



## **Monday 24th February 2020**

Dear Customer,

I'm sick of these storm names, they really get to me. This weekend it's Ellen, Storm Ellen. In trying to find out who is inflicting them on us I read that the Met Office decided to use them as a way of warning us how dangerous the storms can be. All this year's have already been named in advance - spoiler alert - stop reading now if you don't want to know. The next one is Francis and subsequent ones will include Hugh, Jan, Vince, Maura and Iris. They sound terrifying. But how have storms suddenly become attuned to the working week, kicking in on a Friday and causing havoc until Monday. They must reckon weekends are the best time to throw a good show.

Our delicious oranges are grown in orange groves on the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily – fabulous mineral content in these soils as you can imagine. The swedes are grown by the Edwards family in the Lincolnshire fens in their mineral-rich, peaty soils.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

### **Spinach and Chickpea Curry**

2 tbsp oil	3 garlic cloves crushed
1 onion, diced	1 tsp paprika
½ tsp cayenne pepper	½ tsp ground coriander
pinch chilli flakes	2 tbsp tomato puree
1½ x 400g tins chickpeas, drained and rinsed	200ml vegetable stock
1 can coconut milk	60g ground almonds
200g spinach	fresh coriander

Heat the oil in a pan and add the garlic and onion. Cook for a minute then add all the spices and tomato puree and cook a few more minutes. Add the chickpeas, coconut milk, vegetable stock and cook on a medium heat for 5 minutes. Stir in the ground almonds and cook for a few minutes more. Shred and add the spinach and coriander. Cook until wilted through. Serve with rice.

### **Leek, Potato and Bean Boulangere**

2 tsp olive oil	2 leeks, sliced
750g potatoes, thinly sliced	400g tin mixed beans, drained and rinsed
1 vegetable stock cube	50g Cheddar, grated

Preheat the oven to 220°C / Gas 7. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the leeks for 5 minutes. Place half in an ovenproof dish, top with half the potatoes and then the beans. Top with remaining leeks and then potato. Mix the stock cube with 300ml boiling water and pour over the potatoes. Sprinkle with the cheese and bake for 40 minutes until golden and tender.

### **Garlic Mushroom and Leek Pasta**

knob of butter	500g leeks, sliced
300g pasta	200g mushrooms, sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed	150g mascarpone
2 tbsp finely snipped chives	

Heat half the butter in a large frying pan and cook the leeks for 5 minutes until softened. Cook the pasta. Tip the leeks into a large bowl. Add the remaining butter to the pan and cook the mushrooms and garlic for 5 minutes until golden. Drain the pasta and return to the pan. Stir in the softened leeks, garlic mushrooms, mascarpone and chives. Toss together and season to taste.

### **Baked Swede**

650g swede	40g margarine or butter
2 onions peeled and thinly sliced	few sage leaves
small sprig rosemary	vegetable, stock to cover

Set the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Cut the swede into slices, the thickness of a £1 coin. Grease a baking dish and lay the slices of onion and swede in it seasoning with salt and pepper and scattering with sage and rosemary. Ladle over the stock so it just covers the vegetables then dot with the rest of the margarine or butter. Bake in a preheated oven for an hour or so, turning the swede in the stock from time to time until all is tender.

My throat is still a bit puffy.

My cousin called yesterday to tell me Gwerfyl, my aunt, my father's sister, had died. She checked out aged 95, the last of the generation, of the blue-eyed Welsh Celts. They're all gone now leaving us, the hybrids. She lived most of her life in East Sheen on the edge of Richmond Park as did Ylma my other aunt, who lived round the corner. I found Gwev and Ylma's appearance striking as a child, striking for their lack of make-up, their un-dyed, un-tinted hair. Always in trousers, always pored over the broad sheets, always chain-smoking. A dress, anything floral, never in a million years. We used to visit them a lot as Gwev also cared for my grandmother.

My cousin said she didn't think they were going to have a funeral. Sounds novel. I like it. Why bother. Gwev didn't want a coffin, just a bin liner. It's exactly what my dad had said, 'just chuck me out with the rubbish'. I must admit, I hate funerals, I think I'd rather just be chucked out too.

As I write this the Coronavirus is getting ever closer with 150 cases in Italy and lockdown in many towns there. Maybe it is time to start stockpiling. When should one panic, I don't know. Let's hope by next letter we aren't there yet. Hard to imagine it all just fizzling out though.

Kind wishes,

Isobel