



Pondering prunes and plums

Prunes vs. plums. What is the difference?

Plums and prunes both come from the same plant family — Rosaceae — rose family.

Varieties of edible plums are divided into two groups —Japanese (Prunus salicina) or European (P. domestica). The damson plum (P. insititia) is often considered a type of European plum; it intercrosses with European plums freely.

As fruit trees, both European and Japanese plums grow to 15 to 20 feet with somewhat wider spread. All have white flowers. The leaves grow to about 3 inches, broadly oval, and turn tawny yellow in the fall.

Fruit of the Japanese plums color range from green through yellow and brilliant red to deep purple black. The fruit is juicier and used for fresh fruit only.

European plums range in color from green and yellow to almost black. Prunes are European plums with a high sugar content, which makes it possible to sun-dry the fruit without it fermenting at the pit. As fresh fruit, prunes are sweeter than other plums.

Examples of Japanese plums are: “Autumn Rosa,” “Beauty,” “Burbank,” “Casselman,” “Elephant Heart,” “Friar,” “Golden Nectar,” “Santa Rosa” and “Satsuma.”

Examples of European plums are: “Brooks,” “Damson,” “French Prune” “Green Gage,” “Italian Prune,” “President,” and “Stanley.”

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Fresh take on an old favorite: Caesar salad

By Chris Ross
The San Diego Union-Tribune

British food blogger Nicky Corbishley says her kitchen was her sanctuary while she worked in corporate I.T. for 14 years. She used that kitchen time to unwind and experiment, so when she left the corporate world, it seemed natural to devote full time to her blog, Kitchen Sanctuary. Her new cookbook, “Seriously Good Salads,” offers 75 of her favorite recipes, most of which can be served as a main course.

She adds pasta and extra veggies to her version of a Caesar salad to make it a year-round dinner entree, with the suggestion that you can substitute whatever vegetables are in season.

Find more of Corbishley’s recipes on her blog, www.kitchensanctuary.com.

**CHICKEN CAESAR PASTA
SALAD WITH ROASTED
VEGETABLES**

Serves 4

2 red onions, cut into wedges

2 chicken breasts

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

1 medium zucchini, chopped into 1-inch cubes

1 ciabatta bread, chopped into 1-inch cubes

2 heads romaine lettuce, leaves separated and washed

2 cups cooked and cooled spiral pasta

2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese

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Using The Last Of Summer’s Bounty



E. Jason Wambsgans/Chicago Tribune/TNS

Fall brunch apple cake

BRUNCH BASICS

By JeanMarie Brownson
Chicago Tribune

All the bins of apples at the local farmers market make my heart beat faster. How much to buy? Which varieties are my favorites? Do I take a chance on a new apple? How many can I eat on the 1-mile drive home?

September tomatoes likewise cause an internal frenzy. Soon, all those luscious vine-ripened red beauties will disappear until next year. Supermarket tomatoes are just not the same, so I try to eat my fill. That includes tucking them into every meal, including weekend brunch.

This fall, baked chilaquiles is featured on our Sunday brunch menu. At its simplest, chilaquiles combines hearty tortilla chips with a red or green sauce for a starchy combo that welcomes additions such as fried eggs, chicken shreds, cilantro, cheese.

When the tomatoes are plentiful, I make a sauce of fresh tomatoes, canned ground tomatoes and a little chipotle chile. Ground turkey and a packet of taco seasoning add lean protein and zesty flavor. The meaty sauce mixture can be made a day or two in advance and reheated while the oven heats. Likewise, I bake my tortilla chips a day in advance to make the morning prep speedy. Of course, when I have thick, restaurant-style corn tortilla chips available, I use those instead of baking my own; the dish will be a bit richer.

For baked chilaquiles, I crack eggs right into the sauced chips before popping the dish into a hot oven. Serve the baked chilaquiles as soon as the eggs are set so the yolks stay runny and the tortilla chips maintain some texture and crispness. Garnish as you like, but be sure to pass something tangy to cut the richness such as plain yogurt, hot sauce and/or fresh lime wedges. I serve a romaine and arugula salad, dressed with fresh lime and olive oil, and topped with sliced tomatoes alongside the casserole.

The apple sheet cake recipe that follows is based on an old family favorite baked in a Bundt pan. These days, I prefer to use my 13-by-9-inch baking pan with a reduced amount of sugar in the batter. I change up the apples depending on availability. Lately, the SweeTango captures my fancy, but the more readily available Gala and Honeycrisp taste awesome, too.

This tender cake is dairy and nut free. When I’m baking for gluten-sensitive friends, I use Bob’s Red Mill Gluten Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour in place of the all-purpose flour. You may need to increase the baking time by 4 or 5 minutes.

The cake is best served warm, with hot coffee or cold milk for breakfast or brunch — or with vanilla ice cream after dinner. Make two cakes when the apples are aplenty and deliver large squares to the neighbors or coworkers to celebrate the bounty of fall goodness.



E. Jason Wambsgans/Chicago Tribune/TNS

Eggs bake directly in the tortilla chip and tomato sauce mixture. After coming from the oven, the chilaquiles is garnished with avocado, feta and cilantro.

**TOMATO AND TURKEY
CHILAQUILES BRUNCH
CASSEROLE**

Prep: 30 minutes
Cook: 45 minutes
Makes: 4 to 6 servings

12 thick, yellow corn tortillas (one 10-ounce package)

3 tablespoons expeller-pressed canola oil or safflower oil

1 pound ground turkey

1 medium red onion, diced

1 packet (1 to 1.3 ounces) taco seasoning mix (or 2 tablespoons chili powder mixed with 2 teaspoons smoked paprika and ½ teaspoon each garlic powder and salt)

Half of a 28-ounce can of ground tomatoes, about 1½ cups

1 pound very ripe red tomatoes, cored, diced

1 cup diced roasted red pepper (from a bottle is fine)

1 teaspoon pureed chipotle in adobo (from a can or jar), optional

½ teaspoon salt

6 large eggs

½ cup shredded Chihuahua or Monterey Jack cheese

Garnishes:
1 small avocado, halved, pitted, diced
½ cup crumbled mild feta cheese

- ¼ cup sliced cilantro leaves**
Plain nonfat yogurt, hot sauce, lime wedges

1. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Have 2 baking sheets ready. Cut tortillas in half, then cut each half into 3 wedges. Put wedges onto one of the baking sheets. Add 2 tablespoons oil and use clean hands to toss tortilla wedges, coating them with oil. Arrange the wedges in a single layer over the two baking sheets.

2. Bake tortilla wedges, stirring often, until crisp and a little bit browned at the edges, about 20 minutes. Cool completely. (Cover with foil and use within 1 day.)

3. Heat a deep, 12-inch ovenproof skillet over medium heat until hot. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Add turkey and onion. Cook and stir until turkey is cooked through, about 5 minutes. Stir in taco seasoning (or the substitute); cook, 2 minutes. Stir in ground tomatoes, fresh tomatoes, roasted red pepper, chipotle and salt. Heat to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cook, stirring, about 5 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings. (Refrigerate, covered, up to 2 days.)

4. Heat oven to 400 degrees. Reheat the tomato-turkey mixture if necessary. Gently stir in the tortilla chips until all of them are coated with the sauce. Spread the chips in an even layer over the pan but don’t crush them too much. Use a large spoon to make 6 shallow indentations in the chip mixture; crack an egg into each indentation. Sprinkle everything with shredded cheese. Bake until egg yolks are soft set and whites are completely set, 13 to 15 minutes.

5. Remove from oven; garnish with avocado, feta and cilantro. Serve right away with dollops of yogurt, a splash of hot sauce and a squeeze of lime.

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