

## Cooking Light: Recipes for the Health Conscious

By Helen Nash

*With warm weather approaching I would like to share with you a few nutritious, low-calorie recipes that follow my philosophy of staying fit by eating healthy. In addition, the recipes are pareve and easy to prepare.*

### Tomato Soup with Basil Garnish

6 servings

You can prepare this soup ahead of time and serve it either hot or at room temperature. The basil puree, which is garnish but essential for the taste and appearance of the soup, can also be prepared ahead of time.

3 red ball peppers, roasted, skinned and cut into big pieces  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped  
1 fresh red chili pepper or jalapeno pepper, deseeded and cut into large pieces  
4 pounds fresh tomatoes, skinned, seeded and cut into large pieces  
3 cups vegetable broth  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper

Garnish:  
4 cups loosely packed basil leaves

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

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1/3 teaspoon kosher salt

Heat olive oil in a heavy saucepan with a cover. Add the garlic and chili pepper and sauté for a few minutes over low heat. Add peppers, tomatoes and broth. Bring to a boil; reduce the heat and cook, covered for 25 minutes. Cool the soup and then in batches puree in a blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

Garnish:

Place the basil in a food processor with a steel blade; add the olive oil and salt. Puree until very smooth.

To Serve:

Place a generous teaspoon of basil puree in the center of a bowl of soup. When eating, stir the basil puree to better distribute the flavor.

Note:

To skin bell peppers: Preheat broiler. Cut peppers in half, discard the seeds. Place skin side up on a foil-lined broiler pan. Broil close to the heat source (approximately 8-10 minutes for 6 inches of pepper), until they are blistered and charred. Cover with aluminum foil and let cool. Peel off the skin.

To skin tomatoes: Drop into boiling water and pour off the water immediately. Peel, cut in half and squeeze gently to discard most of the seeds. Some seeds will remain.

### Marinated Salmon

6 servings

This is a different version of the traditional pickled salmon. This salmon is less spongy, less vinegary and the color remains the same.

6 salmon fillets, approximately 1 1/2-2 inches wide, skinned  
1 small red onion  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1/4 cup rice vinegar  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground white or black pepper  
15 sprigs fresh dill, finely snipped, plus additional dill for garnish

Preheat oven to 200°. Lightly oil an ovenproof dish (Pyrex or ceramic) that will hold the fillets in one layer. Season the fillets on both sides with salt and pepper, and place in the dish. Bake in the oven, uncovered, for 30-40 minutes. (The timing will depend on how you like your fish.) Cover with aluminum foil and let cook completely. Slice the onion very thinly and scatter over the fish. Whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, 2 teaspoons salt and pepper to taste; the marinade should be well seasoned. Pour the marinade over the salmon and sprinkle with dill. Cover the dish with wax paper, then aluminum foil and refrigerate 2-3 days without turning the fish.

Photos: James Poster

To Serve:

Serve the salmon at room temperature, sprinkled with some of the marinade, along with the onions and garnish with freshly snipped dill.

### Black Bean Salad

6 servings

This is a flavorful, nutritious salad or side dish. It can be an appetizer surrounded by dressed greens or an accompaniment to poultry, meat or fish dishes.

1/2 pound dried black beans  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tomatoes, skinned, seeded and coarsely chopped  
1 small red onion, finely chopped  
1 jalapeno pepper, deseeded and minced  
2 garlic cloves with 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, mashed to a paste  
3-4 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1/2 cup loosely packed cilantro, finely chopped  
2 firm, ripe avocados peeled, pitted and diced  
Kosher salt  
Freshly ground black pepper

Place the beans in a bowl and add cold water to cover. Let



soak overnight. Drain and pick over; discard discolored and shriveled beans. In a covered saucepan combine the beans with enough cold water to cover them. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, partially covered, for approximately 20 minutes or until the beans are very tender. (They tend to harden when refrigerated.) Drain, place into a bowl and toss with olive oil. Let cool. Add tomatoes, onion, jalapeno pepper, garlic, vinegar, salt and pepper. A few hours before serving, stir in cilantro and avocados. Season to taste.

Note:

Wear rubber gloves when deseeding the jalapeno peppers.

## Chocolate Meringue Squares

*42 1½-inch squares or 84 much smaller triangles*

The meringues squares are like cookies. They are fairly dietetic as well and remain moist for quite a few days. If properly wrapped, they can be frozen.

*1½ pound blanched almonds*

*6 ounces imported semisweet chocolate, broken into small pieces*

*8 large egg whites, at room temperature*

*1 cup sugar*

*Unsalted margarine*

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking pan with parchment paper, and grease the paper with margarine. Set aside. In a food processor fitted with a steel blade, chop the almonds in two batches until they are almost fine. Transfer the almonds to a bowl. Do the same with the chocolate, but chop until fine. Combine the chocolate with the almonds. In the bowl of an electric mixer beat the egg whites at high speed until they begin to stiffen; gradually add the sugar, and beat until stiff. With a large rubber spatula gently fold the chocolate-almond mixture into the meringue. Always fold in the same direction, and do not overmix. Spoon the batter into the prepared pan, and smooth the top. Bake in the center of the oven for 30-35 minutes, or until a cake tester or toothpick inserted in the center comes out almost clean. Cool on a wire rack. Invert onto a cutting board, and peel off the paper. Cut into 1 1/2 inch squares, or if you like them smaller, cut the squares into triangles. **JA**

Note:

When freezing baked desserts it is best to wrap them in wax paper, then aluminum foil and place into a small plastic bag.

## Black Bean Salad

