



Monday 18th April 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well and that you had a nice Easter. A nippy wind here but the sun is shining.

And straight in with this week's recipes:

Aubergine and Red Pepper Ragu with Pappardelle

1 or 2 aubergine, chopped into 2cm cubes	1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped	2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 or 2 red peppers, finely chopped	400g tin chopped tomatoes
200ml vegetable stock	1 tbsp soft brown sugar
1 tbsp red wine vinegar	1 tbsp capers, drained
250g pappardelle or other pasta	

Bring a pan of water to boil, add the aubergine and place a saucer over to stop the aubergine floating to the top. Cook for 10 minutes until tender. Drain well. Heat the oil in sauté pan, add the onion and cook until golden. Add the garlic and peppers and cook until softened then add the aubergine, chopped tomatoes, stock and sugar. Simmer for 15 minutes until thickened. Stir in the vinegar and capers. Cook the pasta then add to the sauce, season, toss, and garnish with basil.

Celeriac Soup with Caramelised Onions and Hazelnuts

3 tbsp olive oil	2 onions, finely sliced
15g margarine	1 litre vegetable stock
600g celeriac, peeled and cut into small cubes	50g hazelnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
flat leaf parsley, leaves picked and roughly chopped	

Put the oil in a large pan set over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook for 10 minutes until translucent. Transfer half the onions to a smaller pan with the margarine and continue to cook on a low heat for 20 minutes, stirring regularly, until deep golden and caramelised. Meanwhile, put the stock, celeriac and 200ml water in the larger pan. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes until the celeriac is soft. Blend the mixture with a stick blender until smooth. Return to the pan, warm through and season. Serve topped with the caramelised onions, hazelnuts and parsley.

Roasted Carrot and Crispy Chickpea Houmous

450g carrots, trimmed and cut into 2.5cm chunks	6 garlic cloves, unpeeled
1 tsp sweet smoked paprika, plus extra to serve	1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp ground coriander	6 tbsp olive oil, plus a drizzle to serve
400g tin chickpeas, drained, liquid reserved	3 tbsp tahini
1 lemon, juice	a few sprigs coriander (optional)

Preheat the oven to 190°C/ Gas 5. Put the carrots in a roasting tin with the garlic. Sprinkle over the spices, drizzle with 2 tbsp olive oil and season. Toss together, then roast for 25 minutes. Push to one side of the tin, then add 2 tbsp of the drained chickpeas to the other side and roast for a further 20-25 minutes, until the carrots are tender and golden. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Remove the roasted chickpeas from the tin and set aside. Squeeze the garlic from its skins into a food processor, add the carrots and roasting juices, the tahini and the unroasted chickpeas. Whizz until smooth. Pour in the lemon juice and remaining 4 tbsp oil. Whizz in enough of the chickpea liquid (4-5 tbsp) to make a smooth, creamy houmous. Serve with a drizzle more oil, the crispy chickpeas, a sprinkling of paprika plus some coriander leaves. Serve with flatbreads.

I have no news of interest. My patterns are all disrupted still, going to bed earlier and earlier. I go to bed before the sun goes down and get up in what feels like the middle of the night. It was Saturday morning, too early to start the day, I spent three hours reading about Ukraine and about the miserable state of Covid. Anxious, down and exhausted before breakfast. I was meeting a friend at the Himalayan Gardens in Grewelthorpe: a 40-acre wooded valley with lakes. The 1400 varieties of rhododendron were not yet in flower, but the 150 different magnolias were in full bloom. The setting is stunning, very Zen. The sunlight filtered through the trees. Nature. What a beautiful world. The only world. It would be such a shame for it all to be blown to dust: billions of years of evolution: billions of species and creatures and ecosystems; gone in a mad moment. This is our precarious new reality, enjoy each day and pray. Pray that some idiot doesn't put their foot in it. I still believe there has to be some capitulation on Ukraine's part as hard as that will be. But peace has to be restored, the killing and torture of innocents has to end. Putin can be dealt with in other ways at another time. He won't last forever but the world must.

A guy who I see locally walking his little dog. Well, he's walking, his dog is running rampant killing rabbits. He has something to do with the army indirectly. He said all the soldiers are chomping at the bit. And that 'nudge, nudge', 'the snarks' are already on the ground in Ukraine. Not something he should be telling me, I thought. I could be working for the Russians. Then lo and behold two days later The Times front page is 'a scoop' about how the SAS are on the ground in Ukraine. Not only that, but they disclosed exactly where they were and gave the names of the Ukrainians they were training. My blood boiled, I immediately wrote to the paper. Furious. Why the hell do they do that! It was like Rory Stewart going on Twitter saying that CIA or FBI were in touch their Russian counterparts who had assured them that even if they were given the instruction to fire a nuclear warhead, that they wouldn't do it. If it was true and he made that public, then he's stuffed it. Anyone will do anything with a gun in their head. No wonder the Defence Minister has vanished. And so it goes on....

I hope you have a good week.....
Kind wishes,
Isobel