



Monday 3rd August 2015

Dear Customer,

For once, I am not going to mention the weather. It is beyond mention in its thick, grey, sunless, claggy, oppressive and cold nature. It is no summer at all. I still have the cold on my chest and I am not the only one. I would be panicking by now 14 days in but read that while most people believe a cough lasts between 7 and 9 days, in actual fact, they usually last 18-21 days. So I am gratefully within the norm, for the moment at least. The average adult gets 2 – 5 colds a year, so I should not complain at my first in 8 years. I just hope there won't be some form of 'catch-up' – you know 28 colds in quick succession – 546 days' worth if my mathematics are correct, or the layering up of them into mega colds. People keep saying that I should go to the doctor and get antibiotics. Therein lies one of humanity's greatest problems.

Ernest had his first ever bad chest cold a few months ago and shut himself away for 2 months. I think I saw him once when he popped round, and as he was leaving, with his usual cheer his parting words were "I have just one wish – to drop dead". When I saw him the other day he told me he had been driven mad with a persistent cough for ages afterwards - "...as if there was someone inside me, tickling me with a feather...".

Anyway, onto the important stuff, we have little baby swedes in the bags this week, new tender green curly kale and Marfona potatoes from Rosemary Wass. From Jonnie Watson we have spinach and Cos lettuces. Here are a few tasty and I daresay, very nutritious, recipes you could try this week:

Kale in Balsamic Butter

<i>½ mug balsamic vinegar</i>	<i>2 tbsp unsalted butter or margarine</i>
<i>1 bag kale (or cabbage)</i>	<i>drizzle of olive oil</i>
<i>sea salt and freshly ground black pepper</i>	

Sizzle the balsamic vinegar in a pan over a high heat until it bubbles. Reduce to a thick, sticky syrup. Remove from heat and add in the butter or margarine. Roughly chop the greens, keeping them chunky and cut off any thick stems or woody bits. Plunge the greens into boiling water until glossy and bright – a minute or so. Drain and gloss with oil and season. Mix through the balsamic vinegar butter, adjust seasoning and serve.

Tahini Greens

<i>4 tbsp tahini</i>	<i>4 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>2 tbsp red wine vinegar</i>	<i>2 tbsp water</i>
<i>½ tsp ground cumin</i>	<i>2 lemons, zest and juice</i>
<i>3 garlic cloves, finely minced</i>	<i>sea salt and black pepper</i>
<i>bag of kale</i>	<i>pinch of chilli flakes or powder</i>

In a bowl whisk the tahini, olive oil, red wine vinegar, water, ground cumin and the zest and juice of one of the lemons. Add one of the minced garlic cloves and season. Remove any thick stalks and roughly chop the kale and put in a saucepan. Cover them with hot water, bring to the boil and simmer for a minute or so until bright green, then drain and rinse. Fold the remaining garlic through the greens, season and add a bit of olive oil. Add a good grating of lemon zest and a good squeeze of the juice. Swirl the tahini on the base of a plate and pile the greens on top, finishing with a bit more oil, lemons zest, salt, pepper and a little chilli.

Cream of Roasted Swede Soup

<i>1 swede, peeled and cubed</i>	<i>3 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>salt and freshly ground black pepper</i>	<i>1 onion, finely chopped</i>
<i>2 carrots, finely sliced</i>	<i>2 stalks celery, finely sliced</i>
<i>1 clove garlic, crushed</i>	<i>6 stalks fresh thyme, leaves picked</i>
<i>2 pints vegetable stock</i>	<i>140ml single cream</i>

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Place the cubes of swede in a roasting tray and drizzle over 2 tablespoons of olive oil and season. Roast in the oven for 25-30 minutes until golden brown and tender, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile heat the remaining tablespoon of oil in a large heavy-based saucepan, stir in the onion, carrots, celery, garlic and thyme leaves and fry for 4-5 minutes until softened but not browned. Add the roasted swede to the pan and pour over the stock. Bring gently to the boil, cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Puree the soup in a food processor or liquidiser until completely smooth. Pass through a sieve for an extra fine texture if preferred. Transfer the soup back into the pan, stir in the cream, heat through and adjust seasoning. Serve with some fresh thyme leaves and freshly ground black pepper.

The café is becoming BBC1 drama'ish in its drama. One lady arrived and said she was on a blind date, meeting a man for the first time who she'd met on a dating site. Apparently they were holding hands within half an hour – so that went well. An elderly couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a vegetarian lasagne and the lady said that if she'd murdered him when they met, she'd be out by now. We have a lovely boy who is disabled and comes with his carer each week. They drive all the way from Middlesbrough to have a cup of tea and a banana and he refuses to go anywhere else. There was a fracas with a couple of workmen who wanted sausages with their breakfast. "Vegetarian ! Vegetarian !" they kept saying. They threw the menu at Diane and told her she was a 'Muslim'. So it's all happening at the café.

Hopefully life will be back to normal next week.

Kind wishes,

Isobel