



Monday 16th October 2017

Dear Customer,

It's Monday morning and we are enveloped by a spooky, thick, yellow pre-Ophelia fog. I don't know how much of it we will feel here but my house is very exposed and I wouldn't be surprised after all the effort to declutter and clean my house for the Airbnb booking, if a tree doesn't come crashing through the roof. Actually, I worry more about the sheep. Some years ago several of them were killed when a hay rack blew over onto them in strong winds.

On a cheerier note we have delicious crunchy celery in the bags this week full of vitamin K, folate, potassium, manganese, B2, copper, vitamin B6, vitamin C, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium and vitamin A. And as for the red cabbage, you only need to look at the colour to know how good for you that is. It has a wealth of phytochemicals, antioxidants, nutrients, vitamins and minerals including folate, calcium, magnesium B Vitamins, iron, vitamins A, C, E and K. A dollop of a red cabbage salad a day will keep the bugs at bay, the doctor away.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try:

Quick Braised Celery

1 head celery, de-stringed and cut into 3" pieces 25g butter or margarine
1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced 75g carrot, peeled and thinly sliced
225ml vegetable stock, made with cube 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
salt and black pepper

Melt the butter or margarine in the frying pan and begin to cook the onion for 3-4 minutes over a medium-high heat until lightly golden then add the carrots and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the celery and continue to fry for 5 minutes more or until everything is slightly browned at the edges. Season with salt and black pepper then pour in the hot stock and place a lid on the pan. Turn down the heat and simmer gently for 20 minutes until the vegetables are almost tender then take the lid off and increase the heat to medium and continue to simmer until the liquid has reduced and become slightly syrupy – about 5 minutes. Serve the celery with the juices poured over and sprinkled with parsley.

Potato, Celery and Bean Soup

600g potatoes, diced 1 tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed 1 carrot, diced
2 sticks celery, sliced 400g tin mixed beans, drained and rinsed
1½ tsp dried mixed herbs 1 vegetable stock cube
850ml water 2 tsp tomato puree
salt and pepper 2 tbsp fresh chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and gently fry the garlic, carrot, celery and potatoes for 3-4 minutes. Add all the other ingredients and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10-15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Season to taste and sprinkle with parsley to serve.

Crunchy Red Cabbage and Apple Coleslaw

2 apples 1 lemon, zested and juiced
350g red cabbage, finely shredded 175g carrots, grated
4 celery sticks, finely diced 100g raisins
50g sunflower seeds 50g pistachio or pine kernels
1 tsp vegetarian Worcestershire sauce (or soy sauce) 300ml natural yoghurt
pinch sea salt ground black pepper
150g crumbly white cheese eg Wensleydale, optional

Core and finely dice the apple, place in a large bowl and add the lemon zest and juice. Add the shredded cabbage, the grated carrot and diced celery to the bowl. Mix in the raisins, sunflower seeds, pistachio nuts, Worcestershire sauce and yoghurt, combine and season. Serve the coleslaw with the cheese crumbled on top if using.

I'm still cleaning, de-cluttering, moving furniture about. I wouldn't recommend this to my worst enemy – well maybe I would. I have less than a week to go and it feels like I've barely started, there's so much more to do. I have spent the weekend with a migraine – a combination of paint fumes, stress and exhaustion – and a tooth abscess. So that has wiped 2 days out of my schedule. I've managed the odd thing despite it, I cleaned the toaster and I cleaned the kettle, scrubbed out the lime scale but I have damaged it and it is now leaking. In the course of last week's cleaning I broke the remote control which operates the main TV and the music system so both now don't work. I cleaned it with moist cotton wool buds and it hasn't worked since. I put it in the airing cupboard, changed the batteries – nothing. So it's one step forward and six steps back. I'm really, really fed up with it. As for light bulbs, there must be about 10 variations in my house for different lamps, spotlights etc. ranging from standard to utterly obscure. Some need replacing and I have to work out what needs what and where I can get them. The stress is comparable to moving into a new house or preparing a house for sale, it is just horrible. 'That'll do', isn't really part of my vocabulary – if I apply myself to something it has to be perfect and when it can't be I am miserable. And it isn't always in our power to make things perfect, it rarely is.

I haven't heard anything from the lady who is renting it so I messaged her yesterday to ask what sort of time she was expecting to arrive on Saturday. I have had no response. Maybe after all this she isn't coming.

Meanwhile all my other work is piling up in the background.

Hope you have a good week. As for me, today I am cleaning the upstairs terrace, cleaning windows, oven, bathrooms, raking leaves and taking more boxes of clutter into the roof, which given the weight of what is now up there, I fear will cave in – hurricane or no hurricane.

Kind wishes,

Isobel