



*Guide To*

**ORGANIC COOKING**

# GUIDE TO ORGANIC COOKING



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## Introduction

It's not everyday that a person gets the chance to write a book and when my best friend suggested that I do so, I naturally enough jumped at the chance. I've been a closet-writer for most of my life anyway and writing comes to me as naturally as breathing.



This is why the thought of writing about organic foods and organic cooking in particular was like a dream come true. Combine my two passions, writing and cooking together? What could be better?

And although for some that might have been the beginning of their own personal nightmare, I took it as a challenge to hone both my skills of writing and cooking.

So although you won't find instructions and recipes on how to write, you will (hopefully) find enough fascinating morsels on the subject of cooking, organic style.

In that pursuit then, the first question you might naturally enough want to know is, what exactly is the difference between normal foods and organic foods?

This is a valid question and not one that many people will know the answer to, not because of anything else, but because there really is such little information on the subject.

What there is fairly comprehensive, but I've found that even these only leave me wanting to know more. Which is why, I've started this book with the next section, "What are "Organic Foods"?" Not because I'll be more comprehensive than other sources, but because I believe it helps to know what you're getting into.

After that, I will then take you through some of the many reasons why you might want to go organic. (I can just hear my family and friends laughing at that statement! The fact of the matter is that I've been trying to get everyone to go organic ever since I discovered organic foods for myself.)

After that we can go through a tour of some of the differences found in organic foods vs. normal conventionally grown and produced foods.

And then after that, we'll get to the crux of the matter: cooking organic foods in a manner designed to get the best out of them, and make your mouth water at the tempting thought!

These will be in the "Organic Recipes" section if you find the thought tempting enough to want to skip ahead. And since this book is mainly about organic cooking, I have included as many recipes as I could possibly cram in without overwhelming you.

Let me tell you right now though, that all of the dishes I've given here are simply amazing and must be tried at least once. There's also the added incentive that most of the recipes are also easy to prepare.

And after the recipes section (which spans many pages!), we can then take a look at how you might be able to grow your very own small patch of organic herbs and vegetables.

## What are “Organic Foods”?



Organic foods, to put it shortly and succinctly, are foods grown in a natural manner avoiding such things as pesticides and chemical based fertilizers as well as genetically modified food strains.

This is not the end-all of organic foods however, there is more to organic foods than meets the eye. In fact there's more to organic foods than can normally be seen with the naked eye as well.

Organic foods are really classed as such not for their sheen, luster, taste or any other denominating factor, but for how it is produced. It is in the production methods that the secret for organic food lies, and why they can be termed “Organic food” only if they meet certain requirements.

To all intents and purposes organic foods are the same as conventionally grown foods. The difference as I said, lies not in the way the end resultant food looks, but in the manner in which they are grown, produced, or cultivated, and this includes everything from dairy products to meats and fish to vegetables.

I can just hear you asking, (or that might be own naturally skeptical mind), but how do you know for certain that what you get at the supermarkets are organic products. After all, if they look like, and to some taste the same as normal foods, how can you tell the difference?

You can't. You have to take it on trust that when you're buying a pound of organically grown apples and carrots for a ridiculously high price, that you're getting the real thing and not conventionally grown apples and carrots for a trumped up price.

Then again, that's the beauty of having government and private watchdogs and things around. When these people do their job properly, you can be assured that what you're getting is the real McCoy.

What you do need to look out for is various labeling differences which will tell you how much of organic foods are really contained within the product, if it is a prepackaged food. I go into more detail on this topic in the section, “How to tell the difference”.

But what are organic foods? If I haven’t missed my guess, you might still be slightly up in the air over that one. The clarification, I felt, would be better given in telling you what the differences in organic and conventionally grown foods are.

## The difference

This is where I will try and explain to you in as clear and concise a manner as possible exactly what the differences are between conventional farming methods, and organic farming methods.

I will also go through a few of the pros and cons of each of these methods, not as I see them, but as both sides view the situation. These are not my own personal views but I felt that to give a truly “bigger picture” these must also be presented.

Since the debate over organic or non-organic is a hotly raging one, it seems to me that if I were to list all of the reasons for and against each side, I would still be here come doomsday, so I have limited myself to giving you only a minimal amount of facts.

So far as I know, these are correct, but then again, I never claimed to be anything other than a layperson where organic foods are concerned, so I might not have presented them exactly as a rabid for-or-against of organic foods might have. But then again, my perception won’t be their perception of what things are.

Personally speaking, now that I have “found” organic foods, there’s really nothing better or healthier, both for me and for the planet.

## Conventional Farming Methods

For no better reason than this was the first thought that popped into my head, I have placed the section on conventional farming first. After you read through both of the sections you might then feel better able to make a decision on which method you prefer better.



But since I have only very lightly touched upon these subjects, you might be better off going through more comprehensive material to be better able to make an informed decision.

If on the other hand you're already an organic food convert, reading through these sections will no doubt only strengthen your beliefs.

Whatever the case you can be assured that this is a debate that will live a long life and not readily be solved one way or the other to anyone's full satisfaction.

Conventional farming methods make full use of the twentieth century discoveries of such things as inorganic pesticides and fertilizers.

Conventional farming as we know it, only took off after the Second World War, when war-ravaged countries needed fool-proof methods with which to rebuild their economies, and their farms and food stocks. Modern day conventional farming methods provided the means for this.

Even in this day and age, probably more so in this day and age, conventional farming methods are thought to be the best way to grow the necessary crops to feed the masses.

This is partly why many farmers using these methods, protest against the use of organic farming methods, because there is doubt as to whether organic farming methods can supply the necessary quantities of foods.

At any rate, conventional farming methods encompass,

- The usage of artificial fertilizers
- The use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides
- Inclusion of genetically modified seed and plant stock
- Large scale industrial farming
- Lack of crop rotation. Most of the time only one product will be grown to the exclusion of anything else. This can lead to a depletion in the natural balance of the soil.

These very methods used in conventional farming are the reasons why people preferring to go organic deplore the conventional methods. They believe that the abundant use of such things as artificial fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides contribute to a large scale destruction and erosion of the soil.

The use of genetically modified seeds and plat stock is also a major bone of contention, for the simple reason that it introduces vagaries into the natural order of things which have as yet not been shown to be conclusively safe to all concerned.

Added to all of this is the fact that with large scale industrial farming, soil erosion and ruin, becomes a very real factor, and something that no amount of synthetic chemicals will be able to fix.

Not to mention that with large scale farming operations using such large amounts of pesticides and other harmful chemicals, some of these chemicals seep through the soil and go on to pollute the water table.

These are but a few of the reasons why conventional farming methods are considered to be not good by many people.

The main argument for conventional farming methods as far as I can see however, hinges on the fact that conventional farming methods can produce the much needed large crops.

### Organic Farming Methods

Although organic farming in its present form didn't start until sometime in the last century, it has been around for as long as there was farming going around, which means that it has more or less been around since the beginnings of man's evolution.

It is only of very late that what we term as "conventional" methods of farming have dominated the scene.

It therefore seems strange that something which hasn't been around long enough to even be termed the blink of an eye in evolutionary terms, can be called conventional, while the more established farming methods are thought of as newfound and controversial by many people.

The truth as ever, is stranger than fiction and this is what we're left with to quibble about in this section.

Since we have already gone through what the conventional farming methods entail, it is now the time to define what can be meant by organic farming.

To be very simple, I believe that the most concise method of saying this, is to say that organic farming is the exact antithesis of conventional farming.

As mentioned earlier in the book, organic farming shuns the usage of such things as chemical and synthetic fertilizers and pesticides; it stays away from genetically modified plant stocks; and most of all, it promotes the usage of a natural system of farming that is non-harmful to the environment.

Many proponents of the conventional farming system scoff at organic farming for the simple reason that it goes against everything that we have been raised and educated to believe.

Not only that, one of the main arguments against organic farming is that the production of foods is not enough to meet the growing worldwide demand for foods.

The argument lies in the fact that conventional farming methods are able to produce a vastly larger quantity of foods, whereas none of the methods utilizing organic farming will be able to do so.

There is also a belief among this faction that if organic farming is taken on a large scale, it too will yield the same deadly results on the earth as conventional farming does now.

To recap and put it in an easier to read format, organic farming,

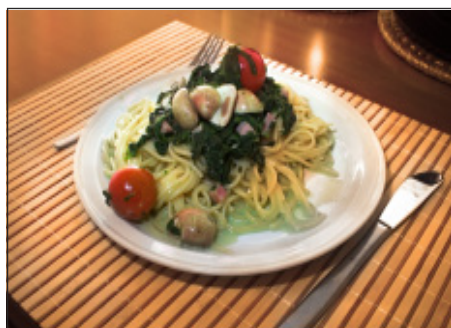
- Espouses the usage of natural fertilizers such as manure and compost, and shuns the usage of chemical fertilizers
- Uses only natural pesticides, and herbicides that can be found in nature, and shuns the usage of synthetic pesticides and herbicides
- Uses only non-genetically modified plant and seed stock

- Uses natural methods of farming such as crop rotation which will enhance the richness of the soil
- Also welcomes what are termed as beneficial organisms which are a natural part of nature and healthy soil
- If livestock is raised on the farm, the livestock is fed on a diet of organic foodstuffs
- In addition they are not injected or otherwise given growth hormones and antibiotics

To my eyes at least, organic farming takes us back to our grass roots and helps to bring our lives back into a natural balance that is not necessarily controlled by unhealthy processed foods and fast foods. The choice as ever is yours to make.

## Why Go Organic?

Why go organic? That's a really good question and something which I, being the avid organic fanatic, should say is self evident, but I won't. Not because it isn't self evident, but because it's all relative.



It really depends on what your definitions of healthy and natural are. For instance, I had a chemistry professor once who said that he didn't see what all the fuss was about, because when it came down to bare tacks, everything was a chemical component in it's own way.

Whether you feed plants and vegetables fertilizer from a natural source, or whether you feed it from a commercially available fertilizer, his theory was that in the end, the plant can't tell the difference.

That's one way to look at things, but I personally felt that to be too simplistic and unnecessarily naïve. Some people might think the same of me, but I still stand by my position, just as my professor stood by his.

It is my firm belief that going organic is the only way to rectify the mess that we have made of our planet, our ecosystem, and our bodies. True, if we do it on a large scale the same detrimental effects of conventional farming would still be present in organic farming in a different way.

But then again, there's a reason why there's an old adage, "Too much of a good thing is bad for you." Organic farming is a good thing, but do it on a large scale and it will definitely be bad for you, the same as conventional farming methods.

So, really, it all just depends on how you go about the whole thing, and which part of reality you can see. Which brings us back full circle to why you might want to go organic to begin with.

Well, if saving the planet on a vegetable by vegetable basis doesn't suit you, you might prefer to go organic for the benefits that you personally can reap.



Good health, a nutritious lifestyle, and the benefit of not having third-hand poisons passed down into our bodies is one of the very best of reasons I would have thought.

And really that's what it boils down to in the end, when you strip away all the veneer and get to the bare bones of the fact, when you wade through all the reports saying "Yes!" to going organic, and when you sit through a very boring one-sided discourse on why organic is good for you, that's what it all comes down to.

But more tellingly, there are more convincing arguments *against* going organic, and these have to do more with our lifestyles and mindsets than anything else.

The first of these is the fact that organic foods are costlier than normal conventional produced foods. This is a great inhibitor for many people, even if they did want to go organic.

The second thing is pure unadulterated lethargy, or in other words, laziness. We're so used to the cushy lifestyle we lead that to step out of it, and into a world where we actually have to go out of way to get "good" food, is just unthinkable.

This is also why so many people who start out with good intentions, fall flat on their faces and give up after about a month or two. The sheer lack of organic foods (although that is changing now to some extent), is a great motivator for us to forget about it. We've lost our foraging instincts so we prefer to take what's available, even if it's not good for us.

- So why would you go organic, after all of that?
- Because it's healthy
- It's nutritious
- In some cases it most definitely tastes better
- There are no added third-hand poisons in the food
- You know that whatever you're eating has been produced in a way that's good for the planet
- And because when all is said and done, you definitely are what you eat

## How to Go Organic

Unlike the question, “Why go organic?”, the question on how to go organic is simply much easier to answer, and can be more definite. And if you’re reading this book on organic cooking, then you’ve already taken the first step in the direction of how to go organic, because what you first want to do is to understand what you’re doing.



To do that you need to understand what organic foods are, and why you would want to go organic. Many people of course just jump right in and start buying organic foods, and this is a great way to start, but I feel that if you have at least a passing knowledge about what you’re getting into, you will be better off.

So to that extent, whether you’ve already started down the path of going organic, or whether you’re still trying to figure it all out, reading this book and whatever other material you can get your hands on, to understand about organic foods is the best way to go.

The next thing you want to do is *not* to examine your reasons for going organic, (we’re not here to soul search), but more importantly find where you can get your organic foods from.

These days of course, it’s not as difficult as it used to be when the whole organic thing started. You can find organic foods in just about every large grocer’s.

Another good place to get organic foods from is from the source itself. The farmer’s who grow organic produce will be a better source for you to get your organic produce from than the supermarkets.

Most places will have some type of farmer’s market somewhere around, and if you haven’t already been frequenting it, you should try and see where there is one near you. Remember though, not all farmers grow organic produce, so you will first have to find out if this is the case.

After you find your way around the various hotspots where you can buy organic produce, the next thing that you want to do is to actually go and get some organic food.

There's no telling whether you will like it or the price unless you first take the plunge and buy something organic. From that point onwards it's then just a matter of time in deciding whether going organic is for you, and whether you want to keep it up.

When you decide that you want to keep up with it, you will then be able to integrate bits and pieces of organic foods into your lifestyle, with your ultimate goal being to integrate it so seamlessly into your life that you will be completely organic in a very short time.

Of course, there's no sanely possible way to be completely organic because of the importance that processed foods and fast foods play in our normal lives, but you can become at least mostly organic in your eating habits if you keep at it.

The next question which you will want to ask, and which I have answered in the next section, is how can you tell the difference between normal foods and organic foods, and what do the various labels and seals signify.

## How to tell the difference

Since as I mentioned earlier on there's really no way to tell the difference between organic food and non-organic food we are forced to rely on the people selling us the food to be truthful.

Luckily for us however, there is hope in the form of labeling which tells us which foods are organic and which foods aren't. In the USA, the USDA requires farms which are organic to follow a strict set of guidelines to be certified as organic.

Over and above this legislation, there are private organic farmers associations which have their own brand of certification as well. And the common factor among all of these is the fact that besides the certification, they also have seals with which they stamp foods and food products.

So if you don't feel too comfortable about going over to your nearest farmers market to get your organic produce, you can always check out the labels in your grocery store.

If any of the foods deemed organic in the store carry one of the many organic certified seals and labels you can be assured that that it has been organically produced.

The one thing that you might want to look out for however, is exactly what the labels say. As ever, although there is certification and labeling stating that the food you buy is organic, there are different levels of organic.

This is the case not for the fruits and the vegetables which you buy fresh from the store, but the case for the many processed and pre-packaged organic foods which tend to have more than one ingredient.

So although you might believe product you're getting is fully 100% organic guaranteed, you might want to check again on what the label says to get the real story.

If you take packaged organic foods, the labeling would consist of not only the seal stating that it is made from organic produce but also a few key words which will tell you exactly how much organic foods are in the package, if only you know how to understand what they are telling you.

For instance labeling for organic foods could go something along the lines of,

- 100% Organic – this food definitely has only 100% of organic foods
- Organic – this food contains over 95% of organic products.
- Made with organic products – this product contains at least a minimum of 70% of organic products (no seal is allowed on these types of food products)
- And when you go below the 70% mark of included-organic products for any packaged foods, you definitely not find either labeling or a seal stating that the food you're buying is organic.

However, if there are organic products contained within this food product, it may be listed in the ingredients section as such, or even listed separately on a side paneling.

To be completely safe in the knowledge that what you're buying is the genuine article you need to look for not only the seal which states the product to be organic, but also the labeling which will tell you exactly how much of the food is actually organic.

As you can see even with products that are certified to be organic there are many pitfalls that you can fall into, but as long as you keep sharp and know what you're buying, then you should be alright.

And another thing that you will want to look out for is other types of labeling which might lead you to believe that what you're buying is organically grown food.

Most of these labels are there not to tell you that what you're getting is organic, but that what you're getting is "natural" or a "health food" or something along those lines.

Remember, it doesn't have to be organically produced to be termed natural or healthy or anything else along those lines.

"Organic" is more a state of how the food was produced than whether or not it is completely "natural" or "healthy" or not.

These foods can contain organic foods, but unless they have more than 70% of organic foods contained within the end product, they cannot lay claim to being organic.

Another thing that you might want to be aware of is that not all products within the category of 100% Organic, or Organic (the two levels of organic food able to use the organic certified USDA seal), are required by law to have the USDA seal on their food products. It is entirely voluntary.

So you might not want to go by seal certification alone to determine whether the 100% Organic certified food you have in your hand really contains 100% Organically produced foods. Check the rest of the packaging as well for more information regards the true state of being.



Although there are many independent groups who define what organic is to them, the standards they set have to meet or exceed those of the standards set by the National Organic Program which is run by the USDA.

They are the ones who set the legal standard for anything organic, and they are the ones who give the organic seal and certification to products and farmers who meet their guidelines on what organic foods are.

This means that although there might be independent organic organizations with their own seals and certifications, the USDA seal and certification is the ultimate authority of being truly organic in the United States.

In Canada, although there is no legal definition as yet, certification can be obtained in Quebec from the Quebec Accreditation Board. In Australia certification of organic foods is handled by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service, and in Japan the Japanese Agricultural Standard is the one that you want to go to.

In the European Union although there are a few different organizations within the different European Union countries which handles the certification of organic foods, they are all tied together by the EU legislation which was passed in 1992 regarding this.

And these are only a few of the bodies around the world which are certifying organic foods as being, well, organic. I find it to be very heartening to see how far the production of organic food has spread and how many people around the world are going organic.

## Organic Food Recipes

This is one section in which I feel great pride, because when I first decided to write this book, I was worried that I wouldn't have enough recipes to tempt you to taste the joys of going organic.



As maybe I might have mentioned I'm a cooking nut, and I love nothing better than to take my time and cook my meals to perfection. So I found that over the years I have accumulated a number (of handwritten books!) of the recipes that I enjoyed the most.

These recipes are ones which I have scraped and scrounged from various places and which various friends and relatives have given me.

And it seems that I had been cooking my organic meat and vegetables in much the same way I was cooking earlier with only a few twists and turns here and there to accommodate the organic side of things, without even thinking about it, which is probably why the task of staying organic wasn't so onerous for me.

This meant that I had a number of favorite recipes that I could impart to you, but most of all, this meant that I could help you to find your way to going organic.

If the only major difference in being organic and staying organic was in the cooking and not in the price or anything else for that matter, then it was a relatively simple task I had on my hands of convincing you that organic was good.

The reason for this being, the fact that I knew that once you had tasted how great organic foods were, in normal day to day cooking as compared to the taste of our normal conventionally produced foods, you would be hooked.

And why was this? Because with only a very few, slight adjustments on your part, you could cook organic and get the taste, as well as the nutrition that you need without losing out on the ease of cooking which you have learnt through the years.

As you go through the recipes section you will notice that there are many recipes in to be found. These I have placed in a rough kind of organization which I hope you will find helpful.

Whichever one you decide to try out though, you can be assured that all the dishes taste great, and some of them are even bordering on heavenly! (Like the Seared Tuna, or the Eggplant Burgers, which despite its very off-putting name is delicious).

The main factor when cooking with organic foods though, is not really what dish you cook, but *how* you cook it. If you want to go organic, then that must mean that in some small way at least that you want to eat healthily, so that's what you need to look at when cooking organic foods as well.

You want to retain the natural health properties of organic foods while at the same being able to get the same great taste of the same great recipes you've been making for years.

This means that you don't really want to use low fat substitutes of things, and make things watered down if the taste is going to suffer for it. But it also doesn't mean that you go to the opposite end of the spectrum and use every single available bad food-habit product around either.

It's no use dousing the entire dish you're cooking in a ton of oil when only a smidgen would have done, and the same applies for overcooking the food and leaching the goodness right out of it. If you're going to do that you might as well go back to non-organic, and processed foods, it certainly costs less!

So although the recipes which I have mentioned might bear a large resemblance to your normal everyday recipes, they have two major differences which sets them apart.

These are the fact that to begin with the nutrition in the foods are not overwhelmed by harmful chemical pollutants, and also that these recipes call for cooking things in a healthy manner, not covering it in lard and fat drippings.

Before we go any further though, I would just like to mention here that although I don't say it throughout the following recipe section in each and every recipe, all of the ingredients which I have give are of the organic variety!

It shouldn't have to be said considering this is a book on organic cooking, but there you have it. Just in case you were in doubt about it at all – the ingredients used are all of the organic variety, even the meats and the dairy products etc.

And although I have included recipes with organic meat in here as well, for the most part I've stuck to using organic vegetable dishes as I believe this to be where the real benefit of organic food comes from.

To that end, in the next section, before we go on to the recipe section, I have compiled a small list of some of the ingredients that I have used, which can very easily be confused with the more normal, unhealthy food varieties.

## Breakfast

I've placed quite a few recipes in the breakfast section because although it might not be quite the "in" thing to have a large and hearty breakfast, it is nevertheless one of the most important meals of the day.

There's also the fact that most people just don't have the time to prepare a hearty breakfast – I should know, I'm one of those people. I much prefer to have a lie-in wherever possible.

Some of the recipes I've provided below are therefore good for having in those frenzied rushed mornings when you slept through your alarm clock and barely had time to shower!

And other recipes, which you will notice, have a longer preparation time and are more useful for those days when you have the time to prepare and enjoy a good breakfast.

## Oatmeal

This is one of those staples that not too many people like, having been force-fed it in their younger days, but something that I feel to be completely misunderstood.

A good steaming bowl of freshly made oatmeal (none of the microwaveable sort for me thank you!) is one of the greater pleasures in life.

And the best part is that you can add just about anything to this dish to highlight and sweeten it. I personally prefer to use maple syrup or some brown sugar to complement my porridge. I also use fresh strawberries when they are in season as well.

**Ingredients:** 2 $\frac{1}{4}$  cups water  
1 cup rolled oats  
1 cup milk (of your choice)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup raisins (optional)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  chopped walnuts  
Sugar or other sweetener to taste  
Salt to taste  
Cinnamon to taste

**Preparation:** Boil the water and the salt in a suitable saucepan. Add in the milk and the oats when the water is boiling, stirring continually so the oats don't become lumpy.

Keep stirring until the oats are cooked, about 5 minutes, add the nuts and the raisins, mix well and turn off the heat. Cover the pan and let it sit for about 3-4 minutes.

Serve with your sweetener of choice and more milk if needed.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 hearty servings



## Swiss style Oats

**Ingredients:** 1 cup Oats  
2 cups Water  
1 tbsp chopped dried Apricots (or suitable substitute)  
1 tbsp chopped Almonds  
2-3 tsp Raisins  
2-3 tsp Sunflower seeds (if you like them)  
1-2 chopped Dates  
A sprinkling of dried Cranberries  
A pinch Cinnamon  
Milk if needed

**Preparation:** You will first need to mix all the dry ingredients together before cooking. Whatever you do, don't add the water!

You can then bring the water to a boil in a saucepan before adding the oats mixture. Stir constantly to begin with, turning the heat to Low, then stir only occasionally to take out any clumps which might be forming.

Cook for about 7 minutes until the water has been absorbed and the oats are cooked through. Take off the heat and keep for a further 2 minutes to cool before serving with the milk if needed.

**Preparation Time:** 10-12 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Summer breakfast Risotto

**Ingredients:** 1 cup Risotto Rice  
2 cups Water  
15oz of thick Coconut Milk (the canned variety is alright)  
1 cup freshly cubed Banana  
½ -1 cup of cubed Pineapple (canned is alright here as well)  
½ cup of Pineapple juice (the juice from the can will also do)  
¼ cup Raisins  
¼ cup sliced (or chopped) Almonds

**Preparation:** Place the water and the risotto rice in a medium sized saucepan and bring to a boil. At this point you need to bring the heat down to a medium low and let the rice simmer, keeping the pan uncovered all the while.

When the rice is mainly cooked and the water has been all but absorbed into the rice, add the pineapple juice. Stir and allow to cook until the juice has been absorbed. Then add the coconut milk to the rice.

When the coconut milk has been absorbed, and the rice is still creamy and not dried up, add the remainder of the ingredients.

Cook for a further 2-4 minutes on low heat making sure the rice doesn't dry up. Serve either warm or cold.

**Preparation Time:** 25-30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Basil Frittata

**Ingredients:** 3 large Eggs  
3 tbsp fresh Basil, chopped  
2 tbsp Chicken Broth  
½ Onion, minced  
3 medium sized Garlic cloves, pressed  
1 cup Italian Brown Mushrooms (Crimini), thinly sliced  
½ medium Tomato, diced  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** You will need a 10 inch skillet to make the Basil Frittata. Heat about 1 tbsp of the broth in the skillet and add the onions to it. Sauté the onions in the broth for about 3 minutes.

While the onions are sautéing, whisk the eggs well, adding the chopped basil and salt and pepper.

Then add the garlic and the mushrooms, and continue to sauté for a further 2-3 minutes. Add the remaining broth, the tomatoes, and salt and pepper and leave on the fire for another 1 minute, stirring all the while so as not to burn the ingredients.

Next pour the egg mixture over the sauté and roll the pan to get an even spread of egg. Lower the heat and cover the pan, cooking for about 5 minutes.

When the frittata is firm and the egg is cooked you can then remove from the heat and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Poached Egg Bagel

**Ingredients:** 1 whole wheat Bagel,  
2 large Eggs  
1 large Tomato, sliced  
2 medium sized cloves Garlic, pressed  
Handful of Arugula  
2 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
½ tsp Apple Cider Vinegar  
Salt and Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Take a shallow pan and add water. Make sure there will be enough to cover the eggs when poaching. Add the vinegar to the water and bring to a boil.

Slice the bagel in half and toast while the water is boiling. Then add the pressed garlic to the olive oil and mix in well. Brush this across the sliced side of the bagel which is now toasted.

You can then garnish the bagel with the arugula and the tomatoes.

When the water has boiled, crack/ slide the eggs into the water to poach. Do not add salt to the water as the egg whites will dissolve. Leave in the water only for a few minutes until the egg white has become firm.

Carefully take out the poached egg with a slotted spatula and leave the spatula with the egg, briefly on a paper towel to drain the excess water. Then place on top of your bagel and season with the salt and pepper.

If you're making more than one bagel and you want to keep everything warm, you can preheat your oven to a very low temperature and keep the toasted bagels, sans the garnishing, on a heating rack in the oven.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Chickpea Surprise

**Ingredients:** 1 can cooked Chickpeas  
1 large Onion, rough sliced  
1 clove Garlic, pressed  
¼ tsp Chili Powder  
1 dried Chili (if you like it hot)  
Dash of Mustard seeds  
¼ tsp Turmeric (optional)  
1 heaping tbsp Desiccated Coconut  
Salt and Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Place a sautéing pan on medium heat and about 1 tbsp of the water from the chickpeas. Drain the rest of the water from the can.

Add the onion to this and sauté until a nice golden brown. Then add the garlic, chili powder, turmeric, mustard seeds and dried chili to the onions. Sauté for a further 2-3 minutes.

You need to be careful here as the mustard seeds are liable to shoot out of the pan, so move the ingredients around in the pan.

Next add the can of drained chickpeas and sauté for a further 3-4 minutes. Add the desiccated coconut, cover the pan and leave for about 1 minute on a very low heat, or alternately you can let it cook on the residual heat.

Take off the fire and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 medium sized servings

## Breakfast Tacos

**Ingredients:** 2 large Potatoes, boiled and diced  
1 medium sized Bell Pepper, diced  
1 medium Tomato, diced  
1-2 Green Onions, diced  
1 small Onion, diced  
Freshly chopped Cilantro  
Dash of Lime  
Salt to Taste  
Pinch of Cumin & Chili Powder  
1 tbsp Olive Oil  
Whole Wheat Tortillas

**Preparation:** Once you have your ingredients assembled, chopped and diced that is, you can then heat up the oil in a fairly large skillet. Add the boiled and diced potatoes and cook for a few minutes.

Then add the onion, the green onions and the bell pepper. Brown these for a while, and then add the cumin, chili powder and the salt. Toss this for about a minute and add the tomatoes last.

Cook the whole until the potatoes are browned and cooked (if you didn't boil them beforehand). When the potatoes are done, add a dash of lime and the freshly chopped Cilantro over the potatoes.

You will then need to warm your tortillas and place the potato mixture inside, or on a side to be served individually.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2-3 servings



## Everyday Hash Browns

**Ingredients:** 1 large or 2 medium sized Potatoes  
1-2 tbsp Oil  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Peel and grate the potatoes. If you're making for more than one serving place the potatoes in cold water so that that they don't turn color.

Heat the oil in a medium to large skillet. Add salt to the grated potatoes and lightly mix while the oil is heating.

Next add the grated potatoes to the skillet and fry until golden brown. Leftover spuds are also good to be used as hash browns.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 serving

## Must-Have Cinnamon Rolls

I've named this recipe a "Must-Have" recipe for a reason, but if you don't like baking and doing time consuming things, then this is definitely not the thing you want to do. It takes about 2 hours to go through the whole thing, although admittedly 1 hour is spent mainly in waiting for the dough to rise.

It's a really great recipe however, and if you ever get the baking and dough-making bug, then I would suggest that you try your hand at this even over the bread recipes which I have included in one of the following sections.

What you can be guaranteed is that if you like cinnamon, this is a scrumptious recipe!

**Ingredients:** For the Filling

1 cup Brown Sugar  
2 ¼ tbsp powdered Cinnamon  
1-2 tbsp butter

For the Dough

4 cups All Purpose Flour  
2 Eggs  
1 cup Milk (of your choice), warm  
½ cup granulated Sugar  
⅓ cup melted Butter  
2¼ tsp Active Dry Yeast  
1 tsp Salt

**Preparation:** First you need to make the dough, so take a large mixing bowl and place the yeast, a pinch of sugar and the warmed milk inside. Stir slightly and let it sit for about 5 minutes or until it becomes frothy.

Then add the remainder of the sugar along with half of the flour, the melted butter, the eggs, and the salt.

If you have a mixer with paddle attachments, you can use this to mix the ingredients together. Use the "Low" setting and do this for about 1 minute or so.

The remainder of the flour should also be incorporated into this mixture during his time, and it is best if you do so in two different times.

After you have fully incorporated all the ingredients, take it out of the bowl and knead the dough for about 3 minutes or until it becomes soft and pliable.

You can then place the dough back in your mixing bowl and cover it with cheesecloth or cling film and leave it aside to rise, for about 1 hour.

For the filling, all you need to do is to mix the cinnamon powder and the brown sugar in a bowl together, and you can do this while the dough is rising.

Before you get to the dough again however, you will need to first flour a clean, flat surface in preparation to rolling out the dough. You will also need to preheat the oven to 400°F.

The dough should be rolled out into a rectangle of about 16"x21" and be about 1/4" thick. You can then spread the butter on one side of the dough, and sprinkle the cinnamon and brown sugar mixture over that.

You can then roll the dough (width-wise that is) so that it looks like a Swiss roll. From this you can then cut about 12 pieces down the length of the roll.

Place these onto either cake pans, or baking tins (you might need more than one), and place in the oven for about 10 minutes.

Take out and leave to cool slightly before serving. You can dust over with icing sugar as well if you like.

**Preparation Time:** 2 hours

**Serves:** makes 12 cinnamon rolls

## Cinnamon Toast

**Ingredients:** 4 slices of Bread  
½ cup of Milk  
2 Eggs, beaten  
2 tsp Cinnamon, powdered or ground

**Preparation:** This is very simple to make and is a variation on the whole French toast thing.

First blend the eggs, milk and the cinnamon together. Place the bread slices over a shallow tray or baking pan, and pour the mixture over the bread.

Allow the bread to soak in the mixture for about 25-30 minutes. You can then place the cinnamon soaked bread under a broiler for about 2 minutes, or until they turn a nice golden brown.

When the toast is done you have the option of topping it with more ground cinnamon, brown sugar, honey, or fruit slices.

**Preparation Time:** 35 minutes  
**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Easy Blueberry Muffins

**Ingredients:** 1 cup fresh blueberries (use frozen blueberries as substitute)  
1½ cups all purpose Flour  
¾ cup Milk (Soy, Rice or Goat's milk will also substitute)  
½ cup Sugar  
¼ cup Oil  
2 tsp Baking Powder  
1 tsp salt

**Preparation:** First you need to preheat the oven to 400<sup>0</sup>F. Then add and mix the flour, sugar, baking powder and the salt together.

Next add the milk and the oil to the mixture, and fold in the blueberries.

You will then need to place some baking cups into your muffin pan, and pour the blueberry mixture into the cups.

Place in the oven and bake for about 25-30 minutes.

If you want you can add more blueberries to the mixture.

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 8 muffins

## Cranberry Muffin

**Ingredients:** 1½ cups All Purpose Flour  
1 cup chopped fresh Cranberries, (frozen will also work)  
1 Egg  
½ cup Milk  
½ cup Sugar  
¼ cup unsalted Butter, melted  
2 tsp Baking powder  
½ tsp Salt

**Preparation:** Preheat the oven to 375°F. Sift all of the dry ingredients together into a large bowl. Then add in the rest of the ingredients and mix together only until ingredients are combined. Don't over-mix.

Grease your muffin tin, or use paper muffin liners, and fill with the batter only about  $\frac{2}{3}$  full. Place in the oven and bake for about 20-25 minutes.

**Preparation Time:** 25-30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 12 muffins



### Morning Peach Cobbler

**Ingredients:** 2 fresh Peaches

1/3 cup of Apple juice (or sweet juice of your choice)

1/4 cup Granola (or Corn Flakes)

1/4 cup of microwaveable Porridge Oats

Pinch of cinnamon

1 tbsp Brown Sugar

**Preparation:** First mix the Porridge oats and the Granola, and separate out 1/3 of the mixture. Place this in a microwaveable dish or large coffee cup as you prefer.

Slice the peaches, and layer them on top of the granola-oats mixture, adding a dash of the apple juice. Layer again with the mixture and alternate with the peach slices and juice.

After laying the last layer of granola-oats mixture drizzle a little more of the apple juice to moisten the entire thing and sprinkle the cinnamon over it.

Next microwave it on high for about 2- 2 1/2 minutes, and let it cool before eating.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 (large!) serving

### Mixed Fruit Breakfast

**Ingredients:** 1 Apple, diced  
1 Orange, peeled and cubed  
2 Bananas, sliced  
1 cup of seedless Grapes  
1 Kiwi, sliced  
1 cup of Strawberries/ Blueberries/ Raspberries  
½ cup of Raisins  
½ cup of chopped Walnuts  
2 cups of Vanilla yogurt  
-or-  
2-3 tsp Brown Sugar

**Preparation:** Prepare all the fruits and mix together. Add the yogurt or brown sugar to taste.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 serving

## Grapefruit/ Strawberry Smoothie

**Ingredients:** 2½ Grapefruits  
4 Oranges  
1½ cups fresh Strawberries (frozen can also be used)  
2 tsp of Honey

**Preparation:** Take 2 of the grapefruits and the Oranges and juice them. Then place the grapefruit juice and the orange juice, along with 1 cup of the strawberries and the honey in a blender.

Blend until it is a smooth drink, and strain into glasses. Strain only if you don't like pulp.

Section the remaining grapefruit half and slice the strawberries. Then top the drink with these to make a nice presentation.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Strawberry Smoothie

**Ingredients:** 4 large Strawberries  
1 freshly juiced Orange  
1 Banana, sliced  
1 tbsp Honey  
¼ cup of Yoghurt  
Dash of Vanilla

**Preparation:** The preparation for this is very simple and requires only that you juice the orange, de-stem the strawberries and slice the banana.

You then add all of these ingredients into the blender and blend until smooth.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Tropical Smoothie

**Ingredients:** 1 medium sized Papaya  
1 Banana  
1 ripe Mango  
1½ cups Pineapple juice  
A dash of Vanilla  
1 cup Vanilla yoghurt

**Preparation:** Deseed, and peel the papaya and the mango, and cut into rough pieces. Slice the banana and add along with the rest of the ingredients into a blender, and blend until smooth.

Serve chilled, or over ice as you prefer.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Breads

I have placed only a very few “bread” recipes here because I have to say that despite my love of cooking, I’m not too fond of bread, even the fresh variety. It’s alright once in a while, but I really prefer something else to bread if I have the choice.

I have included a few other baking recipes like muffins and cinnamon rolls in other sections, but here I have included those breads that I like. You might have noticed that there isn’t a “normal” bread recipe included in this section, and that’s because I just don’t like it.

The ones I have included are the ones that I like best, and the ones which I have been able to successfully bake using the recipe I have shared here!

## Fry Bread

Although this isn’t technically baked bread, and although it’s not even fry bread as you might know it, it is fry bread in a different incarnation. The ingredients are a little different to normal fry bread, but it still tastes great.

**Ingredients:** 1 cup All purpose Flour  
2 tsp Baking Powder  
1 Sugar  
A pinch of salt  
Water (small quantity)

**Preparation:** Sift the ingredients into a mixing bowl. To form the dough, add a little bit of water to and mix in well. Don’t use too much of water as you want a soft dough that is not sticky.

When you have formed the dough mixture set it aside, and take your deep fryer, and heat some oil in it. Next break off small clumps of the dough, stretch it out roughly in your hands and place it in the hot oil to deep fry.

**Preparation Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Serves:** makes enough to satisfy!



## Coconut Bread

**Ingredients:** 1 cup unsweetened Coconut  
2 cups Flour  
1 cup Milk  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Sugar  
1 large Egg  
2 tbsp Applesauce  
1 tbsp Baking powder  
2 tbsp Oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp Salt  
A dash of Vanilla

**Preparation:** First of all, preheat your oven to 350°F. While the oven is preheating, take a skillet and put it over a medium fire. Lightly toast the coconut until golden brown.

Stir it to keep it from burning, and take off the heat as soon as it turns golden brown as coconut will burn very quickly.

Next take a large bowl and combine all of the dry ingredients, first sifting the flour. Take another bowl and combine all of the wet ingredients together.

Now mix in the wet ingredients with the dry ones, and blend in well. Grease a bread pan and pour in this bread mixture. Place it in the oven for about 45 minutes, when the bread should be a golden brown color.

Take out of the oven and place on a wire rack to cool.

**Preparation Time:** 60 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 loaf

## Oatmeal Dinner Rolls

**Ingredients:** 1 cup Oats  
2 cups Water  
2 cups Whole Wheat Flour  
1/3 cup warm Water  
1/3 cup Brown Sugar, packed in  
1 tbsp Sugar  
3 tbsp Butter  
2 tbsp Flax Seed, ground  
2 tbsp Gluten Flour  
1 tbsp All Purpose Flour  
1 tbsp Active Dry yeast  
1 1/2 tsp Salt

**Preparation:** First you need to make the oatmeal, so take a pan, add the water and bring to a boil. When the water is boiling add the oats and the butter and slow cook until the oats are done. Maybe about 5-7 minutes.

Stir well so the oatmeal doesn't form lumps. When the oats are cooked, take it off the fire and set aside to cool.

Next take a mixing bowl and add the warm water to it. Dissolve the yeast in this water and add the cooled oatmeal to this. Along with this also add the remaining ingredients. The all-purpose flour can be added slowly as needed for the dough.

You can then place the whole thing on a lightly floured flat surface and knead until the dough becomes elasticky. You might need to do this for between 6-8 minutes to reach the desired consistency.

Next you will need to grease a bowl and place the ball of dough inside. Cover the bowl and place it in a warm place for about 1 hour or until the dough has become twice its size.

You will then need to take it out of the bowl and punch it down. Leave the dough for another 10 minutes. You will then need to grease your baking trays. Break off pieces of dough and shape into about 18 balls.

Place these on your greased baking trays. Cover and again leave it to rise for about 45 minutes.

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Then place the baking trays in the oven and bake the rolls for about 20-25 minutes until the rolls turn a golden brown color.

Take the rolls out of the oven when done and place on wire racks to cool. You also have the option of making oatmeal bread instead of rolls.

**Preparation Time:** 2.5 hours

**Serves:** makes 18 rolls

## Banana Bread Muffins

**Ingredients:** 2 cups All Purpose Flour  
3 Bananas  
1 cup Sugar  
½ cup Butter  
3 Eggs  
1 tbsp Water  
½ tsp Baking Soda  
½ tsp Salt  
Sugar (a little bit for sprinkling purposes)

**Preparation:** Preheat your oven at 350°F. Then peel and mash the bananas. Add the sugar, the eggs, butter and water and mix together well.

Next add the remainder of the ingredients and mix enough to combine the ingredients only.

Grease your muffin tray or use muffin liners and pour the batter in. Dust the batter with sugar, and place in the oven and bake for about 10-15 minutes.

When they are done take them out of the oven and place on a wire rack to cool. For a crunchy variation, you can add some chopped walnuts to the batter.

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 18-24 muffins

## Soups & Salads

This section contains a few recipes on hearty soups and too-good-to-be-true salads. These are as good a way to complement any of your meals as anything else you might find. The fact that they taste good and are nutritious to boot are just great side benefits!

### Coconut & Carrot Soup

**Ingredients:**  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of Coconut milk  
3 very large Carrots, sliced  
1 large Sweet Potato, diced  
1 large Onion, chopped  
4 cloves Garlic, chopped  
2 tbsp of freshly sliced Ginger  
1 tsp Curry Powder  
3 cups of Vegetable Broth (Chicken broth can also be used)  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Take 1 tbsp of the broth and heat in a saucepan. Add the Onions and sauté in the broth for about 5 minutes. Don't let the pan burn, or the onions to stick to the pan, so stir frequently.

Next add the garlic and ginger with the curry powder and sauté for another minute. You can then add the carrots, the sweet potato and the broth to the mix and simmer on a medium high heat for about 15 minutes.

You can then add the coconut milk and bring to a boil, before taking off the fire.

Next, blend all the ingredients. Make sure to blend the mixture in small batches so as not to burn yourself. You can then add the salt and pepper to taste and reheat.

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Cold Avocado Soup

**Ingredients:** 1 large Avocado  
½ largish Cucumber  
1 cup of Milk (of your choice)  
⅔ cup Water  
¼ cup fresh Cilantro  
4 Green Onions  
2 Limes  
1 small clove Garlic  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Peel and deseed the Avocado, and juice the limes. Peel and chop the cucumber, chop the green onions and mince the garlic.

Place the avocado, cucumber, milk, lime and green onions in a blender and blend until smooth. You can then add the remaining ingredients and blend only until the cilantro leaves are slightly chopped.

You will then need to chill the soup for about 30 minutes before serving. You can then garnish with a few cilantro leaves.

**Preparation Time:** 45 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings



## Creamed Pumpkin

**Ingredients:** 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups of canned Pumpkin  
2 cups Chicken Broth  
1 Onion, finely chopped  
1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cups Milk (you can even use coconut milk)  
2 tbsp Olive Oil  
2 tbsp Brown Sugar  
1 tsp Lemon Juice  
1/4 tsp Nutmeg  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Take a large saucepan and heat the olive oil. Next add the onions and sauté for about 2 minutes. Then add the pumpkin, chicken broth, milk, sugar, nutmeg and salt to the pan. Bring the ingredients to a boil.

You will then need to lower the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes. Add the lemon juice after you take the soup off the fire.

This soup should ideally be served warm.

**Preparation Time:** 25 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Tomato & Butternut Soup

**Ingredients:** 1 medium Butternut Squash  
4 large Tomatoes, diced  
¼ cup of Green Onions, minced  
2 tbsp of Olive Oil  
2 cups Water  
¼ inch of fresh Ginger  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Peel, deseed, and dice the butternut squash. Add the oil to a saucepan and heat, add the onions and very lightly sauté. Then add the diced butternut squash and the water.

Simmer the whole thing on reduced heat for about 12-15 minutes until the squash is soft. Add 2 of the tomatoes and puree with along with the squash. Then add the remaining tomatoes and mix in well but do not puree.

Place on the fire again, and this time add the salt and ginger. Garnish with chopped green onions and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 25-30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 6 servings

## Classic style Potato Salad 1

This is a classic American recipe ... but with a slight twist. If you look closely you will see that there is Tofu on the list of ingredients.

If you prefer to have the Tofu-free version, then you might want to look at the next recipe, which is the potato salad sans the tofu.

**Ingredients:** 3 lbs Potatoes  
½ lb Silken Tofu  
⅓ cup Pickle Juice  
½ large Onion, diced  
1 clove Garlic  
2 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
1 tbsp sweet Pickle Relish  
1 tbsp prepared yellow Mustard  
1 tbsp fresh Dill  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Peel, cube and boil the potatoes, then drain them. Immediately after draining, drizzle the pickle juice over the potatoes and set it aside to cool down.

Next you will need to place in the blender, the Tofu, the garlic, relish, mustard and olive oil, and blend into a creamy salad dressing.

Pour this over the now-cold potatoes, and add the onion, the dill and salt and pepper to taste. Place in the fridge for about 2 hours before eating to get it just perfect!

**Preparation Time:** 40-50 minutes

**Serves:** makes 10 servings

## Classic style Potato Salad 2

If you were looking for more of the classic version of the potato salad in the first recipe you might have felt doomed for disappointment when you noticed the tofu gracing the list of ingredients.

Luckily for you, I'm not too hot on tofu myself although I have to say that surprisingly that potato salad didn't turn out too bad.

So if you're feeling adventurous give it a try (in a smaller quantity!), or just stick with the classic potato salad that you know and love which I have also included below.

**Ingredients:** 3 lbs Potatoes  
6 hard boiled Eggs  
1/3 cup Red Onion, diced  
3/4 cup Mayonnaise  
1 tbsp prepared yellow Mustard  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Peel, cube and boil the potatoes, then drain and cool them. Peel the eggshells and roughly chop up the hard boiled eggs.

Next place the potatoes, the eggs, and the onion into a large bowl and combine together. Then add the mayonnaise, the mustard and the salt and pepper, all to taste. You don't have to use the set amount of mayonnaise and mustard I've mentioned here, you can use less (or more) if you prefer.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 6-8 servings

## Many Bean Salad

**Ingredients:** 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup Kidney Beans  
1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup Black Beans  
1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup White Beans, small  
1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup Red Beans, small  
6-8 Scallions, thinly sliced  
6 oz Mozzarella cheese, shredded  
1 Green Bell Pepper, deseeded and thinly sliced

For the dressing

1 cup Olive Oil  
1/2 cup Parmesan cheese  
1/4 cup Parsley, chopped  
1/4 cup Red Wine Vinegar  
1/4 cup Red Grapefruit juice  
1 tbsp fresh Thyme leaves, roughly chopped  
1 tsp Salt  
1/4 tsp ground Pepper  
1/4 tsp dried Mustard

**Preparation:** You will first need to drain and rinse all the bean varieties. Then take a large bowl and place inside the beans, the scallions and the bell pepper slices. Add the shredded mozzarella to this and toss lightly.

Next you will need to prepare the dressing. To do this take a suitable container and mix everything but the parmesan and the parsley. You can then pour this dressing over your bean salad and add the parmesan and the parsley as garnish.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 10-12 servings

## Fruits and Cheese Salad

**Ingredients:** ½ lb mixed Salad greens  
3 fresh Apricots, halved and then quartered  
3 Figs, roughly sliced  
¾ cup Green and Red Seedless Grapes  
3 oz Gorgonzola cheese (Goat cheese will also work)  
2 tbsp Lemon juice, freshly squeezed  
Salt & Pepper to taste  
A drizzle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

**Preparation:** Take a salad bowl and toss all of the ingredients together, keeping only the cheese separate. When you have combined everything and you are ready to serve, top the salad with the cheese.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Garbanzo Bean Salad

**Ingredients:** 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup Garbanzo beans (canned is good)  
1 small head Romaine Lettuce  
3 stalks Celery, diced  
1 Tomato, deseeded and diced  
<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup Scallion, minced  
3 cloves Garlic, pressed  
3 tbsp freshly squeezed Lemon Juice  
3 tbsp fresh Parsley, chopped  
2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> tbsp fresh Mint, chopped  
A dash of Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup Feta cheese  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Remove and discard the outer layers of the romaine lettuce head and chop the remainder. Drain and rinse the beans if they're the canned variety, and prepare the remaining ingredients.

Then take a large salad bowl and leaving aside the chopped romaine lettuce and the feta cheese, toss the other ingredients together in the bowl. Add the salt, pepper and the olive oil to taste.

To serve, lay the chopped romaine lettuce on your dish, scoop the garbanzo bean salad over the chopped romaine, and sprinkle on top with the feta cheese.

The cheese is optional. If you don't like cheese, the salad won't suffer for it not being there.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Pasta Salad

**Ingredients:** 2 cups cooked Pasta (of your choice)  
½ cup frozen Peas  
⅓ cup Mayonnaise  
⅓ cup Jack cheese, shredded  
2 cloves Garlic, minced  
½ fresh Lemon, juiced  
1 tsp Thyme  
Pinch of Oregano

**Preparation:** Cook and drain the pasta. Then take a large bowl and mix all of the ingredients together. After that leave the whole thing in the fridge to chill for about 1-2 hours before serving.

**Preparation Time:** 30 minutes prep time, 2 hours chilling time

**Serves:** makes 4 servings



## Spinach Salad

**Ingredients:** 1 bag Baby Spinach, washed and left to air dry  
½ - ¾ cup Pine Nuts  
2 tbsp Olive Oil  
¼ cup dried Cranberries  
A dash or two of Balsamic Vinegar  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Take a skillet and heat the olive oil, then add the pine nuts. Roast them until they are a golden brown color, being careful not to burn them.

Put the washed and dried baby spinach leaves in a salad bowl and pour the hot olive oil and the roasted pine nuts over the spinach being careful not to splash hot oil over yourself.

Then add the cranberries, balsamic vinegar and the salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 8-10 servings

## Snacks, Sides & Starters

This section contains as the title so aptly says, snacks starters and side dishes, for the simple reason that these can all be interchanged one with the other as the mood – and the menu – hits you.

So your snack of yesterday could become your starter of today, and your side dish could become your snack, etc.

### Easy Potato Chips

**Ingredients:** 1 Potato, thinly sliced  
Oil

**Preparation:** Spray the dinner plate with some oil. Place the potato slices on the plate in a row.

Put the plate in the microwave on HIGH for 4 minutes. During this time turn potato slices over. Continue to microwave for another 3-5 minutes so that both sides have a chance to cook.

Potatoes are fully cooked when they are browned on top.

Remove from the dinner plate. Salt and season the potato slices to taste. Toss the chips to coat with salt. Let the slices become cool so they can become nice and crispy.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes about 1-2 servings

## Tortilla Chips

**Ingredients:** 2 tbsp Virgin Olive Oil  
½ tsp Cayenne Pepper or Chili Powder  
8 Flour Tortillas (8 -10 inches)

**Preparation:** Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. While the oven is getting hot prepare the tortilla chips.

Mix the pepper or chili powder with olive oil. Now brush some of the oil mixture onto one side of the tortilla. Cut each tortilla into 12 pieces.

Place these tortilla pieces onto an un-greased cookie sheet (optional: a 15 ½ x 10 ½ x 1 inch jelly roll pan). Place in oven and bake for 8 to 10 minutes uncovered until the tortillas turn golden brown in color and become crispy

**Preparation Time:** 20-30 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4-5 servings

## Bruschetta

**Ingredients:** 2 Tomatoes, seeded and chopped  
8 Fresh Basil leaves  
½ tsp. Cloves Garlic, minced  
1 tsp. Balsamic Vinegar  
Black Pepper to taste  
Italian bread

**Preparation:** Combine all of the ingredients together in a bowl.  
Spread this mixture over the Italian bread.

Toast the Bruschetta topping Italian bread at 375°F  
until the bread is crisp. Serve warm and delicious.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 12 servings

## Italian Bruschetta

**Ingredients:** 5 ripe Vine Tomatoes  
8-10 fresh Basil leaves, shredded  
3 cloves Garlic  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  Extra virgin Olive Oil  
Salt to taste  
Necessary amount of toasted Baguette slices.

**Preparation:** Roughly chop the vine tomatoes, freshly shredded Basil and the Garlic Cloves together. Combine these ingredients with the Olive Oil and Salt.

Leave in the refrigerator or on counter for half an hour. Then brush the top of toasted Baguettes with the Bruschetta mix.

You can eat the Bruschetta the next day too. It will taste even better.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes lots of servings

## Muffins a lá Tuna Melt

**Ingredients:** 1 6 oz. can of Tuna, flaked  
¼ cup Celery, diced  
¼ cup Cheddar Cheese, shredded  
¼ cup Onions, diced  
1 Tomato, chopped  
8 Green Olives, sliced  
3 tbsp Mayonnaise  
Pinch Dried Oregano  
Salt and Pepper to taste  
2 English Cheddar Muffins, split

**Preparation:** In a bowl mix the tuna, tomato, oregano, onions, Mayonnaise and celery together. Once these have been well mixed add salt and pepper to taste and leave to aside.

Toast the muffins until they are golden brown. Spread the tuna mixture on top of the muffins. Top off with olives and cheese.

Grill muffins until the cheese melts. Serve hot.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Spring Rolls

**Ingredients:** Rice paper  
Brown or White Rice  
Vegetables of choice: Green, Yellow, or Red Peppers  
Carrots  
Cucumbers  
Onions etc.  
Dipping Sauce (your favorite sauce choice)

**Preparation:** Soak the Rice paper in water for 5 minutes. And then lay out to dry. While the rice paper is drying prepare the filling.

