

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

Dear Customer,

It's 18C and it feels freezing. Further to my comments some weeks back that my ideal temperature was 18C, I take that back, it has gone back up to 28C. One acclimatises. Those who have departed on their holidays are missing out on 'Marrow Week'. We have fabulous marrows in the bags. You could roast some. Simply cut it in half then it into small chunks, drizzle with olive oil, season and bake for 15 minutes at 180C/ Gas 4. You could fry it. Peel the outer skin with the potato peeler and cut into thick chips, season with some plain flour and plenty of salt and pepper and dust the marrow in it. Fry in deep, hot oil until golden and serve with chopped parsley or mint and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Here are some other ideas of what you can do with them:

### **Marrow and Roasted Garlic Soup**

1 marrow, chopped	1 onion, chopped
1 bulb garlic	mixture of herbs eg parsley, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf
water or vegetable stock	

*Place the bulb of garlic on a sheet of foil in the oven and loosely wrap the foil round it. Place in the oven at 200C for about 15 minutes. Meanwhile heat some oil in a very large pan and soften the onion. When translucent add the chopped marrow and herbs and enough stock or water to cover the vegetables. When the garlic is done remove from the oven and allow to cool a little. Break open the bulb and one at a time squeeze the garlic out of its skin into the soup pan. Stir it all round and cook until the vegetables are all tender, about 20 minutes. Once cooked blitz in the pan with a hand blender and serve scattered with fresh parsley. You could add a dollop of natural yoghurt if desired.*

### **Honey and Marrow Tea Loaf**

225g grated marrow	3 Hen Nation eggs
100g caster sugar	100g soft brown sugar
250ml groundnut oil	1 tbsp honey
1 tsp ground ginger	1 tsp vanilla
375g self-raising flour	

*This makes either one large cake or 2 loaf-sized ones. Preheat the oven to 170C and prepare two loaf tines with butter and parchment paper. In a large bowl whisk the eggs until light and fluffy then add the sugar, vanilla and honey. Whisk vigorously again then add the oil and whisk again, ideally with a mixer. Add the flour in stages and mix in well. Add the grated marrow and fold in until combined. Divide equally between the two tins and bake for 45 minutes.*

### **Mexican Bean Stuffed Marrow**

1 marrow	1 tsp oil
1 onion, finely sliced	1 courgette, diced
125g mushrooms, diced	1 tin mixed beans, drained
1 x 400g tin chopped tomatoes	1 clove garlic, minced
1 tbsp ground cumin	1 tsp dried oregano
¼ tsp chilli powder	¼ tsp sweet smoked paprika
¼ tsp salt	50g Cheddar cheese, grated

*Preheat the oven to 180C. Slice the marrow in half lengthways and scoop out the seeds to form boats. Peel the outside of each marrow half. Place the marrow halves in an oven dish and set aside. Put the oil in a saucepan, add the courgette and mushrooms and cook until softened. Then add to this the beans, chopped tomatoes, tomato puree, garlic and all the spices. Simmer over a low heat for 5 minutes. Once this is cooked divide it between the two marrow halves and top with the grated cheese. Cover the baking dish with foil and put in the oven for 30 minutes. During the last 10 minutes remove the foil and turn the oven up to 200C to crisp up the cheese. Allow to rest a little out the oven then serve with rice and salad or green vegetables.*

My French friend and her two little girls are arriving to stay with me this week. They are from the South of France and are spending a day in Paris en route as they want to walk on top of the Eiffel Tower and visit the iconic Louis Vuitton building in the Bois de Boulogne. They are also passing through the Edinburgh Festival first. So.....what excitement and sophistication have I got to offer them here. Well, there's a swing in a playground down by the river. They are done with walks on the moors, once was enough. I checked out events in the area. There's a festival in Thornton le Dale, 60 scarecrows dotted about the village and a duck race which you can buy a rubber duck to enter. I could take them to Castle Howard - probably not edgy enough for them – too classical. But I have my secret weapon – a dog. The girls absolutely adored Myfa and would lie beside her, on top of her, smother her in kisses whispering 'je t'aime Myfa'. They were distraught when she died. I'm sure they'll come to love Lainey.

Some of the Hen Nation eggs have been small in recent weeks but they are getting bigger again now. The two flocks which supply our eggs were retired in March and May of this year and two new flocks have been introduced which tend to lay smaller eggs initially. There has been the extra challenge with the extreme weather conditions, as well as the size, production also dropped. An expert came in last week to check the flocks over to make sure that the hens were coping with the heat and deemed they had good weight and were in fine health. In the extreme heat the birds eat a lot less. Because they don't have sweat glands they have been dust bathing to keep their body temperature regulated which means they are free ranging less and eating fewer bugs and slugs !

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel