

**Monday 16th April 2018**

Dear Customer,

It's Saturday morning, I woke up early and what joy, finally, after 6 months, the sun was streaming through the window, I checked the BBC news, we had bombed Syria in the night, we were at war. The joy had been short-lived – about 3 minutes. It's now 11am, it has clouded over, grey again, but we have still bombed Syria. I'm just a bit furious. A friend texted 'they did it while we were asleep'.

And to make things worse, in a throwback to the Cold War, we've got sputniks in the bags. Also known as kohlrabi you could cut it into cubes and steam until lightly tender and dress with olive oil, a good squeeze of lemon juice, some chopped parsley and salt and pepper. You could cut it into thick batons and saute them in butter or margarine until slightly softened then add some white wine and simmer until tender. You can grate it raw into a salad or use it in a remoulade as an alternative to celeriac dressed in a garlicky, lemony vinaigrette. You can add to soups, stews or stir-fries. You could fry them cubed or sliced in a little oil with mustard seeds, garlic and ginger. You can do all that with them!

**Kohl Rabi Coconut Curry**

1 large onion, finely sliced

1 tbsp oil

2 tsp black mustard seeds

1 tsp fennel seeds

1 tsp ground cumin

6 cardamom pods, crushed to obtain seeds

2 green chillies, deseeded and finely chopped

400g tin chopped tomatoes

200ml coconut milk

1oz butter or margarine

kohl rabi, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp ground coriander

5cm piece fresh root ginger, finely chopped

salt and pepper

400ml water

fresh coriander leaves

Cook the onion in the butter or margarine and oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat for 10 minutes until translucent. Add the kohlrabi and cook uncovered for 4 minutes. Stir in the mustard, cumin and fennel seeds and cook for 2 minutes taking care not to brown the seeds. Add the ground spices, cardamom seeds, ginger, garlic and chillies and cook for a minute. Season, add the tomatoes and water and simmer for 20 minutes then add the coconut milk and cook for a further 20 minutes or until the kohlrabi is tender. Season again then stir in the fresh coriander. Serve with rice, naan breads and yogurt.

**Caramelised Cauliflower Soup**

1 cauliflower

½ tsp grated nutmeg

**For the broth:**

2 tsp olive oil

1 garlic clove, chopped

1 tsp dried thyme

**For the topping:**

1 tsp olive oil

black pepper

fresh thyme leaves

olive oil

salt and black pepper

½ small onion, chopped

750ml vegetable stock

1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

20g bread torn into 2.5cm pieces

60g hazelnuts, toasted and chopped

Preheat the oven to 220C/ 450F/ Gas 8. Cut the cauliflower into florets and spread them on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with fresh nutmeg and salt and pepper and toss everything to coat. Bake for 35-45 minutes tossing halfway through until the florets are roasted and the edges are browned. Remove and cool. In the meantime, start the broth. Heat the oil in a saucepan and saute the onion and garlic for 5 minutes to soften. Add the stock, thyme and vinegar and warm through. When the cauliflower is cool to touch, add it to the broth and blend until smooth. Season to taste then return to the pan to keep warm. For the croutons, heat the remaining oil in a small pan, add the torn bread and a pinch of ground pepper and stir for 5-8 minutes until crisp with browned edges. Serve each portion with a few croutons, chopped hazelnuts and a pinch of thyme leaves.

**Leek, Pea and Pesto Spaghetti**

320g spaghetti

2 tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp basil pesto

250g frozen peas

450g leeks, thinly sliced

grated cheese, optional

Cook the spaghetti according to packet instructions, add in the peas for the final few minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan, add the leeks then gently cook for about 5 minutes until softened. Stir in the pesto and 3 tbsp of the pasta cooking water then simmer for a few minutes. Drain the pasta and peas then add to the frying pan tossing everything together. Divide between bowls and scatter with cheese if using.

It's now Monday morning, the war seems over for the time being, except for the Syrians of course, the ones who are left.

My home has turned into puppy-world. Everywhere is strewn with shredded toilet paper, shredded shoe insoles, crunched up twigs and leaves brought in from the garden, rubber balls, cuddly toys. The carpets are ruined. My pyjamas and remaining clothes are full of rips and holes where she dangles off them.

According to the forecast spring is arriving this coming week – flouncing in, fashionably late.

Hope you enjoy the sunshine,

Kind wishes,

Isobel