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A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul.

August 2016

**FOUR NOVEL WAYS TO INCORPORATE THE BEAUTY
AND THE NUTRITION OF THE TOMATO INTO YOUR MENU PLANS:**

**French *Soubise* – Stuffed and Broiled Tomatoes
with Horseradish Sauce**

Spanish *Tapas* Potatoes

Tomato Cheese Tart

Chilled Tomato – Walnut Sauce with Soymeat

The Spanish explorers brought the seeds of a golden fruited vine, called “*xtomatles*” by the Aztecs, to Spain. At first Spaniards, who called it “*mazzara*” because of its resemblance to an apple, were not overly enthusiastic and found it more useful as a decorative garden vine. The journey of the tomato did not have a very auspicious beginning and could well have ended in a Spanish garden had it not been for the fact that a Spanish trader gave an Italian friend the seeds, or so the story goes. Because the fruit had come from southern Spain, the home of the Moors, the fruit was named “*pomo dei Moro*” or



“apple of the Moors” by the Italian who first planted the seeds. Today we still find evidence of that designation in the Italian word for tomato “*pomodoro*.” There is also a legend that claimed that it was in Morocco that the tomato got the name “*pomo dei mori*” when a Moroccan brought seeds home from Spain.

The French became enthusiastic for a different reason. “*Pomo dei Moro*” sounded like “*Pomme d’amour*” to the Frenchman to whom it was first introduced, or so the story continues. The “love apple,” viewed as a

possible aphrodisiac, was shunned at first because of fear that it might contain a deadly drug. Their fear was not unfounded if one considers that the tomato is a member of the botanical family Solonaceae, a family that includes some very deadly plants in addition to some beautiful flowers and some plants whose parts are very edible. The genus *Solanum* includes the tomato, potato, and eggplant; peppers are in the genus *Capsicum*; the genus *Physalis* contains plants closely related to the *tomatillo* such as gooseberries and groundberries. However, *Nicotiana*, tobacco, is also classified in the Solonaceae as are the *Lycianthes*, plants from which psychoactive alkaloids can be extracted, *Mandragora*, the genus of the poisonous mandrake, and *Atropa*, the genus of the equally deadly nightshade plant from which the powerful narcotic, belladonna, is extracted. If these fearful people had learned to identify dangerous plants by their flower structure, the tomato flower would have been warning just as a plant with three leaves brings to mind the admonition to avoid poison ivy, “leaves of three; let it be.”

Love, however, will triumph, and the tomato, whether it had any impact on love or not, became well-loved and continued its amazing journey from country to country, from continent to continent.

We bemoan the fate of the heirloom tomato which has given way to some of the blandest tasting red orbs that we could have imagined as youngsters. Even the stewed tomatoes that my grandmother, my mother, and I canned, from the less than perfect fruits that farm stands sold as “canning tomatoes”, tasted better months later than do today’s in-season fresh tomatoes. I can still taste August and September tomato sandwich lunches. The small *campari*, introduced in recent years, have been bred for both shelf-life and taste. *Campari* are a significant improvement over most grocery store fruits. Although “tomatoes-on-the-vine,” sold in most produce departments, are said to be the same hybrid as are the *campari*, the beautiful sweetness of the *campari* is not found in the larger tomatoes. I am also fond of the tiny yellow-orange tomatoes that are available from local farmers in August and September. They are a very sweet, low-acid tomato that is perfect for a salad or for a snack.

FRENCH *Soubise* – STUFFED AND BROILED TOMATOES WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE

Tomates Farcis a la Hussarde

TPT - 1 hour and 45 minutes

A soubise is another of those wonderfully convenient menu-makers that is a perfect choice when you have out-of-town guests or when you have had a long day and dinner needs to be quick and comforting. Since it can be made ahead of time, even weeks ahead of time and frozen, it can be baking as you hustle together the rest of the meal—a vegetable, preferably haricots or maybe a bean salad and a dessert. We think this qualifies legitimately as the ultimate French comfort food. When soubise is in our menu plans, we prepare enough to serve later in the week and leave the cream and Gruyère out of that portion. A bit of leftover soubise, secreted in the freezer, can provide an interesting vegetable side or appetizer portion. Even winter, hot-house tomatoes taste good this way. To augment the protein in the menu, I often serve a cheese and fruit dessert or an eggy custard pudding.

FRENCH BRAISED ONIONS AND RICE

Soubise:

1 tablespoon butter
3 cups *thinly* sliced yellow onions
3 tablespoons converted white rice *or*
brown rice, if preferred

2/3 cup vegetarian stock of choice
1/8 teaspoon white pepper, or to taste
Pinch freshly grated nutmeg

6 small tomatoes

3 tablespoons *sulfite-free* creamy horseradish sauce

6 Simpson lettuce leaves—*well-washed and well-dried*—for garnish

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Prepare a 1 1/2-quart oven casserole by spraying with non-stick lecithin spray coating. Also, prepare a 1-quart soufflé dish, large *au gratin* dish, or other oven-to-table serving dish by spraying with non-stick lecithin spray coating. Set aside.

In a skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine butter, thinly sliced onions, and rice. Sauté, stirring constantly, until onions are soft and translucent, *being careful to allow neither the onions nor the rice to brown.*

Add stock, white pepper, and nutmeg. When it comes to the boil, transfer to prepared oven casserole. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Bake in preheated 300 degree F. oven for about 1 hour, or until moisture is absorbed by rice and onions are *very tender*. Remove from oven and scoop *soubise* into a fine sieve. Allow to drain thoroughly.

Prepare an *au gratin* dish, large enough to hold 12 tomato halves, by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

Slice the tomatoes in half. *Gently* squeeze out and discard the juice and seeds. Scoop out the tomato pulp remaining in the tomato halves and chop this *finely*.

Turn chopped tomato pulp into a saucepan. Add prepared, well-drained FRENCH BRAISED ONIONS AND RICE (*Soubise*) and horseradish sauce. Mix ingredients well. Heat over *LOW* heat until just heated through.

Apportion *heated* filling evenly among tomato halves and put the halves into the prepared *au gratin* dish.

Preheat broiler to about 375 degrees F.



Just before you are ready to serve, place the *au gratin* dish under preheated broiler and broil for about 7-10 minutes, or until top is crisp and browned.

Place two halves on each of six dinner or salad plates. Roll the lettuce leaves into an attractive cone and tuck a lettuce leaf between the tomato halves.

Serve at once, as a hot vegetable or as an appetizer.

Yields 6 individual servings

Note: This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 6.1 g.; FAT = 2.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.1 g.;
CALORIES = 98; CALORIES FROM FAT = 20%

SPANISH TAPAS POTATOES

Patatas Bravas

TPT - 53 minutes

The Hotel Colon is not on Calle de Colon in Seville as we had been directed by a friend who had whirled through Spain on a “fifteen-minute-in-the-Black-Forest” tour. The comedy of negotiating the traffic in the center of the city following a map that brought us round and round and round was noticed by a taxi driver to whom we are to this day grateful; he stuck his arm up and with full military flourish commanded us to “follow him” to the hotel. Success was ours and we found a parking place on the sidewalk across from the hotel. It is funny today but that day was a frustration we shall never forget since Ray thought our problems were due to my classroom Spanish, not the map. In addition the hot Sirocco winds had blown up from Africa and the heat and humidity were unbearable. Only tourists, young and on their first European adventure, run around in 125-degree weather, although we did not know the temperature until we got back home and were informed by a friend who had been monitoring our adventure from the States. The hotel compounded our discomfort because they had no air conditioning, only a swamp cooler system which, of course, is all but useless in extreme humidity. The windows open, we tried to get some sleep and found that we were across from a tapas bar in which people gathered and sang all night long. Although we never visited the tapas bar, opting for earlier dinners in the hotel at 9 PM instead of 11 PM, these potatoes were, most likely, on the tapas table in that bar and I now wish I had tasted them to see if I have gotten it right. The sauce on the outside should tingle the tastebuds which are then soothed by the soft potato flesh. The Waring blender had only recently come to Seville when we were there and each evening we heard blenders set up on balconies noisily preparing gazpacho. The use of the blender to prepare a course tomato purée from fresh tomatoes would, therefore, be perfectly acceptable.

1 1/2 pound russet potatoes

3 quarts cold water

1 cup diced, canned tomatoes—well-drained

1 tablespoon extra virgin Spanish olive oil

1/2 cup finely chopped onion

1 garlic clove—very finely chopped

2 teaspoons vegetarian Worcestershire sauce*

1 teaspoon red wine vinegar

1/4 teaspoon Tabasco Sauce, or to taste

Oil for deep-frying**



Set up the deep-fryer.

Cut peeled potatoes into small cubes. To remove excess starch from the potatoes, turn them into a large mixing bowl and add *cold* water. Allow to stand until ready to serve. Drain thoroughly.

Mash tomatoes with a potato masher or turn into a sieve and mash with a spoon.

In a skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, heat oil. Add *finely* chopped onion and *very finely* chopped garlic and sauté until soft and translucent, *being careful to allow neither the onion nor the garlic to brown*.

Add mashed tomatoes and cook, stirring frequently, until thickened—about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to *LOW*.

Add Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, and Tabasco Sauce. Stir to integrate and allow to cook at *LOW*, stirring occasionally, while deep-frying the potatoes.

Pat the potato cubes dry with paper toweling. Deep-fry the potatoes until golden brown. Drain on paper toweling. Add potatoes to prepared sauce in skillet, stirring to coat the potatoes with the sauce. Turn into a heated serving bowl.** Provide small dishes for individual servings

Yields 8 servings
adequate for 4-6 people

Notes: *If you are unable to find a vegetarian Worcestershire-style sauce, an adequate homemade version can be found in *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul, Volume II*, pp. 683-684.

**Used frying oil does tend to become rancid when stored at room temperature. Since we do not deep-fry often, I was in the habit of discarding used oil until I discovered that the oil could be frozen. It is a good idea to filter the oil after frying and before freezing. I bring it back to room temperature an hour or so before I plan to fry.

***If you are serving this as an appetizer in the “*tapas* manner,” place the serving bowl on a warming tray with other hot items.

This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/8 SERVING – PROTEIN = 1.6 g.; FAT = 6.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 13.8 g.;
CALORIES = 120; CALORIES FROM FAT = 50%

TOMATO CHEESE TART

TPT - 1 hour and 3 minutes

This was one of my go-to appetizer or luncheon dishes back in the 1970s. It always received compliments from my guests. Though pizza-like in general flavor, the texture and nutritional values are pleasingly different.

1 whole wheat pie crust for a 9-inch pie

1/2 cup shredded (about 2 ounces) Cheddar cheese

**3/4 cup shredded (about 3 ounces) young, slicing
provolone cheese**

3 medium ripe tomatoes

1 teaspoon dried basil—crushed

1 teaspoon dried oregano—crushed

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons butter

1/2 cup *thinly* sliced scallions

2 tablespoons soft whole wheat breadcrumbs *or*

1 tablespoon whole wheat breadcrumbs plus

1 tablespoon Italian breadcrumbs, if preferred

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Prepare a 9-inch pie plate by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

On a lightly floured surface, roll pastry out to form a circle about 10-11 inches in diameter. Fold in quarters (bottom to top; then right to left), lay in upper left quadrant of prepared 9-inch pie plate, and unfold. Trim around edge leaving about 1/2 inch beyond rim. Turn excess under and flute edges to form a high edge—pressing down slightly as you go to give a rather

firm attachment and thus reducing shrinkage somewhat. If time permits, freeze prepared crust for about 15 minutes. This too helps reduce shrinkage. Cut a 12-inch square of aluminum foil and fit lightly into crust. Cover bottom surface with dried beans, peas, or raw rice (reserved for this purpose) or aluminum pastry weights.

Bake in preheated 425 degree F. oven for 10 minutes. Remove aluminum foil and weights. Return crust to oven for an additional 5 minutes. Remove from oven and set on a wire rack to cool for about 15 minutes.

Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees F.

While pie crust is cooling, shred cheeses. Set aside.

Slice tomatoes in half lengthwise and then into thin, uniform slices. Set aside.

Combine crushed basil, oregano, and freshly ground black pepper in a mortar. Grind to uniform consistency with a pestle. Set aside.

In a small skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add scallion slices and sauté gently for 3 or 4 minutes. Set aside.

Sprinkle the shredded Cheddar and *provolone* cheeses evenly over the surface of the cooled pie crust. Arrange tomato slices over cheese, slightly overlapping in a spiral pattern. Sprinkle blended seasonings evenly over tomatoes. Spoon sautéed scallion slices into center. Sprinkle breadcrumbs evenly over all.

Bake in preheated 325 degree F. oven for 20 minutes, until cheese is melted and dish is heated through.

Serve at once, cutting into pie wedges to serve.



Yields 6 servings
adequate for 3-4 people as a main course

Note: The pie shell may be baked in advance of serving and refrigerated or frozen until just before serving time, cutting 25 minutes from the preparation time required on serving day.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 9.8 g.; FAT = 16.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 17.9 g.;
CALORIES = 259; CALORIES FROM FAT = 58%

CHILLED TOMATO – WALNUT SAUCE WITH SOYMEAT

TPT - 19 minutes

Summer menus can become boring but an unusual sauce like this, served with chilled, or room temperature, grilled vegetables can really perk up those “I don’t want something hot but I don’t want another salad” appetites. I remember well a small restaurant in Rome, which we frequented for lunch. Every noon there was a selection of cold, grilled vegetables to choose from. We ate them with a ball of freshly made mozzarella cheese. It was the memory of those lunches and the notes in my journal from that trip that inspired my creation of this sauce to move that lunch menu to a light evening repast for a late summer evening. In the cool of the morning, I prepare the sauce and steam baby artichokes and new potatoes while I pan-grill squash, red onion, and eggplant slices, whole carrots, radicchio wedges, and

mushrooms. They chill on a large platter to which, before serving, I add some lovely, large roasted red pepper slices that I have frozen in oil. A good, crusty loaf of Italian or French bread and maybe a wedge of cheese are all we need to be very, very satisfied.

**1/4 cup *finely* chopped soy meat analogue
chicken strips**
3 tablespoons *finely* chopped *toasted* walnuts
Pinch salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
1/4 cup *reduced-calorie or light* mayonnaise
1/2 cup canned, *crushed* tomatoes—*well-drained*

In a bowl, combine *finely* chopped soy meat and *toasted* walnuts. Season with salt and pepper. Toss. Set aside until required.

Using the electric mixer fitted with *chilled* beaters or by hand using a *chilled* wire whisk, beat heavy cream in a *clean, chilled* bowl until stiff peaks form.

Add mayonnaise to whipped cream. Fold to combine. Add very *well-drained* tomato purée and soy meat–walnut mixture. Fold to combine. Turn into a serving bowl. Refrigerate until ready to serve.



Yields about 1 1/4 cupfuls

1/10 SERVING (i. e., 2 tablespoonfuls) –
PROTEIN = 0.9 g.; FAT = 5.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 2.1 g.;
CALORIES = 61; CALORIES FROM FAT = 75%

*The fate of the poor sweetpotato is a concern;
we are eating less and less of this fabulous tuber.*

*Since it can not be microwaved successful,
people in western cultures just do not even consider it.*

*Personally I can not understand why it is too hard to toss a sweetpotato or two
into the oven to bake for an hour . . . for all that luscious nutrition . . .*

*Next month I will share some more unusual ways
to serve this member of Morning Glory family. Please do drop by,*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.