

Roasted vegetables stuffed with mushrooms, wild rice and lentils

Serves 6, 40 minutes

- * *Red or yellow peppers - 3 large, deseeded and halved*
- * *Acorn squash - 3, deseeded and halved*
- * *Mixed dried mushrooms - 30g*
- * *Olive oil - a couple of glugs*
- * *Onion - 1, peeled and diced*
- * *Leek - 1, sliced*
- * *Cumin - 1 tbsp*
- * *Thyme - a couple of sprigs*
- * *Fresh mushrooms - 250g, sliced*
- * *Garlic - 2 cloves, sliced*
- * *Red rice - 1.5 cups*
- * *Lentils - 1 cup*
- * *Sun-dried tomatoes- a small handful, roughly chopped*
- * *Parsley - a handful, chopped*
- * *Lemon - juice of 1*

Preheat the oven to 210 degrees C.

Soak the dried mushrooms in a large bowl with 5 cups boiled water.

On a large roasting tray, lay out the peppers and acorn squash. Drizzle with a little olive oil, season, and place in the oven for 30 minutes, or until tender.

In a large saucepan, fry the onion, leek, cumin and a spring of thyme over a medium heat in some olive oil until soft. Add a splash of water if things start to stick.

Meanwhile, in a large frying pan, fry the fresh mushrooms in a glug of olive oil with another sprig of thyme and plenty of salt and pepper over a high heat. Ideally you want them to get a little golden brown (you might need to pour away the excess liquid which comes out of the mushrooms).

Once the onions are soft, add the rice, lentils and liquid from dried mushrooms to the saucepan. Add a teaspoon of salt and some black pepper. Bring to a simmer, cover and leave to cook for twenty minutes.

Once the fresh mushrooms are turning golden brown, add the garlic and the soaked mushrooms to the frying pan and sauté for a couple of minutes. Add the mushrooms to the rice and lentils along with the sun-dried tomatoes. Stir to combine and recover for the rest of the cooking time.

Check that the rice and lentils are cooked. You might need to add a touch more water towards the end of the cooking time, but all of the liquid should have evaporated.

Add the fresh parsley and lemon juice to the rice and mix through. Check for seasoning.

You can either serve this dish straight away, spooning the rice and lentil mixture into the veggies at the table, or else you can return the vegetables, stuffed with the rice and lentils, to the oven for a few minutes. It's also lovely at room temperature.

Fennel, apple and pomegranate salad

Serves 6, takes 10 minutes

Simple, crunchy and refreshing, this salad adds a textured contrast to the stuffed vegetables.

- * *Fennel - 2, base and stalks removed*
- * *Cox or Braeburn apples - 3, quartered, cored*
- * *Pomegranate - 1/2*
- * *Fresh parsley or dill - a couple of handfuls, chopped*
- * *Cider vinegar - 3 tbsp*
- * *Whole grain mustard - 3 tbsp*
- * *Honey - 1 tbsp*
- * *Sunflower oil - 3 tbsp*

Start by finely slicing the fennel. I use the fine slicing attachment on the magimix which means it's done in no time. Otherwise you could use a mandolin or a sharp knife.

Next finely slice the apples and place in a large serving bowl with the fennel. Add the seeds from the pomegranate along with the fresh herbs and mix to combine.

Whisk up the remaining ingredients in a glass with a pinch of salt and pepper. Dress the salad when you're ready to eat.

Cinnamon and oat plum crumble

Serves 6, takes 10 minutes plus oven time

This crumble is fruit heavy so more guilt free than most. Of course try with apples, pears, blackberries, blueberries...you'll need just over a kg of fruit for six.

- * *Plums - 12, stoned and quartered*
- * *Sweet liqueur - a couple of glugs (cassis/amaretto/vin santo)*
- * *Coconut oil - 1/3 cup*
- * *Ground almonds - 1/3 cup*
- * *Whole oats - 1 cup*
- * *Runny honey - 1/4 cup*
- * *Cinnamon - 2 tsp*
- * *Salt - a couple of pinches*

Preheat the oven to 170 degrees C.

Place the plums and a couple of dashes of booze into an oven dish.

With your fingertips, mix the remaining ingredients together in a mixing bowl until you have an even texture.

Sprinkle the crumble topping over the fruit and place in the oven for 45 minutes to an hour (the cooking time will depend on the depth of your dish). The fruit should be quite soft and starting to bubble.

Serve with something cold and creamy. Coconut ice cream is great if you're sticking to the vegan theme.