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EAT YOUR VEGGIES

This Andalusian salad only sounds exotic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spain is the darling of the food world today, and experiments by a bold cast of innovative chefs working out of upscale restaurants are grabbing headlines. But throughout that country, you'll still find the healthy simplicity of Spain's traditional Mediterranean food and the good things cooked in home kitchens.

Regional variations give this basic cuisine distinctive flavors.

Here's a hearty potato salad based on the flavors of the southern province of Andalusia, an ensalada Andaluz created by food writer and Mediterranean food specialist Joyce Goldstein.

This potato salad, made with orange segments, spinach, toasted almonds and a tomato-citrus vinaigrette, is very different from those bound with mayonnaise-based dressings.

Andalusia was known as Al-Andalus when it was ruled by the Moors (Muslim Arabs and Berbers) from the eighth to the 15th century. Andalusian cuisine still includes influences from that period, combined with its own produce: fragrant spices, herbs, almonds, citrus fruits, rose water and sherry.

However, the ingredients for the exotic-sounding ensalada Andaluz turn out to be mostly pantry staples.

Serve the dish as a refreshing side salad or perhaps for lunch with a sandwich.

Potatoes, which here serve as a "canvas" and balance for the stronger flavors of tart oranges and spinach, absorb spices and flavors like few other ingredients, Goldstein says: "You'll find potatoes in every culture because they are versatile, economic, nutritious and, of course, delicious."

Goldstein's latest book is "Antipasti: Fabulous Appetizers and Small Plates" (Chronicle, 2006, \$19.95 paperback).



Ensalada Andaluz, a hearty potato salad based on the flavors of Spain's Andalusia province, was created by food writer Joyce Goldstein. U.S. Potato Board

Ensalada Andaluz (potato-orange-spinach salad)

Prep time: 35 minutes • Cook time: 20 to 45 minutes • Serves 6

This recipe developed for the Associated Press by Joyce Goldstein, courtesy of the United States Potato Board.

Ingredients

For tomato vinaigrette

- 1 cup mild olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced plum tomatoes (canned are acceptable)
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar
- Salt and black pepper to taste

- Optional: Sugar if tomatoes are too acidic
- 2 tablespoons tomato purée

For the salad

- 8 cups spinach leaves, well washed
- 6 very small red potatoes (about 8 to 10 ounces), roasted or boiled and then sliced
- 1 cup celery, sliced 1/4 inch thick
- 1/2 cup finely diced red onion
- Segments of 4 oranges (about 32 pieces) minus peel, pith and membrane
- 1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds

Instructions

In medium bowl, whisk together the ingredients for the vinaigrette.

Toss the spinach leaves with some of the vinaigrette and place them on salad plates. Dress remaining ingredients with some vinaigrette (there may be some vinaigrette left over, depending on how heavily you like to dress your salads) and place atop the spinach.

Per serving, using all the dressing: 447 cal.; 5 g pro.; 16 g carb.; 42 g fat (6 sat., 31 monounsat., 5 polyunsat.); 0 chol.; 253 mg sod.; 5 g fiber; 7 g sugar; 82 percent calories from fat.

Can't miss with French stew

By Mark Fisher
COX NEWS SERVICE

Sure, it's got a funny French name, but ratatouille (ra-tuh-TOO-ee) can be a quintessential American dish.

That's because during this time of year — this glorious time of year — every ingredient in this recipe can be found in farmers markets, all locally grown. So now is the perfect time to make this classic Provençal dish that combines eggplant, tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, zucchini, garlic and fresh herbs into a soft (not crisp) vegetable stew that simply tastes greater than the sum of its parts.

There are many reasons to love ratatouille. It's versatile — it can be served hot or cold or at room temperature, as a side dish or as a main course. It's healthy — just look at the ingredients. And the recipe is forgiving — you can add or subtract an ingredient or two, experiment with different herbs or add a dash of heat, and give it your signature.

But try the original way at least once. Some recipes call for each vegetable to be sautéed separately, then assembled for final cooking, but a one-pot method also yields fine results — and a quicker cleanup.

Ratatouille

Prep time: 40 minutes • Cook time: 55 minutes • Serves 6-8

This recipe was adapted from Bon Appetit magazine.

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 2 pounds eggplant, unpeeled, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 8 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 medium zucchini, quartered lengthwise and sliced
- 3 bell peppers (red or yellow), chopped
- 4 large tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 2 teaspoons salt (or more to taste)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Pinch of sugar
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs, leaves only

- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- cup chopped or torn fresh basil

Instructions

Heat oil in heavy, large pot over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until tender, about 10 minutes. Add eggplant and garlic; sauté 5 minutes. Add zucchini and bell peppers; sauté 5 minutes.

Mix in chopped tomatoes, salt, pepper and pinch of sugar. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender and flavors have blended, stirring occasionally, about 30 minutes. Stir in thyme, parsley and basil, cook 5 minutes. Add additional salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm, cold or at room temperature.

Per serving, based on 6 servings: 225 cal.; 9 g pro.; 35 g carb.; 8 g fat (1 sat., 5 monounsat., 2 polyunsat.); 0 chol.; 807 mg sod.; 10 g fiber; 18 g sugar; 30 percent calories from fat.

'Meat': Don't look for veggies in this cookbook

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straightforwardly and succinctly.

There's not a lot of anything else in the book, however. So if you love vegetables, crackers or desserts, you'll have to get another book.

The book's pink cover identifies its target gender, and the inside of "Meat Club" is attractive and distinctive, with honey gingham and whimsical retro embroidery enlivening the pages.

If you love to pore over lovely food photographs of each dish, don't fork over your dues yet: "Meat Club" doesn't have any. But if you want a book that's easy to use with lots of ways to fix pork, beef and lamb, join the club.

The Bee's Lori Korleski Richardson can be reached at (916) 321-1114 or lkorteski@sacbee.com.

Fruit of the (pork) loin

Prep time: 15 minutes • Cook time: 42 minutes • Serves 4

This dish makes an ideal weekday meal for friends and family. The recipe is from "Meat Club Cookbook" (Chronicle Books, \$18.95, 135 pages). Tester's note: A person of the male persuasion complained about the "girlie portions." It's so delicious, you may want to double it or serve it with a hearty side dish.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more if needed
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, cut into 1-inch-thick medallions
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup dry red wine
- 1/2 cup canned low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, divided use
- 12 pitted prunes

Instructions

In a large sauté pan or skillet, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Season pork medallions with 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Cook, turning once, until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Remove and put on a warm plate.

If necessary, add oil pan to make about 2 tablespoons fat. Add onion and a generous 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in garlic, cook for 1 minute longer and add wine. Bring mixture to a boil, scraping bottom of pan to dislodge any browned bits. Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes until liquid is reduced to approximately 1/4 cup.

Stir in the broth, tomato paste, 2 tablespoons of parsley, and any accumulated juices from the meat. Add the prunes. Bring to a simmer and cook until the sauce thickens and the prunes are soft, about 5 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon of the remaining parsley, 1/8 teaspoon pepper and the medallions. Cook until just heated through, 1 to 2 minutes.

Place the medallions on a plate and spoon the sauce over top, placing 3 prunes on each plate. Finish the dish by sprinkling with the remaining 1 tablespoon parsley and serve immediately.

Per serving, using lean pork tenderloin: 274 cal.; 26 g pro.; 22 g carb.; 8 g fat (2 sat., 5 monounsat., 1 polyunsat.); 74 mg chol.; 225 mg sod.; 3 g fiber; 13 g sugar; 25 percent calories from fat.

LETTERS

A proud spouse

I loved your review of the Doña Tomás cookbook ("A taste of Mexico — straight from East Bay," Taste, Aug. 30). I just wish you had mentioned the third author (Mike Wille), who actually wrote every word except the forward by Richard (Rodriguez) that you enjoyed reading so much! Proud wife of the third ...

— Shelly Luke Wille, Los Gatos

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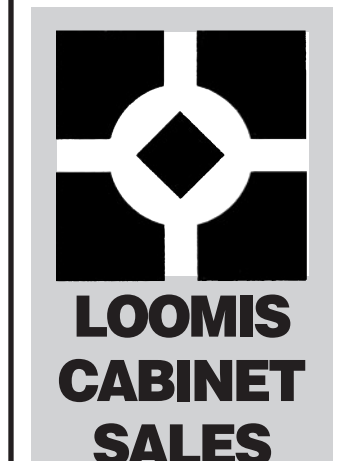
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