



Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle

IDHC

Recipe Collection

**Our Most Popular Recipes
from**

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**Recipes compiled and tested for IDHC by
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Introduction

The recipes in this collection were created to help IDHC community members prepare nutritious, tasty, budget conscious meals for themselves and their families. Every week we would scan the flyers of the major supermarkets and determine the best buys. A recipe would then be created to showcase the most affordable ingredients.

The major supermarkets often have the same specials on a rotation. You will regularly see chicken thighs, pork chops and ground beef on sale. But what do you do with them week after week? This collection was designed to help you make your food dollar go further and to help prevent meal boredom. When we become bored with our usual family dinners it is easy to turn to processed food and take-out, which is often expensive, high in fat and sodium. We hope that these recipes will encourage you to cook healthy meals for yourself and your family and enjoy dinner times together.

Happy Cooking!

PANTRY ITEMS

A pantry doesn't have to be huge or expensive. These ingredients are very versatile and are featured in most of the recipes in this collection. Buy small amounts of dried herbs and spices in bulk and store them in air tight jars.

Dried Herbs and Spices

- Thyme
- Rosemary
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Mixed Italian Herbs
- Bay Leaves
- Chili Powder
- Curry Powder
- Cumin
- Paprika
- Cinnamon
- Kosher Salt
- Black Pepper

When purchasing condiments always look for the lowest sodium option if it's available. Store brands are usually much cheaper than name brands and there is very little difference in taste and quality.

Condiments

- Balsamic Vinegar
- Olive Oil
- Dijon Mustard
- Honey
- Maple Syrup
- Olive Oil Mayonnaise
- Low Sodium Soy Sauce
- Ketchup
- Hot Sauce

BAKING

Almond Parmesan Crackers

Yield 3 dozen crackers

These crispy crackers are a great accompaniment to soup or salads or just for snacking.

1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 cups almond flour
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary
3-4 tablespoons cold water

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Pulse all the ingredients, except the water, together in a food processor.

Add the cold water to the dough, through the feed tube, one tablespoon at a time, until the mixture is holding together well enough to work into a ball.

Separate into two balls of dough, and place each ball on parchment paper, or other non-stick surface which you will transfer to a baking sheet. Top with another sheet of parchment.

Roll each dough ball between the sheets of parchment until flat and about 1/8 to 1/4 inch in thickness.

Using a pizza cutter or knife, score the dough into 1-inch squares but do not separate.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until the crackers are golden brown. Check after 20 minutes as they can easily over bake.

Cool and gently break into squares. Serve with salad or soup.

Avocado Chocolate Pudding

Makes approximately 6 - 1/3 to 1/2 cup servings depending on the size of your avocados

The idea of avocado for dessert can be off-putting but when avocados are pureed they become very creamy. When you add chocolate it just gets better. Buy your avocados a few days before you make this pudding. Very ripe avocados make a creamier pudding.

3 medium avocados, very ripe

1 large banana, very ripe

1/4 cup honey, or to taste

2 tablespoons maple syrup, or to taste

1/4 cup dark cocoa powder

2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips

1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Pinch of fine salt

Coconut milk as needed, about 2 tablespoons or more if you like a creamier pudding

Fresh raspberries and toasted hazelnuts for garnish

Peel, seed and roughly chop avocados. Peel the banana and break it into large pieces.

Add the avocado and banana to a large food processor along with honey, maple syrup, cocoa powder, desired flavouring, salt and 2 tablespoons of coconut milk.

Process until a very smooth paste has formed. Add more coconut milk if necessary through the feed tube until the desired pudding consistency is achieved.

Taste for seasoning and sweetness.

Serve topped with fresh raspberries or chopped, toasted hazelnuts.

Variations:

Mocha Pudding: Instead of vanilla add 1-2 teaspoons instant coffee granules to mixture.

Chocolate Orange: Instead of vanilla add grated zest of 1 orange plus 1/2 teaspoon orange extract.

Chocolate Almond: Instead of vanilla add 1 teaspoon almond extract and unsweetened almond milk instead of coconut milk.

Chocolate Mint: add 1/2 teaspoon peppermint extract and garnish with mint leaves.

Banana Chocolate Chip Muffins

Yield 36 mini muffins, 18 large muffins

These banana muffins are always a hit with kids who won't notice that they have no white sugar or white flour.

3 very ripe bananas, mashed
1/3 cup maple syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large eggs
1/2 cup almond butter (or other nut/seed butter)
1/4 cup coconut flour
1 teaspoon instant coffee grounds, optional
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup mini chocolate chips or finely chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place paper liners into mini or regular muffin tins or spray well with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, mix together mashed bananas, maple syrup, vanilla extract, eggs, and almond butter.

Place a wire sifter over the mixing bowl. Measure the coconut flour, instant coffee, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon and salt into the sifter. Sift the dry ingredients over the wet and mix well. Fold in the chocolate chips or nuts.

Pour mixture into lined muffin cups and bake for 15-20 minutes for mini muffins, 20-25 minutes for regular muffins.

Let cool before serving.

Carrot Cake

Serves 12

This cake is gluten free and nut free. If you are on a dairy free diet, omit the cream cheese frosting. It is important to sift the coconut flour because it can be lumpy.

3 cups finely grated carrots (about 4 large)
1 cup raisins
12 large eggs
1 cup coconut oil, melted or 1 cup sunflower oil
2/3 cup honey
1 cup coconut flour
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" cake pan with non-stick cooking spray and line the bottom of the pan with parchment paper. Spray the parchment as well.

Mix the grated carrots and raisins together in a large mixing bowl.

In a food processor combine the eggs, oil and honey. Remove the lid and sift the coconut flour, salt, baking soda, and pumpkin pie spice over the egg mixture. Mix to combine. Scrape the batter into the bowl with the carrots and raisins. Stir to combine.

Transfer batter into the prepared pan. Bake 45-60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the middle. Cool completely before icing.

Cream Cheese Frosting

3/4 cup whipping cream, (35%)
1 – 250-gram package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

In a medium mixing bowl, whip the cream until firm peaks form when the beaters are lifted out of the cream.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until smooth, then blend in maple syrup and vanilla.

Using a rubber spatula, gently fold the whipped cream into cream cheese mixture. Spread evenly over the cooled cake.

Chocolate Snack Cake

Makes 16 -2-inch servings

This cake is gluten free as well as sugar free. It gets its sweetness from a combination of dates and applesauce. You can use prepared, unsweetened applesauce or make your own.

10 dates, pitted
1 cup of unsweetened applesauce
3 large eggs
1/2 cup coconut oil, melted or 1/2 cup sunflower oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 cup strong brewed coffee OR 2 teaspoons instant coffee and 1/2 cup hot water
1/2 cup coconut flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease an 8" x 8" square baking pan with non-stick cooking spray and line the bottom with parchment paper.

Place the dates in a large food processor and pulse until completely pureed. If your dates are very dry you may add half the applesauce to help them puree.

Add the rest of the applesauce continue to pulse until the mixture is smooth.

In a large mixing bowl whisk together the eggs, oil, vanilla and coffee. Add the date mixture and stir to combine.

Combine the coconut flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt in a separate bowl. Use a wire whisk to combine the dry ingredients or pass through a sifter. Coconut flour can be very lumpy so don't skip this step.

Scatter the dry ingredients over the wet ingredients and mix well until you have a smooth batter.

Pour the batter into your prepared pan and smooth it with the back of a spatula.

Bake for 20 - 30 minutes or until a toothpick stuck in the middle comes out just clean. Cool completely and cut into squares. Serve topped with fresh raspberries if desired.

Cornbread

Serves 6-8

This low sugar, gluten free cornbread starts with a cornmeal mush that helps make the bread moist.

2-1/2 cups yellow cornmeal
1/2 cup boiling water
1 tablespoon sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups buttermilk
2 large eggs
4 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled
2 tablespoons room temperature butter

Place a well-seasoned 12-inch cast iron skillet on the center rack of the oven and preheat oven to 375°F.

Put 1/2 cup of the cornmeal in a medium mixing bowl. Add the boiling water and stir until it becomes a thick mush.

In a small bowl, combine the remaining 2 cups of cornmeal with the sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda.

Whisk the buttermilk into the mush until smooth, then whisk in the eggs. Whisking constantly drizzle in the 4 tablespoons of melted butter

When the oven and pan are fully heated, stir the dry ingredients into the buttermilk mixture. Remove the hot pan from the oven and add the room temperature butter, carefully swirling it around the pan until it's melted and has coated the pan—it's fine if the butter browns. Pour the batter into the skillet or pan and smooth the top gently with a silicone spatula.

Bake until cornbread is lightly browned on top and a skewer inserted into center comes out clean, about 30 minutes.

Let cool for about 15 minutes in skillet, then serve warm.

Lemon Blueberry Muffin

Makes 24 mini-muffins

Coconut flour is a great gluten free alternative. It is a very “thirsty” flour and requires lots of moisture. It can also be very lumpy so always sift coconut flour before mixing in your other ingredients. You can also use frozen blueberries instead of dried or fresh. You do not need to thaw them first.

2/3 cup coconut flour
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 cup dried or fresh blueberries
1/4 cup honey
1 cup coconut milk, full fat
1/4 cup coconut oil, melted or 1/4 cup sunflower oil
6 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 small lemon, zest and juiced

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a mini muffin tin with baking cups or spray well with non-stick cooking spray.

Sift the coconut flour through a wire strainer into a large bowl. Stir in the dried blueberries and baking soda.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the honey, coconut milk, coconut oil, eggs, lemon zest, lemon juice and vanilla extract.

Using a rubber spatula, mix the wet and dry ingredients together.

Spoon batter into the prepared muffin tin, filling each to the top.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 15-20 minutes. Set pan on a wire rack to cool. Wait until muffins are completely cool before serving.

Pumpkin Carrot Muffins

Yield 24 mini muffins, 12 regular muffins

These muffins are gluten free and naturally sweetened.

3/4 cup almond flour
1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup canned pumpkin purée
1/4 cup honey
1 tablespoons almond butter
1/2 teaspoon melted coconut oil or olive oil
2 large eggs
1 medium carrot, finely grated, about 3/4 cup shredded carrots
1/2 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line mini or regular muffin tins with paper liners.

In a large bowl, whisk together the almond flour, pumpkin pie spice, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs. Stir in the pumpkin, honey, almond butter, and oil.

Add the wet ingredients to the dry and stir until combined. Fold in the grated carrots and raisins. Scoop the batter evenly into the muffin tins, filling them about 1/2 full.

Bake for about 15-20 minutes for mini muffins or 20-25 minutes for regular muffins. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean and the tops feel springy to the touch.

Cool before serving.

Strawberry Rhubarb Crisp

Serves 10-12

This crisp uses honey as a sweetener and nut flours instead of wheat flour. If you are on a dairy free diet you can use coconut oil instead of butter.

For the filling:

4 cups rhubarb, diced
3 cups strawberries, diced
Zest from one lemon
2 teaspoon lemon juice
2/3 cup honey or maple syrup
Pinch of salt
3 tablespoons arrowroot powder or corn starch

For the crumbles:

1 cup chopped pecans
1 1/2 cups almond flour
1/4 cup coconut flour
2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup honey
1/3 cup coconut oil, melted or 1/3 cup softened butter

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Put the strawberries and rhubarb in a large mixing bowl with the orange zest, lemon juice, honey, salt, and arrowroot powder and mix well.

Mix the pecans, nut flours, cinnamon, salt and honey together in a medium mixing bowl. Stir in the melted coconut oil or cut in butter until the mixture begins to form crumbs and is well coated

Spoon the fruit filling into the baking dish. Crumble the topping evenly over the fruit.

Bake for 25 minutes, checking occasionally. When the topping is browned, and the fruit is bubbling, remove from oven and allow the crumble to cool for a few minutes before serving.

Variations:

Apple Crisp

Substitute 6-8 large sweet apples for the strawberries and rhubarb and add 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon. Omit the other filling ingredients.

Mixed Berry Crisp

Substitute 2 - 600-gram bags of frozen mixed berries.

BEEF

Cabbage Roll Casserole

Serves 6-8

This comforting casserole tastes just like cabbage rolls, without all the work. You could substitute two bags of prepared coleslaw for the cabbage if you were in a hurry.

1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef
1 large white onion, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced or put through a press
2 - 398 ml (14 oz.) cans low sodium tomato sauce
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 cups cooked whole grain brown rice
1 medium head cabbage, about 1 kg, shredded

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Place a large skillet over medium heat. Add the beef and onion and until meat is no longer pink. Push the meat and onions to one side of the pan. Tilt the pan to one side and use a large spoon to remove any excess fat. Season the meat lightly with salt and pepper. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute longer.

Stir in one can of the tomato sauce, thyme, oregano and cayenne pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes. Stir in the cooked rice and remove from the heat.

Spread a third of the cabbage in the prepared baking dish. Top with half of the meat mixture. Repeat the layers and top with remaining cabbage. Pour the second can of tomato sauce over top.

Cover the dish with foil and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake until the top is starting to crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Serve with sour cream or plain Greek yogurt on the side, if desired.

Cheesy Zucchini Bake

Serves 8

Casseroles are great “all-in-one” meals for busy weeknights with meat, starch and vegetables in one dish. This recipe can be prepared in advance and kept in the fridge until you are ready to bake it. If you’re baking the casserole straight from the fridge add an additional 15 minutes to the cook time.

4 small zucchini, thinly sliced
1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef or beef and pork blend
1 large onion chopped
1 large green pepper, chopped or 2 small rainbow peppers
2 cloves garlic minced
2 teaspoons dried mixed Italian seasoning or 1/2 teaspoon each dried basil, oregano, thyme and parsley
1/4 teaspoon crushed red chili flakes (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 – 796ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes and their juices
2 cups cooked brown or wild rice or brown and wild rice mix (or any leftover rice you have)
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Slice zucchini into thin rounds. Place the slices in a colander in the sink and sprinkle liberally with salt. Let stand 10-20 minutes to release excess moisture from the zucchini. Rinse well and place zucchini rounds on paper towels to dry while you prepare the meat.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9” x 13” baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large skillet over medium-high brown the ground meat until no trace of pink remains. Remove the pan from the heat and push the meat to one side of the pan. Tilt the pan by the handle and using a large spoon remove all but 2 tablespoons of the fat to a heat proof bowl or Pyrex measuring cup. Return the pan to medium-high heat and add onions, peppers and garlic. Sauté 2-3 minutes. Add seasonings and tomato paste and cook 2-3 minutes more. Stir in diced tomatoes and cooked rice.

Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer for 10 minutes to blend flavours. Do not let mixture get too dry if it does add 1/2 cup of water or broth. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed.

Place 1/3 of the meat mixture in the bottom of your baking dish. Top with half of the zucchini slices. Place another 1/3 of the meat over the zucchini then add another layer of zucchini. Cover with the remaining meat mixture. Top with the shredded mozzarella cheese.

Bake uncovered 30-40 minutes or until casserole is bubbling and cheese is browned. Let stand 5 minutes and serve.

Classic Meatloaf

Serves 6-8

Meatloaf is the ultimate comfort food, especially as the days get shorter and colder! Baking the meatloaf on a lined baking sheet instead of a loaf pan creates more crispy edges, helps ensure even cooking and also makes for easier clean up. If your oven heats unevenly, turn the pan around at the half way mark. The breadcrumbs help to lighten the texture of the meatloaf but if you are on a gluten free diet or avoiding white flour, they can be left out.

- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 tablespoons ketchup, plus more for glaze
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup beef or chicken broth
- 1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/3 cup dried bread crumbs (optional)
- 1 egg

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. If using foil to line your pan spray it with non-stick cooking spray.

Heat the olive oil in a medium frying pan. Add the onions and cook until slightly softened, about 2 minutes. Add the thyme, mustard, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce and broth. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until the onions soft and the mixture has slightly thickened. Scrape the mixture into a large mixing bowl and allow to cool.

Add the ground beef to the bowl, along with the egg and optional bread crumbs. Add salt and pepper to taste. Mix lightly with a spoon or your hands. Don't overwork the meat or the finished product will be tough.

Place the mixture on your lined baking sheet and shape into a rectangular loaf. Spread additional ketchup or barbecue sauce evenly on top if desired.

Bake for 1 to 1 1/4 hours, until the internal temperature is 165°F and the meat loaf is cooked through.

Variation: The meatloaf can also be scooped into muffin cups and baked as individual portions. Spray 12 large muffin cups well with non-stick cooking spray and bake the mixture for 30-45 minutes.

Homemade Hamburger Helper with Sweet Potatoes

Serves 4-6

Hamburger Helper is certainly convenient but loaded with sodium and sugar. With a little extra chopping you can make a healthy, tasty alternative. Sweet potatoes will help thicken the sauce and add the sweetness that the boxed version relies upon. Add whatever vegetables your family likes, frozen peas, chopped spinach or diced tomatoes would make good additions.

500 grams lean ground beef
2 medium sweet potatoes
1 medium onion, diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
1 clove garlic, pressed
1-1/2 cups low sodium chicken or beef broth
1 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon chilli powder
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup frozen corn kernels
1/4 cup chopped parsley or cilantro (optional)

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut into 1-inch cubes or use a spiral vegetable cutter on the thickest noodle setting.

Brown the ground meat in a skillet over medium-high heat until no trace of pink remains. Push meat to the side, tilt the pan and drain fat from skillet with large spoon. Add onions, red pepper and garlic and cook until tender.

Add the salt, pepper, oregano, parsley, paprika and chili powder to the meat mixture. Stir in the broth and the sweet potatoes. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and cook until sweet potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes for diced potatoes or 5 minutes for spiralized potatoes. Remove from heat and stir in cheese and parsley or cilantro if using. Let the casserole sit 5 minutes thicken the sauce. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed.

Boxed Hamburger Helper Cheeseburger Macaroni Ingredients: Elbow Wheat Macaroni, Corn Starch, Salt, Enriched Wheat Flour, Sugar, Sea Salt, Modified Milk Ingredients, Dried Ricotta, Cheddar, Romano And Blue Cheeses, Tomato Powder, Monosodium Glutamate, Potassium Chloride, Citric Acid, Maltodextrin, Hydrogenated Soybean Oil, Spices, Modified Corn Starch, Malic Acid, Onion Powder, Natural Flavour, Colour (Contains Tartrazine), Monoglycerides, Silicon Dioxide, Garlic Powder, Yeast Extract, Cream Of Tartar, Disodium Phosphate. Contains Wheat, Milk, May Contain Egg, Soy and Mustard Ingredients.

Italian Stuffed Peppers with Cauliflower Rice

Serves 4-6

Cauliflower is widely available in the late summer and much more reasonably priced than it is in the winter! Cauliflower rice can be easily frozen – just portion into medium freezer bags, allowing about a half cup per person, squeeze out the air and freeze flat. To reheat, place the frozen cauliflower in a large sauté pan and cover with the lid. Let steam over medium heat, stirring occasionally to break up any frozen pieces. It is then ready to be used instead of rice or couscous, seasoned as your family prefers.

1 small head cauliflower, outer leaves removed
1 medium onion, diced
3 clove garlics, minced
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon crushed red chili flakes (optional)
1 teaspoon olive oil
6 small bell peppers (any colour or a combination)
500 grams (1 pound) lean ground beef
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1 - 680 ml (23 oz.) can or jar plain tomato sauce
Chopped fresh parsley and basil to garnish
Parmesan cheese to garnish

Slice the cauliflower in half. Grate the cauliflower against the largest holes of a box grater. Alternatively, cut the cauliflower into quarters and place in a food processor. Pulse until the cauliflower is finely chopped.

Measure 2 cups of the cauliflower rice and set the rest aside for another use.

Combine onion, garlic, spices and olive oil in a large Pyrex measuring cup. Microwave on high 2-3 minutes or until onion is soft. Scrape the mixture onto a plate to cool.

While mixture is cooling cut tops off peppers, remove seeds and membranes. Set aside. In large bowl combine the ground beef, 1 ½ cups of the cheese, cauliflower rice, onion mixture and 1 cup of tomato sauce. Mix well.

Stuff the peppers with meat mixture.

In the crock pot:

Pour remaining 1 cup of tomato sauce into the bottom of the crock pot liner. Add peppers and sprinkle with remaining ½ cup of cheese.

Cover and cook on low 4-6 hours. Serve garnished with chopped fresh parsley and basil if desired.

In the oven:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Add 1/2 cup of water to the bottom of a large, deep baking dish or small roasting pan. Place the stuffed peppers in the dish. Pour remaining tomato sauce over the peppers and into the bottom of the dish. Cover with foil or the lid and bake for 1 to 1 ½ hours. Remove the foil and sprinkle the peppers with the remaining ½ cup of cheese. Bake for an additional 15-20 minutes until peppers are very soft and the meat has reached an internal temperature of 165°F.

Let peppers stand for 10 minutes before serving. Garnish peppers with fresh herbs and parmesan cheese.

Marinated Roast Beef

Serves 6-8

The outside round roast is cut from the outer part of the round where muscles are well exercised, so it contains tough muscles and some connective tissue. It is a very economical cut and is often on sale. This cut of beef may have the least flavor of all the beef cuts, so this marinade will make the meat flavorful and juicy.

- 1 – 1 kg (2 pound) outside round roast
- 1/2 cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 4 cloves minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon mixed Italian herbs
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon sunflower oil

Remove any excess fat or silver skin from the meat using a sharp knife with a thin blade. Place the meat into a large zip top bag.

Combine all the marinade ingredients in a measuring cup and whisk to combine. Pour the marinade over the meat and seal the bag. Place in the refrigerator for a minimum of 4 hours, leave overnight if possible.

Take the meat out of the refrigerator about an hour before you plan to cook it to allow it to come to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Remove the meat from the marinade and pat dry with paper towels. Heat a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sunflower oil. When the oil is very hot, add the meat to the pan and sear on all sides. Place the skillet place in the oven. Roast until the meat reaches an internal temperature of 145°F, about 1 ½ to 2 hours, depending on the size of the roast. Allow the meat to rest for 15 minutes before carving. Carve the meat into thin slices for best results.

Serve with Double Mashed Potatoes and Horseradish-Yogurt Sauce and the vegetable of your choice.

Salisbury Steak

Serves 2-4

Salisbury steak has a bad reputation, probably because it's served in school and hospital cafeterias on a regular basis. This recipe uses fresh ingredients to create a quick and easy comfort food dinner, perfect to lift your spirits on a cold winter evening.

For the meat patties:

500 grams (1 pound) lean ground beef, or ground bison
1/3 cup of bread crumbs, optional
2 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons of Worcestershire sauce
1 large egg
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil

For the gravy:

1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
2 cups low or no sodium beef broth
2 tablespoons corn starch
1 onion, thinly sliced
1 cup (or more) white button mushrooms, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons fresh thyme, minced or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoons of ketchup
2 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley

For the patties:

In a large bowl, whisk the egg with the Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, Dijon mustard, kosher salt and fresh ground pepper. Stir in the bread crumbs if using. Add the beef and mix until just combined. Be

careful not to over mix the meat it will be tough. Divide the meat into 4 portions and shape into oval patties.

Heat the oil and in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the meat patties and cook, flipping once, until well browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. An instant read thermometer should register 165°F. Transfer the patties to a plate and cover to keep warm. Wipe out the skillet with a paper towel and return to the heat.

For the gravy:

While the meat is cooking, whisk the corn starch into 2 tablespoons of the beef broth in a small bowl or measuring cup. Set aside.

Melt the butter in the skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms, onions and thyme. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms and onions are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining beef broth, Worcestershire sauce and ketchup. Stir the corn starch mixture again and then whisk it into the skillet. Cook, whisking occasionally, until the mixture is slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Taste the sauce and correct the seasoning if necessary. Return the patties to the skillet to gently reheat, about 5-10 minutes. Top with the fresh parsley.

Serve with mashed potatoes.

Shepherd's Pie with Cauliflower Mash

Serves 4-6

This is a great recipe to double. Eat half today and freeze half for another day. If you use frozen vegetables, stir them in after simmering the broth and tomato paste. The frozen vegetables will cook while the pie bakes.

Beef Filling:

1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
2 ribs celery, diced
1 large onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 cup low sodium beef broth
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
3 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
1 cup fresh or frozen green peas

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Cauliflower Mash:

1 large head cauliflower, cut into florets
2-3 cloves of garlic, peeled and roughly chopped (optional)
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup milk
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (about a ¼ of a 450g block)

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Spray an 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Make the filling:

In a large skillet over high heat, brown the ground beef until no trace of pink remains. Turn the heat to low and push the meat to one side of the pan. Tilt the pan and, using a large spoon, drain the fat into a heatproof bowl. Return the pan to medium high heat and add the carrot, celery and onion. Cook for 3-5 minutes then add the garlic, tomato paste and thyme. Sauté for an additional 2-3 minutes or until the tomato paste has been combined. Stir in the beef broth and Worcestershire sauce. Bring the mixture to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Do not let the mixture dry out. Add any frozen vegetables and stir to combine. Pour the filling into the prepared baking dish.

Make the cauliflower mash:

While you're preparing your beef, mixture put a large pot of water onto boil. When it comes to the boil add a tablespoon of kosher salt. Add the cauliflower and garlic, if using, and cook to desired tenderness, 8-10 minutes. Drain the cauliflower and return it to the pan and mash with the butter and milk. Stir in 1 cup of the shredded cheese and the mustard. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper if needed.

Carefully spread the mashed cauliflower over the meat mixture. Top with the additional ½ cup of cheese. Bake in your preheated oven for 20 to 30 minutes or until bubbly and golden. Let stand 5 minutes and serve.

Freezing Tips:

Steam is the enemy of frozen food. For the best results cool your beef mixture and cauliflower completely before assembling your pie for the freezer. Never cool your food in the vessel you cooked it in. Always remove food to another container for cooling. Spreading on a baking pan or rimmed cookie sheet maximizes air exposure and will cool the food more quickly. Or to cool food very quickly, remove the food to a metal bowl and placed in a larger bowl filled with ice water. Stirring food as it cools also helps speed things up. Do not put hot food into your refrigerator for cooling as you will raise the temperature of your fridge and compromise your other food products. Wait until you're just about room temperature, 70°F to 80°F before putting your food into the fridge.

After your mixtures are cold assemble the pie. Cover the top of your pie in plastic wrap then cover in foil. Write on the foil with a permanent marker the name of your dish and the date you made it. Freeze for up to 3 months. **Always defrost food in the refrigerator, never at room temperature.** Pull your casserole out of the freezer the day before you want to bake it.

To reheat your Shepherd's Pie, bake in a preheated 375°F oven for 40-50 minutes or until golden and bubbly.

You can also freeze your leftover tomato paste. Scoop leftover tomato paste by the tablespoon onto a small plate covered with a piece of waxed or parchment paper. Place into the freezer and when your tomato pastes balls have hardened, pop into a zip top bag and put back into the freezer. Then when a recipe calls for a tablespoon of tomato paste you're ready to go, without opening an entire can!

Shredded Beef Tacos

Serves 8-10

The outside round roast is cut from the outer part of the round where muscles are well exercised, so it contains tough muscles and some connective tissue. This cut of beef may have the least flavor of all the beef cuts so low and slow cooking in a flavourful sauce is recommended. This recipe makes a lot of beef, but it freezes well. Enjoy it your first night as tacos, then follow the instructions at the end of the recipe for "Grab and Go Burritos".

1 – 1 ½ kg (3 pound) boneless outside round roast
2 teaspoons canola oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced (optional)
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon paprika, regular or smoked
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1 – 680 ml (23 oz.) jar strained tomatoes (Pomodoro)
1 cup beef broth
Zest and juice of 1 lime
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
10 small whole wheat tortillas

For garnish: Pico de Gallo or salsa, sliced avocados, grated cheese, sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

Pat the meat dry then trim the roast of any excess fat and silver skin. Season the meat lightly with salt and pepper.

Combine the chili powder, cumin, paprika, oregano, allspice and cloves in a small bowl. Rub the spice mixture into the meat. Combine the beef broth, lime juice and zest in a small measuring cup. Set aside.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and when it is shimmering hot add the meat and sear the roast well on all sides. When the meat is well browned remove it to a crock pot or a Dutch oven with a lid.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the chopped onion, garlic and jalapeno pepper to the pan. Sauté until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the beef broth and lime juice mixture and bring to a boil. Stir and scrape all the brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Pour over the meat then add the tomatoes to the pot. Stir gently to combine.

To cook on the stove top: Add water if necessary so the beef is mostly, but not completely, submerged. Cover and bring to a low boil. Turn the heat down to low and maintain a gentle simmer. Cook for 2 ½ hours with the lid on, then 30 minutes with the lid off or until the beef is tender enough to shred.

To cook in slow cooker: Set the heat for low and cook for 6 to 8 hours.

When the beef is extremely tender remove from the cooking liquid. Shred the meat with two forks. Meanwhile, let the sauce to simmer with the lid off for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce and thicken to your taste. Adjust salt to taste and mix the meat back into the sauce along with the cilantro.

Serve in warm tortillas along with your choice of garnishes.

Grab and Go Burritos: Let the meat cool completely. Place a desired amount of meat onto a large whole wheat tortilla and garnish with shredded cheese. Fold the ends over and roll up. Wrap each burrito in foil and place into a Ziploc bag in the freezer. Label the bag with the date and contents.

To reheat: thaw the wrap overnight in the refrigerator. Remove the foil and heat in the microwave on power level 5 until heated throughout. Or, keep the wrap in the foil and place in a 300°F oven for 20-30 minutes.

Sirloin Tip Roast with Mushroom Sauce

Serves 8

Sirloin tip is a very flavourful but challenging cut of beef as it rides the line between an oven roast and a pot roast. While you could certainly cook it in a crock pot, oven roasted beef is a nice Sunday dinner. Using water in the bottom of your roasting pan provides a moist environment for the meat and helps keep it tender, just don't let the water evaporate completely or your pan juices could burn. Slicing the meat very thinly, against the grain, will also give a more tender finished product.

1 – 1 to 1 ½ kg (3 to 4 pound) sirloin tip beef roast
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon light brown sugar, optional
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon flour
8 ounces fresh mushrooms, white button or a mix of your favourite kinds
4-6 green onions
2 cups reduced sodium beef broth
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup sour cream (optional)

Preheat oven to 500°F.

Mix the mustard, brown sugar, thyme, ginger, paprika, 1 teaspoon of the salt and pepper in a small bowl until well combined. Coat both sides of the roast with the spice mix.

Place roast on rack in small roasting pan and add 1-1/2 to 2 cups of water, depending on the size of your roasting pan (a larger pan will need more water)

Place pan in oven and roast for 15 – 20 minutes at 500°F. Check that your water hasn't evaporated and add another 1/2 cup or water if needed. Reduce the heat to 325°F roast for about 45 minutes to 1 hour or until a meat thermometer registers 140°F for medium rare or 155°F for medium. Do not take the roast past medium or it will be tough.

While the meat is cooking prepare your sauce ingredients. Thinly slice the green onions. Set the white parts into one prep bowl and the green parts in another. Trim the stem ends from the mushrooms and wipe them clean with a paper towel. Slice the mushrooms 1/4 inch thick and set aside.

When the meat is finished, transfer it to cutting board and tent with foil. Let it stand for 15 minutes while you prepare the sauce.

If you are on a dairy free or gluten free diet, see the gluten free sauce recipe that follows.

If not, place the roasting pan over two burners set to medium-high heat and add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the mushrooms, the white part of the green onions and 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt. Cook, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon, until the mushrooms are softened and brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Add the flour and cook 2 minutes, until incorporated and no lumps remain. Pour in the broth and Worcestershire sauce. Scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to incorporate all the brown bits into the sauce. Increase the heat to high and bring the sauce to a boil, and cook until the liquid is thickened, about 4 minutes.

If you want a creamy sauce remove the pan from the heat. When the sauce comes off the boil and whisk in the sour cream. Stir in the green tops of the onions and taste for seasoning. Carve the roast into very thin slices and serve with the mushroom sauce.

Gluten Free Sauce Option

8 ounces fresh mushrooms, white button or a mix of your favourite kinds

4-6 green onions

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 cups reduced sodium beef broth

2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

1 tablespoon minute tapioca

Thinly slice the green onions. Set the white parts into one prep bowl and the green parts in another. Trim the stem ends from the mushrooms and wipe them clean with a paper towel. Slice the mushrooms 1/4 inch thick and set aside.

About 30 minutes before the roast is finished. Measure 2 cups of beef broth into a measuring cup. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon minute tapioca over the broth and let stand 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a saucepan, heat the olive oil and sauté the onions and mushrooms until soft. Add the broth and tapioca mixture and bring to a boil. Boil for 5 minutes then reduce the heat to a simmer. Simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, until the roast is finished. Add any accumulated juices from the roast to the sauce before serving along with the reserved green onion tops.

Summer Vegetable Lasagna

Serves 8-10

This lasagna uses eggplant and zucchini instead of pasta. Salting the eggplant and zucchini before cooking will help draw the water out of the vegetables so the finished dish won't be soggy.

1 large eggplant, thinly sliced into rounds
2 medium zucchini, thinly sliced into rounds
1-2 tablespoons kosher salt
1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef
1 onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 - 680 ml (23 oz.) can tomato sauce
1 - 540 ml (19 oz.) can stewed tomatoes
1 – 300-gram tub ricotta cheese
1 egg
1/4 cup chopped basil
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 – 260-gram package mozzarella, shredded, about 2 cups
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 °F.

In a large colander lay the zucchini and eggplant slices in a single layer sprinkle with salt. Repeat layers until all the vegetables have been used and salted. Let the vegetables sit in the sink or on paper towels for at least 10 minutes. This will remove any excess moisture from the zucchini and eggplant. Rinse the vegetable slices well and place the slices on a clean tea towel or paper towels to dry. Blot with additional paper towels. Do not skip this step or the finished lasagna may be watery.

While the zucchini and eggplant slices are drying, place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ground beef and cook until no trace of pink remains. Tilt the pan to one side and with a large spoon, drain the excess fat into a heatproof measuring cup. Return the pan to the heat and add the onion and garlic. Continue to cook until onion has softened, about 5 minutes. Season the meat mixture well with salt and pepper. Add the tomato sauce and the diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Let simmer for 10 minutes or until mixture has thickened. Meanwhile, in a medium mixing bowl combine the ricotta cheese, egg, basil and nutmeg. Stir well to combine and set aside.

Place about a quarter of the cooked meat sauce on the bottom of a 9" x 13" baking dish. Layer half the eggplant slices on top of tomato sauce, overlapping slightly. Top with a quarter more of the tomato sauce. Layer the zucchini over the tomato sauce. Spread the ricotta mixture on top of the zucchini. Add another layer of eggplant slices then top with the remaining sauce.

Cover with foil and bake for 15 to 20 minutes until bubbly. Remove foil and sprinkle the shredded mozzarella over the top of the lasagna. Bake for another 15-20 minutes until the cheese is slightly browned. Allow lasagna to rest for 10 minutes before serving

Tex-Mex Rice and Bean Casserole

Serves 8-10

This is a recipe that can be easily adapted to your family's taste preferences. You can substitute any type of ground meat, like chicken or turkey. You could also omit the meat entirely for a vegetarian dish, just use two cans of beans instead of one. Diced zucchini, wilted spinach or diced carrots would also be great vegetable additions. Any leftover rice you have would be good but if you're cooking rice to use in this casserole you can add more flavour by cooking the rice in vegetable broth, chicken broth or tomato juice.

1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef
2 medium onions, diced
2 bell peppers, any colour, diced
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced (optional)
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon chili powder (or more to taste)
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon oregano
Salt and black pepper to taste
1 – 680ml (23 oz.) can plain tomato sauce
1 – 796ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes, drained
1 – 540ml (19 oz.) can small red kidney beans or black beans, drained and rinsed
4 cups cooked brown rice – long grain or basmati
2 cups frozen corn kernels
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro, divided
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
Sour cream or plain Greek yogurt for garnish (optional)

Pre-heat oven to 350°F and spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large skillet brown the ground beef until no trace of pink remains. Drain the beef by pushing it to one side of the pan, tilt it and use a large spoon to spoon the fat into a heat proof bowl. Return the pan to the heat and add the diced onions, peppers and garlic. Sauté until vegetables are beginning to soften, 2-4 minutes. Add the chili powder, cumin, paprika, oregano, salt and pepper. Cook for an additional 2-3 minutes.

Add the tomato sauce, diced tomatoes and beans. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in cooked rice, frozen corn and 1/4 cup of the chopped cilantro. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish and top with the shredded cheddar cheese.

Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the casserole is bubbly and the cheese is melted. Let stand 5-10 minutes before serving. Garnish with sour cream and additional chopped cilantro if desired.

BREAKFAST

Baked Mexican Black Bean Frittata

Serves 6-8

This is a very versatile recipe that can be served for breakfast, lunch or dinner. The frittata can also be sliced and rolled in warmed tortillas to make breakfast burritos.

1 - 540ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 small red onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced (optional)
1/4 cup minced cilantro
6 large eggs
1/2 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon hot sauce, or more to taste
1 cup cheddar or pepper jack cheese, shredded
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 avocado, peeled, seeded and thinly sliced
Juice of 1 lime

For garnish: jarred salsa, sour cream or plain Greek yogurt and additional cilantro

Pre-heat oven to 350° degrees. Spray an 8" x 8" square baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Spread the drained and rinsed black beans in the bottom of the dish

Place a large skillet on the stove and heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, red pepper, green pepper and jalapeno pepper to the pan. Season the mixture well with salt and pepper. Sauté until the vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Add the veggies to the bottom of the baking dish and sprinkle with the cilantro. Allow to cool to room temperature. The frittata can be prepared to this point and refrigerated overnight.

When ready to serve beat together the eggs, milk and hot sauce with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in 3/4 cup of the shredded cheese. Pour the egg mixture over the cooled vegetables. Scatter the remaining 1/4 cup of cheese over the top of the mixture. Bake until eggs are set in the middle and the edges and golden brown about 20 minutes.

While the frittata is baking squeeze the juice of one lime over the sliced avocado. When the frittata is finished cooking place the avocado slices over the top. Sprinkle with additional cilantro if desired. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing.

Serve with salsa and sour cream or plain yogurt on the side.

Chai-Tea Fruit Compote and Yogurt

Makes 2 cups

This dried fruit compote will keep in the fridge for a week. Add more water if you would like a thinner sauce.

For the compote:

3 chai tea bags or 2 tablespoons loose chai tea
3 tablespoons honey
1/2 cup chopped dried apricots
1 cup chopped pitted prunes
1/2 cup chopped dried apple rings
1/2 cup raisins

To serve:

1 – 750g container Greek style yogurt
1/2 cup sliced or slivered unsalted almonds, toasted

Bring 2 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan. Turn off the heat, add the tea bags, and steep for 5 minutes. Strain and discard the tea bags.

Add the honey, apricots, prunes, apple rings and raisins to the saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the liquid thickens to a light syrup, 18 to 20 minutes. (It will thicken further as it cools.) Transfer to a bowl, cover, and chill for at least 4 hours and up to 3 days.

Serve the compote over the yogurt, topped with the toasted almonds.

Chia Seed Jam

Yield 2 Cups

This is an ideal recipe for when fresh berries are in season. However, if you want berry jam in the winter frozen berries work just as well. The chia seeds in this recipe help to create the jelly-like consistency of the jam, while adding protein, fiber and omega-3 fatty acids. Most berries are naturally sweet so you really don't even need to add any sort of sweetener to this jam. But if your berries are a bit on the sour side you can add some maple syrup. There are no preservatives in chia seed jam so it is best consumed within a week. Basil seeds will provide the same jelling effect as chia seeds, however, unlike chia seeds, they cannot be consumed raw and must be soaked before eating.

2 cups strawberries, raspberries or blueberries, fresh or frozen
¼ cup maple syrup, optional
2 tablespoons chia or basil seeds
Water as needed

If using fresh berries wash and hull the strawberries, check blueberries for stems. Thaw frozen berries. Chop berries if they're large.

Place chopped berries, chia or basil seeds and maple syrup, if using, into a blender, food processor or deep mixing bowl.

Use a handheld immersion blender or blend on high speed until preferred jam consistency is obtained. Add water one tablespoon at a time as needed if the jam is too thick.

Pour the berry mixture into a small saucepan and heat over medium heat until the jam comes to a boil.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 5-7 minutes, or until the jam starts to thicken.

Remove from heat and immediately pour into a clean jar or container.

Allow the jam to cool completely and then store in the fridge for up to one week.

Easy Banana Pancakes

Serves 4-6

A quick and easy family favourite with no white flour! If your bananas aren't very ripe you can add the optional tablespoon of honey to sweeten the batter a bit more. The pancakes cook more evenly when they're kept small.

2 very ripe bananas
4 eggs, beaten
1/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 tablespoon honey, optional
Pinch kosher salt
1 teaspoon butter or sunflower oil

Preheat oven to 300°F. Place a cooling rack over a baking sheet and place in the oven.

Peel the bananas and break them up into several big chunks in a large mixing bowl. Use a potato masher to thoroughly mash the banana until no large lumps remain.

Stir in the beaten eggs, baking powder, vanilla, honey and salt. Mix until the ingredients are thoroughly combined. The batter will be very thin.

Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium heat. Add the butter or oil.

Drop about 2 tablespoons of the batter on the hot griddle. The batter should sizzle immediately — if not, turn up the heat slightly.

Cook the pancakes for about 1 minute until the bottoms are lightly browned and golden

Gently and slowly flip the pancakes. Cook the pancakes for another minute or so, until the other side is also golden and brown

When the first batch has finished transfer them to the rack in the oven and continue cooking the rest of the batter.

Serve warm with pure maple syrup.

Easy Chunky Applesauce

Serves 4

This applesauce is very easy to make and versatile. Serve it over plain yogurt for breakfast or with pork chops.

10 sweet apples, like golden delicious or Macintosh

1/4 cup water

Sweetener to taste such as honey or maple syrup

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Peel and core apples and cut into 1-inch chunks.

Microwave: Place apples and water in a microwave dish. Cover and cook at high power for 5 minutes. Remove dish from microwave, stir and check apples for doneness. Cook another 3-4 minutes if desired.

Stovetop: Place the apples and water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat then reduce the heat to low. Simmer until the apples are tender, about 20 minutes.

Lightly mash apples with a potato masher. Add sweetener and cinnamon to taste.

Mini Crustless Quiches

Yield 24 individual quiches

This is a great recipe for any brunch gathering. The majority of the work can be done the night before. In the morning, just whisk together the egg mixture then stir into the vegetables and bake. You can also customize the ingredients, such as omitting the bacon and adding ham, or using only vegetables. Leftovers can be reheated for several seconds in the microwave (time will vary depending on your microwave), or a few minutes in a preheated oven or toaster oven.

1 – 375-gram package low sodium bacon
18 large eggs
1 cup half and half or milk
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 cup broccoli, finely chopped
2 red bell peppers, finely chopped
1/2 cup green onion, finely chopped
1 1/2 cups cheddar, or other cheese, divided

Dice the bacon and cook in a large skillet until crispy. Drain and set aside.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Generously spray 2 - 12 cup muffin tins with non-stick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, cream, salt, and pepper. Add the finely chopped vegetables and herbs to the bowl with the eggs and stir to combine. Stir in half of the cheese, and all of the bacon.

Using an ice-cream scoop or 1/4 cup measure, scoop the mixture into the prepared muffin pan. Fill each to about 1/4 inch from the top, then sprinkle a small amount of reserved cheese over the top.

Place in the oven, and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the egg is fully set and the cheese has just started to turn golden on top and the quiches are lightly puffed.

Remove from the oven and let cool for 5 minutes before running a knife around each muffin, and gently removing from the pan. A soup spoon works well for this. Enjoy while warm or let cool completely before storing in an airtight container in the fridge.

Spring Frittata Squares

Serves 8-12

Asparagus is abundant in the stores and farmer's markets in the spring. If you're not planning to eat your asparagus immediately, wrap the ends of the spears in damp paper towels, place in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and serve it within a couple of days. This recipe makes a lot of servings. If you don't want as much you can cut the recipe in half and bake in a 9" x 9" square pan or a 9" round cake pan. Any leftovers are good cold or can be reheated gently in the oven or in the microwave on low power.

2 large leeks, chopped (white and pale green parts only)
1 – 325g bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces
1 – 227g package white mushrooms, sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 cup fresh chives, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
12 large eggs
1 cup milk
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (half a 450g block) or a blend of cheeses like Swiss or Gouda
1/4 cup minced parsley, optional

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish thoroughly with non-stick cooking spray.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and when it shimmers add the leeks. Sauté for 4 minutes then add the asparagus and mushrooms. Season lightly with salt and pepper and continue cooking until the vegetables are tender, about 5 additional minutes. Spread vegetables in the bottom of the baking dish and allow them to cool. Sprinkle the chopped chives over the cooled vegetables. The frittata can be prepared to this point and refrigerated overnight.

When ready to serve beat together the eggs and milk with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in the Parmesan cheese and 1-1/2 cups of the cheddar cheese. Pour the egg mixture over the cooled vegetables. Scatter the remaining 1/2 cup of cheddar cheese over the top of the mixture. Bake until eggs are set in the middle and the edges are golden brown about 25-35 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing. Garnish with parsley if desired.

Vegetable Frittata Squares

Serves 8-12

A frittata is usually cooked on the stove top in a large skillet. This variation allows you to prepare most of the ingredients ahead of time and is very easy to serve to a crowd. Leftovers are good cold or can be reheated gently in the oven or microwave.

2 – 227-gram (8 oz.) packages large leaf spinach **OR**
1 – 312 gram (11oz.) package baby spinach
1 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and shredded
1 medium or 2 small onions, finely diced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 stem broccoli, florets finely chopped. Trim the end of the stem, peel and finely dice
2 small red bell peppers, seeded and finely diced
1/4 cup fresh basil, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste
12 large eggs
1 cup milk
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (half a 450g block)

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish thoroughly with non-stick cooking spray.

Bring a kettle of water to a boil. Wash the spinach well, if necessary, and add to a large bowl. Cover the spinach with boiling water and let sit for 2 to 3 minutes, until it is just wilted. Drain the spinach in a colander and rinse well with cold water. When it is cool enough to handle, squeeze out as much excess water as possible. You want the spinach to be as dry as possible. Chop your spinach into bite sized pieces and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, broccoli and red peppers. Season the mixture well with salt and pepper. Sauté until the vegetables are softened and beginning to dry, about 5 minutes. Spread veggies in the bottom of the baking dish and allow them to cool. Spread the cooled spinach and chopped basil evenly over the cooked vegetables. The frittata can be prepared to this point and refrigerated overnight.

When ready to serve beat together the eggs and milk with salt and pepper in a large bowl. Stir in 1-1/2 cups of the shredded cheese. Pour the egg mixture over the cooled vegetables. Scatter the remaining 1/2 cup of cheese over the top of the mixture. Bake until eggs are set in the middle and the edges and golden brown about 25-35 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing.

CHICKEN

“All-in-One” Lemon Chicken Dinner

Serves 4-6

This is a fast way to get dinner on the table with very little clean up. Everything is cooked in one dish. Instead of a whole chicken you could also use chicken breasts or thighs. The cooking time will be reduced to about 45 minutes if you use pieces instead of a whole bird.

1 whole chicken
1 lemon, very thinly sliced
12 ounces fresh green beans, about 1 big handful per every 2 people
8 - 10 small potatoes, white or red skinned, quartered
1/4 cup olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon mixed Italian seasoning
1 tablespoon honey
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pre-heat oven to 400°F. Spray a 9” x 13” baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Check the lemon slices for any pits and remove. Place them in a single layer in the bottom of the baking dish.

In a small bowl whisk together the olive oil, garlic and Italian seasoning. Toss the green beans in the oil mixture and, then using tongs, remove them from the oil and place on the lemons. Add the potatoes to the bowl and toss again. Remove the potatoes with tongs and add to the green beans. Season the vegetables lightly with salt and pepper. Leave any remaining oil in the bowl. Whisk the tablespoon of honey into the oil mixture and set aside.

Roast the vegetables for 15 minutes while you prepare the chicken. Place the whole chicken on a poultry cutting board. Turn the chicken onto the breast side and, using sharp kitchen shears, cut away the back bone. Discard the back or save it for stock. Turn the chicken over and using your hands, press down firmly on the breast bone to flatten the chicken as much as possible. Remove the pan from the oven after the 15 minutes has elapsed. Turn the chicken legs out and, using tongs, place the chicken on top of the vegetables. Season the chicken lightly with salt and pepper and return the pan to the oven. Roast the chicken for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, brush the chicken with the honey and oil mixture. Return to the oven and roast for an additional 30-40 minutes or until an instant read thermometer registers 165°F in the breast meat and 175°F in the thigh meat. Let rest 10 minutes before serving.

Asparagus Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Serves 6

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts are great for an easy weeknight meal. This dish is easy enough for mid-week but also is a great dish for a dinner party. The cream cheese mixture can be prepared up to a day ahead. The chicken can be prepared and refrigerated up to 6 hours ahead, but you may need to add 7-10 minutes to the cooking time. Always check the internal temperature of any chicken dish before serving.

6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 – 250g package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup minced fresh parsley, divided
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
2 green onions, minced
1 – 325g bunch fresh asparagus
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
1-2 jarred roasted red bell peppers, rinsed and patted dry
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon olive oil or melted butter
1 teaspoon low sodium soy sauce

Pre-heat the oven to 375°F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl combine the cream cheese, parmesan cheese, 2 tablespoons of parsley, basil and green onions. Mix well.

Break the woody ends off the asparagus and trim them to fit the length of the chicken breast. You should have 2-3 pieces of asparagus for each piece of chicken.

Cut the roasted red pepper into thin strips and set aside. Combine the honey, olive oil and soy sauce in a small bowl. Set aside.

Place a chicken breast on your cutting board and, with your hand flat on top of it, use a sharp knife to slice into one side of the breast, starting at the thicker end and ending at the thin point. Be careful not to cut all the way through to the other side. Open out the breast so that it resembles a butterfly.

Lay a sheet of plastic wrap over the chicken and pound the chicken lightly with a rolling pin or the flat side of a meat tenderizer to create an even thickness. Repeat with remaining chicken.

Season the inside of the chicken lightly with some salt and black pepper. Divide the cream cheese equally over each breast and spread evenly. Place the asparagus on the cream cheese and fold the chicken over top.

Place the chicken on your lined baking sheet and season the top with more pepper. Brush the meat with the olive oil mixture. Arrange the red pepper slices in a nice pattern over the top.

Bake the chicken for 25-30 minutes or until it reaches an internal temperature of 165°F in the thickest part of the chicken breast. Garnish with the additional parsley.

Baked Chicken Fingers

Serves 4 - 6

Frozen chicken strips are very convenient but unfortunately they're very high in sodium, fat and additives. It only takes a few more minutes to cut up fresh chicken, dip it in eggs and bread crumbs or ground almonds. Ground almonds are available in the baking section of most grocery stores and at Bulk Barn. In the end, you've got a meal your kids will love and you know exactly what's in it. You can get about 5 chicken strips from an average size chicken breast.

3 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 eggs
1 tablespoon water or milk
1 1/2 cups panko or regular whole wheat bread crumbs
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt or seasoning salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon olive oil

Pre-heat oven to 425°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
If using whole chicken breasts cut the chicken into 4 or 5 strips.

In a shallow dish, beat eggs and water.

In another shallow dish, mix the bread crumbs with the seasonings. Drizzle the oil over the crumbs and mix well. Dip the chicken into egg mixture, then coat with bread crumb mixture. Place on cookie sheet.

Bake 15 to 20 minutes, turning once, until chicken is no longer pink in center and coating is golden brown. Serve with a dipping sauce made from equal parts honey and mustard.

Gluten Free Option

Substitute 2 cups finely ground almonds (almond flour) for the panko bread crumbs

Reduce oven temperature to 375°F. Baking time is the same.

Maple Leaf Prime Chicken Strip Ingredients: Chicken, Water, Toasted Wheat Crumbs, Wheat Flour, Modified Corn Starch, Corn Flour, Wheat Gluten, Salt, Soy Protein Product, Spice, Sodium Phosphate, Dried Garlic, Baking Powder, Yeast Extract, Vegetable And/Or Palm And/Or Palm Kernel Oil Shortening, Defatted Soy Flour, Garlic Powder, Onion Powder, Flavour, Vegetable Oil, Guar Gum, Dextrose, Citric Acid. Browned In Vegetable Oil.

Baked Za'atar Chicken with Mint Yogurt Sauce

Serves 4-6

Za'atar is a blend of spices and herbs that is commonly used in eastern Mediterranean cuisine. It is very easy to make at home and is very versatile. You can use it to season chicken or fish or stir it into yogurt to make a quick and easy dip for pitas or veggies. The main ingredient in za'atar is sumac which has a fresh, lemony flavor. The sumac that grows in the Mediterranean is a different variety than the staghorn sumac that grows in North America but when the bright red drupes of both trees have been dried and ground the flavor of the resulting spice is similar.

6 – 8 bone-in, skin on chicken thighs or breasts, trimmed of excess fat
1 tablespoon za'atar (recipe follows)
2 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon olive oil
2 large red onions, peeled, halved and thickly sliced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
Chopped fresh parsley

Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Combine 1 tablespoon of za'atar with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Set aside.

Pat the chicken thighs dry with paper towels and season lightly with salt and pepper. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add the 1 teaspoon of olive oil. Place the chicken thighs in the hot pan, skin side down, and sear the chicken until the skin is crispy and browned, about 5 minutes. Turn the chicken and sear for 3 more minutes. Using tongs, transfer the chicken, skin side up, to a plate. Reduce the heat to medium-low.

Pour off any excess fat from the pan and add the red onions. Return the chicken to the pan and arrange on top of the onions. Brush the chicken with the za'atar oil. Place the skillet in the oven and roast until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 175°F for thighs, 165°F for breasts, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with fresh parsley to garnish. Serve with mint yogurt sauce and the roasted onions.

Za'atar Spice Blend

The three basic ingredients for za'atar are sumac, thyme and toasted sesame seeds. Oregano and marjoram are also added to some blends. Oregano is used here. You can make as much or as little as you need, just keep the ratios the same. A "part" can be whatever measurement you like, tablespoons, teaspoons or even cups. Combine all ingredients in a jar and shake to combine. Or pulse ingredients together in a food processor. Store them in a cool, dry place.

1-part thyme
1-part sumac
1-part toasted sesame seeds
1/2-part oregano

Balsamic Chicken with Peppers, Mushrooms and Tomatoes

Serves 8

Chicken really is your best buy! Most weeks you can find bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs or legs at a great price even if it isn't advertised. Having several recipes for chicken in your repertoire can help you save money on your weekly grocery bill. Chicken thighs are easy to prepare and are always flavourful and moist. This spin on Chicken Cacciatore is very simple to prepare because you don't have to brown the chicken before baking. The results are a tasty sauce and chicken with a crispy, well browned skin.

10-12 bone-in chicken thighs or a mix of thighs and drumsticks
2 medium red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 medium yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into 1-inch pieces
1-pound mushrooms (button, cremini, or other), cleaned and cut into quarters
1 – 796ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes, drained
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary or 1 tablespoon dried
1/3 cup + 2 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1/4 cup honey

Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Trim any excess fat from the chicken thighs and set aside.

In a 9" x 13" glass baking dish, toss the peppers, mushrooms, and tomatoes and rosemary together. Whisk the olive oil and vinegar together in a measuring cup, pour over the vegetables then sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of the salt, and freshly ground pepper. Toss until well coated.

Place the chicken pieces, skin side down, in the vegetable mixture so that they get coated in the oil and vinegar then turn them over, so they are skin side up. Drizzle the chicken with the remaining 2

tablespoons of oil and 1 teaspoon of salt and more ground pepper. Finally, drizzle the chicken skin with the honey.

Bake until the chicken is well browned and cooked through, reaching an internal temperature of at least 175°F, about 50 to 60 minutes.

Braised Chicken with Onions and Bacon

Serves 4-6

Braising is a combination-cooking method that uses both wet and dry heat. The food is first seared at a high temperature, then finished in a covered pot or dish at a lower temperature in a flavourful liquid. Chicken thighs and legs are also great for braising because they stand up well to low and slow cooking.

1/4 cup olive oil
8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs or legs
6 slices low sodium bacon, cut into small pieces
6 small onions, peeled and quartered
4 medium carrots, cut into 1" chunks
1 fennel bulb, trimmed and cored, cut into 1" pieces
1 garlic clove, minced or put through a press
1 teaspoon dried thyme
2 cups low sodium chicken broth
1 bay leaf
1 lemon, zested and juiced (about 3 tablespoons of juice)
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pre-heat the oven to 300°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Sear the chicken in the hot pan, starting with the skin side down, flipping once, until the meat is well browned on both sides, about 10 minutes. Transfer the chicken to the prepared baking dish.

Cook the bacon in the skillet until well browned, about 5 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to the baking dish and distribute evenly over the chicken. Pour off any excess fat and carefully wipe out the pan with a paper towel.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in the skillet and cook the onions, carrots and fennel until the vegetables are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and dried thyme and cook for an additional 1 to 2 minutes.

Add the broth, bay leaf, lemon juice, zest and honey to the pan. Bring the mixture to a boil and scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen the brown bits. Boil until the mixture has thickened slightly then pour over the chicken along with the remaining broth. Cover the dish tightly with foil and transfer to the oven. Bake for 35-45 minutes or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 175°F. Sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve.

Cheesy Chicken & Broccoli Casserole

Serves 6-8

Casseroles are a traditional winter comfort food, but many call for canned condensed soups as a base. These canned soups are very high in sodium and with a few substitutions you can make a hearty casserole with fewer additives. If you don't have extra thick yogurt on hand, you can easily make "yogurt cheese". Place 3 cups of regular plain yogurt in a wire strainer lined with 2 or 3 coffee filters. Place the strainer over a bowl and place another coffee filter over the top of the yogurt. Put a small plate over the filter and a can on the top of the plate. Store in the fridge until the liquid has drained from the yogurt and it has thickened. The longer you let it drain the thicker it gets.

1 cup brown rice
2 cups low sodium chicken stock
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thinly sliced
1 large broccoli bunch, cut tops into small flowerets, peel and dice the stems
1 medium yellow onion, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced or put through a press
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon dried thyme
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 cups extra thick full-fat Greek yogurt
2 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 lemon, zested and juiced (about 3 tablespoons juice)
1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pre-heat oven to 375°F. Spray a 9" x 13" casserole dish with non-stick cooking spray and set aside. Bring the chicken stock to a boil in a medium saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Add the rice and return to the boil. Cover and cook rice according to package directions, about 30-45 minutes. When the rice has finished cooking add the broccoli flowerets to the top of the rice. Do not stir in and return the cover to the pot. Let the broccoli steam with the cooked rice while you prepare the rest of the casserole.

Place a large skillet over medium high heat and add the olive oil. Add the sliced chicken and cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the onion, garlic, carrots, diced broccoli stems and dried

thyme. Season the mixture lightly with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5-7 minutes or until vegetables have softened.

Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the yogurt, 2 cups of cheese, lemon juice and zest, parsley, rice and broccoli. Stir until fully combined and evenly distributed. Pour mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup shredded cheese over the top of the casserole. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until the mixture is bubbly and the cheese is melted and lightly golden brown. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving.

Chicken Breasts with Peppers and Zucchini

Serves 4-6

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts are a simple option for a quick supper on a busy weeknight. If your family doesn't like zucchini you could substitute some frozen green beans or sugar snap peas. This recipe can also be made with boneless pork chops. They will cook in about the same amount of time. A combination of low sodium chicken and beef broth will add more flavour when using pork chops, but feel free to use whatever you have on hand, as long as you have a total of 3/4 of a cup. Always cook chicken breasts to a minimum of 165°F and check with an instant read thermometer.

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large or 2 medium yellow onions, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
4 bell peppers, any colour, seeded and cut into strips
1 large or 2 small zucchini, cut into 1/2" rounds
3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
3/4 cup low sodium chicken broth
1 1/2 teaspoons mixed Italian seasoning

Pat the chicken breasts dry with paper towels and season lightly with salt and pepper. Cut each chicken breast in half lengthwise to make two cutlets. This will allow them to cook quickly and evenly.

Heat the olive oil in a heavy skillet over medium high heat and add the chicken. Do not overcrowd the pan and cook in batches if necessary. Cook the breasts for 5 minutes on each side, until nicely browned. Remove the meat to a side plate and keep warm.

Add the onion and garlic to the pan and quickly sauté so the garlic doesn't burn. Add the bell peppers and the zucchini. Sprinkle with the mixed Italian seasoning. Cook for 2-3 minutes then add the Worcestershire sauce and broth to the skillet. Scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen the browned bits. Boil the sauce and reduce slightly. Return the chicken to the pan and cook for an additional 5-10 minutes until the chicken is cooked through and reads 165°F on an instant read thermometer. Turn the chicken several times while it cooks in the sauce. Serve with brown and/or wild rice.

Chicken Thighs with Mango–Avocado Salsa

Serves 6-8

Scoring the chicken thighs before cooking helps to add flavour to the meat and encourages quicker cooking. You could also cook the chicken on the barbecue or substitute chicken breasts for the thighs. The mango salsa would also compliment pork tenderloin or salmon filets. The salsa can be prepared ahead of time. Combine all the ingredients except the avocado. Add just before serving to avoid the avocado turning brown.

For the Chicken:

10 - 12 large skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup freshly squeezed lime juice (about 2 limes)
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon honey (or to taste)
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon kosher salt

Mango Avocado Salsa:

4 small (Ataulfo) or 2 large (Red) mangos, peeled and diced
1 ripe avocado, peeled and diced
1 green onion or shallot, finely chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced (optional)
1 tablespoon honey (or more to taste)
Juice and zest of 1 lime
1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro
Extra chopped cilantro, to garnish
Red chili flakes, to garnish

Preheat oven to 450°. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Whisk olive oil, lime juice, garlic, honey, cumin and salt together. Place chicken thighs, skin side up, on a cutting board dedicated to chicken only and slash each thigh crosswise twice across the bone. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Place in the prepared baking dish and brush with sauce, pushing into the slashes. Bake until the skin is crisp, and an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of thigh registers 175°F, about 25 minutes. Set the oven to broil and cook for an additional 2–3 minutes for crisper skin, if desired. Let the chicken rest for 5–10 minutes before serving.

Prepare the mango salsa: Combine the mango, avocado, onion, red pepper and optional jalapeno in a bowl. Stir in the lime juice and honey. Fold in chopped cilantro. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve the chicken topped with the salsa, garnished with extra cilantro and red chili flakes if desired.

Chicken with Vidalia Onions and Thyme

Serves 4-6

Although there may not be a lot available in the garden in the early spring, perennial herbs such as chives and thyme are ready to use. The following recipe makes use of these early spring herbs. The flavour from herbs grown in your garden is more intense than fresh herbs from the grocery store. Snip what you need shortly before you begin cooking to get the most flavour.

8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons honey
2 Vidalia onions, cut in half lengthwise, thinly sliced
1 cup low sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
1 tablespoon cold butter, cut into pieces
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives

Pat the chicken dry with paper towels and season lightly with salt and pepper.

Heat the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and drizzle with the honey. Cook the chicken until golden and cooked through, about 4 minutes per side or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 175°F. Remove to a plate and cover to keep warm.

Add the onion to skillet. Sauté over medium-high heat until lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Add broth, vinegar and thyme. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil; and cook, stirring often, until the onions are tender, about 5 minutes.

Turn off the heat and stir in the butter until it's melted. Spoon the onions over chicken.

Garnish with the chopped chives.

Maple Glazed Chicken Thighs

Serves 6-8

Maple syrup is can be used for more than just pancakes. It can add a nice sweetness to many dishes, and pairs very well with chicken, pork and winter root vegetables. Remember that it's never a good idea to wash chicken in the sink. It just increases your risk of food borne illness. Instead just pat your poultry dry with paper towels before seasoning. Dry meat will always brown better than wet and have a nicer, crispier crust.

1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, or more to taste
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger
8 chicken thighs, bone-in, skin-on
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons sliced green onions

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In a small saucepan combine the maple syrup, apple cider vinegar, orange juice, soy sauce, garlic, ginger and pepper flakes. Place over medium-high heat and bring the mixture to a boil. Cook until it reduces to 1/4 cup, about 5 minutes. Set aside.

Trim the chicken thighs of excess fat. Pat dry with paper towels and season lightly with salt and pepper. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Place the chicken thighs, skin side down in the skillet and cook until the skin is nicely browned, about 5 minutes. Turn the chicken and brown on the other side for 2 minutes. Remove the chicken to the prepared baking dish.

Pour the reduced maple mixture over the thighs, and using tongs, turn them to fully coat. Place the baking dish with chicken thighs, uncovered, into the oven, and bake for 40 minutes or until a meat thermometer reads 175°F. Turn the chicken thighs with to coat with the sauce 2 or 3 times during the last 20 minutes of baking.

Let the chicken rest for 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with the minced green onions. Spoon the pan sauce over the chicken if desired.

Maple Mustard Chicken Thighs

Serves 4-6

Chicken thighs are an inexpensive cut that can stand long, slow cooking, unlike chicken breasts which are more expensive and dry out very quickly. This recipe doesn't have many ingredients but lots of flavour. Spoon the pan sauce remaining sauce over the chicken when serving.

1/2 cup maple syrup or 1/4 cup each maple syrup and honey
1/4 cup Dijon mustard, regular or grainy
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
6-8 bone in, skin on chicken thighs

Pre-heat to 350°F and spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Whisk the maple syrup, mustard and vinegar together in measuring cup.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Place the chicken thighs skin side down and cook until the skin is crispy and golden brown.

Transfer the chicken to the baking dish and arrange in a single layer. Pour the sauce over the top.

Bake until the chicken is cooked through and registers an internal temperature of 175°F, about 45 to 60 minutes. Serve immediately.

Roasted Chicken Thighs with Asparagus and Sun-Dried Tomatoes

Serves 4-6

A different way to serve fresh asparagus when it's in season!

1 - 314 ml jar sun dried tomatoes
1 large bunch fresh asparagus
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
8 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs
1 small onion or shallot, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced or put through a garlic press
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1 cup low sodium chicken broth
1 cup half and half cream
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced

Pre-heat oven to 425°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminium foil. Drain the sundried tomatoes in a wire strainer over a bowl. Reserve the oil and slice the tomatoes into thin strips. Set aside.

Wash the asparagus well and snap the woody ends. Cut the asparagus stalks into 3 or 4 pieces each and place on the baking sheet. Toss with 1-2 tablespoons of the reserve tomato oil and season lightly with salt and pepper. Push the asparagus to one end of the sheet and set aside.

Heat large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons of the tomato oil to the pan. Pat the chicken thighs dry with a paper towel and season lightly with salt and pepper. Place the chicken in the skillet, skin side down. Cook until the skin becomes golden and crispy - about 5 minutes. When the chicken skin is done, flip chicken over to the other side, using tongs. Cook for an additional 5 minutes. Remove chicken from the skillet and place onto the baking sheet with the asparagus, skin-side up.

Roast the chicken and the asparagus in the pre-heated oven for 15-20 minutes or until the chicken is completely cooked through and registers 175°F on an instant read thermometer. The asparagus should be soft but not mushy.

While the chicken is roasting, prepare the sauce. Pour out the excess fat until about 1 tablespoon remains. Add the onions, garlic and the sliced tomatoes. Cook for about 1 minute, stirring constantly. Stir in the chicken broth, cream and paprika. Bring to the sauce to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the mozzarella. Continue stirring until the cheese has completely melted and the sauce is creamy. Hold the sauce over low heat until the chicken has finished roasting.

Once the chicken is cooked, add the chicken and asparagus to the sauce. Turn the chicken and asparagus with tongs to coat well with the sauce. Garnish with freshly chopped parsley. Serve with roasted potatoes and a green salad.

Sweet and Sour Chicken with Pineapple and Veggies

Serves 8

This recipe makes a lot and is good to feed a crowd. It also freezes well, but make sure it is completely cool before you put it in the freezer. Having all the ingredients sliced and ready to go before you start cooking helps you put the dish together quickly.

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or canola oil
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 – 1-inch piece of ginger root, peeled and minced
- 2 green or red bell peppers, whatever colours you like
- 2 medium carrots, peeled
- 3 medium onions, peeled and halved
- 1 – 200-gram bag snow peas
- 1 - 398 ml (14 oz.) can pineapple tidbits or chunks, drained, juice reserved
- 1 1/4 cups ketchup
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons minute tapioca

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. First, prepare the vegetables. Sliced the carrots on the diagonal and set aside in a large bowl. Cut the bell peppers into good sized chunks. Slice the onions lengthwise (pole to pole) and add to the vegetable bowl. Lastly, remove the stems and strings from the snow peas and cut in half.

Combine the minced garlic and ginger into another small bowl and set aside. Cut the chicken breasts into bite sized pieces.

Drain the pineapple chunks and reserve the juice in a two-cup liquid measuring cup. Set the pineapple aside. Add the ketchup, honey, vinegar and soy sauce to the pineapple juice. Add enough water to bring the liquid ingredients up to 2 cups. Sprinkle the tapioca over the top then whisk to combine.

Add the oil to a large skillet over high heat. Add the minced garlic and ginger to the cold oil. When it begins to sizzle and becomes fragrant add the chicken. Brown the chicken until it is no longer pink. Add the vegetables to the pan and stir to combine.

Pour the sauce ingredients over the chicken and vegetables and bring to a boil. Pour the mixture into a 9" x 13" baking dish and cover with foil. Bake for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Remove the dish from the oven, uncover and stir in the reserved pineapple chunks. Return the dish to the oven and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes.

White Turkey or Chicken Chili

Serves 6

This recipe can also be made in a slow cooker. Brown the ingredients as directed in the first step then add the beans, corn and only 3 cups of broth to the crock pot along with the browned meat and vegetables. Stir in 2 tablespoons minute tapioca to help thicken the chilli. Cook on low 4-6 hours or on high 3-4 hours. This chilli can also be doubled and frozen. Just make sure to cool it thoroughly before putting it in the freezer.

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large white onion or 2 medium yellow onions, chopped
2 stalks celery, diced (about 1/2 cup)
1 jalapeno pepper, finely chopped (seeded with white veins removed if you don't want it too hot)
3 cloves garlic, minced
500 grams (1 pound) ground turkey or chicken
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1 bay leaf
Ground cayenne pepper to taste
Ground white pepper to taste
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can white kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 1/2 cups frozen whole kernel corn
4 cups low or no sodium chicken broth

Optional Garnish:

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt or sour cream

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves

1 lime, cut into wedges

Heat the olive oil in large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Cook the onion and celery until softened, about 2-3 minutes. Add the minced garlic, jalapeno pepper and ground turkey. Cook until turkey is no longer pink, breaking up the meat with a spoon. Add the cumin, oregano, cinnamon, coriander, salt, cayenne and white pepper. Sauté for 5 more minutes.

Add the chicken broth, beans and corn to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, for 25 minutes. Remove bay leaf. Taste and adjust seasonings.

Garnish with cilantro, a squeeze of lime juice and a dollop of plain yogurt or sour cream.

DIPS and DRESSINGS

IDHC House Dressing - Balsamic Vinaigrette

Yield 1 Cup

This is a simple salad dressing that keeps well in the fridge for up to 2 weeks. Bring to room temperature before using. Good olive oil will solidify when it's cold. Shake well before using.

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Combine all ingredients in a squeeze bottle or jar. Shake well to combine and taste for seasoning. If you like a sweeter dressing, add more honey. If you like a sharper dressing, add more vinegar or mustard.

You can make this recipe your own by experimenting with different acids, such as red or white wine vinegar or lemon juice and different sweeteners, like maple syrup. You could use different mustards too, like coarse grain or honey mustard.

Blue Cheese Dip

Serves 4

This recipe has a very similar taste to restaurant style blue cheese but with a lot less fat. To make a salad dressing, add a little buttermilk or use regular plain yogurt, not Greek style.

1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese
2 tablespoons olive oil mayonnaise
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon honey, optional
Juice of 1/2 lemon
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Let stand for 30 minutes in the refrigerator for the flavours to combine. Serve with wings, celery and carrots.

Easy Pico de Gallo

Serves 4

Use this easy salsa to top tacos or as a dip for tortilla chips. A perfect way to use tomatoes when they're in season.

3-4 small tomatoes, seeded and diced
1/4 cup finely diced red or white onion
1 small jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely diced (optional)
Juice of 2 limes
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and serve.

Eggless Caesar Salad Dressing

Makes 1 Cup

A traditional homemade Caesar salad dressing will usually contain raw eggs. Since there is a risk of salmonella with raw eggs this dressing is a safe alternative.

3/4 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons olive oil mayonnaise
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
4 garlic cloves, minced
1/3 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
3 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

Measure the olive oil into a 1 cup measuring cup.

Add the remaining ingredients to a deep bowl or 4 cup measuring cup. Blend with a handheld immersion blender, until the mixture is smooth and creamy.

Slowly drizzle the oil into the bowl while the immersion blender is running. It may be easier to put your bowl or measuring cup on a damp tea towel to hold it in place. Do not pour the oil in too quickly as that can break the emulsification process. Just drizzle it slowly until all the oil has been added.

Store the Caesar salad dressing in the fridge for up to a week.

Garlic-Chive Greek Yogurt Dip

Makes 2 ½ Cups

This dip is even better if it stands overnight in the refrigerator.

1 - 500 ml tub plain Greek yogurt (about 2 cups)
1 medium clove garlic, minced or pressed
1/2 teaspoon kosher sea salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/4 teaspoon paprika
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons chopped chives
1 tablespoon minced parsley

In a bowl mix all ingredients until well combined. Taste for seasoning and adjust if necessary.

Chill before serving. Serve with assorted vegetables or crackers.

Horseradish-Yogurt Sauce

Makes 3/4 Cup

This is a quick and easy sauce that can be made from ingredients you have on hand. Adjust the amount of horseradish to taste. It also goes well with grilled steak or roasted potatoes.

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
1 – 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish (not creamed horseradish sauce)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

Stir together and serve with roast beef.

Maple Shallot Salad Dressing

Yield 2 Cups

This recipe has been adapted from the Healthy Roots Recipe Collection.

1 cup sunflower oil
1/2 cup cider vinegar
1 medium shallot, finely chopped
1/2 cup maple syrup
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Combine all the ingredients in a jar and shake to combine. If you want a smooth dressing, combine the ingredients in a 4-cup measuring cup or a deep bowl. Blend with an handheld immersion blender until the dressing is emulsified and smooth.

The dressing will keep in the refrigerator for 1 week.

Mint Yogurt Sauce

The sauce can be made up to a day ahead and kept in the refrigerator. Use it as a sauce for chicken or fish or as a dip for vegetables or pita bread.

1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint
1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 teaspoon za'atar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Kosher salt and black pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper only if needed.

Raw Carrot Hummus

Makes 1 to 1 ½ cups

This dip is nice alternative to regular hummus and is a great dip for veggies or pita chips. Tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds and can be found in most grocery stores.

4 medium carrots
4 tablespoons tahini
Juice from 2 lemons
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1 small clove garlic, pressed
Olive oil as needed

Peel and roughly chop the carrots.

Add carrots and garlic to food processor and process until finely chopped. Add the tahini and mix until incorporated. Add the lemon juice and salt to taste. Continue blending and drizzle in olive oil until desired creaminess is achieved. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.

Strawberry Salsa

Serves 12, 1/4 cup per serving

This unusual combination makes a delicious summer salsa when local strawberries are at their peak. This recipe was adapted from Healthy McGill. Try it with grilled chicken or as a dip for tortilla chips.

1 cup diced strawberries
1 large tomato, seeded and diced
1/2 cup minced red onion
1/3 cup frozen corn, defrosted or kernels cut from 1 fresh ear of corn
1/4 cup finely chopped cilantro
1 small jalapeño pepper, very finely diced, seeds and white membranes removed
Juice and zest of one lime

In a large bowl, combine strawberries, red onion, corn, hot pepper, cilantro and lime.

Mix well.

Add ground black pepper to taste.

Tzatziki (Greek Yogurt and Cucumber Sauce)

Makes 2 Cups

This is best prepared a few hours before serving so the flavours have a chance to blend. Serve with souvlaki chicken or use a dip for pita or naan bread.

1 English cucumber, peeled and grated
1 tablespoon kosher salt for salting cucumber
1 1/2 cups Greek Yogurt (or regular plain yogurt, strained)
Juice of one lemon (about 3 tablespoons)
1 garlic clove, pressed
1 tablespoon very finely chopped fresh dill or 1 teaspoon dried dill
1 tablespoon very finely chopped mint leaves
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste

If you don't have Greek yogurt you can thicken plain yogurt by straining. Place the yogurt into a wire strained lined with coffee filters. Place the strainer over a bowl and put in the refrigerator for up to four hours.

Grate cucumbers, then put in a wire strainer. Sprinkle the cucumbers with 1 tablespoon of salt. Let stand for 30 minutes to draw out water. Rinse, drain well and squeeze out as much excess moisture as possible.

Place the strained yogurt into a mixing bowl and combine with the cucumbers, pressed garlic, lemon juice, dill, mint and a few grinds of black pepper. Stir well to combine. Taste before adding any extra salt, then add salt only if needed. Place in refrigerator for at least two hours before serving so flavors can blend. (This resting time is very important.)

Yogurt and Herb Salad Dressing

Makes 1 1/4 cups

This is a very fresh dressing that tastes great on any type of salad. It doesn't keep in the fridge for too long so make half a recipe if you won't use it all right away. If you don't have an immersion blender you can stir the dressing ingredients together. You can add any fresh herbs you have on hand.

1 cup Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons olive oil mayonnaise
1 teaspoon lemon juice
2 tablespoons finely chopped green onions
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a 4-cup measure or a deep bowl. Mix with an immersion blender until smooth. If the mixture is too thick add a little milk or buttermilk.

Pour the dressing into a jar or squeeze bottle. Keep in the fridge until ready to serve and use within a day.

FISH

Maple Glazed Salmon

Serves 6-8

You can cut the amount of glaze in half if you're only cooking a few pieces.

1 salmon side, preferably wild
1 cup pure maple syrup
1 lemon, zest and juice
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1 tablespoon low sodium soy sauce
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter

Pre-heat the oven to 400°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

In a medium sauce pan combine the maple syrup, lemon juice and zest, grated ginger and soy sauce. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and allow the mixture to boil until it is reduced by half. Whisk in the cold butter.

Meanwhile, remove the skin from the salmon using a sharp knife. Portion the salmon into 6 or 8 pieces. Wash the salmon and pat dry. Place the salmon in the prepared baking dish and season lightly with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Brush with half the glaze.

Bake for 10 minutes then brush the salmon with the remaining glaze. Bake for an additional 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

Oven Baked Salmon with Pan-Cooked Mushrooms

Serves 8

If you would like a creamy sauce, omit the vinegar and stir in 1/4 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt to the mushroom sauce when you add the fresh herbs. Heat the sauce gently after the addition of the dairy and do not boil.

1 salmon side, preferably wild, skin removed, cut into 8 portions
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive
1 pounds assorted mushrooms, rinsed briefly and wiped dry
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 shallots, minced
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons chopped fresh assorted herbs (parsley, chives, dill or basil will work well)
2 tablespoons chicken or vegetable stock
2 teaspoons white balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons minced parsley

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Cover a baking sheet with parchment and spray with non-stick cooking spray.

Place the salmon portions on the baking sheet and season the filets lightly with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Place the salmon in the oven and bake until the fish flakes and white bubbles of protein appear on the surface, 10 to 20 minutes, depending on the size of the filets.

While the salmon is roasting, cook the mushrooms. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil.

When the oil is hot, add the mushrooms and cook, stirring or tossing in the pan, for a few minutes, until they begin to soften. Add the remaining tablespoon of oil, then turn the heat to medium. Add the shallots and garlic to the pan. Stir together, add salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, and cook, stirring often, for another 1 to 2 minutes, until the shallots and garlic have softened and the mixture is fragrant.

Add the stock and vinegar, cook, stirring often and scraping the bottom of the pan, until the stock has just about evaporated. Stir in fresh herbs. Taste and adjust seasonings. Remove from the heat.

Garnish salmon with minced parsley and serve the salmon with a spoonful of mushrooms on top or on the side.

Salmon Cakes

Serves 4-6

Canned salmon is a much cheaper alternative to fresh or frozen salmon and is just as high in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Stock up when it's on sale and keep it on hand in your pantry for a quick and tasty supper. If you are on a gluten free diet you can omit the breadcrumbs in the mixture and the optional coating. Just make sure to handle the salmon cakes carefully when you're cooking them, so they don't fall apart.

3 – 213g cans sockeye salmon, drained and cleaned
2 green onions or 1/2 small yellow onion, finely chopped
1/2 red bell pepper, finely chopped
Zest of 1 lemon
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey
1 egg
1/4 cup panko or regular bread crumbs, optional
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Optional Coating:

1/2 cup flour
1 egg
2 cups panko or regular bread crumbs
1-2 tablespoons olive or canola oil for frying

In a large mixing bowl combine the salmon, green onions, bell pepper, lemon juice and zest, mayonnaise, mustard, honey, egg and bread crumbs. Season well with salt and pepper. Mix well and form into 6 to 8 cakes. Loosely cover and refrigerate the cakes for 30 minutes to allow them to firm up.

At this point you can gently fry the cakes in a large skillet over medium heat with about 1 tablespoon of oil. Turn carefully when golden brown. Or for a crispy alternative gently dredge cakes in flour, then beaten egg, then panko or regular bread crumbs. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and fry until brown on both sides. Drain on a wire rack or paper towels.

Salmon Fajitas

Serves 6-8

This is an easy sheet pan variation on traditional fajitas. Keep the salmon fillet whole so it will stay moist while the veggies cook. If you have smaller salmon portions arrange them on the baking tray so that they're touching.

For the salmon:

1 – 300 – 350 gram skinless salmon fillet, preferably wild (about 3/4 pound)
3 bell peppers, any colour
1 large sweet onion
1/4 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon sugar, optional
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Sour Cream Sauce:

1/4 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons ketchup
1/4 teaspoon Mexican hot sauce

To serve:

6-8 small corn or whole wheat tortillas
1 avocado
1 lime

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line large sheet pan with foil or parchment

Slice the onions and peppers into strips and place in a large bowl. In a small bowl combine the olive oil with the chili powder, cumin, paprika, oregano, sugar, garlic powder.

Place salmon fillet on prepared sheet pan and brush with a small amount of the olive oil mixture. Season the fish to taste with salt and pepper.

Toss remaining olive oil mixture with the onions and peppers. Season the vegetables to taste with salt and pepper. Add to the sheet pan, spreading to surround the salmon.

Bake for 20 minutes until salmon is cooked and the veggies are soft with a crispy edge.

While the salmon is cooking combine the ingredients for the sauce and set aside. Peel and pit the avocado and cut into slices. Cut the lime into wedges.

After the salmon has cooked for 10 minutes, wrap the tortillas in foil and add to the oven to warm while the fish finishes cooking. Serve the fish in the warm tortillas, topped with avocado and the sour cream sauce. Squeeze lime over the top and add more hot sauce if desired.

Salmon with Bok Choy and Shitakes

Serves 4

The key to this recipe is “mise-en-place”. Have all of your ingredients ready to go before you begin cooking. Mirin is a sweet Japanese cooking wine that is available in most grocery stores. If you can’t find it substitute 1 tablespoon rice or cider vinegar plus ½ teaspoon of honey for each tablespoon of mirin. If you’re making rice, make sure it’s finished before you start cooking your fish. Rice can wait, fish can’t.

4 salmon filet portions, preferably wild
2 tablespoons sunflower oil, divided
8 baby Shanghai bok-choy
8 ounces shitake mushrooms
1 tablespoon grated ginger
1 medium clove garlic, minced or put through a garlic press
3 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
2 tablespoons mirin
1 tablespoon sesame oil

Place your garlic and ginger in a prep bowl together.

Wash the boy choy well – it can be gritty. Chop the boy choy in half width wise, separating the leaves from the stems. Chop the leaves and the stems into bite sized pieces and set aside in separate prep bowls.

Remove the stems from the shitake mushrooms and slice the lids. Discard the stems and set the sliced lids aside in a prep bowl with the bok-choy stems.

Combine the soy sauce, mirin and sesame oil in a small bowl and set aside.

Prepare your salmon filets by rinsing them under cold water. Remove the skin if desired or remove the scales from the skin with a knife or fish scaler if you want crispy skin. Dry the fish well and season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Place two large skillet on the stove, both over high heat. One pan needs to have a tight-fitting lid. Add one tablespoon of the oil to the skillet for the greens. Add the garlic and ginger and cook until just fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the boy choy stems and shitakes and cook until just softened, about 2 minutes. Add the boy choy leaves and the soy sauce, mirin and sesame oil. Cover the pan and reduce the heat to medium and allow to steam while you cook the fish.

Your second pan should be very hot by now. Add the second tablespoon of oil and the fish filets. Cook, flipping once, until desired doneness. About 2-3 minutes per side.

Place a portion of greens on your plate and top with the salmon. Serve with rice.

Salmon with Herbed Cream Cheese

Serves 6

This is a great make-ahead dish for a dinner party. The cream cheese mixture can be prepared up to a day ahead. The salmon filets can be prepared and refrigerated up to 12 hours ahead and refrigerated but you may need to add 5-7 minutes to the cooking time.

6 skinless salmon fillets, preferably wild, centre cuts are best
1 – 250-gram package cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup minced fresh parsley, divided
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
2 green onions, minced
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
1 - 2 jarred roasted red bell peppers, rinsed and patted dry

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl combine the cream cheese, parmesan cheese, 2 tablespoons of the minced parsley, basil and green onions. Mix well. In a small bowl combine the rest of the parsley with the lemon zest. Stir to combine.

Rinse the salmon with cold water and pat dry. Place the salmon fillets fairly close to each other on the baking sheet so that they don't dry out during cooking.

Cut the roasted red pepper into thin strips and set aside.

Season the salmon fillets lightly with some salt and black pepper. Divide the cream cheese equally over each salmon filet and cover the top as best as possible. Sprinkle the parsley and lemon zest over each piece of fish and press down lightly. Arrange the red pepper slices in a nice pattern over the top.

Bake the salmon for 15 to 20 minutes or until just done. Squeeze the lemon juice over the fish and serve or serve with lemon wedges on the side.

Variation: If you have thick salmon filets make a cut in the edge of the filet to create a pocket. Stuff the cream cheese mixture into the pocket, instead of placing on top.

Tuna and Rice Casserole

Serves 6

Tuna casserole is the ultimate comfort food. Most tuna casseroles call for canned cream of mushroom soup and pasta which can be a problem because condensed soups are usually very high in sodium. Making your own base for your casserole isn't difficult and it allows you to control the flavors and the salt content. Adding additional vegetables plus substituting brown rice for pasta will increase the fiber content.

3 tablespoons butter
1 - 227 gram package mushrooms, chopped (about 12 mushrooms)
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 small red pepper, seeded and diced
1 small carrot, peeled and diced
1 stalk broccoli, flowerets finely chopped, stalk peeled and diced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
Salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon hot sauce (optional)
3 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
1 cup low sodium chicken broth
2 - 170-gram cans flaked or chunk tuna, drained
1 1/2 cup frozen peas
4 cups cooked brown rice
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (optional)

Pre-heat the oven to 375°F and spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Sauté the mushrooms, onion, carrots, broccoli stalk and red pepper until softened, about 5 minutes. Season the mixture with dried thyme and then to taste with salt and pepper.

Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and stir until smooth. Cook until the mixture is bubbly and all the flour has been incorporated.

Slowly stir in the milk and chicken broth, making sure no large lumps form. Cook the sauce until it is smooth and has thickened. Stir in the optional hot sauce and taste for seasoning.

Remove from the heat and stir in the tuna, peas, broccoli flowerets and brown rice. Add more milk or broth if the mixture seems dry. Pour into prepared baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese if desired. Bake until the casserole is bubbly, and the cheese is melted, about 20 to 30 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

PORK

Dijon Pork Chops with Butternut Squash and Apples

Serves 6-8

Nothing says fall quite like apples and squash. This recipe is an updated take on traditional pork chops and applesauce.

For the squash and apples:

1 medium butternut squash
4 medium apples
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons maple syrup
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced or 1 teaspoon dried thyme

For the pork chops:

9 boneless pork loin chops
1/3 cup Dijon mustard
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, minced or 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary
1/2 cup apple juice
1/2 cup low sodium chicken broth

Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment or foil.

Peel and seed the squash and apples and cut into bite sized cubes. Spread the squash and apples on the baking sheet and toss with the olive oil, maple syrup and thyme. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Bake until tender, about 30-40 minutes.

After the squash and apples have been in the oven for 15 minutes, prepare the pork chops. Lightly score the chops along the fat edge so they won't curl while cooking. Season the chops lightly with salt and pepper. Combine the Dijon mustard, garlic and rosemary in a shallow dish or pie plate. Heat a large skillet over medium high heat and add 2 or 3 tablespoons olive oil. Dip the pork chops into the mustard mixture and then add to the hot pan. Sear the chops on both sides until brown, 3-5 minutes per side.

Remove the well browned pork chops to a plate and keep warm. Increase the heat to high and add the chicken broth and apple juice to the pan. Scrape up the brown bits on the bottom of the pan and bring the sauce to a boil. Boil rapidly over high heat for 5 minutes until the sauce is reduced by half. Reduce the heat to low and return the pork chops to the pan along with any accumulated juices and simmer 1 to 2 minutes. Serve with the squash and apples and garnish with the pan sauce.

Easy Roasted Pork Loin

Serves 8

Every so often you can find a good sale on whole pork loin roasts. They are usually vacuum packed and sold as either rib or sirloin ends. But what do you do with all that meat? With a bit of careful cutting you can have two great meals, one for “Sunday Dinner” and the other to throw in the slow cooker for an easy mid-week supper.

When you’re ready to make your first pork recipe remove the meat from the plastic and drain well. Pat the meat dry with paper towels and cut in half. The roast has two distinct ends, a “white meat” end and a “dark meat” end. For this recipe you want the “white meat”.

1 - 1 ½ to 2 kg (2-3 pounds) pork loin roast
3 cloves garlic, minced or put through a press
2 teaspoons dried rosemary
3 teaspoons kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil.

Mix the minced garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Mash well to make a paste. Take the tip of a sharp knife and lightly score the fat layer on the roast. Rub the garlic mixture all over pork. Place the pork on the prepared baking sheet. Roast for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°F and continue to roast until a meat thermometer inserted into center of pork registers 160°F, about 40 minutes longer. Remove from oven and let stand 10 minutes.

Pour any juices from roasting pan into a small saucepan and set over low heat to keep warm. Cut pork crosswise into thick slices. Arrange pork slices on platter. Pour pan juices over top. Garnish with rosemary sprigs, if desired.

Serve with homemade chunky applesauce, roasted potatoes and a nice green vegetable.

Honey-Glazed Ham

Serves 10-12

When hams are on sale they're usually a very good buy. Find a small one in the bin and after it's sliced and cooled you can wrap as many slices as you like in foil and freeze them for later use. Use your ham for salads or sandwiches or in a frittata.

1 large ham, ideally bone-in, with no added water or juices

1/2 cup honey

1/4 cup maple syrup

1/2 cup yellow mustard

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

Heat the oven to 350°F and line the roasting pan with several long pieces of foil. These should be large enough to wrap up and around the ham. Place the ham cut-side down in the pan. Take the ham out of its wrappings and place it in the pan.

Use a sharp knife to score the skin of the ham into a crosshatch pattern. Slice long lines into the skin (not into the meat itself) and then slice back the other way to form a crosshatch pattern. This makes the ham a little prettier, and it will also help your glaze permeate the skin later in the baking process.

Fold the foil up around the meat. Fold the top of the foil together to seal as well as possible. This foil pouch is meant to keep the ham from drying out in the oven. Put in the oven to bake, well-wrapped in foil, and go about your business. The ham doesn't need any attention or checking until at least 1 1/2 hours have passed.

Make the glaze: Combine the honey, maple syrup, and butter in a pan and stir over medium heat until the honey is dissolved, and the butter is melted. Stir in the vinegar and Worcestershire sauce. Turn off the heat and set aside.

After about 1 1/2 hours, check the temperature of the ham in the thickest part of the meat, avoiding the bone. The ham is fully cooked already, so you are just checking to see if the inner part of the ham is warm yet. If the ham has reached an internal temperature of 120°F, move on to the next step. If not, seal it back up in the foil and put it back into the oven.

Once the ham hits 120°F internally, turn up the oven to 425°F. While the oven is heating, remove the ham from the oven and ease the foil away and out of the pan. Warm the glaze again if necessary to make it easy to spread. Use a pastry brush to liberally apply the glaze all over the skin of the ham.

Bake the ham for 10 minutes at the higher oven temperature, then remove it from the oven and turn the oven up to broil. Brush the ham with the honey glaze one more time, then put back in the oven under the broiler for about 3 to 5 minutes (keep an eye on it though and remove if it begins to smoke). This will give a crispier skin. Remove from the oven, slice, and serve.

Maple Glazed Roast Pork Loin

Serves 8-10

This easy maple glaze would be delicious on chicken or pork chops. Serve this roast with wild rice or sweet potatoes.

1 – 1 kg (2 to 2-1/2 pound) boneless pork loin roast
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 cup pure maple syrup
1 clove garlic, crushed or put through a press
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Dry the roast well with paper towels. Score the fat layer on the top of the roast with a sharp knife to create a diamond pattern. Combine the rosemary, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Rub the herb mixture over the meat. Place it fat side up in a shallow roasting pan. Roast for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350°F.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the maple syrup, garlic, mustard, vinegar and soy sauce. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce the sauce to 1/2 cup, about 5-7 minutes, stirring often.

After the meat has cooked for 30 minutes carefully remove it from the oven and brush the meat with half of the glaze. Continue to roast for another 5 to 10 minutes then brush the meat again. Roast for a further 5-10 minutes or until an instant read thermometer registers 155°F. Tent the meat with foil and let it rest for 15 minutes, before carving.

Carve the roast and garnish with serve with the any pan juices.

Orange Glazed Pork Loin

Serves 8-10

The spice mixture and glaze would also work well with pork chops or pork tenderloin. Serve this with roasted asparagus and a vegetable rice pilaf for an elegant spring supper.

For the pork:

1 – 1 kg (2 – 2 ½) pound boneless pork loin roast
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the glaze:

1 teaspoon olive oil
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
2 cloves garlic minced
3/4 cup orange juice
1/3 cup low sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
Zest of 1 orange

For the garnish:

1/4 cup chopped pecans
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons lemon juice

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Combine thyme, ginger, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Rub the spice mixture over the meat. Place it fat side up in a shallow roasting pan. Roast for 15 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350°F.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over medium heat, cook the garlic and ginger in the olive oil until fragrant. Stir in the broth, orange juice, honey, mustard and orange zest. Bring to a boil and reduce the sauce to 1/2 cup, about 5-7 minutes, stirring often. Reserve half of the glaze to serve with the pork.

Continue to roast for 30 minutes. Brush the meat with the glaze and cook for another 15 to 20 minutes or until an instant read thermometer registers 155°F. Tent the meat with foil and let it rest for 15 minutes, before carving. While the roast is resting stir together the pecans, parsley and lemon juice.

Carve the roast and garnish with the pecan mixture and serve with the reserved sauce.

Pork Chops with Apples, Fennel and Sweet Potatoes

Serves 6

Fennel is in season right now and is a tasty addition to salads, stews, and soups. When roasted, fennel has a unique aroma and a light, sweet, subtle liquorice taste. To prepare, trim off the root base as you do with onions. Cut away top leafy stalks just above the bulb. Remove tough outer one or two layers as they can be tough. You can save the stalks and outer layers for vegetable stock. The bulb can be cut into cubes or sticks for roasting or into thin slices for salads. The dark green fronds can be pulled from the stems and minced to be used as a garnish for your pork chops and roasted vegetables before serving.

6 pork chops, bone-in or boneless

1 teaspoon paprika

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup apple juice or apple cider

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon honey

2 tablespoons, cut into small pieces

2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut lengthwise in half, then cut crosswise and into wedges (about 14-16 wedges per potato)

2 sweet apples, like golden delicious or red prince, cored and cut lengthwise into eighths

1 large fennel bulb, trim away root end and stalks, cut lengthwise into eighths, mince the dark green fronds for garnish

2 large sprigs of fresh rosemary, leaves stripped from stems and minced or 1 tablespoon dried rosemary

2 tablespoons olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, toss the sweet potatoes, apples, fennel, rosemary, olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Spread the vegetables and apples on the baking sheet. Roast, stirring the vegetables at the halfway point, for about 15 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes are nicely browned and tender.

While the vegetables are roasting cook the pork chops. Pat the pork chops dry with paper towels. Season the chops with salt, pepper and paprika. Heat a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil, then add the chops to the skillet and cook for about 2-5 minutes per side depending on the thickness of your pork chops. The pork should be golden brown and barely pink when pierced in the center with the tip of a small sharp knife. Transfer to a plate and let stand for 5 minutes while you prepare the sauce.

Pour off all but 1 teaspoon of the oil from the skillet, leaving the brown bits in the pan. Return the pan to medium-low heat, add the apple juice, and bring to a simmer, scraping up the brown bits with a wooden spoon. Whisk in the mustard and honey then simmer for about 2 minutes to reduce the liquid slightly. Remove from the heat and whisk in the butter to lightly thicken the sauce. Season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately with a side of roasted broccoli.

Pork Chops with Pears and Sweet Onions

Serves 6-8

Apples are traditional with pork, but pears make a nice change. Sweet onions are abundant in the early spring and are a nice addition to this dish. If you don't have fresh rosemary you can substitute one teaspoon of dried rosemary.

2 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1/3 cup chicken broth
6 - 9 boneless pork loin chops
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 small or 1 large sweet onion, like Vidalia, peeled and thickly sliced
3 ripe, bosc pears, cored and cut into 8 wedges each
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, leaves stripped from stems and minced
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Pomegranate arils or additional fresh rosemary for garnish

Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Stir together the chicken broth, balsamic vinegar and honey in a 1 cup measuring cup. Set aside.

Pat the pork chops dry with paper towels and season lightly with kosher salt and pepper. Heat a large oven safe skillet over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Place the pork chops in the hot pan, and sear browned, about 3 minutes. Do not crowd the pan, sear in the pork in batches if all your chops won't fit at once. Turn the pork chops and sear for 3 more minutes. Using tongs, transfer the pork chops to a plate. Reduce the heat to medium.

Add the onions, garlic, pears and rosemary to the pan. Season the vegetables lightly with salt and pepper and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Pour the chicken broth and vinegar mixture over the onions and bring to a boil. Scrape any brown bits from the bottom of the pan. Return the pork chops and any accumulated juices to the pan and arrange on top of the onions and pears.

Place the skillet in the oven and roast until the pork chops are thoroughly cooked and have reached an internal temperature of 160°F, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven and let the meat rest for 5 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with pomegranate arils or chopped fresh rosemary to serve.

SALADS

Bean, Rice and Corn Salad

Serves 6-8

This recipe was adapted from “The Supreme Bean II” by the Ontario Bean Producers. It makes a great vegetarian main dish or a side salad.

For the Salad:

1 cup cooked brown rice
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
1 medium sweet red bell pepper, diced
1 large celery rib, diced
1/2 large red onion, diced
1 small jalapeno pepper, minced (optional)
1 pint grape tomatoes, cut in half
1/2 cup chopped cilantro

For the Dressing:

2 limes, zested and juiced
1/4 cup sunflower or olive oil
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon cumin

In a large bowl, combine beans, rice, corn, red pepper, celery, onion, and jalapeno.

In a jar with a lid, combine lime juice and zest, sunflower oil, chili powder and cumin. Shake well to combine.

Toss salad ingredients with dressing. Mix well and season with salt and pepper, to taste. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving, or even overnight. Garnish with additional cilantro and tomatoes before serving if desired.

California Quinoa Salad

Serves 20

This recipe makes a lot and is perfect for a pot luck gathering. It is also easily halved. The salad keeps well in the fridge for 2-3 days.

2 1/2 cups quinoa (about 1 pound)
4 limes, zested and juiced
6 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
3 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
4 red mangos, peeled and diced
4 red bell pepper, diced
1 1/2 cups shelled edamame or frozen peas, defrosted and rinsed
1 medium red onion, finely diced
3/4 cup sliced almonds
3/4 cup unsweetened coconut
1/2 cup raisins
1/4 chopped fresh cilantro leaves

In a large saucepan bring 5 cups water to a boil. Cook quinoa according to package instructions and set aside to cool.

In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk together balsamic vinegar, lime juice and zest, honey and olive oil. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the quinoa, mango, bell pepper, edamame or peas, red onion, coconut, almonds, raisins and cilantro.

Pour the balsamic vinegar mixture on top of the salad and gently toss to combine. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours before serving.

Cobb Salad

Serves 4-6

This traditional salad is makes a perfect summer lunch or light supper. You can add whatever meats or cheeses you like.

1 head romaine lettuce, cleaned and chopped
2 boneless, skinless, chicken breasts, cooked, cooled and diced
8 hardboiled eggs, peeled and cut in half
1 – 375-gram package low sodium bacon, cooked and diced
250 grams cheddar or marble cheese, diced
1 English cucumber, diced
1 large tomato, diced
2 avocados, peeled and diced
Juice of 1 lime

Spread the chopped romaine lettuce in a layer on a large platter.

Squeeze the lime juice over the diced avocado to prevent browning.

Arrange the eggs, bacon, chicken, cheese, cucumber, tomato and avocado in rows on top of the lettuce.

Serve with your favourite salad dressing.

Recommended: Yogurt and Herb Dressing

Curried Chicken Salad with Apples and Grapes

Serves 6

This is a great way to use up any leftover chicken you have, white, dark meat or a combination of both work well. Let the mixture sit before using so the curry flavour has time to develop.

1 rotisserie chicken, skin and bones removed, meat diced **OR**
3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and diced
1/2 cup finely diced celery
1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
10 - 15 red or green grapes, halved (quartered if large)
1 Granny Smith apple, cored and diced
1/2 cup mayonnaise (or more to taste)
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
1/2 teaspoon curry powder (or more to taste)
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
Optional garnish: toasted, sliced almonds and mandarin oranges

About an hour before serving combine all ingredients in large bowl. Mix well to combine.

Serve in wraps or in lettuce cups.

Garnish with almonds and oranges if serving as a main dish salad.

Mixed Green Salad with Apples and Maple Pecans

Serves 8-10

The maple pecans are a great topping for any salad and they also make a great snack on their own.

For the Pecans:

1 cup pecan pieces
3 tablespoons maple syrup

For the Salad:

1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 – 312-gram (11 oz.) package mixed salad greens
2 small apples, red or green, peeled, quartered, cored and thinly sliced lengthwise
1/4 cup dried cranberries

Line a small baking sheet or plate with parchment paper.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the pecans and toast until fragrant, watching carefully so they don't burn. Add the maple syrup and toss until the nuts are coated and have stopped steaming. Do not burn! Use a silicone spatula and scrape the nuts onto the parchment paper and allow to cool completely.

While the pecans are cooling, prepare the remaining salad ingredients. Add the thinly sliced red onions to a wire strainer and toss with the kosher salt. Let sit for 10-15 minutes. This will remove the sharpness from the onion. Rinse well under cold water and dry on paper towels. Add to a large salad bowl along with the salad greens, cooled pecans, apple slices and cranberries.

Top the salad with the dressing of your choice. Toss well to combine and serve immediately.
Recommended: Balsamic Vinaigrette or Maple Shallot

Orange & Black Bean Quinoa Salad

Serves 6-8

This salad is best prepared 24 hours in advance.

1 cup quinoa, cooked according to package directions
2 navel oranges, divided
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 - 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 1/2 cups frozen corn, thawed
1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/4 of a red onion, finely chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Finely grate the zest from the 1 orange then squeeze out the juice. Set aside. Cut remaining orange into skinless segments.

Combine the orange juice with olive oil, red wine vinegar, honey and salt in large bowl. Stir in quinoa, black beans, corn, red pepper, onion, cilantro and reserved orange segments and stir until well coated.

Salmon Salad with Yogurt and Dill

Serves 2-4

Leftover cooked salmon is best, but you can also substitute 2 – 213g cans of sockeye salmon. It can be eaten on its own or over top of lettuce, or in a lettuce wrap.

For the Salad:

6 - 8 ounces leftover cooked salmon
1 cup celery, cut into small dice
1/4 cup chopped green onion
2 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

For the Dressing:

2 tablespoons Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons olive oil mayonnaise
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon celery seed
Kosher salt and pepper to taste

Gently break apart cooked salmon filet with a fork and place in a medium bowl. Add celery, green onions, capers, and dill. Fold to combine, being careful not to break up the salmon too much.

Mix together dressing ingredients in smaller bowl, then gently fold into the salmon mixture. Do not overmix. The salad should be chunky.

Chill 30 minutes before serving. Garnish with extra dill if desired.

White Bean Salad with Mint

Serves 4-8

This simple bean salad serves 8 as a side salad or 4 as a main dish.

2 – 540 ml (19 oz.) cans white kidney beans
1/2 cup roughly chopped fresh mint leaves
1 medium red onion, finely diced
1/3 cup white balsamic vinegar
2 red bell peppers, seeded and diced
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Drain and rinse the beans well under cold running water. Place in a medium mixing bowl. In a small bowl, combine the onion and vinegar. Let the mixture sit for 15 minutes. Combine the vinegar and onions with the beans, mint, red bell pepper, and olive oil. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve.

SIDES

Braised Peas and Onions

Serves 6-8

A pretty spring side dish that goes well with chicken or ham.

4 leeks, washed, trimmed and sliced
1 white onion, peeled and finely sliced
3 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
3 cups frozen peas
4 green onions, finely sliced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Melt and butter and oil. Add the leeks and white onions and cook gently until the leeks are softened, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Stir in the broth and bring the mixture to a simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Stir in the peas and green onions. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes more until the peas are defrosted and cooked through. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve.

Brown & Wild Rice “Stuffing”

Serves 6-8

Traditional stuffing recipes are mostly white bread. If you’re trying to keep white flour out of your diet this classically flavoured alternative is a good option for the holiday season. Serve this side dish with roast turkey or chicken.

1 cup brown rice, uncooked
1 cup wild rice, uncooked **OR**
2 cups brown and wild rice blend
1/4 cup unsalted butter, divided
2 medium onions, finely diced
1 1/2 cups chopped celery, including leaves
1 small clove garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage or 1 teaspoon dried
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried

1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
Pinch of grated nutmeg
Pinch of ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/4 cup low sodium chicken broth or turkey stock, or more as needed

The earlier in the day or the day before cook the wild and brown rice according to package directions, substituting low sodium chicken broth for the water. Spread the rice on a cookie sheet and allow it to cool completely before continuing the recipe. If you can refrigerate it overnight, even better.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add the butter. When the butter has melted, add the onion, celery, garlic, sage, thyme, celery seeds, nutmeg, cloves, and salt. Cover the pan with a lid and cook over medium-low heat until the onion is soft, 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove the pan from the heat and add the cooked vegetables to a large mixing bowl. Add the cooked and cooled rice and mix well. Season with freshly ground pepper. Pour the stock over the rice and toss to coat. The rice should just hold together when mounded on a spoon.

Spread the rice mixture into a casserole dish sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. If you are making this a day ahead, cover the dish with foil and refrigerate. Bring the casserole to room temperature before baking. Pour an extra 1/4 cup of stock over the rice mixture if it seems dry. Bake the casserole, covered, at 350°F until heated through, about 45 minutes to 1 hour. For a crunchy top, uncover it for the last 15 minutes of baking.

Chili-Lime Mashed Sweet Potatoes

Serves 4-6

These mashed sweet potatoes have a nice balance of sweet and spicy. You can make them ahead, put them in a casserole dish and reheat them in the oven.

4 large sweet potatoes
2 - 3 tablespoons butter
1 lime, zested and juiced
2 teaspoons chili powder, or more to taste
1 tablespoon maple syrup
Salt and pepper to taste

Peel and dice the sweet potatoes and place in a large pot. Cover with cold water and add 1 tablespoon kosher salt. Stir and place over high heat. Bring the potatoes to a boil and cook until they are soft, 20-25 minutes. Drain the potatoes well and return to the pot.

Mash the potatoes with the butter. Stir in the lime juice and zest, the chili powder and maple syrup. Taste for seasoning and serve hot.

Corn off the Cob

Serves 4-6

A buttery alternative to corn on the cob that can be made ahead. If you're using frozen corn do not thaw and add to the pan after you cook the shallots and red peppers.

6 ears fresh corn, or 4 cups frozen corn
1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
3 small shallots, finely diced
4 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons fresh basil, minced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Husk the corn and boil until tender or wrap in paper towels and microwave 10-12 minutes.

Let the corn cool and cut the kernels off the cob. Hold the corn perpendicular to your cutting board and run your knife down the cob until all the corn has been removed. This step can be done earlier in the day or the day before.

At serving time heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the butter and oil. When the butter has stopped foaming add the shallot and red pepper. Sauté until soft. Stir in the corn and heat through. Season with salt and pepper. Before serving stir in the fresh basil and more butter if desired.

Double Mashed Potatoes

Serves 4-6

If your family is reluctant to try sweet potatoes try them mixed with white potatoes. The addition of cheese makes this a very family friendly side dish.

3 large sweet potatoes
1 very large baking potato (russet potato)
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
3 green onions, minced

Peel and dice the potatoes. Place in a large saucepan and cover with water. Stir in the salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook for 20-25 minutes or until the potatoes are very soft.

Drain well the potatoes thoroughly in a colander and return them to the pan. Mash then well with the butter. Stir in the sour cream or yogurt, cheddar cheese and green onions. Check for seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste.

Fall Vegetable Medley

Serves 4-6

This is an easy way to prepare vegetables to go with chicken or pork.

4 medium red skinned potatoes, scrubbed and cut into 1-inch chunks
1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
1 large red onion, or 3 small yellow cooking onions, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 small bag baby carrots or 5 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
2 small white turnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 teaspoon dried thyme or 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.
In a large mixing bowl, toss peeled and chopped vegetables with olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper.
Spread on baking sheet and roast until tender and browned, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Fluffy Mashed Potatoes

Serves 4-6

Mashed potatoes are the ultimate comfort food. The secret to good mashed potatoes are the type of potato that you use. Russet or baking potatoes are starchier than Yukon gold or white potatoes and break down more quickly when boiled and give you fluffy finished product. Making sure that you cut your potatoes into uniform sizes before boiling will allow them to cook at the same rate, so you don't end up with hard, uncooked lumps at the end.

The amount of dairy you use is up to you, you can use butter or milk or go all out and add cream or sour cream. Chicken broth and a bit of olive oil are also tasty additions if you're on a dairy free diet. Whatever liquid you add to your potatoes should be warmed first so your potatoes don't become gluey and cold.

4 large baking potatoes, peeled and diced into uniform 1" cubes.
1 tablespoon kosher salt

Bring the potatoes and salt to a boil, starting in cold water. Boil rapidly until the potatoes are falling apart, about 20-25 minutes. Drain well and return to the hot pan.

Turn your stove off and place the pan back on the still hot element. Stir the potatoes gently over the residual heat to allow them to dry so they can absorb more liquid when you mash them.

Healthy Choice:

1/4 to 1/2 cup warm, low sodium chicken broth
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Mash the potatoes with the olive oil then lightly fold in the chicken broth until you reach a desired consistency. Taste for seasoning and serve.

Family Favourite:

1/4 to 1/2 cup warm milk or buttermilk

4 tablespoons butter

Mash the potatoes with the butter then lightly stir in the milk until you reach a desired consistency. Do not over mash.

Luxury Potatoes:

1/4 cup milk

4-6 tablespoons butter

1/2 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

Mash the potatoes with the butter and milk. Fold in the sour cream or yogurt. Serve immediately.

Maple Roasted Winter Vegetables

Serves 6-8

The vegetables listed here are only a suggestion. Use whatever veggies your family enjoys. Some good additions/ substitutions would be acorn squash, rutabaga, white turnip, parsnips, Brussels sprouts or Vidalia onions.

1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

3 medium carrots, peeled and sliced 1/4-inch thick, diagonally

3 medium beets, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

1 small butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch pieces

1 large red onions, peeled, and cut into large pieces

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 cup pure maple syrup

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

3 sprigs fresh rosemary, finely chopped

1/2 cup pecan pieces, optional

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Spread the pecans in a small baking pan and toast until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Check them often so they don't burn. Meanwhile, line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place the cut vegetables in a single layer on the baking sheet.

In a measuring cup, stir together the olive oil, maple syrup and balsamic. Drizzle over the vegetables and toss to combine. Season the vegetables with salt and pepper to taste.

Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour until the vegetables are tender and a little caramelized from the syrup. Garnish with the rosemary and toasted pecans.

Roasted Acorn Squash Slices with Maple Pecans

Serves 4-6

There are many “make-ahead” elements to this dish. The maple pecans can be made up to two days in advance and stored in an airtight container at room temperature. The squash can be sliced up to one day in advance. Store it in an airtight container or zip top bag in the refrigerator. Brush the squash slices with the oil mixture just before baking. Once cooked, the roasted squash can sit at room temperature, covered, for up to 2 hours. Make sure your family or guests know that the outside peels of the squash slices are not meant to be eaten. Simply cut away the yellow flesh as you eat it, then discard the peels.

2 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons maple syrup, divided
1 medium acorn squash
1/2 cup finely chopped pecans
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Pre-heat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminium foil and lightly spray with non-stick cooking spray. In a small bowl, stir together the olive oil and 1 tablespoon of the maple syrup.

Halve, seed, and slice the squash into 1” thick slices. Arrange the slices in a single layer on the baking sheet. Brush the slices with half of the olive oil and maple syrup mixture.

