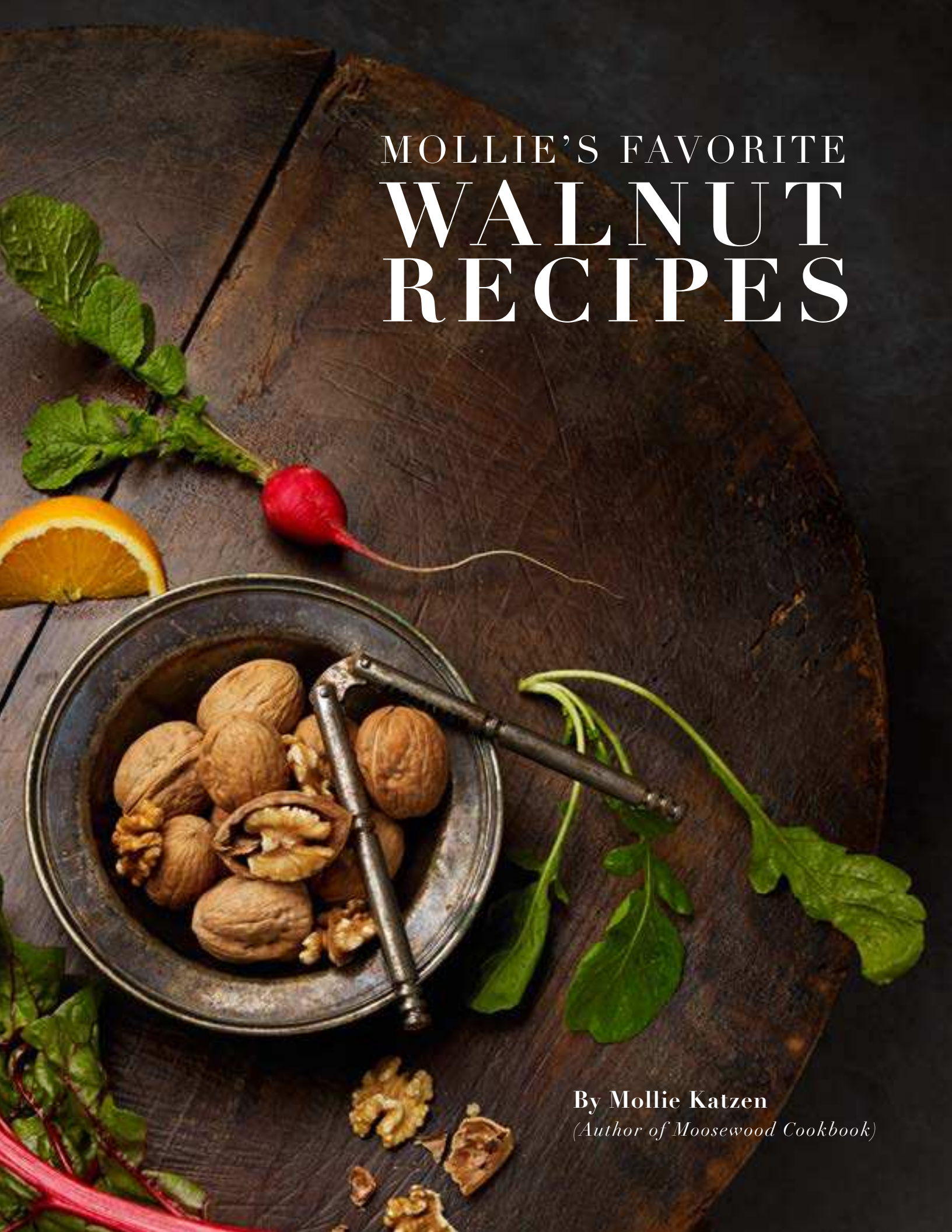

MOLLIE'S FAVORITE WALNUT RECIPES

By Mollie Katzen
(Author of Moosewood Cookbook)

INTRODUCTION

The 40th anniversary of Moosewood Cookbook is a perfect occasion to acknowledge and celebrate my collaboration with California Walnuts. Over the years I have developed so many walnut recipes, I've lost count. And now, my walnut friends and I are pleased to present this beautifully photographed eBook that includes over 70 of my favorites.

In this collection you will find a creamy California Walnut Butter with hints of cinnamon, walnut-themed basil pesto and numerous nutty grain sides and salads even pizza and pasta. You may have figured out by now that I love walnuts.

I eat walnuts daily: before (and for) breakfast, between meals (my mood and blood sugar are highly improved) and as a part of lunch and dinner as well. I like to roast them in a 200° F toaster oven, spread in a thick layer on a baking sheet. I leave them in for a good 15 to 20 minutes, shaking a few times to redistribute and keeping a nose out for that telltale toasty aroma that eventually wafts forth. It's a wonderful ritual and once done, the results are irresistible. This is my standard preparation, whether I'm going to cook with them or grind them into a sauce or paste, or simply eat them by the handful. Walnuts fit seamlessly into my cuisine that I describe as a beautiful plate of food simply cooked, maximally flavored and embracing as many plant components that will harmoniously fit.

I hope you will find these recipes inspiring, nourishing and satisfying.

Mollie Katzen

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BREAKFAST

Breakfast Packets With Walnutty Crusts
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Stone Fruit With Whipped Walnut-Lemon Honey
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Walnut-Crusted Breakfast Pizzettas With Strawberries & Goat Cheese
Walnutty Egg & Bell Pepper Gratin

BREAKFAST

BREAKFAST PACKETS WITH WALNUTTY CRUSTS

SERVINGS: 6

Delicious, toasty crust envelopes your favorite jam in this highly gratifying, surprisingly easy take on homemade breakfast toaster tarts.

1 cup California walnuts
1 to 1 ¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup buttermilk
2 tablespoons roasted walnut oil or grapeseed oil
½ cup delicious jam or preserves
2 tablespoons crunchy sugar (raw or turbinado)

1. Place the walnuts in a food processor (steel blade) along with the flour & salt. Buzz until the nuts are pulverized into the flour & the result has the consistency of a coarse meal, like dry polenta.

2. Combine the buttermilk & oil in a measuring cup & whisk to blend. Keep the machine going as you pour in this mixture. In a matter of seconds, it will become a soft dough, clinging to the blade.

3. Carefully remove the dough from the machine & form it into a ball with your hands. It should be quite soft, but not sticky. If it is at all sticky, lightly flour your hands. Divide the ball into 6 equal parts, forming each into a ball. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400°F.

4. Roll each ball into a 6-inch circle. Add a heaping tablespoon (or even a little more) of your favorite high-quality jam or preserves to half the circle, spreading it to within ½ inch of the edge. Leave the other half circle unfilled.

5. Fold over the unfilled half to cover the jam, crimping the edges completely closed with a fork. Lightly brush the top surface of each pastry with a little water (you can also just use your finger) then sprinkle the top with about 1 teaspoon crunchy sugar. Lay the finished pastries on an ungreased baking tray & bake for 10 minutes, or until golden on the bottom & puffy on top. Cool on a rack for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Variation: You can add some fresh fruit to the jam filling. A few slices of apple or banana, for example, or a couple of tablespoons of fresh or frozen, unsweetened berries. There is plenty of room inside the packets for this addition. Be creative!

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 308; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 11g; Cholesterol 1mg; Sodium 194mg; Carbohydrates 39g; Fiber 2g; Protein 6g

CINNAMON-WALNUT SWIRL BAGELS

SERVINGS: 6

Homemade bagels are easier than you think & make a wonderful family project. These are delicious on their own & even better spread with California Walnut Butter.

1 cup wrist-temperature water
1 teaspoon (about half a packet) active dry yeast
1 tablespoon sugar or honey
1 tablespoon olive oil or roasted walnut oil
1 teaspoon salt
2 ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour (½ cup of it can be whole-wheat bread flour) – plus a little extra for handling
1 cup finely minced California walnuts
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 to 2 tablespoons sugar (can be raw or turbinado)

1. Combine water & yeast in a mixing bowl (ideally the bowl of a stand mixer). Add the sugar or honey & stir to dissolve.

2. Stir in the oil, salt & 1 cup of the flour, then mix on low speed with a dough-mixing attachment (or by hand) until uniform. Add the remaining flour & continue at low speed until it's incorporated. Increase the speed to medium, beating the dough for a couple of minutes.

3. Spray a second, clean bowl with nonstick spray & transfer the dough to this bowl. Spray the top of the dough as well & set in a warm place to rise until doubled in bulk, for approximately one hour.

4. Punch down the dough, using a little extra flour or nonstick spray on your hand to keep things from sticking. Also lightly flour or spray a clean, dry work surface & turn out the dough. Knead for about 5 minutes, then divide into 6 equal parts. Knead each part into a ball & let them sit for another 45 minutes to an hour (imprecise).

5. In a small bowl, toss together the walnuts, cinnamon & sugar, keeping it handy.

6. Using very small amounts of flour or nonstick spray on all surfaces, as needed, to prevent sticking, roll each ball of rested dough into a thin oval about 9 inches long & 4 to 5 inches wide. Place a generous tablespoon of filling in a strip the length of each oval, slightly off center. Roll into a log, beginning with the side closest to the filling. Pinch the edges tightly & then attach them to form a ring, squeezing it tightly closed. Continue with all the dough & all the filling, then let the filled bagels sit for about 20 minutes to rest again.

7. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 450°F & fill a wide, deep sauté pan with water, putting it up to boil. Have ready a baking tray, sprayed lightly with nonstick spray. Also have ready a colander on a plate by the stove & a long-handled "spider" utensil.

8. When the water boils, add the bagels - as many as will fit without crowding. (They will puff up pretty quickly & you want them to have room to expand, so you might need to do this in batches.) Boil for 2 minutes on each side, then lift them out with the spider & place them in the colander for a few minutes to drain.

9. Transfer the boiled bagels to the baking tray (okay if close together –they are done expanding now) & bake for 10 to 15 minutes, or until slightly hardened on the outside & hollow-sounding when thumped.

10. Cool on a rack for at least 20 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 179; Total Fat 8g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 161mg; Carbohydrates 24g; Fiber 2g; Protein 4g

BREAKFAST

FRIED EGGS IN A BED OF TOASTED WALNUT CRUMBS

SERVINGS: 1

"Eggs in a nest" takes on new meaning in this crunchy, coated fried egg augmentation.

3 tablespoons (or so) whole-wheat breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon finely minced California walnuts
1 ½ teaspoons olive oil
2 large eggs
Dash of salt
Chopped flat-leaf parsley (optional)

1. In a medium-sized (9-inch) skillet, toast the dry breadcrumbs & walnuts over low heat, stirring pretty much constantly & keeping watch. They will brown quickly. After they appear to be toasted (just a few minutes in) add the olive oil, stirring it into the crumbs.

2. Push the oiled crumbs into two flat beds (not too thick–leave some crumbs on the side) & drop an egg onto each. Spoon any extra crumbs over the tops of the eggs & sprinkle very lightly with salt.

3. Cover the pan & cook very slowly – lowest possible heat, so the crumbs won't get too dark. Carefully but firmly loosen & lift them out with the spatula onto a waiting plate & sprinkle with chopped parsley, if desired. Serve right away.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 290; Total Fat 19g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 10g; Polyunsaturated Fat 5g; Cholesterol 350mg; Sodium 430mg; Carbohydrates 11g; Fiber 2g; Protein 15g

GLUTEN-FREE WALNUT-RASPBERRY GRANOLA

SERVINGS: 32

This is made with frozen raspberries & is intended for freezer storage. That keeps it at maximum crispness (a key for any good granola!)—& keeps it fresher, too. The berries will store beautifully this way & everything will defrost very quickly in your cereal bowl, after you add milk (regular or soy).

Nonstick spray for the baking tray
4 cups rolled oat flakes, gluten-free (check the label because some are not)
1 cup oat bran (optional)
1 cup sunflower seeds
1 cup chopped California walnuts
1 cup soy protein powder
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup canola oil or grapeseed oil
½ cup light honey or maple syrup
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup (packed) brown sugar
1 cup toasted pumpkin seeds
1 or more cups frozen unsweetened raspberries

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Spray a 13 x 18-inch baking tray with nonstick spray.

2. Combine the flakes, bran (if using), sunflower seeds, walnuts, protein powder in a large bowl. Combine the oil, honey or syrup & vanilla extract & pour this in. Mix thoroughly. (Use your hands, if necessary.) Spread onto prepared baking tray.

3. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes, or until golden. (Stir it two or three times during the baking.)

4. Crumble in sugar as soon as it comes out of the oven, letting it melt in. Cool it on the tray. The granola will get crunchy as it cools.

5. After the mixture has completely cooled, gently stir in the berries until the cereal surrounds them like a protective coating. Carefully pack the mixture into sealable plastic bags or jars, close them tightly & freeze.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 280; Total Fat 10g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 110mg; Carbohydrates 43g; Fiber 6g; Protein 4g

ORANGE-VANILLA-WALNUT FRENCH TOAST

SERVINGS: 2

French toast tastes best when the bread has been soaked all the way through, so it stays moist & creamy on the inside even after it's been cooked.

2 navel oranges
1 ruby grapefruit
3 large eggs
Pinch of salt
Pinch of cinnamon
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
½ teaspoon grated orange zest
½ cup milk (possibly more), skim recommended
3 or 4 ½-inch slices California Walnut Whole-Wheat Walnut Artisan Bread (recipe on page 36)
Butter for the pan
Real maple syrup
Yogurt (optional)

1. Peel the fruit &, using a sharp serrated knife, section them over & into a bowl. Set aside.

2. Begin heating a skillet or a griddle over medium heat.

3. Break the eggs into a pie pan, add a pinch each of salt & cinnamon & beat with a fork until smooth. Beat in the vanilla & orange zest.

4. Continue to stir the mixture as you drizzle in the milk. When it appears to be well blended, add the bread, pushing it down gently with the back of a fork.

5. Let the bread sit in the egg mixture for about 2 minutes, then turn it over & let it sit for another 2 minutes. It should be soaked all the way through.

6. Melt some butter on the hot cooking surface, then add the soaked bread. Fry over medium heat for 8 to 10 minutes on each side, or until golden. (If it begins to brown too much or too fast, turn the heat down. It's important that the French Toast be cooked all the way through.)

7. Serve hot, with real maple syrup & a dollop of yogurt, if desired, & with the prepared grapefruit & orange segments on the side & a citrus zest curl on top.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 480; Total Fat 8g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 1g; Cholesterol 15mg; Sodium 630mg; Carbohydrates 85g; Fiber 9g; Protein 17g

STONE FRUIT WITH WHIPPED WALNUT-LEMON HONEY

SERVINGS: 6

The fruit is very flexible here. Buy the freshest, most perfect selections from your farmers' market or produce merchant. This changes from week to week over the summer & keeps things interesting & exciting.

Nonstick spray
½ cup light-colored honey
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon fine lemon zest
1 teaspoon coarse lemon zest* / chopped lemon peel
⅓ cup minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
2 to 3 pounds fresh summer stone fruit – any combination of peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, pluots, cherries, etc.
Lovely mint leaves, for garnish

NOTE ABOUT THE HONEY
Lighter-hued honeys tend to be milder in flavor than darker ones. I wanted to keep the flavor subtle here, so have called for a light-colored honey. If you prefer a stronger flavor, go ahead & use a darker honey, it's your call.

**Note: There are two kinds of lemon zest preparation in this recipe.*

Fine Zest is best produced using a "microplane" zester.

Coarse Zest aka "chopped peel," is made by shaving off the yellow part of the lemon skin with a sturdy vegetable peeler & then chopping that peel with a sharp knife to a small, but textured consistency.

Regardless of which method you use, remember to do the zesting before you do the juicing – otherwise you will be grumpy.

1. In a small bowl combine the lemon juice, zest, honey & peel & beat for a minute or two, until combined. Stir in the walnuts.

2. Pit & slice the fruit & arrange it on individual plates. Spoon some sauce over or next to the fruit, then garnish with mint leaves. Serve right away.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 205; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 1mg; Carbohydrates 44g; Fiber 3g; Protein 3g

BREAKFAST

TOASTED QUINOA-WALNUT BREAKFAST "SUNDAES"

SERVINGS: 4

A surprising use of quinoa: It's soaked & then dry-toasted, rather than cooked in water.

½ cup quinoa, soaked 10 minutes, drained in fine mesh strainer, patted dry on towels*
¼ teaspoon salt
1 heaping teaspoon crunchy sugar (raw or turbinado)
¾ cup minced, toasted California walnuts
1 cup plain Greek (or just plain thick) yogurt
In-season fresh berries or fruit of choice
Dried fruit of choice (optional)
Artisanal honey (optional)

1. Dry roast the quinoa in a medium-sized skillet over medium-low heat—stirring, for about 8 to 10 minutes, or until it darkens slightly & gives off a toasty aroma. (Don't walk away….it can burn fast.)

2. Sprinkle with salt & sugar & stir over the heat for another few seconds until the sugar melts. Remove from heat & stir in the walnuts. To assemble the sundaes, spread a thick layer of yogurt on each little serving dish & top it with a generous serving of your favorite ripe, in-season fruit.

3. Drizzle with honey &/or stud with dried fruit, if desired & top with a generous sprinkling of the quinoa & walnuts.

**You can soak & dry the quinoa well ahead of time. You can also go ahead & dry-roast the quinoa well ahead of time, too. It will keep well for a couple of days sealed in an airtight jar or bag at room temperature.*

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 297; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 11g; Cholesterol 1mg; Sodium 169mg; Carbohydrates 32g; Fiber 6g; Protein 11g

WALNUT-CRUSTED BREAKFAST PIZZETTAS WITH STRAWBERRIES & GOAT CHEESE

SERVINGS: 6

These pizzettas, with the wonderful addition of California walnuts, goat cheese and strawberries, create a celebration of flavor for brunch!

1 cup wrist-temperature water
1 teaspoon active dry yeast
2 ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour (plus some extra for handling the dough)
¾ cup minced California walnuts (the size of lentils)
1 teaspoon salt
Nonstick spray for handling the dough
Cornmeal for the baking tray
5 ounces goat cheese (plain or herb-coated), sliced into thin circles or crumbled
1 pint strawberries, cleaned, hulled and sliced
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 teaspoon honey
⅛ teaspoon black pepper
California Walnut Butter (recipe on page 38, optional)

1. Pour the water into a medium-large bowl and sprinkle in the yeast. Let it stand for 5 minutes.

2. Add half the flour, plus the salt, and beat with a whisk.

3. Gradually add the remaining flour and then the walnuts, mixing first with a wooden spoon and then with your hands until the dough comes together. (Flour your hands, or lightly spray them with nonstick spray, for easiest handling. The dough will be soft.

4. Spray a second bowl with nonstick spray, and transfer the dough. Cover with plastic wrap, and put it in a warm (not hot) place to rise for 1 hour.

5. Sprinkle a work surface lightly with flour, or spray the surface lightly with nonstick spray. Turn out the dough, and knead it briefly (2 to 3 minutes) with similarly prepared hands, then divide the dough into 6 equal parts with scissors or a pastry cutter. Push each soft piece of dough into a ball, and let them rest for about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 450°F and sprinkle a baking tray (or two) with cornmeal.

6. Slowly stretch each ball of dough into a 6-inch circle or oval, and place them on the prepared tray(s). Bake for 8 minutes, then take the tray out of the oven and arrange the goat cheese and strawberries any way you prefer over the top surfaces. Return the tray to the oven, and bake for another 5 to 8 minutes, or until the edges are golden and crisp.

7. Serve hot, drizzled with olive oil and honey, sprinkled with black pepper, and possibly dabbed with California Walnut Butter.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 376; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 5g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 11mg; Sodium 409mg; Carbohydrates 47g; Fiber 4g; Protein 13 g

BREAKFAST

WALNUTTY EGG & BELL PEPPER GRATIN

SERVINGS: 4

A pretty presentation for breakfast or brunch. The pepper mixture can be made the day before & stored in the refrigerator, but remember to warm it through before adding the egg or you'll need to extend the cooking time. If you can't find good tomatoes you can add a tablespoon of tomato paste or substitute a 15-ounce can of whole tomatoes in juice.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, sliced into ¼ inch slices
pinch red chili flakes
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
2 small zucchini, thinly sliced
6 tomatoes (about 1 pound), chopped
½ cup packed basil leaves
8 to 12 thin asparagus spears, cut into 2-inch lengths
4 large eggs
1 cup California walnuts, chopped

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Arrange 4 shallow, oven-safe baking dishes on a sturdy baking sheet; set aside.

2. In a large sauté pan heat the oil over medium high heat. Add the onions & chili flakes; cook, stirring until it begins to become translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the peppers; cook, stirring, for 7 minutes. Add the zucchini & tomatoes; cook, stirring until tender & most of the liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Stir in the basil leaves.

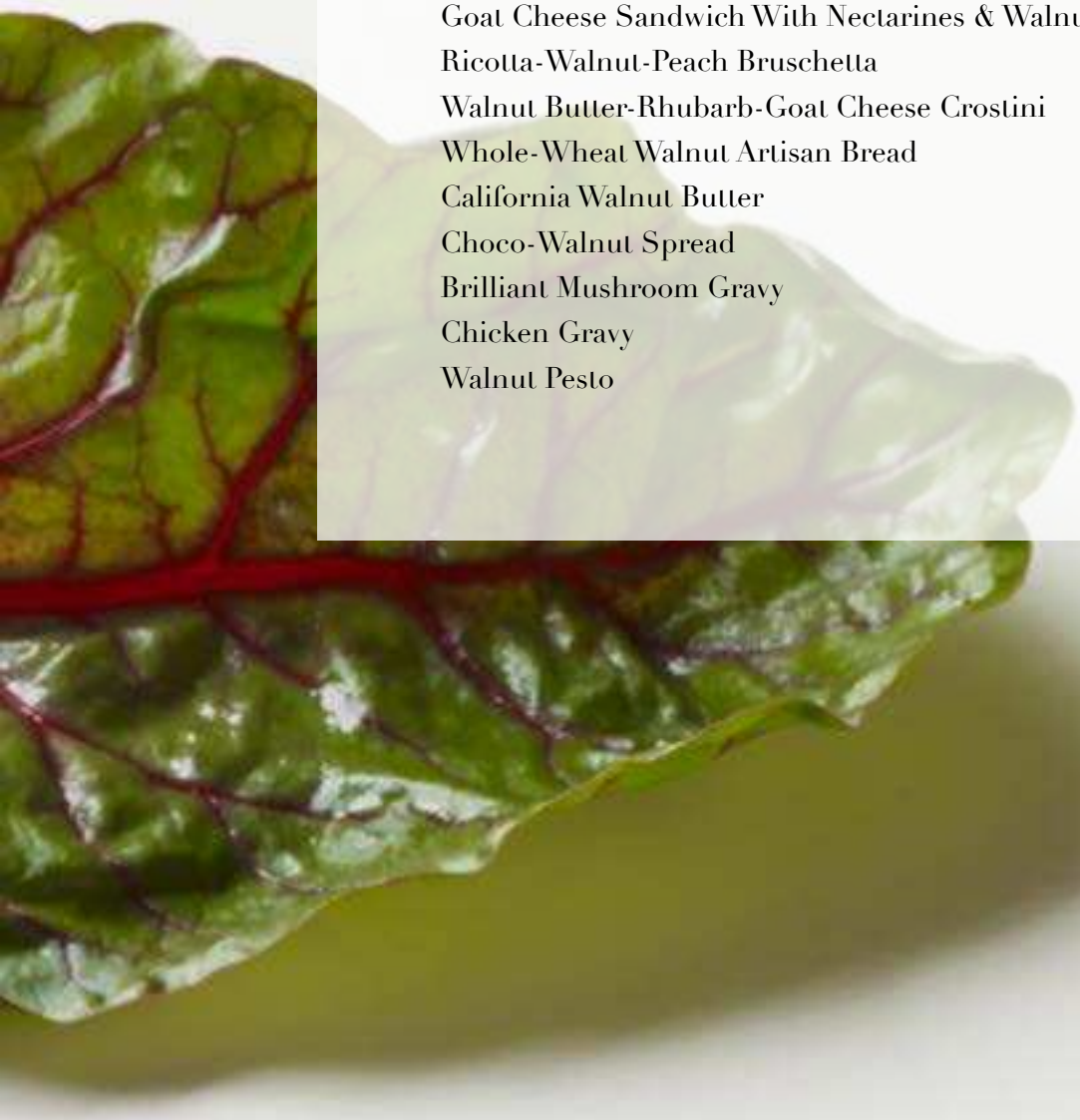
3. In the meantime, bring a large shallow pan of salted water to a boil. Add the asparagus; cook until just tender. Drain well. Add to the pepper mixture.

4. Divide the pepper mixture between four shallow dishes. Using a spoon make a well in the center. Break an egg & drop it into the center. Arrange the asparagus tips around the edges & sprinkle with walnuts.

5. Arrange the dishes on a baking sheet. Bake until the egg is just set, or 18 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 400; Total Fat 31g; Saturated Fat 6g; Monounsaturated Fat 10g; Polyunsaturated Fat 15g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 566mg; Carbohydrates 21g; Fiber 7g; Protein 15g

APPETIZERS, SPREADS & SAUCES



Bacon-Wrapped, Walnut-Stuffed Dates
Goat Cheese Sandwich With Nectarines & Walnuts
Ricotta-Walnut-Peach Bruschetta
Walnut Butter-Rhubarb-Goat Cheese Crostini
Whole-Wheat Walnut Artisan Bread
California Walnut Butter
Choco-Walnut Spread
Brilliant Mushroom Gravy
Chicken Gravy
Walnut Pesto

BACON-WRAPPED, WALNUT-STUFFED DATES

SERVINGS: 6

Walnut-stuffed dates are perfect with a glass of wine on a summer's eve or in front of a roaring fire in the dead of winter. These tasty little morsels have a hidden kick & are quick to make.

12 Medjool dates, pitted
Pinch red chili flakes
12 California walnut halves, toasted
4 slices lean bacon, cut crosswise into three equal pieces

1. Preheat broiler. Line a plate with paper towels; set aside.

2. Carefully make a lengthwise slit in each date, open gently & sprinkle with chili flakes; fill with a walnut half & reform the date around the walnut. Wrap the bacon around the date & secure with a toothpick. Arrange on a baking sheet.

3. Broil, turning until crispy, about 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer paper towels & pat dry. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 98; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 2g; Cholesterol 6mg; Sodium 55mg; Carbohydrates 12g; Fiber 1g; Protein 3g

GOAT CHEESE SANDWICH WITH NECTARINES & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 8

1 sourdough or sweet baguette
4 ounces herbed goat cheese
½ cup California walnuts, lightly toasted & chopped
3 or 4 perfectly ripe nectarines
2 to 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar glaze
Watercress leaves, for garnish

BALSAMIC VINEGAR GLAZE
1 cup balsamic vinegar

1. Heat a barbeque or grill to medium-high heat. Cut the baguette crosswise into six equal lengths, then slice each section in half lengthwise. Arrange the bread, cut side down on the grill; grill until golden & fragrant, about 3 minutes. Halve & pit the nectarines; arrange cut side down; grill until marked & warmed through, about 4 minutes. Slice.

2. Spread each grilled surface with goat cheese, then sprinkle with walnuts, pressing them into the cheese. Decorate the top of each open-face sandwich with some of the grilled nectarines & drizzle with the balsamic vinegar glaze. Garnish with watercress adding a little more of the balsamic glaze if desired & serve right away.

BALSAMIC VINEGAR GLAZE
1. In a small saucepan bring the balsamic vinegar to a boil over medium-high heat.

2. Cook, stirring until reduced to 3 to 4 tablespoons.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 376; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 5g; Cholesterol 9mg; Sodium 495mg; Carbohydrates 54g; Fiber 4g; Protein 13g

RICOTTA WALNUT-PEACH BRUSCHETTA

SERVINGS: 8

Peaches, basil & California walnuts make a wonderful trio of flavor & texture. When they meet up with ricotta in this delicious open-faced sandwich, you will get to enjoy a meal that hovers on that very fun boundary between sweet & savory.

You can make the easy cheese mixture up to a day ahead of time, if you store it airtight in the refrigerator, draining off any whey before serving. Slice the peaches & assemble the bruschetta shortly before serving.

2 cups ricotta cheese
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ tablespoons light-colored honey (or more to taste)
1 cup finely minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
2 to 3 tablespoons fresh basil, cut into very thin strips (plus a few leaves for the top)
8 thick slices ciabatta, or a similar airy artisan bread
Olive oil
2 to 3 perfectly ripe peaches (could also be nectarines), sliced
Freshly ground black pepper
Lemon wedges for serving

BALSAMIC REDUCTION
⅓ cup Balsamic Vinegar

1. In a medium-sized bowl, mash together the ricotta, lemon juice, salt, honey, walnuts & minced basil until combined. Refrigerate until just before serving.

2. Shortly before serving, brush the bread slices on both sides with olive oil & grill in a skillet (a ridged one, if available) over medium heat on both sides until golden.

3. Transfer the toasts to a serving plate & spoon a heap of the ricotta mixture onto each. Arrange a few peach slices on top, drizzle on some Balsamic Reduction & if you like, top each with a few very thin strips of fresh basil. Add a few grinds of black pepper & serve right away, accompanied by lemon wedges.

BALSAMIC REDUCTION
1. In a small saucepan bring the balsamic vinegar to a boil over medium-high heat

2. Cook stirring until reduced to 3 to 4 tablespoons.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 340; Total Fat 15g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 19mg; Sodium 450mg; Carbohydrates 39g; Fiber 3g; Protein 14g

WALNUT BUTTER RHUBARB-GOAT CHEESE CROSTINI

SERVINGS: 10

A blissful appetizer for an early spring party! You can make both the California Walnut Butter & Rhubarb or Cranberry Sauce several days ahead of time. Store in the refrigerator until use. Assemble the crostini just before serving.

1 fresh high-quality baguette (unseeded; not sourdough)
3 ounces very fresh goat cheese
Honey to taste (optional)
California Walnut Butter (recipe on page 38)

RHUBARB SAUCE
2 heaping cups chopped rhubarb (fresh or frozen)
2 tablespoons agave nectar
Small pinch of salt

CRANBERRY SAUCE
2 (12 ounce) packages fresh cranberries
2 cups freshly squeezed orange juice
1 cup sugar
1 cup golden raisins
1 cup California walnut halves, toasted & chopped

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cut the baguette on the diagonal into ½-inch slices & spread them in a single layer on a baking tray. Bake in the center of the oven until lightly toasted. Cool just slightly.

2. In a small bowl, mash the goat cheese until spread-ably soft & sweeten (slightly) to taste, if desired, with a little honey.

3. To serve: Spread each little toast with a little goat cheese, keeping the layer even so the other toppings won't fall off. Add a little California Walnut Butter, pushing it down with the back of a spoon. Top each piece with a small spoonful of Rhubarb Sauce or Cranberry Sauce. Arrange on an attractive platter & serve to your delighted guests.

RHUBARB SAUCE

1. Place the rhubarb in a medium-small saucepan, cover & cook over medium-low heat (nothing added!) for about 10 minutes, or until "saucy."

2. Remove from heat & stir in agave & salt. Let cool to room temperature.

CRANBERRY SAUCE

1. Pick over the cranberries, removing any bruised or blemished berries & add them to a medium saucepan; add the orange juice, sugar, raisins & salt.

2. Bring to a boil & cook until all of the cranberries pop & the mixture thickens. Remove from the heat & cool. Stir in the walnuts.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 340; Total Fat 15g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 19mg; Sodium 450mg; Carbohydrates 39g; Fiber 3g; Protein 14g

WHOLE-WHEAT WALNUT ARTISAN BREAD

SERVINGS: 12

This bread is not only truly delicious & perfectly versatile, but it is so easy to make in a stand mixer with a bread hook attachment. The dough is made directly in the bowl that goes with the machine! The only other thing that you'll need is a baking sheet. Totally saves on cleanup.

2 ¼ cups wrist-temperature water
1 rounded teaspoon active dry yeast (about half a packet)
1 tablespoon sugar
4 cups whole-wheat flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups chopped California walnuts
Extra flour for kneading
Nonstick spray

1. Night before: Measure the water into a large mixing bowl (ideally the bowl of a large stand mixer that has a dough hook attachment). Make sure the water is no warmer than your wrist! (It should feel utterly temperature-neutral to the touch.) Sprinkle in the yeast & wait about a minute. Add the sugar & 2 cups of the flour. Whisk to combine, then cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap & leave at room temperature for 12 hours or overnight.

2. Add the remaining 2 cups of flour & the salt then set up the bowl on mixer stand with dough hook in place. Run the machine at medium-low speed to combine. Continue to run it at medium speed for about five minutes longer. Fold in the 1 ½ cups chopped walnuts until thoroughly combined. Cover the bowl with the same plastic wrap & let sit in a warm spot (just a sunny spot on the counter top will do) until doubled in size, between 4 to 6 hours.

3. Remove the plastic wrap & punch down the dough. Dump it out onto a floured work surface & knead lightly. Shape into a round ball. Spray lightly with water & set on a baking sheet in a warm place until doubled in size, about 2 hours. Spray occasionally to prevent the surface drying out.

4. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

5. Spray the surface of the bread lightly with water. Bake until golden brown, about 25 minutes. When you tap the base of the loaf it should sound hollow. Allow to cool on a rack for at least 20 to 30 minutes before slicing & enjoying.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 160; Total Fat 8g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 180mg; Carbohydrates 20g; Fiber 4g; Protein 5g

SPREADS

CALIFORNIA WALNUT BUTTER

SERVINGS: 8

California Walnut Butter is easy to make & offers a variety of convenient applications. Spread on crostini & garnish with a slice of fruit or fresh herbs for an elegant appetizer, or use it as a dip for crisp vegetables for a quick snack.

2 cups California walnuts
¼ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons walnut or vegetable oil (or as needed)

OPTIONAL, TO TASTE
A little honey
A little cinnamon

You can make walnut butter using raw, soaked, or toasted walnuts. Here's how to do all three & why they're different.

RAW: Use raw walnuts for a very creamy & smooth texture that tastes like a just-shelled walnut.

SOAKED: This method will remove some of the tannin from the walnut skin & offer a more textured walnut butter. Soak the walnuts overnight, drain & discard the water & then reasonably dry the walnuts on clean, plush kitchen towels. You can take this one step further by drying the walnuts in the oven. To do so, arrange them in a single layer on a baking sheet & place it in a preheated 350°F oven for up to 10 minutes. Watch carefully, so they won't darken. Cool the walnuts before making the butter.

TOASTED: A slow, low-temperature treatment will provide deeper flavor & a more interestingly textured finished product. Toast walnuts in a single layer on a baking sheet at 350°F for 10 to 15 minutes, or until fragrant. (Be careful not to let them darken dramatically, if they go this far, the flavor will become bitter.) Cool the walnuts before making the butter.

1. Combine the walnuts & salt in the bowl of a food processor & buzz until the nuts become slightly sticky.

2. Add the oil a little bit at a time until the walnut butter holds together.

3. Store in the refrigerator.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 174; Total Fat 17g; Saturated Fat 1.7g; Monounsaturated Fat 2.5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12.5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 73mg; Carbohydrates 3g; Fiber 2g; Protein 4g

CHOCO-WALNUT SPREAD

SERVINGS: 24

Really delicious! Use it anywhere you would normally use a store-bought sweetened hazelnut chocolate spread, such as on toasted whole grain bread, or on an apple slice (or, just eat it plain!)

2 cups lightly toasted California walnuts
1 ½ cups semisweet chocolate chips (can be a tad more)
Scant ¼ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
2 tablespoons oil
2 tablespoons agave nectar

OPTIONAL
½ to 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
A touch of heavy cream, stirred in just before using

1. Combine everything in a food processor & whip until very smooth (or slightly textured, if you prefer).

2. Transfer to a container with a lid, store at room temperature in a dark place.

3. Use as desired & if you like, stir in a few drops of cream just before serving, for added richness & best spreadability.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 120; Total Fat 10g; Saturated Fat 2.5g; Monounsaturated Fat 2.5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 4g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 25mg; Carbohydrates 9g; Fiber 1g; Protein 2g

CHICKEN GRAVY

SERVINGS: 6

A recipe with 48% less sodium than its traditional counterpart.

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 ½ cups low-sodium chicken stock
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
1 teaspoon white pepper
¼ cup low-fat Greek-style yogurt

1. In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the flour & cook, whisking, until a light straw color.

2. Add the stock all at once & whisk until smooth. Bring to a boil & cook, stirring, for 1 minute.

3. Remove from the heat, add the yogurt & whisk until smooth. Season to taste with salt & white pepper. Serve immediately. This gravy pairs nicely with Walnut-Coated Smart "Fried" Chicken (See recipe page 130).

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 70; Total Fat 6g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 1.5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g; Cholesterol 15mg; Sodium 350mg; Carbohydrates 4g; Fiber 0g; Protein 2g

BRILLIANT MUSHROOM GRAVY

SERVINGS: 8

This smart take on the classic gravy recipe is sure to be a perfect complement to any fall or winter dinner.

1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ pound mushrooms
Pinch of dried thyme
¼ teaspoon salt (possibly more, to taste)
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth (use vegetable or mushroom broth if preferred)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste (optional)

1. Clean the mushrooms &, if the stems are firm & tight, leave them on. If they are soft & beginning to separate, remove them.

2. Chop the mushrooms into very small pieces or thin slices.

3. Place a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat for 30 seconds.

4. Add the oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the mushrooms, thyme & salt & sauté for about 8 to 10 minutes or until the mushrooms are reduced in size & they have expressed some juices.

5. Stir in the garlic. Add the broth & heat until it is hot but not boiling.

6. Place the flour in a small bowl & ladle in enough broth to dissolve the flour (approximately ¾ cup).

7. Use a small whisk to beat this mixture until smooth, then pour it back into the hot broth. Whisk the broth as you pour.

8. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for 5 to 8 minutes, or until lightly thickened.

9. Add salt & pepper to taste, if desired. (Keep this in a tightly lidded jar in the refrigerator & use as needed over the period of a week. You can also freeze it.) This gravy perfectly complements Walnut-Coated Smart "Fried" Chicken (See recipe page 130).

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 35; Total Fat 2g; Saturated Fat 0.25g; Monounsaturated Fat 1.25g; Polyunsaturated Fat 0.25g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 90mg; Carbohydrates 3g; Fiber 0g; Protein 1g

SAUCES

WALNUT PESTO

SERVINGS: 4

This pesto is easy to make and can be kept on-hand for several days. Enjoy it as part of my Spinach Lasagna recipe, or simply toss it with noodles. This pesto also makes a tasty sandwich spread or veggie dip.

3 packed cups fresh basil leaves
3 large cloves garlic
⅓ cup lightly toasted California walnuts
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
⅓ cup grated Parmesan
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Place the basil leaves and garlic in a food processor or blender, and mix well. Add the walnuts, and continue to blend until the nuts are finely ground.

2. Keep the machine running as you drizzle in the olive oil. When you have a smooth paste, transfer to a bowl, and stir in the Parmesan. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

If you are not going to use the pesto right away, place in a container that has a tight-fitting lid. Smooth out the top surface of the pesto, and pour on enough olive oil to cover it completely. This creates an air-proof seal that helps preserve it well. Cover tightly and store in the refrigerator.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 263; Total Fat 27g; Saturated Fat 5g; Monounsaturated Fat 15g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 6mg; Sodium 104mg; Carbohydrates 3g; Fiber 1g; Protein 5g

SALADS & SOUPS

A Smarter Tuna Salad
Basmati Rice Salad With Walnuts & Grapes
Broccoli Salad With Mushrooms & Walnuts
Buckwheat Noodle Salad With Greens & Walnuts
Bulgarian Cucumber Salad With Yogurt & Walnuts
Green-Flecked Barley Salad With Walnuts
Grilled Shrimp Salad
Grilled Zucchini Salad With "Pizza Walnuts"
Radicchio Salad With Walnuts & Ginger-Pomegranate Vinaigrette
Smart Coleslaw With Pears, Walnuts & Cranberries
Walnut-Dotted Potato Salad With Walnut Gremolata
Watercress Salad With Tofu, Shallots & Walnuts
Roasted Root Vegetable Soup With Rosemary Walnuts
Yogurt Barley Soup With Cilantro-Walnut Pesto

A SMARTER TUNA SALAD

SERVINGS: 2

This modern take on a classic lunch favorite includes California walnuts & has 47% fewer calories than traditional tuna salad. The light mayonnaise simply complements the tender tuna & crunchy celery & apples making this tuna salad light, fresh & flavorful!

1 (6-ounce) can white meat tuna, packed in water
1 large stalk celery, minced
4 radishes, minced
1 tablespoon minced red onion
Half a Granny Smith apple, minced
2 to 3 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
3 to 4 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise
¼ cup minced California walnuts, lightly toasted

1. Place the tuna in a bowl & flake with a fork.

2. Add remaining ingredients & mix well.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 250; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 25mg; Sodium 160mg; Carbohydrates 8g; Fiber 2g; Protein 15g

SALADS

BASMATI RICE SALAD WITH WALNUTS & GRAPES

SERVINGS: 6

Naturally sweet grapes combine with the chewy texture of brown rice & crisp toasted California walnuts to make a perfect side salad.

2 cups brown basmati rice
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
6 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (or to taste)
¾ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 tablespoon agave nectar or light-colored honey
5 scallions, trimmed (include white & greens)
½ cup (packed measure) flat-leaf parsley
½ pound very fresh, crisp seedless grapes (red, or a combination of red & green)
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup California walnuts, lightly toasted & chopped
Lettuce cups, for serving (optional)

1. Place the rice in a medium-large saucepan & add 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, cover & lower the heat to the slowest possible simmer. Cook undisturbed for 40 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed & the rice is tender. If all the water is gone & the rice is still too crunchy, add another 3 tablespoons water & continue to cook for 5 to 8 minutes longer, or until the rice is done. Remove from heat immediately & transfer the rice to a long, shallow pan, spreading out the rice & fluffing it with a fork to let steam escape. This prevents the rice from overcooking in its own heat & becoming mushy. You want separate grains for this salad!

2. In a large bowl, combine the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, garlic & agave or honey & whisk until uniform. When the rice has cooled to room temperature, add it to this dressing & stir well until all the rice is coated.

3. Cut the scallions into 2-inch pieces & place in a mini food processor with the parsley. Buzz until very, very finely minced. If you don't have a small food processor, mince the herbs until feathery with a very sharp knife.

4. Add the herbs & grapes to the rice mixture & stir gently with a large fork until everything is pretty much uniformly combined. Taste to possibly adjust salt & lemon & add some black pepper. Cover tightly & chill well before serving. (This also tastes good at room temperature, but it does need at least 4 hours in the refrigerator after it's prepared, so the flavors can meld.)

5. Stir in most of the walnuts shortly before serving & sprinkle the rest of them on top & spoon into lettuce cups if desired.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 473; Total Fat 27g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 11g; Polyunsaturated Fat 11g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 251mg; Carbohydrates 57g; Fiber 5g; Protein 8g

SALADS

BROCCOLI SALAD WITH MUSHROOMS & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 6

This deeply-flavored marinade, full of garlic & ginger, coats tender pieces of broccoli & whole mushroom caps. Lightly toasted California walnuts provide the crowning touch.

⅓ cup roasted walnut oil
1 tablespoon Chinese toasted sesame oil
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon finely minced fresh garlic
1 tablespoon finely minced fresh ginger
Several grinds of fresh black pepper
A pinch of cayenne
¼ pound medium-sized mushroom caps (very fresh, "tight," & white)
2 pounds broccoli, cut into 2-inch spears
⅓ cup unseasoned rice vinegar
1 ½ cups California walnut halves, lightly toasted

1. Combine the first 8 ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in the mushrooms.

2. Steam the broccoli until just tender & bright green. Refresh under cold running water, then drain thoroughly & pat dry with paper towels. Add this to the marinating mushrooms & stir gently until well coated.

3. Cover tightly & allow to marinate at room temperature for at least 2 hours. If marinating longer, refrigerate.

4. Stir in the vinegar within 15 minutes of serving. Sprinkle on the walnuts at the very last minute.

NOTE
This recipe can be served cold or at room temperature. The broccoli & mushrooms need a minimum of two hours to marinate, but I suggest that you marinate it for longer. You can make the salad up to a day ahead of time.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 360; Total Fat 32g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 7g; Polyunsaturated Fat 21g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 440mg; Carbohydrates 16g; Fiber 6g; Protein 9g

SALADS

BUCKWHEAT NOODLE SALAD WITH GREENS & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 4

1 tablespoon agave nectar or light-colored honey
1 tablespoon unseasoned rice vinegar
2 teaspoons low sodium soy sauce
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
½ teaspoon very finely minced or grated fresh ginger (optional)
½ teaspoon salt – or to taste
2 tablespoons roasted walnut oil
1 tablespoon Chinese-style toasted sesame oil
4 ounces uncooked Japanese-style buckwheat noodles
8 ounces of any combination of very fresh spinach, watercress, arugula, frisée or other spunky salad greens — washed & dried thoroughly
4 or 5 lovely, crisp, fresh radishes, in thin slices
1 medium carrot (choose a sweet one!), coarsely grated
1 or 2 scallions, finely minced (whites & as much of the green parts as feasible)
½ cup chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Crushed red pepper to taste (optional)

1. Place the agave nectar (or honey) in a medium-small bowl. Add the vinegar & soy sauce & stir until the honey dissolves. Stir in the garlic & salt. Whisk steadily while you drizzle in the oils to make a vinaigrette. Set aside, leaving the whisk handy.

2. Put up a potful of water to boil. When it boils, add the noodles & cook until tender (about 4 minutes) but still al dente. (Check the package instructions & cook slightly less than indicated.)

3. When the noodles are done, drain them & rinse them in cold water. Drain thoroughly & transfer to a bowl. Add the salad greens, radishes, carrot & scallion, along with vinaigrette (whisk it from the bottom one more time before adding) & toss until everything is evenly dressed.

4. Serve at room temperature or chilled, topped with walnuts & with chili flakes, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 324; Total Fat 18g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 4g; Polyunsaturated Fat 13g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 599mg; Carbohydrates 32g; Fiber 3g; Protein 9g

BULGARIAN CUCUMBER SALAD WITH YOGURT & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 6

Enjoy this light salad with a sliced fresh tomato & some olive oil-grilled artisan bread for a cool summer lunch. Persian cucumbers are my favorite kind for salads. They are sweet, crunchy & seeding is rarely necessary. If you can't find Persian cukes, any small, tight kind will work.

1 cup thinly sliced red onion
1 tablespoon cider vinegar
2 teaspoons agave nectar or sugar
6 small (6-inch) cucumbers, very fresh (peeled only if skin is bitter)
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
½ teaspoon salt, or more to taste
Black pepper to taste
2 to 3 tablespoons minced fresh dill
1 cup firm yogurt (whole milk or low-fat/nonfat Greek)
1 cup lightly toasted California walnuts, chopped
Fresh mint leaves (about 20)

1. Heat a kettle of water to boiling. Place the onion in a colander in the sink. When the water boils, pour it over the onions & let them sit for a few minutes to drain. Meanwhile, combine the vinegar & sweetener in a medium-small bowl & whisk to blend. Add the onions (okay if still warm) to the vinegar, toss with a fork & let this sit while you prepare the rest of the salad.

2. Cut the cucumbers into bite-sized chunks & place in a bowl. Stir in the garlic, salt, pepper & the onions plus all their liquid. Stir to blend, continuing to stir as you add in the yogurt & dill. Cover & chill completely.

3. Taste to adjust salt & pepper. Stir in the walnuts just before serving. Top with torn or freshly julienned mint leaves. Serve cold.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 172; Total Fat 11g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 1mg; Sodium 196mg; Carbohydrates 13g; Fiber 3g; Protein 6g

SALADS

GREEN-FLECKED BARLEY SALAD WITH WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 6

I love combining whole cooked grains with fruit, vegetables & nuts.

1 cup raw barley
2 cups freshly shelled & peeled fava beans (from 2 pounds whole fava bean pods) or edamame
½ to 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon agave nectar or light-colored honey
Heaping ½ cup minced red onion
1 to 2 cups chopped broccoli florets
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
2 average scallions, minced all the way up (whites plus reasonable greens)
1 stalk celery, finely minced
1 to 2 tablespoons mayonnaise (can be reduced fat)
Black pepper to taste
2 to 3 fresh, tart plums, pitted & sliced or 1 cup golden raisins
1 cup California walnut halves, lightly toasted
Lemon wedges, for serving
Celery leaves, for serving

1. Place barley in a pot with 3 cups water & ¼ teaspoon of the salt. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to the slowest possible, cover & simmer until tender (about 45 minutes).

2. Have the favas, onion & broccoli in a colander in the sink. Drain the cooked barley directly into the vegetables in the colander, cooking them slightly in the process. Refresh under cold running water, then shake out all the excess water & leave in the sink for a few minutes to drain thoroughly.

3. While the vegetables & barley are draining, combine the oil, garlic, ½ teaspoon of the salt, vinegar, lemon juice & agave nectar (or honey) in a large bowl, whisking to blend. Transfer the contents of the colander to the bowl & stir to combine.

4. Stir in the scallions, celery & mayonnaise & taste to adjust salt. Add some black pepper to taste.

5. Cover & chill until serving time (also okay to serve right away). Serve topped with plum slices & walnuts & with a squeezable wedge of lemon on the side. Garnish with celery leaves.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 519; Total Fat 22g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 8g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 206mg; Carbohydrates 66g; Fiber 20g; Protein 20g

SALADS

GRILLED SHRIMP SALAD

SERVINGS: 4

Louie-style dressing remade! Still pink & creamy, only friendlier to the waistline. As a final touch, sprinkle toasted California walnuts to add some delicious crunch!

2 tablespoons nonfat Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons reduced fat mayonnaise (preferably canola based)
2 tablespoons cocktail sauce
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (possibly more to taste)
Pinch of salt (optional, to taste)
Pinch of sugar (optional, to taste)
1 teaspoon crushed or minced garlic
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
16 large prawns, peeled & deveined
Salt & pepper (optional)
Shredded romaine lettuce
8 Cherry tomatoes, cut in half (2 for each serving)
2 Hard-boiled eggs, in lengthwise quarters
Kalamata olives (optional)
Toasted California walnuts

DRESSING

1. Combine the yogurt, mayonnaise, cocktail sauce & lime juice in a medium-small bowl & whisk to combine. Taste to see if it needs more lime.

2. Add salt & sugar to taste as well, if desired. Cover & refrigerate until serving time.

PRAWNS

1. Combine the lime juice & garlic in a pie dish. Whisk in the oil. Add the prawns & swish them around until they all come into contact with the marinade. Sprinkle lightly with salt & pepper & cover the pan. Refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours (overnight is okay).

2. Assemble the salad ingredients on four serving plates. Preheat a grill to medium-high – or turn on the broiler. Cook the prawns for 2 minutes, then turn & cook for another 2 to 3 minutes on the other side. They are done when opaque. Transfer the hot prawns to the top of the salad – 4 prawns per serving.

3. Top with a generous dollop of the dressing, sprinkle with toasted walnuts (& olives if desired) & serve.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 140; Total Fat 9g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 4g; Polyunsaturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 140mg; Sodium 350mg; Carbohydrates 5g; Fiber 1g; Protein 9g

GRILLED ZUCCHINI SALAD WITH "PIZZA WALNUTS"

SERVINGS: 4

Long, elegantly thin slices of summery zucchini marinate in the garlicky dressing to make a simple & delicious salad.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (plus a little extra for the zucchini & the California walnuts)
2 tablespoons finely minced shallot
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
¼ - ½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon cider vinegar or red wine vinegar
Pinch sugar
Pinches of dried thyme & oregano
Black pepper
½ pound zucchini (about 5 small ones), halved, & cut into thin, ⅛-inch) slices lengthwise
20 California walnut halves, raw or lightly toasted
1 tablespoon finely grated Parmesan

OPTIONAL EXTRAS
Very fresh, small, halved cherry tomatoes
High-end extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling on top
Sprigs of fresh marjoram, thyme, oregano
Small cubes of feta or crumbled goat cheese
Fresh, sweet corn – shaved from the cobs
Dab of very fresh high-quality ricotta

1. Combine 2 tablespoons olive oil, shallot, garlic, vinegar, ¼ teaspoon of the salt, sugar, pinch each of dried thyme & oregano & a few shakes of black pepper in a shallow bowl. Whisk to blend & set aside.

2. Set a ridged grill pan over medium heat & brush it lightly with olive oil. Place the zucchini slices on the hot surface in a single layer & cook on both sides until just tender & decorated with golden grill marks. Transfer the cooked zucchini directly to the marinade. You might need to do this in a couple of shifts.

3. Let the zucchini rest in the marinade to absorb the flavors – about a minimum of 30 minutes. Longer is also fine.

4. Combine the Parmesan with pinches of dried thyme & oregano in a small bowl. Line a toaster oven tray with foil & brush it lightly with olive oil. Place the walnut halves on the tray, with their more concave sides facing up. With a tiny spoon (if you have one) sprinkle the walnuts lightly with the cheese-herb mixture. There should be enough of it to just cover 20 walnut halves. Place the tray in the toaster oven on the "broil" setting & leave it in there until the cheese melts slightly & the tops are light golden. This will only take a minute or two. Watch carefully so it doesn't burn! Remove from the oven & cool.

5. Serve the zucchini at room temperature or cold, topped with the walnuts & a scattering of any or all of the optional extras.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 152; Total Fat 14g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 6g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 1mg; Sodium 142mg; Carbohydrates 5g; Fiber 2g; Protein 4g

SALADS

RADICCHIO SALAD WITH WALNUTS & GINGER-POMEGRANATE VINAIGRETTE

SERVINGS: 6

Late autumn personified. You can make the vinaigrette well in advance as it makes enough for more than just one recipe. Assemble the salad just before serving.

SALAD
½ pound very fresh radicchio (any type)
½ pound very fresh Romaine leaves
Seeds from 1 medium pomegranate, about ½ cup
½ cup chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

VINAIGRETTE
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons roasted walnut oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon low-fat buttermilk (or omit for a dairy-free dressing)
2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses
1 to 2 teaspoons finely minced shallot
½ teaspoon finely minced garlic
½ teaspoon finely grated ginger or ginger juice
¼ teaspoon salt

1. Wash & thoroughly dry all the salad leaves. Keep them very cold until shortly before assembling & serving the salad.

2. To make the vinaigrette: Measure the oil, walnut oil, vinegar, buttermilk, molasses, shallot, garlic, ginger & salt into a jar with a tight fitting lid. Seal & shake well until all of the ingredients are incorporated. Taste to adjust salt & refrigerate.

3. When serving time arrives, break the leaves into bite-sized pieces in a large bowl. Drizzle the vinaigrette to lightly coat all the leaves; toss well. Sprinkle with pomegranate seeds & walnuts & serve right away, passing a pepper mill as you go.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 200; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 6g; Polyunsaturated Fat g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 115mg; Carbohydrates 13g; Fiber 2g; Protein 3g

SALADS

SMART COLESLAW WITH PEARS, WALNUTS & CRANBERRIES

SERVINGS: 6

A unique coleslaw recipe with crunchy California walnuts, tangy yogurt & sweet maple syrup.

2 pounds cabbage (one each, red & green), shredded
1 large carrot, coarsely grated
½ cup very finely minced red onion
¾ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ cup cider vinegar
¼ cup reduced fat mayonnaise
¼ cup nonfat yogurt
1 to 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup or light-colored honey
½ cup cranberries – dried, or minced fresh
1 to 2 Bosc pears
1 cup of chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Wedges of lemon

1. Combine the cabbage, carrot & onion in a very large bowl. Sprinkle with salt, toss to combine & set aside. In a second (small) bowl, combine the vinegar, mayonnaise, yogurt & syrup or honey & whisk until smooth. Pour this, along with the cranberries, into the vegetables & toss to mix well.

2. Transfer to a container with a tight fitting lid, cover & refrigerate until shortly before serving time. Just before serving, cut the pear(s) into thin strips (also okay to just chop into very small pieces) & gently mix into the coleslaw.

3. Top with walnuts & serve right away, accompanied by squeezable wedges of lemon.

NOTES
Be sure to use a Bosc pear for this, as it's the only variety firm enough to hold up texturally. Other pears will fall apart.

This tastes best when it's made at least a day (& up to 2 days) ahead of time. Leave out the pear & walnuts until just before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 260; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 5mg; Sodium 360mg; Carbohydrates 25g; Fiber 7g; Protein 6g

WALNUT-DOTTED POTATO SALAD WITH WALNUT GREMOLATA

SERVINGS: 8

Classic easy potato salad gets a new hat. This is good at room temperature or cold. It keeps, tightly covered & refrigerated, for up to 3 days. Add the California walnuts just before serving; also prepare the Gremolata shortly before serving as well.

SALAD

2 pounds potatoes (baby red or any kind)
1 cup red onion, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (or more taste)
1 to 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
Black pepper
1 large carrot, minced
1 medium bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange), minced
1 stalk celery, thinly sliced
2 to 3 tablespoons mayonnaise &/or yogurt (optional)
½ cup lightly toasted chopped California walnuts

GREMOLATA

½ cup finely minced pitted Kalamata olives
¼ cup finely minced flat-leaf parsley
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
Grated zest, plus juice, from 1 medium lemon
1 cup finely minced, lightly toasted California walnuts

OPTIONAL SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Fresh, clean salad greens for serving
Very sweet, sliced cherry tomatoes, for serving
2 to 3 hard-boiled eggs, quartered (optional)

1. Peel the potatoes, if desired, & cut them into coin-sized slices. Place in a pot with plenty of water to cover & bring to a boil. Lower the heat & simmer the potatoes until fork tender.

2. Place the onions in a medium-large mesh strainer in the sink.

3. Combine the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, salt & pepper in a medium-large bowl & whisk to blend.

4. Drain the potatoes directly into the onions in the colander, then shake off all excess water & dump all of this into the olive oil dressing in the bowl. Toss to coat. Let this stand & cool to room temperature.

5. Add the minced vegetables, stirring them in; taste, adjust salt, pepper & vinegar. Add mayonnaise or yogurt – &/or some extra olive oil, if desired. The salad is now ready to serve if you are planning to have it at room temperature. If you want it cold, cover & chill for at least an hour.

6. Make the Gremolata. Combine the olives, parsley, garlic & lemon zest in a small bowl & toss until combined. Add lemon juice to taste & to moisten.

7. To serve: Stir the chopped walnuts into the salad. Prepare a bed of salad greens on each plate. Add a big spoonful of the salad & sprinkle the top with Gremolata. Garnish with cherry tomatoes & hard-boiled eggs, if desired, & serve.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 310; Total Fat 22g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 9g; Polyunsaturated Fat 9g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 433mg; Carbohydrates 26g; Fiber 4g; Protein 5g

SALADS

WATERCRESS SALAD WITH TOFU, SHALLOTS, & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 5

In this unusual salad, the watercress is wilted slightly by contact with the tofu-walnut mixture, which is added directly from the pan.

2 tablespoons grapeseed oil or extra-virgin olive oil
2 large shallots, cut into thin rings (rings separated with your fingers)
1 teaspoon salt
½ pound very firm tofu, cut into matchsticks
1 cup coarsely chopped California walnuts
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 to 3 large bunches watercress, trimmed of the largest stems & in a medium-large bowl
Very ripe & sweet cherry tomatoes – whole, if tiny, or halved, if larger, (optional)

1. Place a large, wide skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the shallot rings & ¼ teaspoon of the salt & cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for about 3 minutes, or until the shallots become very soft. Remove from the pan with a slotted spoon & set aside.

2. In the same pan add another tablespoon of oil, stir to distribute & then add the tofu strips. Sprinkle in another ¼ teaspoon salt, stir to combine & then spread out the tofu in a shallow layer. Let it sit over the heat without stirring for a few minutes – until the tofu browns lightly on the bottom. Stir to redistribute & let it sit again to brown & firm up further. Add another ¼ teaspoon salt & do this yet again. The tofu will become chewy & compelling.

3. Stir in the walnuts & the remaining salt. Spread it out again a couple of times, cooking & redistributing the mixture until it is fairly uniformly golden. Return the shallots to the pan & stir them in. When it looks irresistibly yummy, add the vinegar one tablespoon at a time (it will sizzle on contact), stirring to combine after each addition. Turn off the heat & let it sit to absorb for another minute or so.

4. Add the tofu-walnut mixture to the waiting watercress & toss to combine. Serve right away, topped with a scattering of cherry tomatoes, if desired.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 336; Total Fat 28g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 19g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 499mg; Carbohydrates 18g; Fiber 3g; Protein 13g

SOUPS

ROASTED ROOT VEGETABLE SOUP WITH ROSEMARY WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 8

This delightful soup provides an opportunity to appreciate the humble root vegetables that cheer us up in the winter.

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium sweet potatoes (about 1 pound)
1 medium russet potato (about ¾ pound)
4 medium carrots (about ½ pound)
1 large parsnip (about ¾ pound)
2 cups onion, chopped
1 bulb garlic
6 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth &/or water
Salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
Rosemary Walnuts

ROSEMARY WALNUTS
2 teaspoons olive oil
3 cups minced California walnuts
¼ cup (packed) minced rosemary
¼ teaspoon salt

OPTIONAL
½ cup finely minced onion plus another tablespoon of olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line two large baking trays with parchment or foil & add a tablespoon of olive oil to each. Spread the oil evenly.

2. Peel the sweet potatoes, russet potato, carrots & parsnip. Cut the sides off the parsnip (along the central core) & discard the core. Chop all the vegetables into approximately 1 ½ -inch chunks (not exact). Spread the onions on one of the trays, along with the carrots & potato – all in a single layer. Slice the top-most tips from the garlic bulb & place it on the tray with the potato, onions & carrots.

3. Scatter the sweet potato & parsnip pieces on the second tray. Roast in the preheated oven until fork-tender & brown around the edges. (You might need to loosen the pieces from time to time by shaking the trays &/or leveraging them with a small spatula.) Roast the garlic bulb until it's soft enough to give when squeezed. All of this will take anywhere from 20 to 40 minutes, depending on your oven, your trays, the cut of the vegetables, etc.

4. Meanwhile, gently heat the broth &/or water in a soup kettle, covered.

5. When the vegetables are roasted, add them to the heated liquid. (In the case of the garlic, let it cool until comfortable to handle, then squeeze the pulp into the soup.)

6. Simmer over low heat, covered, for about 15 minutes, then blend completely or partially. Taste to adjust salt & add some black pepper.

7. Serve hot, topped with a generous sprinkling of Rosemary Walnuts.*

***See next page for Rosemary Walnuts Recipe**

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 476; Total Fat 34g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 8g; Polyunsaturated Fat 22g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 152mg; Carbohydrates 41g; Fiber 9g; Protein 10g

FOR THE ROSEMARY WALNUTS

1. Place a wide (10-inch) skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the walnuts & rosemary & turn the heat to low. Stirring frequently, pan-roast the nuts until deep golden brown. This will take anywhere from 5 to 10 minutes (possibly, but not likely, longer) depending on the pan & your stove. You want the walnuts deeply toasted, but, of course, not burned. Add the salt when they're done.

2. For extra flavor, you can remove the walnuts from the pan & add an extra tablespoon of olive oil. Add ½ cup finely minced onion & cook over medium heat until the onion is brown & beginning to get crunchy. Add the Rosemary Walnuts back in at the end & toss to combine. (This extra touch is truly delicious!)

YOGURT BARLEY SOUP WITH CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO

SERVINGS: 6

Enjoy this very simple, refreshingly tart soup as a light spring greeting for lunch or dinner.

FOR THE SOUP
1 cup pearl barley
4 cups water
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup finely minced onion
½ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 cup plain yogurt (Greek-style okay)
Black pepper to taste

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO
1 cup California walnuts
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 cup firmly packed cilantro (leaves & smaller stems)
Scant ½ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL TOPPINGS
Minced fresh mint
Chopped California walnuts

FOR THE SOUP

1. Combine the barley, water & ½ teaspoon of the salt in a medium-large saucepan & bring to a boil. Lower the heat to a simmer, cover & cook until the barley is tender – about 45 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, place a medium-sized skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute, then add the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Toss in the onion & cumin & sauté for about 5 minutes, or until the onion becomes translucent. Add the garlic & the remaining ½ teaspoon salt & continue to sauté until the onion becomes very soft – about another 5 to 8 minutes.

3. When steps 1 & 2 are done, add the sautéed mixture to the barley mixture & simmer them together, covered, over lowest possible heat, for about 10 minutes – to meld the flavors.

4. Stir &/or whisk the room-temperature yogurt into the hot soup until it blends in completely. Season to taste with black pepper & serve right away, with a heaping teaspoon (or more) of the pesto added to each serving. If desired, you can also top with scatterings of fresh mint & minced walnuts.

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO:

1. Place the walnuts in a blender or the small bowl of a food processor & grind to a coarse meal.

2. Add the garlic, cilantro & salt & continue to run the machine until it becomes a uniform green paste (some light walnut texture is fine).

3. Run the machine while you drizzle in the oil. Transfer to a container with a tight fitting lid & refrigerate until use.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 320; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 6g; Monounsaturated Fat 4g; Polyunsaturated Fat 2g; Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 620mg; Carbohydrates 45g; Fiber 9g; Protein 9g

SIDES

Better Baked Beans
Couscous With Green Onions, Walnuts & Peas
Israeli Couscous With Leek & Garlic
Leftover Mashed Potato-Broccoli-Walnut Cakes
Parsnip Gratin With Cajun-Spiced Walnut "Crumb" Topping
Pasta Salad With Cilantro-Walnut Pesto
Polenta-Porcini-Pepper Stuffing
Smart Harvest Stuffing
Spiced Basmati Pilaf With Walnuts & Raisins
Turkey Curry Over Cranberry-Walnut Rice Pilaf
White Beans With Pickled Red Onions & Toasted Walnuts

BETTER BAKED BEANS

SERVINGS: 8

California walnuts give these baked beans a nice crunch. Great for any outdoor menu, try it with grilled veggies & chicken breast.

3 (15-ounce) cans navy beans
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups minced onion
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon allspice
1 teaspoon salt
2 medium carrots, diced
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1 medium red or yellow bell pepper, diced
¼ cup grainy prepared mustard
¼ cup dark molasses
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium diced tomatoes

TOPPINGS
Minced flat-leaf parsley
Minced California walnuts, lightly toasted

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Empty the cans of beans into a colander in the sink. Rinse thoroughly & set aside to drain.

3. Place a large (10 to 12 inch) skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the onion, spices & half the salt & cook, stirring often, over medium heat for 5 minutes or until the onion begins to soften.

4. Add the carrots, garlic & bell pepper, plus the remaining salt. Stir to blend, then cover, turn the heat down to medium-low & cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the carrots are tender.

5. Stir in the mustard, molasses & vinegar. Cook for 1 minute, then pour in the canned tomatoes with all their liquid. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to a simmer & cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat & gently stir in the beans (careful not to break them).

6. Transfer to a 9 x 13-inch baking pan & cover it tightly with foil. Bake undisturbed for 45 minutes.

7. Serve hot, topped with parsley & walnuts.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 260; Total Fat 5g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 1g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 409mg; Carbohydrates 46g; Fiber 12g; Protein 11g

SIDES

COUSCOUS WITH GREEN ONIONS, WALNUTS & PEAS

SERVINGS: 6

This is a versatile side dish that can be served at any temperature.

1 ½ cups couscous (regular or whole-wheat)
1 cup freshly shucked English peas or frozen peas
¼ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (possibly more, to taste)
½ teaspoon minced garlic
3 scallions, minced (use as much of the greens as feasible, in addition to the whites)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
Cayenne to taste
1 cup chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Minced flat-leaf parsley
Wedges of lemon, for garnish

Steps 1-3 can be made a day ahead of time.

1. Place the couscous in a medium-large bowl & add 1 cup boiling hot water. Cover the bowl with a plate & let it stand until the water is absorbed (about 20 minutes).

2. Meanwhile, steam the peas over simmering water for 3 to 5 minutes, or until done to your liking. (Alternatively, you can defrost 1 cup frozen peas by placing them in a strainer & running them under room temperature tap water for a minute or two.) Drain well & set aside.

3. Fluff the couscous with a fork from the bottom to prevent clumps. As you fluff it, sprinkle in the salt, olive oil, cumin, lemon juice & garlic. Gently stir in the peas. Cover tightly with plastic wrap & chill until shortly before serving.

4. Stir in the scallions about 10 minutes before serving. Add black pepper & cayenne (& possibly correct salt) to taste. Serve warm (reheated in a microwave), cold, or at room temperature, topped with walnuts & a little parsley & accompanied by squeezable wedges of lemon.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 343; Total Fat 23g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 9g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 3mg; Carbohydrates 30g; Fiber 6g; Protein 8g

SIDES

ISRAELI COUSCOUS WITH LEEK & GARLIC

SERVINGS: 6

This is wonderful on its own as a side dish. The toasted pearls of couscous can also serve as a bed for an appetizer of poached artichokes, or even as an entrée with a hearty dollop of Cilantro-Walnut Pesto.

FOR THE COUSCOUS
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium leek, cleaned & minced (or in very thin half-rounds)
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups Israeli (pearl) couscous
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
2 cups boiling water
Black pepper to taste
1 heaping cup chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
½ cup Cilantro-Walnut Pesto (optional, recipe follows)

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO
1 cup California walnuts
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 cup firmly packed cilantro (leaves & smaller stems)
Scant ½ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

You will need a skillet with a tight-fitting lid.

FOR THE COUSCOUS

1. Place a large (10 to 12-inch) skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan.

2. Add the leek pieces & a little salt & sauté for 5 to 8 minutes, or until the leek is fragrant.

3. Sprinkle in the couscous, a scant ½ teaspoon salt & the garlic. Stir to combine, turn the heat to medium-low & continue to cook, stirring frequently, until the couscous is coated & turning golden (5 to 8 minutes).

4. Pour in the water, cover the pan & turn the heat to low. Let it simmer 8 to 10 minutes, or until the couscous is tender. Fluff with a fork, add black pepper to taste, fold in the walnuts & it's ready to serve.

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO

1. Place the walnuts in a blender or the small bowl of a food processor & grind to a coarse meal.

2. Add the garlic, cilantro & salt & continue to run the machine until it becomes a uniform green paste (some light walnut texture is fine).

3. Run the machine while you drizzle in the oil. Transfer to a container with a tight fitting lid & refrigerate until use.

This dish keeps & reheats well. If you are not planning to serve it right away, store it in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator (for up to 2 days) & heat in a microwave or in a covered pan in a 300°F oven just before serving. Hold off on adding the walnuts until just before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 340; Total Fat 18g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 200mg; Carbohydrates 38g; Fiber 4g; Protein 9g

LEFTOVER MASHED POTATO-BROCCOLI-WALNUT CAKES

SERVINGS: 10

Green-speckled & soft on the inside, golden & crisp on the outside – this is how to embed broccoli in mashed potatoes & come up with something exceeding the sum of its parts.

2 cups finely minced broccoli florets & peeled stems
1 ¾ cups leftover mashed potatoes
2 tablespoons prepared mustard (plain yellow, or Dijon)
Up to 1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
½ cup very finely minced scallions (whites & reasonable greens)
Up to ½ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
Black pepper
1 ½ cups ground California walnuts
¼ cup olive oil, grapeseed oil, or high-oleic safflower oil
A touch of unsalted butter (optional)

1. Heat a kettle of water to boiling. Have the broccoli set up in a colander sitting in a large bowl in the sink & when the water boils, pour it into the broccoli to cook it slightly. Let sit for 2 minutes then drain well, shaking off all the excess water. Transfer the broccoli to a clean tea towel – spreading it out & patting it to dry it completely. Return the colander to the sink (no need to clean it at this point).

2. Place the mashed potatoes in a medium-sized bowl. Add the broccoli, mustard, garlic, scallions, ½ teaspoon salt, if necessary & pepper. Mix until everything is thoroughly blended, then taste to see if it needs more salt.

3. Use your hands (wet them, if you like, for easier handling) to form the mixture into 3-inch patties—about ¼ cup apiece.

4. Have the ground walnuts ready & waiting on a dinner plate. Press each patty gently but firmly into the ground walnuts to coat the entire outer surface, both sides. It's okay to coat them generously. (You might not use them all.) Chill patties very well (they can be prepared to this stage & refrigerated).

5. Place a 10-inch skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add the oil & swirl to coat the pan. If you'd like, you can also melt in some butter.

6. When the oil is hot enough to instantly sizzle a walnut crumb, fry the cakes (in batches, as space allows) for about 5 minutes on each side, or until golden & crisp all over. You want to heat them through (remember, they are already cooked) & get the walnuts golden & toasty, but not dark. (Wipe out the pan between batches, to sweep away any possibly overdone walnuts that might be left behind. Add more oil, as needed, per batch.) Serve hot or warm.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 174; Total Fat 15g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 6g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 4mg; Sodium 151mg; Carbohydrates 9g; Fiber 2g; Protein 3g

PARSNIP GRATIN WITH CAJUN-SPICED WALNUT "CRUMB" TOPPING

SERVINGS: 8

Parsnips are out there, just waiting for you to discover them. Here is a good way to do that.

PARSNIP GRATIN
5 pounds parsnips (about 10 medium ones, approximately 8 inches long, 2-inch diameter)
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar (or to taste)
¾ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
Freshly ground black pepper
1 Cajun-Spiced Walnut "Crumb" Topping (recipe follows)

CAJUN-SPICED WALNUT "CRUMB" TOPPING
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon dried thyme
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 heaping cup finely minced California walnuts
¼ teaspoon salt (scant measure)
Few dashes cayenne (optional)

PARSNIP GRATIN

1. Put up a large saucepan of water to boil. Lightly coat a medium-sized gratin pan with nonstick spray & preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Peel the parsnips & trim & discard the ends. Chop the parsnips into 2 to 3-inch pieces. (Core the parsnips if they are huge.)

3. When the water boils, add the cut parsnips & cook them for about 10 minutes, or until very soft. Use a mesh scooper or a slotted spoon to remove them from the water (shaking out the excess) & transfer them to the work bowl of a food processor. (Remove the saucepan of water from the heat, but do not dump it out yet.)

4. Add the olive oil, vinegar & salt to the parsnips & process until very smooth. If they seem a bit dry, add a little of their cooking water. Season to taste with black pepper (correcting the salt & vinegar along the way, if you so choose).

5. Transfer to the prepared pan & create a generous top layer of the walnut "crumbs." Bake in the center of the preheated oven for 20 to 30 minutes, or until heated through & aromatic. Serve hot or warm.

CAJUN-SPICED WALNUT "CRUMB" TOPPING:

1. Heat the oil in a medium-sized skillet over medium-low heat. When it is warm, add the spices & stir until they are completely coated.

2. Add the walnuts & salt & keep stirring until everything is evenly distributed.

3. Stir & cook over medium-low heat for another 5 to 8 minutes or so (until the walnuts are toasty). Be careful not to burn them!

4. Stir in cayenne to taste, if desired & remove from heat. When cool, store in a tightly closed jar in the refrigerator until use.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 377; Total Fat 19g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 8g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 320mg; Carbohydrates 54g; Fiber 15g; Protein 6g

PASTA SALAD WITH CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO

SERVINGS: 4

Enjoy this light, refreshing—& slightly different—pasta salad. It will look familiar, but taste surprising, in a very subtle way—try it hot or cold. Be sure to make the pesto well ahead of time for optimum flavor.

FOR THE PASTA
8 ounces pasta (fusilli or cavatappi)
1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup Cilantro-Walnut Pesto (recipe follows)
1 teaspoon red wine vinegar, or to taste
1 small red bell pepper, diced very small
8-10 snow peas, trimmed & halved diagonally
4 to 6 ounces fresh mozzarella – in small dice
Chopped California walnuts
Black pepper to taste

OPTIONAL
Halved cherry tomatoes, chopped California walnuts, minced fresh cilantro, carrots, cucumber &/or fennel

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO
1 cup California walnuts
½ teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 cup firmly packed cilantro
Scant ½ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

FOR THE PASTA
1. Cook the pasta according the package instructions. Drain, then toss with olive oil, salt, 4 tablespoons of the pesto & the vinegar. Stir to blend thoroughly, let it cool to room temperature.

2. Stir in the vegetables, followed by the mozzarella, chopped walnuts & black pepper to taste.

3. Serve warm or at room temperature – or chill & serve cold. Top it with additional pesto, if you like, plus any of the other optional toppings.

FOR THE CILANTRO-WALNUT PESTO (MAKES ½ CUP):
1. Place the walnuts in a blender or the small bowl of a food processor & grind to a coarse meal.

2. Add the garlic, cilantro & salt & continue to run the machine until it becomes a uniform green paste (some light walnut texture is fine).

3. Run the machine while you drizzle in the oil. Transfer to a container with a tight fitting lid & refrigerate until use.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 290; Total Fat 6g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 2g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 300mg; Carbohydrates 49g; Fiber 4g; Protein 8g

POLENTA-PORCINI-PEPPER STUFFING

SERVINGS: 6

Here is a fun new twist on an American holiday favorite.

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
1 ½ cups polenta
¾ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons grapeseed oil or extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups minced onion
½ teaspoon rubbed sage
½ teaspoon dried thyme
2 teaspoons minced or crushed garlic
1 cup minced bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange)
1 medium Anaheim chili, minced
Black pepper to taste
1 cup lightly toasted minced California walnuts

OPTIONAL
Corn
Touch of butter
Additional mushrooms
Splash or two of dry sherry

1. Place the dried mushrooms in a medium-sized bowl & pour in 1 cup boiling water. Cover the bowl with a plate & let it stand for at least 30 minutes. (Longer is fine.) When the mushrooms are tender, drain them in a strainer over a bowl, saving the now-delicious water. Squeeze all the water from the mushrooms after they're drained, then finely chop them; set aside.

2. Measure 3 ½ cups water into a medium-sized saucepan & add ¼ teaspoon of the salt. Bring to a boil & sprinkle in the polenta, whisking. Keep whisking; turn the heat down to low. Let it cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon (which will now be easier to use than the whisk) until very thick. This will only take about 10 minutes or less. Pour into a 7x11-inch baking dish or divide the hot mixture between two full-size dinner plates, spreading each "pile" into a circle about ½ inch-thick. Allow to cool completely. It will stiffen up as it cools.

3. Place a 10-inch heavy skillet over medium heat & wait about 1 minute, then add the oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the onion & herbs, plus another ¼ teaspoon of the salt & sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes, or until the onion begins to become translucent. Stir in the garlic, cover the pan & cook over medium-low heat for another 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

4. Add the peppers, chili & chopped mushrooms, stirring to blend. Cover the pan again; cook 5 minutes. Add the reserved liquid from the mushrooms & continue to cook until all of the liquid has evaporated & everything is tender, about 5 minutes.

5. Use a sharp knife, cut the firmed-up polenta into chunks (about 1-inch, but this is totally imprecise). Heat a separate pan over medium high heat & add two tablespoons oil; add the polenta cubes & cook, turning the cubes occasionally until they are all golden. Add the polenta to the vegetables carefully along with the final ¼ teaspoon salt. Stir gently from the bottom of the pan to distribute everything. Season to taste with black pepper. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 370; Total Fat 17g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 300mg; Carbohydrates 47g; Fiber 8g; Protein 9g

SIDES

SMART HARVEST STUFFING

SERVINGS: 6

As one of the great complements to any fall or winter meal, this lower saturated fat & calorie version of stuffing using California walnuts provides a delicious option for cooks.

5 or 6 slices whole-wheat bread (8 ounces) (day-old or even stale is okay)
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
1 ½ cups minced onion
1 stalk minced celery
½ teaspoon salt (possibly more)
1 ½ teaspoons poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
1 ½ cups (packed) cooked wild rice
½ cup dried cranberries
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ cup water or broth (possibly more)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 cup minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
Up to 1 cup fresh pomegranate seeds (optional)

1. Toast the bread until crisp, then dice into small pieces. Set aside. Place a large, deep skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the onion, celery, salt & seasoning. Sauté over medium heat for about 5 to 8 minutes, until onion is translucent & celery is tender. Add garlic, wild rice & cranberries & sauté for another 5 minutes or so. Stir in the bread & mix to combine. Sprinkle in the lemon juice & pour in the broth, mixing them both using a large fork. Adjust salt & pepper to taste.

2. If you are stuffing a bird, it is now ready. If you are not planning to bake it inside a bird, check to see if it is moist enough for your taste. If not, you can add some more broth or water & transfer it to a lightly greased (or nonstick-sprayed) baking dish, cover tightly with foil & heat just before serving. Serve hot, with walnuts mixed in right before serving & topped with pomegranate seeds, if available.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 310; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 1.5g; Monounsaturated Fat 4g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 320mg; Carbohydrates 36g; Fiber 7g; Protein 9g

SPICED BASMATI PILAF WITH WALNUTS & RAISINS

SERVINGS: 8

Guaranteed you will enjoy this nicely textured, versatile side dish that tastes a whole lot more complicated than it actually is to make!

2 cups uncooked brown basmati rice
3 cups water
2 tablespoons oil or butter
1 ½ cups minced onion
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced or crushed garlic
2 teaspoons fennel seeds (optional)
1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
1 cup raisins (dark or golden – or a combination)
1 to 2 teaspoons grated orange or lemon zest (or a combination)
1 ½ cups minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
About 10 fresh mint leaves, cut into very thin strips (optional)

1. Place the rice & water in a pot with a tight-fitting lid. Bring to a boil, then cover & simmer undisturbed over low heat until tender (about 40 minutes). (If the rice is still underdone at this point, it is okay to splash in up to ¼ cup more water & cook a little further.)

2. Meanwhile, heat the oil or melt the butter in a medium-sized skillet. Add the onion, garlic, ginger, fennel seeds & salt. Sauté over low heat for about 15 minutes, or until the onion is very soft. Remove from heat.

3. When the rice is tender to your liking, fluff it with a fork to separate the grains & transfer to a serving bowl. Stir in the onion mixture, working it in with a fork to thoroughly combine. Add the raisins, citrus zest & walnuts as you stir.

4. Top with the mint, if desired & serve right away.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 397; Total Fat 19g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 11g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 297mg; Carbohydrates 53g; Fiber 5g; Protein 7g

TURKEY CURRY OVER CRANBERRY-WALNUT WILD RICE PILAF

SERVINGS: 6

A great use for leftover turkey, this is also a perfect opportunity to get more turmeric (the yellow herb in all curry powders) onto your plate. Both the curry & the pilaf reheat beautifully, so go ahead & make them in advance, if you wish & bring them back to life on the stovetop or in a microwave. Easy!

CURRY

1 ½ tablespoons olive oil or grapeseed or canola oil
1 cup minced onion
2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds
1 teaspoon turmeric
2 teaspoons ground cumin
2 tablespoons very finely minced fresh ginger
1 tablespoon minced or crushed garlic
1 medium carrot, diced
½ medium very sweet bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange), diced
½ teaspoon salt
3 cups diced cooked turkey meat
½ cup water
½ cup apple juice
3 tablespoons thick yogurt (Greek yogurt works best, but you can use any kind)
Red pepper flakes to taste (optional)

PILAF

2 cups cooked brown basmati rice
2 cups cooked wild rice
1 tablespoon roasted walnut oil
3 tablespoons dried cranberries
½ cup minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
Salt to taste (about ½ teaspoon)

1. In a large bowl, combine everything for the pilaf & mix until completely blended. Heat gently just before serving.

2. For the turkey curry, heat a large, deep skillet (medium heat) for about a minute, then add the oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the onion & stir-fry for about 2 minutes, then stir in the spices & ginger & cook, stirring, for 1 minute longer until they smell very fragrant.

3. Stir in the garlic, then add the carrot, bell pepper & salt. Turn the heat down, cover the pan & let it cook for another 5 minutes or so – until the vegetables are just barely tender & completely coated with flavor.

4. Stir in the turkey until it's coated, too, then add the water & apple juice. Bring to a quick boil, lower to the slowest possible simmer & cover the pan & cook for 5 minutes longer.

5. Stir in the yogurt, add red pepper flakes to taste, if desired & serve hot, over the warmed pilaf.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 560; Total Fat 14g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 65mg; Sodium 384mg; Carbohydrates 72g; Fiber 7g; Protein 35g

SIDES

WHITE BEANS WITH PICKLED RED ONIONS & TOASTED WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 6

3 (15-ounce) cans white pea beans or cannellini beans, rinsed & thoroughly drained
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon minced or crushed garlic
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 to 3 tablespoons minced fresh basil
2 to 3 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley
Pickled Red Onions (recipe follows)
½ cup California walnuts, toasted & minced

PICKLED RED ONIONS
1 cup cider vinegar
1 cup water
3 tablespoons honey, agave nectar, or brown sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon bruised peppercorns (just hit them hard with a bowl. It's fun!)
4 medium-sized firm red onions, very thinly sliced with an exquisitely sharp knife

1. Combine the beans, oil, vinegar, salt, garlic & black pepper to taste. Mix gently, cover & chill.

2. Stir in the fresh herbs within ten minutes of serving. Top each serving with Pickled Red Onions & walnuts.

FOR THE ONIONS
1. Put up a kettle of water to boil.

2. Meanwhile, combine the vinegar, water, sweetener-of-choice, salt & peppercorns in a bowl & stir until sugar is dissolved.

3. Place the onion slices in a large bowl. When the water boils, pour all of it onto the onions & let them sit for 5 minutes, causing them to wilt slightly. Drain well & transfer the onions to the marinade.

4. Cover & marinate – at room temperature or in the refrigerator - for at least several hours (but can be days or weeks as well). Store in a tightly closed container in the refrigerator. This keeps indefinitely!

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 376; Total Fat 14g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 6g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 430mg; Carbohydrates 50g; Fiber 14g; Protein 14g

MAINS

Acorn Squash Stuffed With Walnut-Apple Basmati Pilaf
Brilliant Chili Topped With Walnuts
Chicken-Walnut Lettuce Wraps (Gluten-Free)
Curried Mango-Walnut Chicken Sandwich
Feta-Walnut-Sandwich With Heirloom Tomatoes
Grilled Trout With Walnut Meunière
Grilled Walnut Pizza With Roasted Pepper & Cauliflower
Linguine With Broccoli Rabe & Tomato-Walnut Pesto
Mac & Cheese Makeover
Penne With Wilted Greens, Feta & Walnuts
Spinach Lasagna With Walnut Pesto
Stuffed Peppers With Bulgur-Walnut Pilaf
Vegetable & Walnut Pizza
Walnut-Coated Smart "Fried" Chicken
Walnut-Pomegranate Grilled Chicken

ACORN SQUASH STUFFED WITH WALNUT-APPLE BASMATI PILAF

MAINS

SERVINGS: 4

Acorn squash was born to be stuffed & in this case we're filling it with a delicious preparation of basmati rice, caramelized onions, garlic, California walnuts, apples & dried cherries. Put this on a plate & your dinner companions will feel, if not like royalty, then at least very well cared for.

1 cup brown basmati rice
1 ¾ cups water
1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
2 medium acorn squash (about 2 pounds apiece) - halved & seeded
1 teaspoon butter
½ medium onion, minced
⅔ cup chopped California walnuts
¼ teaspoon minced garlic (about half a small clove)
¼ teaspoon salt (rounded measure)
1 medium apple, chopped
¼ cup dried cherries (halved or quartered, if overly large)

1. Combine the rice & water in a medium-sized saucepan & bring to a boil. Then turn down the heat to the lowest possible setting, cover the pot & let the rice simmer undisturbed for 40 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking tray with foil & add 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Use a pastry brush or a rubber spatula to distribute the oil so that it coats the area where you'll put the squash. Place the squash cut side down on the olive oil coating. Put the tray in the center of the oven & roast the squash for 35 to 40 minutes, or until it is tender enough on the bottom to easily insert a fork or a sharp knife. Remove the tray from the oven & let it sit while you prepare the filling. Turn the oven down to 300°F.

3. While the squash is roasting & the rice is cooking, place a small skillet over medium heat & wait about a minute. Add the remaining ½ tablespoon (that's 1 ½ teaspoons) olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Toss in the butter & swirl until it melts into the oil. Add the onion & cook, stirring often, for 10 minutes, or until the onion becomes very soft & is beginning to turn golden. (If it appears to be browning too quickly, turn the heat to medium-low.) Add half the walnuts & cook them with the onions, stirring frequently for 5 to 8 minutes, or until the nuts begin to toast & give off a lovely aroma. Stir in the garlic & salt & cook for 5 minutes longer. Remove the pan from the heat. (Meanwhile, lightly toast the remaining walnuts & set aside.)

4. After 40 minutes of undisturbed cooking, you may now disturb the rice by fluffing it with a fork. Give it a taste. If it is a little too crunchy, add another 3 tablespoons water & without fluffing or stirring it further, put the top back on & let it sit for another 10 minutes with the heat turned off. It will steam itself a little further & become more tender.

5. When the rice is done to your liking, transfer it to a medium-large bowl. Add the onion-walnut mixture (using a rubber spatula to scrape in all the delicious essence that might otherwise be left in the pan) & toss with a serving fork until well combined. Add the apple & cherries & mix until thoroughly combined.

6. Turn the squash over, so their cavities are facing up. Divide the rice mixture among the squash, using a soup spoon to fill the cavities, packing down the filling, and then mounding the top.

7. Cover the filled squash loosely with a tent of foil, and return the tray to the oven for only about 10 minutes – just long enough to heat everything through. (You can also skip this step, and just serve it warm, as is. It's good either way.) Serve topped with the remaining toasted walnuts.

Please note: You can include the squash in the stuffing as well. Simply roast it as directed, peel it and cut it in chunks. Add the squash chunks to the rice mixture. If you can't find dried cherries, it's okay to substitute dried cranberries.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 250; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 25mg; Sodium 160mg; Carbohydrates 8g; Fiber 2g; Protein 15g

BRILLIANT CHILI TOPPED WITH WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 8

A family favorite, this hearty chili with toasted California walnuts is sure to warm you up without weighing you down. This updated version calls for ground lean turkey instead of ground beef making it a lighter alternative to the traditional version.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium-large onion, chopped
1 large carrot, sliced
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cumin
2 tablespoons chili powder
1 pound 99% lean ground turkey breast
1 small red or yellow bell pepper, minced
2 cans red kidney beans (rinsed & drained)
1 (28-ounce) can chopped or crushed tomatoes
1 ½ cups chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Heat olive oil in large, deep pan. Add onion & sauté over medium heat until translucent. Add carrot, salt & spices & sauté until spices are toasted. Crumble in the ground turkey breast & sprinkle in the minced bell pepper & cook until the turkey breast is cooked through & becomes white & opaque.

2. Add the beans & tomatoes & stir gently so as not to break the beans. Bring to a boil then lower heat & cook, partly covered, over medium-low heat for another 20 minutes.

3. Serve hot, topped with a sprinkling of walnuts & parsley.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 330; Total Fat 20g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12g; Cholesterol 25mg; Sodium 400mg; Carbohydrates 46g; Fiber 17.5g; Protein 31.5g

CHICKEN-WALNUT LETTUCE WRAPS *(Gluten-Free)*

SERVINGS: 6

Here's a crunchy, tasty—& easy recipe that just might get you & your family eating more vegetables!

1 large carrot, minced
1 stalk celery, minced
1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded & diced
½ bell pepper (red, yellow, or orange), minced
2 scallions, minced
3 cups minced cilantro
8 snow peas, trimmed & cut into thin strips
1 cooked chicken breast, diced
1 tablespoon chili paste
½ cup seasoned rice vinegar
2 teaspoons Chinese sesame oil
1 cup chopped California walnuts, lightly toasted
Salt & pepper to taste
6 leaves butter (Boston) lettuce—cleaned, dried, & chilled

1. Combine the vegetables & chicken in a medium bowl.

2. Combine the chili paste, vinegar & sesame oil, then pour this into the other ingredients & toss to coat, adding the walnuts as you go. Season to taste with salt & pepper.

3. Divide the mixture among the lettuce leaves & serve cold.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 200; Total Fat 15g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 15mg; Sodium 180mg; Carbohydrates 7g; Fiber 3g; Protein 10g

CURRIED MANGO-WALNUT CHICKEN SANDWICH

SERVINGS: 6

A delicious, easy sandwich filled with hearty chicken salad studded with crunchy toasted California walnuts. Great for lunch or a light supper with soup.

½ pound boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked & diced or shredded (about 4 cups)
1 stalk celery, minced
¼ cup very finely minced red onion
1 mango, diced &/or pulped (or 1 heaping cup diced frozen mango)
1 to 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
3 to 4 tablespoons reduced fat mayonnaise (plus a little extra for the bread, if desired)
1 teaspoon curry powder
¼ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
A dash or two of cayenne
1 cup lightly toasted California walnuts, minced

OPTIONAL
A handful of minced fresh cilantro (okay to include smaller stems)
Salad greens for the bread, if desired

1. Combine everything in a medium-sized bowl & mix until thoroughly combined.

2. Divide among 4 slices of fresh or toasted artisan bread (sourdough walnut would be great!) that have been spread lightly with extra mayonnaise, if desired, & possibly lined with a leaf or two of lovely fresh salad greens.

3. Serve open-face, or top with a second slice of bread.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 357; Total Fat 17g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 21mg; Sodium 450mg; Carbohydrates 34g; Fiber 6g; Protein 18g

MAINS

FETA-WALNUT-SANDWICH WITH HEIRLOOM TOMATOES

SERVINGS: 8

Pimentón or smoked paprika adds flavor to this spread topped with crunchy California walnuts.

1 cup coarsely chopped California walnuts, toasted
½ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 small clove garlic (optional)
½ cup feta cheese
½ cup low-fat/low-sodium cottage cheese
¼ to ⅓ cup water or low-fat milk
1 teaspoon ground pimentón or paprika
⅛ teaspoon cayenne
6 to 8 slices of your favorite artisan bread, fresh or toasted
Extra-virgin olive oil
Extra chopped California walnuts for sprinkling
Ripe heirloom tomatoes – enough to slice thickly for 6 sandwiches
Oregano (dried or fresh)
Freshly ground black pepper

1. To make the spread: Place the walnuts, parsley & optional garlic in a blender or food processor & pulse in spurts until the walnuts & garlic are finely ground & the parsley is feathery & all is combined. Add the feta cheese, cottage cheese, water or milk & seasonings & puree until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl, cover tightly & chill until cold.

2. To make the sandwiches: Brush each slice of bread with a little olive oil, then spread the topping thickly & sprinkle with extra chopped walnuts. Top with thick slices of tomato, a sprinkling of oregano & a few grinds of fresh black pepper. Serve open faced.

Use my Whole-Wheat Walnut Artisan Bread (recipe on page 36) or find the best locally baked bread that you can; herbed or sourdough are very nice for this.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 180; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 10g; Cholesterol 12mg; Sodium 562mg; Carbohydrates 43g; Fiber 4g; Protein 15g

GRILLED TROUT WITH WALNUT MEUNIÈRE

SERVINGS: 8

Nonstick cooking spray
4 whole trout (about 12 ounces each), cleaned & scaled (ask the fish counter to de-bone the trout for you, they will also remove the heads upon request)
2 whole lemons cut into thin rounds
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup finely minced California walnuts
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
3 tablespoons minced flat-leaf parsley
Salt & pepper to taste

1. Coat a grill or broiler pan with nonstick spray; then heat the grill or broiler. Place two or three lemon slices into the cavity of each trout. (Save half of the lemon slices for garnish.)

2. While you are waiting for the grill to become ready, heat the olive oil in a small pan on the stove, then melt in the butter. Add the walnuts & cook over low heat until the walnuts are fragrant & turning golden. This will only take a couple of minutes, so be sure to watch them carefully. When the walnuts are ready, add the lemon juice & parsley, plus a little salt & pepper. Set aside.

3. Spray the outside surface of the trout with nonstick spray, then place the fish on the preheated grill or under the broiler (if you have a grill basket for fish, you can use it here, otherwise, place the fish right on the grill). Cook until golden & firm, about 4 minutes on each side, then transfer to serving platter or individual plates. Spoon a little bit of the sauce over each fish, garnish with the remaining lemon slices. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 303; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 7g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 100mg; Sodium 54mg; Carbohydrates 3g; Fiber 1g; Protein 36g

GRILLED WALNUT PIZZA WITH ROASTED PEPPER & CAULIFLOWER

MAINS

SERVINGS: 8

Try this take on pizza tonight for a fresh, delicious way to showcase seasonal produce & crunchy California walnuts! Experiment with toppings to find a combination you & your family will enjoy.

FOR LAVASH

1 cup wrist-temperature water
1 package (2 teaspoons) active dry yeast
A pinch of sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil (plus extra for the bowl)
3 cups unbleached white flour (¼ cup may be whole-wheat or rye)
Extra flour for kneading
Cornmeal for the pizza peel or cookie sheet

TOPPINGS

2 cups shredded mozzarella (part skim)
Roasted small (1-inch) cauliflowerets from a 1 ½-pound cauliflower (recipe follows)
Roasted red peppers (home-roasted & peeled or from a jar, drained & sliced)
Thin slices of red onion
1 cup chopped California walnuts
8-10 basil leaves, torn, for garnish

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

Roasting cauliflower is easy. Preheat over to 400 degrees F, with a rack in the center position. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil and slick it with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Arrange cauliflowerets on the sheet and roast for 15 minutes, then shake the baking sheet and/or use tongs to loosen and redistribute the pieces. Roast for another 5 to 10 minutes until the cauliflower is becoming uniformly golden.

1. Place the water in a medium-large bowl, sprinkle in the yeast & sugar & stir to dissolve. Let it stand 5 minutes, or until it begins to bubble.

2. Stir in the salt, oil & 1 cup flour. Beat for several minutes with wooden spoon.

3. Add the remaining flour ½ cup at a time, mixing after each addition. The dough will be soft, but should not be sticky.

4. Turn out onto a floured surface & knead for several minutes. Place in an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap & let it rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk. This will take about 1 hour.

5. Punch down the dough & return it to the floured surface. (This is the point at which you can freeze the dough for future use.) Divide it in half, knead each half for a few minutes, then let the two balls of dough rest for about 10 minutes.
(This allows the gluten to relax, so the dough will stretch easily into shape.)

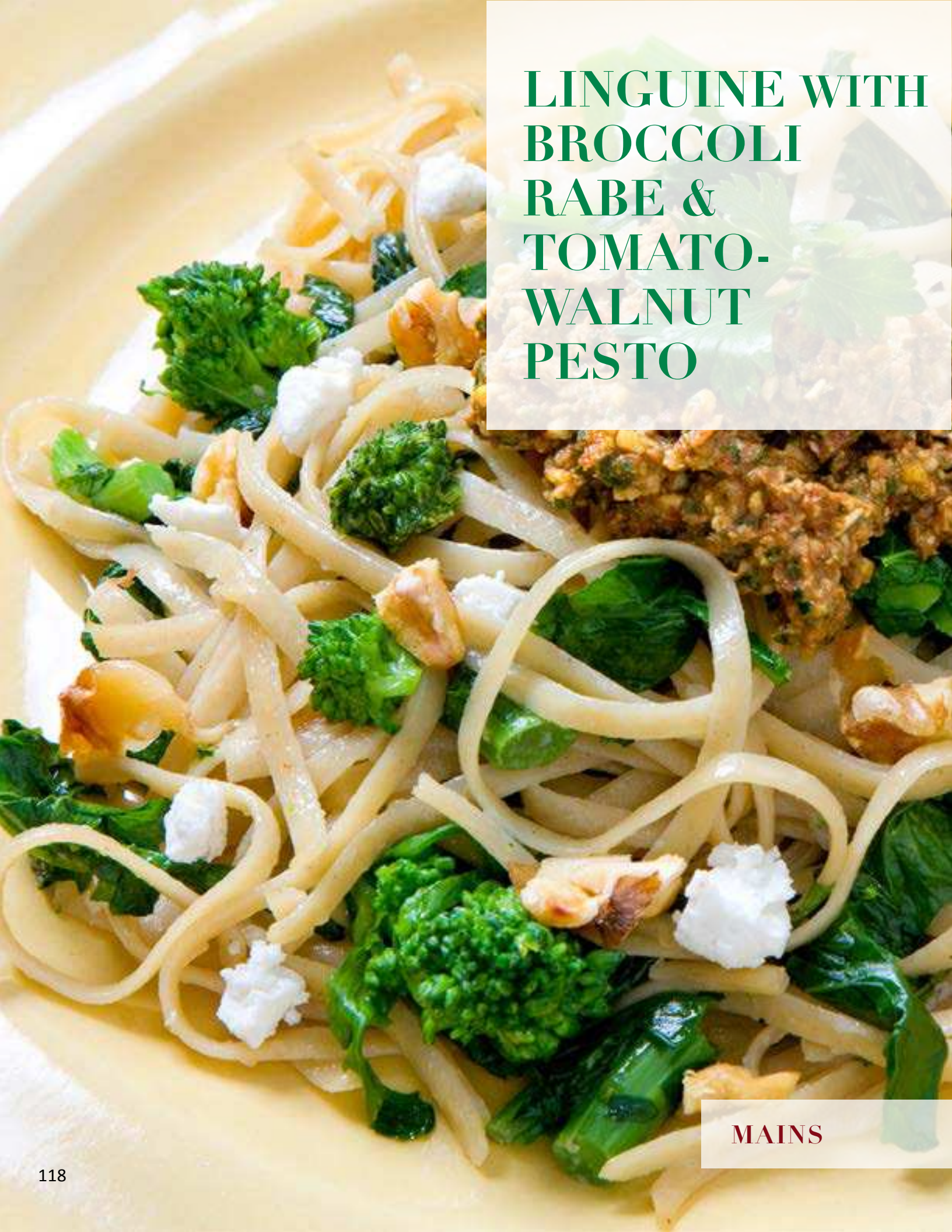
6. Light the grill, so it can heat while you finish preparing the dough.

7. Patiently stretch each ball into a 12-inch circle or oval. (Doesn't need to be perfect.) Lightly brush both sides with olive oil. When the grill is hot sprinkle a pizza peel or a cookie sheet with cornmeal & use either to transfer the dough circles, one at a time (unless you have room for two) to the grill. Cover & wait 2 minutes, then check underneath the dough with a spatula or with long tongs. It usually takes about 2 minutes to get the dough golden & nicely grill-marked on the bottom & air-pocketing on top. When it acquires this appearance, use the peel or cookie sheet to take it off the grill, re-covering the grill to keep it from losing heat.

8. Flip over the half-grilled pizza & brush the bottom (now top), grilled surface with olive oil, then sprinkle lightly all over with mozzarella. (The cheese will serve to hold the vegetables & walnuts down.) Distribute half the onion, half the walnuts, half the cauliflower & half the peppers over the top & return the pizza to the grill via the peel or the cookie sheet for another 2 minutes of covered grill time – or until the second side is brown & striped on the bottom & the cheese is nicely melted on the top.

9. Remove, let rest 5 minutes, garnish with torn basil leaves. Slice & serve. (Repeat with the second half of the dough & toppings.)

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 400; Total Fat 18g; Saturated Fat 5g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 15mg; Sodium 350mg; Carbohydrates 45g; Fiber 5g; Protein 17g



LINGUINE WITH BROCCOLI RABE & TOMATO-WALNUT PESTO

MAINS

SERVINGS: 6

¾ pound whole-wheat linguine
1 pound broccoli rabe, roughly chopped
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon salt
1 cup dry white wine or vegetable bouillon
1 tablespoon minced garlic
3 bulbs roasted garlic cloves
1 cup crumbled ricotta salata cheese
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

ROASTED GARLIC
3 whole garlic bulbs
3 tablespoons olive oil, plus a little extra

TOMATO-WALNUT PESTO
1 cup (2 ounces) dried tomatoes
1 cup boiling water
½ cup (packed) basil leaves
⅓ cup (packed) parsley
¼ cup chopped California walnuts
3 medium cloves garlic, peeled & halved
⅛ teaspoon salt (or to taste)
Red pepper flakes to taste (optional)

The roasted garlic & the pesto can be made up to a few days in advance. Allow the pesto to come to room-temperature when serving & the hot pasta will heat it for you.

ROASTED GARLIC
1. Set the rack to center position (if using a full-size oven) & preheat the oven (or toaster oven) to 375°F. Line a small baking pan with foil.

2. Slice off & discard the very top-most tips of the garlic bulbs & stand the bulbs upright on the foil. Gently & daintily pour about 1 teaspoon olive oil into/onto the upward-facing open cut in each bulb.

3. Roast for 40 minutes or until the bulbs feel soft when gently pressed. (Larger bulbs will take longer.) When cool enough to handle, break each bulb into individual cloves & squeeze the pulp onto a plate. (Some cloves might keep their shape, while others turn to mush. It's all fine, as long as they're tender enough to mash.)

TOMATO-WALNUT PESTO
1. Place the tomatoes & boiling water in a small bowl, cover with a plate & let stand for 1 hour.

2. Put the basil, parsley & walnuts in a blender or food processor & pulse until feathery. Add the garlic & the tomatoes with all their water & purée until it becomes a smooth paste.

3. Return it to the bowl & stir in salt & optional red pepper flakes to taste. Cover tightly & refrigerate until use. Bring to room temperature before serving.

LINGUINE
1. Put up a kettle of water to boil for the pasta. Add the pasta & cook according to the package instructions.

2. Meanwhile, heat a medium-large wok or skillet. When the pan is hot, add about 2 teaspoons of the oil & the broccoli rabe. Sprinkle lightly with salt & using tongs, stir-fry over high heat for about 2 minutes, or until the rabe is deep green. Add the wine or bouillon & the minced garlic & cook for about 5 minutes until the broccoli rabe is tender. Gently stir in the roasted garlic during the last minute or so.

3. Drain the pasta & transfer to a serving platter or large shallow bowl. Drizzle with a little more olive oil & then dump the broccoli rabe mixture over the top. Stirring with tongs as you go, sprinkle in the cheese & some black pepper, gently tossing everything together & bringing the pasta up from the bottom as you mix. Taste to correct salt.

4. Serve hot, garnishing each serving with a generous dollop of Tomato-Walnut Pesto on top.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 567; Total Fat 25g; Saturated Fat 5g; Monounsaturated Fat 13g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 12mg; Sodium 523mg; Carbohydrates 66g; Fiber 4g; Protein 18g

MAC & CHEESE MAKEOVER

SERVINGS: 6

My Mac & Cheese with California walnuts is the real McCoy! For maximum flavor using minimal saturated fat, be sure to use very sharp cheddar cheese in this recipe.

Nonstick spray for the pan
1 ½ cups low-fat milk
½ pound whole-wheat elbow macaroni
1 cup chopped broccoli
1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
1 ½ tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon dry mustard
A big pinch or two garlic powder (optional)
Scant ½ teaspoon salt
½ cup (packed) grated sharp cheddar cheese (about 3 ounces)
3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 ounce)
A big dash of cayenne pepper
2 slices (2 ounces) whole-wheat bread, crumbled
½ cup California walnuts, chopped

1. Spray a 1-quart gratin pan or baking dish with nonstick spray & set aside. Set the oven rack high in the oven (highest rung) & preheat the oven to 350°F.

2. Heat the milk until it is very hot (fine to do this directly in the measuring cup in a microwave, if the cup is microwave proof.) Do not let the milk boil. When it is hot, set aside near the stove.

3. Put a pot of lightly salted water to boil. When it reaches a boil, add the macaroni & let it cook until tender. When it is tender, toss in the chopped broccoli & wait about 30 seconds, then drain the entire potful into a colander in a sink.

4. While the macaroni is cooking, place a medium-large saucepan over medium heat. Add the oil & use a narrow, closely-tined whisk to beat in the flour, mustard & garlic powder. Keep whisking until it forms a thick paste (this will happen within seconds!) & then slowly drizzle in the hot milk, still vigorously whisking, so it becomes smooth as the milk is incorporated. Turn the heat to low & switch to mixing with a wooden spoon. Keep cooking & stirring until it is velvety, thick & smooth.

5. Add the salt, half the cheddar, the Parmesan & the cayenne & stir until the cheese is fully blended. Remove from heat. Add the cooked macaroni & broccoli to the cheese sauce, also adding the remaining cheddar. Stir until all the pasta is well coated. Transfer to the prepared pan, top with the bread crumbs & walnuts & bake uncovered in the high part of the oven for about 20 minutes, or until bubbly around the edges & crisp on top. Serve warm.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 350; Total Fat 17g; Saturated Fat 6g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 22mg; Sodium 370mg; Carbohydrates 35g; Fiber 5g; Protein 16g

PENNE WITH WILTED GREENS, FETA & WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 4

Simple weeknight supper recipe with penne, crunchy California walnuts & wilted winter greens.

1 cup California walnuts
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
3 large bunches fresh greens, stemmed if necessary, & coarsely chopped (about 12 cups) such as kale, collards, mustard or chard
½ teaspoon salt (possibly more, to taste)
½ pound whole-wheat penne
1 cup crumbled feta cheese (possibly more, to taste)
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Spread the walnuts on the tray of a toaster oven (I like to line mine with foil first) & bake at 350°F for 10 to 12 minutes (possibly longer, if you watch carefully to make sure they don't burn). When they (& your entire kitchen) smell heavenly & deeply roasted, remove them from the oven & set aside to cool. When cool enough to handle comfortably, chop them into smaller pieces. (Exact size & shape are up to you).

2. Place a large (10- to 12-inch) heavy skillet over medium heat & wait for about a minute. Pour in the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the onion, turn the heat up & sauté over high heat for 2 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium & cook, stirring often for another 5 minutes, or until translucent & soft.

3. Add the greens in batches, sprinkling very lightly with some of the salt after each addition. As they cook, turn the leaves with tongs, bringing up the wilted ones from the bottom to the top of the pile.

4. Meanwhile, put up a large pot of cold water to boil over high heat. Place a large colander in the sink. When the water boils, add the penne, keeping the heat high. Cook for the amount of time recommended on the package, checking it toward the end of the suggested time, to be sure it is not getting overcooked.

5. When the penne is just tender enough to bite into comfortably, but not yet mushy, dump the water-plus-pasta into the colander. Shake to mostly drain (it's okay to leave some water clinging) then transfer it to the skillet of cooked greens. Use tongs to toss until everything is reasonably distributed, adding in the crumbled feta as you toss. Taste to adjust salt, if necessary & serve hot, topped with walnuts. Pass a pepper mill for individual seasoning.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 565; Total Fat 32g; Saturated Fat 7g; Monounsaturated Fat 9g; Polyunsaturated Fat 16g; Cholesterol 17mg; Sodium 536mg; Carbohydrates 52g; Fiber 15g; Protein 19g

SPINACH LASAGNA WITH WALNUT PESTO

SERVINGS: 8

This easy version of lasagna uses the rich taste of spinach & walnut pesto instead of a heavy Bolognese sauce.

A little olive oil for the pan
2 pounds fresh spinach, washed or 2 (10-ounce) packages fresh baby spinach leaves, or 2 (10-ounce) packages frozen, chopped spinach, defrosted
2 pounds nonfat ricotta cheese or nonfat cottage cheese
1 cup Walnut Pesto (recipe on page 44)
4 large cloves garlic, minced
½ teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
⅓ cup minced California walnuts, lightly toasted
1 (24-ounce) jar low-sugar tomato sauce (or about 2 ¾ cups of your favorite sauce)
16 fresh, uncooked green (spinach) lasagna noodles or, if using dried, 16 no-boil noodles
½ pound low-fat mozzarella cheese, grated

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a 9" x 13" baking pan. If using fresh spinach, chop it fine. If using frozen, chopped spinach, make sure it is thoroughly defrosted & squeeze out all the excess water.

2. Place the ricotta or cottage cheese in a large bowl. Stir in the spinach, walnut pesto (recipe below), garlic, salt, pepper, half the Parmesan & the walnuts. Mix well. Spread half the tomato sauce in the bottom of the pan. Place a layer of uncooked noodles over the sauce. Spoon about ⅓ of the ricotta or cottage cheese filling in dabs over the noodles (you can spread it a little, but not too much) & sprinkle with ⅓ of the grated mozzarella. Follow with another layer of sauce, then noodles, followed by another ⅓ of the filling & another ⅓ of the mozzarella. Repeat one more time & then finish up with a final layer of noodles. You will have some Parmesan left over.

3. If you are using fresh noodles, bake uncovered. If you are using dried noodles, cover the pan tightly with foil.

4. Bake for 50 minutes, uncovering the pan (if applicable) during the last 15 minutes, during which time you can sprinkle on the reserved Parmesan. (In the case of the uncovered pan, if the top of the lasagna becomes as brown as you like it before the full baking time is up, cover loosely with foil & continue baking, so it won't get too dark.) Remove from the oven & let rest for about 10 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 560; Total Fat 32g; Saturated Fat 7g; Monounsaturated Fat 13g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12g; Cholesterol 34mg; Sodium 583mg; Carbohydrates 54g; Fiber 12g; Protein 38g

STUFFED PEPPERS WITH BULGUR-WALNUT PILAF

SERVINGS: 8

These peppers are a great way to get a little fancy on a weeknight!

4 medium size or small (6-ounce) warm-colored (red, yellow &/or orange) bell peppers - they are much sweeter than the green ones.
Bulgur-Walnut Pilaf (recipe follows)
Extra-virgin olive oil as needed

BULGUR-WALNUT PILAF
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup uncooked bulgur
¾ cup boiling water
½ cup fresh-squeezed lemon juice
¼ cup finely minced chives or scallion
1 tablespoon minced fresh dill
3 tablespoons minced Italian parsley
½ cup (packed) crumbled feta cheese
¼ teaspoon salt – or to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 cup California walnuts, toasted & chopped
¾ cup currants or ¾ cup chopped dried apricots

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly oil a baking tray.

2. Use a sharp paring knife to carefully cut the top off of each pepper, reserving the tops. Reach inside the peppers with the knife or a spoon to scrape out the pith & seeds. Do your best to leave the peppers intact in the process.

3. Spoon in ½ cup pilaf per pepper, patiently packing it down as you go. Place the reserved top on each pepper as a plug for the filling (or, if you want to get poetic, as a hat for the pepper).

4. Brush the outside surface of each pepper with a little additional olive oil & place them standing upright, if possible, on the prepared tray.

5. Bake for 35 minutes in the center of the oven. Let sit for at least 5 minutes; serve hot or warm.

BULGUR-WALNUT PILAF
1. Place a medium-small skillet (one that has a tight-fitting lid) over medium heat & wait about 1 minute. Pour in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan.

2. Add the uncooked bulgur & sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes, or until it gives off a toasty smell. Keep stirring during this process to be sure it doesn't burn.

3. Pour in the water, place the lid on the pan & turn off the heat.

4. Let stand 30 minutes.

5. After 30 minutes, fluff with a fork as you add the remaining tablespoon olive oil & the lemon juice.

6. Stir in the chives, dill, parsley & feta & then add salt & pepper to taste.

7. Stir in the walnuts & dried fruit, if using & serve warm or at room temperature.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 270; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 5mg; Sodium 200mg; Carbohydrates 29g; Fiber 6g; Protein 7g

TIPS

• One batch of dough divides perfectly into two 1-pound ricotta cheese containers—or fit a whole batch into a 1-quart yogurt container—for easy freezing. Take the container out of the freezer before you go to work & it will be ready to roll, so to speak, when you get home.

• Prepare the topping ingredients while the dough rises.

• You can make several different pizzas & serve them together.

VEGETABLE & WALNUT PIZZA

SERVINGS: 4

Try a new twist on pizza with a crunchy walnut topping!

1 cup wrist-temperature water
1 package (2 teaspoons) active dry yeast
A pinch of sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon olive oil (plus extra for the bowl)
3 cups unbleached white flour (¼ cup may be whole-wheat or rye)
Extra flour for kneading
Cornmeal for the baking trays or cookie sheets

TOPPINGS
Thin slices of mozzarella
Thinly sliced red onions
Mushroom slices
Sliced bell pepper (various colors)
Cauliflowerets
Broccoli florets
Canned artichoke hearts, drained & sliced
Olives (any kind), pitted & sliced
Ripe tomato slices
Grated Parmesan or Pecorino
Chopped California walnuts

Homemade pizza is more accessible than you think, especially if you keep a supply of dough in the freezer & a few topping ingredients on hand on a regular basis. If you make small pizzas ("pizzettas"), you can individualize the toppings & satisfy the various tastes of everyone in your household, without a whole lot of extra work.

1. Place the water in a medium-large bowl, sprinkle in the yeast & sugar & stir to dissolve. Let it stand 5 minutes, or until it begins to bubble.

2. Stir in the salt, oil & 1 cup flour. Beat for several minutes with a wooden spoon.

3. Add the remaining flour ½ cup at a time, mixing after each addition. The dough will be soft, but should not be sticky.

4. Turn out onto a floured surface & knead for several minutes. Place in an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap & let it rise until doubled in bulk. This will take about 1 hour.

5. Punch down the dough & return it to the floured surface. (This is the point at which you can freeze the dough for future use.) Divide it into four equal parts, knead each quarter for a few minutes, then let the four balls of dough rest for about 10 minutes. (This allows the gluten to relax, so the dough will stretch easily into shape.)

6. Patiently stretch each ball into a 6-inch circle. Sprinkle two baking trays or cookie sheets with cornmeal & place two circles on each. (Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 500°F.) Top each pizza with any combination of toppings. Make sure the walnuts are on top, so they can toast.

7. Bake in the lower half of the oven for 10 to 12 minutes, or until the edges are crispy & brown. (If you're not sure whether or not it's baked through, you can take one pizza out of the oven & cut it in half. If it is still a little doughy on the inside, return it to the baking pan & bake a few minutes longer.) Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 570; Total Fat 18g; Saturated Fat 4g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 8g; Cholesterol 35mg; Sodium 650mg; Carbohydrates 78g; Fiber 5g; Protein 29g

WALNUT-COATED SMART "FRIED" CHICKEN

SERVINGS: 6

Crunchy on the outside from California walnuts & moist in the center, this chicken is healthy too. Ask your meat market to cut the chicken into pieces & save the backbone for stock. Any leftovers can be added to noodle soup for a spicy chicken version.

1 (3 ½-pounds) skinless chicken, cut into 10 pieces
1 ½ cups buttermilk
1 cup panko breadcrumbs
½ cup California walnuts, finely chopped
½ cup cornmeal
2 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
2 teaspoons garlic salt
2 tablespoons paprika
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Place the chicken pieces & garlic in a large bowl. Pour the buttermilk over the chicken pieces & turn to coat. Cover tightly & refrigerate, turning the chicken pieces occasionally, for 2 hours.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a large, low-sided baking pan; set aside.

3. In a large paper bag, large plastic bag, or bowl, combine the panko, walnuts, cornmeal, garlic salt, paprika, cumin, cayenne pepper, thyme, oregano & black pepper. Shake well, or whisk, to mix.

4. Remove the chicken from the buttermilk allowing any excess to drip off. Set one piece at a time in the panko mixture. Shake the bag, or toss in the bowl, until well coated.

5. Arrange the chicken pieces on the prepared baking pan, leaving space between the pieces. Bake until deep golden brown, about 45 to 60 minutes. (An instant read thermometer should register 160° F for the white meat & 170°F for the dark.)

6. Serve hot or at room temperature with Chicken Gravy or Brilliant Mushroom Gravy. (See recipes on pages 42-43.)

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 500; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 3.5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 190mg; Sodium 620mg; Carbohydrates 24g; Fiber 3g; Protein 63g

WALNUT-POMEGRANATE GRILLED CHICKEN

SERVINGS: 8

You can make this most impressive & complex sauce in just minutes!

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast fillets, about 8 ounces each
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
Salt to taste (⅛ teaspoon for the chicken, plus another ⅛ teaspoon for the sauce)
½ cup California Walnut Butter (recipe on page 38)
⅓ cup pomegranate molasses or pomegranate concentrate
2 to 3 tablespoons tawny port or apple juice
1 tablespoon olive oil (possibly a little more)
Pomegranate seeds (arils), for garnish
Chives, for garnish, optional

1. In a shallow dish, soak bamboo skewers for 10 minutes.

2. Pat the fillets dry with paper towels & cut into thin strips; season with the garlic powder & salt. Thread onto skewers & set aside.

3. In a small bowl, combine the California Walnut Butter & pomegranate molasses or concentrate, mashing & stirring, or whisking the two together until fairly uniform. Add the port or apple juice, plus a little salt, to taste - stirring to combine. Set aside, near the stove.

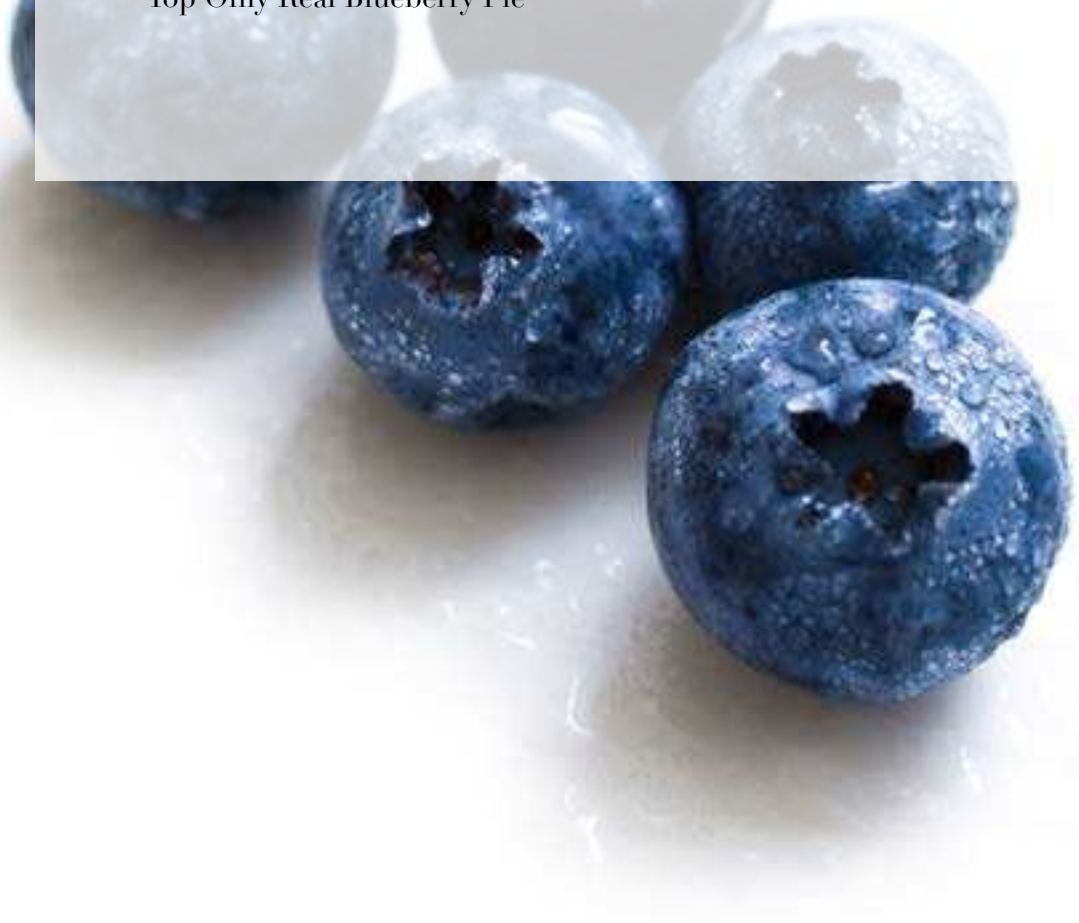
4. Place a small, heavy-bottomed skillet (just large enough to hold the fillets in a single layer) or a ridged grill pan over medium heat & wait for about a minute. Pour in the olive oil & swirl to coat the pan. Add the chicken skewers allowing some space between them & cook, undisturbed, for about 2 minutes, or until golden brown. Use a metal spatula to carefully loosen each chicken filled skewer & flip it over, adding a little more oil if the pan seems dry. Cook on the second side for another 2 or so minutes, or until the bottom surface matches the top. You may need to lower the heat if the chicken begins to burn, or raise it if it is not browning quickly. To check for doneness, insert an instant-read thermometer lengthwise into the thickest part. It should register 165°F; the meat should be opaque white throughout.

5. Brush with about a teaspoon of the sauce on each piece of chicken during the last minute or so of cooking, spreading the sauce into place (you can use the back of a spoon or a brush). Transfer the chicken to a plate & let rest for about 2 minutes before serving. Serve hot, or at room temperature, with additional sauce spread on top & pomegranate seeds to garnish.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 255; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 66mg; Sodium 147mg; Carbohydrates 10g; Fiber 1g; Protein 28g

SNACKS & DESSERTS

Carrot-Walnut-Oat Gems
Chewy Blueberry-Walnut Bars
Cucumber-Walnut Butter-Pretzel Buttons
Walnut-Date Wedges
Whole Grain Walnut Trail Mix
Cranapple-Walnut Crumble
Cream Cheese-Walnut Wafer Cookies
Gingerbread With Sweetly Coated Walnuts
Mexican Dark Chocolate-Cinnamon-Coated Walnuts
Pear Crostada With Walnut & Cornmeal Crust
Spice-Coated Maple-Walnut Nuggets
Top Only Real Blueberry Pie



CARROT-WALNUT-OAT GEMS

SERVINGS: 16

Soft, crumbly & chewy—& brimming with grated carrots & California walnuts—this recipe is deeply satisfying & makes a great portable snack— full of fiber & vitamins—that will fill you up just the right amount & also take care of your sweet tooth. This recipe is truly quick & easy if you use a food processor for grinding the California walnuts & grating the carrots. If you don't have a food processor, you can do Step 1 in a blender & grate the carrots by hand.

Nonstick spray for the pan
3 cups California walnut halves or pieces
¾ cup rolled oats
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups (packed) finely shredded carrot (about ½ pound raw carrots)
1 cup golden raisins
3-4 tablespoons honey, maple syrup or sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray an 8-inch square cake pan with nonstick spray.

2. Place 2 cups of the walnuts in a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Add the oats, cinnamon & salt & process in a few long pulses until they combine to become a powder. Transfer this to a medium-sized bowl. Finely chop the remaining 1 cup of the walnuts & stir these in.

3. Switch to the fine grating attachment of the food processor & grate the carrots. Add this to the walnut mixture, along with the golden raisins, honey, lemon juice & zest & vanilla & mix with a fork until thoroughly combined.

4. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan & press it into a square about an inch thick. Bake in the center of the oven for 45 minutes or until the top is dry & toasty.

5. Remove the pan from the oven & allow to cool for 20 minutes. Remove from the pan & cut the baked mixture into 2-inch squares with a very sharp knife. They are a little crumbly. Allow to cool to room temperature. Store in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator & serve cold or at room temperature.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 252; Total Fat 17g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 97mg; Carbohydrates 24g; Fiber 3g; Protein 5g

CHEWY BLUEBERRY-WALNUT BARS

SERVINGS: 12

You simply must try these vegan, gluten-free bars, which, though simple, add up to far more than the sum of their humble ingredients. Antioxidant-containing California walnuts & blueberries are featured, but the surprise ingredient is silken tofu.

It disappears into the mix & holds everything together. My favorite fruit combination for this (in addition to the blueberries) is dried plums (aka prunes), apricots, figs & cherries. But any kind of dried fruit will work, as long as it is neither crystallized, nor parched & leathery.

Nonstick spray for the pan & the measuring cup
1 cup dried blueberries
3 cups additional dried fruit (mixed, per your taste)
1 ½ cups California walnuts, finely chopped
¼ cup brown rice flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ cup agave nectar (or to taste)
¾ cup mashed silken tofu, soft or firm

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (325°F for a glass pan). Lightly spray an 8-inch square baking pan with nonstick spray & line with parchment paper.

2. Use scissors or a knife to cut the larger pieces of dried fruit into slices approximately the size of a dried cherry. Combine the dried fruit with the walnuts in a medium-sized bowl.

3. Sprinkle in the rice flour & salt & toss until all the fruit is evenly coated.

4. Spray a ¼ cup measure with nonstick spray. Measure in the agave nectar, then pour it into the fruit mixture. Add the mashed tofu & mix with a spoon—or your hands—until everything is thoroughly combined.

5. Spread the mixture into the prepared pan & bake in the center of the oven for 30 to 40 minutes, or until it turns brown around the edges & the top surface is dry to the touch. You can take the pan out of the oven at this point, or, for an even chewier result, turn off the oven & wedge open with a wooden spoon & leave the pan in there for up to 20 minutes longer.

6. Remove the pan from the oven, cool for about an hour or more, then cut the mixture into about a dozen small bars. Transfer them to a rack & let them sit for about an hour. (They'll become chewy while "airing out" on the rack.) Keep the bars in a cookie tin at room temperature— or, if you'll be keeping them for more than a few days, seal them in a heavy plastic bag & store in the refrigerator or freezer. Eat at any temperature. (They're even good frozen!)

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 280; Total Fat 10g; Saturated Fat 1g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 110mg; Carbohydrates 43g; Fiber 6g; Protein 4g

CUCUMBER-WALNUT BUTTER-PRETZEL BUTTONS

SERVINGS: 4

Sometimes great cheer comes from small statements. If you keep California Walnut Butter on hand, these easy little stacks will be a savory lunchbox option on short notice. It's nice to give the kids (or yourself) a non-sweet snack once in awhile.

2 tight, sweet Persian cucumbers or pickling cucumbers (peeled only if the skin is bitter)
1 batch California Walnut Butter (recipe on page 38)
A handful or two of 1-inch pretzels

OPTIONAL ENHANCEMENTS
A little honey
A little cinnamon

1. Slice the cucumbers into rounds ¼ inch-thick.

2. Add small dabs of walnut butter.

3. Gently press a pretzel on top of each.

4. Pack into a small, shallow container with a tight-fitting top & off you go.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 308; Total Fat 26g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 5g; Polyunsaturated Fat 18g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 464mg; Carbohydrates 16g; Fiber 3g; Protein 6g

WALNUT-DATE WEDGES

SERVINGS: 8

You bake this as a cake, then cool & cut into wedges that hold up beautifully packed into a lunch box for something that is dessert-like but wholly nutritious. The individual wedges freeze well, wrapped tightly in plastic wrap & then packed into a heavy-gauge zip-style bag. Pull them out one at a time & pack into a lunch box, still frozen. They will defrost perfectly. You can use gluten-free flour too!

Nonstick spray for the pan
3 large eggs, separated & at room temperature
¼ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup unbleached all-purpose flour or whole-wheat pastry flour
½ teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup minced California walnuts
1 cup chopped, pitted dates

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F & generously coat a 9-inch round cake pan with nonstick spray.

2. Beat the egg whites with a hand-held electric mixer at high speed until they form soft peaks. Set aside.

3. Add the sugar to the yolks in the other bowl, & without cleaning the beaters, beat the yolks & sugar at medium speed for about a minute, or until smooth & thick.

4. Use a rubber spatula to stir the flour, salt, walnuts & dates (which you might have to break up a bit with your hands) into the yolk mixture, folding & mixing until uniform.

5. Dump ⅓ of the beaten whites on top & mix them in. Gently fold in the remaining ⅔ until mostly distributed. They will deflate a little & it doesn't need to be uniform – just reasonably incorporated.

6. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan & bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until the sides of the cake pull away from the pan & the surface of the cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool completely before unmolding & slicing into wedges.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 210; Total Fat 10g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 81mg; Sodium 150mg; Carbohydrates 28g; Fiber 3g; Protein 5g

WHOLE GRAIN WALNUT TRAIL MIX

SERVINGS: 10

Here is a trail mix that includes puffed whole-grain cereal that can stretch out your grazing time & make it last longer without blowing your healthy eating. The addition of dark chocolate will only extend your satisfaction!

1 cup lightly toasted California walnuts (halves or coarsely chopped)
¼ cup raisins
¼ cup dried cherries
3 ½ cups unsweetened whole-grain puffed cereal
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips – or broken pieces of dark chocolate

1. Combine everything & store in a zip-style bag (or individual single-serving bags) in the refrigerator.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 190; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 3.5g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g; Polyunsaturated Fat 5g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 3mg; Carbohydrates 22g; Fiber 3g; Protein 4g

CRANAPPLE-WALNUT CRUMBLE

SERVINGS: 6

A warm & sweet dessert for those chilly winter months.

5 cups thinly sliced peeled apple (any kind but Red Delicious)
1 cup fresh cranberries
1 tablespoon plus 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
Salt (big pinch or ¼ teaspoon)
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 tablespoons brown sugar
¾ cup minced California walnuts
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS
Vanilla ice cream
Whipped cream
Crème fraîche

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.

2. Place the fruit in a medium-large bowl & toss with 1 tablespoon flour, a big pinch of salt & the granulated sugar. Transfer to an ungreased medium-sized baking pan (8 or 9 inches square, or an oval or gratin pan with similar capacity).

3. Use the same bowl to combine the 1 cup flour, brown sugar & ¼ teaspoon salt. Crumble it together with your fingers until mostly uniform & then stir in the walnuts.

4. Pour in the melted butter & mix until evenly moistened.

5. Distribute this mixture over the fruit & pat it down gently, so that it falls into the crevices.

6. Bake in the center of the oven for 30 to 40 minutes, or until the top is golden & the fruit is tender & bubbly around the edges. Allow to cool for at least 10 to 15 minutes, then serve hot, warm or at room temperature, with the topping of your choice.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 363; Total Fat 19g; Saturated Fat 7g; Monounsaturated Fat 4g; Polyunsaturated Fat 7g; Cholesterol 25mg; Sodium 127mg; Carbohydrates 46g; Fiber 4g; Protein 5g

CREAM CHEESE-WALNUT WAFER COOKIES

SERVINGS: 42

Thin, crisp, and not-too-sweet with a strong hint of cinnamon.

1 cup powdered sugar
½ cup butter, softened ahead of time in a medium-large bowl
½ cup softened low-fat cream cheese (half an 8-ounce package)
½ cup (packed) light brown sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1 heaping cup California walnuts
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt (rounded measure)
¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
Semisweet chocolate, melted, for dipping (optional)
Extra chopped toasted California walnuts for sprinkling

Make the dough at least a few hours ahead of time (longer is okay) & store in the refrigerator or freezer. Then preheat the oven & "roll, slice & bake." You can reduce the calories by using a plant sterol or canola spread in place of the butter, but the results will not be quite as crisp. You can compensate by baking the cookies slightly longer.

1. Cream together the butter, cream cheese, powdered sugar & brown sugar at high speed with a hand-held electric mixer. When it is light & fluffy, add the egg & vanilla & beat for another few minutes, scraping the sides of the bowl a few times. Set aside.

2. Place the walnuts in the bowl of a food processor & add 1 cup of the flour. Buzz a few times until the walnuts are ground into the consistency of cornmeal.

3. Add the ground walnuts, along with the remaining flour, the salt & the cinnamon, to the butter-cream cheese mixture & stir until thoroughly blended.

4. Arrange a 12 x 14-inch sheet of parchment paper on a flat surface; set the dough in the middle. Arrange a second sheet of parchment on top. Carefully flatten & roll the dough to an even ¼ inch; freeze until set.

5. Alternatively, divide the dough in half & place each half on a generous rectangle of plastic wrap, covering it with the wrap as you roll each half into a log about 6 inches long & 2 inches in diameter. Finish wrapping each log & refrigerate or freeze until firm.

6. When you are ready to bake the cookies, preheat the oven to 375°F. Unwrap the rolled dough & place it on a cutting board. Using a cookie cutter, cut desired shapes from the rolled dough. Alternatively, using a sharp paring knife (dip it into hot water, if you like, for easier slicing), slice logs into thin (1/8-1/4-inch) cookies. Place cookies on an ungreased baking sheet & bake in the center of the oven for 12 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown on the bottom. Cool on a rack.

7. Dip the cookies in melted chocolate & sprinkle with extra walnuts.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 90; Total Fat 4.5g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 1g; Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g; Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium 25mg; Carbohydrates 10g; Fiber 0g; Protein 1g

GINGER-BREAD WITH SWEETLY COATED WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 10

GINGERBREAD
½ cup (1 stick) butter, plus a little extra for the pan
3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 tablespoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon cloves
3 tablespoons grated fresh ginger (3 to 4 ounces)
⅔ cup (packed) brown sugar
2 large eggs
¾ cup molasses
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 ½ cups buttermilk
***The brown sugar can be light or dark.**

SWEETLY COATED WALNUTS
Nonstick spray for the baking tray
2 egg whites (from large eggs)
¼ teaspoon salt
4 to 5 tablespoons sugar (depending on your sweet tooth)
4 cups California walnut halves

GINGERBREAD

1. Do this at least an hour ahead of time: Unwrap the butter & place it in a large bowl. Use a dinner knife to "chop" it into 1-inch pieces & let it stand at room temperature to soften.

2. Adjust the rack to center position & preheat the oven to 350°F (325°F if you're using a glass pan). Put a little soft butter on a paper towel or a piece of waxed paper (or a butter wrapper) & lightly grease the "floor" & corners of a 9 x 13- inch pan. (No need to grease the sides.)

3. Combine all the dry ingredients except the sugar in a medium-sized bowl. Whisk slowly to blend & then stir in the grated fresh ginger, whisking until it's distributed. Set this aside.

4. Crumble the brown sugar into the softened butter from step 1. Use a hand-held electric mixer at high speed (or, if you don't have one, use a whisk, with enthusiasm) to beat the butter & sugar together until light & fluffy. Add the molasses & the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. (Use a rubber spatula to scrape the sides of the bowl a few times during this process.) Add the vanilla extract & continue to beat for another minute or two until everything is well combined.

5. Add about ⅓ of the dry ingredients to the butter mixture, slowly whisking just enough to mostly blend. Then pour in approximately ⅓ of the buttermilk & stir it in. Continue with another ⅓ of the dry mix & another ⅓ of the buttermilk (dry-wet-dry-wet-dry) until all the ingredients are in the big bowl. Switch to stirring with a spoon as the batter thickens, mix from the bottom of the bowl after each addition - just enough to thoroughly blend without overmixing. (It's okay if the finished batter is not 100% smooth.)

Recipe continued on the next page.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 660; Total Fat 37g; Saturated Fat 9g; Monounsaturated Fat 7g; Polyunsaturated Fat 20g; Cholesterol 68mg; Sodium 506mg; Carbohydrates 75g; Fiber 4g; Protein 13g

6. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan, taking care to scrape all of it in with a rubber spatula. Then use the spatula to spread the batter into place.

7. Bake in the center of the oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until the top is springy to the touch &/or a toothpick inserted all the way into the center comes out clean. Remove the pan from the oven & allow the gingerbread to cool in the pan for at least 15 minutes before cutting into squares & serving. Serve warm, at room temperature, or cold.

8. Serve this with Sweetly Coated Walnuts (recipe follows) & a big spoonful of whipped cream or Greek yogurt – or some vanilla or fruit-flavored frozen yogurt. It's also delicious with freshly cut fruit in season.

SWEETLY COATED WALNUTS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking tray with parchment or foil & spray generously with nonstick spray. Place the egg whites in a shallow pan (a pie pan works well). Use a fork or small whisk to beat in the salt & sugar. Add the walnuts & stir until thoroughly coated. You will probably need to do this in two or three shifts.

2. Transfer the coated nuts to the prepared tray. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring to redistribute every few minutes to prevent sticking. When the nuts are as dark as you like them remove the tray from the oven. Remove the walnuts from the tray while they are still hot, transferring them to a bowl or a plate to cool completely.

MEXICAN DARK CHOCOLATE-CINNAMON-COATED WALNUTS

SERVINGS: 12

Nonstick spray
12 ounces semisweet chocolate
¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 to 3 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons cinnamon
½ teaspoon New Mexico chili powder &/or a dash or 2 of cayenne (optional)
2 cups California walnut halves
3 cups dried fruit (such as a mixture of cranberries, blueberries, etc.)

**Try to save your most perfect unbroken walnut halves for this, as it looks really nice to have the whole piece coated with all the goodies.*

1. Lightly spray the top of a double boiler with nonstick spray, then add the chocolate. Place it over simmering water on low heat to allow it to melt slowly. Don't stir or in any way disturb the melting chocolate.

2. In the meantime, spray 3 dinner plates with nonstick spray. In a medium-small bowl, thoroughly combine the cocoa powder, sugar, cinnamon & optional chili powder &/or cayenne. Sprinkle about half the powdered mixture onto the prepared plates, shaking it into a fairly even layer on each plate. Leave the other half of the dry mix in the bowl.

3. When the chocolate has melted (& leaving it over the double boiler, but with the heat turned off) add 1 cup of the walnuts, gently stirring & turning them in the chocolate until each half is completely coated. Use tongs to lift out the coated nuts, one by one & transfer to a cocoa-powdered plate in a single layer. Dust the top with a little of the reserved dry mix & set aside. Continue with the next cup of walnuts & repeat exactly, using the second prepared plate. Repeat again with the final batch.

4. When all is assembled, put the plates in a refrigerator for up to 30 minutes, allowing the chocolate coating to harden. When it's hard, loosen the coated nuts with a dinner knife & transfer to a bowl. Add in the dried fruit & gently combine. Transfer to a container with a tightly fitted lid. Store in the refrigerator or freezer & serve (or just eat) as desired.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 264; Total Fat 12g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 1mg; Sodium 5mg; Carbohydrates 37g; Fiber 4g; Protein 4g

If you don't have a food processor, you can use the paddle attachment of an electric mixer, a pastry cutter, or two forks to cut the cold butter into the cornmeal-flour mixture. Make sure that you choose a fine grade of cornmeal (not the coarser polenta) for best results. And, you can make the pastry ahead, store it refrigerated, sealed in a plastic bag, for up to a week. Let it warm up a little bit before rolling it out.

The recipe calls for 2 ½ pounds pears & you can substitute apples for half. The two fruit combine beautifully! My own favorite formula is 3 Granny Smith apples, 1 very ripe D'anjou pear & 1 Bosc pear.

PEAR CROSTADA WITH WALNUT & CORNMEAL CRUST

SERVINGS: 12

A fruit tart with ripe pears, a rich cornmeal & California walnut crust with beautiful lattice top.

PASTRY
½ cup chopped California walnuts
¾ cup fine cornmeal
2 ¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
⅓ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup olive oil
1 large egg
About ⅓ cup water

FILLING
2 ½ pounds ripe pears (any kind, or a mixture)
2 tablespoons fresh lemon or lime juice
3 to 4 tablespoons pure maple syrup
2 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
Dash of salt
Greek yogurt, for serving (optional)

PASTRY

1. Combine the walnuts, cornmeal, flour, sugar & salt in a food processor fitted with the steel blade & pulse until the walnuts are ground into a coarse meal. Pour the olive oil on top of the dry ingredients in the food processor. Run the machine in a few long pulses, until the oil is evenly distributed & the mixture resembles a coarse meal. Add the egg & pulse once or twice—just until it is incorporated—then pulse in enough water to bring the dough together. Remove the dough from the food processor & gather it together, kneading lightly into one mass.

2. Break the dough into two uneven pieces, approximately ⅔ & ⅓. Form each piece into a ball & flatten each ball into a thick disk. On a lightly floured surface, roll the larger dough into a 13-inch circle, about ⅛-inch thick. Ease it into a 10-inch tart pan with a removable base & trim the edges. Roll out the smaller disc & cut into strips about ½-inch wide. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375°F.

TO MAKE THE FILLING

1. Peel the fruit & cut it into thin slices. Transfer to a medium-sized bowl & drizzle with lemon or lime juice & maple syrup. Sprinkle with the flour & salt & toss to coat.

2. Spread the fruit in the crust. Arrange the strips of dough on top in a criss-cross pattern, then push the ends of the strips into the edges of the bottom crust to hold them in place. (You might need to wet them a little to make them stick.) Place the filled tart on a baking tray & bake in the lower half of the oven for about 45 minutes, or until golden on the top & around the edges.

3. Cool for at least 15 minutes before removing the rim of the pan & serving the tart. Serve warm or at room temperature. This tastes especially good with a dollop of Greek yogurt on the side.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 326; Total Fat 13g; Saturated Fat 2g; Monounsaturated Fat 7g; Polyunsaturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 17mg; Sodium 106mg; Carbohydrates 51g; Fiber 4g; Protein 5g

SPICE-COATED MAPLE-WALNUT NUGGETS

SERVINGS: 8

Deceptively simple! These wonderful balls will make you feel like you're getting away with eating cookie dough – but it's actually all ground walnut. I am tempted to call these April Fools Cookie Dough!

Nonstick spray
2 cups California walnuts
Scant ½ teaspoon salt
2 to 3 tablespoons pure maple syrup (use "B" grade for stronger maple flavor)
1 tablespoon granulated or turbinado sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Spray the interior & blade of a food processor with nonstick spray for easy handling. Add the walnuts & a scant ½ teaspoon salt & grind to a powder.

2. Add the maple syrup (2 tablespoons for "regular" palates; 3 tablespoons for sweet tooth types) & continue to buzz the machine until it becomes walnut butter.

3. Transfer the mix to a bowl (careful of the food processor blade!) & set aside.

4. In a second bowl or on a plate, combine the sugar & cinnamon.

5. Use your hands to form 1-inch balls from the walnut mixture & roll each of them in the cinnamon sugar until thoroughly coated. Transfer the finished balls to a shallow container with a tight-fitting lid.

6. Cover the container & store the balls in the freezer. They will solidify nicely, but will stay soft. Eat them from there!

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 180; Total Fat 16g; Saturated Fat 1.5g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 12g; Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 150mg; Carbohydrates 9g; Fiber 2g; Protein 4g

TOP ONLY REAL BLUEBERRY PIE

SERVINGS: 8

Here is a standard, classic blueberry pie with two slight & magical differences: a hint of lemon in the filling & ground California walnuts in the top-only crust.

THE FILLING
9 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen, unsweetened)
1 tablespoon freshly grated lemon zest
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
6 tablespoons unbleached white flour
1 cup sugar

THE CRUST
½ cup California walnuts
1 cup unbleached white flour
Pinch salt
4 tablespoons cold unsalted butter
About 2 to 3 tablespoons cold water
Extra flour, as needed, for rolling the dough

CRUST TOPPING
1 tablespoon milk
2 tablespoons brown sugar crystals

THE CRUST

1. Place the walnuts in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade attachment. Add ¼ cup of the flour & pulse until the walnuts are finely ground.

2. Add the remaining flour & the salt & pulse a couple more times so all the dry ingredients become uniformly blended.

3. Working quickly to keep the butter cold, cut it into slices with a dinner knife, dropping the pieces here & there on top of the flour.

4. Pulse the processor until the dry ingredients & butter are combined & the mixture resembles a coarse meal.

5. Add the water, 1 tablespoon at a time, pulsing after each addition. When the dough sticks to itself when gently squeezed, dump it out onto a clean, dry, lightly floured surface & use your hands to press it into a ball.

THE FILLING

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.

2. Place the berries in a bowl & sprinkle them with lemon zest, lemon juice, flour & sugar. Toss very gently, until the berries are evenly coated.

3. Pour the filling into a 10-inch pie dish. Roll out the dough until it is about ⅛ inch thick (or perhaps a little thinner) & cut it into thin strips. Decorate the top of the berries with the strips in a crisscross pattern. OR, instead of cutting it into strips, let your kids cut it into shapes with cookie cutters & just lay the pieces on top of the filling. Have a good time! There is no right or wrong way to do this. (It helps to let all the strips or shapes be touching one another, so they will meld together during baking, a little milk lightly brushed along the edges that touch will help glue them together. Also, press together the edges that meet the sides of the dish.) Brush lightly with milk & dust with sugar crystals.

4. Place the pie pan on a foil-lined tray & bake in the bottom half of the oven for 45 to 55 minutes, or until the filling is bubbly around the edges & the crust is lightly browned.

5. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 305; Total Fat 9g; Saturated Fat 3g; Monounsaturated Fat 2g; Polyunsaturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 12mg; Sodium 19mg; Carbohydrates 56g; Fiber 4g; Protein 4g

Visit walnuts.org for additional recipes, storage and handling tips, nutrition information and more.