



Monday 23rd October 2023

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's been another bewilderingly harrowing week in the world hasn't it. So much brutality and killing of innocents. Another war with no end. I just hope China doesn't see this as an opportunity to head into Taiwan - the US can only spread itself so far. It's all just a nightmare. We've had the good fortune to live through peaceful times here on these isles. One does wonder how long that can hold for ! Thirty years of Farmaround next year and we haven't missed a week's deliveries yet. Not even when we got a call at 4am one morning to say our Forest Hill premises were on fire. We'd had an arson attack and it was raised to the ground. We immediately got in touch with New Covent Garden Market who had an empty unit, and got all the UK and Continental lorries to divert there. We got everything packed and the deliveries still went out that day.

Pumpkins in the bags this week y'all. Pumpkin pie ?

Pumpkin Pie

**1 pumpkin peeled, deseeded and cut into chunks
plain flour, for dusting
½ tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
25g butter/ margarine, melted
1 tbsp icing sugar**

**350g sweet shortcrust pastry
140g caster sugar
½ tsp fresh nutmeg, grated
2 Hen Nation eggs, beaten
175ml milk**

Place the chopped pumpkin in a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Cover with a lid and simmer for 15 mins or until tender. Drain and let cool. Heat oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface and use it to line a 22cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Chill for 15 mins. Line the pastry with baking parchment and baking beans, then bake for 15 mins. Remove the beans and paper and cook for a further 10 mins until the base is pale golden and biscuity. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly. Increase oven to 220C/ Gas 7. Push the cooled pumpkin through a sieve into a large bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the sugar, salt, nutmeg and half the cinnamon. Mix in the beaten eggs, melted butter/ margarine and milk, then add to the pumpkin purée and stir to combine. Pour into the tart shell and cook for 10 mins, then reduce the temperature to 180C/ Gas 4. Continue to bake for 35-40 mins until the filling is just set. Leave to cool, then remove the pie from the tin. Mix the remaining cinnamon with the icing sugar and dust over the pie. Serve chilled.

Galettes with Rainbow Chard (makes 4)

**100g buckwheat flour
5 Hen Nation egg
rainbow chard
sunflower oil**

**good pinch salt
300ml milk
50g butter or margarine, melted
125g cheese, grated**

For the batter, mix the flour and salt in a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add 1 egg, then whisk, adding the milk a little at a time, until you have a smooth batter. Leave to rest for at least 1 hour. Blanch the chard leaves, squeeze, then roughly chop. Add the melted butter / margarine into the batter. Heat an oiled frying pan over a medium-high heat. Put a quarter of the batter into the pan, rolling it around to cover the surface. Cook for about a minute until golden underneath, then flip over. Crack an egg into the centre. Scatter a quarter of the chopped chard and cheese over the whole galette and season. When the underside is cooked to golden brown, use a spatula then your fingertips to lift then fold the edges of the galette into the centre to form a square. Serve immediately, repeat with the rest of the batter and filling.

Sauteed Peppers and Potatoes

**red or yellow peppers
4 cloves garlic
2 or 3 sprigs rosemary**

**80ml olive oil
700g potatoes**

Cut the peppers in half lengthways, discard any seeds, then slice into strips. Peel the cloves of garlic, then squash them flat with the blade of a knife. Heat the olive oil in a large, shallow pan then add the peppers. Leave them to cook, covered by a lid, for 8-10 minutes, until they have softened. Thinly slice the potatoes. Turn the peppers over and continue cooking for 5 minutes. Lift the peppers out and on to a plate, leaving the mixture of sweet juices and olive oil behind in the pan. Add the garlic and the sliced potatoes to the pan, season with salt and black pepper, then tuck in the sprigs of rosemary. When they are golden on the underside, turn them over and lightly colour the other side. Return the peppers to the pan, then pour over 300ml of vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Partially cover the pan with a lid and let the potatoes cook for a further 8 minutes or until tender.

There's good news though about Ruby, the 9-month old Labrador who went missing on a walk in the Stang Forest. She was found a few days ago by Ron, a walker from Leeds - caught up in wire, all skin and bone, and with a big, maggot-infested wound on her front leg. She hadn't eaten for 12 days ! They rushed her to the vet, sadly had to amputate but she is home now and apparently doing well. It was a huge relief to thousands of us who were having sleepless night over her, many of whom went out to join the search. Though losing her leg at such a young age is really sad. Anyway, she is now a local hero, a miracle survivor.

That plumber eventually came back from Scotland to finish plumbing in the freestanding bath. He came downstairs, said he was 'all finished', and as he stood there, water came pouring down through the ceiling light. He managed to stop it then packed up his tools and left. I had to get the electrician to come and disconnect the light, then I had to get another plumbing company to come and redo everything that the other plumber had done. I should be happy now but I'm not as the room looks wrong with the bath in. The bath is massive, shiny and white and has taken the whiteness of the room to another level which already has white walls, white curtains white duvet etc. Not a drop of colour anywhere. I liked it before the bath came, peaceful, all the focus was on the beautiful views. Now it all looks horrible. My house downstairs, has colour, is interesting, has va va voom. The upstairs looks bland and old-fashioned. It never ends. I take all my frustration and angst out on my home décor. Best place for it probably.

Kind wishes, Isobel