

Start fresh in '91, making meals without fuss

The new year has arrived. What better time to get back to the basics, in the kitchen. Using fresh ingredients including fruits and vegetables is not only healthy, it's smart. By following recipes that include little fuss, such as Spicy Winter Chili and Beans, you can create a delicious homemade meal in no time. Chili also freezes well. Just reheat and you have a warm welcome to enjoy after a busy day. A simple tip is to heat the chili in the oven, not on top of the stove, so you don't have to worry about burning it. Favorite Vegetable Soup is another delicious recipe that can be made a day or more ahead and enjoyed all week long.

Warm Brown Bread Muffins are the perfect accompaniment to chili or soup. In fact, muffins made from scratch become a tasty and nutritious breakfast treat — easy to grab on your way out the door in the morning.

Nothing warms and fills you up on a brisk winter evening like pasta. Ratatouille-Pasta Gratinée is delicious with the zest of eggplant and zucchini. It's easy to prepare and the sauce is easily frozen and reheated when needed.

Today's kitchen appliances are also helpful time-savers. Food processors chop our vegetables and puree our fruit in seconds. The microwave oven is a cook's best friend when it comes to defrosting and heating anything quickly.

Shopping for fresh ingredients and preparing recipes ahead of time makes it easy to get back to the basics of nutritious eating.

SPICY WINTER CHILI AND BEANS

1 cup diced green peppers
1 cup chopped onions
1 cup sliced celery

1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon Mexican seasonings
2 cups canned Mexican tomatoes (including juice), crushed
8 ounces diced cooked turkey
16 ounces cooked pinto beans, drained
¼ teaspoon seasoned salt

In a large skillet, sprayed with a release agent, sauté peppers, onions and celery, stirring occasionally. Stir in chili powder and Mexican seasonings; cook 1 minute. Add remaining ingredients; cover. Simmer 10 minutes to blend flavors. Makes 4 servings.

Each Serving Provides: 2 ½ Vegetables; 4 Protein.

Source: Weight Watchers International Clip and Save Recipes.

FAVORITE VEGETABLE SOUP
¼ cup diced onion
2 packets instant chicken broth and seasoning mix
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup thinly sliced zucchini
¼ cup each thinly sliced carrot and chopped seeded tomato
1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
¼ teaspoon basil leaves
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 cups water

In a 1 ½-quart nonstick kitchen combine onion, broth mix and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is translucent. Add remaining ingredients except water and stir to combine; cover and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Add water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, cover, and cook until vegetables are soft, about 20 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove about ½ cup vegetables from saucepan and set aside. In blender container, in 2 batches, puree remaining soup; return pureed



Lite success

Florine Mark

mixture to saucepan, add reserved vegetables, and heat. Makes 2 servings.

Each serving Provides: 2 ½ Vegetables; 10 Optional Calories.

Source: Weight Watchers Week 1 Menu Planner.

BROWN BREAD MUFFINS
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon each rye and whole wheat flour
1 ½ ounces uncooked yellow cornmeal
¼ cup golden raisins
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ cup buttermilk
¼ cup dark molasses
1 egg
2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In medium mixing bowl combine flours and cornmeal; in small bowl combine raisins with 2 tablespoons flour mixture, tossing to coat. Set aside. Add baking soda to flour mixture and stir to combine. In small mixing bowl combine buttermilk, molasses, egg and oil; using electric mixer at

medium speed, beat until combined. Add to flour mixture and mix well. Stir in raisin mixture. Spray eight 2 ½-inch-diameter muffin-pan cups with non-stick cooking spray; fill each cup with an equal amount of batter and partially fill remaining cups with water (this will prevent pan from burning and/or warping). Bake for 15 to 20 minutes (until muffins are lightly browned and a toothpick, inserted in center, comes out dry). Remove muffins to wire rack to cool. Makes 8 servings.

Each serving provides: 1 Bread; 1 Fat; ½ Fruit; 45 Optional Calories.

Source: Weight Watchers Quick Success Program Cookbook, 1988.

RATATOUILLE-PASTA GRATINÉE
2 cups each diced eggplant and sliced zucchini
1 ½ teaspoon salt, divided
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 cup sliced onions
1 ½ cups canned Italian tomatoes (with liquid); drain, seed and dice tomatoes, reserving liquid

2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 teaspoon oregano leaves
¼ teaspoon each basil leaves and garlic powder
Dash of pepper
2 cups cooked spaghetti or fusilli (hot)
8 ounces mozzarella cheese, shredded

Set large colander in sink; add eggplant and zucchini, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt and let stand 30 minutes. Rinse vegetables under running water; drain and pat dry with paper towels.

In 12-inch nonstick skillet heat oil over medium-high heat; add eggplant, zucchini and onions and sauté until vegetables are softened, 1 to 2 minutes. Add tomatoes, reserved liquid, tomato paste, remaining ½ teaspoon of salt, the oregano, basil, garlic powder and pepper, and cook, stirring until tomato paste is dissolved. Reduce heat to low and

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continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are thoroughly cooked and flavors are blended, 15 to 20 minutes.

On flameproof serving platter arrange spaghetti (or fusilli), top with vegetable mixture and sprinkle with cheese. Broil until cheese is melted and lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

Each Serving Provides: 2 Proteins; 1 Bread; 3 ½ Vegetables; 1 Fat.

Source: Weight Watchers Favorite Recipes Cookbook, 1986.

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