

Black Bean and Corn Salad

Serves 6-8
Recipe by Stefani Berkey

2 15-oz cans low-salt black beans
2 cups frozen corn, thawed
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced into 2-inch pieces, or ¾-inch dice
2 carrots — peeled and cut into a ¾-inch dice
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
3 green onions (scallions), thinly sliced, both white and green parts
Half a bunch of fresh cilantro, chopped
2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
Juice from 1 lemon or lime
Salt and pepper to taste
Lettuce or cabbage, chopped

Drain and rinse beans and add to large mixing bowl. Rinse and drain thawed corn and add to beans. Chop and slice red pepper, carrots, celery, green onions and cilantro. Add to beans and corn and mix together.

In a separate bowl, whisk together vinegars and lemon or lime juice. Pour over salad and mix well. Let sit for a few minutes, the stir again. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Serve in a bowl as is or over a bed of chopped lettuce.

This can be refrigerated for up to a week. Mix well before serving after refrigerating.

Class

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high, but as she says, “they’ve been that way since I was a baby.”

“Because I cook and because I love to cook, this is easy for me,” Berkey says to the crowd. “But for others it’s hard.”

That’s exactly why Sarah Morneault and Lindsey Levesque, owners of Tiller & Rye, wanted to offer cooking classes to begin with.

“Cooking is very fundamental to us because we have a lot of ingredients that people don’t know how to use,” Morneault said. Tiller & Rye offers more than 500 different local products and, according to Morneault, is growing constantly.

“We wanted to have a local grocery store feel — something a little bit smaller that focused on as many local products as possible. We also wanted to focus on getting back to ingredients that are natural,” Morneault said. “Maine has been an amazing resource. More and more farmers and artisans are starting to develop their own products.”

Morneault met Berkey while Berkey was shopping at Tiller & Rye. Their conversations about food led to the formation of the classes hosted by Berkey, which Morneault said have been an excellent addition to the store’s offerings.

Berkey instructs students how to make the dishes on her menu and throws in other cooking advice, such as how to properly hold a knife. She also peppers the classes with personal anec-

dotes, describing how the black bean and corn salad is a family favorite.

“I try to use things that everyone would have at home,” she says, picking up a few small potatoes in her hand. “We all live in Maine, so we have to like potatoes.”

Her recipes include fresh ingredients such as green onions, parsley, carrots, cilantro and garlic. And many of her recipes are simple and don’t take long to prepare, like the black bean and corn salad.

Berkey’s lessons have been successful, according to Morneault, and even attracted one of Tiller & Rye’s employees, Tim Godaire.

“I had shopped here before and saw the classes being advertised,” Godaire said. As the primary cook in the household, he decided to take the class. He learned how better to use plant-based ingredients and also picked up some cooking tips and techniques from Berkey, he said.

Not long after, Godaire began working for Tiller & Rye.

“I loved the environment here,” he said.

For Morneault and Levesque, giving back to the community in this way has been an important part of their mission.

“We realized that there was a gap in the market up here,” Morneault said. “We really wanted to give something back to the community.”

The next cooking class with Chef Stef will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 29. Admission for the class is \$15 and participants can sign up at Tiller & Rye at 20 South Main St. in Brewer or at tillerandrye.com/cooking-class/.

but I don’t really care for most pastas after they have been frozen. They lose form and turn into mush. Lasagna usually stands up okay, but spaghetti and angel hair and some of the others just don’t cut it for me after they’ve been cooked and frozen. It’s difficult to make smaller versions of my favorite pasta dishes.

5. It’s OK to eat out too. I can’t seem to decide if it’s more economical for me to buy groceries for one or to eat out. I don’t buy fresh food in bulk, which is where I would find savings, because it would spoil before I got to use it all. So buying in the quantities I do, and usually buying organic, makes it an expensive proposition. Sometimes I think it’s a toss-up between eating out and eating in, although eating out has the added benefit of not having to eat alone.

