



Embrace Your Inner Vegetarian

With Chef Robin Blair



Robin Blair is the Chef and owner of Cooking with C.A.R.E. At a young age Robin was taught the love of food from her grandmother, an extraordinary cook. Under the tutelage of many talented local chefs, Robin honed her skills at Cuyahoga Community College's culinary arts program. She has worked in the professional kitchen and as a community nutrition educator. Her passion is to bring families back to the dinner table, one meal at a time

Whether you are interested in becoming a vegetarian or not, these recipes will help you make the most of your share and teach you some new ideas for cooking with vegetables. By reducing the amount of meat we eat overall, you can improve your health. Increasing your vegetable intake means increased vitamins and minerals. We hope that after this class you will feel more empowered to cook more veggies at home.

Basic Tips and Tricks

Cooking without meat is not that hard. However, making exciting dishes that are vegetarian can be more challenging. Here are some ideas that can help liven up your vegetarian dishes:

Finish your vegetarian dishes with a little high quality olive oil. Use a cheaper oil for everyday cooking, but invest in a rich, high quality oil for sprinkling on dishes as the final touch. It will add depth and flavor to most dishes.

Top with nuts and seeds. A few pepitos (pumpkin seeds) or sesame seeds can add texture and flavor to dishes. Toast seeds and nuts over a medium burner in a dry pan, stirring or tossing constantly. This will bring out extra warm flavors in them.

Try new beans. Try subbing pinto or adzuki beans in your favorite black bean dish. These are both available locally and will give a whole new spin to your favorite dish.

Make purees and pastes. When local veggies are plentiful, try making your own pastes. Any fruit or veggie that can be made into a sauce (tomatoes, butternut squash, berries, etc). Puree and cook-continue to cook off the water until the result is super thick. These pastes can be added by the spoonful to anything cooked in water. A tablespoon of heirloom tomato paste added to the water when cooking spelt berries adds a whole new dimension of flavor. When you make tomato paste, puree the raw tomatoes in the Vitamix. Leave them to sit covered overnight. The water will separate from the tomatoes. Strain off the water and keep it. The tomatoes will cook into puree much faster and the water can be frozen to use for cooking veggies in. To make purees, cook veggies, strain and run through a Vitamix or blender. Add your favorite spices. This can be served warm, or cooled and used as a spread on your favorite sandwich or wrap.

Try slow roasting. Roasting intensifies flavor and brings out the best in veggies.

To make vegetarian meals more satisfying, combine textures and flavors. Umami flavors will give more of that meat like satisfaction. Foods like asparagus, onion, peas and corn are high in umami. Adding things that are chewy will make your meals more “work” and thus make you feel more satisfied. Make sure your meals have a combination of fiber and protein to maximize how full they make you feel.

Roasted Garlic and White Bean Dip

Ingredients

3 Cups	prepared white beans
4 cloves	Roasted Garlic
¼ Cup	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
	Juice of 1 lemon
½ Cup	Fresh Parsley
1 tsp	Pepper
¼ Cup	Roasted Red Pepper (optional garnish)

Directions

Lightly peel garlic head and slice about ¼ inch from top. Place in a square of foil. Cover with a few tbsp olive oil. Fold over and bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes until brown and fragrant.

Prepare beans ahead of time and cool. In a pinch, you can use 2 cans of prepared beans. Drain and rinse beans very well. Combine all the ingredients except garnish and oil in the food processor bowl fitted with the steel blade or a blender. Squish garlic from peel and add.

Process until smooth, about 30 seconds, slowly adding oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate at least 20 minutes or overnight.
Garnish, and serve with pita chips and fresh chopped veggies.

Mashed Cauliflower

Ingredients

1 medium head cauliflower
1 tablespoon cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup grated Parmesan
4 cloves roasted garlic
1/2 tsp salt
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh or dry chives, for garnish
3 tablespoons unsalted butter

Directions

Set a stockpot of water to boil over high heat.

Clean and cut cauliflower into small pieces. Cook in boiling water for about 6 minutes, or until well done. Drain well; do not let cool and pat cooked cauliflower very dry between several layers of paper towels.

In a bowl with an immersion blender, or in a food processor, puree the hot cauliflower with the cream cheese, Parmesan, garlic, salt, and pepper until almost smooth.

Garnish with chives, and serve hot with pats of butter.

Roasted Veg Collard Green Wraps

Ingredients

12 Large Collard Green Leaves
4 cups of assorted seasonal vegetables, chopped (asparagus, green beans, zucchini, onion, squash, etc.)
5 cloves of garlic
Spices ~ Salt, pepper, basil, oregano, garlic, onion, red pepper flakes

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

Season veggies and roast them until golden brown, turning often (around 30-40 minutes).

Heat a large of water.

Cut off the large stem from the collard greens. Using a long pair of tongs, dip each leaf into the water for just 5-10 seconds, enough to blanch it.

Season each leaf and fill with the chopped veggies. Lay on parchment lined baking sheet and place in the oven for 5-6 minutes until the tops brown just a little bit. Enjoy!!!!

Kholrabi and Apple Salad

Ingredients

1/2 cup heavy cream, yogurt or buttermilk
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon coarse-grained mustard
3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1/2 teaspoon sugar or honey
2 bunches kohlrabi (about 2 pounds), bulbs peeled and cut into julienne strips

2 apples

Directions

In a bowl whisk the cream until it holds soft peaks and whisk in the lemon juice, mustard, parsley, sugar, salt and pepper to taste.

Stir in the kohlrabi strips and the apple, peeled, cored, and diced, and combine the salad well.

Strawberry Shortcake

Ingredients

1 cup unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled, plus 2 teaspoons, softened
6 large eggs, at room temperature
2 tablespoons yogurt, at room temperature
3 1/3 cups granulated sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
3 pounds strawberries, rinsed, hulled, and sliced
1/2 cup orange-flavored liqueur, plus a little more for drizzling, or orange juice
1 1/2 teaspoons orange zest
2 1/2 cups heavy cream
5 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F and grease a 9 by 13-inch glass casserole with the 2 teaspoons of butter and set aside. Combine the eggs and milk in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer until frothy. Add 1 1/3 cups of the sugar and continue to beat at high speed until the mixture is quite thick and pale yellow, about 7 to 10 minutes.

Sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl. Fold this mixture gently into the egg mixture. Gently stir in the melted butter and then transfer the batter to the prepared baking pan and bake in the center of the oven until risen and golden brown, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool on a wire rack before proceeding.

Make the strawberry topping by combining the strawberries, remaining 2 cups sugar, 1/2 cup orange liqueur or juice, and orange zest in a large bowl and tossing to combine. Let sit at room temperature for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until all sugar is dissolved. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to assemble the dessert.

Make the whipped cream by combining the heavy cream with the confectioners' sugar in a large bowl and beating with an electric mixer or whisk until slightly thickened. Add the vanilla and continue to beat until the mixture nearly forms stiff peaks.

When ready to assemble the dessert, poke holes all over the cake using a cake tester or toothpick. Drizzle cake with a little orange liqueur or juice. Cut the cake into 1 1/2-inch cubes and place half of the cake cubes on the bottom of a deep-sided dessert bowl. Add half of the strawberry mixture over the top of the cake cubes, juices and all, spreading strawberries evenly with a spatula and allowing the juices to absorb into the cake. Top with the remaining cake cubes and then the remaining strawberries. Top with the whipped cream and serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 1 hour in advance before serving.
Makes 12 servings