



Monday 16th May 2022

Dear Customer,

Straight in with some tasty recipes you could try this week:

Cauliflower and Chickpea Tikka Masala

1 cauliflower
400g tin chickpeas ½ tsp ground turmeric
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
140g jar tikka masala spice paste
3 tbsp non-dairy yoghurt
steamed basmati rice

2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
15g root ginger
200g tomatoes
coriander
½ tsp turmeric

Preheat the oven to 220C/ Gas 7. Line a baking tray with foil. Break the cauliflower into large florets, reserving any tender leaves. Toss the florets with ½ tbsp oil and spread over one side of the baking tray. Toss the chickpeas with another tbsp oil and the turmeric then spread on the other side of the tray. Roast for 20 minutes, stirring each side and adding cauliflower leaves halfway through. Meanwhile, heat the remaining ½ tbsp oil in a large pan. Fry the onion for 6 minutes until soft, adding the garlic and ginger for the last minute. Add the curry paste and fry for 2 minutes. Pour 50ml water and cook until evaporated. Add the tomatoes and 200ml water to the pan and simmer for 5 minutes then spoon in the cauliflower. Simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes. Take off the heat and stir in the yoghurt, chick peas, coriander and cauliflower leaves. Serve with basmati rice.

Chard, Butterbean and Lemon Soup

1 tbsp olive oil
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp ground coriander
200g chard, stalks chopped, leaves roughly torn
chopped
400g tin butter beans, drained and rinsed
2 tbs crispy fried onions
(or some zest and juice of a lemon)

1 onion, finely chopped
1½ tsp cumin seeds
¼ tsp ground turmeric
½ red chilli, deseeded and finely
chopped
500ml vegetable stock
1 preserved lemon, finely chopped

Put the oil in a pan and over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for about 10 minutes until soft and turning golden. Add the garlic, cumin and coriander and cook for 1 minute. Add the turmeric, chard stalks and ½ the chilli then season with black pepper. Stir in the butter beans, stock and 250ml water. Bring to the boil then simmer for 8 minutes. Add the chard leaves and preserved lemon. Cook for 4-5 minutes, until the leaves are tender. Use a blender to whizz the soup until it thickens a bit, but still keeping some texture. Season and serve with the crispy fried onions and remaining chilli scattered over.

Feeling too disconnected, I made the mistake of looking at some news this last week. Yesterday was glorious, 21C, still, with a cloudless sky and it was easy to forget and get lost in the birdsong and the blossoms. But this grey, drizzly Sunday morning, not so much. So our Prime Minister has stepped outside of NATO. Instead of 'acting together as one', he has vowed that Britain, just Britain, will defend Finland from Russia. Why did he do that? King of the World with his vast army. He's determined to finish us off one way or another isn't he - 'by hook or by crook'. While others search for the hard route to peace, he's playing it fast and loose. Provocation. Escalation. I suspect Tom Tugendhat and Tobias Ellwood are somewhere in this mix.

Putin is looking very ill. I hope his doctor is giving him a taste of his own medicine and poisoning him. Wishful thinking. There's a lot of that going on - ever the optimists: he will die soon; Ukraine will win; there will be a military coup; something. A local poet who walks with his labs on the racecourse, asked me the other day if I would kill Putin. Funnily I'd been asking myself the same question the previous day while on the racecourse. High above Richmond, with far-reaching views, it seems to be a good place to contemplate assassinations. 'Yes I would', even though whoever did it would of course die. He said that he would too. I suspect many of us would. Would you? I should do a Survey Monkey survey. So then, you'd think there'd be someone there who could get close enough to him to do it. Early on, many Russian doctors signed a letter to Putin asking him to stop the invasion of Ukraine. Surely his doctors must have connections to some of those doctors. Anyway, that's what I'm counting on.

I hang out in the Covid nerd area on Twitter which keeps abreast of new research; new variants; long Covid; the stats; the testimonies. It's not very cheering. So with the hypersonic nuclear missile with our name on it, and the prospect of us being a bed-ridden nation, all stricken down eventually with Long Covid (LC), prospects are not looking great. Not to mention the economic precipice and climate emergency - 60C in part of India last week !!!!!!! Here in my back garden, there has been little progress. The site has all but been abandoned after the bricklayer had a massive argument with the other guy and launched a spade full force over the garden gate. Neither to be seen since. The only thing changed from last week is the ton bag of sand in front of my front door. I haven't seen my goldfish for three weeks. They may not have survived the 'sweep-in' joint compound and cement which ended up in the pond even though I'd asked them to use dust sheets to protect it.

But Eurovision. Wow. They don't all hate us. Here we were thinking they hated us almost as much as we hate ourselves. But all along, it was the songs that they hated - probably as much as we did ourselves. The songs were humiliating. They were the sticks to beat us with. Finally, we had a good song. A great song. Delivered by a fantastic songwriter and performer. We have many things to be ashamed of in our country but music isn't one of them. Our previous entries over the years - one of life's great mysteries.

Oh Britain ! Always first or last, best or worst, never comfortably in the middle with anything.....ever. Always out on a limb. It's exhausting.

I hope you have a good week..... Kind wishes, Isobel