

Monday 18^h February 2013

Dear Customer,

It's a beautiful day. Thank heavens for some sun and a blue sky – what a difference it makes. We have 'flower tops' in the bags this week from Royal Oak farm, from a plant which is somewhere between sprouts and kale !! – delicious prepared and cooked as you would any other green. We also have their Chioggia beetroot which is very nutritious and very, very pretty when you cut them open – full of fibre, anti-oxidants, B vitamins, C vitamins and minerals such as iron, manganese, copper, potassium and magnesium. Here are a few recipes you could try :

Beetroot, Carrot and Potato Cakes

2 medium beetroots, peeled and grated
2 handfuls grated potato
1 egg
¼ tsp pepper
3 tbsp olive oil

2 medium carrots, grated
½ medium onion, thinly sliced
½ tsp salt
25g plain flour
soured cream for serving (optional) or a chutney

Preheat the oven to 150C/300F/Gas 2. In a large bowl combine the vegetables, mix in the egg, salt and pepper and add the flour. Stir well to blend. Heat half the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Using 2 tablespoons per cake, drop 4 cakes into the frying pan. Flatten them with a spatula and cook for 3-4 minutes per side until they are browned. Transfer to a tray in the oven to keep warm and repeat until mixture is all used. Serve with soured cream, yoghurt or a tomato or fruit chutney.

Sweet Beetroot Salad

225g beetroot
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
salt and pepper

225g carrots
75ml olive oil

Boil the beetroot in their skins until tender. Cool, then peel and chop the beetroot. Peel and grate the carrots into the beetroot. Mix the balsamic, oil and seasoning into a dressing and pour over.

Cauliflower, Egg and Potato Curry

3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 red chilli, finely chopped
2 large potatoes, peeled and chunked
1 medium cauliflower, in florets
6 hard-boiled eggs, halved lengthways
4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 large onion, peeled and diced
thumb-sized piece ginger, peeled and grated
2 tbsp curry paste
400ml coconut milk
handful of chopped fresh coriander

Heat a large, deep, non-stick frying pan, wok or shallow saucepan over a low heat. Add the oil, stir in the onion and fry over a medium heat for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally until softened and starting to golden. Stir in the chilli, garlic and ginger into the onion mixture and fry for 2 minutes. Raise heat a little, add the potatoes and cook for 3-4 minutes until outsides are just starting to soften. Stir in the curry paste, cook for a minute then toss in the cauliflower and stir-fry for a further minute to coat. Pour the coconut milk into the pan and stir thoroughly. Add some salt and turn up the heat and bring to the boil, stirring frequently. Half cover the pan and reduce to a slow simmer. Cook the curry for 20-25 minutes, stirring, until the sauce has thickened and the vegetables are tender. Half bury the eggs, yolk-side up in the sauce, then cover and continue to simmer gently for a further 1-2 minutes to heat through. Serve with a scattering of coriander.

I work a lot on a dining chair slumped with awful posture over an Art Deco desk which I can't fit my legs under so have to stretch, in a nasty spine-curve, to reach the keyboard. The result, I deduce, is a lot of accumulating stress in my lower back. On Friday I was aching and climbed up into the attic to find an ancient massage machine that I used years ago, the ones with two unforgiving, hard, rotating balls. I plugged in and sat a long time as it pounded my lower back. I was in fact frackking my back..... back-frackking digging out years of pent up stress energy. I realised that ,of course, in retrospect and after it brought about one of the worst migraines I've ever had with chronic pain up my back into my neck and head. I spent the next 48 hours in and out of sleep and was sick on the hour every hour. Next morning after a slow start – I was fracked full of energy - I felt amazing, I ran across the moors with Myfa, came back ran round the house hoovering, dusting, up and down stairs, setting off the dishwashers, dryers, washing machines simultaneously. I spring-cleaned the guinea pigs' house which is in the utility room and was vibrating with all the machines going off. I really love my guinea pigs and they are so used to domestic appliances. They sit chomping their food and I go straight past their noses with the hoover and they don't move a whisker. Well that was my weekend and now I'm back slumped over the computer again.

I was overwhelmed by your local marketing suggestions and offers of help, thank you so much and I hope to get back to everyone who responded this week – and of course to take your free loaf order. If you don't know what to choose, your default should be the date and pecan batard – it is really delicious. For anyone who speaks French, you will know that 'batard' means bastard. I tried researching the origin for this but couldn't find it. But anyway, my suggestion..... the date and pecan bastard. Though they are all amazing actually.

I hope you are having a good week and enjoying the lovely weather,

Kind wishes,

Isobel