6. Farmers markets can be a single person’s best friend. The food quality is high. You usually can buy it in the quantities that make sense to your situation. And often prices are comparable or even less expensive than the regular grocery store.

7. Look for deals. Grocery stores offer meals for one, deli meat ends, rotisserie chickens and other deli-prepared foods at reduced prices as the foods near their expiration date, which can help keep costs down.

8. My pantry doesn’t need to be stocked all the time, and that’s OK. I no longer can just dig through my shelves to come up with a meal if I have unexpected visitors. My shelves used to be bulging with cans, jars and boxes of all sorts of things because Jim loved to shop for groceries. There was always a variety of meat in the freezer, and we had lots of options for quick company meals. Now I even have to go to the grocery store to get canned goods to donate to the U.S. Postal Ser-

Oliver

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this one, start with onion, garlic and optional jalapenos sauteed in a vegetable oil — in other soups, you might use onion and celery. Then you add the beans, broth and some more water, plus seasonings. How much liquid you need depends on your taste in soups. If you like thick soup, reduce the liquid.

Mainly, remember everything else in this soup, about 10 items, are there for seasoning and that the seasonings are a matter of your taste. Start with the recommended amounts, taste the soup, then if you wish, add more. If you don’t like or have one of the seasonings, leave it out. Look around the kitchen. Don’t have many spices? Add a little salsa, or even ketchup to flavor it.

In this recipe, the soup is pureed, then at the very last, finished with some sherry and lime juice. If you added them earlier in process, they would lose some of their character in long cooking; sherry is almost always a big improvement to bean and pea soups, but dry white wine is perfectly OK, too.

By the way, remember, if you dump hot soup into a



No-Fail Black Bean Soup

Serves 4-6

1 tablespoon of vegetable or olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 jalapeno pepper, chopped, or a small can of chopped jalapenos (optional)
2 cloves of garlic
1 15-oz. can, or 2 cups, black beans, drained and rinsed
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup water
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 tablespoons dry sherry
2 teaspoons lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Chopped cilantro and/or scallions for garnish

Heat the oil in a 2-quart sauce pan. Saute the onions, jalapeno and garlic for about five minutes, just to soften them.

Add the beans, broth, cumin, coriander and water, and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer for about 45 minutes.

Take off the heat, allow to cool somewhat, then puree with a stick blender or in a food processor.

Add sherry and lime juice, and taste for salt and pepper. Return to the heat to warm for serving.

Serve garnished with cilantro, scallions, sour cream, chips to taste.

food processor, it has a tendency to expand and blow up, so let it cool a bit before you dump it in. Or, better yet, you can use a stick

blender at any time.

Make this soup a couple times to catch the drift of the process, then consider what you can do to vary it. Use

Pancakes

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available, and I love taking advantage of it.

The eggs, coupled with an avocado from the grocery store, went atop slices of the bread, toasted, for breakfast a few times already this week. And the bread also was the base for my son’s roast beef and barbecue sandwich today.

The apple cider was a tasty dinnertime drink for my daughter and I. And the carrots already have made their way into a stir-fry.

One of the eggs is also a perfect base for making these pancakes. You only need one, but the key is to beat it until it’s frothy. That gives the pancakes a wonderful lightness.

An overripe banana is mashed and mixed into the basic pancake batter, along with milk chocolate chips. Delightfully banana-y and dotted with sweet chocolate, this is a breakfast that always draws cheers.

These are pancakes I make when I want to treat my family to a fun breakfast.

It’s certainly not for every day — but once in awhile, it’s a nice treat.

There are several local flours available that you could use for this recipe — both at the Bangor Farmers’ Market and at Tiller & Rye in Brewer, among other places. I always make these with all-purpose flour, but you could probably use pastry flour (which I saw at the farmers’ market) as well.

While these are cooking, I leave a baking sheet in the oven. Heated to about 225 degrees Fahrenheit, it keeps them warm while I cook them all up. And then we can all dig in together, with a drizzle of fresh, local maple syrup.

I love that we have so much access to local foods here.

Sarah Walker Caron is the senior features editor for the Bangor Daily News and author of “Grains as Mains: Modern Recipes Using

Banana Chocolate Chip Pancakes

Serves 4

1 large egg
1 cup all-purpose flour
¾ cup milk
1 Tbsp sugar
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp kosher salt
1 banana, mashed
½ cup milk chocolate chips

Break the egg into the bowl of a stand mixer, discarding the shell. Using the wire whisk attachment, beat until frothy on medium-high speed (about 2 minutes).

Add the flour, milk, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and kosher salt to the bowl of

the stand mixer and mix until just combined. Use a rubber spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the banana and mix briefly until just incorporated. Stir in the chocolate chips.

Meanwhile, heat a nonstick skillet on the stove on a burner set to just below medium heat. Drop the pancake batter onto the skillet by the ½ cup full. Cook until bubbly on the top, and dry-looking at the edges, and then flip. Pancakes will be golden brown on both sides when done.

Enjoy with fresh maple syrup.

Ancient Grains,” available at bookstores everywhere including The Briar Patch, BAM and Bull Moose in

Bangor. For more delicious recipes, check out Maine Course at mainecourse.bangordailynews.com.

Curves

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1. My discipline no longer exists. Every morning, I say to myself, “I’m going to eat salads for dinner from now on.” And every evening, I find myself grazing on everything but. I soon will be 57 years old. I know how I’m supposed to eat, so where did my discipline go? Although I love eating salads, it turns out I don’t like making them, so maybe it’s not just a discipline problem. I know there are prepared salads, but I like to wash my own veggies because of the frequent e-coli scares.

2. The best way to prepare meatloaf is to bake it in muffin tins. The leftovers are easy to freeze and it’s simple to thaw just the number of “meat muffins” desired. They don’t take long to thaw, and they still slice up nicely for a sandwich if you wish.

3. I despise grocery shopping. I’m not much of a shopper anyway, but I find grocery shopping particularly grueling. Even if I have a list all prepared and I haven’t left it on the kitchen table, I just don’t enjoy grocery shopping. I think if it were simply choosing items in the store and they magically appeared in my cupboards and refrigerator at home, I wouldn’t mind it. But you handle your food so many times before you eat it, grocery shopping has lost any charm it ever had for me. Choose items from the shelf or case, place them in the cart, unload them from the cart, load the bags into the cart, load the bags from the cart into your vehicle, unload the bags from the vehicle and carry them into the house, unload the bags into your cupboards and refrigerator. And now you want me to cook, too?

4. I love pasta dishes

vice’s food drives. I don’t have unexpected visitors like we did when Jim was alive, and when you don’t cook as much, there’s no need to have as much on hand.

9. Preparing my own meals seems like a grand effort for little reward. With meal preparation comes the need for cleanup. I don’t mind that process when I’m cooking for others, but it seems like a waste of time for me alone. I would rather spend that time doing other things. It seems foolish to create a mess so that I can just clean it up after eating a meal that I don’t enjoy alone.

10. The lack of structure in my eating habits hasn’t made my efforts to lose weight easy. I know what I need to do: Plan menus, make lists, keep a food journal, have structured regular meals and snacks. All of that takes time I don’t feel like I have in my regular day right now as I adapt to widowhood, but eventually I will make it a priority.

This business of cooking and eating as a single is a project in process. I know adaptation is the key, but I hope knowing what I want out of my meal besides sustenance will open a path I can follow for a while. If it doesn’t work, I’m not afraid to choose another.

Maybe what I need is a Plan C.

As a longtime employee of the Bangor Daily News, Julie Harris has served many roles over the years, but she now has her dream job as community editor. She lives in Hermon with her four Brittany dogs: Sassy, Bullet, Thistle and Quincy, who keep her busy in various dog sports. She was widowed at age 51 when her husband, Jim, died of pancreatic cancer. Follow her blog at curves.bangordailynews.com.



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