



Monday 5th December 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Straight in with this week's tasty recipes you could try with your Swiss Chard:

Swiss Chard with Tahini

400g swiss chard, leaves shredded and stalks cut into 4cm lengths	4 tbsp tahini
3 garlic cloves, 1 crushed, 2 finely sliced	1 large lemon, juice
2 tbsp olive oil	¼ tsp hot smoked paprika
60g pine nuts, toasted	

Simmer the chard stalks in a pan of water for 3-4 mins until tender then drain. For the sauce, whisk the tahini, crushed garlic and all but 2 tsp of the lemon juice and 120ml warm water together until creamy. Warm the oil in a frying pan, add the sliced garlic and cook gently for 3 mins. Turn up the heat and add the chard leaves and stalks. Stir-fry for 5 minutes, until the greens have wilted. Season and add the reserved 2 tsp lemon juice. To serve, spoon over the sauce, dust with paprika and scatter over the pine nuts.

Swiss Chard, Potato and Caerphilly Gratin

400g Swiss chard	400g potatoes
300ml organic cream	1 heaped tbsp wholegrain mustard
150g Caerphilly cheese, coarsely grated	

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Cut the chard leaves off the stalks, then cut the stalks into 10cm long sticks. Cook the stalks in a pan of boiling water for 2 mins then add the leaves briefly to wilt them. Drain, then chop the chard leaves roughly. Slice the potatoes as thinly as possible. Mix together the cream, mustard and half the Caerphilly. Grease a gratin dish and arrange half of the potato slices over the bottom. Top with the chard leaves and stalks then spoon over half the cream mixture. Top with the rest of the potatoes, then the remaining cream mixture. Top with the rest of the cheese then bake for 30 minutes until bubbling and golden.

Swiss Chard, Butterbean and Preserved Lemon Soup

1 tbsp olive oil	1 onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed	1½ tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp ground coriander	¼ tsp ground turmeric
200g Swiss chard, stalks finely chopped, leaves roughly torn	½ red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
400g tin butter beans, drained and rinsed	500ml vegetable stock

1 preserved lemon, pips discarded, skin and flesh finely chopped (if you haven't got a preserved lemon kicking about in a drawer, you can improvise with lemon zest and some salt)

Put the oil in a large pan on a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for about 10 mins until soft and turning golden. Add the garlic, cumin and coriander and cook for 1 minute. Add the turmeric, chard stalks and ½ the chilli, season well and add the beans, stock and 250ml water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat then simmer for 8 mins. Add the chard leaves and preserved lemon. Cook for 4-5 minutes, until the leaves are tender. Whizz the soup, keeping some texture. Serve with remaining chilli scattered over.

A man came round to talk log burners. A big dumping bag of wood costs about £100, he said, and would last 2-3 months using it for a few hours each evening. Cheaper than my estimated £670 a month then. Is it green ? Is it ethical ? I don't know. It's more ethical to freeze to death. There are 8 billion of us. In 1950 there were 3 billion. Five billion more this side of WW11. It is unfathomable. But once we're born, we're here, and it's compelling. As the man was talking log burners, Lainey, round the corner and out of sight, had pinched one of his shoes, pulled out the orange insole and chewed it to pieces.

I don't like the idea of burning trees just to keep myself warm, it's too tangible. You see the wood, you see the smoke. All those particles going into the atmosphere, again just for my own benefit. We have tough choices don't we. The log burner hype says that if we burn a tree, it just puts back into the atmosphere the CO2 that it has absorbed during its lifetime and is therefore carbon neutral. It's all about the human taking precedence, our needs coming first. With 8 billion of us nature doesn't stand a chance.

In France, anyone with a car park has been given 3 to 5 years to cover it in solar panels and this will generate the energy equivalent to 11 nuclear power stations. Why can't we do this ! It's all so miserable here, nothing to give us hope. Sunak has sold his soul to the ERG, their new mouthpiece. He talks tough on China, criticising their treatment of protestors, then next day talks about the new powers being given to our Police to crack down on our protestors - on our peaceful protestors, protesting for a better world. The hypocrisy is hard to take, and so blatant.

So, to my countryside report. It's Saturday, and after a week of thick fog we finally saw the sun. I drove over to Thornton Steward and walked round the reservoir, some of the only water on the block to not be pumped with sewage. At least I don't think so. I then visited the ruined Cistercian abbey, Jervaulx. It should have been an uplifting afternoon but there was too much reality about. The pheasant shooting has just started. I passed a field with 30 men standing in pairs with guns, there were beaters in the woods, the petrified pheasants were flying out squawking, and being blasted to death. The hedges on the roadsides, and those dividing the vast arable fields, they should be sprawling and full of berries, but had been hacked down to almost nothing, as every other year. A barren landscape devoid of life. For all the awareness we have of being critically nature-depleted, and for all the talk of 'The Plan for Nature' the attrition continues.

.....Hope you have a good week.....Kind wishes, Isobel