

Lentil Chili

2 C. dried lentils
3-4 C. water
2 large tomatoes (ripe) chopped
1 tsp cumin
1/2 tsp paprika
1/2 tsp thyme
1tbl minced garlic
1 C. chopped onion
1 tsp salt
3 Tbl tomato paste
1 Tbl. balsamic vinegar
Black and red pepper to taste
Cheddar and sour cream

Directions:

Put lentils and 3 cups water to boil then simmer for 1/2 hour. (Stir and add water as needed) Add tomatoes, cumin, paprika, thyme, garlic, and onions. Cook 30 minutes. Add salt and tomato paste. Cool for 10 minutes. Add vinegar and pepper. Serve with cheese and sour cream.

Manicotti

2 C. flour
3 eggs
1 Tbl olive oil
1/2 tsp salt
1 lb ricotta
Shredded mozzarella cheese
Fresh parsley
Tomato sauce (Go with your favorite jarred, or homemade)
1 cup luke warm water

Directions:

Combine flour, eggs, oil, salt. Slowly add water and beat with wisk until smooth. Fry batter into thin crepes (about half to three quarters a ladle full per pancake).

Pan-Seared Tilapia with Chile Lime Butter

For the Chile Lime Butter:

4 Tbl Softened butter	1 Tsp Lime Zest
1 Tsp minced Shallot	1 Tsp minced serrano chile
2 Tsp fresh lime juice	Pinch of Salt

Directions:

Mix all the ingredients together and stir with a rubber spatula until you have a well-mixed butter paste

For the Fish:

6 6-8 oz Tilapia	Kosher Salt
2 Tbl Olive oil	

Directions:

Pat fish dry and sprinkle with salt. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until just smoking, then sauté 3 pieces of fish, turning over once with a spatula, until golden and just cooked through, approximately 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate, and sauté remaining fish in remaining oil.

Serve piece of fish with dollop of chile lime butter.

Penne alla Vodka

1 28oz can whole tomatoes, drained, liquid reserved
2 tablespoons olive oil
½ small onion, minced (about ¼ cup)
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 medium garlic cloves minced or pressed.
¼ - ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
Salt
1/3 cup vodka
½ cup heavy cream
1 pound penne pasta
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil leaves
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Puree half of tomatoes in food processor until smooth. Dice remaining tomatoes into ½ inch pieces, discarding cores. Combine pureed and diced tomatoes in liquid measuring cup (you should have about 1/23 cups). Add reserved liquid to equal 2 cups.

Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add onions and tomato paste and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are light golden around edges, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and pepper flakes; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Stir in tomatoes and ½ teaspoon salt. Remove pan from heat and add vodka. Return pan to medium-high heat and simmer briskly until alcohol flavor is cooked off, 8 to 10 minutes; stir frequently and lower heat to medium if simmering becomes too vigorous. Stir in cream and cook until hot, about 1 minute.

Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to boil in large Dutch oven over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt and pasta. Cook until just shy of al dente, then drain pasta, reserving ¼ cup cooking water, and transfer pasta back to Dutch oven. Add sauce to pasta and toss over medium heat until pasta absorbs some of sauce, 1 to 2 minutes, adding reserved cooking water if sauce is too thick. Stir in basil and adjust seasoning with salt. Divide among past bowls and serve immediately, passing Parmesan separately.

Salmon with Mustard and Brown Sugar Glaze

¾ cup dry white wine
¼ cup butter, cut into small pieces
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
1 2-pound center-cut skinless salmon fillet

1/3 cup spicy brown mustard (such as Gulden's)
1/4 cup (packed) golden brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Boil wine, butter, and Old Bay seasoning in small saucepan 3 minutes. Sprinkle salmon on both sides with salt and pepper. Place fish on heavy rimmed baking sheet. Pour wine mixture over. Bake until fish is opaque in center, about 14 minutes. Remove from oven.

Preheat broiler. Mix mustard and sugar in small bowl to blend; spread over salmon to cover. Broil salmon until topping is brown and bubbling, about 3 minutes. Transfer salmon to platter and serve.

Makes 6 servings.

Rice and Spinach Casserole

3 C. brown basmati rice
4 ½ C. Water
4 Tbl. olive oil
4 C. minced onion
1/2 tsp. salt
4 Tbl. minced garlic
2 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. coriander
½ tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1lb spinach (cleaned stemmed, minced if fresh or chopped frozen)
1 box fake ground meat
1/2 tsp salt
2 C. low fat yogurt
1 Egg
1 Tbl. lemon zest
1Tbl. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
Pine nuts

Directions:

Put rice and water to boil. Once boiling, cover and simmer 20-30 minutes until the rice is done. Fluff with a fork and set aside. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a frying pan and two tablespoons in a wok. In frying pan, sauté one cup onion with two tablespoons of garlic. When onion is soft, add box of fake meat, and brown (as much as fake meat allows) for about 10 minutes. In the wok, sauté three cups onion with ½ tsp salt for about 5 minutes over medium low heat. Cover, and let cook (Stirring occasionally) for 30 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons garlic, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cook 5 minutes. Turn heat on high, add spinach and ½ tsp salt. Cook, stirring frequently until water evaporates. Stir in fake meat mixture to spinach and cook together for five minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350. Butter a 2 quart casserole pan.

Put yogurt, egg, lemon zest and lemon juice in a large bowl. Add 1 tsp salt and pepper. Beat well. Add rice and mix thoroughly. Press half of rice mixture into buttered casserole dish. Spread spinach mixture over rice. Top spinach with remaining rice. Cover with foil and bake at 45 minutes in center rack of oven. Place on bottom rack of oven for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes. Invert on serving plate. Serve in slices covered with toasted pine nuts.

Veggie Burgers

3/4 cup dried brown lentils, rinsed and picked over
2 1/2 teaspoons table salt
3/4 cup bulgar wheat
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cups finely chopped onion
1/2 cup finely chopped celery
1/2 cup finely chopped leek (white and light green part only)
2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed
1 pound cremini or white mushrooms, cleaned and sliced about 1/4 inch thick
1 cup raw and unsalted cashews
1/3 cup mayonnaise
2 cups panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
Ground black pepper

Bring 3 cups water, lentils, and 1 teaspoon salt to boil over high heat, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until lentils are just beginning to fall apart, about 25 minutes. Drain in fine mesh strainer. Line baking sheet with triple layer paper towels and spread drained lentils over. Gently pat lentils dry with additional paper towels, cool lentils to room temperature.

While lentils simmer, bring 2 cups water and 1/2 teaspoon salt to boil. Stir bulgur wheat into boiling water and cover immediately; let stand off heat until water is absorbed, 15-20 minutes. Drain in fine strainer, using rubber spatula to press out excess moisture. Transfer bulgur to medium bowl and set aside. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onions, celery, leek and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Spread vegetable mixture on second baking sheet to cool; set aside. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil to now-empty skillet; heat over high heat until shimmering. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, about 12 minutes. Spread mushrooms on baking sheet with vegetable mixture, cool to room temperature, about 20 minutes.

Process cashews in food processor until finely chopped, about fifteen 1 second pulses; stir into bowl with bulgur along with cooled lentils, vegetable-mushroom mixture, and mayonnaise. Transfer half of mixture to now-empty food processor and pulse until coarsely chopped, fifteen to twenty 1-second pulses; mixture should be cohesive but roughly textured. Transfer processed mixture to large bowl; repeat with remaining unprocessed mixture and combine with first batch. Stir in panko, 1 teaspoon salt and pepper to taste. Line baking sheet with paper towels. Divide mixture into 12 portions, about 1/2 cup each, shaping each into tightly packed patty, 4 inches in diameter and 1/2 inches thick; set patties on baking sheet; paper towels will absorb excess moisture.

TO COOK ON THE GRILL: Build medium-hot charcoal fire or preheat gas grill on high. Wipe grate with wad of paper towels dipped lightly in vegetable oil. Grill burgers, without moving them, until well browned, about 5 minutes; flip burgers and continue cooking until well browned on second side, about 5 minutes. Serve.

TO COOK ON THE STOVETOP: Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in 12 inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering; cook burgers, 4 at a time, until well browned, about 4 minutes per side, lowering heat to medium if browning too quickly. Repeat with additional oil and burgers. Serve.

Vegetable Torta (CI Sept-Oct '05)

Vegetables:

- 3 Medium eggplants (1lb each), halved crosswise and cut lengthwise into ½ inch thick slices, outer thin slices of skin from each half discarded
- 3 Tbl olive oil, plus additional oil for wire racks
- 1 medium garlic head, outer papery skins removed and top third of head cut off and discarded
- 2 medium red bell peppers
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into ¼ inch thick slices
- 4 medium zucchini (about 8 oz each), cut on steep bias into ¼ inch thick slices.
- Kosher Salt
- Ground black pepper

Crust:

- 4 large slices (about 6 ounces) white sandwich bread, torn into quarters
- 3 tbl unsalted butter, melted plus additional softened butter for greasing pan.
- 2 ounces Asiago cheese, grated on fine holes of box grater (2/3 cup)

Custard and Garnish:

- 3 large eggs
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves
- 2 tbl juice from 1 lemon
- 3 ounces Asiago cheese, grated on fine holes of box grater (about 1 cup)
- 2 tbl thinly sliced fresh basil leaves.

For the Vegetables:

1. Sprinkle both sides of eggplant slices with generous tablespoon kosher salt; transfer salted eggplant to large colander set over bowl. Let stand until eggplant releases about 2 tablespoons liquid, about 30 minutes. Arrange eggplant slices in single layer on double layer paper towels; cover with another double layer paper towels. Firmly press each slice to flatter and remove as much liquid as possible.
2. While eggplant drains, adjust over racks to upper-middle and lower middle positions; heat over to 450 degrees. Set 2 wire racks on 2 rimmed baking sheets; brush both racks with oil. Place garlic cut side up on sheet of aluminum foil and drizzle garlic with 1 ½ teaspoons oil; wrap foil tightly around garlic and set aside.
3. Arrange salted and pressed eggplant slices on oiled racks; brush slices on both sides with 2 tablespoons oil and sprinkle with pepper.
4. Brush peppers with remaining 1/1/2 teaspoons oil and place 1 pepper on each baking sheet with eggplant. Place baking sheets in oven; place foil-wrapped garlic on lower oven rack alongside baking sheet. Roast vegetables until eggplant slices are soft, well browned, and collapsed, and peppers are blistered and beginning to brown 30 to 35 minutes, rotating baking sheets and turning peppers over halfway through baking time. Transfer peppers to medium bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and set aside; allow eggplant to cool on wire racks. Continue to roast garlic until cloves are soft and golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes longer. Set garlic aside to cool. Reduce over temperature to 375 degrees.
5. While vegetables roast, arrange tomato slices on double layer paper towels; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon kosher salt. Let stand 30 minutes, then cover with another double layer paper towels; gently press tomatoes to remove moisture.
6. While vegetables roast and tomatoes stand, sprinkle both sides of zucchini slices with generous 1 tablespoon kosher salt; transfer salted zucchini slices to large colander set over bowl. Let zucchini stand until it releases about 1/3 cup liquid, about 30 minutes. Place triple layer paper towels on large,

microwave-safe plate. Arrange a third of zucchini slices on paper towels; cover with another triple layer towels, pressing to remove moisture. Repeat, arranging remaining zucchini in two additional layers separated by triple layer paper towels, and placing triple layer paper towels on top of final zucchini layer. Place another heavy, microwave-safe plate on zucchini stack; press firmly to compress. Microwave stack on high power until steaming, about 10 minutes. Using potholders, carefully remove stack from microwave and let stand 5 minutes, remove top plate.

7. When peppers are cool, remove skins. Slit peppers pole to pole; discard stem and seeds. Unfurl peppers to they lie flat; cut each pepper lengthwise into 3 pieces.

FOR THE CRUST:

8. Pulse torn bread in food processor until coarsely ground, about ten 1-second pulses. With machine running, pour butter through feed tube and process until combined, about 4 seconds. Add 2/3 cup Asiago and pulse to combine, about three 1-second pulses. Transfer mixture to bowl. Do not wash food processor.

9. Thoroughly grease 9-inch springform pan with softened butter. Measure out 1 cup bread-crumbs mixture and sprinkle in bottom of springform pan; using flat bottom of measuring cup, press crumbs into even layer. Holding pan upright, press additional 1 ¼ cups bread-crumbs mixture into sides of pan, forming thick, even layer that stops about ¼ inch from top of pan. Reserve leftover bread-crumbs mixture.

FOR THE CUSTARD:

10. Squeeze garlic head at root end to remove cloves from skins. In small bowl, mash cloves with fork and place in food processor; add eggs, cream, thyme, and lemon juice. Process until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds.

ASSEMBLE AND BAKE:

11. Arrange single layer of eggplant on top of bread-crumbs crust, tearing pieces as needed to cover entire bottom surface. Sprinkle evenly with 2 tablespoons cheese. Arrange single layer of zucchini and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons cheese. Repeat with another layer of eggplant and cheese. Layer in all red pepper pieces; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons cheese. Pour half of custard over vegetables; tilt pan and shake gently from side to side to distribute evenly over vegetables and down sides. Repeat layering of eggplant and zucchini, sprinkling each layer with 2 tablespoons cheese (about 4 more layers). Pour remaining custard over vegetables; tilt and gently shake pan to distribute. Arrange tomato slices around perimeter of pan, overlapping to fit, then fill in center with remaining slices. Press tomatoes gently with hands. Sprinkle torta with 3 tablespoons reserved bread-crumbs mixture; discard any remaining bread crumbs.

12. Set torta on baking sheet and bake on lower-middle rack until tomatoes are dry, bread-crumbs topping is lightly browned, center of torta looks firm and level (not soft or wet), and torta registers internal temperature of 175 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 75 to 90 minutes. Cool torta for 10 minutes on wire rack; run thin-bladed knife around inside of pan to loosen, then remove springform pan ring.

13. To serve: Slide thin metal spatula between crust and pan bottom to loosen. Let stand 20 minutes longer (to serve warm) or cool to room temperature, sprinkle with basil and cut into wedges.