



Monday 26th February 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. We have delicious, nutty Jerusalem artichokes in the bags this week. You could steam them and mash them with butter. You can also saute them to crisp on the outside and tender inside. You can bake them like jacket potatoes, split them open and melt butter or margarine into them or drizzle with a little chilli oil. They are an excellent source of minerals, containing the most amount of iron of any of the tubers and lots of potassium and copper. Also carotenes, B complex vitamins and more.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try with them:

Sauteed Jerusalem Artichokes with Garlic and Bay Leaves

<i>a few bay leaves</i>	<i>450g Jerusalem artichokes</i>
<i>olive oil</i>	<i>2 cloves garlic</i>
<i>splash of white wine vinegar</i>	<i>salt and pepper</i>

Peel and cut the artichokes into chunks. Place them in an oiled frying pan and fry on a medium heat until golden on both sides. Add a few bay leaves, 2 cloves of garlic finely sliced, a splash of white wine vinegar, some salt and pepper, and place a lid on top. After about 20 to 25 minutes they will have softened up nicely and you can remove the lid and the bay leaves. Continue cooking for a couple of minutes to crisp the artichoke slices up one last time then serve straight away.

Crispy Jerusalem Artichokes with Roasted Garlic and Rosemary

<i>500g Jerusalem artichokes</i>	<i>half a garlic bulb</i>
<i>level tbsp rosemary leaves, chopped</i>	<i>pinch ground mace</i>
<i>2 tbs vegetable oil</i>	<i>15g butter or margarine</i>
<i>2 tsp lemon juice</i>	

Heat the oven to 180C/ 160C Fan/ Gas 4. Soak the artichokes in cold water for 20 minutes to loosen any dirt, then scrub them with a scourer making sure any grit is removed. Halve the small ones and quarter the big ones and put in a roasting tin with the half garlic bulb divided into two and the rosemary. Coat everything in oil and season. Roast for 45-50 minutes until tender inside and crispy outside. To finish, squeeze the softened garlic cloves from their skins and toss with the roasted artichokes along with the mace, lemon juice and butter.

Jerusalem Artichoke and Carrot Soup

<i>500g Jerusalem artichokes, peeled and diced</i>	<i>500g carrots, peeled and chopped</i>
<i>25g butter</i>	<i>1 onion, chopped</i>
<i>1.2 litres vegetable stock</i>	<i>50ml single cream (optional)</i>
<i>2 tbs chopped chives</i>	<i>handful of croutons, to serve</i>

In a large saucepan melt the butter over a low heat and soften the onion for 8 minutes, stirring often, until translucent. Add the artichokes and carrots to the pan with a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes to soften the vegetables slightly. Add the stock, bring to the boil, then cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Transfer to a blender, in batches if needed, and blend until completely smooth. Return to the pan with the single cream and reheat gently. Divide between warmed bowls, scatter with chives and crouton and drizzle over a little extra cream if desired.

On Friday morning Myfa lost her brave battle against the side effects of the steroids. The bug I think cleared a long time ago with the antibiotics. These were prescribed for the inappetence and lethargy from the bug from which would no doubt have recovered with time and a hot water bottle. I sought a second opinion from the head vet as I didn't want to give her them. He said it is what he would have prescribed, I tried to put my own doubts aside and remembered my father had been on them for decades for his rheumatoid arthritis.

What they did over the course of these weeks to my beautiful, gentle dog is indescribable. They burned her muscles away leaving her legs emaciated, they ate her red blood cells, her little pink tummy turned white with anaemia, her tiny pink nipples turned black and scaly. Her liver enzymes soared with the toxicity in her liver. They ate her alive. She couldn't breathe. Every night she was unable to sleep, her breathing was hard, fast and laboured. Nothing I could do could relax or comfort her because the steroids act like a machine – relentlessly burning and sapping her of everything. The vets sought an underlying condition for the symptoms, never once suggested these were all side effects from the steroids. I was lost but on my own research I realised this was all down to the steroids. The poison I was feeding her rolled up in little pieces of ham – she trusted her mummy.

When I fully realised what the steroids were doing to her and that it was purely the steroids, I weaned her off. She was so weak and she drank from a syringe in my arms like a puppy. She started to eat again, she started regaining strength. I felt like I was getting my dog back. She could sleep peacefully, she could walk unaided if I got her up. I could comfort her and she would respond.

I read about milk thistle and spoke to the vet about it when I told him I was taking her off the steroids (which he said was only a homeopathic level of a dose – to some dogs maybe, but to my finely tuned, healthy dog, an atom bomb of a dose). He told me it would be a good idea and would detox her liver. After two days of milk thistle she started with diarrhoea.

The colour of her stools changed, I could see the detox was working on her liver, she was cleansing. I got as much liquid into her as possible but with her upset tummy she went off her food. I should have waited until she was stronger but her liver was so toxic I thought it had to be done immediately in order for her to recover. A friend came to stay with me on Thursday night, she said she would sleep downstairs with Myfa so I could have a night in my bed and try to sleep. At 2am she called me, Myfa had tried to get up to go to the toilet and had collapsed. I ran downstairs but I was too late. I am finding it hard to come to terms with. I have the expected grief and misery of losing her of course, but the manner in which it happened is unbearable, how she suffered. I think about the junctures at which had a different course of action been taken, there would have been a different outcome. How could I have allowed her to have steroids. If she had had a terminal illness then I would have ended her suffering but once I knew it was all about side effects I knew there was hope. She was the sweetest, most wonderful companion. She brought me 11 years of love and joy. We walked thousands of miles together. There isn't a footpath, a riverbank, a hill, a moor, a dale we didn't walk together. As my neighbour said – we were inseparable.

Kind wishes, Isobel