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APPENDIX

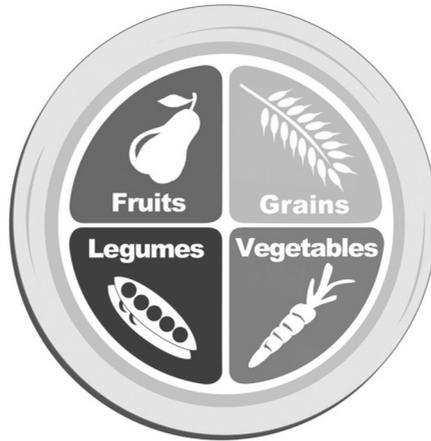
What to Eat

THERE IS SO, SO MUCH DELICIOUS FOOD YOU CAN ENJOY WHILE LEANING in. So many scrumptious dishes that just so happen to be healthy, too. In fact, you are likely going to see that your menus will be much more diverse than what you are used to. For instance, you might be used to the same old boring chicken and rice or steak and potatoes, but now you might enjoy the much more tasty black bean cakes with mango salsa or pasta with cashew cream sauce and veggie sausage, all with big colorful salads on the side.

See? Nothing ho-hum for you! And by the way, you can have your chicken and rice, too, if that's what you want, but simply opt for the nonanimal version of chicken and make it brown rice rather than refined white. You'll feel much more satisfied with all that fiber in your system, even while your metabolism is revving up and the pounds are melting off.

I want you to be happy; I want you to feel completely satiated as you explore this wonderful new territory you've leaned into.

I'm going to give you some specific ideas for meals shortly, but in the meantime, I thought this chart from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (pcrm.org) might help make things clearer for you as you start planning your meals.



Just think about there being four categories of food: Fruits, Grains (tubers like sweet potatoes and yams are in this category, too, as is whole grain pasta), Legumes (beans, lentils, nuts and seeds, and meat alternatives like veggie burgers are included in this category, too), and Vegetables. As you plan your food for the day, try to hit each food group. Mix it up and try new things, always making sure you are getting your protein (legumes have lots of protein) and veggies, and not just focusing on grains alone.

As the good doctors at PCRM put it, “These four food groups provide the good nutrition you need. There is no need for animal-derived products in the diet, and you’re better off without them. Be sure to include a reliable source of vitamin B₁₂, such as any common multiple vitamin or fortified foods.”

Fruits

Fruits are rich in fiber, vitamin C, and beta-carotene. Choose a variety of colors, whether fresh or frozen.

Be sure to include at least one serving each day of fruits that are high in vitamin C: citrus fruits, melons, and strawberries are all good choices. (Eat your apple!)

Choose whole fruit over fruit juices, which do not contain very much fiber.

Grains

Grains include bread, rice, pasta, hot or cold cereal, corn, millet, barley, bulgur, buckwheat groats, and tortillas. Build each of your meals around a hearty grain dish—grains are rich in fiber and other complex carbohydrates, as well as protein, B vitamins, and zinc.

Eat more whole grains, such as brown rice, rolled oats, and barley.

Legumes

Legumes—another name for beans, peas, and lentils—are a good source of fiber, protein, iron, calcium, zinc, and B vitamins. This group also includes chickpeas, baked and refried beans, soy milk, tempeh, and tofu. Choose a variety of colors, whether dried, frozen, or canned. (Nuts and nut milks are good, too!)

Vegetables

Vegetables are packed with nutrients. Include generous portions of a variety of vegetables in your diet. Choose a variety of colors, whether fresh, frozen, or canned. They provide vitamin C, beta-carotene, riboflavin, iron, calcium, fiber, and other nutrients.

Dark green leafy vegetables, such as broccoli, collards, kale, mustard and turnip greens, chicory, and bok choy, are especially good sources of these important nutrients.

Dark yellow and orange vegetables, such as carrots, winter squash, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin, provide extra beta-carotene.

And don't forget your superfoods!

Okay, but what does a typical week actually look like, I hear you asking? In my home, it might go something like this . . .

MONDAY

Breakfast: brown rice with chopped walnuts and sliced strawberries and hot nondairy milk on top

Lunch: quinoa with veggies and chickpeas; butternut squash soup

Dinner: stuffed acorn squash with basmati rice, tofu, veggies; big salad (throw everything into salad: chickpeas, nuts, goji berries, raspberries, different lettuces, radishes, tomatoes . . .) with vinaigrette or nondairy creamy dressing

TUESDAY

Breakfast 2: rye toast; peanut or almond butter

Lunch 2: lentil soup; big salad

Dinner 2: tostada with black beans, salsa, sliced avocado; salad

WEDNESDAY

Breakfast 3: steel-cut oatmeal (soaked overnight, heated in the morning), chopped apples, flax, walnuts, hot or cold nondairy milk on top

Lunch 3: seitan Parmesan (slice of nondairy cheese or little bit of Daiya cheese melted on top); tomato sauce; salad

Dinner 3: black bean cakes with mango salsa; basmati rice; green veggies

THURSDAY

Breakfast 4: quinoa (hot or cold); chopped fruit; flax; nondairy milk (cold or steamed)

Lunch 4: whole grain pasta made from brown rice or quinoa; meatless meat crumbles; tomato sauce with veggies mixed in; salad

Dinner 4: Field Roast sausages and sauerkraut; thick vegetable stew

FRIDAY

Breakfast 5: brown rice (it's my favorite!); cinnamon; flax; steamed nondairy milk

Lunch 5: chili with beans and meatless meat crumbles; salad

Dinner 5: portobello mushroom steaks; roasted brussels sprouts; baked sweet potato

SATURDAY

Breakfast 6: scrambled tofu (add turmeric for color); tempeh bacon; rice bread toasted with a touch of Earth Balance nondairy butter on top

Lunch 6: Mediterranean platter of hummus, baba ghanoush, tabbouleh; pita bread; olives

Dinner 6: Italian white beans (a.k.a. cannellini) with rosemary; roasted yams; braised broccolini or greens; salad

SUNDAY

Breakfast 7: manna bread, toasted; peanut or almond butter on top

Lunch 7: veggie burger; nondairy cheese slice; kale salad with walnuts

Dinner 7: Thai curry with tofu and vegetables; salad

It doesn't sound so foreign or difficult when you look at it laid out like that, now does it? You'll hit your stride soon enough when you find a good rotation of favorite meals. Just think of how you used to eat before; you probably had around seven meals that you knew you liked and were easy to prepare. Well, that's what you'll do on the Lean plan, too. You'll try some different foods and experiment with menus, and you'll end up finding the ones that you and your family love, and *voilà!* New habits will be made, just healthier, upgraded ones!

Okay, so now for a few super-simple desserts. Have a dessert one or two nights a week, but not every night (once you get out of the dessert habit, you won't even crave the sweets at all, except for special occasions where tradition calls!). A few ideas that are my faves:

DESSERTS

Baked apple with crumbled nuts on top, a drizzle of agave nectar

Bowl of brown rice; half a handful of raisins or currants;
 steamed Silk Vanilla soy creamer poured over (rice
 pudding!)
 A couple of squares of bittersweet raw chocolate

SNACKS

Some easy, go-to snacks:
 Bowl of blueberries with rice or almond milk poured on top
 Rice cake with almond butter (spread lightly)
 Hummus and carrots, cucumbers
 Soy or coconut yogurt with a few seeds and nuts
 Handful of goji berries with nuts or seeds
 Green juice (kale or collards, celery, cucumber, lemon with
 rind, ginger, carrots, parsley, mint leaves)
 Power Smoothie (recipe on page 164)
 Bliss bar (order online)
 SunFoods snack bar (order online)
 Clif Builders bar (low glycemic index, 20 grams of protein)
 PureFit Bar
 Vega Bar

Visit the “raw” section of your local health food store and you’ll find plenty of yummy treats.

Extra Lean: Eat at home! A *Consumer Reports* survey found that eating at home was one of the most effective habits for losing weight. There are so many hidden calories and fats when you eat out; you’ll have better control when you prepare the food yourself. It doesn’t have to be fancy, nor does it need to take a long time: a simple bean, veggie, and grain will do. Or a whole grain pasta with veggies and chickpeas with some salad on the side. Even burritos are quick and filling.

If you are like me, you sometimes go out to eat more than you'd like to. Maybe it's a time thing or a business dinner. Whatever the reason, you find yourself in restaurants a lot. Try to avoid this, if at all possible. Cooking at home is the very best way to control what's going into your food, and the time spent at home with your family will be well worth it. Plus, you'll save a ton of money! Start off simply and you'll find it's easier than you think. You can buy canned beans and use frozen cooked brown rice to make quick tacos, or add frozen veggies to that for a hearty bowl of goodies from the power plate.

But in the meantime, here is what you can trend toward when going out:

- Thai, Chinese, or Japanese: edamame, tofu, rice, and all kinds of veggies. If Chinese, steer clear of all those sweet sauces, and keep it simple.
- Mexican: corn fajita (the white flour ones sometimes have lard in them) with black beans, salsa and rice (chips have too much oil).
- Middle Eastern, Greek, or Ethiopian: hummus and baba ghanoush.
- Indian: lentils, chickpeas, and curries (not the ones with cream) with whole grain breads. Ask for dishes made without ghee (clarified butter).
- Pizza places or Italian: pasta (whole grain if they have it) with veggies or spicy tomato sauce; white beans, fava beans, roasted potatoes; salads; pizza with whole grain crust, veggies and onions on top, hold the cheese (sometimes I bring my own nondairy cheese and the pizza maker will use it to make me a super delish vegan cheese pizza).
- Salad bar: lettuces, veggies, chickpeas, olives, mushrooms, tofu, seeds (very light on the vinaigrette!). A side of vegan soup if it's available.

- Burger joints: veggie burgers, without mayo, and with a nice big salad rather than the fries. Baked potato and veggies; salsa or tomato sauce.
- Hotels: ask for oatmeal cooked with water rather than milk; plate of berries; toast and peanut butter (I travel with my own so I know it doesn't have sugar); baked potato, veggies, any kind of beans or legumes they have; minestrone.

If you are on the road, carry some snacks like protein bars or a baggie of nuts and goji berries. You don't want to find yourself starving with nothing to eat and a fast-food joint calling your name!

Okay, so those are the basics. Now for the fun stuff.

Meet Dayna McLeod, a wonderful chef I met a couple of years ago. Dayna wanted to learn how to cook healthy food that both her Australian, meat-loving husband and four-year-old daughter would like, so she attended culinary classes to learn the essentials. And then she took what she learned and started converting her tried-and-true faves from all her travels around the world so that all the dishes were just healthier versions of what she and her family already loved. She turned her favorite recipes into ones without meat, dairy, eggs, or sugar, and I must say, she's done a brilliant job.

Her recipes are simple and practical, and unbelievably delicious, and she's sharing them with you here. Feel free to mix up the main dishes—some you'll want for lunch, others for dinner. There are a few that are one-dish meals, while to others you'll want to add a side dish of a veggie and/or a yam and salad. Dayna will give you some cooking tips along the way, and you'll hear why she loves the dishes she presents here. All that said, feel free to make the dishes your own and experiment until you find what makes your taste buds happiest!

Don't be put off by the long ingredients lists on some of the recipes. These recipes are simple to prepare and simply fantastic.

BREAKFAST

1. BREAKFAST QUINOA

This breakfast quinoa recipe is so delicious it can double as a dessert. Quinoa is naturally loaded with protein and fiber, so it provides long-lasting energy throughout your day. A perfect way to start your morning out right.

Serves 2

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- ½ cup water
- Pinch salt
- 1 teaspoon Earth Balance spread
- 1 medium apple, diced, with peel
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup chopped toasted walnuts
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar

1. In a small saucepan, bring the quinoa, milk, water, and salt to a boil for 2 minutes.
2. Reduce, heat to low and cover for 15 minutes or until all the water is absorbed. Remove from the heat and let sit, covered, for 5 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, in a small skillet over medium heat, melt the Earth Balance spread. Add the apple, stir together until evenly coated, and sauté for 1 minute. Cover and cook for 3 minutes, or until soft
4. Add the cinnamon and walnuts and cook for 1 additional minute.
5. Stir in the apple mixture with the quinoa, and divide between two bowls.
6. Drizzle the agave nectar on top and enjoy!

****Helpful Hint**** Quinoa is a South American grain that needs to be rinsed well before cooking. Quinoa has a natural coating that can make the cooked grains bitter and mushy if they are not washed first.

****Variations**** For a simple change, cook the quinoa as directed above, but omit the apple and Earth Balance spread. Gently fold blackberries and cinnamon into the quinoa, and top with walnuts, agave nectar, and shredded coconut.

2. PUMPKIN FLAPJACKS

Pumpkin gives a traditional pancake a sweet, surprising twist. Adding ginger and cinnamon completes the transformation from ordinary to extraordinary!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup gluten-free flour (I like Bob's Red Mill brand)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup pumpkin, canned or pureed fresh
- 1 cup almond milk
- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons agave nectar
- 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Cooking spray

Toasted pecans for garnish

1. Sift the flour, salt and baking powder together in a large bowl. Add the spices and mix well.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the pumpkin, milk, water, oil, agave nectar, vinegar, and vanilla.
3. Fold the pumpkin mixture into the dry ingredients.
4. Preheat a large, seasoned cast-iron skillet over medium heat for 5 minutes.
5. Spray the pan with a small amount of cooking spray.
6. Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter for each pancake.
7. Cook the pancakes about 3 minutes per side, or until golden brown.
8. Garnish with pecans and serve immediately.

****For Your Information****The pumpkin does make the pancakes a bit dense. They will taste and feel heavier than a plain pancake. Don't be alarmed! More importantly, don't be deterred from making these delicious flapjacks!

****Buy and Try**** Look for Bob's Red Mill brand products the next time you are at the store. They have some fantastic, healthy baking ingredients that I just love to use while cooking. You can also order their products through Amazon.com.

DRESSINGS, SPREADS, AND DIPS

1. CLASSIC HUMMUS

Hummus is a nutritional treasure. It's not only delicious to eat, it is packed with protein and contains lots of vitamins, minerals, omega-3s, and amino acids. This amazing authentic Mediterranean recipe was given to me from my friends at Baba Foods SLO.

Serves 4

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

3 tablespoons tahini
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 (15 oz.) cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon olive oil
Dash salt
Dash pepper
Pinch cumin powder or ground cumin

1. In a small bowl, mix the tahini and lemon juice.
2. In a food processor, combine the garbanzos, garlic, and water, and blend until smooth.
3. Slowly add in the tahini and lemon juice mixture while continuing to blend.
4. Then slowly add in the olive oil, salt, pepper, and cumin.
5. Continue blending until the mixture is extremely smooth.
6. Taste and add seasoning if needed.

****Variation**** This Mediterranean dip lends itself to several variations. Here are just a few flavors you can make: sun-dried tomato, spicy black bean, basil pesto, roasted red pepper, dill and mint, cilantro and avocado, jalapeño, Kalamata olive, artichoke, and roasted garlic . . . and the list goes on and on.

****Serving Ideas**** Serve with flatbread, use as a dip for a vegetable crudité, use it in a wrap, serve it with warm pita triangles, or even on top of a salad to add some protein.

2. GUACAMOLE

This recipe is just a base for your guacamole creation; feel free to improvise. Any way you mash it, it is an easy way to dress up a dish. Fun to bring to a party!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

2 large ripe avocados, peeled and pitted
1 medium Roma tomato, seeded and diced
3 green onions, chopped
1 teaspoon minced fresh red jalapeño pepper
¼ teaspoon cumin powder
⅓ cup fresh roughly chopped cilantro
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Scoop out the avocado flesh and place in a medium bowl. Mash with a fork, being careful not to overdo it, to preserve some small chunks.
2. Add the tomato, onions, jalapeño, cumin, and cilantro, and combine.
3. Squeeze in the lime juice, and season with salt and pepper.

****Helpful Hint**** While storing in the refrigerator, keep your guacamole from turning brown by placing a layer of plastic kitchen wrap directly on the guacamole surface and squeeze out the air.

****Chef's Secret**** For extra spicy guacamole, leave the jalapeño seeds in your mix!

****Serving Suggestions**** Serve this with your terrific tacos, or serve as a dip with some healthy corn chips.

3. PRESTO PESTO

I call this recipe Presto Pesto because it is so simple you can make it in a matter of minutes. This recipe uses just seven ingredients and makes a sauce packed full of flavor!

Serves 10

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1¼ cups toasted pine nuts
- 2 bunches fresh basil leaves
- 1 cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

1. To toast the pine nuts, preheat your toaster oven to 350°F. Spread the nuts on the toasting pan and bake until lightly brown, about 4 minutes. Shake the pan once or twice midway through cooking for even toasting.
2. Prepare a bowl of ice water. Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
3. Gather all the basil leaves, making sure to discard the stalks.
4. Plunge the basil into the boiling water for 10 seconds, making sure all the leaves are pushed under the water. Drain the pot and plunge the basil into the ice water to stop the cooking. Squeeze the basil of all excess water and lay the basil on a paper towel.
5. In a food processor, pulse all the ingredients together (including the toasted nuts).
6. Season to taste.

****Variation**** This recipe calls for pine nuts. You could certainly substitute cashews if you'd prefer. They are definitely the less expensive option of the two.

****Serving Ideas**** Pesto is so versatile; you'll never run out of ways to enjoy it. You can toss it with pasta, use it as a sandwich

spread, make pizza sauce, even just serve it with crackers for an appetizer.

*****Time-saving Tip*****Make a double batch of this recipe and store it in a sealed jar for up to 2 weeks. You can even freeze it in ice cube trays and use it next month.

4. RANCH DRESSING

When I was considering cutting out dairy, one of my first thoughts was, how would I live without ranch dressing? Ranch dressing is about as American as apple pie. Needless to say, this was the first recipe I decided to perfect, and it doesn't disappoint.

Serves 8

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 2 hours, 10 minutes

Ingredients

5 ounces firm silken-style tofu, drained (I like Mori-Nu brand)
½ cup light vegan mayonnaise (I like Reduced Fat Vegenaïse brand)
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
⅓ cup unsweetened soy milk
1 teaspoon minced or pressed garlic
1 teaspoon minced shallot
3 green onions, sliced
1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh dill
1 teaspoon vegan Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
1 teaspoon onion powder
½ teaspoon celery seed powder
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh chives

1. In a blender or food processor, combine all the ingredients except the chives.
2. Mix until you have a smooth and creamy sauce.
3. Add the fresh chives to the mix, and pulse one time, keeping the chives in larger pieces.
4. This dressing should be chilled for 2 hours before serving.

****Helpful Hint**** Refrigerate overnight in a sealed jar to enjoy a more robust flavor.

****Serving Ideas**** Ranch is not just for salad anymore! You can use this creamy delight on just about anything. Pour it over a baked potato, use it as a yummy sandwich spread, or use it as a dip for anything your imagination can think of.

5. CREAMY AVOCADO DRESSING

A great salad deserves a great dressing. With ingredients so fresh, this one blends beautifully with any salad you choose. Did you know avocados are high in fiber? So not only do they taste unbelievable, but they help fill you up.

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- ¼ cup minced fresh cilantro
- 1½ tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar
- 2 tablespoons water
- ½ teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil

1. Combine the garlic, avocado, cilantro, lime juice, agave, vinegar, water, salt, and cayenne, and blend well in a food processor.
2. Continue to blend as you slowly pour a thin stream of olive oil through the opening in the top of the food processor. Blend until smooth and creamy.

****For Your Information**** This salad dressing should be made and used the same day.

MAIN COURSES

1. BLACK BEAN SALSA SALAD

Warning! This dish is highly addictive. This recipe dates back to the 1950s and was created by a famous chef at Neiman Marcus. Sixty-one years later I have adapted this mouthwatering dish into a healthier version. Make copies of this recipe because people always ask for it.

Serves 6

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Ingredients

2 (16 oz.) cans black beans, drained but not rinsed
 1 (14 oz.) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes with green
 chiles (or similar), drained but not rinsed
 1 (8 oz.) can small white shoepeg corn
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broccoli florets, chopped into small florets
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch green onions, diced small
 $\frac{1}{2}$ English cucumber, seeded and diced

2 stalks celery, chopped into ¼-inch dice
 1 red bell pepper, diced small
 1 yellow bell pepper, diced small
 1 green pepper, diced small
 1 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
 1 tablespoon olive oil
 1 lime, squeezed
 ¼ cup wine vinegar
 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
 1 teaspoon cumin powder
 Salt and pepper to taste
 1 avocado, diced small
 Salad greens

1. Combine the beans, vegetables, and cilantro in a large bowl.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the oil, lime juice, vinegar, garlic, cumin, and salt and pepper.
3. Pour the dressing on top of the bean mixture and toss to coat.
4. Cover and chill for an hour or overnight to allow the flavors to develop.
5. Dice the avocado and combine immediately before serving. Plate on top of salad greens.

****Helpful Hint**** This is a perfect dish to bring to a party. To serve it as a dip, omit the broccoli, celery, cucumbers, and avocado. Serve dip with blue corn chips and you will have a real crowd-pleaser. Every party has some sort of salad. Grab some greens from the salad and pour this mixture on top. *Voilà* . . . you now have your main course.

2. BEST BEEFLESS BURGER IN TOWN

Mmmm . . . burgers. They're not just for meat lovers anymore! So fire up your grill, and get ready for one of these thick, juicy homemade burgers. They are sure to be a hit at your next cookout!

Serves 2

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

½ cup tamari soy sauce
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 Gardein Beefless Burgers, frozen
2 tablespoons light vegan mayonnaise (I like Vegenaïse)
1 tablespoon ketchup
1 tablespoon sweet relish
Garlic powder to taste
2 slices vegan Cheddar cheese, sliced
2 multigrain sandwich thins, toasted
4 lettuce leaves
1 tomato, sliced
½ small red onion, slices
½ small avocado, slices

1. Combine the soy sauce and olive oil and marinate the patties in a small ziplock bag for 5 minutes in the refrigerator.
2. In the meantime, make the dressing. Combine the Vegenaïse, ketchup, and relish in a small bowl and mix well.
3. Sprinkle each frozen patty with a light, even coat of garlic powder.
4. Preheat the grill to medium heat.
5. Grill the burgers for 4 minutes per side, or until each patty is nice and brown.
6. Top with a slice of Cheddar cheese in the last minute of cooking, and cover to melt.
7. Toast the sandwich thins for 1–2 minutes on the grill.

8. Remove from the heat and spread the dressing on the insides of the sandwich thins.
9. Place a cheeseburger on each thin, and stack your toppings and enjoy!

****Healthy Tip**** Trying to reduce your carb intake? Skip the sandwich thin and wrap cold crisp lettuce around your burger. Romaine and iceberg lettuce seem to work best.

****Variation**** The sky is the limit for toppings on your burger. Whether it's grilled wild mushrooms, tempeh bacon, soy blue cheese crumbles, grilled pineapple, roasted balsamic onions, jerk seasoning, red beetroot, pickles, salsa, horseradish, roasted red peppers, sun-dried tomatoes . . . the list goes on and on!

3. COCONUT GARBANZO BEAN CURRY

This savory garbanzo bean curry is delicious served over couscous. If there is any left over, pack it in a thermos and take it to work for lunch the next day. This dish travels well, and the flavor actually intensifies overnight!

Serves 4

Active time: 35 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup butternut squash, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 1 cup sweet potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut in ¼-inch dice
- 1 tablespoon African curry powder (or other favorite curry powder)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed

2 tablespoons creamy peanut butter
1 can lite unsweetened coconut milk
1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes, drained
2 (15 oz.) cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
4 cups fresh spinach
2 tablespoons roughly chopped fresh cilantro
¼ cup chopped unsalted roasted peanuts

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Toss the squash and sweet potato cubes in a medium bowl with 1 tablespoon of olive oil until the cubes are evenly coated. Place the squash and potatoes in a single layer on a roasting pan or baking sheet. Roast for 20–30 minutes, or until soft in the middle.
3. In the meantime, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and bell pepper and sauté until soft, 5–8 minutes.
4. Add the curry powder and garlic, and stir constantly for 30 seconds.
5. Stir in the peanut butter and slowly add the coconut milk until a very smooth sauce is formed.
6. Add in the tomatoes, garbanzo beans, sweet potatoes, and squash, and mix until combined.
7. Season with the pepper and salt and bring the mixture up to a simmer. Stir in the spinach until wilted, about 5 minutes.
8. Stir in the cilantro and remove from the heat. Top with the peanuts before serving.

****Did You Know**** Some studies have shown that ingredients in curry may help to prevent certain diseases, including colon cancer and Alzheimer's disease. Curry powders are extremely diverse: some red, some yellow, some brown, some with five spices and some with as many as 20 or more. While curry powder can be bought at

any grocery store, you may want to broaden your palate by finding more at a specialty store. I bought this particular African curry powder at Williams-Sonoma. World Market and other online shops are of course great alternatives.

4. COLD SOBA NOODLE SALAD WITH PEANUT DRESSING

This fantastic salad is filled with fiber and protein, and is bursting with flavor! Soba is chock-full of a potent antioxidant called rutin. It has been shown to improve circulation and prevent LDL cholesterol from clogging blood vessels.

Serves 4

Active time: 30 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

14 ounces extra-firm tofu, pressed and drained
2 tablespoons low-sodium tamari soy sauce
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup brown rice vinegar
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup creamy peanut butter
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup agave nectar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice
2 cloves garlic
1 tablespoon peeled and minced fresh gingerroot
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 cup fresh cilantro leaves
1 bag soba noodles
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cucumber, diced
2 carrots, julienned

3 green onions, sliced
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
¼ cup shredded red cabbage
⅓ cup frozen edamame, defrosted and shelled
⅓ cup bean sprouts
½ can water chestnuts, sliced
1 head lettuce leaves
Toasted slivered almonds

1. Cut the pressed tofu into ½-inch cubes. A simple technique to do this is to cut the tofu block in half. Now cut those 2 halves into halves. Rotate the block 90 degrees and repeat.
2. Combine the tamari, sesame oil, vinegar, peanut butter, agave nectar, orange juice, garlic, ginger, water, and red pepper flakes in a blender or food processor until creamy.
3. Add the cilantro and pulse, being careful not to overblend. The cilantro should look chopped.
4. Using a small amount of the dressing as a marinade, cover the tofu in a shallow container. Chill and marinate the tofu for at least 20 minutes. At this time, you can also chill the remainder of the dressing for your salad.
5. In a large pot of boiling water, cook soba noodles for 5 minutes, or until al dente. You may need to turn down the heat to bring the water to a slow boil. Soba makes froth on top of the water and may quickly overflow your pot.
6. Drain and rinse the noodles well in cold water. Put the noodles in a container with a top, and toss the noodles with 1 tablespoon of toasted sesame oil. This helps prevent the noodles from sticking. Chill the noodles for at least 15 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, combine all the vegetables in a very large bowl.
8. Transfer the cold noodles and dressing into the same bowl, and toss well to coat.
9. Place a few lettuce leaves on each plate. Using tongs, divide the noodle mixture among the four plates on top of the greens.

10. Arrange the tofu pieces around the noodles.
11. Garnish with toasted slivered almonds.

****Chef's Secret**** Many vegan recipes call for pressed tofu. This simple process removes excess moisture, allowing more flavor to be absorbed while cooking. The easiest way I have found to do it is as follows:

1. Remove the tofu from the container and drain the water in a colander over the sink.
2. Layer 2 clean kitchen towels on top of a cutting board.
3. Lay the tofu block on the towels, and lay three more clean towels on top of the tofu.
4. Carefully lay another cutting board on top of the towels.
5. Place 2 heavy books or soup cans on top of the cutting board.
6. Let sit for at least 20 minutes.

****Variation**** Use whatever vegetables you have in the refrigerator for this salad. The great thing about cooking is you can tailor each recipe to fit your needs!

5. GREEK SALAD

A traditional Greek salad features tomatoes, cucumbers, and olives, but this mouthwatering recipe takes the concept to a whole different level. You and your taste buds will be thanking the Greek gods after just one bite.

Serves 2

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 small English cucumber, seeded and diced

6 whole sun-dried tomatoes, drained and diced
¼ small red onion, diced
10 whole Kalamata olives, pitted and drained
4 whole canned artichoke hearts in water, drained and halved
½ cup crumbled vegan soy feta
½ cup olive oil
¼ cup lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon agave nectar
2 tablespoons water
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 whole peperoncini peppers, drained

1. In a large bowl, mix all the vegetables and the feta together. Set aside while you make the vinaigrette.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, lemon juice, garlic, oregano, basil, dill, vinegar, agave, water, and salt and pepper.
3. Pour over the salad and toss to combine the herb vinaigrette with the vegetables.
4. Garnish with a peperoncini on top. Serve immediately.

****Chef's Secret**** The secret to this scrumptious salad is to dice the vegetables to the same size so that the flavors can blend into one bite.

****Variations**** For some added protein, you can add in some tofu or quinoa. For some extra nutritional value, cooked barley will do the trick.

****Buy and Try**** Sunergia Soy Foods Soy Feta and Soy Bleu “cheese.” If you don't have a large selection of vegan products at

your local store, there are great shopping resources online. Even Amazon carries some great products now.

6. HEARTY LENTIL SOUP

This yummy lentil soup recipe is bursting with nourishment from the lentils and an assortment of veggies. This soup is packed with protein and will keep you satisfied all day long. It freezes well and seems to improve with each leftover serving.

Serves 6

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes
- 2 cups Yukon Gold potatoes, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 2 leeks, white and light green only, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 8 cups vegetable stock
- 2 cups brown and/or green lentils, thoroughly rinsed and picked over
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a large soup pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Sauté the onion, potatoes, celery, carrots, leeks, and garlic until golden, about 5 minutes.

2. Next pour the vegetable stock into the pot, and add the rinsed lentils, herbs, and salt and pepper to taste.
3. Increase the heat to high and bring the soup to a boil.
4. Cover, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook for 1 hour.
5. Make sure the level of the stock isn't too low, adding more stock as necessary.
6. Taste and add more salt and pepper if necessary.
7. The soup should be thick and creamy, and the lentils nice and soft.

****Helpful Hint**** Be sure to pick through your lentils carefully. It is easy to find tiny pebbles and grit.

****Buy and Try**** If you are using a store-bought stock, try a brand called Better Than Bouillon. The No Chicken Base is my favorite.

7. MOROCCAN PASTA WITH GARBANZO BEANS

This pasta is a personal favorite of mine. It takes only 30 minutes to make, so it's a great option after a long day at work. This dish is served best cold. Make this recipe ahead of time for a dinner after a long day.

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
- ½ (8 oz.) package rice pasta elbows or spirals (I like Tinkyada brand)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder

- 1 teaspoon harissa
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon finely ground sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 (15 oz.) can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (28 oz.) can crushed Italian tomatoes
- ¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley, loosely packed

1. Heat the oil in a 3-quart sauté pan over medium-high heat.
2. Add the onion and sauté for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
3. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan for 15 minutes, until the onion is translucent.
4. While the onion is cooking, bring a large pot of water to a rapid boil and cook the pasta as directed on the package.
5. When the onion is cooked, add in the garlic, coriander, cumin, harissa, allspice, salt, and pepper, and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
6. Stir in the garbanzo beans and tomatoes and bring to a boil over high heat. Once it has reached a boil, stir, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cover.
7. Drain the pasta and mix in with the tomato sauce, continuing over low heat for 3 minutes. Do not overstir! Too much stirring will cause the pasta to break apart and turn mushy.
8. Sprinkle with the parsley just before serving.

****Helpful Hint**** Cook all rice pasta 3–4 minutes less than directed on package. This will help with the nice al dente effect, and your pasta won't break apart and turn to mush!

****For Your Information**** Harissa is a Tunisian hot chile spice. It is available in most supermarkets in the spice aisle. Harissa can come in a paste form or in dry flakes. Specialty stores will also carry harissa. I know for sure Whole Foods and Williams-Sonoma keep it as a staple item and it's available online and in spice shops.

If you can't find it, substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes.

8. PHILLY NO STEAK SANDWICH

Being a nonmeat eater is no reason to miss out on the warm goodness of a Philly cheesesteak! This recipe replaces beef with seitan, a protein-filled meat substitute made from wheat gluten.

Serves 2

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, cut in half vertically and thinly sliced
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- 1 red pepper, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 (12 oz.) package seitan, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon vegan Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 4 slices vegan provolone cheese (if not available, use
vegan mozzarella), torn into strips
- 2 whole wheat sandwich thins
- 1 cup vegan marinara sauce (optional)

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Sauté the onion and peppers for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cover and reduce the heat to low for 5 minutes, or until the onion becomes soft and translucent.

3. Uncover and increase to medium-high heat. Add the remaining tablespoon of oil, the garlic cloves, and chopped seitan. Make sure all the water is pressed out of the seitan before cooking to keep oil from splattering.
4. Pour the Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, and pepper over the meat while constantly stirring the meat.
5. Cook for approximately 4 minutes or until the seitan starts to turn golden.
6. Lay the cheese on top of the meat mixture and reduce the heat to low. When the cheese is melted, pile onto the sandwich thins and top with warm marinara sauce if desired.

****Buy and Try**** You can now purchase whole wheat sandwich thins at almost any supermarket. Only 100 calories for the entire bun! You can also substitute Food for Life Ezekiel 4:9 bread, which is always a healthy option.

****Variation**** Replace the seitan with Gardein beefless tips. They are found in your grocer's freezer section.

9. SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE

Mamma mia! Who doesn't love spaghetti bolognese? Everyone has their own version of this Italian classic, and I have my own, too. I gave this sauce a vegan makeover, and the results are phenomenal! This is comfort food at its best!

Serves 8

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium yellow onion, chopped

1 cup sliced mushrooms
3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 package soy crumbles (I like Smart Ground from Lightlife)
1 jar vegan marinara sauce
10 fresh basil leaves, cut into chiffonade
1 package rice pasta, spaghetti noodles
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
½ cup diced zucchini
½ cup broccoli florets
½ cup cauliflower florets
Salt and pepper to taste
Fresh parsley sprigs for garnish

1. Place a large soup pot over medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil and heat for 30 seconds.
2. Add the onion and mushrooms and sauté until soft, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute longer.
3. Add the soy crumbles and stir to combine.
4. Pour the marinara sauce into the pot and stir in the fresh basil.
5. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for at least 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook the noodles as directed on the package.
7. Meanwhile, in a large skillet or wok, heat the remaining oil over medium heat.
8. Stir in all the vegetables and sauté, being careful not to overcook. The vegetables should still be a bit crunchy when finished.
9. Transfer the vegetables into the pot with the marinara sauce and stir to combine.
10. Season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste.
11. Drain the noodles and toss together with the sauce. Garnish with the fresh parsley sprigs and serve immediately.

****Helpful Hint**** Chiffonade is a simple technique for cutting basil or mint. Stack several (about 6) basil leaves. Roll the pile of leaves lengthwise into a tight cigar shape. Using a very sharp knife, cut the bundled leaves into thin slices. Fluff the chiffonade with your fingers. You can sprinkle on soups, stir into a dish, or just use it as a garnish to decorate a plate. It's an easy way to impress your guests!

****Chef's Secret**** Substituting the meat with soy crumbles and adding heaps of yummy veggies is a meal in itself. You probably noticed this recipe makes a huge amount of food, and I did that on purpose. This meal freezes great, and may just taste even better the second time around. Some days you just don't have time to cook. By having premade meals readily available, you don't have to reach for junk food anymore.

10. SUNNY CITRUS QUINOA SALAD

This delicious salad is packed with protein and whole grain fiber. Salads are something people either love or hate, and I try to get people to love them by exposing them to salads like this. All salads are not created equal!

Serves 2

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup orange juice, preferably fresh
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro, loosely packed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, loosely packed
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, loosely packed

1 tablespoon chopped chives
1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
¼ cup toasted slivered almonds
¼ cup raisins
¼ cup golden raisins
⅓ cup chopped dried apricots
1 head butter lettuce, leaves separated
1 large navel orange, peeled and sectioned

1. Make the quinoa: Rinse well in a fine-mesh strainer until the water is clear. Place the quinoa and 2 cups of water in a small saucepan over high heat. Bring to a boil for 2 minutes. Cover and turn off the heat. Leave covered for 20 minutes, or until all water is absorbed.
2. In the meantime, combine the orange juice, shallot, cilantro, mint, parsley, and chives in a medium bowl.
3. Add the zest, coriander, cumin, salt, and pepper to the orange juice mix. Whisk the olive oil into mixture.
4. Toast the almonds, if desired, in a toaster oven until light brown.
5. Fluff the quinoa with a fork and transfer to a large bowl. Toss in the raisins, apricots, and dressing.
6. Place the lettuce and orange sections onto a plate, and top with the quinoa salad.
7. Sprinkle the toasted almonds on top for garnish.

**** A Helpful Tip**** Did you know quinoa is a great staple that can be used for breakfast, lunch, or dinner? I like to make 2 cups of quinoa at the start of each week. I put it in the refrigerator so I always have protein at my fingertips. This is a great time-saver tip!

11. ULTIMATE BLT SANDWICH

What takes this sandwich from unflavored to ultimate is the addition of the nutrient-dense avocado. This heavenly fruit has 20 essential nutrients and is a rich source of fiber. Not only does it taste wonderful, you'll be satisfied for hours.

Serves 2

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
6 pieces tempeh bacon
4 slices sprouted-grain bread, toasted lightly
4 romaine lettuce leaves
4 slices tomatoes
6 slices ripe avocado
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons light vegan mayonnaise (such as Vegenaïse)

1. In a medium sauté pan, heat the oil and cook the bacon according to the package directions. Be sure to watch the bacon closely, as it can burn quickly. Place the cooked strips onto a paper towel-lined plate. Set aside to cool.
2. Lightly toast the bread and spread 2 slices with the Vegenaïse.
3. Assemble as you would a BLT, adding avocado on top.
4. Sprinkle salt and pepper to taste.

****Variation**** I like to omit the vegan mayonnaise and instead spread yummy hummus on my bread.

****Buy and Try**** Ezekiel 4:9 Sprouted Grain Bread, Lightlife Fakin Bacon, or Lightlife Smart Bacon

****Helpful Hint**** Packing a vegan BLT sandwich for lunches is easy. Just wrap the sandwich in plastic wrap and put in a cooler. This sandwich travels well and makes for a great office lunch.

12. CHINESE STIR-FRY

Hungry for Chinese food? This budget-friendly recipe is quick and easy, and it tastes delicious over a bed of brown rice. Stir-fries are a simple way to get dinner on the table fast, and you get to show off your chopstick skills.

Serves 2

Active time: 25 minutes

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Ingredients

- 8 ounces firm or extra-firm tofu, pressed and drained
- 4 tablespoons mirin
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium tamari soy sauce
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon agave
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- ½ cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh gingerroot, peeled and very finely minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 bag frozen stir-fry vegetables

1. Cut the pressed tofu into cubes.
2. In a shallow covered container, whisk together the mirin and cornstarch. Add the tofu cubes, cover, and shake the container to evenly coat the tofu. Marinate for at least 20 minutes.

3. In a small bowl, mix together the tamari, red pepper flakes, agave, sesame oil, and orange juice.
4. Heat the canola oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Add in the ginger and garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
5. Using a slotted spoon, remove the tofu from the marinade and sauté the tofu in the wok. Turn the tofu with tongs or a spatula often. All sides of the tofu should be golden brown.
6. Now toss in the frozen vegetables and the tamari mixture. Cook for about 3–5 minutes, or until your vegetables are done. Remember to stir frequently to prevent burning your food. The wok is extremely hot!

****Helpful Hint**** If you are using fresh vegetables, the cooking of this stir-fry moves quickly, so make sure all your ingredients are chopped and ready to go before you begin.

****Variations**** Use any colorful combination of vegetables you please for this dish. A stir-fry is a great way to incorporate more vegetables into your family's diet.

13. CREAMY PUMPKIN PASTA

Halloween is by far my favorite holiday of the year. One thing I've learned, pumpkins aren't just for decorating anymore. Pumpkin is packed with nutrition, and is an excellent source for vitamin A and fiber. Just one more reason to love Halloween!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound rice pasta (I like Tinkyada Spirals), cooked al dente
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

2 links vegan sausage, cut on the bias
1 medium onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
6 fresh sage leaves, cut into chiffonade
1 bay leaf
½ cup dry white wine
1 cup canned pumpkin
1 cup vegan chicken stock (I like Better than Bouillon
No Chicken Base)
½ cup cashew cream (see page 120)
⅛ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
⅛ teaspoon allspice
Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a large pot over medium-high heat, bring water to a boil for pasta. Cook your pasta according to the package directions.
2. Meanwhile, place a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, add the oil to the pan, and brown the sausage (about 3 minutes on each side). Transfer the sausages to a paper towel-lined tray.
3. In a large deep sauté pan, add the remaining tablespoon of oil and bring the heat to medium-high. Sauté the onion for 5 minutes, until translucent and tender. Add the garlic to the onion for an additional minute, continuously stirring to prevent the garlic from burning.
4. Add the sage, bay leaf, and wine to your pan, and reduce by half. This should take only a minute or so. Add the pumpkin and stock, stirring continuously to combine. Increase the heat to high and bring to a boil. Stir in the cashew cream, return your sausage to the pan, and reduce the heat to low. Add the spices to the sauce and simmer for 5–10 minutes, or until the sauce thickens.
5. Return the drained pasta to the pot it was cooked in. Remove the bay leaf and toss the sauce with the pasta. Stir over low heat for 1 minute.
6. Salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately.

****Helpful Hint**** At certain times of the year it may be hard to find fresh or canned pumpkin. Substitute butternut squash for the pumpkin. Butternut squash is available all year-round and should be easier to find at your local market.

****Buy and Try**** My new favorite find is Field Roast Sausages, Italian Style. They taste so much like the real thing that people won't believe you when you tell them it doesn't contain any animal products.

14. HEARTY BOWL OF GARBANZO BEANS AND ARTICHOKES

This is one of my favorite protein-packed one-dish meals. It's loaded with fiber, it's grain free, and it's easy to prepare.

Serves 4

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 (15 oz.) cans garbanzo beans, drained
- 8 sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped
- 10 artichoke hearts in water, drained and halved
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup almond slivers, toasted and ground
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley, loosely packed

1. Put the oil in an iron skillet or wok for about 30 seconds on high, until the oil is hot but not smoking. Add in the garbanzo beans and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring just enough so it doesn't burn

but enough that the garbanzos become a nice warm golden brown all over. Place in a large mixing bowl and put aside.

2. Add a smidgen more oil to the pan. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and artichokes and cook until browned. Add the cumin seeds for 1 additional minute. Combine them in a bowl with the garbanzos.
3. Take out a fresh dry skillet and toast the almonds until they turn a light brown color. Put the almonds in a food processor to grind. If you want to save a skillet, place the almonds on a toaster pan for 3–5 minutes. Add the almonds to the artichokes and garbanzos mixture and season them with the salt, lemon juice, and chopped parsley. Serve warm or at room temperature.

****Chef's Secret**** After cooking, wash your wok under hot running water, using a brush to loosen up the food particles. Dry immediately by heating on the stove. Apply a light coat of vegetable oil with a paper towel to prevent your wok from rusting.

****Variation**** Add in white quinoa to really pump up your protein for the day.

15. TERRIFIC TACOS

In my house we have Taco Tuesdays every week. Serve these tasty tacos family style, and everyone gets to create their own taco. Things can get a bit messy, so make sure to have plenty of napkins around for this fiesta!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

½ box corn tortilla shells

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 package soy crumbles
1 package taco seasoning mix
1 head romaine lettuce leaves (or kale), thinly chopped
2 Roma tomatoes, seeded and diced
½ cup Daiya Cheddar
½ avocado, thinly sliced
½ small red onion, thinly sliced
1 jalapeño chile pepper, finely minced
Fresh cilantro sprigs
¾ cup salsa
6 lime wedges

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F for the tortilla shells.
2. Heat the oil in a medium skillet. Add the onions and sauté for 5–10 minutes, or until the onion becomes soft and translucent. Add the garlic and stir for 1 additional minute.
3. Add the soy crumbles to the onion mix. Continuously stir over low heat until the crumbles have heated up. Be careful as the crumbles can burn easily.
4. Bake the tortilla shells on a baking tray for 5 minutes, or until they become crispy.
5. Put all your fixings on the table and make your own taco!

****Chef's Secret**** When warming up your taco shells, place the open end down on the baking tray. This will stop the shells from closing while heating!

****Buy and Try**** Smart Ground Soy Crumbles. This brand is my favorite, and I love that they now make one with Mexican flavoring.

****Variations**** Substitute the soy crumbles with black beans or pinto beans. This will help keep you full throughout the night.

16. BRAZILIAN BLACK BEAN PATTIES

These hearty bean patties are good standing alone or served like a burger. They are way more delicious than the frozen kind. Kids and adults alike rave about this dish.

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- ½ cup tomatillo salsa (or any salsa of your choice)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon minced fresh parsley
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- 2 (15 oz.) cans black beans, drained
- ¼ cup green onions, finely chopped
- 1½ cups whole wheat bread crumbs
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

For the salsa

- 2 ripe mangos, peeled and cubed
- ¼ cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- ¼ cup finely chopped green bell pepper
- 1 small green chile pepper, seeded and minced
- ¼ cup green onions
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup tomatillo salsa
- 2 teaspoons light agave nectar

1 tablespoon canola oil
½ avocado, cut into ¼-inch dice

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. In a food processor, mix the salsa, cumin, coriander, parsley, chili powder, and black beans. Blitz the mixture until it is very smooth. Transfer the bean mixture from the food processor and put into a large mixing bowl. With a spatula, fold in the green onions, 1 cup bread crumbs, salt, and pepper. The mix should be evenly combined.
2. Shape the mixture into 8 even patties. In a shallow container, pour in the remaining bread crumbs and dredge each patty. Transfer the patties to a baking sheet and refrigerate for at least 20 minutes.
3. In the meantime, mix together the mangos, peppers, green onions, cilantro, lime juice, salsa, and agave into a small bowl. Chill until serving time.
4. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the canola oil over medium heat. Fry each patty for 3 minutes on each side. Be careful not to let the patties burn. Transfer the patties to a paper towel-lined plate to absorb any excess oil.
5. Keep the patties warm on a baking sheet in the oven and until ready to serve (no longer than 15 minutes).
6. Just before plating, dice the avocado and toss with the mango salsa to combine.
7. Serve 2 patties on each plate, and spoon the mango salsa over the top of each one. Serve immediately.

****Did You Know?**** Many times recipes will call for vegetable oil cooking spray. You probably think to yourself that must be a healthier alternative to using a small amount of oil in your pan. Unfortunately, that may not always be the case. Next time you are at the market, look at the label on the back of a cooking spray can. Notice the serving size and the amount of servings per can. Most cans have upwards of 500 servings, each serving being one third of a second. I don't even really know what one third of a second is. Realistically,

how many of you spray your pan for one third of a second? My guess is that you are like everybody else, and you spray your pan in a big circular motion. You have now used 20 to 40 servings of the spray, depending on the size of your pan. So, as you can now see, a small amount of oil in your pan may be the healthier option!

17. COMFORTING CHILI

All chili recipes have changed over time, with new recipes being created every day. If you ask anyone for a chili recipe these days, chances are that you will get a different recipe from every person you ask. My rocking recipe even includes cocoa!

Serves 8

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and cut into ¼-inch dice
- 1 package soy crumbles, crumbled
- 1 cup faux beef stock (I like Better than Bouillon)
- 1 (15 oz.) can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 2 cans tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar
- 4 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground oregano
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons paprika

¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
½ teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder
Salt and pepper to taste
½ cup chopped green onions

1. In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Sauté the onion for 5 minutes, or until tender. Stir in the garlic, mushrooms, and bell peppers, and cook for an additional 4 minutes. The onion should now be translucent. Add the soy crumbles and the stock to the onion mixture, and stir to combine for a few more minutes (about 3 minutes).
2. Next to add in are the kidney beans, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, and agave nectar. Continue to stir all the ingredients together until well blended.
3. Add all the seasonings to the pot while continuously stirring. You may need to add some water to the chili at this point, ½ cup at a time. The chili should not be too thick, more of a stew consistency but not as runny as a soup. Remember, some of the liquid will reduce while cooking.
4. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for at least an hour, stirring occasionally. The longer you let the chili simmer, the more robust the flavors will taste. Check the consistency of your chili after 40 minutes. If the chili is too runny, uncover the pot for the last 20 minutes, or until the desired consistency is reached.
5. Serve into warm bowls and sprinkle the green onions on top to garnish.

****Fun Facts**** Do you know that there are two kinds of tomatoes: one that floats on the water and one that sinks into the water? The tomato that sinks into the water is tastier because it contains more sugar. Do not judge it by color alone.

Also, did you know that if you bring a magnet near the tomato, the magnet will repel? It is because a tomato is 94 percent water, and water molecules repel magnetic fields.

18. FANTASTIC FAJITA SALAD

This is a healthy and fun fajita recipe. By using my culinary instincts and creativity I have made it nutritious and light. You can even make this recipe more tasty and delicious by introducing your own ingredients to it.

Serves 2

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 package Gardein Homestyle Beefless Tips,
chopped
- ¼ cup low-sodium tamari soy sauce
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup faux chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke flavoring
- ¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons peeled and minced fresh gingerroot
- ¾ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground oregano
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 head romaine lettuce leaves
- ½ avocado, diced
- Fresh cilantro leaves
- Lime wedges
- 12 cherry tomatoes, halved

1. Defrost the beefless tips for 5–10 minutes.
2. Combine the first 11 ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well.
3. Cut the tips in half to marinate. Place the beefless tips in a plastic bag or nonmetal baking dish. Pour the marinade mixture over the beefless tips, turning to coat. Seal the bag or cover the dish; marinate at least 30 minutes or 2–3 hours in the refrigerator, turning the tips several times.
4. Remove the beefless tips from the marinade, reserving 2 tablespoons of the marinade. Heat the reserved marinade in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the beefless tips, onion, and red and green peppers, searing 3–4 minutes, or until the tips are heated through. Remove from the heat.
5. Line four individual salad plates with the romaine leaves. Spoon the hot mixture over the romaine-lined plates. Top with the avocado and garnish with fresh cilantro leaves, lime wedges, and cherry tomato halves.

****Buy and Try**** Gardein Homestyle Beefless Tips are found at any major food chain in the freezer section. They are a great-tasting product, and super simple to cook with.

****Variations**** If you are feeling like something different, you can easily substitute seitan in this great recipe.

19. CHANNA DAL

Dal is the primary protein source for vegetarians in South Asia and it can also be a great part of any healthy diet. This simple curry is a staple in my house. This recipe is easy, fast, and so tasty!

Serves 4

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 tablespoon peeled and minced fresh gingerroot
1 teaspoon seeded and minced green chile pepper
1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 (14 oz.) cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
1¼ cups faux chicken stock
1 teaspoon garam masala
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves
Cooked brown rice (optional)

1. In a medium-size saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat and add the cumin seeds for 1 minute. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, chile pepper, cumin, turmeric, and coriander, and sauté for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
2. Mix in the garbanzos and the stock and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce the heat to low and cover. Let simmer for 15 minutes. Mix in the garam masala and salt and pepper, and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat, and toss the cilantro in with the garbanzo mixture.
4. Serve over brown rice if desired.

****Helpful Hint**** It is always better to use dried beans in a recipe if possible. Cooking dried beans always appears to be a monumental task because it seems like a great deal of time must be spent before you can even use the cooked beans in a recipe. While canned beans are really convenient, cooked dry beans have a lot more flavor than their canned relatives. If you plan ahead, dried beans are easy to cook and are very economical, priced much lower than canned beans. Here is a great tip that will make cooking dried beans easier for you: If you have the freezer space, cook more than one batch of beans at a time. Freeze the cooked beans for up to

6 months. This way you have more flavorful beans but your frozen beans are just as convenient as purchased canned beans.

20. CITRUS GINGER TOFU

The best thing about tofu—besides its nutritional value—is the way it takes on the flavor of your favorite marinade. I love the zesty orange flavor in this recipe. Chinese food doesn't have to be a once-a-week restaurant treat again!

Serves 4

Active time: 30 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 (16 oz.) package extra-firm tofu, pressed, drained, and cut into 8 (¼-inch-thick) slabs
- 2 tablespoons mirin
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 bunch broccolini, ends trimmed and cut into 4- to 5-inch-long thin stalks
- 2 tablespoons low-sodium tamari soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon light agave
- ¼ teaspoon Asian chile paste
- 1 teaspoon orange zest
- ⅓ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon peeled and minced fresh gingerroot
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed

1. Press and drain the tofu.
2. In a small bowl, combine the mirin, 2 tablespoons orange juice, and

cornstarch and blend well. Place the tofu in a single layer in a shallow nonreactive dish. Pour the marinade over the tofu and marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

3. Put the trimmed broccolini in a large skillet and cover with water. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat. Simmer the broccolini 5 minutes, until tender and bright green. Drain the broccolini and plunge into an ice bath. Drain and lay the broccolini on a paper towel to dry.
4. In another small bowl, whisk together the tamari, agave, chile paste, orange zest, juice, and toasted sesame oil. Put to the side to use later.
5. Using the skillet from the broccolini, heat the canola oil over medium heat. Add the ginger and garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add the marinated tofu and stir-fry until golden brown on each side. Add the broccolini for 1 minute more and continue to stir-fry. Mix in the tamari sauce and combine. Cook for an additional 2 minutes, or until the broccolini is heated through.
6. Serve immediately.

****Helpful Hint**** Any major food chain should have an Asian section in their store. It is usually in the condiment aisle, where the dressings and marinades are. Ingredients such as mirin, chile paste, and tamari are pretty standard in most markets. If you can't find them, try to find an Asian market, or buy these staples online.

21. HARVEST ARUGULA SALAD

Every year I look forward to the beautiful fall season and all the glory it offers. I created this recipe after harvesting some of my favorite ingredients, and the result was bliss!

Serves 4

Active time: 25 minutes

Start to finish: 60 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 small butternut squash, cut in half, seeded and cubed
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, stems removed, plus more for garnish
- ½ cup red quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons raw pumpkin seeds (or pepitas)
- 2 tablespoons raw sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced
- 1 Gala apple (or whatever variety you prefer), peeled and diced
- 4 cups arugula, washed and dried

For the dressing

- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon finely minced shallot
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. In a small bowl, drizzle the olive oil over the butternut squash and toss to coat evenly. Spread the butternut squash into a single layer over a baking tray. Sprinkle with fresh rosemary, and roast in the oven for 20–25 minutes, or until the squash is tender. Transfer the squash to a plate and chill.

2. Meanwhile, in a small pot, combine the quinoa and water and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed. Fluff with a fork, transfer to a plate, and chill.
3. While the quinoa is cooking, preheat a toaster oven to 350°F. Line the toaster tray with aluminum foil, and spread the pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and walnuts in a single layer. Cook for 3–5 minutes, or until the seeds and nuts are lightly toasted. Transfer to a plate and let cool.
4. Next make the dressing by blending the balsamic vinegar, shallot, garlic, mustard, agave, salt, and pepper in a blender. With the machine running, gradually add the olive oil through the opening in the lid to process into a thick dressing.
5. In a large salad bowl, toss the celery, cucumber, apple, arugula, chilled squash, chilled quinoa, and a third of the dressing together. You will only need enough dressing to lightly coat the salad. If you feel a third of the dressing isn't enough, add the desired amount. Now add the seeds and walnuts and toss until everything is evenly blended.
6. Divide the salad onto four plates and garnish with rosemary sprigs. Serve promptly.

****Chef's Secret**** When making a green salad, you never want to pour your salad dressing onto your salad until right before you serve it. If you do pour the dressing on and it sits for more than about 15 minutes, you will end up with a salad of mush. On some occasions (picnics, tailgating, potlucks) it may not be appropriate to bring a big salad bowl to toss your dressing into your salad. My secret is to bring the salad in a large ziplock bag and keep the dressing in a separate container. When you are ready to serve, pour your dressing into your ziplock, seal it shut, and shake, shake, shake! You now have a well-tossed salad without the mess.

22. MASOOR DAL

I have been so fortunate to travel the world and sample many different cuisines and cooking methods. This Indian dal is truly an epicurean delight.

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 2 teaspoons very finely minced fresh gingerroot
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 red chile, finely diced
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 2¼ cups red lentils, rinsed and drained
- 1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar
- 6 cups vegetable stock
- Cooked brown rice
- ¼ cup roughly chopped raw cashews (optional)
- ¼ cup seedless raisins (optional)
- ¼ cup shredded coconut (optional)
- ¼ cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro leaves (optional)

1. In a large pot, dry roast the cumin seeds for 2–3 minutes over medium heat, or until they become aromatic. Remove from the pan

and grind in a spice grinder. If you don't have a spice grinder, you can mince the seeds with a sharp knife.

2. Using the same pan, turn the heat to high, add the oil and the poppy seeds and cook until the poppy seeds begin to pop. Reduce the heat to medium and sauté the onion and shallot for 2 minutes. Adjust the heat to low and stir in the roasted cumin, ginger, garlic, chile, turmeric, and garam masala, and cook for 1 additional minute, stirring the entire time.
3. Add the red lentils and tomatoes to the spice mixture, and toss to combine. Drizzle the agave over the mixture and increase the heat to medium-high. Add a splash of stock and continue stirring the lentils into the spice mixture for 1 additional minute.
4. Add the remaining stock and bring the dal to a simmer. Reduce the temperature to low and cook, uncovered, for 25 minutes. The dal should be a stew consistency, and the lentils should be nice and soft.
5. I usually serve this over brown rice, which absorbs all the yummy juices from the dal. If you desire, top the dal with the nuts, raisins, coconut, and cilantro leaves, and serve immediately.

****Did You Know?**** Have you ever read a recipe that calls for coriander but then saw the same recipe calling for cilantro? Don't worry; it can be a bit confusing. In the U.S., the seed of the herb is referred to as coriander. So usually coriander is used when a recipe is calling for dried herbs for soups and stews. The stem and leaves are referred to as cilantro. So a recipe calling for cilantro is calling for the fresh green herb used in guacamole and salads.

23. MOROCCAN VEGETABLE TAGINE

Moroccan cuisine is known for its flavorful tagines. A tagine is an exotic stew that has a spicy aroma, and it's very easy to make. This recipe makes a mouthwatering meal every time.

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 small onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baby carrots
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup eggplant, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
1 cup zucchini, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
1 cup red ripe tomatoes, cored and diced
 $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups sweet potatoes, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped dried apricots
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon agave nectar
3 cups faux chicken stock (I like No Chicken Base by Better Than Bouillon)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon dried thyme
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cumin
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground coriander
1 (15 oz.) can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Cooked couscous
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced almonds, toasted lightly (optional)

1. In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion and garlic in the oil until tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Mix the carrots, eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and apricots and combine with the onion mixture. Stir in the lemon

juice, agave, and stock, and season with the thyme, cinnamon, cumin, and coriander. Make sure the stock is covering the vegetables. If necessary, add the appropriate amount of stock. Bring to a boil over high heat, cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

3. Add the garbanzos and season with salt and pepper. Stir to combine and cook for an additional 10–15 minutes. Serve over couscous, and sprinkle with almonds if desired.

****Did You Know?**** Research shows that of any food, apricots possess the highest levels and widest variety of carotenoids. Carotenoids are antioxidants that may help to prevent heart disease, reduce “bad” cholesterol levels, and protect against cancer.

24. PENNE PASTA WITH SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

Pasta . . . somehow I never tire of pasta. So many different sauces, so many shapes, so many possibilities. I love the way this pasta is so simple, yet so satisfying.

Serves 2

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients

8 ounces rice pasta (I like Tinkyada), cooked according to package directions

1 teaspoon olive oil

2 cloves garlic

1 cup zucchini squash, cut into ¼-inch dice

¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped

1 cup broccoli florets

¼ cup pesto sauce (recipe on page 237)

Salt and pepper to taste

2 tablespoons pine nuts (pignoli), toasted
½ cup fresh basil leaves, cut into chiffonade

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and cook the pasta.
2. Meanwhile, using a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute, or until the garlic becomes fragrant. Garlic burns very easily, so watch it.
3. Add the vegetables to the garlic and sauté for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the pesto sauce to the vegetable mix and toss until everything is evenly coated with the pesto. Cook for an additional 3 minutes, or until the vegetables are lightly browned and cooked al dente.
4. After the pasta is finished cooking, drain the pasta and return to the pot it was cooked in over low heat. Add the vegetable sauce to the pasta and combine. Season with salt and pepper, and remove from the heat.
5. Divide the pasta evenly between two plates. Sprinkle with pine nuts and place the basil chiffonade in a small mound in the center to garnish. Serve promptly.

****Variations**** I love to put some Kalamata olives and sliced portobello mushrooms in this dish. Then stir in some fresh arugula just before removing from the heat. You can use just about any vegetable you like in this dish. Remember, you want to cook things *you* like to eat, so add your favorite ingredients.

25. PUERTO RICAN SPICY BEAN STEW WITH RICE

Red beans and rice are an important staple in Puerto Rican cuisine. Most of their stews contain bacon for its smoky flavor. In this recipe I add chipotle pepper for that same smokiness, and trust me, your heart will thank you later!

Serves 4

Active time: 20 minutes

Start to finish: 60 minutes

Ingredients

1 cup brown basmati rice, rinsed and drained
2 cups water
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 small onion, finely diced
2 medium carrots, finely diced
1 poblano pepper, finely diced
1 green bell pepper, finely diced
1 dried chipotle pepper
½ cup finely chopped fresh cilantro, plus more for garnish
2 (15 oz.) cans red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
½ cup tomato sauce
½ teaspoon dried oregano
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
⅛ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 cups stock (I like Better Than Bouillon No Chicken Base)
2 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, cubed
1 cup cubed butternut squash

1. Put the brown rice and water in a pot. Season with salt to taste. Set the heat to high and bring to a boil, uncovered. Once it comes to a boil, reduce the heat to low. Cover the pot with a lid wrapped in a kitchen towel to absorb the excess liquid. Simmer on low for 35–45 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the rice sit in the covered pot at least another 10–20 minutes.
2. In the meantime, place the oil in a large saucepan on medium-high heat; heat the oil for 1 minute. Stir in the garlic, onion, carrots, peppers, and cilantro and sauté until the onion is tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Next mix in the beans, tomato sauce, oregano, cumin, salt, and pepper and combine with the onion mixture. Add 2 cups of stock (or

enough stock to cover the beans by 1 inch) and bring to a boil for 4 minutes.

4. Add the cubed potatoes and squash and stir. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes.
5. Divide the rice among four bowls, and place the bean mixture on top. Garnish with cilantro and serve immediately.

****Chef's Secret**** Most people love the nutrition that beans provide, but they are leery of eating them because they get embarrassed from the gas beans cause. Here is a simple way to prevent that: In a stockpot, place 1 pound of beans in 10 or more cups of boiling water. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes. Then cover and set aside overnight. The next day, 75 to 90 percent of the indigestible sugars that cause gas will have dissolved into the soaking water. Drain the soaking water that the beans were in and replace with fresh water to cook in. It is as simple as that.

26. WILD RICE-STUFFED SQUASH

Stuffing squash is a great way to turn this delectable vegetable into a meal. If you can't find an acorn squash for this dish, any winter squash will do.

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 60 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 whole acorn squash (or winter squash), cut in half and seeded
- 1 (15 oz.) can cannellini or navy beans, rinsed and drained
- ¼ cup faux chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes, drained
2 stalks celery, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup faux bacon bits
1 cup wild rice, cooked
2 tablespoons pine nuts (pignoli)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh basil leaves, cut into chiffonade
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cut the squash in half and remove the seeds. On a baking pan covered with aluminum foil or a nonstick silicone mat, lay the squash open side down, on the pan. Roast for 20 minutes.
2. In a small bowl, mash $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the beans with the stock, and set aside for later.
3. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion, garlic, sun-dried tomatoes, celery, and red pepper flakes for 5 minutes, or until tender. Toss in the faux bacon bits and cook an additional minute, stirring frequently. Remove from the heat.
4. Stir the mashed beans, whole beans, rice, 1 tablespoon pine nuts, and half of the basil into the skillet, and combine with the vegetable mixture. Season to taste.
5. Using the roasted squash halves, place them on the baking sheet, open side up. Divide the bean and vegetable mixture evenly into the squash, and press the mixture firmly until you have a nice mound on top.
6. Cover the baking pan with aluminum foil and reduce the oven heat to 375°F. Cook the squash for 15 minutes.
7. Uncover the squash and bake for an additional 6 minutes or until the squash and vegetables are lightly golden on top.
8. Use the remaining basil and pine nuts to garnish, and serve promptly.

****Did You Know?**** Acorn squash is a good source of dietary fiber and potassium. Wild rice is an excellent source of protein and is very low in fat. Combine the two, like in the recipe above, and you have a complete meal that will keep you full for hours.

****Buy and Try**** For a great-tasting healthy alternative to bacon bits, try Frontier organic Bac'uns. Use them to top salads, baked potatoes, or your favorite soups. Most supermarkets will carry a vegetarian substitute for bacon bits.

27. THAI GREEN CURRY

I am a huge fan of curries in all forms. In particular, I think Thai curries are bursting with flavor. This green curry paste is just packed with fresh ingredients and it is literally as easy to make as pureeing all the ingredients in a food processor.

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 60 minutes

Ingredients

1 package water-packed extra-firm tofu, pressed, drained,
and cubed

1 stalk prepared lemongrass [See Helpful Hint]

5 cloves garlic

1 shallot, chopped

2 Thai chiles (jalapeño is a good substitute if you can't
find Thai)

1 thumb-size piece of fresh gingerroot, peeled and sliced

½ cup fresh Thai basil (regular fresh basil works
well also)

½ cup roughly chopped fresh cilantro sprigs

½ teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon ground coriander

½ teaspoon ground white pepper
1 teaspoon agave nectar
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
2 14 oz. cans lite unsweetened coconut milk
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 small yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 green pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 red pepper, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 small zucchini, diced
1 cup sweet potato, cut into ½-inch cubes
1 cup broccoli florets
1 cup fresh snow pea pods
½ 14 oz. can bamboo shoots (or an entire 8 oz. can), drained
Cooked brown basmati rice, ⅓ cup per serving

1. Press the tofu and drain for at least 20 minutes to release all the excess water.
2. In the meantime, make your green curry paste. In a food processor or blender, mix the prepared lemongrass, garlic, shallot, chiles, ginger, basil, cilantro, cumin, coriander, white pepper, agave, lime juice, and ¼ can of the coconut milk. Set aside the remaining coconut milk to use later. Blitz well to make a fragrant green curry paste.
3. In a large pot, add the olive oil and heat over medium heat for 1 minute. Sauté the onion for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cubed tofu and vegetables, and continue to sauté for an additional 2–3 minutes. You want the vegetables to remain firm. Pour the remaining coconut milk into the pot. Next stir in the curry paste slowly to get a nice smooth sauce. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for at least 20 minutes.
4. Serve the curry in warm bowls atop brown basmati rice.

****Helpful Hint**** You can find fresh lemongrass in most Asian food and grocery stores. Look in your local grocery store in the spe-

cialty produce department. When buying fresh lemongrass, look for stalks that are fragrant and tightly formed.

To prepare fresh lemongrass, you want to use the softer, fleshier part of the lemongrass. This is located under the tough outer leaves. Peel away the outer layers with your fingers and discard. Using a sharp knife, cut off the lower bulb about 2 inches from the bottom of the stalk and discard. Now it should be fairly easy to cut up the lemongrass. Starting from the lower end (where the bulb was) make thin slices up to two thirds of the stalk. Now place the sliced lemongrass in a food processor and pulse five times. You have just prepared your lemongrass.

****Variations**** This is a great dish to prepare when you are cleaning out your refrigerator. Use all the fresh veggies you have left over from your week. This curry tastes great with just about any vegetable you can imagine, and you can even use frozen vegetables to make this easy dish. This is a great lunch to take to work the next day, so don't throw out any leftovers!

28. TROPICAL BEAN STEW

This black bean stew recipe is very appetizing and very filling. I love the fruitiness of the mango against the rich black beans and the mild blend of spices.

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- ½ cup green onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 green pepper, cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 red pepper, cut into ½-inch dice
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced

2 medium sweet potatoes, cut into ½-inch dice
1 (14 oz.) can diced tomatoes, drained
¾ cup vegetable stock
2 (15 oz.) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 ripe plantain (or banana), sliced ½ inch thick
1 ripe mango, peeled and diced
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
2 tablespoons shredded coconut for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a large pot or saucepan over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add the onion and green onions and sauté for 5–7 minutes, or until tender. Add the garlic for an additional minute and stir until fragrant.
2. Mix the peppers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, and stock into the pot, and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for about 20 minutes. You want the sweet potatoes to still be firm.
4. Add the beans and continue to simmer, uncovered. Cook for 5 minutes. The beans should be heated through.
5. Stir in the plantain, mango, and half of the cilantro, and gently stir until everything is heated through.
6. Sprinkle the coconut and remaining cilantro over the beans to garnish.

****Helpful Hint**** To pick a plantain that is ripe, look for one that is yellow and black in color. The more black it has on the skin, the sweeter it will taste. A healthy way to prepare a plantain is to steam it. With the skin on, cut off the top and the bottom ends of the plantain, and make a long slit down the entire length of the fruit. Next cut the plantain into 3 equal pieces, and put in a steamer basket over hot water. Steam for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the fruit is bright yellow and soft. A well-ripened plantain will cook faster, so time accordingly.

****Did You Know**** What is the difference between a banana and a plantain, you might ask. Plantains tend to be firmer and lower

in sugar content than bananas. Both fruits are a great source of potassium and dietary fiber, but they are consumed a bit differently. Bananas are almost always eaten raw, while plantains tend to be steamed, boiled, grilled, baked, or fried.

29. CHICK'N WITH CREAMY MUSHROOM SAUCE

The Gardein Chick'n Scallopini is a staple I always have in my freezer. Use it just like you would use a chicken breast and create lots of different meals. You can change the sauce, grill them, chop them, and put them on a salad. You're the chef!

Serves 4

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 35 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup gluten-free flour (I like Bob's Red Mill)
- 1 package Gardein frozen Chick'n Scaloppini (do not thaw)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

For the mushroom sauce

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced white mushrooms, stems removed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced wild mushrooms (use any kind you want or just double the white mushrooms), stems removed
- 3 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup faux chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup cashew cream (page 120)
- 1 teaspoon Earth Balance buttery spread

½ teaspoon dried thyme (or fresh if you have it)
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Pour the flour into a shallow container. Lightly dredge the chick'n in the flour. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Sauté each chick'n patty for 2–3 minutes on each side, or until lightly browned. Transfer to a baking tray and put in a 200°F oven while you make the sauce.
2. In the skillet you used to cook the chick'n, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and sauté for 5 minutes, or until tender. Add the mushrooms and cook for 3 more minutes. Next add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute.
3. Pour in the white wine and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the sauce by about half. Pour in the stock and gently whisk in the cashew cream. Bring the sauce to a boil again, and cook for 4–5 minutes, or until the sauce has thickened.
4. Stir in the Earth Balance and let melt. Stir in the thyme and salt and pepper, taste, and stir to combine.
5. Place the chick'n onto four plates and pour the mushroom sauce over; serve immediately.

****Chef's Secret**** Steer clear of table salt, which is more processed and contains added ingredients. Use kosher salt or sea salt instead.

30. CAPRESE PANINI

Italian cuisine is a very important aspect of Italian culture. The Caprese salad is a highly famed staple of Italian cuisine, greatly loved and imitated all over the world. I decided to step it up a notch and turn it into a heavenly sandwich.

Serves 2

Active time: 15 minutes

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons pesto sauce (page 237)
- 4 slices Ezekiel 4:9 bread (or other multigrain bread)
- 4 thin slices tomato
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 4 fresh basil leaves
- ½ cup loosely packed arugula leaves
- 4 slices mozzarella cheese substitute (I like Daiya brand)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

1. Spread 2 tablespoons of pesto on top of a slice of bread. Next, lay tomato slices on the pesto. Sprinkle the tomatoes with salt and pepper. Place the basil and arugula leaves on top. Finally the mozzarella should be the last layer on the sandwich. On another slice of bread, drizzle one side with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, and place the bread, oil side down, to create the sandwich.
2. Cook the sandwich in the panini press set on medium-high heat. The sandwich is ready when the cheese is melted, about 6 minutes. If you don't have a panini press, cook the sandwich on a grill pan or in your toaster oven.
3. Repeat for the other sandwich.

****Did You Know?**** The proper way to store olive oil is in a dark, room-temperature cupboard or even in the refrigerator. The healthy nutrients in olive oil as well as the taste can slowly degrade over time, so it's probably best to use it within a year or within six months once opened.

SIDE DISHES**1. MASHED SWEET POTATOES**

Yummmm . . . Everyone loves mashed potatoes. Let's face it: they are the ultimate comfort food. Traditional mashed potato recipes are

made with loads of butter, cream, and salt. These mashed potatoes are just as yummy and good for you!

Serves 4

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Ingredients

6 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced (5 cups)
1 tablespoon Earth Balance
½ cup cashew cream (page 120)
1 tablespoon agave nectar
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1. Place the potatoes in a large pot and cover them with water. Bring to a boil over high heat and cook, uncovered. Once the water is boiling, cook for 10–12 minutes, or until tender. Drain the potatoes.
2. Transfer the potatoes to a large mixing bowl. Using the whisk attachment, mix the potatoes for 1 minute on low speed. Add the Earth Balance, cashew cream, agave, and cinnamon. Whip on medium-high until very smooth. Season with salt and pepper, and whip 1 additional minute.
3. Serve immediately.

****Did You Know?**** Besides being simple starches, sweet potatoes are rich in complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, beta-carotene, vitamin C, and vitamin B₆.

2. ORANGE BROCCOLI

This broccoli dish will give you a double dose of your daily vitamin C.

Serves 2

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ¼ bag frozen broccoli
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- ⅓ cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon orange zest

1. Place the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Add the broccoli and stir-fry for 3 minutes or until lightly browned.
3. Add the garlic to the pan and cook for 1 additional minute.
4. Decrease the heat to medium-low, pour the orange juice over the broccoli, and cover the pan.
5. Let the juice steam the broccoli until the broccoli is tender, about 5 minutes.
6. Sprinkle the zest over the broccoli and serve immediately.

****Chef's Secret**** Looking for a way to reduce your oil while cooking? I learned several years ago that you only need a small amount of oil to cook most foods. I have a technique you might want to try and see if it works for you. First you want to make sure the pan you are about to use is not hot. I put 1 tablespoon of oil in my pan. I swish that oil around the best I can. Next, I wrap a paper towel or paper napkin around two fingers, my pointer and middle finger. I put my wrapped fingers in the oil and rub the pan in a circular motion until the pan is evenly coated with the oil from my paper towel. You will notice the paper towel has absorbed quite a bit of the oil in the pan. Now your pan is evenly coated with a much smaller amount of oil than you started with!

3. ROASTED ASPARAGUS

Recipes don't have to be complicated to be tasty. This is a perfect example of the less-is-more theory.

Serves 2

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Ingredients

½ pound asparagus, tough ends snapped off

1 tablespoon olive oil

Sea salt

Freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Place the asparagus in a single layer in a roasting pan.
3. Drizzle the asparagus with the oil and toss to evenly coat the spears. You can also hand roll the asparagus along the extra oil on the bottom of your pan.
4. Sprinkle with sea salt and pepper.
5. Roast until the spears are tender and lightly browned, 10–15 minutes.

****Variation**** After the asparagus is cooked, drizzle 1 tablespoon of balsamic vinegar over the spears for a nice tangy flavor.

4. SWEET ROASTED CARROTS

I was never a fan of cooked carrots until I created this recipe. They always brought back memories of the carrots I had at the cafeteria in grade school. They were mushy and flavorless. Now I know that roasting carrots brings out their natural sweetness and they are actually yummy! Who knew?

Serves 2

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Ingredients

8 whole carrots
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Trim the tops and bottoms off the carrots and peel. Cut in half lengthwise.
3. In a small roasting pan, place the carrots in a single layer. Drizzle with olive oil and roll the carrots back and forth on the pan. This will help evenly coat both sides of the carrot.
4. Sprinkle with the rosemary and salt and pepper, again rolling the carrots back and forth on the pan to get seasonings on both sides.
5. Bake for 30–40 minutes (the roasting time will vary depending on the thickness of your carrot), turning the carrots over halfway through.
6. Carrots are best when they are browned on all sides and soft.

****Buy and Try**** I honestly do not know how people can live without a Silpat nonstick baking mat. Silpat is a silicone mat designed to fit your baking pans and cookie sheets. The mat allows you to never have to grease a pan again! I use my Silpat every time I put anything in the oven. The amazing thing about a Silpat is that nothing sticks to it so it makes your cleanup so much faster. Plus you can reduce the amount of oil you use in your recipes and you can help save the planet by never having to use parchment paper again. They're available in any cooking store or on Amazon.com.

****Variation**** You can use just about any fresh herb when roasting carrots. My favorites are thyme and sage. This carrot dish is a great accompaniment to any holiday meal.

5. SESAME ASIAN SLAW

Traditionally, coleslaw has been a mayonnaise-based salad. This coleslaw is bursting with flavor, easy to make, and is anything but traditional.

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- ¼ cup rice vinegar
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium tamari soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon agave nectar
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 3 green onions, sliced
- ½ cup seeded and diced cucumber
- 1 cup grated red cabbage
- 1 cup grated green cabbage
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine the rice vinegar, oils, tamari, agave, garlic, and red pepper flakes. Cover the bowl and refrigerate 20 minutes.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the onions, cucumber, cabbages, carrots, cilantro, and basil.
3. Combine the salad and dressing, and toss just before serving.
4. Sprinkle sesame seeds on top to garnish.

****Time-saving Tip**** Most supermarkets sell the grated cabbage and carrot mix in a 16-ounce bag. Less mess, less time, and same great taste.

6. CREAM OF BROCCOLI SOUP

This homemade recipe is much better than anything from a can. This sophisticated broccoli soup is rich and creamy, plus it has the added goodness of spinach. People don't think of serving soup as a main course, but there's no reason not to—not when it's creamy good like this!

Serves 4

Active time: 30 minutes

Start to finish: 1½ hours

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 leek, sliced, white and pale green section only
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1½ pounds broccoli, florets chopped, stems trimmed and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 2 quarts faux chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup cashew cream (page 120)
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 2 roasted red peppers (optional)

1. Heat the oil in a heavy stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, leek, and celery and sauté for 6 minutes, or until the onion

is tender. Add the broccoli and sauté for 8 minutes. Add the garlic and continue to sauté the mixture for an additional minute, or until fragrant. Stir in the stock, bay leaf, salt, and pepper, and bring to a boil. Now reduce the heat to low and simmer for 25 minutes. Add the cashew cream and simmer for an additional 10 minutes. Discard the bay leaf.

2. Working in batches, pour the soup into the blender about three quarters of the way full. Puree. Add the spinach to the very last batch and continue to blend until the spinach is a smooth puree. Pour all the soup, other than the spinach batch, back into the pot. Finally stir in the spinach batch to combine. Serve in soup bowls.
3. If desired, in a food processor puree the roasted peppers with 1 tablespoon cashew cream, and blend until smooth and creamy. Drizzle on top of the soup for garnish.

****Variations**** You can use just about any green vegetable to make this delicious soup. I love it with asparagus.

DESSERTS

1. CHOCOLATE-COVERED STRAWBERRIES

This is the world's most decadent and simplest dessert that you will ever make. Whenever I serve them at a dinner party, people are so impressed! If they only knew that they take only 10 minutes to make. Shhh . . . our little secret!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

12 long-stemmed whole strawberries

½ cup vegan dark baking chocolate

1. Prepare a baking sheet by lining it with parchment paper or a Silpat baking mat.
2. Wash the strawberries and dry them thoroughly.
3. In the top of a double boiler over boiling water, melt the chocolate, stirring occasionally, until the chocolate is smooth. Turn off heat.
4. Holding a strawberry by the stem, dip it in chocolate, rolling in a circular motion to evenly coat most of the berry. Let the excess chocolate drip from the strawberry back into the pan.
5. Carefully transfer each strawberry to a baking sheet.
6. Chill in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to set the chocolate before serving.

****Buy and Try**** Find a dark chocolate with a high cocoa content. Endangered Species makes a great bar called All Natural Extreme Dark. It has 88 percent cocoa content in it. Scharffen Berger also has bittersweet chocolate baking chunks with 70 percent cocoa. Try and stay away from the vegan chocolate chips if possible, as they contain a lot of sugar.

****Variation**** If you want to spice things up a bit, you can top your strawberries with a variety of ingredients. After dipping your berry, roll it in crushed almonds or pistachios. If you are really feeling adventurous, add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground chili powder to the melted chocolate before you dip your berry. The options are endless . . .

2. CHOCOLATE MOUSSE WITH RASPBERRY COULIS

This chocolate mousse recipe is simple to make and virtually fool-proof. The mousse has a rich chocolate flavor and is light and velvety smooth, almost like pudding. It will even satisfy the hard-core chocolate lovers!

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 40 minutes

Ingredients

- 12 ounces silken soft tofu (I like Mori-Nu tofu, in the small cardboard box)
- 2 ounces vegan dark baking chocolate (I like the Endangered Species All Natural Extreme Dark chocolate bar)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons agave nectar
- 1 pint fresh or frozen raspberries
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

1. Melt the chocolate over a double boiler, stirring constantly.
2. In a food processor or Vitamix, combine the tofu, chocolate, vanilla and 1 tablespoon of agave nectar and blend. Make sure to occasionally scrape the sides of the bowl. Blend for 2 minutes.
3. Transfer the mousse to individual cups. (I love to use martini glasses for this.)
4. Chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
5. In the meantime, purée the raspberries, remaining agave nectar, and lemon juice in a blender until smooth.
6. Using the back of a large spoon, press the puree through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl to remove the seeds.
7. Pour the raspberry mix over the mousse just before serving.

*****Variation***** You can flavor this mousse several different ways by just adding 1 teaspoon of mint, coconut, or orange extract to the tofu mixture before blending. The raspberry coulis is optional; I use it as a “wow” factor when serving guests.

3. SILKY STRAWBERRY PUDDING

This blissful dessert is ridiculously easy to make, with some seriously impressive results. Wow your guests when you bring this out—they will think you have been in the kitchen for hours!

Serves 4

Active time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 1 hour, 5 minutes

Ingredients

8 ounces frozen strawberries, unsweetened, thawed and drained

12 ounces firm or extra-firm silken tofu (I like Mori-Nu)

1 tablespoon orange zest

¼ cup agave nectar (optional)

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

4 fresh strawberries, sliced

1. In a food processor, combine all the ingredients except the sliced strawberries, stopping after 1 minute to scrape the sides of the bowl.
2. Blend for an additional minute or until the mix is very smooth.
3. Divide the mix evenly among small bowls, and chill for at least 1 hour.
4. Garnish with sliced strawberries and serve immediately.

****Variations**** Substitute the strawberries with your favorite fruit, and make this recipe your own. My personal favorites are raspberry with orange zest or mango with lime zest.

****Buy and Try**** Mori-Nu silken tofu is probably the most recognized brand of tofu. Check your grocer's dry foods section to find it (it comes in a small cardboard box and does not require refrigeration). Ask your grocer if he carries Mori-Nu silken Lite Tofu, or ask him to order it for you. The Lite Tofu is just as yummy as the regular tofu, just fewer calories!

4. SIMPLY SWEET FRESH FRUIT

There are some days when I just need to satisfy my sweet tooth but I don't want to make a big fuss. This recipe does the trick.

Serves 4

Active time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients

4 tablespoons cashew cream (page 120)

1 pint fresh strawberries, sliced

1 tablespoon orange zest

1 tablespoon agave nectar

1. On a small dessert plate, dollop 1 tablespoon cashew cream in the middle of the plate. Don't spread the cream too thin, just enough to make it the size of a silver dollar.
2. Using a quarter of the strawberries, place the slices on top of the cashew cream.
3. Sprinkle a little bit of the orange zest over the strawberries.
4. Drizzle a quarter of the agave nectar on top.

****Variation**** Omit the orange zest from the recipe and replace it with shredded coconut.

Shopping and Resource Basics

Here are some basic things to help you shop and eat well. Remember to just lean in to all this, and don't make yourself crazy. Take a weekend afternoon and wander a health food store, a farmers' market, and the healthier part of your local grocery (the periphery aisles where the produce is and the "health foods" aisle if they have one).

Once you're in the swing of things, I'd suggest you always go grocery shopping with a complete list of what you need and don't get anything other than what you've itemized. And don't go shopping when you are hungry (impulse buys can be deadly)!

Proteins

Try to have a protein at every meal; this way your diet is sure to be balanced, and you'll feel energetic and strong.

Tofu is bean curd, soy. It has very little flavor so it can be used in either savory or sweet dishes and will take on the flavor of whatever sauce or seasoning you use. It's low in calories, cholesterol, and fat, and it's high in protein and iron. You'll find it near cheese or in the "fresh" section of markets.

If you think you don't like tofu, listen to what my reader Yvonne had to say:

TOFU. Just the word brings up images of crazy, crunchy hippies. I bought the container and let it sit in my fridge until it expired. Then I did it again. I knew I wanted to try it, but I really didn't know how. Finally I read a description that changed my mind. It said something along the lines of, "You can't not like tofu. It's like saying you don't like flour. No one eats a handful of flour and no one eats a plain slice of tofu. It's an ingredient, and you find the recipes you like. If you don't like the outcome, you try it in something else, as you would most other ingredients." Okay, so I had to find a recipe. I found one for vegan lasagna, and the tofu was blended with olive oil, garlic, and salt. It was supposed to mimic the ricotta cheese. I liked that it could be "hidden" in a lot of yummy Italian layers. Pasta and garlic, how could I go wrong? I still used my tofu ricotta sparingly in the layers, just in case. Well, I loved it! And so did my husband. He didn't even know he was eating a vegan meal! I had put ground imitation meat [texturized vegetable protein, or TVP, which you can find in your grocery store] in the sauce along with onions and mushrooms. Well, now I was really onto something. I could trick people! So I had my dear old dad over for leftovers, and he loved it! Success!

Tempeh is made from cultured soybeans, which are formed into a sort of cake. It's easily digestible, has a nutty flavor, and is very high in protein, dietary fiber, and vitamins. It has a stronger flavor than tofu. It's usually found near the cheese section.

Seitan is made from wheat gluten and is chewy in texture. It is high in protein, very low in fat, and is extremely versatile in cooking. Nearly anything made with meat can be made with seitan instead. Find it near the cheese or vegan section of your market.

Beans and legumes are high in complex carbohydrates (the good kind!), fiber, iron, and folic acid; they also have a lot of protein. You can store them in your pantry almost indefinitely, and use them for bean salads, soups, and casseroles: black beans, lentils, garbanzo beans, lima beans, adzuki beans, black-eyed peas, edamame, fava beans. Beans are my protein of choice; they are super healthy, so opt for them often! Canned are also fine; just rinse them first to get rid of the salt!

Nuts and seeds and nut butters have plenty of fiber, nutrients, and antioxidants along with healthy monounsaturated fats; nuts and seeds go far in filling you up and making you feel satiated. Try almonds, cashews, walnuts, pecans, pistachios; almond butter, peanut butter, tahini, and so on. Choose raw and unsweetened, with no salt. My new favorite brand is PB2 powdered peanut butter; it's got all the protein of peanut butter but without all the oil. It's kind of perfect!

High-protein meat alternatives are wonderful transitional proteins as you move away from meat and toward plant-based options. They are delicious, but I recommend eating whole foods as often as you can. Things that grow in the ground or on trees are what you want to fill your diet with. Still, I believe in progress, not perfection!

Gardein Garden+Protein: These high-protein, center-of-the-plate meat alternatives are delicious and easy to prepare as an entrée or an ingredient in a soup, stew, sandwich, or whatever. Gardein is my absolute favorite alternative meat, as it tastes so

good and my meat-eating friends always love it. I recommend the Beefless Tips, which are great for stew or on a skewer with other veggies, and Chick 'n Scallopini, which you can use in any way you would use chicken; it's highly versatile and easy to cook with. www.gardein.com

Tofurky: I love their Italian Deli Slices for sandwiches. They also make several flavors and styles of tempeh. Their holiday “turkey” looks like sliced turkey, so you can enjoy the feast along with everyone else at the table. www.tofurky.com

Field Roast: These folks make two of my favorite products. Celebration Loaf is a vegan “roast” with mushroom stuffing; it's a nice presentation for holiday or special events and great with a homemade sauce or gravy. Also their Field Roast Sausages are the best and come in several different flavors. I like the Italian and serve it with portobello mushrooms, red peppers, fennel root, tomatoes, and garlic over pasta. www.fieldroast.com

Nate's Meatless Meatballs: Add them to a pasta sauce, or sauté, stick a toothpick in it, and *voilà*, a delicious appetizer. Now you can add “meatballs” to anything!

Lightlife Smart Ground meatless meat crumbles are great to use in tacos, chili, or any sort of meat sauce. I serve them to hearty eaters as well as kids all the time, and they never know they aren't eating meat! www.lightlife.com

Starches

Whole grains: brown or wild rice, millet, quinoa, amaranth, buckwheat, corn, et cetera.

Sweet potatoes, yams, roasting potatoes

Flax crackers, rice cakes

Steel-cut oats and whole grain hot cereal mixes

Whole grain breads (try the sprouted ones, and go for gluten-free if you are sensitive to gluten). Most whole wheat is still pretty

processed, so try rye and pumpernickel. My favorite is Manna bread, which you can find in health food stores, if not some mainstream grocery stores.

Whole grain pastas made from artichoke, corn, quinoa, spelt, black beans, or brown rice. (This last is my favorite; it looks and tastes like regular white pasta. Be sure not to cook it too long, and you may want to rinse it with cold water before you put the sauce on.)

Vegetables and Fruits

Squashes, broccoli, kale, mustard greens, Swiss chard, spinach, cucumbers, carrots, radishes, dried figs, apples, plums, blood oranges, tomatoes, artichokes, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, eggplant, all kinds of mushrooms, salad greens, cherries, blueberries, limes. You get the drift; whatever looks fresh and colorful, give it a whirl. Steer clear of sweetened dried fruits.

Vegetarian Cooking Stocks and Broths

Imagine Foods No Chicken Broth
 Imagine Foods Vegetable Stock
 Pacific Organic Mushroom Broth
 Pacific Organic Vegetable Broth
 Rapunzel Bouillon Cubes
 Better Than Bouillon No Beef
 Better Than Bouillon No Chicken Base

Nondairy

Cheeses: These are several companies whose products I use and enjoy. My favorite is Daiya because it tastes and melts just like cheese. See www.daiyafoods.com.

Again, these cheeses are part of “leaning in.” They should be used sparingly and as a treat while you move ever more toward whole foods that grow in the ground or on trees. They have fat and calories

to consider, so please use them as transitional foods to make your lean comfortable.

Soya Kaas, Sunergia Soy Foods (www.sunergiasoyfoods.com), Follow Your Heart (www.imEarthKind.com), and Galaxy Nutritional Foods (www.galaxyfoods.com) are all good, and come in Cheddar, mozzarella, Parmesan, and feta. Follow Your Heart is what I use for eggplant Parmesan and hot paninis.

I like Silk Soy Creamer to mix into hot beverages. It's rich and delicious. Use only a tad, as it has sugar and fat. It's better than milk or cream, though, which is why I'm compromising a bit here.

Instead of cow's milk, try hemp, rice, almond, or soy milk. Get them unsweetened, and use stevia to sweeten to taste.

Cream cheese and sour cream: Tofutti (www.tofutti.com). Tofutti cream cheese has 4 grams less fat in a 2-tablespoon serving size compared with regular cream cheese, plus 4 grams less saturated fat and absolutely no cholesterol. Follow Your Heart Cream Cheese has 2 grams of fiber and no trans fats, even though it has more calories and fat, so it too is a good alternative.

Butter: Earth Balance Natural Buttery Spread. This is a tasty substitute for butter, but use sparingly, only when no other substitute works.

Pantry / Staples

Follow Your Heart Reduced Fat Vegenaïse mayonnaïse substitute. It has lower total fat than regular mayo; it's very low in saturated fat, has no cholesterol, and has no hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fat and no trans fats. Use it sparingly!

Condiments: Ketchup, mustard, relish. Annie's Naturals are some of the best I've found. (www.anniesnaturals.com). Also, Cascadian Farm and Woodstock Farms are good (www.cascadianfarm.com).

Canned goods: Pasta sauces, beans, and vegetables. Try Eden Organic (www.edenfoods.com), Muir Glen (www.muirglen.com), and Walnut Acres Organic (www.walnutacres.com). Good products. I love the Muir Glen Fire Roasted Diced Tomatoes!

Oils: Use extra-virgin olive oil and canola—and sparingly. You can use the sprays, too, but remember: a very small spray!

Egg substitute: Ener-G Egg Replacer. It's nothing more than potato starch and tapioca starch mixed into a powder, to which you add water, and it works really beautifully for baking (www.ener-g.com).

Keeping the Cost Down

I know getting healthy food is sometimes challenging and expensive, but it doesn't have to be. You just have to know where to look! Leaning in to a healthy diet can actually help you save on food bills.

1. Buy in season. Produce in season is almost always less expensive than out-of-season produce because it's more abundant.

2. Avoid precut, washed, and packaged fruits and vegetables. They're always more expensive than the whole foods (and a waste of packaging). If you need the convenience, go for it; just know that you'll be paying more.

3. Watch produce prices carefully. Locally grown fruits and vegetables sometimes cost less than imported produce, while at other times imported produce saves you a lot—just be on the lookout for the best deals. (And be mindful of the carbon footprint—how far your food had to travel to you and therefore how much fuel was required to get it there.)

4. Shop at farmers' markets at the end of the day. Farmers' markets are a great place to find fresh, in-season, and locally grown produce for cheap—especially if you shop at the end of the market day when growers may be willing to sell their produce at a discount, rather than have to pack it up and take it back home with them.

5. Don't be afraid to buy frozen vegetables. Frozen veggies (especially store brands) are often cheaper than fresh ones, and they can actually be *more* nutritious because the veggies are frozen right after they're picked, preserving vitamins that are lost in transporting fresh veggies from the farm to the store. And of course, keep an eye out for sales and stock up your freezer with

veggies that can be tossed into soups, stews, stir-fries, pasta, and many other dishes.

Extra Lean: If you are making a soup or casserole, make twice what you need and freeze the rest so that you have some ready-made meals for the weeks to come.

6. Consider the value of your time. For most of us, time is just as valuable as money. We tend to think that eating fast food is less time consuming—an illusion reinforced by a steady stream of fast-food company advertising. But in reality, the time you spend driving to a fast-food restaurant and then idling in a drive-through could just as easily be spent at home with your family, cooking a simple meal. All it takes is a small initial time investment in learning to cook a few new meals. Even simpler, you can just convert the meals you already eat into ones that fit your new lifestyle.

Most families rotate the same menu of dishes every week, for ease of preparation and to simplify grocery shopping. Once you've got that set menu of favorite meals, prep time is quick.

Definitely check out the big bulk stores like Sam's Club or Costco. They have big frozen bags of veggies you can stock up on and load into your freezer. You could even split bulk buys of beans/rice/grains/veggies with friends.

Some health food stores will sell the 50-pound bags of grains and dried beans if you ask, and may give you a good price if you order them in advance.

A great online site, *BulkWholeFoods.com*, has many great dried bulk foods, grains, and rice.

Amazon sells beans and grains as well—just search on *www.amazon.com*.

Here's a very handy little guide to the cheapest fruits and veggies by the month, to help you save money: http://frugalliving.about.com/od/foodsavings/tp/Cheapest_Produce.htm

And here are some more resources you might find useful. (Thanks, Natala, for your list!)

Some Great Resources to Check Out

Recipe Sites

<http://blog.fatfreevegan.com>

<http://simplifiedfood.com>

<http://happyherbivore.com>

<http://veganyummyum.com>

<http://vegandad.blogspot.com>

<http://kblog.lunchboxbunch.com>

<http://therealmealtoday.blogspot.com>

<http://www.managercomplete.com/engine2/recipes.aspx>

<http://fatfreevegan.com>

<http://www.hollycowvegan.net>

<http://chocolatecoveredkatie.com>

<http://vegweb.com>

Guided Meditations

I have some on my website, www.kathyfreston.com/ and they are also offered on Amazon and iTunes.

Great Recipe Books

The 30-Minute Vegan by Mark Reinfield and Jennifer Murray

1,000 Vegan Recipes by Robin Robertson

Appetite for Reduction by Isa Chandra Moskowitz

Color Me Vegan by Colleen Patrick Goudreau

The Complete Guide to Vegan Food Substitutions by Celine

Steen and Joni Marie Newman

Eat, Drink & Be Vegan by Dreena Burton

Eat Vegan on \$4 a Day by Ellen Jaffe Jones

Forks over Knives: The Plant-Based Way to Health by

Gene Stone

The Get Healthy, Go Vegan Cookbook by Dr. Neal Barnard

The Gluten-Free Vegan by Susan O'Brien
The Happy Herbivore Cookbook by Lindsay Nixon
More Great Good Dairy-Free Desserts Naturally by Fran
 Costigan
Party Vegan by Robin Robertson
Unprocessed by Abbie Jay
Vegan Family Meals: Real Food for Everyone by Ann Gentry
Vegan Lunch Box by Jennifer McCann
Vegan on the Cheap by Robin Robertson
The Vegan Slow Cooker by Kathy Hester
Vegan Soul Kitchen by Bryant Terry
The Vegan Table by Colleen Patrick Goudreau
Veganomicon by Isa Chandra Moskowitz and Terry Hope
 Romero
Viva Vegan! by Terry Hope Romero

Healthy Eating Out

<http://happycow.net>
<http://www.veg dining.com/Home.cfm>
<http://www.vegetarianusa.com>
<http://www.vegguide.org>
<http://www.vrg.org/travel>

There are also vegan/vegetarian groups in almost every major city, so you can go online to find out what's near you. It's great support as you continue to lean in.

Phone Apps (to help you find good food wherever you go)

Cruelty Free
 Everyday Vegan
 ilocate Vegan Restaurants
 iVegetarian
 PCRM 21 Day Vegan Kickstart
 Vegan Is Easy
 Vegan Recipes

Vegan YumYum
 VeganSteven
 VeganXPress
 Vegetarian Smartlist
 Veggie Passport
 Veggie Spots
 VegOut
 VegWeb /Vegan Recipe Finder

Great Health Books

Veganist: Lose Weight, Get Healthy, Change the World by yours truly; I had to include these!

The Quantum Wellness Cleanse by yours truly yet again

Breaking the Food Seduction by Neal D. Barnard, M.D.

The Cancer Survivor's Guide: Foods That Help You Fight Back by Neal D. Barnard, M.D.

The China Study by T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D.

* Dr. T. Colin Campbell has an excellent certification program through Cornell University on plant-based nutrition.

Cholesterol Protection for Life by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Disease-Proof Your Child by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Dr. McDougall's Digestive Tune-Up by John A. McDougall, M.D.

Eat for Health by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Eat to Live by Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

The End of Overeating by David A. Kessler, M.D.

The Food Revolution by John Robbins

Foods That Fight Pain by Neal D. Barnard, M.D.

The Get Healthy, Go Vegan Cookbook by Neal D. Barnard, M.D., and Robyn Webb

Mad Cowboy by Howard F. Lyman

The McDougall Program by John A. McDougall, M.D.

The McDougall Program for Maximum Weight Loss by John A. McDougall, M.D.

The Pleasure Trap by Douglas J. Lisle, Ph.D.

Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease by Caldwell B. Esselstyn, Jr., M.D.

Films and DVDs to Watch for Day 21, Connect the Dots

45 Days: The Life & Death of a Broiler Chicken, by Compassion Over Killing. This will show you what happens in the brief life of chickens, who are slaughtered at just 45 days old. You can find it at *ChickenIndustry.com*.

Earthlings, narrated by Joaquin Phoenix. This one is widely hailed as the best documentary about the treatment of animals in society, and it's also the one video on this list that covers more than the meat industry.

Farm to Fridge, narrated by James Cromwell (yes, from *Babe!*). Cromwell explains precisely what happens to animals—from the farm to the fridge—and it has already been viewed more than a million times. See it at *MeatVideo.com*.

Free Range: A Short Documentary. To better understand labels like “free range” or “humanely raised,” watch this video to see what happens on the “best of the best” meat ranches.

Glass Walls, narrated by Sir Paul McCartney. In this film, McCartney gives slaughterhouses (and factory farms) glass walls: he narrates, animal by animal, precisely what happens in modern food production. **If you're going to watch just one video, I suggest this one.** You can find it online at *Meat.org*.

Meet Your Meat, narrated by Alec Baldwin. This is probably the most famous behind-the-scenes video ever, and has been viewed millions of times at *MeetYourMeat.com*.

Mercy for Animals Investigations. This is not one video; it's 13 shorts (and it will surely be more by the time you read this), which will give you a good, clear look at what happens to animals as they become food. Find it at *MercyforAnimals.org/investigations*.

Overlooked: The Lives of Animals Raised for Food by the Humane Society of the United States. This is an eye-opening look at the modern meat industry. Go to *HSUS.org*, or search online for the title.

Health and Cooking Videos

Chef AJ and Dr. Matt—Healthy Made Delicious

Fat, Sick, and Nearly Dead

Forks over Knives

Processed People

Sugar: The Bitter Truth

Tackling Diabetes with Dr. Neal Barnard

Health-Related Websites

<http://engine2.org>

<http://www.heartattackproof.com>

<http://pcrm.org>

<http://www.rawfor30days.com/index4.html>

<http://www.tcolincampbell.org>

<http://www.NutritionFacts.org>