

Welcoming Spring

By Helen Nash

The arrival of spring ushers in new, lighter foods. Your taste buds will surely appreciate some of these refreshing spring recipes.

Hummus

*8 appetizer servings, approximately
14 hors d'oeuvres servings, approximately*

This dish is especially tasty when served with cucumbers, radishes, bell peppers and toasted pita triangles.

*8 unpeeled garlic cloves, wrapped in foil
15-ounce can chickpeas, drained*

Helen Nash is the author of Kosher Cuisine (New Jersey, 1995) and Helen Nash's Kosher Kitchen (New Jersey, 2000). She lives in New York City.

*3 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)
4-5 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Kosher salt, approximately
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin, approximately
7 tablespoons cold water, approximately*

Preheat oven, or a toaster, to 350°. Bake the garlic for about 30 minutes or until soft.

Squeeze the garlic pulp into a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add the chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, salt and cumin. Pulse, adding cold water until mixture is very smooth. Season to taste.

*Hummus
Photos: James Poster*



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Smoky Eggplant

4 appetizer servings

This appetizer has a nice Middle Eastern flavor. Cucumbers and warm pita make for a delicious accompaniment to this dish.

1 medium eggplant (1 1/4 pounds, approximately)

1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice, approximately

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 garlic clove, minced

1 1/2 tablespoons tahini

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat broiler.

Line a rack in a broiling pan with foil and place eggplant on it. Broil eggplant as close to the heat source as possible, turning once, for about 20 minutes or until soft. Cool a bit.

Peel eggplant. Place the flesh in a sieve to drain and discard the seeds, if necessary.

Place eggplant in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, tahini, cumin, salt and pepper. Pulse until the mixture has a smooth consistency. Transfer eggplant to a dish and adjust seasoning.

Black Sea Bass with Potatoes and Tomatoes

4 servings

This easy-to-prepare recipe is a perfect light meal.

1 pound small waxy potatoes, such as fingerling or Yukon Gold

1/2 pound cherry tomatoes

4 rosemary sprigs

4 sea bass fillets with skin, about 6 ounces each

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

4 tablespoons olive oil

4 anchovy fillets

3/4 cup dry white wine



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Preheat oven to 400°.

Rinse potatoes. Cut in half horizontally and steam until tender. Place in a greased, ovenproof dish.

Rinse tomatoes. Cut in half and squeeze out seeds. Add to the potatoes and season with salt and pepper. Place rosemary sprigs on top.

Season fish with salt and pepper and place over the potatoes in a single layer, skin side up. Drizzle with oil, and pour wine over fish. Place anchovies on top.

Bake for 15 minutes, or until the fish turns opaque.

Serve each fish portion with the vegetables and juices spooned over.

Carrot Salad

8 generous servings

What makes this carrot salad different from most is the addition of sunflower seeds and chives. It is colorful, nutritious and tasty. A nice buffet dish, it keeps well.

1 cup roasted sunflower seeds

8 medium carrots (2 1/2 pounds), grated

1/4 cup chives, snipped with scissors

Place sunflower seeds, carrots and chives in a large bowl.

Dressing:

1/3 cup lemon juice

1 teaspoon Kosher salt, approximately

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper, approximately

1 tablespoon sugar

4 tablespoons olive oil

Whisk together lemon juice, salt, pepper and sugar in a bowl, then whisk in the oil. Pour the dressing over the carrots and mix well. Let the salad settle for a few minutes, then adjust seasoning.

Notes:

I grate the carrots in a food processor fitted with a medium-grating attachment.

It is possible to buy roasted sunflower seeds. To roast them on your own, spread the seeds on a baking sheet and roast in a preheated 350° oven for approximately 15 minutes, or until lightly roasted and crisp.

Chocolate Chip Cookies

Approximately 6 dozen

Children love these cookies! I make them medium size, but you can make them any size. You can use either margarine or butter in this recipe without affecting the taste.

2 1/4 cups unbleached flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

16 tablespoons (8 ounces) unsalted margarine or butter

3/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 large eggs, at room temperature

1 3/4 cups chocolate morsels

1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 375°.

Combine flour and baking powder in a small bowl.

In an electric mixing bowl, cream margarine at medium speed, adding both sugars gradually until ribbons form. Beat in vanilla extract and eggs.

Fold in flour mixture with a spatula, then add the chocolate morsels and nuts.

Drop flat tablespoons of batter onto ungreased cookie sheets and bake for about 13 minutes, or until golden. Let cookies settle for a minute before removing them to a cooling rack. **JA**



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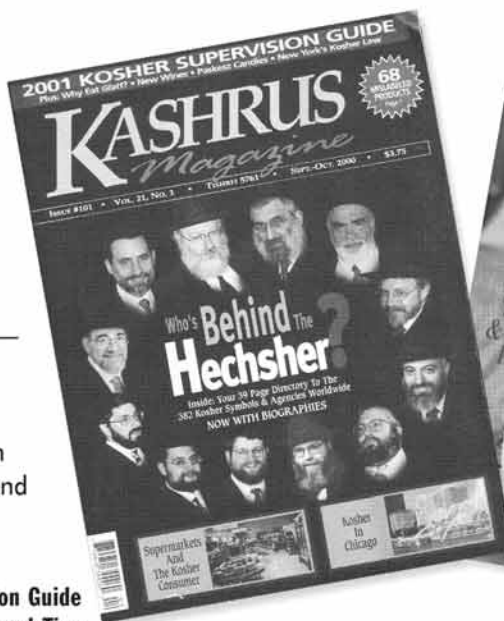
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