

12th December 2008

Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate

Comfort eating – the positive side to recession

It seems to be very much accepted that when in the midst of crisis one can turn to comfort eating or soul food to get you through and I would like to support this notion.

According to the statistics (and it's fair to say there is always a question over the reliability of statistics – a recent poll by a market research company found 109% of people surveyed believed every statistic they read to be true.....hmmm).

Anyway, according to the statistics many restaurants are closing down or going on reduced operational hours (even one of Gordon Ramsey's restaurants has just announced this approach to recession management). So it seems we are not eating so much in restaurants.

But takeaways, pizza parlours, chip shops, ready meal counters and the like seem to be doing rather better. The Brits, who like to eat out rather like the Americans, are now eating in (just not cooking it yet.)

And who can blame us? When M&S will sell you two main meals, two side dishes, two deserts and a bottle of plonk for a tenner, why would you want to spend £67 for two sat next to a grumpy family with squealing offspring for two laborious hours. Yippee M&S I say.

And, with a worldwide wine glut (the like of which has never been seen – so much that even Europe hasn't got warehouses big enough to store it all), you can buy three bottles of half decent plonk for a tenner at Asda....

So we stay at home, we eat at home, we drink at home, and meanwhile the nations pubs and restaurants creak under the heavy weight of their own overhead and begin to close one by one.

The problem is when we emerge from the recession, depression or whatever other cleverly labelled term the next few years receives, do you really want a high street fill with nothing but pizza parlours and kebab houses.

It would be nice if we could just spend a little keeping the pubs and restaurants with the good service, food and drink open for the future.

Of course if this really is depression then we all need to acquire an old oil drum and large supply of wood, rather than worry about restaurants. But one thing I think we will all need is chocolate.

If the Government has one mission surely it must be to nationalise Cadbury and bring production of this dietary essential in-house, so to speak.

Chocolate is more than just chocolate, it's an eternal symbol of positivity, warmth and support. Every man woman and child should receive one Department of Cadbury bar each week during the repression, err recession, and that should help lift the spirits.

In the interim, in the case of panic, don't worry, Cadbury are not the only chocolate makers. I can't remember who they are but there are definitely others and if you really do want value with your chocolate Asda do a great own brand 28 pence bar (it's quite big too) which is surprisingly good.

12.12.08.