

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

'Allo' dear Customer,

Here are a few delicious recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

**Summer Courgette Pasta**

400g fresh linguine	2 medium courgettes
4 tbsp olive oil	zest of a lemon
handful fresh basil leaves	1 garlic clove
pinch dried chilli flakes	salt and pepper

*Grate the courgettes and pat dry. Cook the linguine according to packet instructions. Drain and tip back into saucepan leaving a little cooking water in the pan with the pasta. Crush the garlic clove and tear the basil leaves. Add these to the pasta along with the courgettes, olive oil, lemon zest, chilli flakes, salt and pepper. Toss together and serve in one big serving dish scattered with basil leaves and a drizzle of olive oil.*

**Courgette and Hazelnut Bread**

400g plain flour	480ml buttermilk
1 large courgette	60g chopped, toasted hazelnuts
30g bran	1 garlic clove
1 tbsp sunflower oil	2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 tsp salt	1 tbsp brown sugar

*Preheat oven to 200C/ Gas 6. Grate the courgettes and squeeze in kitchen roll to remove any moisture. Mince the garlic. Sift the flour, salt and bicarbonate into a large bowl and then add the nuts, sugar and garlic. Mix together well to combine and then add the courgette. Add in the oil and then start to add the buttermilk. You may find you don't need all the buttermilk, or you may need a little more. Mix until just combined into a soft dough. Don't overwork the dough. Shape into a loaf shape and score the top of the loaf with a knife. Bake for 40 minutes or until risen and golden.*

**Aubergine and Courgette Bake**

2 large courgettes, cut in 5mm slices	1 aubergine, cut in 5mm slices
100g spring cabbage, finely shredded	400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 clove garlic, grated	50g Parmesan cheese, grated
handful fresh herbs	salt and black pepper

*Preheat the oven to 200C. Layer the aubergine and courgette slices in an ovenproof dish, alternating between each until they have been used. Liquidise the garlic and tinned tomatoes, then add the cabbage and herbs and liquidise again. Season with salt and black pepper. Pour the tomato sauce over the aubergine and courgette slices and sprinkle over a thick layer of Parmesan. Put in oven and bake for 30 minutes until the crust is golden.*

It's Sunday evening. It usually is when I write this and I got back to Richmond at midnight on Thursday. On Friday I took my flip flops off, put my wellies back on and spent two hours walking round the sheep in the pouring rain. They were pleased to see me. I had left my house spotless but even so, returning to it, it felt grubby and cluttered and annoying. I could see Ernest's trail on the carpet where he had been in and out to feed the guinea pigs but it wasn't that the problem – the house had just dirtied itself in my absence. On arriving back, having driven straight from France, it was midnight, I unpacked the car, sorted washing, cleared the fridge out - that all took hours and then at 3am I started writing my 'to do' list. I have spent since then working my way through the list. That is why I had to go on holiday – to escape the list - that which dictates and controls my life.

My friend Dawn was desperate to get back to the UK, she had had a bit of an emotional time. Holidays can do that – strip you right down. Before re-entering the UK, dogs must visit a vet to be treated for heart and intestinal worms. So on arrival at Calais and after driving down every 'rue' we eventually found a vet. I had read on the internet that a young dog had died of a heart attack after the treatment. I said I wasn't happy about her having it, he told me she'd had it before. After a great deal of deliberation, thinking through our options – which were to stay in France or go home, I agreed for her to have it. He asked when I was travelling back and I said I was going now and he told me I couldn't and had to wait 24 hours. I wasn't aware of that and last time I just left straightaway. It didn't bother me but it was going to be hard breaking the news to Dawn that we weren't allowed out – 24 hours in Calais. She wasn't very happy about it.

I suggested we go and have a look at Sangatte – Dawn looked at me blankly. All I could find was a pretty village – no shanty camp of asylum seekers. We drove round the hinterland of Calais which I found very interesting but Dawn didn't. We couldn't find anywhere to stay so decided to go to Boulogne and drove up the coast road.

"Look! There's England!" I said, seeing the white cliffs. Dawn said she couldn't look at it. We stopped on the coast by some dunes, a war memorial and an old bunker. I got out with Myfa to investigate and have a walk while Dawn stayed in the car. Myfa started eating grass, I really hoped she would throw the pill up, she was starting to get a bit manic. We ended up in the Hotel Ibis in Boulogne. Next morning my friend Helen texted me and told me it was the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D Day Landings and she was listening to Vera Lynn on the radio. I'd been oblivious but googled it, we were there in Normandy and now I wanted to stay for the commemorations. I really wanted to but I knew there wasn't a hope in hell. I emailed Dawn the link and she emailed back "what time are we checking out?"

I was really interested in having a good look at Boulogne. Dawn wasn't but she came with me anyway and I even got her up on the old fortress walls – spectacular views. I've been coming to Boulogne and Calais since I was a baby and this is really the first time I have visited them, I just thought they were P & O ferry ports but found two interesting and very French towns.

Anyway, my dear friend is now safely back in SE11. She has decided she doesn't like the sun and is much happier watching a black and white film with a cup of tea and a biscuit and rain beating at the window.... ..which can be good too !

Kind wishes,

Isobel