



Monday 19th December 2022

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday. The weather has been horrendous with freezing fog and freezing rain. I've been marooned at home all day, I couldn't even get down my driveway to cross the road to the field to walk the dog, it was sheet ice. A few brave walkers passed, they walked on the grass verge, holding onto the fence. So I haven't left the house. Diane ended up in a hedge last night after skidding on black ice and is awaiting recovery.

I played ball with Lainey in the living room then I made my signature Christmas main: a chestnut and cashew nut loaf in puff pastry. Well I've nearly made it, or two of them. The mix is ready, just have to roll out the pastry and load the tins. I didn't put enough lemon juice in last year. This year it's perfect. Then the football! I haven't even bought any Christmas cards but at least there are postal strikes. I scabbled about for any leftovers from last year but there were just cards with no envelopes, envelopes with no cards – a result of spoiling. With a pile of cards and an address book, it's such an onerous task, it has to be done at full speed. But this results in terrible, sloppy handwriting with too many insertions of missing letters and too much scribbling out. They show obvious haste and lack of care.

Liberated from cards with Christmas trees, baubles, holly and baby Jesus on, I bought some cards online last night featuring a little wren, forget-me-nots, and dandelions instead. I will send these as New Year's cards. In fact I might do this every year. One can always change one's ways.

I've been having brussel sprout worries. I had booked ours weeks ago with our grower in Lancashire and on Friday she told me they were deep under ice and she had no idea if she would be able to harvest them. In all her years of farming she said she has never known such terrible conditions and didn't know if all her crops lay ruined under the ice. 'The boys in London are going up the wall' she said, meaning the wholesalers. It didn't sound good. I called round for a back-up, but to no avail, it was the same story everywhere. I even tried Holland just in case, but the same – too much ice to harvest them.

We were to talk at lunchtime today and I am pleased to say it was good news, they are thawing, they can harvest, so thank heavens for that. Christmas dinner is unimaginable without them.

So here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

Lemon Roast Potatoes

1kg potatoes, cut into 3-4cm pieces

2 tbsp oil

1 lemon, zested

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Boil the potatoes over a medium-high heat for about 10 minutes then drain and leave to steam for a few minutes. Add the lemon zest to the pan of potatoes shake and rough the potatoes up so they get coated. Add the oil to a large baking tray and put in the oven. Remove the hot baking tray from the oven and place the potatoes on it. Season and toss in the oil. Roast for 20 minutes, then turn over and roast for another 20 minutes until crisp and golden.

Cheesy Carrot Bake

450g carrots, grated

1 tsp salt

100ml vegetable stock

1 onion, finely chopped

40g organic Cheddar, or non-dairy cheese

20g fresh coriander, chopped

2 Hen Nation eggs

2 tsp olive oil

good pinch pepper

Preheat the oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Place a pan over a medium heat and add the grated carrot and salt. Cook until the liquid from the carrot evaporates. Add the stock and reduce until dry. Remove the pan from the heat and set aside. Put a separate pan over a low heat then add the oil. Sweat the onions until soft but not coloured. Then add the onion to the carrot mixture along with the cheese, coriander and eggs. Mix well to combine and season with pepper. Place the mixture in a deep baking dish lined with baking parchment. Smooth the mixture over and place in the oven for 15 minutes.

Roasted Parsnips

450g parsnips, peeled and cut into 5cm pieces	1 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp dried oregano	flaky sea salt
freshly ground black pepper	pinch of chilli flakes

Preheat oven to 220C. Spread parsnips on a large baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and season with oregano, salt, pepper, and chilli flakes. Toss to evenly coat. Roast until golden and easily pierced with a knife, about 30 minutes, tossing once halfway through.

Braised Red Cabbage

130g creamy margarine	800g – 1k red cabbage
2 tart apples, peeled, cored and sliced	140g demerara
140ml red wine vinegar	2 cinnamon sticks
2 cloves	2 star anise
1 lemon, zested and juiced	

Preheat the oven to 160C / Gas 3. Melt the margarine in a casserole dish over a medium heat. Add the cabbage and apple and cook for 5-10 minutes, or until just soft. Add the remaining ingredients, season with salt and pepper and stir together for a few minutes. Cover well with some crumpled baking paper and a lid and transfer to the oven. Cook for about 1½ hours, stirring every 30 minutes until reduced and tender. Will keep in the fridge for a few days. Simply add a splash of water if dry and reheat to serve.

Well it's been one hell of a year hasn't it. Ending of course on a high with mass strikes, a deep freeze, hypothermia, hypersonic missiles, poverty, viruses galore etc. etc. Where on earth do we go from here. What will 2023 bring? It boggles the mind.

This is my last note of 2022 and it has been a joy to have you as our customers. I am so grateful that you stick by us through the ups and downs, through the seasons. By being organic you are making such an enormous contribution to protecting our wildlife

and our fragile ecosystemsand you save the lives of all those hens. I know I say it every year but you really are the best of humanity, and I know this. So thank you, thank you.

And massive thank you of course to all the amazing Farmaround staff who work so hard and on whom I rely. To Diane, Brian, Rogerio, Enrico, Ash, James, Fred, Tyrstan and David.



Happy Christmas

See you in 2023

Love and best wishes,

Isobel and all of us at Farmaround