

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's a grey and rainy, miserable day here in Richmond. We had been looking forward to the glorious spring weekend weather the forecasters had promised but as ever, they were talking about the south. We are still in snowdrop mode. The snowdrops have been out since late December and are still going strong and not a daffodil in sight. I don't want to know what's happening in London, but at a guess – you are fully in bloom. Spare a thought for us. It must be very disorientating for our driver who goes back and fore to London – spring, winter, spring, winter, spring, winter. I can't see any upside for us on this topic. Here are some super easy and delicious recipes you could try this week:

**Broccoli, Chilli and Tomato Spaghetti**

400g spaghetti	1 tbsp olive oil
350g broccoli, in small florets	1 red chilli, finely sliced ( to taste)
1 lemon, zested and squeezed	300g tomatoes, chopped

*Cook the spaghetti according to packet instructions. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan and add the broccoli, chilli and zest. Cook on a medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring often. After 5 minutes add the chopped tomato to the pan and cook for a further 1-2 minutes until they begin to soften and the broccoli is tender. Squeeze in the lemon juice and add the zest and give everything another good stir. Remove from the heat. Drain the spaghetti and add to the pan with the cooked broccoli and tomatoes. Toss well and serve. Add grated cheese if required.*

**Broccoli, Tomato and Macaroni Bake**

200g macaroni	350g broccoli, in small florets
3 tbsp corn flour	630ml skimmed milk
100g spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped	1 tbsp French Dijon mustard
50g mature Cheddar cheese, grated	50g breadcrumbs (1½ slices)
3 springs thyme, leaves picked	300g tomatoes, sliced in rounds

*Preheat oven to 200C/Gas 6. Bring a large pan of water to the boil, add the macaroni and cook for 5 minutes, then add the broccoli and cook for a further 3 minutes. Drain and tip into a 2-litre baking dish. Make a paste with the corn flour and 2 tbsp of the milk. Pour the rest of the milk into a pan and bring to the boil. Add the paste and whisk continuously until you have a smooth, velvety sauce. Stir in the spring onions, the mustard and two-thirds of the cheese then pour the sauce over the macaroni and broccoli. Mix the breadcrumbs with the remaining cheese and the thyme. Arrange the tomato slices over the top of the dish, slightly overlapping as you go, then scatter the herby crumbs over the top. Bake for 20-25 minutes until the top is golden and crusty and the filling is bubbling. Allow to stand for 5 minutes, season with freshly ground black pepper and serve.*

**Spring Greens with Lemon Dressing**

250g broccoli, in florets	400g spring greens, thick stalks removed, shredded
2 cloves garlic	zest and juice of 1 lemon
2 tbsp olive oil	

*Bring a pan of water to the boil then add the broccoli and greens and cook for about 5 minutes until tender. To make the dressing, mix the garlic, lemon juice and zest, olive oil and some seasoning together. Drain the greens well, mix with the dressing and serve.*

**Spring Greens with Crème Fraiche**

450g trimmed spring greens  
4½ tbsp. crème fraiche  
Sprinkle of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

*Cut the trimmed spring greens in half lengthways. Bring a wide, shallow pan of salted water to the boil and cook the green for 1-2 minutes until tender then drain well. Mix the crème fraiche in the pan with a sprinkling of salt and black pepper and bring almost to the boil. Add the spring greens and gently reheat. Transfer the greens to a warmed shallow dish and spoon over the crème fraiche. Sprinkle with a little black pepper and serve.*

I am still absorbed by ebay at the moment and going through the rollercoaster highs and lows of buying catering equipment. My particular high came when I bought some double crepe plates for £75 – the new price being around £950. You can't buy crepes up here so that is very exciting. I've been looking at crepe making videos and it looks very easy to scrape the batter over the edge by mistake and down the side of the machine – there's no rim to hold it on. I have a £5 bid on at the moment for a blackboard, cut out in the shape of a huge bull and obviously meant for a butchers. I will be chalking 'organic cauliflower soup with fresh parsley and croutons £3.80' on it. The irony is irresistible. My low came when I regretted putting a £82 bid on a job lot of café tables and chairs. After the bid I blew the photos up and they were in a really bad state and I couldn't work out how to retract my bid. Then, two days later, thank God, someone outbid me. I can't tell you the relief.

We are still waiting for the lease to be concluded, then all systems go and we will vacate our existing 2 premises. Busy days ahead !

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Kind wishes,

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