

AN EASTERN-INSPIRED MEAL

I spent some time traveling in Thailand and was captivated by the omnipresence of micro-restaurants—someone with a wok, grill, and cashbox seemed to be on every corner. When I'm ravenous, I gravitate to those flavors: salty and smoky and citrusy.



SUPER SAVORY GROUND KEBABS

with
UNPEANUT SAUCE

These kebabs are easily made as little burgers if you don't want to mess around with skewers, but stick or no stick, make them oblong to facilitate dipping. The fragrant rice powder is a great secret weapon as a thickener and binder, bringing a lot of flavor to the task. If tender bellies are not a consideration, a little fire is a nice addition to these; you might send some Sriracha on the side for anyone who can take the heat. If you can't find the lime leaves, the finely grated zest of one lime or a teaspoon of very finely minced fresh lemongrass are equally delicious substitutes.

SERVES 4 TO 6

12 small bamboo or metal skewers
1 tablespoon basmati or other long-grain white rice
2–3 fresh makrut lime leaves, center rib torn out
1 pound ground meat (turkey, pork, beef, or chicken)

2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
1 tablespoon coconut sugar or brown sugar
¼ cup finely minced fresh basil
¼ cup finely minced fresh mint

¼ cup finely minced fresh cilantro

To SERVE

UnPeanut Sauce (recipe follows)

1 If you are using bamboo skewers, submerge them in a dish of water to soak.

recipe continues

2 In a small heavy sauté pan, heat the rice, dry, for about 2 minutes, until lightly toasted and fragrant, stirring or shaking the pan frequently. Remove from the heat and toss the lime leaves in with the hot rice, stirring once or twice, and then dump the contents of the pan into a spice grinder or blender. Grind to a fine powder.

3 Combine the rice powder in a medium bowl with the meat, fish sauce, ginger, sugar, basil, mint, and cilantro, and stir thoroughly (it's easiest to use your hands). Refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow the rice powder to hydrate.

4 Using dampened hands, form a sausage of about 2 tablespoons of the meat mixture around each of the skewers, and set them into the fridge again while you heat the grill, grill pan, or broiler. Cook for 6–8 minutes on each side, until lightly charred and cooked through. Cool to room temperature before wrapping loosely in foil or packing into an oven-safe covered dish. Serve with UnPeanut Sauce.

UNPEANUT SAUCE

Rich in nutrients and health benefits and general yumminess, cashews step in for peanuts here to make a gentler, creamier version of the usual satay sauce.

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

1 cup dry-roasted,
unsalted cashews
2 teaspoons finely
grated fresh ginger
½ teaspoon finely
grated orange zest

1 tablespoon toasted
sesame oil
2 teaspoons coconut
sugar or brown sugar
1 tablespoon tamari or
soy sauce

2 tablespoons lime
juice
1 tablespoon orange
juice
½ cup light canned
coconut milk

1 Soak the cashews in water to cover for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.

2 Drain the cashews and place in a blender. Add the ginger, zest, oil, sugar, tamari, lime juice, orange juice, and coconut milk, and blend until quite smooth.

3 Transfer to a mason jar or other lidded container, and store in the refrigerator for up to a week.

CINNAMON APPLE MUFFINS

These muffins are an excellent way to start the day, with loads of protein from the almonds and the goodness of cinnamon making the house smell like all will be well. They are adapted from a recipe by Comfy Belly's Erica Kerwien, who is a great resource for making treats using a limited list of ingredients. Nothing about these gluten-free muffins tastes of restriction; these taste more like cinnamon buns, but without the post-consumption nap those often require.

MAKES 10 MUFFINS

1½ cups peeled,
chopped apple chunks,
roughly 1- to 2-inches
1½ teaspoons ground
cinnamon
½ cup + 2 tablespoons
plain whole-milk
yogurt or a dairy-free
substitute
⅓ cup honey or maple
syrup
2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla
extract
2½ cups (240g) almond
flour
1 cup (128g) oat bran
2 tablespoons tapioca
flour or cornstarch
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon baking
soda
½ teaspoon baking
powder

For the TOPPING

1 tablespoon ground
cinnamon
¼ cup honey
3 tablespoons unsalted
butter, softened,
ghee, or coconut
butter
¼ teaspoon sea salt

1 Preheat the oven to 325° F. Spray or butter a twelve-cup muffin pan.

2 Toss the apple chunks with the cinnamon in a medium bowl.

3 In a separate medium bowl, combine the yogurt, honey, eggs, and vanilla, and blend well with a wooden spoon.

4 Put the almond flour, oat bran, tapioca flour, salt, baking soda, and baking powder in a small bowl and mix until well combined.

5 Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and stir until combined. Put 2 tablespoons of batter in each cup, reserving the remainder.

6 Make the topping. In a small bowl, cream together the cinnamon, honey, butter, and salt.

7 Separate the topping into two-thirds and one-third (I usually just very scientifically draw a line in the bowl, a little to one side of what seems like the middle) and divide the larger portion among the filled muffin cups (about a teaspoon per cup), plopping it into each center.

8 Distribute the seasoned apples, five or six pieces per cup, pressing them lightly into the batter and topping. Then divide the remaining batter among the cups, dropping it on top of the apples, which it may not cover completely.

9 Evenly distribute the remaining topping over the top of each muffin. Bake for about 25 minutes, until a toothpick placed in the center of a muffin comes out clean and the edges are starting to brown.

INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN RICE PUDDING

There's more that connects us than divides us, across the globe, than the headlines might let on. To wit: there is a Cypriot dish, a simple rice flour pudding, known as muhalebbi, which is so, so similar to an Israeli pudding known as malabi. A Lebanese rice flour pudding known as meghli is traditionally served to pregnant women to help them grow strong babies, and in Puerto Rico, a pudding known as majarete made with either rice or corn accomplishes a similar purpose. Shalom aleichem, Salaam alaikum, peace be with you. Some of these rice puddings are enriched with copious amounts of spices, some use brown sugar and others white. They are all an eggless custard, milk fortified with a little grain to make a digestible and soothing offering suitable for the recovering as well as the upright. It may not be your mother's rice pudding, but it surely is someone's mother's, and it's a smooth, lovely alternative to the gritty or grainy rice puddings that you might be citing as the foundation of your resistance to rice puddings in general. Note that sweet rice flour will not work here; you want regular rice flour, of the type sold in bulk bins. Brown or white work equally well.

SERVES 6 TO 8

4 cups carton-type
coconut milk or cow's
milk (or a blend of the
two), divided
½ cup white or brown
rice flour

¼ cup sugar or honey
½ teaspoon sea salt
½ teaspoon rosewater,
orange blossom
water, or vanilla
extract

Plum or peach jam,
roasted fruit, or fresh
berries, to serve

1 Measure 3½ cups of the milk into a medium saucepan and heat over medium heat to almost boiling point.

- 2** Mix the flour with the remaining ½ cup milk in a heatproof cup, stirring until smooth.
- 3** Slowly pour about one-third of the hot milk into the flour paste, stirring well.
- 4** Return the mixture to the milk in the saucepan and stir very well to combine. Cook over gentle heat while whisking continuously for about 5–8 minutes, until the mixture is thickened. Add the sugar and salt, and continue to cook and whisk until the whisk leaves visible streaks, another 5–7 minutes. Take off the heat and stir in the rosewater or vanilla.
- 5** To enhance the texture, stir the pudding for about 10 minutes as it cools, a process you can hasten by decanting it into a mixing bowl and even immersing the bowl in a larger container of ice water. Pour the cooled mixture into 6–8 small bowls. If you'd like to prevent a skin from forming at the top, very lightly butter some parchment paper circles and press these over the surface of the puddings.
- 6** Cool to room temperature and then chill thoroughly (about 2 hours) before eating.
- 7** Serve with a dollop of jam, roasted fruit, or fresh berries.

