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

April 2020

UNUSUAL *PASTA* AND NOODLE DISHES:



Baked Spaghetti with Spinach, Kale, and Aged Provolone

Chinese Noodles with Black Mushrooms and Broccolini

Thai-Style Oil

Japanese-Style Noodle Salad with Crisp Vegetables

Ravioli with Goat Cheese and Pomegranate Sauce

Smoky Orzo and Sausage Skillet

Vietnamese – Inspired “Squid and Celery Salad

Archaeological excavation at the Lajia site in northwestern China gave the world an astonishing view of life some 4,000 years ago. An overturned bowl, buried beneath ten feet of sediment, contained long, thin, spaghetti-like noodles made from two types of millet. They represent the earliest evidence of noodles ever found and show considerably advanced skill. The Chinese have a definite advantage over Italy in the “invention of pasta” claims with this find combined with an early reference to noodles found in a manuscript dating to 220-225 AD, that is during the East Han Dynasty. The Italians do certainly get credit for spreading the word and for the considerable amount of shelf space they do claim today.

When being interviewed, I have often been asked if we eat a lot of *pasta* as vegetarians. Whether it is the interviewer’s own lack of imagination or our surname or maybe they just like *pasta* and noodles and want some ideas, it is a common question. I not only like the taste of noodles and *pasta*, I am also quite appreciative of the creative opportunities this simple, inexpensive ingredient presents. Rarely, when using a simple noodle/*pasta* base, is the final dish a repeat.

As a young child, I watched my grandmother make noodles. A ball of flour, water, and salt, and occasionally egg yolks, was rolled out on the flour-covered kitchen table and expertly sliced into long thin noodles which were allowed to rest and dry. They were then hung from dowels positioned between kitchen chairs. Ray remembers his mother and aunts hanging spaghetti, *fettucine*, and *lasagne* noodles over towels covering the back of dining room chairs. Fresh noodles were available at dairy stores and some meat markets for those who did not make their own. Our mothers soon used commercially-available, packaged, dried noodles, macaroni, and spaghetti exclusively; ease of storage and convenience were most important since women had become part of the workforce during that post World War II period and kitchen time was often at a premium.



We knew noodles. There were wide noodles and narrow, square, and twisted noodles but they were noodles not *pasta*. There was macaroni and there was spaghetti. The term *pasta*, borrowed from Italian, soon became so widespread that Americans have stopped italicizing it. My generation, concerned about empty calories, introduced whole wheat *pasta* and noodles and *pasta* made from Jerusalem artichokes. In the 1980s many nutritionists advised an increase intake of carbohydrates, stepping back on the widely accepted 1/3:1/3:1/3 protein to fat to carbohydrate ratio which had served most of

us pretty well up until then. That has been supplanted by a low-carbohydrate craze today that actually makes *pasta* and noodles guilty pleasures. But if you want to indulge, the pendulum has swung back to fresh noodle/*pasta* products. My *pasta* machine which sat idle in the cupboard for years has been passed on to the next generation who are enthusiastic about making their own *pasta*. If you want to pretend you are eating *pasta* or you want somewhere to put your favorite sauce, substitutes made from low-carb vegetables, spaghetti squash, or spiralized vegetables are supposed to keep the carb temptation at bay.

I wish I could say something witty about a pendulum other than that it swings and will swing back but learning a few interesting *pasta* dishes might prepare you for the next swing.

BAKED SPAGHETTI WITH SPINACH, KALE, AND AGED *PROVOLONE*

TPT - 55 minutes

Sometimes the weather or work load or a pesky winter virus leads you to “comfort foods” like macaroni and cheese. Oh come on, macaroni and cheese doesn’t have to be elbow macaroni and Cheddar cheese. This casserole delivers taste complexity for numbed taste buds and comfort for the downed spirit.

- 3 quarts *boiling* water
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 3-inch piece lemon zest
- 6 ounces high protein *or* whole wheat spaghetti

- 1 1/2 teaspoons butter
- 2 medium scallions—sliced
- 1 large garlic clove—*finely* chopped
- 1 cup chopped *fresh* spinach
- 1/2 cup chopped *fresh or* frozen kale
- 1/3 cup canned, *diced* tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons chopped, jarred sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon crushed, dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

- 3 tablespoons shredded, *aged provolone* cheese

- 1/4 cup skimmed milk
- 5 tablespoons shredded, *aged provolone* cheese
- 2 teaspoons *extra virgin* olive oil



Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare a **9-inch ceramic quiche dish** by coating with non-stick lecithin spray coating.

In a large kettle set over *HIGH* heat, add lemon juice and lemon zest to *boiling* water. Break spaghetti in half. Add spaghetti and cook, stirring occasionally, over *HIGH* heat according to package directions, but *only until al dente*. Drain thoroughly, discarding lemon zest.

In a skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add scallion slices, chopped spinach and kale, *diced* tomatoes, chopped sun-dried tomatoes, and crushed basil. Sauté gently for several minutes, until *crisp-tender*. Season with black pepper. Remove from heat and set aside briefly.

In a mixing bowl, toss drained spaghetti with sautéed vegetables. Add 3 tablespoonfuls shredded cheese. Toss again. Turn into prepared casserole. Pour milk over. Sprinkle remaining 1/3 cupful shredded cheese evenly over. Drizzle olive oil over.

Bake in preheated 350 degree F. oven for about 15 minutes, or until cheese is melted and bubbling.

Yields 4 servings
adequate for 2 people

Note: This recipe is easily doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 11.7 g.; FAT = 10.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 40.4 g.;
CALORIES = 287; CALORIES FROM FAT = 32%



CHINESE NOODLES WITH BLACK MUSHROOMS AND BROCCOLINI

TPT - 8 hours and 28 minutes;
8 hours = mushroom rehydration period

In the days when we could more easily shop in our favorite Chinatown grocery store in New York City for big, beautiful, meaty dried Chinese black mushrooms there was no problem finding the very finest, ones with the patterned caps; they were always available. Quality dried black/shiitake mushrooms can be easily ordered online. Don't be tempted to substitute U. S.-grown shiitake; they don't hold a candle to the premium mushrooms exported from Asia. This low-fat vegan entrée is a wonderfully flavorful way to enjoy those precious mushrooms.



- 5 large, dried Chinese black mushrooms**
- 1 quart boiling water**

- 2 tablespoons tamari soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons Shaoxing rice wine or mirin (Japanese sweetened sake)**
- 1 tablespoon commercially-available Duck sauce**
- 1 tablespoon water**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Thai sweet chili sauce**
- 1 teaspoon corn starch**

- 1 tablespoon Thai-style oil [see recipe which follows]**

- 4 ounces Chinese Yang Chun wheat noodles**

- 4 broccolini stems with flower heads attached—trimmed and sliced into 1-inch pieces to yield 1 cup***

- 1 large scallion—trimmed, well-rinsed, and sliced diagonally into 1-inch pieces**

In a Pyrex measuring cup, soak mushrooms in *boiling* water for 8 hours or overnight. Fit a small dish into the measuring cup to keep mushrooms submerged during the soaking period.

In the morning, drain well. Remove and discard tough stems. Slice each mushroom cap into four or five thick slices. Set aside until required.

In a small bowl, combine soy sauce, rice wine, Duck sauce, water, Thai sweet *chili* sauce, and corn starch. Using a small wire whisk, blend thoroughly until corn starch is in suspension. Set aside briefly.

In a kettle set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, cook noodles in *boiling* water according to package directions. Drain.

In a non-stick-coated skillet or *wok* set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, heat Thai-style oil. Add mushroom slices and broccolini. Stir-fry for 3-4 minutes.

Add drained noodles. Stir-fry for a minute. Remove skillet or wok from heat. *Reduce heat to LOW*.

Whisk sauce ingredients once more to insure that corn starch is in suspension. Add to noodle mixture. Stir well to coat noodles and vegetables and to remove any bits that might have stuck to the pan surface.

Add scallion pieces and again stir to coat everything with the sauce. Turn out onto a heated platter.

Serve at once.

Yields 2 servings

Notes: *Chinese broccoli can be substituted, if available. It has larger leaves and would be the *Brassica* preferred in Thailand and China.

This recipe can be doubled or tripled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 11.6 g.; FAT = 9.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 73.3 g.;
CALORIES = 419; CALORIES FROM FAT = 21%



THAI-STYLE OIL

TPT - 2 hours and 26 minutes;
2 hours = flavor development period

Thai “nam prick pao” is a wonderful sauce, albeit often too hot for Westerners, that is served with eggs, noodles, soups, stir-fries, tofu, and probably a dozen more dishes. It is, however, usually made with dried arbol chilies. The flavor is wonderful but I had one chance to taste it. The second mouthful was no longer defined by my taste buds. I have taken the essence of the famous condiment to create a cooking oil that will add the wonderful flavors of Thailand. An egg fried in this oil is amazing. You can’t, I guess, legitimately call this a sauce but when spooned over noodles or used as the oil for stir-frying, it can contribute very flavorful nuances.

1/2 cup high-heat safflower or sunflower oil
1 large shallot—thinly sliced

2 large garlic cloves—thinly sliced

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
1 tablespoon liquid aminos*
2 teaspoons black bean paste
1/4 teaspoon jalapeño chili sauce
1/4 teaspoon crushed, dried red pepper flakes

In a saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, heat oil. When hot, add shallot slices. Allow to cook for about 12 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove shallot slices from oil. Set aside briefly.

Add garlic slices. Cook for 4 minutes. Remove saucepan to a heat-resistance surface.

Add previously browned shallot slices, lime juice, brown sugar, liquid aminos, black bean paste, *jalapeño* chili sauce, and crushed, dried red pepper flakes. Stir to combine. Allow to stand for 2 hours.

Set a funnel in a cruet or jar. Set a fine sieve into the funnel. Pour the oil mixture into the sieve. Discard residue left behind. Seal cruet or jar and refrigerate until required.

Yields about 12 tablespoonfuls

Note: *Instead of fish sauce, traditionally used in *nam prik pao*, vegetarians/vegans can add Bragg Liquid Aminos to create a “fishy” taste.

1/12 SERVING (i. e., per tablespoonful) –
PROTEIN = 0.2 g.; FAT = 8.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 2.6 g.;
CALORIES = 91; CALORIES FROM FAT = 88%



JAPANESE-STYLE NOODLE SALAD WITH CRISP VEGETABLES

TPT - 43 minutes;
10 minutes = seaweed toasting period;
15 minutes = seaweed soaking period

While writing “A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America’s Immigrant Soul,” I explored soba noodles, the classic, dark, brown, coarse-textured Japanese buckwheat soba noodle and the less bitter soba noodle made from a grain blend that includes wheat. I found limited acceptance with both versions and so proceeded to evolve a main course salad using whole wheat spaghetti. It was also a subtle way to include the smoky taste of powdered tea and the briny taste of a sea vegetable. This main course pasta salad clearly shows the hidden protein in the foods we eat.

**4 ounces dry whole wheat and Jerusalem artichoke
spaghetti or whole wheat spaghetti —broken in half**
3 quarts boiling water

One 6 x 2-inch strip dried *kombi* seaweed—well-brushed and well-rinsed*

1/4 cup *boiling* water

SESAME DRESSING:

1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon *tamari* soy sauce
1 tablespoon *mirin* (rice wine)
1 teaspoon *toasted* sesame oil
1 teaspoon *toasted* sesame seeds
Ground mixed peppercorns—white, red, and black—to taste
Several dashes ground gingerroot
Dash ground red pepper (cayenne)
Two or three pinches ground *Oolong* tea

1 baby cucumber—peeled, halved lengthwise, and *thinly* sliced at an angle
10 snowpeas—trimmed, strings removed, and *thinly* sliced into matchstick pieces
6 canned water chestnuts—sliced
4 red radishes—trimmed, halved, and *thinly* sliced
2 scallions—trimmed, well-washed, and *thinly* sliced at an angle

Preheat oven to 250 degrees F.

In a kettle set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, add spaghetti to the 3 quartfuls *boiling* water. Cook according to package directions. Drain. Rinse well under cold water. *Allow to drain very thoroughly.*

Meanwhile, place *kombi* seaweed on a baking sheet and place in preheated 250-degree F. oven for about 10 minutes, or until it shrinks and releases a strong marine fragrance. Turn over and over during the toasting period. Using a scissors, cut into *very thin* strips over a breadboard. Turn into small mixing bowl.

Add the 1/4 cupful *boiling* water. Set aside for about 15 minutes. Drain well.

In a large mixing bowl, combine water, soy sauce, *mirin*, *toasted* sesame oil, *toasted* sesame seeds, ground mixed peppercorn, ground gingerroot, ground red pepper (cayenne), and ground tea. Using a wire whisk, combine thoroughly.

Add *very thinly* cut strips of *kombi*, well-drained spaghetti, *thinly* sliced cucumber, snowpea matchsticks, sliced water chestnuts, *thinly* sliced radishes, and *thinly* sliced scallions. Toss gently to coat noodles and vegetables with prepared sesame dressing. Turn into a serving bowl or onto a platter. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Toss again before serving. *Serve chilled.*

Yields 4 servings



Notes: *Dried sea vegetables are available in Asian markets, natural food stores, and, often, in the Asian food sections of well-stocked grocery stores.

The addition of 1/4 cupful matchstick pieces of *jicama* and/or 1/4 cupful *very fresh* green pea sprouts can add further texture to this salad if your produce section carries them.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.5 g.; FAT = 1.7 g.; CARBOHYDRATES = 29.0 g.;
CALORIES = 161; CALORIES FROM FAT = 10%

RAVIOLI WITH GOAT CHEESE AND POMEGRANATE SAUCE

TPT - 33 minutes

When we were in Rome, I ordered ravioli and was astonished when I was served a piece of lasagne pasta folded over a filling of cheese. In Florence both lasagne and mushroom ravioli were served in the same manner. I was so determined to make my own ravioli when we first married that I had repeatedly struggled with an imported, tinned ravioli form. Never did I expect that there was “another way.” We are used to the little pillows of ravioli available fresh in Italian markets or frozen for our convenience. The following recipe is a very twenty-first century ravioli made with goat cheese which makes a smashing first course presentation. Pomegranates and hazelnuts are two of nature’s miracle foods and all those nutritional positives come with flavor. This is a wonderful, urban chic sauce for ravioli.

We enjoy this dish with a salad of greens right from the garden often on a summer or early fall evening when the heat of the day has withdrawn and the cool of evening is rolling in. It also makes a celebratory entrée for a New Year’s meal and a very different first course during the holidays.

1/4 cup pomegranate juice

1 1/2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon *light* brown sugar

1 tablespoon chopped, *preservative-free* hazelnuts
—*toasted*

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste



3 quarts *boiling* water

2 six-inch lengths of *lasagne* noodles

1 cup baby spinach, *mesclún* or small salad greens
—well-washed and well-dried

2 slices (about 1 1/2 ounces) goat cheese with garlic
and herbs, of choice

2 slices (about 1 1/2 ounces) *fresh mozzarella*—halved

Pomegranate seeds, for garnish

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, bring pomegranate juice to the boil. Allow to cook down to about 2 tablespoonfuls. Remove from heat and set aside briefly.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Cook stirring constantly until butter begins to brown. Reduce heat to *LOW*. Add reduced pomegranate juice, brown sugar, *toasted* hazelnuts, and black pepper. Remove from heat and keep warm on a warming tray.

In a large saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, cook the *lasagne* noodles in *boiling* water until tender. Drain well.

Divide the salad greens between two warmed salad plates. Place one of the drained noodles on top of greens. Place a slice of goat cheese and a slice of *mozzarella* at one end of each noodle piece. Turn the noodle over to encase the cheese. Ladle *one-half* of the prepared sauce over each *ravioli*.

Serve at once, garnished with pomegranate seeds.

Yields 2 servings

Note: This recipe can be doubled, when required.



1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 21.2 g.; FAT = 19.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 28.7 g.;
CALORIES = 380; CALORIES FROM FAT = 45%

SMOKY *ORZO* AND SAUSAGE SKILLET

TPT - 24 minutes

The hints of smoke make this simple skillet less than common and very satisfying.

1 cup vegetarian stock of choice
1/2 cup *dry orzo* pasta
1 large garlic clove—crushed *but not chopped*
2 drops liquid smoke*

**1 orange baby sweet bell pepper—cored, seeded,
and *thinly* sliced**
**1 red baby sweet bell pepper—cored, seeded,
and *thinly* sliced**
1/4 cup canned, *petite-diced* tomatoes
1/8 teaspoon Spanish *smoked* paprika

1 large vegetarian sausage (about 3 ounces)**

1/4 cup *mozzarella* pearls

In a skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat stock until it reaches the simmer. Reduce the heat to *LOW-MEDIUM*.

Add *orzo*, crushed garlic clove, and liquid smoke. Stir. Cover tightly and allow to cook for 12 minutes, until *orzo* is al dente. Stir occasionally. Remove and discard garlic clove.

Add orange and red pepper slices, crushed tomatoes, and smoked paprika. Cook, uncovered, for about 10 minutes. Stir frequently and add water, by the spoonfuls, if necessary to prevent sticking.

Add sausage slices. Cook, stirring frequently, until heated through.

Scatter *mozzarella* pearls across the surface and *allow to melt into little pools*. *DO NOT STIR*.

Serve at once directly from skillet.

Yields 4 servings

Notes *Choose a liquid smoke product that is a simple mesquite smoke distillate, one that does not contain a list of chemicals with which you are uncomfortable.

**My preference is for an apple-sage grain sausage link or a vegetarian *chorizo* sausage.

This recipe can be doubled, when required. Be sure to choose a skillet large enough to accommodate the doubled quantity.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 10.1 g.; FAT = 4.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 14.7 g.;
CALORIES = 142; CALORIES FROM FAT = 29%



**VIETNAMESE – INSPIRED “SQUID”
AND CELERY SALAD**
Goi Muc

TPT - 1 hour and 36 minutes;
1 hour = flavor development period

Vegetarians can revisit octopus and squid recipes to introduce variety into their menus rather easily. I bread and fry rings cut from calamarata pasta to approximate fried calamari. Those same pasta rings can be marinated with a Vietnamese marinade to approximate an Asian seafood salad.



3 ounces dry calamarata pasta*
3 quarts boiling water

MARINADE:

2 tablespoons mirin (rice wine)
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
2 teaspoons liquid aminos**
1 teaspoon tamari soy sauce
1 teaspoon preservative-free, smooth peanut butter—brought to room temperature
1/2 teaspoon sugar

1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh lemongrass
1 garlic clove—crushed and very finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
Freshly ground mixed peppercorns—red, white, and black—to taste
Dash or two ground red pepper (cayenne), or to taste

1 rib celery—trimmed and very thinly sliced
1/4 cup fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves
2 tablespoons very finely slivered orange sweet bell pepper
1 teaspoon very finely slivered, fresh organic lime zest

Rice crackers, of choice***

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, combine *boiling water* and *calamarata pasta*. Cook according to package directions. Drain. Rinse with cold water. Using a scissors, cut *calamarata* into thin rings. Turn into a strainer until required.

In a shallow bowl, combine *mirin*, lime juice, liquid aminos, soy sauce, peanut butter, and sugar. Using the back of a spoon, work peanut butter until it is in suspension.

Add *finely* chopped lemongrass, *very finely* chopped garlic, sesame oil, ground mixed peppercorns, and ground red pepper (cayenne). Stir to mix well.

Add drained *pasta* rings, celery slices, fresh coriander (*cilantro*) leaves, *finely* slivered sweet pepper, and *very finely* slivered lime zest. Stir to coat well. Allow to marinate in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Stir occasionally to insure uniform marination. Turn out into a soup plate or other shallow serving dish or small platter.

Serve with a slotted spoon.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *It has become increasingly difficult to find imported *calamarata pasta* in my local groceries. Large-bore *rigatoni* can be substituted. Choose a brand that is ridged to continue the illusion of tentacles.

**Bragg's Liquid aminos can give the salty, fishy nuance of the traditional fish sauce.

***A variety of rice crackers can usually be found in the international aisle of most well-stocked grocery stores.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 3.3 g; FAT = 1.0 g; CARBOHYDRATE = 25.6 g.
CALORIES = 126; CALORIES FROM FAT = 7%



Have you heard the phrase “mise en place?”

*Drop by next month and I’ll try to help you
make this re-prep technique work for you.*

Judy

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

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