



Monday 9th December 2019

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's Sunday. I met a friend for a late lunch in a Wensleydale pub this afternoon. When I went in, it wasn't a bad day, inside we didn't see the weather changing. We came out into gale force winds and torrential sleet. The roads were treacherous. So, the first signs of snow. The winds are howling, but mainly the political ones. What a week we have coming.

And here are a few recipes you could try:

Grilled Leek and Fennel Salad

2 leeks	1 fennel bulb
1 lemon	75g buckwheat
1 clove garlic	handful flat leaf parsley
80g pitted black olives	1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
2 tbsp olive oil	150ml boiling water

Trim the roots and tops of the leeks and cut in half vertically. Rinse to remove any soil and shake dry. Slice each half into 10cm lengths. Thinly slice the fennel bulb. Add 1 tbsp oil to a frying pan and place the leek slices cut-side down. Fry for 4-5 minutes on each side until charred and caramelised. Transfer them to a bowl and squeeze over half the lemon juice. Add the sliced fennel to the empty frying pan and fry for 3-4 minutes on each side then add them to the leeks. Season the vegetables with salt and pepper and set aside. Meanwhile put the buckwheat in a pan, cover with 150ml boiling water and put a lid on. Return to the boil then reduce to a simmer for 8 minutes. Drain with a sieve, shake dry, then tip into a large bowl. Peel and grate the garlic, finely chop the parsley and roughly chop the olives, and add them to the buckwheat. Squeeze over the remaining lemon juice and spoon in the mustard. Pour in 1 tbsp oil and stir well. Add the leeks and fennel and toss everything together then serve.

Whole Roasted Cauliflower

1 cauliflower	75g butter or margarine, softened
1 tbsp olive oil	2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 tbsp hard cheese, grated	100g fresh breadcrumbs
25g flat leaf parsley, leaves roughly chopped	finely grated zest ½ lemon
lemon wedges, to serve	

Preheat the oven to 190°C/ Gas 5. Trim the leaves off the cauliflower and set aside for another recipe. Cut the base so that it sits upright. Bring a pan of water to the boil and lower in the cauliflower. Cook for 5 minutes until the outside is just tender. Drain, and pat dry with kitchen paper. Meanwhile, combine 50g butter/ margarine with the oil, garlic and cheese then season. Place the cauliflower into a shallow ovenproof dish or tin and rub all over with the flavoured butter / margarine. Roast for 25-30 minutes, basting twice, until golden and tender. Meanwhile, heat the remaining butter/ margarine in a frying pan. Add the breadcrumbs and fry until lightly toasted and golden then season. Remove and leave to cool, then mix with the parsley and lemon zest. Serve the cauliflower cut into thick slices or wedges scattered with the crumb mixture, with lemon to squeeze over.

Cauliflower and Dhal Pilaff

1 cauliflower, cut into small florets	3 carrots, diced
½ tsp ground turmeric or curry powder	1 tsp cumin seeds
1 lemon, zest and juice	2 tbsp sunflower oil
2 onions, chopped	2 tbsp curry paste
150g red split lentils	1.2 litres hot vegetable stock
300g long grain rice	fresh coriander, to serve

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Place the cauliflower, carrots, turmeric or curry powder, cumin seeds, lemon juice and 1 tbsp of the sunflower oil in a large bowl and gently 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. Scatter over the coriander leaves to serve.

It's present buying time again and the annual sense of pointlessness, searching for gifts for people who don't need anything and don't want anything. I mean, really, there is only so much stuff we can cope with. I have everything I need, have spent a lifetime accumulating it. I have cutlery, a kettle, a TV, saucepans, carpets, a radio, slippers, unread books, bedding, I have enough clothes to last more than 100 years. Most people do. The planet is being plundered of its natural resources and is burning up from producing Christmas presents. We know that. But, it's not so straightforward, we are humans. We are ridiculous and irrational, we need nothing, want nothing, but would be devastated to receive nothing, we never grow up. Me included.

That's Christmas, but the only real show in town is the election. By the time of the next letter, storm Atiyah will have blown us in and out of our polling stations. I'm sure I won't be the only farmarounder burning the midnight oil on Thursday.

Kind wishes and good luck,

Isobel

PS For weeks commencing 23rd December and 30th of December, if you are a Wednesday delivery your order will come to you on the day before, so on the Tuesday. Thursday deliveries will be delivered on Friday and Friday deliveries will be delivered on the Saturday. The Jumbo Christmas Vegetable Bag £29.50 and Christmas Fruit Box £29.50 are available for delivery weeks commencing 16th December and the 23rd December. With lots of variety they will include generous family portions of all you will need to tide you over the festive period.