

Introduction

Fasting is a wonderful part of our spiritual life. And because of this, we need to practice it regularly, and we must make sure that we do it in a healthful manner. One crucial factor to remember is this: we must avoid foods and recipes that contain oils that are partially hydrogenated or fully hydrogenated. These oils are otherwise known as Trans Fats, and they are terrible for our health.

When reading food labels, it is very important for us to pay attention to the ingredient list. When we see partially hydrogenated or fully hydrogenated oil—of whatever kind—it is best to avoid the food product. Hydrogenated oils are found in many prepackaged foods and are often used as a substitute for butter.

It is always best to choose butter over margarine. In the fasting period, we are asked to avoid butter, but instead of replacing butter with margarine, it is healthier for us to use other alternatives such as plant- and nut-based oils. It is my hope that this cookbook will provide you with many delicious and healthy recipes.

Why should we avoid eating foods that contain Trans Fats? Great question! It is because these fats are synthetically created. Our body does not have the mechanisms to properly break down this fake food; therefore, when it is consumed, it may pose health risks to the body.

Some of the health concerns associated with Trans Fats are the following:

- Trans Fats increase a person's cholesterol levels more than saturated fats. (So again, this reminds us that butter is better than margarine.)
- Trans Fats can raise a person's triglyceride levels.
 - Both high cholesterol and triglyceride levels could increase a person's risk for heart disease.
- Trans Fats can also lead to a person becoming insulin resistant which eventually could turn into Type 2 Diabetes.
- Consumption of Trans Fats can lead to weight gain.

It is always best to stick to real foods. Limit the amount of artificial flavors, preservatives, and chemicals in your diet. Your body has a hard time processing these fake-food products, which can be hard on your liver, leading to serious health problems.

Read ingredient labels! Focus on removing foods from your diet that contain ingredients such as:

- High fructose corn syrup
 - It is easy to think this sweetener may be okay because of fructose, and fructose is a sugar naturally found in fruit. This is not the case! This sweetener is created through chemical, enzymatic, and genetically modified processes. This fake sugar does not function the same way in our body as eating a piece of fruit would.
 - Our bodies can handle real sugar that comes from sources such as sugar cane, molasses, beets, maple syrup and honey. High fructose corn syrup does not work well in the body, and it can lead to a variety of health problems. So stick to a portion-controlled amount of the real sweeteners listed above. And focus on removing high fructose corn syrup from your diet.

- Some reasons to avoid high fructose corn syrup:
 - It has been shown to be part of the rise in overweight and obesity.
 - It has been shown to increase rates of diabetes among children and adults.
 - It could interfere with certain metabolic functions.
- Food dyes such as red dye 40 and yellow lake 5 etc...
 - These food dyes are made up of a bunch of chemicals that our body does not need! Research shows that they may be a cancer causing agent, and cause allergic reactions.
- Aspartame and other artificial sugars
 - Again your body was not made to digest a bunch of chemically created products. Eat real food! Even if a person is diabetic, he or she may be able to consume portion-controlled amounts of real sweeteners: it just has to be properly incorporated into their meal plan. A person with diabetes could work with a dietician or diabetes educator. However, the diabetic needs to explain to the health-care professional that he or she would like to avoid artificial sweeteners; together they may design a meal plan that works for the diabetic.
 - Research shows that aspartame may have a damaging effect on the region of the brain known as the hypothalamus. This region of the brain is important in regulating when your body has had enough food to eat. So if damage occurs to this region of the brain it could possibly lead to people eating more food than they actually need.
 - Whenever you eat a food that tastes like it should have calories, but it does not your body does not feel satisfied. As a result your body will still seek out those calories. So many times when people eat a lot of artificially sweetened foods and beverages they tend to snack more frequently.

When we focus on removing the ingredients listed above from our diet, we will also be cutting out a lot of other unhealthful ingredients. So again, we need to check the ingredient list! We need to look at the ingredients that make up our food product. If we are unfamiliar with a lot of the terms or see some of the ingredients listed above, it is better for us to choose another food product.

