



Monday 15th May 2023

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Finally the sun, and it's a different world !

Here's just the one tasty recipe you could try this week:

Broccoli, Potato and Lentil Curry

150g red lentils	2 onions
1 tbsp black mustard seeds	2 tbsp olive or coconut oil
800g potatoes	4 garlic cloves
thumb of ginger	2 chillies
2 tbsp spice mix	1 vegetable stock cube
400g tin chopped tomatoes	800ml warm water
head of broccoli	

Put the lentils into a bowl and cover with cold water to soak for a few mins. Finely slice the onions. Dry fry the mustard seeds for 2 mins in a large pan until they start to pop. Add 2 tbsp oil and the onions to the pan. Season with salt and pepper and cover with a lid. Fry for 15 mins, stirring now and then, till the onions are soft and pale golden. Meanwhile peel or scrub the potatoes and chop into bite-size chunks. Crush the garlic, peel and grate the ginger, and finely slice the chillies. Stir these, with the potatoes, into the pan. Add the spice mix, crumble in the stock cube and stir. Tip in the tin of tomatoes and then fill the tin twice with warm water and add it to the pan. Drain the lentils and add them. Put a lid on the pan, turn the heat up and bring to the boil. When boiling, turn the heat down and simmer for 20 mins. Meanwhile break the broccoli into small florets and chop the stem into 9 small pieces. Stir them into the pan and simmer, without the lid on the pan, for 8-10 mins till the broccoli is tender. Serve with rice or naan breads.

No news here. On Saturday I took Lainey to DogFest in Bedale, a dog event raising funds for animal charities. I thought she'd love it. All the stalls were filled with dog treats, there were agility competitions and dog paddling pools. As I walked towards the park there were dogs of every description arriving from all directions. Hundreds of them, all wagging their tails. They were going to a party. Lainey hated it – 'what the hell have you brought me here for !' She wouldn't go in the paddling pool, she wouldn't watch the agility classes, she turned her nose up at every single dog. She was appalled by the whole thing. The only thing she enjoyed was when she hid from me under the tablecloth at the catering stand and I had to ask if anyone had seen my dog. Then she poked her head out.

Now she's sulking because there are three pheasants in the garden and I won't let her out to chase them. They are on my small back lawn, which apart from mowing a few paths through, I am leaving wild. I did this last year too, and have to say, I really don't like how the docks, thistles and buttercups are spreading. My lawn may be past the point of no return. But I've made such a fuss on the Richmond Landscape Trust Facebook page in recent weeks accusing them of ecocide for their reckless, early mowing of the flower meadow, how can I possibly now mow my own lawn. Not least because they will all see it. The pheasants feel very at home in my mini meadow and are eating dandelion seeds. They are safe from those who further up the lane would shoot them.

So Lainey isn't happy with me for taking her to the dog party, because of course, she isn't a dog. And I'm not happy with her because yesterday in a brief moment when she decided she was one, she ran out the house and chased the squirrel, who shot like a rocket up to the top of the tall Scots pine where the crows started attacking it. With Lainey at the bottom and the crows at the top, it was absolutely horrible. I haven't seen squirrel since. He didn't come to the bird feeders this morning. As for food, all she wants to eat are Winalot Shapes. Suddenly I think I've cracked it, Lily's Coronation chicken, I got a tin, she loved it. I buy 12, they are very expensive. Next tin I open, 'eurgh, this is disgusting'. I try the Butternut boxes, expensive too, she thought 'Salmon to Love' and Chicken You Up' were the best things she'd ever eaten - until I subscribe, fill up the freezer compartment with them, and now they revolt her. It's not like she'll eat what I eat, except for broccoli and cabbage providing not a single particle of any sauce has been near it. I've been through every brand out there. Every failed attempt, after a couple of days, gets tipped down the bottom of the garden for wildlife. Then of course, she gets interested. She waits until it's in a putrid state and has soil and grass cuttings mixed in with it, then surreptitiously sneaks down the garden and gobbles it up. The only other way to get her to eat is to start hoovering. I whip round with the Dyson stick every night before bed so the start of each new day isn't marred by coming down to a mess. As soon as she hears the hoover, she goes to her bowl and eats. The hoover stops, she stops.

Kind wishes and hope you have a good week,

Isobel