy and refreshing recipes you could try this week:

### **Leek, Parsnip and Ginger Soup**

2 tbsp olive oil	250g leeks, sliced
20g root ginger, peeled and finely chopped	500g parsnips
250ml dry white wine	1 litre vegetable stock
salt and freshly ground black pepper	

Heat the oil in a large pan and add the leeks and ginger. Cook gently for 2-3 minutes until the leeks start to soften. Add the parsnips and cook for a further 7-8 minutes until they begin to soften. Pour in the wine and stock and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes or until the parsnips are tender. Puree in a blender or food processor until smooth. Season to taste. Reheat and garnish with a dusting of paprika.

### **Parsnip and Potato Rosti**

200g potatoes, peeled and grated	200g parsnips, peeled and grated
½ onion, grated	2 sprigs thyme, leaves stripped
25g butter or margarine, melted, plus extra for frying	

Put the grated potato in a clean tea towel and squeeze to remove the excess water. Tip into a bowl with the parsnip, onion, thyme and melted butter or margarine. Season really well and mix. Heat a non-stick frying pan to hot then tip in the mixture and press down with a spatula. Cook for 6-8 minutes until golden brown and crisp underneath. Flip the rosti out onto a plate then put back in raw-side down and continue cooking for another 6-8 minutes until completely cooked through.

### **Vegetable and Lentil Cottage Pie**

3 tbsp olive oil	2 onions, coarsely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	2 carrots, chopped in 1cm cubes
200g parsnip, chopped in 1cm cubes	125g dried lentils
400g tin chopped tomatoes	1 tbsp sun-dried tomato paste
350ml vegetable stock	salt and freshly ground black pepper
85g kale, leaves stripped from stems, finely chopped	900g potatoes, cut in large 5cm chunks
30g butter or margarine	5 tbsp milk, dairy or alternative
140g Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated, or dairy alternative	

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large, non-stick saute pan. Add the onion and garlic and fry for 8-10 minutes over a medium-high heat or until starting to turn golden, stirring occasionally. Pour the remaining table spoon of oil into the pan, tip in the carrots and parsnips and fry for 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium. Stir in the lentils, tomatoes, sun-dried tomato paste and stock. Season and simmer, covered, for 35-40 minutes over a low heat until the carrots and parsnips are tender and the lentils have softened. Remove from the heat and stir in the kale. Check the sauce consistency and add a little eater of over-dry. Pour the mixture into the baking dish. Leave to cool and preheat the oven to 200C/ Fan 180C/ 400F/ Gas 6. Boil the potatoes in a pan. When tender, mash with the milk and butter or margarine until very smooth and season. Stir in the cheese and spread it over the filling. Bake for 30-40 minutes until gold and bubbling.

On Saturday I felt like a normal human being. I went to Currys PC World to have a look at TV's. I felt very sorry for the sales assistants. Like everyone else I just wanted to see them in the flesh with no intention of buying one there – just to know which models to hunt the best online price for. People were snapping them on their phones, writing down model numbers. One could hear the whispers in the aisles 'Black Friday, Black Friday...'. Black Friday, brought over by rats from the US to disrupt normal retail life and Christmas trade. Everything is changing so we might as well make the most of it. Pre-Airbnb in my cleaning mania I managed to destroy the TV remote control with a moist cotton wool bud. After some weeks in the airing cupboard and a change of batteries it still didn't work. I can use the TV, switch it on and off, but the volume is stuck on barely audible. If I'm alone and everything is silent - Myfa isn't snoring, the kettle isn't on - then I can just about hear it. My TV is as old as my sofas, over 20 years old, a Bang and Olufsen from the days when they were more affordable and a good investment, and brilliantly rotated towards you wherever you sat. I called B & O to get a price for a new remote - £370. I think it's time is up.

There's a rat in my garden. He's living in a tunnel under the paving stones but each morning I see him scratching at the gravel against the house trying to get into the foundations. It's quite a dilemma, he's a lovely rat and I can't help but throw him bits of banana and baked beans which he collects and takes back to his tunnel. I have a humane rat trap which I bought some years ago when one ( Robbie ) did get into the house but didn't get to use it as my neighbours poisoned him. If I caught it I don't know where I could take it where it would be safe – not be poisoned or shot. They must be the most despised and persecuted creatures on earth – hence why their numbers have reduced so drastically.

They will probably end up on the endangered species list in due course. When I had mice proliferating in the attic, I used to catch them, call Ernest, and he would collect them and take them to his barn along with a little bag of guinea pig food and some apple – enough food to keep them going while they got their bearings. He would not do the same with a rat, terrified of them since babyhood when one jumped on him in his pram when he was parked in the garden.

Kind wishes,

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