Far more useful to an overwhelmed friend or acquaintance are offers like these, extended in the days and weeks of new grief (or, for that matter, new parenthood, or recovery of any kind):

- I'M CALLING YOU FROM THE GROCERY STORE/DRUGSTORE/OFFICE SUPPLY STORE AND DRIVING HOME RIGHT PAST YOUR HOUSE. IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN PICK UP FOR YOU? ARE YOU, FOR EXAMPLE, OUT OF TOILET PAPER OR SHAMPOO OR CAT FOOD?
- TOMORROW IS MY ERRAND DAY. CAN I GET/MAIL/RETURN ANYTHING IN MY TRAVELS AND SAVE YOU A TRIP? DO YOU NEED STAMPS OR YOUR DRY CLEANING ATTENDED TO?
- MY MORNING IS SUDDENLY OPEN AND I AM ITCHING TO GET OUTSIDE/GET MY HANDS DIRTY/USE THIS CRAZY LOVE I HAVE OF SORTING MAIL AND FOLDING LAUNDRY! I'VE GOT TWO HOURS TO WALK YOUR DOG/WEED YOUR GARDEN/MAKE NEAT PILES OF ENVELOPES. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO USE THEM?

If the offer is *specific in nature, focused in time, and seems not to be causing you any extra trouble or travel*—almost doing you a favor—then those in need are much more likely to take you up on it. Use what you know how to do (you're a whiz at accounting, are known for your lovely handwriting, just got certified as a massage therapist), or just are plain willing to do (clean gutters, drive kids to school or the car to the mechanic) as one guide. Use what you know about the person as another, and shape your offer along those three guidelines. You'll almost always get a taker.

Utterly strapped for an idea? Within hours of a diagnosis or loss, a family's kitchen can become a windstorm of bagels and fruit trays, and tubs of hummus and cream cheese begin to replicate in the dark of the fridge. Roll up your sleeves, unflinching, and bring order to the fridge and counters. Slice excess bagels and freeze them, consolidate duplicate containers, remove furry things from the crisper, rearrange picked-over platters, take out the recycling and clean the sink and start a fresh pot of coffee and get rid, please, of the wilted flowers.

Here's the thing: No matter who has rushed to our side, pretty much every sad person ends up standing alone in the kitchen at some hour of the day or night. To see order there, to know that the prospect of wading through yet another task you'd rather not face has magically been lifted from your consciousness as if by well-meaning elves, well—that can be a huge gift.

BREAKFAST KOLIVA

A true koliva is a lot of work to create, as it is equal parts altarpiece and edible. They are beautiful, loving things to labor over and to present, and if you feel moved to build one, instructions abound on the interwebs as to their creation and backstory. The doctored-up oatmeal below borrows the poetry of the seeds and grains and fruits that my dear Andrea introduced to me and brings the ceremonial dish to the table as a nourishing breakfast. This is best when an overnight soak for the oats is part of the preparations, so plan ahead by a day if you can.

SERVES 4

1 cup steel-cut oats
½ teaspoon salt,
divided
Scrape of finely grated
orange zest
¼ teaspoon ground
cinnamon
¼ cup dried
cranberries
¼ cup chopped dried
apricots

1 tablespoon sesame
seeds
1 tablespoon hemp
seeds
2 tablespoons
sunflower seeds
¼ cup honey

To SERVE

Heavy cream or
coconut cream
Sliced or slivered
almonds, toasted
Arils of half a
pomegranate
Honey
Unsalted butter or
coconut oil

1 The night (or at least several hours) before you plan to serve this, put the oats in a pan with water to cover by 2 inches, along with ¼ teaspoon of salt. Bring to a boil, turn off the heat, and leave to cool, covered.

recipe continues

2 In the morning, cover with fresh water by a generous inch, adding the orange zest and cinnamon to the pot with the water. Stir well to incorporate, smoothing out any lumps. Bring this mixture to a boil, then lower the heat. Cook the oats at a low simmer for about 10 minutes, until the grains are quite tender and the mixture has thickened, stirring often to prevent sticking.

3 Add the cranberries, apricots, sesame seeds, hemp seeds, sunflower seeds, honey, and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Stir to combine, and let rest, covered, for a few minutes.

4 To serve immediately, portion into bowls, drizzle with a little cream, and sprinkle some almonds and pomegranate seeds and a drizzle of extra honey on top.

5 To tuck into a basket for someone to eat later, spread the mixture in a well-buttered 8 × 3-inch loaf pan or similar baking dish, or for single servings, into four buttered wide-mouth half-pint mason jars. Dot the surface(s) with butter or coconut oil and drizzle with honey. The pan can be heated, uncovered, in a 325°F oven; the jars should be set into a larger pan of hot water before heading into the oven. Make sure to include a small bottle of cream and teeny jars of pomegranate seeds and almonds in the basket, so the ceremony of drizzling and festooning can happen at serving time.

WILD RICE SOUP

This soup is full of flavors without being overwhelming, full of nutrition without being heavy, and a full meal in one bowl. There are many ways to tailor it to the tastes and preferences of your recipient. For the greens, you can use broccoli rabe, which admittedly is not to everyone's taste but I adore it, cleaned and chopped, or another sturdy green, like kale, which is more universally appealing. Whichever green you choose, reserve the other half-bunch for the Little Meatballs (page 127) or the UnMeatballs (page 129), which accompany the soup. Note that the rice should be soaked overnight in cold water to generously cover before making this soup.

SERVES 4 TO 6

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 medium yellow onion,
diced (about 1½ cups)
1 teaspoon salt
1 medium leek, tough
outer leaves removed,
quartered, cleaned,
and sliced fine
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon ground
cumin
2 teaspoons ground
coriander

¼–½ teaspoon
cayenne pepper
1–2 large carrots,
peeled and diced
(about 1 cup)
2–3 medium Yukon
Gold or similar
potatoes, peeled and
diced (about 2 cups)
1 cup wild rice, soaked
overnight and
drained

8–10 cups vegetable
or chicken broth
½ bunch broccoli rabe,
kale, or other greens,
stemmed
and chopped (about
4 cups, loosely
packed)
1 batch Little Meatballs
(page 127) or
UnMeatballs
(page 129)

1 Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and the salt, and sauté for about 5 minutes, until it softens.

recipe continues

NAOMI AND LINA'S ALMOND COOKIES

Sometimes my friend Naomi shows up at my door with an empty peanut butter jar full of dahlias she has grown that are so glorious as to make a burlesque dancer blush, and when she sets them on the table and tosses a few hazelnuts from her tree, little trios of them still clustered in their curly green pods, around the base of the jar, I suddenly feel the value of my house increase in every possible way. And there was this one time she popped over with some cookies that her friend Lina used to make when she was a private chef for macrobiotic movie stars and popes and what have you. Even without their glam backstory, these are satisfying and nourishing, and the hint of spice makes them just interesting enough to provide a sliver of pleasure. The recipe doubles easily, which is good because the “dough” tastes so good that you may not be able to bake absolutely all of it.

MAKES ABOUT 18 COOKIES

1 cup raw almonds
¼ cup maple syrup
½ teaspoon kosher or
flaky sea salt

½ teaspoon vanilla
bean paste or vanilla
extract
2 cardamom pods,
shells removed, or

¼ teaspoon ground
cardamom
2 teaspoons water

1 Preheat the oven to 325°F, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2 Put the almonds, maple syrup, salt, vanilla, cardamom, and water in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until you have a coarsely ground, uniform mixture.

3 Using two teaspoons, compact small portions of the mixture into little egg-shaped balls. Place these onto the parchment-lined pan; they can be quite close together as they do not spread. Bake for about 20 minutes or until they are a nice golden color.

4 Once cool, store airtight at room temperature. These keep like a dream, and are also well suited to mailing. They can be frozen for up to 3 months.



OTHER WAYS TO DO IT

You can mix the nuts up in infinite ways. A mixture of cashews and almonds gives a tenderer and slightly richer result, and walnuts, pecans, and other candidates all play nicely with the flavors.

is expected. Nobody wants to read a love note on the banana (scratch it into the peel lightly with a pencil or even a fat needle; your message darkens magically by the time the lunch is opened) or the orange (use the channel knife that came in that bartending kit you got nine Christmases ago) *every day*. That edges toward the creepy. But there is something about lifting the fog of drudgery on the packing of the meal with some little act of silliness that also lifts the spirits of both preparer and consumer.

I definitely have a happier relationship with the more traditional interpretation of the care package, the version that calls up memories of mail-call at summer camp and involves affixing postage and honing your sense of how transit time and shipping method will affect the contents. It is a pretty comparable exercise, though. Because, lunch box or flat-rate Priority Mail carton, the message is the same: "Thinking of you!/You should eat a little!" And like fancy touches in the lunch box, the care package gets a lot of its power from its *rara avis* status. Most days, whether those days are spent at an office or at what my one daughter used to call "sleep-away college," mail is *meh*. Junk mail, bills, and announcements of one sort or another make up the lion's share, their contents pretty obvious and in some way burdensome. But a box! A box is an event. You have to balance it on your bike or your lap or clutch it in some obvious fashion as you make your way back to your cabin, desk, or dorm room. At least mentally, you are rubbing your hands together in greedy glee.

As I move through regular life, I collect all kinds of doodads to keep in my stash of care-package material. I like a box to feature a balance of homemade (some durable cookie- or brownie-esque item), humorous (hello, novelty erasers and temporary belly-button tattoos), and exotic (sachets of fancy French cocoa, for example, or most of what's available in the candy aisle of a large Asian grocery store). I like to throw in some health-giving item, such as an herbal tea or essential oil or clean socks. Cushion the contents with a foreign-language newspaper or the funnies. There's probably room for a silly photo or bad limerick. *Boom*. You are now the hero of the mailbag.

FORSAKING ALL OTHERS ROASTED TOMATO SOUP

I've had the same copies of the Moosewood Cookbook and The Enchanted Broccoli Forest since dinosaurs roamed the earth; the pages have the splatters and dog-ears to prove it. From the all-day-project magnitude of eggplant moussaka to the poetic simplicity of baked custard, there is reliability on every page. Your house will smell good and the food will taste good and everything will be fine—that is Moosewood cooking, to me. Even after years of traveling together, I can still find surprises in those books, such as the genius move I discovered long after I thought anyone needed to tell me how to make tomato soup, of adding a little bit of honey and mayonnaise to it. The flavors balance magically and ho-hum tomato soup becomes the tangy tomato soup of your best grilled-cheese memory. "Oh, thanks a lot," said my younger daughter when I made this vegetable-enhanced version. "Now I can't ever eat any other tomato soup ever again." It's a lunch box staple and holds up to giant-batch/stash-it-in-the-freezer preparations. If you are serving it in a bowl and not a thermos, you can gild the lily by providing a drizzle of lemon oil or minced fennel fronds or some crème fraîche or casually rustic crumbles of goat cheese, but you won't miss those touches if you skip them. The soup is remarkably tastier on its second day, so don't be afraid to make it ahead.

MAKES ABOUT 12 CUPS

1 medium fennel bulb, trimmed of stalks and cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks	2 tablespoons olive oil Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or olive oil	One 28-ounce can ground peeled tomatoes 6 cups water
2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks	2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	One 6-ounce jar artichoke hearts, drained

recipe continues

1 tablespoon honey
3 tablespoons Vegenaïse
or mayonnaïse
1½ teaspoons salt

To
GARNISH (OPTIONAL)
A drizzle of lemon oil
Minced fennel fronds

Crème fraiche
Goat cheese crumbles

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Toss the fennel and carrots with the olive oil, spread them on the tray in a single layer, and sprinkle a bit of salt and pepper over them. Roast for about 15 minutes, until they are starting to brown at the edges, then toss them with a spatula and switch the oven off; leave the vegetables in the oven to soften a little more in the residual heat as you get on with the other preparations.

2 Heat the butter in a large pot over low–medium heat, and sauté the garlic in it for about 1 minute, being careful not to let it brown. Add the tomatoes and heat them through. Add the roasted vegetables along with the water and the artichoke hearts. Simmer for 15–20 minutes, until the carrots and fennel are tender enough to cut with a spoon.

3 Now attack the soup with an immersion blender, or process in batches in a regular blender, observing all commonsense precautions regarding hot liquid and expansion, until you have a thick, smooth puree.

4 Whisk in the honey along with the Vegenaïse, and taste to correct the seasoning as you like.

5 This soup can be used immediately, refrigerated for up to a week, or frozen for up to 3 months.

POCKET FRITTATAS

“Don’t think I am fooled by the whole muffin thing,” said my eldest, the Chief Resident Quinoa Skeptic, in dark tones, when I served these. “I can see they are made of quinoa.” But before I could respond in any way, she had eaten it. And then she ate another. They come across like something between a nice, not-at-all dry muffin and an amusingly portable frittata. They are tasty hot, with a big messy salad and maybe some soup, for dinner, but they also ride happily at room temperature into lunch boxes or other places food gets grabbed and consumed on the fly. Like a frittata, quiche, or omelet, they are kind of a blank canvas, and a list of variations follows the main recipe.

MAKES 12

1 tablespoon neutral
vegetable oil
1 cup coarsely chopped
asparagus
1 teaspoon tamari or
soy sauce
½ teaspoon finely
grated orange or
lemon zest

2½ cups cooked
quinoa, brown rice, or
millet
4 ounces cheddar
cheese, coarsely
grated (1 cup), divided
2–3 ounces (about
½ cup) crumbled feta
cheese

½ cup chopped fresh
parsley
4 eggs
½ teaspoon smoked or
plain paprika
Salt and freshly ground
pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly spray or brush a twelve-cup muffin tin with olive oil.

2 Heat the vegetable oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat and stir-fry the asparagus for about 5 minutes, until bright green and even a little browned in places. Remove from the heat and toss with the tamari and zest.

recipe continues

CHOCOLATE PUDDING

After my friend Kari tasted the second draft of this recipe, she thoughtfully gave me a set of eight pudding cups with snap-on lids to make it easier for me to keep bringing her pudding on the regular. Jam jars make a fine substitute if you live too far from Kari to get the same deal. You can use regular condensed milk in place of the condensed coconut milk called for here, but if aversion and not availability is the obstacle, even extremely coconut-averse people say this pudding does not taste remotely like coconut. All it brings is a super-silky, creamy texture. This recipe makes a lot of pudding, but I have never found that “made too much pudding” really amounts to a problem.

MAKES A GENEROUS 6 CUPS OF PUDDING, SERVING 8 TO 10 DEPENDING ON PORTION SIZE

½ cup natural or Dutch-process unsweetened cocoa powder
⅓ cup cornstarch
½ teaspoon salt
4 cups cow’s milk or carton-type coconut milk

One 15-ounce can sweetened condensed coconut milk
4–6 ounces (170g) semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
Whipped cream, to serve (optional)

- 1 Have ready eight to ten small dishes or mason jars.
- 2 Combine the cocoa, cornstarch, and salt in a heavy, medium saucepan. Slowly whisk in the fresh milk, then add the condensed milk and whisk together thoroughly.
- 3 Heat over a medium flame, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon and being sure to reach into all corners of the pot so no area scorches

or remains unstirred. Bring it all the way to a low boil (only evident if you stop stirring, which you shouldn’t do for long), and continue to cook for about 7 minutes, until the mixture is nicely thick and the waves from stirring stay visible on the surface. You’ll also notice that a darker skin starts to form on the surface if an area stays undisturbed; that’s another signal that it’s done. Rest assured that the pudding will thicken considerably as it cools.

- 4 Remove the pot from the heat and add the chocolate, whisking until it is melted. Add the vanilla. At this point, you can ladle it into the waiting dishes, or continue whisking until the pudding has cooled, which yields a creamier texture and the ability to mound it up attractively in the dish. This can take some time; either put on a podcast or transfer the pudding to a stand mixer and set it to low.
- 5 Churned or not, let the dishes come to room temperature before covering and chilling them, or condensation will spoil their tidy tops.
- 6 Whipped cream makes a totally unnecessary but welcome embellishment. The pudding will keep for up to 1 week, refrigerated.



OTHER WAYS TO DO IT

You may be as surprised as I was to discover that the addition of ⅓ cup of canned pure pumpkin makes for an astonishingly silky texture, along with the extra nourishment it supplies. It is entirely undetectable in flavor terms.

PEACH TAPIOCA

Fruit tapioca is tasty and fast to make, and is so different from the creamy, egg-y way that tapioca usually gets treated that it will likely win over even any skeptics who may live in your house. I have no skeptics in my house. In my house I have to hide it in order to have enough for the lunch boxes the next day.

SERVES 4 TO 6

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup small pearl tapioca

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup water

3 cups orange-carrot juice

2 cups coarsely chopped fresh or frozen peaches

$\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup apple juice concentrate (sold in

the frozen section), or 3 tablespoons honey or agave syrup

- 1 Put the tapioca and water in a medium saucepan to soak for about 30 minutes.
- 2 Add the orange-carrot juice, peaches, and apple juice concentrate; taste for sweetness and adjust as necessary.
- 3 Bring to a low boil, stirring all the while to prevent the tapioca from clumping to the bottom of the pot, and simmer for about 5 minutes, until a few of the tapioca balls test soft (they do not need to be clear, just tender).



- 4 Pour the pudding into a lidded container, or into a collection of small jars or bowls, and cool to room temperature before covering and chilling thoroughly. Tapioca will keep for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.



OTHER WAYS TO DO IT

You can substitute instant or minute tapioca for the small pearl, in which case you eliminate the soaking step and can whip it together even faster—just dump everything in the pot and cook. Everyone I feed loves peach, but the possible combinations of fruits and juices give a person myriad ways to mix it up.

ROASTED BROCCOLI

Roasting makes broccoli (and brussels sprouts, and all brassicas) insanely moreish, and when you involve lemons and salty crispy cheese, there's no stopping a person once they begin nibbling at the dish.

SERVES 1 TO 2

1 broccoli crown (about
½ pound)
1 tablespoon extra-
virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon grated fresh
ginger

Finely grated zest of
½ lemon
¼ teaspoon Aleppo
pepper or crushed red
pepper flakes
½ teaspoon kosher salt

1 tablespoon sliced
almonds or pepitas
2–3 tablespoons freshly
grated Parmesan or
other hard, dry cheese
1 teaspoon lemon juice

- 1 Preheat the oven to 450°F, and line a sheet pan with parchment paper.
- 2 Trim the tough end off the broccoli, and peel the stalk. Break the florets apart and sliver the trunk into ½-inch sticks. Don't fuss over achieving regular sizes; variation makes for crispy bits.
- 3 Whisk together the oil, ginger, lemon zest, and Aleppo pepper in a large bowl. Add the broccoli and toss gently until evenly coated. Arrange the broccoli on the lined sheet pan, with enough distance between to allow for crisping, not steaming. Sprinkle with the salt.
- 4 Roast for 10–12 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, flip the broccoli pieces, and scatter the almonds and Parmesan across the sheet pan.
- 5 Sprinkle the tray with the lemon juice and serve hot or at room temperature.

