



Monday 30th April 2018

Dear Customer,

It's Monday morning and quite cold and breezy. What topsy turvy times we live in. I doubt if ever there have been such weird leaders sharing the world stage. One minute we are on the verge of nuclear war, the next, great romances are breaking out with stunning images of Kim Jon Un and Moon Jae-In, and of course Macron and Trump. Britain, frigid and cautious, has no one to make love with.

To celebrate the surprising turn of events in the Koreas we have put long white turnips in the bags full of vitamin C, vitamin B-6, magnesium, iron, folate, zinc and much more. You could cut them into chunks, toss with fresh sliced ginger, vegetable oil, salt and pepper on a baking tray, drizzle with honey and roast at 200C/ 400F/ Gas 6 until tender. You could saute them – grate your turnips, saute a couple of sliced shallots in butter or margarine in a pan then add the grated turnips, salt, pepper and a little water and cook until tender, serving with fresh chopped parsley.

Here are some recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

Turnip, Potato and Mustard Gratin

450g turnips, thickly sliced
margarine, for greasing
350ml double cream
3 tbsp Dijon mustard

6 large potatoes, thickly sliced
1 garlic clove, halved
450ml milk

Fill a saucepan with 500ml water, the milk, a pinch of salt and a grinding of black pepper then bring to the boil. Add the turnips and potatoes and cook for 2 minutes. Strain, drain well and pat dry. Heat the oven to 180C/ 160C fan/ Gas 4. Grease a baking dish and rub the sides with garlic to add a hint of flavour. Mix the cream and mustard in a large bowl, add the potatoes and turnip, mix well until coated and season well. Layer into a baking dish, flattening the top level. Bake for 30-40 minutes or until golden brown and the turnip and potato are cooked through and tender.

Spring Green, Leeks and Ricotta Lasagne

300g spring greens, shredded
400g leeks, halved, lengthways, washed and chopped
350g ricotta
4 tbsp pesto
30g cheese, finely grated

1 tbsp olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
150ml vegetable stock
250g fresh lasagne

Heat the oven to 200C/ Fan 180C/ Gas 6. Drop the spring greens into boiling water and cook until just tender then drain well/ Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and add the leeks with a good pinch of salt. Cook until very soft. Add the garlic to the leeks and cook for 2 minutes. Keep 4 tbsp of the ricotta aside and stir the rest into the leeks with the greens. Mix everything well then add enough vegetable stock to make it a little saucy but not watery then take off the heat. Put a quarter of the sauce in the bottom of an oiled baking dish, approximately 18cm x 25cm. Top with a tablespoon of the pesto then 2 sheets of the lasagne. Repeat three times ending with the lasagne. Mix the rest of the ricotta with another splash of vegetable stock and spread over the top layer. Scatter with the cheese and bake for 20 minutes until golden and bubbling.

Steamed Golden Syrup Sponge

250g golden syrup, plus 3 tbsp for the base
250g turnip, peeled and grated
150g white rice flour
2 tsp baking powder

3 Hen Nation eggs
grated zest of 1 organic lemon
50g ground almonds
½ tsp salt

Boil a kettle of water. Take a sheet of foil 30cm square and the same sized piece of baking parchment. Make a 6cm pleat wide in the middle of both layers so that the two are pleated together and the steam can billow up into the pleat. Grease the parchment side of the lid and set aside. Take another length of foil 40cm long. Fold it over to make a solid strip roughly 9cm wide and set aside. Lightly grease a 2-litre pudding basin. Pour the 3 tbsp golden syrup into the basin. Set aside. Beat the remaining golden syrup and eggs for 4 minutes before adding the grated turnip and lemon zest. Whisk for another minute. Finally add the flour, ground almonds, baking powder and salt, and whisk to combine. Pour into the basin and place the foil-and-paper over the top, foil-side up. Wrap string twice around the lip of the basin making sure you leave no gaps where water could get through. Tie the string firmly with a knot. Trim the parchment and foil layers so that only a couple of centimetres protrude below the string line. Lower the basin into the saucepan with the help of your home-made length of foil making sure the basin sits squarely on top of the foil strip. Pour the boiling water from the kettle into the pan around the pudding until the water level reaches the lip. Turn up the heat to a simmer and put a lid over the saucepan for ½ hour then remove the pudding and allow to cool a little before serving.

I know this thing is supposed to be a puppy but I'm not convinced. I've been finding stockpiles of little pieces of toast thriftily hidden under cushions like a squirrel. She slopes about like a panther and slithers off furniture on her belly like a snake. She swings around the car and sits on the head-rests like a chimpanzee and walks like a cat along the back of the sofa, her favourite place to sleep. When she wants to go outside she makes a faint, clipped, gravelly miaow sound – just one. Yet she will sit quietly and watch the whole episode of Simon Schama's Civilisations on Modern Art.

She was lovely for the first few weeks. If I was upset with her she would peep out from behind a chair. Now she's getting too confident and naughty. If I tell her off she immediately goes for my glasses or the remote control, runs off with them and starts crunching. In this inane puppy world and lacking any mental stimulation I took Proust's 'A la Recherche du Temps Perdu' to bed with me. I've had it for many years but never got further than page 2. I remember watching a programme about an elderly people's home in Hampstead who were very discerning. One prerequisite was that one had to have read said book, in French, to be allowed to live there. My French is rusty but slowly the fog cleared and I started to understand. It was as miserable and dark as sin. I gave up in favour of using Fluffles, the soft toy poodle, for a tug of war, back to puppy world. I must admit, I am bored stiff at the moment, I need a new challenge. A new country, a new business, an Open University degree, a new life, or maybe just a holiday, I need something.

Kind wishes,

Isobel