



Monday 31st January 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope you are well. It's a quiet, sunny and bright Monday morning after two serious storms which saw Richmond as good as barricaded in by fallen trees. But, they blew all the leaves in my garden into a big, neat heap which I could bag up and take to the garden waste depot. It's still mild though - very, very mild.

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

Honey-Glazed Rainbow Carrots

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| <i>450g rainbow carrots, halved and sliced</i> | <i>3 tbsp olive oil</i> |
| <i>2 tbsp balsamic vinegar</i> | <i>1 tbsp honey</i> |
| <i>sea salt and black pepper</i> | <i>fresh parsley</i> |

Preheat the oven to 400F. Oil a baking dish and set aside. In a bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar and honey then season generously. Add the carrots and toss well to coat evenly. Put them into the prepared baking dish. Roast for about 30-35 minutes until the carrots are tender but not mushy. Scatter with a sprinkling of sea salt and parsley to serve.

Broccoli and Spinach Gratin

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| <i>350g broccoli, chopped</i> | <i>40g margarine or butter</i> |
| <i>1 small onion, finely chopped</i> | <i>40g plain flour</i> |
| <i>500ml organic milk</i> | <i>170ml organic single cream</i> |
| <i>240g spinach, roughly chopped with stems</i> | <i>25g soft breadcrumbs</i> |
| <i>75g Gruyère, grated</i> | <i>2 tsp olive oil</i> |

Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Cook the broccoli in a large pan of boiling salted water for 2 minutes, drain and set aside. Put the margarine or butter in the dry pan and set over a medium-low heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for 5 minutes, until starting to soften. Add the flour, stir for 1-2 minutes until thickened, then gradually whisk in the milk until smooth. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring, until thickened, then stir in the single cream. Bring back to the boil and season. Add the broccoli and spinach to the sauce and mix together. Pour into a 1.3 litre ovenproof dish. In a small bowl, mix together the breadcrumbs and Gruyère, then scatter over the vegetables. Drizzle with the oil, place on a baking tray and bake for 30 minutes, until bubbling and golden.

Roasted Swede

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| <i>1 swede</i> | <i>12 cloves</i> |
| <i>1 tbsp olive oil</i> | <i>30g dark muscovado sugar</i> |
| <i>20g wholegrain mustard</i> | |

Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Score the swede all over with a knife, cutting about 1cm into the flesh in a criss-cross pattern. Stud the surface with cloves. Drizzle with the oil and season, then wrap in a large sheet of greaseproof paper and place in a small ovenproof dish. Roast for 1 hour, then remove the paper and return to the oven for a further 30–60 mins, or until the swede is well cooked. Remove from the oven and turn down the temperature to 120°C/ Gas ½ . Mix the sugar and mustard together in a small bowl and brush the swede all over with the mixture. Return to the oven and cook for 20–30 mins. Carve into slices to serve.

The Ukraine situation is worrying isn't it. After our government's cack-handed attempt at managing the pandemic, I remember thinking back then, 'God forbid this lot are ever in charge in a military conflict'. Yet here we are.

It might not be the intention for our troops to fight in Ukraine, I don't think Boris is belligerent, he would rather find peace, but as we know, sometimes things can happen. And then something happens.

He is set to talk with Putin 'come on Vladdy', as Putin appears by video link, the James Bond baddie, from his palatial fortress somewhere in deepest Siberia. Having said that, Boris may relish the Chamberlain moment...

"I am speaking to you from the Cabinet Room at 10, Downing Street.....I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received, and that consequently this country". He may see it as a way of escaping Partygate. That Boris' birthday cake could start WW3, nothing would surprise me anymore. That's the crazy old world we now live in.

The tabloid press will be whipping up the wartime spirit, freaking us out to buy newspapers, and announcing, in a roundabout way, that we are at war with Russia. Well let's hope not, and that life goes on.

The first ever communication from North Yorkshire Council about Covid has just popped through the door: '**A useful guide to living with Covid**'. So that's it then. And taking us right back to the beginning, in case we slept in, I quote:

"COVID-19 is a virus that can make people unwell. It affects everyone differently. Most people get a mild illness, but others can be seriously ill for a long time and might need a lot of time off work or school. Some people need to go to hospital and some people can sadly die'.....God, they think we're thick.

Yesterday in the hiatus between the two storms I managed to find a road out of Richmond and went to Wensleydale to walk at Jervaulx in the ruins of the Cistercian Abbey. As always, I veered off the set route and started trespassing, presumably, onto the privately owned parkland, making the most of there being no sheep. I always have my excuse at the ready in case .This time, I was ready with my being drawn to the interesting topography: the strange mounds and hollows and how they related to the Abbey. No-one nabbed me. It was beautiful and peaceful. Nature is such a tonic to the manmade madness of these times.

Kind wishes, Isobel