“Food is medicine,” and as the saying goes... “You are what you eat!” God provides us with so many nutritious, real, and—it goes without saying—delicious foods! By eating real foods, our bodies will be thankful! We need to always focus on eating real foods. Many of our prepackaged foods contain a list a mile long of chemicals and additives that are terrible for our health. Our bodies know what to do with real foods. Real foods also naturally contain the nutrients that our bodies need. Let’s take a look at an example. See if you can guess this concoction:

Ingredients: Corn syrup solids, partially hydrogenated soybean oil, sodium caseinate (a milk derivative), dipotassium phosphate, sodium silicoalminate, artificial color, mon-and diglycerides, soy lecithin, artificial flavor.

Sound good? These are the ingredients for a **Non-Dairy Creamer**.

So, we have briefly discussed the importance of consuming real food. In addition to focusing on eating real foods, it is also important to make sure we are controlling the portion size of the food we eat. It takes twenty minutes for the stomach to send a message up to the brain that our bodies are satisfied. This is simply the way God created us. The point is, the faster we eat, the more we eat. We must take time with our meals, enjoying them and giving thanks to God for providing us with such blessings.

We should enjoy every bite! Slowing down our eating pace does help with portion control. We need to listen to the feedback our bodies are giving us. To sum up, we do not want to cause stress to our body by one eating fake foods and two by eating too much food. So to simply put it, it is best to eat portion controlled amounts of real foods.

I hope this cookbook provides you with some nutritious and delicious recipes that you might consider incorporating into your meals during your fasting periods.

*This cookbook was not designed to cure, to provide diagnosis, or to treat an ailment. It contains recipes free of animal-based products, and when the recipes are carried out, they can become part of an overall healthy diet.

This cookbook was compiled by Rita Hanna MPH, RD. I hope your fasting seasons are enriched.
Matthew 6:16-18.

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Try these Tasty Tips

Substitutions

- Use coconut, soy, rice or almond milk in coffee, teas, cereals or creamed soup recipes (coconut milk is a bit sweet so factor this quality into your cooking). Please use these in moderation (Especially use soymilk in moderation because the plant based chemicals in soy milk may have an effect on hormones in the body when consumed in very high amounts).
- Make a pesto sauce without using cheese.
- For a dessert try a piece of dark chocolate (When you consume dark chocolate that is 70% or more cocoa there are many benefits for your health).
- Protein sources instead of meat, fish, and poultry: choose beans, nuts and whole grains.

Breakfast Ideas

- Oatmeal with apple slices, walnuts, cinnamon, and a tiny bit of maple syrup or brown sugar
- Apple or banana, topped with a nut butter such as peanut or almond
- Bagel with avocado, tomato, and garlic powder
- Toast with peanut butter and honey or jam
- Cereal with almond milk and a piece of fruit
- Make a mixture of Tahini (sesame seed paste) and molasses. Eat on a slice of bread, apple slices or a banana.

Good Non-dairy Sources of Calcium

- Beans
- Almonds
- Brazil nuts
- Figs
- Spinach
- Broccoli
- Sesame seeds and sesame seed paste
- Kale
- Collard greens
- Blackstrap molasses
- Curry powder
- Basil
- Cinnamon
- Celery

Let's Make Side Dishes and/or Main Entrees

Couscous and Vegetables

You'll Need

- Olive oil
- 1 cup uncooked whole wheat couscous
- 2 chopped carrots
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 2 chopped celery stalk
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- Fresh ground pepper and salt to taste
- Parsley to garnish

Directions

Prepare couscous: boil 1 ¼ cups water, add boiling water to couscous, remove from heat and couscous will absorb water.

While couscous is preparing, chop all vegetables and sauté in some olive oil for approximately 10 minutes. Next mix couscous and vegetables together, and add seasonings and additional olive oil. Serve with a garnish of parsley on top. Enjoy!

**The use of whole-wheat couscous makes this meal a good source of fiber and protein.

Lentils, Bulgur wheat, and Spinach

You'll Need:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| -1 cup chopped onion | -1 Tablespoons olive oil |
| -3 garlic cloves | -1 teaspoon salt |
| -½ cup dried lentils | -1 teaspoon cumin |
| -1/2 cup dried bulgur wheat | -¼ teaspoons ground black pepper |
| -5 cups fresh spinach (approx 5 ounces) | |

Directions:

- In a bowl combine ½ cup dried bulgur wheat with ½ cup water. Let sit. Bulgur will absorb water and become soft.
- In a pot heat olive oil, add chopped onion and garlic, sauté until onions are soft. Add 1 cup of water and lentils. Bring to a boil. Then cover and reduce heat and simmer for approximately 30 minutes or until lentils are tender.
- Add bulgur to lentils. Add cumin, salt, and pepper and mix together. Next slowly mix in spinach.

Roasted Garlic

You'll Need

- Garlic bulbs (as many as you would like to roast)
- Olive oil (at least a tablespoon per bulb)
- Parsley to garnish
- Bread to spread the roasted garlic onto (pita bread or baguette slices work wonderfully)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 F

Take a whole garlic bulb and pull off the excess first outer layer and leave the garlic bulb in tact. Next cut off approximately ¼ of an inch of the garlic stem portions (the pointy ends). You now should have a whole bulb of garlic still in tact with the top stem cut off enough to see the actual garlic cloves. Next place the bulb in a baking dish and drizzle with olive oil. Let the olive oil seep into the garlic cloves and then repeat. Next cover and bake for 45 to 1 hour or until garlic cloves become soft.

Let cool a bit. Garnish with parsley. Then peel open and spread garlic on bread.

**Parsley works well as a garnish that you can eat because it helps to combat garlic breath.

Roasted Cauliflower

You'll Need

- 1 head cauliflower, cut into, 2-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon cumin (more if you'd like)
- Chopped parsley for garnish

Directions

Heat the oven to 425° F. Place the cauliflower florets in a large roasting pan and toss with the olive oil, salt, pepper, and cumin. Roast until cauliflower is tender and lightly browned approximately, 35 to 40 minutes.

Easy Black Bean Salsa

This recipe can be prepared in a short amount of time. You can use it as an appetizer side dish or the main entree.

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups cooked black beans
1 ½ cups cooked corn
1 ½ cups salsa
¼ cup cilantro, chopped
1 ½ Tbsp fresh lime juice

Directions:

*Mix all of the above together and use this as your base.

*From this add some chopped vegetables or fruit such as bell pepper, carrots, yellow onion, green onion, avocado, or tomato.

*Add a chopped up chili or jalapeno for a spicy flavor. Or add some chili powder.

Serve on top of a salad, in a wrap, on top of a baked potato or with some corn chips

**It is important to make sure you are consuming a food that contains vitamin C when you are eating a plant based source of iron. This helps to allow your body to absorb the iron that is found in the plant based food. For example beans are a great source of iron. But for your body to absorb the iron from the beans a vitamin C food source must be consumed at the same meal. So enjoy beans with tomatoes or have some pineapple as a side dish. And that is why it works well when lemon or lime juices are part of a bean recipe.

Jazzed up Garbanzo Beans

You'll Need:

- 1 green chili (deseeded and finely chopped)
- 1 ½ cups cooked garbanzo beans
- 2 garlic cloves (finely chopped)
- 1 medium yellow onion (chopped)
- 2 Tablespoons Olive oil
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger finely sliced
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ tablespoon lemon juice

Directions

- Place the olive oil in a pan that can be covered. Saute the onion, until slightly browned. Add the chili, garbanzo beans, garlic, ginger, chili powder, cumin and coriander. Cook for approximately 2 minutes.
 - Next add water cover and simmer for about 10 minutes. Finally add the lemon juice.
 - Enjoy with pita bread, over rice or by itself.
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Mujadarah (Lentils with Rice)

You'll Need:

- 1 cup brown lentils
- 2 cups rice
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 3 cups water
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- In pot, combine lentils, water, salt, and pepper. Cook over medium heat for 7 minutes or until lentils are half cooked.
- Add rice, cumin powder. Cook until water is absorbed and rice is tender (add more water if necessary). Mix well and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Fry onions in oil until dark brown.
- Top each dish with the fried onions and oil.

Variation: use 1 cup bulgur instead of rice. Cook lentils until practically soft (approx. 16 minutes) remove from heat, add bulgur, stir, and let sit until rest of water is absorbed. Add more water if necessary. Bulgur is a great source of protein and fiber which makes the meal more nutritious but still delicious.

