



Monday 18th October 2021

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday morning. Weather not too bad. Grey but with a touch of brightness, and it's calm and mild. If the frosts and hurricanes can hold off for a bit, that would be great.

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

Sweet Potatoes with Herb Dressing

450g sweet potatoes

½ tsp smoked paprika

100g Greek-style yogurt

small handful mint leaves, chopped

½ small onion, finely sliced

1 tbsp olive oil

1 garlic clove, crushed

small handful mint and flat leaf parsley, chopped

1 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp capers, rinsed and drained

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Slice the sweet potatoes into slender wedges, about 6-8 per potato. Transfer to a large roasting tin and toss with 2 tbsp oil. Dust with the paprika and season. Roast for 40-45 minutes, turning with a spatula halfway through. Meanwhile, stir the garlic into the yogurt with ½ the chopped herbs and the lemon juice; season and set aside. Ten minutes before the potatoes are cooked, put the remaining 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan over a low-medium heat. Add the onion and a pinch of salt and fry gently for 8 minutes, stirring often, until soft. Increase the heat slightly and add the capers, cooking for 1-2 minutes, until the onion turn slightly golden. Arrange the sweet potatoes on a platter and spoon the yogurt dressing over, scattering with the onion and capers, and the remaining herbs.

Courgette and Tomato Gratin

450g courgettes, thinly sliced

300g tomatoes, sliced

25g Cheddar cheese, finely grated

large pinch cayenne pepper

2 tbsp basil pesto

4 tbsp breadcrumbs

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 tbsp oil

Preheat the oven to 220°C/ Gas 7. Toss the courgette slices in the pesto until lightly coated. Arrange the courgette and tomato slices in a single layer in a large, 2 litre, ovenproof gratin dish; season to taste. Mix together the breadcrumbs, cheese, garlic and cayenne pepper and sprinkle over the top. Drizzle with the olive oil. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes until the top is golden and the vegetables are tender. Serve with crusty bread.

Savoy Cabbage and Sweet Potato Cakes

5-600g sweet potatoes, diced

1 tbsp olive oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

25g Cheddar, or non-dairy alternative, grated

½ Savoy cabbage, shredded

1 tsp fennel seeds, lightly crushed

1 tsp paprika

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Boil the sweet potatoes for 10 minutes until tender. Remove using a slotted spoon. Add the cabbage to the water and cook for 3-4 minutes, then drain. Crush the potatoes roughly with a fork to keep some texture. Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the fennel seeds, garlic and paprika for a few seconds, then add the sweet potato and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in the cabbage. When cool enough to handle, mould into 4 patties and place on a greased baking tray. Top with the cheese and bake for 15 minutes until golden.

'Inflation, inflation, inflation', is what it sounded like - Boris' parting shot before he lifted travel restrictions to set off on his painting holiday in Marbella. And I can see why. Inflation brings a higher tax take and VAT take. It reduces the relative value of the £2 trillion-plus national debt. Print lots more money to do all the things he's promised to do. I guess there will be a reckoning but I would have no idea what that might look like. Unchained inflation sends businesses and households into turmoil. The ensuing higher interest rates, good for savers, but absolutely terrible for everyone else.

There are scary, bumpy weeks ahead aren't there. What with that, the pandemic, the gas supply, trade wars, Taiwan, French fishermen blockading the ports, floods, NHS crisis, driver shortage, pigs piling up (poor bloody pigs) and all other nightmares, it's going to be one hell of a winter. Can we blame all of this on Boris, a mirror image of his shambolic brain ? I guess not everything but I can see now the floor of his student digs - strewn with dirty socks and underpants, crusty plates and saucepans, chocolate wrappers, books and loose change. Some people thrive in chaos, it makes them feel more alive. But I do think we are quite good at getting on with our lives despite everything. We manage to conveniently ignore many realities. We are spinning round at 1000mph on the edge of a spherical rock with only gravity stopping us from dropping off into the universe, and that doesn't seem to bother us much. In fact, it barely gets a mention.

No news from here really. Despite the steeply rising cases, as far as everyone in Richmond is concerned it's all over, life is back to normal. I am the only person still living through a pandemic. And conspicuously so. I now look neurotic with my mask wearing. I met a friend for a pub lunch, it was raining but we had to sit outside and the water dripped onto our food. I went in to pay with my mask on and my black bio-scarf wrapped twice round my face. I looked like a highway man, or a hunt sab. The guy couldn't hear a word I said, and I couldn't hear a word he said; the words absorbed into the fabric. I paid and got out quick.

The TV signal has finally been restored in Richmondshire after three months. During that time many got themselves a computer for the first time and went on the internet, others signed up with Sky. I signed up with Netflix to watch The Crown, all series back to back, then cancelled it again disappointed with the film selection. I have though just discovered 'Curzon home' with a great selection of art and international films, at 3.99 a film, pay as you go. Got that up my sleeve for some long, dark nights.

I hope you are keeping safe and well. Thank you so much for being with Famaround.

Kind regards,

Isobel