

THE FISH PEDDLAR

Newsletter September 2008

I started the last newsletter basking in glorious sunshine and hoped that it would last. How foolish was I to think it would. Having just had an extremely rainy month I can't say that I am too unhappy to see the back of August. I bet that some of you parents are also glad to see an end to the seemingly longer school holidays. My predictions for trade and supplies through July and August seemed to be about right. Southfields seemed like a ghost town on some days, I almost expected tumble weed to blow across Replingham Road and you could have your pick of parking spaces. Mind you there didn't seem to be any let up with those pesky traffic wardens. Personally I like the beginning of September, as it signals change. After the holiday period a semblance of normality returns as autumn kicks in. Shorter days and colder weather I like far better than hot summer days, but enough of that.

Fish News!

I think as the weather changes peoples eating habits change with it. Out go the salads and grilled and in come the roasting and baking. Fish pie is a must. Traditional ingredients are cod fillet, haddock and prawns. I would suggest adding fresh salmon to give it a richer flavour and smoked haddock just to add something different to the mix. With the prices of both cod and haddock on the increase why not try it with pollack or even coley. Coley is much maligned, with people saying that it is food for cats. Although slightly darker in colour than the illustrious cod it has a slightly stronger flavour and is two thirds the price, providing value for money. Squid after swimming to deeper colder water to spawn comes back into season. Tell me who doesn't like calamari fritte. Grilled or pan fried in butter, skate at this time of year is particularly good. I have some bad news for those of you who like to eat fresh tuna. There seems to be a world shortage with catches in the Indian Ocean down by almost 60%. This has created a sharp increase in its value as demand exceeds the supply. Why not try a black bream roasted on a mixed bed of Mediterranean vegetables. It can be cooked in one dish and is ready in fifteen minutes. There is minimal preparation time and not much washing up of pots and pans. Don't forget we can prepare all your fish in store so if you like fillets all you have to do is ask. A new species I have been sent to try is Arctic Char. Its origin is the Yukon River, from extremely cold water. Similar to a rainbow trout but without the muddy taste trout can sometimes have. It can be cooked exactly the same way as you would trout or salmon and are well worth a try. It is currently on my catch of the day board.

A little rant!!!

I was recently in a couple of supermarkets (Waitrose and Tesco) that had fish counters and as I can't resist (sad I know) I had to have a look. I looked objectively at both the quality and range on offer and the prices. I really do advise you if you buy your fish from places like these to price check them. On comparison the prices they charge we equal to ours, however the quality was shocking even if it is me that is saying it. I ask you how come multi nationals charge premium prices for a poorer quality product. They lead us to believe that they are value for money. I think it's just good marketing.

The farmers market is another of my concerns. I could go on all day but why bring people in from miles away to an area like Southfields on a Saturday morning (trader's busiest days) for 4 hours when there are butchers, bakers, fish mongers and delis galore. The prices at these markets are often inflated and the produce not authentic. Southfields is unique in that it has everything shoppers could want. If you're not happy with the product or service then say so. Always ask the traders if they can get things that may be out of the ordinary me included.

Remember you have the right to reply and suggest to any of the points of view in this letter.

Contact

The Fish Peddlar on 020 8871 4411 or by email, info@fishpeddlar.co.uk or visit the website and go to contact area www.fishpeddlar.co.uk