



Monday 20th November 2023

Dear Customer,

Another week as November slips away. Still mild with differing variations of grey – ash, pewter, battleship, charcoal, sludge. ‘Grey of the Day’ today is quite a soft dove grey.

I’m afraid it’s starting to look a lot like Christmas. The Christmas lights went up in Richmond at the weekend and we have parsnips and sprouts in the bags.

Here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try:

Balsamic and Honey Sprouts

450g brussel sprouts, halved

¾ tsp balsamic vinegar

2 tbsp olive oil

¾ tsp honey

Preheat oven to 220C / Gas 7. Line a baking sheet with aluminium foil. On the prepared baking sheet, toss the brussel sprouts with 1½ tsp of the oil, the salt, and a good grinding of black pepper. Roast, stirring once halfway through, until tender and golden brown, about 20 minutes. Drizzle the remaining oil, vinegar and the honey over the roasted sprouts then toss to evenly coat.

Dahl with Parsnips

500g parsnips, chopped into small chunks

2 tsp coriander seeds

1 tsp fennel seeds

1 tsp black mustard seeds

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 carrot, peeled & finely diced

thumb size piece of ginger, grated

50g butter, or dairy-free alternative

1 tsp light brown sugar

1 x 400ml tin coconut milk

lime wedges, to serve

2 tsp cumin seeds

2 tsp garam masala

1 tsp fenugreek seeds

1 tsp ground turmeric

1 onion, peeled & finely diced

4 garlic cloves, grated

1 red chilli, finely chopped

200g fresh or tinned tomatoes, chopped

1 x 400g tin puy lentils, drained

desiccated coconut, to serve

Preheat your oven to 180°C/ Gas 4. Toss the chopped parsnips in a roasting tray with a little oil, salt and pepper. Roast for 20 minutes, until soft. In a hot, dry saucepan, heat the spices until they release their aromas, then grind in a pestle and mortar. Gently fry the diced onion and carrot in a little oil, until soft. Add the garlic, ginger, chilli, butter and spices to the pan and stir for a couple of mins. Next, add the tomatoes, sugar, lentils, coconut milk and roasted parsnips. Simmer for 30 minutes. Serve topped with a little desiccated coconut and lime wedges. Naan bread are the perfect accompaniment.

On Saturday I felt the urge to see the sea. It’s been a long time. I’ve avoided the North-East coast since the unexplained mass die-offs of crustaceans - the likely cause being the dredging up of long-buried industrial toxins as they scoop out the Tees basin. Whatever was in the water was also making dogs ill. The sewage spills have also dulled the attraction. I thought I could just go and look at it. I was vaguely enthusiastic and filled a flask, loaded some towels in case I let Lainey have a paddle. I set off on the cross-country route. What a depressing nightmare it was driving through thousands and thousands of acres of arable land. No hedges, no trees, just a vast, dead expanse of mud. Well I say mud, but not mud, thousands and thousands of acres of human sewage sludge spread over every field. The smell was unbearable even with the car windows shut.

Most people don’t realise that most of their food is grown in human sewage sludge. 80% of our sewage, over a million tons, is spread on the land, the farmers get it from the water companies. And in the sewage are ‘forever’ chemicals, toilet chemicals, microplastics, e-coli. In fact the Farmers Weekly themselves list “PTEs include elements such as zinc, cadmium, mercury, chromium, selenium and arsenic as well as virus and disease-causing pathogens including salmonellae, beef tapeworm eggs and potato cysts nematodes”,

and says it is down to the individual farmer to monitor it. And as if we don't have enough shit on this island, when in 2020, Holland banned the use of human sewage as a fertiliser, guess who started importing it? Of course we did, approved by our government.

Researchers in Cardiff and Manchester recently found that UK soil is likely to have the highest concentration of microplastics in the world (500-1000) pieces per square metre – all part of the sludge - the solids captured by the filtration systems – sold to farmers.

On a positive note, organic farms do not grow their vegetables in human excrement, it is prohibited in the organic standards, so we can rest easy on that one.

Also noted on the drive of misery, that new housing had sprung up around every town and village – the exact same homogeneous housing estate - the same template, over and over again 'Oh, that'll do'. God, have they got no imagination.

It was a very depressing day, I never even stopped anywhere to drink the flask of tea. It's Monday and I still feel depressed now. What we are doing to this country hurts my soul.

All the sheep are doing fine as another winter approaches. I've been busy sending Izzy Lane parcels out – living vicariously through them when I check the tracking on Parcel2Go and see them 'Leaving the UK', or out for distribution in San Francisco or Berlin – like watching the airport flight board. When I used to collect my parents from the airport I would always burst into tears of relief when 'landed' appeared.

We have such a short selling period, from September to Christmas. We have to try and get the money in to pay for their keep for the next year. The flock is diminishing as I knew it would. These were the years I dreaded, when all the sheep became elderly at the same time. I rescued the first 5 Wensleydales back in 2003. It was then in 2006-2007 that I went mad and rescued about another 700 – most of them lambs. With similar life spans, it would be like having 700 dogs getting old simultaneously. Time marches on. If there's anything you want, I would love as ever, offer you my Farmaround customers, a 20% discount on everything across the board, using discount code FAR23 www.izzylane.com

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