

Monday 30th October 2017

Dear Customer,

Friday's balmy and surprising 21.5C was replaced by gale force winds on Saturday and a lovely sunny, nippy Sunday, today, with blue skies. We have tasty cauliflowers in the bags this week full of vitamin C, vitamin K, folate, vitamin B6, pantothenic acid and omega-3 fatty acids.

Here are a few recipes you could try with it:

Cauliflower and Pear Bake

1 cauliflower	3 unripe pears, peeled, cored and sliced
4 Hen Nation eggs, beaten	1 tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper	½ tsp nutmeg
4 tbsp breadcrumbs	1 large pepper, cut into 1cm slices
6 black olives, stoned and sliced	6 mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 tbsp onion, finely chopped	1 tbsp parsley, finely chopped

Remove the outer leaves from the cauliflower, chop into florets and wash. Drop them into a large pan of boiling water. After 10 minutes, add the pear sliced and cook until just tender. Drain and put the cauliflower, pears, eggs, salt, pepper, nutmeg and breadcrumbs into a liquidiser and blend. Preheat the oven to 180C/ 350F/ Gas 4. Lightly grease a large baking dish. Pour a quarter of the cauliflower mixture into the dish and cover with half the pepper and olive slices. The pour in another quarter of the cauliflower mixture and cover it with the onion and mushrooms. Repeat a cauliflower layer and then add the remaining red pepper and olive slices. Top with the remaining cauliflower. Bake for 30-45 minutes until the top is golden. Finally sprinkle with the parsley and serve.

Spanish Crisp Cauliflower

1 cauliflower, broken into small florets	4 tbsp gram flour
2 tsp paprika	sunflower oil for deep-frying
1 tbsp chopped parsley	salt and black pepper
2 dessertspoons red wine vinegar	
2 tbsp capers, soaked in cold water for 20 minutes, squeezed dry then chopped	

Cook the cauliflower florets in boiling, salted water for a few minutes until just tender. Drain the cauliflower well and while still hot, put in a bowl with the flour, paprika and some salt and pepper. Mix it all together until the cauliflower is coated with flour. Heat the sunflower oil to 190C in a deep-fat fryer or a deep, heavy-based saucepan. Fry the cauliflower florets in batches until crisp and golden then remove from the oil and drain on kitchen paper. Sprinkle with the vinegar, chopped capers and parsley and serve.

Gratin de Chouxflour

1 cauliflower, trimmed and chopped	coarse salt
nutmeg, freshly grated	60g Comte or other cheese, freshly grated

Béchamel Sauce:

25g butter	25g flour
330ml milk	1-2 tbsp breadcrumbs
nutmeg	salt and black pepper

Sprinkle the cauliflower with coarse salt and steam for 15 minutes until soft. Preheat the oven to 180C/ 350F/ Gas 4. Transfer the cauliflower to a medium gratin dish. Season with a dash of nutmeg and top with half the Comte. Now prepare the béchamel. Melt the butter in a saucepan over a medium-high heat. When the butter starts to sizzle add all the flour at once and stir it into the butter with a wooden spoon. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring continually until the mixture turns creamy. Pour in the milk and whisk it into the sauce making sure you don't leave any clumps on the bottom or sides of the pan. Bring to a simmer and cook for a few minutes, stirring as the mixture thickens. Set aside to cool for a few minutes. Season the béchamel with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Pour evenly over the cauliflower, top with the remaining cheese, sprinkle with breadcrumbs and bake for 20 minutes until heated through and golden on top. Flash under the grill for the final 5 minutes. Let it rest for 5 minutes and serve.

It wasn't exactly penury staying with my friend for a week. She rents a wing of a Georgian mansion, set in parkland with its own little walled garden and wisteria and climbing roses creeping round the arched door. The interior is like a boutique hotel. However, I was looking forward to getting home. On Saturday morning when my Airbnb guests were due to depart, at 11am I thought, I packed the car ready and drove to Richmond. I'd asked the lady to text me when they had left. Not receiving a text I drove past the house at 11.30am, there were still cars on the drive. I carried straight on past and up to the end of the lane where I parked up near the sheep waiting for the text. No text came. It was clearly written that departure was 11am. I didn't want to put pressure on them but by 1pm I was desperate to go home, so desperate. I was starting to think maybe I had got the dates wrong and they were there until Sunday, or that they had got the dates wrong and thought they were there until Sunday. So I texted again asking if they were still in the house. There was no response, not until 1.30pm when they said they were walking out the door. Thank God for that.

I got home, I was exhausted and with yet another migraine. The house smelled different. Myfa went round sniffing everything, they had had dogs with them. The house was pleasantly clean and the bathrooms smelled of cleaning products. That was a relief. I got someone to come and pressure wash all the paving outside while I hoovered.

In conclusion, my first experience of doing Airbnb, it has been difficult, disruptive and stressful, even though the guests could not have been nicer and more considerate. If I saw another booking pop up, I would despair. In the hours I sat in the car waiting for them to leave I pondered the importance of 'home'. My friend said she liked renting property instead of owning, finds it liberating. I am the opposite, I need my home, my roots dug down somewhere, my sanctuary. I thought about the next generation, the ones who will never be able to buy their own homes unless they inherit, coming out of university with 50-60k of debt, demoralised before they even start.

On that note !! I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel