

Food for High Achieving Women



DISHIN' WITH DEBBIE!

April Greetings to you all. I hope this newsletter finds a springier spring in your step, an elevated lift in your attitude, a brighter sparkle in your eye. **It's spring!!!!** There's only one thing I like better than cooking and that's gardening (wait! Chocolate is in there somewhere too, but I digress...). The flowers are popping up all over. Hooray!



Does anyone know what this flower is? Double points for knowing the latin name. If you guess it, I'll give you some of mine!

With this month's culinary adventure, we'll be travelling to the Middle East. For the geographically challenged, here's a map of the Middle East (at least according to Google.)

Our resident expert in all things Middle Eastern appears to be the Divine Ms. Meyers (Tracey to you and me!) She provided all three of the following recipes. She says, "This is like my favorite kind of food in the world... maybe even more than Mexican or whatever you call what I picked up in New Mexico and Arizona..."

My office has been subjected to my hummus and tabouleh salad so many times, you'd think they'd learn to love it the way I do but forget them... I'm still working on my baba ganoush recipe... I can never get it exactly the way I like it or the same way twice but these three, I feel confident you'll like the results..."

Tracey's wise advice is to buy some pita breads, warm them up on the oven while you're putting these three things into pretty serving dishes and have yourself a real feast. MmmmMMMMmm... I know what ***I'm*** making for dinner tonight!!!



Tabouleh Salad



Ingredients:

- 2 cups bulgur wheat
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 cucumber, diced
- 1/2 red onion, diced
- 2 cups parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh mint, chopped
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 3 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 c. feta cheese diced small (more if you like it- which I do!!!)

Directions:

- 1.) Place bulgur in a large bowl, cover with cold water and soak until all the water is absorbed - about an hour. Taste the bulgur; if it is still crunchy add more water and continue soaking until it's soft/chewy - NOT mushy. **(Editor's Note: Mushy bulgur is NASTY!)**

- 2.) Drain any excess liquid and add remaining ingredients, adjust for seasoning and oil.
- 3.) Allow to sit for at least an hour in the refrigerator or at room temperature to develop flavor.

Tracey notes that it is even better the next day!

Hummus

Ingredients:

- 2 or 3 cloves of garlic (more if you like it- which I DO!)
(Editor's Note: A girl after my own heart! At least we won't be getting attacked by vampires! :))
- 1 (19 ounce) can garbanzo beans, half the liquid reserved
- 4 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 Tablespoons tahini
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil



Directions:

- 1.) In a blender or food processor, chop the garlic.
- 2.) Reserve about one Tablespoon of garbanzos for garnish and throw the rest in the blender with the lemon juice, tahini, chopped garlic and salt. Blend until creamy and well mixed.
- 3.) Transfer the mixture to a medium serving bowl.
- 4.) Sprinkle with pepper and pour olive oil over the top. Garnish with reserved garbanzo beans.

Tracey says this recipe doubles or triples really well (it sounds like she has some experience with multiplying recipes!).

Stuffed Grape Leaves

For you recipe scaredy cats, Tracey foreshadows this recipe with, "Don't be intimidated by the length of the instructions. It goes REALLY fast and they are SO GOOD!!! I could show you way faster than I'm telling you!"

Ingredients:

- 1 16-ounce jar grape leaves
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 medium-sized yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 Tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 Tablespoon. dried basil
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked long-grain white rice, such as basmati
- 1/2 cup raw pine nuts (optional)
- 8 cups vegetable broth, divided
- 2/3 cups fresh lemon juice, divided, plus more for drizzling
- Water, as needed

Directions:

- 1.) Gently remove the grape leaves from their jar and rinse each one under cold water, being careful not to rip the leaves.

- 2.) Pat the leaves dry and place on a cutting board.
- 3.) Using a small, sharp paring knife, remove the stems from the leaves. Cover with a paper towel and set aside.
- 4.) Prepare the filling. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, heat the olive oil and add the onion, garlic, parsley, and basil. Stir continuously until the onion is soft and fragrant, about 6 minutes.
- 5.) Add the rice and pine nuts and sauté, stirring often, for 3-4 minutes longer.
- 6.) Add 4 cups of the vegetable broth and bring to a low boil.
- 7.) Turn down the heat to low and simmer for 10-15 minutes, or until the rice is cooked, adding water if necessary.
- 8.) Add half of the lemon juice, stirring well to combine and cook for 2-3 minutes longer or until most of the liquid has been absorbed.
- 9.) Remove the pan from heat.
- 10.) Assemble your feast: Prepare a dry, clean workspace. Place one of the grape leaves, shiny (dark) side down, flat on your work surface.
- 11.) Place 1-2 Tablespoons of filling on the lower-middle portion of the leaf, right above where the stem used to be.
- 12.) Fold in the sides of the leaves over the center, then roll the bottom of the leaf over the filling and continue to roll, holding the sides in, until you've rolled the leaf up and no filling is visible.
- 13.) Place the package seam-side down in a large saucepan or pot big enough to fit all of the stuffed leaves in a single layer.
- 14.) Repeat until all the grape leaves are used, placing one directly next to the other and leaving no space in between.
- 15.) Drizzle another 1-2 Tablespoons of olive oil over them, followed by the remaining lemon juice.
- 16.) Pour the remaining 4 cups vegetable broth over the grape leaves to cover.
- 17.) Cover the pot and simmer over medium-low heat for one hour, adding water as necessary to keep the packages covered. Note: When simmering grape leaves, don't bring the liquid to a boil or they'll split open and make a mess. **(YIKES!)**
- 18.) Remove the pan from heat, uncover, and let them cool in the liquid for 20-30 minutes.
- 19.) Using a slotted spoon, gently transfer the grape leaves to a serving dish.
- 20.) Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice and serve at room temperature or cold.

Whew! Just formatting this recipe gave me carpal tunnel! This may only be for the brave OR the foolhardy!

Since I couldn't very well have a DWD column without dessert (It just wouldn't be fittin'), here's a recipe for easy Baklava from All Recipes.com.

Baklava

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 ounce) package phyllo dough, thawed
- 1 cup water
- 1 pound chopped nuts
- 1 cup butter
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey

DIRECTIONS:

- 1.) Preheat oven to 350 degrees

Can anyone tell me in what famous movie there's a line like this and who said it?

- 2.) Butter the bottoms and sides of a 9x13 inch pan.
- 3.) Chop nuts and toss with cinnamon and set aside.
- 4.) Unroll phyllo dough. Cut whole stack in half to fit pan. Cover phyllo with a dampened cloth to keep from drying out as you work.
- 5.) Place two sheets of dough in pan and butter thoroughly. Sprinkle 2 - 3 Tablespoons of nut mixture. Repeat until you have eight sheets layered.
- 6.) Using a sharp knife, cut into diamond or square shapes all the way to the bottom of the pan.
- 7.) Bake for about 50 minutes until baklava is golden and crisp.
- 8.) **Enjoy!**

That's all for this month! Join me next month when we travel to hot and spicy Africa. Send me those recipes as soon as you can!

May - African Specialties

June - Exotic Thailand

July - England- what better way to celebrate the month of American independence?

August - From Russia With Love

September - Canadian Comestibles

October - Oktoberfest in Germany

November - Culinary Adventures from the Land Down Under (Australia/New Zealand)

December - South American Treasures



Please send recipes to dereihart@pa.gov. Hurry up and do it now so you

UNTIL NEXT MONTH- KEEP ON DISHIN'!

- Debbie