

10 EASY VEGETARIAN RECIPES TO IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS!



PAUL BARRETT

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SMASHWORDS EDITION

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Recipe 1 – Sweet Potato and Chestnut Gratin



This is a great Sunday dinner centre-piece, which works really well with steamed broccoli or flash-fried spring greens. The chestnuts give it a nice festive twist for a Christmas dinner option - recommended with lashings of cranberry sauce!

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 tbs olive oil
900g sweet potatoes or a mix with good firm potatoes - peeled & sliced approx 5mm thick
4 cloves garlic - crushed
250g chestnuts - grilled, shelled and roughly chopped
300ml double cream or 50/50 with milk
1 red chilli (optional) - de-seeded and thinly sliced
1/2 tsp dried rosemary
3 tsp lemon juice
Approx. 1 cup grated mature cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 190C/Gas Mark 5 and butter a large gratin dish.
2. And sweet potato slices, chestnuts, garlic, oil, half the cream, rosemary, chilli if required, and salt and pepper to a large mixing bowl and toss until coated.



3. Layer the slices/mixture in the butter dish and build up until full.
4. Pour over the remaining cream.
5. Cover the dish with foil and bake for approx. 35 mins.
6. Take off the foil, sprinkle with grated cheese and bake uncovered for a further 30 minutes until crisp and brown.
7. Serve immediately.

Recipe 2 - Butternut Squash and Broad Bean Tagine



This is one of my favourite recipes and generally will make it for any guests we have if I don't make a curry! It's easy, and above all, enjoyable to make, especially the initial stages. I find you can experiment pretty while widely with the combinations of the spices depending on personal taste.

This is also a great one for cold winter evenings served with lots of harissa.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 2 tbs Ras-el-hanout
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp chilli powder or cayenne (optional)
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- Pinch saffron
- 4 tbs lemon juice
- 1 large Butternut squash, peeled, de-seeded and cut into 2cm cubes
- 300g frozen broad beans
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 small onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 500ml hot vegetable stock (ideally from bouillon powder)
- 1 tbs honey

Method

1. Mix all of the spices together with half the lemon juice in a large mixing bowl.



2. Gently sauté the chopped onion and garlic in the olive oil until soft, but not browned.
3. Add the butternut squash, stock and lemon juice and simmer for about 30 minutes.
4. Add the frozen broad beans and return to the boil. Simmer for a further 20 minutes.
5. Stir in the honey and season.

Serve hot with couscous and any combination of harissa, fresh dates, flaked almonds and chopped coriander.

Recipe 3 - Various Easy-to-Make Quiches



This is a very flexible recipe which produces an easy to use pastry due to the cheese content, and can be adapted with any of your favourite veggie fillings. I have been selling these at the country market in Leek for the last year or so, and I generally sell out pretty quickly!

This is the basic recipe and I've included a few of my favourite variations. I also recommend broccoli and cheese or butternut squash and red pepper. The quantities below are for single quiches, but I recommend making them in quantity as these also freeze well.

Ingredients

Pastry

115g plain flour
60g butter
60g margarine
1/2 tsp English mustard powder
1/2 tsp paprika
Pinch of salt
60g grated mature cheese
50ml water

For the filling

2 large eggs
75ml single cream
Salt and pepper
Vegetables of choice (see variants below)

Method

1. Mix all of the pastry ingredients in a food processor until it resembles fine breadcrumbs, then slowly add water to bind to a dough. Knead until smooth, wrap in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.
2. Beat the eggs, cream and salt and pepper together.
3. When chilled, roll out the pastry and line a 9" flan tin.
4. Preheat the oven to 200C. Put a baking tray in the oven.
5. Add the vegetables to half-fill the tin and pour the egg and cream mixture over. Top with grated cheese.
6. Bake for 35-40 minutes or until brown. Serve hot or cold.

Quiche Variations

1. Spinach and Ricotta



Ingredients

To the egg and cream mixture, and;
1 400g tin chopped spinach, drained
1 small tub ricotta cheese, drained
Pinch of nutmeg
Mix together until even.

2. Leek and Cheese



Line the pastry tray with;
1 finely chopped leek, sautéed in butter with a pinch of thyme
Add extra grated cheese before baking.

3. Leek, Mushroom and Cheese



As 2 above, with the addition of 6 finely sliced mushrooms sautéed in butter.

