

I love sharing holiday menus and ideas. It is a great and fun way to add to family traditions, change up traditions, and/or share in other family's traditions.

Recipe	Vegetarian (no meat products)	Vegan (no animal derivatives)	Gluten Free	Eggs	Soy	Nuts
Stuffed Acorn Squash with Quinoa and Pistachios	YES	YES If you omit feta cheese	YES	No	No	YES
Garlic and Ginger Butternut Squash Soup	YES	YES	YES	No	No	No
Curried Red Lentil, Kale and Sweet Potato Soup	YES	YES	YES	No	No	No
Colorful Kale Salad	YES	YES	YES	No	No	No Has pumpkin seeds
Sweet Potato Colcannon	YES	YES If you omit butter	YES	No	No	No
Garlicky Mashed Sweet Potatoes	YES	YES	YES	No	No	No
Mushroom Gravy	YES	YES	YES	No	No	No
Dark Chocolate Bark with Pistachios and Sea Salt	YES	YES	YES	No	No	YES
Raw Pumpkin Pie	YES	YES	YES	No	No	YES
Raw Vanilla Cashew Cream	YES	YES	YES	No	No	YES

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Stuffed Acorn Squash with Quinoa and Pistachios

Serves 8

Ingredients

4 small acorn squash, halved and seeds removed

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

1 cup quinoa, rinsed

1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

1/2 cup feta, crumbled (leave out if vegan)

1/2 cup roasted, salted pistachios, chopped

2 teaspoons red-wine vinegar

Pinch red-pepper flakes

Directions

1. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Brush squash with 2 tablespoons oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast cut side down on two baking sheets until tender and caramelized, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, bring quinoa and 2 cups water to a boil in a small pot. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until tender and water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Let cool, then fluff with a fork. In a large bowl, combine quinoa, parsley, feta, pistachios, remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and vinegar. Season with salt and red-pepper flakes. Divide filling among squash.

Tidbits: This main-course-worthy dish is all about the presentation. Quinoa is a complete protein, and it will easily fill up guests who skip the turkey.

If you are serving vegans, swap the feta cheese for some nutritional yeast, which has a mild nutty, cheesy flavor.

Recipe inspired by Wholeliving.com November 2011

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Garlic and Ginger Butternut Squash Soup

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil or coconut oil
1/2 cup onion, diced
1 tablespoon fresh garlic, minced (more to taste)
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, minced (more to taste)
4 cups cubed butternut squash
4 cups vegetable broth
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Directions:

1. In a pot, heat oil over medium-low heat. Add onions and cook until soft, 5-6 minutes. Stir in ginger and cook for 30-60 seconds, just until fragrant. Measure in squash, broth, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and let cook for 20 to 25 minutes, until squash is extremely soft.
2. Turn off heat and puree soup using an immersion or regular blender. Return to pot (if using regular blender) and reheat.
3. Divide soup into bowls (with rice, if using) and top with a sprinkle of cilantro and pumpkin seeds.

For Serving

sprinkle with chopped cilantro and toasted pumpkin seeds
Serve with your favorite salad
Can be served over cooked germinated brown rice

Tidbits: Butternut squash is considered a type of winter squash: Shaped like a large pear, this squash has cream-colored skin, deep orange-colored flesh and a sweet, nutty taste similar to that of a pumpkin.

Winter squash is one of the richest sources of plant based anti-inflammatory nutrients such as omega 3s and beta-carotene, which are important for a strong immune system to help protect against colds. Pair that with the antiviral, anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties of garlic and the medicinal properties of ginger and you have yourself one potent immune-boosting soup!

This soup is easy and inexpensive to make. It has few ingredients but big in flavor!

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Curried Red Lentil, Kale and Sweet Potato Soup

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon coconut oil
1 medium yellow onion, finely diced
2 teaspoons grated ginger
2 large garlic cloves, minced
2-3 teaspoon Garam Masala curry powder (to taste)
1 teaspoon sea salt
3 tablespoons tomato paste
5 cups water
1/2 of a 14oz can of full fat coconut milk mixed with 1/2 cup of water
1 cup red lentils
1 large jewel sweet potato, peeled and diced into 1/2-inch cubes
1 bunch dinosaur kale, stemmed and coarsely chopped

Directions:

Heat the coconut oil in a large pot. Add the onion and cook over medium heat. Add a pinch of salt and cook for about 5-8 minutes, or until onion is tender.

Stir in the ginger, garlic, curry powder, and salt. Stir for about a minute, stirring frequently.

Add the tomato paste, water, coconut milk, red lentils, and sweet potato. Bring to a boil, and then lower to a simmer.

Cook, partially covered, until the sweet potatoes are tender and the lentils are cooked through, about 30 - 45 minutes.

Stir in the kale and cook for about 5 minutes, or until wilted and tender. Serve.

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Colorful Kale Salad

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1 bunch of kale, remove tough, thick stem from the leaves before chopping
1/4 head of red cabbage
1 shredded carrot
1 shredded beet
½ red onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic
1/3 cup of raw pumpkin seeds
1 to 2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 squeezed lemon
1/3 cup nutritional yeast
1 tsp sea salt
Pinch of Cayenne pepper
Black pepper to taste

Directions

First massage chopped kale leaves with sea salt to reduce toughness.

Add chopped up cabbage, onion, garlic, and shredded beet and carrots.

Then add olive oil, lemon, apple cider vinegar, pumpkin seeds, and nutritional yeast and cayenne pepper. Add salt to taste. Mix everything together thoroughly.

Note: I usually mix until nutritional yeast has dissolved into the salad.

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Colcannon is an Irish dish made from smashed white potatoes, cabbage or kale, leeks & butter.

Try this healthy version of traditional colcannon using sweet potatoes, leeks and collard greens. You can substitute any dark leafy greens. Collard greens' gentle smoky flavor perfectly complements sweet potatoes and leeks. This dish is hearty and healthy. It is high in vitamins A, C and K.

Sweet Potato Colcannon Recipe

Ingredients:

3 very large or 4 medium sweet potatoes
2 medium leeks
1 bunch collard greens
3 tablespoons olive oil
Zest of 1/2 orange
1 to 2 teaspoons sea salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons sweet cream butter (omit for vegan option)

Directions:

1. Peel sweet potatoes if desired. Cut potatoes into 1-inch cubes and place in a steamer basket. Steam potatoes for approximately 25 minutes until fork tender and will mash easily. Lightly mash potatoes in a large bowl and set aside.
2. Trim bottom 1/4 inch and top 2 inches from leeks. Slice each in half lengthwise and soak in a bowl of water, swishing to remove sand and grit. Repeat with clean water if leeks are gritty. Dry leeks, then chop into 1/4-inch half-moons.
3. Rinse collards, shake to dry and tear each leaf from thickest part of stem (discard stems). Gather leaves, roll like a cigar and chop roughly.
4. Place olive oil in a large frying pan on medium heat. Add leeks and stir regularly for 3 to 4 minutes until they begin to soften. Add greens and continue to stir until wilted, no more than 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. Add orange zest, salt, pepper and butter to potatoes. Mash with a handheld potato masher or large fork until you've reached desired texture.
6. Add greens and leeks, stir and adjust seasonings to taste. Place mixture in an oiled/buttered covered casserole dish until ready to reheat and serve. This can be made a day ahead and heated in a covered casserole dish.

Inspired by this original recipe: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/fresh-take-on-an-irish-classic-sweet-potato-colcannon.aspx#axzz2mXu0MiZg>

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Garlicky Mashed Sweet Potatoes

Serves 8

The mellow flavor of roasted garlic is such a nice complement to naturally sweet tubers that there's no need for butter.

- 1 large head garlic
- 1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced (8 cups)
- 2 large apples, peeled and diced (2 cups)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut top off garlic head, exposing cloves. Place on piece of foil, and top with chopped rosemary. Drizzle with olive oil. Wrap loosely with foil, and bake 50 to 60 minutes, or until soft and golden.

2. Place sweet potatoes and apples in pot with enough water to cover. Add salt, cover pot, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, and simmer 10 minutes, or until sweet potatoes are soft.

3. Drain, and reserve 1 cup cooking water. Transfer to serving bowl.

4. Squeeze roasted garlic cloves into sweet potatoes and apples. Add balsamic vinegar, and mash, adding cooking water as necessary to adjust texture for creaminess. Season with pepper, and serve hot.

Recipe Inspired by Vegetarian Times November/December 2008 p.71

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Mushroom Gravy

Makes 4 ½ cups

Ingredients:

4 cups water

½ oz dried porcini mushrooms (1/2 cup)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ cup shallots

8 oz assorted mushrooms such as white button, shiitake, cremini

½ cup dry white wine

3 tablespoons cornstarch

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

Bring water to a boil. Transfer dried mushrooms to a medium bowl. Cover with water and let stand 30 minutes, until mushrooms are softened. Drain liquid (and reserve) through a sieve and slice mushrooms. Set aside.

Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and cook until tender, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add fresh mushrooms and cook until soft, about 6 to 8 minutes. Deglaze pan with wine and reduce liquid by half, about 3 minutes.

Meanwhile, slowly whisk cornstarch into 1 cup of mushroom liquid until smooth; set aside. Add remaining 3 cups mushroom liquid and chopped rehydrated mushrooms to gravy. Bring to a boil. Stir in cornstarch mixture and simmer until mixture thickens, about 5-7 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

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Dark Chocolate Bark with Pistachios and Sea Salt

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

Vegetable cooking spray
8 oz dark chocolate (70% cacao), melted
¼ cup shelled pistachios, chopped
¼ teaspoon sea salt

Directions:

Lightly coat an 8-inch pan with cooking spray. Line with parchment paper, leaving a small overhang.

Pour in chocolate and smooth with a spatula into an even layer.

Sprinkle with pistachios and sea salt. Chill in fridge until completely set, about 30 minutes.

Peel off parchment, and break into pieces.

Tidbits: You can mix up a batch in about 5 minutes before chilling in the fridge. Try different combinations of toppings: nuts, dried fruit, unsweetened coconut, orange zest, candied ginger, etc.

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Raw Pumpkin Pie

Filling

½ cup cashews – soaked 4-6 hours (optional, if you have time it will make a smoother texture)
1/8 cup maple syrup
¼ cup agave syrup
½ cup coconut oil
¾ cup carrot juice
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon salt
1 + ½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ginger
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

Blend all ingredients together.

Crust

About 3 cups pecans
About ¼ cup dates (packed)
About ¼ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon vanilla

1. Chop dates in a food processor until they form a paste – put the date paste in a bowl.
2. Chop the pecans to a fairly fine chop
3. Add the date paste back in and mix together with the salt and vanilla
4. Press into a pie dish
5. Pour filling into crust and refrigerate for a few hours. This pie is best when kept cold until serving.

Source: Adapted from... www.agreenfork.com

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Raw Vegan Vanilla Cashew Cream

Ingredients:

1 cup organic raw cashews soaked for at least 2 hours (I soaked for 4 hours)

¼ - ½ cup filtered water depending on desired thickness

1-2 tablespoons honey or more to taste

½ teaspoon natural vanilla extract, or a little more to taste

a pinch of sea salt

a pinch of cinnamon

a pinch of nutmeg

a pinch of cloves

Directions:

Blend on high speed in a Vitamix (or high-powered blender) for about 2 minutes. Add more water if needed to desired consistency. Refrigerate overnight.

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