

# 1993

93-00.htm: [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]

# pressure cooked cow (pot roast) in red wine sauce

Cooked cow is not high on our list of favorite foods. But let's face it, we're still not vegetarians even if we do like to eat that way generally. We grew up carnivores. We still are. And in our defense, it must be said that we did not seek out this red meat recipe. It is a regular dish at the in-laws where we are regular guests. Where in addition to being frequently fed animal parts we are also continually subjected to mainstream American television. I'm not sure which is more damaging but we seemed to have survived both. Thus far.

So having reconciled ourselves to eat beef, this is a great way to go. The combination of pressure cooker efficiency and spicy red wine sauce magic help to soften up this sucker like overcooked potatoes. It's a Lebanese/Middle Eastern/Mediterranean/who knows exactly dish. That we've grown to love having occasionally, until such time as politically correct cuisine forces decide otherwise.

## ingredients

### cow group

- 4 lbs top round roast beef (least visible fat) cut in 5/8 in thick slices
- 2 heaping T (1/3 c?) Crisco
- 1 T vegetable oil

### spice group

- 1/2 t allspice
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/2 t pepper
- 1/8 t red pepper

### prepared stuff group

- 1/2 c red (or white) wine (red in title refers to tomatoes)
- 1 lemon, juice from
- 2 c chopped mature tomatoes (2 medium tomatoes, if available)
- 1 sweet red pepper, chopped (for the smell, if you have one)
- 2 T (heaping) tomato paste (3 if no fresh tomato)
- dissolved in:
  - 1 1/2 c hot water
  - 1 head garlic (8 cloves, coarsely chopped)
  - 2 t salt

## instructions

1. This is the family-serving-with-leftovers serving size. If you are capable of advanced preparation kitchen technique, rub the dried spice group over both sides of the beef the morning before the meal (or at least several hours before) and leave in the fridge to get acquainted better. If not, just do it at the cooking stage and skip the socializing period.
2. Heat the Crisco and oil in the pressure cooker (in an amount moderated by your fear of fat

level) to brown the slabs of beef (in stages until all are browned, removing them as done to make room for more). Meanwhile have somebody else do the veggie, garlic, and lemon preparation, or do it yourself before starting the browning.

3. Return all the browned beef to the pot and add the prepared stuff group (everything else in the list). Stir around a little. Cook about 5 minutes without pressure, loosely covered or not as you like, and then 10–15 minutes at full steam, letting it sit until the pressure subsides naturally.
4. We like it with [Armenian rice](#), and fresh nonfat plain yogurt on the side, and some veggies. You can serve it with anything you think is appropriate.

## notes

1. A [cute illustration](#) is available from the original hand written recipe.
2. Some [photos](#) too.

*pcprirws.htm: 2-aug-2001 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*

# tuna pasta?

Fancy pasta dishes are for planned dinners, which allow ingredient gathering and unpressurized preparation time. This pasta is for coming home with no lead time and a dinner goal of "as soon as possible," no hassles allowed. It's a one pot meal (actually 2 before they are combined into one) for quasi-vegetarians like dr bob and latent Catholics on the wrong side of Lent season, like ms\_ani. It requires having a few standard canned items on hand for just such improvisations, but little else. And it even has great taste. (Like the dr bob cooking team, although we have to confess the "tuna helper sin" committed repeatedly during our early twenty-something phase.)

## ingredients

- 1 lb fusilli (or penne)
- 1 onion, minced
- 2 T butter
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, halved
- 1 28oz can Italian style tomatoes (can a tomato have style?)
- 1 2.2oz can (= 1/3 c) chopped black olives
- 1-2 T capers
- 1 6oz can dolphin-safe tuna
- salt to taste
- cayenne red pepper powder
- 4 inch squeeze of anchovy paste tube
- generous freshly ground black pepper

## instructions

1. Start by getting the pasta water going on the stove. It takes a while to get boiling and the fusilli/penne then take their time on their way to al-dentization.
2. Then do the onion. dr bob does his onion in one of three ways. With the cowbell shaped cheese grater which is very quick but produces excessive onion juice which you must lose before sautéing. Who knows what escapes with the liquid. Or with his super duper veggie dicer (manual food processor, folks), seen at various U.S. home shows but picked up on the street in West Germany when there still was one. Or with increasing affluence, a food processor. This time we went with the dicer. Dry onion sautéed in butter and olive oil. With the two garlic cloves.
3. Okay, now for the cans. Open the pelati (tomatoes). Open the olives. Open the tuna. Open the capers. Oops, that's from a jar in the fridge. Then dump in the pelati. Dump in the olives. Dump in the tuna. (Into the pan with the onion.) Shovel in a couple of forkfuls of capers. Sprinkle in some salt and red pepper powder for a slight kick. Grind in some black pepper. Uncap the anchovy paste tube and squeeze out about 4 inches into the sauce. Simmer until the pasta is done.
4. Drain pasta, combine with sauce. Serve.

## notes

1. We hate anchovies. Never have them on our pizza. Yuck. But a little bit in a sauce can add to the taste. Since the word "little" is the key word here, toothpaste tubes of anchovy paste left in the fridge do the job nicely. (Don't mistake it for toothpaste: superyuckies!) We got the idea from an Italian woman's magazine with an accompanying paperback cookbook. Unacceptable to purists of course.

*tunapsta.htm: 2-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# asparagus and red potato salad

We like asparagus a lot. Of course it wasn't always that way. dr bob doesn't remember ever eating it as a kid. Fresh or frozen. In fact it was way into adulthood that he became vaguely aware of this usually overpriced vegetable that people apparently just had to have in season. Eventually he started having it too. There wasn't anything immediately grabbing about it. But as time passed, it became more and more valued. He began reading various ways of preparing the stuff. He bought one of those tall narrow pots that aren't good for anything else but asparagus. Without any clear moment of revelation, dr bob found himself among(st) the converted—a full fledged member of the asparagus lovers society.

dr bob also compulsively collects recipes. Cookbooks, cooking magazines, women and fashion magazine articles, and newspaper FOOD sections. Any category alone represents an information overload, but noncookbook categories have a sort of natural window of opportunity for overloading, so that any particularly interesting item, even if tagged in some way, gets lost in the growing stockpile of paper-based media on which it comes. This particular asparagus recipe got clipped from the paper and entered its temporary still-lying-around-in-plain-sight period before being committed to the archives. Amazingly enough the right combination of circumstances involving a surprise Sunday afternoon visit by a brother-in-law gave us the excuse to try it out and we all loved it. Enough to tell other people about it. So here's how it goes.

## ingredients

1 1/2 t garlic, minced

2 1/4 t Dijon mustard

6 T balsamic vinegar

salt

1 c (-1T) extra virgin olive oil

2 lbs small red potatoes (about 2in diameter) cleaned but not peeled

2 lbs fresh asparagus

1/2 c chopped scallions, including  
2in green stems

black pepper, freshly ground

1 head Boston lettuce, leaves  
washed and dried

Boston lettuce? What is it? We skipped it the first time, but used 3 red leaf lettuce leaves the 2nd time, finely chopped.

1 head radicchio, leaves washed

We chopped it the first time, forgot it the 2nd time.

and dried

1/4 c chopped parsley or chives or combination

We forgot this the first time, replaced it with 1/2 c chopped green of leak, sprinkling of freeze dried chives.

## instructions

1. Place garlic, mustard, vinegar, and 3/4 t salt in a nonaluminum bowl and whisk well. Gradually whisk in olive oil. (Dressing can be made 1 day ahead, covered and refrigerated, but really, how much time would that save?)
2. Bring 4 quarts of water to boil and add potatoes and 1 T salt. Cook until potatoes are tender when pierced with a knife, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain well. Cut potatoes into quarters, then halve the quarters.
3. Cut and discard tough ends from asparagus stalks. With vegetable peeler, peel stalks, starting just below the tips. Cut stalks on diagonal into 2 in pieces. Bring 4 quarts of water to boil and add 2 t salt and asparagus. Boil until tender, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain in colander and refresh under cold running water. Pat dry. (Both potatoes and asparagus can be prepared several hours ahead, covered loosely with plastic wrap and left at room temperature.)
4. When ready to serve, toss potatoes, asparagus and scallions in bowl. Heat dressing over medium heat until hot. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Arrange border of alternating lettuce and radicchio leaves on serving plate. Mound salad on leaves and sprinkle with parsley. Makes 8 servings. [We just served it all mixed up.]

## notes

1. We had something similar to this at the [Philadelphia Restaurant School](#), which added inspiration to try it. We had a couple great meals there years ago, but seem to have too much inertia to return. Must make a note about that.
2. **THE ARUGULA MAKEOVER.**  
Ten years later we are cutting down on carbs to help ani lose a few pounds. We see a piece on the South Beach Diet and the cardiologist who wrote the book and he actually sounds sensible and honest. The next day bob is thinking a salad with chunks of potato (not a lot, low carb remember?) and veggies, and some tuna on the grill pan, rare inside. Trader Joe's provides us with the small red potato chunks and garlic all ready to go (intended product use: garlic mashed potatoes) and since they have to be cooked, the hot potato salad idea naturally emerges, so we consult this recipe for ingredients on hand. Oops, that last bit of green onion gone. Only 3 leftover asparagus stalks and a half jar of baby asparagus (ready-for-use). We'd also grabbed a bag of triple washed baby arugula at Trader Joe's (how do they guess what we want so well?) to replace the greens, since we have been on an arugula trip lately. We start with a handful, tossed into our newly acquired inverted flat topped square pyramid shaped Crate and Barrel salad dish. And by now we have high end balsamic vinegar on hand for the dressing: we settle on about a third of the dressing ingredient amounts since this is only for the two of us, whisked together in our brand new 1 quart stainless All Clad saucier waiting to be heated. Only whole grained Dijon mustard

is available and turns out to be an improvement. We throw in a medium tomato, chopped, into the salad bowl that is. Then the chopped remnant asparagus. Ani cuts up a few fresh white mushrooms, into the mix they go. A handful of baby French string beans get steamed. The potatoes are done, heat turned off. Ready to do the tuna, salt and pepper, olive oil, ani takes care of that end. Meanwhile we heat the dressing. Dump in the drained warm potatoes, then the crisp green beans chopped into inch long pieces. The chopped tomato. Then the heated dressing. Grind a little fresh pepper into it. We toss until evenly distributed. The tuna is done. We thinly slice it and serve. Yes. A keeper. [A real chef would have wiped down the sides of the salad bowl, [the balsamic vinegar dressing looks quite messy, eh?](#)]

3. Maybe we should write ourselves a big note on the fridge to try to return to the Restaurant School this next decade since we never made it back this past one either.

*asprpsld.htm: 16-aug-2003 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*



# spaghetti squash or squash spaghetti? (or both!)

Wednesday, spaghetti day! Somehow this phrase was plugged into the postwar boomer generation that spawned dr bob. But can spaghetti in a squash substitute for spaghetti in a box? To be on the safe side, you can combine both.

dr bob loves food that comes with instructions. Like the [tilapia fish deal](#). With the 2 page supermarket owner's manual. Kitchen hints make the product so much more user friendly. This time it was spaghetti squash. Never had any before. And there was this little sticker on the end about how to cook it. For dr bob and the rest of the target market who had no clue what to do with the stuff. In the microwave even (oven, also fits the phrase). So we picked it up. It sat on the refrigerator a while. This yellow football-like veggie with a green sticker. "Do me this way." But the challenge was to do something more interesting with it.

One cookbook said it was perfect for combining with pasta sauces. Since dr bob was already thinking squash-based pasta sauce, he mistakenly took this as confirmation of his goal. But there were no squash-based pasta sauces in that book. Out came the *Talismano della Felicità*, *La Cucina della Felicità*, and various other Italian language sources of promised culinary happiness. Useless. The index just lists recipes by name, names which rarely reveal key ingredients, and which are organized by pasta type and not sauce names. These enormous tomes must have lots of secrets which will forever remain safe from the dr bob cooking team. At least they look good on the shelf.

So we went with the spaghetti squash casserole idea from the first American cookbook we had looked at. We even has some nearly deal scallions (= green onions, close enough) hiding in a bag of stuff from the mother-in-law jammed in the vegetable drawer at the bottom of the fridge, called for by this recipe. We improved on the cheese, since asiago was all we had lying around. A TV cooking show informed us that asiago is sort of like pecorino romano, the sharper tasting competitor for parmigiano reggiano. We had gotten it for a risotto with radicchio we'd seen on another cooking show and forgot to use it.

## ingredients

- 1 spaghetti squash
- 2 medium tomatoes
- 3 T olive oil
- 2 or more garlic cloves
- 1 t salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 c coarsely grated asiago cheese
- 1/4 c freshly grated parmigiano
- a few chopped up scallions (green onions?)

## instructions

1. Okay, this is pretty quick. First we cut the squash in half lengthwise and scooped out the seeds.
2. We put it in a dish with 1/4 c water, covered it with plastic wrap and nuked it on high for 9 minutes face down and 9 more face up.
3. It probably would have been easier to scoop it out later as advised by the book that we forgot to pay attention to. Seeing spaghetti squash become spaghetti strands for the first time was truly amazing. Once cooked, as you begin to pull out the squash from its skin, it just breaks apart into these spaghetti-like strands.
4. Meanwhile we sauteed the chopped garlic and chopped tomatoes and salt and pepper. Not long.
5. [Optional fish detour: Then threw in about 1/4 c white wine. And a couple pieces of white flat fish for the rest of our meal for two. They cooked pretty quick. Once removed,]
6. We threw in the spaghetti squash scooped out from its skin and the asiago and parmigiano and the scallions and stirred it up.

## notes

1. Not long after this first encounter with spaghetti squash, at a food fair (The Book and the Cook 1993), we picked up an Italian cooking magazine sample giveaway. And they had a whole section on winter squash, including spaghetti squash with spaghetti from a box. The *Journal of Italian Food & Wine*, Volume III, Number 1, Winter 1993 (p. 27), out of NYC. No trace of it on the web in 2002. Another casualty of the 20th century? Couldn't find the entrance ramp for the bridge to the third millennium? Here's what they said.

## spaghetti with spaghetti squash

### ingredients

- 1 spaghetti squash (most are rather large)
- 3 garlic cloves
- 5 medium thick slices of unsmoked bacon, or pancetta
- 3 T chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 t rosemary, leaves only
- 1/4 c white wine
- 1/4 c chicken broth
- 1 lemon, juice of
- olive oil
- 1 lb spaghetti # 8 or #9 (what, they have numbers?)

### instructions

1. Open the squash the long way and remove the "spaghetti" inside. Heat a little olive oil in a frying pan and add the garlic cloves and squash until they become a bit browned. Do not overcook. Boil water for pasta.
2. In a separate pan, brown the bacon or pancetta and discard the fat. Drain the cooked meat thoroughly and crumble.

3. Remove the garlic from the squash and add the rosemary, crumbled bacon, 1 T extra-virgin olive oil, white wine and broth. Cook on high heat stirring to coat all the squash.
4. When pasta is done, pour squash over it, squeeze lemon juice on top, sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve. If it needs moistening, drizzle a little olive oil on top. Serve with parmigiano cheese.

NOTE: Additions to this dish can be made. Saute onions slowly until they caramelize and add at the end. You may treat leeks the same way. Good tiny peas may be added at the end. The adventuresome might try hot red pepper flakes.

*spgsqsh.htm: 8-jan-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# red lentil and rice soup

I don't know if this is Armenian. Or Lebanese. Or a family tradition. Or just Isgouhi's invention (dr bob's mother-in-law). Whoever is responsible, this is a darn good soup, to use an awful(ly) American expression, and easy too. Unfortunately when we make it, it's never exactly like when she does. Must be the mother/mother-in-law curse.

## ingredients

### namesake stuff

- 1 c cracked red lentils (washed)
- 1/2 c white rice

### other stuff

- 1 large onion, quartered
- 2 1/4 qts water
- 1 t salt
- 1/2 stick (= 4 T) butter
- some small pieces of bread (at least a slice worth)
- 2 lemons, juice of
- red pepper powder, cumin to taste (optional)

## instructions

1. First you have to seek out the red lentils in an Armenian or Lebanese or Middle East specialty store, now also conveniently available at the local branch of the national natural whole foods supermarket chain. They look just like green split peas except they are a reddish orange color (putting split peas in orange dye is not an acceptable substitute). If you are lucky enough to score a bag, don't forget it in the closet like we did for so long. We have Isgouhi. You don't.
2. So get started by rinsing the lentils. About six times or so until the rinsing water is clean.
3. Then put them with the rice, quartered onion, and water into the pressure cooker and boil about 10 minutes uncovered.
4. Skim off as much of the white foam on the surface as possible. (Unlike beer, this soup shouldn't have a head). Then close the pressure cooker, bring to full steam and let'er go for 5 minutes, then lower for 10 minutes. Open and add salt to taste.
5. In a saucepan brown the pieces of bread (pita, American, whatever) in the butter.
6. Add to the soup together with the lemon juice. Then simmer together for a few minutes or until the desired consistency is reached. We like it thick. So we cut down Isgouhi's original 3 1/2 qts to 2 1/2 qts and then simmer it down longer afterward. After all this pressure cooking, the rice should almost dissolve into the creamy soup. Sprinkle some red pepper powder or paprika and cumin on each serving. Then enjoy.
7. If you're wondering who to thank afterward, it's "iss-goo-HEE."

## notes

1. Hours after typing in this recipe, the dr bob cooking team enjoyed a candlelit October backyard dinner at our close Turkish friends' house. Red lentil soup was the first course and bob had 3 bowls. Müge's mom also makes it, so it must also be a Turkish thing. She adds a large carrot for color (although it couldn't be seen in the dark!) and purees the result smooth, instead of the bread step. Either way, we are talking powerful comfort food here.
2. This gets really sluggish as a leftover in the fridge. Add some water to thin it out and heat it up and then mix in a bit of [Middle Eastern red pepper powder](#) and cumin (to taste) and some fresh lemon juice to give it a kick.
3. A twist on this is to use Italian arborio rice instead of the usual white rice, but you have to compensate by adding at least a cup and a half (estimate) more water. The result is even creamier and when appropriately thick, you can't beat this as serious "comfort food." Using crunchy bread croutons is also an excellent option and simplifies the preparation.
4. This recipe is bullet proof, and even interplanetary miscommunication (men are from mars, women are from venues) cannot ruin it. One much later run-through of this winter favorite, bob decides to help ani with the prep before getting back to test grading and sets out the cookbook recipe and each of the ingredients and gets out the quart glass measure for the water and puts in the first quart to be ready to add. Ani, notorious for not reading recipes, interprets this as the quantity called for in the recipe and goes with it, more than a quart low so to speak in the language of the old gas station tradition of checking the oil under the hood, very last century. When she realizes the soup stuck to the bottom forming a crust, she began trying to scrape it off and bob takes a grading break. The light bulb goes off. Not enough water. bob doesn't talk enough. It didn't seem to do much damage. A little thicker than normal. bob had two bowls, later realizing this was equivalent to four. His stomach realized this first. bob survived.
5. [Illustrations](#) available.
6. **UPDATE 2006.** Isgouhi decided to substitute bulgur for the white rice, which is news to bob but apparently not to the Middle East. Of course bulgur is much healthier than white rice, so this was a welcome surprise. Since hubby Barkev does not like the soup pureed, we ate it lumpy, but in fact it tasted like non-red lentil soup since red lentils disintegrate while other lentils retain their texture and the bulgur simulated the undistintegrated lentils. However, Isgouhi says the pureed soup would taste even better. Same procedure with direct substitution. We'll have to try it ourselves next time.

# mashed potato king

Once upon a time there was a typical meat, potato, and vegetable American family. The potatoes were often mashed. And in abundant supply. One family member would often assume the awesome responsibility of avoiding leftover mashed potatoes. By eating much more than the average meat, potato, and vegetable guy portion. Preferably with lots of gravy or butter. Though at the end of the meal the butter would no longer melt in its little well in the middle of the mound. Actually it was margarine, since this family was not in the butter tax bracket. [It was also the golden age of pre-fat awareness.] And when there were leftovers, they became mashed potato cakes, fried in butter (margarine) in hamburger shaped globs. In shorter supply being already in the leftover stage. But still fair game for the mashed potato king. dr bob before the dr.

Lately dr bob hasn't been having much mashed potatoes. But being an avid newspaper recipe collector, he stumbled on an article about mashed potatoes and ways to enhance them, assuming that one felt the need to improve on the traditional hunk of butter (margarine) and not too much milk. [Too much makes potato slop, right Claire?] However, with a food info glut of regularly and irregularly arriving cooking magazines and women's magazines in addition to the big cardboard box full of newspaper clippings, dr bob's faulty memory couldn't pin down the place he'd seen it. Fortunately it was on top of the pile where he first looked and became one of the few to actually get used.

Among the suggestions was using buttermilk instead of milk, but the supermarket was closed and the last bit in the fridge had fed the bread machine that afternoon. Nonfat yogurt could be substituted it said. And boiling a yellow turnip with the potatoes was another presumably mutually exclusive idea. Almost never had turnips before. The ones on hand turned out to be white. One was added with some garlic pulp leftover from pressing about 4 cloves for other purposes. The potatoes had been around too long and had to be peeled, but the new ones bought for the occasion got to keep their skins. The vitamins are supposed to be there. After about 15 minutes of full (salted boil), the chopped potatoes (roughly 3/4 in) sat in their potato water until serving time.

Then some leftover nonfat yogurt, about 1/3 an 8oz container, with a little milk thrown in, and a tablespoon of unsalted butter, and some fresh chopped parsley. And a half cup of grated parmigiano and romano were mashed together with our 5 speed electric beaters. Some salt and generous freshly ground pepper. Not bad.

Did we forget to list the ingredients?

## ingredients

- some potatoes, with skins if good enough
- 1 turnip
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1/3 c plain nonfat yogurt
- not too much milk
- 1 T unsalted butter

some fresh parsley, chopped  
1/2 c grated parmigiano, romano  
salt, freshly ground pepper to taste

## instructions

1. See above.

## notes

1. This is not a real rigid recipe. But it began the mashed potato renaissance in the dr bob cooking team circle.
2. Claire is half-American, half-French, but raised French. Apparently without cooking lessons. With a newborn daughter on a year long academic visit to [Berserkely](#) with her absentminded professor husband (totally French), she was initiated into the mom/housewife business. Being European, it was natural to invite the neighbors for dinner. She had an American cookbook (sublet furnished apartment) and tried the mashed potatoes, but not being well versed in the amazing American units, overdid the milk a bit. Not being (fully) American, she did not know the difference. We did not tell her.

*mshptkng.htm: 2-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# still waiting for [gabriella's lasagna](#)

[in progress]

INGREDIENTS FOR AN 11in x 14in x 2.5in ROASTING/LASAGNA PAN

OR 12in x 18in x 3in CALPHALON ROASTING PAN

Note: 11\*14 = 154, 12\*18 = 216, so percentage increase about 40 percent

## **bolognese meat sauce**

| 11x14                     | 12x18 | in <sup>2</sup> pan size |
|---------------------------|-------|--------------------------|
| <b>food process group</b> |       |                          |
| 1 c                       |       | large onion              |
| 1 c                       |       | celery                   |
| 1 c                       |       | carrots                  |
| <b>meat saute group</b>   |       |                          |
| 3-4 T                     |       | olive oil                |
| 1.4lb                     |       | lean ground beef         |
| <b>sauce group</b>        |       |                          |
| 2 c                       |       | dry white wine           |
| 2 c                       |       | milk                     |
| 1.5 t                     |       | nutmeg                   |
| 3 28oz cans               |       | italian plum tomatoes    |

## **bechamel sauce**

| 11x14                    | 12x18           | in <sup>2</sup> pan size |
|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 5 c                      | 7 c             | milk                     |
| 10.5 T = 1 stick + 2.5 T | 16 T = 2 sticks | butter                   |
| 7.5 T flour              | 11 T = 2/3 c    | flour                    |
| 1/3 t                    | 1/2 t           | salt                     |

## **lasagna pasta**

| 11x14   | 12x18   | in <sup>2</sup> pan size |
|---------|---------|--------------------------|
| 5       | 7       | large eggs               |
| 3 3/4 c | 4 1/2 c | pasta flour              |



or  
 ? lb                    ? lb                    pasta sheets  
 [?? ?x? sheets] [?? ?x? sheets]

## two years later: preliminary notes

We again find the courage to face The Lasagna. By this time we have been using Marcella's [new book](#) rather frequently so we check the new version of her Bolognese sauce recipe. Surprise, it seems completely different. So we decide to fake it based on our previous experience and the license given to us by the radical change in proportions in the official recipe. Not that we carefully recorded our improvisation. Feel free to be imaginative.

We'd been hunting down a suitable big deep lasagna pan that would do justice to the real thing and finally we found an adequate solution: a 2.5 in deep 11 in x 14 in nonstick roasting pan. When we go to all this trouble, we want to make a lot of it. For this pan we decided a 6 egg pasta recipe would be needed, but it turns out that 5 would have been enough. The trick is not to boil all the noodles while assembling but to hold off till you see exactly how many you need—and then you can make fettuccine out of the rest. We had to freeze most of our boiled remnants but did catch on in time for enough fettuccine for two some night. Also frozen. Later we bought our first [Calphalon](#) pan: a bigger roasting pan, this one 12 in x 18 in x 3.5 in, for a real monster lasagna, though we got it for a turkey.

The 5 egg recipes should take about 2 hours to "work" and boil, but you have to make the dough in advance and refrigerate it in a bowl covered by a damp towel at least 1/2 hour (or the day before if you like) before this phase. The boiling is done immediately afterward. We got two 12qt stock pots 2/3 full of water boiling during the rolling phase and did 3 noodles at a time in each pot. They are done in some fraction of a minute but fishing those suckers out with a big round flat hole-filled long handled kitchen tool (what is that thing? a strainer?) and a long handled flat wooden spatula is no picnic—and not quick—so who knows how much longer than necessary we abused the noodles. They taste great anyway.

Assembly is rather quick compared to the other phases—about a half hour. We were able to do 9 layers with the amount of sauce per layer we used. Afterwards, it seemed like too much sauce compared to the noodle value. One really has to try to use the minimal amount per layer for a good result.

## Phase one: the sauce

This takes about 4 hours minimum and is probably best done in advance (like days before). We chopped up the onion, celery, and carrots in our small food processor (since we had not yet purchased the real one). The "1 cup" quantity is only a guess. We sautéed this a while in olive oil, first the onions, and then together with the carrots and celery, but cannot see any reason why they can't all start together. As for the meat, one could probably just skip it and convert this to a vegetarian dish that would be just as good, but we haven't tried that yet. (Mushrooms are a thought.) We added 1.4 lb only because that was how much our frozen package in the freezer weighed. Less would have been fine. Throw in your choice of amount (thawed is better!) with

salt and a few pepper mill twists and break apart the ground beef into its grinds (?), cooking it until no longer red. Then add the milk and simmer, stirring frequently until the milk has bubbled away (judgment call) and stir in 1/4 t nutmeg. Add the wine and simmer till it evaporates. Then add the tomatoes and stir everything up well. Once the mixture starts to boil again, turn down the heat so that the sauce barely simmers—with solitary bubbles surfacing occasionally. Cook uncovered at least 3 hours or more, stirring occasionally. When done, taste for salt and add if insufficient.

## **Phase one: the noodles**

### **the hard way**

later.

### **the easy way**

Buy fresh pasta sheets. We have gotten them both at the national whole food supermarket chain and at our favorite Italian specialty store. They are still not thin enough for real lasagna, which we prefer at the last notch of the roller pasta machine setting (they are at the next to last setting), so they must be cut in about 3 in strips and passed through the roller machine to flatten out a bit (to about 4 in). Then 3 strips per layer, with lengths cut to match the pan.

## **phase three: boiling and fishing**

[in progress]

## **phase four: assembly**

[in progress]

## **phase five: baking**

[in progress]

## **notes**

finally gabriella shows us her technique under extenuating circumstances in the States.





amazing. Move on to our [concluding remarks](#).

wfglsgn2.htm: 22-sep-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]

# rachele's woman's magazine carrot vegetable pasta (maccheroncini alle carote)

rachele made this pasta for us in Italy after other friends raved about it. We liked it too. But our letter reminding them of our request for the recipe took quite some time for a response via gianpiero's e-mail. Finally the photocopy of the magazine page showed up in the mail with a little note saying that it takes a lot less than 40 minutes if you use a pressure cooker as she does. bob forgot this part of the note until after following the original recipe pretty closely.

For 4 persons, about 40 minutes total, unless you pressure cook:

## ingredients

400 g maccheroncini (1 lb elbow macaroni or butterfly pasta)  
300 g carrots (about 3 or 4 medium carrots)  
1 smallish eggplant  
2 narrow zucchini  
1 large clove of garlic (or to taste)  
20 g ~ 1.5 T butter  
3 T oil  
.05 l ~ 1/4 c cream of your choice  
30 g ~ 2/3 c grated parmigiano or other "grana"  
1 T chives, chopped  
salt and pepper to taste

## instructions

1. Peel carrots, slice and boil in salted water until soft, about 10 minutes. Drain and puree' in a suitable kitchen gadget: blender or food processor.
2. Put the result in a small nonstick pan on low heat for about 5 minutes, then salt and pepper to taste (dr bob has no taste so just eyeballs it unless ms\_ani is around to handle the salt decision) and stir in the cream, presumably with the heat off.
3. Meanwhile after the carrots are on their own on the stove, peel the 2 zucchini, and cut each lengthwise in half and then in half again (in quarters) and then slice widthwise about 3/16 inch slices. At least that's what we did once. You may julienne them or chop them in any way you see fit (the recipe says cube them). Slice the unpeeled eggplant widthwise and then into small cubes.
4. Peel and press one large garlic clove into the oil and butter in a saucepan and start heating. As soon as the garlic starts dancing, throw in the chopped zucchini and eggplant. Sauté 10 or 15 minutes, 15 is better. Then salt and pepper to taste.
5. Meanwhile, probably at step 3, start the pasta water boiling. Dump in your choice of pasta when the water is boiling (preceded by some salt). Cook until al dente. Drain. Put back in the pot over low heat (?). Stir in the carrot sauce and parmigiano and finally the sautéed vegetables and chopped chives.
6. Eat.

## notes

1. rachele used butterfly pasta (farfalle). We used cavatelli. Maccheroncini you will never find written on a box of pasta in the USA, but they are just small elbow macaroni. Since our version did not measure up to rachele's maybe we should have stuck with the farfalle.
2. Chives are not an ingredient that frequently finds its way into our cooking, and when we did this originally in the early nineties where we live, fresh spices were more difficult to come by. Nowadays they are much more easily found in supermarkets.
3. So we should redo this in a pressure cooker. Hmm. What about the liquid? We better get in touch with rachele again. gianpiero, ..., help!

## rachele's revision 2001

ciao Bob and Any,

You are very patient, but finally you get the answer to the macaroni with carrots recipe.

I use the pressure cooker to cook all the vegetables. Starting with the carrots, peel them off and put them into the pressure cooker with a quarter of glass of water and cook them for about 5 minutes. When they are done, puree them in a mixer and make it creamy but adding the boiling water and the cream.

Then, you can cook the other vegetables into the pressure cooker. In another 5 minutes they will be ready. It is difficult to say how much water you must put into the pressure cooker (maybe 2 tablespoons?)... if it is too much you will have some "broth" (vegetables are releasing their own water!!!).

The chef final touch is to put all the ingredients together with the too much "al dente" pasta and let it cook for another 3 minutes on fire, stirring it continuously.

Try it and tell me which method you prefer.

Ciao  
Rachele

**still to try...**

## bucatini two ways

One of our favorite "long pasta" dishes in Rome is *bucatini all'amatriciana*. Bucatini are spaghetti length straight macaroni, about 3mm wide, while perciatelli are somewhat narrower. For some reason [DeCecco](#) imports perciatelli to the US instead of the more common bucatini found in Italy, so we end up using them, instead unless we get fresh bucatini from [Carlino's](#), our local trusted fresh pasta source. When cooked, both are somewhat less user-friendly than spaghetti in the fork-rolling and mouth-insertion phase because of their extra thickness, seeming to have a mind of their own which easily leads to sauce splattering. Wearing a big napkin tucked in at the neck is a wise move when feeding, if protecting your shirt from ugly tomato sauce stains is something you care about. If you are one of those long-pasta amateurs who already has trouble rolling spaghetti on a fork, you're in trouble here. Lots of slurping is required, but try to avoid overly loud sucking noises.

The traditional amatriciana sauce is made with tomatoes, garlic, and pancetta, an Italian lean bacon that comes in a roll like lunchmeat until sliced (thick, request about 1/8 in thick slices from the 3 1/2 – 4 inch diameter roll) but which is not really substitutable by American bacon and should not be tried. With a touch of pepperoncino for an extra kick, but not enough to make it spicy hot. We trust [Marcella](#) on this one.

But if we don't have any pancetta in the freezer waiting for this dish, we have to improvise. For our nontraditional sauce, we had some garden fresh tomatoes from a relative and some farm fresh sweet peppers and a bag of mint leaves from a friend. Fresh tomato based sauces are quick and delicious and can even be nutritious, as we hope this one is.

## perciatelli with fresh tomato and sweet pepper sauce

### ingredients

#### for two people, no leftovers:

- 1/2 lb bucatini/perciatelli
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1 sweet red pepper, chopped
- 2 medium, ripe tomatoes, skinned and chopped
- 1/4 t cayenne red pepper
- salt to taste
- black pepper, freshly ground
- 2 T fresh mint, chopped
- 1/4 c freshly grated parmigiano

### instructions

1. First start the pasta water boiling. Then begin the sauce but take a timeout to throw in the pasta when the water starts boiling enthusiastically, preceded by some salt of course. (Our

DeCecco perciatelli box says 11 minutes boiling time.)

2. The tomatoes also require maybe 30 seconds in boiling water to loosen the skins, which must then be peeled. You can do this in the pasta water just before throwing in the pasta.
3. Over low heat, sauté the garlic in olive oil a few minutes, then add the chopped pepper.
4. A few minutes later throw in the chopped tomatoes. Let simmer.
5. 10 minutes from the start throw in the spices. Turn off after few minutes.
6. When the pasta is done (al dente), drain and return it to the pasta pot, stir in the sauce and parmigiano and serve.

## notes

1. We never peel the tomatoes, but maybe this once we did... If it's too much of a hassle, forget it. A little skin never hurt anyone... [This attitude was confirmed by a Philly food writer Jim Quinn whom we really respect for his wonderful food writing, in a [Philadelphia Magazine](#) article about fresh tomato sauces from South Philly (saucy things; Quinn on Food; Aug 2000 (Page 235).]
2. A little detail we never discuss: How much salt in the pasta water? Big grained salt, fine grained salt? bob never really knows and just dumps some fine salt in, but marcella says 1 1/2 t per pound of pasta.

## bucatini all'amatriciana

### ingredients

1 lb bucatini/perciatelli  
2 T olive oil  
1 T butter  
1 medium onion, chopped fine  
2 1/8 in disks of pancetta, chopped into small pieces, say 1/2 x 1/4 x 1/8 in  
1 1/2 c canned imported Italian plum tomatoes, drained and cut up  
chopped hot red chili pepper to taste  
salt to taste  
3 T freshly grated parmigiano  
3 T freshly grated romano

### instructions

1. Again start the pasta water boiling etc.
2. Put the oil, butter and onion in a saucepan over medium heat and sauté a bit, like usual.
3. Then add the pancetta and cook about a minute, stirring a few times.
4. Add the tomatoes, chili pepper, and salt and gently simmer uncovered for 25 minutes.
5. Taste and correct for salt and hot pepper.
6. Drain the pasta and toss with the sauce, then mix in the cheese.
7. Serve with optional freshly ground black pepper, more cheese if you really love it.



## notes

1. We just use the standard large can of Italian plum tomatoes, or even just fresh plum tomatoes, skins and all.
2. This is a terrific pasta combination.

*bucatini.htm: 2-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# zucchini with saffron pasta sauce

We are continually resisting being seduced by new pasta cookbooks, without any consistent success. The ones full of glossy color photos are the hardest on our resolve. And when a sales guy walks into the ms\_ani workplace with a sample copy to generate interest at only \$2.99 per copy, complete with the glossy color photos, it was an offer that could not be refused. ms\_ani took the lead and others followed suit.

Of course usually these cookbooks just end up on the shelf. Unused. But we had some fresh zucchini in the fridge and not much else. And needed a zucchini idea to make it through dinner, without going to the supermarket, which we love to do of course, but not when it's too late. So since this cookbook was a fresh acquisition, we checked it out and came up with a winner. Zucchini with a creamy saffron sauce. Alas! No cream in the house, laments dr bob. We can't do it. No problem, says ms\_ani. We'll just use milk. Milk? No, we can't do it. Milk with cornstarch. Hmm. Maybe. After all, what alternative was there? Besides, this substitution makes it much healthier! Still skeptical, the dr left it to the ms. And it was a success! Even better as leftovers for lunch the next day. The well known (to some) aging effect of pasta.

Of course your kitchen may have the cream but not the saffron. dr bob is a big importer of cheap Italian saffron for Iranian friends who are heavy users. 125 mg packets at roughly 50 cents a shot compared to an outrageous \$3.50 circa for a probably comparable amount in those big glass jars you see in american supermarkets. So we keep a few packets ourselves just in case. Italians use saffron for risotto alla milanese, which is probably the most famous risotto dish that we've never made. Just yellow rice seems a bit boring to us, so we rarely have occasion to dip into our saffron supply.

## ingredients

1 lb penne or orecchiette  
3 T olive oil  
1 1/3 lb small young zucchini, cut into 1/4 in slices  
salt, pepper, nutmeg to taste  
2/3 c milk + 1 t cornstarch or 2/3 c cream (light, half and half, heavy, whipping?)  
1/2 T saffron ?  
parmesan cheese

## instructions

1. THE PASTA:  
Cook the pasta. You know the routine. Al dente.
2. THE VEGGIES:  
Sauté the garlic and zucchini until browned but still crisp (i.e., not limp, nor as in "burned to a crisp"). Add the spices "to taste".
3. THE SAFFRON CREAM:  
If your arteries are feeling daring, bring the cream and saffron to a boil and simmer gently until it thickens slightly and attains a "mellow saffron color" (is that anything like "mellow

yellow"... the 60s song by Donovan?). If you are health conscious like us or just don't happen to have cream on hand, mix the cornstarch with the milk and saffron and proceed as in the cream scenario.

4. ASSEMBLY:  
After draining the pasta, return to the pot and combine with the zucchini and saffron cream.
5. SERVE.

## notes

1. The american motto "bigger is better" does not apply to zucchini. Look for the narrowest ones at your supermarket.
2. You might consider an Italian specialty store for the saffron.
3. Oh, the [pasta cookbook](#)... we should pull it out and try some more things...

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

# pizzoccheri?

Pizzoccheri are a well kept secret of northern Italian cuisine, from the part of Italy at the northern border where they speak Italian with a German accent and make smelly fontina cheese. But a secret that has not escaped [Marcella](#) or the pasta cookbook author whose [book](#) we grabbed in Pier I Imports when we spotted the authentic looking recipe.

The dr bob team had been introduced to pizzoccheri, long buckwheat pasta noodles about fettuccine size but shorter, by [Piero](#), who brought them to us from Italy and showed us how to make the traditional recipe. We forgot to take notes at the time. Years later we had one box left and managed to find a one time buy of another box at our local authentic Italian products store. But we were saving them for a special occasion which never seemed to come. When we discovered them in our local supermarket, we finally decided to buy the smelly cheese and do up a box for no special occasion at all. But the Savoy cabbage took some time to locate. It finally showed up at the same supermarket and the dish was immediately green-lighted. By this time the smelly cheese was also seriously moldy, so it had to be trimmed down a bit. To our chagrin, the expiration dates were respectively 2 and 3 years earlier than the current year. Although we had a brand new box in our hands and several more boxes in stock waiting in the supermarket (not moving fast, as you might imagine), it seemed a shame to waste such a great product. We went with the two year expired box to see what would happen.

Without Piero nearby, we went with the cookbooks and our better judgment. One said half a pound of Savoy cabbage, the other 3 1/2 cups. The cabbage head we had seemed like it was heavier but we didn't stop to weigh it. Once cut up it seemed like more than 3 1/2 cups too but what the hey. We through it all in anyway. The recipes weren't very clear about how the potatoes should be cut up either. Between the two cookbooks and the 3 different brand box abbreviated recipes, we went with the "small cubes" suggestion on one. About 1 cm or 3/8 in on a side, on the average. [Note that since potatoes are not rectangular, this is only a rule of thumb.]

## ingredients

### boilables

- 1 lb pizzoccheri della [Valtellina](#)
- 1 T salt
- 3 - 4 medium potatoes, cut into small cubes
- 1 small head Savoy cabbage (1/2 lb?, 3 1/2 c?), cut roughly into strips 1/2 in by 2 1/2 in

### sauté-ee's

- 2 T unsalted butter
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, sliced
- 6 fresh sage leaves, chopped [or 1/2 t dried]
- 1 leek, chopped [optional, if unavailable]

### finishers

- 1/4 t salt
- freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1/2 - 2/3 c grated parmigiano

1/4 -1/3 lb fontina valle d'aosta

## instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling.
2. Ready the potatoes. Peel if you must, then cube.
3. Wash the cabbage and cut into strips.
4. Cut the cheese into thin slivers.
5. When the water is boiling seriously, dump in the potatoes and salt, cover, return to a boil, and continue uncovered for about 4 minutes.
6. Add the cabbage, cover and bring to a boil again, then continue uncovered for 5 minutes.
7. Add the noodles, cover and bring to a boil yet again and cook 8 - 12 minutes until the pasta is not quite al dente.
8. Meanwhile sauté the garlic, sage and leek in butter and oil until softened up a bit.
9. When the pasta is ready, drain briefly but don't shake out the liquid.
10. Return the pasta to its pot and mix in the sauté mixture, parmigiano, salt and pepper.
11. Put half the mixture in a large enough casserole dish (or a large one and a small one) and cover with half the fontina slivers. Repeat.
12. Put on the top rack of a 400° F preheated oven for 5 minutes to melt the cheese.
13. Then remove and let sit a couple minutes and serve. This is a hearty meal.

## notes

1. [Marcella](#) actually prefers Swiss chard stalks (leafy parts removed) to savoy cabbage, but if necessary, one can use whole Swiss chard or even under desperate circumstances spinach according to the more flexible alternatives. However, we don't think it will be the same.
2. If the stinky fontina valle d'aosta is out of the question, regular Italian fontina or even Bel Paese may be substituted perhaps. We've never betrayed our valle d'aosta. [Although its from the Valle d'Aosta region and not the Valtellina region to the east, where they may use caseri cheese instead.]
3. Not only did we survive the 2 year outdated box, but the 3 year one as well.
4. If pizzoccheri are just a pipe dream where you live, both our cookbook references have slightly differing recipes for the fresh pasta, one with eggs, one without. But without trying it first, you'll never be curious enough to go to all that trouble, will you?
5. [Illustrations](#) available.
6. After trying the [new pizzoccheri recipe](#) with sausage a few times, we have been adding 4 links of sweet fennel Italian sausage, skins removed, diced, sautéed with the garlic and sage to add an extra kick to this dish. Increasing the comfort food index a few notches.
7. **2002 update.** This recipe is bullet proof. We find ourselves stretching it a lot each time we do it. Besides the sausage. Extra garlic, pressed into the leek sage butter oil mixture instead of just sliced. Extra sage which we always keep in the freezer ready for this dish. Maybe 12 leaves chopped. Oops, we found ourselves out of leeks when we tried this with some buckwheat gnocchetti della Valtellina we found next to the pizzoccheri on the supermarket shelf in Rome this summer. (Bosco brand from Cepina Valdisotto, usual pizzoccheri recipe on the 500g package.) So two yellow onions finely chopped stood in for them (minus the sausage, which turned out not to be left waiting in the freezer as we had thought). And instead of the broiling routine, we put the whole thing in the oven at 350°

for a while waiting for some in-laws who then did not even show up. Still great for just the two of us. With lots of leftovers. Refrigerates well. Freezes well.

*pizzocri.htm: 3-sep-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# fresh avocado and tomato cold spaghetti

Avocado and cold spaghetti? Pretty weird, huh? I guess this qualifies as a [summer pasta](#), served cold to beat the heat. We did this once and liked it, but somehow never got around to a second trial for a long time, just out of sheer laziness. It comes from Julia della Croce's [pasta book](#) which we snagged in a Pier One impulse buy. An accompanying story was never recorded, so that this recipe was later almost yanked from the collection in 2002 except that 1993 was a prolific year and the following 9 recipe files and table of contents listing would have had to have been edited to change the consecutive numbering if removed.

Adding an after-the-fact note seemed like the path of least resistance. We love avocado's and will try it again this summer. Promise. Meanwhile, this is how it goes.

## ingredients

3/4 lb spaghetti  
1 lb sweet vine ripe tomatoes, or cherry tomatoes  
1 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and thinly sliced  
a large garlic clove, minced finely with a knife  
1/3 c extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 t salt or to taste  
freshly ground black pepper to taste

## instructions

1. Boil the pasta water and dump in the pasta and some salt when ready.
2. Prepare the tomatoes, chopping into small pieces unless cherry tomatoes are used, in which case they can be halved.
3. Put the tomatoes in a large serving bowl with the avocado and rest of the ingredients.
4. When the pasta is cooked al dente, drain and while dripping wet, transfer to the bowl and toss with the sauce.
5. If the pasta is too dry, add a little more olive oil and re-toss.

## notes

1. The original recipe called for blanching peeling and seeding the tomatoes, an activity we refuse to do. It also noted an optional additive: 1 T of drained capers.
2. We probably refrigerated the sauce while waiting for the pasta.

*fatcspg.htm: 26-may-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# purple rice (blueberry mushroom risotto)

## sales pitch

Okay, so you had to be convinced about [strawberry risotto](#). But you tried it. [Right?!] And you liked it. [Right?!] So once you open up the door to one fruit, it's no big deal to let another one sneak in. [Right?] Meanwhile we are reminded that the king vegetable of Italian cuisine, the tomato, is technically a fruit! [Out of the closet, you fraud!] So here's another delicious exotic risotto to impress your dinner guests with, namely, blueberry mushroom risotto [risotto con funghi e mirtilli!] from a fashion magazine.

## history

We're experiencing a cultural explosion here on the Main Line (western Philly suburbs) these days. Two new book superstores in our town alone, with a super alternative video store, and a great new Tuscan Italian restaurant with brick oven pizzette. A new high tech supermarket down the Pike (Lancaster) at the exit of our new superhighway, the Blue Route (destination IKEA!). A new wholesome food supermarket a bit farther west (followed by another branch in the east). A new Mediterranean Lebanese restaurant not far in the other direction. Etc. etc.

So we were book browsing in the west end super bookstore with some international astro guests. dr bob was in the math book section for a change (from the cookbook section of course). ms ani was magazine browsing fashion magazines. Which are occasionally covering some fashionable food. This one was courtesy of some expatriate Italians living in Australia who had tried it in Venice. Their recipe called for a third of a "punnet" of blueberries, which our Scotch-Canadian female astro guest said was either a basket or rare unit only used for berries in British English, of unknown quantity. Our Cambridge Italian-English Dictionary says it's a little basket of fruit (retranslated from Italian). We just guessed.

## the test

So we finally had a night free to cook and stopped at the supermarket on the way home for the only ingredient left to acquire: fresh mushrooms. This had been a big fruit summer for us with a near constant supply of cheap kiwis (which later became year round), and not so cheap strawberries and blueberries to keep our banana and overpriced breakfast cereal company every morning—so the blueberries were already on hand. But this was to be our first crack at the new supply of arborio rice personally imported from Rome several months earlier. Two 1 kilo boxes in a plastic bag purchased at a small fraction of the local outrageous price for the stuff. But with one small catch. The kitchen shelf time for our imported rice has always been longer than the life cycle of the dreaded starch bugs which had invaded us earlier in the year. Getting into everything starchy in our cabinets. This rice had its own contingent to add to the ranks. Except dr bob, after instructions from the ms, sifted and shook the rice a bit at a time over the sink like the old gold rush prospectors searching for gold, picking out the more agile specimens when necessary, while ms ani did most of the testing of the purple rice recipe.

## ingredients



**our list****the original quantities****base**

|                                |                  |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1 c arborio rice               | 500g (about 2 c) |
| 2 T olive oil, roughly         | 3 T              |
| 1 medium onion, finely chopped | 1                |

**addins**

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1/2 lb mushrooms, sliced finely               | 400 g (about 1 lb)       |
| salt and pepper to taste                      | (say 1/2 t and 1/4 t)    |
| 1 c blueberries (maybe 3/4 c)                 | 1/3 punnet?              |
| 3/4 c dry white wine (125ml)                  | 250 ml                   |
| 1 veggie broth cube/paste for about 4 c broth | 7-8 simmering cups broth |

**finishers**

|                               |       |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| 1/3 c freshly grated parmesan | 2-3 T |
| 1 T butter                    | 1 T   |

**our instructions**

1. The astute reader will see that we downsized this recipe by a half. The unastute reader will just keep on reading.
2. By now you're old hands at this risotto stuff so a short version suffices. [Check out another risotto recipe if you're not.] Start boiling about 4 cups of water in a teapot.
3. Sauté the onion in olive oil until soft, then over high heat do the mushrooms until they "give up their liquid" (?), accompanied by a lot of stirring activity. [We suppose they must sweat heavily under duress, leading to a liquid accumulation in the pan.]
4. Add the salt and pepper and chopped up veggie cube/paste and continue stirring until the given up liquid evaporates.
5. Then stir in the blueberries and rice and stir around about 1 minute, then pour in the wine and evaporate it. [A couple minutes.]
6. Then add the boiling water a cup or half cup at a time, depending on your patience (half cup is better) for about 3 1/2 cups.
7. Do the al dente taste test at around 20 minutes of the boiling water phase.
8. If passed (the test), remove from the heat, add the butter and cheese and stir it all up.
9. Serve immediately with freshly ground pepper and parmesan cheese at the table.

**notes**

1. Risotto Rosa con Funghi, [Australia Vogue Aug/Sep 93](#), p.141.
2. **purple trivia.** The first record dr bob bought himself as a teenager was Jimi Hendrix, Smash Hits, with the cut Purple Haze. A live rendition of which he just missed at Woodstock, the Event. But which he caught in Woodstock, the movie. And dr bob saw Purple Rain, the movie, when it first came out and Prince was still just Prince. And he first discovered purple potatoes at a Philly food fair (Book and the Cook). Now available at our

super whole foods supermarket. [See purple potato salad.] Maybe yours too. What does this have to do with this recipe? Absolutely nothing.

3. **2006 Update.** 13 years later Australia Vogue is lost in the dust bin of history by now, as are Toscana Cucina Rustica (now Bianca) and Marbles (now Citron) in Bryn Mawr, but the TLA Video store is still going strong, and many other new and worthy restaurants have opened. The starch bugs are a dim memory now that arborio rice is everywhere. And [blueberry mushroom risotto](#) is still a "[down under](#)" [hit](#) on search engines (also new since 1993), although it credits European origins, while apparently Philadelphia's Italian food guru Marc Vetri has discovered the sauce for pasta applications, as recounted offhandedly by Philly Inquirer food writer Rich Nichols on March 23, 2006. However, Google has arrived in the intervening years to help us with the definition of the punnet as an almost unit:

[\*punnet\*](#)

*a small square or sometimes rectangular container for fruit or vegetables, such as strawberries or bean sprouts. When used as a unit of measure, a punnet is generally the same thing as a dry pint in the U.S. or an Imperial pint in Britain; see pint [1] above. However, grocers use punnets of several sizes to package berries, fresh mushrooms, etc.*

# slightly different macaroni and cheese

It was another one of those nights. A Monday night. Back from the front lines of the math/science crisis in America, complicated by economic pressures to get faculty to do more and more besides teaching (let's not even talk about research), dr bob and ms\_ani have carpooled home to a creative cooking project—alternative macaroni and cheese. The goal: to use up a hunk of asiago cheese that had been around awhile, and some of the new block of pecorino romano—both of which by the way seem to last nearly forever in the fridge, unlike the precious parmigiano supply we keep there. From the early days of mr bob (the pre-PhD period), the Betty Crocker Cookbook had been the bible for making macaroni and cheese, but it never seemed as tasty as the killer yellow stuff sold as a side dish by cafeteria/deli/diner type food providers.

This time, apart from the cheese constraints, Dijon mustard was suggested by an intense period of recipe section extraction the day before from a dozen woman's magazines culled of their possible jewels prior to waste disposal after years of procrastination. [Now the impetus for the editing was the big upcoming first time home ownership move. Also responsible for the need to use up existing pasta supplies to avoid taking along the dreaded starch bug plague to the new residence, but that's another story.]

Already late, there would not be excessive time for creativity. Boil the pasta water, then the pasta about 12 minutes (read the box) to an al dente state. Meanwhile do the béchamel sauce. Combine and layer twice with cheese and freshly grated black pepper in a deep baking dish. 20 minutes at 400°, then the broiler to brown the top a few minutes.

## ingredients

- 1 10 oz box of elbow macaroni (we used organic pasta)
- 2 2/3 c béchamel sauce:
  - 3 T butter
  - 3 T flour
  - 2 2/3 c milk
  - freshly ground pepper
  - 1 T Dijon mustard
- 2 c grated asiago cheese
- 1/2 c pecorino romano

## instructions

1. Didn't we already go over this?
2. Well, melt the butter and whisk in the flour until smooth, then add a little milk and whisk until smooth, then dump in the rest and try to smooth it all out. Add in the other stuff and the cheese too, which should melt and smooth in as well.
3. Combine with the cooked macaroni and throw in the preheated 400° oven for as long as you can stand waiting, then finish it off with the broiler if you want a browned top.

## notes

1. Once you relax the rules on a recipe, anything goes. ms\_ani had a macaroni and cheese craving during the media hyped ICE STORM '94 that caught us by surprise one winter Friday. And we had some fresh generic mushrooms to use up, and some frozen veal to nuke back to life (i.e., usability) in the microwave. And some pre-move DeCecco rigatoni still to get rid of.
2. So we decided to substitute the 1 lb box of rigatoni for the 10 oz elbow macaroni we used the first time and jack up the béchamel sauce to 3 cups. Except we were real low on milk, so we hit our dried milk supply for the electric bread machine, recently joined by a lone can of dried buttermilk powder found misplaced on a supermarket shelf. So we used 1/2 c of nonfat regular milk powder plus 1/4 c buttermilk powder plus 3 c water for the liquid milk. From the 8oz of generic fresh mushrooms, halved and finely sliced, half were sautéed in 2 T of butter just briefly with freshly ground black pepper. The cheese was about the same, but only eyeballed. We just mixed it all up in the pot this time, cheese and freshly ground black pepper. Some added breadcrumbs on top and some shaved Kaisori (?) cheese that was left over, not enough. That's all.
3. Meanwhile we revived the veal, floured it and sautéed it in olive oil. Then removed the veal and did the mushrooms with a few tablespoons of chopped leaks. Quickly adding the 1/3 c Marsala wine, maybe 1/2 c. Then returned the veal to the pan to simmer a bit while we attacked the macaroni. A little Frascati wine from the fridge, open for cooking, a little salad. What a meal.
4. Guess you had to be there...

## asparagus leek risotto

### (plus second anniversary surprise)

dr bob never had a fresh leek until his forties. dr bob never even had a can of leek and potato soup until his forties. dr bob still feels pretty young and looks pretty good for a middle aged grownup person. It's hard to believe how fast life seems to go by. But thanks to a week on a small impoverished Caribbean island at a luxury hotel on a beautiful beach with a subcompact rental car, the food team got to cruise a lot of local minimarkets and "supermarkets", and had one dinner in town trying to escape the outrageous prices on the beach. Of course since it was a second wedding anniversary, not a whole lot was saved, but we did accidentally discover a wonderful vegetable pasta dish with leeks in the lineup. So wonderful that after a decade of not having time to try any of the recipes we tagged in [Bon Appetit](#) (well, hardly any), we were inspired to write to "Ask Bon Appetit" to see if they might coax a real by-the-numbers recipe out of the chef who, by the way, had mysteriously appeared from the kitchen to ask us how we liked the food (another first for us) and then roughly explained the recipe upon request.

We came home and promptly gave it a try, and it was good, but just not the same. So we figured we'd have to write the chef, since there was no guarantee our magazine would help us out on this one. [We didn't. They didn't.] Meanwhile we had half the white trunk part of the leek left from the trial pasta event and a bunch of trim-looking asparagus both relaxing in the fridge. Asparagus risotto came to mind, so we got out [Marcella](#) (Hazan, the book) and then dr bob had the brilliant idea of using the leek in place of the token chopped onions in her recipe. But was conveniently getting sick so ms ani executed the idea. She's getting to be quite a risottatrice. Excellent!

One question remained. Riso arborio or riso integrale? Those Italians have a whole lineup of different rices. For risotto one can use either arborio or "roma" or "classico" or "integrale", the latter of which is a kind of brown italian rice. dr bob hauled about 2 kilos each of both arborio and integrale back on the last Roman expedition, influenced towards the integrale by vague health food considerations. These contributed to the great starch bug plague of '93 which we have still not emerged from at this writing. One evening the food team had spent hours sifting and pawing through all this rice to eliminate hordes of these little creatures that could not escape from the plastic bag in which the four 1 kilo boxes were sitting. (Others had already escaped from previously imported stocks of arborio rice or [DeCecco](#) pasta to establish a colony behind the counters in the apartment kitchen, sending out search parties on a daily basis. We had to buy a house to escape them.)

One might wonder why we went to such lengths with our rice import business. The answer is simple. We're cheap. [Frugal?] About 5 bucks plus for a pound here. 2 bucks for a kilo there. Do the numbers. [Hint: \$5/lb here versus \$2/2.2 lb there -> 5.5 here/there ratio.] [Later note: prices have fallen considerably in the interim due to the increasing market for real Italian food, saving us from having to fill our bags with this heavy product on our return trips from risottoland.] Anyway, while we were cruising the minimarkets in Antigua, picking up our annual supply of mango and guava jams and jellies and various and other sundries, we discovered a lonely 1 lb box of arborio sitting on the shelf. Which we snapped up. Tilting our stocks in favor of an arborio surplus. So we went with arborio for the asparagus-leek risotto.

So the lineup for our variation of the traditional asparagus risotto goes like this:

## ingredients

1)

- 1 lb fresh asparagus, thin stalked
- 1 1/2 T butter
- 2 or 3 T olive oil
- 1/2 white leek stalk, finely chopped (about a cup)

2)

- 1 1/2 c arborio rice
- 1/2 t salt, or to taste 1 vegetable broth cube, or equivalent

3)

- freshly ground pepper
- 1 T butter
- 1/2 c freshly grated parmesan

## instructions

1. Asparagus prep: break off the ends of the stalks and potato peel the harder parts down if there are any. Ours were tender enough without the peeling. Steam in an asparagus steamer standing up for about 5 minutes after boiling. Cut into half inch lengths and reserve the tips to add in at the end. Save a cup of the asparagus water to add to the risotto.
2. Meanwhile, have a teapot boiling up about 4 or 5 cups of water for the rice to be added as needed.
3. Sauté the leeks in the olive oil and butter until translucent, then add the detipped asparagus pieces for a couple of minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Then add the rice and mix around till it gets well coated.
4. Then add the cup of asparagus water. When absorbed, begin adding the boiling water from the teapot a half cup or so at a time for about 20 minutes or so that the rice takes to cook (al dente test!), together with the veggie broth cube and the salt.
5. Final touch. Turn off the heat and mix in the tablespoon of butter, the asparagus tips, and the almost half cup of parmesan, and freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve immediately. We quite enjoyed it.

## notes

1. You don't have to fly to the Caribbean to move on the leek question. Just go out and buy some. And try our version of the St John's leek and veggie pasta. Whatever, it's a winning vegetable. [Or is it a root?]
2. And try it before your golden years are here. We did and we're glad.

## variation: asparagus and baby shrimp

1. Many years later no leeks are on hand but some asparagus has been sitting way too long in the fridge, so a risotto burial seems like the only solution. The usual onion replaces the

leek, and a small plastic container (1 cup size) of previously frozen baby shrimps are snagged on the way home from work to do a combo flavor kind of thing. Rice cut down to one cup to intensify the mix. The asparagus are a bit soft in places. bob whacks off the stiff ends, rinses them rubbing off the soft spots and does the asparagus pot boiling routine separately. And chops up some left over fresh chanterelle mushrooms, just a partial handful also aging in cold storage, which are sautéed in a little butter separately. No open bottle of white wine there though, so bob hits the rice with a splash of Bacardi light rum which does the job at the initial rice toss-in stage. The add-ins are incorporated about 5 minutes from the end. A bunch of yellowing flat parsley gives up some green parts to make a couple tablespoons of fresh chopped parsley. Plus the usual parmigiano and black pepper finisher.

2. The basic idea of asparagus and shrimp together came from the orecchiette Campbell cream of shrimp soup asparagus [combo](#). Ms\_ani was impressed.
3. You can do this with baby shrimps in a can too. With or without any kind of mushrooms. And if you have a leek, that too.
4. Oh, before you incorporate the asparagus, take the tougher ends and food process them with a little water to add a greenish tinge to the creamy risotto end product. To spread the flavor a bit more.

## variation: lemon asparagus risotto

1. 2005. Looking for a slight variation we pulled a trusted [risotto author](#) from the shelf (*Risotto Risotti*), and found this simple idea. Again just onions instead of leeks. Then just add a few tablespoons of lemon juice and some lemon zest (we used a left over half lemon for the zest and cheated by adding to its limited juice output by adding some from a yellow plastic container) at the beginning of the water addition phase. Since we are limiting simple carbs at this point, we only use 3/4 c arborio rice with the bunch of asparagus (about a pound?). After cooking the asparagus in the asparagus pot, we cut off the tougher ends and stuck them in the boiling rice water combo and then ground them up with a hand blender to add asparagus flavor to the gooey rice mixture. We then cut up the rest in half inch pieces and reserved them till the end of the cooking phase and then dumped them in to heat through again and then finished it off with plentiful parmigiano and freshly ground black pepper stirred into the pot and an extra hit on the serving.

## second anniversary surprise

### ingredients/instructions

Fettuccine, freshly prepared, tossed with:  
 chopped zucchini, spinach, celery, and leek  
 sautéed in vegetable oil [blanche spinach first, then chop]  
 spiced with:  
 garlic, oregano, and fresh dill, salt and pepper.  
 Add touch of cream at the end, toss in fettuccine.

October 19, 1993 Redcliffe Tavern, Redcliffe Quay, St John's Antigua

Dear Bon Appetit,

The Redcliffe Tavern in the heart of St John's, Antigua serves a great pasta: fettuccine tossed with zucchini, spinach, celery, and leeks. Although the chef explained roughly how to make it, a printed recipe would save us a lot experimentation to get it right.

Thanks, bob and ani

[No reply.]

*asplkris.htm: 31-aug-2005 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*



# potato leek soup not from a can

Seeing as how the subject of canned potato and leek soup has already come up, it's worth realizing that unfamiliar as it might be (Campbell's certainly doesn't make it) and in spite of the funny impossible-for-us-average-Americans-to-guess-its-pronunciation -except-if-we-heard-it -before-seeing-it french name you may find associated with it if you browse cookbooks for potato leek soup ["Vichyssoise" = "vishee-shwah", "ah" as in doctor holding down your tongue, say "ah"], it is a snap to do from scratch even without thinking ahead as long as at least one good sized leek is on hand. And it doesn't even have to be fat city—a healthy version tastes great too. [Nix that heavy cream!]

This lite version comes from a woman's magazine, found by accident when several years of several such mags went through the dr bob "maybe someday there will be enough time to look at these recipes after they go into the big recipe clipping box" editing session prior to house moving. [Actually the house stayed put. We moved.] The magazines easily gave up their food sections under the knife, at least those pages looking mildly interesting. [Too bad there was never time to check them out as they arrived in the mail.]

## ingredients

### what they said

12 oz leek, trimmed, rinsed, chopped

1 T olive oil

2 C pared, cubed potatoes

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 C low sodium chicken broth

2 C low fat milk

1 t salt

dash each of cayenne pepper, nutmeg

### what we [ms\_ani] did

we had 2 leek trunks in the fridge. chopped the greens seem to be useless so we disappeared them immediately, one 6oz, one 11+oz. we cut off the root end of the 11+oz trunk. good enuf.

we use extra virgin for everything

we are guessing pared means peeled here

we used 2 medium cloves

we personally imported NO MSG veggie broth cubes from Italy until finding imported paste in a can here

we were down to 2 percent milk when this was written, now 1 percent, how about you?

dr bob is often suspicious of this ingredient but what the heck, ms\_ani wildly adds while bob advises caution just a touch

## instructions

1. Sauté the chopped leeks in olive oil over low heat for 5 minutes.
2. Add the potatoes, garlic and broth, and bring them to a boil. Then cover and simmer for 10 minutes, until soft.
3. Puree in a blender [use a hand blender].
4. Add the milk and seasonings. Mix some more.
5. Heat without letting boil. Serve.

## notes

1. From McCalls Magazine, April 1992.
2. Healthy Food Analysis: Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 294 calories, 12g protein, 50g carbohydrate, 6g fat, 5mg cholesterol 920mg sodium
3. Yikes! does that mean 1 t salt is like 3700 mg? How much salt is too much? Everybody talks about it but nobody ever really empowers us with numbers, at least ones that we remember.
4. We used our manual vegetable slicer dicer on the leeks. And about 3 medium red potatoes. We squashed the garlic and then chopped it. For the broth we just put the cube in 1 cup of warm water and dumped it in mostly still intact. The blending part had to be done half a batch at a time, with one cup milk each pass, since blenders are not usually big enough [but the hand blender makes this step much easier].
5. Actually we lied on the last part, step 4. They said chill it and serve cold! And make a green pea puree [6 ingredients, more work!] to swirl around for extra flavor. Already we've made the big step to not open a can and they want us to double the labor investment—like making not one but two soups from scratch! Forget it. One is our limit. We just dabbed some hunks of nonfat plain yogurt into our serving bowls with freshly ground pepper. Yum. Excellent. And so easy. Especially when you have a partner who likes doing soups all by herself [but dr bob did the leek prep!].

# risotto and fagioli (beans and rice?)

Getting closer to the big move. Supplies on hand diminishing. Need to lighten our load by using up some of those that remain. Plus we don't want to go back out into the night to some supermarket foraging for food ideas when it's already suppertime. A quick assessment of possible ingredients is made. We still have a good stock of arborio rice and dr bob remembers a bean risotto photo from one of the package recipes that resides in the big recipe clipping box [not consulted out of laziness]. And there are some cans of kidney beans both red and white that never seem to get used. We decide to go with the white ones—also called cannellini. From the fridge some plum tomatoes with disturbing black marks, a dying green pepper, some canned artichoke hearts from the cabinet. The picture begins to take shape. The following ingredient list develops as we follow our noses.

## ingredients

### base

- 1 1/2 c arborio rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 T olive oil, about
- 1/2 c white wine

### veggies/beans

- 1/2 green pepper, chopped
- 3 average plum tomatoes, black spots removed if present
- 1/3 left over regular tomato (you can use another plum one)
- 4 artichoke hearts, chopped
- 1 20oz can cannellini
- 1 veggie broth cube, or equivalent

### finishers

- 1/2 t salt, or so
- 2 T fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/2 c freshly grated parmesan and romano cheese
- freshly ground pepper to taste

## instructions

1. Start teapot of water boiling. About 4 c water.
2. Sauté onions first, then add pepper, then tomatoes and artichoke hearts.
3. Stir in rice. Add wine. Stir about.
4. After it evaporates, dump in the cannellini with the first hit of boiling water and the broth cube. Salt to taste. Do the usual water treatment.
5. When al dente (about 20 min of rice/water phase), remove from heat. Add parsley, cheese, freshly ground pepper.
6. Serve with good bread.

## notes

1. So how does it turn out? A success, for our taste anyway. Very reminiscent of pasta e fagioli. But more rewarding since we faked it with random kitchen remnants and our imagination.

*risefag.htm: 2-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*

# risotto with leeks, mushrooms, and chicken

Let's cut right to the chase:

## ingredients

### base

- 2 c arborio rice
- 2 medium leek trunks, chopped finely
- 3 T olive oil, about
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 4oz can chopped mushrooms (or fresh mushrooms)
- 1 5oz can white chicken, drained
- 1/4 c Marsala wine
- 1 veggie broth cube, or equivalent

### finishers

- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 T butter
- 1/2 c parmesan cheese

## instructions

1. Sauté leeks in oil, add tomatoes, cook 5 minutes, add chicken and mushrooms, 2 more minutes, stir in rice, add Marsala, let evaporate, start adding boiling water, broth cube. Continue usual risotto 20 minute water absorption phase.
2. Finish by removing from heat and adding the butter and freshly grated black pepper and parmesan cheese.
3. Serve.

## notes

1. This was a quick improvisation [yikes! canned chicken? where did that come from?] but tasted pretty good. So we did not want to forget it.

*lkmshcrs.htm: 2-aug-2001 [what, ME cook? © 1984 dr bob enterprises]*

## chestnut stuffing

Thanksgiving again. Like most (middle North) Americans, dr bob sees a whole turkey only once a year. And the big question each year is: what kind of stuffing to stuff the bird with? Some people seem to call the stuffing "dressing" but we have a slight problem with this. When most people we know are dressing, the dressing materials end up on the outside of their bodies, not in various digestive and excretory system cavities as occurs in the case of turkeys and other large but not-in-a-position-to-complain fowl. [Later knowledge acquisition: "dressing" is in fact "stuffing" on the outside, i.e., not in the bird, so this makes sense after all.] Whatever we call it, many agree that it is perhaps the best part of a turkey dinner, especially in combination with the killer gravy and obligatory mashed potatoes keeping it close company.

This year [that year, after the fact] dr bob spotted a chestnut stuffing recipe in a woman's magazine he'd never seen before at a supermarket checkout line of course. Listed on the cover under the obligatory article about married sex. Roasted chestnuts are a big Mediterranean tradition, one fondly recalled by the transplanted Lebanese-Armenian in-laws as well as by dr bob from his Italian winter season visits, during which street vendors hawking these freshly roasted nuts are a common sight in Rome. But responding to recent training by ms\_ani to limit food magazine gathering, it was left at the checkout. Until the stuffing question surfaced only days later at the in-laws. Chestnut stuffing, it seemed, was an idea ready to join our common tradition. But where was that recipe...? Armed only with a vague memory of the magazine cover and supermarket chain, an investigation of all the checkout isles of two different supermarkets finally turned up the target publication.

Although the recipe called for white bread slices (!!), dr bob had every intention of doing either a whole wheat bread substitution or using a supermarket bread cube stuffing "mix" package found in abundance at this time of the year. But in the "healthy foods" supermarket there was a large display of whole wheat dressing boxes which sold us after a moment's hesitation about just what the product was. Nothing but whole wheat bread cubes, it turned out, when the boxes were opened.

The original title of this was "**chestnut sage stuffing**" but ms\_ani has a thing about sage. She dislikes it. So the small amount in this recipe may or may not have found its way into our rendition. [Oops, it's rosemary, not sage, that she hates. Simon and Garfunkel memories must have interfered with my mental banned spice list.] As a stuffing recipe, this called for a 12-14 lb turkey to fill, but in later years, a lot of bad P.R. has turned us off of stuffing the bird, so we end up in the dressing category where the size of the cavity is irrelevant. It is never big enough anyway. On our first run through we used 2 5oz (145g) whole wheat dressing (bread cubes) packages and 2 c vegetable broth, but this was not enough to supply the demand, so we increased the quantity for the followup Easter turkey (hey, immigrants are free to invent their own traditions), with enough left over for a 9 in square baking pan outside the turkey. For some reason we also used hazelnuts and walnuts on Easter after the chestnuts for Thanksgiving, maybe just for a change, but certainly invalidating the name of the recipe of course. We also found the broth called for by the original painfully inadequate, so increased it drastically to satisfy our desire for moist stuffing.

## ingredients

### what they said

1 lb white bread, about 16 slices  
 1/4 c chicken stock or canned broth

### saute items

1 large onion, chopped  
 3 cloves garlic  
 6 T butter

### nuts

2 c roasted chestnuts (15.5oz can whole chestnuts)

### spices

1/2 c fresh parsley, chopped  
 2 t dried sage  
 1 1/2 t dried marjoram  
 1/2 t ground nutmeg  
 1 t salt  
 3/4 t pepper

### what we did

1 14oz (400g) bag herbed seasoned stuffing  
 2.5 - 3 c vegetable broth

2 onions, chopped  
 1 medium bunch celery, chopped finely  
 5 cloves garlic  
 3 T butter  
 3 T olive oil

2 c roasted chestnuts (15.5oz can whole chestnuts) or:  
 .65 lb blanched filberts (no hassle)  
 .65 lb walnut pieces

1/2 c fresh parsley, chopped  
 2 t fresh parsley, chopped  
 2 t dried marjoram  
 1/2 t ground nutmeg  
 1 t salt  
 3/4 t pepper

## instructions

1. If you use bread as suggested then start instead by cutting it into 1/2 in cubes and place in a large bowl. Otherwise just dump the bread cubes of choice into a large bowl from the package.
2. Prep the veggies and then sauté them in your choice of fat until soft, stirring occasionally (about 5 min).
3. Break the chestnuts into pieces and add to the bread cubes.
4. Add the sauté mixture and spices and stir until well combined.
5. Pour in the broth and mix until the bread is moistened.

## notes

1. The magazine was [First for Women](#), new on the scene in '93 but still not on the web in '01.
2. [Illustration](#) available.
3. July 31, 2004. Final stop of the Simon and Garfunkel Old Friends Tour at the Colliseum,

Rome. 600K people along the Fori Imperiali stretching all the way to Piazza Venezia. bob and ani are there with Milvia. What a memorable night.

*chstnts.htm: 11-aug-2004 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*



# not exactly mashed potatoes

After the stuffing decision, the next question was how to mess with the traditional mashed potato recipe so that it could no longer be called simply "mashed potatoes". Addition of other root vegetables seems to be a good choice for inclusion in this category. We had seen quite a few not exactly mashed potato recipes in our food magazine browsing and ms\_ani had settled on one for the big event (T-day). Unfortunately it could not be located at the last minute and some fast thinking creativity was called upon to save the day. We had these parsnips in the fridge as the leading candidate for the secondary root vegetable. Though we'd never eaten them before, they seemed to pop up in quite a few of the altered mashed potato recipes. They look like fat albino carrots, which distinguishes them from their similar root relative the turnip, which is also foreign to our diet, though not because of any conscious decision, just the inertia of habit.

## ingredients

### root vegetables or close relatives

- 6 large potatoes, peeled, cut up
- 1 lb parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 1 leek, chopped fine
- 2 cloves garlic

### additives

- butter
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- milk

## instructions

1. Boil the potatoes and parsnips together in salted water until soft, about 15 minutes at full boil.
2. Sauté the leek and garlic in some butter until softened.
3. Mash the potatoes with electric beaters, adding just enough milk to soften the result but not so much that it begins to flow. Then combine the sauté mixture and pepper with the mashed tubers. More salt is probably inadvisable at this point.

## notes

1. This is a judgment call on the quantity of milk. It depends on how big and how many potatoes you have. You have to have some experience in this or just add a little at a time. And the amount of butter depends on your health objectives for this particular dish.
2. This simple recipe was hiding after the chestnut stuffing recipe in our original paper archives where it was overlooked until webified.

## not just bean soup (carrots!)

When dr bob was a kid, [Campbell's](#) Bean and Bacon soup was his favorite. He used to slurp up the liquid part, carefully saving the beans for a squishy white bread bean sandwich. Even better than the ketchup sandwiches of the time. Those were the days. It never occurred to him that one could actually make soups from scratch. Or that one should read the label on those canned soups. [Salt city!]

Of course growing up brought an awareness that one could make soups without a can opener, but that it was still probably too much effort. Only recently was this myth shattered by experience. The dr bob cooking team, led by the initiative of ms\_ani, began with some great and incidentally healthy cream soups from the 15th anniversary edition of [The Moosewood Cookbook](#).

However, ms\_ani was sick with the flu on this one occasion soon after [The Big Move](#) to the new corporate headquarters. dr bob knew soup was a good idea, and offered to hunt and forage out to a local supermarket for some of the stuff. But easily renounced this suggestion (laziness, what else?) at ms\_ani's rejection of the offer (out of guilt at being responsible for his contemplated journey). Then bob remembered the latest women's magazine food special snatched at the checkout line—where a bean and potato soup had caught his eye during his speed scan for potentially promising recipes (ignoring the mandatory article on sex). Inventorying the required ingredients, only celery was missing. No big deal—just increase the carrots! And he did it, with some minor modifications, all in a pretty painless 40 minute time slot. The result: delicious, recalling childhood memories of the old bean soup days but with a new twist. Carrots. Thus justifying the \$3.50 spent on the mag, which after closer examination only yielded two soup recipes as the realistic usable harvest, one still left untried.

### ingredients

|            |                            |
|------------|----------------------------|
| 4          | medium carrots             |
| 2          | celery ribs                |
| 2          | medium cloves garlic       |
| 2 T        | butter                     |
| 4 c        | vegetable broth            |
| 3          | medium potatoes            |
| 2 T        | fresh dill, chopped        |
| 1 15oz can | cannellini beans           |
| 1/2 c      | sour cream / plain yoghurt |
| 1 T        | all purpose flour          |
| 1/8 t      | pepper                     |
|            | salt to taste, if desired  |

### no frill web instructions

[Consult the illustrated [hand printed recipe](#) of the vanity press paper edition for the elaborated version with two illustrations: (1) carrots vs beans on the scales, with rabbit, thumbs up and (2) the trouble with spaghetti ]

1. Food process the carrots and celery, then sauté them in melted butter with pressed garlic in an 8 quart nonstick pot.
2. Meanwhile heat the broth, then add it to the veggie mixture with the coarsely chopped potatoes and dill. Simmer covered for about 20 minutes.
3. Stir together sour cream or yogurt, flour, salt and pepper, and add them to the pot with half the beans. Puree with a hand blender or in batches in a regular blender.
4. Add remaining beans. Cook and stir until heated through.
5. Serves 4-6. Leftover soup can be used as a pasta sauce like an Alfredo sauce.

## notes

1. **AND PASTA SAUCE?** Sure. If it's pretty thick, it makes a great cream sauce for pasta. If you have a couple bowls left over, maybe a cup and a half or two, add it to some(\*) al dente cooked pasta with some parmigiano and freshly ground pepper. We used a small open curled pasta, gnocchetti sardi, but this could work with cavatelli or orecchiette or even long pasta like fettuccini or spaghetti. Health wise, it crushes classic "Alfredo sauce". By the way, freshly ground pepper is also a good idea on each serving in the more traditional soup mode. And if you caught the "h" that slipped into the yoghurt/yogurt above, it's optional. We checked. Though we still lose points for inconsistency.
2. (\*) 1 pound, the standard US dry pasta packaging size.

*carrotbn.htm: 2-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]*