



## Fennel-Apple Salad – Serves 8+

*Fennel adds an anise-like taste and additional crunch to an apple salad. The salad is lightened up from the traditional version, but it has plenty of flavor with sweet raisins, dried cranberries, and toasted nuts. Try pecans for a sweeter taste or walnuts for more bitterness. Serve the fennel-apple mixture atop some arugula or leafy salad greens for extra color.*

- 1 large bulb of fresh fennel*
- 1 large red apple, cored and chopped*
- 1-2 tablespoons of sugar*
- 3-4 green onions, chopped*
- ¼ cup of cider vinegar*
- ¼ cup of light mayonnaise*
- ¼ cup of fat-free plain Greek yogurt*
- ¼ teaspoon of salt*
- ¼ cup of golden raisins*
- ¼ cup of dried cranberries*
- ¼ cup of chopped, toasted pecans or walnuts*
- 4 cups of arugula or leafy salad greens*



*Trim the fennel of any bruised or yucky outer stalks and cut away the hard base (kind of like celery). Trim the top stems but save a tablespoon or two of the feathery fronds to chop and garnish the salad. Slice the fennel bulb through the middle lengthwise (top to bottom) and then cut out the core. Cut the fennel into strips and then chop it into smallish pieces. Put the apple and fennel into a large bowl and toss it with the vinegar. Add the green onions, mayonnaise, yogurt, salt, raisins, and cranberries and mix the salad well. Refrigerate the salad for at least an hour. Divide the arugula among the plates and then top each arugula mound with some of the fennel-apple salad mixture. Before you serve the salads, sprinkle each with some of the nuts and the reserved fennel fronds.*



## Bavarian Pot Roast – Serves 6+

*This easy to assemble main dish won't be forgotten. The heady scent of beef, vegetables, ginger, cloves, and wine will remind you as the meal bubbles away in the slow cooker. Plus, once you taste the pot roast with its savory sauce, you'll want to have it again and again. Try the roast with mashed potatoes, or, if you want to go really German, with spaetzle.*

*1 2½ - 3 pound boneless chuck roast*

*1 16-ounce bag of baby carrots or 4-5 medium carrots, cut into chunks*

*2 medium onions, chopped*

*2 stalks of celery, sliced*

*½ cup of chopped dill pickles*

*8 ounces of sliced mushrooms*

*1 cup of red wine (cheap Burgundy is fine)*

*½ cup of reduced sodium beef broth*

*3 tablespoons of grainy Dijon mustard*

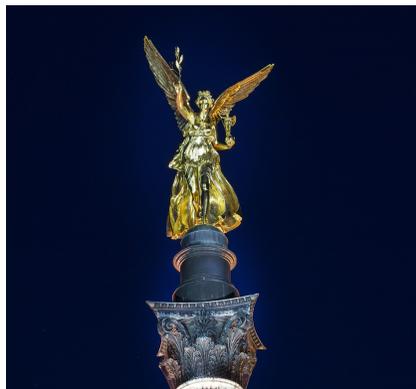
*½ cup of crushed gingersnaps (or ½ cup of flour plus ½ teaspoon of ginger)*

*½ teaspoon of pepper*

*½ teaspoon of cloves*

*2-3 bay leaves*

*1 teaspoon of salt*





*Coat a large slow cooker with nonstick spray and add the carrots, onion, celery, dill pickles, and mushrooms. Put the roast on top of the vegetables. In a large bowl, mix together the wine, broth, mustard, and gingersnaps (or flour and ginger). Pour the mixture on top of the roast. Sprinkle the roast with the pepper, cloves, bay leaves, and salt. Cover the slow cooker and cook everything on low for 8-10 hours. Remove the bay leaves and serve the meat with the vegetables and sauce.*





## Spaetzle (Dumplings) – Serves 6+

*These are a European specialty, and they are great served with gravy, a bit of browned butter, sprinkled with some chives and bacon crumbles, or even plain. They also are quite easy to cook and are well worth the small amount of extra effort you expend to make them. The spaetzle reheat well if you'd like to make them ahead or have leftovers. I generally reheat the leftover spaetzle in the microwave with a bit of water until they are just warm.*

*1 cup of milk*

*3 eggs*

*3 cups of flour*

*½ teaspoon of salt*

*¼ teaspoon of nutmeg*

*Mix the milk and eggs. Add the salt, flour, and nutmeg to form a damp dough. Put a large pot of water on to boil. Once you have a rolling boil, press the dough through a course grater (one with really big holes), a big slotted spoon, or a spaetzle maker into the pot of water. You should have smallish nuggets of wet dough dropping into the water. Don't crowd the spaetzle. You'll need to cook them in batches. Stir the spaetzle in the water gently and let them cook a few minutes until they rise to the surface of the water. Lift them out and let them drain while you cook the remainder of the dough.*



## German Chocolate Pound Cake – Serves 12+



*This is a recipe you'll probably return to repeatedly. The cake is dense, moist, and full of deep chocolate taste. The pumpkin puree adds a little complexity to the flavor of the cake—most people won't know what it is other than that it's good. The pumpkin also contributes the moistness and eliminates the need to use eggs, butter, or oil, making the cake considerably lighter calorie and fat wise than traditional pound cakes. To save time and the hassle of preparing a frosting, you sprinkle pecans, coconut, and chocolate chips over the batter before baking it. After the cake bakes, a drizzle of caramel topping finishes the cake. Try the cake slightly warm from the oven with a little low-fat ice cream on the side. The cake is even better, though, the next day after the flavors have had a chance to meld (with ice cream, of course!).*

*1 box of German chocolate cake mix (or other chocolate)*

*1 15-ounce can of pumpkin puree*

*1 cup of mini chocolate chips*

*1 cup of chopped pecans*

*½ cup of shredded coconut*

*¼ cup of caramel topping*



*Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and coat a 10-inch tube pan with nonstick cooking spray with flour in it (or use regular nonstick spray and dust the pan with a teaspoon of flour, tapping out the excess). In a large bowl, mix the cake mix and the pumpkin puree until thoroughly combined and smooth. Stir in ½ cup of mini chocolate chips. Pour the batter into the tube pan. Sprinkle the top of the batter with the pecans, coconut, and remaining mini chocolate chips, shimmying the pan a little to settle the batter and topping. Bake the cake for 45-60 minutes or until the top springs back when pressed gently or a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean or with only a few crumbs attached. Let the cake cool for 10-20 minutes and then remove it from the pan. Place the cake on a plate with the topping side up. Warm the caramel topping a little in the microwave to soften it and drizzle the caramel over the top of the cake.*



## December 7

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.*

*Luke 1: 68-71*

In these days of early December there are those of us who remember where we were when the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service launched a surprise air attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th—"a date which will live in infamy," as then President Franklin Roosevelt described it.

As we all reflect on that December day in 1941, we need to be mindful of God's unfolding plan for our salvation. Luke introduces Jesus's cousin, John, son of Zechariah. Elizabeth, John's mother, and John—also known as "John the Baptizer" each took their places in the unfolding story and days leading to Jesus's birth. We would do well to ponder what parts we will play in our days of Advent preparation.





## In the Kitchen, December 7

*Cranberry-Kale Salad*

*Italian Turkey Sausages with Grapes*

*Grits or Polenta*

*Coconut Pie*

*Let's start with a healthy salad made with fresh kale, a winter season vegetable that in December usually can be found in the markets for much less than lettuce greens. Italian Turkey Sausages With Grapes sounds weird, but it's a good main dish and super simple to make when you're short on time. The dish cooks on the stove top and includes a small number of ingredients. To catch all the sweet-savory juices, serve the sausages and grapes over quick-cooking grits or polenta. For dessert, try a coconut pie. The pie gets its custardy richness from eggs and coconut—not from lots of cream and butter. It has no crust and takes only a few minutes to make, but start it baking before you make the salad, as the pie needs about an hour in the oven. You can, of course, bake the pie ahead and serve it at room temperature or even cold. Topping each piece of pie with a small dollop of non- or low-fat plain or vanilla Greek yogurt and a dusting of cinnamon would cut the sweetness and look lovely.*





## Cranberry-Kale Salad – 6+

*Kale has become incredibly popular lately as a “super food.” It’s been around for years, perhaps just not noticed. Your grandmother probably served kale, but I doubt she presented it as a salad. Try this version, which is simple and is best made early in the day and refrigerated until dinnertime. If eating raw kale bothers your digestion or just isn’t your thing, you can substitute fresh spinach instead (you won’t need to massage the spinach, just toss it with the other ingredients). The salad will be tasty and nutritious either way.*

*6 cups of fresh kale, preferably “baby,” washed, dried, and chopped into bite-sized pieces*

