

# 2002

# crème brûlée blues

creme brulee (let's just drop the accents!) had been an occasional restaurant treat on the dr bob menu later in life, but the thought of 2 cups of heavy cream and 8 eggs in one dessert was a powerful incentive for a health-conscious aging bob to avoid actually making one himself. Still this did not prevent him from noticing a hazelnut creme brulee recipe in the newspaper, filing it in the cooking archives, and remembering exactly where it was stored for a sizable chunk of a decade. Once the secretary of the modern languages department next to math somehow crossed bob's path and mentioned creme brulee, so bob brought her a copy of the recipe. She never made it of course.

Way back in the mid nineties, bob and ani made a little road trip out to Napa Valley while visiting the Bay Area (on the excuse of academic business no doubt). The first winery on the road entering the valley is [Domaine Chandon](#), the American wing of Moet-Chandon famous for its Dom Perion champagne, one bottle (1983) of which hung around for one decade after the bobandani merger (a wedding gift from a guest who should have been there as the best man) until finally on New Year's Eve 2001(2), the decision was made to use it, since the right occasion never seemed to arrive. But to chill it bob stuck it in the freezer over at the sister-in-law's and forgot about it. It froze. No big pop was the first indication. A little came out to taste. bob stuck it in a pot of water to hasten the thaw, but the damage was done. Flat. What is that expression... pearls before swine? Oh well.

Back to Napa Valley. This winery had actually donated a whole lot of pretty good sparkling wine (you can't call it champagne if it wasn't made in that region of France) at cost for the toast at a [scientific meeting](#) the summer before. The missing wedding guest had struck the deal for a big international GR (that's general relativity) meeting at Stanford named after a friend of Einstein, but that's another story. So it was lunch time and the winery had a French restaurant. Not cheap but what else do a couple of DINKS have to do on their first visit to Napa Valley besides taking the wine tour (we did). So not only was this lunch really terrific, but bob went for the creme brulee filled crepe with fresh berries dessert that left a lifetime impression on both ani and bob, even though ms\_ani is not much of a dessert person.

Then there is the little matter of a weakness for kitchen gadgets. Kitchen torches started showing up in the late nineties basically for the sole purpose of glazing an occasional creme brulee. Which bob was not going to make, so had no need for. This time it was ani who fell for it. A little dinner for a coworker and her husband and recent addition to their previously carefree existence. We're in [Williams-Sonoma](#) after lunch, the Saturday of the dinner. Ani goes for the torch, bob picks up a little overpriced [all about creme brulee book](#). Browsing the book, it is clear that it is already too late to follow the timing suggested by the recipes, but so what.

Reaching home, the hazelnut creme brulee recipe is extracted, the torch instruction recipe is read together with the book base recipe and some cross-merging is done. First downsizing the 8 eggs to 4 as was suggested by the book, which also claims that whether you use half-and-half (10.5%), light cream (18%), whipping cream (30%), heavy cream (36%) or double cream (48%), it will not affect the taste. And following the "loosely cover the water bath containing the creme-brulee mini-dishes with water half way up there sides with aluminum foil" instruction that came with the torch recipe, proceeded. The result would need a quick cool down since time was

running out. The timer sounds. The oven door opens. The aluminum foil is turned back... only to reveal a [water creme brulee mixture](#) that was the same inside and outside the mini-dishes. Couldn't have been a worse unforeseen disaster. Bob scooped enough of the creme brulee lumps into one mini-dish to salvage [at least one](#) for experimenting with the torch later. And went off to the French pastry shop for a substitute dessert.

Later we realize that W-S sold us the torch without warning us that it contained no fuel, so even if we had not been derailed by one fate, another would have caught us anyway. Turns out you have to buy a little canister of the butane fuel in a cigar store. Later in the week we held our noses long enough to make the buy at the local mall and return to fill the torch. And did the glaze thing. Not so hard. The result was edible, but somehow the expected strong hazelnut taste just wasn't there. Maybe another time.

We adjusted the recipe downwards in health impairing ingredients, based on the typical recipes found in the book, which suggests 8 eggs for 2 c heavy cream.

## ingredients

### original hazelnut recipe:

2 c heavy cream  
 1/3 c half-and-half  
 10 large egg yolks  
 1/2 c blanched, toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped  
 pinch of salt  
 1/2 c granulated sugar  
 1 T vanilla extract  
 1/2 c hazelnut liqueur  
 1/4 c light brown sugar for glazing

### our modification:

2 c half and half  
 4 large egg yolks  
 1/4 c hazelnut fine crumbs  
 pinch of salt  
 3/8 c sugar  
 1 T vanilla extract  
 1/4 c hazelnut liqueur  
 1/4 c light brown sugar for glazing

## instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. In a medium saucepan combine the cream and half-and-half or just use all half-and-half hoping to minimize the fat damage, and scald it. That means it just starts to expand but don't let it overflow.
3. Add the hazelnuts (maybe this will calm it down), remove from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Once cool, reheat to a scald.
4. Meanwhile combine the yolks, salt, sugar and vanilla in a large bowl and whisk until the color lightens, sort of like doing zabaglione.
5. Slowly add the hot cream with the nuts while continuing to whisk until smooth.
6. Add the liqueur and strain through a fine sieve.
7. Fill your 4 custard dishes to about 1/4 in below the top edge or 6 (to 8?) ramekins (traditional creme brulee dishes) to a bit less below the top edge since they are only about 7/8 in deep (and 4 in in diameter).

8. Place the dishes in a hot water bath (see below) and set in the lower third of the oven.
9. Cook until lightly tanned on top and a skewer inserted into the center is hot to the touch, about 25 to 30 minutes.
10. Remove to a rack to cool.
11. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
12. To serve, evenly spread the brown sugar across the top of the custard for browning with the torch. Observe your torch instructions for doing the torching, and beware of the alcohol component which is inflammable so be VERY careful...
13. Allow to cool a few minutes by rechilling before serving.

## notes

1. Philly Inquirer, March 9, 1994. Four servings, full fat maxi-cholesterol version per serving: *Cal 691!*, *74% from fat*, *Fat 57 g*, *Prot 10 g*, *Carbo 37 g*, *Cholest 685 mg*, *Sodium 114 mg*.
2. The standard creme brulee recipe seems to be for 2 cups of your choice of cream product, but for 4 people, a half recipe is fine for 4 ramikins.
3. A hot water bath means a baking dish of some kind with a paper towel in the bottom (prevents sliding), which you place the creme brulee dishes in and fill half way up their sides with warm water.
4. The brown sugar is supposed to be dried...by spreading out on a baking sheet and putting it in the oven at 300° for 5 minutes. Then remove and cool. Finally put in a small zip-lock plastic bag and crush the sugar with a rolling pin. Store extra in an airtight container in the fridge. Sounds like a hassle. Granulated sugar is easy.
5. DINK = double income no kids.

*cremrul.htm: 16-aug-2006 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*

## black bass dick's way

We're fish novices. We told him so. But we know food jargon. So when we asked Dick what to do with the black bass filets at the Ardmore Seafood counter in the Eastern Main Line Farmer's Market in Suburban Square one Saturday afternoon, he gave us the long story and we took it all in attentively. Fish with service. Great fish according to Dick. He cleaned each fillet for any remaining bones.

So the story was a simple butter capers and white wine sauce, fish started in pan and finished in the oven, served with freshly squeezed lemon juice and some balsamic vinegar spiced black bean sauce on the side. It was enticing. We went for it.

### ingredients

2.8 lb = 7 cleaned (deveined) black bass fillets = 28 bucks  
[5 to 7 oz per person]  
salt and pepper  
butter, olive oil for sautéing [just enough, not too much]  
1/4 c capers  
1/2 c white wine  
more butter (2--3T)  
lemon quarters for serving

### instructions

1. Clean the fillets by rinsing in water and then pat them dry with paper towels.
2. Salt and pepper them.
3. Sauté 2 fillets at a time in a nonstick pan with some olive oil and butter, flesh side up first only 2 minutes, then skin side down 2 minutes or less (it starts to curl up).
4. Then remove to a baking pan (glass or ceramic) coated with cooking spray. Repeat until all fillets are done. We used 4 +3 in two 8x12 in ceramic dishes.
5. Add the capers and the wine and evaporate off. Then add 2 T butter. Melt. This part is the deglazing step.
6. Pour the caper butter sauce over the fillets and put in a preheated (350°) oven for 5 minutes max to finish cooking the interior.
7. Serve with freshly squeezed lemon (each recipient can handle this part) and some balsamic vinegar laced black bean sauce on the side.

### balsamic vinegar laced black bean sauce

1 28oz can black beans, drained, sort of rinsed  
4 t balsamic vinegar  
1/4 t cayenne red pepper  
1 T olive oil  
salt to taste

1. Puree in a food processor.
2. Put in a small ceramic oven dish with cover.
3. Leave in the oven during preheating and fish baking to warm it up.
4. This could be a little more flowing in texture. Wonder how you could achieve that?

## notes

1. Dick had suggested serving this on a "bed of black bean sauce", but we did not want to freak out our in-laws and we didn't make enough anyway so we just served a heaping tablespoon on the side. Eating the fish and sauce in the same bite loses the fish flavor so it is best ingested with alternative forkfuls. The black beans could be easily used for other purposes since they are pretty tasty this way.
2. Excellent. Thanks, Dick.
3. We served this with fresh penne and vodka sauce first and thin asparagus and brussel sprouts on the side, after a prosciutto di san daniele and gallia melon appetizer. So we turned off the oven and opened the door a bit while we were occupied with the appetizer and pasta courses. Did not do damage.

*blbassdw.htm: 16-aug-2006 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# little armenian rings (easter cookies: *zadgva kahke*)

This is a tasty little treat that is not too sweet, but satisfies the munchy craving nicely.

## ingredients

### dry stuff

- 5 c all-purpose flour
- 1/2 c sugar
- 3 t (heaping) baking powder
- 1 t mahleb

### wet stuff

- 1c milk (water if no milk around), slightly warmed
- 1 c butter (2 sticks), melted
- 1 c vegetable oil

### finisher stuff

- 1 egg, beaten

## instructions

1. Mix together the dry ingredients.
2. Combine the wet ingredients.
3. Mix the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients.
4. Let rest for a half hour or more.
5. Make 1 inch diameter dough balls.
6. [Roll each one with flat open hands](#) until it is about a 5 or 6 inch long cylinder and make it into a little doughnut by twisting it into a ring and pinching the ends together.
7. Place equally spaced on cookie sheets.
8. [Brush with beaten egg](#).
9. Bake in a preheated 300° oven for 20 to 25 minutes until [golden brown](#).

## notes

1. [Secrets of Cooking](#) has two variations of this theme, both with sesame seeds but Isgouhi dropped the seeds because they get in your teeth. The same reason I rarely eat popcorn.
2. [Illustrations](#) available.

# pascale's quiche lorraine

quiche lorraine was apparently born in the [Alsace-Lorraine](#) regions of France bordering on Germany. These two regions are often linked together, Alsace the richer one on the border and Lorraine the poorer one just inside, probably since the pair kept getting stolen back and forth between the two nations in their numerous wars. The capital city of Alsace is Strasbourg, pascale's hometown, so she is probably a reliable source for an authentic version of this well known classic which she served to us in her tiny little Paris apartment in a cheap lightweight Teflon-coated 30cm (12in) diameter quiche pan. One of which she helped us acquire before returning home. The recipe came later by email but required some translation / modification.

- Here is the receipe of the Quiche Lorraine:

Mix together in a bowl :

200 g of shredded mozzarella (in france you would take: gruyère)  
300 g ham cutted in very small cubes  
150 g "lardons" (I don't know the translation, may be you know Ani ...)  
300 g of white mushrooms cutted in small pieces

and transfer onto the pie crust in the tefal baking plate

In the bowl, mix together :

4 eggs,  
15 dl of milk  
30 dl of heavy cream  
1 spoon flour,  
salt, pepper and grounded nutmeg

Pour the mixture onto the pie and bake it at 200° Celsius. Than Enjoy it  
!!!!

I miss you

love  
Pascale and Arnaud

We'll overlook the mozzarella remark and forget about the untranslatable lard ingredient, clearly more fat anyway. So here is what we actually did with this input.

## ingredients

### crust

1 frozen pie crust round, thawed

### flavor additives

8 oz = 1/2 lb gruyere cheese, grated



4 - 6 oz = 1/4 - 1/3 lb ham, cubed small  
8 oz = 1/2 lb white mushrooms, chopped, sauteed in:  
2 T butter

### custard

4 eggs  
2 c light cream or half and half  
1 T flour  
1/2 t nutmeg  
salt and pepper to taste

## instructions

1. Prepare the pie crust in the bottom of the quiche pan as directed on the package (prebaking about 15 minutes at about 425°).
2. Meanwhile grate the cheese, chop the ham, clean and chop the mushrooms and saute them in the butter until soft.
3. Mix together the custard ingredients in a large bowl.
4. Arrange the flavor additives evenly on the pie crust bottom and then pour the custard mixture over them.
5. Bake about 30 minutes at 400°.
6. Test for doneness by inserting a knife or other sharp instrument into the center of the quiche. Done when it comes out "clean".
7. Serve immediately.

## notes

1. [Illustrations](#) available. Very tasty. We'll be doing more quiche after this.
2. Get your ham at the deli counter. Ask for a 1/4 in slice of a high quality precooked ham. That should be about right. No need to have too much pig in your quiche.
3. Impatiently waiting for the email recipe, we gave a try to an appealing recipe from [epicurious.com](#) which seemed typical: 6 eggs and 1 2/3 c cream/milk, so we were surprised that only 4 eggs are really necessary with a bit more liquid. Of course, having reduced the cholesterol, one can also lower the fat in the liquid component as well. You probably can get away with using all lowfat milk instead.
4. This can be done the day before and reheated in the oven for later serving. The microwave is ruled out if you use a metal quiche pan as we did, but not if you use a ceramic pan instead.
5. Serves 6–8 if not the entire meal.

## vegetarian option

We [later](#) tried this as a vegetarian dish by replacing the onion by one leek and the ham by chopped red (half) and yellow (half) sweet peppers. A very tasty alternative that surprised bob's skeptical expectations of ani's ingredient switch. The leek substitution emerged from our love for the [leek tart](#). And the fact that we had a leek and no onion when this transformation took place the first time. Flexibility feeds creativity?

*quichep.htm: 20-sep-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# cappuccino cheesecake

Over the years as coffee became more and more to bob's liking, the idea of doing a cappuccino cheesecake lingered in the back of his mind but somehow the thought of just adding instant espresso powder to the cheesecake batter seemed a bit unacceptable, for reasons that were not easily put into words. We've shown our eager willingness to take shortcuts on many occasions in the past, but this one just wasn't happening. Until the seductive food photography of a luscious specimen on a deep chocolate high top crust caught bob's eye in a quick in-store scan of the latest William-Sonoma oversized seasonal food magazine [Taste](#). This was the one.

A suitable Saturday night target dinner soon presented itself. Friday afternoon the head chef tears himself away from his office a few hours early in a rare escape from workaholism. Home to memorize the needed ingredient list for items not on hand. Off to the local supermarket, once a local family owned chain but recently gobbled up by one of those ugly mega-corporate food chains that shut off bob's supply of recipe ready hazelnuts in no short order. Home with the catch, bob finds that once again not writing down a list has proved to be a mistake—the instant espresso "preferably Medaglio d'Oro"—had slipped his mind. Back to the stealth Safeway (it retained its local name) and no instant espresso powder of any kind! 5:30pm and 30 minutes till closing at Carlino's—maybe they'd have something authentic. But Friday traffic from hell is in full swing in the suburbs and after a false start east confirming the hopelessness of the attempt, bob turns west towards the upscale supermarket alternative—maybe they have something acceptable.

Along the way it occurs to him that he could grab a treat of oven-ready prepared escargot (snails) from the French pastry shop which had recently been offering a few French imports not in the usual pastry/bread/chocolate lineup of the business. Yeah, but how do you get those little suckers out of their shell after you bake them, he asks. Easy. Use a pickle fork. Back on the road bob realizes he forgot to carefully read the handwritten sign of baking instructions: "Back at 350° for ... minutes." Absentmindedness strikes again, but if it hadn't struck the first time, there wouldn't be any snail passengers at this point. We'll just have to fake it.

The moment of truth arrives. Will this upscale store have some decent substitute for the Medaglio d'Oro espresso powder? A miracle. No substitute needed. There it is. And bob grabs a jar of caramel sauce he spots just in case as a backup.

This cheesecake seems to have an alarmingly high amount of butter and fat as cheesecakes go, but it is not a recipe to compromise on with lower fat shortcuts, at least not before doing it once to see how it's really supposed to turn out. The story continues in the instructions.

## ingredients

### crust

2 sticks = 8oz = 1/2 lb cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces  
1/2 c sugar  
1 1/4 c all-purpose flour  
1/4 c rice flour

1/2 c cocoa powder  
large pinch salt

**batter**

3 8oz pkgs = 1 1/2 lb cream cheese, softened  
1 c sugar  
4 eggs  
1 lb = 2 c sour cream  
2 T instant espresso, preferably Medaglia d'Oro

**caramel glaze**

(another stick of butter was here along with some heavy cream)  
skip this in production: just buy some caramel sauce (fat free!)

