

Advanced Vegetarian Cookery

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Published by Kevin Dwyer at Smashwords

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Advanced Vegetarian Cookery

Introduction

These recipes are mostly my own creations from being vegetarian on and off for 20 years or so, many are a variation on a theme. The essence of these recipes is that they are nutritious and have extremely tasty sauces. I also partly intended this to give people ideas on how to cook tofu / bean curd. The tofu in these recipes can be replaced with other beans of choice. Dried beans or chick peas are very economical.

Beginnings

Way back I went on a cooking course and learnt simple recipes like lasagne with green lentil tomato sauce with a wholemeal roux layered on pasta sheets. Other than that the Cranks recipe book was an inspiration with its carrot cake, stuffed aubergines with cumin, chick peas and spinach and also their simple Armenian soup. I'd also like to give a mention to the chef from the Hare Krishna's at Camden, Peter O'Grady for his quick tip on how to cook aubergines which I could never seem to get right.

[Fried Aubergines](#)

Wash and slice at about 10 mm. Fry with a lump of butter in a non-stick pan for 20 mins or until the consistency changes. They go from being light coloured to a darker and soft gooey consistency that is also crispy which is when they taste amazing. Stir them around also.

Sometimes when frying food becomes too dry, a saucepan lid in the pan over the vegetables will keep the steam and moisture in for a while, then remove again to crispen up. This also works well for mushrooms.

[Mushrooms in Red Wine with Garlic and Parmesan Cheese](#)

Fry the mushrooms and sliced garlic in butter for a couple of minutes, don't burn the garlic. Add red wine, probably about a third of a wine glass, boil down to more of a saucy consistency. Add finely grated parmesan and serve.

[Hummous](#)

Homemade hummous has the benefit of being low salt if you want and tastes not at all like shop bought. One can use canned chick peas and in fact drop a hand blender straight into the tin but I'm suggesting dried chick peas as they taste way

fresher. I rarely measure anything, in fact just cook according to proportion so for this recipe soak some dried chick peas overnight, they do swell up so go for about half of what you think you'll need, mug full and a half may be ok depending on how much you want to make. Cook (boil) the chick peas until they are soft and don't chuck away the water, about an hour. Add juice of a lemon or lime, tablespoon of olive oil, and tahini (sesame seed paste). Pinch of sea salt. Blend or mash by hand.

[Green Beans with Goat's Cheese](#)

Fry green beans in a little butter till just cooked. Turn off the heat, add goat's cheese and serve with fresh French bread. Some varieties of the tinned green beans are good for this too.

[Salad](#)

Typical salad ingredients based around a Waldorf salad. Lettuce or baby spinach, walnuts, sliced avocado, chopped vine tomatoes, red pepper, apple, cucumber and sunflower seeds.

Add dressing - olive oil, Balsamic vinegar, juiced lemon, pinch of sea salt, ground black pepper, chopped up garlic and a mustard powder. No need to overdo the mustard powder, it should just sit there slightly in suspension in the stirred dressing. Add fresh chopped sage too. Use roughly twice as much olive oil as vinegar so the dressing should end up thick rather than watery.

Dressing also goes nicely mixed into grated carrot, and on black olives and cubed feta. Some of the supermarkets own brand of olives in the tins seem to have the least preservatives.

[Tofu Nut Roast](#)

One of my very first recipes on the mission to make bean curd more interesting. Easy to make and tastes nice whether it emerges out of the oven as a perfect looking nut roast or somewhere in-between. Fry/ cook finely chopped up onion and garlic in butter, turn off heat. Add mashed tofu, cashew nuts (brake up a little), breadcrumbs from toast, teaspoon or so of stock, few leaves fresh sage is nice or a sprinkling of mixed herbs. Mix around and add a drop of water if it's too dry. Mixture should be just moist and kind of springy.

Place in a loaf baking tin, top with grated cheddar cheese and bake in the oven on 150 C until mixture is brown and crispy on top. Up to half an hour on a pre-heated oven but keep an eye on it. Food that smells cooked usually is!

