

Cucumbers with Dill

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber, peeled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh dill
- Salt and pepper
- 3 to 4 tablespoons rice vinegar, unseasoned, or cider vinegar

Preparation:

Combine all ingredients in a bowl; cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
Serves 2 to 4, but can be doubled or tripled quite easily.

Penne with Eggplant

From Melanie Williams, Neighborhood Coordinator

Ingredients

- 2 eggplant (or 4 Japanese eggplant) cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 3 ½ garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (or to taste)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- ¼ cup pine nuts

- 16-oz uncooked whole wheat penne
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup torn basil leaves
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup (2-oz) grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish

Method

Preheat oven to 400F. Combine eggplant, cherry tomatoes and garlic in bowl. Drizzle with ¼ cup olive oil and sprinkle with red pepper flakes, 1 tsp each salt and black pepper; toss to coat. Spread in even layer on foil- or parchment-lined baking sheet. Place pine nuts in small baking dish. Place veggies on center oven rack and pine nuts on lower rack. Roast pine nuts for 8 mins or until golden brown. Roast veggies for 35 mins or until tender and eggplant in golden brown.

Cook pasta until al dente, in boiling, salted water (8-10 mins); drain well over large bowl. Reserve 1 ½ cups of pasta cooking liquid. Keep pasta warm.

Place roasted veggies in food processor. Add basil and 3 Tbsp olive oil. Puree. Combine with pasta in large bowl; add ½ cup cheese. Add the reserved cooking liquid ½ cup at a time, using as much as needed to achieve creamy consistency, stirring constantly. Adjust salt. Sprinkle with pine nuts and garnish with more cheese. Serve.

Asian Pear Pecan Cookies

Makes about 24 -30 soft cookies
Preparation Time 20 minutes
Cooking time 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2-3 Asian pears peeled, cored and sliced
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup finely ground pecans
- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt

Preparation:

1. Place the Asian pears in a blender and puree to make 1¼ cup of pear puree. Pour into Pyrex measuring cup and microwave for 2-3 minutes. Let the mixture cool for about 5 minutes.
2. Preheat your oven to 375 F.
3. Grease two large cookie sheets.
4. Place your pecans in the blender and chop until the nuts are flour texture.

Quick tip!

For fluffier, whiter rice, add one teaspoon of lemon juice per quart of water. To add extra flavor and nutrition to rice, cook it in liquid reserved from cooking vegetables.

Zesty Zucchini and Squash

INGREDIENTS:

- 2-3 yellow squash, cubed
 - 1/2 onion, chopped
 - 2-3 zucchini, cubed
 - Salt to taste
 - 2 large tomatoes, diced
 - Oregano, to taste
 - 1-3 hot peppers, minced
 - Garlic powder, to taste
- (or to taste)

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Reduce heat to low and cook until tender-crisp.

White-Bean Soup with Peppers and Bacon

Note from Laurie: I tried this soup this week and my family loved it! I used a mix of sweet peppers from my Boxes: white, purple, red and yellow. (Leave out the green though. They're not as sweet.) Then I increased the peppers to 3 cups and left out the carrots. Yum!

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups dried navy beans
 5 bacon slices
 2 cups chopped red bell pepper
 2 cups chopped onion
 1 cup chopped carrot
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1 teaspoon onion powder
 1 teaspoon garlic powder
 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 3 (16-ounce) cans fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley

Preparation

Sort and wash beans; place in a large Dutch oven. Cover with water to 2 inches above beans; bring to a boil, and cook 2 minutes. Remove from heat; cover and let stand 1 hour. Drain beans.

Cook the bacon in pan over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon from pan; crumble and set aside. Add bell pepper and the next 8 ingredients (bell pepper through minced garlic) to drippings in pan; sauté 10 minutes or until browned. Stir in the broth, scraping pan to loosen browned bits. Add beans. Bring to a boil; cover, reduce heat, and simmer 1 hour or until beans are tender.

Place 3 cups of the bean mixture in a blender, and process until smooth. Return the puréed mixture to pan. Stir in the bacon and parsley.

Note: This soup will freeze well for up to two months. Pour into an airtight container, leaving enough room for expansion (usually an inch or two at the top). To reheat, thaw completely in the refrigerator; then place contents in a saucepan over low heat, adding some liquid if necessary.

SHRIMP STUFFED SWEET BANANA PEPPERS

12 to 14 sweet banana peppers, whole
 1 med. yellow onion, finely chopped
 1/2 bell pepper, finely chopped
 1/8 tsp. Old Bay seasoning
 Lg. tbsp. mayonnaise
 1 1/2 c. Italian-seasoned bread crumbs, moistened with 2 tbsp. milk
 1 c. chopped shrimp
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/4 tsp. parsley flakes
 2 tbsp. butter
 2 ribs celery
 1 clove garlic
 1/2 tsp. chicken bouillon
 Picante or tomato sauce
 Monterey jack cheese, shredded

Directions

Melt butter; add bouillon. Sauté chopped onion and bell pepper until soft. Add seasonings, bread crumbs and shrimp. Mix well. Add mayonnaise and mix well.

Split peppers down one side. Clean out seeds and membrane. Stuff with mixture. Dot with one tablespoon picante sauce or tomato sauce. Sprinkle with Italian-seasoned bread crumbs.

Place in buttered baking dish. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour. Just before done, place strips of grated Monterey Jack cheese on top of each pepper and cook until cheese is bubbly.

Southern Peach Scuppernong Salsa:

Ingredients:

1 cup seeded and quartered scuppernong grapes
 2 medium peaches, peeled and chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
 1/2 of a medium red bell pepper, chopped
 1/2 of a large cucumber, peeled, seeded, and chopped
 1/2 of a medium Vidalia or other sweet onion, chopped
 2 large jalapeno peppers, seeded and minced
 1 Tbsp lime juice
 1/4 tsp salt (or more to taste)
 Fresh ground black pepper to taste

PREPARATION:

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and stir gently. Adjust salt and pepper to taste. Chill for at least 20 minutes. For an interesting variation, try adding a little fresh mint or tarragon, finely minced.

