Your Weekly Meal Plan

Eat Well, Be Well and LOVE Every Bite!

Your refrigerator staple for healthy lunches and snacks:

Lentil Pate

Your Weekly Meal Plan is:

Navy Bean & Kale Soup

Lemony Quinoa with Spring Vegetables

Roasted Baby Broccoli and Pasta

Food For Thought: Lessons from the longest-lived people in the world

One of my favorite health books is ***The Blue Zones: Lessons For Living Longer From the People Who've Lived The Longest***. This book examines the four cultures with the highest percentage of people who have lived to 100 years old—Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; Nicoya, Costa Rica and Loma Linda, California.

There are many consistencies across the four cultures—daily exercise, strong family values, and a diet with lots of fruits and vegetables. But the one that really jumped out to me was that **beans** were the cornerstone of **each** Blue Zone diet.

Yes, beans! This is quite a powerful finding for the small, humble bean.

One reason beans are important for health and longevity is that in addition to being a good source of protein, they also contain lots of powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants are a class of phytochemicals that neutralize free radicals in the body. Free radicals are unstable compounds that cause cellular damage and one of the primary factors causing aging.

In a U.S. Department of Agriculture study, researchers measured the antioxidant capacities of more than 100 common foods. Three types of beans made the top twenty: small red beans, red kidney beans, and pinto beans. And three others — black beans, navy beans, and black-eyed peas — achieved top-40 status.

In a delicious effort to get more of these little powerhouses in your diet, enjoy this week's recipes for Lentil Paté and Navy Bean Soup.

Until Next Week, Eat Well, Be Well and LOVE Every Bite!
~Chef Jenny

Lentil Paté

This easy spread is really delicious! I love it stuffed in celery or with cucumbers.

1 15 oz can** lentils, drained or 1 3/4 cups cooked lentils
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 cup tahini
1 Tablespoon tamari (soy sauce)
Salt and pepper to taste

Process lentils and olive oil in a blender or food processor until mixture forms a thick paste. Add remaining ingredients, and process to desired texture, adding more oil or tahini if needed for creaminess.

**You can use Eden beans which have bay leaf and thyme added and have extra flavor, but they also contain wheat. Or, use Westbrae plain lentils.

Navy Bean & Kale Soup

Serves 4-6
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes
Equipment Needed: Soup pot

1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 small onion, halved and thinly sliced
½ head purple kale, stemmed and chopped (about 3-4 cups chopped)
1 small garnet yam, peeled and diced
1 Tablespoon smoked paprika, plus more for garnish
1/2 Tablespoon curry powder
1 bay leaf
4 cups vegetable broth
2 15.5-oz. cans navy beans, drained and rinsed, divided
1 1/2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, and cook 8 minutes, or until lightly caramelized, stirring often.

Add kale, and cook 4 to 5 minutes, or until wilted. Stir in yam, paprika, curry powder, and bay leaf; cook 1 minute more, or until fragrant. Add broth, and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low, and cook 30 minutes, or until kale and yam are tender.

Purée 1 cup beans with 3/4 cup water in blender or food processor. Add purée and remaining beans to soup. Simmer 10 minutes, then stir in vinegar. Remove bay leaf, season with salt and pepper and serve.

Lemony Quinoa with Spring Veggies

Serves 4-6
Preparation Time: 15 minutes (plus shelling peas)
Cooking Time: 20 minutes
Equipment Needed: Baking Sheet, saucepan/skillet

This easy entrée highlights two seasonal spring vegetables: asparagus and peas. Served with lemony quinoa, this light dinner is a wonderful way to welcome the season! The chives added at the end are for garnish, but really make the dish pop so buy them if you can. You can use the rest later in the week on baked potatoes! Yum!

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 pound asparagus (about 1 bunch), woody ends trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces
salt and pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 small red onion, finely chopped
1 1/2 cups uncooked yellow quinoa, rinsed
3 cups vegetable stock
1 Tablespoon lemon zest (almost the whole lemon)
3 Tablespoons lemon juice (get the zest off before you juice it)
salt and pepper
1 cup fresh peas (about 1 lb English Peas you shell—a labor of love, but very worth it!) or 1 cup frozen peas
1/2 cup toasted cashews
2 Tablespoons fresh chopped chives for garnish

Preheat oven to 400F. Place asparagus on a baking sheet, drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and roast for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat other 1 teaspoon oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Add garlic and red onions and cook for 2 minutes. Add quinoa, stock, lemon juice, lemon zest and a sprinkle of salt and pepper. Cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove top and sprinkle peas on top of quinoa mixture, cover and continue cooking for 5 more minutes. Add roasted asparagus, stir gently to combine, then garnish with cashews and chives and serve.

Roasted Baby Broccoli Pasta

Serves 4
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 25 minutes
Equipment Needed: Baking sheet, saucepan/skillet

Nutrition All Star: Baby Broccoli is in season right now, grown locally in Watsonville. Since you can eat the whole stem, it really saves you time in the kitchen, compared to regular broccoli. But, like broccoli, it is packed with nutrients, like vitamin C, folate, vitamin A and potassium, as well as some iron, calcium, vitamin B and fiber. If you can't find this variety, you can substitute regular ol' broccoli!

This pasta dish is loaded with loaded with broccoli and gets most of its fat from olives, which contain healthy monounsaturated fats.

8 oz brown rice pasta, rotini or penne
1 lb baby broccoli (about 2 small bunches)
1 red pepper, diced
1 yellow pepper, diced
1 Tablespoon olive oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
pinch red pepper flakes
1 cup kalamata olives, cut in half
5 sun dried tomatoes, rehydrated and sliced (you can buy them dry, rehydrate and use, OR buy the sundried tomatoes in a jar)
1/2 cup fresh minced parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400F. Wash and trim baby broccoli and cut the peppers. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment. Drizzle with olive oil and a little salt and pepper. Roast in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Also, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta according to package directions and drain when done.

Meanwhile, mince garlic. Combine oil, garlic and red pepper flakes in a large saucepan. Add olives, sun dried tomatoes, beans and parsley. Cook over low heat until the rest of the pasta ingredients are ready. When pasta is cooked and broccoli is roasted, add all ingredients into the saucepan and cook until all heated through. Add salt and pepper and serve.

Shopping List

Remember to read through your recipes before shopping to see if there is anything you would like to double. Also, I don't have salt or pepper on here—I am assuming you have them in the kitchen already. **Have fun shopping!**

Store Section	**Lentil Pate**	**Navy Bean Soup**	**Lemony Quinoa & Spring Veg**	**Roasted Baby Broccoli Pasta**
Produce	2 cloves garlic 1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley	1 small onion 1 head purple kale 1 small garnet yam	2 cloves garlic 1 small red onion 1 pound asparagus (about 1 bunch 2 lemons (for 1 T zest and 3 T juice) 1 cup fresh peas (about 1 lb English Peas you shell) or 1 cup frozen peas 2 T fresh chopped chives	4 cloves garlic 1 pound baby broccoli, about 2 bunches 1 red pepper 1 yellow pepper 1/2 cup fresh Italian parsley
Bulk/Refrig/ Frozen			1 1/2 cups uncooked yellow quinoa 1/2 cup toasted cashews	1 cup kalamata olives
Grocery/ Canned	1 T olive oil 1 15-oz can lentils or 1 3/4 cups cooked 1/4 cup tahini 1 T tamari	1 T olive oil 2 15.5-oz. cans navy beans 4 cups vegetable broth 1 1/2 T red wine vinegar	2 t olive oil 3 cups vegetable stock	1 T olive oil 8 oz brown rice pasta, rotini or penne 5 sun dried tomatoes (dry or in a jar)
Spices/Misc.	1 t dried thyme	1 T smoked paprika 1/2 T curry powder 1 bay leaf		pinch red pepper flakes