



Monday 28th November 2022

Dear Customer,

It's really cold here now. I had to sponge the ice off my car windows this morning. It's thick fog and didn't get above 3C all day. I tuck my jumper and t-shirt into my trousers now to stop the draughts. It makes a big difference, but I forget to untuck them if someone comes to the door. But it's all about staying warm and trying to manage the energy supply..... to the point of obsession. After knocking all the internal walls out downstairs some years ago, I have a vast open living area which is impossible to heat. There's no obvious place to put a room divider, I been pondering a big thick curtain to section off a tranche but it would look horrible. I know it's partly psychological but I feel cold all the time, colder than I have ever been.

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

Cauliflower and Lentil Dahl

1 onion, chopped	1 clove garlic, chopped
2.5cm piece root ginger, grated	1 tbs lemon juice
1 tsp ground coriander	1 tsp ground cumin
½ tsp turmeric	75g red lentils
300ml vegetable stock	2 tbsp hot curry paste
1 cauliflower, in florets	300ml coconut milk
125g frozen peas	2 tbsp chopped coriander

Heat some oil in a saucepan and add the onion, garlic, ginger and dry spices and fry gently for 5 minutes. Add the lentils, stir well and pour in the stock. Bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Heat some more oil in a frying pan. Add the curry paste and fry gently for 3 minutes. Add the cauliflower and stir-fry another 3 minutes then remove from the heat. Add the coconut milk and cauliflower to the lentils and return to the boil. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the peas, coriander and lemon juice. Cook until peas are tender. Serve with with naan bread or rice.

Honey-Glazed Turnips

turnips cut into wedges	50g butter or margarine
4 tbsp clear honey	2 bay leaves
5-6 thyme sprigs	1 tsp salt

Put the turnip wedges, honey, butter or margarine, thyme and salt in a large frying pan with 200ml water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and cook for about 15 minutes or until the turnips are soft to the core and slightly translucent. Remove the lid, turn up the heat and cook for 5 minutes more, gently turning the turnips from time to time until the liquid has evaporated and the turnips are coated in a syrupy glaze. Season and top with a knob of butter or margarine, if liked.

Turnip and Leek Gratin

3 garlic cloves, peeled & finely sliced	2 leeks, finely sliced
300ml organic cream	2 bay leaves
¼ tsp ground nutmeg	¼ tsp white pepper
turnips, scrubbed & stalks removed	20g breadcrumbs
10g thyme, stripped from stems & chopped	zest of 1 lemon

Preheat oven to 180°C/Gas 5. Heat some oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and cook for a minute then add the leeks and cook for 8-10 minutes or until soft. Set aside. Pour the cream into a saucepan and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat, add the bay leaves simmer for 5 minutes. Turn off the heat, remove the bay leaves and add the nutmeg, white pepper and salt and set aside. Meanwhile, thinly slice the turnips into 3mm thick slices. Grease a gratin dish and arrange half of the turnips overlapping each other. Layer over the cooked leeks and top with the rest of turnips. Pour the cream over and push the turnips down.

Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes or until the turnips are soft. To get a nice golden-brown colour on top, use the grill at the end if necessary. Meanwhile, put the breadcrumbs in a roasting tray and bake for a few minutes until golden. Let them cool and mix through the thyme and lemon zest. Remove the gratin from the oven. Sprinkle the breadcrumb mix on top and serve.

I hope you've been enjoying the football. I've watched little bits but each match is like watching a tragedy play out. All the years of training and anticipation coming down to these 90 minutes. I watched Brazil play Serbia, who were devastated when they lost, as were their fans. It was so sad. Only one team and one set of fans will end up happy.

I watched England play and have never felt less patriotic. I think I actually wanted them to lose. I don't like this country at the moment, it's horrible.

It's Tuesday night, I am very late with the letter after doing another photo shoot of the Izzy Lane clothes yesterday with a local photographer and model. I had been worried and stressed about how I was going to get all the clothes to the location. The location only being opposite my house but down the bank. I couldn't possibly go back and forth carrying them while at the same time organise the outfits, as all had to be done quickly. As I was falling asleep it suddenly occurred to me. The wheelbarrow. I got up early, gave it a good scrub and lined it with dust sheets. I lay all the clothes in it. The photographer and model arrived and off we went, me pushing the wheelbarrow. It was perfect. I can't tell you how pleased with myself I was.

Sometimes, life's pleasures are in the little things. My stick Dyson has been wobbling on the wall for about 1½ yrs and all that time I'd been telling myself that I must get a handyman to fix it. Then one day I thought 'I wonder if I can do it on my own'. I felt sure I had a screwdriver somewhere, but it was likely in the shed. I went to the kitchen drawer and took out a pointy knife. It turned the screw and within seconds the Dyson was firmly attached back on the wall. What a sense of achievement !

On Ebay I bought some little sieves to put in the plug holes of the kitchen and utility room. They fitted perfectly and cost just a couple of quid. They catch every errant pea or bit of porridge. No more sink plunging. To see a pea caught in the sieve, saved from going down the plug hole, it beats visiting the Pyramids or climbing Kilimanjaro. There is nothing more satisfying than the banal and simple pleasures of normal daily life.

I hope you have a good week

.....Kind wishes, Isobel