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# *Fasting Recipes*

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Pizza Napoletana with Olives and Anchovies, Page 18.



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## Foreword

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*By Mat. Anastasia Williams, Saint Patrick Orthodox Church, Clifden, Ireland.*

### About These Recipes

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Comprised of the contributions of several parishoners, these favourite Orthodox fasting recipes came from our years with the community of the Apostle Thomas in Munich, Germany. We compiled the recipes to share, especially with the many new converts coming into the parish. Fasting can be daunting enough; we hoped to provide a practical repertoire of recipes to help get started.

### Fasting Notes

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- It might seem easy to go on plain noodles for a day or two; the hard part of the fast usually starts in the third week. Prolonged malnourishment by then will start to affect the body in more serious ways. On the other hand, vegetables start to taste amazing.
- During longer fasts, we rely a lot on beans and grains (such as soup with bread). We find that the nourishment sustains us in the long term. A bowl of trail mix (salty roasted nuts with dried fruit) along with fatty plants like coconuts, avocados, and olives provide supplemental nourishment.
- Most things can be made oil-free, though the nutrition and flavour suffers accordingly. Adding fresh garlic, onion, or lemon juice just before serving helps offset some of the bitterness of the feat.
- When fasting strenuously, supplemental salt is helpful. Without salt, the body succumbs to lethargy, headaches, and dizzy spells. Experienced monks who fast for several days or weeks will, from time to time, eat spoonfuls of salt mixed with honey and sesame seeds. Electrolyte tablets also work.
- Though supermarkets now offer vegan meats, fats, and proteins, my favourite fasting recipes remain traditional peasant dishes. Simple, nutritious, and hearty, these regional specialties were created, handed down, and perfected by generations of parents figuring out dinner. Here's a collection of some of our favourite fasting recipes from around the world, hopefully easy to make and easy to enjoy.



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## Irish Cuisine

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### Fried Bread with Baked Beans

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- Sliced bread
- Oil (we like cold-pressed Rapeseed oil)
- Tin of baked beans, warmed

Arrange slices of bread on a preheated dry skillet. With a finger over the opening of the oil bottle to control the stream of oil, drizzle a bit of oil on top of the bread. Use a spoon, spatula or knife to spread the oil evenly. Once lightly toasted on the dry side, flip the bread to fry it lightly on the oiled side. Serve with baked beans.

Fried tomato and mushrooms: fry mushrooms in a hot pan with oil until crispy. Mushrooms give off water as they cook, so the pan should be hot enough to sizzle off the juices. Half a firm tomato. The halves should be placed cut side down on a hot pan in a puddle of oil and left alone for a few minutes so that it can crisp. Use a good spatula to carefully pry off the tomato with the crispy layer intact.

With Kippers: On a fish day, add some kippers (Irish smoked herring). Use scissors to cut the kippers fillets down the spine. Fry skin side up until deeply crisped, 8-12 minutes. Turn them over and crisp the skin. Be careful not to fry the skin too early or it will cause the fillet to curl and shrivel up.

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### Potato Wedges

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- 1 kg rooster potatoes (or other favourite variety), peeled and cut into wedges
- Oil
- Salt and pepper
- Thyme or rosemary (optional)
- Drizzle of lemon juice (optional)
- Sliced onions and garlic (optional)

The potatoes can be cut into small or large wedges, according to preference. Smaller wedges will cook faster. Toss with oil, a generous sprinkle of salt, pepper and herbs. Lemon juice, sliced onions and garlic will add flavour. Roast at 200° forced heat (with the fan) for 20-40 minutes (depending on size of chunks and desired crispiness), using a spatula to turn over and stir the potatoes every 10-15 minutes. Try with stewed green beans, page 12.

With roasted vegetables: Throw in chunks of carrots, celery, parsnips, turnips, beets, or any other desired vegetable. Try to gauge relative cooking time of each vegetable and chop into sizes accordingly, so that everything finishes around the same time (ex. carrots should be peeled and cut into smaller pieces, celery might be left in finger-length stalks).



### Chowder (Potato Stew)

---

- 2 leeks or a bunch of scallions, chopped
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 parsnip, diced
- 2-3 stalks of celery, diced
- 1-2 carrots, peeled and diced
- bay leaf
- 5-7 potatoes, peeled and diced

If using oil, sauté the leeks/scallions before adding the other chopped soup vegetables and enough water to cover everything. Cook until tender. If desired, blend the soup into a creamier texture, first removing bay leaf. Season to taste.

**Clam Chowder:** on a fish day, a bucketful of clams brings a lot of flavour to the pot. Rinse and scrub the clams. Steam them a few minutes until they open, reserving the steaming broth. Remove them from their shells and rinse off additional sand. Slowly strain the steaming broth through a fine-mesh sieve, carefully excluding the sand settled at the bottom. Cook the chowder in the clam broth, omitting the vinegar, but adding an arm of star anise (1 piece off the 6-armed star) and some dill. Add the clam meat at the end of cooking. Season to taste.

### Crumpets (fasting pancakes)

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- 300 g self-rising flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 300 g water (orange juice for sweeter flavour)
- 50 ml oil
- handful of scallions (optional, for more savoury flavour)
- oil for frying

Make a batter from the flour, salt, oil, and water (or juice). Fry small spoonfuls of the batter in oil (can use round crumpet rings if desired; I don't), flipping until both sides are golden brown. Serve with jam or honey. If going for a more savoury flavour, use water instead of juice and mix into the batter a handful of chopped scallions; serving with a favourite chutney.



## Farl

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- 650 g potatoes (such as Rooster or Maris Piper)
- 115 g self-rising flour
- 1.5 tsp salt
- pepper
- minced garlic or chopped scallions (optional, for flavour in lieu of butter)
- oil

Peel, steam until tender, drain, and finely mash the potatoes. Press it through a sieve to achieve a lighter texture. Knead in flour, salt, and pepper. Shape into a disk about as wide as your skillet. Cut the disk into wedges and fry them up, about 5 minutes a side, till golden. Serve as breakfast with baked beans, fried tomatoes, and mushrooms.

## Oatmeal

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- 1 liter water
- 2 cups oatmeal (about 500 ml dry, about 1-2 ratio oats to water)
- 1 tsp salt
- cinnamon or other warm spice to taste

Boil the water and stir in the oats, salt and spice. Cook a few minutes until thickened. Serve with a banana, toasted pecans and honey; a spoonful of peanut butter with maple syrup; milled flaxseed, etc.

Easy candied nuts: start with chopped nuts or wack nuts (walnuts, hazelnuts, etc.) while in a bag with a rolling pin. Pour the crumbles into a microwavable bowl and drizzle in a few drops of oil. Sprinkle in salt and brown sugar (it doesn't need much, just enough to crisp). Stir the mixture until combined. Microwave on medium-low power for 30 seconds or so until just starting to sizzle. Stir and microwave on lowest power setting 5-10 seconds more.





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## German Cuisine

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### Sauerkraut

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Finely chop a head of white cabbage, reserving whole a few outer leaves. Mix with grated carrots and salt so that the flavour is not bitter and no longer sweet. Place in an earthenware pot, cover with whole cabbage leaves and place a wooden board and stone on top. Cover the pot with a towel and store in a warm place until foam forms, after about 24 hours. Then weigh down with a stone so that the cabbage is under the brine. After each removal of sauerkraut, put the cabbage leaves back and weigh them down again with wood and stone so that the cabbage is under the water.

### Potato Dumplings

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- 500 g potatoes
- 150 g flour
- starch (quantity varies according to type of potato, Irish potatoes need more starch than German potatoes)
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- Pinch of nutmeg

Peel, lightly cook (not fully, they should still slightly raw inside), drain, and mash the potatoes. Knead in the flour, salt, nutmeg and enough starch to make a smooth, non-sticky dough. Shape into desired shape. Shape the dough into dumplings and cook in boiling salted water until tender.

Schnupfennudel: (literally translates to “sniffle-noodle”) roll the pasta into small fingers with tapered ends. Once cooked, they are fried in oil to a crisp golden brown and tossed with sauerkraut.

Gnocchi: Roll the pasta into balls and shape into a ribbed form with a fork. Serve with a nutty green or red pesto.

### Cucumber Salad (oil-free)

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*Recipe from Fr. Meliton of the men's monastery of St. Job in Munich*

- Cut fresh cucumbers into small pieces
- drizzle with honey
- toss with toasted sunflower seeds or chopped walnuts
- toss with coconut flakes
- sprinkle of cinnamon or cardamom

Leave to infuse for one hour.



### Carrot Salad with Walnuts

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- 1 kg finely grated carrots
- Juice of at least 1 lemon
- Oil, preferably olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of sugar or honey
- Chopped walnuts
- 1 apple, finely chopped

Mix together and leave to infuse.

### Bavarian potato pancakes (Riebedatschi)

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- 1 kg potatoes
- 1-2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp flour
- oil

Peel and grate the potatoes. Stir in chopped onion, salt, and flour. Using a tablespoon, place small patties in a preheated pan with oil, no more than three. Fry until crispy. Served with apple sauce. Also goes well with red sauerkraut (which is sweeter than white sauerkraut).



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## Greek Cuisine

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### Chickpea Soup (Ravithia)

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- 1 onion, chopped
- Olive oil (can go without on oil-free days and just boil everything)
- 1 tin of chickpeas, undrained
- 1-2 tablespoons tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon of oregano
- 1 bay leaf (to taste)
- 1 tin-full of water to rinse out the bean-tin
- 1-2 tsp of starch dissolved in cold water

Sauté the onion in oil. If the soup is to be prepared without oil, add raw onions to the pot. Add the chickpeas, tomato purée, oregano, bay leaf and stock to the pan. Simmer for 20 minutes or so, until the onions are soft. Stir in the corn starch dissolved in water and cook a minute or two more to thicken. Season to taste.

### Risotto with Spinach (Spanakorizo)

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*A common recipe in which 1-2 tablespoons of tomato puree can be used instead of the lemon flavourings. Leek can be used instead of spinach to make prazorizo.*

- 60 mL olive oil
- 250 mL chopped onions (spring onions, red onions or leeks also work)
- 1 clove of garlic
- 500 g frozen spinach (frozen cubes can go straight into the pot)
- 250 g risotto rice
- 600 ml water, as required
- 15 g chopped fresh dill
- ½ teaspoon of cumin
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 1 tablespoon of red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté the onions in olive oil in a large pan over a medium heat until soft. Add the garlic and sauté for a further 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Add the rice and stir until greasy and lightly toasted. Add the spinach and cook for a few minutes, covered, until it starts to wilt. Add a little more water, dill, cumin, salt and pepper. Keep adding water until the rice is almost cooked. Towards the end, add the lemon juice and red wine vinegar and adjust the seasoning to taste. Cover and remove from the heat. Cover and leave to rest for a few minutes before serving with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. The risotto can also be served cold.



### Greek Baked Beans (Giganten)

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- 2-3 tins of butter beans, undrained
- olive oil
- 1-2 onions, chopped
- 1-2 carrots, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1-2 tablespoons tomato purée
- 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried mint (optional)
- a handful of fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tsp starch (cornflour) dissolved in cold water
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Sauté the soup vegetables in oil over a medium heat for 5-10 minutes. Toss in a casserole dish with the tomatoes, undrained beans, dill, oregano and mint, salt and pepper. Add enough bean juice or water to cover everything. Bake at 180 degrees for 1 hour. Stir, add more bean juice or water and bake for a further 30-40 minutes until the beans have thickened and are toasty brown on top. You can further enhance the flavours of the dish by stirring in more liquid and repeating the process every 30 minutes until the dish is fragrant and toasted. To finish, stir in dissolved starch (cornflour) and bake for a further 5 minutes until sauce is thickened. To serve, stir in salt, extra virgin olive oil and fresh parsley. \*\*To prepare without oil, simply toss everything and bake.

