

## Wellness Cooking Class-December 2015

### Appetizers and “Mocktails”

Many people find it challenging to eat healthfully this time of year while attending many social events. Often the food choices included items that we try to minimize on a plant-based diet. However, if you choose carefully and plan ahead, you can enjoy these social occasions, and still make good food choices.

Suggestions for some “better” choices of foods typically available at social events:

Proteins: pureed beans in dips, hummus, spiced nuts

“Dippers”: Whole wheat pita bread, baked whole wheat pita chips, multi grain baguette, raw vegetables, fresh fruit

“Holders”: Cucumber cups, mini pepper halves, cherry tomatoes, endive leaves, mushroom caps



**Spinach Stuffed Mushrooms** Source: *New American Plate Cookbook* by American Institute for Cancer Research  
This warm appetizer will make any occasion special. The healthy spinach filling has a zesty taste, and the baked mushrooms make for an elegant presentation. These can be prepared ahead of time and baked just prior to serving.

**Ingredients:** (Makes about 20)  
olive oil cooking spray  
2 tsp olive oil  
1/3 cup shallots, chopped  
1 pkg frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained (10 ounces)  
1 egg white, beaten  
1/2 cup whole wheat bread crumbs  
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts, chopped  
Dash ground nutmeg  
20 medium mushroom caps, cleaned and stems removed (about 1 1/2 pounds)

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Place parchment paper on baking sheet.
2. In a skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add shallots and sauté for about 5 minutes, stirring often until golden.
3. Transfer shallots to bowl and mix in spinach. Stir in egg white, bread crumbs, pine nuts, nutmeg; season with salt and pepper. Stir to combine.
4. Place the mushroom caps on the baking sheet. Spray the mushroom caps lightly with olive oil cooking spray. Stuff each mushroom with 1 rounded tablespoon of the spinach mixture, mounding the filling.
5. Bake for 20 minutes or until mushrooms are tender.

Optional preparation: Omit chopped toasted pine nuts and add 1/3 cup feta cheese and 1/4 cup parmesan cheese to spinach filling.



**Red Quinoa-Avocado Salad** Source: [www.Wegmans.com](http://www.Wegmans.com) (Makes: about 4 cups)

Even whole grains can be served as appetizers! Red quinoa is variety of this popular whole grain (it also comes in black!). It has a slightly nutty flavor and is nutritionally similar to white quinoa. This colorful whole grain salad can be served in a variety of vegetables, including endive leaves, mini sweet pepper halves or cucumber “cups”. This recipe can be prepared ahead of time (except avocado) and kept refrigerated; add the avocado just before serving.

Quinoa has a naturally bitter coating of saponins that should be rinsed away before using. Quinoa is a seed, and the saponins help protect the plant. You can rinse quinoa using a very fine strainer, lined with a coffee filter to keep the tiny seeds from running through the holes.

**Ingredients:**

½ cup	red quinoa, uncooked
½ cup	cilantro, finely chopped (can substitute parsley)
½ cup	green onions, thinly sliced
1	plum tomato, diced
1	avocado, peeled, cored and diced
1 Tbsp	lemon juice
1 Tbsp	white wine vinegar
1 ½ Tbsp	olive oil
1/8 tsp	salt
¼ tsp	pepper

**Directions:**

1. Cook red quinoa according to package directions. Place in a large bowl and chill.
2. In a small bowl, mix lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper to make vinaigrette. Set aside.
3. Add cilantro (or parsley), green onions, and tomatoes to cooked quinoa.
4. Pour vinaigrette over salad and stir to combine. Add avocado; mix gently.
5. Spoon into cucumber cups, endive leaves or mini-sweet peppers halves. Arrange on serving platter.



**Hummus Dip** Source: *The Cancer Fighting Kitchen* by Rebecca Katz (Yield: 1 1/4 cups)

This traditionally Mediterranean spread is becoming increasingly popular in the United States, as a healthier alternative to sour cream or cream cheese-based dips. Nutritionally, it provides fiber, plant-based protein, iron, and B vitamins.

