

Trout and tofu tempt the tastebuds

By Mark Sunderland
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The holidays are upon us with the ringing of bells, commercials telling us what to give and the (dreaded) lists. The holidays also include a surplus of food that ranges from Grandma's homemade turkey, mashed potatoes with gravy and fresh cranberry sauce, or perhaps a pepperoni pizza from the local pizzeria. Whatever one has for the holidays, it seems there is a surplus of various meat products and very few vegetables that adorn the table.

The question arises though: what if one isn't a meat eater? Does the holiday become a season of fasting due to family not making a veritable feast of meat, fish and vegetables? Hardly, just because one doesn't devour the flesh of some dead animal doesn't mean the holidays have to be a tortuous time watching others devour animals with the garnish of greens.

So what to do? The question is easier answered than one would think, and I do know. I grew up in an orthodox church, think Christianity, and there are times of the year when meat, cheese and such are limited, which means there have been plenty of times when Thanksgiving took place on a day of fasting. The enticing scent of a baking salmon in a white sauce with chopped garlic, hints of mint or basil mixed in with the fish. The pleasing cloying aroma of potatoes with a mélange of other scents that remind me of a garden.

How about trying a thick filet of trout baked in a butter, a dash of rosemary and parsley, with asparagus with toasted garlic and lemon, stuffed caberolls and a wild rice pilaf with a linguine in a clam sauce.

It reminds me of Thanksgiving on a Friday when only certain foods due to religion. So I opted for seafood and pasta with a large selection of vegetables forced down my gullet. Of course when I was younger, I hated when a holiday feast was limited with the distasteful greens.

So is my distaste for veggies a helpful source for creative recipes? I find that there are many different ways to have an amazing holiday without devouring the flesh of an animal. So, we've covered fish and what about other sources of tasty food?

Let's go with tofu! Tofu, coagulated soy milk pressed into a block, is a good source of various nutrients, plus tofu takes on the flavor of whatever it is cooked in. Tofu seems a good alternative for turkey as a person can mix it up in a gumbo, soups, spices and other nutty concoctions. A dish of 'turkey' with Aglio e Olio (an Italian dish of olive oil and garlic), warm biscuits and a salad of

kiwi and lime with mint is a good alternative to the traditional turkey dinner.

It sounds like a veritable feast to me without a touch of meat or fish present. So, I've placed forth a few ideas for non-meat holiday feasts. Of course, I know they aren't truly recipes so much as ideas but these ideas will lead one on the right path for hunting

down such recipes. I've named actual recipes and, well, what is wrong with fish! Perhaps a plate full of squid with a side of mashed potatoes and a setup of salad of fruit will be nice. So, toss out the meat and replaced with a nice filet of salmon with a nice glass of white wine. Enjoy the holidays in a vegetarian or vegan fashion.

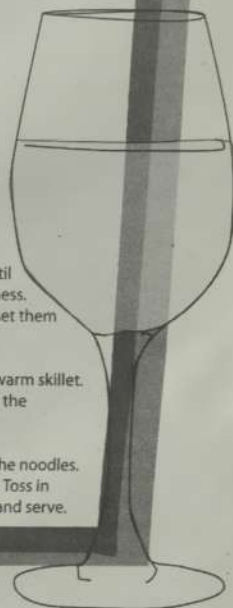
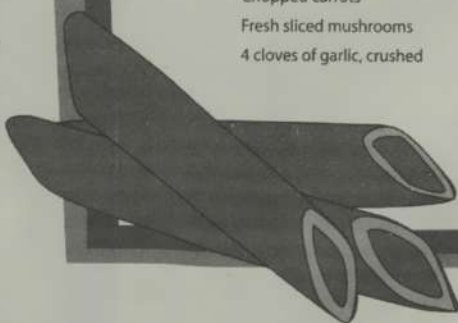
PENNE PASTA PRIMAVERA

INGREDIENTS

½ cup of olive oil
½ cup white wine
Fresh chopped tomatoes
Fresh chopped broccoli
Whole string beans
Chopped carrots
Fresh sliced mushrooms
4 cloves of garlic, crushed

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Bring a pot of water to boil and add the noodles to it. Boil the noodles until tender.
- 2) Place a skillet on the stove top. Bring it up to a medium heat.
- 3) Crush up the 4 garlic cloves with a garlic press.
- 4) Slice up the mushrooms and chop up the tomatoes, broccoli and carrots.
- 5) Cook the carrots, string beans and the broccoli first until warm. Do not cook them to the point of mushy or soggy. The vegetables should be firm and warm. Once cooked, set them off to the side.
- 6) Strain the noodles and transfer them into the already warm skillet. Pour in the olive oil and white wine over the noodles. Stir the noodles, wine and oil together.
- 7) Add in the carrots, string beans, broccoli and onto of the noodles. Mix them all together and cook them for several minutes. Toss in sliced mushrooms and chopped tomatoes. Mix together and serve.



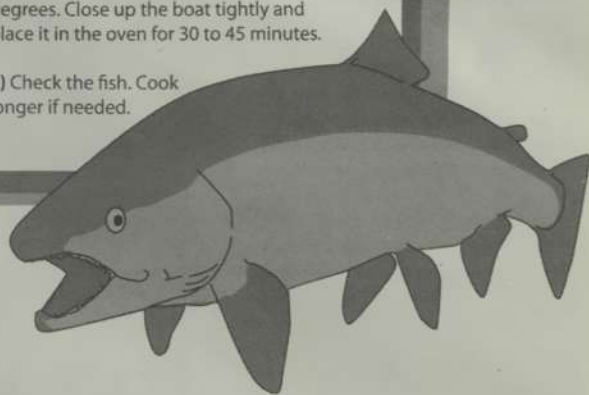
TROUT/STEELHEAD

INGREDIENTS

4 filets of steelhead
2 tbsp of butter per boat
2 cloves of garlic per boat
1 tbsp of fresh, chopped, thyme
1 tbsp of oregano
⅓ - ½ cup of dry white wine per boat
salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Build a boat of aluminum foil and put one filet of fish inside of it.
- 2) Melt the butter down in a dish, then pour it over the fish.
- 3) Chop up the garlic cloves and sprinkle it over the fish with the thyme, oregano and add the white wine. Repeat with the other filets, one filet per boat.
- 4) Make sure the oven is pre-heated to 400 degrees. Close up the boat tightly and place it in the oven for 30 to 45 minutes.
- 5) Check the fish. Cook longer if needed.



TOFU STIR FRY

INGREDIENTS

1 brick of tofu - dice up the tofu into smaller cubes
2-3 portabella mushrooms - sliced
1 whole white onion - chopped
1 bundle of asparagus - sliced
¼ - ⅓ cup of soy sauce
A tbsp of vegetable oil

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Cut up the tofu brick into small cubes.
- 2) Slice up the portabella mushrooms into thin strips. Chop up the white onion.
- 3) Remove the hard ends of the asparagus and slice them into strips.
- 4) Heat up a medium sized skillet to medium high heat.
- 5) Once the skillet is heated up, add the oil in with the asparagus. Cook the asparagus by itself for a few minutes until warm.
- 6) Add into the mushrooms and onion, adding a bit of soy sauce.
- 7) Cook the vegetables until warm, then add in the tofu with the rest of the soy sauce. Mix together, making sure the tofu doesn't fall apart, and then serve.



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