

Food

PROTEIN SHAKE-UP Fifth in a six-part series about cooking with unusual proteins

Lovable legumes

Beans and grains form an irresistible nutritional combo

BY CARON GOLDEN

Once again, we're looking beyond the animal to plants for sources of protein — plants like grains and legumes. You know: rice and beans. ■ We've long heard that the rice and beans combo makes for the perfect protein. And, yes, it is a great combo, so long as they're in balance. Since rice is so much less expensive than beans, when cost is a factor, rice tends to dominate the pair, and then it's not nearly as nutritious. And, of course, not all rice is equal. White rice is far less healthy a choice than brown rice. ■ If you're looking to plant-based sources of protein to complement or replace animal proteins, remember that what we need to stay healthy are the nine essential amino acids that make up what is called a "complete protein." These amino acids are the building blocks of proteins that our bodies use to manufacture essentials

SEE BEANS AND GRAINS • E3



RECIPES

Sorghum and Cherry Tomato Salad



Beans and Harissa



Merguez Sausage and Beans

E3

Beans and Harissa

Prepared and styled by chef Vince Schofield of Catania Coastal Italian in La Jolla.

K.C. ALFRED SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE

IT'S HARD TO RESIST THE MUMMIES' GAZE

Decorated chocolate cupcakes make adorable, fun Halloween party fare

BY KATIE WORKMAN

If you have kids, chances are pretty good you'll find yourself needing to bake something for a Halloween event. Or maybe you got invited to an adult Halloween party and you volunteered to bring a dessert. Either way, this is the recipe you need for a fast, easy — and delightfully spooky — party treat.

These adorable little mummy cupcakes don't take much more time than frosting a bunch of regular cupcakes, but the fun/cool factor is extremely high. If you do have kids, grab them and ask them to help. So what if one or two of the mummies look like they are

unraveling a little bit? That's part of the charm of bringing a homemade item — that it looks a little homemade.

My older son, Jack, pronounced these the best chocolate cupcakes I've ever made, and I've made a lot of cupcakes. So speaking of plain old cupcakes, think of these even after Halloween has come and gone, and skip the mummy frosting part for a delicious, basic chocolate cupcake recipe. You can use any frosting you like, including this one, and just give them a good smear for other occasions. I clearly will be making them for Jack's birthday in January.

SEE CUPCAKES • E5



MATTHEW MEAD • AP

Bands of frosting are for a good gauze, so to speak: wrapped faces in Mummy Cupcakes.

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

CHEESECAKE LESS DECADENT IN BAR FORTIFIED WITH FIBER

The pick: Fiber One Cheesecake Bar

Why it rates: Here are two good ways to sneak more fiber in your diet while getting the satisfaction of eating dessert. Fiber One's new cheesecake bars have a soft, graham cracker-ish crust, creamy filling and a ribbon of either strawberry or salted caramel flavoring. In informal taste tests, the strawberry edged out the salted caramel, but both had a genuine cheesecake taste. Weighing in at just 38 grams each, they won't fill you up like a bowl of bran. And while the bars shouldn't replace your daily diet of beans, grains and greens, they are delicious, portable ways to amp up your fiber intake.

Info: Each bar contains 150



calories, 6 grams of fat, 24 grams of carbs and 5 grams of dietary fiber (about 20 percent of the daily recommended amount). Boxes of 5 sell for \$3.49-\$3.99 at most grocery and big-box stores.

BEANS AND GRAINS • Together, they contain all nine essential amino acids

FROM E1 like muscle tissue, blood cells, hair and nails among others. Will plant-based proteins offer this? No. Not entirely. But, the good news is that you can combine these “incomplete proteins” with other proteins in meals to create a complete protein. The exceptions? Quinoa (actually a seed not a grain), buckwheat and hempseed are considered complete proteins.

Generally, beans tend to have more protein per serving than grains — but in a well-balanced diet, you're smart to enjoy both, separately or together. They're particularly wonderful paired in soups, salads and stews.

I love to make hearty salads with whole grains like farro, kamut, barley and wheat berries. Lately I've been experimenting with ancient grains like amaranth, green wheat freekeh and sorghum. Each of these is versatile in that they cook up like rice and pair well with all sorts of vegetables, fruits, nuts and spices that take you through the seasons. They take well to strong flavors, so in the fall, make the most of remaining tomatoes and herbs. In winter pair them with fruit like apples or persimmons or pomegranate seeds, or vegetables like butternut squash and mushrooms. Add some greens and some toasted nuts, and flavor with sautéed onions, shallots or garlic, and you'll have something special. Alternately, cook them up sans savory seasonings to make a hot cereal — then add some honey and cinnamon with milk.

