



Monday 11th April 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope you're enjoying this milder, sunny weather. The countryside is blooming and looking glorious if you are heading out this weekend.

Just sending a few recipes this week:

Potato, Leek and Bean Boulangere

2 tsp olive oil	4-500g leeks, sliced
750g potatoes, thinly sliced	400g tin mixed beans, drained and rinsed
1 vegetable stock cube	50g Cheddar, grated, or non-dairy alternative

Preheat the oven to 220°C/ Gas 7. Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the leeks for 5 minutes. Place half in a shallow ovenproof dish. Top with half the potatoes and sprinkle over the beans. Top with remaining leeks and then potatoes. Blend the stock cube with 300ml boiling water and pour over the potatoes, season with black pepper. Scatter the cheese over and bake for 40 minutes until golden and tender.

Kale and Mushroom Pasta

1½ tbsp olive oil	200g mushrooms, sliced
150g wholewheat spaghetti	1 small onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, crushed	200g kale, thick stalks removed and leaves shredded
3 tbsp cream or non-dairy	1 tbsp lemon juice

Heat 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan and fry the mushrooms until cooked through and turning golden. Tip onto a plate and set aside. Meanwhile, cook the pasta for 1 minute less than packet instructions. Scoop out and reserve a mugful of the cooking water, then drain the pasta. Return the frying pan to a medium heat with the remaining ½ tbsp oil. Add the onion, garlic, kale and 1 tbsp water, and cook for 4-5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the cream, lemon juice, reserved mushrooms and pasta, and a glug of the cooking water, tossing everything together.

French Onion Soup

50g butter or alternative	1 kg onions, cut into ½ cm half-moons
8 thyme sprigs	4 bay leaves
2 tbsp plain flour	250ml dry cider (or white wine)
6 tbsp cognac (or other brandy)	1 tbsp cider vinegar
500ml strong stock	4 slices baguette, about 1.5cm thick
1 garlic clove, halved	75g Gruyère cheese, grated
1 tbsp finely chopped chives	

Melt the butter in a saucepan; add the onions and a pinch of salt. Cover and cook over a low-medium heat for 5 minutes. Uncover and cook, stirring and scraping the pan base often, for 50-55 minutes, until the onions are sticky and deep brown; if they start to catch, add 1-2 tbsp water and scrape up any brown bits. Tie the herbs tightly together with kitchen string and add to the pan, along with the flour. Stir for 2-3 minutes to cook out the flour, then turn up the heat. Add the cider (or wine), brandy and vinegar; As it bubbles, scrape the pan base until the liquid thickens. Stir in the stock, season and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer gently for 20-25 minutes until thickened slightly; season again. Meanwhile, preheat the grill to high. On a baking tray, toast the baguette slices for 2-3 minutes, until golden brown. Flip and grill for 1-2 minutes more.

Rub each with the cut side of the garlic; set aside. To serve, divide the soup into bowls and place on the baking tray. Top each bowl with the toasts, scatter over the cheese and grill until golden. Serve piping hot, with the chives scattered on top.

No news. Nothing much happening here, which is probably a good thing. On the local Facebook group is a post from Total Energies saying 'ONE MORE SLEEP'. One more sleep until the petrol station reopens. That's as good as it gets. I saw a crisp lorry unloading there yesterday. It serves as the corner shop so quite handy really after a 2-yr absence - even if it does look exactly the same apart from the strange new stone frame. It might have looked ok on the plan drawings.

I still haven't seen any birds fly off with even a tuft of the wool fleece I spread near the trees opposite my house. I had to go and rake it all up, leaving just what had been blown out of reach into the hawthorn and down the steep bank where the rabbits live. Maybe I was too early and they're still building the hard structures with twigs: I've seen a few of those fly past. I've kept my rakings in a sack to replenish just in case.

Wishing you a very Happy Easter,

Kind regards,
Isobel