



**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday. It's not cold, but it's grey. A bit blustery. A bit oppressive. We can have whole summers of this extremely unfair north / south divide -warm, bright and sunny in the south - warm'ish, dull and dark up here. I hope we're not in for another one.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

### **French Beans and Potato Curry**

1 tbsp vegetable oil	1 onion, finely sliced
20g fresh root ginger, peeled and roughly chopped	1 green chillies, finely sliced (deseeded, if liked)
½ tsp nigella seeds	1 tsp madras medium curry powder
300g new potatoes, halved or quartered if large	220g french beans, trimmed and halved widthways
75ml coconut milk yogurt (or natural yogurt)	½ lime, zest, and juice
fresh mint, leaves torn	

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and cook the onions over a medium-high heat for 5-7 minutes until soft and golden in places. Add the ginger and ½ the chilli then fry for 2-3 minutes until fragrant. Add the nigella seeds and curry powder and fry for another minute. Tip the potatoes into the pan with 450ml water, then cover and bring to the boil. Simmer briskly for about 18 minutes until just cooked. Add the green beans and simmer, covered, for another 4-6 minutes, until tender but still bright green. Stir through the yogurt, lime zest and juice then season. Serve scattered with the mint leaves and remaining chilli, with steamed rice or naan bread.

### **Kale and Ricotta Tagliatelle**

300g tagliatelle	220g kale
3 tbsp olive oil	1 red chilli, seeded and finely
chopped	
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	fresh basil, leaves roughly torn
125g ricotta	1 tbsp toasted pine nuts

Remove any tough stems from the kale, then shred. Cook the tagliatelle in a large pan of boiling salted water for 6 minutes, then add the kale and cook for a further 3 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a small pan and add the chilli and garlic. Cook gently for 3 minutes. Drain the tagliatelle and kale and return to the pan. Stir in the garlic mixture and most of the basil. Gently fold through the ricotta. Serve scattered with the pine nuts, remaining basil and a good grinding of coarse black pepper.

### **Chunky New Potato Mash**

700g new potatoes	40g creamy margarine
2 crushed garlic cloves	chopped chives

Boil 700g new potatoes in their skins until very tender, about 12–15 minutes. Drain well. Melt the creamy margarine in a frying pan over a low heat and add 2 crushed garlic cloves. Fry gently for 1 minute, then tip the potatoes into the pan with the garlic butter. Mash roughly so the potatoes are just broken up. Stir in some chopped chives and season well.

I filled a flask intent on driving over to the coast, longing to see the sea. In the end I didn't have it in me, it's been a stressful week, so drove just the 6 miles to Kiplin Hall. A cup of tea in the car always feels like a luxury, and the car park as good as anywhere. I wasn't sure I'd make it round the whole circuit but I set off, starting with the walled garden and through into the woods. All I could hear were lambs crying. As I emerged into the park land there were about 50 of them, their mothers nowhere to be seen. They were crying and crying, exhausted, walking round and round the massive pasture. Maybe the ewes were being sheared and would be back. No, I doubt it, they keep the lambs close by when they shear.

No. They were separated for good and not even the end of May. Probably the offspring of the older ewes, who will have gone definitively 'down the road', as they call it. Normally this happens in July when they are taken off their mothers to be 'fattened' for the September sales. These must have been born early, but some of them were tiny.

Away from the main group were two heading in a different direction, not siblings as different breeds. The larger, robust one, kept stopping to wait for the little one whose back-end had gone and could only do two steps before falling down. Probably a single lamb, taken from its mother and during the trauma had some sort of vestibular attack. If I called the farmer he would come and shoot it. I've had a lamb like that before that I rescued. It lived for a while in a dog basket in my porch. I bottle fed it and would carry it out to the garden during the day. While I hoped it might, it never recovered.

I told the nice, moustached, elderly gentleman at the entrance, a volunteer I think. I complain about something every time I see him. I asked him why the lambs hadn't been put in a small enclosure rather than be left in the park searching endlessly for their mothers, and that it was unbearably cruel. Not that he had anything to do with it of course. I told him about the lamb. It was a harrowing walk.

Otherwise, I have become accustomed to my card's last digits - '666'. I reconciled myself to it by treating it like a gargoyle. With me at all times, fending off any evil spirits. The advantage of course, it's really easy to remember - just slips off the tongue..

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