



Monday 4th July 2022

Dear Customer,

Hello. We have the beautiful Graffiti aubergines in the bags this week. Much sweeter than black aubergines, you could roast them with peppers. Cube the aubergine, slice the peppers and slice an onion. Put in a roasting tin, toss all with olive oil, season, and sprinkle over some chilli flakes, if desired. Roast for about half an hour until tender and starting to char, and serve with some toasted sourdough, garnished with flat parsley.

Sunday afternoon and the weather is disappointing - grey with the occasional shower. It is mild though. Good weather to potter about in the garden with a cardigan on and a mug of tea and muse over whether the newly inserted plants, acquired yesterday from Meynells pet shop in Finkle street, and who also sell cheap perennials, are in the right place....and if they are the right colour. It never used to be this hard. I'd buy a plant and pop it in randomly where there was a space and it looked fine. Not any more it doesn't. And here are some tasty recipes for this week:

Cajun-Spiced Cauliflower Pasta Bake

*1 small cauliflower, cut into florets, stalk chopped
250g sweetcorn, tinned
4 tsp cornflour
175g Ramiro red peppers, sliced
150g Organic Cheddar, grated*

*175g small pasta shapes
500ml organic milk
1 tbsp olive oil
1½ tbsp Cajun or fajita seasoning*

Heat the oven to 200°C / Gas 7. Cook the cauliflower for 3 minutes in a pan of boiling water. Drain, let cool, then transfer to a baking dish. Cook the pasta to al dente. Drain, cool, then add to the cauliflower. Put the sweetcorn and 150ml of the milk in a blender and whizz to combine. Add the cornflour and whizz until smooth. Heat the oil in a pan over a high heat, then fry the peppers with the spice mix for 4 minutes until browning lightly. Add to the baking dish and mix together. Put the pan back on a medium heat, add the sweetcorn mixture and the rest of the milk, then bring to the boil, whisking often, until slightly thickened (about 5 minutes). Add most of the cheese and stir until melted and smooth. Pour the cheese mixture over the pasta bake, then sprinkle with the remaining cheese and spice mixture. Bake for 15-20 minutes until bubbling and golden on top.

Masala Cauliflower

*1 tbsp sunflower oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
chopped
1 small green chilli, finely chopped
chopped
salt
1 tsp ground turmeric
200g frozen peas
florets
1 large potato, cut into 2.5cm chunks
chopped, to garnish*

*1 tsp mustard seeds
1 large onion, roughly chopped
1cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely
chopped
2 plum tomatoes from a tin, roughly
chopped
1 tsp garam masala
½ tsp chilli powder
1 large cauliflower, cut into small
florets
handful fresh coriander leaves, finely
chopped*

Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the mustard and cumin seeds and cook for 1-2 minutes until sizzling. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for 10-12 minutes, until golden. Mix in the garlic, ginger and chilli and cook for 2 minutes, then stir in the tomatoes, spices and some salt.

Turn the heat to high and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in the peas, cauliflower, potato and 50ml cold water. Cover, reduce the heat to low and cook for 20-30 minutes until the cauliflower and potato are tender. Garnish with coriander.

Aubergine and Potato Gratin

250g aubergine, cut into cubes
1 onion, sliced
2 tbsp oil
200g chopped tomatoes
1 tsp dried mixed herbs

250g potatoes, peeled and diced
1-2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 tbsp dairy or non-dairy cheese, grated
150ml veg stock
3 tbsp breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. In a pan of boiling water, cook the potatoes for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside. Heat the oil and add the onion. Fry gently until soft. Add the garlic, then the aubergine and fry until tender. Add the potatoes to the aubergine. Season with salt and pepper. Add the tomatoes and stock, simmer for 10 minutes. Place the mixture in a gratin or baking dish. Sprinkle over the breadcrumbs and cheese and bake in the oven for 15 minutes until the topping is golden.

I have a difficult relationship with red. I look around my home and there is none. Any red that came as a gift is in a cupboard. I love the vibrant orange/red of a self-seeded poppy when it pushes up through the lavender. But the shrub with bell-shaped red flowers on which I think begins with a 'w', I can't bear it, and it's directly in my line of vision when I'm sitting at the computer. Thankfully the flowers have dropped now but I feel so sorry for it. It's not the plant's fault. And then there's the red rose in the front garden. It's fabulous. But not there, because again, I can see it. And it may even be one of the roses I dug out of our family home before it was sold, which makes the relationship to it even more complex. I know it's not the right time of year to uproot anything, but I've created a wild area in the back corner where the peonies have been moved to. I might make it the 'red and wild' area and move them all there to be muted by the grasses and 'weeds'. Am I so stupid, my brain hard-wired to associate anything red with blood. Or does it just look too much like Christmas. Or maybe there's very good reason that red and green should never be seen.....unless you're a tomato.

A newly published study by Pesticide Action Network Europe has found that nearly a third of the fruit produced in Europe contains the residues of the 55 harmful, toxic substances which since 2011, were supposed to have been being phased out. Half of all peaches, nectarines, pears and cherries and a total of 29% of all fruit are contaminated with these specific chemicals. Instead of reducing, the numbers have exploded: +53% on average. So as with everything else, things are getting worse and not better.

As for all the other chemicals (in total there are around 600 'approved' ones), there is a known 'dirty dozen' list of the worst contaminated - topping the list is cherries, with 97% contaminated with up to 39 types of chemicals. Thank heavens for the organic movement, saving us from the dirty diet of the dirty dozen.

Very best wishes..... Isobel