



**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday, grey and wet up here, beautiful and sunny down there I gather. The north / south seasonal divide still going strong despite global warming. Summer doesn't bother with us, it's too far up the A1. The BBC forecast keeps promising a bit of half sun/half cloud, then snatches it away again and puts double black raindrops in its place. Glorious sun, the difference between a good day and a bad day, happiness and misery.

We have the first new season onions in the bags this week and the first curly kale, which is from Devon.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

**Mediterranean Vegetable Couscous**

300g tomatoes	2 courgettes
1 pepper	1 onion
4 cloves garlic	2 tbsp olive oil
300g couscous	approx.700ml vegetable stock
fresh herbs eg parsley, basil	

*Preheat the oven to 200C/ 400F/ Gas 6. Chop the tomatoes, courgettes, pepper and onion into 1" pieces and peel the garlic. Toss the vegetables and whole garlic cloves with the olive oil. Spread them out on a baking sheet in a single layer. Season with salt and pepper and roast for about 45 minutes, stirring a couple of times during cooking until the vegetables are wilted and browned on the edges. Meanwhile, cook the couscous to packet instructions using vegetable stock instead of water, then fluff with a fork. When the vegetables are cooked, chop the garlic cloves up and chop up the fresh herbs and combine both with the couscous. Adjust seasoning and serve warm or cold.*

**Apple, Crispy Kale and Carrot Salad**

2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 6cm batons	1 tsp fennel seeds
2 tbsp vegetable oil	50g mixed Seeds
bunch kale	2 apples, peeled, cored and cut into matchsticks
60g smoked Cheddar, cubed ( optional )	1 tbsp cider vinegar

*Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Place the carrots in a bowl and toss with the fennel seeds and oil. Spread out on a large roasting tray and roast for 5 minutes, then add the mixed seeds and roast for a further 2–3 minutes until toasted and golden. Add the kale to the roasting tray and toss with the carrots and seeds. Roast for a further 8 minutes until the kale is crispy. Toss in the apple, smoked Cheddar if using, and cider vinegar and mix together well. Season and serve warm.*

**Kale, Pea and Walnut Pesto with Wholewheat Pasta**

320g frozen garden peas	250g kale, any thick stems removed
large handful basil leaves	20g walnut halves, toasted and roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed	2 tbsp grated cheese, optional
3 tbsp olive oil	300g wholewheat spaghetti
1 tbsp chilli flakes, plus extra to serve	1 small lemon, juice

*Put the peas in a bowl and cover with just-boiled water. Drain and rinse in cold water. Blanch the kale in boiling water for a minute. Drain and rinse in cold water then wring dry in a clean tea towel. Transfer to a food processor with the drained peas, basil and a good pinch of salt and whizz until roughly chopped. Add the walnuts, garlic, and cheese if using, then whizz again. With the motor running, drizzle in the oil. Season. Cook the spaghetti to al dente. Reserve a large ladleful of the cooking water, then drain. Add a little of the reserved pasta water to the pesto and whizz until combined. Toss the pesto and chilli flakes through the pasta, adding lemon juice to taste and more of the reserved pasta water, if needed, to create a loose, silky texture.*

It's now early evening. It was a big day as I had to drive a few miles to the 'pay-at-the-pump' petrol station in Catterick to fill up for the first time in months. Despite the weather I took a flask and headed for the hills to get some headspace. First stop near Reeth and a footpath that led to the moors – quick U-turn when I found we were in a field of cows with their calves. They are very protective of their babies and see black Labradors as a heinous threat. I walked up to a secret, isolated hamlet, High Fremington with its sumptuous cottage gardens and overgrown snickets, where time has stood still and the air is sweet with honeysuckle. I drove across the tops from Swaledale into Wensleydale and stopped to walk and breathe in the incredible views trying not to disturb the trotting curlew and lapwing chicks. Then back to civilisation, the village of Marske, just a few miles from Richmond, and a footpath running alongside a beautiful stream crossed by old drover bridges. I sat on the grassy bank and poured a mug of tea while Lainey paddled. Then suddenly, out of the blue, the sun came out and it felt like heaven. It was so refreshing to get back out and about. I don't know why I didn't do it before. The psychological effects of lockdown perhaps, getting used living within a diminished radius, in a ground down sort of way.

I got home, put on Classic FM, cup of tea, I sat on my front terrace in the sun which looks over the valley to Round Howe, a strange forested mound. Lainey sat in the chair opposite, we stared out at the same dreamy view. Quiet contemplation, just me and my dog, the perfect Sunday.

These are such anxious times, sometimes you just need a break from everything, and especially the news and from 'trying to comprehend' the incomprehensible. Sometimes you need to just be - a Sunday of being and nothingness.

Stores open tomorrow. If you're going out to shop for Britain wear a good mask and a big pair of spectacles. I guess it can't be 'laissez faire' and it has to happen but I don't much like us being bubbles or counters on this board game, being this experiment, being moved about like in a game of Risk – but then that's exactly what it is.

I hope you have a good week,

Isobel