Place the squash in the oven and roast for 5 to 7 minutes.

Remove the tray from the oven and, using tongs, flip over each slice. Brush with the remaining olive oil and maple syrup. Return the baking sheets to the oven and continue roasting until the squash slices are fork-tender, about 15-20 additional minutes.

While the squash is roasting add the pecan pieces to a large, cold skillet. Place the pan over medium-high heat and toast the pecans until they are just fragrant and starting to brown. Add the last 2 tablespoons of maple syrup to the pan and stir constantly until the pecans are no longer steaming. Scape the pecans onto a piece of parchment paper and allow to cool. When the pecans are cool enough to handle break into small pieces.

When the squash has finished roasting remove from the oven and garnish with the pecan pieces.

Roasted Broccoli

Serves 4-6

A nice change from steamed broccoli.

1 large bunch of broccoli, cut into florets
3 tablespoons olive oil
1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon lemon juice **or** 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
Pinch of red pepper flakes (optional)

Preheat the oven to 425° F and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, toss the broccoli with olive oil, salt, black pepper and garlic. Spread the broccoli in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet.

Bake until florets are tender enough to pierce with a fork and the edges are browning, about 15 minutes. Turn once halfway through the baking process and add red pepper flakes, if using. After baking, drizzle the broccoli with balsamic vinegar or lemon juice before serving.

You can make soup with the leftovers too. Throw any leftovers into a pot with some chicken or vegetable broth, boil and then puree with a handheld immersion blender. Season and serve.

Roasted Cauliflower and Sweet Potatoes

Serves 6-8

If you're not a fan of cauliflower because you've only had it steamed or boiled don't write it off until you've tried roasted cauliflower. When cauliflower roasts it develops a sweet, nutty flavour and delicious crispy edges.

3 sweet potatoes - peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 head cauliflower - cut in florets
2 medium onions, diced
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 425°F and line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Spray foil, if using, with cooking spray and set aside. You don't have to spray the parchment.

Place chopped sweet potatoes, cauliflower and onion in a large mixing bowl and drizzle with balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Sprinkle with paprika, salt and pepper. Toss until the vegetables are evenly coated. Spread vegetables in an even layer on a baking sheet and roast until lightly browned and caramelized about 30 minutes.

The key to a deep, golden brown vegetable is not over-crowding the baking sheet. If you find the vegetables too crowded, use two pans. If the vegetables are too crowded on the pan you will end up steaming them, not roasting them.

Serve with roasted meat or chicken.

Serbian Cabbage

Serves 6-8

This recipe was one of my mother's "go-to" recipes in the 1970's. In the fall cabbage is abundant and cheap making this a very simple and economical side dish. As a variation you could also use half a cabbage and add one finely sliced celery root and one finely sliced fennel bulb. You could also substitute two bags of prepared coleslaw if you were in a hurry.

1 small head, green cabbage
1 can evaporated milk
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 cup regular or panko bread crumbs
1/2 cup butter, melted

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9" x 13" baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In a small bowl combine the melted butter and bread crumbs. Stir well to combine.

Remove the tough outer leaves from the cabbage and cut in half. Remove the core and cut the cabbage into quarters. Place one of the flat sides down and finely shred the cabbage and place in the prepared baking dish. Pour milk over and lightly season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle the cabbage with the buttered bread crumbs. Cover the dish tightly with foil. Bake covered for 30 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 30 minutes or until the crumbs are brown and the cabbage is tender.

Vegetable Rice Pilaf

Serves 8-10

Brown rice can be mushy when it's over cooked. Baking the rice in the oven will give you a more consistent result.

1 small onion, diced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 stalk celery, diced
1 medium carrot, peeled and diced
1 broccoli stem
1 tablespoons olive oil
3 cups brown rice
6 3/4 cups vegetable or chicken stock
1/4 cup finely chopped parsley, for garnish
Salt and pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven to 350°F.

Cut the flowerets from the broccoli and chop finely. Set aside. Peel and dice the broccoli stem. Bring the broth to a boil in a large pot over high heat.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the onions, bell peppers, celery, carrots and diced broccoli stems. Cook until the vegetables are soft and fragrant. Season with salt and pepper. Add the rice to the pan and sauté with the vegetables 2-3 minutes.

Add the rice and vegetables to the broth. Stir to combine then pour into a large oven safe dish that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray.

Cover the dish with foil and bake for 30 to 40 minutes.

Stir in the broccoli flowerets and bake for an additional 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and garnish with the parsley.

Wild Rice with Dried Cranberries

Serves 4-6

This is a side dish has lots of flavours that are associated with Thanksgiving or Christmas but it's good at any time of the year.

1 cup wild rice, rinsed and drained

4 cups water

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1 tablespoons olive oil

1/4 cup finely chopped green onions, reserve the green part for garnish

1 small orange, zested and juiced

1/2 cup dried cranberries, coarsely chopped

1/4 cup hazelnuts, walnuts or pecans, toasted and coarsely chopped, optional

1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced, optional

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Place the rice in a large saucepan with a lid. Add the water and salt and bring to a boil over high heat.

When the water and rice come to a boil, lower the heat to medium-low to maintain a slow but steady simmer and cover the pan.

Cook the rice for 45 minutes. It should be chewy and some of the grains will have burst open. It may need an additional 10 to 15 minutes. Check the rice often and stop cooking when the grains are tender.

When the rice is done, pour it into a strainer to drain off any remaining liquid.

Place a large skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the white part of the green onions and sauté, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 2 minutes.

Add the cooked wild rice, along with the orange zest and juice, dried cranberries, and hazelnuts. Stir to combine. Taste and check for seasoning. Add more salt and with pepper only if needed. Garnish with parsley and green onions if desired.

SNACKS

Infused Water Ideas

For infused waters, wash your ingredients thoroughly. Slice whole fruit or cucumbers as thinly as possible to expose more surface area to give your water maximum flavour. Layer your ingredients in a pitcher or large mason jar. Add 4 to 6 cups of water to cover. Let the water infuse for a few hours or overnight. Store in the refrigerator and replenish water as needed. Use more or less or any of the ingredients to suit your personal taste.

Rainbow Citrus

- 1 blood orange
- 1 naval orange
- 1 lemon
- 1 lime

Blueberry Clementine

- 3 clementines
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup blueberries

Apple Cinnamon

- 1 apple (or pear), cored and sliced
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 – 1" piece fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced

Cucumber Mint

- 1/2 English cucumber, cut into thin rounds
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup loosely packed mint leaves
- 2 limes

Strawberry Basil

- 1/2 English cucumber, cut into thin rounds
- 6 strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 6-8 basil leaves

Maple Spiced Mixed Nuts

Makes 4 cups

These nuts are sweet and spicy and are not only great for snacking, but they also make great gifts. Use any combination of nuts that you like. If you want a spicier mix increase the amount of chili and cayenne to taste. Just make sure to watch them carefully when they're in the oven because they can burn easily!

1 cup natural, unsalted almonds
1 cup unsalted cashews
1 cup unsalted walnut or pecan halves
1/2 cup unsalted pistachios
1/2 cup unsalted pumpkin seeds
1/2 cup maple syrup
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 – 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/8 – 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Pre-heat oven to 350°F. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large bowl combine the nuts and the spices. Add the maple syrup and stir until thoroughly combined. Spread the mixture evenly on the baking sheet.

Bake, stirring every 5 minutes, for 20-25 minutes or until the nuts are sticky and the syrup has started to bubble.

Remove from oven and let cool completely.

Store in an air tight container.

Salmon Cucumber Bites

Yield 24-36 salmon bites

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1/4 teaspoon paprika

1/4 teaspoon Tabasco or Sriracha hot sauce

250 grams (1/2 pound) leftover cooked salmon **OR**

3 – 213g tins sockeye salmon

3 green onions

1 tablespoon lemon juice

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

2 English cucumber, peeled and cut crosswise into 12-18 slices each, depending on the size of the cucumbers.

Combine the mayonnaise, paprika, and hot sauce in a small bowl and mix thoroughly.

Taste for seasoning and add more hot sauce if desired.

Flake the cooked salmon into large bite-sized pieces or drain and clean the canned salmon.

Finely mince the white part of the green onions and mix with the salmon. Finely mince the green parts of the onions and set aside.

Gently fold the spicy mayonnaise into the salmon. Taste and adjust the seasoning adding salt and pepper if needed. Refrigerate the salmon mixture until ready to use.

Use a melon baller or teaspoon to scoop out the centre of each cucumber slice. Don't dig too deeply or your cups will become open-ended tubes and the salmon filling will fall right through.

Divide the salmon mixture into each cup and garnish with the minced green onions.

SOUPS

Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

Serves 10

If you have leftover cooked chicken or wild rice, stir them in at the end, after the vegetables have finished cooking in the broth.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
3 medium carrots, peeled and finely chopped
3 large celery stalks, finely chopped
2 medium garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoons dried thyme
12 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1/2 tablespoon honey
1 bay leaves
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 1/2 cups wild rice or wild rice blend
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, medium dice
4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, medium dice
1/2 cup coarsely chopped Italian parsley

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. When it shimmers, add the onions, carrots, celery, garlic and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened, about 10 minutes.

Add the broth, vinegar, honey, bay leaves and rice. Season with salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low and simmer, covered, until rice is tender but still has some firmness, about 30 to 40 minutes.

Add the diced chicken and simmer over medium heat until chicken is cooked through, about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat, add parsley, taste, and season with additional salt and pepper as needed.

Corn Soup

Serves 8-10

If you find corn soup to be too fatty, make the broth the day before and refrigerate overnight. The excess fat will solidify on top of the stock. Remove the fat and proceed with the rest of the recipe.

650 grams (1 1/2 pounds) pork shoulder butt steaks
350 grams (3/4-pound) salt pork
3 – 425 ml (15 oz.) cans white hominy corn, drained and rinsed
3 – 540 ml (19 oz.) cans red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
12 - 16 cups fresh water

Dice the pork shoulder butt steaks into bite sized pieces. Trim as much fat as possible. Dice the salt pork. Place meat in a large soup pot and boil and cover with water. The water should cover the pork completely. Boil for 1 hour until the meat is very tender.

Add the corn and kidney beans to the pork

Add more water to cover mixture by 3 inches. Bring the soup to a boil then reduce to a simmer. Cook for 1 hour, adding water in necessary. Stir occasionally, do not let it stick to the bottom of the pot.

Creamy Roasted Carrot Soup

Serves 10-12

Roasting the vegetables in the oven first gives the soup a richer flavour. This recipe makes a lot and can be easily halved. To make a vegetarian version substitute vegetable stock for the chicken stock. Silken tofu can be stirred in instead of milk or cream.

3 pounds carrots, peeled and cut into 3-inch lengths
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil
2 onions, cut to medium dice
4 medium ribs of celery, cut to medium dice
2 small potatoes, peeled and cubed
2-4 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
12 cups low sodium chicken stock
1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1 cup milk or half and half (optional)

Pre-heat the oven 375°F. Cover a sheet pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Spread the carrots out in a single layer. Drizzle with the olive oil and toss to coat. Season lightly with salt and

pepper. Roast, stirring once halfway through, until they're tender, blistered and lightly browned, about 1 hour.

Melt the butter or additional olive oil in a large saucepan set over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until it is translucent and fragrant, 2-3 minutes. Add the celery, the diced potato and ginger and cook 4-5 minutes longer. Add the roasted carrots, the chicken broth, salt, pepper and maple syrup

Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to medium low. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes or until the carrots are very tender. Puree the soup with an immersion hand blender or in batches in a stand blender. Taste and check for seasoning.

Stir in the milk or cream if desired.

Game Day Chili

Serves 8-10

Chili is a classic accompaniment for any football viewing party. This chili can be made the day before and reheated in your crockpot or slowly simmered on the stove. Adjusting the amount of cayenne pepper will allow you to make the chili as spicy or as mild as you like.

- 1 kg (2 pounds) lean ground beef (1 family package)
- 1 large white onion, diced
- 4 bell peppers, any colour, seeded and diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced or pressed
- 1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can no-sodium diced tomatoes
- 1 – 680 ml (20 oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup corn kernels, canned or frozen
- 2 cups low sodium beef broth
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 4 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Stove Top Method: Place a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef and cook until no trace of pink remains. Push the beef to one side of the pot and using a large spoon, drain the fat into a heat proof measuring cup or bowl. Add onions, bell peppers, garlic and spices. Cook the meat and vegetables for an additional 5 minutes until the onions are soft.

Add the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce and beef broth. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce the heat to low. Cover and let simmer for 2 hours. Before serving add the kidney beans, black beans and corn. Simmer for an additional 10-15 minutes to warm through.

Crock Pot Method: Add the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, beef broth, beans and corn to the crock of the slow cooker.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the ground beef and cook until no trace of pink remains. Push the beef to one side of the pot and using a large spoon, drain the fat into a heat proof measuring cup or bowl. Add onions, bell peppers, garlic and spices. Cook the meat and vegetables for an additional 5 minutes until the onions are soft. Cook on low 4-6 hours.

Lasagna Soup

Serves 6-8

This is a hearty soup that is very welcome on a cold winter day. You can easily double this recipe and freeze half for another time. You could also add one cup cooked small pasta, like elbow macaroni or ditalini, to the soup when you add the spinach. For another variation substitute one pound of bulk sausage meat for the ground beef.

1-pound ground beef or beef and pork blend
1 1/2 teaspoons mixed Italian seasoning (or 1/2 teaspoon each parsley, oregano and basil)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup chopped onions (about 2 medium)
1 cup diced carrots (about 2 large)
1 – 454-gram package white mushrooms, quartered
2 garlic cloves, minced or put through a press
4 cups low or no-sodium chicken broth
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can low-sodium diced tomatoes
1 – 680 ml (20 oz.) can plain tomato sauce
1 – 142-gram (5 oz.) package baby spinach
1/4 cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded, for garnish
1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese, for garnish

Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Brown ground beef until no trace of pink remains. Drain excess fat with a large spoon. Season the meat with dried seasonings and salt and pepper and stir to combine. Add the onions and carrots and sauté 3 minutes. Stir in mushrooms and garlic and sauté another 3 minutes.

Add the broth, canned tomatoes and tomato sauce and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 20-30 minutes to combine flavours.

Add the spinach and cook until wilted. Stir in fresh parsley.

Serve immediately and garnish with mozzarella and Parmesan cheese if desired.

“Loaded” Roasted Cauliflower Soup

Serves 8-10

A lighter version of a loaded baked potato soup. You can substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth and omit the bacon if you want to make a vegetarian soup. The addition of dairy products makes for a smooth, creamy soup, but they are optional as well.

1 large or 2 small heads cauliflower, cut into florets
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
6 - 10 slices low sodium bacon, very finely chopped
2 medium onions, diced
2 small cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 teaspoon dried thyme
8 cups low sodium chicken stock
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 cup half and half or whole milk
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Pre-heat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.

Toss the cauliflower florets in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and arrange them in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast them in the pre-heated oven for 20-30 minutes or until they're golden brown.

Meanwhile, place a large soup pot over high heat and add the chicken broth. While the broth is heating, cook the finely diced bacon in a frying pan until crisp. Use a slotted spoon to remove the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels and pour off the excess fat. Add the onions, garlic and thyme to the same pan, adding the additional tablespoon of olive oil if needed, and cook until the onions are soft, about 5-7 minutes. Scrape the mixture into the broth.

When the cauliflower has finished roasting add it to the pot and cover. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes. Puree the soup with an immersion blender until smooth. Mix in 1 1/2 cups of the cheese and let it melt without bringing the soup to a boil again. Stir in the milk or cream and season lightly to taste with salt and pepper.

Garnish each bowl with the reserved cheese, chives and crisp bacon bits.

Roasted Butternut Squash and Apple Soup

Serves 4-6

Squash is plentiful and inexpensive in the fall. This soup recipe goes a long way and can be easily doubled and frozen. Roasting the vegetables first gives the soup a deeper flavour.

1 large butternut squash
1 large yellow onion
2 large carrots
2 sweet apples, such as McIntosh or Royal Gala
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoons kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup water
1 cups good apple cider or juice

Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment or foil.

Peel the squash, cut in half, and remove the seeds. Cut the squash into chunks. Peel, quarter, and core the apples. Cut into chunks. Peel the carrots and onions into cut into large chunks. Spread the vegetables on the baking sheet and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes until well browned.

Add the vegetables, stock and water to the pot. Bring to a boil, cover, and cook over low heat for 30 to 40 minutes, until the squash and apples are very soft. Puree with an immersion blender until smooth. Or carefully ladle the soup into a blender or food processor and puree in batches.

Add the apple cider or juice and enough water to make the soup the consistency you like; it should be slightly sweet and quite thick. Check the salt and pepper and serve hot.

Garnish with any combination of chopped chives, crumbled bacon, sour cream, toasted pumpkin seeds or sautéed mushrooms and apples if desired.

Roasted Vegetable Minestrone

Serves 8-10

Roasting the vegetables in a hot oven gives them a richer flavour. Watch them carefully to make sure they don't burn.

2 medium bulbs fennel, trimmed, quartered, cored, and cut into slices
3 ribs celery, cut into bite sized pieces
2 large carrots, peeled and cut into bite sized pieces
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can white kidney beans
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can red kidney beans
8 cups low sodium chicken broth
1 teaspoon dried mixed Italian seasoning
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup finely grated parmesan cheese

Heat the oven to 450°F.

Line a baking sheet with aluminium foil or parchment paper. Spread the chopped vegetables on the baking sheet and toss with the oil, salt and pepper.

Roast for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring after 10 minutes. The vegetables should be nicely browned and tender. Transfer the vegetables to a large pot.

Add the tomatoes and their juices, the drained and rinsed beans, the chicken broth, and dried herbs to the pot. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to medium low, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Thin with water, if necessary, to get the consistency you like. Stir in the parsley, salt and pepper to taste.

Ladle into bowls and serve immediately and top with grated parmesan cheese.

Spring Vegetable Soup

Serves 8

This is a light soup that is perfect for the spring. If you want a heartier soup you can add 2 cups of cooked rice before adding the carrots and peas.

4 tablespoons olive oil
2 leeks, white and pale-green parts only, chopped
1 fennel bulb, chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
4 celery stalks, thinly sliced
8 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
4 medium carrots, peeled, thinly sliced
2 cups shelled peas, fresh or frozen
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 tablespoons fresh chives, chopped
Grated parmesan for garnish

Heat 4 tablespoons of oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add the leeks, fennel, onion, and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened but not browned, about 5 minutes. Add the broth. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until vegetables are just tender, about 10–15 minutes.

Add carrots and peas and simmer until carrots are just tender, about 5 minutes. Taste the soup and season lightly with salt and pepper if needed. Stir in the chopped parsley and chives. Serve immediately garnished with parmesan cheese if desired.

Three Sisters Soup

Serves 8

For centuries, the Iroquois people grew squash, beans, and corn together. This soup has been adapted from a recipe by Canadian chef and Cree elder, Bertha Skye who earned a gold medal at the Culinary Olympics in Frankfurt, Germany in 1992.

2 – 425 ml (15 oz.) cans white hominy, drained and rinsed **OR**
3 cups frozen corn kernels
2 cups chopped green beans, fresh or frozen
1 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes
1 large russet potato, peeled and diced
3 cups water
4 cups low sodium chicken or low sodium vegetable broth
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a large soup pot, over high heat, combine the broth and water. Add half of the corn, then all the green beans, squash, potatoes and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat then reduce the heat to medium low. Simmer until vegetables are almost tender, about 30 minutes. Mash lightly with a potato masher. Stir the remaining corn and season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer for an additional 30 minutes and serve.

About Bertha Skye:

Bertha grew up in the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation in Saskatchewan (and according to Bertha, this is the coldest place on earth!). She was formerly a cook at four different residential schools before she met her husband, Hubert Skye, and moved to Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. In 1992 Bertha competed on a team comprised of other Native chefs from across Canada at the World Culinary Olympics. Her team competed against 14,000 other chefs from around the world and took home the Grand Gold as well as winning the most medals of any of the other teams.

Bertha has lived in Six Nations for 53 years and is the mother of three daughters and two sons. She also is the proud grandmother of six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. In addition to being an Elder at McMaster University, she also works as an Elder at Mohawk College. She also volunteers her time as a board member at the Six Nations Health Foundation.

Source: McMaster University

Celebrate the Three Sisters: Corn, Beans and Squash by Alice Formiga

Corn provides a natural pole for bean vines to climb. Beans fix nitrogen on their roots, improving the overall fertility of the plot by providing nitrogen to the following years corn. Bean vines also help stabilize the corn plants, making them less vulnerable to blowing over in the wind. Shallow-rooted squash vines become a living mulch, shading emerging weeds and preventing soil moisture from evaporating, thereby improving the overall crops chances of survival in dry years. Spiny squash plants also help discourage predators from approaching the corn and beans.

The large amount of crop residue from this planting combination can be incorporated back into the soil at the end of the season, to build up the organic matter and improve its structure.

Corn, beans and squash also complement each other nutritionally. Corn provides carbohydrates, the dried beans are rich in protein, balancing the lack of necessary amino acids found in corn. Finally, squash yields both vitamins from the fruit and healthful, delicious oil from the seeds.

The Legends of The Three Sisters

Legend I

The term “Three Sisters” emerged from the Iroquois creation myth. It was said that the earth began when “Sky Woman” who lived in the upper world peered through a hole in the sky and fell through to an endless sea. The animals saw her coming, so they took the soil from the bottom of the sea and spread it onto the back of a giant turtle to provide a safe place for her to land. This “Turtle Island” is now what we call North America.

Sky woman had become pregnant before she fell. When she landed, she gave birth to a daughter. When the daughter grew into a young woman, she also became pregnant (by the West wind). She died while giving birth to twin boys. Sky Woman buried her daughter in the “new earth.” From her grave grew three sacred plants—corn, beans, and squash. These plants provided food for her sons, and later, for all of humanity. These special gifts ensured the survival of the Iroquois people.

Source: Diana Erney. 1996. Long live the Three Sisters. Organic Gardening. November.p.37-40.

Legend II

A long time ago there were three sisters who lived together in a field.

These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and way of dressing. The little sister was so young that she could only crawl at first, and she was dressed in green. The second sister wore a bright yellow dress, and she had a way of running off by herself when the sun shone, and the soft wind blew in her face. The third was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to protect them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long, yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breeze. There was one way the sisters were all alike, though. They loved each other dearly, and they always stayed together. This made them very strong.

One day a stranger came to the field of the Three Sisters - a Mohawk boy. He talked to the birds and other animals - this caught the attention of the three sisters.

Late that summer, the youngest and smallest sister disappeared. Her sisters were sad. Again, the Mohawk boy came to the field to gather reeds at the water's edge. The two sisters who were left watched his moccasin trail, and that night the second sister - the one in the yellow dress - disappeared as well. Now the Elder Sister was the only one left. She continued to stand tall in her field. When the Mohawk boy saw that she missed her sisters, he brought them all back together and they became stronger together, again.

Source: This story is taken from an oral account by Lois Thomas of Cornwall Island, compiled by students at Centennial College and found in "Indian Legends of Eastern Canada."

Legend III

When a medicine woman could no longer bear the fighting among her three daughters, she asked the Creator to make them stop. The Creator turned the three girls into plants and told them that to grow and thrive, they would be dependent upon each other. From that day on, Native people planted the three plants together to enable the beans to shade the squash and the corn to provide a stalk onto which the beans and squash could climb.

Source: Huronia Historical Parks, 2013 Media Resource Kit and Story Ideas

What is Hominy or Lyed Corn?

Before Indian Corn can be used for Corn Soup it must be thoroughly dried. The corn is picked in the late fall, the husk pulled back, then braided into three-foot-long bunches and hung up in the barn so the crows can't get at it.

Before Indian Corn (which is white) can be cooked into corn soup, it must first be put through a process called "lying". Lye is an extremely strong acid found in hardwood ashes. This is what the traditional Indians used as it was abundant from their campfires. This lying process softens the outer shell somewhat and allows the two black eyes found on each kernel of corn to be washed off after cooking. There are very few Indians adept at preparing the dried white corn in this manner. The amount of wood ashes to be boiled with the corn is a very tricky task to accomplish properly. Too much lye will destroy the corn and too little will not do the job.

Therefore, we leave this to the "lyers" of the tribe. The corn is boiled with the hardwood ashes and water for about two hours. Then it is washed to remove the eyes or hulls and to rinse the corn free of lye. The Tuscarora reservation has three or four "lyers" who perform the difficult and messy task of "lying". A "lyer" will do a large amount of corn in a day depending on how many orders she has to do for the tribal members.

Source: Loren (Lolly) Greene, www.tuscaroras.com

Tomato Soup Three Ways

Serves 6

This tomato soup is easy to prepare and is easily customized to suit the tastes of your family. This soup stores beautifully and tastes even better the second day. If you don't add the cream, you can store it in the freezer for up to 3 months. It's not any more expensive to make your own and the bonus is you know exactly what's in it and you can control the salt and sugar.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large garlic clove, peeled and chopped or put through a press
2 tablespoons flour
3 cups low or no-sodium chicken broth
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 teaspoon honey
1 sprig fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil or chives

In a large pot or Dutch oven heat the oil and butter over medium-low heat until the butter melts. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft but not browned, about 5-8 minutes. Sprinkle in the flour and stir to coat the onion and garlic.

Add the broth, tomatoes, honey, thyme, and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Bring the soup to a simmer over medium-high heat while stirring the mixture to make sure that the flour is not sticking to the bottom of the pan. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes. Discard the thyme sprig if using. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Version 1: At this point you can serve the soup as a "chunky tomato soup"

Version 2: Let the soup cool briefly and then purée in two or three batches in a blender or blend for a few minutes with an immersion blender. You will now have a smooth tomato soup that can be garnished with fresh basil, parmesan or cheddar cheese.

Version 3: After the soup is pureed and off the boil, add 1 1/2 cups of whipping cream or half and half for a creamy tomato soup. Heat gently after the cream has been added, do not bring to a boil. Serve warm but not hot, garnished with the basil or chives if desired.

(For comparison here are the ingredients in Campbell's Condensed Tomato Soup: WATER, TOMATO PASTE, SUGAR, WHEAT FLOUR, MODIFIED CORN STARCH, SALT, CANOLA OR SOYBEAN OIL, YEAST EXTRACT, CITRIC ACID, VINEGAR, DEHYDRATED ONIONS, DEHYDRATED GARLIC, FLAVOUR, SPICE)

VEGETARIAN

Cauliflower & Chickpea Curry

Serves 6-8

This recipe comes together very quickly if you make sure that all your ingredients are prepped beforehand. Combine all the spices into a small bowl, combine all the liquid ingredients in a 4-cup measure and combine all the vegetables into a large bowl. That way when you start cooking everything is close at hand.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, finely diced
3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
2 teaspoons curry powder
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon low sodium tomato paste
2 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup coconut milk
1 cup canned low sodium diced tomatoes, drained
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 small cauliflower, cut into florets
2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch-thick rounds
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 – 142 g (5 oz.) package baby spinach
Zest and juice of 1 lime
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt

Place a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat and add the oil. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until it begins to brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and add the garlic and ginger. Cook and stir for 1 minute to blend the flavours. Add the curry powder, coriander, cumin, cinnamon and cayenne. Stir for 30 seconds to toast the spices. Add the tomato paste and stir until well blended, another 30 seconds.

Add the broth, coconut milk, tomatoes, salt and pepper to taste and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the cauliflower, sweet potatoes, and carrots. Raise the heat to medium high and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low, cover, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Stir in the chickpeas, spinach, lime juice, and zest. Cook until the spinach has wilted, about 3 minutes more. Serve garnished with the cilantro and yogurt.

Cinco de Mayo Vegetarian Chili

Serves 10-12

This chili makes a large quantity that will feed a crowd. You can half the recipe or freeze any extra. You can add ground turkey or ground beef if desired. If you do so, cook the meat well before you sauté the onions and peppers

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large onions, diced
1 large carrot, diced
2 red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced or put through a press
1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely diced
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon dried oregano
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can crushed tomatoes
1- 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1- 540 ml (19 oz.) can small red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1- 540 ml (19 oz.) can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
2 cups frozen corn kernels
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 green onions, thinly sliced
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
1 lime, cut into wedges
Shredded cheddar cheese
Sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

Place a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Add onions, carrot, bell peppers, garlic, jalapeno pepper and spices. Cook the vegetables for 5 to 7 minutes or until the onions are soft.

Add the tomatoes, assorted beans, corn and salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat so it's just high enough to maintain a simmer. Continue cooking, uncovered, stirring frequently, until the flavours are blended and the chili thickens, about 30 minutes.

Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper if needed. Just before serving, stir in the green onions and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges, cheddar cheese and sour cream on the side.

Moroccan Eggplant and Chickpea Stew

Serves 4-6

This vegetarian dish is easy to prepare and very economical at this time of year when eggplants are in season. The spices can be modified to suit your family's tastes. You could also add cooked chicken to the dish before the final simmering. Browning the eggplant in the oven first helps it hold its shape and gives it a nice roasted flavour. This is one of those dishes that's even better the next day!

1 large eggplant
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 large onion, cut in half then sliced thin across the grain
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 teaspoons paprika
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup vegetable stock
1 – 796 ml (28 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Preheat the oven to 450°F. Line a baking sheet with foil. Brush the foil with olive oil or spray with non-stick cooking spray.

Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise then crosswise into 3/4-inch rounds. Place the eggplant slices on the foil, brush both sides with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and sprinkle lightly with kosher salt. Place in the oven for 15 minutes or until the eggplant is lightly browned. Turn half way through. Allow the eggplant to cool then cut into 1-inch chunks. Set aside.

Heat the other 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large, heavy skillet over medium high heat. Add the onion and garlic. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes. Add the paprika, chili powder, cinnamon cumin, cayenne, salt and pepper. Then stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Gradually stir in the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes, stirring frequently, until all the spices and tomato paste have been incorporated into the broth.

Add the diced tomatoes, chickpeas and eggplant to the pan. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to medium low. Simmer the stew, covered, until the vegetables are quite tender, about 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Taste for seasoning. Stir in the parsley and serve with brown rice or whole wheat couscous.

Southwest Stuffed Peppers

Serves 4-6

These hearty and filling stuffed peppers are one of those dishes that you can truly “make your own”. You can substitute small red kidney beans for the black beans, use any type of rice you have on hand any veggies that are in your fridge.

4 large bell peppers
2 cups cooked rice (brown, basmati, wild or a blend)
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup frozen kernel corn, thawed
3 green onions, chopped, white parts separated from green parts and greens reserved
1/4 cup chopped bell pepper tops
1 cup plain tomato sauce or strained tomatoes
2 teaspoons chilli powder
1 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon oregano
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup shredded cheese, cheddar, Monterey Jack or your favourite blend

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray and 9” x 13” baking dish with non-stick cooking spray.

Wash the peppers well and slice off tops and remove the seeds. Finely dice 2 pepper tops to add to the filling mixture and set aside. Slice the peppers in half and remove the white membranes. Place in the baking dish cut side down with a 1/2 cup water. Cover the dish with foil and roast the peppers for 30-40 minutes or until just tender. Drain and set aside.

While the peppers are roasting combine the filling ingredients. In a large bowl combine the cooked rice, black beans, corn, the chopped whites of the green onions, peppers tops, tomato sauce and seasonings. Mix well to combine.

Fill the peppers with the rice mixture. Cover the baking dish with foil and return to the oven. Bake for 15-20 minutes. Uncover and top the peppers with the shredded cheese. Bake for an additional 5-10 minutes or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.

Serve immediately garnished with sour cream or plain Greek yogurt and the reserved chopped green onions.

Spaghetti Squash Fritters

Serves 4-6

This is an easy way to use leftover spaghetti squash or a good alternative to potato cakes. You can serve these patties with a side of tomato sauce or top with a fried egg for breakfast. The spaghetti squash can be roasted the day ahead and refrigerated until ready to use.

1 medium spaghetti squash
1 large egg
2 green onions, white parts only, minced
1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/2 teaspoon mixed Italian seasoning
2 tablespoons bread crumbs (optional)
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 tablespoons canola or sunflower oil for frying

Pre-heat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and spray with non-stick cooking spray.

Remove the ends from the spaghetti squash. Cut it in half and scoop out the seeds. Drizzle the cut side of the squash with olive oil and lightly season with salt and pepper. Place the squash on the baking sheet, cut side down and roast for 30-40 minutes, or until the squash is very soft and lightly browned. Remove from the oven and let cool.

When the squash is cool enough to handle use a fork to scrape the flesh into strands. Scrape the strands into a clean tea towel. Wrap the towel around the squash and squeeze out the excess liquid. You should have 2 to 2 1/2 cups of squash.

Add the squash to a mixing bowl along with the egg, green onions, Italian seasonings, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Mix well with your hands or a wooden spoon.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil and when it is hot drop the squash mixture into the pan, about a 1/4 cup per patty. Fry the mixture until it is golden brown, then using two spatulas, carefully flip the patty. The patties are delicate! Fry on the other side until golden. Remove from the pan and let drain on paper towels.

Serve immediately plain or with the sauce of your choice.

Vegetable Stir-Fry

Serves 4-6

The key to a successful stir fry is to have all your ingredients chopped, mixed and ready to go before you start cooking. You can add any protein you like to this recipe, chicken, beef, shrimp or egg. Cook the protein first in your hot pan, then set aside on a plate and return it to the pan after the vegetables have finished cooking.

Sauce:

1 cup low sodium vegetable or chicken stock
3 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon honey
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 tablespoon cold water

4 eggs
1 teaspoon low sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon canola or sunflower oil
2 cloves garlic, minced or put through a press
1-inch piece ginger, peeled and grated
1 large carrot, cut into thin slices
1 large sweet onion, peeled and cut into slices
1 - 227g (8 oz.) bag sugar snap or snow peas, trimmed
2 bell peppers, seeded and cut into strips
1 – 227g (8 oz.) package white mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
1 small bunch asparagus, trimmed and sliced into 2" pieces

Combine the broth, soy sauce, honey, vinegar and sesame oil in a 2-cup measuring cup. Combine the cornstarch and water in a small bowl. Whisk both well and set aside.

Beat the eggs with 1 teaspoon soy sauce. Heat 1 teaspoon of the oil a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat. When pan is hot, add the egg and cook until no longer runny. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Return the pan to the heat and add 1 tablespoon of oil. Add the onions and carrots and cook for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the garlic, ginger, peas, peppers, mushrooms and asparagus. Cook while stirring for 3 to 5 minutes or until the vegetables are tender-crisp.

Whisk the sauce ingredients and cornstarch mixtures again to recombine. Add the sauce mixture to the pan and bring to a boil. Stir in the cornstarch mixture and cook until the sauce has thickened. Gently fold the eggs back into the vegetables. Serve immediately over brown rice.

Vegetarian Taco Skillet Supper

Serves 4-6

This vegetarian dinner comes together very quickly, especially if you do all your prep work beforehand. Make sure all your ingredients are pre-measured and ready to go before you start to cook. You can adjust the spice level to your own taste by adding more cayenne pepper or a hotter salsa. The leftovers make a great filling for burritos or quesadillas.

1 onion, peeled and diced
1 clove of garlic minced or put through a garlic press
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 cup uncooked brown rice, basmati or long grain
1/2 cup uncooked French green lentils, rinsed
2 1/2 cups low sodium vegetable stock, more as needed
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 teaspoon paprika, regular or smoked
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional (or more to taste)
Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste
1 – 540 ml (19 oz.) can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 cup diced tomatoes, drained
1 cup jarred salsa
1 small zucchini, shredded
1 cup frozen corn
1 cup shredded cheese, cheddar or Monterrey Jack or a blend of the two
Chopped cilantro for garnish (optional)

Place a large skillet with a lid over medium high heat. Add the olive oil then sauté the onions and garlic until softened, 3 to 5 minutes.

Stir in the rice and lentils. Sauté for an additional 2 minutes, then stir in the vegetable broth. Bring the liquid to a boil. Once boiling, cover the pan and reduce the heat to low.

Simmer the rice and lentils for 20 to minutes, or until they're tender and the liquid has been absorbed. Taste the lentils for doneness and add more broth to the pan, about 1/4 cup, if the mixture seems too dry.

Stir the chili powder, paprika, oregano, cumin and cayenne. Lightly season the mixture with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Add in the black beans, diced tomatoes, salsa, zucchini, corn and 3/4 of the cheese. Stir gently to combine.

Smooth the mixture with the back of a spoon. Top with the remaining cheese and cover with a lid. Heat on low until the cheese is melted and the mixture is bubbly.

Garnish with the cilantro. Serve with lime wedges, sour cream or plain Greek yogurt if desired.



Laura Lenson has lived in the Niagara Region for her entire life. She is very proud of her Indigenous heritage. Her paternal grandmother, Helen Dockstader Baird, was Cayuga from Six Nations.

Laura graduated from Brock University in 1987 with a BA, Music Major. She taught piano privately for more than 25 years. As much as she loved music and her students, her passion was always cooking.

She made the decision to follow that passion and in 2006 enrolled in a personal chef course through United States/Canada Personal Chef Association at their school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After her training she opened her personal chef service, **Laura's Custom Cuisine**.

After working with private clients, she was contracted by the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle (IDHC). She has cooked diabetes friendly meals for meetings and training sessions and provided lunches with budget friendly recipes for IDHC's Heathy Lifestyle Fridays and Wellness Wednesdays. She recently compiled her recipes into a cookbook to help everyone make heathy, tasty, easy to prepare meals.

The best part of her job, however, was teaching cooking classes the second Thursday of each month at IDHC. In the **"Let's Cook with Laura"** series, participants learned how to make the most of their food dollar and gain confidence in the kitchen.

Laura has catered for the Niagara Regional Native Centre Three Fires Justice volunteer appreciation dinner, provided a daily lunch program for the Niagara Peninsula Area Aboriginal Management Board (NPAAMB) programming at Niagara College and catered the VIP Reception at the Celebration of Nations. She also led a lunch and cooking skills program at Bethlehem Housing in Niagara Falls and a cooking skills program at Soaring Eagles Secondary School in Thorold.



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