



Monday 1st October 2017

Dear Customer,

Hurricane Maria is whipping up outside - knew she'd head for Richmond after Florida. We have beetroot in the bags this week – fantastic roasted, in soups and burgers*. Not fantastic taking up lodgings in the fridge drawer for months – I know all about that. You could fish them out your bag straightaway and boil in a saucepan of water to tender. Keep them tucked up in their skins in the fridge ready to peel and chop into salads or sandwiches through the week. As well as being a good source of folate, magnesium, vitamin C, Iron and vitamin B6, it is also lowers blood pressure.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

Spaghetti with Courgettes and Chilli

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| 200g spaghetti | 2 medium courgettes |
| 2 tbsp olive oil | 1 clove garlic, crushed |
| ½ long red chilli, sliced | olive oil, to serve |

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions to al dente. Meanwhile slice the courgettes lengthways using a potato peeler. Heat the olive oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the courgettes, garlic and chilli. Stir over the heat for about 3 minutes until soft. Season well with salt and freshly ground black pepper. When the pasta is cooked, drain it and return to the pan. Add the courgettes, taste and adjust seasoning. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil.

Beetroot and Courgette Burgers*

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| 2-3 tbsp olive oil | 1 onion, finely chopped |
| 2 cloves garlic, crushed | 1 medium raw beetroot, grated |
| 2 courgettes, grated | 1 large carrot, grated |
| 100g wholemeal bread (4 slices), crusts removed | 400g tin chick peas, drained |
| 3 tbsp crunchy peanut butter | 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley |
| 1 Hen Nation egg yolk (or flax egg – mix 3 tbsp milled flax with 1 tbsp water) | |

Sauce:

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| 350ml plain yoghurt | olive oil |
| ½ cucumber, diced | 1 clove garlic, crushed |
| lemon wedges, to serve | |

Heat about 1 tbsp oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Saute the onion and garlic for 4-5 minutes or until softened. Add the grated vegetables and cook, stirring for about 5 mins until wilted, then drain off any liquid. Place the bread, chickpeas, peanut butter and egg yolk/ flax egg in a food processor and pulse to combine. Transfer the mix to a bowl, stir in the grated vegetables and parsley and season. Form the mix into 8 patties and chill for a few minutes, or up to 24 hours. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan over a medium heat and cook the burgers in batches for about 2-3 minutes each side until golden. Make a quick sauce by combining the yoghurt, a drizzle of olive oil, cucumber and crushed garlic. Serve with the sauce and lemon wedges.

Beetroot, Carrot and Ginger Soup

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| oil for frying | 1 large onion, chopped |
| 3 medium beetroot, peeled and diced | 2 large carrots, diced |
| 25g fresh ginger, peeled and grated | juice of 1 orange |
| 1¼ litre of vegetable stock | salt and pepper |

Heat 1 tbsp of oil in a saucepan. Add the onion and fry gently for 10 minutes without colouring until soft and translucent. Add the beetroot, carrot and ginger and stir for 1 minute. Add the orange juice and stock and season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the veg is tender, about 25-30 minutes depending on how small you have cut the vegetables. Blend until smooth. Gently reheat if needed and check the seasoning before serving.

Where do I start ? I know I have been harping on about trying to let my house out on Airbnb to generate some extra income. It was advertised all through the summer and not one single booking. It is just as well as the house was in no fit state to rent out – it needed too much tidying up and cleaning as well as a bathroom fitting. I have slowly been sorting things out through the summer and the bathroom is nearly done but the house though better is still nowhere near ready. I tried to take the listing down but wasn't technically competent enough. In the end I gave up and left it there on the assumption that if no one was interested in the summer holidays, they definitely wouldn't be in autumn or winter. Then to my shock and horror when checking my emails the other night a booking popped up for a week from the 21st October. Since that evening life has been hell. I haven't been able to sleep doing lists in my head of the things I need to get – crockery, towels, mattress toppers, ironing board, sheets etc etc - the things I need to do – decorate downstairs, put locks on toilet doors, fix plugs, fix smoke alarms, service boiler, clean all the windows, clear all my stuff away into hidden places etc etc, not to mention the garden – the list is practically infinite. The stress is unbearable on top of my normal stuff.

Ernest has been coming round to help me move furniture round – moving it one day and then moving it back the next. Today its Sunday and I feel utterly exhausted, demoralised and fed up with it. I have one very large living/kitchen/dining area but one side of it looks very pale and insipid compared to the other side – the colour distribution isn't balanced. It's not helped by the short, shrunken, shrivelled curtains which desperately need steaming or ironing, not least to see if it will add a bit of the length back after I washed them. I have spent tens of hours on ebay looking for stuff including suitable rugs to sort out the colour balance. They are all either horrible or unaffordable. Are the next three weeks going to be like this and is it worth it – at the moment it feels like a nightmare.

All I can say is that I hope it isn't a Farmaround customer and she's reading this now. I'm very grateful of course for the booking.

Very strange, just as I am writing this I have had another booking for a week over the Christmas period. I'll be booking into a homeless shelter.

Hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel