

Monday 3rd December 2012

Dear Customer,

It looks like winter this morning, a thick blanket of snow. Myfa is outside licking it. It's slopping and sloshing so hopefully won't hang around and disrupt deliveries. I gather we have that to look forward to, and the coldest winter for 100 years.

After orange cauliflowers and purple carrots, the bags are looking a little more ordinary this week – banal even ! Our January King and Savoy cabbages, and our carrots, are from Ormskirk. Our sweet potatoes, plum cherry tomatoes, peppers and grapes have come straight up the 'autoroute du soleil' from Almeria and the broccoli is from Doncaster. Broccoli has more vitamin C than oranges and more calcium than whole milk. Without further ado, here are some delicious recipes you could try:

Baked Sweet Potatoes with Honey, Chilli and Rosemary

sweet potatoes, washed and halved
salt and freshly ground black pepper
leaves of a sprig of rosemary

small chilli, thinly sliced, optional
olive oil
1 tbsp clear honey

Preheat the oven to 200C/Gas 6. Score the sweet potatoes in a crisscross pattern with the point of a sharp knife. Place on a baking tray, season and spoon over the olive oil and scatter the chilli, if using. Then spoon a little honey on each potato, cover with foil and bake for 20-25 minutes. Remove the foil, add the rosemary and continue cooking for another 10 minutes or so until the potatoes are cooked.

Surprisingly Delicious Italian Broccoli, Sultana and Chilli Penne

350g penne pasta
2 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, sliced
25g sultanas
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

50g ciabatta bread, roughly torn
20g Parmesan, finely grated (optional)
250g broccoli, cut into bite-sized chunks
½ red chilli, deseeded and chopped
3 tbsp curly parsley, chopped

Cook the penne according to packet instructions to al dente. Meanwhile, preheat the grill to medium and line the grill pan with foil. Mix the torn bread with half the oil in a bowl and season with black pepper. Spread out on the grill pan and grill for 2-3 minutes, turning frequently, until crisp and golden. Cool slightly, transfer to a blender and whiz to coarse crumbs. Stir in the Parmesan. Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes, until softened. Add the broccoli, garlic, chilli and sultanas and cook for 5 minutes, stirring, until the broccoli is tender – add a splash of water to prevent it catching. Drain the pasta and add to the pan with the parsley and lemon zest and juice. Season, toss, then serve, topped with the toasted Parmesan crumbs.

Roast Cabbage with Peppers, Cherry Tomatoes and Balsamic Vinegar

1 cabbage, trimmed and quartered lengthways
3 cloves garlic, unpeeled
2 pinches caster sugar
1 tbsp chopped chives

1 red or yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into strips
4 tbsp olive oil
110g cherry tomatoes
salt and peppers

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Put the cabbage and red pepper into an ovenproof baking dish with the whole cloves of garlic and the olive oil. Season with the sugar, salt and pepper. Mix everything through so it is well coated with the oil. Roast for 40-45 minutes, turning once or twice so that the cabbage browns here and there in the heat. Then add the cherry tomatoes and return to the oven for a further 5 minutes to heat through. Spoon over the balsamic vinegar and toss. Taste and adjust seasoning. Sprinkle over the chives and serve hot or warm with a crusty bread.

It was terrible last week. I was chauffeuring Myfa back from the moors in torrential rain and heard a thud - I'd hit a rabbit. They say that it is never the ones that you see which you hit and it's true. I am so careful, I drive around the lanes at 10mph. But this one darted out of the undergrowth as I was passing. It was hideous, throwing itself around on the road, then lay immobile. I went over thinking, hoping even, that it would be dead but it wasn't – it flashes through your mind that you should drive over it again but I wouldn't have the courage. I put it in the car and brought it home. I filled a laundry basket with hay and covered it to resemble a dark burrow. After an hour or so it was sitting up, but there was a lot of blood. I knew that if I called the vet, they would euthanase her. The next morning I came down with trepidation but found her alive and perky. I transferred her to a big dog cage so I could get a proper look. She was beautiful with big brown eyes. She lay stretched out in the hay looking serene, majestic, and I reckoned the injury was superficial, a scraped nose. I laid out a buffet – carrot, lettuce, grass – she drank but she didn't eat. Next morning, she was really upset, a frightened wild animal in a cage. It was a crisp, sunny morning and I packed her in a wicker hamper and we set off to search for her warren. Once I'd identified the place it happened, I climbed into the fields and saw a group of rabbits playing in an area of long grass, went over and found burrows. I felt sure this was her home and her family. As I put her in the grass, she pricked up her ears. I walked off and didn't look back. The moral of the story – dead looking animals on the road aren't necessarily dead.

Apart from that thank heavens James made it to the final !

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS Please place your Christmas orders as soon as possible. Everything is now on the website and do let us know if you aren't connected and need some 'hard copy'.

PPS Cow Nation blue cheese available now !!