



Monday 24th August 2020

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's been so grey and miserable and never stops raining. And nearly the end of another summer ...another disappointing summer. Beautiful Britain has had its chance to showcase itself to all the newbie staycationers, show itself in all its glory, all now vowing 'never again'. My beautiful roses have barely even flowered, most just rotting in bud. I never quite know what roses like, but whatever it is, they don't like this. On that we are in agreement.

Here are some fabulous marrow recipes you could try this week. You could try the chutney, get some Christmas presents under your belt while you can:

Stuffed Marrow Rings

<i>marrow, top and tailed</i>	<i>100g fresh breadcrumbs</i>
<i>3tbsp milk</i>	<i>225g vegetarian Cheddar cheese, grated</i>
<i>50g pine nuts, roughly chopped</i>	<i>1tsp dried basil</i>

Preheat the oven to 190°C /375°F/ Gas 5. Slice the marrow into 3cm thick rounds. Cut away and discard the seeds from the centre to form rings. Place in a greased ovenproof dish in a single layer. Soak the breadcrumbs in the milk for 2 mins. Mix with 175g grated cheese, pine nuts and basil. Season to taste. Fill the marrow with the stuffing and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake in the oven for 35-40 mins until the marrow is tender and the cheese is browned.

Marrow and Pecan Cake

<i>250ml sunflower oil</i>	<i>300g self-raising flour</i>
<i>3 tsp mixed spice</i>	<i>½ tsp baking powder</i>
<i>250g soft brown sugar</i>	<i>4 Hen Nation eggs</i>
<i>1 orange, juice and finely grated zest</i>	<i>300g marrow flesh, coarsely grated and squeezed of any liquid</i>
<i>200g pecan nuts, roughly chopped</i>	

For the icing:

<i>50g butter, softened</i>	<i>250g cream cheese</i>
<i>4 tbsp maple syrup</i>	

Heat oven to 160C/140C fan / Gas 3. Grease and line a 22cm round springform cake tin with baking parchment. Put the flour, spice and baking powder into a bowl and crumble in the sugar. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the orange zest and juice, then pour in the oil. Add the marrow and 150g of the pecans to the oil mixture, then beat into the flour until combined. Tip into the cake tin, smooth the top and bake for 1 hr 20 mins, or until a skewer comes out clean. Leave to cool for 30 mins in the tin before removing and placing on a wire rack to cool completely. While the cake is cooling, make the icing by beating all the ingredients together. Use a spatula to spread the icing over the cake. Sprinkle over the rest of the pecans to decorate.

Marrow Chutney makes about 4 x 500g jars

<i>1½ kg marrow / courgettes</i>	<i>1½ tbsp salt</i>
<i>250g carrots, peeled and chopped</i>	<i>250g onions, peeled and chopped</i>
<i>250g eating apples, peeled, and chopped</i>	<i>250g raisins</i>
<i>3cm piece root ginger, finely chopped</i>	<i>½ tsp coriander seeds</i>
<i>½ tsp dried red chillies</i>	<i>½ tsp cumin</i>
<i>250g light muscovado sugar</i>	
<i>700ml malt vinegar</i>	

Peel the marrow with a potato peeler and discard the peel. Cut the marrow into small chunks and put in a preserving pan with the remaining ingredients. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the consistency is thick and most of the liquid has evaporated, and your wooden spoon leaves a clear path for a second or two when scraped through the pan (this will take about an hour or so). Pour the chutney into hot sterilised jars, cover with vinegar-proof lids and store for at least a month before serving

I was eaten alive in the humid weather. I must have had nearly 30 bites – small ones, big ones - ants, flies, mosquitoes, I don't know what.....fleas ? It's horrible. I went up to see the sheep last week. I had Lainey with me (black lab, 2½ yrs). The sheep head butt her so I can't take her in with them. So instead I walked alongside their long, field on the other side of the fence, in the stubble field. I carefully tucked my trousers into my socks so nothing could fly up them and bite me. I can't take any more bites. Minutes later Lainey came running up to me freaked out, she had a wasp on her ear, I think it had stung her. I whooshed it off and it landed on her leg. It may have stung her again, I hit it with her lead and it disappeared. Lainey ran off again unperturbed. Five minutes later I felt a stab in my ribs, by reflex I put my hand on it and my hand was stung. A sting in the ribs and a sting in the hand. The wasp must have flown off Lainey's leg and up underneath my T shirt. I am feeling absolutely persecuted.

Now have to make sure that everything that can be tucked in must be tucked in.

I read with concern that Coronavirus can remain viable for up to two years frozen at minus 20C. So please, DO NOT PUT ANY BITS OF CORONAVIRUS IN YOUR FREEZER

Two years later.....just when we thought it was history... one Sunday morning, out come the Yorkshire Puddings.

As we come to terms with living through the pandemic and about the worst death rate in the world, what have we to look forward to. Economic meltdown in the autumn followed by complete economic self-annihilation in December as we catapult off the Brexit cliff edge. And just in case anyone is still standing, the grand finale, driverless cars coming in the spring to tank about and smash us to pieces. The end of a civilisation. How they must roar with laughter in their private cabinet meetings.

I don't know very much about Biden, I keep meaning to read up about him. I just remember what he said back in June, that while the vast majority of Americans are decent people, that "there are probably anywhere from 10-15% of people out there, they're just not very good people". So about 41 million US duds then. 'Anywhere from 33 million to 50 million of you are just not very good people'. Not another idiot. But in his favour, he isn't Donald Trump.

Kind wishes

Isobel