



**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Dear Customer,

I am back, I did in the end go away, and I'm sorry there was no letter last week. I don't know how you could have coped – a bag of vegetables and no recipes – you must surely have gone hungry. I was suffering from driving-exhaustion.

Here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try with this week's ingredients:

**Vegetable Pad Thai**

4 *tbsp crunchy peanut butter*  
2 *tbsp light soy sauce*  
100g *wide rice noodles*  
275g *Savoy cabbage, shredded*  
150g *beansprouts*

2 *tbsp lime juice*  
2 *tbsp light brown muscovado sugar*  
2 *tbsp vegetable oil*  
3 *carrots, grated*  
50g *peanuts, roughly chopped*

*Blend the peanut butter in a bowl with 4 tbsp boiling water. Add the lime juice, soy sauce and sugar and mix well. Place the noodles in a heatproof bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave to soften while frying the vegetables. Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add the cabbage and carrots and stir-fry for 5 minutes. Drain the noodles and tip into the pan with the beansprouts. Add the peanuts and sauce and cook for 1–2 minutes, stirring. Serve immediately.*

**Savoy Cabbage and Walnut Lasagne**

750ml *organic whole milk*  
½ *small onion*  
6 *fresh lasagne sheets*  
45g *butter, plus extra for greasing*  
8g *sage, leaves chopped*  
50g *walnuts, roughly crushed*  
20g *hard cheese, grated*

1 *bay leaf*  
2 *garlic cloves, bashed*  
½ *Savoy cabbage, cored, cut into 2 cm strips*  
3 *tbsp plain flour*  
1 *pinch grated nutmeg*  
125g *mozzarella, torn*

*Bring the milk to the boil with the bay leaf, onion and garlic. Set aside for 15 minutes to infuse, then strain. Meanwhile, cook the lasagne sheets in boiling water for 3 minutes to al dente, then refresh in cold water, drain and pat dry on a clean tea towel. Blanch the cabbage in boiling water for 3 minutes then drain and pat dry. For the sauce, melt the butter over a low heat and add the flour and sage. Stir for 2 minutes then slowly pour in the infused milk, whisking all the time until smooth. Simmer for 3-4 minutes. Add the nutmeg and walnuts and season. Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Grease a 22cm x 16cm baking dish. Set aside one third of the sauce and stir the cabbage into the rest. Cover the base of the dish with a little of the plain sauce, then top with 2 lasagne sheets. Cover with half the cabbage then add another 2 lasagne sheets and the remaining cabbage. Top with the final 2 lasagne sheets, spoon over the remaining plain sauce and scatter with the cheeses. Bake for 40-45 minutes until golden*

My friend had to, as usual, endure 9, 10, 11 hour days just sitting there navigating routes on small roads and lanes as I can't bear to drive on motorways. It's difficult to switch from the peace and tranquillity of the Dales, to being in the M1 lorry crush, and on top of that you don't see anything. I love to see the changing landscapes, summer wilting into autumn, to pass through our towns and villages, see what people are up to, what England is looking like. My friend suggested we shouldn't tell anyone it took 11 hours to get from Richmond to Stoke on Trent. I don't understand it either. It's not like we even stop anywhere other than to find a toilet. I don't like working to a plan, meaning all accommodation was last minute, ie with flat phone batteries, trying to search online for a couple of rooms ...at 9pm in the dark... in torrential rain....in the middle of nowhere...to no avail. I can understand noone ever wanting to go away with me. Just too much drama to bear. It's always like that.

We did settle in a few places for a few days– in Buckland St Mary in Somerset, in North Huish in South Devon and then in Fletching in Sussex - catching the late sun, with lovely coastal walks, and enabling me to visit some suppliers which I will come to in another letter.

On the way back we were at breaking point, having spent about 12 hours on small roads from Sussex heading north and east, the rain was so heavy like ocean waves breaking down on us, and again there were no rooms. My friend was vomiting with migraine, I had a migraine and after spending literally hours, in desperation, looking for accommodation we eventually found two rooms in the Holiday Inn in Kettering. We staggered in, ill, exhausted, luggage-less and took straight to our beds. In the morning, and refreshed for another day on the road, the last leg, I went to get a buffet breakfast to take back to the room. I had to take Lainey ( dog ) with me and made her sit down and 'wait' in the lobby. I got myself a few cornflakes, and some sausages and bacon for her. As I stared at the tea machine she came flying round the corner, six seconds is the longest she can bear to 'wait'. I bent down to grab her lead, at the same time she took a flying leap to try and kiss me and smashed me in the face. I yelled, my front tooth. I knew it wasn't good. I haven't been able to eat properly since, it has been inflamed and felt like an abscess. The tooth is loose and wobbling. If I bit into an apple it would be gone. The perfect finale to the trip.

Studying the map my friend said " Can we just do one junction on the A1, otherwise we will end up too far east". The words hung blasphemously in the air. 'Ok then'. We sat on the slip road onto the A1, the lorries were nose to tail and it took 5 minutes for someone to let us on. We were squeezed between two lorries, I glanced at the dashboard, suddenly there was no fuel in the car. We would run out any second. 'Where's the next exit, we've got to get off here quick'.

My friend disappeared into her phone. We'd missed the exit. There were signs showing 36 miles to the next services on the M18.

'Where can we get off'. My friend couldn't fathom if we could get off or not. Excruciating miles passed and in the nick of time I swung off at a sign for the M18 heading in the wrong direction towards Hull and Doncaster Racecourse, it looked like our best bet. There was soon a road off the motorway and into Doncaster to fill up. Followed by a monologue on why I don't like motorways. I dropped off the courtesy car, the snazzy, smooth, swiftly accelerating saloon and picked up my repaired car which now feels an old tractor.

Home sweet home !

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel