



Monday 6th December 2021

Dear Customer,

It's a cold, blustery and wet Sunday morning. But still somehow bearable. Only a couple of weeks to the shortest day, and a few more to 2022. It flies doesn't it.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try with this week's vegetables:

Creamy Broccoli Gnocchi

250g broccoli, in small pieces and florets
½ lemon, zested and juiced
350g fresh gnocchi
100g frozen peas

½ tbsp Dijon mustard
3 tbsp crème fraîche (or non-dairy alternative)
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp pine nuts, toasted

Mix together the crème fraîche, mustard and lemon juice. Set aside. Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil. Add the frozen peas and the broccoli and cook for 3 mins, then add the gnocchi. Cook until the gnocchi begins to float to the surface, 1 min or so, then drain. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and, once hot, tip in the gnocchi, broccoli and peas. Toss around in the hot oil for 1 min, then stir through the crème fraîche mixture. Season to taste and serve topped with the lemon zest and pine nuts.

Broccoli and Lemon Pasta

300g pasta
2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
fresh basil

head broccoli, cut in small pieces and florets
grated zest 1 lemon
3 tbsp olive oil

Preheat the oven to 220°C/ Gas 7. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Meanwhile, toss together the broccoli, garlic, lemon zest and chilli. Drizzle over 2 tbs of the olive oil and stir until everything is coated. Spread out evenly on a large baking tray and roast for 6–8 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender and beginning to brown. Reserve 100ml of the pasta cooking water then drain the pasta and return to the pan. Stir in the roasted broccoli, reserved cooking liquid, remaining tablespoon of olive oil and the basil. Serve with a good grinding of black pepper.

Baked Swede and Onion

1 swede, peeled and cut into 2-3cm cubes
1 rosemary sprig, leaves finely chopped
50g butter or suitable margarine
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
250ml vegetable stock

2 tbsp olive oil
6 thyme sprigs
3 onions, thinly sliced
2 bay leaves
¼-½ whole nutmeg, freshly grated

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Put the swede in a roasting tin with the oil. Add the chopped rosemary and leaves from 2 thyme sprigs, plus salt and plenty of black pepper, then toss together well. Cook in the oven for 45 minutes, stirring a couple of times, until soft and tinged with gold in places. Meanwhile, melt the butter /margarine in a saucepan. Add the onions, garlic, bay leaves and leaves from 2 more thyme sprigs. Cook over a medium heat, stirring often for 20 minutes, until the onions are soft and golden. Stir the onions into the swede. Add the stock, a good grating of nutmeg, a good pinch of salt and grinding of black pepper. Scatter the remaining thyme leaves over the top and return to the oven for 30-40 minutes, until the stock has become thick and syrupy. Remove from the oven, taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

I'd never really looked at Twitter much until the pandemic started. But verging on spontaneous combustion early on in the pandemic I took my anger there. Many of us did, and found the likeminded, as well as scientists and experts bringing different perspectives to our daily 'wash your hands' briefings. We found some sanity. Since then, I've been a regular. Yet, I can't bear it.

Pandemic and politics aside, I naturally started following all the animal rights groups. And now I am in a state of permanent distress. I go on to Twitter to check out about the virus and other goings on and have to squint my eyes to scroll past all the horrific images of animal abuse. I can't look at them but retweet them. From the psychopathic trophy hunters sitting next to freshly killed bears and lions and giraffes, beautiful creatures; to videos of beagle puppies wagging their tails with excitement as they are wheeled off in crates to the labs, replacing the ones coming out in yellow bags; terrified cows filmed through the slats of a lorry at the abattoir; foxes being ripped apart by hounds; Soi dogs, tied up in sacks ready to be boiled or roasted alive. It is one long technicolour nightmare.

At the same time, it drives action. People coalesce behind twitter leaders, and everyone else piles in to support the cause and 'get it out there'. Social media campaigns work. The National Trust have just voted to ban 'trail hunting', brought about by the hunt sabs footage and campaigns on social media. The luxury fashion brands are one by one dropping fur. We have seen U-turns from our politicians when twitter ignites. The issues we care about need our voices, our outrage, else nothing changes. Social media unites us across the world in our common causes. And that's a great thing. So thank you Jack Dorsey, as you step back from Twitter, for creating this world changing platform. But it is harrowing.

Of course, the news this week has been all about that poor little boy Arthur. It is heart-breaking.

Well that is my cheery note for the week. As for Omicron – not looking great is it.

Christmas is coming. I will email in the next few days with our Christmas schedule

Hope you have a good week. Best wishes, Isobel