

2009 Mediterranean Month Recipe Contest Winners

Mediterranean Salad with Lemon Balsamic Vinaigrette

Submitted by Dustin Burnett, MS RD

* Makes 8 servings*

Ingredients for Salad

- 1 head romaine lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 head red leaf lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1/2 small head radicchio, torn into bite-sized pieces
- 1 15-oz can cannellini beans OR chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
- 1 15-oz can roasted red peppers (drained) and sliced
- 1 6.5-oz jar artichoke Hearts (drained and rinsed) and quartered
- 1 6-oz can black olives, small ripe (drained and rinsed)
- 6 oz Gruyere cheese, grated
- 2 oz Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
- 8 oz walnut halves

Directions

Combine all of the aforementioned ingredients into a large salad bowl. For presentation, toss lettuce first, then arrange additional toppings in artful design on the top of the salad.

Ingredients for Vinaigrette

- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper, ground (fresh preferred)
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp mustard (ready prepared)
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil

Directions

The dressing is best made one day in advance. Whisk together garlic, salt, pepper, lemon juice, mustard, and vinegars. Continue whisking rapidly while gradually drizzling olive oil into the dressing until all of the oil is added and the dressing is thick. Similarly, the dressing can be made in a blender or food processor; or all of the ingredients can be shaken in a sealed jar.

To Serve

Serve salad separate from dressing to preserve the salad. Salad ingredients can also be tossed with a light coating of the vinaigrette just prior to service (do not coat the lettuce with the vinaigrette until just prior to service; otherwise, the lettuce will become wilted).

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Mediterranean Lamb Salad

Submitted by Don Cavness

* Serves 4 *

Ingredients

1 lb. ground lamb
2 Tbsp olive oil
Seasoning mix (see recipe below)
2/3 cup water
1 10-oz package prepared shredded cabbage
Avocado wedges
Tomato wedges
Tzatziki*
1/4 cup grated or shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano (or 1/2 cup feta cheese crumbles)
Fresh mint or fresh cilantro
Fresh parsley
Toasted pita bread points (there are many whole grain selections available)

*Tzatziki is a dip of Greek origin made from Greek yogurt, cucumber, mint, and garlic and may be found in the deli section of better grocery stores.

Recipe for Seasoning

2 Tbsp (6 teaspoons) of good quality chili powder (ground dried red ancho is best: grind the whole dried pod in a blender, with or without the hot seeds, depending on heat preference.)
5 tsp paprika
4 1/2 tsp cumin
2 1/2 tsp onion powder
1/2 tsp of garlic powder
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
Combine all ingredients

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees; prepare seasoning recipe, and lightly sprinkle pita bread points with seasoning mixture and set aside. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil to skillet, cook meat on medium heat, stirring occasionally, until no longer pink. While lamb is cooking, place pita bread points on cookie sheet, bake 3 - 5 minutes at 325 degrees (avoiding scorching the seasoning on the pita points). Drain meat, stir in 2 1/3 tablespoons (7 teaspoons) of seasoning mixture and 2/3 cup water, return to heat, stirring until blended (3-5 minutes)

Presentation

Place 2 cups shredded cabbage in each bowl, alternate avocado slices and tomato slices around the outside, add 1/2 - 1 cup meat mixture, add 1/4 of the cheese, top with 2 tablespoons tzatziki, garnish with fresh mint or cilantro leaves, and fresh parsley sprigs. Serve accompanied by lemon wedges and crushed Turkish Aleppo or Halaby pepper-infused extra virgin olive oil.

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Mediterranean Pizza Submitted by Judy Doherty

* Serves 6 *

Ingredients

6 yukon gold potatoes, medium in size, skin on
Drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil
Fresh chopped garlic
Fresh chopped basil
3 ripe plum tomatoes
1/4 cup sliced sundried tomatoes
1/2 cup sliced mushrooms
1/2 cup chopped fresh spinach leaves
2 Tbsp grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
Fresh-cracked black pepper to taste

Directions

Rinse the dirt off the potatoes and pierce with a fork. Microwave the potatoes until done, about 2 minutes each. They are done when a knife goes through them easily.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Mash the potatoes into a lightly oiled rectangular 9X12 baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with basil and mashed garlic. Top with sliced plum tomatoes, sundried tomatoes, spinach and mushrooms. Sprinkle with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until the cheese is golden brown and the veggies are roasted. Cool slightly then cut into squares. Grate black pepper over the top. We like to serve with a large tossed salad with roasted walnuts, extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar and roasted asparagus.

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Pumpkinseed and Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

Submitted by Carol Leivonen

* Makes approximately 2 1/2 cups of pesto *

This pesto is made with roasted pumpkinseeds which are often called pepitas. It is ideal for people with nut allergies, who may want to enjoy the flavor of a pesto. We love it with our Pita Break Lavash crackers as a dip, but it can also be used as a spread in a pita pocket sandwich, or as a base for a grilled sandwich. No additional salt may be required, as the pumpkinseeds and parmesan cheese are salted. Assemble all ingredients and have them ready to go into your food processor.

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups roasted salted pumpkinseeds (pepitas)
3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes in oil (drained from oil)
1/4 tsp black pepper
8 large fresh basil leaves
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Directions

Place pumpkinseeds, parmesan cheese, sun dried tomatoes, pepper and basil leaves into bowl of food processor. Pulse for a few seconds to blend. Add olive oil in a slow stream while continuing blending until desired consistency is obtained. Remove from machine bowl, place in serving bowl and chill until ready to serve.

Garnish with additional sundried tomato pieces or basil leave if desired and serve with pita or Lavash crackers.

2009 Mediterranean Month Recipe Contest Winners

Grape Leaves Stuffed with Rice and Figs with Lemon Yogurt Sauce

Submitted by Diane Nemitz

* Makes approximately 40 – 50 stuffed grape leaves *

Ingredients

One jar grape leaves (about 50 leaves)

- 1 cup brown rice
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup finely chopped dried figs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped pine nuts
- 2 Tbsp dried mint
- 1 Tbsp dried dill weed
- 2 finely chopped green onions
- 3 Tbsp citrus flavored olive oil

For sauce

- 1 cup Greek yogurt
- Juice and zest of one half lemon
- 1/4 cup shredded cucumber

Directions

Preheat oven to 360 degrees. Spray a deep oven-proof baking dish with cooking spray. Place grape leaves in large bowl and cover with boiling water. Let them soften for three or four minutes, then remove and carefully unroll them. (May line bottom of baking pan with broken bits of leaves).

Prepare the filling by sautéing rice and pine nuts in olive oil, then add three cups water, figs, mint, dill weed and green onions. (I then transfer to rice cooker) Cover pan and simmer until rice is tender and water is absorbed. Allow stuffing to cool, then stuff grape leaves as follows:

Place heaping tablespoon of filling on leaf. Cover with bottom portion of leaf, fold in sides and continue to roll until filling is completely enclosed. Place close together in layers in baking pan. When pan is filled, drizzle with citrus flavored olive oil, cover with hot water and cover the pan. (Use foil if pan does not have its own cover).

Bake for about one hour. Cool before serving. May be served at room temperature or cold. Serve with lemon-yogurt sauce which has been prepared by combining yogurt, lemon juice, lemon zest and cucumber. (allow sauce to stand for 15 minutes to combine flavors, but do not prepare too far in advance.)

These are wonderful party appetizers!

2009 Mediterranean Month Recipe Contest Winners

Hazelnut-Crusted Cod Loins with Roasted Plum and Fig Garnish

Submitted by Diane Nemitz

* Serves 4 *

Ingredients

- 4 purple plums, seeded and halved
- 4 fresh figs, halved
- 1 teaspoon cumin mixed with 2 teaspoons sugar
- Olive oil
- 12 to 16 oz. cod loins
- 1/2 cup flour seasoned with salt and pepper to taste
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water
- 1 cup very finely chopped hazelnuts

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brush plums and figs on all sides with olive oil (may use flavored oil as desired). Place on baking sheet, cut side down and bake for 10 minutes. Turn fruit over and sprinkle with cumin and sugar and return to oven for another 10-15 minutes. Fruit will be light brown and tender, but not mushy.

While fruit is roasting, prepare fish. Heat additional olive oil (not flavored) in large skillet to a depth of about 1/2 inch. Dredge cod in flour, then dip in egg, then in hazelnuts. Press nuts into cod firmly. Fry over medium heat, turning once, until crust is golden brown and fish flakes easily with a fork.

Serve cod with a plum half and fig half per person.

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Bruschetta with Cannelini Bean Paste, Tomato Chutney and Reduced Balsamic Glaze

Submitted by Joshua James Ogradowski

* Serves 8 *

Ingredients

BREAD

- 1 French baguette, 1 inch slices
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, or olive oil pan spray

WHITE BEAN PASTE

- 1 can cannellini or garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 garlic clove
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup orange juice, freshly squeezed
- 1 oz Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, grated
- Pinch Hawaiian sea salt
- Pinch black pepper, freshly ground

TOMATO SALSA

- 4 Roma tomatoes, quartered, deseeded and brunoise
- 1 red Fresno chile, red, deseeded and brunoise
- 1/2 shallot, skinned and brunoise
- 3 basil leaves, chiffonade and then minced
- 1 oz lime juice, freshly squeezed

REDUCED BALSAMIC GLAZE

- 8 oz balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp organic sucanat

Directions

For the bread: Preheat grill, cut bread into 1 inch bias slices. Brush olive oil, or spray the bread with pan spray and grill until golden crust, hold.

For the bean paste: open can of white beans, drain and rinse with water. Peel skin from garlic and cut nub off, slice in half. Put half garlic clove in chopper for 2 seconds. Add beans, oil and freshly squeezed orange juice and blend until smooth like hummus. Add graded parmesan cheese, sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and pulse. Put in piping bag and hold.

For the tomato chutney: Add chopped tomato, red Fresno, basil, shallot, and lime juice in a bowl. Mix and hold.

For the balsamic glaze: Pour balsamic vinegar in small sauce pot with sucanat and heat until nappe. Cool and hold in skirt bottle.

For the bruschetta: pipe white bean paste on grilled bread, sprinkle on chutney gently and lightly put balsamic glaze over the top.

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Warm Lemon Orzo and Spinach Salad

Submitted by Melanie Plesko, RD

* Serves 6 *

I created this simple salad using fresh spinach from my local farm. I was trying to make a dish that incorporated all the flavors of pesto, without all the fuss. It is a versatile dish that can be served as an appetizer or would pair nicely with grilled salmon as a main course. Plus, my kids gave it a thumbs up. I'm all for getting them to eat more greens!

Ingredients

1 pound orzo (1 Tbsp kosher salt for cooking)
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp fresh ground black pepper
1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/3 cup pine nuts
5 handfuls fresh spinach, coarsely chopped
1 handful of fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
1/4 cup shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano

Directions

Fill a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Add orzo and 1 Tbsp kosher salt to water and cook at a vigorous boil for about 7 minutes until al dente. Drain and place in a large bowl.

To make lemon dressing: in a small bowl combine, lemon juice and zest, extra virgin olive oil, pepper and salt with a whisk.

Add lemon dressing, pine nuts, spinach, basil and Parmigiano-Reggiano to orzo and toss to combine. Serve warm.

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Beauty Ranch Almond Cookies

Submitted by Susan Zabriskie

* Makes 30 Cookies *

Here is a recipe I developed over several trials. A cookie in the classic Italian tradition, slightly sweet with almond top notes. They include orange because I had a cache of California mandarins that were so perfect I could not even bear to throw the peels away!

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp almond extract
- 3 cups flour
- 1/2 cup finely chopped almonds
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 Tbsp orange zest or finely minced peel(thin-skinned mandarins)

Option: roll cookies in sesame seeds before baking. This uses about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sesame seeds)

Directions

Beat together eggs, oil, sugar, vanilla, and almond extract. Mix in remaining ingredients until well blended. Refrigerate dough for 1-2 hours or more for ease in handling.

Using 1 tablespoon of dough, form cookies in to log shape and place on baking sheet, about an inch apart. Bake at 370 degrees for 11 minutes or till golden brown (11 minutes in my convection oven. A regular non-convection setting might be a 15 minute bake time).