

Asian Inspired Greens

When I discover fresh greens in August in Texas, I honestly can't say no. That is exactly the reason that led to my having a bag of braising baby greens, a bunch of chard, and another bunch of spicy mustard, all needing to be cooked at once. I immediately knew that I would turn to Hetty McKinnon for inspiration, and below is my take on her Restaurant Greens from her gorgeous book, *To Asia With Love*.

Ingredients

Garlic/Shallot Oil (optional)

- 3 TBL of Olive Oil
- 2 Garlic cloves or one medium shallot, peeled and finely chopped

Sauce

- 4 TBL Tamari
- 1 TEA Maple Syrup
- 2-3 TBL of boiling water
- A few grinds of pepper (or, if you prefer a bit of heat, red pepper flakes)

Greens

- 2 bunches of any greens (chard, kale, mustard, gai lan, ong or bok choy), well washed and drained on a dish towel.
- Olive oil
- Sea Salt

Directions

1. If you would like to serve this with garlic/shallot sauce, prepare it by heating oil in a small pan. When hot, add garlic or shallot and leave on the heat just

- long enough for it to color slightly. This will be a matter of seconds. Remove from heat, and allow to cool.
2. In a jar with a lid, combine tamari, maple syrup, water, and pepper. Shake well and set aside.
 3. Prepare greens by cutting the leaf lengthwise down the center and in half if they are long. Work through the bunches attempting to keep a similar length and shape.
 4. Fill a large pan with water and bring to a boil; add a splash or two of oil. Working in batches, drop the pieces with thicker stems first, and then after a few seconds, add the more leafy pieces. Use a wooden spoon to submerge all of the greens and move them around for a few more seconds. This blanching process is quick, and the pieces are done as soon as they are wilted and brighten in color.
 5. Gently remove with tongs, slotted spoon, or a similar tool and place in a colander. Drain very well. If serving, immediately arrange the greens on a platter, drizzling with the tamari blend and a spoonful of the garlic oil. Salt to taste.
 6. You can also opt to put greens in an ice bath to retain their bright color and warm and serve later.
 7. Serve alongside steamed rice or over rice noodles.
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Vegan Eggplant Fideuà

Intrigued recently by this Ottolenghi Guardian Catalan recipe this fideuà is a remarkable blend of flavors and textures. Not familiar with the term, I learned that it was a bit of a cross between a risotto and paella and often features shrimp and fish. Admittedly the many steps involved are not for the impatient, but trust me, every moment you dedicate to bringing this to table will be richly rewarded.

Ingredients: The vegetables

- Olive oil
- 3 large red peppers (350g)
- 2 firm eggplants (600g)
- Fine sea salt and black pepper

Directions

1. Set a griddle pan on a high heat and ventilate your kitchen. As the pan heats, prepare the peppers and eggplants by rubbing a bit oil all over the skins. When the grill pan is hot, lay out as many the vegetables.
2. Keep a close watch and rotate as the skin blackens. This process takes up to 30 minutes and is complete when the vegetable is charred on all sides. Set them aside to cool completely.
3. Once the peppers and eggplant are cool enough to handle, peel off and discard the skins. Remove stems and seeds from the peppers. Tear the peppers and eggplant into strands. Lay out on a large plate, sprinkling with salt and set aside.

Ingredients: The pasta base

- 250g GF vermicelli or capellini pasta broken into roughly 3cm lengths
 - Olive oil
 - 2 onions, peeled and thinly sliced
 - 3 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced or 2 shallots peeled and sliced thin
 - 1 tbsp tomato paste
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp smoked paprika
 - 1 large plum tomato chopped fine
 - 500ml prepared vegetable broth
1. Place a heavy, 11-12 inch (28cm,) nonstick lided frying pan over medium-high heat. Add the vermicelli to toast.

Keep a very close watch and stir frequently until most pieces are a deep golden shade. Tip pasta into a bowl and set aside.

2. Return pan to the heat, add a splash of olive oil and saute the onions, stirring, until soft and lightly brown. Stir in the garlic or shallots, tomato paste and paprika, cook for another three minutes, until fragrant.

Combining

1. Add the pasta pieces, tomato pieces, broth, a teaspoon of salt and a good grind of pepper and combine well. Lay eggplant and pepper strands on top in small piles, leaving spaces to see the pasta below. Cover the pan, turn down the heat to medium, and leave to simmer for 10-12 minutes, until all the liquid has been absorbed.
2. To create a crisp base, remove the lid, turn down the heat to low and allow to cook undisturbed, for approximately 10-12 minutes. When done the pasta at the edge of the pan starts to curl inwards. It's a bit tricky to create a crisp crust and not burn, patience and low heat is the key.
3. Remove from heat and allow to sit and rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Ingredients: The Picada

Traditionally added during the last stage of cooking, here the picada is more of a topping.

- 1 slice stale GF bread
- 60ml olive oil
- 35g whole almonds
- 1 cascabel chili, stem and seeds removed, flesh roughly crushed
- 1 minced garlic clove or small shallot
- 15g (4 T) flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 5g dill leaves, finely chopped

1. While the Fideuà cooks or during the rest period, prepare the picada topping.
2. Use as small frying pan on medium heat or a toaster to toast the bread until lightly colored.
3. Add the oil to the fry pan and when heated add almonds and fry for three to four minutes, until lightly golden. Stir in crushed cascabel chili and garlic set aside to cool.
4. When bread and almonds have cooled, place in a small processor and blitz until the consistency of bread crumbs, add herbs, blitz again. Add to a small bowl and stir a pinch or two of salt.

Serving

1 lemon, cut into 6 wedges

Spoon half the picada over the fideuà and serve straight from the pan with the lemon wedges with remaining picada alongside.

Herbed Pumpkin Seed Dressing

I've managed to keep a lovely herb garden alive this summer and absolutely delight in harvesting twice a week to make up a luscious dressing for salads. I eat a large raw salad daily, rotating ingredients with the season. You will find that this dressing is equally delicious on a raw broccoli salad, a cabbage slaw, or, as pictured above, with a mess of freshly picked salad greens.

Full disclosure: I never measure ingredients for my dressings but felt it would be kind to share a model to work with if a homemade dressing is a new territory. I've shared a few options so that you can make it your own.

Ingredients

- 1 cup of olive oil, or if you prefer oil-free, use a plant-based unsweetened milk
- 1/2 cup raw pumpkin or hemp seeds (the seeds will make it thick and creamy)
- One green scallion or peeled and chopped shallot
- 2-3 handfuls of fresh herbs, any combination such as basil, mint, parsley, cilantro, or dill
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar or citrus juice
- 2 TBL Nutritional Yeast
- A splash or two of maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard or 1 TBL of miso paste
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions

I prefer to mix this in my food processor, but a blender or immersion blender works equally well.

If using pumpkin seeds, blend them first, creating a fine powder to create a smoother dressing. Once you have achieved that then add all ingredients and process or blend until smooth, tasting, and adjusting to your preference. Store in the fridge for up to two weeks.