



**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

Dear Customer,

The nights are drawing in, hopes of an Indian summer gone. We are well and truly into autumn and heading for winter. There's been a northwest wind blowing, the central heating's back on as is the thick coat and scarf. It's hygge time. Hygge derives from a 16<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian term 'hugga' meaning 'to comfort' or 'to console'. God knows we need it at the moment. It's about sanctuary, staying an extra hour in bed, a good book, a roaring fire, simple décor, blankets, candles, an autumn walk, a mug of cocoa, carrot scones, woolly socks..... organic fruit and vegetables delivered to your door. Time to batten down the hatches and hygge till spring.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

**Sweet Potato and Pepper Curry**

<i>½ tbsp coconut oil</i>	<i>2 red or yellow peppers, cut into chunks</i>
<i>1 onion, roughly chopped</i>	<i>1 sweet potato, scrubbed and cut into 2cm chunks</i>
<i>curry paste, to taste</i>	<i>400ml tin coconut milk</i>
<i>fresh coriander, chopped</i>	<i>20g toasted flaked almonds</i>

*Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the peppers and onions for 8-10 minutes until softened and lightly browned. Add the sweet potato chunks, stir in the curry paste to taste, and the coconut milk, then bring to a simmer. Cover with a lid and cook for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally until the vegetables are very soft. Season to taste and stir in half the coriander with a splash of water, if needed. Scatter with the almonds and remaining coriander. Serve with pilau rice or warmed naan breads.*

**Broccoli Pasta**

<i>300g fusilli or penne</i>	<i>300g broccoli, cut into florets</i>
<i>2 tsp olive oil</i>	<i>2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced</i>
<i>1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped</i>	<i>50g walnuts, roughly chopped</i>
<i>grated zest and juice of 1 orange</i>	

*Cook the pasta to al dente. Meanwhile, cook the broccoli in a pan of boiling water for 2–3 minutes then run under cold water. Drain and pat dry on kitchen paper. Cut each floret in half to give a flat surface. Heat half the oil in a heavy non-stick frying pan and cook the broccoli, cut side down, over a high heat for a minute or two until charred. Drain the pasta and return to the pan, then stir in the broccoli. Heat the remaining oil in the frying pan and add the garlic and chilli. Cook for a minute until just golden then add the walnuts, orange zest and juice and bring to the boil. Add to the pasta pan and toss together.*

**Carrot and Sultana Scones**

<i>225g plain flour</i>	<i>2 tsp baking powder</i>
<i>50g olive spread or other margarine</i>	<i>30g golden caster sugar</i>
<i>50g sultanas</i>	<i>25g pumpkin seeds</i>
<i>125ml organic skimmed milk</i>	<i>1 tsp vanilla extract</i>
<i>100g carrots, coarsely grated and squeezed to remove excess juice</i>	

*Heat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Sift the flour and baking powder into a large bowl and, using your fingertips, rub in the olive spread or other margarine until well blended. Stir in the sugar, carrots, sultanas and pumpkin seeds, then make a well in the centre and pour in the milk and vanilla extract. Using a table knife, bring the mixture together to make a firm dough. Pat out to a thickness of about 2cm and, using a 6cm cutter, stamp out 8 rounds. Transfer to a non-stick baking tray, brush the tops with milk and bake for 15–18 minutes, until risen and golden. Leave to cool on a wire rack before serving.*

For some time I've been pondering a subscription to New Scientist, a respite from Covid and politics. I could up my game, get nerdy. I finally subscribed and opted for the magazine through the door, being more hygge than digital and a laptop-induced hooked neck. The first copy arrived. It didn't look inviting. It was mainly about Venus, and whether there's life out there in the universe. I'm not interested in alien life, it's too speculative. Seemingly there could be 35 other civilisations in the Milky Way but if there was intelligent life, being 17000 light years away, it would take 34,000 years to get a message back and fore. My neighbour said she'd be interested in reading the issues after me, so I went to bed and forced myself to read it cover to cover. I read a long and very depressing piece about the extinction of the Chinese paddlefish in the Yangtse river.

Subscribers were invited to an online event, the 'state of the Covid'. It was hosted by the Editor who was chivvying along their three gloomy Covid writers. These people sift through and assimilate all the stats and research going on across the globe. They get down to the nitty gritty. It turns out that the nitty gritty is that we still know almost nothing. They said it is a new virus, it's only been with us for 9 months. What state are we all going to be in when it's an old virus. To leave us all with a bit of optimism, they rounded up by saying that the only consensus they could find among scientists is that we will have to live with it forever.

But here I interject. We mustn't despair. The world's scientists have been wrong about a great many things and they may well be wrong about this.

The next issue has just arrived. It's weekly, they will come thick and fast. The main story is about the six distinct groups of Covid symptoms and their likely outcomes. I'm just not going there. The hygge objective is to try and reduce anxiety, not shovel it in.

But back to my enthralling sofa story. The first piece has just arrived back from the upholsterer. I'd been dreading any of it coming back, was getting used to the sparse emptiness. Sometimes more is a hell of a lot less. But the first piece back was a 'chaise' which I bought on Ebay for £50 and had never seen as I had I sent straight to him. I loved its form, very modernist, a German brand with a T-shaped back and elongated upside -down T-shaped base. I had it covered in a turmeric corduroy ant it looks amazing. Perfect for the 'parlour' where the morning sun streams in. It's hygge.

Hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel