



Featured Recipes

TOMATO SOUP

Our garden is producing an overabundance of tomatoes early this year. We are already busy dehydrating many of them and eating the rest as fast as we can. (For hints on dehydrating tomatoes, see the September 2011 newsletter.) I also have a favorite tomato soup that is so easy to make that there is usually a pot of this cooking at least once a week. It doesn't have to be eaten as a soup, it can also be used over pasta or potatoes, or whole grains (try stirring a couple of cups of cooked rice into the soup) or polenta. The possibilities are endless.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: variable, depending on use

1 mild onion, diced
 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 tablespoons water
 4 pounds ripe tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped (see hints below)
 1 cup vegetable broth
 fresh parsley, cilantro or basil for garnish

Place the onion and garlic in a large pot with the water. Cook, stirring frequently until onions and garlic soften and begin to smell fragrant, adding more water as necessary until they are quite soft. Add the tomatoes and broth and bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes. Puree with an immersion blender, taste and add a bit of salt and pepper, if necessary. For a thinner soup-like consistency add a bit more vegetable broth, if necessary. (The consistency of the soup will depend a lot on how you prepare the tomatoes.) Serve with your choice of fresh herb for garnish.

Hints: To prepare the tomatoes, place them in a large bowl fitted with a colander and peel with a serrated peeler, chopping and seeding as you prepare each one. This will be messy, but does not take much time. Add the tomatoes to the pot, leaving most of the seeds behind. I usually strain the seeds from the juices and also add the juice to the pot, so I may use less of the vegetable broth depending on how juicy the tomatoes are.

QUINOA PUDDING

I know this sounds like a strange use for quinoa, but I always get requests for what to do with rhubarb, and I used to make a pudding with rhubarb and tapioca. Imagine my surprise when quinoa turned out to make a better tasting pudding with strawberry and rhubarb than tapioca did.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Chilling Time: 1 hour

Servings: 6-8

2 ¼ cups water
 1 ½ cups chopped fresh rhubarb
 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries
 1/3 cup uncooked quinoa
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ½ cup organic sugar
 ½ teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest
 1 tablespoon cornstarch

Place 2 cups of the water in a large saucepan with the rhubarb, strawberries, quinoa and cinnamon. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer until quinoa is tender, about 25 minutes. Add the sugar and lemon zest. Place the cornstarch in a small bowl with the remaining water and whisk until smooth. Stir into the pudding mixture and continue to cook and stir until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Remove from heat, cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Serve scooped into a bowl, topped with a small scoop of almond or rice "ice cream", if desired.

HALFWAY BLENDED MINESTRONE SOUP

By Prajakta Athalye

This recipe was sent to me a few weeks ago and I couldn't resist sharing it with all of you. It is so easy, versatile and delicious that I'm sure you will enjoy it often.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 2-3

4-5 cups water
 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
 4 stalks celery, chopped
 2 carrots, chopped
 2 cups cooked beans of your choice
 1 tablespoon chopped dried chives
 1 teaspoon dried basil
 1 cup uncooked bowtie pasta
 1 avocado, sliced
 1 lime, juiced
 freshly ground pepper
 chopped fresh cilantro



Place the water in a large soup pot. Add tomatoes, celery, and carrots. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook until celery and carrots are tender, about 10 minutes. Add beans, chives and basil and return to a boil. Cook for about 10 minutes longer, then add the pasta and simmer until pasta is tender, about another 8 minutes. Remove from heat and blend slightly using an immersion blender. (You still want to be able to see pieces of the veggies and pasta.) Ladle each serving into a bowl and garnish with a few slices of avocado, a bit of lime juice and several twists of freshly ground pepper.



Cathy Fisher

Cathy Fisher has worked for the McDougall Program since 2006 and in 2010 began teaching cooking classes. Cathy also teaches weekly classes at True North Health Center in Santa Rosa. To view more of Cathy's healthy plant-based recipes, visit www.StraightUpFood.com or follow her on Facebook at <http://tiny.cc/kfc6d>.

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Filling and flavorful, this casserole is much easier to make than enchiladas since you don't need to roll the tortillas or make a separate sauce.

1 medium yellow onion, chopped
 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
 1 tablespoon freshly minced garlic (5 medium cloves)
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 1 teaspoon dried basil
 2 teaspoons chili powder
 1 can (15-ounce) diced tomatoes (1½ cups), not drained
 1 can (15-ounce) black beans (1½ cups), drained and rinsed
 1 medium zucchini, small diced (about 1½ cups)
 1 cup raw, frozen, or canned corn (drained)
 4-5 cups roughly chopped chard leaves, (about 4 large leaves)
 4 corn tortillas (6-inch) cut into 1-inch squares

2 corn tortillas (6-inch) cut into 1-inch square



Preheat oven to 375. Chop and prepare all ingredients before starting. Place 2 tablespoons of water into a soup pot on high heat. When the water begins to sputter add the onion and bell pepper and sauté for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and add the garlic, oregano, basil and chili powder, and sauté for 1-2 minutes, adding water as needed to keep things moving.

Stir in the diced tomatoes, beans, zucchini, corn, chard, and the 4 cut up tortillas, and cook covered for 5 more minutes, stirring halfway through. After the 5 minutes, place 1 cup of this mixture into a blender and blend until smooth; then add this sauce back into the pot. Pour into a 2-quart casserole dish (I use an 8x11-inch square dish. You do not need to prepare the pan with any oil or parchment paper).

Scatter the remaining 2 tortillas (that have been cut into pieces) across the top, and bake uncovered for 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let sit for 5 minutes before serving. Optional: serve with guacamole or diced avocado.

Preparation: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 12 minutes (stove top), 15 minutes (baking); Serves: 6

COLESLAW



Most coleslaw recipes are made with a creamy dressing, usually oil-based, but not here. For a creamy texture, I suggest using cashews in this recipe, but you may also make it without any nuts at all, and it's still delicious!

Dressing

1 small clove garlic, minced
2 tablespoons Dijon or stoneground mustard
½ cup water
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
1/3 cup raw, unsalted cashews (about 2 ounces) (optional)

3 cups chopped green cabbage (like cabbage confetti)
1 cup chopped red cabbage (like cabbage confetti)
1½ cups grated carrots
1½ cups diced apple (skin on; about 1 to 2 apples)
½ cup raisins
¼ cup chopped red onion

Place all of the dressing ingredients into a blender and set aside.

Combine the remaining ingredients (cabbage, carrots, apple, raisins, and onion) in a large bowl.

Blend the dressing ingredients until smooth, and pour into the bowl of vegetables and fruit, mixing thoroughly with a spoon. Serve immediately or chill for at least one hour first to allow flavors to blend.

Preparation: 20 minutes

Serves: 6 as a side dish (makes 7½ cups)

PESTO PASTA

Ah, lovely pesto! “But don’t you need oil and cheese to make pesto?” No way! These ingredients are traditional, but they can be simply omitted, resulting in a sauce that is much lighter and fresher in taste. Great with sautéed vegetables (green beans, tomatoes and yellow squash), as well as over zucchini strands (cooked or raw) or on steamed potatoes.

½ cup water

½ cup walnuts (1½ ounces)

½ teaspoon minced fresh garlic (1-2 cloves)

1 large bunch fresh basil (30-40 large leaves, or about 2 ounces)

1 package (12-16 ounces) cooked whole-grain spaghetti or fettuccini pasta (enough for 4 people)

Optional: 2 tablespoons walnuts for garnish



In a food processor, blend all ingredients until smooth (1 to 2 minutes), adding a bit of water as needed to thin.

Return the just-cooked and drained pasta to its cooking pot with the heat on medium-low, and add the pesto, stirring for 2-3 minutes until the pasta is completely coated and the pesto is warmed through (adding water as needed). Serve immediately as is or with sautéed vegetables. Optional: serve with a light dusting of grated walnuts on top (using a rotary cheese grater).

Preparation: 15 minutes

Serves: 4 (makes about ¾ cup of sauce)

FRUITY OIL-FREE VINAIGRETTES

Vinaigrette dressings are beloved for their sweet, spicy and tangy combinations. They are easily made without oil, salt and sugar. Create your own using a combination of fruits, vegetables, vinegar, nuts/seeds, onion/garlic, and/or fresh herbs.

To prepare each dressing, place ingredients into a high-speed or standard blender, and blend until smooth. Makes about 1 cup.

Pineapple-Mango Vinaigrette

½ cup diced pineapple (3 ounces)

½ cup diced fresh mango (3 ounces)

¼ cup water

1 tablespoon apple cider or brown rice vinegar

1 tablespoon minced fresh basil

Strawberry Vinaigrette

1 cup sliced strawberries (about 7 medium strawberries)

¼ cup water

1 tablespoon apple cider or brown rice vinegar

1 tablespoon finely chopped white or yellow onion



1 medjool date pitted and chopped (or 2 deglet noir dates)
 1 teaspoon chia seeds
 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

ZUCCHINI BREAD

I have fond memories of my mom's zucchini bread made from the squash in our garden and the walnuts from our trees. Usually we'd make this in the summer or fall when zucchinis were fresh and plentiful, but there's no reason you can't make this tasty bread any time of year.

10 Medjool dates (7 ounces.), pitted and chopped
 1 cup non-dairy milk
 1-1/4 cups old fashioned rolled oats
 3/4 cup dry millet
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
 1/2 teaspoon ground (dry) ginger
 1 3/4 cups unpeeled, grated zucchini (about 1 and a half medium zucchinis)
 1/2 cup grated apple (unpeeled; about 1 medium apple)
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 3/4 cup walnut halves, coarsely chopped



Preheat oven to 325. In a small bowl, cover the chopped dates with the non-dairy milk and set aside to soak.

Dry ingredients: grind oats and millet into a flour in your blender (a high-speed blender will do a finer job) and place into a bowl. Add to this the soda, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. Place all of the dressing ingredients into a blender and set aside.

Wet ingredients: In another bowl, place the grated zucchini and apple, and vanilla. Blend the dates and the non-dairy milk until very smooth. Add the date mixture to the bowl of zucchini, apple and vanilla, and mix with a fork.

Combine the wet and dry ingredients and mix thoroughly, folding in the chopped walnuts at the end. Pour into one standard size loaf pan (9x5-inch) lined with parchment paper, or use a silicone baking pan.

Bake 1 loaf for 65-70 minutes uncovered. The bread will be done when the top of the loaf is an even medium brown, and there should be cracks in the top of the loaf, too. When you take it out to test for doneness, insert a toothpick far down, and if it comes out clean, it's done. Let cool for 5 minutes before removing from the pan to cool further on a cutting board. Cool for another 10-15 minutes before slicing

Preparation: 35 minutes

Baking time: 65-70 minutes. Makes: 1 standard loaf (about ten 3/4-inch slices)