4. Mediterranean Vegetable



Finely chop/slice;
1 medium courgette
1 red pepper
1 red onion

Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast in a preheated oven at 200C for approximately 25 minutes. When cool, add to the pastry tray as above.

Recipe 4 - Aubergine and Chick Pea Curry



This recipe combines two of my favourite ingredients, both often found in North African cooking, but they work fantastically here. I greatly recommend using dried chick peas for this, which although take a bit of preparation give this the texture and flavour that you can't quite get from the tinned ones. This is also a nice child-friendly recipe if the chilli is omitted.

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 large or 2 medium aubergines - cubed, salted for 1/2 hour and rinsed
- 2 large onions, roughly chopped
- 150g dried chickpeas - soaked overnight and simmered for 1 hour
- 3 tbs sunflower or vegetable oil
- 1 green pepper, de-seeded and cubed
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1/2 tsp fenugreek
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 green chilli, de-seeded and chopped
- 1 handful fresh coriander, chopped
- Salt and pepper



Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and add onions, garlic, chilli, ginger and spices. Sauté gently for 5 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes and simmer to reduce for a further 5 minutes.
3. Add the aubergine cubes, pepper and chick peas with 300ml water. Stir well, cover and simmer gently for 25 minutes.
4. Add half the chopped coriander and season to taste. Stir well.
5. Serve with rice or naan bread, with remaining coriander sprinkled on top.

Recipe 5 – Harissa



Although this is not strictly a meal, I find that this provides such a good compliment to so many dishes (if you like to increase the heat as I do!), that it is worth including the recipe. There are a number of variations to this, but this one is my favourite.

Ingredients

3 red peppers, halved and de-seeded
2 tbs olive oil
3 cloves garlic, crushed
2 red chillies, de-seeded and finely chopped
1 1/2 tsp coriander seeds
1/2 tsp caraway seeds
Salt and pepper

Method

1. Grill the halved peppers skin side up until black. Place in a bowl tightly covered with cling film. When cooled you should be able to remove the skin easily. Roughly chop and set aside.
2. Dry roast the coriander and caraway seeds for approx. 1 minute only. Cool and grind to a powder in a pestle and mortar.
3. Place peppers, spices, and all other ingredients into a food processor and blend until fairly smooth.
4. Season to taste.

Transfer to a clean sterilised jar. This should keep in the fridge for up to 3 weeks.

Recipe 6 - Ratatouille Pasta



This is another recipe which is a great favourite with my children and has become a firm weekly favourite. It basically combines a traditional oven-roasted ratatouille base with a pan-fried tomato and garlic sauce which is then mixed with ready cooked pasta. I have found I can vary this not just with the pasta and vegetables used, but also the core herbs used in the tomato sauce.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

Vegetables

1 large aubergine, cut into 2cm cubes.
2 large onions, sliced
2 large courgettes, cut into 2cm cubes
2 red or yellow peppers, roughly diced
4 tbs olive oil
Salt and pepper

Tomato Sauce

2 tbs olive oil
2 cloves garlic, sliced
1 tin chopped tomatoes
4 large ripe tomatoes, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
1 1/2 tsp dried basil
1 tbs soy sauce
Pinch sugar
Salt and pepper

300g dried pasta

Method

1. Toss all the vegetables together with the olive oil and seasoning in a large roasting tin and place in a pre-heated oven at 200C for approx. 1 hour until soft and beginning to brown.



2. For the tomato sauce, add the sliced garlic to the oil and simmer gently for 1 minute, without browning.

3. Add the tinned and fresh tomatoes to the pan with the bay leaf and gently simmer for 40 minutes until reduced. Add the sugar, soy sauce, and seasoning to taste and take off the heat.

4. Cook the pasta as per the guidelines (i.e. 8 to 10 minutes), and drain.

5. Toss together the vegetables, sauce and pasta and reheat gently when ready to serve.

6. Serve with grated cheese and fresh basil leaves.

Recipe 7 - Carrot and Celery Pilaf



This recipe is very simple to make, and also quick to cook, but perfect for entertaining a number of people. This is one of my wife's favourites so I get to cook this quite regularly! Again the chilli content can be moderated to make it more child friendly, although I find it does add a nice extra dimension, and is not overly fiery.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 4 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 3 carrots, coarsely grated
- 3 celery sticks, including leaves, finely diced
- 3 spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 fresh green chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
- 50g flaked almonds
- 200g cooked red lentils
- 400g cooked brown basmati rice
- 50ml orange juice
- 200g light vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Heat 2 tbs of the oil in a large frying pan and add the onion until softened but not browned.



2. Add the carrots, celery, spring onions, chilli and almonds and stir fry for 3 minutes. Place in a bowl and set aside.
3. Add the remaining oil to the pan and cook the rice and lentils for 2 minutes until heated through. Add the stock, orange juice and season to taste. Simmer for 2 further minutes.
4. Add the vegetables back into the pan and combine to warm through.
5. Serve immediately with fresh bread.

Recipe 8 - Cheese and Bean Quesadillas



This recipe works brilliantly as a light lunch or as a special mid-morning snack! The fillings can be varied widely but I find that this one works really well and is not as unhealthy as other combinations.

Serves 2

Ingredients

2 tbs sunflower oil
4 large flour tortillas
2 large carrots, coarsely grated
50g mature cheddar cheese, grated
2 spring onions, chopped
1 large clove garlic, halved
1 fresh green chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
1 400g tin kidney beans, drained
Small handful of coriander, roughly chopped
Salt and pepper

Method

1. Mix the carrots, cheese, chilli, spring onions and kidney beans together in a large bowl until combined and the beans are slightly crushed.



2. Add the coriander and season to taste.

3. Rub one side of each tortilla with the cut side of the garlic.

4. Place half the mixture on the tortilla, ensuring garlic side is on the outside. Sandwich together with the other tortilla.

5. Add the oil to a large frying pan and fry gently for 2 minutes. Flip to ensure both sides are lightly browned.

6. Cut into pizza-style wedges and serve with salsa or guacamole.

Recipe 9 – Caponata



I have only discovered this dish relatively recently but have found that it is that rare thing - just as delicious hot or cold. I find it also improves if left in the fridge and eaten cold the day after, especially with crusty bread and a green salad. This traditionally also has capers in it, but I am not a great fan and so omitted them.

Serves 4, or 6 as a side dish

Ingredients

3 tbs olive oil
2 large aubergines, cut into 1.5cm cubes
3 small celery stalks, finely diced with the leaves
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tin good plum tomatoes
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
Handful sultanas
Handful green olives, thinly sliced
2 tbs balsamic vinegar
1 tbs Demerara sugar
Handful chopped parsley
Salt and pepper

Method

1. Place the aubergine cubes in a colander and sprinkle generously with salt and toss together. Leave for one hour to bring out the juices then rinse thoroughly and drain.
2. In a large saucepan, heat half the olive oil and gently sauté the celery, onion and garlic until soft but not browned.



3. Add the tin of tomatoes, including juice and simmer to reduce for 10 minutes.
4. Add the sugar, balsamic vinegar, sultanas and olives and simmer for a further 10 minutes, then take off the heat.
5. In a separate frying pan, and the remaining olive oil and fry the aubergine cubes until tender.



6. Add all the ingredients together and simmer for a final 10 minutes. Season to taste.
7. Allow to cool and stir through the chopped parsley. Serve with a final drizzle of olive oil.

Recipe 10 - Thai Stuffed Peppers



This is a Thai variation of a classic vegetarian staple, and there are countless variations to it, so it doesn't need to get boring. I have even tried it with a whole marrow!

Serves 4

Ingredients

4 large red or yellow peppers, carefully cored whole, with lids retained.
4 tbs vegetable oil
2 small onions, finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic, crushed
1 fresh red chilli, de-seeded and finely chopped
1 courgette, roughly chopped
80g creamed coconut, chopped
6 fresh Thai basil leaves, chopped (optional)
Handful of fresh coriander, chopped
3 tbs soy sauce

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.
2. Lightly brush the peppers with vegetable oil and put them in a roasting tin for 10 minutes until softened.



3. Heat the remaining oil in a wok and stir fry the onions, garlic and chilli for 3 minutes.
4. Add the courgettes, coconuts, herbs and soy sauce and simmer for 5 minutes.



5. Pour the mixture into the pepper shells, place the lids on top and return to the oven for 10 minutes.
6. Serve at once with rice, stir fried spring greens or a range of dipping sauces.