



Monday 8th June 2020

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's Sunday morning and I've had to put the heating back on. It's absolutely freezing, it's grey, it's windy, it's pouring. But the crops really needed it, it was getting very droughty and wilted in the fields. We are still waiting for the English season to get properly going but we do have new season broad beans and pak choi in the bags as well as plum cherry tomatoes from 'track-n-trace' Isle of Wight.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could fiddle about with using this week's vegetables:

Pak Choi Noodle Stir-Fry

250g fine rice noodles	2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 garlic cloves, crushed	1 tsp fresh root ginger, finely chopped
1 chilli, deseeded and chopped	pak choi, shredded
1 tbsp soy sauce	

Soak the rice noodles in boiling water, off the heat, for 10 minutes, forking over occasionally to loosen the threads. Drain and toss with 1 tbsp oil. Heat the remaining oil in a wok and fry the garlic, ginger and chilli for a minute. Add the pak choi and turn in the hot oil for 3–4 minutes till it collapses a little. Stir in the noodles and toss over the heat till steam rises. Sprinkle with soy sauce and serve.

Broad Bean and Potato Cakes

400g potatoes	150g podded broad beans
2 tbsp chopped fresh mint	1 tsp ground coriander
150g pot natural yogurt	2 tbsp oil

Cook the potatoes in boiling water until tender, drain and cool. Meanwhile cook the broad beans until tender, drain and cool. Place the beans in a food processor and blend to a coarse paste. Crush the potatoes and stir in the beans, 1 tbsp of the mint, the coriander, 1 tbsp of the yogurt and some seasoning. Shape into 4 cakes. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and fry the cakes for 3 minutes on each side until golden. Mix the remaining yogurt and mint together and serve with the potato cakes.

Creamy Tomato Risotto

400g tin chopped tomatoes	1 litre vegetable stock
knob of butter or margarine	1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped	2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 rosemary sprig, finely chopped	250g risotto rice
250g cherry tomatoes, halved	basil, roughly torn
4 tbsp hard cheese, grated (optional)	

Tip the tin of chopped tomatoes and half the stock into a food processor and whizz until smooth. Pour into a saucepan with the remaining stock, bring to a simmer and keep over a low heat. Meanwhile place the butter or margarine and oil in a large saucepan and melt over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 6-8 minutes until softened. Stir in the garlic and rosemary then cook for a minute more. Add the rice and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Start adding the hot stock and tomato mixture a quarter at a time. Let the risotto cook, stirring often, adding more stock as it is absorbed. After adding half the stock, add the halved cherry tomatoes. After 20-25 minutes the rice should be creamy and tender, the tomatoes softened, and all the stock used up. Cover and leave for a minute then stir in the basil. Sprinkle with the grated cheese to serve and a grinding of black pepper.

Before this started I could have just about imagined a global pandemic, imagined a collapsed economy, but never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined how a British government could screw it all up so badly. You just assume that when the chips are down, and the chips ARE down, that they would rise to it. Instead of a serious-shit cabinet of great brains and visionaries, it's like having a group of toddlers piled into a toy car veering about as they each try to grab the steering wheel.

In the wings of the Andrew Marr show " Right Matt, let's go through it all again. Say it back to me –"we took the right decisions at the right time".

"ok...erm.... we took the right decisions at the... righ..wrong time"... "no try it again".... " Ok...ok.. we did the...what was it.....um.. we took the wrong decisions at the wrong...err.. the right time". " No, for heavens sake Matt, concentrate..."

We are the humiliation of the entire world. The lockdown, the introduction of face masks to protect against an airborne respiratory disease (it was always obvious that it was), the testing and tracing, all of it, has come nearly 4 months and 50,000+ tragic deaths too late. "Just' a mild illness", we watched our young Prime Minister fighting for his life in intensive care. We thought he was going to die.

We watched as thousands of people stepped off planes from China and Northern Italy onto the London underground. We knew it was spreading out of control, infecting every corner of the country unrestrained. Could they really not see what we were seeing.

And now the introduction of 14 days quarantine for any arrivals. A magnanimous gesture on the part of our government to protect international travellers from getting infected in Covid cess pit Britain. A two-week cool off period to decide if they really do want to step in.

I've been trying to track and trace our suppliers in the woollen mills.....'Hello, is a-n-y-b-ody there ?' They've slowly been getting back to me, emerging dishevelled and disorientated from their bunkers. Their furloughed staff are gradually making their way back to the looms. Our cashmere socks are next in the queue at the Halifax knitters and my Shetland wool will be spun by Bastille Day, ready for making some beautiful tartans. So on with the manufacturing. Whether I will be able to sell any of it is another matter but we have to go on as if life will go on and it's the only way our economy will get its cogs going again. I do think Rishi has done a good job supporting jobs and the economy to date but sadly he can only do so much. Never will it have been so vital to buy British and support our own industries.

Sending very best wishes,

Isobel