Spring Vegan Candlelight Dinner—Aegean Odyssey

Spinach Artichoke Dip
Ingredients
½ yellow onion, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 12 ounce package frozen spinach (thawed, drained and squeezed dry)
8 ounces canned artichoke hearts (drained and chopped)
1 12 ounce package firm silken tofu
6 ounces hummus
3 garlic cloves, minced
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper

Preparation
1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Sauté onion in olive oil until onion is soft, about 6 minutes; then add spinach and artichoke hearts.
3. Blend together tofu, hummus, garlic and seasonings in blender until mixed and smooth.
4. Combine spinach mixture with tofu mixture.
5. Taste and add extra seasonings, as needed.
6. Smooth into non-stick baking dish and bake for 15-20 minutes, or until lightly browned on top.
7. Serve warm with grilled pita wedges.

Fassolatha (Classic Greek Bean Soup)
Ingredients
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large carrot, finely diced
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 ¼ cups drained canned tomatoes
2 garlic clove, finely chopped
3 cups canned cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
5 cups water
5 teaspoons vegan vegetable base
1 zucchini, finely diced
Grated zest of ½ lemon
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
1/8 teaspoon dried thyme
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper
1 14 ounce can artichoke hearts, drained (rough chop)

Preparation
1. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3-4 minutes until soft. Add the carrot, celery, tomatoes, and garlic to the pan and continue cooking for a further 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

2. Add the beans, water and vegetable base. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook
gently for about 10 minutes.

3. Add the zucchini, lemon zest, mint, thyme and bay leaf and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for about 30 minutes until all the vegetables are tender.

4. Remove the pan from heat and let cool slightly. Remove and discard the bay leaf and transfer 1 cup of the soup to a blender or food processor, process to a smooth puree, and recombine. (This step is optional).

5. Add chopped artichoke hearts toward the end of the cooking process (last 10 minutes). Serve immediately.

**Grilled Eggplant Salad**

*Ingredients*
- 2 red bell peppers
- Extra virgin olive oil for brushing
- 2 large eggplants, peeled and sliced 3/8-inch thick
- 2 tomatoes, seeded and diced
- 1/3 cup chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup minced fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup lemon juice, or to taste
- Salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste

*Preparation*
1. Preheat gas grill (or broiler). Grill whole red peppers, turning occasionally, until completely charred, about 20 minutes. Place in plastic or paper bag to steam 10 minutes to loosen skins. Working over bowl to catch pepper juices, remove skin, seeds and stems, and discard all. Dice peppers, and set aside.

2. Brush oil onto one side of eggplant slices; place on grill, oiled side down. Cook until tender and grill marked, 5 to 7 minutes. Oil tops, turn over and grill until tender, another 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to cutting board, and chop.

3. Combine eggplant, peppers and juices, tomatoes, scallions, parsley, cilantro, mint and garlic in large salad bowl, and toss to mix. Add lemon juice, and season generously with salt and freshly ground pepper.

4. Taste and adjust seasonings, adding more lemon juice, salt or pepper as needed. Serve at room temperature.

**Espresso Granita**

*Ingredients*
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 ½ cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 ½ cups very strong espresso coffee, chilled
Preparation
1. Put the sugar in a pan with the water and stir over low heat to dissolve the sugar. Increase the heat and boil for 4 minutes, without stirring. Use a wet pastry brush to brush down any spatters on the side of the pan.

2. Remove pan from heat and pour the syrup into a heatproof nonmetallic bowl. Sit the bowl in the kitchen sink filled with ice water to speed up the cooling process. Stir in the vanilla extract and coffee and let cool completely.

3. Transfer to a shallow metal container, cover, and freeze for up to 3 months. Before serving, chill individual serving bowls in the refrigerator. To serve, invert the container onto a cutting board. Rinse a cloth in very hot water, wring it out, then rub on the bottom of the container for 15 seconds. Give the container a sharp shake and the mixture should fall out.

4. Break up the granita with a knife and transfer to a food processor. Process until it becomes grainy and crunchy. Serve in chilled bowls.

Note: A very dark, fruit-flavored espresso is the only choice for this specialty. Otherwise the flavor will be marred by the freezing.

Chickpeas & Vegetables in Saffron Sauce with Bulgur Rice Pilaf

Chickpeas & Vegetable Mixture:
Ingredients
1 zucchini, halve lengthwise and slice
1 yellow squash, halve lengthwise and slice
½ onion, sliced
1 tomato, diced
½ red pepper, cut in strips
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 cup chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Preparation
Sauté vegetables in olive oil. Stir in chickpeas.

Saffron Sauce:
Ingredients
¼ cup diced onion
4 tablespoons vegan margarine
4 tablespoons flour
2 cups soy milk
1 pinch saffron
Salt and pepper
1/8 cup vegetable base

Preparation
1. Sauté onions in margarine until translucent.
2. Add flour and cook 3 minutes.
3. Stir in soy milk and remaining ingredients.
Bulgur-Rice Pilaf:
Ingredients
2 cups rice
1 cup bulgur
3 cups water
1/8 cup vegetable base

Preparation
Serve sautéed vegetables over bulgur- rice pilaf and spoon saffron sauce on top.

Grilled Mushrooms with Kalamata Olives & Sun-Dried Tomatoes
Ingredients
3 large whole portabella mushrooms, stems trimmed
3 large whole oyster mushrooms, stems trimmed
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, peeled and minced
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
4 ounces sun-dried tomatoes (oil-packed), diced
Pinch of Greek oregano

Preparation
1. Season portabella mushrooms with olive oil, salt, pepper and garlic. Grill whole.
2. Sauté oyster mushrooms.
3. Sprinkle mushrooms with oregano prior to service.

Greek Fruit-Nut Strudel
Ingredients
1/4 cup walnuts
1/4 cup frosted pecans
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup toasted coconut
1/4 cup raisins
½ cup corn syrup
Pre-made Phyllo Dough

Preparation
1. Mix nuts and dried fruit with corn syrup; set aside.
2. Cut phyllo into 5 inch squares.
3. Place 2 to 3 tablespoons of the fruit/nut mixture in center and fold diagonally.
4. Place on baking she and bake at 350 F for 30 minutes or until golden brown.
Serve warm.