



Monday 26th November 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Weather here moderate to bad, but not too bad, as we see out November. With a nip in the air what can be more warming than Pipi et Patata. Here are a few recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Pipi e Patati

600g potatoes
100ml olive oil
2 red peppers
pinch salt

Peel the potatoes and cut them into jumbo chips. Wash the peppers, remove the stalks and cut into slices of the same thickness. Heat the oil in a large pan, add both the potatoes and peppers and cook, uncovered, for about 20 minutes turning often with a spoon until tender and golden. Add salt to taste.

Broccoli Pasta

3-500g broccoli, cut into florets
5-6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
500g dried pasta
handful of fresh basil leaves
100ml extra virgin olive oil, plus 4 tbs to serve
1 tsp chilli flakes
50g pine nuts, toasted
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, add the broccoli and simmer for 3-5 minutes or until tender. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a separate pan and gently cook the garlic and chilli for 2-3 minutes or until the garlic is golden brown. When the broccoli florets are tender, scoop them out of the water with a slotted spoon and add to the pan with the garlic and chilli along with 120ml of the broccoli cooking water, reserving the remaining water. Using the back of a fork, crush the broccoli with the garlic to form a coarse purée. Return the pan containing the broccoli cooking water to the heat and bring to the boil. Add the pasta and cook according to the packet instructions until al dente. Drain thoroughly and tip into a large serving bowl. Top with the broccoli purée and drizzle over the additional olive oil. Scatter with the toasted pine nuts and basil leaves. Toss until evenly distributed. Season with freshly ground black pepper.

Leek, Pea and Pepper Frittata

2tbsp olive oil
2 leeks, sliced
100 frozen peas, thawed
50g hard cheese, grated
450g potatoes, chopped into 1½cm cubes
1 roasted pepper, sliced
4 Hen Nation eggs, beaten
crusty bread, to serve

Heat the oil in a 20cm (8in) non-stick frying pan. Add the potatoes and season. Cook for 10 minutes over a medium heat until softened and golden. Preheat the grill to its highest setting. Add the leeks to the frying pan with 1 tbsp water then cover and continue cooking for a further 10 minutes. Stir the roasted pepper and peas into the beaten egg, then season well. Pour the egg mixture into the pan around the potatoes, and cook over a medium heat for 5 minutes, gently moving the egg around the pan to ensure it cooks evenly. Scatter the cheese over the frittata then place the pan under the hot grill and cook until lightly golden. Serve the frittata in thick slices with some crusty bread.

After all this hoo-ha, it seems we probably aren't leaving the EU after all. It changes by the minute. But that is how it seems this morning, 9.59am Sunday, just before we waste 27 EU leaders' time flying them to Brussels, up the garden path, for nothing. We will have been the biggest time-wasters in history.

I think there might be a thing called 'too much democracy'. Where's Idi Amin when we need him, a dictator. But a nice wholesome one with a green agenda – David Attenborough for example.

I don't want to fast-forward you through time but it's coming quickly, I am worried about the future of Europe whether we are in it or not. Fast-forward to 2021, Merkel isn't standing for re-election, she will be gone. France has elections in 2022, Macron, Europe's significant other, will be gone - he is less popular than even Francois Hollande at this point in his presidency. But Merkel, she is Europe, she's kept the lid on it. Saint Angela with her powerful, understated charisma – her diplomacy and pragmatism, which have kept Russia at bay, Europe rolling along in peace. Politicians come and go, occasionally someone extraordinary appears. Without Merkel I can see the EU descending into an exasperating, aggressive, power-struggling mess of polarised factions where nothing can get done.....déjà vu.

A friend who lives up the Dales, a classically trained musician, has been trying to persuade me to foster his grand piano which takes up the whole of his small living room. He wants to replace it with 2 sofas. He wants me to burn my piano so his can go in its place and he will know where it is. He says mine is utter rubbish and unplayable. This upsets me a lot. This was my dad's piano that he bought just after the war from above a jellied eel shop on the Fulham Broadway. It's always been part of my life, I remember my dad playing Beethoven and Mozart on it until rheumatoid arthritis took hold. I admit, it is a bit shabby now, and out of tune, and Bohemian, but we are a good pairing because I can't play anyway. Every few years when I'm having a bad time and look to find solace at the keyboards I call the piano tuner out and have to have the same argument with her. She says it's un-tuneable and that she won't even attempt the lower and higher keys. She shows me pictures online of how I can make it into a shelving unit or a coffee table. But it is my piano and I love it. When this friend mockingly played Moonlight Sonata on it I thought it sounded fantastic, it was all dingey, hissy and twangy like a 78rpm gramophone record. One gets sick of all the digital clarity.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel