



**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and you managed to get through another week.

I haven't had a holiday yet this year. I really wanted to go down to the South of France....just for a change ! But it's such a long drive. There's a lot to be said for living in Kent. Living up here you can add on another day. I wish I had a solar-powered private jet. If I went to France I would have to take Lainey with me as she can't be separated from me for more than 3 minutes at most. But the idea of putting the rabies vaccine into her, and insecticides to protect her from the ticks and sand flies doesn't appeal. She's such a healthy girl, I couldn't bear to poison her, she's only 1yr 8 months. Not yet. So, with a friend, we decided to go to the West Country for a couple of weeks departing this weekend. On Thursday I spent hours looking at Airbnb and Homeaway for accommodation. I find it very hard to commit to anything, nothing was quite right, I would leave the decision until the last minute. On Thursday I started to prepare and filled the car with recycling, and parcels to go to the post office. Got in the car and it was dead, I put the key in the ignition, nothing. I called out a local garage who tried the battery, that was fine, they said they didn't have a clue, that I would have to contact the dealership. I contacted the dealership who sent out the RAC, who said it was the steering lock, and that it would have to be recovered. I unloaded the recycling and parcels and within hours it was being loaded onto the recovery vehicle. I watched it depart slowly down my road like a hearse, heading for Teeside. My holiday had departed. The dealership rang me on Friday. The part needed had to be ordered from Germany and would take 5 working days to get hold of. In the meantime they have sent me a new executive saloon with black leather interior. It's an automatic but not the sort I'm used to. The delivery man showed me how to start it, with a button, how to make it move, stop and reverse using a stick on the steering wheel. I had to ask him to repeat it four times, I was still none the wiser, and then he left. I put all my recycling into big bags with the parcels and walked into town. Couldn't even bear to look at the car. I hate it. Later that day I had to run an errand, I had to do it by car. It took me about 5 minutes to start it, I kept pressing the button and nothing happened. In the end I managed and it was driveable, but only if absolutely necessary. I don't want to go on holiday in it. I don't like new cars, I want my car. So anyway, it is now Saturday morning. I have to pick my friend up from the train station. She thinks we are now going to the West Coast of Scotland in the saloon until my car is fixed, then to the West Country for a week. However, I just checked out the midge count and it looks unbearable. Driving the 12 miles will be a good test to see if I can bond with the saloon enough to drive it to Cornwall. It is certainly where the best weather is heading.

So while I stress and deliberate, here are a few recipes you could try this week:

#### **Aubergine and Courgette Pasta**

2 cloves of garlic	½ bunch of fresh basil
aubergine	4-6 tablespoons olive oil
400g tin chopped tomatoes	500 g dried rigatoni
80g ricotta cheese (optional)	small onion
2 courgettes	

*Peel and finely chop the onion and garlic. Pick the basil leaves and finely chop the stalks. Trim and cut the aubergine and courgettes into 2cm slices. Heat 3 tablespoons of oil in a pan and sweat the onion, garlic and basil stalks for 7 minutes. Add the tomatoes, season well and bring to a steady simmer. Cook for about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, fry the aubergine and courgettes in the remaining oil until golden, then stir into the tomato sauce with most of the basil leaves. Cook the pasta, drain, then stir through the sauce. Divide between plates, crumble over some ricotta if using and scatter over the reserved basil leaves.*

#### **Aubergine, Tomato and Courgette Gratin**

400g courgettes, thinly sliced lengthways	1 aubergine, thinly sliced lengthways
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil	300g tomatoes, sliced
4 tbsp fresh breadcrumbs	2-3 cloves garlic, chopped
25g flat leafed parsley, chopped	125g mozzarella, thinly sliced
1 tsp dried oregano	

*Preheat the oven to 220°C/ 430F/ Gas 7. Put the sliced courgette and aubergine in a large bowl and add 2 tbsp of oil and seasoning. Toss together to coat and arrange on 2 oiled baking sheets large enough to take all the vegetables. Bake for 20 minutes, turning halfway through cooking, until the vegetables are tender and golden. Add the halved tomatoes for the final 5 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the crumbs in a bowl with the garlic and parsley. Layer up the roasted vegetables in a gratin dish with the mozzarella slices and oregano. Spoon the crumb mixture over the top and drizzle with the remaining oil. Return the dish to the oven for 10 minutes until the top is golden and the vegetables are tender. Serve with ciabatta.*

#### **Onion and Potato Soup**

20ml vegetable oil	750g onions, sliced
3 garlic cloves	10g fresh sage
600g potatoes	1 litre boiling water
120ml milk (optional)	sprig thyme leaves

*Peel the potatoes and cut into chunks. Place on a lined baking tray, add the sage and half the oil and mix well. Cover and place in the oven at 180C / 350F/ Gas 4 for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally until soft and lightly coloured. Meanwhile pour the oil into a pan on a medium hob and add the onion and garlic. Saute for 10 minutes until soft, reduce the heat and cover with a lid. Leave to sweat for a further 20 minutes. Remove the lid, increase the heat and allow to colour slightly. Add the potatoes to the onions and stir well. Add the water and stock cube and bring to a boil, cook for a further 15 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Blend until smooth with a stick blender. Add the thyme leaves and then milk if desired and season well to taste.*

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS Just back from the station. Wow, the car's fantastic. It's so smooth..... !