



Monday 25th May 2021

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday and the rain hasn't stopped for days. It's absolutely horrible, and dare I say, depressing. Nearly June and it still feels like winter. And we didn't even get one single point in Eurovision last night. What's happened to the 'entente cordiale', we gave France 'douze points'. Not even a token gesture from Malta. It's dog eats dog in this cruel world. So here we are - cold, sodden and friendless on this wretched island.

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

Tomato and Broccoli Pasta

splash of olive oil	2 cloves of garlic finely chopped
2 tins of chopped tomatoes	1 large handful of black olives - roughly chopped
2 tsp dried oregano	200g broccoli in florets
350g spaghetti	handful of basil
sea salt and black pepper	

Add a splash of olive oil to a large pan and sizzle the garlic over a low heat for a minute. Tip in the chopped tomatoes, olives and dried oregano - simmer the sauce over a medium heat without a lid. Season to taste with sea salt and black pepper. Cook the spaghetti in a pan of boiling water, adding the broccoli for the last 5 minutes of cooking. Then drain the spaghetti and broccoli and tip into the pan with the tomato sauce - stir to mix everything together. Scatter over the torn basil to serve.

Leek and Courgette Fritters

2 leeks, sliced	1 courgette, grated
1 garlic clove, crushed	handful chopped herbs, dill, coriander
120g plain flour	2 tsp baking powder
1 Hen Nation egg	150ml organic milk
1 tsp ground coriander	1 tsp ground cumin
pinch cinnamon	pinch chilli flakes
2 tbsp olive oil	salt and pepper

Clean and slice the leeks into 2cm rounds. Put some oil in a frying pan over a medium heat, add the leeks and saute for 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for a further 5 minutes. Meanwhile put the flour, baking powder, spices and some seasoning in a mixing bowl. Beat and add the egg with the milk, herbs and 2 tbsp olive oil. Stir to combine into a thick batter. Add the courgette and cooked leeks and stir to combine. Heat the frying pan again on a medium heat. Add some oil and once hot, add spoonfuls of the vegetable mixture to the pan. Fry for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown.

Chard Tart

300g shortcrust pastry	3 tbsp olive oil
2 medium onions, finely sliced	250g Swiss chard
2 Hen Nation eggs plus 1 yolk	200ml crème fraiche
salt and freshly ground black pepper	50g finely grated Gruyère

Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured surface. Loosely wrap around the rolling pin and carefully unroll over a 25cm, round tart dish. Gently press the pastry into the dish and prick the bottom with a fork. Line with crumpled greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans. Chill for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Put the pastry in the centre of the oven and bake blind for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, remove the paper and baking beans and return to the oven for 5 minutes to dry out. Then remove from the oven. Keep the oven on. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan over a low heat and fry the onion until soft. Prepare the Swiss chard by ripping the green leaves away from the white stems. Finely slice both and add the stems to the onions. Fry gently until they begin to soften then add the sliced leaves and fry until soft. Season to taste and tip the mixture into the pastry case. Beat together the eggs, egg yolk and crème fraiche, mix in the Gruyère, season to taste and pour into the tart, making sure that it seeps through the chard filling to the base. Bake for 25 minutes until golden and slightly risen. Serve hot or cold.

Well we've done it ! We've won the 'Best in Show' with our very own Yorkshire mutant, the one with a spectacular triple mutation. It's not yet a 'variant of concern', which is a cause of concern - a 'suck it and see'. Today's news touted as good news is that the vaccines offer some protection against the Indian variant, 33% after one dose of Astra Zeneca. It should never have come to this, it was all so predictable. Covid is coming at us thick and fast with a myriad of permutations. In the end, who will outwit who !

We don't need the mindfulness of the 'Diary of a Richmond Georgian Lady' and her daily tea-taking when we have Sheila. Last week I called her Shirley. I was nearly right. Last night when I walked through the cemetery, I saw her again. I learned she is not only tending her parents' grave but a whole assortment - of aunts and uncles, grandparents, great grandparents – her family all nicely grouped together. She said she needed to replace some pots. I looked down, there were some wilting pansies in plastic tubs alongside vases of plastic chrysanthemums. I said they looked fine. She has some silk flowers at home that she needs to bring. She told me about her annual pilgrimage, a coach trip to Lourdes, cancelled last year and likely to be cancelled again this year. She never stays at the hotel prescribed by the coach company, but at a family-run French B & B. She told me about the red soil. But coming to the point, last night she had a corned beef sandwich and tomato soup for tea. 'Do you eat lunch?' I asked her. Yes, she goes to Wetherspoons every day and had just had a baked potato with tuna. Tonight she was going to have new potatoes – par-cooked from Aldi - you just put them in the microwave for 8 minutes. They only take 8 minutes from scratch, but I didn't say that.

Hellbent on deception, the BBC has just changed the weather forecast. From mid-week we were supposed to be getting half-sun, but they have now removed the suns and replaced them with black raindrops, so another week of this. False hope as usual.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel