



Monday 16th November 2020

Dear Customer,

I hope you're ok and surviving as we enter Week 2 of Lockdown 2. It's Sunday, sunny at this moment, but with a blustery cold wind, rain coming and going. No frost though yet and none in the forecast for the rest of the month, which is highly unusual. The gorse is re-flowering on Ernest's land and rhododendrons are coming out in the grounds of Hauxwell Hall. Spooky.

And so to a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Spaghetti with Courgettes and Fennel

1 bulb fennel	2 courgettes
2 tsp extra virgin olive oil	½ tsp sea salt flakes
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced	300g spaghetti
25g flat leaf parsley, roughly chopped	1 lemon, zest and juice

Place a large saucepan of salted water over a high heat. Trim the base of the fennel and cut the bulb in half from top to bottom. Remove the core. Using a mandolin finely cut the fennel and courgettes into 1mm slices, reserving the fennel fronds to garnish. Heat the oil in a lidded frying pan. Add the courgette, fennel and salt. Cover and cook for 10 minutes over a low heat. Stir occasionally. Remove the lid, add the garlic, stir well and cook, uncovered, for a further 10 minutes until softened. Meanwhile, cook the pasta to al dente. Drain the pasta (reserving the cooking water) and add to the pan of vegetables with the parsley, lemon zest, the juice of half the lemon and enough of the pasta cooking water to loosen. Toss well and season with plenty of black pepper before serving, decorated with the reserved fennel fronds.

Roast Parsnip and Bean Soup

500g parsnips	1 onion
4 cloves garlic	5 sprigs rosemary
2 tbsp olive oil	2 x 400g tins butter beans, drained
1-2 tbsp bouillon powder	

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Peel and chop the parsnips and onion and spread on a baking tray. Smash the garlic cloves in their skins and add with the rosemary to the tray of vegetables. Drizzle with olive oil, season, and toss it all together. Roast for 25 minutes, until the parsnip and onion are starting to char at the edges. Squeeze the garlic out of their skins and put back in the tray. Scrape the tray of roasted veg into a saucepan, add the beans and 1 tbsp of bouillon powder. Cover with boiling water, boil and simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the parsnips are tender. Whizz to make a smooth soup, adding more water if necessary.

Cauliflower and Potato Cheese

300g potatoes, thinly sliced	1 cauliflower, cut into florets, cut core into 1cm chunks
40g butter or margarine	40g plain flour
500ml milk	30g strong blue cheese, crumbled
10g flat leaf parsley, finely chopped	20g breadcrumbs
70g Cheddar, grated	

Preheat the oven to 200 °C/ Gas 6 in an ovenproof casserole. Boil the potato and cauliflower in salted water for 5 minutes. Drain well and transfer to a bowl. In the same pan, melt the butter then stir in the flour and cook over a medium heat for 2–3 minutes until golden. Add the milk slowly stirring constantly until it thickens, about 10 minutes. Season, take off the heat and whisk in the blue cheese. Stir in the potato and cauliflower. Mix together the parsley and breadcrumbs then scatter over the top. Sprinkle over the Cheddar and bake until golden, about 10-15 minutes.

When I was walking up in Marrick, a Dales village a few weeks ago I saw an incredible yellow clematis flowering profusely... .. in November ! I came home and searched for it on the internet. Found it. It flowers right through from June to November. I bought a few. The problem is that in order to put trellis up I would have to correct the terrible lean of my neighbours' fence over my garden. I say my neighbours but the house is mainly empty, the owners live in Cheshire, they only come up once a fortnight just before green bin day to mow the grass and then leave again.

Anyway I got someone to come and straighten the fencing and put trellis up for the clematis which would also hide their garage from my view. It looked fantastic from my side. But now I am freaking out. After he'd left I went round to look at their side. Instead of replacing the old posts, he had left them in and added new posts. They weren't even lined up with the old posts, and where he'd dug holes to insert them, he'd hoiked out their paving stones and replaced them with concrete. It looks an absolute mess and I don't know what on earth to do. I'm ok for a few weeks as they won't be coming up because of lockdown.

I'd mentioned it before to the neighbours that I wanted to correct the lean, he didn't seem convinced that the space on my side beneath the lean didn't belong to him. We left it hanging with no agreement. But I needed to get the clematis in. Trouble ahead !

Someone asked if my friend had found her cat Angel. Sadly not. While she has to think she has found a new home in Kent, I fear she is down and out in Paris, roaming the streets, alone, destitute, trying to catch mice in the Gare de Lyon.

So that's it, Cummings has gone. Maybe now Boris can move out the 'yes' boys and put a serious cabinet in place at this time of national crisis. And get a deal with the EU. Just put up with the fish and sign it. It can always be revisited in a few years surely, when we aren't in the middle of a pandemic and economic meltdown.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel