

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.

Caramelized Shallot Pasta

While I'm trying to fit in before lunch hikes and face meetings until 10 pm I'm on the prowl for quick to the table meals. This recipe will surely find a place in my new menu rotation. We just had it for lunch and I could eat it again tomorrow it was so delish!

INGREDIENTS

- **¼ cup olive oil**
- **6 large shallots, very thinly sliced**
- **1 red onion, finely chopped**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- **1 teaspoon red-pepper flakes, plus more to taste**
- **1 teaspoon of smoky paprika**
- **8-12 ounces of finely chopped Baby Bella mushrooms**
- **1 (4.5-ounce) tube or (6-ounce) can of tomato paste (about 1/2 to 3/4 cup)**
- **10 ounces gluten-free spaghetti**
- **1 cup parsley, leaves and tender stems, finely chopped**
- **Flaky sea salt and fresh ground pepper**

1. Heat olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat. Add shallots and red onion, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the shallots have become totally softened and begin to caramelize showing golden fried edges, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Add red-pepper flakes and chopped mushrooms. You may need to add more oil at this point. Keep heat at medium-high so that mushrooms begin to brown. Add tomato paste and season with salt and pepper and paprika, stirring constantly to prevent any scorching, until the tomato paste has started to cook in the oil a bit, caramelizing at the edges and going from bright red to a deeper brick red color, about 2 minutes. This is an extra step but really brings out the flavors. Set aside while pasta cooks.
3. Before draining pasta add a ladle full or two of the pasta water to the shallot mixture, turning up the heat. Add drained pasta and swirl to coat each piece of pasta with sauce.
4. Toss in chopped parsley, season to taste with salt and pepper and enjoy!

Adapted from Alison Roman's recipe in NYT.

A Winter Salad

Doesn't this winter salad make you smile? Every bite of this crunchy dish is full of vitality and joy, exactly what is needed during the long months of winter. You truly don't need a recipe to make it but I will share the ingredients I used and the process. Please allow yourself permission to play with what you include, bringing to life a different salad each time.

Salad

Red cabbage, chopped finely by hand

Carrots, grated

Kohlrabi, peeled and grated

Apple, a tart yet sweet variety either grated or cut finely in julienne strips

Pumpkin Seeds

Sunflower Seeds

Other ingredients I have used include grated broccoli stems, finely chopped kale stems, diced oranges, beets, hemp seeds, and any toasted and roughly chopped nuts you enjoy.

Vinaigrette

Blend well with a whisk or shake in a jar with a tight-fitting lid

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh orange juice

2 TBL Apple Cider Vinegar

2 TBL Honey or Maple Syrup

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Olive Oil

Salt and pepper to taste

Prepare salad ingredients and toss with the vinaigrette. Allow it to sit at room temperature to marinate a bit before serving. This salad keeps very well, up to 3 days even with the dressing. I think it tastes better each day!

Vegan Chocolate Tart

This is an amazingly simple, decadent dessert that no one will believe is vegan and gluten free!

Crust

- 1 cup pitted Medjool dates, soaked in hot water for 10 minutes
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hazelnuts or pecans
- 3-4 T raw cacao nibs
- 1 T coconut oil

In the food processor, process nuts and cacao nibs until

ground. Add drained dates and coconut oil to make a smooth paste. Press into a tart pan with a removable bottom (line with parchment paper if it is not non-stick). Place in the freezer until caramel layer is finished.

Caramel layer

- 1.5 cups Medjool dates, soaked in hot water for 10 minutes
- 4 T tahini
- pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ t vanilla extract, or a pinch or two of vanilla powder

Process all together until smooth. Spoon into the tart crust and use your wet your hands to evenly distribute.

Coconut Chocolate Ganache

- 2 400 ml cans full-fat coconut milk, chilled until the cream separates
- 150-200 grams dark vegan chocolate
- 1 t vanilla extract, or a pinch or two of vanilla powder

Spoon the solid part of the coconut milk out of the can and warm gently over low heat. Add vanilla. Break up the chocolate and stir into the warm milk until all is melted and smooth. Quickly pour over the caramel layer and chill for 2-3 hours until set.

The remaining coconut milk is wonderful in smoothies or in my super seeded chia pudding.

When ready to serve, remove the tart from the pan and serve. Enjoy!

Inspired by Claire, @HealthyFrenchWife