



Monday 22nd May 2017

CORRECT PHONE NUMBER IS 01748 850700

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. The weather here is overcast but quite warm and we have finally had some much-needed rain. It looks like a lovely week ahead, like summer, and especially in London.

Mushrooms are so clever. In case you missed the new research a year or so ago, or my writing about it, mushrooms can make vitamin D in the same way that we ourselves do. If you are stuck indoors when the sun is shining, simply put your mushrooms out to sunbathe for you – pop them on your window sill and they will create vitamin D which you can then eat. They contain a 'provitamin' called ergosterol that gets converted into vitamin D when exposed to the sun's ultraviolet. So after your mushrooms have had a nice time in the sun, here are a few ways to eat them:

Mushroom Ragù

1 tbsp olive oil	1 onion, chopped
200g mushrooms, thickly sliced	1 tbsp tomato puree
100ml vegetable stock, hot	100ml red wine
thyme leaves	

Heat the oil in a wide saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes until softened. Stir in the mushrooms, cover and cook for 5 minutes until the mushrooms have released some juice. Uncover and cook for a few minutes to evaporate the juice then stir in the tomato puree. Cook for 30 seconds then stir in the red wine. Bubble for a few minutes to reduce by half then stir in the stock with a few thyme leaves. Bubble for a few minutes until reduced a little then season. Delicious served with mashed potato and a green.

Mushroom Carbonara

2 tbsp olive oil	30g butter or margarine
small onion, finely chopped	2-3 garlic cloves, crushed
10 sage leaves, shredded	200g mushrooms, sliced
400g spaghetti or linguine	2 Hen Nation eggs, beaten
100g cheese	

Melt the butter or margarine in a frying pan over a medium-high heat then fry the onion for 5 minutes until softened and golden. Add the garlic and fry for 30 seconds. Add the sage and mushrooms to the pan then fry for 3-4 minutes longer until golden and tender. Meanwhile cook the pasta in boiling salted water for 10-12 minutes until al dente. Drain and return to the saucepan. Quickly mix the beaten eggs into a hot saucepan with the pasta stirring vigorously to coat all the strands. Add the mushroom and onion along with the cheese. Season with lots of black pepper and serve, perhaps with a green salad.

Lentil and Courgette Bake

3 tbsp olive oil	2 onions, finely chopped
250g green lentils	500ml vegetable stock
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped	400g carrots, peeled and finely chopped
450g courgettes, finely chopped	2 tsp paprika
pinch dried chilli flakes	handful black olives, stoned
2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes	100g Cheddar cheese, optional

Cook the lentils in the vegetable stock for 15 minutes until al dente. Drain, reserving the stock. Heat the oil in a casserole and cook the onion, garlic, carrots and courgettes until softened. Stir in the lentils, paprika, chilli flakes and then the chopped tomatoes. If the mixture looks a little dry, add 100ml of the reserved vegetable stock. Season then sprinkle with the grated cheese if using and bake in the oven for 20 minutes or until the cheese is golden. Scatter with the olives and serve.

The day after I found the baby starling in Northallerton town centre and had to drive it to a wildlife sanctuary, I set off to Kendal to see our skirt and jacket manufacturer. Just 15 minutes out of Richmond there was a baby rabbit in the middle of the road. I brought the traffic to a standstill and went to pick it up. It had been hit by a car and its back end seemed paralysed. Impossible to know if it was bruised and shocked or irreparably broken. Ernest was with me, coming for a run out as he'd never been to the Lake District before despite it being only an hour or so away. He said I should just put it in the grass verge, I wasn't going to do that and had to give it a chance. I put it on a towel on the back seat next to Myfa, I kept a check on it, it seemed alert and was looking round. I stopped in Hawes and went into the SPAR shop, found a small box with cellotape and pens which the staff emptied out for me. I had to get to Kendal but if it was still alive by the time I got home I would go to the wildlife rescue centre again with it. Somewhere between Hawes and Kendal it died. I kept it in the car, I would take it 'home', back to where I found it.

After my meeting I drove to Ambleside to a vegetarian restaurant. Joy of joy a whole menu to choose from, Ambleside is full of veggie restaurants and guest houses. I decided I wanted to live there. I'd never really appreciated the Lake District much before but it was stunning and Myfa spent some time paddling and swimming in Lake Windermere.

On the way back going across the moors there was a tiny lamb on the side of the road barely a couple of days old. I could feel Ernest praying I wouldn't notice it. Of course I would notice it, it's all I see. I slowed down, it was separated from its mother who was on the other side of a tight wire fence. There was no way that lamb could get back to its mother. I pulled up and put my hazard lights on. The lamb was panicking. I went and opened the gate and told Ernest to crouch down out of sight the other side of it while I crouched down out of sight. Eventually the lamb should work its way round to the open gate. After about 10 minutes of being crouched down Ernest got up and said 'Come on, it will find its own way back in'. 'No it ***** won't I yelled back'. 'You stay there' I told him and I got into the field with the other sheep, ran down to the bottom, over a fence and out onto a track. The lamb was now between me and the gate. I slowly edged it up as it threw itself against the fence and eventually threw itself through the open gate and ran back to its mother. It drank and drank from her and had probably been out for a long time. Thank heavens for that. I drove back laying baby bunny to rest on the way. Oh the joys of the spring in the countryside !

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel