



Monday 22nd January 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and managing to evade all the nasty bugs going round. We've been pretty much snowed in since just after the last newsletter. The first day of snow is very pretty, after that it's like being in prison. Tomorrow it's supposed to turn milder and I can't wait to see it thaw and to get my car out.

We have Florence fennel in the bags this week – full of fibre, potassium, calcium, folate, vitamin C, vitamin B6 and phytonutrients.

Here are a few recipes you could try:

Braised Fennel and Celeriac

2-3 *tbsp olive oil*
1 *medium celeriac, peeled and cut into chips*
50g *butter or margarine*
100ml *white wine*
2 *tbsp chopped parsley*

2 *fennel bulbs cut into 8 lengthways*
salt and black pepper
2-3 *tbsp pernod (pastis), optional if you have it*
juice of a small lemon

Set the oven to 150C/ 300F/ Gas 2. Heat the oil in a lidded, ovenproof cooking pot over a low-medium flame. Add the fennel and celeriac, season and turn them in the oil until lightly gilded – about 15 minutes or so. Add the butter or margarine and allow to froth, then turn down the heat. Season and add the pastis is using, and the wine. Spoon these juices over the veg, add the lemon juice and bubble. Cover then put in the oven for 1 hour until soft and meltingly tender. Stir in the parsley and serve direct from the pot.

Celeriac and Potato Rostis

450g *celeriac, peeled weight*
half a small onion, sliced
1½ *tbs wholegrain mustard*
salt and freshly ground pepper

450g *potatoes, peeled weight*
a little grated nutmeg
squeeze lemon juice

Peel and grate the potato and celeriac and add the sliced onion, Mix together then place in a clean tea towel and squeeze out any excess liquid. Add the nutmeg, mustard and lemon and season the vegetables to taste. Return to the tea towel and squeeze again. Form the celeriac and potato into small, round flat rosti about 1cm thick and 4cm wide. Squash them together well. Heat a little sunflower oil gently on a low heat. When it is hot add the rostis carefully and leave for about 5 minutes. When they are golden on one side carefully turn them over and cook for a further 5 minutes on the other side pushing down with a spatula. When the rostis are cooked they can be kept warm or reheated before serving.

Baked Celeriac with Lemon and Thyme

750g *celeriac*
40g *butter or margarine*
3 *sprigs rosemary*

juice of ½ lemon
6 sprigs thyme
baking parchment

Set the oven to 180C/ Gas 6. Cut the baking parchment about twice the diameter of the baking tin then press it into the tin leaving plenty of overhang. Peel the celeriac, slice it in half then cut each half into 4 to 6 wedges. Chop the wedges into thick slices and drop them into a bowl. Squeeze the lemon into the bowl. Melt the butter or margarine in a small pan then add it to the celeriac then remove the leaves from the thyme and add to the bowl. Pull the needles from the rosemary sprigs and finely chop them then add to the lemon and butter or margarine. Season with salt and black pepper. Tip the celeriac and its seasonings into the paper-lined baking dish then fold the paper over and seal. Bake for 35 minutes then open up the paper, turn the pieces of celeriac over then return to the oven and leave to cook for a further 15 minutes or so until pale gold.

Myfa had the results of her blood samples, they ruled out cancer, she has no anaemia, the white blood cell count suggest she's fighting something but not what. The vet prescribed another course of antibiotics and some steroids. So it's trial and error to see if they work. If I haven't spent hundreds of hours on the internet trying to establish what they can't. I had to speak to the head vet. He didn't like the grilling, or that I'd obviously been on the internet. It drives them mad. I had already filtered out diseases prevalent in Bolivian strays. He said that with testing you have to know what you're testing for. I told him that surely with the symptoms she was displaying they would have an idea of what to test for, what to rule out. She has all the symptoms of Lyme Disease, I asked them to test for that while they still had her fresh blood in the lab. Head vet said it is likely I will never know what has been wrong as is very often the case, to their frustration. So as things stand today, we are still in a twilight zone, I am sleeping downstairs on a mattress, with her all the time. The steroids have given her enough oomph to get out to the toilet on her own, eat, and change places several times a day. For days her legs had been like jelly, she couldn't walk. But she is still very miserable and with barely any energy and sleeping all the time. Tomorrow, Monday, for the sake of self-preservation, I have to stop watching her every breath and twitch and get some normality back, some routine, have a bath, write a 'to do' list, start eating again properly.

So sorry to still be so miserable but there is nothing else I can write about. I did manage to concentrate this morning on Macron being interviewed by Andrew Marr and am still envious of the French for having him. I'm sure that the future shape of Europe is most definitely in his hands.

Kind wishes and hope you have a good week,

Isobel

PS Monday morning, Myfa is a bit brighter, therefore so am I, and the thaw has finally started. There's a lot of thudding as snow slides off the roof and a lot of dripping noises, and even the sun has made an appearance.