



Monday 20th May 2019

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Plenty to look forward to this week with the European elections on Thursday, same day the fun fair arrives in Richmond marketplace in front of the polling station. In one hit we'll be able to cast a vote, hook a duck and have a spin on the Waltzers. We won't know the results until Sunday which is a long wait but they will be fascinating when they come, a picture of today's Europe.

We have aubergines in the bags this week. You could try roasting it. Preheat the oven to 240C/ 460F/ Gas 9. Cut the aubergine in half and place on a baking tray cut-side up. Slit the flesh lengthways and tuck some garlic into the slits. Drizzle with olive oil and season. Bake for about half an hour, basting again halfway through.

Here are some other tasty recipes you could try this week:

Grilled Aubergine

<i>aubergine</i>	<i>4 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>½ tsp coriander seeds, cracked</i>	<i>2 tsp lemon juice</i>
<i>1 tbsp chopped fresh basil</i>	
<i>salt</i>	

Preheat the grill. Cut the aubergine into 5mm slices lengthways. Brush both sides of each slice generously with olive oil. Arrange in a single layer in the bottom of a grill pan. Scatter half the cracked coriander seeds over the slices. Cook under the grill until browned, for 5-6 minutes. Flip and season with the remaining coriander seeds and cook under the grill until browned, for 3-4 minutes. Whisk the lemon juice, basil and salt together in a bowl and drizzle over the grilled aubergine slices. Serve warm.

Roast Carrot and Bean Dip

<i>1 large carrot, diced</i>	<i>400g tin cannellini beans, drained</i>
<i>1 tbsp tahini</i>	<i>2 cloves garlic</i>
<i>juice of ½ lemon</i>	<i>3 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>sea salt</i>	

Place the diced carrots on a roasting tray, drizzle with a little olive oil and roast at 200C / 180F/ Gas 6, for 10-15 minutes until turning golden and softening. Add the roasted carrots, cannellini beans, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and a good pinch salt to a food processor and blend to a thick dip. Serve with crudites or in a baked potato.

Courgette and Lemon Linguine

<i>400g linguine</i>	<i>3 courgettes, coarsely grated</i>
<i>3 tbsp olive oil, plus some drizzle</i>	<i>1 garlic clove, finely chopped</i>
<i>zest of a lemon</i>	<i>pinch crushed chillies</i>
<i>handful basil leaves, torn</i>	

Cook the linguine to packet instructions then drain, leaving a little water clinging to the strands. Tip it back into the cooking pan with the grated courgettes, olive oil, garlic, lemon zest, chillies and most of the basil. Season generously then toss everything together. Scatter with the remaining basil leaves and an extra drizzle of olive oil.

Aubergine, Chard and Chickpea Curry

<i>1½ tbsp vegetable oil</i>	<i>1 onion, chopped</i>
<i>3 cloves garlic, chopped</i>	<i>½ red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped</i>
<i>5cm piece root ginger, chopped</i>	<i>1 aubergine, finely chopped</i>
<i>2 tbsp tamari</i>	<i>400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed</i>
<i>2 tbsp curry powder</i>	<i>½ tsp ground turmeric</i>
<i>300ml coconut milk</i>	<i>400g can chopped tomatoes</i>
<i>175g chard, chopped</i>	<i>½ lemon, juice</i>
<i>1 tsp ground black pepper</i>	<i>wholemeal pittas, toasted and cut into soldiers</i>

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion, garlic, chilli and ginger for 2-3 minutes, stirring regularly. Add the aubergine and tamari and cook for 5 minutes, continuing to stir. Add 5 tbsp water and cook for a further 3-4 minutes. The aubergine should be soft, cook a little extra if not. Add the chickpeas, curry powder, turmeric, coconut milk, chopped tomatoes, chard, lemon juice and black pepper. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve with the toasted pitta soldiers.

It's Sunday evening and I have just got back from the Lakes. I went up there for a long weekend, met a friend, we did Airbnb in a Gothic house in Windermere. It's the first time I've been away with Lainey.

The Lakes were full of walkers, my friend is a walker, a serious walker. On Saturday she joined the melee and headed off in her walking boots, layered up in all the gear with her flask and GPS, off to the high ridges, she'd be gone until dusk. She is Amazonian and makes me feel like a wimp. My new, comfy navy slacks with a white stripe up the sides suggested I could be a sports person – track events perhaps. I am the quintessential potterer... an ambler. I ambled by the lake watching Lainey, her happy, glowing face looking back at me as she stood up to her tummy in the lapping waves. She dared a few swims then ran exuberantly back to me splashing through the water.

I sat on a café terrace and watched the world go by, ordered tea and toast, and a chopped-up sausage for her. I potted about in Ambleside down pretty footpaths and around the Roman fort. And joy of joy, Ambleside is full of vegetarian restaurants.

For all that it was lovely, I felt disconcerted, an underlying low mood and anxiety. It's Monday morning, I got home last night, going away had been like a jolt. A weekend is not long enough to break through the barrier of accumulated cyber rubbish, routine, stress, work and domesticity, all it does is stir one up. I need a proper long holiday to break through and rediscover myself I think !

Kind wishes,

Isobel