



**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. We are having an autumn/ winter catch up with gales, heavy rain, snow and hail. Horrible for all the new born lambs which are studding the fields. It's the same every year, born at the worst possible time. The farmers are so stuck to tradition, mating the ewes in September to have lambs in March. If only they could mate the ewes a couple of months later, at least their short lives would be a bit more tolerable. Or better still, grow vegetables.

One thing which can tolerate severe weather is purple sprouting broccoli, which we have in the bags this week from the rolling hills of Devon. It's quite an extraordinary vegetable in that is harvested in late winter, when even hardy cabbages are over and barely anything else can grow, tolerating temperatures of up to minus 12C. Yet it is so delicate and tender. It is delicious eaten like asparagus. Steam gently for 8-10 minutes, sprinkle the heads lightly with lemon juice then serve on warmed plates with a pot of creamy margarine for dipping. Or you could try one of these tasty recipe ideas:

#### **Chargrilled Purple Sprouting Broccoli with Sweet Tahini**

<i>bunch purple sprouting broccoli</i>	<i>1 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>40g tahini</i>	<i>1½ tsp honey</i>
<i>2 tsp lemon juice</i>	<i>1 small garlic clove, peeled and crushed</i>
<i>2 tsp sesame seeds, dry-toasted</i>	<i>3 tbsp water</i>

*Trim the ends from the broccoli and blanch for 3 minutes in salted, boiling water to al dente then drain and leave to dry. Toss the broccoli in the oil a little salt and pepper then cook on a hot griddle pan for 2 minutes on each side until slightly charred and smoky then set aside to cool. Whisk the tahini, honey, lemon juice, garlic and a bit of salt then add a tablespoon of water. Contribute to add and whisk the rest of the water. Put the broccoli on a serving platter and drizzle with the sauce and scatter with the toasted sesame seeds.*

#### **Balsamic-Roasted Purple Sprouting Broccoli**

<i>bunch purple sprouting broccoli</i>	<i>1 garlic clove</i>
<i>2 tbsp balsamic vinegar</i>	<i>1 tbsp olive oil</i>
<i>sea salt and black pepper</i>	<i>50g pine nuts</i>

*Heat the oven at 200C/ Fan 180C/ Gas 6. Trim the ends of the broccoli and cut thicker stems in half. Peel and grate the garlic and whisk it with the olive oil and balsamic vinegar and plenty of salt and pepper. Pour the balsamic dressing over the broccoli and toss thoroughly to coat. Scatter with the pine nuts then put the baking tray in the oven and roast the broccoli for 10-15 minutes. The stalks should be tender and the florets slightly charred. Serve with any remaining balsamic dressing from the baking tray drizzled over.*

#### **Tomato, Olive and Purple Sprouting Broccoli Pasta**

<i>1 tbsp olive oil</i>	<i>2 garlic cloves, chopped</i>
<i>300g purple sprouting broccoli</i>	<i>3 x 400g tins plum tomatoes</i>
<i>2 garlic cloves, chopped</i>	<i>1 tsp crushed red chilli flakes</i>
<i>10 black olives, pitted and halved</i>	<i>2 tsp capers, drained</i>
<i>450g spaghetti or other pasta shape</i>	<i>grated cheese to serve (optional)</i>

*Heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat. Add the garlic and chilli and cook for 1-2 minutes until golden. Stir in the tomatoes, breaking them up with a wooden spoon. Season well then reduce heat and simmer gently for 10 minutes. Add the olives and capers for the final 2 minutes of cooking. Meanwhile cook the spaghetti according to packet instructions. Add the broccoli to the pan for the final 3 minutes of cooking. Drain the pasta and broccoli and add to the pan of tomato sauce. Mix well and serve, scattered with cheese if desired.*

#### **Creamed Savoy Cabbage with Apples, Cumin and Cider**

<i>2 tbsp olive oil</i>	<i>2 onions, thinly sliced</i>
<i>2 tsp cumin seeds</i>	<i>2 garlic cloves, finely chopped</i>
<i>250ml dry cider</i>	<i>1½ tbsp cider vinegar</i>
<i>500g Savoy cabbage, leaves sliced 2cm thick</i>	<i>1 apple, thinly sliced</i>
<i>1 tsp salt</i>	<i>100ml crème fraiche or vegan alternative</i>

*Heat the oil in a large saucepan then add the onion and the cumin seeds. Cook over a medium heat for about 10 minutes, stirring often until the onions are soft and starting to caramelize. Stir in the garlic for a few seconds then pour in the cider and vinegar. Add the cabbage and apple and mix together. Add the salt, bring to a simmer, cover with a lid and cook for 15 minutes until the cabbage is soft. Stir in the crème fraiche and simmer over a low heat for 2 minutes more. Check the seasoning and a good grinding of black pepper. Sprinkle with a few more cumin seeds to serve.*

It's all set to be another magnificent week at the Commons on the road to nowhere. Our politicians are so full of self-belief, so opinionated like little hamsters running in their wheels, unable to break free of their mindsets. One strong opinion versus an equally strong opposing opinion equals nothing, equals hopelessness. Society is made up of the warps and wefts of the differing needs, values, hopes and dreams of its people. Compromise is always the name of the game.

If this period has done anything, it has been to lay them all bare, in the glare of the spotlight they sought, and show us how terrifyingly ordinary they are. And how unfit to manage our country. Where did they all come from in the first place. Watching the discourse is like watching the bickering and stropiness of a family game of Monopoly. It really gets to me seeing them in high spirits in the Commons, and doing chat shows, and fashion shoots for the Times, when their heads should be bowed in shame as businesses are melting down with uncertainty, jobs, lives, our country, hanging by a thread. My message to them ' You are not of the calibre we require, you create problems, not solve them, you create divisions, you damage society, you damage our economy, you are not fit for purpose, take your pensions and go'.

Kind wishes,

Isobel