



**Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday morning, the birds are singing, we have had some beautiful weather. The hawthorn bushes on Westfields have burst into leaf and the pasture is a carpet of yellow celandines.

It's a tricky bag this week. We are very much between seasons when more is being sown than harvested, our traditional 'hungry gap' when the salted, pickled and dried foods, preserved in the autumn, would be brought to the table.

Anyway, the job at hand, and helping you work your way through this week's crunchy bag:

**Pak Choi Noodle Stir-Fry**

250g fine rice noodles

2 garlic cloves, crushed

1 tbsp soy sauce

235g pak choi, shredded

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tsp fresh root ginger, finely chopped

1-2 small fresh chillies, deseeded and chopped

Soak the rice noodles in boiling water, off the heat, for 10 minutes, forking over to loosen the threads. Drain and toss with 1 tbsp oil. Heat the remaining oil in a wok and fry the garlic, ginger and chilli for a minute. Add the pak choi and turn in the hot oil for 3-4 minutes till it collapses a little. Stir in the noodles and toss over the heat till steam rises. Sprinkle with soy sauce and serve.

**Roasted Celery with Chickpeas and Egg**

1 head of celery, trimmed

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

1 onion, thinly sliced

2 tbsp sherry vinegar, plus extra to serve

handful watercress

4 Hen Nation eggs

400g can chickpeas, rinsed and drained

2 tbsp capers, drained

1 tsp ground cumin

Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Cut the celery stalks on an angle into 5cm lengths, reserving any leaves. Put the lengths into a pan of boiling salted water, boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the celery to a bowl. Add the eggs to the boiling water and cook for 6 minutes. Drain and plunge the eggs into cold water. Once cool, peel and halve. Meanwhile, put the blanched celery in a roasting tin with the olive oil and season. Roast for 15 minutes, then add the chickpeas, onion, capers, vinegar and cumin; season and toss together. Return to the oven for another 10 minutes, until the celery is golden and mostly tender. Layer the watercress, reserved celery leaves and roasting tin contents on a large serving dish, with the eggs tucked in among the leaves. Drizzle over a little more olive oil and sherry vinegar; season and serve.

**Parsnip Rostis**

400g parsnips

2 tbsp cornflour

sea salt

1 Hen Nation egg

vegetable oil

crème fraiche

Peel and coarsely grate the parsnips and put into a large bowl. Add the egg, cornflour and a couple of good pinches of salt. Mix well to combine. Heat a frying pan over a medium heat and add some oil to the pan. Put some dollops of the parsnip mixture into the pan, squash them down a little. They should be no more than 2cm thick, or they won't cook through. Allow the rösti to cook for a few minutes and then check the underside by lifting it up with a palette knife. If the underneath is deep golden brown, turn the rösti over to cook the other side. Serve the rösti straight away, topped with a dollop of crème fraiche.

My car's MOT ran out just before lockdown, I was halfway through sorting out the new brake pipes but that has now been left in suspension. But actually, it's refreshing just to walk from the doorstep and not feel the daily compulsion to take Lainey somewhere different in the car. Life is simple, choice eliminated. I do have a few walking options but most involve going downhill only to have to come back up the hill, which these days feels like a mountain. I thought it would make me fitter doing this every day but it's the opposite.

Yesterday as I collected a freshly baked loaf from my neighbour's garden wall and replaced it with some fruit and vegetables, there was a wild rabbit huddled on the drive. It had myxomatosis, it couldn't open its eyes. I fetched a pillowcase to pick it up with, put it in a cardboard box then took it to the sheep paddock, leaving it in the pen on some fresh grass with some chopped up carrot and apple. I really wanted to put antibiotic ointment in its eyes but was worried I'd give it a heart attack prising its eyes open. I checked on it later, it was still there and had eaten. I will check on it again later.

I have to say, what a great tragedy and loss to us all, those brilliant surgeons, nurses and doctors and care workers, losing their lives. It is heart-breaking. I know we have NHS and care workers among us, so to you a massive thank you for all you do and for your courage and selflessness, you really are our shining light..... along with all the other workers out there enabling us to carry on living, and not least our fantastic delivery drivers.

As the days and weeks roll into one..... the first day of spring, the clocks going back, the appointments of the new shadow cabinet, all slip by unnoticed, and now Easter.....at least I believe it is.

Who knows when this lockdown will end, we are stuck. No doubt will wait and watch as other countries loosen the grip. They now say there is an 80% chance we will have a vaccine by autumn. So lets' hope. We can but surmise on what our ragged world will look like when we emerge.

There could well be a day in the near future when the government says 'right you can come out now'. We might say 'no, we're not coming out'.

I hope you have a good week and can enjoy the sunshine on your daily walk, or flooding into your home.

With very best wishes,

Isobel