

January 2016

THE MEAT BOYCOTT OF 1973 AND RAVIOLI:

Ravioli with Roasted Mushrooms and Chestnut Sauce

Ravioli Salad with Honeydew Melon and Yellow Tomatoes

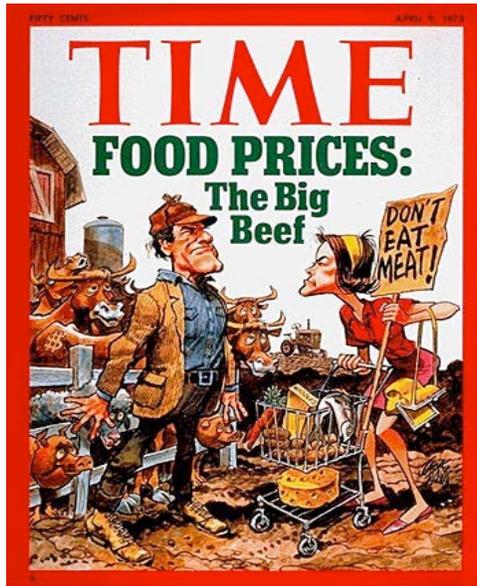
Ravioli with Lentil Sauce and Sausages

Cheese Ravioli and Vegetables with Fresh Tomato Couli

The food rationing of World War II shaped my mother's cooking; we ate meat but not a lot of it. On meat delivery day, we walked to the market with our ration stamps and bought a single cut of meat, a roast of pork, a smoked pork loin, a rump roast of beef or some ground beef, liver, a chicken, or a turkey. Roasts and poultry would be cooked for Sunday dinner and the leftovers and chops cut from the roasts, carefully planned by Mother, became a quintet of dishes lasting until Thursday. Friday was often fried fish, French fries, and coleslaw, available as take-out at a market every Friday. Otherwise, Friday's dinner would be a vegetable dinner with cold cuts or canned salmon. Saturday's meal might be an omelet or pancakes. Ray's family, living in the New York metropolitan area, had more access to meat and rationing did not affect their menu planning as much as I had experienced.

In 1971, about seven years after we married, we began to drop meat from our diet. First it was bacon and other smoked meats and meat products that contained nitrates; then it was red meats, pork, and poultry. Finally in the spring of 1973 we found that we no longer had the enzymes to digest fish. Interestingly, it corresponded with the meat boycott of April 1973, a grass roots consumer action scheduled to take place between April 1st and 8th. Food prices had jumped significantly by that April and housewives were livid. Although President Nixon had established wage and price freezes in 1971, presumably to garner votes, the 1972 Russian wheat deal and the reduction in corn production, due to a corn leaf blight that started in Florida and had spread north and west, quickly placed a stress on the food chain.

There was, as a consequence, less cattle feed and smaller feedlot herds sending the price of meat up to a level that made the price of meat unaffordable for the average American. Coupled with the ending of those wage and price controls, the food supply was seriously impacted. The price of meat was not the only inflationary statistic; grocery costs leapt twenty per cent in one year, in part due to the oil embargo which followed soon after. Reinstatement of price controls was too little, too late.



Since we were almost confirmed vegetarians by that point Ray's secretaries asked me for a list of entrées that they could eat during the designated week of boycott and beyond. Presented with a long list of possibilities, they responded, "What do I serve with these?" and "Do you have any ideas other than tomato sauce for *ravioli*?" They needed menus and that experience is probably the number one reason that I went out of my way to include menu ideas in *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods that Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*.



RAVIOLI WITH ROASTED MUSHROOMS AND CHESTNUT SAUCE

TPT - 47 minutes

If you have never seen the fruits of the sweet chestnut tree, they are fascinating. The burr (or bur), as it is known is a spiny container for as many as seven seeds or as few as one, depending on the species or variety. Known as castagna in Italian, they are members of the genus Castanea, a name that probably came from Latin, although Linnaeus's first edition in 1753 placed this tree in the genus Fagus. Chestnuts were a Native American food source long before the Europeans arrived and became an important food for the American colonists. The chestnut blight fungus, first identified on Asian chestnut trees on Long Island in 1904, spread across the country and an estimated four billion American chestnut trees were destroyed in just forty years. An effort begun in the 1930s to breed from the pockets of blight resistant trees continues. Chestnuts have a carbohydrate content comparable to wheat and are, therefore, ground into flour and used for bread making, one of the reasons chestnuts were important to the colonists on Long Island especially during the years of British occupation. Although they contribute less protein to the diet than do other nuts, they do contribute vitamin C and are the only nut to do so.

Chestnuts and mushrooms give this dish a distinctive earthy, autumnal feel, probably because the chestnut harvest always appeared in our local markets in the late fall and as soon as they were available, the street vendors in Manhattan would tempt you with the aroma of roasting chestnuts. We roast them for stuffing, add them to casseroles, and eat them out-of-hand in front of the fire. Whole, shelled seeds are available dried and canned but I find the purée, often marketed as "purée de marrons," to be most useful for this sauce.

3 slices soy bacon

1 tablespoon safflower or sunflower oil

**16 ounces whole crimini mushrooms—trimmed,
well-rinsed, and halved or quartered**

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme—crushed

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

CHESTNUT – CREAM SAUCE:

1 tablespoon butter

1 large shallot—very finely chopped

1 1/2 cups light cream or half and half

3/4 cup unsweetened chestnut purée

2 tablespoons fat-free dairy sour cream

**1 tablespoon grated pecorino Romano cheese
or parmesan cheese, if preferred**

Salt, to taste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

12 large cheese ravioli—frozen or freshly made

Place a platter or shallow serving bowl onto a warming tray set at HIGH.

In a large non-stick-coated skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, lightly fry soy bacon. Set aside until required.

Preheat oven to 385-400 degrees F.

In a roasting pan, combine quartered mushrooms, oil, crushed, dried thyme, salt and black pepper. Toss well. Roast in preheated oven until liquid extruded by mushrooms has evaporated and the mushrooms are browned. Stir frequently. Remove from oven and spoon out onto one end of the heated serving platter.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add *very finely* chopped shallot and sauté until soft and translucent.

Add cream, chestnut purée, sour cream, and grated cheese. Using a wire whisk, stir until well-combined. *Reduce heat to LOW* and allow the sauce to simmer until it thickens. Stir frequently.

Meanwhile, cook *ravioli* according to package directions. Drain.

When sauce is thickened to your liking, season with salt and pepper to taste. Add drained *ravioli* and allow the *ravioli* to heat through for several minutes. Spoon the *ravioli* onto the other end of the heated platter. Spoon the chestnut sauce over the *ravioli*.

Crumble crisp soy bacon. Use to garnish the ingredients on the platter.

Serve at once.

Yields 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Note: This recipe is easily halved, when required.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 11.2 g.; FAT = 14.1 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 29.2 g.;
CALORIES = 29.2; CALORIES FROM FAT = 44%



RAVIOLI SALAD WITH HONEYDEW MELON AND YELLOW TOMATOES

TPT - 1 hour and 12 minutes;

1 hour = *ravioli* chilling period

Oh sure, in a pinch I have used cherry or grape tomatoes for this recipe but I think red introduces too much of a contrast. The yellow, the green, and the white of this main course salad present a very cool summer invitation.

3 quarts boiling water
1 pound small, round cheese ravioli
1 teaspoon safflower or sunflower oil

2 tablespoons safflower or sunflower oil
1 tablespoon herb vinegar* or white vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

**1/2 very firm, under-ripe honeydew melon—seeded,
peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch dice to yield about 5 cups**
**1/2 pound low-moisture mozzarella cheese—cut into
1/2-inch dice**
1 cup halved, small yellow pear tomatoes
3 tablespoons slivered fresh basil
3 tablespoons slivered fresh arugula
3 scallions—light green portions only—thinly sliced

Cook *ravioli* in *boiling* water according to package directions. Drain thoroughly. Turn into a mixing bowl. Add the 1 teaspoonful oil and toss to coat the *ravioli* and prevent them from sticking together when chilled. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

In a cruet, combine the 3 tablespoonfuls oil, vinegar, and black pepper. Shake vigorously. Set aside.

In a shallow serving bowl, combine cooked and chilled *ravioli*, diced melon and *mozzarella* cheese, halved tomatoes, *slivered* fresh basil and *arugula*, and *thinly* sliced scallions. Toss *gently*.

When ready to serve, shake prepared *vinaigrette* again and pour over salad. Again, toss *gently*.

Serve at once. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Yields 8 servings
adequate for 4-5 people

Notes: *MIXED FLOWER VINEGAR WITH OREGANO, which appears in volume II of *A Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*, p. 679, gives this salad a very special something. It is our choice in this case.

This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/8 SERVING – PROTEIN = 13.6 g.; FAT = 11.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.8 g.;
CALORIES = 257; CALORIES FROM FAT = 42%

RAVIOLI WITH LENTIL SAUCE AND SAUSAGES

TPT - 1 hour and 7 minutes

When the cool, damp evenings of the autumn descend upon our valley, we do close the windows and doors, effectively moving inside for the winter. All summer we have had an inside/outside bond with the night but now we must retreat. Suppers like this please at this time of year.

1/3 cup dry, brown lentils
1 1/2 cups vegetarian stock of choice
1 bay leaf—broken*

2 teaspoons vegetable oil
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1 garlic clove—finely chopped

1/2 cup well-drained, canned, *diced* tomatoes
1 medium carrot—peeled and chopped into small dice
1 1/2 teaspoons tomato paste
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon dried thyme—crushed
1/8 teaspoon ground sage
Pinch ground marjoram
2 quarts *boiling* water
8 ounces large, *frozen* cheese ravioli*

6 frozen soy sausages

Freshly grated Parmesan *or* pecorino Romano cheese, as preferred

Sort lentils and discard those of poor quality. Rinse thoroughly.

In a non-aluminum saucepan** set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine lentils, stock, and broken bay leaf.* Bring to the boil. Reduce heat to *LOW*, cover tightly, and simmer for about 30 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Drain, reserving liquid for soup stock and discarding bay leaf pieces.

In a skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine oil, *finely* chopped onion and garlic. Sauté until soft and translucent, *allowing neither the onion nor the garlic to brown*.

Add sautéed onion and garlic to cooked lentils with diced carrot, tomatoes, tomato paste, black pepper, crushed thyme, and ground sage and marjoram. Mix *gently*, but *thoroughly*. Simmer until thickened to desired consistency—about 8 minutes.* Keep warm on warming tray, set at *MEDIUM*, until required.

Place a large platter onto the warming tray to heat.

In a kettle set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine *boiling* water and *ravioli*. Cook according to package directions. Drain thoroughly. Turn out onto warming tray.

At the same time, place frozen soy sausages into a small saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat. Turning frequently, allow sausages to brown. Transfer to platter next to *ravioli*.

Spoon warm lentil sauce over.

Serve at once with grated cheese.

Yields 6 servings
adequate for 4 people

Notes: *The lentil sauce can be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated or frozen until required.

This recipe can be doubled, when required. When we halve this recipe, we make the lentil sauce as instructed here but freeze half of it for another menu.

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 11.1 g.; FAT = 5.7 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 21.4 g.;
CALORIES = 175; CALORIES FROM FAT = 29%

CHEESE RAVIOLI AND VEGETABLES WITH FRESH TOMATO COULIS

TPT - 29 minutes

This makes an absolutely beautiful presentation and it really does not take all that much time nor is it complicated. We make the sauce ahead of time; sometimes we even freeze it. The vegetables are julienned early in the day and at dinner time it's "presto."

**10 plum tomatoes—peeled, seeded, and
chopped— or 1 3/4 cups (about 28 ounces)
canned diced tomatoes**

**2 teaspoons *extra virgin* olive oil
2 tablespoons *finely* chopped shallots
1 garlic clove—*finely* chopped
1 tablespoon *finely* chopped fresh basil leaves
or 1 teaspoon dried basil—crushed
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**

**1 tablespoon *extra virgin* olive oil
1/2 cup julienne slices of peeled celeriac (knob
or root celery)
1 medium leek—*white portion only*—julienned
1 medium carrot—scraped or peeled and
julienned
1/2 small zucchini—julienned
1/2 small yellow summer squash—julienned**

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

**12 large (13 ounces) round cheese *ravioli*—
homemade or commercially-available,
fresh or frozen
2 quarts *boiling* water**

4 sprigs of fresh basil, for garnish

Using the electric blender or the food processor fitted with steel knife, purée chopped and seeded tomatoes. Press the resultant purée through a fine sieve into a saucepan. Set the saucepan over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat and allow the purée to thicken and reduce by about one-quarter.

In a skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, heat the 2 teaspoonfuls olive oil. Add *finely* chopped shallot, garlic, and basil, and black pepper. Sauté until shallots are soft and translucent, *being careful to allow neither the shallots nor the garlic to brown*. Add to tomato purée, reduce heat to *LOW*, and continue to cook, stirring frequently, until required.

Cook cheese *ravioli* in *boiling* water for about 6-7 minutes.

While ravioli are cooking, in a second skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat the remaining tablespoonful of olive oil. Add julienned celeriac, leek, carrot, zucchini, and yellow summer squash. Sauté until just heated through, but still *crisp-tender*. Sprinkle lemon juice over and toss gently.

Divide sautéed, julienned vegetables into four portions and arrange in the middle of four heated serving plates. Using a slotted spoon, nestle three cooked *ravioli* in the vegetable nest.



Carefully and attractively spoon hot tomato *coulis* around the centered vegetables.

Garnish each with a sprig of fresh basil and *serve at once*.

Yields 4 individual portions

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

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 10.5 g.; FAT = 8.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 40.9 g.;
CALORIES = 286; CALORIES FROM FAT = 26%

Since we generally eat three meals each day and you will be preparing these meals for many years, I urge you to address food prep as an adventure, a challenge, and a zen pleasure. See you next month when I'll share my thoughts on th peculiar attitude toward red foods during the colonial period,

Judy

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