Beans are another favorite. I've always enjoyed them, but I learned that chef Vince Schofield of Catania hated them as a kid. His mom is from Guer-



K.C. ALFRED U-T

Chef Vince Schofield prepares bean dishes at Catania Coastal Italian in La Jolla.

rero, Mexico, and his stepfather from Jalisco. Coming from large families, beans were the primary source of protein since they were much more affordable than meat. It followed that beans were a staple in the family household when they married, but Schofield would have none of it. It wasn't until his early 20s, when he awakened after a party at a friend's house and his sister was making a pot of frijoles de la olla, or boiled pinto beans in the pot, that he had a bean epiphany. “I ate them with salsa and tortillas and fell in love,” he said.

Later, the kid who grew up only knowing black beans and pinto beans got an education in the vast world of beans when he worked in his first restaurant kitchen. Today, Schofield loves incorporating beans on his menu. Currently, you'll find a dish of mussels with lardo, mirepoix soffritto, fried harissa and shelling beans.

Schofield pointed out some of the ways beans can be enjoyed. Who doesn't love

pork and beans? The saltiness of the pork and the earthiness of the beans “are just fantastic,” he said. Bean purées — think hummus, for example, with garbanzo beans — are the perfect mixture of creaminess and fat. You don't have to be limited to garbanzos, though. Try making flavorful purées with Great Northern, navy or cannellini beans — or black beans. Or riff on the mixture and turn them into soups. And then there are red beans, which in Chinese cuisine are often used for desserts.

The day I visited Schofield, he prepared two very easy bean dishes that showcase beans — in this case lima, brown turkeys and soldier beans. These beans, which he sourced from Chino Farm, were shelling beans. These fresh beans cook much faster than dried beans. But, Schofield noted, any will work.

The inspiration for these dishes, he said, comes from humble beginnings and using what you have. Schofield paired the beans with

animal proteins, but you don't have to if you'd rather go vegetarian. Of course, the animal proteins take a back seat by providing flavor, not being the centerpiece. It's a matter of giving them some TLC to transform beans into a hearty, comforting dish on a cold fall night.

Both of his recipes literally took five minutes to prepare — but, you have to do some advance, if passive, prep with the beans. First, you must soak dried beans overnight. The following day, cover either the now-soaked dried beans or fresh beans in a pot with three times the volume of water to beans. Add one carrot, peeled and halved, one rib of celery and half an onion with the root attached so that it doesn't fall apart in the water while cooking. Bring the water to a simmer, not a boil. Simmer the beans for 25 to 30 minutes if they're shelling beans, an hour to an hour and a half if they're dried. Remove from the heat and let cool. Only once they're cooling can you salt them. They won't absorb the salt until then, said Schofield. At that point, you're ready to make any bean recipe.

Golden is a freelance food writer and blogger.

MICHAEL MARKS Produce Picks



MOISTURE CAN BE TROUBLE FOR NEW RUSSET POTATOES

When I worked in the produce department of a grocery store, I used to hate this time of the year.

New-crop russet potatoes were just coming in. My boss would tell me to build a huge end-cap waterfall display. I'd have 500 sacks of 10-pound potatoes on that display. The next day, when I opened up the store, I'd walk in and notice a funny smell.

The first time this happened, I walked around the department trying to isolate the location of that odor. My nose finally took me to my beautiful and huge display of potatoes. I had to start disassembling that display, one bag at a time, until I finally reached the culprit — a bag with two rotting potatoes in it. And it was near the bottom of the display.

That's when I first learned about new crop fresh-dug russet potatoes. This time of year, growers dig up the spuds, take them to the packing sheds, wash them, try to blow dry as much as possible and then immediately pack them into their bags. These spuds have not been in storage long enough to dry out. That means there may be moisture in your bag of potatoes.

If you don't want to enter your pantry or kitchen and be knocked off your feet with an awful odor, then when you get your spuds home, open the bag and let the spuds dry out. Once fully dry, you can then put them into a cool, dry, dark place for storage without too much worry about a rotting potato.

When you are at the farmers market, ask the potato farmer if he or she will sell you “dirty” potatoes. These are potatoes that have not been washed off. All the dirt is still on the spud. These dirty potatoes will last forever. Well, maybe not forever, but for several months.

The reason? Water has not been added. Once you wash a spud, a little bit of water may enter a tiny crack. Be it ever so slowly, decay begins.

I'll buy an entire 50-pound carton of dirty potatoes. Into my garage they go. Six months later, I will still be eating perfect potatoes.

You should see 10-pound bags of potatoes retailing for around \$2.99 a bag.

