



Monday 8th October 2017

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. It's been moderately sunny on and off but a blustery week here. The winds are stripping the trees and my garden already has big leaf-drifts. It seems too early this. There was no transition between summer and autumn. Transitions ease us gently from one season to the next, that's what they are there for. This was harsh, like being taken by the scruff of the neck and thrown into it. Anyway, to comfort us we have tasty parsnips, leeks and spinach in the bags this week and here are some autumnal recipes you could try with them:

Parsnip and Spinach Soup

450g parsnips, peeled and roughly chopped
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sautéed
2 tsp smoked or non-smoked garam masala
1.1 litre vegetable stock
bag of spinach, chopped

Peel and chop the parsnips into 1" chunks, place in a saucepan and add the stock. Bring to the boil then simmer until soft. Add the garam masala, garlic and spinach and cook until tender. Blitz with a stick blender and serve immediately.

Spicy Root and Lentil Casserole

2tbsp sunflower oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 carrots, thickly sliced
2 tbsp curry paste or powder
100g red lentils
natural yoghurt and naan bread, to serve (optional)
1 onion, chopped
700g potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
2 parsnips, thickly sliced
1 litre vegetable stock
small bunch coriander, roughly chopped

Heat the oil in a large pan and cook the onion and garlic over a medium heat for 3-4 minutes until softened, stirring occasionally. Tip in the potatoes, carrots and parsnips, turn up the heat and cook for 6-7 minutes, stirring until the vegetables are golden. Stir in the curry paste or powder, pour in the stock then bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, add the lentils, cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes until the lentils and vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened. Stir in most of the coriander, season and heat for a minute or so then serve.

Buttery Leeks and Peas

50g butter or suitable margarine
350g frozen peas
3 large leeks, finely sliced

Melt the butter or margarine over a low heat and cook the leeks for 20 minutes until softened but not coloured. Bring a large pan of lightly salted water to the boil and cook the peas for 4 minutes. Drain, stir into the leeks and serve immediately.

Leek, Potato and Parsnip Roast

1k potatoes
450g leeks
3 cloves garlic
450g parsnips
75ml olive oil
salt and black pepper

Scrub the potatoes and parsnips, wash the leeks, then cut all the vegetables into 1" chunks. Cook the potatoes and parsnips in boiling salted water for 3-4 minutes and drain. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large roasting tin on the top shelf of the oven at 230C/ 450F/ Gas 8. Add the hot potatoes, parsnips and whole garlic cloves. Baste them in the hot oil and season with salt and pepper. Cook on the top shelf of the oven for about 30 minutes, turning occasionally and basting with oil. Stir in the leeks and cook for a further 20 minutes or until all the vegetables are crisp, tender and golden brown.

I'm still on with preparing the house for the Airbnb visitors. The stress of it is still unbearable and I'm on the countdown now with just 14 days to go. The downstairs living space was so desperately in need of painting that I was forced to get a decorator in. So now the house looks worse than ever with everything displaced. I've been having to clear out every cupboard. A big breakthrough moment came on Friday when I got rid of all the holocaust food – it will be Sod's Law won't it. All the past their sell-by date stuff which lived in the back of my cupboard – kept in case of a dire national emergency. I found a big bottle of unopened tomato ketchup in the back of the cupboard, it had turned brown. I've never seen that happen before. This is not me being slovenly not having been to the back of my cupboards for so long, it's because time is going so much quicker nowadays. Well I have got rid of it all and my food cupboards are practically bare. To think, all this time, living under the illusion of plenty.

The upside it that I am tackling things that have bugged me for years and would have bugged me for years to come, I'm hitting it all.

I just saw mw neighbour on the drive. She returned last night from sailing round the Greek Islands where she read the Marie Kondo book, which seems to be spreading like. She said she has gadget instructions in 25 different places and has turned her house upside down having now embarked on the journey to rationalise and declutter. Friends, I think the tide of consumerism has turned in favour of getting riddim.

Those sofa ads saying 'order now for Christmas' have started appearing again. I always wonder who it is who new sofas every Christmas. I bought my sofas 24 years ago from Bentalls in Kingston. The seat cushion covers had become worn and shredded and the all fabric faded from the sun. I have just taken the covers to a seamstress up the Dale who is making new seat cushion covers and turning everything else inside out and resewing it. I feel sure it will look brand new again and keep me going for the next 24 years – they aren't ready for landfill just yet.

Hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel