



Monday 21st December 2015

Dear Customer,

Up here in the glacial period, the Yorkshire Dales, it was a shocking 16.5 degrees today and my car was covered in red Saharan sand. When I walk Myfa on the moors, I keep complaining that it's too hot, that it's boiling, I huff and puff and tie my coat round my waist and roll up my sleeves. I don't usually see the goldfish from November till March and spend the winter wondering if they're dead or if the heron's been, but they're still swimming about...merrily. I like it like this. It's the shortest day tomorrow which is just fantastic, we made it.

I'm afraid the broccoli wasn't good enough quality to put in the bags but we have replaced it with other things. We've got the rough diamond of veg in the bags this week especially for Christmas. I thought you might want to impress your family or guests with a celeriac puree smear.... or at least impress yourself..... a dollop and a quick swipe across the plate. Dollop, swipe, dollop, swipe, dollop, swipe, on each plate.

Celeriac Puree

1 celeriac, peeled and roughly chopped
25g butter

75ml whipping cream
salt and black pepper

Cover the celeriac with water and a pinch of salt and boil until very soft. Strain it in a sieve, removing as much liquid as possible. Heat the cream and melt the butter to a nutty brown colour, the ingredients are best combined while still warm. Put the cream, butter and celeriac in a blender and puree until completely smooth. Season to taste.

Smashed Celeriac

1 celeriac, peeled
handful fresh thyme, leaves picked
salt and black pepper

olive oil
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3-4 tbsp water

Slice about 1cm off the bottom of your celeriac and roll onto the flat edge so it's safe to slice. Dice it into 1cm cubes. Put a casserole-type pot on a high heat, add 3 good lugs of olive oil, then add the celeriac, thyme and garlic with a little seasoning. Stir around to coat and fry quite fast, giving a little colour for 5 minutes. Turn the heat down to a simmer, add the water or stock, place a lid on top and cook for around 25 minutes, until tender. Season carefully to taste and stir around with a spoon to smash up the celeriac.

Braised Sticky Root Vegetables

4 carrots
celeriac or swede
2 tbsp maple syrup
coriander and caraway seeds crushed, to taste

4 parsnips
1 onion, quartered
3 tbsp olive oil
2 sprigs thyme

Preheat the oven to 220C / Gas 7. Peel the vegetables and cut them uniformly lengthwise. In a bowl mix the syrup, oil, spices and thyme and add salt and pepper. Add the vegetables and coat well. Spread on baking sheet covered in baking parchment. Bake for about 25 minutes, turning once midway through.

Sprouts with Chestnuts, Lemon and Herb Crumb

450g Brussel sprouts
6 tbsp breadcrumbs
grated zest of a lemon
2 tbsp chopped parsley

110g cooked chestnuts
2 tbsp butter or margarine
leaves from 2 sprigs thyme

Trim and halve the sprouts and cook until tender. Mix in half the butter or margarine and keep them warm. Heat the rest of the butter or margarine in a frying pan and add the crumbs and lemon zest. Season with salt and pepper and fry until crisp and golden. Add the chestnuts and heat through then stir in the herbs. Tip over the sprouts and serve.

It was lovely seeing Tim Peake blast off. I was very surprised that he was only travelling 250 miles into space, the same distance as Richmond to London. I thought he'd be travelling light years. It made me think back to my comment the other week about managing to cling onto the earth as it spins about in the universe. I looked up how fast it spins and the answer is disturbing, just 1000 miles an hour. That seems far too slow for comfort – no margin for messing around. Once they puncture it with a frack and suck out all the gas from its core, then what's going to happen. When Mr Peake was speaking to the press he said it was strange to see how tiny the earth was from one window and how utterly black it was from the window the other side. Where does it end and what's on other side of the end. We'll let him worry about that one because down here it's Christmas.

It remains for me to say how humbled and grateful I am that you stay with us, with Farmaround. I feel very privileged to have such amazing customers. You are simply the best. You're better than all the rest.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

from all of us at Farmaround