Hummus only requires a few ingredients, so it is easy to whip a batch at home. Tahini is a paste made from roasted and ground sesame seeds and is a key ingredient in hummus. There are endless variations to a basic hummus recipe, so that you easily change the flavor and appearance of the dip to meet your preferences. Try some of the suggestions listed at the end of the recipe at home. Store prepared hummus in an airtight container in the refrigerator and use within 5-7 days.

**Ingredients:**

1-15 oz can	chick peas, rinsed and drained (15 ounces), preferably low sodium
2-3 cloves	finely minced garlic (or to taste)
2 Tbsp	tahini
6-8 Tbsp	reduced sodium vegetable broth or water, depending on desired consistency
2-3 Tbsp	lemon juice (about 1 medium lemon)
1 tsp	olive oil
¼ tsp	salt
	Ground black pepper, to taste
	Paprika (for garnish)
	Olive oil (for garnish)

**Directions:**

1. In blender or food processor, place chick peas, garlic, tahini, broth or water, lemon juice and olive oil. Blend on high speed until mixture is smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl or blender a few times during the mixing.
2. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour mixture into serving bowl. Garnish with drizzle of olive oil and sprinkle of paprika.
3. Serve with cut-up raw vegetables or pita bread wedges, or use as a sandwich spread.

**Suggested add-ins:**

½ cup chopped olives  
½ cup roasted red peppers  
½ cup sun-dried tomatoes  
1" piece ginger, peeled and minced



**Roasted Garlic and Kale Hummus** Source: [www.ohmyveggies.com](http://www.ohmyveggies.com) Makes about 1 ½ cups  
The roasted garlic gives rich flavor and the kale provides color (from beta-carotene) to this hummus. Serve with pita wedges, whole grain crackers or assorted raw vegetables, or use on your favorite sandwich or wrap.

#### **Ingredients**

7 cloves	garlic, unpeeled
1 (15-oz) can	chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 cup	tightly packed kale leaves, finely chopped, stems removed
1/4 cup	lemon juice
3 Tbsp	water
3 Tbsp	tahini
¼ tsp	salt, or to taste
	Olive oil for garnish

#### **Directions**

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wrap the cloves of garlic in foil and place in the oven until soft, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow garlic to cool.
2. Peel off the papery skin and add the cloves to a blender or food processor along with the remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl (or blender) during mixing.

Note: You can leave small bits of kale leaves in the hummus, if desired, or blend until completely smooth.

3. Transfer to a serving bowl and drizzle with olive oil, if desired.



**Hummus and Vegetable Pinwheels** Source: *The Cancer Fighting Kitchen* by Rebecca Katz (serves: 4)

These wraps are a quick and healthy snack or light meal. The hummus provides a nutrient dense base for the pinwheel. Add a variety of colorful vegetables to complement the flavor of the hummus and to provide great eye appeal.

4- 8"	whole wheat tortillas
1 cup	hummus dip
2 cups	tender leafy greens such as spinach, arugula, romaine or baby kale
1/2 cup	matchstick carrots
¾ cup	red peppers, cut into thin strips

1. Place a tortilla on a flat surface. Spread 1/4 cup hummus over the tortilla, leaving a 3/4-inch border all the way around.
2. Lay one-fourth of the spinach, carrots and red peppers over the hummus. Roll up into a tube.
3. Use a smear of hummus to “glue” down the edge of the tortilla. Secure edge with 6 toothpicks, evenly spaced.
4. Trim off the ends. Cut crosswise into 6 pinwheels (about 1” wide) to serve as appetizers.
5. Repeat with the remaining tortillas and filling ingredients.



**Anytime Bars** Source: *The Cancer Fighting Kitchen* by Rebecca Katz (Makes 25 bars)

These date and nut treats are nutrient dense, as the base ingredients are oats, nuts and dried fruits. This recipe can easily be adapted to your taste preferences- see suggested variations at the end of the recipe. The components are quickly mixed together in a food processor or blender.

1 cup	pecan halves
1 cup	whole almonds
¼ cup	whole wheat pastry flour or all-purpose flour
2 Tbsp	ground flaxseeds
¼ tsp	salt
1/8 tsp	baking powder
1/8 tsp	baking soda
¼ cup	old-fashioned rolled oats
1 cup	pitted dates, quartered
1 cup	dried apricots, halved
1	egg
5 Tbsp	maple syrup
1 tsp	vanilla
1 ½ tsp	grated orange zest (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Spread the nuts in a single layer on lined baking sheet. Toast for 7-10 minutes until lightly brown and aromatic.
3. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees F. Spray 9" square pan with cooking spray.
4. Combine flour, ground flaxseeds, salt, baking soda and baking powder in a food processor or blender and process for 5 seconds to combine.
5. Add the toasted nuts to the flour mixture and pulse 5 times to coarsely chop. Add the oats, dates and apricots and pulse 10-15 times, until the mixture is well chopped but still coarse.
6. In a large bowl, whisk the egg, maple syrup and vanilla together until thoroughly combined.
7. Add the fruit and nut mixture and grated orange zest to the liquid ingredients and mix thoroughly.
8. Spread the mixture in the greased 9" baking pan in an even layer. Bake for 25-30 minutes, until set and golden brown; don't over bake or the bars will be too dry.
9. Let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes, then cut into 25 squares. Leave the bars in the pan until completely cool, so they'll hold together when you remove them.

Variations:

- Use walnuts instead of almonds or pecans
- Add 1/4 cup dried cranberries, cherries or currants when mixing together in Step 7.
- Add 2 tbsp sesame seeds when mixing together in Step 7.
- Add 1/4 cup unsweetened shredded coconut when mixing together in Step 7.



“Mocktails” can be a chance to get creative. You can mix various fruit juices together to create a unique flavor. Add seltzer to make the drink “bubbly” and to dilute the sweetness. Garnish with frozen berries and orange slices instead of ice to add color.

**Pomegranate-Apricot Sparkler** Source: [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org) (makes 6 servings)

1 ½ cups pomegranate juice, chilled  
1 ½ cups apricot nectar, chilled  
1 ½ cups seltzer water, chilled  
Frozen berries, lime slices or pomegranate arils.

1. In large pitcher, combine first 3 ingredients. Pour into individual cups.
2. Garnish each glass with frozen fruit pieces, if desired.

**Holiday Citrus Punch** Source: [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org) (makes about 15 servings)

4 cups orange juice  
2 cups 100% cranberry juice  
4 cups sparkling water or seltzer  
1 orange, sliced horizontally into 1/4-inch slices  
1 lime, sliced horizontally into 1/4-inch slices

In large punch bowl, combine juices and sparkling water or soda. Float orange and lime slices on top and serve.



### Extra Recipe to try at home!

**Ginger Spice Biscotti** Source: [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org) (Makes: about 30 cookies)

1 1/4 cups	unbleached, all-purpose flour
1 cup	whole-wheat flour or whole-wheat pastry flour
4 tsp	ground ginger
1 tsp	cinnamon
1 1/2 tsp	baking powder
1/4 tsp	allspice
1/4 tsp	salt
2 large	eggs
1/3 cup	canola oil
1/4 cup	unsweetened apple butter or applesauce
1/3 cup	packed dark brown sugar
1/2 cup	dried cranberries, chopped dried pineapple or other dried fruit
	dark chocolate (optional)
	sliced almonds (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Cover cookie sheet with parchment paper.
2. In medium bowl, mix next 7 ingredients and set aside.
3. Using electric mixer or food processor, combine eggs with oil and apple butter for 10 seconds. Add sugar and blend for 30 more seconds.
4. Add half of dry mixture and process until smooth. Add remaining dry mixture and process until a soft and sticky forms.
5. Transfer dough to a large bowl; fold in dried fruit.
6. Divide dough in half and place on either end of cookie sheet. With damp hands, form each piece of dough into a log 3 inches wide and about 3/4-inch high and about 9 inches long.
7. Bake 25-30 minutes, or until firm to the touch. Logs will spread during baking.
8. Remove from oven and cool 10 minutes. With serrated knife, slice each log into 1/2-inch wide cookies, cutting on a diagonal. Place on baking sheet.
9. Bake 10 minutes. Turn each cookie over and bake 10 more minutes. Turn oven off and leave biscotti in oven for 10 minutes.
10. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack. Store at room temperature.

Serving tip: Coat 1 side of cookie with dark chocolate and sprinkle with sliced almonds.