Serve in the summer with mayo, some of the salad above and boiled new potatoes with butter and fresh parsley. Or in winter as a full roast dinner.

Lentils etc.

Mostly I use red lentils as they don't need soaking and cook quickly, about 20-25 minutes and they're done. Other than that readymade dried soup mixes that take maybe 45 mins are also good. Green lentils can take almost an hour and barley is similar. Beans etc. need soaking overnight which is why many of these recipes have tofu (soya bean curd) as a protein ingredient. Best bought from a Chinese supermarket for value and taste but mostly I use the one from mainstream supermarkets.

Do remember for vegetarian cooking there needs to be a mix of proteins from beans, grains and nuts. I'd recommend whole grain brown rice. The brown rice takes about 20-25mins to cook.

Red Tai Tofu

Ingredients - 1 onion, tofu (bean curd), tahini, peanut butter, 3 cloves of garlic, stock, red pepper sauce, olive oil, tomato puree, flaxseed mix (or hemp), water.

Personally I think vegetarian cookery is way harder than meat so to get a recipe to come out with an equally rich, nourishing and warming sauce is quite an achievement and here's how to do it. When I'm cooking I look at how much of each ingredient is in or going into the pan so that there is not too much of any one ingredient. This relates to colour and the need for a mix of proteins (and some greens in there too). Other than that I make it up based on what's in the kitchen. Also, I don't measure anything though I generally cook for about four in a large wok or non-stick pan.

Generally this means half the food goes in the fridge and gets eaten the next day. I also cook fast. 20 mins to throw it all in the pan, tidy up and leave it simmer for 30 - 40 minutes.

Slice onion in half end to end and then slice again same way into pieces which will randomly fall apart. Fry with butter and garlic. Add about a tube of tomato puree or a small tin full. Don't skimp on the puree! Heaped teaspoon of Tahini (sesame seed paste). About a desert spoonful of organic crunchy peanut butter. Add tofu chopped large.

Add boiling water from the kettle, not too much at this point as more can be added later but enough to cover everything by about a centimetre but this stops anything burning. Add stock, about a teaspoonful, olive oil - tablespoonful, red pepper sauce as Tabasco to taste (few shakes of bottle) or to taste. Add dessertspoonful of Flax - Seed mix which includes linseeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and goji berries from supermarkets or health food stores as this bulks up the nutritional value of the meal.

Stir all this well, careful not to mash the tofu and see how thick the sauce is. Usually I will add more water and then leave to boil down for 30 minutes. Most of this is already cooked so it's about the sauce - should end up rich red coloured, little bit of dark oil here and there and thick enough not to be at all watery.

Serve with brown rice or mash.

Ingredients - onion, tofu (bean curd), tahini, peanut butter, garlic, stock, red pepper sauce, olive oil, tomato puree, flaxseed mix (or hemp), water.

Much of this winter 2011 we've eaten sprouts as the greens in the recipes for the simple reason my father has bought sprouts when he's out shopping. Luckily I have grown to love sprouts but replace the sprouts with something else if that's what you like

[Poor Man's Asparagus Soup](#)

Asparagus is a mighty fussy vegetable but extremely tasty and nutritious. The old fashioned way to cook it is standing upright steamed. As you may guess, I fry it in the pan with a little butter for a few minutes. Might seem like we're on a cholesterol fest here, but, who's going to serve asparagus without butter ? I would recommend not buying asparagus in a sealed plastic bag as the supermarkets have started to sell it because maybe 50 % of the time it's gone off, hence the following recipe ...

Ingredients

Mushrooms, brussel sprouts, yellow lentils, half an onion, stock, butter, olive oil, cashews/ pistachios, pepper, water to cover over. Chilli and parmesan optional.

Having overcome the disappointment about what I was looking forward to I made this soup. Cook the yellow lentils for half an hour first in boiling water. Then add all the ingredients together in one pan and cook for another half hour. Basically the yellow lentils take an hour to cook and cook better in plain water, they'll take ages to cook in a thick sauce. stock contains salt so I rarely add extra.

Optional chilli sauce since I mostly like chilli sauce and prefer it to black pepper in some dishes. Liquidize until smooth. Serve with grated Parmesan or cream and a sprinkle of cayenne pepper for presentation.

That was an easy recipe and just a matter of getting to amount of water right for a smooth soup. Back to a more complex mix of ingredients, colours, textures and flavours. Spring greens are very tasty too.

[Stew](#)

Ingredients - Aubergine (fried with butter 20 mins), tomato puree, handful of hazelnuts, 6 oz. chestnut mushrooms, tea spoon of peanut butter & same for tahini, brussel sprouts, olive oil, flax-sunflower-pumpkin goji berry mix seed mix, one and a half teaspoons of stock, chilli pepper sauce, 3 oz. red lentils, garlic, onion, , water to cover and boil down to thick sauce.

After cooking the aubergine everything else goes in to make a large pan of stew, about a wok full in fact. Usually I add enough water to help the lentils cook but also I add more water than I want the final dish to have so that it can boil away for 30 minutes without burning.

I rarely burn these recipes as that would make me tearful considering the amount of food going into them. Also I set a timer for 15- 20 minute intervals and usually the dishes get stirred every 5 minutes. The heat builds up as they are cooking and the gas gets turned down if it's boiling away too rapidly. Simmering with a few bubbles with the pan lid on keeps the heat in and saves on gas. These recipes are a result of my mum and I taking it in turns to cook over the years so there's usually a couple of sets of eyes on the pan to make sure dinner arrives safely !

Serve with mashed potato - once the potatoes are cooked, mash with a little butter, fresh ground black pepper and a splash of soya milk. No lumps please!

Tinned chestnut is the crème de la crème for making a sauce. I don't use it that often as it is so rich I only ever need half a tin. This recipe should come out rather like the richness and consistency of gravy made with stock from a roast.

[Chestnut Soup](#)

Ingredients - Half tin of chestnut puree, half a tube of tomato puree, half an onion, garlic, Tabasco, few mushrooms, potatoes, tahini, few sprouts, stock, butter, hazelnuts, olive/ walnut oil, 3 oz. red lentils. (Ingredients in small quantities).

The odd thing I remember about this recipe is that the ingredients are all in equally small quantities, handful of this, handful of that. Fry the onion first then add everything else and cover with water. The lentils will take 20 -25 minutes to cook. Liquidize.

[Beef Bourginion????](#)

Relax, take a deep breath. This recipe takes basic dried soya chunks (otherwise known as dog food) and turns them into something that tastes, well, nicely edible.

Ingredients - Dried soya chunks, 1 large onion, half a tin of chestnut puree, tomato puree, few chopped fresh tomatoes, few cloves of garlic, stock, butter, walnut oil, red/ orange pepper in large chopped pieces, Tabasco, sunflower seeds, few linseeds, red wine, water to cover.

About three quarters of a milk pan of soya chunks. These swell up so use an appropriate amount, pour boiling water over them and leave for 20 minutes. Drain and rinse several times depending on how mucky they are.

Fry the chunks until they are really quite burnt and maybe don't use your best pan. Being burnt is what makes them taste like meat and this takes about 20 minutes. They should taste like a nice snack at this point. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer down to a sauce for 45 minutes.

Serve with brown rice and optional yogurt which will make up for the sauce if it dries out too much.

Bolognese

Ingredients - aubergine, 1 large onion, 6 oz. mushrooms (leave whole), handful of hazelnuts, 4 oz. red lentils, garlic, butter, chilli olive oil, red pepper, sunflower seeds, teaspoon shelled hemp, 500 grams of chopped vine tomatoes (or a tube of tomato puree), water. Black pepper and grated Parmesan. Tastes just like meat Bolognese.

You'll notice slight variations in the ingredients depending on what was bought and in the cupboard. For example this recipe has chilli olive oil which was an attractive bottle at the supermarket I couldn't resist and adds a unique flavour. I'd recommend not letting the chillies fall into the pan as it's fairly hot anyways. The grated Hemp is made by the same people that make the flax seed mix and available in Holland and Barrat.

Cook up the aubergine for 20 minutes and get everything else ready whilst it's cooking. Add the rest of the ingredients. Simmer until the sauce is thickened or the lentils have cooked away to nothing, about 40 minutes. Serve on spaghetti with black pepper and Parmesan.

Super Soup

Ingredients - Asparagus, onion, garlic, butter, olive oil, hemp, 1 large potato, linseeds, apple, raisins, sunflower seeds, stock, red lentils, tomatoes, hazelnuts, water. Parmesan.

Asparagus is something of a power food when it comes to nutrition I think and so this is the asparagus soup. Adding in the hemp, hazelnuts and seeds makes for a wholesome dish. With this recipe everything can just go in the pan and simmer for half an hour. Liquidise. Parmesan is optional as is the cheese in all of these dishes. I tend to eat less cheese recently and take vitamins instead. Mozzarella sliced and dropped into soups is also nice. This soup should be a smooth texture once liquidised.

Serve with wholegrain bread.

Note on soups. Soups can be all pretty much the same, the common denominator is usually a potato. For example the Cranks Armenian soup is potato, red lentils, onion, cumin and apricots, liquidised and this very simple soup gives the inspiration to try blending different ingredients to form a taste that doesn't really relate to any of them. Though my soups have slightly varying contents, just change the ingredients, for a fresh tomato soup go for a pound of tomatoes, a large potato, onion, garlic, butter, herbs, olive oil and a half stock cube. Adding red lentils is a cheap way to make more soup. Lentil soup, otherwise known as dhal can be done with butter, garlic, lentils, onion, curry powder, cubed coconut (and lemon juice), parsley for decoration.

[Curry](#)

Ingredients - pack of asparagus (chopped), Brussel sprouts, 1 large onion, 1 pound of chopped vine tomatoes, red lentils, hazelnuts, stock, dessert spoonful of Pataks curry paste, peanut butter, sesame seed paste, flax-goji-sunflower seed mix, 2 roughly chopped carrots, butter, mushrooms, walnut oil.

I think all vegies like a veg curry so I'll finish with this one which is a real winter warmer, especially when served on a plentiful amount of piping hot mash. By now you may realise that the ingredients are not weighed but proportional to each other so just throw all of this in the pan and cook it. From start to finish should be within one hour.

[Simple Soup](#)

This is a more recent recipe, cooked the same way as the other recipes only we have a recent addition to the kitchen in the form of a Vitamix blender. It gets used a lot but for soups and stews I'll blend spinach, maybe pak choi or greens and in this case the crinkly cabbage and then add them in. This creates mix of blended and unblended, as suits one's own taste.

Large courgette, half a crinkly cabbage, onion, Antony Wirrel Thompson stock cube, tahini / sesame seed paste, chia seeds, garlic, potato, red tabasco, water to cover, tomato puree, sunflower seeds. Liquidised. Parmesan.

Most of these recipes are dependant upon a nice stock and so it pays to search one out if you haven't already, Vecon is fairly well know. For a really lazy way to make a stew just buy a tin of Braised Tofu from Holland and Barratt and put that in with the other ingredients. It comes in it's own tasty stock and isn't a particularly expensive way to buy tofu.

[Oranges in Liqueur](#)

Not really one for puddings but a dish but this is a recipe that's slightly classy. I came across it whilst working at the Windsor horse show, oranges in liqueur. At

the time it was sliced oranges in Cointreau but Mead is nicer if one can hold of it. A variant on this is fruit salad in Mead. Go 50/50 orange juice and Mead and add to some nice fresh fruit such as oranges, peaches, banana and melon. Maybe add cream or ice cream.

Other than that pudding rarely extends to anything other than rhubarb or apple in custard. Rum can be nice addition. Yogurt and frozen fruit such as mango, strawberry or cherry in the Vitamix blender makes awesome ice cream. Kd