



**Monday 21st October 2019**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's another rainy Sunday morning with the nation hungover after the new racy prime time Saturday game show The Showdown – highly anticipated, high drama and ending in a cliff-hanger. I think we might be sick of cliff-hangers. Followed by a nice breakfast this morning of MP's popping up on all the TV channels..... the ritual shredding of all hope.

A new week begins tomorrow, and with it comes parsnips, sneaking in, packed with minerals - with calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc and iron as well as folate, vitamin B6, vitamin C, vitamin E and vitamin K, everything you could possibly ask for in a vegetable. They also herald the clocks going back, darkness descending at 5.45pm, the march to winter.

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

**Parsnip and Onion Tart**

175g plain flour  
3 onions, sliced  
3 Hen Nation eggs  
50g mature Cheddar cheese, grated

75g chilled butter diced, plus 25g butter  
500g parsnips, peeled and quartered lengthways  
300ml milk

*Preheat the oven to 190°C/ 370F/ Gas 5. For the pastry, sift the flour and a pinch of salt into a bowl. Rub in the 75g butter to form fine breadcrumbs. Add 1–2 tbsp cold water to mix to a soft dough. Roll out on a floured surface and use to line a 23cm loose-bottomed tin. Cover; chill for 15 minutes. Line the pastry case with parchment paper, fill with baking beans and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the paper and beans and set aside. Turn the oven down to 180°C/ 350F/ Gas 4. Meanwhile, heat the 25g butter in a non-stick frying pan and add the onions and season. Cook over a gentle heat for 10 minutes, until golden and caramelised. Meanwhile, cook the parsnips in boiling water for 5–7 minutes, until tender. Drain well and tip into a bowl. Mash until smooth. Beat together the eggs and milk. Stir in half the cheese, the onions and parsnips. Season. Pour the mix into the tin and scatter over the remaining cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes, till just set in the middle. Remove from the tin and serve warm.*

**Roasted Cauliflower and Dhal Pilaff**

cauliflower, cut into small florets  
½ tsp ground turmeric  
1 lemon  
2 onions, chopped  
150g red lentils  
300g long grain rice

3 carrots, diced  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
2 tbsp sunflower oil  
2 tbsp curry paste  
1.2 litres hot vegetable stock  
coriander leaves, to serve

*Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 390F/ Gas 6. Place the cauliflower, carrots, turmeric, cumin seeds, juice of the lemon and 1 tbsp of the sunflower oil in a large bowl and toss together. Spread out on a large baking sheet and roast for 25–30 minutes until tender and golden brown. Meanwhile heat the remaining oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion for 5 minutes until softened. Stir in the curry paste, lentils and stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the rice, cover and cook for a further 10–12 minutes until the rice and lentils are tender and the liquid has been absorbed. Spoon the dhal pilaff into bowls and top with the roasted vegetables. Serve scattered with coriander leaves.*

After reading something in the news last week saying our walking speed at 45 years old is indicative of our general health. I wondered how fast I walk. I suppose it's relative, does one overtake, is one overtaken? This morning I took Lainey for a walk round the block. It's a nice block, up my lane followed by grassy footpaths, down towards the river and back up through the cemetery and across Westfields, a couple of miles. I'd always been put off joining any walking groups thinking they would walk too fast and too far. I like going at my own speed and my own distance. Walking up my lane I could see the Richmond rambles ahead of me. Jesus Christ they were slow. I was quickly upon them and overtaking, there must have been at least 40 of them, in pairs, chatting. I got the wafts of conversations as I overtook in the fast lane ....' I haven't been to Manchester since I was 22'...'I don't like cities' ....'Is he unemployed. 'Are you having a nice walk?' they said to Lainey. 'Is this your favourite walk?' she was asked. I told them it was one of them. I moved quickly on and left them back in the distance. Maybe I do walk at a decent pace after all.

Ernest, retired from looking after the Izzy Lane sheep and turning 70 this week has just decided to get with it and join the big wide world on the world wide web – he's never touched a computer before and he can't text. It's a really big deal for him. He came round with his BT bill and I called them to get his broadband put on. Ernest asked if the box (router) would be delivered in a white van. I realised he'd never had a white van delivery before though he sees them all the time delivering to his neighbours.

I took him to Currys PC World to get a laptop. I was looking for one with a giant keyboard. Heaven knows how he will cope with trying to use a mouse. After we chose one with the help of an assistant, he went off to the counter to pay and I went to wait at the exit. But then I could hear the assistant trying to sell him all sorts of schemes, protections and insurances. I marched over like his minder 'surely it comes with a warranty', 'just the manufacturer's warranty' she said.

How many warranties does one want. I told her he didn't want anything, just the hardware. He was also buying a telephone. I suggested he chose the one with a button on to block calls. He's always being harassed to buy gas boilers and windows. Then the persistent assistant said for just £9.99 he could buy insurance for his £24.99 phone in case it broke, they would immediately replace it. If I hadn't been there he would have signed up to everything. Anyway, Ernest is so excited. I've got someone to come and set his computer up next week and strip it back to its simplest form. Then I will have the agony of trying to teach him how to use it.

If there's a giant spider in the bath or a frisky one by my bed looking as if it might run up the duvet and across my face in the night, I pick it up in the nearest piece of clothing and throw it out the window. Neighbours must think I am constantly having an argument with myself, chucking my clothes out, strewn across the front lawn. I've brought in two sodden socks and a t shirt this morning.

Kind wishes and hoping for a 'good' week,

Isobel