



Monday 27th February 2012

Dear Customer,

Things are still a little tricky with availability after the cold snap both here and on the Continent but hopefully this milder spring-like weather will bring us some spring greens, purple sprouting broccoli and cauliflowers from Cornwall, where they start, in the next week or two.

But for the moment anyway, that leaves us with cabbage ! It is very good for you though and there's lots you can do with it. Cabbage and noodles is delicious: cut the cabbage into strips, add a chopped onion and sweat it down in a covered pot with a little water and sea salt and cook some noodles. When done, add the noodles to the cabbage pot, apply butter or olive oil, some chopped garlic, salt and pepper and possibly caraway seeds if you like them.

For a Sweet and Sour: Finely slice the cabbage, get your pan hot and add some vegetable oil, toss in the cabbage, stirring quickly. Add some tomato puree, a little soy sauce and a dash of Chinese vinegar – add honey, sugar or orange juice to make a bit sweeter.

You could try it with basil and tomato: Fry some chopped tomatoes gently in olive oil then add some garlic and onion. Then add a little tomato puree. Add the cabbage leaves and slowly cook along with some oregano and bay leaves. Add a few basil leaves. Eat with pasta.

Creamy Savoy Cabbage with Carrots

1 Savoy cabbage
4 large carrots
50g butter
4 tbsp double cream
pinch nutmeg

Clean the cabbage, cut in half then remove the core. Rinse the leaves then shred as finely as you can. Cut the carrots into fine, thin strips or grate in a food processor. Bring a pan of water to the boil and add the cabbage and carrots. Boil for 6 minutes until just tender, then drain. Return to the hot pan and add the butter and cream. Season with salt and pepper and add the nutmeg, stirring well to coat. Serve immediately.

Phew, finally back in Richmond anyway and back at my desk. My muscles have just about recovered from the dancing and Myfa has recovered well from her cheese and onion sandwich poisoning. In London I'd booked into a posh, portered hotel for 2 nights as we were having private viewings by boutiques of our new Izzy Lane collection, and this is what one has to do. My car was parked in the underground car park and I couldn't move it else I'd go onto a higher tariff. There were no shops about to buy dog food so I gave Myfa half an old sandwich for breakfast. About 8 hours later she started needing to go to the toilet every 10 minutes – I was up and down in the lift like a yo-yo, running through the marble corridors, past the porters, down the road and out of sight to a bit of grass. Eventually I went and sat an hour with her in the car and decided I had to check out and get out of London. I had a meeting in Hampstead the next morning so drove to a motel on the M1 and stayed there. Until 4am I had to keep running outside with her and ended up falling asleep in my clothes in full central heating. One feels so bad after ! Well I have since been told that onions are poisonous to dogs. I never knew that. Fashion week was good and we got some great orders for the clothes which will hopefully keep the sheep kicking for the next year. Saw some great shows too – Mathew Williamson's and Vivienne Westwood's.

After London I went to stay in the Black Mountains to be somewhere quiet to catch up on my work and then went to Ilfracombe in Devon for a meeting with a potential new dairy. After meeting up with a friend in Lustleigh, I set off late into the night looking for accommodation. I got fairly lost quite quickly. It was getting later and later, I must have tried 12 B and B's and pubs for accommodation and no one would take dogs. I was driving round aimlessly up and down steep, muddy narrow lanes. Sometimes the lanes were just turning into farm tracks. The oil light had been on for about 500 miles and the engine started really grinding and struggling on inclines. I eventually stopped the car to put oil in but it was pitch black and had to feel where the oil cap and hole was. I had a 5 litre can of oil and I poured into where I thought the hole would be. Then I couldn't see to use the dip-stick. I set off again and the oil light went off and the engine stopped grinding, so that was good. In the next village I stopped under a street-lamp to inspect what I'd done. I had poured oil all over the whole engine and in dipping the dip-stick found it coated in oil the whole way up, about nine inches higher than it should have been. I had no idea if this made the car likely to burst into flames...or not. I fully expected it to at any moment so it was a tense onward journey. Unlike the friendly, family-owned establishments I'd tried, I eventually found a Best Western which allowed dogs and we got a room. Even driving back to Yorkshire yesterday, each time I heard a car horn or saw a flashing of lights, I thought it was someone trying to tell me that I was on fire. Anyway, they are a few of my moments of the week.

I hope all is well with you,

Kind wishes,

Isobel