Combine all of the ingredients together. Place the mixture on top of the pre-soaked rice paper. Now roll the filling stuffed rice paper into Burrito style tube. Dip in the sauce and enjoy.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 serving

## Chicken Caesar Wraps

**Ingredients:** 4 Chicken Breasts, halved  
1 package Romaine Hearts  
1 Red Bell Pepper  
A handful of Sprouts  
2 tbsp Vegetable Oil  
2 tbsp. Lemon Juice  
8 Large Four Tortillas  
Salt and Pepper  
Caesar Dressing

**Preparation:** Put the chicken breasts, oil and lemon juice into a plastic bag. Seal the bag and keep for ten minutes for the chicken breasts to become coated with juice and oil.

Next place the coated chicken into a bowl. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Grill for 10 minutes. Turn the chicken over once until chicken is moist but cooked. While the chicken is cooking prepare the rest of the filling.

Roughly chop the Romaine Hearts. Deseed and remove the stem from the bell pepper. Cut the bell pepper into thin strips.

Slice the chicken into thin strips as well. Mix the chicken, romaine hearts, sprouts and bell pepper together well.

Spread this mixture on tortillas. Now drizzle Caesar dressing over the chicken mixture and the tortillas. Fold bottom half of tortilla over 3 inches of mixture and then roll horizontally.

**Preparation Time:** 20-25 minutes

**Serves:** makes 8 servings



### Kale Mediterranean style

**Ingredients:** 2 bunches Kale, chopped  
2 tbsp Lemon Juice  
3 Cloves Garlic, pressed  
1 tsp Soy Sauce  
Extra Virgin Olive Oil to taste  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Take each kale leaf and fold in half. Cut or pull the stems out.

Chop the leaves and rinse in a colander.

Lightly salt some water and bring to the boil in a steamer. The salted water will add taste and color to your kale leaves.

When the water is boiling add the kale into the steamer basket.

Leave covered and steam for 7 to 10 minutes. When the leaves are done they will be tender.

Toss steamed kale leaves with the other ingredients and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Classic Biscuits

**Ingredients:** 1½ cups All-Purpose Flour  
½ cup Multi-Grain Flour  
3 tbsp Baking Powder  
1 tbsp Yeast Flakes or Brewers Yeast  
1 tbsp Flax Meal  
¾ cup Rice Milk or Soy Milk  
⅓ cup Margarine or Vegetable Oil  
¼ tsp Salt

**Preparation:** In a bowl combine the Flax meal, both of the flour types, the yeast flakes, baking power and salt together. To this mixture add some margarine. Blend entire mixture with a fork until the dough is crumbly.

Add Milk and blend well until dough is moist enough to knead and shape. Roll out dough mixture until it is ¾ inch thick.

Cut out the Biscuits with a cookie cutter or the top of a wine glass. Place cut out Biscuits on an ungreased baking sheet.

Bake in oven at 450 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.

When the biscuits are done they will be a golden brown on top. Serve piping hot and enjoy.

**Preparation Time:** 25 minutes

**Serves:** makes 15 servings

## Sun Dried Tomatoes & Couscous

**Ingredients:** 1 cup Dry Wheat Couscous, uncooked  
1 clove Garlic, minced  
1 cup Vegetable Broth  
½ can of Chickpeas (a 14oz can).  
¼ cup Green Olives chopped  
⅓ - ¼ cup Sun-Dried Tomatoes, chopped  
2 tbsp Lemon Juice  
2 tsp Olive Oil  
Generous pinch of dried Basil  
Generous pinch of dried Parsley  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Combine the Vegetable Broth, Olive Oil, and minced garlic in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the Couscous to the boiling Broth and then remove from heat.

Cover pot for 5 minutes. Next fluff the Couscous with fork to separate the grains. Combine the rest of the ingredients with the Couscous and stir.

Serve warm.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 - 4 servings

### Burrito Bite sizes

**Ingredients:** 3 slices Country Ham  
2 slices Soy Swiss or Swiss cheese  
Mustard  
Lettuce  
1 ten inch Tortilla

**Preparation:** Spread some mustard over the tortilla. Over the mustard lay the ham slices. Layer the tortilla with cheese and lettuce.

Roll tightly into a burrito. Slice the burrito into 1 inch thick pieces. Hold the burrito pieces together with a toothpick

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 3 servings

## Main Courses

### Salmon and Mustard Dill

**Ingredients:** 1½ lbs Salmon Fillet, de-boned and skinned, cut into 4  
¼ cup Chicken Broth  
2 cloves Garlic, pressed  
3 tbsp freshly squeezed Lemon juice  
1 tsp fresh Dill, chopped  
1 tsp Honey  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** First prepare all of the ingredients so that they are ready for cooking as you need them.

Pre-heat a large skillet on medium high heat for roughly 2 minutes. While the skillet is heating up, rub 1 tbsp of lemon juice onto the salmon. Add enough salt and pepper for seasoning and taste.

When the skillet is hot and ready for the salmon, place the salmon skinned side facing upwards. You will need to cook the salmon for about 2 to 3 minutes.

When one side of the salmon has been cooked turn the salmon over and let the cooking continue for another 2 to 3 minutes so that the other side of the salmon gets cooked.

From the beginning of the cooking process until you remove the salmon onto a plate you have no need of oil or any liquid to cook the salmon.

Now when the salmon has been removed from the pan wipe the pan with a paper towel in order to remove any burnt salmon pieces and excess oil from the salmon.

Once the pan has been cleared of any burnt pieces and oil, return the pan to the stove. You can now prepare the mustard dill sauce in the large skillet.

Put the pressed garlic in the hot pan and stir for about ½ a minute. Next combine the mustard, chicken broth, the 2 tbsp of fresh lemon juice, honey, salt and pepper. Whisk these sauce ingredients well.

Cook the sauce mixture on high heat. This will help to reduce the sauce amount slightly. When the sauce is nearly done add the dill. Now pour over the salmon and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Tuna Seared

**Ingredients:** 12oz. Tuna cut into 2 steaks  
3 tbsp Scallion, minced  
2 tbsp Soy Sauce  
2 tbsp freshly squeezed Lemon Juice  
2 tbsp Rice Wine  
1 tbsp fresh Ginger, minced  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Preheat a stainless steel skillet for 2 minutes over medium heat, and while the pan is heating, prepare the tuna steaks. First rub the tuna steaks with the lemon juice and pat with salt and pepper on both sides.

Prepare both the ginger, and the scallions at this time and mince them. The skillet will now be hot enough for you to sear your tuna steaks on.

Place the steaks on the skillet and cook for about 2 minutes on each side depending on the thickness of the steaks.

When they are cooked to your satisfaction, remove the tuna steaks from the skillet and place on a warmed plate. Keep the skillet on the fire.

Add the remaining ingredients in the order of rice wine first, soy sauce, ginger and scallion last to the pan, and cook for about 1 minute. Season this with the pepper and salt, and pour the mixture over the tuna steaks. Serve hot

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings

## Chicken with Mustard Tarragon Sauce

**Ingredients:** 2 boneless and skinless Chicken Breasts  
1 Onion, halved and roughly sliced.  
½ cup Chicken Broth  
5 cloves Garlic, pressed  
3 tbsp Dijon Mustard  
2 tbsp fresh Parsley, chopped  
1 tbsp fresh Tarragon, chopped  
1 tbsp additional Chicken Broth  
2 tsp Honey  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Heat the additional tablespoon of chicken broth in a medium sized stainless steel skillet. Add the onions and sauté for over medium heat for about 2 minutes.

While the onions are sautéing, cut the chicken breasts into 1 inch pieces. Add these to the onions and sauté for about 3 minutes. Next add the garlic and sauté for a further 1 minute, stirring frequently.

Combine the honey, mustard and ½ cup pf chicken broth, and add this mixture to the sautéing chicken and mix thoroughly.

Simmer uncovered on medium heat for 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally. This will cook the chicken pieces evenly and will also help to reduce the sauce.

When the chicken is cooked, place on a plate and garnish with roughly chopped tarragon and parsley, and add salt and pepper to taste.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings



## Shepard's Pie

**Ingredients:** 1 package Minced Meat (of your choice)  
6 large Russet Potatoes  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup Water  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Milk (of your choice)  
1 large Onion  
2 tbsp All Purpose Flour  
2-3 tbsp unsalted Butter  
1 tsp Gravy seasoning  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** First you will need to prepare the mash topping for the Shepard's pie. To do this, peel, cook and drain the potatoes.

Then add the butter, milk, and salt and pepper to the potatoes. Mash everything well until there are no lumps.

While the potatoes are boiling you can prepare the filling for the Shepard's Pie. Take a large skillet and put some oil into it to prevent food from sticking to pan.

Brown the minced meat first and then add the gravy seasoning, onions, flour, and water. Add salt and pepper to taste, and then place this mixture in a casserole dish.

When your mash topping is ready spread it evenly over the top of your minced meat.

You can then broil the Shepard's Pie uncovered, or alternately you can bake it for about 10-15 minutes.

**Preparation Time:** 45 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4-6 servings

## Salmon and Cucumber

**Ingredients:** 1½ lb Salmon Fillet, skinned and de-boned, cut into 4 pieces  
3 cups thinly sliced Cucumber with peel  
½ cup Scallion, chopped  
3 tbsp fresh Cilantro, chopped  
3 tbsp freshly squeezed Lemon Juice  
1 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
1 tbsp Soy sauce  
1½ tbsp fresh Mint, chopped  
2 tsp Jalapeno peppers, minced  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Prepare the salad by chopping the cucumber, scallions, jalapeno peppers, fresh mint and fresh cilantro, and tossing together.

Preheat a largish skillet on medium heat for 2 minutes. Next rub the lemon juice, salt and pepper into salmon to season it.

Place the salmon in the hot skillet for 2-3 minutes to sear and then turn it over and cook the other side for a further 2-3 minutes.

Next mix the salad dressing by whisking together the soy sauce, lemon juice, salt, pepper and olive oil together while the salmon is cooking.

Drizzle the salad dressing over the cucumber salad, toss and serve on dinner plate. When the salmon is cooked, remove from heat and place the pieces on the bed of cucumber salad. Garnish with a sprig of cilantro and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 serving

## Spinach Fettuccine

**Ingredients:** 1 lb Fettuccine  
1 lb fresh Spinach, (frozen can also be used)  
4 cloves of Garlic, sautéed  
½ cup of half-and-half  
¼ cup Parmesan Cheese, grated  
¼ cup fresh Basil  
1 tbsp Olive Oil  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** You will first need to prepare the fettuccine according to the instructions on the package. While the pasta is cooking you can then prepare the rest of the ingredients.

Place the remaining ingredients in a food processor, and chop coarsely. When the fettuccine is done, you can then toss the spinach mixture with the pasta to obtain a delicious pasta dish.

Season with salt and pepper, pinenuts and some chopped basil if you like before serving.

**Preparation Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Veggie Stir Fry

**Ingredients:** 1 Red Bell Pepper, cut into ½ inch pieces  
2 cups Green Cabbage, sliced thinly  
1 cup fresh Shiitake Mushrooms, sliced  
5oz. Tofu, cut ½ inch thick  
1 Onion, cut in half and roughly sliced  
4 cloves Garlic, pressed  
2 tbsp fresh Cilantro, chopped  
2 tbsp Soy Sauce  
1 tbsp Vegetable Broth  
1 tbsp Sesame Seeds  
1 tbsp fresh Ginger, minced  
1 tbsp Rice Vinegar  
Salt and Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** First you need to prepare all of the ingredients. Then heat 1 tbsp of broth for about a minute and stir fry the onions for about 2 minutes in this stirring constantly.

Next add the mushrooms and the red peppers to the stir fry. Keep on the fire for about 2 more minutes. Then add the ginger and garlic and stir fry for a further 2-3 minutes.

Finally add the cabbage and the rest of ingredients and stir fry for another 2 minutes. Sprinkle the sesame seeds over stir fry, and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Crispy Cauliflower

**Ingredients:** 1 whole Cauliflower, chopped into flowerets  
12 Kalamata, (Greek Olives which have been cured in brine)  
4 tbsp fresh Flat Leaf Parsley, chopped  
4 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
2 tbsp Red Wine Vinegar  
4 tsp Capers, drained and finely chopped

**Preparation:** First you need to combine the vinegar, 3 tbsp oil, olives and capers together in a small bowl. Leave aside to marinate in juices.

While these ingredients are marinating, heat the rest of the oil in a large non-stick pan. Cook the cauliflower over medium high heat for 10 minutes.

Cover the pan with a lid or a piece of foil if your pan doesn't have any lid. Stir occasionally.

Next you will need to remove and keep aside the pan lid so that you can see the progress of the cooking cauliflower.

To make the cauliflower flowerets taste great, sauté the flowerets until they are brown and tender, but firm. There should be a 5 to 10 minutes cooking period for the cauliflower to become browned.

When the cauliflower is ready, transfer to a bowl and toss with the olive mixture and the chopped parsley. Make sure that all of the cauliflower is well coated in the mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Arrange the cauliflower dish on a platter and serve immediately whilst still hot.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4-6 servings

## Mediterranean Roasted Peppers

**Ingredients:** 2 Red Peppers  
2 Green Peppers  
1 Onion  
3 cloves Garlic, finely chopped  
¼ cup Balsamic Vinegar  
¼ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
1 tsp. Lemon Juice  
Salt & Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** First, preheat your oven to 425°C, then you can cut your peppers and the onion into small chunks.

You will then need to take a mixing bowl and whisk the olive oil, lemon juice, balsamic vinegar and garlic together until very well combined.

You can then pour this mixture over the onions and peppers and toss until everything is nicely distributed. Next, place everything evenly on a baking tray and place this (on the top rack) in the oven for about 20 minutes, or until the onions caramelize.

**Preparation Time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## “Eggplant” Burgers

**Ingredients:** 1 package Hamburger Rolls  
1 large Eggplant  
½ cup Tomato or Pesto Sauce  
½ cup Parmesan Cheese (topping)  
2 Cloves Garlic, minced  
3 tbsp Balsamic Vinegar  
3 tbsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
¼ tsp Salt & Freshly ground Black Pepper to taste

**Preparation:** Pre-heat your grill to a nice hot degree. While the grill is heating up prepare the eggplant burgers.

First prepare the eggplant dressing by mixing balsamic vinegar, olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper in a bowl. Now slice the eggplant to about  $\square$  to ¼ inch thickness.

Once the eggplant has been cut brush both sides of the eggplant with the dressing.

Lay the eggplant on the now well heated grill. When the eggplant is cooked to a nice golden brown, turn over on to the over side. You should have nice grill lines showing on the burger. Keep on grill for 10 to 14 minutes.

Once the eggplant is fully cooked remove from the grill. Place the eggplant on to the hamburger roll. Put some tomato or even pesto sauce on top of the burger. For added taste you can sprinkle some parmesan cheese over the sauce.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 6 burgers

## "Tomato" Burgers

**Ingredients:** 1 Tomato, coarsely chopped  
2 Meatless Roasted Garlic Burgers, frozen  
2 cups Italian Salad Greens  
2 tbsp Mozzarella Cheese, shredded  
1 tbsp Fresh Basil, chopped  
1 tbsp Balsamic Vinegar

**Preparation:** Start the cooking process by preheating the grill on medium heat. While the grill is heating up prepare the rest of the ingredients. Prepare the tomato topping mixture. Blend the vinegar, tomato and the basil together.

When the grill is fully heated, place the burgers on the grill and grill according to package directions. When the burgers are nearly done place shredded cheese over the burgers. Continue with the grilling until the cheese has fully melted.

Now layer 2 salad plates with the salad greens. Place your grilled burgers on this bed of salad greens. Spoon some of the tomato mixture over the plates with the salad greens and the burgers.

**Preparation Time:** 30-35 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2 servings



## Spicy Asparagus Spears

**Ingredients:** 1 bunch of Asparagus  
2 tbsp Olive Oil  
1 tbsp Chili Powder  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** To prepare the Spicy Roasted Asparagus begin by washing the asparagus clean. Chop any hard ends off. Now place all of the asparagus on a baking sheet in a single layer.

Lightly coat each stalk of asparagus with olive oil. Sprinkle some salt over the stalks for taste and then generously apply some chili powder over all of the asparagus.

Now roast the asparagus in the oven for roughly ten minutes or until the asparagus starts turning brown. At this point the tips of the asparagus will become slightly crispy. Remove from oven and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Black Bean Chili

**Ingredients:** 2 cans Black Beans, undrained  
6 Cloves Garlic, minced (or 2 tbsp jarred garlic)  
4 Roma Tomatoes, diced  
1 Onion, diced  
1 small can Tomato paste  
1 tbsp Cumin

**Preparation:** Place all of the above ingredients into a crock pot over a low fire. When the pot starts to boil, reduce the heat to a simmer. Leave the chili on the stove for about 3 hours of cooking time.

When the Black Bean Chili is ready, you can serve it hot over bed of rice.

**Preparation Time:** 5 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4-6 servings

## Quick and Easy Chili

**Ingredients:** 2 large Onions, chopped  
¼ cup Chili Powder  
2 – 4oz Green Chili Peppers, chopped (amount depends on taste)  
2 cans Red Kidney Beans, with liquid  
1 large can Stewed Tomatoes  
1 tsp Oregano  
1 tsp Garlic Powder  
Red Pepper or Cumin to taste.

**Preparation:** Make the chili by adding all of the ingredients to a large pot. Bring the contents to a boil.

When this mixture has boiled reduce the heat and simmer with the lid closed (there should be a little space left open to allow the steam to escape from the pot).

Keep on the stove top and simmer for 2 hours. To get the full flavor of the chili right through all of the ingredients stir the chili pot every 10 minutes.

When the chili is done remove from heat. You can serve the chili into bowls or with your favorite hot dog.

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4 servings

## Easy Patty Melt

**Ingredients:** 1 Burger (your choice of filling)  
Butter  
2 Cheese slices (your choice)  
2 slices Bread

**Preparation:** To make the patty melt cook the burger so that it is well done. While the burger is cooking prepare the “bun”. On one slice of bread lay a piece of cheese.

As soon as your burger is cooked, put this on top of the cheese. Layer the burger with yet another slice of cheese. Close off the “bun” by placing your other slice of bread on top of the cheese slices and the burger.

Put a little margarine in a frying pan to prevent sticking. Place the Patty Melt burger bun in the frying pan and lightly grill the burger and the bun.

When the cheese starts melting remove from pan. Place on a plate with a tomato slice as a garnish.  
Delicious and simple

**Preparation Time:** 10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 1 serving

## Desserts

Be still my beating heart. There's so many that I like that I couldn't make up my mind, so instead I included only four of my most favored desserts!

### Strawberry Cheesecake style Pie

**Ingredients:** 1 package of Fat Free Cream Cheese, 8oz.  
1 cup Fat Free Plain Yogurt  
1 cup Strawberries, diced  
1 tsp Vanilla flavoring  
3 tbsp Sugar  
1 Low fat Graham Cracker Pie Crust, 9 inch prepared pie shell

**Preparation:** For the cheesecake your first step is to cream the sugar and the cream cheese together in a mixing bowl. To this cream cheese mixture, blend in the vanilla flavoring and the yogurt. Mix the ingredients well.

Now to obtain the strawberry flavoring, gently fold in the strawberries. Once all of the strawberries have been mixed into the cream cheese filling pour this filling into the graham cracker crust.

Place the Strawberry Cheesecake Icebox Pie into your refrigerator and freeze until the pie sets or keep for about 2 -3 hours. By this time period you should have a well set and firm pie.

Once the pie is ready, top with some whipped cream (if your taste buds crave some whipped cream).

Keep the pie in the refrigerator until you are nearly ready to serve. At this moment take the pie out of the refrigerator and allow the pie to get slightly warm before you serve it.

**Preparation Time:** 2½ hours

**Serves:** makes 8 servings

## Graham Cracker and Yoghurt Pie

**Ingredients:** Pie Crust of 1½ cups Graham Crackers, crushed  
¼ cup Unsalted Butter, melted  
¼ cup Sugar  
Pie Filling – 2 cups Vanilla or Strawberry Yogurt  
2 cups Strawberries, chopped  
8oz. topping (your choice), whipped

**Preparation:** You will need to pre-heat the oven to 350°F. While the oven is heating up prepare the pie crust.

For the crust you will need to combine the butter, crumbs and sugar together. Press this crumb mixture evenly into your 9 inch pie pan. Make sure that the bottom and the sides are all coated well with the crumb crust.

Place this prepared shell into the oven and bake for 5 minutes. Once the crust has been fully baked remove from oven and allow to cool down. While the crust is cooling down prepare the filling for the pie.

Carefully fold in the whipped topping of your choice into yogurt. Combine these 2 ingredients well. Now add the strawberries to the filling and combine. Once the filling is ready spoon this filling into your ready made pie crust.

Place the pie in the freezer and leave for 4 hours. Just before you are ready to serve this dessert, place in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Garnish with more of the whipped topping and some strawberries and serve.

**Preparation Time:** 30-40 minutes

**Serves:** makes 8 servings

## Coconut Custard Pie

**Ingredients:** 4 Eggs

1 cup Flavored Coconut Milk (your choice of flavoring)

1 cup 1% Milk

½ cup Buttermilk Baking Mix, All Natural

¾ cup Sugar

¼ cup Butter, softened

1⅓ cup Coconut

1 tsp Vanilla

**Preparation:** Ready the oven for the Coconut Custard Pie by preheating the oven at 350 degrees. While the oven is getting hot prepare the coconut filling. In your blender pour in the sugar, butter, baking mix, vanilla, 1% milk and the flavored coconut milk. Blend well for 3 minutes on low speed.

Now pour the blended coconut filling into the prepared pie crust shell. Top the pie with some coconut pieces. Place in the oven and bake for 40 minutes.

Once the pie has been in the oven for 40 minutes check to see if the pie is done. To check if the pie is cooked you should insert a knife ½ way between the center of the pie and the edge.

If the pie is cooked your knife will come out clean. At this point the pie top and topping are golden in color.

**Preparation Time:** 40-45 minutes

**Serves:** makes 8 servings

## Chocolate Pudding

**Ingredients:** 3 cups Soy Milk or Milk of your choice  
1/3 cup Cocoa  
3/4 cup Sugar  
1/4 cup Corn Starch (if you are going to use as pie filling then use 1/3 cup)  
3 tbsp Margarine  
1 1/2 tsp Vanilla  
1/4 tsp Salt

**Preparation:** To make this pudding you will need to place the cornstarch, cocoa, sugar and salt into a pot. Mix all of these ingredients together well. Blend in the milk and whisk to combine.

Place pudding pot on stove and bring to the boil on medium heat. Keep stirring right throughout the cooking time. Once the milk has boiled reduce to a simmer for 5 to 10 minutes, covered.

When the 10 minutes is up remove the pot from the heat. Into this still hot mixture whip in the vanilla and the margarine. Combine all ingredients thoroughly.

Pour entire mixture into bowls or pie crust. Place the Chocolate Pudding in the refrigerator and chill for 3 hours.

**Preparation Time:** 3 1/2 hours

**Serves:** makes 4 servings



## Drinks

Since I prefer to mainly to cook, and not to mix drinks in any form or manner, I stick such simple pleasures as fresh fruit and vegetable juices, and only very seldom concoct something out of these realms.

I'm very adventurous when it comes to mixing and matching my fruits and my vegetables to make juices, but when it comes to anything else, I feel I can safely say that there is no one worse at it than I am.

In fact although I love iced tea in all its many incarnations, it wasn't until recently that I was able to actually make a glass of iced tea that tasted anywhere near passable! Until then I was forced to abandon my organics and trawl through the shops for great iced tea.

This is partly the reason why I finally decided to introduce this section as well instead of leaving it out. Although I have only included a few recipes here, they are ones that I have tried and tested and which I really love.

### Iced Tea

When you go through the recipe you will no doubt notice the large quantities I have used. As I said, I just adore iced tea so when I make a batch, I tend to make a batch to see me through for a few days, especially in the hot summer months.

This is also a great hit with my various friends and relatives as well as the small people in my life in the shape of my nieces, nephews and friends' children!

Oh, and by the way, it is entirely possible to find organic tea. You might have to search a little bit to find, but it is available for you to buy.

**Ingredients:** 10 black Tea Bags  
1 gallon Water  
1 cup Sugar  
½ cup freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice  
Ice or Cold water

**Preparation:** Take about 4-5 cups of the water and boil this. When the water has boiled you can steep the tea bags in it for between 2-5 minutes. No more, otherwise the tea will become too strong.

You can add in the sugar and the lemon or lime juice while the tea is steeping. It makes it easier for the sugar to dissolve and then you also don't have to worry about whether you added everything!

When the tea has steeped for five minutes take the teabags out of the water. Next pour the tea into a suitable gallon jug and top up with cold water, or just water and ice.

Serve well chilled, and extra sugar or sweetener if you need it.

**Preparation Time:** 15 minutes + chilling time if needed

**Serves:** makes approximately 1 gallon of tea

## Cranberry Juice

This might be a little messy, but it is well worth the effort.

**Ingredients:** 1 lb fresh Cranberries  
5 cups Water  
½ cup Sugar  
3 Orange slices  
Salt to taste (a pinch will normally do)

**Preparation:** First wash the cranberries, then place it along with the orange slices, the salt and the water. Place this over a medium fire for about 10 minutes or until the berries burst.

You should use a non-reactive pan when cooking the cranberries as otherwise you could get some very nasty stuff in your cranberry juice.

You can then either use the same pan or another one, but you will definitely need a sieve lined with cheesecloth.

Pour the cooked cranberries into this sieve, then strain it into a suitable saucepan. Add the sugar at this point and bring the juice to a boil once more, this time for about 2-3 minutes.

Add more sugar if needed. Serve chilled.

**Preparation Time:** 15-20 minutes + chilling time

**Serves:** makes 3-5 servings

## Mango Lassi

**Ingredients:** 4-6 tbsp Yoghurt  
¾ pint of iced Water  
¼ cup Mango juice  
Sugar to taste

**Preparation:** You have a choice here, you can either throw everything into the blender and get it all over and done with in one go, or you could do it the slightly longer way.

For this method, you will first need to beat the yoghurt until it's smooth then add the water, sugar and the mango juice.

For both methods however, the best way to serve it is chilled, or poured over ice.

**Preparation Time:** 5-10 minutes

**Serves:** makes 2-3 servings

## Tropical Tapioca

**Ingredients:** 200g Tapioca  
1½ cups Water  
1½ cups Coconut Milk (or any other milk)  
Sugar, Brown Sugar, Treacle or Maple Syrup to taste  
Salt to taste

**Preparation:** Place the water first of all in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Then you need to add in the coconut milk and let this heat up slightly.

Next add the tapioca into this and make sure to stir constantly in the beginning so as to avoid forming unpalatable lumps.

You can then add the salt to taste. Lower the heat to bring the tapioca to a gentle simmer stirring all the while. Do this for about five to eight minutes only, as the tapioca has a nasty habit of dissolving if left in water or on the fire for too long.

You can then either add the sweetener of your choice at this point or when serving. Just be sure to serve this hot.

For added taste dust a little of ground fennel over the top of the tapioca.

**Preparation Time:** 10-15 minutes

**Serves:** makes 4-5 servings

## Basic Barley

**Ingredients:** 100g Barley, (either the pearled, or the non-hulled variety)  
8 cups of water  
Salt and sugar to taste

**Preparation:** Since barley takes a bit of time to cook, you might first want to soak it, either overnight, or for about half and hour to one hour in a bowl of boiling water.

Wash the barley before and after you soak it. When you're ready to cook it, you can place it in a saucepan along with the water and put it on a medium high heat.

Add a little bit of salt to taste, and wait for the water to boil. At this point you can lower the heat to low and cover the pan if you wish.

Be warned though that if you close it and go, the minute you leave, the water will begin to boil and overflow in a manner reminiscent to Niagara Falls!

Leave it to slow cook for about 20-30 minutes depending on the variety of barley you're cooking. For instance the pearled variety takes less time than the non-hulled variety of barley.

When the water has reduced to about half or just under, you can take it off the fire and serve with sugar or sweetener to taste.

**Preparation Time:** 50 minutes – 1½ hours depending on the barley variety

**Serves:** makes 3-4 servings

## Grow your Own Organic Garden

This is one of the many joys of life if only you can learn to sit back and enjoy watching things grow! Not many people can do this, but as I can personally attest it is a great counterpoint to the hectic lives we lead these days.

My problem was not that I didn't like gardening, but more that I had a black thumb, not a green one. It took a lot of effort on my part to overcome this natural inheritance – my father also has the tendency



to a black thumb, as do my brother and sisters – but I managed it anyway!

I'm now the proud owner of an indoor herb garden, and since I live in the city in

a high rise apartment, I have managed to plant only a very small vegetable garden in the balcony space that I have.

I have still managed to do this, and it is worth every bit of cursing and heaving and lugging I have to do when I buy a twenty pound bag of organic fertilizer which was on sale, if you will excuse the pun, at dirt cheap prices!

### Herbs

This is one of the easiest and the best gardens that you can have, especially if you have an indoor herb garden. These can be a boon to your organic cooking and since you're growing them yourself, at least you know that what you're putting in as soil and fertilizer is truly organic.

There are a few steps that you might want to look into before making your organic garden and the first thing I would do is to

decide whether I want an indoor organic herb garden or an outdoor herb garden.

I've outlined the steps below to make it easier for you.

- Decide whether you want an indoor or an outdoor organic herb garden.
- Depending on your choice you will then be able to decide on the types of herbs you want, and will be able, to plant.
- Decide whether you want a themed herb garden, such as an Italian herb garden, or a French herb garden etc.
- You will then need to see where you can get your seed stock from. If you live near a nursery that sells organic seed stock you'll be fine, otherwise you might have to mail order your seed stock.
- Next you will need to buy the necessary pots and things to make your herb garden a reality and if it's indoors, make a space for where you want to keep it.
- If all you want are a few pots with your favorite herbs (at least to begin with – trust me it can become addictive!) then you will want to clear out enough space for your two or three pots.
- Choose a place with enough sunshine coming in. If this is a problem think about getting Grow lights or fluorescent lighting for where your herbs will be planted.
- The next step is the fun one, where you take your organic seed stock and your organic fertilizer and plant your herbs.
- After that it's a matter of watering regularly and trimming away any dead leaves.
- If you find that you have a pest infection you can use an organic pesticide to deal with the problem, or barring that you can always try and use a tried and true method of spraying the leaves with soap water.

You might not be able to use the herbs for a few weeks, but at least you'll be rid of your pest problem. More often than not however, pests are the result of poor soil balance so you might want to check the soil first.



## Vegetables

Growing a vegetable garden is much on the same principles of growing your organic herb garden. Here as well you will need to decide whether you want, or can have,

- An indoor or outdoor vegetable garden.
- How big you want to make your organic garden.
- What vegetables you want to include in your vegetable garden.
- Find out where you can get your organic vegetable seed stock from.

And in addition to these you will also want to decide,

- What type of gardening system you want, i.e. hydroponics, raised bed etc.
- Where you're going to be gardening.
- Whether you want to start out with a small organic vegetable garden and take it from there.
- Where you can find good organic fertilizer for your vegetables.
- And what vegetables you can plant throughout the year to get fresh seasonal vegetables.

## To Compost or Not to Compost

That is most definitely the question, whether you have a large garden or not. If you have a small garden, you can still make yourself organic compost on a small scale but it might be easier for you to buy the organic stuff from a place which supplies it.

If you have a somewhat largish garden, you can easily make your own organic compost and not have worry about getting good top soil coverage for your herbs or vegetables.

There are a number of containers on the market today which are all geared for small scale compost manufacture in the home. The problem with most of these however, is the fact that they don't allow for the compost to be turned very easily.

It becomes a hassle if you get the wrong type of compost bin and could put you off for life on having to make compost! The best types of compost containers are the varieties which allows you to tumble the container regularly as well.

If you're interested you will find these compost tumblers available from any good garden shop, or place which sells organic gardening supplies.

## The end

I hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it, and more importantly I hope you found more reasons to go organic and stay organic.

Like I mentioned earlier the recipes included are mine for the most part, but recipes, like organic farming, have been floating around time and space for a very long time, and I can't lay any claim to them particularly.

I haven't created any of the recipes mentioned here, not being creative enough to do so, but I have tried and tested just about every recipe mentioned here with great success over and over again.

Those recipes which were not in my personal stock of recipes, I obtained from my friends who love cooking almost as much as I do, and who also have an affinity to cook organic foods.

There's not much more that I can add really except for, Bon Appetite!

