

The image features two glasses of a frothy, light-colored beverage, likely a healthy holiday drink. The glass in the foreground is a clear glass mug with a handle, containing a cinnamon stick and a dusting of brown powder (likely nutmeg). The glass in the background is a clear glass tumbler, also containing a cinnamon stick and a dusting of brown powder. The background is a light-colored surface with white snowflake decorations and a red ribbon. The text "HEALTHY" is at the top, "Holiday" is in the middle in a large red script font, and "RECIPES" is at the bottom. At the very bottom, the author's name "MIRA DESSY, NE" and title "THE INGREDIENT GURU" are displayed in bold black text.

HEALTHY

Holiday

RECIPES

MIRA DESSY, NE
THE INGREDIENT GURU

Healthy Holiday Recipes

Mira Dessy

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INTRODUCTION

As the fall and winter seasons come closer your thoughts are probably focused on holiday celebrations. Whatever your favorite holiday is — Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Winter Solstice, Christmas, or Kwanza — chances are you're thinking about food.

I find this to be a wonderful time of year because of the seasonal access to a fabulous array of nourishing foods, warming spices, and mouthwatering flavors. Of course, everyone has their favorites. Maybe it's aunt Susan's green bean casserole or that amazing cookie recipe you got at the cookie exchange years ago. But even though we have our traditional favorites, there's always room for new tasty treats.

To help you navigate the holidays I've put together this book with some of my favorite recipes plus tips and tricks to help you manage your leftovers.

Regardless of which holiday you're celebrating, and who you're celebrating with, there are a few things to keep in mind to help you have your best holiday season ever:

- Recipes are written with an understanding that you will be sourcing gluten free options, organic (or at a minimum rBST free) dairy, and purchasing organic for the Dirty Dozen produce items such as apples and grapes.
- Many people receive gifts for the holidays and often these gifts are highly caloric food choices such as chocolates, cookies, alcohol, and more. All of this tempting fare can lead to overindulgence, bloating, and weight gain. Instead of keeping (and consuming) these gifts consider sharing the wealth. If you're still going to an office, consider sharing them at work. Working from home? See if there is a food pantry or soup kitchen that you can share them with. Although they get food donations they don't often get treats to share.

- When you do get holiday goodies, take the time to savor your food, to focus on what you're eating. This helps you to enjoy it rather than mindlessly gobbling it down.
- Remember the Three Polite Bite Rule: psychologically the first three bites are the ones that we enjoy the most. So don't deprive yourself of a treat, but simply limit it to the bites that taste the best.
- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Often we're tempted to skip breakfast to "save room" for the big meal later. That can lead to a roller-coaster effect on your blood sugar which may cause you to overeat foods that are fatty and high in sugar.
- Beware of the buffet. During the holidays everyone tends to pull out all the stops and there's a bewildering array of food choices. Instead of taking a little bit of everything on your plate take the time to go through the line twice. Once to see what's there, the second time to pick out what you actually want to eat.
- Alcohol is high in calories and can increase your appetite leading to overindulgence. Moderate your alcohol intake by alternating alcoholic drinks with sparkling or still water.
- Avoid sabotage. If you are gathering with family, gently refuse the family food pushers who vigorously offer seconds, thirds, or more. Knowing in advance that you're going to politely refuse helps you avoid excess and you'll feel better later.

Whatever your plans are for the holidays and whoever you're able to celebrate with, remember to take the time to express your gratitude for what you have and those you love.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, holiday season!



APPETIZER

Southern Italian Antipasto

With its colorful arrangement of rich cheeses, cured meats, and pickled vegetables, this Antipasto platter will surely make an elegant centerpiece and bring your guests together to feast and mingle over!

YIELD: APPROX. 30

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

COOK TIME: 15

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large ball burrata cheese
- 4 oz. Provolone cheese, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 oz. hot sopressata, thinly sliced
- 3 oz. sweet sopressata, thinly sliced
- 4 fresh figs, quartered
- 4 oz. fresh ricotta cheese

3 T. Easy Homemade Vanilla Fig Jam:

- 3 T. walnuts, chopped
- 1 6-oz. jar roasted red peppers, sliced
- 1 4-oz. container marinated and seasoned mixed olives
- 1 8-oz. jar artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 lbs. red seedless grapes, split into 3 or 4 bunches
- Fresh basil and rosemary sprigs, for garnish
- Crusty Italian bread, thinly sliced.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the burrata in the center of a large platter. Place Provolone cheese, sopressata, and fresh figs in groups around it.
2. Fill a small serving bowl with the ricotta cheese. Top with the fig jam and walnuts, then place near the burrata arrangement.
3. Place the roasted red peppers, seasoned olives, and marinated artichoke hearts in individual serving dishes. Vary the colors next to each other.
4. Tuck the grapes, fresh herb sprigs, and crusty bread slices around the other ingredients for visual appeal.

Rather than an original "recipe," this serves as a guideline for constructing a delicious and attractive antipasto featuring traditional Southern Italian ingredients.



Crostini with Brie and Orange-Cranberry Relish

Crusty Italian bread, topped with melting Brie cheese and bursting sweet-tart cranberry-orange sauce, makes for a delicious, warm appetizer.

YIELD: APPROX. 30

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

COOK TIME: 15

INGREDIENTS

Crostini Ingredients:

- 1 long, thin baguette, cut into 1/3" slices
- 3 T. unsalted butter, melted
- 8 oz. Brie cheese, rind removed and cut into thin slices

Cranberry relish Ingredients:

- 12 oz. bag fresh cranberries
- 1/2 C. raw cane sugar
- 2 T. real maple syrup
- 3/4 C. fresh orange juice
- 2 t. fresh ginger, finely minced
- 1 t. ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 T. orange zest, preferably organic

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Arrange the baguette slices and brush with the melted butter.

2. Place in pre-heated oven and bake for 7-9 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and place a small size of Brie on each crostini.

3. In a large saucepan, combine the cranberries sugar, maple syrup, orange juice, ginger, cinnamon, and orange zest. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for 10-12 minutes or until the cranberries "pop."

4. Remove from heat and let it cool for several minutes. Spoon some warm cranberry relish over each crostini.

To give the flavors more chance to blend, you can make the relish a day or two in advance. When you're ready to serve, heat it in a microwave for 20 seconds to warm it up a bit.



SWEET & SAVORY SPICED PECANS

Warm and sweetly pungent, these sugar-and-spice nuts make a great appetizer or last-minute holiday gift.

Sweet & Savory Spiced Pecans

SERVES: 4 CUPS

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 35 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 T. fresh rosemary leaves, finely chopped
- 2 t. ground cinnamon
- 1 t. ground cardamom
- ¾ t. allspice
- ½ t. ground cloves
- ¼ t. ground cayenne
- ½ t. fine sea salt
- ¼ t. black pepper
- ¼ C. unsalted butter
- 1/3 C. honey, preferably local
- 2 T. maple syrup
- 4 C. whole pecans
- ¼ C. raw cane or other large grain sugar, for dusting

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set the rack in the middle of the oven and pre-heat to 350°F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. Combine rosemary, cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, cloves, cayenne, salt, and black pepper in a small bowl. Stir and set aside.
3. Add butter to a small skillet set over medium heat. Add the honey and maple syrup and stir to combine. Heat for 1-2 minutes or until heated through. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Place pecans in a large bowl and pour the melted butter mixture. Add the spice mixture and stir until the pecans are fully coated.
5. Transfer the coated pecans to the prepared baking sheet and spread it into a thin, single layer. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 30 minutes. Stir after 15 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and cool for 5-10 minutes. Sprinkle half the coarse sugar on top and stir to combine.

It is also a great stocking stuffer! Place the nuts in an airtight bag and add note to consume within 2-3 weeks.



PROSCIUTTO BASKETS WITH WHIPPED GOAT CHEESE FILLING

This crispy Italian dry-cured ham holds a tart, earthy flavor of creamy goat cheese! Crunchy and creamy, this appetizer makes every bite a wonderful sensory experience.

Prosciutto Baskets with Whipped Goat Cheese Filling

YIELD: 24

PREP TIME: 20 MIN

COOK TIME: 10 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- Olive oil
- 12 slices thinly sliced prosciutto
- 4 oz. goat cheese, softened
- 4 oz. ricotta cheese
- 3 T. heavy cream
- 2 T. fresh thyme, leaves only
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 C. pistachios, chopped

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- 24-cup mini muffin pan
- Pastry bag and tips

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Pre-heat oven to 375°F. Wipe or brush the muffin pan lightly with olive oil. Set aside.

2. Cut prosciutto slices in half lengthwise to create 24 long, thin strips.

3. Place 1 slice of prosciutto in each muffin cup; make sure to fully cover the bottom and sides and leave an overhang on all sides. Repeat for the remaining 23 cups.

4. Place in preheated oven and bake for 9-10 minutes or until the edges of the prosciutto starts to brown.

5. While the prosciutto baskets are baking, combine the goat cheese, ricotta cheese, heavy cream, and thyme leaves in a medium bowl. Season with salt and black pepper and stir to combine. Set aside.

6. Remove from the oven and cool for several minutes. Transferring each prosciutto basket to a plate lined with paper towels to remove excess grease. Transfer baskets to a serving platter.

7. Fill the piping bag with the cheese mixture. Carefully pipe the goat cheese mixture into each prosciutto basket. Top with some chopped pistachios.

STRAWBERRY CAPRESE SKEWERS WITH BALSAMIC GLAZE

Replace the tomato in your traditional Caprese salad with sweet, juicy strawberries, beautifully paired with balsamic glaze and fresh basil for a sweet and savory appetizer!



Strawberry Caprese Skewers with Balsamic Glaze

SERVES: 4 PREP TIME: 15 MIN COOKTIME: 10 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 16 fresh, small strawberries, washed and cut in half across the width, hull intact
- 32 medium fresh basil leaves, washed and patted dry
- 16 Ciliegine (mini-Mozzarella balls)
- 1 C. balsamic vinegar

Optional:

- 2 T. high-quality extra-virgin olive oil to drizzle

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

16 6" wooden skewers

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the top half of a strawberry to a wooden skewer with the hull facing up. Fold one basil leaf in half, dark side facing out, and add it to the skewer. Add one mini-Mozzarella ball, followed by another folded basil leaf, and the bottom half of the strawberry.
2. Repeat with the remaining 15 skewers. Arrange on a serving platter and set aside.
3. To prepare the glaze, add balsamic vinegar to a sauté pan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring frequently until the vinegar is reduced to about 1/3 of its volume.
4. Remove glaze from heat and let cool slightly. Drizzle over the skewers with some extra virgin olive oil, if desired.

For a clean presentation, apply glaze over a different platter while drizzling it onto the skewers.



WHITE BEAN DIP WITH SEASONED PITA CHIPS

For an easy but fancy holiday appetizer, try this match made in heaven smooth and creamy white bean dip with mildly seasoned pita chips.

White Bean Dip with Seasoned Pita Chips

SERVES: 4-6

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

COOK TIME: 10-12 MIN

INGREDIENTS

Seasoned Pita Chips Ingredients:

- 6 large pitas
- 3 T. extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

White Bean Dip Ingredients:

- 1 15 oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 cloves fresh garlic, peeled
- 2 T. fresh lemon juice
- 2 - 3 large fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 1/3 C. regular extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 T. high-quality extra virgin olive oil
- dash cayenne pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut each pita into 8 equal-sized wedges. Brush pita wedges with olive oil on both sides and place on a prepared baking sheet. Season with salt and black pepper. Place in the preheated oven.
3. Toast both sides for 5-6 minutes each or until pita wedges are golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside.
4. While the pita wedges are baking, add cannellini beans, fresh garlic, lemon juice, sage leaves, and olive oil to the bowl of a food processor and blend until smooth.
5. Pour mixture into a serving bowl and season with salt and black pepper, to taste.
6. Add a dash of cayenne pepper and a drizzle of some extra virgin olive oil. Serve with seasoned pita chips and/or vegetable crudités.

Although you can use the same extra virgin olive oil for the entire recipe, adding a drizzle of higher-quality olive oil right before serving will add an extra "pop" of flavor.



SOUP

Mockstroni Soup

This hearty soup features that classic minestrone combination of herbs, beans, and vegetables. Because it's not your classical minestrone, I decided to change the name and call it "mockstroni."

YIELD: 6 BOWLS PREP TIME: 15 MIN COOKTIME: 30 MIN FOR INSTANT POT

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 1 white onion, minced
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1- 15 oz can diced tomatoes, with juice
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1/2 cup spinach
- 1 large zucchini, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups bone broth
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp dried parsley

Optional:

add 1 small hot pepper for a bit of a warming kick.

if this is too spicy, the pepper can be cooked separately and added to the bowl before serving.

INSTRUCTIONS

To make in a slow cooker

1. Add all ingredients into the pot and stir to combine
2. Seal and cook on manual high for 20 minutes
3. Natural release 10 minutes then quick release

To make in a slow cooker

1. Add all ingredients and stir to combine
2. Cover and cook high 3-4 hours/low 6-7 hours
3. Add salt and pepper to taste
5. Garnish with fresh parsley

Feel free to experiment with whatever vegetables you happen to have on hand. Fresh herbs are always best, but in the wintertime (my favorite time to make this comforting soup) dry herbs are fine.



Meatball Soup

For a delicate yet filling warm bowl of comfort, try this main-dish soup!
Meatballs and rice make this substantial enough to serve on its own.

SERVES: 12-16 PREP TIME: 30 MIN COOKTIME: 20-25 MIN

INGREDIENTS

Meatball soup

- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup of celery (mostly greens), diced
- 8 large cabbage leaves, shredded
- 1/2 sweet bell pepper, diced
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups water meatballs (see recipe below)
- 1 cup cooked rice
- Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Meatballs

- 1 pound organic ground meat
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon dried onion
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Meatball soup

1. Heat olive oil in a large stock pot
2. Saute onion until just starting to wilt
3. Add garlic and saute one more minute
4. Add celery and cabbage greens and saute two minutes
5. Add bell pepper and saute one minute
6. Add broth and water
7. Bring to just under boiling then reduce to a simmer
8. Gently spoon meatballs into soup
9. Cook 20 minutes or until meatballs are done
10. Add rice, salt and pepper and serve

For meatballs

1. Mix ingredients together and form into meatballs
2. Bake in 350F oven for 20 minutes or until cooked through

This is my favorite meatball recipe, it can also be used to cook in tomato sauce for a spaghetti squash and sauce meal



WINTER SOUP

There's nothing like a nourishing, warming soup during cold winter months. Combined with a simple salad and a delicious cheesy biscuit, it makes a perfect holiday soup!

Winter Soup

YIELD: 10-12

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ribs celery, diced
- 1 white onion, minced
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1- 15 oz can diced tomatoes, with juice
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1/2 cup spinach
- 1 large zucchini, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups bone broth
- 1 tbsp dried basil
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tbsp dried parsley

Optional:

add 1 small hot pepper for a bit of a warming kick - if this is too spicy, the pepper can be cooked separately and added to the bowl before serving

INSTRUCTIONS

To make in the Instant Pot

1. Add all ingredients into the pot and stir to combine
2. Seal and cook on manual high for 20 minutes
3. Natural release 10 minutes then quick release

To make in a slow cooker

1. Add all ingredients and stir to combine
2. Cover and cook high 3-4 hours/low 6-7 hours
3. Add salt and pepper to taste Garnish with fresh parsley



Instant Pot Split Pea Soup

The addition of the dulse, an edible seaweed found in the North Atlantic, to this recipe adds a wonderful flavor plus a big boost of iodine and other trace elements our bodies need.

SERVES: 6 PREP TIME: 10 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 2 carrots, diced (1 cup dehydrated carrot slices)
- 2 ribs celery, diced (1/3 cup dehydrated celery)
- 1 onion, diced (1/3 cup dried onion)
- 1 pound dried split peas, picked over and washed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 6 cups bone broth
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons dulse (a type of seaweed), crumbled

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place all ingredients except salt, pepper, and dulse in an Instant Pot. Stir well to combine.

Instant Pot Cook Time :15 minutes
Natural Release approximately 15 minutes
Slow Cooker Time: 8 hours on low

2. Remove bay leaf

3. Add salt and pepper

4. Blend together with an immersion blender

5. Ladle into bowls to serve and top with 1 teaspoon crumbled dulse

If you want to make this as a vegetarian dish simply substitute vegetable broth or water for the bone broth.



ROASTED VEGETABLE SOUP WITH TOMATO AND FENNEL

This particular roasted vegetable soup is a favorite. After all, who doesn't love tomato soup? But part of what makes this so wonderful is the fennel which gives it a delicious flavor boost.

Roasted Vegetable Soup With Tomato And Fennel

SERVES: 3-4

PREP TIME: 20 MIN

COOKTIME: 40 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lbs. Roma tomatoes, halved
- 2 medium red bell peppers, deseeded and quartered
- 1 large fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 2 large carrots, cut in half lengthwise
- 2 medium shallots, outer skin removed and halved
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed and peeled
- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 T. fresh thyme leaves
- 4 c. organic chicken bone broth
- ½ c. full-fat coconut milk
- ½ c. fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F
2. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a baking mat and set aside
3. Arrange the tomatoes, red peppers, fennel, carrots, shallots, and garlic in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet
4. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and black pepper, to taste
5. Toss to combine and sprinkle veggies with fresh thyme leaves
6. Place baking sheet in preheated oven and roast until vegetables are tender and lightly charred, approximately 20-25 minutes
7. Transfer the roasted veggies and any juices from the baking sheet to a large soup pot and add the bone broth
8. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until hot and bubbly
9. Remove from heat; using an immersion blender, blend contents of the soup pot until completely smooth
10. Stir in the coconut milk and fresh basil, and serve

MAIN COURSE



Orange-Cranberry Bone-In Chicken Breasts

This moist and flavorful chicken breast is seared with tart and juicy cranberries and citrusy orange and garnished with some fresh cranberries for a joyful holiday dinner.

SERVES: 4-6

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 40 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 2 T. olive oil
- 2 lbs. bone-in chicken breasts, with skin
- 1½ tsp fresh sage, chopped
- 1½ t. fresh thyme leaves
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup fresh (or frozen) cranberries
- ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- ¼ cup honey, preferably local
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ¼ tsp ground cloves
- ⅛ tsp ground nutmeg

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the top oven rack in the center position and preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Season the chicken with sage and thyme; salt and black pepper, to taste.
3. Add olive oil to an ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Place seasoned chicken skin-side down and cook for approximately 4-5 minutes until it releases easily from the bottom of the pan. Turn the chicken and continue cooking for another 4-5 minutes on the remaining side.
4. While the chicken is browning, add the cranberries, orange juice, honey, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg to a small saucepan. Set to medium heat and bring to a gentle boil. Cook approximately 4-5 minutes or until the cranberries pop open and the sauce thickens slightly.
5. Pour one half of the orange-cranberry sauce over the browned chicken and transfer the skillet into the preheated oven. Roast until the chicken is fully cooked through and the sauce is bubbly for 25-30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through and reaches an internal temperature of 160°F.
6. Remove pan from oven and transfer chicken to a serving platter. Cover loosely and let rest for 5 minutes before serving. Top with remaining orange-cranberry sauce (or serve on the side) and serve with your choice of sides.



