



Monday 15TH January 2024

Dear Customer,

It's a beautiful Monday morning. Finally, the sun. Nippy, sunny and dry.

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

Cauliflower and Spinach Curry

1 tbsp olive oil	1 onion, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed	3cm piece ginger, peeled and grated
2 tbsp medium tikka curry powder	2 tbsp tomato purée
1 cauliflower, chopped into florets	200g spinach
400g tin chopped tomatoes	1 vegetable stock cube, made up to 200ml
240g long-grain rice	

Heat the olive oil in a large, deep saucepan over a medium heat and add the onion, garlic and ginger. Cook for 5 mins, until the onion is starting to soften, then add the tikka powder and tomato purée and cook for a further 1 min. Add the cauliflower, spinach, chopped tomatoes and vegetable stock to the pan and increase the heat to high. Cover with a lid, bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 10 minutes until the cauliflower is tender and the spinach has wilted. Serve with rice.

Spicy Cauliflower

50g fresh breadcrumbs	75ml olive oil
600g cauliflower, trimmed	1 tbsp capers
6 garlic cloves, chopped	½ tsp fennel seeds
pinch dried chilli flakes	1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
4 tbsp black olives, chopped	salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Soak the capers in cold water for 20 mins, then squeeze dry and roughly chop then set aside. Toss the breadcrumbs in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and spread them out on a baking tray. Bake in the oven for about 5 minutes, until golden. Remove and set aside. Break the cauliflower into separate small florets. Warm about 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a wide, shallow pan over a medium heat, add the cauliflower and stir well. Leave to cook for about 10 minutes, until the edges start browning slightly, then season to taste and stir gently. Add the capers, then cover and cook for about 5 minutes, until the cauliflower is tender. Drizzle over the remaining olive oil and scatter with the garlic, fennel seeds and chilli flakes. Toss to mix in. Cook for 2 more minutes, then add the parsley and olives. Sprinkle with the toasted breadcrumbs and serve.

Boulangere Potatoes

700g potatoes, peeled and finely sliced	30g butter / margarine
1 onion, peeled and sliced	2 cloves garlic, crushed
3 sprigs fresh thyme leaves	200 ml vegetable stock (warm)
salt & pepper	

Preheat the oven to 180C / Gas 4. Peel and thinly slice the potatoes. Melt 25g of butter or margarine in a saucepan over a gentle heat and add the onion and garlic. Cook slowly for 10 minutes to soften the onion, taking care not to colour it. In an ovenproof dish place a layer of sliced potatoes on the bottom and season with little salt and pepper. Follow this with a layer of the buttery onion and garlic mixture and sprinkle over a little of the fresh thyme leaves. Repeat this process a further twice, then finally finish with a layer of sliced potatoes on top. Pour over the hot vegetable stock, season with a touch more salt and pepper and place the final 5g of butter/ margarine on top. Place the dish in the oven for 1 hour or until the potatoes are cooked.

I've had to banish myself to my bedroom to write this. Downstairs it's too distracting as my big, dark brown piano is being painted white by the decorator and it's fascinating. It's shrinking and blending into the room. I could have done this 20 years ago, it isn't sacrilege. What to do with all the inherited dark oak and mahogany furniture ? It's a no-brainer. The piano looks amazing now. In the end I decided not to attempt to paint it myself, cover it in a gloopy mess. I remember having lessons on it as a child – hopeless. I always had a mental block about reading music, could only play by ear, and improvise. I remember the saxophone lessons I had at Goldsmiths College, would read the first few bars then slip off the page into improvisation, incapable of the necessary concentration. I wish I'd tried harder. I'd love to sit down and play some Mozart. Alas all I can do is the musical equivalent of doodling – bad doodling.

But what does any of this matter now that 'Schnapps' has said we have entered 'the pre-War' phase. What the hell does that mean, war with who ! Cameron has said all the red warning lights are now flashing with Russia, China, Iran. What in God's name are they going to do to us ! Pre-War or pre-Election, it's hard to know. Would they really sacrifice all our lives to win the election; preside over our charred remains from the number 10 bunker, or Silicon Beach. Squirty is rushing round the globe signing security guarantees with anyone and everyone. 'Britain will protect you'. Venezuela wants Guyana back. Off goes the Royal Navy, they send a warship. I didn't know it was policy to protect all our former colonies. And China's former colonies, Britain has already been sending ships on exercises through the Taiwan Straits. I have to say WT*. Britain will protect the whole world.

And when Trump is back in the White House, he's already said he wants out of NATO, probably AUKUS too and that he won't protect Europe. Turkey will use its veto in NATO, Hungary will use its veto in the EU. Britain will find itself alone, at war with Russia, China, Iran, Venezuela, and the Houthi rebels. 'Right, you arrogant, jumped-up little Anglo shits, now we're gonna get you'. And Trump, 'well the Queen's dead.....five years of calling me a *****remember the balloon....'

Hope you have a very good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel