



5 Exclusive Recipes

Thank you for joining our newsletter. We're glad to have you as part of our community.

Here are 5 exclusive recipes, just for you. Enjoy!



Polenta Black Bean Medallions with Spicy Salsa



Creamy Vegetables on Baked Potatoes



Eggplant Lentil Stew



Stirred-Not-Fried Wild Rice



Vegetable Corn Loaf



Meet Chef Darshana Thacker



Fun Facts

My favorite fruit:

Suavas

My favorite unique ingredient:

Sorghum flour

I've been cooking since:

My 20s (a late bloomer)

A lot of my recipe inspiration comes from...

Popular traditional foods of the world




DarshanasKitchen.com

Darshana Thacker is chef and culinary project manager for Forks Over Knives. A graduate of the Natural Gourmet Institute, she's known for her hearty and distinctly flavorful creations, which draw inspiration from a wide range of ethnic traditions. Chef Darshana was a lead recipe contributor for the *New York Times* best seller *The Forks Over Knives Plan*. Her recipes have been published in *The Prevent and Reverse Heart Disease Cookbook*, *Forks Over Knives—The Cookbook* and *Forks Over Knives: The Plant-Based Way to Health*, and *LA Yoga* magazine online. Chef Darshana has catered numerous events, served as a private chef, and regularly holds individual and group cooking classes. Visit DarshanasKitchen.com for more.



Polenta Black Bean Medallions with Spicy Salsa

 Makes 9–10 pieces

 Ready in 2 hrs 15 min

This is a fun dish that can be made into an appetizer when cut into medallions or a main dish if you prepare it as a casserole topped with assorted steamed vegetables. Either way, it's great served with a spicy salsa and guacamole. This recipe freezes well for weeks, so make a double batch for a ready meal whenever needed (see notes).

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans
- ½ leek, white part only, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ teaspoon oregano powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth, or water
- 1 cup polenta
- Sea salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 cup tomato salsa
- 1 cup guacamole
- Assorted steamed vegetables (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Rinse and drain the black beans. Set aside for later.
3. Add the leeks, garlic, and ½ cup water to a pan. Bring to a boil.
4. Add the oregano, cumin, turmeric, and pepper. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, for 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil again.
6. Slowly add the polenta while stirring constantly with a whisk to avoid lumps. Season with salt to taste. Once the mix comes to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, for another 30 minutes, until all the vegetable broth has been absorbed. Stir frequently to prevent the polenta from sticking.
7. Gently stir the beans and lemon juice into the polenta. Cook for another 5 minutes.
8. For the **CASSEROLE** version of this dish, skip to step 13.
FOR MEDALLIONS: Spread the polenta on one of the parchment-lined baking sheets, and pat into a ½-inch layer. You will probably not spread it across the whole sheet.

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Polenta Black Bean Medallions with Spicy Salsa

9. Let cool to room temperature, and then refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
10. Remove from the refrigerator. Cut into 9 or 10 medallions using a 2½-diameter round cookie cutter. Place the medallions on the other parchment-lined baking sheet. You can prepare them a couple of days in advance and refrigerate the tray, covered in plastic wrap.
11. When ready to serve, heat the oven to 350°F. Remove the plastic wrap from the baking sheet, and bake the medallions for 10 to 15 minutes on each side.
12. Serve hot, topped with the salsa and guacamole.
13. **FOR A CASSEROLE:** Spread the polenta evenly into a 2½- to 3-quart casserole dish.
14. Let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for at least 1 hour. You can prepare and refrigerate the polenta a couple of days in advance.
15. When ready to serve, remove from the refrigerator and bake for 30 minutes in an oven preheated to 350°F. Serve hot, topped with your choice of steamed vegetables (if using), then the salsa and guacamole.

Notes:

Beans: Although canned beans are very quick and convenient, I recommend cooking beans in large batches and freezing them in 1½-cup portions (the same amount as in a can). It's very economical, saves time overall, and tastes better. Place the beans in a bowl and cover generously with water. Set aside to soak for 6 hours or overnight. Rinse the soaked beans and place them in a large saucepan, covered with a generous amount of water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer, partially covered, until the beans are just tender, 35 to 40 minutes. Drain and use as suggested in the recipe or freeze for later use.

Freezing: If you are freezing the medallions, remove them from the freezer and let stand for an hour or so, or leave them in the refrigerator for a day. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes on each side, for a nice crispy crust. If you are freezing the casserole, thaw at room temperature for a few hours or in the refrigerator for a day. Bake at 350°F, covered with aluminum foil, a glass lid, or a baking sheet for 20 minutes, then remove the cover and bake for another 10 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned.





Eggplant Lentil Stew



Makes 7 cups



Ready in 50 minutes

This lentil stew is very quick to make, and you can swap the lentils for chickpeas or even fresh or frozen green peas. The combination of mint and tarragon gives the stew a unique flavor. You can use fresh herbs if you like; just cut the quantity in half.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion, cut into ½-inch dice (about ¾ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup dried French lentils, rinsed
- 1 teaspoon dried tarragon
- 1 teaspoon dried mint
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- ½ lb. Chinese eggplant, or any long variety, cut into 1-inch dice
- 4 medium tomatoes, cut into ¾-inch dice (about 2 cups)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- ⅓ teaspoon chili powder, any hot variety
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- Sea salt
- 2 stalks scallions, white and green parts, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, finely chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the onions, garlic, and ½ cup water in a soup pot. Cook, covered, on medium-low heat until the onions turn translucent, about 5 to 7 minutes.
2. Add the lentils, tarragon, mint, nutmeg, and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer, covered, for 15 to 20 minutes, until the lentils are almost cooked.
3. Add the eggplant and tomatoes and cook for another 10 minutes, being careful not to overcook the eggplant.
4. Add 3 tablespoons of water to the tomato paste, and mix it into the pot.
5. Add the chili powder and vinegar, and season with salt to taste.
6. Garnish the stew with the scallions and cilantro, and serve hot with bread or steamed grains.





Vegetable Corn Loaf



Makes 1 loaf



Ready in 80 minutes

I love bread ... and I love savory breads even more! With its vegetables and fresh herbs, this loaf makes a great replacement for ordinary bread at the dinner table.

INGREDIENTS

For the wet mix:

- 1 tablespoon ground flaxseeds
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup unsweetened, unflavored plant milk
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn, puréed
- ½ medium onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup green beans, finely chopped (about 3 ounces)
- 1 carrot, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon minced fresh sage
- ½ teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- ½ teaspoon chili flakes
- ½ teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. To prepare the wet mix, place the flaxseeds, vinegar, and plant milk in a medium bowl, and mix well. Let stand for 10 to 15 minutes, until the mixture gets slightly frothy.
3. To prepare the dry mix, add the corn flour, sorghum flour, oat flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt to another bowl, and mix well.
4. Add the onions, green beans, carrots, garlic, sage, thyme, chili flakes, lemon zest, lemon juice, and turmeric (if using) into the wet mix.
5. Add the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir gently, just to combine. Do not overmix.
6. Line an 8 × 4-inch loaf pan with parchment paper, and pour in the batter. Bake the loaf for 50 to 60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

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Vegetable Corn Loaf

For the dry mix:

1 cup corn flour

½ cup sorghum flour

2 tablespoons oat flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon baking soda


1 teaspoon sea salt


7. Turn the oven to the broiler setting for 1 to 2 minutes, to lightly brown the crust.
8. Remove the loaf from the oven, and let it cool completely. Remove from the pan and slice. Toast or reheat in the oven before serving with hummus or a fruit butter.





Creamy Vegetables on Baked Potatoes

 Makes 5–6 cups sauce

 Ready in 45 minutes

This creamy vegetable sauce goes well over pasta, brown rice, and my boyfriend's all-time favorite choice—baked potatoes. If you have some leftover baked potatoes, this dish is even quicker to make. To give it a nice spicy touch, add some hot chili powder into the sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large Russet potatoes, rinsed well
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 2 ounces mushrooms, sliced (about 1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, cut into ½-inch dice (about 1 cup)
- 6 ounces green beans, cut into ½-inch pieces (about 1 cup)
- 1 zucchini, cut into ½ inch dice (about 1 cup)
- 2 (15-ounce) cans navy or other white beans, drained & rinsed
- 2 cups unsweetened, unflavored plant milk
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- 2 tablespoons chickpea or white miso
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme, plus 1 tsp more, for garnish
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ⅛ teaspoon chili powder, any hot variety (optional)
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Place the potatoes on a baking sheet, and bake until they are tender when pierced with a fork, about 45 minutes.
2. Place the shallots, mushrooms, garlic, and ½ cup of water in a saucepan, and cook, covered, on medium-low heat, until the shallots turn translucent, about 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Add the carrots, green beans, and ¼ cup water. Increase the heat to medium and cook, covered, until the vegetables are tender, about 7 to 10 minutes. Add more water, 2 tablespoons at a time, if needed.
4. Add the zucchini and cook for another 5 minutes. Place the white beans, plant milk, nutritional yeast, and miso in a blender, and blend into a smooth sauce. Pour the sauce into the pot with the vegetables, and stir.
5. Add the sage, thyme, garlic powder, onion powder, and chili powder (if using), and season to taste with salt and pepper.

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Creamy Vegetables on Baked Potatoes

6. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, uncovered, for 5 to 10 minutes more, to blend the flavors.
7. When ready to serve, place each potato on a plate, slit it down the middle lengthwise, and squeeze the ends to spread it open. Top with about a cup of the vegetable sauce, garnish with some fresh thyme, and serve hot.

Notes:


Although canned beans are convenient when you are pressed for time, I recommend cooking beans in large batches and freezing them in 1½ cup portions (the same amount as in a can). It's very economical, saves time overall, and the beans taste better.

Place the beans in a bowl and cover generously with water. Set aside to soak for at least 6 hours, or overnight. Drain and rinse the soaked beans, place them in a large saucepan, and cover with a generous amount of water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer, partially covered, until the beans are just tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and use as suggested in the recipe, or freeze for later use.





Stirred-Not-Fried Wild Rice

 Makes 5–6 cups

 Ready in 50 minutes

This recipe is easy to make, especially if you slice all the vegetables uniformly. They will cook quickly and yet have a nice crunchy texture. To make this a one-dish meal, you can mix in a can of cooked black beans with the rice.

INGREDIENTS

5 ounces shiitake mushrooms, sliced (about 1 cup)
½ large onion, cut into ½ -inch dice (about 1 cup)
2 tablespoons grated peeled fresh ginger (2-inch piece)
1 cup wild rice
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks (about ¾ cup)
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon brown rice vinegar
2 tablespoons low-sodium tamari
2 large leaves nappa cabbage, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
1 bunch baby bok choy, thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
2 stalks scallions, white and green parts, cut into 1½ inch lengths and thinly sliced lengthwise
¼ teaspoon freshly ground white or black pepper
1 teaspoon sesame seeds
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sauté half the mushrooms with the onions, ginger, and ¼ cup water in a medium pan on medium-low heat until the onions are translucent, 4 to 5 minutes.
2. Add the rice and 1¾ cups of water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer, covered, until the rice is tender, about 35 to 45 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine the bell pepper, carrots, garlic, and ¼ cup water in a sauté pan and cook until the carrots are almost cooked, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Mix the vinegar and tamari in a small bowl and pour into the pan, along with the cabbage, bok choy, scallions, and the remaining mushrooms, and cook until the greens have wilted slightly, about 2 to 3 minutes. Season with pepper to taste. Serve the vegetables over the rice, or stir them into the rice.
5. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds and cilantro, and serve hot.