Mediterranean Roasted Vegetables

Bursting with sweet flavors and packed with nutrients, this rainbow of vegetables is seasoned with aromatic Herbs de Provence, making it the perfect side dish for the main course.

SERVES: 4-6

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

COOK TIME: 40-45 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. bag mini sweet peppers, seeded and cut in half
- 1 lb. Portobello mushroom caps, sliced1 large red onion, sliced
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and cut in half
- 2 t. garlic powder
- 2 t. Herbs de Provence (or Italian seasoning)
- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 T. balsamic vinegar
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add peppers, Portobello mushrooms, onion, and Brussels sprouts to a mixing bowl. Add garlic powder, Herbs de Provence, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar and toss to combine. Season generously with salt and black pepper.
3. Arrange seasoned vegetables on prepared baking sheet in a single layer, without overcrowding.
4. Place in preheated oven and roast for 40-45 minutes. Stir halfway through or until the vegetables develop a nice caramelized color.
5. Remove from oven and serve immediately.

Feel free to substitute any sturdy veggie you have on hand, such as carrots, fennel, parsnips, and eggplant.



Stuffed Beef Tenderloin with Portobello Mushrooms

Savory beef tenderloin stuffed with Portobello mushrooms and hearty herbs is a splendid meal to serve for any holiday dinner.

SERVES: 4-6 PREP TIME: 20 MIN COOK TIME: APPROX. 1 HR

INGREDIENTS

- 3 T. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 large leek, thinly sliced
- 12-oz. baby Portobello mushrooms, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 c. baby spinach, tough stems removed
- 2 t. fresh thyme leaves
- 2 t. fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
- 1½ T. fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ c. Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- 1½ lbs. beef tenderloin roast, butterflied
- 1 large red onion, cut into thick slices
- 4 shallots, halved
- 6 medium rainbow carrots, peeled and cut into 2" chunks
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 c. beef broth, preferably organic
- 2 T. unsalted butter

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the top oven rack in the center position and pre-heat the oven to 400°F.
2. Heat 2 T. of olive oil in a large, high-sided skillet over medium heat. Add the leeks, mushrooms, and garlic. Season with salt and black pepper and stir to combine.
3. Cook and stir occasionally for approximately 8-10 minutes or until most of the water from the mushrooms evaporates.
4. Add the spinach and fresh herbs. Continue cooking for approximately 1-2 minutes or until the spinach wilts. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. Place the butterflied beef tenderloin between two sheets of plastic wrap or wax paper and gently pound with a meat mallet or rolling pin to a ½-inch even thickness. Brush the surface of the beef with the remaining olive oil and generously season with salt and black pepper.
6. Stir the Parmesan cheese into the mushroom-spinach mixture. Evenly spread the mixture over the beef tenderloin, leaving a small border (½-1 inch) around the edges.
7. Roll up the tenderloin and secure with kitchen twine. Season the outside of the beef with additional salt and black pepper and place in the center of a roasting pan lined with the sliced red onions.
8. Place the shallots and carrots around the beef and tuck in the fresh thyme sprigs. Add the beef broth and place in the pre-heated oven to roast until the beef reads between 125°F-130°F* for medium-rare on an instant-read thermometer, approximately 35-40 minutes. (The temperature will rise another 5 degrees or so while resting).
9. Transfer the beef tenderloin to a serving platter and cover loosely with foil. If necessary, return the vegetables to the oven for another 10-15 minutes, or until fork-tender.
10. Transfer the veggies to the serving platter and pour the pan juices into a medium saucepan. Place over medium-high heat and reduce for approximately 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the butter and stir to emulsify the butter and thicken the sauce.
11. Cut the stuffed tenderloin and serve with the roasted vegetables and pan sauce.

SHEET PAN BEEF FAJITAS

Amazingly delicious tender chicken bursting with Mexican flavors, colors, and fun! This sheet pan dinner is one of the quickest meals you can serve for your holiday dinner.



Sheet Pan Beef Fajitas

SERVES: 6

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 15-20 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb. flank steak, sliced into thin strips
- 1 lb. bag mini sweet peppers, cut in half lengthwise and seeded
- 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 T. ground cumin
- 2 t. chili powder
- ½ t. cayenne pepper
- 1 t. red pepper flakes
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- ½ c. fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped
- 1 large lime, sliced

Optional:

- 1 large avocado, diced
- Corn tortillas or large lettuce leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

P1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.

2. Combine sliced flank steak, peppers, red onion, olive oil, cumin, chili powder, cayenne, and red pepper flakes in a large mixing bowl. Generously season with salt and pepper and mix until fully coated.

3. Spread the steak and pepper mixture onto the prepared baking sheet and roast in a preheated oven for 15-20 minutes or until the steak reaches the desired level of doneness and the peppers slightly caramelized.

4. Remove sheet pan from oven and sprinkle with fresh cilantro and a squeeze of fresh lime juice.

You can also serve it with Siete chips or lettuce wraps as a delicious option.



Herb-Roasted Chicken with Red Potatoes & Kale

Just imagine the chicken roasting on a sheet pan, infusing all the other ingredients with deliciously herby-juicy goodness!

SERVES: 6 PREP TIME: 10 MIN COOK TIME: 40-47 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lbs. red potatoes, cleaned and cut in half
- 1 large red onion, roughly chopped
- 6-8 whole garlic cloves, finely minced
- 3 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 T. fresh rosemary, minced
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 10-12 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 large lemon, cut into 8 wedges
- 2 c. fresh kale, washed, tough stems removed, and thinly sliced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. Toss the potatoes, red onions, minced garlic, olive oil, and fresh rosemary in a large mixing bowl. Generously season with salt and black pepper and arrange the veggies on the prepared baking sheet in a single layer.
3. Add the chicken thighs to the bowl and coat with any remaining rosemary and olive oil mixture. Season the chicken with additional salt and black pepper, if desired, and nestle in between the veggies along with the lemon wedges and sprigs of fresh thyme.
4. Roast in the preheated oven for 30-35 minutes or until the chicken is nearly done. Remove from the oven and stir in the fresh kale.
5. Return to the oven and roast for another 10-12 minutes, or until the chicken is completely cooked* and the kale is wilted.
6. Remove from oven and transfer chicken and potatoes to a serving platter and loosely cover with foil. Let chicken rest for 5 minutes before serving.

**Always cook meat to temperature, not by time. The minimum safe recommended cooking temperature for chicken thighs is 165°F (74°C). I recommend using this instant read thermometer*



Rosemary Garlic Beef Tenderloin

A classic meal for holiday dinners, this recipe adds a bit of rosemary and garlic to bring out the tenderloin's natural umami flavor.

SERVES: 6 PREP TIME: 10 MIN COOK TIME: 45-50 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 3 T. coconut oil, divided
- 16 oz. white mushrooms, sliced
- 2 large shallots, sliced
- 3 T. fresh rosemary leaves, chopped
- 3 T. garlic, minced
- Sea salt and black pepper, to taste
- 3 lbs. beef tenderloin roast
- 1 large red onion, sliced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place oven rack in the center position and pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. Melt 1 T. coconut oil in a large, high-sided skillet over medium heat. Add the mushroom and shallots and season with salt and black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 4-5 minutes or until the mushrooms and shallots develop a bit of color and soften. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl. Set aside.
3. Dissolve the remaining coconut oil in a small bowl and microwave. Add the rosemary and garlic to the oil and season with salt and black pepper, to taste. Then, rub the rosemary-garlic mixture on the beef.
4. Arrange the sliced red onion on the bottom of the same skillet and place the seasoned beef on top of the onions.
5. Put the mushroom and shallot mixture around the beef and place in the preheated oven for 45-50 minutes for medium-rare or longer for more well-done results.
6. Remove from oven and rest for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Allow the beef to rest at room temperature for 20-30 minutes before roasting and use an instant-read thermometer to check for doneness. For medium-rare, remove from the oven at 140°F. The temperature will rise to 145°F as it rests.

BEVERAGE



Non-Alcoholic Eggnog

This is made specially for those who love the luscious taste of classic eggnog, but are not fond of using raw eggs.

SERVES: 10-12

PREP TIME: 10 MIN

COOK TIME: 10-15 MIN

INGREDIENTS

12 eggs
1¼ c. organic sugar
4 c. organic whole milk
2 c. organic evaporated milk
2 c. organic half & half
2 t. vanilla extract
1 t. ground nutmeg

Garnish:

Cinnamon sticks

Dash nutmeg

Organic whipped cream

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine eggs and sugar in a bowl and whisk until well-combined. Transfer to a saucepan and stir in whole milk, vanilla extract, and ground nutmeg.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the evaporated milk and half and half. Set aside.
3. Turn the heat under the egg mixture to medium-low heat, stirring constantly to prevent the milk from scorching. When the mixture reaches 160 degrees on a candy thermometer, remove from heat and slowly whisk in evaporated milk mixture.
4. Pour the eggnog into an airtight container. Store in the fridge overnight or until thoroughly chilled. Serve in mugs and whipped cream, cinnamon sticks, or dash nutmeg. Enjoy!

*I simply want this to be non-alcoholic so everyone in the family can enjoy it.
But for adults, you can add some rum, bourbon, or cognac.*



Cranberry Moscow Mule

A festive splash of colors of this classic cocktail with a warm gingery flavor of a traditional Moscow Mule will surely make this your family's new favorite holiday drink!

YIELDS: 2 COCKTAILS

PREP TIME: 5 MIN

COOK TIME: N/A

INGREDIENTS

5 oz. premium vodka
2 oz. 100% cranberry juice
2 T. fresh lime juice
12 oz. ginger beer

Garnish: (optional)
fresh rosemary sprigs,
bottom leaves removed,
approximately 2-3" long
fresh cranberries
fresh lime wedges

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thread three fresh cranberries onto the bottom of each rosemary stem for the cranberry sprig garnish
2. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice; add vodka, cranberry juice, and lime juice, and then shake well. Pour into ice-filled copper mugs. Top off with beer and stir.
3. Garnish with rosemary sprigs and lime wedges.

You can also skip the vodka and replace with non-alcoholic ginger beer for a pleasant mocktail everyone can enjoy. Cheers!



**CINNAMON & CUMIN-INFUSED
CRANBERRY SPRITZER**

This delightful beverage combined with classic flavors--cranberry, orange, & cinnamon--is complemented by the unexpected addition of cumin.

Cinnamon and Cumin-Infused Cranberry Spritzer

SERVES: 6

PREP TIME: 5 MIN

COOK TIME: 10- MIN

INGREDIENTS

1 c. fresh or frozen cranberries
¼ c. honey
½ c. water
2 T whole cumin seeds
4 cinnamon sticks
3 c. unsweetened cranberry juice
2 medium organic oranges, each cut into 8 wedges

Optional: ½ c. vodka
3 c. sparkling water

Optional Garnish:
Additional cinnamon sticks
6 long rosemary sprigs, lower leaves removed, and threaded with fresh cranberries

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a small saucepan over medium heat, add cranberries, honey, water, cumin seeds, and cinnamon sticks. Stir occasionally while cooking for 8-10 minutes or until the spices are intensely aromatic.
2. Remove from heat and pour into a non-reactive bowl. Add cranberry juice, orange wedges, and vodka, if desired. Place in the refrigerator for several hours to overnight.
3. Once completely chilled, remove from the refrigerator and squeeze the orange wedges before discarding. Strain the mixture and discard the solids.
4. Fill serving glasses with ice and add ⅓ seasoned cranberry juice mixture. Pour each glass with sparkling water and stir. Sweeten with additional honey, if desired. Garnish with cinnamon sticks and/or rosemary sprigs.

For an adults-only version, add a little vodka, to taste or skip it for a delightful mocktail everyone can enjoy.



SPARKLING POMEGRANATE COCKTAIL

This cold, sparkling water with a splash of pomegranate juice makes this refreshing cocktail a festive fizz!

Sparkling Pomegranate Cocktail

YIELD: 2 COCKTAILS

PREP TIME: 5 MIN

COOK TIME: N/A

INGREDIENTS

4 oz. citrus-flavored vodka,
chilled
6 oz. 100% Pomegranate
juice, chilled
3 T. fresh lime juice
4 oz. cold sparkling water

Optional garnish:

lime wedges

fresh pomegranate arils

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice cubes, then add vodka, pomegranate, and lime juice. Shake well.
2. Strain liquid mixture and pour it into two champagne glasses. Top with sparkling water.

Serve in holiday-themed glasses for even more seasonal cheer!



DESSERT

Orange Cranberry Scones

Light and flaky scones with the fresh and tangy flavor of oranges and pops of tart and sweet cranberries. Drizzled with orange glaze for an attractive finish.

YIELDS: 12 PREP TIME: 15 MIN + 30 MIN TO CHILL BAKING TIME: 18-22 MIN

INGREDIENTS

Scone Ingredients:

- 2 c. GF flour blend (such as King Arthur) + ¼ c. for work surface
- 3 t. baking powder
- ½ c. granulated sugar
- ¼ t. salt
- ½ c. cold unsalted butter
- ½ c. heavy cream
- ¼ c. sour cream
- 1 large egg
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- ¼ t. orange extract
- 1 t. orange zest, preferably organic

1 c. raisins

Glaze Ingredients:

- 2/3 c. powdered sugar
- 1-2 T. fresh orange juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a large, rimmed baking parchment paper. Set aside.

2. Mix dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl: 2 cups flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Cut butter with a fork until butter is in pea-sized pieces.

3. In a separate bowl, mix the wet ingredients: heavy cream, sour cream, egg, vanilla extract, orange extract, and orange zest. Whisk to combine. Fold the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until combined. Add in the raisins and stir until mixed.

4. Knead the batter into a ball. Press the dough down into a 6" x 10" rectangle. Cut in half lengthwise, and then each half into 3 rectangles. Then, cut each rectangle diagonally to create triangle-shaped pieces.

5. Transfer the scones to the prepared baking sheet, leaving 1-2" between them. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before baking.

4. Pre-heat oven to 400°F, then add the baking sheet to the oven when ready. Bake the scones for 18-22 minutes or until they are nicely golden brown. Remove from oven and cool for 5-10 minutes.

5. While the scones are cooling, prepare the orange glaze by mixing the powdered sugar and orange juice together in a small bowl.

6. Drizzle the warm scones with orange glaze.



**POACHED PEARS WITH HONEY
MASCARPONE CREAM**

This elegant dressed-down poached pear is simmered in warming spices and topped with mildly sweet cream and a dash of cinnamon.

Poached Pears with Honey Mascarpone Cream

SERVES: 6 PREP TIME: 10 MIN COOK TIME: 25-30 MIN

INGREDIENTS

Poached Pears

Ingredients:

- 3 c. Riesling or other sweet white wine
- 1/3 c. honey
- 3 whole cinnamon sticks
- 2 t. whole cloves
- 3 whole star anise
- 6 firm pears, peeled
- Dash ground cinnamon, for garnish

Honey Mascarpone Cream

Ingredients:

- 8 oz. mascarpone cheese, softened to room temperature
- 3 T. half & half
- 3 T. runny honey
- 2 t. pure vanilla extract
- 2 t. organic orange zest

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine wine, honey, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and star anise in a large skillet. Simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring occasionally, for approximately 5 minutes or until the honey is melted and the spices become fragrant.
2. Halve the pears and carefully remove the seeds with the tip of a small spoon.
3. Add the pears to the simmering mixture. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until the pears are tender.
4. While the pears are poaching, whip the softened mascarpone cheese and half & half until light and dry using a mixer.
5. Add the honey, vanilla extract, and orange zest and whip until combined. Place in the fridge to chill before serving.
6. Remove pears from heat and cool slightly. Serve with a spoonful of the honey mascarpone cream and a dash of cinnamon.

The key to success with this recipe is to use pears that are not quite ripe. I prefer naturally firm pears, such as the red Anjou used here.



MARVELOUS MOLASSES COOKIES

This moist, dark cookie boasts warming spices and uses turbinado sugar to add sweetness and deepen the decadent flavor.

Marvelous Molasses Cookies

YIELD: 30-32 PREP TIME: 1 HR & 40 MIN BAKE TIME: 12 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup butter
- 1 cup turbinado sugar
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup molasses
- 2 cups GF flour blend (such as King Arthur)
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- extra sugar and cinnamon for rolling

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt the butter
2. Add sugar and egg, beat until smooth
3. Add molasses and stir to combine well
4. Combine dry ingredients and then add to wet ingredients
5. Cover and chill the dough for 1 hour
6. Mix cinnamon and sugar together - 7 parts sugar 1 part cinnamon
8. Preheat oven to 350 F
9. Roll dough into 1" balls, roll in cinnamon sugar mix
10. Place on ungreased cookie sheet (cookies will flatten and spread)

Bake 9-10 minutes, let cool on a wire rack



Flourless Black Bean Brownies

Before you think, "Um...no" let me assure you, these are delicious! I've brought these to a number of different gatherings. Everyone is always amazed at how moist and tasty these brownies are. That makes it perfect for those who need to eat gluten free.

YIELD: 16 PREP TIME: 20 MIN BAKE TIME: 30 MIN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ C. black beans
- 2 eggs
- 1 heaping T. ground flax seed
- 3 tablespoons coconut oil, melted
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 pinch sea salt
- ½ t. baking powder
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 3/4 cup evaporated cane juice crystals
- 2 t. instant espresso powder
- 1 C. dark Belgian chocolate w/almonds, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. Lightly grease an 8x8 square baking dish
3. Add remaining ingredients (except chocolate); blend until smooth; pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish
4. Top with chopped chocolate
5. Bake in the preheated oven until the top is dry and the edges start to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 30 minutes



Olive Oil Cranberry Bundt Cake

This moist and soft bundt cake is filled with sweet, tart cranberries in every bite!

YIELD: 10-12

PREP TIME: 15 MIN

BAKE TIME: 1 HOUR

INGREDIENTS

- 6 egg whites
- 1 1/2 cups evaporated cane juice crystals
- 3/4 cup extra virgin cold pressed olive oil
- 2 cups "GF flour blend (such as King Arthur)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup buttermilk, organic
- 2 cups chopped fresh cranberries
- 2 tablespoons orange zest

If desired make a simple orange juice glaze:

- 1 cup evaporated cane juice crystals
- 1/4 cup orange juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
2. Butter a 9-inch bundt pan and dust with flour. In a bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff
3. Beat in the cane juice crystals until fluffy. Whisk together with orange juice to make the orange glaze.
4. Mix in the olive oil in a separate bowl, mix the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg
5. Alternately mix the egg white mixture and the buttermilk into the flour mixture until smooth
6. Fold in the cranberries and orange zest
7. Transfer the mixture to the prepared Bundt pan
8. Bake 1 hour in the preheated oven, until a knife inserted in the cake comes out clean

This cake can also be made with blueberries instead of cranberries, simply omit the cinnamon and nutmeg.

About the Author



Mira Dessy is The Ingredient Guru. A holistic nutrition professional, author, and a popular public speaker, she knows that it's not just what you eat, but what's in what you eat. Dessy is a Board Certified Holistic Health Practitioner whose mission is to educate and empower consumers.

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