



**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

Dear Customer,

I hope you are well. Weather is still peculiar with heavy April'esque showers, occasional short bursts of hot sun, otherwise cold. It's been very disappointing.

But here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try this week:

**Crispy Sesame Kale**

|                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| bag of kale     | 2 tsp sesame oil    |
| ½ tbs olive oil | 1 tbsp sesame seeds |

Preheat the oven to 220°C / Gas 7. Rinse the kale under cold running water and dry the leaves. Cut out the centre stalks, then cut the kale into 5cm slices. Place the kale on a baking tray and drizzle over the sesame and olive oils, scatter over the sesame seeds and season with sea salt and black pepper. Roast in the oven for 20 minutes, turning halfway through cooking, until crisp at the edges.

**Redcurrant Cakes**

|                    |                                  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 120g plain yoghurt | 200g sugar                       |
| 3 Hen Nation eggs  | 115ml sunflower or vegetable oil |
| 180g plain flour   | 2 tsp baking powder              |
| ¼ tsp salt         | 1 tbsp grated lemon zest         |
| fresh redcurrants  |                                  |

Preheat oven to 180C / Gas 4. Lightly grease and flour the cups of a mini-loaf or muffin tin. In a large bowl, whisk together yoghurt, sugar, eggs and oil until smooth and well blended. Add flour, baking powder, salt and lemon zest, and stir until the batter is smooth and silky. Pour into the prepared cake tin, dividing evenly between the cups. Scatter redcurrants on top of the batter. Bake in preheated oven for 25-30 minutes, or until the edges are pale gold and a skewer comes out clean when inserted into the centre. Let cool on a rack for 20 minutes in the pan, then turn out.

It's not often there's any good news, but last week when the newsflash popped up that there'd been a plane crash in Russia, that everyone on board was dead, and that Prigozhin was on the passenger list – my heart skipped a beat. One force of evil eliminated at least. Of course, this news was sharply swept away – deemed not very newsworthy compared to the unsolicited kiss at the Women's World Cup. And as August slips into September, the news bandwagon will be moving onto the Strictly line up. There have already been 'teasers' - Krishnan Guru-Murthy. Must admit, that's an interesting one though.

But it's so depressing for everyone who cares about anything. Another year is passing and all it does is get worse: Britain's creeping descent into a third world country; the real possibility of Trump being the next President again; being fried alive in the hottest world temperatures ever; the swill of sewage, chemicals and plastic that poison, choke and suffocate every living being. Our stunning world being trashed before our eyes. It is all just hideous.

I know I keep saying it, but we are treated like morons – dumbed into thinking we can just carry on doing nothing, that life will go on. There's never a long-term plan, it's only ever about the next election. One likes to imagine that it is human destiny to evolve – to become wiser, more civilised, more democratic, and cooperative. But clearly this isn't the case. At any point, a demagogue can, and does, come along, appeal to the slime within, and puts everything into reverse. Dangerous men should be taken out quickly. Things were looking good in Russia when Gorbachev was in power with perestroika. It was short-lived, now look at it. - a brainwashed population where the free thinkers are hanging off the edge in a living hell. It's no great leap from where Russia is today, to where Cambodia was in the late 1970's when Pol Pot and the communist Khmer Rouge killed millions of their own people - all the intellectuals, the teachers, the scientists, the professionals – and they burned all the books.

The world can't deal with its big existential problems when we have madmen out there. It is the outcome of every election anywhere in the world, and the cocktail of leaders at any given time, which determines all our futures. What would Trump mean – yet again pulling out of the Paris Climate Accord; the withdrawal of support for Ukraine, the pulling out of NATO, and who knows what sort of relationship with China, Russia and the rest of Europe. The future gets ever more worrying by the day.  
Right. What shall I have for breakfast.

It's Sunday morning and the summer feng shui'ing of my house continues. It's quite useful being close to the military base of Catterick. Yesterday, three soldiers with a small removal company on the side, came and emptied my attic. I started to warn them there were a lot of spiders up there but let my words fade out as I remembered they'd been in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban. They were young and fit. I felt exhausted just being in the same house as all that effort. Up and down the stairs - I could hear thuds and clunking and a lot of good humour but I kept out the way, didn't want to witness any of it coming out. Suitcases of my mum's clothes, the boxes of books, the 90-piece dinner services etc – all that physically remains of their lives, except for us. I went out once, saw the 1980's Goblin teasmade and came straight back in. It's all gone to our unit on the trading estate where I keep the Izzy Lane wool and stock and our archives. The plan is to sort through it. The hope is to not slowly bring it all back again. What am I supposed to do with teasmade ! The Carmen heated rollers ! How do I get rid of these things without it breaking my heart. I'm not a hoarder. I have no problem getting rid of anything I've bought, it's things I've been given or that belonged to them. That's my problem.

One of the soldiers came to find me with a box that he said he didn't want to put it in the van. It was a polished wooden box with my name inscribed in gilt italics. It looked like it should have contained my ashes. Intrigued, I opened it to find a bottle of Sicilian red wine dated 2005 along with a beautifully crafted corkscrew / penknife, and other wine drinking paraphernalia. A lovely gift from a Sicilian supplier, but no recollection of it. I have a terrible memory – just hope I thanked them for it. Never too late I guess.

Hope you have a lovely last week of august,

Best wishes,  
Isobel