*3 tablespoons of olive oil*

*3 tablespoons of lemon juice*

*Zest of a lemon*

*¼ teaspoon of salt*

*¼ teaspoon of pepper*

*2 tablespoons of feta cheese*

*1/3 cup of dried cranberries*

*1/3 cup of toasted walnuts*



*Place the kale in a large salad bowl and drizzle it with oil and lemon juice. Sprinkle in the lemon zest, salt, and pepper. Using your hands (do wash them well, first), squeeze the kale and squish (or massage) the oil and lemon juice into the leaves to soften them. Sprinkle the kale with the feta, cranberries, and walnuts and mix everything together. Refrigerate the salad for at least an hour, if possible.*



## Italian Turkey Sausages with Grapes – Serves 4

*In a hurry? Try this recipe. It requires relatively few ingredients, cooks quickly on the stove top, and is tasty and hearty when served over a bed of grits or polenta. I use sweet Italian turkey sausages, but, if you like the spicy version, go ahead. You also could use chicken sausages. Similarly, I use red grapes and red wine to make the dish, but, if you like white grapes and wine, go for them. They'll work. No wine? Substitute chicken broth. As you've probably figured out, this is an adaptable dish--just the sort of thing you need on a busy day when you don't want to hunt up a lot of ingredients. The main thing to keep in mind is to avoid overcooking the sausages. Poultry sausage is leaner than pork, and it will dry out and become hard if cooked too long. That said, the turkey sausages will be far less leaden in your stomach than pork sausages, and the turkey version goes nicely with the sweet grapes. If you want to serve the dish to company, go for it. Sprinkle on some minced parsley and a bit of shaved Parmesan cheese, and you'll have a trendy, "rustic" Italian-style, main dish.*

*1 teaspoon of olive oil*

*16-20 ounces of Italian turkey sausages (6-8 sausages)*

*2-3 cups of red seedless grapes, stems removed (about 16 ounces)*

*2-3 tablespoons of red wine*

*1/2 cup of water*

*2-3 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar*

*2-3 tablespoons of chopped parsley (optional)*

*2-3 tablespoons of shave Parmesan cheese (optional)*

*Heat the oil in a non-stick skillet over medium-high heat and add the sausages. Brown them on all sides for about 5 minutes and then remove them to a plate. Add the grapes to the skillet and let them brown and cook for about 5 minutes. Mash some of them a little with a spatula to extract a little juice. Add the water and red wine to the skillet and stir the mixture for a few minutes. Add the sausages back to the skillet, cover the skillet,*

# DRAFT



*and turn down the heat to a simmer. Let the sausages cook for a few minutes more until they are just cooked through (165 degrees). Turn off the heat and stir in the balsamic vinegar. Serve the sausages and grapes over grits or polenta to catch the juices. If you are feeling the need to be fancy, sprinkle each serving with some chopped parsley and a bit of shaved Parmesan cheese. Mangia!*





## Coconut Pie – Serves 8

*Piecrusts, in my view, exist primarily to hold tasty fillings, which are the main purpose of pies, aren't they? Plus, crusts require time to make, and, in order to taste reasonably good, need substantial amounts of “bad for you” fat. This pie skips the fatty crust and moves on to the main event—lots of creamy, orange-infused coconut filling. You won't miss the crust or the time it takes to make it. The pie bakes up firm enough without a crust to serve “as is.” Serve slices of the rich, sweet pie warm from the oven with coffee or tea, or make the pie ahead and serve it cold with little cinnamon-dusted clouds of low-fat yogurt or whipped topping perched atop.*

*2 cups of low-fat milk*

*2/3 cup of sugar*

*4 eggs*

*1 tablespoon of butter, melted*

*1 teaspoon of vanilla extract*

*1 teaspoon of butter flavoring*

*1/3 cup of flour*

*1/4 cup of salt*

*1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg*

*1 teaspoon of grated orange zest*

*1 1/2 cups of shredded coconut*

*1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon, plus extra for dusting (optional)*

*Low-fat yogurt or whipped topping (optional)*



*Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and coat a 9-inch, deep-dish pie plate with nonstick cooking spray. Whisk the milk, sugar, eggs, vanilla extract, butter, and butter flavoring until smooth. Whisk in the flour, salt, nutmeg, and orange zest. Stir in the coconut until well combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared pie plate, sprinkle the top with cinnamon, and bake the pie for 50-60 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Serve the pie warm or cool.*



## December 8

*See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.*

*Malachi 3: 1-4*

Malachi means “messenger.” Perhaps you kept turning the Old Testament pages thinking you must have missed Malachi! After all, it is a small book. Ah, there it is, at the very end of the Old Testament, and its three chapters anyone can read in minutes.

