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## **Recipes for Professional Development Cooking Class, March 16, 2011**

**Class title: *Spring Salads, Wraps, and Pizza***

Ethnic Profiles: Multiple

### **Orzo and Feta Salad with Sun Dried Tomatoes**

Orzo is tiny oval pasta and makes an excellent choice for pasta salads. Mix and match ingredients here to reflect the seasons.

1 1/2 cups orzo pasta  
6 sun dried, olive oil packed tomato halves, minced  
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely chopped  
1 red onion, finely chopped  
1 cup crumbled feta cheese  
½ cup chopped black olives, drained  
1/4 cup chopped Italian parsley  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until just tender; drain.

In large bowl combine pasta, tomato, cucumber, onion, feta, olives, parsley, lemon juice, oregano and pepper, and olive oil. Toss and chill for 1 hour in refrigerator. Taste for seasonings and adjust as necessary. Serves 6

## Rice Salad with Peas and Asparagus

This is an Italian recipe based on one by Michael Chiarello, restaurant and TV chef. This makes a good grain salad for the salad bar, and the ham could be omitted if desired. For an entrée salad, serve on a bed of lettuce and add more ham.

1 cup Arborio or other short grain rice  
½ pound asparagus  
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons lemon juice  
½ teaspoon Kosher or sea salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 cup frozen peas, thawed  
1 pound sugar snap peas, trimmed and thinly sliced on the diagonal  
2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley  
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest  
½ cup thinly sliced basil leaves  
½ cup minced boiled ham  
¼ cup freshly grated Peccorino Romano cheese

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the rice, stir and reduce the heat to low. Cook, stirring from time to time, until the rice is barely done, about 15 minutes. Drain well and place on a baking sheet to cool.

Bring another pot of salted water to a boil.

Trim the asparagus spears by bending until they snap. Cut on the diagonal into pieces about 1/3-inch long. Put in the boiling water and blanch about 1 minute. Remove and drain.

In a bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, salt, pepper, and olive oil.

In a large bowl, combine the cooked rice, asparagus, peas, and sugar snap peas, along with the parsley, lemon zest, basil leaves, ham, and cheese. Gently toss with your hands.

Just before serving add the olive oil dressing and gently toss again.

Serves 8

## Curried Chicken Salad Pita

Here curry spices are used to flavor mayonnaise which is then mixed with the chicken and vegetables to make a salad that is tucked into pita pocket halves. This can also be an entrée salad, served on a bed of greens.

1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion  
½ teaspoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon curry powder  
¼ teaspoon mustard seed  
½ teaspoon cumin seed  
½ to 2/3 cup mayonnaise  
2 cups chopped cooked chicken  
½ cup finely chopped celery  
1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion  
12 to 16 sprigs cilantro  
4 sprigs fresh mint

In a dry, unoiled frying pan over medium heat, toast the cumin, curry powder, and mustard seed, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Put the mayonnaise in a mixing bowl and add the fragrant spices and mix well. Stir in the chicken, celery, and red onion. Mix well.

Spoon about 1/4 of the mixture into a pita pocket half. Tuck in 3 to 4 sprigs of cilantro and one of mint. Repeat with the remaining salad.

Makes 4 pita pock halves

## Gyro-Style Pita with Ground Beef, Tomato, Mint, and Onion

In Middle Eastern neighborhoods, vendors have upright spits of seasoned lamb roasting, from which they cut thin slices, tuck them into a warm pita or other flatbread, seasoning them well with onions, tomatoes, and herbs. In this version, ground beef is used.

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 12 sprigs cilantro
- 4 sprigs fresh mint
- 4 sprigs fresh parsley
- 4 pita pocket halves
- 4 tablespoons spoons sour cream
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

In a medium frying pan, over medium high heat, heat the olive oil. When hot, crumble in the ground beef and cook, stirring until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until soft, another 1 to 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper.

Warm the pita halves.

Spoon ¼ of the beef mixture into each pita half, divide the tomatoes and onions equally among the halves. To each half, and add 3 sprigs cilantro and 1 each of mint and parsley. Mix the sour cream and lemon juice together and add one tablespoon to each pita half.

Makes 4 pita pocket halves

## Asparagus and Mushroom Pizza

Asparagus is one of the quintessential spring vegetables. It is so versatile and can be used in stir fries, pastas, soups, salads and, as here, a pizza topping. Use as many types of mushrooms as you can find. *Herbes de Provence* is a mixture of aromatic dried herbs found in the hills of southern France, and in French markets and easily available in any store here. The mixture typically includes thyme, rosemary, bay, basil and savory.

5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into one- inch pieces on the diagonal

1 pound mushrooms, various types, sliced

½ teaspoon kosher or sea salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon dried *Herbes de Provence*, or substitute dried thyme

In a large frying pan, heat the olive over medium high heat. When hot, add the asparagus and sauté until the pieces turn bright green, and are just tender to a fork, about 3 minutes. Remove and set aside. Add the mushrooms and cook until the juices have evaporated and they are soft, about 3 minutes. Return the asparagus to the pan, and season all with the salt, pepper, and herbs. Spread the topping on each of 2 14-inch prepared pizza skins and bake following the instructions for the pizza crust.

Makes enough for 2 14-inch pizzas

## Chili Beef Pizza with Spinach

Adding a little hint of cinnamon and clove to the ground beef used in the topping, along with chili powder gives the meat a depth of flavor reminiscent of Mexican mole sauce. Although the spinach can be finely chopped if desired, the wilted whole leaves, make a green background for the ground beef that is very appealing.

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 pound lean ground beef  
1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt  
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne (optional)  
¼ to ½ teaspoon chili powder  
4 cups water  
2 bunches spinach, stems removed

In a medium frying pan over medium high heat, heat the olive oil. When it is hot, add the ground beef, crumbling it in. Sprinkle with the salt, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, optional cayenne and chili powder.

Cook, stirring, until the meat is lightly browned, about 5 minutes.

In a medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil. Add the spinach and blanch just until wilted and bright green, about 45 seconds to 1 minute. Drain and pat dry. Chop if desired.

On each of the 2 14-inch prepared pizza skins, first spread the spinach and then top with the meat. Bake following the instructions for the pizza crust