

Balsamic Portobello Steaks

These meatlike portobello mushrooms can be eaten as a main course or used in a sandwich. For the latter, split squares of focaccia and toast lightly, cut sides down, on the grill. For added richness, crumble about 3 oz. blue cheese over the cooked mushrooms and serve with arugula.

In a large, shallow nonreactive bowl, stir together the vinegar, olive oil, lemon juice, parsley and garlic. Add the mushrooms and turn to coat. Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour, turning once. Drain before grilling.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill for direct grilling over medium-high heat. Oil the grill rack. Or preheat a stovetop grill pan over medium-high heat.

Place the mushrooms, gill side down, over the hottest part of a charcoal fire or directly over the heat elements of a gas grill. Cook, turning once, until moist on the underside and just firm to the touch on the top, 4 to 6 minutes per side. Arrange the mushrooms on individual plates and serve hot. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Essentials of Grilling*, by Denis Kelly, Melanie Barnard, Barbara Grunes & Michael McLaughlin (Oxmoor House, 2003).

10-Layered Salad

This salad is delicious as a light dinner or as a side dish to enjoy with family and friends. You can make the 10-layered salad heartier by adding lean meat, such as turkey, ham, shrimp or leftover roasted chicken.

To make the dressing, in a bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, sour cream, sugar, ranch rub and vinegar. Set aside.

Scatter three-fourths of the lettuce on the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch rectangular baker, then layer the tomatoes, bell pepper, mushrooms, onion and hard-cooked eggs, in this order. Scatter the remaining lettuce and then the peas on top. Drizzle the dressing over the salad, then sprinkle the cheese and bacon on top. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to overnight. Serves 8.

Williams-Sonoma Culinary Expert

Ingredients for Balsamic Portobello Steaks

- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 large, fresh portobello mushroom caps, each about ¼ lb., brushed clean

Ingredients for 10-Layered Salad

- For the dressing:
- 1¼ cups light mayonnaise
 - ¾ cup light sour cream
 - 2 Tbs. sugar
 - 2 Tbs. Williams-Sonoma Ranch Rub
 - Dash or two of white wine vinegar
- 1 head iceberg lettuce, shredded
- 4 large plum tomatoes, sliced
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, seeded and sliced
- 8 oz. mushrooms, sliced
- 1 small red onion, quartered and chopped
- 4 hard-cooked eggs, peeled and chopped
- 1 small bag frozen peas, thawed and drained
- 8 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded
- 6 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled

Choosing and Storing Vegetables

When choosing vegetables, look for the freshest ones you can find. As they sit in the market, they will lose vitamins and moisture and their flavor begins to dissipate. Fresh vegetables should look plump, moist and unwrinkled. At the farmers' market, you can ask the farmer when the vegetables were picked. Often, you'll be offered a sample to taste.

Some vegetables, such as corn on the cob, tomatoes and artichokes, begin to lose their freshness as soon as they are harvested. Others, such as hard-shelled winter squashes, potatoes and carrots, can be stored for relatively long periods of time. Tender leafy greens do not keep well; store them in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator for only a few days. When their leafy edges turn brown or the leaves show signs of decay, discard them.

Cabbage and root vegetables, such as turnips, are good keepers. These wintertime vegetables can hold onto their flavor, texture and nutrients for several weeks after harvesting. Store them in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. Sturdy summer vegetables, such as zucchini and eggplant, also do well in the crisper but for a shorter time.

Onions, shallots and garlic can all be stored at room temperature and will usually last about 3 weeks. Keep them in a cool place, preferably in a basket where the air can circulate. Potatoes must be stored in the dark, as light will cause them to turn green and bitter.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Collection Series, *Vegetable*, by Marlena Spieler (Simon & Schuster, 2002).

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Technique Class: Healthy Cooking Series: Vegetables

“Vegetable side dish” once meant a second thought—it was the dish that turned meat and potatoes into a meal. Today, this is no longer true. The plain boiled vegetables of the past have given way to a new philosophy of cooking that puts fresh vegetables in a prominent place on the table, adding color, flavor and appeal to any meal.

Eating the Rainbow: A Guide to Produce by Color

Choose produce from a range of color categories, both for visual interest and for maximum nutrition. The fruits and vegetables in each category carry varying amounts of phytochemicals that offer valuable health benefits.

Below is a brief description of how each color group offers a different benefit to your overall health. But on a more basic level, thinking about color is an easy way to make sure you are eating all the fresh produce you need. If you remember to eat a rainbow of colors every day, as part of a meal, snack or dessert, you will be well on your way to a fresh and varied diet.

Williams Sonoma's New Healthy Kitchen Cookbook Series provides delicious recipes categorized by colors to help you bring creativity and color into your meals.

Color Group	Benefits
Purple and Blue	Promote heart health; help memory function; lower the risk of some cancers; promote urinary tract health; promote healthy aging; and boost immunity.
Green	Lower the risk of breast, prostate, lung and other cancers; promote eye health; help build strong bones and teeth; and boost immunity.
White and Tan	Promote heart health; help maintain healthful cholesterol levels; lower the risk of breast, lung and other cancers; and slow cholesterol absorption.
Yellow and Orange	Promote heart health; promote eye health; lower the risk of some cancers; and boost immunity.
Red	Promote heart health; help memory function; lower the risk of some cancers; promote urinary tract health; and boost immunity.
Brown Whole Grains, Legumes, Seeds and Nuts	Lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of colon and other cancers, diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma New Healthy Kitchen Series, by Georgeanne Brennan (Free Press, 2006).



The Seasonal Approach

A key to preparing delicious vegetable dishes is to follow the seasons. Any vegetable that has been locally grown and ripened in its natural season will be infinitely more flavorful than a semiripe specimen transported from the other side of the country or the other side of the globe. Visit a local farmers' market to find the freshest vegetables of the season, and you can't help but be inspired in the kitchen.

Following is a list of vegetables to enjoy at their peak of season. Keep in mind that their availability will vary with location and weather.

SPRING VEGETABLES	SUMMER VEGETABLES
<p>Shoots and Stalks: Artichokes and asparagus</p> <p>Leaves: Arugula, baby spinach, kale, lettuce and mâche</p> <p>Cabbage Family: Broccoli rabe and cabbage</p> <p>Roots and Tubers: Daikon, new potatoes, radishes, turnips and young ginger</p> <p>Mushrooms: Buttons, morels, oysters, porcini, portobellos and shiitakes</p> <p>Peas, Beans and Seeds: English peas, fava beans and green beans</p> <p>Bulbs: Baby leeks, green garlic, green onions and Vidalia onions</p>	<p>Leaves: Arugula, romaine lettuce and spinach</p> <p>Vegetable Fruits: Bell peppers, chilies, eggplants, summer squashes, tomatillos, tomatoes and zucchini</p> <p>Roots and Tubers: Carrots, ginger and potatoes</p> <p>Peas, Beans and Seeds: Corn, English peas, green beans, haricots verts, wax beans and shelling beans, such as cranberry and flageolet</p> <p>Bulbs: Garlic, leeks, onions and shallots</p>
AUTUMN VEGETABLES	WINTER VEGETABLES
<p>Shoots and Stalks: Artichokes and fennel</p> <p>Leaves: Spinach and Swiss chard</p> <p>Cabbage Family: Broccoli, broccoli rabe, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower</p> <p>Vegetable Fruits: Bell peppers, eggplants, pumpkins, and winter squashes</p> <p>Roots and Tubers: Celery root, parsnips, potatoes, rutabagas, sweet potatoes, turnips and yams</p> <p>Mushrooms: Black trumpets, buttons, chanterelles, oysters, porcini, portobellos and shiitakes</p> <p>Bulbs: Garlic, leeks and shallots</p>	<p>Leaves: Frisée, kale, radicchio, Swiss chard and turnip greens</p> <p>Cabbage Family: Broccoli, broccoli rabe, Brussels sprouts and cabbage</p> <p>Roots and Tubers: Beets, carrots, celery root, Jerusalem artichokes, parsnips, rutabagas, sweet potatoes, turnips and yams</p> <p>Mushrooms: Buttons, chanterelles, portobellos and truffles</p>

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Vegetable Tian

Originating in Provence, a tian is a French word that describes a shallow earthenware casserole as well as the food it contains. Traditionally it features a variety of vegetables, herbs and cheeses that are layered and then baked.

Preheat an oven to 350°F. Lightly coat a 2-quart baking dish with olive oil.

In a fry pan over medium heat, warm 5 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, 5 to 10 minutes. Add the bell pepper and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 to 10 minutes. Transfer the onion-pepper mixture to the prepared baking dish and spread evenly. Set aside.

In a bowl, combine the zucchini, crookneck squash, 5 Tbs. of the olive oil, the rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper and stir to coat evenly. Arrange the zucchini, crookneck squash and tomato slices on the onion-pepper mixture, overlapping the rows. Drizzle with the remaining 2 Tbs. olive oil and bake for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, stir together the cheese and bread crumbs. Remove the baking dish from the oven and sprinkle the bread crumb mixture on top. Bake for 15 minutes more.

Turn the oven to broil and broil until the cheese is golden brown, 5 to 8 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 6.

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Hummus

Hummus provides a delicious way to enjoy chickpeas, which pack a superior nutritional punch—they are a lean source of protein as well as a source of carbohydrates and fiber. If you would like a spicier mix, add a little cayenne pepper. Serve with fresh vegetables and warm pita bread for dipping.

In a food processor or blender, combine the chickpeas, the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice, the tahini, 3 Tbs. of the olive oil, the garlic puree, the $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt and the cumin. Process until a soft, creamy paste forms, adding water to loosen the texture, if necessary. Taste and add more lemon juice and salt, if needed.

Transfer the puree to a serving bowl and spread with the back of a spoon to form a shallow well. Drizzle with the remaining 1 Tbs. olive oil. Sprinkle with the parsley and paprika. Garnish with the lemon wedges and olives and serve. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Lifestyles Series, *Small Plates*, by Joanne Weir (Time-Life Books, 1998).

Ingredients for Vegetable Tian

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil, plus more for greasing pan

$\frac{1}{2}$ large yellow onion, diced

1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch strips

5 garlic cloves, minced

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

3 small zucchini, cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch rounds

2 small crookneck squash, cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch rounds

1 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary

1 tsp. finely chopped fresh thyme

1 lb. plum tomatoes, cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch rounds

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fine dried bread crumbs

Ingredients for Hummus

4 cups canned chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups dried chickpeas, cooked

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh lemon juice, plus more as needed

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup tahini

4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil

1 to 2 Tbs. roasted garlic puree

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt, plus more as needed

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cumin

2 tsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Large pinch of paprika

6 lemon wedges or radishes

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup brine-cured black olives, such as Kalamata