Whole Wheat Pasta and Veggies

Serves 6

You'll Need

- 8 ounces raw whole-wheat pasta (will yield 4 cups cooked)
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup chopped tomato
- ½ small onion chopped
- 3 ½ cups chopped broccoli- stems and florets (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup whole olives of choice cut in half
- 3-4 cloves garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Directions

Bring 8 cups of water to a rapid boil. Cook pasta in boiling water. Steam broccoli until slightly softened but still crunchy. Once pasta is cooked and drained add all other ingredients and mix until well coated. Serve warm or cold.

Basil Pesto Pita Pizzas

Basil Pesto Sauce

- 1 cup packed basil leaves
- 5 Tbsp toasted walnuts
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Mix all in blender until even consistency is reached.

Take a pita and spread pesto on pita top with red bell pepper, mushrooms, tomatoes and place in 350 F degree oven until heated.

**You can make a bunch of pesto at one time and freeze the pesto in ice cube trays. After the cubes have hardened, transfer them to a freezer bag and use servings as necessary. This is a great thing to do during the summer time when basil is growing well in the garden. Come winter you have wonderful pesto to enjoy. And it can be used in so many dishes. On pasta, pizza, sandwiches, and roasted or grilled vegetables.

Manicotti

You'll Need:

- 1, 8 ounce box, (14 pieces) manicotti shells
- 4 cups diced mushrooms (choose what you like and you could also use a variety)
- 10 ounces chopped fresh spinach or 10 ounces thawed and drained frozen spinach
- 1 small white or yellow onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cups marinara sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasonings and other herbs of choice to mix with sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper

Directions:

In a large skillet, add 2 Tablespoons olive oil. Saute the garlic and onions but do not brown. Next add spinach, mushrooms and ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper and Italian seasoning to skillet. Cook covered for approximately 10-15 minute, stirring occasionally. Next uncover filling and let cool season to taste with salt and pepper. Place olive oil and sauce to cover the bottom of a casserole dish. When filling has cooled, stuff the manicotti. Place the stuffed manicotti in casserole dish, then cover with marinara sauce (don't forget to mix in herbs to sauce). Cover with aluminum foil, then cook in an oven at 350 for about 40 to 45 minutes.

** If you have a couple of minutes before work, pre-chop the vegetables and store in the refrigerator. Then you can come home from work stuff the shells and dinner preparation moves along much faster.

**Try adding other vegetables such as zucchini or eggplant.

Swiss Chard with Raisins and Pine Nuts

Serves 4

- 1 ½ pounds Swiss chard (preferably rainbow or red)
- ½ cup pine nuts (2 ½ ounces) (I rarely use this many pine nuts and it is still tasty!)

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup golden raisins, finely chopped (I never chopped them)
- 1 cup water

-Tear chard leaves from stems, then coarsely chop stem and leaves separately.

-Toast nuts in oil in a wide 6- to 8-quart heavy pot over moderated heat, stirring constantly, until golden, 1 ½ to 2 minutes, then transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain and season with salt.

-Cook onion in oil remaining in pot, stirring occasionally, 1 minute, then add chard stems and cook, stirring occasionally, 2 minutes. Add raisins and ½ cup water and simmer, covered, until stems are softened, about 3 minutes. Add chard leaves and remaining ½ cup water and simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until leaves are tender, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with pine nuts.

Spicy Rice and Kale

4 Servings

- 2 ¼ cups canned low-salt chicken broth or vegetable broth
- 1 ½ teaspoons Creole or Cajun seasoning
- 1 cup converted white rice (I've used regular white rice and it's still delicious!)
- 4 ounces kale (about ½ large bunch), stems and ribs removed, leaves coarsely chopped (2 cups packed)

Bring broth and Creole seasoning to a boil in heavy large saucepan. Stir in rice and kale and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 20 minutes.

*Kale is a great source of calcium. Calcium is a mineral that your body needs to maintain good health. When you cook with foods that contain calcium, calcium is not lost in the cooking process.

Both of these recipes were located on the website: www.epicurious.com. This is a great website to do a search for recipes using primarily all real ingredients. You can do a search based on the main ingredient you want to use. Basically this website is a very friendly searchable database of all the recipes found in the cooking magazines Gourmet and Bon Appetit. Many are simple as you can see from the two found on this page.

Red Lentil Dal

You'll Need

- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped

- 1 green chili, chopped
- 1/3 cup red lentils
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 cup water
- 14 oz can diced tomato
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 Tablespoon lemon juice
- Cilantro to garnish
- Salt to taste
- Cooked rice

Directions

In a pot heat the oil and sauté the onion, garlic, chili, and turmeric. Sauté until the onion is soft and translucent. Next add the lentils and water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and cook until the water is absorbed into the lentils. Next mash the lentils with the back of a wooden spoon. Finally add the tomatoes, sugar, lemon juice, and salt.

Garnish with cilantro and serve over rice.

Hummus

This recipe will work well for various cook-out events. Use it as an appetizer and serve it with slices of carrots, bell pepper and celery.....fresh from the garden

- 1 1/2 cups cooked garbanzo beans

- Water
- 2 Tablespoons tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice from a fresh lemon
- 1 ½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3-4 garlic cloves, crushed

Spices and herbs to season: examples: cumin powder, dried or fresh parsley, sweet paprika

Directions:

Place all ingredients in a blender including ¼ cup water and mix until smooth but thick.

Put on a plate and decorate with spices, herbs and a bit of olive oil. Enjoy with raw vegetables such as carrots, celery, and bell pepper or with pita bread or crackers

Salad Dressing

Get creative with your salads, top it with such foods as beans, nuts, seeds, and dried fruit.

You'll Need

- 3 Tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 Tablespoon Balsamic Vinegar
- Brown mustard to reach a consistency you like

Directions

Using a fork, mix all together until unified.

This is your base. You can jazz it up however you would like or enjoy as is.

Suggestions

- Salt, pepper
- Herbs or spices as you find fit for your taste (oregano, garlic, or cayenne)
- Hot sauce or horseradish
- A tad bit of honey
- Try a flavored balsamic vinegar or red wine vinegar

Boston Baked Beans

You'll Need:

- 4 cups cooked navy beans
- 1/3 cup molasses
- 1 Tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large white onion, sliced

- 2 Tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine the beans, molasses, oil, onion, brown sugar, ginger, salt and dried mustard in a 1 ½ quart baking dish. Add ¼ cup of water to baking dish. Mix thoroughly and then cover and bake for 30 minutes.
 - While this is baking heat the oil in a skillet and saute the onion slices until slightly browned. After the beans have baked for 30 minutes take them out of the oven and top with the onions and then bake uncovered for 10 minutes.
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Jazzed Up Potato Rounds

Makes 8 to 10 servings

You'll Need:

- 2 pounds russet potatoes
- Olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut potatoes into 1/2 inch thick rounds. Place in baking dish and coat with olive oil and seasonings. Adjust seasonings to your liking. Bake until potatoes are soft approximately 30 minutes.

Super Soups

Black Bean Soup

Yields: 8 servings

You'll Need

-1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
-3 Cups Chopped onions
-2 teaspoons cumin
-1 teaspoon of salt
-1 medium carrot, diced
-10 cloves garlic, crushed

-1 medium zucchini
-5 cups cooked black beans
-1 ½ cups orange juice
-Black pepper
-Cayenne pepper
-8 ounces of salsa

Directions

Place oil in large pot. Heat the oil, and sauté the onion, cumin, salt, zucchini, carrot, and the garlic over medium heat. Saute until carrot is tender. Add cooked beans. Mix in orange juice, cayenne, black pepper, and salsa. Simmer over low heat for 20 to 25 minutes.

**This is a great soup that provides a great combination to maximize nutrient absorption. Orange juice is used as the base for the broth. This is important because black beans are a great source of iron. For the human body to be able to absorb the iron out of vegetarian sources a vitamin c source needs to be present. Hence the perfect combo... black beans and orange juice.

Barley Vegetable Soup

You'll Need:

1/2 cup pearl barley	6 cups vegetable stock
3 Tablespoons olive oil	2 teaspoons dried dill
1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced	2 Tablespoons lemon juice
5 large, carrots, cut into thin rounds	Salt and pepper to taste
1 medium onion, chopped	

Directions:

In medium bowl, place barley and cover with hot water. Let stand about 20 minutes; drain. In large pot, heat oil, add vegetables and sauté five to seven minutes. Add barley, stock, salt, pepper and half of dill. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes. Add lemon juice and remaining dill and salt and pepper to taste.

