



Monday 9TH January 2023

Dear Customer,

I hope you are settling nicely into 2023. It's Monday morning and there is a little respite from the weather. It is still and bright with some blue sky, though I think the wind is about to get up again. I suspect that deep under the fallen leaves in the flower beds, hidden alongside hibernating toads, there may be some snowdrops coming through, the beginnings of nature's reawakening. Always so welcome along with the lengthening days.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

Roasted Courgette and Sweet Pepper Paella

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| 450g courgettes | 2 red peppers |
| 4 tbsp olive oil | 1 onion |
| 4 cloves garlic | 2 tsp paprika |
| 2 tsp tomato paste | 1 litre vegetable stock |
| Sprinkling of thyme | 250g paella rice |
| 70g black olives | |

De-seed the peppers and slice into 1" wide strips. Chop the courgettes into 1" thick rounds. Place both on a baking tray and drizzle with 1 tbs of the olive oil. Season, then grill on high for 20-25 minutes until the peppers soften and start to blacken. Meanwhile finely chop the garlic and onion. Heat the remaining oil in a deep pan over a medium heat. Fry the garlic and onions until soft. Add the turmeric and paprika then cook for another minute, then add the paella rice. Combine the tomato paste and thyme into the stock then pour over the rice. Simmer for about 20 minutes until the stock is absorbed and the rice is al dente. Roughly chop the black olives. Once rice is cooked remove from the heat and toss in the olives, peppers and courgettes and mix well.

Fennel Pasta

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| 300g pasta eg penne or fusilli | 1-2 tbsp olive oil |
| 1 fennel bulb | 1 large onion |
| 1 tsp sugar | 2 tbsp lemon juice |
| 60-120ml pasta water | |

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions to al dente. Meanwhile heat the olive oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. Add the sliced fennel, onion and sugar to the frying pan and stir well. Gently cook, stirring regularly for about 5 minutes until the fennel and onion are soft and evenly caramelised to golden brown. Season with salt and pepper and stir in the lemon juice. Cook for a couple more minutes then add some of the pasta water and reduce heat to low. Drain the pasta and stir into the fennel and onion.

Roasted Fennel and Peppers

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| 1 or 2 fennel bulbs, halved and sliced | 2 red peppers, cut into 1" pieces |
| 1 medium onion, cut into 1" pieces | 3 garlic cloves, minced |
| 1 tbsp olive oil | ½ tsp rubbed sage |

Place the fennel, peppers, onion and garlic in an oiled baking tray. Drizzle with oil; sprinkle with lots of salt and pepper and the rubbed sage. Toss to coat. Bake, uncovered, at 220C / Gas 7 until tender, 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Grated Rainbow Carrot Salad with Lemon Dijon Vinaigrette

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| 450g rainbow carrots, peeled | 2 tsp Dijon mustard |
| 1½ tbsp vegetable oil | freshly squeezed lemon juice, from one lemon |
| 1½ tbsp olive oil | 1-2 tsp honey, to taste |
| 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley | |

Shred the carrots in a food processor. Set aside. In a salad bowl, combine the Dijon mustard, lemon juice, honey, vegetable oil, olive oil, salt and pepper. Add the carrots and fresh parsley and toss well. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.

No news here, it was a quiet week getting back into the groove. A tooth infection came and went. Nearly everyone I know is poorly with some bug or other, or the lingering after-effects. All the more reason to try and eat well with lots of fruit and vegetables to replenish our nutrients.

Opposite my house is a wooded area. I have a fantastic view when there are no leaves on the trees. But when they are leafed my view is obscured, apart from a window in the middle, an opening, framed by a large overhanging branch. Through that window I can see across the valley and to the moorland above. It's my window of hope as I become enshrouded by greenery. At the weekend the guy who manages this Trust land arrived with an armful of young trees. He plonked an oak tree in my gap before securing it to another tree, pending it being planted - presumably this week. When I first purchased this house I contributed generously to the purchase of that land when a campaign was mounted to buy it from the council to protect it forever from development. I'm not expecting any favouritism but there are 80 other acres where beautiful oak trees can be planted.

I'm dreading the confrontation when they turn up with the shovel. If it ends up in my gap, I've already been working through all the options in my mind: to move it; kill it; prune it into insignificance etc..... I will have sap on my hands.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes, Isobel