	SOURCE	PRICE	TIPS
Pomegranate	San Joaquin Valley	\$1.99-\$2.79 each	These early pomegranates will be more pale in color.
Peaches and nectarines	San Joaquin Valley	\$2.49-\$2.99 per pound	The season started 2 to 3 weeks early, so it will soon be ending.
Kiwifruit	New Zealand, California	\$1.99-\$2.49 per pound	New crop from California is just starting; they will need time to ripen.
Artichokes	Castroville	\$2.50-\$3 each	Be cautious about the very wickedly sharp thorns on the fall crop.

SOURCE: MICHAEL R. MARKS

Sorghum and Cherry Tomato Salad

Sorghum is an ancient grain, packed with protein, making a comeback thanks to its being drought tolerant and gluten free. The grains look like little ball bearings with black dots in the center. You can easily find packages of it from Bob's Red Mill. It can be boiled like rice for a side dish, made into risotto or hot cereal — or even popped like popcorn. Or, turned into a flavor-packed salad like this one. Note that while it will taste good right after you make it, making it the day before you plan to serve it will give the various sweet, herbaceous, briny, salty and garlicky flavors time to come together.

Serves 4 to 6

1 cup sorghum
3 cups water or stock
1 cup cherry tomatoes, sliced in half
2/3 cup marinated or frozen artichoke hearts
1/4 cup kalamata olives, pitted and sliced
1/3 cup red onion, diced
1/2 cup garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1/4 cup currants
2 tablespoons pine nuts, lightly toasted
1/4 cup fresh parsley, minced

FOR VINAIGRETTE

1 tablespoon fresh oregano, minced
1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/3 cup white wine vinegar
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 teaspoon sugar
pinch of freshly ground black pepper
2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Combine the sorghum and water or stock in a pot and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for about an hour until the sorghum grains are plump and have a chewy consistency. Drain any excess liquid.

To make the vinaigrette, stir together all of the ingredients except the olive oil. Then slowly whisk in the oil until the ingredients are blended together and the dressing emulsifies.

To make the salad, combine the cooked sorghum with the tomatoes, artichoke hearts, kalamata olives, red onion, garbanzo beans, currants, pine nuts and parsley. Toss with the vinaigrette. Refrigerate for a day before serving, to allow the various flavors to meld.

Recipe from Caron Golden.

Beans and Harissa

Harissa is a North African hot chili pepper paste that can include spices and herbs such as garlic, coriander, cumin, dried mint and caraway seeds. You can find prepared harissa at international markets. On the menu at Catania, chef Vince Schofield serves this dish with mussels mixed in. If you want to do so, 3 1/2 to 4 pounds of mussels will serve 4 to 6 people as a main dish. Schofield also says that if you don't want to use meat in the recipe, add garlic and onion or any vegetable paste you enjoy to add more flavor.

Serves 4 to 6

3 tablespoons of brunoise mirepoix (two parts onion to one part celery and one part carrot, finely chopped)
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 ounces lardo (cured pork fat) or bacon, chopped
1 1/2 tablespoons of harissa paste
1 pound beans (shelling or dried), prepped (see note)

1 cup chicken stock
1 lemon, thinly sliced and charred — keep the juice to use as well (you can also use preserved lemon pieces)
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped

Note: If you're using dried beans, soak them in water for 24 hours prior to cooking. If they are fresh shelling beans, this step is not necessary. The procedure will be the same as follows: Cover beans with three times the volume of water to beans. Add one carrot, peeled and halved, one rib of celery and half an onion with the root attached so that it does not fall apart in the water while cooking. Beans only accept salt when cooling, so salt at the end of your desired taste.

From Vince Schofield of Catania

Eat with crusty bread.

Merguez Sausage and Beans

Merguez sausage is a red, spicy lamb sausage, originally from North Africa. Schofield says that if you don't want to use meat in the recipe, add garlic and onion or any vegetable paste you enjoy to add more flavor.

Serves 4 to 6 people

1/2 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
4 ounces Merguez sausage (or another fresh sausage you enjoy), crumbled
1 pound beans (shelling or dried), prepped (see note)
1 tablespoon capers
1 tablespoon caper juice
1 cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon butter
Salt to taste, if needed
Parsley and celery leaves to garnish

In a pan, heat the olive oil and brown the sausage. Add the prepared beans and capers and allow to cook for 1 minute.

Deglaze the pan with caper juice. Add the chicken stock and let thicken a bit. Make sure there is enough liquid left in the pan so the beans don't become dry. Finish with a pat of butter, and then add salt if needed. Garnish with parsley and celery leaves.

Enjoy with crusty bread.

Note: If you're using dried beans, soak them in water for 24 hours prior to cooking. If they are fresh shelling beans, this step is not necessary. The procedure will be the same as follows: Cover beans with three times the volume of water to beans. Add one carrot, peeled and halved, one rib of celery and half an onion with the root attached so that it does not fall apart in the water while cooking. Beans only accept salt when cooling, so salt at the end of your desired taste.

Recipe from Vince Schofield of Catania



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