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September 6: Lunchbreak - Quinoa Tabouli Salad

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11:21 a.m. CDT, September 6, 2012

Chris Chodos

Chris' Tips:

Plan Ahead

When dining out, call the restaurant in advance, and when traveling, contact the airlines and hotel, to notify them of your food restrictions.

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Quinoa Tabouli Salad

Tabouli is typically made with bulgur, or sometimes couscous... both of which have gluten. But substitute amazing

Be Prepared

Have an emergency plan in place in case you have an **allergic reaction**, keep safe and healthy snacks on hand, and before traveling research the local foods and restaurants.

Communicate

Let others know if you or your child has food allergies. Meet with your child's teacher, school nurse, principal, or cafeteria manager. If you have food allergies, notify co-workers. Hiding this information can be potentially dangerous.

Do Not Live with Embarrassment or Fear

Food allergies are nothing to be ashamed of. Talk with your child about his/her condition to help build their confidence and remind them they can live healthy, normal lives if they avoid the foods that they are allergic to.

Become "Label Literate"

Understanding the ingredients on a label or in a recipe will enable you to make safe decisions. Knowledge is power.



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quinoa, and you have a perfect gluten-free, healthy salad! This is just one of many salads where you can substitute quinoa for another grain and still get that great salad. Try it with cooked quinoa or sprouted. Depending on life schedules, I have both on hand ready to go!

Ingredients:

- 2 cups quinoa
- 1 tsp Celtic or Himalayan salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 cup mint leaves
- 1 cucumber peeled (if not organic), seeded, chopped
- 4 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bunch of flat leaf parsley, chopped

Directions:

Cook the quinoa according to package directions and let cool. (Alternatively, you can soak the quinoa covered with water in a glass or stainless steel bowl in the refrigerator for 3-4 days. Quinoa will soften and sprout. Change the water every other day.) In a food processor combine olive oil, lemon juice and garlic. Pulse until combined. Add mint, salt and pepper. Process until mint leaves and garlic are minced and the dressing is what I love to call "dressing smooth." Adjust seasonings to taste. Drain the quinoa. Combine gently with the dressing, chopped parsley, cucumber and tomato. Serve in lettuce leaves.

Important note about phytic acid in grains and seeds: Quinoa is known as a grain, but is actually a seed. Soaking our grains and seeds before eating them reduces phytic acid. Phytic acid is a mineral inhibitor. If we can reduce it in our food, we can absorb more minerals. **Iron** absorption is the most striking example. One study found that if you can remove phytic acid entirely from grains, you can improve your iron absorption three times in the case of rice, and nearly twelve times in the case of wheat or quinoa

Cashew Cacao Truffles

Chocolate and cashews are amazing together. This simple and versatile recipe is my go-to sweet and I hope you'll add it to your list of delicious, healthy treats!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 2 cups cashews
- 2/3 cup cacao powder*
- 1/2 tsp Celtic or Himalayan salt
- 1/2 cup coconut nectar or palm sugar (I prefer nectar in this recipe)
- 2 Tbs coconut oil

Directions:

In a bowl or plate, pour the shredded coconut. Place the cashews in a food processor and process until finely ground. In a large bowl, mix the ground cashews, cacao powder and salt. Stir the coconut nectar and coconut oil into the cashew mixture until thoroughly combined. Form into balls (about the size of a large grape) and then roll the balls in the shredded coconut. Refrigerate for four hours or freeze for about an hour until firm. Enjoy!

Options

You can substitute any nut for the cashews and substitute any nut or cacao nibs for the coconut. In fact, get even more creative and use your favorite seeds instead of the nuts or add a dash of lemon or orange peel for a citrus twist.

* Cacao powder is preferred, but you can substitute cocoa powder if it's easier to find.

Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free Pizza

So delicious! You will see how easy it is to make pizza combining **vegan** or nut cheeses with your favorite toppings. I love Applegate Natural Pepperoni (gluten- and casein-free). As I always say, get creative with any selection of veggies!

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1 clove garlic (optional)
- 1/2 pepper (red, yellow or green), thinly sliced
- 1/2 onion (red, yellow or white), thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes, drained and thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup pepperoni slices
- 1/2 cup shredded vegan mozzarella cheese (I prefer Daiya or Follow Your Heart)
- 1 tsp Nutritional yeast (optional)
- 1 dairy-free pizza crust (I prefer Ener-G or Nature's Highlights)



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Directions:

Preheat oven according to pizza crust instructions. Heat oil in skillet, medium heat, and add garlic, peppers, and onions, or whatever your favorite vegetables are. Sauté until almost tender. Place pizza crust on baking sheet or pizza stone. Spread it with sauce and sprinkle with cheese. Top with veggie mixture and sun-dried tomatoes. Bake pizza until cheese melts and crust is crisp, about 15 minutes. (Refer to your pizza crust instructions for exact timing.) Slice and enjoy!

Optional

For those who can't have soy or rice cheeses, substitute pesto for the cheese. As always, get creative! Add grilled chicken, turkey sausage, salami, spinach, kale, carrots, broccoli... I think you get the idea. Your favorites and your creativity. Pizza can be more than just cheese and tomatoes!

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