



Monday 16th January 2017

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. I have just seen the first snowdrops on the grass verge opposite my house – new beginnings, the earth is stirring. Despite this week's bone-chilling cold and first sprinkling of snow, it still stirs. If there is one thing we can rely on it is nature.

The bags are packed with sniffle-busting goodness. We have Savoy cabbages full of vitamins A, C, K and B6, folate, potassium, manganese, thiamine, calcium, iron and magnesium to name but a few. Your swede is equally charged – both coming from the rich, peaty soils of Lancashire, Royal Oak Farm. Your leeks are from David Govier who farms 270 acres near Crediton in the rolling hills of mid-Devon – a farm exceptional for the number of earthworms which makes cultivation easy.

All is not particularly well in the organic fields of the Mediterranean where Italy has had its lowest temperatures for 25 years and Spain has had severe flooding wiping out the broccoli and courgette crops amongst other things. It could be a very hungry 'hungry gap' this year, the period when nothing much grows here and we turn to the Continent.

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

Roasted Savoy Cabbage

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| 1 savoy cabbage | olive oil |
| sea salt | freshly ground black pepper |
| lemon juice | |

Preheat the oven to 200C/ 400F and grease a rimmed baking sheet. Cut the cabbage into quarters vertically and cut out the core. Cut each quarter into two lengthways and thinly slice crosswise. Place the cabbage on the baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and toss to coat. Put in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, stirring halfway through until cooked and golden in places. Grind black pepper over it. Sprinkle with lemon juice and serve.

Baked Savoy Cabbage with Emmental

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| 1 savoy cabbage | freshly grated nutmeg |
| 150g Emmental cheese, grated | 300ml double cream |
| 75g freshly made breadcrumbs | |

Preheat the oven to 200C/ 180C Fan/ Gas 6. Remove any tough outer leaves and cut the cabbage into 6 wedges. Bring a large saucepan to the boil in lightly salted water and blanch the cabbage for 4-5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain well on kitchen paper. Arrange the wedges in a 2.5 litre baking dish and season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Scatter the Emmental over the cabbage, pour over the cream then scatter with the breadcrumbs. Put in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes until tender, bubbling and golden. You could also substitute the double cream with some tinned chopped tomatoes and juice.

Swede in Stock

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| 500g swede | 35g butter or margarine |
| 500ml vegetable strong vegetable stock | |

Peel the swede and cut in half lengthways, then in half again. Slice it so you end up with small pieces no thicker than your little finger, like saute potatoes. Melt the butter or margarine in a shallow pan on a moderate heat and add the swede. Leave the pieces to colour on their flat sides then turn them. When they are golden brown on all sides, pour in the stock and bring to the boil. Once boiling turn down the heat to a simmer and leave for 15 minutes or so until the swede is deep orange-gold and tender enough to squash with a fork. The liquid should have reduced to a buttery juice. Serve with a grind of black pepper and salt with some crusty bread.

My habitual Christmas gloom has lifted thankfully and I am now back to busily making plans. One of my New Year's resolutions is to stop watching politics programmes at every opportunity and late into the night. A friend did suggest it was escapism. 'No' I said. 'It's in the family, we're all the same.....mmm well actually maybe it is'. So I decided that it is escapism, it is bordering on addiction and that I will stop. However, I haven't got off to a very good start and this year of all years is going to be a hard one to detach from as we enter this new era of quantum politics. And there are so many elections coming up in Europe. I love European elections. It's so much more appealing to cogitate on the world's problems than on one's own. And it's all so fascinating !

I hope that you are getting back into the swing and having a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel