

CHEF MARIE'S PERSONAL RECIPES

APPETIZERS

(Appetizers, Soups, Salads, Dips, Soufflés, Sandwiches, etc....)



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APPETIZERS

Artichoke Soup



*1 tsp. grape seed oil
8 fresh large artichokes
2 lemons
3 leeks
2 garlic cloves, minced
5 cups vegetable stock
2 large white potatoes, peeled, quartered
1 bouquet garni
4 to 6 Tbsp. plain low-fat Greek Yogurt
4 to 6 Tbsp. ground flaxseeds
4 to 6 tsp. freshly chopped chives
Salt and pepper to taste*

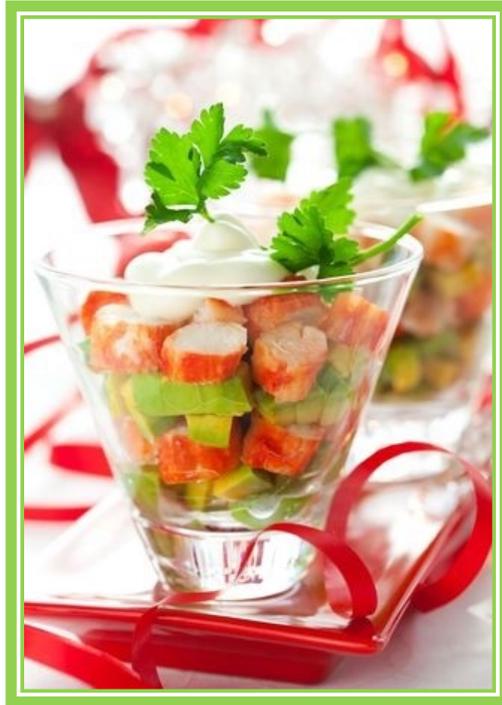
Prepare a pan with water, the juice of one lemon, a large pinch of salt, and bring to a simmer. Peel away the rough outer layers artichokes leaves and blanch them for 5 minutes. Strain and set aside for later use. Chop the artichokes and set aside. Using the white part of the leeks only; chopped, clean, pat dry them and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium high heat. Add the leeks and briefly saut., do not brown. Add the artichokes, garlic, stock, potatoes, bouquet garni, juice of half a lemon, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and continue to simmer for 40 to 45 minutes. Puree the soup with a hand blender. Season to taste and adjust with a little more lemon juice, if needed.

Transfer to four soup bowl. Top each bowl with a tablespoon of low-fat Greek yogurt, a tablespoon of flaxseed, a teaspoon of chives, and serve immediately.

Option: You may omit the low-fat Greek yogurt. You may also serve with a nice slice of country French or Italian bread. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Avocado and Crab Appetizer



*1 avocado
Half a lemon
6 oz. crabmeat
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
Dash of Worcestershire
3 tsp. freshly minced salad herbs
Salt and pepper to taste
2 Tbsp. low-fat sour cream
2 glasses
Parsley to decor*

In a bowl mix the olive oil, lemon juice, Worcestershire, 2 tsp. herbs, and season to taste.

Peel the avocado, cut in half, remove pit, and chop. Sprinkle lemon juice to prevent browning.

Equally divide and alternate the avocado and crab in the 2 glasses. Drizzle the prepared vinaigrette. Finish by sprinkling the remaining herbs, sour cream, parsley and serve immediately.

Makes 2 servings.

Avocado and Egg Sandwich



4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
1 avocado; cut in half, pit removed
1/2 lemon, juiced
Cayenne pepper
Tabasco sauce
Salt
1 sandwich loaf or 2 slices of breads

Using a fork, mash the hard-boiled eggs in a bowl. Using a large spoon, remove the avocado flesh. Transfer to the egg bowl. Add lemon juice and mash. Mix in some cayenne pepper and salt to taste. You may then add tabasco sauce to taste. Fill your bread and serve immediately.

Option: Serve with a side vegetarian salad for a nutritious meal.

Makes 1 sandwich.

Beet and Jicama Salad



*4 beets
2 medium Jicama; peeled, halved and sliced
1/4 red onion, diced
4 oz. crumbled goat cheese
1 cup salad greens
4 Tbsp. salad herbs
4 Tbsp. vinaigrette
4 tsp. chopped walnuts or pecans
Salt and pepper to taste*

Parboil the beet and cook until tender. Time may vary based on their sizes (20 to 25 minutes for medium sizes). Remove from water and cool. Trim the tops and peel the skin. Slice and set aside.

Prepare 4 servings plates or bowls. Divide the salad greens among them. Top with the beets and Jicama slices. Sprinkle the red onion, goat cheese, nuts, and season to taste. Pour over the vinaigrette, sprinkle the salad herbs, and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Beet and Vegetable Soup



*1 tsp. canola oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 large celery stalk, diced
1 large garlic clove, minced
5 large beets, peeled and chopped
2 potatoes, peeled and chopped
5 to 6 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
A few Thyme branches
Salt and pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a large pan over medium high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the carrot, celery stalk, garlic, and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the beets, potatoes, stock, a couple of thyme branches, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes.

Transfer to a blender and purée with enough of the liquid to obtain the right creamy consistency. Season with salt and pepper to taste. You may serve immediately or refrigerate for 2 hours before serving cold.

Option: Top each serving with a spoon of low-fat Greek yogurt or low-fat sour cream. Crème fraiche for a special occasion!

Makes 4 servings.

Beet Chips



*1 tsp. grape seed oil
2 large beets
Garlic powder to taste
Salt and pepper to taste*

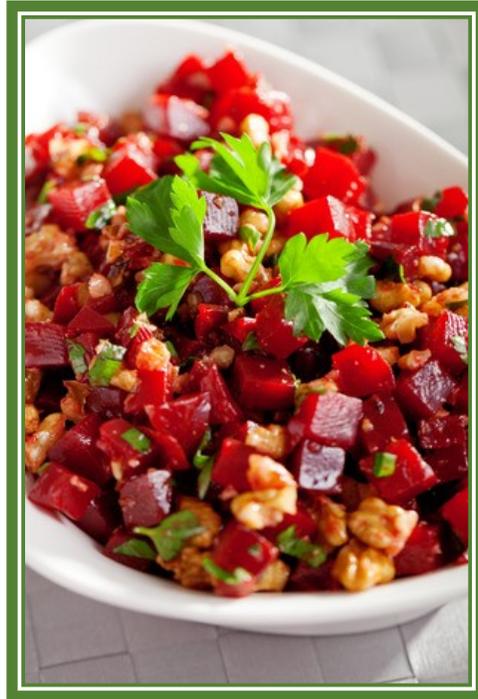
Preheat the oven to 350 °F.

Peel and thinly slice the beets. Carefully toss the slices with the oil in a bowl. Transfer to a baking sheet. Sprinkle with garlic powder and season to taste.

Bake for 40 minutes, turning half way through the cooking time and seasoning again. Remove from the oven and transfer the chips to a cooling rack. Completely cool before use.

Makes 4 servings.

Beets and Walnuts Salad



*2 large red beets (20 oz.)
1/4 cup walnuts
1 small shallot, minced
1 large garlic clove, minced
1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1-1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice
3 Tbsp. walnut oil
1 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
Salt and pepper to taste*

Place the beets in a large pan, cover with water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes or until the beets are cooked through. Drain and cool. Peel, dice, and place in a serving bowl.

Mix the shallot, garlic, mustard and lemon juice in a bowl. Blend in the walnut oil, parsley, and season to taste. Pour the dressing over the beets and mix carefully. Spread the walnuts and serve immediately.

Servings may vary, based on uses.

Black Bean Soup



12 oz. black beans, rinsed
2 tsp. canola oil
1 large onion, finely diced
1 large carrot, finely diced
2 celery stalks, finely diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
6 cups low fat-sodium chicken stock
1 bouquet garni
Salt and pepper to taste

Place the beans in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat and let soak for an hour. Drain and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the carrot, celery, garlic, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the beans, stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes or until the beans are cooked through. Skim the surface of any foam that forms. Remove 1/3 cup of beans and purée with a fork. Return to the soup and mix. Remove the bouquet garni, adjust seasonings, and serve immediately.

Note: If the soup turns out too thick, adjust with stock. If the soup turns out too thin, strain the beans and reduce the liquid on its own.

Comments: You may substitute vegetables stock for the chicken stock.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Blueberries and Flaxseed Oil Vinaigrette



¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup flaxseed oil
½ cup blueberries
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
½ shallot, chopped
Pinch salt
Pinch pepper

Place all the ingredients in a deep measuring cup. Smooth out with a hand blender. Refrigerate until use.

Option: You may add a little apple vinegar for some tartness. You may substitute flaxseed oil with walnut or almond oil.

Makes approximately 3/4 cup.

Calamari and Orange Salad



*1 garlic clove, minced
3 Tbsp. freshly minced basil
1 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
5 Tbsp. olive oil
3 Tbsp. lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
1 Boston lettuce heart, chopped
1 red bell pepper; remove ribs and seeds, then sliced
2 tomatoes, diced
2 oranges; peeled and cut into wedges
1 lb. fresh or frozen calamari*

Mix the garlic, basil, parsley, olive oil and lemon juice in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Set aside for later use.

Heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the calamari and cook until slightly tender. Time may vary based on the calamari thickness. Let completely cool.

Place the lettuce over a serving platter. Layer with bell pepper slices, calamari, diced tomatoes and orange wedges. Pour the prepared dressing and serve immediately.

Comments: If using frozen calamari, defrost according to package instructions. You may also use squids for this salad. This salad is best served cold.

Makes 4 servings.

Cantaloupe and Carrot Soup



1 large cantaloupe; peeled, seeded and chopped
2 yellow tomatoes, peeled and seeded
2 carrots, peeled and shredded
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1/2-inch fresh ginger, peeled and shaved
1/2 tsp. freshly minced thyme
1 Tbsp. freshly minced basil
Salt and pepper to taste

In a blender; mix the cantaloupe, yellow tomatoes, shredded carrots, lemon juice, ginger, thyme, and basil. Blend until smooth. Season to taste and transfer to a serving bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for half an hour. Best served cold.

Makes 4 servings.

Carrot and Apple Salad



*1 lb. carrots
1 lb. apples
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 Tbsp. walnut oil
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp. fresh salad herbs, minced
A bunch of your favorite greens for six
6 tablespoons low-fat plain yogurt
Salt and pepper to taste
4 Tbsp. chopped walnuts*

Blend the vinegar, mustard, garlic, and lemon juice together in a large bowl. Mix in the walnut oil and season to taste.

Shred the carrots and apples and mix immediately with the vinaigrette to avoid browning. Mix in the fresh salad herbs and refrigerate for half an hour. Adjust the salad seasonings, if needed.

Divide greens among six plates. Top with prepared carrot salad. Finish with a spoon of yogurt and chopped walnuts. Serve immediately.

Makes 6 servings.

Carrot, Orange and Ginger Soup



*1 tsp. grape seed or canola oil
1 small onion, minced (about 4 oz.)
4 large carrots, shredded (about 1 lb.)
1 garlic clove, minced
1/3 cup chicken stock (low-fat and low sodium)
1 small potato, skin removed and shredded (about 3 oz.)
1 lemon
5 oranges
1/8 tsp. ground coriander
1/2 Tbsp. honey
1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced
1 Tbsp. fresh mint, minced
4 Tbsp. low-fat Greek yogurt
Salt and pepper to taste*

Juice three oranges and set aside. Peel the remaining oranges, dice and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the carrots, garlic, and cook for a minute. Add the stock, potatoes, orange juice, coriander, ginger, honey, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes.

Purée the soup in a blender and return to the pan. Add a little lemon juice, mint, and season to taste over low heat. Before serving, mix in the yogurt. Do not boil or the yogurt will curdle. Add the diced oranges and serve immediately.

Option: Chicken stock may be substituted with vegetable stock.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Chicken and Apple Salad



*2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
2 tsp. honey (optional)
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. walnut oil
2 large apples
1 lemon, juiced
1/2 large heart of Romaine, chopped
1/2 small cabbage, chopped
1/2 small cucumber, chopped
1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
12 oz. diced cooked chicken breast
Salt and pepper to taste*

Mix the vinegar, lemon juice, honey (optional) and oils in a large bowl. Season to taste and set aside.

Peel, core, and dice the apples. Mix them with some lemon juice to prevent browning.

In the prepared vinaigrette bowl; add the Romaine, cabbage, cucumber, walnuts, chicken and apples. Mix well and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Chicken Tomato Soup

1 tsp. canola oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 large carrot, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
2 cups of chopped tomatoes
1 garlic clove, minced
4 cups chicken stock
1 lb. skinless cooked chicken breast, chopped
1 bouquet garni
A few branches of parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Heat the butter or oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the carrot, celery stalks, and sauté rapidly. Add the tomatoes, garlic, stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Finish with the cooked chicken, parsley, and season to taste.

Option: Add cooked rice or pasta before serving. You may substitute parsley with cilantro and add minced jalapeno to taste.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Chickpea and Tahini Dip



*1 lb. dry chickpeas
2 garlic cloves, peeled
7 Tbsp. Sesame Tahini paste
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
5 Tbsps. olive oil or 1 Tbsp. olive oil plus 3-4 Tbsps. cooking liquid
Salt and pepper to taste*

Rinse and drain chickpeas. Place chickpeas in a large pot and add enough water to cover them. Cook for 60 minutes or until tender. Drain and set some of the liquid aside. Cool the chickpeas completely. In a food processor; mash chickpeas, Tahini paste, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. You should have a creamy but thick paste. If too thick, thin out with cooking liquid and more lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes before use.

Serve with pita bread, pita chips, or raw vegetables

Suggestions: Add 2 tsps. crushed pepper flakes, 1 tsp. ground cumin, and 1 tsp. ground coriander. You may also add any types of fresh herbs, nuts, and spices to give it a different flavor or touch.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Chickpea, Dried Tomato, and Tahini Dip



*1 lb. dry chickpeas
2 garlic cloves, peeled
7 Tbsp. Sesame Tahini paste
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
5 Tbsp. olive oil
4 to 6 dried tomatoes
Salt and pepper*

Rinse and drain chickpeas. Place chickpeas in a large pot and add enough water to cover them. Cook for 60 minutes or until tender. Drain and set the liquid aside. Cool the chickpeas completely.

In a food processor; mash chickpeas, dried tomato, Tahini paste, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. You should have a creamy but thick paste. If too thick, thin out with cooking liquid or more lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes before use. Serve with pita bread, pita chips, or raw vegetables

Comments: To reduce fat, you may substitute the 5 Tbsp. olive oil with 1 Tbsp. olive oil and 3 to 4 Tbsp. cooking liquid.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Chickpea, Tomato and Spinach Soup



*1 tsp. olive oil
1 small onion, diced
8 oz. canned chopped Italian tomatoes
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup uncooked rice
5 cups low-fat-sodium chicken stock
12 oz. cooked chickpeas
6 oz. chopped baby spinach leaves
2 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
1/2 tsp. sweet or hot paprika
Salt and pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the tomatoes, garlic, bay leaf, and cook until the juices are evaporated. Add the rice, stock, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the chickpeas, spinach, and continue to cook for 5 minutes. Add the parsley, paprika, and adjust seasonings. Remove bay leaf and serve immediately.

Comments: You may substitute the chicken stock with vegetables stock. If using brown rice, it will take a little longer to cook.

Makes 4 servings.

Chili (My healthier Version)



*1 tsp. grape seed oil or canola oil
1 large onion, diced
1 green pepper; core, seeded, and diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 lb. ground turkey
1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes
2 oz. tomato paste
1 ¼ cup beef or vegetable stock (or a little more)
12 oz. cooked kidney beans or pinto beans
1 tsp. thyme
1 tsp. oregano
2 tsp. cumin
2 Tbsp. chili powder
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper and salt to taste*

Heat the oil in a deep pan over high heat. Add the meat and brown slightly. Remove the excess fat rendered by the meat. Add the onion, pepper, garlic, and mix well. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, stock, herbs, and spices. Bring to a boil and reduce heat. Simmer uncovered for 50 minutes to an hour. Stir occasionally.

Add the beans and bring to a simmer. Adjust seasonings and serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Cioppino

2 tsp. olive oil
1 small onion, julienne
1 green bell pepper, julienne
1 small fennel bulb, julienne
4 garlic cloves, minced
5 plum tomatoes
1 Tbsp. tomato paste
1 cup fish or vegetable stock
1/3 cup dry white wine
4 fish steaks such as shark, halibut, swordfish, or tuna
1 bouquet garni
8 clams
8 mussels
8 shrimps, peeled and deveined
1 bunch of basil, minced
Salt and pepper

Make a small incision (x) on the top and bottom of the tomatoes. Blanch the tomatoes for 15 seconds. Remove and place in ice-cold water to stop the cooking process. Peel, seed, and chop the tomatoes.

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onions, peppers, fennel, garlic, and sauté for 4 minutes. Add the diced tomatoes, tomato paste, and stir for a minute. Add the stock, wine, fish, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add clams, mussels, shrimps, and cook until the shells open. Remove bouquet garni. Add basil and adjust seasonings.

Makes 6 servings

Clear Vegetables Soup

2 tsp. olive oil or canola oil
8 oz. onions, diced
4 oz. carrots, diced
4 oz. celery stalks, diced
6 oz. turnips, diced
6 oz. red bell-peppers, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
6 oz. fresh tomatoes
3 oz. frozen peas
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, minced
Salt and pepper

Make a small incision (x) on the top and bottom of the tomatoes. Blanch the tomatoes for 15 seconds. Remove and place in ice-cold water to stop the cooking process. Peel, seed, and chop the tomatoes.

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the carrots, celery stalks, bell peppers, and sauté rapidly. Add the turnips, garlic, stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until barely tender. Add the peas, tomatoes, and simmer until tender. Add parsley, adjust seasonings, and serve immediately.

Option: Add cooked rice, pasta, or even cooked meat or fish before serving. If adding Tofu: drained and pressed off extra water. Stir-fry in a little oil until slightly browned before serving with the soup.

Note: I like to make a large batch and use it for various meals adding meat, fish, starches, or tofu.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Cream of Broccoli (or other vegetables)

2 tsp. grapeseed oil
1 small onion, diced
2 lbs. broccolis, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
4 cups veal, chicken, or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
1 ½ to 2 Tbsp. cornstarch with a little water
4 Tbsp. cream
Salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add 1 ½ lbs. of broccoli, garlic, stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the broccolis are tender. Skim the surface as needed. Remove the bouquet garni and puree in a blender. Bring back to the pan and thicken with the arrowroot/cornstarch water mixture, a little at a time, until you reach the right consistency. Add the remaining broccolis and bring to a simmer. Cook until tender and adjust seasonings. Add the cream, bring to a boil, and serve immediately.

For a lower fat, you may substitute the cream with regular/low fat sour cream or yogurt. Do not boil; it would curdle.

For other Vegetables Cream Soup: Substitute the broccoli with asparagus, mushrooms, carrots, corn, or spinach.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Crostini with Berries



*4 round toasted baguette slices
4 Tbsp. low-fat cream cheese
12 thick strawberry slices
A few blueberries for décor
A few basil or mint leaves for décor*

Spread the low-fat cream cheese over the toasted slices. Top with strawberry slices. Décor with blueberries, basil or mint, and serve immediately.

Option: Feel free to substitute your favorite bread in this recipe.

You can replace the low-fat cream cheese with strained low-fat Greek yogurt, low-fat ricotta, strained low-fat yogurt mixed with goat cheese, goat cheese spread and so on.

You can also substitute the berries with other fruits (apple, pear, peach, mango, apricot, etc...). You can also drizzle with honey, sprinkle chopped nuts and cinnamon. That would be great by example with apple, pear, peach, apricot and so on). The solutions are endless!

Makes 2 servings.

Crostini with Pear & Roquefort

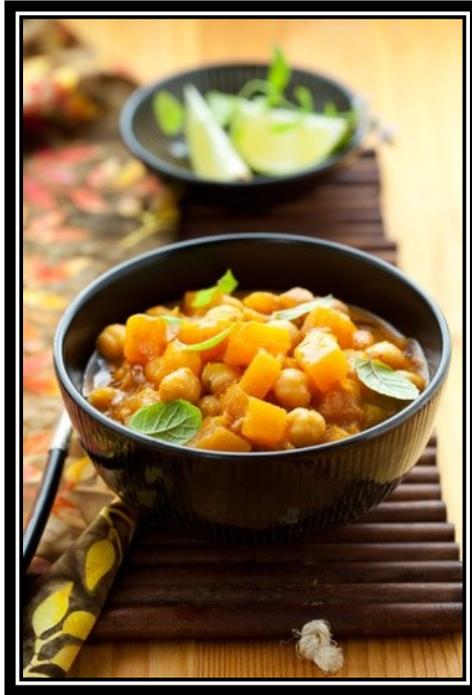


*1 toasted walnut, country or pumpernickel bread slice
2 to 3 pear slices
A few pieces of Roquefort cheese
Pepper to taste*

Top toasted bread slice with pear slices. Sprinkle cheese, pepper to taste and serve immediately.

Makes 1 serving.

Curried Pumpkin and Chickpea Soup



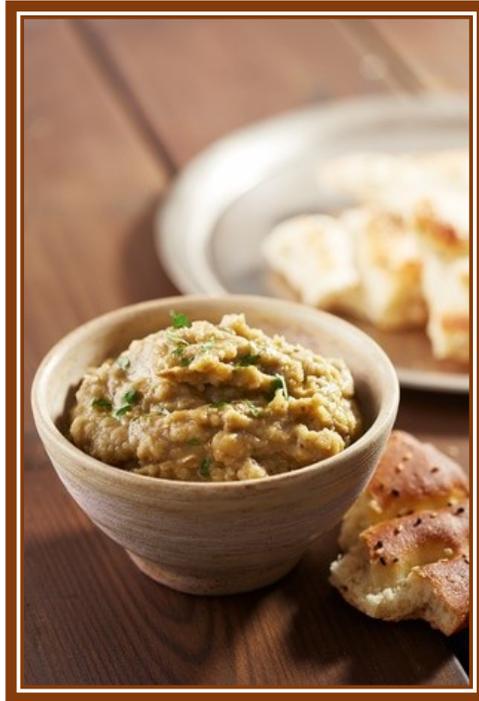
3.5 lbs. pumpkin; peeled, seeded and cubed
1 Tbsp. canola oil
1 large onion, cubed
2 tsp. Spice Hunter curry seasoning
1 (14 oz.) can organic light coconut milk
2 (14.5 oz.) cans organic low-sodium vegetable broth
1 (15 oz.) can organic chickpeas, drained
Salt and pepper to taste

Steam the pumpkin until cooked, but still firm.

Heat the oil in a stockpot and sauté the onions until translucent. Add the curry seasoning and stir well. Mix in the coconut milk, broth, and bring to a boil. Add the pumpkin and garbanzo beans. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Season to taste, adjust with additional curry seasoning if needed and serve immediately.

Makes 8 servings.

Eggplant and Tahini Dip



*1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large eggplant
2 garlic cloves, peeled
1/4 to 1/3 cup Tahini paste
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste*

Slice eggplant in half lengthwise and brush with olive oil. Place upside down on sheet pan. Broil until the skin is charred black and the pulp soft (approximately 20 to 30 minutes). Scrape out the flesh and refrigerate in a bowl for several hours.

Discard any eggplant liquid from the bowl. Purée garlic, eggplant, 1/4 cup Tahini paste and lemon juice in a food processor. For stronger flavor, add more Tahini paste. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for 20 to 30 minutes, before serving.

Serve with pita bread, pita chips, or raw vegetables.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Fava Beans and Sundried Tomato Paste



*2 cups of fresh shelled fava beans
2 garlic cloves, chopped
4 large sun-dried tomatoes
2 pinches of freshly minced thyme
2 pinches of freshly minced rosemary
Lemon juice to taste
6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste*

Bring a pan filled with water to a boil. Add the shelled fava beans for simmer for 6 to 7 minutes or until tender.

Meanwhile, prepare a bowl filled with water and ice. Once the beans are tender, strain and immediately add to the cold-water bowl to stop the cooking process. Drain, start removing the outer shell of the beans, and transfer the beans to a food processor. Add the garlic cloves, sun-dried tomatoes, thyme, rosemary, a little lemon juice, and start puréeing. Add the olive oil in a thin stream to incorporate well. Season to taste and refrigerate until use.

Suggestions: Use this paste over vegetables slices, crostini, toast, sandwich base, or to fill cooked egg whites.

You can keep this paste refrigerated for a couple of days. If so, and to keep it moist, top the paste with a thin layer of olive oil.

Makes 1 cup.

Four Beans Salad



*8 oz. dried garbanzo beans
8 oz. dried black beans
8 oz. dried red beans
8 oz. green beans
2 oz. red onions, diced (about 1/2 small red onion)
1 large garlic clove, minced
4 Tbsp. olive oil
9 Tbsp. white balsamic vinegar
3 to 4 Tbsp. fresh salad herbs, minced
Salt and pepper to taste*

In a bowl mix the garlic, oil, vinegar and herbs. Set aside.

Cook the beans separately following the packages instructions. Generally, it takes about 30 to 45 minutes to cook those types of beans. Check for desired doneness, before straining.

Place the green beans with a little salt in a pan and bring to boil over high heat. Cook until desired tenderness. Strain and place immediately in ice cold water to stop the cooking process. Strain and pat dry.

Place all the beans and red onion in a large bowl. Add the prepared dressing, season to taste, and refrigerate for an hour before serving.

Option: If you feel this dressing is too vinegary, you can add more olive oil to it and reduce the amount of vinegar. This salad may be served over lettuce, rice and/or with tomatoes. You may substitute one 15-oz. can cooked beans for each dried bean. Rinse before use.

Makes 12 servings.

Fish and Seafood Soup

2 tsp. olive oil or grapeseed oil
2 onions, sliced
2 carrots, chopped
1 bulb of fennel, sliced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced
2 tomatoes
2 lbs. monkfish fillets
1 lb. white fish fillet (ex. halibut, cod, or sea bass)
1 lb. flounder or John Dory fish fillet
1 cup white wine
2 Tbsp. Pernod or Anis Liqueur (optional)
Zest of 1 orange
8 cups fish stock
1 bouquet garni
A few threads of saffron
4 Tbsp. freshly minced basil
2 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
2 lbs. mussels
2 lbs. shrimps
1 lb. sea scallops
Salt and pepper

Toasted French baguette slices
brushed with olive oil and garlic.

Make a small incision (x) on the top and bottom of the tomatoes. Blanch them for 15 seconds. Remove and place in ice-cold water to stop the cooking process. Peel, seed, and chop the tomatoes.

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the carrots, fennel, bell pepper, tomato, and gently mix. Top with the monkfish, fish fillets, white wine, Pernod, and orange zest. Reduce the liquid by half. Add the stock, bouquet garni, saffron, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the mussels, shrimps, scallops, and cook until the shells open. Two options at this point.

1. You continue adding basil and parsley. You adjust seasonings and serve immediately in a soup tureen. Serve immediately with the toasts on the side.

2. You transfer the fish and shellfish to a soup tureen. You strain the liquid, pushing down much of the ingredients to extract all their flavors. You return the liquid to a pan, add basil, parsley, and bring to a boil. Then you adjust seasonings and pour the liquid over the prepared tureen. Serve immediately with the toasts on the side.

Makes 8 servings.

French Onion Soup



*2 Tbsp. grapeseed oil
3 large onions, thinly sliced (1.5 lbs.)
2 Tbsp. Cognac
2 Tbsp. flour
6 to 7 cups beef stock (low fat/sodium)
Salt and pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the onions and cook until golden brown. Stir occasionally to avoid burning. This will take up to 20 minutes. Carefully add the Cognac and flambé. When the flame dies, sprinkle the flour, and mix well. Add the beef stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Skim any foam that forms at the surface. Adjust seasoning and serve immediately.

Serving suggestion per portion: Top with a thinly toasted slice of baguette and 1 to 2 Tbsp. Swiss, Emmental, Comté or Gruyère cheese. Place in the oven under the broiler until the cheese is melted, about a minute or so.

Option: Beef stock can be replaced by vegetable stock.

Makes 6 servings.

Gazpacho



*4 slices whole wheat bread
1/2 cup olive oil
7 large tomatoes, chopped (2.5 lbs.)
2 medium cucumbers, chopped (1 lb.)
1 large onion, chopped (8 oz.)
1 medium red/orange bell pepper; seeded, ribs removed & chopped (6 oz.)
6 garlic cloves, chopped
2 cups tomato juice
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh basil
1 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon
Dash ground cumin
1 lemon, juiced
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste*

Soak the bread slices in approximately 1/4 cup of cold water for 5 minutes.

In a blender, purée all the ingredients until smooth. Season with salt and cayenne pepper to taste. Refrigerate and serve cold.

Makes 12 servings.

Gazpacho Tropical

3 cups of tomato juice (made from fresh tomatoes or can)
1 cup mango, chopped
1 cup papaya, chopped
3 cups pineapple, chopped
1 cup cucumber; peeled, seeded, and chopped
1 cup green bell pepper, chopped
1 small red onion, chopped
1/4 cup freshly minced cilantro
1 tsp. hot sauce (optional for spiciness)
4 tbsp. flaxseeds
Salt and pepper to taste

Place all the ingredients in a blender. Mix until smooth. Season to taste, cover, and refrigerate. Serve cold.

Makes 12 servings.

Goat Cheese Log



*1 - approx. 11 oz. plain goat cheese log
8 Tbsp. medium coarse ground flaxseed
2 Tbsp. paprika
1 Tbsp. Cajun spices
4 Tbsp. raw honey, warm
2 thyme branches*

Mix the flaxseed, paprika and Cajun spices in a plate. Brush the warmed honey over the goat cheese log. Roll the log into the prepared mix. Decorate with thyme branches and refrigerate until use.

Suggestions to use the goat cheese log:

- Serve as an appetizer with small toasted slices of bread or vegetables slices.
- Top a baby spinach salad with a slice of the goat cheese.
- Top half a peach with a thin slice of goat cheese. Melt under a broiler. Drizzle a little basil oil flavored olive oil and ground pistachio nuts before serving. This can also be used as a top for a spinach salad or as an accompaniment of your favorite greens.-

Spices are guidelines; you can increase or change them based on what you prefer.

Makes 12 servings.

Greek Salad



1 curly endive or chicory, trimmed
1 small red onion, sliced
1 medium cucumber, sliced
1 large yellow bell pepper, sliced
2 large tomatoes, sliced
1/2 cup feta cheese, diced
4 Tbsp. black olives
Dressing made with:
2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
4 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. minced garlic
2 Tbsp. low-fat Greek yogurt
1 Tbsp. freshly minced oregano
2 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix the vinegar, olive oil, garlic and yogurt in a large salad bowl. Add the oregano, salad herbs and season to taste.

Top with the curly endive or chicory, red onion, cucumber and yellow bell pepper. Mix well, add the tomatoes, feta cheese, olives and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Ham Hock and Split Pea Soup



*1 ham hock
2 lbs. split peas
1 large onion, diced
2 carrots, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
6 cups vegetables stock
1 tsp. Italian herbs
Salt and pepper to taste*

Place ham hock, split peas and vegetables in a large pan. Pour over the vegetables stock and add the Italian herbs. If necessary, add enough water to barely cover the ham hock. Bring to boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and cover leaving a small space for steam to escape. Simmer for 30 minutes or until the split peas are starting to fall apart. Remove ham hock and purée the soup with a hand blender. Adjust seasoning and to the desired consistency. You can do that by either adding more stock or by reducing the soup over medium heat, stirring often to avoid burning on bottom of the pan.

Comments: If ham hock is not available, I suggest using 2 to 4 oz. Canadian bacon that you would sauté first in very little canola oil, before adding split peas and vegetables. When serving the soup, you may use some leftover ham pieces as a garnish. You may freeze some of the soup for up to a month.

Makes about 8 to 10 servings.

Hot Chicken Wings and Legs



2 Tbsp. paprika
1 oz. chili sauce
2 Tbsp. ground cumin
2 Tbsp. ground coriander
2 Tbsp. ground caraway
2 tsp. cardamom seeds
2 Tbsp. cayenne pepper
2 Tbsp. black pepper
2 tsp. salt
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 oz. grapeseed oil
1 oz. chili sauce
4 lbs. chicken wings & legs

In a blender; purée the paprika, cumin, caraway, cardamom, cayenne, black pepper, salt, garlic, grapeseed oil and chili sauce. Mix the marinade with the chicken pieces and transfer to a zipper bag. Refrigerate overnight.

Preheat a barbecue to medium-high heat. Brown each chicken pieces until golden brown. Turnover and finish cooking over low-heat. If needed, switch sides to avoid burning.

Option: You may also bake in the oven at 450° F for 30 minutes on a baking sheet. Turn halfway through cooking time.

Servings 6 to 8 or may vary based on appetite!

Kale and Spinach Dip



*1 Tbsp. olive oil
2 cups kale, cleaned and chopped
1 cup spinach, cleaned and chopped
1 large carrot, peeled and shredded
1 cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt
1 garlic clove
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 ½ Tbsp. parmesan cheese
2 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste*

Heat half of the oil in a large sauté pan. Add the kale and sauté until almost cooked through, about 3 minutes. Add the spinach and continue to cook for another minute or two. Transfer to the food processor, add the shredded carrots, yogurt, garlic, lemon juice, parmesan cheese, and herbs. Purée until the mixture is smooth. Season to taste and refrigerate for half an hour or until use.

Option: Use this dip with your favorite sliced vegetables, snow peas, vegetable/root chips or sandwich spread.

Makes approximately 3 cups.

Kale Salad



1 large bunch of kale, shredded as small as possible
Slices of radishes for decoration
1/3 cup of chopped dried cranberries and other dried fruits
6 to 8 baby carrots, shredded
1/2 avocado, sliced
1 garlic clove, minced
1 lemon, juiced
1 to 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. walnut oil
2 Tbsp. feta or shredded cheese (Jarlsberg, Baby Swiss, or a young Fontina)
2 Tbsp. pumpkin seeds or walnuts
Salt and pepper to taste

Place the kale in a bowl and add the lemon juice. Mix thoroughly and set aside for an hour. Remove kale and, by hand, press off extra lemon juice. Transfer the kale to a serving bowl and add the shredded carrots.

In a small bowl, mix the apple cider and oils. Add the garlic and season to taste. Add the dressing to the kale and mix well.

Divide among two plates. Top with the cranberries or dried fruits, cheese, pumpkin seeds or walnuts and décor with slices of radishes. Serve immediately.

Makes 2 servings.

Kelp Seasoning



- 1 Tbsp. organic kelp granules (available in grocery stores and Asian market)*
- 1 Tbsp. garlic powder*
- 1 Tbsp. onion powder*
- 1 Tbsp. cayenne pepper or paprika*

As salt maybe a problem to some, here is a low sodium alternative that will be an excellent source of iodine as well. I mixed different ingredients with the kelp granules to diminish the kelp flavors that were a little overwhelming to me. Of course, you can use kelp granules on their own, as a substitute to salt.

Mix all the ingredients together.

Option: For a cheesy flavor: Add 2 tablespoons parmesan cheese or nutritional yeast flakes for vegetarian.

Makes 1/4 cup.

Lean Lentils Stew



*1 lb. lentils
3 oz. chopped onions
3 oz. chopped carrots
3 oz. chopped celery
2 garlic cloves, minced
32 oz. low-salt organic vegetables broth
Salt and pepper to taste
Hickory liquid smoke*

Place lentils, onions, carrots, celery, garlic and broth in a pan. If necessary, add a cup of more of water to cover above the ingredients. Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes. Season and add drops of hickory liquid smoke to taste.

Comments: Once it cooled down, the lentils may absorb some of the liquid. If so, just add some broth or water to reheat to return to the desired stew consistency. You may add cooked ham, sausage, ground meat, quinoa or top with cooked sunny side-up eggs.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Leek, Garlic and Tomato Soup



*2 tsp. canola oil
2 leeks, cleaned and medium diced
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 cups tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and medium diced
1 ½ cups potatoes, medium diced
A few saffron threads
5 cups vegetable stock
1 bay leaf
1 large pinch dry thyme
Salt and pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a large pan over medium high heat. Add leeks, garlic, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, potatoes, saffron, stock, bay leaf, thyme, and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat and continue to cook the vegetables until very tender.

Remove bay leaf and purée with a hand mixer. If needed, continue to reduce over low-medium heat to a creamy consistency. Season to taste and serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Leek, Potato and Celeriac Soup



*2 tsp. olive oil
2 large leeks, white part only and chopped
1 large garlic clove, minced
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
3 large white or red potatoes, peeled and chopped
1 large celeriac root, peeled and chopped
4 cups organic low-sodium vegetable stock, hot
1 thyme branch
1 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a deep pan over medium high heat. Add the leeks, garlic, and briefly sauté. Add the carrot, potatoes, celeriac, stock, thyme branch, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes. Remove thyme and purée with a hand blender until smooth. Mix in the parsley and season to taste. Serve immediately on its own or along a spinach salad.

Comments: This soup is delicious served cold or hot.

If a thinner soup is desired, after you puréed it, just add more stock as desired.

You can also add curry powder to vary the flavor.

On special occasion and if a richer soup is desired, add a drop of crème fraiche per serving.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Leeks With Walnuts Vinaigrette



*8 small leeks
1 garlic clove, minced
1 shallot, minced
1/4 cup walnuts, finely chopped
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
2 Tbsp. tarragon vinegar
4 Tbsp. walnut oil
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. freshly minced chives
1 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
Salt and pepper to taste*

Mix the garlic, shallot, mustard and vinegar in a bowl. Slowly whisk in the oils. Add the walnuts, chives, parsley and season to taste. Set aside for later use.

Wash and trim the leeks, as shown on the picture. Place them in a pan, cover with water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes or until cooked through.

Drain and cut the leeks in half lengthwise. Mix the leeks with the prepared vinaigrette and let cool. Refrigerate for an hour and serve cool.

Comments: You may steam the leeks as well. On occasion, I love to add a chopped cooked egg to the dressing.

Makes 4 servings.

Lentils Salad



1 lb. lentils
1 Tbsp. garlic cloves, minced
1 small onion, diced small
1 carrot, diced small
1/4 cup red bell pepper, diced small
1/4 cup yellow bell pepper, diced small
1 bouquet garni
1 bay leaf
1 orange, juiced
2 Tbsp. wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. shallot, minced
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
6 Tbsp. walnut oil
3 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs
Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl mix the vinegar, shallot, and mustard. Slowly whisk in the oil. Add the herbs, season to taste, and set aside.

Rinse the lentil and place them in a pan. Add water (3 times the volume of the lentils), garlic, onion, carrot, bell peppers, bouquet garni, bay leaf and orange juice. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 to 35 minutes, or until tender.

Remove bouquet garni and bay leaf. Strain the lentils and transfer to a bowl. Mix in the vinaigrette and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve cold.

Makes 6 servings.

Melon with Figs and Prosciutto



*1 cantaloupe
4 slices Prosciutto
4 fresh figs
A bunch of Arugula mixed with some vinaigrette
Pepper to taste*

Cut the cantaloupe in half. Scoop out the seeds and drain the liquid. Cut each half into half again and remove skin. Cut open the figs without breaking through their bottoms.

Place arugula on half the side of a serving platter. Place the melon wedges on the other side. Top with Prosciutto, décor with figs, sprinkle pepper and serve immediately.

Suggestions for a great wine pairing: A 10-Year-Old Tawny Porto Sandeman.

Makes 4 servings.

Minestrone Soup

2 tsp. olive oil
4 oz. onion, thinly sliced
2 oz. carrot, diced
2 oz. celery, diced
2 oz. zucchini, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 oz. green cabbage, shredded
4 oz. fresh tomatoes
6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
1 oz. macaroni
6 oz. cooked red beans
2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, minced
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, minced
Salt and pepper

Make a small incision (x) on the top and bottom of the tomatoes. Blanch the tomatoes for 15 seconds. Remove and place in ice-cold water to stop the cooking process. Peel, seed, and chop the tomatoes.

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the carrot, celery, garlic, and sauté rapidly. Add the cabbage, zucchini, stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until barely tender. Add the tomato, beans, and herbs. Adjust seasonings and serve immediately.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Mushrooms and Barley Soup



2 tsp. canola or grapeseed oil
2 oz. barley
1 small onion, diced
1 large carrot, diced
1 small turnip, diced
5 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
8 oz. mushrooms, sliced
2 Tbsp. parsley, minced
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook the barley according to package instructions. Drain and set aside.

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onion, carrot, turnip and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are barely tender. Add the mushrooms, parsley, drained barley, and bring to a simmer. Continue to cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Season to taste and serve immediately.

Comments: For a variety, I sometimes add leftover beef roast chunks, slices of filet mignon or cooked ground beef. You can also add cooked chicken.

If preparing this soup for a few days, I do not add the cooked barley until I am ready to serve. Just reheat a portion of the soup and add barley accordingly. That way, the barley does not get too soggy by absorbing the soup liquid!

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Mushroom and Chestnut Pate



*1 tsp. grape seed oil
1/4 cup minced shallots
1/4 cup shredded carrots
1 large garlic clove, minced
1/4 lb. Cremini mushrooms, chopped
1/4 lb. Shiitake mushrooms, chopped
1/4 lb. Oyster mushrooms, chopped
1/2 tsp. freshly minced thyme
1/2 tsp. freshly minced sage
1 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
1/4 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. ground pepper
3 Tbsp. Sherry
4 oz. cooked chestnuts and 1/3 cup toasted walnuts
2 Tbsp. nutritional yeast*

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the shallots, carrots, garlic and briefly sauté. Add mushrooms, thyme, sage, parsley and cook, stirring frequently, and until their liquid is almost evaporated, 4 to 5 minutes. Deglaze the pan with the Sherry, scraping up the bottom of the pan and cook until the liquid is evaporated. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to a food processor. Add the chestnuts, walnuts, nutritional yeast and pulse until finely chopped. If your food processor is small, break into a couple of small batches. Serve garnished with sage and croutons, if desired.

Comments: You may use this pate as a filling for pinwheels, puff pastries, sandwiches, vegetables and so on. I also love mixing it with rice, pasta, vegetables, as a top for a filet mignon or risotto. I also use it as a component for salad dressing, simply on top of a Brie slice or a toasted slice of bread. You may substitute the nutritional yeast with Parmesan Cheese. Feel free to use your favorite mushrooms and spicing up this recipe. Makes 2 cups.

Natural Cleanser Soup



*1 large leek, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
3 garlic cloves, halved
1 tsp. freshly minced ginger
1 sweet potato, peeled, chopped
1 small fennel bulb, chopped
1 bunch of spinach, chopped
1 tsp. herbs de Provence
1 apple, cored, chopped
pinch of salt and peppers*

Place the leek, carrots, celery stalks, garlic, ginger, sweet potato, fennel bulb, and herb de Provence in a large pan. Barely cover with water. Bring to boil over medium to high heat. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Transfer the vegetables and fruit to a blender. Add enough liquid to get to a liquefy consistency. Blend until smooth and season to taste.

Comments: If you like a stronger sweeter apple flavor, use 2 apples. You may add 1 Tbsp. ground flax seeds per serving and some chia, just before serving.

Makes 1 or 2 smaller servings.

Nectarine and Greens Salad



*3 oz. arugula
3oz. endive greens
4 oz. crumbled goat or feta cheese
¼ cup sliced almonds
¼ cup dried cranberries
2 large nectarines or peaches, sliced
6 Tbsp. vinaigrette
Salt and pepper to taste*

In a bowl, mix the arugula and endive greens with 2 Tbsp. vinaigrette. Divide among 4 plates. Equally top each plate with cheese and fruit slices. Sprinkle the cheese, almonds and cranberries. Drizzle remaining vinaigrette and serve immediately.

Option: Serve with grilled shrimps, scallops or chicken. You can also add smoked duck slices or prosciutto. You can also add broccoli to the salad.

Makes 4 servings.

Niçoise Salad



<i>4 eggs</i>	<i>1 minced shallot</i>
<i>5 oz. mixed greens</i>	<i>1 minced garlic clove</i>
<i>2 large tomatoes, diced</i>	<i>1 tsp. Dijon mustard</i>
<i>2 cooked potatoes, sliced</i>	<i>2 Tbsp. wine vinegar</i>
<i>1 orange bell pepper, thinly sliced</i>	<i>4 Tbsp. olive oil</i>
<i>1 small cucumber, sliced</i>	<i>2 Tbsp. walnut oil</i>
<i>4 oz. cooked green beans, cut in half</i>	<i>3 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs</i>
<i>6 oz. canned tuna</i>	<i>2 anchovy fillets</i>
<i>2 oz. small Niçoise black or green olives</i>	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>

In a bowl; add the shallot, garlic, mustard, vinegar, oils, 2 Tbsp. salad herbs, anchovy fillets and a pinch of pepper. Purée with a hand blender. If too thick, add a little water to thin out. Taste and adjust with salt, as needed. Set aside.

Place the eggs in a pan and cover with water. Add 2 tsp. salt and bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Remove the eggs and place them in ice cold water. Peel, quarter, and set aside.

In a large bowl, mix the greens with 3/4 of the prepared dressing. Transfer to a large serving platter. Add the potatoes, bell pepper, cucumber and green beans. Top with the tuna, eggs, tomatoes and olives. Sprinkle the remaining salad herbs and dressing. Serve immediately, family style.

Option: You can add some artichokes heart like I did on this one.

Makes 4 servings.

Oven Roasted Pear Salad



2 tsp. grape seed oil
4 pears
1 lemon, juiced
2 oz. spice pear or apple cider
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Nutmeg, Cinnamon
4 ounces Boston lettuce, cut into bite sizes
2 oz. radicchio
4 ounces blue cheese
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1/4 cup glazed walnuts
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Place the juice of 1 lemon in a large bowl. Peel the pears and cut them in half. Remove cores and mix the apples halves with the lemon juice to prevent browning. Heat the grape seed oil in an oven safe pan over medium heat. Add the pears and quickly sauté until slightly golden on each side. Add the cider and vanilla extract to the pan. Sprinkle a little bit of nutmeg and cinnamon over the pear halves. Bring to a boil. Spoon sauce over the pears and transfer to the oven. Bake for 10 minutes. Spoon sauce over the pears again and continue to cook until tender, about 5 to 10 minutes. Time may vary based on the pear sizes.

Meanwhile, prepare the dressing by mixing the cider vinegar, lemon juice and olive oil in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the Boston lettuce, radicchio and carefully mix. Transfer to four plates. Top with blue cheese and set aside. Transfer the pears to the prepared plates. Equally spoon the sauce over the pears, add the glazed walnuts, and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Pistou



*1 cup olive oil
4 to 6 large peeled garlic cloves
2 bunches of fresh basil
Salt and pepper to taste*

In a blender, purée the olive oil, garlic, and basil. Season to taste and blend for another minute.

Comments: This is a basic Pistou recipe that you can expand in many ways.

I use it as a marinade, sauce, for brushing on barbecued items, or on sandwiches (instead of using mayonnaise, vinaigrette, or butter). Sometimes, I like to add some lemon juice for chicken or fish recipes. I may also reduce slightly the basil and substitute it with some lavender or thyme. You can also spice it up a bit with cayenne pepper. I may also add a couple of canned anchovies to it. If so, make sure you rinse the anchovies to reduce sodium. For a reddish Pistou, I add some sun-dried tomatoes. Play with it, as it is part of having fun in the kitchen. As far as the garlic, you can reduce it or add more, up to you and based on how much you love garlic!

Here is an example of how you could use this Pistou:

Take 2 large zucchinis, some Pistou, salt and pepper.

Preheat a grill. Cut from each zucchini some thick lengthwise slices and brush them with the pesto. Season to taste and grill until desired doneness. Refresh with a little more Pistou before serving.

Option: Add a couple of sundried tomatoes on top of each zucchini slices towards the end of cooking. They will not only give them extra flavors, but will also make your slices more colorful, flavorful, and attractive. Great accompaniment to any grilled meat, fish, and brochettes.

Makes about 1 cup.

Poached Egg Over Greens



*1 cup mixed greens
1 Tbsp. vinaigrette
1 garlic clove, sliced
1 extra-large egg
1 tsp. white vinegar
Pinch salt
Pinch pepper*

Mix the greens with the vinaigrette, garlic, and transfer to a serving plate.

Heat enough water, the vinegar, to poach the egg over medium heat. Crack the egg into a ramekin, making sure you do not break the yolk. When a few bubbles appear, slide the egg into the water. Cook until set, about 2 to 3 minutes. Gently remove the egg and place it on top of the prepared salad.

Option: Add freshly chopped vegetables. You can also use 2 eggs. If so, crack each egg into a different ramekin and slide each egg into the water, making sure they do not touch each other.

Makes 1 serving.

Pumpkin Hummus



*2 Tbsp. almond butter
2 tsp. flax seed oil or walnut oil
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. ground cumin
1/2 tsp. ground coriander
2 cups cooked garbanzo beans
2 cups cooked pumpkin puree
1 garlic clove, smashed
1 tsp. paprika
Salt to taste*

Combine all ingredients and purée in a food processor until very smooth. Thin out with water, as needed. Serve with pita breads or vegetables.

Makes 2 cups.

Pumpkin Soup



*1-3 lbs. pumpkin
1 tsp. olive oil
2 large onions, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
6 cups low-fat-sodium chicken stock
2 cups low-fat milk
2 fresh sage leaves
6 Tbsp. low-fat Greek yogurt
2 Tbsp. roasted pumpkin seeds
Salt and pepper to taste*

Peel the pumpkin and cut the flesh into medium cubes.

Heat the oil in a large pan over high heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the pumpkin, garlic, stock, milk, sage, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and continue to simmer for 30 minutes.

Remove sage and transfer pumpkin to a blender. Purée with enough liquid to obtain a creamy consistency. Return to the pan and season to taste.

When plating, top each soup with 1 Tbsp. yogurt and 1 tsp. roasted pumpkin seeds.

Makes 6 servings.

Puree of Carrot

2 tsp. canola oil or grapeseed oil
4 oz. onions, diced
1 lb. carrots, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
4 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
4 oz. potatoes, diced
1 Tbsp. fresh parsley, minced
Salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the carrots, garlic, and cook for 2 minutes. Add the stock, bouquet garni, potatoes, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Remove the bouquet garni and puree the soup in a blender. Use enough cooking liquid to obtain the right consistency. Return to pan, add parsley, and adjust seasonings.

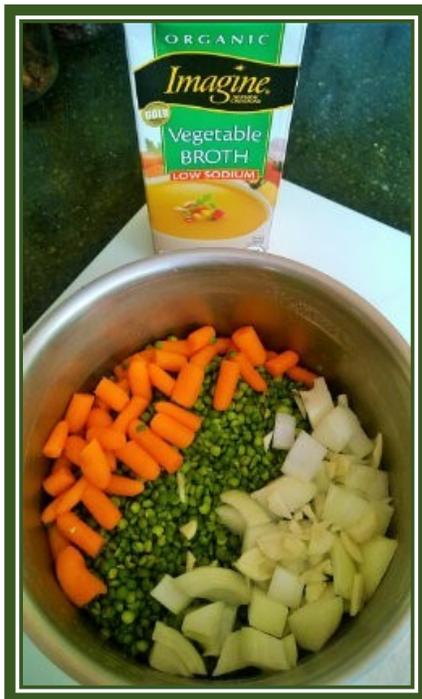
Option: Substitute the carrots with cauliflower, artichoke, or broccoli.

For mixed vegetables, substitute the 1 lb. carrots with 5 oz. of carrot, 3 oz. celery, 3 oz. turnip, 3 oz. leek, and 2 oz. cabbage.

For leek and potato puree: substitute the 1 lb. carrots with 10 oz. of leeks and 10 oz. of potatoes. You can also substitute 2 oz. of un-cooked rice for 4 oz of potatoes.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Quick Fat-Free Split-Pea Soup



*1 lb. split pea
4 oz. onions, chopped
4 oz. carrots, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
32 oz. low-sodium organic vegetables broth
1/2 tsp. Italian herbs
Water
Salt and pepper to taste*

Place all the ingredients in a pan. Make sure you have enough water to cover way above the ingredients. Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes.

Purée with a hand blender, adjust seasoning and voila!

Comments: Based on how you like the thickness of your soup, feel free to add more water or broth once puréed.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Quick Halloween Chili



*2 tsp. grape seed oil
2 onions, peeled and diced
2 carrots, peeled and diced
2 branches of celery, diced
1 bell pepper, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 lbs. ground turkey meat
3 cans of 15 oz. diced tomatoes
1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs
1 bay leaf
1 can of 15 oz. organic pumpkin puree
1 can of 15 oz. organic black kidney beans
1 can of 15 oz. organic red kidney beans
2 Tbsp. chili powder
1 tsp. sugar (optional)
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste*

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté until translucent. Add the carrots, celery, bell pepper, garlic, and sauté for two minutes. Add the ground turkey and cook for two more minutes. Add the diced tomatoes, Italian herbs, bay leaf, and bring to a boil. Add the pumpkin purée, beans, chili powder, sugar, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for another half hour. Season with salt and cayenne pepper to taste. Remove any fat floating on top before serving.

Makes 12 servings.

Quinoa with Roasted Vegetables



*1 large eggplant, diced
1 large zucchini, diced
1 yellow bell pepper, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 large red onion, diced
16 cherry tomatoes
8 cloves garlic, halved
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
2 bunches freshly minced basil
2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 cups warm cooked quinoa
1 lemon
Salt and pepper*

Place the eggplant, zucchini, bell peppers, onion and garlic in a bowl. Add 2 Tbsp. olive oil, rosemary, 3/4 of the minced basil, and season to taste. Mix well and refrigerate for an hour. Preheat the barbecue on medium high. Transfer the vegetables to a barbecue vegetable pan. Roast over the fire until the vegetables are crunchy and slightly browned, mixing on occasion. Add the tomatoes and cook for another 2 minutes. Spread the warm quinoa in the bottom of a serving platter and top with the grilled vegetables. Sprinkle lemon juice, remaining basil, and serve immediately.

Comments: Before cooking your quinoa, according to basic package directions, you can add freshly minced herbs. Or, if you prefer, when it is still hot, and you have simply followed the basic cooking directions without adding anything, you can then add some freshly minced salad herbs and a little bit of olive oil to it. Either way, will emphasize the flavors. I personally like doing so, after it is cooked, as I feel the quinoa has a more refreshing taste at the end.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Radish Salad



2 bunches of elongated radishes
1 shallot, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
1 lemon, juiced
3 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs
Salt and pepper to taste
Parsley for decoration

Mix the shallot, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and salad herbs in a bowl. Season to taste and set aside.

Remove greens from the radishes. Slice the radishes to end up with similar round pieces. Mix the radishes with the prepared dressing and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve decorated with a few parsley branches.

Option: When plating, you may serve the prepared radishes over a couple of Boston or Batavia leaves, as a base.

Makes 4 servings.

Roasted Tomato and Red-Bell Pepper Soup

2 tsp. olive oil
2 lbs. tomatoes, halved lengthwise
3 large red bell peppers, seeded and quartered
4 to 6 garlic cloves, peeled
1 tsp. fresh thyme, minced
2 Tbsp. fresh basil, minced
2 cups of chicken or vegetable stock
4 Tbsp. cream or regular/ low fat sour cream or yogurt
Salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Place the tomatoes, red bell peppers, and garlic on an oiled baking sheet. Drizzle a little olive oil over the vegetables and roast for 30 minutes or until brown. Remove from the oven and cool.

Puree the vegetables in a blender. Transfer to a saucepan; add the thyme, and enough stock to bring to a soup consistency. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Adjust seasonings and consistency with more stock, if needed. Add the basil, cream, mix and bring to a boil. If adding regular/low-fat sour cream or yogurt, do not boil since it would curdle. Adjust seasonings and serve immediately.

Option: Serve this soup cold in the summer for a refreshing taste.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Shrimps and Mango Salad



*16 large shrimps, deveined (about 1 lb.)
1 mango, peeled and diced
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 lime, juiced
1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
2 Tbsp. freshly minced cilantro
2 cups mixed greens
1/4 red onion, thinly sliced
Salt and pepper to taste*

Heat a large pan with salted water. Once boiling, blanch the shrimps until opaque. Drain and rinse under cold water. Strain, peel the shrimps and refrigerate until use.

In a bowl, mix the olive oil, lime juice, jalapeno, cilantro, and season to taste. Add the diced mango pieces and carefully mix.

Spread the mixed greens over a long serving platter. Top with red onion slices and prepared shrimps. Evenly spread the mango dressing and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

Smoked Duck Salad



*2 cooked smoked duck breasts
1 bag of Mesclun salad
2 Tbsp. raspberry vinegar
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 Tbsp. Raspberry liquor
1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 shallot, minced
1/2 cup olive oil
1 Tbsp. seedless currant or Red Bordeaux Wine jelly
2 Tbsp. freshly minced salad herbs
1 cup of berries (raspberry-blueberry), cleaned
1/2 cup sliced almonds
Salt and pepper to taste*

Using a sharp knife, thinly slice the duck breasts. Season with a little pepper. In a bowl, combine the vinegar, liquor, mustard, shallot, and jelly. Mix thoroughly. Slowly whisk in the oil to emulsify. Season to taste and add 1 Tbsp. herbs. Adjust sugar level, if needed.

Mix the Mesclun with some of the dressing and place a portion in the middle of a plate. Add slices of duck breast around, top with a little Mesclun, drizzle sauce around, and sprinkle remaining herbs.

Suggestions for a wine pairing: Liar's Dice, Zinfandel – Murphy Goode.

Makes 4 servings.

Smoked Salmon and Cucumber Canapé



8 round slices pumpernickel bread
8 round slices cucumber
8 Tbsp. low-fat ricotta cheese
8 slices smoked salmon, rolled
1 tsp. prepared horseradish
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 Tbsp. minced chives
Springs of fresh dill for decoration
Salt and pepper to taste

In the food processor; combine the low-fat ricotta cheese, horseradish, lemon juice, some, and season to taste. Place 1 Tbsp. over each bread slice. Top with a cucumber slice, a salmon slice, and decorate with dill. Repeat with remaining items. Serve immediately or refrigerate for a short time, before serving.

Makes 4 servings.

Strawberries Soup

2 lbs. strawberries
A pinch of cinnamon
2 Tbsp. powdered sugar (option)
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
Mint leaves

Clean and remove the strawberries stems. Cut the strawberries into thin slices. Place the strawberries, cinnamon, powdered sugar in a saucepan and sauté rapidly over high heat. In a blender, purée the strawberries mixture and pass through a sieve to get rid of all the seeds. Add the lemon juice and mix well. Refrigerate and serve cold with mint leaves as a decoration.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Tuna Sandwich



1 small onion, thinly chopped
1 carrot, shredded
1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
12 oz. freshly cooked tuna, shredded
1/2 lemon, juiced
1/2 cup mayonnaise (olive oil base)
8 slices whole wheat bread
1 cup lettuce, spinach or favorite greens
16 thin slices tomatoes
Pickles
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste

In a bowl; carefully mix the onion, carrot, celery, tuna, lemon juice and mayonnaise. Season with salt and cayenne pepper.

Toast bread slices or not. Spread the tuna mixture on one bread slice. Top with tomato slices, greens, and close with another bread slice. Repeat with remaining ingredients and serve immediately with pickles.

Options (for additional flavors): Add small pieces of French cornichons, drained capers or sun-dried tomatoes into the tuna mixture. You may also add a little bit of Dijon mustard or tomato paste.

Makes 4 servings.

Turkey and Vegetables Sandwich

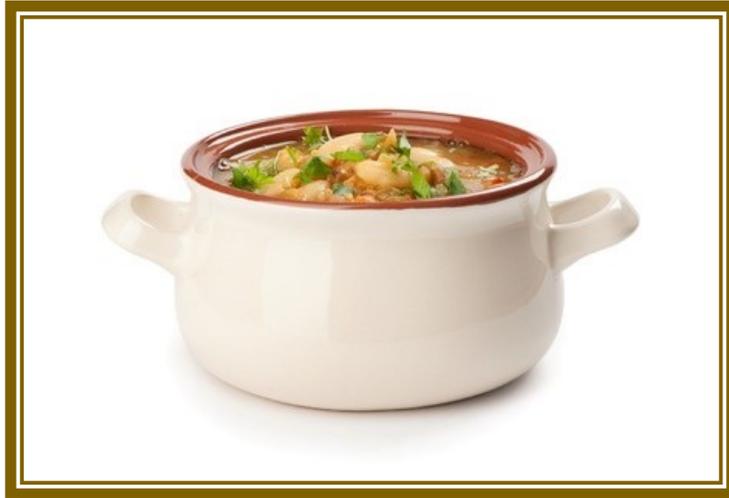


4 slices of 100% whole wheat bread
2 Tbsp. mashed avocado (option: mixed with a little Tabasco sauce)
2 tsp. mustard
6 oz. freshly sliced turkey meat or "nitrate free" turkey deli slices (optional)
4 red onion slices
8 tomato slices
8 cucumber slices
3/4 cup of shredded lettuce
A few pepperoncini (optional)
A few pickles slices (optional)
1 Tbsp. Italian dressing
Salt and pepper to taste

In a bowl, mix shredded lettuce with the Italian dressing and set aside. Spread the avocado over two slices of breads. Spread the mustard over the remaining two slices. Top the avocado slices with the turkey, onion, tomato, cucumber and lettuce. Finish with the pepperoncini (optional), pickles (optional), and season to taste. Close the sandwiches with the mustard bread slices and serve immediately.

Makes 2 sandwiches.

Turkey, Escarole and White Bean Soup



4 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1/2 lb. ground turkey, crumbled
15.5 oz. can organic white beans, drained and rinsed
4 cups chicken stock
1 lb. escarole; trimmed, washed and dry
1 tsp. salt
Pinch of pepper to taste

Heat a large pan with 1 tsp. salt water and the escarole. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking process. Squeeze the water out of the escarole, chop and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the turkey and brown thoroughly. Add the garlic and sauté for a minute. Add the beans, stock, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and continue to simmer until the beans are very tender. Remove 1/4 cup of beans, purée and return to pan. Add the escarole and season to taste. Bring to a simmer and serve immediately.

Comments: You can make the same recipe with freshly cooked white beans. You can also substitute cooked turkey or chicken for the ground turkey.

Makes 4 servings.

Vichyssoise

1 tsp. grapeseed oil
1 medium onion, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
12 oz. leeks, white part only, thinly sliced
12 oz. potatoes, thinly sliced
4 to 5 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1 bouquet garni
4 to 6 tablespoons chilled heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
Fresh chives minced for garnish

Heat the oil in a pan over high heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent. Add the garlic, leeks, and sauté rapidly. Add the potatoes, chicken stock, bouquet garni, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender. Remove the bouquet garni and pass through a food mill or puree in a blender, using enough cooking liquid to obtain a creamy consistency. Adjust seasoning, cover, and chill in the refrigerator. At serving time, add the chilled cream, sprinkle the chives, and serve immediately.

Option: Substitute low-fat sour cream or low-fat yogurt for the cream. You may also serve this soup hot, using warm cream.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

White Beans Stew

2 tsp. canola oil
2 lbs. dried white beans
1 large onion, small diced
1 large carrot, small diced
1 celery stalk, small diced
4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 lb. tomatoes, chopped (no liquid)
1 bouquet garni
3 Tbsp. freshly minced parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Place beans in a large stockpot and add enough water to cover them. Bring to a boil over high heat. Remove from heat and let stand covered for 30 minutes. Drain beans and rinse under cold water.

Heat the butter or oil in a large pot over high heat. Add onions, carrots, celery, garlic, and sauté for 2 minutes. Add beans, bouquet garni, and enough water to cover the beans. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer covered for 1 to 1 ½ hours or until tender. The liquid should be reduced and thickened to a creamy consistency. (If necessary, remove beans from liquid. Bring the liquid to a boil and reduce to creamy consistency. Then add the beans again). Add tomatoes and bring to a boil. Add parsley and season to taste.

Makes 12 servings.