

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2014**

A postcard from Edinburgh

Dear Customer,

It's Bank Holiday monday and I am in Edinburgh, living dangerously, parking wherever takes my fancy. Just got back to the car after breakfast in a medieval windy passage and yet again, I haven't got a parking ticket. I thought they would be rigorous just outside the castle but I got away with it. As I did yesterday, parked directly outside the venue of Alison Jackson's trashy, satirical opera 'La Trashiata' which I'd come up to see.

I had planned to write my newsletter from my room this morning but I couldn't get the wifi to work. That's the story of my life and hence you have a Blackberry letter, inevitably short, but I'll be back in the swing in september.

Now badly parked, but in the car at least, next to the Scottish National Gallery. I've sent my travel companion in while I write this. Invited to a lovely meal with friends in the Missoni hotel last night - it was like being in my wardrobe. I have a lot of Missoni skirts and I recognised all the patterns on the walls. Myfa was optically challenged on the stripy carpet and did her special walk which she does across anything slatted - decking or wooden footbridges. She walks very slowly, shaking, with her legs spread-eagled like a toad.

Well I think that's my lot as La Diva wants to go to Arthur's Seat. I am passing this onto Diane who will insert some of her favourite recipes. I've reminded her that pot-noodles won't cut it with you.

Kind wishes,  
Isobel

Beetroot and Chocolate Brownies (yum)

500g whole raw beetroot (3-4 medium beets)  
100g unsalted butter, plus extra for the tin  
200g bar plain chocolate (70% cocoa)  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
250g golden caster sugar  
3 eggs  
100g plain flour  
25g cocoa powder

Wear a pair of rubber gloves to stop your hands from staining, then top, tail and peel the beetroot - you'll need about 400g flesh. Roughly chop and put into a large bowl. Add a splash of water, cover with cling film, then microwave on High for 12 mins or until tender.

Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. While the beetroot cooks, butter then line a 20 x 30cm traybake or small roasting tin. Roughly chop the chocolate and cut the butter into cubes. Tip the cooked beetroot into a sieve, drain off any excess liquid, then put into a food processor or blender with the chocolate, butter and vanilla. Whizz until the mix is as smooth as you can get it. The chocolate and butter will melt as you do this.

Put the sugar and eggs into a large bowl, then beat using an electric hand whisk until thick, pale and foamy, about 2 mins. Spoon the beetroot mix into the bowl (it won't look too pretty at this stage, but bear with me), then use a large metal spoon to fold it into the whisked eggs. Try to conserve as much air in the mixture as you can. Sift in the flour and cocoa powder, then gently fold these in to make a smooth batter. Pour into the prepared tin and bake for 25 mins or until risen all over, with just the merest quiver under the centre of the crust when you shake the pan. Cool completely in the tin, then cubes.

No cake for Isobel after the pot noodle comment.

Hope you enjoy

Diane