

1995

scandinavian yellow pea soup

Swedish friends have heightened our awareness of Scandinavian cuisine. For example, those weird celery roots you find in the supermarket that are clearly not roots of celery—that's a typical Scandinavian ingredient. [Apparently this obvious root takes its name from its celery-like taste.] We've used it once but this time took the easier celery route. Thanks to the increasing popularity of IKEA, we didn't have to search for dried yellow peas, for the typical Scandinavian soup of the same name, although later Fresh Fields moved in and made this ingredient readily available. We had some on hand waiting for the day our woman's mag recipe could be put to the test. We'd already tried the no-frills recipe from a Scandinavian cookbook—this one seemed much more interesting with leeks, potatoes, rutabagas. A sure thing. Unfortunately we overlooked the small detail of overnight soaking.

how to avoid thinking ahead with dried beans/peas

Instead of soaking dried beans/peas overnight in cold water covering them by several inches and then draining the next day, you can be like us and do the pressure cooker alternative. Clean and rinse the dried legumes and put 6 to 10 cups of water (2.5 qts) per 2 cups (about 1 lb) legumes in the pressure cooker. Cook at low heat 5 minutes. Then remove from heat, lose the pressure, drain in a colander and rinse under hot tap water. We only realized this trick reading our pressure cooking book while we were faking it with an improvised technique which sort of amounted to the same thing, almost.

how to have a ham bone on hand

This recipe execution began with the free cooked smoked ham ani got from her company at Christmas. We would have preferred a real bonus, but seeing as how we got the ham, and had the ham, and now had the ham bone, we were ready for some kind of ham bone based soup like this one. The real recipe actually calls for a ham hock or smoked pork shank (?), but it's good to be flexible in the kitchen—the first step towards creativity.

how much?

By cross-referencing all our legume soup recipes, we learned that one pound of dried beans is about 2 cups. Our digital scale was only doing metric readouts and not very well since the weight seemed to fluctuate by plus or minus 10 percent, so this was useful information. It took us many years to finally dispose of the scale. The typical corresponding amount of water is 10 cups, which if you have one of those glass 4 cup equals 1 quart graduated kitchen liquid measuring things (what are they called?), equals 2.5 quarts, though some recipes go low at 2 and others high at 3. We did a 2.5 and added a cup at the end before serving to thin it up a bit.

how to save time

Use a pressure cooker. This is (was) the nineties. Who has time to wait hours for soup? An 8 qt pressure cooker. A supercooker works better for interrupting the steam.

what stuff to use:**ingredients**

1)

1 lb or 2 c yellow peas, whole or split
1 lb ham hocks or 1/2 c finely chopped ham or 1 ham bone from a free ham
1 onion, finely chopped
1 T chopped fresh or 1 t dried thyme
10 c water

2)

2 c diced potatoes
2 c diced rutabaga (yellow turnip)
1 1/2 c chopped leek
1 T salt (?)

3)

1 cup hot water
freshly ground black pepper to taste

4) **options**

add some carrots
add more leeks
hold the rutabaga

instructions

1. Do the pressurized or the overnight presoak as explained above.
2. Then pressure cook the first set of ingredients for 30 minutes.
3. Depressurize and add the second set of ingredients. Pressure cook 10 minutes.
4. Depressurize and puree a few cups in a blender and return to the pot with about a cup of hot water to thin it a bit. Add the freshly ground pepper.
5. Keep on warm 5 minutes to make sure it's hot enough to serve.

notes

1. Watch out. During the second phase we had the heat too high without thinking since the steam rocker maintains the correct pressure independent of the heat, but of course does not control the direct heat transfer to the bottom of the pot. We burned the bottom layer a bit and had to transfer the soup minus the burnt layer to a new pot. Not fatal. Be flexible.
2. This is similar to [red lentil and rice soup](#).

puglia pasta and black beans

The evening before both turning twice the age at which one normally takes the GRE (Graduate Record Exam) and retaking them in solidarity with ms_ani, dr bob faces a problem they have been frequently avoiding in the past unpleasant test preparation month, namely cooking something tasty and healthy at home instead of eating outside prepared food that although sometimes tasty, was probably not very healthy as a regular thing.

Pasta with beans would satisfy the protein requirement that considerably more effort with some frozen chicken breast would meet. Half a can of black beans were left over from a previous such attempt with rice. To be matched with some great Puglia pasta, cicatelli, never heard of 'em before, but looking like a longer twisted version of cavatelli and lovingly made by the Cara Nonna (dear grandma) pasta factory and overpriced at the urban gourmet food store where the shopping team spotted them.

ingredients

- 1 lb cicatelli (or any cavatelli-like pasta)
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 large onion
- 1 red pepper
- 1 large carrot
- 2 stalks celery
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 8 or so fresh plum tomatoes, chopped
- 10 leaves fresh basil, chopped
- 1 T dried chives
- 2 t hot paprika
- salt
- freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 or 1 can black beans
- 1/2 c parmigiano

instructions

The experiment proceeded as follows. The new food processor recently acquired much later in life than necessary got all the veggies. First the onion, red pepper, carrot, and celery all got processed together. Meanwhile the pasta water got started. [And the pasta later dumped in at the boiling stage with salt, who knows how much—we always just throw that in casually.] Saute'd the first batch of veggies with the olive oil in an 8 quart nonstick pot. And threw in the chopped garlic.

Meanwhile the tomatoes go into the food processor next and are roughly chopped. After about 10 minutes, maybe less, in go the tomatoes to join the saute party. Then the basil, chives and spices, and the beans. Let it go for another 10 minutes. Finish by adjusting the salt and pepper, mixing in the pasta and adding the parmigiano. Is this brain food or what?

notes

1. Don't ask about the GRE's. These tests should be outlawed.

pgpstabb.htm: 6-aug-2001 [[what, ME cook?](#) © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]

mixed bag pasta sauce

Most of the early recipes that were thought good enough to record, but which did not have time for some inspired little chatter about them, were mercilessly deleted in 2002. A few survived by chance, who knows why. This one sounds fun.

ingredients

- 1 onion
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed
- 2 T olive oil
- 10 oz sliced white mushrooms
- 1 shaved carrot (or 1/2)
- 1/3 c sliced olives
- 5 or 6 plum tomatoes, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste
- cayenne red pepper to taste
- red pepper flakes to taste
- 1/3 c light cream
- 2/3 c grated romano cheese (we were out of parmigiano?)
- 1 lb orrecchiette or farfalle or ...

instructions

1. Start the pasta water boiling and do the pasta.
2. Meanwhile, saute the onion and garlic in olive oil.
3. Add in the sliced mushrooms. Stir around a bit.
4. Then the carrot. Soften.
5. Then the olives, tomatoes, salt and peppers.
6. After say 10 minutes, add 1/3 c light cream.
7. Drain the al dente pasta and combine the sauce with the pasta and cheeses.
8. Serve.

notes

1. No notes either.

fettuccine con spinaci

Here is another story-less recipe, but it survived because it is a winning combination.

ingredients

2 lb spinach, cooked and chopped
1 1/2 T butter, 1 T olive oil or 2 T olive oil
4 garlic cloves, pressed
8 oz veggie broth
1/2 c milk + arrowroot (or light cream if fat is not an issue)
pepper and salt to taste
1 c freshly grated parmigiano
touch nutmeg
1 lb fettuccini

instructions

1. Boil pasta water and cook al dente.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the spinach and cook it down with just the water left on it from rinsing. Chop.
3. Sauté the garlic in olive oil / butter until just softened.
4. Then stir in the veggie broth and dairy component, salt and pepper, nutmeg.
5. Drain the al dente pasta.
6. Combine the sauce, spinach and pasta, and the cheese of course.
7. Eat.

notes

1. No notes again.

fetspnch.htm: 27-may-2002 [[what, ME cook?](#)] © 1984 [dr bob enterprises](#)]

turnip risotto

Turnips. I always see them sitting there in the supermarket. I read about them. And once in a while I buy a few. But then they just sit there in the fridge. The problem is that they don't speak to me. I must be turnip deaf.

So they were sitting in the fridge when ani called me across the continent for advice on what to feed my fussy brother-in-law. [Correction: one of my fussy brothers-in-law.] She listed some of the fridge tenants of the moment. Ah, those turnips. Risotto. They spoke to me. "Do me this way." Red pepper for color. Zucchini for good measure. Yeah. Veggie vibes.

I got the leftovers after my flight home. Excellent. Why are there so many good ways to do risotto?

ingredients

base

1 1/2 c arborio rice
2 T butter
1 onion, chopped
1/4 c wine

veggies

1 zucchini, chopped
1/2 red pepper, chopped
1 turnip, chopped
1 t (heaping) veggie broth stuff

finishers

1/2 c parmigiano
pepper, freshly ground to taste

instructions

1. First chop all the veggies. Except for the onion, make 'em into little cubes, maybe 1/4 inch on a side, though the red pepper won't have this depth. Or julienne 'em. No hard and fast rules here.
2. Then sauté the onions in the butter. Then the red peppers a few minutes. Then the zucchini, likewise.
3. Then dump in the rice. Mix and sauté 2 minutes, then add the wine and let evaporate. Maybe 1 minute or two.
4. Then do the water treatment. An already boiling 4 or 5 cups of water in a teapot contributes first a cup to the mixture. Then as it is absorbed, stir in another cup or part thereof, depending on your patience. Repeat until you reach about 20 minutes of water treatment. Check for al dente rice.
5. Mix in the parmigiano and pepper.
6. Serve immediately.

notes

1. We are now turnip convinced. We stick them in lots of places now, where they contribute a decidedly noticeable positive flavor to the mix. Give them a shot. Listen to them. Then eat them.

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vegetarian mushroom bacon stuffing

Vegetarian with bacon? We forgot to buy the bacon. Didn't miss it.

ingredients

sautéables

- 3 c chopped celery
- 1 medium to large onion, chopped
- 1 large leek, chopped (maybe 3 cups?)
- 3 T olive oil

more plus spices

- 1 lb white/portabello mushrooms, chopped
- 1 1/2 T dried sage leaves
- 2 t dried thyme
- 1 t salt
- 3/4 t ground black pepper

broth

- 2 1/2 c vegetable broth, heated (1 c canned vegetarian, 1 1/2 c from concentrate)

bread/finishers

- 8 oz whole wheat stuffing pieces
- 8 oz ordinary stuffing pieces
- 2 large eggs
- 1 1/2 t baking powder

instructions

1. Since there is no bacon fat to sauté the veggies, try the olive oil alternative. Soften those celery bits (about 10 minutes).
2. Then add in the mushrooms and spices and continue another 10 minutes or so until they are tender.
3. Mix this stuff into the bread cubes in a large pan.
4. Mix in the broth until evenly wetted down.
5. Beat the eggs and baking powder and stir them in well. Add some more broth if the stuffing seems a bit dry.
6. Dump into a buttered/cooking sprayed/otherwise greased large rectangular pan and bake in preheated oven about 1 hour until cooked through and golden brown on top.

notes

1. Apparently this comes from [Bon Appetit](#) November 1995. With some slight modifications other than forgetting to [bring home the bacon](#).[!]
2. Choose your baking pan wisely since there is a good chance the oven will already be a bit crowded by the presence of a large turkey, and they have to spend quality time together in there.

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