

3 Recipe

Gift



Hello and Happy Holidays,

Here is my gift for you this holiday season. This is the time to enjoy good food with family and friends. The following three recipes are easy to prepare and definite show stoppers. Let's face it, we are all very busy this time of year. Recipes that allow us to plan ahead and quickly execute, will save time and help lower some of the stress we all experience during the holidays.

The *Mushroom and Red Pepper Baked French Toast* can be made quickly for breakfast or brunch. Some steps can be done the night before, to make it easy to throw into the oven in the morning. And feel free to change the vegetables and add herbs of your choice. Or for a more traditional version, leave out the vegetables, add some cinnamon and top with fresh berries or fruit of choice. And don't forget the maple syrup.

The *Sweet Potato Soup with Ricotta Dumplings* makes a great appetizer course for a bigger meal or can be served at lunch with some toast. Make the soup ahead and freeze. Then just thaw and re-heat when ready to serve. The dumpling mixture can be made a day ahead and stored in the refrigerator.

The *Lemon Lime Pudding Cakes with Berry Confit* are a true treat. They're light and perfect with a big meal. Plus they're full of flavour. The cakes can be made a day or two ahead as can the confit and be in the refrigerator. Then quickly warm up before serving.

I've included gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan and paleo options for those who need it.

And of course, all three recipes are good for the gut, each with a number of ingredients that feed our beneficial bacteria.

Please take some time for yourself and find joy as you celebrate with your loved ones. I know it may be tough to carve out some time for you but you deserve it.

Enjoy these recipes and all the best for the new year.

Lorene Sauro, RHN



Mushroom and Red Pepper Baked French Toast

This is simple to make and can be baked in the oven while you do other things in the morning to get ready. The vegetables can be cooked the night before. Make a bigger batch to serve the whole family. Perfect for any breakfast or brunch.

Serves 1-2

- 1/4 red pepper
- 2 large Cremini mushrooms, cut into pieces
- 2 tbsp butter or coconut oil
- 2 eggs (4 tsp ground chia in 4 tbsp water can replace eggs, if desired)
- 1/4 cup milk of choice such as whole cow's milk (preferably organic), or almond or coconut milk (carrageenan free)
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 green onion, chopped
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 2 pieces sourdough, whole grain, sprouted, or gluten-free bread or almond bread
- Maple syrup

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Melt half the butter or coconut oil in a small skillet on medium high heat. Add the mushrooms and peppers and sauté until soft. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste.
3. Put the eggs, milk, parsley, pinch of sea salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Stir with a whisk until well mixed.
4. Butter the bread with the remaining butter or coconut oil. Cut the bread into chunks - staler bread is best, and add to the milk mixture. Add in the mushrooms, peppers and green onion. Mix.
5. Grease a baking dish, about 8-x 4- inches in size or similar sized dish with melted butter or coconut oil.
6. Pour the egg-bread mixture into the baking dish.
7. Place in the oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, until the egg is set and the bread is slightly golden. Scoop out of the pan and place on a plate.
8. Drizzle with maple syrup. Serve.



Tip: Other vegetables can be substituted for the mushrooms and peppers. Or leave them out and add some cinnamon and topped with berries.

Sweet Potato Soup with Ricotta Dumplings

Serves 2-3



- 1 tbsp butter or olive oil
- 2/3 cup chopped onions
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes
- 1 tsp thyme
- 4 cups chicken, bone or vegetable broth plus extra to thin soup if too thick
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 1-2 tbsp chopped fresh dill or parsley for garnish

To Make the Dumplings:

- 1 1/2 cups chopped spinach, washed and dried
- 1 tbsp finely chopped white onion
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 tbsp chopped sauerkraut
- Pepper to taste
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg

*For Vegan or Paleo Version: Use fermented cashew cream cheese instead of ricotta



To Make the Dumplings

1. Heat a small skillet on medium high heat. Add the butter or olive oil and onions and lightly sauté. Add the chopped spinach and continue to sauté until the spinach is wilted and the onion is cooked. Remove from the heat and set aside.
2. Put the ricotta cheese in a bowl and add the cooked spinach and onions, sauerkraut, pepper and nutmeg. Mix well. The sauerkraut is usually salty enough that this does not require added sea salt.
3. Put in the refrigerator to chill until ready to use. Can be made a day ahead.

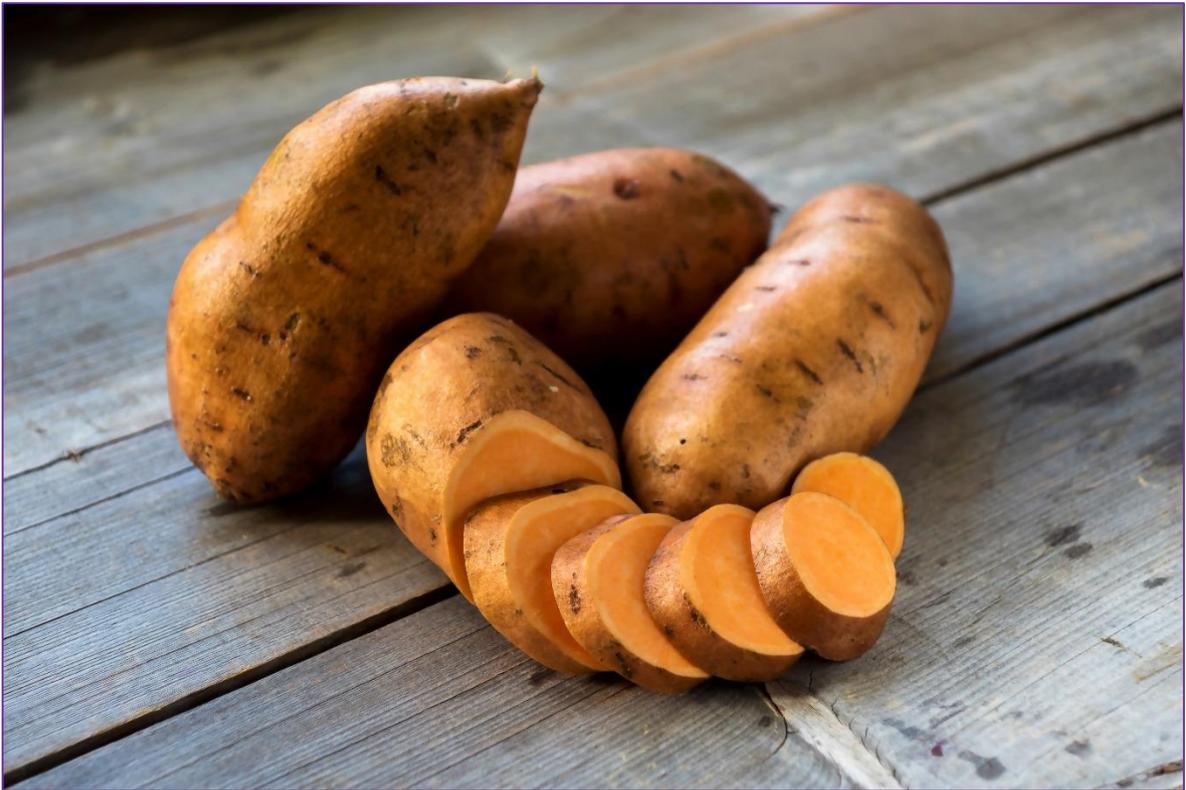
To Make the Soup:

1. Melt the butter or olive oil in a medium saucepan on medium-high heat. Add the onions and lightly sauté.

2. Add the garlic, sweet potatoes and thyme and continue to cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
3. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Lower to simmer and cook for 15 minutes or until sweet potatoes are soft.
4. Remove from the heat and puree with a hand blender or transfer to a regular blender to puree. Add sea salt and pepper to taste.
5. Use an ice cream scoop to make a round dumpling with the ricotta cheese mixture.
6. Ladle the soup into a bowl and place the ricotta dumpling on top. Garnish with dill or parsley. Repeat with the rest of the soup and dumpling mixture. Serve.

Tip 1: Soup can be ahead of time and frozen. Thaw on the day using and re-heat.

Tip 2: This is a nice appetizer course for a bigger meal or serve with toast for an easy lunch.



Lemon Lime Pudding Cake with Berry Confit

This is a simple dessert that can be made the day ahead and re-heated to be slightly warm when ready to serve.

Serves 8

- 2 tbsp melted butter or coconut oil plus extra for greasing the baking dishes
- 3 eggs, separated
- 3/4 cup organic sugar, coconut sweetener, raw honey or maple syrup
- 1 tsp combination lemon and lime rind
- 1/3 cup combination fresh lemon and lime juice
- 1/2 cup all-purpose einkorn, or light spelt flour or gluten-free oat flour or 1 cup almond flour
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1 1/4 cups whole organic milk or light, canned coconut milk
- Organic icing sugar or ground coconut sweetener for dusting



Confit:

- 1/2 cup frozen or fresh blueberries (wild are best)
- 1/2 cup frozen or fresh raspberries
- 1/2 cup frozen or fresh strawberries
- 2 tbsp organic sugar or coconut sweetener or raw honey or maple syrup
- 2 tbsp black currant or raspberry liqueur (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Grease 8 6-oz ramekins or a 9-inch round baking dish with butter or coconut oil.
2. Mix the egg yolks and 1/2 cup of the sugar or sweetener of choice together in a bowl. Whisk until pale and fluffy. A hand mixer or a hand blender with a whisk attachment can be used for this. Whisk in the butter or coconut oil, and lemon and lime juice and rind.
3. Mix the flour, baking powder and sea salt together in a separate bowl. Add to the lemon lime egg yolk mixture with some of the milk. Whisk until smooth. Add the rest of the milk and whisk again until smooth.
4. Whipped the egg whites in another bowl until it forms stiff peaks. Add the remaining 1/4 cup sugar before the whites are fully whipped (helps prevent over whipping).

5. Whisk the whipped egg whites into the lemon lime mixture until smooth.
6. Gently ladle the mixture into the ramekins or the baking dish. Fill to just below the rim.
7. Put the baking dish or ramekins in a bigger pan and place in the oven. Fill the bigger pan with boiling water so there is one inch of water in the pan for a water bath. Bake for 30 minutes or until the cake(s) are set and slightly puffed. May be slightly golden on top.
8. Remove from the oven and let cool. Top with berry confit and your favourite ice cream (optional). Best served warm.

To Make the Confit:

1. Put the berries in a small saucepan and add sugar or sweetener of choice.
2. Bring to a boil and cook for two minutes.
3. Remove from the heat and add the liqueur, if using. If you wish to remove the alcohol from the liqueur and still have the flavour, then add the liqueur at the same time as the sugar and the berries are being heated and the alcohol will cook off.



Tip 1: Can be made the day ahead and kept in the refrigerator. Re-heat in the oven for 10 minutes at 325 degrees F. before serving.

Tip 2: If you can't find organic icing sugar, you can make your own icing sugar for dusting by grinding organic sugar (evaporated cane juice) in a clean, coffee grinder. This also works with coconut sweetener or sucanat but they are brown so cakes will have a slightly different appearance. This is also true if you use these sweeteners in place of the organic sugar when making the cakes. They will be darker in colour.

Vegan Version: Use 8 tsp ground chia in 6 tbsp water. Mix together and let thicken before adding. Whisk into the butter and sugar and whip until slightly lighter and thicker. Then add the lemon and lime juice and rind. Mix. Add the dry ingredients with some of the milk. Whisk together and then add the rest of the milk. Bake as above in a water bath but it takes longer – approximately 40 - 45 minutes. Look for it to cook through the middle and puff a bit. The cakes will have more liquid in the bottom than the cakes made with eggs but it still tastes amazing. Works best if using organic sugar or coconut sweetener as these have better binding power. Einkorn or spelt flour. Soft white wheat flour is another option. Gluten-free oat flour also works well but use 2/3 cup instead of 1/2 cup. Makes only 6 cakes.