

VEGETARIAN GOURMET
Thanksgiving Dinner

RECIPES BY CHEF RON PICKARSKI



APPETIZER

Butternut Squash Chowder



MAIN COURSE

Thanksgiving Day Tofu
with Sage Dressing, Sauce Velouté,
Wild Rice Pilaf, Brussel Sprouts with Walnuts
and Candied Ginger Cranberry Sauce



DESSERT

Swiss Roasted Pecan Torte



Butternut Squash Chowder

This soup is rich, non-fattening, and delicately sweet, with mild herbs to emphasize the squash flavor. The garlic comes across as a subtle accent.

Yields 6 servings

- 2 cups butternut squash (peeled, diced, and steamed until soft)
- 1 cup sweet potato (peeled, diced, and steamed)
- 1 cup carrots (peeled, sliced, and steamed)
- 3 cups water (including water left over from steaming the vegetables)
- ½ cup diced red bell pepper
- ½ cup diced onion
- 1½ to 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1½ teaspoons minced garlic
- 1½ teaspoons chopped basil
- ¾ teaspoon chopped rosemary
- ½ teaspoon chopped thyme
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil, olive oil, or other cooking oil
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced green bell pepper or diced zucchini
- 5 teaspoons vegetable broth powder
- ¼ teaspoon paprika (preferably Spanish, because it is hotter than the sweeter Hungarian paprika and is added to counter the sweetness of this soup)

Blend the squash, sweet potatoes, and carrots with the water until smooth, and set aside. Saute the red bell pepper, onion, salt, garlic, basil, rosemary, and thyme in the oil over medium heat for 5 minutes. Now add the remaining ingredients and saute for another 5 minutes. Add the pureed vegetable mixture, cook for another 5 to 10 minutes, and serve hot.

Chef Suggestion: Top soup with a spiral web garnish

The web garnish on the soup is challenging in that one has to use a pastry bag with a medium writing tube. Using **Follow Your Heart® Vegan Sour Cream**, thin out 2 parts of sour cream with 1 part water and mix to soften the sour cream. Fill the mixture in the pastry bag and squeeze out starting in the center of the bowl and creating a spiral outward to the edge of the soup. Inserting a knife into the soup at 12 o'clock, cut to the center of the soup. Do the same from 3, 6 and 9 o'clock. Now, starting from the center, cut outward from 10:30, 1:30, 4:30 and 7:30. This will create a spiral web going inward and outward.



Thanksgiving Day Tofu

*with Sage Dressing, Sauce Velouté, Wild Rice Pilaf, Brussel Sprouts
with Walnuts and Candied Ginger Cranberry Sauce*

This is a superb substitute for the traditional Thanksgiving turkey.
It's really the dressing that carries the dish. The corn oil gives it that wonderful buttery

Yields 1 medium loaf; 4 servings

1½ pounds tofu
2 tablespoons arrowroot powder
3 tablespoons vegetable broth powder
¾ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon agar agar powder
2 tablespoons barley malt syrup, dissolved with 2 tablespoons water
Sage Dressing (see recipe)

Wash the tofu, pat dry, and cut into small pieces. Put the tofu, arrowroot, broth powder, salt, pepper, and agar flakes in a food processor and blend to a smooth paste. Oil and flour the loaf pan (or line it with baking liner paper after oiling)

Spread a layer of tofu paste inside the pan, lining the bottom and all four sides. (Spread only a thin layer on the ends.) Use all but about 1 cup of the paste.

Firmly but gently press the dressing into the pan, on top of the tofu paste "liner". Try to avoid displacing the tofu. Cover the dressing with the remaining tofu, carefully sealing the edges. Cover the pan with foil, making certain the foil doesn't come in contact with the tofu. (The tofu will eat into the foil.)

Bake in a preheated oven at 350° F for 30 to 40 minutes. Then remove the foil cover, glaze the top of the loaf with the dissolved barley malt syrup, then turn the oven up to 450° F, and continue baking for 10 minutes. Remove from oven and allow loaf to cool for about 10 minutes. Unmold, slice and serve hot with with Sauce Velouté.

Sage Dressing

Yields 2 cups

- ½ cup finely diced onions
- ½ cup finely diced celery
- ½ cup finely diced carrots
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons unrefined corn oil
- ½ teaspoon ground sage
- ¼ teaspoon dried basil
- 3 tablespoons vegetable broth powder
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup water
- 2 cups chopped ½ inch cubes of dry white or whole wheat bread

Saute the vegetables in the oil with the garlic for 5 minutes on medium heat. Add the remaining spices and saute another 5 minutes. Add the water and bring to a simmer. Then add in the bread crumbs and let simmer a few minutes and then take the dressing off the fire and let it cool.

*Note: If fine bread crumbs are used the dressing will be too tight. * If you are not a vegetarian a low sodium chicken broth powder could be used.*

Sauce Velouté

Yields about 3 cups

- 1 tablespoon Earth Balance® or canola oil
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh garlic
- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 sprigs parsley, chopped
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoon chicken base
- 6 cups water
- ½ cup roux (mixture of ½ cup unbleached white flour plus ¼ cup canola oil) **note: approximately 6 tablespoons of roux are needed for 3 cups sauce**

Add oil or melt the Earth Balance in a 3-quart saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions, celery, carrot, and garlic. Sauté for 5 minutes, or until the onion is transparent. Add the thyme, bay leaf, parsley, black pepper, vegan chicken base, and water. Mix well, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain the mixture and return it to the pan. Add the roux and salt, and stir with a wire whisk until the sauce thickens. Use immediately, or transfer to a covered container and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about two weeks.

Wild Rice Pilaf

Yields 4 servings

2 cups vegetarian chicken-flavored broth (2 cups water and 2 tablespoons Frontier chicken-flavored broth powder)

½ cup brown rice

½ cup wild rice

3 tablespoons canola oil or Earth Balance

2 cups sliced onions

2 teaspoons brown sugar

½ cup Craisins or dried cranberries

½ teaspoon finely grated orange zest or 1 tablespoon frozen orange juice concentrate

⅛ teaspoon cinnamon

Combine broth, brown rice, wild rice and cinnamon in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 45 minutes or until rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed.

Meanwhile, heat Earth Balance or canola oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and brown sugar. Cook 6 minutes or until liquid is absorbed and onions are soft and translucent. Reduce heat to low. Slowly cook onions, stirring often for 25 minutes or until they are caramel color. Stir in dried cranberries. Cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes or until cranberries swell. Gently fold cranberry mixture and orange zest into cooked rice.

Sautéed Brussels Sprouts with Walnut Oil

Yields 3 servings

3 tablespoon canola oil

2 cups halved brussels sprouts

¼ cup chopped walnuts

⅛ teaspoon sea salt

¼ cup water

Heat the oil in a 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat. Add walnuts and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes or until walnuts are lightly browned. Leaving oil in pan, remove walnuts.

Add Brussel Sprouts and salt and sauté for 3 minutes to lightly brown. Add water, put lid on pan and let cook until water has evaporated.

Candied Ginger Cranberry Sauce

Yields 3 cups

12 oz. bag fresh cranberries

1 cup water

½ cup sugar

¼ cup frozen orange juice concentrate

3 tablespoons chopped candied ginger

Pinch of salt

Wash cranberries. Put all ingredients into a sauce pan, stir, bring to a simmer and cook until cranberries pop. Reduce to low heat and cook another 5 minutes. Remove from fire immediately and refrigerate until cold. Serve cold.



Swiss Roasted Pecan Torte

This torte is one of my signature “friendly foods” pastries and has always been a four-star dessert. The original recipe calls for caramelized sugar, whipping cream, and butter. This version is vegan and sugar-free. Not only is it more healthful, but the flavor and texture are actually more delicate than the original. The barley malt syrup in this recipe fines the torte a subtle caramel flavor.

Yields one 11-inch torte

4 cups pecans
1 cup barley malt syrup (or ½ cup barley malt syrup and ½ cup honey)
¼ cup brown rice syrup
1 heaping tablespoon arrowroot powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons barley malt syrup, dissolved in 2 teaspoons water
pie dough (recipe recipe)

Roast the pecans at 275° F for about 40 minutes. (Slow roasting is essential to this dessert, because it allows for a delicate pecan flavor.) Using the food processor, grind the pecans to the consistency of coarse flour. Mix the finely ground pecans with the syrups, arrowroot, and vanilla. Set aside while you make the pie dough, if you haven't made it already.

Roll out half of the pie dough and place it in an 11-inch fluted torte pan, trimming the edges. Add pecan mixture on top of this bottom crust. Then roll out the remainder of the pie dough, place it over the filling, and trim the edges. Seal the edges of the top and bottom crust together. Cut a few holes in the top crust to let the steam escape.

Bake in a preheated oven at 350° F for 35 minutes. Then brush the top crust with the dissolved barley malt syrup, and bake until lightly browned (5 to 10 minutes). Cool and serve.

Variation: Instead of the brown rice syrup, substitute ¼ cup of honey.

Chef Suggestion: Drizzle the plate for a delicious presentation.

Take ¼ cup raspberry jelly and heat it in a microwave for about 10 seconds or long enough for it to become syrupy. Immediately take a spoon full and drizzle it speedily back and forth over the plate, starting from the top (12 o'clock) to the bottom of the plate (6 o'clock).

Drizzling speedily will make your sauce lines thin. If you move slowly, the lines will be thick. Either way is okay but thin is preferred. No matter how it turns out, it is okay because like nature, no two plating will be the same. They will be original and that is the essence of art.

Pie Dough

Yields two 9-inch crusts

1½ cups unbleached white flour

¼ cup Palm or non-trans fat shortening

½ cup ice water

2 teaspoons granulated sugar

Pinch salt

In a large mixing bowl pour the flour. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut the butter into the flour until the mixture becomes a crumbly meal.

Stir the salt and sugar into the ice water and pour it over the flour mixture. Using a fork, mix the water with the flour mixture until the dough binds together. (If the dough appears too wet, add a little flour.) Form the dough into two balls, and let rest a few minutes.

Turn one ball of dough onto a floured surface, and flatten it into a ½" thick circle.

With a floured rolling pin, roll out the dough (from the center outward) to a 10-inch circle that is ⅛" to ¼" thick. Transfer the dough to a 9-inch pie pan.

Roll out the second ball of dough as instructed above. Drape the top crust over the filling. Join the edges of the top and bottom crusts, roll up, and pinch together.



Chef Ron Pickarski

Chef Ron Pickarski is a culinary pioneer in vegetarian and natural foods. His delicious plant-based recipes are high in nutrition, low in fat, and cholesterol and dairy-free, making them the perfect choice for health conscious eaters who enjoy great-tasting food! He is a seven-time medal winner at the International Culinary Olympics and author of three cookbooks — *Friendly Foods*, *As You Like It*, and *Eco-Cuisine*.