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Gourmet vegetarian cooking

Importance of diet: Diet is much more important than most people think. The cholesterol level that you wake up with is like a baseline, that shows what the artery lining has been exposed to overnight; however for about 18 hours of the day what affects the artery lining is the fats from the meals, on top of that baseline.

The Lyon Diet Heart Study¹ showed that a Mediterranean diet from Crete reduced heart attacks and death by 60% in 4 years, compared to the diet usually prescribed in North American coronary care units.

A Cretan Mediterranean diet is low in cholesterol and animal fat, high in beneficial oils such as olive and canola, and high in fruit, vegetables and whole grain fiber. It is a mainly vegetarian diet.

What you should aim for:

-Never eat an egg yolk (use whites or egg substitutes such as Egg Beaters, Egg Creations or Better 'N Eggs); avoid trans fats and fried foods such as chips and fries, keep your meat intake to 2 oz./day, or one 4-oz serving of animal flesh of any kind every other day, and use a non-hydrogenated Canola margarine such as Becel, President's Choice non-hydrogenated, Olivina or Lactantia. (An animal is anything with eyes, a face or a mother: fish is better than chicken, which is better than beef.)

Instead of thinking of your meatless day as your punishment day, think of it as your gourmet cooking class day. **Have fun making vegetarian meals delicious.** A positive attitude is what it takes to make a big change in lifelong habits.

FINDING ALTERNATIVES

One of the key issues is finding alternatives for the "fat bombs" like potato chips, French fries, butter, ice cream and sour cream. (See table).

Low-fat yogurt can be used in place of sour cream for vegetable dips and baked potatoes. You can also make low-fat yogurt into a cheese spread by putting it in a coffee filter and draining out the water. This can be used instead of cream cheese for bagels, and in lasagna and other dishes that call for cheese.

If you are diabetic, overweight or have a high triglyceride level, reducing sugar intake is important. The best sugar substitute for cooking is sucralose (Splenda) because it is actually a kind of sugar, and doesn't lose its flavor with heating. It can be used in baking, in making sorbet, and even in cocktails.

For sautéing, use a nonstick wok or pan, and instead of oil, use a nonstick spray such as Pam, or the President's Choice Virtuous Spray. A 1.5 second

spray is 7 calories of fat, compared to almost 50 in a teaspoon of oil!

Weight loss:

One pound of fat contain 3,500 stored calories. You only burn 100 calories walking a mile. That means that to lose a pound, you need to walk 35 miles, or cut out 500 calories a day for a week; to lose 50 pounds you need to cut out 500 calories a day for 50 weeks; to keep it off you need to cut out 500 calories a day permanently. (To lose 20 pounds, it would be about 200 calories a day.) One serving of anything fat-based, such as meat, cake, pie, ice cream, nuts, chips or fries, is 400 calories; a serving of starches or sugar, such as bread, juice, fruit, 4 crackers, ½ bagel, or a can of pop, is 100 calories. If you stay away from cake, pie, ice cream (except on your birthday), nuts, chips, fries, keep your meat intake to one serving every other day, and keep optional sugars and starches to 5 or 6 a day, you will lose weight. The trick is finding alternatives you like.

A table of high-calorie foods to be avoided, ("calorie bombs") and some alternatives, is presented at the end of this booklet.

LEARNING TO MAKE VEGETABLE-BASED MEALS DELICIOUS:

Here are some hints for tasty, interesting stir-fry meals:

The Sauce:

Prepare this in advance and have it handy next to the stove. Any stir-fry dish can employ sauce to blend flavors and enhance the accompaniment of rice.

The basic trick is to run hot tap water slowly into a cup with a fork-full of cornstarch and quickly stir to produce a thin paste. (A heaping fork-full is about the same as a tablespoon, but it stirs better.) Gradually add more water or wine (up to about ¾ of a cup) and a teaspoon of Hoisin Sauce, peanut butter or a bit of hot sauce. Different sauces will accompany different dishes. Beef with green peppers, green onions and snow peas goes well with peanut butter and hot sauce, whereas white wine plus a tablespoon of Hoisin sauce would enhance a vegetable stir-fry.

Preparation:

For ease of preparation, have all items chopped up ahead of time. Separate harder vegetables such as celery and carrots from softer ones such as mushrooms. I like to put them in small bowls ready to toss into the wok. Spray the non-stick wok with Pam or a similar spray, or heat a small amount of oil in the wok (canola oil is a good choice because it is high in monounsaturated fats and takes the heat better than olive oil). Add finely-chopped fresh ginger or garlic for flavor. Cook the hard vegetables first (e.g. carrots, celery, cauliflower, broccoli) with a quick stir. Add some water, put the lid on the wok and steam them for about one minute. Take the lid off, add softer vegetables (such as zucchini, onions, mushrooms) and continue to stir until vegetables are almost cooked. Scoop out a well

in the middle of the vegetables and pour in the cornstarch sauce. As it thickens, stir the vegetables until they are coated with sauce, then quickly remove from the wok into a large bowl. Serve immediately. Rice is a suitable accompaniment.

Maintenance of your wok: To avoid rust on your iron wok, do not leave food in it throughout dinner. Rinse it with hot water and scrub immediately after cooking, then pour a bit of oil in the bottom and wipe it evenly with a paper towel to coat the wok.

Using a non-stick wok is helpful in reducing the requirements for oil; an electric wok may be helpful since it is more efficient than sitting a wok on top of an electric burner. If you have a gas stove, then a regular wok on top of a gas burner is probably the best choice. For an electric range you need a wok with a flat bottom. A wok with a long wooden handle is easier to use than one that has two small handles requiring two hands to lift; then you don't have a hand free for the spatula or scrub brush for quick rinses between dishes.

MICROWAVE

A microwave is convenient for cooking vegetables. Add just a bit of water to any type of fresh or frozen vegetables and cook briefly to produce a crisp product. Preparation is easy and takes very little time. The microwave dish can often double as a serving dish. Any leftovers can go into the freezer in same dish, and be re-heated in the microwave the next day, and still remain surprisingly fresh.

In addition to variety, convenience, and freshness, another advantage of frozen vegetables over canned ones, is that canned vegetables have a considerable amount of salt added to them, which you should also learn to avoid. (Another chapter discusses salt restriction). One hint that may help you in learning to prepare meals that are more balanced, is to choose two to three days a week as meatless days. This will force you to find vegetable dishes with "star quality", and make it easier for you to include them in your menus on other days of the week.

Most households rotate about 15 main meals through the kitchen. To make a substantial change, you will need to find about a dozen vegetable-based or pasta meals that you like, and that are reasonable to prepare. Then you have to change your grocery shopping habits so that you have the ingredients in the house on a regular basis.

The whole secret to making a major change in your diet is to take a positive attitude: instead of thinking "he's telling me I have to cut out everything I like", make up your mind to have fun learning how to make healthy meals delicious.

When you go to a restaurant, use it as an opportunity to learn a new dish for your repertoire. Go to a Chinese, Indian or other restaurant that will have interesting vegetarian choices, and ask the

waiter to help you order a vegetarian meal; if you like the dishes, figure out how to make them at home. Explore the cuisine of poor countries where meat is a luxury.

Then the trick is to back the cooking lessons into the shopping cart, and make it routine.

SOLUBLE FIBER

Your body makes more cholesterol every day than you would ever eat. Much of this is in the form of bile salts, which are stored in the gallbladder until mealtime. As soon as the food leaves the stomach and goes into the duodenum, a reflex contraction of the gallbladder pours the bile salts down the bile duct into the duodenum; they mix with the food and help with fat absorption as the food moves down the intestine. In the lower small bowel, the bile salts are reabsorbed, go back to the liver, and are stored in the bile duct.

If your meal contains something that binds the bile salts and prevents them from being reabsorbed, the bile salts are eliminated in the stool, and your liver has to take cholesterol out of the bloodstream to make new bile salts.

Foods that are high in soluble fiber include oat bran (but not wheat bran or all bran; it's specific!); lentils, beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, okra, carrots, barley and kiwi fruit. A good backup fiber, if you don't get one of the other sources in your meal, is psyllium powder or granules; one teaspoon of psyllium is equivalent to 2-3 tablespoons of oat bran. Try to include one of these options with each meal, and the effect will be to lower cholesterol by about 10%; that effect is big enough to reduce risk of heart attack (or strokes due to atherosclerosis) by about 20%.

The principle here is called bile acid sequestration; there are also resin powders available as drugs which work the same way, and a drug called ezetimibe has a similar effect.

RECIPES

Because I was born and raised in Perú, I love spicy food. If the recipes are too spicy, cut back on the spices. If you don't like curry, leave out the curry powder, and call it chili!

If you don't like these recipes, fix them 'til you do, or try others. Tolerable is not good enough; if you don't like it you won't do it. I would love to receive your favorites for the next edition.

In a number of recipes I mention President's Choice Too Good to be True products. I find them very helpful; they are available in Canada at Loblaw's and some other stores; in the U.S. they are available at Harris Teeter stores (mainly in the South); please let me know for the next edition if they are available elsewhere.

For example, The President's Choice frozen beans are great, as a combination of several kinds of beans can be used conveniently, and the packages can be put back into the freezer, so the whole quantity doesn't need to be used. This is useful for chilis, soups, feijoada, etc. Beans are important because beans and grains together make up a complete protein. Grains and beans are each missing some of the amino acids, but combining them gets you all of the essential amino acids; it is likely for that reason that every poor country has a version of beans and grains: in Peru tacu-tacu, in Brazil feijoada, in Jamaica dirty rice, in Southern Italy pasta e fagiole, and so on. By getting protein in this way, you won't be hungry half an hour later.

Low-fat salad dressing

Ingredients: ¼ c. vinegar, ¼ c. olive oil, ½ c. water less 1 tbsp, 1 tsp cornstarch, 1 tsp. Mustard powder, ½ tsp Italian spice, ½ tsp coarsely ground pepper, (or substitute juice of 1 lime for the vinegar).

Preparation: Add mustard powder, spices to vinegar; stir cornstarch into water, cook in microwave for a minute or two to thicken. After the spices have steeped in the vinegar for a few minutes, add the olive oil and thickened cornstarch/water, and beat briskly.

Variations: balsamic vinegar, fresh basil leaves, fresh coriander, fresh oregano, ½ tsp of mustard seeds.

This has about 1/3 the calories and fat of a regular vinaigrette.

Refrigerated Dill Pickles – Salt Free

These pickles are easy to make and are salt free. Vinegar is the pickling agent and there is no canning involved.

Ingredients:

2 cups (500 mL) pickling cucumbers, sliced (4 mini cucumbers)

½ cup (125 mL) thinly sliced red onion

2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 ½ cups (375 mL) cider vinegar

1 tbsp (15 mL) sugar

¼ cup (50 mL) water

1 tbsp (15 mL) dill seed

1 tsp (5 mL) mustard seed

Directions:

1. Place the cucumbers, onion and garlic in a plastic container.

2. Place the vinegar, sugar, water, dill seed and mustard seed in a sauce pan. Bring to a boil for 3 minutes. Cool.

3. Pour the liquid over the cucumbers and store in the fridge for 3 days, stirring once a day. Make sure the cucumbers are completely submerged in the vinegar solution.

4. After 3 days the pickles are ready to eat. They will keep for 2 weeks, however they will become softer as time goes on.

Makes 2 cups (500 mL).

Low-fat muffins

Ingredients: 1 c. all-purpose flour; 2 tsp. baking powder; 1 tsp. baking soda; ½ tsp. salt; ½ tsp. cinnamon; 1 c. oat bran; ¼ c. wheat germ; ¾ c. sucralose (Splenda); 2 tbsp. flax seed; ¼ c. chopped apricots, ¼ c. grated carrot; grated rind of one orange; 1 c. buttermilk (or milk soured with lemon juice); 2 oz. Egg Beaters, ½ c. low-fat yogurt; 2 tbsp. canola oil.

Preparation: preheat oven to 400 degrees F; sift together flower, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Stir in bran, wheat germ, sugar substitute. Stir in flax seeds, apricots, grated carrot and orange rind. Beat buttermilk, egg substitute, oil and low-fat yogurt together; pour into dry ingredients and stir to moisten; fill muffin cups and bake 20 minutes.

Serving: makes 12 large muffins.

Comment: there are lots of variations: use applesauce, raisins, cranberries, etc. Nuts are good but high in calories: 7 calories in a peanut, 15 in a cashew, etc.

Vegetarian chili

Ingredients: 1 can tomatoes, 1 can tomato juice (about 14 oz.) and 1 large can kidney beans (about 800 ml/28 oz.); 1 can President's Choice low-fat refried beans, 1 green pepper, 4 green onions, 1 medium onion, 1 c. chopped celery with tops; 1 c. chopped carrots, 1 tbsp cumin powder, 4 tbsp chili powder, 1 tbsp mustard powder, ¼ -½ tsp hot chili flakes, coarsely ground pepper, 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar, a bit of salt if you must (or light soy sauce).

Preparation & Cooking: Chop onions, celery, carrots, green pepper; sauté with a minimum of spray or canola oil in a large nonstick pot or electric frying pan; add spices, stir; add tomatoes and kidney beans, stir and simmer while the rice is cooking; thicken with low-fat refried beans.

Serving: Serve on brown rice; add hot sauce to taste; add a little coriander chutney (see recipe) and a few drops of sesame oil to make this qualify for "gourmet" status.

Variations: add or substitute chick-peas, frozen corn kernels, red pepper, or other choices.

Egg-Beater Omelet

Ingredients:

1 cup of Egg-Beaters®, Egg Creations® or Better 'N Eggs® (8 oz.), thawed in advance

¼ cup each of finely chopped red and green pepper

¼ cup chopped green onion

¼ cup chopped mushrooms

½ tsp. Italian spice

¼ tsp black pepper

½ tsp mustard powder

Preparation: Stir Egg-Beaters, mix in spices, beat for a while to get bubbles in.

Cooking: Heat a non-stick omelet pan or wok; spray some Pam or other non-stick spray (or put 1 tsp canola or olive oil) into the pan; sauté the veggies, then pour egg mixture into pan. Scrape the bottom with spatula repeatedly until egg mixture is thickening; cover while cooking; fold or flip once when firming up, and serve when ready.

Note: if using a small omelet pan divide into 2 omelets.

Serve with some low-fat sour cream and guacamole on the side, and some sprigs of cilantro.

Variations: add a bit of cheese while the omelet is thickening, add some cilantro and hot peppers, or some chipotle pepper powder or Cajun spice.

Makes 2 large servings.

Potato Frittata (also called Kugel)

Ingredients:

Potatoes (as many as you can fit in one layer in a large deep frying pan)

1 large Vidalia onion

2 tsp minced garlic

½ each green and red bell pepper

Canola oil 1 tbsp

Pepper, hot pepper flakes to taste

1 cup soy protein Parmesan cheese

2 cartons Egg-Beaters or alternative

Preparation: Grate the potato (unpeeled), finely chop the onion and bell peppers, heat the canola oil and spread around the frying pan. Heat the oven to 350° F.

Cooking: Sauté the onion, garlic, peppers; stir in the grated potatoes, then the Egg Beaters; add pepper, hot pepper flakes and stir in half the parmesan cheese and sprinkle the rest on top; bake for 1 hour, let rest 5 minutes, then serve hot or cold.

Accompaniments: hot sauce, chutney or chili sauce

Note: use other vegetables (such as parsnip, carrots, asparagus and/or eggplant rather than potato if diabetes or weight are issues.

Egg salad sandwiches

Ingredients:

1 carton low fat Egg Creations® or equivalent

1 or 2 green onions

1 or 2 celery ribs

Paprika ½ tsp or so as desired

Freshly ground pepper ½ tsp or so as desired

Miracle Whip or other mayonnaise, preferably cholesterol-free; about half a cup

Nice whole grain bread for sandwiches; makes about 6 sandwiches depending on how heavily loaded

Non-hydrogenated canola/olive oil margarine

Method:

Pour a carton of Egg Creations into a pyrex cake dish or pie plate, put in microwave on high for 1 minute. Scrape with a spatula to mix, set on high for another minute, repeat a minute at a time until cooked (will depend on the thickness, which will depend on the size of the dish). Put in fridge to get cold.

Slice a green onion or two lengthwise and then chop finely; finely chop some celery (about a half cup, more if desired). Put chopped veggies into a bowl, add a couple of big glops of no-cholesterol mayonnaise; mix; season with paprika and freshly ground pepper; mix again.

Take the eggs out of the fridge, chop finely with spatula, add to mayonnaise mix, stir until well combined; add more 'mayo' if needed to achieve desired texture.

Spread canola/olive margarine on slices of bread, put egg salad on bread, firmly press top slice on, cut in half and serve on plates

Garnish with olives, celery or carrot sticks or a pickle as desired.

Barley stuffed peppers

Ingredients:

250 ml (1 c) barley, 30 ml (2 tbsp) chopped parsley, 1 large onion, 375 ml (1 ½ c) cheddar (7% M.F.), 3 medium carrots, 2 cans Italian style tomatoes, 30 ml (2 tbsp) oil,

2 medium red peppers, 250 ml (1 c) frozen peas, 2 medium green peppers, 2 medium yellow peppers, 2 envelopes. Low salt vegetable broth

Preparation:

In large pan on high heat, bring to boil 700 ml (3 ¼ c) water, barley & broth. Reduce heat, cover & simmer 1 hour until liquid is absorbed & barley is tender.

Meanwhile chop onion & shred carrots. Heat oil in skillet over medium heat & cook onion until tender.

Stir in carrots & cook 5 min. until vegetables are tender & lightly browned. When barley is done, stir in onion mixture, frozen peas, parsley & 250 ml (1 c) shredded cheese. In a blender, blend tomatoes until almost smooth. Pour into a shallow casserole.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Cut top off each pepper & remove seeds. Cut a thin slice from bottom of each pepper. Fill with barley mixture & place in casserole. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake 1 hr. until tender; cover with foil during the last ½ hour to prevent over-browning.

Coriander Chutney:

Ingredients: 1 large bunch of fresh cilantro, juice of 1 large or two small limes, ¼ tsp. hot pepper flakes, ¼ tsp salt (or a teaspoon of soy sauce).

Preparation: Wash cilantro carefully; remove strings from roots; chop coarsely including roots and stems, and place in Cuisinart or blender; add lime juice and hot peppers, blend and serve. If it's too thick, add a bit more lime juice, or maybe a bit of balsamic vinegar.

Variations: Add a bit of fresh mint if you have some in your garden.

Comments: I discovered this wonderful stuff in an Afghan restaurant in Guelph, Ontario called Pamir, and then found out they sell it at the Indian grocery store around the corner. It is a great addition to chili on rice, and other dishes.

The next 3 recipes, and the desserts at the end, are courtesy of Lucy Waverman, a food writer with the Toronto Globe and Mail.

Korean noodles with vegetables

A good vegetarian main course.

6 ounces Korean glass noodles or rice sticks

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 teaspoons sugar or sucralose (Splenda)

2 teaspoons sesame oil

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

2 teaspoons chopped ginger

6 Shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced

1 cup julienne carrot

1 cup thinly sliced onion

4 cups baby spinach

1 cup Chinese chives, cut in 3-inch lengths

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

2 tablespoons green onion, chopped

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

Boil a large pot of water. Add noodles and boil for 4 minutes or until transparent and softened but still with a little texture. Drain and rinse with cold water. Reserve.

Combine soy sauce, sugar and sesame oil in a mixing bowl.

Heat wok on high heat and add vegetable oil. Add garlic and ginger and stir fry for 30 seconds. Toss in mushrooms, carrot and onion and stir fry for 1 minute, or until slightly softened. Add spinach and cook until just wilted. Stir in chives and noodles and mix together. Stir in soy sauce mixture and season well. Serve with green onions and sesame seeds. Serves 2

Mediterranean-style vegetable lasagne

A quick and flavourful lasagne using seasonal vegetables. Look for Sicilian eggplant if available, it has a soft, custard-like texture and no bitterness. The instant, dried lasagne noodles are available in boxes at the supermarket. Although they can be used without any pre-soaking, they soften more easily if you soak them for a couple of minutes in water before using.

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, diced

1 clove garlic, chopped

2 small zucchini, diced

½ eggplant, peeled and diced

1 red pepper, diced

1 teaspoon dried basil

½ teaspoon red pepper flakes or more to taste

1 28 oz. (796 mL) can tomatoes, pureed

¼ cup black olives, pitted and sliced

¼ cup chopped parsley

Salt and freshly ground pepper

8 ounces fontina, provolone, mozzarella or Cheddar, grated

1 cup Parmesan, grated

9 instant lasagne noodles

Heat olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté until onion is softened slightly. Add zucchini, eggplant and pepper and cook 5 minutes longer. Sprinkle with basil and pepper flakes. Add tomatoes, stir together and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes. Stir in olives and parsley and season with salt and pepper. Reserve. Combine fontina and parmesan.

Preheat oven to 375 F.

In a buttered 7 x 11-inch gratin dish, layer one third lasagne noodles, slightly overlapping, one third of sauce and one third of cheese. Repeat 2 more layers finishing with sauce and cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until sauce is bubbling and cheese is melted. Serves 4 to 6

Baked tomatoes with pasta

This rustic dish is perfect for flavourful summer tomatoes. Use less anchovies, if desired.

6 beefsteak tomatoes

¼ cup olive oil

1 can anchovy fillets

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

2 tablespoons slivered basil

Salt and freshly ground pepper

1 pound whole wheat penne

Freshly grated Italian Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Slice tomatoes thickly. Oil an ovenproof baking sheet with 1 tablespoons oil. Place one layer tomatoes on sheet. Top with half of anchovy filets, half of garlic and herbs. Season layer with salt and pepper. Add a second layer on top with remaining anchovy, garlic and herbs. Pour over remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil. Bake for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven and coarsely chop up tomatoes using kitchen scissors. Return to baking dish and bake for 30 minutes longer or until juices have thickened slightly and sauce has lots of taste.

Boil pasta according to package directions. Drain and toss with tomatoes. Serve with Parmesan. Serves 4 - 6

Vegetarian chili

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced, optional

1 onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon dry oregano

1 ½ tablespoons chili powder

¼ teaspoon chili flakes

2 cups squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1-inch dice

1 28-ounce can tomatoes

2 medium zucchini, cut into 1-inch dice

1 can black beans or kidney beans, drained

¼ cup chopped parsley

Heat oil in large pot on medium heat and add jalapeno, onion and garlic. Cook until softened, about

5 minutes. Add cumin, oregano, chili powder, chili flakes and sauté for 1 minute.

Add squash and sauté until coated in spices. Chop tomatoes and add with their juice, to pot. Bring to boil. Turn heat to medium-low and simmer for 20 minutes or until squash is beginning to soften.

Add zucchini, beans and parsley and simmer for one minute longer or until zucchini and squash are cooked through. Serve with warm tortillas, grated cheese, sour cream and chopped onion. Serves 4 - 6

Portobello mushroom steak burger

I usually serve 2 mushrooms topped with the cheese and tomato confit, but if they are very large one will be enough. Technically this is not a burger, more like a steak.

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 shallots, finely chopped

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

8 Portobello mushrooms

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Tomato Confit:

2 tablespoons olive oil

¼ cup finely chopped shallots

1 teaspoon chopped garlic

2 cups drained chopped canned tomatoes

2 tablespoons fresh basil chopped

½ cup grated Pecorino cheese

1 small focaccia bread cut in 8

Combine oil, vinegar, garlic, shallots and mustard in a bowl. Brush over mushrooms. Season and marinate for one hour.

Heat oil in pan on medium high heat. Add shallots and cook for 2 minutes or until softened. Add garlic and tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often. Add the basil. Sauce should be thick. Reserve.

Preheat barbecue to high. Grill mushrooms 3 to 4 minutes per side or until browned and tender. Place one mushroom on each piece of focaccia. Top with tomato confit and cheese. Serves 4

Pad Thai Noodles (an easy version):

Ingredients: 1 package flat rice noodles; 1 c. green beans, 1 c. carrots, 1 c. green onions (all julienned); 1/3 bottle President's Choice Memories of Szechuan peanut sauce, 1/3 bottle Memories of Bangkok spicy tamarind sauce; ½ tsp. hot pepper flakes, ½ c. fresh cilantro.

Preparation: Put water on to boil in large pot; spray non-stick wok with PC Virtuous spray or Pam, sauté veggies, add pepper flakes, stir sauces into veggies.

Cooking: Put noodles into water, remove from stove, drain after 5 minutes in large colander, then toss with veggies and sauce.

Serving: serve in bowls, sprinkle with fresh cilantro.

Variations: Add about 8-10 leaves of chopped fresh basil; put some large chunks of lemon grass in the pasta water before boiling water and fish them out

of the colander before serving; use bean sprouts instead of beans; chopped peanuts and/or a few chopped shrimps could be added to fancy up. You could also stir in some cooked chopped Egg-Beater. Instead of the President's Choice sauces if you can't find them, you could make up the Thai sweet and sour sauce below instead of the Memories of Bangkok sauce, and stir a tablespoon of peanut butter into a cup of hot water that has had a tablespoon (actually, a forkful) of cornstarch stirred into it as described above, instead of the peanut sauce.

Thai sweet & sour sauce:

Ingredients: 1 c. rice wine vinegar, ½ c. water, ½ c. sugar or Splenda; ½ c. light Splenda brown sugar, 1-2 tsp. ch. fresh red chilies, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp. minced garlic, 1 tsp ch. cilantro stems and roots, strings removed (wash carefully); 1 c. halved, seeded and chopped cucumber; 1 tbsp. cilantro leaves for garnish.

Cooking: Combine vinegar, water, sugars, chilies, salt, garlic and chopped cilantro stems in a saucepan; cook over low heat 2 minutes, stirring; remove to bowl and let cool; stir in the cucumber and cilantro leaves, serve immediately.

Comment: Adapted from Sheila Lukins' All around the world cookbook (see below). For making the Pad Thai noodles, I would run this through the Cuisinart or blender to make a sauce as a replacement for the Memories of Bangkok sauce. It will keep for a while in the fridge.

Thai pesto:

Ingredients: 3 large cloves garlic crushed (or 3 heaping tsp. paste); 2 tbsp minced ginger (or paste); 1 bunch fresh cilantro, with the roots removed; ¼ c. dry-roasted peanuts; ½ tsp. crushed red pepper, ½ c. canola oil, 4 green onions chopped.

Preparation: with Cuisinart running, drop garlic and ginger through tube; add cilantro, peanuts & red pepper; gradually add oil; season to taste with salt. Can prepare up to a day ahead; refrigerate.

Comments: My daughter-in-law, Kate Gutteridge, is a fine gardener. She made up this recipe to use up some of her cilantro before it went to seed. It will keep in the fridge for a while, and is a very easy way to make a quick delicious pasta dish. Just toss with cooked pasta and serve. (I have since learned that it's OK to use up cilantro after it has gone to seed; throw the flowers in too!) Variations: use different herbs and nuts.

Pasta with spinach:

Ingredients: Pasta of choice, about 8 oz.; 1 onion, 1 green pepper, 3 green onions, 1 tsp. ginger, 1 tsp. garlic, 1 c. chicken broth, 1/3 c. hot pepper flakes, 1 tsp. olive oil, non-stick spray; 1 forkful of cornstarch stirred into ½ c. hot water.

Preparation: chop veggies, heat large pot of water with a teaspoon of olive oil added; spray non-stick

wok with PC Virtuous spray or Pam; sauté veggies, add spices, then add chicken broth. Bring to a boil, add spinach on top to melt in steam; when the spinach is softened, add cornstarch/water to thicken. Add pasta to boiling water in the large pot; reduce the sauce to the right texture and remove from heat; after pasta has cooked 8 minutes drain in large colander and toss with the spinach sauce.

Variations: More veggies (celery, zucchini), ginger, cumin, cardamom, curry powder, lemon juice, a couple of shrimp per person, etc.

Comment: a low-fat variation of a recipe from La vera cucina Italiana (see below). (The original called for 6 tablespoons of butter! Cornstarch and water can cover a multitude of sins.)

Singapore chow mein fun (curried noodles):

Ingredients: 3 green onions, ½ green pepper, ½ red bell pepper, ½ medium onion, ½ cup peas, 1 tsp. garlic, ½ tsp. ginger, 1/3 c. fresh cilantro, juice of 1 lime, 2 tbsp. curry powder, 1 tsp. mustard powder, ½ tsp. hot pepper flakes, 1 forkful cornstarch, 1 c. hot water, 8 oz. Pasta (linguine works well but any pasta is fine).

Preparation: Chop the onions and peppers; stir the cornstarch into water (hold the forkful in the cup under the hot water tap and stir briskly). Put a large pot of water on to boil for pasta, with a tsp. of olive oil in it. Spray your non-stick wok and put it on medium heat.

Cooking: Sauté peppers and the onions 'til the onions are limp; add the garlic and ginger; stir and cook another minute; add the curry powder, stir and cook another minute; add the hot pepper flakes and mustard powder, cook briefly; then stir in the cornstarch and water, and the lime juice. Bring to a boil and remove from heat, stirring occasionally. Cook the pasta 8 minutes, drain in a big colander; adjust the thickness of the sauce (add a little water or white wine if it's too thick, cook a bit longer if not thick enough). Put the pasta into the wok and toss with sauce; serve.

Variations: Add 2 oz. of chopped ham or back bacon, and a couple of medium shrimp chopped into quarter-inch pieces.

Vegetarian paella

Ingredients:

15 ml (1 tbsp) oil, 1 large onion, chopped, 2 cloves garlic, chopped, 250 ml (1 c) long grain rice, 2 ml (1/2 tsp) ground turmeric, 2 ml (1/2 tsp) ground cumin, 1 ml (1/4 tsp) ground cinnamon, 250 ml (1 c) frozen corn, 1 can unsalted tomatoes, drained; 250 ml (1 c) frozen peas, 1 can kidney beans, drained; 125 ml (1/2 c) seedless raisins; 60 ml (1/4 c) sliced almonds, toasted (and a generous pinch of saffron if you can afford it).

Preparation: Sauté onion in oil for 3 minutes. Add garlic & sauté 1 min. Stir in rice, turmeric (and saffron), cumin & cinnamon. Add enough water to

drained tomato juice to make 450 ml (1 ¾ c). Add to skillet & bring to a boil. Lower heat, cover & simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in thawed corn, peas, beans, drained tomatoes & raisins. Cover & simmer 10 minutes or until the rice is tender & the liquid is absorbed. Serve with almonds sprinkled on top.

Madras vegetables:

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. ginger, ½ tbsp. garlic, 2 tbsp. curry powder, 2 potatoes, 3 c. cauliflower florets, 1 sweet potato, 1 c. peas defrosted, ½ c. raisins, fresh cilantro 1/3 bunch., ½ cup lentils.

Preparation: Dice potatoes & sweet potato, chop cilantro stems, mince garlic & ginger if not using paste.

Cooking: Spray non-stick pan; sauté garlic, ginger, cilantro stems and curry powder, add 1-2 tbsp. water to make paste; stir in potatoes and cauliflower; cover with water (2 in.); bring to boil; cover, reduce heat, simmer 20 minutes. Add peas and raisins, cook uncovered 5 min./tender; stir in cilantro leaves, serve.

Serving: Serve with Rice Pilaf.

Comments: Modified from Lucy Waverman's Fast & Fresh. (Firefly Books).

Rice Pilaf:

Ingredients: 2 c. basmati rice, 2 c. water, 1 tsp. turmeric (pinch of saffron), 6 cloves, 1 tsp. cumin seeds, 2 bay leaves, ½ cinnamon stick, salt to taste.

Preparation: Soak rice 30 minutes, drain, put in heavy pot with 2 c. water and remaining ingredients. **Cooking:** Bring to boil, stir in 1 tbsp olive oil, cover; reduce heat to low, cook 15 minutes. Remove from heat, uncover & stir.

Serving: Serves 4.

Variation: stir in finely chopped onions fried to brown, and some finely grated carrot

Comment: Modified from Lucy Waverman's Fast & Fresh (Firefly Books)

Grilled vegetables

Chop up large onion (or use pearl onions), green pepper, red pepper, yellow zucchini, Portabella mushroom; throw in some baby carrots, eggplant slices. Marinate in ¼ c. light soya sauce with ¼ c. balsamic vinegar, 1 tsp mustard powder, ½ tsp hot pepper flakes, 1 tsp sesame oil, freshly ground pepper. Grill on barbecue using a grilling basket; serve with new potatoes. Grilled cauliflower is also great.

Spicy Okra and Tomato Sauté:

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. canola oil, 1 large onion, chopped; 2 tsp. garlic; 2 tsp. sweet paprika; 1 hot green chili pepper, chopped; 1 lb. okra, trimmed and sliced ½ in. thick (discard the ends); 1 tbsp. wine vinegar; 3 tbsp. white wine; 1 lb. tomatoes, fresh or canned, sliced; 1 tbsp. chopped cilantro or basil; salt & pepper to taste.

Cooking: Heat the oil in a large heavy pan or casserole; add the onion and half the garlic; sauté on medium heat until onion begins to soften; add paprika, chili pepper, sauté a few minutes more, stirring. Add the okra and vinegar, and sauté until bright green (about 5 minutes); add wine, tomatoes and remaining garlic; cook 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until okra is tender and mixture aromatic. Add basil or coriander, season to taste.

Serving: serve with hot cooked grains such as bulgur, rice, lentils.

Comment: modified slightly from Martha Rose Shulman's *The spice of vegetarian cooking*.

Spiced potatoes with coriander:

Ingredients: 2 lb. red waxy or new potatoes; 1 lb. ripe tomatoes, diced; 4 green onions, minced; 1 tsp. garlic, 1/3 cup chopped cilantro including stems; 1 tsp. roasted cumin, juice of 1-2 lemons or limes, to taste; salt and pepper to taste; ¼ tsp. hot pepper flakes or cayenne (optional).

Cooking: steam the potatoes until tender, about 15 minutes if small; slice into halves or ¼ in. slices depending on size; put into nonstick pan with a bit of canola oil; stir in the onions, garlic, cilantro and stems, sauté until fragrant; stir in the tomatoes and sauté until hot, and serve.

Comment: modified from a potato salad in Martha Rose Shulman's *The spice of vegetarian cooking* (see below); can be served cold as a salad, but I prefer it hot as a vegetarian main course.

Mulligatawny Soup:

Ingredients: 2 tbsp. canola oil; 2 tbsp. curry powder; 1 onion, minced; 2 tsp. ginger; 2 carrots minced; ½ c. raw peanuts (or unsalted); 2 green peppers chopped; 2 quarts vegetable stock; 4 whole cloves; ½ c. almonds coarsely chopped in a blender; 1 tbsp. honey; 2 tbsp. shredded coconut; ½ c. raisins; 2 tart apples, peeled and diced; 4 whole cloves; 1 tsp. ground mace or nutmeg; 3 tomatoes peeled and chopped; 1 ½ cups cooked brown rice; 1 additional apple sliced thin for garnish.

Cooking: heat the oil in a large heavy soup pot; sauté the onion with curry powder, ginger, apples, carrots, peanuts and green pepper for about 3 minutes or until onion starts to soften.

Add the vegetable stock cloves, almonds, honey, coconut, raisins, mace/nutmeg, salt, pepper and tomatoes, bring to simmer. Cover and simmer low for 30 minutes. Remove half the soup and puree in a blender, return to pot and stir well.

Heat through, adjust seasonings, and stir in the cooked brown rice.

Serving: top each bowl with a couple of thin slice of apple.

Comment: Adapted from Martha Rose Shulman's *The spice of vegetarian*. An easy vegetable stock that's pretty good is Knorr powder in a little yellow can; they also make a pretty good and easy chicken stock and fish stock powder, but these products are

all salty, so if you have high blood pressure you need to go on the low side with the dosing.

Dad's vegetarian pasta with beans

Ingredients: Whole-grain pasta of choice; ½-1 green pepper, 4 green onions, ½ large onion, 2 cm ginger (or 1 tsp. ginger paste), 1 shallot, 2 cloves garlic (or ½ tsp. paste), ½ c. celery, ¼ c. chickpeas and/or black beans (canned, frozen or precooked); 1 tsp. Italian spice, ½ tbsp. cornstarch, ½ tsp. hot pepper flakes.

Preparation: Put a large pot of water on to boil and add about a tsp. of olive oil. Chop veggies; the garlic, ginger and shallot should be finely minced. (It is easier to use pre-chopped ginger and garlic; the same goes for stir-fries.)

Cooking: Sauté veggies and spices in a nonstick wok with a spray of Pam or PC Virtuous Oil; put the cornstarch into a cup, stirring vigorously while running hot water into cup from tap; add cornstarch/water to wok to thicken sauce; turn off heat and stir occasionally to prevent excessive thickening; add a bit of water as needed to adjust thickness.

Serving: serve with a bit of grated cheese, crusty roll/garlic bread.

Variations: add chopped cilantro or a bit of coriander chutney, use tomato sauce, mushrooms, different kinds of beans, chopped carrots, hoisin sauce. Add pasta to pot when a rolling boil has been reached; stir several times early on to prevent sticking. At 8 minutes (3 for fresh pasta) drain in a large colander, then toss in the wok with the tasty veggie sauce.

Thai cucumber salad:

Ingredients: 1/3 c. shallot, 1/3 c. green onions, 4 medium cucumbers, 2-4 small hot red chilis, ½ c. rice vinegar, 2 tbsp sugar or Splenda, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ c. chopped cilantro.

Preparation: Mince shallot, slice green onions, peel and half the cukes lengthwise and seed, then slice thinly; open the hot peppers lengthwise remove the seeds, and slice very thinly. Combine cukes, onions, shallot, pepper in a large bowl; combine sugar, vinegar and salt, then add to cuke mix; toss well.

Serving: stir in the cilantro and serve. Yields ten servings of ½ cup.

Fried green tomatoes

From the Fish restaurant, Charleston SC.

Chef Ryan Hermann

The sauce:

Egg substitute to equal 1 egg
cayenne pepper, optional
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup good olive oil
3 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
six kaffir lime leaves, chopped

Combine all ingredients except oil in a blender, and puree. Add the oil slowly, it should thicken as you go.

Taste it and adjust for seasoning; add a little cayenne pepper if you like it spicy.

The tomato:

2 nice firm bright green tomatoes

tempura batter

2 cups flour

salt and pepper

1 1/2 cup soda water

Slice the tomatoes a quarter inch thick. Dredge them in a touch of flour, and then in the tempura batter. Fry them in canola oil. At 350 degrees the tomatoes will take two minutes to cook. When done they will be crispy and golden brown. Pat them dry and salt them lightly, and serve with the kaffir aioli. Enjoy!

Banana Leaf Vegetable Curry (From the Banana Leaf Restaurant, Singapore)

Ingredients: 1 onion, 2 tbsp. minced garlic, 1 ½ tbsp. curry powder, 6 medium carrots, 3 potatoes, 1 medium cauliflower, 4 c. vegetable broth; 2 tbsp. honey, 1 cinnamon stick, 1 can chickpeas (19 oz.); ½ c. golden raisins, 2 c. plum tomatoes, ½ c. chopped cilantro, 1 c. toasted coconut (for garnish).

Preparation: peel and dice potatoes, peel carrots, slice in half, then cut into 1-inch pieces, separate cauliflower into florets.

Cooking: Spray nonstick wok, sauté onions 'til wilted, add garlic 2-3 min., add curry powder 2 min., then add veggies, broth, honey, and cinnamon stick. Boil, reduce to simmer; cook uncovered until veggies are tender (20 min.), add chickpeas and raisins, simmer 15 min., stirring occasionally. Raisins should be just plump. Just before serving stir in the tomatoes and cilantro and heat through.

Serving: Serve on basmati rice, garnish with toasted coconut.

Comments: Adapted from Sheila Lukins' *All around the world* cookbook. At the Banana Leaf restaurant, instead of a plate and placemat, you get a placemat-sized piece of banana leaf; they come around with buckets of rice and curry, and plunk some down on your banana leaf!

Herbed Garbanzos and Parsley with Penne

Ingredients:

2 cups cooked/canned Garbanzo Beans (chickpeas)

2 tsp Olive Oil

1 Medium Red Onion

2 Cloves Garlic, minced (or 1 ½ tsp garlic paste)

Zest of 1 Lemon

1 tsp Ground Cumin

1/4 tsp Oregano

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp Chili Pepper, Chipotle (Ground)

1 lb. Penne Pasta

1 cup Fresh Chopped Parsley

3 Tb Fresh Lemon Juice

1 cup Vegetable Stock

Cooking:

In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat; add the onion and garlic, cover and cook until the onions are browned, about 5 minutes. Add the cooked garbanzo beans, stock, lemon zest and juice, cumin, oregano, salt and hot chili pepper. Cover, reduce the heat to low and simmer for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook the pasta until barely tender, about 7 minutes; do not overcook. Drain and return to the pot.

Add the garbanzo mixture and the parsley to the pasta and cook over medium-low heat, stirring gently until the pasta has absorbed most of the liquid, 2-3 minutes. Transfer to a warmed serving bowl and serve immediately.

Yield: 4-6 servings

Modified from:

<http://www.bobsredmill.com/recipe/detail.php?rid=92>

Risotto & Squash Bake

A wonderful vegetarian main dish or side dish using sweet winter squash.

Ingredients:

1 cup Arborio or Carnaroli Rice (I think Carnaroli is better for risotto)

2 Tbsp Olive Oil

1/2 cup Chopped Yellow Onion

1/2 cup Chopped Mushrooms

3-3/4 cups Vegetable or Chicken Stock

2 cups Winter Squash, Cooked and Pureed

1-1/2 cups Parmesan Cheese, freshly grated

3 tbsp low-fat sour cream

Cooking:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

-In a large, deep ovenproof skillet heat the olive oil and sauté the onion and mushrooms until onion is soft and yellow. Add the rice and stir to coat with oil.

-Add 1-1/4 cups of stock to risotto and place into oven. Set timer for 15 minutes.

When timer goes off, add another 1-1/4 cup of stock to risotto and stir to combine. Set timer for 15 minutes.

-When timer goes off, add 1-1/4 cup of stock and the squash to risotto. Set timer again for 15 minutes.

At the end of the 15 minutes add the cream and cheese.

Return to oven and bake for an additional 15 minutes. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6-8 servings as a main course

Adapted From:

<http://www.bobsredmill.com/recipe/detail.php?rid=425>

contributed by Peggy Deen, owner & chef of Minor Miracle Desserts

Tex Mex Quinoa salad with corn

Ingredients

2 tsp chipotle puree or ground chipotle

2 tsp lime juice

1 tsp olive oil

2 tsp ground cumin

¼ tsp salt
 2 large ears of cooked corn
 Olive oil for brushing
 ¾ cups quinoa
 2 cups water
 1 tbsp olive oil
 6 tbsp lime juice
 1 tsp lime zest
 2 tsp ground toasted cumin (toast seeds in a dry frying pan and then grind)
 1 tsp ground coriander seed
 3 green onions, finely sliced
 1 jalapeño pepper, cored, seeded and diced
 1 can black beans rinsed well and drained well
 1 sweet red bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced
 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
 Salt and pepper
 Lime wedges for garnish
 Avocado slices for garnish

Preparation:

1. In a medium bowl, combine the chipotle puree, lime juice, oil, cumin, coriander seed and salt. Stir well.
2. Lightly brush the corn with olive oil, and grill until light golden in spots, turning often. Remove from grill and let cool.
3. Rinse the quinoa well in a fine sieve under cool water. (If you skip this step it will be very bitter.)
4. In a saucepan, bring water to boil, add quinoa, cover, and simmer on low, stirring occasionally, until the water is absorbed (about 10-15 minutes). Transfer to a large bowl, spread out and allow to cool.
5. When the corn is cool enough to handle, remove the kernels from the cob and add to the bowl along with the chipotle, lime juice, oil, etc.
6. Stir in beans, red pepper, tomatoes, cilantro

Serving:

Spoon some of the salad into a pasta bowl; garnish with avocado slices and lime wedges.

Serves 6-8 as a salad, 4 as a meal

Adapted from Jill Wilcox, London Free Press August 22, 2009

SOME OF MY LOW-FAT FAVORITES THAT AREN'T VEGETARIAN:

If you keep the intake of animal flesh down to two ounces a day, it likely isn't necessary to be vegetarian every other day. A combination of vegetarian meals and low-meat meals is even better than going vegetarian every other day. I have include here some of my favorite recipes that have a bit of animal flesh as a flavoring.

Feijoada (Brazilian black beans)

Ingredients: 2 lb. dried black beans, 1 tbsp. canola oil, 4 c. chopped onion, 2 sausages cut into ½ in. slices (try spicy Italian sausage, or chorizo or other spicy sausage); 4 heaping tsp. garlic (or large cloves); 2 tsp. cumin powder; 1 tsp. mustard powder, 6 c.

water, ½ tsp. salt, ½ tsp. coarsely ground pepper, 1 bay leaf, ½ c. red wine vinegar, ½ tsp. hot sauce (or hot pepper flakes).

Preparation: sort and wash beans; place in large Dutch oven, cover 2 inches with water, bring to a boil; boil 2 minutes; cover/stand 1 hour, drain, set aside.

Cooking: wipe pot with paper towel, heat oil in it, add onion, sausage, garlic; sauté 10 min/onion tender; add cumin and mustard, sauté 1 minute; return beans, add water & spices, bring to boil, cover, simmer 70 min./tender.

Serving: remove bay leaf, stir in vinegar/hot sauce, serve on rice. Yields 15 cups.

Afghan spinach with lamb:

Ingredients: 1 bunch fresh spinach, washed and stemmed (or use baby spinach); 1 medium onion chopped; 4 green onions, 1 green pepper, 6 oz. lamb cubed, 10 cloves cardamom, ¼ tsp. mustard seed, ¼ tsp. cumin seed, ½ tsp coriander seed, ½ tsp. hot pepper flakes, juice of 1 lime.

Preparation: chop the veggies, grind/blend the spices (I use an old coffee grinder, but a mortar and pestle is the classic way).

Cooking: brown the lamb, reserve it to a small bowl; put the veggies in the pan and sauté them; add the spices, stir, return lamb to pan, cook 'til veggies are soft. Add some liquid (e.g. a bit of balsamic vinegar or lime juice) to the pan to deglaze; place spinach in large casserole; pour lamb mixture on top; squeeze lime juice over the top, cover, and heat in microwave for about 4 minutes, just to soften the spinach but not melt it down.

Serving: serve over basmati rice with coriander chutney (see recipe above).

Comments: I figured out a version of this after trying it at Pamir, an Afghan restaurant in Guelph, Ontario. Frozen boneless lamb works fine: just thaw it out enough to cut a piece off the end, and refreeze it for next time. Also, frozen ground lamb is fine. Serves 4-6 depending on amount of rice and accompaniments.

Spicy Thai Shrimp soup (Tom yum):

One of the nicest Christmas presents I ever got was a complete kit to make Tom Yum soup. My son Jeff and daughter-in-law Kate Gutteridge put it together for me, knowing how I love it. They included a recipe, and it's now one of our regulars.

Ingredients: 1/3 c. shallot, ¼ c. lemon grass, 1 tbsp ginger, 1 tsp garlic, 1 tbsp. chopped Cilantro stems; non-stick spray, 3 medium shrimp per person. shrimp halved lengthwise; 6 c. water, 1 can helmet mushrooms, 3 tbsp. fresh lime juice, 1 tbsp. Thai fish sauce, ¼ tsp. chili oil, ¼ c. chopped fresh cilantro. (Note: chop the lemon grass into big enough chunks that it can be lifted out before serving, as it is woody.)

Preparation: Heat non-stick pan, add first five ingredients; sauté 2 min., set aside; spray with Pam

or PC Virtuoso spray, heat, add shrimp, sauté 3 min., set aside. Boil water in pot, add shallot/ginger/cilantro/lemon grass mix, simmer 10 minutes.

Serving: Remove the lemon grass chunks; spoon into bowls, ensuring that each has some shrimp and mushrooms; sprinkle chopped cilantro on top.

Variations: The lemon grass is important, but if you can't find it this is still a good soup. Use minced galangal, the Thai ginger, if you can find it. There is a paste available in Thai grocery stores called Canh Chua Thailan (sour soup paste) that is used to make this soup in Thai homes and restaurants; it isn't perfect as it contains palm oil, but there's not a lot of oil in it and it is authentic. I use a couple of teaspoons in a batch.

Dessert:

For dessert, the Mediterranean diet favours fresh fruit. Here are a couple of alternatives.

WINTER FRUIT SALAD

Winter fruits make an excellent salad when they are marinated with a tasty dressing. Blood oranges are available from end of January through April and their intense ruby colour makes an attractive dressing.

2 blood or navel oranges

2 bananas

1 cantaloupe

3 kiwi fruit

1 cup seedless red or green grapes

Dressing:

½ cup blood orange juice

1 tablespoon sugar

1 tablespoon chopped preserved ginger or to taste

1 tablespoon lime juice

1 teaspoon ground cardamom

Peel oranges removing all the white pith. Cut into sections. Peel and thinly slice bananas. Scoop cantaloupe into balls with melon baller.

Alternatively, dice. Peel and thinly slice kiwi fruit.

Toss with grapes. Arrange attractively in large glass bowl.

Combine blood orange juice, sugar, ginger, lime juice and cardamom in small bowl. Drizzle over salad and chill thoroughly before serving. Serves 6

MAPLE MOUSSE

A low fat version of a favourite dessert.

2 cups drained yoghurt

½ cup maple syrup

2 tablespoons brandy

1 teaspoon grated lemon rind

2 egg whites

2 teaspoons granulated sugar or sucralose (Splenda).

Place yoghurt in large bowl. Place maple syrup in a pot over medium heat and reduce until ¼ cup

remains. Add brandy. Beat into yoghurt along with lemon rind.

Beat egg whites until frothy then beat in sugar. Continue until egg whites hold soft peaks. Fold into yoghurt mixture. Spoon into glass dishes and serve with cookies. Serves 4

GINGER SPICE COOKIES

A low fat cookie to serve with creamy dessert.

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon ground ginger

¼ teaspoon nutmeg

¼ teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon cloves

¼ cup canola margarine

¼ cup packed brown sugar

¼ cup granulated sugar

2 oz. Egg Beaters or Better than Eggs

Preheat oven to 350 F. Sift together flour, ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves.

In a separate bowl or with an electric mixer, cream margarine and sugar until light. Beat in egg substitute. Stir in flour mixture until blended.

Gather dough into ball and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Lay half of dough between sheets of plastic wrap and roll out thinly. Cut with cookie cutter into 2-inch rounds. Prick each cookie with a fork. Repeat with remaining dough.

Bake on ungreased cookie sheets for 5 to 7 minutes or until golden. Cool on racks. Makes 20 cookies

SOME OF MY FAVOURITE COOKBOOKS

Barbie Casselman: Good-for-you cookbook: a healthy eating guide. Random House of Canada, Toronto, 1993.

Sheila Lukins: All around the World Cookbook. Workman Publishers, New York, 1994

Deborah Madison (with Edward Espe Brown): The greens cook book. Bantam Books, New York, 1987.

Martha Rose Shulman: The spice of vegetarian cooking. Healing Arts Press, Rochester, VT. 1991.

Donaldo Soviero: La Vera Cucina Italiana: the fundamentals of classic Italian cooking. Macmillan Publishing Co., New York, 1991.

Lucy Waverman's Fast & Fresh (Firefly Books)

Lucy Waverman: Home for dinner; Random House of Canada 2002.

Crazy Plates and Looney Spoons are two fun books by sisters from St. Thomas Ontario, but substitute Egg Beaters or egg whites for eggs, Becel for butter, and so on when using these books.

Internet sources:

<http://www.epicurious.com>

<http://www.ontariowhitebeans.com>

<http://www.bobsredmill.com>

<http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/category/special-diets/vegetarian/#q135xWciyt32ldMw.97>

<http://www.chatelaine.com/tag/vegetarian-recipes/>

<http://www.canadianliving.com/food/cooking-school/article/101-vegetarian-recipes>

Also see :

<http://www.glycemicindex.com>

Mediterranean diet. N Engl J Med. 2013 Apr 4;368(14):1279-90.

3. Spence JD. How to prevent your stroke. Vanderbilt University Press, Nashville TN. 2006

References:

1. de Lorgeril M, Renaud S, Mamelle N, et al. Mediterranean alpha-linolenic acid rich-diet in the secondary prevention of coronary heart disease. Lancet 1994; 343:1454-1459.
2. Estruch R, Ros E, Salas-Salvadó J, Covas MI, et al. Primary prevention of cardiovascular disease with a

SUGAR SUBSTITUTES:

The best is probably Stevia.

Calorie bombs:

To control your weight, aim for ~ 10 calories per pound of target weight. Exercise only burns ~ 100 calories per mile of walking, so unless you exercise a lot, to weigh 170 pounds means you probably need to keep below 1700 calories a day. Think of your calorie allowance as hard-earned money that you have saved up. When you are about to eat something, ask yourself if it's really worth that many calories, or whether you would rather spend them on something better. Don't blow them on things you don't really want, and think of really high-calorie foods as having too high a price tag – I call them calorie bombs. Below are some ideas for alternatives for these high price-tag food

Calorie Bomb	Alternative
Peanuts 7 calories each	Popcorn
Cashews 15 calories each	Popcorn
Potato chips 10 calories each	Popcorn
French fries 600 calories	Baked potato, new potatoes
Big store-bought muffin 450 calories	Low-fat muffin 200
Cooking oil 50 calories/teaspoon	Non-stick spray 7 calories/1.5 second spray
Ice cream (2 scoops) 400 calories	Sugarless sorbet 100 calories
Meat 400 calories	Baked potato 200 calories (large)
Salad dressing 125 calories/tbsp	Low-fat 70 calories
Chili with meat 8 oz. 400 calories	Meatless chili 200 calories

Obviously, the popcorn should not be greasy, salty bags of popcorn, but kernels popped in the microwave or an air popper; a teaspoon of melted margarine is 50 calories (the equivalent of only 5 potato chips!). Try spices or other flavourings instead of a lot of margarine or butter. The baked potato should not be stuffed with butter and sour cream, but something like low-fat yogurt (stir in a bit of mustard powder and green onion or chives) or salsa.

Check out these videos about egg industry propaganda

<http://nutritionfacts.org/video/eggs-and-cholesterol-patently-false-and-misleading-claims/>

<http://nutritionfacts.org/video/eggs-vs-cigarettes-in-atherosclerosis/>

<http://nutritionfacts.org/video/egg-cholesterol-in-the-diet/>

<http://nutritionfacts.org/video/how-the-egg-board-designs-misleading-studies/>

Also see: <http://www.athero.org/commentaries/comm1145.asp>

Enjoy!

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If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to support our work at the Stroke Prevention & Atherosclerosis Research Centre, it can be sent to the

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Find 29 of the best vegetarian recipes on the all-vegetarian food blog, Cookie and Kate! These are our most popular meatless main dishes. 100% delicious! After a big weekend, I'm looking forward to some fresh and healthy, restorative meals. You, too? You're in the right place. Since we have many new visitors here this year (welcome!), I've rounded up 29 of the most popular vegetarian main dishes on Cookie and Kate. Gourmet Vegan Recipes, gourmet vegan food, gourmet vegetarian recipes, fancy vegan recipes, dinner party vegan recipes, vegan fine dining. Bring a ying and yang vibe to your cooking. The creamy element of this dish is made from blended hazelnuts, whilst black rice is given a tangy, smoky flavour from tamari. Get the recipe here. Defining a Vegetarian. Fundamentalist vegetarians refrain from eating any meat product, to include fish and poultry, eggs and dairy products. Their motivations run from health, religion, concern for animals, and concerns for the environment. Cooking Schools. The Natural Gourmet Institute 48 West 21st Street 2nd floor New York, New York 10010 212-645-5170 naturalgourmetinstitute.com Plant-based curriculum, also optional sea food and organic chicken and eggs, 619 hours, certificate ACCET Accredited.