



Monday 28th September 2020

Dear Customer,

I hope you're well. After a blustery few days it has been a beautiful Sunday with glorious autumn light. We have cavolo nero in the bags this week, Tuscan kale. Pleading its worthiness, it is an exceptionally good source of calcium as well as lutein, vitamins K, A and C, B vitamins, manganese, copper, iron and many other elements. You can eat it raw - remove the tough stems, shred it and massage into a salad creamy dressing to tenderise it. You can shred and boil for a few minutes as you would cabbage. You can stir-fry by heating a splash of oil in a wok or large frying pan over a high heat, add garlic, ginger and chilli and cook for 3-4 minutes until wilted but still crunchy. You could try a Gratin.

Here are a few recipes you could try this week:

Cavolo Nero Gratin with Roasted Garlic

25g butter or margarine
1 tsp olive oil
2 tbsp picked thyme leaves
300ml crème fraîche
good grating fresh nutmeg

1 small garlic bulb
60g soft breadcrumbs
bunch cavolo nero, central ribs torn out
75ml organic milk

Preheat the oven to 190°C/ Gas 5. Grease a baking dish. Slice the top off the garlic bulb to expose the garlic cloves. Drizzle with the oil then wrap loosely in foil to make a parcel. Roast for 25 minutes until tender. Melt the butter in a frying pan and add the breadcrumbs and thyme. Remove from the heat, stir and season. Tear the cavolo nero into bite-sized pieces and pile into the baking dish, crushing and the leaves as you do to tenderise and reduce the volume. Squeeze the pulp from the garlic cloves into a small pan with the crème fraîche, milk and nutmeg. Heat through gently, whisking. Season, then pour over the torn cavolo nero, tossing to mix. Press down, scatter with the buttered breadcrumbs, cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the foil and cook for a further 25-30 minutes until golden and bubbling.

Chilli and Lemon Purple Sprouting Broccoli

bunch purple-sprouting broccoli
2 red chillies, thinly sliced

1 tbsp olive oil
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

Halve any large stems of broccoli lengthways then cook in a pan of boiling, salted water for 3 minutes. Drain well. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan or wok and when the oil starts to smoke, add the chillies. Sizzle for a few seconds then add the broccoli and a pinch of salt. Cover with a lid and cook for 3 minutes, shaking the pan once or twice. Lift the lid, the broccoli will be a little browned in places. Stir in the lemon zest and juice and serve.

Squash and Purple Sprouting Broccoli Salad with Chilli 'Butter'

1 squash, peeled, halved and deseeded
70g butter or buttery margarine
2 tsp chilli flakes
1 lemon, halved

2 tbsp olive oil
bunch purple sprouting broccoli, thick stems halved lengthways
10g flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped
30g roasted salted almonds, chopped

Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Cut the squash into 1cm-thick slices, put in a roasting tin, toss with the olive oil then season. Dab a third of the butter or margarine over. Cover with foil and roast for 30 minutes, then remove the foil and roast for another 10-15 minutes until golden. When the squash is almost done, cook the broccoli in boiling water until just tender. Drain and set aside. Melt the remaining butter or margarine in a pan over a low heat. Stir in the chilli and parsley then season. Transfer to a bowl and add the lemon halves to the pan, flesh-side down. Turn up the heat and fry briefly until slightly charred. Serve scattered with the almonds and the spiced butter drizzled over, and with the charred lemon halves alongside for squeezing.

The return to University's going well isn't it. Immediate imprisonment.

Things aren't looking good. But at least we know what we are dealing with now. Main imperative, stay alive, and don't get 'long Covid' either, and broadly we know how to do that, more or less.

What news from here. The deputy headmaster of Richmond School got trampled to death by a herd of cows while walking his dogs in a field next to the Georgian racecourse. They didn't mean to kill him and were just protecting their calves...one assumes. Everyone is shocked as they were either taught by him, or their children were. I saw the Air Ambulance circling that afternoon. The townspeople have been invited pay to their respects and line the streets for his funeral on Thursday. It's very sad indeed.

I saw Ernest. If you are new-ish to Farmaround, Ernest is a Crocodile Dundee-esque figure who looked after my sheep in the early years. He'd never been further than 10 miles from Richmond in his life, never eaten pasta or pesto or curry, or been to the cinema. He'd spent all his life with his parents on the farm. The media attention Izzy Lane received back then honed in on him, everyone loved him, his gentle manner - humble and unassuming. He became a local star and would get recognised in the Coop.

Anyway, before Covid I encouraged him to confront his fear of technology and took him to PC World to get a laptop.

A big mistake. He's turned into a born-again, Trump-supporting redneck. He spends all his time on YouTube watching and listening to American farmers. He believes Covid19 is a conspiracy and says he brazenly (*proudly*) walks round town mask-less, not moving aside for anyone (*trying to protect themselves from the virus*).

So Trump is saying he might not stand down if he loses the election on November 3rd. The USA, the new Belarus. Whoever wins it's going to kick off isn't it. He won't go quietly and is likely to whip up his hundred million-odd gun-wielding supporters. Can the world get any more unstable, precarious and frightening ? Yes, loads more. With so many brilliant, clever, decent people in the world, how come we have such lousy, dangerous villains as world leaders. That is what we have to tackle to have any hope for the future. They all have to go... somehow !

Will see what this new week has in store,

Kind wishes,

Isobel