



Monday 22nd August 2016

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Revelling no doubt in the absurdity of ending the Olympics one short off the top of the league table. We get so used to being losers and humiliated at every world event - the Eurovision Song Contest, the Football. This has been alarming.

To settle your shock we have cavolo nero appearing in the bags this week. It is so healthy, packed with antioxidants, vitamins and minerals including lutein, vitamins A, C, K, fibre, calcium, manganese and iron.

Pasta with Cavolo, Orange and Chilli

400g tagliatelle or pappardelle pasta
40g hazelnuts, halved
3 cloves garlic, finely sliced
zest of half an orange
grated hard cheese to serve, optional

bag cavolo nero
6 tbsp olive oil
2 red chillis, deseeded and chopped
25g flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

Cook the pasta to 'al dente' according to packet instructions. Meanwhile remove the tough ribs from the cavolo and wash the leaves, plunge into boiling water and cook for 7 minutes. Drain well, squeeze the excess water from the cavolo and chop it roughly. Toast the hazelnuts with a tablespoon of oil in a frying pan until golden. Tip into a bowl along with the oil from the pan. When the pasta has about four minutes of cooking time left, heat the rest of the oil gently and cook until the garlic is pale gold, add the orange zest and cavolo, season well and heat through. Drain the pasta, return it to its pan and add the hazelnuts with the oil and the contents of the frying pan along with more seasoning and the parsley. Serve with the grated cheese if desired.

To roast your broccoli, cut into small 3cms florets including the stalks and place them in a large bowl. Add to the bowl a tbsp of sesame oil, a tbsp of vegetable oil, a tbsp of sesame seeds and some salt and pepper. Mix them well so the broccoli is well-coated in the seasoning and oil. Place on a baking tray and roast at 180C/ 350F/ Gas 4 for about 20 minutes, or until golden and slightly crisp on the edges. You can eat as is, use it as a delicious salad ingredient or try this toastie:

Roasted Broccoli and Cheese Toasted Sandwich

160g mature organic cheddar, sliced
100g roasted broccoli
50g butter or margarine

4 slices of white bread
pinch black pepper
splash of Worcestershire sauce

Divide the cheese equally between two pieces of bread. Roughly chop the broccoli and arrange it on top of the cheese. Season with pepper and Worcestershire sauce and top the sandwiches with the two remaining slices of bread. Spread the top and bottom of the sandwiches evenly with the butter or margarine. In a heavy-based frying pan over a low heat, lay the sandwiches in the pan and slowly heat so the bottom of the sandwiches turn crisp and golden, about 3-4 minutes. Flip them and cover the pan with a lid so the cheese melts. Check every minute or so to make sure it doesn't burn. Allow to cool a little and serve.

Apart from Gelert, the dachshund we had when I was a child, I have had three dogs in my life. A rescued sort of Setter/Labrador, a golden retriever and now Myfa, a black Labrador. These three have spanned my adult life, a life where I have had to spend day after day, hour upon hour on river banks, watching and applauding. All three were never happier and more themselves than when they were searching with their paws in the river beds, plunging their heads under the water to bring up rocks and ferry them onto the grass. Myfa rolls the rocks around as if they are alive and manically pulls the grass up behind them. I've often wondered why and what it is a throwback to as it's nothing to do with their modern role 'getting up' pheasants. I was musing on how Labradors aren't depicted in any old paintings – only spaniel and wolfhound types. I thought they were probably introduced much later from Labrador in the last century or so. So when I got home I hit Google. What I found was that Labradors originate from Canada and descend from the, now extinct, St Johns Water dogs. Their role was to aid the fishermen, going under the water to bring up ropes and nets and accompanying the carts back home catching any fish that leapt off into the grass. What I find astonishing is how this seems to have passed into their DNA and has transferred across hundreds of years, in the same way the drive to 'put up pheasants' has manifested into their DNA in more recent years. They are trained for a 'job' and the job becomes instinctive and is passed through the generations. Myfa was 8 inches long when I got her, her mother certainly didn't teach her anything. It throws up a lot of questions. And of course if this is happening with one species, it is probably happening with most of them including the human one. What exactly does end up in our genes, in our blueprint, and how much of who we are is coming from the 'jobs' and learned behaviour of our forebears.

What exactly is in the DNA stuff or is there another explanation. Anyway, I'm going to stop thinking about it now. I'll just pass it over to you 😊.

Have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel