



**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday morning. After a wet, grey and dismal week we have blue skies and warm sunshine. Spring had stalled a while but today the reticent buds of my magnolia tree are cracking open and the birds are singing.

Here are a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

#### **Purple Sprouting Broccoli Gratin**

200g purple sprouting broccoli	1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to finish
1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped	8 kalamata olives, chopped
200ml organic cream or non-dairy substitute	20g breadcrumbs

Steam the broccoli over boiling water for around five minutes. Alternatively, cook it in boiling water until tender – three to four minutes – and drain well. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and chopped olives and cook gently for a few minutes. Add the cream, let it bubble for two to three minutes until thickened and reduced by about a third, then add black pepper to taste, and salt if needed. Put the broccoli into a shallow gratin dish or ovenproof pan, pour over the cream mix, add a trickle of oil and scatter breadcrumbs on top. Grill for a few minutes until golden and bubbling and serve.

#### **Sweet Pepper and Leek Curry**

1 tbsp vegetable oil	1 onion, thinly sliced
3cm ginger, finely grated	2 leeks, thinly sliced diagonally
2 peppers, thinly sliced	1 tsp each ground cumin
1 tsp garam masala	½ tsp ground turmeric
400g tin chopped tomatoes	1 tsp caster sugar
basmati rice to serve	30g flaked almonds, toasted
2 tbsp roughly chopped coriander leaves	4 tbsp coconut yoghurt

Heat the oil in a pan over a medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 8-10 mins, until softened and starting to turn golden. Add the ginger, leek, peppers and spices. Fry for 1-2 mins until fragrant, then stir in the chopped tomatoes, along with the sugar. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 mins, until thickened, then season to taste. Cook the rice according to the pack instructions, then mix in the flaked almonds. Scatter the coriander over the curry, then serve with the rice and yoghurt.

#### **Roasted Swede**

1 swede	8 cloves
1 tbsp olive oil	30g dark muscovado sugar
20g wholegrain mustard	

Preheat the oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Score the swede all over with a knife, cutting about 1cm into the flesh in a criss-cross pattern. Stud the surface evenly with cloves. Drizzle with the oil and season, then wrap the swede in a large sheet of greaseproof paper and place in a small ovenproof dish. Roast for 1 hour, then remove the paper and return to the oven for a further 30–60 mins, or until the swede is well cooked. Remove from the oven and turn down the temperature to 120°C/ Gas ½. Mix the sugar and mustard together in a small bowl and brush the swede all over with the mixture. Return to the oven and cook for 20–30 mins.

My passport expired two years ago. It's not a nice feeling knowing you can't escape if you need to. I had gone off to the passport booth in Tesco to get my photo done. It's all digital and touch screen these days. It kept rejecting my face telling me that my eyes were closed, which I know for a fact they weren't. Five times, the big red cross appeared. I only had one more attempt so I thought I'd try with my glasses on as I'd read this was permissible. Bingo! I got the green tick. I got home, did my passport application and uploaded the photo. Phew. Good job done.

A week later I received an email saying my photo had been rejected. This morning I went back to booth. It wasn't working and I had to call the helpline, she said there was a fault and that either I could go and find another booth or else she would manage me through it. Great, no privacy at all at such a delicate time. First attempt rejected, 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt rejected. She said it needed to see my eyebrows and I should lift my fringe up. Still no good – she said it was perhaps the bits of hair sticking out meant it couldn't read my face properly. I was getting angrier and angrier and angrier, scowling into the glass. I gave up. It couldn't read my amorphous face with no eyes, no discernible features and hair sticking out. You b\*\*\*\*\* of a robot. No safe and legal route out the country for me then.

It's now Monday morning and a little beyond my magnolia tree on the other side of the road, 6 men from Len Porter's the local fencing company are hammering telegraph poles into the ground and fixing 'pig wire' to them to create a big compound for the eight newly planted rowan trees. Honestly. I just can't bear it. I went over. The said it needed to be like that, big and robust, to protect it from cows, and deer. I told them there weren't any cows and there weren't any deer. I'm just waiting for it to be topped with barbed wire as is every other fence in the county. So now I have to see that eyesore every time I look out the window.

Coming back to the local Green Party, when I did speak to the woman who does their social media, having complained about how invisible and ineffective they are, she said the Green Party councillor also had his own Facebook page. Maybe that was where the action was, the fight for nature. I had a look. There was a picture of him laying across his sofa with a pint of beer watching TV and pictures of some of his grandchildren, photoshopped. Nothing wrong with that, it's his life. On his page, a glance to the left at his 'friends', there was a man standing in a field with a gun. A click onto his friend's page and there was a picture of his friend in a ploughed field with the bodies of about 200 birds lined up in rows that he had proudly shot.

The Yorkshire Dales, synonymous with the obliteration of nature, and no one gives a damn. It is absolutely soul destroying.

Hope you have a lovely Easter whatever you are doing.....Kind wishes, Isobel