



Monday 1st November 2021

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Kicking straight off with your week's recipes:

Beetroot Potato and Bean Boulangere

350ml vegetable stock

1 tbsp vegetable oil

250g beetroot, cooked, thinly sliced

750g potatoes, thinly sliced

2 leeks, sliced

400g tin mixed beans

Preheat the oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Bring the stock to a boil in a large pan, add the potatoes and cook for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the leeks for 5 minutes. Stir in the beans and season. Place 1/3 of the potatoes in the base of an ovenproof dish, top with half the beetroot and then half the leek mixture. Repeat with the remaining ingredients. Finish with a layer of potatoes, pouring over the leftover stock. Bake for 25 minutes until golden and cooked through.

Cavolo Nero and Chickpea Pasta with Chilli

200g cavolo nero, trimmed

1 red chilli, sliced

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 small lemon, zest and a squeeze of juice

3 cloves garlic, sliced

400g tin chickpeas, drained and rinsed

300g spaghetti

Strip the leaves from the cavolo nero stalks and set aside. Finely slice the stalks and place in a large frying pan with the garlic, chilli, chickpeas and oil. Season and place over a medium heat, frying gently for 4-5 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the spaghetti for 1 minute less than packet instructions. Scoop out a mugful of the cooking water before draining. Roughly crush the chickpeas in the pan with a potato masher. Shred the cavolo nero leaves and stir into the pan, cooking for another 3-4 minutes until wilted. Add the drained pasta to the pan with 5 tbsp pasta cooking water, the lemon zest and a squeeze of juice. Season and mix well.

Leek and Caerphilly Lattice Tart

400g leeks, thinly sliced

3 fresh thyme sprigs, leaves stripped

plain flour, for dusting

2 tbsp wholegrain mustard

120g Caerphilly or Wensleydale cheese, crumbled

small knob of butter or margarine

300g potatoes, diced

500g shortcrust pastry

100g crème fraîche

1 Hen Nation egg, beaten

Heat the butter in a frying pan over a medium heat and cook the leeks and thyme for 5-10 minutes until softened. Meanwhile, cook the potatoes in a pan of boiling water for 8-10 minutes until just tender, drain and transfer to a large bowl. Stir in the softened leeks and thyme. Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. On a lightly floured surface, roll out three-quarters of the pastry to the thickness of a £1 coin and cut out a 25cm x 35cm rectangle. Re-roll the trimmings and reserved pastry and cut out 12 long strips of varying widths. Transfer the pastry rectangle to a non-stick flat baking sheet and spread with the mustard, leaving a narrow border. Spoon the potatoes and leeks over the mustard, then dot with the crème fraîche and cheese. Brush the border with egg and arrange the pastry strips on top of the filling, in a wide diagonal lattice. Brush the pastry strips with more egg. Bake for 25 minutes until the pastry is cooked through and golden.

It's been a shitty morning. I've been looking at sewage. With the recent revelations, I'd gone onto The Rivers Trust website, and their interactive map, which shows all the sewage discharge points of England's rivers, becks and coastlines. Into the Swale, between its source and Richmond, 4294 hours of waste have been pumped. So much for it being 'pristine' as I always describe it. Looks are deceptive. As the fastest river in England, it at least moves the shit quickly down to York to meet the river Ouse, then out to sea – bleach, toilet chemicals and all. It has probably played a part in the thousands of dead crabs, lobsters and other shellfish washed up on the local beaches in the last week. Huge mounds of them, cause of death unknown. I think we are at 'one minute to midnight' on so many fronts. Nature just can't take any more. We may be the last to go, but we will go the way of the lobsters because we are incapable of taking any action to prevent it. Has Theresa May's contribution to the future of our planet, the ban on plastic cotton wool buds, come into force yet? No. Pushed back because of the pandemic.

It would be lovely to leave it up to people to take personal responsibility and do the right thing. But even knowing what the right thing is they do the wrong thing.

In this Bruegelesque town, the river is the centre of all recreation. It's always full of people, beer cans, children, dogs - wading about, floating, swimming. I went straight onto the local Facebook page, started typing 'Sewage into the Swale 2020' and gave the breakdown for each popular beauty and bathing spot, the corresponding sewage discharge point and number of discharge hours.

The Batts 391 hours, Lombard Wynd 196 hours, Richmond Bridge 77 hours. I worked my way upstream through everything that would come back downstream to get them in the gob. *Marske 2973 hours !* I suggested the place to swim was Muker, a village close to the source and before *Gunnerside 392 hours.*

As expected, there was more interest on Facebook in a child's lost wellington. They didn't seem to mind much swimming in pee, faeces, and Duck's limescale remover, or that no one has seen a fish in the river since 1957. Peter Bell popped up in defence of sewage, another said it's been like that since the Industrial Revolution, and a couple of tearful emojis. 'God help us', there is no hope. I just feel sorry for the innocents, all the poor creatures whose world we are destroying. COP26 starts this morning.

Kind regards,

Isobel