### Stinging-Nettle Soup

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*A favourite of the monasteries on Mount Athos*

- 1 kg nettle leaves\*
- 2 onions, diced
- 1 potato, grated
- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 tablespoon fennel, finely chopped
- juice of 1-2 lemons
- Olive oil (optional)

If not fasting from oil, sauté the onions in oil. Otherwise, cook the soup vegetables in water until soft, adding the nettles near the end. Flavour with lemon juice, salt and pepper.

\* Harvest stinging nettles at the end of March to April, before they flower. Cut small leaves (5-7 cm wide or smaller) from the stem using gloves and scissors. It takes a large bag of leaves to make a pot of soup.



### Stewed Green-Beans

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- 1 kg frozen green (or French) beans
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 2-3 onions, diced
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, finely diced
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- dill
- parsley
- 1 tbsp starch dissolved in cold water

Sauté the onion and garlic in oil until soft and starting to brown. Add the beans, tomatoes and enough water to cover everything. Put the lid on the pot and simmer for 40-60 minutes until the beans are saturated with the stock and very soft (adding water if necessary). At the end, stir in the starch-dissolved-in-water and cook 1 minute to thicken. Season to taste with a good dose of salt, dill, and parsley. Once cooled a bit, Greek grandmothers bless it with an extra drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

### Garlic Potato Mash (Skordalia)

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- 750 g potatoes
- 3-4 cloves of garlic, pressed
- 2-3 tablespoons red wine vinegar or lemon juice
- ½ cup olive oil

Peel the potatoes and boil them in salted water until they are completely soft. Drain, reserving the broth. Mash the potatoes with the olive oil, adding broth as needed. Season with garlic, lemon or vinegar, and salt to taste. The mixture will thicken as it cools; stir in more of the stock as required. If desired, mash in some greens, such as chopped scallions, cabbage, or parsley. Reheat by baking leftovers in a baking dish, sprinkled with a topping of chopped walnuts rubbed with salt and oil.

### Courgette and Potato Pancakes

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- 500 g potatoes
- 500 g courgettes (about 2)
- 125 g flour
- 2-3 tablespoons starch
- 2 teaspoons salt
- frying oil
- 1-2 lemons

Peel and grate the potatoes; grate the courgettes with the skin on. Mix with salt, flour, and starch. Spoon the mixture into a preheated (medium heat) and oiled pan and press flat. If they are touching in the pan, you can gently push them apart with a spatula once the bottoms are well toasted. Fry for about 10 minutes (a long time) until they are a deep golden brown (a darker colour is slightly sweeter), then turn over and fry the other side. Leave to cool on a wire rack lined with paper towels. Using a spoon, carefully drizzle about ½ teaspoon of lemon juice over each pancake.



### Greek Red lentil soup (aka Turkish 'bride soup')

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- olive oil (optional for oil-free fasting days)
- 1-2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon paprika, ground
- 1 cup red lentils (ca 250 g)
- ½ cup fine bulgur (ca 100 g)
- 2-4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 8 cups vegetable stock or water
- ½ teaspoon dried mint leaves
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- juice of 1 lemon

If using oil, fry the onions until golden brown, about 15 minutes. Stir the paprika, lentils and bulgur into the onions. Add tomato paste, vegetable stock, mint, oregano; bring to a simmer and cook gently for about 1 hour, until soft and creamy (the bulgur dissolves). Season with salt, extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice.

### Lemon Rice Pilaf

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- 1 onion, chopped
- 250 g rice
- 50 g flaked almonds (or other chopped nuts/seeds of your choice)
- 400ml salted water (less than the 1:2 ratio, especially for thin rice such as basmati, to avoid splitting the grain)
- Grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Dill

Sauté onions in oil. After 1-2 minutes, add the nuts and toast them too, for about 3-5 minutes. Stir in the rice, which will combine with the oils and toast lightly (it will smell fragrant). Add the water, stir once and cook, covered, until almost cooked. (I switch off the hob for the last part of cooking and wait 5 minutes). Once rice is tender, toss with the lemon zest, lemon juice, dill, a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper and season to taste.

#### Lemon Rice Pilaf (oil-free)

Cook the rice in water in a saucepan with a lid over a low, decreasing heat until cooked. Remove from the heat. Add the dill, lemon zest and juice. Toss in 1-2 tablespoons of raw, finely chopped onion or garlic and stir the rice until it has fluffed up. (When cooking without oil, add a little raw onion and garlic at the end to give the dish a fresh flavour). Put the lid back on and leave to rest for a minute or two before serving.



### Creamy chickpea stew (Oil-free)

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- 1-2 onions, diced
- 3 carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 7 - 8 cups water
- 250 g orzo (pasta that looks like rice), fusilli also works
- 2 tins (approx. 400 g each) chickpeas
- 120 mL tahini (I can't find tahini in Clifden so I've used 100% nut peanut butter. It's \*cough\* unorthodox, but also works)
- 80 - 100 mL cup lemon juice, to taste
- a handful of fresh or frozen kale or spinach
- chopped fresh dill, to taste
- salt and pepper, to taste

Heat the water (or oil, if permitted) over a medium heat, add the onion and sauté for about 5 - 7 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for a further 1 minute. Add the water, bring to the boil. Add the orzo and chickpeas, reduce the heat and simmer for 8-9 minutes until the pasta is soft. Remove from the heat and stir in the tahini and lemon juice. Add the kale or spinach, dill, salt and pepper. The soup will thicken on standing; add more liquid if needed.

### Greek Mushy Peas (Arakas latheros)

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- 500 g peas (fresh or frozen)
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1 potato, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3-4 tomatoes, chopped, 1 tin of chopped tomatoes, or 2 tablespoons of tomato purée
- ⅓ cup olive oil (or not, for oil free)
- 1 tablespoon starch (cornflour) dissolved in cold water
- 2-3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- Salt/pepper

Fry the onions in oil until soft. Add the carrots and potatoes and fry for a further 3-4 minutes. Stir in the peas, tomatoes and dill and pour in enough hot water to just cover the peas. Simmer for 30 minutes until the peas are soft. Stir dissolved starch (cornflour) into the peas and cook for a further 2-3 minutes until thickened. Adjust seasonings to taste.

\*\*If you don't want to use oil, simply cook all the vegetables in the stock, adding water as necessary.



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## Italian Cuisine

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### Olive Bread (oil-free)

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- 500 g flour
- 30 g flax seed (softens and enriches the bread with protein)
- 1 package of yeast
- 2 tsp. salt
- 250 mL water (can use a bit of olive brine for the water, reducing the salt a bit)
- pitted olives in brine, loosely chopped

Mix the flour, yeast, and salt in a bowl. Stir in the water until messy (flour doesn't dissolve right away into water but it will soak in slowly, even if you leave it alone). Knead together with chopped olives (I use a machine with a dough hook) until smooth and tacky (not so sticky). Cover the dough and put it in a cold oven. Turn on the warm function (50 degrees) for 5-10 minutes and then turn off again. Let the dough rise 40 minutes or so.

Turn out the dough on a floured surface and fold into a square, pressing out some of the air bubbles. Shape into a rounded loaf and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Score the top with a sharp knife. Brush with water or olive brine; let rise again for 40 minutes.

Bake 20-30 minutes in a 225° oven using the top-bottom heat function. If the oven lacks this function (like ours), rather than using a baking sheet for the second rise, place the loaf in a parchment-paper-lined, oven-safe lidded pot. Preheat oven with the forced heat function (with the fan). Bake the loaf in the lidded pot to protect the crust from drying out. The loaf is done when tapping the bottom of the loaf produces a hollow sound.

### Focaccia

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- 500 g flour
- 1 package of yeast
- 2 tsp. salt
- 250-300 mL water
- olive oil
- rosemary
- cracked salt and pepper

Mix flour, yeast, and salt in a bowl. Add water and knead into a loose dough. Cover the dough and put it in a cold oven. Turn on the warm function (50 degrees) for 5-10 minutes and then turn off again. Let the dough rise 40 minutes or so. Meanwhile coat the inside of a casserole baking dish with olive oil. Turn the dough out into the casserole dish and fold it together into a square, turning it over to coat with oil. Spread the dough out in the dish and let it rise in the warm oven for another 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 190 (160 for forced-heat settings). Use oily fingertips to dent the surface of the dough. Drizzle olive oil over dough to pool into the finger dents. Sprinkle with cracked salt, pepper, and rosemary. Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown on top.





### Pesto Rosso

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- 1 jar of sun-dried tomatoes with oil
- 1 package of sun-dried tomatoes without oil (ex. 100 g package from Lidl)
- 2/3 cup almonds (dry roasted at 150° 10 minutes until just fragrant)
- 2-3 cloves of garlic
- 2 tablespoons of fresh rosemary leaves

Including the oil from the jar, puree everything in a blender until you have a smooth paste. If it is too thick, add one or two fresh tomatoes. Season to taste.

### Spaghetti with Red Sauce

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- 2 tins of chopped tomatoes
- 2 cloves of garlic
- spicy red pepper, to taste
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Handful of loosely chopped fresh basil
- 250 g freshly cooked spaghetti

Finely chopped the spicy pepper and garlic; open the tomato tins. Add the garlic and pepper to a bit of hot oil and sauté until fragrant (but be careful, it happens fast). Add the tomatoes before the garlic burns and simmer 20 minutes or so. Remove from the heat, season with salt and pepper, adding the basil and a generous drizzle of olive oil just before serving with the spaghetti.

### Pasta with Creamy Potato Sauce (Pasta e Patate)

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- 500 g bite-sized pasta (such as fusilli or penne)
- 1-2 onions or leeks
- 2 carrots
- 1-2 tsp rosemary
- 2-3 tbsp tomato paste
- 4-5 potatoes
- Olive oil

Cook the pasta and drain, reserving the broth. Chop and sauté the onions. Add the chopped celery, carrots, and rosemary to toss in the heat until fragrant. Add the reserved pasta water along with the tomato paste and potatoes. Cook everything until tender, 20 minutes or so. Puree until smooth, season with salt, and drizzle with olive oil. Toss with noodles.



## Pizza Napoletana with Olives and Anchovies

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### Dough for 4 small pizzas:

- 500 g flour (type 0 or 00, from SuperValue)
- 250 - 300 ml water (lukewarm)
- 1 pkg yeast
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil (cold-pressed)
- 9 g salt
- 1 teaspoon barley malt (or sugar)
- Wheat semolina or flour for sprinkling the base

### For the Sauce:

- 300 g chopped tomatoes
- Salt to taste
- olive oil
- oregano
- 4-6 cloves of garlic (1 or so per pizza), finely chopped or freshly pressed

### To Garnish:

- Fresh basil
- Olives
- Anchovies

Mix the flour, yeast, salt and malt. Mix in the water and olive oil. Knead well to form a soft, elastic dough. Leave the dough to rest for 1-2 hours (longer in a cold kitchen). Divide the dough into 4 balls, which should rise for a further half-hour or hour before being formed into pizzas. I placed mine in small bowls greased with olive oil and turned them to distribute the oil.

Sprinkle the semolina or flour generously onto a table or plate. Carefully turn out a pizza dough on the plate to coat the base of the pizza. Place the dough, semolina side down, on the work surface. Carefully press out a pizza with your fingers so that the crust remains airy (gently press out the larger bubbles). Loosen the dough a little by tossing it like a Neapolitan pizza chef (there are many YouTube tutorials on the panning technique).

Top each pizza with a layer of tomato sauce. Slide the pizza onto a baking tray (for easy baking) or, for technical baking, onto a bread peel (or a cutting board). This will help to shake off the excess flour/semolina and spread the sauce. Pull out the edges of the pizza to create a wide, even round. Some Italians pre-bake the pizza at this point, 5-10 minutes in a very hot oven. Add fresh garlic, a pinch of salt, some oregano and a dash of olive oil. Once baked, garnish with fresh basil and, if desired, olives and anchovies.

### Easy bake (reliable, good pizza):

Bake the pizza in a preheated oven at 220 degrees for 10-15 minutes.

### Technical bake (potentially disastrous, potentially brilliant pizza):

For an improvised pizza oven, a baking sheet can be turned upside down, placed in the top half of the oven and used as a baking stone. Preheat the oven to maximum heat. When it is hot, switch on the grill function. Slide the pizza from the peel directly onto the preheated, inverted baking tray. According to Neapolitan standards of 800-1000 degree stone-fired ovens, a pizza should be ready in about 60 seconds; 5-7 minutes is more likely for a home improvisation.



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## *Balkan Cuisine*

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### Best Bean Burger

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- 1 tin of red beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ tin chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 2 onions
- 500 g mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons lentils (optional)
- 2 tablespoons of rolled oats
- 3-4 tbsp flour
- Pepper, salt, herbs, garlic, mustard, chilli, paprika

Chop the onion and sauté for a bit. Then add the mushrooms and cook for 15 minutes. Mix onions and mushrooms with all the ingredients and spices. Put everything in a blender and puree. Add lentils or oats if necessary, until the mixture can be formed into patties. Season to taste. Fry patties in oil until crispy.

### Olive Breadsticks

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- 400 g flour
- 1 sachet of dry yeast
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- Garlic (finely chopped)
- 200 mL water mixed with some olive brine, to taste
- handful of olives, chopped

Mix everything together and leave the dough to rise for about 30 minutes. Divide the dough into approx. 12 pieces and shape into sticks, place on baking paper, brush with olive oil, sprinkle with sea salt to taste and bake in a 180 degree oven for approx. 15 minutes.



### Serbian Stuffed Cabbage Leaves (Sarma)

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- 1 medium-sized head of sauerkraut (if sauerkraut is too salty, separate the leaves approx. 2 hours beforehand and soak in water)
- 400 g rice
- 150 ml tomato puree
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 large carrot
- 5 medium-sized onions
- 50-80 g celery root (optional)
- 2 tablespoons sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- about 10 peppercorns
- 60 ml oil
- 3 bay leaves
- pepper
- salt



Chop the onions and sauté in 30 ml oil. Add the finely chopped carrots (and celery) and after 1 minute add 100ml tomato puree, 1 tablespoon of tomato paste and 1 tablespoon of paprika powder. Add the rice, fry briefly and add 100ml water. Simmer briefly, then remove from the heat and season with 1 tbsp parsley, salt and pepper.

Leave the filling to cool and, in the meantime, prepare the cabbage leaves to wrap the sarma in. Fill the cabbage leaves with a spoonful of filling and roll up. Place small cabbage leaves on the bottom of the pot and place the rolled up sarma on top.

When done, pour the rest of the oil and water to cover the sarma. Add the peppercorns, bay leaves, 50ml tomato puree, 1 spoon of tomato paste. Cover with cabbage leaves and cover with a heavy plate (to prevent them from rising during cooking). Place on the hob to boil, then simmer at a low temperature for two to three hours. Add a little hot water from time to time if necessary.



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## Georgian Cuisine

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### Aubergine (Eggplant) with Walnut Filling (Nigvziani badrijani)

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- 3 aubergine (eggplant)
- salt, oil
- 150 g walnuts, ground
- 2 onions
- Seeds from ½ pomegranate
- 5 cloves of garlic
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- paprika (hot, if you can find it)
- A handful of chopped fresh coriander (approx. 15 g)
- 1 teaspoon or more khmeli suneli, to taste (special Georgian spice mix)
- Curry and/or turmeric to taste

Cut the aubergine lengthways into thin slices, ½ cm - 1 cm thick. Salt each slice and place vertically on the edge of a bowl for ½ hour to dehydrate the bitterness. Squeeze the aubergines dry between two kitchen towels, then fry in oil until golden brown on both sides. In the meantime, prepare the filling: Chop the onions and fry until soft and sweet, then mix with the nuts. Press the garlic into the pomegranate. In a large bowl, mix the nut mixture, pomegranate mixture, vinegar and spices well. Flavour the filling. Spread a tablespoon of the filling on each aubergine slice and roll up carefully, starting at the narrow end. Leave the rolls to rest for a while before eating to allow the flavours to infuse. Any remaining filling can be added to fried mushrooms to make a quick and delicious mushroom salad.



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## Romanian Cuisine

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### Pesto of Aubergine and Sweet Pepper (Zacuscă)

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*This Lenten dish is prepared and preserved with neighbours in September, after the harvest, generally over an open fire.*

- 1 kg aubergines
- 500 g sweet red peppers (chopped)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 250 ml strained tomatoes
- 200 ml oil (if desired)
- 1 tablespoon salt, more if required
- 3-5 peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1-2 bay leaves

Prick the aubergines and peppers and roast on a foil-lined baking tray at 230 degrees for 25-45 minutes, turning occasionally, until the skin is burnt and blackened (this gives the zacuscă its characteristic smoky flavour). The peppers may be ready 10-15 minutes earlier than the aubergines. Once cooled, remove the core and seeds from the peppers. Cut the aubergine in half, scoop out the flesh and discard the skin. Chop the peppers and aubergine flesh with the back of a knife (not a blade) until you have a smooth, juicy mixture (you can also use a food processor, but it's not as much fun). Sauté the chopped onion for 3-5 minutes. Add the peppers, aubergines, tomatoes, oil (if desired), salt, pepper, bay leaves and sugar. Simmer for 90 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Add water if necessary, but it should be thick at the end. Remove the bay leaves and season with salt to taste. Keep in sterilised preserving jars for up to a year. Enjoy on bread with fresh and pickled vegetables.

### Pesto of Bean and Sweet Pepper

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- 250 g white beans, soaked and drained
- 2 red peppers, roasted and deseeded
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tin of tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf
- 250 g carrots, thinly sliced
- 3-4 peppercorns

Boil the beans until soft and drain (or start with a tin). Sauté the onions, garlic and carrots for about 10 minutes. Add the tomatoes, beans, bay leaf and peppercorns and cook for a further 30 minutes. Can be served hot or cold, chunky or pureed. Remove the bay leaf and peppercorns before pureeing.



## Vegetable Pilaf

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- 2 medium-sized onions, diced (yellow or red or both)
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 sweet peppers (one red, the second can be a different colour)
- Optional vegetables, such as:
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 250 g mushrooms, sliced
- a piece of cabbage, sliced or diced
- 100 g courgette, diced
- a few fresh tomatoes, diced
- oil
- 250 g rice
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika powder
- 750 ml vegetable stock
- salt and pepper
- A handful of chopped parsley

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees. In an ovenproof pan with a lid (e.g. cast iron), sauté the onions in oil over a medium heat. Increase the heat slightly and add the rest of the vegetables and sauté for a further 5 minutes. Add the rice and paprika powder, stir well and toast in the oil for a minute or two. Add the stock and cook the rice on the hob for 5 minutes. Stir well and place the pan in the preheated oven. Cook in the oven for about 25 minutes without stirring. Leave to rest and cool for a further 10-20 minutes. Flavour with salt and pepper. Serve with parsley.



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## *African Cuisine*

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### African Bean Stew

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- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 onion
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 tsp dried ginger
- ½ tsp chili
- 1 tsp salt, pepper
- 1 tsp dried parsley
- 1 liter of broth or water
- 1 can of tomato
- ½ cup peanut butter
- 3 sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- ½ cup peas
- 1 can of red or black beans

Fry onion with garlic for a few minutes until softened. Add spices, broth, tomatoes, peanut butter, and potatoes. Simmer until tender. Add the beans and peas near the end. Season to taste.





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## Indian Cuisine

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*This cuisine offers much more in terms of fasting dishes; I only know this one. Asian cuisines also offer several traditional fasting recipes, such as tofu. In the future, we could expand the list.*

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### Chickpea Curry

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- 2 tins of chickpeas
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1 tin of coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 50 g onions, finely diced
- 5 g ginger with peel, finely grated
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons curry powder
- 2 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- Pinch chilli flakes
- 1 stick of cinnamon
- 1 squeeze of lime juice
- 5 g fresh coriander, chopped (2 tablespoons)
- salt and pepper

Sauté the onions for a few minutes; add the ginger, garlic, curry powder, chilli and cumin. After a minute, add the chickpeas, cinnamon, tomatoes and coconut milk. Leave to simmer for 10 minutes. Season to taste and add the lime juice and coriander.



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## Asian Cuisine

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### Beijing Savory Pancakes

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*The “crumpet” version of a much finer delicacy known as 葱油饼*

- 100 g water
- 100 g flour
- 100 g sourdough
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2-3 spring onions, chopped into rings
- 15 g roasted sesame oil
- 25 g mild oil

Mix the flour, baking powder, sourdough and water to form a thick dough. Leave to rest overnight at room temperature. Add the spring onions, salt and oil. Fry the batter on both sides to make pancakes.

**Soy Dipping Sauce:** Dissolve 1/4 teaspoon sugar with 1 tablespoon of hot water. Add 1½ tablespoon soy sauce and 1 tablespoon Chinkiang vinegar (or rice vinegar).

**Ginger Scallion Dipping Sauce:** in a little dish, combine 1 tsp salt, ½ tsp sugar, 2 tablespoons of grated ginger and 1 tablespoon of very finely chopped scallion (the white part). Heat 1½ tablespoons of oil until very hot and stir it into the mix to create a sizzle.

### Peanut Dip (oil-free)

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- ¼ cup smooth peanut butter<sup>1</sup>
- ¼ cup hot water
- 1 clove of garlic, grated
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

Slowly stir the hot water into the peanut butter until smooth. Stir in the garlic and soy sauce. Can be used as a spread, sauce and dip for raw vegetables such as carrots.

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<sup>1</sup> Open the nut butter carefully as a separated layer of oil can form on top. This oil can be stirred into the mixture by piercing the butter with a table knife and turning it like a key, then gradually working out the lumps.



### Spicy Peanut Sauce

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- 6 tbsp peanut oil (or neutral-flavoured oil)
- 1-2 onions
- 1 grated garlic clove
- 2 tsp. sambal oelek (hot chilli paste)
- 4 tbsp peanut butter
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 TBSP. lemon juice

Heat the oil, fry the onion until golden brown. Add the garlic and sambal oelek and sizzle briefly until fragrant. Add the peanut butter, 125 ml. of the water and stir until smooth. Season to taste.



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## Lebanese Cuisine

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### Creamy Red Beet Salad (oil-free)

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- 500 g packet of cooked beetroot, grated
- 1 clove of garlic, finely grated
- 50 ml lemon juice
- 100 ml tahini
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dill, cumin and dried mint to taste

Mix everything together in a bowl to form a creamy mixture. Leave to rest for a few hours so that the flavours can combine.

### Tahini Salad Dressing (oil-free)

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- 120 mL tahini
- 60 mL water, or more for a thinner consistency
- 60 mL lemon juice from about 2 freshly squeezed lemons
- 2 cloves of garlic, pressed or grated
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon of cumin

Mix everything until creamy. It may look a little separate at first but keep whisking. Alternatively, puree all the ingredients in a blender. Taste and adjust the flavour as desired. Use immediately or store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two weeks.

### Hummus

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- Juice of ½ lemon (or more, to taste)
- ¼ cup (60 ml) well-stirred tahini
- 1 (425 g) tin of chickpeas or 250 g dried chickpeas, cooked through
- 4 tablespoons (50 ml) aquafaba (juice from the can of chickpeas); more without oil
- 1 clove of garlic
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) extra virgin olive oil, plus more for serving (optional)
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Some ground paprika, turmeric or sumac to garnish.

Blend everything together with a mixer until creamy and lightened in colour. Adjust seasonings to taste. To serve, garnish with a sprinkle of sweet paprika powder and a drizzle of olive oil.



### Tomato Baba Ganoush

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- 1 large aubergine (eggplant), cut into 4 cm chunks
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- a good pinch of sea salt
- a few dashes of Tabasco sauce
- 1 large, ripe tomato, chopped
- 1 fat garlic clove, finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4. Toss the aubergine (eggplant) chunks in 3 tablespoons of the olive oil with the sea salt and Tabasco, then spread them out on a baking tray and bake for about 15 minutes, until charred and tender. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan, add the tomato and garlic and fry for about 30 seconds. Add the roasted aubergine (eggplant) and a couple of spoonfuls of water to loosen the mixture, then cook for about 3 minutes over a medium to high heat, till the whole lot breaks up into a rich, fleshy, black-skin-speckled salad". Eat warm or cold, spooned onto warm pita or Lebanese flatbread.



## Mexican-American Cuisine

### Bean Chili

- 2 medium onions, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, diced
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano (or thyme or savoury)
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- ¼ teaspoon hot chilli (optional)
- 1 (approx. 425 gram) tin of chopped tomatoes
- 1-2 tablespoons tomato purée
- 1 (approx. 400 g) tin of kidney beans or black beans
- 1 (approx. 400 g) tin of brown beans (e.g. quail beans or borlotti)
- 1 (approx. 340 g) tin of sweetcorn

\*\* A generous tablespoon of a high quality chilli powder (without paprika; chilli should be the first ingredient) can be substituted for cumin, oregano, paprika and hot chilli.

Sauté the onions in oil over a medium heat until soft. Add the garlic for a minute or two until fragrant. Add the dry spices\*\* and a generous amount of oil. Swirl everything on the hob for a couple of minutes until well coated and fragrant. If the spices start to burn, splash in some water. Add the tomatoes, with a little water to rinse out the tin. Stir until the mixture is loosened. Add the beans (with the bean juice) and the sweetcorn and enough water to cover everything. Cover and simmer over a low heat, stirring occasionally. The stew should thicken as the beans and sweetcorn release their starch. If the stew is too watery, remove the lid and allow the steam to cook off until the stew can support the weight of the beans. To make thick beans, e.g. for a bean burrito wrapped in a tortilla, bake the leftover chilli in a casserole dish at 200 degrees. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a toasted tortilla strips, roasted sweet potato cubes, guacamole, corn, and/or fresh salsa:

**Toasted tortilla chips:** Use scissor to cut up a package of tortillas into strips or wedges. Toss tortilla in oil and salt and bake in oven until lightly toasted.

**Roasted Sweet Potatoes:** Peel 1-2 sweet potatoes and cut into 2 cm cubes. Place in a large glass or ceramic casserole dish and toss in oil, salt, and pepper. Roast at 200 degrees forced heat (with the fan) for 20-30 minutes until they start to crisp up. Carefully loosen the pieces with a spatula and turn them over. Roast for a further 15-20 minutes until the top edges are crispy. Turn them over again. Roast again 5-10 minutes until all the edges are crispy.

**Guacamole:** Using the back of a fork, mash 1 ripe avocado, 1 small clove of garlic (pressed or finely chopped), a handful of cherry tomatoes, the juice of half a lime, 1-2 tablespoons of finely chopped fresh coriander, ¼ teaspoon of salt and pepper to taste. For a simpler flavour, simply slice fresh avocado and sprinkle with salt.

**Fresh Salsa:** Finely chop 500 g fresh tomatoes, ½ red onion and 15 g fresh coriander. Flavour with the juice of 1 lime, salt and pepper. Leave to infuse for an hour.



### Peanut Butter and Jam (oil-free)

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*Classic American Orthodoxy here; a daily staple in our house during Lent.*

Spread a slice of bread or cracker with 100% unprocessed peanut butter and garnish with jam. Sprinkle generously with salt. For adults, the jam can be omitted or replaced. Any nut butter can do, e.g. almond butter or tahini. A drizzle of honey goes well with tahini for dessert. Chutney with peanut butter is weird, but nice; peanut butter with cucumber and tomato slices has been tried and...it works, starting about the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Lent, when the body starts to crave basic nutrition.

Carb-free: Omit the bread and spread the peanut butter on a piece of fruit, such as an apple or banana. Sprinkle with salt; drizzle with honey.

### Avocado Banana Toast (oil-free)

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*Avocados, in season during Great Lent, provide much-needed fat on oil-free days.*

- A slice of bread or toast
- Oil-free nut butter such as peanut butter or almond butter (optional)
- Avocado slices, sprinkled with salt
- Sliced banana
- honey

For breakfast, spread nut butter on the bread, then top with salt, avocado and banana. Drizzle with honey and eat carefully.

### Avocado Dressing (oil-free)

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- 1 ripe avocado, cut into slices or cubes
- Juice of 1-2 limes or juice of 1 lemon
- A good pinch of salt
- Fresh grated garlic (optional)

Toss everything together in salad greens (the avocado will coat the leaves with a creamy green dressing) and wait 5-10 minutes to allow the flavours to blend. For a creamier version (or if the avocado is too hard), the dressing can be pureed in a blender.



### Roasted Broccoli

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- 1 head of broccoli
- oil
- salt
- Peel and juice of ½ lemon

Cut the broccoli lengthways (including the stalk) into 4-6 pieces. Rub the pieces all over with oil using your hands. Salt well and bake at 200 degrees for 13-15 minutes until lightly browned and can be pierced with a knife but still has a fresh colour. Toss with lemon.

### Waldorf Salad

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- finely chopped celery
- finely chopped apples
- chopped walnuts
- salt
- vegan mayonnaise

Toss together all the ingredients and allow to infuse for several hours.

### Creamy Butternut Coconut Squash Soup (oil-free)

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- 1 butternut squash, peeled, cored and cut into pieces (pumpkin seeds can be roasted with oil and salt for snacking)
- about the same amount of potatoes, peeled and cut up
- 1 can of white beans (butter or cannellini), undrained
- 3 leeks, cleaned and chopped
- 1-2 inch piece of ginger, sliced
- 1-2 tablespoons of tomato paste (adds strong flavour, so adjust carefully)
- 2 cans of coconut milk (the ingredients should be just coconut, 60-70 %, no thickeners or stabilisers)
- a great deal of salt
- favourite white vinegar that tastes good enough to lick (ex. rice wine or apple)

Cook together with enough water the squash, potato, leek, ginger, white beans, and tomato paste. When everything is tender, purée it with a handheld immersion blender. Add coconut milk (try not to boil it) and begin to season with salt. Add tomato paste to give it colour and flavour. Add a splash of vinegar to give it depth. Salt, tomato, and vinegar will alter the flavour significantly. At first, it will dramatically improve the flavour but be careful not to add too much. When the balance of flavours is achieved, it's quite lovely, delicately sweet and toothsome.





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## Russian and Ukrainian Cuisine

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### Ukrainian Stuffed Pancakes (Syrniki)

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*Usually made with cheese and eggs, this is the fasting version.*

- 200 g flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder (5 g)
- pinch of salt
- pinch of sugar
- 2-3 tablespoons sauerkraut juice
- 2-3 tablespoons of oil
- water
- Oil for the pan (no oil in the batter)
- Optional fillings, such as
  - grated apple and cinnamon
  - grated boiled potato
  - grated courgette
  - fried mushroom
  - fried onions
  - dill, herbs

Mix the flour with baking powder, salt and sugar. Add sauerkraut juice, oil, fillings of your choice. Mix with enough water to make a thick batter (about as thick as crumpet batter). Heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat (3 or 4). Pour the batter into the oil to form 5-centimetre rounds. Fry on both sides, then turn the pancake on its side and brown the edges. Keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.

### Pickle Soup (Rassolnik)

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- 100 g barley
- 2 pickled cucumbers (Russian pickled cucumbers, if available)
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 2 potatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- 200 - 300 mL cucumber brine
- 1 tablespoon of tomato puree, if desired
- Fresh herbs, e.g. parsley or dill

Finely chop the pickles and onions. Peel and dice the carrots and potatoes. Add the barley and vegetables to a pot with the bay leaves, cucumber brine, enough water, and tomato puree. Cook until barley is tender, about 1 hour. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with fresh herbs.

### Black Lentil Soup (oil-free)

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Cook 250 g black beluga lentils with 400 g soup vegetables (e.g. leek, celeriac, carrots, possibly a few potatoes) until soft. Season with salt, 1-2 teaspoons of vinegar (e.g. balsamic vinegar) and 3-4 tablespoons of fresh, finely chopped onion and garlic.



### Corn Polenta (Banosh)

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Cook the polenta in vegetable stock (or lightly salted water) until a creamy porridge is formed (the liquid ratio depends on the size of the semolina; see packaging). Sauté the mushrooms of your choice until they are soft and the juices are released. Pour the mushrooms (and mushroom juices) over the polenta and bake until lightly browned and crispy.

### Buckwheat with Mushrooms

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- 300 g roasted buckwheat (if possible, roasted, such as most Polish brands)
- 300 g fresh mushrooms, halved or sliced
- 1-2 onions, finely chopped
- oil, if desired
- salt

Boil the buckwheat in 600 ml salted water until half cooked (about 15 minutes). In the meantime, fry the mushroom halves with the onions in oil until they are soft and slightly crispy. Add salt and pepper. Add everything to the pot with the buckwheat and cook for a further 5-10 minutes (until the buckwheat is cooked).

For the oil-free version, add the raw mushrooms to the pot after the buckwheat has been cooked for 5-10 minutes. Add the finely chopped onions just before the end to refresh the taste.

### Fasting Borscht (Red Beet Soup)

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|--|---|
| - 2 fresh (not cooked and packaged) beetroot, chopped or grated              | - 2-4 tablespoons tomato purée  |
| - 1 yellow beetroot (or another red beet), chopped or grated                 | - 1-2 handfuls of plums, finely chopped                                       |
| - Oil (optional)   | - 1 tin of white beans  |
| - 2 onions, chopped  | - One or two handfuls of buckwheat (roasted, if you have the Russian version) |
| - 2 carrots, chopped   | - splash of favourite vinegar   |
| - some sauerkraut or finely chopped white cabbage (handful or two, to taste) | - 2 litres of water, lightly salted   |
| - 250 g mushrooms  | - 2 tablespoons flour or 2 teaspoons cornflour                                |
| - bay leaf   |   |

If using oil, lightly fry the onions, mushrooms and cabbage before adding them to the pot with the remaining ingredients (except flour or cornflour). Cook gently for about an hour. Add enough vinegar to give it depth. Dissolve the flour or cornflour in a little cold water. Stir into the hot soup and simmer gently for 1-2 minutes until the soup thickens. Add some chopped fresh garlic at the end for extra flavour. Leave the soup to infuse in the fridge for several hours or even overnight before serving with a dark brown bread.

