



**Monday 29th November 2021**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday afternoon and all quiet after yesterday's blizzards and gale force winds which brought trees down and put out the electricity across the area. There was a smattering of snow this morning which has settled. The sun is out now but it's really cold, even in the house with the heating on. The wood pigeons are milling about in the garden, hungry. I keep finding them bits to eat. The squirrel is sitting upright on a plant pot clutching an over-ripe banana-end in both hands, eating it like an ice cream.

The little birds are manically tweeting and collecting seeds and berries down the lane. The seasonal dial has been turned – Winter ON.

Here are a few tasty, warming recipes you could try this week:

### **Braised Cabbage and Apple Wedges**

1 cabbage, trimmed	2 apples
1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling	30g margarine or butter
300ml hot vegetable stock	30g soft fresh breadcrumbs
1 unwaxed lemon, zest	1 tbsp pine nuts

Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Cut the cabbage into 6 wedges. Cut the apples into quarters, removing the cores. Put a large, wide ovenproof casserole dish over a medium heat and add the oil and butter or margarine. Season and fry the cut sides of the cabbage and apple wedges for 8-10 minutes, turning halfway through, until lightly charred. Remove from the heat and arrange the cabbage cut-sides up in the pan. Pour in the stock, cover and bake for 20-25 minutes. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix together the breadcrumbs, lemon zest and pine nuts, along with a drizzle of oil. Remove the pan from the oven and increase the temperature to 200°C/ Gas 6. Scatter the breadcrumb mixture over the cabbage wedges and return to the oven, uncovered, for 10 minutes, until the topping is golden and crisp.

### **Kale and Parsnip Rosti**

400g potatoes	300g parsnips
4 tbsp olive oil	2 onions, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed	400g tin cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
175g kale	200ml tub crème fraîche, or non-dairy alternative
2 tsp vegetable bouillon powder	3 tbsp French mustard

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Cook the peeled, but whole, potatoes and parsnips in boiling, salted water for 5 minutes then drain well. Meanwhile, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a saucepan and gently fry the onions for 5 minutes until lightly browned. Add the garlic and fry for a further 1 minute. Stir in the beans and kale and cook gently for a few minutes, stirring until the kale has wilted. Add the crème fraîche, bouillon powder, mustard and 150ml water and stir to combine. Turn into a shallow ovenproof dish and spread level. Coarsely grate the potatoes and parsnips into a bowl. Stir in the remaining oil and a little seasoning. Mix well. Tip out onto the kale mixture and spread evenly. Bake for 45-50 minutes until the surface is crisp and golden.

### **Aubergine, Chickpea and Yellow Pepper Curry**

500g potatoes, peeled and diced	1 tbsp oil
1 onion, chopped	1 aubergine, diced
1 yellow pepper, diced	1 tbsp medium curry powder
400g tin chopped tomatoes	400g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Cook the potatoes in boiling water for 5–8 minutes until just tender, then drain. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and stir-fry the onion, aubergine and pepper for 8–10 minutes. Add the curry powder and cook for 1 minute more. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, 300ml water, chickpeas and reserved potatoes, and cook for 10 minutes. Season to taste and garnish with chopped coriander. Serve with rice or warm naan breads.

There's only one story in town today, new kid on the block, Omicron. Friend or foe, no one knows. Seemingly symptoms so far recorded have been mild according to the GP who discovered it. But the South African population is much younger. With that level of sophistication, that number of mutations, the 'horror' expressed by scientists who've had a look at it, can this really be more benign than Delta, the 'cold' we were promised Covid would become. Or are we facing a deadly, slow-burner operating in ways we have yet to discover. If this was a film, it would be very exciting.

By the time you get this letter a lot more will be known, and there will be a lot more cases. I'm hoping my brother won't be one of them after going to the so-called 'super-spreader event', the South Africa / England game at Twickenham..... followed no doubt by many hours in the local pubs.

In the background the BBC national news is on, it shot to Low Row, further up Swaledale where there is deep snow and the electricity is out. It was interviewing an elderly lady in her home in a rocking chair covered in blankets, a neighbour had just brought her a hot water bottle. I recognised her but couldn't place her. Then remembered a few years ago, looking for a seamstress, I took about 50 throws up to her to have their labels sewn on. They were heavy throws and she had to take them a few at a time, in batches, up to her sewing room. When I got them back I had to have them all unpicked, she'd made such a dogs dinner of them – they were all wonky and upside down.

I hope you have a good week and, mmmmm.....stay safe,

Very best wishes,  
Isobel