



**Monday 17th September 2018**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's mild and blustery up here. It's 'hold onto your hats time' wondering which of the seven hurricanes thundering about the troposphere has its eye on us. They seem ferocious. I missed our last major hurricane, the Michael Fish one. I was touring France with my band at the time, there weren't mobile phones and there was no internet back then – I remember us being shocked when we got home and saw all the trees uprooted on Clapham Common. It was a long time ago. When it comes to natural disasters we must live in the safest place on earth.....for the moment at least.

As summer fades, the rainbow carrots are popping out of the soil. In ancient times carrots were either purple or white. Selection and hybridisation by the Dutch in the 15<sup>th</sup> century brought us the ubiquitous orange carrot of today, famed for its high levels of vitamin A. According to the World Health Organisation, vitamin A deficiency in third world countries, partially or totally blinds nearly 350,000 children each year from more than 75 countries, and 60% of them die within months of going blind. Sadly all they need is to eat some carrots.

There are different beneficial micronutrients in rainbow carrots, in all their pigments. Yellow contain xanthophylls and lutein, pigments similar to beta carotene. Red carrots contain lycopene, recently found to help prevent heart disease and many cancers including prostate cancer. Purple carrots have even more beta carotene than orange ones and get their pigments from anthocyanins which are powerful antioxidants. White carrots lack pigmentation but contain health promoting phytochemicals. That is to say.....they are all very good for us. You could grate or shave them with a potato peeler into a lovely carrot rainbow salad. Mix with some fresh parsley and or basil, salt pepper, toasted pine nuts and a vinaigrette of 3 parts olive oil to 1 part wine vinegar, a sliced garlic clove, a dollop of Dijon mustard, a splash of balsamic and salt and pepper.

Here are a few other simple recipe ideas you could try this week:

#### **Balsamic Glazed Rainbow Carrots**

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 400g rainbow carrots  | 3 tsp olive oil          |
| salt and black pepper | 5 tbsps balsamic vinegar |
| 2½ tbsps sugar        |                          |

*Preheat oven to 200C/ 400F/ Gas 6. Wash and slice the carrots in half lengthways. Toss them in olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread them out in a roasting tin. Roast for about 30 minutes until carrots are tender. While they are cooking place the balsamic and sugar in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 5 minutes until the mixture has reduced by about half and appears thickened and syrupy. Remove the carrots from the oven and serve drizzled with balsamic glaze.*

#### **Kale and Garlic Pasta Sauce**

|  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1 large leek                               | 6 cloves garlic       |
| 2 large handfuls kale                      | 100ml olive oil       |
| 500g pasta eg penne, linguine or spaghetti | 100g cheese, optional |

*Tri, halve and chop the leek into chunks and peel the garlic. Put a large pan on to boil then drop in the leek and garlic cloves. Cook for 3 minutes then add the kale Cook for another 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the vegetables to a liquidiser. Add the olive oil and liquidise into a vivid green puree. Season with salt and pepper. Bring the water back to the boil and cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Drain and return the pasta top the pan. Add the sauce and allow to simmer over a low heat for 30 seconds. Grate in the cheese if you are using, season again to taste and serve.*

#### **Fresh Beetroot Soup**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 3 tbsps olive oil        | 1 medium onion, chopped                           |
| 3 cloves garlic, chopped | 500g beetroot, or thereabouts, peeled and chopped |
| 1 litre vegetable stock  | salt and pepper                                   |

*Warm the olive oil in a pan and stir in the onions and garlic. Cook until translucent but not browned. Add the chopped beetroot and cook for a few minutes then add the stock. Bring to the boil and simmer until the beetroot is tender. Whizz in a food processor until smooth and season to taste.*

#### **Beetroot and Lemon Houmous**

|                       |                                      |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 250g tinned chickpeas | 200g beetroot, cooked                |
| 1 lemon               | 1 clove garlic                       |
| olive oil             | salt and freshly ground black pepper |

*Drain the chickpeas then combine with the beetroot and the juice and zest of 1 lemon. Blitz for a minute on high speed. Peel and mince the garlic and add to the processor with a little seasoning and two tablespoons of olive oil. Blitz again until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl, drizzle with olive oil and scatter with fresh hers. Serve with pitta bread or crisp breads.*

Some time ago I placed a £75 bid on an attractive handmade Indian rug on ebay then forgot about it. On Friday I got an email saying I had won it. It hadn't had any other bids. In the description it said it was 8" x 16" – inches. Perhaps it was and that she'd taken the photos in a dolls house and is why it had no other bids. I assumed 8ft x 16ft. Thankfully it didn't arrive in an envelope but in a big heavy package. I tried it in every place and position possible but it looked horrible.

It had too much pattern, I couldn't live with it. But it was a fantastic rug, I knew I had got a bargain, so I called the local Tenants Auctioneers. I sent photos and was informed by the carpet and tapestry consultant that they would expect it to make about £500. I told him I would bring it straight in. I was very pleased with myself. Things like that don't happen to me. I went into the hall, where it was all rolled up and ready to leave, and Lainey was lying next it, her mouth full of tufts. There were tufts, warps and wefts, all over the floor. She had chewed right through it, a big hole. It is now worth nothing.

No other news here, the flowers and foliage are melting divinely into autumn, the light is stunning.

Kind wishes,

Isobel