

TEAS WITH ZING

There is nothing like a tall glass of iced tea, but don't just settle for plain tea. Add your favorite fruit juices, fruit sodas, fruit purees, and fruit syrups and create your own signature drink, or follow our simple suggestions.

8 orange and spice black tea bags, steeped in 5 cups boiling water.

1 orange, halved

[1/2] medium lemon

[1/2] cup sugar

Ice cubes

8 mint sprigs and 8 orange slices, for garnish

1. Squeeze the whole orange and lemon half into the steeping tea and stir in the sugar until it dissolves. Chill for several hours.

TIP: Try any of your favorite fruit juice in place of the orange and lemon. Cranberry, raspberry, white grape, mango or peach nectar, even pineapple juice are all perfect for adding to tea. Add whole fresh strawberries for garnish if you like.

2. Remove the tea bags and fruit from chilled tea. Fill glasses with ice cubes and pour in the tea. Garnish with mint sprigs and orange slices.

MIXED VEGETABLES AND BROWN RICE

Brown Rice is gluten free, low in price, great in flavor, nutritious and extremely versatile. When only the husk is removed in rice, it is filled with important antioxidants, vitamins, iron, and potassium. It is a great source of fiber and can help you loose wait. No wonder it was just added to the food and drug administrations list of whole grains that can make health claims.

Makes 6 servings

1[1/2] cups Brown Rice

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon chopped garlic (from 1 medium clove)

1 cup chopped white onion (from 1 medium onion)

[1/2] cup chopped red bell pepper (from [1/2] medium pepper)

1 cup chopped tomato (from 1 large tomato)

2 cups Italian parsley, leaves only, chopped

[1/2] cup extra virgin olive oil

[1/4] cup cabernet wine vinegar, or other red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (from 1 medium lemon)

2 teaspoons salt

[1/2] teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Bring 3 quarts of salted water to a boil in a 6-quart stockpot. Add the Brown Rice to the boiling water. Return to a boil and cook, uncovered, for about ten minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water.

2. While the rice is cooking, heat the olive oil in a medium skillet at medium high heat. Add the onion and garlic to the pan. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes and add the red bell pepper. Cook, stirring, 3 minutes more and add the tomato. Remove the mixture from the heat and set aside.

TIP: This side dish can be served hot out of the pan or it can be served cold, straight out of the refrigerator. It is great to take to a party, because you can serve it at room temperature and it's still as good as it was when you made it.

3. Drain the rice well in a colander, shaking to dry it as much as possible. Spoon the grain into a large bowl and add the cooked vegetables, parsley, olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Toss well and serve.

CHEESE AND VEGETABLE ENCHILADAS

Serve these delicious enchiladas with your favorite salsa, some shredded iceberg lettuce, and a bowl of packaged Mexican rice for a great family dinner. I have found that children love this South of the Border dish, and it is a quick and easy alternative to fast food.

Makes 4 servings

2 cups grated carrots (from 2 medium carrots)

1 cup thinly sliced celery (from 2 large ribs)

1 cup sliced white onion (from 1 medium onion)

TIP: The easiest way to slice a peeled onion is to cut it in half from root to tip and lay each half cut side down on the cutting board. Slice across as thinly or thickly as you need.

[3/4] cup stemmed, seeded, deveined, and sliced red bell pepper (from 1 small pepper)

[1/4] cup olive oil

2 cups canned tomatoes (from a 28-ounce can)

2 tablespoons ground cumin

1 tablespoon chili powder

2 teaspoons chopped garlic (from 2 medium cloves)

One 10[3/4]-ounce can tomato puree

1 tablespoon lemon juice (from 1 medium lemon)

2 cups shredded smoked gouda (about 8 ounces)

Eight 10-inch flour tortillas

2 avocados, peeled, stoned, and thinly sliced

1 cup plain yogurt

1 cup fresh salsa

1. Preheat the broiler and line a broiler pan with aluminum foil. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the carrots, celery, and onion and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes.

Add bell peppers to the pan and cook 3 minutes more.

2. Roughly chop the tomatoes and add them to the vegetable mixture along with the cumin, chili powder, garlic, and tomato puree. Simmer for five more minutes over high heat.

3. Puree [1/3] of the vegetable mixture in the jar of a blender with the lid on and covered with a dish towel to prevent spilling. Pour the resulting sauce into a flat dish. Dip each tortilla into the sauce, coating both sides. Place some of the reserved vegetables in the center of each tortilla and roll up. Place the rolled tortilla, seam side down in the pan. Repeat with the remaining tortillas. Sprinkle the tortillas generously with the cheese and broil for two-to four minutes, until the cheese melts and begins to brown.

4. Serve hot, with the sliced avocado, yogurt, and salsa.

CREAM CHEESE AND NUT SANDWICHES ON CINNAMON RAISIN BREAD

Some years ago the Chock Full O'Nuts Coffee Shop chain sold thousands of these sandwiches every day, along with steaming bowls of the day's special soup, to bankers, secretaries, messengers, shoppers, anyone who stepped up to the counter. It was an inexpensive, popular, and nourishing lunch.

Makes 4 sandwiches

8 ounces cream cheese, softened

[3/4] cup chopped toasted pecans or walnuts (about 3 ounces)

1[1/2] teaspoons cinnamon

2 tablespoons honey

8 slices cinnamon/raisin coffee bread, commercial or home made.

1. In a small bowl, whip together cream cheese, nuts, cinnamon and honey.
2. Lay out 4 slices bread. Spread each slice thickly with cream cheese mixture. Top each with another slice of bread. Cut off the crusts if you like. Cut each sandwich into quarters.

TIP: These sandwiches hold up very well. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap or aluminum foil, refrigerate overnight and pop into bag lunches for a special school treat.

PUMPKIN AND ONION CASSEROLE

Bring the kids into the kitchen when Halloween is on the way and let them help prepare this delicious fall dish. Another way to use the familiar pumpkin, this is a wonderful way to get the family to try a vegetable they otherwise might not want to sample.

Makes 6 servings

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter (5 tablespoons), plus more for buttering the dish

2 medium onions, chopped (about 3 cups)

1 teaspoon minced garlic (1 clove)

2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes

3 pounds pumpkin, peeled, cut into 1-inch cubes

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

$1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons Herbes de Provence

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Panko bread crumbs

1. Preheat the oven to 375[dg]F. Generously butter a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -quart ovenproof casserole.
2. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a heavy skillet. Add the onions, garlic, apple, and pumpkin. Cook, tossing, for 5 minutes.

3. Toss with salt, pepper, and Herbes de Provence. Spoon the mixture into the casserole.

Pour in the cream.

TIP: This casserole may be covered and refrigerated at this point, for several hours or overnight. Bring to room temperature for 20 minutes and continue with the recipe.

4. Bake, covered, 1 hour.

5. Combine the Panko crumbs and the remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Remove the casserole from the oven and uncover. Spread the buttered crumbs over the top. Bake, uncovered, 20 minutes longer, until lightly browned.

6. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

WILD RICE AND TURKEY MUFFINS

I love to make these muffins with my leftover turkey. Everyone is so surprised when they find the muffins have turkey in them! Pair them with a favorite salad, a savory bowl of soup, or add them to a brunch menu for an extra savory treat. They are the perfect freezer muffin. Just reheat them wrapped in foil and serve.

Makes 12 muffins

[1/2] cup unsalted butter (1 stick) plus one tablespoon for greasing the muffin tins

[1/2] cup chopped shallot (from 4 medium cloves)

1 teaspoon chopped garlic (from 1 medium clove)

1 cup cleaned, stemmed and chopped shitake mushrooms (about 4 ounces)

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

[1/4] teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 cup whole milk

2 large eggs at room temperature

1 cup cooked wild rice

1 cup finely diced roasted turkey

1. Melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallot and garlic and cook, stirring, until soft, about 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms. Cook the mushrooms until soft, turning often, about 5 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 350[deg]F. Grease 12 muffin cups with unsalted butter.
3. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, pepper, and nutmeg together into a large bowl. Mix the eggs and milk together in a medium bowl and stir in the sautéed vegetables, turkey and wild rice. Pour this over the dry ingredients and stir until just blended—the batter will be thick and lumpy.
4. Scoop [1/4] cup of batter into each prepared muffin cup. Bake the muffins for 25 minutes or until the muffins are no longer moist in the center or a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Cool the muffins on a wire rack for 15 minutes before removing them from the tin. Serve warm, or cool completely before freezing.

Classic Sugar Cookies

Use a cookie cutter to make this cookie perfect for any occasion. They can be sprinkled with colored sugar or frosted with the royal frosting recipe that follows.

2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ Tsp Sea salt

1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar

3 egg yolks

1 tsp vanilla

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together. Set this aside. In the bowl of a mixer, place the butter and the sugar. Beat this together at medium speed until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg yolks, one at a time and then add the vanilla. Add the flour mixture to the butter and finish the mixing process with a wooden spoon.

Divide the dough into 4 pieces and flatten each piece into a disk. Wrap the disks in plastic wrap and then refrigerate for at least four hours or up to overnight. Remove the dough from the refrigerator when ready to use it and allow it to soften slightly before rolling it out.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a large baking sheet. On a lightly floured board, roll out one disk of the dough to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Transfer the cutouts to the baking sheet and bake until the edges are golden, about 8 minutes.

Cool the cookies on wire cooling racks and then put them in an airtight container. They will keep at room temperature for one week or can be frozen for up to one month.

Royal Icing

Smooth, glossy icing is perfect for decorating cookies. A thinner consistency will help it spread easier, and a thicker one will be easier to pipe through a pastry bag. You can control this by adding more or less powdered sugar. Glossy icing can be achieved with a few drops of glycerin from the pharmacy.

2 large egg whites, room temperature

4 cups powdered sugar, sifted

2 tsp lemon juice

3 drops of glycerin

Beat the egg whites until stiff, but not dry, in the mixer. Add the sugar, lemon juice, and glycerin. Beat this for one more minute. If the icing is too thick add more egg whites, if it is too thin add more sugar.

Frosted Glaze

This glaze is great for decorating cookies quickly and simply. Bake the cookies several days ahead or freeze them for up to 2 months. Then decorate the cookies up to 2 days ahead. Make sure that they have time to dry thoroughly before you store them.

3 tbs whole milk

½ tsp vanilla

3 ½ cups confectioners sugar, sifted

Food coloring, if desired

In a medium bowl, combine the milk and the vanilla. Slowly stir in the sugar until the glaze becomes thick and creamy. The longer that you beat this the glossier it will become. Divide the glaze into separate bowls and add the different colors if you desire.