Mainlining Veggies

Do you have friends who think that vegetables can’t make a delicious—and satisfying—main dish? Invite them over and prepare one of these three recipes. Pair the peppers or caponata with a salad or the tofu salad with some soup. Then ask them again.

Got a question or suggestion? Write to healthycook@cspinet.org.

### Sicilian Caponata with Whole Wheat Couscous

Every Sicilian cook has her or his own version of this traditional vegetable stew.

- 15 oz. can no-salt-added chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup whole wheat couscous
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 sweet bell peppers, chopped
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 Tbs. tomato paste
- 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes, optional
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 small Italian eggplant, chopped
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted

**PER SERVING (2 cups)**

- Calories: 460
- Total Fat: 21 g
- Sat Fat: 2.5 g
- Protein: 13 g
- Sodium: 440 mg
- Cholesterol: 5 mg
- Carbohydrates: 57 g
- Fiber: 13 g

Bring 1 1/2 cups of water to a boil in a medium pot. Stir in the chickpeas and couscous, cover, and remove from the heat.

Heat the oil in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté the peppers, onion, and celery until they start to brown, 3-5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and stir in the tomato paste, red pepper flakes, vinegar, and sugar. Cook, stirring often, for 2 more minutes. Add the vegetable broth and eggplant and simmer until the eggplant is tender, about 10 minutes. Season with up to 3/4 tsp. salt.

Fluff the couscous mixture with a fork and divide into four portions. Top with the caponata and garnish with pine nuts. Serves 4.

### Provençal Tofu Salad

I used my favorite whole grain, black rice, but brown rice or just about any other whole grain would work.

- 1/2 lb. thin green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 14 oz. water-packed soft tofu, drained
- 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 2 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 Tbs. water
- 2 Tbs. mustard
- 1 Tbs. capers, roughly chopped
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 cup brown rice
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes

Steam the beans until tender, 5-7 minutes. Rinse under cold water to stop the cooking, then drain well and set aside.

Cut the tofu into 1-inch cubes and blot on paper towels. Heat the canola oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Dip the tofu cubes in the egg. Sauté the tofu until golden brown on all sides, about 2 minutes per side.

Make the dressing: In a large bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, water, mustard, capers, and shallot. Slowly pour in the olive oil while continuing to whisk. Season with pepper to taste and up to 1/4 tsp. salt.

Gently toss the tofu, green beans, and black rice with the dressing. Arrange the salad greens on four plates, top with the dressed tofu, green beans, and rice and garnish with the tomatoes. Serves 4.

### Quinoa Stuffed Peppers

Quick....and absolutely delicious. What could be better?

- 4 sweet bell peppers, halved lengthwise, ribs and seeds removed
- 1/2 cup quinoa, well rinsed
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 10 oz. baby spinach
- 1 small clove garlic
- 1 (about 6 Tbs.) grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 large bunch basil, about 4 cups
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbs. boiling water
- 1/4 cup unsalted pistachios

Put the peppers skin side up on a lightly oiled baking sheet and broil on high until slightly charred and starting to soften, about 10 minutes. Remove the peppers from the oven and set them aside.

While the peppers are roasting, simmer the quinoa with the vegetable broth and tomatoes in a medium pot for 10 minutes. Stir in the spinach in batches. Spoon the quinoa-spinach mixture into the roasted peppers.

To make the pesto, combine the garlic, Parmesan, basil, olive oil, pepper, and up to 1/4 tsp. salt in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped but not smooth. Stir in the boiling water. Top the filled peppers with the pesto and garnish with the pistachios.

Serves 4.

**PER SERVING (2 halves)**

- Calories: 400
- Total Fat: 19 g
- Sat Fat: 3.5 g
- Protein: 14 g
- Sodium: 440 mg
- Cholesterol: 5 mg
- Carbohydrates: 49 g
- Fiber: 9 g