

Our commitment to good nutrition & great taste

# Welcome

to CSNN Mississauga's



Layered Butternut Squash Casserole with a cashew sauce



Baked Eggplant...with a cheesy twist! Super delicious and healthy too



Braised Red Cabbage - it's a delicious side-dish to go with. or.... to go alone

Lets start 2019 with some Nutrition Intelligence.

The Virtual Kitchen is a celebration of food - it's a commitment to good nutrition and great taste. We hope that here you'll find some recipes that meet your unique needs.....

**Optimize health through nutrition** - Nutrition Intelligence helps an individual clear away confusion about healthy eating. Learning to cook, continually practicing and building your skills can lead to long-term eating strategies that work specifically for you. Change your diet, change your life.



Looking back at January we featured a creamy Mac & Cheese-y dish with a caramelized cauliflower sauce. It's a comfort food that everyone loves especially as the weather gets cold and snowy.

The importance of the quality & wholesomeness of the food we eat, avoiding additives, exposure to antibiotics, hormones and pesticide residues is another aspect of eating for optimal health. Purchase Certified Organic whenever possible.

*It all matters...*

## *Season's Highlight*



**It's best to purchase Mushrooms that are Certified Organic. Mushrooms are very porous and easily absorb pesticides, fungicides and toxins such as petrochemicals and industrial metals, to name a few.**

Many mushrooms are nutrient dense and considered a superfood - nutritionally speaking they're a great source of fiber and protein. They also include B vitamins, selenium, potassium, copper and vitamin D.

Crimini mushrooms also contain polysaccharide phytonutrients which function as powerful antioxidants that protect us from oxidative damage.

It's best to clean mushrooms with a damp towel. Avoid rinsing or soaking them, not because water logs them but because any moisture can inhibit browning.



**Cook mushrooms in a large pan. Spread them out in a single layer to maximize contact with the pan and allow moisture from the mushrooms to evaporate quickly so they develop a deep colour and flavour.**

When you add mushrooms to a hot pan they start to leak copious amounts of liquid. Once the liquid evaporates, they'll start to develop a deep colour and flavour - exactly what you want.

Store mushrooms in a paper bag in the refrigerator for 3-4 days (avoid storing in plastic because plastic traps moisture and accelerates spoilage plus, avoiding plastic is a good thing to do for our planet).





## *Layered Butternut Squash baked in a cashew sauce*



Choose each ingredient carefully. If you're unfamiliar with nutritional yeast, it's a highly nutritious vegan food that has many health benefits. It adds extra protein, vitamins and minerals as well as antioxidants to your meals. It has a cheesy, nutty, savour flavour..

### **Ingredients for the sauce:**

- 1/2 cup cashews soaked 3-4 hours, drained and rinsed (see the reason why in the Building Skills page)
- 3/4 cup filtered water
- 1 Tbsp brown rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp nutritional yeast (see sidebar)
- 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp Himalayan sea salt
- 1 garlic clove, minced

### **Ingredients for the casserole:**

- 1 butternut squash, peeled and seeded, cut into a large dice (see Building Skills page)
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin organic olive oil
- 2 Tbsp Organic coconut oil or organic avocado oil
- 1/4 tsp Himalayan sea salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 8 oz crimini mushrooms, wiped clean & sliced
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 5 cups Swiss chard, chopped



Roast the butternut squash on a parchment lined baking sheet until tender



Sauté the onions in the same pan as the mushrooms



Layer the butternut squash, mushroom mixture and the sauce

To start... read through the entire recipe first to be sure you have everything you need and the proper tools.

### To get started...

- We used a 4-cup casserole dish that was 9 inches long by 6 inches wide and 2 inches deep.
- Put out all the ingredients and prep before starting the recipe - grate, chop, measure and weigh everything first.
- Line your baking sheet with parchment paper. Set aside.
- Preheat the oven to 400° F.

**Now you're organized and set up for success. You'll begin by roasting the butternut squash and then, while it's roasting, you'll make the creamy sauce.**

1. Toss butternut squash cubes with 2 Tbsp olive oil to coat, then place evenly on the lined baking sheet. Sprinkle with sea salt and freshly ground pepper.
2. Roast in the preheated oven for 25 minutes until tender (pierce with a paring knife to check if they're done).

### While the squash is roasting, lets work on the sauce.

3. Put the sauce ingredients into your high-speed blender and blend on high until the sauce is smooth. Set aside.
4. Heat 2 Tbsp coconut oil in a large skillet. Once the oil is hot add the mushrooms in a single layer (sauté in batches if necessary) and cook until starting to brown. Add onions and cook until translucent. Add Swiss chard and cook 3-4 minutes until wilted.
5. In your casserole dish, start with a layer of butternut squash, next cover with a layer of the mushroom/Swiss chard mixture and then the creamy sauce. Continue to layer using all the ingredients.
6. Bake in the 400° F oven for about 15 minutes until warmed through, taste and season with additional sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. ENJOY





## Baked Eggplant with a cheesy twist...



It's easy to grind your own hazelnut meal/flour. You'll love the intense nutty flavour it brings to this eggplant dish

Hazelnuts lend star power and complexity to this Baked Eggplant dish. Don't use breadcrumbs because they won't add to the flavour. From a health perspective, hazelnuts contain more folate than other nuts and...hazelnuts are the only nut that contains Vitamin A (an antioxidant with cancer protective properties).



Eggplants have an array of vitamins, minerals, including fiber, folate, potassium and manganese

### Ingredients:

- 1 eggplant, cut into 1/4 inch slices
- 3/4 cup extra virgin organic olive oil
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 cup hazelnut meal/flour (see Hazelnut Whizdom)
- 4 Tbsp nutritional yeast
- 3 tsp garlic powder
- 3 tsp onion powder
- 1/4 tsp Himalayan sea salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup feta cheese (optional)

## Method:



The eggplant slices are coated with the hazelnut flour mixture and ready to bake in the oven.

1. Preheat oven to 425° F.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. In a small bowl, mix the olive oil and lemon juice, set aside.
4. On a plate put hazelnut flour, nutritional yeast, spices, sea salt and black pepper, set aside.
5. Brush both sides of eggplant slices with the olive oil/lemon juice mixture and then press each side into the flour mixture to coat well.
6. Place prepared eggplant slices on the parchment lined baking sheet and cook in preheated oven for 12 minutes, flip slices over and cook another 12 minutes until lightly browned.

Best served immediately with a protein or a salad - delicious for lunch or dinner. You're going to love this recipe!

Everyone has nutritional concerns and unique needs. There is no one way of eating that works for everyone. We need to consider genetic differences, health concerns, food sensitivities, allergies plus personal preferences - all factors that influence what style of eating that works best for each individual.

**Hazelnut Whizdom** – it's very easy to make your own hazelnut flour. Hazelnut flour is made from grinding whole hazelnuts into a crumbly meal. Since it adds so much nutrition and flavour to this recipe it's worth taking a few minutes to make your own.

Use your food processor, fitted with the S blade. Freeze your hazelnuts overnight, add to your food processor and pulse until they reach a small crumble. Hazelnuts *won't* break down to a fine flour, just small crumbles due to their fat content. Don't overprocess or you'll make nut butter.





## Build your skills

This is the third month that we're focusing on unfamiliar terms and methods that could be confusing and affect your cooking results.

Lets take a look...



Invest in a good knife and practice dicing vegetables in different sizes

**Dice** - chopping vegetables. The key is to make uniform pieces - equal size and shape. Uniformly cut foods cook at an even rate unlike uneven shapes where the smaller pieces cook faster while the larger pieces take longer. It's easier if you trim away all the rounded parts and start with an even-sided shape.



When sautéing, be sure the oil that coats the pan is hot before adding the food

**Sauté** - means to cook small pieces over medium-high heat until browned on the outside and cooked through. The term sauté comes from the French to jump. The jumping refers to the way the pieces of food appear to jump in the pan as the moisture is forced out by the high heat of the pan and oil. Pan frying is different and takes place at a lower heat. This is because the food to be pan fried is not cut into pieces before cooking - example would be a chicken breast.

**Soaking nuts** - in our Layered Butternut casserole we ask you to soak the cashews *before* making the sauce. Cashews don't have a strong flavour plus once soaked they add the creaminess to a sauce (without adding actual cream). Soaking cashews for 3-4 hours reduces the phytic acid plus the soaking helps them blend better for a creamy mouth feel texture.



All nuts can be soaked to remove the phytic acid, then dehydrate and they're crunch is back

Learning what the terms mean as well as the why's and how's are valuable cooking tools. Building your skills month by month means that over time your confidence will increase because of practice, patience and experience.

As you transform your eating or just fine-tune it, first recognize what you want to do, then set up your kitchen, fill your pantry and refrigerator and begin the journey by planning. Take it one dish, one meal, one day at a time and slowly you'll discover what works the best for you.



## Braised Red Cabbage

### Ingredients:



Mise en place is a French culinary process in which ingredients are organized and prepared before cooking. It makes cooking far more efficient with a better outcome.

- 2 onions, sliced thinly
- 1 Tbsp organic coconut oil
- 1/2 red cabbage, sliced thinly
- 1 bay leaf
- pinch ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp Himalayan sea salt
- 1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp caraway seed
- 2 Tbsp organic dry red wine
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 Tbsp filtered water
- 1/2 cup organic red apple, cut into strips
- 1 Tbsp raw honey





Cruciferous vegetables, like Cabbage, contain the largest concentrations of health-promoting sulfur compounds which increase the liver's ability to produce enzymes that neutralize toxic substances.

The red cabbage used in this recipe adds almost twice as much vitamin C as green cabbage plus, the reddish-purple colour contains powerful antioxidants!

### Method:

1. In a medium sized sauté pan, sauté onions in coconut oil over medium heat until lightly browned.
2. Add the sliced red cabbage, stir then cover - cook for about 5 minutes.
3. Add bay leaf, pinch of cloves, sea salt, pepper, caraway seed, red wine, balsamic vinegar and water. Mix to combine.
4. Cook over low heat, covered for 30 minutes.
5. Remove the bay leaves, add the sliced apple and honey. Stir to mix. Cook for an additional 15 minutes.

**Enjoy every delicious bite...**

Here in the Virtual Kitchen we strive to add nutritional value to every recipe - the result is food that's not only better for you, it tastes better, too. Each bite is packed with disease fighting vitamins and minerals.

Nutrition Intelligence will help build your health, maintain a good weight and set you on the right path for the year ahead. Everyone has individual needs, likes and dislikes. Find what works for you....

**Focus • Plan • Cook**

*With all that said, enjoy January's recipes and we look forward to sharing more Nutrition Intelligence in February...*