



Monday 22nd May 2023

Dear Customer,

What a turnaround. The weather's glorious here in Yorkshire d'Azur after nine months of Yorkshire de Misère. And it looks set to continue. Finally, a sigh of relief. We made it through. Ten degrees centigrade, the difference between happiness and misery. I hope it's as lovely wherever you are.

And voilà a few tasty recipes you could try this week:

Leek, Broccoli and Potato Soup

vegetable oil, for frying

200g of potatoes, finely sliced

600ml of water, or vegetable stock

250g of leek, sliced

250g of broccoli

white wine vinegar, or lemon juice

Add a splash of oil to a large pan. Add the leeks with a pinch of salt and gently sweat until they soften without colouring.

Cut the broccoli into florets and finely slice the stalk. Add this to the pan along with the sliced potato. Top with the water or vegetable stock and leave to simmer for 30 minutes. Once the broccoli and potato are very soft, transfer the contents of the pan to a blender and blitz into a smooth soup. Taste and season with salt, pepper and a dash of vinegar or fresh lemon juice for some zing. Serve garnished with toasted almonds, chives, a grinding of black pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.

Broccoli, Potato and Lentil Curry

150g red lentils

1 tbsp black mustard seeds

800g potatoes

thumb of ginger

2 tbsp spice mix

400g tin chopped tomatoes

head of broccoli

2 onions

2 tbsp olive or coconut oil

4 garlic cloves

2 chillies

1 vegetable stock cube

800ml warm water

Put the lentils into a bowl and cover with cold water to soak for a few mins. Finely slice the onions. Dry fry the mustard seeds for 2 mins in a large pan until they start to pop. Add 2 tbsp oil and the onions to the pan. Season with salt and pepper and cover with a lid. Fry for 15 mins, stirring now and then, till the onions are soft and pale golden. Meanwhile peel or scrub the potatoes and chop into bite-size chunks. Crush the garlic, peel and grate the ginger, and finely slice the chillies. Stir these, with the potatoes, into the pan. Add the spice mix, crumble in the stock cube and stir. Tip in the tin of tomatoes and then fill the tin twice with warm water and add it to the pan. Drain the lentils and add them. Put a lid on the pan, turn the heat up and bring to the boil. When boiling, turn the heat down and simmer for 20 mins. Meanwhile break the broccoli into small florets and chop the stem into 9 small pieces. Stir them into the pan and simmer, without the lid on the pan, for 8-10 mins till the broccoli is tender. Serve with rice or naan breads.

Broccoli and Lemon Pasta

300g pasta shapes

2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 red chilli, seeded and finely chopped

3 tbsp olive oil

head of broccoli, chopped

grated zest 1 lemon

30g cheese, finely grated (optional)

fresh basil

Preheat the oven to 220°C / Gas 7. Cook the pasta to packet. Meanwhile, toss together the broccoli, garlic, lemon zest, chilli and half of the cheese, if using. Drizzle over 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and mix. Spread out evenly on a large, non-stick baking tray and roast for 6-8 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender and just beginning to brown. Reserve 100ml of the pasta cooking water then drain the pasta and return to the pan. Stir in the roasted broccoli, reserved cooking liquid, remaining tablespoon of olive oil and most of the basil leaves. Serve sprinkled with the remaining cheese, basil leaves and a good grinding of black pepper.

I like to keep abreast of the news so as not to be caught unaware. Though blissful ignorance makes for a happier life. Saturday night, I switch on the news, 'Phillip Schofield', I change news channel, 'Phillip Schofield'. I turn off and turn back on to watch the press preview. They're discussing 'Phillip Schofield'. All the Sunday papers, leading on 'Phillip Schofield'. He's a daytime chat show host. We are being treated like utter morons. There should be a separation between 'celebrity' gossip and 'news' - never the twain should meet - press the red button.

So in a prelude to the G7, Liz Truss who should be locked, has the audacity to fly to Taiwan for a meeting with their President to goad China with another rant about them. This at a time when Zelensky is making supreme efforts to get China on side. He must be secretly furious. She is meddling, shit-stirring. She's a liability.

And Rishi, 'I can't believe I'm here - Biden to the left of me, Modi to the right', at the G7, he can't stop smiling, like he's on some happy drug. He might be very bright but he is also naïve. All the stupid bragging about Britain's 'leadership' and his own rant about China. He's making enemies where he doesn't need to. However much they may deserve it, or you might want to, you just can't play hardball with China.

As Russian submarines gnaw away at our internet cables, why does he feel the need to make Britain number 1 target. Does he think it's a vote winner all this bravado. He might be in for a sharp shock, especially given Trump is showing a lead in the polls if up against Biden next year and US support just walks away.

Come on Rishi, in your red socks embroidered with a Japanese baseball team's logo, to seduce Japan's Fumio Kishida - a new bromance. I'd like to say, 'your country needs you', but I'm not sure we do.

Kind wishes and hope you have a good week,

Isobel