

Monday 17th November 2014

Dear Customer,

We have Jonnie Watson's cavolo nero in the bags this week as well as his celery – the ancient remedy for anxiety, rheumatism, insomnia, gout and toothache. It may surprise you to know that celery is a rich source of antioxidants. It is packed with vitamin C, potassium and iron and is a good source of folate. One stick of celery has just 2 calories. This means that 30 sticks of celery has the same number of calories as 1 digestive biscuit. That's a really tough choice.

If you're just about to wash your celery and stick it in a glass..... or dunk it in your tea, hold it right there !

Delia's Quick Braised Celery

1 head celery, trimmed, de-stringed and cut into 3" pieces 25g margarine or butter
1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced 75g carrot, peeled and thinly sliced
225ml vegetable stock made with bouillon cube 1 tbs chopped fresh parsley
salt and freshly milled black pepper

Melt the margarine or butter in the frying pan and cook onions for 3-4 minutes over a medium-high heat until lightly golden, then add the carrots and cook for a further 2 minutes. Now add the celery and continue to fry for 5 minutes more, or until everything is slightly browned at the edges. Season with salt and pepper, then pour in the hot stock and place a lid on the pan. Turn down the heat and simmer gently for 20 minutes until the vegetables are almost tender, then take off the lid and increase heat to medium and simmer until the liquid has reduced and become slightly syrupy – about 5 minutes. Serve the celery with the juices poured over and sprinkled with the parsley. Nice with mashed potatoes !

Celery Braised in White Wine, Cream and Thyme

1 bunch celery, separated into stems small bunch thyme, woody stalks removed
150ml white wine 250ml double cream
1 clove garlic, crushed salt and freshly ground black pepper
25g butter

Preheat the oven to 180C. Using a potato peeler, remove any tough strings. Cut each stem in half and for the thicker stems, cut in half down the length too. Lay the celery end to end in a rectangular baking dish, tucking in the thyme sprigs. In a jug, stir together the wine, cream and crushed garlic. Season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Pour the wine and cream over the celery and dot the butter over the top. Loosely cover with foil and bake in the oven for an hour or so until the celery is just tender when pierced. Remove the foil and bake for a further 30-45 minutes until the top is golden and bubbling.

Cheese, Celery and Walnut Scones with Parsley Butter

225g self-raising flour 2 tsp baking powder
50g butter 125g Cheddar cheese, grated
2 sticks celery, finely chopped 50g walnuts, roughly chopped
1 large free-range egg 6 tbs milk

For the Parsley Butter:

50g butter 2 tbs parsley, finely chopped

Preheat the oven 220C / Gas 7 and grease a baking tray. Place the flour and baking powder into a large bowl, rub in the butter until it resembles fine breadcrumbs and then stir in the finely chopped celery, 100g of the grated cheese and the chopped walnuts. Break the egg into a measuring jug, lightly beat and make up to 150ml with the milk, reserving a little to brush the scones with. Mix gently into a soft dough. Knead lightly on a floured surface and roll out to approx. 2cm thick, cut into 6cm rounds and place on a baking tray, re-roll any trimmings. Brush the tops of the scones with the remaining egg and milk mix and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese. Bake for 12-15 minutes until risen and golden.

Mix together the softened butter and parsley and serve the scones warm split in half topped with the butter.

I spoke to a French friend the other evening who lives down in the South of France. She was telling me about her new boyfriend who she met in Corsica recently. She said she said she finds him ugly and that she doesn't even like him. He's coming to stay with her for the weekend and while he was trying to make plans of what they could visit together, she said she wasn't going to go out the house with him. I said she needn't and should just get food in, and videos so she wouldn't have to talk to him. She said she would just sit and read.

I think she might be onto something. Why go through that horrible, illness and madness-inducing agony of being in love when you can just be with someone you don't like. Or someone just about tolerable. To not care what they do or say, if you see them or you don't, whether they stay or go. Surely it's a no-brainer. I'll keep you updated on this one, we'll see if it turns out to be a good working model. She may be ahead of the game.

Ernest is back, by default, looking after the sheep after a year's break. He came with me to walk Myfa on the moors the other day. He's great company as I don't have to speak to him and he doesn't have to speak to me of course. Once he's got the Daily Mail headlines off his chest, he quiets down. I remarked how silent it was and he said "apart from the odd gorse". "Grouse" I said and laughed for the next five minutes. He just has no idea how funny he is. He makes such a mess of words sometimes. He'll half know the word he's trying to say then makes the other part up. I wish I'd written them all down for that eventual book. He's just brilliant.

Our lovely new Izzy Lane collection has just gone online – we have some very cool coats and skirts this season at www.izzylane.co.uk from our beautiful sheep. 20% discount for all my dear Farmaround customers using FAR2 discount code.

Hope this finds you well,

Kind wishes,

Isobel