



Monday 2nd November 2020

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's a blustery old Sunday as November begins. I just tried walking on Westfields and the wind nearly blew my head off. I noticed the sheep have been moved off for the winter. Word will get round and the sheep-chasing dogs will be back with their minders.

Here's just one little recipe for you. It's a good one though:

Roast Cauliflower and Dhal Pilaff

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

It's all happening this week - a new lockdown, the US election. Whatever happens, and it has to be Biden, it's worrying. Trump can only have lost voters during his presidency, not gained new ones. I doubt he will appeal to young first-time voters, more ethnically diverse and progressive than his typical last-time voters... no longer with us. But Trump is a demi-God, a cult leader, his followers are devoted, they are fanatics, and that spells trouble.

As for the virus, we continue to hover between the devil and the deep blue sea. We all must ponder what would we do if we had to decide. It would help to know how much more money we can borrow before going off the edge. I read someone say 'it's like an overdraft, we don't get to decide', it's the lenders. The spectre of Greece is haunting. Before their bail-out, they ran out of money, couldn't pay pensions or their public sector wages.

I remember thinking back in early September that given there's no vaccine, it would make sense to have scheduled, prepared for lockdowns, 2-3 weeks, which cover the school holidays, and then make up the lost school hours during the rest of term. If necessary, move the school holidays to meet lockdown needs. That Christmas should also become a lockdown, but an inclusive, family one. You go where you want to go but then have to stay there for the lockdown period. I would give Test and Trace to local authorities and make it ferocious. I wouldn't include students in the half term lockdown so as not to put them on the move again and would make them quarantine before Christmas. Then I would encourage longer working hours out of lockdown to boost productivity and encourage people to spend, spend, spend. So periods of super-activity all round, in schools, workplaces, shops, hospitality, to compensate for the lack of it during the lockdowns, and in the knowledge that lockdown would come again, on a specified date. That's what I thought.

Did you see the new research about masks and the vast variation in their effectiveness with some only catching 16% of aerosols. I can't believe there's no standard. A few people have suggested I make Izzy Lane masks. I couldn't cope with the responsibility. I remember when I did dog leads for Izzy Lane, the manufacturer had never even strength-tested theirs. It was the first thing I did. I spent more money on testing than I ever got back in sales. But the idea that someone would be at the side of a busy road with their beloved dog, a puller, and the lead snap. It doesn't bear thinking about.

So many people are going about thinking they are as protected as they can be and are protecting others but unbeknown to them are wearing the most useless of masks. They should be certified, not a free for all for anyone with a sweat factory or a sewing machine.

Anyway, to take our minds off all that, what's happening in 1765 in the life of our newly adopted Georgian diarist.

2nd Nov. at Church in the Morn, Violent rain. Miss Carr drank Tea with us. Mrs Wilson in the Eve

3rd Nov. Wind and rain. Mr and Mrs Wilson drank tea

4th Nov. Extremely Cold, in the Morn a Shower of Snow, this day's Post brought the news of the death of his Royal Highness William Duke of Cumberland, he died last Thursday the 31 of Octr suddenly in his chair (he was the Butcher of Culloden - put down the Jacobite rising)

5th Nov. In the Morning a Shower of Snow, Mama and I drank Tea at Mrs Wilson's

6th Nov. Fine Cold day. Mr Jackson brought home my Stays, I paid him 1L.5s 0d. He brought his Fiddle and play'd us two or three tunes. Mrs Wilson and A. Nichols came in

7th Nov. This day orders came for General Mourning for his late Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland to begin on Sunday next. I drank Tea at Mrs Wilson's. I went with Mrs Wilson and her Young Ladies to the Dancing School, it being a Publick Night, we stay's tel 10 o'clock. A Child buried with the Small Pox

8th Nov. Busy preparing for mourning. Miss Carr drank tea.

Maybe we'll leave her there, suspended in 1765, to an eternity of taking tea, in what looks like Tier 2.

A friend has just taken 6 months off work to spend winter in her village house in l'Occitanie. I rang her to see if she'd got there safely, the eve of French lockdown, she'd been driving down with a bad hip after an op and all her pets. She said she'd stopped outside Paris to give water to the animals and saw one of her three cats, Angel, had gone. The travel carrier was empty. She didn't know if she'd escaped from the car in Kent before setting off or jumped out in Paris when she'd put the window down because it was hot. She thinks Kent more likely, and that the dogs would have barked if it were Paris. But they might have been asleep. Her cats are terrified of the dogs, terrified like a coiled spring, suddenly Angel sees an escape route, the car window open, and is out in a split second.... onto the Peripherique. I hope she's right, that it was in Kent and that the posters being put up there will find her. Dogs are conspicuous wandering on their own but cats aren't. Poor little cat.

I hope you have a good week. Get hygge, Kind wishes, Isobel