



Monday 14th February 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's Monday morning and pouring with rain, as it has been all weekend. Now gearing up for an ultra-windy week with two storms on their way. Still mild though. The daffodils are in bud and the days are lengthening.

You could 'whole roast' your butternut squash. Preheat oven to 220C/ 425°F/Gas 7. Line a roasting tray with aluminium foil. Pierce the squash in 5-6 places with a sharp knife and place on the tray. Roast until the outer skin is browning and starting to shrivel and the squash is tender. Break open or peel and remove the seeds.

Here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try this week:

Warm Broccoli and Red Pepper Salad

165g broccoli, in small florets

2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tsp honey

1 tsp sesame seeds

2 bs sesame oil

1 clove garlic, crushed

½ tsp chilli sauce

½ tsp grated fresh ginger

2 red peppers, deseeded and finely sliced

Heat half the oil in a frying pan or wok. Stir-fry the peppers and broccoli for 5 minutes or until the peppers are tinged golden and are slightly soft. Add the remaining ingredients apart from the remaining oil and sesame seeds and stir-fry for a couple of minutes. Serve with the remaining oil drizzled over and the sesame seeds sprinkled over.

Butternut Squash, Chickpea and Apple Curry

200g cooked chickpeas

1 large onion, sliced

3 cloves garlic, finely chopped

butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cubed

400g tin plum tomatoes

juice of ½ lemon

1 tbsp vegetable oil

2 tbsp chopped ginger

2 tbsp medium curry powder

fresh coriander, finely chopped

2 apples, peeled, cored and cubed

200g yoghurt

Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the onion, ginger and garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes until soft. Add the curry powder and seasoning then cook for a minute. Add the squash and stir to coat in the curry mix. Stir in half the coriander, the tomatoes and apples with 300ml water from the chickpeas. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 30 minutes until the squash is tender. Add the drained chickpeas and simmer for 5 minutes, uncovered, then remove from the heat. Stir the remaining coriander and lemon juice into the yogurt, season and stir through the curry. Serve with steamed rice.

I'm feeling slightly despondent and not very chirpy. The situation in Ukraine is worrying. The problem we have with Putin and all such despots, is that they can't relinquish power and will rig elections to the bitter end. Out of office, they will be had for all their crimes against humanity. Maybe we need to create an ex-despot luxury safe-haven island for them with gilded palaces, forever homes, so that they can be lured out before things turn 'If I'm going, you're all coming with me' nuclear.

Russia, with its rich culture: beautiful people; it's brilliant artists and writers; it's scientists. What a loss to the world and to us all, reduced to being Putin's ego. For the moment, nothing we can do about it, just watch and wait.

However, when it comes to the Turkish dog massacre, that's another matter. If you aren't an idiot like me - who has liked all the animal rights activists and charities on Twitter - whose feed automatically selects for you, every case of animal cruelty and abuse on the planet - then, you might not be aware of what's happening in Turkey.

The street dogs were loved, a part of daily life: beautiful, healthy dogs. They would hang out on the buses and in cafes: people would feed them; they mingled in. Then suddenly Erdogan told all the authorities to get rid of them by whatever means. So different local authorities devised their own methods and started: beating them to death; poisoning them; shooting them, burying them alive; chucking them into

rubbish lorries to be minced up; puppies and all. The harrowing photographic evidence keeps coming. There were protests on the streets, but people are scared under Erdogan and backed off. Some authorities are rounding the dogs up and dumping them in the mountains and forests where temperatures are minus 20, with no food or shelter. They are freezing and starving to death. It's heart-breaking.

Oh, for those halcyon days of blissful ignorance. Many of my Twitter friends are now Turkish. I am part of the Turkish resistance. Individuals and small groups are smuggling dogs away and are going up into the mountains and forests to feed the abandoned with what little they have: collecting stale bread from the bakers; making shelters for the puppies using discarded plastic sheets and pallets. The dogs are 'wild with hunger', one said. I'm sending them as much food as I possibly can. These amazing people seem to be getting no other help.

That's my cheery lot for the week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel