

August 2022

SIMPLE, EXCITING WAYS WITH FRUITS

Avocado and Bean Salad with Berries

Blackberries with Brown Sugar

Cranberry and Cream Dressing

Grilled Apples with Cheese and Honey

Vegetarian Pork with Fennel – Pear Sauce

The fertilized ovaries of plants develop into fruits. Many of these fruits are regarded by non-botanical scientists, and even botanical scientists who cook, as vegetables. Peas-in-the-pod, tomatoes, summer squashes, winter squashes, and eggplants all contain the seeds of the next generation. Let's drop the lab coats and explore the sweeter side of the fruit story generally foraged by man and beast and insect and bird as treats for the taste buds. Surely we'd rather have a cookie than a cracker although both carbohydrate sources are ultimately converted to sugar.

It was exciting to see the research that uncovered the remains of a cache of figs, olives, plums, and pears, identified by paleobotanists at a Paleolithic site, Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, in Northern Israel, and to know that they could be 780,000 years old. In 2011 the teeth of a 40,000-year-old Neanderthal revealed bits of a date eaten just before he died. Fruits have been and are instinctively craved by primates, including humans. Whether we were first attracted by the bright colors of many fruits or by the sweet flesh, earliest *homo sapiens* gathered fruit to include in their diets. As the centuries have passed, we have learned that this attraction was very much to our benefit. The benefit, therefore, was mutual. Mammals were nourished and the seeds of the plant were successfully disseminated. Analysis of every fruit in your produce department can generate a long list of nutritional contributions. To delineate them would certainly overwhelm this limited space. Every week food scientists learn more and more that supports our attraction to fruits. Every week cooks find new ways to use the fruits they forage, now in markets. Below are a few ideas you may not have considered.

Summer's plenty never leaves us searching for ideas; every summer fruit captures the sunshine of its growing season but winter can be a different story. When you think a fruit salad might be appropriate but it's the middle of the winter, what is your plan? In the winter, during the war years, my mother resorted to canned fruit including that bizarre mixture known as fruit cocktail, the one with the deadly maraschino cherries. We add our frozen local blueberries to beets to make our "Beet and Blueberry Salad with Walnuts and Feta" [see recipe archives, March 2020]; we use our canned cherries to make "The Really Red Winter Salad" [see recipe archives, February 2016], but fresh fruits can be a challenge in the winter. We enjoy orange slices with onions and olive oil in the Sicilian manner and, of course, a "Waldorf Salad" is always well-received. Pears, mangoes, pineapple, and avocados offer opportunities. The "Cranberry and Cream Dressing" I have included here is a wonderful tool to turn winter's pears, bananas, or apples into the fruit salad you might be looking for, a fruit salad that celebrates the season rather than apologizing. During the winter of this Covid-19 pandemic, I found myself becoming pretty creative with canned and frozen fruit; I never had to resort to canned fruit cocktail.

AVOCADO AND BEAN SALAD WITH BERRIES

TPT - 20 minutes

A vegan salad that provides the important antioxidants of fruits and the leguminous protein of beans too is a treasure in my salad files and a full-fledged joy when summer's berries and greens arrive in my market. When the freshly harvested lima beans appear, I again seek out this recipe.



1 quart boiling water
1/4 cup fresh or frozen baby lima beans

LIME MAYONNAISE DRESSING:

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
1/2 teaspoon grated organic lime zest
1/2 teaspoon grated organic orange zest
1 tablespoon calorie-reduced or light mayonnaise with olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon honey
1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard with wine

2 cups spicy mesclún – well-rinsed and well-dried
1/2 cup fresh strawberry quarters—well-rinsed and dried
1/2 cup fresh blackberries or raspberries—well-rinsed and dried
1 avocado—peeled, pitted, and chopped



Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, cook lima beans in *boiling* water for about 5-6 minutes. Drain. Plunge into cold water until required.

In a small dish, combine lime juice, lime and orange zest, mayonnaise, oil, honey, and mustard. Using a small whisk or fork, beat until smooth. Set aside until required.

On a small platter, arrange *mesclún*. Scatter strawberries, blackberries, and chopped avocado over.

Drain lima beans well. Scatter over fruits.

Drizzle prepared dressing over. Grind black pepper over.

Serve at once, tossing just before plating.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: Fried or grilled bread is a good accompaniment to this salad. The amino acids in the grain help to complement the leguminous protein contribution in the salad.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 3.2 g.; FAT = 11.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 11.6 g.;
CALORIES = 170; CALORIES FROM FAT = 61%

BLACKBERRIES WITH BROWN SUGAR

TPT - 4 hours and 2 minutes;
2 hours = room temperature fruit maceration period;
2 hours = refrigerated fruit maceration period

The great big, freshly-picked blackberries that appear in our farmers' market in August are so plump and so sweet that I can barely get home without diving into a quart. I do wait, however, because this is my favorite "first-blackberries-of-the-season" recipe. It is a simple celebration of this beautiful berry and well-worth the four-hour wait. I serve them with demitasse spoons so that one berry fills the whole bowl of the spoon.

1 cup blackberries—well-washed and well-drained
1 1/2 tablespoons light brown sugar
Pinch ground allspice

In a bowl, place well-washed blackberries. Sprinkle brown sugar and ground allspice over. Stir *very gently* to coat fruit with sugar. Cover and set at room temperature for two hours.

Stir gently, cover again, and refrigerate for two more hours or until ready to serve.

Divide among four dessert dishes, parfait glasses, or Irish coffee mugs.

Yields 2 individual servings

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

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.8 g.; FAT = 0.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.9 g.;
CALORIES = 96; CALORIES FROM FAT = 5%



CRANBERRY AND CREAM DRESSING

TPT - 33 minutes;
20 minutes = melted sauce and jelly cooling period

Using a dressing, like this cranberry and cream dressing, you can turn a benign banana, a pear, or an apple into quite an enjoyable winter salad. During the holidays, this dressing inevitably makes an appearance on our table.

2 tablespoons jellied cranberry sauce
1 tablespoon red currant jelly



2 ounces cream cheese or mascarpone cheese
—softened to room temperature
2 tablespoons plain yogurt—do not use thickened
Greek yogurt
2 teaspoons freshly squeezed orange juice

In a saucepan set over *LOW* heat, combine *jellied* cranberry sauce and currant jelly. Heat until both melt. Remove from heat and allow to cool for about 20 minutes.

In a mixing bowl, combine softened cream cheese, yogurt, and orange juice. Using a wire whisk, beat ingredients until smooth.

Add melted and cooled cranberry–currant mixture. Continue beating until again smooth.* Turn into a small serving bowl.

Serve at room temperature.

Yields about 9 tablespoonfuls

Notes: *If necessary to consistency, add a teaspoonful or two of light cream or half and half. Or, if you have whey in your refrigerator or freezer, you can use that to thin dressing and add a helping of protein at the same time.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/9 SERVING (i. e., per tablespoonful) –
PROTEIN = 0.7 g.; FAT = 2.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 2.9 g.;
CALORIES = 49; CALORIES FROM FAT = 51%

GRILLED APPLES WITH CHEESE AND HONEY

TPT - 12 minutes

When the night temperatures require a quilt and the apples are the first thing you smell when you enter the farmers' market, then it is time for me to pull out all my favorite apple recipes and experiment with a couple of new ones. Apples, which are said to have originated in Central Asia near what is today Kazakhstan, are a member of the Roseace family, a diverse family that includes the rose and salad burnet. Apples deserve more respect than to be thought of as the fruit that is always there in the root cellar or in the fruit drawer of the refrigerator each winter. Beautiful apples and a chunk of cheddar cheese can continue to end meals as they have always done but this recipe celebrates the pairing a bit more elegantly.

2 teaspoons almond oil

1 teaspoon confectioners' sugar

**1 large Golden Delicious apple—peeled, sliced into
1/2 thick rounds, and carefully cored**

**1/2 ounce extra sharp Cheddar cheese—shaved with
a vegetable peeler into thin strips and brought to
room temperature**

3 tablespoons chopped pecans—toasted

**4 teaspoons orange blossom or wildflower honey,
as preferred**

Preheat **grill pan** over *MEDIUM* heat. Place two dessert plates on a warming tray set at *LOW*.

In a shallow bowl combine almond oil and confectioners' sugar. Stir to combine.

Coat both sides of apple slices with the oil–sugar mixture. Grill until marked—about 3 minutes. Turn and grill the other side. Transfer the grilled apple slices to the warmed dessert plates, dividing them between the two dishes.



Sprinkle the shaved Cheddar cheese over the warm apple slices. Sprinkle a tablespoonful of *toasted* pecan pieces over each serving. Drizzle 2 teaspoons of honey over each serving. *Allow to remain on the warming tray until ready to serve.*

Serve warm. Provide a fruit knife and fork.

Yields 2 individual servings

Note: This recipe can be doubled or tripled, as required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 3.4 g.; FAT = 14.7 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 29.7 g.;
CALORIES = 245; CALORIES FROM FAT = 54%

VEGETARIAN “PORK” WITH FENNEL – PEAR SAUCE

TPT - 15 minutes

The combination of olive oil, used here to sauté the “porkless pork”; butter to sauté fennel and onions; and the sweet finish of pear is phenomenal.

1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
8 ounces frozen “porkless pork”*

1 tablespoon butter
1/2 cup slivered fennel
1/2 cup slivered onion

6 tablespoons pear nectar

In a small, non-stick-coated skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, heat oil. Add “porkless bites” and gently sauté, turning as pieces brown.

At the same time, in a second skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add slivered fennel and onion. Sauté until vegetables are crisp-tender. *Reduce heat to LOW.*

Add pear nectar. Allow to simmer, stirring frequently, until nectar thickens slightly. Turn sautéed “porkless bites” into heated serving bowl. Spoon sautéed fennel and onion, with syrup in bottom of skillet, over “pork.”

Serve at once.

Yields 2 servings

Notes: *This frozen product comes with a package of sauce. Tuck the sauce package into your freezer for another use.

When required, this recipe can be doubled.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 14.5 g.; FAT = 12.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 40.4 g.;
CALORIES = 295; CALORIES FROM FAT = 39%



*The word apple may bring an image to mind of just one variety of apple,
the one you generally buy.*

*To me, having grown up in apple country along Lake Ontario,
the word apple is a far more complex word.*

*I see the orchards of my youth, I smell the aroma of the fruit, I remember bushels and
bushels of red, yellow, and green apples in September and October,
and I remember bushels and bushels of apples wintering over in the root cellar.*

I still explore new ways to eat this wonderful fruit. Do drop by next month,

Judy

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

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