

EAT GREEN • LIVE WELL

vegetarian

times

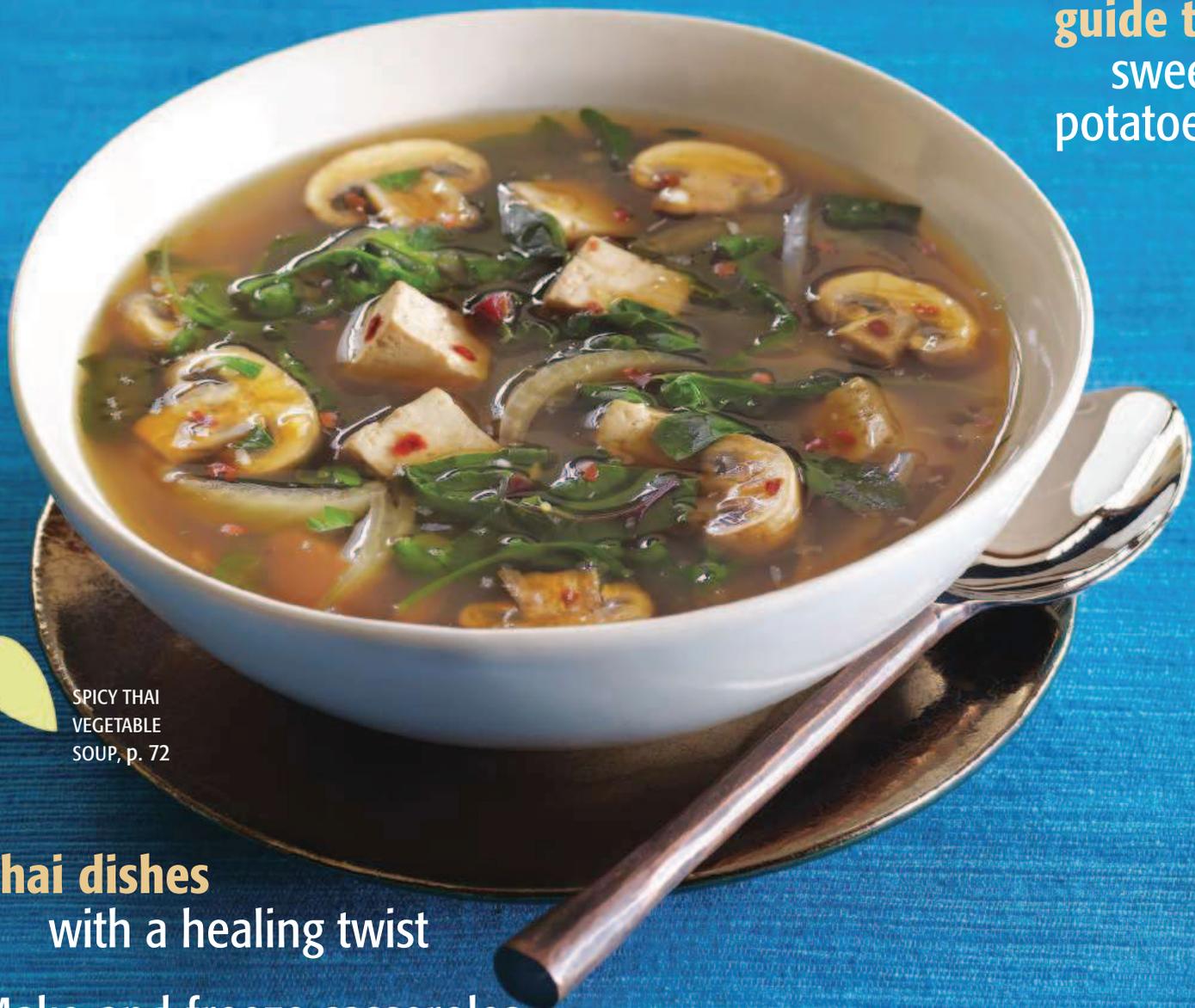
January 2010
vegetariantimes.com

light & easy

33 tasty, healthy recipes
under 300 calories

5 vegetarian
weight-gain
traps
+ how to
avoid 'em

A cook's
guide to
sweet
potatoes



SPICY THAI
VEGETABLE
SOUP, p. 72

Thai dishes
with a healing twist

Make-and-freeze casseroles

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¹Moyad, M. et al. *Adv Ther.* 2008. Oct; 25(10): 995-1009. Dr. Moyad is a consultant to The Ester C Company.

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Circle reply #22 on Info Center card

the real deal

The week before we went to press with this issue of *VT*, the Bravo reality series *Top Chef* grabbed my attention. It was episode 10, when the competing chefs stepped into the kitchen of Tom Colicchio's posh Las Vegas eatery Craft-

steak, all of them pumped and primed to cook up a meaty feast.

You can imagine the contestants' surprise, then, when host Padma Lakshmi presented the challenge of the week: to create a winning meal for actress Natalie Portman, who is ... wait for it ... *vegetarian*.

Jaws dropped. Panic and culinary mishaps ensued. Seven professional chefs proceeded to blow my mind with their strangely limited definition of a vegetarian meal. By and large, the dishes were sparse, vegetables-only assemblages, with barely any beans and not a single grain to be seen.

I found this especially surprising because on the same day the show aired, our team had been putting the finishing touches on the story of *VT*'s own Chefs' Challenge ("Honor Roll," p. 58). In this annual contest, we invite students from the graduating classes of America's top cooking schools to create recipes for *VT* readers.

Instead of drama, student chefs from all across the country served up simply spectacular recipes, proving that America's cooking schools are brimming with talent, skill, and inspiration.

And for that, we say, *bravo!*

Elizabeth Turner



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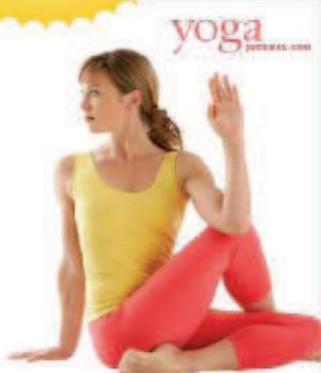
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contributors



Lindsay Nixon

Recipe Developer, "No-Brainer Brunch," p. 48

What is your New Year's resolution?

To break up with Starbucks. Their soy chai lattes are addictive!

What did you discover while on this assignment?

How to make "egg" nog from scratch. It's all about the nutmeg. Who knew?

What's your No. 1 grocery splurge?

Ghirardelli Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips!

What's your No. 1 pantry staple?

Chickpeas. I buy three cans every time I'm at the store for fear they might run out. I have at least 10 cans in my apartment right now.

What was your best improvisatory moment in the kitchen?

I had taco shells, but no faux taco meat. So, I mixed chickpeas with taco seasoning—best tacos I've ever had, and one of my most popular recipes.



Robyn Valarik

Food Stylist, "Balancing Act," p. 70

What is your New Year's resolution?

I don't make them. I believe every day is an opportunity to start anew.

What did you discover while on this assignment?

Tofu can be surprisingly good.

What's your most treasured family recipe?

The Czech nut cookies my dad's been making my whole life. He still grinds the walnuts with his hand-crank grinder.

What's your favorite piece of cookware?

The 12-inch cast iron skillet I bought at a flea market in New York 15 years ago.

What fruit or veggie best describes you and why?

Coconut. It takes some patience and hard work to unveil its sweet interior.



Su-Mei Yu

Recipe Developer, "Balancing Act," p. 70

What is your New Year's resolution?

To promote the cooking and eating of healthful and seasonal food among the new generation of Thais.

What's your No. 1 pantry staple?

Salt from the Gulf of Siam.

What's your favorite piece of cookware?

My mother's granite mortar and pestle.

What fruit or veggie best describes you and why?

Banana. I was forced to have a couple each day at boarding school in Thailand. It became a lifelong habit.

What was your most memorable dining experience?

Cooking and eating dishes made from blossoms by Burmese refugees who work as gardeners at my friend's estate. 🌱

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letters

LENTIL LOVE

I just cooked the Curried Red Lentil Soup with Lemon from the October issue (1 Food 5 Ways, “Lentils,” p. 63), and I have to tell you what a great soup it is. It’s filling and full of warm flavors and protein. I served it with a spring salad and sourdough rolls, and my family loved it! Another plus: it was easy and affordable.

DIANE SMITH | SEATTLE

I just made the Yellow Lentil Dal (p. 64). Oh, my gosh, it is so good I might just make a batch every week and keep it in the fridge. My only suggestion is that someone cooking for children will probably want to omit the red pepper flakes. I decreased the amount from 2 teaspoons to 1, but my kids would have enjoyed it more without any red pepper flakes.

JEAN TOCK | VIA E-MAIL

SHARE: Reader Recipe

Planet Burgers

MAKES 9 BURGERS | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

~~1 1/2 cups cooked brown rice~~
 Serve on whole-grain hamburger buns with condiments.

- 3 cups cooked brown rice
- 12 oz. cooked chickpeas, mashed
- 1 medium onion, chopped (1½ cups)
- 4 oz. cooked red beans or adzuki beans, mashed
- 1 medium carrot, shredded (½ cup)

1. ~~1 1/2 cups cooked brown rice~~
 Stir together all ingredients in large bowl. Shape 9 ½-inch-thick patties.
2. Coat nonstick skillet with cooking spray, and heat over medium-high heat. Cook patties in skillet 4 to 5 minutes per side, or until browned on outside and cooked through on inside. (Use wide spatula to flip burgers; they can be fragile.)

PER SERVING: 253 CAL; 10 G PROT; 9 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 34 G CARB; 47 MG CHOL; 282 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 4 G SUGARS



ANIMAL INSPIRATION

Thank you for the interview with the inspiring and venerable primate expert Jane Goodall (October, One-on-One, p. 44). For decades she has traveled the globe to implore people to respect the lives of all animals, and it’s high time for Jane Goodall to be in the spotlight. Peace Prize for her good deeds.

sunflower seeds COMERFORD | GLENVIEW, ILL.

- ½ cup dried parsley
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp. dried thyme

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE OMISSION

What a fantastic issue (November/December)—loved the look back through the years, and *really* loved Bryant Terry’s Thanksgiving recipes (“Soul Celebration,” p. 58). I did, however, notice that the Carrot & Stick column was omitted. I hope you haven’t removed it permanently.

DIANNE HANLON-DRUYFF | MARBLEHEAD, MASS.

Editors’ Note: Don’t worry, Dianne, Carrot & Stick is back this month. Check it out on p. 22.

FREEZER PLEASURES

I have one request for a topic I’d love to see: make-ahead freezer meals.

MEAGAN SOUSA | GEORGETOWN, MASS.

Editors’ Note: We were thinking about publishing Meat Vag Check

p. 30) for a few great one-dish meals you can freeze and enjoy



Back to Basics? We Never Left!

It's a bit old fashioned, but for decades I've been creating wholesome and delicious whole grain products following the same process honed over millennia - stone milling. It imparts a delicious flavor and preserves all of the nutrients in the grains we mill. I believe there's no better way of creating the hundreds of Bob's Red Mill products available on grocery store shelves throughout the country. And I hope you agree.

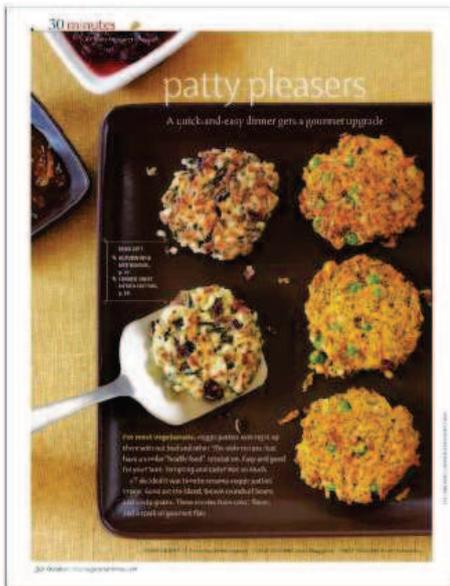
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HEALTHFUL CHOICES

I decided to make some much-needed improvements to my diet as I had been backsliding due to a tight schedule and stress at work. So far I've made the Curried Red Lentil Soup with Lemon (October, p. 63) and the Curried Sweet Potato Fritters (October, "Patty Pleasers," p. 34). Both turned out great! I happened to have some pineapple lemongrass chutney on hand, so I used that instead of mango with the fritters, and it was really yummy. Thanks, *VT*, for helping me get back on the right path!

ELIZABETH HANCOCK | VIA E-MAIL

SAVE WATER, GO VEG

I enjoyed reading "Why Go Veg?" (Resources, vegetariantimes.com), but I did notice a key point was missing: the importance to save water. In today's world of scarce resources, this is a *big issue*. Something like 100 times the amount of water is needed to produce 1 pound of meat, compared to 1 pound of grain. Which means one of the greatest positive impacts we can have is simply switching from a meat-based diet to a vegetarian one.

TOM FOX | VIA E-MAIL

tell vt What is your favorite meal to start the New Year?

Because we always go hiking on New Year's Day, I need something that can be made quickly when we get home. I combine all the elements of good luck in one dish I call Island Hoppin' John. [It has] greens, black-eyed peas, rice, and tomatoes! —CRIS

We like vegetarian BBQ Riblets, sauerkraut, and mashed potatoes. —HEIDI

Homemade vegan blueberry pancakes with molasses, and iced white tea for a cool drink. Don't forget the oranges! —THOMAS

I love thin-crust pizza covered with fresh veggies: sliced tomatoes, onions, peppers, cooked eggplant, and garlic. —CAROLINE

I like to keep it simple with a bowl of organic vanilla yogurt topped with organic raspberries. Then I go for a run in the frosty Maine

air and begin the New Year feeling invigorated and clean. —JULIE

To fit with the Mexican tradition of menudo for New Year's, I've decided to make my favorite Vegetarian Posole Stew (from vegetariantimes.com). It is the perfect vegetarian alternative. —MELISSA

I always make black-eyed pea hash with baked brown rice, jalapeño cheese cornbread, and a tangy slaw. Us Southern folk gotta have black-eyed peas for good luck and cabbage for money. —STEPHANIE

Vegetarian paella and champagne! —JENNIFER

In San Antonio, tamales are the traditional Christmas Eve and New Year's Day feast. Instead of the typical pork fare, my family has fallen in love with bean tamales. Try this wonderful South Texas treat, you won't regret it! —PAMELA

My grandmother is German, and it has always been a tradition to eat jelly donuts after the New Year begins. —JILL

Totally in line with my Italian heritage: pasta lenticchie. Grandma served it on New Year's to bring prosperity and health to the family, and now I have an uncanny craving for it every year. —GINA



next question:

For calorie-conscious cooks, vinegar is an essential flavor enhancer. What's your favorite vinegar, and how do you use it?

Visit vegetariantimes.com/tellvt to share your answer—and see what others have to say. Our favorite responses will be published in the next issue of *VT*.

FAB 5

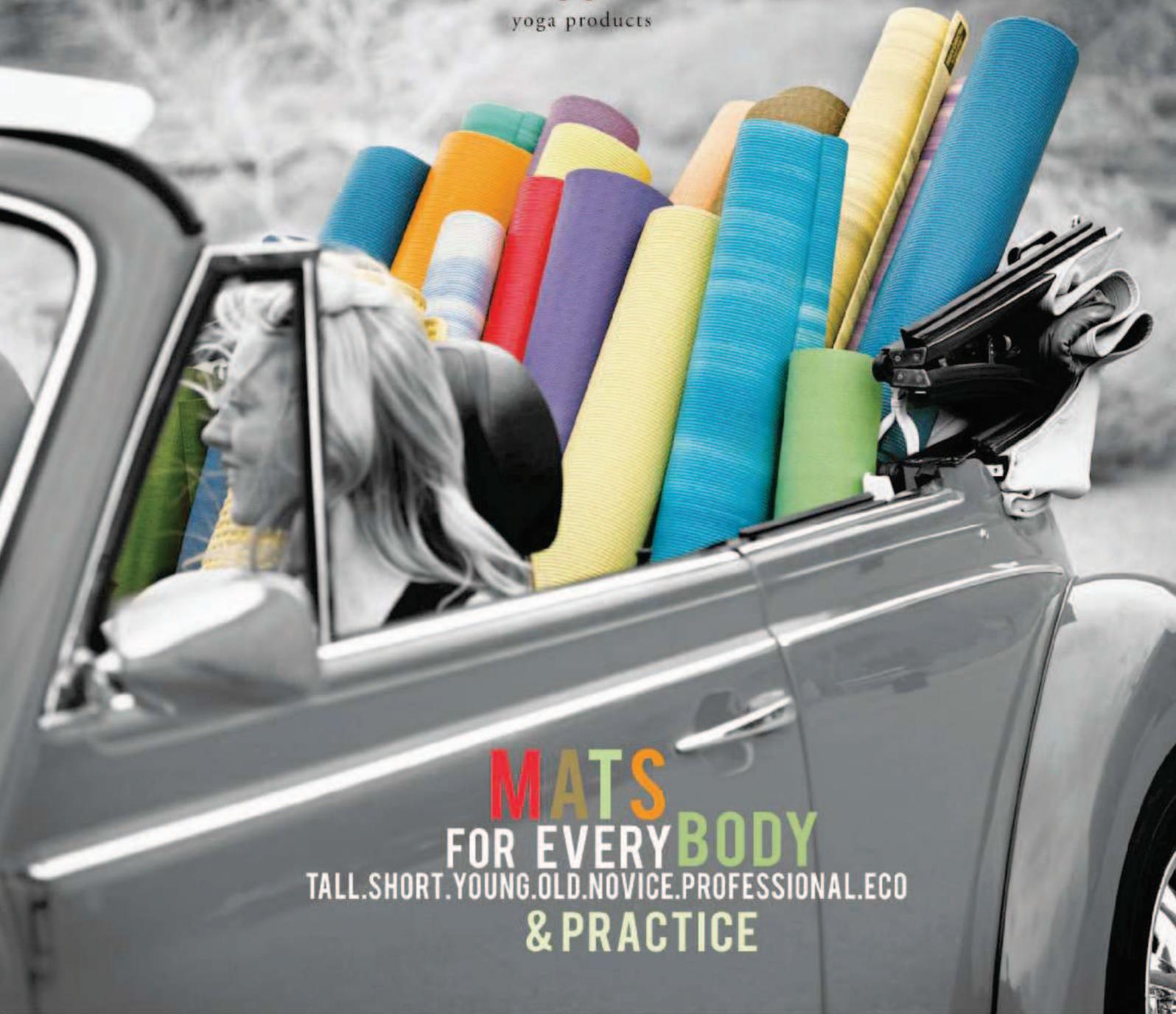
We only print recipes we think are terrific, but each month we always have a few favorites. These are our top five from this issue:

- 1. Citrus Salad, p. 75
- 2. Spicy Sun-Dried Tomato Soup with White Beans & Swiss Chard, p. 65
- 3. Balsamic Port Sauce with Dried Cherries and Rosemary, p. 41
- 4. Arame-Vegetable Strudels, p. 44
- 5. Sweet Potato Latkes, p. 57

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THIS JUST IN

EDITED BY Amy Spitalnick ILLUSTRATIONS Aya Kakeda

Need-to-know info about your health, diet, mind, body, and the world you live in



green teamwork

Some of us put in enough hours at the office that it can feel like a second home—and that means your workday eco-imprint may be bigger than you'd like. But it can also be tough to change hardwired, officewide practices with just one voice. So, if you're still searching for a New Year's resolution, here's one: organize a green team devoted to making the office a more environmentally sustainable place.

Be sure to sign up key players to initiate your green team, advises Mary

Lynn Wilhere, business outreach coordinator with Washington, D.C.'s District Department of the Environment: "You want a mix of people who are passionate about environmental issues, but also people with authority who can make decisions." Once your team is a go, do your best to recruit at least one member from each department.

"Start with easy wins, such as switching to Forest Stewardship Council-certified or recycled copy paper and setting printers to print pages on both

sides," suggests Jennifer Gerholdt, program officer with the World Wildlife Fund, who's worked with a green team at WWF. Later, you might try to win approval for installing energy-efficient lightbulbs, setting lights and equipment on timers so they turn off after a period of inactivity, and establishing recycling and composting in the break room.

As important as sustainability is, try not to take yourself too seriously. "Make it fun, so you avoid green fatigue," advises Wilhere.

—EMILY HORTON

Idea Factory For more tips on starting up a green team, visit greening.usda.gov, and click on Green Teams.

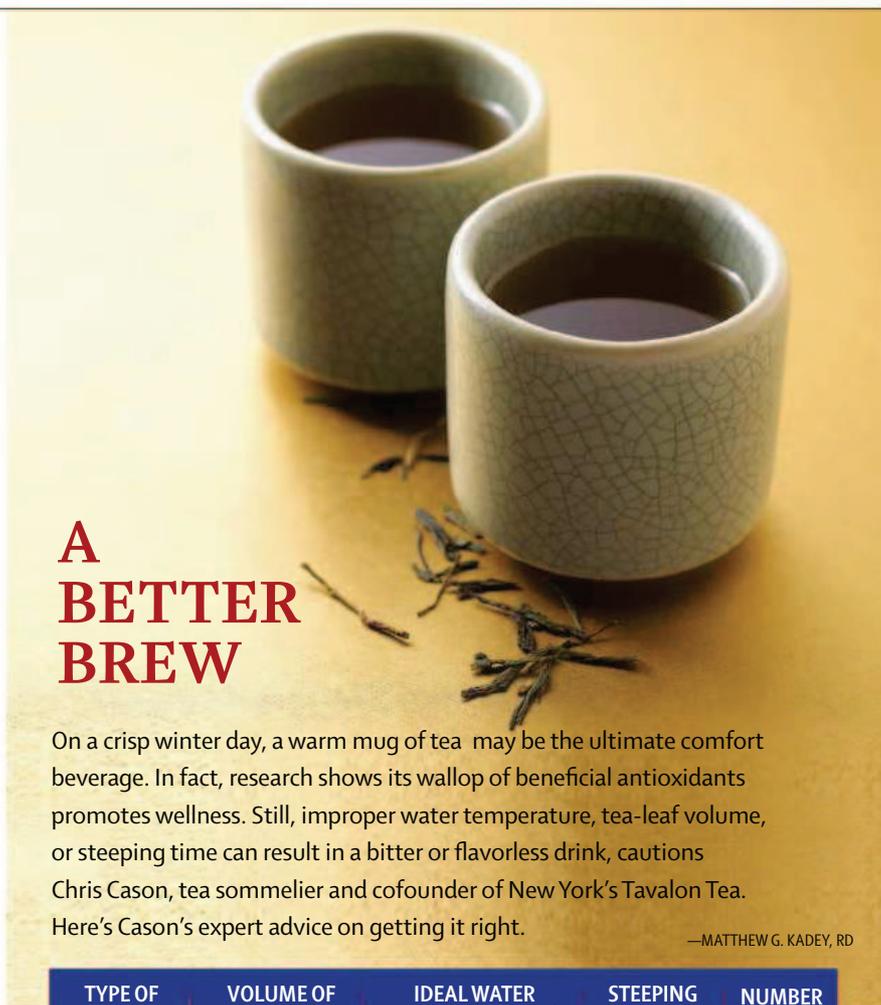
baking builds muscle

Baking isn't just yummy fun, it's also therapeutic, especially for kids like Marwa. Marwa suffers from a medical condition that leaves her bones extremely fragile, forcing her to rely on crutches and braces to walk. Kneading dough helps strengthen her arm and shoulder muscles, so she can better wield these tools. Plus, learning to follow the steps in a recipe benefits her schoolwork. Marwa's rehabilitative baking class is a project of Jerusalem's nonprofit ALYN Hospital (alyn.org).



PHOTO: CATHY LANYARD

Marwa, age 4



A BETTER BREW

On a crisp winter day, a warm mug of tea may be the ultimate comfort beverage. In fact, research shows its wallop of beneficial antioxidants promotes wellness. Still, improper water temperature, tea-leaf volume, or steeping time can result in a bitter or flavorless drink, cautions Chris Cason, tea sommelier and cofounder of New York's Tavalon Tea. Here's Cason's expert advice on getting it right.

—MATTHEW G. KADEY, RD

TYPE OF TEA	VOLUME OF TEA LEAVES (tsp. per 8 oz. water)	IDEAL WATER TEMPERATURE (°F)	STEEPING TIME	NUMBER OF STEEPS *
White	1.5	180 (steam with no bubbles)	2–3 minutes	2–3
Green	1.5	180 (steam with no bubbles)	2–3 minutes	6
Oolong	1–1.5	190–200 (steam with lazy bubbles)	3 minutes	6
Black	1	212 (rolling boil)	4–5 minutes	1–2
Rooibos/ Yerba Maté	1	212 (rolling boil)	5 minutes	5–6

* Bacteria like wet tea leaves, so Cason recommends you don't wait too long between infusions—say, about 2 hours.



Settle in by the fire for an entertaining take on such heady topics as diet, ethics, the environment, and animal rights, courtesy of the hosts of Vegan Radio—who include Megan Shackelford of Oh Sweet Mama's Vegan Bakery in Florence, Mass. You might even catch a musical guest. Subscriptions to podcasts of the program, broadcast biweekly on WXOJ-LP 103.3 FM in Northampton, Mass., are available via iTunes.

what we're eating too much of this month



Score a handful of savory **Flamous Falafel Chips**, and you'll dodge an empty-calorie snack attack. Hearty with organic corn and chickpeas, these chips pack impressive amounts of protein and fiber. Plus, they're sturdy enough to hold up to the thickest party dip. \$4.89/8 oz.; flamousbrands.com

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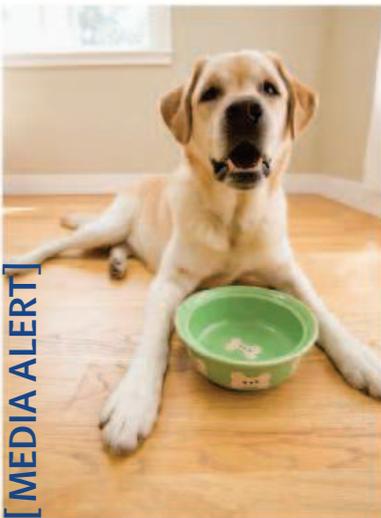
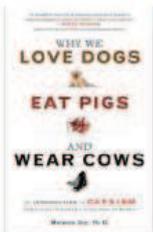
The percentage that vegetarian offerings have increased in school nutrition programs since 2007.

[Source: School Nutrition Association]



comfortably numb?

"*Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows* is the book I'd always wished I'd had to give to the carnists in my own life, so I could say, 'Here, read this and you'll understand me, why I'm vegan, and also why you and I have such a different perspective on the same issue,'" says the book's author, University of Massachusetts, Boston, psychology and sociology professor Melanie Joy, PhD. Joy coined the term "carnism" to bring to light a belief system that makes it possible for people to eat some animals and not others—a system so ingrained, its assumptions go unquestioned. It's also a book to enlighten vegetarians. "Carnism helps us realize that asking someone to stop eating meat is asking for a profound shift of consciousness," Joy says.



[MEDIA ALERT]



[Q&A]

COURTESY PETA

The **Montreal Canadiens** hockey team got a fighter when they traded for Georges Laraque in July 2008. That year, *Sports Illustrated* named Laraque the game's best enforcer: his job is to protect his teammates while roughing up the opposition. Off the ice he fights for animal rights; the 6-foot-3 athlete became a vegan in 2009, after seeing the film *Earthlings*. —PATRICK CAIN

Q What motivates you to be an activist?

A Animals cannot defend themselves—people have to do it for them. That's why I wanted to do protests [with PETA]. Animals are dying every single day. It's my duty to educate people.

Q How do you reconcile your image as a tough hockey player with your caring side?

A I want people to know the real me, and while fighting on the ice is my job, it's not who I am as a person. I try to help as many people as I can. I don't only look out for the welfare of animals; I also do charity work on the behalf of kids, like Play It Smart [a community outreach program with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania]. The impact you have on kids when you're an athlete is unreal.

Q Has your switch to a vegan diet affected your athletic performance?

A I've never felt better in my life. I'm less tired; my body has more energy. It's unbelievable! When you become a vegan, you learn to put the right stuff in your body.

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Amy's Spinach Pizza Snacks

easy eats

In case the holidays have run you ragged and you need a break from the kitchen, we've rounded up four tasty frozen appetizers to pick up the slack—whether you're hosting a New Year's get-together or a game-day bash. —GABRIELLE HARRADINE

12

The percentage of Americans surveyed who reported eating a food they thought had been recalled.

[Source: Rutgers' Food Policy Institute]

FAB FROZEN FIND	SUPER FOR ...	CAN'T EAT JUST ONE BECAUSE ...	SHOPPING INFO
Alexia Onion Rings	Game day	The salty crunch and juicy inside are a scrumptious match.	\$3.49/13.5 oz.; alexiafoods.com
Amy's Spinach Pizza Snacks	Game-day, or after-school snack	The blend of cheese and spinach will warm you on a wintry day.	\$3.69/6 oz.; amys.com
			
The Fillo Factory Assorted Quiche	Brunch, or as dinner starters	They're not just yummy, but fun to eat.	\$5.89/12 pieces; fillofactory.com
The Perfect Bite Co. Zucchini Cakes	Brunch, or as party pleasers	Subtly spiced, each pairs perfectly with a dollop of Greek yogurt.	\$12/dozen; theperfectbiteco.com

[TASTE TEST]



Karyn Calabrese serves up tantalizing meat- and dairy-free dishes in her Chicago restaurants Karyn's Cooked and Karyn's Raw. A new year is all about getting unstuck from ruts, so we asked Calabrese,

"What vegetarian dish is most in need of redemption, and what's your advice on redeeming it?"

Most in need of a makeover is the bland vegetarian staple of steamed rice and boiled vegetables. Having been a vegan for over 30 years, there is no way I could have stuck to the diet eating bland, boring food! I need spice, flavor, and excitement in life, including in what I eat.

At Karyn's Cooked, I've created two variations on the rice and veggie staple. One is the Asian-inspired Buddha Bowl: a stir-fry of brown rice, tofu, broccoli, red peppers, zucchini, onions, cauliflower, carrots, garlic, ginger, and turmeric in a teriyaki sauce. The second I call Southern Comfort—here, the rice is spiced Cajun style with cayenne, paprika, and cumin; it's mixed with thyme-flavored kidney beans, and served with collard greens seasoned with onion, and a side of cornbread.

—MATT KIROUAC



NATURAL Rx

Problem: Sore gums

Solution: Neem

The scoop: As if swollen and bleeding gums weren't tormenting enough, gum disease has been associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Extracts of the neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*), whose use dates back to ancient India, may be of help. A study in the *Journal of Medicinal Plants Research* found that a neem-leaf-extract-based mouth rinse eased gum inflammation over a period of four weeks.

What to look for: A mouthwash containing extracts from neem leaves or neem bark, which herbalist Michael Tierra, coauthor of *The Way of Ayurvedic Herbs*, says also harbors powerful anti-inflammatory compounds. Use at least twice a day.

—DAN FIELDS



Try: TheraNeem Herbal Mouthwash, \$12.95/16 oz. (organixsouth.com); Neem Tree Farms Neem Bark Mouthwash, \$8.99/2 oz., concentrated, makes 8 oz. of mouthwash (neemtreefarms.com)

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[DO THE RESEARCH]

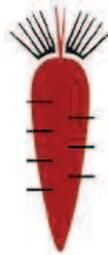
notice more, eat less

If you eat mindfully, you're apt to weigh less than if you heedlessly wolf down your food, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Mindfulness is defined as nonjudgmental awareness of the present moment; mindful eating was assessed by a questionnaire that asked study participants if they stopped eating when full, and whether they noticed the subtle flavors in foods and were attentive to how food affected their emotional state. Higher scores on the questionnaire were associated with a lower BMI. The study also revealed a link between eating mindfully and practicing yoga, suggesting that mindful eating is a skill you can learn.

carrot & stick

Who walks the walk ...who's nothing but talk

CARROT TO



Bundanoon, Australia, for becoming the first town Down Under to ban the sale of bottled water. This past July, 356 residents filed into the most attended town meeting in Bundanoon history and voted overwhelmingly to back the ban, known as Bundy on Tap, or BOT. The initiative, which garnered just one nay, is a clear win for the planet. It will help reduce not just the amount of plastic accumulating in landfills, but also the more than 456,000 barrels of oil required to produce, package, transport, and refrigerate the nearly 600 million liters of bottled water Aussies consume each year—not to mention the 60,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere in the process.

BOT sprang up following an outcry over Sydney-based beverage company Norlex's intention to build a water extraction plant in town. When Bundanoon residents nixed that plan, Norlex plotted to extract local water and truck it out of town for bottling. BOT mastermind Huw Kingston, owner of two Bundanoon-based businesses, penned a call for action in the local quarterly—which he summarizes by saying, "if we as a community were against having a water extraction plant in town, then perhaps we should look at not having the end product in town." This past September, instead of stocking Norlex's and its competitors' bottled H₂O, Bundanoon stores cleared their coolers and began selling reusable bottles. The town has also installed four filtered-water drinking fountains with spouts that allow for easy refilling.

STICK TO



Families Organized to Represent the Coal Economy, aka F.O.R.C.E., for its *Eyes for Frosty* story and coloring book that sells the next generation on the virtues of coal. The story opens as three young children put the finishing touches on a snowman and innocently ask where they can find coal for the eyes. Enter Power Rock and his sidekick, Spurt, who tell the children how coal is made, harvested, and used—without so much as a mention that burning coal is a leading cause of global warming, acid rain, and smog.

That's quite a bit of propaganda for a group whose self-professed goal is "to provide accurate and balanced information to Pennsylvania citizens about the contributions and benefits of a healthy coal industry." For balance, F.O.R.C.E. might have added that in an average year, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, a coal plant generates 10,200 tons of nitrogen oxide, which forms lung inflammation—triggering smog. Or they could have illustrated what the Environmental Protection Agency estimates are 1.5 million fish trapped against structures that annually draw 2.2 billion gallons of water up from lakes, rivers, and oceans to turn the turbines at a typical coal-fired power plant.

—RACHEL DOWD

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- D.T., Utah



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3. HAPPY BUNCH

Make rounding up veggies for cooking or storage quick and easy with reusable silicone Fusion Brands Food Loops. \$10/4 loops; fusionbrands.com

4. ALL IN ONE

Progressive International Stainless Steel Magnetic Measuring Spoons combine two shapes for scooping ease and magnets to keep it all together. \$13.06/set of 5; amazon.com

5. CLEARLY BETTER

No more plastic in the microwave, thanks to the Pyrex 3-piece Bake, Serve 'N Store Set. Use the glass lid for cooking and reheating, the plastic lid for storage and portability. \$9.99; pyrexware.com

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EYE REHAB

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2 Kimberly Sayer Cellular Extract Eye

1 At the start of your day, dab **Aubrey Organics Lumessence Rejuvenating Eye Crème with Liposomes** (aubrey-organics.com)

(\$38/1 oz.; aubrey-organics.com)

Research suggests **Cellular Extract Eye**

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(\$25/1.4 oz.; jason-natural.com),

Smooth away fine **Jurlique Eye Makeup Remover**

(jurlique.com)

While getting plenty **Jason red elements™ Lifting Eye Crème**

(shown in jason-natural.com)

DIY REFRESHERS

Treat your peepers to these at-home remedies from Julie Gabriel, author of *The Green Beauty Guide* and founder of the Petite Marie Organics skin care line.

For dark circles:

Grate a raw potato in a bowl, then use two cotton pads to soak up the juice, rich in the skin-lightening enzyme catecholase. Fold the pads in half, and place one under each eye; let pads rest there until completely dry.

For puffy eyes:

Brew a cup of black tea with two tea bags, then chill the bags in the fridge. Apply the bags directly to your closed eyelids, pressing slightly so that the antioxidant-packed tea penetrates your skin.

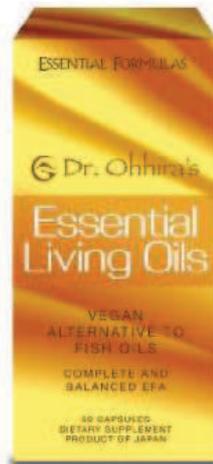
For fine lines:

Blend equal amounts of castor seed, pumpkin seed, and flaxseed organic oils, plentiful in nourishing and hydrating essential fatty acids. Each morning and night, dab a few drops around your eyes, avoiding the area near the lash line and making sure oil is absorbed. —E.B.



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fire starters

Can the foods I eat trigger unwanted inflammation?

Q What exactly is chronic inflammation, and should I be worried about it?

A Inflammation is your body's natural response to injury. It aims to stop the damage and start the healing process. If you were to fall down and skin your knee, you'd see inflammation in action. The redness and swelling all around the wound means that your blood vessels are expanding, bringing in white blood cells and antibodies to knock out invading bacteria, along with proteins and other nutrients to repair the damage.

So inflammation is a good thing, and even essential—up to a point. The problem is all that swelling and repair work can be painful (which is why anti-inflammatory medicines, such as ibuprofen, are effective painkillers). Also, sometimes inflammation kicks in at completely inappropriate times. In common rheumatoid arthritis, for example, joints become painful and swollen when there's been no injury at all.

Worse, this process can sometimes happen, not just in a skinned knee or arthritic joints, but all over your body. It is as if your whole system has gone on red alert, ready to attack potential infections and repair injuries. Your cells release various compounds into your bloodstream that keep inflammation going when you don't actually need it.

This exaggerated response plays a role in a wide variety of health problems. In your lungs, inflammation leads to asthma. In your digestive tract, inflammation causes the pain and diarrhea of Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. In the arteries, it contributes to heart disease.

Q Are there certain foods that trigger or quiet inflammation?

A: Yes, plenty of them. Common food allergies are inflammation in overdrive. The most extreme example is a peanut allergy, which can be life-threatening. Most other food allergies are much milder, but they all mean that something you ate triggered inflammation.

In research studies, certain foods have been shown to trigger arthritis symptoms, presumably by sparking inflammation of the tissues lining the joints. The most common triggers are dairy products, corn, meats, wheat (and sometimes rye and oats), eggs, citrus fruits, potatoes, tomatoes, nuts, coffee, and sugar.

Certain fats and oils can fan the flames of inflammation. Meats contain arachidonic acid, which, in your body, is converted to prostaglandin E₂,

ILLUSTRATION Gilbert Ford

Flax oil is loaded with alpha-linolenic acid, an essential omega-3 fatty acid with strong anti-inflammatory effects.

a compound that sparks inflammation. Plants do not contain arachidonic acid, but some common cooking oils—particularly corn, sunflower, safflower, and cottonseed oils—can produce prostaglandin E₂.

On the other hand, diets rich in vegetables and fruits help prevent inflammation from kicking in unnecessarily. In a recent study at the University of Minnesota, researchers tracked the diets of 285 adolescents and looked for signs of inflammation on blood tests. It turned out that the more vegetables and fruits the adolescents ate, the less inflammation they had. Many other studies have shown the same thing.

Q Are there any supplements that can help?

A Yes. Flax oil is loaded with alpha-linolenic acid, or ALA, an essential omega-3 fatty acid with strong anti-inflammatory effects. ALA is also found in flaxseeds, walnuts, soy products, wheat germ, and canola oil; trace amounts are in common vegetables, fruits, and beans. A second natural fatty acid, gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), is found in evening primrose, borage, black currant, and hemp oils. You will find all these oils at natural food stores. A typical daily regimen would include each of the following:

- **Flaxseed oil:** 1 tablespoon.
- **Evening primrose, borage, or black currant oil:** look for brands containing 1.4 to 2.8 grams of GLA.
- **Vitamin E:** 400 IU. Vitamin E

protects against oxidation of the other oils.

Researchers have found an anti-inflammatory effect of ginseng in test-tube studies of human cells. The effect appears to be due to natural compounds called ginsenosides.

It pays to choose foods that limit inflammation. That means avoiding meats, fried foods, and any trigger foods that seem to cause symptoms for you, and emphasizing vegetables and fruits. If you need an extra anti-inflammatory boost, natural supplemental oils may be helpful. 🌱

Neal Barnard, MD, lives in Washington, where he always wears knee pads when he straps on his Rollerblades, and eats plenty of fruits and vegetables.

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Four make-ahead casseroles that have plenty of flavor—and flair



SWEET POTATO,
SHEPHERD'S PIE, p. 34

freezer pleasers

Wouldn't it be great to come home after a long, cold day, throw a pan into the oven, and within an hour and a half (just in time for dinner) have a fragrant, piping hot, homemade entrée ready to put on the table? These casseroles deliver on that dream. Prepared ahead, they retain their fresh-made flavor for up to four months, and they can go straight from freezer to oven. Plus, they're a far cry from calorie- and fat-laden condensed-soup-and-cup-of-cheese casseroles. From a comforting shepherd's pie to a spicy samosa casserole, they're just the things to chase away those winter dinner blues.



GLUTEN FREE

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There are many reasons why controlling our weight is important for most of us. We like to have a trim body for our own vanity, self-esteem and to be more attractive to others. However, if those were the only reasons then we, as nutritionists, would not have created a diet product. An overweight body is not a really healthy body. Clinical studies repeatedly show overweight individuals have a much higher incidence of diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and a myriad of other serious complaints. These are matters that have little to do with vanity and everything to do with health. Health is our business and the slim good looks that go with a healthy body is a fringe benefit.

While there are many so-called meal substitute products on the market, none properly take into account all the nutritional factors necessary to make them really work. Unfortunately, eating fewer calories alone does not guarantee you will lose weight. When you severely reduce your caloric intake you may well be depriving your body of many nutrients it must have to maintain good health. When your body is missing these vital nutrients it thinks you are starving. This triggers a survival mode response. Your body holds on to fat so you won't starve. That is why Lewis Laboratories developed Weigh Down™. It is truly a nutritionists' diet plan that covers all the bases. It provides at least 100% of all

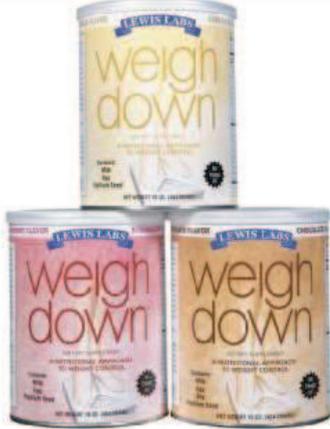
vitamins, minerals, proteins and fiber you need, plus digestive enzymes, so these nutrients can readily be used. Weigh Down™ also contains an effective level of three important lipotropic factors: choline, inositol and carnitine, which actually help burn fat deposits. Weigh Down™ provides every nutritional element for a successful diet with only 98 calories per serving.

Each serving of Weigh Down™ also contains an effective quantity of Lewis Laboratories' special blend of fruit, grain and vegetable fiber. By providing the necessary bulk material your body needs, it helps to ensure proper digestive functioning and gives you the *full* feeling of having had enough to eat.

Most diet plans claim they make it easy to lose weight. That is simply not true. There is no easy way to lose weight. The real difference is

that Weigh Down™ will work when others will not. But don't expect miracles overnight. In many cases, most will not see results until the second week, after the body has adjusted to the new regimen. Resist the temptation to weigh yourself everyday. The little variations you see will be meaningless. Real permanent weight loss is a gradual process and so it should be. Don't forget, even one pound a week is 52 pounds a year. Rapid weight loss is almost always related to lost water, not fat. It is never permanent and could be damaging to your health. Always consult your doctor before beginning any serious weight loss program.

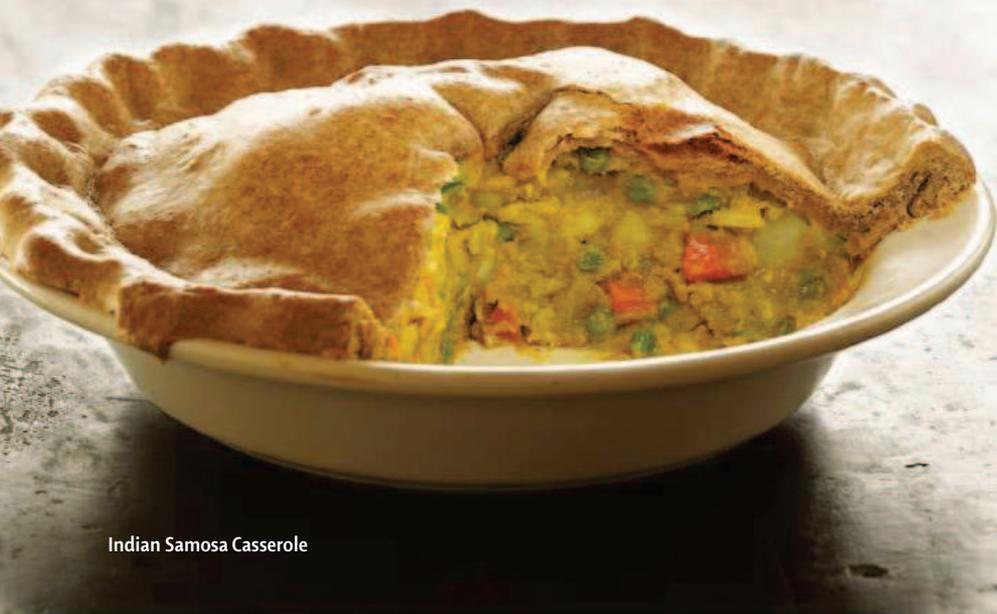
Weigh Down™ is a powder which, when mixed with skim or low fat milk, makes a thick, rich, delicious drink. It is available in your choice of Vanilla, Chocolate and Strawberry.





Other products from Lewis Labs' include: 100% Pure Premium Imported Brewer's Yeast*, Fiber Yeast, Fabulous Fiber*, Super Fabulous Fiber, The Lecithin*, OVER40*, RDA*, Staminex, Staminex with Ginseng, Staminex with Stevia Extract*, are available at independent health food stores everywhere.
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Circle reply #17 on Info Center card



Indian Samosa Casserole

Indian Samosa Casserole

SERVES 6 | VEGAN

Everything you love about Indian samosas is here in one low-fat, easy-to-make pie. Serve with Cucumber Raita or Tofu Raita from vegetariantimes.com.

CRUST

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbs. vegetable oil

FILLING

- 1 Tbs. black or yellow mustard seeds
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ⅛ tsp. red pepper flakes, optional
- 5 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered (1¼ lb.)
- 1½ tsp. vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, diced (1 cup)
- 1 medium carrot, diced (½ cup)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 tsp. agave nectar or sugar
- 2 Tbs. soy milk

1. To make Crust: Preheat oven to 375°F. Whisk together flours and salt in bowl. Stir in oil until clumps form. Add 6 to 10 Tbs. cold water, 1 Tbs. at a time, until dough holds together. Shape into ball, cover with damp towel, and set aside.

2. To make Filling: Stir together mustard seeds, curry, ginger, cumin, and red pepper flakes, if using, in bowl; set aside.

3. Cook potatoes in boiling salted water 15 minutes, or until tender. Drain, return to pot, and mash, leaving small chunks.

4. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and garlic, and sauté 5 minutes, or until carrot is tender. Move onion mixture to side of pan, and add mustard seed mixture in center. Toast 30 seconds. Stir in peas and broth. Fold onion mixture into potato mixture; stir in agave nectar. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Spread Filling in 9-inch pie pan. Set aside.

5. Roll out Crust dough to 11-inch circle on floured work surface. Cover Filling with dough, pressing down to make sure no air pockets remain. Trim away excess dough, and crimp edges with fingers. Cut X in center to vent steam; brush with soy milk just before baking. Place pie on baking sheet, and bake 40 to 50 minutes, or until crust is golden. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

6. Frozen cooking instructions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Place casserole on baking sheet, and bake 75 to 90 minutes, or until Filling bubbles and Crust is golden. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

PER SLICE: 299 CAL; 7 G PROT; 7 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 54 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 469 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS

Veggie Tamale Pie

SERVES 6 | GLUTEN FREE

Keep a taste of the Southwest right in your freezer with this easy tamale pie.

TOPPING

- ½ cup dry polenta or corn grits
- ¼ cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese

FILLING

- 1½ tsp. vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 1 medium onion, diced (1 cup)
- 1 small zucchini, diced (½ cup)
- ½ medium red, yellow, or orange bell pepper, diced (½ cup)
- 1 Tbs. chili powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. dried oregano (Mexican, if available)
- 1 15-oz. can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 14.5-oz. can tomato purée
- ½ cup frozen corn kernels
- 2 tsp. brown rice flour

1. To make Topping: Preheat oven to 375°F. Bring 2 cups water to a boil in saucepan. Stir in polenta, reduce heat to medium, and simmer 30 minutes, stirring often. Stir in cheese. Set aside.

2. To make Filling: Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and onion, and cook 5 minutes. Add zucchini, bell pepper, chili powder, cumin, and oregano. Cook 5 minutes more.

3. Stir in beans, tomato purée, and corn. Mix rice flour with ¼ cup cold water; stir into zucchini mixture. Cook 3 minutes, or until mixture thickens slightly. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

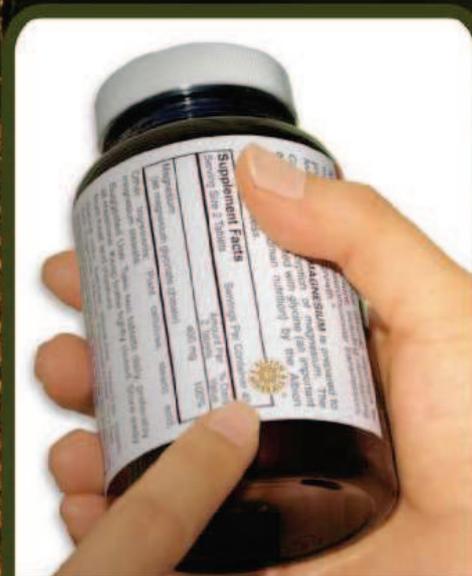
4. Spread Filling into 8-inch-square baking pan. Spread Topping over Filling.

5. Place casserole on baking sheet. Bake 40 minutes, or until filling bubbles and top is golden. Let stand before serving.

6. Frozen cooking instructions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Cover casserole with foil, and place on baking sheet. Bake 90 minutes. Remove foil during last 15 minutes of baking.

PER SLICE: 195 CAL; 7 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 31 G CARB; 6 MG CHOL; 628 MG SOD; 6 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS

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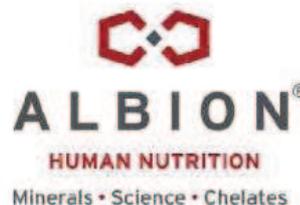


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Circle reply #18 on Info Center card

Mushroom and Wild Rice Hotdish

SERVES 6

“Hotdish” is the term used for casseroles in Minnesota, where wild rice is the official state grain. Just the right amount of vegan sour cream is blended in for a comforting entrée that’s both light and satisfying.

½ cup uncooked wild rice and
brown rice blend

1½ tsp. vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped (1 cup)

1 large stalk celery, diced (½ cup)

3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)

1 lb. button mushrooms, sliced

1 tsp. grated lemon zest

1 cup creamy portobello mushroom soup,
such as Imagine

2 Tbs. lemon juice

6 oz. Quorn Chik’n Tenders (2 cups)

½ cup vegan sour cream

2 Tbs. panko breadcrumbs

1. Bring 1 cup water to a boil in medium saucepan. Stir in rice, reduce

heat to medium-low, and simmer 30 to 40 minutes, or until rice is tender.

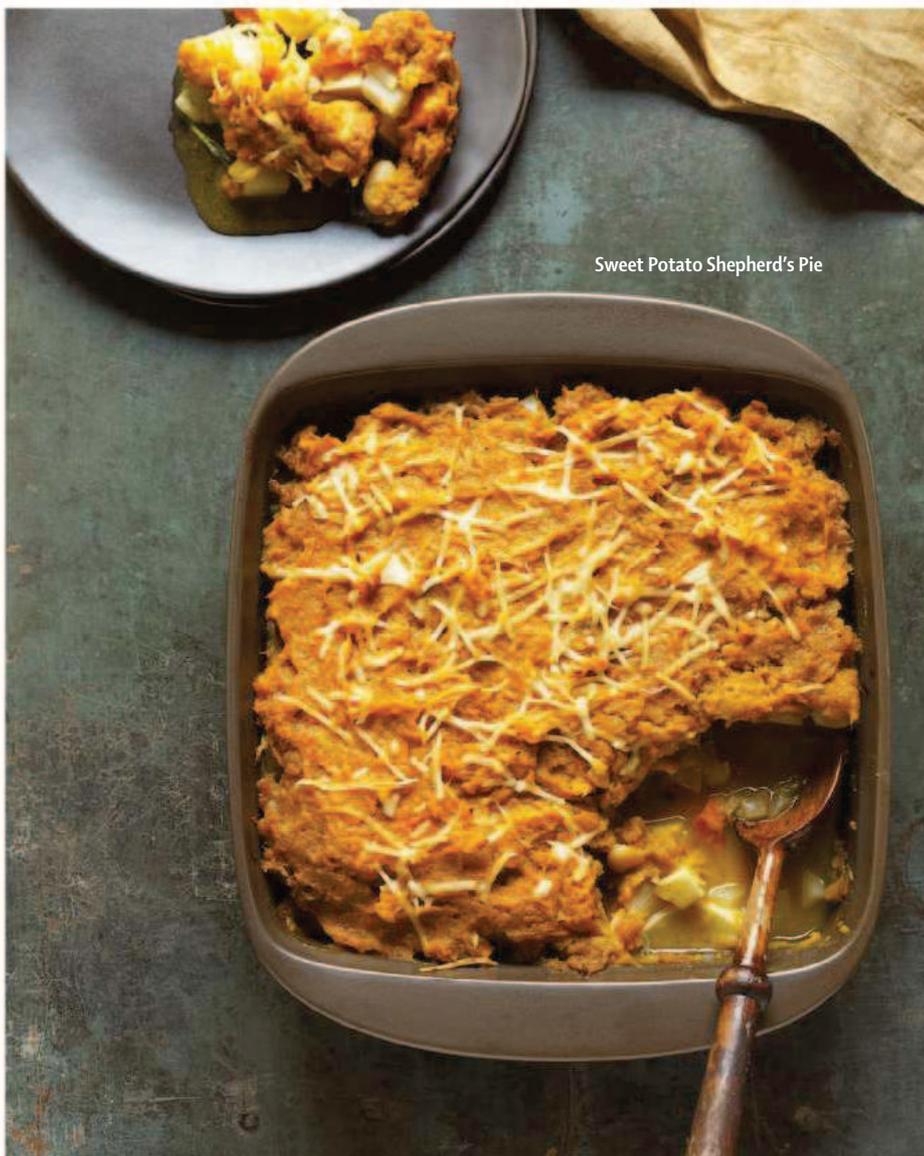
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, celery, and garlic. Cook 5 to 6 minutes, or until onion is soft. Add mushrooms and lemon zest. Cook 4 to 6 minutes, or until mushrooms are soft and beginning to brown. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

3. Stir in mushroom soup and lemon juice. Remove from heat, and stir in Chik’n Tenders, rice, and sour cream. Spoon into 8-inch-square baking dish, and top with breadcrumbs. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place casserole on baking sheet. Bake 25 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown on top and bubbly in center.

4. Frozen cooking instructions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Cover casserole with foil, and place on baking sheet. Bake 1 hour, or until filling bubbles and top is golden. Remove foil during last 15 minutes of baking. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 172 CAL; 9 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 27 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 212 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 3 G SUGARS

No-mess tip: bake frozen casseroles on a rimmed baking sheet to catch juices that bubble over.



Sweet Potato Shepherd's Pie

Sweet Potato Shepherd's Pie

SERVES 6 | GLUTEN FREE

This veggie-laden version of a pub favorite gets a healthful flavor boost from sweet potatoes. To make it vegan, simply omit the Parmesan or use vegan Parmesan.

SWEET POTATOTOPPING

1 medium sweet potato,
peeled and diced (¾ lb.)

¼ cup fat-free milk or plain soymilk

1 Tbs. nonhydrogenated margarine
or butter

¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

FILLING

1½ tsp. vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped (1 cup)

1 leek, white part thinly sliced (1 cup)

2 turnips, diced (1 cup)

1 carrot, diced (½ cup)

3 sprigs fresh thyme

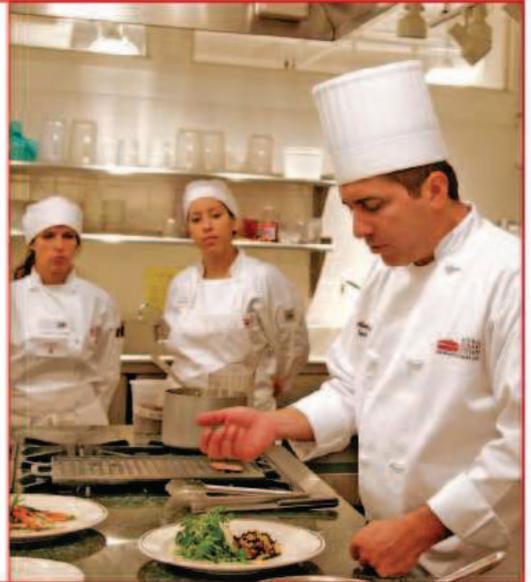
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- 1 sprig fresh rosemary, chopped (2 tsp.)
- ¼ cup white wine or water
- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 3 Tbs. shredded Parmesan cheese, optional

1. To make Sweet Potato Topping: Bring large pot of water to a boil. Add sweet potato, cover, and boil 10 minutes, or until tender. Drain, and return to pot. Mash with milk, margarine, cinnamon, and nutmeg; season with salt and pepper, if desired. Set aside.

2. To make Filling: Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and leek, and sauté 5 to 6 minutes, or until leek is soft. Add turnips, carrot, thyme, and rosemary; cook 2 to 3 minutes more, or until carrot begins to soften.

3. Add wine, and cook 30 seconds to deglaze pan. Stir in beans and broth. Cover, and simmer 10 minutes, or until carrots and turnips are soft. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

4. Remove thyme sprigs from Filling, and discard. Pour Filling into 2- or 3-qt. casserole dish. Spread Sweet Potato Topping over Filling. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, if using.

5. Place casserole on baking pan. Bake 30 minutes, or until filling bubbles and cheese is melted. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

6. Frozen cooking instructions: Preheat oven to 375°F. Cover casserole, and place on baking sheet. Bake 60 to 75 minutes, or until filling bubbles and top is golden. Remove foil during last 10 minutes of baking. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 129 CAL; 4 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 20 G CARB; <1 MG CHOL; 176 MG SOD; 5 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Melynda Saldenais is a Denver-based freelance writer who fondly remembers her grandfather's casserole creations, which were always delicious and never the same.



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Circle reply #35 on Info Center card

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BY Matthew G. Kadey, RD
RECIPE BY Mary Margaret Chappell

chia seed

There's more to this salubrious seed than a pop culture reference

Prized for centuries as a superfood by the ancient Aztecs of Mexico, chia was nearly wiped out by the Spanish conquistadors, only to be hawked in recent memory as a novelty product, to the tune of *Ch-ch-ch-chia!*

How It Heals

Lately, the seeds of the *Salvia hispanica* plant are experiencing something of a renaissance as a functional food. Word is spreading of chia seeds' copious amounts of heart-healthy omega-3 fats—"higher than many other foods," says Wayne Coates, PhD, coauthor of *Chia: Rediscovering a Forgotten Crop of the Aztecs*. Research published in *Diabetes Care* suggests chia can help lower blood pressure and combat potentially heart-damaging inflammation.

Chia seeds are also chock-full of fiber, which has been credited with preventing weight gain and reducing diabetes risk. "Chia's abundant soluble fiber forms a gel in the stomach, which slows food digestion, helping decrease blood sugar levels and promote satiety," says Coates.

Add to chia's benefits impressive amounts of chronic-disease-fighting antioxidants and the bone-building trio of calcium (about six times the amount in milk), magnesium, and phosphorus.

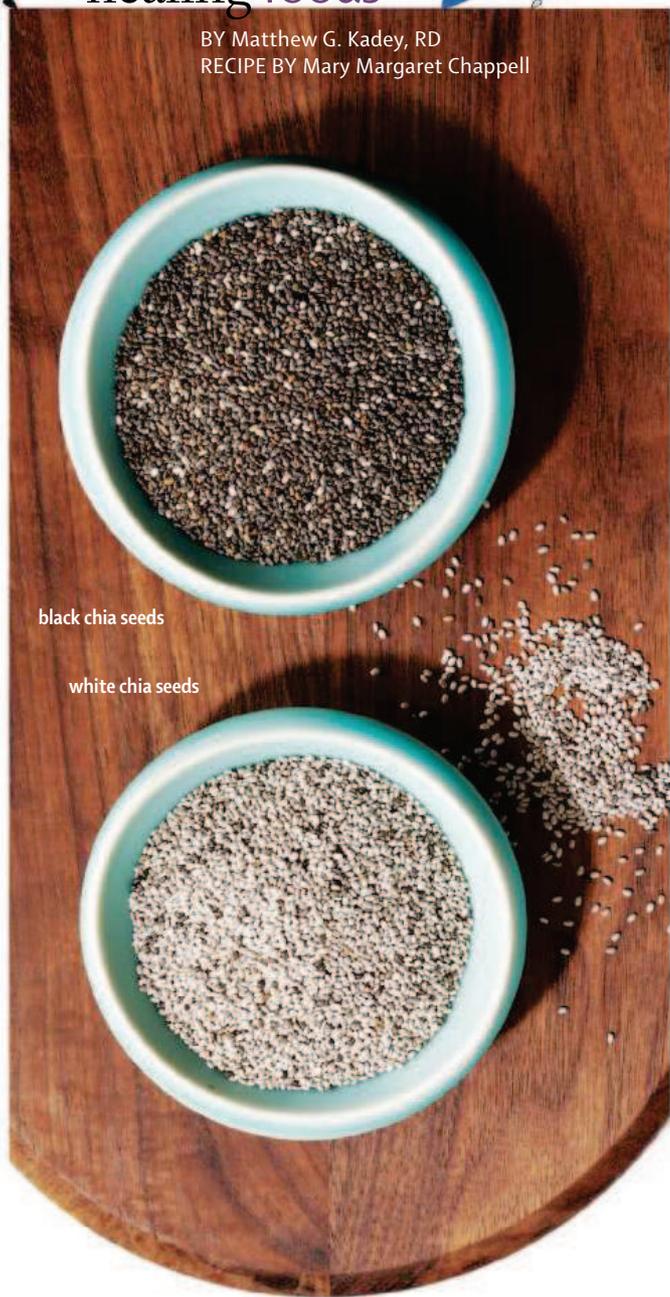
Eat It Up

Make a habit of adding at least 1 to 2 tablespoons of chia daily to your diet. According to Coates, there are no real restrictions on chia intake. "Most people can eat a cup a day without a problem," he says. If you're not used to eating a lot of dietary fiber, you may want to build up slowly to limit gastrointestinal distress.

The best evidence suggests black and white varieties of chia are equally nutritious. And unlike flax, the seeds don't need to be ground up to access their healing benefits. "Chia also has a longer shelf life than flax, because the higher levels of antioxidants prevent the volatile oils from going rancid,"

Supplement Savvy

- Look for chia oil supplements that contain at least 300 milligrams of omega-3 fats per veg cap; take one or two per day with meals. Keep the supplements refrigerated to avoid rancidity.



black chia seeds

white chia seeds



Salvia hispanica belongs to the mint family.

says Coates. Still, it's best to refrigerate whole chia seeds.

Mix the seeds into yogurt, salads, smoothies, quick bread batters, veggie burger patties, and your favorite cereal to add satisfying crunch without altering flavor. Or take advantage of chia's ability to absorb several times its weight in water, and whip up a tapioca-like gel to thicken puddings, sauces, fruit spreads, or dips: add 1/3 cup of seeds to 2 cups of water; stir gently with a wire whisk off and on for 5 minutes to prevent clumping, and store in a sealed container in the fridge. For vegan baking, 1/4 cup of chia gel acts as an egg replacer.

To boost the nourishing goodness of homemade muffins or pancakes, substitute chia powder for one-quarter of the flour called for in a recipe. Packages of 100 percent chia powder are available, but you can easily make your own by grinding whole seeds in a coffee grinder.

Word is spreading of chia seeds' copious amounts of heart-healthy omega-3 fats.

Raw Chocolate-Chia Energy Bars

MAKES 8 BARS | VEGAN

Whole chia seeds add nutritional punch and crunch to these chocolate treats.

- 1 1/2 cups pitted dates
- 1/2 cup raw unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup whole chia seeds, such as ReNew Life Ultimate ChiaLife
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract, optional
- 1/4 tsp. almond extract, optional
- 1 cup raw slivered almonds or raw shelled pistachios
- Oat flour for dusting, optional

1. Place dates in bowl of food processor; purée until thick paste forms. Add cocoa powder, chia seeds, and vanilla and almond extracts, if using. Pulse until all

ingredients are combined. Add almonds; pulse until nuts are finely chopped and well distributed through date mixture.

2. Spread large sheet of wax paper on work surface, and dust with oat flour, if using. Transfer date mixture to wax paper, and use paper to press mixture into 1/2-inch-thick rectangle. Wrap tightly, and chill overnight.

3. Unwrap block, and cut into 8 bars. Dust edges and sides with oat flour, if using, to prevent sticking. Rewrap each bar in wax paper.

PER BAR: 195 CAL; 5 G PROT; 8 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 31 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 2 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 22 G SUGARS

Canada-based writer *Matthew G. Kadey, RD*, has never owned a chia pet.

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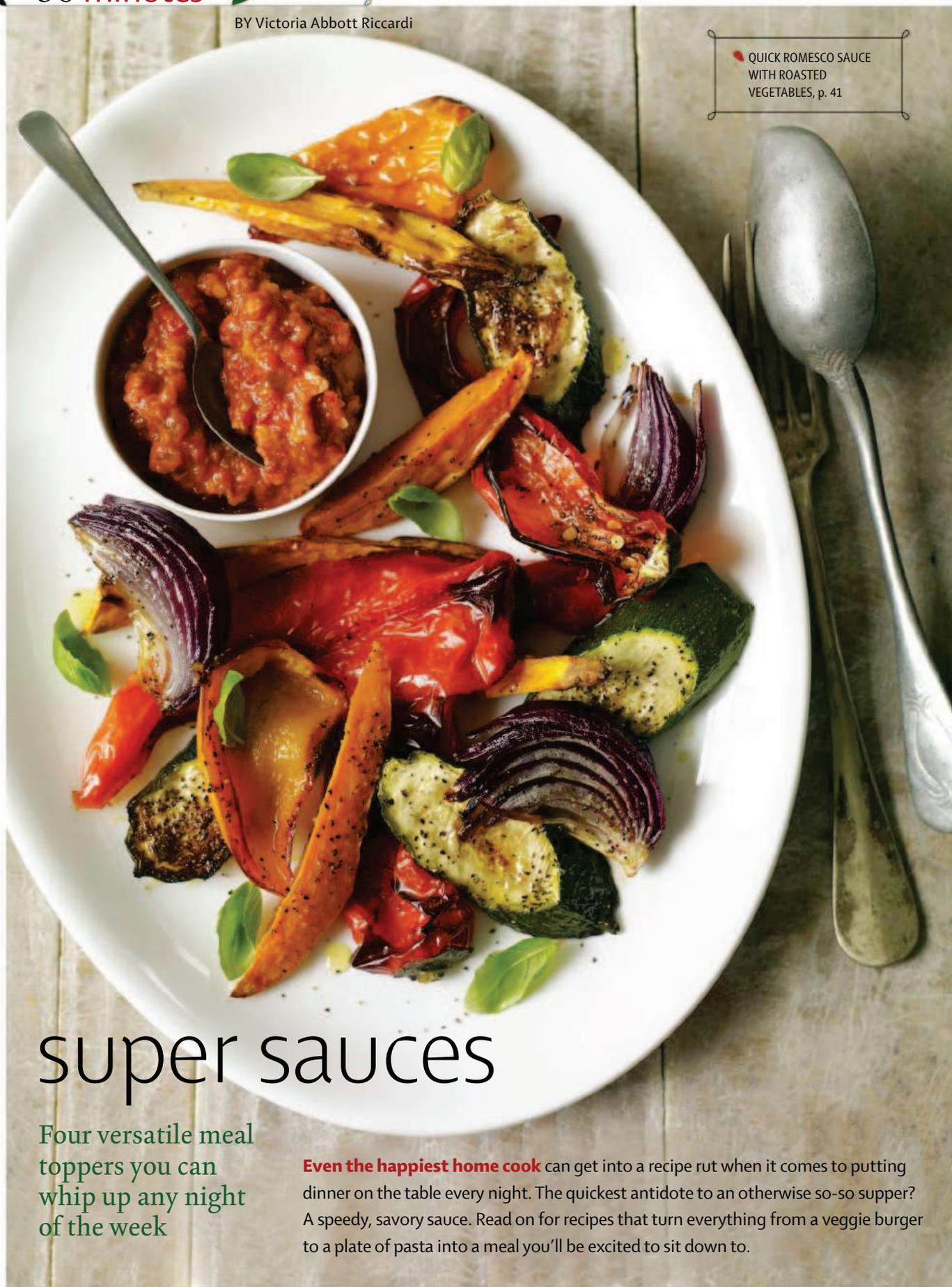
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Circle reply #9 on Info Center card

QUICK ROMESCO SAUCE
WITH ROASTED
VEGETABLES, p. 41



super sauces

Four versatile meal
toppers you can
whip up any night
of the week

Even the happiest home cook can get into a recipe rut when it comes to putting dinner on the table every night. The quickest antidote to an otherwise so-so supper? A speedy, savory sauce. Read on for recipes that turn everything from a veggie burger to a plate of pasta into a meal you'll be excited to sit down to.



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Dairy Free	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Allergen Free	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
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Circle reply #3 on Info Center card



Chunky Mushroom Ragù

Tempeh Bolognese

Balsamic Port Sauce with Dried Cherries and Rosemary

Quick Romesco Sauce

celery, oregano, and garlic, and cook 5 to 6 minutes, or until vegetables are browned, stirring often.

2. Meanwhile, heat remaining 1½ tsp. oil in separate skillet over medium heat. Add tempeh, and brown 2 minutes on each side. Add soy sauce and ½ cup water. Cook tempeh 5 minutes more, or until liquid has absorbed. Break tempeh into small crumbles with spatula.

3. Stir tempeh, tomatoes, wine, tomato paste, and Worcestershire sauce into onion mixture. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, partially covered, 10 minutes. Stir in evaporated milk, and simmer 5 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

PER ¾-CUP SERVING: 186 CAL; 11 G PROT; 8 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 20 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 552 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 10 G SUGARS

Chunky Mushroom Ragù

MAKES 3 CUPS | VEGAN | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Need a switch from tomato sauce? This hearty mushroom topping is just the ticket for pasta, grilled tofu, greens, or even eggs.

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 1 Tbs. dried Italian herb seasoning (mixed herbs)
- 6 cups sliced mixed mushrooms, such as buttons, portobellos, and shiitakes
- 6 cloves garlic, minced (2 Tbs.)
- ¼ cup white wine
- 2 cups mushroom broth
- 1 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add onion and Italian seasoning; sauté 6 minutes. Stir in mushrooms and garlic; sauté 10 minutes, or until mushrooms begin to brown.

2. Add wine; cook 2 minutes, or until most of wine has evaporated. Stir in broth and soy sauce; simmer 6 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Stir in parsley just before serving.

PER ¾-CUP SERVING: 149 CAL; 4 G PROT; 7 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 20 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 456 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS

Tempeh Bolognese

MAKES 4 CUPS | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

This classic Italian pasta sauce is made with crumbled tempeh instead of ground meat. Try it over spaghetti, polenta, potatoes, or puréed cauliflower.

- 1 Tbs. plus 1½ tsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped (1½ cups)
- 1 large carrot, finely chopped (½ cup)
- 1 cup finely chopped celery

- 1 Tbs. dried oregano
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 1 8-oz. pkg. tempeh
- 1 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 28-oz. can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 Tbs. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. vegan Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup low-fat evaporated skim milk

1. Heat 1 Tbs. oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot,

Make these sauces ahead and store in the fridge
for home-cooked dinners that can be ready in minutes.

Quick Romesco Sauce

MAKES 2 CUPS | VEGAN | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

This garlicky Spanish sauce is delicious over baked potatoes, veggie burgers, and roasted vegetables. You can also use it as an appetizer dip or a sandwich spread.

- 1 large dried ancho chile
- 2 Tbs. olive oil, divided
- ½ cup chopped red onion
- 1 tsp. sweet paprika
- 1 pimiento (whole jarred sweet red pepper), drained and chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced (4 tsp.)
- ¼ cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 15-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 slice whole-grain bread
- ¼ cup toasted sliced almonds
- 2½ tsp. sherry vinegar

1. Place ancho chile in small bowl, and cover with boiling water. Soak 10 minutes, or until soft. Drain, remove stem and seeds, and thinly slice.
2. Heat 1 Tbs. oil in skillet over medium heat. Add onion, paprika, and ancho chile; sauté 6 minutes, or until onion turns golden. Add pimiento and garlic, then broth; cook 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Stir in tomatoes and their juice. Tear bread into small pieces, and add to skillet, along with almonds. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 10 to 12 minutes.
4. Stir in vinegar and remaining 1 Tbs. oil. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Transfer mixture to food processor, and pulse until chunky-smooth.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 166 CAL; 4 G PROT; 10 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 18 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 206 MG SOD; 6 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS

Balsamic Port Sauce with Dried Cherries and Rosemary

MAKES 2 CUPS | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE
30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Keep some of this sweet-and-sour sauce in a microwavable bottle in the fridge so you can warm it and drizzle over vegetarian sausages, baked sweet potatoes, quinoa, or couscous.

- 1 cup dried pitted sweet cherries
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 3 shallots, minced (½ cup)
- 1½ tsp. minced fresh rosemary
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- 1 cup ruby port
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- ¾ cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. cornstarch

1. Place cherries in saucepan with 1 cup hot water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer 3 minutes. Remove from heat, and set aside.
2. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add shallots, rosemary, and allspice; sauté 3 minutes. Stir in port, orange juice, broth, and vinegar. Drain cherries, and add soaking liquid to saucepan. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer 12 minutes.
3. Dissolve cornstarch in 1 Tbs. cold water in bowl. Add to port mixture, and cook 1 minute, or until sauce thickens. Stir in cherries, and season with salt and pepper, if desired.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 226 CAL; 3 G PROT; 1 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 46 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 33 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 32 G SUGARS

Victoria Abbott Riccardi is a freelance food and travel writer from Newton, Mass. Most of these sauces were inspired by her travels, in which she gravitates toward bidden, locally recommended eateries.

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BY Lisa Turner

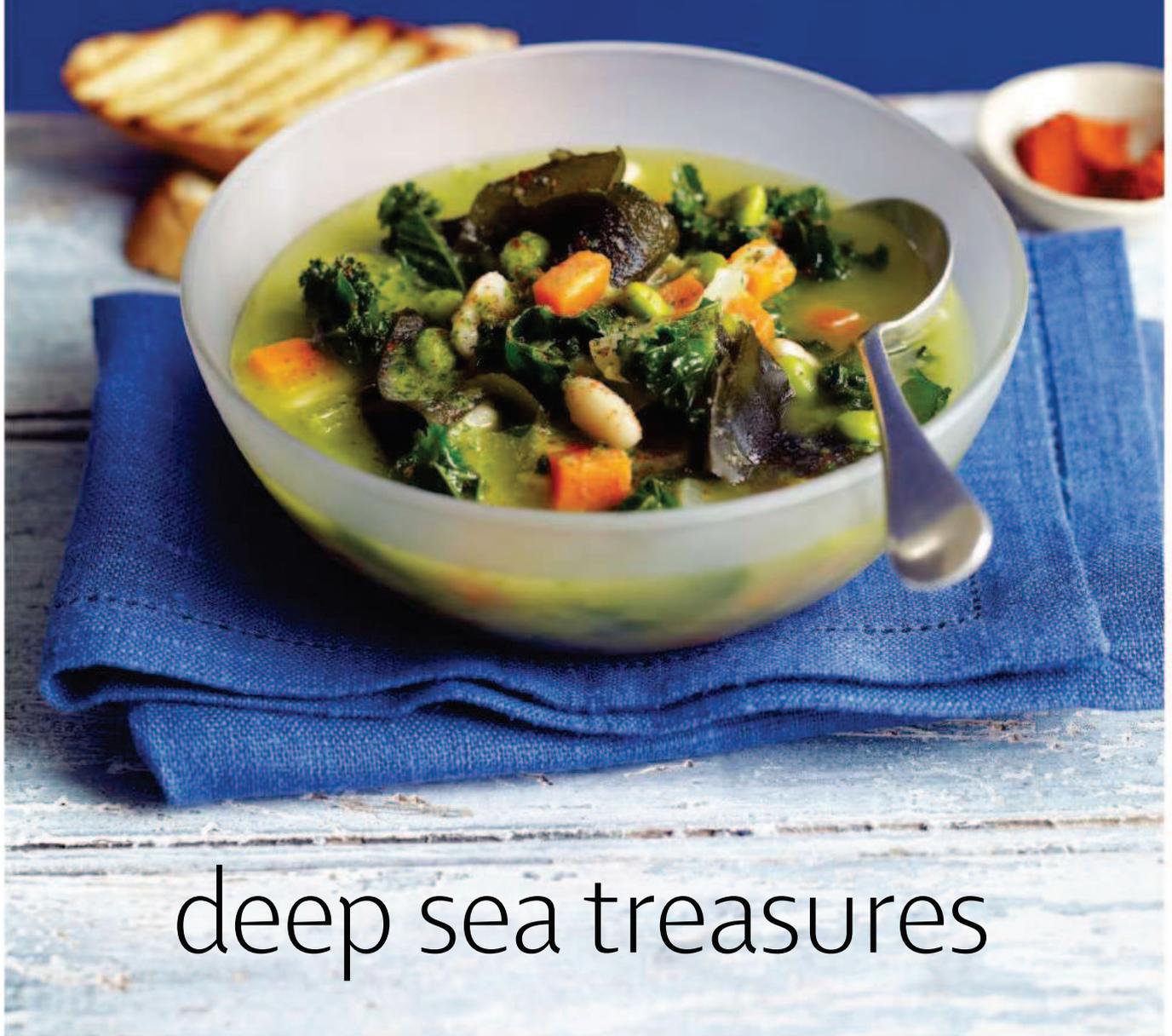
Dive into the delicious possibilities sea vegetables offer

 CARROT, WAKAME, AND KALE STEW

If the term “sea vegetables” makes you think of kelp that squishes between your toes at low tide, it’s time to catch the wave of these true wonder foods.

Sea vegetables are a rich food source of iodine, a trace mineral that’s crucial for healthy thyroid function. “Seaweed is also used to help balance female hormones, and in traditional Chinese medicine, to treat fibrocystic breast disease and uterine fibroids,” says Terry Grossman, MD, coauthor of *Transcend: Nine Steps to Living Well Forever*.

When properly prepared, sea vegetables have a firm, chewy texture and a rich, salty flavor. Try them in the following recipes, and experiment with several varieties in your everyday cooking; you’ll love what the tide brings in.



deep sea treasures

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICHARD JUNG; FOOD STYLING: LORNA BRASH; PROP STYLING: CYNTHIA INIONS

SEA VEGETABLE CHEAT SHEET

Slip sea vegetables into your favorite recipes with this handy guide

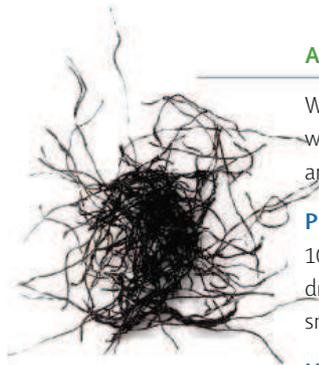


WAKAME

Mild and slightly sweet, wakame turns bright emerald after soaking.

Preparation Soak 15 minutes until soft; drain, and rinse. Heat gently, if at all; wakame gets slimy when cooked.

Uses Boosts the flavor and nutrition of lentils, greens, soups, and salads.



ARAME

Wiry dark brown strands with a mildly sweet flavor and chewy texture.

Preparation Soak 10 minutes in cold water; drain, rinse, and chop into smaller pieces, if desired.

Uses Arame's dark hue contrasts beautifully with winter squash, leafy greens, or white beans. Try in brothy soups as well.



KOMBU

Wide strips or sheets of dark-colored dried sea kelp, kombu adds depth to slow-cooked dishes with its pronounced flavor.

Preparation No soaking necessary; add directly to hot cooking liquids.

Uses Best as a flavoring agent in broths, soups, and stews. Remove before serving.



HIJIKI

Similar to arame, hijiki is bolder in flavor, with anise-like undertones.

Preparation Soak 10 minutes in cold water; drain, rinse.

Uses Stands up well to cooking; can be used to flavor root vegetables, mushrooms, and beans.



NORI

Thin, dark green or brown sheets most often used as sushi wrappers. Sold toasted or raw.

Preparation No soaking required; avoid cooking—nori quickly disintegrates.

Uses Cut into strips to use as garnish for salads, hummus, soups, vegetables, or rice.



DULSE

Red leaves or flakes with a salty, earthy taste.

Preparation Soak 10 minutes in hot or cold water; drain, and rinse.

Uses Good in soups, stews, and sauces. Can be used to replace hijiki or wakame.

PHOTOGRAPHY: MIKE LORRIG; STYLING: JULES MOORE

Carrot, Wakame, and Kale Stew

SERVES 6 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

This winter stew is a great way to sneak sea vegetables into a recipe; the wakame gets mixed up in the kale, so picky eaters won't even know it's there. After soaking the wakame, taste a small piece; if it seems too salty, repeat the soaking process a second time.

- ¼ cup wakame
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced (½ cup)
- 2 small carrots, diced (½ cup)
- 1 celery rib, diced (¼ cup)

- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1½ cups frozen baby lima beans, thawed
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 bunch kale (12 oz.), trimmed and chopped (6 cups)
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ⅛–¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper

1. Place wakame in small bowl, cover with cold water, and soak 15 minutes, or until soft. Drain, squeeze out liquid, and set aside.

- 2.** Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery, and sauté 3 to 5 minutes, or until tender. Add cannellini beans, lima beans, and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, 10 minutes.
- 3.** Transfer half of soup to food processor, and purée until smooth. Stir mixture into remaining soup in pot, and add kale. Cook 5 minutes more, or until kale is tender. Stir in oregano, nutmeg, cayenne, and drained wakame.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 177 CAL; 8 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 30 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 452 MG SOD; 9 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Roasted Brussels Sprouts Medley with Nori Strips

SERVES 6 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

Finely sliced nori sheets add smoky flavor and crunch to roasted winter vegetables.

- 2½ cups Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 2 small red onions, cut into eighths (1½ cups)
- 1 medium sweet potato, cubed (1½ cups)
- 3 small parsnips, sliced (1½ cups)
- 1½ cups whole baby carrots
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly crushed
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 sheets toasted nori
- ⅓ cup chopped, toasted hazelnuts
- 1 Tbs. toasted walnut oil

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Coat baking sheet with cooking spray.
2. Toss together Brussels sprouts, onions, sweet potato, parsnips, carrots, garlic, and olive oil in large bowl, making sure vegetables are coated with oil. Transfer vegetables to prepared baking sheet, and roast 35 to 45 minutes, or until vegetables are tender and browned, stirring halfway through.
3. Meanwhile, cut or tear each nori sheet into 4 rectangles (you should have 8 pieces). Stack pieces on top of one another, and slice into thin strips.
4. Transfer vegetables to large serving bowl, and toss with hazelnuts, walnut oil, and nori strips. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 201 CAL; 4 G PROT; 11 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 24 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 64 MG SOD; 5 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS

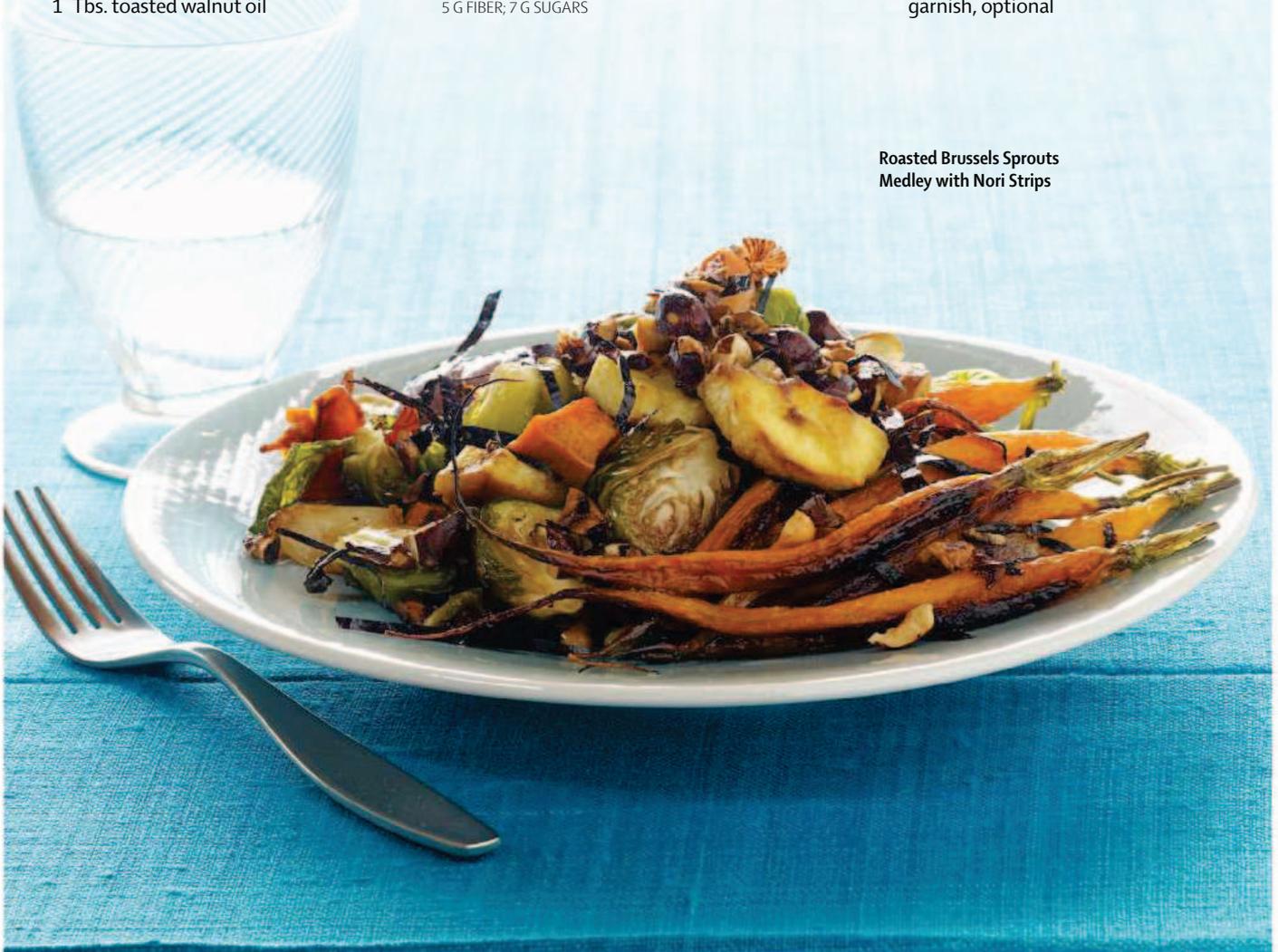
Arame-Vegetable Strudels

SERVES 6 | VEGAN

Thin strands of soaked arame lend flavor and texture to this light and healthful main dish.

- ¼ cup arame
- ¼ cup plus 1 Tbs. olive oil, divided
- 1½ cups diced portobello mushrooms
- 1 cup broccoli florets, chopped small
- 1 cup cauliflower florets, chopped small
- 1 small leek, chopped (¾ cup)
- 2 medium carrots, diced (¾ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp.)
- 1 cup roasted red peppers, rinsed and drained
- ⅓ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes
- ¼ cup silken tofu, drained
- 1 Tbs. sherry or red wine vinegar
- 12 frozen phyllo pastry sheets, thawed
- Fresh rosemary sprigs for garnish, optional

Roasted Brussels Sprouts Medley with Nori Strips



Like dried spices, sea vegetables will remain fresh for up to a year when stored in a cool, dark, dry cupboard.

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Place arame in bowl, and cover with cold water. Soak 10 minutes, or until soft. Drain, and set aside.
2. Heat 1 Tbs. oil in skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms, broccoli, cauliflower, leek, and carrots; sauté 5 to 7 minutes, or until vegetables are tender. Stir in garlic, and cook 1 minute more. Stir in arame; season with salt and pepper, if desired. Remove from heat, and spread mixture on plate to cool.
3. Purée roasted red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes, tofu, and sherry in blender or food processor 1 to 2 minutes, or until smooth, adding 1 or 2 Tbs. water, if necessary, to thin. Transfer to saucepan.
4. Place 2 sheets phyllo dough on work surface, and brush with olive oil. Stack 2 more phyllo sheets on top, and brush with oil. Top with 2 more phyllo sheets. Spread half of mushroom mixture onto phyllo stack, leaving ½-inch border on each long side and covering one-third of phyllo stack. Fold long edges of phyllo over filling; roll into log lengthwise, enclosing filling completely. Repeat with remaining phyllo sheets and filling.
5. Coat baking sheet with cooking spray. Place strudels on baking sheet, and bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown. Meanwhile, warm red pepper sauce.
6. To serve: Spoon ¼ cup red pepper sauce on each plate. Cut each strudel into thirds, and place one piece of strudel in center of sauce. Garnish with rosemary, if using.

PER SERVING (1 SLICE STRUDEL AND ¾-CUP SAUCE):
265 CAL; 5 G PROT; 14 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT);
30 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 399 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER;
5 G SUGARS

Wild Rice, Shiitake, and Hijiki Salad

SERVES 4 | VEGAN

East meets West in this salad laced with goji berries, tempeh, and shiitake mushrooms and seasoned with soy sauce and sesame oil.

- ¼ cup hijiki
- 1½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- ½ cup wild rice, washed and drained
- 1 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 3 cups sliced shiitake mushrooms
- 2 small shallots, finely chopped (½ cup)
- 1 8-oz. pkg. tempeh, cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 Tbs. tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbs. grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 Tbs. dried goji berries or dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped, toasted pecans
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

1. Place hijiki in bowl, cover with cold water, and soak 10 minutes, or until soft. Drain, squeeze out liquid, and set aside.
2. Bring broth to a boil in large saucepan. Add wild rice, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, 40 to 45 minutes, or until tender. Remove lid, and simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes more. Drain excess liquid.
3. Heat vegetable oil in skillet over medium heat. Add mushrooms and shallots, and sauté 3 to 5 minutes, or until mushrooms are just soft.
4. Stir in tempeh, tamari, and ginger. Cover, and cook 7 minutes, stirring frequently.
5. Stir in toasted sesame oil, goji berries, and hijiki. Transfer to large bowl, and stir in wild rice. Season with salt and pepper, if desired, and stir in pecans. Serve hot or cold, garnished with chopped parsley.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 284 CAL; 12 G PROT; 14 G TOTAL FAT
(2 G SAT FAT); 31 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 394 MG SOD;
5 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Lisa Turner is a food writer and chef in Boulder, Colo. She has been cooking with sea vegetables since 1994, when she fell in love with them at the Kusbi Institute in Massachusetts.

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BY Mary Margaret Chappell

 ORANGE-APRICOT CRISP



Orange-Apricot Crisp

SERVES 12 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

Brown rice flour, vegan margarine, orange zest, and vanilla come together to make a crunchy-sweet topping for a fruity winter dessert.

- 8 oranges, plus 1 tsp. grated orange zest
- 2 cups dried apricots, thinly sliced
- ½ cup dried currants or raisins
- ½ cup chopped candied ginger
- 1 cup brown rice flour
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 6 Tbs. vegan margarine, softened
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 9-inch-square baking pan with cooking spray.
2. Cut ends from oranges. Stand 1 orange on cutting board, and slice away peel and pith. Cut orange into quarters; cut quarters into ½-inch-thick slices. Repeat with remaining oranges, and transfer to bowl. Stir apricots, currants, and candied ginger into oranges. Spread mixture in prepared baking pan.
3. Stir together brown rice flour, sugar, orange zest, and salt in bowl. Rub margarine and vanilla into rice flour mixture with fingers until combined and mixture forms large crumbs. Spread crumb mixture over orange mixture.
4. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, or until top of Crisp is golden brown. Cool 10 minutes; serve warm.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 270 CAL; 3 G PROT; 6 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT); 54 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 164 MG SOD; 5 G FIBER; 35 G SUGARS 

flour power

Brown rice flour is a tasty way to get more whole-grain fiber into delicate baked goods

THE SCOOP: Both white rice flour and brown rice flour are made by grinding dried rice into a powder that's then sifted until a fine flour remains. But brown rice flour comes with a healthful dose of both flavor and fiber (2 grams per ¼ cup). "One of the first things people miss when they stop eating wheat is the flavor; I use brown rice flour to help put that flavor back into baked goods," explains Annalise Roberts, author of *Gluten-Free Baking Classics*.

Even for people who aren't following a wheat-free diet, brown rice flour makes a great substitute for part of the all-purpose flour in a recipe. Because it's lighter and finer than whole-wheat flour, brown rice flour lets you bump up the fiber content of baked goods without making them too dense or heavy.

HOW IT'S USED: "Brown rice flour can be used to make everything except bread," says Roberts. "I put it in muffins, scones, cream puffs, crêpes, pancakes, and popovers—even pizza crusts."

SHOPPING TIPS: Look for brands of rice flour (brown or white) that are finely ground or labeled "superfine," such as Authentic Foods Superfine Brown Rice Flour, recommends Roberts: "The finer the rice flour is, the better the results you'll get in your baked goods."

PHOTOGRAPHY

Lisa Romerein

FOOD STYLING

Valerie Aikman-Smith

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BY Lindsay Nixon



no-brainer brunch

PHOTOGRAPHY Lisa Romerein FOOD STYLING Valerie Aikman-Smith PROP STYLING Emily Henderson

Happy Herbivore blogger Lindsay Nixon creates the ultimate make-ahead feast for New Year's Day

FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE

FROM TOP LEFT:

FRESH WINTER
FRUIT SALAD

SMOKY BREAKFAST
SAUSAGE LINKS, p. 50

EGGNOG-BANANA
PARFAITS, p. 50

TOFU SCRAMBLE
BRUNCH RING, p. 50

Anyone who knows me or reads my blog knows that I love breakfast and brunch more than any other meal of the day. (I've created and reviewed more recipes for breakfast foods than lunch and dinner combined!) But putting together a brunch spread can be daunting after a long night of New Year's Eve festivities. The solution: recipes that let you do all the prep work well ahead of time. That way, you can sleep in and still have an elegant celebration ready when friends come by.

Fresh Winter Fruit Salad

SERVES 8 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

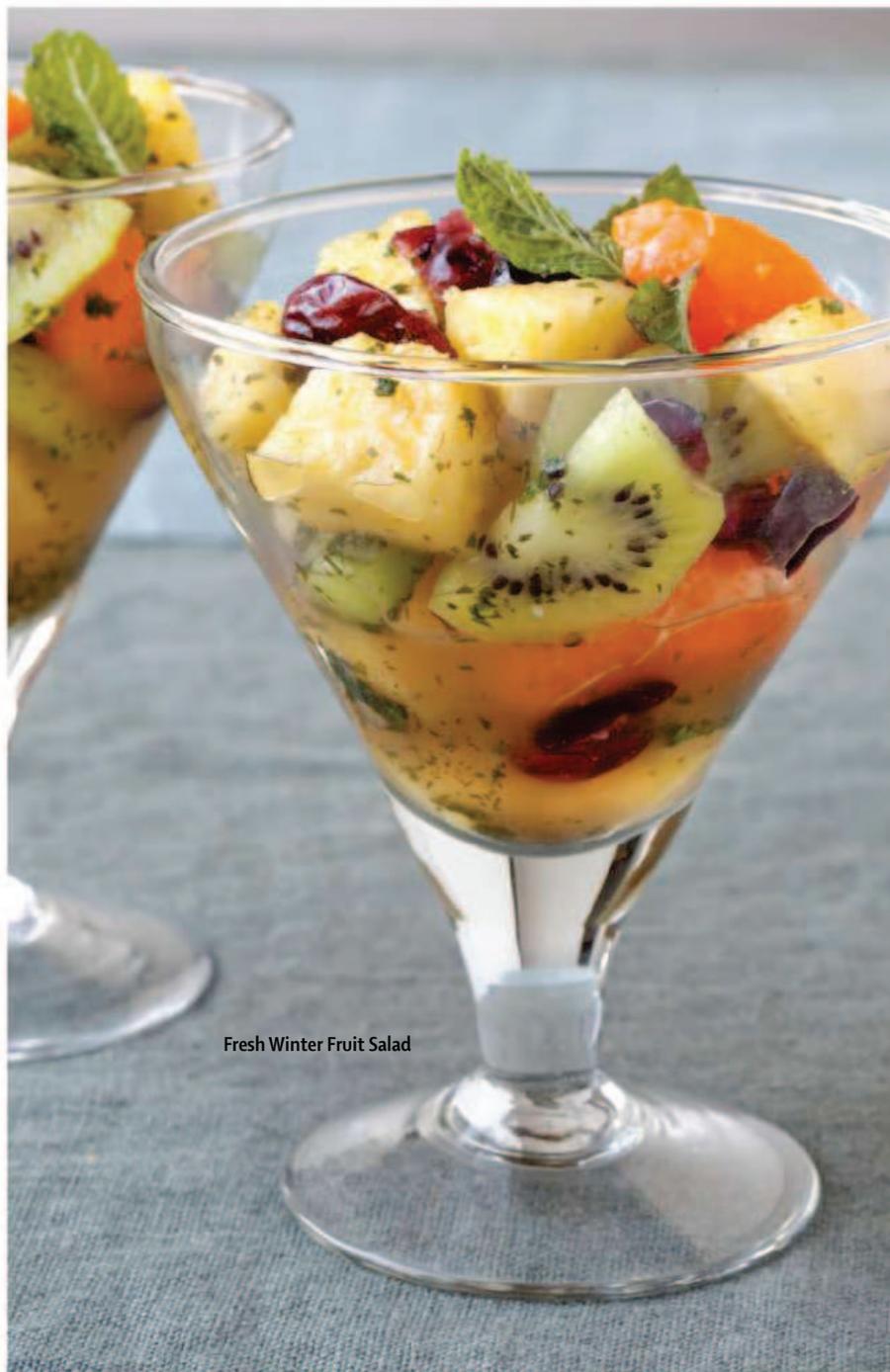
A light lime syrup harmonizes the flavors of the fruits in this salad. Use whatever fruit you have on hand, but if you plan to use apples, pears, or bananas, add them just before serving so that they don't brown. If you want to add carambola (star fruit), look for fruit that is beginning to turn golden yellow with slightly brown edges—unripe green fruit may be sour.

- 2 Tbs. sugar
- 2 Tbs. lime juice
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh mint, plus sprigs for garnish
- 4 clementines or Mandarin oranges, peeled, segments sliced in half (1 cup)
- 2 kiwifruits, peeled, halved, and sliced (1 cup)
- 1 cup pineapple cubes
- 1 carambola (star fruit), sliced (½ cup), optional
- ¼ cup dried cherries or dried cranberries

1. Combine sugar and lime juice in glass measuring cup, and microwave on high power 1 minute, or until sugar dissolves and mixture is syrupy. Cool 10 minutes, then stir in mint.

2. Combine fresh and dried fruit in large bowl. Stir in lime syrup. Cover, and chill 30 minutes, or overnight. Garnish each serving with mint sprig.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 64 CAL; <1 G PROT; <1 G TOTAL FAT (0 G SAT FAT); 16 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 1 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 11 G SUGARS



Fresh Winter Fruit Salad



Tofu Scramble Brunch Ring

Ground turmeric, “the Indian saffron,” lends color and flavor to a veggie-laden scramble.

Tofu Scramble Brunch Ring

SERVES 8 | VEGAN

Tofu scrambles are tasty, but they aren't the prettiest dish for a party. Here, crescent roll dough turns the breakfast fave into a sliceable showstopper.

- 1 16-oz. pkg. extra-firm tofu, drained and crumbled
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 1 Tbs. plus 2 tsp. prepared mustard
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 4 cloves garlic, minced (4 tsp.)
- 2 cups frozen chopped broccoli, thawed
- ½ cup shredded vegan Cheddar cheese, optional
- 2 8-oz. cans refrigerated vegan crescent dinner rolls, such as Pillsbury

1. Stir together tofu, nutritional yeast, mustard, and turmeric in bowl. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Set aside.
2. Coat skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. Add onion, cover, and cook 3 minutes, or until softened. Add garlic, and cook 1 minute more. Stir onion-garlic mixture into tofu; fold in broccoli and cheese, if using. Cool.
3. Coat large baking sheet with cooking spray. Unroll both cans of dough, and separate into triangles. Arrange triangles on prepared baking sheet with short sides of triangles toward center and points facing out, making sun shape of

overlapping triangles with 4-inch round opening in center. Lightly press dough to flatten slightly.

4. Spoon tofu mixture around crescent roll ring, leaving center clear. Pull points of triangles over filling and tuck under to form ring. (Filling will be visible.) Cover, and chill overnight, if desired.

5. Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake Brunch Ring 25 to 30 minutes, or until crust is golden brown. Serve warm.

PER SLICE: 299 CAL; 13 G PROT; 16 G TOTAL FAT (4 G SAT FAT); 29 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 495 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Smoky Breakfast Sausage Links

MAKES 24 LINKS | VEGAN

These sausages were a hit among VT's vegan staffers, who loved the idea of homemade veggie links. They're a snap to make in a two-layer bamboo steamer.

- ½ cup cooked or canned adzuki beans, rinsed and drained
- 1¼ cups vital wheat gluten
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbs. pure maple syrup
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 Tbs. rubbed sage (not powdered)
- 2 tsp. ground fennel
- 1 tsp. liquid smoke
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg

1. Prepare bamboo steamer, and lay out 25 sheets of foil, each about 5 inches square.

2. Mash beans with fork in bowl until smooth. Stir in remaining ingredients.

3. Roll walnut-sized pieces of bean mixture into small links (they need not be perfect). Wrap each link in foil, and twist both ends so it looks like Tootsie Roll.

4. Place wrapped links in steamer, cover, and steam 30 minutes. Serve immediately, or refrigerate until ready to use. Warm gently in oven or toaster oven 8 to 10 minutes if not serving immediately.

PER LINK: 52 CAL; 5 G PROT; <1 G TOTAL FAT

(<1 G SAT FAT); 6 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 63 MG SOD; <1 G FIBER; 1 G SUGARS

Eggnog-Banana Parfaits

SERVES 8 | VEGAN

Chilling this parfait mixture overnight allows the flavors of maple, nutmeg, and cinnamon to blend into a rich pudding.

- 24 oz. vanilla soy pudding
- 2 Tbs. pure maple syrup
- 2 Tbs. dark rum, or 1 tsp. rum extract
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg, plus more for garnish
- ¼ tsp. ground cloves
- 2 cups vanilla cookies or wafers, such as Cherrybrook Kitchen or Mi-Del, crumbled
- 4 bananas, sliced
- Soy whipped cream, for garnish

1. Combine pudding, maple syrup, rum, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves in bowl; chill overnight.

2. To assemble parfaits: Alternate layers of cookies, pudding mixture, and banana slices, to fill serving cup. Top each parfait with dollop of whipped cream, and sprinkle with ground nutmeg.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 244 CAL; 4 G PROT; 4 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 49 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 115 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 27 G SUGARS



Eggnog-Banana Parfaits

1 FOOD 5 WAYS

BY Alison Ashton

NUTRITIONAL PROFILE

1/2 CUP COOKED SWEET POTATO CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING:

- 125 CALORIES
- 4 G FIBER
- 15,488 MCG BETA-CAROTENE
- 21 MG VITAMIN C
- 377 MG POTASSIUM

Taste the rainbow (clockwise from left): garnet, jewel, yampi, and Okinawan varieties.

sweet potatoes

No matter what you call them, these rich-hued root veggies need no introduction

PHOTOGRAPHY John Kernick FOOD STYLING Cyd McDowell PROP STYLING Alistair Turnbull



Chocolate Sweet Potato Torte, p. 54

Which are your favorite sunset-hued root vegetables? Sweet potatoes or yams? The answer, it turns out, depends more on different vernaculars than different veggies. “In the U.S., most of the time the words ‘sweet potato’ and ‘yam’ are used interchangeably,” says Tara Smith, extension specialist at Louisiana State University’s AgCenter Sweet Potato Research Station. “In the 1930s Louisiana sweet potato producers started labeling their extra-sweet, moist, orange-flesh cultivar a ‘yam’ to differentiate it from the paler, drier versions cultivated on the East Coast.” True yams “are a completely different species than sweet potatoes,” says Smith. They’re a starchy, bland tuber native to Africa and cultivated in tropical climates.

Available in many varieties, sweet potatoes aren’t always orange either, as you can see in the photo, left. But no matter what you call them or which color you choose, one thing’s certain: these ultraversatile root vegetables make delicious additions to entrées, side dishes, and desserts.

1 FOOD 5 WAYS

SWEET POTATOES 101

Look for these tasty varieties when you shop.

Variety	Characteristics	Best Uses
ORANGE-FLESHED Beauregard, garnet, jewel	Copper to russet skin; bright-orange to reddish-purple flesh ; moist consistency and sweet taste	Baked or steamed; mashed or puréed in casseroles, cakes, and pies
WHITE Cuban, boniato, yampi	Cream to russet skin; cream-colored, mildly sweet, flaky flesh	Great in savory dishes, especially Latin or Caribbean fare
BLUE Okinawan	Petite size; whitish skin; purple flesh ; starchy, dry texture; sweet flavor	Add steamed chunks to a stew; best option for oven fries

Different types of sweet potatoes can be used interchangeably in recipes, though cooking times may need to be adjusted for differences in starch and water content.

batter into prepared pan. Bake 45 minutes, or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in pan on wire rack. Remove springform sides; cool completely.

6. Melt chocolate in small saucepan over medium-low heat. Stir in soymilk. Spread chocolate mixture over top of cake. Let stand until chocolate sets.

PER SLICE: 227 CAL; 6 G PROT; 9 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT); 37 G CARB; 71 MG CHOL; 61 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 29 G SUGARS

Colorful Oven Fries

SERVES 6 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE
30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Oven-fried sweet potatoes can be tricky because the potatoes' high moisture content makes it difficult for them to "fry," and their ample sugar causes them to burn easily. Okinawan sweet potatoes work well here because of their dry texture, but a dusting of potato starch helps keep all varieties crisp.

- 2 lb. assorted sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼-inch-thick sticks
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon, optional
- 2 Tbs. potato starch

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper, or coat with cooking spray. Set 1 oven rack in top position and 1 rack in bottom position.

2. Toss together sweet potatoes, oil, salt, pepper, and cinnamon, if using. Sprinkle with potato starch; toss mixture once more to coat well. Arrange in single layer on prepared baking sheets. Bake 10 minutes. Turn potatoes with spatula, and rotate baking sheets. Bake 12 minutes more, or until golden brown.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 121 CAL; 2 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 24 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 226 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS

Chocolate Sweet Potato Torte

SERVES 12 | GLUTEN FREE

Puréed sweet potato, cocoa, almond flour, and eggs yield a rich, dense, and fudgy cake perfect for chocolate lovers.

- 1 cup packed cooked, mashed orange-fleshed sweet potato, such as Beauregard, garnet, or jewel
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- 1 cup almond flour
- ½ cup unsweetened dark-chocolate cocoa powder
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- 4 large eggs
- 2 oz. bittersweet chocolate
- 2 Tbs. nonfat soymilk

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray.
2. Blend sweet potato, 1 cup sugar, almond flour, cocoa, and salt in food processor 30 seconds, or until smooth, scraping bowl as necessary.
3. Separate 3 eggs, placing whites in bowl of electric mixer. Add 3 yolks and remaining whole egg to sweet potato mixture; pulse to combine. Transfer sweet potato mixture to large bowl.
4. Beat egg whites with electric mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Add remaining ½ cup sugar; beat 2 minutes more, or until stiff, glossy peaks form.
5. Fold one-third egg white mixture into sweet potato mixture with spatula. Gently fold in remaining whites. Pour



Colorful Oven Fries



Sweet Potato Bourbon Pie

Say yes to dessert! A slice of Sweet Potato Bourbon Pie delivers sweet satisfaction, plus almost 100 percent of your daily requirement for vitamin A.

Sweet Potato Bourbon Pie

SERVES 10

Pumpkin pie may be a holiday dessert, but similarly-seasoned sweet potato pie is a beloved Southern specialty year-round. And if you want to take some of the guilt out of indulging in this dessert, just tell yourself a slice takes care of almost 100 percent of your daily vitamin A needs.

- 2 cups cooked, puréed orange-fleshed sweet potato, such as Beauregard, garnet, or jewel
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbs. bourbon
- ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 9-inch whole-wheat frozen pie shell
- 2 Tbs. chopped toasted pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Whisk together sweet potato, brown sugar, flour, bourbon, pumpkin pie spice, salt, and eggs in large bowl until smooth. Pour into pie shell. Sprinkle with pecans.
2. Place on rimmed baking sheet. Bake 50 minutes, or until center is set. Cool on wire rack.

PER SLICE: 286 CAL; 5 G PROT; 12 G TOTAL FAT (4 G SAT FAT); 41 G CARB; 63 MG CHOL; 213 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 21 G SUGARS

Sweet Potato Latkes (Sweet Potato Pancakes)

SERVES 6 | VEGAN | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Shredded sweet potatoes stand in for russets in this version of potato pancakes, and puréed sweet potatoes replace eggs to make the recipe vegan. Starchy, dry-fleshed sweet potatoes, such as Okinawan or boniato, work best. If you use a moist, extra-sweet type, such as Beauregard or garnet, keep a close eye on the latkes while they cook—the potatoes' high sugar content may make the latkes

burn if they're cooked just a moment too long. Serve with Vanilla Applesauce (from vegetariantimes.com) and vegan sour cream.

- ¼ cup baked, puréed sweet potato
- 1¼ lb. sweet potatoes, peeled and shredded
- ½ cup grated onion
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper
- 4 tsp. canola oil, divided

1. Combine sweet potato purée, shredded sweet potatoes, onion, flour, salt, and pepper in bowl. Shape into ¼-inch-thick patties.
2. Heat nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray; add 1 tsp. oil. Add 3 patties. Cook 3 minutes; flip, and cook 2 minutes more, or until browned on both sides. Drain on paper-towel-lined plate. Repeat with remaining oil and patties.

PER LATKE: 118 CAL; 2 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 21 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 218 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS

Ricotta Ravioli with Sweet Potato Sauce

SERVES 6

Homemade ravioli doesn't require a pasta maker when you use prepared won ton wrappers from the refrigerator section of the supermarket. Freezing the ravioli before cooking them helps them hold their shape in a pot of boiling water. Frozen, uncooked ravioli can be stored in a freezer bag for up to a month.

RAVIOLI

- 1 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 1 oz. grated Pecorino-Romano cheese, optional
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp.)
- 2 tsp. minced sage, plus more for garnish

- 48 square won ton wrappers
- 1 oz. shaved Pecorino cheese, optional
- 2 tsp. chopped fresh parsley, plus more for garnish

SWEET POTATO SAUCE

- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 Tbs. minced shallot
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp.)
- 1 cup cooked, puréed orange-fleshed sweet potato
- 2 Tbs. sherry or white wine

1. To make Ravioli: Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Stir together ricotta, grated cheese (if using), garlic, and sage in medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
2. Place 1 won ton wrapper on work surface (cover remaining wrappers with damp, clean towel to prevent drying.) Spoon 2 tsp. ricotta mixture in center of wrapper. Brush edges with water. Top with another won ton wrapper, pressing gently to seal edges. Repeat with remaining ricotta mixture and won ton wrappers. Arrange ravioli in single layer on prepared baking sheets; freeze.
3. To make Sweet Potato Sauce: Heat oil in small saucepan over medium heat. Add shallot, and season with salt, if desired. Cook 2 minutes, or until tender. Add garlic; cook 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Stir in sweet potato and sherry, and season with salt and pepper, if desired; simmer 5 minutes.
4. Bring large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add ravioli; stir with spoon or spatula to keep them from sticking together. Cook 2 minutes, or until ravioli float to surface. Drain. Arrange 4 ravioli per serving plate. Top each serving with 3 Tbs. Sweet Potato sauce, then shaved cheese (if using), chopped parsley, and minced sage.
PER SERVING (4 RAVIOLI PLUS SAUCE): 294 CAL; 12 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 50 G CARB; 17 MG CHOL; 575 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Freelance writer and recipe developer Alison Ashton used her balcony in Marina del Rey, Calif., as a photo studio so she could show VT editors exactly which varieties of sweet potato she used in these recipes.

BY Mary Margaret Chappell

HONOR ROLL

Winning recipes from this year's up-and-coming student chefs get high marks for their delicious simplicity and creativity



BEST ENTRÉE Wild Mushroom Ravioli in Sage and Brown Butter Sauce, p. 63



BEST DESSERT
Oatmeal Cheesecake
Banana Splits, p. 65



PHOTOGRAPHY Richard Jung FOOD STYLING Lorna Brash PROP STYLING Cynthia Inions

Back in March, VT put out a call to the graduating classes of America's top cooking schools, inviting students to draw on their culinary training to come up with their best, easiest, most innovative vegetarian recipes for our annual Chefs' Challenge contest. After six months, many delicious judging sessions, and more than 12,000 reader votes cast on vegetariantimes.com (that's two quarters' worth of "work" for those of you still thinking in school time), we've found our winners—just in time to ring in 2010. Here's hoping the New Year for these up-and-coming chefs is as tasty and exciting as the recipes they've created.

BEST APPETIZER

THE CHEF: Joshua James Ogradowski
Johnson & Wales University
Providence, R.I.



Even as a kid, vegetarian Joshua Ogradowski enjoyed cooking breakfast for his large family. His culinary career included stints as a dishwasher in an Italian restaurant, a movie theater concession stand supervisor, and country club line cook before he enrolled in the culinary arts program at Johnson & Wales. Currently, Joshua is pursuing his master's degree in art and teaching. He developed this recipe for a recorded heart-healthy cooking demo in a spa cuisine class.

Bruschetta with White Bean Paste, Tomato Chutney, and Reduced Balsamic Glaze

MAKES 16 BRUSCHETTA

BALSAMIC GLAZE

- 1 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbs. Sucanat or nonrefined cane sugar

WHITE BEAN PASTE

- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 oz. grated Parmesan cheese (½ cup)
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ clove garlic, minced (½ tsp.)

CHUTNEY

- 4 Roma tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped (2 cups)
- 1 red Fresno chile, seeded and finely chopped (¼ cup)
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped shallot
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped fresh basil
- 2 Tbs. lime juice

BRUSCHETTA

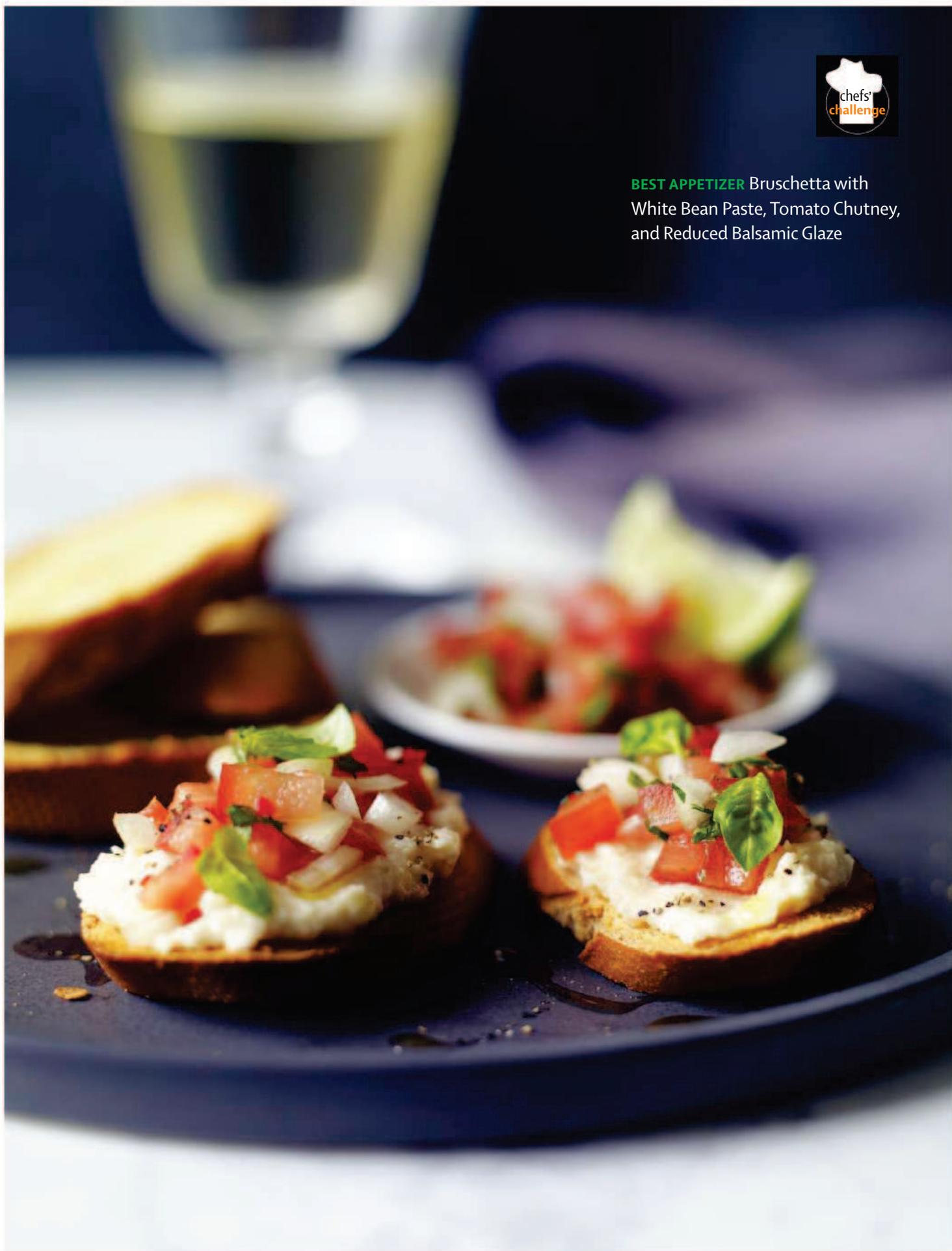
- 16 slices French baguette
- 2 Tbs. olive oil

- 1.** To make Balsamic Glaze: Simmer vinegar and Sucanat in saucepan over medium-low heat 20 minutes, or until syrupy. Cool.
- 2.** To make White Bean Paste: Blend all ingredients in food processor until smooth. Season with salt and pepper, if desired.
- 3.** To make Chutney: combine all ingredients in bowl.
- 4.** To make Bruschetta: Preheat grill or grill pan. Brush baguette slices with oil, and grill 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Spread 1 Tbs. White Bean Paste on each grilled bread slice. Top with 2 Tbs. Chutney; drizzle with Balsamic Glaze.

PER SLICE (WITH TOPPING): 186 CAL; 7 G PROT;
5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 28 G CARB; 3 MG CHOL;
309 MG SOD; 2 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS



BEST APPETIZER Bruschetta with White Bean Paste, Tomato Chutney, and Reduced Balsamic Glaze





BEST SIDE DISH Sicilian-Style Roasted Vegetables with Balsamic Syrup

BEST SIDE DISH

THE CHEF: Nancy Liguori
Natural Gourmet Institute
New York, N.Y.



When Nancy Liguori doctors up recipes to make them healthful and delicious, she's got the credentials to back up her creations. After getting her MD in 2004, Nancy worked in the health care communications sector before enrolling in the Natural Gourmet Institute's part-time chef's training program. This recipe was an improvisation during her final culinary school class, which focused on Sicilian cooking. "We had extra green beans and red bell peppers, so I decided to roast them and treat them in the classically Sicilian *agrodolce* style by tossing the vegetables with orange and lemon juices and then drizzling them with reduced balsamic vinegar," she explains.

Sicilian-Style Roasted Vegetables with Balsamic Syrup

SERVES 8 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE
30 MINUTES OR FEWER

- 1 lb. green beans, trimmed
- 1 large red bell pepper, sliced lengthwise into ½-inch-thick strips
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ⅓ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. grated orange zest

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Toss green beans and bell pepper strips with oil,

salt, and pepper in large bowl. Spread in single layer on baking sheet, and roast 20 to 25 minutes, or until vegetables are crisp-tender and beginning to brown, stirring occasionally.

2. Bring vinegar to a boil in small saucepan over medium-high heat. Simmer 5 to 7 minutes, or until vinegar is thick and syrupy, stirring occasionally.

3. Toss green bean mixture with orange juice, lemon juice, and orange zest in large bowl. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Transfer to serving dish, and drizzle with balsamic vinegar syrup.

PER ½-CUP SERVING: 65 CAL; 1 G PROT; 4 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 8 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 104 MG SOD; 2 G FIBER; 4 G SUGARS

BEST ENTRÉE

THE CHEF: Emily Peterson
Institute of Culinary Education
New York, N.Y.



Wild Mushroom Ravioli in Sage and Brown Butter Sauce

SERVES 5

- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 small shallot, minced (2 Tbs.)
- 1 4-oz pkg. "gourmet blend" mushrooms (shiitakes, oyster mushrooms, and baby bellas), diced
- 2 Tbs. white wine

"I have been cooking ever since I could see over the stove, but needed to get stuck behind a desk to inspire me to cook professionally," says Emily Peterson. As a birthday present to herself, she enrolled at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York, and has never looked back. Emily now teaches cooking classes at the Astor Center in New York, provides cooking demonstrations at local farmers' markets, and cooks at The Green Table restaurant. To create this winning entrée, she used won ton wrappers to make ravioli—a time-saving trick that let her focus on the filling ingredients instead of fussing with dough and pasta makers.

- 1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 20 square won ton wrappers
- ¼ lb. (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 4 fresh sage leaves, plus more for garnish
- 2 Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add shallot, and sauté 2 minutes. Add mushrooms, and cook 7 to 10 minutes, or until softened. Add wine and thyme, and cook 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Cool.

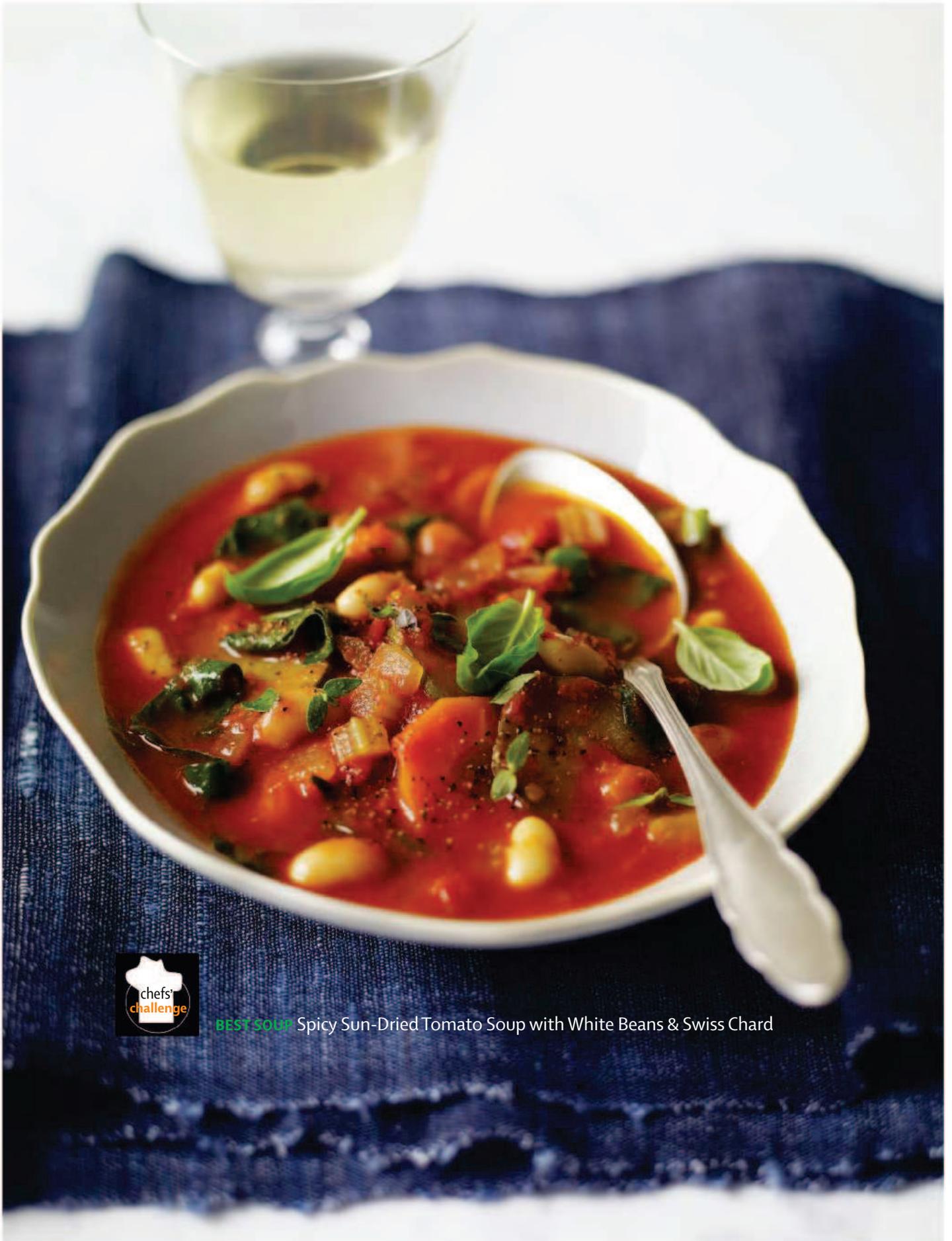
2. Cut 1 won ton wrapper in half, to form 2 rectangles. Brush edges of won ton half with water, and place 1 tsp. mushroom mixture on one side. Fold won ton wrapper in half to make square

ravioli, pressing on edges to seal. Place on baking sheet. Repeat with remaining won ton wrappers and filling.

3. Melt butter in large skillet over low heat. Add sage leaves, and cook 8 to 10 minutes, or until fatty solids in butter sink to bottom of saucepan and turn nutty brown.

4. Meanwhile, cook ravioli in large pot of boiling salted water 2 minutes, or until they float to top. Transfer to skillet with slotted spoon, and toss to coat with brown butter sauce. Season with salt and pepper, if desired, and sprinkle with cheese.

PER SERVING (8 RAVIOLI): 298 CAL; 5 G PROT; 25 G TOTAL FAT (13 G SAT FAT); 21 G CARB; 53 MG CHOL; 336 MG SOD; <1 G FIBER; <1 G SUGARS



BEST SOUP Spicy Sun-Dried Tomato Soup with White Beans & Swiss Chard

BEST SOUP

THE CHEF: Abigail Henson
Natural Gourmet Institute
New York, N.Y.



Spicy Sun-Dried Tomato Soup with White Beans & Swiss Chard

SERVES 8 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

30 MINUTES OR FEWER

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 medium onion, chopped (1½ cups)
- 2 medium carrots, sliced (1 cup)
- 2 ribs celery, chopped (½ cup)

Years ago, Abigail Henson's sister, Mary Boccardo, turned her on to the idea of cooking school after seeing an ad for the Natural Gourmet Institute in the back of VT. Their paths led them away from their dreams of writing cookbooks and opening a teahouse together, but both sisters eventually enrolled in the Natural Gourmet Institute. Abigail came up with this soup on a cold winter night. "As usually happens with soup, it made itself with the ingredients I had on hand," she explains. "I used sun-dried tomatoes as the star ingredient, and everything else just seemed to evolve."

- 1 small zucchini, sliced (1 cup)
- ½ tsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 15-oz. cans diced tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. can small white beans or cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped, plus 2 Tbs. oil from jar
- ½ bunch (6 oz.) Swiss chard, chopped
- ½ tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 cup torn fresh basil

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and red pepper flakes, and cook 1 minute, or until garlic is fragrant. Stir in

onion, carrots, celery, zucchini, and rosemary, and cook 10 to 15 minutes, or until onions are soft.

2. Add broth, 1 can tomatoes, and beans. Scoop 1 cup mixture into food processor or blender, and add remaining can of tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes, and sun-dried tomato oil. Purée until smooth, stir mixture into soup, and season with salt and pepper, if desired. Simmer 10 minutes.

3. Add Swiss chard and thyme; simmer 5 minutes more, or until chard is wilted. Remove pan from heat, and stir in basil.

PER 1½-CUP SERVING: 169 CAL; 5 G PROT; 8 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT FAT); 21 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 367 MG SOD; 6 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS

BEST DESSERT

THE CHEF: Kathleen Willcox
Institute of Culinary Education
New York, N.Y.



Oatmeal Cheesecake Banana Splits

SERVES 6

- ¾ cup rolled oats
- 1½ cups low-fat milk
- 4 oz. low-fat cream cheese or Neufchâtel cheese, softened

While working as a journalist, Kathleen Willcox realized she spent more time on the job thinking, dreaming, and reading about food than anything else, so she enrolled in the Institute of Culinary Education. She still writes about pop culture and food—but now she works as a personal chef, cooking instructor, event planner, and party cook for catering companies around New York. This dessert came about during a game of "clean out the fridge": Kathleen broiled bananas atop an oatmeal base for a hot dessert that's topped with a cheesecake-like mixture of light cream cheese and sour cream.

- 4 oz. reduced-fat sour cream
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 2 bananas, halved lengthwise, each half cut into 3 pieces
- 2 Tbs. light brown sugar
- ¼ cup toasted sliced almonds or other nuts for garnish, optional

1. Coat 6 8-oz. ramekins or ovenproof dishes with cooking spray, and set aside.

2. Combine oats, milk, and pinch of salt in saucepan, and bring to a boil over medium-low heat. Cook 6 to 8 minutes,

or until oats are creamy. Divide oatmeal among prepared ramekins, and cool.

3. Preheat oven to broil. Beat cream cheese and sour cream with electric mixer until smooth. Beat in confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Stir in raspberries.

4. Top oatmeal in each ramekin with 2 banana slices. Sprinkle 1 tsp. brown sugar over bananas. Broil 3 to 5 minutes, or until brown sugar is bubbly. Top with cream cheese mixture; sprinkle with almonds, if using.

PER SERVING: 228 CAL; 6 G PROT; 8 G TOTAL FAT (4 G SAT FAT); 35 G CARB; 24 MG CHOL; 120 MG SOD; 2 G FIBER; 23 G SUGARS



KEEP YOUR EYES WIDE OPEN WHEN YOU EAT.

BY Hillari Dowdle

beat TRAP THE TRAP

5 veg weight-gain pitfalls,
and how to avoid them

When you announced to the world,

“I’m going vegetarian!” chances are that someone, somewhere was worried you’d waste away to nothing.

Of course, that’s *not* true. Not only can you meet your calorie needs on a vegetarian diet, you can easily exceed them. While in theory a vegetarian diet is the most healthful on the planet, in practice it sometimes leaves much to be desired in terms of weight management and vibrant good health.

In the spirit of the New Year—our resolutions for weight loss and healthful eating still alive and kickin’—we asked several savvy, veg-friendly chefs and nutritionists to help spot common vegetarian diet traps, and suggest ways to not fall into them.

ILLUSTRATION BY Juliette Borda

TRAP #1 Negative Thinking

“A vegetarian diet is exciting, but when people focus on what they’re not doing anymore, they’re missing out on the adventure of it,” says Christina Pirello, host of the PBS series *Christina Cooks*, and author of *This Crazy Vegan Life*. “And they can start to lose nutrition if they’re focusing on just lopping things out without replacing them with something healthful.”

Focusing so intently on what you’re cutting out of your diet that you stop thinking about what you’re putting into it is possibly the most basic vegetarian pitfall of all. When meat (or eggs, or dairy, or all of the above) drops out, it can be easy to assume that all other foods are A-OK. Unfrosted Pop-Tarts, Oreos, Fritos—all these are vegetarian, and all are nutritional black holes just the same. “You can stick to everything vegetarian or vegan, and still be eating way too many processed foods,” Pirello says.

Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD, author of *The Flexitarian Diet: The Mostly Vegetarian Way to Lose Weight, Be Healthier, Prevent Disease, and Add Years to Your Life*, has a name for victims of this trap: “I call them the ‘beige vegetarians,’” she says. “They’ll be reading labels like crazy to make sure there’s no meat in their diet, but they’ll have no fruits or vegetables on their plates.”

With a willingness to experiment and a little kitchen inspiration [see Trap #5, Clueless about Cooking, p. 69], a whole new world of textures, flavors, and energy-boosting phytonutrients can be yours. “I encourage people to make a list of foods they love, focus on the vegetables there, and then start playing around with one new seasonal veggie every week,” says Jackie Newgent, RD, author of *Big Green*

Cookbook: Hundreds of Planet-Pleasing Recipes & Tips for a Luscious, Low-Carbon Lifestyle. “When you’re playing with just one ingredient, it gives you a focus. You can expand your eating plan one vegetable at a time.”

Taking this addition approach, make your local farmers’ market an idea laboratory. “A vegetarian should always be eating a variety of fresh foods, and the ‘green’ market is a great place to find inspiration,” says Myra Kornfeld, a culinary instructor at the Natural Gourmet Institute of Culinary Arts in New York, and author of *The Healthy Hedonist Holidays: A Year of Multicultural, Vegetarian-Friendly Holiday Feasts*. “You’ll encounter purslane, wild spinach, escarole, chicory ... these are the kinds of things that people overlook, but they’re delicious once you get to know them.”

Balance your diet, and your plate, with more vegetables, and expect to feel better and start shedding pounds.

TRAP #2 Subpar Carbs

Vegetarians heaved a collective sigh of relief when the benefits of a low-carb diet started getting debunked. Pasta, that old friend, was back on the menu! And with it came lots of refined carbohydrates. For many, that added up to creeping weight gain.

Pirello—a confessed pasta fan—

and that is where the fiber and nutrition are,” explains Blatner. “When you’re eating refined grains, there’s a low satiety factor—it’s hard to get full, which can lead to overeating.”

The solution is simple: switch to whole-wheat pastas, and explore the world of whole grains, which come with filling fiber and nutrition intact. “A healthy vegetarian will look at brown rice, quinoa, and barley,” Pirello says. “These complex carbohydrates break apart slowly in the body—they set you on simmer, so you won’t be hungry as quickly.”

Keep good old semolina pasta on the menu, if you like, but go easy. Limit the serving size to ½ cup—no more than 25 percent of your plate—and load up your pasta primavera with extra broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, eggplant, and onions.

TRAP #3 Mock Meat Overload

It’s easy to replace all those hot dogs, hamburgers, bologna slices, and chicken wings you’ve cut from your diet ... with meatless hot dogs, hamburgers, bologna slices, and chicken wings. But going overboard on these microwavable replacements is simply faux-meat folly.

“The jury is out on whether they are really healthier for you,” says Pirello. “Yes, there is less saturated fat, but there

with them is that they are superconvenient. It’s so easy to microwave plateful after plateful of nuggets and overdo it. You’ll get more protein than you really need, and way too much salt. And you may be missing out on all the phytonutrients that come with eating whole foods.”

One more thing: if you’re relying on fake meat for dinner every night, you may very well be getting too much soy—especially if you’re pouring soymilk on your breakfast cereal, snacking on edamame, and eating a tempeh burger for lunch. “Soy is great, but nobody gets healthy focusing on one food,” says Blatner. “You want to rely on beans for protein, but there are lots of beans out there, and each has its unique nutritional qualities. Instead of grabbing a preformed patty, try adding white beans with tomato and basil to a whole-grain pita, or tossing some garbanzos into a stir-fry, or heating up some lentil soup. Every legume will bring a different set of phytochemicals and micronutrients to the table.”

TRAP #4 No Game Plan

Even if you know what’s best for you, it’s easy to fall into the habit of grabbing whatever’s handy. Too often, that means calorie-dense cheese and starch. If you

What packs 100 (or so) calories?

1 oz. American cheese: 94 | ½ Pop-Tart: 103 | 15 cups spinach leaves: 104
50 baby zucchini: 100 | 5 steak-cut French fries: 101 | 15 almonds: 104

recommends proceeding with caution. “It takes the body 20 minutes to process that it’s getting full, but you can knock back a huge plate of pasta in 10 minutes,” she says. “Refined carbs go down so fast and so easy.”

So, what’s wrong with cultivating a refined palate? “When you refine grains, you remove two-thirds of the plant—you take away the bran and the germ,

can also be lots of sodium, preservatives, hydrogenated fat, and fractionalized soy protein.”

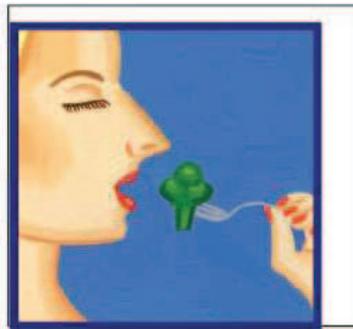
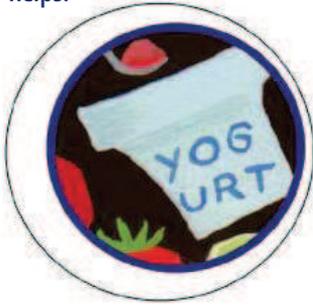
The key here is moderation—and vigilant label reading. Look for varieties that include whole grains and beans (as some do). “They’re nice transitional foods,” says Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, nutrition adviser for the Vegetarian Resource Group. “The biggest problem

eat out a lot, you’re especially prey to a reliance on pound-packing foods. “When you go vegetarian, it pays to do a little restaurant sleuthing, so you’re not falling back on cheese pizza and French fries,” says Tara Gidus, RD, aka the Diet Diva. She advises getting to know the chefs at your regular haunts, and asking politely for more meatless options. “You won’t be the first,” she says.

| slimming tips |

COMBINE PROTEIN WITH CARBS

"People eat 2 cups of cereal out of the box, and a half-hour later they're starving again," says Tara Gidus, RD. "Even if you just add soymilk, it really helps."



CHEW YOUR FOOD

"I try to eat slowly and deliberately," says Myra Kornfeld. "That act alone will get me in touch with my body enough to keep me from overeating."

JOURNAL EVERY MORSEL

"If you're standing in front of the fridge with a spoon," says Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, "you'll be less likely to use it if you know you have to write down everything you put in your mouth with it."



Apply the same advance work to the meals you cook at home. One of the best ways to lose weight and feel energized, says Newgent, is to plan for a balanced plate: fill half with vegetables or fruits, one-quarter with whole grains, and one-quarter with protein-rich foods, such as beans, whole soy foods, or nuts.

If you haven't quite gotten the knack of eating this way, don't worry. All it takes is a little practice. If you're new to the game, start out planning a week's worth of menus—you don't have to execute the plan exactly, but you'll get a good idea of what you need to eat and how to shop for it. Once you've grasped that, and mastered the art of the balanced plate, you can start to loosen up a bit. "With planning, less is more, but you do want to ballpark it," says Blatner. "Start each week with just two or three ideas for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Go to the store with those ideas in mind, and be open to what's beautiful, in season, and fresh."

One sweet side to planning: when you start to replace French fries with baby zucchini, you get to add a whole lot more to your plate. [See *What Packs 100 (or So) Calories?* on p. 68.]

TRAP #5 Clueless about Cooking

Bar none, the single most important thing you can do for your diet is to get into the kitchen and start cooking your own food. "People say they are so busy that they don't have time to cook," muses Pirello. "In other cultures, dinner is the entire point. You make an evening out of it. Here, we have dinner in a bucket so we can hurry up, choke it down, and do something else."

Pirello blames the "dinner-in-a-bucket syndrome" on a cultural disconnect—with a world of convenience foods, we've lost the art of cooking. It's time to revive that art, she says, especially if you're a vegetarian. "When you don't have the basic skills to put a meal together, you're at the mercy of whatever is out there—it's how you end up every night saying, 'Oh, it's 7 o'clock, I'll just do pasta again,'" she says. "You need to know how to braise, how to roast, how to stew; you need basic knife skills. We're not splitting the atom here."

Still, if the kitchen seems like foreign territory, sign up for a cooking class or two, says Kornfeld. Watch YouTube videos, thumb through cookbooks, read food magazines (such as this one), and experiment.

You'll boost your odds of culinary success if you set up a go-to pantry. Pirello advises having the following on hand: sea salt, black pepper, extra virgin olive oil, and a few types of whole grains (millet, brown rice, amaranth, quinoa). Stock up on dried beans (black, white, pinto, garbanzo), plus a couple of canned varieties for on-the-spot cooking. Buy a few vinegars (white, balsamic, red wine). Invest in a great knife. ("Go to a kitchen store, and hold every chef's knife in your hand," says Pirello. "When you find the right one, you'll just know it—I swear.")

And don't neglect the spice rack. Keep a few key spices on hand, and you can turn whatever's in season into a feast, says Kornfeld: "Combine cumin, ginger, chili powder, and oregano, and you can give dishes a Mexican flavor profile. Use cumin, coriander, ginger, garlic, and turmeric, and you've got Indian. Mix fennel, white wine, and a few of the green herbs, and you'll have Provençal."

What effort you do make will be amply rewarded with greater vitality and a naturally trim waistline. "Cooking is more work—it just is," Pirello says. "But if you're not willing to work for your health, what *are* you willing to work for?" 🌱

balancing ACT

According to Thai philosophy, staying in sync with Mother Nature through the changing seasons is the key to healthful living. This involves cooking with seasonal ingredients, of course, but also eating to balance the four basic elements of life: earth, water, wind, and fire.

Winter is dominated by the earth element, so foods that heal right now include “earth” items: buttery root vegetables and warming root seasonings, such as onion, ginger, and garlic. Citrus and greens enhance benefits by helping prevent respiratory illnesses. For a taste of how the Thai approach to food and cooking can keep you feeling balanced and well throughout the cold months, try these recipes; all are mainstays in Thai healing practices.

Stay well all winter long with recipes that draw on Thai healing traditions



GINGER TEA, p. 72. Ginger is a warming and spicy rhizome that soothes the digestive system and calms the mind.

GAENG KHAE
(SPICY THAI
VEGETABLE
SOUP), p. 72.

Spicy seasonings
are believed to
nurture the
digestive,
circulatory, and
respiratory
systems.





Chile Paste

Ginger Tea

MAKES 2 CUPS
GLUTEN FREE
30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Ginger is Mother Nature's protective cloak, shielding us from sickness on winter days. This tea is very spicy—if it tastes too strong, dilute it with more hot water and honey. Traditional advice is not to drink more than 2 cups of ginger tea a day unless you are using it as a treatment for a bad chest cold.

- 12 thin slices fresh ginger, pounded with mortar or rolling pin
- 1 Tbs. honey

1. Put ginger and 3 cups water in small saucepan, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 20 to 25 minutes.

- 2.** Strain out ginger slices and discard, or reserve to make Ginger Massage Oil (recipe below). Stir in honey, and serve hot. Tea can be reheated, if necessary.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 36 CAL; <1 G PROT; <1 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 9 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 4 MG SOD; <1 G FIBER; 9 G SUGARS

Ginger Massage Oil for Cold Hands and Feet

When your hands and feet get chilled, use this aromatic massage oil to stimulate the circulatory system and counter inflammation. Pour 1 teaspoon into a small bowl, and microwave on high 5 to 6 seconds. Massage warmed oil into cold hands and feet, and leave on 1 hour before washing off.

- 6 whole cloves
- 1 tsp. mustard seeds
- ½ cup almond oil
- 4 Tbs. minced fresh ginger (or use leftover ginger from Ginger Tea recipe, above)
- 10 drops sandalwood essential oil

- 1.** Toast cloves and mustard seeds in skillet over medium-low heat 3 to 5 minutes, or until fragrant. Cool, then grind to powder in coffee grinder.
- 2.** Transfer spice powder to small jar. Add almond oil, ginger, and sandalwood oil. Close, and shake well to combine.

Gaeng Khae (Spicy Thai Vegetable Soup)

SERVES 4 | VEGAN

This medicinal soup from the north of Thailand is believed to prevent and reduce colds and fever. The flavorful base is a hand-ground paste of chiles, garlic, lemongrass, and shallots. If you don't have a mortar and pestle, blend all the ingredients in a food processor. Serve with brown or red rice.

CHILE PASTE

- 15 dried chiles de arbol or Japones chiles
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 stalks lemongrass, minced
- 2 shallots, minced (½ cup)
- 1 tsp. red miso

SOUP

- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1½ cups sliced beet greens, Swiss chard, escarole, turnip greens, or kale
- 1 cup turnip or fennel chunks
- ½ cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup firm tofu chunks
- 1 cup coarsely chopped arugula
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped parsley

- 1.** To make Chile Paste: Soak chiles in bowl of boiling water 30 minutes. Drain, pat dry, and finely chop.
- 2.** Combine garlic and salt in mortar, and pound with pestle. Add lemongrass, shallots, miso, and chiles, pounding and crushing after each addition to make thick paste.
- 3.** To make Soup: Bring broth to a boil in saucepan over high heat. Stir in soy sauce and Chile Paste. Add beet greens, turnip, and mushrooms, and bring to a boil. Cook 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 5 minutes. Add tofu, and cook 2 minutes more. Stir in arugula, mint, and parsley, and simmer 1 to 2 minutes, or until herbs wilt.

PER 1-CUP SERVING: 126 CAL; 9 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 17 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 811 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 4 G SUGARS



Ginger Massage Oil for Cold Hands and Feet



STIR-FRIED TOFU Tofu is a neutral food, good for establishing balance with all elements. Peppercorns, cloves, garlic, and green onion are believed to stabilize the wind element that accompanies wet, moist air and heavy fog and rain.

THAILAND Where vegetarian eating is a religion

Once a week, traditional Thai market vendors pack their stalls with colorful blooms, heavenly scented jasmine leis, candles, and incense wrapped in fresh banana leaves. The sudden abundance of flowers for sale marks the Buddhist Sabbath, or *wan phra*. Devout Buddhists, young and old, converge on the market to select the prettiest flowers to add to their offering trays and baskets. The special vegetarian dishes they cook for the Sabbath will be presented as lunch for Buddhist monks.

For centuries, most Thai people followed the teachings of their Buddhist religion, which prohibit the killing of living things—even for food. Thai cooks would prepare dishes with seasonal produce, grains, and nuts. During religious holidays today, most still adhere to a strict vegetarian diet.

Stir-Fried Tofu

SERVES 4 | VEGAN

30 MINUTES OR FEWER

As you stir-fry this quick-and-healthy dish, the perfume from the warming spices and sesame oil will rejuvenate you after a long day at work or time spent out in the cold. If you can't find extra-firm silken tofu, opt for extra-firm or firm tofu to ensure that the cubes remain intact. Serve with cooked rice.

- 1 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. red bean paste, or miso
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. white peppercorns, roasted and ground, or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. white pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cayenne pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. ground cloves
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced (1 tsp.)
- 1 19-oz. pkg. extra-firm silken tofu, drained and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
- 1 green onion, finely chopped (2 Tbs.)
- 1 tsp. sesame oil

1. Combine soy sauce, bean paste, peppercorns, salt, cayenne, and cloves in small bowl. Set aside.
2. Heat large skillet or wok over medium-high heat 1 minute. Add oil, let warm 30 seconds, then add garlic. Stir-fry 6 to 7 seconds, or until garlic is pale golden. Add tofu, then add bean paste mixture and ginger. Cook 1 to 2 minutes, or until tofu is heated through, shaking pan or gently stirring to toss tofu in spice mixture. Stir in green onion and sesame oil. Transfer to bowls, and serve warm.

PER $\frac{1}{2}$ -CUP SERVING: 115 CAL; 6 G PROT;
8 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 3 G CARB;
0 MG CHOL; 310 MG SOD; <1 G FIBER;
<1 G SUGARS

Citrus Salad

SERVES 4 | VEGAN | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER

Look for stunningly red-fleshed blood oranges, which are just coming into season, to make this salad.

DRESSING

- 2 Tbs. agave syrup
- 1½ Tbs. lime or lemon juice
- 1 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes

SALAD

- 2 oranges or blood oranges
- 1 grapefruit
- ½ cup coarsely chopped arugula
- 1 shallot, peeled, thinly sliced crosswise, and loosened into strands (¼ cup)
- 1 Tbs. coarsely chopped mint leaves
- 2 Tbs. crushed roasted peanuts or dry-roasted almond slivers, for garnish
- 1 Tbs. toasted sesame seeds, for garnish

1. To make Dressing: Mix all ingredients together in bowl. Taste for balance of

sweet, sour, salty, and spicy, adjusting seasonings as necessary. Set aside.

2. To make Salad: Slice ends off oranges and grapefruit. Stand fruit on cutting board, and slice away skin and pith from outside with knife. Cut fruit segments from membranes, and transfer to bowl; toss lightly with arugula, shallot, and mint. Toss with Dressing. Serve garnished with peanuts and sesame seeds.

PER ¾-CUP SERVING: 142 CAL; 3 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 27 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 427 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 20 G SUGARS



CITRUS SALAD Citrus fruits and shallots are said to ease colds and respiratory infections. Foods with a cool-spicy quality, such as arugula and mint, help keep us in balance with nature.

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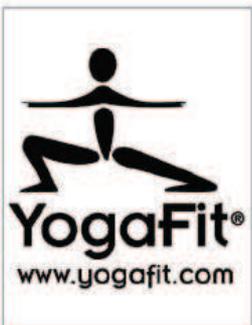


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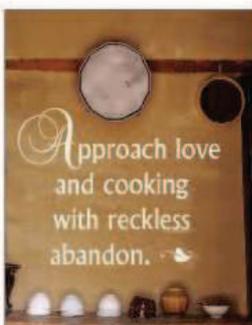


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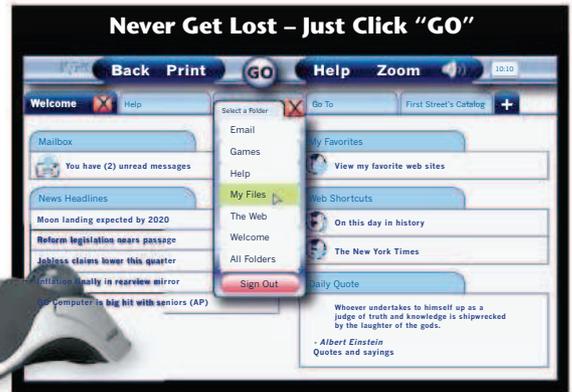
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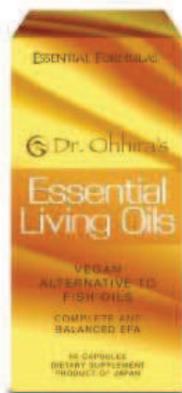
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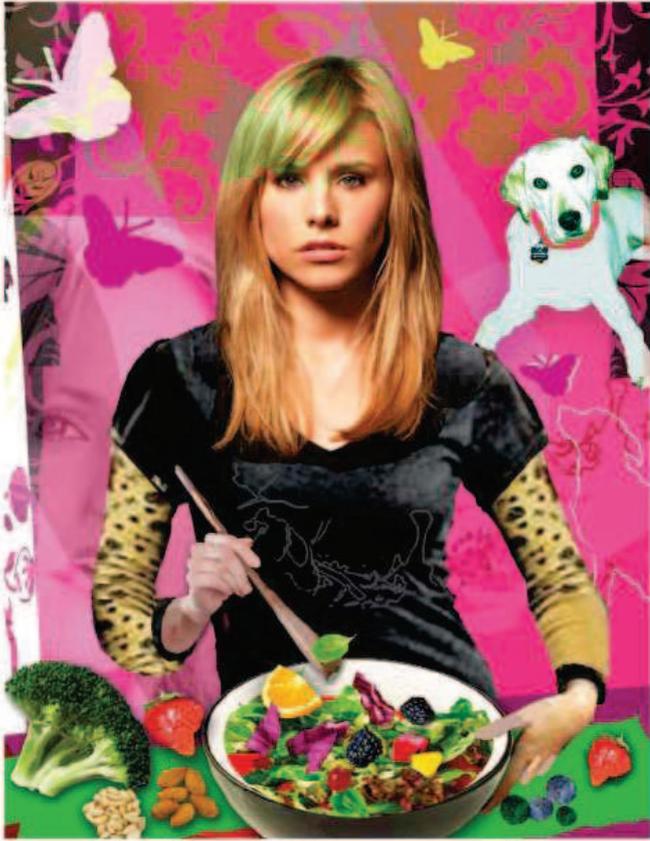
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Kristen Bell

This actress has a well-honed funny bone and a heart for animals

Landing her breakout role in 2004 as a crime-solving high school detective in the TV series *Veronica Mars*, Kristen Bell successfully segued into a movie career as the title character in 2008's *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. Next up for Bell is the romantic comedy *When in Rome*, opening in January. A vegetarian for more than 15 years, the 29-year-old animal lover shares her home with three rescue dogs: Lola, Shakey, and Sadie. Bell first met Sadie, a Hurricane Katrina survivor, on a visit to the Helen Woodward Animal Center, a shelter she's active with near San Diego.

Q What introduced you to vegetarianism?

A I had a lot of quirks as a child. One was that I didn't like to eat meat: I didn't like to chew it, didn't like the taste or smell of it, and just wasn't having any of it. I was in the minority of kids who actually loved fruits and vegetables. My mom, who was a nurse, was very supportive of my choice to become a vegetarian, but said we were going to do some research. I'm constantly monitoring how colorful the food on my plate is, which is a trick my mom taught me. I make sure to eat really dark power vegetables, like broccoli and kale.

Q Do you get to cook for yourself much?

A I cook a lot. Cooking makes me feel calm, makes me feel empowered; it makes me feel like I'm a provider. One of my favorite things to do is to pick a food, like kale, and get some fresh from the farmers' market, then look up different recipes with it as an ingredient, make all those recipes, and decide which is best.

Q Is it true you have dessert after every meal?

A Yes, even after breakfast. I like having something sweet to finish a meal, and I'm not ashamed of that!

Q How much does your concern for animal welfare influence your vegetarianism?

A When I was little, I loved my dogs so much. Part of my becoming a vegetarian was that I would look at my burger, then look at my dogs, and I wasn't able to see a difference. But I think it was Milan Kundera, in [his book] *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, who said something like you can really judge people's personalities based on how they treat those who are at their mercy—in other words, animals. That's a great way to live, because a lot of creatures in this world are defenseless and we have to be compassionate and aware.

Q You've said how hard it was to keep a straight face while filming [the 2009 release] *Couples Retreat* with funnyman Vince Vaughn. How important is laughter to you?

A It's vital, it's No. 1. Laughter provides so much to your emotional and mental health. And you have to be able to laugh at yourself. That's key. At a dance rehearsal for *You Again* [scheduled for release in 2010], I wasn't picking up the steps quickly. I just couldn't get the "booty shake" right. I looked over at the director and the choreographer, and they were cracking up and videotaping me. I'm sure it'll turn up on some blooper reel! 🍌

After hearing Kristen Bell talk about The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Los Angeles-based writer Bonnie Siegler is ready to give the movie version another try.

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