Carrot Soup with Dill Pesto

You'll Need

- 4 large carrots, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 Tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tsp dill seeds

- 1 cup fresh dill

- 2 Tablespoon pine nuts
- Salt and Pepper

Directions

In a stock pot, saute the chopped carrots, onion, and dill seeds in 2 Tablespoons olive oil until tender about 10 minutes. Add 4 cups broth and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer until carrots are very tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer soup to blender in batches and puree. Season with salt and pepper.

While the soup is preparing in a food processor or blender, combine 1 cup fresh dill and 2 Tablespoons of pine nuts and chop finely. Then slowly add 2 Tablespoons olive oil and process until well blended. Season the pesto with salt and pepper. Remove from blender and set aside. No need to clean the blender you will be using it again and the flavor of the pesto is fine. Now when the carrots are tender transfer the soup into the blender in small batches puree the soup. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Next place soup in bowls and add a dollop of the pesto.

**This original recipe was provided by The Kretchmann Farms who are part of the Community Supported Agriculture Organization. The recipe has been altered to contain no animal products (and it is still delicious). Originally the recipes calls for butter but various vegetable oils, work well too.

Community supported agriculture is a great group to be connected with. It is great for your health and the environment to support local farmers. Community Supported Agriculture provides for this. To learn more about local farm co-ops and organic farm deliveries in your area check out the website www.localharvest.org. Many farms do weekly deliveries of in season produce to various locations. You can find the one that is close to you and pick up fresh produce on a regular basis.

Golden Squash Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 medium sized butternut squash, peeled and cut into about ½ inch pieces (about 3 cups)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 medium garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 TBSP fresh ginger, chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp curry powder

- 2 ¾ cups + 1 TBSP vegetable broth
- 6 oz canned coconut milk
- 2 Tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt and white pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Peel squash and cut into pieces.
2. Heat 1 TBS broth in medium soup pot. Saute onion in broth over medium heat for about 5 minutes stirring frequently, until translucent. Add garlic, ginger, and continue to sauté for another minute. Add turmeric, curry powder and mix well. Add squash, and broth, and mix. Bring to a boil on high heat. Once it comes to a boil reduce heat to medium low and simmer uncovered until squash is tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Place in a blender and blend with coconut milk. Make sure you blend in batches filling blender only half full on low speed, so hot soup does not erupt and burn you. Blend until smooth, about one minute. Thin with a little broth if needed. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. Reheat and add cilantro.

**Source: george.mateljan@worldshealthiestfoods.com

**This is a great nonprofit organization that provides recipes for cooking with whole foods free of charge. The organization will email you recipes and feature the health benefits of a different food each week.

Quinoa Coconut Milk Corn Chowder

Ingredients

1 Tablespoon olive oil	4 cups vegetable stock
1 large yellow onion, chopped	1, 14 oz. can coconut milk
3 garlic cloves, chopped	2 bay leaves

1 large potato with skin, cubed

¼ teaspoon cayenne

3 cups corn kernels

½ teaspoon salt

½ cup uncooked quinoa

Parsley springs to garnish

½ cup red bell pepper, diced

Pepper to taste

Optional variations

- Add one chopped chili pepper
- Add some crushed red pepper
- 6 shallots chopped, instead of 1 large onion

Directions

In a large pot on low heat, sauté onion, garlic, red bell pepper, quinoa, and potato for approximately 7 minutes. Next add vegetable stock and the bay leaves and simmer for 30 minutes. Add milk and seasonings and increase heat for a few minutes. Remove from heat, garnish with parsley and serve.

**Quinoa is a super grain. It is native to South America. It is a grain that is a good source of protein and fiber.

Time for Dessert

Hilbeh

This is a traditional Middle Eastern Dessert that contains the ingredient fenugreek.

Yields: close to 50 pieces

You'll Need

- ¼ cup fenugreek
- 1 cup flour

- 3 cups smeed (Farina or cream of wheat)
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 package dry yeast
- 1 cup luke warm water
- 1 cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- dash of salt
- Attar (syrup) see recipe below

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Clean fenugreek and boil in 1 cup of water until tender.
- Dissolve yeast in ¼ cup water and ¼ tsp sugar.
- Mix flour, smeed, olive oil, sugar, baking soda and cooked fenugreek with ¼ cup of its juice.
- Add dissolved yeast and rest of water (¾ cup) to mixture to form a dough.
- Spread dough in (17" x 12") greased pan (grease with oil). Smooth by patting. Then with a knife, cut into diamonds.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until brown.
- When hot, pour cold syrup over it.
- Run knife through diamond grooves again.

Attar (syrup)

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 ½ cups water
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice

Mix sugar and water and bring to a boil. Add lemon juice and boil for 7 or more minutes.

You want the syrup to be cooled before you pour it over the hot hilbeh.

**Fenugreek is a spice that feels like a stone. It can be found at many Middle Eastern and Indian, and All Natural Grocers.

Coconut, Peanut Butter Balls

This recipe is very easy to make. Kids tend to enjoy this recipe and because it is so simple to make they can take great part in the preparation process. Plus it is a great way to incorporate flax into you and your families' diet. Enjoy!!

Yields: Approximately 35 one inch sized balls

You'll Need:

-1 cup peanut butter

- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 cup ground flax seed
- 1 cup flaked coconut

Directions:

- In a mixing bowl, mix peanut butter, honey, vanilla, and ground flax seed together.
 - Place the coconut on a plate and spread it evenly. Drop a spoonful of the peanut butter mixture onto the plate of coconut. Roll it until the coconut covers the mixture. In your hands form the mixture that is covered with coconut into a ball. Place in a container that can be refrigerated. Refrigerate balls until firm. Keep refrigerated until they are going to be eaten.
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Peanut Butter Cups

This recipe will make 8 regular size muffin tin peanut butter cups or 16 small ones. Because these peanut butter cups are very rich the small muffin tins help to provide a nice, enjoyable portion. If you do not have the small muffin tins and are using the regular size a half of a peanut butter cup is a very satisfying size.

You'll Need:

- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- 8 teaspoons peanut butter

Directions:

- On a stove top in a double broiler melt the chocolate. Stir in the sugar and mix until smooth. Next place approximately one tablespoon in the bottom of each muffin tin to total 8 or approximately 1/2 a Tablespoon in the bottom if using the smaller muffin tins to fill 16. Now freeze the muffin tins until chocolate hardens approximately 15 minutes.
- Remove tray from freezer and place one teaspoon for large muffin tins or 1/2 teaspoon for small muffin tins of peanut butter and then cover the peanut butter with chocolate. Freeze again.
- When hardened pop peanut butter cups out of muffin tin (using a plastic utensil) and enjoy or place in an airtight container and refrigerate.

Caramelized Banana Slices with Toasted Nuts

Yields: 8 servings

You'll Need

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 Tablespoons water
- 4 Tablespoons lemon juice

- 4 Bananas, peeled and cut into 1/3 inch slices
- ¼ cup toasted walnuts, halved
- ¼ cup toasted pecans, halved

Directions

Combine sugar, water and lemon juice in a medium pan. Stir over low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase the heat slightly until syrup turns to a brownish color (approximately 5 minutes). Remove from heat. Add banana slices and coat with sugar mixture. Top with toasted nuts and serve.

Cranberry Apple Sauce

You'll Need

- 6 medium apples peeled, cut into small pieces (Braeburn, Rome, Fuji)
- 12 ounces fresh cranberries
- 3/4 to 1 cup sugar (less for more tart taste)
- 2 Tablespoons apple juice or other fruit juice

Directions

Place apples and cranberries in food processor and pulse a couple of time to chop. Add sugar and juice; process until pureed. Refrigerate 3 hours before serving.

**Cranberries are such a super food. They are a great source of antioxidants which helps to control free radical damage the can occur in the body.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped and lightly toasted
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon salt

- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
 - ½ cup maple syrup
 - 2 tablespoons of water
 - 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees
 - Mix dry ingredients together
 - Mix wet ingredients together and whisk
 - Stir the dry mixture into the wet mixture
 - Let stand for 5 minutes
 - Drop round tablespoons of dough onto cookie sheet and flatten with your hand. Or what I like to do and it works great is to keep my hands wet with a bit of water and then form the dough into balls. Then I place them on the cookie sheet and flatten them. I noticed that the moisture on my hands tends to keep the dough together.
 - Bake about 16-18 minutes until cookies are slightly brown

This recipe was created by Jo Ann Stepaniak a chef from Pittsburgh, PA. She has created some vegan cook books that contain great nutrition information and would be a nice addition to your cookbook selection.

Peanut Butter Cookies

You'll Need:

- ¾ cup peanut butter
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup water
- 2 Tablespoons peanut oil

- 1 Tablespoon ground flax seed
- 1 ½ cups quick oats
- ½ cup old fashioned rolled oats

Directions:

In a medium bowl, beat the 1st four ingredients with a fork until well blended. Next add the flax seed and stir. Next stir in the quick oats and old-fashioned oats. Drop the cookie dough onto a cookie sheet and flatten the dough with a fork. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool for a few minutes on the cookie sheet then remove and let cool on cooling racks.

These cookies also can work well as a part of breakfast.

Chocolate Cake

You'll Need:

- 1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ¾ cups baking cocoa (and a little extra for dusting the cake)
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

- 1 cup applesauce
- A pinch of cinnamon
- ½ cup plain soymilk
- ¼ cup safflower oil (and a little extra for greasing the pan)
- 1 sweetened dried cherries or cranberries
- ½ cup toasted, chopped walnuts or hazelnuts

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350. In a medium sized mixing bowl, combine first six ingredients stir with a whisk. In a small bowl combine applesauce, cinnamon, soymilk and oil. Mix well and then add to flour mixture stirring just until moist and a thick batter is reached. Stir in cherries and nuts. Spread into a greased 10 inch spring form pan. Bake at 350 for 45 or until edges begin to pull away from pan. Cool on wire rack. Dust with cocoa.

*Again it is important to avoid the use of margarine and hydrogenated vegetable shortenings. They are synthetically created products that can have an ill effect on your weight and health. This cake is versatile and works well to celebrate a birthday of a loved one during the Lenten season. It is free of eggs, butter, and dairy but it is not missing the flavor and stays moist too.

And what a great birthday gift. A homemade Trans Fat Free Treat! Yummy! Don't forget the birthday candles 😊

Baked Pears with Chocolate

You'll Need:

- 4 Bosc Pears (peeled, sliced in half length wise, and cores removed and scooped out)
- 1 cup Apple juice
- 16 Teaspoons Dark chocolate chips

Directions:

Place pears in baking dish, cut side up. Pour apple juice evenly on pears. Fill each pear with 2 teaspoons of chocolate. Bake for approximately 40 to 45 minutes or until soft.

*Dark chocolate is our friend! It contains flavonoids which are naturally occurring compounds found in plants that have many health benefits such as antioxidant qualities. This antioxidant quality helps to limit damage that can be caused to cells in our body. These flavonoids have also been shown to help with the prevention with cardiovascular disease and help to control high levels of LDL or bad cholesterol. So remember the darker the better (try for at least 65% of cocoa) and portion control is key. A helpful hint to help with portion control is when you eat dark chocolate never use your teeth. Let it melt in your mouth and enjoy it!

Ultra-Orange Cake

Serves 8

This is moist and sweet and orangey. For a less sweet cake, decrease the sugar by 2 Tablespoons.

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350

- Grease and flour one 8x8 inch pan or line the bottom with wax or parchment paper.

Whisk together thoroughly in a large bowl:

- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt

Add and stir together until smooth:

- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon grated orange peel
- 1 Tablespoon white or cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Scrape the batter into the pan and spread evenly. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a rack for 10 minutes. Slide a thin knife around the cake to detach it from the pan. Invert the cake and peel off the paper liner, if using. Let cool right side up on the rack.

Reference: The Joy of Cooking Cookbook

Ginger Snaps

Ingredients

- 2 ½ Tablespoons ground flax seed mixed in three Tablespoons warm water
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup applesauce
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 ¾ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup blackstrap molasses
- ½ cup white sugar (and a little extra to roll the dough in)
- ½ cup brown sugar

- ½ cup finely chopped crystallized sugar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350 F.
- Combine flax and water and let sit.
- In a medium bowl combine flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Set aside.
- In a larger bowl combine, oil, applesauce, molasses, brown sugar, and white sugar, and flax seed mixture and mix until completely combined.
- Next add the flour mixture and the crystallized ginger and stir until combined.
- Next form dough into balls about the size of a Tablespoon and place on an ungreased cookie sheet.
- Bake cookies for eight minutes. Remove from tray and cool on the cooling rack.
- After cooled store in an airtight container.