



Monday 8th March 2021

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Another week in paradise. Weather here is grey, nippy and dry but storm making landfall overnight.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Leek, Tomato and Gruyere Pie

3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
400g leeks, trimmed and roughly chopped
200g creme fraiche
320g pack puff pastry sheet

1 tbsp sunflower oil
250g mushrooms, quartered
100g Gruyere, grated
1 Hen Nation egg, beaten

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Parboil the potatoes for 5 minutes and drain. While the potatoes are boiling, heat the oil in a medium saucepan and gently sweat the leeks and tomatoes for 4-5 minutes until beginning to soften. Stir through the creme fraiche and grated cheese and add the parboiled potatoes. Season with a small pinch of salt and some black pepper. Place the filling in a medium rectangular baking dish just a little smaller than the pastry sheet, and top with the sheet of puff pastry, cutting away any excess and pressing down the edges. Brush all over with beaten egg and cut a hole in the top to allow steam to escape. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes or until golden and bubbling.

Fennel and Cabbage Coleslaw

2 apples
1 fennel bulb, trimmed, fronds reserved

Dressing:

1 tbsp finely chopped fennel fronds
2 tbsp pistachios (optional)
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
100g mayonnaise

juice ½ lemon
400g cabbage, core removed

2 tbsp lemon juice
25g flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

To make the dressing, place all of the ingredients except the mayonnaise into a small food processor. Blitz until very finely chopped. Transfer to a large bowl and stir through the mayonnaise. Season to taste. Quarter the apples, remove the core and thinly slice. Place in a bowl and stir in the lemon juice. Slice the fennel very thinly and finely shred the cabbage. Add the vegetables and apple to the bowl with the dressing and toss to combine. Garnish with any remaining fennel fronds to serve.

Broccoli Roasted with Mustard Dressing

½ small onion, finely chopped
2 tsp English mustard
60ml sunflower oil
350-400g broccoli, in small pieces

5 garlic cloves, sliced
4 tsp white wine vinegar
2 sprigs thyme

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Put the onion, chopped garlic, mustard and vinegar in a bowl and whisk together for 1 minute. Slowly add the oil, whisking as you do so, then season. Pour the dressing into a roasting tin and bring to a simmer over a medium-low heat. Add the thyme and garlic, then the broccoli. Roast in the oven for 15 minutes until tender and lightly caramelised. Transfer the broccoli to a warm serving dish, spoon over some of the dressing.

I had been anxious about Pinky, my pink goldfish and Perky, her pink daughter, and the heron. The fish were inseparable, I never saw one without the other, Perky hugged Pinky's side like a foal. Having taken the netting off for the toads, I was planning to get some help to half-put the netting back up. I knew it was urgent. Yesterday I went to the pond to check on them. No sign of Pinky, she'd gone. I felt sick, she was bigger, juicier, more visible, easier to grab-and-go.

The baby had her head buried in the oxygenating plant hoping no-one could see her. She was alone, my heart sank. I cursed myself for being so careless. I went back out to the pond every 5 minutes, still no sign of her. Perky was bereft, I would have to get some more fish urgently. I took Lainey for a walk, bought some tulips from the market, came home and sat by the pond for half an hour hoping for a glimpse of Pinky. No, nothing, she'd been eaten.

I rang the garden / fish centre, "how much for a fish ?", "£12.50" he said. Blimey ! "because they are bigger". "So £30 for 3 ?" – "no, £37.50". I had to order three, said I would be arriving at 4.30pm with cash if they could have them ready. I collected them and took them straight to the pond, lowered them in letting the pond water slowly mix with the tap water in their plastic bag. They slithered out and darted round the pond. Little Perky perked up. Then who should appear from absolutely nowhere – bloody Pinky. Fish are so clever, she was teaching me a lesson. I immediately reconstructed the frame over the pond and threw the netting over allowing for safe passage of the toads. So now they are five. The pond has livened up, Perky has new playmates and Pinky has new children, the three Goldilocks.

My letter arrived yesterday. It barely had time to fall through the letterbox and my brother was on my case emailing me 'good news' you can book your appointment now. Yep, very good news ! JFC

I was watching some old episodes of the brilliant 'One Foot in the Grave' the other night. Mrs Meldrew was complaining that whilst most people used the Medical Encyclopedia to check their symptoms, Victor used it to create them. I get that. I've already got side effects from the vaccine and haven't made the appointment yet.

Chris Whitty said today that the virus would be back later in the summer and would find everyone who hasn't been vaccinatedand kill them. We've been warned 😞

Kind wishes,

Isobel