

# a february cooking class

## Beet Cosmopolitan Mocktail

serves two

4 oz beet juice  
4 oz raspberry puree (blend raspberries until smooth and use a sieve to strain out the seeds)  
2 oz syrup of your choice (for class we will use a fruit-based sweetener)  
1/8 tsp vanilla extract  
2 tsp lime juice  
6oz club soda  
ice, enough to fill a shaker

Combine all ingredients in a large cocktail shaker and strain into martini glasses. Garnish with a lime wedge or beet shaving.

## Cashew Ricotta Crostini

for the ricotta:

1 quart cashews (soaked overnight)  
2 tsp fine sea salt, plus extra for bread  
1/2 tsp black pepper  
2 tbp nutritional yeast  
1 ea lemon, juice only  
1 tbp oregano  
1/3 cup olive oil, plus extra for drizzling  
1 cup filtered water

For the crostini:

1 ea baguette, sliced thin on the bias

optional: diced tomato, kalamata olives and fresh basil leaves

To prepare the ricotta:

Drain and rinse the cashews. Place in a food processor with the salt, pepper, nutritional yeast, lemon juice and oregano. Process until all the cashews are broken into small pieces. Stop and scrape down the sides of the bowl. With the processor running, drizzle in olive oil until the mixture clumps together in a ball. Reserve any remaining oil for toasting bread. With the processor running, drizzle in the water until the mixture is the consistency of spreadable cheese. Please keep in mind that the ricotta will thicken during refrigeration.

Transfer the ricotta to a quart container. For best results, chill overnight until set for the best flavor and consistency.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread bread slices on a baking tray and brush both sides with olive oil. Season lightly with salt. Toast until golden and remove from oven. Spread with ricotta and garnish with olive oil and ground black pepper, if desired. (Can also be topped with a salad of diced tomato, halved kalamata olives and shredded basil).

# Lettuce Wedge Salad with Eggplant Bacon, Cherry Tomatoes, Red Onion and “Bleu Cheese” Dressing

## **Eggplant Bacon**

1 ea large eggplant  
1 tsp smoked paprika  
1/2 cup olive oil  
2 tsp fine sea salt  
1/2 tsp black pepper

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Slice the eggplant into 1.5” thick sections lengthwise. Slice each section into 1/4” thick slabs, like bacon. Drizzle in the olive oil and toss to coat the eggplant. Repeat with the salt, smoked paprika and pepper.

Transfer the slices to oiled baking sheets and lay in rows, taking care not to overlap them. Bake for approx. 20 mins each side, until the slices are crisp, golden brown and dark around the edges.

Once cooled, the bacon can be stored in between parchment paper sheets in the refrigerator. To reheat, warm in a toaster oven for about 30 seconds. Take caution as they cook quickly in the reheating process and can burn if unsupervised. Reheating the bacon will give it the perfect crispiness!

Note: for help with this recipe search “How to Make Eggplant Bacon” on YouTube. My video is one of the first to pop up!

## **Vegan Bleu Cheese Dressing**

1/4 cup vegan mayo (such as Veganaise)  
1/4 cup Anita’s Coconut Yogurt, or cream from the top of a refrigerated can of full fat coconut milk  
2 tsp vinegar  
1/2 lemon, juice only  
1 tbsp tahini  
1/2 tsp garlic powder  
1/2 tsp onion powder  
1/4 tsp black pepper  
1/4 tsp vegan worcestershire sauce  
1/8 ea block extra firm tofu, crumbled (or vegan bleu cheese crumbles)  
fine sea salt, to taste

Mix all ingredients, except tofu, together in a medium mixing bowl. It may seem like there’s too much liquid at first, but as you continue to stir it will all incorporate together.

Crumble the tofu into small pieces and add to the dressing. Fold in the crumbles and serve! Be sure to refrigerate any unused portions. This will keep for about one week in the fridge.

Assemble the Salad:

1 ea head lettuce of your choice (iceburg, bibb, romaine) cut into wedges or thick slices  
1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half  
1 ea small red onion, thinly sliced  
eggplant bacon crumbles

## Seared Portobello Mushroom over Farro Risotto or Garlicky Rocket Arugula with Herbed “Cream” Sauce

### **Farro Risotto**

serves 2 as an entrée or 4 as a side

4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth  
1 tbp extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tbp vegan butter (like Earth Balance)  
1 ea large shallot, minced (about 1/3 cup)  
1 ea small onion  
1 cup pearl farro  
1/2 cup dry white wine, room-temperature  
fine sea salt, to taste  
freshly ground black pepper, to taste  
“almesan” or nutritional yeast\*

Soak the Farro for approximately 25 minutes in water.

Add the vegetable broth to a large stock pot over and heat over low heat until simmering. It’s important to keep the broth hot throughout the cooking process.

Meanwhile, add the olive oil, shallots, and onions to another large sauté pan and heat over low heat. Cook for 4 minutes, or until the shallots and onions are just starting to turn translucent, stirring occasionally. From here on out, no straying from the stove. Risotto requires constant stirring and your complete and undivided attention. Throw on some energizing beats and let’s get to it.

Increase heat to medium-low and add drained farro. Cook for 3 minutes, or until grain is lightly toasted. Take time with this step as it’s important to break down the wall of the grain so that it can absorb liquid as it cooks. Add white wine and cook 2 minutes or until almost absorbed, stirring constantly. Season with salt and pepper.

Increase the heat to medium, and use a ladle to add approximately ½ a cup of vegetable broth to the pan. Use figure-eight motions to stir the farro constantly as it absorbs the broth. When nearly all of the broth has been absorbed, add in another 1/2 cup of vegetable broth. Repeat this process, adding broth, stirring constantly, and never leaving the pan, until all of the broth has been used, or until the risotto is thick, creamy, and tender. You may not need to use all of the broth. This typically takes about 25 minutes.

Turn off the heat and stir in the vegan butter and about 1/2 of the parmesan. Divide the risotto and greens between bowls. Sprinkle with more parmesan if desired. Serve immediately.

\*to make almesan, combine 1 cup peeled almonds, 1 small clove garlic, 1 tbp nutritional yeast and salt and pepper to taste in a blender. Pulse until fine, like parmesan cheese.

### **Herbed Cream Sauce**

4 tbp vegan butter (like Earth Balance)  
2 tbp arrowroot powder  
2 cups almond milk or cashew milk, unsweetened  
1/2 tsp fine sea salt  
½ tsp black pepper  
¼ tsp nutmeg  
1 ea bay leaf  
4 tbp chopped chives, parsley, thyme combined  
optional: For even tastier results, add 1/2 c finely ground cashews or cashew butter

Bring nut milk to simmer. Add bay leaf, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Whisk in arrowroot powder softened in a little water. Whisk in vegan butter. Remove from heat and stir in the herbs.

## Garlicky Rocket Arugula

- 1 tbp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 bunch Rocket Arugula
- 2 ea cloves garlic, minced
- fine sea salt
- black pepper, to taste

Heat the olive oil over medium-low in a large pan. Add the Arugula and cook for 1 minute, or until just beginning to wilt. Then, add the garlic and continue to cook for another 1 minute, or until the greens are tender and wilted, stirring frequently. Remove from the heat and generously season with sea salt and black pepper. Set aside.

## Seared Portabellos

- 2 ea extra large portabello mushroom caps, stemmed and cleaned
- 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- fine sea salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste

Place a sauté pan over high heat. Brush the portabellos generously with olive oil and sprinkle all sides with salt and pepper to taste. Place upside down in pan and sear over high heat until blackened. You can use a spatula to press down the caps for even cooking. Flip and cook on gill side until blackened. Remove to a plate to cool. Once cooled, on the same plate, slice the caps thinly on the bias, like steak. Reserve drippings for garnish.

## Grilled Pineapple Sundae

### Grilled Pineapple

- 1 ea large pineapple, peeled
- ½ cup natural brown sugar (granulated), or granulated coconut sugar

Place a saucepan over medium heat. Cut the pineapple into ½" thick slices, including the core. Dredge in brown sugar and place in the hot pan, making sure not to overcrowd the pan. Allow to caramelize for 3-4 minutes until golden. Carefully flip the slices and repeat on the other side. Remove to a plate to cool.

### Chocolate Sauce

(adapted from Living Raw Food)

- 1½ cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1¾ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 pinch fine sea salt
- 3 tbp coconut butter/oil, warmed to liquefy

Combine all the ingredients except the coconut butter/oil in a blender. With the blender running, add the coconut butter/oil and continue blending to emulsify.

Store sauce refrigerated in covered container. Before serving, place container in warm water bath to re-liquify.

Assemble each sundae with:

- 1 ea slice grilled pineapple
- 2 ea scoop vegan vanilla ice cream (Anita's preferred brand is Nada Moo)
- generous drizzle chocolate sauce
- 2 tbp toasted walnuts, chopped