



Monday 4th September 2017

Dear Customer,

Blimey, the summer has flown, September already and it is grey and foggy this morning, around 14C. Time to get serious again – work, school, North Korea. But please let us not see Christmas in the shops yet, ruining the otherwise lovely season of autumn. Or why don't they just go the whole hog and have the grim reaper dangling on the shelves, they might as well.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try:

Pasta with Spinach and Chilli Tomatoes

<i>olive oil</i>	<i>1 medium onion, finely chopped</i>
<i>3 garlic cloves, crushed</i>	<i>¾ tsp dried chilli flakes</i>
<i>300g wholemeal pasta</i>	<i>400g can chopped tomatoes</i>
<i>125ml red wine</i>	<i>¾ tsp dried oregano</i>
<i>175g spinach, finely chopped</i>	

Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and gently fry the onion, garlic and chilli flakes, stirring regularly, for 5 minutes. Cook the pasta according to packet instructions. Add the tomatoes, wine and oregano to the frying pan and stir to combine. Add the spinach, bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes. Drain the pasta and tip into the pan then toss to combine and serve.

Cream of Celery Soup

<i>1 head celery, finely sliced</i>	<i>1 large onion, chopped</i>
<i>1 clove garlic, chopped</i>	<i>small bunch flat leaved parsley, chopped</i>
<i>1 litre vegetable stock</i>	<i>100ml single cream</i>
<i>pinch nutmeg</i>	<i>black pepper</i>
<i>2 tbsp olive oil</i>	

In a large saucepan or casserole heat the oil gently and add the celery, onion and garlic. Sweat over a gentle heat until the vegetables are all soft but not browned, around 15 minutes. Add the chopped parsley and vegetable stock then season well with nutmeg and black pepper. Simmer the soup for approximately 15 minutes then pour into a blender along with the single cream. Process at high speed until the soup is smooth and creamy. Return to the pan to warm. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil.

Walnut, Cheese and Celery Scones

<i>225g self-raising flour</i>	<i>2 tsp baking powder</i>
<i>50g butter</i>	<i>125g mature Cheddar cheese, grated</i>
<i>2 stalks of celery, finely chopped</i>	<i>50g walnuts, chopped</i>
<i>1 Hen Nation egg</i>	<i>6 tbsp milk</i>

Preheat the oven to 220C/ 200C Fan/ Gas 7. Grease a baking tray. Place the flour and baking powder into a large bowl, rub in the butter until it resembles fine breadcrumbs then stir in the chopped celery, 100g of the grated cheese and the chopped walnuts. Break the egg into a measuring jug, lightly beat and make up to 150ml with the milk, add all but a small amount, reserved to brush the tops with. Mix gently until you have a soft dough. Knead lightly on a floured surface and roll out to approximately 2cm thick, cut into 6cm rounds and place on a baking tray. Brush the tops with a little of the reserved egg mix and sprinkle with the remaining cheese. Bake for 12-15 minutes until well-risen and golden then cool on a wire rack. Serve warm with butter and some celery sticks to crunch on.

I took my French friend and her children to the airport on Thursday. We had arranged to call in on my brother on the way through Harrogate. It would be the first time I would see him since he stopped talking to me earlier in the year. He knows my friend as she worked for Farmaround many years ago – it was in the early days of the organic revolution and before the Mediterranean growers had formed themselves into cooperatives with export departments. We had to liaise directly with the farmers and she was dynamic, speaking an impressive 7 languages. Anyway, as we set off I knew we had to get fuel. But then because we were talking and stopping to look at fields of cows, I forgot about it. On the really busy road between Ripon and Harrogate just the other side of a sharp bend at the bottom of a hill we ran out of petrol. It was horrendously dangerous, I got the children out the car. Myfa wouldn't get out the car, completely exhausted from being the subject of the girls' affection for a week, I dragged her off the back seat and she fell in a lump on the grass verge. It would take too long call out the RAC, they would miss their flight. I put my thumb out to the next passing car and a lady stopped, then another one stopped. We got into the 2 cars and they took us to Harrogate to get diesel. It all took over an hour. We were already late setting off. Thankfully after a lot of spluttering the car started. I saw there were missed calls and a text from my brother asking if we were still going.

When we pulled up outside his house I could see the back of his head as he sat on sofa. The kitchen table was laid out with homemade cakes, rice crispie chocolate things, all specially made for the children – he and his fiancé had been busy. The giant flat screen TV's normally set on a news channel were off. They had bought gifts for the children.

'What time's the flight ?' he said. I thought we might have half an hour but he said the traffic was bad and we had to leave in 5 minutes or they would miss it. We didn't even get the chance to sit down. Greg decided I must follow him, there was no margin for getting lost in Harrogate. We got to the airport in time, they departed and then we went for a coffee and had a long chat. We stayed off difficult subjects like me and me selling my house. It was really nice to see him.

I have spent the weekend recovering from the exertions. The house is blissfully peaceful once more.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel