

PUMPKIN

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When it comes to pumpkin spice and other things nice, there's another factor at play called "the familiarity effect," says Fischer. "The more you've been exposed to something, the more it ingrains itself in your preferences," he said. "So simply by experiencing pumpkin spice every year, over and over again... it takes on that sense of familiarity." Add in all

the other positive associations with fall, it "can really cause us to find some sort of nostalgic comfort in it."

Trust that advertisers know all about the familiarity effect, which is at play behind other nostalgia-based food trends like the craze for "birthday cake"-themed items.

"It's not just because birthday cake is a tasty thing, it's because by co-opting that you can use all those positive associations," says Fischer. "You can take advantage of them."

Cormiea added: "Otherwise, they would just call it vanilla."

In 2017, a school in Fells Point was evacuated after students detected an unusual smell they couldn't quite place. It turned out to be a pumpkin spice scented air freshener. Had someone told the students it was pumpkin spice, perhaps things would have been different.

People take their sense of smell for granted, says Cormiea. But it plays a major — if under-appreciated — role in day-to-day life.

Those who lose their sense of smell, including people suffering long-term effects of COVID-19, are at risk of being not able to detect gas leaks, fires and food going bad. Additionally, loss of smell can be associated with a feeling of emotional disconnection and problems with memory.

"I've seen tons of studies where they ask people: 'If you had to lose one of your senses, which one would you pick?'" she said. "People always say they would give up their sense of smell. And I would like to

suggest that that is not the right decision."

Back to that experiment: After the first sip, while holding his nose, my research subject said he was drinking hot chocolate. After the second sip, where he was permitted to smell the drink at the same time, he pronounced it "gross hot chocolate." He did not know that it was a pumpkin spice latte.

Since autumn only began two weeks ago, he still has time to get with the pumpkin spice program.

EGGPLANT

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Cover, bring to a boil, lower heat to medium and cook 5 to 7 minutes until eggplant is tender. Stir in sesame oil and serve. May also be served at room temperature.

Per serving (based on 4): 115 calories; 7 g fat; 6 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 1 g protein; 13 g carbohydrate; 10 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 751 mg sodium; 12 mg calcium

Recipe from "Regional Cooking of China" by Maggie Gin

ROASTED EGGPLANT SANDWICHES WITH ARUGULA WALNUT PESTO MAYONNAISE

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 eggplant sliced in 1/2-inch rounds
- 1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 3 cups arugula, divided
- 1 cup basil
- 1/3 cup unsalted walnuts unsalted
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 8 thick slices your favorite bread, toasted
- 1 (8-ounce) jar roasted red peppers, drained and patted dry

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Place sliced eggplant on a cutting board and sprinkle with salt. Allow to sit until the oven is done preheating. Wipe the salt (and the liquid released) off the eggplant slices with a paper towel or clean kitchen towel. Place eggplant on the baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper to taste. Cook in the oven for 20 minutes, flipping halfway.

3. While the eggplant is cooking, prepare the pesto mayonnaise. Combine 1 cup of the arugula, the basil, walnuts and garlic in a food processor. Pulse until combined, scraping down the sides as needed. Add the olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper and pulse until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed. Spoon the pesto into a bowl and add the mayonnaise. Stir to combine and refrigerate until ready to use.

4. To assemble the sandwiches, spread a layer of pesto mayonnaise on 4 slices of bread. Top with roasted red peppers, the remaining 2 cups of arugula and eggplant. Top with remaining slices of bread — you can add another layer of pesto mayonnaise to the top slice of bread too, if you're feeling adventurous.

Per serving: 566 calories; 42g fat; 14g saturated fat; 45mg cholesterol; 9g protein; 43g carbohydrate; 6g sugar; 3g fiber; 1,192mg sodium; 73mg calcium

Slightly adapted from a recipe by thissavoryvegan.com

EGGPLANT TERRINE

Yield: 6 servings

- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus 3/4 cup or more for



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Roasted Eggplant Sandwich with Arugula Walnut Pesto Mayonnaise.

- drizzling and brushing
- 2 yellow bell peppers
- 1 red bell pepper
- 3 eggplants cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 5 ounces Emmentaler cheese
- 1 sprig fresh basil, chopped
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 3 ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 garlic clove
- Salt and pepper

1. Preheat the broiler. Line a loaf pan with parchment paper (spreading a little butter on the inside of the loaf pan will help it to stay in place). Place the bell peppers on a cookie sheet, drizzle with oil and roast, turning frequently, until charred and blackened all over. Remove from the oven, place in a plastic bag and seal the top. Do not turn off the broiler. Brush the eggplant slices with oil, place in a single layer on the baking sheet and broil until golden brown on both sides; this will require a few batches.

2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

3. When the bell peppers are cool enough to handle, peel, seed and chop the flesh. Make a layer of eggplant slices in the prepared pan. Grate 1/2 cup of the Emmentaler and slice the remainder. Stir the grated Emmentaler, chopped bell peppers and a little basil into the eggs and season with salt and pepper. Arrange a layer of Emmentaler slices on top of the eggplant and spoon in some of the egg mixture. Continue making alternate layers until all the ingredients are used, ending with the egg mixture.

4. Place the loaf pan in a roasting pan, add boiling water to come about halfway up the sides and bake 1 hour.

5. Meanwhile, put the tomatoes, the 2 tablespoons of oil and garlic in a small pan, season with salt and pepper, and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for 20 minutes. Remove and discard the garlic.

6. Remove the terrine from the oven, unmold onto a warm serving dish, discarding the parchment



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Eggplant With Peanut Butter.

paper, and serve with the tomato sauce.

Per serving: 482 calories; 40 g fat; 9 g saturated fat; 108 mg cholesterol; 14 g protein; 24 g carbohydrate; 13 g sugar; 11 g fiber; 120 mg sodium; 298 mg calcium

Recipe from "The Silver Spoon"

PICKLED EGGPLANT WITH OIL AND VINEGAR

Yield: 4 servings

- 1 small eggplant
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce

Peel eggplant and julienne as finely as possible. Lightly salt and let stand 10 to 15 minutes.

Squeeze out liquid. Combine vinegar, sugar, oil and soy sauce in a small saucepan and heat to a simmer. Pour over eggplant and refrigerate a few hours, tossing once or twice. Serve cold with hot rice.

Per serving: 115 calories; 7 g fat; 6 g saturated fat; no cholesterol; 751 g protein; 13 g carbohydrate; 10 g sugar; 4 g fiber; 752 mg sodium; 12 mg calcium

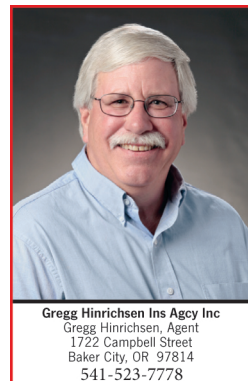
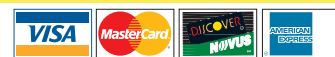
Recipe from "Japanese Country Cookbook" by Russ Rudzinski



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