



Monday 17th January 2022

Dear Customer,

It's Saturday afternoon and in the valley the golden trees are rising out of a pale blue mist. Above is a crystal-clear sky. Almost enough to drive one to paint. The weather has been stunning. Not much winter about, just a little ice here and there.

Finally, we have found some cauliflowers, in the bags this week, and here are some tasty recipes you could try:

Roasted Cauliflower and Garlic Soup

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| 1 cauliflower | 1 onion, cut into wedges |
| 1½ tbsp olive oil | 1½ tsp cumin seeds |
| 8 garlic cloves, 6 unpeeled, 2 finely sliced | 20g sunflower seeds |
| 400g cannellini beans, drained and rinsed | 500ml hot vegetable stock |
| 1 tbsp cider vinegar | |

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Trim the cauliflower. Cut off the smaller leaves and set aside, halving any thick stems. Chop the remaining cauliflower and put in a roasting tin with the onion wedges. Toss with 1 tbsp olive oil and 1 tsp cumin seeds then season. Add the unpeeled garlic cloves and roast for 10 minutes. Add the cauliflower leaves and roast for 20-25 minutes more, until golden. Just before the cauliflower is ready, toast the sunflower seeds in a frying pan on a medium heat then tip onto a plate. Heat the remaining ½ tbsp oil in the same pan and fry the sliced garlic and ½ tsp cumin seeds for 1 minute, until golden then set aside. Remove the garlic and cauliflower leaves from the roasting tin. Tip everything else into a blender. Squeeze in the garlic from its skins, then add the beans, stock, cider vinegar and 200ml water. Whizz until smooth and season. Serve topped with the cauliflower leaves, sunflower seeds and garlic oil.

Roasted Cauliflower and Dhal Pilaff

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| 1 cauliflower, cut into small florets | 3 carrots, diced |
| ½ tsp ground turmeric or curry powder | 1 tsp cumin seeds |
| zest and juice 1 lemon | 2 tbsp sunflower oil |
| 2 onions, chopped | 2 tbsp curry paste |
| 150g red split lentils | 1.2 litres hot vegetable stock |
| 300g long grain rice | coriander leaves, to serve |

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Place the cauliflower, carrots, turmeric (or curry powder), cumin seeds, lemon juice and 1 tbsp of the sunflower oil in a large bowl and gently toss together. Spread out on a large baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes until tender and golden brown. Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion for 5 minutes until softened. Stir in the curry paste, lentils and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the rice, cover and cook for a further 10–12 minutes until the rice and lentils are tender and the liquid has been absorbed. Spoon the dhal pilaff into bowls and top with the roasted vegetables. Scatter over the coriander leaves and serve.

10 Downing Street, the new Ibiza. The euphoria and hilarity enhanced by the daring, by knowing everyone else was in lockdown - selfie with finger on nuclear button; Tippexed moustache on Thatcher's portrait – with selfie; Matt Hancock in laundry cupboard (it was around that time wasn't it).

'It could only happen here' I thought, then remembered Berlusconi. Even Angela Merkel...Mutti... surprisingly played German punk rocker Nina Hagen at her exit ceremony, a hint at her alter ego. 'You think you knew who I was ?'

Putti summoned himself to the Queen for a grovel, a cane across the backside, and 12 Hail Mary's, humming in his head Rag'n Bone Man's 'I'm only human after all.....tralalala.....hahahaha'.

I bet he and Carrie can barely function ,rolling about in endless laughter, at how they are doing us over.....our 21st Century Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

Oh these days. Who's waiting in the wings but Truss and Dish. Both small and serious, in contrast to the incumbent. Forced to choose, I'd rather it was Rishi. Please God let it not be Truss. She's trying to reinvent herself: is wearing more make-up; volumizing her hair; cultivating 'ice lady'. Whereas Rishi the geek likes to solve massive problems. He is my MP of course but after initially being impressed, I went off him once he was in the Cabinet. He seemingly stopped being his own person. And too many copy and paste responses to my letters eg the billions that grouse moors contribute to the economy. Whenever I used to write to my previous MP William Hague, I got a personal response with his own views, irrespective of the party line. My letters were always sent immediately, though it was disconcerting, to the CEO Of the British Wool Marketing Board or the CEO of Nat West for their response and I would receive their personal replies back, along with his own. He was a very good local MP.

Being part of the Cummings' Cabinet only served to make them all look useless. He filled it with weak 'yes' men, puppets sent to stutter out the messages and front the Cummings' policies. Rishi was one of them. But maybe he just had to play that game, and knew what game he was playing. It's worked for him so far. Maybe Boris won't go, maybe not this time, he may get off with just a suspended sentence.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel