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

September 2020

BERRIES – FAMILIAR AND UNFAMILIAR

- Berry Sorbet**
- Broiled Persimmon with English Cream**
- Citrus-Marinated Watermelon and Kiwifruit**
- Custard Dessert with Kiwifruit**
- Grape and Pear Salad with Blue Cheese**
- Green and White Fresh Fruit Compote**
- Israeli Breakfast Salad**

Everywhere I have traveled, I have encountered berries, familiar and unfamiliar. Cloudberry at Christmas in Scandinavia and in an inn deep in a birch forest in Russia remain fond memories; beautiful, tart gooseberries in a summer tart in Great Britain were incredible. My great-grandfather's elderberry wine is a memory that remains too but I never was considered sick enough to get a sip as a child! I use currants when I can get them; I've made barberry jam; and prickly pear nectar is divine.

A local grocery has a permanent berry section with a sign "always berries." Yes, in the winter, when their competitor down the road uses the grocery store's big excuse—"out of season"—this store still stocks antioxidant-loaded berries, albeit imported from the southern hemisphere. If you do not freeze blueberries, blackberries, and strawberries in season or if you run out of your frozen stock in February or March, they will be available. There are other fruits that can be moved to that "berry section" in my market in the winter because there are many fruits, some traditionally considered vegetables, that qualify to dwell under that broad and inclusive umbrella.

raspberries – red and black	boysenberries	tomatoes
huckleberries	chokberries	strawberries
mulberries - red and white	blueberries	grapes
elderberries	cloudberry	kiwifruit
dewberries	gooseberries	melons
loganberries	currants – red and black	eggplants
thimbleberries	juniper berries	squashes
lingonberries	barberries	beach plums
cranberries	pawpaws	pineapples
salmon berries	Pacific crabapples	bananas
gogi berries (aka wolfberries)	persimmons	pomegranates
acai berries	prickly pears	

As I have noted on a previous occasion, the tomatoes found in the New World and introduced to Europe by the Spanish and Portuguese explorers were not the large red fruits we know today. Tomatoes are classified botanically as berries since

they are the soft, ripened ovaries of plants, often with seeds but never with pits. The small yellow ancestors that grew on vines were clearly identifiable as berries. Bananas, beach plums, grapes, kiwifruit, persimmons, even eggplants, watermelons, cantaloupes, honeydew melons, pumpkins, and squashes are all, botanically, berries.

A blackberry, my favorite, is not a berry but a coalesced fruit; each of those wonderful little seeded flavor drops is really “the berry.” Pineapples, raspberries, and strawberries all must be offered the same excuse because they too are coalesced berries violating the requirement that a berry is a single fruit from a single ovary. It is a more complicated category than one would think giving us a lot more choices.



BERRY SORBET

TPT - 4 hours and 10 minutes;
30 minutes = cooling period;
3 hours = freezing period

The palate-clearing sorbet served between courses in formal dinners is rarely, if ever, seen today except probably at state dinners in the EU. The pleasure of lemon or orange or even raspberry ice between the fish and meat courses is quite an experience. Americans serve sorbet only for dessert or over a fruit compote appetizer. I remember being able to pick up a pint of fruit sorbet at my local drive-through Dairy Barn. Groceries today do sell fruit ices and ice milk which can substitute for sherbets but if you are up for a challenge, you can create a sorbet full of fruit goodness.

1 cup fresh blackberries—well-rinsed
1 cup fresh blueberries—well-rinsed
1 cup fresh strawberries—hulled and well-rinsed
1/2 cup fresh red raspberries—well-rinsed

2/3 cup cranberry juice
2/3 cup sugar

1/3 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

In the work bowl of the food processor, combine blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries. Process until berries are uniformly puréed. Set a sieve over a bowl. Press purée through the sieve to remove seeds. Clean out sieve. Repeat to remove *all* seeds. Discard refuse. Set aside briefly.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine cranberry juice and sugar. Heat, stirring frequently, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and allow to cool for 30 minutes.

Add lemon juice and berry purée. Stir to combine.

Turn into a **7 x 3 x 2-inch loaf pan**. Freeze for at least 3 hours.

Wrap leftovers in aluminum foil. Return to freezer.

Yields 10 servings

Note: This recipe calls for about 2/3 cupful of the strained berry purée. In the summer, when the berries are sweet and reasonable *and local*, I purée and strain a quantity to store in the freezer for the fall and winter.



1/10 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.4 g.; FAT = 0.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 25.7 g.;
CALORIES = 102; CALORIES FROM FAT = 2%

BROILED PERSIMMON WITH ENGLISH CREAM

TPT - 21 minutes

There are two varieties of persimmon generally available in our markets at this time of year. Fuyu are a sweet, flat-bottomed variety that can be eaten out-of-hand while still quite firm. Hachiya, on the other hand, are a larger, heart-shaped variety with a rounded base which must be fully ripened, almost to a mushy state, to be sweet. The fruit of the Hachiya is sweet when ripened but it is more astringent than is the fruit of the Fuyu. Fuyu persimmons make an unusual dessert or a dramatic garnish while providing vitamins C, K, B₆, and beta-carotene. It is also a source of phytochemicals and an excellent source of magnesium.

We love berries and Fuyu persimmons are no exception so we routinely double this recipe.

ENGLISH CREAM:

- 2 teaspoons mascarpone cheese**
- 1 teaspoon light dairy sour cream**
- 3 drops pure vanilla extract**
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice**

- 1 ripe Fuyu persimmon—sliced in half crosswise**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons honey**

- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice**



Set broiler rack about 6 inches below coil. Preheat broiler to 400 degrees F.

In a small bowl, combine *mascarpone* cheese, sour cream, vanilla extract, and 1/2 teaspoonful lime juice. Mix well. Turn into a serving dish. Set aside until required.

Place halved persimmon, cut-side-up, in a baking pan. Drizzle each half with honey. Broil until browned and caramelized—about 9-10 minutes. *Be careful not to allow honey to burn.* Remove from oven.

Sprinkle the remaining teaspoonful of lime juice over the broiled persimmon halves.

Serve with prepared English cream.

Yields 2 servings
adequate for 2 people as a garnish

Note: This recipe is easily increased to serve as many as you wish.

1/2 SERVING (per half) –
PROTEIN = 1.0 g.; FAT = 1.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 21.5 g.;
CALORIES = 62; CALORIES FROM FAT = 17%

CITRUS – MARINATED WATERMELON AND KIWIFRUIT

TPT - 2 hours and 6 minutes;
2 hours = marination period

When first-course fruit cups were in vogue, they could be awful, descending to the tasteless depths of canned fruit cocktail, even those served in restaurants. With just a little imagination, fruit cups, now dubbed fruit compotes, can be so beautiful and so luscious that dessert is the only place on the menu for them. This is one such combination; it is divine. We garnish it with our dried strawberries for a very delicious and contemporary twist.

- 1 cup cubed ripe watermelon**
- 2 ripe kiwifruits—peeled, halved the long way, and cut into half-moon slices**
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice**
- 3 tablespoons guava juice or nectar**
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lime juice**
- 1 fresh mint leaf—*finely* slivered**
- 1 tablespoon *dried* strawberries, for garnish, if available***



In a large shallow bowl, combine watermelon cubes and kiwifruit slices. Spread them out in the bowl to form a single layer.

In a measuring cup, combine orange, guava, and lime juice with slivered mint leaves. Stir to mix well. Pour over the fruit. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours to allow the fruits to become infused with the juice combination. Stir occasionally to insure uniform marination.

Using a slotted spoon, divide between two dessert dishes or sherbet glasses.

Serve chilled.

Yields 2 individual servings

Notes: *Sliced strawberries, dipped in sugar, dry quickly in an inexpensive dehydrator. Store in an air tight container or plastic bag for a special treat or a special garnish.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.2 g.; FAT = 2.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 25.2 g.; CALORIES = 113; CALORIES FROM FAT = 22%

CUSTARD DESSERT WITH KIWIFRUIT

TPT - 1 hour and 16 minutes;
1 hour = custard sauce cooling period

You may be wondering why I suggest serving kiwifruit with a dairy custard since kiwifruit contain actindain, commonly used as a meat tenderizer. The rule with kiwifruit is no milk or other dairy but a dairy-based sauce can be used as the final garnish. This lovely dessert is really quite simple made quite special by a dramatic presentation. If you do not have crème brulee ramekins, search them out; you'll find a dozen uses for them.



VANILLA CUSTARD SAUCE:

- 1/4 cup light cream or half and half**
- 1/4 cup *fat-free* pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 1 egg)**
- 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**



1/3 cup heavy whipping cream

1 tablespoon Prickly Pear cactus syrup

3 ripe golden kiwifruit—peeled and sliced

In a non-stick saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine cream, pasteurized eggs, and 2 tablespoons sugar. Using a wire whisk, combine well. Cook, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens.

Add 1 teaspoonful vanilla extract. Blend well. Turn into a small dish and refrigerate for 1 hour.

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

Fold chilled custard, whipped cream, and cactus syrup together.

When ready to serve, assemble by dividing the kiwifruit slices between **two 5-inch *crème brulee* ramekins**. Spoon custard-cream mixture over each serving.

Serve at once.

Yields 2 individual servings

Note: This recipe can be doubled to create a very dramatic party dessert by using a large baked vanilla meringue as a base. At the very last minute, arrange kiwi on top of the meringue and spoon the custard-cream mixture over.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 5.9 g.; FAT = 16.3 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 37.2 g.;
CALORIES = 301; CALORIES FROM FAT = 49%



GRAPE AND PEAR SALAD WITH BLUE CHEESE

TPT - 11 minutes

Generally eaten-out-of-hand in our house or served with cheese, seedless grapes can be added to fruit compotes and used to make a simple salad like this that challenges the taste buds with every forkful. I love the contrast of crunch and sweet . . . and then that blue cheese . . . I always spring for a Danish import.

1 slice vegetarian bacon—chopped

2 large red lettuce leaves—well-rinsed and dried

1 ripe pear—peeled, cored, and halved— or 2 juice-packed canned pear halves, if preferred

16 seedless, organic green grapes

1 1/2 ounces blue cheese—cut into 2 large but thin slices

6 toasted walnut halves



In a small skillet, set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, fry bacon until crisp and lightly browned. Remove from heat and allow to cool until required.

Place a lettuce leaf on each of two dessert plates. Arrange a pear half on top of lettuce. Scatter eight seedless grapes on each plate. Nestle a slice of cheese next to the pear half. Add three *toasted* walnut halves to each plate. Garnish each with fried bacon.

Serve as a first course or as a salad.

Yields 2 individual servings

Notes: This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 7.1 g.; FAT = 8.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 16.1 g.;
CALORIES = 176; CALORIES FROM FAT = 44%

GREEN AND WHITE FRESH FRUIT COMPOTE

TPT - 1 hour and 6 minutes;

1 hour = maceration and flavor development period

The taste and the fresh, bright overall color of this fruit presentation, is refreshing beyond words. We find that we and ours always have room for this compote after a heavy meal. It is like an exclamation point at the end of a meal where dark colors have predominated. A splash of asti spumanti or a mascato wine can make this a very suitable dessert for a special dinner or a dinner with friends.

1 can (20 ounces) canned lychees—well-drained

1 cup ripe honeydew melon balls

1/2 cup organic seedless green grapes—well-rinsed*

1 green kiwifruit—peeled and sliced into half-moon slices

1 small, firm, ripe pear—diced (*Comice or Bosc pears are our choices*)

2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Fresh mint leaves, for garnish



In a large plastic container with tightly fitting lid, combine melon balls, *lychees*, honeydew melon balls, green grapes, sliced green kiwifruit, diced pears, and lemon juice. Turn gently to coat fruit pieces with liquid.

Refrigerate for at least 1 hour to allow for flavor development.

Serve into sherbet glasses or wine glasses. Garnish with mint leaves.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *If you are unable to buy organic seedless grapes, omit grapes since grapes are usually sprayed with sulfite-bases preservatives.

Sliced, ripe Green Gage plums are an interesting addition, if available.

This recipe is easily doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.9 g.; FAT = 0.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 16.1 g.;
CALORIES = 67; CALORIES FROM FAT = 3%

ISRAELI BREAKFAST SALAD

TPT – 4 hours and 11 minutes;
4 hours = yogurt draining period

When I was a senior in high school, a girl in my homeroom announced that she would not be graduating with us, that she was moving with her family to a kibbutz in the nine-year-old nation of Israel. I have never forgotten Lee's name and I have often thought of the commitment her family made and the hardships they must have endured. Her adventure was so compelling that I subsequently consumed every article I could find on kibbutz living. This breakfast salad, served with a bowl of thick yogurt, was popular in the early years of settlement. The salty feta cheese, which can be modified to taste, provided protein and helped to prevent dehydration in the hot, dry climate. I think of Lee whenever I serve it and wonder how life has been for her.

We serve this as a main-course salad, sometimes even for breakfast. Instead of just serving main course salads on large dinner plates, I acquired some wooden plates/chargers which sit attractively on the large dinner plates. Salads, when presented this way don't leave the question "What else are you serving?" hanging in the air.

1/2 cup plain yogurt

**about 6 ounces plum tomatoes—halved, seeded,
and chopped**

3/4 cup seeded and chopped watermelon

1/4 cup small red bell pepper squares

1/4 cup small cucumber cubes

2 tablespoons very *thinly* sliced radishes

**1 scallion—well-washed and slivered—both *white*
and *green* portions**

1 tablespoon *finely* slivered fresh mint leaves

1 teaspoon *finely* chopped fresh oregano leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons *extra virgin* olive oil

2 ounces *feta* cheese—broken into large chunks*

Set two automatic drip coffeemaker filters into a sieve over a medium-sized bowl or a yogurt filter over a 2-cup measuring cup. Pour the yogurt into the filters and set in the refrigerator. Allow to drain for about 4 hours, or until of the consistency appropriate for your use. Turn prepared yogurt *crème* into a bowl and cover bowl with plastic wrap until required. Refrigerate for not more than 3 days.

In a large salad bowl or onto a noodle platter, combine chopped tomatoes and watermelon, red pepper squares and cucumber cubes, very *thinly* sliced radishes, slivered scallion, *finely* slivered fresh mint leaves, *finely* chopped fresh oregano leaves, and oil. Toss *gently, but thoroughly*.

When ready to serve, top with chunks of *feta* cheese. Accompany with a bowl of yogurt *crème*.



Yields 2 hearty servings

Notes: *Do not buy the crumbled and seasoned *feta* cheese. Choose the large chunks packaged in brine. If too salty for your taste, soak the *feta* cheese, in cold water in the refrigerator for several days, changing the water daily.

This recipe can be halved, if required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 14.0 g.; FAT = 21.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.8 g.;
CALORIES = 319; CALORIES FROM FAT = 59%

*Next month we'll spend some time with the menu possibilities
of another berry, the pomegranate. Please drop by,*

Judy

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

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