



## Monday 26 October 2020

Dear Customer,

Parsnips, parsnips this week. I really hope you are ok and keeping your spirits up. We will fly through winter. It's a blustery, sunny Sunday. The leaves are being stripped from the trees, clocks have gone back.

Here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try this week:

### **Honeyed Parsnip and Potato Tart**

*300g parsnips, peeled and very finely sliced*      *150g potatoes, washed and very finely sliced*  
*1 small onion, very finely sliced*                      *2 tbsp olive oil*  
*320g rolled puff pastry sheet*                          *75-100g Stilton, crumbled*  
*4 sprigs rosemary, leaves only*                        *1 tbsp clear honey*

*Preheat the oven to 180°C / Gas 4. Toss the vegetables in the olive oil. Season generously. Unroll the pastry and lay it on a baking sheet with the parchment it comes on. With the tip of a sharp knife, cut a 2cm border around the pastry and score the middle, making sure not to go all the way through. Scatter half the crumbled Stilton over the base. Next, layer the parsnips, potatoes, onions and rosemary on the scored pastry, trying to distribute the mixture as evenly as possible and avoiding the border. Scatter over the remaining Stilton. Bake for 45 minutes until cooked and golden. Drizzle with the honey before serving.*

### **Roast Potato and Parsnip Curry with Apple Chutney**

*2 tbsp sunflower oil*                                      *1 large onion, sliced*  
*2 cloves garlic, crushed*                              *1 tbsp chopped fresh root ginger*  
*½ tsp cayenne pepper*                                *1 tsp ground turmeric*  
*1 tsp garam masala*                                    *400g cold roast potatoes, cubed*  
*400g cold roast parsnips, cubed*                   *227g can chopped tomatoes*  
*400ml can coconut milk*                            *100g frozen peas*  
*juice ½ lemon*

#### **For the Chutney**

*1 apple, cored and finely diced*                      *1 small onion, finely chopped*  
*2 tbsp chopped fresh mint*

*Heat the oil in a pan and add the onion, garlic and ginger. Cook gently for 5 minutes until soft and golden. Add the cayenne, turmeric and garam masala, then add the potatoes and parsnips and toss. Stir in the tomatoes and some seasoning and simmer for a couple of minutes. Stir in the coconut milk and peas then bring to the boil. Simmer gently for 5 minutes until the sauce is thickened. Add the lemon juice and check the seasoning. Make the chutney by mixing together the apple, onion and mint. Serve the curry with the chutney and naan bread or rice.*

I know we are all trying to carry on, to get through as best we can. I certainly am but feel pretty rubbish today. Someone sent me a YouTube link which has appeared online, it was of me playing with my band in Marseille. I'd never seen it before, in fact I have no footage at all of me and my band. Any recordings we had were on VHS, chewed up and lost over the years. It was lovely seeing my bandmates as they used to be, and me as I used to be.

It was filmed in a TV studio for France 3. I remember the interview I did before we played. I was asked what book I was reading. It just happened to be 'La Femme du Boulanger' by Marcel Pagnol and the camera and lighting crew gave me a round of applause. Pagnol was from near Marseille. I was very into my French literature. So, I am feeling horribly nostalgic for those carefree days, the camaraderie, the music.

My New Scientists are backing up as I knew they would. Instead I am reading, or dipping in and out of, 'Life in Georgian Richmond'. It is the recently found diary of a local lady written in the 1760's. It's riveting. I will give you an example of a week, this week, in 1765:

26<sup>th</sup> Oct: Wet morn. I drank Tea at Mr Wilson's  
27<sup>th</sup> Oct: At Church Morn and Eve. Mr and Mrs Newsam drank Tea with us. Shower of rain  
28<sup>th</sup> Oct: Cold day, in the Eve Mrs Wilson came in  
29<sup>th</sup> Oct: very Cold, A. Nichols sat the Eve with us  
30<sup>th</sup> Oct: Cold showers of rain, Miss Carr drank Tea with us  
31<sup>st</sup> Oct: Miss Carr drank tea with us, Mrs Wilson in ye Eve  
Nov 1<sup>st</sup>: Wind and rain. After dinner I went into Mrs Wilsons to ask them to drink Tea, they sat the Eve  
( next instalment next week )

Mesmerising. The diarist never would have guessed that 250 years on, her repetitive taking of tea would be such a tonic to a troubled brain in troubled times.

I met Ernest on the moor for a walk. Separate cars of course, he knows I'm social distancing. Cases here are rocketing. After all this effort since March I don't want to get the virus now. He sees a friend every Saturday whose wife works in the bakery and who has children and grandchildren who all have lots of friends and they are all mixing liberally as if we weren't in the middle of a pandemic. Ernest might not mind being exposed to them but I do. He drives me mad, he can't walk in a straight line and keeps veering into me so I have to veer into the hedge or a crater. Then I find myself trying to get ahead of him so I am upwind but then he catches up so I have to go faster and faster to keep him behind me. It's not a relaxing walk.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel