

Red Lentil Bolognese

Adapted from Vegan Richa's Lentil Bolognese

Ingredients

- 1 package of gluten free spaghetti
- 1 cup of red lentils
- Olive oil
- 2 pkgs or 1lb of mushrooms chopped
- 1 onion, peeled and finely
- 1-2 shallots or cloves of garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 grated carrots
- 1 t dried oregano or use 1/2 tbsp fresh
- 2 t dried basil or use 2 tbsp fresh
- 1 t of dried thyme or a sprig of fresh
- ½ t of red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 3 T nutritional yeast optional
- 16 ounces of crushed tomatoes
- 2 heaping T tomato paste
- 1 T of maple syrup
- 1 cup of prepared veggie broth on reserve
- Salt and pepper to taste
- fresh basil or thyme for garnish

Instructions

1. Wash the lentils, cover with water and simmer over medium heat for 10-15 minutes. Keep a close watch and add a bit of water and stir as needed. Cook until softened and the water has been mostly absorbed. Set aside.
2. Heat oil in a deep heavy skillet over medium heat, add onion, shallots or garlic and a sprinkle of salt. Once onion has softened add a handful or two of the chopped mushrooms. Saute in batches, removing cooked ones to a

bowl as you work your way through all of the mushrooms.

3. Return all mushrooms to the skillet, add the carrots, herbs, spices and mix in. Cook for 2 mins.
 4. Add the tomato paste and crushed tomatoes, maple syrup, salt, pepper. Simmer for 15 minutes.
 5. Fold in the cooked lentils and mix well. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Adjust thickness with veggie broth or tomato paste. Allow it to sit while pasta is prepared.
 6. Prepare spaghetti, drain
 7. Serve bolognese over cooked spaghetti, garnishing with fresh basil and vegan parmesan.
 8. Enjoy!
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Baked Rice Pudding

Some days just call for rice pudding and today's drippy steel gray skies led me to adapt this yummy Milk Street recipe. This is pure comfort food and the fact that it cooks itself in the oven makes it a winner in my kitchen. (4 servings)

Ingredients

- 3 T of maple syrup or honey, more or less to taste
- A pinch of sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ t of cinnamon
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of whole fat coconut or almond milk (I like a mixture of the two)
- 2 cups of water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of organic arborio rice, quickly rinsed and drained
- Grated zest from one lemon
- 1 peeled and finely chopped apple

- 1/2 cup of raisins
- Vanilla powder or Vanilla extract

Directions

In a dutch oven, heat milk and water over medium heat, bringing to a gentle boil. Stir in rice, maple syrup, sea salt, and cinnamon. Cover and place in a preheated oven for 50 minutes. Remove, uncover and add apple, raisins, and vanilla. Cover and return to the oven, turning off heat. After 10 minutes remove from the oven, uncover, stir well and allow to cool. Pudding will thicken as it cools.

Enjoy at room temperature or chilled.

Spinach and Leek Tart

Here's a recipe that tics just so many boxes for me. It's delicious, goes together with ease and in advance (a big win), is gluten-free, vegan, and my favorite is that it can be customized to the handful of veggies hanging out in your fridge.

I was gifted with a Texas sized leek upon my return from France and it played the starring role along with a bunch and a half of garden fresh spinach.

Tart Crust

- 1/2 cup (140 grams) superfine brown rice flour
- 1/4 cup (70 grams) buckwheat flour
- 1/4 cup (70 grams) almond flour
- 2 Tbs (20 grams) potato starch
- 2 Tbs (20 grams) tapioca starch

- 1 Tbs sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup (115 grams) unsalted butter, cold and diced
- Tart pan with a removable bottom.

Place dry ingredients in the food processor and pulse a couple of times to combine. Add the cold, diced butter and pulse 10 times until the butter is cut into the flours. Add the ice water a bit at a time while pulsing. The dough should stick together when pressed but not be too wet. Check it often as you might not need it all of the water.

Form the dough into a disk, wrap it in parchment paper and flatten it a bit with your hand. Refrigerate for about 1 hour.

Roll out the dough to about 1/4"-1/8" thickness.

Fill the tart pan with the crust, pinching it back together if it breaks apart. Return the tart pan to the refrigerator for another 20 minutes or so while preparing the filling.

Vegetables

- 1 large or 2-3 small leeks, cleaned and finely chopped
- A bunch or two of fresh spinach cleaned and finely chopped.
- Olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Filling

- 1 cup soaked cashews (soak for 1 hour or more in hot water)
- 1/4 cup water
- 4 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp Herbes de Provence or mixed herbs of choice
- 1 tbs. dijon mustard
- 1 can organic Chickpeas drained

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Place crust in heated oven and bake for 10 minutes. Set it aside to cool.
3. In heavy skillet over medium heat warm olive oil and gently saute chopped leeks. Take care not to burn the edges.
4. When leeks are translucent and softened sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste and lay spinach on top.
5. Cover pan and lowe the heat to allow the spinach to wilt.
6. Once wilted, remove from heat, and set aside to prepare the filling.
7. Place all filling ingredients in a high speed blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
8. Taste and adjust seasonings. Consider adding more nutritional yeast or herbs.
9. Spoon leeks into prebaked crust, and cover with filling. Level out with a spoon. and place spinach on top, pressing in slightly.
10. Drizzle with a little olive oil, more herbs and sprinkle of sea salt
11. Return to the tart to oven and bake for 30 minutes (until the base is crispy and the filling has firmed up and is golden brown).
12. Allow to cool before removing the pan.
13. Tart will hold shape best when served at room temperature and keeps well for up to 36 hours.

Enjoy!

Socca Bread

This simple rustic flatbread holds a special place in my heart and I am sure it will in yours as well. Socca bread has the ability to make a simple soup and salad meal complete.

I like to use my cast iron skillet but feel free to use your choice of an oven-safe pan.

Ingredients

- 1 cup chickpea flour (aka besan or garbanzo bean flour)
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ t mineral salt
- 2 – 3 T olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large sweet or red onion finely sliced
- 1 t Za'atar, or dried herbs of your choosing

Directions

Preheat oven using the broiler setting, placing the rack at the lower half of the oven.

Blend flour, water, salt and 2 tabl of olive oil, allowing to stand for a minimum of 15 minutes, the longer the better.

Warm remaining oil in pan over low to medium heat and sauté onions until soft and translucent. Pour batter over onions and allow mixture to cook slowly, loosening the edges with a spatula as you would a large pancake.

When the bottom of the Socca bread has set but the top layer is still wet, sprinkle with herbs and place under the broiler.

Watch carefully so not to burn, taking the pan out once it is golden in color and cooked through.

This step will take 5-10 mins max.

Flip onto a serving platter and enjoy warm or at room temperature.

Lemon Roasted Brussels Sprouts

You know there is always room for one more roasted sprout recipe in your repertoire. This one takes this winter veg right into spring with the bright taste of lemon and the sweetness of caramelized shallots.

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees

1 large or 2 small Meyer lemon, if available, otherwise 2 small unwaxed lemons- chopped very fine peel and all

4 medium shallots, peeled and chopped

1.5 lbs Brussel Sprouts, trimmed and cut in halves or quarters depending on size

Good Quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil, enough to lightly coat sprouts

Flaked Sea Salt to taste

Toss all prepared ingredients together in a large bowl making sure sprouts are well coated with oil. Layout in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet. If crowded use a

second sheet. Pop in the oven for 35-45 mins. Cooking time will depend on the density of the sprouts. They are finished when slightly browned and fork-tender. It's really that simple. Enjoy!

Vegan Moussaka

I really haven't thought about Moussaka in years, actually decades. The last time I had it in fact was at a pub in Oxford for heaven's sake. I do remember it being an amazing comfort food and that was exactly what I was searching to serve at last meal for months with Foix friends.

Once again I made enough to feed a small village and there was not a morsel left.

Enough for a 9" x 11" baking dish and 4-6 good appetites.

Ingredients

- 4 medium eggplant, cut into 1-2" cubes
- 6-8 large firm potatoes, cut in quarters lengthwise, steamed and peeled
- 4 Shallots peeled and diced
- 1 red onion, peeled and diced
- 1 ½ lbs of mushrooms, halved and sliced
- Fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 2 16 ounce cans of chopped tomatoes, or whole peeled tomatoes
- 1 tube or 28-ounce jar of tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons of maple syrup

Cashew cream

- 3 cups of raw cashews, soaked overnight or in hot water

for an hour

- 1 14 ounce can of coconut cream or full-fat coconut milk– begin adding only $\frac{1}{2}$ of the can then adjust to reach a thick cream of pouring consistency
- 1 cup of Almond milk
- 1 Veggie broth cube
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of nutritional yeast
- Salt
- Pepper
- Red pepper flakes
- 1tbl of fresh or dried oregano
- 1 branch of thyme or 1 tea of dried thyme
- Cinnamon stick or 1 tea ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon Allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tea of freshly grated nutmeg
- A handful or two of pinenuts

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Toss eggplant with olive oil, lightly salt, spread on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper
3. Roast in the heated oven for 20-30 mins until pieces are tender but not falling apart
4. While the eggplant roasts, cover the bottom of a heavy dutch oven with olive oil and begin sauteing the shallots and onions over medium heat.
5. Add oregano, thyme, red pepper flakes, and allspice.
6. Add half of the mushrooms, cooking until brown, adding additional oil if necessary.
7. Remove cooked mushrooms to a plate and finish cooking the remainder, returning the others to the pan
8. Add chopped or whole tomatoes, using a wooden spoon to crush a bit, the tomato paste, maple syrup, the cinnamon stick, and salt and pepper to taste. Allow to gently simmer and thicken.
9. Begin assembling the moussaka by laying the bottom layer

of potatoes, arranging them in the baking dish. Cover potato mixture with the eggplant, then pour over the tomato mushroom sauce.

10. Cover with foil, reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees and begin baking for 60 minutes.
11. While the moussaka bakes prepare the cashew cream topping. Combine all ingredients in a high-speed blender or use an immersion blender and process until very smooth and creamy. Taste and adjust seasonings.
12. 15 minutes before moussaka is finished, remove the foil and pour a layer of the cashew cream over the top. Sprinkle with a bit of nutmeg and the pinenuts. Turn up the oven to 400 degrees and cook until the cream is set and beginning to brown.
13. Allow moussaka to set for 15- 30 minutes before serving.
14. Enjoy!

Spiced Butternut Soup

The weather has turned cold here in Foix these final days of winter with a mix of snow and rain each day. This delightful and colorful soup brightened the dreary day and was delicious!

Ingredients

- 2 leeks, chopped fine
- 2 large kohlrabi peeled and cut into chunks
- 3 large potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 large butternut squash, peeled and cut into chunks
- Chopped fresh or frozen spinach or kale
- Olive Oil
- 1 Tbl of freshly grated turmeric or 1 tea turmeric

powder

- 1 Tbl of freshly grated ginger
- 1 tea cumin powder
- 2 cubes of vegetable broth cubes prepared with hot water

Directions

In a heavy dutch oven heat olive oil over medium heat, add leeks, saute slowly allowing them to gently soften and not brown. Add spices, mix well, and broth. Remove from heat and set aside.

Steam each of the prepared vegetables (kohlrabi, potatoes, and squash) seperately until just fork tender, being very careful not to overcook.

Add to broth. Simmer gently for 15 mins.

Add chopped kale or spinach.

Adjust seasonings and liquid as needed.

Enjoy!

Spicy Cauliflower Snacks

I will admit I have a problem with these cauliflower snacks. I honestly can not stop myself from eating these and can easily consume an entire head of cauliflower in this fashion, on my own. I'm not saying I am proud of this fact, just sharing in case you have the same problem yourself. I did warn you.

Ingredients

One full head of cauliflower cut into bite-sized flowerets

2 cups of Besan flour, this is slightly different from the chickpea flour you might buy in your grocery store but either can be used

Filtered water

1-2 cups of mild cooking oil

A dash of Cayenne pepper, or more if you like

1 tsp Tumeric

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Ground cumin

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp Ground coriander

1 tsp Salt and more to taste if needed.

Chutney store-bought or try this amazing Green Chutney

Directions

Pour the besan flour into a large mixing bowl. Add all of the spice and blend with a wire whisk. Next add water gradually, whisking until the mixture is the consistency of a pancake batter.

Let this set for at least 15 minutes and up to an hour if possible.

Add cauliflower pieces coating all well. You may need to add a bit more flour or water, adjusting the spices accordingly.

Heat oil in a large heavy skillet and when hot shallow fry the cauliflower pieces over medium heat. Be careful oil does not

become too hot because these pieces need to cook all the way through, maybe 10-12 minutes total cooking time. Turn as they cook with tongs or a slotted utensil.

Lay cooked snacks on a tray lined with paper towels and keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.

Offer chutney alongside.

Please excuse me that these are instructions and not an exact recipe, my apologies up front if that makes it challenging for you. I trust you will forgive me once you have eaten your share of these.

Apple Pear Crumble with Ginger

With a nod to my Foix friend Sanna Phinney, I share with you this super simple dessert. It's was Sanna's delicious recipe that she prepared for our welcome meal that served as an inspiration.

Ingredients

4 apples, cored and cut into chunks

4 pears, cored and cut into chunks

1 T Fresh Ginger – finely grated

2-4 T maple or date syrup or honey

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup each of pumpkin, sunflower, and hemp seeds

1 cup of Almonds, Walnuts, or Pecans or a mixture

1 cup coconut flakes or chips

1 t cinnamon

$\frac{1}{4}$ t of freshly grated nutmeg

$\frac{1}{4}$ t of vanilla powder or 1 t of vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of melted coconut oil

1-2 T maple or date syrup or honey (more depending on desired sweetness)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Mix the fruit, ginger, and syrup together and pour into a baking dish.

In a food processor lightly process the seeds, nuts, and coconut leaving texture. You can also use a blender but be careful not to over-process.

In a mixing bowl combine spices, oil, and maple syrup with the nuts. You may need to adjust the proportions by adding more syrup to taste or a bit more oil if it is too dry. You will want all of the mixture lightly coated.

Place in preheated oven and bake for 35-40 mins. The top should be golden brown and the fruit should be fork tender.

Serve warm or at room temperature. Consider topping with coconut ice cream or a plant-based whipped topping.

A Warming Spiced Chia Porridge

When last week, during the fierce winter storms in Texas, all I wanted to do was to warm my children and give them comfort there was an ocean between us. And as often my go-to, when I am distressed, I look for relief in the kitchen. In search of something warming but not grain-heavy like oatmeal I played a bit with Vegan Richa's Chia Banana Pudding. The results were exactly what I desired, warming and comforting but light and digestible. I hope you will give it a try this final stretch of winter and enjoy it as much as I did.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cup (366 ml) non-dairy milk – a combination of almond and coconut milk is very nice
- 2 medium-sized ripe bananas
- 1/2 tsp (0.5 tsp) pumpkin pie spice or cinnamon + nutmeg
- A splash or two of maple syrup or honey to taste
- A bit of freshly grated ginger
- 4 tbsp each of chia seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and hemp seeds
- 1/2 raisins or other chopped dried fruit, plus more for topping

Directions

1. Combine all of the ingredients listed up to the seeds and blend until smooth using a blender (immersion or high speed). Alternatively, the banana can be mashed with a fork and mixed with milk and spices.
2. Pour mixture into a saucepan and heat to a simmer. Stir

well as it thickens. Add seeds and continue cooking for another few minutes.

3. Turn off heat, add dried fruit and allow to sit for the seeds and liquid to gel for 15 minutes or more if desired.
4. Warm gently to serve, divide into dishes, and top with remaining dried fruit or fresh if you prefer.

Enjoy!

Spiced Walnut Lentil Patties

These patties. They are just the best. Plate them up with some roasted veg and a salad or pack them along as I did on your next hike. Consider precooking the lentils and rice to cut down on the last minute prep or prepare the full mixture and allow to sit overnight in the fridge. You can top these any way you like but I am partial to the avocado mayo that follows.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup chopped red onions
- 1/3 cup walnuts, ground
- 1 bunch of fresh cilantro finely chopped
- 3/4 tsp each of ground cumin and coriander
- A pinch or two of cayenne
- 1 tea of sweet or smoky paprika
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 3/4 cup cooked brown or white rice
- 1 1/2 cups cooked brown lentils
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 flax egg 1 tbsp flaxseed meal mixed in 2.5 tbsp warm water, let sit for 2 minutes

- 4 or more tbsp gf ground breadcrumbs or chickpea flour to firm up the mixture
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil for cooking patties

Instructions

1. Saute onion until soft. Add ginger, walnuts, and cilantro.
2. Mix well and add to the food processor with spices, salt, basil, rice, half of the cooked lentils, and pulse a few times until well combined. Transfer to a bowl with the rest of the lentils.
3. Add tomato paste, oil, flax egg, and mix everything with your hands or heavy wooden spoon until evenly mixed in. Mashing a bit if needed.
4. Adjust seasonings as needed. Add in the breadcrumbs or flour.
5. Let the mixture chill for 10 minutes.
6. Add in more flour or breadcrumbs if too moist to form into patties.
7. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Add just a splash of oil and spread it around. Once oil is hot place patties on the skillet and cook for 4 to 6 minutes per side.
8. Serve with your favorite sauce, sriracha mayo, or try this avocado-ranch.

Inspired by Vegan Richa

Spring Cabbage Rolls with Lemon Shallot Glaze

The secret to easy cabbage rolls is, to begin with, a large loosely packed head of cabbage, the kind found at your local markets or organic coop. I so love the concept of cabbage rolls as they allow me to literally let my imagination run wild. They are a fantastic end of the week dish to use up whatever bits have been forgotten in your fridge and can easily become a comfort staple. In this version, I was inspired by leftover short grain brown rice, a single fennel bulb, two lonely leeks, and a handful of mushrooms. The end result was remarkable.

Cabbage

6-8 large outer cabbage leaves

Remove leaves careful not to create any tears. Stack in a deep large bowl of layout in a deep dish baking pan and cover with boiling water. Allow them to sit in the water until tender. Drain and lay them out on toweling to dry. Cut into the thick stem at the base of the leaf just enough to ease folding. This may be just a cut inwards or perhaps a small triangle is required.

If you are working with a cabbage head with tight leaves there is another method of submerging the entire head in a boiling pot of water until the leaves drop away.

Be sure to save the center of your cabbage to chop up for this soup or salad recipe.

Filling

- One prepared cup will fill 3-4 rolls depending on the size of cabbage leaves.
- 2 leeks
- 2 medium or one large fennel bulb and fronds. Thinly sliced and chopped
- 12 finely chopped mushrooms
- A few handfuls of thinly sliced fresh spinach leaves
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of pan-roasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped (sub with walnuts, pecans, or almonds).
- 1-2 cups of cooked rice or other grain (amount depends on the number of rolls you are preparing)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh chopped herbs such as parsley, thyme, basil, and mint or 1-2 TBL of a dried herb blend.
- Salt and Pepper to taste
- Olive Oil

Slice leeks in half down the length, wash away any grit and pat dry. Chop all the way up to the green stems which hold just as much flavor as the base.

Heat oil in a heavy skillet, add leeks and sauté over medium heat, once they begin to soften and brown remove to a plate.

Add more oil if needed and chopped mushrooms, cooking over medium heat until golden in color.

Add fennel to mushrooms and continue cooking until fennel is aromatic and just slightly softened.

Remove mixture from heat, and pour into a large mixing bowl along with all remaining ingredients including the leeks. Combine well and season to taste.

Sauce

- 6-8 shallots peeled and sliced
- 4 TBL Coconut oil or Vegan Butter

- 2-3 TBL Rice Flour or starch (arrowroot, cornstarch) for thickening
- Juice from 2 lemons
- 1 cup plant-based milk or cream (the thicker the milk the creamier the sauce)
- 1 cup vegetable broth prepared
- salt and pepper to taste
- 3-5 saffron threads- allow them to bloom in a bit of boiling water for 15 mins before adding (optional)

Using the same pan over medium heat add coconut oil or vegan butter and when warm add shallots. Sauté until soft and beginning to caramelize. They can burn quickly so keep a close watch on the temperature.

Use the flour or starch to make a roux for thickening.

When well integrated with the shallots slowly add the prepared vegetable broth and saffron with water. Whisk until smooth and bring this all to a simmer and allow to thicken.

To finish off this sauce add lemon juice and plant-based milk or cream, heat thoroughly and season to taste.