The prophet never experienced the thunder and fire of a 747 taking off from Ben Gurion Airport bound non-stop, thirteen hours to New York. His words, however, speak volumes as God imparts to our human hearts and contemporary times the message he would have us hear on this day in early December. Read the words of Malachi aloud. You be the Prophet this time! And please, really listen. “What more can he say than to you he hath said...?”



## In the Kitchen, December 8

*Lemon Soup*

*Turkey Meatballs with Broccoli*

*Stout Bread*

*Pineapple*

*Today's menu is warm, filling, and nutritious. Start with a simple lemon soup. While the soup is simmering on one burner, you can mix up the meatballs and get them started for an easy one-pot meal. Tonight's vegetable, broccoli, goes right in with the meatballs. The lemon theme from the soup continues with the lemon in the sauce for the meatballs and broccoli. The stout bread has a gingerbread quality that complements the lemon in the remainder of the meal. The bread can, of course, be eaten with dinner, or you may want to save it for dessert—it's that good! The bread certainly would go nicely with fresh or slightly thawed frozen pineapple.*



## Lemon Soup – Serves 6

*Only a small number of ingredients combine to make a fresh tasting, flavorful soup. In fact, the soup pretty much makes itself. The only tricky part is making sure you whisk the egg yolks constantly while adding a small portion of the hot soup very slowly to them. You are whisking to blend the soup into the yolks without making scrambled eggs. Continue your whisking when you add the egg mixture into the soup pot. That will blend the egg mixture into the soup and thicken your soup. Also watch the heat. You don't want to boil the soup once you've added your egg yolks. They cook in the soup, thickening it, without boiling.*

*6 cups of reduced sodium chicken broth*

*1/3 cup of uncooked brown rice*

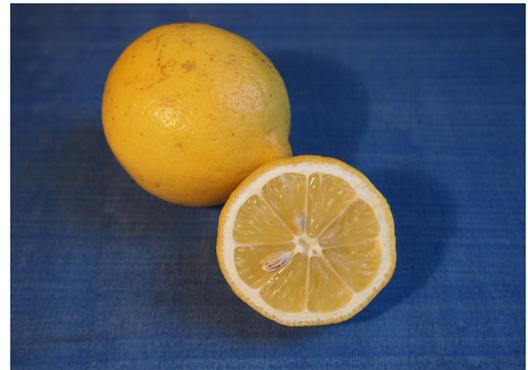
*2 egg yolks*

*Juice of a lemon*

*¼ teaspoon of pepper*

*¼ teaspoon of garlic powder*

*2 tablespoons of chopped fresh parsley (or one teaspoon of dried)*



*Bring the broth to a boil. Add the rice, stir, cover the pot and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook the mixture for about 40 minutes or until the rice is tender. Whisk the egg yolks and lemon juice until frothy in a small bowl or measuring cup. Slowly, while whisking constantly, add a cup of the hot soup to the egg yolks. Pour the mixture back into the rest of the soup, whisking constantly to blend everything. Heat until just below the boiling point (do not boil!). Serve bowls of the soup sprinkled with the parsley (or, if you're using the dried parsley, stir it into the soup before you serve the soup).*



## **DRAFT** Turkey Meatballs with Broccoli – Serves 4

*These turkey meatballs are light, filling, and much more nutritious and economical than a take out dinner. The meatballs are flavored with a bit of green onion and go nicely with the bright green broccoli. The lemony sauce coats the meatballs and broccoli and has just a touch of ginger. You can serve the meatballs and broccoli “as is” or atop some rice to catch the sauce.*

*4-6 chopped green onions*

*¼ cup of quick cooking oatmeal*

*1 egg*

*½ teaspoon of lemon pepper seasoning*

*16 ounces of ground turkey (93 percent lean)*

*2 tablespoons of reduced sodium soy sauce*

*2 teaspoons of canola oil*

*¼ cup of water*

*1 16-ounce package of frozen broccoli florets*



*Combine the onions, oatmeal, egg, lemon pepper, turkey, and soy sauce and mix everything well. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat, add the oil, and swirl it to coat the skillet. Form marble-sized meatballs (about an inch in diameter), add them to the hot pan, and brown them for 6-8 minutes. Lower the heat, add ¼ cup of water and the broccoli. Cover the pan and cook for 5-6 minutes more until the meatballs are cooked through and the broccoli is crisp tender. Add the sauce (see below). Stir everything gently to thicken the sauce and coat the meatballs and broccoli.*

*Sauce*

*½ cup of apricot or peach fruit spread*

*¼ cup of water*

*2 tablespoons of reduced sodium soy sauce*