**serving touch**

high quality cocoa powder dusting

## instructions

1. This [overthick crust](#) is really a thin dense brownie-like layer base that you can do ahead of time. At least that's what it looked like when it exited the oven. Williams-Sonoma tell you to get out your standing mixer with the paddle attachment, throw all the crust ingredients in and mix at low speed until the dough "comes together" (like the Beatles' song no doubt). Everybody with one of those big expensive standing mixers with a paddle attachment in your kitchen, raise your hands. Okay, the rest of us, read on.
2. We pulled one stick of butter from the fridge and the other from the freezer. Cold and colder. To get started bob fed the butter sticks down the tube into the food processor with the slicing blade which worked pretty well except that the resulting slices all stuck together again. On to plan B. bob figured one of those multiple wire hand flour and fat pie crust dough blenders could cut up the butter and then chop it into the flour mixture which had already been whisked together in a large bowl. But the butter is apparently still too cold to yield easily to this solution. bob insists. After a long struggle, the butter ends up chopped evenly into the flour mixture as hoped so he begins working the dough with one hand squeezing and turning. But there was no way this dough was gonna "come together". Still too dry. The standing mixer must have to work a miracle to reach this state.
3. bob adds 1/4 c cold water sprinkling it a bit at a time with the one hand squeezing and turning, squeezing and turning. Patiently. It starts coming together. Finally it arrives. A big chocolate dough ball.
4. Preheat the oven to 300°.
5. Next they say "roll the dough" into a 9-inch spring-form pan base. As in roller pin rolling, huh? No way. Memories of the similar [bavarian apple torte](#) sugar dough crust's failure to cooperate immediately come to mind decades later. bob just plops the blob down in the pan with the sides attached and gently convinces the dough to flatten out evenly with one hand pressing the flesh, finishing it off with the chicken breast [pounder](#) on a stick. [See note below.]
6. Bake the crust 30 minutes. Remove and let cool completely, say about 30 minutes. Doesn't it look like a low rise brownie? [At this point bob went on his espresso powder mission.]
7. Now for the batter. [Re-preheat the oven to the same temperature again if too much time passes between these steps.] Dump the sugar in a large bowl and add the room temperature cream cheese. Those of you with the standing mixer can figure out how to let it do the work. The rest of us, beat the cream cheese and sugar together on low with electric beaters

- until smoothly blended together.
8. Add the eggs one at a time, beating each one into the batter until it disappears.
  9. Beat in the sour cream and espresso on low until smooth. What a beautiful shade of cappuccino color, and the espresso powder really does dissolve nicely. Quality stuff?
  10. Pour the batter over the crust in the spring-form pan and jiggle it to a smooth level surface with a spatula.
  11. Get out one of those old used [aluminum baking pans](#) from the Thanksgiving stuffing. To be on the safe side we put the spring-form pan on a large square of oversized aluminum foil and scrunched up the sides to make it waterproof. Then place it in the baking pan and put in the oven. Pour hot water in the pan until it reaches halfway up the side of the spring-form pan. Slide the rack into the oven and close.
  12. Bake 1 1/4 – 1 1/2 hours. To test doneness, "gently shake the pan". The cake should be set from the center to the edge, but not dry. Touching the center is also allowed. [It took us 1 3/4 hours of baking time to be convinced.]
  13. Remove and let cool at room temperature for 30 minutes. Then refrigerate at least 1 hour. [Overnight!] Check out that beautiful baked cheesecake surface. Must be the water-bath lower temperature baking.
  14. Almost serving time. At this point you are supposed to make the brown sugar/ butter/ cream caramel glaze. We say skip it—caramel sauce is much better. We did it like they said and the result was pretty ugly. When it cooled, a lot of fat separated on top like aged gravy, and what was underneath looked like sludge. The taste was not there either. We dumped it.
  15. Be careful when you remove the sides, running a knife around the edge first to free the cake. No sour cream topping to cover up cracks if the surface sticks to the side as you expand them away as almost happened to us, but we were able to free the one stuck part.
  16. Dust the surface with cocoa in one of those powder shakers. Serve with caramel sauce drizzled over the slice and on the side.

## notes

1. The first thing you will notice if you don't read ahead to this note is that the crust sticks to the pan bottom like superglue. It is difficult to cut through all the way to the pan and if you have a nonstick pan, you don't want to cut the pan surface. Instead use parchment paper to line the bottom before putting in the crust dough. Trace out the pan bottom on the paper and cut it round exactly to fit, then put the pan sides on and then the dough in. This way you can easily remove the cheesecake entirely from the pan and put it on a wooden cutting board when ready to serve. Check out a [slice](#). Or the [source](#) of the slice.
2. You will need a very thin sharp knife to cut the pieces cleanly. By coincidence the ultimate cheesecake knife had just arrived in the mail via an internet purchase: a [crystalized titanium 6.5 inch chef's knife](#) [Boker brand]. Since the cake was half gone by this time a week later, bob was able to wedge a spatula under the crust and get most of it out of the pan intact and onto the cutting board. This knife is so amazing, and so perfect for slicing through a cheesecake including hard crusts. It is the thinnest knife you can imagine and the cake hardly notices it going through.
3. We had bought caramel sauce in a jar and it was highly viscous (did not flow easily). By the second serving night, the light bulb went off (brilliant idea) and we popped the open jar (metal top, you know) into the microwave for 30 seconds on high. Loosened right up. We spooned it over the plate easily. Being warm was also a nice touch. If you buy it in a

- plastic container maybe you can just squeeze it out instead. [Yes, this is the way to go.]
4. So what is the verdict? The guests at the initial serving raved. Not too sweet they said (obviously not cheesecake fans). Fantastic. (Okay, we're improvising the comments from memory.) But bob's first impression recalled coffee ice cream from the days before he opened up to coffee. Straight coffee ice cream is still not a favorite. This has a strong coffee taste. But a week later the cake tasted even better to ani, and by this time even bob was convinced. Just took a little time to be won over. And the aging really did seem to improve the flavor. If you like cheesecakes and like coffee, go for it.
  5. The [original recipe](#) is on-line at Williams-Sonoma [recipe from *Layers of Delight* by Emily Lughetti, photos by Anna Williams, *Taste*, Spring 2002]. But trust us, we are true amateur cook recipe testers. Learn from our experience.
  6. [Illustrations](#) available.

## 2006 update

Four years later Paul makes the request again for his birthday. [Actually a few other requests had been made in the intervening years, but the cheesecake team had gotten a bit out of practice and was not delivering product so easily anymore.] A few nights before, the evening after-work cake execution deed is started. But no cocoa in the cupboard! bob goes out to Whole foods for a superior European brand. A 30 minute delay. All the dry stuff is in the Kitchenaid mixer, but bob forgot to read ahead. Sour cream in the batter, but of course no sour cream on hand. Ani takes over and turns on the mixer while bob goes back out to a local Wawa for the dairy product. Upon return, she does not report any troubles. The bottom layer is successfully in the pan, and goes into the oven for 30 minutes and then into the refrigerator for say 15 minutes while the batter is mixed. The clock is running so in goes the batter and back into the oven in the biggest roasting pan we have, wrapped in foil to prevent the water bath from seeping in. An hour and 3/4 or so. Then out and into the refrigerator.

The dusting of the surface with cocoa we left until serving time, doing the individual slices. A few eaters complained of too much dusting on the top. Maybe the dry cocoa at serving time should be kept to a minimum. But check out the beautiful cappuccino coloring of the [unadorned cake](#). The water bath seems to prevent cracking very nicely. Sometimes a hassle is worth the price.

# pretty good cauliflower leek gratin

[Cook's Illustrated](#) takes a sort of physicist approach to cooking. They focus on a small number of recipes in each issue and completely tear them apart, test many variations, and draw analytic conclusions from the process about the best way to proceed and why. Usually bob snags it on impulse when he sees a topic that touches some food nerve. It should really be a subscription mag but the dr bob team is already unable to deal with the current load. Best New York Cheesecake was the hook that got bob to pull the issue with this recipe. Leeks are a dr bob cooking team weakness and cauliflower is a substantial veggie favorite that needs partners. This one showed promise.

Oscar night 2002 provided the occasion to implement while the issue was still current, an unusual event in an endless post-it marking process of recipe after recipe that life never seems to allow time for revisiting. Ani was busy with a work presentation, so it was a solo effort. Living up to its expectation, accompanied by a wonderful Cuvee `Le Charnay' Menetou-Salon by Jean-Max Roger, a French white wine we'll probably never see again, picked for us by our wine outlaw facilitators at the [Princeton Corkscrew](#). Coincidentally a major location for the current Oscar contender in six categories. Princeton that is. Princeton math in particular. A story bob knew something about from firsthand experience.

We modified this recipe out of laziness, taking a shortcut with the topping, reducing the cream fat content and therefore disqualifying our version as "the best ever". But "pretty good" is not a bad alternative for us impatient amateurs.

## ingredients

- 1 large cauliflower, trimmed into small pieces
- 2 T unsalted butter
- 1 medium shallot, mince (about 2 T)
- 3 small leeks, cleaned and chopped finely
- 1 T all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 c light cream
- pinch nutmeg
- pinch cayenne
- 1/8 t freshly ground black pepper
- 1 t minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 c gruyere cheese, grated
- breadcrumbs to coat top
- 2 T parmigiano
- spray olive oil to dampen breadcrumbs

## instructions

1. Boil pasta water in the usual pot, add 1 T salt, and throw in the cauliflower pieces as if they were pasta. Cook about 3 or 4 minutes until tender but still crunchie inside (al dente?). Drain and rinse under cold water in a colander until cooled down (to prevent them

- from continuing on to a mush state). Leave them there for now.
2. Sauté the shallot and leeks in butter until softened, about 2 minutes.
  3. Add the garlic and cook about 30 seconds.
  4. Stir in the flour until combined, about 1 minute.
  5. Whisk in the cream and bring to a boil.
  6. Stir in the spices and gruyere cheese until incorporated. Remove from heat.
  7. Gently stir in the cauliflower (so you don't pulverize it) until evenly combined and then dump into a baking dish.
  8. Sprinkle with the parmigiano, then a coating of breadcrumbs and spray with olive oil spray to wet down the breadcrumbs.
  9. Bake in a preheated 450° oven for 10 to 12 minutes until golden brown.
  10. Serve immediately.

## notes

1. The Best Cauliflower Gratin, by Julia Collin, April 2002, [Cook's Illustrated](#), pp.18–19, leek variation.
2. [A Beautiful Mind](#), Oscar for Best Picture 2002. [Film](#) by Ron Howard (Best Director) with ex-Gladiator Oscar winner Russell Crowe as the Nobel prize winning mathematician John Nash from the [book](#) by Silvia Nasar. Read the book.

*cauleekg.htm: 28-may-2002 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*



## san pietro e paolo purple pizza (crema di radicchio)

One of bob's usually unsatisfied food desires is crema di verdura style pizza where the topping is based on some kind of vegetable puree like cream of artichoke or cream of asparagus, a remnant of a decade's old memory of such a pizza experience in a notable rural pizzeria in the Castelli Romani near Rome where the pizza was served on big wooden slabs. Unfortunately this kind of pizza does not seem to make the usual list of traditional pizza varieties in most Italian pizzerias although bob is always studying the menus hoping for something exotic to show up. And the probability of rediscovering that pizzeria from the past AND then actually returning there seems to be near zero.

Instead a combination of circumstances lead to a sort of chance pizza revelation on San Pietro e Paolo Day, Rome 2001. Most Italians have not only a birthday which is an automatic gift from mother nature, but also a name day which they get to celebrate almost like an extra birthday [since most Italian first names coincide with the name of an existing saint or some slight variation of one each of which is assigned to a calendar day and there are plenty of such names to go around, which means that some of them have to share days since these are in shorter supply, limited by mother nature of course]. In addition Italian cities usually have [patron saints](#), like San Gennaro for Naples, San Silverio for Ponza and San Antonio (not the Texas one) for Padova, the last of whom's tongue was part of the plot for a cute little movie bob caught in his amazing 5 movie attendance record at the 2001 Tenth Anniversary [Philadelphia Festival of World Cinema](#), but that is another story altogether. Rome has two patron saints, Peter and Paul (hmm ... what about Mary?—oops, a sixties connection—apparently no name day but she is covered by another category, will have to research this point later), since for some reason they share the same day (the fact that they both met their end in Rome might have something to do with it and their patron saint affiliation). And when a city has a patron saint, the corresponding name day is a legal holiday for that city. When this holiday falls on a Friday or a Monday, even better since it means a long weekend. Good for residents maybe but maybe not so good for tourists. Since the stores are all closed.

This particular June 29 was special in three ways. As a Friday holiday before the July vacation exodus, it meant people in Rome could leave a day early for their traditional month long vacation (either July or August for certain business sectors). Which they did all at once as usual (long weekenders plus long vacationers) creating enormous traffic jams a day early, making bob and ani's Saturday drive to northern Italy with donato a piece of cake. July 29 also meant no longer having to dial the urban access digit 0 before cell phone numbers, so bob had to reprogram all the numbers in his borrowed cell phone. And July 29 also meant ani had arrived on the usual Philly-Rome direct flight that morning, and since nothing was planned, it seemed like a good occasion to wander around the historical center window shopping. Hard to do more than that when almost every shop is closed. We headed for the Spanish Steps anyway where we found the usual tourist crowd milling about. Not much to do besides look in the windows and take a rest with an overpriced but genuine cappuccino to bust the jet lag blues which even bob seemed to share thanks to a poor night's sleep. Overpriced like the rest of the shops in this exclusive shopping district. Killing time before a lunch date at the home of some friends.

Which meant passing by the attractive little side street trattorias starting to emit those irresistible smells. But at a certain point passing up the airline breakfast caught up with ani right at this little pizza by the slice shop and a little solid food snack was in order. At first glance the offerings did not seem so appealing but then this strange purple pizza caught bob's eye and when the explanation came back radicchio, he knew this had to be the choice. A layer of mozzarella followed by a layer of cream of radicchio generously sprinkled with parmigiano. A terrific appetizer for the lunch that kept us from eating more. Fiorfiore at 17–19 via della Croce, Rome. We'll be returning there. And not just for another slice. We'll ask for the pizzaiolo (pizza maker) and try to pump him for details. Who knows what we'll learn.

## ingredients

[to be found]

## instructions

1. [to be found]

## notes

1. If you can help us with this recipe, please e-mail us.
2. On our trip north we made it to the home of Parma's smaller prosciutto competitor, San Daniele, near Udine in Friuli (west of Trieste), to sample really excellent prosciutto in a prosciutto outlet/restaurant [Dall'Ava](#) (Prosciutterie DOK). They go through so many prosciuttos a day you always get the freshest possible cuts. Wow.

*pizzaradi.htm: 14-aug-2001 [what, ME cook? © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# mint baked potato wedges

Dining out life in Philly and on the Main Line has been getting better and better. We're crazy about the herb spiced [grilled octopus](#) served at [Dmitri's](#) two Mediterranean/Greek restaurants in the city and recently grilled octopus moved out to the burbs. Lourdas Greek Tavern right in the heart of Bryn Mawr in the space that used to house the business (Print Out Press) that for many years photocopied the dr bob annual christmas card before it went bust and bob moved on to Kinko's. Okay, the grilled octopus is not quite the same as Dmitri's but like they say: "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush..." or something. Anyway the French fries in this place are addictive—dusted with dried mint flecks and probably too much salt.

This inspired us to try to catch that flavor in our own home baked potato wedges. Potato experts would know which potato is best for wedge baking but we had no clue. We went with the upscale hype for Yukon Golds, cleaning the spots but leaving most of the skin intact. Then cutting in half lengthwise and then cutting lengthwise triangular wedges. We snagged the potatoes after a 30 minute wait for 3 whole red snappers, cleaned, 12 bucks total, not a deal to be found out on the Main Line. It was the Memorial Day weekend Snow Crab sale at the 69th Street Pathmark, The People's supermarket. \$1.99 a pound, 50 cents extra per pound for steaming right there on the spot, regular, mild or spicy. bob waited patiently for the crab crowd. Years of training by Italy seems to have paid off.

## ingredients

6 or 7 Yukon gold potatoes, cleaned, spots removed  
olive oil  
dried mint  
salt and pepper  
Middle Eastern red pepper (or paprika)

## instructions

1. Prep the potatoes and boil them in salted water about 8 minutes.
2. Drain and put in a large bowl.
3. Coat with the spices, all eyeballed to taste, and just enough olive oil to do the job. Mix up so the stuff gets spread around evenly.
4. Bake in your oven at 350° for long enough to finish the cooking and brown them a bit.

## notes

1. This is all kind of vague, huh? Next time bob will have to take a more hands on involvement in production. But experiment a little. The [result](#) was really good, although the [fish](#) looked a bit ugly. Must be the fish heads, eh? Go easy on the salt.

# risotto ai fiori di zucca (risotto with zucchini flowers)

*"all things must pass"*

— george harrison (passed, 2001)

Festa di San Pietro e Paolo 2002 minus two (days). A Thursday evening. Rome got cheated out of a weekday holiday this year since June 29 falls on a Saturday. The streets seem rather quiet for late June in Rome as bob goes foraging for dinner. Porta Pia appears to be a popular (in the sense of "common people") neighborhood in the evening, absent all the white collar lunch crowd that makes midday so lively. The terrific fast-serve great-food lunch place at the beginning of via Nomentana (Primafile, number 7) that brought white collar bob back for dinner reverts to a normal restaurant pizzeria in the evening. For lunch it is bustling with activity, supplying choices of nearly every vegetable on the market deliciously prepared, some pasta salads, cheeses, fruit, some dead animal/fish dishes and a few super-quick fresh hot pastas on demand. A killer chocolate cake next to the register. At dinner it is still almost empty at 8:30pm. Plan B, find the risotto from last summer a couple blocks away. Al Padavano ("Venetian, Roman and seafood specialties", via Bergamo 50-52-52A). Also nearly empty. But the target risotto listed on their permanent all-season menu is still there and this is the season for zucchini flowers. Yes, they have it.

This summer bob hit the street with a cheap just-on-the-market first day purchase Motorola cell phone to plug into the Italian communication network. More important than arriving with luggage. Which rejoined bob after a short trip from Paris to Copenhagen two days later. Followed by a quick trip to Elba, including boat ride with swimming and relativity talks. Etc. Finally bob stabilizes back in Rome and calls everybody on the short list. Without much immediate success. Everybody is busy with their own lives, which complicate with age. The old days have passed. [bob eats alone](#), again.

So Mario (the simpatico waiter), how is this risotto put together? Easy. The short story is that it is a small variation on risotto alla milanese (that means "with saffron" in this context). You do a standard recipe (see below) while making a "soffritto" of finely chopped zucchini flowers in butter or oil, and just before the rice is done, you add in the soffritto and get them acquainted while still on the burner. Then remove, add parmigiano. Done. The hard part is finding the zucchini flowers in the US. Good luck. If you score, this recipe is terrific stuff. If not, well, ignorance is bliss...?

We've never seen this anywhere else in Italy and only one US cookbook was found with a recipe, but somewhat more complicated. [[Simply Tuscan](#) by Pino Luongo]. For even less cash, bob gets the recipe, the dish, a quarter liter of house white wine (mistake, since when combined with the current heat wave, it induces excess sweat gland activity), bread, water and a regrettably large portion of heavy eggplant parmesan. 20.50 Euro, about 20 bucks. bob leaves a 2 Euro tip, that's about 4 thousand lire, unthinkable large in lira for Italian tipping norms, but these little coins seem so insignificant. And bob is happy about the food find.

The next day bob spends 30 minutes in line at his bank at the university. It's the last day to

exchange lire for euro, and bob was stuck with 105 thousand lire from the previous summer, the changeover having occurred in his absence. With an Italian bankcard in his possession for years now, waiting in line at the bank was a distant memory, but one which was ready to repeat itself with out of the ordinary bank activities like this one. This euro thing is great. With current near parity between dollars and euros, price translation is unnecessary. Armed with 50 bucks from the dead currency, a few extra meals are financed.

Saturday, the Festa arrives, and Rome Gay Pride Day supplies the party. A big parade from Piazza della Repubblica (near Stazioni Termini, the main train station) to the famous Bocca della Verita (mouth of Truth). A dancing horned devil-dressed spokesperson shouts on the loudspeaker from a truck float: "They say we are against Nature!... Well, then ... better (to be) against Nature!" Met with cheers from the dancing masses in tow. They sure know how to have a good time. Too bad the world is still such an intolerant place.

Evening arrives. Bob's call for a social encounter never comes so he heads off for the open air free films at the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and Piazza Farnese all clustered together in the heart of old Rome without dinner. Arriving closest to the first, minutes before the film starts just after 9 o'clock. A classic film of short black and white episodes from the early 1960s with Vittorio Gassman (1922-2000) and Ugo Tognazzi directed by Dino Risi. *I Mostri* (1963). Perfect little doses of Italian comedy. The call finally comes (cell phone of course) and the family arrives just after the halfway point intermission traditional in Italian cinema. We wander over to Piazza Navona where Gassmann is visible on the far end but in color this time. Bob manages to get a tartufo nero at [Bar Tre Scalini](#). Known throughout the world except by Romans. Not exactly the dinner he had in mind but tasty nonetheless.

What a wonderful evening for street social life hardly imaginable back in the States. Isabella (4) and Sofia (6) are having their first late Roman evening on the town. While waiting for Dad to arrive with the car near midnight, they discover an air vent which [balloons up their pink dresses](#), and remain fascinated for the longest time.

## ingredients

### rice base

- 1 c arborio rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 T butter
- 1/3 - 1/2 c white wine
- 1 12.5 mg packet powdered saffron
- 1 optional heaping teaspoon veggie broth paste or powder

### finishing touches

- 1/3 c fresh parsley, chopped
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1/3 - 1/2 c parmigiano, freshly grated

### option 1: zucchini flower addin

- 8 – 16 zucchini flowers, washed, stems and pistils removed

### option 2: cheese cubes

- 1/2 c small cubes of fontina val d'aosta and/or asiago or similar cheese

## instructions

1. Start 4 cups of water boiling in a teapot to supply the rice when needed.
2. Prepare the onion and saute it in the butter until soft.
3. Mix in the rice, stir around a bit, then throw in the wine and evaporate off, a couple minutes max.
4. Then add in the first cup of boiling water and the saffron. One packet is enough to turn the rice a bright yellow.
5. Continue to do the risotto thing, adding additional water say a 1/2 or 3/4 c at a time when needed, for about 18 to 20 minutes. Optional veggie broth concentrate may be added as well.
6. Do the al dente taste test. When ready, turn off the heat and mix in the finishing touches, including a hit of boiling water if needed.
7. If you cannot find zucchini flowers, you can stop here and call it *risotto alla milanese*, or add option 2 cheese cubes immediately before serving (since the heat quickly causes them to melt, and it is better if they still seem like blobs when eaten). If your company arrival time is uncertain, you can halt the process 5 minutes before reaching the al dente state and simply restart to finish it off when you want to serve it.
8. If by some miracle you score some zucchini flowers, chop them up and saute them in the olive oil only a minute in a separate pan (they are already soft) and then mix them in at the finishing stage. Literary integrity requires fair warning: this part remains guesswork until we find some zucchini flowers ourselves.

## notes

1. We discover risotto ai fiori di zucca also on the menu at Armando's at the beginning of via Tiburtina before the trip is over, later have lasagna with fiori di zucca at the Festival at Castel Santangelo after tripping on the curb while cell-phoning to Isabella and Sofia's parents inside and nearly breaking an elbow on the adjacent building corner, and then pizza with fiori di zucca some other night. And at home we find a variation of this risotto recipe (no saffron) in our [very first risotto cookbook](#) on the shelf of the dr bob cooking team library. Maybe we should get to know our collection better.
2. Judith and Norma based on real experience suggest instead to add the zucchini flowers a few at a time as the rice is cooking (more precisely a third after 5 minutes, another third after 10 minutes, the last third with the finishers). Maybe someday we'll get to try both approaches and compare, but this second route is clearly easier (and requires less fat, sorry Mario).
3. Well, Philly fans, fiori di zucca can be found after all right here at home in the USA. Scanning the [Best of Philly](#) entry this year for [Carlino's](#), phone number right there, dr bob calls 'em right up and talks to Joe the produce buyer and asks the question—and the answer is yes! One or two day's notice. Twice a week delivery. 20 bucks for a box of 50 that turned out to be 40 when they arrived a few days later, but still a bargain at 50 cents apiece for a rare treat. Carmel brand edible flowers shipped from Israel by [Agrexco Ltd](#) in this growing global economy. Thursday pickup for Saturday night dinner. The box said keep at 0 degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit), but our fridge which is a bit above freezing kept them fine.

## **addendum: [fried zucchini flowers](#)**

So we gave 10 away to marybeth without whose encouragement we would not have undertaken this search which met immediate success, leaving 30 for fried zucchini flowers and risotto. The fried zucchini flowers we did in advance so we would not be slaving over the stove when our guests arrived, and reheated them in the oven as an appetizer when they finally did show up. Not quite like in a pizzeria in Italy but then the cooks are not socializing with the clients there either.

The only authentic recipe we had in our cooking library was a couple sentences long in [Roma in Bocca](#), slightly mistranslated into english. Basically remove the pistils, carefully open and stuff each flower with a piece of anchovy and a cube of mozzarella cheese, then prepare a thick batter with flour, water and salt, dip them in and fry in lots of very hot oil. For the actual quantities, [marcella](#) at least had the batter described but did not bother to stuff the flowers. She says gradually add water to the flour until it reaches the consistency of sour cream, not very precise. We used a cup of flour and about 3/4 cup water and managed to do about 8 flowers with it, then repeated for another 8, trying to glob as much batter on as possible since in the frying stage the coating seems to thin out dramatically. marcella says salt the flowers immediately after pulling them out of the oil, but we just put some salt into the batter. The fine salt grains did not seem to want to stick anyway when we did a test shake over the finished product.

And marcella is also more explicit about the flower prep: don't soak the flowers, but very gently and quickly rinse them and then pat them dry with paper towels, and leave about an inch of stem to help with dipping and dropping into the hot oil. We forgot to remove the pistils but they were not noticeable in the finished product. We cut a medium mozzarella ball lengthwise into 1 cm square cross-section strips for the stuffing, and nixed the anchovies that we are not terribly fond of. It seemed to take forever for them to turn golden brown (maybe 15 minutes) as she suggested they should be before removal, but we were patient. Eventually they came around. We were able to do about 6 at a time in our 6 quart nonstick rice pot filled about 3/4 inch deep with vegetable oil.

We saved one wrapped flower to put in the freezer to see how long it would last. Those flowers that lost their stems in the prep process plus the rest were reserved for the risotto. About 13 all together if our count is right. We cut off the green bases and removed the pistils, and then cut them lengthwise into 3 strips. We coarsely chopped half of them and left the rest intact, adding them at 3 stages during the rice cooking as suggested above, leaving the whole ones towards the end. ani dumped in our usual quantity of veggie broth paste before bob could stop her, but the dark brown addition did not diminish the bright yellow color of the saffron, and probably improved the taste. Which was good. Unfortunately the digital camera was accidentally set for a minimovie, which has terrible resolution, so a useful photo of the colorful finished dish doesn't exist. The original [Roman restaurant dish](#) will have to do.

## reverse european weekend pasta: orecchiete with zucchini and arugula

The early dr bob lined-paper recipe-log notepads had quite a few pasta improvisations that had no storyline attached. Good enough to remember but no catchy hook for entertainment value. They finally met official death with the first dr bob cd tying-up-loose-ends campaign in 2002 after years of being carried along hopefully in the table of contents listing. Several orecchiete recipes were among this crowd. Perhaps even as good as this one. Which was inspired by the summer of 2002 six week dr bob Rome trip with no ms\_ani visit to break up the long separation.

Regular trips to Rome financed by somebody's academic research funds provide the dr bob cooking team with new kitchen ideas for back home. Interesting ingredient combinations registered for later first hand application. At least those that the team can actually remember after the trip. And recently crossing the mid-century mark has not done any favors to bob's already diminished memory capacity. This trip bob remembers a side dish combo: boiled potatoes, artichoke hearts, and cooked green fava beans warmed together in a skillet with butter and served. Fava beans look remarkably like our own familiar lima beans but apparently they are distinct and preferred in the Mediterranean. They come wrapped in an extra layer inside the pod that requires additional labor to remove. And then there was that penne pasta dish with zucchini and rughetta, the roman name for arugula, the stuff which is now readily available in the states for some years now but which is rounded, while the real thing over there has jagged edged leaves and is supposedly more potent.

Did we mention that Big Pharma is wrecking ani and bob's constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness through a sane vacation policy? Or was that in the Declaration of Independence? Something we should probably remember after all the visits to Independence Hall we've made with friends from out of town. Come to think of it, as burbites from the Philly Main Line we also qualify as out-of-towners. Anyway, getting back to the point, for nine years ms\_ani worked for Small Pharma (biotech). With three weeks vacation per year from the start. Then she moved up to Big Pharma and got cut back to two weeks with a 5 year waiting period to get back the stolen third week and some fraction of a lifetime more to ratchet that up to 4. Did we also mention that when you examine the details, a US vacation week is really only 5 days, so this 2 weeks means 10 lousy days. Did we also mention that Big Pharma makes about 3 times the average profit of American industries and owes its production success to a highly sophisticated work force in research and development? Wouldn't it make sense to keep these worker bees happy? And nobody except the top brass seems happy with this retro vacation policy, although with some poetic justice, 2002 seems to be the year that the top brass class is finally being caught with their pants down while conning everybody to rip off the system. This probably won't help the vacation problem go away though.

This ongoing vacation conflict came to a head with the 2002 annual dr bob summer visit to Rome. 3 vacation days already used up on one long spring break weekend visit to Paris for the quiche recipe [acquisition](#) (2 days) and one short weekend to Rome for our [first cooking school student's](#) wedding to Adele (1 day). [Weekend trips to Europe may seem a bit crazy, but what can a wage slave do when given no alternative?] Only 7 days left and ms\_ani decides to pass on the usual mid trip visit to bob this summer and save 5 for a fall break nobody-to-see, no-



schedule-to-follow Caribbean beach vacation. As opposed to her everybody-to-see Italian vacations involving trains, buses and boats moving us around in a desperate attempt to maintain our many friendships there.

After 4 weeks the 4th of July (Thursday) long weekend arrives and the prospect of waiting another 2 weeks still for a reunion simply elevates itself to the status of cruel and unusual punishment. The only solution? The reverse European weekend trip. Fly back unannounced to surprise ms\_ani. And cook up some delicious pasta while in town. Air France had the low budget weekend special through Paris. Half what bob paid for his indirect flight high season flight to Rome through Paris booked months in advance (since the direct flights were sold out at reasonable fares). And bought less than 24 hours before departure. Which was the same [7am flight](#) bob had had some previous experience with a few summers before, but this time armed with his own European cell phone needed for the 4:50am taxi reservation, although still trapped in a window seat due to Air France's continued unreasonable preflight seat reservation policy.

Back at home base, looking for a light dinner concept for two, bob remembers the zucchini and arugula. And impulse buys a companion ingredient (orange bell pepper). And some red onion borrowed from the salad idea acquired from Guido the night before in Baltimore (see below). The bell pepper came to mind from the leek and red and yellow pepper vegetarian substitution for the ham in Pascale's quiche recipe that had been realized the day before as well. And which bob had silently objected to thinking the pepper might be too heavy when in fact it turned out great. A splash of wine thrown in for good measure from the chilled French white already being sipped by the cooks. Served with the arugula and shaved parma tomato salad. Another success. This time with an accompanying story line.

## ingredients

- 2 T olive oil
- 1/4 c red onion, chopped finely
- 1 medium orange (or red or yellow) pepper, chopped finely
- 3 medium zucchini, quartered lengthwise, then sliced thinly.
- 1 plum tomato, liquified by a hand blender
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/4 c white wine
- 1/4 c pasta water
- 3/4 c finely chopped arugula
- 1 lb orecchiette, cooked al dente
- 1/3 c parmigiano, freshly grated

## instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling and when boiling, throw in some salt and cook the pasta al dente. Farfalle, fusilli or penne or some other short pasta would also work here.
2. Meanwhile, wash and finely chop the arugula.
3. Chop the red onion and optional color choice bell pepper.
4. Wash and cut the zucchini as described.
5. Sauté the onion and pepper in olive oil until both are softened.

6. Then add the zucchini and some salt and pepper.
7. After 10 minutes throw in the optional wine and evaporate off.
8. Puree the tomato and incorporate. Continue cooking.
9. Throw in some pasta water stolen from the pasta in progress and continue, say 20 minutes total from the zucchini insertion point.
10. Stir in the arugula and combine with the al dente pasta and parmigiano.
11. Serve with extra grated parmigiano and freshly ground black pepper.

## notes

1. Reverse European weekend: Friday midday arrival, Monday afternoon departure. Ani calls in sick Monday, encouraged by bob as on other occasions where a special day was needed. You gotta do what you gotta do, in defense of individual rights.
2. Big Pharma. You could read about its evils in the cover article of the April 9, 2001 [The Nation](#) by spy novelist John Le Carre' if they weren't themselves so greedy about charging for access.
3. **Arugula and shaved parmigiano tomato salad:**  
A handful of arugula. Washed of course. 2 plum tomatoes or the equivalent, chopped, then marinated with olive oil and a balsamic vinegar and 1/8 c finely chopped red onion. Combined with the arugula and shaved parmigiano when ready for serving. Simple.

*rewpsta.htm: 16-aug-2006 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# moist red baked chicken alla nora

There is no single chicken [alla nora](#). She uses no recipes, measures no ingredients, and likes to try different spice mixes. bob liked this one and asked her to at least list what went into the mix with a vague indication of the amounts that only had suggestive value. And then soon after attempted a recreation. Kind of like all the cold fusion people who went into action after the first big announcement. Except for the measure of success. The resulting chicken, while not exactly the same, was still good, and that's all that counts in the kitchen. Cold fusion, on the other hand, well, the cake did not rise in anybody else's kitchen so to speak.

## ingredients

### meat

2 lb skinless chicken (about 3 unsplit chicken breasts)

### dry stuff

salt and pepper to taste

1/2 t allspice

1/2 t cumin

1 cinnamon stick

1/4 t oregano

1/4 t thyme

1/8 t cardamom

2 cloves

1 bay leaf

1/8 t cayenne red pepper

### wet stuff

1 T sweet red pepper paste

1 T tomato paste

3 T olive oil

1/4 c lemon juice (from 1 or 2 lemons)

1 t vinegar

6 cloves garlic, pressed

### oven prep

1/2 c water

## instructions

1. Clean the chicken. Remember that some unacceptably large fraction of US mass market chickens come home with salmonella contamination.
2. Mix the dry stuff in a large bowl and then add in the wet stuff and mix together well.
3. Slime the chicken around in this marinade (use your hands), cover with plastic wrap, and marinate in the fridge for a few hours.
4. Put the chicken in a baking dish and add the water, then cover tightly with aluminum foil.
5. Bake in a 350° preheated oven for 1 hour.

## notes

1. Nora used hot red pepper paste, which we like most other Americans did not have, so we substituted the sweet red pepper paste plus cayenne red pepper powder.
2. This was so tender and moist, it just fell apart with the fork. Yum!

*chknnora.htm: 16-aug-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# lemon garlic green beans

Green beans. They can be so boring. We often glance at them longingly in the produce section wondering what we could do to make them more interesting. Memories of frozen green beans boiled and heaped on the plate from childhood make us turn away.

Actually there is a pretty good Armenian/Middle Eastern vegetarian main dish "*fasoulia*" or "*fassoulia*" made with tomatoes like a casserole that we often have at the in-laws and which occasionally ani makes at home, but other than that, our imaginations are coming up short. And they can be included in homemade nicoise salads, we've even done that. But as a principle ingredient of a side dish, we were ready to try this one from the *Bon Appetit* Too Busy to Cook section. Which means it is quick and easy.

## ingredients

- 1 lb green beans, trimmed
- 1 T olive oil
- 1 T grated orange peel
- 2 t grated lemon peel
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 c veggie broth
- 2 T (1/4 stick) butter

## instructions

1. Cook beans in large pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Drain well.
2. Heat oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Add orange peel, lemon peel, and garlic and stir 1 minute.
4. Add broth and simmer 1 minute.
5. Add butter and beans. Toss until beans are heated through and sauce coats beans, about 2 minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper and serve.

## notes

1. [Bon Appetit](#), June 2002, p.149. Green Beans with Citrus Butter Sauce. Thanks for sharing, Michael Hunter. He says 4 to 6 servings.
2. The original called for chicken broth but why ruin a perfectly good vegetarian recipe with liquified animal parts?
3. We had maybe half a pound of green beans on hand, we didn't weigh them, and no oranges to harvest fresh peel from. So we used a teaspoon of dried grated orange peel and the peel from one big real lemon. For that we have one of those nifty [Good Grips](#) citrus peelers that make what is called "zest", so in fact it is called a [lemon zester](#). And we used two pretty big garlic cloves for the half dose of beans cuz we love garlic. Pretty interesting...

*lggrbns.htm: 19-aug-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# ravioli with fat free arugula cream sauce

bob is a food voyeur. keeps reading all these restaurant reviews, and philly is a pretty good restaurant town so they keep on coming. always something new. sometimes he even gets to try some out. but mostly they remain a distant dream. ravioli with arugula cream sauce, just a phrase in passing in some review, who knows what food destination. no clue what it might be. but it stuck in bob's mind. unusual since his memory is not one of his strong points. absent minded professor image to live up to. not hard for bob to do.

anyway, the fridge is usually stocked with at least one package of exotic stuffed ravioli from the local authentic [Italian family](#) food source. with a backup [version](#) from Trader Joe's in the pantry not requiring refrigeration, for when the Carlino supply is temporarily out.

a little spice package of arugula gets grabbed at the supermarket. an already opened pint container of fat free half and half waiting in the fridge. fat free half and half—seemed too good to be true when bob spotted it by chance the week before. and no recognizably dangerous ingredients listed on the container. seemed okay for the first pasta sauce application. why not arugula cream?

so what might arugula cream be? never hurts to consult the cookbook library. for any kind of cream sauce with green leafy things pulverized together. nope. so... what to do. well, arugula pesto is lots of pulverized arugula with some pine nuts, parmigiano and a little garlic thrown into the mix. and we put freshly ground black pepper on practically every dish of pasta we chow down. sounds like the lineup we can use for the cream sauce, light on arugula since we only had 2/3 oz, which might have been like a half a cup of whole leaves if you didn't press them to the bottom. half a cup of fat free half and half. turn on the blender. already done. hmm.

## ingredients

- 1 lb high quality stuffed ravioli
- 1/2 c fat free half and half (substitutable by any cream product of any fat content)
- 2/3 oz arugula, maybe 1/4 c loosely packed if you imagine it already chopped up a bit
- 2–3 T freshly grated parmigiano
- 1 garlic clove
- a hit of freshly ground black pepper

## instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling and cook the ravioli (with salt, how much is never clear to bob, he just dumps some in) as directed until al dente.
2. Meanwhile dump all the other ingredients into the blender and blend until smooth.
3. Pour into your 4 qt nonstick chef's pan or equivalent and put on minimum heat for just long enough to warm the cream a bit.
4. Drain the ravioli and dump into the cream sauce. The heat from the recently boiling ravioli will finish the job on the sauce.
5. Serve immediately.

## notes

1. The sauce has a lovely light green color. And no accompanying fat laden cream guilt baggage. But if you can't find the guilt free stuff, remember it's only half a cup, divided in two or three servings depending on how hungry you are, go with light cream and sleep easy.
2. Not bad for such a quick improvisation. We'll do this again.

*aruglacrm.htm: 16-aug-2006 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*



# caribbean butternut squash soup

Turning 50 seems hard to imagine when you are young, but slowly it creeps up on you. Thirty something is still clearly young, and forty something is really middle age but by a stretch of the imagination you can still think you are young. However, hitting the half century mark is an inescapable sign that the young days are over. And time for a colonoscopy. Lots of bad stuff can happen down there in the second half century. Better to know as soon as possible.

Colonoscopy prep means flushing out the system the night before. Drinking a gallon of terrible stuff over a few hours time that does the job. And to make that easier, bob decided to do a primarily liquid diet the 3 days counting down to the event.

Just back from Barbados, where a Caribbean pumpkin soup recipe had caught his eye in a cookbook (which was not purchased to avoid adding to the inactive cooking library section, but an ingredient list got memorized and written down), soup seemed a good bet for the liquid diet, so it got put on the agenda. Butternut squash seemed like a good substitute for the pumpkin and the coconut milk seemed like a creamy way to avoid the fat of real cream, and it even came in a low fat version that reduced the fat even more. And the recipe had leeks, a good hook considering bob's weakness for this veggie. But caramelized and used as a topping. Hmm, easier to just throw them into the soup earlier. They were. But a special trip was required for the curry powder. Turned out that the cupboard only had cumin, one of the key ingredients of curry.

Well, the moment of truth. A little plain lowfat yogurt dribbled here and there in the bowl as a topping. bob takes a taste. The verdict: pretty good stuff. A success. We'll have to use more of this lite coconut milk in the future.

## ingredients

### bakeable stuff

1 butternut squash, split in half lengthwise

### sautee stuff

2 T butter or olive oil

1 medium onion, food processed

1/2 big leek or 1 small leek, food processed

2 cloves garlic, pressed

2 medium potatoes, food processed

1 t curry

1 t salt

1/2 t pepper

### liquid stuff

3 c veggie broth

1 c coconut milk

### topping stuff

lowfat plain yogurt

## instructions

1. Cut the butternut squash in half without stabbing yourself or slicing off important body parts. These guys are pretty hard and do not want to cooperate. Be very careful.
2. Bake the squash placed cut side down in a baking pan at 350° for 1 hour. Remove from oven and let cook until you can remove the skin and the seeds. Set aside.
3. Sauté the onion and leek in a deep nonstick pot with the butter/oil and the salt, and when soft, add the other spices, the potato and squash and the veggie broth. Simmer for about 30 minutes so the potato will cook and a little extra softening up of the rest occurs.
4. Add the coconut milk, adjust the spices to taste, and heat through.
5. Serve with dollops of yogurt in each bowl, freshly ground black pepper to taste.

## notes

1. Converted from pumpkin soup recipe in *Caribbean Cooking*, [Australian Women's Weekly Cookbook](#), with nice photographs of each recipe.
2. [Thai Lite Coconut Milk](#) produced in Thailand for [Andre Prost Inc](#), Old Saybrook, CT 06475. Turns out they have a whole bunch of [soup recipes using coconut milk](#). The [coconut dill carrot soup](#) looks worth trying soon.

*cbntsqsp.htm: 30-oct-2002 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*

## celery stew (ersatz<sup>4</sup> khoresh)

For many years we enjoyed regular home-cooked Persian food, courtesy of our good friend Nadereh. There were certain dishes that were really special, but seemed to require obscure ethnic ingredients that invariably were found in D.C. where there is a concentration of Iranians to buy them. bob's interest in these dishes even led him to buy two cookbooks by one of the most visible [Iranian cuisine cookbook authors](#) writing in English, who also lives in D.C. Which found a comfortable home on the shelf in the cooking library, but did not see any use. Until Nadereh moved to D.C. for a job opportunity. And only months later for the same reason, even Afsaneh moved away, who had at least presented hope of producing Iranian meals for us, although they had only materialized during her infrequent mom's visits. While we were happy that these moves meant positive changes in their lives, they left a big hole in our hearts ... and in our stomachs.

One evening quite by accident, we stumbled into action. Ani had tried to make [basmati rice](#) the night before, with potato slices on the bottom, and some saffron on hand thanks to a few packages of Italian saffron that we had reserved from the many hundreds we had imported for Nadereh over the years as a much cheaper alternative to US sources of the spice. All the while bob was complaining since he did not understand why rice almost by itself was worth putting on the plate. Prejudiced by his heavy risotto habit.

So the next night we had no clear plan of action for dinner or once-mobile entree ingredient, but the leftover rice and lots of newly acquired vegetables, some of which were for a Martha Stewart red lentil chestnut soup recipe that she refused to publish on the web like all the other TV cooks (but that is another story). Which is how the key ingredient, celery, happened to be on hand. And this sparked Ani's memory for the celery stew recipe in one of the cookbooks: celery and mint khoresh. The once-mobile ingredient (chicken or meat) had to be substituted; cooked favas stepped up to the plate. With some chopped artichoke hearts and carrots thrown in for good measure.

## ingredients

### sauté stuff

- 2 T olive oil
- 5 small celery stalks, chopped about 1 in long
- 4 small carrots, peeled and chopped about 1/2 in long
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped

### spices

- 2 T dried parsley (1/2 c fresh preferred, coarsely chopped)
- 2 T dried mint (1/2 c fresh preferred, coarsely chopped)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 2 12.5mg packages of saffron powder

### additives

- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1 lime, juice of
- 1/2 c water
- 1 15oz can turnip greens

- 1 15 oz can cooked fava beans
- 1 15oz jar artichoke hearts

## instructions

1. Clean the celery, carrots and onion and chop them as directed.
2. Sauté the sauté stuff until softened/browned a bit in the bottom of a pressure cooker.
3. Stir in the spices, and garlic (so it does not get burned if you had added it earlier), lime juice and the can/jar contents, including liquids unless too objectionable, in which case they should be replaced by a bit of water, just enough so the pressure cooking works.
4. Pressure cook 10 minutes at full steam.
5. Serve over saffron rice of some kind.

## notes

1. We were pretty impressed with this accidental but very successful first exercise in almost Persian cooking.
2. Bob took one bite and decided to immortalize the dish with a [photo](#).
3. Thanks for the inspiration, Najmieh Batmanglij. [A Taste of Persia](#), p.122.
4. *Ersatz* (adjective): "replacement; substitute or synthetic; the word usually suggests inferior quality." Oops, well, "usually" is not "always". But since *khores* as explained by Najmieh seems to be a stew that requires a once-mobile (i.e., dead animal) ingredient, this adjective is appropriate for our vegetarian version here.

*celstew.htm: 13-dec-2002 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*

# chocolate hazelnut torte

Supermarket checkout line. bob spots a food magazine special supplement entitled *Healthy Cooking* with a cover recipe of an inviting dense chocolate slab dripping with an overflowing chocolate sauce topping and hazelnuts in the name: chocolate hazelnut mousse torte. A chocoholic with a weakness for his favorite [dessert nut](#), and it's healthy too? How could bob resist?

So the recipe was in the mental to do docket. All that was needed was an excuse. Which ani provided. Restless to bake something one evening, the first idea that comes to her mind lacks essential ingredients. So bob suggests this one. Some ingredients are also missing, but nothing that can't be faked without doing damage. After getting started together, bob realizes that chocolate was not what she had in mind and has to finish solo. Poor spousal communication typical of males.

No applesauce left for the fat substitution. It doesn't last forever, and we'd finally cleared that out from supplies. But a jar of carrot baby food turned up waiting for the next [brownie cheesecake torte](#) (it had been waiting quite a few years already) that turned out to be exactly the required half cup. And only a few double chocolate chips left, but lots of high quality bittersweet chocolate to substitute them, roughly broken up in a guesstimate amount that was a bit hard to compare with the original 8oz units. But the exact amount is not critical here. And the extra chocolate sauce topping? Who needs it. A dusting of confectioner's sugar will do the job, improving the health stats a bit more and saving more work. And what does this have to do with [mousse](#)? We know mousse, and there was no mousse here.

## ingredients

### crust

- 1/2 c recipe ready chopped hazelnuts (or the equivalent)
- 2 c chocolate wafers
- 4 T melted butter
- nonfat cooking spray for coating the pan

### chocolate mixture

- 1 c lowfat milk (we use 1% but the nutritional analysis allowed for 2%)
- 1 3/4 c sugar
- 3 T coffee liqueur, like [Kahlua](#) (we were out! and used [Godiva Cappuccino liqueur](#))
- 1/4 c vegetable oil
- 8oz chocolate chips (or equivalent solid chocolate)

### flour mixture

- 1 1/2 c flour
- 1/4 c cocoa powder
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/2 t baking powder

### cake finishers

- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 c applesauce or 1 jar carrot baby food

2 t vanilla

### topping

sprinkle confectioner's sugar over each piece at serving time, using one of those little covered cans with holes in the top if you have one

## instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Blend or food process together the nuts and roughly broken up cookies. Then combine with the melted butter in a bowl and press evenly into the bottom (only) of an 8 or 9 in diameter spring-form pan coated with cooking spray (we used a 9 in pan to spread this baby out a bit more, smaller pieces, better health). Set aside.
3. Combine the chocolate mixture ingredients in a saucepan and melt them together on low heat, then stir one last time and set aside to cool.
4. Sift together the flour mixture ingredients in a large bowl and set aside.
5. When the chocolate mixture is cool, whisk in the egg, applesauce or carrot baby food, and vanilla and then stir in the flour mixture until smooth.
6. Pour into the crust filled pan and bake for 30 minutes, or until a toothpick jabbed into the center comes out with a few moist crumbs attached? [We baked this an hour and the center was still mush.]
7. Remove and cook in the pan for 1 hour or refrigerate overnight.
8. To serve, remove the side from the pan and sprinkle each serving with the optional confectioner's sugar and serve with a complimenting ice cream flavor on the side, which of course blows up the nutritional data if you are not careful.

## notes

1. The nutritional information includes the chocolate glaze resulting from whisking together 1 c sugar, 1 c cocoa, 1 1/4 c 1 % milk and 2 t vanilla over high heat until boiling then cooking on medium heat for 3 minutes—oops, remove from heat and then add the vanilla, sift through a strainer?—then cool in the fridge with the surface covered by plastic wrap until slapping on the cooled cake, a possible option:  
*14 servings, per serving: 373 cal, 5g prot, 55g carbo, 2g fiber, 17 g fat, 7g sat fat, 187mg sodium, 40mg cholest.*
2. [Healthy Cooking](#), December 2002, cover recipe, p. 57.
3. We'll have to replenish our [Kahlua](#) supply soon. And browsing the [Godiva](#) site reveals a [motherload of killer recipes](#). Life is too short.
4. Apart from a quarter wedge sacrificed to the in-laws (small pieces remember?), bob got to do this one [piece by piece](#) until it disappeared. With [Ben and Jerry Karamel Sutra](#) ice cream on the side. Yumm.

# garlic cumin long pasta

Some recipes work well right out of the box so to speak. No missing ingredients, no changes to make. Satisfactory results obtained.

This one is simple and quick and comes from a married French-Italian guy born in Morocco living in Paris and contributing to an American healthy cooking magazine. Another bob, but although we recall one classic French film in which the ill-fated hero was an [unlucky petty criminal named Bob](#) (later remade by Hollywood), there aren't a whole lot of French or Italian Bob's—this one goes by the name of Robert, but probably with a funny pronunciation. The cumin is the Moroccan touch. Which we happened to have on the spice shelf, probably a decade old but the shelf life of spices is not something many people pay much attention to, including us.

## ingredients

### pasta

12 oz long pasta: spaghetti, linguini, tagliatelle or fettuccine

### sauce

1/2 olive oil

1/2 c chopped fresh Italian parsley

1 T ground cumin (is there any other kind?)

1/2 t dried crushed red pepper

### finishers

salt to taste

freshly grated pepper to taste

freshly grated parmigiano to taste

## instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling and when ready dump in the salt and pasta and cook until al dente.
2. Meanwhile mix the sauce ingredients together and set aside.
3. Drain the pasta when ready, reserving about 3/4 c cooking liquid.
4. Return the pasta to the pot over medium heat and dump in the sauce and toss around to coat the pasta for about a minute, adding 1/4 c of the reserved cooking liquid at a time if dry, until it seems right, you'll know.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve with parmigiano on each serving or just dump some of that in too and serve.

## notes

1. Okay, we did have to substitute some dried parsley for the missing fresh parsley. Small detail.
2. [Illustration](#).
3. From Robert Colombi, *Too Busy to Cook?* section, [Cooking Light](#), December 2002,

p.214–215. He used spaghetti.

*grlcmpsta.htm: 16-aug-2006 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*



# fettuccine with zucchini and mint (mojitos!)

Mint was one of those things that entered dr bob's life with ms\_ani. It was always in her family's homemade salad dressing but it wasn't so obvious until the new sister-in-law [nora](#) arrived from the old country and kicked it up a notch ([Bam!](#)). Salad dressing is something we never buy. We just put together some olive oil, freshly squeezed lemon juice, some pressed garlic, freshly ground pepper and dried mint that we now keep a big stash of in the kitchen, and mix it into the salad greens, tomato, cucumber (avocado if in season) and we're in business. Nora increased the mint level enough to get bob to notice that it was there and ever since he's been following her example. Of course mint is also a key ingredient in our favorite [yogurt soup](#), or even in [yogurt drink](#) (basically plain yogurt watered down with water and some salt and dried mint factored into the equation) often found in various middle eastern cuisines. And at the in-laws when Isgouhi's spaghetti with a spare tomato meat sauce just barely coating every little spaghetti is served, on the side comes a little plate of bright green dried mint flakes to sprinkle over it with your fingers—who would have ever thought of such a combination? But it works.

On the down side there is peppermint candy, something bob never liked, and chocolate mints! What a waste of good chocolate. Apparently peppermint, spearmint and mint are all in the same family, but what a difference it makes what you do with the stuff.

For example, 2001 was the year of the [mojito](#) in philly ([Philly Mag Best of Year](#) August 2001 through July 2002, so we were not that far behind), apparently a local manifestation of a worldwide trend. Several authentic Cuban cuisine restaurants opened in the city and word got out. We were quickly informed by friends Afsaneh, Geraldine and Ellen, an international trio of ladies with good taste and more social radar than us, who replicated the drink they'd experienced in a bar for us to try at home (fresh crushed MINT, lime juice, sugar, rum, soda water, ice: the web is full of [recipes](#)). Soon after, following a particularly heavy movie in center city, we stopped in [one](#) of those restaurants for a drink to chill out a bit, trying the authentic real deal and staying on for a terrific dinner after checking out the tasty menu and the day's specials. The local newspaper also noticed the drink, providing us with a [mojito fish recipe](#) to try and then pass on to the AGE trio in reciprocity. This all happened at the same time *Cooking Light* provided us with an appealing mint and zucchini fettuccine recipe. We'd already noticed the [zucchini-fettuccine affinity](#), so with the mint radar up, this recipe became a high priority action item. We accompanied it with mojito salmon on the side, which turned out not to be as [photogenic](#) as the pasta.

## ingredients

- 1 lb fresh fettuccine
- 1 t butter
- 8 c 1/2 in cubes zucchini
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- 1/4 c fresh mint, chopped
- 1/2 t salt
- 3/4 t freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 T olive oil

1/4 c freshly grated parmigiano

## instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling and when ready throw in the pasta and some salt. [Leonora says omit the salt, but missed that remark and don't see the point. Add less salt later to taste.]
2. Meanwhile saute the zucchini and garlic in butter in a large nonstick pan for about 4 minutes or until softened. Over medium high heat but don't burn the garlic!
3. Stir in the mint, salt (to taste) and 1/4 t pepper.
4. When al dente drain the pasta.
5. Combine the zucchini mixture, pasta and oil, tossing to coat the pasta well.
6. Sprinkle with parmigiano and the rest of the black pepper. It is okay to exaggerate with the parmigiano as we often do.

## notes

1. From Leonora Morales (Santiago, Chile), [Cooking Light](#), June 2002, p.188. She's been to Italy many times and like bob decided to emulate their pasta-with-vegetable dishes back home (she suggests the occasional option of adding fresh tomatoes and pine nuts). We're glad she shared her experiment with us and we're happy to share it with you.
2. Nutritional information for 6 servings (1 1/2 c per serving):  
*CALORIES 258 (20% from fat), FAT 5.7g (sat 1.3g, mono 2.9g, poly 0.9), PROTEIN 9.2g, CARB 42.4g, FIBER 7.1g, CHOL 45mg, IRON 2.4mg, SODIUM 312mg, CALC 64mg.*
3. Of course ani and bob polished most of this off the first night by themselves. We are suckers for pasta.
4. [Illustrations](#).

*fetmintz.htm: 1-may-2003 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*